



The Chinese Civil War

Why did the fighting between the Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Party happen?



Key Stages 4-5 | Postwar 1945-present, Second World War 1939-1945

Lesson resource

Introduction

In 1940s China, two parties were fighting for power. On one side was the ruling nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) party, led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. On the other was the opposing Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao Zedong.

During the Second World War, both parties banded together to fight off Japanese occupation. However, after the war, peace talks between the two quickly broke down. The fighting between the two parties became ongoing before escalating into civil war.

The civil war was eventually won by the CCP in 1949. Mao declared the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949. Chiang Kai-shek, meanwhile, fled to the island of Taiwan, where he continued to rule.

Use the British government sources in this lesson to explore the complicated reasons behind the war and its outcome, including party ideology, propaganda, fighting tactics, and power struggles.

Suitable for:

KS 4 - 5

Time period:

Postwar 1945-present,
Second World War 1939-1945

Connections to the Curriculum:

Key stage 4:

Edexcel GCSE History:

- Mao's China, 1945–76

OCR GCSE History:

- International Relations: the changing international order 1918–1975
- China 1950–1981: The People and the State

Key stage 5:

AQA A-level History:

- The Transformation of China, 1936–1997

Edexcel A-level History:

- The making of modern China, 1860–1997
- Mao's China, 1949–76

OCR A-level History:

- China and its Rulers 1839–1989
- Japan 1853–1937

Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Teachers' notes	Page 3
Background	Page 5
Connections to curriculum	Page 6
External links	Page 7
Tasks	Page 8
Source 1	Page 12
Source 2a	Page 14
Source 2b	Page 16
Source 3a	Page 18
Source 3b	Page 20
Source 3c	Page 21
Source 3d	Page 23
Source 4	Page 25
Source 5a	Page 27
Source 5b	Page 29

Teachers' notes

This is the second in a planned series of three lessons on 20th century Chinese history. You can read the first part here: [May Fourth Movement 1919](#)¹

This lesson looks at the Chinese Civil War after the end of the Second World War until the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949. It can also be used to support the study of Mao's China (1945-76) as well as the overall development of China in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Teachers could use the illustration image of this lesson as a Starter Activity.

This is a Chinese postage stamp commemorating the People's Liberation Army and the Chinese Civil War from 1927 to 1949.

- What does this image reveal about the Chinese Civil War?
- Why was it produced?
- After the lesson, review how this source relates to those you have examined.

It is worth highlighting the issue of perspective during this lesson. Each of these sources come from a British government perspective. Most of the sources used in this lesson come from the Foreign Office and the War Office. It is worth discussing with students why this is the case. What other sources of information could be used on this topic?

Sometimes, British government officials are reporting on or quoting sources from either the Kuomintang or Chinese Communist Party, allowing students to hear from those perspectives as well. Ask students to consider: Why does The National Archives have these sources? How does the perspective of the source affect how we interpret it?

For GCSE students, teachers may wish to reduce the number of sources in the lesson in quantity or length or assign small groups to work on different sources for students to feedback to the class.

Discussion questions:

- What were the different factors that helped the CCP win the war? Consider both the how and why.
- What might have happened if the KMT won the war instead?
- How do you think the Chinese Civil War is viewed (a) in the West (b) within China? Why is it important to explore different perspectives and interpretations in history?

¹ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/may-fourth-movement-1919/>

Teachers' notes

Sources

Banner image: Chinese postage stamp commemorating the People's Liberation Army during the Chinese Civil War from 1927 to 1949. M&N / Alamy Stock Photo

Source 1: Map: 'Areas of Communist Activity in China' from Harrison Forman: 'Report from Red China', June 1945. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

Source 2a: Telegram reporting on an editorial called 'Without Democracy There Will Not Be Peaceful Reconstruction' in the Yen'an Paper 'Emancipation Daily', commemorating the 34th anniversary of the Chinese Revolution of 1911. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

Source 2b: Translated article called 'Inside Yen'an' written by a member of the Overseas Chinese department in the Kuomintang Headquarters, sent for publication in The New Republic, a newspaper published by the KMT in Canada. August 1944. Catalogue ref: WO 208/485

Source 3a: An English translation of a report on an interview with Mao from July-August 1944 in the newspaper Ta Kung Pao. Catalogue ref: WO 208/485

Source 3b: Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong at the Chongqing negotiations, a series of negotiations between the KMT and CCP from 29 August to 10 October 1945. Wikimedia Commons

Source 3c: Telegram from H. Seymour, British Ambassador to China, to the British Foreign Office on 31 October 1945. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

Source 3d: Dispatch in English on 3 November 1945 in which KMT Minister of Information K.C. Wu dismisses charges by the CCP. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4389

Source 4: Report entitled 'METHODS OF DISTINGUISHING GUERRILLAS FROM CIVILIANS' by the Japanese army, 1943-45. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

Source 5a: Extract from a translated New Years message from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek printed in China Newsweek, a British bulletin, 6 January 1945. Catalogue ref: FO 371/75736

Source 5b: Article titled 'British Seek US Help for Plan to Contain Chinese Communism' by Benjamin Welles, a foreign correspondent for The New York Times, 6 January 1949. Catalogue ref: FO 371/75736

Background

The Chinese Civil War in the period from 1945 to 1949, was a monumental conflict between two major political forces in China: The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Party, also known as the Kuomintang (KMT). This was a post-war clash that eventually led to the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

This prolonged struggle for control over China's future emerged after the Second World War, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Nationalist Party – or Kuomintang (KMT) – had temporarily united to prevent Japanese occupation. The ideological differences and power struggles between the parties that had existed before the war soon resurfaced, leading to intense confrontation. Following the war, the weak alliance between them crumbled, and both sides resumed hostilities with the aim of establishing their dominance over China. The United States, which had provided substantial support to the KMT during the war, made efforts to mediate between both sides, hoping to prevent an all-out conflict. Nevertheless, the deep-seated differences and longstanding grievances between the CCP, led by Mao Zedong, and the KMT, led by Chiang Kai-shek, proved insurmountable.

