

THE LONG MARCH

The Background

1911	Chinese Revolution. Nationalists led by Sun Yat-sen overthrow the Manchu Empire. New government based on Sun's 'Three Principles' of Nationalism, Democracy and The People's Livelihood set up in Canton. Second government in Beijing (Peking) led by Yuan Shi-kai who became President backed by the army.
1916	Sun declares war on Germany - Yuan followed in 1917.
1918	Treaty of Versailles allows Japan to keep German territory of Shantung. China gains nothing. China stops buying British and Japanese goods and turns to Russia for friendship. Russia returns land taken from China in the last century. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) begins to grow.
1922	Nationalists or Kuomintang (KMT) fail to defeat powerful warlords. Sun invites CCP to join his army.
1925	Sun Yat-sen dies. Chiang Kai-shek becomes leader of the KMT.
1926	Northern expeditions against warlords are very successful.
1928	Chiang enters Beijing and is accepted as China's new ruler. Chiang believes China needs a strong military leader and decides to get rid of his only rival, the CCP.
1927	Chiang begins a series of attacks on the CCP. KMT death squads hunt down Communists in Canton, killing 6000. Similar attacks in Shanghai and other large cities. Mao Zedong (also called Mao Tse-tung) becomes leader of the CCP. He takes remainder of CCP to the mountains of Kiangsi and sets up a Soviet to rebuild the party and begin a civil war against the KMT.
1931	Chiang begins a series of extermination campaigns to defeat the CCP in Kiangsi. The army of the CCP - Red Army or People's Liberation Army (PLA) - use guerilla tactics. The Japanese invade Manchuria. Chiang decides he must defeat the PLA before turning against the Japanese.

The Long March 1934-5

Read the chart on the left. Chiang spent six years trying to get rid of the Communists and in 1934 he made a final effort to defeat them. He surrounded them in their base at Kiangsi. The CCP was starving and short of ammunition and in April they were badly defeated at Kuangchang.

Mao decided to abandon Kiangsi and take the CCP to the mountains of the north. In October, the Red Army broke through the surrounding KMT forces and began their Long March to safety. They travelled over 6000 miles through dreadful conditions. Of the 400,000 who left Kiangsi, only 4000 reached safety at Yen-an.

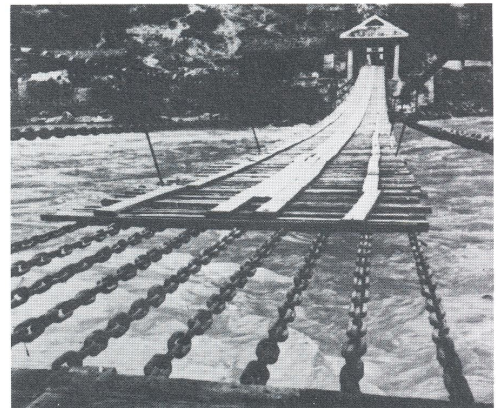
The following passages are accounts by survivors of the Long March.

The Tatu River

SOURCE A

The army watched breathlessly as the men swung along the bridge chains. Ma Ta-chiu was the first to be shot into the wild torrent below. Then another. The others pushed along, but just before they reached the flooring at the north end of the bridge they saw enemy soldiers dumping cans of kerosene (paraffin) on the planks and setting them on fire.

Watching the last sheet of flame spread, some men hesitated, but the platoon commander sprang down on the flooring before the flames



The Luting Bridge over the Tatu River.

