

Civil War 1946-1949 (cont'd)

Five major campaigns:

1. The struggle for Manchuria 1946-1947
2. The 'strong point offensive' 1947
3. The Liaoshen campaign Sept-Nov 1948
4. The Huaihai campaign, Nov 1948-Jan 1949
5. The Pingjin campaign, Nov 1948-Jan 1949

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Mao focuses on Beijing - why Beijing?

Three key victories in the North East: Xinbaoan; Zhangjiakou & Tianjin

After the first two victories, the NRA forces had gone to Tianjin to prepare for a march to Beijing. Mao and the PLA attacked Tianjin, not waiting to attack them on the march, in an attempt to crush them in Tianjin.

They succeeded and Tianjin fell on **15 January 1949**.

The Communists now turned to Beijing - would the remaining 200,000 NRA soldiers fight? No, the Nationalist governor agreed to talks and then agreed to surrender and evacuate troops.

16 January 1949 Beijing falls to the Communists

There was a victory parade on 31 January made up of predominantly US military equipment - all taken from the GMD showing how much effective the CCP military policies had been.

The significance of the three major campaigns (Liaoshen, Huaihai, Pingjin) - 1948-1949:

Jiang handed over power to Li Zongren but retained the title of Generalissimo so no real hand over.

The end of the civil war.....mopping up!

CCP forces marched South taking:

The Yangzi (by crossing it, very symbolic) April 1949

Nanjing April 1949

Shanghai May 1949

Mao announced the creation of the Chinese People's Republic, 1 Oct 1949

Jiang Jieshi flees to Taiwan, December 1949 from where he claims the legitimate government of the whole of China.

Death toll of the civil war

It was a brutal war with atrocities on both sides.

Nationalists lost 3 million men

Communists lost 1 million

Famine and other civilian deaths takes total to 6 million.

(17 million soldiers died in WW1; 23 million in WW2, 3 million of which were Chinese)

Outcome of the Civil War - Nationalist weaknesses:

1. Military failings, strategic errors:

Eg. Jiang was impatient so opted to try to take Manchuria rather consolidate his strength in the centre of China.

'Strong Point offensive' a good example of misunderstanding the situation

2. Jiang engendered little loyalty in troops:

Weak leadership, tactically weak decisions, underfunding led forces to defect or become moles. (more on p144)

Conscription and training methods were brutal but the only way to gather troops (p146)

3. Jiang engendered little loyalty in the people:

Jiang's failure against Japan (and strategy of retreat);

corruption (see notes on Jiang in his relationship with the underworld);

Cronyism & nepotism (more on p144) compared to his stated moral force for good (New Life Movement);

dependence on US

Dependence on urban elite

Refusal to acknowledge local power structures in attempts to consolidate rule (p146)

Compare this to Mao and his comprehension of the economic situation (ie poor China) and its rural roots. (see below on popularity of CCP).

3. **Failure to win the propaganda war:** 1 million landlords were killed due to CCP policy, how did Jiang not manage to make this a 'marketing tool' for GMD support.

4. Economic failings over the period of their leadership 1935-1945 (not just through the civil war):

Military failings aside, it can be argued that **INFLATION** was the single biggest problem undermining Jiang's leadership. Inflation is the general term for all prices going up in an economy (ie housing, food, transport, food).

1937-1941 - mild inflation (price indexed at 100 in the year 1937 rose to 1980)

1941-1948 - hyper inflation (price index in 1941 went from 1980 to 287,700,000)

Why?

In 1945, 80% of government expenditure was going on the military. To fund this, Jiang raised taxes, nationalised banks (for control purposes), borrowed from overseas, but more importantly he **printed money**.

He funded 50-70% of his money needs from printing money.

Eg in 1937 there was 3.6 billion yuan in circulation; in 1945 there was 1,506 billion yuan in circulation

This has two effects:

1. As money in circulation increases, there is more money to spend which chases fewer and fewer items to buy thus prices go up.

AND/OR

2. This causes a fall in the value of Chinese currency (or depreciation). This is caused as so much money is printed (ie lots of money so lower value) plus, as the country is seen as economically weak, demand for its currency falls.

Inflation is also seen as a cause of a weak currency, although the weak currency often causes inflation as it becomes more difficult to pay for things as the value of your currency falls.

Eg You want to buy a pen for \$1. If the exchange rate for \$/Y is 1:100, the pen costs Y100. However, if the exchange rate shows a depreciating yuan eg \$/Y 1:150, you now need Y150 to buy the same pen.

An easier way to think of all this is:

There are \$100 in circulation and Y100 in circulation thus one \$ equals one Yuan.

If more yuan are printed with no increase in \$, then there are \$100 in circulation and, say, Y200.

So, your Y2 in your pocket is now only worth \$1 when previously, Y1 was worth \$1. So the, value has halved in terms of buying power and value internationally as a currency.

At the same time, China tries to repay debtors, as their own currency becomes increasingly worthless.

<https://fee.org/articles/the-great-chinese-inflation/>

China is basically bankrupt by 1949

Summary p147 Lynch

Outcome of the Civil War - CCP strength:

1. The CCP developed the first semblance of administration of the countryside through the Yanan Period. Peasants were given some education but more importantly, some control over their own affairs through cooperatives...and land!

Rule was very often through fear so it was not paradise. It has been argued that the CCP garnered support by encouraging peasants to seize property from the hated landlords (and helping to control rents?) This led to 1 million landlords being killed between 1945-1949