The Chinese Civil War can be divided into three distinct phases.

Stage one (1945–1946): The start of large-scale military operations. During this period, the CCP launched successful offensives in various regions, based on support from the peasantry and rural areas. However, the KMT faced internal challenges, including corruption, inflation, and a loss of popular support. These factors contributed to the CCP's early advances.

Stage two (1947–1948): This period saw a major shift in the balance of power. The CCP launched a strategic offensive, employing guerrilla warfare tactics [defined below] and encircling major cities held by the KMT. The CCP's military successes during this period, combined with its effective mobilisation of the population, drove the party's rise and further weakened the KMT's position.

Stage three (1948–1949): This phase marked the CCP's decisive push toward victory. The CCP launched a series of offensives, capturing key cities and regions such as Shenyang, Jinan, and Chengdu. By late 1949, the CCP had effectively established control over most of mainland China, prompting Chiang Kai-shek and the remains of the KMT to retreat to the island of Taiwan.

There are different perspectives on the causes of the Civil War between the KMT and the CCP.

For example, the KMT strongly opposed the ideology of communism adopted by the CCP. They viewed communism as a dangerous and subversive ideology that threatened social stability, private property, and individual freedoms. The ruling groups that controlled the KMT included the old landlord class and existing officials who were often accused of corruption. They feared that the CCP's ultimate goal was to establish a communist state and eradicate their influence.

The CCP, meanwhile, gained significant support from the rural population, particularly peasants. They promised land reform, improved living conditions, and a voice for the marginalised rural masses. The CCP's agricultural policies appealed to much of the population in agrarian China.

Background

The fall of the Nationalist government led to the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1, 1949, with Mao Zedong as its leader. Meanwhile, the KMT government in Taiwan continued to claim legitimacy as the rightful government of China, establishing the Republic of China there.

The Chinese Civil War had far-reaching consequences for China's political, social, and economic landscape. It resulted in the expulsion of the KMT from mainland China and the division of the country into the PRC and the Republic of China in Taiwan. The conflict also marked a turning point in China's foreign relations, as the PRC pursued a different path from the KMT-led government in Taiwan. The Chinese Civil War left an indelible imprint on the history of modern China and continues to shape its trajectory to this day.

Guerilla Warfare: operations carried on by small independent forces, generally in the rear of the enemy, with the objective of harassing, delaying, and disrupting military operations of the enemy.

External links

[Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950](#)¹

Resource from The Wilson Center Digital Archive including useful tools such as a timeline and visualisations.

[Post-war Thailand and the onset of the Cold War in Southeast Asia](#)²

Blog from The National Archives looking at Thailand's role in the Cold War in Asia around the time of the Chinese Civil War.

[Legacies of Chinese indenture aboard the Empire Windrush in 1948](#)³

Blog from The National Archives exploring the history of the Chinese community in the Caribbean and as part of the Windrush generation.

[The National Archives blog posts about China](#)⁴

Blog posts from The National Archives exploring different facets of Chinese history.

[Chinese Labour Corps on the Western Front](#)⁵

Blog from The National Archives exploring the British recruitment of Chinese labourers for the First World War.

¹ <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/topics/chinese-civil-war-1946-1950>

² <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/post-war-thailand-onset-cold-war-southeast-asia/>

³ <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/legacies-of-chinese-indenture-aboard-the-empire-windrush-in-1948/>

⁴ <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tag/china/>

⁵ <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/chinese-labour-corps-western-front-2/>

Tasks

Starter task:

Before looking at the sources in this lesson, write down what you already know about:

- The Kuomintang (KMT)
- The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)
- Chiang Kai-shek
- Mao Zedong

Task 1

Look at this map from June 1945.

Map: 'Areas of Communist Activity in China' from Harrison Forman: 'Report from Red China', June 1945. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

Harrison Forman (1904-1978) was an American photographer and journalist. He wrote for 'The New York Times' and 'National Geographic'. During the Second World War he reported from China and interviewed Mao Zedong.

- What proportion of China was under Communist control according to the map?
- Can you explain how the KMT might have viewed the situation?
- Why do you think this map was produced?

Task 2: Ideologies of the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party

Use the sources in this section to uncover the different ideologies (beliefs and ideals) of both political parties. These sources relate to the KMT and CCP. Answer the questions for each source, 2a and 2b.

Source 2a:

Telegram reporting on an editorial called 'Without Democracy There Will Not Be Peaceful Reconstruction' in the Yen'an Paper 'Emancipation Daily', commemorating the 34th anniversary of the Chinese Revolution of 1911. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

Yenan (Yan'an) was the capital of the Communist-controlled area of China and 'Emancipation Daily' was a newspaper produced by the Chinese Communist Party. The 'first double tenth victory'* mentioned in the source refers to an agreement between Kuomintang (KMT) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on 10 October 1945, the Double Ten Day of the Republic of China.

