

# Authoritarian States & the Cold War

**Two essays · two different topics · 90 minutes (45 minutes each).** Markscheme rewards a clear thesis, focused analysis (not narrative), precise evidence, and engagement with named historians. Choose the question whose command term you can answer most directly. Detailed paper-writing guide on the last page.

## 1 · Hitler — Germany 1918–1945 — Authoritarian Case 1

### Conditions for the rise VERSAILLES · WEIMAR WEAKNESS · DEPRESSION · IDEOLOGY

#### LONG-TERM WEAKNESSES

- **Treaty of Versailles (1919)** — Article 231 war guilt, 132 billion gold marks reparations, 100,000-man army, demilitarised Rhineland, lost 13% of territory and all colonies. Universally rejected by all German parties as a "diktat".
- **Weimar Constitution flaws** — proportional representation produced unstable coalitions (over twenty cabinets 1919–33); Article 48 emergency powers normalised rule by decree under Brüning, Papen, Schleicher.
- **Stab-in-the-back myth (*Dolchstoß*)** — army blamed Jews, socialists, "November Criminals" for defeat; corrosive on republican legitimacy.
- **Cultural backlash** — conservative Germany resented Weimar's modernism, sexual liberalism, Jewish prominence in arts and finance.

#### SHORT-TERM TRIGGERS

- **Hyperinflation 1923** — middle-class savings wiped out; lifelong distrust of democracy.
- **Great Depression 1929–32** — Wall Street Crash withdrew US loans (Dawes 1924, Young 1929 plans). Unemployment 1.6 million (1929) to over six million (1932). Industrial output halved.

- **Brüning's deflation** — wage and benefit cuts deepened the Depression; ruled by decree from March 1930.
- **Communist threat** — KPD's growth (10% to 17% of vote 1928–32) pushed industrialists, army and conservatives toward Hitler as the lesser evil.

#### HITLER'S IDEOLOGY — THE AIMS

1. Destroy Weimar democracy and create a single-party Führer state.
  2. Restore national pride by destroying the Treaty of Versailles.
  3. Unite all Germans (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and racially purify (anti-Semitism, eugenics).
  4. Achieve Lebensraum in the East.
  5. Crush Communism at home and abroad.
- **Mein Kampf (1925)** — explicit blueprint: destroy Versailles, unite all Germans, racial state, Lebensraum east, war on Jewish-Bolshevism.
  - **Volksgemeinschaft** — racially pure "people's community"; class abolished by race.
  - **Führerprinzip** — leadership principle; loyalty to Hitler, not the state or law.
  - **Social Darwinism & antisemitism** — eternal struggle between races; Jews as the "racial poison" requiring removal.

### Rise to power 1919 · NSDAP · MUNICH PUTSCH · 1932 ELECTIONS · 30 JANUARY 1933

#### EARLY YEARS · 1919–28

- **1919** Hitler joins DAP; renamed NSDAP 1920; 25-Point Programme.
- **Nov 1923 — Munich Beer Hall Putsch** — failed coup inspired by Mussolini's March on Rome. Hitler imprisoned (9 months in Landsberg); writes *Mein Kampf*.
- **Lesson learned:** "legality strategy" — take power through the ballot box, then dismantle democracy from within.
- 1928 election: NSDAP only 2.6% of vote — irrelevant under Weimar prosperity.

#### BREAKTHROUGH · 1929–32

- **1930 election:** NSDAP 18.3% (107 seats) — second-largest party.
- **Jul 1932 election:** NSDAP 37.4% (230 seats) — largest party. Nov 1932: dropped to 33% — Nazis losing momentum, finances strained.
- **Propaganda machine** under Goebbels: rallies, posters, radio, "Hitler over Germany" plane tour.
- **SA** roughly 400,000 by 1932 — street violence with KPD created an atmosphere of crisis Nazis offered to end.

#### BACKSTAIRS INTRIGUE · 1932–33

- **President Hindenburg** distrusted the "Bohemian corporal"; refused him Chancellorship Aug and Nov 1932.
- **Franz von Papen**, dismissed Chancellor, schemed with Hitler — convinced Hindenburg they could "box him in" with conservatives.
- **30 January 1933** — Hitler appointed Chancellor of a coalition cabinet (only 3 of 11 ministers Nazi).
- Conservative miscalculation — they thought they had hired Hitler; instead, he had hired them.

#### WHY HITLER — NOT THE OTHERS?

- **Ideology** tapped existing nationalism, antisemitism, anti-Versailles consensus.
- **Organisation** — Nazis had a national party machine no rival matched.
- **Propaganda** — Goebbels mastered radio, film, mass spectacle.
- **Economic crisis** made democracy seem broken; Nazis offered jobs & pride.
- **Conservative patronage** — von Papen, industrialists (Thyssen, Krupp), army elites placed Hitler in office.
- **Personal qualities** — oratory; coalition tactician (Bullock); but exploiting structures rather than commanding them (Kershaw).

## Consolidation of power 1933–34 · REICHSTAG FIRE · ENABLING ACT · NIGHT OF LONG KNIVES

27 Feb 1933	<b>Reichstag Fire.</b> Marinus van der Lubbe arrested. Used as pretext for the next day's <b>Reichstag Fire Decree</b> suspending civil liberties indefinitely.
5 Mar 1933	<b>Final election</b> — NSDAP 43.9%; with DNVP coalition partner, 51.9%. Not the two-thirds majority needed to amend the constitution.
23 Mar 1933	<b>Enabling Act</b> — passed 444–94 after Communist deputies banned and Centre Party persuaded with promised concordat. Hitler can now legislate without the Reichstag for four years.
Apr–Jul 1933	<b>Gleichschaltung</b> ("coordination") — trade unions abolished (replaced by DAF, 2 May); rival parties dissolved; one-party state declared 14 July.
30 Jun 1934	<b>Night of the Long Knives.</b> SS murders SA leadership including Ernst Röhm, plus Schleicher, Strasser. Removes army's fear of SA and binds army to Hitler personally.
2 Aug 1934	<b>Hindenburg dies.</b> Hitler merges Chancellor & President into "Führer". Army oath sworn personally to Hitler. Total power achieved.

## Domestic policies — the Nazi state

### ECONOMIC — SCHACHT THEN GOERING

- **1933–36 Schacht:** deficit financing (Mefo bills), secret rearmament. Unemployment six million (1933) → under one million (1939). Conscription (1935) absorbed labour.
- **1936 Four-Year Plan** under Goering — autarky and war economy by 1940. Synthetic oil, rubber, iron.
- **Mason thesis:** 1938–39 economy overheated → "flight into war". **Overy counter:** economy was functioning; war was chosen.

### SOCIAL — VOLKSGEMEINSCHAFT IN PRACTICE

- **Workers:** Strength Through Joy (KdF); wages stagnant; trade unions abolished; Volkswagen savings scheme defrauded.
- **Women:** Kinder, Küche, Kirche. Marriage loans, mother's cross. Labour shortage forced women back to factories from 1937.
- **Youth:** Hitler Youth (compulsory 1939), League of German Girls. Curriculum politicised — race science, military drill.
- **Churches:** Concordat (Jul 1933) breached immediately. Confessing Church (Niemöller, Bonhoeffer) resisted.

### RACIAL POLICY

- **Apr 1933** boycott of Jewish shops; Civil Service Law removes Jews from public employment.
- **1935 Nuremberg Laws** — Reich Citizenship + Blood & Honour. Jews stripped of citizenship.

- **Nov 1938 Kristallnacht** — pogrom, ~91 dead, 30,000 deported, 267 synagogues burned.
- **Jan 1942 Wannsee** — Final Solution; about six million Jews murdered by 1945.

### PROPAGANDA · GOEBBELS' MACHINE

- **Reich Ministry of Propaganda** (Mar 1933) — Goebbels controls press, radio, film, theatre, art.
- **Volksempfänger** — cheap radio in over 70% of households by 1939.
- **Nuremberg rallies** — Speer's *cathedral of light*; Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935).
- **Cult of Hitler (Kershaw, "Hitler myth")** — separates "good Führer" from "bad Party".

### TERROR & OPPOSITION

- **SS (Himmler)** — concentration camps, racial state, Final Solution. **Gestapo** small (~7,000 in 1939) — relied on denunciations (Gellately).
- **Opposition limited:** Communists/Socialists smashed 1933; July 1944 Stauffenberg bomb plot failed; White Rose (Scholls, 1942–43) executed.
- "Working towards the Führer" (Kershaw) — officials guessed Hitler's wishes; explains radicalisation without explicit orders.

### THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE — INTENTIONALISM VS STRUCTURALISM

**Intentionalist** (Bullock, Hildebrand, Jäckel, Goldhagen) — Hitler's *Mein Kampf* blueprint and obsessive will drove every step from 1925; the regime was a hierarchical dictatorship executing his ideology, war and Holocaust included.

**Structuralist / Functional** (Mommsen, Broszat) — chaotic polycracy of competing agencies; radicalisation came from below as officials competed to anticipate Hitler's wishes.

**Synthesis — Kershaw "working towards the Führer"** — Hitler set ideological direction; subordinates radicalised policy in pursuit of his vague will. Captures both the agency and the cumulative drift toward genocide and war.

## Key figures & named historians

### KEY FIGURES

**Adolf Hitler** — *Führer 1934–45* — Leader, ideologue, supreme decision-maker from 1938.

**Paul von Hindenburg** — *President 1925–34* — Appointed Hitler Chancellor 30 Jan 1933; died Aug 1934.

**Franz von Papen** — *Chancellor 1932; Vice-Chancellor 1933–34* — Brokered Hitler's appointment thinking he could control him.

**Joseph Goebbels** — *Minister of Propaganda 1933–45* — Architect of media control and the Hitler myth.

**Heinrich Himmler** — *Reichsführer-SS* — Ran SS, Gestapo, camps. Main organiser of the Holocaust.

**Hermann Göring** — *Four-Year Plan, Luftwaffe* — Designated Hitler's successor until 1945.

**Ernst Röhm** — *SA leader* — Murdered in Night of the Long Knives 30 June 1934.

**Hjalmar Schacht** — *President of Reichsbank; Economics Minister to 1937* — Designed mefo-bills; resigned over rearmament pace.

