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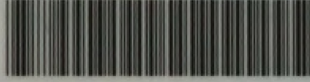
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TOMORROW'S CHINA

A. L. STRONG

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TOMORROW'S CHINA

by Anna Louise Strong

Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy

NEW YORK

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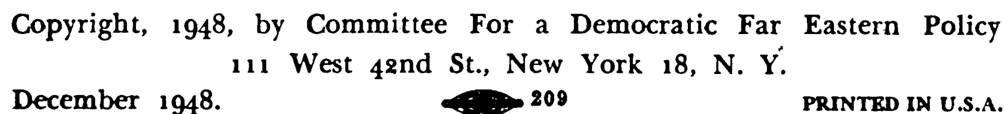

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

In the short space of time since Anna Louise Strong completed this book and sent it to the press, *Tomorrow's China* has become today's.

The events in China at the end of 1948 will surely stand in history with the victories of the American, French and Russian revolutions. Speaking "globally," the gigantic change in China proves that the onward march of the common man did not end with the allied triumph over Axis fascism and national oppression in World War II. The people themselves have taken over the battle where some governments left it off or changed sides. In international politics in the diplomatic sense, we shall soon see the government of the new China laying claims to the permanent seat on the Security Council of the United Nations which the Chinese people earned by their sacrifices in World War II.

In Sino-American relations, many progressive groups and students of the Far East in this country have come to see that these developments are good, not bad, for the people of the United States. As this is written, the victorious forces in China have offered America friendly relations on equal terms. The offer has been endorsed by other groups which will participate in China's new government such as the Democratic League and the anti-Nanking Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang.

On the other hand, the same offer clearly warns of what will happen if any form of intervention continues of more U. S. troops landing on Chinese soil. "This," says the North China radio statement of November 22, "would constitute armed aggression against the sacred

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territory and sovereignty of China, all consequences of which would have to be borne by the American government." The non-Communist components of the new coalition have associated themselves with this warning too.

For their own future and that of world peace, therefore, the American people clearly have a job to do—to press for complete withdrawal of intervention in Chinese affairs, break any projected blockade of the new China, secure full diplomatic recognition of the new China for mutual benefit and wipe out the blood-guilt of the United States toward the Chinese people. Formal "recognition" with economic pressure and activities to harass the new coalition regime will not endear America to the Chinese people any more than U. S. bombers did.

Even before the decisive liberation offensives, Chinese workers in both parts of the country joined, in August, 1948, in the mighty All-China Federation of Labor. The joyful forebodings of some U. S. "experts" that the new China will not be able to cope with city problems, and therefore collapse, will be proved wrong by this and other non-military developments.

Writers, like Anna Louise Strong, who early reported what they saw and took the side of the Chinese people are fully vindicated. If reaction were not reaction, even today's Washington would realize that those who served America's interests best were those, in the government and press, who told the truth despite slander. Those who ignored the truth in favor of their own prejudices led the United States into wastage of $6 billion and provision of arms to kill Chinese, earning only hatred and defeats which no force could avert.

Tomorrow's China describes a big accession, as big as one-fifth of mankind, to the forces and future of the common man. It describes a development that contributes to world peace and can contribute to the prosperity of all people in all countries. It is a boon, further, to all who want to know the truth and do not fear to steer their own course by its light.

December 18, 1948

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Chapter I

CHINA—ALLY OR TARGET?

The propaganda of American planes and bullets is destroying in China a century of good will.

When Dr. Magdalen Robitzer, the staid and kindly UNRRA dentist, went into a nursery in North Shensi to prepare the children's teeth before the evacuation into the deeper hills, her white skin started a panic. "The American! The American!" shrieked the youngsters, clinging to their teacher or rushing into the cold winter outdoors. They were finally calmed by the assurance that the doctor was not an American, but a Czech. They had never heard of Czechs but the neutral word soothed them. At least the dread "Americans" had not arrived!

What has made "America" a name that frightens children? What do those six-year-olds in the far northwest on the edge of Mongolian deserts know of America, anyway?

They know that they run to the air raid shelter for safety from that "American plane." They knew that last night, in the narrow cave that to them meant security and home, their fathers said goodbye to their mothers and gave them the last, long hug. They knew they were setting forth, women and children first, into the unknown winter of the hills. They knew that they travelled at night, because those "American planes" swooped so low by day.

All their last goodbyes, all their terror and loss, are tied in their childhood minds with the word "American." Let diplomats and merchants of death explain that by some alchemy of words on paper those planes are now Chinese, sent to "aid China." Chinese children and peasants,* who know that China never made planes, will not cease to call them "the Americans" when they come to kill from the air.

---

* Chinese soil-tillers are at present largely "peasants" (feudal tillers), but after the land reform they begin to become "farmers," *i.e.*, free enterprise producers with an understanding of a market. I use either word in this book, depending on the situation.—A.L.S.

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China never made them, China never paid for them, no democratically elected representatives of the Chinese people ever asked for them. They come from America, and they kill!

The UNRRA workers can give you plenty of examples. Their stations, their ships, their trucks, were constantly strafed in Shantung. There was first of all that civilian hospital given to the people of North Kiangsu by Madame Sun Yat-sen's China Welfare Fund. Since the people of North Kiangsu had suffered more than most from the Japanese invasion, and were ridden with every kind of tropical disease, the hospital was gladly taken to its destination by UNRRA. It was UNRRA which officially informed Chiang Kai-shek's military authorities of its route and location, that it might be protected as civilian relief. Then the planes came over, sweeping low on the first day as if to identify it, and returning the two following days for a "careful, methodical strafing," in the UNRRA doctor's words. The hospital had to move and hide, as the locally elected people's governments were hiding, as the farmers in the fields were hiding, when the planes passed above.

One UNRRA worker returned from Shantung saying that there would be famine there since no peasants were ploughing, for fear of the air attacks that strafed "even individual ox-teams." He overstated, basing his report on the small area where the UNRRA relief station was. It was true that thousants of acres of Shantung's most fertile land remained unploughed, because it was flat land, without shelter, and because it was near the American naval and air base of Tsingtao, from which the planes took off to raid the countryside. But peasants in the hilly country had a signal system to warn them, and air raid shelters big enough to drive an ox team into.

Those peasants joked with their unconquerable Chinese humor. They said there was one good thing about the Americans training at Tsingtao. Those Americans "kept such regular meal times" that a peasant could count on ploughing "before nine in the morning, after five in the evening and between twelve and two at noon!" It was a joke that cut deep into the old goodwill for Americans.

A little more than a year earlier in that same Shantung the peasants turned out by thousands to rescue the American marines' Christmas mail. I was told about it by the American

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colonel who was head of Intelligence in Tsingtao. An American transport plane, flying from Tsingtao to Tientsin, had had motor trouble and had thrown out twenty-two sacks of mail over twenty-two miles of Shantung. The colonel flew down to "that Communist capital, Linyi" about it, and the "Communist government" called on the peasants and they turned out in winter to hunt the mail. They found "not twenty-two sacks but twenty-four," bragged the colonel, because some sacks broke open and had others inside.

"I don't think a single letter or package was lost," he added. "It's a sample of honesty you couldn't beat anywhere in the world! They dug those bags out of swamps; you could tell by the mud on them. They found them on cliffs and in trees." The peasants had refused money because "we are allies"!

Those peasants aren't friendly any more, according to the same colonel. The last time he went to Linyi—just before it was taken by Chiang's army—he found the atmosphere grim. "They had been shot up the day before by some of those planes we gave to Chiang," he said. "They made me go round and see the results. They had four dead and several more in the hospital dying and a lot of buildings smashed. They showed me the spent ammunition. It was American stuff. They said: 'That's not the way for America to help China.' They were distinctly uncordial. They didn't ask me to come again."

THIS IS especially serious because it is precisely on "Tomorrow's China" that the American bullets and bombs are falling. This China of the north holds tomorrow in its hands. We call it "Communist China" but the people there call it the "Liberated Areas," and claim their government as democratic. Already it is no negligible land. Its area—even at the date of the "Cease Fire" order to which George C. Marshall was signatory in January, 1946—is as great as the United States east of the Mississippi, its population greater than that of the entire United States. After two years of civil war in which America gave close to six billion dollars to destroy this China, the "Liberated Areas" are bigger than ever. Instead of their previous 140,000,000 population, they claimed 168,000,000 in June, 1948.

Already they move to establish a federal coalition govern-

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ment, which will speak for all China, which will challenge Nanking. As Nanking goes down in inflation and corruption, the young men, the energetic, the progressive, the builders of Tomorrow's China, make their way across battlefronts to the interior. The provincial governments of the Liberated Areas have shown themselves stable, honest, able to pay their way without foreign help. Around them already assemble the delegates coming underground from Chiang's China, to organize —on a nationwide scale—the government for Tomorrow.

It is precisely this China that America's warlords have chosen, not as ally, but as target today!

Must America shoot up China to smash the Communists? Must America proceed to total war to kill this China of the North? Even that might not avail against it. These Chinese of the countryside, with their mobile armies and their hidden governments, do not even fear the atom bomb!

Or is it time to learn what they are doing? What is their program, what their successes? No one has fully told. For a decade these areas of the North that the outside world calls Communist and that call themselves democratic have been hidden behind a curtain of whistling steel: the Japanese war and Chiang Kai-shek's blockade. At times the blockade wore thin and daring reporters penetrated part of their territory. But even Edgar Snow, in his classic *Red Star Over China,* was only able to picture the Yenan district in northeast Shensi. The other, greater territories were unreached. Since Ed Snow's day the Liberated Areas have grown mightily; they are twenty times as large as then, and one hundred times as populous. To picture them now on the basis of the barren Yenan area is like picturing the postwar lands of Eastern Europe on the basis of Albania alone.

These were the thoughts I had when I went to China in 1946, the year that has since been known as the year of the "Marshall Truce." A chance had suddenly and blazingly appeared in Peiping to view in detail this China of the North. A kind of super-government called Executive Headquarters had been set up under American chairmanship to implement the "Cease Fire" order. This Headquarters operated American Army planes to nearly forty points of North China and Manchuria where "Truce Teams" functioned, also under American chairmanship. This gave the American air force the right to

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cover all China to the Soviet border. It also delivered North China to correspondents, if they had time and the will.

The chance was superlative—and temporary. For civil war expanded steadily; nobody knew how long this Executive Headquarters would remain. I seized the chance: I flew to Yenan, to Kalgan, Shantung, Hopeh, to Manchuria. I remained nine months in the Liberated Areas, covering them more completely than any foreigner has done. I came out with one of the last planes when Executive Headquarters closed down in early 1947.

It may be difficult now for outsiders to visit and see for themselves this inland China behind the barriers of civil war. But the lines of its growth are already clear. In late 1948, as I watch from America through vagrant newspaper comment the growth of that northern China, which has reached now to the Yangtze River and beyond it, which is projecting a federal government, I know that the predictions they made to me more than a year ago in Yenan are slowly coming true. Here is no copy of the West, no copy of the Soviet Union. Here is a new democracy springing from the soil of China, transmuting an ancient people into a modern nation.

All Asia, I know, is watching this new China. For these Liberated Areas seem to be proving unconquerable. Japan could not beat them; the Liberated Areas grew by fighting Japan. Chiang Kai-shek could not beat them; he has tried for twenty years and failed. America tried to extinguish them by the "war policy" of Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley and General Albert C. Wedemeyer, and the "truce policy" of General George C. Marshall. Both failed.

The "Liberated Areas" keep spreading. And the peoples of South and East Asia, who are half the human race, keep watching. For all Asia is in birth-pangs of the democratic revolution. And the first-born of that new Asia seems already here!

America's choice—to make of that China an ally or a target—will determine more than the future of China. It may determine the future of America, too.

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Chapter II

THE CITY OF CAVES

Our plane flew west from Peiping. Yenan, for twelve years the Number One Capital of the Chinese Communists, lies in the arid hills of northwest China on the edge of the Mongolian deserts. During our three hour flight the mountains grew steeper and the valleys narrower until the naked slopes seemed like the barren mountains of the moon. From the air few settlements were visible for the people live in caves in the sides of cliffs.

Our plane turned sharply down, raced dangerously between rock mountains and struck wild grass where sentries stood on guard. We emerged on a rough field that was used as an airport. Two trucks and some jeeps appeared. One truck came from the military headquarters of the Chinese Communists, the other from the Liaison Group of the U.S. Army, which had been here since Colonel Joseph P. Stilwell established it to rescue American airmen shot down over China by the Japanese. I was to stay in the American compound, which was now a kind of guest house for foreign visitors.

We jolted, by rough road, above a shallow river and saw beyond it the ruins of a town. Once Yenan had been a walled city, but when the Japanese had finished bombing there was no structure of that city left. So the people left the heaps of rubble and dug themselves caves in the loess soil of the cliffs, such as the farmers in this part of China have lived in for generations. Yenan's population now was sunk in the scenery, scattered over ten square miles of rugged hills. Smoke curled from stove-pipes stuck in the mountains. The mouths of the caves gaped out at all levels. Up every valley one saw blue-trousered people, jumping the gullies, climbing home by their steep, carved trails.

Bumping over the bed of Yen River our truck dumped us into the American Compound, an enclosure containing several buildings surrounded by an earthen wall. Whittelsey Hall, the largest structure, built in memory of Lieutenant Whittel-

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sey of the U.S. Air Force, who was killed in North China in the joint war against Japan, contained a social hall and dining-room. A long row of semi-caves, only partly built into the cliff, formed officers' quarters. These also accommodated occasional correspondents now. There was also a weather station, a radio transmitter to connect with Executive Headquarters and a dynamo supplying light.

The compound had originally been built for an American Liaison Group of ten to twenty men, who, during the war with Japan, collected for the U.S. Army the military intelligence supplied by Communist-led armies all over North China and also handled the rescue of more than one hundred airmen, shot down by the Japanese and saved by Chinese peasants at considerable risk to themselves. The place was almost empty now. One lone American major was on duty as "Observer." He supplied intelligence to Executive Headquarters but complained that it was disregarded.

"On my last trip to Peiping I actually found that they were displaying a 'Yenan air force' of twenty planes on their official map! Why do they take that propaganda dope from Nanking instead of asking their own Observer here? I'm in radio contact with them every day. I could have told them that there is no Yenan air force and never has been. . . . There's just one lone plane that deserted from Chiang as a protest; it stands as an exhibit for there is no gasoline. But it seems that Executive Headquarters doesn't really want to know."

This officer was soon transferred. American observers to Yenan were changed very often. Perhaps because they so soon began to like the Chinese Communists, or perhaps because none of them were ever able to find that "Russian connection" in Yenan that they were all told to get. The only Russians around Yenan were two doctors—a surgeon and a medical man—flown in with two airplane loads of Red Cross supplies with official permission from Chiang Kai-shek when the Russians were in Manchuria. They were busy with medical work, talked no politics, and had no way of contacting Moscow or even of getting home. There were other foreigners in Yenan—the Friends' Ambulance Unit of Australians and Americans, and a Czech doctor sent in by UNRRA; they used American planes to reach the world.

There was no red flag over Yenan. The same flag flew here

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that flew over Chiang Kai-shek in Nanking, the flag of the Chinese Revolution—white sun on blue sky. I noticed it the first week of my arrival, when I came downhill from an air raid shelter-cave after eight of Chiang's planes had been bombing and strafing the town. There the flag was, the flag that had sent the attacking bombers, flying also against the dazzling sky of these arid regions, mute symbol of a Chinese unity that Yenan fought for, through and beyond the civil war.

YENAN'S CAVES were in clusters, up some two score different valleys. They were of many types and sizes, some small and primitive, some large, with stone facing and floor. The advantage of a cave is, of course, its cheapness, not only in money but in wood and metal. Timber is scarce in northwest China, whose eroded hills are long denuded of forests. Metal is still scarcer. So for generations the people here dug caves in the firm soil of cliffs, with front walls of lattice-work, in which hung windows and doors. A Yenan cave cost barely ten dollars for materials, besides labor. I saw a peasant's two-cave home that he bought with five bushels of grain.

There was neither running water nor sewage system. Water came from wells; it was advisable to boil it. Light was supplied by candles or by small kerosene lamps no brighter than candles. The American compound had a generator which gave electricity till 10:30 P.M., but only to the nearest houses. Chinese peasants found candles too expensive; they used home-pressed vegetable oil in tiny jars, with a hanging cotton wick which gave only enough light to prevent stumbling in the room. Public halls in Yenan were lit by big oil lamps hanging from the ceiling; they were bright but fluctuating and sometimes exploded, causing merriment.

There was no sense of hurry in Yenan. There was a sense of the ages, of time and space. There was a sense of the earth and the slow rhythm of the seasons, of the wide, difficult expanse of the Chinese land and the wheeling of the sun above it, bringing seedtime and harvest. Even in the midst of the winter battles, people noted the new fall of snow that would be "good for the crops."

So Yenan, despite the war, remains in my mind as a haven of peace. My health is better and I expect to live longer because of the six months that I spent there. The Chinese com-

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ing to Yenan from Nanking, Peiping, Shanghai also felt, I noticed, this sense of rest.

When I commented to Mao Tse-tung, chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, about the restfulness of Yenan, he told me, half-jokingly, to contrast General Chu Teh, commander-in-chief of the "People's Armies," with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. "Both have just celebrated their sixtieth birthdays. Chiang's hair is all white but Chu Teh has only a few gray hairs!"

I took him too seriously. "Yet Chu Teh has led a hard life in the field," I added, "while Chiang sits easily in Nanking."

"I do not think he sits so easily," dissented Mao with twinkling eyes.

PEOPLE came to Yenan from all the Liberated Areas for consultation or to make reports. I met people there from Shantung, North Kiangsu and Manchuria as well as from the nearer Shansi, Hopei and Chahar. It was for them no half day's jaunt, as when one goes from Shanghai to Nanking or from New York to Washington. It took them weeks, perhaps months, to make the journey, as once it took Americans to ride by horse from Maine to Washington. So when they came it was for no brief interview but for discussions lasting many days.

A few modern facilities had been brought by the Communists into this cave-dwelling region: a half dozen jeeps and trucks that ran on low grade gasoline from a local oil well and handicraft refinery, a field telephone that jumped Yen River to important places, a newspaper and a radio to connect with the world's life.

The life on Radio Hill was an odd blending of primitive and modern. In a deep cave at the foot of the cliff a printing press turned out the *Yenan Emancipation Daily* on a thick brownish paper made by handicraft from local grass. Five hundred feet higher up, by paths that were steep and slippery in wet weather, the staff of newspaper and radio lived on successive ledges, with their aerial wires waving against the sky high above. The caves were small, barely six by twelve feet in size, heated poorly by charcoal braziers and lit only by tiny lamps.

In these dim caves well educated young people from many

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lands and knowing many languages monitored the news of the world. Here sat a youth with ear-phones, taking down Associated Press reports by the weak light. Near him another took down United Press. Central News of Nanking—Chiang's official agency—was monitored twenty-four hours a day. Only a fraction of this news could be printed in the limited size of the *Yenan Emancipation Daily,* but it was made available in digests for the Central Committee and for anyone who took the trouble to know. I could get better world news in Yenan than in Peiping. There was also radio contact with the regional governments of the Liberated Areas, and with field headquarters of the various armies all over North China and Manchuria. The dynamo cherished for this radio was far too precious to be used for lighting the caves of the radio workers, or even the cave of Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

THERE WAS good company on Radio Hill; it attracted intellectuals irresistibly. Everyone there was a personality with a story. Editor Liao had been diplomatic representative for the Eighth Route Army in a southern city, with presumable personal immunity, till one day an official of Chiang's political police said to him: "The Generalissimo invites you," and took him to jail for several years. Editor Yu was an engineer with a degree in railway transport; he was eventually sent to Manchuria to help run railways. Half a dozen young Chinese ran the English language broadcast; they had come from overseas, from Hong Kong, Singapore, Java, and even America, to fight for their country against the Japanese. Among them was gentle-mannered Chen Lung, from Java, whom they called "The Dragon," because that was the English of his name.

Steepness and elevation made Radio Hill a wild region right in the heart of Yenan. There was a view down three valleys that was breath-taking on a night of full moon. On darker nights the hill was inaccessible and dangerous. One winter night in the dark of the moon Editor Liao's pet dog ran out of his cave and disappeared yelping between the cave and the outdoor toilets, carried away by a wolf into the darkness too swiftly for the sentry to act. I remembered this a year later when I read how Chiang's sentries were disappearing on dark nights right in the heart of Yenan on the wild slopes of Radio Hill!

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SOCIAL LIFE in Yenan was friendly and informal. There were all the familiar recreations—dinners, dancing, card games, theater—but they had a quality of their own. Dinners commonly included fifty or sixty people at several round tables in one of the mess halls. Jokes were many and laughter hearty. A virulent liquor, called "beigar," was served but only in thimblefuls. In cards some played bridge but more indulged in a game called "one hundred," which had two jokers and was more peppy than bridge. General Chu Teh was a devotee and had a childlike passion for winning. One of my few sad moments in Yenan was when he accepted me as partner and my inexperience made him lose.

The theater had expert actors; its costumes were as gorgeous as Peiping could show. We saw the classic Chinese opera, short vaudeville skits known as "Yang-kes" and regular modern dramas in three acts. The American Army also made its contribution to Yenan recreation. The American Observer, as social repayment for the dinners and dances to which the Chinese invited him, showed Hollywood movies that were sent out for G.I.'s. There was an epidemic just then of psychiatric dramas of soul-tortured women. Yenan's notables stared politely at the uncanny emotional habits of Americans. Documentaries of World War II came as profound relief.

Nobody dressed up for any of these occasions. Nobody had a change of clothes. A suit of strong blue cotton of government issue was universal wear. It faded to various tones of gray blue according to length of wear and exposure to weather, for Yenan had no good dyes. In winter it was replaced by a cotton-padded suit of similar material. Women wore trousers as is customary in rural China. Shoes were of heavy cotton, also padded in winter, with soles of home-grown hemp.

Chief social event of the week was the Saturday night dance, attended by many of the party leaders. Chinese musical instruments mingled with Western, making dance rhythms of such ancient favorites as "My Old Kentucky Home." There were waltzes and two-steps and one-steps and a four-step to "Yang-ke" music, like a fox-trot but with more swing. People expressed themselves with easy freedom. Those who wanted to stamp, stamped; those who wanted to glide, glided. Some professional Yang-ke dancers of the theater brought the agility of an acrobat to the floor. Among the leaders of party

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and government the "little devils" who served as orderlies—what the rest of the world would call coolies—also whirled gaily. The surroundings were crude but the dancers' easy fellowship turned crudities into fun.

Dance hall windows were left open even in winter since folks danced in the padded clothes they wore everywhere. Once when they sprinkled the floor to keep down the dust, water-drops froze near the windows, causing merriment when the dancers slipped. I recall another occasion when they gave out peanuts with the admonition: "Throw your shucks behind your chairs and not on the dancing floor!" The evening usually ended with a free-for-all "Yang-ke," a circular folk dance that went ever faster to a final bang.

Meet, then, three of the leading Communists as they appeared in the Yenan dances. Chou En-lai, chief negotiator returned from Nanking, danced with the grace of a diplomat. He was perfection in the waltz. Sometimes a too restrained perfection; after a dance with him one might like for variety to take on one of the "Yang-ke" acrobats or the Russian doctor, Orloff, who liked to stamp it, Cossack-style. But Chou-En-lai was always Number One dancer. His control, his agile grace—one imagined these qualities in his discussions in Nanking.

