



REVISION – CHINESE CIVIL WAR



2 phases 1927-1937/1946-1949

1. *Causes 1927*

2. *War 1927-1937*

3. *1937-1946*

4. *Causes 1946*

5. *Results*

MATERIAL: Rogers/Thomas = 252-287

1. CAUSES OF THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR – FIRST PHASE:

LONG TERM CAUSES

- **Socio-economic factors**
- **Political weakness**
- **Influence of foreign powers**
- **Revolution 1911 - Republic**
- **The rule of Yuan Shikai (WWI – Japanese Twenty-One Demands)**

SHORT TERM CAUSES

- **Regionalism – Warlords (1916-1928)**
- **GMD - Guomindang (1912)**
- **WWI – Versailles Treaty (1919)**
- **May Fourth Movement (4/5 1919)**
- **Chinese Communist Party (1921)**
- **First United Front (1922)**
- **Whampoa Military Academy (1924)**
- **Sun Yixian dies (1925)**
- **Jiang Jieshi – GMD (1925)**
- **Northern Expedition (1926)**

IMMEDIATE CAUSES

- **White Terror -Shanghai/ (1927-)**

2. WAR 1927-1937:

Jiangxi Soviet 1930-1933:

- **First Encirclement Campaign – GMD (1930) – Communist victory (Mao – Guerilla tactics)**
- **Second/Third Encirclement Campaign – GMD (1931) – Communist victory (Mao...)**
- **Fourth Encirclement Campaign – GMD (1932) – Communist victory (Zhu De – Mao was replaced but his guerilla tactics was used)**
- **Fifth Encirclement Campaign – GMD (1933) – GMD victory (huge campaign!)**

Long March 1934-1935:

- **The Crossing of the Xiang River (1934 – Disaster led by the Twenty-Eight Bolsheviks)**
- **Zunyi Conference (1935 – Mao becomes the leader of the Communist Party!)**
- **The split of the CPC in Sichuan (1935 – Mao's tactics showed good military leadership)**
- **Mao and his forces reached Shaanxi (1935 – Mao had become the undisputed leader)**

Manchuria 1931-1933:

- **Japanese attack (1931)**
- **Manchuria – Manchukuo (1932)**
- **Jiangxi Soviet declares war against Japan (1932)**
- **GMD makes a truce with Japan (1933)**

Second United Front 1937

- **Mao suggested a Second United Front against Japan**
- **Stalin and Comintern pushed for an alliance between GMD and CPC**
- **Jiang Jieshi refused – kidnapped (1936)**
- **April 1937 – Second United Front formed**
- **GMD – received support both from the USA and the USSR**
- **CPC – did not receive any support but became acknowledged**

CPC STRENGTH

1. The Long March to a defensible place
2. Propaganda success (and myth)
3. Popular support (war against Japan)
4. Mao's skilled leadership
5. Civil War fighting experience
6. The survivors became a dedicated group of fanatical revolutionaries
7. Mao's suggestion to work together with the GMD against Japan – true Nationalism

GMD WEAKNESS

1. GMD focused on the war against CPC – not Japan (they lost popular support)
2. GMD treated the peasants poorly
3. GMD failed to implement Sun Yixian's Three Principles (Nationalism; People's Democracy and People's Livelihood)

3. 1937-1946

GMD weaknesses worsened by the Japanese War (1937-45)?

The GMD were to emerge from the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) divided, demoralized and discredited, their best troops destroyed and the economy in crisis:

1. **The GMD were cut off from their traditional power base in the Lower Yangzi area**
2. **The GMD forces were less active in fighting the Japanese than the Communists were**
3. **The GMD mismanaged the economy, fueling hyper-inflation**
4. **The GMD lost many of its best troops during the Japanese War**
5. **The GMD alienated the peasantry**
6. **GMD corruption worsened**
7. **GMD relations with intellectuals and students worsened**

What strengths did the CPC display during the Yanan Era (1935-46)?

The factors outlined below laid the foundations for CPC success in the Civil War of 1946-49; the CPC were to emerge from the Japanese War more united, with an enlarged army, wider support and control over a much greater area than previously.