**Martin Niemöller** — *Confessing Church leader* — 'First they came...' quote. Imprisoned 1937–45.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer** — *Theologian* — Involved in July Plot; executed April 1945.

**Claus von Stauffenberg** — *Army colonel* — Placed 20 July 1944 bomb.

**Hans & Sophie Scholl** — *White Rose leaders* — Executed 22 Feb 1943.

### NAMED HISTORIANS

**Alan Bullock** — Intentionalist — 'Hitler: A Study in Tyranny' (1952). Hitler's will and ideology central.

**Ian Kershaw** — Synthesis — 'working towards the Führer'. The 'Hitler myth' bound regime together.

**Martin Broszat** — Structuralist — Nazi Germany as polycracy of competing agencies; cumulative radicalisation.

**Tim Mason** — Economic crisis by 1938–39 forced a 'flight into war'. Class-based reading of working-class resistance.

**Hans Mommsen** — Structuralist extreme — Hitler a 'weak dictator' whose subordinates drove policy.

**Richard Overy** — Rejects Mason's crisis thesis — economy was functioning; war was chosen.

**Robert Gellately** — Gestapo was small; society 'self-policed' through denunciations — consent widespread.

**Daniel Goldhagen** — 'Hitler's Willing Executioners' — 'eliminationist anti-Semitism' a deep German cultural trait. Widely criticised but influential.

**Christopher Browning** — 'Ordinary Men' — Holocaust perpetrators motivated by conformity, peer pressure, careerism, not innate ideology.

## Essay angles & ready-made theses

### THESIS TEMPLATE · RISE TO POWER

*"Examine the conditions which enabled Hitler to come to power."*

Hitler's accession on 30 January 1933 was the product of a structural collapse of Weimar legitimacy under the Depression, but his appointment was contingent on the strategic miscalculation of conservative elites — von Papen and Hindenburg — who believed they could "box him in"; ideology and propaganda made the Nazis a viable mass movement, but it was the right's instrumentalisation of him against the KPD that converted electoral plurality into the Chancellery.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · MAINTENANCE OF POWER

*"To what extent was propaganda the most important method by which Hitler maintained power?"*

Propaganda was the indispensable instrument that wove terror, economic recovery and the "Hitler myth" into a self-sustaining consent up to 1939, but it functioned as the cement, not the foundation: the Volksgemeinschaft was held together less by Goebbels' radio than by Schacht's reflation of employment, the SS-Gestapo's selective terror against organised opposition, and the personal cult that allowed Germans to attribute every benefit to the Führer and every failure to subordinates (Kershaw).

### THESIS TEMPLATE · ECONOMIC POLICY

*"Evaluate the impact of Hitler's economic policies 1933–39."*

Nazi economic policy achieved the political goal of ending mass unemployment by 1936 and re-armed Germany faster than any rival, but it did so at the price of suppressed living standards, a coerced labour market and a structural dependence on conquest — supporting Mason's "flight into war" reading more than Overy's claim of a stabilised war economy.

## LIKELY QUESTION STEMS

- **"Examine the conditions which enabled Hitler to come to power"** — long-term Versailles / Weimar flaws + short-term Depression + role of conservative elites. Bullock (intentionalist) vs Kershaw (structuralist) on Hitler's role.
- **"To what extent was propaganda the most important method by which Hitler maintained power?"** — propaganda + terror + economic recovery + Hitler myth (Kershaw). Argue propaganda was decisive 1933–36, terror dominant 1938–45.
- **"Compare the methods of consolidation used by Hitler and one other authoritarian leader"** — pair with Stalin: legal façade (Enabling Act / 1936 Constitution), terror (Night of the Long Knives / Great Terror), cult (Führer / Vozhd), ideology (Volksgemeinschaft / Socialism in One Country).
- **"Evaluate the impact of Hitler's economic policies on Germany 1933–39"** — apparent recovery vs militarisation. Mason: economy forced a "flight into war" by 1938–39. Overy: economy functioning; war was chosen.
- **"Discuss the view that Nazi rule rested more on consent than coercion"** — Gellately: Gestapo relied on denunciations; Kershaw's Hitler myth ⇒ much of the population willingly identified with the regime until military defeat.

## 2 • Stalin — USSR 1924–1953 — Authoritarian Case 2

### Conditions for the rise LENIN'S LEGACY • SUCCESSION STRUGGLE • 1924–29

#### THE BOLSHEVIK INHERITANCE

- **October Revolution (1917)** — Bolsheviks seize power, Civil War 1918–21, War Communism, Red Terror, NEP from 1921.
- **Lenin's death (Jan 1924)** — no clear successor. Lenin's Testament (1922–23) criticised Stalin as "too rude", urged removal as General Secretary; suppressed by the Politburo.
- **Power vacuum** — collective leadership: Stalin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky.

#### WHY STALIN WON THE SUCCESSION 1924–29

- **Position:** General Secretary from 1922 — controlled appointments; Lenin Levy (1924) flooded the Party with new members loyal to him.
- **Ideology:** "Socialism in One Country" (1924) versus Trotsky's "Permanent Revolution" — appealed to a war-weary Party.
- **Tactics:** shifted alliances brilliantly. Right (with Bukharin) vs Left (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev) 1924–28; then Left vs Right 1928–29.
- **Underestimation:** rivals saw him as a "grey blur" (Sukhanov); Trotsky disdained the apparatus and its master.
- **Lenin's funeral (Jan 1924)** — Stalin chief mourner; Trotsky absent (misled about date).

#### STALIN'S AIMS

1. Build 'socialism in one country' — rapid industrialisation and modernisation of the USSR to survive in a hostile capitalist

### Consolidation of power GREAT TERROR • CULT OF PERSONALITY • CONSTITUTION 1936

#### THE GREAT TERROR • 1934–38

- **1 Dec 1934 — Kirov assassination.** Leningrad Party boss shot (likely on Stalin's order, per Khrushchev 1956). Used as pretext for purges.
- **Show Trials:** 1936 Zinoviev/Kamenev (Sixteen); 1937 Pyatakov (Seventeen); 1938 Bukharin/Rykov/Yagoda (Twenty-One). Confessions extracted by torture and threats to families.
- **Yezhovshchina** (Yezhov as NKVD head, 1936–38) — quotas for arrests and executions issued to regions.
- **Military purge 1937:** Marshal Tukhachevsky and 7 generals shot June 1937; about 35,000 officers removed (3 of 5 marshals, 13 of 15 army commanders, 50 of 57 corps commanders).
- **Scale:** ~700,000 executed 1937–38 (NKVD records); Gulag population peaked over two million.
- **1938** Yezhov himself shot; Beria takes over NKVD.

#### CULT OF PERSONALITY

- "Father of the Peoples", "Vozhd", omniscient teacher; Pravda's daily hagiography.
- Rewriting of history — *Short Course* (1938) replaced earlier Bolshevik narratives. Trotsky airbrushed from photos.
- 1936 "Stalin Constitution" — paper democracy with universal suffrage, but single-list elections; mask for terror.

### Social, religious, foreign policy

#### SOCIAL & CULTURAL

- **Education:** mass literacy drive (literacy ~50% in 1926 to ~90% by 1939); polytechnical schools; Stakhanovite ethos.
- **Women:** 1920s liberalisation (easy divorce, abortion legal 1920) reversed 1936 — abortion banned, divorce difficult, "socialist family" promoted. Women now also expected to work full-time and run the home.

world.

2. End the NEP compromise and complete the socialist transformation of agriculture through collectivisation.
3. Eliminate all rivals and potential rivals within the Party to secure absolute personal authority.
4. Create a unified Soviet identity, subordinating national minorities to Russian cultural dominance.
5. Mobilise ideology and propaganda (Socialist Realism, the Cult of Personality) to legitimise his rule.

#### SUCCESSION TIMELINE

1922	Stalin General Secretary; Lenin's strokes.
Jan 1924	Lenin dies; Stalin chief mourner.
1924–25	Triumvirate (Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev) vs Trotsky.
1925	Trotsky removed as War Commissar.
1926	United Opposition (Trotsky+Zinoviev+Kamenev) — defeated.
1927	Trotsky expelled from Party; exiled 1929 to Almaty, then abroad 1929; assassinated Mexico 1940.
1928–29	Stalin breaks with Bukharin Right; ends NEP; collectivisation begins.
1929	Stalin's 50th birthday — cult of personality launched.

#### WHY THE TERROR?

- **Conquest (totalitarian):** Stalin's design — eliminate Old Bolsheviks who could remember a different past.
- **Getty / Fitzpatrick (revisionist):** Terror was less centrally directed; provincial denunciations and quotas spiralled out of control. Bottom-up dynamic.
- **Kotkin (synthesis):** Stalin drove it but a fearful Party machine fuelled it — the "willing executioners" mattered as much as the Vozhd.
- **Khlevniuk (archives):** Stalin signed lists personally — about 40,000 names approved for execution. Centrality reaffirmed.

#### THE SECOND REVOLUTION • 1928–41

- **Collectivisation** (1929–) — peasants forced into kolkhozes; Five-Year Plans for grain procurement. **Dekulakisation:** ~1.8 million deported; ~30,000 shot.
- **Holodomor (1932–33 Ukraine famine)** — three to four million dead; debate as genocide vs collateral.
- **Five-Year Plans** (1928–32, 1933–37, 1938–41 partial) — heavy industry, Magnitogorsk, Dnieprostroil. Coal output up about four-fold; steel three-fold.
- **Stakhanovites** (1935–) — propaganda heroes of labour productivity.
- **Costs:** grain shortages, coerced labour, famine, militarisation of work; growth real but uneven.
- **Religion:** League of the Militant Godless; church property seized; ~50,000 priests killed/imprisoned 1928–41. Loosened 1941 to mobilise patriotism.
- **Culture:** Socialist Realism (1934 Writers' Congress); Shostakovich denounced 1936; anti-cosmopolitan campaign post-1945.
- **Nationalities:** Russification deepened; deportations of Chechens, Ingush, Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans (1941–44).

