

## Studies on Kuomintang's Propaganda of New Equal Treaties During the Anti-Japanese War

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### Abstract

During the Second World War, in order to support China's Anti-Japanese War, US and UK have announced abolition of the previous unequal treaties to China, and signed the new equal treaties. Taking full advantage of these new equal treaties, Kuomintang (KMT) has launched propaganda of the new treaties to serve its wartime politics. In this process, KMT's "revolutionary" image has been set up, as well as Chiang Kai Shek's totalitarian dictatorship has been glorified and the KMT party's interests served; on the other hand, Wang's puppet government has been struck, price-fixing policy has been publicized and the overall situation served. Therefore, it reflects the multi-faceted characteristics of KMT's wartime politics: While adhering to fight against Japan, KMT took advantage of the monopoly status of state power to achieve its political dividends.

**Key words:** Anti-Japanese War; Kuomintang; Propaganda on equal treaties

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### INTRODUCTION

On January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1943, US and UK signed equal treaties with China and abolished the unequal treaties, which

are a major event in China's diplomacy during the anti-Japanese war. The study results of scholars on equal treaties are plenty, but almost all focused on discussing the facts of the treaty abolition and the relevant international relations, as for the KMT's equal treaty propaganda to serve its wartime politics, however, are relevantly less.

### 1. TO SET UP KMT'S "REVOLUTIONARY IMAGE"

Since 1920s, "revolution" has become a strong word in China's political discourse. In the political game, a party who could firmly grasp the initiatives of "revolution" would occupy the strategic high ground of political co-channel and legitimacy, owning an invisible but very powerful weapon to fight against its political opponents (Wang, 2005, p.173). In contrast, if the other party once was labeled as "counter-revolutionary", it would be easy to fall into a vulnerable discourse position, or into an embarrassment difficult to make defense for itself.

Though KMT has established the central government in 1927, the features of its political legitimacy were obviously insufficient (Zhu, 2006). Inside the party, continuous factional infighting, contradictions and civil wars weakened its political dominance; outside the party, constant disclosure of its "counter-revolutionary" nature made by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has impacted its rule base. Therefore, KMT has exerted itself to strengthen its political legitimacy and the rule of force.

Since the anti-Japanese war, all domestic political parties and social classes took the national interests as the priority and united together to fight against the Japanese. In the world, the central government controlled by KMT was the international representative of China; in the domestic, KMT controlled the important base of support of the war - the rear base, therefore, it can be

said that KMT took the absolute dominant position in political resources. The new treaties signed equally have further created a perfect opportunity to strengthen its legitimacy and “revolutionary image” for KMT.

After the equal treaties have been signed, the KMT authority first of all wrote the contribution of abolishing the unequal treaties into their own “revolutionary struggle” achievements.

As for the new treaties signed equally, Chiang Kai Shek has spoken to the national military and civilian over radio, “After fifty years of revolutionary bleeding and five and a half years of war sacrifice, we Chinese nation has changed the bitter history of over a hundred years of unequal treaties into the glorious record of abolishing the unequal treaties”.<sup>1</sup> The “fifty years of revolutionary bleeding” by Chiang referred the abolition of unequal treaties to the results of unremitting revolution by KMT since its establishment as Hsing chung hui. Subsequently, the “*New Equal Treaties Publicity Outline*” issued by KMT central propaganda department summarized four backgrounds for the abolition of unequal treaties in the third part: “a) A hundred years of sacrifice; b) Decades of revolutionary struggle; c) Long-term war of sacrifice; d) Understanding and affirmation by countries all over the world to the Chinese nation”,<sup>2</sup> which likewise linked the abrogation of unequal treaties to KMT’s persistent “revolution”. Under the guidance of this new equal treaties publicity outline, the provisional capital held an official celebration assembly. The preparation file of the assembly also wrote,

the president issued documents to alert and encourage the military and civilian that the conclusion of the new treaties is the result of our party’s fifty years of revolutionary bloodshed and five years of the military and civilian’s war of resistance.<sup>3</sup>

In the addition, KMT’s basic level party branch also properly carried out the instructions of the KMT Central committee. In the paper which the Jiangjin County to celebrate the new treaties also pointed out that