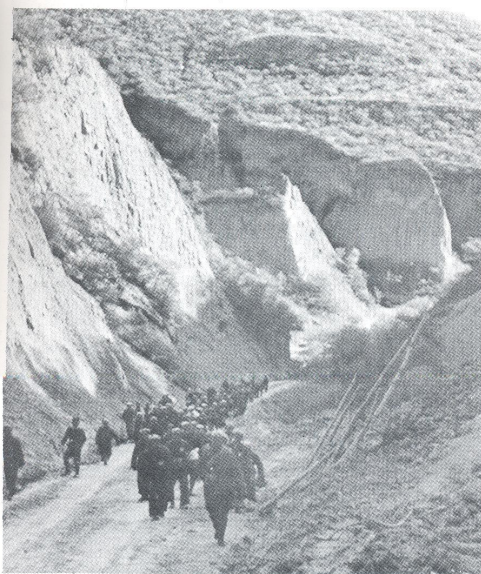
reached his feet, calling to the others to follow. They came and crouched on the planks, releasing their hand grenades and unbuckling their swords. They ran through the flames and threw their hand grenades in the midst of the enemy. More and more men followed, the flames lapping at their clothes. Behind them sounded the roar of their comrades, and beneath the roar the heavy thud, thud, thud of the last tree trunks falling into place. The bridge became a mass of running men with rifles ready.

The Great Snow Mountain

SOURCE B

As we climbed higher and higher we were caught in a terrible hailstorm and the air became so thin that we could scarcely breathe at all. Speech was completely impossible and the cold so dreadful that our breath froze and our hands and lips turned blue.

Men and animals staggered and fell into chasms, and disappeared forever. Those who sat down to rest or relieve themselves froze to death on the spot . . . By nightfall we had crossed, at an altitude of 16,000 feet. To avoid enemy bombers, we arose at midnight and began climbing the next peak. It rained, then snowed, and the fierce wind whipped our bodies and more men died.



The Red Army crosses the Great Snow Mountain during the Long March.



The Long March, 1934-5.

The Sungpan Marshlands

SOURCE C

Treacherous bogs were everywhere which sucked a man down once he stepped off the firmer parts, and more quickly if he tried to pull himself out. We could only advance with great care, stepping on grass clumps . . . It was really like crossing a quicksand. Fortunately the advance guard had left a coarse rope which wandered into the middle of the swamp.

Importance of the Long March

- 1 It ensured the survival of the Chinese Communists.
- 2 It ensured Mao's place as 'supreme leader and father figure'.
- 3 It became a legend and made the Red Army into heroes.
- 4 While the Red Army was based in Yen-an in the north the CCP could always claim they were fighting the Japanese.
- 5 Chiang had failed to stamp out the main threat to his power.
- 6 The Red Army took the ideas of communism into every village they visited, and spread Communism among the peasants.

THE LONG MARCH: EXERCISES



Chiang Kai-shek.

SOURCE A

Five times Chiang tried to encircle the Communist or 'Red' area . . . When Chiang tried to crush them for the fifth time, they broke out of the encircling ring of KMT troops, and on the 16th October 1934 moved away from their base towards the south-west.

Desmond Painter, Mao Tse-tung (1976).

SOURCE B *China, 1935.*



SOURCE C

We say that the Long March is the first of its kind ever recorded in history . . . For twelve months we were under daily reconnaissance and bombing from the air by scores of planes. We were encircled, pursued, obstructed and intercepted on the ground by a big force of several hundred thousand men. We encountered difficulties and great obstacles on the way, but by keeping our two feet going we swept across a distance of more than 20,000 li through the length and breadth of eleven provinces.

Well, has there ever been in history a long march like ours? No, never. The Long March is also a manifesto. It proclaims to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes and that the imperialists and their jackals, Chiang Kai-shek and his like, are perfect nonentities.

The Long March is also an agitation corps. It declares to the two hundred million people of eleven provinces that only the road of the Red Army leads to their liberation. Without the Long March, how could the broad masses have known so quickly that there are such great ideas in the world as upheld by the Red Army?

The Long March is also a seeding-machine. It has sown many seeds in eleven provinces, which will sprout, grow leaves, blossom into flowers, bear fruit and yield a crop in future. To sum up, the Long March ended with our victory and the enemy's defeat.

Mao's view of the importance of the Long March in Chinese communist history. Taken from The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung (Vol. 1).



Mao Zedong.



SOURCE D

Painting of the Long March. Is it a realistic picture or propaganda? Give your reasons.

