

MEMOIRS OF A CHINESE MARSHAL



A Cultural Revolution "confession" by
Marshal **PENG DEHUI** (1898-1974)
covering his career from service in China's
warlord armies to command of the Chinese
People's Volunteers in Korea.

Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal

—The autobiographical notes
of Peng Dehuai (1898-1974)

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book presents the memoirs of Marshal Peng Dehuai, the outstanding general who was one of the builders of the Chinese Red Army and who served as Vice-Premier of the State Council and Minister of Defence until mid-1959. The autobiographical notes were written in response to interrogations during the "Cultural Revolution" (1966-76).

In July 1959, Marshal Peng was denounced for a letter he wrote to Chairman Mao Zedong during what is known as the Lushan Meeting, an enlarged session of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In the letter, Marshal Peng pointed out some of the ultra-left mistakes that occurred during the "Great Leap Forward" in the national economy and in the establishment of the people's communes.

This was followed by the Eighth Plenary Session of the Party's Eighth Central Committee in Mount Lushan, where Peng Dehuai and a few other comrades were condemned as a "Right-opportunist anti-Party clique."

The persecution of Marshal Peng intensified during the Cultural Revolution under circumstances that led to his death on November 29, 1974.

The Cultural Revolution ended in 1976. The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Party, held in December 1978, reexamined

Marshal Peng's case and reversed the judgement that had been imposed on him. It exonerated him of all charges and reaffirmed his contributions to the Chinese revolution.

This English edition is a translation of *Memoirs of Peng Dehuai*, published in Chinese in December 1981 by the Beijing People's Publishing House. It includes an introduction by the editorial group in charge of compiling the marshal's memoirs and a preface by Yang Shangkun, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Marshal Peng's letter to Chairman Mao at the Lushan Meeting in 1959 as well as a record he made of his last talk with the Chairman in 1965 are printed as appendices.

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彭德怀

Marshal Peng Dehuai with
his signature in Chinese

第三次简历材料 谈任伙

一九七〇年七月二十一日下午，审查委员会两位负责人指示，

我的简历还没重写，一位说，着重入党前后的历任职务，一位说：从八岁写起，不写不行。我在三年受审过程中，已经写过两次简历材料：第一次是，一九五七年七月十四日副在杨从贵家从家庭环境，旧军任职和去红军以后的历任职务，第二次是，一九六〇年或一九六八年春，审查是身从出生到平江起义这一段也重写一次。这是第三次了，我说不敢再写了，因为它毫无用处，也毫无意义。为了服从组织，这是尽最大努力回忆，简明的写上吧。其中当然是重复，尽量缩短吧，把过去未写上的写上去。但二十余年的事要回忆，说不是挨困难的。最困难，又用公历月日，使回忆容易混乱，加以旧社会使用农历的习惯，这更易混乱记忆。对于我的童年、幼年、少年一段生活经历，反而记忆清晰。甚至从儿

后打碎得行号
造地经月期一部
重一月又一月
看的一支转个要保
白军写我个用风色
解下，次在也新保
众组织冲在保保

孩不久，真是以别人心...
新响改为益得响，动批团打境，一次两次个命批不下，
去与说，一定要打下批新响，打下下批新响，清不了罗条新日
不在批响人后，经批直了批，批才批响批响，批批了不批响

The manuscript of the Marshal's Memoirs



At the Hunan Army
Officers' Academy (1923)

back in northern Shaanxi after the successful Eastern Expedition as the head of the Red Army's Anti-Japanese Vanguard Detachment (1936)





At a forward position as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Eighth Route Army during the Hundred Regiments Campaign against Japanese invaders (1940)

Peng Dehuai (second on the left) at the Qinghuabian front in northern Shaanxi as Commander of the Northwest Field Army (March 1947)





Greeting Zhou Enlai at Yan'an Airport on his return from Chongqing in the company of Mao Zedong, Zhu De and Liu Shaoqi (January 1946)

Directing an attack on Yichuan County-seat (February 1948)





Walking to the site of the armistice agreement signing in Kaesong, Korea,
as Commander of the Chinese People's Volunteers (July 28, 1953)



Marshal Peng Dehuai as Minister of National Defence on the Tiananmen gate tower in Beijing on National Day in 1955



At the Wu Family Garden in Beijing's western suburbs (1964)

Chatting with people while on an inspection tour in Pingjiang County, Hunan Province (December 1958)



Introduction

I

Marshal Peng Dehuai (1898-1974), one of modern China's greatest military leaders, began to write his own history in 1959 as a personal defence during the lowest point of his career. It was a time when he had been dismissed from top-level Party and government posts in the wake of criticism for a letter he wrote to Chairman Mao Zedong at the Lushan Meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee. The letter was repudiated by the Chairman.

Today Peng Dehuai's letter, presented in its entirety on p. 510, seems diplomatic and mild in its presentation of what are now acknowledged as some of the real mistakes — such as the wild exaggeration of production figures — made during the “Great Leap Forward”. However, having been repudiated by the Chairman, the letter brought down on Peng Dehuai such labels as “Right opportunist”, “Anti-Party element”, “careerist” and “hypocrite”.

These labels were to plague him for the rest of his life and led, during the “Cultural Revolution” of 1966-76, to the vicious physical and mental persecution that resulted in his death in Beijing in 1974.

Peng Dehuai tells us in his *Memoirs* that he felt compelled to address a letter to Chairman Mao on the deficiencies of the Great Leap Forward after

having looked into them through personal investigation in such areas as Pingjiang County, Hunan Province, the site of the revolutionary uprising he led some 30 years earlier.

This boldness in seeking to correct what he considered to be wrong characterized his career which started in the old warlord armies of Hunan Province in 1916 and reached its height when he commanded the Chinese People's Volunteers that thwarted the U.S. war of aggression against Korea during 1950-53.

The *Memoirs* are taken from accounts Peng Dehuai wrote during the last 16 years of his life — the years following his denigration. Exiled from Zhongnanhai — the site of the Party headquarters in Beijing — to Wu Family Garden in the western suburbs in 1959, Peng did manual labour and wrote. On June 16, 1962, he presented the Party Central Committee with a long letter on his life from his birth to the Lushan Meeting. Known as the "letter of 80,000 characters", it only brought more criticism against him. Deprived of the right to state his case and worried about what might happen to the letter, he had parts of the original draft kept in his native home in Wushi Village, Xiangtan County, Hunan Province.

He wrote during this period: "I never had so much as a moment of rest in my life as a soldier. Now I have nothing to do in my old age except grow peaches."

In November 1965, Comrade Mao Zedong sent Marshal Peng to Sichuan Province as Deputy Chief for National Defence Construction in South-west China. (Marshal Peng's record of the meet-

ing at which Chairman Mao gave him instructions on his mission appears on p. 522.) But in December the following year—at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution—he was forced by Qi Benyu, a member of the “Cultural Revolution Group” under the CPC Central Committee, reputedly under orders by Jiang Qing, Chairman Mao’s wife and first deputy leader of the group, back to Beijing where he lost all vestiges of freedom and faced constant interrogation.

In response to his interrogator’s demand for “confessions”, Marshal Peng produced more autobiographical notes on his life and career. The first 13 chapters of this book are based on these writings during the Cultural Revolution; the 14th and 15th chapters are largely from his “letter of 80,000 characters”. During the Cultural Revolution, some of his notebooks became missing after having been confiscated by the investigators. Others were burned. The surviving manuscripts were filed by the investigators as evidence of his “crimes”. The manuscripts were sorted out after Peng Dehuai’s rehabilitation by the CPC Central Committee in December 1978.

A good part of the *Memoirs*, then, were written by Peng Dehuai during a time he was interned for investigation in Beijing without the benefit of any reference material. This gave rise to some discrepancies which have been explained in footnotes. Since he was writing from memory, he erred in some dates, names of people and places, and designations of army units. The editors have corrected them and added a number of footnotes. Some

footnotes have been inserted in the English edition to provide foreign readers with background information on contemporary Chinese history. In doing so, the editors sincerely hope they have complied with the spirit of the work as written by Marshal Peng.

II

“In later years, I often recalled the plight of my childhood with a view to preventing myself from becoming corrupt and forgetting the hard life of the poor.” (See Chapter I, “Childhood Plight”, p. 27.)

Marshal Peng tells how legends of the Taiping Revolution impressed him when he was still a child in Hunan Province. He was forced to leave school at an early age after his mother died and his father became sick. His family situation was so desperate that he was forced to beg — something he found distasteful. He refused to do it more than once and was reluctant to eat the food begged by his grandmother and brother. He went to work as a child labourer in the coal mines but later was forced to leave his hometown to work on the dykes around Lake Dongting to escape the local authorities' persecution after taking part in a struggle for grain during a famine.

Primarily as a way to help support his family, Peng Dehuai joined the Hunan Army as a private in 1916. This was during a time of struggle for power among the warlords after the failure of the 1911 Revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Peng Dehuai's *Memoirs* provide an extraordinary glimpse of this

turbulent time in Chinese history through the eyes of an enlisted man in the old warlord's armies.

His experience as a child labourer and worker on the dykes gave him a sympathy for the downtrodden and hatred for oppressors. Early in his army career, he organized a clandestine group among the soldiers known as the "Save-the-Poor Committee". As a young platoon leader, he approved — after hearing the complaints of local peasants — an operation to eliminate a particularly ruthless landlord. Because this landlord happened to be the brother of a high official, Peng Dehuai was arrested and narrowly escaped death himself — thanks to a young soldier who cut the ropes that bound his hands to help him escape.

After this episode, Peng Dehuai went back for a while to his family home to farm but was soon lured back to the military when he entered the Hunan Army Officers' Academy (the landlord's brother lost his position from embezzlement and the complaint against Peng Dehuai was conveniently pigeonholed) through the patronage of Zhou Pan, a ranking officer who, as Peng Dehuai gradually came to realize, mouthed support for the revolution but actually sided with the reactionary forces. Peng Dehuai's rise in the military establishment in the Hunan warlord armies was accompanied by a growing involvement in clandestine activities to protect soldiers' rights and help the poor.

A key moment in his life during this time, as Peng Dehuai describes it, was his meeting with Duan Dechang, a communist who gave him the inspiration of knowing he was not alone and that the Party

could provide the guiding principles for a real revolution. In 1928, Peng Dehuai joined the Communist Party and continued to work under cover while in the meantime being promoted to regimental commander.

The circumstances of the order for the arrest of his comrade and fellow officer Huang Gonglue in July 1928 prompted Peng Dehuai to start the famous Pingjiang Uprising in which he led a section of the Hunan Army to revolt against reactionary rule and liberate the town of Pingjiang, freeing students and revolutionaries from jail. This was the beginning of Peng Dehuai's career as a Red Army officer.

From the Pingjiang Uprising in July 1928 until the end of the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea in 1953, Peng Dehuai fought countless battles — endearing himself to his troops by often joining them on the frontlines. Among the campaigns he describes in his *Memoirs* are the breaking out of enemy encirclement in the Jinggang Mountain area in January 1929, the attack on Changsha in July 1930, the attack on Ganzhou in January 1932, and the Hundred Regiments Campaign against the Japanese invaders in August 1940.

Since most of the *Memoirs* were written as answers to questions raised by his investigators, Peng Dehuai made little or no mention of the other more famous battles he directed and won. Despite this, the *Memoirs* contain an intimate account of the Red Army's struggles from its earliest beginnings, including descriptions of inner-Party struggles, the army's inseparable links with the masses, and its survival

through the hardships of the Long March to prevail over the enemy in the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression and the War of Liberation. Chapter 14 is devoted to the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea, a war which ended with an acknowledgment by U.S. General Mark W. Clark that he had gained the unenviable distinction of being the first United States army commander in history to sign an armistice without victory.

The most serious crime with which Marshal Peng was charged during the Cultural Revolution was that he had "opposed Chairman Mao all his life". The *Memoirs* give a different picture, starting with their first meeting in 1928. Peng Dehuai throughout the *Memoirs* expresses his deep respect for both the man Mao Zedong and his ideas. Marshal Peng is also candid in expressing some of the differences the two had over the years. For instance, when Peng Dehuai sent a telegram to Chairman Mao in January 1934 expressing his agreement with the decision to move the Red Army east but arguing that an absolute guarantee must be provided that the advance armies be able to maintain their contact with the base area in Yan'an, Marshal Peng reports that "Chairman Mao was not pleased with my telegram, 'You supply the absolute guarantee,' he said, 'I can't.'"

At an army-government forum held in North China in 1945, Peng Dehuai said he regarded Mao Zedong first as an elder brother, then as a teacher and last as a leader. As expressed in the *Memoirs*, it's clear that a great deal of Peng Dehuai's admiration

for Mao Zedong was based on the correct theories which the Chairman advocated. At the same time, Peng Dehuai opposed those who wished to deify Mao Zedong as a leader who was always 100 per cent right. It was for this that he was accused during the Cultural Revolution of "opposing Chairman Mao". Holding his interrogators in contempt, he said, "All I did was to confide everything to Chairman Mao."

As one of the builders of the Chinese Red Army and an outstanding leader of the Party and country, Peng Dehuai is one of the most important personages in China's revolutionary history. During his career he served as Commander-in-Chief of the Third Army Group of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party during the Second Revolutionary Civil War; Front Commander of the Red Army in northern Shaanxi Province after the completion of the Long March; Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Eighth Route Army during the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression; Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese People's Liberation Army as well as Commander and Political Commissar of the PLA First Field Army during the War of Liberation. After 1949, he served concurrently as Vice-Premier of the State Council and Minister of Defence.

Because they were written during a time he was in custody, Peng Dehuai's *Memoirs* cannot truly reflect the scope of the outstanding contributions he made to his country during his lifetime.

III

One of the things the *Memoirs* reveals is the character of Marshal Peng.

At the time he wrote about his life, history had been turned upside down. For seeking truth, he was slandered as an opportunist. As a high commander in the Chinese revolutionary army, he was branded a counter-revolutionary element. His truly glorious military career was distorted and painted black. Newspapers during the Cultural Revolution labelled him as a "big warlord", "careerist", and "major conspirator". Such incredible charges were levelled at him as "usurping the Party and the Army", "recruiting deserters and traitors", and "forming a clique to pursue selfish interests".

He denied it all.

"This is not a matter of insulting me alone," he said in his anguish (See Chapter 5, "The Pingjiang Uprising" P. 212).

Peng Dehuai keenly felt the danger of the distortions not only to himself but to the Party and the nation. All things done against Marshal Peng and other revolutionaries were being carried out in the name of revolution. Having been asked to accept the investigation of the Party, he faced investigators who were hooligans. He had hoped the investigation would clear him. Instead, he found investigators whose only aim was to besmirch his name. He spoke — as is clearly evident through the *Memoirs* — to the Party with an open heart. He was rewarded with torture and imprisonment for life.

Peng Dehuai's refusal to admit any crime infuriated his interrogators. They kicked him until his ribs were fractured and lungs injured. Beatings sent him unconscious to the floor.

He fought to the last. It's said that the noise he made by banging on the table and shouting at his investigators shook the house.

"I fear nothing; you can shoot me!" he roared. "Your days are numbered. The more you interrogate, the firmer I'll become."

Peng Dehuai was interrogated until he was bedridden. He was deprived of the right to sit, to rise up, to drink water, to go to the toilet or to turn over in bed. By the time he died on November 29, 1974, he had gone through over 130 interrogations.

Marshal Peng Dehuai — having survived hundreds of battles fighting for the revolution — died a martyr's death. He was an army officer who made small-time tyrants shake in their boots; he was a Red Army commander whose name struck terror in the hearts of the Kuomintang reactionaries everywhere he fought — in Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi and Fujian provinces; he was a general who was able to break through the strong enemy blockade along the Xiangjiang River to capture the town of Zunyi during the historic Long March; he was the Eighth Route Army Deputy Commander-in-Chief who created vast base areas behind the Japanese lines; he was the Commander-in-Chief of the First Field Army that liberated Northwest China; and he was the Commander of the Chinese People's Volunteers who defeated the invading U.S. troops in Korea.

This is Marshal Peng Dehuai's record, one that not only does great credit to his name but one which will inspire the Chinese people in the years to come.

The Editorial Group for
Memoirs of Peng Dehuai

March 1982

On Reading the Memoirs of Peng Dehuai

— *By Way of a Preface*

*Yang Shangkun*¹

This book brings myriads of thoughts to my mind.

There is a poem which says, "The mighty river flows to the east. Its waves have swept many a notable into oblivion." But the merits and exploits of Comrade Peng Dehuai will never be blotted out no matter what the course of history.

A much beloved and outstanding strategist and statesman in China's revolution, Peng Dehuai was a great Communist fighter and a hero of the Chinese nation.

Although he fell into obscurity after 1959, his memory with the passage of time is increasingly cherished. The *Memoirs* were written by Comrade Peng to state his case at a time when he was the victim of a great injustice. In the face of being accused of hair-raising crimes, he took up his pen and

¹ Yang Shangkun was one of Marshal Peng's old comrades-in-arms and Political Commissar of the Third Army Group of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army in 1932. He is now Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

calmly wrote down the story of his life — a life in which he spared neither life nor limb to fight for the revolution. This integrity and uprightness displayed in times of adversity was typical of him. His outstanding military exploits and legendary career have added brilliance to our revolutionary history.

He was a man who struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. He was loyal to the Party and politically incorruptible. He led a simple life and maintained a down-to-earth style of work. These qualities which have won him our lasting respect also set an example for our future generations.

It goes without saying that he had his weaknesses, too. For example, being very strict and forthright, he at times gave way to rashness. But he was bold enough to admit his mistakes and correct them.

For scores of years, Comrade Peng Dehuai was a colleague of mine. We fought shoulder to shoulder for most of the time between 1932 and the years of the War of Liberation. Our work again brought us close together in the period between the founding of the Chinese People's Republic and the beginning of the "Cultural Revolution". We became intimate friends. When the editors of the *Memoirs* brought the manuscript to Guangzhou in the spring of 1981 and asked me to check them, I was only too glad to do it.

I witnessed many of the events referred to in the *Memoirs*. And to read this work — written as it is in the very style, half-classical and half-popular, that Peng Dehuai used to write his telegrams and letters during the war years — endeared me to his memory. It brings back his image in those stormy

decades — his statute-like face set with dark, sparkling eyes imbued with a powerful and unyielding spirit.

Before joining the revolution, Peng Dehuai was a regimental commander in the warlords' armed forces of Hunan Province. The Chinese revolution was at a low ebb in 1928, following the counter-revolutionary coup by Chiang Kai-shek. Opportunist cowards quit the revolution one after another. It was at this juncture that Comrade Peng risked his life to organize the famous Pingjiang Uprising during which he joined the revolution with courage and steadfastness.

When I first made his acquaintance in 1932, he gave me a moving account of the uprising. The attempt of the "Gang of Four" and Kang Sheng* to negate this brilliant achievement of Comrade Peng Dehuai only serves to show how mean and paltry they were.

Under the great hardships of the old society, Peng Dehuai was a man who dared to seek out the truth in an effort to save China and her people. Educated by the Communist Party, he was tempered

* Kang Sheng (1898-1975) was Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress before he died of an illness on December 16, 1975. He was advisor to the Cultural Revolution Group under the CPC Central Committee during the Cultural Revolution. In October 1980, the CPC Central Committee decided to expel him from the Party posthumously because he had taken a direct part in the activities of Lin Biao, Jiang Qing and others for the usurpation of Party and state power and had committed other serious crimes during the Cultural Revolution — *Tr.*

through the years to become a proletarian revolutionary. In intervals between battles, he could be found studying Lenin. He had great admiration for Comrade Mao Zedong.

Peng Dehuai liked to crack jokes with his men at ordinary times. But during battle he displayed an iron will. His frequent presence at the front inspired courage in the soldiers. At times his resoluteness and sternness made his men afraid of him, but they used to say, "We love him more than we fear him."

During the fifth campaign against enemy "encirclement and suppression", Peng Dehuai criticized Li De¹ to his face for his faulty command, saying that his strategy and tactics were leading to the loss of the Soviet areas created with much effort, as "the prodigal son doesn't feel sorry when he sells his father's farmland." These sharp remarks of his, which were made without taking into consideration his own personal interests, left a deep impression on comrades. Upright and outspoken, Peng Dehuai dared to air his views freely. A man of foresight and wisdom, he had an open heart.

At first glance, some of the facts stated in the

¹Li De was the Chinese name of Otto Braun (1900-1974), a German sent by the Communist International to China in 1932. He arrived in the Central Soviet Area in September 1933 to serve as advisor to the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Chinese Soviet Government. During the fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign launched by Chiang Kai-shek against the Red Army, Otto Braun and the "Left" opportunist leaders in the CPC Central Committee adopted a series of erroneous strategies and tactics that brought heavy losses to the Red Army. Braun left China in 1939.

Memoirs seem to be contradictory. This is, in fact, not so. For instance, Comrade Peng wrote that he was not a Party Central Committee member at the time the Red Army broke through enemy encirclement on its Long March in October 1934. In fact, because of the fierce fighting then raging, he had not been informed of his having been co-opted a Central Committee member at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Party's Sixth Central Committee held in Ruijin in January 1934. As the *Memoirs* were written from memory when the author was completely cut off from the outside world, there may be inaccuracies in some specific details. Because of the complicated historical situation, his views on certain questions may differ from the reminiscences of other comrades. Under the circumstances of the Cultural Revolution, it was only natural that he could not fully expound his views. In spite of all this, the *Memoirs* still provide precious historical data on the Chinese revolution.

The last time I saw Peng Dehuai was in October 1965 when Comrade Mao Zedong sent me to inform him that the Party Central Committee had assigned him the task of defence construction in the Southwest. Before departing, he called on me to say goodbye. We talked about the past and future, and were reluctant to part. Sadness overtakes me whenever I think of that parting moment.

The best way to keep the memory of Comrade Peng Dehuai alive is to learn from his example. I believe that the publication of these *Memoirs* will receive the wide public attention they deserve.

I. Childhood Plight (1898-1916)

I was born into a lower-middle peasant family* on the 10th day of the 9th moon on the lunar calendar in 1898. All my family had at that time were a few thatched huts on eight or nine *mu*** of fallow*** and hilly land. We planted sweet potatoes and cotton on the fallow land and palms, tea, China fir and bamboo on the hill. Working hard and living frugally, the eight of us — my grand-uncle, grandmother, my parents and four boys — barely managed to make ends meet.

I went to an old-style private school at six and studied the *Primer in Three-Word Phrases, Elementary Reading for Children, the Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, Mencius, the Hundred Clan Names* and other old books. But at eight, my mother died and my father became ill. I had to drop out of school because of extreme poverty. As my grand-uncle was almost 80 and my grandmother over 70, there was no one to look after my three little brothers. Less than a month after my mother's

* In Wushi Village, Xiangtan County, Hunan Province.
— *Tr.*

** 15 *mu* = 1 hectare. — *Tr.*

*** In Hunan, some land cannot be productive unless it is allowed to lie idle once in every two or three years. — *Tr.*

death, my six-month old youngest brother died of starvation. The family first sold the trees and wooded plots, then mortgaged our fallow land to leave us less than three-tenths of a *mu* of land. The implements and furniture in the house, even the wooden doors and planks used for beds, were sold. Our huts were mortgaged too, except for two rooms where the family huddled under roofs which could keep out the sun on good days but not the rain on wet days. Cotton batting was used to plug the holes in the family's cooking kettle when water was boiled. We were in rags. While other people wore cotton-padded clothes and stockings in the cold winter months, my brothers and I put on straw sandals and covered our bodies with a kind of dress made of palm bark which made us look like primitive men.

By the time I reached 10, the family was at the end of its rope. On lunar New Year's Day, we had no rice for food while people in the rich families nearby let off fire-crackers. Leading my second brother by the hand, I went out to beg for the first time in my life. When we came to the home of Old Teacher Chen on Sesame Beach, he enquired if we were kiddies coming to wish him luck on New Year's Day.

"No," I said. "We're beggars."

But my brother Peng Jinhua said, "Yes." He was given half a bowl of rice and a small piece of meat.

We returned home at dusk with only less than two *sheng** of rice. Dazed by hunger, I fell on the floor

* 1 *sheng* = 1 litre. — *Tr.*

the moment I entered our hut. Grandma offered me a bowl of vegetable soup when she learned from my brother that I had eaten nothing the whole day.

The first day of the lunar year had passed, but what did the second have in store for us?

"Come," Grandma said, "let all four of us go beg for some rice."

I stood on the threshold, refusing to go because I knew beggars were humiliated by others.

"What do we do then?" Grandma said. "When I wanted to go begging yesterday, you didn't want me to go. And now you're not going today. Are we going to starve to death?" Leading two of her grandsons (one was my third brother who was less than four years old), the grey-haired woman who was over 70 went out into the falling snow and biting wind. With the help of a walking stick, she swayed from side to side on her little bound feet. I felt as if a dagger had pierced my heart.

Taking a chopper, I went into the hills to cut firewood which I sold for 10 coppers to buy a small package of salt. I also took home a clump of winter fungus I'd gathered from a dying tree and made a soup of it. Father, Grand-uncle and I all had some.

When it was getting dark, Grandma and my two brothers came home with a bag of cooked rice and three *sheng* of rice. She poured the cooked rice into the fungus soup and offered it to us. I refused, which made Grandma weep.

"Why won't you have the rice I begged?" She asked. "We will share whatever food we have, and when there's none, all of us will die together."

Whenever I recall this moment, tears come to my eyes and my heart is filled with grief. The same sadness overtakes me at this moment. I can't go on writing any more today and have to stop here.

And yet events as sad as this have happened hundreds of times in my life!

I never went begging again. After this I cut firewood, caught fish and carried coal to sell. Going about in rags or in a raincoat made of palm bark and wearing straw sandals in the biting cold of winter, I never knew a full stomach. Such was the hardship I went through in my childhood.

During this time, I was deeply influenced by my grand-uncle who had been a member of the Taiping Army.¹ He often told me stories about the Taiping forces. The Taipings, he used to say, had food for everybody, the women unbound their feet, and the land was shared out among the tillers. This instilled in me the idea of taking the landlords' riches to relieve the poor, of wiping out the landlords and finding a way out for the poor.

At 10 or 12, I started to work as a cowherd for a rich peasant named Liu, earning five coppers a day in the first year and 10 in the second. I had many chores besides cutting some 30 jin* of grass for a big water buffalo and a smaller one every day. Going

¹ Founded in 1850, the Taiping Army was made up of revolutionary peasants led by Hong Xiuquan and others, who established the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom that ruled a substantial part of China before it was crushed by the Qing court in 1864.

* 2 jin = 1 kilogramme. — Tr.

to bed very late at night and getting up before day-break, I slept less than six hours a day.

I became a child-labourer at the age of 13 to 14 at a small coal pit in the neighbourhood where I worked 12 or 13 hours a day, turning a water-wheel made of bamboo to drain water from the pit. I made 30 coppers a day. To earn a few coppers more, I went down the pit with an oil-lamp on my head twice a day to haul coal — really back-breaking toil. Ventilation and sanitary conditions were very bad. Cave-ins and pit-flooding were common, causing scores of people to lose their lives at a time. During the four years I worked as a cowherd and then as a miner, I got some idea of the cruel exploitation labourers suffered at the hands of rich peasants and capitalist bosses. With the New Year drawing near one winter, the mine went bankrupt and closed down. The boss fled, and I got only a year's wage for two years' work — a terrible loss to me. Heavy toil had bent my back, which remains a little crooked today.

It was New Year's Eve when I returned home from the mine, and Grandma, Daddy and my brothers were very pleased to see me back. But my younger brother said, "Big Brother still has no shoes on. See, his feet have cracked in the cold."

I told them that I had no money for shoes because the boss had run off without paying the workers. When we left the mine, each worker was given only four *sheng* of rice. These words brought tears to Daddy's eyes.

"You are very dirty and pale," he said. "You don't look like a human any more. You've worked two

long years for that son-of-a-bitch for nothing!" Daddy clenched his fists and wept.

At the age of 15, I did odd jobs — pushing a wheel-barrow or cutting firewood or catching fish for sale. Drought brought famine that year. The landlords and rich merchants hoarded the grain. Some of the starving people — who had to stand in long soup lines — organized a protest to try to force grain prices down. I took part and the local defence head accused me of "inciting people to disturb peace in the village." The township defence corps dispatched men to arrest me, and my poor uncle told me to run away.

"I've not a single copper in my pocket," I said. "Where can I go?"

"I sold a piglet today," he said, "and I have a string of coppers (1,000 pieces) you can use on the way. Go to the lakeside to work on the dykes."

I did as he advised and went to Xilinwei in Xiangyin County where I served as a dyke worker for two years. There I learned how construction workers were exploited by the dyke bureau authorities.

The paddy fields around Lake Dongting were, for the most part, surrounded by dykes. Workers building these dykes were paid by contract plus piece work. To cover a 10-foot square depression with soil one-foot deep was called a "fill-in *fang*."* The wages for filling it depended on how far it was to get the soil and on how easy it was to get it. The excavation of a 10-foot square to a depth of one foot was termed a "well *fang*." The rate paid for

* *Fang* — an amount of earth or stone work. — *Tr.*

excavating it was a little higher than for covering a "fill-in *fang*" with soil. The rate for a *fang* ranged from 10 to 50 coppers. Dyke workers were required to bring their own tools and provisions and to build the sheds in which they slept. The ruler used to measure the size of a *fang* was one-third longer than the present-day foot ruler. Labour was organized this way: At the top was the dyke construction bureau. Under it were contractors who in turn had shed chiefs under them. The smallest work unit was formed by the workers, usually from 15 to 25 persons, in a shed. Several sheds were combined under each contractor. Each contractor and shed chief took five per cent of the dyke workers' wages. Gifts had to be presented to the overseers and work inspectors of the dyke construction bureau during festivals or when there were weddings or funerals in their families. All these forms of exploitation were a serious burden on the labourers.

There was a bookkeeper with every shed who did not receive his wages in the way dyke workers did. When the accounts were added up and found to be 101 silver dollars at year's end or on the completion of a specific project, the last dollar went to the bookkeeper. Each shed had a cook. A man preparing meals for 15 persons or less had to spend three-tenths of his time in the kitchen and seven-tenths in carrying soil with a shoulder-pole. One cooking for 16 or more people could spend two-fifths or half of his time in the kitchen. A cook who did not work on the dykes when it snowed or rained, was paid the same way. Being a cook as well as a dyke worker, I earned the largest number of work-points

possible. But what I made came to only three and a half *dan** of husked rice when I quit the worksite in the spring of 1916 after having worked there for two and a half years. Those who did no cooking or who could not turn out for work because of illness usually fell into debt. As a result, they never were able to return to their homes but had to serve all their lives as labourers on the lakeside. The land around Lake Dongting was known as a granary which had been built on the sweat and blood of dyke workers.

At times the construction workers went on strike in protest against exploitation and for a higher rate for a *fang* of earth work, and I joined them. But most of these strikes failed to achieve the expected results for lack of organization and leadership. Everyone on the board of directors of the dyke construction bureau had amassed a fortune by squeezing the workers.

Whenever it rained or snowed and there was nothing to do on the dykes, I left the worksite to visit peasants' homes in the neighbourhood and chat. When a specific project was completed in two or three months, the worksite would move to another locality. As I came into contact with more and more peasants, it dawned on me that the richest parts of Hunan Province had the biggest gap between rich and poor. People who lived from hand to mouth were to be found everywhere, and there were many pauperized families like my own. Numerous forms

* 1 *dan* = 50 kilogrammes. — Tr.

of usury were practised, and the annual interest rate was as high as 100 per cent.

The appalling poverty I experienced in my childhood and youth tempered me. In later years, I often recalled the plight of my childhood with a view to preventing myself from becoming corrupt and forgetting the hard life of the poor. That is why I can still vividly remember the ordeals I went through as a child.

II. Enlisting in the Hunan Army

(March 1916-Autumn 1921)

Joining the Hunan Army

I enlisted in the Hunan Army in mid-March 1916. As I was born on the 10th day of the ninth moon, I was below 18 and only reluctantly accepted into the armed forces. My entry into the army coincided with the campaign to oust Tang Xiangming, who was Military Governor of Hunan Province and an agent of the Northern Warlords.¹ In 1916 people everywhere were secretly talking of fighting the warlord Tang and his Northern troops. It was said that Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the Guangxi army would help them in a war against the Northern armies who

¹ The Northern Warlords belonged to a feudal military setup established in Beijing by Yuan Shikai. Following the toppling of the Qing Dynasty in the 1911 Revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, Yuan made himself President of China, and later he tried but failed to be the emperor of China before his death in 1916. After Yuan's death, the Northern Warlords continued to rule over China with the backing of foreign imperialist powers. They were crushed by the National Revolution of 1925-27 based on Kuomintang-Communist cooperation.

were massacring people in an attempt to suppress the revolution. As World War I was then going on, the European and American imperialists had slowed down their aggression against China, and China's industry was growing at a relatively high speed. This gave rise to such deceptive bourgeois patriotic ideas as "a prosperous nation with a mighty army" and "save the nation through industrial development". They had an influence on me. But my chief motive in joining the army was to earn money to help provide for my poor family. A dyke worker would be unable to do that.

Starting as a second-class private at a salary of 5.50 silver dollars a month, I was taken on by the First Company of the First Battalion of the Sixth Regiment of the Third Brigade of the Hunan Army's Second Division. The pay later increased to six dollars when I became a first-class private. The monthly food bill was 1.8-2.00 dollars and pork was served every Saturday. After deduction of food and sundry expenses, there were 3.80 dollars left, and I could send home 3.00-3.50 dollars per month. There were then only three people in my family — Grandma, Daddy and my third brother — because Grand-Uncle had died and my second brother had left home to become an apprentice. The three dollars I sent home was barely enough for them to live on.

The commander of the Second Division was against Dr. Sun Yat-sen, but the brigade and regimental commanders were for him. Tang Xianming was finally ousted, and the provincial governorship in

Hunan passed to Tan Yankai.* The Second Division moved to western Hunan Province, and the Sixth Regiment of the Third Brigade was sent to Changde in July-August. The First Battalion to which I belonged¹ was assigned to the premises of Deshan Academy in Changde for training. Under strict discipline we spent about eight hours a day in two drill classes and two other classes. Most of the junior and non-commissioned officers had participated in the 1911 Revolution, and some were graduates of the Baoding Military Academy.¹ While giving lessons on military and cultural matters, these officers at times also gave patriotic talks focussing on a "prosperous nation and a mighty army" theme. These school-trained officers were disliked by officers who had risen from the ranks, and some were kicked out in the autumn of 1917 when the men and junior officers of the Second Division started a campaign against Division Commander Chen Fuchu for his collaboration with the Northern warlord Fu Liangzuo.²

In the summer of 1917, Fu Liangzuo came south

* Tan Yankai (1880-1930) was a Constitutional Monarchist towards the end of the Qing Dynasty and later took part in the 1911 Revolution. He aligned himself with Chiang Kai-shek in 1927 and served as President of the National Government and of the Executive Yuan. — *Tr.*

¹Founded in the late years of the Qing Dynasty, the military academy was located at Baoding some 300 km. south of Beijing and provided courses in infantry, cavalry, engineering, artillery and logistics.

²Fu Liangzuo, Vice-Minister of Ground Forces in the Northern Warlords' government, was made Military Governor of Hunan Province in August 1917.

to replace Tan Yankai as the Military Governor of Hunan Province. When his troops occupied Hengshan County, a hot battle flared up between them and the First Division and other units of the Hunan Army. My regiment, the Sixth Regiment of the Second Division's Third Brigade, was then stationed in Changde City, while the Fifth Regiment was in Taoyuan County. (I do not remember the deployment of the other units.) The junior officers and men of these units were opposed to the Northern Warlords, and they mutinied. I took part in the mutiny as a soldiers' deputy from my battalion. Brigade Commander Chen Jiayou and Regimental Commander Lu Diping secretly backed the mutiny. Divisional Commander Chen Fuchu was forced to resign. The First Battalion stationed in Deshan then marched to the western section of Changde.

Meanwhile, another group of officers trained at the Baoding Military Academy were expelled to be replaced by junior officers who had risen from the ranks since the 1911 Revolution. This added to the strength of the forces which supported Dr. Sun Yat-sen and opposed the Northern Warlords. In mid-autumn the Sixth Regiment of the Independent Third Brigade ("independent" was a newly acquired designation) moved to Xiangyin County where it joined forces with units of the First Division in a battle against Fu Liangzuo. Lu Rongting¹ of Guang-

¹ Lu Rongting, leader of the warlords in Guangxi Province, served as Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces in 1917. In October of the same year, he sent troops to support the Hunan Army. He stepped down in September 1924.

xi Province also ordered the Guangxi units under the command of Ma Ji to join the battle. The anti-Fu forces came under the name of the Hunan-Guangxi Allied Army. After a battle at Yuezhou, these forces, towards the end of the year, reached the Yanglousi-Tongcheng line where fighting raged for over a month. Some troops of the Northern army came on flatboats on the Changjiang (Yangtze) River and stormed Yuezhou. The Hunan-Guangxi Allied Army reeled back along the whole front in January 1918.

The Northern forces under Zhang Jingyao, Wu Peifu and Feng Yuxiang swarmed over Hunan Province. Those under Zhang occupied Changsha, Baoqing (present-day Shaoyang city), Liling and Chaling. The troops of Wu Peifu took Hengyang and Anren, and Feng's forces captured Changde. The Guangxi Army fell back to present-day Shaoyang while the main forces of the Hunan army retreated to Chenzhou and Yongxin. After fighting several engagements with the enemy in the areas south of Hengyang and west of Leiyang, the Independent Third Brigade (my company commander Li Tai-chang was killed in action and was replaced by Li Peishi) retreated and put up defence at Hukou township in Chaling and in Lingxian County. After bypassing Baoqing, Hengyang and Leiyang, the Sixth Regiment withdrew to put up defence in Huanxi township in April or May.

The Independent Third Brigade, first commanded by Lu Diping and later by Lin Xiumei, was stationed in Tianzifen in Lingxian County. The chief of

its logistical department was Lin Boqu,* brother of Lin Xiumei, who told me later that Lin Xiumei had utopian socialist ideas.

An allied army made up of Hunan, Guangdong and Guangxi forces was formed later to halt the southern advance of the Northern armies, but never went into action. A stalemate then followed because Zhang Jingyao and Wu Peifu did not advance farther south.

When it met with setbacks in the campaign against Fu Liangzuo in 1917, the Hunan army, driven out of a great part of the province, was unable to pay its men for as long as 23 months. The soldiers were then kept from making trouble in many ways. They were told to be patriotic by observing the law and supporting the Constitution, and to fight for a unified China by warring against the Northern Warlords. Many were sent to classes to learn a profession. The soldiers were promised that they would be given their back pay after the overthrow of warlord Zhang.

As the Hunan and Guangxi armies retreated helter-skelter, my company withdrew to Tangxingqiao in Xiangtan County. There I visited the home of my aunt, who ran a shop making and selling wooden utensils. On returning to my company some three hours later, I found it had retreated in

* Lin Boqu (1885-1960) joined the CPC in 1921, took part in the Long March and served as Chairman of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region during 1937-48. In the years after Liberation he was first Secretary-General of the Central People's Government and then Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. — *Tr.*

the direction of Baoqing. While I was heading for Xiangxiang in an effort to catch up with the company, I met He Dequan, a fellow soldier who had straggled behind. Travelling together, the two of us caught up with the company in the township of Huanxi. Many of our men, thin and exhausted after much fighting and a long march, fell victim to disease, especially malaria. Though in financial straits, the company still had money for office and medical supplies. Since there was a surplus of office funds but not enough funds for medical purposes, I suggested using some office money for medicine. But Company Commander Li Peishi disagreed.

"Man is more important than money at a time when we are giving support to law and the Constitution," I said.

But the company commander said nothing. This made me realize that, though he had his good points, he was a miser.

Two days later, I went to Huang Gonglue's* place and there I met Yuan Zhi** who enquired about the sick in our company.

"The situation is so serious," I said, "that there are no men to carry out sentry duties at times."

"I've heard that you're going to resign from the army," he said.

* Huang Gonglue (1898-1931) was one of the leaders of the Pingjiang Uprising. He joined the CPC in 1927 and in 1930 was appointed commander of the Third Army of the Red Army. In October 1931 he was killed in action in the township of Donggu in Ji'an County, Jiangxi Province in a Kuomintang air raid. — *Tr.*

** Commander of the author's battalion. — *Tr.*

"Yes," I replied.

He advised me not to do so.

The following day, Huang Gonglue, whose mind was full of patriotism, came to my company and told me, "The battalion commander is permitting nobody to resign since this would have a bad effect on the other men." He advised me to be patient.

I told Huang Gonglue about a junior high school student by the name of Li Can who had enlisted in my company a week earlier and who was now with the Second Platoon. I later introduced them and from then on the three of us became bosom friends.

Later, Company Commander Li Peishi fell ill and left the army; he was replaced by Zhou Pan.

At that time, some enemy units under Zhang Jingyao were stationed in Chaling. Sentries from the companies of the Sixth Regiment were sent out to keep an eye on them, but there was no fighting between our men and the enemy troops.

The Sixth Regiment remained in and around Huanxi township for two years without moving. It tried to flatter the public by mouthing slogans for bringing about a united China and for the defence of the Provisional Constitution of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. It procured its provisions locally by collecting land tax. On the average, each soldier was given 50 coppers to one dollar for pocket money each month, and was supplied with less than half an ounce of cooking oil and the same amount of salt per day. Even such meagre salaries for the troops had to be obtained from the authorities in Guangdong Province. The troops raised their own pigs, grew vegetables and cut firewood. There were four to five

hours' training per day, and the discipline was less strict than it had been. The Sixth Regiment established a temporary training unit in the township of Huanxi in which lessons on simple rules and regulations were taught. The Mandarin language lessons taught included such messages as cultivating self-confidence and valuing time. I was one of the trainees, and in less than two years made some progress in language study. Talks were also given on the dismemberment of China by the foreign powers and on building China as a prosperous nation with a mighty army. (This was called "a spiritual talk".) The teachers, who taught part-time, were officers with school education. The trainees, 10-15 men from each company, were picked from the ranks. All trainees continued to perform their daily military duties and lived and had their meals in their own companies. Two classes were given each day, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon; each lasted no more than three hours. A trainee was required to write two compositions per month, during which tests were given on military science and essay writing. The trainees also took part in drilling sessions in their own companies.

The aim of the warlords in running such a training unit was to train their own lackeys and to win the hearts of the men with a view to consolidating their own forces. But I made friends with a score of school graduates and soldiers who came from poor peasant families. We encouraged each other to work for the country and the people and pledged not to indulge in corruption (including embezzlement

and the taking of concubines) or harass the civilian population.

Assigned to Spy on Warlords' Armies

"Brigade headquarters wants to send a man to Changsha City to reconnoitre conditions in the enemy's rear," Battalion Commander Yuan Zhi said to me one day in July 1918. "You've been picked for the job."

"It's not easy to get the inside information required," I said. "I've no friends over there."

"You just go contact your former company commander, Hu Zimao, in a tea shop on Fuzheng Street in Changsha, and he'll tell you everything. Also, we would like him to be our quartermaster here." Then the battalion commander told me to pass through the defence zones of Wu Peifu in Anren and Hengyang on my way to Changsha, and to travel through the positions held by a unit under Zhang Jingyao in Liling and Chaling on the return trip.

"Remember to talk in an indirect way to Hu Zimao to get military information from him. Don't make him suspect that you're a scout."

I accepted the assignment.

On the trip out, I took the liberty to visit my home in Xiangtan by way of Hengshan and stayed with my family for two days. While in Xiangtan, I also stayed with my former squad leader, Guo Deyun, and with my aunt for three or four days. Guo Deyun supplied me with the following information about the Northern armies: Their men fought and

murdered one another; it was rumoured that Zhang Jingyao and Wu Peifu were not on good terms, but the reason was not clear; the civilian population hated the Northern armies and hoped for the arrival of the Southern armies.

I stayed two days in Changsha City, where I met Hu Zimao at a tea shop in Fuzheng Street. Following a brief chat, I told him that Battalion Commander Yuan hoped he would return to be a quartermaster.

"I'll go and do whatever I can to help," he said after hesitating for a while. "That's my obligation. At the moment, the ordinary people hate the Northern forces; they hope that the Southern armies will come soon."

"Isn't there a rift within the Northern armies?" I asked.

"The Northern troops are not on good terms from top to bottom. There'll be a change, but there is no obvious sign of it yet." He also talked about other things which I cannot remember now.

Sensing that he was edgy, I dropped the idea of lodging in his house. He had not asked me to do so, either. When taking leave, I asked when he would go to see Battalion Commander Yuan.

"As soon as it is convenient," he said. "Just to go and see things for myself."

Then I went to take a letter — which Zhen Xiang, a squad leader in my company had given me — to the Yang Family House in the town of Langli. I guessed that he might have sent about a dozen dollars with the letter to his penniless family. I lodged in Zhen Xiang's home for two nights where I learn-

ed from his elder brother that my friend He Dequan's home was less than 10 *li* away.

I went to He Dequan's home and passed the night there. It was just a friendly call, and soon I was back in Changsha City.

I wanted to take the train to Liling and Chaling to return to Huanxi township. But I was arrested by the military police of the Northern forces when I was booking a train ticket at the Xiaowumen Station. Detained for half a month, I was tortured and interrogated several times. During one of these tortures, I was in such terrible pain that I was about ready to say that I was a spy and meet death. But, on second thought, I changed my mind — how could I help the enemy instead of completing my mission? And what could the interrogators do if I said nothing and was ready to die?

I told them that I came to look for a job in Changsha. Without any evidence against me, the military police released me on a guarantee given by a hosiery factory that a widow from my home district operated in partnership with others.

It was already late August when I returned to Huanxi township via Liling and Chaling.

The Campaign to Oust Warlord Zhang

The campaign to drive out the Northern warlord Zhang Jingyao started in secret in Hunan Province in the spring and summer of 1919 and lasted four months. As there was a split between Feng Yuxiang, Wu Peifu and Zhang Jingyao, the forces of

Feng and Wu pulled back to the north, leaving Zhang in isolation. The Hunan army then began to attack him. Pushing forward from Huanxi township to Leiyang, Qiyang and Wenmingsi in the later part of March, the Independent Third Brigade's Sixth Regiment mounted an attack on Zhang's forces in Baoqing in mid-April. In the first battle, the warlord's troops were driven to a place between Yongfeng and Baoqing. And in the second, they were forced to flee to a locality between the county seats of Yongfeng and Xiangxiang. The third battle was fought when we pursued them to a place near the Baishui Railway Station east of Xiangyin.

Then we chased them to somewhere east of Linxiang and fought the fourth battle. Most of the warlord's forces were wiped out, and a very small number of remnant troops managed to flee into Hubei Province. In the battle fought east of Xiangyin, enemy troops that had escaped annihilation dispersed to become roving bandits. The Sixth Regiment went back to Guiyi by train, where they wiped out the bandits. After that the regiment was stationed in Xinshijie.

I received a letter from home saying that my grandmother was seriously ill, and I asked for a week off. But Zhou Pan gave me a 10-day leave, four days for the round trip and six days to stay at home. It was harvest time for late rice. I spent four days helping bring in the harvest for poor peasant Hu Yueheng and for Zhou Liushi, who was a well-to-do middle peasant (I heard later that Zhou had become a small landlord by the time of nationwide Liberation). I returned to the army on time

after spending two days cutting firewood for my family's kitchen.

My platoon leader, Li Runsheng, missing after being seriously wounded in the campaign to oust warlord Zhang, had never been heard of since. He was presumed dead. Company Commander Zhou Pan ordered me to be acting platoon leader. I formally became platoon leader in the battle that drove remnants of warlord Zhang's forces to Xiangyin. By that time I had been in the army three years. At first I was a second-class private, then a first-class one. Not long afterwards, I was deputy squad leader, then squad leader. And I became a platoon leader at the end of the campaign against warlord Zhang. (But I'm not quite sure whether the campaign took place in 1919 or 1920.)*

The October Revolution that took place during this period had a big impact on me and other soldiers. A tight blockade by the military kept the news of the revolution from reaching us on time. But after our capture of Changsha and Yuezhou we could get more news than we had been able to in the remote parts of southern Hunan Province.

The Fight for Back Pay

Towards the end of 1919 or 1920, all armed forces from other provinces had been driven out of Hunan. The warlords of Hunan in destroying Zhang's troops had captured lots of materiel to enlarge the Hunan forces into a big army of four divisions with 10

* The campaign took place in 1920. — *Tr.*

brigades. In appearance, unification had been achieved throughout the province.

Following the failure of its campaign against Fu Liangzuo in 1917, the Hunan army had withdrawn to a corner of the province, and the soldiers were not given their pay for as long as 23 months. The army authorities maintained their rule by telling the rank-and-file that they were fighting for the Constitution, for patriotism and for the unification of China, that they would be able to learn skills at classes, etc.

The soldiers were promised that they would be given their back pay after the overthrow of warlord Zhang. After the annihilation of Zhang's forces and the unification of Hunan, however, the back pay was piling up. Soldiers demanded that the arrears be given them in a lump sum at once and that their pay be given regularly every month. Nearly 100,000 soldiers, in a spontaneous demonstration, began to march on Changsha City. Soldier representatives' associations were elected from the rank-and-file in the divisions, brigades, regiments, battalions and companies. And in Changsha, an all-provincial association was formed for the whole army. The representatives directed all army activities, and the orders of officers became invalid. But things were in good order in the army—an indication that soldiers were very good at self-government. Two military area commanders were killed in Pingjiang and Liling. It was said that they had tried to disrupt the struggle for back pay. All power in the army had become vested in the soldiers' representatives and the officers had lost control over their men.

Troops across the province began to converge on Changsha at the command of the soldiers' representatives. Setting out from the town of Xinshijie, men of the Sixth Regiment reached Guiyi Railway Station on the bank of the Miluo River, ready to entrain for Changsha. Then they remained at Guiyi because some sort of a compromise had been reached to solve the arrears problem. Regimental Commander Liu Xing sat there stock-still and wept, without uttering a word. Battalion Commander Yuan Zhi and Company Commander Zhou Pan held that they approved of the actions of the soldiers' representatives as long as they caused no trouble to the people. Because of the lack of political leadership, the struggle for arrears was first taken advantage of and then sabotaged by a deceitful man — warlord Zhao Hengti.¹ He issued certificates by which the soldiers could draw their back pay from county governments out of their land tax income over a period of three years. This trick worked and virtually disintegrated the soldier representatives' associations. Some soldiers' representatives were enticed and blackmailed to conform. For instance, many were promised that they would be sent to school or college. But none of these promises ever materialized.

I was neither blackmailed nor deceived. The mutiny taught me the following lesson: When soldiers become conscious of what they are doing and are organized, they constitute a mighty force.

¹Zhao Hengti was then concurrently Military Governor and Governor of Hunan Province. He stepped down in 1926.

The experience helped me to set up soldiers' committees and institute soldiers' self-government in later years.

The Battle in Support of Autonomy in Hubei Province

The Hunan Army was reorganized in 1920 following the annihilation of warlord Zhang's forces. It was now inevitable that the army, having become so enlarged, would expand its domain. Zhao Hengti, Military Governor of Hunan Province, wanted to maintain his feudal separatist regime in the name of "a union of autonomous provinces".¹ He tried to extend his sphere of influence and grab the territory of Hubei Province under the pretext of helping the autonomous movement there. Thrusting into the southern part of Hubei Province in the summer of 1921, the Hunan Army fought its way to the Hesheng Bridge (not far from Wuchang), where it was defeated by troops of the Northern Warlords Wu Peifu and Xiao Yaonan. Its retreat route was cut when Yuezhou County-seat in Hunan was captured by the commandos of the naval forces of Wu and Xiao. Put to rout, the Hunan Army lost half of its forces as it withdrew to the Changsha-Xiangyin area. The defeated troops looted and raped wherever they happened to be, bringing calamity to an infuriated civilian population. So much

¹The slogan was raised by a number of warlords to maintain their separatist local regimes. They used it in the 1920s as a counter-measure against the Northern warlords' policy of "unifying the country by force".

for the slogan: "Hunan should be governed by the Hunanese."

When the Hunan army set out for the aid-Hubei battle, the Second Division moved north along the railway for a frontal attack on the enemy. The Sixth Regiment entrained for the north at Yuezhou and a station to the south of it. I was transferred to the Third Battalion's 11th Company (its commander was on sick leave). Our units fled back to Hunan Province at the end of July. After a brief stay in Changsha for regrouping, the Sixth Regiment moved to Nanxian County, where Regimental Commander Yuan Zhi made me acting company commander, and I garrisoned at Zhuzikou in Nanxian County at the head of a reinforced platoon (with four squads). This took place in mid-August. The platoon remained there for about a month. There a small number of stragglers and Dongting Lake bandits conducted harassing raids.

As the defeat in the aid-Hubei battle had smashed all hopes of grabbing territory outside Hunan Province, contradictions flared up again in the ranks of the Hunan army. In appearance, it seemed that a warlords' alliance formed by graduates from the Baoding Military Academy and the Shikan Gakkō (military academy) in Japan was trying to oust the officers who rose from the ranks.¹ But in fact it was their attempt to divide up the territory of Hunan among the top officers. There was an armed

¹Graduates from the Baoding Military Academy, graduates from the Shikan Gakkō in Japan, and officers who had risen from the ranks formed the three factions within the Hunan army.

clash in the autumn of 1924 in which the officers from the two academies ousted the officers who had come up from the ranks. As a result, several tens of thousands of men under the officers who had risen from the ranks, such as Lu Diping, Xie Guoguang and Wu Jianxue, were forced to flee into Guangdong Province. This split within the army weakened the reactionary forces in Hunan and added to the strength of the Northern Expedition Forces in Guangdong Province. It also caused more splits within the Hunan army. For example, Tang Shengzhi¹ joined the Guangdong army in the Northern Expedition. Many soldiers and a small number of junior officers who had risen from the ranks hoped that the Communist Party would show them the way out, but failed to get in touch with the Party. I was one of these people.

During the aid-Hubei campaign, I was still with the Sixth Regiment's First Company which actually increased its strength in both men and rifles while other companies and battalions of the regiment were losing as many as two-thirds of their men, mostly through desertions, not casualties. Our new arrivals were recruited into the company by the soldiers themselves. In our First Company there were no desertions for two reasons. First, the company's financial accounts were open for all the men to

¹Tang Shengzhi (1889-1970) was then Commander of the Hunan army's Fourth Division. During the Northern Expedition, he was Commander of the Eighth Army and Commander-in-Chief of the Fourth Army Group. He was a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress after China's Liberation,

inspect, and the company had a public fund (accumulation of unspent office, medical and sundry expenses and of salaries earmarked for vacancies),¹ which was used to provide fringe benefits for soldiers. Second, corporal punishment was abolished. No longer were soldiers flogged or forced to go down on their knees. Those who broke discipline were either ordered to stand still or served a warning, or their infractions were put on record. These two rules won the support of soldiers in our old-style army unit. The underground activities carried out by the Save-the-Poor Committee in the company also helped to unite it.

¹ There were usually a number of vacancies in each army unit in old China. The salaries earmarked for these posts were either embezzled by the officers or designated by higher authorities for use by the army unit.

III. Determined to Save the Poor

(Autumn 1921-1925)

Killing the Tyrannical Landlord Ou Shengqin

Zhuzikou, a little town of some 300 households in Nanxian County, was situated in a land of plenty. There was plenty of rice, fish, livestock and poultry. The reed-beds abounded with wild game. But there were also all kinds of taxes, high land rent and usurious rates of interest that bled the people white. A marked difference existed between the rich and the poor. I frequented the outskirts of the town to chat with the peasants after supper. A poor peasant by the name of Jiang Ziqing told me about a local despotic landlord, Ou Shengqin (whose brother, a major general, served as a senior counsellor in the office of Zhao Hengti, Military Governor of Hunan Province). The landlord tyrannized the poor peasants by grabbing their rice fields and reed marshes — land which had been formed over the years by river-borne sediment. Jiang asked me time and again to help him get back his land.

An investigation of Jiang's charges not only confirmed what the peasant had said, but further revealed that the landlord prohibited fishing in sec-

tions of the river that he had marked out for himself and allowed no one to cut reeds or hunt wild ducks in reed marshes he claimed that he owned. Having seized the land and homes of others, the landlord imposed all kinds of taxes on them. He was also a usurer who forced others to sell to him cheap rice crops that were still green in the fields. To increase his power, he bought over some rich, old settlers to oppress the new ones. Head of the local Tax Bureau and Chief of the local Dyke Construction Bureau, he levied taxes on all kinds of goods and produce, particularly on the catches of the fishing people. He bullied the people and stopped at no evil, doing more harm to the neighbourhood than the bandits.

One day, I told Jiang, the poor peasant, of the need to set up a Save-the-Poor Committee.

A tyrant like Ou, I said, could only be struck down by a great number of organized people. The peasant said that the local people showed a great deal of hatred for him but everybody was afraid to take any action.

"Are you afraid?" I asked.

"I am not afraid. But I can do nothing by myself."

"I will dispatch some armed soldiers to kill the tyrant tonight." I said, "Please lead the way for them." He was delighted. Then I told him that those going to kill the landlord would go in disguise and that the matter must be kept a secret.

That very night I sent First Squad Leader Wang Shaonan and three soldier members of the Save-the-Poor Committee to kill the tyrant. Before they set out with the peasant leading the way, I briefed them, telling them that only the landlord was to be killed

and that no harm was to be done to anybody else in the family. After completing the task, they should put up an anonymous notice listing the crimes of the landlord.

The landlord was killed which ended the collection of taxes the following day. But the relief to the poor was short-lived — on the third day, tax collection resumed. I then realized that to kill one or two tyrannical men alone was of no use.

I learned later that poor peasant Jiang attempted to wipe out the whole family by also killing the tyrant's wife and children. I have no idea if this is true.

A few days later, our unit left for Sanxian Lake to board a steamship for Xiangyin where we mounted an attack on the troops under Shen Hongying¹ in Pingjiang. The people had said nothing bad about my men by the time the company left Zhuzikou. That was in the autumn of 1921.

The Sixth Regiment marched to Jinjing (between Changsha and Pingjiang) and to Xinshijie before closing in on Pingjiang. The forces of the Guangxi warlord Shen Hongying fled towards Guangxi Province via Liuyang and Liling. Following this, the Sixth Regiment returned and garrisoned in the Lukoushe area 70 *li* from Changsha at the end of November. A few days after we reached there — some three or four months after Ou Shengqin's death — I was charged with murdering him.

¹Shen Hongying was a warlord of Guangxi Province, whose forces moved through Hunan, Jiangxi, Guangdong and Guangxi provinces in the early 1920s.

It happened after Xu, leader of the Special Task Platoon, arrived at my place to inform me that Regimental Commander Yuan Zhi had requested my presence at regimental headquarters in Changsha.

I had travelled about five *li* on the way to Changsha when I was intercepted and arrested by a squad of men.

"Regimental Commander Yuan arrests you under orders from Military Governor Zhao," Platoon Leader Xu said. "He does it quite reluctantly. I heard that you've murdered High Counsellor Ou's brother and his family." I replied that Ou Shengqin was killed, but his family was spared. The platoon leader said that I was accused of the murder by High Counsellor Ou. "Ou Shengqin was a cut-throat tyrant," I said and recounted his many crimes.

The soldiers around me became quite sympathetic on hearing what I said. But I knew the platoon leader was lying when he said that the regimental commander was reluctant to order my arrest and would certainly do everything to free me when I was brought to the military governor's office. Some of the escorting soldiers suggested that I refuse to give in at the military governor's because there was no evidence against me, and Ou Shengqin could have been killed by bandits, or by people who wanted to take revenge for the wrongs he had done them.

When we came to a place 20 *li* from Changsha after covering 60 *li*, I asked to stop for a rest. While I was resting, a young soldier who held the rope tying me sat very close to me. He secretly loosened the rope around my hands and then pushed his palm

against my back twice. I knew what he meant; he wanted me to run away.

After travelling some more, we came to a river crossing on the Laodao River 15 *li* from Changsha. I thought to myself that it was ridiculous for me to have to lose my life for the murder of a tyrant. I would never die because of that scoundrel. So I made up my mind to escape during the river crossing.

We boarded the ferry boat and came close to the opposite bank. I cried aloud to Platoon Leader Xu, "There's some money in my overcoat pocket. You people can have it, otherwise it will be taken by the prison wardens."

"The money will be returned to you when you're freed," the platoon leader said. "In case you're unfortunate, it will be used for a burial service."

"There's no need for that. Just take it to order a big feast for all of you, and if there is anything left over, divide it among yourselves."

Now the boat was not far from the bank, and the platoon leader came forward to take the money from me. I gave him a powerful push, and into the river he fell. Leaping ashore, I threw off the rope and ran to the east as fast as I could. The escorting soldiers fired a few shots in the air, but no one came after me. The 20 dollars in my pocket had bought me my life. I was deeply grateful to the soldiers, particularly to the young one with a Yuanjiang accent, whom I will never forget.

I ran 20 or 30 *li* at a stretch; night fell. I reached Qilixiang situated between Changsha and the town of Langli, and was safe. Squatting in the grass, I took off my shirt which was soaked with sweat. I was

very tired and hungry and hadn't a single copper in my pocket. Lying on the ground, I looked at the twinkling stars above and improvised a poem: "The world turns, bright are the sun and moon, but where am I to go? Isn't there any place for me in this wide, wide world?" My spirits soared, and I regained my strength to continue my journey.

On I walked. Arriving at Yijiawan on the mist-shrouded bank of the Xiangjiang River in the middle of the night, I caught sight of a small boat in the river, and composed a few more lines:

By the bank of the broad Xiangjiang,
A small boat with a glowing light plies,
On board a girl mends fish nets,
An old man packs for a journey.

I saw an old boatman and told him that I wanted to get across the river, but I didn't have a single copper with me.

"Get on board, please," he said. "I'll take you to the other bank free."

I asked his name, and he said he was called Luo the Sixty. He was over 50 and had only one child — a daughter.

"Where have you been, Sir? Where are you going?" he asked.

"Don't call me 'Sir', I'm nobody special," I said.

He scrutinized me from head to foot and shook his head, not believing that I was a poor man. So I told him what had happened to me. When the boat touched the west bank, I gave the old man my shirt, but he refused to have it. I jumped on shore, leaving

the shirt in the boat. Saying goodbye, I told him that I wanted him to have the shirt as a souvenir.

I ran to Guo Deyun's home.

When the Red Army captured Changsha in 1930, I came to Yijiawan again, bringing to the old boatman some grain confiscated from local tyrants. He was approaching 70. He did not know my name. I remember him as my saviour.

The Charter of the Save-the-Poor Committee

Guo Deyun was my squad leader when I joined the army. He had been a soldier in the last years of the Qing Dynasty and had taken part in the 1911 Revolution. Later he became a platoon leader. He had a strong sense of justice and hated the warlords and the wars they waged, as well as the corrupt officials and cut-throat, tyrannical landlords. After leaving the army, he had become a cobbler. I quickened my steps toward his home when I thought of the good qualities of the man: He had the grit of a poor man and some of the qualities of a scholar. He supported the formation of an association to liquidate the rich landlords and distribute their wealth to the poor.

The eastern horizon was getting bright by the time I came to the river bank near a bridge south of Xiangtan and knocked at the door of Guo Deyun's house.

Surprised to see me, he asked, "What's happened? There must be something wrong for you to come in the night." He bolted the door and took me to a dark

room upstairs. I told him and his father what had happened to me. Guo asked his father not to tell anybody.

"Where did you eat your last meal?" Guo asked.

"I had it at company headquarters yesterday morning," I said.

His jaw dropped. "And you've walked nearly 200 *li*!" he said.

Guo's father said they still had a little cooked rice left. He asked me to have some before going to bed. "Breakfast will be ready when you get up," he added.

Picking up a fish net, Guo Deyun said, "Please go to sleep now. I'm going to fish in the Xiangjiang River. If I'm lucky, I can bring back a fish for breakfast."

I slept soundly on the straw in the room upstairs. The sun was high when I got up. It was about nine o'clock. Guo's father came into the room carrying cooked rice and a basin of water for me to wash. He was followed by his son who brought a big bowl of fish. Guo asked who would come there to look for me when breakfast was over.

"They know I have escaped, and I expect Zhang Rongsheng and Li Can in a couple of days. Others don't know that I'm here."

Guo Deyun told his father that Zhang was a short man who had been a tailor, and that Li Can was tall and had been a student. "When they come," he said, "tell them that Peng is here. If anybody else comes, just say you don't know."

The old man nodded, saying that he knew the two men as they had been there before.

When Guo Deyun asked where I planned to go, I told him I wanted to go to Guangdong Province. He said that it would be better for me to remain in Hunan than to go to a strange place. "The situation here will change," he added. I told him that since I was penniless, feeding myself was a problem. Guo said that he would go to the military and government offices to find out if there was news about me. He told us to take our lunch without him as he would probably return late in the afternoon. Handing Guo my overcoat, I asked him to pawn it to buy some rice. He refused to take it, saying that he was able to make ends meet as there were many shoes to mend and he could make enough money for three to four *sheng* of rice a day.

"There are also plenty of fish in the river, and I can catch a catty or two in the morning or evening to buy two or three *sheng* of rice." But he said he was unable to provide money for me to go to Guangdong Province.

"You're a company commander," he said. "You must have sent home some money."

"I'm just an acting company commander," I said. "I used to send two dollars to my Grandma and two to my Father every month. My brothers have already grown up and can fend for themselves. Things may be rough for them, but this will just inspire them to bump off the rich landlords."

Guo Deyun laughed. "I've been suffering for half a lifetime," he said "and yet I haven't killed a single landlord."

Guo Deyun asked about the Save-the-Poor Committee. I informed him that we had taken on a few

new members. He told me he only had one prospective member with whom he hadn't yet spoken formally about joining the committee.

"I've only told him of the need to save the poor, and that this could only be done by getting organized," added Guo who told me that I could go to live in the house of the prospective member for a few days as it was safer in the countryside. "Then you can talk over the matter with him," he said.

Guo Deyun asked if I wanted to send a message to other members of the local Save-the-Poor Committee. He said he had ways of delivering my message.

Guo Deyun left. He came back around four in the afternoon, saying that there was no news about me in either the army garrison or the county government. He did this for another three days, only to come back each time with no news of anything about me.

At Guo Deyun's request, I followed him at 10 p.m. one evening to go to live in a vegetable garden outside the town. There were two thatched huts belonging to his nephew, Li Guisheng, who was 16 or 17. The youth's mother was blind, but she was a kind woman and kept a tidy house. She had the look of her brother, Guo Deyun.

Guo came the next day, bringing me some novels like *Outlaws of the Marsh* and *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* along with some newspapers. He told me that he would fetch the newspapers for me daily, or his nephew would bring them back after selling his vegetables in town.

Four days later, Li Can came from Changsha on a

morning steamboat. The moment he entered the house, he said that he had known where I was staying. I asked how he knew.

"You've no other place to go," he said. He said the military governor's warrant to arrest me for killing the tyrant had been transmitted to Civil Administration Office and the headquarters of the Second Division (Li Can was a clerk there) where it was pigeonholed in the archives and not transmitted to units under the division.

Li Can and I then discussed my plans for the future. When I told him that I intended to go home to farm, he said that the time was not right for me to do so and that I must be more watchful.

"Otherwise," I said, "I'll go to Guangdong Province." When he asked whom I was going to look for in Guangdong, I told him "Lu Guanghou".

Li Can said that on his return to division headquarters he would write to Lu Guanghou to inform him about my situation and ask him to write him if he could find a job for me.

He wanted me to move to his native home in Yizhang where I could easily get in touch with Lu Guanghou as it was near Shaoguan in Guangdong Province. He said that Zhou Pan had sent me 20 dollars. He himself had also brought me a dozen dollars. So I would have about enough money for the trip to Guangdong.

Before leaving for Changsha by boat at noon, Li Can said that he would bring along Zhang Rongsheng and Huang Gonglue a few days later to talk over the matter with me, but he had to get in touch with Lu Guanghou first.

A fortnight later, Li Can, Zhang Rongsheng and Huang Gonglue came to my place, accompanied by Guo Deyun. Guo's nephew Li Guisheng bought pork, fish and a bottle of rice wine for lunch. The five of us discussed the Charter of the Save-the-Poor Committee and summed up our ideas as follows:

1. Wipe out landlords, land to the tiller.
2. Wipe out foreign invaders, abrogate unequal treaties, take back the customs and foreign concessions, abolish consular jurisdiction.
3. Develop industry, relieve the poor.
4. Have self-government for soldiers, eliminate corporal punishment and withholding of soldiers' pay, open accounts for inspection by soldiers.

We were all brimming over with excitement while we discussed these main points. When Li Can proposed the taking back of the customs and foreign concessions and the abrogation of unequal treaties and the abolition of consular jurisdiction, Huang Gonglue, who was full of patriotism, jumped to his feet with joy and exclaimed, "This is a programme that will save our nation and its people."

Guo Deyun was given the task of revising the four points into a written draft. It was agreed that they would form the Charter of the Save-the-Poor Committee to be formally adopted at an all-membership meeting. It was also decided that the four measures secretly be made known to all committee members, who would discuss them and give their suggestions. Zhang Rongsheng was to return to the army to make them known to committee members.

Now it can be seen that these points were incomplete and had the anti-imperialist and anti-

feudalist nature of a bourgeois democratic revolution. The Save-the-Poor Committee was set up in the army by soldiers under the influence of the Communist Party of China. Initially, the membership consisted of only seven persons — Li Can, Zhang Rongsheng, Wang Shaonan, Xi Hongquan, Zhu Changsong, Wei Benrong and me. Huang Gonglue joined it at this discussion meeting which was attended by two educated people born to landlord families, two handicraft workers and one poor peasant. None of us had read any Marxist-Leninist books.

After the meeting, seven persons — the five of us, Li Guisheng and his mother — sat down to a big farewell feast prepared from the fish, meat and wine Li Guisheng had bought. Huang Gonglue, Li Can and Zhang Rongsheng then went back to Changsha by boat. This took place in late December.

I was now 23, no longer a youth, but a full-grown man.

Going to Find a Friend in Guangdong

One of the educated people whom I befriended in 1918-19 was Lu Guanghou. He and Lu Diping came from the same big family. He entered the Shaoguan Military Academy in the winter of 1918 and, on graduation in the spring of 1920, returned to Hunan to serve as a platoon leader.

Lu Guanghou and I were with the same company when our units were training in Yueyang. He was not happy, feeling that his talent was not being used. He was also somewhat unconventional in his ways

and spent more money than he could make. Li Can's wife had a brother by the name of Xiao Wenduo who served as Lu Diping's chief-of-staff. Lu Guanghou often wrote to Xiao Wenduo and Lu Diping, and was also in contact with Li Can.

Li Can, who came from a small landlord's family (with 40 to 50 *mu* of land), was a native of Yizhang County. He wanted me to stay in his house in the county, which is located near Shaoguan. He asked Lu Guanghou to send his letters to the Tai Chang He Grain Shop outside the east gate of Yizhang. While arranging this, we did not make it known to Guo Deyun, who was poor but generous — in fact I did not want to trouble Guo any more. I also wrote to Lu Guanghou, informing him of my circumstances and my plan to go to Guangdong.

After the departure of Li Can, Huang Gonglue and Zhang Rongsheng, I stayed in Li Guisheng's house for another week or so, during which time I had some summer clothing made. I moved to my aunt's a few days later. Then I took a steamboat to Hengyang City and walked to Yizhang by way of Chenzhou. There I stayed in the Tai Chang He Grain Shop owned by Li Can's uncle. This was on the 30th day of the 12th moon. Li Can had written to the shop about my coming.

I put up in the grain shop for one day — the lunar New Year's Day. On the next day I set out with a salt-carrying horse caravan for Shaoguan, arriving in Lechang on the first day, Shaoguan the second and Huaxian the third. Lu Guanghou, who lived outside the east gate of the county-seat, told me about his current living situation and the armed forces he was

organizing. He said that Commander Xu (possibly Xu Chongzhi¹) had set up an independent battalion for President Sun Yat-sen,* and that he had been made commander of the battalion for the time being. The battalion was to be expanded, he said. The first three companies had been formed, and the fourth — still being formed — was under-strength with only half the number of men and rifles of a full-strength company. Lu Guanghou wanted me to be commander of the Fourth Company.

Lu was a sociable man with guests coming and going all day long. As a battalion commander, he got a monthly salary of only 120-130 dollars — not enough to cover his considerable expenses.

I stayed in Huaxian until the Sweet Dumplings Festival,** which was a joyous occasion. The women did not bind their feet. They worked in the paddy fields, cut firewood, took manure to the fields, pushed carts and even carried sedan chairs. Few men did these heavy chores which in Hunan were performed by men. I gained a better understanding of the unbinding of women's feet as something important for their participation in productive work.

¹Xu Chongzhi came to Guangdong Province with Dr. Sun Yat-sen in the summer of 1917 to serve as Chief Military Counsellor of the Generalissimo's Headquarters. (Dr. Sun was Generalissimo of the Defend-the-Constitution Government.) He was appointed Commander of the Second Detachment of the army to aid Fujian and Guangdong provinces established at the end of 1917.

*Dr. Sun was President of the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party). — *Tr.*

** The 15th of the first moon on the lunar calendar, also known as the Lantern Festival. — *Tr.*

On the 20th of the lunar year's first moon, I arrived at a village some 20 *li* southeast of Zengcheng, where the headquarters of the Independent Battalion was located. The Fourth Company had some 40 men and 30 old rifles, which were to be replaced with new ones yet to be bought. This place was a two-days' walk from Huizhou. Deputy Battalion Commander Luo told me that the forces of Chen Jiongming¹ were relatively good to us, and his troops stationed a dozen *li* away daily came in frequent friendly contact with our men. Many of Chen Jiongming's battalion and company officers were Battalion Commander Lu Guanghou's schoolmates or colleagues. Some came from Lu's native place.

But one day at dawn — about a fortnight after I had taken command of the Fourth Company — our troops were suddenly attacked by a unit of Chen Jiongming's forces. Some of our men were captured; others fled and were missing. Our units lost more than half their strength. When the remnants were regrouped in Zengcheng, Lu Guanghou arrived and said that the loss was due to his own lack of vigilance because he had put too much faith in friends and former schoolmates who had gone back on their word.

"I'm your friend," I said, "but I didn't do a good job for you."

"You're not to blame," he said, adding that the

¹Chen Jiongming was appointed Governor of Guangdong Province and Commander-in-Chief of the Guangdong army by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. He betrayed the revolution later. In 1925 the revolutionary army in Guangdong conducted two eastern expeditions and routed Chen's army.

Fourth Company had just been formed, made up of new recruits using rifles in bad repair.

The deputy battalion commander interrupted, saying that only 20-odd men with rifles were left and that he had lost his luggage and now had no change of clothes.

"We'll talk over the matter when we get a clear picture in two or three days," Lu said.

After two or three days, Lu asked me to go to Huizhou City with him. He said that the weapons of the First and Second companies had just been purchased, and that he would ask Chen Jiongmíng's men to return the weapons to us. After arriving in the city, I met Lu's wife who was beautifully dressed like a high-class lady. She lived in the house of a friend, with many servants. It was probably the mansion of a regimental or brigade commander. Most of those coming to see Lu were officers of middle ranks, and they called each other "elder brother" or "younger brother" in the language of gangsters. It seemed that the battalion commander and these people belonged to the Society of Brothers.* Lu Guanghou spent lots of money. From where did he get it? Was he collaborating with the Merchants' Corps¹ or foreigners? Not knowing the inside story, I thought I had better keep a distance from them.

A few days later, Lu and I were in Guangzhou,

* A secret society. — *Tr.*

¹The Merchants' Corps were armed forces organized by the chambers of commerce in cities in old China. In collaboration with the army and police, the Merchant's Corps often suppressed workers' and other revolutionary movements.

where preparations were under way to regroup his badly mauled battalion into a company to be headed by the deputy battalion commander. I made up my mind to quit, and as I had nowhere else to go I decided to return home to farm and do some work among the peasants. I tendered my resignation to Lu Guanghou, but he told me to wait for some time to see if anything else could be done.

"It's not easy to make the trip," he said, "because people are searched very strictly in Hunan."

"I've decided to go home," I said. "I don't want to bother you any more."

"If you have decided to leave, then which route are you going to take?" he asked. "If you enter Hunan via Shaoguan, the border check is very strict." I told him that I wasn't concerned about the check, but what I wanted was to see something of the world by travelling on a steamship back to Hunan by way of Shanghai and Hankou.

My insistence prevailed, and he agreed to let me return to Hunan. He asked his staff officer to book me a ticket to Shanghai and Hankou on a British steamer because it would be exempt from searching. Then he handed me 20 dollars for the trip, and I thanked him. "Don't thank me. Take it as your salary for the month," he said.

It was sometime in the second moon (I do not remember the date on the Gregorian calendar) that I began the voyage from Guangzhou. Caught in a storm, the ship anchored in Port Xianmen for three days. I did not stay in Shanghai because I had no money. I just took a brief walk on the pier, then bought a ticket for another steamer that took me to

Hankou, where I landed and crossed the Changjiang River to get on a coal train leaving for Xujia-peng. The coal train carried no passengers, and I had no money for a ticket, either. Hearing one of the train crew speak my own dialect, I told him of my difficulty and asked him to assist me. I handed him a little "tea money" for a tip. The man took the matter up with the station authorities, telling them that I was a friend going to Changsha. He told me to climb onto an open car in the middle of the train, and there I was left alone during the whole journey.

Arriving in Changsha, I went to look for my aunt, a worker in the Xiangya Hospital, and borrowed five dollars from her. With one dollar I bought a suit of thin clothes and took a bath to wash away the coal dust.

On the next day, a steamboat took me to Xiangtan County. I went to Guo Deyun's home only to learn that he had died a fortnight before. His father and his nephew said that he had succumbed to typhoid after a high fever had left him unconscious.

Guo's father, a kind man approaching 80, was very much weakened by grief. His own health was failing. His 12-year-old grandson (Guo Pinsheng, who became a turncoat in later years) had dropped out of school to learn the cobbler's trade. Feeling very lonely, the old man and child could barely make a living. I tried to cheer them up, and asked if Guo Deyun had left a will. The old man said that his son was overtaken by illness before he had finished writing the Charter of the Save-the-Poor Committee.

"Knowing that his end was drawing near," the old man said, "he asked that the upbringing of my

grandson be entrusted to Peng Dehuai. Then he breathed his last."

Meanwhile, I learnt that the headquarters of the Sixth Regiment and the First Battalion under the command of Yuan Zhi and Zhou Pan were garrisoned in the city of Xiangtan not far from Guo Deyun's house. I wrote to Wang Shaonan and Zhang Rongsheng, who came to see me not long afterwards. After telling them about my experiences in Guangdong, I told them that I had now made up my mind to return to farming at home and work among the peasants.