Today’s acquirement of China’s equal international status owns to the results of Chinese Kuomintang’s fifty years of Revolutionary Struggle, over five years of resistance war over

the country, and the successive leadership of the prime minister (Sun Yat-Sen) and the president (Chiang Kai-Shek).<sup>4</sup>

In order to propagandize the merits of the abolition of unequal treaties, the KMT authority published *China Kuomintang’s Fifty Years of Diplomatic Struggle History*, whose “Introduction” section made the most incisive description of KMT’s fifty years of “revolutionary image” and its struggle course (Central News Agency, 1943). The main text of this diplomatic struggle history has been divided into fourteen parts, which were traced from Hsing chung hui, Nanjing provisional government’s free and equal guideline on the foreign policy after the 1911 revolution, the revolutionary diplomacy advocated by KMT’s reorganization in the 1920s, Sun Yat-Sen’s northward publicity of abolition of unequal treaties, the foundation of Nanjing National Government, the continued northern expedition, the tariff autonomy, and conclusion of equal treaties, etc.. Its objective was to describe KMT’s fifty years of development process as a glorious history of unremitting struggle for the abolition of unequal treaties.

However, it is not difficult to find a special phenomenon from these materials: About the stated reasons for abrogation of unequal treaties, these related documents and data have placed KMT’s fifty years of “revolutionary struggle” prior to the resistance war and sacrifice of the national military and civilian. This move actually gave much credit for abolition of unequal treaties to KMT itself, trying to create a positive and noble image of it, whose purpose was to bang the drum for its political legitimacy. What’s more, the KMT interior even thought that the abolition of unequal treaties was only the result of insistent efforts of the party, with no mention of the contributions of the national-wide bloodshed and sacrifice. KMT Chongqing headquarter has said the instructions to celebrate the new equal treaties, “Henceforth the unequal treaties have been abrogated. One hundred years of shackles have been abolished, which is of course the glory of the whole nation, but it’s more due to the achievements of our party’s leading the revolution.”<sup>5</sup>

In order to create a publicity atmosphere, KMT also paid attention to constructing social public’s salute to KMT from the outside. KMT Chongqing headquarter required this in its expanding propaganda plan, “let the people’s organizations send telegrams to the central committee to celebrate the conclusion of new treaties

<sup>1</sup> The Speech of the President to Encourage the National Military and Civilian. (1943). *Journal of National Zhongzheng University-Special Issue to Celebrate Conclusion of New Treaties*, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> Instructions of Sichuan provincial government department of education about the publicity outline of equal new treaties issued to Sichuan provincial Chuandong Normal School (publicity outline as attached), Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0129, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00273.

<sup>3</sup> Agenda of preparatory conference to celebrate conclusion of Sino-US and Sino-UK new treaties by the public at the provisional capital, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0002, File No. 00147.

<sup>4</sup> The letter about reviewing the founding conference to celebrate conclusion of new treaties of Sino-US and Sino-UK by the third district of Jiangjin county to National Women Normal College (slogan attached), Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0121, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00093.

<sup>5</sup> The instruction of Chongqing city executive committee directly under China Kuomintang Central about sending representatives to participate in the celebration conference of Sino-US and Sino-UK new treaties, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00001.

(the important content of the telegrams will be drafted by the headquarter).<sup>6</sup> That is to say, KMT has played a self-directed and self-appreciated show in the political propaganda of new treaties, the people's organizations only made signatures on the solute telegrams whose content have been drawn up. The telegram of Chongqing temporary Council to the KMT Central Committee fully embodied this instruction,

Fighting for an equal international status is the founding father's life goal, abolishing the unequal treaties is the basis of the government's foreign policy. These two objects today have been successfully completed under the leading of your president (Chiang Kai-Shek) and your minister (Tse-Ven Soong). The tremendous achievements will go down in history.<sup>7</sup>

It similarly accentuated KMT's efforts and had no mention of huge sacrifice of the anti-Japanese military and civilian. In addition, KMT headquarters in Chongqing also required the basic level party branches to

instigate the local people groups to separately or jointly send celebration telegraphs to the central committee (the branches themselves don't need to do this). The telegraph content should stress that the conclusion of the new Sino-US, Sino-UK treaties is the result of our party's fifty years of struggle, and the achievements of the founding father (Sun Yat-Sen) and the president's successful leading of revolution and resistance war.<sup>8</sup>

This also showed that KMT has made a self-directed and self-performed show, meanwhile, it tried to let public opinions seem to be spontaneous and therefore emphasized the basic level party branches no need to do the same, which really "rack its brains".