Liu-Hsiao-chi, who next to Mao himself, is the leading Marxist theoretician, danced with a scientific precision in which two plus two inevitably made four. But about once in three dances, when he had begun to seem too arithmetically exact, he would go in for higher mathematics with a few exciting flings. This is like his writing, which is terse, exact prose, punctured by an occasional sharp metaphor.

Chu Teh, commander-in-chief of the armies, danced as if doing his famous "Long March." He kept a steady one-step whatever the band played. If you were caught with Chu Teh when the music gave an enticing waltz, you might glance longingly at that perfect dancer Chou En-lai, stepping it with the equally perfect Mrs. Mao Tse-tung. But at the end of the evening when you were too tired to walk or even stand, you could still dance with Chu Teh. His rhythm had an effortless, sturdy persistence that was easier than sitting still.

One word was heard more often than any other in Yenan conversations. It was "the people, the people." Always the

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ultimate reference was to the Chinese people, and the people of the world. "Go among the people." "Learn from the people." "From the people and to the people must be your policy." These were the slogans one heard. They seemed to be more than slogans. Thy seemed to spring naturally from a love for the Chinese people and a faith in their ultimate victory.

General Chu Teh, for instance, was a military man who had expressed himself in battles for thirty-five years. Yet when he sat in his faded blue cotton uniform in front of my cave discussing the civil war, he based predictions not on arms but on "the people."

"Chiang Kai-shek cannot possibly win for there are 450,-000,000 people in China. They keep rising up till they get democracy. You can't suppress all of them. . . . We Chinese people are like the sea. And the Kuomintang—Chiang's party —is like a ship. The ship comes, turns the waters and troubles them. It passes and the waters come together as before. We Communists are like fish in the sea. We live in it. . . ."

Later he resumed the theme at his four-cave home at Date Garden while the moon rode peacefully over the Yenan hills. "For thousands of years the Chinese people have been ruled by despots. But now they have tasted democracy all over North China. Now the despots can never win."

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Chapter III

THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS

For twelve years Yenan was the Communists' chief center and political experiment-station. But they had no illusions about the place. Once when I complimented Mao Tse-tung on the fine climate of "the place he picked"—I like dry climates—he replied with a bit of banter: "We didn't pick it."

Until then I had fallen for the idea that the Communists had come to Yenan in a kind of triumph, concluding their famous "Long March." Of course there was some triumph in surviving at all and in breaking through Chiang's troops and the warlords of ten provinces. But basically the Communists came to Yenan because they were chased out of the good ricelands in the south and could stay in this northwest dust-bowl since it was so poor and far-away.

Who are these Communists who so persist and grow in the rural areas of China? Who set up a new government, yet fly the same flag that is flown in Nanking? Who maintain their own armies, yet preach "coalition"? Who proclaim a "New Democracy," even a "New Capitalism," yet call themselves Communists?

These questions can now be answered with fortunate clarity because the Communists themselves discussed their history and policies in considerable detail for two years before their Seventh Congress in 1945. They came to certain conclusions about their program and achievements, and also about some serious mistakes that they don't intend to repeat. They will tell you all about it very frankly, including the mistakes. Since these are the kind of mistakes that Communists have made and may be making today in other lands, they have more than a historic interest.

China's political history, for more than twenty years, has revolved around the relation of two parties: the Kuomintang and the Communists. When these two parties cooperated, the progressive forces of China went from victory to victory, sweeping aside feudal warlords and foreign imperialists alike. When these two parties split, the Chinese people were plunged into civil war and chaos.

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It was from Lu Ting-yi, the mild-mannered spectacled chief of information in Yenan, that I got the fullest analysis of the Chinese Communist Party's history. He recounted it in his excellent English on the terrace in front of my cave, hour after leisurely hour.

The Chinese Communist Party was born in the revolutionary upheavals that swept the world at the close of the first World War. Lu distinguished three periods in its history: The Great Revolution, begun by united Kuomintang and Communist forces but broken by the split in 1927; the agrarian revolution and civil war, which ended with the "Sian incident," December, 1936; and the period of anti-Japanese resistance, during which there was a Chinese "national united front." This united front was disturbed by armed clashes between Kuomintang and Communist forces from 1939 onward, but was not officially broken until March, 1947, with the expulsion of the Communist diplomatic representatives from Nanking. With this began a fourth period, the present time of active civil war.

Leadership, ideas and policies changed during these periods. "The Communist Party was always heroic," said Lu, "but many mistakes were made by the leadership in getting experience. They were costly mistakes and taught us to avoid such mistakes later."

A GENERATION ago the democratic revolution for China was proclaimed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. He announced the "Three People's Principles"—People's Nationalism, People's Democracy, and People's Livelihood—which at various times were variously defined. The high tide of his movement was reached in the decade after the First World War when, under the strain of the war and the influence of the Russian Revolution, all forward-driving currents in China combined. The first trade unions appeared and the first peasants' unions. The Chinese Communist Party held its first congress in 1921. In following years it proposed a united front to Dr. Sun's party, the Kuomintang, and became an integral part of it at the Kuomintang's first National Congress in January, 1924.

Dr. Sun agreed to the united front because he had become convinced that his party of patriotic business men and intellectuals could not liberate and modernize China without the help of the organized workers and peasants. The Communists

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agreed because they held that the first job was to smash feudal and warlord rule in China and that to do this they must cooperate with progressive business men. The "Three People's Principles" were given a detailed—and radical—definition and were supplemented by Dr. Sun's "Three Great Policies"—friendship with the Soviet Union; cooperation with the Chinese Communists; promotion of the organization of workers and peasants.

SUCCESS WAS terrific as long as the combination held together. Labor unions and peasants' unions grew with incredible speed. When the Kuomintang combined their strength with that of the upper class progressives, it became a first-class fighting power. Patriots from all China flocked to join the Kuomintang-Communist alliance in its southern base in Canton. In 1926 the joint revolutionary armies marched north under General Chiang Kai-shek, their way smoothed by the underground organizations of workers and peasants set up by the Communists. Four hundred thousand members of peasants' unions in Hunan province alone acted as spies, guides and labor for the advancing revolutionary troops. Provincial warlords collapsed with little fighting; peasants' unions, together with merchants' associations and trade unions, set up local governments known as "People's Power." In cities along the Yangtze the workers poured into the "foreign concessions"—those islands of imperialist rule in the heart of the country—and took them back for the people of China. In Shanghai the organized workers, led by the Communist Chou En-lai, themselves threw out the local warlord and turned the city over to Chiang Kai-shek.

The capture of Shanghai brought to a head all frictions that smouldered under the united front of Communist and Kuomintang. Here China's strongest trade unions faced her richest native capitalists and the business firms of foreign powers. To Chiang Shanghai was rich loot that could make him independent of any party. He secured the backing of Shanghai capitalists and paid for it with a blood purge of the workers who had given him the city, slaughtering five thousand of them in Shanghai alone. He threw out a majority of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee and reorganized the party around his personal dictatorship. Then, buttressed by quick foreign recognition, he set out to exterminate the Communists.

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The Great Revolution was over. The game of warlord politics resumed.

THE CHINESE Communists today regret that they submitted to Chiang so readily in those far off days. They were then under the leadership of Chen Tu-hsiu, a brilliant Peiping professor, who was one of the party's founders and its first secretary. "The mistake of Chen Tu-hsiu," said Lu Ting-yi to me in Yenan, "was his submission to the bourgeoisie, *i.e.,* to Chiang's regime."

Chiang's purge of the Communists, Lu explained, began a full year before that Shanghai massacre. In March, 1926, Chiang arrested the commander of a naval vessel for being a Communist and announced that all high officers in the army who were Communists should be removed from their posts. That was the time, the Communists think today, to have made their stand. They had helped so well in organizing the joint armies that three of Chiang's four armies were under Communist influence, while there was some sympathy for Communists even in the fourth. Chen Tu-hsiu submitted to Chiang's purge in the interests of "harmony." He later submitted to a similar exclusion of Communists from leading posts in Kuomintang organizations, many of which these Communists had organized.

"This submission left us unprepared to resist Chiang's bloody massacre later," stated Lu Ting-yi. "One must know how to unite with the bourgeoisie on some points while struggling with them on others. Today we unite with Chinese capitalists against feudalism and foreign imperialism, but we struggle against the capitalists' attempts to exploit their workers, and against their tendency to appease feudalism and foreign imperialism. Chen Tu-hsiu only united but did not struggle. So the bourgeoisie gained its aims through us, but thwarted ours."

A second chance was given the Communists by the "Wuhan Government," a coalition in Central China in which more than half of the Kuomintang's central committee still cooperated with Communists. But Chen Tu-hsiu "still retreated." He allowed workers' pickets to be disarmed in the Wuhan cities. When a notorious warlord siezed Changsha, provincial capital of Hunan, and a hundred thousand peasants besieged that city, all set to take it over for "our democratic government

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of Wuhan," Chen Tu-hsiu, under pressure of the Wuhan government, ordered the peasants to go home. The bewildered peasants, broken by confusion, were massacred by the warlord's troops.

"This retreat of the Communists left the workers and peasants leaderless and made possible the July counter-revolution in Wuhan," judged Lu Ting-yi. "Never again will we desert the workers and farmers when they are ready to fight for 'People's Power'."

TEN YEARS of civil war was the price the Chinese people paid for the great split. Chiang's anti-Communist war became the excuse for every repression, for jailings, tortures, murders of all vocal democrats. The corrupt rule of the degenerating Kuomintang doomed the countryside to banditry, flood and famine, driving tens of millions of peasants from their homes. By 1934, China had sixty-five million homeless refugee peasants, according to Professor Charles Hodges, in *Asia* magazine —a number half as great as the population of the United States!

The Communists, however, survived. Their membership dropped from 50,000 to 10,000 after the storm of Chiang's first repressions. Chen Tu-hsiu, discredited, was dropped from the leadership. Painfully the ranks formed again around new leaders.

"These made mistakes in the other direction," said Lu Ting-yi to me in Yenan. "For many years there were mistakes of the left."

The first "leftist" mistake was the launching of uprisings in isolated cities in winter of 1927-28, after Chiang's *coup d'état*. The first such uprising, the Canton Commune, is still considered justified, though it was drowned in blood. "It was a rearguard action of the Great Revolution, needed to announce our program to the people," said Lu. Later uprisings in Chiang-policed cities were clearly hopeless, just a bloody waste.

More successful was the movement that began far from the cities, in the hills of South China, under a new leader, Mao Tse-tung.

Mao Tse-tung, at this time in his early thirties, was the son of a Hunan farmer, and one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party. When the Communists were bloodily suppressed in the cities, Mao turned to the hungry peasants of

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Hunan. In the spring of 1928 his small band, known as the "Peasants' Self-Defense Corps," met the remnants of the revolutionary armies under General Chu Teh at the border of Hunan and Kiangsi. They formed a "Soviet Border District" of seven counties, with an arsenal and a military training school. They had three thousand armed men all told, but Mao had a new idea.

Mao's idea was that in a country so vast, so chaotic and with such poor communications as China, the "democratic revolution" need not conquer the entire country at once. "Armed bases of the revolution" could be set up most easily in the hills at the border of two provinces where the spheres of different warlords overlapped. If these bases won the peasants' support by giving them land, democratic government and means of defense against bandits, they might last through periods of "revolutionary ebb" and could later expand throughout the nation. Here Mao diverged from the European pattern of revolution and did his own thinking, based on his knowledge of China. Borders between countries are fortified in Europe; they are no place for new regimes to start. In China, a warlord's strength decreases as you leave his capital.

By 1930, the Communists held ten such "Border Regions" on the boundaries of provinces, some of which survived until they were included in the great "Liberated Areas" of today. But misfortune arose from another mistake which was known as the "Li Li-san Line." The success in the rural districts went to the head of some of the leaders and they mocked the rural bases as trivial and unimportant. The time had come, they said, to take big cities; the revolution was on the upgrade! The Communists took Changsha, capital of Hunan Province, and talked of taking the Wuhan cities and starting revolts in Shanghai and Nanking. They "corrected" this policy a few months later, after they had been dislodged from Changsha by bombardment from foreign gunboats.

The Communists had advertised themselves beyond their strength. They paid for it. Foreign governments prodded Chiang to suppress the Communists, giving him weapons and military advisers. Chiang was not averse. Within one year, from autumn of 1930 to 1931, he launched three "extermination campaigns" against the largest Communist area, that of Kiangsi, which was under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh. Each campaign was larger than the one before;

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Chiang led the third in person with 350,000 men. All these campaigns failed ingloriously, for the Communists were rooted in the loyalty of the peasants. Most of Chiang's soldiers were also poor peasants, and many of them went over to the Communists.

These hopeful local regimes of the Communists not only defended themselves but created a peasant democracy. In January, 1934, they held their second "Congress of Soviets," attended by 700 elected deputies from many far-scattered regions. The representatives were mostly poor peasants, with a smaller number of artisans and farmhands, and a few professional people and industrial workers. Local governments made reports on land division, irrigation, schools, sanitation. One report noted 1,423 cooperative warehouses. Another said "the hunger of women for education surpasses anything in our history."

NEW MISTAKES, however, now weakened the Communists. From 1931 onward, a group known as the "dogmatists" gained intermittent control of party policy. Many of them had studied abroad and could quote Marxist theory in overpowering detail, but their ignorance of China's practical conditions was catastrophic. Their policies cost the Communists their Kiangsi base.

"When we were in Kiangsi, we were offered an alliance with the Fukien general, Tsai Ting-kai, the hero of Shanghai's 1932 resistance to Japan," explained Lu Ting-yi. "He opposed Chiang's appeasement of Japan and was willing to cooperate with us. Our dogmatists were too orthodox to join hands with 'that bourgeois.' And thus we lost the chance of victory."

Chiang destroyed the Fukien general's forces and turned to encircle the Communists in his fifth and greatest "extermination campaign." His strategy was devised by German Nazi advisers. He mobilized nearly a million men against the Communist districts, sending 400,000 against their Kiangsi base. He made an encircling blockade and slowly tightened it. The campaign lasted a year. Kuomintang sources later estimated that a million Kiangsi peasants had been killed or starved to death.

The main Communist armies, to the number of 90,000, finally broke the encirclement and began the famous "Long March," one of the great marches of all history. Eight thousand

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miles they marched, over some of the world's roughest country, taking many women and children along. They zigzagged east and west, and then swung far around to the north, traversing the entire breadth of China. They crossed eighteen mountain chains and twenty-four large rivers. They marched for more than a year, with almost daily skirmishes and many critical battles. Besides defeating or eluding the armies of Chiang that pursued them, they broke through the armies of ten provincial warlords, and took in passing 62 cities. They crossed six territories of aboriginal tribesmen, some of which had not been penetrated by any Chinese force for a generation. They traversed great, uninhabited grasslands in the far west. They performed incredible feats of valor, such as the crossing of the Tatu River, where 30 volunteers went over, swinging hand over hand from suspension chains of a dismantled bridge in the face of machine-gun fire, stormed the guns, and replaced the floor of the bridge for the army.*

No Communist now is willing to say that the Long March was the result of a mistake. It has become too heroic a tradition for anyone to disavow. But they will tell you that "it might have been avoided" by correct tactics in Kiangsi. "The dogmatists indulged in too much positional warfare; with our present technique of 'dispersal' we might have filtered, passed Chiang's blockhouses through the hills," said Lu Ting-yi. They will tell you of the heavy losses, how the membership of the Communist Party and the size of its army had reached 300,000 in Kiangsi days, and had sunk to 40,000 by the end of the Long March. They will tell you that the Long March itself began with the disastrous strategy of straight line marching in large masses, easily bombed from the air, and might have ended in final catastrophe, had not the leadership been changed after the first three months of the march.

At the historic Tsunyi Conference in January, 1935, held in the midst of the Long March, the leadership of the "dogmatists" gave way to that of Mao Tse-tung. "Mao Tse-tung's leadership made of the Long March a military miracle and brought us to Yenan," said Lu Ting-yi.

SUCH WERE the heavy losses and the bitter lessons through which the Chinese Communists came, in October, 1935, to

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* For the full account, see Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*.

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North Shensi on the edge of the Mongolian deserts, and began to build again in a barren land. They had left the rich, moist soil of the south that gave two crops a year. They had come to the "badlands," where peasants wrung a bitter living from an arid climate and an eroded soil. Every three years there was a small famine. The great famine of 1928-30, not long since over, had slain three to six million people, and left a heritage of waste land and banditry. In such a territory, the newcomers tried out their policies under the hardest possible test conditions, developing the forms of economic and political life that later were to spread from Yenan to the sea.

They made North Shensi blossom. By land reform, production drives, and other methods, they doubled the cultivated area and doubled the crops. They developed small industries and cooperatives. They increased primary schools seventeen fold. They established the first secondary schools, the first university, the first hospitals. They devised a system of voting by which even illiterate farmhands might express their will. They created here their unique, partly self-supporting government and army.

It was done in endless war with the desert. It was done against the age-old apathy of peasants who had repeatedly failed. It was done against a blockade maintained by Chiang Kai-shek and under occasional armed attack by both Chiang and Japan. Under such conditions was the new pattern of life and of government made.

A YEAR after the Communists established themselves in Yenan, the nine years of civil war were ended by the "Sian Incident." Chiang Kai-shek, going to Sian to force his generals into another expedition against the Communists at a time when all China flamed with desire for a united resistance to Japan, was forcibly detained by officers of his own armies. He was only set free after negotiations in which people of many persuasions took part. The most important factor in freeing him was the fact that the Communists sent Chou En-lai to Sian to urge Chiang's release—that same Chou En-lai who had once given Shanghai to Chiang, and on whose head Chiang had afterwards put a price.

"Don't you ever feel that you made a mistake in setting Chiang free in Sian?" I asked of Lu Ting-yi in 1947, while Chiang's bombs were falling on Yenan.

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"No," he replied, "it was the only way in which China could have been united against Japan."

Chiang's release in Sian through Communist intercession led directly to a wide Chinese unity against the invader, Japan. This unity was never absolute, but it continued in some degree for nearly ten years.

It was during these years, in distant, primitive Yenan, among some of the most backward peasants of China, that the policies of the Communists became completely integrated with the needs of the Chinese countryside. Here Mao Tse-tung developed his theses on the "New Democracy," the basis of all Chinese Communist policies today.

Mao's "New Democracy" was written in 1940 to answer the pessimism that grew among Chinese patriots when so many Kuomintang generals and leaders turned traitor. Mao declared that, despite all traitors, the Chinese people would win the victory, both in their war against Japan and in their democratic revolution. He analyzed the road to victory, and the kind of government that could best lead the Chinese people to victory and to prosperity after the war. Not the Kuomintang dictatorship, not a Communist-led dictatorship of the proletariat, not the forms of "bourgeois democracy" copied from the west, but a "New Democracy," a coalition government of all revolutionary classes, led by the Communist Party, *i.e.,* workers, farmers, petty bourgeoisie and even such capitalists as opposed feudalism and foreign imperialism.

The "New Democracy" marked a turning point in China's revolutionary thinking and influenced the revolutionary thought of the world. After five years of testing, its theses were expanded in Mao Tse-tung's report to the Seventh Party Congress in April, 1945, which was published in China under the title *On Coalition Government,* and in the United States as *The Fight for a New China.* Mao stated then with confidence, "In the entire period of the bourgeois democratic revolution, in a period of several dozens of years, our general program of new democracy will remain unchanged." The Marxist line for China was established; it had its theoretical base, its practical experience, its program for the years to come.

They called the Congress the "Congress of Unity and Victory," though unity with the Kuomintang was becoming less dependable, and the final victory over Japan had not yet come. "There was a great sense of unity and victory," explained Lu

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Ting-yi, "because more than a million comrades, separated by many lines of battle, had been able to think their way through to a joint estimate of their past experience and their future path." In preparation for the Congress, there had been two years of discussion of Party history and policy in all the far-flung Party organizations beyond the battlefronts. They had digested their history and learned from their mistakes. For the first time, Mao Tse-tung was formally elected chairman, though he had been acknowledged leader and chief for many years.

At the risk of oversimplification, I shall try to give, in a few words, the platform the Chinese Communists then adopted.

1. China is today a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country. Her people's goal today is not the Socialist revolution but to secure national independence from foreign imperialism, to smash feudalism and establish modern industry under forms of capitalism and democracy. But since China's democratic revolution comes late in world history, when world capitalism is declining while Socialism has been established in the U.S.S.R. and is being approached in many parts of Europe, China's capitalism and democracy will not copy the forms of the rest but take new forms.

2. The democratic revolution will not be led by the bourgeoisie as it was in Western lands. Nor will there be at present a dictatorship of the proletariat, as in the U.S.S.R. The democratic revolution in China will be led by the working class, with the peasantry as the main force, and with the participation of progressive people of many classes: the middle class of the small towns, the progressive bourgeoisie, and even "forward-looking landlords." There must be a correct approach to all these classes, to bring about the democratic revolution with the least cost and pain.

3. "Land to the Tiller" is the basic economic program. No economic progress can begin until the soil-tiller is freed from crushing rents, taxes and feudal exactions. Feudalism on the land must be smashed.

4. Capitalist enterprise must be encouraged to break down feudalism and to develop industrial production rapidly. But private monopoly capital will not be allowed to develop. There must be a "new capitalism" encouraging all forms of productive enterprise—private, cooperative and public—with collective agreements between workers and management. Because of the general decline of world capitalism and the weak-

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ness of Chinese capitalists in particular, and because of the existence of a strong Communist Party and an organized working class, one need not fear that this capitalism will develop beyond the powers of the workers to control it.

5. Since China is very large and under pressure of different feudal and imperialist interests, her economic and political development will be uneven. Hence the growth of her democratic revolution will be uneven. Nationwide victory will follow a zigzag path. But democratic areas can be established in part of the country from which the democratic revolution will spread.

6. All the feudal forces of China, assisted by foreign powers which wish to exploit China will attack such democratic areas. But the areas can be successfully defended and extended. An army of a new type is needed for this, closely integrated with the people. A strategy of a new type is also needed, relying fully on the people and organizing them, disintegrating the enemy forces partly by arms and partly by winning over the common soldiers.

7. The Communist Party represents especially the working class and the poor farmers; most of its membership consists of peasant soldiers. But other classes than these share in creating the new democracy. Hence the Communists should restrict themselves to not more than one-third of the government posts, leaving the other two-thirds to representatives of other progressive classes. In this coalition, the Communists should seek leadership not by superior force, nor by political pressure, but by correctly analyzing the people's needs and securing general agreement. For this their weapon is their command of Marxist analysis. Policy must be "from the people and to the people." This does not mean that the Party merely echoes the people, but that it keeps close to the people, analyzes what they want and tells them how to get it. Democracy must be based not on passive approval through the ballot but on the energetic initiative of the people.

Such was the platform the Chinese Communists developed through 25 years of struggle, through many losses and many victories. Such are the policies by which they have grown today —at the end of 1948—to a party of remarkable maturity and unity, with more than 3,000,000 members, controlling most of North China and Manchuria from the Mongolian deserts to the Yangtze.

