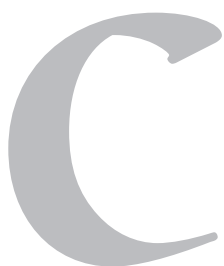


## TIMELINE C

1937	Sino-Japanese War begins with the Japanese attack on Lugouqiao • Japan begins large scale invasion of China • Fall of Shanghai • Fall of Nanjing
1938	Japan occupies major coastal cities in China • Jiang Jieshi and government retreat to Chongqing in Sichuan province • Program of Armed Resistance and National Reconstruction adopted by Jiang Jieshi
1940	Japanese puppet government set up in Nanjing under Wang Jingwei, a former Guomindang leader
1941	US Lend Lease available to China • USA enters the war • Southern Anhui incident in which the Communist Fourth Army is attacked by Guomindang troops
1943	Jiang meets with President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill in Cairo
1945	Japanese surrender and withdraw from China
1946	Russians agree to hand over Manchuria to Guomindang forces
1947	Guomindang (Nationalist) forces capture Yanan • Further Nationalist successes in capturing major cities • Agrarian Land Reform draft completed and guides land reform in Communist held areas
1948	Communists recapture Yanan • Communist victories in Manchuria • Nationalists suffer severe losses of troops and equipment in Manchuria
1949	Communist victory and takeover of Beijing, Nanjing, Wuhan and Shanghai • 1 October: Mao Zedong declares the founding of the People's Republic of China • Jiang Jieshi and his officials and supporters flee to Taiwan with US assistance • Mao visits Soviet Union
1950	Sino-Soviet alliance signed in Moscow • Agrarian Land Reform law introduced • Chinese forces assist North Korea against US and UN forces • Communist government adopts measures to eliminate private banks and bring an end to inflationary problems
1951	Tibet claimed by China • Three Selfs Movement to free Chinese churches from foreign influences • Three Anti, Five Anti, and Thought reform introduced

革命委员会好



## THE CRISES OF THE REVOLUTION

**Manchuria:** renamed Manchukuo in 1931 by the Japanese

The crises of the revolution were precipitated by the war with Japan. Since the Japanese invasion of **Manchuria** (China's north-east region) and the establishment of a puppet regime in Manchuria under the former Chinese Emperor Puyi, Jiang Jieshi had pursued a policy of non-resistance to the Japanese. The Xian incident of December 1936 seemed to herald a new era in Chinese history with an end to the ten year Civil War that had raged between the Guomindang and Communist forces. The news of the second united front between the Guomindang and the Communists was welcomed by the Chinese people who were determined to stand up and resist the Japanese aggression to the bitter end.

During the war with Japan between 1937 and 1945, political control of China was divided between the three protagonists. The cities on the coastal plain and along the major rivers were under the control of the Japanese; the area around Chongqing in Sichuan was under Guomindang (Nationalist) control; the north-west (Shaanxi) and the hinterland behind the coast formed part of the Communist controlled border region that was liberated from the Japanese. It was the experiences of the Chinese people in these regions during the war that precipitated the revolution.

The inquiries in this investigation will focus on the social, economic and military problems of the revolutionary groups (that is, the Guomindang (Nationalists) and the Communists) in the area under their control during the war with Japan and the Civil War which followed.

### INQUIRY 8



## What problems did the Guomindang government face during the war with Japan and the Civil War? Why did the government fail?

The documents that follow should help you to understand:

- the nature of the Japanese attack on China
- how the Guomindang (Nationalists) responded to the Japanese attack
- how the economic problems contributed to the Guomindang failure
- the military strategies of the Guomindang
- United States and Soviet support for the Guomindang.

In the first stages of the war, the Japanese troops moved west to occupy Taiyuan, the capital of Shaanxi province, and southwards to Shanghai which was strongly defended by the Chinese. The Chinese army was pushed back to Nanjing, and were unable to hold off the Japanese who, with assistance from their navy, were able to capture Nanjing in December 1937.

The brutality of the Japanese seizure of Nanjing on 13 December 1937 was described by Dr Bates, an American professor teaching at the Nanjing University.