In fact, a ruling party's realistic publicity and appropriate praise for its leadership and its country's diplomatic achievement give no ground for blame. However, that KMT contributed the abolition of unequal treaties the most into his fifty years of revolutionary struggle was suspected to be an excessive boast. The fact proved that US and UK's agreeing to abrogate unequal treaties was closely related to the Chinese tremendous sacrifices and contributions to the world Anti-Fascist war during the period. China has become one of the "four Powers" from a poor and weak country, US's support without saying. However, US's support lied in China's Ant-Japanese war being conducive to the interests of USA. China contained most of Japanese troops, is an important force in the world Anti-Fascist camp. The US

and UK allies had to consider from their national realistic interests to accept China's requirement of abolishing the unequal treaties. Therefore, the nation-wide resistance war and bloodshed are the real reason for the abolition of unequal treaties. Lattimore, the former political counselor of Chiang Kai-Shek, said, "US and UK did this not only because they thought this is a cause of justice, but also a respect to China's five years of war for all free loving nations." (Lattimore, 1943) Feng Yuxiang also pointed out directly in his speech entitled *Conclusion of New Treaties and Social Stability* that the conclusion of new treaties is the contributed to people's fight and bloodshed. "We wish our compatriot to pay attention to one thing, how we could achieve this result, in one word it has been obtained through the war, that is to say the success has been obtained by blood". Feng Yuxiang then clarified that the success of equal treaties has been achieved by bloodshed and sacrifice of those ordinary people who neither lived in tall buildings nor wore silk dresses (Feng, 1943).

In the propaganda for equal treaties, KMT strengthened to shape its "revolutionary image" and propagandized its fifty years of struggle process, which had a target in politics.

During the propaganda of equal treaties, KMT's publicity of its own contribution to the abolition of unequal treaties aimed at civilizing people to hold itself as the only valid party, hence to make people obey, support, and consolidate its ruling status. The Ministry of Education held by Chen Lifu made a special issue *Le Feng* to popularize the equal treaties, and forwarded to all schools. Chen Lifu wrote articles for this special issue, advocating that the long-term bondage of unequal treaties to China lied in people's no belief, therefore could not unite to fight, and claiming that to unify beliefs with the three people's principles was the guarantee of country's development and people's freedom. Chen Lifu tried to use the success of equal treaties to strengthen the ideology of three people's principles in the education system.<sup>9</sup>

Also, in the face of the constitutional rolling movements in the real area, KMT intended to use the propaganda of equal treaties to rationalize and legitimize KMT's one-party rule. One Sun Fo's speech could be a circumstantial evidence. Sun Fo said, that the US and UK allies did not understand China's one party rule and worried that China would become a fascist country was because they "do not have a deep understanding about politics and development of China. They do not understand that the KMT is a party responsible to find the country, and has been congruously supported by the whole nation, which has been even admitted by the different parties." (Sun, 1943) This indirectly proved that the KMT was in the pursuit of a "special" political status. The

<sup>6</sup> The implementation draft of expanding publicity of conclusion of new treaties of Sino-UK and Sino-US, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00647.

<sup>7</sup> The telegraph of Chongqing provisional council about celebrating Sino-US and Sino-UK equal new treaties, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00486.

<sup>8</sup> The telegraph of China Kuomintang Chongqing Executive Committee about copying the measures of expanding celebration and publicity of the new treaties of Sino-UK and Sino-US (measures attached, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0004, File No. 00001.