## FOREIGN POLICY

- **1934** USSR joins League. Litvinov pushes collective security.
- **1935** Franco-Soviet and Soviet-Czech pacts.
- **1938 Munich** — USSR excluded; Stalin concludes the West won't deal seriously with Moscow.
- **23 Aug 1939** — **Nazi-Soviet Pact** (Molotov-Ribbentrop) — non-aggression + secret protocol partitioning Eastern Europe.

- **1939–40** USSR seizes eastern Poland, Baltic States, Bessarabia. Winter War with Finland (1939–40) — costly stalemate.
- **22 Jun 1941** — **Operation Barbarossa** — German invasion. Stalin reportedly paralysed for ~10 days. ~27 million Soviet dead by 1945.
- **1945–53**: Eastern European satellites, Cominform (1947), Berlin Blockade (1948–49), Soviet bomb (Aug 1949), Korean War (Stalin approves Apr 1950).

### THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE — TOTALITARIAN VS REVISIONIST VS POST-ARCHIVAL

**Totalitarian school** (Conquest, Pipes, Tucker; 1960s–80s) — Stalin's Terror was a top-down design to crush all autonomous society, modelled on Lenin's precedent; the Vozhd's paranoia and ambition explain the scale.

**Revisionist / social** (Fitzpatrick, Getty, Manning; 1980s) — Terror grew bottom-up out of bureaucratic chaos, denunciations and centre-periphery rivalry; Stalin's role was real but less omniscient than Conquest claimed.

**Post-archival synthesis** (Kotkin, Khlevniuk, Service) — Soviet archives opened after 1991 confirm Stalin signed about 40,000 execution lists personally and drove the Terror, while a willingly compliant Party and police machine fuelled it. Synthesis: top-down design + bottom-up enthusiasm.

## Key figures & named historians

### KEY FIGURES

**Leon Trotsky** — *Chief rival; Commissar for War* — Brilliant, arrogant, isolated. Advocated 'permanent revolution'. Exiled 1929, murdered with an ice axe in Mexico, 1940.

**Grigory Zinoviev & Lev Kamenev** — *Old Bolsheviks* — Initial Stalin allies against Trotsky, then United Opposition (1926), executed after 1936 show trial.

**Nikolai Bukharin** — *Leader of the Right; NEP's champion* — 'Golden boy' of the Party. Executed 1938 after the third Moscow Show Trial.

**Sergei Kirov** — *Leningrad Party chief* — Popular rival; assassinated December 1934 — the pretext for the Terror. Stalin's role in the murder is disputed.

**Vyacheslav Molotov** — *Foreign Minister from 1939* — Replaced Litvinov; signed the pact with Ribbentrop. Embodied hardline Stalinism.

**Nikolai Yezhov** — *Head of NKVD, 1936–38* — Ran the Great Terror ('Yezhovshchina'); purged and executed 1940 — erased from photographs.

**Lavrenti Beria** — *Head of NKVD from 1938* — Georgian like Stalin. Ran the terror apparatus through WWII and the Soviet atomic project. Executed 1953.

**Alexei Stakhanov** — *Coal miner* — Supposedly mined 14x his quota in 1935 — propaganda model for 'shock work'.

## Essay angles & ready-made theses

### THESIS TEMPLATE · SUCCESSION

"Why did Stalin emerge as Lenin's successor?"

Stalin won the succession because he combined institutional advantage — the General Secretaryship and the Lenin Levy, which allowed him to appoint a Party machine personally loyal to him — with an ideological repackaging ("Socialism in One Country") that resonated with a war-weary cadre. Trotsky's brilliance and Bukharin's economic moderation were no match for an opponent willing to break with the right (1928) the moment they had served their tactical purpose against the left.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · METHODS OF RULE

"Examine the methods used by Stalin to maintain power."

Stalin sustained personal rule through an interlocking system of Terror, ideology and cult — but the post-archival evidence (Khlevniuk) shows the Terror was more centrally directed than Fitzpatrick's revisionism conceded, while the cult of the Vozhd and the redemptive narrative of socialist construction gave even the regime's victims an ideological grammar that delegitimised resistance until 1953.

### NAMED HISTORIANS

**Robert Conquest** — Totalitarian — Stalin personally drove the Terror; a deliberate campaign rooted in Leninist logic. The Great Terror (1968).

**Richard Pipes** — Continuity thesis — Stalinism was Leninism fulfilled, not a deviation.

**Sheila Fitzpatrick** — Revisionist — Soviet society had agency; Terror was shaped by local denunciations and upward mobility as much as by central command.

**J. Arch Getty** — Revisionist — Terror emerged from bureaucratic chaos and factional politics, not a single master plan.

**Stephen Kotkin** — Post-revisionist — Stalin was the indispensable agent; geopolitics and ideology fused. Without Stalin, no collectivisation of that scale.

**Simon Sebag Montefiore** — Court history — Stalin's inner circle of patronage, intimacy and fear; he was calculating but also performatively emotional.

**Orlando Figes** — Cultural/psychological — The Whisperers: Terror atomised Soviet society and created a culture of silence.

**Robert Service** — Biographical synthesis — Stalin was neither a Trotskyist hero nor a pure monster but an ideologically committed organiser of exceptional capacity and cruelty.

**Oleg Khlevniuk** — Archival — Politburo and NKVD records show Terror was directed and micro-managed from the top, vindicating much of Conquest.

### OTHER LIKELY STEMS

- **"To what extent was Stalin's economic policy successful 1928–41?"** — measured by regime goals (industrial base, war readiness) it succeeded; measured by cost (Holodomor 3–4 million; Gulag) it was catastrophic. 1941 industrial base survived Barbarossa — bench-test of "success".
- **"Compare the rise to power of Stalin and one other authoritarian leader"** — Stalin / Mao: insurgents who out-manoeuvred more famous rivals (Trotsky / Wang Ming) by mastering the Party apparatus and rural ideology. Conquest vs Fitzpatrick vs Khlevniuk on the Terror — argue post-archival synthesis.

### 3 • Mao — China 1921–1976 — Authoritarian Case 3

#### Conditions for the rise WARLORDS · JAPAN · CIVIL WAR 1927–49

##### BACKGROUND — REPUBLICAN CHINA

- **1911 Revolution** ends Qing dynasty; Sun Yat-sen briefly president, then Yuan Shikai.
- **Warlord era 1916–28** — fragmentation; foreign concessions; humiliation.
- **4 May 1919** — May Fourth Movement (against Versailles handing Shandong to Japan); birth of Chinese nationalism and Marxism.
- **1921 CCP founded** in Shanghai (Mao a founding member).
- **First United Front (1923–27)** — CCP and Guomindang (GMD) under Sun Yat-sen, then Jiang Jieshi.
- **Apr 1927 Shanghai Massacre** — Jiang turns on CCP, kills thousands. CCP nearly destroyed.

##### MAO'S AIMS AND IDEOLOGY

1. Replace GMD / imperial order with a communist state led by peasants.
2. Adapt Marxism-Leninism to Chinese conditions ('Sinification' of Marxism).
3. Eliminate landlord class; collectivise agriculture and industry.
4. Build China as a great power independent of both USSR and USA.
5. Transform culture — uproot Confucian hierarchy, build 'New Man'.

#### Consolidation & transformation 1949–76 · LAND REFORM · HUNDRED FLOWERS · GLF · CULTURAL REVOLUTION

##### 1949–57 — CONSOLIDATION

- **Land reform 1950–52** — about 700,000–two million landlords killed; 40% of arable land redistributed.
- **Suppression of Counter-Revolutionaries (1951)** — about 700,000 executed.
- **Three-Antis (1951) & Five-Antis (1952)** — corruption, capitalism, Party discipline.
- **1953–57 First Five-Year Plan** — Soviet model, heavy industry; relatively successful.
- **1956 Hundred Flowers** — "let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend". Floods of criticism shocked Mao; ended in **Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957)** — about 500,000 intellectuals labelled "rightists", purged. Trap or genuine? — debated.

##### GREAT LEAP FORWARD · 1958–62

- Mao's break with Soviet model — Stalin had died; Khrushchev "secret speech" alarmed Mao.
- **Aim:** overtake Britain in steel in 15 years; "Walking on two legs" — agriculture + industry.
- **People's communes** — about 26,000 by end-1958; communal kitchens; private plots abolished.
- **Backyard furnaces** — peasants smelting useless pig iron; harvests neglected.
- **Famine 1959–61** — about 30–45 million dead (Dikötter's archival figure 45 million; Frank Dikötter, \*Mao's Great Famine\*, 2010).
- **Lushan Conference (Jul 1959)** — Marshal Peng Dehuai criticises GLF; purged. Mao steps back from day-to-day; Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping pull recovery from 1961.

6. Permanent revolution against bureaucratic entrenchment (esp. 1966+ CR).

- **Maoism** — peasant-based revolution (vs orthodox Marxism's urban proletariat); permanent revolution; "politics in command"; mass line; voluntarism (will trumps material conditions).
- **Sinification of Marxism** — adapted to Chinese conditions; Mao Zedong Thought enshrined 1945.