### 8.1.1

WG used in this source

## THE RAPE OF NANJING

Airplanes had been over us almost constantly for the past two days, but no one heard them now, and the shellfire had been terrific. The wall had been breached and the damage in the southern part of the city was tremendous. No one will ever know what the Chinese casualties were, but they must have been enormous. The Japanese say they themselves lost 40,000 men taking Nanking.

The general rout must have started early that afternoon. Soldiers streamed through the city from the south ... The road for miles was strewn with equipment they cast away ... Trucks and cars jammed, were overturned, caught fire; at the gate more cars jammed and were burned—a terrible holocaust—and the dead lay feet deep. The gate blocked terror-mad soldiers

scaled the wall and let themselves down on the other side with ropes, pullies and belts tied together, clothing torn to strips. Many fell and were killed. A fleet of junks was there. It was totally inadequate for the horde that was now in a frenzy to cross to the north side. The overcrowded junks capsized, then sank; thousands drowned ... Meanwhile, we were busy at headquarters disarming soldiers who had been unable to escape and had come into the zone (demilitarised) for protection. We assumed then that if they gave up their equipment, their lives would be spared by the Japanese. But it was a vain promise. All would have preferred to have died fighting to being taken out and shot, or sabred, or used for bayonet practices as they all were later on ...

Source: R. Pelissier, *The Awakening of China 1793–1949*

Japanese actions against Chinese civilians did little to endear the Chinese population—it ensured that they became the focus of their hatred.



### 8.1.2

## EDGAR SNOW ON THE ATTACK ON SHANGHAI

Widespread and indiscriminate bombing of civilian centres produces in millions of people ... a reaction of profound outrage and disgust. It arouses a peculiarly

personal hatred of the invader ... This was perhaps Japan's greatest contribution to the unification of China.

Source: Lois Wheeler Snow, *Edgar Snow's China*, p. 158



## QUESTIONS

- 1 How were the Chinese civilians and soldiers treated by the invading Japanese?
- 2 What was the purpose of the Japanese action against the Chinese?
- 3 How did Japan's attack on China contribute to China's unification?

## THE GUOMINDANG GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO ATTACKS

The Japanese attempt to take the railway near Suzhou suffered a setback when the Chinese troops destroyed almost two divisions of Japanese in the battle for Taierzhuang village. Japan's progress was further hampered when Jiang's troops broke the dykes of the Huang

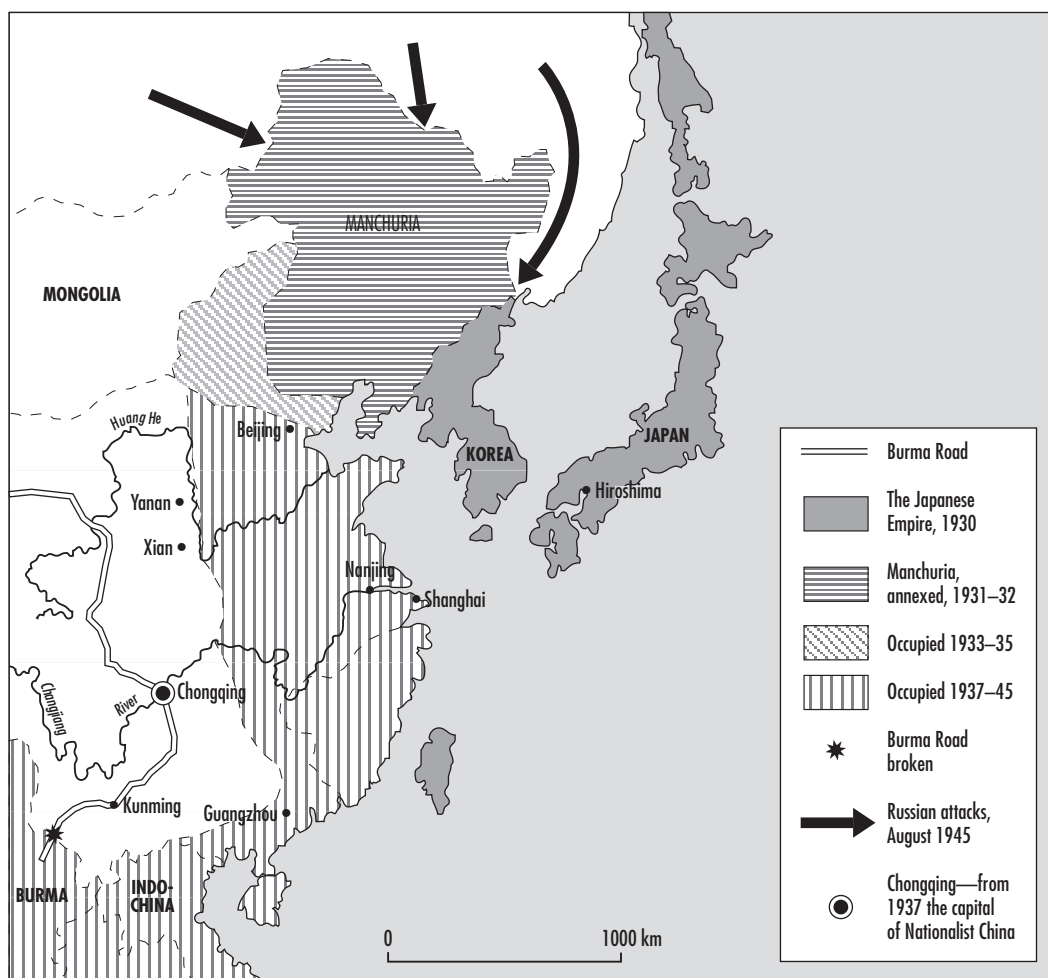
He. This action has been criticised by historians for its senseless destruction of villages and its devastating impact on the countryside. It caused floods and severe environmental damage to vast areas of southern China. Not only was there huge loss of life, but the Huang He was diverted as a result. This had a future impact, rendering many areas uninhabitable for twenty or more years.

