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WORK, EMPLOYMENT, CONFLICT IN ASIA

This pack is produced for pupils in years 10-13 that are interested in the history of Wales, Britain and Europe between 1939 and 1959. It uses photographs and cartoons to explore **Work, Employment and Conflict in Asia** during these years.

The pack was written for a conference on the same subject at The National Library of Wales, and is the second in a series of three.

It introduces material from two of the Library's collections, namely the Illingworth Cartoon Collection and the Geoff Charles Photograph Collection. Further details of these can be found on page 16.

The pack was written by The National Library of Wales Education Service.

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Content

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The End of the Second World War and Demobilisation

Despite the fact that the war in Europe ended in May 1945, and the war in the Far East in August of the same year, the demobilisation of over five million military personnel continued until the end of 1946.

The British Government had started preparing for the transition from war to peace long before the end of the Second World War, with plans for re-establishing into civilian work military personnel and those working in armaments and other war related work, building new homes, and the gradual removal of government control over the economy.
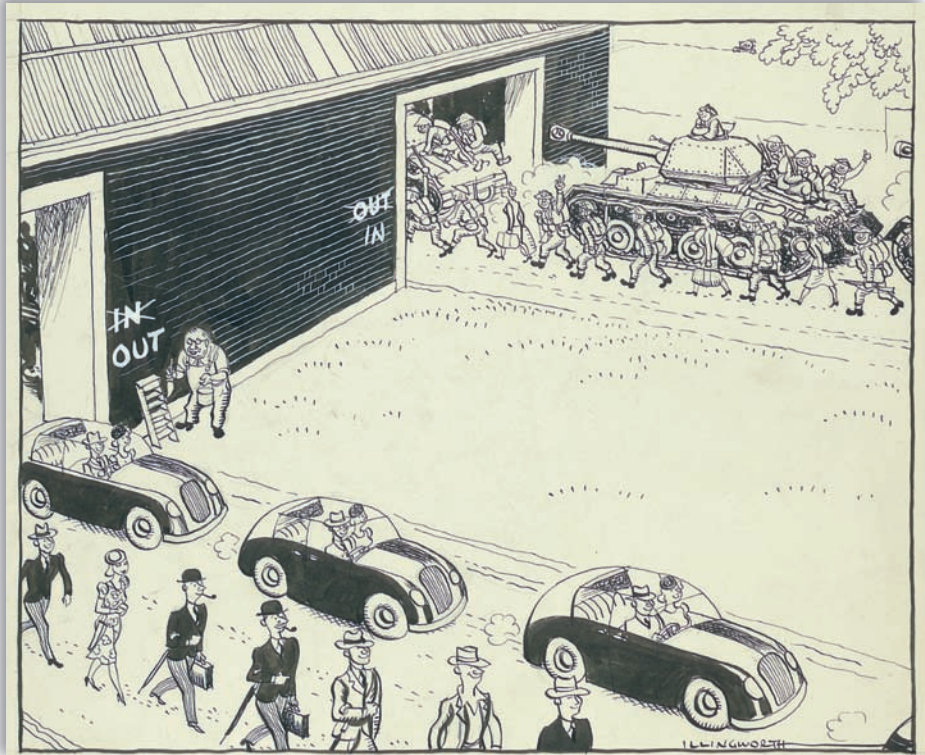
Demobilisation begins, **May 1945. On May 16, 1945 the government announced that it would demobilize 750,000 soldiers.**
Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

Part of the Labour Party's promise in its manifesto *Let Us Face the Future* was to create full employment and work for all, and with its large and unexpected victory in the 1945 General Election it was given a mandate to implement some of those plans. Although millions of soldiers returned to Britain in the period after the Second World War, the Labour Government managed to keep the level of unemployment low for a long period of time, even though it was criticized from some quarters for doing so at the expense of Britain's wider interest.

Jim Griffiths nails his colours to the mast of a sinking ship, September 1949.
Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

The Labour Party and Nationalisation

The policy of nationalisation was high on the new Government's agenda, and according to Labour politicians it was key to achieving the aims of full employment and economic recovery. The fact that they had fought and won the 1945 General Election on a manifesto that was firmly committed to nationalisation gave the Labour Party the belief that they had support from the electorate for radical policies.