Source 2b:

Tasks

Translated article called 'Inside Yen-an' written by a member of the Overseas Chinese department in the Kuomintang Headquarters, sent for publication in *The New Republic*, a newspaper published by the KMT in Canada. August 1944. Catalogue ref: WO 208/485

The Overseas Chinese department took care of affairs concerning the Chinese population who lived outside of China's borders. There were KMT headquarters in countries around the world, including the US and Canada. *The New Republic* was the official newspaper of the Canadian KMT branch. This article was written to inform Chinese people living in Canada about the Communist-controlled area of China (from a KMT perspective).

- What is the perspective of the author? How does this affect how you look at the text?
- Why was this source produced?
- What type of source is this?
- How would you describe the ideology of the KMT and CCP based on this text?
- What clues does the text give about reasons for conflict between the KMT and CCP?

Task 3: Breakdown in communications

During the war, the KMT and CCP joined forces against Japanese occupation and put forward a united front. After the war, this united front broke down.

The following sources, 3a-3d, are in chronological order from July 1944 to November 1945. Answer the questions for each source.

Source 3a:

An English translation of a report on an interview with Mao from July-August 1944 in the newspaper Ta Kung Pao. Catalogue ref: WO 208/485

Source 3b:

Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong at the Chongqing negotiations, a series of negotiations between the KMT and CCP from 29 August to 10 October 1945.

These negotiations ended in the Double Tenth Agreement, in which both parties presented a united front and agreed to form a coalition government to avoid civil war. However, both parties were unconvinced by the agreement, and civil war soon returned.

Source 3c:

Telegram from H. Seymour, British Ambassador to China, to the British Foreign Office on 31 October 1945. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

Source 3d:

Dispatch in English on 3 November 1945 in which KMT Minister of Information K.C. Wu dismisses

Tasks

charges by the CCP. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

- What does each source infer about the relationship between the KMT and the CCP?
- How accurately does each source portray this relationship?
- Describe the course and nature of this relationship using sources 3a-3d.

Task 4: Fighting tactics

Look at source 4 and answer these questions.

Report entitled 'METHODS OF DISTINGUISHING GUERRILLAS FROM CIVILIANS' by the Japanese army, captured and translated by the US Army's Pacific Military Intelligence Research (PACMIR). 1943-45. Catalogue ref: WO 208/4398

From 1937 to 1945, China and Japan fought in the second Sino-Japanese War as part of the Second World War. During this war, the KMT and CCP formed a precarious united front. The CCP successfully used guerrilla tactics against the Japanese army and recruited support in the rural population. In contrast, KMT forces were weakened by the war and the KMT government struggled with the economic fallout of the conflict.

- What does this source infer about the fighting tactics of the Communist army (also known as the Eighth Route Army)? List at least three things.
- Research a definition of 'guerrilla warfare' and compare your list.
- How do CCP tactics explain its mass support amongst peasant communities in China?
- What do you think made these fighting tactics difficult for the Japanese troops as well as the KMT to combat?
- Why do you think the Japanese Army created this report?
- Why do you think the British government has extracted this report?

Task 5: End of the war

Sources 5a -5b date from January 1949, nine months before the official end of the war in October 1949.

Source 5a

Extract from a translated New Year's message from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek printed in China Newsweek, a British bulletin, 6 January 1945. Catalogue ref: FO 371/75736

- What message does Chiang Kai-shek want to communicate to the people of China?
- What is the tone and attitude of the message?
- Can you suggest the possible impact of the war on the peoples of China?

Tasks

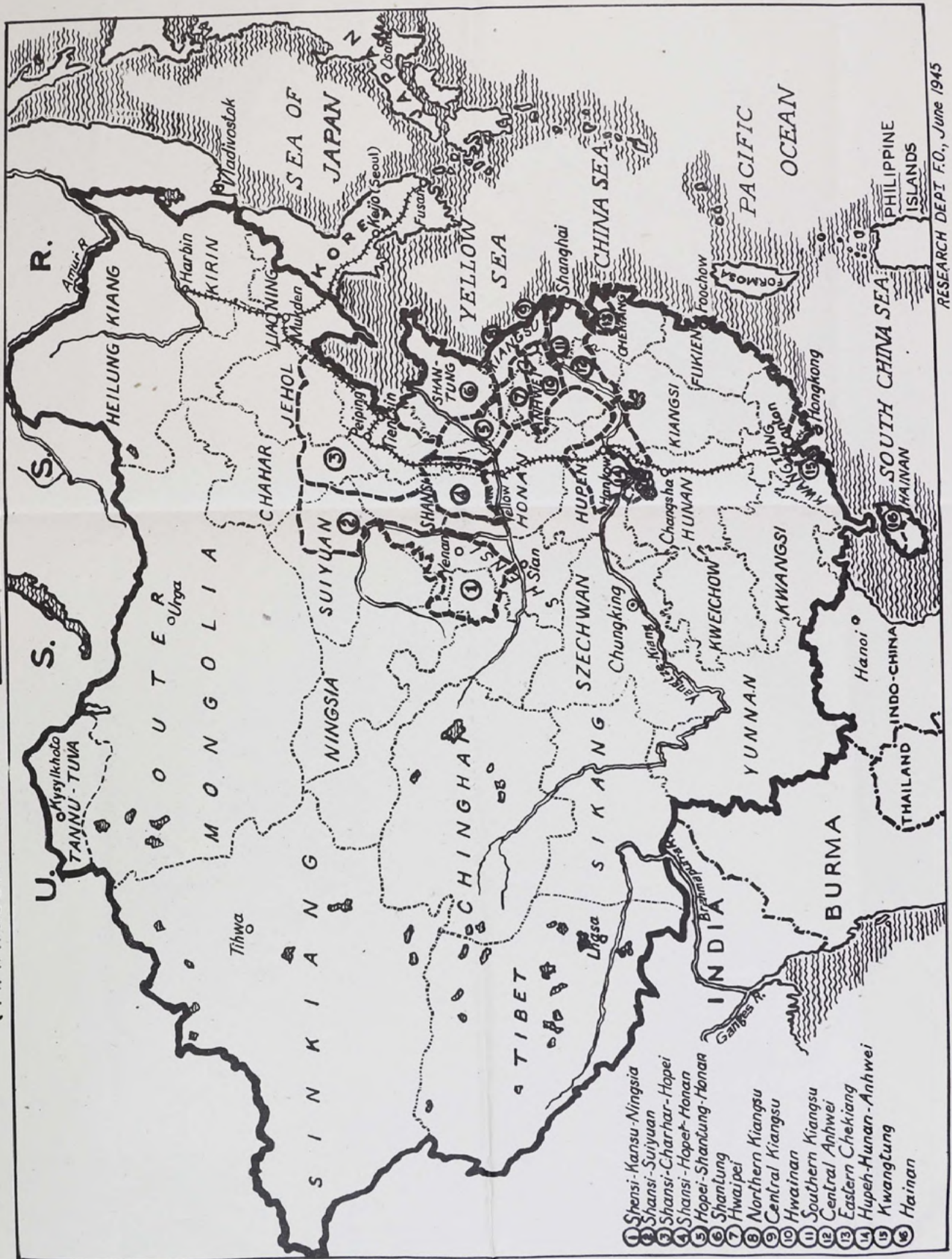
Source 5b.

