**China AOS 1- Historiography**

**100 days of Reform**

X.L Woo - “Some historians said that if the emperor had implemented his changes one at a time, allowing the reactions to flare up and cool down, rather than bombarding the country with reforms, the history of China might have been different”

**Boxer Uprising**

Michael Lynch- ‘Cixi’s support for the Boxers had proved as unwise as it had been affective’

George Morrison- the uprising ‘was from the outset encouraged and fostered by the Empress Dowager and by the ignorant reactionaries whom she selected as advisers.’

Sterling Seagrave- Cixi was ‘paralysed by indecision’ throughout the crisis.

**Qing Reforms**

Edwin Moise- ‘The Manchu ruling class had neither real enthusiasm for the changes that had been forced onto it, nor great skill at carrying them out’

‘The government’s initial steps towards modernization drastically increased the number of people who expected rapid progress, and many of them turned against the dynasty when their expectations could not be met.’

Patricia Ebrey- people in positions of power ‘shared the revolutionaries’ zeal for modernisation and reform, even if for different reasons; to the local elite they appeared the best means to achieving local order’

Di Mcdonald- The Qing reforms were ‘too little, too late’

**Death of Guangxu and Cixi**

John Fairbank- Cixi had the Emperor poisoned. It was ‘one of the most notable coincidences in the Old Buddha’s long and murderous career’

Sterling Seagrave-

**Abdication of the Qing**

John Fairbank- Sun Yat-sen deserves more recognition and ‘certainly deserves A for effort’

Edwin Moise- ‘The final collapse of the Qing Dynasty was to a considerable extent inspired by a revolutionary from Guangdong named SunYat-sen.’

C.P Fitzgerald- ‘the decision to replace the dynasty, and the monarchy, with a republic was, at the time, a most radical step...That the Chinese, of all people, should choose a republic rather than a new dynasty seemed to be wildly idealistic, unpractical and reckless.’

John Fairbank- ‘He [Yuan Shikai] knew how to make the old system work, but it turned out that... he had no vision of a new system.’

Michael Dillon - “The Qing government was overthrown, not by a single rebellion but by a decentralised movement that devolved power to the provinces. However it proved extremely difficult to replace it with a government that was acceptable to all the provinces and regional economic and political interests that had been involved in the struggle to bring down the Manchus”

**New Culture Movement and 4th May Movement**

Ross Terrill- The magazine New Youth by Chen Duxiu (co-founder of the CCP) was ‘a magazine that jabbed the rapier [sword] of modern Western ideas through the ribs of China’s rigid conditions.’

Rana Mitter- ‘the May Fourth period marked a unique combination of...a sense of real and impending crisis; a combination of a plurality of competing ideas aimed at “saving the nation”, and an audience ready to receive, welcome, contest and adapt these ideas’

“Old ethics, customs and literature came under disparaging attack,” (Hsu)

“There is definitely no reason why we should blindly follow others,” (Ssu-Yu Teng)

“How intense the Chinese sense of nationalism could be when outrages…was shown in the disturbances,” (Lynch)

“An extremely intense brand of nationalism had been adopted by the bourgeoisie and working class alike,” (Morcombe and Fielding)

“The movement… turned many Chinese against Western democracy, and … towards Marxism,” (McDonald)

Peter Gue Zarrow - “May Fourth has become an extremely important but ambiguous notion in all discussions of modern Chinese history. The Communists have sometimes gone so far as to trace the origins of their Party to May Fourth – they saw May Fourth as representing progressive, patriotic elements, as marking the emergence of the working class and as leading to ‘cultural revolution’ – then they treated May Fourth as the necessary condition for the appearance of the CCP.

**The White terror and the Shanghai Massacre**

Maurice Meisner- Chiang bought about a bloodbath that virtually destroyed both the CCP and the workers movement in China’s largest city’

It was ‘an orgy of counter-revolutionary violence’

“The Shanghai massacre of 1927 did not lead to the victory of Jiang Jieshi but rather to the collapse of military unity in the NRA… The spread of violence in the cities and countryside made it possible for the northern warlords to launch a counter-offensive military campaign… Facing enemies from both directions, warlords in the north and Communist uprisings in the south, Jiang Jieshi’s NRA was forced out of North China… As a result of these defeats, Jiang Jieshi announced his ‘retirement’ and left Nanjing, leaving a fraction of soldiers remaining in Wuhan and Nanjing…” Sharron Gu,

The Nanjing (nationalist) Decade

During the Nanjing Decade, building a modern state seemed impossible, as the government was trapped in practices that had characterised the warlord years and, before that, the imperial government. Militarism and its control over finances were hard to overcome. At the same time, the relationship between state and private economy appeared to be following patterns developed in the late Qing Self-Strengthening period, when reforms had been implemented by informal networks of officials and private entrepreneurs.” Margherita Zanasi

**Jiangxi soviet**

Ross Terrill- The young heads (28 Bolsheviks) of the politburo were ‘good at theory and bad at most other things’.

Shiping Zheng – “The Jiangxi Soviet Republic afforded the Communists the first opportunity to test their ability to govern…”

Shiping Zheng – “Mao Zedong deliberately used the Jiangxi Soviet Republic to counter-balance his opponents who were in control of the Party organisation. However it did not last long, and Mao’s dominance of it was even shorter.”

**Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist regime**

Lucien Bianco- ‘peace and order were relative, just as the unification achieved in this decade was more apparent than real.’

Jack Gray- The Nationalist record ‘should be judged... by what took place where its power was sufficient’ not taking into account constraints that were out of their control.

William Kirby- The Nationalists made ‘stunning accomplishments from a position of unenviable weakness’

Jack Gray- ‘there is no doubt that by 1937 in every respect China under the Nanjing government was solving her problems, at least on an experimental scale.’