"Also keep an eye on the work of the local Save-the-Poor Committee," said Zhang Rongsheng.

They also told me that High Counsellor Ou, brother of the murdered landlord, had been sacked because of embezzlement, and that Huang Gonglue, who was still a platoon leader in the Second Battalion's Eighth Company, was stationed in Xiangxiang, 30 li from my home. The Third Battalion was garrisoning Hengshan, and the First Battalion, Xiangtan County-seat. Li Can was still with Second Division headquarters.

"Your pay for October and November last year totals 30 dollars after deduction of the sum you drew," Zhang Rongsheng said. "The money has been sent to the company, and Quarter Master Wei Shixiong doesn't know what to do with it. Now, let me go and get it for you."

"Fine," I said. "I'll buy Guo Deyun's father one *dan** of rice and one month's vegetable oil, salt and

* See footnote on p. 26. — Tr.

coal, and send five dollars to my aunt in the Xiangya Hospital in Changsha to repay the money I borrowed from her."

"And buy two catties of meat to let the three of us and Guo's father and the child have a good supper," said Wang Shaonan.

Some ten dollars were left which I prepared to take home.

Then the conversation turned to the Save-the-Poor Committee, and they agreed to the four basic principles discussed at the first meeting. They wanted them to be written in greater detail to become the Charter of the Save-the-Poor Committee.

They advised me to return to the army.

"Let's see what Yuan Zhi and Zhou Pan think of you first," put in Zhang Rongsheng.

Both Zhang Rongsheng and Wang Shaonan, who were stationed in Xiangtan, said that they would provide for Guo's father in the future.

"That's very good," I said. I went home next day to become a farmer.

A Review of Six Years of Soldiering

The period I've just written about took place in a great epoch replete with the turmoil of the old being superseded by the new in human history. In the 23 years between 1898 and 1921, a host of events took place in China: the Reform Movement of 1898 and the failure of the reformists; the occupation of Beijing by the Eight-Power Allied Forces, the flight of the Qing Court to Xi'an, and the re-

sistance to the invading foreign forces put up by the Yi He Tuan* organized by the people; the 1911 Revolution that toppled the Qing Dynasty, the failure of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shikai proclaiming himself emperor; the dismemberment of China by the big powers, followed by the carving up of the country by imperialist-backed warlords and their wars that went on year after year; and other nightmares. And there were as many taxes and levies as there are hairs on an ox. The social structure fell apart, and countless peasants who lost their land and means of subsistence became cannon fodder in warlords' armies. I was one of them. The great May Fourth Movement and the founding of the Communist Party of China brought hopes to people while the imperialist World War led to the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, which was an inspiration to all oppressed people. All this consisted of class struggle between oppression and resistance, between retrogression and progress, with the latter always prevailing over the former.

I reached the age of 23 in 1921. Having been a cowherd, a child labourer, a dyke worker and a soldier, I had been through extreme poverty and experienced the hard life of workers, peasants and soldiers. In the process, I cultivated some simple class feelings for the oppressed. I also gained a lot following my enlistment in the army from the stories told by veterans of the 1911 Revolution. Many young graduates from the Baoding Military Academy arrived in the army to serve as trainees, platoon

* Also known as Boxers. — *Tr.*

leaders and company commanders. At first, they were in very high spirits; they talked of the humiliation China had suffered since the Opium War with tears rolling down their cheeks. They composed military songs to instill patriotism in the soldiers. But as they rose in ranks, these officers gradually became corrupt, throwing overboard all their patriotism and their professed love for the people. Their talk turned to how to get a promotion and amass a fortune. However, their corruption and retrogression could in no way keep history from going forward. History is always moving ahead in a wave-like fashion, and the people of today outpace those of yesterday in their continuous forward advance.

During this period, I made the acquaintance of some educated young men (most of whom were middle school students) who were serving as soldiers in the army. At first these young men also mouthed a lot of patriotism and talked of how to be upright and work for the common good. Gradually I came to know that most of them had enlisted with the idea of becoming officers and getting rich.

I knew well some 20 of these young men, and in the end only two remained my true friends — Huang Gonglue and Li Can, who later joined the glorious Communist Party of China and became the commanders of the Third Army and Eighth Army of the Red Army respectively. They laid down their lives for the cause of the Chinese people. I also made friends with some rank-and-file soldiers who were poor peasants or jobless handicraft workers. Honest and uncorrupted, they readily accepted the idea of doing away with the rich to relieve the poor and

wiping out landlords and foreign invaders. By 1921, some 10 of these men had joined the Save-the-Poor Committee. Some of them died in the Northern Expedition. Others joined the Communist Party and died while fighting in the Red Army. None of these men turned traitor.

Born at a time when human history was moving forward by leaps and bounds, I was unable to keep pace with the tempo of this great epoch. The Communist Party of China was founded in 1921, but at that time I had not got in touch with Marxism and did not know the following fundamentals: the scientific laws of social development, analysing problems from the standpoint of class struggle, and revolution as the conscious action of the organized masses. When I first joined the army, I entertained the idea of helping the wronged against the wrongdoers — this found expression in the killing of Ou Shengqin. The four points of the Save-the-Poor Committee were a summing-up of my thinking formed in my six years in the army. They were very childish and laughable and something to be much regretted. They did not show a clear relationship between the liquidation of rich landlords and the wiping out of the system of feudal exploitation. At that time I had no idea of the essential identity and difference between land rent, usury and exploitation by capital. As to “land to the tiller”, Dr. Sun Yat-sen put forward the following slogan at a meeting of the Tung Meng Hui (Chinese Revolutionary League) in Tokyo in 1905: “Drive out the Manchus, revive the Chinese nation, establish a republic and equalize

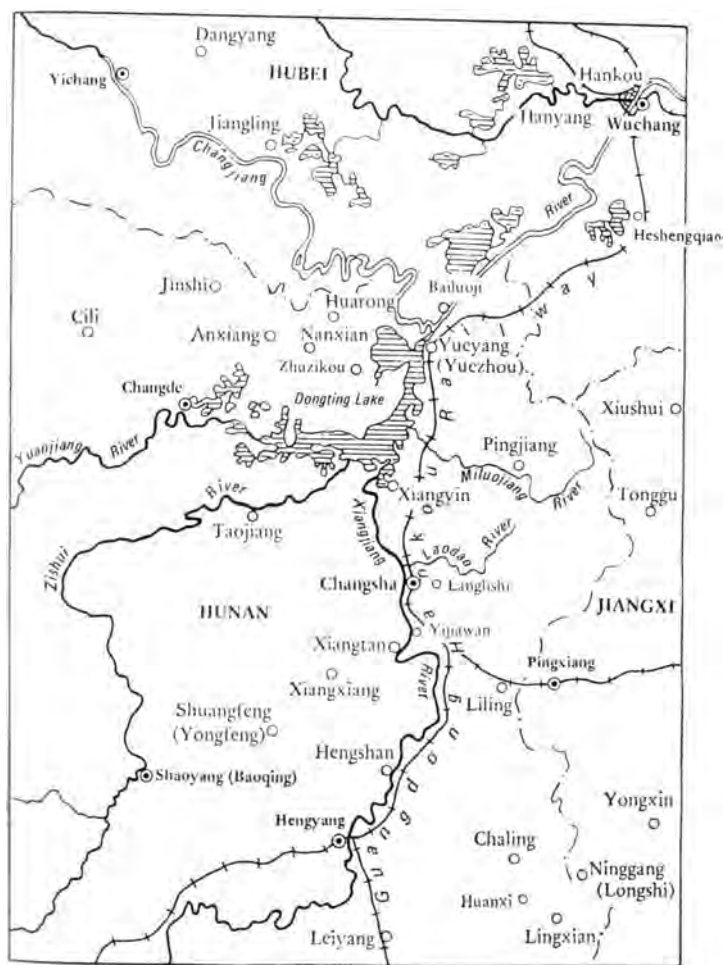
landownership." Later, he came out with the proposal "land to the tiller".

Our four points for the Save-the-Poor Committee also confused wiping out foreigners with overthrowing imperialism. Wiping out foreigners embodies the idea of rejecting everything foreign and is similar to the Yi He Tuan's 1900 slogan, "Help the Qing Dynasty wipe out foreigners." The slogan "develop industry, relieve the poor" had been raised in the days before the May Fourth Movement by the representatives of the national bourgeois. In 1918 Battalion Commander Yuan Zhi entertained the idea of "soldiers operating industries". The four points made no mention of the following: supporting President Sun Yat-sen's Provisional Constitution, opposing separatist regimes of the warlords, instituting democracy and unifying China. These were crucial issues at that time. China could only resist foreign aggression and develop its industry by instituting democracy and unifying the country. The aim couldn't be achieved otherwise.

Returning to Farming at Home

On returning home, I found that my neighbours were germinating seed rice by soaking it in water and cultivating sweet potato seedlings. Planting was to start after the Qingming Festival in the middle of the third moon. The condition of my family at the time: burdened with debts incurred after my mother's death many years before, the family had mortgaged all its land with the exception of two or

AREAS WHERE THE AUTHOR WAS ACTIVE BEFORE 1928



three-tenths of a *mu* of vegetable land. When I returned home, the family had got back half of the mortgaged land, and 200 more dollars had to be paid to get back the rest. Second brother, Jinhua, was an apprentice, and third brother, Ronghua, then 16, could be counted as half an adult labourer. Father was an ailing man, and Grandma was then 80.

I told Father and Fifth Uncle of the warrant to arrest me which, I learned, no one in the village had ever heard of. Fifth Uncle warned me not to tell anybody, since the tyrants would stir up trouble if they knew about it. Father even advised me not to tell my brothers as they were too young to hold their tongues.

Father and Uncle were delighted at hearing that I would remain at home to farm this time. Grinning with joy, Uncle said that I had finally settled down after going through much hardship.

My brothers and I immediately started to discuss plowing up wasteland for growing sweet potatoes to provide the family with food in the coming autumn.

When I told my father that the poor could have their day only by killing off landlords, he said, "Don't you know that your cousin, Zhou Yunhe, was arrested and shot because he wanted to drive out Military Governor Tang?* After that his wife miscarried, his mother died of grief, and your uncle has become a lonely man who has gone to live in the Jiutanchong Mountains. You'll certainly become another Zhou Yunhe if you are arrested this time."

* For Tang, see p. 28. above. — Tr.

I told father that I would go to see my uncle the next day. Father nodded and asked me to bring back some seed sweet potatoes.

The next day I arrived at Uncle's hut at noon after crossing several mountains. We chatted as we munched sweet potatoes for lunch. When the conversation turned to the arrest and killing of his son, I asked why they had him shot.

"The anti-Tang organizations in Changsha and Xiangtan had been smashed, and he fled back home with two of his friends."

"What did they do back home?" I asked.

"He told the villagers that Tang Xiangming had slaughtered revolutionaries by the hundreds of thousands in Hunan Province, and that he was a traitor like Yuan Shikai. If Tang were overthrown, people would not have to give grain to the government or to pay tax or rent. The villagers were pleased to hear this, but the gentry was offended." My uncle said that his son was betrayed by others, and he was arrested and sent to face the firing squad.

I passed the night in my uncle's hut where we chatted into the wee hours. I asked Uncle to come back with me to live in my home, but he said, "I'm still in good health, and it's easier to get firewood and water here in the mountains. The harvest from a few *mu* of land is enough for me after part of it is given away as rent. I'll go to live in your home in a few years' time when I've lost the power to work. Your family is still poor, but I believe it will fare better."

"We can fare better only when the rich landlords

are wiped out and the people don't have to pay rent," I said.

Uncle nodded: "That's what my son said."

After breakfast, I filled two wicker baskets with sweet potatoes to the brim — around 100 catties — and paid Uncle one dollar for them.

"The potatoes don't cost that much," Uncle said.

"Five hundred catties of sweet potatoes are exchanged for one hundred catties of rice, which is priced at two dollars fifty coppers. Your sweet potatoes cost only fifty coppers." But he had no small changes.

"Don't bother," I said. "Keep the balance for yourself."

When I took leave of Uncle, I saw tears well up in his eyes. I turned back many times to look at him, standing stock still on the slope to see me off. This uncle of mine was a very honest and upright man who never took a single copper from anyone that was not due him.

Arriving home after midday, I found that my third brother had readied the hoes for turning up the wasteland. While hoeing the soil, the two of us talked about family matters. He told me that during the time I was away working on the lake dykes, the family had been in terrible straits and that only the rice begged by Grandma had kept the family alive in those years.

In the four months I was at home, I spoke to my brothers and a few neighbours about the need to overthrow landlords to save the poor and to let the tillers own the land they farmed as well as on other subjects — the revolution carried out by the

Communist Party of Russia, the birth of a Communist Party in China, the rise of a trade union in Changsha and the need to unbind women's feet.

Quarter Master Hu Zimao (my company commander at the time I enlisted in 1916) of the Sixth Regiment stationed in Xiangtan wrote to inform me that Regimental Commander Yuan had learned that I had returned home, and that he wanted me to help find a few hosiery weavers and tailors to serve as master-craftsmen in a factory he was going to set up. I also wanted to go to Changsha to learn something about the trade union there.

I went to Changsha, but could not locate the trade union. I made my way to Xiangtan where I succeeded in finding the skilled workers the commander wanted. When I went to Hu Zimao to tell him, he said that the regimental commander wanted me to assist him in running the factory.

"I don't know that job," I said. "I'd better go home to farm."

I was back home that evening.

Entering the Hunan Army Officers' Academy¹

In late June or early July 1922, Huang Gonglue and Li Can wrote asking me to join them in taking the entrance exam at the Hunan Army Officers' Academy. They told me that Commander Yuan

¹The Hunan Army Officers' Academy was founded in 1917 by Zhao Hengti, a warlord in Hunan, on the basis of a junior army school. It was closed in 1926 with the fall of Zhao.

Zhi of the Sixth Regiment and Deputy Commander Zhou Pan had also told Huang Gonglue to ask me to do so.

Arrangements for me to enter the school had already been made by Huang Gonglue and Li Can. They also had changed my name from Peng Dehua to Peng Dehuai as I had told them I had wanted to do when we were in the home of Guo Deyun. They had my name put down on the payroll of regimental headquarters and listed me as a second lieutenant (platoon leader) so that I could get money for daily use. Later I was listed as a lieutenant in my former unit — the First Company. A third of my salary was to be shared between the other two platoon leaders of the company.

The entrance exam was to take place in August. I hesitated about sitting for the exam, because I was afraid that I would fail as a result of my low educational level. I thought it wouldn't be bad to stay home and farm. So I did not send letters of reply to either Huang or Li for about a week.

Zhang Rongsheng, who was given a "home leave", came to my house one day to say that members of the Save-the-Poor Committee and others in my company hoped to see me enter the officers' academy so that I could return to the company after graduation.

"We've got to build up our armed forces if we want to wipe out rich landlords and foreigners," he said. "This is the view of Li Can and others of the Save-the-Poor Committee." Zhang said he was asked by them to come and urge me to take the exam.

"Then I'll go try my luck," I said. "If I fail, I'll come home to farm."

My words pleased Zhang who left at daybreak for his own home some 10 *li* away.

I took the exam in Changsha in August and made quite a good performance. Those who passed could board at the school for five dollars a month, there were no other expenses. At meal-time, eight persons sat at a table on which five dishes and a soup were served. I moved to the school in either August or September, earlier than other students.

The Investigation Committee question me on the following points:

1. The Army Officers' Academy opened in November. What were you doing in the months of August, September, October and November?

Answer: My educational level was low. One must have a junior middle school student's knowledge of natural science to be able to understand lectures on such military subjects as topography, fortification and weaponry. I went to board at the school in early August and started to prepare for these courses on my own. After entering the school, I never lived any place else but there until my graduation at the beginning of August 1923.

2. Did you see Regimental Commander Yuan at Sixth Regiment headquarters when you passed through Xiangtan on your way to the academy?

Answer: I went to Quarter Master Hu Zimao's at regimental headquarters and was about to see Regimental Commander Yuan Zhi. But Hu said, "Don't go now, he is busy. Call on him some other time."

I learned that Yuan Zhi had taken a concubine. What I hated most was to hear about others taking concubines or smoking opium. So I did not go to see him. Yuan phoned me one Sunday when I was at the academy in Changsha. That was the only time I went to his mansion in the city.

3. Why did the regimental commander show such an interest in you?

Answer: I have no idea. I can only guess that these might be the reasons: When our forces were crossing the Xiangjiang River at Hengyang in February or March 1918, I was assigned to take rearguard action. After all the troops had crossed to the right bank, Yuan Zhi (a battalion commander at the time), who also was remaining behind, asked me if all the men had made the crossing. I told him they had and that I was bringing up the rear (I had about a squad of men). Just then an enemy unit was seen detouring to a spot on our flank, only 1,000 metres away from where Yuan and I were.

"Quick — Run along the river. I'll cover you," I said to him. After he had got to safety, I retreated, and the enemy did not give us hot chase.

When Yuan and I met again, he said, "That was very risky business. I nearly became a prisoner for not keeping an eye on the flank and rear."

Another time, we had mounted an attack against Zhang Jingyao's forces at Baoqing when our troops were caught in a cross-fire because the point of attack was not selected properly. I led a platoon (the company commander was Zhou Pan) in making a feint against another point, which drew the enemy's fire

to my position. Yuan Zhi was slightly wounded, but he was saved.

These two incidents might have made him grateful to me.

At the time our units were garrisoned in Huanxi township, Yuan Zhi served as a part-time language teacher. I wrote two compositions which, I learned from Huang Gonglue, Yuan had liked. He gave me marks of 100 on both compositions and sent them to Regimental Commander Liu Xing.

Consisting of no more than 300 words, one of the compositions was entitled "Treasure Time" which read something like this:

Saint Yu the Great valued every "inch" of time;
Tao Kan the Sage treasured every moment.
What about the military men of our age,
Who aspire to great national tasks?

The other composition, "Aspirations", was about the same length and went like this:

With no aspirations we can accomplish nothing,
The nation and the family will perish,
The race is bound to become extinct,
Like the over-turning of a nest,
That breaks all the bird eggs.
Living at a time when the strong devour the
weak,
If we see but take no notice,
Then we are no different from fowl and beast.
With no aspirations in our heads,
We would be like a helmless boat and a horse
with no bit,
Drifting nowhere with the tide.

At that time I had no idea what full stops and other punctuation marks were. Nor did I know composition style or what was called commentary or what was called narration. I don't have a clear idea about them even now. Yuan Zhi had a little patriotism in him at that time. So did I. In this respect it could be said that we were somewhat like-minded. I think another aim of his was to train me to be his tool. All this is but a guess.

I was put in the first class when I came to the officers' academy. Huang Gonglue, who arrived later, was in the fourth class. Since we lived not far away from each other, we met every day.

The student body was made up of officers in active service, ranging from the rank of second lieutenant up to major (battalion and company commanders and platoon leaders). Some, who had money, enjoyed themselves in hotels after they had passed the entrance exam. They came to the academy only in October.

As the opening date was postponed time and again, lessons were given before the formal opening of the academy in November. The curriculum: four major courses in battle tactics, topography, fortification and weaponry; minor courses in the drilling manual, the field operation manual, marksmanship, service regulations, in addition to army institutions and practices, horsemanship, tactics and training in field artillery, etc. The classes were very dull, but the tests were strict and one could not make the grade without studying hard. There were also pep talks on the current situation and the nation's humiliation,

all of which contained many idealistic things. At the beginning it was planned that the training was to last six months, but the introduction of new teaching material based on that used in the three-year courses of the Baoding Military Academy, prolonged training to nearly a year. I graduated somewhere in August the following year.

Contradictions in the Hunan Army; Activities of the Save-the-Poor Committee

On graduation, I became the commander of the Sixth Regiment's First Company.

It was sometime in October that Commander Lu Diping of the Second Division called a meeting of officers of regimental rank and above at Jiangshe (located between Xiangtan and Xiangxiang). It was an anti-Zhao Hengti* meeting, at which Lu expressed readiness to go to Guangdong Province to work for Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Regimental Commander Yuan Zhi, who appeared ambivalent at the meeting, was ambushed and killed by Lu Diping's men at a place five *li* from Jiangshe on his way back to regimental headquarters.

One of Yuan's bodyguards escaped and returned to Xiangtan with the news of the ambush. Zhou Pan rang me up immediately to discuss with me how to meet the emergency. I told him that there was only one battalion in Xiangtan and, with the unit attached to regimental headquarters, less than 1,000 men. I suggested that the troops be quickly

* See footnote on p. 43. — *Tr.*

assembled near the mountain 10 *li* beyond the western suburbs and prepared for any eventuality. Zhou agreed with me. The men were assembled in less than two hours. After a short discussion, they wanted to send me to division headquarters at Jiangshe to see what had happened. I said the deputy regimental commander must brief all officers and men on the situation and ask for their views on whether it was appropriate for me to go as their representative. Zhou did as I said.

I promptly called Wang Shaonan, Zhang Rongsheng and Xi Hongquan and others to a meeting at which I told them that if I did not return by noon the next day it was probably because I had been detained and that if attacked they should never give up their arms in surrender.

In that event, I said, they should act on their own to wipe out the rich landlords and distribute their property to relieve the poor people. I told them the more our followers, the better, and that they should never force people to side with us. I said that this plan could be secretly passed among the committee members and then among the soldiers — but not a word to the officers.

What I said made them happy. Zhang Rongsheng said there was no risk in my going. He wanted me to come back as quickly as possible. Zhou Pan advised me to take a horse from regimental headquarters. I agreed.

In less than two hours I reached Jiangshe where a memorial service was being held for Yuan Zhi. There was a sarcastic and even insulting couplet written by Lu Diping. One line from it read: "When

alive he was my officer, when dead a corpse I mourn over. . . . My colleague for a decade, who died a hero's death. . . ." (I don't remember the second line now.)

What nonsense! Who did not know that Yuan Zhi was murdered by Lu Diping's men?

When he received me, Lu Diping said that the unfortunate death of Yuan Zhi was a loss to the whole army. I told him of my purpose in coming: As the situation had not been clear our troops had moved out of Xiangtan and I had come to ask for further instructions. Lu Diping ordered our men to set out at once and march into Guangxi Province by way of Hengshan and Yongzhou.

By daybreak I was back at regimental headquarters where I found the troops bivouacking outdoors. I gave a briefing on the situation: the troops attached to divisional headquarters were panic-stricken; they would march south immediately. There was not much danger where we were, but it would be better not to remain long. I said that we should move to Xiangxiang and Yongfeng to get closer to the Second and Third battalions."

"We've nowhere to get funds as all connections have been severed," Regimental Quartermaster Hu Zimao said. "What should we do?"

When the others were at a loss, I said, "First borrow 30,000 yuan from the Chamber of Commerce of Xiangtan by mortgaging the salt tax to it, and then turn over the debt to the provincial financial department." The quartermaster put in: "The small factory set up by Regimental Commander Yuan Zhi is worth 1,000 dollars. Part of it belong-

ed to him, and part is made up of public funds. What do we do with this?"

Zhou Pan told him to go and deal with the matter as he liked.

As I have said before, Yuan Zhi had developed the idea of turning soldiers into workers, and I was very much for it. The small factory he set up was run on an experimental basis. Yuan's family was not rich; his mother had depended on weaving to bring up her son, give him an education and send him to the Baoding Military Academy. He was patriotic and had ability.

Not long after the murder of Yuan Zhi, Quartermaster Hu Zimao resigned and returned home to his tea business. Zhou Pan became acting Regimental Commander, then Regimental Commander. Zhou Pan's family was not rich either. His father was a worker who made things from bamboo strips. Zhou Pan also entertained some patriotic ideas, but he was not as patriotic as Yuan Zhi, and in times of emergency he lacked the power of decision. Both Zhou and Yuan had some trust in me, but they were probably using me.

Later in November, our units moved to the Yongfeng-Yangjiatan area in Xiangxiang County. The First Company under my command garrisoned in Gushui (present-day Lianyuan County) in Xiangxiang. The First Battalion was expanded into two battalions — the First and Second battalions. (I was the commander of the First Company.) A unit of Xie Guoguang, i.e. under Yang Chaofan, was organized into the Sixth Regiment's Third Battalion. The commander of the First Battalion was Liu Dao-

jing, a northerner and graduate from the Baoding Military Academy. The Brigade Commander was Tang Xibian.

After Lu Diping had led into Guangdong Province the main forces of the Second Division and the two independent brigades under Xie Guoguang and Wu Jianxue, the forces under Liu Xuyi (10,000 troops) in western Hunan took the opportunity to enlarge their territory by taking Chenxi, Hongjiang, Xinhua and Xupu counties. This enabled Liu Xuyi to monopolize the tax on opium coming out of Guizhou Province to the dissatisfaction of He Yaozu and Song Hegeng.* A war to drive out Liu Xuyi (in fact a war for the opium tax) broke out and lasted from February to the end of March or the beginning of April in 1924.

In early April 1924, Battalion Commander Liu Daojing took home leave to see his parents. I acted as the commander. The Sixth Regiment returned from Hongjiang County to Xiangtan County.

Our troops reached Jinggang near Changsha at the end of April, 1924. Later we pushed on towards Guilin City via Fengyang, Yongzhou and Quanzhou county-seats in an attempt to relieve the beleaguered units under Lu Rongting. (The troops under his subordinate Shen Hongying had mutinied.) At that time Lu Rongting backed Sun Yat-sen. He had

* He Yaozu was then Commander of the First Division of the Hunan army. He served as mayor of Chongqing under Chiang Kai-shek during 1942-45. Later he voiced support for the People's Republic and became a member of the Central-South Military and Administrative Committee after Liberation. Song Hegeng was his associate in the Hunan army. — *Tr.*

helped Hunan on many occasions in the war against the Northern Warlords.

In the sweltering heat of July, Battalion Commander Liu Daojing returned to the battalion, but he went home again shortly afterwards, and once more I became acting battalion commander. Our troops came back to garrison along the Xiangyin-Changsha line where we rested at the end of August or the beginning of September.

In January and February 1925, the Sixth Regiment moved to Cili in northwestern Hunan to help the division under He Yaozu retake Lixian, Shimen and Cili.

In April the regiment reached the Qijiahe area in Taoyuan County to prevent Guizhou provincial troops under Yuan Zuming from invading northwestern Hunan. It moved to Anxiang County in June or July. The First Battalion was first stationed in the county-seat and later in the Wusheng-gong-Mahaokou area, where the men took a rest.

Although contradictions within the ruling classes in Hunan flared up anew in 1925, they took a common stand in their opposition to Soviet Russia and communism and in countering their influence. My work during the year centred on bringing unity to my battalion, further consolidating the First Company and cautiously opening up work in the Second, Third and Fourth companies. I hoped that there would be three to five Save-the-Poor Committee members in every company by the end of 1925. I encouraged the soldiers to discuss current affairs. I was advised by the members to do more work among the officers, to strengthen communication within the

whole regiment and to work boldly without becoming isolated. They would take care of the work among the men in every company and so good results could be obtained with cooperation from top to bottom. This view of the members was a sound one.

The material used for discussing current affairs carried the following themes: Soviet Russia had announced the abrogation of its unequal treaties with China, and now it was assisting Dr. Sun Yat-sen in Guangdong Province. During World War I fought among the big powers, Japan's interests had replaced Germany's in China. The Paris Peace Conference had done more harm than good to China. Glutting the Chinese market with European, American and Japanese manufactured goods constituted economic aggression against China. Some people did not agree that imperialism was bad, but on the contrary alleged that Soviet Russia was bad — this was turning facts upside down. Others said the Communist Party of China was not good in this or that respect, but it was founded only three or four years before, and it had not given away any territory or paid reparations or concluded any unequal treaty with foreign countries or sold out the interests of the Chinese people. The CPC began its firm opposition to imperialism as soon as it was founded, and had done many good deeds. What reason was there for some people to say that it was no good? They did not blame the traitors and traitorous governments that had been selling out the nation since the Opium War for giving away territory and paying indemnities, for the loss of sovereignty, for the humiliation the nation had suffered, for the 21-point treaty Yuan

Shikai had signed with Japan, but blamed the CPC. How could they justify themselves? If a person did not use his brain and parroted what others said, he could side with the traitors. Some people alleged that "communization" was no good. But I argued that what it really meant was opposition to corrupt officials, despots and evil gentry and to the taking of concubines. It meant equality between men and women and opposition to opium-smoking. Was there anything bad in all this? We had to go in for "communization" in a big way to sweep away all the corruption.

Following the discussion of such simple truths (at that time a backward person like me could only produce such concrete facts to serve as discussion material), the reactionary talk in the First Battalion decreased sharply. From this, it can be seen that anti-imperialist education was important in the old-fashioned armies.

When the Northern Expeditionary Army¹ in Guangdong Province swept into Hunan in May 1926, Liu Daojing did not return to the army after his leave and resigned. I was made Commander of the First Battalion, a position which I held until I became regimental commander in October 1927. (I went to take up the post at regimental headquarters on the eve of the lunar New Year.)

For two and a half years I served as acting battalion commander (on two occasions) and then battal-

¹The Northern Expeditionary Army was the National Revolutionary Army that marched north from Guangdong to fight the Northern Warlords.

ion commander. I was battalion commander for only one and a half years.

My Home Visits

The Investigation Committee asked how many times I visited home and enquired about my family's tiledroof house.

I returned home on four occasions after enlistment. I have already written about the first three visits. I was not at home when my father died in the spring of 1925. In March or April, Huang Gong-lue fell sick and went to Changsha for treatment. Later, he contracted smallpox; pockmarks appeared on his face and boils covered his body. I went to Changsha to see him, and finding his condition very serious, I helped him call a good doctor. I took this opportunity to return home for the fourth time.

My home village was then the scene of a terrible famine caused by drought. Since the landlords hoarded the grain, the poor could get rice from nowhere. My neighbours and friends were starving. I forced some landlords to sell me more than 10 *dan* of unhusked rice (at a high price of 100 dollars), and distributed it free of charge to the poor peasant families in my village (now called Wushi Production Brigade). The landlord Chen Man Zuanzi cursed me behind my back, saying, "That penniless son-of-a-bitch does not own even a corner of land, yet he passes himself off as a rich guy."

This incident made me more firm in my determination to wipe out landlordism and distribute the land to the poor.

I had brought home more than 600 dollars (including 200 dollars which Zhou Pan gave me to cover funeral expenses). After deducting the money used to pay the medical bills for Huang Gonglue and to buy grain for the village poor, I still had more than 400 dollars left, which I gave to my brothers.

In the autumn and winter of 1927, my regiment's Economic Committee gave 400 dollars to my second brother without my knowing it. My family used this and the money I had given them to build the tiled-roof house with 12 rooms, which is still there.

IV. Finding the Communist Party of China

(1926-April 1928)

Taking Part in the Northern Expedition, Making the Acquaintance of Duan Dechang

In the winter of 1925 the Sixth Regiment returned to its garrison in the counties of Nanxian, Huarong and Anxian. My battalion was first stationed in the county-seat of Anxian and then in Mahaokou.

The contradictions among the Hunanese warlords had been growing sharp since the autumn of 1925. The warlords feared that the Northern Expeditionary Army would push north from Guangdong and that Tang Shengzhi would enter into an alliance with Guangdong. Some warlords, like Zhao Hengti and He Yaozu, advocated a preemptive attack to wipe out the forces of Tang Shengzhi.

In April 1926, the Sixth Regiment was suddenly ordered to move to Xiangxiang and Yongfeng counties to await further orders. I learned that Zhao Hengti had stepped down and Ye Kaixin¹ had become Hunan Military Governor before I reached my destination. The regiment then received an order

¹Ye Kaixin was then Commander of the Hunan army's Third Division.

to march into the area between Baoqing and Hengyang near the defence zone of Tang Shengzhi's Fourth Division. The First and Second divisions also pushed into southeastern Hunan in an attempt to wipe out Tang Shengzhi's forces there. Soon afterwards, word came that the vanguard units of the Northern Expeditionary Army had reached Anren County, and Ye Kaixin was hastily putting up defences along the Liling-Hengshan-Yongfeng line. This created consternation in the ranks of the Hunan army, now facing imminent defeat.

The companies of my battalion had undergone training in the winter, and there were now members of the Save-the-Poor Committee in every company. After going through the discussions on the current situation conducted from the first to the third moon, the men and officers in my battalion had a better understanding of the Northern Expedition. They no longer feared it now, but were pleased to see it happen. After our troops arrived in Yongfeng County, I told my officers and men that the forces under Ye Kaixin were to meet with certain defeat and the Northern Expeditionary Army would certainly win. I also talked with Zhou Pan about this and asked him to send men to contact Tang Shengzhi at an early date. Zhou Pan said that this had already been done.

The Northern Expeditionary Army mounted an attack on us one day. I called Zhou Pan on the phone to inform him. He asked me how we should handle the situation. I said our troops could pull back to Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang counties via Xiangxiang, Ningxiang and Yuanjiang. I told him

that if the countyseat of Xiangxiang were occupied, our troops could skirt it to the west.

Our regiment successfully reached its destination without losing a single man but rather growing in strength.

The National Revolutionary Army's¹ Eighth Army under Tang Shengzhi then entered Changsha, and the Second Division of the Hunan Army was reorganized as the First Division of the Eighth Army. The Sixth Regiment of the Third Brigade was renamed First Regiment, with Dai Jijie (originally Commander of the Second Battalion) as commander. I remained Commander of the First Battalion. Xie Deqing, Commander of the Fifth Company, was promoted Commander of the Second Battalion. The troops under Liu Xing, Tang Xibian and other Baoqing warlords (remnants of the Second Division) were organized into the Third Regiment, with Liu Jiren as commander. Tang Shengzhi brought together some troops of the logistical units and regrouped them into the Second Regiment with Zhang

¹In July 1925 the Government of the Republic of China was set up in Guangzhou (Canton), and its armed forces were renamed the National Revolutionary Army. As the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China were then cooperating to carry out the Northern Expedition, a large number of CPC and Communist Youth League members played a key, vanguard role in the army, enabling the National Revolutionary Army to win victory in the Northern Expedition. Following the betrayal of the revolution by Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jingwei in 1927, the Kuomintang forces continued to use the name of the National Revolutionary Army.

Chao as commander. These three regiments were grouped together to become the First Division of the Eighth Army of the National Revolutionary Army. Zhou Pan, who was made Division Commander, set up a Political Department in the First Division, and appointed political instructors in the regiments.

After undergoing a brief period of training, our units joined the Northern Expedition. The First Regiment stormed the south gate of Wuchang city in coordination with other units — on its right flank were troops under Ye Ting making an assault on the Chaoyang Gate, and on its left was the 36th army. The First Division's Second and Third regiments did not take part in the battle because they were still being reorganized.

A few days later, Duan Dechang, Secretary-General of the division's Political Department, was introduced to me by Mi Qing, regimental political instructor, at my place. Duan brought with him a lot of propaganda material, and I asked him to return as often as possible. He promised to, and kept his word. He always sent somebody to bring me progressive magazines as soon as possible.

After the surrender of the enemy forces in Wuchang, the First Division was transferred to the command of He Jian, Commander of the 35th Army. My regiment remained in Hanyang city for a few days before moving to Dangyang by way of Xiaogan. When the First Division reached Dangyang County-seat, we received a report that the remnant forces of Wu Peifu were fleeing from Yichang to Nanyang via the Yuquan Mountain. I was ordered by Zhou Pan to cut off the enemy's retreat route by

taking Mt. Yuquan. Zhou Pan agreed to let Duan Dechang go with me.

When our forces came to Mt. Yuquan, the enemy troops had passed through the area a day ahead of us. On the summit of the rugged mountain a huge Temple of General Guan surrounded by ancient cypress and pine trees created a scene as unique as the one described in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* — the place where the spirit of the general was said to have appeared after his death. My men camped there.

Duan Dechang and I spread our straw bedding in front of the statue of General Guan. The chat we had was a deep-going one, and very instructive for me. Duan asked what I thought of General Guan. "He was a tool of feudal rulers and is still being used that way by the ruling class. That's a meaningless life," I said.

"What do you think has meaning then?" Duan Dechang asked.

"There's meaning only when one works in the interests of the workers and peasants," I replied.

He asked what I thought the final goal of the National Revolution was.

"Isn't it what people are now shouting out loud every day — the overthrow of imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry, and a 25 per cent cut in land rent? I think we should carry out a 'land to the tiller' programme, and not stop at a 25 per cent rent cut."

"A genuine revolutionary also should not stop at the land-to-the-tiller stage," he said. "He should turn private ownership of the means of production

into public ownership, so that the system of 'to each according to his work' can develop into the communist system of 'to each according to his needs'. The Communist Party is striving for such an ideal. In Russia, following the victory of the October Socialist Revolution led by the Bolsheviks, a system of 'to each according to his work' has been initiated, and class exploitation is being wiped out. The task of the Communist Party is to realize socialism and communism, and a Communist dedicates his life to the creation of such an ideal society."

Then he asked, "Have you joined the Kuomintang?"

"No, I haven't and I never will," I said.

"Why?" Duan asked.

"You can see for yourself Kuomintang guys like Tang Shengzhi and He Jian — both warlords and big landlords who use Buddhism to deceive the people. And He Jian and Liu Xing are opium traffickers who collaborate with imperialism. How can these people, who are even against the 25 per cent rent cut, be revolutionaries?"

When I asked how things were with the top Kuomintang Party members, Duan said that Chiang Kai-shek, Hu Hanmin, Sun Fo, T.V. Soong and Tai Chi-tao¹ were all fake revolutionaries or counter-revolutionaries.

We talked for over two hours. Having learned so

¹Hu Hanmin was a Right-wing leader of the Kuomintang, and was against Dr. Sun Yat-sen's policy of cooperating with the CPC. Sun Fo (Dr. Sun Yat-sen's son), T.V. Soong (Dr. Sun's brother-in-law) and Tai Chi-tao were members of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang.

much, I thanked Duan and expressed admiration for his views. Now and then I still recall that conversation.

Duan Dechang and I had several other talks later, but the first one was the longest and the most significant. I conveyed the substance of all my talks with Duan Dechang to members of the Save-the-Poor Committee. In this way, the political and ideological influence of the CPC in the First Regiment was transmitted through Duan Dechang.

The First Division did not stop at Dangyang, nor did the First Regiment on Mt. Yuquan. Our forces continued to push forward the following day. After passing through Yingcheng and Zhaoshi without fighting, we crossed the Hanshui River and, in late December, reached Yichang, where we said good-bye to the stormy year of 1926 and ushered in 1927.

Setting up Soldiers' Committees

The 35th Army and the First Division remained in Yichang for a month or so. We called a meeting of members of the Save-the-Poor Committee (now diminished in size to only eight following the death of several of our members in the attack on Wuchang city) on New Year's Day in 1927 to discuss two problems. One was to amend the four original principles which no longer fully met the requirements of the times: (1) wipe out rich landlords and carry out a land-to-the-tiller programme; (2) wipe out foreigners, take back the customs and foreign concessions and abolish consular jurisdiction; (3) develop in-

dustry and relieve the poor; (4) do away with corporal punishment and withholding of soldiers' wages, and permit self-government by soldiers. We decided the charter must now also state:

— Support Dr. Sun Yat-sen's will, carry out his three cardinal policies of alliance with Russia, cooperation with the Communist Party and assistance to the peasants and workers;

— Oppose imperialism, abrogate the unequal treaties, take back the customs and foreign concessions, abolish consular jurisdiction;

— Overthrow warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry, reduce land rent and interest and gradually turn over the land to the tiller;

— Institute in the National Revolutionary Army a system of equality between officers and men, abolish corporal punishment, set up soldiers' committees, and institute soldiers' self-government. Soldiers should observe discipline and not gamble, rape or harass the people;

— Oppose the withholding of soldiers' pay, institute a system whereby accounts are open for soldiers to inspect, let soldiers have the freedom to read progressive magazines and newspapers;

— Give soldiers' committees the right to arrest counter-revolutionary elements for trial in military courts and the right to serve on juries.

These were the six points, the original wording of which I cannot remember clearly now.

The meeting also adopted a slogan for carrying out political education which could be discussed on a daily basis in connection with the reality of the times. It read: "The rice we eat is produced by

peasants, and the clothing we wear is made by workers. We must serve the workers and peasants." This slogan was chanted before roll call and meals. Skits based on the slogan as it related to our experience were to be written and performed by the troops.

Such activities were carried out continuously in the First Battalion between January 1927 and July 22, 1928 when the Pingjiang Uprising took place.

The second problem discussed was whether we should abolish the Save-the-Poor Committee. We reached a unanimous agreement that the committee would continue its underground existence to provide leadership to the soldiers' committees and to carry out the six points mentioned above.

The discussion also touched on the preparations for setting up soldiers' committees, which was formally begun a week after the meeting. Then soldiers' committees came into existence in the companies, and soldiers' groups in the squads. Members of the soldier's committee in each company were elected at an all-member meeting of the company, and a group leader was elected by a meeting held on the squad level. The Battalion soldiers' committee was elected at a joint meeting attended by committee members from the companies.

Evening training classes were run in the battalion where free discussions were held and people invited to make reports or give lectures. The basic things covered were the Three Cardinal Policies, action slogans and current events. The man who taught the most was Duan Dechang, Secretary-General of the Division's Political Department. Regimental

and battalion political instructors also came to teach. I also went to take part in the discussions.

Obviously, the points and slogans adopted at the meeting incorporated the CPC's united front programme and its system of political work in the armed forces. The six points formulated at the meeting marked a big step forward from the four points adopted five years before. Under the political influence of the CPC, the members of the Save-the-Poor Committee and the rank-and-file soldiers had raised their political consciousness to such an extent that they showed doubts about the Kuomintang and the National Revolutionary Army. They wanted to serve the workers and peasants. This had not come about easily. Leadership by the CPC was essential to changing the nature of army units.

Without any practical experience, the soldiers' committees did not make any real headway. But the soldiers had become very involved, and there was no desertion.

Huang Gonglue arrived soon after the conclusion of the Save-the-Poor Committee meeting. He said that at the recommendation of the regimental commander, the division commander had approved his going to study in an advanced class of the Huangpu Military Academy.¹ I was angry and told him that

¹ Located near Guangzhou (Canton), the Huangpu (Whampoa) Military Academy was founded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in 1924 to train officers for the Northern Expeditionary Army with the assistance of the CPC and the Soviet Union. In addition to the regular curriculum, it also offered advanced courses in politics and military affairs, and Huang Gonglue took these courses.

as a company commander in the Third Regiment his departure would greatly add to the difficulty of doing work among the men in the Third Regiment because its commander, Liu Jiren, was most reactionary.

The Kuomintang Betrayed the Revolution

In late January, the 35th Army and the First Division moved back to northwestern Hunan where they were ostensibly assigned to mop up bandits. What they were really doing was suppressing the local people and protecting counter-revolutionary elements.

The First Battalion under my command was stationed in the county-seat of Cili.

One day in March, a brigade under Dai Douyuan (the regimental headquarters and the Second and Third battalions of the regiment were stationed in Shimen) killed a standing committee member of the Peasant Association in the Jiangya District of the county. In March or April, a huge memorial service for the murdered man was held in the large drilling ground at the entrance of the headquarters of the brigade under Dai Douyuan. It turned out to be a mass peasant demonstration to demand that the murderers be punished and compensation made to the family of the victim. The officers and men of my battalion attended the service, and both the battalion's political instructor, Ou Qunhua, and I addressed the rally. The rally took some of the wind out of the sails of the counter-revolutionaries, served

as a major lesson to the troops and inspired the local peasants.

On learning that the First Battalion had been to the rally, He Jian* asked Dai Douyuan to get my speech, which he then handed to Zhou Pan with the advice to keep an eye on me. But Zhou Pan showed the text to me.

A Buddhist rally was sponsored in Linli in mid-March by He Jian, who ordered all officers at or above warrant officer rank to go there to be accepted as true followers of the faith. I did not want to go.

"Just go and have a look," Zhou Pan said. "You are free to believe in Buddhism or not."

"I don't believe in it," I said. "Why should I go?"

The soldiers' committees in my battalion also boycotted the rally which was of a counter-revolutionary nature. Believing in the Three People's Principles, we were against feudal superstition. No officer went to be initiated as followers of Buddhism, and no soldier went to learn the chanting of sutras.

After this, He Jian told Zhou Pan that he suspected me of being a CP member. But Zhou told him that I was a Kuomintang leftist. He Jian told Zhou to make me the head of a second-rate commercial tax bureau. Zhou Pan told him that I was not interested in money.

In early May, the First Division was suddenly ordered to set out for Yuezhou. The May 21st In-

* See p. 97 above. — *Tr.*

cident¹ took place a few days after our arrival there. That was a continuation of the April 12th Incident.² When the First Division was passing through Yuanjiang County, the Independent Brigade under the command of Chen Guangzhong mutinied and fought its way to Baoqing, slaughtering members of the peasant organizations along the route. When Xu Kexiang was massacring the revolutionary people in Changsha, the mutinous troops under Xia Douyin³ closed in on Wuchang city and attacked the forces commanded by Ye Ting at Heshengqiao. The troops of warlord Yang Sen⁴ from Sichuan Province moved along the left bank of the Changjiang River and took Baishiji (on the bank opposite Chenglingji) and Xinti. There were signs that he was working hand in glove with Xia Douyin. Meanwhile, He Jian and the First Division took control of Yuezhou. Ob-

¹On May 21, 1927 Xu Kexiang, He Jian and other Kuomintang commanders in Hunan, egged on by Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jingwei, ordered a raid on the trade union council, peasant association and other revolutionary organizations in the provincial capital of Changsha, arresting and massacring Communists and workers and peasants. This is known as the May 21st Incident.

²In a coup staged in Shanghai by Chiang Kai-shek and other reactionaries on April 12, 1927, large numbers of Communists and revolutionary people were massacred. This is known as the April 12th Incident.

³This refers to the Independent 14th Division of the National Government at Wuhan. As engineered by its commander Xia Douyin, the division betrayed the revolution in May 1927.

⁴Yang Sen was a warlord of Sichuan Province. Following Chiang Kai-shek's coup on April 12, 1927, he was appointed by Chiang as Commander of the 20th Army of the National Revolutionary Army.

viously there was some sort of coordination between north and south.

I had not the slightest doubt that He Jian was one of the main plotters behind the May 21st Incident. Zhou Lan, Governor of Hunan Province, and Tang Shengzhi* were probably active behind the scenes. When I made my views known to Mi Qing, regimental political instructor, he said that Tang Shengzhi was a man who would never change. He thought Tang was pursuing a "melon-like policy" — meaning that the melon's skin was white but the inside was red.

I told Mi Qing to pass the information promptly to the Provincial Party Committee of Hunan. The Second and Third regiments, which were reactionary, had not come ashore in Yuezhou. The First Regiment had landed; its First Battalion was reliable, and the Second and Third battalions could be made neutral.

Mi Qing agreed to go to the Provincial Party Committee in Changsha. I handed him a pistol and some money for use on the way. But after he left he was never again heard from. Battalion Political Instructor Ou Qunhua had quit the army before our troops set out from Cili, and I had no idea of his whereabouts.

When Xia Douyin betrayed the revolution and mounted an attack on Wuchang, I suggested to Zhou Pan that our troops move north to wipe out Xia Douyin's forces in coordination with Ye Ting's troops. But Zhou Pan said there was no order for

* See footnote on p. 46. — *Tr.*

him to do so. Two days after the May 21st Incident, I again suggested that he should promptly send our troops to Changsha to quell the mutiny of Xu Kexiang and restore revolutionary order in the city. As there were then enough ships and trains in Yuezhou, our forces could be moved there quickly to mount a sudden attack on the enemy. But Zhou Pan again used the pretext that he had not received any orders and could not act on his own. I said in anger, "All this has been engineered by He Jian, Zhou Lan and Tang Shengzhi in the first place. How can they give the order to fight themselves? The crux of the matter now rests with the First Division. If we sit here looking on, the revolutionary situation in Hunan and Hubei will come to an end."

In the old-fashioned armies, it was rare for a subordinate officer like me to speak so sharply to his superior. Whenever I had made suggestions to Zhou Pan before this, he had always accepted them. This time, out of his own class nature, he rejected my suggestion.

It now seems that Xia Douyin's mutiny and the May 21st Incident were carried out under direct instructions from Chiang Kai-shek.

When I returned to battalion headquarters, I felt angry and frustrated because nothing could be done to suppress the small reactionary force under Xu Kexiang. Zhou Pan and I had been colleagues for a decade, but all of a sudden the so-called good relationship between us went to pieces. Up to then, I had held that there was some patriotism in Zhou Pan. Now he sat on the fence when the revolution was meeting with setbacks, and civilians and CP

members were being massacred. Where was his patriotism then? I would not continue to be his tool. Moral: Don't believe the good words of a man uttered in ordinary times; his action in an emergency will tell what sort of a man he is. I had previously thought that Zhou Pan was honest, though not very capable. It turned out that he had wild ambitions.

Seeing that Xia Douyin's troops could not outfight those commanded by Ye Ting, Zhou Pan rang up to summon me to division headquarters. This took place in the morning two days after I made my suggestions to him. When I reached division headquarters, Zhou Pan told me that a force consisting of three to five regiments under Yang Sen had occupied Jianli, Zhuhe, Baiji and Xinti, and there were indications they were about to attack Wuhan city in coordination with Xia Douyin.

He ordered me to take the First Regiment to Chenglingji and make a feint as if to launch an attack across the river to pin down Yang Sen's troops on the opposite bank. This way, in case the Communists became victorious, he then could have something to claim. However, when I reached Chenglingji, I did not make the feint but concentrated my troops under camouflage and got ships ready for a real attack. My troops stormed across the river at dusk and captured Baiji, situated at the six- or seven-*li* wide confluence of the Changjiang and Xiangjiang rivers on the opposite bank. Our attack caught Yang Sen's units flat-footed. They detected our presence only when the First Battalion under my command had landed. They had built no defences

and their fire power was feeble. My battalion suffered only a few casualties. We pursued Yan Sen's routed troops for some 20 *li* in the direction of Zhuhe.

Zhou Pan refused to allow the Second and Third regiments and the main force of the First Regiment to join the battle and ordered me to bring back the First Battalion to Chenglingji the next day. "Shiquan,¹ you took a big risk yesterday," Zhou Pan said when we met.

"The forcing of the river," I said, "at a time when both the Changjiang and Xiangjiang rivers were at their height was something the enemy never expected. It seemed risky, but it was not in fact."

I thought to myself: Zhou Pan had wanted to gain something for himself by mounting a feint. I really stormed across the river — which was not to Zhou's liking — because it was my view that we should assist Ye Ting by giving Xia Douyin a stab in the back. The rout of Yang Sen's troops reduced the threat to Ye Ting's right flank, and at least gave some moral support to his troops. This event that took place in the beginning of June 1927 indicates my developing dissatisfaction with Zhou Pan.

Tang Shengzhi's Eastern Expedition Failed

In the summer of 1927, Tang Shengzhi was still making use of the flag of the revolution as a cover in an attempt to capture Nanjing and Shanghai. His real purpose: to take over the leadership in the counter-revolutionary camp.

¹The author's courtesy name.

Somewhere in June 1927, Tang ordered the Fourth Group Army to thrust eastward along both banks of the Changjiang River in a punitive campaign against Chiang Kai-shek. The Eighth and 36th armies moved along the southern bank, and the 35th Army and First Division along the northern bank. These forces soon spread out on a front stretching from Wuhu to Hefei and Bengbu. When the First Division reached Tongcheng, it was attacked by Guangxi provincial troops and the forces under Lu Diping.¹ And two groups of Chiang Kai-shek's forces assaulted the Eighth and 36th armies. The troops of Tang Shengzhi were put to rout, and they reeled back in confusion from the Wuhu-Hefei-Bengbu line. The 35th Army withdrew from Hefei. Pulling out of Tongcheng on July 20, the First Division fought rear-guard action while retreating along the left bank of the river. Its First Regiment was bringing up the rear to give cover to other retreating units (the regimental commander was on leave, and I acted as regimental commander). The regiment was attacked by Guangxi forces and the troops under Lu Diping when it reached Huangmei and Guangji.

When the First Regiment retreated to Hankou, we found the Second Regiment, under Zhou Pan himself, was already in nearby Hanyang.

"How far away are the pursuing enemy troops?" Zhou asked me. I told him that they had already passed by Wuxue and Huangpi and they would enter

¹ It was the Guangxi Army and the forces of Cheng Qian that attacked Tang Shengzhi's troops along this front at the time.

Hankou the next day. Then he asked about our losses. I told him that my regiment had suffered only 20 casualties, the dead had been buried, and the wounded taken on board a steam launch at Wuxue, which should have brought them to Xinti by now. I said the Second and Third battalions had suffered no losses because they had not come into contact with the enemy.

Zhou Pan said, "He Jian has ordered the forces to retreat to Changde. Most of them have already left, leaving behind our unit to serve as rear guard. We haven't got a single rifle from the Hanyang Arsenal, but we have always borne the brunt of the fighting when the whole army was advancing and fought rear-guard action during retreat."

"He hasn't treated you as a schoolmate," I said (Zhou Pan and He Jian were both Baoding graduates).

"Schoolmate! Schoolmate indeed!" Zhou bellowed. He asked me, "Why did the Guangxi Army and Lu Diping's forces give our troops such hot pursuit?" I said, "One is going back to Guangxi and the other to Hunan to defend the territories they had grabbed in the two provinces. The revolution is done for."

"What should we do next?" Zhou Pan asked.

"One living in wooded hills," I said, "doesn't fear the scarcity of firewood." Seeing that Zhou Pan did not know what to do next, I said, "Take a country road to Zhuhe where we can cross the river and march back to Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang counties. Immediately send the Third Regiment in Zhuzhou to Anxiang."

Zhou nodded approval.

Passing through Hankou, the forces under He Jian fled in disorder to northwestern Hunan. The First Division thus freed itself from the grip of the 35th Army as well as from that mangy dog — He Jian. Although this pleased me, I did not show my feelings, but — fearing that he would waver — said to Zhou Pan: “He Jian can’t hold Changde. He has to withdraw to the upper reaches of the Yuanshui and Zijiang rivers. Lu Diping’s army will certainly push through Changde and Yiyang to capture Xiangtan, Changsha and Yueyang. Then they will call a peace conference to divide the booty. We would be lucky to get a fertile area — Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang counties.”

Setting out from Hankou, the First Division moved to Jianli and Yanbu, where it crossed the river to reach Huarong County. Division headquarters, First Regiment headquarters and the First Battalion were stationed in Nanxian County-seat. The Second Battalion under the command of Xie Deqing was stationed in Sanchahe. The Third Battalion commanded by Yang Chaofan was garrisoned in Huarong. The Second Regiment was in Anxiang, while the Third Regiment was still on the way from Zhuzhou to Anxiang. My regiment reached Nanxian in late August or early September.¹

¹ Marshal Peng’s memory must have failed him in connection with the dates on which the First Regiment took part in the punitive campaign against Chiang Kai-shek and its return to Nanxian as well as the date on which the regiment prevented the setting up of the village suppression committee in Nanxian County. These events took place at later dates.

Although the vigorous peasant movement had, to all appearances, been put down by the reactionary forces, a great hatred still smoldered in the hearts of the peasant masses.

The First Division had completed a 700- to 800-kilometre retreat. It covered the distance from Tongcheng to Huangmei by forced march, doing upwards of 80 *li* each day. Our men did some 70 *li* per day from Huangmei to Hankou. They marched over 60 *li* a day from Hankou to Huarong. As far as I can remember, the troops rested only three or four days during the whole retreat from Tongcheng to Huarong.

After my regiment had arrived in Nanxian, Regimental Commander Dai Jijie, who was on leave, phoned Zhou Pan to tender his resignation. Maybe he was ashamed to return.

In the beginning of September I called Zhang Rongsheng, Li Can (Commander of the Second Company) and Li Li (Commander of the Special Task Company) to a meeting to discuss the current situation, which we all believed to be serious. The soldiers' committees could no longer remain in the open. As officers of the Second and Third battalions were keeping a strict surveillance over the men of the First Battalion, it was difficult to carry on our activities. Given the present situation, we decided it would be counterproductive to continue our revolutionary activities in the open. We would now carry them out under cover. Zhang Rongsheng suggested doing away with the name of the soldiers' committee as a way of safeguarding the benefits the soldiers had already won. He argued that such ben-

efits would be lost if at some point the soldiers' committees were forced to dissolve and that this tactical change was accepted by a majority of soldiers.

Li Can said that the benefits for the men could be safeguarded as long as I remained battalion commander. But Li Li argued that the benefits must be safeguarded even if I was not battalion commander. He stressed the need to keep united and prepare for a long-term struggle, otherwise our forces would disintegrate. Both Li Can and Zhang Rongsheng were of the opinion that Zhou Pan's confidence in me as the battalion commander was not firm. They pointed out that Regimental Commander Dai Jijie received his full salary even though he always went on leave whenever there was fighting. Yet Zhou Pan did not fire him but always wanted me to be acting regimental commander. This, they pointed out, was Zhou Pan's way of making use of me to fight battles and keep the troops together for his own benefit.

We agreed on an interpretation of the current situation. After full deliberations, we kept intact the principles for the soldiers' committees, but deleted the clause on arresting counter-revolutionary elements and sending them to court and assuming the right to serve as jury men. The accounts checking committees were to be preserved, and they were to carry out their duties in the open, making the ledgers public every month and overseeing the use of public funds. While the soldiers' committees were going underground, the Save-the-Poor Committee was to play a central role. The changes took place smoothly.

The slogan of serving the workers and peasants was still shouted, and skits were still performed at evening gatherings in the First Battalion.

The Battle for Xinzhou

This battle, in which warlords fought to grab territory for themselves, had not the slightest progressive nature. It was fought from mid-November to the end of the month. The battle developed like this:

Retreating from Anhui to Hunan, He Jian's 35th Army passed through Jinshi and Lixian in late August 1927, and reached Taoyuan upstream from Changde in mid-September. When five nearby regiments of Guizhou troops under Yuan Zuming, commanded by a certain Li, found that the Jinshi-Lixian area was weakly defended, they attacked and occupied the area. Then about 4,000 of these troops took Xinzhou (some 10 *li* from Jinshi). An invasion of Anxiang seemed imminent.

Lu Diping's troops reached Changsha between the end of August and mid-September. Chiang Kai-shek sent Liu Xing as "Pacification Commissioner"* to accompany Lu Diping to Hunan with the chief purpose of taking over and reorganizing the First Division under Zhou Pan. He Jian reached a compromise with Lu Diping and pledged allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek. As a result, he received his share — Jinshi, Lixian, Shimen, Cili, Changde and Taoyuan.

He Jian launched an attack on the Guizhou forces

* The title was usually given to an official appointed to govern a newly conquered region. — *Tr.*

along the Lishui River from Changde in November and captured Shimen and Lixian by mid-November.

Zhou Pan arrived in Changsha city before the Double Tenth Festival* in October to meet "Pacification Commissioner" Liu Xing and Lu Diping. They changed the designation of the First Division to Independent Fifth Division of the Hunan army and put it under the command of Lu Diping. While in Changsha, Zhou Pan had probably consulted with He Jian and Lu Diping, who, with the common aim of grabbing territory and obtaining supplies, decided to launch an attack on the Guizhou troops in Lixian, Jinshi and Xinzhou. So our First Regiment attacked the Guizhou troops east of Xinzhou from Nanxian and Huarong, and the Second and Third regiments set out from Anxiang to attack the Guizhou troops south of Xinzhou in coordination with the main force of the 35th Army. The Second Battalion of the First Regiment under Xie Deqing set out from Sanchahe to serve as vanguard, marching on Xinzhou. Setting out from Nanxian, the First Battalion under my command tailed the Second Battalion. And the First Battalion was followed by the Third Battalion (commanded by Yang Chaofan) that set out from Huarong.

When our troops were attacking Xinzhou, Zhou Pan arrived in Anxiang from Changsha on a steam launch. He took command of the Second and Third regiments which tailed the First Regiment. And a

* Double Tenth (October 10) was the anniversary of the 1911 Revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. — *Tr.*

division of the 35th Army was advancing from Lixian to Xinzhou. A certain day in late November was set for a concerted attack on the town.

The troops were some five *li* from Xinzhou when they came to an enemy forward position on an isolated height. Approaching the height without changing into battle array, the Second Battalion under Xie Deqing was caught in the enemy's fire and withdrew in confusion. Zhou Pan ordered it to regroup and tail the Third Battalion as a reserve force. The First Battalion under my command stormed the height and pursued the enemy troops right into the streets of Xinzhou. The First and Second companies each occupied a brick house as a foothold in the street fighting that was to follow. This was very important when there was no artillery cover. My troops made little headway that night, but we made essential preparations for street fighting. The Second and Third regiments and a 35th Army division arrived on time under the command of Zhou Pan, and our troops captured Xinzhou the following evening.

The Guizhou forces were routed, and they fled in disorder towards the Wufeng-Enshi area in western Hubei Province. Our First Regiment chased the enemy to Jinshi and there we stopped our advance.

After the battle, First Regiment headquarters and the First Battalion moved back to Nanxian, where part of the Third Battalion were garrisoned in Meitianhu and another part in Nanxian County-seat. The Second Battalion was stationed in Sanxianhu. The Second Regiment was garrisoned in Huarong, and the Third Regiment in Anxiang.

Becoming Regimental Commander

One evening in late September 1927, Zhou Pan rang up to summon me to division headquarters. There he said to me, "The old division commander (Liu Xing, who had then returned to Hunan with Lu Diping as "Pacification Commissioner") has accepted the resignation of Dai Jijie and you have been promoted Commander of the First Regiment. Lei Zhenhui (former Commander of the Fourth Company, one of Zhou Pan's protégé) will be the Commander of the First Battalion. Although the First Division has become the Independent Fifth Division, there is no change in the regiments' designations. The division has been put under the command of Lu Diping — so it is freed from the grip of He Jian."

"We've been together for a long time," said Zhou Pan, in advising me not to hesitate to take the post.

"It would be better if Dai Jijie returned," I said. "In his absence, I can be acting commander."

Zhou Pan said that since the matter had already been settled, it was useless to talk about it any more. He told me to take up the command immediately and that the appointment papers would be issued later. The appointment fee was 1,200 dollars, and he asked me to send somebody to get it from the division manager's office.

Zhou wanted me to go to Changsha to see Lu Diping and Liu Xing. "If the appointment papers arrive in a couple of days," he said, "we will go to Changsha together." He said that both Lu and Liu show a great interest in the old Sixth Battalion (the old designation of the First Regiment, whose com-

mander in 1916 was Lu Diping, while Liu Xing was a battalion commander).

I said, "I am not going to thank them for my promotion. (In the old-fashioned armies, one had to go to the offices of their superiors to thank them after promotion.) As to taking the oath of office, it can be done any day because I always go to work at regimental headquarters."

"A date must be fixed for it now," Zhou said. "The division's Chief-of-Staff Du Jitang has already told Deputy Regimental Commander Jin to make preparations for the swearing-in ceremony."

"Yes," Du Jitang said.

"What am I going to do with my appointment fee of 1,200 dollars?" I asked.

"Shiquan,* you have to give at least a dinner for the men and a banquet for the officers," Du said. "People from the local public and educational circles and some colleagues from the Second and Third regiments and the division headquarters may come to bring you greetings."

"So much trouble. . . . I am not going to take that post," I said.

Then Zhou Pan told Du Jitang to ask the officers of division headquarters and the Second and Third regiments not to bring me greetings so that they would not add fire to my hot temper. Du agreed, and I thanked him.

Then I said that Regimental Commander Dai Jijie's resignation had already been in effect for a year. His salary — 240 dollars a month — had been

* See footnote on p. 108. — *Tr.*

sent to him every month. Meanwhile, some unspent funds earmarked for office and other sundry expenses had accumulated. When Dai was regimental commander, three-fifths of this money was turned over to the battalions and two-fifths to regimental headquarters. This practice was followed when I was acting regimental commander. Now, there was still some 6,000 dollars left. When I was with the First Battalion, unspent funds were handed over to the Accounts-Clearing Committee to be used as public funds (Zhou Pan interrupted, "You do have public funds?") for purchasing mosquito-nets and quilts for the men. There was very little left. At that time military supplies were hard to get because Regimental Commander Yuan's murder and changes in the political situation had brought chaos to supply deployment. Now, I asked, what should we do with the unspent funds left behind by Regimental Commander Dai?

"Use it as a public fund to buy supplies as you have done before," Du said.

Zhou Pan was forced to agree, saying, "It's okay to use it that way."

Zhou Pan said that the gentry in Nanxian County were going to inaugurate a Village Suppression Committee¹ during the coming Double Tenth Festival. He asked if I wanted to attend the inauguration.

"I'm not going to such a counter-revolutionary

¹ The village suppression committees were set up by the Kuomintang reactionaries to suppress the Communist-led peasant movements after Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal of the revolution in 1927. They rounded up and persecuted Communists and other revolutionaries.

meeting," I replied. Zhou said that he didn't want to go either.

He then asked Chief of Staff Du to get a steam launch ready for him to go to Changsha, but not to tell anybody about it. "And on the Double Tenth Festival Day," he said, "you just say that division commander has gone to Changsha."

Zhou Pan left for Changsha City two days before the Double Tenth Festival. Next day I called a meeting of Li Can, Zhang Rongsheng and Li Li to inform them of the talk I had with the division commander. They were surprised to learn that Zhou still trusted me. I asked them, "Which road are we going to take?"

"Take the road of the Communist Party!" Zhang Rongsheng said without any hesitation.

"At the present moment a National Revolution is going on," Li Can said. "In the future we'll take the road of the CP."

"The National Revolution can be completed only by taking the road of the CP," Li Li said.

Zhang Rongsheng then asked, "Which road are you going to take, Regimental Commander?"

"I agree with Li Li's position," I replied.

Then I asked them which road they thought Zhou Pan would take. All of them were of the opinion that Zhou would not take the CP's road.

"Then he will not carry through the National Revolution," Li Li said.

"Are Zhou and me standing closer together or farther apart?" I asked.

There was silence for a moment until Zhang Rongsheng said, "it's up to you to answer that question."

"I've been striding forward slowly," I said, "but Zhou has already started to move backward."

Then I told them how I had advised Zhou Pan to suppress the revolts of Xia Douyin and Xu Kexiang in May, and how he had rejected my advice.

"The remarks I made to Zhou Pan were very sharp," I said, "yet he did not betray me. For this, I have to thank him. But when things got to a crucial point, Zhou, who was in a decisive position, sided with the counter-revolutionary camp and twice rejected my suggestions. As a result, nothing could be done to save the situation. Previously he had accepted most of my suggestions because they were in his own interests or at least harmless to him. His rejection of my advice about quelling the two revolts shows that he has a firm counter-revolutionary stand. Now, he has made me a regimental commander. Am I going to follow him or stay with you? I've made up my mind to take the revolutionary road — the CP road. I'll go along that road with you, and there is no turning back. I made this decision a long time ago."

Then I asked them, "How am I going to go about my work when I take office at regimental headquarters? There, the secretaries, staff officers, quartermaster, and deputy-regimental commander are all corrupt people, who take bribes and are reactionary. They should be fired. How can I get in touch with you?"

"You'd better send Zhang Rongsheng to serve as leader of the Orderlies' Platoon at regimental headquarters," Li Li suggested, "and transfer the present

platoon leader, a second lieutenant, to the Special Task Company to serve as a platoon leader with the rank of lieutenant. No one will notice this."

"I'd better go to headquarters to serve as either an orderly or a squad leader," Zhang Rongsheng said.

"That won't do," I said. "If you're not a platoon leader, you cannot be in touch with me very often. Li Li is right."

Zhang Rongsheng said that I should make it known to all at the oath-taking ceremony that 1,200 dollars had been saved. The amount of money I had saved on sundry expenses during my year-long term of office as acting regimental commander, he said, should also be made known at the ceremony.

"Set up an Accounts-Clearing Committee with a declaration that accounts in the regiment are open for all the men to inspect," he said.

All of us agreed with Zhang Rongsheng. I told them of my plan to set up a training company with the aim of opening up work among the men in the regiment. I wanted Li Can to be the company commander. I asked the three of them to deliberate on how we should set up the training company and who should be transferred to the company from the First Battalion. The main aim was to do work among the men from the Second and Third battalions.

Then Li Li asked when I was leaving for my post and whether the Special Task Company should greet me at the entrance of regimental headquarters.

"A few days from now — on Sunday," I said, "I'll leave after breakfast. Zhang Rongsheng can carry my cot for me. I'll take my small leather case, and

my quilt can be placed on the horse. I don't want to bother anyone else."

They all agreed with the plan — a break from the old, bureaucratic way.

"You've built up a strong friendship over the years with the men of the First Battalion," Zhang Rongsheng said. "You should bid them farewell."

"I'll take turns at dinners with all the companies in the regiment," I said.

"When are you going to regimental headquarters?" Zhang Rongsheng asked.

"I'm going there anyway," I said, "and there is no hurry. The question now is to consolidate our work in the First Battalion. Zhou Pan revealed his reactionary nature by watching the May 21st Incident with folded arms, and he showed his nepotism by appointing Lei Zhenhui Commander of the First Battalion."

After they left, I began to mull over the problems brought about by my appointment as regimental commander. These thoughts about Zhou Pan and his reactionary ideas surged over and over in my mind:

1. He appointed Lei Zhenhui and not Li Can to take my place as battalion commander without asking my opinion because he feared that I might not agree. This proved that Zhou Pan had some reservations about me but wanted to continue making use of me for the present.
2. Events after the May 21st Incident forced Zhou Pan and me to go our separate ways. For the time being, the two of us would make use of each

other; there could be no hope for long-term cooperation.

3. Zhou Pan was not yet openly anti-Communist. But he had sat on the fence at the time of the May 21st Incident, doing nothing to save those being massacred and letting the revolution suffer setbacks. That he had a hatred for communism was obvious.

4. Officers in my regiment — the three battalion commanders, the deputy regimental commander and the officers at regimental headquarters — were all anti-communist. So were most of the company commanders. This was a big hindrance to carrying out revolutionary activities. A way to overcome this hindrance had not yet been found. Leaving the First Battalion, I would lose a mass base, and this would make the work in the Second and Third battalions all the more difficult.

5. The counties of Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang were situated in a rich farming area, but the land was criss-crossed by rivers and canals. Such a terrain would put us in a fix in the event of an emergency.

6. Zhou Pan and I had been colleagues for a decade, during which time we had been making use of each other for our own purposes. Morally, we had nothing in common. Such a relationship could not serve as a foundation for long-term cooperation. He protected me from He Jian because he wanted to make use of me. The problem now was how we would break with each other — peacefully or violently. In the event of my joining the CP, Zhou Pan would regard it as something that would do him every harm and no good. If he were to detect this, he

would murder me as Lu Diping had killed Yuan Zhi. Zhou had wilder ambitions than Yuan Zhi did, but was less capable. I would take advantage of this weakness of his and keep vigilant — to gain time.

At moments of indcision I talked over these matters time and again with Li Can, Li Li and Zhang Rongsheng.

When our forces reached Jinshi at the end of the year in pursuit of remnants of the Guizhou Army, I surveyed the terrain of western Hubei Province and found huge mountains towering on the borders of Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan and Guizhou provinces — a very favourable terrain for military operations in the future.

Before I took up my post, I was called by Zhou Pan to Anxiang where we had a talk. Zhou told me he had found in Changsha that the collusion between He Jian and Chiang Kai-shek had started very early and there was a split within the Tang Shengzhi clique. He said the situation would become stable because He Jian had to regroup and train his troops following their heavy losses during the retreat from Anhui Province.

“We, too, must take advantage of this opportunity to train our troops in earnest,” he said. “Obviously, only a small number of men made a good show in the Xinzhou Battle — the First Regiment was quite different from the others.”

Then he said my appointment papers had arrived in Nanxian County and I could be sworn in on my return. He said that Xie Deqing was incompetent, and he would have him transferred to the Commercial

Tax Bureau and assign Chen Pengfei to take his place. He asked what my view was. I said I agreed with him.

Zhou Pan took a ship back to Changsha by way of Anxiang. Commander Xie Deqing left the Second Battalion, and Adjutant Lü of regimental headquarters was transferred to division headquarters. The transfers came as a surprise to me, and I was glad because these two men were very reactionary.

I went back to Nanxian on December 10 after my talk with Zhou Pan in Anxiang. The appointment papers had already arrived there, and I had no choice but to go and take up my new post. I moved to regimental headquarters at the end of the month, i.e. on the eve of the lunar New Year. There was no swearing-in ceremony. I went to the dinners given in my honour in the companies and battalions.

Foiling the Inauguration of Nanxian's Village Suppression Committee

Hunan Province became the scene of a terrible White terror after the May 21st Incident. The feudal forces set up village suppression corps, village suppression committees and "civil corps"¹ everywhere in the province, which massacred workers, peasants and students without discrimination. This was also the case in Nanxian.

¹ Both the village suppression corps and the civil corps were counter-revolutionary armed forces organized by the big landlords in Hunan Province.

Some revolutionary soldiers of the First Regiment continued to conduct propaganda demanding the overthrow of local tyrants and evil gentry and corrupt officials. Plays and skits to this effect were performed by them.

In late September when the biggest local landlord, who had earned the nickname "Living Satan", came back from Changsha to Meitianhu, the soldiers of the Second Company there arrested him and marched him through the streets for all to see. The local people were delighted, but none dared come out to parade in the streets. This was an indication of how terrifying the White terror was.

The local tyrants and evil gentry in town surrounded Zhou Pan, heaped gifts on him and hosted banquets for him in the best restaurants where high-class call girls served as his table companions. Mean and shameful tricks of all kinds were employed to entice the division commander.

They also tried to invite me to their banquets, but whenever I received an invitation card, I wrote the word "shame" on it and sent it back.

At that time Zhou Pan didn't have the guts to come out openly against the CP; and he was heard to say that those who were really tyrants and evil gentry must be struck down, and so should those landlords who were the "heartless rich".

The moderate blows dealt to these people served to delay the inauguration of the village suppression committee in Nanxian to the end of September. But the reactionary elements were not to be deterred from making preparations for setting it up.

At the beginning of October, I called together comrades on the Save-the-Poor Committee for a meeting to discuss how to foil the inauguration of the village suppression committee and deal a blow at the haughty reactionary elements while keeping Zhou Pan neutral. Following this, a large number of leaflets and posters were prepared to be distributed and posted on October 9, the eve of the Double Tenth Festival. This would be a surprise attack on the local tyrants and evil gentry, who were ready to set up their village suppression committee during the festival.

I went to see Zhou Pan after supper on October 5. When I asked him why he had not set out for Changsha, he asked me to go with him to see Lu Diping. "No," I said. "His murder of Commander Yuan hurt my feelings." Then I asked, "Are the local tyrants and evil gentry going to inaugurate their village suppression committee at the Double Tenth Festival?"

"Yes," he said. "They have already sent their invitation cards."

"Are you going to attend the inauguration, Division Commander?"

"I don't want to. I'm leaving for Changsha by steamer tonight."

"That's fine," I said.

Zhou Pan left for Changsha that night without telling anyone.

On the morning of October 10, large numbers of posters and leaflets appeared on the streets as well as in the suburbs of the county-seat. On the leaflets and posters were printed: "Down with the local

tyrants and evil gentry!"; "Down with the village suppression committee, a counter-revolutionary organization!"; "Shoot so and so on the village suppression committee!"

The local tyrants and evil gentry, who not long before had been very gleeful, were frightened out of their wits by these posters and leaflets put out in the name of army units, peasant associations and student organizations. Some even fled to Changsha. No officers from the garrison units turned up for the inauguration. The plan to rig up a village suppression committee completely fizzled out. None had been set up by the time the Independent Fifth Division's First Regiment left Nanxian a year later.

Joining the Communist Party of China

A representative of the CP Special Committee for the counties of Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang came to see me when it was getting dark two days after the Double Tenth Festival in 1927. The man, 25 or 26, who introduced himself as Zhang Kuang, said that he had known my name for a long time. He commended our work during the festival.

"That action against the setting up of the village suppression committee was excellent," he said. "It has humbled the tyrants and evil gentry. But it was very risky, for it might have exposed the Party's secret organization in the army."

Knowing that he had been sent by the CP, I said, "I'm not a CP member. People in the army say that

I'm a Kuomintang leftist. I've neither admitted nor denied that. In fact, I've never applied for membership in the Kuomintang. At a weekly memorial meeting held in January 1927, Zhou Pan said that all officers were members of the Kuomintang. However, I've never paid party dues nor attended a party meeting. I never filled in a party entry form."

I could see the representative tense a bit as I spoke.

Telling him not to be nervous, I said, "I'm a faithful follower of the CP. I knew Comrade Duan Dechang very well between the time the Northern Expeditionary Army beseiged Wuchang and the May 21st Incident this year. He was the Secretary-General of our division's Political Department. He had been of great assistance to me. I talked with him many times and asked him to recommend me to be a member of the CP. But he said, 'the CP Central Committee has made a decision not to enrol Party members in the Eighth Army — and that is why your application for membership has not been accepted.' I'm looking forward to meeting Duan Dechang, whom I have not seen since the May 21st Incident. I'm still eager to get into the CP. The Kuomintang is an out-and-out counter-revolutionary party."

Zhang Kuang then talked about some aspects of the current political situation and local events. He refused to admit that the Great Revolution had met with failure, but stated that the revolutionary tide was rising. I felt what he said did not tally with the facts as I knew them. But I did not want to start an argument with him over that because this was the first time we had met.

A few days later, Zhang Kuang again dropped in when night was falling to say that Duan Dechang had recommended me to become a member of the CP as had comrades of the Special Committee which had passed a resolution to accept me as a CP member. He said I would be informed as soon as this was endorsed by the Provincial Party Committee.

I was very glad to hear that, and thanked the Special Committee for the trust it had in me.

When I asked where Duan Dechang was, Zhang Kuang said that he had received a slight burn during an insurrection in the Shashi area, and he was now in Nanxian. It saddened me to hear this.

I suggested that Duan Dechang come and stay in Li Can's home after changing his family name "Duan" to "Zhang". "Then," I said, "the army surgeon from my regiment can go and treat his burn."

Zhang Rongsheng, who was present during my talk with the CP representative, said that this would have to be decided by the other comrades.

A few days later, probably in late October, Zhang Rongsheng informed me that Duan was in Li Can's home, and he took me to see him in the evening.

While Zhang Rongsheng kept watch outside, I asked Duan about his condition. He said the burn had healed. He briefed me on the current situation and encouraged me.

These were the main points of what he said:

The Great Revolution had met with failure. The Kuomintang had betrayed the revolution and could not solve any problems. The Right opportunism of

Chen Duxiu* had gone bankrupt. The Autumn Harvest Uprising** had suffered from adventurism. The Chinese revolution was at a low ebb. But CP members and the revolutionary masses could not be killed to the last man. They had learnt lessons this time and would do better in the future.