##### HOW MAO WON — 1927–49

- **1927–34 Jiangxi Soviet** — rural base; land reform; encirclement campaigns by Jiang.
- **1934–35 Long March** — about 6,000 miles, 100,000 troops to under 10,000 survivors. Zunyi Conference (Jan 1935): Mao becomes effective CCP leader. Long March myth = founding legend.
- **1936 Xi'an Incident** — Jiang kidnapped; forced into Second United Front against Japan.
- **1937–45 Sino-Japanese War** — CCP grows from ~40,000 to over one million; controls vast rural areas (Yan'an base). GMD weakened by holding cities. Mao's nationalism + land reform out-organises GMD's corruption and inflation.
- **1945–49 Civil War** — US fails to broker peace (Marshall Mission). CCP Soviet aid (Manchuria captured arms); GMD inflation 1947 (one US dollar = 12 million yuan by 1949). PLA wins major battles 1948 (Liao-Shen, Huai-Hai, Ping-Jin).
- **1 Oct 1949** — Mao proclaims PRC at Tiananmen.

##### CULTURAL REVOLUTION · 1966–76

- **Causes:** Mao's reassertion against Liu/Deng "capitalist roaders"; ideological purification; permanent revolution; succession battle.
- **1966** Mao's "Bombard the Headquarters" big-character poster. **Red Guards** mobilised; Tiananmen rallies (over 11 million students). **Little Red Book** mass-produced.
- **Four Olds** — old customs, culture, habits, ideas — destroyed. Schools closed; teachers persecuted; intellectuals "sent down" to countryside.
- **Liu Shaoqi** denounced 1968, dies in prison 1969. **Deng Xiaoping** purged twice (1966, 1976).
- **Lin Biao incident (Sept 1971)** — designated successor flees, dies in plane crash in Mongolia. Massive blow to Mao's aura.
- **Gang of Four** (Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, Wang Hongwen) ascendant 1973–76; arrested October 1976 weeks after Mao's death (9 Sep 1976).
- **Death toll:** estimates 750,000–three million directly; tens of millions persecuted.

##### FOREIGN POLICY

- **1950** Sino-Soviet Treaty (with Stalin); Korean War intervention (Oct 1950).
- **1958** Quemoy-Matsu crisis; **1959** Tibet uprising suppressed; Dalai Lama flees.
- **1960** Sino-Soviet split openly declared. **1962** Sino-Indian War (brief, China wins).
- **1964** China tests atomic bomb.
- **1969** Sino-Soviet border clashes (Ussuri River, Damansky/Zhenbao Island).
- **1972** Nixon visits China — strategic realignment against USSR.

## THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE — MAO THE MODERNISER, THE MONSTER, OR THE ARCHIVAL RECORD?

**Revolutionary moderniser** (Spence, Meisner, Fairbank) — Mao reunified a war-shattered nation, ended landlordism, raised literacy and life expectancy, and asserted Chinese sovereignty after a "century of humiliation"; the famines and Cultural Revolution were costs paid for transformation.

**Monstrous tyrant** (Chang & Halliday *Mao: The Unknown Story* 2005) — Mao was a power-obsessed predator equivalent to Hitler or Stalin; revolution was a vehicle for personal control; criticised by Spence and Nathan as polemic.

**Archival post-2005** (Dikötter trilogy: *Mao's Great Famine, Tragedy of Liberation, Cultural Revolution*) — provincial Party archives confirm Great Leap deaths at ~45 million and Cultural Revolution killings in the millions; Mao knowingly chose these costs. Synthesis: revolutionary aims do not absolve verifiable mass culpability.

## Key figures & named historians

### KEY FIGURES

**Mao Zedong** — *Chairman CCP 1943–76; Chairman PRC 1954–59* — Ideologist, strategist, paramount leader until death.

**Zhou Enlai** — *Premier 1949–76* — Pragmatic administrator; shielded some targets in CR.

**Liu Shaoqi** — *State Chairman 1959–68* — Led post-GLF recovery; purged in CR; died 1969.

**Deng Xiaoping** — *General Secretary 1956–66* — Purged twice (1966, 1976); returned after Mao's death; architect of reform.

**Lin Biao** — *Defence Minister 1959–71* — Edited Little Red Book; designated successor; died 1971 fleeing to USSR.

**Jiang Qing** — *Mao's wife; CR cultural leader* — Gang of Four; arrested Oct 1976.

**Peng Dehuai** — *Defence Minister 1954–59* — Criticised GLF at Lushan; purged.

**Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi)** — *GMD leader* — Defeated 1949; led Taiwan until 1975.

### NAMED HISTORIANS

**Jung Chang & Jon Halliday** — *'Mao: The Unknown Story'* (2005) — unremitting condemnation; Mao as monster equivalent to Hitler/Stalin.

**Frank Dikötter** — *'Mao's Great Famine', 'Tragedy of Liberation', 'Cultural Revolution'* — archival research, heavy casualty figures, terror-based regime.

**Michael Lynch** — Standard IB text — broadly critical but balanced; 'Mao unashamedly condoned terror'.

**Roderick MacFarquhar** — *'Origins of the Cultural Revolution'* — intra-Party politics; rejects monolithic tyrant model.

**Maurice Meisner** — Revisionist — Mao as utopian reformer; achievements in health/literacy real; failures of a revolutionary, not a gangster.

**Jonathan Spence** — Balanced biographer; 'Mao's talents unexceptional but ambitions extreme'.

**John Fairbank** — Stresses continuity with Chinese imperial tradition.

**Edgar Snow** — *'Red Star Over China'* (1937) — sympathetic journalistic account of Yan'an period; source for CCP self-presentation.

## Essay angles & ready-made theses

### THESIS TEMPLATE · RISE / CONSOLIDATION

*"Examine the methods Mao used to consolidate power 1949–57."*

Mao consolidated the People's Republic by combining ideological transformation with sustained coercion: land reform (1950–52) destroyed the gentry and bound the peasantry to the new state, the Suppression of Counter-Revolutionaries and the Three- and Five-Anti campaigns disciplined the urban classes, and the Hundred Flowers / Anti-Rightist sequence (1956–57) flushed out and crushed intellectual dissent. The Korean War overlaid this with a patriotic mobilisation that gave the regime nationalist legitimacy at the moment of greatest vulnerability.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · GREAT LEAP FORWARD

*"Was the Great Leap Forward driven by ideology or economic logic?"*

The Great Leap was an ideological project that merely wore economic clothing: its targets — overtaking Britain in steel, the people's communes, backyard furnaces — were not derived from any rational planning calculus but from Mao's voluntarist conviction (intensified by his break with Khrushchev) that political will could overcome material constraint. Dikötter's archival reconstruction of about 45 million famine deaths exposes the consequences of subordinating economics to ideological self-confidence.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · CULTURAL REVOLUTION

*"Evaluate the impact of the Cultural Revolution."*

The Cultural Revolution achieved Mao's short-term goal of breaking the Liu Shaoqi-Deng Xiaoping reform faction and reasserting his personal authority, but its long-term consequences ran in the opposite direction: a generation of educational and economic damage created the conditions for Deng's post-1978 reforms once Mao was gone, while the Lin Biao incident (1971) and the ouster of the Gang of Four (1976) discredited Maoist purity politics for the rest of the century.

land reform, Korean War mobilisation, Hundred Flowers / Anti-Rightist trap (1956–57).

- **"To what extent was the Great Leap Forward a result of Mao's ideology rather than economic logic?"** — voluntarism, break with the Soviet model after Khrushchev's Secret Speech (1956), Permanent Revolution; Dikötter on Mao's archival culpability for the famine.
- **"Evaluate the impact of the Cultural Revolution on China"** — political (purge of Liu Shaoqi, twice-purged Deng Xiaoping), social (Red Guards, sent-down youth), cultural (Four Olds, schools closed for years), economic ("lost decade"), foreign policy (1972 Nixon opening from Soviet hostility).
- **"Compare the methods of consolidation used by Mao and Stalin"** — both used Terror, cult and ideology, but Mao preferred mass mobilisation campaigns (rectification, Cultural Revolution) over Stalin's NKVD apparatus. Both built personality cults; Mao's outlived him in iconography longer.
- **"Discuss the view that Mao's domestic policies caused more harm than good"** — weigh land reform / literacy / female emancipation against Great Leap (~45 million dead) and Cultural Revolution. Position: pre-1957 transformative, post-1958 catastrophic.

## LIKELY QUESTION STEMS

- **"Examine the methods Mao used to take and consolidate power 1934–57"** — Long March legend, Yan'an base, peasant

## 4 • Berlin — 1948–49 & 1958–61 — Cold War Case 1

**Two crises over the former German capital.** 1948–49 Blockade and Airlift produced the FRG/GDR division and NATO; 1958–61 ultimatum cycle ended with the Wall, stabilising the Cold War by sealing its most dangerous flashpoint.

### Timeline

1945–07	<b>Potsdam zones</b> Germany and Berlin each divided into 4 occupation zones (US, UK, FR, USSR). West Berlin is 160km inside the Soviet zone.
1947–01	<b>Bizonia</b> British and US zones merge economically — first step toward a separate western Germany.
1948–02–1948–06	<b>London Conference</b> Western powers agree on a West German state; Soviets walk out of Allied Control Council (March).
1948–06–20	<b>Deutsche Mark</b> Western currency reform in their zones. Extended to West Berlin 23 June — immediate Soviet trigger.
1948–06–24	<b>Blockade begins</b> Soviets cut road, rail, and canal access to West Berlin. ~2.5m West Berliners face starvation.
1948–06–26	<b>Airlift begins</b> Operation Vittles (US) / Plainfare (UK). At peak, one aircraft landed every 30 seconds at Tempelhof.
1949–05–12	<b>Blockade lifted</b> After 318 days, ~277,000 flights, ~2.3m tonnes delivered. Stalin accepts defeat without firing a shot.
1949–05 / 10	<b>FRG and GDR</b> Federal Republic (23 May) and German Democratic Republic (7 Oct). Division is locked in.
1952–03	<b>Stalin Note</b> Stalin offers reunified, neutral, disarmed Germany. Adenauer and the West reject — was it a serious offer? (historians divided).
1953–06–17	<b>East German uprising</b> Workers strike in East Berlin; Soviet tanks crush the rising. ~50 dead.
1955	<b>Two blocs locked</b> FRG joins NATO (May); Warsaw Pact formed (May).
1958–11–27	<b>Khrushchev's ultimatum</b> Six months to make West Berlin a 'free city' or USSR will sign separate peace with GDR, ending Western access rights.
1959–09	<b>Camp David</b> Khrushchev-Eisenhower summit. Ultimatum quietly dropped; 'spirit of Camp David'.
1960–05–01	<b>U-2 shot down</b> Powers's U-2 downed over Sverdlovsk. Paris Summit (May) collapses. Crisis reopens.
1961–06–04	<b>Vienna Summit</b> Khrushchev bullies Kennedy. Reissues Berlin ultimatum. Kennedy: 'It's going to be a cold winter.'
1961–08–13	<b>Berlin Wall built</b> Overnight: barbed wire, then concrete. ~2.7m East Germans had fled via Berlin since 1949; the haemorrhage stops. Kennedy: 'A wall is a hell of a lot better than a war.'
1961–10–27	<b>Checkpoint Charlie</b> US and Soviet tanks face off for ~16 hours. Back-channel Kennedy-Khrushchev deal de-escalates.
1963–06–26	<b>Ich bin ein Berliner</b> Kennedy in West Berlin. Wall becomes the symbol of communist failure.