Questions

- 1 (a) Describe the events leading up to the Long March 1933–5.
 - (b) What major difficulties faced the Communists on the Long March?
 - (c) What does Mao Zedong claim in Source C was achieved by the Long March? What other achievements were made?
 - (d) What criticisms would you make of Sources A and C as accurate records of the Long March?
- 2 (a) *Either* Write an account of the Long March remembering to include reasons for it, the difficulties, the length of time of the march and its significance; *or*
 - (b) Write an account as a journalist reporting for *The Times*. You could have been part of the March or use interviews from survivors. To help you, read the accounts of the March on pages 48–9. Don't forget to give background material. Bring out the character of Mao if you can. A good headline always helps.

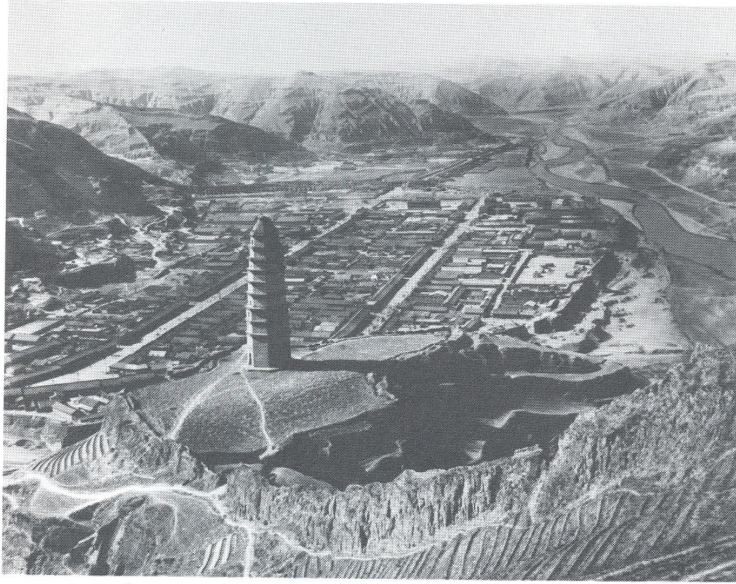
3 Write a short essay on the Long March under the following paragraph headings:

- (a) the plan
- (b) the escape
- (c) crossing the Tatu River
- (d) the Great Snow Mountain
- (e) the Sungpan Marshes
- (f) arrival at Yen-an.

Look at Source D, and other pictures of Mao in this chapter.

- 4 (a) What impression does Source D give of Mao?
 - (b) Is this the same as the impression given by other pictures?
 - (c) Explain any differences between them.

LIFE IN YENAN



SOURCE A *Yen-an: Headquarters of Mao's forces.*

Between 1937 and 1942, Mao created a new society in Yen-an using ideas he had tried out in Kiangsi. Many of the people lived in caves cut in the soft rock.

Life was based on co-operation between the peasants and the soldiers. When peasants harvested, soldiers helped. When soldiers dug gun pits, peasants helped. General Peng Te-huai said: 'The people are the water, the soldiers of the 8th Route Army are the fish. The fish cannot live without the water.' Peasants became soldiers and/or provided food and labour.

Both men and women played an equal part in this society. Women fought alongside men. Men spun cotton alongside women. Both took responsibility on the Peasant Associations.

Decision-making was shared by peasants and soldiers through elected committees.

Peasants began to invent their own songs and dances while Mao began to develop his own philosophy. He based his ideas on Marx and Lenin but applied it to China. What resulted was known as 'Maoism'.



SOURCE B *Mao at Yen-an, 1938.*

Maoism

Lenin saw the town workers (urban proletariat) as the main revolutionary force in Russia.

Since there were few industrial workers in China, Mao saw the country peasants as the main revolutionary force.

Mao said that no one must stray from the path of revolution. Each peasant must watch out for his/her political shortcomings. There had to be a continual process of self-criticism and self-improvement.

SOURCE C

Everyone carried a weapon of some sort – a rifle on his back, a grenade at his hip . . . even the little boys and girls wore dummy grenades dangling from their waists.

Written by an American journalist.