<sup>9</sup> Chen Lifu, Maintenance of Equality and Freedom, *Le Feng* Special issue, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0122, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00414, p.2.

construction of KMT's glorious image of "revolutionary image" through the propaganda of equal treaties was just to make the reasonable and legitimate comments for this "special" status.

## 2. TO STRENGTHEN THE AUTOCRATIC CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP OF CHIANG KAI-SHEK

Chiang Kai-Shek's position as the leader has been constantly demonstrated since the Anti-Japanese war and enhanced during the propaganda of equal treaties.

About the propaganda of Chiang Kai-Shek's role in equal treaties, KMT's approach was to highlight the flag of the party left by Sun Yat-Sen and the political symbol of Sun Yat-Sen as the founding father, and at last to mention the president's leadership to find a reasonable explanation for Chiang Kai Shek's dictatorship.

Sun Yat-Sen is KMT's late leader, though passed away for many years, his political symbol for KMT to legitimately rule China has been continuously strengthened. In 1940 March, KMT officially entitled Sun Yat-Sen as father of the nation, "the purpose is to shape Sun Yat-Sen as the common spiritual leader of the whole nation, so as to arouse and unite people to fight against the Japanese invaders." (Chen, 2006) It should be said that to make Sun Yat-Sen from a great spirit into a kind of idol had certain positive effects for people's united resistance against the Japanese. However, during the propaganda of equal treaties, Chiang Kai-Shek has also been propagandized while strengthening Sun Yat-Sen, which obviously reflected the characteristics of KMT's wartime politics serving its party interests.

*China Kuomintang's Fifty Years of Diplomatic Struggle History* not only reviewed KMT's struggle course, but also devoted a section to elaborate the "president's consistent leadership", especially pointed out that Chiang Kai-Shek was the capable leader who carried on Sun Yat-Sen's work. The quote of Sun Yat-Sen's words of "foresight" aimed to pave the way for obeying President Chiang in the following, implying that President Chiang had the foresight to lead the national compatriots, and the goal of beating Japanese, founding country and revolutionary success could be realized if other people could uniformly followed him. (Central News Agency, 1943) KMT was intended to emphasize that the president was the inheritor who carried out Sun Yat-Sen's behest, and the country would realize rejuvenation if other people obeyed president's guidance. To portray Chiang as the successor of Sun Yat-Sen, KMT racked its brains.

In addition to the literal propaganda, KMT also change the public space to be political propaganda stages through assembly, march and slogan shouting, etc.. Because space was not a stationary physical location, it could

produce dramatic change through human behaviors, or even became an excellent place to moralize and cultivate people (Huang, 2006). On February 5, 1943, the public in the provisional capital held a conference to celebrate the conclusion of new equal treaties in Chongqing Fuzhichi. One purpose of the celebration mentioned in the preparatory documents of conference was "to let men and women, old and young understand that the equal treaties' conclusion has been achieved with the great personality of Chairman Chiang and under the correct leadership of the party."<sup>10</sup> After the conference tens of thousands of people paraded. When the parade passed the president's mansion and government's door, they exclaimed, "Long live the president! Long live Chairman Lin!"<sup>11</sup> Though the slogan also expressed respect to Lin Sen, there's no other slogans in addition to the ceremonial salute of "long live Chairman Lin". This showed that Lin Sen was the chairman of the Republic of China and nominal symbol of the country, who could not be completely ignored after all. But to the president there was not only the ceremonial slogan as "long live the president", but also expressions of "obey president Chiang" which substantially stressed Chiang's hegemony.<sup>12</sup> March and slogan shouting, etc. have further promoted Chiang's leadership in the public fields.

In addition to praise that Chiang Kai-Shek was the successor to the cause of Sun Yat-Sen, some people in the KMT even entirely contributed to the conclusion of equal treaties to the wise leadership of Chiang Kai-Shek. Under this atmosphere, even the professional diplomat Wellington Koo had to say in a speech about equal treaties: "the reasons for this success are of course because of the justice of the allies of US and UK, however, its main cause lies in the correct leadership of the chairman." (Wellington, 1943)

In recognition of Chiang Kai-Shek's contribution to the conclusion of equal treaties, some people in the KMT even organized the feudal "presenting Nine Tripod Cauldrons" event to pay tribute to Chiang Kai-Shek. In late January 1943, universities directly under the KMT Central Organization Ministry and KMT branches in the mining industry have planned to present nine tripods to Chiang Kai-Shek. The inscriptions engraved on the Nine Tripod Cauldrons said,

<sup>10</sup> Agenda of preparatory conference to celebrate conclusion of Sino-US and Sino-UK new treaties by the public at the provisional capital, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0002, File No. 00147.