#### WHY THE BLOCKADE • 1948

- **Western moves** threatened Soviet hopes for a unified, neutralised Germany: Bizonia (Jan 1947), Trizonia (Apr 1948), London Conference agrees on a West German state (Jun 1948), Deutsche Mark introduced 20 June 1948.
- **Stalin's options:** accept partition (lose influence) or coerce (West Berlin as the West's vulnerable forward position).
- **24 Jun 1948** — road, rail, canal access cut to West Berlin. About 2.5 million West Berliners face starvation.
- Non-violent: Stalin knew US held nuclear monopoly.

#### THE AIRLIFT • 1948–49

- **Clay** proposed armed convoy; Truman rejected. **Bevin** championed the airlift.
- **277,000 flights**, about 2.3 million tonnes over 11 months. Peak: one plane every 30 seconds at Tempelhof.
- **Halvorsen** "Candy Bomber" — propaganda gold.
- Stalin lifts blockade **12 May 1949** without face-saving formula.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF ROUND ONE

- **FRG (May 1949) and GDR (October 1949)** — division institutionalised.
- **NATO (Apr 1949)** founded — peacetime alliance, US revolution.
- West Berlin becomes the symbol of Western resolve.
- Stalin's prestige dented — the West acted without war.

#### WHY THE SECOND CRISIS • 1958–61

- **Refugee haemorrhage:** about 2.7 million East Germans (~20% of GDR population) fled to West via Berlin between 1949 and 1961 — disproportionately young, skilled, educated.
- **Khrushchev's motives:** stop refugees; force recognition of GDR; reassert credentials against Mao's mockery of "peaceful coexistence"; test new Kennedy administration.
- **1958 ultimatum** — six months to make West Berlin a "free city" or USSR signs separate peace with GDR.
- **Vienna Summit Jun 1961** — Khrushchev bullies Kennedy; reissues ultimatum.

#### THE WALL • 13 AUG 1961

- Built overnight: barbed wire, then concrete. Eventually 155 km, 302 watchtowers, "death strip"; about 140 killed crossing 1961–89.
- **Kennedy:** "A wall is a hell of a lot better than a war." Sent Vice-President Johnson and General Clay.
- **27 Oct 1961 Checkpoint Charlie** — US/Soviet tanks face off ~16 hours; Kennedy-Khrushchev back channel de-escalates.
- **1963 Kennedy:** "Ich bin ein Berliner" — Wall as global symbol of communist failure.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF ROUND TWO

- Refugee flow stops; GDR stabilises for 28 years.
- Khrushchev achieves main goal but visible communist failure.
- Crisis shifts to periphery — Cuba (1962), Vietnam.
- Wall enables détente: Test Ban Treaty (1963), Ostpolitik (Brandt, 1969).

## THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE — BERLIN AS COLD WAR CRUCIBLE

**Orthodox** (Schlesinger, Feis) — Stalin provoked the Blockade as an opportunistic test of Western resolve; the Airlift and NATO were necessary defensive responses to Soviet expansionism.

**Revisionist** (Williams, Kolko) — Western moves (Bizonia, currency reform, FRG plan) forced Stalin into a defensive blockade aimed at the only leverage he had over a permanent partition of Germany he could not otherwise prevent.

**Post-revisionist / archival** (Trachtenberg *A Constructed Peace*, Hope Harrison, Naimark) — both crises were structural by-products of an unresolved German question; the Wall (1961) stabilised the Cold War by making partition permanent and removing the most volatile flashpoint, opening the way to détente.

## Key figures & named historians

### KEY FIGURES

**Lucius Clay** — *US Military Governor of Germany* — Pushed hard line in 1948; proposed armed convoy. Returned to Berlin 1961 as Kennedy's envoy.

**Ernest Bevin** — *British Foreign Secretary* — Championed the Airlift; architect of NATO.

**Konrad Adenauer** — *FRG Chancellor 1949–63* — CDU. Anchored West Germany to NATO; 'politics of strength'.

**Walter Ulbricht** — *GDR leader* — Pressed Khrushchev to close Berlin border; got the Wall.

**Nikita Khrushchev** — *Soviet First Secretary* — Ultimatum diplomacy 1958–61; boxed into Wall.

**John F. Kennedy** — *US President 1961–63* — Accepted Wall as lesser evil; 'Ich bin ein Berliner' 1963.

**Gail Halvorsen** — *US pilot* — 'Candy Bomber'; propaganda symbol of the Airlift.

### NAMED HISTORIANS

**Mikhail Narinsky** — Archival — Stalin's aims in 1948 limited and tactical; misjudged Western resolve.

**Vladislav Zubok** — Stalin was cautious, never wanted war; Khrushchev was erratic and reactive.

**Hope Harrison** — Ulbricht, not Khrushchev, drove the Wall decision; the tail wagged the dog.

**William Taubman** — Khrushchev biography — ultimatum diplomacy was improvisation, not grand strategy.

**Marc Trachtenberg** — Wall produced 'A Constructed Peace' — de facto settlement of the German question.

**John Lewis Gaddis** — Wall stabilised Cold War; made détente possible by neutralising Berlin as flashpoint.

## Essay angles & ready-made theses

### THESIS TEMPLATE · THE BLOCKADE

*"Examine the causes and consequences of the Berlin Blockade."*

The 1948–49 Blockade was Stalin's defensive response to a sequence of Western moves — Bizonia, the London Conference, the introduction of the Deutsche Mark — that threatened to fix a permanent partition of Germany on Western terms; but its consequences inverted Stalin's intent, hardening Western resolve into NATO (April 1949), legitimising West Germany's creation, and turning West Berlin into the propaganda showcase of the Cold War for the next forty years.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · THE WALL

*"To what extent did the Wall stabilise the Cold War?"*

The Berlin Wall, however symbolically catastrophic for the communist project, structurally stabilised the Cold War: it sealed the GDR's most damaging haemorrhage, removed the great-power flashpoint that had threatened to escalate at any moment since 1958, and cleared the political space for the Test Ban Treaty (1963) and Brandt's Ostpolitik. Kennedy's blunt assessment — "a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war" — captures the trade-off the West reluctantly accepted.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · COMPARATIVE

*"Compare the significance of Berlin and Cuba as Cold War crises."*

Berlin and Cuba were both nuclear-shadowed confrontations resolved by graduated coercion and back-channel diplomacy, but their structural legacies diverged: Berlin built the architecture of confrontation (NATO, FRG, GDR, garrison Europe), while Cuba built the architecture of safety (hotline, PTBT, MAD doctrine, the road to SALT). Together they show how the same logic of brinkmanship could institutionalise both rivalry and its limits.

closed; flashpoint defused; détente becomes possible). Trachtenberg, Gaddis.

- **"Compare the significance of the Berlin Blockade and the Cuban Missile Crisis"** — both ended without direct war via back-channels; Berlin built confrontation institutions (NATO, FRG, GDR); Cuba built safety machinery (hotline, PTBT).
- **"Discuss the view that the Berlin crises were really about Germany rather than about Berlin"** — Hope Harrison: Soviet aim was always to force Western recognition of the GDR and lock in partition; West Berlin was leverage, not target.
- **"Evaluate Khrushchev's handling of the second Berlin crisis 1958–61"** — ultimatum diplomacy; Vienna Summit; Wall as compromise; Checkpoint Charlie tank standoff. Improvisation more than strategy (Taubman).

## LIKELY QUESTION STEMS

- **"Examine the causes and consequences of the Berlin Blockade (1948–49)"** — Western currency reform & FRG plan triggered Stalin; the Airlift turned a Soviet probe into the founding moment of NATO and the institutionalisation of divided Germany.
- **"To what extent did the Berlin Wall (1961) stabilise rather than intensify the Cold War?"** — symbolically intensified (visible communist failure), structurally stabilised (refugee leak

## 5 • The Korean War — 1950–1953 — Cold War Case 2

**The first hot war of the Cold War.** A Korean civil conflict became a superpower confrontation that militarised containment, integrated NATO, locked in Sino-American hostility, and produced the limited-war template later applied in Vietnam.

