

MISSION TO YENAN: (DIXIE MISSION)

NARRATOR: Ray Ludden
Jack Service
John Davies
John Emmerson.....

LUDDEN: It sounds very much like "The Last Time I Saw Paris".
The last time I saw Mao Tse Tung was in Yen-an in 1944,
and he was dancing gaily on the padded ground of an
apple orchard in Yen-an with the local belles in their
padded suits; and he was having a very fine time.

In 1944, they were American diplomats in China. Japanese
armies occupied most of North China. Yen-an, was the
wartime headquarters of the Chinese Communists.

This is the story of the last time that American
officials met on a friendly basis with the leaders
of Communist China, and the last opportunities and
personal tragedies that resulted.

DAVIES: We felt that it was essential that the United States
have observers in this area in contact with the
Communist leaders, so that we would have a realistic
appraisal of their power potential and what they
might mean for the future.

LUDDEN: Our only purpose in talking to the Communists was to
find out what the hell they were doing, how well they
were getting on with it, and what more they could do.
We were fighting a war against the Japanese; and if

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they could do something to assist the war, then it was to our advantage to have them get on with it, and what could we do to help them.

SERVICE:

The group that went to Yen-an was called the United States Army Observer Group, but we had a nickname for ourselves that had obscure origin. We called ourselves the Dixie Mission. Some people said that it was called Dixie because of the song "Is It True What They Say About Dixie", and others said that it had something to do with rebellion because Dixie had been the seat of a rebellion.

Yen-an is not very far from Japanese-held territory, and we had flown very low, sort of through the hills, and we came into this rather barren-looking valley.

We expected to see a town or a city, but the city had been bombed by the Japanese, and they simply evacuated the old city of Yen-an. And the caves in the sides of the hills really weren't visible from the air, but we did see the pagoda that identified this site, and a small, dusty little air strip. We landed on the strip, and there was a crowd waiting at one end.

I believe that Chou En Lai was there - Chou En Lai had been in Chung King as the Communist Party representative down there during much of the war - and I and some others had met him. They really had been isolated during the war and for many years before the war. There had been a few journalists

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that had visited them in the early years of the war before the blockade in '39. But we were just as curious about them as they were about us, I think. But there was a great deal of friendship on both sides.

EMERSON:

When we got to Yen-an, here we found the people living in caves, in the side of the mountains. Then we found that the people were active, they were enthusiastic. Just talking to them gave you a certain amount of confidence when you heard about what they were doing. All of this contributed to an atmosphere, I think, which was a very favourable one, and probably even more favourable because of the contrast to what we had left behind in Chung King. Those of us who had lived in Chung King became very depressed because the political atmosphere was very depressing - one heard only stories of corruption, of deals one way and another, the Chinese were not really fighting the Japanese in the war.

LUDDEN:

The feeling between the Americans and the Chinese Communists in Yen-an was very amiable indeed. I mean, after all, you must admit that this was very much in the nature of a honeymoon period.

SERVICE:

It prevailed for at least the first six months or nine months. We arrived there in July, and we had all sorts of missions. We wanted to tap what intelligence they had about Japanese military forces, military strength,

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order of battle information. We wanted to find out what they were doing with prisoners, what they were doing in psychological warfare, wanted to interview their prisoners; we wanted to establish channels to get the Japanese publications, which could be done out of cities like Peking. We wanted to set up a weather-reporting network because they held strategic areas all over North China. The Fourteenth Air Force needed to have prognosis of the weather before they started bombing missions and things like that. I don't think there's ever been such a period of cordiality between America and China. Certainly we had more forthcoming co-operation, with less demands, less conditions, up there than we had in Nationalist China at that time. Furthermore, I doubt if there's ever been a Communist society, or Communist regime, that laid itself so open. They rescued something like 70 American pilots and air crew all over North China; they allowed us to go anywhere. Our people wanted to go out and see guerrilla warfare, see what they were doing, see their support from the people. One of the questions that we were exploring was the possibility of some sort of co-operation with the Communists. The advantages of this were fairly obvious, since they surrounded the Japanese, and were behind the Japanese. The potentiality for guerrilla activity was just fantastic.