SOURCE D *Students at the cave university, Yanan.*

Mao taught his ideas along with other leaders to thousands of Red Army recruits at Yanan. His lectures and essays at the 'cave university' became the basis of what was known eventually as the *Thoughts of Chairman Mao*. People who visited saw his ideas put into practice. However, it is important to remember that life in Yanan was often harsh, often a struggle. Conditions remained primitive and people had to learn to live with a constant war situation. Disease and malnutrition were always present.

Members of the Friends' Ambulance Unit treating a Chinese soldier. The Quakers were among the few Westerners allowed into Yanan. (Use this picture with Worksheet 9).



Questions

- 1 Why did Mao go to Yanan?
- 2 Look at the photograph of Yanan (Source A). Give two reasons why it was such a good base for Mao.
- 3 Explain the purpose of the 'cave university'.
- 4 Explain the main differences between the ideas of Lenin and Mao.
- 5 Can you find any other evidence on these pages to support the American journalist's statement (Source C)? How useful is his evidence?

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Mao knew that the Red Army would be smashed if it fought battles with the Kuomintang which had modern equipment. So he taught his soldiers the techniques of guerilla warfare. Most of the time the Red Army was invisible. The soldiers became ordinary peasants, working in the field. They only came together when they were sure of winning a battle. Below you will find a selection of the rules made about guerilla fighting. They have been copied by every guerilla army in the world.

The enemy attacks, we retreat;
The enemy camps, we raid;
The enemy tires, we attack;
The enemy retreats, we pursue.

How Mao thought the war should be fought

'With our tactics the masses can be aroused for struggle on an ever-broadening front, and no enemy, however, powerful can cope with us. Ours are guerilla tactics. They consist of the following points.

Divide our forces to arouse the masses; concentrate our forces to deal with the enemy. To extend stable base areas, employ the policy of advancing in waves; when pursued by a powerful enemy, employ the policy of circling round behind.

Arouse the largest numbers of masses in the shortest possible time and by the best possible methods.

The tactics are just like casting a net. At any moment we should be able to cast it or draw it in. We cast it wide to run over the masses, and draw it in to deal with the enemy.'

Guerilla warfare according to Peng Teh-huai, Commander of the 1st Front Red Army

- 1 Partisans must not fight any losing battles. Do not fight if you are not sure of winning.
- 2 Surprise is the main weapon. Keep moving.
- 3 A careful and detailed plan of attack and especially retreat must be worked out before a battle.
- 4 The partisans must always outnumber the enemy in a battle. Attack in strength where the enemy is weakest or most unprepared.
- 5 Do not fight the main enemy army but concentrate on their weakest links.
- 6 Get as much information as you can from your friends, the masses (peasants). Make use of your superior knowledge.
- 7 It is absolutely necessary for the partisans to win the support and participation of the peasant masses. If there is no movement of armed peasants there is no base for the partisans and the Red Army cannot exist.

Military principles of the People's Liberation Army

- 1 Attack scattered, isolated enemy forces first; attack concentrated, strong enemy forces later.
- 2 Take the country areas first. Take small cities later and large cities last of all.
- 3 The main aim is to wipe out the enemy's army. It is not to capture or hold strong enemy positions. These positions can be taken after the enemy's army has been wiped out.
- 4 Fight no battle unprepared. Fight no battle you are not sure of winning.
- 5 Keep moving.
- 6 Build up your strength with captured weapons. Win over enemy soldiers to your side.



The 8th Route Army helps to train and organise peasants.

Instructions

You are Mao's right hand person. You have been given the task of writing down the rules of the Red Army. Choose only six from the list below and write them down. Make sure they fit into Mao's ideas of how guerilla wars should be fought. Then answer the questions.