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Chapter IV

MAO TSE-TUNG

In a cave on a Yenan hillside looking down a dusty valley which infinite human labor turned at some seasons partly green, lived Mao Tse-tung, one of Asia's most notable leaders and thinkers. For twenty years he had lived blockaded, shut off from the world by battle fronts of foreign and civil wars. From this seeming isolation, deep in the heart of China's rural areas, the thought of Mao Tse-tung shaped the Chinese Revolution. Today one hundred and seventy million people in North China and Manchuria recognize government on a pattern Mao designed.

Mao Tse-tung is a legend all over China far beyond the "Liberated Areas," among illiterate peasants who combine his name with Chu Teh's, speaking of "Chu-Mao." On the famous Mount Omei, where Chiang Kai-shek went for summer rest from Chungking, farmers revealed their rifles to an American whom they trusted, saying: "When the time comes, we are ready. Life is better under Chu-Mao." There were no Communists among them. Wherever peasants feel unbearably oppressed by landlords, bureaucrats and warlords, the hopeful legend runs of Mao Tse-tung.

From his distant cave, Mao Tse-tung has become a world figure. His theses on "Protracted War" became accepted formulas among American and other military experts, many of whom never knew whence they came. His theses on "New Democracy" not only devised new forms of government for China but may have influenced the similar forms that appeared five years later in Eastern Europe. His analysis of China's revolution is studied eagerly in the colonial lands of Southeast Asia. In fact, Marxists all over the world agree that in order to understand the modern problems of Asia, it is necessary to study Mao's thought.

"Mao's great achievement has been the application of Marxist thinking to Chinese problems," said Liu Hsiao-chi, whom the Chinese considered their second ablest Marxist. "Not only

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has Mao applied Marxist methods to solve the practical problems of China but he has popularized Marxism as a method for the Chinese people to use. On every kind of problem—the nation, the peasants, strategy, the construction of the Party, literature and culture, finance and economy, methods of work, philosophy—Mao has applied Marxist principles to new conditions and given those principles a new development. He is the first Marxist in Asia to succeed in doing so."

Like everyone else in Yenan, Mao Tse-tung lived in a cave. He changed his residence often, perhaps for convenience of new work, or because of the danger that might threaten him as China's Number One Communist. When Chiang's first bombs fell on Yenan in August, 1946, during my first visit, they fell not far from the cave in which Mao had lived a fortnight earlier. Most of Yenan's people thought the bombs had been aimed at "the chairman." Except for this occasional change of residence, Mao went about Yenan informally, without concern.

My first interview with him was postponed by the rising of Yenan River because of a morning shower. The following day the river subsided and I went to Mao's home by auto-truck, slithering down the steep bank, bumping over boulders in the water, climbing the far shore at a dangerous angle and passing the gate into "Yang Family Village," the narrow ravine where the headquarters of the Central Committee was located. We dismounted a short distance up the ravine, climbed a steep path between corn-stalks and tomato vines, and came to a ledge from which a score of caves opened.

Four of these caves, set close among the neighbors, were the home of Chairman Mao.

Mao Tse-tung is a large man, loose-limbed, with the slow massive but easy movements of a middle-western farmer. His round, rather flattish face has a placid reserve that lights into vivid humor when he smiles. Under his shock of thick black hair, a powerful head and searching eyes indicate an active penetrating mind that little escapes. He has an elemental vitality directed by a deep but mobile intellectuality. He wore the usual suit of dark blue cotton. There was no haste or restlessness in his manner but a very poised friendliness.

We sat on the flat clay terrace under an apple tree while the late afternoon wore on and sunset glorified the jagged

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hills. Mao's fascinating, dark-haired wife sat beside us for a time and then went in to arrange a meal. Their small daughter, in a dress of bright figured cotton, played around her father's knee, climbed into his lap, received his caresses and came over to give her hand to the visitor, her shyness overcome by curiosity.

In the early part of the conversation I noticed a movement in the grass higher up the hill, some fifty feet above Mao's caves. "Who is up there?" I asked, thinking how easily a bomb could be dropped on our terrace and wondering if there were guards above protecting the Chairman's home.

"Just another family," replied Mao. "Their children are curious about my foreign guest."

Seldom have I seen a man so happily and sociably set in his environment. Living like a peasant, he did not even demand the privacy that most intellectuals think necessary for their work. What privacy he needed was given by the respect in which his neighbors held him. The children above peeped down but made no noise. Even Mao's little daughter had a disciplined sense of what she might do during his interviews. She clung or played about him quietly, but undemanding, while he gave his mind to our talk.

The conversation ran easily. Lu Ting-yi interpreted so quickly and unobtrusively that I was not conscious of the barrier of different speech. Mao questioned me in detail about America. I found that on many American events he was better informed than I. He had read many recent American books and pamphlets. This was surprising because for twenty years there has not even been a postal system to connect him with the world. But he planned the smuggling in of knowledge as carefully as he planned the strategy of war. The information collected for him from tiny receivers in the radio caves that monitored the news, was surprisingly complete. He used his brief contact with the world through the American Army Liaison Group to bring in books from many lands. When foreign visitors came to Yenan, they were invited to tell about their respective countries.

Mao answered questions directly and practically.

"How shall I explain to Americans what you are fighting for?" I asked, expecting some statement of ideology.

"Chiang's troops come to kill peaceful people and these

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people defend themselves in order to live," he replied, adding with a twinkle: "Even Americans should understand that."

"How long can you keep on fighting?"

"Of our own desire we would not fight even a day. But we can fight as long as there is fighting to be done. We have fought twenty years; if need be, we can fight another twenty."

It was a delicious meal that Mrs. Mao set before us, much of it from the ripe tomatoes, onions, beans and peppers that grew in the hillside garden. Mao, a Hunanese, loves hot pepper in his food. For dessert there was "eight treasures rice," rice sweetened with "eight delicacies." In this case there were four: peanuts, walnuts, plums from Mao's garden, and dates from "Date Garden" upriver.

"The rice is not grown in Yenan County but we grow it in this Border Region over near the Yellow River," commented Mao. "We southerners found the northern millet diet difficult when we came here twelve years ago. We longed for our native rice. Finally we found a place in one of our lower, warmer valleys where rice can be successfully grown."

MAO TSE-TUNG was born in 1893, in a village in Hunan, the province that is the heart of south China. His father was a poor peasant who served many years as a soldier but who, in Mao's childhood, had been able to buy two and a half acres of land. Later he prospered enough to give his son an education.

The family was conservative and religious. At a Yenan dinner party I heard Judge Chen Ching-kun say to Mao that it was odd that a man of his—the judge's—conservative past should be cooperating with Communists. "That's nothing," retorted Mao. "I was brought up a Buddhist!"

Young Mao, as a school-boy, saw a revolt of starving people in Changsha, the provincial capital. It was suppressed and the leaders publicly beheaded. Later there was armed conflict between landlords and peasants in Mao's own county; the courts helped the landlords suppress the farmers. Still later the boy saw starving farmers seize rice successfully from landlords. This turmoil of hungry farmers impressed the young Mao as he grew.

In early student days he had the snobbishness of the intellectual, and nowhere are scholars more "superior" than in

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China. Mao later told the writers' congress in Yenan how embarrassed he used to feel when he carried his luggage on a bamboo pole in front of other students "who could not bear the weight of anything on their shoulders or carry anything in their hands." He felt himself half-student, half-peasant, and it irked him.

"I felt that the cleanest people in the world were the intellectuals," Mao confessed, recalling those youthful days. "Workers, peasants, soldiers—these were dirty people. I was willing to borrow the clothing of students but not of workers." Later, when Mao had lived and worked among farmers, soldiers and workers, he experienced an inner revolution and came to feel that "the cleanest people in the world are the workers and peasants. . . . Even though their hands might be black and their legs plastered with cow-dung, they are still cleaner than the bourgeoisie." Mao, today, will entertain a louse-ridden peasant overnight in his cave and not give it a thought. It is an attitude he recommends to those who would work among Chinese peasants.

Mao was a man of twenty-six when he became a Marxist. He was active in the Peking students' movement—that famous May Fourth Movement that overthrew a traitor cabinet and blocked Japan's Twenty-One Demands in 1919. Young Chinese intellectuals in those days were enthusiasts for the recent Russian Revolution. They also felt the power of their own upsurge against Japan, which had aroused workers, merchants and farmers. Students were no longer aloof; they were a ferment among all social classes. Under the impact of such forces was formed the mind of Mao Tse-tung.

At the same time—1920—Mao married. He was one of those first students who broke the tradition of centuries, refusing the wife his parents had chosen, and taking his own bride, a fellow student named Yang Kai-hui. Their marriage and ten years of married life were celebrated as the "ideal romance" by young radicals of Hunan. Mao's wife was murdered in 1930, together with his sister, by a Hunan warlord who gave allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek.

The first years of Mao's personal romance were also the happy years of honeymoon of the Kuomintang and Communists. How close was that union is shown by the jobs the young Mao held in both parties at the same time. He attended the

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first national congress of the Communist Party in 1921 and was a delegate to the first National Congress of the Kuomintang in 1924. The Kuomintang made him a member of its Shanghai Bureau, and later editor of its political weekly, and still later, chief of its propaganda department in charge of training all the farmer organizers. Mao and his young bride had all that China offered of high-speed, successful living in those swift years before the Kuomintang—changed overnight—butchered the wife and put a price of a quarter of a million silver dollars on Mao's head.

In January, 1927, in the last months of the "Great Revolution," only a few months before the final split, Mao was sent to Hunan, his home province, to report on the "Farmer's Unions" that were seizing power. He inspected five counties and wrote a short report that was buried in two obscure bulletins. Chen Tu-hsiu, then chief of the Communist Party, called Mao a hot-head for it and pulled him out of Hunan. The Farmers' Unions thought differently; they elected Mao president of the All-China Farmers' Union, an organization of tremendous numbers that was soon to be suppressed.

Those thirty-two days spent by Mao studying the Hunan farmers may have in the end a more lasting effect on China's history than Chiang's seizure of power in Nanking which took place a few months later. It was there Mao Tse-tung had a vision of the organizing genius of the Chinese farmers. His report, rescued from those obscure bulletins, is a classic today.

"In four months an unprecedented revolution was staged," he wrote. "The centuries-old privilege of the feudal landlords was shattered and the farmers' unions became the sole power. . . . What Dr. Sun Yat-sen tried but failed to accomplish in forty years of revolutionary struggle is done by the farmers in a few months." Mao brushed aside the criticism—concurred in by Chen Tu-hsiu, his party leader—that the farmers "went too far." "Revolution is not an invitation to a banquet . . . a drawing of a picture or the making of a piece of embroidery that can be undertaken at leisure," he wrote. "It is a revolt!" Mao saw "the democratic forces in the rural districts overthrowing the feudal power." He never forgot it. That vision became the basis of his future life and work.

The "line of Mao Tse-tung" developed slowly. If his first enthusiasm for the farmers' governments was repudiated as

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extreme by Chen Tu-hsiu, the slowly growing rural governments Mao later organized in south China were disdained as "too trivial" by the adventurous Li Li-san. The bitter test of the Long March raised Mao Tse-tung to leadership. In his twelve Yenan years, his stature steadily grew. It was here he developed the body of thought that made him known in China and the world. When he was finally elected chairman of the Chinese Communist Party at its Seventh Congress in 1945, many former leaders were so discredited by the two years' party discussion of past history that they would have gone down to permanent disgrace, had not Mao intervened to save his former antagonists.

"Those comrades who have made mistakes," he said, "no matter how grievous and costly, if they admit their mistakes honestly and if they have analyzed the mistakes and learned from them, are better leaders than men who are untried." It was the statement of a leader who knew how to create political unity out of strong men who had held, and fought for, divergent views.

MAO IS not only a great political leader. He is a man of wide education who can meet with scholars anywhere. He is accomplished in the Chinese classics and a discriminating lover of the Chinese opera. He quotes readily from ancient literature and just as readily from old peasant proverbs. He also moves easily among the philosophers of the West, from the early Greeks down to the present day.

Mao is a poet of no mean ability, though he has little time to indulge this talent. On his airplane trip to Chungking in 1945—the only time in twenty years that he went outside his blockaded area—he composed a poem on China that astonished the literati by its beauty and power.* Chungking intellectuals had expected some uncouth agitator from the caves of the northwest; they met a man whose philosophic grasp and literary style was beyond their own.

Mao seems able to make his profound knowledge available in very simple words. In a famous speech at the inaugural of the party school he gave a short explanation of the sources and kinds of human knowledge—that most abstruse subject of

* This poem, "The Snow," was reprinted in *Masses & Mainstream*, January, 1949.

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philosophy—in words that a peasant could have understood. He brightens even Marxism with sharp metaphor, and his phrases become proverbs.

In his attack on dogmatism, for instance, Mao compared Marxist theory to an arrow which "must be shot at the target of the Chinese Revolution."

"We must shoot the arrow with an aim. . . . Some comrades shoot the arrow without an aim and they do the revolution a great deal of harm. . . . Other people take the arrow and admire it but refrain from shooting, and these are curio-admirers who have practically no connection with the Revolution. . . .

"We study Marxism-Leninism not because of its good looks, nor because there is any magic in it, as if it were a kind of charm to cast out devils. . . . It has neither good looks nor magic; it is only very useful. . . . There are people who think it is a sort of charm with which one can easily cure any disease. Those who take it as dogma are that kind of people. We ought to tell them that their dogmas are more useless than cow-dung. For dung can be used as fertilizer, while dogmas cannot."

In attacking the self-conceit of students, to which Chinese intellectuals have always been especially prone, Mao told them:

"Books have no legs; they can be opened and shut at will. To read books is the easiest job in the world. It is much easier than cooking a meal or slaughtering a pig. For when you want to catch hold of the pig, he will run; when you slaughter him, he will squeal, while the book on the table neither runs nor squeals but lets you handle it as you like. . . . So I wish those who have only book knowledge and no practical experience would be more humble."

In discussing criticism, Mao said:

"Criticism is done as a doctor treats his patients, for the purpose of curing the disease and not of killing the patient. . . . To attempt to kill him at one stroke or by beating him all over is no way to do."

All the stock questions usually asked of Communists have

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been asked many times of Mao Tse-tung. Usually he makes a fresh, unexpected answer. Editor Yu, who often acted as Mao's interpreter, told me of the American who came all the way to Yenan to convince Mao that Communism is a religion. He had argued the point in Nanking with Chou En-lai and other Communists, who told him: "No, it is a science." Unsatisfied, he sought the fountain-head.

As they jolted over Yen River, the pilgrim bragged to Yu: "You'll see how I'll convince your chairman."

The "convincing of Mao" took only fifteen minutes. The visitor explained his views and paused for breath. Instead of arguing against him, Mao replied: "You can call it a religion if you like, the religion of serving the people." The man went home delighted with a brand-new slogan. Mao is one of the few Communists anywhere who would have made such an answer. His study of many philosophies and perhaps the poet in him, gives him a sense of the many human meanings there may be in a single word. He also knows when it is useful to argue over definitions and when it is not.

MAO'S DIRECT speech, wide range of knowledge and poetic imagery make his conversation the most stimulating I have ever known. His mind swept easily over the world, with calm clarity, including many lands and epochs in his view. I have never met a man whose speech was at the same time so exact and so full of poetry.

In speaking of the American weapons captured from Chiang's troops he called them a "blood transfusion—from America to Chiang, from Chiang to us." In speaking of American imperialism, he said: "It becomes lonely. So many of its friends are dead or ill. Even penicillin will not cure them."

Many of Mao's metaphors originate, I think, in the give and take of conversation, and are later, after some testing and working over, incorporated in his writings. I think the metaphor of the "paper tiger," which he later used in a widely quoted article, originated in that first interview he gave me. "Reactionary rulers," he said, "are paper tigers. Terrible to look at, but melting when the rains come."

The word "paper tiger" seemed to strike him; he stopped to be sure that I got its exact flavor. Lu Ting-yi, who was translating, gave the word as "scare-crow." Mao halted the

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talk and asked Lu what a scare-crow was. Then he refused the word. A paper tiger, he said, was not something dead stuck in a field. It scares not crows but children. It is made to look like a dangerous beast. But it is really only pressed paper which softens when damp.

After this explanation Mao continued, using the words "paper tiger" in English, laughing at his own pronunciation. Before the February Revolution in Russia, he said, the czar looked strong and terrible. But a February storm washed him away. Hitler also was washed down by the storms of history. So were the Japanese imperialists. They were paper tigers, all.

"Chiang-Kai-shek—paper tiger," said Mao in English, laughing.

"Wait a moment," I interrupted. "I am a reporter. Do I write that Mao Tse-tung calls Chiang a paper tiger?"

"Not just in those words," Mao replied, still laughing. Then he added, mincing his words like a child who has decided to be very correct and proper: "You may say that if Chiang supports the people's interests, he is an iron tiger. If he deserts the people and launches war against them—which is just what he is doing now—he is a paper tiger and the rains will wash him away."

We talked on over fresh tea-cups till the night grew late and Mrs. Mao had long since put the small daughter to bed in the adjoining cave. Then the chairman and his wife accompanied me down the hillside, with a kerosene lantern to show the uneven path. We came to the narrow road where the auto truck waited. Goodbyes were said. They stood on the hill watching as my truck jolted downward and splashed into the bed of Yen River. Bright, very bright were the stars over the wild, dark Yenan hills.

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Chapter V

YENAN FIGHTS TO THE SEA

The Japanese war gave the Chinese Communists the chance to take North China and Manchuria. This was historic irony for the Japanese said that they came to save China from the Communists. But the Communist areas grew by fighting Japanese.

When the Japanese war began the Communists had only a barren territory in the northwest, some 33,000 square miles with a million and a half people. When it ended they had more than eight hundred thousand square miles of territory with 140,000,000 people. Their lands grew twentyfold and their population nearly one hundredfold. They grew by organizing the people's resistance.

This was not what Chiang Kai-shek expected. He had little faith that any Chinese force could resist Japan. For ten years (from 1927-37), he appeased Japan and fought the Chinese Communists instead, in the name of "unifying the nation." He finally declared war against Japan in 1937, only under tremendous popular pressure, when Japan had already deeply invaded China. Then the national unity he had vainly sought by conquest came at once, as Chinese of all persuasions rallied against the invader.

The Communist forces of General Chu Teh were reorganized as the Eighth Route Army of the National Government, and ordered to the front in north Shansi. Chiang gave them the job of penetrating the enemy rear and fighting the Japanese in territory from which his regular troops had fled in rout. He expected the Communists to be annihilated. From his view it was their proper fate. There was irony in that, too, for the Communist areas grew by fighting, while Chiang, for lack of fighting, declined to a provincial warlord of Szechwan.

Japan's first defeat in China was suffered at the hands of the

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Communists in Pinghsing Pass, in north Shansi. This battle, though Chiang never gave it credit, saved Chiang's capital Nanking from premature encirclement and preserved him a line of retreat to the interior. Japan's strategy, in the first days of war, was to drive south by the three great north-south railways into the Yangtze Valley, and at the same time take Shanghai, thus catching Nanking in a sack. But as the Japanese moved south into Shansi highlands, the fast-hitting Eighth Route lads under Lin Piao struck them from the cliffs in surprise attack. The Japanese debacle here forced Japan to relieve these Shansi forces by diverting troops from the Peiping-Hankow drive. This saved Hankow for a year, long enough for it to serve Chiang's government as a base when Nanking finally fell.

The importance of that Pinghsing victory to the local farmers was that they learned that the Japanese could be defeated "if you fought correctly." The tale was told long after to my friend, Sidney Rittenberg, by a ploughman who took part in the famous battle.

"When the Japs came into our area my chum and I talked it over and decided that we'd have to resist. But how? Without rifles or any weapons? We met an Eighth Route soldier and went into the woods for a talk. Then we saw a Jap officer and seven soldiers coming towards us across the meadow, searching everywhere. My friend and I began to shake all over."

At this point in his tale the ploughman began to act as in a drama, knees shaking, hands fluttering, head wobbling from side to side. Then he grew still and continued: "The Eighth Route soldier said: 'Take it easy, take it easy. If you run they're sure to see you. Wait and see what they will do.'

"We waited and the Japs came straight towards us. The soldier said: 'Let's go into that cabin.' There was an empty hut in a clearing near by. We went inside and the soldier sat quiet but my friend and I looked through the broken paper in the window. My chum whispered: 'Old gentleman in heaven, they are coming right here. We are all lost eggs. Maybe we can run out the back door and get away.'

" 'Take it easy,' said the soldier. 'Keep still.'

"He took a grenade out of his belt and pulled the pin but kept his thumb on the safety catch. I thought he's going to blow us all up so we won't be tortured by the Japs. We trem-

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bled and expected death. 'Keep quiet,' he said, 'and see how we fight.'

"Then suddenly that Jap officer was right in the door with the seven soldiers behind him. The Eighth Route soldier tossed the grenade through the door right under their feet. And boom! we had seven new rifles! With those rifles my chum and I and five more villagers went with the Eighth Route into the battle of Pinghsing Pass."

The ecstasy of farmers who found that they could fight back against the invaders was the force that carried the Communist-led armies from Yenan to the sea.

I VISITED Chu Teh's headquarters in Shansi in January, 1938, in the seventh month of the war of resistance to Japan.

"We believe that the hope of saving China lies largely in the mobile units of North China," he told me. "We will keep Japan from consolidating her gains and from using North China as a base against the rest of the country. We are proud to be the Generalissimo's most obedient army!" That held as long as he was ordered to fight the invading Japanese.

Even at that time, in the first year of the war, when Chiang Kai-shek had been driven from Nanking and had fallen back on Hankow, the Communist-led troops had restored Chinese local governments in several dozen counties behind the Japanese lines, and were beginning to expand into what later became great "Liberated Areas." These areas grew not quietly in orderly country, but in war-torn provinces, ravaged by both bandits and invaders. When a small disciplined force penetrated such areas with a method of successful fighting and a clear political program, it quickly multiplied to many times its original size.

Take the story of Commissar Li Ching-yu, which I had from his own lips after the war was over. He was sent into South Hopei early in the war with a band of eight hundred armed men. Within a year he had twenty thousand armed men and had driven the Japanese-appointed governments from thirty counties, substituting local Chinese governments chosen by the farmers and the troops.

How did Commissar Li perform this miracle?

"I found five kinds of armed bands all fighting each other," he explained. "There were defeated Kuomintang troops,

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newly organized puppets, some Japanese, some bandits and some local farmers' bands who tried to defend their villages. We set out to create order in this chaos. We sent delegations to all armed forces except those openly serving the Japanese. If they accepted our program, we gave them training and they became our troops. Some refused our program and went over to the puppets, getting arms from the Japanese. These we fought and disarmed."

The farmer's side of this picture was given by a village boy in Shantung, who became Militiaman Kuo.

"My father organized to defend our village against bandits. Ten men began but fifty more joined suddenly when the bandits came and folks saw that we would resist. . . . Then we heard that the Eighth Route was in the next county and offered training. We were suspicious at first, fearing they would draft our boys by force as other armies did. So we sent half a dozen at first, and when these came back all right, we sent others. Then the training period grew from a week to a month and we began to trust the Eighth Route and they helped us get arms." By the end of the war with Japan, young Kuo was a famous militiaman, commanding twenty-five hundred militiamen of Shantung.

THE POLITICAL program was as vital as the military. "It was not enough to urge folk to resist Japan," explained Commissar Li. "Farmhands and half-starved share-croppers thought only how to get food. We set out to improve their livelihood."