Duan Dechang commended me as a man who had remained firm in his revolutionary attitude. "What you've been cherishing for a long time has now come true," he said. "The Special Committee has passed a resolution to accept you into the CP. A report has been sent to the Provincial Party Committee, and it will certainly endorse it."

Duan advised that the work among the men in the army must be done in secret. It was not easy, he said, for the Party to get a foothold in the armed forces. The First Battalion could serve as a base to

* Chen Duxiu (1880-1942) began editing the magazine *New Youth* in September 1915. Together with Li Dazhao, he founded the *Weekly Review* in 1918, advocated the new culture and was one of the chief leaders of the May Fourth new cultural movement. After the May Fourth Movement, he accepted and propagated Marxism. He was one of the main founders of the Communist Party of China and held the post of General Secretary of the Party for the first six years after its founding. In the last period of the First Revolutionary Civil War, he pushed a Right opportunist line and thus committed a serious error. Later he lost faith in the future of the revolution and denied the need for the proletariat to continue to carry out the tasks of the democratic revolution in China. He formed a faction inside the Party, engaged in anti-Party activities, and was consequently expelled from the Party in November 1929. He later linked up with the Trotskyites, and in May 1931 a Trotskyite organization in China made him its general secretary. In 1932 he was arrested and imprisoned by the Kuomintang. He was released in August 1932. — *Tr.*

** See footnote on p. 225. — *Tr.*

carry the work on to the whole regiment and even the whole division. The Party organization in the army, Duan added, would play an important role when conditions were ripe.

He said that the CP would make revolution forever. But some people idealized every Party member. That did not conform with reality. He added that one must not become dejected at seeing a few bad things about Party members.

Duan gave me two more books — *A Popular Version of Capital* and *Proletarian Philosophy*. He made no mention of the fact that it was he who recommended me for Party membership.

I felt that my inner determination had increased immensely after hearing what Duan had said. The feeling of isolation I had after the May 21st Incident was gone. My coming into contact with the CP was like getting in touch with the masses of the people, and now I had something to rely on.

I have often recalled this talk with Duan Dechang. I still do so today.

Zhang Rongsheng brought a young man to see me at dusk one day. Introducing himself as a special representative for Nanxian (I can't remember his name now), he said he wanted to recommend a man by the name of Deng Ping to work in my unit.

"There is a jobless youth about 21 or 22 years of age," he began. "He can write well and in good handwriting, and he can paint, too. Is there any job for him in your place?"

I told him there was a vacancy for a clerk with the rank of staff sergeant and another for a third-class secretary (second lieutenant or lieutenant). The

monthly pay was 15-16 dollars for the former and 30 dollars for the latter. He said all the young man wanted was to have enough to live on.

"Let him come to work as a clerk for some time on probation," I said and enquired about where the young man was.

"Outside," Zhang Rongsheng said, "in a room he shares with others."

"You can talk over the matter with him. If he agrees, he can come tomorrow and live in a room next to mine. Tell the others that he is a friend of mine."

Satisfied with such an arrangement, the man in passing asked if I was a CP member.

"No," I said. "There's nobody to recommend me for membership."

"We know your words as well as your deeds," he said, "Such as parading 'Living Satan', the biggest despotic landlord in Meitianhu, along streets and on river dykes; the performing of skits and trying of tyrants and evil gentry by the troops at Jiudushan; the shouting of serve-the-workers-and-peasants slogans by your troops; the struggle against the inauguration of the village suppression committee and against the killing of revolutionary students, etc. These are the best recommendation you can have. There's no need to get anyone to recommend you."

This talk must have taken place not long after I returned to Nanxian from the battle of Xinzhou. Deng Ping arrived at the First Battalion's headquarters in December.

A leading member of the Nanxian County Party Committee by the name of Wang was brought to see

me by Zhang Rongsheng one evening a few days before lunar New Year's Day. He wanted to get a mimeograph machine with stencils and ink for printing leaflets and posters to be used in a year-end struggle. He said it was hard to buy one in the market. I said I could give him a machine, and I told Zhang Rongsheng to get it ready for him.

The man also wanted a few rifles to be used during the New Year Festival to suppress some counter-revolutionary elements and kidnap a few rich landlords with a view to exacting money from them.

"There are some registered rifles," I said. "But how to get them out and deliver them? You first discuss a way to do it. Then let me know. It must be done in strict secrecy."

He also wanted a supply of bullets. I told him there were 100-200 bullets for each rifle.

"Don't fine the tyrants who are to be shot," I said. "Just confiscate their property. Don't kill those who are fined. If you kill them after fining them, it'll be difficult to obtain any money from others in the future. And in this lakeside area, don't set fire to houses. They cluster together on the dykes, and when one is set ablaze, all the others will be reduced to ashes. These are just a few suggestions for your consideration." I did not tell him to guard against recklessness.

"Fine!" he said. "Your views will be considered when they are reported to the County Party Committee."

After he left, I told Zhang Rongsheng that there were two or three unregistered rifles in Li Can's place. Zhang said Li Can had two, and there were

four at battalion headquarters and three more with Li Li of the Special Task Company.

I suggested that the guns be taken out in so many batches as might be decided in a discussion with the County Party Committee, adding that they must be handed over to very reliable persons. Weapons had no class nature in themselves, I said, and they could be used by anybody who possessed them. I stressed the need to ensure secrecy.

As I remember, the rifles were taken away by Li Shouxuan, who is now Commander of the Railway Corps and who was then a secret member of a soldiers' committee. The way to hand over the rifles was devised by Li Can, Zhang Rongsheng and members of the Party Committee of Nanxian County.

Duan Dechang left Nanxian in November after his burn had entirely healed. It was Zhang Kuang who made the arrangements for his departure. Duan wanted several rifles and some money, which were delivered to him by Zhang Rongsheng and Li Li. Later, Zhang Rongsheng took a few more rifles along with some bullets and money that the Party Special Committee had requested.

It was probably in late December or on the eve of lunar New Year that Zhang Rongsheng came to me in high spirits and said to me, "I've got some good news for you. The Provincial Party Committee has formally accepted you as a member of the Communist Party of China." When I asked him how he knew, he grinned but kept silent. Perhaps he was already a member of the CP.

"Comrade Zhang Kuang of the Special Committee

is coming this evening to hold a swearing-in ceremony for you." (This was called "admission to the school" at the time.)

It was early evening where Zhang Kuang came into my office with Zhang Rongsheng and Deng Ping. Soon after they were seated, Zhang Kuang and Zhang Rongsheng started to make preparations for the ceremony. But just then division headquarters rang up to say that Deputy Division Commander Li and Chief-of-Staff Du would soon be in my office. I asked Zhang Kuang to postpone the ceremony to another day. He agreed and said that a date would be fixed later.

Beginning with lunar New Year's Day, I went to the First and Third battalions in Nanxian, where I dined with the men of every company and the units attached to regimental headquarters. I later went to the Second Battalion in Sanxianhu where I stayed for four or five days. I remember that I spent the Sweet Dumplings Festival in Sanxianhu, where I also dined in every company and gave a banquet in honour of the officers in the battalion with a view toward doing some revolutionary work in the Second Battalion and toward prolonging our stay there to give time for Zhang Rongsheng to carry on with his activities.

During the visit Zhang got in touch with two people who could be made members of the Soldiers' Committee. One was a corporal, a squad leader who had been a garment worker like Zhang Rongsheng himself. The other was an orderly at battalion headquarters.

During the stay in Sanxianhu, I gathered informa-

tion on the timetable of ships arriving and leaving Changsha, Yuezhou, Changde, Shashi and Yichang as well as the size of ships so that my troops could move into the Yuanjiang-Zijiang area quickly in case of emergency.

The ceremony at which I was sworn in as a Communist Party member took place at regimental headquarters after my return to Nanxian. It was in the latter part of the first moon or in the beginning of the second moon (in February or March 1928) — I can't remember the exact date now. The latter part of the first moon in the 17th year of the Republic would be around February 15, 1928. If it was in the beginning of an intercalary moon, it would be in the beginning of March.

A solemn ceremony was held in the evening. The walls of the room were hung with the portraits of Marx and Engels drawn by Deng Ping and streamers carrying the words: "Proletariat of the world, unite and strive for a Communist society."

Only four persons were present at the ceremony. Zhang Kuang, who attended on behalf of the Special Committee, sat opposite me while Deng Ping and Zhang Rongsheng were at either end of the table. After delivering the oath, Zhang Kuang gave a briefing on the current situation in China. In his analysis he did not acknowledge that the revolution had met with defeat but said that a revolutionary high tide continued to exist. In this, his appraisal was in principle different from Duan Dechang's.

I swore that I would devote my life to the Chinese and the world revolutions. I pledged that I would fight for the cause of communism all my life, ready

to give everything — even my life. The ceremony made a deep impression on me.

A Party branch was formed at the ceremony, which was put under the direct leadership of the Special Committee. There were four members in the branch: Deng Ping, Zhang Rongsheng, myself and Li Guang (of peasant origin, he was sent by the Special Committee or Nanxian County Party Committee to serve as a courier in my regiment. To outward appearances, he was my orderly. Later he became missing-in-action when the Red Army broke through the enemy's encirclement in the Jinggang Mountains in January 1929).

When Zhang Kuang asked who would be the Party branch secretary, I nominated Deng Ping. But the two others kept silent when asked to give their views. Then Zhang Kuang said that I would serve as secretary. I accepted his decision.

At a Party branch meeting held a few days later, Li Can and Li Li were accepted into the CP. An oath-taking ceremony, also presided over by Zhang Kuang, was held for them following endorsement by the Special Committee.

There were now six members in the Party branch. After Zhang Kuang and Deng Ping left at the end of the meeting, the remaining four of us sat around and chatted. Li Can told us that people arriving recently from Changsha had said the provincial capital was in the grip of a terrible White terror with Communists being killed every night. Previously the killing had been done only in the daytime. "We

Communists can never be killed off," I said, "Haven't we acquired another *gu** here?"

Many years afterwards, when the Seventh Party Congress was in progress in 1945, some comrades came and talked with me in the cave where I lived. There was a horrifying White terror in China between the winter of 1927 and the spring of 1928, they said, and they asked me how things were going in the army. I told them about the above conversation. Then I said, "We have grown in strength to the point that the question is not whether the Kuomintang will kill us off but rather how we are going to finish off the Kuomintang."

These words of mine were put into circulation at the Lushan Meeting in 1959, and I was charged with the crime of having entertained the idea of investing a *gu* when I joined the Party. But I used the word with an entirely different meaning.

Who Recommended Me for Party Membership and When I Was Admitted

During this investigation lasting over three years, about one-third of the time has been spent on questions about who recommended me for Party membership and when I was admitted.

I have been queried time and again. The investigators have said that I was recommended for Party membership neither by the Special Committee

* The Chinese character *gu* means "a bunch of people" here. But it has various meanings, including "share" as a share invested in a joint stock company. — Tr,

of Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang counties, nor by Duan Dechang, but by another person. They allege that I don't want to share the merit of staging the Pingjiang Uprising with so and so and therefore have held back the name of the person who did recommend me. Whenever I try to explain, they say I am a cunning old fox. They first showed me a letter written by a comrade who implied that it was Huang Gonglue who had recommended me. And finally they produced a report to the Central Committee written by Pan Xinyuan, who alleged that I had been recommended by Huang Gonglue.

Did Huang Gonglue tell that comrade it was he himself who recommended me for Party membership? I have no idea about this because Huang Gonglue has already died a glorious death.

But I do know that Pan Xinyuan never met Huang Gonglue. In February or March 1930, some troops of the Fifth Army of the Red Army and the unit attached to army headquarters received some training in city-storming tactics on the borders of Yongxin and Anfu counties. At that time the war between Chiang Kai-shek and the Guangxi warlords had not yet ended. We were getting ready to storm Anfu and other county-seats scattered along the basin of the Yuanshui River and wipe out local landlords' forces so as to join the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area to the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area. Pan Xinyuan was brought by couriers of the Party in Nanchang and Ji'an to the Fifth Army headquarters where he stayed for about a week. By that time Huang Gonglue, Deputy Commander of the Fifth Army, had already been transferred three or four

months before to the Sixth Army (later renamed Third Army) as its commander. So it is certain that Pan did not meet Huang. And Pan Xinyuan was never again to come to the Central Soviet Area.

I have been charged with not believing in historical data or in the evidence provided by comrades. In fact, I was allowed to see only a few words in the above-mentioned letter, and I could not make out what they meant. The Investigation Committee has said time and again that a person under investigation can only "plead guilty" and is not permitted to "brag about his merits". The man in charge of the Investigation Committee covered up the material with his hands, permitting me to see only a few words. I declare once again that Comrade Huang Gonglue had not returned to Nanxian County in Hunan at the time I joined the Party.

As regards who recommended me for Party membership, I used to write before the Seventh Party Congress that it was the Special Committee of Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang counties. And over the past few years, I wrote it was Comrade Duan Dechang. Both formulations are incomplete. Why did I write after the Seventh Party Congress, that it was Duan Dechang who recommended me? At the time of the Seventh Congress, Comrade Ren Bishi took charge of writing the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party." I also took part in the work. In studying the personal history of Duan Dechang, Comrade Ren Bishi gave quite a detailed account of his loyalty. After hearing it, I was much grieved and greatly moved. To keep him fresh in my memory and to learn from him, I

have since stated that it was Duan Dechang who recommended me for Party membership.

Who actually recommended me? The answer should be given exactly as Comrade Zhang Kuang of the Special Committee said, "Comrade Duan Dechang recommended you for CP membership. Comrades on the Special Committee also made the recommendation collectively."

In late April 1952, I returned to Beijing from Korea to be hospitalized and have a tumour removed. Following my discharge, I stayed at Yongfu Hall in Zhongnanhai where I was asked to write a brief history of myself by filling in a form. It was stated that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had wanted members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee to write their brief histories for an encyclopaedia. I had forgotten the exact month and day when I joined the Party. I wrote April 1928 because I preferred to give a later rather than earlier date. I would like to keep to this date.

V. The Pingjiang Uprising (*Spring to July 1928*)

The Independent Fifth Division Set up a School

Two or three days after my promotion to regimental commander, I went to Division Commander Zhou Pan with a plan to set up a training company for soldiers in my regiment. The purpose, I said, was to unify battle tactics, combat movements and methods.

Zhou Pan's response was that the division also had plans to set up a school. I said I thought that was a good idea and added that my regiment would give up its plan for a training company since a school was to be established by the division.

Both Zhou Pan and Division Chief of Staff Du Jitang found it hard to come up with names of men qualified to run the proposed school.

I suggested we establish a school for some 500 students. "We can always find some way to manage it," I said.

Zhou Pan gave the go-ahead to Du Jitang to work out a plan for the school. "Now who will be the Principal?" he asked.

"As Division Commander, you should also be Principal and there should be a deputy principal," I suggested.

"Who would be a good Deputy Principal? He must be a vigorous man with experience and knowledge," Zhou Pan said.

"Haven't you sent Huang Gonglue to further his study at the Huangpu (Whampoa) Military Academy? He'll graduate by the end of December," I said.

"That man will do," the division commander said. "But he has been gone a year without writing me."

I said that I had heard from him twice and that he had not written more because the division had had no permanent address for a whole year.

"Please write to Huang Shi (the formal name of Huang Gonglue, which is actually the courtesy name) immediately and ask him to come back to the division on graduation," Division Commander Zhou said.

That evening I called together Li Can, Li Li and Zhang Rongsheng to discuss the matter. I said we had to give up the idea of the training company discussed two days earlier because the division commander had decided to establish in the division a school with Huang Gonglue in charge. I suggested picking a total of 30 men from our regiment to study in the school — 20 from the battalions, five from the Special Task Company and five from the Machine-gun Company. I asked Zhang Rongsheng to pick the men from the First Battalion, and Li Li to get the men from the unit attached to regimental headquarters. They agreed with me.

"Pick only those who are very active and politically reliable," I said. "You should carry on work among the soldier-students who come from the Second and Third battalions and from the Second

and Third regiments. For the time being, just go to chat with them and have an exchange of views. It must be done secretly, not in the open."

We decided to copy the rules of the soldiers' committee for the school with an additional preamble: "Support the Three People's Principles, abide by the will of President Sun Yat-sen, carry out his Three Cardinal Policies with a view toward saving the nation and cherishing the people." The sentence "Down with the new warlords" was added in the rules, while the soldiers' committee was changed to students' self-government. The document bore the signature: "Zhou Pan, Commander of the Independent Fifth Division of the National Revolutionary Army and Principal of the Division School".

I thought to myself: If Zhou Pan agrees to this it means his endorsement of the rules of the soldiers' committee of the First Battalion.

Taking the amended rules to Zhou Pan in the evening of the following day, I said, "Division Commander, I applaud your sound proposal for setting up a division school. Chiang Kai-shek came into power by advertising the Three People's Principles, mouthing the President's will and pretending to carry out his Three Cardinal Policies to get the assistance of the Soviet Union and the backing of the CP. He also ran the Huangpu Military Academy. But having taken power into his hands, he threw away the Three Cardinal Policies and turned against the Soviet Union and the CP and started massacring the people. The CP can never be overthrown, nor can it be killed to the last man. It has been deceived

this time, but it has learned a lesson and cannot be cheated a second time.

“Our Independent Fifth Division can grow in strength by carrying out the Three People’s Principles, drawing on the experience of the Northern Expedition and setting up the division school. Here I have worked out the rules of the school for you, a man whose aim is to save the nation and cherish the people. Please have a look at it to see if it is useable.”

Division Commander Zhou became enthusiastic when he came to the words: “Down with the new warlords.” He promptly called Chief of Staff Du to his side and said, “This is a fine motto for the school. Please study it and give some consideration to the wording. It’s time now to get rid of the new warlords.”

The Division Commander then asked me about the strength of the First Regiment. I told him that my regiment had 3,000 officers and men and a few dozen more.

I was heartened that the main points of the soldiers’ committee rules we mapped out at the meeting in Yichang on New Year’s Day had won approval at the division level. But legalization did not mean realization, which would only be brought about through great efforts.

Preparations for setting up the school got under way in the winter of 1927.

A letter soon came from Huang Gonglue who acknowledged receipt of my letter and the money I sent him for the trip back. He said that he was just

taking his final exams and hoped to be back after graduation in February.

We were glad to see Huang Gonglue on his return from Guangdong at regimental headquarters in mid-February 1928. Li Can and others immediately came to welcome him after word of his arrival had spread. We talked about the situation as it had developed over the past year. Our talk resumed after supper, focusing on conditions in the regiment and on preparations—which were about to be completed—for setting up the school. We told Huang Gonglue that Division Commander Zhou Pan would be Principal and that he would be Deputy Principal. We pointed out that since the division commander would not come to school regularly, it would be convenient for us to carry out our activities at the school. The teaching material being printed was the same as that used in the Hunan Army Officers' Academy. Then our conversation turned to the rules of the school and the sentence "Down with the new warlords."

"Who are the new warlords?" Huang Gonglue asked.

"Chiang Kai-shek, of course," I said.

Huang Gonglue flew into a rage, speaking in defence of Chiang as President of his military academy.

We were terrified. We had told him everything . . . this could mean a disaster for us! We were angry beyond description.

"Gonglue," I exclaimed, "we've been friends for years. You've always said how you cherished the revolution. But now you have changed. Well, you

can take Chiang Kai-shek's broad road, and we'll take a small path strewn with hazards and hardships."

Zhang Rongsheng pulled out a towel which he shoved into Huang's mouth as a gag before he began to throttle him. Huang's face instantly turned pale.

"Strangle him and throw his body into the river tonight," said Li Li.

At this moment, Huang Gonglue pointed his finger at his leather shoe.

"Wait a minute," Deng Ping said, noticing Huang's gesture. "Relax a little. Let him breathe. He can't escape anyway."

Hidden in a hole in the heel of Huang's shoe was a letter of recommendation from the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee. We were greatly surprised. Huang came to half an hour later.

"Why make such a big joke?" I asked.

"You're now a regimental commander," he said. "Who knows if you're really for or against the revolution?"

Then Huang Gonglue asked us to send for Comrade Huang Chunyi, who had travelled with him and was now in the barracks outside. There was another comrade, He Guozhong, a probationary Party member, who also might have arrived that day. "Please look for him in the barracks," he said.

After breakfast the following morning Huang Gonglue and I sat on the willow-shaded dyke outside regimental headquarters, watching fishermen angling with hooks. He talked about the significance of the Guangzhou Uprising and the White terror that took place in the wake of its defeat during which countless people were slaughtered in a most

barbarous manner. He said that during his trip to Shanghai, Hankou and Yuezhou, he saw posters reading "No talk about state affairs. Seek pleasure in drinks" posted up in hotels everywhere. The atmosphere here in Nanxian, he said, was not so terrifying.

Then he asked what had been on my mind over the past few months. I told him I had thought of many things:

My displeasure at his going to the Huangpu Military Academy in January last year; the unfolding of a Buddhist campaign by He Jian who said that "Buddhism is identical with the Three People's Principles", and his holding of Buddhist meetings to make our men recite sutras when the 35th Army and the First Division moved to the lower reaches of the Lishui River in February and March; the murdering of a standing committee member of the Peasant Association in the Jiangya District by Dai Douyuan's brigade which garrisoned Cili County.

"All this," I said, "is in line with the saying 'the wind is sweeping through the tower to herald a rising storm in the mountains.' It is obvious that a counter-revolution was being plotted then."

Then I told him that Xia Douyin mounted an attack on Wuchang and, when the May 21st Incident took place, I twice told Zhou Pan that he could save the revolution by annihilating the forces under Xia Douyin and Xu Kexiang, but he turned a deaf ear to me. But the First Division did free itself from the control of He Jian when it withdrew to Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang counties in the wake of the debacle of Tang Shengzhi's eastern expedition.

After discussing the problems confronted in the armed uprisings in various areas, we two agreed on the importance of setting up base areas without which we would get nowhere in the light of present-day technical development.

In discussing Chiang Kai-shek, we were of the opinion that he had failed to unify China. He had control over only the four provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian and Anhui, and had only partial control over Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi and Henan provinces. The flag over Northeast China had changed, but the old system remained as before.¹ Northwest

¹ Northeast China was dominated by Zhang Xueliang, new leader of the Fengtian Warlords' clique and also known as the Young Marshal. In June 1928, Zhang Zuolin, Zhang Xueliang's father and leader of the Fengtian Warlords which had been in control of the military government in Beijing, withdrew to Northeast China and was assassinated by agents of the Japanese army. He was succeeded by his son, Zhang Xueliang. In mid-June the Chiang Kai-shek government announced "a policy of peaceful settlement of the Northeast question". Following negotiations between emissaries of Chiang and Zhang, Zhang declared on December 29, 1928 that he would "observe the Three People's Principles, obey the orders of the National government and change the flag." Following this, the flag of the military government at Beijing was replaced by the flag of the Chiang Kai-shek government in Nanjing. In return, Chiang made Zhang Xueliang Commander-in-Chief of the Frontier Defence Armies of Northeast China. But the original political, military and economic systems of the Fengtian Warlords remained unchanged.

China was still occupied by Feng Yuxiang* and local forces. Southwest China remained as of old. In south China, Guangdong and Guangxi provinces were ruled by separate warlords. In the existing situation in China, no single imperialist power could annex the country, nor could the imperialist powers divide it up peacefully. In fact, each of the imperialist powers was colluding with a faction of warlords to extend its sphere of influence. Hence warlords' wars were inevitable.

I told Huang Gonglue I had acquainted Zhou Pan with all of this to try to make him more determined in establishing the division school. I also told Huang about my slight revision of the rules of the soldiers' committee for use as rules for the school

* Feng Yuxiang (1882-1948) served as brigade commander, division commander, military governor, director-general and so on during the time the Northern Warlords held sway. In October 1924 he launched a coup in Beijing and reorganized his army as the National Army. On November 5, he abolished the title of emperor which Pu Yi, the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty, had continued to hold after his dethronement, and drove him out of the imperial palace in Beijing. In September 1926 he announced his break with the Northern Warlords and joined the national revolution. Following Chiang Kai-shek's counter-revolutionary coup of April 12, 1927 he participated in the anti-Communist activities of Chiang and of Wang Jingwei. After the Japanese invasion of Northeast China on September 18, 1931 he favoured resistance against Japan and in May 1933 cooperated with the Communist Party in forming the People's Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Chahar Province (covering parts of what are now Shanxi, Hebei and Inner Mongolia) to resist Japanese imperialist invasion. Later he continued to cooperate with the Communist Party. On September 1, 1948 he died in a fire on his way back to China from the United States to attend the New Political Consultative Conference preceding the founding of the People's Republic. — Tr.

and that Zhou Pan was delighted with the sentence "Down with the new warlords".

"What is Zhou Pan planning to do?" Huang Gonglue asked.

"He is not as capable as Yuan Zhi, but he has wild ambitions, bigger than Yuan Zhi's," I said. "He uses me to train soldiers to fight for him. And he is making use of you to run a school to produce lackeys for him. He wants to overthrow the new warlords so that he himself can replace Chiang Kai-shek. At the time of the May 21st Incident he sat on the fence, revealing his anti-Communist nature."

I told Huang Gonglue that the Save-the-Poor Committee had stopped its activities after the formation of the Party branch which was now giving leadership to the soldiers' committees.

"At the time of the June 1 Massacre," I said, "both Li Can and Zhang Rongsheng came to Changsha to discuss how to coordinate the activities of the Save-the-Poor Committee with the anti-Japanese

¹On April 5, 1923, a Hunan Association to Back Up Diplomacy was founded by the province's Trade Union Council and other public organizations to campaign for the break of economic relations with Japan. On June 1, 1923, as inspectors from the association were searching for Japanese goods on the bank of the Xiangjiang River in Changsha, they were beaten up by Japanese navymen. More than 1,000 people gathered there to protest the outrage. Men from Japanese naval vessels on the river opened fire on the crowd, killing two persons and wounding scores more. This is known as the "June First Massacre". Tens of thousands of people turned out for a demonstration in Changsha, carrying the corpses of the victims. This was followed by protest strikes of workers and students. The movement was suppressed by the warlord Zhao Hengti in mid-June.

movement. At that time, you argued against this, saying that it would be very risky without serving any large purpose. So you were not informed later of the Committee's activities. We decided to carry out secret activities to support the student boycott of Japanese goods and their protests against the murdering of Chinese workers by the Japanese. These activities, though not open, gave a patriotic lesson to soldiers of the First Company. The soldiers' committees have gone underground. Formerly all officers and men were members of the committees, which were declared dissolved later. Then we started registration of members secretly, and now there are 60 members, all of them in the First Battalion and Special Task and Machine-gun companies attached to regimental headquarters.

"The Accounts-Clearing Committee still operates in the open. The rules of the soldiers' committees and the slogan of serving the workers and peasants are still being used regularly to educate the soldiers. But there is not a single soldiers' committee member in the Third Battalion, while the Second Battalion has only two prospective members. It is difficult to approach the men in a strictly organized army."

Then I told Huang that we had planned to run a training company to work among the men in the Second and Third battalions. The plan was dropped because the division commander was establishing a school.

"At present," I said, "we have picked 30 squad leaders and lance-corporals for the school. They are members of the underground soldiers' committees,

which are secretly working among the rank-and-file soldiers.”

Then Huang Gonglue wrote this poem and presented it to me:

The Guangzhou Uprising¹ is defeated,
But the standard keeps flying
With the founding of the Soviet areas, and the
Red Army;
Along my way in Shanghai, Wuhan and
Yuezhou,
Whoever talked about politics might lose his
head,
But the sun cannot always be hidden by dark
clouds;
We talk about the current situation as a spring
breeze blows,
As willow catkins greet our reunion;
Scenic Lake Dongting spreads 800 *li* wide,
The cream of the nation at its side.

We talked for four hours that morning. I could not compose poems, so I just jotted down these lines for Huang:

Thirst for knowledge drives you to Huangpu,
I object to your going, but you appear in my
dreams;
The big lesson drawn from the May 21st
Incident:
Revolution cannot do without an armed force;
The Autumn Uprising takes place in the coun-
tryside,

¹ The uprising took place in December 1927 with the leadership of Zhang Tailei, Ye Ting and others.

Its failure is caused by recklessness;
A new banner is raised atop Mt. Jinggang
By the Worker-Peasant Army under Mao
Zedong;

I wish to follow the model
And fight on lakesides or in mountains;
Taking the opportunity offered by Zhou Pan's
opening a school,
Let's strive with caution to gain two years' time.

When Huang Gonglue finished reading what I had written, I said, "The most important thing is to be cautious and to gain two years' time. Once we're exposed, Zhou Pan will dispose of us, and we'll suffer losses."

Huang Gonglue then asked what books I had read lately. I told him *The ABCs of Communism* by Bukharin, *A Popular Version of Capital* by Li Ji and *Heroes of the Marsh*.

"Which person in *Heroes of the Marsh* do you think you are most like?"

"Somewhat like Li Kui,*" I said.

Our conversation switched over to other subjects, until at noon Zhang Rongsheng came in to say that the other two new arrivals, Huang Chunyi and He Guozhong, were waiting at regimental headquarters for us to lunch with them.

Back at regimental headquarters I found that Huang Chunyi was a gentle, learned man and He Guozhong a fat, boisterous young man with a fair complexion. I called Chief of Staff Du at division

* A just-minded, brave but reckless hero in the novel.
— Tr.

headquarters to tell him that Huang Gonglue and two other men had arrived at regimental headquarters, and they would be at division headquarters to see him tomorrow. I asked him to ring up the division commander. Du said all right, adding that preparations for the school inauguration had almost been completed.

After lunch, I briefed Huang Gonglue and the two others on the size of the school, the preparation work for its establishment, Zhou Pan's aim in running the school and the temperament of Chief of Staff Du.

The three men met the Chief of Staff the following day, and they had a good impression of one another.

The division commander returned from Changsha three days after the call from Du to preside over the school's inauguration ceremony. He announced the appointment of Huang Gonglue as Principal, of He Guozhong as Dean and of Huang Chunyi as Commander of the School. The arrangement was better than we expected. Huang Gonglue was given the rank of major, and the other two the rank of captain.

Speaking at the ceremony, Division Commander Zhou Pan declared his adherence to the political slogans of the Northern Expedition and stressed the need to overthrow imperialists, corrupt officials, local despots and evil gentry, and particularly to strike down new warlords. His speech was based on the rules for the division school.

Following the ceremony, I took Huang Gonglue and the other two comrades to my regimental headquarters for a Party meeting to discuss our plan for the future. Zhang Kuang of the Special Committee

also attended the meeting held somewhere around the end of April 1928. One of the items discussed was why Zhou Pan had changed so much for the better. We couldn't figure it out and decided to let future facts provide the answer.

We again touched on this point: the rules for the school were similar to those adopted for the soldiers' committees of the First Battalion on New Year's Day in 1927. What had been added to it was "Down with the new warlords". If they were properly implemented and our method of work was right, with one-third of each graduating class secretly joining the underground soldiers' committee, by the end of the year there would be one committee member in every company of the Second and Third regiments. And with the growth of membership the following year, there would be one or two progressive companies to serve as a nucleus in every regiment of the division in which the First Regiment would become the nucleus. The whole division could then be won over to stage an uprising as soon as conditions became favourable.

Our experience in the First Battalion showed how difficult it was to transform army forces into progressive and revolutionary units fighting in the service of the workers and peasants. We came to the conclusion at the meeting that secret activities in the army could hardly be expected to make any headway without progressive officers to serve as cover. Nothing could be done without one or two progressive officers among the company commanders and platoon leaders in a battalion determined to carry the revolution through to the end.

At the meeting in Mahaokou held at my battalion headquarters two years before, some comrades had warned we must not become isolated — which could lead to exposure and failure — but must act boldly if we were to make any real progress among the backward. Comrades at the meeting told me to do more work among officers while they worked among the rank-and-file soldiers. Such coordination of efforts from top to bottom had been effective, and we had achieved some results.

At the Party branch meeting, a decision was made to make He Guozhong, a probationary Party member, a full member. This brought the total number of Party members in our branch to eight. Zhang Kuang of the Special Committee, who also attended our meetings, instructed us to set up a Party Committee in the regiment, and a Party branch in the division school with Huang Gonglue as secretary working under the leadership of the Regimental Party Committee. He chose me to serve as Secretary of the Regimental Party Committee to which no opposition was voiced.

Zhang Rongsheng warned that we should be extremely careful to carry out our activities in secret. "All Party people coming to contact us must first get in touch with Deng Ping rather than the regimental commander, otherwise we'll expose ourselves," he said. All at the meeting agreed with his view.

The Struggle for Back Pay

In mid-April 1928, the Independent Fifth Division received an order to march to Pingjiang County to

replace Yan Zhongru's brigade then engaged in the "suppression of Communists". The division school was to move to Yuezhou.

Meanwhile, the men had not been paid for three months and were owed pay held back over the preceding years amounting to two months' salary. In other words, they were five months behind in their pay.

With a view toward raising the political consciousness of the men, the Regimental Party Committee decided to launch a protest for back pay before the troops set out for Pingjiang. We knew the protest could gather momentum only if coordinated under a unified plan.

Underground soldiers' committees by that time had been set up in the First Battalion and the Machine-Gun and Special Task companies and other units attached to regimental headquarters. The struggle started in the First Regiment, then spread to the Second and Third regiments and to the division school. In this way almost the entire division joined the fight for back pay. Frightened out of his wits, Division Commander Zhou Pan was at a loss what to do. The protest was completely successful. This paved the way for the Pingjiang Uprising.

In preparation for the protest, a huge amount of basic propaganda work was done to link economic demands with political objectives. These points were driven home to the soldiers:

We were enlisted to make revolution; to overthrow warlords, corrupt officials, local despots and evil gentry; and to bring about a cut in land rent and interest. But now there is neither revolution nor pay

while talk of a cut in land rent and interest is heard no more. Yet, we are ordered to "suppress Communists" and crack down on peasant associations. Who orders us to do such things? Chiang Kai-shek! A soldier earns 6.5 dollars a month. Paying 3.3 dollars for mess, he has only 3.2 dollars left — and this is withheld from us. What a miserable lot we have! We can't even afford to wear straw sandals or smoke coarse tobacco, let alone provide for our parents, wives, children. The officers must consider the problems of the enlisted men!

Next came organization work. As advised by Zhang Rongsheng, squad leaders of the First Battalion contacted their counterparts in the Second and Third battalions and also won over as many platoon leaders as possible. At underground meetings held by squad leaders, soldiers discussed the simply written posters and were encouraged to write posters of their own. Then they began to air their grievances to the regimental commanders, who in turn reported the situation to the division commander.

These proceedings were made known to all other battalion commanders and to the Second and Third regiments to create an atmosphere of urgency. Students in the division school were encouraged to spread the news to the units from which they had come. Representatives were even elected to return to their original units where they, with the assistance of the underground soldiers' committees, called on the students to stop attending classes.

After five days of agitation, the enlisted men began to act on the sixth day when they presented

petitions to the regimental commanders in the morning and to division headquarters in the afternoon. Posters were distributed to citizens and students to win public support. The bigger the scale, the better.

Things went well according to plan on the sixth day. At noon, the division commander rang me up, saying, "I've heard that the men of your regiment are clamouring for back pay—something very unexpected!"

"This is not just being done by a few men," I said. "The whole regiment is in an uproar. They went to see Deputy Regimental Commander Jin in the morning, and later came to ask me to do something to get their back pay. I said, 'Our financial matters are kept open. You can go to check the accounts for yourselves'. The men asked me to report to you, Division Commander, and ask you to help them.

"The division has been ordered to go to suppress the Communists in Pingjiang, but the men would not go if you don't give them their pay. I think their demand is just," I said. "Are men of the Second and Third regiments also clamouring for back pay? Things would be very bad if they were."

Zhou Pan asked Chief of Staff Du Jitang to enquire about conditions in the Second and Third regiments. He also asked him what to do. Du then told Zhou the situation was quite serious in the Third Regiment as the men had risen up to demand for back pay. He said he had not yet asked about the situation in the Second Regiment. But posters had already appeared on the streets, and people at the Chamber of Commerce were in panic.

Zhou Pan picked up the phone and said to me,

"The Third Regiment is also rioting, according to Du Jitang."

"Something must be done promptly," I said, "otherwise things could become very hazardous. In the struggle for back pay in the 9th year of the Republic,* army units all over Hunan Province marched on the provincial capital of Changsha. The troops then obeyed only the orders of the soldiers' representatives and turned a deaf ear to their officers."

"Yes, Yes," Zhou Pan said (at that time he had been a much frightened company commander). "You tell the soldiers' representatives that division headquarters now has only 10,000 dollars at its disposal."

"That can't solve any problem," I said. "Soldiers' deputies outside are waiting for a reply. I'll phone you later."

My talk over the phone was overheard by the soldiers' representatives. "What shall we do now?" I asked them.

Zhang Rongsheng spoke in a booming voice to the representatives, "Go and tell the men in your squads the attitude of our Regimental Commander. Go to petition division headquarters in the afternoon."

"OK," the soldiers' representatives roared and left.

Later I phoned the division commander again, telling him that the men were going to his headquarters. I advised him to obtain a temporary loan of 100,000 dollars from the counties of Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang by mortgaging the taxes on salt, fish and

* That was 1920. — Tr.

consumer goods. The loan, I said, could be repaid within a period of less than two months. I told him 50,000 dollars could be obtained from the Chamber of Commerce of Nanxian, 30,000 from that of Anxiang and 20,000 from that of Huarong. It wasn't necessary for division headquarters to take up the matter, I said, and the regiments could go to borrow the money from the chambers of commerce.

With the borrowed money, we could pay all the men's wages for January this year, each man receiving three dollars. Another sum of 20,000 dollars would be needed to cover the amount for the two months in the previous years. Division headquarters could decide how much each officer was to receive. The First Regiment needed about 30,000 dollars. Any money left would be turned over to division headquarters. "If you give me your consent," I told Zhou Pan, "I'll go to get the money from the Chamber of Commerce in Nanxian."

The division commander gave me his permission.

On arriving at the Chamber of Commerce of Nanxian County, I told people there that the troops were doing the right thing in their demand for held-up pay since they had received no pay for three months that year and only part of the pay for two months in the previous year. And now they were ordered to get out for battle. If they were not treated properly, I said, they would rise in a mutiny, and that would mean disaster for the locality.

"Yes, yes," said the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.

I asked for a loan of 50,000 dollars to be repaid in about two months with taxes levied on salt, fish and

consumer goods. He promised to give the loan, but he said it could not be made available very soon.

"There must be no delay," I said, "or else a mutiny will spread like a prairie fire."

An agreement was reached to hand over the entire sum by noon the next day. I said a cheque for the salt, fish and consumer goods tax revenue would be issued by division headquarters to the Chamber of Commerce as security. He agreed.

I picked up the phone at the Chamber of Commerce and informed Division Commander Zhou of the loan agreement.

The division commander was overjoyed to hear it. And this made those in the Chamber of Commerce realize that I came for the loan at the request of division headquarters.

After returning to regimental headquarters, I told the deputy regimental commander to inform the Second and Third regiments of the loan agreement I had reached with the Nanxian Chamber of Commerce.

The March on Pingjiang

Our division reached Pingjiang County at the end of the 4th moon or the beginning of the 5th moon in 1928. Units attached to division headquarters and the First Regiment's First and Third battalions were stationed in the county-seat, and the Second Battalion in Sicun township some 50 *li* to the south. The Second Regiment was deployed along a line stretching from a point 50 *li* north of the county-

seat to Nanjiangqiao, while the Third Regiment took up positions on the Changshoujie-Jiayizhen line east of the county-seat. The division school was in Yuezhou.

The brigade under the command of Yan Zhongru in Pingjiang, together with a large number of reactionary "civil corps", had been conducting mopping-up operations in the surrounding villages for over six months. Their cruel suppression, arson, slaughtering and looting had brought enormous losses of lives and property, but they had failed to subjugate the revolutionary masses. The county Party Committee was still there, and small peasant guerrilla units were continuing to put up resistance.

The First Regiment and the division headquarters were the last to arrive in Pingjiang. Division Commander Zhou Pan was hailed as the "father" who "gives a new lease on life" to the 700,000 people of Pingjiang by heads of reactionary societies, county government offices and the "civil corps," who collected at a spot 10 li west of the county-seat to give him a hero's welcome.

Comrades Li Can and Zhang Rongsheng had come to Pingjiang a few days earlier to scout the situation and to make arrangement for billeting the troops. They said that Yan Zhongru's brigade and the "civil corps" and village-suppression gangs not only massacred people and torched peasant cottages, but also stole chickens, pigs, cattle and things belonging to the civilian population. They behaved worse than bandits, they said. Almost half of the houses were razed to the ground in the villages to the east, north-east and southeast of the country-seat. More than

1,000 people, most of them poor peasants and students, were thrown into prison where the heat along with starvation and disease took away several to a dozen lives every day. People were shot at night. A horrifying White terror was raging.

I called a Regimental Party Committee meeting in the evening to discuss ways to halt the arson, killing and looting by reactionary troops in their village suppression operations. The following counter-measures were worked out at the meeting:

1. Men who had come earlier and were familiar with the situation must be promptly dispatched to the battalions and companies to report to soldiers on the reactionary rule of the local administration.

2. The reactionary "civil corps" must be put under surveillance and prevented from doing harm to the people during suppression operations in the villages.

3. Disciplinary education must be earnestly carried out in the regiment with the help of members of the soldiers' committees.

4. Sun Yat-sen's policy of assisting the workers and peasants must be integrated with the motto of the soldiers' committees on serving the workers and peasants. This meant, in the current circumstances, safeguarding the interests of workers and peasants by stopping the village suppression forces from robbing people, stealing chickens and pigs and slaughtering cattle. Posters and streamers were to be written and propaganda conducted by word of mouth against the banditry of the village suppression forces.

The Second Battalion did not go out to conduct

any village suppression operation, but carried out propaganda among the local people when it came to be garrisoned in Sicun township. After five or six days, the peasants, who had fled the village, began to return to farming at home.

The day after our arrival, I was the first to show up at a meeting of regimental and battalion commanders called by Zhou Pan to assign the units to different garrison areas. I told him of the bad discipline of Yan Zhongru's brigade and the civil corps. I said they were not suppressing the Communists but forcing the people to rise in rebellion.

When he addressed the meeting, the division commander announced a tightening of discipline, stressing that no activities harmful to the innocent people would be tolerated.

The Third Battalion of my regiment was stationed on either side of Pingjiang's north gate. Outside the gate was Zheshuping Square on which men of the Third Battalion drilled. It was also the place where the firing squads of the local court and village suppression committee killed the people. Before they were shot, many young men and women acted heroically by shouting, "Down with the new warlords!" "Down with imperialism!" and "Down with corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry!" This won the sympathy of our troops and added to their hatred for the Kuomintang.

Before meeting their death, some male and female students called out, "Soldier friends of the revolution, come on! Save us!"

Greatly moved, the men of the Third Battalion went out on several occasions, all on their own, to

stop the firing squads. Later, whenever they got word that some people were to be shot, the soldiers would rush out to start training on the drill ground, permitting no shooting.

A thoroughgoing "suppression" plan had been tabled by the brigade under the command of Yan Zhongru. Worked out in great detail, it proposed participation by the Fifth Division, Yan Zhongru's brigade and civil corps. With Zhou Pan as chief commanding officer, it was to be carried out after May 10. When the mopping up operation was over, Yan Zhongru's brigade was to leave for Chaling.

I thought to myself: I should help local Party work by sending the plan to the County Party Committee. While I was tossing over this idea in my mind, a man by the name of Mao Zongwu appeared in my room. We knew each other in 1916 when he was a soldier with the Second Company under Yuan Zhi and I was a soldier with the First Company. Mao Zongwu said that he planned to stay with me for a few days because, as he put it, the Communists were stirring up trouble in the countryside.

"You're more than welcome," I said, and treated him as an old-timer.

I purposely put the "suppression" plan under a book and then said, "I'm going out today and won't be back until this evening. You're welcome to stay here in my room — make yourself at home."

I told Li Guang not to enter the room unless he had something important to attend to so that Mao could copy the "suppression" plan.

Mao Zongwu was about to leave when I returned to my room at regimental headquarters at dusk. "Are

you going to take with you the suppression plan you've copied?" I asked.

He denied that he had copied it.

"What's that in your pocket?" I asked. Seeing that he was frightened, I added, "Since you were bold enough to come here, you don't need to be afraid. Do you know the story about stealing a letter from the enemy?"* He said he knew. I told him that I knew he was a scout.

"We've got word that the Second Battalion in Sicun belongs to your regiment," he said. "The men of the battalion do not conduct village suppression operations or harass the civilian population. And when they go out for training exercises, they wrap bullets in paper and leave them on the ground.** Ostensibly, I am here to see you as an old friend, but actually I've been sent by the County Party Committee to find out what's going on here."

When asked about his position in the County Party Committee, Mao said, "A courier."

I told him to return to Sicun in the disguise of an army uniform, and asked Zhang Rongsheng to take him out of the city. Mao told me that he would be back at the County Party Committee by noon the

* In the classical Chinese novel, the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, an advisor to Prime Minister Cao Cao was sent to visit his former schoolmate, Admiral Zhou Yu of the Kingdom of Wu, and stole a confidential letter from the latter. However, the plot differs from the author's metaphor here in that the letter was actually a trap designed to incriminate two of Cao Cao's naval commanders and induce their execution. — Tr.

** To be used by the guerrillas. — Tr.

following day. I warned him that he must be on the alert after leaving Sicun.

"I haven't copied the whole thing," he said. "And I've scribbled in such a way that nobody can make head or tail of it. I'll never say anything if I'm arrested or tortured. You need not worry."

"Huangjindong will be attacked by the Third Regiment, which is a most reactionary unit," I said. "The County Party Committee must stay in places 15 *li* away from the Second Battalion in Sicun; don't get too close to it. There are good men and bad in the battalion. When they go out on suppression operations in villages, they will never go to localities more than 10 *li* from Sicun. They'll not arrest any civilians or seize their belongings. If there are guerrillas, they must stay away from my troops."

Now here is the political background of some of the officers with the Independent Fifth Division:

Liu Jiren, Commander of the Third Regiment, was most reactionary.

Zhang Chao, Commander of the Second Regiment, a typical middle-of-the-roader, was relatively enlightened. He often came to talk with me about the current situation. He knew that final victory would be won by the CP. Since the revolution was at a low ebb after the May 21st Incident, he had not sided with either the right or the left, but sat on the fence. I had written to inform him of the bad discipline of the brigade under Yan Zhongru and the "civil corps".

Chen Pengfei, Commander of the First Regiment's Second Battalion, was rather enlightened.

Yang Chaofan, Commander of the Third Battalion, was reactionary, but had connections with the soldiers. He was discharged because he was suffering from TB and was replaced by Deputy Regimental Commander Jin from the Baoding Military Academy, a very reactionary man, but he had no connections with the rank-and-file soldiers.

The commander of the Ninth Company had died of sickness, and the commander of the Third Regiment's Third Battalion had been dismissed for embezzling funds.

Division Commander Zhou Pan wanted Huang Chunyi to be Commander of the Ninth Company, and Huang Gonglue to be Commander of the Third Regiment's Third Battalion. He Guozhong became acting principal of the division school. I agreed with the division commander when he asked for my opinion. The Party thus secured an important foothold in the Third Regiment.

After the troops under my command had garrisoned Pingjiang County-seat for a fortnight, I attended a banquet hosted by Zhou Pan for corrupt officials, despotic landlords and evil gentry. One of the guests by the name of Zhang Ting looked like a fattened hog. He was the chairman of a suppression committee. Speaking at the banquet, the die-hard reactionary heaped praises upon Zhou Pan in a most shameful manner. Standing upright to toast the division commander, he said that Zhou Pan was a "father" who "gave a new lease on life" to Pingjiang. But he hinted that Zhou had erred in not killing enough people, and wanted him to kill more.

"You cannot be wrong if you kill anybody five *li* outside the county-seat," he said.

"According to what Mr. Zhang has said," I retorted, "some 700,000 out of the 750,000 people in the county have to be massacred. Our descendants will say: 'several hundred years ago there was a Zhang Xianzhong who massacred people in Sichuan Province, today there is a Zhang Ting who drowns Pingjiang in blood.' Mr. Zhang is truly the worthy offspring of Zhang Xianzhong, and your name, too, will become notorious for your crimes in ages to come. Please think it over. If there are as many Communists in Pingjiang as you have asserted, it is all because of the way you have conducted the suppression campaign. In the name of clearing up the villages, the "civil corps" under your command have been stealing chickens, slaughtering pigs, dragging away cattle and plundering the wealth of the people everywhere. You have been arresting and killing people and bringing devastation to every home in a way that no bandits have ever done. Is Mr. Zhang not to be accountable for all this? Are you not to be shot?"

The atmosphere in the hall immediately changed. The hundred or so local tyrants and evil landlords, whose faces turned pale, started to murmur, "Mr. Zhang has made indiscreet remarks!"

Zhou Pan could not help but say, "The real tyrants and evil gentry must be struck down, but innocent citizens and good gentry are to be protected."

The banquet came to an unpleasant ending.

At noon the following day, Division Commander Zhou Pan's bodyguard, Chen Yucheng, came to tell

me that the division commander was going to Changsha the next day, and he wanted the Second Company under Li Can to escort him to Jinjing midway between Pingjiang and Changsha. The company was to return to its garrison the next day.

That was the order from Zhou Pan, the bodyguard said, adding that the matter was strictly confidential.

Then he produced a code book from his pocket. He said that it was the code used by Zhou Pan and Deputy Division Commander Li.

"I've made a copy of the code for you," he said. "If there's a top secret, I will translate it in two copies, one for Deputy Commander Li and the other for you. If a message of the highest secrecy is received, I will give it to you first and then to the deputy division commander."

Then he told me how to use the code, showing me the ways to modify the numbers in the army code by additions and subtractions. I handed him 10 dollars. He returned five dollars to me, saying the charge for a military telegram was only half the normal rate. A member of the Save-the-Poor Committee, bodyguard Chen was a quiet good-looking man, who always wanted to learn. People used to call him the "Jade Lady". Following the murder of Yuan Zhi, he was transferred from the First Company to become the bodyguard of the division commander who greatly trusted him because both were from the same district.

The morning of July 18 I took Zhang Rongsheng, Leader of the Orderlies' Platoon, and some orderlies to the Second Battalion in Sicun on horseback. There, Battalion Commander Chen Pengfei had his

troops lined up to greet us. Speaking to the men, I told them what the reactionary administration in Pingjiang County-seat was doing — slaughtering students, workers and peasants who displayed great courage and shouted slogans before they were killed.

“If there are guerrillas carrying out harassment here, you must not shoot back at them. Tell them to go back, and make it clear to them that the troops and guerrillas are not supposed to harass one another. They are not bandits, but self-defence troops of the peasantry. They’re making revolution, and we’ll follow their footsteps sooner or later.”

Many peasants and other civilians stood in groups a few hundred metres away to listen to me. After speaking, I lunched at Chen Pengfei’s battalion headquarters.

While we were having our meal, a relative of Battalion Commander Chen’s came from Changsha to tell us that a CP organization had been tracked down in the provincial capital the day before, and a safe-conduct in the handwriting of Principal Huang Gonglue of the division school was found. It was Division Commander Zhou Pan who made out Huang’s handwriting.

The bad news took away our appetite.

While his relative was having a rest in the adjoining room, Chen Pengfei said to me in an anxious voice, “Huang Gonglue and I were classmates at the Army Officers’ Academy. Please do something to save him.”

“What do you think I can do?” I asked.

“Either set him free or hide him,” he said. The

battalion commander's sympathy for Huang Gonglue did not come from any political understanding, but from his friendship with him. The two had been close to each other, particularly during the time they were classmates at the Army Officers' Academy.

Not daring to disclose to him the plan I had in mind to save Huang Gonglue, I just said, "I'll let you know after I've obtained more details from Changsha at regimental headquarters."

Seeing me off outside the town, he said, "Gonglue and I have been schoolmates and colleagues. We are all very intimate friends and you are even closer to him. You must do what you can to save his life. I'll do whatever you say if Gonglue can be saved."

Touched by these words of his, I grasped his hand and said, "My feelings are exactly the same."

Chen Pengfei later deserted when the White armies of Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi provinces launched a mopping-up campaign against us in early November. In a letter he left behind, Chen pledged that he would never be anti-Communist. He said he was leaving only because he couldn't stand the hardships we were going through at the time.

On our way back to Pingjiang County-seat, Zhang Rongsheng briefed me on our work in the Second Battalion. The two men who had been candidate members for the soldiers' committee when our units were in Sanxianhu, he said, were now members, and each had brought in one more man. The Second Battalion had carried out field exercises twice both within two *li* from the market place. Members of the soldiers' committee wrapped two cartridges of bullets and placed them under the tea shrubs. Zhang

said people all remained in the village, and nobody had fled. He also knew that the speech I had made earlier the same day inspired the men, but some of the officers became suspicious of me.

Deciding on an Uprising

It was dreadfully hot when I returned to Pingjiang County-seat around 4 p.m. I did not go to regimental headquarters, but went straight to the telegraph office, where the man in charge greeted me, "Regimental Commander has been going around to inspect the defences despite the sweltering heat. You're really working for the nation and the people. . . ."

"Any telegram from Changsha?" I asked.

"There's a coded message for you, and another for division headquarters. They're now being checked."

"I'm going to division headquarters, let me take it there."

He handed me two telegrams, and I gave him a receipt for them.

I went back to regimental headquarters where the telegrams were decoded. One was sent to me by Zhou Pan's bodyguard, Chen Yucheng, and it read:

party special committee of nanxian, huarong and anxiang counties tracked down stop responsible member of committee arrested in changsha admitted huang gonglue communist stop zhou pan identified huang's handwriting on self-conduct stop he orders deputy division commander li to arrest three persons promptly:

gonglue, chunyi, guozhong stop no other information end message

The same message was carried in the telegram Zhou Pan sent to Deputy Division Commander Li.

I told Zhang Rongsheng to promptly notify the comrades on the Regimental Party Committee to meet me at 7 p.m. in Huang Chunyi's ward at a county-run hospital on the pretext that we were going there to see Huang, who had had a relapse of T.B.

A moment later, Deng Ping came to report: "A special representative of the Provincial Party Committee, Comrade Teng Daiyuan,* has arrived. He is on a work-inspection tour of Pingjiang and Liuyang counties in eastern Hunan. He is staying in a house adjoining Li Can's."

"What a coincidence!" I exclaimed.

I told Deng Ping and Zhang Rongsheng what I had heard at Chen Pengfei's battalion headquarters and let them read the telegram sent by Zhou Pan's bodyguard. Zhang Rongsheng flew into a rage and began to blame Huang Gonglue, saying, "When we were in Nanxian County, the Special Committee asked me to give them safe-conducts stamped with the regimental headquarters' seal. I refused and criticized them for asking.

"It's useless to blame anyone now," I said. "The problem is what to do."

* Teng Daiyuan (1904-74) served as Minister of Railways and Vice-Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference after China's Liberation. — *Tr.*

"What should we do?" Deng Ping asked.

"There's no alternative but to stage an uprising (which was called an "insurrection" at the time) without hesitation," I said.

Deng Ping and Zhang Rongsheng said that it was lucky we had the information, otherwise all of us would have been arrested.

When I came to Huang Chunyi's ward at the hospital, I found the others there already. Eight persons came to the meeting — Deng Ping, Zhang Rongsheng, Huang Chunyi, Li Can, Li Li, Li Guang, Teng Daiyuan and me. All were glad to welcome Teng Daiyuan, who was introduced by Deng Ping. I told them that the reactionary government in Changsha had arrested a courier of the Special Committee and taken from him a safe-conduct pass written by Huang Gonglue.

"This is an emergency meeting of the Regimental Party Committee," I said. "Comrades, we must discuss whether we should stage an uprising."

Li Can spoke first. He said the time was not ripe, and it was a bit rash to start an uprising. The situation was not very favourable to us. He considered the end of the year a better time. He suggested that Huang Gonglue and the other two be enabled to flee, and I should also flee whenever necessary.

I disagreed. "Better make up our minds now for an uprising," I said. "The slightest hesitation will mean defeat."

"Then I give up all hesitation," Li Can said, "and support staging an uprising at once."

Zhang Rongsheng, expressing confidence, briefed

us on conditions in the First Battalion. He said the soldiers hated both the reactionary county government and the village suppression committee and were enraged by the slaughtering of students and peasants.

Li Li said the situation was similar in the Special Task and Machine-gun companies, but the Special Task Battalion attached to division headquarters remained like a piece of iron.

"This is because we haven't worked among the men," Zhang Rongsheng interrupted. "Soldiers of the Second Battalion are also quiet because we haven't worked among them either."

"We have made a lot of headway in the Third Battalion in recent months," Huang Chunyi said. "The men hate both the Kuomintang and the local reactionaries. Their spirits keep soaring. Because of this, the county government and the village suppression committee dare not shoot people in the daytime, and they haven't the guts to kill people on Zheshuping Square. When their firing squads try to kill people at night, the soldiers go out on patrol, all on their own, to halt them. The men have doubts and complaints about you, the regimental commander, and blame you for not coming forward to intervene and order the First Regiment to kill the bastards."

"Is this true only with the men of your Ninth Company?" I asked.

"No, no. It's the same with the men of the 10th, 11th and 12th companies. We are preparing to recommend three persons to join the CP. One of

them is Li Jukui,* a squad leader in the Ninth Company.”

Zhang Rongsheng then said that news of the killing of peasants and students on Zheshuping Square and the efforts made to stop the butchers by the infuriated men of the Third Battalion had been made known only to the soldiers of the First and Second battalions, the Special Task and Machine-gun companies, but not to the Special Task Battalion attached to division headquarters.

“The underground soldiers’ committees in the First Battalion and in the units attached to regimental headquarters have demanded that soldiers’ committees be reestablished from the bottom up,” I said. “A meeting of soldiers’ committee members is to be called this evening to make preparations for launching a struggle for back pay. The men have only received two dollars each since March. The amount in arrears is now larger than when the troops were in Nanxian County — the men have not received their pay for almost five months. We’ll use the back pay issue as the chief means for staging an uprising. At first we will operate in secret, then we will act openly to win over officers commanding the platoons, companies and battalions or at least make them sympathetic. You can make it known that I, the regimental commander, approve of all this. There is no alternative but to use back pay to carry the struggle into the division headquarters’ Special

* Li Jukui became a general of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army and President of the Central Institute of Logistics after the founding of the People’s Republic. He is now on the Central Advisory Commission of the CPC. — Tr.

Task Battalion (200-odd men), a bulwark of the diehards, and rally the great majority in the regiment to foil any possible attack from the Second or Third regiment."

Those attending the meeting were delighted and confident when they heard that the uprising was to be preceded by a struggle for back pay. They said that success was certain because we could draw on our experience from the earlier struggle over back pay. All backed the uprising and pledged not to falter.

The time set for the uprising was 1 p.m. on July 22 (the 6th day of the 6th moon) when the opposing forces would be taking a siesta.

Assignments:

Comrade Li Li was to mobilize the men in the Machine-gun and Special Task companies and dispatch representatives to call on the men of the Special Task Battalion attached to division headquarters to fight for back pay.

Comrades Li Can and Zhang Rongsheng were responsible for directing the First Battalion and for bringing the Second Battalion into the struggle. They were to organize soldiers' committees and to secure the participation or sympathy of the battalion and company commanders. Zhang Rongsheng was also given the task of organizing the rear office personnel of regimental headquarters and of the Second and Third regiments for participation in the fight for back pay.

Comrade Li Guang was to take a message that evening to Huang Gonglue of the Third Regiment's Third Battalion in Jiayi township to notify him to

stage an uprising at 1 p.m. on July 22. He could stage it after the set time, but never ahead of it. Under the cover of fighting for back pay, he was to dispatch Xi Hongquan and Guo to carry a message to He Guozhong in Yuezhou, informing him of the uprising plan and telling him to bring the division school to Pingjiang at once — saying that this was the order from division headquarters. The message was to reach He Guozhong by the evening of July 19, or by noon the next day at the latest.

Special representative of the Provincial Party Committee, Comrade Teng Daiyuan (one of the leaders of the Pingjiang Uprising), was to take charge of political work, and with the assistance of Deng Ping, to draft posters, slogans, leaflets and announcements. Teng was also responsible for maintaining contact with local Party organizations and for establishing a government.

I myself was assigned the task of wiping out the reactionary "civil corps", the village suppression units, the police and the county administration and breaking open the jails to free the inmates. Besides other preparatory work for the uprising, I also had the task of capturing division headquarters.

Li Can and Lei Zhenhui were responsible for conducting operations against the recruits of the village suppression committee.

Huang Chunyi was to mobilize the men of the Ninth Company (and all the men of his battalion if possible) to take care of the county's garrison and police and to free prisoners, keep division headquarters under surveillance, and arrest the reactionary elements in government agencies.

The Special Task and Machine-gun companies attached to regimental headquarters were assigned to keep an eye on the division headquarters' Special Task Battalion at the time of the uprising.

All preparations for the uprising were scheduled for completion before noon on July 20. Detailed plans were to be worked out and sent to me for adjustments. A briefing on the preparatory work was to be made at noon on July 20.

On the morning of July 20, I sent the following coded telegram to Zhou Pan in the name of Deputy Division Commander Li Huigen:

telegram received stop three persons arrested as instructed stop army school moving to pingjiang stop don't worry end message

The briefing took place at a meeting called by the Regimental Party Committee after lunch on July 20. All preparations were completed as a result of the great amount of work done the day before. To the delight of both officers and men, soldiers' committees were revived in the First Battalion and the Special Task and Machine-gun companies. The fight for back pay had begun. But no report had come from the Second Battalion. Li Guang, who had taken the message to Huang Gonglue, had not yet returned.

The meeting made the following decision:

Officers and men were to be placed on an equal footing after the uprising. All officers, including regimental, battalion and company commanders and platoon leaders, were to be elected by soldiers' committees. A thorough-going democratic method was

to be employed to get rid of the outdated system of control in the old-fashioned army. Reactionary officers were to be deposed to pave the way for remoulding old army units. Soldiers' committees were asked to prepare as soon as possible a list of the candidates to be elected as officers as well as a list of the officers to be dismissed. These lists were to be discussed and endorsed at a Regimental Party Committee meeting scheduled for July 21.

An emergency developed at midnight on July 20: Liu Jiren, Commander of the Third Regiment, rang me up saying that Huang Gonglue was a Communist. In the name of demanding back pay, Huang had killed his nephew, Commander of the 11th Company, at dusk on July 20. Then he borrowed 3,000 dollars from the Chamber of Commerce in Jiayi township and fled into the Nanshan Mountains with his troops.

Third Regiment Commander Liu then tried to blackmail me.

"Huang Gonglue was recommended by you. You're accountable for his betrayal and desertion."

"Yes, that's true," I said. "Let's not talk about responsibility for the time being. What shall we do now? There's a clamour for back pay. That's an enormous problem for us. Five months' pay has piled up. The entire division can be involved. Then it'll really be a headache."

He was shocked to hear what I said, which took the arrogance out of his voice. Speaking in a different tone, he said, "Yes. It's not something that's easy to tackle."

I realized that the back pay issue had hit home.

A moment later, Commander of the Second Regi-

ment, Zhang Chao, phoned to say that the commander of the Third Regiment's Third Battalion had led his men in a rebellion over back pay. I told him the back pay issue was a troublesome one because the men had not received their wages for five months and more. I said the men of my regiment had on occasion stirred up trouble for back pay, but his Second Regiment was better disciplined, and he didn't need to worry.

"It's hard to tell," he said. "Who can rest assured? Who can guarantee that they'll not fight for back pay? Officers of lower ranks may also get involved."

I told him that we two should frequently be in touch by phone. He said OK.

From what the two regimental commanders had said, I concluded — much to my relief — that they didn't have the guts to attack us as long as the back pay outcry was used as a cover for an uprising.

Zhang Rongsheng came in to ask why I wasn't in bed at that late hour and who had just rung up. I told him about my conversations with the two regimental commanders, and asked him to send for Deng Ping at once and to call the other comrades on the Regimental Party Committee for a meeting.

Deng Ping soon came in. Both he and Zhang Rongsheng wondered what in the world Huang Gonglue was doing.

"There's no sense in blaming him now," I said. "We must quickly send letters in the name of the soldiers' committees to the battalion and company commanders and squad leaders of the Second and Third regiments. The letters should say that the soldiers, who are being ordered to suppress Com-

munists and kill peasants in villages, have not received their pay for five months. The men of the First Regiment are demanding their back pay. Unless they get it, they will refuse to set out for the villages but will side with the Communists. The letters should be mimeographed and sent to the Second and Third regiments and their rear offices."

I also ordered Zhang Rongsheng to send the Telecommunication Squad to a locality five *li* west of the county-seat to cut all the telephone wires linking Pingjiang with Changsha and to write on the poles the slogan "Long live the Communist Party!"

On their return to regimental headquarters before dawn, they heard me humming a little ditty of my own composition:

A heavenly message sent over the wires is
worth 1,000 pieces of gold,
It nourishes the roots of revolution;
When the difficulties of tomorrow are over,
The red flag will be hoisted at 2 p.m. on the
22nd.

Deng Ping wanted to know what it all meant. I brought out from my pocket the telegram Zhou Pan has sent to Deputy Division Commander Li and showed it to him."

"How did this come into your hands?" he asked.

"I can't tell you that. It's a manifestation of the might of the people."

I had in mind that handsome young man with a thirst for knowledge, that anonymous hero who would forever remain in my memory!

At dawn, Comrades Teng Daiyuan, Li Can, Li Li

and Huang Chunyi arrived. Deng Ping informed them that Huang Gonglue had staged an uprising and has led his troops into the mountains south of Jiayi township. On hearing this, they had mixed feelings, overjoyed on one hand and anxious on the other.

Then I informed them of the talk I had had with the two regimental commanders, Liu Jiren and Zhang Chao. I said they dreaded the soldiers' demand for back pay. "If we stage an uprising, they will not attack us," I said. "There are no regular troops here, only a civil corps in Yuezhou and Xiangyin. There are seven regiments in Changsha. In Liuyang there are the three regiments of the brigade under Zhang Huizan. And Yan Zhongru's brigade is in Liling. I think we can count on two or three days or even four of five days before any major force can arrive to attack us after the uprising.

"But we must be fully prepared to wipe out the reactionary forces. Huang Gonglue has started a bit too early, but that doesn't matter much. It has created consternation in the ranks of the Second and Third regiments. We'll stick to our original plan and speed up our work on the Second and Third regiments and their rear offices in town for their participation in the fight for back pay. Leaflets calling on all soldiers to demand back pay must be sent without delay."

Following a short discussion, all attending the meeting agreed to stage the uprising according to the original plan.

Such matters as an oath-taking ceremony to be held after the uprising, the name of the army and

the assignment of cadres were also brought under discussion. I suggested calling our forces "The Revolutionary Army of the Workers and Peasants". But Teng Daiyuan preferred "The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army". Teng's proposal was adopted. The designation of our forces was the Fifth Army of the Red Army (because there was a Fourth Army of the Red Army in the Jinggang Mountains). The three battalions of the First Regiment were to be expanded to become the First, Fourth and Seventh regiments.

It was also decided to institute a party representative system in the Fifth Army with officers elected by soldiers' committees. Officers and men were to become equals, receiving the same pay. Following the victory of the uprising, a sum of 12 dollars was to be issued to every soldier and officer (by instalment; four dollars were to be given immediately after the uprising).

The amount of money to be used for POW repatriation could not be fixed until we knew the amount available and the number of prisoners.

We also discussed a list of the officers to be detained at noon the following day and a list of persons to take their place. The lists had been made by the soldiers' committees in the battalions and companies and submitted by Zhang Rongsheng.

A decision was made that I, as the regimental commander, call an officers' meeting at 10 a.m. on July 22 at which some reactionary officers would be detained. At 11:30 a.m. I would go to the First Battalion's drill ground outside the East Gate to deliver a speech announcing the uprising.

We worked hard and earnestly and passed the day — July 21 — in good spirits. As night was falling, Li Can came to report on the First Battalion's preparations. "The regiment under Xu Kexiang betrayed the revolution in Changsha on May 21 last year," he said in excitement. "Now fourteen months later our First Regiment is preparing for an uprising, also on the 21st — of July. This change is coming really fast."

Huang Chunyi, Zhang Rongsheng and Li Li also came to report on the progress of their preparations.

"We've won over the participation of the Special Task Battalion attached to division headquarters in the back-pay struggle," Li Li said. "But I'm not sure if it will join in the uprising. But there's no doubt that it will not side with the reactionary forces to oppose us."

"The reactionary troops under the village suppression committee," Li Can reported, "take their noon break at 12:30 every day and get up at 2:30 p.m. With the exception of sentries, there are no other troops around. I discovered this on a reconnaissance mission today. The time set for the uprising — 1 p.m. — is appropriate."

Huang Chunyi said that Commander Jin of the Third Battalion looked "a bit abnormal". "He was a bit nervous. It seemed he had sensed something in the air," Huang said, adding that the fight-for-back-pay deputies elected by the companies had held their meetings secretly and were in high spirits. He said many demanded the disbanding of the village suppression committee and its recruits, the garrison

units and the police force. All called for freeing the inmates of jails.

"Things seem to be getting on wonderfully well," I said. "It'll be fine if the Third Battalion takes part in the uprising, and the Special Task Battalion attached to division headquarters remains neutral. That would mean victory for us."

Huang Chunyi interjected:

"Most of the men hate Third Battalion Commander Jin and want to have him shot."

"Jin will be detained at the officers' meeting I am going to call at 10 a.m. tomorrow," I said. "Huang Chunyi will be named acting battalion commander. Is there any risk in this? Can the officers accept such a decision?"

The others said there was no risk at all, and the decision would certainly be accepted because the company commanders and platoon leaders of the Third Battalion hated Battalion Commander Jin. They would also accept Huang Chunyi as acting battalion commander. All would back me up, they said, if I declared that Commander Jin had not run open accounts and had collaborated with reactionary despots and gentry.

Huang Chunyi said that his appointment would be accepted — there would be no problem about that. "But I've been with the Ninth Company for only a short time — just a month — and I haven't built up a deep understanding with the men in the battalion. They have faith in me, but it's not firmly based," he said.

"It doesn't matter if their faith in you is not very firm at the moment," I said. "It'd be a fine thing if

the Third Battalion does not fight against the uprising.”

“I’m sure of that,” Huang said.

We held a Regimental Party Committee meeting when Deng Ping and Teng Daiyuan turned up. Both Zhang Rongsheng and Li Can said that Commander Lei Zhenhui of the First Battalion and Commander Li Yuhua of the First Company had been very good and enthusiastic ever since they took part in the fight for back pay in Nanxian, and they were particularly happy to see the soldiers’ committees become open organizations this time. Both officers wanted to join the CP.

“How do they know that there is a CP organization in the First Regiment?” I asked.

“When he saw that the fight for back pay in Nanxian had been conducted in a planned, orderly manner,” Li Can said, “Lei Zhenhui did not believe it was something done spontaneously by the rank-and-file soldiers. He implied that you, the regimental commander, were directing it from behind the scenes. And he believes that the division commander trusts you.”

“Both these officers,” I said, “are very close to Division Commander Zhou Pan. As long as Zhou Pan and I go along the same road, they’ll give me their support. But now Zhou and I are taking two entirely different roads, and I’m not certain whether they support me. They were very poor in their childhood, but both hope to get rich. This is particularly so with Li Yuhua. For the moment, neither of them sees the true nature of Zhou Pan, who made a very ‘left’ speech at the inauguration ceremony

of the division school when he shouted 'Down with new warlords and local tyrants and evil gentry!' They will probably take part in the uprising because they pledged to work in the service of the workers and peasants when the soldiers' committees came into the open this time."

Both Li Can and Zhang Rongsheng were of the opinion that the two officers would take part in the uprising. They argued that in case they turned reactionary, they could not escape from being caught by the men of the First Battalion.

A decision was made at the meeting that the Second Battalion was not to take part in the uprising. It was to be sent back to Pingjiang to be remoulded. Its commander Chen Pengfei was to be won over to go along the same road with us for some time.

Rising in Arms

At 10 a.m. on July 22, I called a meeting of battalion and company commanders and platoon leaders at regimental headquarters, at which I denounced the Kuomintang for the crimes it had committed, and proclaimed the founding of a revolutionary government of workers and peasants and of a Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. I said that the rules of the soldiers' committees adopted in January 1927 were to be implemented and that all must work in the service of workers and peasants.

I announced that Commander Jin of the Third Battalion had worked hand in glove with the despots

and evil gentry of Pingjiang and that he was suspected of embezzling funds as his accounts had not been kept open for soldiers to inspect. He was deprived of his post and taken into custody by the Special Task Company. Commander Huang Chunyi of the Ninth Company was appointed Acting Commander of the Third Battalion.

I also announced that pending an investigation, a dozen or so company commanders and platoon leaders were not to return to their command, for they did not have a clear understanding of the revolution and had refused to implement the rules of the soldiers' committees. They were to be replaced by appropriate persons elected by the soldiers' committees at battalion and company levels.

Then I went to the oath-taking rally held at 11:30 a.m. on the First Battalion's drill ground outside the East Gate. The men lined up there in perfect formation, each with a red ribbon around his neck. They shouted the revolutionary slogan: "Serve the workers and peasants!" They were in high spirits and seemed to have acquired a completely new look.

A responsible member of the soldiers' committees announced the opening of the ceremonies. Deafening applause rent the air when he invited me to address the men. I took the floor and made a speech. The main points:

— The Kuomintang has perpetrated counter-revolutionary crimes. Overthrow the KMT government.

— Serve the workers and peasants, form a government of workers, peasants and soldiers, and establish a Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

— Equality between officers and men, and election of officers by soldiers' committees.

— Support the Communist Party of China; confiscate the land owned by the landlords and give it to the tillers.

— March on the county-seat of Pingjiang at once, wipe out the landlords' recruits and smash the garrison units.

— Disband reactionary agencies and free the people in prison.

— Arrest counter-revolutionaries, who will be tried and punished by a revolutionary court of justice.

I called on the troops to accomplish these revolutionary tasks with resolution and fortitude.

Then I read out the oath, the gist of which was:

We are determined to overthrow imperialism and the Kuomintang government, form a government of workers, peasants and soldiers; confiscate the land of the landlords and give it to the peasants. We will establish a Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, in which officers and men are equal, the officers are elected by soldiers' committees, and the accounts are kept open.

Then I ordered:

Attack without delay the reactionary county government of Pingjiang, the "civil corps", the village suppression units and the village suppression committees. Wipe them out resolutely. We are rising in arms! The day has come to serve the workers and peasants!

The rally ground was engulfed in a cheerful and exciting atmosphere that was beyond description.

Wearing red ribbons around their necks, the men, very anxious for battle and brimming with courage, started to march on the county-seat.

The attack began at 1 p.m., and all reactionary units in town were demolished by a little over 2 p.m. — in less than one and a half hours, much faster than planned. Not a bullet was fired, and no one was wounded or killed.

I went to the county-seat at a little past 3 p.m. and found peace and order reigning everywhere and red banners flying above the streets. The Kuomintang flags were gone, having been pulled down by students and other citizens. Revolutionaries just freed from prisons paraded up and down the streets, shouting slogans and arresting reactionary elements. The streets were full of posters and streamers, everybody was celebrating. Crowds of joyful people moved here and there. The shops were open and doing business as usual.

“There . . . that’s Regimental Commander Peng,” a crowd of students and other people shouted when they saw me entering regimental headquarters.

Pingjiang was transformed within three or four hours. This impressed me with the inexhaustible might of a revolution.

With a roll of red posters in hand, Deng Ping came in, saying, “We’ve won! Victory has come easier than expected.”

“It seems that a revolutionary tide is rolling,” I said.

“It does seem so. The Kuomintang has massacred the people. And now the people are pouring out their wrath on the Kuomintang.”

A rousing welcome was given to the Second Battalion when it marched into Pingjiang from Sicun at 4 p.m. Propaganda teams organized by students just freed from prison made speeches to the men of the battalion in a lively way. This added much to the political awakening of the soldiers. The men of the Second Battalion were joyful, and they were ready to set up their own soldiers' committees. Zhang Rongsheng was in charge of the battalion.

Large quantities of munitions had been captured, including nearly 1,000 rifles and some 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition (mostly taken from the stockpile at division headquarters), according to briefings given at a Regimental Party Committee meeting held between 9 and 10 p.m. More than 2,000 members of the "civil corps" and the police force had been taken prisoner. Some 1,000 people had been set free from prisons. The reactionary county magistrate and members of the village suppression committee totaling 300 to 400 persons, had been arrested. All the officials under the county magistrate were in custody.

But the most reactionary men in Pingjiang, Zhang Ting, chairman of the village suppression committee, had gone to Changsha long before the uprising. Deputy Division Commander Li and Chief of Staff Du had also escaped.

The town had not yet been screened for local tyrants and evil gentry who had fled into Pingjiang from the wrath of the peasantry in the surrounding villages. To prevent their escape, measures were taken to stop people from going in or out of the city's four gates, and troops were posted on the wall sur-

rounding the county-seat. After daybreak, the peasants would come to town to help with the identification and arrest of the tyrants and evil gentry.

"Big victories have been won in all areas," Zhang Rongsheng said. "Our work is proceeding well, but we have very little funds. There's little ready cash in the division's coffer. There are cheques issued by the Customs House of Yuezhou for a total of 100,000 dollars. But they can't be cashed now. A small sum — less than 1,000 dollars — has been found in the Tax Bureau and the Land and Grain bureaus of the county. And at regimental headquarters, there are only a few hundred dollars left; the quartermaster of the regiment has gone with the head of the division's managerial office to Changsha to obtain funds for July and August. The public funds at regimental headquarters amount to 15,000 dollars."

Zhang Rongsheng then went over my accounts. "The total pay you have earned since the time you became a company commander after graduating from the Hunan Army Officers' Academy add up to 4,200 dollars," he said. "Your brother Peng Jinhua, who came to Nanxian last January, said that your family did not have a house to live in and was in debt following the deaths of your father and grandmother. I gave him 400 dollars and told him not to let you know about it. You had told me before that funds earmarked for office use and for other purposes were all public funds, and the unspent portion must be put into the public fund, and not into a personal account. But your pay belongs to you.

Do you want to send part of it home or to keep some for personal use?"

"Put all the money into the public fund," I said. "I'm a man who wants to overthrow tyrants and evil gentry and capitalist bosses. I'll never be one of their kind to be struck down by you people."

All in all, the money at regimental headquarters amounted to less than 28,000 dollars, including the public and sundry funds left over by former Regimental Commander Dai Jijie. And in the county-seat's warehouses there were 1,000,000 *jin* of salt and tens of thousands of *dan* of grain belonging to the local administration and landlords. When sold at reduced prices, all this could bring a total of 30,000 to 40,000 dollars. Some money could also be raised from the big shops, but the number of merchants who had a capital of more than 10,000 dollars was small. There were ten tea and edible oil shops, each with a capital of over 50,000 dollars, but they were owned by shareholders. Zhang Ting, chairman of the much hated village suppression committee, had shares in three shops. Some people said he held one-third of the shares, and others said he held more than two-thirds.