The Government promised that industry would serve the people of Britain, and it introduced an extensive programme of nationalisation. The first steps were the nationalisation of the Bank of England in 1946, civil aviation in August of that year, and the coal industry and the *Cable and Wireless* Company in January 1947.

Ifton Colliery in Shropshire, November 1954. **Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Bureaucrats come between the miner and the consumer, July 1948. Illingworth and the *Daily Mail* were opposed to the nationalisation of industry, and this cartoon was accompanied by information that the Coal Board had made a loss of £23 million in its first year after nationalisation. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

At first there was no united resistance to the nationalisation programme, but as the Conservative Party grew in strength once more following the disappointment of the 1945 Election, it became apparent that they were ideologically opposed to the plans on the basis that they were at odds with private enterprise and free trade. By 1948 Conservative Members of Parliament were actively trying to prevent the nationalisation bills introduced in Parliament, even though the Labour Party's large majority meant that the bills soon became law.

The Government's answer to everything, circa 1947. Illingworth portrays the Labour Government in an aeroplane dropping Nationalisation Paper Plans as people flee from the effects of Britain's economic problems. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

The government faced another problem in 1947 with the onset of the Winter Crisis. This crisis was a combination of pressure on the pound and economic problems, a shortage of fuel and other goods, and the coldest winter for over fifty years. With large parts of Wales and Britain under heavy snow the Minister of Fuel and Power, Emanuel Shinwell was forced to introduce measures to conserve fuel.

Buzz off – I've no time for you, May 1947. Opponents of nationalisation attacked Emanuel Shinwell during the Winter Crisis with the slogan *Shiver with Shinwell.* **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Much needed supplies reach the village of Llanwddyn during the snow, March 1947. **Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales**

Despite these problems the Labour Government went ahead with its nationalisation programme. By now Conservative Members of Parliament were more vocal and united in their opposition to nationalisation and were more willing to criticise it not only as a policy that was contrary to free trade, but also as one which led in their opinion to waste, laziness, and creating industries that were not competitive.

In 1948 large sections of the electricity and transport industries came under government control despite clear objections from the Conservatives.

Their heads in the clouds, April 1948. Transport and coal welcome electricity to the world of nationalisation while prices are still rising. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

The next target in Labour's nationalisation programme was the gas industry. The 1948 Gas Act brought together over a thousand smaller private companies into twelve regional Gas Boards, with the Wales Gas Board having responsibility for gas in Wales. The use of gas in homes increased considerably during the 1950s as a result of a successful marketing campaign by British Gas, the body responsible for overseeing the regional gas boards.

The last industry to be nationalised by Labour during this period was steel. In 1949 the Iron and Steel Corporation of Great Britain was created to control the industry, and more than 80 private iron and steel companies were nationalised. During the 1950s Conservative governments privatised the industry, but it was re-nationalised by Harold Wilson's Labour Government in the 1960s.

Nationalisation falls, **February 1951. Attlee and Churchill paddle in different directions as the canoe approaches nationalisation falls. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

From 1946 to 1951 some two million workers that used to work in the private sector moved to work for nationalised industries.

The response to the Labour Party's ambitious programme to nationalise Britain's main industries has been mixed. There was strong support at first from workers and their unions. They saw nationalisation as a means of ensuring fair wages, better safety in the workplace, and the ability to bargain collectively for better conditions.

Although the Conservative Party objected to the policy on ideological grounds, they did not privatise many of these industries when they had the opportunity to do so during the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and it seems that to some extent they had accepted nationalisation, even though they did not agree with the policy.

The attitude of the Conservative Party to nationalisation changed drastically with the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1979, and her government set about to privatise many of those industries nationalised by the Labour Party during the 1940s and 1960s.

Workers at the Shotton Steel Works, **April 1953. Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Women and Work

Before the Second World War the social roles of both genders was more clearly defined. It was believed generally that the woman's place was the home, and the man's role was to go out and work. It was acceptable for women to work outside the home if they had no family to care for, but women were paid less than men even when doing exactly the same work.

The lives of many women changed dramatically during the Second World War. This was the first time that many of them had left home to work: in 1939 there were 94,000 women working in Wales, but by 1944 the number had increased to 204,000.