Article titled 'British Seek US Help for Plan to Contain Chinese Communism' by Benjamin Welles, a foreign correspondent for The New York Times, 6 January 1949. Catalogue ref: FO 371/75736

- According to this article, what is inferred about the British perspective on the war and its outcomes?
- What type of source is this? Why was it produced?
- Why do you think the United Kingdom wants to 'contain' the spread of Communism in Asia?
- What is meant by 'the Dutch action in Indonesia' according to the article? [Clue: research 'Operation Kraai'.] How does this relate to what was happening in China?

Source 1: Map: 'Areas of Communist Activity in China' from Harrison Forman: 'Report from Red China', June 1945. Catalogue Ref: WO 208/4398

AREAS OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN CHINA
(HARRISON FORMAN: REPORT FROM RED CHINA)



- ① Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia
- ② Shansi-Suiyuan
- ③ Shansi-Charhar-Hopei
- ④ Shansi-Hopei-Honan
- ⑤ Hopei-Shantung-Honan
- ⑥ Shantung
- ⑦ Hwaipei
- ⑧ Northern Kiangsu
- ⑨ Central Kiangsu
- ⑩ Hwainan
- ⑪ Southern Kiangsu
- ⑫ Central Anhwei
- ⑬ Eastern Chekiang
- ⑭ Hupeh-Hunan-Anhwei
- ⑮ Kwangtung
- ⑯ Hainan

RESEARCH DEPT F.O., June 1945

Source 1: Transcript

AREAS OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN CHINA

(HARRISON FORMAN: REPORT FROM RED CHINA)

Key:

Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia
Shansi-Suiyuan
Shansi-Charhar-Hopei
Shansi-Hopei-Honan
Hopei-Shantung-Honan
Shantung
Hwaipei
Northern Kiangsu
Central Kiangsu
Hwainan
Southern Kiangsu
Central Anhwei
Eastern Chekiang
Hupeh-Hunan-Anhwei
Kwangtung
Hainan

Map description

Map of China with districts labelled and marked out. The areas of China that are under Communist control are differentiated by being outlined in thick black lines and numbered, with numbers corresponding to a key in the bottom left hand side. The Communist-controlled areas all border one another and are clustered in the eastern central part of China, and appear to take up approximately 10-20% of the landmass. The cities Yen'an (Yan'an), Shanghai, Tientsin [Tianjin], Peiping [Beijing], and Hankow [Hankou] are marked out in the Communist-controlled areas.

Source 2a: Telegram reporting on an editorial in the Yen-an Paper
 'Emancipation Daily'. Catalogue Ref: WO 208/4398

= REVOLUTION FUTILE WITHOUT DEMOCRATIC
 GOVERNMENT =

'TODAY IS THE FIRST DOUBLE TENTH AFTER VICTORY IN THE WAR
 OF RESISTANCE AND THE CHINESE PEOPLE ARE AGAIN FILLED WITH HOPE
 OF CHINA BECOMING INDEPENDENT, FREE, POWERFUL, AND PROSPEROUS.
 BUT AS LONG AS A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IS NOT SET UP THIS HOPE
 WILL AGAIN BECOME AS FUTILE AS AFTER THE 1911 REVOLUTION,
 AND CHINA WILL AGAIN BE PLUNGED INTO A STATE OF RETROGRESSION AND
 DIVISION.'

∴ COMMUNIST PARTY'S UNITY POLICY =

THE EDITORIAL THEN POINTS OUT THAT BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
 CONDITIONS ARE NOW VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN 1911 FOR THE
 POWER OF THE PEOPLE HAS GROWN UP AND THE PEOPLE HAVE CREATED
 THEIR VANGUARD- THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY- IN THE REVOLUTIONARY
 STRUGGLE. AFTER THE JAPANESE SURRENDER THE COMMUNIST PARTY
 PROMPTLY BROUGHT FORWARD A POLICY OF PEACE, UNITY AND
 DEMOCRACY TO OVERCOME THE PRESENT CRISIS.