- 1 Stand no nonsense from the peasants.
- 2 Take what you want from anyone.
- 3 Return all borrowed articles.
- 4 Do not pay for what you can steal.
- 5 Replace all damaged articles.
- 6 Persuade the peasants to support the KMT.
- 7 Be courteous and polite to people and help them whenever you can.
- 8 Show no mercy to peasants who do not help.
- 9 Be honest in all your dealings with the peasants.
- 10 Pay for all goods you buy from peasants.
- 11 Force peasants to join the Red Army.
- 12 Be clean and sanitary and dig lavatories at a safe distance from the village.
- 13 Leave houses as you found them.
- 14 Burn peasants houses you have slept in to destroy evidence of your stay.
- 15 Do not give weapons to the peasants, they cannot be trusted.
- 16 Do not hesitate to torture peasants for information.
- 17 Shoot all KMT prisoners to make them fear the Red Army.
- 18 Do not talk to peasants if you can help it.

Questions

- 1 Explain why you chose the six rules you did.
- 2 Select four of the rules you did not choose and explain exactly why you left them off your list.
- 3 Explain who partisans were.
- 4 Write a short account of Red Army tactics. Explain why the peasants supported the PLA and why Chiang's army lost support.

GUERRILLA WARFARE: EXERCISES

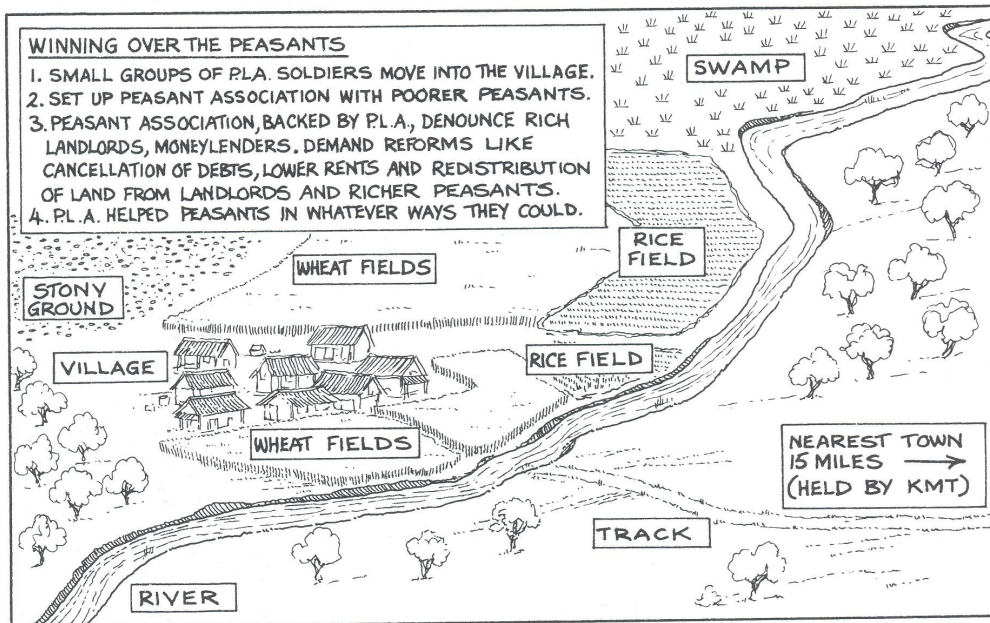
Questions

- 1 Explain what you could do for the villagers and what the villagers could do for you.
 - (a) A small KMT force is operating 10 miles away from the village.
 - (b) A large well-equipped KMT army is advancing towards the village.
 - (c) A rich landlord complains that a peasant has not paid her rent.
 - (d) Four KMT deserters arrive at the village asking for shelter.
 - (e) A cartload of PLA arms and ammunition is sent to the village.
- 2 The peasants who live in Ling Po want to help your PLA unit. List the ways in which they can do this. Here are some clues to help you.
 - (a) They know the area very well.
 - (b) They can travel short distances from the village without arousing suspicion.
 - (c) Only they know who lives in the village.
 - (d) They have many practical skills.
- 3 Why might children and women play a specially useful role in supporting a guerilla unit?
- 4 KMT units generally live in fortified areas in towns. What advantages does this give your PLA unit?
- 5 Why do you think the name People's Liberation Army was chosen?
- 6 Which do you think is the most important rule of guerilla fighting? Explain your choice.