Land Army Girls, October 1942. By 1943 almost 4,500 women were members of the Women's Land Army in Wales. **Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.**


Even though things improved for women during the Second World War women tended to work during the 1950s until the birth of their first child, and occasionally after the children had grown up. During this period many campaigners focused on ensuring fair and equal rights for men and women in the workplace.

I want a full one too, June 1947. A mare tells the Chancellor, Hugh Dalton, that she wants the same wage as the stallion. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

On the whole it was easier for women to be accepted in the workplace during the 1950s than during the period before the Second World War, and this was partly due to changes in the education system. It was, however, expected that women should look for opportunities to get married rather than developing a career, and this idea was reinforced by powerful images in magazines and women's literature, and in films, television programmes and advertising.

A woman clocking in, July 1953. Work for women was in fact seen as a way of filling in the time between school and marriage. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**
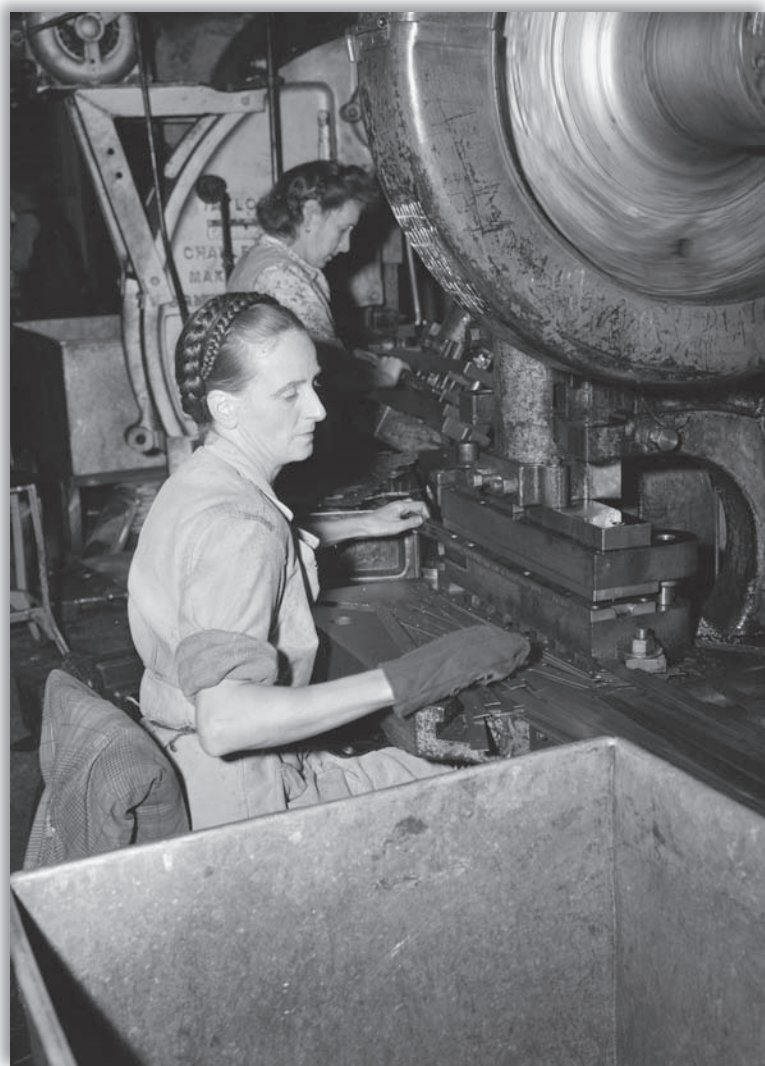
Although the status of women within society had been changing and improving gradually since the beginning of the 20th century, and this process was accelerated by the Second World War, a fundamental difference between the roles of men and women did persist. The wife still had responsibility for the home and rearing the children, while the husband was still the main breadwinner. It was only after the protests of the women's liberation movement and the sexual revolution of the 1960s that more permanent changes were made to the status of women.

Limes Brothers Factory in Merthyr Tudful, June 1951. **Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

The Cold War in Asia: Mao Zedong

Mao Zedong is one of the most influential people in the history of the modern world. He was the leader of a revolution who managed to gain power and maintain it for over a quarter of a century, and was a figure that had a direct influence on the lives of millions of people.