<sup>11</sup> Agenda of preparatory conference to celebrate conclusion of Sino-US and Sino-UK new treaties by the public at the provisional capital, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0002, File No. 00147.

<sup>12</sup> Agenda of preparatory conference to celebrate conclusion of Sino-US and Sino-UK new treaties by the public at the provisional capital, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0002, File No. 00302.

Versed in both composing and martial arts, though benevolent and friendly to neighbor countries, our president leads to fight against the invaders, we scholars and workers sing and dance here to respectfully present Nine Tripod Cauldrons for him, which will be treasured for thousands of years.<sup>13</sup>

The inscriptions has extremely exaggerated Chiang Kai-Shek's contributions in the equal treaties, which were like praising ancient emperor's political and military achievements. This feudal praise form of "presenting Nine Tripod Cauldrons" appeared within KMT who claimed to lead the country towards "freedom and equality", that was extraordinary absurd. On February 27, 1943 the central news agency reported the related matters of planning by tripod presenting in the title of *To Cast Nine Tripod Cauldrons to Present Chairman Chiang*.<sup>14</sup> The activity of tripod presenting was known to the public, but no public objection. The "presenting Nine Tripod Cauldrons" was carried out orderly until November 7<sup>th</sup> the ceremony has been held. The farce of "presenting Nine Tripod Cauldrons" has lasted for as long as eight months. Chiang knew this beforehand, but didn't come up to intervene or stop, only at the last moment refused to accept the Nine Tripod Cauldrons (Deng, 2009). The incident of "presenting Nine Tripod Cauldrons" has reflected the extent to which Chiang Kai-Shek has been promoted by the KMT by taking advantage of the propaganda of equal treaties.

However, during the process of strengthening leadership of Chiang Kai-shek by propagandizing equal treaties, there's not no different voices within the KMT. On the role of Chiang Kai-shek in the signing of new treaties, Feng Yuxiang has mentioned in speeches, but it was in this context, "When we commemorate the success of signing equal treaties, we should not forget to thank the highest commander who has bended himself for the national affairs, and all the soldiers who have fight for the country with great merits, particularly those warriors who shed their bloods and sacrificed their lives." In these words Feng Yuxiang has paid tribute to the highest commander, recognized Chiang's role in the conclusion of new treaties, but the focus was still on the great contribution of soldiers who bled and died in the war. In the posterior segment of the speech, Feng explained more specifically, "We want to learn the democratic spirit of US and UK," (Feng, 1943) which was significantly different from those words that sang merits of Chiang's dictatorship. Song Qingling clarified the importance of democracy and national conference in her speech *Freedom and Equality Can Only Be Achieved After Japanese Aggressors have been Wiped Out*. She said that the Prime Minister's testament had two points: one was the abolition of unequal treaties, and the

second was to hold a national conference. Song Qinglin also expected in this speech that, "the democratic spirit will be developed because of the anti-Japanese war and foundation of the country, a new China of three people's principles shall be founded on the base of the elected national conference." (Song, 1943)

Although there were a number of different voices within the KMT like this, in the propaganda of equal treaties emphasizing Chiang Kai-Shek's personal achievements and outstanding leadership was still the major trend within KMT. Soon afterwards on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943, Lin Sen passed away. Shortly after Lin Sen's death, the KMT Central Committee decided that Lin Sen's portrait no longer hangs in the auditorium from September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1943. Thereafter, in all formal public places such as auditoriums, only portraits of Sun Yat-Sen and Chiang Kai-Shek would be hung.<sup>15</sup> In other words, in a few months after the end of the celebration, KMT cancelled hanging of Lin Sen's portrait in public places by taking the chance of his death, leaving only the portrait of Chiang Kai-Shek hung on a par with Sun Yat-Sen, since when the systematic construction of Chiang Kai-Shek's hegemony has been completed in the perspective of political symbol.