AS LONG AS THE PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE NATION UNITE AS ONE MAN
 UNDER THIS POLICY AND STRUGGLE ON RELENTLESSLY, THEN ALL
 DIFFICULTIES CAN CERTAINLY BE OVERCOME AND THE MISSION OF THE 1911
 REVOLUTION BE FULFILLED- NAMELY THE SETTING UP OF AN INDEPENDENT
 FREE STRONG AND PROSPEROUS NEW CHINA.

CBBC MONITORING)+++RP. (C) 14.20

Source 2a: Transcript

Note: The 'first double tenth victory'* mentioned in the source refers to an agreement between Kuomintang (KMT) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on 10 October 1945, the Double Ten Day of the Republic of China.

Transcript

Revolution Futile without democratic government

'Today is the first double tenth after victory in the war of resistance and the Chinese people are again filled with hope of China becoming independent, free, powerful, and prosperous but as long as a democratic government is not set up this hope will again become as futile as after the 1911 revolution, and China will again be plunged into a state of retrogression and division.'

Communist Party's Unity Policy

The editorial then points out that both internal and external conditions are now very different from those in 1911 for the power of the people has grown up and the people have created their vanguard – the Chinese Communist Party – in the Revolutionary Struggle. After the Japanese surrender the Communist Party promptly brought forward a policy of peace, unity and democracy to overcome the present crisis.

As long as the people of the whole nation unite as one man under this policy and struggle on relentlessly, then all difficulties can certainly be overcome and the mission of the 1911 revolution be fulfilled – namely the setting up of an independent free strong and prosperous new China.

Source 2b: Translated article called 'Inside Yen-an' sent to the KMT newspaper The New Republic, August 1944. Catalogue Ref: WO 208/485

In the matter of education and propaganda, the Communists should stop stirring up resentment and hatred. Marxism theories are not the proper thing to teach young students and soldiers. Our efforts should concentrate towards the bringings to the people the full meaning of Sun Wen Chu-I (The Three Principles of Dr. Sun Yet-sen.) We must give full publicity to our nationalistic aspirations and the up building of our country. In so doing the army will be brought about to be under the direction and control of our government and the people will unite as one.

China is a united nation. Our motto is "Resist Japan and Build-up our nation." Victory cannot be obtained without unity. Generalissimo Chiang is whole-heartedly behind the move for national unity. Public opinion expresses approval of this movement and there is sympathetic attitude expressed in every part of the country. All of us are determined to work for the unification of the nation which will lead our nation to power and to prosperity.

Legally and morally there shall not be two governments. There must be one legally constituted and universally recognized government. The power of defence should be centralized and the order of the Central Government is law and must be strictly obeyed. We, the people, urge for the centralization of our army."

Source 2b: Transcript

In the matter of education and propaganda, the Communists should stop stirring up resentment and hatred. Marxism theories are not the proper thing to teach young students and soldiers. Our efforts should concentrate towards the bringing to the people the full meaning of San Men Chu-l (the Three Principles of Dr Sun Yetsen). We must give full publicity to our nationalistic aspirations and the up building of our country. In so doing the army will be brought about to be under the direction and control of our government and the people will unite as one.

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Legally and morally there shall not be two governments. There must be one legally constituted and universally recognized government. The power of defence should be centralised and the order of the Central Government is law and must be strictly obeyed. We, the people, urge for the centralisation of our army.

Source 3a: Report on an interview with Mao from July-August 1944 in the newspaper Ta Kung Pao. Catalogue Ref: WO 208/485

Interview With Mr. Mao Tze-tung.

On June 12, at the Communist Hdqrs in the suburbs of Yen-an, the Press Party made an official call on Mr. Mao Tze-tung. The interview took place in a fairly spacious parlor. Mr. Mao is 51 years old and looks stouter and older than we used to find him in photographs. He was plainly dressed, wearing a suit of woolen uniform in chocolate colour and a pair of black leather shoes. His native town is Hsianghsiang, Hunan, of which he still carries a strong accent. After hands-shaking and exchange of greetings, Mr. Mao addressed the pressmen, expressing hearty welcome to them in coming to Yen-an. Then he went on to say: "Our aim is in common which is to knock down the Japanese warlords and to overthrow Fascism. All China and all the world are united on that common basis." Speaking of the opening of the second front in Europe, Mr. Mao expressed great felicity and said that the repercussions of the event would extend beyond Europe to reach the Pacific and China. He remarked: "All those in China who are engaged in the war of resistance should concentrate on their aim and should work hard. The time is opportune for us to knock out the Japanese warlords by acting in coordination with the decisive operations in Europe." Explaining the Communists' attitude towards national affairs, Mr. Mao stated: "We the Communists are in support of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and are persistently for the cooperation of the Kuomintang, the Communists and the people of the whole nation for the purpose of overthrowing the Japanese imperialism and of building a democratic independent China. To this policy the Chinese Communist Party has consistently adhered throughout the initial intermediary and present phases of the war, because this falls in line with the wish of the entire nation". Finally he declared: "The Chinese people are in great need of democracy, for only democracy can give us strength in our war of resistance, lead our internal and external relations into a normal track, secure us the victory, and make possible the building of a good country." Mr. Mao having finished his address, Mr. Gunther Stein, the British correspondent, began first to inquire about the talks conducted by Mr. Lin Tso-han in Chungking. To this, Mr. Mao replied: "The talk has been going on for some time and is still proceeding. We hope progress will be made and some results can be obtained. As yet there is nothing available for your information."