Mao was born in 1893 to a fairly well off peasant family. As a young man he came across revolutionary ideas and spent large parts of his life organising and inciting insurgency. By the early 1920s he was a Marxist , and was one of the founder members of Chinese Communist Party in 1921.

He was also a fervent nationalist who wanted to see an end to foreign influence in Chinese affairs.

Mao's ideas were different to those of other revolutionaries such as Lenin as he believed that it was the rural peasantry and not the urban proletariat that should and would direct the revolution in China. During the 1920s he developed a Chinese version of communism known as Maoism, and by the mid 1930s he was the leader of the Chinese Communist Party.

Mao Zedong, Leader of the People's Republic of China, 1949-1976, November 1949. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Tension between India and China, December 1959. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Mao Zedong was also a successful military leader. During various periods in his life he fought successfully against foreign powers and enemies within China. After the Long March in 1934 and 1935 when the Red Army travelled to Yan'an in northwestern China and established a communist government, Mao introduced a series of social reforms that were very popular with the peasantry.

In 1949 Mao and his army defeated the nationalists under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, and the People's Republic of China was created on October 1, 1949.

Throughout his life Mao refused to accept that Stalin and the Soviet Union had a right to lead world communism, and he refused to accept Soviet interference in Chinese affairs.

The Cold War in Asia: SEATO and Malaya

After Mao came to power in China in 1949 the capitalist countries feared that communism might spread across Asia. This was reflected in the foreign policies of the United States and Britain during this period as they tried to prevent the spread of communism. In February 1955 ten countries including western capitalist powers like Britain and the United States, and local capitalist countries such as Australia and South Vietnam, came together in the South Eastern Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) to try to prevent the further spread of communism.

Communists Keep Out, circa 1956. The cartoon shows John Dulles (United States Secretary of State) and Anthony Eden (Britain's Foreign Minister) warning communists to stay away, while ants carrying communist symbols are marching under the fence. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

A Communist Panther attacks a village in Malaya, July 1948. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Malaya was one country where British soldiers fought against communists. Malaya had been under British rule for a long period, and some of its people felt that the Malayans were given preferential treatment by the British at the expense of other ethnic groups, especially the Chinese and Indians that constituted a substantial part of the population.

In 1948 the Malayan Communist Party began a guerrilla war in an attempt to force Britain to leave, and British soldiers fought side by side with some Malayans against the communists. By 1957 the communists had been defeated and Malaya became an independent country and a member of the British Commonwealth.

Britain kept a military presence in Malaya for a long period after this in order to prevent communism from returning to the country.

The Cold War in Asia: The Role of China

The history of the People's Republic of China and its relationship with other countries are central to the history of the Cold War in Asia. At different periods under the leadership of Mao Zedong, China was friendly with the Soviet Union, closer to the United States, and following its own path by completely ignoring other countries.

The United States was suspicious of the new People's Republic of China created in 1949 and apprehensive about its revolutionary leader, Mao Zedong. Although it was not a modern industrial nation China was a massive country in terms of geography with a population of some 500 million, and when it signed a treaty with the Soviet Union in 1950 it was feared that this alliance might lead to the spread of communism to other countries.

The relationship between the Soviet Union and China was never easy. In the first place Stalin believed that he was the rightful leader of worldwide communism, and that Mao had no right to develop his own Maoist theories in place of the ideas of Marx and Lenin. Mao was not willing to kneel to the Soviet Union, and following Stalin's death he felt that Khrushchev was wrong to try and develop a closer relationship with capitalist countries.

Stalin has his eye on China, November 1948. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**


Repent Ye! For the Kingdom of Lenin is at hand, August 1960. Khrushchev is enjoying a drink at the bar with the leaders of capitalist countries while Mao protests. In 1956 Khrushchev called for peaceful coexistence between communism and capitalism. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Mao and Khrushchev move in different directions, September 1959. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