1. **The CPC united under Mao**
2. **Under Mao, the CPC adapted Marxism to Chinese conditions, sinifying it**
3. **The CPC broadened its support base by appealing beyond the peasantry to other classes.**
4. **The CPC won peasant support, through land and educational reforms**
5. **The CPC had the opportunity to expand massively the area under its control because the Japanese drove the GMD southwards**
6. **The Red Army based at Shaanxi, led by Zhu De and Peng Dehuai, was much better disciplined than the GMD forces**
7. **Nationalism**
8. **The CPC took a more active part in resisting the Japanese (1937-45) than the GMD**

4. CAUSES 1946

It became part of the early **Cold War**. At first we did not see this clearly. Both of the superpowers wanted a stable China and a weakened Japan. They also wanted the CPC and GMD to form a coalition government and the US was even willing to let the USSR have some influence over Manchuria. General Marshall (US Army) was appointed mediator and he tried to get the CPC and GMD to agree on the following terms:

- *Set up a Coalition Government*
- *Form a temporary State Council*
- *Unite their armies into a new National Army*
- *Have free elections for local government*

When General Marshall tried to finalize the negotiations in 1946 both sides (CPC and GMD) were moving military troops into Manchuria – and a diplomatic solution was no longer possible. The USSR had occupied Manchuria after Japan left the region. Now the Soviet Union gave the CPC troops in Manchuria large stockpiles of Japanese weapons. The US wanted to contain communism, so they made US ships and aircraft available for Jiang Jieshi and GMD to send 500 000 troops to Manchuria. At the same time 50 000 US troops were sent north to occupy Beijing. Now both superpowers were involved (and thereby we can see an early example of a “*Proxy War*”). The Chinese Civil War would not be over until the end of 1949...

5. RESULTS

CPC Victory – WHY?

GMD WEAKNESS

- Resisted democratic changes
- Repression – alienated liberals and the middle class
- The GMD government relied on the support from a narrow wealthy section of businessmen and landlords
- Corruption continued
- The GMD government was inefficient
- Unfair tax system (especially for the peasants)
- Could not control the inflation (especially affected the middle class)
- Economic reforms 1948 came too late (new currency + rationing)
- Economic collapse 1949

Jiang Jieshi made serious mistakes

- Poured most of his military resources into Manchuria – far from his real bases of support
- Was responsible for the devastating defeat at the GMD Headquarter in Manchuria at the railroad junction Xuzhou (November 1948)
- Interfered too much in the military campaigns – far away from the action
- Poor quality of the GMD troops
- Poor morale of the GMD troops – high desertion rate (up to 70% annually)
- Brutal discipline within the GMD • GMD failed to punish collaborators in reoccupied areas
- GMD official and officers at Taiwan were corrupt which led to a rebellion in 1947
- GMD appointed non-Manchurians (as officials and commanders) to run this region
- US only provided limited support (Jiang Jieshi had counted on a large-scale US intervention in China against the CPC)

NOTE – many Chinese blamed GMD for the resumption of the Civil War in 1946

CPC STRENGTH

- The Role of Mao!
 - He was flexible with the ideology – he stressed the idea of a “*national struggle*” and he included four revolutionary classes (the proletariat, peasants, petite bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie)
 - He was flexible with the land policy and rural reforms (to win peasant support)
 - He enforced the “*eight rules*” of the Red Army
 - He enforced an egalitarian policy:
 - Everyone should have the same living conditions
 - Intellectuals had to work with peasants
 - Women should be treated equal to men (no more arranged marriages, right to divorce, right to education, vote at 18, right to do military service and right to form women’s associations)
- Skilled military leadership (like Lin Biao)
 - General Lin Biao successfully transformed the PLA from a guerilla fighting force to a regular army
 - The PLA had higher standards and morale compared with GMD (also better conditions, political indoctrination+ the “*eight rules*”)
 - Mao Zedong did not interfere with the military decision-making
- When the CPC took over urban areas they worked to prevent crime, to control food distribution and create a fairer tax system
- CPC had a widespread peasant support
- The role of infiltration and intelligence
 - Jiang Jieshi’s Assistant Chief of Staff, General Liu Fei, was a communist agent
 - The Head of the GMD’s War Planning Board, Guo Rugui, was also a communist agent
 - GMD Commander in Manchuria, General Wei Lihuang, was also a communist agent

NOTE – In 1949 the PLA was much bigger than the GMD Army (4 million –1.5 million)

The eight rules of the Red Army:

1. *Return and roll up the straw matting on which you sleep.*
2. *Be courteous and polite to the people and help them when you can.*
3. *Return all borrowed articles.*
4. *Replace all damaged articles.*
5. *Be honest in all transactions with the peasants.*
6. *Pay for all articles purchased.*
7. *Replace all doors when you leave a house.*
8. *Be sanitary, and, especially, establish latrines a safe distance from people's houses.*

Revolutionary War – Mao's revolutionary warfare consisted of several stages:

- **Setting up base areas**
- **The organization phase**
- **Defending the bases**
- **The guerrilla phase**
- **Protracted war**
- **Seizing power**

Mao about Guerilla warfare: We split up into small, swift combat units which got in their rear and on their flanks and attacked, cutting them into segments. There's nothing secret about such tactics ... and the militarists later tried to use them against us. They failed because such guerrilla warfare requires not only a thorough knowledge of the terrain of the battle area but also the support of the common people.