Now while we were there, starting in September, other events were going on in Chung King. Principally,
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this was the suggestion by President Roosevelt, that General Stillwell be put in command of all Chinese forces. One purpose of this was to enable him to use the Communist forces as well as the National Government forces by putting them under single American command. Up to this time the two armies had been facing each other - the Communists had to counter the Nationalist blockade. To try to resolve this problem, the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai Shek, temporizing and Roosevelt pushing, General Hurley was selected by Roosevelt and sent to China. General Hurley was a fairly prominent Republican politician, a lawyer by training, part Indian by blood, from Oklahoma, who had been Secretary of War under President Hoover, had been very successful in arranging a settlement of oil company claims against the Mexican Government after the nationalization of the Mexican oil fields, and had served as a sort of a general handy man to go on missions for Roosevelt during the war. And he was selected apparently to try to put this across in China. He was a rather hearty person, a very bluff manner, presumably a great persuader. However, he was not able to persuade Chiang Kai Shek, and as I said, his mission to arrange this American command of Chinese armies failed. Chiang Kai Shek insisted on the recall of Stillwell, which had to be granted. And Hurley then turned to this very important question of trying to solve, the differences, the stalemate, between the Communists and the National Government.

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DAVIES:

This was essentially a self-imposed mission, because this was not in his original charter from the President, which had to do purely with the relationships between Stillwell and the Generalissimo, and the vitalization of the Chinese war effort.

SERVICE:

The Chinese in Chung King, the Generalissimo and his advisors, I think rapidly got the measure of Hurley. They realized that he was a very different man from Stillwell, who had long experience in China. Hurley was very much impressed by the Chinese in Chung King, and I think basically, like many Americans, was charmed off his feet. At any rate, they suggested that he go to Yen-an, and try to get the Communists to agree, substantially, to the Generalissimo's terms.

Hurley came to Yen-an in November - November 6, I think, 1944.

EMERSON:

...I happened to be there at that time. And he caught the Chinese quite by surprise by his habit of giving the Indian choktaw war whoop as a greeting when he was about to descent from the airplane. And we explained to him that this was a friendly greeting from an Indian tribe in the United States, and they accepted this from him. And in his meetings with the Communist leadership - which are, of course, now a matter of record - General Hurley actually thought he had achieved agreement, because into that agreement, he threw, and Mao agreed, all of the

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principles of the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, whatever he put in, Mao agreed. Then General Hurley signed, and Mao Tse Tung signed, and they all thought that a great agreement had been achieved.

SERVICE:

...He took these back to Chung King and found, to his surprise, that they were totally not acceptable. And from then on he was trying, for the next year, to negotiate some sort of a peace between the Communists and Chiang Kai Chek.

EMERSON:

...I remember him saying that the Chinese in Chung King, the Nationalists, and the Communists in Yenan were like the Democrats and the Republicans in the United States. That is, after all, we had a Democratic Administration, President Roosevelt was a Democrat, but he, General Hurley, was a Republican. And yet he was working for President Roosevelt. And here were these Republicans in Yenan, the Communists, and there was no reason why they couldn't co-operate with the Democratic, the Nationalist Administration in Chung King. And so he would explain this to the Communists, and he was quite confident that everything could be worked out quite well.

DAVIES:

But his central position was that the United States was there to sustain Chiang Kai Chek. By that he meant that Chiang Kai Chek was to be sustained as the dominant

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personality in the Chinese government.

SERVICE:

The policy of the American Government at this time, really, was to avoid a complete commitment to Chiang Kai Chek, because it was quite obvious, in the balance of forces in China, that the future of ChiangKai Chek's government was in doubt. The Communists, from what we reported, and many people were reporting, had greater vitality, organizational power, support of the people, and so on. And we did not wish to commit ourselves wholly to the support of a party that was going to lose. But Hurley was a maverick loose on the range, and there was simply no way apparently of putting a rein on him.

DAVIES:

The only person who could say to Hurley "This is not the case, we must adopt a more flexible and realistic position", was the President.

SERVICE:

There are many indications that President Roosevelt did not have nearly as rigid a view as Hurley did. One complicating factor in the whole background was that the President apparently had become, he had sort of given up on working with Chiang Kai Chek pretty much after the Stillwell recall. And he turned more and more toward the hope of co-operation with the Soviet Union as a stabilizing force in the Far East. And this led eventually up to the Yalta agreements about China, and Hurley was convinced that if Stalin would support American policy in

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China, be willing to go along with it, that the Chinese Communists would be told by Stalin to give in and co-operate with the central government.

EMMERSON:

It always surprised us in Yenan that we didn't see any Russians hiding under the bushes. We felt that they must be there, you see, giving orders to Mao Tse Tung, and so on; although we began to decide in our own minds that this just probably wasn't so, because Mao obviously was a great Communist figure in his own right, and he was not about to take orders from Stalin, or anyone else. He was a Communist leader and prophet, and writer of doctrine in his own right. They were Communists, there was nothing else, except that they were Chinese Communists. And therefore they might have developed even that early, they might have begun to develop, you see, in a separate way - not toward the Soviet Union - and the present split of the Soviet Union makes it quite obvious that their destiny did not lie irrevocably with the Soviet Union.