The relationship between the Soviet Union and China was therefore one of constant change. At times the two countries were close but always wary of one another, and each country was very mistrustful of the other's relationship with the United States.
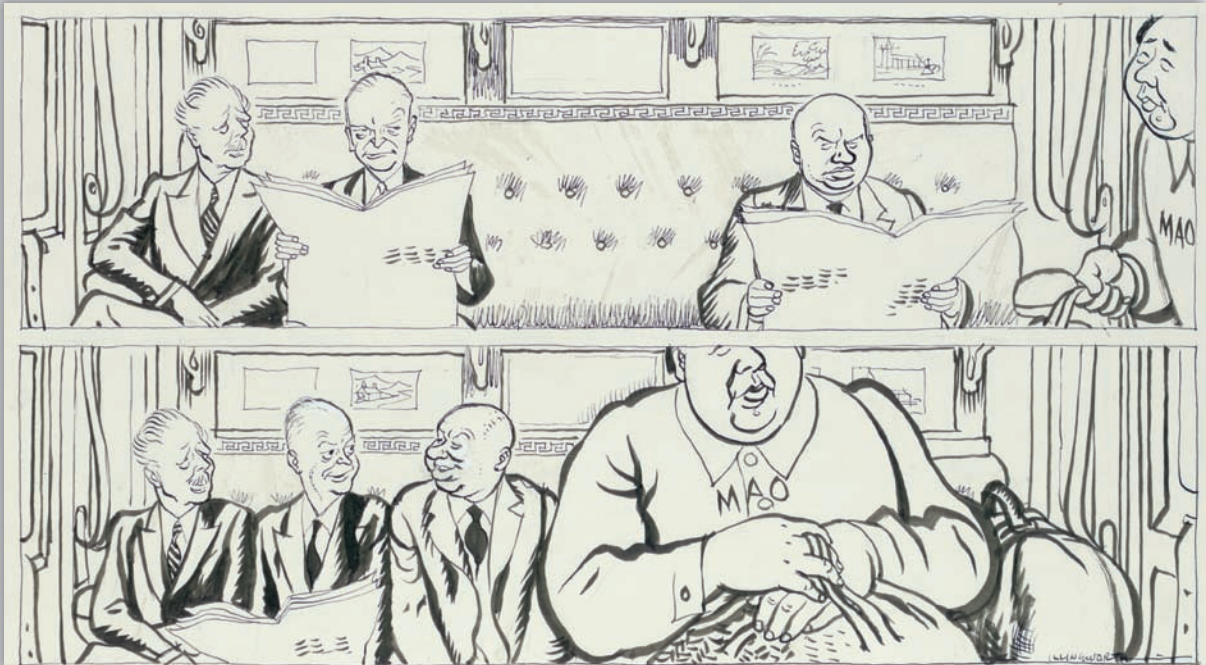
Khrushchev prefers Eisenhower to Mao, October 1959. The British Prime Minister Macmillan and US President Eisenhower are sitting close together, while Khrushchev is sitting on the other side. When Mao sits down, Khrushchev is forced to move closer to them.
Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

Mao receives The Order of Hungary, March 1959. Khrushchev presents a medal to Mao after the Dalai Lama was forced to flee Tibet following the brutal suppression of nationalists demanding independence from Chinese rule. Mao is splattered with blood as bodies lie on the ground. The Order of Hungary refers to the fact that Khrushchev used similar force against Hungary in 1956.
Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.
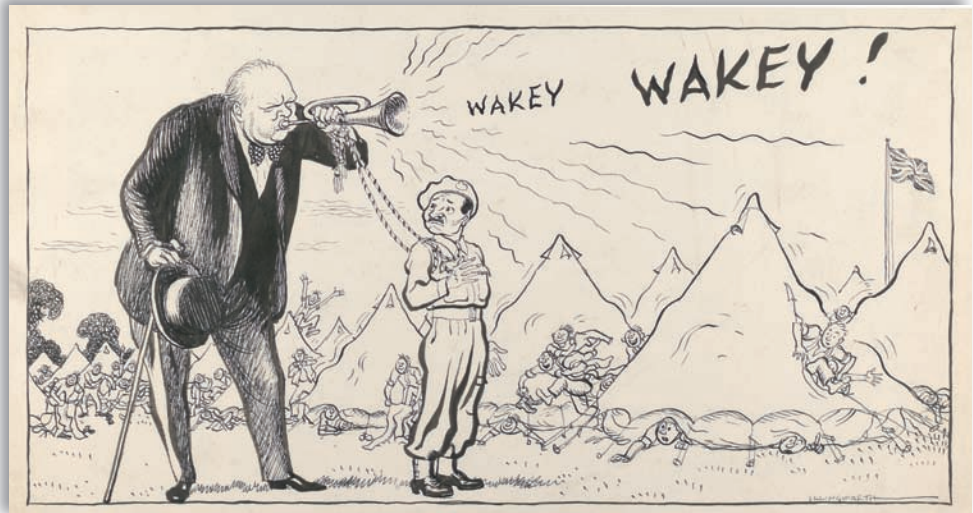
The Korean War: 1950-1953