Li's organizers went into stables where farmhands slept and learned their troubles. They worked all day in the fields and guarded their master's property all night for a wage of two or three hundred pounds of grain per year. This did not even feed the man himself properly, much less a family. Farmhands' Unions were organized, protected by the army, and the wage rose to eight hundred pounds of grain, which could feed a man and wife. Collective agreements gave farmhands occasional days off to visit village fairs and "wine to comfort them" when they dug out the human offal from the toilets for fertilizer. Such homely improvements of life gave farmhands something to fight for. Li similarly organized share-croppers' unions and got the rents reduced.

Soon these local farmers were electing "people's govern-

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ments" which they willingly defended with their lives. Li's thirty liberated counties were only one area among dozens that were similarly liberated by the Communist-led troops.

While the Eighth Route Army thus expanded across North China, a similar army, known as the New Fourth, was formed on the Lower Yangtze, and commissioned – originally – by Chiang Kai-shek. Its exploits were spectacular and its tasks hazardous, for it operated among some of the heaviest Japanese concentrations in China. This army regularly raided the Shanghai-Nanking Railway; in autumn of 1938 it hoisted the Chinese flag over a Japanese airfield within sight of Shanghai. The people called this army "world army number one" and "soldiers of God." They had a saying: "As in lettuce you eat the heart, so if you join an army, join the Fourth." This was reported by Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson (later Brigadier General), commander of the famous "Carlson's Raiders" in the South Pacific, who visited the New Fourth in 1940.

By the end of 1940, the Communist-led armies had multiplied from an original 45,000 authorized by Chiang to half a million men. Their "Liberated Areas," beginning as small islands of resistance in a sea of Japanese invaders, had grown until they touched each other, making continuous contact across North China, striking across Japanese-held railways and isolating Japanese troops in their fortress-cities. So amazing were their successes with such slender means of war that one is driven to ask what might have been achieved if the larger, better armed forces of Chiang's central government had fought with a similar zeal. It seems possible that Mao Tse-tung was right, that China alone could have worn down Japan, thus preventing her later assault on the United States at Pearl Harbor.

Chiang's generals, far from emulating these Communist successes, bitterly opposed the "unruly expansion" of the Communists. They tried to disband or weaken the Communist-led forces. A three-cornered war developed. Some fifty of Chiang's generals at the front went over to the Japanese openly, in order to fight the Chinese Communists with Japanese money and supplies. They were encouraged from Chungking; it was called "beating the enemy by curved line method." High officials of Chiang's government fled to Nanking and set up a puppet government there. Deadly phrases were whispered

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around Chungking: "Japanese are only lice on the body of China but Communism is a disease of the heart."*

Armed clashes between Kuomintang and Communist forces increased from 1939 onward, the Kuomintang generals often coordinating their attacks with those of the Japanese. Equipment given by America for use against Japan was hoarded by Chiang for the expected future civil war. The massacre of the New Fourth's headquarters and rear guard in January, 1941, by Kuomintang forces was the first signal to the world of the growing clash. In 1943, Chiang ordered the Communist Party disbanded; in 1944, he ordered their armed forces reduced to one-tenth their existing size. With these orders the Communists did not comply.

"Fortunately we have not obeyed those orders and so we have retained some free territory and a gallant anti-Japanese army for the Chinese people," stated Mao Tse-tung at the Seventh Party Congress, in 1945. "If there were no Liberated Areas and their armies, where would the people's anti-Japanese war be? Where would the nation's future be?"

By figures compiled a few months earlier, the Communist-led armies had re-established Chinese county governments in 591 counties, or eighty-two percent of the 721 counties that were lost by Chiang's armies to Japan. Of 453,000 square miles of territory lost by Chiang to the Japanese, the Communist-led armies had recovered 301,000 square miles, or two-thirds. Their troops were engaging 64.6 percent of the 560,000 Japanese troops in China, and 95 percent of the puppet troops.

Impressed by the record of the Communist-led armies, which American military intelligence confirmed, Colonel (later General) Joseph P. Stilwell, chief of American armed aid to China, urged that arms be sent to the Liberated Areas and air-bases set up there, and that all Chinese forces be unified under a War Council representing all parties. He especially demanded that American arms supplied to Chiang be used against the Japanese, and not hoarded for later use against Chinese. Chiang demanded Stilwell's recall and got it. American policy suffered a rapid change under Patrick J. Hurley, the new ambassador, and General Albert C. Wedemeyer, the

* In the Nazi-Soviet Documents, released by the U.S. State Department, the Japanese Foreign Minister, Matsuoka, bragged to Ribbentrop in 1941 of his good relations with Chiang Kai-shek.

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new commander. By spring of 1945, Chiang used American equipment to attack Chinese Communists—with the knowledge of the Americans—even while the Japanese war was on.

JAPAN's surrender caught all China unawares. Chiang, routed by Japanese attacks, was penned up in southwest China with so many hostile Chinese of one kind or other between him and the ocean that he could not get out without help. He had become little more than an inland warlord, except for American support. The Communists were, on the other hand, well placed to take over major areas of China from Japan. Their Liberated Areas comprised most of North and much of Central China, except for railways and cities held by the Japanese.

"Take the cities! Take the railways! Disarm the Japanese!" was the order issued by Chu Teh.

The armies and militia of the Liberated Areas drove on the Japanese-held cities with a vigor inspired by Japan's surrender. In the last ten days of August, 1945, they took eighty-five county towns and five Shantung ports; by September, they had doubled the number of county towns they held. The gain in territory was not large for they already had the rural areas, but the gain in cities was immense. They were expected in Shanghai and could have taken that city. They refrained, fearing trouble with America.

Chiang's policy—and that of America—was to stop these Communist victories at once. Chiang commanded the Communist-led armies to stand still. He swiftly contacted those fifty-two Kuomintang generals who had been fighting on the side of Japan, and who were therefore in the disputed territory already, and made them his agents against the Communists. The Japanese themselves were ordered, in supplementary peace terms issued August 23, to hold their positions until relieved by Chiang's Central Government troops and to retake and hold for Chiang any positions they had lost to "irregular armies." Meanwhile, America put planes and ships at Chiang's disposal to rush his armies into North China in what has been called the "greatest air-lift in history." It cost the American people $300,000,000. It convinced the people of North China that Chiang intended not to cooperate with them in victory but to subdue them with American aid.

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"Why are the Japanese still fighting in our territory when everywhere else they stopped a month ago?" the people of North China asked. The Japanese replied that they were fighting now on orders from Chiang and from America. It was not an answer that enhanced Chiang's popularity or America's prestige!

"Chiang and the puppets, the Americans and the Japanese, all cooperated to fight the 'People's' Armies of North China," is the way they state it now for history.

The dignity of the great American ally was shaken by many incidents in that mad rush. I owe to the mayor of Chefoo a choice tale of the unsuccessful American attempt to take his port. American naval vessels, he said, entered the port in the first week of October and asked the local Chinese authorities to surrender the city. The latter refused, saying that they had already driven out the Japanese, that perfect order prevailed, and that it was "unseemly for an allied power to take a Chinese port from a Chinese army." Discussion lasted several days, growing more acrimonious until the mayor remarked: "It would be a pity if the third world war should start in Chefoo." The Americans thereupon withdrew to their ships, asking the Chinese to come on board the following morning for a "very important conference."

That midnight two hundred motor boats full of puppet troops recently serving the Japanese arrived from American-held Tientsin and seized an uninhabited island facing Chefoo two miles out. Shore sentries reported them and at four in the morning Chefoo troops went to the island in junks, caught the invaders sleeping and completely routed them. A few hours later the American naval vessels steamed away from Chefoo without notice and without waiting for that "very important conference." Chefoo folks not unnaturally concluded that the Americans had planned that puppet attack in order to take the port themselves as "mediators between conflicting forces of Chinese."

To SETTLE these conflicts Ambassador Hurley flew to Yenan and brought back Mao Tse-tung—under an American guarantee of his personal safety—to confer with Chiang Kai-shek. An agreement was signed October 10, known as the Double Tenth Agreement. The Communists agreed to evacuate some

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41,000 square miles with 16,901,000 population, chiefly south of the Yangtze, around the ports of Shanghai and Canton. Chiang agreed—as he had so often—to stop hostilities, grant civil liberties, equal legality of all political parties and the reorganization of all troops into a national army. Two important points were left unsettled. Chiang refused to fix the ratio at which the Communist-led armies should be taken into the national army. He also refused any kind of recognition whatever to the locally elected civil governments in the Liberated Areas. The Communists then reserved the right to defend those areas until a national democratic coalition government should be formed.

Before, during and after the signing of the treaty, the battles kept right on. Four days before the signing, Chiang launched a large-scale attack against the Communists of Central China. Two days after the signing, he issued to his generals a newly printed set of instructions on "Fighting Communist Bandits." Even those Communist-led troops that evacuated areas south of the Yangtze in accordance with the treaty were attacked as they withdrew. In November, Chiang sent three armies into Honan—by-passing many Japanese-held cities—to clear the Communists from the Peiping-Hankow railway. The Communists encircled and decisively defeated two of these armies, whereupon the third withdrew from the civil war and remained in the Liberated Areas as "guests of the Peoples' Armies."

Chiang clearly did not have enough forces in North or Central China to subdue the Communists. A new approach must be found. It was a new approach by Chiang and by America alike.

Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley and General Albert C. Wedemeyer were withdrawn; their names were linked with the policy of civil war. General George C. Marshall arrived as the special envoy of the President of the United States, announced as a mediator and a bringer of peace. It was understood that he would carry out the policy of the "Big Three," adopted at the recently adjourned Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, and restated in a speech by President Truman: a democratic coalition government for China, formed by mutual consent of all political parties, after which all foreign troops—Americans and Russians—should withdraw.

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A "Cease Fire" order was signed on January 10, 1946, and Marshall added his signature to those of Chiang and the Communists. Military positions of both sides were to be frozen as of January 13, 1946, pending the formation of a national government representing all parties.

The military positions fixed in that agreement remain historic despite all later vicissitudes of war. They were sanctioned not only by Chiang but by America. By that agreement the Liberated Areas claimed 445,000 square miles with 113,000,000 population in North China. By the later "Cease Fire" for Manchuria, they claimed in Manchuria 390,000 square miles and 26,000,000 people. The claim, often repeated in following months of civil war—that the Liberated Areas comprised 835,000 square miles with 140,000,000 people, refers to those "Cease Fire" orders. (Today, in 1948, they have spread far beyond those confines.)

As fixed by those agreements the Liberated Areas reached from the mouth of the Yangtze opposite Shanghai to the Amur River on the north; they stretched from the Mongolian deserts to the sea. They were equal in size to the United States east of the Mississippi, and equal in population to the whole United States.

Such was the twenty-fold growth of the Communist-held lands, won in war against the Japanese.

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Chapter VI

FIRST TEST OF THE "MARSHALL PLAN"

People all over China were happy in January, 1946. Many were hungry, many were naked, millions had died and tens of millions were homeless, but there was hope of peace. It was the highest tide of hope in nearly twenty years.

The "Political Consultative Conference," representing all parties, met January 10 with Chiang Kai-shek in the chair. To the cheers of the delegates he handed them the "Cease Fire" order signed that morning. His opening speech pledged again the freedoms that China's progressives had demanded for years: freedom of person, speech, press, assembly; equal legality of all political parties; local self-government and popular elections; release of political prisoners.

In three terrific weeks the delegates settled five basic questions of China's future government. They agreed to set up a coalition in definite proportions for the transition period. They agreed on methods of peaceful reconstruction of the state. They agreed on the way in which a National Assembly should be called to adopt a Constitution, and on the form of Constitution it should consider. They agreed that the army should be reorganized by reducing existing armies of all parties and combining them into one national army controlled by no party but by a democratic coalition government. Everything in these resolutions, charting the path to peace and political democracy, was passed unanimously by rising vote, with Chiang Kai-shek in the chair.

All over China great mass meetings applauded the PCC decisions. Only the secret police were not happy. They would lose their power and graft. Many high generals were unhappy; they would lose the loot of military government. "If I fight the Communists I might lose half my province but in this peace I will lose it all," quipped one War Zone commander. The loot of a war zone, whose warlord appointed all civil and military officials, was a graft not lightly to be given up.

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So the hopeful mass meetings, while applauding those unanimous decisions, were broken up by Chiang's political police. The great student demonstration in Shanghai that welcomed Marshall—the "peace-bringer"—was smashed by the garrison police. In February, the reactionaries fought the PCC decisions by inciting riots. In March, they fought through the Executive Committee of the Kuomintang which, also meeting under Chiang's chairmanship, denounced the actions of its own PCC delegates and decided on unilateral action to legalize the dictatorship. On April 1, Chiang himself declared that the form of Constitution agreed on by the PCC was unacceptable. He announced that the government must "take over Manchuria," and failed to mention the "Cease Fire" on Manchuria that he had signed three days before. From that time on, the civil war widened.

Now the Chinese had eyes on Marshall. Chiang's promises had been made and broken many times; they were not seriously believed. But Marshall's name was on that "Cease Fire" order. America was pledged, not only Chiang. More than America was involved for Marshall was presumably carrying out the decision of the Big Three—the Foreign Ministers Conference of Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union—made at the end of 1945. So the Chinese hoped and waited for Marshall somehow to bring them peace.

All of North China bristled with points of conflict. Chiang's forces and those of the Communists were not divided by a simple border. Chiang, with American air-lift, had taken over many of the previous Japanese positions. He held scores of isolated cities, completely surrounded by Communist-led peasants. He held bits of railway that led nowhere, since the Communists held the pieces between. Chiang's agents in much of this territory were those same generals who had held the same territory for the Japanese. The local patriots had fought them seven years and had never submitted; nor did they intend to submit now to these "puppet generals," even if whitewashed by Chiang.

To resolve these conflicts Marshall set up in Peiping the "Executive Headquarters" referred to earlier. Kuomintang and Communist representatives worked here in equal numbers under American chairmanship. "Truce Teams," also under American army men as chairmen, were located in thirty to forty of

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the centers of disturbance to prevent conflict by conference. Seldom in history had any nation placed itself so willingly and completely under the guidance of a foreign power's representatives.

THE FIRST great test of peace through Marshall's "truce teams" took place in what was called the "Central Plains Liberated Area," with its capital in the hills north of Hankow. Few foreigners ever saw this area, for by August, 1946, it existed no longer, having been liquidated by Chiang's troops. My friend, Sidney Rittenberg, who came to China with the U.S. Army and remained to work for UNRRA, lived and travelled in this area in the spring of 1946 when it was under attack. As UNRRA representative he studied the needs of its villages; later, loaned as interpreter to Truce Team Thirty-two, he saw from the inside the growing strife. It is to his thorough study that I owe this account.

Few parts of China have had a longer, bitterer history of revolution than these Hupeh hills. Peasant revolts grow naturally here. This is rice country where a man with two acres of his own is accounted a solid farmer. The prevalent type is the poor peasant with less than an acre, and the sharecropper, tilling fields of landlords who themselves possess from forty acres up. Fight for food is bitter; class war centers around irrigation water.

On any mountain-side you see remnants of castle walls—stone walls with a moat around them, not the usual mud walls of China—and you are told: "Those were built by the landlords during the T'aiping Rebellion. A hot center of revolt was here." The peasants stirred again in the Great Revolution of 1925-27. When it was suppressed, they formed here the Hupeh-Anwhei Soviet. When this was broken, its troops went on the "Long March" to Yenan, under Wang Chen.

Ruthless slaughter marked the suppression of every revolutionary wave: the T'aiping Rebellion, the Great Revolution, and especially Chiang's suppression of the Chinese Soviets. It was here that Chiang's military ordered the execution of "everyone in the county with the surname Hsu," thus liquidating the sixty-six relatives of General Hsu Hai-tung of the Communists. Parts of North Hupeh are still depopulated of army-age males from those massacres. In other parts, especially

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in the hills, bands of armed peasants have held for twenty years.

In 1938, when the Japanese were driving into Hankow and Chiang's armies were falling back on Chungking, Li Hsien-nien, a local man who had been some years in Yenan, came walking back over the border with thirty-seven men. Li's task was to unite the peasants of this area into a firm anti-Japanese base. Soon he had organized a fifth division of the New Fourth Army, with ten thousand and then twenty thousand men. His base expanded until it covered all Hupeh except for the Wuhan cities, which were fortified by the Japanese. His army continued in constant battle, pressing the enemy out of the rice regions.

In early 1945, Wang Chen came back to the area. He had been garrison commander in Yenan, developing that famous system whereby the Peoples' Armies raise most of their own food. But the Japanese were cutting down through Central China like a knife through butter, and a half million Central Government troops were collapsing, letting the enemy through to the American air bases in the south. So the Communists sent Wang Chen a thousand miles with three thousand men to organize resistance in the wake of the Japanese and prevent their consolidating the Hankow-Canton railway.

Wang Chen drove on south, organizing the farmers' resistance, until he reached even the outskirts of Hong Kong. He was attacked by Japanese and Kuomintang troops in combination. Japan's surrender took place while Wang Chen was fighting in South China, but this only increased the energy with which the Japanese and Kuomintang together fought Wang Chen. Then Wang learned that Mao Tse-tung had signed in Chungking that "Double Tenth Agreement," pulling all Communist-led forces out of south China. So he turned around and fought his way back again, joining forces north of the Yangtze with General Li.

At its height the Central Plains Liberated Area, under Wang and Li, included both the northern plain of Honan and the southern plain of Hunan and spread eastward down the Yangtze—forty-five million population, all told, in parts of five provinces. But by April, 1946, when Rittenberg reached the area, it had shrunk to a small part of its original size. The territory south of the Yangtze had been evacuated be-

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cause of the Double Tenth Agreement, while the territory north of the river was cut up into many separate islands by attacks from Chiang's troops. The largest "island" lay east of the Peiping-Hankow railway, with capital and headquarters in the town of Hsuanhuatien. Here were concentrated the area's 90,000 troops. Other "islands" were defended only by local peasants' militia. Central Government troops pressed on all of them, in small skirmishes against villages.

The "Cease Fire" order of January 10 made not the slightest difference in the fighting here. So the newly organized Executive Headquarters in Peiping sent a special "Truce Team" to Loshan on the northern edge of the area, where a special agreement for the area was signed at the end of January. This provided that both sides cease fighting, that all fortifications be destroyed and that various districts remain with the side that had them on the date of the signing of the "Loshan Agreement."

The "People's Armies" together with the peasants celebrated the Loshan Agreement by festive processions with dances all along the borders of their districts. *"Peace is Precious"* read the banners. They brought baskets of fruit to present to the Kuomintang troops. The Kuomintang officers, however, kept their troops away from contact with the celebrating peasants. In some places the attacks did not stop even for a day.

The conditions for the Communists therefore rapidly grew worse. They had destroyed their blockhouses—this was later proved by Truce Team investigation—but Chiang's men kept their fortifications and built new ones, conscripting peasant labor and tearing down peasant buildings for materials. General Li, determined on peace, ordered his men not to fight even when attacked, but to retreat. They gave ground in one place after another, feeling very unhappy.

General Li even began the partial demobilization called for to prepare for Marshall's "Army Reorganization Plan." He sent fifteen thousand men home, giving them the formal passport of demobilization that was supposed to protect them. Many of them were killed by Kuomintang troops on their way; the disarmed men being merely beaten to death and left lying on the road.

Four of these demobilized men brought back the report.

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The first Kuomintang patrol they met on their way to their homes in Honan consisted only of soldiers without officers. These warned the demobilized men to go back, saying: "If you go further you will meet officers and be out of luck. We have orders to arrest you, passport or no passport." The four men returned to General Wang Chen and reported: "We tried to be demobilized but the Kuomintang won't let us and we wish to state that we consider it bureaucratic to order men demobilized when it can't be done."

The people of the area were much disturbed by the thought that the New Fourth Army might leave them. Their devotion to the army was shown in many ways. Once, when Rittenberg was walking with the secretary of the area government, a small boy trudged up. He looked ten but was really fourteen. He was burning with fever and gritting his teeth to keep going. He saluted and said: "*Paokao* (Report)." He reported that he had been working as a "boy" a few weeks earlier in a hospital when Kuomintang troops captured it. They killed some of the patients, arrested and tortured others. "But I was so small," said the boy, "that they just put me in jail." Here he nearly died of hunger until some citizens brought food for the prisoners. These kindly men helped the boy escape. He hid in the home of a rich farmer who had no sons but only daughters, and who offered to adopt the boy. "But as soon as I grew strong from food I came to report here."

"Why didn't you stay with a man who would feed you and look after you," asked the secretary.

The boy looked dazed from illness but replied that he "had to report." He added: "I couldn't stay in a Kuomintang area; I want to be with the New Fourth." They sent him to the hospital. A week later Rittenberg saw him, utterly happy, in a new uniform.

This love of the people for their New Fourth Army had been won by the army's consideration for the people. The area had been devastated by the Japanese and was hungry, a recipient of UNRRA relief. UNRRA asked the army to rebuild the roads that they had destroyed to interrupt the Japanese; these were needed to bring relief to the villages. But better roads would make it easier for the Kuomintang troops to attack. Nonetheless, General Li ordered his troops to repair the roads for the people's relief.

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To lessen the people's burden, the New Fourth Army cut down its own food. The troops went on a diet of two meals daily, each meal consisting of a single bowl of *hsifan,* a thin rice gruel. This system was introduced company by company, by voting, after full discussion. "If we defend the people we need strength to defend them," argued some. Others replied: "Spring ploughing is beginning and many farmers are so weak that they can hardly plough. We must not increase their burden even by one bowl of rice." All of the companies voted for the curtailed diet. To supplement it, they planted gardens and collected edible weeds. General Li Hsien-nien, the commander-in-chief, set the example; he had one of the biggest gardens and collections of edible weeds in the area.

THE SPIRIT of the area affected even some of the Kuomintang soldiers and officers. Rittenberg met a troop that had been captured by the peasants' militia while raiding grain. They were given some propaganda teaching and then allowed to go home. For the officers the teaching consisted in reading Mao Tse-tung's *On Coalition Government*. Some of them wept, saying: "If we had known what Mao stood for, we would never have fought this war." One captured colonel, with whom Rittenberg had dinner, stated that he did not want to go home but had asked permission of the Communist leaders to rest and study for a month, after which he wanted to work in the Liberated Areas, preferably on tasks of reconstruction.

THE TRUCE TEAM, meanwhile, in its Hankow office, got so many complaints from the people of this area about "Kuomintang attacks in violation of truce" that they decided to visit the district and travel from county to county. As they went from place to place the fighting stopped. They returned to Hankow and flew to Nanking to report success in establishing peace. They were met at the Nanking airport with the news that as soon as they had left, the government troops had attacked all along the line. The American member of the "Truce Team" threw up his hands, saying: "What is the use?" He was soon replaced.

Throughout April, the "nibbling attacks" continued. The Communists offered at this time to surrender the entire area,

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if their troops could be given safe passage north to one of the older and recognized Liberated Areas. This Chiang would not permit for he thought that he could wipe them out. It was understood that Chiang was preparing for an "extermination attack" but that the 200,000 men he had already in the area did not seem to him enough.

In the first week of May, dispatches from Chiang's Hankow Headquarters fell into the Communists' hands proving that an "annihilation offensive" was to be launched within ten days. The dispatches were revealed by Kuomintang officers, some for bribes and some because they opposed civil war. The news was a shock to the Communists. Chou En-lai, Communist representative in Nanking, demanded action from General Marshall who had just returned from America. Chou stated that such an attack would release nation-wide civil war. The revelation put on the spot the "Cease Fire" order to which Marshall was signatory. Something had to be done.