Source 3a: Transcript

Interview with Mr. Mao Tze-Tung.

On June 12, at the Communist Hdqrs in the suburbs of Yen-an, the Press Party made an official call on Mr. Mao Tze-tung. The interview took place in a fairly spacious parlor. Mr. Mao is 51 years old and looks stouter and older than we used to find him in photographs. He was plainly dressed, wearing a suit of woolen uniform in chocolate colour and a pair of black leather shoes. His native town is Hsianghsiang, Hunan, of which he still carries a strong accent. After hands-shaking and exchange of greetings, Mr. Mao addressed the pressmen, expressing hearty welcome to them in coming to Yen-an. Then he went on to say, "Our aim is in common which is to knock down the Japanese warlords and to overthrow Fascism. All China and all the world are united on that common basis." Speaking of the opening of the second front in Europe, Mr. Mao expressed great felicity and said that the repercussions of the event would extend beyond Europe to reach the Pacific and China. He remarked, "All those in China who are engaged in the war of resistance should concentrate on their aim and should work hard. The time is opportune for us to knock out the Japanese warlords by acting in coordination with the decisive operations in Europe". Explaining the Communists' attitude towards national affairs, Mr. Mao stated: "We the Communists are in support of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and are persistently for the cooperation of the Kuomintang, the Communists and the people of the whole nation for the purpose of overthrowing the Japanese imperialism and of building a democratic independent China. To this policy the Chinese Communist Party has consistently adhered throughout the initial intermediary and present phases of the war, because this falls in line with the wish of the entire nation." Finally he declared: "The Chinese people are in great need of democracy, for only democracy can give us strength in our war of resistance, lead our internal and external relations into a normal track, secure us the victory, and make possible the building of a good country." Mr. Mao having finished his address, Mr. Gunther Stein, the British correspondent, began first to inquire about the talks conducted by Mr. Lin Tso-han in Chungking. To this, Mr. Mao replied: "The talk has been going on for some time and is still proceeding. We hope progress will be made and some results can be obtained. As yet there is nothing available for your information."

Source 3b: Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong at the Chongqing negotiations from 29 August to 10 October 1945. Wikimedia Commons



Source 3c: Telegram from H. Seymour, British Ambassador to China, to the British Foreign Office, 31 October 1945. Catalogue Ref: WO 208/4398

2c
CW/2/4
M2(2)-
17

[This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorised recipient and not passed on.]

[CYPHER]

CABINET DISTRIBUTION.

FROM CHUNGKING TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir H. Seymour.
No. 1381.

D. 4.16.p.m. 31st October, 1945.

30th October, 1945.

R. 5.10.p.m. 31st October, 1945.

Repeated to SACSEA. (for Mr. Denning)
Commander in Chief Hongkong.
kk kk

My telegram No. 454 to Government of India.

Mutual recriminations between Communist and Central Government propagandists continue in press [grp. undec.] for example in press interview at Chungking October 27th Shansi Governor Yen Hsi Shan alleged [grp undec ? that] Communist forces had attacked and seized several towns in Shansi [grp undec ? shortly] after they had been captured from [grp undec ? Communists] by Central Government troops who had maintained defensive but never offensive attitude towards the Communists.

2. At Press Conference of October 27th Minister of Information K.C. Wu stated that with the object of restoring the railway [grp. undec ? Central] Chinese Government had agreed with Communist representatives that "status quo [grp.undec.] Communist forces in [grp.undec. [grp. undec ? Canton] railway zones will be maintained provided Communists would leave railways alone".

3. He added [grp undec ? they] had urged Communists to send representatives of 18th Group Army to Chungking to form sub committee to discuss that Army's re-organisation and operational area in fulfilment of recent agreement. He added that general agreement had been reached regarding holding of political Consultative Council. Communist representatives had referred the above issues to the Yen-an.

4. Wu claimed that discussions with Communists were continuing in cordial atmosphere and that there was no need for him to comment in detail on improper reports now circulating, as they are at variance with the facts.

O.T.P.

Chin 124
006 2/5

Source 3c: Transcript

This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorised recipient and not passed on,

[CYPHER]

CABINET DISTRIBUTION.

FROM CHUNGKING TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Sir H. Seymour.

D. 4.16pm 31st October 1945

No. 1381

R. 5.10pm 31st October 1945

Repeated to SACSEA (for Mr. DEning)
Commander in Chief Hong Kong.

My telegram No. 454 to Government of India.

Mutual recriminations between Communist and Central Government propagandists continue in press for example in press interview at Chungking October 27th Sanshi Government Yen Hsi Shan alleged that Communist forces had attacked and seized several towns in Shansi shortly after they had been captured from Communists by Central Government troops who had maintained defensive but never offensive attitude towards the Communists.

2. At Press Conference of October 27th Minister of Information stated that with the object of restoring the railway Central Chinese Government had agreed with Communist representatives that "status quo Communist forces in Canton railway zones will be maintained provided Communists would leave railways alone."

3. He added they had urged Communists to send representatives of 18th Group Army to Chungking to form sub committee to discuss that Army's re-organisation and operation area in fulfilment of recent agreement. He added that general agreement had been reached regarding holding of political Consultative Council. Communist representatives had referred the above issues to the Yen-an.

4. Wu claimed that discussions with Communists were continuing in cordial atmosphere and that there was no need for him to comment in detail on improper reports now circulating, as they are at variance with the facts.