The meeting made these decisions:

Half of the grain and salt was to be sold at low prices, the other half distributed free to the poor. No donations were to be obtained from shops with a capital of less than 10,000 dollars, and shops capitalized at more than 10,000 dollars were to donate 5 to 10 per cent of their assets. Where shops were jointly owned by ordinary merchants and reactionaries, the portion owned by the latter was to be

confiscated and a 30 per cent tax levied on the remainder. Pawnshops were to be confiscated, and the pawned articles returned free to their owners according to their receipts.

"How long can we stay in Pingjiang County-seat?" Zhang Rongsheng asked.

"Five to seven days," I said, "The Second and Third regiments will withdraw to Liuyang and Yuezhou this evening."

On July 23, teams organized by the soldiers' committees did propaganda work among the people inside and outside the county-seat. Their propaganda covered promoting equality between officers and men, abolishing corporal punishment, and serving the workers and peasants who supplied everyone with food and clothing.

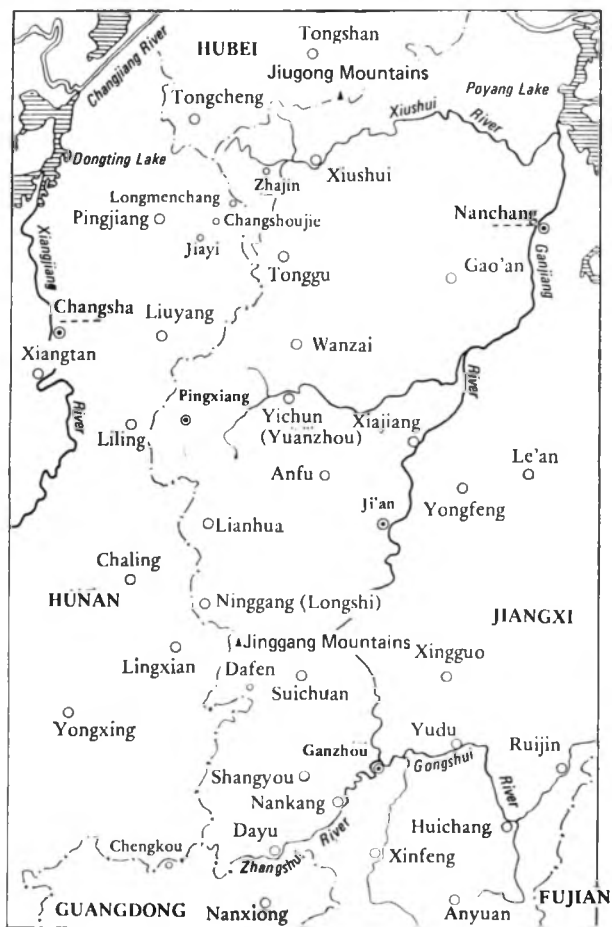
Leading members of the Pingjiang County Party Committee arrived in the county-seat that day, and Comrade Teng Daiyuan directed their preparations for a mass rally to be held on July 24 to celebrate the victory of the uprising and to inaugurate a Soviet government of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers.

On the same day the citizens rounded up another batch of reactionary despotic landlords and set up a temporary revolutionary court to try them. Some notorious counter-revolutionaries were shot.

Captured rifles and ammunition were handed to the County Party Committee, which mobilized the people to move them to the Huangjindong Mountain area, where peasant self-defence forces were being formed. Salt was also transported there in great quantities.

We gave the men of the division school a warm

THE PINGJIANG UPRISING AREAS AND THE
JINGGANG MOUNTAINS



welcome when they arrived in Pingjiang from Yuezhou in the afternoon. They were very happy, and all requested to join the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. We had planned to send off those soldier students who refused to join the Red Army but wanted to return to their own units. But now all of them signed up with the Red Army.

The Third Regiment's Third Battalion commanded by Huang Gonglue reached a locality five *li* north of Pingjiang at 4 p.m. While his troops were resting there, Huang Gonglue came to see me and cheerfully told me about his experiences. Just then Li Guang, who had been sent by the Regimental Party Committee to take a message to the Third Battalion, rushed in to say that the men of the Third Battalion had fled.

"It was He Zhongbin, Commander of the Ninth Company, who incited the men to do so by saying that they had been deceived by Huang Gonglue, a Communist who had done this and that. . . . He led the troops to the south, while I came back here without being noticed," Li Guang said.

"Let's go after them," Huang Gonglue said, gasping with rage. "We can call them back."

"You can't catch up with them," I said. "Nor can you call them back. If one man goes alone, he'll be detained. An hour has passed by now, and if troops are to go after them, it'll take another hour before they can set out. By then the fleeing troops would have made 20 *li*. And what troops are to be sent after them?"

"The Second Battalion in Sicun," Huang Gonglue replied.

I told him that the Second Battalion had returned to Pingjiang the day before. As this battalion was not very reliable, it was informed of the uprising by phone only two hours before it took place.

"The uprising, in the main, has triumphed," I said. "But there's always the possibility of rebellion within our ranks. Battalion Commander Jin along with a dozen or so company commanders were detained just an hour before the uprising. The troops are being mobilized to set up soldiers' committees at all levels, and there'll be an election tomorrow. The Third Battalion first joined the uprising and then mutinied and left us. This lesson is useful for consolidating the First Regiment, and it shows that some officers must be cleared out."

After listening to us for some time, He Guozhong rose to leave, saying, "There're hidden hazards. We mustn't be careless."

I said to Huang Gonglue, "You'd been with the Third Battalion only about a month; you were not familiar with the conditions there, and the men did not trust you. Liu Jiren, Commander of the Third Regiment, had conducted reactionary indoctrination for a long time in his battalions, where revolution became something illegal and counter-revolution was regarded as legal. It is very hard to carry on our work in such a situation in which facts have been turned upside down. A change in the situation cannot be effected in a short time. What I say here is a fact, not something to justify ourselves. So we must think over the matter from every angle to draw a lesson from it. The mutiny of the Third Battalion is not something beyond expectation. So there's

no use grieving over it. It has not brought us any losses, but will add to the consolidation of the First Regiment."

An all-membership meeting of the Regimental Party Committee was held around 8 p.m. on July 23. It was attended by the largest number of participants so far — Teng Daiyuan, Huang Gonglue, Huang Chunyi, He Guozhong, Zhang Rongsheng, Li Can, Li Li, Li Guang, Deng Ping and me, 10 persons in all.

After giving an account of the mutiny of the Third Battalion, Huang Gonglue said he had failed in his mission. I restated my views on the mutiny and stressed the need of mobilizing the men to clear out unreliable officers. Following some discussion on the need to draw a lesson from the mutiny, the meeting decided to strengthen leadership over the soldiers' committees, to continue mobilizing the men to elect their officers, to promote the soldiers' self-government, to bring about equality between officers and men and equal pay for both, to implement the January 1927 rules of the soldiers' committees, and to overthrow despotic landlords and share out their land among the peasants. (The clause on the reduction of rent and interest in the rules was deleted.)

The meeting unanimously adopted my proposal on asking the Hunan Provincial Party Committee to let Teng Daiyuan stay as Party Representative for the Fifth Army of the Red Army.

Li Can, Li Li and Zhang Rongsheng said that Commander Lei Zhenhui of the First Battalion, Commander Li Yuhua of the First Company and Commander Chen Pengfei of the Second Battalion had

put up a good show during the uprising. But some other comrades held the view that these officers were good only when everything was going smoothly, but it was unpredictable how they would behave when the going got rough.

"Will the men elect these officers if an election is conducted tomorrow?" I asked.

"They will," Zhang Rongsheng said.

All at the meeting agreed to my proposal that Huang Gonglue be the Party Representative for the Fourth Regiment. I told them that Battalion Commander Chen Pengfei had been very much concerned over Huang Gonglue's safety when the Special Committee was tracked down in Changsha. But it seemed this was more a matter of personal attachment than politics.

A joint meeting of soldiers' committees was called at regimental headquarters for the morning of July 24. I addressed the meeting, which elected me commander of the Fifth Army of the Red Army and concurrently Commander of the 13th Division. Deng Ping was elected Chief of Staff of the Fifth Army.

A decision was made to set up the First, Fourth and Seventh regiments with Lei Zhenhui, Chen Pengfei, and Huang Chunyi as commanders. He Guozhong was made Deputy Commander of the Seventh Regiment. It was also decided to change the name of Regimental Party Committee to the Party Committee of the Fifth Army, and to institute a Communist Party representative system from army level down to company level, and to establish political departments in units above battalion level. The meeting welcomed Teng Daiyuan as Party Repre-

sentative for the Fifth Army of the Red Army, and appointed Li Can and Huang Gonglue Party Representatives for the First and Fourth regiments. Huang Chunyi was to be concurrently Party Representative for the Seventh Regiment. Our Red Army accepted the leadership of the CP, pledging that it would always work in the interests of workers and peasants.

When the Regimental Party Committee became the Party Committee of the Fifth Army, Party Representative Teng Daiyuan automatically became its Secretary, and the Party representatives at all levels became secretaries of Party committees in line with the practice of the Fifth Army at the time.

A mass rally was convened at 4 p.m. on July 24 by the Pingjiang County Party Committee to celebrate the victory of the uprising and to proclaim the founding of a Soviet government of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers and the establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. A total of 50,000 people, including all officers and men of the Fifth Army, gathered on the rally ground over which red flags waved amidst the throbbing and clanking of drums and cymbals to create an inspiring scene. Teng Daiyuan and I addressed the rally. The rally was exhilarating.

On July 24 we learned from Changsha by telegraph and telephone that the reactionary troops there were poised for an attack on Pingjiang. They were expected to reach the suburbs of Pingjiang on July 27 or 29 at the latest. Hence all our work in the county-seat had to be completed by July 27.

On July 25 the regimental commanders and Party representatives were called to a meeting to discuss

the deployment of troops in the suburbs to meet the enemy attack. It was decided that our forces would take advantage of the favourable terrain around the county-seat to deal the attacking enemy a telling blow — wiping out one or two enemy regiments to raise the prestige of the newly formed Red Army. Then our forces would pull out of Pingjiang and march into Jiangxi Province and southern Hubei Province. With this objective in view, our forces were deployed in this way:

The Special Task and Machine-gun companies were to build camouflaged fortifications west of the county-seat to kill those enemy troops that would be lured there.

The First Regiment would then mount a frontal attack and the Fourth and Seventh regiments a pincer attack from north and south to wipe out a part of the attacking enemy. This would lure the main force of the enemy units towards the county-seat, and our troops would then withdraw to the countryside east of Pingjiang and to Jiangxi Province.

To put the plan into action, the First Regiment was placed at a favourable position west of the county-seat. The Fourth Regiment under Chen Pengfei and Huang Gonglue was deployed 30 *li* south of Pingjiang, from where it would thrust northward to assault the flank and rear of the enemy if he attacked the West Gate. The Seventh Regiment commanded by Huang Chunyi and He Guozhong was positioned 30 *li* north of the county-seat, from where it would move south to assault the enemy if he entered the West Gate.

Everything had been done to meet the oncoming enemy attack — the terrain had been surveyed, telephone lines strung up and points of attack chosen. We were sure that a part of the enemy forces would be wiped out.

The enemy arrived on July 29. Three regiments moved towards Changshoujie (70 *li* east of Pingjiang) to cut off our retreat route. Five other regiments formed in two echelons marched one after the other along the Changsha-Pingjiang Highway to the western suburbs of the county-seat. The first echelon consisting of two regiments attacked the positions of our First Regiment near the West Gate about 10 a.m. Caught in shattering fire from our camouflaged machine-gun positions, some 300 enemy troops were killed or wounded.

Our Seventh Regiment under Huang Chunyi and He Guozhong struck from the north of the county-seat and assaulted the enemy's flank and rear at noon. This created confusion in the enemy ranks, and they were forced to withdraw to a locality south of the highway. The fighting continued till late in the afternoon when the enemy's second echelon pushed close to our positions. But our Fourth Regiment was nowhere to be seen. The battle then reached a stalemate. Our First and Seventh regiments and units attached to army headquarters withdrew from the fighting at dusk. We moved to the countryside north of Pingjiang and gathered at Longmen east of Pingjiang near Xiushui in Jiangxi Province.

It would have been possible to wipe out one or two enemy regiments if the Fourth Regiment had

joined in the battle in coordination with the First and Seventh regiments as planned.

In the evening of the third day, the Fourth Regiment reached Longmen to join our forces. We then learned what had happened: this regiment left its position in the afternoon of July 28 (a day before the enemy's attack on Pingjiang) without order and pushed towards Liuyang County to attack the Third Regiment in a vain attempt to bring back the Third Battalion that had mutinied a few days before. As a result, the Fourth Regiment, which had a total strength of 700, lost more than half of its men.

The Seventh Regiment lost over 100 men, and its biggest loss was the death of Comrade Huang Chunyi who was killed in action. The First Regiment and the Machine-gun and Special Task companies suffered a loss of a few dozen men.

Lacking an understanding of a protracted revolutionary war, the July 25 military meeting erred in failing to discuss strategy. This form of warfare would have to consist of attacks and counter-attacks extended over a long period of time. If we had had this concept in mind at the time, we would have pulled out of Pingjiang before the enemy stormed the county-seat. Then the enemy would have captured an empty town and we would not have suffered such heavy losses. Our forces should have been deployed at Changshoujie and the borders of Xiushui and Tonggu counties in Jiangxi Province where we could have operated in regiments in the countryside to liquidate local despots and distribute land to the peasants and to work among the masses. In this way our troops would have come into contact with

the people to deepen their class education and further their political awakening.

At that time I failed to avoid a battle which we were not sure of winning. I had no understanding of the unity of the three major tasks* and showed my blindness. I had little knowledge of the Marxist-Leninist line and of strategy and tactics. This was the first lesson I learned and also the first mistake I made after joining the Red Army.

A Brief Summary

At the time of the Pingjiang Uprising in July 1928, the revolution in China was confronted with great difficulties. The reactionary armed forces were most powerful in Hunan Province and relatively strong in the three provinces of Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi taken together. Generally speaking, there was political stability in these three provinces. Conditions for an uprising were not ripe; and we were not fully prepared.

But some CP members in my regiment were exposed following the tracking down of the Special Committee of Nanxian, Huarong and Anxiang counties. They were not arrested, however, thanks to reliable information that came to our hands. If no decision had been made to stage the uprising, the exposed comrades would have lost their lives. Nei-

* The three major tasks of the Chinese Red Army were: fighting battles, doing mass work, and raising funds and provisions. — Tr.

ther could those who had not been detected remain long under cover. The weak foundation (eight or nine Party members) we had built in the Independent Fifth Division's First Regiment faced the danger of being destroyed.

The Regimental Party Committee did the right thing when it made the decision to start the uprising, and the measures it took were correct.

At the time of the uprising, there were two reactionary regiments in our division and two units of landlords' troops in Pingjiang County. Although we were outnumbered one to three, we won a complete victory.

One of our comrades acted rashly by staging an uprising ahead of the fixed time, and was not successful. But the situation as a whole was not endangered. Everything else was done according to plan — the uprising, the oath-taking rally, the proclamation of our programme.

Quite a few revolutionary groups had been formed by the rank-and-file soldiers at the time of the uprising, although there were only eight or nine Party members.

The reactionary forces of Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi provinces rushed to Pingjiang and tried to wipe out our forces immediately after the uprising. Their "joint suppression" operations were defeated by our troops after more than 40 days of fighting, during which we used the tactics of circling around. Our officers and men fought in strange territory without a base area, had no link with the local agrarian revolution, and were not familiar with the terrain and the customs and ways of the local people. Yet

they had to tackle the enemy in pitched battles for days on end.

In those difficult days, a small number of men wavered and deserted our forces. As a remedy, we made a decision to regroup our men with local guerilla units at an inauguration meeting of the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area. Our consolidated forces then began to grow rapidly in strength.

We accomplished many important tasks between July 22 when the uprising took place and July 29 when our troops pulled out of Pingjiang County-seat in the evening. We instituted a new system under which the Fifth Army placed itself at the service of workers and peasants after taking thorough-going democratic measures to do away with the outdated system of the counter-revolutionary forces. Without the Fifth Army of the Red Army it would have been impossible to create in a very short time a large Soviet base area on the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi borders. We destroyed the counter-revolutionary machine by demolishing the counter-revolutionary county administration, the village suppression committee, Kuomintang agencies and all the reactionary KMT troops in Pingjiang.

Arms were promptly handed out to the revolutionary masses, and the Provisional Revolutionary Soviet Government of Pingjiang County was inaugurated. A large number of people were freed from jails.

We set up a temporary revolutionary court to try a number of counter-revolutionaries who had massacred countless people. Their executions brought great rejoicing to the local people because it

redressed a great injustice to them and dealt a telling blow to counter-revolution. This was completely justified and fully necessary.

During the current Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, however, a few persons have acted in the name of criticizing the scenario of the film *Tide of Wrath** to allege that "Peng Dehuai soiled both hands with the blood of the people during the Pingjiang Uprising." This is not a matter of insulting me alone, but a vilification of the Pingjiang Uprising led by the Communist Party. Hence they vilify the Communist Party. They are taking a counter-revolutionary stand to reverse the verdict we passed on counter-revolutionaries four decades ago.

The negation of everything — the negation of the Pingjiang Uprising — is not just an error, it is a downright crime.

Some persons have even gone so far as to say that my troops slaughtered peasants during "suppression operations" in the villages. There are historical documents as well as survivors of the Pingjiang Uprising to bear witness to the following facts:

During its 36 days' stay in Pingjiang (from June 16 to July 22), the First Regiment under my command never conducted any suppression operation; its First and Third battalions as well as the units attached to regimental headquarters which garrisoned Pingjiang County-seat never went out of the county-seat; the Second Battalion stationed in Sicun township on the southern outskirts only drilled in a locality a few *li* from town a couple of times.

* A film produced in 1963 on peasant uprisings in the 1920s.

An underground Party worker in Pingjiang County's southern district, who wrote about my troops long ago, is still living. And there are persons in the People's Liberation Army who took part in the Pingjiang Uprising.

An investigation must be conducted to clear up this matter. Creating something out of nothing to reverse with ulterior motives the verdict passed on counter-revolutionaries — this can never be tolerated. If anyone has made such a vilification purely from a factionist standpoint, he too must be censured.

Publication of articles based on such fabrications in the *People's Daily* and the *Liberation Army Daily* damages the reputation of these papers and plays into the hands of careerists and counter-revolutionary double-dealers.

Like all other units in the White army, the First Regiment of the Independent Fifth Division was, until the Pingjiang Uprising, a counter-revolutionary unit — a tool employed to safeguard the landlord and bourgeois classes and their system of exploitation. It was also a tool used to suppress the revolution of workers and peasants. This was the true nature of the First Regiment.

But most of the men in the regiment were peasants in army uniform, people who had suffered oppression and exploitation. They were forced to serve the interests of their oppressors and exploiters. This was the main contradiction within the White armies.

In the White armies, the strictest organizational measures and a discipline based on absolute obedience were employed to bind soldiers hand and

foot. The men were denied the slightest freedom of action. There were 10 rules, the violation of any one of which could make a soldier lose his head. (For example, one rule said that "those who form a clique for selfish purposes will be beheaded.") In the White armies, all words or actions deemed detrimental to the interests of the exploiters and oppressors were regarded as illegal.

With their own personnel, administrative and grading systems, the White armies kept people in line by using such humbug as "the army belongs to the nation" and "communism does not suit China's conditions", and by giving high pay to officers.

Changing the nature of a White army unit was no easy job. While in such a unit, I used my legal status to carry out illegal underground activities among the men for 12 long years. But my accomplishments were minimal.

The experience I gained taught me that one must be good at making use of contradictions of all kinds to legalize the illegal such as the rules of the soldiers' committees which, through our work, were adopted as the objectives of the division school.

Our goal was illegal (revolution), and legality was but a means of achieving that goal. Otherwise we would have been using legality for the sake of legality and would have become the willing tools or accomplices of the reactionary rulers.

A concrete analysis must be made of concrete conditions. Contradictions riddled the old-fashioned armies. We could provide opportunities for ourselves by taking advantage of these contradictions in a flexible manner, but legal and illegal struggles must

be closely coordinated to achieve unity of action. We later used this method among the puppet armies and puppet organizations during the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression to achieve some good results in safeguarding the interests of the people. But there has not been an adequate review of the experience.

VI. Marching into the Jinggang Mountains

(July 1928-July 1929)

The Red Army Smashed a "Joint Suppression" Campaign by White Armies of Three Provinces; the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area Established

The First and Seventh regiments and units attached to army headquarters pulled out of Pingjiang and moved to Longmen in the countryside to the east. All along the way peasants greeted us warmly, bringing gifts, shouting slogans and singing songs. Though a large number of village houses had been burned and destroyed, the peasants volunteered to share their homes with the Red Army troops so that our troops would not have to camp in the rain. (This was the first time I heard peasants call us the "Red Army".) The warmth of the villagers put our troops in high spirits.

The Fourth Regiment lost touch with us after suffering considerable losses in Liuyang. Two or three days later, a guide sent by the local Party organization brought the regiment back to us.

We spent nearly 10 days resting and reorganizing our troops at Longmen. We did the following:

1. Set up a Political Department. Party Representative Teng Daiyuan was appointed director of the department and Zhang Rongsheng deputy director. The department was to carry out political and ideological work in the army and deal with local tyrants. Any confiscations and allotments would have to be approved by it. Political agencies would sign public notices, including announcements of the crimes of those receiving capital punishment.

2. Strengthened the soldiers' committees and developed Party organizations (Party organizations in the army at that time remained secret). We set up a secret Party branch for each company, and recruited Party members mainly from the underground soldiers' committees. By October most of the grass-roots units had established Party branches.

3. Started a system of Party representatives from top to bottom (by appointment).

4. Improved propaganda work, which was conducted by both companies and army offices. Most men carried loudspeakers. They used red earth and later lime to write slogans on walls along the route and in camping areas.

In mid-August about 12 to 15 enemy regiments massed at Pingjiang and Liuyang for an attack against the Red Army (by now the peasants were calling our army the "Red Army" and the Kuomintang army the "White army"). To avoid a reckless battle of attrition with the enemy, our army marched on to Xiushui in Jiangxi Province. We took Xiushui and Zhajin and stayed there 10 days, where we obtained winter clothing and wiped out one

White army battalion and 200 to 300 "civil corps" men.

In early September the White army forces in the three provinces of Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi launched a "joint suppression" campaign against us. Our army withdrew from Xiushui and took Tonggu. We divided up our troops, who began to learn to do mass work. Since our work in Jiangxi Province hadn't suffered much from the line of reckless action, it was rather easy to mobilize and organize the local people. In less than one month, some mass organizations appeared at Xiushui and Tonggu, particularly in the Zhajin area, where the people had organized themselves.

Our army men learnt how to deal with local tyrants, raise funds and unearth hidden wealth. A landlord often buried several hundred or even several thousand silver dollars in one pit. Our work team, led by Zhang Rongsheng, arrested a number of local tyrants in the Zhajin area. Dressed in rags, they did not look like tyrants at all. I freed quite a few of them, only to draw criticism from the work team.

"These tyrants could pay a penalty of more than 1,000 dollars each," Zhang Rongsheng said.

I did not believe him until later I saw the families of these tyrants hauling away sack after sack of silver dollars on their backs.

When we occupied Xiushui County-seat, we carried out the same policy we had during our uprising at Pingjiang. Merchants had to donate a sum of money according to their capital. Those who owned capital of less than 10,000 dollars didn't have to give any money. Those who had more than that

had to donate 5 to 10 per cent. Where reactionary political representatives and ordinary merchants ran joint trades, the reactionary portion was confiscated while the remainder was levied a 30 per cent tax. We seized Kuomintang government salt and distributed it among the people. But the local people criticized us when they couldn't get salt on the market. We confiscated pawnshops and returned everything free according to the receipts. We appropriated two major cloth stores owned by reactionaries. We did not give the goods to civilians because our army needed clothing. Later, civilians could buy no cloth and complained.

We raised less than 30,000 silver dollars (cloth stores excluded) in Xiushui County-seat, but got half as much again from fining local tyrants and ferreting out hidden wealth in the countryside. As time went on, we gradually came to see to whom we should turn for money. In fact, this was a problem arising from failure to tell the target of the socialist revolution from that of the democratic revolution, which are two different stages.*

Our army marched south and entered Tonggu County where the people were really warm, and shopkeepers kept their doors open.

The enemy followed us. Our army moved on southward to Wanzai Bridge, where three regiments of Zhang Huizan's brigade from Hunan Province suddenly attacked us, breaking the Kuomintang armies' convention of not overstepping provincial borders.

*The democratic revolution aims at the abolition of feudal exploitation but not capitalist exploitation as in a socialist revolution. — *Tr.*

We moved into the mountainous area on the borders of four counties — Pingjiang, Liuyang, Xiushui and Tonggu. Then White troops from Jiangxi and Hunan provinces launched a pincer attack against our army. We pushed north into southern Hubei Province to the Tongcheng-Tongshan-Jiugongshan area. With enemy troops of Jiangxi and Hunan pursuing us and those of Hubei trying to block us, we turned south in the area between Jiugongshan and Xiushui-Wuning.

Wherever we went we wiped out “civil corps” and local police, destroyed county and district government offices, killed reactionaries, and distributed confiscated property and goods among civilians. We aimed at annihilating one White battalion at a time while avoiding battles of attrition.

In countering the “joint suppression” campaign by White troops of three provinces, we employed tactics of wheeling around — fighting in a way like turning a mill, which the enemy called spiral warfare. We often took the enemy unawares, appearing on one of his flanks or in his rear and keeping him on the run. By mid-October he was exhausted. We destroyed an entire battalion of Chu Peide’s troops at Zhajin, and the enemy stopped pursuing us. Thus we smashed the “joint suppression” campaign planned by the reactionary authorities of Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi provinces at a meeting in August. Our presence on the borders of the three provinces greatly threatened the major cities of Changsha, Wuhan and Wuchang. Hence the alarm of the enemy.

In 45 days of hard fighting, our army lost some 1,000 men for various reasons. The Red Army shrank

to less than 2,000. Comrade Zhang Rongsheng died a hero's death, as did Comrade Li Li.

Before passing away, Zhang Rongsheng said, "The cause of the Communist Party will certainly triumph!" He had been one of the earliest Communists in the Fifth Army of the Red Army and had done much useful work.

Lei Zhenhui, a regimental commander, and Li Yuhua, a company commander, turned traitor. Li cooked up a story about "our Army Commander being surrounded" and said that he would take the First Company to his rescue, and went over to the enemy. Most of his men, however, saw through him and came back. He succeeded in cheating a dozen men, who went with him.

Lei Zhenhui did not succeed in his plan to run away that evening. Next morning, he took out his pistol and attempted to kill some of our men and go over to the enemy. His guard, Comrade Zhang Zijiu, snatched the pistol from him. A shot rang out but hit the ground. Being tall and strong, Lei wrested the pistol back, only to be shot dead by Comrade Huang Yunqiao, a company commander. Later, Huang became the Commander of the Independent Division of the Red Army in southern Jiangxi Province. He laid down his life in operations against the enemy's Fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign.

Later, peasants at Zhajin turned against us because a "cursed commander" (as nicknamed by them) of the Pingjiang guerrillas had burned their houses and killed their folk. The peasants had been kind and warm to the Red Army before. But now they

hoisted white flags to show they supported the White army, and attacked us with homemade cannon. The Party organization at Pingjiang was seriously influenced by the line of reckless action at that time. If this problem was not solved, it would be useless to talk about establishing base areas, expanding the Red Army and deepening the agrarian revolution.

In mid-October Comrade Teng Daiyuan, as Special Representative of the Hunan Provincial Party Committee, called the First Party Conference of the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area. It was a joint meeting of representatives from the Red Army and five counties — Liuyang, Pingjiang, Xiushui, Tonggu and Wanzai. At the time there was a County Committee in Pingjiang, three comrades making up a Work Committee in Xiushui, and a Work Team of several people in Wanzai. We had never been in touch with any Party organization in Tongcheng and Tongshan counties.

There was a district committee in Liuyang County. Wang Shoudao* was in charge of Liuyang County where there was less wanton burning and killing to estrange the Party from the masses.

Youju on the Pingjiang-Tonggu border was chosen as the site of the meeting. I remember the meeting lasted three or four days. It was a significant meeting for pioneering border base areas and among its accomplishments were:

1. Establishment of a special Party committee and a base area at the borders of the three provinces

* Wang Shoudao is now on the Standing Committee of the Central Advisory Commission of the CPC. — *Tr.*

of Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi. The meeting elected the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area Special Committee, with Comrade Wang Shoudao as Secretary of the Special Committee and Comrade Teng Daiyuan as Party Representative and Secretary of the Party Committee of the Fifth Army of the Red Army.

2. Opposition to the ideas of reckless action, such as wanton burning and killing.

3. Opposition to factionalism and promotion of organizational integration of the Red Army with local guerrilla troops. During the grave struggle against the "joint suppression" campaign by White troops of three provinces, three important cadres — Lei Zhenhui, Chen Pengfei and Li Yuhua — turned traitor or ran away, as did some individual soldiers. Organizational integration would strengthen the troops politically and improve army and civilian relations. Since the main troops of the Red Army came from other places, they were strangers to the local people. The mixing could make them better acquainted with the localities and the people. This in turn could increase the combat effectiveness of local troops and help the Red Army adapt itself to local circumstances, so that it could easily disperse or concentrate its forces.

4. Realization that without a shared political and ideological understanding, there could be no unity, either within the army itself or between the army and civilians. Without such unity, we could not keep on fighting for a long time, let alone win victory.

In this regard, the hard struggle in the previous

two months had been useful to the building of the Red Army. Though now smaller in number, the Red Army had greatly heightened its political consciousness and had drawn knowledge from its experience.

5. An analysis of the experience from the Pingjiang Uprising. The main factors that made the uprising a success and helped us smash the enemy's "joint suppression" campaign were:

- The leadership of the Communist Party;
- The support of the masses in the border areas, especially the peasants in Pingjiang and Liuyang;
- The example of comrades who had already hoisted the revolutionary banner in the Jinggang Mountains; and
- The influence of the Northern Expedition.

In addition, the soldiers' committees in the army played an important part in maintaining good discipline and consolidating the troops. If there had been no such organizations at a time when the Party's organizational strength and political-ideological leadership was so weak, it would have been difficult for us to hold out for three weeks, let alone three months. After the uprising, we were obliged to do things we were not familiar with — mainly fighting without a rear area. It was very difficult to accommodate the sick and wounded and there was practically no way to get medicine, and we had to provide for ourselves. I had never given a thought to these things when I served in the old armies. Now we learned how to hunt down tyrants and ferret out money from hidden pits. And we began to learn to do mass work. These were new problems; we had to start learning from the beginning.

The meeting also made an analysis of the current political situation, coming to the following conclusions:

1. During the Nanchang and Autumn Harvest uprisings,* the people's armed forces lacked experience. Now they had more than one year's experience in the Jinggang Mountains and had established base areas and the Red Army.

2. The Kuomintang had revealed its out-and-out counter-revolutionary character. It had carried out none of the political and economic slogans put forward during the Northern Expedition, nor had it solved even one minor problem.

3. The people had come to know the Kuomintang by their personal experiences. They knew full well that it was a party that wanted to strip them of everything. They were indignant at its policies of "cleaning up" the villages and killing people. They demonstrated these feelings during the Pingjiang Uprising.

Why should we follow the banner flying over the

* The Nanchang Uprising took place on August 1, 1927 in Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi Province, where Zhou Enlai and other CPC leaders led 30,000 troops of the Northern Expeditionary Army in rising against the treacherous KMT government. It marked the beginning of CPC's leadership in revolutionary war and the founding of the people's armed forces.

The Autumn Harvest Uprising, led by Mao Zedong, took place on the Hunan-Jiangxi border in September 1927. The participants, including armed peasants and workers and revolutionary troops, formed the First Division of the First Workers' and Peasants' Revolutionary Army. Mao Zedong led the troops to the Jinggang Mountains where a revolutionary base area was established. — *Tr.*

Jinggang Mountains? I realized that it was a concrete and not abstract banner, a substantial and not imaginary one. Both the Nanchang and Autumn Harvest uprisings had failed, but each had left a small surviving force. These two forces met in the Jinggang Mountains to form the Red Army led by Zhu De and Mao Zedong. They became the banner of all Red Army troops, not only rousing people to action but assuming leadership over all Red Army forces.

I began to pay attention to the Jinggang Mountains in the winter of 1927 and the following spring when the comrades there attacked local tyrants, distributed farmland among peasants and built a base area. I felt that without a base area, it was impossible to fight an enemy equipped with modern facilities, with aircraft, trains, motor vehicles, warships, telegraph, and telephone. And without carrying out a policy of "land to the tiller", it was impossible to establish a base area. Hence my admiration for Mao Runzhi.*

After reorganization our main force had 11 companies in three columns; each company numbering 150 to 180 men. The remainder were reorganized as local guerrillas and Red Guards. Under the instruction of the Provincial Party Committee, Comrades Teng Daiyuan, Deng Ping, He Guozhong, Li Can and Zhang Chunqing and I led five companies to the Jinggang Mountains to get in touch with the Fourth Army of the Red Army. I had been longing to go there to learn the experience, to find out what kind of revolution was taking place there, and how

* Courtesy name of Mao Zedong. — *Tr.*

farmland was distributed, etc. The remaining six companies stayed in various counties of the border area under the command of Comrade Huang Gong-lue.

The Fourth and Fifth Armies of the Red Army Met in the Jinggang Mountains

Local peasants had reaped their autumn harvest and the November weather was fine and warm at the time the Border Area Party Special Committee was set up. Leading five companies, Teng Daiyuan, some other comrades and I were preparing to start for the Jinggang Mountains when information came saying that White army troops from Hunan and Jiangxi provinces were again ready to attack the Border Area in a "joint suppression". To upset the operation plan of the enemy in Jiangxi, our army took Wanzai County-seat by assault. Staying there for a week, we raised more than 10,000 silver dollars and replenished the army's stock of winter clothing.

Now two or three enemy regiments from Jiangxi advanced on Wanzai from Nanchang. When they were a half day's march from the county-seat, we set out for the Jinggang Mountains, going through the area between Pingxiang and Yichun.

Chairman Mao Zedong, who was then Front Committee Secretary of the Fourth Army of the Red Army, sent Comrade He Changgong* with 200 to 300 men to meet us. They arrived at a place 40 *li* to the

* He Changgong is now on the Standing Committee of the Central Advisory Commission of the CPC. — Tr.

north of Lianhua County-seat before we got there, and hid in the mountains flanking the road. We spent more than an hour trying to get in touch with them. They said their task was to make contact with us from the Fifth Army.

Lianhua County-seat had a garrison of one White army regiment. At night, we slipped past it to the west and headed for Longshi township (now Ninggang County-seat). We got there a few days before the anniversary of the Guangzhou Uprising. There we met Fourth Army Commander Zhu De. Next day we went to Ciping and met Party Representative Mao Zedong.

The first thing Mao Zedong said to us was: "So you've taken our road, too. Conditions are ripe for making revolution in China. Even if a socialist revolution cannot triumph, a democratic revolution will."

I realized some comrades in our Fifth Army did not have a clear understanding of the question and mixed up the two revolutions. They thought the elimination of land-rent exploitation and elimination of capitalist exploitation were the same thing. Though I knew that this view was not quite sound, I myself did not have a good enough understanding of the question to have anything to say.

A few days later, the Fourth and Fifth armies got together to hold a high-spirited rally to mark the anniversary of the Guangzhou Uprising. We built a platform, which was not so steady. When the speakers mounted, it collapsed. Some said it was not auspicious.

"Never mind!" Army Commander Zhu De said.

"If we fall, we shall rise and fight again. Let's rebuild it."

Once again we put up the platform. Army Commander Zhu De and Party Representative Mao Zedong mounted it and addressed the rally. I spoke too. I do not remember what we said at that time.

After two or three days, we received a resolution adopted by the Party's Sixth Congress. The Front Committee of the Fourth Army called an enlarged meeting, which was attended by all comrades on the Standing Committee of the Party organization in the Fifth Army. Comrade Mao Zedong, Front Committee Secretary of the Fourth Army, chaired the meeting, which discussed the resolution elaborately, paragraph by paragraph.

I was deeply impressed by the meeting. I realized that the Chinese revolution was at a lull between two revolutionary high tides, not rising continuously. I acquired a better knowledge of the Party's Ten-Point Programme¹ and the nature and tasks of the democratic revolution.

¹ The Ten-Point Programme adopted at the Sixth National Congress of the CPC in July 1928 included (1) overthrow imperialist rule; (2) confiscate foreign capitalist enterprises and banks; (3) unify China and recognize the right of nationalities to self-determination; (4) overthrow the Kuomintang warlord government; (5) establish a government of councils of workers, peasants and soldiers; (6) institute the eight-hour day, increase wages, and establish unemployment relief and social insurance; (7) confiscate the land of all landlords and distribute it among the peasants; (8) improve the living conditions of soldiers, give land and jobs to ex-soldiers; (9) abolish all exorbitant taxes and miscellaneous levies; and (10) unite with the world proletariat, unite with the Soviet Union.

The Front Committee gave a detailed explanation on the need to oppose the line of reckless action. After the Pingjiang Uprising, I was disgusted with wanton burning and killing. After the houses were burned down, where could people live? The Red Army would have no place to put up for the night either. The reactionaries were persons, not houses. When we took Xiushui County, the peasants at Zhajin and Ma'ao began to mobilize themselves for the revolution. After we left, the "cursed commander" of the Pingjiang guerrillas burned all houses in that area.

When the Red Army returned half a month later, the peasants wore white ribbons and attacked us with home-made cannon and gave us no information about the enemy. People taking reckless action called them turncoats and did nothing to win them over but suppressed them. They did not criticize their own mistakes at all. On the contrary, they regarded mistakes as truth. They praised those who carried out the erroneous policy as being resolute in making revolution, and condemned those who opposed the erroneous policy as irresolute and unreliable because of a "warlord background".

The Party's Sixth Congress solved this problem and made us happy. At the meeting, Comrade Mao Zedong said that burning houses would estrange us from the masses. He told a story about Suichuan County to the south of the Jinggang Mountains. At first, the peasants there came close and made friends with us. Later when we took out matches and began to set houses ablaze, they walked away and looked on at a distance. When we wanted to draw near

them again, they went farther away. Then he told us how the Fourth Army approached the masses who had turned their coats. It took a series of measures to win them over. Listening to him, I was greatly impressed. I admired him still more after coming into personal contact with him.

That conference — which took place just as I turned 30 — gave me the best lesson I had learned since I was born.

Attending the conference were Wang Zuo and Yuan Wencai, formerly chieftains of forest outlaws who had joined the Communist Party. Taking their political background into account, the Front Committee deleted one paragraph in relaying the Resolution of the Sixth Congress. That paragraph was about tactics towards forest outlaws: how to win over their masses and isolate their chieftains. Later, Yuan Wencai learned of this and made trouble.

As the conference was proceeding, reactionary forces in Hunan and Jiangxi provinces deployed their troops for an "encirclement and suppression" drive against the Jinggang Mountains. At the same time, the men of the Fourth Army of the Red Army still wore summer clothes and straw sandals. They had no winter clothing, no salt to prepare food, and no money to provide individual soldiers with the three coppers needed for daily meals. Only by leaving the Jinggang Mountains and going into White areas to hunt local tyrants could they overcome their difficulties.

But what to do with the wounded, sick and disabled? The army could not take them along and had to leave some people behind to take care of them.

The Fourth Army was only 5,000 to 6,000 strong. It could not afford to leave troops behind.

The Front Committee of the Fourth Army met many times to discuss these problems. I attended the meetings. At last, we decided that five companies of the Fifth Army, totalling 700 to 800 men, would stay behind in the Jinggang Mountains to protect and take care of the wounded, sick, and women and children. I was also appointed Deputy Commander of the Fourth Army. I knew I was taking on a heavy and risky task.

After the meeting broke up, I went to talk to Teng Daiyuan, who was the Secretary of the Party Committee of the Fifth Army. He called a Party Committee meeting, attended by me, Deng Ping, Li Can, He Guozhong, and possibly Li Guang. We were of two opinions. The first was that we had come only to make contact. Now that we had fulfilled our task, we should go back immediately to the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area to relay the Resolution of the Sixth Congress. We should not stay in the Jinggang Mountains for a longer time at the expense of the development of our border area. Countering that was the argument that we should accept the instruction of the Front Committee to defend the rear area in the Jinggang Mountains, so that the main force of the Fourth Army could safely break through enemy encirclement and expand itself in White areas. If the Fifth Army did not shoulder this task, the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area Government would suffer once the Fourth Army moved away, or would even collapse.

Most participants held the first opinion. Only

THE HUNAN-HUBEI-JIANGXI BORDER REGION



Teng Daiyuan and I were for the second. We talked the other comrades over to our position. We were ready to help the main force to leave safely and expand in an outward direction at the expense of our own interests.

Leaving the Jinggang Mountains, the Fourth Army planned to move to the rear (the outer flanks) of the enemy. It would seek an opportunity to smash the enemy's "encirclement and suppression" by launching a pincer movement in concert with the defenders in the Jinggang Mountains. But when its men were marching from Xiaoxingzhou to Suichuan County, the enemy's Li Wenbin Brigade followed at their heels. If the Fourth Army manoeuvred well, it could destroy or rout the enemy brigade. Nevertheless, it pushed on to Dayu and Nankang, where it was assaulted by the enemy brigade. Then it passed by Anyuan and Xunwu in southern Jiangxi and moved into southwestern Fujian. Thus it lost contact with the Jinggang Mountains completely.

This meant the Fifth Army had to defend the Jinggang Mountains alone, with five companies guarding five paths.

A Breakthrough from the Jinggang Mountains

On the third day after the Red Army's Fourth Army left the Jinggang Mountains, 12 to 15 White regiments from Hunan and Jiangxi provinces encircled and attacked us in these mountains. There were 4 enemy brigades embracing 8 regiments coming from each province for the "encirclement and

suppression" campaign. During the operation, we discovered only 7 Hunan regiments and 5 Jiangxi regiments. Besides the Li Wenbin brigade that was tailing our Fourth Army, the Jiangxi enemy should have 3 brigades comprising 6 regiments. The enemy around had a total strength of between 12 and 14 regiments, or between 24,000 and 28,000 men, each regiment averaging 2,000 men.

Against this enemy force we had only 600 to 800 men. The enemy was 30 to 40 times our strength. He surrounded us ring upon ring and launched attacks for three days and nights. At last, he succeeded in breaking our defences in three positions — Huangyangjie, Bamianshan and Bainihu. Our Li Can Company defending Huangyangjie was cut off, as was our Peng-Li company defending Bamianshan.

He Guozhong and I gathered three companies, a special task platoon and rear-service persons, totaling more than 500 men, at Ciping. We planned to break through enemy encirclement, for any other course of action would mean our total destruction. Our troops had to open a way in front and bring up the rear, protecting more than 1,000 women and children and sick and wounded men left behind by the Red Army. It was a tough job. For a whole day and a whole night, we followed goats' trails and climbed sheer precipices in the lap of the highest peak of the Jinggang Mountains. We slipped through the first ring of enemy encirclement.

It was bitter cold. Snow fell in large flakes and covered the mountain with a white layer one foot deep. I lost my ration bag and ate nothing for two days; I did not want my comrades to know. Hungry

and tired, I took every step with effort. But once rifle shots broke out, my strength returned, I do not know how. At Lancaotian we overcame a small enemy unit blocking our advance and broke through the second ring of enemy encirclement.

On the third day of our breakthrough, when we arrived at Dafen, we were ambushed by the enemy on three sides. We were in danger of being exterminated under enemy cross fire. I concentrated the forces of three companies to pierce the enemy position at one point—the only thing to do in such circumstances. We marched on south, cutting the last ring of enemy encirclement. But the enemy quickly sealed the gap and surrounded our wounded, sick and disabled men trailing behind. We could not rescue them. The enemy had the advantage of numbers.

Our Red Army which had been encircled ring upon ring by an enemy 30 to 40 times our strength, thus walked into an ambush as soon as it broke through. No army, except the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army led by the Communist Party, could have survived such perilous circumstances. Going into the Jinggang Mountains, the enemy was swollen with arrogance. He pursued us, attacked our flanks, blocked us, ambushed us. He thought he would gain a lot. In fact, he gained nothing. His dream was broken by the heroic Red Army.

Nevertheless, just after National Day in 1969, a *People's Daily* correspondent wrote that Peng Dehuai did not want base areas, rejecting Chairman Mao's instruction. He either knows nothing about base areas, or is opposing Mao Zedong Thought by

flaunting the red banner of Mao Zedong Thought. He does not understand what a base area is or how to build one, let alone how to persevere in struggles in a base area. He is a subjectivist wagging his tongue too freely. With a full stomach and warm clothing, he accuses others of opposing Mao Zedong Thought. He should be more careful about talking nonsense. Some day he may trip and fall, and break his teeth!

Only a little more than 500 men made the breakthrough at Dafen. They climbed the mountains at Shangyou and Chongyi and crossed the upper reaches of the Zhangshui River at Nankang. It was the 30th of the 12th moon of the lunar year. Less than three *li* from the river was a large village with several hundred households. Big landlord families there were preparing feasts to celebrate New Year's Eve. When the Red Army arrived, they ran away.

Having made the breakthrough in the Jinggang Mountains, the Red Army men had marched for 20 days, all the time being pursued and waylaid by the enemy. They were hungry and exhausted. They were overjoyed to see the feasts spread on tables in landlords' homes, and quickly fell to eating and drinking. While dining, I said we should leave the village quickly, and stay at least five *li* away from it. But other comrades were reluctant to go; they wanted to leave the next morning.

"This place," I said, "is only 40 *li* from the farthest enemy strongpoint and 30 *li* from the nearest on the Guangdong-Jiangxi Highway. One town at the river crossing has telephones, and people there must have informed the enemy of our presence. Three hours have passed since our force crossed the

river, and probably enemy troops are coming this way. They may arrive here at midnight, surround us, and assault us before dawn. In the past, the enemy dared not act rashly. Now he has broken our defence in the Jinggang Mountains. He is full of reactionary arrogance and drive."

But they said there was no problem and we could leave before dawn. Already worn out, our men took emergency as commonplace. Comrade Teng Daiyuan never interfered with military matters in normal times. This time, however, he was against staying in the village. It is hard to describe how angry I was.

I did not sleep that night, nor did I want to. I made rounds of the companies and saw everybody sleeping soundly; even the sentinels dozed off. I walked about outside the house. About one o'clock at midnight, rifle shots rang out above the sound of firecrackers heralding New Year. I called the army bugler to blow for an emergency muster. As soon as we fell in outside the village, enemy troops arrived. Rifle shots broke out and messed up things a bit. I told our men to move towards Xinfeng.

He Guozhong said to me, "You take the forward troops. I'll cover the rear."

After we had marched about 10 *li*, he came up to me and said that he did not see Li Guang coming along, that Li might have taken away some troops. At daybreak, we lined up our men and counted only 283 soldiers with rifles. No one knew where Li Guang had taken the remaining half. Some comrades said we should wait, or send a messenger to look for them.

"Neither way is good," I said. "We have no alternative but to move away from danger."

After going another 10 *li*, we saw some unit standing in line on a hill ahead. My binoculars showed them to be a "civil corps" in poor shape. We charged, they fled. The enemy troops we had shaken off were also worn out; they did not pursue us. Occupying favourable positions, we took cover and quickly cooked our food. One hour and a half later, we set out for Xiaohe township (at a ferry crossing of the Xinhe River) to the southeast of Xinfeng. We marched east, passed by Zhongshi township, and went on in the direction of Huichang. Then we advanced towards Xingguo County to look for the local Party organization. This general direction was announced for all comrades.

We found out later that Li Guang had led as many men as we had to Nanxiong County in Guangdong Province. Without leadership, they were exterminated in one month. Li Guang was among the missing. They would not have ended up this way if they had been informed of the general direction of our march that day. This was a result of the carelessness of the leaders.

We reached Qiaotou in Yudu County in mid-February where there was a secret local branch of the Communist Party and a small guerrilla unit acquainted with local conditions. They helped us gather intelligence about the enemy and provided us guides so that we could move about freely. And they helped us buy 1,000 rounds of ammunition.

After we had taken a rest of two or three days there, the enemy came again. We moved to Liantang

and Dongshan in Xingguo County, where there was also a local Party branch, which had connections with small units of the Second and Fourth regiments of the Red Army in southern Jiangxi Province. In White areas, the presence or absence of underground Party organizations made a world of difference. There we took a rest for about five days before the Liu Shiya Brigade of the White army came to attack us.

The local Party branch informed us that the enemy brigade had only five battalions, one of which had stayed behind to guard the Yudu County-seat with its "civil corps". Now we had 300 men and 283 rifles. We decided to take action. We made a detour to keep clear of the enemy's main force and attacked Yudu County-seat. We marched 140 *li* in 18 hours, arriving at the foot of the county-seat's wall at midnight.

We scaled the wall and surprised the enemy with a fierce assault. We wiped out one battalion, a "pacification corps" and the local garrison, totalling 600 to 700 men. We captured 300 to 400 rifles and two light machine guns. The county magistrate escaped. We had been chased and intercepted by several enemy brigades for more than one month. Now as soon as we settled in this area, we made a 140-*li* forced march and stormed a county-seat. The enemy was completely taken by surprise. Moral: superiority without preparation is no real superiority; a well prepared and courageous force can defeat a superior force that had made no preparations.

After this battle, the civilians in Yudu called

our Red Army unit the "troops from Heaven". Our men dressed the wounds of the prisoners after the battle, and gave each wounded two silver dollars as pocket money. We explained our policies to them and distributed leaflets. We put all the enemy dead in one place for the Liu Shiyi Brigade to bury when it returned. The 300 prisoners watched us doing all this and were moved. More than half of them joined the Red Army.

After leaving the Jinggang Mountains, we suffered defeat after defeat. Now we had achieved a significant victory. But we had to be careful not to take the enemy lightly. Otherwise we could not maintain the victory. We expected the enemy's main force to return to the rescue of the county-seat some time between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Our troops had to cross the Yudu River by 3 p.m. and go to Xiaomi to put up for the night.

It was a little past two in the afternoon when everything was ready. But nobody knew where Party Representative Teng Daiyuan was, and time was pressing. At last, we found him in the post office. While he was gathering newspapers and documents, he had accidently pulled the trigger of his pistol and shot himself in the chest. We found him lying in the room, seriously wounded.

I took the last boat across the river. It was nearly three when we were all on the other side. The vanguard of the Liu brigade arrived at four o'clock. It was interesting for the two armies to watch each other from across the river. They only fired at us but dared not cross the river in pursuit.

It was nearly dusk when our main force reached

Xiaomi 30 to 40 *li* south of the county-seat. We left only a few men to guard the river bank. Xiaomi nestled at the foot of a mountain beside the bend of a stream. The inhabitants were not at all afraid of the Red Army but smiled at us. When dusk fell, the secretary of the local underground Party branch came and asked where we had come from. We told him.

"Last night," he said, "we heard the sound of raging rifle fire in the county-seat. This morning, someone living outside the county walls passed by and said that the Red Army stormed the county-seat last night. I didn't believe him. I thought it was the White troops fighting each other."

"Can you help us?" I asked.

"Sure!" he answered. "Our Party branch has more than 20 comrades, and we have a peasant association."

"We have more than 20 seriously wounded men," I said, "including Teng Daiyuan, Party Representative of the army."

"We have ways to accommodate them," he said. "The people here are sympathetic. We'll do our best to ensure your safety. And we'll try to buy medicine."

I told him we had some spare rifles. Having captured 300 to 400 rifles the previous night, we had burned the old and worn-out ones.

"There are still one hundred and a few dozen more good rifles to spare," I said. "Please keep them for us."

"We have Party members and reliable sympathizers," he said. "Each of us can keep one rifle. By

the way, could you give us a few rifles to help us organize secret guerrillas?"

"Yes," I said.

"Some 40 *li* away," he said, "we have an underground Party district committee."

"But we are short of ammunition," I said.

"We can manage without it. We have money, and we can buy ammunition in small quantities. How many rifles have you burned up?"

"We burned about 200 rifles and released 500 prisoners in Yudu. If we had known there was an underground Party organization here, we would not have burned them."

"We didn't know you burned rifles. What a pity! I should have sent somebody or gone myself to the county-seat this morning! Old Peng, we have longed for a few rifles but couldn't get any. If we had obtained a few dozen earlier, we would have turned this place into a Soviet area."

He Guozhong came in to say that he had posted guards around and talked with the prisoners. Nearly half of the prisoners wanted to join the Red Army. I briefed him on my discussion with the Party branch secretary.

"That's fine!" he said. "I was just wondering what we should do with the wounded."

Though Comrade Teng Daiyuan was badly wounded, he wanted to move with the troops and refused to stay. "How can you manage," he said, "with only two leaders — you and He Guozhong?"

"Your wound is too bad," I said. "The bullet went through your chest, and we don't know whether it hit your lungs. The wound can't heal if you

move around with the army. It's dangerous. Stay until you recover, then come back to the Fifth Army. Now you should settle down and recuperate." Finally, he was convinced.

Deng Ping suffered from some minor ailments. Seeing there was a Party branch supported by the people, he wanted to stay to work in the area while taking some time to rest and regain his health. I tried to talk him round till daybreak, but he insisted on staying. We had no choice but to let him stay.

We left behind nearly 100 rifles which later helped the local comrades build up the Independent Regiment in southern Jiangxi Province, part of Huang Gonglue's Sixth Army.

Here are my impressions about the period following our breakthrough from the Jinggang Mountains:

For about 30 days, between the breakthrough and our arrival at Qiaotou in Yudu, we had no base area to depend on and no mass support. As a result, the Red Army had great difficulties in its operations and marches. Earlier, when we pulled out of Pingjiang, the Fourth Regiment lost touch with us, but the Party branch and civilians of the base area guided the regiment to Longmen to join us again. This time, troops headed by Li Guang lost contact with us but nobody brought them back to us. I began to see the importance of the base area and the masses. But at that time I had no idea of the strategy of encircling cities from rural areas. When the enemy took the Jinggang Mountains, the counter-revolution reached its climax. After winning a victory at Yudu, the Red Army switched over from

the defensive to the offensive. The importance of base areas impressed me still more. We had to make a believer of the enemy. If you did not strike him, he did not recognize your existence; only after he had suffered from your blows did he acknowledge your existence. This is absolutely true.

To ensure our safety and to rest and reorganize our troops, we decided to leave Xiaomi after day-break. Xiaomi had sympathetic people and a reliable underground Party branch, but it stood at an intersection too close to the county-seat of Yudu. We wanted to move to Niushan on the borders of the three counties of Huichang, Xinfeng and Yudu, about 30 *li* to the southeast of Xiaomi. Niushan lay in the mountains, where it was easy to guard ourselves against the enemy. In addition, our departure would draw the enemy's attention away from Xiaomi, so that White troops would not come to "purge and suppress" the civilians, and our wounded would be safer.

When we arrived in Niushan, the local peasants put up red flags to welcome us and called the Red Army men "Elder Brothers". We stayed there 10 days. The civilians led a hard life. The San Dian Society, a secret feudal society, was popular in Niushan, as it was in all counties in southern Jiangxi Province. They said that 500 years ago, there was a single Hong family. Later, it was divided into the San Dian Society and the Communist Party, because the character "Hong" was made up of two characters — "San" (three) and "Gong" (communist). Therefore, the society and the Communist Party came from the same family. Some members of the

society favoured the Communist Party policy of hunting down local tyrants and distributing farmland among the peasants. Others were against it. This was a reflection of the class contradiction within the society.

During our 10-day stop there, we did some propaganda work. More than 10 poor peasants joined the Red Army, as did 100 prisoners.

We knew from the newspapers and letters Teng Daiyuan had gathered in Yudu that the Hunan-Jiangxi White troops who launched the "joint suppression" campaign against us in the Jinggang Mountains had withdrawn and returned to their garrisons. Discord had deepened between the warlords in Hunan and Guangxi provinces and between Chiang Kai-shek and the rulers of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces. Liu Shiyi's brigade left only one regiment behind to garrison Yudu County-seat; the brigade headquarters and a regiment short of a battalion had returned to Ganzhou City. Therefore, the enemy had no more strength to pursue us.

Summing up the events reported in the newspapers, I made a speech to our comrades. I said war was brewing between the warlords, and a new situation would arise.

At that time, we had a small number of men, but we were united as one. We discussed and reviewed the Yudu battle. We criticized Comrade Teng Daiyuan for going to the post office alone. He almost became one of the missing men, Comrades also criticized me for leading the charge over the county-seat wall. It was risky and reckless, they said. We recalled how Li Guang had lost touch with

us. It was New Year's Eve, so dark a night that you could not see your hand in front of your face. Li Guang's company was marching in the middle of the column, with him at the head. When he came to the highway junction, he must have thought we had taken the road to Guangdong Province and must have gone south. Then because he could not see us ahead, he must have thought he was falling behind. He must have quickened his pace to catch up with us, leading himself farther and farther away from us. They were lost because of the darkness of night.

If we did night marches again, the comrades said, every one must wear a piece of white cloth on his back, so that those marching behind could see and follow closely. The vanguard should carry lime to mark the direction of advance at any road junction, while the rearguard should carry brooms to sweep away the lime, so that the enemy could not follow us. Li Guang's missing company weighed heavily in everyone's mind.

No matter what, the comrades said, everybody should always have two pairs of straw sandals ready. If we had sandals and parched rice (food rations) and no more Li Guang incidents, we need fear nothing, not even the worst situation. They also said that they would get a horse for me, their Army Commander, next time they caught some tyrants. I said we should storm Anyuan County-seat the next morning to get summer clothing. Other comrades said we should carry along lime to write slogans.

In this discussion, soldiers freely gave opinions and suggestions. We enjoyed solid unity in which everybody had a high sense of responsibility for the

revolution. (We did not know the word "cadre" at that time.)

In southern Jiangxi Province, people wore summer clothes in the latter part of February. We attacked and took Anyuan County-seat and wiped out the reactionary armed force of "pacification corps" and police there. Staying there for about 10 days, we opened the prison to free the inmates and made our summer uniforms. We collected all kinds of newspapers and analysed the events in the news. They showed that contradiction was growing between Chiang Kai-shek and the Guangxi provincial regime, and discord was dividing the warlords in Jiangxi Province. We were ready to fight our way back to the Jinggang Mountains and restore the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area.

One day, we found in the magistrate's office a document stating that the Fourth Army of the Red Army had destroyed the Guo Fengming brigade at Tingzhou, killing Guo, the commander.

Things did not go so smoothly the first two or three days after we entered Anyuan County-seat. The local reactionary "pacification corps" pushed 10,000 peasants to besiege us, shelling us day and night with locally-made cannon. Standing on the walls, we shouted at them, trying to talk them round to no avail. He Guozhong led two companies in charging out and killing dozens of the "pacification corps" troops. He rounded up several hundred peasants and brought them inside the walls. We explained to them our position and gave them money and things we had taken from reactionary landlords

and stores. After we did this two or three times, the siege fell apart.

The local peasants were very poor, but brave. When they began to understand us, some 200 to 300 came to join the Red Army. In Anyuan County-seat and nearby Beixiang, the enemy had destroyed several Party organizations, killing quite a number of Communists. Three remaining comrades on the Party County Committee fled to the border between Nanxiang and Xunwu and recruited a dozen men there.

Comrade Du, a member of the County Committee, came to report to us after we had broken the siege. He said the committee members eked out a living by felling timber and making charcoal. We gave him 20 to 30 *liang** of opium we had confiscated from the reactionary county government and 200 silver dollars as reserves for developing Party work. He refused to take the 200 dollars, but accepted the opium.

"We can cut trees and make charcoal for a living," he said. "You keep the money for military spending. We'll sell the opium to buy a mimeograph machine and relieve the families of several martyrs."

Their hard work and plain living moved us. Later, I commended the fine work style of this County Committee in my reports on the Soviet areas along the Hunan-Jiangxi and Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi borders.

Later, after the Red Army smashed the enemy's third "encirclement and suppression" campaign in

* 1 *liang* = 50 grammes. — Tr.

1931, our Third Army Group came back to Huichang, Anyuan and Xunwu counties to open up new Soviet areas. This same Comrade Du still headed the Anyuan County Committee, and we established a Soviet area quickly. During the period of domination by Wang Ming's political line,* Comrade Du was slandered as a member of the Anti-Bolshevik Corps and shot. Such tragedies were countless in that period. In 1942, when we launched the campaign to rectify incorrect styles of work and to examine cadres, Chairman Mao's policy was: Do not arrest people in most cases, kill not a single person, apologize to the comrades who were wronged. Comrades who had once been treated unjustly were moved. A comparison of the two policies shows how great Chairman Mao's line is in adhering to the principle of seeking truth from facts.

The Fourth and Fifth Armies Met in Ruijin

After we learned for sure how the Fourth Army of the Red Army was doing we changed our original plan for returning to the Jinggang Mountains. We passed by Huichang County-seat and took Ruijin County-seat, drawing near to Gutian and Tingzhou. A few days later, the Fourth Army marched from Changting County through Gutian to meet us a second time at Ruijin. Our Fifth Army had grown from 300 men to 700 or 800.

* The erroneous "Left" Wang Ming line dominated the CPC from the Fourth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee in January 1931 to the Zunyi Meeting in January 1935. It caused enormous losses to the Party and the revolution. — *Tr.*

Comrade Mao Zedong showed me a letter from the Party Central Committee dated February. It expressed too much worry about the current situation. On the ground of reducing the targets of enemy attention, the letter demanded that Zhu De and Mao Zedong leave the Red Army and that the Red Army break up and scatter among the villages.

I wrote a letter to the Central Committee, saying that because the situation was tense, the main leaders should not leave the army. With the leadership of the Communist Party and sound policies, I said, the Red Army could hold out. In the early days, there was a Bai Lang¹ who fought hither and thither. Since he was able to hold out for a long time, why shouldn't we? This was the first time I had written a letter directly to the Central Committee. My letter was sent by the Fourth Army Front Committee. The master copy was kept by Chairman Mao.

I reported to the Fourth Army Front Committee how we had withdrawn from the Jinggang Mountains.

¹Bai Lang (1873-1914), a native of Baofeng, Henan Province, organized peasant armed forces in his town in October 1911 to oppose oppression and exploitation by imperialism and feudal landlords. In the following year he raised the slogan of "take from the rich to relieve the poor", and his forces took an active part in the fight against warlord Yuan Sihkai's regime in Beijing. Towards the end of 1913 his troops fought in Anhui, Hubei, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, calling themselves the Citizens' Army to Punish the Traitors. In the summer of 1914 his forces withdrew to Henan Province where they were encircled by enemy troops. He was killed in action in August 1914 when his troops tried to break through enemy encirclement in an area between Baofeng and Linru.

"It was very risky," Party Representative Mao Zedong said. "We should not have made the decision for you to stay and defend the Jinggang Mountains."

We stayed about one week in Ruijin. We left for Yudu two days after the Fourth Army arrived. On our way, we confiscated the grain of a landlord surnamed Zhong and distributed it among the local poor. Some people — either lackeys of the landlords' clan or some of the people who had been misled — tried to obstruct the distribution of grain. Armed conflict flared up. (Landlords in southern Jiangxi Province manipulated strife between the clans.) Without investigating the incident, a responsible member of the Fourth Army Headquarters ordered that two of the people opposing the distribution be shot.

The Red Army was just passing by and did not stay long. It would have been easy for reactionary landlords to take advantage of this incident to stir up armed conflict and obscure class struggle.

Army Commander Zhu, Party Representative Mao and I took our lunch together. At that time, everybody used a towel to wrap up a lump of cooked rice to eat wherever we took a noon rest. We ate the rice cold with only cool water, without any other food. While eating, Chairman Mao learned of the incident and sternly criticized the wanton killing of people. He was so serious that I was very much impressed. I thought his was a good style of work, a correct political approach. That was the second time (the first was in the Jinggang Mountains) he made such a direct impression on me.

When we drew near Yudu County-seat, I pro-

posed leading the Fifth Army in fighting back to the Jinggang Mountains and restoring the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area Government. The Fourth Army Front Committee agreed with me.

Returning to the Jinggang Mountains, Restoring the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area

Crossing the river at Yudu, we again passed through Xiaomi where the local people had openly organized a government and a guerrilla fighting unit. They warmly greeted the Red Army. The wounded soldiers we had left behind had already recovered. Comrade Teng Daiyuan came beaming out to join us again. Now the Fifth Army was nearly 1,000 strong, with everybody in a brand-new grey army uniform and a cap shaped like a lotus leaf. Many looked like elegant students.

We said good-bye to the people of Xiaomi and thanked them for taking care of our wounded. They said the Red Army had helped them organize guerrillas to deal with the "pacification corps". Now they were able to operate openly and no longer paid rent in kind to landlords after autumn harvests.

"We'll divide the farmland between ourselves later," they said.

Armymen and civilians lingered in animated conversations, reluctant to part. Some young men saw us off for 10 *li* and only then unwillingly turned around for home. Teng Daiyuan and the other comrades who had remained there to heal their wounds had done a good job in explaining our policies to

the local people. Their experience showed how much the peasants longed for CP leadership and an armed force. Having these two things, the local people could come out from underground operations into the open to establish their own government.

Comrade Deng Ping also returned to the army, and we held a rally to welcome him back. I made a speech, saying that just when times were extremely difficult, some change would begin to take place. By holding out, we could win victory. It had been extremely difficult when our defence in the Jinggang Mountains was broken by the enemy. But only three months later, a change took place. At first, we retreated with the enemy in hot pursuit. Then we made a forced march and stormed Yudu County-seat. After we won the victory, the enemy began to retreat instead of pursuing and attacking us, and we switched over from retreat to the offensive. Experience had taught us to stay united, to hold out and to stand firm — never to waver, relax or slack off. With the exception of only a few, the overwhelming majority of our comrades had stood firm.

Once again we passed through Niushan where the civilians gave us a warm welcome, tugging at us and asking us to stay. Somewhere north of Xinfeng County-seat, we ran into some 30 to 40 "pacification corps" troops. We wiped them out and captured a number of old rifles which we gave to the Party organization at Xinfeng. Comrade Guo Yiqing, the leader of the masses at Xinfeng, led a guerrilla force of 60 to 70 men, armed with spears and home-made rifles. In a discussion between Comrade Teng Daiyuan and the County Party Committee, it was decid-

ed that Guo should work in the Fifth Army for a period and then return to Xinfeng. Later he became political commissar of a regiment of the Fifth Army. He was killed in action when we pulled out of Changsha city after occupying it for the first time. We deeply regretted the loss.

The return to the Jinggang Mountains was completely different from our withdrawal. No enemy appeared on our way except the few dozens of "pacification corps" troops we wiped out at Xinfeng. We arrived in the Jinggang Mountains in less than 10 days. Our troops spent one night at Ciping, where we met Wang Zuo* whose Special Task Battalion had suffered slight losses. But the civilians in the Jinggang Mountains had suffered terribly at the hands of the enemy. When the White troops from Hunan and Jiangxi occupied the area, especially when they withdrew, they set fire to houses, looted and killed many people. With no medical treatment available, malaria ran rampant. There was also no salt, no cloth, and a lack of other necessities of life.

We allocated 2,000 silver dollars in aid to the people of the Jinggang Mountains where the whole population was not up to 2,000.

The next morning we went to Longshi township to meet some cadres doing various kinds of work in the border area. They gave us an overall picture of the situation. Yongxin was one of the counties where cadres had done a good job. The local organization

* Another chieftain of the forest outlaws in the Jinggang Mountains who had joined the Red Army. — Tr.

remained intact in one district of the county. In other districts, it collapsed or went underground. Lianhua and Ninggang counties fared likewise. Some local organizations maintained sporadic activities; others went underground. In short, the enemy had not destroyed the Border Area entirely. A number of revolutionary people and grass-roots cadres had been jailed in Lingxian and Rucheng counties. But the great majority of cadres at county and district levels, except for a few who had turned traitor, were still around. The greatest hardship was the shortage of daily necessities, salt, medicine and cloth in particular. We had to find a way to overcome this quickly.

The Fifth Army's Second Company, led by Li Can and Zhang Chunqing, was still in Huangyangjie after having defended that area. It had suffered more than 20 casualties, but no other losses. The Peng-Li Company, which guarded Bamianshan, had scaled steep cliffs and detoured around to the enemy's rear when its position was broken through. Both its commander and Party representative were natives of Qiyang and Baoqing counties, and they wanted to go back to their native land to wage guerilla warfare. This was a localistic way of thinking which expressed a lack of confidence in holding out in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area. Risking danger, they left the border area and went to a place east of Hengyang City (now Hengdong County), where they were encircled and destroyed by the enemy. In April or May 1955, I found the man who had been the Company's Political Commissar, Li Keyu, working with the air force of China's Navy. So the company

had not been entirely wiped out. But it had been routed to a greater or lesser extent.

In Yongxin, Lianhua and Suichuan counties, some of the local armed forces had been lost, but the main forces remained.

The three companies led by me and Teng Daiyuan in making the breakthrough had not only preserved their main force. Except for that part taken away by Li Guang, they had grown twice as strong.

We reorganized the Fifth Army into the Fourth and Fifth columns, and assigned He Guozhong Commander of the Fourth Column, and Li Can Commander of the Fifth Column. There was also a Special Task Company. All together, the army was 1,200 to 1,300 strong.

Conflicts between Chiang Kai-shek and the rulers of Guangxi Province grew. Chiang ordered Lu Diping to take his Second Army from Hunan to Jiangxi Province and be the governor of the latter. He Jian attached himself to Chiang, who made him Governor of Hunan Province and used him to attack the Guangxi warlords. Conflicts between Chiang and the Guangxi clique were extended into a conflict between Hunan and Guangxi warlords. There was no doubt that the situation was favourable to the development of the Hunan-Jiangxi and Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Soviet Border Areas.

We should not let this opportunity slip by. The Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area could overcome its difficulties only by expansion. The Army and the local revolutionaries had to hold a joint meeting to reach a common understanding and seek unity of action.

Teng Daiyuan agreed with me to call this joint meeting in the name of the Party Representative and Party Committee of the Fifth Army.

The meeting discussed how to restore work in the border area. It decided that the Fifth Army and Wang Zuo's Special Task Battalion (more than 200 men) should together storm Lingxian and Guidong county-seats to wipe out the "civil corps" and free the imprisoned revolutionaries and to raise funds and collect necessary supplies.

We took the two county-seats and rescued the civilians and comrades from prisons. But we captured only limited supplies. Then we stormed Chengkou in Guangdong, which was a small commercial port (300 to 400 households) shipping goods to south-eastern Hunan. We captured dozens of rifles and 30,000 rounds of ammunition, and raised about 30,000 dollars.

When we heard that there were no regular troops defending Nanxiong County-seat nearby, we took it and spent five days there. In Chengkou and Nanxiong, we bought medicine — especially quinine and atabrine — and salt and cloth. In Nanxiong, we almost matched the amount of money raised in Chengkou and collected nearly the same quantity of supplies, capturing fewer rifles and less ammunition.

The Fifth Army shared the supplies, rifles and ammunition evenly with Wang Zuo's battalion. Wang Zuo was quite satisfied with their preferential share. The remaining things were divided according to a unified plan in the border area after consultation with Wang. The Fifth Army had a

favourable political influence on Wang Zuo's troops in that operation.

The operation took us one month and a half. Expansion was the means by which we rehabilitated and consolidated the Soviet area.

It was early July and blazingly hot when we returned to the border area across the three counties of Lianhua, Yongxin and Ninggang. We spent some time resting and consolidating our troops. The Fifth Army was reorganized into two columns, each comprising four companies. Commanders of the columns were Li Can and He Guozhong, and Party representatives Liu Zongyi and Peng Ao. There was an additional Special Task Company attached to army headquarters.

The Attack on Anfu

A few days after reorganizing the army, the Special Party Committee of the Border Area called a joint conference. Attending were members of the Special Committee, Yongxin County Party Committee and Fifth Army Party Committee, Teng Daiyuan and me. Deng Qianyuan was Secretary of the Special Party Committee and Teng Daiyuan, Secretary of the Fifth Army Party Committee. Deng said the Fifth Army should seize Anfu County-seat according to the policy of extending the border area. He said the county-seat had a weak enemy force of only one battalion.

I was against the idea. I said Ji'an County-seat nearby had an enemy division headquarters and a

brigade, while Yongxin and Lianhua county-seats not far away each had an enemy brigade with two regiments. The enemy of these three neighbouring places would go to the rescue of Anfu if we attacked it. And though Anfu County-seat was small, it had high and solid walls and was hard to storm. It also had a "civil corps", and the information about its garrison including only one battalion might not be true. Our force was small. If we attacked the county-seat, we would have no more strength to deal with enemy reinforcements. Then we would have landed ourselves in a passive position at the expense of our current promising situation. Moreover, there was a river skirting the northern wall of Anfu. It became deep and turbulent when it rained, and could not be forded. Even if we took the county-seat, we could not defend it.

Those who disagreed with me said if we attacked Anfu, the enemy would certainly give up Yongxin and Lianhua county-seats and retreat to Ji'an County-seat.

"The enemy will certainly go to the rescue of Anfu and attack us on three sides," I said. "If we have no considerable force to destroy him, he will not give up Lianhua and Yongxin county-seats."

I argued with all the others at the meeting. The minority had to be subordinate to the majority. Hence a decision to take a very erroneous action. Almost our whole army was destroyed. (Teng Daiyuan is still alive; he can bear witness.)

At that time we should have marched on Sui-chuan and Taihe counties, or Lingxian and Chaling counties. There was no enemy main force in these

two directions. Nearby Ganzhou city had only Liu Shiyi's brigade with five battalions, one battalion having been destroyed by us in Yudu. Conflicts between Chiang Kai-shek and the Guangxi warlords were acute. He Jian's support for Chiang led to the Hunan army's aiding Chiang and attacking Guangxi Province. As a result, there were no enemy forces guarding Chaling and Lingxian county-seats and very few defending Anren, Youxian and Liling county-seats. But our comrades stubbornly refused to march on places where enemy defences were weak.

We began the attack on Anfu in mid-July. The enemy sent one battalion to meet us 30 *li* from the county-seat, occupying a small piece of highland before we came. As soon as we came into contact with it, it fled back to Anfu. We pursued it to the county-seat and found more than one regiment of enemy troops well dug in against us. We knew we had been entrapped. He lured us to attack the county-seat, and was moving troops from Lianhua and Yongxin county-seats to assault us from behind. So we retreated 30 *li* along the way we had come to a place between Yantian and Anfu. As dusk fell we cooked food for supper. We planned to set out again before dawn for the Soviet area to avoid a pincer attack of enemy troops from Lianhua and Yongxin.

Setting out before dawn, I marched with Company Commander Huang Yunqiao in the vanguard. We had covered less than one *li* when rifle shots rang out. Enemy troops from Yongxin, Lianhua and Anfu lying in ambush opened fire on us from three sides. Our courageous Huang Yunqiao Company charged

into the enemy ranks, followed by other companies. We breached the enemy line and fought our way back to our base area in Yongxin. In this way, we broke through an enemy encirclement along a deep and turbulent river.

In this operation, we lost more than 300 men, killed or wounded. Column Commander He Guozhong was killed, while Column Commander Li Can was wounded. Chief-of-Staff Liu Zhizhi laid down his life. Nine of the 11 company commanders were wounded. The enemy surprised us with his rapid movement and circumspect deployment. He could not have done so if he had not known our operation in advance. I suspected there might be traitors in our ranks.

Later, our troops gathered at a place to the west of Yongxin County-seat to celebrate the anniversary of the Pingjiang Uprising of July 22.

That year (1928-1929) we learned many lessons: That was the hardest year.

VII. Back in the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area

(August 1929-June 1930)

Returning to the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area

In the autumn of 1929 I led the Fourth and Fifth columns from the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area back to the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area.

In July the two columns came together to take a rest and carry out reorganization for a whole month on the borders of Yongxin, Ninggang and Lianhua counties in the centre of the Soviet Area.

In August the enemy's Zhang Huizan Division and Tan Daoyuan Division, totalling four brigades, attacked our army. They aligned three brigades in their first line, with one column heading for Yongxin and another for Lianhua, mounting a pincer attack against our rest area. They placed the remaining brigade in a second line as a reserve force.

Our army, about 1,100 strong, slipped through a leak between enemy forces and lay in ambush at Lukousha (about 40 *li* east of Lianhua County-seat), intending to surprise the enemy when he entered Lianhua. In the evening, an enemy rear battalion escorting army supplies and gear came to Lukousha to put up for the night. We waited till the enemy

assembled to set out, and opened fire on them. They ran helter-skelter. Our men charged and destroyed the entire battalion in half an hour. We captured all the supplies and gear of a whole division. But we had no carriers to help us take these things away, because the civilians had gone to hide in the mountains. We did our best to bury supplies and gear for future use and had no time to clean up the battlefield.

In this battle, we employed the tactic of "avoiding the strong enemy points and attacking the weak", and we hit hard at the enemy's vital part — supplies and gear. But if we did not follow up the victory, we still could not repulse the enemy's offensive. We could not pay too much attention to minor gains, but had to take the whole situation into account, avoid the enemy's main force and strike at his weak points, and take him by surprise. This was the only way we could beat back his attack. Therefore, we swiftly marched north, took Yichun and Fenyi and eradicated the landlords' armed forces there. Then we attacked and took Wanzai. We threatened Zhangshu and then Nanchang. The enemy attacking the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area was forced to retreat to Ji'an under cover of night.

In this operation, the enemy was compelled to give up the county-seats of Yongxin and Lianhua. Now the Hunan-Jiangxi Soviet Border Area covered three entire counties including Ninggang.

After this victory, we advanced to Tonggu in September, returning to the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area we had left more than one year before. Now the Fifth Army could easily replenish its

strength by recruiting POW's. In the latter part of September, the Border Area Special Committee and the Fifth Army Party Committee called a joint conference to hear the experience of the two border areas and of the Fourth Army — mainly the experience in doing mass work, building up base areas (including raising funds), and carrying out political work among soldiers. We also exchanged information. Work in the border area had made progress. The six companies of the Fifth Army that had stayed behind remained intact. Local guerrillas had grown a little in strength. Recklessness had not been eradicated, but it was much less than in 1928. Slogans for reckless action, such as "Kill, kill, kill all reactionaries", were no longer heard.

We analyzed the political situation. Contradictions between Chiang Kai-shek and the warlords of Guangxi Province were sharpening. Qian Dajun's army, under Chiang's direct control, had gathered at Hengyang. Wu Shang's Eighth Army of Hunan had mustered at Qiyang. War would break out between Chiang and the Guangxi warlords any moment. There were also conflicts between Lu Diping's Second Army from Jiangxi Province and Zhu Peide's Third Army from Yunnan Province. Circumstances were favourable to the revolution, to the expansion of guerrilla warfare and Soviet areas.