FOR A MOMENT Hsuanhuatien was a focus of history. Three top-notchers—General Henry C. Byroade, for the Americans, General Chou En-lai, for the Communists, and one of the Ministers of War, for the Central Government—converged on that little town. This "Big Team" flew by plane to Hankow. Then they plunged into the primitive roads by which one comes to rural China. They came to a swollen river. The jeeps had to be carried over on poles and the people had to wade. Chou En-lai removed his shoes, rolled up his trousers and waded over. General Byroade did the same. The Kuomintang general visibly struggled between desire to copy the American and a sense of what was due to a general's "face." Then he rode over on the backs of his soldiers.

The hall at Hsuanhuatien was packed that evening, with people hanging on outside the windows. General Byroade gave a peculiarly uninteresting account of the way in which a truce team was supposed to function. It was amazing that the means by which everyone hoped for salvation could be made to seem so dull. The central government's representative arose, a tall, thin bald-headed man with a face like a sheep. He talked as if telling a tale to children, making it simple for their infant minds. "The Communist armies are our brother armies. The government has no plans to attack this

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area," he assured them. "I have full authority to guarantee that there will never be such an attack."

Chou En-lai's words were often quoted in the days that followed: "Guests—and hosts—for I am here both guest and host. You have heard the personal guarantee of the government representative. What is there left for me to do but to urge you to remember that promise, so that in the future you may all recall how the deputy chief of staff from the Generalissimo's own headquarters has personally guaranteed you against attack." He sat down amid cheers, having turned a routine bit of insincerity into a solemn pledge that even the Americans recalled uncomfortably in days that followed.

The fuss that was made by the "Big Team" postponed the expected offensive by more than a month. Chiang himself flew to Hankow, to Sian, and other points on the area's periphery, during that week when the top-flight representatives spoke their pieces in Hsuanhuatien. He took with him all of his war chiefs. Judging by what happened he was rearranging that offensive, postponing and greatly enlarging it, in order to smash the area finally and quickly, without too much more publicity.

It came off at the end of June. Three hundred thousand Central Government troops drove in from three directions on the already shrunken area. As the Communists turned northwest to escape encirclement, two hundred thousand more of Chiang's men, many of them American-equipped, crashed in from that direction. By the mathematics of war the Communists were finished.

Yet a strange incident took place at the beginning of that offensive. One of Chiang's regiments, spearheading the attack, marched over and joined the Communists. This might have been understood if the odds had been equal. But to jump right into that deadly circle made one wonder. Was the circle so deadly after all? Or did Chiang's own men doubt his ultimate victory?

The Communist forces broke into many small columns. They seemed to evaporate into the countryside. The truce team lost sight of them. The enemy lost sight of them. Even their friends lost sight of them. Airplanes couldn't find them. For weeks nobody knew if they were alive or dead.

Then far to the northeast a column appeared in Anhui

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and joined the New Fourth forces there. A week or so later General Li's main column appeared far to the west on the edge of Szechwan and a new "Liberated Area" came to life. Two months later Wang Chen turned up in his old garrison town, Yenan, having swung far west and doubled back to the north. All the "People's Armies" in North China chuckled that "the boys have all got home."

The Generalissimo got the area which had been offered him without battle. He lost some face for he had set his aim on annihilating those Communist-led armies—and failed. But the real casualty in that conflict was the dream of peace by Marshall's negotiation. All over China people awoke to the knowledge that the Marshall mediation was not bringing peace.

Swiftly, from the Central Plains Area, Chiang's armies drove outward, attacking next South Shansi and North Kiangsu. The civil war widened until it became the greatest in world history, involving four million men in the regular armies, and millions of village militia.

Tentatively, at first, and then in firmer tones, the Chinese press, even in Kuomintang areas, began to analyze the Marshall tactic. "When the Kuomintang fares well, the Americans let the fighting proceed," commented the Shanghai newspaper, *Chou Pao*. "When the Kuomintang fails, the Americans begin to mediate. . . . When Hsuanhuatien was taken by Kuomintang troops, Marshall did not stop it. But when General Li broke the encirclement and approached Szechwan, a truce team rushed by plane to halt him. When Marshall returned from America he merely looked at the fighting in Manchuria which was at its height. He only became energetic when the 148th Kuomintang division revolted, stopping Chiang's advance towards Harbin."

Soon it became clear that the Marshall truce plan had produced far bigger, bloodier battles than the Hurley "war policy." Under Hurley's policy, Chiang had been able to mobilize only a million men against the Liberated Areas; under the "Marshall truce" he attacked with two million. In the Hurley days, Chiang had only twenty American-equipped divisions against the Japanese; now he had fifty-nine American-equipped divisions, a navy and an air-force against the Chinese Communists. In the Hurley period,

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Chiang had been able to attack only the fringes of the Liberated Areas, using chiefly Japanese and puppets; under the "Marshall truce" he penetrated deeply, using his best "very own" divisions, who had moved to attacking positions with American aid. Under the eyes of the "truce teams" who pulled out of cities just before Chiang's assaults, Chiang took one Communist capital after another—Hsuanhuatien, Hwaiyin, Changeth, Kalgan, Linyi, and Yenan.

Then all over China people began discussing the question of Marshall's "sincerity." It was the favorite dinner subject among correspondents and among educated Chinese. Marshall, people said, must have known what he was doing. He was not stupid, as Hurley was. Was his the clever way of putting over what had been American policy throughout?

The full potency of that "Cease Fire" order became clear to Yenan in August when it was announced that America gave Chiang two billion dollars' worth of war surplus supplies. "This is the success of Marshall," was said ironically and bitterly. The speaker meant that Marshall's truce talk had dazzled the American people, so that they stopped protesting military aid to Chiang.

When I asked Peng Teh-hwai, deputy commander-in-chief, what he thought of Marshall's sincerity, he shrugged his shoulders and replied: "I do not deal in psychology. I am a military man. As such I note that Marshall equipped Chiang's troops, trained them and transported them to the points whence they could most readily attack. He did it under the 'Cease Fire' order more effectively than he could have done it any other way."

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Chapter VII

KALGAN—THE "NEW CAPITALISM"

As the civil war expanded over a dozen provinces, making a mockery of the "Marshall truce," I raced against time to visit other Liberated Areas while the air transport to them endured. Kalgan, an hour's flight northwest of Peiping, was next on my list. It was spoken of as "the Communists' second capital." It was also the prime example of their "new capitalism" which encouraged free enterprise but not private monopoly capital.

Our Executive Headquarters' plane bumped to a stop in a cow pasture converted to air field. We were led to the porch of a new reception office and refreshed with free watermelons and tea. On our way into town in a captured Japanese auto we passed through markets bursting with produce—luscious grapes, apples, pears—at one-fourth the Peiping prices. Streets were full of the bustle of shoppers. Roads were torn up for repairs. Down a wide thoroughfare came a group of children dancing, doing a propaganda folk-dance to the joy of the populace. To come from Yenan to Kalgan was like coming from a valiant Dust Bowl to one of those "Queen Cities" of the American West.

Gentle mannered General Tsai, of the army's political department, met us at the Guest House of the army, a four-acre garden inset with small, new houses built not long since for the Japanese general staff. Our dining-room served a French-style lunch and a Chinese-style dinner, prepared by a Chinese chef who had learned cooking in France. Was there anyone we wished to meet, the general asked politely. Any villages, enterprises, institutions we wished to view? General Nieh and Governor Sung, the military and political chiefs of the area, would be coming to dinner to answer our questions. All was at our disposal, efficiently arranged.

People were easy to meet, ready to talk and informal. They reminded me of the early expanding days of the American West.

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"Tell Henry Wallace that this is the only place where free enterprise still has meaning," said dapper Finance Minister H. C. Nan. "Here capitalism is young, fighting its way out of feudalism. Here industry is not taxed and prices not controlled."

Nan, in his Kalgan office, could meet any Western business man on equal terms and talk his language. He wore a business suit of gray wool trousers and blue wool jacket, not like the shapeless clothes of Yenan. His first casual remark revealed a miracle.

"The government of this area ran on a balanced budget throughout the war with Japan. We shall have a deficit this year because we are running government for 30,000,000 people on taxes collected from 18,000,000. It is the penalty of sudden growth. Even so, we might have managed but for this constant civil warfare. The Kuomintang troops are nibbling around the edges of our area like worms at a mulberry leaf. This causes too much military expenditure." Mr. Nan's balanced soul was annoyed by war.

"How will you meet the deficit? By printing currency?"

"Oh, no," said Mr. Nan, "we don't believe in that. Our state bank has a surplus from the profits of past years. In the last months of the year when taxes run out we shall borrow from that. We shall repay when new taxes come in. The only trouble is that for a few months the bank will be short of funds to lend to private enterprise. That isn't very serious; the big loans to farmers are not needed until spring."

I stared at this placid financier who talked such incredible common sense and thought of the trillions of dollars they printed in Nanking and the billions they borrowed from America to finance a regime that has twenty times the resources of the Chin-Cha-Chi Area, of which Kalgan was capital. Then I asked Mr. Nan about taxes. Was it true that industry was not taxed?

"Eventually we intend to tax it," he smiled, "but at present we give exemptions for several years depending on how much we need the industry. Liquor and cigarettes have no exemption; we tax them now. Exemptions from two to five years are given to textiles, glass, farm implements, machine-building, iron and steel, electrical appliances and the making of such raw materials as alcohol, dyes, oil, carbon. Such industries get

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not only tax exemption but loans from our state bank at low interest, help with transport and relief in any unexpected calamity."

A dry little smile curved Mr. Nan's lips as he added: "Unexpected calamity—means insurance against Chiang's bombing. Help with transport—means the army transport will take the plant to a safer place in case of a Kuomintang invasion."

For the cool Mr. Nan the tremendous upheaval of battle was just one more thing to calculate!

GOVERNOR SUNG, a benevolent, professional man whose round face was punctured by black-rimmed spectacles, was equally explicit about the intent to develop a capitalist system. "We aim to remove the obstacles that feudalism places in the way of capitalism," he stated, "so that capitalism may thrive and grow. We don't intend to let this private capitalism run away with us; publicly owned and cooperative industry will be the leading forms. But there is plenty of room for private enterprise and profit and will be for a long time to come.

"What is the matter with your American business men? I quite understand that your warlords and monopoly capitalists prefer to deal with Chiang. They buy ownership of China's natural resources and pay for it by financing the civil war. But haven't you any free enterprise capitalists left who want to do honest business? Our Liberated Areas are their natural market. Farmers, owning their own land, produce surplus and are eager for goods."

"In what could you pay?" I asked.

"In wheat, furs, wool, national currency or local currency. The difficulty would be to get the profit past those thieving Kuomintang generals between us and the sea, or to sail it out of port past that navy that America gave to Chiang."

Then he told me the story of the Moslem livestock handlers who had driven $20,000 (gold) worth of cattle to the Peiping market the preceding March. Chiang's political police had thrown them into jail as "Communists" and seized the cattle. The Kalgan merchants' guild appealed to Chiang's governor in Peiping, and he gave a signed order for the cattlemen's release, for he wanted their trade to continue. The police, however, did not obey the order. They argued: "If we let them free, they'll demand their cattle again. They're sold and the

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money spent." So the unhappy cattlemen still sat in jail because if their innocence were once admitted, the police would be embarrassed by the need of returning their goods!

Trade still had aspects of the Middle Ages. Despite such unfortunate incidents, trade still went on. The president of the Kalgan Chamber of Commerce, a portly merchant in a long, silk gown, gave me some business facts over a bowl of fragrant jasmine tea. In the year of the democratic government, he stated, the city's industrial and commercial enterprises had grown from 1,980 to 3,130 in number, while market booths had increased from two thousand to thirteen thousand.

"The net profit of most enterprises in the past three months has been between twenty and thirty percent of their capital," he stated. "The land reform has stimulated the farmers' trade. Recent purchases of fruit, cakes, wines, meats and luxury foods for the Harvest Moon Festival totalled half a million gold dollars in Kalgan markets. This is a real boom!"

THE GOVERNOR and the merchant had spoken as such men might in any young, expanding capitalism, though it was a bit rare, in this stage of the world's life, to find a capitalism so ardent for which nobody apologized. But what of the labor unions? It was their strength, I found, that made this capitalism really "new."

All earlier capitalisms have suppressed trade unions, which fought their way slowly into life. But here they were as strong, or stronger, than the capitalists. There were 410,000 organized workers in Chin-Cha-Chi, the five-province area of which Kalgan was capital.*

In the big sprawling building that served as labor temple I met three of the leaders. Meet H. C. Ma, pale, intellectual, in a black cotton suit with a fountain pen stuck in his pocket; he is chairman of the Chin-Cha-Chi Federation of Labor. Meet grizzled middle-aged Hsiao Ming, in blue cotton, chairman of Kalgan City Labor Council. Meet Hsu Ping, spruce-looking in khaki wool, president of those aristocrats, the Railway Workers, the oldest union in North China, which supplied most of the organizers for the others.

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* This area was combined in the summer of 1948 with the Four Provinces Area south of it into the North China Liberated Area.

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The Railway Workers Union of the Peiping-Suiyuan Railway dates from 1921; it was born in a great, successful strike. It has existed ever since, sometimes legally, but more often illegally. It was forced underground by Chiang's rule and later by the rule of Japan. Twenty-four years of struggle, most of it underground!

"Was there any difference in the treatment you got from Chiang's Kuomintang and the treatment from the Japanese?" I asked.

"Difference? What difference? We were suppressed by the same people all the time. When the Japanese took Kalgan, in 1937, the Kuomintang secret police embraced them and continued as their agents, oppressing the people as before but with the better weapons of the Japanese."

Trade unions sprang into life again as soon as the Communist-led armies liberated the area. "Even if there had never been a union in that particular factory," they told me, "there would be some old workers who had once been union members. They would start a union." These unions appeared first by factories, then affiliated into local federations, and then began to combine into central unions according to industry. The latter process was not completed, due to difficulties of communication raised by the civil war.

Benefits began even before the unions were fully organized. "Our new government doubled all wages by decree the first month and raised them again thirty percent in the second month," they said. "This was necessary because the workers were actually starving and something had to be done at once. By the third month of liberation the trade unions were operating and had made their investigation of rational and irrational wage scales. We decided to base wages on the cost of millet, adjusted every month." Wages ranged from 300 pounds of millet per month for unskilled workers to 900 for managers, reckoned in millet but paid in cash.

"Under the Japanese even skilled workers went hungry. We got neither wheat nor rice nor millet to eat but only rice husks and *kaoliang* which is cattle-food. But now even an unskilled worker gets enough to feed and clothe a wife and child."

I figured a bit. Ten pounds of grain per day for an unskilled worker. It wouldn't seem much in America. How would it seem in Shanghai where workers were rioting for

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food? Reckoned in food, it was the highest wage I had found in China.

Clothing, they said, was bought at low prices through workers' cooperatives, helped by credits from government or industry. Housing needs were met by repairing broken buildings or by taking over buildings vacated by the Japanese. Every trade union maintained schools for its members.

"But the biggest change," said H. C. Ma, "is the raising of the workers' status. This includes the right to organize, to take part in collective bargaining, to take part in production plans for industry, to take part in government. In the Kalgan municipal council, twenty-eight of the ninety-one members are trade-unionists."

This, they said, was what the trade unions had accomplished, in the first year of Kalgan's "new capitalism." They weren't in the least afraid that this new capitalism would run away from them, or develop beyond their power to control it. They felt their hands on the wheel.

I WENT to check their claims in some of the factories. There were thirty-five factories in Kalgan and the nearby city Hsuanhua. Most of them were small. Nearly all of them were expanding from the increased farmer trade.

The "Desert Soap Factory" was a small enterprise on the edge of town, employing thirty-six workers. It belonged to the "Prosperous China Syndicate," a corporation organized on government initiative, with mixed public and private capital, to make needed consumer goods. The factory produced three kinds of soap: laundry, toilet and carbolic. It was excellent soap, hard-milled.

I met the manager and three members of the shop committee in the main office. Everyone was friendly and informal. They were all about equally well dressed. The manager, in patched blue overalls, was a chemist brought from Peiping for his technical knowledge. He answered my questions about the business and then left me with the workers.

Wages, they said, ranged from 242 pounds of millet per month for apprentices to 880 for the manager. Most of the workers were skilled and got 500 pounds per month. This would feed a family and leave something for clothes. What had wages been under the Japanese? Well, how could you

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reckon them with prices always rising? Possibly sixty pounds of millet for a skilled man. Anyway, it was never enough to eat. Housing? Under the Japanese we had no homes. We slept out of doors in summer and in the boiler room in winter. Now we have repaired several buildings for housing. Every family has a room.

The most important benefit, they all insisted, was that "formerly you had to keep your mouth shut but now you can speak freely and not be afraid. No matter what the trouble is —wages, clothing, housing—you can discuss it and change it."

Wage disputes were infrequent since wages were several times as high as a year ago. "Some workers wanted still more, but the shop committee examined the manager's books and found that if we took more wages it would bankrupt the business. We explained this to a general meeting of workers and everybody agreed."

"What problems do you have to discuss with the boss?" I asked. To my surprise they said that the most recent discussion was about clothing. Everyone had needed new clothing and it was cheaper to buy wholesale, but the workers' cooperative did not have enough capital for this. So they asked the manager to use the factory's credit for the workers' cooperative. This was agreed; the loan was repaid in three months. Similarly they bought food staples in large quantities after harvest when food was cheapest, arranging to use factory credit under the workers' cooperative control.

This factory was too small to have a paid shop committee man. The shop committee of five all worked in production. They had been elected by secret ballot. "The workers wrote their choice on paper slips. There was a 'Fair Election Committee' to help those who could not write. But most of our workers now write well enough to copy candidates names from the blackboard." The shop committee divided its own work: one man for chairman, one for organizer, one for grievances, two for education. "Every worker attends some educational class," they said.

They showed me two large, well lit classrooms, used for study in the morning and recreation in the evening. Classes met at seven in the morning for an hour before work. They were in two groups, the more advanced having a paid teacher sent by the Kalgan City Labor Council while the less

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advanced were taught by workers of the plant. A small group of the best educated met with the manager for a course on current events; they gave the news to their fellow workers through conversation.

The factory made good profits in spite of the blockade. It made the profits from the explosion of productive energy and the widening of the farmers' market that came with the smashing of feudalism in the land reform.

IN THE MIDST of these easy visits a bombshell broke. A small town named Chining, a hundred miles to the west was taken by Fu Tso-yi's troops, provincials under Chiang. General Tsai told me with surprising frankness: "We fought badly in the west. We lost Chining. This has encouraged Chiang to launch his all-out offensive on Kalgan. You must return by plane for we have begun to disperse."

Then began that peculiar form of defense known as "dispersal," the protection of the institutions of a people who have no anti-aircraft against the modern airplanes of the enemy. Trucks and carts filled with people, provisions, baggage, equipment, began moving steadily out of the city. The North China University had gone a month earlier; its autumn term opened many days' journey away in the hills. The hospitals now moved and four of the UNRRA workers went with them, to the cheers of the Chinese populace.

It was all in such quiet order as if part of the routine of business. I had ordered some letterheads from a print-shop. "We can make them if necessary," said the manager, "but our best fonts of English type are packed for moving." I had ordered a fur-lined coat at one-third the Peiping prices. General Tsai came to tell me: "We are evacuating the tailors. If your plane fails and we take you overland we will bring back a tailor for you. Otherwise you should get your coat in Peiping."

At the publishing house they were packing up their books. They said: "Take as many as you like." So I took two hundred books and sent them later—the only extant collection of Liberated Areas literature—to the Hoover War Memorial Library at Stanford University.

At the Guest House I saw them roll up the beautiful blue rugs and pack them on trucks with the sacks of provisions.

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Many writers left with that party. As the truck pulled out they smiled and waved goodbye, then burst into an Eighth Route Army song. They left behind the manager, the best interpreter, one house boy and that excellent French chef. General Tsai told them: "When you have seen our foreign guests to the last plane, come to me at once for your transportation."

In the midst of that dispersal the trade unions gave us a farewell party. It began with a banquet at the Railway Workers' Club, with many toasts to our hopes of meeting again. Then there was a program of dances, short plays and juggling by enthusiastic amateurs in the big trade union hall—that was to be bombed out of existence in a week. Chairman H. C. Ma proposed that the presence of two correspondents from America and France should be used to send a message to the world's trade unions and especially to the C.I.O. of the United States. Everyone cheered the idea. They had several times sent cables to the C.I.O. but had never had an answer.

"Perhaps Chiang interfered with our cables or perhaps our brother workers in America do not even believe that we exist."

So they drew up their message by committee during the last numbers of the program. "We, organized workers meeting in bomb-threatened Kalgan, greet you in behalf of 410,000 organized workers of Chin-Cha-Chi, on behalf of the 31,000,000 people of this area and on behalf of 1,500,000 organized workers in the Liberated Areas of North China and Manchuria." They listed their gains through organization: stable wages, the eight-hour day, and—most important of all—the right to speak freely and bargain collectively for the means of life.

"All of these gains are menaced by the bombs, planes and guns that you American workers produce," they stated. . . . "If you American workers allow this joint conspiracy of Chinese warlords and American imperialists against us, then be assured that you yourselves will not escape. For the war that America is sending us threatens the whole world." They ended with an appeal for world peace and democracy.

It was cheered. Then the meeting broke up swiftly. Many carts and trucks waited outside. Many were leaving that night and would travel till day-break. They had waited to say goodbye.

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On the long dusty road to the airport next morning, we passed more than a hundred carts loaded with great rolls of newsprint. They were taking "half of the Chin-Cha-Chi daily paper" to the hills. A reduced edition still appeared in Kalgan. "But when they bomb us out here, our paper will appear without interruption from its new base."

The guards removed the obstacles they had placed on the airfield and admitted the lone American plane. General Tsai took my hand warmly in farewell.

"Our lively, prosperous Kalgan lives now in your memory. Our dispersal is nearly completed. Kalgan will be a battleground."

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Chapter VIII

HOW GOVERNMENT GOES UNDERGROUND

What happens when a government "disperses"? By what technique does it go underground among its people, protected by their loyalty?

As civil war closed around Kalgan, Sidney Rittenberg, who had come to Kalgan for the China Welfare Fund, traveled at my request across country from Kalgan to Yenan to see what effect the loss of Kalgan had on life in the rural districts of which Kalgan had been the capital. He traveled on foot for thirty days. He went without money and he needed none. He was armed with a letter from the Kalgan authorities stating that he was a friend of the Chinese people enroute to Yenan and asking all county governments to help him on his way.

That paper was honored everywhere. It bought things that no money could buy. Food, lodging, guides, transport animals, shoes when his own wore out, local currency when needed, even American canned goods that were booty of war, were given on that paper from Kalgan. . . . Yet Kalgan had fallen to the enemy; for the world outside its government had ceased to exist. But to the thirty million people of the Chin-Cha-Chi Liberated Area and the two sister areas beyond, that paper was as good as ever. It did not even occur to them to think that their government had "fallen." It had merely moved from Kalgan back to the hills. Kalgan money, not Chiang's money, still circulated in towns and villages. County governments carried on their business, village militias patrolled the approach to villages in the name of the Liberated Area government of Chin-Cha-Chi. The government that had moved from Kalgan was not even a "government-in-exile" for it had moved not abroad but into the homes of its farmers.