R.H Tawny- the common Chinese farmer was like ‘a man standing permanently up to his neck in water so even a ripple is sufficient to drown him.’

Tom Ryan- ‘The New Life Movement did very little other than intruding into people’s lives. It remained an urban movement and had little or no impact on the peasantry. Calls to live frugally made no sense to people who in many cases spent their lives in abject poverty.’

Frederick Wakeman- described Chiang’s ideology as ‘Confucian Fascism’.

Jack Gray- The Nationalists attempts to progress ‘nevertheless presented an ugly face to the world.’

C.P Fitzgerald- ‘the Chinese people groaned under a regime [that was] Fascist in every quality except efficiency.’

John Fairbank- ‘In an era of peace and order the Nanjing Government might have ridden the crest of modernisation, but its fate was determined almost from the first by the menace of Japanese militarism.’

**The Long March**

Edgar Snow: the Long March was "one of the great triumphs of men against odds, and men against nature."

Craig Dietrich: “Although the Long March was a tactical defeat, it had very beneficial psychological and organizational effects and gave the Communists an important strategic advantage.” Or even shorter: “Although the Long March was a tactical defeat,…it gave the Communists an important strategic advantage.”

“The March became a classic triumph of survival” - Khoon Choy Lee

*Good quotes for highlighting the fact that the march was not a success*

Maurice Meisner: "the fact that the largest part of the Red Army was destroyed during the ordeals of the next year can hardly be seen as a victory."

"The exhausted survivors of the Long March who reached Shensi celebrated little more than the sheer (and fantastic) fact that they had managed to survive.”

*Both of these challenge Snow and Dietrich's views and would therefore work well with them in the 10 mark section of the document analysis in evaluating ‘how useful’ the document is.*

**The Yanan decade and war with the Japanese**

Maurice Meisner: “The history and experiences of the Yenan decade, upon which the victory of 1949 was based, served to reinforce the Maoist belief in the primacy of moral over material forces, of men over machines, the conviction that the truly creative revolutionary forces reside more in the countryside than the cities, and the view that ideological-moral solidarity is more important than artificial unity that might be provided or imposed by any formal bureaucratic organization. More importantly, victory came on the basis of a massive popular social revolution that involved the active and meaningful support and participation of tens of millions of peasants.”

Edwin Moise: “The CCP became a more nationalist organization under Mao…Under Mao the CCP struggled for nationalist goals more vigorously and more competently than the ‘Nationalist Party’, the Guomindang. Had it not done so it certainly would not have risen to control the nation as fast as it did, and might not have done so at all.”

Lucien Bianco: “The CCP’s greatest ally was the Japanese army, whose atrocities left the peasantry in such desperate straights that it had no recourse but to seek the Red Army’s protection.”

Jean Chesneaux: “Without the explosions of the peasant struggle in the liberated areas in 1946-48 the Communist armies would not have been able to hold out against the Kuomintang, whose military superiority had even enabled them to take Yenan and hold it for a time in 1947; nor would they have been able to launch their great counter-offensive of 1948. The same principles of ‘people’s war’ as had been proved in resistance against Japan were now put in operation against Chiang Kai-shek: cooperation between the regular army, guerrilla and militia units, the dialectic of ‘the fish and the water’, deep politicization of the army and so forth. The Kuomintang was progressively driven out of all the rural areas of north China towards the end of 1948 and the major cities were then surrounded.
The military success of the Communists had been greatly facilitated by the internal crisis within the Kuomintang-held territory, in which there were strikes, student unrest and political discontent among the middle class. For the first time in several decades, the peasant movement was able to coordinate its action effectively with that of other social forces.”

Rectification - “There was no doubting how far he was prepared to go to enforce his authority. Members now held him in awe or in terror. – Michael Lynch

**The Civil War and the Proclamation of the PRC.**

C.P. Fitzgerald: “To understand why China became a Communist country, the nature of the guerrilla war is the essential clue. It ruined the old order.”

Lucien Bianco: “Guerrilla warfare is not a special form of the art of war, but the continuation of revolutionary struggle by military means.”

Stuart Schram: “The Chinese civil war of 1946-49 in unquestionably one of the most striking examples in history of the victory of a smaller but dedicated and well-organised force enjoying popular support over a larger but unpopular force with poor morale and incompetent leadership.”

John King Fairbank: “Instead of learning to live off the countryside as the CCP was doing, the KMT lived of the printing press.”

Immanuel Hsu “The Nationalist government, which bore the major brunt of the fighting, was so depleted physically and spiritually that it was manifestly incapable of coping with the new challenges of the postwar era.”

Lucien Bianco: “Almost every major area of the Nationalist military weakness was an area of Red Army strength. The same generals – Chu Teh, Peng Teh-huai, Lin Piao, Chen I, and Liu Po-cheng – remained in command not only throughout the civil war, but from one war to another, from the Kiangsi period, the Long March, and the National Resistance War of 1937-45 to the final showdown with the Nationalists. The Communists’ strategy was at once simple and clever, as bold as it was natural, and aimed, as we have noted, at destroying enemy forces rather than defending cities or expanses of territory. The Red Army was distinguished by its great mobility, or rather its total movability (everything could be rapidly dismantled and moved, leaving the enemy with a denuded area and a meaningless victory), as contrasted with the relative immobility of the Nationalist garrisons…Finally, the morale of the Red Army was as different from the forces of order as day from night. Conscription, a tragedy in the government controlled areas, was an honour in the Liberated Areas.”

## Other evidence

**Social Structure**

* Total population: 500 Million
* Peasants = 85-90% of China’s population
* Proletariat (urban workers) = 0.5% of population

## Key terms

Long march

Yanan period

* Mass line
* ‘going down to the peasants’
* Yan’an way
* Maoism