Instructions

Imagine you are in command of a small group of Red Army fighters. You have arrived at the village

of Ling Po. The plan of the village is shown below. Your fighters have some expert knowledge of the following: fighting, medicine, farming, engineering, Communist ideas. You are all fit and healthy. You can all read and write.



Ling Po. The village has no water supply, doctor or school. The infant death rate is very high. None of the villagers can read or write. The huts are wooden with thatched roofs. The swamp is unhealthy. Cultivation methods are primitive. Flour is ground by hand. The villagers keep a few pigs and chickens. Ling Po is regularly raided by KMT soldiers who loot, burn and rape. Most of the land is owned by three rich landlords.



Peasants transport food to the Communist front line.

Instructions

Read Sources A–E and answer the questions on this page and question 4 on **Worksheet 10**.

SOURCE A

The Generalissimo has personally come to save you . . . Only the brigand leaders, Chuh Teh and Mao Tse-tung will be killed . . . rise up quickly and kill all the red brigands in order to regain your freedom. Brigand soldiers come quickly to join the Revolutionary Army. Each brigand soldier who comes with a rifle will be rewarded. Red brigands are mean and low.

A Chinese leaflet written in 1932.

SOURCE B

Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.

Mao Zedong.

SOURCE C

The enemy attacks, we retreat;
The enemy camps, we raid;
The enemy tries, we attack;
The enemy retreats, we pursue.

Mao Zedong.

SOURCE D

The People's Liberation Army is like a net.

Mao Zedong.

SOURCE E

- 1 Speak politely to the people and help them whenever you can.
- 2 Return doors and straw matting to the owners.
- 3 Pay for any damage you cause.
- 4 Pay a fair price for any goods you buy.
- 5 Be sanitary – establish latrines well away from houses.
- 6 Don't take liberties with the womenfolk.
- 7 Don't ill-treat prisoners.
- 8 Don't damage crops.

The eight rules of the 8th Route Army.



Battle-scarred veteran of the 8th Route Army.



A Red Army guerilla on guard near the paddy fields.

Questions

8 Look at Source A.

- (a) Who was the 'Generalissimo'?
- (b) Who were the 'brigand soldiers'?
- (c) What was the 'Revolutionary Army' mentioned in the leaflet?
- (d) What was the purpose of the leaflet?
- (e) What is the name given to this type of statement?
- (f) How effective do you think this leaflet was? Give as many reasons as you can to explain why it was likely or unlikely to succeed?

WAR AGAINST THE JAPANESE



The situation in China, 1940. Use this map with Worksheet 10.

Questions

- 1 Why did the Japanese find it hard to defeat the PLA?
- 2 The Japanese hit back with reprisals (taking hostages and executing them). What effect do you think this had on recruitment for the PLA?
- 3 Much of the time the Japanese took no action against the PLA. How did Mao use these periods of rest to help the PLA?

The Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931. Japan had fought many wars with China in the past and had always had ambitions to own an empire on the mainland. Manchuria contained many natural resources such as coal and oil.

Once Manchuria had been conquered the Japanese changed its name to Manchukuo and placed the Chinese former child-Emperor, Pu Yi on the throne of this puppet state.

In spite of this invasion, Chiang refused to join the CCP in fighting their common enemy and continued with the civil war. It was not until 1937 that Chiang agreed to ally with the CCP and form a United Front. The Japanese, fearing a united

China, invaded the rest of the country in 1937.

The Japanese had a powerful, well-equipped army supported by a modern airforce. They were brutal in attacks, ruthlessly bombing large cities like Nanking. Within a year the KMT had been defeated and Chiang took refuge in the mountain city of Chungking. Only the PLA continued to fight with any vigour, launching the 'Hundred Regiments Campaign' in 1940.

In 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the USA entered the war. The American government sent supplies to the KMT in Chungking along the Burma Road and by air.

