

TOP-SECRET CHINESE NATIONALIST DOCUMENTS REVEAL THE TRUTH ABOUT  
THE NANKING INCIDENT  
(Summary)

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In January 2003, official documents that demolish — once and for all — the “Nanking Massacre” myth were discovered. Marked “top-secret,” they were compiled in 1941 by the Chinese Nationalist Ministry of Information under the title *Outline of International Propaganda Operations*. The documents are detailed records describing counterintelligence activities implemented by the Nationalists in 1937, when war with Japan broke out, and thereafter.

Nanking was the seat of Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist government in 1937. The documents are preserved in Taiwan, home to the Nationalists since 1949. The author discovered them at the Museum of Chinese Nationalist Party History in Taipei. He made photocopies of the documents, which he took back to Japan.

An examination of those documents reveals that the provenance of accusations that Japan perpetrated a massacre in Nanking is wartime propaganda initiated by the Nationalist intelligence organization. They also expose European and American Nationalist agents who were intimately involved in the concoction of “Nanking Massacre” propaganda.

One of them was the China correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, an Australian who went by the name of H. J. Timperley. At the time, Timperley was perceived as the conscientious journalist who told the world about the “Nanking Massacre.” *What War Means: The Japanese Terror in China*, a book that he edited, became the bible of proponents of the massacre. However, the top-secret documents unearthed in 2003 state, in no uncertain terms, that *What War Means* was part of the Chinese propaganda campaign against Japan.

In 1937, the Nationalist government’s International Propaganda Department made the decision to mount an external propaganda campaign involving foreign (European and American) collaborators. The use of foreign newspaper reporters as those collaborators was central to that campaign.

The International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone was organized mainly by Christian missionaries from the U.S.; its members were all foreigners residing in Nanking. We now know that the Committee’s leaders were closely connected with Timperley, and participated willingly in the propaganda campaign against Japan. *War Damage in the Nanking Area*, written by Lewis Smythe and M. S. Bates, was also a Chinese Nationalist propaganda tool designed for use against Japan.

Equally important, perhaps, is absence of any mention of a massacre’s having been perpetrated in Nanking in official Nationalist government proclamations issued between 1937 and 1945. In the

aforementioned top-secret documents, no particular emphasis is given to Nanking in the year 1937, except for references to the launching of a propaganda war against Japan in connection with the fall of the Nationalist capital.

According to these same documents, between December 1937 (the time when the massacre is supposed to have been committed) and October 1938, the Nationalist government, now operating from Hankou, held a total of 300 press conferences to which members of the foreign press were invited (usually 50 of those journalists attended). However, there is no evidence showing that mention of a massacre in Nanking was made at any of those conferences. The government did issue a protest to the Assembly of the League of Nations soon after the Nanking Incident (the fall of Nanking). However, that protest was in connection with a minor bombing incident in Hankou.

Even more interesting are the circumstances surrounding the Chinese translation of *What War Means: The Japanese Terror in China*, the aforementioned propaganda book issued by the International Propaganda Department. *Outline of International Propaganda Operations* tells us that portions of the book suggesting that there had been a massacre in Nanking were deleted from that translation. The International Propaganda Department had apparently deemed those sections inappropriate because they lacked credibility and might be counterproductive. This decision implies that the Nationalist propaganda machine had determined that the dissemination of propaganda — even in wartime — relating to a massacre in Nanking was unseemly.

Proponents of the “Nanking Massacre” have been mystified for decades by the absence of references to a massacre in the writings of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, and in reports and other documents relating to the Battle of Nanking issued by the Nationalist government. *Outline of International Propaganda Operations* has solved the mystery, once and for all.