DAVIES:

With the death of Roosevelt, Truman came in and Truman was only the continuer in the first phases, of what he understood was Roosevelt's policy. Hurley told Truman that Roosevelt's position was the same as his, Hurley's. The case of Hurley is an example of an important segment of American Foreign Policy - that is, policy toward one country - being dictated almost exclusively by one man. This was a very serious problem because we were committed then to Chiang in a situation which was highly fluid,
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which was disintegrating acutally, and in which we were being committed to the losing side, and which we were alienating the side that was going to win, and we were forcing the side which was going to win into a relationship of alliance with the Soviet Union - which it may have been prepared to do anyway, but which in this case gave it no alternative but to go through with a tight tie-up with Russia. This was most unsound, and the repercussions from this have carried on for decades - up to today, of course. So Hurley's position then became the official United States position, because no one would counter it. And the people in the State Department and certainly every one in the Embassy in Chung King had been terrorized by Hurley, because he was a terrible old cumudgeon, and had denounced anyone as disloyal who had said that this policy would not work.

LUDDEN:

For instance, he thought they were goint to the Communists and saying "Don't pay any attention to what General Hurley might say because that's not the way it's going to be". He had that sort of feeling in mind.

EMMERSON:

And later, when he went to Washington, he named the Foreign Service Officers who had been assigned as political advisors - who were: John Service, John Davies, Ray Ludden, myslef, among those whom he felt were, as he called it, trying to undercult his policy in China. So, after McCarthy had made his various accusations of so many Communists in the State Department and so on, there cam about this whole

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series of investigations of numerous people of course - anyone who had had connections with China, who had been in China, or especially of course, who had been in Communist China, was a subject of investigation. And so, the spotlight turned, of course, on all of us, because we had not only been in China, but we had cavorted with Communists, we had seen Communists every day for long periods of time, we had talked with Communists, we had eaten, broken bread with Communists, you might say, we had become very well acquainted with Communists.

McCARTHY:

When Chiang Kai Shek was fighting our war the State Department had in China a young man named John S. Service. His task obviously was not to work for the Communization of China. Strangely, however, he sent official reports back to the State Department urging that we torpedo our ally Chiang Kai Shek and stating in effect that Communism was the best hope of China. The Communist affiliations of Service are well-known. His background is crystal clear.

DAVIES:

There developed really an almost hysterical atmosphere, in which those of us who had lost China, as the phrase was, were then pilloried by Congressmen, and in the press by publicists. We were in the position, of course, of those who brought bad news, and as a result were executed for having brought the bad news.

LUDDEN:

We had been part of the conspiracy that sold China down the river to the Communists, and therefore you were out.

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SERVICE: I was finally discharged at the order of the Loyalty Review Board, not for disloyalty, but for doubts of loyalty. And other people were separated from the government during that period for various reasons - for not being completely forthright in their testimony, or for showing insufficient judgement, or bad judgement, judgements which, incidentally, have been proved right by history now, but which at that time, was unpopular.

DAVIES: I was charged among other things, with having been a principal proponent in the Department of State of the separability of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists. This was a period when everyone believed that this was a huge monolith that confronted us - that China and Russia were one, and that they were all directed by the Kremlin. In effect, I was an embarrassment to the State Department, and the State Department doesn't like to be embarrassed, and they wanted rid of me.

LUDDEN: Well, they were castigated and drummed out of the club. I know very well that people in the Department of State, I mean actually avoided them, I mean consciously avoided them, while all this investigatory process was going on, because they were afraid of being tainted by this imaginary brush. It was fairly disgusting.

DAVIES: I returned to Lima from Washington after Mr. Dulas had discharged me, because we were happily settled there, and it was a pleasant environment. The Peruvians had been

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marvellous to us. They understood this kind of situation in which we were involved because from their point of view were political refugees. They were most hospitable and understanding. So some of my friends put up some money, and I put up what little I had, and we formed together a furniture company; and we manufactured furniture in Lima. That I found baffling - I am not a businessman, and had never had any experience in that respect. And I also launched out on designing furniture, which for me was a new experience. But I found rewards in that. I found it very agreeable. I won two awards from the American Institute of Interior Designers on a chair and a table... This was an international competition. I won two and the Danes won two that year; so I felt really quite set up about that. I thought it was one of my greatest triumphs. But we were there in Peru for about ten years.