Source 3d: Dispatch 3 November 1945 in which KMT Minister of Information K.C. Wu dismisses CCP charges. Catalogue Ref: WO 208/4398

YT: - = CHUNGKING DENIES USE OF POISON GAS AGAINST COMMUNISTS =

CHINA (TELEGRAPH SERVICES): U.P. DISPATCHES IN ENGLISH FOR ALL STATIONS. 14.05., 3.11.45.

CHUNGKING: MINISTER OF INFORMATION, K.C. WU, LAUGHED AT THE COMMUNIST CHARGE OF USING POISON GAS IN SHANSI, HE SAID: "ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT GOT ANY POISON GAS".

HE DENIED THE GOVERNMENT WAS UTILISING JAPS TO FIGHT THE COMMUNISTS.

= GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS TO COMMUNISTS =

K.C. WU SAID DURING THE TALKS OF THE PAST TWO DAYS THE GOVERNMENT HAD PROPOSED:

(1) BOTH SIDES SHOULD ORDER THEIR TROOPS TO STAY WHERE THEY ARE.

(2) WITHDRAW 10 KMS. RAILWAYS (FEW WORDS INAUDIBLE).

= WU DENIES KUOMINTANG PLANE DIVE-BOMBED =

COMMUNIST VILLAGE =

A COMMUNIST (?RELEASE) CHARGED A KUOMINTANG PLANE WITH DIVE-BOMBING A VILLAGE NEAR THE COMMUNIST HELD TOWN OF TOUHSIEN ON THE TIENSIN-PUKOW RAILWAY IN SHANTUNG ON 30TH OCTOBER, KILLING FOUR AND WOUNDING EIGHT. THE MINISTER INFORMATION K.C. WU SAID NOTHING OF THAT SORT IS TRUE.

THE COMMUNIST ORGAN, THE NEW CHINA DAILY, PUBLISHED THAT THE CENTRAL KUOMINTANG HEADQUARTERS IN CHUNGKING WERE PRINTING (?MILLIONS) OF COPIES OF A "BANDIT SUPPRESSION HANDBOOK" REPRESENTED AS DEFINITIVE SIGN THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMENCING A FORMAL CIVIL WAR. K.C. WU SAID: "RIDICULOUS". HE SAID THAT THE CENTRAL KUOMINTANG DEMANDED THE "NEW CHINA DAILY" TO PRINT A CORRECTION. (CORRECTION: 4TH LINE UP FROM END PLEASE READ AT END..REPRESENTED A DEFINITE...ETC...).

(B.B.C. MONITORING)+++++15.36. R. (N.H).

Source 3d: Transcript

Minister of Communications Yu Fei Peng...said the Communists are forcing the peasants living in villages near the railway lines to destroy the railways, one man must remove one sleeper every ten men must remove one railway. The punishment for disobedience is massacre of whole families.

YT: Chungking denies use of poison gas against Communists

China (Telegraph services): U.P. dispatches in English for all stations. 14.05., 3.11.45.

Chungking: Minister of Information K.C. Wu laughed at the Communist charge of using poison gas in Shansi, he said: "Absolutely impossible. The Government has not got any poison gas."

He denied the Government was utilising Japs to fight the Communists.

Government proposals to Communists

K. C. Wu said during the talks of the past two days the government had proposed:

1) Both sides should order their troops to stay where they are.

2) Withdraw 10 KMS. Railways (few words inaudible).

...

Wu denies KMT plane dive-bombed

A Communist release charged a KMT plane with dive-bombing a village near the Communist held town of Touhsien on the Tientsin-Pukow railway in Shantung on 30th October, killing four and wounding eight. The Minister of Information K.C. Wu said nothing of that sort is true.

The Communist organ, the New China Daily, published that the central KMT headquarters in Chungking were printing millions of copies of a "Bandit suppression handbook" represented as a definite sign that the government is commencing a formal civil war. K.C. Wu said: "Ridiculous." He said that central KMT demanded the "New China Daily" to print a correction.

Source 4: Report entitled 'METHODS OF DISTINGUISHING GUERRILLAS FROM CIVILIANS', 1943-45. Catalogue Ref: WO 208/4398

I. METHODS OF DISTINGUISHING GUERRILLAS FROM CIVILIANS

1. Line up the civilians and make them stand at attention or else watch their reaction to orders.
2. Order them to undress to the waist and note the extent of their suntans. Farmers are usually suntanned because they work without shirts. Special precautions must be taken, however, since Communist laborers have recently been working in the fields and many have become suntanned, and have callouses on their hands.
3. Engage them in simple conversation and determine whether or not they are conversant with local topics or technical Communist talk.
4. Conduct a physical inspection and note their muscles. Communist Party members are usually evenly developed whereas the arms of farmers and the shoulders of peddlers seem to be overdeveloped.
5. Ask children whether the person in question is a resident of the village or a relative.
6. Separate a suspect from those whose acquaintance he claims and compare their statements regarding mutual acquaintances.
7. Select those in plain clothes whose clothes do not fit them, those whose clothes are not soiled like those of the ordinary people and occasionally those who have the soil of other areas on their clothes.
8. Test for the Communist ideal of common ownership by giving them cigarettes and other items during interrogations or conversations. When given these cigarettes or other items, Party members usually share them with others because of their thorough indoctrination in Communist principles. Also during mealtimes, they will yield to others to gain the merit of being an example for them. On the other hand, since they do not believe in private ownership, they sometimes demand cigarettes without any hesitation from their interrogating officers and others.
9. When they are mixed with civilians, note the ones who observe the expression on the interrogator's face or watch his eyes. These are signs that they are Party members.
10. Place a trusted prisoner in the same room with the guerrilla or civilian at the detention station or internment camp and secretly observe the situation.
11. When guerrillas and civilians are interrogated as to whether or not they are Party members, most of the Party members will state they are not. Note those who are keyed up and emphatic in their denial. That is a means of hiding the fact of their membership.