By mid 1938 the Japanese had control over the cities, towns, airways, transportation and communication networks of the coastal regions which constituted the more developed areas of China. To maintain political control they set up 'puppet' governments with the cooperation of pro-Japanese Nationalists. The most significant was the one at Nanjing under the control of Wang Jingwei, a former leader in the Guomindang government.

Jiang Jieshi resolved to follow a program of Armed Resistance and National Reconstruction. The Guomindang government was moved to Wuhan, and then finally to Chongqing in the mountainous Sichuan province. The region around Chongqing formed part of 'free China', as the area was free from Japanese control. When the government moved to this region, many landlords, business men, bankers and Chinese citizens from the Japanese-occupied areas packed up their belongings and made the long trek, often on foot. The retreat to Chongqing, the new capital city perched on a clifftop high above the Yangzi River, was a significant feat that had required the removal of all government departments—the whole bureaucratic system was relocated.

## ★ 8.2.1

### THE JAPANESE ADVANCE ON CHINA



The feudal nature of the city appalled many reporters who visited and those who were forced to move there found it a nightmare. Han Suyin, who was married to an officer in the Guomindang and had been forced to relocate there, found that all the worst elements of old feudal China—nepotism, selfishness, decadence, indifference to poverty and suffering—were found in this ‘pathetic’ city.



### 8.2.2

**WG** used in this source

**phantasmagoria:**  
optical illusions

**chimera:** monster with  
a lion's head

**cindery:** remains of  
burnt coal

## RECOLLECTIONS OF CHONGQING

Chungking was **phantasmagoria**, a monster, brusque **chimera**, an unreal and thorough freak; a fortress where trees could not grow on the inch-thin soil covering the rock. A city of squalor and filth, and with one of the most impossible climates on earth; a furnace in summer, in winter swallowed by unrelenting fog; and yet, for all its squalor, its rats, its misery, its desolation, its impossible

cruelties, it was also magnificently, raucously alive, palpitating with the stolid triumph of its million people, whose sufferings seemed endless, whose courage, determination and forbearance towards gross injustice was the **cindery** mask over the flame that would one day devour all this structure of evil.

Source: Han Suyin, *Birdless Summer*, pp. 72–3

Chongqing, although far west in the high mountainous region of Sichuan, was still the target of many Japanese air raids. One such attack on 4 May 1939 was described by a French missionary.