South of Kalgan lay yet another great Liberated Area, holding parts of four provinces in the great bend of the Yellow River. Here the government of another thirty million people had some time ago moved to the hills. So when Kalgan fell, and Rittenberg traveled cross-country, I flew to the Four

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Province Area to see what this hidden government was like.

Hantan, a city of fifty thousand on the long since inoperative Peiping-Hankow Railway, had been this area's capital in the year after the surrender of Japan. Then General Liu Po-cheng, observing how Chiang was attacking the Liberated Area capitals, decided not to await attack in Hantan but to move the capital beforehand to a hideout in the country. There was still an Executive Headquarters' "Truce Team" in Hantan with which the Area government kept in contact. It was here that I had to seek connection with the vanished government. I sent word that I was coming, flew to Hantan and trusted luck.

Half a dozen trucks and jeeps met the plane at its arrival. Colonel Alexander, the tall American chairman of the "Truce Team," had come for his weekly mail. A tiny Chinese woman in a black dress proved to be Dr. Chu, of the Health Department, who had come for Red Cross supplies. Her eyes appraised me and I wondered if she had also come for me. As I waited, uncertain whether or not to accept the colonel's invitation to stay with the "Truce Team," an unobtrusive man at my elbow said quietly: "Perhaps you had better stay with us."

"And who are you?" I asked, surprised at the way he had materialized from nowhere.

"The Communists," he replied.

I turned to his very ancient auto and took my seat on its dusty cushions, tossing to Colonel Alexander the remark that I might drop in for dinner that evening. I was wrong. I dropped out of sight right there and didn't reappear for a week!

"What are all these people coming to see the airplane for?" I asked my new companion as we drove through a crowd of a thousand people who pressed around the edges of the field.

"They have seen few planes except those that come to bomb them. This Executive Headquarters plane is their last touch with the hope of peace."

The words made me look at him attentively. Li Ti-hua was his name. He said that he worked in the department of public relations and had come to take me to "headquarters" if I wished to go. He took me to a hotel room where Dr. Chu joined us; she had collected her Red Cross supplies. After

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lunch with the Hantan mayor we were joined by two other government officials and our party of half a dozen started north.

Hantan was the center of a cotton-growing region; the Japanese had made it their collection point for cotton from South Hopeh and North Honan. They forbade home spinning in order to control the crop. Dr. Chu told me, in her quiet, methodical manner, how a peasant had been tied to a tree and tortured to death in sight of the village for buying a pound of cotton for his wife to spin. The people resisted the Japanese by growing grain instead of cotton. In the end the Japanese grew so desperate for cotton that they looted the cotton padding from people's clothes.

The road out of Hantan seemed made of boulders, set in bottomless dust. We jolted along and dust collected in drifts all over us. When we reached Wu An county town I was caked with dust, inside and out. They brought us hot water and towels and we dug our hands and faces out of the dust with them. We spent the night in some offices of the county building. They set up plank beds in the rooms. Dr. Chu found for me an ancient cot with woven wire springs, a bit sagging. It was probably the only "Western style" bed in the county. We took it with us next day to make a "Western style bedroom" at headquarters in the hills.

Late on the second evening we came—just where or how must be unrecorded—to a village of several hundred stone houses built of the native rock. They crowded one on the other, following contours of the rocky land. They took me into a room in this stony rabbit-warren. Its polished tables and well-built *kang*—brick platform-bed—showed that it belonged to a well-to-do family. We set up the cot and our Western-style guest-room was complete.

The house had been "borrowed" from a big landlord—he was not at home but his daughter-in-law was—and was used as hostel. When I opened my door next morning I saw a dozen young people in the court eating big bowls of yellow millet flavored with a pickled vegetable. They stared at me with interest but scattered like shy deer when I got out my camera. Returning, they told me: "We are the book store. We are passing through to the publishing center, in a village seven miles from here."

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Often as many as thirty people spent the night in our hostel. One night a party with laden donkeys brought a group of women I had known in Yenan. They had come a month on foot, holding conferences. They planned to meet the leaders of the Four Provinces and then go on to Shantung and Manchuria. I envied their physical endurance for I was tired by my relatively short trip.

For two days Colonel Li—for I found that Li Ti-hua was a colonel—arranged interviews in my room. I thus met the chief of the militia, of the trade unions and the peasants' union. On the third day I recovered enough to want to see the physical set-up of the army command and government that had moved to this primitive place.

"Three types of organization are needed to carry on the collective life of a large area," explained General Po I-po, a large, efficient-looking man who was commissar of the army. These are the civil government, the army headquarters and the voluntary associations, such as trade unions, peasants' union, women's and youth associations, the cooperatives, the Communist Party. Some six hundred people comprise the necessary top leadership of all these organizations. They all live in villages not more than two miles away.

"Army Headquarters is in this village; two miles away is the civil government; in another village two miles off are the chiefs of the voluntary associations. Still other villages house the newspaper, the book department, the radio, all the institutions that we need for effective work. When any general problem comes up, such as land reform or the defense of the area, we hold a meeting of all top-flight leaders of army, government and voluntary associations. Each system assumes its share of the work and carries it out all over the area. All our forces of army, government and voluntary associations can be brought into play at once from here."

That was the set-up whose details I began to observe.

A FEW doors down my street was army headquarters. Even after visiting it twice I could hardly find it again without a guide. The cobblestoned streets, the walls, the entrances all looked alike. Inside one entrance a sentry stood but you didn't see him till you passed the outer door. There he stopped you; he had a bayoneted rifle. Passing him, you came to a court

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from which many rooms opened. You entered one of these rooms.

Six men in rather dusty uniforms sat around the long table in the twelve-by-twenty-foot room that I entered. Maps covered the wall behind them from floor to ceiling. In the four corners stood four small desks, at each of which sat a secretary.

"This," said Commissioner Po I-po, "is our General Staff."

"Here is our chief of staff." He introduced the man at the head of the table. "Here is our secretary general." I recognized General Tao who had traveled with us from Hantan. "Here is the chief of G1, G2, G4. I am the Commissar. The head of G3 is absent on business. Otherwise we are all here except our commander-in-chief, General Liu Po-cheng, who has gone to one of the fronts.

"He can reach us at any time by phone," continued Po I-po, pointing to a telephone on one of the desks. It was the only modern instrument in the room. "That phone connects with ten thousand miles of line and one thousand phones," he stated. "We connect with all our fronts, with our rear services, with all important cities and with the government departments. We captured the equipment bit by bit from the Japs. Now we are capturing American telephone equipment. It is better than that of the Japs. You can use on it either voice or Morse."

They showed me captured American weapons, a Remington-Rand pistol, an Underwood carbine. "These are samples brought for study," they said. "Most of the captured weapons stay at the front for use. We have also captured heavy artillery, tanks and bazookas."

Pointing to the maps on the wall, they said: "They are detail maps of the Area. We took them from the Japs. The Japs made very good maps. We have mounted them on sheets of cotton so that they can be quickly taken down and re-hung."

At a word of command an orderly brought in sample cases from the secret archives. Everything was neatly filed in tin boxes or in leather knapsacks. "Everything in our headquarters can be taken down and packed in half an hour," said Po I-po. "It can all be transported on two mules and the backs of a few men. It can be set up in one hour in any place to which we go.

"We have about two hundred men at headquarters, not

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counting sentries and orderlies. We include here our Operations, Intelligence, Departments of Discipline and Education, military administration and personnel and signal corps. We do not include here our rear services, *i.e.,* supplies, transport, medical department, weapons and ammunition. These departments need not even be in the same county. They are placed according to convenience and we reach them by messengers, telephone or radio."

The daily program of work of the general staff was as follows: They rose at six and gave the first two hours to individual study. "I personally," said Po I-po, "am studying Chairman Mao's recent instructions on land reform and also the reports that come from our villages. For theoretical study I am giving some time to Lenin's *Two Tactics*. Each of us has his individual program. At eight we all breakfast together on rice and two vegetables. Then we assemble here for three hours' joint work. After that the heads of departments—of G1, G2, and so on—go to their own offices and direct the work of their subordinates. At four we have our second and last meal, which is wheat bread, two vegetables and tea. At five we take an hour's recreation. Evenings are for miscellaneous work.

"The city of Hantan was a convenient place to work in. It had better housing and electric light. But there are advantages also in working in a village. There are fewer distractions. In a city one becomes inclined to bureaucracy. Here everything is quiet and we concentrate on our work."

By a rough stone path that wound through rolling country I came to the village that housed the departments of civil government. On the way I passed donkeys carrying cotton to market, shoes for the army, bundles of newspapers going to distribution centers. The "government village" was under the brow of a hill.

The atmosphere was gentler, more civilian, less snappy than at army headquarters. A mild-mannered woman named Sun Wen-hsu proved to be secretary general of the government. She had an office in a stone-flagged room some ten-by-twenty feet in size, with paper windows giving light. She had, she said, thirteen offices for various parts of her work. Ten percent of the civil service employees, she said, were women.

The Four Provinces Area, explained Miss Sun, had grown

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from the anti-Japanese base set up in 1937, in southwest Shansi, by General Liu Po-cheng under orders of Chu Teh. It had spread until it now included 193 counties. Some of these had had elected governments for several years, while others were liberated in the final overthrow of the Japanese. General elections to the People's Congress of the Area were held every two years, in March. The Congress contained 750 members, and had chosen a standing committee of forty-four with a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary general.

Chairman Jung Wu-shung, to whom Miss Sun introduced me, had won his reputation as a leader in the "Dare To Die" local guerrillas; this was not a Communist armed force at first but joined them later. Jung had been elected deputy from his county where he was so popular that, with fifteen candidates and four to be chosen, he polled 142,000 of a possible 150,000 votes. Governor Jung told me that the government had been able to balance its budget from 1942 to 1944 on a taxation rate of ten to thirteen percent of the farmers' crops.

"This year we shall have a deficit," he admitted, "because we drew up the budget in January when we did not expect the civil war. Besides, we are administering a larger area than we took taxes from. Ours is a strong, self-sufficient area. We can feed ourselves and have surplus. We can clothe ourselves and have surplus. We have grain, cotton, fruit, nuts, pepper, tobacco. We also have coal and iron. We have everything we need but peace!"

They had expected peace during the first half of 1946, until Chiang launched his all-out assault on the Central Plains and also attacked Kalgan. "But now we know that we shall have to defend ourselves indefinitely, for five, ten, fifteen, perhaps twenty years. We have therefore fixed our army at a size that we can maintain indefinitely." Governor Jung explained that they had fixed on three to four hundred thousand as the size of the army that could defend the basic farming of the area "not perfectly but adequately, and eventually take back lost cities," and that was not too much for the people to support year after year. The enlistment campaign therefore took place in only a few counties "because the war may be long and we do not wish to bother the same counties again soon."

This was the only government I ever saw that budgeted its army in wartime to a size that could be indefinitely kept up!

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TWO HUNDRED top chiefs of government lived in this village in rooms assigned by the village authorities among farmers' homes. With sleeping quarters and offices they occupied one hundred and fifty rooms. "We crowd the villagers somewhat," admitted Miss Sun, "but they consider it an advantage to have the government here because we bring in many educated people, such as doctors, nurses, social workers and this improves the schools and hospitals here."

I went sight-seeing with Miss Sun to see the offices of various departments. The finance chief had a ten-by-twenty-foot office with files neatly clipped to tapes running along the walls. The chief of archives had a dirt floor but a high ceiling, giving large storage space. He had a mimeograph in a corner, probably the first the village had ever seen. His records were in easily transportable tin boxes.

The government's mailing bureau was a room with dirt floors and walls, with two large wooden tables near the door for sorting mail and a plank bed at the rear of the room for the postal clerk. Along both side walls were hung sheets of heavy cotton to which were stitched pockets marked with names: "People's Council," "Public Security," "Department of Agriculture," "Railways and Highways," "Hantan Municipality." Piles of books on the floor were waiting to be wrapped.

"The pockets on one wall are for outgoing mail and on the other for incoming mail," explained Miss Sun. "Our post-office can be rolled up and put on donkey-back in half an hour."

We passed the village cooperative, an unpretentious room to which farmers were bringing cotton and buying salt, kerosene, paper and cigarettes. The manager told me that there were two hundred members in this village and that I would find similar cooperatives in all the villages of the Four Provinces Area.

FOUR O'CLOCK dinner awaited us in Miss Sun's office with Governor Jung and a dozen department chiefs. They were highly educated people; almost every one had a university degree. Chia Chien, the judge, had graduated in law from Chaoyang University, in Peiping. Fan Jung-yi, chief of reconstruction, was a graduate in economics from Tokyo University. Yuan Chi-ho, chief of civil affairs, graduated in engineering

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from Shansi University. Others came from other institutions of higher learning in China or abroad.

These highly educated people lived and worked in high spirits on a standard of living of a not very prosperous peasant. When I asked what their salaries were they laughed and replied that until recently they had received "thirty *gitsao*"—the local currency—as a monthly cash salary besides rations, but they had recently decided to give it up "to help save the budget in the new emergency of our self-defense war."

"And to save our time in drawing it," laughed one, "because thirty *gitsao* will now buy just one box of matches."

The rations, which were the real salary, consisted of two daily meals of rice or wheat with soup and two vegetables. They got also two suits of summer clothes annually—the area is a warm one—and "one-third of a winter suit each year."

"Do you want to know what one-third of a suit is," laughed the judge of the Supreme Court, taking off his coat to show it to me. "See those patches inside. Those are this year's goods. One-third of the padding is also new." Everyone guffawed at this.

They offered to show me the government treasury. We went through a yard in which a peasant woman was cooking her husband's meal and came to a small, unguarded room where stood a wooden chest the size of a steamer trunk. "That contains the government treasury," they laughed.

"Your gold reserve?" I asked.

"Oh, no! The gold, silver and valuables on which the people's currency is based are much more serious. They are well secured in another village with the state bank that makes the loans to peasants. This box is just the cash on which we run the government for thirty million people!"

I joined in the laughter and then told them of an American friend who argued that you cannot blame Kuomintang officials for grafting. "They have to, he says, because their salaries are so small. What do you think of that argument?"

I got a different answer from the obvious one I expected. Everyone grinned and Chairman Jung replied: "That's not the reason why they graft. Kuomintang officials have to graft because if one of them should work hard and refuse to steal the people's money, Chiang Kai-shek would arrest him as a Communist!" Everybody laughed some more at that.

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WAS IT really possible that this group of merry people, living so informally and so isolated under such primitive conditions, had government power in their hands in an area of fifty-five thousand square miles with thirty million people? I thought of the imposing buildings and well staffed offices commonly connected with government and wondered whether real power could be so informally expressed.

As I went among these villages, I saw that there was little to distinguish them, either from the earth or from the air, from thousands of others. If the air reconnaissance of the enemy swooped low, what could be seen? There were no troops; there were only the few village guards. There was no transport except the usual peasant carts and laden donkeys, an occasional messenger on bicycle who could hide at first sight of a plane, and—once in a long while—an ancient truck.

If a stranger, however, approached any one of these villages by any of the dozen paths, he would find a small boy playing by the road or sitting on a rock. The boy would spring to attention and demand: "Your road pass, please." If the stranger had no pass, he would be stopped.

"How would you stop us?" I asked one small village sentry—he could not have been over eleven years old—who demanded passes from three men accompanying me. "We are four grown people. If we walk right past you, there's nothing you could do."

"There is, too," declared the boy.

"What could you do?" I asked.

"I could yell, couldn't I? Then the militia would come running!"

The village militia was equipped to handle any ordinary intruder. And if by remote chance, a strong force of enemy troops should break through the regular army defending the frontier, or if enemy planes should learn of the government's location and come to bomb, then the entire government and army general staff, with the chiefs of all the voluntary associations of the Area, could be on the move in a couple of hours to some other cluster of villages where they could operate equally well.

They could move thus, anywhere in the Area, recognized and protected by the people.

On my way back to Hantan, I stopped for a day in Wu An

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county town. The Congress of Labor Heroes was gathering; delegates were chosen by their villages for some outstanding achievement in production. They were planning the all-round development of their county. As I listened to their discussions, I realized that the hidden government I had met in the hills was the government that these local leaders recognized. It also became clear that this hidden government could operate with its small, skeleton staff because so much of government business was carried on by county governments and by voluntary associations of the people. The business of the Area government was to correlate rather than dictate details. It operated on that old American maxim that came from an era when America also had a decentralized farm economy: "That government is best that governs least."

AT THE END of the afternoon, I attended the review of militiamen in the grove outside the county town. Wu An County had ten thousand militiamen, of whom four thousand came that first day. They had no full uniforms but all were distinguished by some insignia chosen by their village: some wore green puttees, some tan ones, some had special belts or caps. All had rifles and many of these were decorated for the occasion with bright paper rosettes.

They went through simple maneuvers with snap and vigor. They sat cross-legged on the ground and listened to many short speeches. Dozens of the militiamen themselves asked for the floor and got it. They spoke well.

My presence seemed to interest them especially. When the county authorities invited me into the reviewing stand, the crowd gave a friendly cheer for the "long friendship of the American and Chinese people," and then at once someone asked me to "take the ships out of Tsingtao." They discussed at some length the proper authorities to be approached to get that American navy out. One man from the audience asked if the "correspondent from America" had any way of getting a letter to the United Nations, then meeting in New York. To my shame I admit that I had forgotten that the Assembly of the United Nations was meeting, but these militiamen of the Four Provinces knew. I replied that I was flying to Peiping in the morning and could send an airmail letter from

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there. Everyone cheered that idea. So they drew up their resolution, a hot one and effectively expressed.

"To the United Nations from the 330,000 people of Wu An County in the Liberated Areas of China," they began. "We express our respect to all countries that work for the peace of the world." Then they mentioned their "eight long years of resistance" to the aggression of Japan, followed by the present traitorous attack by Chiang Kai-shek "with American assistance." They asked for "effective stoppage of American military intervention in China," demanded that the United States "fulfill its duty as a member of the United Nations," and that the United Nations set up a committee "for justly dealing with the United States for all of its illegal acts in China."

It was passed with uplifted fists and most of those fists held rifles with bayonets in the air. They were a tough lot of independent citizens, those militiamen. They had written that resolution through their own committee, unprompted and unhelped by any outsiders. It was clear that they had a keen sense of government, not only of a county and an area but of the world. There were a million such militiamen in the Four Province Area defending that hidden government in the hills.

It was nearly dark when the review ended. The sun had left the grove and the level wheat fields, while the distant hills were purple against gold. It would be late before we could reach Hantan as we must that night. They asked me, however, to wait in the reviewing stand and let the militiamen leave first. I understood when I reached the road. Four thousand armed men stood there at attention in two long lines that stretched far down toward Hantan in the dusk. I said goodbye to the county officials, took my seat by the driver and drove jolting along the dusty road between a guard of honor with rifles and bayonets.

At our late supper, Colonel Alexander was too discreet to ask directly just where I had gone. He tried to approach it by many courteous questions about what I had seen and how far I had traveled on my trip. It was no sceret to anyone that I had been to Wu An county town. But beyond Wu An I knew from his questions that he was guessing the wrong road.

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Chapter IX

MANCHURIAN EMPIRE

The Communists acquired an empire in Manchuria. One of the world's greatest food producing regions, with railroads, cities and vast natural riches, fell into their hands with the defeat of Japan. They got it because they knew how to arouse the initiative and organize the support of the Manchurians. Chiang Kai-shek didn't.

Chiang Kai-shek might have had Manchuria. The Russians drove out the Japanese for him, installed his appointees in all the Manchurian cities and protected them there for months to give them a chance to organize a government. The Americans brought in eight armies for him which should be enough to police your own land. At first the Manchurians wanted Chiang. After the long Japanese oppression, they yearned romantically for union with Nanking.

"In fourteen years of slavery to the Japs, we forgot how that ——— ——— Chiang sold us out when the Japs attacked in 1931," said a woman of Tsitsihar in rough farmer language. "We only knew that we were all Chinese together beating the Japs. We longed for the Central Government to come. Then they sent men to boss our cities and they made a common cause with the Jap puppets, and they stole more cattle than the Japs. And now, if I could get my hands on that ——— ——— Chiang, I'd bite his throat in two with my own teeth."

Chiang would not be safe with those Manchurians who once had longed for him to come.

CHIANG—with the aid of U.S. Marines—still held a southeast segment of Manchuria at the time of my visit, the ports, the coastal railway as far as Changchun. The capital of the Communists' Manchurian empire was at Harbin, an hour's flight further north. There was a weekly plane from Changchun to Harbin which flew to supply a Truce Team and an American military mission there.

Harbin was a shopping paradise for American officers. They

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flew up from Changchun to buy their liquor. They came in the morning and returned in the afternoon, an hour's flight over a war-torn region through which Chinese civilians plodded dangerously a month on foot. On the day I flew in, several officers made the round trip and brought back scores of bottles of pre-war wines and vodka costing, they bragged, only forty cents a bottle. One colonel got enough mink skins to make a coat for his wife.

Harbin was glutted with food at bargain prices. Good creamery butter cost twenty-five cents a pound in the busy market. Great carcasses of meat, firm and fresh in the cold weather, were offered at eight cents a pound. Big fresh eggs were twenty-one cents a dozen.

The hospitality of the Guest House of the "Democratic Joint Army Headquarters"—the Communist-led troops of General Lin Piao—was a thing to write home about. They gave you letterhead stationery of good quality on which to write it, too. For the first time since reaching China I saw pale yellow curls of good butter heaped high, large hams cut into thick pink slices, white slabs of chicken browned in butter and washed down with good local wine.

The stock joke about Harbin among the Americans was the tale of the army pilot who asked the Chinese guard at the airport: "Are you going to shoot down my plane?"

"No! No! I am here to guard it," cried the horrified Chinese.

"Too bad," replied the American. "If you shot down my plane, I might get a week in Harbin!"

Harbin was no paradise for its inhabitants. Nobody starved but Manchurian farmers froze naked among mountains of grain and beans. It took a ton of grain to buy six yards of cotton goods. It took ten tons of soy beans to buy one forty-yard bolt. Manchuria, food producer for the world, could not get its crops to market. Manchuria was blockaded on three sides by the Russian-closed frontier, on the fourth by Chiang's battle-front.

That was my first surprise in Manchuria—to learn that the Russian frontier was closed. Not only no arms came over, but not even peaceful trade. "You can't even smuggle across it," said Harbin merchants. "It is tighter than Chiang's battle-front."

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How did the Communists get to Manchuria? How did they take possession and organize government there? I inquired among the leaders I met.

There were already Communists among the city workers when the Japanese invaded in 1931. These went into the rural districts and organized "Manchurian Volunteers." All through those years when Americans supplied scrap iron to Japan and recognized her right to Manchukuo, when Chiang Kai-shek accepted the Japanese as sovereign in Manchuria, ordering the Manchurians not to resist—all through those years small Communist-led bands of Manchurians fought the Japanese. Most of the resistance leaders were killed in those years of warfare, but those who survived rule Manchuria today.

Governor Feng Chang-yung, of Sungkiang Province, in which Harbin is located, gave me harsh details of his fighting days.