The biggest conflict of the Cold War in Asia during the 1950s was the Korean War. Officially it was a war between the communist Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), and the capitalist Republic of Korea (South Korea). Despite this fact the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China supported the communist north, while the United Nations, the United States, Britain and many other capitalist countries supported the capitalist south.
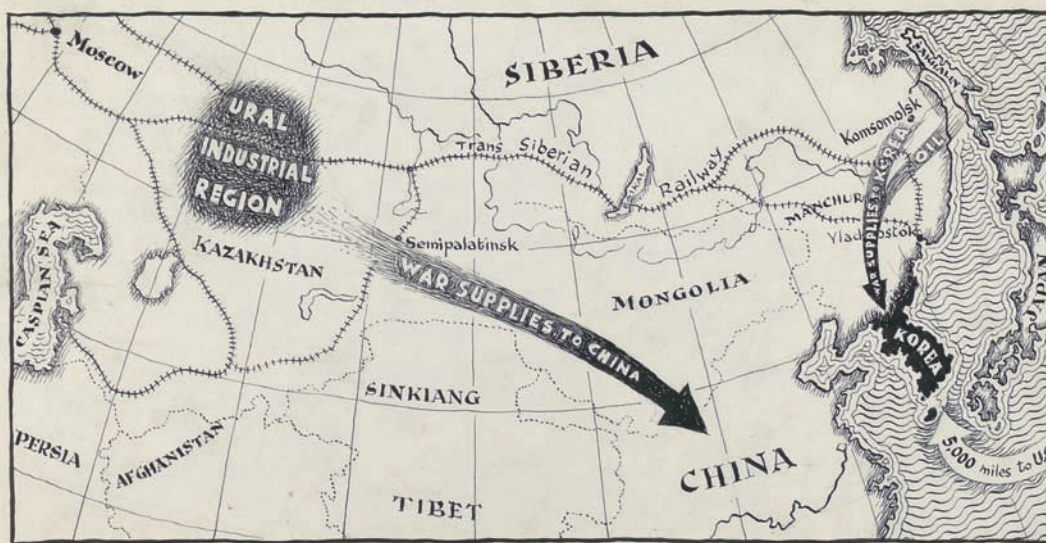
At the end of the Second World War Korea was divided along the 38th Parallel. The northern part of Korea was occupied by troops from the Soviet Union, while United Sates troops occupied

Churchill urges Clement Attlee to wake up, August 1950. In June 1950 North Korean soldiers attacked South Korea by crossing the 38th Parallel, the dividing line between the two countries. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

the south. Before the soldiers of both countries had left Korea a communist government had taken power in the north and a capitalist one in the south, with the leaders of both governments claiming sovereignty over the whole country. By 1950 Kim Il Sung had become leader of the communist north, and Syngman Rhee leader of the capitalist south.

On June 25, 1950 North Korean soldiers invaded the south and quickly made ground, driving the South Korean army back towards the capital, Seoul.

Military aid for Korea, July 1950. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

This attack was condemned by the United Nations and a resolution was passed to send military assistance to the government of the south, while the United States Government also decided to send military support to the south.

War with China, November 1950. The cartoon shows the American General, Douglas MacArthur, leader of the United Nations force in Korea leading the UN to war with China. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Following the initial success of the communist North Korean troops they were driven back across the border by a combination of soldiers from South Korea, other capitalist countries, and the United Nations. After seeing this success the United States saw an opportunity to conquer the communist north and unite the country under a capitalist leader.

Early in October 1950 United Nations soldiers entered North Korea and Mao decided it was time for China to intervene in support of communist North Korea and Kim Il Sung.

With the aid of the Chinese the northern communists managed to drive the United Nations soldiers back.

After three years of fighting that saw millions killed, both sides had managed to gain territory before retreating almost to the exact border that existed before the war. The Korean War ended with a ceasefire and the creation of a demilitarized zone near the old border on the 38th Parallel.