### 8.2.3

**WG** used in this source

**calcarated:** containing  
carbonate of lime/  
limestone

## ATTACK ON CHONGQING

The enemy planes have flown over the city only once, but they have followed its largest diagonal, from the N.E. to the S.W. As on the previous day, they have showered it with both incendiary bombs and torpedoes, in a pattern of perfect precision. Every fifty yards or so a group of incendiary bombs and two torpedoes have crashed down through the commercial and most populous sections of this overcrowded city. And they have chosen the moment of the day when the streets are most crowded, the moment also when people fleeing daytime attacks have returned to the city in the hope that the night would protect them.

After nightfall, Chungking is one vast blazing mask. Quicker than it takes to tell, beams crack, walls crumble, telephone poles collapse amidst showers of sparks and tangled wires. People run about without knowing where

to go, stumbling and floundering, trying to escape the flames that close in from every side ... Cries and appeals fill the air, and the acrid odour of sulphur and pitch gets caught in people's throats ... Three o'clock in the morning. The sirens are heard once more. Thus alert in the middle of the night in the blazing city, the horrified people dash towards the shelters in an indescribable rush, trampling upon one another, shouting and crying ... Soon daybreak comes, a day of horror follows a night of terror. The bright May morning sun rises above the smoke, the ruins, the corpses, many of them **calcarated**, they litter the streets. There are corpses everywhere ... as survivors roam through the burning ruins, searching feverishly for traces of some relatives. There is a woman bent and crying over half a corpse. Chungking has become one vast cemetery.

Source: R. Pelissier, *The Awakening of China 1793–1949*

## QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did the Japanese launch continuous bombing raids on the capital?
- 2 What impact did the Japanese incendiary bombing have?
- 3 Why would the Nationalist government have selected this city as its base during the war? Use the map in Source 8.2.1 to explain your answer.



## SOVIET AID TO JIANG

The Chinese government was cut off from the coast by the Japanese, who thought that this would force Jiang Jieshi to accept peace terms. Jiang refused as he was anticipating further international assistance and intervention. Up to this point the international reaction to Japan had been limited. Germany, who had a pact with Japan, had been forced to withdraw its military mission and advisers in early 1938. Britain was following its policy of appeasement and closed the Burma road, which prevented supplies reaching inland China. United States President Roosevelt spoke eloquently about ‘quarantining’ and ‘halting the spread of the epidemic of world lawlessness’, but was pursuing a Congress-imposed non-interventionist policy. The United States did nothing until Pearl Harbor was attacked in December 1941. The Soviet Union became China’s lifeline, dispatching 1000 aircraft and 2000 aviators to aid China’s defence and protect the major cities against air raids. It also supplied the Chinese government with a credit of US\$100 million and a vast quantity of munitions (C. P. Fitzgerald, *Communism Takes China*, p. 95).

Madame Jiang Jieshi, an ardent anti-Communist, in the following statement gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Soviets.

★  
8.3

### LIBERTY MAGAZINE, JANUARY 1939

Eighty percent of Japan’s war supplies come from America ... and 95 percent of the aviation gasoline which was used by Japan in her ruthless bombing was American. Throughout the first three years of resistance Soviet Russia extended to China for the actual purchase

of war supplies and other necessities, credits several times larger than the credits given by either Great Britain or America. I may point out that Russian help has been unconditional throughout.

Source: Su Kaiming, *1840–1983 Modern China: A Topical History*, pp. 169–70



## QUESTIONS

- 1 Why would Madame Jiang have made this statement?
- 2 What was she hoping to achieve?

## JIANG JIESHI LAUNCHES ATTACKS ON THE COMMUNISTS

Once Jiang had moved his government to Chongqing he adopted a relatively passive attitude to fighting the invaders. This was despite the fact that he had formulated a program of Armed Resistance and National Reconstruction after meeting with Communist representatives in April 1938. The Japanese had also eased the military pressure on the Guomindang forces and directed their main thrust against the Communist controlled liberated areas behind Japanese lines.

In 1939 and 1940 Jiang ordered his troops to launch attacks on the Eighth Route Army (the Red Army renamed). He sent his best troops to blockade Yanan and in 1941, in the southern Anhui incident, attempted to eliminate the New Fourth Army (Communist force in the south) in a planned ambush in a confined mountainous area. This was the incident which strained to breaking point the second united front between the Guomindang and the Communists. Jiang withdrew all financial support to the Communists, claiming the New Fourth Army had been disobedient.