KMT magnified Chiang's personal effects while propagandizing the equal treaties, and took all possible means to eulogize his achievements, which fully showed that the malformed political system of one person's domination and one person's dictatorship has been realized as it should have been like this.

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### 3. TO SERVE THE OVERALL POLITICAL SITUATION OF RESISTANCE WAR

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In addition to serve the own interests of the party, KMT also took propaganda of the equal treaties to serve the overall situation of resistance war, which was embodied in three aspects.

A) Taking the opportunity of propagandizing the new equal treaties, KMT struck Wang Ching-Wei's puppet government and disclosed its traitor's deceit and confusion to the public.

The national government's signing equal treaties with the UK and US have caused the Japanese and the puppet government's attention. Wang's puppet government and the Japanese also directed a political farce of "abolishing unequal treaties". From the legal perspective, since the beginning of the Sino-Japan war all treaties between the two countries have been abolished. The problem of unequal treaties between China and Japan has no longer existed. In order to foster Wang's puppet government,

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<sup>13</sup> *Gu Jiegang Diary the 5<sup>th</sup> volume 1943-1946* (2007), Taipei Linking Publishing Co., Ltd., p34.

<sup>14</sup> *Gu Jiegang Diary the 5<sup>th</sup> volume 1943-1946* (2007), Taipei Linking Publishing Co., Ltd., p.33.

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<sup>15</sup> The instruction of Jiangxi provincial government: This is to Stipulate As per Order the Measures of Hanging of President's Portrait and Address (1944), *Jiangxi Provincial Government Gazette*, 1296, p.30.

highlight its so-called “legal” status and offset the positive influence of equal treaties’ conclusion between China and the allies of UK and US, the Japanese and the puppet government also planned related activities to “abolish” extraterritoriality. When the Japanese and the puppet government learned the signing date of equal treaties between the national government and the US and UK, they brought forward the signing date of *Agreement of Returning Concessions and Abolishing Extraterritoriality* which was originally scheduled on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1943, and the puppet government’s announcement of war to the UK and US to January 9<sup>th</sup>, intending to compromise the positive significance of new treaties of Sino-US and Sino-UK (Zhou & Cai, 2003). Wang Ching-Wei and Japan’s signing of the so-called *Agreement of Returning Concessions and Abolishing Extraterritoriality* was merely a deceptive strategy by which Japan tethered the traitor regime of Wang’s puppet government in the process of invading China, without any real meaning to the overall war. But in propagandas, the practices to confuse the public by the Japanese aggressors and the traitors still needed to be denounced. For this purpose, Tse-Ven Soong on behalf of the national government gave severe criticism to the puppet government in January 12<sup>th</sup> 1943’s press conference. Tse-Ven Soong said, “Wang’s puppet government to Japan is like dogs and cats to their master. The dogs and cats can never be expected to be equal to the master. This really isn’t worth a comment.” (Za i& Fang, 1993, p.55) The central news agency also wrote that the puppet government’s declaration of war was merely to execute Japan’s command, which was absurd and could only prove that the enemy was at the end of the rope (Za i& Fang, 1993, p.37).

What’s more, Bao Kai, the spokesman of the Military Commission incisively analyzed and refuted the scandal of puppet government in combination of the propaganda of equal treaties. Bao Kai pointed out that from the logic of time, China’s resistance war against Japan and declaration of war against each other already abrogated the unequal treaties in fact. Japan and the puppet government’s signing of pseudo treaties were just to cover up the acts of aggression and to deceive the compatriots of the enemy occupied areas. The Japanese commanded Wang Ching-Wei to declare war to the UK and US, the reason of which was not only to make an empty show of strength, but also by making use of the traitors to plunder and extract materials at Japan occupied areas to support its aggression war, forcing the people at Japan occupied area to be cannon fodder for the Japanese. About Wang’s so called “taking back the concessions and abolishing extraterritoriality”, Bao Kai analyzed that international treaties must be signed between parties in an equal position. The relationship of Japanese and traitors was the relationship of master and slave. Everything of the slave belonged to the master, the slave had no independent

rights. Japan and the puppet government’s conclusion of new treaties were like Japan’s signing contract with himself, and Japan’s returning concessions also equaled to returning concessions to himself. At last, Bao Kai disclosed the essence of the puppet government, “as long as the enemy doesn’t withdraw from our territory, his so-called “abolishing of extraterritoriality” and the so-called “returning concessions” is complete craps.” (Bao, 1943)