### Timeline

1945–08	<b>38th Parallel</b> US and USSR divide Korea at 38th parallel for Japanese surrender — meant as temporary, becomes permanent.
1948	<b>Two Koreas</b> Republic of Korea (ROK, Syngman Rhee) in South; Democratic People's Republic (DPRK, Kim Il-sung) in North.
1949–06	<b>US withdraws</b> US combat troops out of South Korea, small advisory mission left.
1950–01–12	<b>Acheson's Perimeter</b> Secretary of State Acheson's National Press Club speech excludes Korea (and Taiwan) from US 'defense perimeter' — read in Moscow as green light.
1950–04–14	<b>NSC-68</b> National Security Council paper calls for massive US rearmament, containment worldwide. Awaits an event.
1950–06–25	<b>North invades</b> DPRK crosses 38th parallel. Seoul falls 28 June. Kim had pressed Stalin for approval since 1949; Stalin gave it after Soviet A-bomb and PRC consolidation.
1950–06–27	<b>UN authorises force</b> UNSC Resolution 83 — possible because USSR boycotting over Taiwan seating. US leads UN Command; 16 nations contribute.
1950–09–15	<b>Inchon landing</b> MacArthur's amphibious masterstroke deep behind North Korean lines. Seoul liberated 28 Sept.
1950–10	<b>UN crosses 38th</b> Truman authorises pursuit into the North — aim shifts from restoration to reunification ('rollback').
1950–10–19	<b>Pyongyang falls</b> UN troops advance toward the Yalu; Chinese warnings ignored.
1950–10–25	<b>Chinese entry</b> ~300,000 People's Volunteers cross the Yalu. MacArthur caught by surprise in November.
1951–01–04	<b>Seoul falls again</b> Chinese drive UN forces back. Longest retreat in US military history.
1951–03	<b>Lines stabilise</b> Ridgway reorganises 8th Army; front returns to near 38th parallel. War becomes stalemate.
1951–04–11	<b>MacArthur sacked</b> Truman relieves MacArthur for insubordination (public calls to expand war into China, use atomic weapons). Civilian control of military reaffirmed.
1951–07	<b>Armistice talks begin</b> At Kaesong, then Panmunjom. Drag on 2 years over POW repatriation.
1953–03–05	<b>Stalin dies</b> Removes main obstacle to armistice — Stalin benefited from war tying down US.
1953–07–27	<b>Armistice signed</b> At Panmunjom. Line roughly at 38th parallel. No peace treaty — formally still at war. DMZ established.

### CAUSES · LOCAL + GLOBAL

- **Local:** 35 years of Japanese colonisation (1910–45); 1945 division at 38th parallel; 1948 two states (Rhee in South, Kim in North); border skirmishes 1949–50.
- **Stalin's green lights:** Soviet A-bomb (Aug 1949), PRC declared (Oct 1949), Acheson "defense perimeter" speech excluding Korea (12 Jan 1950), Sino-Soviet Treaty (Feb 1950).
- **Stalin's calculation:** low-risk test. Weathersby archives confirm approval Apr 1950 conditional on Mao concurring.
- **US framing:** Truman read invasion as Soviet proxy probe — the moment NSC-68 had anticipated.

### COURSE · FOUR PHASES

- **Phase 1 (Jun–Sept 1950):** KPA drives UN/ROK into Pusan Perimeter.
- **Phase 2 (Sept–Oct 1950): Inchon landing (15 Sept)** — MacArthur's amphibious masterstroke; Seoul retaken. UN crosses 38th parallel — restoration becomes rollback.
- **Phase 3 (Oct 1950–Jan 1951):** Chinese intervention — about 300,000 People's Volunteers cross Yalu. Chosin Reservoir retreat. Seoul falls again.
- **Phase 4 (Mar 1951–Jul 1953):** Ridgway stabilises. Stalemate, hilltop battles, strategic bombing of North Korean cities (~85% buildings destroyed).

### TRUMAN VS MACARTHUR

- MacArthur insubordinate: own envoys to Chiang; letters to Republicans; advocated atomic strike on China; ultimatum without authorisation (Mar 1951).
- **Truman fires him 11 Apr 1951.** Senate hearings: Bradley calls expansion "the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy".
- **Significance:** civilian control reaffirmed; containment as limited (not rollback); nuclear weapons constrained by political logic.

### CONSEQUENCES

- **US:** defence budget \$13bn (1950) → \$50bn (1953). NSC-68 realised. Permanent garrisons in Germany & Japan.
- **NATO:** integrated command (SHAPE 1951); West German rearmament (NATO 1955).
- **USSR:** US tied down in Asia; Warsaw Pact (1955).
- **China:** first independent military assertion since 19th century; 180,000+ dead. Sino-Soviet seeds of resentment.
- **Taiwan:** 7th Fleet neutralises Strait — PRC unification permanently blocked.
- **Japan:** San Francisco Peace Treaty + US Security Treaty (1951); economic "divine wind".
- **Cold War:** militarised, globalised, locked into proxy-war template.

## THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE — CIVIL WAR OR SOVIET PROBE?

**Traditionalist** (Stueck, Goncharov-Lewis-Xue) — Korea was a Soviet-directed proxy attack: Stalin authorised Kim's invasion in April 1950, Mao concurred, and Truman correctly read it as the moment NSC-68 had anticipated.

**Revisionist** (Cumings *The Origins of the Korean War*) — the war's origins lie in a Korean civil conflict reaching back to 1945; the US misread a local revolution as Soviet expansion and globalised it.

**Archival synthesis** (Weathersby's Soviet documents; Chen Jian for China) — both are partly right: Korea was a civil war, but it became a hot war only because Stalin gave the green light after the August 1949 Soviet bomb and the October 1949 PRC declaration removed his strategic inhibitions. Synthesis: local fuse, superpower igniter.

## Key figures & named historians

### KEY FIGURES

**Kim Il-sung** — DPRK leader — Initiated the invasion; survived war as founder of Kim dynasty.

**Syngman Rhee** — ROK President — Authoritarian, anti-communist; nearly wrecked armistice to force continued fighting.

**Harry Truman** — US President — Intervened within 48 hours; fired MacArthur; kept war limited.

**Douglas MacArthur** — UN Commander — Inchon hero; advocated nuclear war on China; sacked April 1951.

**Matthew Ridgway** — US Field Commander, then UN Commander — Stabilised front March 1951; model of limited-war command.

**Mao Zedong** — PRC Chairman — Committed People's Volunteers despite devastating cost.

**Stalin** — Soviet leader — Approved April 1950; limited Soviet involvement to air support (disguised).

**Dean Acheson** — US Secretary of State — 'Defense perimeter' speech 1950; then architect of US response.

### NAMED HISTORIANS

**William Stueck** — Traditional / synthesis — Stalin-approved, locally fought, superpower consequences.

**Bruce Cumings** — Revisionist — civil war reframed as superpower war by US misreading of Korean politics.

**Kathryn Weathersby** — Archival — Soviet documents show Stalin's April 1950 approval decisive.

**Chen Jian** — Mao intervened for ideological and security reasons; not a reluctant Soviet proxy.

**Max Hastings** — Operational history — military lessons of limited war; stresses Western unpreparedness.

**John Lewis Gaddis** — Korea militarised and globalised the Cold War; model for Vietnam pattern.

## Essay angles & ready-made theses

### THESIS TEMPLATE · ORIGINS

"Examine the reasons for the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950."

The Korean War broke out because a long-running local civil conflict was suddenly weaponised by Stalin's calculation that the post-1949 strategic environment — Soviet bomb, PRC declaration, Acheson's defence-perimeter speech that excluded Korea — made a low-risk proxy probe attractive. Weathersby's archival evidence makes Cumings's "civil war first" reading compatible with the traditional view: the conflict was Korean in origin but became a Cold War event only because the superpowers chose to make it one.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · TRANSFORMATION

"To what extent did Korea transform the Cold War?"

The Korean War converted the Cold War from a regional, economic, and largely European confrontation into a militarised, globalised, and nuclear-shadowed system: NSC-68's defence-spending revolution, NATO's integrated command, West German rearmament, the Sino-American freeze of 1950–71, and the doctrinal template of "limited war" that would govern Vietnam — all flowed from the Korean inflection point.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · COMPARATIVE

"Compare Korea and Cuba as Cold War crises."

Korea and Cuba both demonstrated the limits of nuclear-age coercion, but they built different machineries: Korea institutionalised confrontation (NSC-68, NATO command, the limited-war template later applied in Vietnam), whereas Cuba institutionalised safety (the hotline, the Partial Test Ban Treaty, Mutual Assured Destruction as accepted doctrine, and the road to SALT).

military command; West German rearmament; Sino-American hostility for 20 years; Vietnam template established.

- **"Compare the international consequences of the Korean War and the Cuban Missile Crisis"** — Korea built confrontation architecture; Cuba built safety architecture.
- **"Evaluate the significance of Truman's dismissal of MacArthur (April 1951)"** — civilian control reaffirmed; rejection of rollback; nuclear weapons subordinated to political logic. Bradley's "wrong war, wrong place, wrong time, wrong enemy" set the limited-war doctrine.
- **"Discuss the view that Korea was the moment containment became militarised"** — pre-1950 containment was largely economic (Marshall Plan) and political; Korea converted it into a permanently armed posture (NSC-68, garrisons, conscription).

## LIKELY QUESTION STEMS

- **"Examine the reasons for the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950"** — local civil-war fuse + Stalin's post-1949 strategic confidence (Soviet bomb, PRC declared, Acheson "defense perimeter" speech, Sino-Soviet Treaty). Cumings vs Stueck; synthesis via Weathersby's archival evidence of Stalin's April 1950 approval.
- **"To what extent did the Korean War transform the Cold War?"** — US defence budget \$13bn → \$50bn, NSC-68 realised; globalisation of containment to Asia; NATO integrated

## 6 • The Cuban Missile Crisis — October 1962 — Cold War Case 3

**Thirteen days that brought the world closest to nuclear war** — and ended with both superpowers building the machinery (hotline, Test Ban Treaty, MAD doctrine, eventual SALT) to avoid doing so again.