By intervening in the Korean War the United States had shown that it was not willing to see the domino effect spreading through Asia, with one country after another falling to communism.

On the other hand Mao had shown with his intervention in support of North Korea that he was willing to commit Chinese soldiers to defend any threat to China's borders.

Panmunjom, June 1953. Panmunjom straddles the border between North Korea and South Korea in the middle of the Demilitarized Zone created when the Korean War ended in 1953. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**
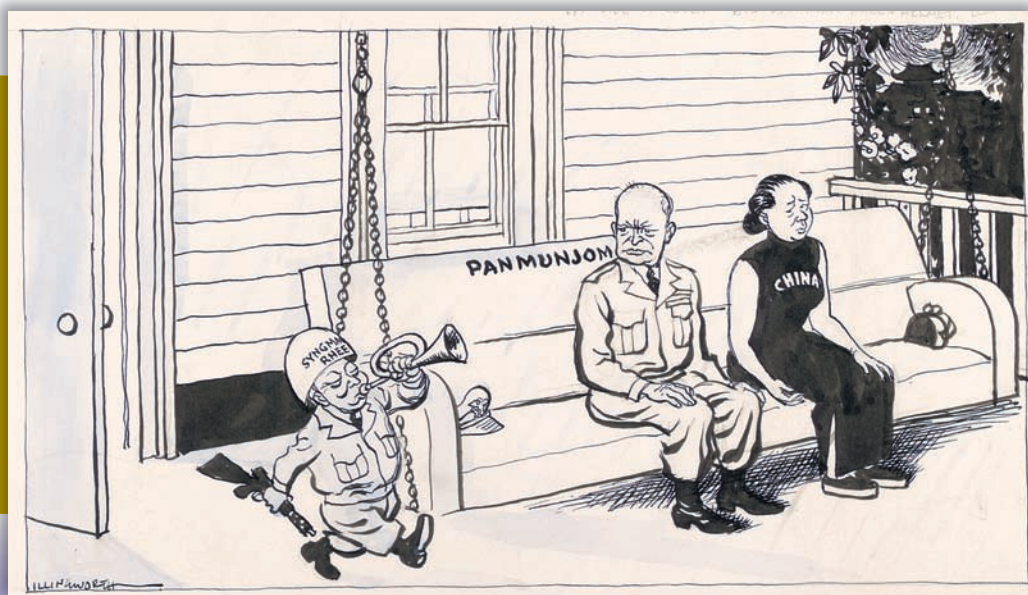
Illingworth Cartoons

Leslie Gilbert Illingworth was born in Barry in 1902. He attended Cardiff Art School and then took a job with the *Western Mail*. He was awarded a scholarship to Slade School of Art, and after completing his studies, returned to Cardiff to work for the *Western Mail* as a cartoonist. Illingworth joined the *Daily Mail* in 1939, and drew cartoons that were to lift Britain's morale during the Second World War.

After the war ended, Illingworth was able to concentrate more on domestic issues in his cartoons, but kept a keen eye on foreign affairs, especially when they related to Britain. He became Chief Cartoonist for the satirical magazine *Punch* in 1945, but remained with the *Daily Mail* until his retirement in 1969. He died in 1979.

The Illingworth cartoon collection at the National Library, which contains 4,563 images, explores a wide variety of topics through the eyes of one of Britain's best known cartoonists of the twentieth century.

www.llgc.org.uk/illingworth

Geoff Charles Photos

Geoff Charles was born in Brymbo in 1909. He studied for a Diploma in Journalism at the University of London, from where he graduated with first class honours in 1928. He worked as a reporter for the *Western Mail* and the *Mountain Ash* and *Aberdare Express* before moving to Guildford to work on the *Surrey Advertiser*.

Following a serious bout of illness he returned to Wales to work on the *Wrexham Star*, and shortly after joining the paper he reported on the Gresford Colliery Disaster. He moved to Newtown to run the Montgomeryshire Express where he met a reporter called John Roberts Williams for whom he was to illustrate articles for *Y Cymro*.

He dedicated 50 years of his life to portraying Wales through the lens of his camera. His contribution to Wales is unique and today his archive of 120,000 photographs is one of the treasures of the National Library of Wales. Geoff Charles died in 2002.

www.geoffcharles.llgc.org.uk