In order to expose the puppet government’s traitor behaviors, KMT central propaganda department formulated *Propaganda Points on the Event of Declaration of War of Wang ching-wei Puppet Government* and issued it with propaganda points of equal treaties, whose main contents were as follows: that the Japanese let the puppet government enter war showed that it’s at the dead end, and the puppet government’s joining of war was to solve the cost of the war. Wang’s joining of war proved its misery and absurdity, and helped the Japanese to ravage compatriots’ life and property in the occupied areas, beyond that, it had no influence on the war. Wang’s joining of war also showed that the Japanese aggressors were crumbling, the UK and US should have reinforced the aids to China. KMT central propaganda department stipulated, that “these points should be publicized with reference to the publicity of conclusion of equal treaties between China and the UK, US.”<sup>16</sup>

The KMT headquarters in Chongqing also required clearly in the *Draft Implementation Measures of Expanding Publicity of Conclusion of Equal Treaties of Sino-US and Sino-UK* that the purpose of the propaganda was

to make people be aware of the significance of the conclusion of new treaties, strengthen their belief of independence so as to revere the country, crush Wang’s puppet government’s conspiracy of war declaration, and promote the great cause of fight against the Japanese and found the country.<sup>17</sup>

B) To expand propaganda of strict price limitation plan through propaganda of equal treaties. Though the conclusion of Sino-UK, Sino-US new treaties was a great event to be celebrated, the social situation at the rear areas was very serious due to economic deterioration and serious inflation. According to the price index of the national government statistics office, the price index of 1942 December was 61.28 times of the benchmark index of 1937 (Sichuan Union University Institute, para.4, 1998). Price control was the social and economic problem

<sup>16</sup> The telegraph of the Ministry of Society to China Western Science Academy about the measures to expand publicity of Sino-UK and Sino-US new treaties and publicity points on the event of declaration of war of Wang Ching-Wei puppet government (measures and points attached), Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0122, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00012.

<sup>17</sup> The *Draft Implementation Measures of Expanding Publicity of Conclusion of Equal Treaties of Sino-US and Sino-UK*, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0051, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00647.

to urgently resolve at the rear areas, which was also a major political problem KMT had to face. From January 1943, the national government has propagandized the price plan on various important occasions, which also pervaded the propaganda of equal treaties.

Lin Sen's broadcast speech on 1943 New year's day focused on two problems, one was about the significance of equal treaties, the other was about the price limitation. "I hope that our countrymen will pay attention to *The Plan of Strengthening Price Control*...which the compatriots should spontaneously help and observe, don't avoid this obligation and don't give up this right." (Zai & Fang, 1993, p.9) Chiang Kai-Shek also stressed in the broadcast speech after the new treaties have been signed, that "everyone shall live in the way of wartime, and implement price control plan".<sup>18</sup> In addition, the *Publicity Outline of Equal New Treaties* issued by KMT central propaganda department also clarified that, after signing of equal treaties "our people's due consciousness" was to "obey government's laws and fulfill citizen's obligation". The outline enumerated three obligations, wherein the first was "to obey the price limitation - effectively observe the limitation action and report and punish criminals."<sup>19</sup> According to the publicity outline, the basic level party branches should also stress the price limitation slogan while publicizing new treaties: "celebrating the new treaties needs to assist in the implementation of price limitation policy."<sup>20</sup>

C) To maintain friendship of the allies, the remaining problems in the Sino-UK equal new treaties should be carefully handled in the propaganda.