### Timeline

1959-01-01	<b>Castro takes Havana</b> Fulgencio Batista flees. Castro initially not a declared communist; US ambiguous.
1960	<b>Cuba turns Soviet</b> US sugar embargo; Cuba nationalises US assets; Soviet trade agreement; CIA begins Bay of Pigs planning.
1961-04-17	<b>Bay of Pigs</b> CIA-trained exiles landed at Playa Girón. Disaster: Kennedy withholds air cover, brigade captured in 72 hours. Humiliates US, convinces Castro he needs Soviet protection.
1961-06	<b>Vienna Summit</b> Khrushchev bullies Kennedy over Berlin; reads Kennedy as weak after Bay of Pigs.
1961-08	<b>Berlin Wall</b> Accepted by Kennedy. Confirms Khrushchev's sense of Kennedy's limits.
1962-04	<b>Jupiter missiles operational</b> US IRBMs in Turkey go live — visible from Soviet territory. Khrushchev humiliated.
1962-05	<b>Anadyr decision</b> Khrushchev decides to place IRBMs and MRBMs in Cuba — restore nuclear parity illusion, protect Cuba, bargain chip on Berlin and Turkey.
1962-07-1962-10	<b>Operation Anadyr</b> Soviet shipments to Cuba: 42,000 troops, 36 R-12 MRBMs, 24 R-14 IRBMs planned, tactical nukes, Il-28 bombers. Disguised as agricultural equipment.
1962-10-14	<b>U-2 photographs</b> Major Heyser's U-2 photographs SS-4 sites at San Cristobal. Analysed 15 Oct. Briefed to Kennedy 16 Oct.
1962-10-16	<b>ExComm convenes</b> Executive Committee of NSC: air strike vs. invasion vs. blockade debated for 6 days in secret.
1962-10-22	<b>Quarantine announced</b> Kennedy's televised address. US imposes 'quarantine' (not 'blockade' — blockade is act of war). 500-mile radius around Cuba.
1962-10-24	<b>Ships turn back</b> Soviet ships stop or reverse course at quarantine line. Rusk: 'We're eyeball to eyeball, and I think the other fellow just blinked.'
1962-10-26	<b>First Khrushchev letter</b> Emotional, personal letter: 'knot of war'. Offers missile withdrawal for US non-invasion pledge.
1962-10-27	<b>'Black Saturday'</b> Second Khrushchev letter — demands Jupiter withdrawal from Turkey. U-2 shot down over Cuba, pilot killed. Submarine B-59 nearly launches nuclear torpedo. Kennedy sends Robert Kennedy to Dobrynin with secret Jupiter deal.
1962-10-28	<b>Khrushchev accepts</b> Radio Moscow announces withdrawal in exchange for US non-invasion pledge. Secret Jupiter clause kept secret 25 years.
1963-06	<b>Hotline</b> Moscow-Washington direct teletype established.
1963-08-05	<b>Partial Test Ban Treaty</b> Bans atmospheric, underwater, outer-space tests. First superpower arms control.
1964-10	<b>Khrushchev falls</b> Ousted by Politburo — Cuba retreat a central charge.

### KHRUSHCHEV'S FOUR MOTIVES

1. **Defend Cuba** — after Bay of Pigs (Apr 1961) and Operation Mongoose, both Khrushchev and Castro expected US invasion. Cuba was Soviet communism's only Western Hemisphere ally.
2. **Nuclear parity** — US about 5,000 warheads vs USSR ~300 (often unreliable) ICBMs. Cuba-based MRBMs would multiply Soviet warheads in range of US by 40%+ at a fraction of the cost of new ICBMs.
3. **Turkey parity** — US Jupiters operational April 1962, visible from Soviet territory. Khrushchev to son: "*Why can't we do to them what they do to us?*"
4. **Berlin leverage** — once missiles operational (planned Nov 1962), believed he could force a Berlin deal.

### EXCOMM · 16-22 OCT 1962

- 13-member committee, recorded on JFK's tapes. Six days of secret debate.
- **Options:** do nothing, UN appeal, surgical air strike (JCS, Acheson), invasion, blockade ("quarantine").
- **Air strike rejected:** Air Force could not guarantee 100% destruction; risk Soviet response.
- **RFK's Pearl Harbor analogy** against surprise strike.
- **Quarantine adopted (20 Oct):** minimum initial force, graduated escalation possible, time for Khrushchev to think.
- Post-archives: tactical nukes already on Cuba; 42,000 Soviet troops. Vindicates Kennedy's caution.

### BLACK SATURDAY · 27 OCT 1962

- **U-2 shot down** over Cuba (Major Anderson killed) by local Soviet commander without Moscow's authorisation.
- **Submarine B-59**, harassed by depth charges, nearly launches nuclear-tipped torpedo. **Vasili Arkhipov vetoes** — "the man who saved the world".
- Second Khrushchev letter (public) demands Jupiter withdrawal — harder than first (private) letter.
- **Trollope ploy:** Kennedy replies only to first letter. Simultaneously, RFK meets Dobrynin: US *will* withdraw Jupiters within 5 months — but secretly.
- **28 Oct** Khrushchev accepts publicly. Secret Jupiter clause hidden until 1989.

## CONSEQUENCES

- **Machinery to avoid repetition:** Moscow-Washington hotline (Jun 1963); Partial Test Ban Treaty (Aug 1963).
- **Doctrine:** Mutual Assured Destruction; second-strike doctrine; eventual SALT (1969).
- **Leadership:** Kennedy's reputation surges; Khrushchev falls Oct 1964 (Cuba retreat a central charge).
- **China:** Mao calls Khrushchev "capitulationist"; Sino-Soviet split open. PRC tests bomb Oct 1964.
- **Cuba:** US non-invasion pledge keeps Castro in power decades.
- **Cold War:** direct nuclear confrontation never recurred — moves to periphery (Vietnam, Angola, Afghanistan).

## THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE — CLOSER TO WAR THAN THEY KNEW?

**Heroic-Kennedy school** (Sorensen, Schlesinger; *Thirteen Days* RFK) — JFK's calibrated quarantine and statesmanship pulled the world back from the brink; the lesson is the value of cool-headed, graduated management.

**Revisionist** (Allison *Essence of Decision*, Garthoff) — the outcome owed more to bureaucratic luck than presidential genius; multiple decision channels and miscommunications produced a settlement that could easily have gone the other way.

**Post-archival** (Fursenko & Naftali *One Hell of a Gamble*, Dobbs *One Minute to Midnight*) — Soviet documents reveal tactical nuclear weapons already on Cuba, 42,000 troops, and a B-59 submarine commander overruled by Vasili Arkhipov; the world was closer to nuclear war than either leader knew. Synthesis: Kennedy's caution was vindicated, but the margin of safety was perilously thin.

## Key figures & named historians

### KEY FIGURES

**John F. Kennedy** — *US President* — Chose graduated response; managed ExComm; accepted secret Jupiter deal.

**Robert Kennedy** — *Attorney General* — Pivotal ExComm moderator; back-channel to Dobrynin on 27 October.

**Nikita Khrushchev** — *Soviet First Secretary* — Authorised Anadyr; blinked 28 October; fell 1964.

**Fidel Castro** — *Cuban Prime Minister* — Wanted missiles for defence; excluded from 28 Oct deal; furious at Soviets.

**Robert McNamara** — *US Secretary of Defense* — Pushed quarantine over air strike; post-crisis voice for arms control.

**Anatoly Dobrynin** — *Soviet Ambassador to US* — Back-channel to RFK; central to Jupiter deal.

**Vasili Arkhipov** — *Soviet submarine officer* — Vetoed nuclear torpedo launch on B-59 — 'the man who saved the world'.

**Adlai Stevenson** — *US UN Ambassador* — UN Security Council showdown with Zorin: 'I am prepared to wait until hell freezes over'.

### NAMED HISTORIANS

**Graham Allison** — Three analytical lenses (rational, organisational, bureaucratic) — *Essence of Decision*.

**Aleksandr Fursenko & Timothy Naftali** — Soviet archives — Khrushchev's motives multi-causal; the 'gamble' was not strategic.

**Michael Dobbs** — Operational history — the crisis was more dangerous than leaders knew; luck mattered.

**Sheldon Stern** — Kennedy tapes — JFK restrained hawks; contradicts 'best and brightest' myth.

**Vladislav Zubok** — Crisis forced Khrushchev toward détente thinking; basis of later SALT.

**John Lewis Gaddis** — Taught both sides nuclear fear was symmetric; foundation of Cold War stability.

## Essay angles & ready-made theses

### THESIS TEMPLATE · CAUSES

*"Examine the causes of the Cuban Missile Crisis."*

The Cuban Missile Crisis was the product of four converging Soviet motives — defending Castro after the Bay of Pigs, narrowing the strategic nuclear gap, reciprocating the Jupiter deployment in Turkey, and acquiring Berlin leverage — interacting with American constraints rooted in Kennedy's post-Bay-of-Pigs credibility deficit and mid-term electoral exposure. Fursenko and Naftali's archival reconstruction shows the multiplicity is the answer: no single cause is sufficient, and isolating "Cuba" from "Turkey" misreads Khrushchev's strategic mind.

### THESIS TEMPLATE · TRANSFORMATION

*"Did the Cuban Missile Crisis change superpower relations?"*

The Crisis transformed the management of superpower rivalry without transforming the rivalry itself: the hotline, the Partial Test Ban Treaty, MAD doctrine and the trajectory toward SALT (1969) all emerged from October 1962 — but Vietnam, Angola and Afghanistan demonstrate that the safety machinery built at the centre did not constrain the violence at the periphery. Trachtenberg is right that Cuba built a ceiling on direct conflict, not a floor on geopolitical competition.

## LIKELY QUESTION STEMS

- **"Examine the causes of the Cuban Missile Crisis"** — Fursenko / Naftali's multi-causal framework: defend Cuba (after the Bay of Pigs and Operation Mongoose), redress the nuclear

gap, Turkey-Jupiter parity, and Berlin leverage. Kennedy's domestic constraints (mid-term elections, Bay of Pigs reputation).