In these fortunate circumstances, the Fifth Army Party Committee thought the army's task was to take action to link the revolutionary activities in three ranges — the Jinggang Mountains, Mufu Mountains and Jiugong Mountains. This would join the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area, Southern Hubei Border

Area and Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area into a long expanse extending north from the Jinggang Mountains to the banks of the Changjiang River. There we could mobilize the masses freely, wipe out landlords' armed forces and "civil corps", distribute land among the peasants, set up Party organizations and governments, and strengthen the base areas in coordination with the Fourth Army Front Committee's plan to take the whole of Jiangxi Province in one year.

To fulfil our task, we reorganized the Fifth Army into five columns, each having five companies. There were also a Special Task Company and a Cadre-training Company. The whole army was 3,100 strong. We defined guerrilla areas for each column. The First Column, commanded by Kong Hechong, would move about in the area covering Pingjiang, Xiushui and Tongcheng. The Second Column, commanded by Li Shixing, would operate in Liuyang, Wanzai and Pingxiang. Its original commander, Huang Gonglue, was promoted Deputy Commander of the Fifth Army. The Third Column, commanded by Wu Gaizhi, would manoeuvre in Tonggu and Yifeng. The Fourth Column, commanded by Guo Bingsheng, would operate in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Soviet Area. The Fifth Column, commanded by Li Can, would carry out operations in the counties of Yangxin, Daye, Tongshan, Tongcheng, Puqi and Xianning in southeastern Hubei Province, as well as in Ruichang and Wuning in Jiangxi Province.

The whole army numbered some 3,000, not up to the strength of the army at the time of the Pingjiang Uprising. But its quality had greatly improved after going through a year's trials and tribulations.

Identifying itself with the masses, the army now played a very different role. In fact, following the example of the Jinggang Mountains meant essentially the integration of our army with the people. The key to such integration lay in arresting local tyrants and distributing land, politically humbling the arrogant landlord class and economically confiscating its property and dividing it among the peasants. In the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area land was shared out on an equal basis — the realization of “land to the tillers”. When the White troops from Hunan and Jiangxi provinces launched their “joint suppression” campaign, one district government in Yongxin County did not collapse as did others because it carried out this land policy. But although everybody acknowledged land reform as a sound policy, it was not enthusiastically taken as a model to be studied and adopted. For example, no serious effort was made to carry out land reform.

We drew up a correct strategic plan. In half a year, we expanded the Soviet areas, linking all three of them together.¹ The main force of the Red Army grew, as did the local armed forces. Our command centre, the Fifth Army headquarters, was located in Tonggu County. In mid-November I wrote a letter to the Party Central Committee, reporting our plan and how we joined forces with the Fourth Army. I also gave an account of how I joined the Party and of the general course of the Pingjiang Uprising. My letter was sent in care of Comrade Wang Shoudao,

¹The three areas were the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Soviet Area, the Hunan-Jiangxi Soviet Area and the Southern Hubei Soviet Area.

Secretary of the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area Special Committee.

Fifth Army headquarters settled down for only a short time in mid-December when information from various places showed that the enemy at Ji'an was making preparations for an attack on the Yongxin Soviet Area. Huang Gonglue, Teng Daiyuan, Deng Ping and I took Wu Gaizhi's Third Column plus the army's Special Task Company and Cadre-training Company (which trained platoon leaders and company commanders and commissars) to gather at a place east of Yongxin County-seat, close to our Fourth Column, after passing through Zhutan, Yifeng and Yantian to the east of Lianhua County-seat. We planned to repulse the enemy in coordination with the Fourth Column.

The enemy at Ji'an was probably the Tan Dao-yuan Division. He thought the Red Army had gone north and underestimated the strength in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Soviet Area. When he had come out of Ji'an County-seat and covered a little more than 10 *li*, our Fourth Column swung into action and destroyed an entire battalion, capturing some materiel. He immediately drew back into the county-seat, and did not come out again. He had probably discovered that our main force was around. Then our force broke up to take separate routes. We eliminated the landlords' armed forces in Suichuan and Taihe counties and mobilized the masses to set up local governments. Our local forces also made considerable headway in Taihe and Wan'an on the banks of the Ganjiang River.

The Southern Jiangxi Party Special Committee

and the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area Party Special Committee asked us to organize a Sixth Army. Huang Gonglue was suggested as commander, and we were asked to provide the other cadres. Zhu Changxie, who was Secretary of the Party Special Committee of the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area, and Wang Huai and Zhou Gaochao, members of the Standing Committee, came to us in person to make the request. The Fifth Army Party Committee complied by giving them Huang Gonglue and other senior cadres, such as Li Jukui, Wang Ruchi and Chen Zhenya. In addition, we let them have the whole Cadre-training Company with more than 100 men armed with rifles. (The Sixth Army was later changed to the Third Army under the First Army Group.) This happened in early and mid December 1929.

We celebrated lunar New Year at Tianhe.

In the spring of 1930 we led the Third and Fourth columns to the Yongxin-Anfu border (30 to 40 *li* from Yongxin County-seat) to carry out reorganization, take some rest, do mass work, and prepare for an assault on Anfu and other county-seats along the Yuanshui River. Conflicts between the warlords Chiang Kai-shek, Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan were becoming obvious. Lu Diping of the Jiangxi provincial army ordered the "pacification corps" to be strong in defending the county-seats.

The Special Committee wanted to call a joint Party meeting of cadres at county level and above. In February or March, Pan Xinyuan, an inspector from the Party Central Committee, came to Fifth Army headquarters and stayed for a week. I told him

that Huang Gonglue had gone to organize a Sixth Army. He said it should be put under the command of the Fifth Army. I said this would depend on the circumstances. When the Sixth Army operated along the eastern banks of the Ganjiang River, it would be more convenient to place it under the command of the Fourth Army Front Committee. When it crossed the river to operate on the western bank, it could be commanded by the Fifth Army Party Committee. The Sixth Army itself could take command of Fifth Army troops operating along the Hunan-Jiangxi border.

My Talks with Pan Xinyuan, Inspector from the Party Central Committee

I talked with Pan Xinyuan many times.

I told him that in the year and more following the Pingjiang Uprising, we had learned many lessons through our intense and arduous struggles. We especially had learned this basic principle about armed struggle: Without a base area, armed struggle cannot last; without armed struggle, a base area cannot be established. This was proved through the establishment of the Hunan-Jiangxi and Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi border areas. In carrying out armed struggle, it was necessary to have a division of labour between the Red Army, which was the main force, and local guerrillas and Red Guards. Without the Red Army as the main force, we could not open up new territory or throw back an offensive by the White army. Without the local armed forces, we could not suppress the reactionary "pacification

corps" and the landlords and rich peasants in rebellion; in that case we would fail to defend the base area. The Red Army was weaker than the White army. We should study how to use the weak force of the Red Army to defeat the strong force of the White army. For example, I told him about the forced march to storm Yudu County-seat and the ambush at Lukousha the previous August. In both cases, we beat a strong enemy with our weak force, surprising him and striking him at a vital point. As a result, we repulsed the enemy's offensive.

This tactic was not known to the old armies. There were always opportunities to strike; the enemy's weak points were always present. But it was difficult to discover these weak points and seize the opportunity. The Fourth Army successfully seized the opportunity to destroy the Guo Fengming Brigade and opened up a new situation — creation of the Western Fujian Base Area.

I also recounted our failure in storming Anfu County-seat the previous June. If the 1,300 to 1,400 strong main force of the Fifth Army had been wiped out that time, I said, it would have been very difficult to consolidate and expand the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area. It was not easy for the main force of the Red Army to win victory in every battle. We should, however, oppose adventurism as in the case of the attack on Anfu. We had joined the Red Army through an uprising among the old-type reactionary state troops. We had received all supplies from the rear. Having crossed over to the Red Army, we found no rear to support us and had to rely on ourselves for all provisions. This was tough. Now we

had learned the ABCs of providing for ourselves by hunting down local tyrants and unearthing hidden wealth. We were replenishing our strength by recruiting peasants and winning over prisoners.

Under the circumstances, I said, it was impossible to establish a so-called consolidated rear, a rear the enemy could not penetrate. We learned a lot from the lessons in defending the Jinggang Mountains. It was not suitable to concentrate the wounded and treat them in a place like the Hongguang Hospital. We should rely on civilians to hide them and treat them in separate places. I described how we had entrusted our wounded, including our Party representative, to civilian families at Xiaomi. That was a valuable experience. We were going to follow this experience and set up no more hospitals like the Hongguang Hospital in the Jinggang Mountains. Of course, that was a good hospital, but we could not protect it.

“Then why should we say ‘consolidated base areas?’” Pan asked.

“‘A consolidated rear,’” I said, “means a place where our troops have fixed hospitals, clothing factories and stores of all kinds of military materiel. ‘A consolidated base area’ means an area which White troops can enter and from which we can drive it out. When they come in again, we can beat them back again, and so on. The civilians in the area always support us: they help the Red Army to hide and protect its men, gather intelligence about the enemy, harass the White troops and refuse to give them information. They can watch the local counter-revolutionaries and even suppress them. Such a base

area deserves to be called 'consolidated'. If there is an area which White troops can occupy for a long time and from which we cannot drive them out, it is a guerrilla area or a guerrilla base area. The Jinggang Mountains can only be counted as the army's rear. We guarded the area for three days before the enemy broke our defence. Even if he could not fight his way into the area in three days, he could in 30 days."

"So it was wrong to defend the Jinggang Mountains?" Pan asked.

"In defending the Jinggang Mountains," I said, "we first acted correctly, then wrongly, and then correctly again. At first, five companies of the Fifth Army defended our established positions, drawing the enemy to attack our fortifications and wearing him down. This helped our Fourth Army operating on the exterior line to move about freely and assault the enemy, and to frustrate enemy encirclement by coordinating with the Fifth Army. That was correct. The situation changed when the Fourth Army was assaulted by the Li Wenbin Brigade. It gave up coordinating with us in the defence of the Jinggang Mountains, and marched through southern Jiangxi Province into western Fujian Province. This was the only way it could steer clear of the enemy and preserve itself. But this left the Fifth Army all alone in defending the Jinggang Mountains. The enemy, 30 to 40 times stronger than ourselves, was bound to take our positions, however firm we stood. Under these circumstances holding out became an error. At that time we did not know how the Fourth Army was

faring. If we had known in time, we would have broken through the enemy encirclement one or two days earlier and we would have been safer. Then our positions at three of the five passages to the mountains were breached by the enemy. The Fifth Army decided to break through to avoid destruction and preserve Red Army troops, so that we could come back some day to restore the border area and the Jingtang Mountains area. That was absolutely necessary and correct. It was not easy to make such a decision at that time. It would have been unimaginable if we had not been prepared.”

And yet after 40 years — just after National Day in 1969 — a *People's Daily* correspondent said I had not wanted base areas and had rejected Chairman Mao's instructions. According to him, I should not have broken through the enemy encirclement, but should have fought the enemy desperately until all of our men had laid down their lives. This *People's Daily* correspondent rejected Mao Zedong Thought, but said his was Mao Zedong Thought. He is an opportunist who has lost all sense of shame.

In another talk with Pan, I said we were not yet good at mass work; we did only limited propaganda work. We had not even learned the first lesson of building the Party, establishing a government and distributing farmland among the peasants in rural areas. If the situation eased a little that year, I said, we could learn to do more mass work, especially land distribution.

Pan also talked about the current political situation. He said the war between Chiang Kai-shek and the Guangxi warlords would end at last, and the

contradictions between Chiang Kai-shek, Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan might not break out into war. He said he would go straight back to Shanghai. I asked him what way he would take. He said he would first visit his native place in Liuyang, then go through southeastern Hubei Province to Shanghai. He did not meet Huang Gonglue, who was already on the eastern bank of the Ganjiang River and was working in Wan'an County.

The Yuan Wencai-Wang Zuo Incident

In early March 1930, three or four days after Pan Xinyuan left, we mustered the Third and Fourth columns on the borders of Yongxin, Ji'an and Anfu counties and started to train them for storming Anfu County-seat. It was midnight when Zhu Changxie, Secretary of the Border Area Party Special Committee and Chen Zhengren,* Secretary-General of the Committee, (there may have been Wang Huai and others present also, but I don't quite remember) came to our army headquarters to report to the Army Party Committee. Teng Daiyuan, Deng Ping and I were present; Huang Gonglue had gone to the Sixth Army. Zhu Changxie and the others said Yuan Wencai and Wang Zuo wanted to turn traitor. They said during a joint meeting of cadres at county level and above in Yongxin County-seat, Yuan and Wang had tried to force the Special Committee to let them

* Chen Zhengren (1907-72) served as Secretary of the Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee and held various cabinet posts after Liberation. — *Tr.*

take over local armed forces of the border area, which would be reorganized under their command. As Wang Zuo spoke, he banged his pistol on the table. Yongxin County-seat was garrisoned by troops under Yuan and Wang. If his demand was rejected, the Special Committee comrades said, Yuan and Wang might arrest all the comrades attending the joint meeting. Danger was imminent. They asked the Fifth Army to take immediate action.

"Last May and June," I said, "Wang Zuo took his Special Task Battalion to fight in coordination with the Fifth Army during the attacks on Lingxian, Guidong, Chengkou and Nanxiong. He was all right then, and not so arbitrary. Things might not be so serious. Why has he changed so quickly?"

Zhu Changxie said Wang was incited by Yuan Wencai after the latter deserted the Fourth Army. In January 1929, when the Fourth Army Front Committee discussed the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress, it did not relay one paragraph which said that the Red Army should win over the rank-and-file of bandit troops and isolate their chieftains. (The Front Committee had deleted the paragraph because Yuan and Wang were to join the discussion.)

But Yuan later got the full document from the Political Department of the Fourth Army and found that paragraph. After his return, he read it to Wang Zuo (who was illiterate), saying, "No matter how loyal we are, they will not trust us."

Close to dusk one day, half a month after we had come back from storming Nanxiong, I said, I went to Wang Zuo alone, intending to persuade him to be on better terms with Yuan Wencai. But he tried by

and large to brush the matter aside. After dusk, Fifth Army headquarters sent a messenger for me. Wang's guards outside shouted, "Halt!" Wang got nervous and drew out his pistol. His men in the room raised their rifles, too. I knew he suspected danger. I remained seated, saying, "There is no enemy here." My messenger came in, and I asked, "Why have you come?" He said the Party representative had sent him to bring me back, fearing that I might meet wolves on the way. So Wang was suspicious indeed.

Things were so sudden and urgent that it was very hard to handle them. The Army Party Committee called an emergency meeting. The Special Committee and I decided to dispatch the Fourth Column's Party Representative Liu Zongyi (or Zhang Chungqing) to take a part of the column to guard a pontoon bridge 30 *li* from Yongxin County-seat. The following morning, we would negotiate with Yuan and Wang to clear things up before making a decision.

Later we heard that as soon as the Fourth Column's troops reached the pontoon bridge, Yuan and Wang discovered them. They rushed out of the county-seat and charged up the bridge. Both were killed; one shot on the bridge, the other drowned under it. More than 20 of their men, veteran bandits in the Jinggang Mountains, broke through and went back into the mountains. The rest remained in the county-seat.

The Special Committee announced the "crimes" of Yuan and Wang, and reorganized their troops as the Independent Regiment of the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area, and put it under its direct command.

We did not know about this beforehand, nor did we interfere with it afterwards.

I know that before the Fourth Army of the Red Army left the Jinggang Mountains, Chairman Mao spent a lot of time talking with Yuan, trying to persuade him to leave with the army. The Chairman told me at that time that Yuan was very sly and always up to something. But he said Yuan had agreed to leave with the army and to work with the Fourth Army's Political Department, which would help reduce trouble in the Jinggang Mountains. The Chairman told me all this as we sat talking on the ground outside his house at Ciping where I had gone to see the Fourth Army off. Clearly, the Chairman had wanted to win over Yuan so that he could make progress under new circumstances.

In 1931, after we smashed the enemy's first "encirclement and suppression" campaign, Xiang Ying* arrived in the Central Soviet Area. The leading agency and troops (20th Army) taking part in the Futian Incident withdrew to Yongxin on the western bank of the river. I discussed with Chairman Mao the ways to win them over, and touched on the Yuan Wencai-Wang Zuo Incident. Chairman Mao said that we should not have let Yuan and Wang

* Comrade Xiang Ying (1898-1941) arrived in the Central Soviet Area in January 1931 to be Acting Secretary of the Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in the area. He served as Secretary of the Southeast Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Deputy Commander of the Communist-led New Fourth Army during the Anti-Japanese War, and was killed in action in January 1941, when Chiang Kai-shek treacherously annihilated 9,000 men of the New Fourth Army in southern Anhui. — *Tr.*

take part in the discussion of the Sixth Party Congress documents. When the Fifth Army's Fourth Column drew near Yongxin County-seat, they became so scared that they could not but put us on the alert, Chairman Mao said. An intellectual, Yuan deserted the Fourth Army and returned to the Jinggang Mountains with ulterior motives. Before his return, Wang Zuo moved with the Fifth Army and behaved fairly well. Wang was not suspicious towards the Fifth Army. He proposed to join us in an attack on Nanxiong — we did not suggest it to him. If he had had doubts, he would not have volunteered and gone with us.

At an enlarged meeting of the Military Commission of the CPC Central Committee held in Beijing after the Lushan Meeting, some persons charged that Peng Dehuai killed Yuan Wencai and Wang Zuo because he wanted to take over their troops. I ask the Investigation Committee to thrash out the rights and wrongs of this case. If I ever took a single rifle from their troops, I am willing to pay for it with my life. Chen Zhengren is still alive, and he can testify. If what the Special Committee comrades reported at that time was not true, then they should be held responsible, and we too should be blamed for being credulous.

If what I have said tallies with the facts, then the Yuan-Wang Incident was similar to what happened at a critical moment in 1930, when the enemy launched its first "encirclement and suppression" campaign and the General Front Committee decided at Qiaotou to disband the 20th Army.

I always supported Chairman Mao's policy of re-

forming forest outlaws patiently — when I arrived in the Jinggang Mountains for the first time and when I returned there a second time to restore the base area. Only by carrying out the Communist Party's class line and specific policies could we gradually heighten the political consciousness of forest troops, help them make ideological progress, and disintegrate and reform them. "Winning over the rank-and-file and isolating the chieftains" was only a dogmatic class line, not a concrete practical class line.

The Border Areas in Full Bloom, the Central Committee's April Reply

In early March, three to five days after we had solved the Yuan-Wang problem, I led the Third and Fourth columns in storming Anfu County-seat, destroying an enemy battalion and a "pacification corps" totalling 600 to 700 men. Now the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area covered six county-seats — Yongxin, Lianhua, Ninggang, Taihe, Suichuan and Anfu — as well as half the area of each of the three counties of Chaling, Lingxian and Wan'an. The border areas were in their heyday then.

The Red Army went on to take Xinyu, Fenyi and Yichun county-seats in March, wiping out the reactionary garrisons of the "pacification corps" and other troops. We stayed in Yuanzhou (Yichun) for 10 days to take a rest and carry out reorganization. In April we captured Wanzai and Tonggu. In the middle of the month we took Dongmenshi and Wenjiashi in Liuyang County, where we destroyed

more than 200 enemy troops. Dongmenshi, located east of Liuyang, was a stronghold of the reactionary "civil corps". About April 20, the First, Second, Third and Fourth columns gathered at Changshoujie in the eastern part of Pingjiang County. A few days later the Fifth Column also arrived after suffering a setback in attacking Ruichang County-seat and travelling along the border between Ruichang and Yangxin. The five columns totalled 5,000 to 6,000 men.

Full-scale war had broken out between the warlords Chiang and Feng and Yan.¹ Lu Diping ordered the "civil corps" to concentrate in county-seats. This was very favourable to our plan to destroy the armed forces of landlords, mobilize the masses and expand the Soviet areas. Now the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Soviet Area and the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Soviet Area were joined into one piece without White troops operating in between. The two border areas had been joined in a military sense. Local work with the people, however, failed to keep up with the situation. Only some propaganda work was done.

By late autumn and early winter 1929, the main force of the Red Army had doubled its strength. The morale of the army men was soaring high. The army had never been so strong since the Pingjiang Upris-

¹This large-scale warlords' war, with Chiang Kai-shek on one side and Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan on the other, was fought during May-October 1930 and raged over vast areas in Henan, Shandong, Anhui and other provinces along the Longhai, Tianjin-Pukou and Beiping-Wuhan railways. Casualties on both sides were estimated at 300,000.

ing. Local Red troops had also grown stronger. When we took Yichun County-seat, we added more than 1,000 men, new recruits that the KMT commander Lu Diping had enlisted from Hunan Province. All of them joined the Red Army to replenish the Third and Fourth columns. That was an unexpected gain.

The representatives sent by the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area Special Committee to attend a meeting in Shanghai returned to the Border Area with a letter from the Central Committee in reply to one I sent in the winter of 1929. We called it the "April reply". Besides praising us, the letter said that our establishing base areas was correct, "but don't establish them in mountains as you do. You should set them up in major cities like Wuhan." This triggered arguments within the Fifth Army and brought on the influence of Li Lisan's political line.* I had only a vague idea about the question then. Someone on the Fifth Army Party Committee began to oppose "Right deviation" and to attack a few comrades born into rich peasant families.

"We take class origin into account," I said, "but we don't take it alone."

"That is a protect-rich-peasants line," one of the comrades argued.

The letter shows that the Li Lisan line did not

* A "Left" opportunist line represented by Comrade Li Lisan (1899-1967). For the main features of this line which existed in the Party for about four months in 1930, and the author's view of it, see next chapter. — *Tr.*

begin on June 11* but sometime before April. The difference was that the letter did not mention the overall revolutionary situation in China; it only contained a call for the seizure of major cities as base areas. Any deviation in political line would make itself felt on organizational problems. That was why people stressed the exclusive importance of class origin. Those who did so were very arrogant. They assailed others as "Right deviationists" without allowing them to have their say.

Crushing the Offensive of the Luo Lin and Guo Rudong Divisions

On April 30, 1930 the whole Fifth Army marched on Pingjiang County-seat, planning to take it on May 1. Defending the county-seat was one regiment of the Wang Dongyuan Brigade under He Jian. We started the attack at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, and by four in the afternoon we had eliminated the garrison; only a few troops escaped.

Although the war between Chiang Kai-shek and the Guangxi warlords had ended, another war between warlords, with Chiang Kai-shek on one side and Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan on the other, was raging over wide areas. Again there was a favourable situation.

We spent two days resting in Pingjiang County-seat in Hunan Province before attacking Xjushui and

* On June 11, 1930, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee led by Comrade Li Lisan adopted the "Left" resolution, "The New Revolutionary Hightide and Winning Victory First in One or More Provinces". — *Tr.*

Wuning county-seats in neighbouring Jiangxi Province. Each county-seat had a garrison of one battalion and some "pacification corps" troops. Wiping out the two garrisons would join the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Soviet Border Area and the Southeastern Hubei Soviet Area.

We destroyed the enemy in Xiushui County-seat, and the garrison of Wuning County-seat fled.

Then we heard that Luo Lin's division of two brigades (comprising four regiments) and another division of five regiments under Guo Rudong from Sichuan Province had taken advantage of our Fifth Column's departure to attack the Yangxin and Daye Soviet areas in southeastern Hubei. We immediately set out with four columns to deal with the Luo and Guo divisions, leaving the First Column to carry on work in Pingjiang.

The peasants warmly greeted our Red Army troops as we marched through. Our base areas in the counties of Liuyang, Pingjiang, Wanzai, Tonggu and Xiushui had been devastated by White troops. Most places had been laid waste by the enemy, who set all houses on fire. The civilians treated the Red Army men as their family members. Some even spared their last half of a *sheng* of rice or dried potatoes to relieve the poorly rationed Red Army soldiers. When we came to Longyan District in Yangxin County, the civilians were so warm to the Red Army men that they even surpassed those of Pingjiang in their hospitality. All Red Army troops passing by were reluctant to leave.

The local people attended our sick and wounded with meticulous care. All along our way, we were

greeted with the sound of people shouting slogans, singing songs, and beating drums and gongs. That year saw a prolonged drought, but everywhere the civilians brought tea and water for our men. We were not short of water when we camped and cooked our food. Old and young, women and children, stood by the roadside, each carrying a large fan. They fanned the sweating army men marching by. Wherever we stopped to put up for the night, the villagers shared their homes with us, cleaned them up with special care and made the beds ready for us. They would rather sleep in the open themselves than see the army men camping outdoors. Our billeting areas resounded with songs and slogan shouting all day long. The civilians also placed sentries around the enemy to prevent information from reaching him and to protect the Red Army. Seeing that our army mess was short of food, they put their own small stores of potatoes, maize or rice into barrels outside our doors and went away.

Inspired by the people, we were determined to take Yangxin County-seat. But although we broke lines of secondary enemy defence, we were unable to take the fortified county-seat after a day-long battle. The civilians mobilized stretcher bearers to bring our wounded back to their villages and attended them as if they were their own family members.

Guo Rudong's division came from Daye to reinforce the besieged enemy. We planned to make a feint of besieging the town while withdrawing our main force to assault the rescue division. I gave one order after another for the withdrawal, but our troops would not budge an inch. They said they would take

the county-seat and destroy Luo Lin's division at any cost, otherwise they would be letting down the local people. After much persuasion, our main force withdrew and moved to the borders of Daye and Yangxin counties, where it routed Guo Rudong's division of five regiments, destroying almost half their force. Exploiting the victory, we took Daye County-seat and went in hot pursuit of the enemy to Echeng County-seat and Huangshigang, threatening Wuchang city.

Under the cover of British, U.S. and Japanese imperialist warships, remnants of the Guo Rudong Division fled across the Changjiang River to the northern bank. We did not have the artillery to deal with the imperialist warships, so we could do nothing but watch them flee across the river.

At Huangshigang, we confiscated imperialist firms and stores. Thousands upon thousands of peasants organized themselves into teams to carry goods and property. That was a great mass movement; people maintained discipline and implemented correct policies. To do such a good job was not easy. I saw the strength of the people. When we occupied nearby Jinniu Town and took over the wealth and property of a big landlord, the local popular leaders declared that all ready money should go to the Red Army for military spending. With shoulder-poles balancing large baskets, the peasants carried huge quantities of silver dollars and coppers to Red Army headquarters without taking any on the way. Other goods and property were divided among the Soviet area governments and the local peasants according to plan.

VIII. Storming Changsha City

(June-September 1930)

The Attack on Wuchang City and the Li Lisan Line

About June 20, 1930 our troops assembled near Liurenba and Sanjiangkou on the borders of Daye and Yangxin counties to rest for a few days. We had sent two Red Army representatives to Shanghai to attend a Conference of Representatives of Soviet Areas called by the Party Central Committee. They returned to Fifth Army headquarters. He Changgong came back first, Teng Daiyuan one day later. The Fifth Army Party Committee called an enlarged meeting for the two men to explain the guideline (the Li Lisan line) of the Central Committee-sponsored conference.

In general, the Central Committee held that the time had come for nationwide revolutionary action. Action committees at central, provincial and border area levels¹ were to be set up to organize insurrec-

¹ To carry out their adventurist plan for organizing armed insurrections in China's key cities and concentrating all Red Army forces to capture these cities, the "Left" opportunist leaders headed by Comrade Li Lisan in the CPC integrated the leading agencies of the Party, Communist Youth League and trade unions at various levels into action committees in June 1930 with the task of preparing for such

tions throughout China. In regard to the international situation, the Central Committee said it expected imperialist armed forces to attack the Soviet Union and that we would have to help defend it with arms. Its appraisal of the civil war between the warlords was that both sides would suffer fatal losses and meet their doom. It assigned the Red Army specific tasks. The Third Army Group was to storm Wuchang city and fight in coordination with the Second and Fourth front armies¹ for the seizure of Hanyang and Hankou cities. The First Army Group was to capture Nanchang and Jiujiang cities. The Fifth Army was to expand itself into a Third Army Group commanding the Fifth, Eighth and 16th armies; it was supposed to grow to 50,000 men by August 1 and become the Third Front Army.

The Central Committee did not discuss specific work among urban workers and other citizens in Chinese cities, rural work in northern China, or specific work among White soldiers across the country.

But at that time the Fifth Army was only 7,000 strong. How could we grow to 50,000 men by August 1? And the call to defend the Soviet Union with arms was not practical because no imperialists were attacking it. A serious economic crisis had spread from the United States to Britain and France, and Japan was busy plotting to annex Northeast China.

insurrections. Li Lisan's "Left" deviationist error was stopped by the Third Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the CPC held in September 1930. But the action committees continued to exist for some time.

¹ Designated the Second Army Group and the First Army at the time.

As to the civil war between the warlords, it didn't look like they would suffer fatal losses and meet their doom. Nor had we seen much work done by the Party among the White troops. Our Red Army men fought every battle with effort, risking their lives, and never saw White troops rebel to join our operations. All this was only my feeling; I did not really understand what was going on.

The assigned task of attacking Wuchang city worried me. Five regiments of the White army garrisoned the port city with strong fortifications. The Changjiang River was teeming with imperialist warships. As the river was at its height, the Southern Lake was brimming over. Only one dike led to the city walls. After the war between Chiang Kai-shek and the Guangxi warlords had ended, Qian Dajun's Army (12 regiments) garrisoned Yuezhou city while the Luo Lin Division guarded Yangxin County-seat, both of them nearby. If our army attacked Wuchang city, they would certainly assault us from behind. Then we would be facing a strongly fortified city with our retreat route cut off, being flanked by the turbulent Changjiang River and the flooding Southern Lake. The situation would be much more dangerous than either the circumstances in January 1929 when we broke through from the Jinggang Mountains or the June attack on Anfu County-seat. Our whole army would be wiped out.

At first I did not agree to expand the Fifth Army into a Third Army Group. I said the army had less than 8,000 men, only up to the strength of one regular division with three regiments. Even if we could grow to 30,000 strong, that would make up only one

army. We should wait till we had 50,000 men and then change to an army group. Why should we make an empty show of strength? In fact, if we did so, we could not increase our combat effectiveness, but only reduce it. We would waste cadres, whom we were short of. Later I made a compromise, proposing we wipe out landlords' armed forces in six counties in southeastern Hubei Province, mobilize the local masses to set up governments, expand the Red Army and take Yuezhou as our rear base — all in preparation for attacking Wuchang city.

Nevertheless, we acted on the instruction of the Central Committee and founded the Third Army Group with the Fifth, Eighth and 16th armies. The Fifth Column was expanded as the Eighth Army and the First Column as the 16th Army, while the Second, Third and Fourth columns became the Fifth Army. The army group headquarters was concurrently headquarters of the Fifth Army. A Front Committee of the Third Army Group was established at the meeting which adopted this compromise plan, and the Party Central Committee made me Secretary of the Front Committee.

At that time I did not know the full content of the Li Lisan line. I only saw it as military adventurism from the concrete example of attacking Wuchang city; our boycott of the line was on that particular question. I did not realize that the line was an entirely erroneous, adventuristic one — politically, militarily and economically.

I still think that if the Central Committee carries out an erroneous line, it is difficult for subordinate Party organizations to see through it at first. For

it is not easy for them to grasp the overall situation. Even if they do, they can only make suggestions to the Central Committee. To avoid heavy loss in special circumstances, they have no alternative but to boycott the line, as on the question of attacking Wuchang. If they oppose the Central Committee right from the beginning, there is the danger of splitting the Party. Today I still have no definite idea on a proper solution of this problem.

Occupying Yuezhou City

When the Liurenba meeting ended, we made arrangements for eradicating landlords' armed forces in six counties in southeastern Hubei Province (Echeng, Puqi, Xianning, Jiayu, Tongcheng and Tongshan) and taking Yuezhou city as our rear base. Yuezhou had a garrison of Qian Dajun's two large divisions (12 regiments), about 40,000 strong, and a unit attached to the Wang Dongyuan Brigade and one of its regiments. How to overcome such a strong force?

We sent a force to take Jinniu and Echeng first, pretending to attack Wuchang city. This deceived the enemy, who moved Qian Dajun's two divisions by steamboat to reinforce Wuchang overnight. By the end of June, most "civil corps" in Tongshan, Tongcheng, Puqi and Xianning counties had been eliminated by us.

Famine plagued southern Hubei Province at the end of June and early July, when Fifth Army headquarters called a Front Committee meeting in Tong-

shan County-seat to discuss the operation to storm Yuezhou. Since Qian Dajun's divisions had been moved to Wuchang, all agreed to attack Yuezhou. We took Linxiang, Chenglingji and then Yuezhou, destroying only a small part of Wang Dongyuan's brigade. Under the cover of imperialist warships, the units attached to his brigade headquarters and the main force of one of his regiments escaped by ship to Junshan on a corner of the Dongting Lake. Another regiment of the Wang Brigade had been destroyed at Pingjiang on May Day. In Yuezhou city we captured large quantities of ammunition, military materiel and food belonging to Qian Dajun's divisions. There were four 75 mm. field artillery pieces and several howitzers, and the Red Army began to have an artillery unit.

After we had taken Yuezhou, British, U.S. and Japanese warships carried out reckless provocations against us as they did at Huangshigang port. They wantonly bombarded the city walls. We mounted our artillery pieces under cover. (Only Wu Ting, a Korean comrade, and I knew how to fire artillery shells then.) When the warships sailed close, we hurled dozens of shells at them. A dozen shells hit home, and they dared not come near the banks. At Huangshigang port we had not been able to shell them because we had no artillery pieces. As our Red Army soldiers watched our shells hit the warships, they shouted thunderously: "Down with imperialism!"

On the third day a Red Army unit under Duan Dechang operating on the Honghu Lake sent two fishing boats scouting around our place. We gave

them a ship-load of salt and ammunition. Thanks are due to Comrade Duan Dechang, who sowed a none-too-good seed like myself. He went to join Karl Marx long ago, I'm still around.

We left Yuezhou five days after taking it. We could not carry the heavy field artillery pieces along, so we blew them up. But we took two howitzers to Pingjiang and other places until the middle of the Long March when we threw them into the Wanshui River along the Sichuan-Guizhou border.

At a Front Committee meeting in Tongshan County-seat, one comrade, Deng Qianyuan, sharply criticized Teng Daiyuan and Yuan Guoping for their decision to confiscate a store. He charged them with acting against the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress and violating the Central Committee line. Those present were quite puzzled. In fact, Deng wanted an excuse to dismiss General Political Commissar Teng Daiyuan and take his place. Deng had written me a letter, urging that the Front Committee Secretary pay more attention to the nature of the current revolution — that is, who should be the targets of our attack and who should have their property confiscated. I was surprised by his letter. The Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress had clearly defined the present stage as one of the democratic revolution. Earlier, when the Liurenba meeting ended, Deng came to talk to me, saying that Teng was not good at this or that, and should no longer hold the post of General Political Commissar.

I told him that Teng was a comrade with an excellent ideological quality, and gave an account of Teng's behaviour at Yudu where he was wounded.

No matter how difficult the times we had faced, I said, he had always been optimistic. He maintained good ties with the rank-and-file. It would be incorrect to remove him from his post of General Political Commissar. Then I said that I had been in the Party for only a short time and had not studied Marxism. So Deng Qianyuan could take my post as Front Committee Secretary while I would continue to take care of military operations. But he declined.

At the Front Committee meeting, I had to speak the truth. I said Teng and Yuan were correct in confiscating the store, which was owned by a general commander of anti-Communist troops in six counties in southern Hubei Province. That was political confiscation which did no harm to the economic policy of the democratic revolution. After confiscation was announced, the Tongshan County Soviet took over the store. That was correct too, as Deng should have known. Then I related how he had wanted to be the General Political Commissar and I had disagreed; I asked him to take over as Front Committee Secretary, but he declined. Listening to me, more than half of those present criticized him. He admitted his error, saying it was a problem of petty-bourgeois ideology. Seeing him make a self-criticism, the comrades dropped the matter. This was in late June or early July.

The First Attack on Changsha City

About July 15 we returned to Pingjiang to reorganize, replenish and rest our troops for a short

period. The Fifth Column was reorganized as two divisions (four regiments) designated as the Eighth Army. Army Commander was Li Can and Political Commissar, He Changgong. Later Li Can suffered from infection of his old wounds and left in disguise for Shanghai for treatment. On his way, he was discovered and killed by the enemy. He Changgong took his place as Army Commander; Deng Qianyuan became Political Commissar. The Fifth Army also had two divisions comprising four regiments. I was concurrently Army Commander and Teng Daiyuan, Political Commissar. The First Column expanded as the 16th Army, with a certain Kong as Army Commander and a certain Yu as Political Commissar.¹ After Kong turned traitor, Xu Yangang took over as Army Commander. Then Xu was killed in action, and Xiao Ke* replaced him as Commander; Wang Zhen** was Political Commissar.

As we were preparing to celebrate the second anniversary of the Pingjiang Uprising on July 22, He Jian, No. 1 counter-revolutionary in Hunan Province who had murdered hundreds of thousands of revolutionary people, ordered three brigades to attack Pingjiang, with Liu Jianxu as commander. On July 22 the enemy vanguard echelon reached Wengjiang township 30 li from Pingjiang County-seat. Its second echelon arrived at Jinjing and its third echelon, at Chunhuashan, each maintaining a distance of 30 to

¹The names are Kong Hechong and Yu Zhaolong.

* Now member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Central Advisory Commission. — *Tr.*

** Now member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. — *Tr.*

40 *li* from the other in a single-line battle array. Detecting the weak point of the enemy deployment, our main force set out before dawn on the 23rd and lay in ambush five *li* from Wengjiang township. When the enemy vanguard echelon marched on Pingjiang, we assaulted it on either flank and destroyed most of it. A small part of the enemy escaped. Then we hurried to Jinjing and routed the enemy's second echelon, wiping out more than half of it. Next day, on the 24th, we went on to Chunhuashan and struck at the enemy's third echelon, destroying part of it. We followed the retreating enemy in hot pursuit, forced the Langli River on the 25th, and marched on Changsha city, breaking line after line of enemy defence from noontime to midnight. Finally we exchanged fire with the enemy entrenched in positions east of Changsha. Before dawn we broke through the positions defended by five enemy regiments, and took the whole city at dawn.

The jackal He Jian escaped across the Xiangjiang River alone. That we weren't able to capture him is still something to be regretted.

In this campaign we fought four battles in three days, covering a distance of 140 to 150 *li*, in which we lay an ambush for the enemy, attacked and then stormed fortifications. Our force of 8,000 men defeated an enemy 30,000 strong. This is rare in military history. A common characteristic of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and later the People's Liberation Army is courage and staunchness displayed under fire.

The next morning we decided to leave the Eighth

Army to guard Changsha under the command of Army Commander He Changgong, Political Commissar Deng Qianyuan, General Political Commissar Teng Daiyuan and General Political Department Director Yuan Guoping. I took the Fifth Army with two divisions (I was concurrently Army Commander) to pursue the enemy in the direction of Yijiawan. Remnant enemy troops retreated across the Xiangjiang River to the western bank. At the foot of the Zhaoshan Mountain, I found Luo the Sixty, the old boatman who once saved my life. Now approaching 70, he had a white beard. I gave him some property seized from local tyrants. He did not know my name, but I acknowledged him as the man who'd saved my life. I was 32; many years had gone by since the day he rowed me across the river free of charge.

Yijiawan was 40 *li* from Changsha city. We had a telephone line, but were not able to get through. On the third day, comrades in Changsha went outside the city and succeeded in calling me. They said the reactionaries were at large in the city sniping at people, burning houses and cutting telephone wires. They wanted to withdraw from the city. I said no. I asked them to make an immediate check on all households and arrest counter-revolutionaries. Later they indeed were able to ferret out a large number of reactionary officers and special agents of He Jian's army.

I hurried back to the city with the Fourth Division. Our Garrison Headquarters put up notices announcing capital punishment for counter-revolutionaries. After fewer than 100 persons were shot, peace and

order reigned in the city. The poor citizens gave us warm support. This experience demonstrated that we could not seize political power without an armed force, nor could we refrain from suppressing counter-revolutionaries.

At dawn August 6 our forces pulled out of Changsha after occupying it for 11 days. We did a lot of things in those days. At noon on July 28 we called a Front Committee meeting which assigned Deng Ping Garrison Commander of the city, and put up notices accordingly. We published the provincial *Soviet Daily*. On August 1 we called a mass rally of more than 100,000 people to establish an Interim Provincial Soviet Government and an Interim Trade Union Council. We widely publicized the Ten-point Programme of the Sixth Party Congress. We mobilized poor urban citizens and suburban peasants and POWs to join the Red Army, which as a result grew by 7,000 to 8,000 men. We raised funds totaling 400,000 silver dollars, overcoming the shortage of clothing and medicine. We captured large quantities of rifles, artillery pieces, ammunition and army radio sets to equip the main force and local forces of the Red Army. We confiscated the property of imperialists and local despotic gentry and divided it among poor civilians. We executed a number of counter-revolutionaries and freed several thousand political prisoners.

All this was a great success at that time, a fact which cannot be denied. This success, however, could neither cover up the errors of the Li Lisan line, nor rescue it from failure. It was a local success, which could not make up for the losses the Li Lisan line

brought to other areas across the country, especially to the work in White areas. Nevertheless, the Third Army Group's victory in taking Changsha city meant support for the Li Lisan line.

The withdrawal from Changsha:

On the evening of August 3 He Jian mustered his whole strength of 15 regiments and, under the cover of a dozen small imperialist warships, crossed the Xiangjiang River up and down stream, and attacked Changsha from the north and south.

Our 16th Army stationed about 2,000 men at Langli township to ensure the security of our rear (a pontoon bridge was there). One of our divisions guarded the river bank at the western gate of Changsha. Another division dug in outside the northern gate. The main force of a third division positioned itself outside the eastern gate near Tianxingge, while a small part of it was patrolling a district four or five *li* to the south, watching the route which led to Houzishi. We placed Army Group headquarters near the eastern gate. Still another division took up its position at Yijiawan, guarding the way to Liling and Xiangtan county-seats.

The enemy began to attack at 4 a.m. on the 4th, drawing close to the eastern gate. But our Army Group General Political Department and provincial Action Committee had not moved out of the gate. I took one division (3,000 men) of the Fifth Army to act as the rearguard, controlling a high ground outside the gate. I saw that the enemy troops advancing from north and south would soon meet, leaving a gap of only five *li*. One enemy vanguard regiment from the north was marching south rapidly. I order-

ed two companies to block the enemy advancing north, and concentrated the whole strength of our division to assault the enemy regiment advancing south. We destroyed the entire regiment and rescued the General Political Department and Action Committee from the city. Our whole army withdrew safely to Liuyang County, and covered the retreat of more than 100,000 civilians of the border area.

The Founding of the First Front Army and the Second Attack on Changsha

In mid-August we gathered the Fifth and Eighth armies around Changshoujie to train and consolidate the troops for a week. One evening, two or three days after we arrived there, the Wanzai County Party Committee sent us a message, saying that the First Army Group had moved to the county from Niuxing railway station opposite Nanchang city. We immediately sent our Army Group Political Department Director Yuan Guoping to get in touch with them, report on our condition and ask for instructions. He brought back a letter, in which the First Army Group Front Committee asked us to attack the enemy at Yonghe township, while they would strike at the Dai Douyuan Brigade at Wenjiashi. It took four days to go to Wanzai and bring the message back. So as soon as we received the message, we set out for the operation. When we reached Yonghe township, we discovered that the enemy had retreated to Changsha two days earlier.

On the third day of our arrival, Mao Zedong and Zhu De came with the detachment directly under the

First Army Group headquarters. This was the third time we joined our forces. We held a joint meeting of the front committees of the First and Third army groups on the same day. Comrades on the Third Army Group Front Committee proposed founding a First Front Army and a General Front Committee. I suggested putting the Fifth and Eighth armies of the Third Army Group into the organizational system of the First Front Army to facilitate unified command. At that time the Fifth Army was 7,000 to 8,000 strong and the Eighth Army, 5,000 to 6,000 strong. Under the direct command of the Army Group headquarters were a Special Task Regiment, an Artillery Regiment and an Engineering Battalion, totalling 3,000 men. All together, there were 15,000 to 16,000 men. The 2,000 men of the 16th Army were the main force of the local troops in the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area.

The First Army Group comprised the Third, Fourth and 12th armies, about the strength of the Third Army Group.

Known as the First Front Army, we were actually 30,000 strong, equal to He Jian's force defending Changsha. The joint meeting agreed to assign Zhu De Commander-in-Chief of the First Front Army, and Mao Zedong General Political Commissar and General Front Committee Secretary. From that time on, I worked under the leadership of the General Front Committee headed by Comrade Mao Zedong.

The joint meeting also discussed an attack on Changsha. I did not speak. The Third Army Group badly needed a short period for training and consolidation. Between November 1929 and August 1930,

our force had increased seven-fold, but it had had no chance for rest and consolidation since May. A number of companies had no Party branch or even a Party member. They had only soldiers' committees, and no Party core. The attack on Changsha this time was very different from the first when we broke up the enemy forces one by one in a surprise attack. This time, although the First Army Group had destroyed the Dai Douyuan Brigade, the three other enemy brigades had withdrawn safely into Changsha where there was still another brigade. While we were marching on the city, we gave the enemy five or six days to strengthen its fortifications. We were unable to take the enemy by surprise, and the whole affair became positional warfare. I wondered whether we could win a quick victory. In fact, we besieged the city for more than one month, but failed to take it.

We failed to take Changsha a second time because, militarily, our army was good at waging a mobile war and launching surprise attacks, but lacked technical training for regular positional warfare. The political reason was that the war between the warlords, in which Chiang Kai-shek fought Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan, had come to an end, enabling Chiang to move troops to reinforce Changsha — a factor which increased the confidence of the defenders.

Failing to take the city after more than one month, the General Front Committee decided to stop the attack and move the Red Army to Yichun in Jiangxi Province, ready to fight mobile warfare in the area between the Xiangjiang and Ganjiang rivers. That

was absolutely correct. It also decided to send the First Army Group to take Ji'an County-seat and deploy the Third Army Group along the northern bank of the Yuanshui River to threaten Nanchang city and block enemy reinforcements, while repeated operations were to be carried out along the Hunan-Jiangxi border to destroy enemy forces. That was also correct. The occupation of Ji'an would favour our mobile operations between the two rivers.

Some comrades from the Third Army Group proposed attacking Nanchang city. But others opposed the idea, giving this reasoning: Would it be a good idea to capture Nanchang after our failure to take Changsha? Although Nanchang had fewer defenders than Changsha, its fortifications were not weaker; it was surrounded by numerous lakes and ponds, which was favourable for defence and not for attack; the war between the warlords Chiang and the Feng-Yan group had ended, and the enemy was free to attack us, so we should be prepared to destroy enemy forces one by one between the two rivers. They argued that we should wait to see how things turned out before we decided to attack Nanchang or Changsha.

The other group said that waging mobile war between the two rivers was like practising shadow boxing. It could drag on till our beards turned white and still we wouldn't be able to seize political power in Hunan and Hubei provinces. This group was still supporting the Li Lisan line. At last, they were convinced by Comrade Mao Zedong to change their minds.

IX. From the First to the Fourth Counter-Campaigns Against "Encirclement and Suppression"

(September 1930-February 1933)

The Third Army Group Crossed to the East of the Ganjiang River

In September or October 1930 the war between the warlords (Chiang versus Feng and Yan) came to an end, and the enemy began making preparations to attack the Red Army on a large scale. At the same time, our General Front Committee obtained reliable information that the Li Lisan line had been exposed.

After the First Army Group took Ji'an, the General Front Committee changed the plan for waging a mobile war between the Xiangjiang and Ganjiang rivers to one for creating base areas in the vast expanse stretching from the Ganjiang River eastward to the seacoast. The new plan envisaged a strategy of luring the enemy deep into the base areas, taking careful measures to frustrate his first "encirclement and suppression" campaign, and preparing for a protracted struggle. Strategically it was more comprehensive and correct than the old plan. I supported it wholeheartedly without any hesitation.

The enemy launched its first "encirclement and suppression" campaign in early December 1930. Chiang Kai-shek assigned Lu Diping Commander-in-Chief for the campaign. The Third Army Group of the Red Army crossed to the eastern bank of the Ganjiang River. But just before they were to cross the river, some comrades opposed the crossing. These were men who advocated "localism" — a special interest in their own area. It happened that most of the men in the Fifth and 16th armies came from Pingjiang and Liuyang counties in Hunan and most of the men in the Eighth Army were natives of Yangxin and Daye counties in Hubei. These comrades suggested that the First and Third army groups be divided, the Third Army Group remaining on the western bank and the First Army Group crossing over to the eastern bank. In this way, they said, we could have the option of concentrating our forces to destroy large enemy units or breaking up into regiments to wage guerrilla warfare in the Hunan-Jiangxi and Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi border areas and in the southeastern Hubei base area. They argued that this would be a practical tact for seizing political power in the three provinces of Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi. These comrades had some good reasons for suggesting this to maintain a protracted war. Therefore, they enjoyed the support of quite a number of men.

But it would be hard for either the First or the Third Army Group alone to destroy one enemy division (six regiments) at a time. It would be quite easy for the two army groups fighting together to destroy an enemy division. Therefore, to defeat the enemy,

we had to oppose "localism", follow the political banner of Zhu De and Mao Zedong, and concentrate on unifying the Red Army forces. The First and Third army groups should not be separated. My vote was decisive; the side I voted for would win the issue.

"Dividing our two army groups at the river," I said, "does not serve to support our preparations to smash Chiang Kai-shek's large-scale offensive. On the other hand, if the Third Army Group does cross to the east side of the river, then who will defend the Soviet Areas we have spent several years working to build up on the west side of the river? This worries many officers and men of the Third Army Group. This is a justified concern which must be given careful attention. It's a question, however, that can be solved. The Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area can expand its 16th Army. There are five small regiments in southeastern Hubei, and they are preparing to found a Ninth Army. (The Ninth Army was founded in the winter of 1930 with about 3,000 men. In the spring of 1931 it crossed the Changjiang River and joined the Fourth Front Army. Then Ninth Army Commander Chen Qi and most of his officers were shot by Zhang Guotao on the trumped-up charge of being members of the 'Reorganization Clique'.¹) The Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area has an

¹The "Reorganization Clique" was one of the factions which existed in the Kuomintang in the late 1920s and early 1930s. On July 15, 1927, Wang Jingwei staged a counter-revolutionary coup d'état in Wuhan and aligned himself with Chiang Kai-shek in Nanjing. Dissatisfied with Chiang's monopolization of power, however, he and his followers organized a group called "Society of Comrades for the Reorganization of the Kuomintang".

Independent Division, which can be further expanded.”

My explanation freed the comrades from some of their worries. To hold out in the base areas, the Red Army would have to stick to its locality, but it had to oppose localism too. It was a complicated problem, one that took time to solve step by step.

“Anyone who objects to the decision,” I said, “can discuss it after we have crossed the river. No one should try to block our action, let alone suggest the division of the First and Third army groups.”

The problem was solved by and large. But people did not have a deep understanding of the issue.

The General Front Committee sent Comrade Zhou Yili to the Third Army Group to pass on instructions in his capacity as Representative of the Party Central Committee. At the meeting for this purpose I told him about our argument on crossing the river, adding that there was no major problem.

“How about the other preparations?” he asked.

“Only our boats are not yet ready,” I said. “I’m going right now to get the boats.” Thus I indicated our determination to cross the river.

The meeting at Third Army Group headquarters went on from morning till dusk, and seemed to have reached unanimity on crossing the river.

Taking a company with me, I went to get the boats ready. When I came back to Army Group headquarters, the meeting had not yet broken up. Several regimental officers were there, among them Du Zhongmei who spoke for the rest:

“Why shouldn’t the two army groups separate at

the river? Why must we cross the river to the east together? We have objections.”

This was “localism”, still exerting its strong influence. It was necessary to do some more work. I said we must concentrate our strength to destroy the large numbers of invading Chiang Kai-shek troops. Those who had objections could discuss the matter after crossing the river.

“I will cross the river,” I said. “The decision of the General Front Committee is correct. The Red Army has to fight anywhere in China. We have no use for localism. Do you have anything else to say?”

“Nothing,” they said.

“We cross the river at dawn tomorrow,” I said. “The boats are ready.”

After an intense ideological struggle, we had turned the comrades around. It had not been easy, particularly considering our political and ideological level at that time.

Nevertheless, at the 1959 Lushan Meeting and later at an enlarged meeting of the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee in Beijing, some persons said that Peng Dehuai cooked up a plot to oppose crossing the Ganjiang River beforehand. Suppose someone had said, “Don’t cross the river.” And then he turned around and said, “Cross the river.” Can we imagine more than 10,000 troops to be all blockheads moving here and there at the words of one man? It is ridiculous. That was an unreasonable, unfounded speculation based on subjectivism. The truth is that we failed to carry out thorough ideological work at the time.

A Forged Letter Exposed; the Red Army Smashed the First "Encirclement and Suppression" Campaign

The Third Army Group crossed the Ganjiang River between Xiajiang and Zhangshu. Chairman Mao's military strategy for crushing the first encirclement by the enemy (100,000 strong) was: Lure the enemy deep into the Soviet base areas and attack him. This was a far-sighted and reliable strategy. We had had no experience in waging a large-scale campaign. For the first time we were going to gain some experience in countering the offensive of a formidable enemy.

Nevertheless, as the Third Army Group gradually withdrew to the Huangpi-Xiaobu area south of Yongfeng marching towards the centre of the Soviet area, they found that the farther they went, the fewer civilians they met. They could not even get a guide to show the way. Our troops wondered whether it could really be one of our base areas — it seemed worse than a White area.

The problem was that the General Action Committee of Jiangxi Province (the Provincial Party Committee) objected to the strategy of luring the enemy in to destroy him. They called it "Right opportunism" and a political line of retreat, not of offence. They advocated a policy of "Fight our way to Nanchang city" in direct opposition to the decision of the General Front Committee. They deceived the civilians into blockading the Red Army, telling them not to meet the armymen. Then they distributed leaflets, publishing a so-called declaration to comrades and civilians. They wrote large slogans, saying

“Support Zhu, Peng and Huang. Down with...”*

This was not just an inner-Party struggle between political lines, it was an attempt to split the Party and the Red Army. A struggle within the Party had turned into one between the enemy and ourselves. This would certainly be exploited by the Anti-Bolshevik Corps. If we did not overcome this danger, it would be difficult to defeat the formidable enemy.

The Third Army Group was stationed at Dongshanba while the General Front Committee was at Huangpi, 60 to 70 *li* away. Enemy forces were entering the borders of the Soviet area by different routes. The Third Army Group was in a key position.

I was thinking about how to cope with the dangerous situation one night in mid-December 1930, when Zhou Gaochao, Secretary-General of the office of the Third Army Group Front Committee, suddenly brought me a letter written personally by Mao Zedong (his hand-writing has a unique style, which is hard to imitate) to Gu Bo (Chairman Mao's secretary). The letter said that things would be plain sailing if, in the trial of the AB Corps (a counter-revolutionary organization), a confession could be obtained by force to show that Peng Dehuai was also a member of the AB Corps. Attached to the letter was a declaration to comrades and civilians, running to nearly 10,000 words. I still remember that it began

* The names referred to here are Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Huang Gonglue and, by the ellipses, Mao Zedong. The author could not possibly write the name of Chairman Mao in such a context during the “Cultural Revolution,” especially as a person under investigation. — *Tr.*

with the words "Disaster has befallen our Party!!!
. . . * has turned traitor and gone over to the enemy."
Then it listed a chain of crimes, such as "Right opportunism," "capitulationist line", and so on and so forth.

While reading it, I asked Zhou Gaochao, "Where is the messenger?"

"He is outside," he said.

"What sort of person is he?"

"An ordinary young peasant."

"Call him in."

I read through the letter and the leaflet, but still Zhou had not come back with the messenger. I thought the letter was aimed at splitting the First and Third army groups and drawing the Third Army Group over to support the Provincial Action Committee. I expected that I was not the only one to receive a copy. Copies might also have been sent to Comrades Zhu De and Huang Gonglue. If that turned out to be true, it would be a most horrible plot. The least bit of carelessness in handling the matter would mean the greatest misfortune! I recalled how Comrade Mao Zedong built the revolutionary army of workers and peasants, how he founded the Jinggang Mountain Base Area, how he relayed to us the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress, how he tried to win over the Yuan Wencai-Wang Zuo alliance, how sternly he criticized the shooting of two civilians, how he made a self-criticism for leaving the Fifth Army to defend the Jinggang Mountain area, especially how he drew up the Gutian Congress Res-

* The name of Chairman Mao is omitted here for the reason given in the previous footnote. — *Tr.*

olution.* All these showed his correct policies and principles as well as his statesmanship. Comrade Mao Zedong was definitely not a conspirator, but a proletarian statesman. The letter must have been forged, a sinister plot to split the Red Army and the Party.

Half an hour passed by before Zhou came back, saying, "The messenger has gone. I ran after him for some distance, but couldn't call him back."

I wondered why they had not sent an important person to negotiate such a major affair with me, but had given the letter to an ordinary messenger who wanted neither a reply nor a receipt. How strange! It must be a plot. If people believed the letter, we would suffer irretrievable losses.

Zhou picked up the letter from the table and read it.

I asked him, "What do you think of it?"

"Why should they be so sinister?" he asked.

"Call an emergency Front Committee meeting to discuss this matter for nine o'clock tomorrow," I said. In addition to comrades on the committee — regimental commanders, political commissars, directors of political departments and chiefs of staff should attend."

"You mean nine this morning. It's already 2 a.m. now."

* The resolution drawn up by Comrade Mao Zedong for the Ninth Party Congress of the Fourth Army of the Red Army, held in Gutian Village, Shanghang County in Fujian, in December 1929. The resolution enabled the Red Army to build itself entirely on a Marxist-Leninist basis and to eliminate all influences of armies of the old type. — *Tr.*

“Yes, nine this morning.”

I immediately asked comrades Teng Daiyuan, Yuan Guoping and Deng Ping to come to my room and showed them the letter. They all agreed with me that it was a plot.

“How dangerous!” Teng Daiyuan said. “It is a major plot.”

Since we were 60 to 70 *li* away from the General Front Committee, there was no time to go there for instruction. Meanwhile, I feared something unexpected would turn up. I quickly wrote a simple declaration of less than 200 words. It declared that the Futian Incident was counter-revolutionary, that the slogan to bring down Mao . . . and support Zhu, Peng and Huang revealed a plot to split the Red Army and undermine the plan for crushing the offensive of the White army, that the First and Third army groups would unite under the leadership of the General Front Committee, support Comrade Mao Zedong and the guidance of the committee.

Teng Daiyuan called to me: “Come on, time for breakfast!”

“Just a few more words,” I said. I finished the declaration and gave it to them. They read it and agreed.

When the comrades came for the meeting, I first showed them the fake letter and the attached declaration to comrades and civilians, and then read them aloud. I told Teng Daiyuan, Yuan Guoping and Deng Ping about the messenger. (We were suspicious of Zhou Gaochao then. Our analysis: He had arrived 10 days earlier, bringing a letter of introduction from the Action Committee. But he was a supporter of the

Li Lisan line, not a member of the Anti-Bolshevik Corps.) We decided to send a squad to take the Declaration of the Third Army Group and the fake letter to the General Front Committee at Huangpi. Deng Ping took charge of the matter.

Then I went with Teng Daiyuan and Yuan Guoping to the meeting place. Everybody was talking about the matter. Some looked nervous and agitated. Others voiced suspicion.

As soon as we arrived, Du Zhongmei, a man of the type of Zhang Fei,* shouted, "A great conspiracy!"

"You are right," I said.

Zhou Gaochao announced the meeting open. He asked me to speak first.

"The Futian Incident was a counter-revolutionary revolt," I said. "The forged letter framed innocent comrades, representing an attempt to split the First and Third army groups and thwart the General Front Committee's plan for smashing the offensive of the White army. They published the slogan 'Down with Mao . . . ; support Zhu, Peng and Huang'. That is not a controversy over the Party line, but a counter-revolutionary action, a sinister plot of the Anti-Bolshevik Corps, which dominated the Provincial Action Committee in alliance with supporters of the Li Lisan line. The forged letter was actually written by Cong Yongzhong, leader in the Futian Incident, who learned Mao's style of handwriting well enough to imitate it. In that letter, however, he used Arabic figures to give the year, month and day, letting the

* Zhang Fei was a hot-tempered general in the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-280 A.D.).

cat out of the bag. Comrade Mao Zedong never uses Roman or Arabic figures in his letters; he writes them in Han characters."

Comrade Huang Gonglue arrived during my speech. He listened to me for about 10 minutes and left. After the meeting broke up, I asked Deng Ping what Huang Gonglue had to say.

"He said nothing but 'Old Peng stands by Mao,' and left."

At the meeting, I also said that strategically, I was in favour of putting the Third Army Group into the organizational system of the First Front Army for unified command. The revolution called for this. After our withdrawal from Changsha, I said, I was for waging mobile warfare between the Xiangjiang and Ganjiang rivers. Now the war between warlords had ended, and Chiang Kai-shek and Lu Diping were coming to attack us with an army 100,000 strong. To smash their offensive, we must act with care and sureness of victory. It was fully correct to lure the enemy in so that we could make use of the mountainous terrain and rely on the masses, acquiring favourable conditions for defeating the enemy. I supported this policy wholeheartedly.

If I had rejected this policy and adopted a wrong one, I said, the General Front Committee could have dismissed me from my post. Why should it have resorted to conspiracy? We have only dismissed Deng Qianyuan for committing an error; nothing more.

I also related how Comrade Mao Zedong had transmitted the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress to us with sincerity and how he had criticized the

comrade who shot two civilians during our march from Ruijin to Yudu.

My speech changed the mood of the comrades, who directed their hatred towards the Futian Incident. The meeting adopted the declaration: Oppose the counter-revolutionary Futian Incident! Down with the AB Corps! Support the General Front Committee! Support Political Commissar Mao! First and Third army groups, unite and smash the Kuomintang offensive!

This event helped our troops raise their political consciousness.

Next day we took the Third Army Group to Xiaobu, 15 li from Huangpi where the General Front Committee was stationed. I went over and invited Political Commissar Mao to come and make a speech at a cadres' rally of the Third Army Group. That was the first time our cadres had seen the Commissar.

All this was aimed at opposing the Futian Incident and strengthening the leadership of the General Front Committee. A few days after the Third Army Group Front Committee published its declaration, the reactionary Provincial Action Committee crossed the Ganjiang River and went to Yongxin County on the western bank. Their provocative plot had failed. They had sent the same forged letter to Comrade Zhu De, who also gave it to the General Front Committee.

Misled by reports of dissension, Zhang Huizan, the front commander of the White army, thought the Red Army had a split. His division swiftly advanced to Longgang, only to meet with complete destruction. Zhang was taken prisoner. "Our

vanguard has taken Zhang Huizan!"* — people recite this line with pride even today. Zhang's division was the enemy's main force. His capture shook the whole enemy army and offered us a good chance to destroy the enemy forces one by one.

We defeated the enemy's first encirclement campaign. The civilians knew they had been cheated and returned to their homes. Again they came out to act as scouts for the Red Army and carry the wounded. Chairman Mao's strategy had triumphed and won the people's faith in the Red Army.

Shattering the Second Encirclement Campaign

After we smashed the enemy's first "encirclement and suppression" campaign in January 1931, Chiang Kai-shek started a second campaign in March. This time his General Commander was He Yingqin, who applied the tactics: "Advance abreast, consolidate at every step, and strike sure blows." It was a tactic of building countless blockhouses. The enemy used twice as many troops as the first time. Their camps extended for 700 *li* from the Ganjiang River eastward to Jianning County in Fujian Province.

In the latter part of April, the enemy advanced step by step in a line across Futian, Guangchang and Jianning counties. Xingguo County-seat was under his occupation. The main force of the Red Army, the First and Third army groups, moved from Longgang to Donggu, 60 *li* from Xingguo County-seat. Some people said we were walking into a blind alley.

* A line from one of Chairman Mao's poems. — *Tr.*

Chairman Mao asked me to go into the mountains between Donggu (where the Third Army Group was stationed) and Futian to have a look at the local terrain in preparation for battle. We had a good meal of wild berries before we started work. We had decided earlier at Longgang to destroy first the enemy troops marching on Donggu from Futian. (They came from northern China and did not feel at home in these southern areas; and they had never fought with the Red Army. I forget whether their commander was Shangguan Yunxiang or Luo Lin.¹) But we had not yet decided on the tactics — when and where we should strike. We had some discussion after arriving at Donggu, but found no solution. Now we surveyed the terrain on the spot and solved the tactical problem. We decided that the Third and Fourth armies of the First Army Group should dig in and lie in ambush 15 *li* from Donggu, and the Third Army Group should detour to the enemy's right flank and rear, with its back to the Ganjiang River.

“Is there any danger in this?” Chairman Mao asked me.

“No,” I replied. “The enemy cannot imagine that we would dare strike at his flank with our back to the river.”

The battle started. The First Army Group routed the enemy in two or three hours. The Third Army Group didn't have enough time to get to the fixed position, and part of the enemy escaped. Following this victory, the Red Army defeated other enemy

¹The commander was Wang Jinyu.

forces one by one like splitting a bamboo, and wound up the campaign by wiping out the Liu Heding Division in Jianning. In 15 days, the 35,000-strong Red Army swept across 700 li from west to east and smashed a White army 200,000 strong. This is a brilliant example of a weak force beating a strong force, knocking out the enemy forces one by one. It is an example of combining operations on interior and exterior lines. It was a creative discovery of the military dialectics of the war fought by the Red Army.

I learned something from this campaign. Chairman Mao planned the operation with extraordinary care, pondering every detail again and again, neglecting nothing. He was also very careful in applying tactics, studying every problem over and over again. He was always ready to ask his subordinates for advice and listen to them modestly. In this campaign he skilfully applied his strategy of "Cut one finger of the enemy rather than wound all ten."

The Third Army Group fought the last battle of the campaign and took Jianning County-seat. Then it received an order to take Lichuan County-seat to the north.

Killing Huang Meizhuang

Under the correct leadership of Comrade Mao Zedong, the First and Third army groups shattered Chiang Kai-shek's second offensive. The Third Army Group fought the last battle to destroy the Liu Heding Division at Jianning County-seat in Fujian

Province. Then it moved to Lichuan County in Jiangxi Province to do mass work and raise funds, in preparation for countering Chiang Kai-shek's third offensive.

We read in the newspapers that Chiang Kai-shek had appointed Huang Gonglue's uncle, Huang Hanxiang, to be Pacification Commissioner with an office in Nanchang city. Whom was he going to "pacify"? It was none other than Huang Gonglue, of course. After his two defeats in attacking us, Chiang Kai-shek was plotting to split the Red Army.

Two days later, Huang Meizhuang came to Lichuan, accompanied by a young special agent who was disguised as a student. When Huang Meizhuang arrived at our defence line, he introduced himself as Huang Gonglue's elder brother. The guards brought him to Third Army Group headquarters where I accommodated him. Then I invited Teng Daiyuan, Yuan Guoping and Deng Ping to have a discussion. According to our information, Huang Meizhuang was a university student, the son of the first wife of Huang Gonglue's father. More than 20 years older than Huang Gonglue, he had persecuted his brother, refused to give him money to go to college, and scorned Gonglue's mother. Now he was acting as a go-between for his uncle attempting to entice his brother into turning traitor. He was an unprincipled person while his uncle, Huang Hanxiang, was the worst sort of politician. Huang Gonglue's mother, 50, was first a slave girl, then a concubine. After our Pingjiang Uprising, she was driven out of the Huang family. She behaved very well, and had no complaints against her son Huang Gonglue.

"If we don't entrap Huang Meizhuang," I said, "we can't get evidence against him. Once we've got evidence, we can execute him and tell Huang Gonglue, dispelling Chiang Kai-shek's illusions."

The comrades agreed with me.

Having met Huang Meizhuang before, I pretended to be very warm. I entertained him with a rich luncheon, serving the famous liquor "Bamboo Green". I toasted him, saying:

"I drink half a cup. You have a great capacity and should finish one full cup."

He emptied his cup at one gulp.

"You go ahead," I said. "I can't drink much."

"I drain two cups and you one cup," he said. He wanted to see me drunk and get information from me. He knew I seldom touched wine, but what he didn't know was that I also had a great capacity for liquor.

I drank two or three cups while he finished five or six full cups.

"You have won one victory after another," he said. "Your force has grown fast!"

"It's not so strong," I said. "Gonglue's army has only 30,000 men; mine has only 50,000."

Seeing that I revealed our strength, he was very pleased. He said, "Have one more cup."

Drinking half a cup, I said, "Very well. Mr. Huang Hanxiang has been promoted. Gonglue and me congratulate him. Brother Mei, you have come here in spite of the hot weather. You must have important business. Wish you success. Gonglue and me are as intimate as brothers. We are bosom friends

sharing weal and woe. If you have brought some good news, don't hide it from me."

"How dare I hide it from you," he said. He was already half drunk.

"We have less than one hundred thousand men," I said. "What could that make us?"

"You? Commander-in-Chief! Commander-in-Chief, of course. Gonglue will be an army commander when you come over to our side." He told the truth.

"That may be your idea," I said. "How can you be sure?"

"Not just an idea. Both the Generalissimo (meaning Chiang Kai-shek) and Uncle Hanxiang have letters for Gonglue." He was more than 80 per cent drunk and spoke incoherently, "Terrific! One more cup." Then he cut open the bottom of his leather suit case and pulled out two letters from a hidden lining.

In his letter, Chiang Kai-shek said that he was at fault for not having done a good job when he was President of the Huangpu Military Academy, so that his student, Huang Gonglue, had taken the wrong road. Huang's letter said that "Mr. Chiang has great virtue and I, as your uncle, am willing to put in a good word for you."

By now Huang Meizhuang was very drunk and could not contain himself.

I said to him, "Go to sleep, Mr. Meizhuang. I'm going to bed too. We'll talk some more at dinner."

Comrades Teng Daiyuan, Yuan Guoping and Deng Ping were waiting for me in another place. I went to them and told the story.

"Cut his head off," Yuan Guoping said, "wrap it

up, and lock it in a leather case. Then let the special agent who came with him carry it to Nanchang city at night. Tell the agent that Huang has gone to Huang Gonglue's place in secret, and ask him to come back for him in a few days."

We entrusted this matter to Du Liqing (i.e., Xu Jianguo), head of the Security Section of the Political Department. Deng Ping wrote a reply on behalf of Huang Gonglue. It said that Chiang Kai-shek was a traitor who killed workers and peasants and should be executed, that Huang Hanxiang, who sang the same tune as Chiang, should be condemned to capital punishment, and that Huang Meizhuang, who acted as a pawn, had been executed, and his head being returned as a warning to others. The letter was attached to the wrapped-up head, which was given to the special agent to be dispatched to Chiang Kai-shek.

Then we sent Huang Meizhuang's criminal evidence to Comrade Huang Gonglue, and told him how we had handled the matter. He wrote a reply, saying he was happy to know how we had disposed of the case.

Some time later, Chiang Kai-shek abolished the Pacification Commissioner's Office. He never again cherished such delusions about the Red Army.

Breaking the Third Encirclement Campaign

Chiang Kai-shek's armies launched a third encirclement campaign against us less than two months after the second campaign. He made him-

self Commander-in-Chief, directing 300,000 troops. His commanders for various routes were Chen Cheng, Wei Lihuang, Luo Zhuoying, Jiang Dingwen, Zhao Guantao and Xiong Shihui. The enemy columns advanced side by side deep into the Soviet areas and took all our county-seats.

Our Front Army had only 32,000 to 33,000 men. We were forced to make a detour, marching through Jiangle and Liancheng counties in western Fujian Province and Ruijin and Xingguo counties in neighbouring Jiangxi Province and stopping at Laoyingpan. We wanted to break through the enemy's weak link at Futian on the Ganjiang River, but the enemy discovered us. We changed our target and broke through at Liangcun, then took Huangpi. In these two battles, we destroyed three enemy divisions, attracting other enemy forces to Huangpi. Then we slipped through a crack between enemy forces and returned to Xingguo County. It took the enemy half a month to find out that we were in Xingguo, and when he marched on the county, we had already had a good rest. Moving all the time and looking for us, the enemy soldiers became so thin and worn out they could scarcely drag themselves along. Many fell sick and died. In this way, the enemy numbers were depleted by one-third.

The enemy was forced to withdraw. We struck and destroyed one brigade under Jiang Dingwen, and then one division (probably Han Deqin's division) in the Donggu-Baishui area, winding up the third counter-campaign against enemy "encirclement and suppression".

This campaign gave full expression to Chairman Mao's strategy and tactics of flexibility and mobility. In three months of fighting, we defeated an enemy 10 times our strength. Compared with its enemy, the Red Army had poorer equipment and a far smaller number of men, and had no rear support. But it won a great victory, smashing enemy encirclement through a series of strategies and tactics previously unknown in China and abroad. This was a new development of Marxism-Leninism — Mao Zedong's military dialectics which expressed the basic content of his military thought which the People's Liberation Army troops have discussed so often. If imperialism dares launch a new world war, Mao Zedong's military dialectics remain an important weapon for guiding the people's war to victory.

Creating a New Soviet Area, Learning to Do Mass Work

In late November 1931, after crushing the enemy's third encirclement campaign, the General Front Committee instructed the Third Army Group to deploy itself in Huichang, Anyuan, Xunwu and Xinfeng counties and the area south of Yudu County. Our central area was Huichang and Anyuan. We convened the First Soviet Congress in the same month.

We did a lot of work in two months and more, up to January 1932. We destroyed the armed forces of local landlords and wiped out all "civil corps". We carried out mass work, distributed land among the

peasants, and built a new Soviet area. We founded an Independent Division in southern Jiangxi Province, with a strength of 1,500 to 1,600 men and with Huang Yunqiao as commander. Each of its regiments was built on the basis of a company transferred from the Third Army Group, and became competent quickly. This experience in building the army was later successfully applied in the War Against Japanese Aggression. The Third Army Group had 15,000 to 16,000 men before it crossed to the east of the Ganjiang River. After the three counter-campaigns against enemy encirclement, it shrank to about 10,000. Now we had replenished it with 4,000 men.

We established political power in the four counties of Anyuan, Huichang, Xunwu and Xinfeng, and organized some local forces for the counties and districts. Peasants in nearly half of the area benefited from the distribution of land. That was the first time I learned how to distribute land after having been in the Red Army for three years. I realized that only by doing mass work and mobilizing the masses to build political power and distribute land could we make the masses see the Red Army as their own army. Only in this way could our troops quickly heighten their class consciousness, abide by mass discipline, and refrain from attacking rich peasants as landlords in raising funds and provisions for the army. I had a better understanding of the three major tasks put forward by Chairman Mao — fighting battles, doing mass work, raising funds and provisions — and the unity of the three.

The Failure to Take Ganzhou City

In mid-January 1932, as we were making progress with land reform, we received an order from the Front Army Command for the Third Army Group to take Ganzhou city, leaving only a few cadres to carry on local mass work. I was pleased with the order. Earlier, when we attended the First Soviet Congress, a leading comrade of the Central Committee Bureau asked me whether we could take the city. I said I estimated the strength of the brigade garrisoning the city under a certain Ma to be 6,000, and there were another 2,000 men belonging to the "Pacification Corps". We could overpower them if we had time and if Chiang Kai-shek failed to send reinforcements.

With a population of 30,000 to 40,000, Ganzhou was the commercial centre of southern Jiangxi. It was also a centre of the reactionaries. The capture of the city, I thought, would be favourable to our development and consolidation in 12 counties in southern Jiangxi (Ganxian, Nankang, Dayu, Shangyou, Chongyi, Xinfeng, Longnan, Dingnan, Quannan, Xunwu, Anyuan and Huichang). It would help link the Soviet areas in Hunan and Jiangxi provinces into one expanse and consolidate the rear of the Red Army. It would improve the conditions of the Central Soviet Area and ensure the security of the Party Central Committee Bureau and Central Soviet Government at Ruijin. The Red Army men would be relieved from worrying about home when they marched north to develop new areas and wage mobile warfare. That would clinch our success in occupying

more than half of Jiangxi Province — the Central Soviet Area in the south, the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area in the northwest, the Fujian-Zhejiang-Jiangxi Border Area in the northeast, and the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area in the west.

Ganzhou city stood at the confluence of the Zhangshui and Gongshui rivers. It was surrounded by water on three sides, and the garrison had spent a long time building solid fortifications. We besieged the city for more than one month and tried several times to blow up the city wall with explosives, but failed.

In attacking Ganzhou, we committed the following errors:

The January 28th Incident¹ took place at that time. We should have held high the banner of a national revolutionary war against Japanese aggression and called for stopping the civil war and marching to the anti-Japanese front. We should have altered certain concrete policies to develop an Anti-Japanese National United Front. The main force of the First Front Army of the Red Army should have moved to the Fujian-Zhejiang-Jiangxi borders to support the anti-Japanese troops in Shanghai, organize the masses for resistance and launch a political offensive to expose Chiang Kai-shek's treacherous policies. Thus we could have linked the Central Soviet Area

¹On January 28, 1932 Japanese marines attacked Shanghai. Under the impact of the nationwide movement for resistance to Japan, the 19th Route Army garrisoning Shanghai fought the invaders for over a month, dealing the Japanese imperialists a heavy blow. This is known as the "January 28th Incident".

with the Fujian-Zhejiang-Jiangxi Border Area and expanded the Soviet areas and our armed forces in preparation for counter-campaigns against enemy "encirclement and suppression."

By attacking Ganzhou, however, we failed to take advantage of the January 28th Incident to hold high the anti-Japanese banner and deal a political blow against Chiang Kai-shek, but gave him a pretext for carrying out the reactionary policy of "internal pacification before resistance to foreign invasion". And we did not anticipate that Chiang Kai-shek would give the tungsten mine at Dayu to the Guangdong provincial army in exchange for its offensive against our army. So our attack on Ganzhou city served to ease the tension between Chiang Kai-shek and the Guangdong warlords.

I did not see all this then. I firmly carried out without any hesitation the erroneous order of the Front Army Command to attack Ganzhou. I wanted to take the city, liberate southern Jiangxi, establish a link with the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area, consolidate the rear, ensure the security of Ruijin (where the Central Committee Bureau was stationed), and then march north. My one-sided view did not suit the political situation at that time.