During the negotiation for Sino-UK new treaties, the national government had hoped to abolish all unequal treaties of the UK to China, including the Kowloon concession problem. Since the British insisted not to give up the Kowloon concession, the national government had to compromise in order to abolish the unequal treaties as soon as possible. Kowloon concession problem has not been resolved by the conclusion of new treaties, which has left a regret henceforth.

About this colonial diplomacy of UK the national government knew clearly, but in the propaganda of new treaties it still paid attention to keep restraint and avoid stimulating it. *The Implement Draft of Measures*

<sup>18</sup> The Speech of the President to Encourage the National Military and Civilian. (1943). *Journal of National Zhongzheng University-Special Issue to Celebrate Conclusion of New Treaties*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Instructions of Sichuan provincial government department of education about the publicity outline of equal new treaties issued to Sichuan provincial Chuandong Normal School (publicity outline as attached), Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0129, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00273.

<sup>20</sup> The slogans of the public at the 10<sup>th</sup> district of Chongqing City to celebrate Sino-US and Sino-UK equal new treaties, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0061, Catalog No. 0015, File No. 01955.

*to Expand Publicity of Sino-UK and Sino-US New Treaties* has required implicitly to "pay attention to avoid overdoing it and the subtle international relationship". If the "subtle international relationship" was difficult to acknowledge, another material had shown very clearly. A *Propaganda Bulletin* issued by KMT Chongqing City Executive Commission which was marked "confidential" required that no slight dissatisfaction to the remaining problems of new treaties should have been expressed. The bulletin required that "the problems which have not been involved" mentioned in the "annex the 4<sup>th</sup> clause" could only be interpreted as "not yet perfect" and could not be criticized or slightly abused.<sup>21</sup>

Through propagandizing the new treaties, KMT struck the puppet government, promoted price limitation plan, and carefully handled allies' relationship, etc., which were conducive to serving the overall situation of the war.

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## CONCLUSION

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In the war, China has signed equal treaties with UK and US, which have opened a crack to abolish the unequal treaty system and has been a major political achievement of China made during the war. It was in line with China's national interests.

The national government controlled by KMT was the only and legitimate representative of China in the international arena, and has been recognized by most countries in the world. As a government of a country, to maintain and fight for the national interests was the attribute of a modern government. Therefore, that the national government led by KMT signed with UK and US the equally new treaties were determined by the basic requirement to fulfill its leadership in national affairs. That the National Government actively negotiated with UK and US of the abolition of unequal treaties was merely to execute its external functions. To speak more plainly, was to do things within its parts.

The above two points has decided that the conclusion of new treaties was worth publicizing and celebrating, but the premise was to be settled in the country, the nation's stance. After all, the great contributions and sacrifices made by thousands of Chinese people in the world anti-fascist war were the underlying factor to conclude the new treaties. If considering the contribution of a nation and a country to be the credit of a political party or a leader, there was a suspicion that whether it deserved it.

During the propaganda to celebrate the equal treaties, KMT did this for its own partisan interests. On one hand, by making use of the political tutelage KMT almost combined the party and the government. KMT considered China's signing of new treaties with UK and US as major

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<sup>21</sup> The Bulletin issued by China Kuomintang Chongqing Executive Committee, Chongqing Archives collection, Fonds No. 0134, Catalog No. 0001, File No. 00183.

political resources acquired during its ruling, and spared no effort to strengthen the publicity. If the publicity focused on morale promoting and propaganda of war, it was not only understandable but also deserved full praises. But the focus of KMT's propaganda was to record the achievements onto the party or a certain political leader, and put the bloodshed sacrifice of soldiers and civilians since the war in the second position. This reflected the characteristics that KMT used propaganda of new treaties to serve its partisan interests.

However, that KMT took the opportunity of new treaties to disclose the fraudulence of Wang Chingwei Puppet government's declaration of war and the "abolition of extraterritoriality" should be recognized. From this perspective, the propaganda fight against the puppet government, maintained the justice and legitimacy of the anti-Japanese national union, and strengthened the determination and confidence of people at the rear areas. In addition, that propagandizing the price limitation policy as well as paying attention to maintain relationships with allies also served the overall situation of war, from this perspective, which was also commendable.

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