



# **Mao: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)**

*Delia Davin*

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As a giant of 20th century history, Mao Zedong played many roles: peasant revolutionary, patriotic leader against the Japanese occupation, Marxist theoretician, modernizer, and visionary despot. This Very Short Introduction chronicles Mao's journey from peasant child to ruler of the most populous nation on Earth. He was a founder of both the Chinese Communist Party and the Red Army, and for many years he fought on two fronts, for control of the Party and in

an armed struggle for the Party's control of the country. His revolution unified China and began its rise to world power status. He was the architect of the Great Leap Forward that he hoped would make China both prosperous and egalitarian, but instead ended in economic disaster resulting in millions of deaths. It was Mao's growing suspicion of his fellow leaders that led him to launch the Cultural Revolution, and his last years were dogged by ill-health and his despairing attempts to find a successor whom he trusted.

Delia Davin provides an invaluable introduction to Mao, showing him in all his complexity; ruthless, brutal, and ambitious, a man of enormous talent and perception, yet a leader who is still detested by some and venerated by others.

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