Source 4: Transcript

METHODS OF DISTINGUISHING GUERRILLAS FROM CIVILIANS

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Source 5a: Extract from a New Year's message from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, 6 January 1945. Catalogue Ref: FO 371/75736

- 2 -

PRESIDENT CHIANG'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

4

In the course of his New Year message to the people of China, President Chiang Kai-shek said:

"The task which the government considered as of great importance was to recover the Northeast, thereby preserving China's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. But unfortunately we have not been able to do this... Commercial and industrial cities as well as cultural centres in north and east China are now being menaced by the Communists. During this national crisis I cannot but blame myself for my inadequate leadership. I am sorry that I have not lived up to the high expectation of my people...

"We are convinced that all patriotic citizens will not tolerate the Communist method of 'liquidation', and 'struggle' and that they are not willing to abandon their liberty. But we are also fully aware that military operations have increased the people's burden and that they hope for an early conclusion of the war. Having shouldered the responsibility of national affairs, I have carefully studied the situation and have been giving careful consideration to the wishes of the people.

"Being a strong believer in the three People's Principles and abiding by Dr. Sun's bequeathed teachings, I did not have any intention of fighting the Communists at the end of the war. Immediately after V-J Day, the Government declared its principles for peace and reconstruction. Later it went one step further by seeking to solve the Communist question by means of political consultation. In the one-and-a-half years that elapsed, the Communists disregarded every agreement and obstructed every peace effort that was made. As a result these agreements and the programmes which were agreed upon were not implemented. In the end the Communists started an all-out rebellion, thereby endangering the very existence of the nation. Unwillingly the Government was forced to order a general mobilization and proceed with the anti-Communist campaign.

"Communism has already had a history of 25 years in China. In this period I have never for a moment given up the hope that the Communists would place the national interest above that of their own, would follow the regular courses as befitting a political party, and would join hands with the Government in finding ways to work for peace.

"The key to the problem of peace or war and to the happiness or suffering of the people is not in the hands of the Government, nor can the problem be solved by the popular appeal for peace to the Government alone. The problem can only be decided by the Communists. If the Communists are sincerely desirous of peace, and clearly give such indication, the Government will be only too glad to discuss with them the means to end the war. If a negotiated peace is not detrimental to national independence and sovereignty, but contributes to the welfare of

5

the people, if the constitution is not violated and constitutionalism is preserved, the democratic form of government is maintained, the entity of the armed forces is safeguarded and if the people's free mode of living and the minimum living standard is protected, then I shall be satisfied... If peace can be secured, I am not at all concerned about my own position. In this I will follow only the consensus of the people.

"If, on the other hand, the Communists are not sincerely desirous of peace, and will insist on continuing their armed rebellion, the Government, with no other alternative, will fight them to the finish. I firmly believe that the Government will win out in the end..."

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“We are convinced that all patriotic citizens will not tolerate the Communist method of ‘liquidation’, and ‘struggle’ and that they are not willing to abandon their liberty. But we are also fully aware that military operations have increased the people’s burden and that they hope for an early conclusion of the war. Having shouldered the responsibility of national affairs, I have carefully studied the situation and have been giving careful consideration to the wishes of the people.

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Source 5b: Article titled 'British Seek US Help for Plan to Contain Chinese Communism', 6 January 1949. Catalogue Ref: FO 371/75736

British Seek U. S. Help for Plan To Contain Chinese Communism

Envisage Program for Halting Expansion of Reds From Perimeter Countries—View on Dutch in Indonesia Is Changing

By **BENJAMIN WELLES**

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Jan. 6—A plan to prevent communism in China from spreading throughout the Far East is rapidly taking shape in the minds of policy-making officials of the British Government.

This plan, which is understood to have been passed to Washington for examination, envisages joint Anglo-American leadership in cooperation with other Asiatic and European powers in preventing the spread of communism beyond the borders of China.

In the past three weeks the British Government has done some hard thinking about China and the Far East. On the basis of reports from all its Far Eastern missions and evaluation of these reports at high diplomatic levels, the Government has come to two distinct conclusions.

The first is that the Chiang Kai-shek regime in China will inevitably be succeeded by a Communist-run government. The second and more important is that communism can no longer be stemmed from within China but must be "contained" from perimeter countries that still have non-Communist governments.

In short, the British are now inclined to bar recognition to any Chinese "coalition" government, believing this would prove a waste of time and, in effect, useless. Some British Far Eastern experts are frank in saying that they hope that the United States will adopt the same policy, "cut its losses" in China and adopt what they consider a realistic approach to Communist growth in the whole Far East.

In this connection preliminary reports of the results of the Dutch action in Indonesia are having a profound effect on British Government opinion. British officials who three weeks ago were outspokenly critical of the Dutch are now ready to concede privately that the Dutch may have been right after all.

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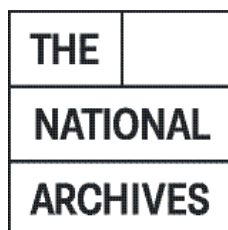
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