- **"To what extent did the Cuban Missile Crisis change superpower relations?"** — hotline (June 1963), Partial Test Ban Treaty (August 1963), Mutual Assured Destruction as accepted doctrine, the road to SALT (1969). Counterpoint: proxy-war continuity in Vietnam, Angola, Afghanistan. Trachtenberg: ceiling on direct conflict, not floor on rivalry.
- **"Compare the management of the Berlin and Cuban crises"** — Wall and quarantine both graduated; both back-channelled (Checkpoint Charlie, Dobrynin-RFK); Wall closed a wound, Cuba opened arms control.
- **"Evaluate the role of individual leaders in the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis"** — JFK's Trollope ploy, Khrushchev's letters, RFK at the back-channel, Vasili Arkhipov's veto on the B-59 torpedo (the man who saved the world). Resolution was structural and personal at once.
- **"Discuss the view that the Cuban Missile Crisis was a victory for the United States"** — public quarantine win + non-invasion pledge; secret Jupiter clause hidden until 1989; Khrushchev removed in 1964 partly because he could not claim Cuba publicly. A managed draw, marketed as a US win.

## 7 · How to write Paper 2

<b>Format</b>	1h30 · 2 essays · 2 topics	Choose one question per topic from a choice of about 5 per topic. Markscheme: 15 marks each, 30 total.
<b>Each essay</b>	~45 minutes	5 min planning · 35 min writing · 5 min checking. A focused 800–1200 words beats a sprawling 1500.
<b>Markscheme</b>	A01–A04	AO1 knowledge · AO2 analysis · AO3 evaluation/historiography · AO4 structure. Top bands require sustained focus, judgement, and named historians.

### Command terms — what they actually want

- **"Examine"** — consider arguments and evidence with judgement. *Not* a list.
- **"To what extent"** — argue degree (significant / partial / limited). Take a position; show counter; weigh.
- **"Evaluate"** — appraise pros and cons, then judge.
- **"Compare and contrast"** — both halves required. Run on prose, not separate sections; thematic structure beats serial.
- **"Discuss"** — present competing interpretations, then take a side.
- **"Analyse"** — break into parts, explain how each contributes.

### Essay structure (PEEL with judgement)

- Introduction** — context (one to two lines), **thesis** (your direct answer), and **signposting** of three argument lines. Avoid throat-clearing.
- Three to four body paragraphs**, each with:
  - **Point** — topic sentence, the paragraph's claim, tied to the question.
  - **Evidence** — precise dates, names, statistics. Generic = capped.
  - **Explanation** — link evidence back to claim.
  - **Link** — mini-judgement: how this argument supports or qualifies the thesis.
- Conclusion** — restated, weighted thesis. No new evidence. The judgement, not a summary.

### Historiography — non-negotiable for high marks

- Name **at least two historians** per essay; embed views in argument, not as a tacked-on paragraph.
- Frame as schools where useful: *orthodox / revisionist / post-revisionist / new Cold War history; intentionalist / functionalist; totalitarian / revisionist / post-archival*.
- Use historians to **support** your claim or to set up a counter you then refute.
- Name + view + brief evaluation. e.g. "*Kershaw's 'working towards the Führer' captures the radicalising structure that intentionalist accounts (Bullock) understate.*"

### What top-band answers do (and most don't)

- **Front-load the thesis** — examiner sees your argument in the first three lines.

### Cross-topic comparisons — high-yield essay pairings

Comparison	Why it works	Key evidence to pull
<b>Hitler &amp; Stalin — rise to power</b>	Both exploited a crisis democracy / transition, used ideology to mobilise, eliminated rivals through coalition then purge	Versailles & Depression vs Lenin's Testament & succession; 1933 Enabling Act vs 1929 break with the Right; "legality strategy" vs General Secretaryship
<b>Stalin &amp; Mao — consolidation</b>	Both used terror, cult, mass campaigns and ideological purification, but Mao preferred mass mobilisation, Stalin the apparatus	Great Terror vs Cultural Revolution; Show Trials vs Red Guards; Kirov murder vs Liu Shaoqi denunciation; Vozhd vs Chairman Mao Zedong cult
<b>Hitler &amp; Mao — ideology in practice</b>	Both racially / nationally exclusionary; both willing to inflict mass death to transform society	Volksgemeinschaft vs Maoism; Holocaust vs Great Leap famine ~45 million; Lebensraum vs Permanent Revolution
<b>Berlin &amp; Cuba — crisis management</b>	Both crises ended without war via back-channel diplomacy; Wall & quarantine both graduated, both face-saving	Checkpoint Charlie tank standoff vs Dobrynin-RFK Jupiter deal; Kennedy: "wall better than war" vs Trollope ploy

- **Stay analytical** — every paragraph answers the question; nothing is "background".
- **Argue degrees** — "decisive in the short term, qualified in the long term" beats "important".
- **Counter-argue** — engage seriously with the strongest opposing view; refute, don't ignore.
- **Precise evidence** — dates, statistics, named people, named events. "Many died" → "about 700,000 executed 1937–38 (NKVD records)".
- **Historiography embedded** — schools and named historians woven through, not bolted on.
- **Judgement throughout** — mini-evaluation at the end of each paragraph; full judgement in conclusion.

### Common pitfalls — automatic mark caps

- **Narrative drift** — telling the story instead of arguing the question. Single biggest cause of mid-band scores.
- **Generic evidence** — "the Depression" without figures; "many people" without numbers.
- **No historiography** — caps you below the top bands.
- **One-sided** — no counter-argument means no real evaluation.
- **Imbalance** — three pages on the first cause, one on the others.
- **Misread command term** — answering "describe" when asked "to what extent".
- **Compare-and-contrast in two slabs** — markscheme prefers thematic, not "section A then section B".

### Time budget · 1 hour 30 minutes

<b>5 min</b>	Read all questions on the paper. Pick one question per topic — the one whose command term you can answer most directly with the evidence you know.
<b>5 min</b>	Plan essay 1: thesis · 3–4 paragraph topic sentences · key evidence/dates · 2 historians.
<b>35 min</b>	Write essay 1.
<b>5 min</b>	Plan essay 2.
<b>35 min</b>	Write essay 2.
<b>5 min</b>	Check both — does each conclusion answer the actual question?

<b>Korea &amp; Cuba — Cold War transformation</b>	Korea built the architecture of confrontation; Cuba built the architecture of safety	NSC-68 / NATO integration / West German rearmament vs hotline / Partial Test Ban Treaty / MAD doctrine / road to SALT
<b>Berlin &amp; Korea — Stalin's probing under nuclear shadow</b>	Both Soviet probes under nuclear constraint that produced opposite Western responses	1948 Blockade — non-violent coercion under US atomic monopoly; June 1950 Korea green-lit only after Soviet bomb (Aug 1949) and PRC declaration

## Forecast — most likely 2026 question stems

### TOPIC 10 — AUTHORITARIAN STATES

- **Hitler:** "Examine the conditions which enabled Hitler to come to power" · "Evaluate the methods used to maintain Nazi rule 1933–39" · "To what extent did Hitler's economic policies lead to war?".
- **Stalin:** "Why did Stalin emerge as Lenin's successor?" · "Examine the methods used by Stalin to maintain power" · "Discuss the view that Stalin's economic policies were successful 1928–41".
- **Mao:** "Examine the methods Mao used to consolidate power 1949–57" · "Evaluate the impact of the Great Leap Forward" · "To what extent was the Cultural Revolution motivated by ideology?".
- **Comparative (any two):** rise · methods of consolidation · use of ideology · economic policy · treatment of opposition · cult of personality. Pair Stalin with whichever you have stronger evidence on.

### Exam-day checklist

#### THE NIGHT BEFORE

- Re-read this sheet — focus on dates, statistics, and historian names.
- Pick your **two strongest topics** in advance — Paper 2 requires essays from *different* topics, so commit to (e.g.) Stalin + Cuba, not two authoritarians.
- Memorise **three thesis sentences per topic** — generic enough to flex onto any command term.
- Memorise **two named historians + a one-line view** for each likely topic.
- Sleep. A tired memory is worse than an extra hour of revision.

#### IN THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES

- Read every question on the paper — both topics — before choosing.
- Pick the question whose **command term** you can answer most directly with the evidence you actually know.
- If two stems look equally answerable, choose the one with the clearer **counter-argument** available — top-band marks need it.
- Underline the command term on the paper. Underline the time-frame. Underline any restrictive word ("methods", "economic", "after 1934").

### TOPIC 12 — COLD WAR

- **Origins / leaders:** "To what extent was the Cold War caused by ideological differences?" · "Evaluate Stalin's role in the origins of the Cold War" · "Discuss the importance of Truman in the early Cold War".
- **Berlin:** "Examine the causes and consequences of the Berlin Blockade" · "To what extent did the Wall stabilise the Cold War?".
- **Korea:** "Examine the reasons for the outbreak of the Korean War" · "To what extent did Korea transform the Cold War?".
- **Cuba:** "Examine the causes of the Cuban Missile Crisis" · "Evaluate the consequences of the Crisis for superpower relations".
- **Comparative crises:** Berlin & Cuba (management) · Korea & Cuba (transformation) · Berlin & Korea (Stalin's probing).

### WHILE WRITING — DISCIPLINE

- **Front-load thesis** in line one or two. The examiner sees your argument before they see your knowledge.
- **Topic sentence** for every paragraph; never start with a date.
- **Embed historians** mid-paragraph, not in a separate "historiography" paragraph at the end.
- **Mini-judgement** at the end of each paragraph ("therefore X was decisive in the short term but not the long term").
- **Counter-argument** in at least one paragraph — refute, don't ignore.
- **Evidence:** dates / statistics / names. "About 700,000 executed 1937–38" beats "many died".

### IF YOU START RUNNING OUT OF TIME

- Skip to the conclusion — write a strong, weighted thesis. **An incomplete essay with a real conclusion outscores a complete essay without one.**
- Drop your weakest paragraph. Do not write three weak paragraphs when two strong ones will do.
- Bullet points in the last 2 minutes are acceptable; an unfinished sentence is not.

Paper 2 cheat sheet · gayib.com · IB History HL · May 2026 · Topics 10 (Authoritarian States: Hitler · Stalin · Mao) and 12 (Cold War: Berlin · Korea · Cuba). Historiography embedded throughout — top-band marks require named historians and competing interpretations.