"You fought in snow and slept in snow," he said. "The snow would be over your knees and you would stamp it down, build a fire and sleep. And this went on night after winter night, and year after year. You ate grass. I myself know fifty kinds of wild grass that you can eat."

"But hasn't Manchuria grain?" I asked in surprise.

"Manchuria had Japs," was the grim reply. "Our movement was a big flame in 1935; we were fifty or sixty thousand armed volunteers. So the Japs burned the peasants out of their villages, to destroy our economic base. Then the peasants lived in dugouts and still fed us and our volunteers still flourished. Then the Japs gathered the peasants into big villages, surrounded by barbed wire and guarded like concentration camps. Still our bands hid in the woods and the peasants left food in the fields for us to find. But the Japs controlled the crops through the landlords; any peasant suspected of feeding an outlaw was shot. In the end our bands could survive only in small numbers."

When the Russian Red Army drove out the Japanese in a lightning drive, in August, 1945, the Manchurian Volunteers reappeared and grew swiftly. They mopped up the Japanese in the rural areas while the Russians were taking the railways and big cities. At the same time, some of the regular Communist-led armies, already fighting in southern Manchuria,

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drove north, disarming Japanese as they went, until they contacted the "Manchurian Volunteers." General Lin Piao was sent north by Yenan to weld all these armed elements into an offensive force. At the time of my visit, Lin Piao had an army of three hundred thousand, of whom half had come from North China while half were Manchurians.

Contrary to much rumor, Lin Piao was not installed by the Russians. The first stage of his journey was made by American plane, the rest on foot. In those days American planes flew out from Yenan to pick up American airmen shot down by the Japanese. One such plane, on request from the Communists, took Lin Piao along. One doubts whether the Americans knew just how important in Manchuria Lin Piao was to be.

What help did Lin Piao get from the Russians? Every kind of tale has been spread in China and in America about this. According to Lin Piao, the Russians gave him nothing.

"No troops, no weapons, no advisers, nothing!" he told me categorically. "Whatever men and arms came with the Red Army into Manchuria, went back when the Red Army went. Whatever store of arms the Russians took from the Japs in Manchuria, they either took with them back to Russia or else destroyed on the spot."

I checked this statement again and again in Manchuria with men who were in a position to know. The Chinese Communists were the first to admit that the victory in Manchuria was achieved primarily by the Red Army and that they themselves, fighting in the rural areas while the Russians took the cities, were able to disarm more Japanese and seize more booty than if they had operated alone. But no arms of any kind were directly given by the Russians to the Chinese Communists as far as I could learn.

Surprisingly enough the Manchurians I met took it for granted that the Russians had helped Chiang Kai-shek and not the Chinese Communists. For while the Communist-led forces spread through the rural areas of Manchuria, the Russian Red Army installed Chiang's appointees in all the Manchurian cities and protected them there for many months to give them a chance to organize a government.

That treaty with Chiang must have been awkward for the Russians. While Chiang was officially asking them to stay in Manchuria longer than they originally intended, to give him

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time to bring more troops into the country, Chiang's secret police were instigating demonstrations all over China denouncing the Russians for staying. The American press echoed this attack on "red imperialism," demanding how long the Russians planned to remain.

Chiang's functionaries in the Manchurian cities did not make the situation easier. Their method of organizing the country was to contact landlords who had been Japanese agents for fourteen years, and authorize them to form armed bands for Chiang against the Communists. From the Russian-protected cities, Chiang's officials instigated civil war against the farmers of the countryside. One prominent Harbin citizen, who served as mayor during the period of Red Army control before Chiang's appointees came, was later assassinated by gangsters of the Kuomintang regime, which also ruled under Russian protection. Such incidents did not encourage the Russians to stay in Manchuria any longer "protecting Chiang." When Russian diplomatic officials and civilians were murdered in Changchun in riots stirred up by the arriving Kuomintang troops for whom the Russians had been holding the city, the Russians decided that they had had enough. They announced that they were pulling out of the remaining Manchurian cities without awaiting any more of Chiang's troops.

As the Russians pulled out of Harbin and the other north Manchurian cities, they took with them, at Chiang's request, all the administrators appointed by Chiang to rule those cities. They saved these officials from the Manchurian people and sent them home from Vladivostok to Shanghai. In thus asking the Russians to save his officials, Chiang Kai-shek admitted that he could not control Manchuria without foreign armed help.

WHEN THE Russians pulled out, they closed the border. They could have used that Manchurian food surplus for their own Far East or for their zone in North Korea, both of which were short of food. But they closed the border tightly on the theory that if they let even a bolt of cotton goods across it, they would be mixing in China's civil war.

"They would say we helped the Communists," explained the Soviet consul to me in Harbin.

"They say it anyway," I retorted hotly. "All of them say

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you are arming the Chinese Communists. Are you fixing your policies to suit the American press?"

He was understandably annoyed. "Of course they lie about us," he said, rather precisely, "but they know that they lie and their lies can be disproved. But if even a car of cotton goods came over the border, who could ever prove that it contained no arms?"

This Soviet consul, incidentally, who had been in Harbin throughout the Japanese occupation, gave up his diplomatic status when the Chinese Communists came in, "because we do not recognize their regime," he said. "I act here now," he explained, "not as representing my government, but as representing some fifty thousand Russians who have always lived in Manchuria, in other words, as representing one of the local population minorities." It was a fine point, but he thought it important.

The only government which had any official relations with the Chinese Communist regime at the time of my visit was the United States of America, which had a military mission in Harbin, negotiating the evacuation of the Japanese. The American Captain Wilson enjoyed chaffing the Soviet consul —he did it at a tea I attended—about his very poor connections with the U.S.S.R. The Russian sent a courier with mail once a month to the frontier, three days' journey by mixed passenger and freight train.

"A plane came all the way from Peiping just to bring me a letter from my wife," bragged the American. The Soviet consul seemed annoyed at this reminder of effective American penetration into a city the Russians built.

THE LIBERATED AREA of Manchuria was thus strictly on its own, a hardy and energetic people in a spacious land but without connections to the world. How did the Communists operate? What problems had they? What methods? What successes? How did they win Manchurians away from Chiang?

Let us take what happened in two villages that I visited.

Leftwood Village, not far from Harbin, was a small place of fifty-four families, thirty of which had owned no land but worked as hands or as share-croppers on the lands of Landlord Su. Under the Japanese, Su became the agent of the Japanese to buy and sell grain, to handle rationed goods, to collect

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forced labor and forced loans, to distribute "rewards for good citizens." Su profited handsomely and dishonestly on all these transactions and was hated by everyone.

"Su was worse than the Japs," all the peasants told me.

After Japan's surrender, the Kuomintang administrators, installed in Harbin with Russian help, also made Su their agent to raise an armed force against the Communists. Su got together ninety armed men, who lived by loot, bossing the township more arrogantly than under Japan. Not until June, 1946, two months after the Russians had gone and the Chinese Communists had taken power in Harbin, did the Leftwood villagers gain courage to ask help from the city administration against "Su's bandits." Su fled. A village election and land reform followed. Su's excess lands, acquired as Japanese agent, were confiscated and distributed. Once given land, most of Su's bandits were glad to settle to farming.

A similar story was told me in Wang Family Village, a settlement of a thousand people outside the city of Tsitsihar. There were no big landlords here for the Japanese took all the land and made the peasants work for them as serfs.

"We got neither millet nor wheat to eat but a flour from acorns," they told me. "Many people died of this; they passed blood."

After the Japanese were beaten, a "recovering army" of the Kuomintang came and took all the village horses. Then officials came from Chiang's government (installed by the Russians in Tsitsihar) and told the villagers that the land now belonged to the city authorities and they would auction off the right to plant it for a year. Only twenty families had enough money to rent land directly; the other two hundred families had to become their share-croppers. Before it was time to sow, however, the "Joint Democratic Army" arrived and declared that all land taken from the peasants should go back to them, that the villagers themselves should meet and divide it without paying anyone. The inhabitants of Wang Family Village thereupon distributed the land on the basis of one acre per capita. The harvest that followed gave everyone enough to eat wheat bread and even to buy some cotton cloth.

There was plenty of poverty still in Wang Family Village. I saw a boy of thirteen darting mother-naked between the

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huts on a day so cold that I shivered in my fur coat. But the villagers, eating good bread that no longer poisoned their intestines, felt themselves on the upgrade.

The reason why Chiang Kai-shek failed and the Communists succeeded in Manchuria begins to appear in these examples. Everywhere in Manchuria, in their brief term of power, Chiang's administrators contacted local landlords and former Japanese agents, and authorized them to form armed bands under the name of "recovering armies." These armies supported themselves by stealing farmers' livestock on a wholesale scale. Figures from Nunchiang Province, for instance, showed that "recovering armies" seized 7,357 horses and cattle in Nunchiang County, 10,500 in Chinghsing County, 14,300 in Kannan County, 18,825 in Lungchiang County, and so on. The farmers were not slow to call these recovering armies "Kuomintang bandits." They began to resist them under the leadership of the Communists.

The Communists encouraged the people to organize. They stimulated local initiative to improve industry, government and army. In industry they released the free enterprise of merchants, offering loans from government funds to those merchants who traded for necessary goods across Chiang's battle-front. In government, they urged the peasants to throw out the Japanese puppets and elect their own chiefs. To form an army, they urged the peasants to organize their own militia against bandits, whether these were ordinary thieves or the "recovering armies" of the Kuomintang. It should not be necessary to mention these homely and obvious methods of re-creating industry, government and army, were it not that so many postwar organizers of government—whether Chiang in China, the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in Indo-China, the Americans in Korea and the Philippines—did exactly the reverse.

THE RESULT of the release of the people's energies was an explosion of energetic life that grew more confident day by day.

The land reform began on a large scale in May, 1946. Lin Piao released twelve thousand of his ablest army organizers to promote it. Their task was to inform peasants that they had the right to take back lands unjustly taken under the Japa-

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nese. "We do not bother landlords with less than seventy-five acres," several organizers told me, "for land here is not so crowded as in China proper. Those who have more than seventy-five acres were all Japanese agents."

The cities also awoke. The poorest slum-dwellers of Harbin organized a cooperative known as the "Poor Folks Housing Society," and applied to the city government for houses from which Japanese were being repatriated, to use in a slum clearance scheme. I saw the horrible holes in which they had recently been living, with water flooding the yard and seeping through the sagging walls. I saw also the neat apartments—one room to a family—that cost almost nothing to rent. Down in Changchun, the Kuomintang capital, former Japanese houses stood empty while bureaucrats fought over who had the right to the graft.

Industry got under way on the basis of private initiative. The manager of a large flour mill in Harbin told me that he was now able to buy grain and sell flour for the first time in fourteen years. Under the Japanese and under the brief Kuomintang regime that followed, the government had a monopoly of grain and the mill was hired only for milling. "Now we have free trade again and can make good profit as we used to do before the Japs came," said the manager. The flour mill workers told me that they were getting double wages and a share in profits.

I visited the Tung Faho Department Store, a famous enterprise for a generation in Harbin. It went bankrupt under the Japanese, and remained closed under the Red Army and under the Kuomintang. Under the stimulus of the present regime, the clerks, who lived in a building in the courtyard, decided to revive the business. The owner lived in Shantung, on the other side of Chiang's battle-front, but the clerks made an agreement with the owner's agent in Harbin. The workers, on their own suggestion, took no money wages at first but only their food. Monthly wages on an agreed scale were credited to them to be paid from future earnings. The workers were also to get more than half of the profits; there had been argument on that, but the workers pointed out that they were taking most of the risks.

"Why didn't you organize a cooperative store instead of

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recognizing an owner who was bankrupt and in debt?" I asked.

"It is on the name he built for twenty years that we can get credit now," they answered. There was the ethics of capitalism in its early "progressive" stage.

THE SAME popular initiative that was restoring economic life also created government.

Villages were urged to hold elections, but not all the villages could be reached at once. So provisional governments of provinces were set up by delegates from peasants' unions, merchants' unions, trade unions and army units. The first provincial government of Nunchiang Province, for instance, was set up in the rural districts in November, 1945, three months after the surrender of Japan and six months before the Kuomintang appointees left the main provincial city, Tsitsihar. After seven months of organization, a regular "People's Congress" of the province met in July, 1946, which had representatives elected from every county, though not yet by a uniform system.

In August, 1946, one year after Japan's surrender, a joint congress of all the Manchurian provinces met, adopted a program and set up a "Joint Administrative Committee" to carry it out. Every province in Manchuria was given the right to frame its own constitution—a right that Chiang had always denied. The following general principles for all were laid down:

(1) General elections to be held rapidly.
(2) Land of Japanese and traitors to be given to the peasants.
(3) Help to private industry, with reasonable profit for capital.
(4) Education in democracy for the armed forces.
(5) General education to be improved.
(6) Equality of nationalities: Chinese, Mongols, Moslems, Koreans.
(7) Civil liberties were guaranteed in an amazingly inclusive statement which comprised "freedom of body, of thought, of speech, of press, of assembly, of organization, of religion, of travel, and of choice of profession."

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The "Joint Administrative Committee," elected at this congress, was no Communist list but a roster of the most famous "native sons" of Manchuria who for twenty years or more had fought for Manchurian freedom. The Communists did not make the mistake of setting up a one-party government, as Chiang had done. They called upon "all progressive, democratic Manchurians" to help organize their land. These included – in the top ranks – former Kuomintang leaders, Democratic Leaguers, Manchurian patriots who dated back to the warlord days of Chang Tso-lin.

THAT WAS how the Chinese Communists got Manchuria, by arousing and organizing its people to achieve industry, farming, government and self-defense.

Chiang Kai-shek sent to Manchuria armies from South China that spoke a different language. He appointed a mayor for Changchun who—during two weeks of my visit—was absent in Nanking playing politics. He authorized former Japanese puppets to set up armies.

The Communists, on the contrary, called on all patriotic Manchurians, native sons and daughters, to liberate and organize their land. They secured a government of well-known local leaders who could win respect in any country, who could win devotion in their own country, for which they had fought so many years.

Which method would win the Manchurians might have been guessed!

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Chapter X

RAILWAY TO TSITSIHAR

The Communists ran three thousand miles of railway in Manchuria. This made their Manchurian empire unique. Down in North China, where Chiang used the railways to bring his troops in, the Communists specialized in tearing railways up.

A representative of the U.S. State Department in Changchun told me that he heard the trains to Tsitsihar weren't running. The Communists, he said, had taken up the track. Communists to him were just natural railway-smashers. "Why should they tear up their own railway?" I asked him. He was startled and then agreed that it might "make a difference." It did.

I rode fifteen hours on that railway from Harbin to Tsitsihar. They told me that I was the only foreigner who had made the trip since the Liberated Area of Manchuria had the road. It was an inspiring journey. I never saw anyone so devoted to railroad-running as the Communists were in Manchuria. The life of their empire depended on it.

I went to the Harbin railway station at nine in the morning. I had not only an interpreter but also a private bodyguard named Chen, given me by courtesy of the Joint Democratic Army. His job seemed to be to carry great piles of pillows and blankets to make me comfortable on the hard wooden seats and to run for boiling water for tea at the stations. I felt like a general!

The car was bright with fresh green paint, just out of the repair shop. It was clean as a pin inside until the passengers got busy eating sunflower seeds and spitting out the shucks. Soon the floor was ankle-deep in shucks of which I contributed my share. A freezing October wind blew through the windows which were open on both sides. I never saw anyone so given to fresh air as those Manchurians.

The train pulled out on time, full but not overcrowded. We rolled through a landscape like that of Montana or

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Manitoba, wide gently rolling plains dotted with woods and trees. We stopped long at stations to cool the locomotive and avoid hot boxes. Since there was only soy bean oil and an oil from a tree for lubricant, the engineers babied their engines with plenty of rest. So we moved steadily but slowly, taking fifteen hours for the two hundred odd miles to Tsitsihar.

Ours was the "army car," located in the middle of the train for defense against possible bandit raids. The passengers were army men and women, with an occasional peasant who got in by mistake and was allowed to stay if there was room. The advantage of an army car is that seats can be "commanded" by a bit of paper with a general's signature. My bodyguard Chen "commanded" a string of five seats "for the American guest of General Lin Piao to lie down and rest." He was making the best of Lin Piao's routine signature! I did not want to lie down at eleven in the morning, in the midst of a staring crowd, but that ostentatious blanket-padded couch gave our party—and the bodyguard—a lot of face.

Everyone at once wanted to know what an American was doing in their territory "when the American is helping Chiang." They also wanted to know when I would take my troops out of China. I was asked this by everyone I met in Manchuria, by farm women, school children, soldiers.

Near me sat one of the most fascinating young women I ever met anywhere. She was a flame-like creature in the blue uniform of the "Joint Democratic Army," her energy wore her thin even under those padded clothes. She looked less than twenty—she looked like embodied youth—but she said that she was twenty-five. Her name was Li Pai-chung, and she was a peasant organizer in Chiaotung County, now traveling back from Harbin with the young officer to whom she had just been married. There was a bright purity in her face that made one wish to shield her from all evil in the world. But she had personally liquidated "Northern Tyrant," a bandit leader of one hundred armed men.

Li's patriotism had been stirred in childhood—when Manchuria was invaded. There was nothing she could do about it for she was only a child in the grammar school. When the war spread to China, Li was in secondary school and she

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volunteered at once to serve her country. She organized in the rural districts, working under the Kuomintang until 1939; then the Kuomintang grew more reactionary and began arresting people for patriotic agitation against Japan. So Li escaped to the Liberated Areas. Thus she became a political worker in a big sprawling county in Manchuria. And thus this slight girl came up against "Northern Tyrant," who bossed a big village of 20,000 people for the Japanese.

"Northern Tyrant," whose real name was "Kan," had grown rich in fourteen years as a Japanese agent. The ways he got his wealth were typical. When the Japanese demanded forty men for forced labor, Kan said they demanded eighty; then he took bribes from forty for "releasing" them. When the Japanese gave cotton goods for ration, Kan gave the worst shoddy to the peasants and kept the good cloth for himself. Thus, his hundred and fifty acres grew to nine hundred, with livestock and buildings in proportion.

Kan handled his farmhands so that he owed them nothing at the end of the year. He worked them to exhaustion and subtracted fivefold penalties for illness. Kan kept the accounts, and the men had no redress. Often you saw in Kan's court a row of kneeling sharecroppers whom he was beating because they had failed in their rent.

After Japan's defeat, Kan got a paper from Chiang's military representative in Changchun, organized a band of one hundred armed men, and kept on ruling the countryside. Twice his band had skirmishes with the "Joint Democratic Army," but Kan's connection with them was not discovered.

The discovery of "Northern Tyrant" came in this wise. One of his farmhands heard of the land reform in the southern part of the county and grew bold enough to ask his boss, not for land, but for his pay.

Kan said: "So you've turned Communist. I'll tell the Kuomintang."

The farmhand retorted: "I'll report you to the Peasants' Union."

Kan drew his Mauser but the worker ran. He ran south to the railroad and reported "Northern Tyrant" to the county bureau where worked the young organizer, Li.

"So I asked the union to let me go and organize that place and arrest Kan first," said Li, as if this were routine work.

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How does a thin girl that you could knock down with a sweep of an arm arrest the chief of one hundred armed men?

"I went secretly with ten men dressed as peasants," Li explained. "We investigated three days. I found that Kan had only ten real bandits, and the other ninety were only farm-hands whom he bossed. We arrested the ten before dawn by surprise. At once we called a meeting to 'settle with Kan.' Two thousand people came. The people accused Kan and he admitted. The people demanded to shoot him. This we did." She said it with that bright, pure glow in her face.

I FELL into conversation with a peasant who rode a short distance between local stations. He had been twice conscripted for forced labor by the Japanese, each time for six months.

"They rounded you up in the streets," he explained. "If you were rich, you paid. If you were poor, you went to work. I was a landless farmhand with a wife and two kids. When I was away they ate grass. It was lucky that the Japs took me in summer. If it had been winter, my family would have died. They had no winter clothes but huddled on the brick oven, and I had to keep a fire going to keep them alive."

The man was now a self-sustaining farmer. He had received seven acres in the land reform. He even had a horse. "I bought it from the landlord that we settled accounts with," he said. "We took back one hundred of the acres that he got as a Jap puppet, and he was willing to sell me the horse because he cannot use so many horses now. I agreed to pay in grain at harvest. It will be a good harvest because everyone works hard on his own land."

Bodyguard Chen pushed himself from time to time into my conversations. Of course he would never give me orders; he was there to serve me. But he would tell the interpreter: "It is time for Miss Strong to rest." He would tell would-be questioners: "Miss Strong is getting tired, and I have orders from General Lin Piao that she must not get tired on the trip to Tsitsihar." He was very important about it and he was really observant, for the trip was long, and the interest of the talk often kept me going to exhaustion. If I persisted in talking after his warnings, he would shrug his shoulders as

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if to call attention to the fact that he at least had done his best.

A few hours out of Harbin, we ran into a battle with bandits. Our train halted in an open field and waited half an hour. "The railway guards are fighting a gang of Hunhuzes up ahead," they told me. "We are waiting to see if it will affect us."

"Hunhuzes," explained Li, "are bandits. The name means 'Red Beard' and dates from early bandits who hid their identity by masks with red beards. Today's Hunhuzes are a mixed lot, including ordinary bandits and former Jap puppets, usually under the leadership of some landlord who gets credentials from Chiang's generals to harry our areas. We know this because we capture them with the credentials on them. Also, they formerly bragged of their connection, but they try to hide it now."

Word came that we might proceed. The train moved slowly along. For an hour or more we were in the zone of battle. We saw peasants fleeing in small groups, hiding livestock behind convenient hillocks.

Armed guards stood on the roofs of one large village, scanning the horizon. Once we heard a burst of machine-guns ahead. The men in our car opened the windows still wider, and every man seemed to have a rifle which he trained from the window, ready to shoot. We saw distant groups of horsemen, and our men scrutinized them carefully.

"Are those Hunhuzes?" I asked on one such occasion.

"No, they are farming people," replied Li's husband, putting down his rifle.

"How can you tell at this distance?"

"Don't you see that people are walking slowly near them? People on foot would be running if Hunhuzes came."

Later we learned that the railroad guards had routed a band of two hundred Hunhuzes, capturing many. "Those Hunhuzes were not attacking the railroad," explained Li. "They attacked a village and the peasants' militia sent to the railroad guards for help." She told me that there had been four attacks on the West Manchurian since the present regime came to power. "The size of the attacks decreases," she said, "for our territory becomes better organized. Besides, many of these 'Kuomintang generals' have been caught."

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Everyone laughed when she spoke of "Kuomintang generals." One of the things that helped discredit Chiang in Manchuria was his bestowing of the title "general" on leaders of armed bands that quickly declined to bandits. Eleven such "Kuomintang generals" had recently been caught in Harbin and convicted of trying to start an uprising. Most of them were Hunhuz generals with a big title but a small army. Everyone knew the story: they showed me clippings from a Harbin paper about it on the train.

The most picturesque figure among the captured "generals" was the "Living Buddha"; he had a harem of "queens." He confessed at his trial that he had "given the word of God" through the Chinese countryside during the Japanese war under the name of the "Golden Thread Great Religion," but that his real work had been espionage for Japan against the Eighth Route Army. After Japan fell, he contacted some of Chiang's generals and was sent to Manchuria to continue the work. He had reported to them that he had three thousand men; he admitted in court that the number was "somewhat smaller."