We also made military errors. Luo Zhuoying led two divisions south along the western bank of the Ganjiang River from Ji'an while two more divisions (six regiments) marched north from Nanxiong in Guangdong Province along the Guangdong-Jiangxi Highway to rescue the enemy garrison. We should have gathered our main forces of the Front Army, the First and Third army groups, at a striking posi-

AREAS COVERED BY THE AUTHOR DURING THE PERIOD FROM THE 1ST TO THE 5TH COUNTER-CAMPAIGNS AGAINST "ENCIRCLEMENT AND SUPPRESSION"



tion at Nankang County, with the remaining troops pretending to attack the city. That would have given us a good opportunity to destroy any one of the two columns of enemy rescue troops. But I did not make the suggestion. The enemy rescue troops arrived when we failed to take the city after a lingering siege. We did not withdraw quick enough, but remained too long at the foot of the solid city walls till we were exhausted and vulnerable to assault by the enemy. In addition, the enemy garrison was twice as strong as we had estimated. I discovered this later in 1965, when I read a story by Ma Kun, Brigade Commander of the Ganzhou garrison, about how he had defended the city, which was carried in the *Historical Accounts* published by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. He wrote that his brigade had 8,000 men, supplemented by 10,000 men reorganized from the local "civil corps". With only 14,000 men, our Third Army Group could certainly not have overcome such a superior force holding strong fortifications. If there had been 8,000 enemy troops as I estimated, we would have taken the city. It was a grave error to attack a fortified city before finding out the real situation of the enemy troops holding it.

Repulsing the Fourth Encirclement Campaign

Withdrawing from Ganzhou, we mustered in the Jiangkou area. The Central Committee Bureau came to call a meeting at the front. Chairman Mao also arrived. The meeting was divided. The Bureau held

that the Third Army Group should go to the western bank of the Ganjiang River and occupy Shangyou and Chongyi counties to develop Soviet areas, so that Suichuan, Taihe and Wan'an counties could link up with the Hunan-Jiangxi Soviet Area. But Chairman Mao said the Third Army Group should march north and take Zixi, Guangze and Shaowu counties to link up with the northeastern Jiangxi area. I did not support Chairman Mao's correct idea, but agreed with the opinion of the majority in the Central Committee Bureau. If I had supported Chairman Mao, the Central Committee Bureau would probably have reconsidered the matter.

Why did I support the view of the Central Committee Bureau, and not that of Chairman Mao? Because I still thought as I had when we wanted to take Ganzhou. Besides, I did not realize that the Fourth Plenary Session of the Central Committee (which adopted the Wang Ming line) actually carried on the Li Lisan line. The Central Committee session called the Wang Ming political line a Bolshevik line endorsed by the Communist International. I did not know that this line, like the Li Lisan line, was opposed to the Mao Zedong concept of a people's war, to the strategy of encircling the cities from the rural areas. It was a purely military viewpoint of depending on the Red Army alone to conquer the country. A Communist should always ask why, but I obeyed the decision of the Central Committee Bureau blindly.

After the Jiangkou Meeting, the Third Army Group moved to Shangyou, Chongyi, Guidong and Yingqian. The First Army Group, led by Chairman

Mao, took Zhangzhou, then marched into Guangdong Province and fought a stalemated battle with a dozen enemy regiments east of Nanxiong. By the time the Third Army Group had rushed to the battlefield, both the enemy and the First Army Group had withdrawn. Our two army groups were closely related, and neither did so well by fighting alone. If the two army groups had not been divided, they would have destroyed all the enemy regiments.

When our two army groups met in the Nanxiong area, Chairman Mao was commanding the First Army Group and marching with it. In mid or late June both army groups marched north. The Third Army Group took the route of Yudu-Xingguo-Yihuang and, switching east, passed by Guangchang and headed for Nanfeng. By this time the Front Army Command had been reorganized. Zhu De remained Commander. Zhou Enlai was General Political Commissar and Liu Bocheng, Chief of General Staff. Chairman Mao had left the army.

In late August or early September 1932¹ the Third Army Group received an order to take Nanfeng County-seat. Chiang Kai-shek regarded the county-seat as a military stronghold of strategic importance in eastern Jiangxi Province for invading the Soviet areas. His army had built solid fortifications there after the failure of his second "encirclement and suppression" campaign. It had a garrison of six regiments under Mao Bingwen. For two days we attacked the county-seat, but failed to take it, suffer-

¹ The date should be February 1933.

ing 1,000 casualties. Peng Ao, Commander of our Third Division, was killed in action.

At this juncture, the leadership of the Front Army came to the Third Army Group. There were Commander-in-Chief Zhu De, General Political Commissar Zhou Enlai (who had been Secretary of the Central Committee Bureau, but I'm not sure whether he still was at this time), and Chief of General Staff Liu Bocheng. But Chairman Mao was not to be seen.

"Where is Chairman Mao?" I asked Liu Bocheng.

"He is busy with government affairs," Liu answered.

At that time the Wang Ming line had not become dominant in administrative management, Party Committee leadership and political work in the army groups. Things remained pretty much as before.

We continued the siege of Nanfeng, but didn't intensify our attack. The enemy garrison under Mao Bingwen asked Chiang Kai-shek for help. Chiang ordered two divisions stationed in Ji'an County-seat to go to the rescue, marching east through Yongfeng and Yihuang along the Soviet area border. The Third Army Group pretended to attack the besieged county-seat with effort, while its main force moved with the First Army Group to the area south of Yihuang and Le'an counties. We assaulted the flank of the two moving enemy divisions and wiped them out. Yihuang's garrison of one division came south to attack us. We wiped it out too, capturing its commander, Chen Shiji. All together, we eliminated 28,000 enemy troops. Thus we crushed the enemy's fourth "encirclement and suppression" campaign without much effort.

X. The Errors of the
Wang Ming Line Became Clear to Me
During the Fifth Counter-Campaign
Against Enemy Encirclement

(November 1931-September 1934)

The First Soviet Congress met in November 1931 where we heard the guidelines worked out by the Fourth Plenary Session of the Central Committee. We were told that it was a great and correct session adopting an entirely Bolshevik line representing the views of the Communist International. There were stories about how secret activities had been carried out in the Party before the session was convened and how comrades returning to Shanghai from Moscow had sharply pinpointed the "conciliatory" nature of the Third Plenary Session in opposing the Li Lisan line. I had the impression that it was not the Central Committee which had convened the Third Plenary Session that had decided to call the Fourth Plenary Session. Rather the comrades returning from Moscow had forced the Central Committee to call it by carrying out secret activities within the Party and launching a surprise attack on the Central Committee. I doubted the legitimacy of the Fourth Plenary Session.

While listening to the serious "crimes" of "the line of conciliation", I thought over these developments: Li Lisan had been dismissed from the leadership — he had admitted his mistake and gone to study in Moscow; the Third Plenary Session had issued supplementary instructions in a circular defining his mistake as not only a matter of tactics but one of the political line. Since the problem had been solved politically and organizationally, why should the Fourth Plenary Session be convened? I suspected that the session had a sectarian tendency. As the Secretary of the Third Army Group Front Committee, I should have relayed the guidelines of the session and led discussions related to the Li Lisan line. But I did not care to. The political departments did it — Wang Jiaxiang* was Director of the General Political Department of the Red Army and Yuan Guoping, Director of the Political Department of the Third Army Group.

I was unaware of most of the decisions made by the Central Committee. But some of the concrete decisions I knew about, I took exception to. After our victory in countering the enemy's fourth encirclement campaign, the Central Committee dismissed Luo Ronghuan** from the post of Political Commissar of the First Army Group, and later Teng Dai-

* Wang Jiaxiang (1906-74) served as Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director of the International Liaison Department of the CPC Central Committee after China's Liberation. — *Tr.*

** Luo Ronghuan (1902-63) became one of the marshals of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and served as Director of the PLA's General Political Department after China's Liberation. — *Tr.*

yuan from the post of Political Commissar of the Third Army Group. I sent a telegram to Bo Gu,* saying that we should not hastily swap senior officers in a time of war, and that Teng maintained good ties with the rank-and-file of the Third Army Group. I asked him to annul the dismissal of Teng, but never received a reply. I was in low spirits. Teng Daiyuan obeyed the order and left my army group.

The central leadership abolished the system of the Party committee in the army and installed a system of a single leader, i.e., the political commissar had the final say. It replaced veteran political commissars with new ones. It carried out a campaign to ferret

* Bo Gu (1907-46), whose real name was Qin Bangxian, joined the Communist Party in 1923. In April 1931 he served as Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League and from September 1931 to January 1935 held overall responsibility in the provisional central leadership of the CPC, in which position he followed a "Left" line and thus committed serious errors. After the Zunyi Meeting in January 1935 he served as head of the Field Political Department of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. In 1936 he, Zhou Enlai and Ye Jianying took part in the peaceful settlement of the Xi'an Incident as representatives of the Central Committee of the CPC. In 1937 Bo Gu became head of the Organization Department of the Central Committee. After the outbreak of the War of Resistance, he was appointed the CPC's representative in Nanjing. After 1938 he served successively as member of the Changjiang Bureau and as member and concurrently head of the Organization Department of the Southern Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. In 1941 he became head of the *Liberation Daily* and of the New China News Agency in Yan'an. In 1945 he was reelected to the Central Committee at the Seventh National Congress of the Party. In February 1946 he went to Chongqing to take part in the negotiations with the Kuomintang, but died in an airplane crash in April while on his way back to Yan'an. — Tr.

out counter-revolutionaries without reliance on the masses. Everybody in the army was worried about his safety, and there was not much democracy. The Section for Eliminating Traitors, which had originally been under the Political Department, now became a Security Bureau at the same level as the Political Department. Acting in a privileged and mysterious way, the Security Bureau was divorced from the rank-and-file, resulting in distrust among the comrades. And the army no longer did mass work. The pernicious influence of all this prevailed a long time before it could be liquidated.

Some time later, there was a campaign against the so-called Luo Ming line. Luo Ming's problem was that he had written a letter saying the Soviet border areas and Central Soviet Area should carry out different concrete policies. He was absolutely right. Why should he be labelled as a supporter of a Right opportunist line of retreating and running away?

From the time we smashed the enemy's fourth "encirclement and suppression" campaign to the beginning of his fifth campaign, the Soviet areas had not expanded at all. "Imperial envoys" sent by the Central Committee condemned large numbers of leading Party, government and army cadres in the Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Border Area and Southeastern Hubei Area as members of the "Reorganization Clique", killed them, and replaced them with their "imperial envoys" or people to their liking. The facts gradually helped me see through the Fourth Plenary Session as an occasion where a petty-bourgeois sect had usurped leadership in the Central Committee.

In January or February 1944, when I called on

Chairman Mao at Zaoyuan in Yan'an, I asked him, "Was the Fourth Plenary Session illegitimate?"

"It was legitimate," he said, "because it was approved by the International."¹ He removed my doubt.

The Battle of Liancheng

Victory over the enemy's fourth encirclement campaign provided an opportunity for the Wang Ming line to be carried out in the army. The supporters of this line widely praised the Fourth Plenary Session. They put forward the slogan of "taking dynamic actions". As a result, the Red Army had no rest, replenishment or training. Followers of the Wang Ming line mechanically explained the saying "pit one against ten, and ten against a hundred", and called on the numerically weak Red Army to defeat a strong enemy tactically. In fact, they opposed Chairman Mao's tactical policy of concentrating a superior force to annihilate the enemy.

In the summer of 1933 the Third Army Group moved into western Fujian Province and took the county-seats of Qingliu, Guihua, Jiangle and Shunchang, occupying a large expanse of land. We received no order to carry out mass work there, but an order for the immediate capture of Liancheng County-seat. We had to arrive at the county-seat at a fixed time and attack it at a fixed point in a north-south direction. We could not change this erroneous arrangement because subordinates must obey su-

¹The Communist International. — *Tr.*

periors and hold themselves entirely responsible for any change.

There is a difference between a joint operation of army groups and an operation by one army group. In a joint operation, each army group must act strictly according to plan. In an operation by one army group, it must be given the right to act flexibly to fulfil the task. The dogmatists didn't make the difference and measured everything with the same yardstick.

Liancheng County-seat was garrisoned by the Ou Shounian Brigade (three regiments) of the 19th Route Army. With the best equipment among White troops, the brigade was quite combat effective behind strong fortifications. It was hard to draw near the county-seat from the north because the ground sloped upwards with the enemy overlooking us. It was blazingly hot during the day between the fifth and sixth moon.¹ I took a scout platoon to tour the area for a whole day, but failed to pinpoint a good spot for attack. I found we could not take the county-seat according to the order. We had to alter it. We reported to headquarters, which approved our new plan for attacking from the south. But still we could not take it. It was necessary to change the plan completely.

Some 30 *li* south of the county-seat, there was one regiment (short of one battalion) of the Ou Shounian Brigade defending Pengkou, a strategic place difficult to approach. We decided to besiege this place and assault enemy reinforcements. Fighting all day

¹ Between July and August.

long, we destroyed an enemy battalion and encircled another battalion and a unit attached to regimental headquarters. Sure enough, the whole garrison of the county-seat came out to aid the regiment. We struck and destroyed part of the brigade; the rest fled towards Shaning east of Liancheng. We would have wiped out the entire enemy brigade if the First Army Group had fought this battle with us.

We entered the county-seat. There was no order for the Third Army Group to do mass work, but one for it to take Yangkou and Yanping right away. We went and mopped up the "civil corps" and "merchant corps" there. The garrison troops of the 19th Route Army had escaped by boat. By now we had occupied a large area in western Fujian Province, covering eight or nine counties. But we acted just like a monkey picking corncobs, grabbing one and dropping the other. We did nothing to consolidate the gains. The civilians were not warm to us; only a few attended the mass meetings. I felt that there was something wrong with our land policy in these areas. No land was given to the landlords, who fled to White areas. Rich peasants were given poor land, and many fled too. Under the slogan of hitting hard at the rich peasants, a few of the better-off middle peasants were penalized, and some of them ran away. Those who fled helped spread all sorts of rumours, so that it was very difficult to carry on our work in the border areas. The White areas imposed a strict economic blockade on the Red areas. Things got worse and worse. I wrote all this in a telegram and sent it to Bo Gu. No reply — and no order for correcting the

policy. I came to see even more clearly that Chairman Mao's land policy was correct and vital.

Negotiating with the 19th Route Army

In August the Red Army moved to a place less than 200 *li* from Minhou County-seat. Jiang Guangnai and Cai Tingkai¹ sent a representative surnamed Chen (I forgot his full name²) to meet us as a feeler towards negotiations. During our operations in western Fujian Province, we had both praised and criticized them. We said they had been right in fighting the Japanese invaders but were wrong in coming to our area to "suppress Communists". In fact, they were victims of a plot by which Chiang Kai-shek would benefit either way: "suppression of Communists" or the annihilation of the troops commanded by Jiang and Cai. We explained all this to Chen and reiterated the three conditions stated in the August First Declaration.³

"We have to oppose Chiang Kai-shek and resist Japanese aggression at the same time," Chen said. "Without opposing Chiang, we cannot resist the Japanese."

"You are right!" I said. "To resist Japanese inva-

¹ Jiang Guangnai was Commander, and Cai Tingkai Deputy Commander, of the Kuomintang's 19th Route Army.

² Chen Gongpei.

³ On January 17, 1933 the Provisional Central Soviet Government of China and the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army issued a declaration on Japanese imperialist invasion of North China. The declaration expressed readiness to unite with all other

sion, we must oppose Chiang. For Chiang is carrying out a traitorous policy of 'internal pacification before resistance to foreign invasion'. Only by resisting Japan can we stop the civil war."

We invited Chen and his men to dinner, serving washbasins full of pork and chicken we had taken from local tyrants. After they went to bed, I wrote a letter to Jiang Guangnai and Cai Tingkai, informing them of our aim of opposing Chiang and resisting Japanese aggression and requesting them to send a representative to Ruijin County-seat to negotiate with our Central Committee.

I sent a telegram about our negotiation to the Central Committee. We soon received a reply saying we had neither given enough importance to the matter nor entertained the guests with proper hospitality. I thought we had given quite significant consideration to the matter. For entertainment, our army men always used washbasins to serve rice and other dishes, the same washbasins they used to wash their faces and feet. This was our practice until we returned home from the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea.

Later when Chen went to Ruijin to negotiate, the

armies in China for joint resistance to Japan under the following conditions:

- (1) Stop attacks on the revolutionary base areas;
- (2) Guarantee democratic rights for the people; and
- (3) Arm the people.

This was reiterated in the Declaration to All Compatriots of China on Resistance to Japan and National Salvation issued by the CPC on August 1, 1935, also known as the August First Declaration.

Central Committee said the Third Party¹ was worse than the Kuomintang because it was more deceptive to the people. Although I did not agree with their closed-doorism, I could not state my reason. I had something of an inferiority complex, thinking that intellectuals could always produce their reasons for doing anything. First they criticized us for not entertaining Chen with proper hospitality and for not paying enough attention to the matter. Now they were saying that the Third Party was worse than the Kuomintang. It was they who were not giving enough importance to the matter! The Third Party opposed Chiang Kai-shek and wanted to resist Japan. What harm could this do us? If I by that time had read Chairman Mao's "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society", I could have criticized these intel-

¹ After Wang Jingwei's counter-revolutionary coup d'état in Wuhan on July 15, 1927, Deng Yanda and other Kuomintang left-wingers organized in Shanghai the Provisional Action Committee of the Kuomintang, also known as the Third Party because it opposed the Kuomintang controlled by Chiang Kai-shek on the one hand and disagreed with the Communist Party of China on the other. In 1935 it changed its name to "Action Committee for China's National Emancipation" which responded to the Communist Party's call for all parties to join hands in resisting Japanese aggression and coping with the national crisis, and took an active part in anti-Japanese activities. In 1941 it initiated, together with other groupings, the China League of Democratic Parties and Groups, and renamed itself the Chinese Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party in 1947. It has supported CPC leadership since the founding of the People's Republic of China and remains one of the democratic parties taking part in socialist revolution and construction.

lectuals. But I was incapable of making any Marxist criticism. Before joining the Party, I had read only *The ABCs of Communism* and *A Popular Version of Capital*. Although I had been in the Party for six years, I knew little about Marxism-Leninism. I badly needed revolutionary theory. I had enthusiasm for the revolution, of course.

A couple of months later, Chairman Mao sent me a copy of *Two Tactics** with something like this pencilled on it: "People would have avoided their errors if they had read this book during the Great Revolution". Not long afterwards, he sent me a copy of "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*** He wrote on this book: "If you have read the first book I sent you, you know only one aspect of the matter; only by reading this will you know that the "Left" mistakes do as much harm as the Right." (I received both books when we were attacking the enemy at Zhangzhou Middle School.) It was difficult for me to understand the first book at that time. The second book was easier. I carried these two books along with me till I reached Wuqi township in northern Shaanxi Province. Then I left with Chairman Mao for 15th Army Group headquarters at Ganquan County-seat, and a comrade who was sorting out documents committed the books to flame. I felt very sorry about it.

* V. I. Lenin's *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. — Tr.

** Another work by Lenin. — Tr.

The Fujian Incident¹ and the Beginning of the Fifth Counter-Campaign Against Enemy Encirclement

The Fujian Incident was a flare-up of conflicts within the Kuomintang, a continuation and development of the struggle between the anti-Japanese group and the pro-Japanese group after the January 28th Incident. It was a struggle launched by the petty-bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie to oppose Chiang Kai-shek, the representative of the comprador and landlord classes. We needed to take advantage of it to foil the fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign Chiang Kai-shek was preparing against us.

With this simple understanding, I wrote a telegram to Bo Gu on the Central Committee in care of the General Political Commissar. I suggested that the Fifth Army Group be left to defend the Central Soviet Area and that the First, Third, Seventh and Ninth army groups be massed and dispatched to the Fujian-Zhejiang-Jiangxi Border Area to threaten the major cities of Nanjing, Shanghai and Hangzhou

¹ After fighting the Japanese invaders in Shanghai in early 1932, the 19th Route Army was sent by Chiang Kai-shek to attack the Red Army in Fujian. Realizing the futility of fighting the Red Army, its leaders Cai Tingkai, Chen Mingshu and Jiang Guangnai concluded an agreement with the Red Army in October 1933 to resist Japan and oppose Chiang Kai-shek. In November 1933 they allied themselves with Kuomintang forces under Li Jishen, announced their break with Chiang Kai-shek and established the People's Revolutionary Government of the Republic of China in Fujian Province (known as the Fujian People's Government). The Fujian People's Government collapsed under Chiang's military pressure in January 1934.

with the aid of the base area under Fang Zhimin and Shao Shiping. This would support the 19th Route Army in the Fujian Incident, promote the anti-Japanese movement, and upset Chiang Kai-shek's plan for the fifth encirclement campaign. Later when I dropped in the General Political Commissar's office at Jianning County-seat, I was told that Bo Gu had criticized my suggestion, saying that it would be adventurist to move away from the Central Soviet Base Area.

When the Third Army Group was ordered to move from Fujian Province into Jiangxi Province, I went to the General Political Commissar for instruction and found out that the Central Committee was going to move the 10th Army of 3,000 men from north-eastern Jiangxi south to the Central Soviet Area. If the main force of the Red Army did not march to the Fujian-Zhejiang-Jiangxi Border Area to threaten Nanjing and Hangzhou and back up the 19th Route Army, the Fujian Incident could not last, but dissipate like a bubble. Chiang Kai-shek had money to buy over people and powerful military pressure to bring to bear on the 19th Route Army, which would be finished. That was his old trick, which did not work only in the case of the Red Army.

Because we did not support the 19th Route Army, one wing of the Central Soviet Area lost its backing. Politically we pulled down the bridge leading to an Anti-Japanese National United Front. The Fujian Incident quickly came to an end, and the fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign, which Chiang had prepared for one whole year, finally began. Neither the Central Committee nor the Front

Command had discussed such a major problem. They did not pay the least attention to the experience in crushing the first, second and third "encirclement and suppression" campaigns, let alone the commanders' experience in directing the operations. Such "subjectivism" worried me a lot.

After the enemy's fifth encirclement campaign started, I saw more clearly the incorrectness of their [the central leaders'] military line, especially their order to divide the First and Third army groups which prevented the Red Army from destroying large numbers of enemy troops in a mobile war. For example, Chiang Kai-shek sent three divisions to attack Lichuan County-seat which was guarded by an independent regiment of 500 to 600 men of the Red Army. Of course, the independent regiment pulled out of the county-seat — otherwise it would have been wiped out. For this they dismissed the commander of the regiment, expelled him from the Party and tried him, labelling him a Right opportunist. That sort of punitiveness enraged me. Why should he be tried? Many others should be tried as well.

After the fall of Lichuan County-seat in Jiangxi Province, the Third Army Group received an order to advance from Taining County in neighbouring Fujian Province to Xunkou northeast of Lichuan. We met an enemy division at Xunkou and destroyed it (three regiments short of one battalion). The remaining battalion defended a stockaded village on the top of a steep hill which was difficult to climb. But there was no water at the hilltop, and it took only a day to wipe out the battalion. This brought us an initial

victory in countering the fifth encirclement campaign.

Nevertheless, Li De¹ ordered the Third Army Group, even before the destruction of the besieged battalion, to march on Xiaoshi between Lichuan and Nancheng. Lichuan had an enemy garrison of three or four divisions, while neighbouring Nancheng and Nanfeng county-seats had a garrison of three divisions each. Xiaoshi, where we were stationed, was located 30 to 40 *li* from each of the enemy-held county-seats. Our army group was cornered in a triangle bristling with enemy blockhouses. We could hardly move about and faced with the danger of complete destruction. The enemy force north of Taining, having discovered that our main force had left for Lichuan, was preparing to attack Taining, while the enemy garrisons at Lichuan, Nanfeng and Nancheng were reported as ready to assault us. I sent an urgent telegram opposing the order. The reply agreed to our withdrawal. We returned to Xunkou and escaped destruction.

The Battle of Tuancun

In September or October 1933 the enemy left one division to guard Lichuan County-seat and moved three divisions towards Deshengguan on the border between Fujian and Jiangxi provinces.

It was about early October² when the maple leaves

¹ Otto Braun, see footnote on p. 16.

² The battle of Tuancun took place in December 1933.

were turning red in the cool and pleasant weather. One fine morning as dawn crept over Deshengguan, two enemy divisions (12 regiments) advanced to a place a dozen *li* east of Tuancun and the same distance from Deshengguan. Tuancun was a small basin lying between Deshengguan and Lichuan County-seat, about 30 *li* from the county-seat. Another enemy division of three regiments pulled up somewhere three to five *li* east of Tuancun, forming a second echelon. Placing themselves like the three points of a triangle, the three divisions began building blockhouses at noon. We sent one division in group after group, feigning movement to harass the frontal enemy and draw their attention.

Three of our divisions (the Second, Third and Fourth divisions) hid in a place five or six *li* to the left flank of the enemy's second echelon. The enemy made no serious search and did not discover them. The two divisions in the enemy's first echelon each deployed half of their troops (three regiments) in battle array, while the division in the second echelon (three regiments) kept building blockhouses.

When Army Group headquarters gave the signal, our frontal division feigned attack, while our main force (the three concealed divisions) charged into the enemy's second echelon, shouting, throwing hand-grenades, and firing rifles and machine guns. The troops in the second echelon ran helter-skelter, inflicting the other two divisions in the first echelon. Then our frontal division struck and put the whole enemy army in great disorder. The enemy troops fled into the "tortoise-shells"* near Lichuan County-

* A nickname for blockhouses. — *Tr.*

seat with our men racing among them. The three enemy divisions (15 regiments) of 40,000 men and our four divisions of 10,000 men ran mingled together, kicking up clouds of dust.

It was like a tiger charging into a flock of sheep; a large number of stampeding sheep made it difficult to catch any one of them. Our force of 12,000 men routed an enemy of 40,000 men. It was a victory, but we took less than 1,000 prisoners. Our army did not gain much from such a victory, which did not do much harm to the enemy either. Our strategy should be: "Cut off one of the enemy's fingers rather than wound all ten." If the First Army Group had been there fighting alongside our Third Army Group, we could have wiped out all three enemy divisions (15 regiments) plus the three regiments at Xunkou. Then if we had sought opportunities to destroy another 20 enemy regiments, we probably could have smashed the enemy's fifth encirclement campaign. And there would have been no 25,000-*li* Long March in history.

That battle was not significant, but the spectacle of it impressed me so much that I can never forget it. I was shivering from malaria at the command post when the battle started. The sight of the enemy debacle stopped my shivers. I improvised a verse:

It's like a tiger after a flock of sheep;
Under a blanket of smoke and fire
Our army surges forward;
The cries of battle reach the sky,
The earth and mountains shake,
My malaria disappears;
The enemy runs helter-skelter,

Kicking up dust to the sky;
Our brother army has not come,
And so you live another day.

Discovering our main force was at Tuancun, Chiang Kai-shek ordered his troops in the Taining area to move south. Our Front Army Command gave an order for the First Army Group to come to our place, to my great pleasure. Under the policy of "fighting for every inch of land", however, the Front Army Command did not want to lure the enemy into our base area. The First Army Group broke the enemy line in a frontal attack while the Third Army Group failed to break through on the flank. Our route lay in a deep valley between steep cliffs. The enemy had cut down trees and thrown them into the valley to block us from attacking his flank. It took us three to four hours to remove the obstacles in our way. Then we found the enemy had escaped into his "tortoise-shells". If he had advanced 40 to 50 *li* farther, we would have had a better chance to destroy him. In that case his supporting force based in Fujian would have become useless, affecting the operations of his main attacking force which was advancing in a southward direction in Jiangxi.

When the enemy discovered that our main force had arrived at Taining, his contingent at Lichuan marched again on Deshengguan. Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek's troops had converged on the centre of the Central Soviet Area from north, east and west, while Guangdong provincial troops blocked our passage on the south. The enemy attempted to tighten the ring

around the Soviet area and "drain the pond to catch the fish". We could only ward off blows and were unable to hit back. When the enemy advanced from east to west, the Third or First Army Group was ordered to halt his advance. Later the Third Army Group received an order to take up positions at Guangchang, Baishui and Shicheng, which brought us face-to-face with seven enemy divisions. This confrontation lasted five or six months. Under effective cover of rifle and artillery fire, the enemy was able to advance four or five *li* at a time. He built blockhouses, then pushed on again. We were only wasting our bullets and had no reserve supplies. The Red Army had 50,000 troops to fight a positional war against an enemy 500,000 strong. The enemy had at its disposal the manpower and material resources of the whole nation, while our Soviet areas had only a population of 2.5 million. With such a contrast, we were forced into fighting a war of attrition. How could we not but fail?

When we attacked Nanfeng County-seat a second time, we were ordered to "press the enemy out of the county-seat and hit him". But there was no hope at all of even taking the county-seat. We had fewer than 30,000 troops (including the First, Third and Ninth army groups, the last numbering about 3,000) to attack the enemy garrison with five divisions behind strong fortifications. The enemy was also better equipped than in the previous four encirclement campaigns. The Front Army Command put me in charge of the battle, but they issued specific orders to every army group, even pinpointing the mortar emplacements. The First and Third

army groups moved side by side from west to east against the enemy, while the Ninth Army Group moved from south to north. We fought a whole day without making any headway. Ours was a deployment of evenly placed forces. The enemy could counter-attack any point and break through. But we had no right to change the deployment. When dusk fell, the enemy struck at our Ninth Army Group, and Luo Binghui's unit withdrew. Then two enemy divisions detoured to the flank and rear of our Third Army Group headquarters, about one *li* away. Fortunately, we had a unit in reserve, which checked the enemy. If he had come nearer, he could have sealed off the narrow passage for our First Army Group and could have destroyed it. In this battle, we indeed concentrated our forces, but to strike at fortified positions and not to fight mobile warfare.

The Battle of Guangchang

When we stopped over at the Emei Peaks in the Taining area in January or February 1934, I wrote a letter to the Central Committee, suggesting preparations for a long struggle, without which we would meet with the same failure as the Fourth Front Army, which could not hold the Hubei-Hunan-Anhui Soviet Area. There was no reply.

In March or April the enemy gathered a large force to attack Guangchang. The Front Army Command had withdrawn to Ruijin. A provisional command was organized, with Bo Gu as Political Commissar. Li De (Otto Braun) was actually the Commander-in-

chief. He went to the frontline and directed the defence of Guangchang. Time and again, I said the county-seat could not be successfully defended against the well-equipped enemy. He did not believe me, however, but believed in his permanent fortifications.

Without having to face aircraft and artillery pieces, I said, these defences would have been fairly strong, but they were useless against the enemy's modern equipment. If we tried to hold Guangchang, the whole Third Army Group of 12,000 men would perish in two or three days, and the county-seat would be lost.

Since the county-seat had no walls, they wanted to order a regiment to build more fortifications.

I suggested mobile defence. A reinforced company of about 200 men should be assigned to defend the fortifications and draw enemy attention, I said. Our main force would take control of the mountainous area 10 *li* to the southwest of the county-seat and hide there. When the enemy came to attack our fortifications, we would strike at his flank and destroy part of his force. I drew a map for the whole operation. To my relief, the foreign adviser approved my plan.

Seven enemy divisions came to attack Guangchang County-seat under the cover of an artillery brigade. The enemy air force made 30 to 40 sorties a day to coordinate with the ground forces. The enemy troops advanced 1,000 to 2,000 metres at a time, building blockhouses and arraying firepower at every stop. Each time before they pushed forward, six or seven planes came to drop bombs on our posi-

tions. Between eight o'clock in the morning and a little after four in the afternoon, all our "permanent" fortifications had been razed to the ground. Our troops made a few assaults without success and suffered nearly 1,000 casualties by the end of the day. Every man of the battalion that defended Li De's "permanent" fortifications was killed.

Seeing all this, the Front Army Command agreed to pull out our troops and give up defending the county-seat. The Third Army Group suffered heavy losses, retreating to Toupi township. The Front Army Command had watched the Red Army troops fighting adroitly and heroically and the officers commanding expertly, so they made no criticism of them. We had no artillery, and each man was given only a few bullets, less than the number we fire in a single shooting practice nowadays. In those days, we depended on launching sudden attacks and fighting with daring, flexibility and mobility. If we gave up these merits and fought a desperate positional war, we would suffer.

At eight o'clock in the evening after the battle had ended, Bo Gu called me by phone, saying that he and Li De (Braun) wanted me to go to Yang Shangkun's place to have a talk, and that they would go back to Ruijin the next day. When we met, Li De continued to harp on his tactics — how to launch close shock assaults¹ and how to organize firepower.

¹ "Close shock assaults" was a tactical principle formulated by Li De (Otto Braun) during the Red Army's operations against Chiang Kai-shek's fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign. It meant that as the enemy built block-houses and advanced step by step, the Red Army troops

"How to organize firepower?" I said. "We have no more ammunition! Launching close shock assaults against a network of enemy blockhouses means hundred per cent failure. No such assault has ever turned out to be a success." Then I poured out my views, risking personal misfortune.

"Your orders have been wrong right from the beginning," I said. "Since we frustrated the enemy's fourth encirclement campaign, we have not fought one successful battle because of the Front Army Command's errors in directing operations. The chief error was to divide our main forces. At the Tuan-cun battle, if the First and Third army groups had fought together, we would have destroyed three enemy divisions totalling 15 regiments and captured men and ammunition to replenish our forces. We have fought a battle of attrition in every operation against the enemy, who is supported by a national regime and by imperialism, while we depend only on the enemy for our supplies. But you know nothing about this." Then I recounted the contact battle at Xunkou, where we destroyed an enemy division and wanted to wipe out his last battalion surrounded by our forces, but we were not permitted to do so — the frontline commander didn't even have the right to exercise some flexibility. Then the Third Army Group was ordered to go to Xiaoshi, where it was almost annihilated by the enemy.

were also to construct fortifications from which they could sally out against the enemy troops when the latter emerged from their blockhouses. This tactical concept suited the strategy of pure defence (purely defensive defence) carried out by the then "Left" opportunist leaders.

“You sat in far-away Ruijin and directed the second attack on Nanfeng County-seat,” I said, “even marking the emplacements for mortars on the map. But this part of China has never been surveyed to make a 1:100,000 map. It is a map made by enquiry, and even the positions of some places are marked incorrectly. You almost caused the loss of the entire First Army Group. Were it not for the high political consciousness of the Red Army, you would have forfeited the First and Third army groups long ago. You saw this Guangchang battle. Your subjectivism shows that you are merely a military expert practising tactics on maps. Nearly eight years have gone by since the Central Soviet Area was founded and six years since the First and Third army groups began operation. It was not easy to build the base areas. But they are being given away. As the saying goes, ‘The prodigal son doesn’t feel sorry when he sells his father’s farmland.’”

Comrade Wu Xiuquan interpreted for me. Li De (Braun) did not grow angry. I suspected Wu Xiuquan had not translated all my words or else why hadn’t Li De become infuriated? I asked Comrade Yang Shangkun to interpret what I had said all over again. This time Li De flew into a rage, saying: “Feudal! Feudal!” I was pleased. He said I was malcontent because they had dismissed me from the post of Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Commission. (It was true that I was dismissed, but I didn’t know why.) I said I didn’t care about that, what I cared was how to defeat the enemy. I told him he was mean and shameless.

I had my old uniform ready in my kit, ready to

follow him to Ruijin County-seat to be tried, expelled from the Party, or killed. I had no misgivings whatsoever. But at that time I mentioned only their errors in commanding our troops, not their mistakes in political and military lines. Strangely, I was neither dismissed nor punished. Returning to Ruijin, Li De spread rumours, saying that Peng Dehuai tended towards the Right. In fact I had only cited a few examples of his errors. A military line is subordinate to a political line. Politically they said the time had come for a decisive battle between revolution and counter-revolution and so we must not give up even one inch of land in the Soviet areas. This would certainly give rise to a military line of pure defence, of launching close shock assaults and dividing our forces for defence.

After the Guangchang battle, we went on waging positional warfare for more than four months till we reached Shicheng County. In the course of this, we won a minor victory at Gaohunao. In that battle we surprised the enemy by attacking him from the back of a mountain. But the "Left" opportunist leaders took advantage of this victory to play up their tactics of close shock assault. They asked me to write an article about the battle. When I gave them the article, they kept the sentences that suited their purpose and crossed out those they did not like, especially the following: "This was a victory won under special circumstances, which cannot prove that 'close shock assault' is suitable." They changed it into proving that close shock assault was correct. After revising my article, they

did not pass it back to me for approval, but published it under my name.

All this helped me understand that they were carrying out the entirely wrong line of the Fourth Plenary Session, that besides committing errors in military command, they launched excessive struggles against comrades and attacked others so as to build up themselves, that they flaunted the banner of a line representing the Communist International and pretended to be Bolsheviks.

XI. The Long March and the Meeting of the Three Main Forces

(October 1934-December 1936)

The End of the Wang Ming "Left" Opportunist Line

The Red Army broke through enemy encirclement in October 1934 and reached Yizhang and Chenzhou in southern Hunan Province in November. I suggested that the Third Army Group march swiftly on Xiangtan, Ningxiang and Yiyang in northern Hunan to threaten Changsha and move around to destroy small units of enemy troops. In this way we could harass Chiang Kai-shek's armies and force them to alter their deployment. I also suggested that the Central Committee lead the other army groups to Xupu, Chenxi and Yuanling counties in western Hunan and mobilize the masses to build base areas and create battlefields there. All this would help us repulse the enemy offensive. Otherwise, I said, we would be forced into the Xiyan Mountains on the borders of Hunan and Guangxi provinces, where we would have to fight the Guangxi army, too. That would be unfavourable to us. But the Central Com-

mittee neither gave me a reply nor adopted my suggestions.

It was a most odd thing that we did not discuss such an important matter as our withdrawal from the Central Soviet Area. (I had not attended any meeting since the Central Committee Bureau Meeting at Jiangkou in March 1932. I was not a member of the Central Committee¹ or the Central Bureau. But Central Committee members also had not discussed the matter, I was told.)

As I had expected, the Red Army was to march deep into the huge mountains (Xiyan Mountain Range) bordering the two provinces. In the course of our seven-day march, the local Guangxi army, which knew the local people and the terrain well, fought a guerrilla war against our army, giving us many difficulties. After hard fighting, the Third Army Group left the mountains and arrived in Liping County in southeastern Guizhou Province. The First Army Group fared better, marching on the right wing across Hunan territory. The Central Committee column moved in between, like sitting in a sedan-chair carried by the two army groups, each on one side. In this way, we arrived at Zunyi County-seat in Guizhou Province in December, when we ended the four-year domination by the Wang Ming line.

Of the several "Left" opportunist lines that prevailed in China's revolutionary movement, the Wang

¹ The author was elected a member of the Central Committee at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee in Ruijin, January 1934. But he was not informed of this in time because of the tense war situation.

Ming line lasted the longest. Since it put up the signboard of internationalism and put on the cloak of Marxism-Leninism, it was difficult to see its true colours. I had butted my head against a wall of hard facts before I saw it through. The last of these hard facts was its approach to the Fujian Incident, which prompted me to contrast it with Comrade Mao Zedong's leadership. In the first three counter-campaigns against enemy encirclement, when Mao Zedong was in command, everything turned out well. In the third counter-campaign in particular, Chiang Kai-shek's army, 500,000 strong, marched on us in three huge columns. Our Red Army had a little more than 30,000 men, but we operated in perfect order and smashed the formidable enemy forces one by one. That was not easy. In the fifth counter-campaign, however, the Wang Ming line led to a contrary result, though our resources and the political situation were much better than in any of the previous counter-campaigns.

It took me less time to recognize the Li Lisan line. There were many reasons, the most direct being the instructions to attack Wuchang city. If we had carried out these instructions, the Third Army Group would have been destroyed. That was a matter of life and death. Through this concrete experience, I knew the adventurist nature of the Li Lisan line. But my understanding was superficial, not profound.

Following the establishment of the Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao at the Zunyi Meeting and later the inner-Party study of the two opposing political lines in 1943, I further realized the long struggle between the Marxist-Leninist line and

the anti-Marxist-Leninist line in the Party.

From the Zunyi Meeting to the Huili Meeting

In January 1935 I attended a meeting of the Central Committee for the first time. It was the Zunyi Meeting. Chairman Mao presided over the meeting, which put an end to the erroneous military line that had been taken from the beginning of the counter-campaign against the enemy's fifth encirclement. I did not take part in all sessions of the meeting, but had to leave halfway through. When the Sixth Division of the Third Army Group — on the alert guarding the Wujiang River bank south of Zunyi — was attacked by Chiang Kai-shek's Wu Qiwei¹ Army, I rushed to the frontline to take command.

After the meeting, I was told of the decisions made. It reshuffled the Military Commission; Mao Zedong was now the leader of the Central Committee's Revolutionary Military Commission. It dismissed Bo Gu from the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee and appointed Luo Fu (Zhang Wentian)*

¹ Wu Qiwei was Deputy Commander of the Kuomintang's Sixth Route Army.

* Zhang Wentian (1900-76), also known as Luo Fu, joined the CP in 1925. In January 1933 he went to the Central Soviet Area to be the director of the propaganda department of the CPC Central Committee Bureau there. He was elected General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee at the Zunyi Meeting in January 1935. After Liberation in 1951 he was appointed ambassador to the USSR. Returning to China in 1955, he became First Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. After the Eighth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CPC, he became a special research fellow at the Institute of Economics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. — *Tr.*

to take his place. It called for working hard to build base areas on the borders of Hunan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces¹ and to get in touch with the Second Front Army.* Everybody was happy with these decisions and supported them completely. But the comrades hoped that Mao Zedong would take the post of General Secretary as well.

Then the enemy closed in on Zunyi. The Red Army gave up Zunyi and marched west. The enemy armies followed us to the Yunnan-Guizhou-Sichuan border, where we swung round, took a bypath and returned to Tongzi in Guizhou Province again. The Third Army Group marched on to the south and ran into four or five enemy regiments under Wang Jialie² at the Loushanguan Pass. We routed them and followed in hot pursuit right up to the walls of Zunyi County-seat. We stormed the enemy at night, and he gave up the county-seat and fled south. We took Zunyi a second time.

The next morning Wu Qiwei's army under Chiang Kai-shek launched an attack on Zunyi County-seat. Chiang Kai-shek arrived in Guiyang City, capital of Guizhou Province, to direct the attack. The Third Army Group held off the enemy outside the walls from an elevated terrain extending from the south gate to the west gate. The First Army Group

¹ The Zunyi Meeting decided to build base areas on the borders of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces.

* The Second Front Army, Commanded by Comrade He Long (1896-1969), founded the Hunan-Hubei-Sichuan-Guizhou Revolutionary Base Area in October 1934. — *Tr.*

² Wang Jialie, a warlord of Guizhou Province, was the Kuomintang's Governor of Guizhou and Commander of the Second Route Army's Fourth Column.

hid in a place to the southeast of the county-seat, waiting until the enemy launched a full-scale attack on the Third Army Group and then assaulting him on the flank and rear. The battle began at nine in the morning and ended at four in the afternoon. The First and Third army groups destroyed an enemy division; the survivors fled.

That was how, for the first time, we won two successive victories after withdrawing from the Central Soviet Area. We upset the enemy's pursuit plan and won some initiative. It was significant to have achieved those victories just after our new leadership had taken office.

The day after we beat the Wu Qiwei army, the Central Committee agencies arrived in the county-seat. The Third Army Group gathered in a place more than 10 *li* to the southwest of the county-seat. It planned to take three to five days' rest, hear a transmission of the decisions of the Zunyi Meeting and discuss them.

In the meantime, Chiang Kai-shek's armies were converging on Guiyang City. The Yunnan provincial troops were massing in Bijie and Xuanwei on the Yunnan-Guizhou border. Several units of the Sichuan provincial army were assembling in the southern part of the province. I argued that we could shake off the Yunnan provincial troops and concentrate on fighting Chiang Kai-shek's armies. If we could seek opportunities to destroy three or four more divisions under Chiang Kai-shek, we would be able to stand firm and implement the Zunyi Meeting's decision: Carry out repeated operations along the Hunan-Guizhou-Sichuan-Hubei borders (cover-

ing the counties of Sinan, Xiushan, Tongren, Xupu, Chenxi and Yuanling) to foil the enemy offensive, get in touch with the Second Front Army, build new base areas, and stop our strategic retreat.

Then we received a Military Commission order which put the Third Army Group under the command of Lin Biao and Nie Rongzhen of the First Army Group to attack an enemy army garrisoning Lubanchang. This army had been there for four days and had completed good fieldworks. We launched a day-long attack to no avail. When dusk fell, we withdrew and moved west. When we reached a township near the Wanshui River, the Military Commission decided to assault the pursuing Pan Wenhua Division, which had nine regiments and was the main force of the Sichuan's provincial army under Liu Xiang. We fought the whole day without success. Under cover of night, we withdrew, crossed the Wanshui River, and went on west. The enemy tried to block us and strike at our flanks. Things were tense.

The Military Commission assigned Liu Shaoqi as Director of the Political Department of the Third Army Group. The original director, Yuan Guoping, was transferred to the Military Commission for another job. Chairman Mao had introduced Liu to me earlier at the Zunyi Meeting, saying he was an early member of the Party and was now a Central Committee member. I welcomed Liu and told him that our troops feared not being killed in action but being wounded, and feared not forced march or night march but illness that made them fall behind. This was a problem arising from fighting without base

areas. I said everybody was happy to have heard the Zunyi Meeting decision to build base areas, but we had not had time to have a good discussion of the matter. After defeating Wu Qiwei's army, we had intended to take three to five days' rest to discuss the decision and overcome the mood of hesitation in fighting the enemy. Our troops were quite worn out, especially on the day they fought the battle at Loushanguan Pass. The enemy's Wang Jialie unit set out from Zunyi at eight or nine in the morning, attempting to take the pass (45 li from either Zunyi or Tongzi) before we arrived there. The Military Commission informed us of the enemy move after 11 o'clock in the morning and ordered us to take advantage of an opportunity to attack Zunyi. We immediately made for the pass, marching on the double. The long-distance marches on the double had exhausted our men, and they did not regain their strength even after several days. When our vanguard reached the commanding height at the Loushanguan Pass, Wang Jialie's troops were only 200 to 300 metres away. If they had occupied the height first, we would have had to attack upwards and suffer more casualties. As it was, we were able to charge down easily and defeat five enemy regiments. (It was not a strong force.) We suffered only 100 casualties. But it was a frontal attack without cutting the enemy's retreat. Hence not many spoils.

I also told Liu that the enemy troops in Hunan Province were weaker than before. During the war between Chiang Kai-shek and the Guangxi warlords, part of Wu Shang's Eighth Army of Hunan went over to the Guangxi army, while another part was routed.

The Red Army twice attacked He Jian's army at Changsha city, inflicting quite some losses on it. When the Red Army arrived in Chenzhou and Yizhang. I suggested that the Third Army Group march on Xiangtan and Ningxiang to threaten Changsha, that the Central Committee take the main force to the area around Xupu and mobilize the masses to prepare for war, and that the Third Army Group spend a period of time dealing with the enemy in the area of Ningxiang, Xiangtan, Xiangxiang and Yiyang. That had not been a bad idea and should have been taken into consideration, I said. But Bo Gu and the others on the Central Committee did not adopt it. I told Liu that Chiang Kai-shek's armies were quite tired too, that only the Yunnan and Sichuan provincial armies were fresh and vigorous. I said we should shake off the enemy's blockades, flank attacks and pursuits and win one battle or two to switch over to the initiative, get in touch with the Second Front Army and build new base areas according to the decision of the Zunyi Meeting. Then things would take a turn for the better. That was what I talked about with Liu Shaoqi.

Two days later, Liu Shaoqi added his and others' views to mine and wrote a telegram to the Central Committee Military Commission. He wanted me and Yang Shangkun to put our signatures on it. But I felt that it was different from my view, so I did not sign. The telegram was sent in the names of Liu and Yang.

The Military Commission ordered the Third Army Group to send 300 to 400 men led by a strong cadre to open new base areas on the borders of Si-

chuan, Yunnan and Guizhou provinces. We selected more than 400 men and assigned Comrade Xu Ce, political commissar for one of our divisions, to lead them in carrying out guerrilla warfare and opening new base areas in localities assigned by the Military Commission. Xu had been the Director of the Organizational Department of the Southeastern Hubei Special Committee in 1930, and had come to our Third Army Group to do political work. In March 1966 when I went to Gongxian County to inspect coal mines, I made inquiries about Xu Ce's unit. I was told that they had fought till May or June in 1935 when they had been reduced to only a few dozen men. Encircled by the enemy, every one of them died a hero's death; no one surrendered to the enemy.

As Liu Shaoqi took office as Director of the Political Department of the Third Army Group, Chiang Kai-shek had come to Guiyang to direct a huge army to wipe out our forces. Under the wise guidance of Chairman Mao, the Red Army detoured from an area northwest of Guiyang to a place east of the city, then moved south and turned west, freeing itself from encirclement and leaving the enemy troops far behind. We successfully crossed the Jinsha River and entered Huili County in the southern tip of Sichuan Province. That was a great victory. I admired such daring operations to out-manoeuvre the enemy. I was happy with it, having no "Rightist wavering" at all.

In mid-May the Central Committee called a meeting in Huili, known as the Huili Meeting. Now the Military Commission had received the telegram from Liu Shaoqi and Yang Shangkun and a letter

from Lin Biao. Lin's letter suggested that Mao Zedong, Zhu De and Zhou Enlai move with the army to take charge of major affairs, that Peng Dehuai be assigned Front Commander, and that the Red Army swiftly march north to join forces with the Fourth Front Army. I read this letter while attending the meeting and did not mind, considering it a matter of directing field operations. In fighting battles together, we had been in the practice of letting the First Army Group command the Third Army Group sometimes and the Third Army Group command the First Army Group at other times. There were also occasions when they voluntarily coordinated their operations. For example, the day after we took Zunyi County-seat a second time, the First and Third army groups voluntarily coordinated their movements to defeat the counter-attack of the Wu Qiwei army.

Nevertheless, Chairman Mao said at the meeting that Lin Biao had been instigated by Comrade Peng Dehuai to write the letter, that both the letter and the telegram by Liu and Yang were a reflection of a mood of Right deviation on the part of those discontented with the loss of the Central Soviet Area. I felt sorry when I heard this. But there was no time for argument because the enemy was closing in on the Jinsha River. I thought misunderstanding was inevitable among people. Lin Biao's letter was well-intentioned; he wanted to improve things. I had not talked with Lin Biao beforehand, and my talk with Liu Shaoqi was entirely legitimate. I did not try to explain the matter then, but left it to the others to do it at some future date. I figured that time would

clear things up. On the other hand, I made a self-criticism, saying that I had been unhappy because we failed to win the two battles at Lubanchang and Wanshui and that I was pondering ways to fight good battles and free ourselves from the passive situation. Such unhappiness showed a Rightist deviation, I said. I also criticized Lin Biao's letter, saying that we had just reshuffled the leadership at the Zunyi Meeting, and it was inappropriate to suggest another reshuffle of the Front Command, and it was still more inappropriate to recommend me for the post. Lin Biao said nothing to make clear that he had written the letter without my knowledge.

When Chairman Mao mentioned this matter again at the Lushan Meeting in 1959, Comrade Lin Biao made a solemn statement to the effect that his letter had nothing to do with Peng Dehuai who did not know about it beforehand.

As I remember Liu Shaoqi did not attend the Huili Meeting, which decided that the Red Army should march north immediately to join forces with the Fourth Front Army to build a Sichuan-Shaanxi-Gansu Soviet Border Area. At that time, I thought that although neither the letter nor the telegram had anything to do with me, I had become involved and I must be more careful in the future. But whenever something cropped up, I forgot.

Over the past 24 years, the Chairman has mentioned this matter four times. I have not gone to the Chairman to explain the matter, nor have I discussed the matter with any other comrade. Lessons have taught me that I had better make an explanation to clear things up so that misunderstandings do not pile

up for a general settlement. Explanations would also have helped prevent provocators from making use of the matter. (Zhang Guotao* made use of the Huili Meeting to sow dissension. I said it was a trifle, I was wrong.) I was wrong in failing to explain the matter to the Chairman.

Following the Huili Meeting, a struggle cropped up when Zhang Guotao attempted to split the Red Army and we struggled against his activities. My position did not allow me to show any hesitation in this struggle.

Joining Forces with the Fourth Front Army and the Struggle Against Zhang Guotao

After the Huili Meeting, the whole Red Army marched northward. The main force of our First

* Zhang Guotao (1897-1979) was a renegade from the Chinese revolution. Speculating on the revolution, he joined the Chinese Communist Party in his youth. In the Party he made many mistakes and ended by committing grave crimes. Most notoriously, in 1935 he opposed the Red Army's northward march, advocating a defeatist and liquidationist withdrawal by the Red Army to the minority-nationality areas on the Sichuan-Xikang border. He engaged in openly traitorous activities against the Party and the Central Committee, established his own bogus Central Committee, and disrupted the unity of the Party and the Red Army, causing heavy losses to its Fourth Front Army. Thanks to patient education by Comrade Mao Zedong and the Central Committee, the Fourth Front Army and its numerous cadres soon came back under the correct leadership of the Central Committee and played an honourable part in subsequent struggles. Zhang Guotao, however, proved incorrigible. He escaped from the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region in the spring of 1938 and joined the Kuomintang secret police. — *Tr.*

Army Group defeated the army of Liu Wenhui* and crossed the Dadu River at Anshunchang. Another force captured the Luding Bridge, enabling the whole army to advance north quickly. The Third Army Group took Tianquan, Lushan and Baoxing counties and climbed over the snow-capped Jiajin Mountain to join forces with Zhang Guotao's army at Lianghekou.

When we reached Heishuisi, the Military Commission ordered me to take a unit eastward along the right bank of the Heishui River to greet the main force of the Fourth Front Army that was going to cross the river, leaving the main force and headquarters of the Third Army Group at Luhua County.** I took the 11th Regiment to Yinian where we welcomed Comrade Xu Xiangqian and the armies commanded by Wang Hongkun and Yu Tianyun.

Zhang Guotao sent his secretary Huang Chao to Yinian, where he stayed in my place. He said that since it was difficult to get things in this place, he had brought me several catties of dried beef and several *sheng* of rice, as well as 200 to 300 silver dollars. I wondered why he should be doing that. Later, Huang asked me about the Huili Meeting. I told him that we had not fought battles well and had had some

* Liu Wenhui (1895-1976) was a warlord of Sichuan Province at the time. During the War of Liberation he renounced his allegiance to the Kuomintang as Governor of Xikang Province in December 1949. He served as Minister of Forestry in the Central People's Government.
— Tr.

** Luhua County was renamed Heishui County in 1954.
— Tr.

Rightist tendencies, but nothing serious. How did they know about the Huili Meeting? Had the Central Committee informed them of it? If it had, why should they ask me?

"Chairman Zhang (meaning Zhang Guotao) knows you very well," he said.

"I have not met him," I said.

Then he touched on the current strategic principle, saying, "We must move southward first if we want to launch a northern expedition." I said that was Kong Ming's* idea of consolidating the rear of the Kingdom of Shu. Huang also talked about the ferocity of the cavalry units under the Ma family in Northwest China.

Turning over what Huang had said in my mind, I realized that he had come from Zhang Guotao with the sinister purpose of persuading me to join their side. It was obvious that they did not agree with the Central Committee's strategic principle of advancing northward and wanted to sow dissension within the First Front Army and split inner-Party unity besides painting a dark picture of the national situation. Confusing the disastrous consequences of the Wang Ming line with difficulties arising from the objective situation, they denied that the Zunyi Meeting had achieved great victory in correcting an erroneous line. I did not mind their gift of some dried beef and rice, but the handsome present of 300 silver dollars aroused my suspicion. This was typical of the sordid tricks played by old warlords.

* Courtesy name of Zhuge Liang (181-234 A.D.), famous strategist in the period of the Three Kingdoms. — *Tr.*

When I returned to Third Army Group headquarters at Luhua after fulfilling the task, the Staff Department of the Military Commission had taken back all the codebooks used for exchanging information between the army groups, including those used for communicating with Chairman Mao of the Military Commission and the First Army Group. After that, we could get in touch only with the Front Command. We had lost contact with the Central Committee and the First Army Group.

In the northward march, the Third Army Group marched in the rear of the right-wing column while the First Army Group acted as the vanguard. In the middle were the Fourth, 30th and Ninth armies of the Fourth Front Army and the Front Command. I had a feeling that Zhang Guotao was scheming to further his own ambitions, but the Central Committee seemed to be unaware of it. Chairman Mao and Zhang Wentian marched with Front Command and arrived at Upper and Lower Babso, over 100 *li* northwest of Songpan (Sungqu), a day or two earlier than we did. One or two days later, our Third Army Group reached A'gyi and Baxi, 15 to 20 *li* away from Front Command. I immediately went to Front Command and Chairman Mao's place. In fact, I wanted to see only Chairman Mao. At that time, Zhou Enlai and Wang Jiaxiang had fallen ill and were staying with Third Army Group headquarters. During our four or five days' stay at Baxi, I visited Front Command every day. I put the 11th Regiment in a concealed place close to Chairman Mao's residence as a precaution.

Ye Jianying, Front Command Chief of Staff, told

me that the First Army Group had got lost in the Ejie area, where they could find no guides to show them the way through the boundless grasslands. Yang Shangkun had been transferred to another job, and Li Fuchun had succeeded him as Political Commissar of the Third Army Group. Our Third Army Group set up a radio station and compiled a new codebook. We said that we wanted to establish contact with the First Army Group. What we could not say was that we were preparing for any eventuality. We sent Comrade Mu Jong (a Korean) with a compass to trace the whereabouts of the First Army Group and take the codebook to Lin Biao and Nie Rongzhen. Something happened on the very day he found Lin Biao.

Before noon one day, I went to Front Command where comrades were discussing how to continue the northward march. But when I returned there after lunch, I found Chen Changhao* had completely changed his tune. He said that the Aba (Ngawa) area was a better place than the Tongjiang-Nanjiang-Bazhong area in the northeastern part of Sichuan Province. Who could believe that a nomadic area was better than an agricultural area? He did not utter a word about the fact that the national political situation called for the Red Army's northward march to resist Japanese aggression. I just listened to him and kept silent. Doubtless, he had got a telegram from Zhang Guotao, who wanted to change the direction of march.

I went to Chairman Mao's place immediately and

* Political Commissar of the Fourth Front Army. — *Tr.*

told him about the matter. I said we supported the Central Committee and insisted on marching northward, but they supported Zhang Guotao's principle to go south.

"The First Army Group has gone two days ahead of us," I said. "What will we do if the Fourth Front Army disbands the Third Army Group? Can we hold some hostages under those circumstances to prevent the misfortune of Red Army troops fighting each other?"

Pondering over my question for a while, the Chairman said, "No."

I felt very sorry. If the Third Army Group was compelled to go south, the First Army Group could not continue its northern march, either. If the Central Committee was not able to go, the First Army Group could achieve nothing by marching north alone. If we went southward with Zhang Guotao's front army, he might try to make use of his superior force to get rid of the Central Committee. His plot had been revealed by Huang Chao when he said at Yinian that the actual man in charge was Mao, not Zhang Wentian (Zhang, who was the then General Secretary, was not worth a damn in their minds). These words could not have come from the mouth of Huang Chao, who was less than 30 years old, but had to have come from Zhang Guotao, a wily old fox. Though my suggestion to hold hostages was wrong, I made it to Chairman Mao alone at a critical juncture for the purpose of freeing ourselves from danger.

In less than two hours after my talk with Chairman Mao, Ye Jianying reported to him privately that

Zhang Guotao had sent a telegram proposing that the Red Army march south. Chairman Mao went to see Xu Xiangqian and Chen Changhao to discuss the route of the march with them. Chen said he had received a telegram from General Political Commissar Zhang Guotao, recommending a march to the south.

"If we are going to march southward," Chairman Mao said, "the Secretariat of the Central Committee has to discuss it at a meeting. Comrades Zhou Enlai and Wang Jiaxiang, who are ill, are with Third Army Group headquarters. Let Zhang Wentian, Bo Gu and me go to them for the meeting."

Chen Changhao agreed, unaware that the Chairman wanted to get away from his control. I discussed with Ye Jianying how to bring maps and the Second Bureau* to Third Army Group headquarters secretly before dawn the next day, so that we could go on marching north. Ye said he would try.

At Third Army Group headquarters Chairman Mao sent a telegram to Lin Biao and Nie Rongzhen, saying that there had been some changes regarding the route of the march and instructing the First Army Group to halt and wait.

It was daybreak, and there was no sign of Ye Jianying. I was wondering what had happened when Ye came with the Second Bureau (with Zeng Xisheng as Bureau Director) and the maps. He had slipped past close surveillance imposed by Chen Changhao. Good fortune!

The Third Army Group marched northward.

* In charge of intelligence. — *Tr.*

Chairman Mao and I were marching in the rear with the 10th Regiment commanded by Yang Yong.*

"What would we have done if they had detained us?" I asked Chairman Mao.

"We would have had to go south with them," he said. "But they will understand in the long run."

Li Te (a returned student from the Soviet Union and then Chief of Staff of the Fourth Front Army) prevented cadres of the First Front Army from returning to us and treated them harshly. But Li De (Otto Braun), who had committed mistakes in the Central Soviet Area, behaved very well this time in releasing the First Front Army cadres. Chairman Mao said some very moving words to Li Te and persuaded me not to have a row with him.

Chen Changhao wrote me a letter, asking me to stop marching north.

"Write him a reply," Chairman Mao said, "and say we'll meet again someday."

It was said that Chen Changhao had attempted to dispatch troops to pursue us. But Xu Xiangqian said it was ridiculous for Red Army troops to fight each other. His words played an important part in preventing Chen from chasing us.

The following day we arrived at Ejie and joined the First Army Group. The feeling between our two army groups was so warm that we greeted each other like members of one family. At the moment,

* Yang Yong (1912-83) was a member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee and Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the PLA before his death in January 1983. — Tr.

I realized that class friendship stood above everything else.

In the struggle against Zhang Guotao, Chairman Mao displayed a strong sense of principle and flexibility. At a meeting of the Central Committee held at Heishuisi (which I did not attend), Zhang Guotao wanted to be General Political Commissar. But Luo Fu proposed to make him General Secretary. Chairman Mao did not agree. He wanted to offer him the post of General Political Commissar rather than General Secretary. Zhang Guotao did not want to be the General Secretary, however.

"You people take the post of General Secretary," Zhang said. "We are fighting a war now."

If we had given up the post of General Secretary, Zhang Guotao could have called a meeting in that name to legalize the bogus Central Committee he was to set up later. This was an issue of principle.

When the First and Third army groups joined forces at Ejie, the Central Committee called a meeting. Some people proposed to expel Zhang Guotao from the Party. Chairman Mao disagreed, saying, "It is not a problem involving Zhang Guotao alone. We have to take into account the many officers and men of the Fourth Front Army. You may expel him from the Party, but he goes on commanding and hoodwinking tens of thousands of troops. And we will be embarrassed when we meet again."

Later when Zhang Guotao set up a bogus Central Committee, once again some people wanted to expel him. Again Chairman Mao took exception to the proposal. If Zhang Guotao had been expelled from the Party then, it would have been much more dif-

difficult for us to win over the Fourth Front Army later for crossing the grasslands, and there would have been no joining forces of the Second and Fourth front armies at Garzê, let alone the great union of the First, Second and Fourth front armies in northern Shaanxi Province. The above is an example of the combination of principle and flexibility in the struggle between two opposing lines within the Party.

Crossing the Grasslands on the Long March

Going northwest from Ejie, Chairman Mao marched everyday with the First Army Group in the vanguard. Ye Jianying and I commanded the unit under the direct control of the Central Committee, and the Third Army Group followed in the rear.

The Bailong River flows between sheer cliffs and overhanging rocks, particularly at Lazikou, which was a real natural barrier guarded by a regiment under Deng Baoshan.¹ When we marched past Lazikou we could not imagine how our heroes in the First Army Group could have climbed the precipices to hurl grenades down at the defenders. I saw enemy corpses blurred with blood on the ground, and I wondered how many casualties we had suffered.

It took us seven or eight days to march from Ejie to Hadapu (Bailong) via Lazikou. Our route went across a semi-nomadic Tibetan area, sparsely populated and short of provisions. The troops that marched

¹ It was a Kuomintang unit under Lu Dachang that garrisoned Lazikou.

in the rear had even more difficulties. Located from 30 to 40 *li* south of Minxian County-seat, Hadapu was at the border of two regions, one inhabited by Tibetans and the other by Hans. The Han people lived in a backward agricultural region. At that time 6,000 to 7,000 men of the Fifth and Ninth army groups remained in the Aba area with the Fourth Front Army. When we arrived at Hadapu, the First and the Third army groups each had about 6,000 men, and the unit attached to the Central Committee had about 2,000 men, making a total of 14,000 men. All these men were in poor health. During our march, we sometimes saw comrades fall and die on the roadside.

The whole army had a four- or five-day rest at Hadapu. We learned from local newspapers that Liu Zhidan* had established a Soviet base area in northern Shaanxi Province, which made everyone happy. It was a distance of over 1,000 *li* from Hadapu to the Soviet base area in Bao'an County with the Liupan Mountains lying in between. Our officers and men, every one of them as thin as a lath, had to march 80 to 100 *li* every day. Along the way, they had to cope with attacks by enemy troops, particularly enemy cavalries. To strengthen the combatant units for

* Liu Zhidan (1902-36) was one of the founders of the Shaanxi-Gansu Revolutionary Base Area and of the 26th Army of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. In April 1936, he led the 28th Army of the Red Army to Shanxi for resistance to Japan. He was killed in an action in Zhongyang County, western Shanxi, during an attack by Kuomintang reactionaries. Bao'an County, Shaanxi Province, his native place, was renamed Zhidan County in 1936 to honour his memory. — *Tr.*

further battles and to preserve cadres for developing new areas, I proposed to streamline the army by dissolving the Third Army Group and reorganizing its men into the First Army Group. Chairman Mao of the Military Commission approved my proposal. We called a meeting of Third Army Group cadres at and above regimental level to explain the need to reduce the size of army establishments and to cancel the designation of the Third Army Group. Pressed for time, we could not conduct a thorough discussion.

And this also came to be labelled as a plot of Peng Dehuai after the 1959 Lushan Meeting. I am at a loss as to what to do — laugh or cry. Taking the Nanchang Uprising and the Autumn Harvest Uprising into consideration, we had to retain the designation of the First Army Group. I therefore proposed to streamline the army by dissolving the Third Army Group and strengthening the First Army Group. The Central Committee approved my proposal, which I firmly implemented. These are the facts. How can these facts be condemned as “taking only individual interests into consideration and ignoring the interests of the Party as a whole”? And how can they be explained as a “disguise” or a “scheme”?

After the regrouping, the First Front Army was renamed the Anti-Japanese Vanguard Detachment, or the Shaanxi-Gansu Detachment. I was assigned Commander of the detachment and Chairman Mao, Political Commissar. During our march eastward from Hadapu, the detachment defeated cavalries under the command of Ma Bufang, Ma Hongkui and Ma Hongbin, as well as Deng Baoshan's troops, Mao Bingwen's army and a unit of the Northeast Army.

We wiped out a regiment of Deng Baoshan's army on the peak of the Liupan Mountains. After 20 days of hard fighting, we arrived at Wuqi township on the border of the Northern Shaanxi Base Area. We had been there only one day when five regiments of enemy cavalymen attacked.

"Beat the pursuing enemy. Don't let them enter the base area," Chairman Mao said.

We won the battle, winding up the great 25,000-*li* Long March of the heroic Red Army. When we regrouped our troops at Hadapu, the Red Army had over 14,000 men. When we reached Wuqi township, only 7,200 men were left.

Someone has said: "Ever since Comrade Mao's leadership was established in the whole Party and the whole army at the Zunyi Meeting in 1935, Peng Dehuai has opposed his leadership most of the time and has carried out divisive activities within the Party and the army." Are there any grounds for these unwarranted charges? None at all. On the contrary, when the Red Army defeated the pursuing cavalry after arriving at Wuqi township, Chairman Mao wrote me a poem, which ran:

High mountains, dangerous passes, deep ravines,
The enemy cavalry sweep the length and
breadth at will;

Who dares stop them, astride a horse, gun at
the ready?

Only our General Peng Dehuai.

I changed the last line of the poem into "Only our heroic Red Army", and returned the poem to Chair-

man Mao. Clearly, there was no estrangement between us but mutual trust.

Smashing the Third "Encirclement and Suppression" Campaign Against Northern Shaanxi

When the First Front Army of the Red Army arrived at Wuqi township, Chiang Kai-shek ordered over 10 divisions of Zhang Xueliang's* Northeast Army to launch a third "encirclement and suppression"

* Zhang Xueliang, known as the Young Marshal, succeeded his father Zhang Zuolin as head of the Northeast Army and ruler of Northeast China after the latter was assassinated by agents of Japanese imperialism in June 1928. (Cf. footnote on p. 151.) On September 18, 1931, the Japanese Kwantung Army seized Shenyang, and the Northeast Army withdrew to the south of Shanhaiguan Pass under Chiang Kai-shek's order of "absolute non-resistance". Later the Northeast Army was sent to Northwest China to "suppress Communists" together with the Kuomintang's 17th Route Army (Northwest Army) under Yang Hucheng. Under the influence of the Chinese Red Army and the people's anti-Japanese movement, both the Northeast and Northwest armies agreed to the Anti-Japanese National United Front proposed by the CPC and demanded that Chiang Kai-shek unite with the CPC to resist Japan. As Chiang Kai-shek refused, Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng jointly arrested him, and this became known as the Xi'an Incident of December 12, 1936. Chiang was forced to accept the terms of unity with the CPC and resistance to Japan, and was set free to return to Nanjing. Zhang Xueliang, who accompanied Chiang to Nanjing, was immediately placed under detention. Yang Hucheng was ousted from his post in April 1937 and had to take a leave of absence abroad. After the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, he came back to China to offer his services, only to be interned by Chiang Kai-shek. The Kuomintang had him murdered in a concentration camp in Chongqing when the People's Liberation Army was approaching the city in September 1949. — Tr.

sion" campaign against the Red Army forces in the Northern Shaanxi Soviet Area. The enemy's first line forces included four divisions of Dong Yingbin's Army assembled at Qingyang, preparing to march eastward along the banks of the Hulu River from Qingyang and Heshui; three divisions under the command of Wang Yizhe assembled at Luochuan, ready to go north; and one division garrisoning Ganquan and another division, Yan'an. The enemy's second line forces included two armies of the Northwest Army commanded by Yang Hucheng and several divisions of the Northeast Army; their locations were unknown.

The 26th Army of the Red Army in northern Shaanxi under the command of Liu Zhidan had about 3,000 men, as had the 25th Army from the Hubei-Henan-Anhui area under the command of Xu Haidong.* The two armies had merged to form the 15th Army Group, which was stationed at Daozuopu between Ganquan and Fuxian. Chairman Mao and I left Wuqi township first, passed by Xiasiwan in Baoan County (Zhidan County)** and crossed the Shao-shan Mountain to reach the headquarters of the 15th Army Group at Daozuopu, where we met Comrades Xu Haidong and Cheng Zihua*** and had a discussion with them on a plan to smash the enemy's third encirclement campaign. Our troops took a three-day

* Xu Haidong (1900-70) became senior-general of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and served as member of the Military Commission of the CPC Central Committee after China's Liberation. — *Tr.*

** See note on p. 381. — *Tr.*

*** Cheng Zihua is now on the Standing Committee of the CPC Central Advisory Commission. — *Tr.*

rest at Wuqi township, then followed along the same route.

Xu Haidong, I and a number of regimental officers went to reconnoitre the terrain around Zhiluo township. Then our troops destroyed some landlord strongholds and wiped out the "civil corps" in Tatong village. After making preparations for the battle, about 7,000 men of our First Army Group came to gather around Taotong village. Both the First Army Group and the 15th Army Group lay in ambush in hills north and south of Zhiluo township.

Four enemy divisions of Dong Yingbin's army, in four echelons, drove towards Zhiluo township via Heshui and Heishuisi at the rate of 30 *li* a day. When his 109th Division came into the ambush zone near Zhiluo township our troops swung into action and destroyed the whole division in about two hours, killing Division Commander Niu Yuanfeng. The enemy's 106th Division, forming the second echelon, lost one regiment and retreated into fortified villages in Heishuisi. The enemy's third "encirclement and suppression" campaign was thus smashed in early December 1935.

It was absolutely necessary to win such a battle after our arrival in the Northern Shaanxi Base Area. This was the first victory after the triumphant Long March. The enemy's 110th Division in Ganquan was besieged for almost a month by two small divisions (each had about 2,000 men) of the Red Army commanded by Yang Dezhi* and He Jinnian, but the

* Yang Dezhi is now member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. — Tr.

enemy dared not send reinforcements to the division. The main force of our First Army Group, together with our 15th Army Group, occupied the area between Yichuan and Qiulin county-seats and areas to the north and south. They obtained provisions and carried out mass work there.

Towards the end of December, after the battle at Zhiluo township, Chairman Mao called a meeting of the Central Committee at Wayaobu. At the meeting he made his well-known report *On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism* (December 27, 1935). I stayed in Ganquan to direct our troops in an attack on Ganquan County-seat. In a little over a month, we carried out the work of the Anti-Japanese National United Front among the Northeast and Northwest armies, and won over the POW officer Gao Fuyuan (captured by the 15th Army Group during the Lao-shan battle before our arrival in northern Shaanxi).

Gao Fuyuan, who had been a university student in Beijing and graduated from the Northeast China Military Academy, was a good friend of Zhang Xue-liang with a strong commitment to resisting Japanese aggression. Treating him as our guest after his capture, we had many conversations with him on resisting Japanese aggression and saving the nation, on Chiang Kai-shek's policy of non-resistance to Japan and his attempt to weaken and even get rid of the Northeast Army by forcing it to "suppress the Communists". We invited him to inspect Red Army units and attend performances of anti-Japanese plays and songs given by our army men. He was convinced that we wanted to resist Japanese aggression, but he had many doubts about the Communist Party. "How

can you combine internationalism with patriotism?" he asked.

I had a democratic discussion with him for two days and one night according to the guidelines in Chairman Mao's report at the Wayaobu Meeting. Then he wanted to visit the besieged 110th Division in Ganquan County-seat. I agreed, and he went.

A few days later he returned from Ganquan to tell me that the great cause of resisting Japanese aggression and saving the nation depended on the Communist Party and the Red Army. He said the relations between the Red Army and the people showed that the Communist Party really cherished the nation and the people.

Calling at my residence one night, he told me that both Zhang Xueliang and Wang Yizhe wanted to resist Japanese aggression and that there was a popular demand for fighting back to Northeast China among officers and men of the Northeast Army.

"But everything depends on Zhang Xueliang," he said. "If Zhang is able to know the truth about the Red Army, he may cooperate with you on the issue of resisting Japanese aggression."

"You go back to Xi'an City and talk to him," I said.

"Do you really mean to let me go back?" he said with great joy. "I won't let down the Red Army which has given me such cordial treatment."

"You may go any time you like."

"Tomorrow morning?"

"Good! I'll see you off."

Next morning, I gave him 200 silver dollars and

dispatched some cavalymen to escort him to the defence line of Wang Yizhe's troops.

A week later, he took an airplane flying provisions to Ganchuan County-seat and dropped a great quantity of newspapers and magazines near our headquarters. By now the Red Army had built a bridge linking itself with the Northeast Army in an Anti-Japanese National United Front. Nationally, the anti-Japanese movement was developing fast. Gao turned out to be very good and joined the Communist Party. Later he was killed by the Kuomintang after Zhang Xueliang escorted Chiang Kai-shek back to Nanjing.

Zhang Xueliang's shift from anti-Communism to an alliance with the Communist Party for resisting Japan fully proved the correctness of Chairman Mao's report, *On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism*, and dealt a blow against the "closed-doorists". Developing an Anti-Japanese United Front with the Northeast and Northwest armies, the Red Army created favourable conditions for an eastern expedition.

From this one could see the contrast between the two different political lines. When we were fighting in Jiangxi Province, we had a strong Red Army and vast Soviet areas. But as a result of the Wang Ming line and a wrong policy towards the 19th Route Army, we lost 90 per cent of the Soviet areas, 90 per cent of the Red Army forces and almost all Party organizations in the White areas. By the time we arrived at Wuqi township, we had only 7,200 men left plus the 15th Army Group, totalling 13,000 men. With the guidance of Chairman Mao's correct line, how-

ever, we smashed the enemy's third "encirclement and suppression" campaign as soon as we set foot in northern Shaanxi and developed an Anti-Japanese National United Front, launching a strategic offensive on the Kuomintang. Chairman Mao's line drove Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang into a passive position and won the initiative for our Party and army and their work in both the Soviet and White areas. I sensed the might of a correct political line, one which was most effective in mobilizing all revolutionary forces. All this added much to my courage.

Crossing the Huanghe River to the East, Heading for Shanxi Province

After smashing the enemy's third encirclement campaign against northern Shaanxi, the Red Army had a lot of trouble getting supplies — something we had to take into account in planning our operations.

Northern Shaanxi Province was a good base area in which small Red Army forces could operate and a good place in which large Red Army forces could establish a foothold. But its economy was backward and transportation poor. It was a sparsely populated area bordering on the Huanghe River (Yellow River) to the east, deserts to the north and wilderness to the west. Though it was a difficult place for the White armies to encircle, it was also a difficult place for the Red Army to expand itself. If the Red Army marched southward, it would have to fight the Northeast and Northwest armies. Moreover, Chen

Cheng, Chiang Kai-shek's general, had three armies stationed in Luoyang city and west of it, ready to manoeuvre against the Red Army. A southward march would only bring more enemy troops under Chiang Kai-shek's direct control to Northwest China and strengthen his control there. Therefore, a southern expedition was unfavourable to the expansion of the Red Army and the situation as a whole.

It would be ideal, however, for the Red Army to march eastward across the Huanghe River to open up base areas in the Lüliang Mountains, and then to go ahead to central and southeastern Shanxi Province. An eastern expedition could extend the anti-Japanese movement to North China and solve the problems of obtaining provisions, replenishing our troops, raising funds and collecting other material supplies. But contact with the Northern Shaanxi Base Area would have to be ensured in an eastern expedition.

In mid-January 1936 I received Chairman Mao's telegram instructing the Red Army to march eastward across the Huanghe River and seize the Lüliang Mountains to open up new base areas. Although I supported the Military Commission's plans, two things worried me. First, I was afraid that the Red Army might not be able to cross the river. At that time our armymen were still weak, barely having recovered from the great fatigue of the Long March. The entire Red Army numbered only some 13,000 men, including the units under the command of Liu Zhidan and Xu Haidong. It would be unfortunate if we were to suffer a setback by failing to force the river. Second, if the Red Army was able

to cross the river and then met with very strong reinforcements sent by Chiang Kai-shek, it should be able to ensure its withdrawal back to the Northern Shaanxi Base Area. This was a point we couldn't afford to ignore. Therefore, in my telegram of reply, I supported the decision, agreeing that it was necessary to advance eastward across the Huanghe River. But I added that we must have an absolute guarantee that our contact with the Northern Shaanxi Base Area be maintained. I had on my mind the poor physical condition of the Red Army men and the hard lesson of having no base areas to depend on during the Long March.