The PLA fights the Japanese

At first the Japanese thought of the PLA simply as bandits who were a nuisance but not a serious threat. But it soon became clear that the 'bandits' controlled large areas of what was supposed to be Japanese-occupied territory. The Japanese, realising that the PLA needed the support of the peasants, launched a bloody campaign against the villages called the 'Three Alls' – kill all, burn all, destroy all. The PLA were forced into the mountains or, literally, underground.

SOURCE A

We worked during the day and dug tunnels at night. By the beginning of 1945 we had completed four main tunnels with 24 branches radiating out from them. We also dug more than 15 kilometres of tunnels to connect us with neighbouring villages. Our tunnels not only had direction signs and oil lamps at the turns, but we had rest places, food stores, kitchens and latrines. The entrances were usually at the base of a wall under brick beds or in dry wells. Inside the entrance we made the tunnel dip down and up again . . . if the enemy pumped in poison gas we blocked the caves with earth so the gas couldn't get in.

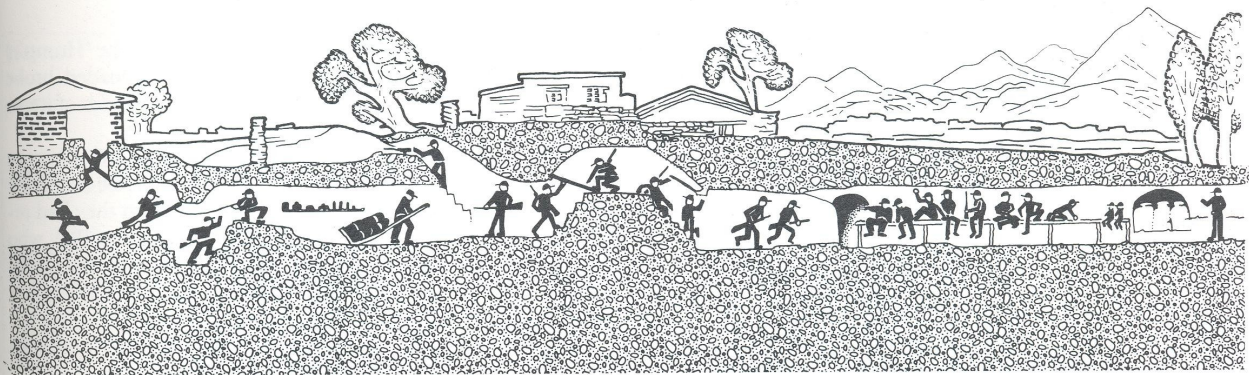
A member of the PLA remembers.



Japanese troops posing for a photograph in the streets of Mukden, 1931.



Japanese troops attacking a Nationalist base, 1939.



In 1942 the Japanese began building blockhouses (forts). Operating from these they began to clear villages. Villages were surrounded by wattle fences and then anyone inside suspected of being a Communist was killed and the other peasants driven away.

By August, 1500 blockhouses had been built

and 8000 villages cleared. Mao then took a terrible revenge. The 8th Route Army was placed near villages and waited until the end of the long dry season. At the beginning of September, hundreds of miles of fencing was set alight and thousands of Japanese were roasted in their own traps.

Chinese underground tunnels.

THE COMMUNIST VICTORY

Questions

- 1 What do you think Mao meant when he described the Atom bomb as a 'paper tiger'?
- 2 What evidence can you think of that proves this argument that weapons do not decide everything, but that people do?
- 3 Can you think of any reasons why Mao was not frightened of the atom bomb?
- 4 Why was the American government suspicious of the CCP?

On 6 August 1945, the USA dropped an atomic bomb on Japan. Another followed a few days later. On 8 August Stalin invaded Manchuria. Within a week the Japanese surrendered.