SERVICE:

I was discharged in late 1955. Actually it was very difficult to get work in those days. Anyone who is as controversial as I was, corporations were simply unwilling to touch you - "We're very sorry but we have to think about stockholders", and so on. Eventually I was offered a job by a man in New York, an Englishman who happened to be sole owner of a small company. He was the only stockholder he had to worry about. He offered me a job in a small

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company selling what are called steam specialties, it's a steam trap actually; and I worked there for six years.

DAVIES:

I had four children while we were in Peru, went with us to Peru. We then had three children in Peru. We joined this famous Latin-American population explosion. So I felt that the seven children should grow up in the American environment, because we were Americans and proud of being Americans, and this was the place for them to grow up; so we brought them here.

SERVICE:

Eventually I appealed through administrative channels in Washington, exhausted the possibilities there. We went up to the White House and could get nowhere; so then we went to the courts and we fought our way through the various levels of the federal courts until we got to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court finally ruled unanimously in my favour that I had been discharged illegally; and I rather surprised the State Department by saying that I was quite serious about my suit, that I wanted reinstatement, and I went back to the State Department. I was not fighting just to make a point, but I really wanted to get vindication by going back into the State Department. Also I had been discharged before I had established any rights under the retirement plan and I forfeited a great investment from my pension rights; and I thought I owed it to myself and to my family and so on to at least gain back some of what I had lost unjustly.

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LUDDEN:

But Jack, even after he was cleared and reinstated in the Department, I mean the pusillanimous State Department wouldn't even send his name up to the Senate for confirmation as Consul General. And he was assigned as American Consul in Liverpool in England where we've had a Consul General since 1798, I think. And they assigned him there as American Consul. It was a pretty dismal period, but we all went through it. I mean the idea of being castigated either directly or by innuendo, after you had done your best for the people from whom you drew your pay and rations for many years, and often times under very difficult circumstances, to have all these innuendos floating around about you. And people actually, 'Oh, that so-and-so, he's been tied up in that China inquiry,' and sort of flinching when it was mentioned.

EMMERSON:

But of course these charges kept cropping up. One had thought they were dead in 1952; but again in 1957 they rose again. It happened that at that time I was Deputy Chief of Mission in Beirut, and the Senate was discussing the Eisenhower Doctrine for the Middle East, and some Senator rose to note that, "Who was our Deputy Chief of Mission in a sensitive spot in the Middle East - no-one but one John Emerson, who had participated in the loss of China, and now he was obviously busily losing the Middle East". So these things have a tendency not to lie quietly.

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LUDDEN:

Would John Emerson have made Ambassador? - Undoubtedly. But he was barred from the Far East until fairly recently when Ed Reischauer was made Ambassador to Japan, and he was successful in getting John Emerson back to the Far East, back to his trade.

DAVIES:

It's a period, you know, that one does not dwell upon, because if one becomes preoccupied with what would appear to be an injustice to one, you know, you begin to brood and you lose your sense of perspective. What I tried to do was to think positively and look to other things. After I was fired I decided that there's nothing to be done, but we'd make a new life. We'd think in affirmative terms and the past is past. Which is what we have done and which has helped to keep a certain balance in the point of view and outlook.

EMMERSON:

The effects of all this on our Foreign Service were quite serious. In the first place I think that they destroyed the China Service that the experts in China field, our China language officers, one by one, were either dismissed from the State Department, resigned, or found other employemnt, or found other posts completely outside of the Far East.

DAVIES:

The recommendations made by Service, Ludden and myself were to the effect that we should have flexibility, we should have a freedom of action in the situation.

EMMERSON:

We thought that there was an opportunity at that moment

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to win some good will from the Chinese Communists.

We also felt that there was a very good chance they were going to take over China.

DAVIES:

Our theme was that the American Government should work with the Chinese Communists in the war against Japan, and, if possible, to establish a relationship with them which could carry on through to the post-war period, in which we could have a harmonious relationship with them rather than an acrimonious, antagonistic one, which is what finally did happen. They had indicated to us a desire for a collaborative relationship with us. They had indicated this in no uncertain terms to Jack Service. And later, when I was in Yen-an, I had precisely the same reaction from them.

SERVICE:

...We would have maintained our relations - there never would have been a break. There wouldn't be an exile government in Taiwan; and probably, if we had maintained relations with China, there would not have been a Korean War. Very likely, if you follow things through, there might not have been a Viet Nam War. In other words, we might have avoided all of the two wars we've had with China since, and so on.

EMERSON:

But I believe that what Mao is saying today is similar to what he was saying to us in 1944. So I do believe then that there is a great opportunity for us at the present time to again develop a relationship with the government of mainland China.

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