Chairman Mao was not pleased with my telegram.

"You provide the absolute guarantee," he said. "I can't."

After accompanying Chairman Mao to Daxiang village on the northern bank of the Wuding River, I left for the river estuary with a radio transmitter and traced the river tens of kilometres up and down stream, looking for suitable ferry crossings. I spent seven nights pinpointing two crossings for the First and 15th army groups and gathering intelligence about the enemy. I acquainted myself not only with the enemy's frontline fortifications and deployment of troops and firepower, but also with his disposition in depth. This would help ensure a successful crossing or a safe withdrawal to northern Shaanxi in any eventuality.

Later when I arrived at the predetermined ferry crossings, I found our troops had built only 15 boats, each capable of carrying 30 men. It took one hour 20 minutes for these boats to cross the river and

AREAS COVERED BY THE AUTHOR DURING THE LONG MARCH



come back. Meanwhile, we had to transport all together 14,000 men of the Red Army along with their kits, field kitchens, horses, etc. Such a small number of boats could ensure neither the crossing nor a safe return if necessary. We decided to bring into play the initiative of the local Party, government and civilians. Working day and night, they built 100 boats and assigned each to three or four boatmen who were given organizational and political training. All this helped provide a guarantee for a successful crossing or safe return. Without doing all this we could not have acquired an absolute guarantee for contact with the Northern Shaanxi Base Area.

Less than one enemy battalion guarded the bank opposite each of our ferry crossings. Farther beyond, there was also one battalion garrisoning Liuyu township and another battalion, Shilou County, 30 to 40 *li* away from the river bank. By the time these two battalions could arrive at the bank, our entire army would have crossed the river.

I spent more than a month making preparations on the bank of the Huanghe River. I carried out detailed reconnaissance of the strength and firepower of every enemy blockhouse and the location of their reserve troops on the opposite bank. It was very important that a senior commander make such detailed reconnaissance and preparation since the Red Army had inferior firepower and lacked artillery support. Then I went back to Daxiang village to report to Chairman Mao on the preparations, the selection of ferry crossings and the time for action. He approved everything.

The Red Army troops made a smooth crossing.

Starting off from the two ferry crossings, they reached and took the opposite bank almost without any casualties. The Chairman went with the 15th Army Group to Shilou County and I with the First Army Group to Liuyu township.

After crossing the Huanghe River, the Red Army took Xixian, Shilou and Jixian counties in the Lüliang Mountains. Two enemy divisions that had occupied Suide and Mizhi on the western bank to the northwest were forced to retreat. This helped to remove a threat to the Northern Shaanxi Base Area. The warlord Yan Xishan had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to build fortifications along the Huanghe, which proved useless in preventing the Red Army from crossing the river.

The enemy quickly massed 12 regiments at Duijiuyu and prepared for an advance towards Damaijiao. It would have been possible for us to destroy his two vanguard regiments (one brigade) on the move. However, we chose not to do so, but encircled and attacked Duijiuyu from three sides. The enemy force being large, the one-day battle ended in a stalemate. Chairman Mao changed the plan of operations. Taking advantage of the absence of troops to the rear of the Shanxi Army, he ordered the 15th Army Group to march north and take Wenshui and Jiaocheng to threaten Taiyuan city. Then the 15th Army Group drove into Jingle County to publicize the call to advance north and resist Japanese aggression. Meanwhile, the First Army Group took Xiaoyi and marched on Lingshi and Jiexiu. This posed a threat to Pingyao, Yuci and Taigu as well as Taiyuan

City, and forced the enemy troops at Duijiuyu to withdraw into Taiyuan.

The two enemy divisions that Yan Xishan had sent to Suide and Mizhi in northern Shaanxi Province were recalled and retreated overnight to Shanxi Province. This enabled the Soviet Areas on the two banks of Wuding River to join together. The three armies of Chen Cheng, Chiang Kai-shek's general, dared not enter Shanxi by crossing the Huanghe River at Tongguan, but made a detour by train via Zhengzhou and Shijiazhuang cities to assemble in Yuci and Taigu near Taiyuan city. Then they pressed southward step by step. Before the main forces of Yan Xishan and Chen Cheng were able to assemble and launch attacks on our Red Army troops, we had already spent a whole month resting and reorganizing our units and carrying out mass work. In neighbouring Jiexiu, Lingshi and Linfen counties, the First Army Group aroused the civilians to arrest local tyrants, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars, recruited several thousand soldiers (most of them coming from Henan and Shandong), and captured a large quantity of arms and ammunition from local "civil corps". Involved in conflict most of the time, the 15th Army Group achieved less in recruiting soldiers and raising funds. But on its return march, it wiped out a whole enemy regiment south of Liulin. And when the enemy forces closed in on the bank of the river, the Red Army had already safely crossed the river and returned to northern Shaanxi.

When Yan Xishan and Chen Cheng concentrated

their forces and launched an attack on the Lüliang Mountains, we published, in the name of the Anti-Japanese Vanguard Detachment of the Red Army, an open telegram to the Kuomintang government, to all naval, land and air forces and public and legal organizations and schools across China, and wrote a special letter to Yan Xishan. In the telegram and letter, we explained our anti-Japanese position, saying that we were unwilling to see "members of one family drawing swords against each other", that we only wanted to march northward to fight the Japanese invaders. We also said that since Chiang and Yan did not allow us to do so, we would withdraw the Anti-Japanese Vanguard Detachment to northern Shaanxi for the time being by order of the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Red Army of China. We asked them to send representatives to discuss vital matters for saving the nation.

The eastern expedition was of great significance. We wiped out about three enemy regiments; captured hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition; recruited 7,000 men for the Red Army, including 5,000 civilians and 2,000 POWs; raised 400,000 dollars in cash; and expanded the Soviet areas in northern Shaanxi. We publicized the anti-Japanese position of the December 1935 Meeting of the CPC Central Committee, and so supported the national salvation movements of the students in Beijing, Tianjin and Taiyuan. All commanders and men of the Red Army could see the correctness of the political line of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao. We had regained the initiative polit-

ically and militarily by launching a strategic offensive against the enemy.

With the correct leadership of Chairman Mao, we smashed the Kuomintang army's third encirclement campaign against the Northern Shaanxi Base Area, marched into Shanxi Province and publicized our anti-Japanese position widely. Thus the Communist Party assumed leadership in the movement to resist Japanese aggression. This was the second victory won by the Red Army after arriving in northern Shaanxi. This time, Chairman Mao marched with the army as Chairman of the Military Commission and Political Commissar of the Anti-Japanese Vanguard Detachment and made decisions on all measures. Our army adopted mobile and flexible tactics, suffering few losses but achieving a lot. As Commander of the Anti-Japanese Vanguard Detachment I did only a little practical work under the leadership of Chairman Mao.

The Western Expedition in June

In late May or early June 1936 we called a meeting of all cadres of the Red Army at a place east of Wayaobu, where the agencies of the Central Committee were located. Chairman Mao addressed the gathering. He mentioned the great victory of the eastern expedition and opposed the departmental selfishness of the First Army Group in refusing to give new recruits to replenish the 15th Army Group. He announced the establishment of a Western Expeditionary Army and its headquarters to expand

the anti-Japanese base areas and to meet the Second and Fourth front armies coming across the grasslands. He appointed me Commander of the army without a political commissar, but assigned Liu Xiao* Director of the army's Political Department. He mentioned the setting up of a Red Army Academy with Lin Biao as President, where a large number of cadres transferred from army units were going to study.

I led the First and 15th army groups marching westward in two columns, left and right. As the left column, the First Army Group marched on Quzi, Huanxian and Yuwang. It destroyed the Ye Brigade of Ma Hongkui's army at Quzi, capturing the brigade commander and his wife. We treated them leniently and released them. Later they helped us develop the Anti-Japanese United Front among the Kuomintang troops of the Hui nationality.

The 15th Army Group, marching as the right column, took Jingbian, Dingbian, Anbian and Yanchi county-seats and encouraged the masses to establish local governments. The Front Command marched with the 15th Army Group.

Marching on westward in early August, the 15th Army Group took Hui'anbu and Tongxin County-seat, while the First Army Group penetrated into the area between Guyuan and Haiyuan and Tongxin County-seat. Both were operating in Ningxia. Guyuan County-seat was defended by a division under the Northeast Army Commander He Zhuguo

* Liu Xiao is on the Central Advisory Commission of the CPC. — Tr.

and a unit attached to army headquarters. There was a second division at Haiyuan, and a third one along the Tongxin-Guyuan line. Our troops drove a wedge between the three divisions, separating each from the other. I wrote a letter to Army Commander He Zhuguo, explaining our principle of resisting Japanese aggression and saving the nation and urging him to withdraw all his troops from Haiyuan and Tongxin to Guyuan County-seat and the area to the south so as not to harass our troops going to meet the Second and Fourth front armies which were coming to resist Japanese aggression. I promised him that our troops would not attack his on the move, but would rather offer them every convenience. He did not believe me at first. Then I sent Zhu Rui to negotiate with him, and an agreement was reached. He observed the agreement.

In mid-August the First Army Group took Longde, Huining and other county-seats between Pingliang County and Lanzhou City. One of its units moved on and met the Second and Fourth front armies in Tongwei. I was with Front Command at Dalachi northwest of Haiyuan.

Zhang Guotao arrived in Huining County-seat with his headquarters. I sent him a telegram, saying that I was going to Huining to meet him and telling him the locations of four armies of the Northeast Army: Wang Yizhe's army in Luochuan, Dong Yingbin's army in Qingyang, He Zhuguo's army in Guyuan, and an army under a certain Ma¹ in Lanzhou City. I

¹The four Northeast armies were headed respectively by Wang Yizhe, Dong Yingbin, He Zhuguo and Yu Xuezhong. Yu's army was stationed in Lanzhou City.

told him that these armies would not stand in the way of his troops' advance, but Chiang Kai-shek had ordered Wang Jun's army to move to Pingliang, which showed an intention to intercept our troops at Longde. Chiang had also ordered Hu Zongnan's army to move to the Northwest. I advised Zhang to concentrate all his troops in the Haiyuan-Dalachi area to wipe out Wang Jun's army.

Zhang Guotao sent me a reply telegram saying that I needed not go to Huining, that he and Commander-in-Chief Zhu De would leave for Dalachi the same day to talk with me, and that Xu Xiangqian and Chen Changhao would also come with their troops.

Next day Zhang Guotao arrived at Dalachi, but Xu and Chen still had not turned up by the third day. At dawn the following day, I went to Zhang Guotao's place and queried him, "Why haven't Xu and Chen come yet?"

"I ordered them," Zhang Guotao replied, "to lead the main forces of the Fourth Front Army and the Fifth Army Group of the First Front Army in crossing the Huanghe River near Lanzhou City and marching on Wuwei (Liangzhou)." His order was made at the time he sent me the telegram.

I told him about the influence of Chairman Mao's December 1935 report, *On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism*, and our united front with the Northeast and Northwest armies. But he turned a deaf ear to me.

Zhang Guotao's headquarters and its division com-

manded by Chen Xilian* and Xie Fuzhi** under Wang Hongkun failed to cross the river probably because they were stopped by the army of the Ma family and Wang Jun's army.

After Zhang Guotao's arrival at Dalachi, two divisions of Wang Jun's army tailed after the cut-off division of the Fourth Front Army. I said to Zhang Guotao that if the division blocked the enemy in front, our First Army Group could assault the pursuing enemy on his flank and rear and lay an ambush at Dalachi. In this way, I said, it would be possible to wipe out Wang Jun's two divisions and get in touch with the main force of the Fourth Front Army, which had crossed the river from its southern bank.

Though Zhang agreed to my proposal in word, he secretly ordered Wang Hongkun's troops to retreat towards Dongxin County-seat, wrecking our operation plan. Once again, I discussed with Zhang laying an ambush at a place between Haiyuan and Dongxin county-seats to destroy Wang Jun's troops. He agreed again verbally, but ordered the Fourth Front Army to withdraw eastward to obstruct the ambush plan.

Because Zhang Guotao upset our operational plans time and again, we had to give up a large area west of Yuwang. If our troops had wiped out Wang Jun's

* Chen Xilian is on the Standing Committee of the CPC Central Advisory Commission. — *Tr.*

** Xie Fuzhi (1909-72), who served as Vice-Premier and Minister of Public Security after Liberation, was posthumously expelled from the Party in October 1980 for having taken a direct part in the activities of Lin Biao and of Jiang Qing to usurp supreme Party and state power. — *Tr.*

army then, the Xi'an Incident would have taken place earlier, and our troops would have controlled Lanzhou City and the Xining-Lanzhou Highway or even the whole province of Gansu.

This happened in September or October.

In early October the Wang Jun and Mao Bingwen armies followed on the heels of the First Army Group, while Hu Zongnan's five reorganized brigades attacked its flank. The armies under He Zhuguo and Dong Yingbin were also closing in from the south under Chiang Kai-shek's pressure. The situation was very critical.

I held that if we did not beat back the pursuing enemy, we would not be able to get enough food for the Northern Shaanxi Base Area. The whole Bao'an County had a population of only 10,000; if the Red Army could not get a firm foothold there, it would have to give up northern Shaanxi and march eastward across the Huanghe River. That would be very unfavourable to us. We had to prevent this situation at any cost. I decided to assemble the First Army Group south of Shanchengbu and the 15th Army Group north of it to launch a pincer attack on the advancing brigade of Hu Zongnan's army when it penetrated into Shanchengbu. There were only several families living by a small spring in Shanchengbu, 15 *li* west of Hongde township. After Hu Zongnan's troops left Tianshuibu (60 *li* west of Shanchengbu), they had to come to Shanchengbu for water. As the enemy's vanguard brigade under Ding Delong arrived at Shanchengbu at dusk, the First Army Group launched its attack from the south and west and wiped out the greater part of it.

Though not a big victory, this battle helped to bring about the December 12th Incident in Xi'an City.

Hu Zongnan did not resign himself to the defeat. He took four brigades to march on Yanchi and Dingbian as the left column. Wang Jun's and Mao Bingwen's armies, as the middle column, advanced towards Wuqi township and Zhidan (Bao'an) County. The Northeast Army marched on Huachi County-seat as the right column.

The Red Army moved to an area between Hongde township and Yanchi and lay in ambush on the fringe of the desert, waiting to attack Hu's troops, who would be worn out with fatigue, hunger and thirst from plodding through the desert. They were the main and the most active force in the whole operation. If we could wipe out two brigades of Hu's troops, we would defeat this offensive of the enemy.

Deep in the night of December 12, Ren Bishi,*

* Ren Bishi (1904-50) was a veteran member of the Chinese Communist Party and one of its first organizers. He was a member of the Party Central Committee from its Fifth National Congress in 1927 onward, and was elected to the Political Bureau at the Fourth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee in 1931. In 1933 he served as Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee of the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area and Political Commissar of the Sixth Army Group of the Red Army. When the Sixth and Second army groups joined forces and formed the Second Front Army, he was appointed its Political Commissar. He was Director of the General Political Department of the Eighth Route Army in the first years of the War of Resistance. In 1940 he began to serve in the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee. At the First Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee in 1945 he was again elected a member of the Political Bureau and of the Secretariat. Comrade Ren Bishi died in Beijing on October 27, 1950.

(just appointed by the Central Committee as Political Commissar for the Front Command) and I were studying a map under a lamp in our dwelling — a shepherd's cave one metre high and two metres wide. A sandstorm was howling outside. A decoder brought in a telegram, shouting:

“Chiang Kai-shek has been arrested by Zhang Xueliang!”

Later the Central Committee sent us a message asking us our opinion on what to do with Chiang Kai-shek. Ren Bishi and I held repeated discussions and agreed to the Central Committee's policy of releasing Chiang.

Hu Zongnan withdrew his troops in the night. At dawn December 13 all enemy columns were gone. Zhang Xueliang's troops abandoned Luochuan, Qingyang and other county-seats and concentrated in Xi'an City. Our First and 15th army groups, part of the Second Front Army, and the Fourth and 31st armies entered Qingyang County-seat, Xifeng township and nearby places. Zhang Xueliang sent cotton-padded clothes and ammunition to our troops.

If it had not been for Zhang Guotao's sending the 20,000-man main force of the Fourth Front Army into the blind alley of Liangzhou to be wiped out by Ma Bufang's army, we would have had 60,000 to 70,000 men remaining in the First, Second and Fourth front armies who could have gained control of Northwest China. Then we would have been in a much more favourable position to lead the War Against Japanese Aggression. The Northeast and Northwest armies would not have been broken up separately by Chiang

Kai-shek. We would have had an anti-Japanese allied army controlling the great Northwest.

Wang Ming's "Left" opportunist line and Zhang Guotao's Right opportunist line met with one defeat after another. Only Chairman Mao's correct line triumphed in all areas. The First Front Army played a special role after arriving at Wuqi township in northern Shaanxi Province. It kept counter-attacking the enemy militarily and launched a strategic offensive politically. As a result, Zhang Xueliang of the Northeast Army arrested Chiang Kai-shek, who was forced to stop the civil war. All this took place in 11 tempestuous months.

In the struggle against Zhang Guotao, I learned a lot from Chairman Mao. If we had not adhered to the political and military principle of marching northward to resist Japanese aggression, but had gotten mixed up with Zhang Guotao's opportunist line, it would have been impossible for the proletariat to win leadership or even the right to speak in the great national revolutionary war against Japanese aggression. If we had not persisted in taking a different route on the grasslands, it would have been impossible to prove the correctness of Chairman Mao's line and to achieve the great union of the First, Second and Fourth front armies in northern Shaanxi. If we had expelled Zhang Guotao from the Party after he tried to split the Red Army, the Party would have suffered from prolonged division. Chairman Mao adhered to principle, refusing to give the post of General Secretary to Zhang while displaying flexibility and avoiding a prolonged split. As a result of our staunch struggle, Zhang Guotao deserted all by

himself, but we won over large numbers of cadres of the Fourth Front Army. We thrashed out the rights and wrongs and united the comrades. This was a great victory for Chairman Mao's consistent principle of approaching comrades from the desire for unity. Between September 1935 and September 1936, we smashed the enemy's third encirclement campaign against northern Shaanxi, convened the December Meeting, launched the successful eastern expedition, put an end to the civil war, and greatly raised the prestige of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao in the whole Party, the whole army and the whole country. The vivid facts taught comrades throughout the Party to see the contrast between the two political lines and acknowledge their leader, whom they recognized through a series of trials and errors.

XII. The War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression (July 1937-August 1945)

The Red Army Redesignated as the Eighth Route Army¹

After the Lugouqiao Incident,² the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army was redesignated as the Eighth Route Army of the National Revolution-

¹According to the results of the political negotiations between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang, the main force of the Red Army was renamed the Eighth Route Army of the National Revolutionary Army on August 25, 1937, in order to promote nationwide resistance to Japanese aggression and win final victory over Japanese imperialism. Zhu De was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Eighth Route Army; Peng Dehuai Deputy Commander-in-Chief; Ye Jianying Chief of Staff; Zuo Quan Deputy Chief of Staff; Ren Bishi Director, and Deng Xiaoping Deputy Director, of its Political Department. The Eighth Route Army had the 115th, 120th and 129th divisions under its command. After redesignation, it remained a people's army led by the Communist Party of China.

²On July 7, 1937, the invading Japanese army attacked the Chinese garrison at Lugouqiao, more than 10 kilometres southwest of Beijing. The Chinese troops put up resistance under the influence of the nationwide anti-Japanese movement and the anti-Japanese proposition of the Communist Party of China. This marked the beginning of the Chinese people's heroic War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression, which lasted eight years.

ary Army. A headquarters of the Eighth Route Army was established with Zhu De as Commander-in-Chief, myself as Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Ren Bishi as Director of the Political Department, and Zuo Quan Deputy Chief of Staff. A sub-commission of the Military Commission was organized in the Party,¹ with Zhu De as Secretary and Ren Bishi as Secretary-General. Zhu, Ren and I formed the Standing Committee of the sub-commission. Zuo Quan and the commanders and political commissars of the divisions might all be executive members of the sub-commission (I can't remember it clearly now). At that time the main force of the Red Army was 32,000 strong. We organized 4,000 men as the Northern Shaanxi Garrison Brigade which was to defend the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region together with a small regiment. We reorganized the 14,000 men of the First Front Army as the 115th Division with Lin Biao as commander, the 6,000 men of the Second Front Army as the 120th Division with He Long as commander, and the 8,000 men of the Fourth Front Army as the 129th Division with Liu Bocheng as commander.²

¹ This was the North-China Sub-Commission of the Military Commission of the CPC Central Committee, with Zhu De as Secretary and Peng Dehuai Deputy Secretary. The members were Ren Bishi, Zhang Hao, Lin Biao, Nie Rongzhen, He Long, Liu Bocheng and Guan Xiangying. Established according to a Party Central Committee decision of August 29, 1937, the sub-commission was the Party's supreme military agency in the enemy's rear in North China.

² According to an order from the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Party Central Committee dated August

Front Headquarters called a gathering of cadres at and above the regimental level at Yunyang township to discuss the guidelines of the Luochuan Meeting¹ of the Party Central Committee, namely, the guidelines of Chairman Mao's speech at the meeting. I spoke at the cadres' meeting, discussing the victory of the Anti-Japanese United Front. Following the redesignation, I said, we should take care to guard against warlordism, bureaucracy, and separation from the masses. I also said we must guarantee (1) the absolute leadership of the Party in the Eighth Route Army; (2) the predominance of soldiers from worker-peasant families; (3) the fine tradition of our political work; and (4) persistence in our system of political study. Comrade Ren Bishi and leading comrades of divisions also made speeches.

In September Comrade Zhou Enlai asked me to go to Taiyuan city with him to meet Yan Xishan.² Street gossip we heard on the way — and particularly after

25, 1937, the First Army Group, 15th Army Group and 74th Division of the Red Army merged to form the 115th Division of China's Ground Forces; the Second Front Army, 27th Army, 28th Army, First and Second independent divisions, Chishui Garrison Battalion and part of the troops directly under the former Front Command merged to form the 120th Division; and the Fourth Front Army, 29th Army, 30th Army, and the First, Second, Third and Fourth independent regiments of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region were reorganized as the 129th Division.

¹The enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held at Luochuan County, Shaanxi Province, in August 1937.

²Yan Xishan was a warlord who ruled Shanxi Province for a long time. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Second War Zone in August 1937.

we arrived in Taiyuan — showed that people hoped the Red Army would soon be able to take part in the War Against Japanese Aggression. To take shelter away from Japanese air raids, Yan lived in a village in Guoxian County* north of Taiyuan. After our talks with Yan, Zhou asked me to go with him to see Fu Zuoyi** in Datong City to the north. Japanese troops were marching on Datong from Zhangjiakou City to the east. They had taken Tianzhen and Yanggao when we arrived in Datong. Fu's troops were retreating in a hurry. Next day we returned to Guoxian County, where Yan Xishan met us and asked our advice on how to hold the defences in Shanxi (meaning the permanent fortifications at Yanmenguan, Ruyuekou, Pingxingguan and Niangziguan passes), mainly the Pingxingguan and Yanmenguan passes.

When I left headquarters in northern Shanxi, I started to weigh how the Eighth Route Army could win a first battle in the War Against Japanese Aggression to raise the prestige of the Chinese Communist Party and its army. This also would help

* Changed to Yuanping County in 1958. — *Tr.*

** Fu Zuoyi (1894-1974) was Commander-in-Chief of the Seventh Group Army. During the War of Liberation, he was Commander-in-Chief of the "Bandit Suppression" Headquarters of North China. In January 1949, after the liberation of Tianjin, he accepted the terms proposed by the CPC for the peaceful liberation of Beiping (Beijing) and renounced his allegiance to the Kuomintang government. After Liberation he served as Vice-Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Vice-Chairman of the National Defence Council, Minister of Water Conservancy and Minister of Water Conservancy and Power Supply. — *Tr.*

dispel fears of the invading Japanese army, boost anti-Japanese morale and develop mass movements. Now in Guoxian County, Yan Xishan told us that Wang Jingguo's army was defending the Pingxingguan Pass, Chen Changjie's army the Ruyuekou Pass and still another army the Yanmenguan Pass.

"You just hold on to the frontal defence at the Pingxingguan Pass," I said. "Our 115th Division will leave for Wutai, Lingqiu and Yuxian counties and hide on both sides of the enemy's route of advance. When he attacks Pingxingguan, we will strike at his flanks and rear. Our 120th Division in northwestern Shanxi will also assault the enemy's flanks when he attacks the Yanmenguan Pass."

Yan was quite satisfied with my plan.

Later one brigade of the 115th Division ambushed a rear regiment of the enemy Itagaki Division at the Pingxingguan Pass and destroyed the greater part of it. We won the first battle, which meant the Japanese army's first setback since the July 7 Incident in 1937. Inspired by this victory, Wei Lihuang* took four or five armies to dig in at Xinkou township.

Breaking through the Pingxingguan and Yanmenguan passes, the Japanese army marched on Taiyuan

* Wei Lihuang (1896-1960) was Deputy Commander of the Second War Zone (under which the Eighth Route Army operated) in the early years of the Anti-Japanese War. In 1948 he was Commander-in-Chief of the "Bandit Suppression" Headquarters of Northeast China. He escaped to Nanjing on the eve of the liberation of Shenyang and was put under house arrest by Chiang Kai-shek. In 1949, he was released and went to Hong Kong. He came to Beijing in 1955 and became a Standing Committee member of the National Committee of the CPPCC. He was also Vice-Chairman of the National Defence Council. — *Tr.*

City. They met with tough resistance from the Kuomintang troops at Xinkou township. One of our 129th Division regiments commanded by Chen Xilian and Xie Fuzhi sneaked into the enemy's Yangmingbu Airfield under cover of night and burned up more than 20 Japanese planes and wiped out the enemy garrison of one battalion. This victory greatly encouraged Wei Lihuang's troops at Xinkou.

The two victories mobilized the people in North China to resist Japanese aggression and enhanced the prestige of the Eighth Route Army among the masses. More and more people joined our army.

Then Comrade Zhou Enlai asked me to go with him to see Cheng Qian* at Baoding City. On our way back to headquarters, we passed by Xinkou township where the defenders were still holding out against the Japanese army. They only stuck to their positions, but dared not concentrate the forces to attack a weak point of the enemy, much less assault his flanks or rear. They followed a rigid dogma: One must never fight without cover of frontal fire even when making an attack on the enemy's flanks or rear. When we passed by Shijiazhuang City on our way to Taiyuan city, Comrade Zhou Enlai asked me

* Chief of General Staff of the Military Council of the Kuomintang, Cheng Qian (1881-1968) was Commander of the First War Zone during the Anti-Japanese War. He became Governor of Hunan Province in 1947. In August 1949 he renounced his allegiance to the Kuomintang government. After Liberation he was Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Vice-Chairman of the National Defence Council and Governor of Hunan Province. — *Tr.*

to go and meet Huang Shaohong* at the Niangziguan Pass. During that period I seemed to be a representative of the Eighth Route Army making connections here and there to do united front work.

An Instruction from the Military Sub-Commission

On October 8, 1937 the North China Military Sub-Commission issued an instruction under the influence of the victory of the 115th Division of the Eighth Route Army in routing part of the Japanese Itagaki Division. In the orders, Taiyuan City in Shanxi Province was described as a North China stronghold for resistance to Japan. In fact, Taiyuan was to fall to the enemy soon after October. Obviously, the instruction was made blindly without taking into full account the enemy's political, economic and especially military preparations for invading China. At the same time it overestimated the strength and progressiveness of the Kuomintang armies. This would be liable to affect the implementation of the policy of mainly re-

*Huang Shaohong (1895-1966) was Deputy Commander of the Second War Zone during the early years of the Anti-Japanese War. In 1949, he was a member of the delegation sent by the Kuomintang government to Beijing for peace negotiations with the CPC. After the Kuomintang government rejected the Agreement on Internal Peace concluded between delegates of the two parties, he went to Hong Kong and renounced his allegiance to the Kuomintang government. After Liberation, he served as a member of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang. He was also a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. — *Tr.*

lying on ourselves, mobilizing the masses to carry on guerrilla warfare, and preparing for a long and arduous struggle.

At that time comrades on the Military Sub-Commission had not come to see guerrilla warfare in the enemy's rear as a strategic concept. We had a vague understanding of the policy put forward by Comrade Mao Zedong at the Luochuan Meeting: "Guerrilla warfare is primary, but don't let the chance slip for mobile warfare under favourable conditions." We did not realize that this was the correct policy for carrying on a protracted war against Japanese aggression in the enemy rear. At that time I could not tell which of the two — "mobile warfare" or "guerrilla warfare" — was primary or secondary. That was why sometimes I used the term "mobile-guerrilla warfare" and at other times, "guerrilla-mobile warfare".

The October 8 instruction was written on the basis of some superficial information and wishful thinking. It was divorced from reality and could not stand the test of practical application. It turned out to be a wrong instruction.

When the instruction was drafted and issued, I was not at Eighth Route Army headquarters but was accompanying Comrade Zhou Enlai to Baoding, Shijiazhuang and other places to do united front work. I read it after I returned to headquarters from Wei Lihuang's place. I did not know who wrote it. But I voiced no objections after going over it. Though the overall view presented in the instruction was not mine, I agreed with some of its details. This instruction was written from the viewpoint of

underestimating the enemy's strength and aiming for a quick victory. Before leaving for Baoding, I had a chat with Zhu De, Ren Bishi, Zuo Qian and other comrades.

"It is a myth to say the Japanese imperial army is invincible," I said. "It will be hard for the enemy to enter Shanxi Province if the Eighth Route Army is 200,000 strong backed with artillery force and equipped like the armies under Chiang Kai-shek's direct control, and if the Kuomintang troops can defend their strategic strongholds while our troops carry out flexible operations to attack the enemy and mobilize the masses to take part in the Anti-Japanese War." Such a tendency to underestimate the enemy and aim at a quick victory probably affected others. Since I was a Standing Committee member of the Military Sub-Commission, I was also responsible for mistakes in the instruction.

The Second Wang Ming Line

After the Japanese army occupied Taiyuan City in November 1937, the Eighth Route Army headquarters moved from the Wutai Mountains to Mamu village in Hongdong County, southern Shanxi Province. One day in December the Central Committee sent us a telegram, calling me back to Yan'an in northern Shaanxi for a meeting.

On the third day after my arrival, Wang Ming and Kang Sheng flew into Yan'an, and the Political Bureau held a meeting the same evening. Wang Ming delivered a speech, and so did Chairman Mao. Xiang

Ying spoke about the redesignation of our forces in the south as the New Fourth Army. I listened carefully to the speeches made by Chairman Mao and Wang Ming. Both of them were for resistance to Japanese aggression, but they were divided on how to carry out the Anti-Japanese War. Speaking as if he represented the Communist International, Wang Ming said that resistance to Japan was above everything else. Everything must go through and be subordinated to the united front, he said. Everyone must have a clear understanding of the alliance of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party as the basic point, and the two parties should jointly fulfil the duty of unifying China's political power and armed forces. The Kuomintang and the Communist Party, he said, were equals, and it was impossible for either to lead the other. All political parties and groups should share responsibilities and leadership between them and strive for a common cause, help each other and expand themselves together. He stressed the importance of the role of the Kuomintang government and its army in resisting Japanese aggression and paid little attention to any need to mobilize civilian participation in the Anti-Japanese War. On the issue of the Anti-Japanese National United Front, he emphasized the experience in Spain and France and in China's Northeast. In the anti-Japanese camp, he said, one should only distinguish the anti-Japanese faction from the non-anti-Japanese faction, and should not classify them into Left, middle-of-the-road or Right groups. He

said that the C.C. Clique and Fu Xing Society¹ were not Fascists because they resisted aggression while the Fascists were the invaders.

Clearly, these views of Wang Ming's showed a major difference in principle from Comrade Mao Zedong's correct views. Wang Ming ignored the question of how the proletariat could win leadership in the nationwide War Against Japanese Aggression. This confirmed his political line as one of giving up the leadership of the Communist Party in the Anti-Japanese National United Front and departing from the proletarian stand. It was a capitulationist line. Experiences in Spain, France and China's Northeast, which he talked about, were lessons of failure. If Wang Ming's line were carried out, we could not have guaranteed the absolute leadership of the Communist Party in the Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army, and we would have been compelled to do everything according to the orders of the so-called legal government of the Kuomintang reactionary clique. It would have been impossible for the anti-Japanese bases and democratic government to exist in the enemy rear. And it would have been impossible to tell who was the leading class in the united front, who were the reliable allies of the proletariat, who were the rightists that took a passive attitude

¹The C.C. Clique and Fu Xing Society were Fascist organizations within the Kuomintang and counter-revolutionary tools used by Chiang Kai-shek to maintain the oligarchic rule of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie. The C.C. Clique was headed by Chen Guofu and Chen Lifu and the bosses of the Fu Xing Society were He Zhonghan, Kang Ze and Dai Li.

in the resistance to Japanese aggression, and who were the vacillating middle-of-the-roaders. These questions of principle were confused by Wang Ming's line.

At that time I failed to have a good understanding of Chairman Mao's correct line, but was influenced by Wang Ming's line. My ideas were vague on these questions of principle. Recalling my speech at the Central Committee Political Bureau meeting in December 1937, I only gave an account of the Anti-Japanese War in North China and matters on adhering to the absolute leadership of the Communist Party in the Eighth Route Army. I did not speak in support of Comrade Mao Zedong's correct line. Nor did I speak for or against Wang Ming's wrong line. I took an equivocal attitude which in actual effect meant support for the wrong line. One must support one side and oppose the other in a dispute over matters of principle, but not sit on the fence.

The evening meeting lasted till dawn. Since there were different views, I felt it difficult to communicate the guidelines of the meeting after returning to the army. What Wang Ming had said did not help solve any concrete problems. Chiang Kai-shek did not recognize the united front at all. The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army was redesignated as part of the National Revolutionary Army, and our men were compelled to wear Kuomintang army caps. Our army was subordinated to the Kuomintang army. Chiang Kai-shek attempted to change the nature of the Eighth Route Army and assimilate it into his armed forces. He did not recognize cooperation at all. Doing everything through the united front

meant doing everything through Chiang Kai-shek, who would never tolerate the expansion of the Eighth Route Army, never allow us to have any independence or take any initiative, never give us equal treatment. Upon my return, I could only communicate what Chairman Mao and Wang Ming had said and let their views be tested in practice.

Next day I called on Comrade Luo Fu (Party General Secretary and chairman of the meeting), taking with me the sheets on which I had jotted down the main points. I asked him the best way to communicate the guidelines of the meeting after returning to headquarters. He told me that the Secretariat would draw up a common outline for communicating points discussed at the meeting. Two days later he gave me a copy, namely, the Summary and Guidelines of the December Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee. I reported on the meeting in accordance with the outline on my return to North China. After studying the outline myself, I felt that the concrete problems were still unsolved. But I held that the Eighth Route Army must on no account be assimilated by the Kuomintang, so I included in my communication the guidelines stated at the time of the Red Army's redesignation at Yunyang township. I added a paragraph saying that the Eighth Route Army, now a part of the National Revolutionary Army, must nevertheless maintain its fine tradition on the following three principles: (1) ensuring and strengthening the absolute leadership of the Communist Party; (2) ensuring the predominance of soldiers from worker and peasant families; and (3) ensuring the tradition of

high-level political work and persisting in the system of political study. Though I was not clear on some of the problems, I was sure about the need to maintain the absolute leadership of the Communist Party in the Eighth Route Army. I did not make any other additions or deletions in the outline. To communicate the outline was a decision of the Central Committee, and I had to do it. But it was essential to gear it to actual circumstances so that it would be beneficial to the nationwide War Against Japanese Aggression. At the end of my report and the discussion of the outline, I added a few remarks to the effect that the principle of subordinating everything to the anti-Japanese movement should be carried out in accordance with actual work. For instance, we would continue to collect provisions, expand the Eighth Route Army, and so on.

In order to guarantee the absolute leadership of the Communist Party in the Eighth Route Army, we restored the system of political commissars and political departments in the spring of 1938. We decided to expand the Eighth Route Army by the following four kinds of armed forces: training brigades, newly organized brigades, provisional brigades and replenishment brigades. They were to be organized in the following four strategic areas: Wutai Mountain area, the 115th Division, the 120th Division, and the 129th Division. Each area could add as many brigades as it could and then report to the Central Committee Military Commission in Yan'an and Eighth Route Army headquarters. There was no need to ask permission from, let alone report to the Kuomintang government. Each area would provide for itself

on the basis of "Those who have money, give money; those who have labour power, give labour power". Wherever a base area or government was set up, the area could collect patriotic agricultural taxes. An area without a base area government could depend on donations, loans, assignments and confiscation of traitors' property; it didn't have to depend on the Kuomintang for pay or provisions.

In 1940 and 1941 we issued our local currencies¹ in all base areas, and banned puppet currencies and the Kuomintang's "legal tender".² We set up in the base areas anti-Japanese democratic governments according to a "Three Thirds System".³ We adopted the tactics of guerrilla warfare as the principal means and took on mobile operations only under favourable conditions. The ambush at the Pingxingguan Pass

¹ Currencies issued by banks in various Liberated Areas for local circulation. For example, the Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan Border Area issued the "Southern Hebei currency", the Central Plains Liberated Area issued the "Central Plains currency", and the Hebei-Rehe-Chahar Border Area issued the "Great Wall currency".

² The puppet currencies were issued by the banks of the Japanese puppet government, i.e., by the Joint Preparation Bank of the Japanese puppet government in North China or the Reserve Bank of the Japanese puppet government in Nanjing. The "legal tender" was issued by the Kuomintang's bureaucrat-capitalist banks according to regulations announced by the KMT government in November 1935. These banks were the Central Bank, the Bank of China, the Bank of Communications and later the Farmers' Bank.

³ The "three thirds system" was a CPC policy for establishing united front governments in the anti-Japanese democratic base areas. According to this policy, Communist Party members, non-Party Left progressives, and middle-of-the-roaders should each account for one-third of the personnel in an anti-Japanese democratic government.

and the later Hundred Regiments Campaign and Anti-Friction Battle were all mobile warfare of a guerrilla nature, and we called them "mobile-guerrilla warfare" or "guerrilla-mobile warfare", and no regular battle was fought.

All the above-mentioned military, political, economic and Anti-Japanese National United Front policies were carried out in accordance with Chairman Mao's principle of maintaining independence, keeping the initiative in our own hands and relying on our own efforts. When the Red Army was redesignated as the Eighth Route Army, it was only 28,000 strong. But in the eight years of the Anti-Japanese War it grew into an army one million strong without any outside assistance. This would have been impossible without Chairman Mao's line of Marxism-Leninism. When Chairman Mao was writing *On Coalition Government* as his report to the Seventh Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, I called at his home in Zaoyuan and said to him that the correct line of the Central Committee had been basically implemented in the Resistance in North China. He corrected me, saying that "the correct line has been implemented there, not basically implemented". I said that in the latter period of the "Hundred Regiments Campaign" against enemy mopping-up operations, two of our brigades in the Taihang Mountain Area fought hard and suffered heavy casualties. Chairman Mao said that helped steel our troops.

In the half year or so after communicating the Summary and Guidelines of the December Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, however, the absolute leadership of the Com-

munist Party in the Eighth Route Army was somewhat weakened as was Party political work. Some officers ran away, and the Kuomintang induced some other officers and men to turn traitor. At the same time the Kuomintang revealed its reactionary character by imposing restrictions on the expansion of the Eighth Route Army and on the growth of the Communist Party. These facts made me aware of the danger of Wang Ming's line and the importance and correctness of Chairman Mao's principle of maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in our own hands and of his works, such as *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War Against Japan* and *On Protracted War*.

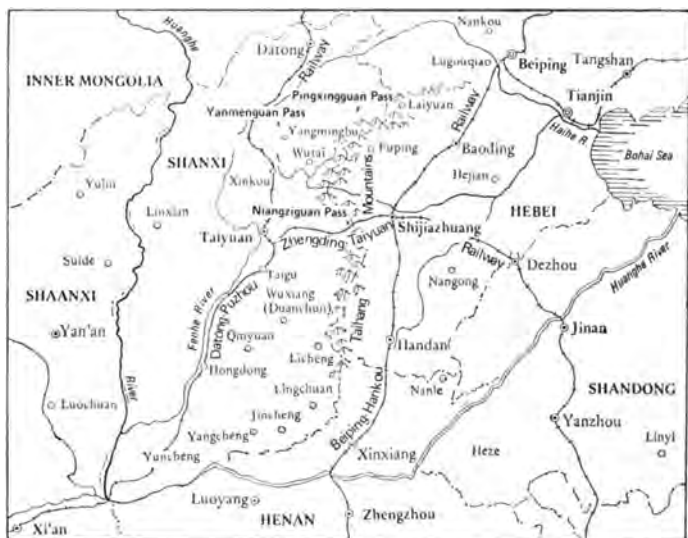
Ironclad evidence had proved that China's Anti-Japanese National United Front could only be led by the proletarian Communist Party, and not by a so-called joint leadership. It was impossible for the Kuomintang of the feudal landlords and comprador bourgeoisie to lead the front, to set up the anti-Japanese democratic coalition government with the "three thirds system", to transform the reactionary agencies of its party, government and army, and to implement the policy of reducing land rent and interest on loans and developing a national economy. Therefore, it was impossible for the Kuomintang to assume resolute leadership in carrying out the Anti-Japanese War and striving for national independence and liberation. "Everything through the united front" meant binding the growing revolutionary forces hand and foot, it meant giving up proletarian leadership and surrendering to the feudal and comprador classes.

But I did not express my definite opposition to Wang Ming's line until the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the Party held in the autumn of 1938.

As for the principle of "everything through the united front", I made no attempts to implement it from the very beginning. We thought that since Chang Kai-shek was unable to go into the Japanese-occupied areas to interfere in our business, we would just do everything in accordance with Chairman Mao's principle of maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in our own hands. When the Sixth Plenary Session was convened in the autumn of 1938, the Eighth Route Army had grown to 250,000 strong with many provisional, newly-organized and training brigades. We had not gone through the Kuomintang at all — if we had, nothing would have been allowed.

After the Sixth Plenary Session, I implemented Chairman Mao's policy for the Anti-Japanese National United Front with a much better understanding. That was why I did much better in carrying out the policy of "both unity and struggle" and the principle of acting "on just grounds, to our advantage and with restraint" in the struggles against the Kuomintang diehards. As for Wang Ming's line, I did not see it clearly, but I was compelled to boycott it when it did not work in actual practice. I did not understand the grave errors of Wang Ming's two lines until I arrived in Yan'an in the winter of 1943 to study the struggle between the correct and erroneous lines and a number of historical questions in preparation for the Party's Seventh Congress.

AREAS WHERE THE AUTHOR DIRECTED OPERATIONS
 DURING THE WAR OF RESISTANCE AGAINST JAPANESE AGGRESSION



Both the "Left" deviation under Wang Ming's first line and the Right deviation under his second line were detrimental to the democratic revolution. But his second line did not become dominant in the Party. From these facts, I realized that I was slow in understanding things. At the beginning, I always had a vague understanding of the struggle between the two lines within the Party and could not see it through till things became obvious.

An "Anti-Friction"¹ Battle

In 1940 the Eighth Route Army waged two major battles in North China: the Anti-Friction Battle and the major offensive against the Japanese invaders with 24 regiments taking part. They were necessary for carrying on the Anti-Japanese War in North China.

Let me deal with the Anti-Friction Battle first.

In the summer of 1939, after the Japanese troops had stopped their strategic offensive on the battle-front, the Kuomintang began an anti-Communist propaganda drive, spreading rumours such as "the Communist Party engages in disruptive activities" and "the Eighth Route Army moves about without fighting and refuses to obey orders". In June 1939 the Kuomintang murdered by burying alive members of the New Fourth Army Liaison Office in

¹ The term "friction" was widely used at the time for all kinds of reactionary activities of the Kuomintang reactionaries to sabotage the Anti-Japanese National United Front and to oppose the Communist Party and other progressive forces.

Pingjiang County-seat, Hunan Province. Though Shi Yousan and Qin Qirong of Shandong Province,¹ and Zhang Yinwu, Zhu Huaibing and Hou Ruyong of Hebei Province² flaunted the anti-Japanese banner, they never fired a shot at the Japanese but specialized in attacking the rear areas of the Eighth Route Army and killing local anti-Japanese cadres. In Shanxi Province, Yan Xishan triggered the Qiulin Incident,³ slaughtering anti-Japanese cadres and Communists and attacking the New Army (the Anti-Japanese Dare-to-Die Corps). Massacres of New Fourth Army officers happened in Henan and Hebei provinces. He Shaonan, Commissioner of the Suide Prefecture in Shaanxi Province, was specially engaged in sabotaging the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia

¹ Shi Yousan was Commander-in-Chief of the 39th Group Army of the Kuomintang. Qin Qirong was Commander of the Kuomintang's Third Guerrilla Column in Shandong Province.

² Zhang Yinwu was Commander-in-Chief of the Kuomintang's "civil corps" in Hebei Province. Zhu Huaibing was Commander of the Kuomintang's 99th Army. Hou Ruyong was Commander of the North China Fourth Guerrilla Assault Column of the General Task Force of the Military Council of the Kuomintang.

³ Between March and June 1939 Yan Xishan summoned senior military, government and civil cadres from Shanxi and Suiyuan provinces to a meeting at Qiulin township in Shaanxi Province, to hatch a scheme to annihilate the New Army (known as the Anti-Japanese Dare-to-Die Corps) and the League of Self-Sacrifice for National Salvation. His scheme failed owing to a series of struggles waged by the CPC both inside and outside the meeting. But he stuck to his reactionary plan. In December of the same year, instigated by Chiang Kai-shek, Yan launched an attack on the New Army and slaughtered cadres of the League of Self-Sacrifice for National Salvation.

Border Region. He set up checkpoints at Sanyuan to detain Eighth Route Army vehicles and personnel. Such incidents were too numerous to be counted.

In the winter of 1939 Chiang Kai-shek launched an anti-Communist onslaught in an attempt to control the Taihang Mountain Area. He ordered Lu Zhonglin, Governor of Hebei Province, to "recover the lost territories" from the Eighth Route Army and appointed Zhang Yinwu Garrison Commander of Hebei Province specially for launching surprise attacks on the rear areas of the Eighth Route Army and on the anti-Japanese guerrillas. Earlier in June Chiang Kai-shek made public his theory of "saving the nation by a devious path".¹

When I stopped over in Xi'an and Luoyang cities on my way back to the Taihang Mountains from Yan'an in November, I sensed an extremely tense anti-Communist atmosphere. I arrested two KMT agents at a checkpoint at Sanyuan, who wanted to examine and detain my lorry. I released all detained vehicles of the Eighth Route Army and questioned the KMT agents:

"Who ordered you to check up and detain the lorry of the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the 18th Group Army? Is it Generalissimo Chiang or Cheng Qian?"

¹ During the Anti-Japanese War, some Kuomintang troops and officers surrendered to the Japanese invaders and became puppet troops and officers. Then they launched attacks on the Liberated Areas together with the Japanese army. The Kuomintang called this "saving the nation by a devious path" to cover its crime of surrendering to the Japanese invaders and persecuting the Communists.

* See footnote on p. 412. — Tr.

I handed the two over to Cheng Qian for punishment. I told him that the "April 12th Incident" in Shanghai and the "May 21st Incident" in Changsha had turned the First Great Revolution into a ten-year civil war against the Communist Party and the people.

"As a result," I said, "China lost her northeastern part and the Japanese advanced to Wuhan. Now there are diehards, covert Wang Jingweis*, who are worse than the overt Wang Jingweis."

I pointed at the nose of He Shaonan at Cheng Qian's place and said, "You are a covert Wang Jingwei. You have done as many evil deeds as you could in northern Shaanxi to sabotage the anti-Japanese rear area of the Eighth Route Army."

"Now whoever opposes the Communists and fires the first shot," I said to Cheng Qian, "will be hit by our second shot immediately, then our third shot. This is 'to pay a man back in his own coin'."

"It is not right to fire the third shot," Cheng Qian said.

"Get rid of him, and no more frictions," I said.

"Just go back to Suide to be Commissioner," I said to He Shaonan when I was leaving, "and the people will seize you for a public trial."

He Shaonan did not dare to go back to Suide Prefecture again, which had by now become part of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region.

* Wang Jingwei (1883-1944), Vice-President of the Kuomintang, fled from Chongqing, the wartime capital of the KMT government, and openly surrendered to Japan in December 1938. — *Tr.*

Comrade Lin Boqu,* Director of the Liaison Office of the Eighth Route Army in Xi'an City, accompanied me to see Cheng Qian. Back in the office, he asked me:

"Why were you in such a temper today?"

"I had to flare up," I said, "otherwise, we could not beat back the anti-Communist onslaught and stop He Shaonan from going back to Suide."

Wu Yunfu,** who was with us, said that I had done the right thing because the KMT diehards were simply disgusting.

I threw out a political feeler at that time to see whether Chiang Kai-shek dared to fight a civil war. If he planned to do so, he would have to kick out Britain and the United States and surrender to Japan. It was difficult for him to make the move. My feeler was valuable. Cheng Qian was a Kuomintang veteran, a typical middle-of-the-roader. His statement that it would not be right to fire the third shot meant the middle group approved our anti-friction struggle, and an armed struggle at that, so long as we did not go too far.

I drove into Luoyang City from Xi'an and met with Wei Lihuang and called on a number of democratic personages, including Li Xijiu. At Li's place, I met Sun Dianying (Commander of the New Fifth Army) unexpectedly. I explained the situation about anti-Communist frictions to them. Being a benign and uncontentious person, Li Xijiu looked very wor-

* See footnote on p. 33. — *Tr.*

** Wu Yunfu (1904-69) served as Vice-President of the Chinese Red Cross after Liberation. — *Tr.*

ried. Sun Dianying, who had once been a bandit, was crafty.

"The Eighth Route Army has a way to cope with all this," he said meaningfully. He meant that we could fight back.

"We need your help, too," I said.

"We'll act on your principle: 'We will not attack unless we are attacked.'"

I understood he meant that when we hit the friction-makers, the New Fifth Army would remain neutral. Later, when we routed Zhu Huaibing's army and chased its remnants, Sun Dianying's troops, who were having drills at the time, paid no attention to it.

I talked several times with Wei Lihuang. He invited me to dinners, revealing his fear of a civil war. Wei was a middle-of-the-roader in the War Against Japanese Aggression but a resolute anti-Communist element during the civil war. In Chiang Kai-shek's third "encirclement and suppression" campaign against the Central Soviet Area, he was the commander of the middle column. To commend his anti-Communist merits, the Kuomintang changed Jinjia-zhai to Lihuang County* after him when he led his troops in attacks on the Hubei-Henan-Anhui Soviet Area. I briefed him on the Kuomintang's anti-Communist activities. Declining to comment, he urged us to remain tolerant for the sake of the nation.

"But what can we do," I asked, "if the diehards do not show tolerance? Is there any danger of a civil war?"

* Now Jinzhai County (also known as Meishan) in Anhui Province. — *Tr.*

"There can be no more civil war," he said. "Another civil war will finish everything off."

After the Xi'an Incident, during which Chiang Kai-shek was arrested, Wei Lihuang held that it was a good idea to oppose the Communists, but no one could be successful in doing so. Though the 18th Group Army was put under his command, he had never taken command of it. His statement of "another civil war will finish everything off" voiced the feelings of the anti-Japanese group within the Kuomintang at the time.

When I said good-bye to him, he said I could have dinner at the Tenth Army's headquarters after crossing the river at Yuanqu. He said Army Commander Chen Tie had sent his men to Yuanqu to wait for me. This was another gesture indicating his fear of civil war. As I climbed into my car to set out, a Kuomintang officer in his thirties, who saw me off, told me that they were making preparations for a three-pronged attack on the headquarters of the Eighth Route Army. He went away after seeing me off, maybe a sympathizer of the Eighth Route Army among Wei's subordinates.

While going to dinner at the headquarters of Chen Tie's army, I wondered why he had invited me. Chen came from Liling and his wife was a teacher from Xiangtan.

"Morals are no good nowadays," Chen's wife said to me. "Mr. Peng, you should take care of yourself when you walk about."

Between Yuanqu and Yangcheng there was a 30-li narrow passage flanked with sheer precipices and overhanging rocks. I had with me a small radio

transmitter and a squad of guards, more than 10 men in all. Avoiding the narrow passage, we took mountain trails. Camping in the open that night, I sent a telegram for assembling seven brigades in preparation for an anti-friction battle.

When I was back at headquarters, the brigades were ready. Two brigades had arrived in Wuxiang under the command of Nie Rongzhen from the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Area.

Our counter-attack against anti-Communist friction began at the end of January 1940. In a battle lasting three days, we wiped out more than 10 regiments, including two whole divisions of Zhu Huai-bing's army, Hou Ruyong's brigade and a column of Zhang Yinwu's army. The battle consolidated the Taihang Mountain Base Area and ensured its contact with base areas in Shandong, northern Jiangsu and northern Anhui as well as the Hebei plain. That was a great victory.

In the battle, we intentionally let Lu Zhonglin and his 1,000-man escort escape. Five armies under Chiang's direct control in the Zhongtiao Mountains looked on and kept away from the battle, as did Zeng Wanzhong's army from Yunnan in Jincheng, the New Fifth Army in Linxian and Sun Chu's army in Yangcheng.

After that, armed frictions came to an end in the Taihang Mountains. We smashed the first anti-Communist onslaught. We won victory by implementing Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in the Anti-Japanese National United Front and his policy of waging armed struggles against frictions "on just grounds, to our advantage, and with restraint".

That was the first time we gained experience from the National United Front. When the Kuomintang diehards stirred up armed frictions, we had to oppose them with armed struggle. We could win victory only by seeking unity through struggle. If we had not smashed the first anti-Communist onslaught, we could not have consolidated the anti-Japanese democratic base area in the Taihang Mountains, and all anti-Japanese base areas in North China would have been affected. We could not have won over the middle-of-the-roaders if we had not dealt a resolute blow at the anti-Communist diehards. Therefore, it was necessary and correct to wage the first anti-friction battle. Unity was conditional — it had to be aimed at resistance to Japanese aggression and serve to develop and not weaken the revolutionary forces. That was Mao Zedong's concept and his revolutionary line. Everything had to serve resistance to Japan and be subordinate to it. The Anti-Friction Battle showed a unity of opposites. After the victory, however, we held no discussions to enhance our understanding and eradicate the influence of the Wang Ming line. That was a serious shortcoming.

I did not ask for instruction before launching the battle. Since this was the first Anti-Friction Battle, I should have asked the Central Committee for permission beforehand. But we were in a grave situation and could be attacked any time. I had no time for asking permission. I reported to the Central Committee after the battle and got its approval.

The Hundred Regiments Campaign

In February 1940, after we had defeated the Kuomintang's first anti-Communist onslaught, the enemy puppets and diehards spread rumours in North China, such as "the Eighth Route Army is moving about without fighting" and "the Eighth Route Army only fights the allies, but never attacks Japanese troops". They attempted to mislead the masses and sow dissension between the Eighth Route Army and local civilians. Taken in by these lies, some people began to have doubts about the Eighth Route Army. Using its theory of "saving the nation by a devious path", the Kuomintang directed a part of its troops to surrender to the Japanese invaders and join the puppet army, secretly giving them a legal status.

The Japanese invaders had stopped their frontal offensive in China and concentrated their forces in North China to carry out repeated "mopping-up" operations against our base areas behind enemy lines. Making use of several communication lines, the Japanese and puppet troops invaded our base areas to expand their occupation zones and increase the number of their strongholds. At the same time, the Japanese troops adopted a multiple policy, coupling military attacks with political inducement for surrender, economic blockade and moral deception.

As the Japanese invaders pursued a policy of "tightening public security",¹ the puppet troops, pup-

¹In March 1941 the Japanese invaders and Chinese traitors in North China launched "a campaign for tightening public security", which included "mopping-up" operations against the Liberated Areas, "major accusation drives"

pet organizations and enemy-occupied areas expanded. Our anti-Japanese base areas became smaller and smaller, and it was difficult to obtain provisions for our troops. The Japanese army also blockaded our anti-Japanese base areas and cut the contacts between them. In particular, its policy of "building prisoner's cages"¹ in southeastern Shanxi Province worsened the situation. Basing themselves in strongholds, the Japanese and puppet troops carried out a policy of "burning all, killing all, looting all" everywhere, bringing desolation to places and destitution to the people.

The people were eager to see heavy blows dealt against the Japanese and puppet troops. Some people in a few places wavered and surrendered to the enemy under terrible threats. Between March and July 1940 vast expanses of the anti-Japanese base areas in North China became guerrilla zones. Only two county-seats remained in our hands before we launched the Hundred Regiments Campaign. They were Pingshun in the Taihang Mountains and Pianguan in northwestern Shanxi. The civilians, who originally paid taxes to the anti-Japanese government only, now had to pay the puppet government too.

against anti-Japanese fighters in guerrilla areas, and establishment of a Bao-Jia system (each Jia had 10 households, and each Bao 10 Jia) to make house-to-house check-ups and expand puppet troops.

¹The "policy of building prisoner's cages" was a brutal method used by the Japanese imperialists to destroy the Communist-led troops and anti-Japanese bases in the enemy's rear. They imposed a blockade on our base areas by using the railways and highways and building blockhouses, trenches and walls.

The increase of the danger of an "Eastern Munich"¹ in Asia had an impact on the people in the enemy-occupied areas, especially on the intellectuals.

Nevertheless, when the Japanese invaders and puppet troops penetrated deep into our base areas and built strongholds here and there, they divided their forces and left their rear areas and communication lines weakly defended. This provided us with favourable opportunities for action.

All this encouraged us to organize the Hundred Regiments Campaign.

Miscalculation of the enemy's move was also an important reason for us to launch the campaign. We held that the cutting of the international communication line in Southwest China² increased the vacillation of the Kuomintang. Moreover, the Japanese passed the word around that they would attack Xi'an City in August to cut the communication line in Northwest China. In that trying climate, the Kuomintang wavered still more, and the danger of its surrender was growing.

In such circumstances, we decided to organize a

¹In 1938 and 1939, British and U.S. imperialism made several moves trying to reach a compromise with Japanese imperialism by sacrificing China. This was called an "Eastern Munich".

²The international communication line in Southwest China was the Yunnan-Burma Road, which was opened to traffic in 1938. It started from Kunming City in Yunnan Province, ran through Chuxiong, Xiaguan, Baoshan, Luxi and Wanting to link with Burmese roads. It was China's vital artery to maintain ties with foreign countries in the Anti-Japanese War. On July 17, 1940 Britain yielded to Japanese imperialist pressure and sealed off the communication line.

major campaign. Eighth Route Army headquarters decided to start preparations in early July and launch the campaign in early August when the standing crops grew tall and luxuriant to form a "green canopy" over wide areas. According to the original plan, 22 regiments would take part (10 from the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Area, eight from the 129th Division and four from the 120th Division) in wrecking the Zhengding-Taiyuan Railway as the main target and the Beiping-Hankou Railway, the northern section of the Datong-Puzhou Railway, and the Baigui-Jincheng Railway¹ as secondary targets. We planned to launch attacks on the enemy's communication lines around August 13.* The tasks were assigned as follows: our troops in the Taihang Mountains were to demolish the railway line between the Niangziguan Pass and Taigu and that between Shijiazhuang and Xinxiang; our troops in the Wutai Mountains were to wreck the railway between Shijiazhuang and Lugouqiao near Beiping and that between the Niangziguan Pass and Shijiazhuang as well as the eastern and western sections of the railway at Nankou; our troops in the Shanxi-Suiyuan area were to destroy the line between the northern neighbourhood of Taiyuan City and the area beyond the Yanmenguan Pass; our troops in the Taiyue Mountains were to destroy the entire Baigui-Jincheng Railway; and troops in the central and southern Hebei areas

¹ The Baigui-Jincheng Railway has since been dismantled.

* On August 13, 1937, Chinese garrison troops in Shanghai rose in resistance against Japanese troops which launched a massive attack on the city. — *Tr.*

were to demolish the entire railway between Shijiazhuang City and Dezhou.

After the decision was made, Eighth Route Army headquarters sent telegrams to the various troops on July 22 and made a report to the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee. We knew that, as soon as the operation started, considerable numbers of Japanese and puppet troops would pull out of our base areas. So we asked the various military areas and sub-areas to be ready to wipe out retreating enemy troops and destroy their strongholds, blockhouses, trenches and walls.

As soon as our troops received the orders, they went into action and got into their designated positions ahead of time. The tall and luxuriant standing crops covered up their movements in the surroundings of numerous strongholds and blockhouses of the Japanese and puppet troops. In order to avoid being detected by the enemy and ensure our simultaneous attacks at different places and give the enemy a bigger surprise, we triggered the campaign 10 days ahead of schedule — in late July.¹ We did not wait for approval by the Military Commission. (This was wrong.)

After the campaign got started and some victories were won, a large number of troops in various base areas joined in on their own to assault, pursue and wipe out the panic-stricken retreating Japanese and puppet troops. A total of 104 regiments took part,

¹ The Hundred Regiments Campaign was launched on August 20.

including the 22 regiments assigned for the campaign. That was why we named it the Hundred Regiments Campaign in a war communique. This demonstrated that the armed forces under the leadership of the Communist Party had a high level of political consciousness and initiative.

In the campaign we wiped out over 30,000 Japanese and puppet troops. A much greater number of puppet troops and organizations dispersed or disintegrated by themselves. It took the enemy more than a month to restore the Zhengding-Taiyuan and Beijing-Hankou railways. We recovered nearly 50 counties and a large number of county-seats, but lost some of them later. Finally, we were able to hold more than 26 county-seats. We recovered six counties in the Taihang Mountains — Yushe, Wuxiang, Licheng, Shexian, Lingchuan and Xiangyuan; three counties in the Taiyue Mountains — Qinyuan, Fushan and Anze; four counties in the Wutai Mountains — Fuping, Lingqiu, Laiyuan and Hunyuan; eight in northwestern Shanxi Province — Linxian, Xingxian, Kelan, Lanxian, Wuzhai, Pinglu, Zuoyun and Youyu; Hejian and other counties in central Hebei; Nangong and other counties in southern Hebei; and Nanle, Qingfeng, Neihuang and other counties on the Hebei-Shandong-Henan plain. This gave the Japanese invaders and the puppet troops quite a shock. We carried out our operations smoothly against the weakly defended enemy communication lines because the Japanese and puppet troops had penetrated into our base areas and divided their forces to defend numerous blockhouses.

In the campaign we seriously damaged the enemy's

communication lines, wiped out a great number of puppet troops and organizations, and demolished many enemy blockhouses and strongholds in our base areas. We recovered many county-seats and captured the greatest quantity of materiel we ever had in the Anti-Japanese War.

The campaign enhanced the confidence of the people in North China in winning victory in the enemy's rear areas, dealt a heavy blow at Japan's policy of inducing China to capitulate and at the scheme of an "Eastern Munich", and gave much inspiration to the people in Chiang-controlled areas. It dealt another blow against the capitulators, increased the prestige of the anti-Japanese troops led by the Communist Party and gave the lie to the Kuomintang rumour that the Eighth Route Army was "moving about without fighting". Chiang Kai-shek's army had both rear support and foreign aid. The Eighth Route Army fighting in the enemy's rear enjoyed no assistance at all. But it took the overall interests of the country into consideration and organized the "Hundred Regiments Campaign", upholding the sacred cause of resisting Japanese aggression and saving the nation. We let the people throughout the country make their judgements and educate themselves. In the large-scale campaign, our troops gained some experience in storming strong enemy fortifications. This later helped us to develop armed work teams in the enemy's rear areas. We also speedily carried out the work of disintegrating the puppet troops and organizations in North China. Thanks to the restoration of vast Liberated Areas, the civilian people no

longer suffered from having to pay taxes to the Japanese and puppet troops.

When news of our victory reached Yan'an, Chairman Mao sent me a telegram immediately, saying:

hundred regiments campaign exciting stop
could you organize one or two more query

This showed the campaign was quite a success.

However, I did make some mistakes in connection with this campaign. My chief mistake was that I had miscalculated the direction of Japanese advance. The enemy planned to attack the Central Plains to control the entire length of the Guangzhou-Hankou and Hunan-Guangxi railways. But I thought (according to reports from our intelligence personnel) he would attack Xi'an City in Northwest China. I was afraid that he would take Xi'an and cut the link between the Central Committee (in Yan'an) and Southwest China. (This was an unnecessary worry.) I did not see that the Japanese Fascists wanted to drive south to control the Guangzhou-Hankou Railway for launching a Pacific War. If I had seen through the enemy's strategic plan, I would have waited another six months to launch the battle at a time when the enemy had occupied Changsha, Hengyang and Guilin cities and dispersed his troops still more widely. If I had done so, we would have achieved much better results and the campaign would have acquired much greater significance. The campaign was launched too early. Though we won a victory in a tactical sense, the campaign postponed the time — for about a month — for Japanese invaders to drive south for the campaign to control the Guangzhou-Hankou and Hunan-Guangxi railways, reducing their

pressure on Chiang Kai-shek. This helped Chiang Kai-shek objectively. The Japanese army was compelled to recall a division from East and Central China to intensify its offensive on our base areas in North China. Particularly in the Taihang Mountain area, the enemy pursued a policy of "burning all, killing all, looting all" (this policy was initiated in the summer of 1939), and the people suffered losses that might have been prevented. Moreover, I directed the operation somewhat rashly in the late period of the campaign. It lasted a whole month in the Taihang Mountain area, where our troops had no time for rest and reorganization before the Japanese and puppet troops came back and launched a "mopping-up" operation. In the "mopping-up" operation, each enemy column included a reinforced Japanese battalion supported by puppet troops. I always tried to wipe out a whole enemy column so that the enemy would not dare use only one battalion as a column in later operations, giving our troops and people a longer interval to manoeuvre between "mopping-up" operations. My view, however, did not tally with the actual conditions. Our troops were quite worn out and could not attain my goal. As a result, the 129th Division suffered heavy losses.

I should be held responsible for all the above consequences. But I hold that in judging that campaign, one cannot ignore our circumstances and tasks at that time. If anyone casts all this aside and views it from another angle and says it was launched "just for protecting Chiang Kai-shek's rule" and showed a "bourgeois-oriented strategic principle", his analysis of the operation is, in my opinion, a bit extreme.

For our victories were actually much bigger than our losses.

In the Cultural Revolution, some persons have slandered the "Hundred Regiments Campaign". They have said that our strength revealed in the campaign aroused Chiang Kai-shek's vigilance and made him engineer the Southern Anhui Incident.¹ Hence Peng Dehuai should be held responsible for the wiping out of the 8,000 to 9,000 men of the New Fourth Army. Good lord, what social class do they speak for? I doubt whether they have any knowledge of history. Since the Hundred Regiments Campaign took place after, not before, Chiang Kai-shek's first anti-Communist onslaught, then who should be held responsible for the massacres of Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army men before the first anti-Communist onslaught? Some people even said that Chiang Kai-shek launched an unprecedented offensive against the people's Liberated Areas after the surrender of Japan because he had been alerted by the strength we revealed in the Hundred Regiments Campaign. Did they have a bad memory or intentionally distort the facts of history? Who had revealed our strength before the April 12th Incident in

¹In January 1941, the New Fourth Army in southern Anhui Province moved north with the permission of the Kuomintang authorities. But it was ambushed and surrounded by 80,000 Kuomintang troops at Maolin township in Jingxian County. In a bloody battle lasting seven days and nights, Army Commander Ye Ting was captured and most of the over 9,000 officers and men of the army died a heroic death. Only a small number of men broke through the encirclement. That is known as the Southern Anhui Incident.

Shanghai and the May 21st Incident in Changsha in 1927? Who had ever launched a Hundred Regiments Campaign before the April 12th Incident? Chiang Kai-shek fought a ten-year civil war. Again, who had ever launched a Hundred Regiments Campaign before Chiang initiated the civil war? The answer was definite — nobody had ever launched a Hundred Regiments Campaign. Chiang Kai-shek launched a ten-year civil war because of the very nature of his clique as the representative of the landlords and comprador bourgeoisie. He was the representative of an anti-Communist and anti-people clique. Even in the period of resistance to Japanese aggression, he launched three anti-Communist onslaughts.¹ When the Anti-Japanese War ended, he had several million troops and enjoyed imperialist aid. Why should he not oppose the Communist Party and the people? Why should he not attack the Liberated Areas?

Slanderers of the Hundred Regiments Campaign: You have gone over to the side of Japanese imperialism and the Chiang Kai-shek clique. Please read

¹ After the fall of Wuhan to the Japanese in October 1938, Chiang Kai-shek shifted to a policy of passive resistance to Japan and active opposition to the Communist Party. He launched three massive anti-Communist onslaughts from winter 1939 to autumn 1943. The first one covered the period from winter 1939 to spring 1940, during which Kuomintang troops occupied five counties in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, Yan Xishan staged the December Incident in which he launched attacks on the Anti-Japanese Dare-to-Die Corps, while Shi Yousan and Zhu Huaibing attacked the Eighth Route Army troops in the Taihang Mountain area. The second anti-Communist onslaught took place in January 1941, when more than 80,000 Kuomintang troops ambushed the New Fourth Army moving north from

the telegram Chairman Mao sent me. Why is your view so different from Chairman Mao's? From rostrums, you shout at the top of your voice: "Down with Peng Dehuai!" and down with this or that. Think it over! Think of yourselves! Instead of chatting about these things among three or five persons in a room, you have spread such poison time and again at rallies of tens of thousands of people!

I hold that the Hundred Regiments Campaign was a military success. Especially after the Anti-Friction Battle, we had to organize such an anti-Japanese campaign to show that we had to oppose frictions for the sake of resisting Japanese aggression. Only thus could we win over large numbers of middle-of-the-roaders. At that time only by seizing the advantage of a weakly defended enemy rear to launch a vigorous surprise attack could we deal blows at the enemy and restore vast expanses of anti-Japanese base areas. It was not easy to organize such a campaign in a unified and planned way under the condition of dense networks of enemy blockhouses. Our

southern Anhui, resulting in the world-shocking Southern Anhui Incident. (Cf. footnote on p. 443.) The third one lasted from spring to autumn 1943. Producing his anti-Communist, anti-popular book, *China's Destiny*, and taking advantage of the dissolution of the Communist International, Chiang directed his agents to clamour for the "dissolution of the Communist Party" and the "abolition of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region" in the name of popular organizations, and mustered large numbers of troops garrisoning the banks of the Huanghe River in preparation for a blitz attack on the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. The Communist Party and the troops under its leadership repulsed these onslaughts and overcame the national crisis.

victory helped expose the deceptive propaganda of the Japanese invaders and Chiang Kai-shek. It was also necessary for the accumulation of revolutionary strength. If we had not dealt blows at the Japanese invaders and puppet troops at that time, our base areas would have turned into guerrilla areas, our army would not have grown to one million strong supported by two million militiamen, and we would not have had vast Liberated Areas as battlefields for the Liberation War to deal timely blows against the invading Chiang Kai-shek army.

During the Anti-Japanese War, the people's warfare took a step forward as compared with the days of the Red Army. For instance, we developed multiple forms of warfare, including large-scale tunnel warfare, mine warfare and sparrow warfare.* We used all kinds of weapons. We had various types of armed organizations. There were ordinary and core members of the militia. There were militia teams in villages, core militia companies in districts, and independent militia regiments, battalions or detachments in counties. Armed work teams emerged after the Hundred Regiments Campaign. They were a unity of Party, government, military and civilian organizations. Their members had a good understanding of policy, could analyse the realities, and showed excellent flexibility in approaching each target of

* "Sparrow warfare" is a form of guerrilla warfare by which the guerrilla fighters and militiamen, relying on popular support and their familiarity with the terrain, operate in groups of three or five and disperse or assemble as may be necessary to fool, tire out, and kill the enemy.
— *Tr.*

struggle. They always kept the people's interests in their minds and skilfully combined legal struggle with illegal struggle. All this grew step by step under the guidance of the Mao Zedong concept of people's war. It is a pity that the experience in all these areas has not been reviewed systematically.

XIII. The War of Liberation

(1946-October 1949)

Withdrawal from Yan'an

I remained in Yan'an to serve as Chief of Staff of the Revolutionary Military Commission of the CPC Central Committee after the conclusion of the Seventh Party Congress.*

Chiang Kai-shek unleashed a civil war in 1946 when he launched attacks on the Liberated Areas. By November of the year, our People's Liberation Army had annihilated 35 enemy brigades to deal a heavy blow against his forces. As a result, he had almost exhausted the manpower resources of his army.

Chiang Kai-shek then planned to convene a bogus "National Assembly"¹ and to attack Yan'an. One of his objectives was to deal a blow to the People's Liberation War politically. Another objective was to

* The Congress was held in Yan'an from April 23 to June 11, 1945. — *Tr.*

¹ Referring to the "National Assembly" convened unilaterally by the Kuomintang government in Nanjing from November 15 to December 25, 1946 in violation of the resolution of the Political Consultative Conference and the will of the people throughout the country. The "National Assembly", aimed at splitting the nation and maintaining Kuomintang dictatorship, was opposed and boycotted by the CPC, the various democratic parties and the people all over China.

employ overwhelmingly superior forces to annihilate our troops in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region or to force them, along with the CPC Central Committee and PLA headquarters, to retreat to the east of the Huanghe River and then set up a blockade line against them along the Huanghe and Wuding rivers. In this way, Chiang Kai-shek might move his main forces commanded by Hu Zongnan to dominate the Central Plains or North China and bolster the strength of his mobile forces. That was his plot.

In spring 1947 Chiang's troops were forced to give up their all-out attacks on the Liberated Areas and concentrate on an offensive against Shandong Province and Yan'an. Chairman Mao's firm and wise policy was: "We must defend and expand the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region and the Liberated Areas in the Northwest with a firm fighting spirit; it is entirely possible to achieve this objective."

Obviously the aim of the Central Committee was to lure in and then wipe out a great part of the enemy's main forces with relatively few troops of our own. To inspire the Chinese people to strive for victory in the nationwide Liberation War, the Party Central Committee and the PLA headquarters remained in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, where they continued to direct the Liberation War throughout the country and commanded the PLA units in the Northwest to pin down Hu Zongnan's forces there and smash Chiang Kai-shek's scheme.

When Hu Zongnan launched an attack on Yan'an, his troops outnumbered ours by ten to one. The en-

emy had some 240,000 troops, but we had only a little over 25,000. Being troops under Chiang's direct control, Hu's units were in full strength and had first-class equipment and a fairly high level of combat capability after undergoing training for a long time.

In early March 1947 Hu Zongnan ordered five brigades to attack Qingyang and Heshui counties in eastern Gansu Province. Our 358th Brigade, New Fourth Brigade and First Brigade of Garrison Units, totalling 12,000 men, did not fight well and sustained about 1,200 casualties in the first engagement at Xihuachi. They withdrew from eastern Gansu to assemble in Fuxian County, where they were ready to take part in the defence of Yan'an. Their failure in the Xihuachi battle brought them a lot of criticism.

Meanwhile, the main forces of Hu's army were converging on Luochuan and Yichuan counties in preparation for an attack on Yan'an.

I hurried to Fuxian County to brief our troops on the excellent war situation in the Liberated Areas throughout the country, and told them of the great significance of defending Yan'an, Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee as well as the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. They were full of enthusiasm when I told them that we were fighting to protect Chairman Mao.

Our troops were then holding meetings to find out the cause of their failure in the fighting in eastern Gansu. I joined their discussion, but before it was finished, I went to inspect the Training Brigade in Nanniwan, where the main positions for the defence of Yan'an were located. Comrade Luo Yuanfa told

me that the brigade was short of bullets, averaging less than 10 for each rifle. I discussed with the officers the deployment of our troops there and asked how many days they could hold out. They said that Nanniwan could be held for five days.

I told them to do their best to halt the enemy's advance and inflict losses on him, not to fight to the last ditch but to stop the enemy troops there for a week to provide the offices under the Central Committee with sufficient time to pull out of Yan'an.

Later they did hold Nanniwan for seven days. They would have held out longer if they had had more ammunition.

I went back to Fuxian.

I returned to Yan'an on March 12 to report to Chairman Mao. At that time, Comrade He Long was not in Yan'an, but in the Shanxi-Suiyuan Border Region. I told Chairman Mao that the brigades and rear-service personnel in northern Shanxi, who totalled only 20,000 men, could be put under my command for the time being before Comrade He Long came back to Yan'an.

"That's good!" the Chairman said.

Later the Central Committee appointed Xi Zhongxun Political Commissar and me Commander of the Northwest Field Army. Comrade He Long was appointed Commander of the Northwest Military Area,¹ and he also took charge of the rear areas.

Meanwhile our Party's Liaison Office in Nanjing

¹ It was called the Joint Command of the Defence Forces of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region and the Shanxi-Suiyuan Border Area. Later it became the Northwest Military Area.

had ceased to function, and Zhou Enlai and other comrades returned to Yan'an from Nanjing. Comrade Ren Bishi became Secretary-General of the Party Central Committee, and Comrade Zhou Enlai served as Chief of Staff of the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Party Central Committee.

I left the Commission then. Comrade Zhang Wenzhou,* who was transferred from the Party's Northwest Bureau, served as the Chief of Staff of the Northwest Field Army. I asked the Third Bureau** to give me two small hand-operated radio transceivers and some staff officers and decoders to form a mini-headquarters with some 50 officers and men.

Hu Zongnan had already massed his troops in Luochuan and Yichuan, and they were marching north on Yan'an.

The Northwest Bureau called a mass rally in Yan'an. Addressing the rally, Comrade Xi Zhongxun¹ and I mobilized the masses to defend Yan'an and the border region, keep food and other supplies out of the reach of the enemy, and withhold all information from him. We called on the people to support the PLA in the war to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek and wipe out the Hu Zongnan bandits. This mobilization rally was quite a success.

* Zhang Wenzhou, who served as Deputy Commander of the Armoured Units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army after Liberation, is advisor to the Armoured Units and member of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC. — *Tr.*

** In charge of communication. — *Tr.*

¹ Zhu De and Zhou Enlai spoke at the rally. Xi Zhongxun took the floor at another rally.

On the third or fourth day after the enemy troops began their attack on Nanniwan, I ordered the New Fourth Brigade to send scouts to reconnoitre the terrain around Qinghuabian, where we planned an ambush for the enemy troops. The Training Brigade also surveyed the terrain and discharged its duty very well in defending Nanniwan and escorting Chairman Mao through Guaimao safely.

By March 17, Chairman Mao had moved from Zaoyuan to Wangjiaping. He said to me that the houses were to be swept clean and no furniture was to be damaged when we withdrew from Yan'an.