Mao commented on the A-bomb:

'Can atom bombs decide wars? No they can't. Atom bombs could not make Japan surrender. Without the struggles waged by people atom bombs could be of no avail. The atom bomb is a paper tiger.' (*The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*)

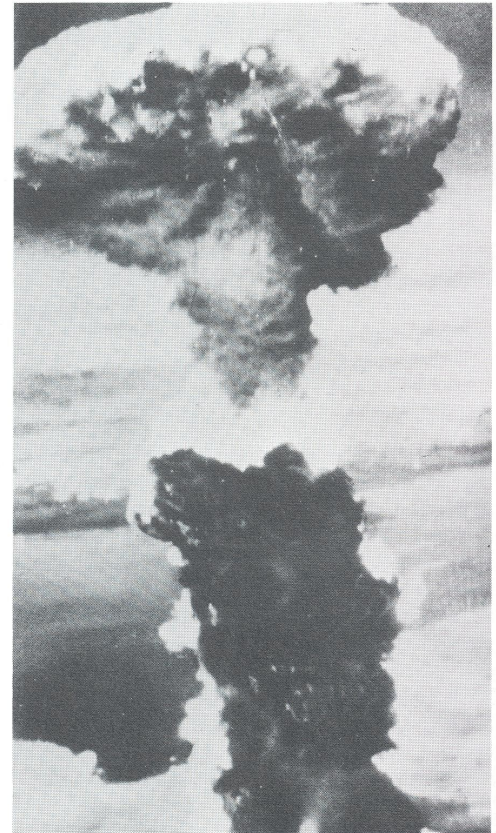
The American government, suspicious of the CCP, ordered the Japanese to surrender only to the KMT and continued to send aid to Chiang. On paper, the KMT looked like the most powerful ruling party in China, but in the eyes of the 100 million peasants of northern China, the CCP were more important.

The civil war continues

With the Japanese threat removed, the civil war began again. At the start in 1946, Chiang had a large, well-equipped army thanks to aid from the USA. He had done little fighting against the Japanese so he still had plenty of equipment.

However, during the war Chiang had lost the support of the peasants and even the Americans felt that his rule was very corrupt. For example, American pilots took great risks flying transport planes over the mountains to bring equipment to

KMT soldier executes a PLA suspect.



The mushroom cloud over Hiroshima.

Chiang. (This was called flying over the 'Hump'.) On one occasion a crate being unloaded broke open and was found to contain hundreds of items of silk underwear for Chiang's wife.

Many Chinese felt that Mao had led the more effective resistance against the Japanese and knew that during the Japanese occupation they had received a lot of practical help from the PLA who controlled most of the countryside. Chiang found that many of his soldiers deserted the KMT rather than fight the Reds.

Civil war 1946-9

The KMT controlled China south of the Yangtse river and held most of the cities in the north and in Manchuria. The Communists controlled the countryside in between, so that contact between the two groups of nationalists had to be by air.

CHINA: BEFORE THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION



The PLA on the march.

Questions

5 Why did the USA *not* support the PLA?

6 Why did Chiang Kai-shek lose the civil war? You could answer this as a list of reasons or a paragraph or as a full essay.

7 You are a member of the PLA who has been with Mao since the beginning. Write an essay explaining why the Communists were able to take control of China and set up the People's Republic in 1949. You should mention:

- (a) the Long March;
- (b) Mao's ideas;
- (c) Yanan;
- (d) guerilla fighting;
- (e) the support of the peasants;
- (f) mistakes made by the KMT;
- (g) any other points you think are important.

Main events of the civil war

June 1946–Spring 1947	Chiang attacks the PLA in Manchuria, promising that the reds would be defeated in six months. USA supplies KMT forces from the air. PLA uses guerilla tactics.
1948	Mao gathers his forces and drives the KMT back into their town bases. Prices in the KMT areas rise steeply and morale is low.
1949	The PLA captures every major city north of the Yangtse and wins three major battles in Manchuria. Beijing surrenders.
January	Shanghai and Nanking taken.
April–May	Canton, the last major city held by the Nationalists, surrenders.
October	Chiang Kai-shek takes what is left of his KMT supporters and flees to the island of Taiwan. He remains here as President until his death in 1975.
December	

On 1 October 1949, Mao appeared at the Gate of Heavenly Peace at the Imperial Palace in Beijing. He read a speech which proclaimed the People's Republic of China.'



Celebration of the first anniversary of the People's Republic of China, 1950.