Chairman Mao left Yan'an at dusk on March 18. We escorted him through the airfield area quietly. The enemy had thrust to a point only seven *li* from Yan'an, reaching the last defence position held by the Training Brigade. Chairman Mao was then moving past the airfield, Qiaoergou and Guaimao towards Qinghuabian. All along the way, he could hear the enemy's rifle shots coming from the southern bank of the Yanhe River.

After Chairman Mao left, I made an inspection tour of the Northwest Bureau, the offices of the Joint Command of the Defence Forces and Yangjialing and found the houses swept clean and furniture put in good order as the Chairman had instructed.

At around 9 o'clock, I returned to Wangjiaping and phoned the commanders at the front, telling them our plan, and setting the time and routes for their withdrawal. I ordered the 358th Brigade to withdraw in a swanky manner to Ansai northwest of Yan'an, luring the enemy troops towards that county.

Our main force lay in ambush in the Qinghuabian area, northeast of Yan'an.

Our withdrawal from Yan'an was conducted in a most orderly manner — an indication of the admirable calmness of the people's army men educated in Mao Zedong Thought.

I led my mini-headquarters in climbing a mountain; then we headed for Qinghuabian and got there in the afternoon.

It took the enemy seven days to advance to Yan'an by way of Nanniwan and Ganquan County. Hu Zongnan occupied Yan'an on March 19.

The Fighting in Qinghuabian, Yangmahe and Panlong

Our troops arrived at the field positions and lay in ambush. But after the second and third day had passed, still no enemy units had come into sight. Some comrades became anxious, fearing that the enemy would not come that way. But I believed they would turn up sooner or later.

On March 25, 1947, leaving behind a regiment to control Guaimao, the headquarters of the 31st Brigade of Hu Zongnan's reorganized 27th Division and one of its regiments entered our ambush ring. In the ensuing battle lasting over an hour, we wiped out the enemy, capturing some 3,000 troops, including the brigade commander, and nearly 300,000 rounds of ammunition. This was the first gift Hu Zongnan sent us after he mounted his attack on Yan'an. The gift was not big enough, but it was bad-

ly needed because we were terribly short of ammunition and had difficulty in getting reinforcements.

The battle helped us to make good the losses suffered by the New Fourth Brigade and the Training Brigade in eastern Gansu Province and at Nanniwan.

On April 15, Chairman Mao gave the Northwest Field Army an instruction on strategy: Adopt the "wear and tear" tactics to tire and weaken the enemy troops and then wipe them out piecemeal. This was our general plan. How should we carry out Chairman Mao's strategic principle? We first had to know the enemy's strategy, and then work out a practical operation plan on the basis of both our strategy and theirs.

Following our first victory, we concealed our main force northwest of Qinghuabian. Then we began to detect where the enemy planned to launch his attack. Discovering that our troops were in the Qinghuabian area, Hu Zongnan ordered three of his brigades to advance northward from Yan'an in a two-pronged drive via Guaimao instead of advancing eastward from Ansai. His force that marched on Yanchang, Yanchuan and Qingjian counties failed to contact our troops. So did the troops which pushed through Wayaobu, Yongping and Panlong.

Hu Zongnan then discovered that our main force was stationed northwest of Qinghuabian. Rather than move his troops westward by several routes from Qingjian, Wayaobu and Panlong, he concentrated his main forces at Panlong and Qinghuabian from where they thrust northward. Some of his

troops were left behind to defend Wayaobu and Qingjian.

Judging from his troop movements, we were sure that Hu Zongnan's objective was to drive our troops to the east of the Huanghe River. He was not confident of annihilating our forces. Responding to the enemy's intention, we worked out the operational policy of the Northwest Field Army: Strive to win victory in every engagement, provide ourselves with food, ammunition, bedding and clothing captured from the enemy, and replenish our units with POWs.

When the enemy set out to attack us, our troops had already moved to a place northwest of Wayaobu. Failing again to meet us, the enemy withdrew, leaving behind the 135th Brigade to control Wayaobu.

Meanwhile, our troops moved to the area northwest of Qinghuabian and east of Ansai.

In an attempt to prevent our troops from moving southwest, Hu Zongnan ordered his forces at Yongping, Panlong and Wayaobu to mass in the Yan'an area and the region north of it. Fearing that his 135th Brigade would be isolated in Wayaobu, he sent two brigades from Qinghuabian to bring back the brigade.

Knowing the enemy's intention, we sent our main force to lie in ambush along both sides of the road five *li* south of Wayaobu leading to Yangmahe. We dispatched a small detachment of crack troops to the south of Yangmahe to halt the enemy reinforcements moving north. (Yangmahe is 15 *li* from Wayaobu.) On April 14, while the 135th Brigade was

AREAS WHERE THE AUTHOR DIRECTED OPERATIONS
DURING THE WAR OF LIBERATION



withdrawing southward, our ambush force struck and wiped it out completely in less than two hours, capturing its acting commander.

Having located the main force of our troops, Hu Zongnan got together seven brigades to start a march towards Wayaobu in three columns from the south in an attempt to drive our troops to the Suide-Mizhi line. Small units of our army fought the advancing enemy columns and retreated slowly. Our main force moved overnight to conceal itself in an area between Panlong, Yongping, Wayaobu and Qingjian. Each of our brigades then sent a company to harass the advancing enemy and lure him to the Wuding River and the Suide-Mizhi line. This way our main force had a four-day rest.

As soon as the enemy troops reached the Suide-Mizhi line, our main force attacked Panlong, an important supply base defended by a strong enemy brigade. We captured Panlong in the evening of May 4 after two days' fighting. About 6,000 enemy troops of the 167th Brigade were put out of action, and its commander Li Kungang was taken prisoner. We captured 40,000 suits of summer uniforms, over 10,000 bags of flour, more than a million rounds of ammunition (this was most precious to us) and large quantities of medical supplies. This put an end to our serious shortages of grain, clothing and medicine.

Hu Zongnan's army found an empty Panlong with nothing in its warehouses when they returned four days later.

We celebrated our three successive victories at a mass meeting in Ansai County, where our troops assembled for a month-long rest and reorganization.

Switching from the Defensive to the Offensive

When Chairman Mao put forth his "wear and tear" tactics on April 15, 1947, he wanted our army to grapple with the enemy for a month in the Wayaobu-Qingjian-Qinghuabian area.

In a little over a month after the enemy's capture of Yan'an on March 19, our army fought three battles, wiping out five regiments and three detachments attached to brigade headquarters. Chairman Mao had told us to wear down the enemy completely. But now we had only worn him down 70-80 per cent. That was why we were still not able to annihilate two enemy brigades in one battle. Skilfully combining fighting with the tiring-out tactics, we became much more confident in wiping out Hu Zongnan's troops.

Lured by our troops, six or seven brigades of Hu Zongnan's army set out from Yan'an to mount a large-scale attack on Ansai County and areas north of it. But our main force had left Ansai two days earlier and advanced to Huanxian and Quzi by taking a route between Xiasiwan and Ganquan and had crossed Shaoshan. Our troops under Wang Zhen met Ma Jiyuan's unit in an attack on Heshui and failed to win the battle. Then they besieged Huanxian and Quzi county-seats, wiping out over two regiments of Ma Hongbin's troops.

Fearing that our army would drive to the Xi'an-Lanzhou Highway, Hu Zongnan assembled his main force at Xifeng township and Qingyang County-seat in great haste and ordered them to launch a northward offensive from the south. He also moved part

of his main force in Yan'an to reinforce the southern front.

Our troops had rested for half a month when Hu Zongnan's troops attacked Huanxian. They immediately moved to Yanchi and captured Dingbian, Anbian and Jingbian, forcing Ma Hongkui's units to retreat to neighbouring Ningxia Province.

About eight or nine reorganized brigades of Hu Zongnan's army arrived in pursuit of us. Because they were too close to us, our units did not fight well in a battle to besiege Yulin with the aim of wiping out enemy reinforcements. Our troops then withdrew to a place 70 *li* southeast of Yulin and 60 *li* north of Mizhi. Hu's units followed on our heels. We retreated to the north of Shajiadian, where we ambushed the 36th Reorganized Division on August 20, wiping out its two brigades and capturing the commander of the 123rd Brigade.

By now we had wiped out or worn down almost half of the 200,000 troops sent by Hu Zongnan to capture Yan'an six months before.

Five brigades under Liu Kan, Commander of the enemy's 29th Army, retreated to Suide while a division commanded by Liao Ang defended Qingjian, Yanchang and Yanchuan county-seats.

To pose a threat to the enemy's rear, I ordered the Second Column under Wang Zhen to march on Nanniwan, Yichuan, Luochuan and Hancheng, all south of Yan'an. Hu Zongnan quickly ordered Liu Kan's army to move south to defend Luochuan, while two brigades under Pei Changhui, Commander-in-Chief of the enemy's Fifth Army Corps, defended Yan'an and the 76th Reorganized Division with Liao Ang as

its commander remained at its garrison in Qingjian.

Our main force crossed the Wuding River upstream near Suide to control the highway linking Suide with Qingjian. When the enemy in Suide withdrew southward, another unit of our army appeared near Yan'an and Ganquan and further south, luring the enemy back to Yan'an.

Our main forces then secretly crossed the Wuding River at a point downstream from Suide and advanced southward along the Huanghe River east of Qingjian. In a surprise attack, they captured Yanchang and Yanchuan and besieged Qingjian garrisoned by two regiments of the 24th Brigade of the 76th Reorganized Division under Liao Ang and a detachment attached to his division headquarters. We wiped out the enemy forces in Qingjian and captured Liao Ang on October 11, 1947.

The weather in northern Shaanxi was extremely cold. After fighting incessantly for over half a year, our troops should have been massing in the Qingjian-Yanchuan area for rest and consolidation instead of attacking Yulin. Taking the safety of the Central Committee into consideration, however, our troops went to attack Yulin for the second time. They failed to capture Yulin after besieging it for almost a month. The attack on Yulin was called off in December when the weather was getting too cold. This can be considered a minor mistake I made. Otherwise, our troops would have had a month for rest and consolidation, and the new-type ideological education movement in the army would have achieved greater success.

We started the new-type ideological education movement in the army in mid-December.

We won great victories on the battlefields in the Northwest and other Liberated Areas across the country in 1947. Under the personal command of Chairman Mao, we went over to the offensive from the defensive.

The New-Type Ideological Education in the Army

On the battlefield in the Northwest, we gained a valuable experience, namely, the new-type ideological education in the army.

In December 1947 our troops were undergoing consolidation and training after giving up the siege of Yulin. In the 358th Brigade of the First Column, there was a soldier from Sichuan Province who had joined our army after being taken prisoner. In the middle of the night, he went alone to a field to write a tablet in memory of his mother. As he did this, the man wept and cursed those who had made his mother die a tragic death. He poured out his hatred for the Kuomintang and local despotic landlords and pledged that, having joined the PLA, he would avenge his mother's death.

The soldier was overheard by the political instructor of his company, who had suffered as much as the soldier. The two then embraced and wept together over the bitterness they had been through.

In the wake of this, we called a mass meeting in the unit for the two men and other soldiers to pour out their grievances against the old society. This

became the starting point of an ideological education movement.

Most of the officers and men in the PLA had their own histories of blood and tears. Since everybody had kept his bitter experience to himself, the soldiers' common hatred for the enemy did not turn into a common class feeling.

Meetings, big and small, for soldiers to pour out their grievances were soon held extensively in the army. This added immensely to the class consciousness of the soldiers and helped them realize that they could win emancipation and eliminate the exploiting classes only by toppling the Kuomintang government and wiping out its armed forces, by establishing a people's government to distribute land among the peasants who would work in farm cooperatives.

In the course of checking class origins, some hidden Kuomintang agents were ferreted out in the PLA. They confessed their criminal schemes under the influence of the policy of lenient treatment for those who confessed. This further raised the class consciousness of the officers and men and sharpened their revolutionary vigilance.

By making check-ups on performance of duty and the will to fight and asking the question "why", we found that some men discharged their duties very well and were brave in fighting, while some others did not do well and lacked courage. A low level of class consciousness or lack of combat experience was the reason why most of these men made a poor performance or showed little courage.

After making a thorough analysis and appraisal

of each man, we switched over to combat training, during which "officers teach soldiers, soldiers teach officers, and soldiers teach each other." Officers and soldiers taught and learned from one another in earnest.

As to the appointment of officers in the armed forces, we adopted a method that combined democratic election with approval by higher authorities.

Before the Battle of Wazijie, the First Field Army felt an acute shortage of cadres, especially cadres at the company, platoon and squad levels. Following the "pour-out-grievances" movement, which had heightened the class consciousness of the soldiers, the method of democratic election and approval by high authorities was employed in the selection of cadres. This solved the cadres shortage problem. When nominating a candidate, these conditions were taken into consideration: class consciousness, good points and shortcomings, and ability to command. The nominators and candidates, officers and men, sat together to compare the merits and demerits of the candidates to pick those best suited to be cadres.

This became universal education in a political-ideological and professional sense, and it enhanced the unity between senior and junior officers as well as between officers and men. Later experience proved that the majority of the cadres thus selected were good, whereas some of the candidates the higher authorities had in mind were not so good, and a few of them were bad elements.

Through this movement, mass discipline improved, so did relations between senior and junior of-

ficers as well as between armymen and civilians. This was a method by which the masses educated themselves.

This form of holding "pour-out-grievances" meetings was a great success. We had not found this form in the days of the Red Army or during the Anti-Japanese War. If we had, our achievements in winning over POWs to join the Red Army would have been much greater and our armed forces would have grown much faster.

Popularizing the method in the entire army, Chairman Mao commended it as a "new type of ideological education movement in the Liberation Army."

From the Wazijie Battle to the Capture of Lanzhou City

Some 32,000 men of our First, Third and Fourth columns massed at Ganguyi, Nanniwan and Linzhen township in mid-January 1948, while 12,000 men of the Second Column gathered east of Hancheng. The Northwest Field Army now totalled 44,000 to 45,000 men. Its morale was very high, thanks to the new-type ideological education movement in the army.

The enemy troops were then deployed in this way: two brigades garrisoned Yan'an, an isolated city; three brigades defended Luochuan; one brigade was stationed in Zhongbu* and another in Yi-

* Zhongbu, changed to Huangling County in 1944, is situated in the north-central part of Shaanxi Province and is the site of the tomb of Huang Di, the legendary Yellow Emperor.
— Tr.

chuan. The enemy forces totalled seven brigades.

The greatest difficulty confronting our army then was the shortage of food. If we advanced, there was no way to send the food to us. Nor could we solve the problem by retreating. We had no alternative but to take Yichuan County-seat. Our troops would probably be successful if they were to besiege Yichuan while attacking enemy reinforcements and they would surely be able to take the county-seat if no enemy reinforcements arrived. So we decided on a sudden siege of Yichuan.

When our army besieged Yichuan, Hu Zongnan sent four brigades from Zhongbu and Luochuan to reinforce Yichuan, which was defended by one brigade. In all, Hu Zongnan threw in five brigades or about 30,000 men, with 6,000 in each brigade.

Our battle deployment was completed on February 28. It snowed heavily in the evening. I phoned the First Column to ask about the situation. An officer said, "The heavier the snow, the better."

On March 1 our troops completely wiped out the four brigades of enemy reinforcements at Wazijie. On the evening of March 3 we captured Yichuan, wiping out the enemy brigade there.

In this battle, five brigades of enemy troops, totalling 30,000 men, were completely annihilated and Army Commander Liu Kan and Division Commander Yan Ming were killed.

We could wipe out only one enemy brigade at a time in March 1947. A year later, we were able to wipe out five brigades in a single engagement. This was a big change.

We could have besieged Yan'an and wiped out

enemy reinforcements sent to the city. The shortage of food supplies prevented us from doing so.

At the time we also wanted to go to the aid of two other armies in the Central Plains, one commanded by Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping and the other by Chen Geng* and Xie Fuzhi. So our army marched to Chunhua via Malanyu and captured Binzhou to cut off the Xi'an-Lanzhou Highway. Two of our brigades commanded by Xu Guangda were left behind to deal with the enemy troops in Yan'an and Luochuan. They were to intercept the enemy troops when they withdrew. But the brigades failed to achieve their objective. So the decision to leave them behind was incorrect.

After our army captured Binzhou and controlled the Xi'an-Lanzhou Highway, Hu Zongnan brought back four brigades from Henan Province as well as a division (probably the 65th Division) of the Guangxi army. The two brigades in Yan'an fled back to Xi'an. We recovered Yan'an only one year after our withdrawal.

The First Column of our army thrust into Baoji City, which was a big supply base for Hu Zongnan's forces. This played a certain role in shortening the duration of the war in the Northwest by adding to Hu Zongnan's difficulties.

But at that time I underestimated the support

* Chen Geng (1903-1961) became senior-general of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and served as Deputy Commander of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA, and Vice-Minister of National Defence after China's Liberation. — Tr.

Ma Bufang's units were able to give to Hu Zongnan and the speed with which Hu was able to get reinforcements from Henan Province. The thrust into Baoji landed our troops in a passive position, and they were quite worn out when they withdrew.

Chairman Mao's April 1947 instruction on wearing down Hu Zongnan's units was one of profound significance. Troops lose their combat effectiveness when they are thoroughly tired. This truth is hard to understand unless one experiences it personally.

Our army returned to Baishui for rest and consolidation and to get food supplies. At a place north of Pucheng County, we put out of action an enemy division retreating southward from Hancheng.

The units of our First Field Army were then dispersed to do mass work in the Huanglong Mountain area, Hancheng, Zhongbu, Yijun, Tongguan, Yaoxian, Fuping, Baishui and Pucheng. They spent the lunar New Year there in the winter of 1948.

By order of the Party Central Committee, I left the Northwest front on February 17, 1949 to attend the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Party.* Before the end of the session, Chairman Mao ordered me to go and help command the attack on Taiyuan, capital of Shanxi Province. After the capture of the city, the Central Committee made a decision in mid-April to transfer the 18th and 19th army groups of the North China Field Army to the First Field Army.

* Held in Xibaipo Village, Pingshan County, Hebei Province from March 5 to 13, 1949. — *Tr.*

I took the two army groups to the Northwest front immediately.

I spent a total of three months on attending the Plenary Session and attacking Taiyuan, and returned to the Northwest front in late May. Our troops had rested for a comparatively long time.

The defences in the cities of Xi'an and Xianyang were strengthened by the enemy when our 18th and 19th army groups arrived in the Xi'an plain. In a battle at Fufeng and Meixian that followed, we wiped out four armies under Hu Zongnan to put an end to his 12-year rule in the Northwest and liberated Baoji City. The 18th Army Group stayed to garrison Baoji and deal with the remnants of Hu Zongnan's units that were fleeing to Hanzhong.

The First Field Army and the 19th Army Group pushed westward. After bitter fighting at Lanzhou, they wiped out Ma Jiyuan's army completely. On August 25 Lanzhou City, capital of Gansu Province, was liberated, and on September 5 Xining City, capital of Qinghai Province, fell to our troops. The 19th Army Group alone wiped out three brigades under Ma Hongkui and five regiments under Ma Hongbin. The People's Liberation War in the Northwest had, by and large, come to an end in September 1949.

In early October (probably on the 5th or 6th), I arrived in Jiuquan to negotiate the peaceful liberation of Xinjiang with Tao Zhiyue from that province.

When our troops withdrew from Yan'an in March 1947, all the Liberated Areas in China were on the strategic defensive. They switched over to the of-

fensive only a year later — by early March 1948. What a dramatic change!

Our victory in the battle of Wazijie came only one year and 18 days after our abandonment of Yan'an. And one and a half years after Wazijie, our forces captured Lanzhou City. During this period, two-fifths of the territory of China (including Xinjiang) were liberated, and over 20 battles at or above the brigade level were fought. There were countless battles at or below the regimental level.

The people could win emancipation only through the people's armed struggle.

The Liberation War in the Northwest lasted two and a half years, and the Chinese People's Liberation War less than four years. The PLA defeated an enemy four times its strength and liberated one-quarter of mankind. This was a great victory for Mao Zedong Thought.

Two Mistakes and One Precious Lesson

I had made two mistakes and learned a precious lesson on the Northwest battlefield.

My first mistake came in late October 1947 after our troops had taken Qingjian County-seat and captured Liao Ang, a division commander of Chiang Kai-shek's troops. It was then very cold in northern Shaanxi. After undergoing intense fighting for half a year, our troops should have been given time for rest and training along the Qingjian-Yanchang line instead of being ordered to attack Yulin.

We failed to capture Yulin after besieging it for

about a month. This deprived our troops of a period for rest, consolidation and training.

If the attack on Yulin had not been launched, the new-type ideological education movement in the army would have been carried on for a month and a half longer and the success achieved would have been greater.

As a command officer, I had one good point — I was never satisfied with the victories already won. But I was overanxious to win more victories, so the good point became a shortcoming. Although I reminded myself again and again to guard against impatience, I found it difficult to overcome it.

When I decided to launch the second attack on Yulin, I thought of nothing but the safety of the Central Committee in the Mizhi-Suide area — we could ensure the safety of the Central Committee by taking Yulin. But I did not take other aspects of the matter into consideration.

My second mistake was made in the wake of the major victory at Wazijie. After our troops took eastern Gansu Province and Binzhou and cut off the Xi'an-Lanzhou Highway, I should have gotten our forces together for rest and consolidation and focused my attention on educating the great number of POWs captured in the Wazijie battle.

Instead, I ordered our troops to march a long distance to attack Baoji City and to disrupt Hu Zongnan's rear with the aim of shortening the duration of the war in Northwest China.

It was impetuosity that made me underestimate the enemy. In a very short time, Hu Zongnan got together a huge army of reinforcements mainly

from Henan Province and also from Yan'an, to launch a pincer attack on our troops in coordination with Ma Jiyuan's units from Qinghai Province. Our troops had to withdraw from Baoji and were so overcome with fatigue that they failed to wipe out enemy units which otherwise might have been annihilated.

In my military career, I received several lessons of this kind. But the one I got on the Northwest battlefield was the most profound.

Impatience for success means subjectivism in ideology and adventurism in action. This tendency often emerged in me after a series of major victories. This was arrogance. But it won the support of some soldiers at the time.

The precious experience I gained was the new-type ideological education movement in the army. Since I have already touched on this subject, I will not go into it again here.

XIV. The War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea

(October 1950-July 1953)

Dispatching Troops to Korea

At noon on October 4, 1950, three days after National Day, an airplane arrived in Xi'an city. I was told to leave for a meeting in Beijing without the slightest delay.

The Party Central Committee was holding a meeting to discuss the dispatch of troops to aid Korea when I arrived at Zhongnanhai* at 4 p.m.

Some comrades told me that Chairman Mao had asked those attending the meeting to list the disadvantages involved in dispatching troops to Korea. Chairman Mao then said: "You have reasons for your arguments. But at any rate, once another nation is in a crisis, we'd feel bad if we stood idly by."

I did not speak at the meeting because I had arrived late. But I thought to myself that troops should be sent to rescue Korea.

When the meeting broke up, I was taken to the

* Part of the former imperial palace now used as the premises of the Party Central Committee and the State Council. — *Tr.*

Beijing Hotel by comrades of the administrative section under the Party Central Committee.

I could not fall asleep that night. I thought it might be because I could not enjoy the soft, cozy spring bed. So I lay on the carpeted floor. But sleep still did not come and a train of thoughts flashed across my mind: The U.S. occupation of Korea, separated from China by only a river, would threaten Northeast China. Its control of Taiwan posed a threat to Shanghai and East China. The U.S. could find a pretext at any time to launch a war of aggression against China. The tiger wanted to eat human beings; when it would do so would depend on its appetite. No concession could stop it. If the U.S. wanted to invade China, we had to resist its aggression. Without going into a test of strength with U.S. imperialism to see who was stronger, it would be difficult for us to build socialism. If the U.S. was bent on warring against China, it would want a war of quick decision, while we would wage a protracted war; it would fight regular warfare, and we would employ the kind of warfare we had used against the Japanese invaders. As we had a national government and Soviet assistance, our situation was much better than it had been during the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression. We should dispatch troops to Korea to safeguard our national construction.

Again and again I turned over in my mind the Chairman's remarks: "You have reasons for your arguments. But at any rate, once another nation is in a crisis, we'd feel bad if we stood idly by." I came to realize that his instruction combined in-

ternationalism with patriotism. "You have reasons for your arguments" — yes, but if the matter was considered outside the light of the emergency in Korea, you would get nationalism, not internationalism. I believed that sending troops to Korea would be a correct, necessary and wise policy decision which should be carried out without delay. Having straightened out my thinking, I gave my support to the Chairman's wise decision.

The Central Committee meeting resumed in the Yiniantang Hall in Zhongnanhai the next afternoon. After listening to other comrades, I said, "It is necessary to dispatch troops to aid Korea. If China is devastated in war, it only means that the Liberation War will last a few years longer. The U.S. will find a pretext at any time to invade China if its troops are poised on the bank of the Yalu River and in Taiwan."

Chairman Mao made the decision to send me to Korea. I did not decline the offer. When I was walking by the lake, someone said to me, "You don't seem to be resigned to your advanced age."

The First Campaign

At dusk on October 18, 1950 I crossed the Yalu River with vanguard units of the Chinese People's Volunteers. We reached the Ragocho Power Station on the morning of October 19 and arrived in a small gully to the northwest of the town of Bukjin on the morning of the 20th.

Travelling in trucks and tanks, some advance units of the enemy had driven to the banks of the Yalu River.

On the morning of October 21, a division of our 40th Army passing through Bukjin encountered Syngman Rhee puppet troops not far outside the town.

The First Campaign was an unexpected one. I immediately altered our original plan of march. Our troops displayed characteristic flexibility and mobility and wiped out some Syngman Rhee units in the Unsan Area near Bukjin, forcing the pursuing U.S. and puppet troops to retreat. We thus got a firm foothold there.

The First Campaign ended in victory for us on October 25.

Because of their high level of mechanization, the U.S., British and puppet troops were able to withdraw speedily to the Chongchon River and the Ke-chon Area, where they started to throw up defence works. Our troops did not pursue the enemy because the main enemy force had not been destroyed even though we had wiped out six or seven battalions of puppet troops and a small number of American troops.

The mechanized enemy troops moved and built fortifications speedily. Their tanks and fortifications formed a system of defence. It would have been unfavourable for our Volunteers to engage the enemy in positional warfare with the equipment they had at that time. They might even have suffered defeat.

The Second Campaign

We employed the tactic of purposely showing ourselves to be weak, increasing the arrogance of the enemy, letting him run amuck, and luring him deep into our areas.

While some small units of our army remained in contact with enemy troops, our main force assembled in areas east and west of Bukjin and made use of the favourable terrain to build camouflaged positions 30 kilometres from the point where the enemy set out to attack us.

One day in mid-November, Douglas MacArthur¹ came over on a reconnaissance flight. His command headquarters said in a broadcast to the troops: "get ready, push to the Yalu River, and be home before Christmas."

His attack came around November 20. We sent small units to engage the enemy and to lure him to come after these units. It was nearly dusk when the enemy troops penetrated to the Unsan-Kusong line — the place we had planned for our counter-attack.

The enemy troops had been worn out after a day's fighting and were not ready to dig themselves in when small detachments of our troops began to strike at their rear. Then our main force swept into the enemy ranks with the strength of an avalanche and engaged the enemy at close quarters

¹ Douglas MacArthur became Commander-in-Chief of the "United Nations Forces" in July 1950 in the war of aggression against Korea. He advocated an attack on China. His setbacks in Korea brought about his dismissal.

with grenades and bayonets. The superior firepower of the enemy became useless. Over-turned and damaged enemy vehicles were strewn over the road, blocking the retreating enemy troops.

This method of fighting, which the enemy troops had never experienced before, took them by surprise. Thus our troops won a major victory in the Second Campaign. The enemy lost no fewer than 6,000 motor vehicles and well over 1,000 tanks and gun-carriers. We captured only a small part of the equipment because most of it was later burned by the enemy with napalm bombs.

The enemy troops fled south in panic, abandoning Pyongyang and falling back on the 38th Parallel.

This campaign laid the foundation of victory in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea recovered all its lost territory by the end of the campaign.

The Third Campaign

In the wake of the Second Campaign, our forces pursued the enemy and by mid-December made a sneak approach to the 38th Parallel. After making a thorough reconnaissance of enemy positions, our forces got everything ready for an offensive.

In the evening of December 31, 1950, our troops stormed across the 38th Parallel, captured Seoul and crossed the Hangang River to recover the port of Inchon and drive the enemy to the 37th Parallel.

The enemy brought in four divisions in reinforcements from Japan and the United States and massed them along a defence line along the Rakdong River; and they were supported by veteran soldiers shipped over from Europe. Enemy troops withdrawn from the Hamgyong area on the eastern front were also sent to man the defences along the Rakdong River.

The enemy's mechanized units retreated only 30 kilometres every day — a distance that our troops could cover in a night. The enemy plan was to do everything to lure our troops to attack his fortified positions, and then — having worn out our troops — to mount a frontal attack against us and land his marines on our flank to cut off our retreat route.

By now the Chinese People's Volunteers had fought three major campaigns in a row in severe winter after their entry into Korea three months before. They had neither an air force nor sufficient anti-aircraft guns to protect them from enemy bombers. Bombed by aircraft and shelled by long-range guns day and night, our troops could not move about in the daytime. And they had not had a single day's good rest in three months. It is easy to imagine how tired they were.

As our supply lines had now been extended, it was very difficult to get provisions. The strength of our forces had been reduced by nearly 50 per cent due to combat and non-combat losses. Our troops badly needed reinforcements and rest and reorganization before they could go into battle again.

By now we had three armies on the southern

bank of the Hangang River, quite close to the 37th Parallel. Our main forces were then stationed north of the Hangang River on the 38th Parallel and in the area south of it, where they were resting and undergoing reorganization. They built fortifications in anticipation of enemy counter-attacks and a prolonged war.

The Fourth Campaign

Our troops stopped their attacks after reaching the 37th Parallel (the Suwon Area).

The enemy forces mounted their counter-attack in late January 1951, following their failure to lure our troops into their fortified zones along the Rakdong River. We fielded five armies against them.

In this campaign, we wiped out nearly two enemy divisions which suffered about 2,000 casualties. Most of the enemy troops we annihilated were Syngman Rhee puppet troops, and the rest were mixed French, Belgian and Luxembourg units. The U.S. army lost only a little more than a battalion. But the enemy's counter-attack was repulsed.

In February or March 1951, I left Korea for Beijing (the round trip took seven days) to report to Chairman Mao on the situation on the Korean front and to ask him for strategic instruction. I explained to Chairman Mao that as the Korean War could not be won quickly, the 50th Army on the southern bank of the Hangang River should be withdrawn to the northern bank before February 15, 1951.

The Chairman gave a clear instruction for conducting the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea: "Win a quick victory if you can; if you can't, win a slow one." That is a clear and flexible principle.

The Fifth Campaign

The enemy forces thrust northward on a massive scale in mid-February after they failed to lure our troops to the Rakdong River area.

Our forces fought the enemy bitterly while retreating from one position to another. The enemy forces pushed to the 38th Parallel in around 40 days.

Then in a counter-attack on the western front, our troops almost pushed the enemy back to Seoul. This was the first phase of the Fifth Campaign.

But the enemy did not give up Seoul this time. Many echelons of enemy troops were deployed outside the city, and the enemy did not beat a retreat after reaching the 38th Parallel on the eastern front.

In a concerted drive, the Chinese People's Volunteers and part of the Korean People's Army pushed back the enemy troops on the eastern front. But one of our armies advanced too far (almost to the 37th Parallel!) during the drive. It became confronted with supply problems and had great difficulties in getting food. The men were exhausted when they came back to our positions. Because of oversights in its arrangement for a shift of position, a division of the 60th Army was attacked by aircraft and en-

circled by mechanized units while on the march. It lost a total of 3,000 men. That was the second phase of the Fifth Campaign. The losses in this campaign were the highest suffered by our forces in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea.

The Fifth Campaign was fought on a mammoth scale with one million troops taking part on either side. Our forces were still unable to annihilate a whole regiment of American troops in the campaign. They succeeded in wiping out a whole U.S. battalion on six or seven occasions, and a division of puppet troops.

If we encircled a U.S. regiment, our troops would need two days to wipe it out because they were poorly equipped and the enemy air force and mechanized units would do everything to rescue the encircled unit. Only once did our troops wipe out an entire U.S. regiment and none of its men was able to escape; this took place in the Second Campaign. Otherwise our troops were able to wipe out only whole U.S. battalions. If a U.S. battalion encircled in the night were not wiped out while it was still dark, the Americans had the means to rescue it the following day.

Chairman Mao sent a telegram instructing us not to try to annihilate large bodies of American troops at a time, but to decimate them piece-meal. This was an excellent method, but a transitional period was needed for our men to build strong fortifications without which it would be impossible to carry out this approach.

The enemy forces had become quite exhausted in over two months of intense fighting from the begin-

ning of the Fourth Campaign to the end of the Fifth Campaign.

During this period, our forces had constructed a network of good fortifications. The surface defensive positions of our forces were giving way to fortifications built underground. A defence-in-depth tunnel system* was taking shape gradually along the 38th Parallel. The tunnel fortifications were so strong that no enemy troops could penetrate them (an example was provided by the tunnel fortifications of the Sangkumryung Ridge).** As a result, the enemy's attacks were repulsed one after another.

With concentrated forces, we could now crack the enemy defence line at any given point. Our troops had learned to wage defensive warfare as well as offensive warfare of a positional nature by using tunnel fortifications.

With the emergence of strongly built defences in the summer and autumn of 1951, our forces began to employ Chairman Mao's "piece-meal" attack method against the enemy.

* A total of 1,250 km. of tunnels and 6,240 km. of trenches involving the shifting of 60 million cubic metres of rock and earth were dug along the front by the Chinese People's Volunteers and the Korean People's Army during the war. — *Tr.*

** In 43 days of fighting ending November 25, 1952, the U.S. forces dumped 10,000 bombs and 1,900,000 shells that blasted away two metres of rock from the summits of a small cluster of heights known as the Sangkumryung Ridge. Fighting back from tunnel fortifications built deep underground, the Chinese People's Volunteers repulsed no fewer than 900 attacks on the hills, inflicting a total of 25,000 casualties on the enemy. — *Tr.*

In launching an attack, our troops concentrated in camouflaged offensive positions to bring maximum fire power to bear on the enemy. In such an attack, a part of the enemy — usually a battalion — was wiped out. We fought many such battles — around four or five per month. The numbers of enemy troops thus put out of action were not small when they were added up.

Moreover, our forces had mastered the tactic of storming strongly fortified defences in positional warfare. The last battle in which our forces stormed enemy defences took place one evening in late July 1953, when four of our armies cut through a 25 × 25 kilometre gap in the enemy's bunker defence system in a single night just before the signing of the Armistice Agreement. Our forces wiped out a heavy artillery regiment of the U.S. Army and a great part of four puppet divisions.

Employing this new tactic of active defence in positional warfare, our poorly equipped forces could breach enemy defences when attacking and hold their ground when defending their own positions. Thus our troops won the initiative on the battlefield. This tactic, which was the manifestation of the fine political equalities and military traits of a revolutionary army, created a most favourable condition for conducting positional warfare of a protracted nature.

This victory won by our troops forced General Mark W. Clark, Commander-in-Chief of the enemy's Allied Forces, to request that the Armistice Agreement be signed without delay. Clark said: "In carrying out the instructions of my government, I

gained the unenviable distinction of being the first United States army commander in history to sign an armistice without victory."

Signing the armistice, I thought that the war had set a precedent for many years to come — something the people would rejoice at. It was a pity, however, that having established our battlefield deployment, we were unable to deal greater blows against the enemy.

We gained a lot of experience in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea. Our success in moving supplies to the front without any air cover was likewise a valuable experience. We also gained much experience in countering germ warfare.

On the Korean battlefield, the Chinese People's Volunteers and the Korean People's Army fought shoulder to shoulder to help each other like brothers. Fighting together for three years, the Chinese People's Volunteers and the Korean people and the Korean People's Army built up a militant friendship sealed in blood. The feeling of internationalism between our two peoples became even more profound.

XV. The Lushan Meeting

(1959)

The Situation Surrounding the Lushan Meeting

Before the Lushan Meeting, the Central Committee convened two meetings in Zhengzhou,¹ one in Wuchang and another in Shanghai.² My participation in these meetings was as follows:

¹ The first Zhengzhou Meeting was held during November 2-10, 1958. Called by Chairman Mao Zedong and attended by some leaders at the central and local levels, the meeting discussed the issue of the people's communes and the Resolution of the Zhengzhou Meeting on Certain Questions Concerning the People's Communes. The second Zhengzhou Meeting, held from February 27 to March 5, 1959, was an enlarged session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. It also focused on the people's communes. On the basis of Chairman Mao's proposals, the meeting laid down the principle for overhauling and building up the people's communes and produced a draft of Some Regulations on the System of Management in People's Communes.

² The Wuchang Meeting was held during November 21-27, 1958. It was called by Chairman Mao and attended by some central leaders, leaders of central ministries and commissions, and the first secretaries of Party committees of provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. The meeting discussed the Resolution on Certain Questions Concerning the People's Communes (draft) and questions of industrial and agricultural production. It adopted some documents, including the Proposals on Education by the

I attended only one of the two Zhengzhou Meetings. Because I received the notice fairly late, I attended the meeting only on its concluding day. At the concluding session held on a train after dusk one day, Chairman Mao made a speech, which was mainly directed against the "communist wind".* The meeting did not last long because all participants had unanimous understanding of the issue. I agreed with the Chairman's views and did not give any other opinion.

During the Wuchang Meeting,¹ I participated in the discussions of the Northwest Group. In a discussion on publishing the grain and cotton figures for 1958, some comrades said that the grain output was more than 500 million tons while others

Party Group of the Ministry of Education as Approved by the Party Central Committee. The Shanghai Meeting was held from March 25 to April 4, 1959. The meeting discussed the people's communes, the national economic plan, industrial and agricultural production, as well as the agenda for the Seventh Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CPC. It worked out a series of documents on streamlining and consolidating the people's communes.

* A wrong tendency which appeared in the movement to form people's communes in 1958, marked by absolute equalitarianism in income distribution and by the uncompensated transfer of material, financial and manpower resources from lower to higher levels in the communes or to government agencies. — *Tr.*

¹ Referring to the Sixth Plenary Session of the Party's Eighth Central Committee which took place in Wuchang from November 28 to December 10, 1958. The session adopted the Resolution on Certain Questions Concerning the People's Communes, the Resolution on the 1959 National Economic Plan, and other documents.

said that it was 450 million tons and cotton output was 3 to 3.5 million tons. There were also some comrades who said that we could now produce as much grain as we wanted, and the current problem was that industry lagged way behind agriculture. I said that the grain output was not as much as they had said. Then a comrade criticized me politely by saying: "Commander, you seem to have doubts on everything — what can we say to you?"

"If the figure released is less than the actual harvest," I said, "it will be easy for us to add to it later. But if it exceeds the actual harvest, we will get into a fix."

Later the Chairman suggested 375 million tons as the figure to be released. Although I agreed to this decision, I still had doubts about the figure.

After the meeting I went to the Wushi and Shaoshan people's communes in Xiangtan County, and then to Pingjiang County. The impression I got from my tour of these places was that the grain actually harvested was not as much as claimed in the figures. The reason: harvesting was not being done properly because of a shortage of labour power, and in some places more grain than expected had been consumed.

At the Pingjiang exhibition on local production, I found that the high production figure for 1957 was announced as the 1958 figure, while the low figure for 1958 was released as 1957's. To make up figures like this was something horrifying.

After returning to the city of Zhuzhou, I met Comrade Bo Yibo. Talking about the grain output figure, I said: "The actual grain production is not as big as estimated. It will be very difficult for the gov-

ernment to purchase 60 million tons of grain in the current year. Over-purchasing will create the difficulty of transporting grain back to the countryside, and will discourage the peasants in their work. I think it will be more appropriate to purchase 45 million tons."

"You should send a telegram to the Central Committee," Comrade Bo Yibo said.

"Please write the telegram yourself," I said.

Later I wrote the telegram and sent it in my own name. In the telegram I explained why the purchase should be 45 million and not 60 million tons. I am responsible for the telegram, which may or may not be right. But it can be seen that I did not hide my doubts.

The Shanghai Meeting was convened in April 1959 during the time a rebellion was taking place in Tibet. I concentrated on arrangements for dispatching troops to Tibet. So I did not raise opinions on anything else.

I toured the countries of Eastern Europe in May 1959 and returned to Beijing in mid-June. I went to the Ministry of National Defence building the day after my return, and heard a briefing on the domestic situation given by Huang Kecheng.* The grain shortage in the Heze area in Shandong Province was less serious than it had been at the time I left for Europe. During the Shanghai Meeting in April, Gansu was

*Huang Kecheng, who was member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee and Vice-Minister of National Defence at the time, is now Second Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC.
— Tr.

said to be a province with a grain surplus, but now it faced a serious grain deficiency. It was not easy to send grain there because of the lack of transportation.

"Can the army provide some more transport facilities?" I asked.

"We have already done what we could," Huang said. "Some naval vessels sailed to Chongqing to help ship food grain. Some aircraft from the air force are also being used. Preparedness against war will be affected if more are made available. There is also an oil reserve problem. Although the rebellion in Tibet has been put down, we cannot reduce the number of transport vehicles used there."

He seemed a bit embarrassed.

"We can still do something to help the provinces in the way of transport," I said. "People of the fraternal countries in Eastern Europe are very enthusiastic in their attitude towards China. The leaders in these countries are closely following the rebellion in Tibet."

I went on to say that the Central Committee would convene a work meeting at Lushan on July 1, but I was very tired and wished to have a rest. I asked Huang Kecheng to attend the meeting because as a member of the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee, he was familiar with the situation both in the army and in the government. He replied that it would be better for me to go as he would prefer to stay at the Military Commission to take charge of its day-to-day work. Rather than press him too hard, I had to go myself.

I went to Lushan by taking a ship from Wuhan on June 29. I had a rest on July 1, and the meeting

opened on the 2nd. Chairman Mao spoke in general about the current situation. The gist of his speech was: the achievements were great, the problems were many, but the future was bright.

The General Office of the Party Central Committee distributed a lot of material. I was put in the Northwest Group, where I attended almost all the meetings — about 10 in all. I also participated in two meetings called by the State Council to discuss planning work and one or two meetings of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee. Except for the above-mentioned meetings, I did not go anywhere else.

Zhou Xiaozhou* came to my place twice to chat with me. He touched on the industrial situation in Hunan Province in our first conversation. In the past, he said, Hunan had laid no foundation for heavy industry, but now there were iron and steel works and plants turning out electric generators and machinery in the province, which had also made great progress in light industry. He added that great successes had been achieved in water conservancy construction and good harvests could be ensured even if there was no rainfall for 40 days running. We talked for less than an hour before we went to lunch.

Two days later, Zhou Xiaozhou came to talk with me for the second time. He said that the grain output figure for the previous year had been cooked up.

* Zhou Xiaozhou (1912-66) was then alternate member of the CPC Central Committee and First Secretary of the Party's Hunan Provincial Committee. — *Tr.*

"Why?" I asked.

"It was a result of pressure," he replied. "When the figures of different areas were made available, the higher authorities said they were not final. The figures were sent up for the second time, and they said again, 'not final'. As this process was repeated several times, cadres at lower levels came to know that what was wanted was exaggerated figures."

"The figures reported must tally with the amounts actually produced," I said. "They should neither be exaggerated nor reduced."

"Now people are having their meals in communal canteens," Zhou Xiaozhou said. "So large cauldrons and big ranges are used, resulting in a waste of both firewood and labour power. If people cook in their own kitchens, meals can be prepared by women and the weak. But now only the able-bodied can cook. Because of the communal canteens, hot water cannot be conveniently obtained by individual households. People have objections to the communal canteens."

"You should inform the Chairman of these problems," I said.

After saying that he had talked to the Chairman about some of these problems the day before, Zhou Xiaozhou said that he hoped I would find an opportunity to talk to the Chairman about the actual conditions.

"Officers and men have also informed me of some aspects of the social situation," I said. "I have already sent the information to the Chairman."

"Can it reach the Chairman?" he asked.

"Yes, it can," I answered.

Zhang Wentian* lived in a compound separated from mine by a wall. Since we could see each other when we went outside, we chatted together on many occasions. We talked casually whenever we went out for a walk. I cannot remember clearly what we talked about after such a long time. We touched mainly on these subjects: losses out-weighted gains in smelting iron in small indigenous furnaces. I said that there were gains as well as losses in smelting iron this way. (This remark of mine in my letter to the Chairman was miscopied as "there were losses as well as gains".)

"Your evaluation is relatively high," Zhang said. "We must make a good study of history. Chairman Mao has learned a lot from Chinese history."

"Chairman Mao is the only person in the Party who has a genuine understanding of Chinese history," I said. I expressed my desire to study political economy after the meeting. I held that Stalin had solved the problem of the law of socialist economy, but he had not correctly solved the question of the contradictions among the people and even committed mistakes on this issue. Chairman Mao had solved this major problem by analyzing very clearly the two types of contradictions which differed in nature. This had consolidated the dictatorship of the proletariat and creatively developed Marxism-Leninism.

The above were the main points I discussed with Zhou Xiaozhou and Zhang Wentian around July 10

* See footnote on p. 362. — Tr.

during the Lushan Meeting. Huang Kecheng had not yet arrived at Lushan.

I joined the Northwest Group in the early period of the Lushan Meeting, which began on July 2, 1959. In the eight days from July 3 to July 10, I spoke seven times (including comments on other speakers' remarks) at the group meetings. My remarks were printed in the bulletins of the meeting and distributed to all the participants by the General Office of the Party Central Committee.

After Chairman Mao criticized my letter dated July 14 on the morning of July 23, the Northwest Group collected my speeches (including the comments) and printed and distributed them to the participants after proof-reading them several times.

These facts clearly showed that I had not kept silent but had made remarks to voice my dissatisfaction with certain "Left" tendencies before I wrote the letter to the Chairman. This is a fact.

Except for going out to attend meetings, I had since July 1 stayed indoors to read documents on finance and economy issued by central departments, letters from the masses and bulletins of the meeting. By the evening of July 12, I had formed in my mind the view that there was a serious disproportion in state planning and that Chairman Mao's principle of "walking on two legs"* had not been implemented in various fields of work. This was to be the main content of my letter dated July 14.

* "Walking on two legs" refers to a series of policies for the simultaneous development of industry and agriculture, heavy and light industries, enterprises run by the Central government and those run by local authorities, etc. — *Tr.*

I planned to state my views to the Chairman on the morning of July 13. But when I arrived at the Chairman's place, his guards told me that the Chairman had just gone to bed. So I went to a meeting of the Northwest Group.

After supper on July 13, I sat down to write the letter (the draft had already been worked out in my mind the previous evening) and sent the finished letter to the Chairman himself the next morning. On July 16 my letter was printed and distributed by the General Office of the Party Central Committee. I stated at a group meeting on July 18 that the letter was written for Chairman's personal reference only, and I asked the General Office to take back the copies of my letter it had distributed.

In their speeches made on July 20 or thereabouts, Zhang Wentian, Zhou Xiaozhou and some others said they basically agreed with what I had said in my letter. Huang Kecheng arrived at Lushan in the evening of July 18 or 19. I did not see the text of what he had said at any meeting of his group.

Repudiating my letter on the morning of July 23, Chairman Mao said that it had presented a programme of an anti-Party nature. He said that before the letter was written, some people had made speeches in support of my views, that I had set the tune and others had echoed me. What else could this be if not an anti-Party clique? — Chairman Mao said.

The climate at the meeting changed and my feelings became tense after Chairman Mao's repudiation of my letter.

To vindicate my motive and explain my wishes in writing the letter, I would like to state once again

my views on the domestic situation and on some specific issues of the time (I won't elaborate on the achievements).

My views on the domestic situation then were as follows: I held that an excellent situation prevailed in our country. Led by the Party and guided by the General Line, the Chinese people launched a vigorous Great Leap Forward movement in 1958, at which time people's communes came into existence across the country. The Great Leap Forward movement had unfolded on an extensive scale and the formation of the people's communes conformed to the interests of the people and their wishes to get rid of quickly the state of being "poor and blank".* This excellent situation created favourable conditions for us to carry out the General Line, consolidate the people's communes and carry on the Great Leap Forward movement.

Did that mean, then, that there were no problems? No. That was not the case. There did exist some relatively serious shortcomings or mistakes in some specific areas or in certain concrete policies. The letter I wrote during the Lushan Meeting was based on these problems.

First of all, I had objections to the planning work of that time. I held that we were starting too many capital construction projects in too hasty a way in 1958. Many of the projects were having to be rebuilt, and part of the labour force was lying idle. The dispersion of construction funds delayed the

* A Chinese phrase indicating the economic and cultural backwardness of the country. — Tr.

completion of key projects, and raw and processed materials were in short supply.

Instead of being limited, the scale of capital construction continued to expand blindly in 1959.

There was a certain degree of lopsidedness in the development of the iron and steel industry. People stressed the construction and development of processing and material industries but neglected the raw material industry to some extent. The raw material industry provided the foundation for the material and processing industries. If the foundation were unstable, the development of the processing industry would be impeded.

In my July 14 letter to Chairman Mao, I listed a series of examples of this problem, such as the lack of a conscientious study ever having been conducted on the equipment used for steel-making, rolling and ore-crushing, for extracting coal and mineral ore and for coking. We also had not paid enough attention to the source of pit-props, the increase of transportation capacity and manpower, the increase in purchasing power, and the distribution of commodities in the market. In a word, we did not have a well-balanced plan.

At that time I thought that unrealistic planning was the cause of a host of problems. I was also afraid that if no real efforts were made to suspend some capital construction projects started in 1958 or in the first half of 1959, the disproportions would be prolonged (the main imbalance was that agriculture lagged far behind industry), we could not free ourselves from a somewhat passive position, and this

would directly affect our speed in the effort to catch up with or surpass Britain in four years.

In my letter to Chairman Mao, I also wrote: "Although the State Planning Commission has set guidelines on the proper balance, it has difficulty in making the final decision because of various reasons." I then had these four reasons in mind: first, the local governments wanted to build more projects at a greater speed; second, the departments under the State Council wanted to do the same; third, the Party Central Committee also wanted to do this; and fourth, we had not yet found the objective law governing the speed of socialist construction in our country.

Stalin had come to a conclusion with regard to the speed of socialist construction in the Soviet Union only after groping for nearly two decades, i.e., the annual average rate of increase should be from 13 to 14 per cent. During a Five-Year Plan period, the Soviet Union doubled its GNP with an increase of 14.87 per cent each year.

The conditions in our country were somewhat different from those in the Soviet Union at that time. First of all, we had more manpower. Second, our international environment was better. But our industrial foundation was weaker. After making these comparisons, one might conclude that the tempo of socialist construction in our country could be quicker. But how quick should it be? If our GNP was to be doubled within four years, the average rate of increase would be 18.93 per cent per year; and if it was to be doubled within three years, the increased rate would be 26 per cent per year.

I thought we could aim at doubling our GNP in four years and strive to achieve that aim in three years and a half. But I did not put forward the plan because I had no experience in this field. I always held that without setting a norm for each year, planning could not be done well and either rashness or conservatism would easily occur. Then we would have to make self-criticisms time and again.

In my letter to the Chairman, I devoted half the space to criticizing planning. I wrote the sentence "Although the State Planning Commission has set guidelines on the proper balance, it has difficulty in making the final decision because of various reasons" as a way of excusing the State Planning Commission.

I held that there should also be a norm for agricultural production. It would be pretty good for agricultural production to register an average increase of 7 per cent a year in our post-Liberation conditions. Of course, it would develop at a quicker pace in the future with improvements in the supply of farm machines, water conservancy and fertilizer production.

In the post-Liberation period we had had a good year, an average year and a lean year in agricultural production in each three-year period. The year 1952 was a bumper harvest year, 1953 was an average year, and 1954 a lean year. That was also the case with 1955, 1956 and 1957.

In the past, it had been our practice to offset the losses in lean years with the gains in good years. The year 1958 saw an exceptional bumper harvest. But the grain reserves of the state did not increase but

dwindled because harvesting and storing were done badly in many areas, and in some other areas too much grain was eaten up or wasted.

If the climate pattern held, then 1959 would be an average year and 1960 a lean one.

A total of 90 million people were engaged in iron smelting in the autumn of 1958, and 70 million turned out to build water conservancy works in 1959. This may have been good for our long-term interests, but was not conducive to agricultural production in the current years. The "big undertakings" started simultaneously in other fields would aggravate the lack of manpower in agricultural production. And this would work against an increase in farm production, reducing the supply of raw materials for a number of industries, including light industry, and the supply of foodstuffs.

There were three different views on the masses using small, indigenous blast furnaces to produce iron: first, it brought only losses and no gains; second, it brought more losses than gains; and third, it brought gains as well as losses. I held the last view and opposed the first two.

On trade policy, my view also differed from those who stood for "subordinating the domestic market to foreign trade". If too much was exported, there would be shortages on the domestic market, which would affect the withdrawal of currency from circulation. Financial income would be reduced, and the Great Leap Forward affected.

I summarized all this as follows:

The outstanding contradiction confronting us in

construction is the tension in various fields caused by disproportions. Such a development has in essence affected the relationship between workers and peasants and between the various strata in the cities and rural areas. Thus the contradiction takes on a political nature. It is the key link which affects our mobilization of the masses of people for continuing the leap forward.

At that time leading comrades in many areas had developed a subjectivist way of thinking. Sometimes they wrongly regarded long-term strategic tasks in the period of socialist construction as slogans for immediate action. In carrying out a specific task, they did not study the concrete conditions seriously but made decisions according to their own wishes. Quotas assigned by the central authorities were raised at every level. Purely subjective slogans got into circulation, such as "the land can yield as much as you dare to work for", "a 'Left' deviation is better than a Right one — the former involves your method, the latter has to do with your stand."

Of course, people would not say these wrong things in front of the Chairman or other leading comrades. In my opinion, such practices and statements were in fact undermining the General Line, the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune.*

In the organization of the rural labour force, too much stress was laid on "putting a big army corps into operation". The strong and the weak were not

* At the time, these were known as the "three red banners". — *Tr.*

combined but separated and put into different groups. Organizing manpower in such a way did not suit our present technical level in rural production.

“Evil winds” rose in some areas, namely, the “communist wind”, the tendency to exaggerate production figures, and the tendency towards compulsion. A sizable number of cadres in grass-roots units (and also many at other levels) mistook the newly-established people’s communes as a sign of the advent of communism. They blindly collectivized great quantities of means of production and of livelihood to practise “communism”. They blindly pulled down houses and felled trees and bamboo groves before new residential quarters were built. Many peasant households sold out their family property at low prices for fear of their being “communized”. To exaggerate the achievements in their work, some cadres reported to higher authorities almost limitless astronomical figures for the amounts actually produced. If these figures were all added together, the total would have been astounding!

It cannot be denied that such phenomena had something to do with the excessive production quotas set by some leading departments. Many grass-roots cadres adopted compulsory methods to create astronomical production figures or to meet the quotas which had been raised when they were handed down from one level to another. In some areas, beating people had become a common practice — people were beaten if they did not fulfil their tasks, or were late for work, or said some displeasing words. In productive labour in some areas many women suffered abnormal menstrual cycles and other feminine

disorders because women's physiological characteristics were not taken into consideration. I got a particularly deep impression of these practices when I visited Wushi and Pingjiang in December 1958. During my stay there, many peasants came to me to make appeals and lodge complaints. The "evil winds" in some areas directly affected the prestige of our grass-roots Party organizations among the people. To some extent, the prestige of leading comrades at the central level also suffered. The worst of it was that all this discouraged the peasants in their production. I summarized these problems as a tendency towards boasting and exaggeration, petty bourgeois fanaticism and compulsion. In the early days of the Lushan Meeting, the comrades present did not air their views on these issues freely. It was the above-mentioned facts that prompted me to write the letter to Chairman Mao.

July 23 — a Severe Test for Me

In the letter I wrote to the Chairman on July 14, 1959, I gave the essentials of my views on some issues which I found inconvenient to talk about at the meetings of the Northwest Group. These issues involved the implementation of a number of concrete policies concerning the General Line, the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune as well as the working methods of some cadres. I thought the main problem was the "Left" phenomena. Although there were also some "Right", conservative ideas, they were rare. The "Left"

phenomena worried me a lot. I held that if we could not correct them or catch up in our planning work, the speed of the development of national economy would surely be affected. If I discussed these problems at the meetings, it seemed to me, people would be confused. But they could be easily resolved if the Chairman reiterated the principle of "walking on two legs". When the people's communes were first set up in the autumn of 1958, some people had vague ideas about the system of ownership and the principle of distribution according to work in the people's communes. But these vague ideas were quickly cleared up by the Chairman through his enlightening remarks. I was very glad to see that, while the deviations were corrected, the enthusiasm of the comrades were not affected. So I wrote the letter to the Chairman on July 14 with the aim of solving the existing problems as soon as possible — of defending the General Line and the Great Leap Forward and consolidating the people's communes. I had no intention to "usurp Party leadership" or "oppose Comrade Mao Zedong". In the letter, I only brought up some outstanding problems in broad outline and did not go into their causes because I could not pinpoint many of the causes. Anyway, I thought, my letter to the Chairman was only for his reference, and he would consider it carefully.

Things went contrary to my wishes. On the morning of July 17, I received a copy of my letter printed and distributed by the General Office of the Party

Central Committee with an added headline in big characters: "Comrade Peng Dehuai's Statement of Opinions".

On July 18 I asked to take back the letter at a group meeting by stating that it was written in haste and did not explain my ideas clearly enough.

On the morning of July 23 the Chairman spoke at a plenary meeting, criticizing the letter from a high level of principle. He said that it was a Right opportunist programme, worked out in an organized and planned way and with a deliberate purpose. Furthermore, he noted that I had committed errors of warlordism and great-nation chauvinism and errors in several struggles between opposite political lines.

I can hardly find suitable words to describe my heavy feelings as I listened to the speech of the Chairman. Returning to my residence from the meeting, I thought over the Chairman's remarks again and measured my subjective wishes and purpose against them. I could not be convinced at all. My resentment was very strong.

At dusk on the same day, I took a stroll on the road with a heavy heart. I met a comrade who said:

"Old Peng, have you thought over the remarks the Chairman made this morning?"

"People will judge for themselves whether I'm right or wrong," I replied. "Time will clarify everything."

"Old Peng, you can't take the attitude of giving no heed to it. The Chairman's remarks this morning put the matter on a high level of principle — politi-

cally and organizationally, and from the standpoint of the struggle between the two lines. You should think it over in the interests of the Party and the people and make a written speech."

"I'm very tired now. I can't write anything clearly at this moment."

"You may just give your ideas and let your secretary take them down and write them out. Then consider them carefully yourself. In this way, your written speech will be fairly well-knit and deep-going."

"I haven't brought a secretary with me. I have with me a senior captain staff officer in charge of military telegrams. He is not qualified to write such an article."

I knew that all his remarks were well-intentioned and proceeded from the interests of the people. I said good-bye to him and went back to my residence.

The staff officer handed me a telegram from the Tibet Military Area, which was transmitted by the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee. The telegram asked for more transport vehicles.

I took the telegram and went to Comrade Huang Kecheng for a discussion. As I opened the door of his room, I heard him say: "You people mustn't get excited. The matter will be cleared up. The Chairman will not err." When I entered the room, I saw Zhou Xiaozhou, Zhou Hui and Li Rui there.

"Commander, we're only 50 steps away from being Rightists!" Zhou Xiaozhou said.

I said that we should not worry even if we were

only 50 steps away, and it was a good thing to straighten out some of the vague ideas.

I only stayed for a while and did not touch on anything else. I returned to my office to attend to the telegram.

Unable to get to sleep that night, I kept turning the matter over in my mind until daybreak. I had written the letter to the Chairman for his reference only; why should it turn out to be a "statement of opinions"? How could it become a Right opportunist programme? How could it be something worked out in an organized and planned way and with a deliberate purpose? What the comrade I met in my stroll had said was right, but what should I do in the interests of the Party and the people? Should I keep my views or make a self-criticism?

I pondered a series of questions. A mood of complaint even emerged. I thought: Although I came to know the Chairman relatively late, I had known him for over 30 years. What prevented him from having a talk with me if I had made such grave mistakes in my letter?

At the same time I took into consideration the fact that our Party Central Committee was persisting in its opposition to imperialism and modern revisionism and was actively supporting the democratic and national liberation movements in the world. The international proletarian movement would suffer a great deal if the CPC Central Committee headed by Comrade Mao Zedong suffered a loss in prestige. Thinking of this, I wavered in the thought of keeping my views.

On the morning of July 24, two comrades came to ask me whether I had fully thought over the matter. I told them that my letter to the Chairman was written in the light of some specific conditions at home and at the Lushan Meeting. It was written without much preparation and I harboured no evil plot in writing it.

They asked me if I had exchanged views with other comrades before I wrote the letter. I answered that only Comrade Zhou Xiaozhou had come to my place twice to tell me about some specific work problems in Hunan Province. I had told nobody but him that I would write a letter (without mentioning the content of the letter) to the Chairman. Comrade Zhang Wentian had come to see me on several occasions to talk about economic construction in the country. We didn't talk about writing a letter.

"Don't look at the matter by focusing on the letter alone," they said, "but consider the interests of the whole situation."

The conversation lasted over two hours, and warm tears welled up in our eyes when we said good-bye. I was greatly moved, and was very grateful for their help. I made up my mind to make a serious self-criticism.

I went back to the Lushan Meeting and accepted everything that others called an error, as long as the interests of the Party and the people were not jeopardized by what I said. In making self-criticism, I made some exaggerations, which were out of keeping with facts. But on the question of the so-called

“military club”¹ I strictly adhered to the facts as a matter of principle. Even during the Lushan Meeting, there was some pressure to try to obtain a confession by coercion on this problem.

This became much more pronounced later, especially during an enlarged meeting of the Military Commission held in Beijing (from late August to early September). I was accused of being dishonest, insincere and deceitful when I refused to confess to the existence of a “military club” and describe its programme, objective and list of members.

At one time, when I was making a self-criticism at an enlarged meeting of the Military Commission, a small group of comrades roared out: “Hurry up and make a confession! Don’t deceive us any more!”

This made me very angry and I said: “You can expel me from the Party and have me shot! If there are members of the ‘military club’ among you people, you can step forward to say so yourselves.”

Some comrades said that I was too stubborn and too flippant in making such remarks.

I wanted to erase my influence in our army over the past 30 years and discredit myself after the conclusion of the Lushan Meeting. This, I thought,

¹ After Peng Dehuai was wrongly criticized for his letter to Chairman Mao during an enlarged session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee (the Lushan Meeting), he and other comrades were erroneously labelled as a “Right Opportunist Anti-Party Clique” at the Eighth Plenary Session of the Eighth CPC Central Committee held at Lushan immediately afterwards. Since Peng Dehuai was then Minister of National Defence, the “Right Opportunist Anti-Party Clique” was also referred to as a “military club” in the course of criticism.

would help consolidate the People's Liberation Army under the leadership of the Party. It was with this attitude that I returned to Beijing to make a self-criticism. But I would never confess that there was an organization called the "military club" with a programme, an objective and a list of members. To do so would have led to serious consequences. I was prepared to destroy myself, but I would never do anything to harm the people's army led by the Party.

APPENDICES

Comrade Peng Dehuai's Letter to Chairman Mao

(July 14, 1959)

Chairman:

This Lushan Meeting is important. In the discussions in the Northwest Group, I commented on other speakers' remarks several times. Now I am stating, specially for your reference, a number of my views that I have not expressed fully at the group meetings. I may be as straightforward as Zhang Fei,* but I possess only his roughness without his tact. Therefore, please consider whether what I am about to write is worth your attention, point out whatever is wrong, and give me your instructions.

A. The achievements of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 are indisputable.

According to figures verified by the State Planning Commission, total industrial and agricultural output value in 1958 increased 48.4 per cent over

* See footnote on p. 313.

1957. The increase in industry was 66.1 per cent, and that in agriculture and sideline production, 25 per cent (it is certain that grain and cotton registered a 30 per cent increase). State revenue rose 43.5 per cent. Such a rate of increase is unprecedented in the world; it exceeds the established speed of socialist construction. In particular, the Great Leap Forward has basically proved the correctness of the General Line for building socialism with greater, quicker, better and more economical results in a country like ours, hampered by a weak economic foundation and by backward technology and equipment. Not only is this a great success for China, it will also play a long-term positive role in the Socialist Camp.

But as we can see now, an excessive number of capital construction projects were hastily started in 1958. With part of the funds being dispersed, completion of some essential projects had to be postponed. This is a shortcoming — one caused mainly by lack of experience. Because we did not have a deep enough understanding, we came to be aware of it too late. So we continued with our Great Leap Forward in 1959 instead of putting on the brakes and slowing down our pace accordingly. As a result, imbalances were not corrected in time, and new, temporary difficulties cropped up. But these projects are after all needed in national construction. They will gradually — in one or two years or a little longer period — bring us returns. Gaps and weak links exist in production, making it impossible to put some

projects to use. Also, the serious shortage of essential reserves of certain types of supplies makes it difficult to correct in time the disproportions and the newly created imbalances. These are the difficulties confronting us. In working out the plan for 1960, we should give it more serious consideration on a practical and reliable basis. Some capital construction projects started in 1958 or in the first half of 1959 which cannot be completed must be suspended with the utmost resolution. We have to give up one thing in order to gain another. Otherwise the serious disproportions will be prolonged, and it will be impossible to extricate ourselves from our passive position in certain fields, and that would hamper our speed in the effort to catch up with or surpass Britain in the next four years.

Although the State Planning Commission has set guidelines on the proper balance, it has difficulty in making the final decision because of various reasons.

The people's communes which emerged in rural China in 1958 have great significance. They will free the peasants in our country from poverty, and have set the right path along which we can speed up the building of socialism and march towards communism.

On the issue of ownership, there was some confusion at one time, causing shortcomings and mistakes in our practical work. Though this was a serious problem, the shortcomings and mistakes have been basically corrected and the confusion basically eliminated after a series of meetings were held in Wuchang, Zhengzhou and Shanghai. The people's

communes are gradually shifting to the normal course of distribution according to work.

The problem of unemployment was solved during the Great Leap Forward in 1958. The quick solution of this problem was no small matter; it was a matter of great importance to a country like ours with an enormous population and a backward economy.

In the nationwide campaign for the production of iron and steel, too many small blast furnaces were built with a waste of material, money and manpower. This, of course, was a rather big loss. On the other hand, through the campaign we have been able to conduct a preliminary geological survey across the country, train many technicians, temper the vast numbers of cadres and raise their level. Though we paid a steep tuition (we spent over 2,000 million yuan to subsidize the effort), there were gains as well as losses in this endeavour.

Considering the above-mentioned points alone, we can say that our achievements have been really great, but we also have quite a few profound lessons to learn. It would be to our benefit to make an earnest analysis.

B. How to review the experience and lessons in our work.

At this meeting, the participants are making many valuable suggestions in the discussions on the experience and lessons in our work last year. Our Party's work will benefit greatly from these discussions. The Party will be able to free itself from a passive position in some fields and take the initiative, acquire a better understanding of the laws governing the socialist economy, readjust the imbalances

which always exist and realize the correct meaning of achieving a "positive balance".*

In my view, some of the shortcomings and mistakes that emerged in the Great Leap Forward were unavoidable. All the revolutionary movements led by our Party in the past 30 years or so have had some shortcomings accompanying their great achievements. These are the two aspects of the same question. The outstanding contradiction confronting us in construction is the tension in various fields caused by disproportions. Such a development has in essence affected the relationship between workers and peasants and between the various strata in the cities and the rural areas. Thus the contradiction takes on a political nature. It is the key link which affects our mobilization of the masses of people for continuing the leap forward.

There are many reasons for the shortcomings and mistakes in our work during the past period. The objective reason is that we are unfamiliar with socialist construction and do not have a comprehensive knowledge based on experience. We do not have a deep understanding of the law of planned and proportionate development of the socialist economy, and we have not implemented the principle of walking on two legs in various fields of work. In handling problems in economic construction, we are not as competent as we are in dealing with political prob-

* A term used during the "Great Leap Forward" to mean achieving economic balance at a high speed of development, as against "negative balance" which meant achieving a balance by lowering the speed of development and production targets. — *Tr.*

lems like the shelling of Jinmen* and the putting down of the rebellion in Tibet. As for the objective situation, our country is in a backward state of being "poor and blank"*** (some of our people still do not have enough food, and last year each person was rationed six metres of cotton cloth, enough to make only a suit and two shorts) and the people are eager to change this situation. A second reason is the favourable international situation. These have been important factors contributing to our launching the Great Leap Forward. It was entirely necessary and correct for us to accelerate our construction work to try as soon as possible to put an end to poverty and backwardness and to create a more favourable international situation by taking this good opportunity and acting on the demands of the people.

A number of problems that have developed merit attention in regard to our way of thinking and style of work. The main problems are:

1. A growing tendency towards boasting and exaggeration on a fairly extensive scale. At the Beidaihe Meeting last year, the grain output was overestimated. This created a false impression and everyone thought that the food problem had been solved and that we could therefore go all out in industry. In iron and steel, production was affected with such extreme one-sided thinking that no serious study was conducted on equipment for steel making and rolling and ore crushing as well as for coal mining

* Otherwise known as the Quemoy Islands, off the coast of Fujian Province. — *Tr.*

** See footnote on p. 495. — *Tr.*

and other mineral ores and for making coke, on the source of pit-props, on transportation capacity, on the expansion of the labour force, on the increase in purchasing power, on the distribution of market commodities, etc. In sum, we did not have a balanced overall plan.

It was also a lack of realistic thinking that gave rise to these errors. This, I am afraid, was the cause of a series of our problems.

The exaggeration trend has become so common in various areas and departments that reports of unbelievable miracles have appeared in newspapers and magazines to bring a great loss of prestige to the Party.

According to what was reported, it seemed that communism was just around the corner, and this turned the heads of many comrades.

Extravagance and waste grew in the wake of reports of extra-large grain and cotton harvests and a doubling of iron and steel output. As a result, the autumn harvest was done in a slipshod manner, and costs were not taken into consideration. Though we were poor, we lived as if we were rich.

What is particularly serious in all this is that it was very hard for us to get to know the real situation for a fairly long period. We did not have a clear idea of the situation even at the time of the Wuchang Meeting and the meeting of secretaries of provincial and municipal Party committees held in January this year.

The tendency towards boasting and exaggeration has its social cause, which is worth studying. It also has to do with our practice of fixing production

quotas without corresponding measures to meet them.

Though Chairman Mao reminded the Party last year of the need to combine soaring enthusiasm with a scientific approach and the principle of walking on two legs, it seems that his instructions have not been grasped by most leading comrades, and I am no exception.

2. Petty-bourgeois fanaticism which makes us vulnerable to "Left" errors. In the Great Leap Forward of 1958, I, like many other comrades, was misled by the achievements of the Great Leap Forward and the zeal of the mass movement. As a result, some "Left" tendencies developed in our heads. We were thinking of entering a communist society in one stride, and the idea of trying to be the first to do this gained an upper hand in our minds for a time. So we banished from our minds the mass line and the working style of seeking truth from facts, which had been cultivated by the Party for a long time.

In our way of thinking, we have often muddled up the relationship between strategic goals and concrete measures, between long-term principles and immediate steps, between the whole situation and part of it, and between big collectives and small collectives. The Chairman's calls such as "strive for a high yield on a smaller area and bring in a big crop", "catch up with Britain in 15 years", etc., are long-term strategic goals. But we have not studied them carefully and have not paid enough attention to the specific current conditions so as to arrange our work on a positive, safe and reliable basis. Because they were

raised at every level, some quotas, which could only be met after several or a dozen years, became targets to be fulfilled in one year or even a few months. By so doing, we divorced ourselves from reality and lost the support of the masses. For example, the law of exchange at equal values was negated and the slogan of "giving free meals to all" was raised much too early; in some areas, state monopoly purchase and marketing of grain was abolished for a time when the slogan of "eating as much as you like" was raised on the grounds of bumper harvests of grain. Some techniques were popularized hastily even before they were tested and approved. Some economic and scientific laws were rashly neglected. All this was a "Left" deviation. In the eyes of comrades showing such a deviation, everything could be done by putting politics in command. They forgot that the aim of putting politics in command was to raise political consciousness in work, guarantee the increase in the quantity of products and improvement in their quality, and bring into play the enthusiasm and creativeness of the masses to speed up our economic construction. Putting politics in command cannot replace economic laws, let alone concrete measures in economic work. We must stress both putting politics in command and taking effective measures in economic work; we should not emphasize one thing at the expense of the other. Generally, correcting "Left" tendencies is more difficult than eliminating Right conservative ideas. This has been proved in the history of our Party. During the latter half of last year, there seemed to be an atmosphere in which people paid attention to combating "Right" conser-

vative ideas but ignored the "Left" tendencies of subjectivism. Thanks to a series of measures adopted after the Zhengzhou Meetings held last winter, some "Left" tendencies have been basically corrected. This is a great victory, which has educated comrades of the whole Party without affecting their enthusiasm.

By now we have got a basically clear picture of the domestic situation. Particularly because of the recent meetings, most comrades within the Party basically hold the same view. The present task for the whole Party is to unite and keep up the effort. In my opinion, it will be very beneficial to review in a systematic way the achievements and lessons in our work since the latter half of last year to further educate the comrades of the whole Party. The aim is to make a clear distinction between right and wrong and to raise our ideological level. Generally speaking, we should not go about trying to affix blame; this would be harmful to our unity and our cause. Basing ourselves on our experience and research since the latter half of last year, we can clarify some problems arising from unfamiliarity with the laws governing socialist construction. Other problems can also be grasped after a longer period of study and experiment. As for our way of thinking and work style, the profound lessons we are learning this time help us to realize the problems in them more easily. But we'll have to try very hard before they can be thoroughly rectified. Just as the Chairman has instructed us at the present meeting: "The achievements are great, the problems are many, the experience is abundant, and the future is bright." It

is up to us to grasp the initiative. So long as the whole Party is united and works hard, the conditions for continuing the leap forward are present. The plans for this year and next and for four more years will surely be fulfilled successfully. The aim of catching up with Britain in 15 years can be basically achieved in four years, and we can surely surpass Britain in the output of some important products. Hence our great achievements and bright future.

With greetings,

Peng Dehuai

July 14, 1959

Chairman Mao's Conversation with Comrade Peng Dehuai (excerpts)

(September 23, 1965)

Recorded by Peng Dehuai afterwards

The Chairman: I've been waiting for you a long time and have not gone to bed. I received your letter yesterday afternoon, and I was too excited to fall asleep. You are a bull-headed person. You haven't written me for several years; but once you take up your pen, you write me a letter of 80,000 words. Comrades [Liu] Shaoqi, [Deng] Xiaoping and Peng Zhen will join us in a little while. Premier Zhou can't come because he has gone to meet [Prince Norodom] Sihanouk. Let's have a chat.

We are going to build up a strategic rear in preparation against war. Our investments in the Southwest are proportionally the highest. It is a particularly important strategic rear area. You are a suitable choice for the Southwest Region. In the future you may also command some troops and fight in a war and get reinstated this way.

Peng: During the Lushan Meeting, the Chairman asked me my opinion about the resolution on my question.* At that time, I made three promises.

* Referring to the "Resolution on the Mistake of the Anti-Party Clique Headed by Comrade Peng Dehuai", adopted by the Eighth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CPC on August 16, 1959. — *Tr.*

The Chairman: What were the three promises?

Peng: I wouldn't be a counter-revolutionary under any circumstances; I wouldn't commit suicide under any circumstances; and I would do productive labour to earn my own living because it would be difficult for me to continue to do my present work.

The Chairman: I still remember the latter two promises. Perhaps the truth is on your side. Much can be done in the Southwest Region, our most important strategic rear area. It has all kinds of resources and has favourable geographical conditions. If he goes there, Comrade Peng Dehuai may achieve something. A unified Party leadership and a construction headquarters will be set up with Li Jingquan* as head and Peng Dehuai as deputy head, and there is Cheng Zihua** too.

Your going to the Southwest is Party policy. If there is anyone who does not agree, let him talk to me. In the past, I have actively opposed Comrade Peng Dehuai, but I am now sincerely supporting him. We should judge old Peng by adopting the approach of "one divides into two". This approach also suits me. During the period when the Li Lisan line was dominant in our Party, cadres of the Third Army Group were against crossing the Ganjiang River, but Peng said that the crossing must be made. You did what you said, and the army group crossed the river. We cooperated very well in smashing Chiang-

* At the time, First Secretary of the Southwest Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. Now on the Standing Committee of the CPC Central Advisory Commission.
— *Tr.*

** See footnote on p. 385. — *Tr.*

Kai-shek's First, Second and Third "encirclement and suppression" campaigns. During the counter-revolutionary Futian Incident, three forget letters written with the aim of sowing discord were sent to Zhu De, Peng Dehuai and Huang Gonglue. Peng sent a special messenger to bring the letter to me as soon as he received it. The Front Committee of the Third Army Group also held a meeting and issued a declaration against the Futian Incident. You handled the matter well. And you were firm in the struggle against Zhang Guotao's splitting activities. Your achievements on the Northwest battlefield in the Liberation War are also clear and definite. With a small number of troops, you defeated powerful Kuomintang forces under Hu Zongnan. I've always kept this in my memory, and I keep your name in my selected works. Why should all merits of a person be negated when he commits a mistake?

The Chairman continued: You'd better go to the Southwest. Let Comrades [Liu] Shaoqi and [Deng] Xiaoping call a meeting of the comrades concerned from the Southwest Region and make things clear. If anyone disagrees, let him talk to me.

彭德怀自述

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THIS book gives a unique personal glimpse of modern Chinese history from the beginning of the century to the "Cultural Revolution" through the eyes of one of the builders of the Chinese Red Army.

Born into a poor peasant family in Hunan Province, Marshal Peng Dehuai (1898-1974) enlisted in 1916 in one of the old warlords' armies. While rising through the ranks to become a regimental commander, Peng Dehuai worked underground to organize soldiers' rights groups. He joined the Communist Party shortly before leading the Pingjiang Uprising in 1928 against reactionary rule. After founding the Third Army of the Chinese Red Army, Peng Dehuai went on to a brilliant career as an eminent commander before and during the epic Long March, in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the War of Liberation, and in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea. After Liberation in 1949, he served as Vice-Premier of the State Council and Minister of Defence.

Marshal Peng Dehuai fell into political disgrace in 1959 after addressing a letter to Chairman Mao Zedong pointing out some of the problems in the "Great Leap Forward". Under virtual house arrest for most of the last 16 years of his life, Marshal Peng did manual labour and wrote biographical notes in response to demands for "confessions". He died under persecution during the "Cultural Revolution" on November 29, 1974.

Exonerated by the CPC Central Committee in 1978, Marshal Peng Dehuai has been restored to his rightful place in history as one of the greatest military leaders in China's revolution.

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