The Living Buddha used his fantastic religion as a cover for his secret armed organization. "I called myself 'Living Buddha' and claimed to remove all illness and calamity. Anyone who preaches religion must claim to remove calamity, or he will get no converts," said this remarkable man. "My real purpose was to occupy Harbin," he stated, as he described his proposed conquest street by street. He had actually started an uprising, but had not been able to hold the first city block!

This banditry was no longer a serious menace, everyone told me. It had been serious in the first year after liberation, for when the puppet armies and the "recovering armies" were dispersed, part of them hid out as bandits, raiding villages and railroads. Their strength, however, rapidly decreased. Six months earlier there had been ten or twenty thousand of these marauders, operating in bands as large as a thousand. Now, at the time of my visit, the total number was not more than two or three thousand, and the bands never ran above a couple of hundred.

"The decrease in banditry," they said, "is due to three causes. Our army smashed them. The farming people organ-

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ized self-defense. The land reform enables former farmhands to live without turning bandit."

IT WAS nearly two in the morning when we got to Tsitsihar, but Governor Yu Yi-fu was waiting to receive me in an office of the provincial government building, where a bed had been installed for me. He had been told by radio from Harbin that I was coming, and he was prepared to show me everything in Tsitsihar, starting at once!

Governor Yu was a highly intelligent man in his forties in black-rimmed spectacles and a shabby black padded cotton suit. He was a native of the province, educated in Yenching University, in Peiping. He had been the first principal of the first high school in Tsitsihar when the Japanese had invaded sixteen years before. He had laid on the shelf his peaceful dream of educating his home province, and joined the Young Marshall's army to fight for Manchuria's freedom. When Chiang arrested the Young Marshall and disbanded his army, Yu was one of the many whose hopes were deferred.

Now he was home—governor of Nunchiang Province, whose name, he said, means "Tender River." He was in Tsitsihar, whose name is a Mongolian word for "border," and which was a frontier outpost two hundred years ago against the Mongol hordes. He was home again, experienced now not only as an educator, but as a soldier, an editor, as a leader and organizer of the "Save the Nation Movement" in North China. He could do more for education in a single year now than in sixteen years as a high school principal. So none of these sixteen years of his had been wasted. Governor Yu Yi-fu was a lucky man.

"Whom and what do you want to see?" he asked me. "Nobody will be in his office tomorrow, but we'll pick them up at the celebration." This reminded me that the morrow was October Tenth, the national holiday, the day of the founding of the Chinese Republic.

Now, I have been put through some pretty fast schedules by women's clubs and Rotary clubs in the American West, but never have I speeded through a split-second program like the one in Tsitsihar. When one thinks of Chinese Communists, one imagines the caves of Yenan, the leisurely life where clocks are few and transport uncertain, and they fix appoint-

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ments not by the hour but by the half day. But little Tsitsihar could give an American town an hour's start and catch up with it. They had speed.

It began at eight in the morning, after four hours' sleep. There was a public unveiling of a monument to a local hero, killed in the war against the Japanese. A funeral march, bowed heads, short tributes, and big sparkling wreaths of tinsel flowers—it was too late in the year for real ones—on the cold stone. By nine o'clock the big physical culture meet of the schools was beginning—ten thousand children in a public park with the governor, the mayor and the school superintendent reviewing them in events that went on all day.

"We have thirteen thousand children in school this year," declared the mayor. "We have distributed land and houses, so more children were able to come. You have now new desks and benches, for we repaired many schools. Formerly teachers beat the children; now this is not allowed. My young friends, strengthen your bodies and minds, for you are the strength of Manchuria."

One class—believe it or not—sang a song of welcome to me, the American guest who had arrived the night before. It had been written and rehearsed since two that morning. The kids were especially proud of their feat and thought it entitled the whole class to file to the reviewing stand and shake my hand.

Boys in white caps and shirts. Girls with big paper flowers, first grade youngsters with red rosettes on long wands, drills, songs, marches—the things school children do all over the world on national holidays. From the songs and the slogans one can tell the mood of the country and what folks want their children to believe. Here were no pictures of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, as one might have expected under a regime where Communists play an important part. This was China's birthday and no foreigners at all were featured, only Chinese.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen was the great hero whose portrait shone in posters and on big floral stars. His was the name and tradition the school children honored. Two little children, a boy and a girl together, carried a big star with Dr. Sun's portrait surrounded by flowers, and set it up facing the tribune. Other youngsters bore smaller stars to set up at

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the foot of the big one. These showed Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh, Chou En-lai, and other Communist leaders, including the ones in Manchuria, General Lin Piao and Governor Lin Feng. There were also pictures of non-Communists. There was no portrait of Chiang Kai-shek.

About Chiang they sang as follows:

"When the East Ocean Devils invaded
Chiang Kai-shek sold us out to the Japs.
But the Communists organized the people,
The valiant Manchurian Volunteers!
If there had been no Communists,
There would be now no China!"

About Mao Tse-tung they sang:

"Since Mao Tse-tung came to us
There is sunshine
There is democracy
There is the rule of the people."

I met the energetic Mrs. Shih in the tribune, a brick-maker's wife who, herself illiterate, had become a patron of education. Her husband owned a small brickyard with four workers and had been forced under the Japanese to make quantities of bricks for nothing for a local puppet known as "Wang the Second Tiger." After the liberation, this Wang was tried by a People's Tribunal and compelled to pay one hundred and eighty-six thousand yen to the brick-maker. The latter then said: "I rejoice in justice, but if I keep this money, my friends will say that I make use of our new government to get rich. Let us all build a school with it."

They built a school, remodelling a former horse market into twenty-four rooms. Many people gave voluntary labor. The brick-maker donated bricks. His wife became so enthusiastic that she found a new career promoting education. She became a public figure and was elected to the Tsitsihar city council. Her speeches were eloquent, colloquial and sometimes rude.

From the school celebration I was whirled out of town to Wang Family Village—described in the preceding chapter—and back to the Railway Workers' celebration. Four thousand workers sat on the ground, but three hundred and sixty of the number were given chairs to sit on and red rosettes in

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their button holes, as a mark of honor. They were the "railway heroes" who had contributed various inventions to improve the operation of the line. Their exhibition in a nearby building showed a bit of tree bark that could—at a pinch—replace the unobtainable rubber washers, an odd kind of local grass that could be used instead of cotton waste, mixtures of vegetable oils that could be substituted for the lacking lubricants, and many spare parts now made in their shops that had not been made before. The "hero inventors" were beginning an eight-day conference to discuss ways of improving the railroad. They were in line for the road's new technical staff.

Railway Commander W. C. Kuo, who had once been secretary to the Young Marshall, told me how his railway organization got its start.

"It began when we captured a broken locomotive last January by disarming Japs and puppets in a station further south. We collected railway workers, repaired it, and named it 'People's Locomotive Number One.' We hitched it to some cars of Eighth Route soldiers and took a junction where there were three more locomotives. Today, on our West Manchurian Railway, we have sixty-seven locomotives, thirty of which we repaired, while the others we captured intact. We run forty-three trains: nineteen carry coal, eight grain and lumber, twelve are mixed freight and passenger, while four are the passenger trains from Harbin to Tsitsihar." His figures concerned the West Manchurian; there were two other railway systems in the Liberated Area, the North Manchurian and the East Manchurian, a total of three thousand miles of track.

Surprisingly, the railway paid its way, though passenger travel cost only about half a cent a mile, about one dollar for my fifteen-hour trip from Harbin to Tsitsihar. "How could we keep on running if we did not pay our way?" asked Kuo in a matter of fact manner. "We pay not only operating expenses but the cost of troops that guard the line.

"We have many difficulties, but we lick them," he concluded. "Last month, we repaired twenty more locomotives and put them in service. Breakdowns in September were only a third as high as in August. Those substitutes you saw, the grass, the bark, the bad oil, work fairly well as long as the

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workers are watchful. We can run a year or two on our present basis with steadily improving service. Then we shall face new and more serious shortages. By that time we hope for peace, or we shall find some other way out of our problem." Kuo spoke with confidence.

"Can't you get lubricants and spare parts from the U.S.S.R. in return for Manchurian grain?" I asked.

"We didn't even ask. We know they would refuse."

"Are the Russians crazy?" I asked. "They have a property interest in this road. They built it—their old China Eastern—and they have a right to share in its operation by treaty with Chiang Kai-shek. It is their only land route to their naval base in Port Arthur and their Zone in North Korea. What on earth prevents them from announcing to the world that they will sell lubricants to keep this railroad from falling apart?"

"Yes, but we have a war on and the Russians refuse to be caught in it," said Kuo. "They prefer to go to Port Arthur ten days around by sea."

"Why should repairing a road in which they have a property right land them in war?" I demanded.

"Quite simply," replied Kuo. "Chiang is using the southern part of this railroad to bring in troops against us. When we get ready for our counter-offensive, we shall use the road to advance against Chiang. And what would the Russians do then?"

AT FIVE O'CLOCK, there was a banquet, at which I was one of two guests of honor, the other being a representative from Inner Mongolia who was visiting the Liberated Areas to report on them to his people. My good friend, Mrs. Shih, sat beside me and rose to make a speech straight at me that the interpreter hated to translate. "She is not using polite language. She is using peasant language. She is saying 'thee' and 'thou,' " he apologized, unhappily. I made him translate it; Mrs. Shih would have made him anyway. She didn't intend to let me get away.

"All the years of my life, American people and Chinese people were good friends," she stated, "but now thee'd better take thy troops out of our country and stop sending bombs and guns to kill us. Then we can keep on being friends. Else

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we'll have to throw them out, and that won't be so friendly." She seemed quite sure that the Chinese people could do it —and would.

It was after midnight when the banquet and the interviews following it ended. But delegations were waiting in my bedroom from the girls' high school and boys' high school to ask—no, to demand—that I come to visit them in the morning and make speeches in their assemblies. I told them it depended on my plane. They wanted me to chance it anyway; they said they would post lookouts and rush me off when the plane arrived. There was a third delegation from the school authorities to tell me that the children were much disappointed because I left their physical culture demonstration so early. They wanted me to see *all* their songs and drills. The school authorities had compromised by suggesting that I see, on the following morning, a special review of some prize-winning groups. We fixed the hour for seven, for I had other interviews at an eight o'clock breakfast.

I came down sleepy and shivering, pulling my fur coat around me over three thicknesses of woolen clothes. I sat in the wind and watched while those lithe young bodies, clad only in shorts, went through maneuvers. It was a good show; they had picked their best. I was duly impressed by the primary school kids who threw themselves on the ground and "stalked the enemy" in the bayonet drill. I was impressed by the graceful, lively dances with flowers and hoops and by the imitation of two battleships with flags waving and engines rolling right there in front of me. I was impressed by the verve with which they sang:

> *"Chiang Kai-shek, he has a wicked heart,*
> *He sold out Manchuria with both hands!*
> *But the people will defend our Liberated Area.*
> *If anyone tries to steal our grain,*
> *We'll fight to death and to victory!"*

But I was still more impressed by the ability of these small youngsters to take that wind on their almost naked bodies. Manchurians are a hardy bunch.

It would be a long, long time, I thought, before Chiang Kai-shek ever got down that railway, or conquered those school kids of Tsitsihar.

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Chapter XI

LAND TO THE TILLER

When I once asked Mao Tse-tung whether he had any doubt of final victory, he did not discuss the army but replied: "That will depend on how well we accomplish the land reform. Chiang Kai-shek will fail because he goes against the needs of the peasants. If we Communists can solve the land problem, we shall win."

The land problem is an old problem in China. Peasant revolts have been chronic through the centuries. Usually they have been local, easily suppressed. But the great T'aiping Rebellion (1850-65) overthrew landlord power in sixteen of China's then eighteen provinces; it was finally suppressed only by the aid of foreign troops, chiefly British, in long protracted wars costing millions of lives. Since that time, every attempt of the peasants to overthrow feudalism has been held back, not only by native feudal forces but by the pressures of foreign powers.

For millions of the tillers of the soil the question is a matter of life and death. They need a land revolution not in order to live better but in order to live at all. From three to six million people died in the 1929-30 famine in North Shensi and Kansu—only one of the typical famines that scourge the rural areas of China. Deaths might have been prevented if the peasants had owned their crops or if grain-hoarders had been compelled to disgorge. But after the landlords and tax gatherers had taken their share, the one-fourth to one-third of the grain that was left would not keep the soil-tiller alive.

Landlords maintain power in thoroughly feudal manner. They hire bands of armed retainers and control the courts. They handle all accounting with their share-croppers; they exact feudal services from members of the peasants' families. A girl in Kalgan whose father had been a big landlord north of Peiping told me how her mother used to string up peasant women by the arms and beat them because they failed to please her in some of the feudal duties she exacted.

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THE CHINESE Communists saw the "land to the tiller" program as the basis for everything else desired: for economic progress, political democracy, military strength, even for the flowering of schools. In the past twenty years, they have tried three different methods of getting land into the hands of the man who tilled it.

In the earlier civil war, from 1927-36, they practiced land confiscation. They gave this up during the anti-Japanese war, for the sake of national unity against the invader; they substituted rent reduction, enforcing laws long since endorsed by the national government but never enforced by it. When rent reduction was well enforced by energetic Peasants' Unions, landlordism became unprofitable and landlords were often willing to sell land to tenants at reasonable rates. The Peasants' Unions then helped peasants buy it by cooperative credits. But laws are not self-enforcing; peasants often feared to complain. In all Japanese-occupied territory landlordism got worse, the landlords commonly acting as Japanese agents. Sometimes they betrayed patriots to death, securing their lands. The hatred this aroused was a factor in the revolutionary postwar land reform.

New methods of land reform began on the peasants' own initiative at the end of the Japanese war. Landlords who had been enemy agents were captured, tried before "People's Tribunals" and deprived of their ill-gotten lands, and sometimes of their lives. Lesser landlords were ordered to "settle accounts" for their past evasion of rent laws. The Chinese Communists, feeling the pulse of the peasantry, decided that the time had come to "solve the land problem fundamentally and break with feudalism entirely." The decision to confiscate landlords' land was taken May 4, 1946, by the Party's Central Committee. The basic program on Agrarian Law was made a year and a half later, at a National Agrarian Conference, September, 1947.

During that intervening year and a half the active agent in the land reform was not the government but the "Peasants' Unions." These were voluntary associations open to peasants living by their own toil. They were protected by the People's Armies, and assisted by organizers from the party, the army and various educational organizations. But after such

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organizers had explained the laws and methods, the local peasants decided what lands to take and how.

"Don't make the mistake of giving land to the peasants," the organizers were told. "The Communists are few and have no power to give land. Only if all the peasants do it, will it be done."

The land reform, 1946-47 model, was not land confiscation pure and simple. It was a campaign to get land into the hands of the man who tilled it by purchase, by gift, by confiscation, by fines, by social pressure, by every means that the local community would support. No attempt was made at this stage to secure absolute equality of land holdings. The aim was to "smash feudalism" and get enough land into the hands of the tillers so that the great mass of farm folk could live from their own soil. The aim was also to arouse the peasants to action and to a sense of their collective power. The social consciousness and sense of people's power aroused by the land reform was seen as the surest foundation for the "new democracy." The economic security of farmers on their own soil was seen as the foundation of the "new capitalism" that would finally smash feudalism.

Only after a year and a half of such land reform, on peasant initiative, had thoroughly awakened the peasants, did the Communists move toward the new agrarian laws which—by equalizing land holdings and assisting peasant cooperatives, should prevent their "new capitalism" from growing into the "old capitalism" of the West.

THE TYPICAL method of land reform during the period when I saw it, was the "settling accounts" meeting, also called the "struggle meeting." I attended such a meeting in "Back Village," near Kalgan.

Night had settled after field work. We found the meeting by the shouts that echoed down the dark, uneven lane. In an open yard between clay walls of houses some five or six hundred people, in gray-blue peasant clothing, sat on the ground. Clusters of bound-foot women hung around the edges of the gathering. A score of youths in the front rows wore red armbands. These were "Young Vanguards," who led in shouting slogans or decisions.

There had been no peasant union in "Back Village" until

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the past few days. Then a dozen peasants in the field had discussed the land reform that had transferred land in the neighboring villages and had opined that "it was time we did it too." They talked it over secretly with twenty more and sent to Kalgan for an organizer to give advice. The result was the meeting I saw. The organizer from Kalgan took no part in the meeting; he sat in the audience. Local peasants acted as chairman in turn.

Facing the peasants stood Mei, who had been chief of the township under the Japanese, a typical township boss, hard-faced and domineering. A lean, middle-aged peasant was challenging him.

"And wasn't it you who took the common land by the railroad?" This, I learned, was a strip thirty feet wide and a mile long.

"I took it for the township," declared Mei.

Ironic laughter arose. "Who was the township? You were! You made us work the land but you got the harvest."

"You got it," shouted the red-banded youths with glee.

A bearded man strode from the crowd and thrust his face close to the former chief. "When the Japs asked forced labor, one from every house, didn't you spare your son and take two sons of mine?"

There was a pause and then Mei admitted: "I did."

"Then pay me for the son of mine who did your son's work!"

The crowd sank its teeth into this first definite demand for settlement. "Pay him for doing your work," the Vanguards shouted.

An old woman makes her way forward painfully on bound feet and addresses the former boss. She is trembling with her own daring but the meeting has given her courage. "Remember," she quavers, "the eighteen dollars you squeezed from my old man in the days when eighteen dollars was a year's food?"

"I remember," admits Mei.

"Give me five bushels of grain to settle accounts," she pleads.

Her timidity moves the crowd more than a stronger demand. "Five bushels isn't enough; make it ten," shouts a voice. "Ten bushels," repeat the young men's shouts.

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For half an hour they piled up the "accounts" of the former boss. He admitted the charges but asked "forgiveness."

"No forgiveness without amends!" shouted the crowd. "Come clean, make amends if you want to belong to the people." It was a striking formulation. Finally he was told to think it over until the following night when the villagers would "struggle with him" again. Meanwhile an elected committee of eleven would list the claims presented.

"This is only the first meeting," a local chairman apologized to me. "We shall struggle with Mei for many meetings. He is tough."

"What will happen if he keeps refusing?" I asked.

"He will yield in the end in order to live at peace with his neighbors," the man assured me. "He is not a big landlord who can flee to the city to live on his gains."

EVERYONE IN "Back Village" took heart from the results in "Peaceful Wall," a nearby village where the land reform had been successfully completed. The biggest landlord there had been a man named Yang, who had owned one hundred and twenty acres. In America such a farm would be a "family farm," but in this part of China a family with half an acre per member of the family rates as a self-supporting peasant. Yang had thirty share-croppers on his acres, over all of whom he exercised "feudal rights." Every spring, for instance, the tenants had to clean and repair Yang's house without pay.

One woman testified in the meeting that she had been required to wash the clothing for the nine members of Yang's family for eight years without wages. Another woman had served as wet nurse for Yang's baby son for a year; she had been promised payment in land but had been given none. Each of these women was awarded an acre of land by the village meeting. Yang proved soft metal; he declared almost at once that all of his land was "not enough to meet the just claims of my fellow villagers" and that he "offered it all" to them. They then "let him keep" twelve acres which made him still the richest farmer in "Peaceful Wall."

Before this land reform there had been 26 landlords in "Peaceful Wall" owning 1,000 acres, 164 self-supporting peasants owning 766 acres, 233 share-cropping tenants and two hundred landless farmhands. After the land reform of that

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year there was neither landlords, share-croppers nor landless farmhands left, but 625 families tilling 1,766 acres, about three acres per family. The land holdings were not fully equal—ex-landlord Yang still had twelve acres—which he probably lost in September, a year later—but every family could live from its own land at the prevailing standard. Most important, every family felt the stimulus of free enterprise, knowing that there was freedom at last to advance, to invest in small tools, in irrigation, in land reclamation, since the crop would remain untouched by the former feudal rent.

Early in 1947 the radiograms poured into Yenan reporting the land reform from various areas. More than sixty million farming folk had received land in less than a year. The amounts received were not large by Western standards—one-third of an acre per capita in crowded Shantung, or two acres per capita in sparsely settled Manchuria—but to the Chinese peasants it made the difference between perpetual hunger and a modest self-subsistence, between serfdom and freedom, between an old despair and a new hope.

The land reform went on in the midst of battle. A village in Shantung proudly announced that its land had been divided "within sound of Chiang's guns." Peasants in North Kiangsu, where Chiang had deeply invaded, actually parcelled out land on which Chiang's forts were built! The peasants who got the land waited to plough it, but they were confident it would be theirs some day.

Some villagers in North Kiangsu were holding a celebration of their land reform when Chiang's soldiers opened fire on them from a blockhouse across a river.

"Ha," said the villagers, "they are setting off fire-crackers to honor our land reform!"

THERE is no space here to discuss the new farmer who is appearing in China on the basis of the land reform. His production drives, his "labor exchange brigades," his cooperatives, the "team work without boundaries" by which whole townships, counties, and provinces mobilize to fight floods, drought and pests—these must be left to a later book. It is necessary, however, at least to mention that the land reform is the most important political factor in the civil war.

In all regions of North China and Manchuria the "Peoples'

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Liberation Armies"—all Communist-led forces were combined in 1946 under one name—reported that the enthusiasm of the new volunteers against Chiang Kai-shek was greater than it had formerly been against Japan.

"I used to have to explain to them the reasons for fighting," declared a political commissar. "But now it is they who do the explaining. They now have land to defend."

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Chapter XII

STRATEGY AGAINST SUPERIOR ARMS

The victories by which the Liberated Areas have steadily expanded have been a constant puzzle to military experts. Again and again by all known rules, the People's Armies should have collapsed. When they did not do so, foreign experts sought the reasons. They blamed some mythical Russian aid, but no such aid was ever found. Secretary Marshall himself twice stated that there is no proof of Russian aid to the Chinese Communists. Marshall, with the report of Truce Teams from all parts of North China and Manchuria, was in a position to know. Then experts blamed the corrupt inefficiency of Chiang's armies. But the Liberated Areas expanded just as rapidly against the well-equipped armies of Japan.

These victories come from a unique organization of the armed forces and a remarkably realistic strategy worked out by Mao Tse-tung through the struggles of twenty years. These methods of war are being eagerly studied by insurgent armies in south and east Asia. It is to Mao Tse-tung and to Communist China, much more than to present-day Moscow, that the nationalist revolutions of Indonesia, Indo-China, Burma, look for their latest, most practical ideas. Mao's strategy was made to fit such peoples; for China's problems are similar to theirs, and the people's revolution in China, also, must win against superior arms. That is why it interests the colonial insurgents of southeast Asia, who face the superior arms of Europe and America.

The strategy of the People's Armies is a very conscious strategy. It is based on two kinds of armed forces—the regular army and the "people's militia"—which act in close correlation. The regular army is highly trained, under able generals, who have studied the military experience of world history, and have themselves fought for more than twenty years. This army is highly mobile; its forced marches are among the longest known to military men. It has an exceptional discipline and is trained in the tactics of "dispersal," which means that

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entire divisions can evaporate into small squads, or even scatter and, as individuals, filter through an enemy front and reassemble at agreed points hundreds of miles away.

The regular army is kept limited to a size that a given area can support without bankrupting the government. It raises much of its own food, from 30 per cent on an active front such as Shantung, to 100 per cent in the stable rear. In the long intervals between battles—and most of war consists of such intervals—the regular army gives organized help to the peasants in farm work, in dyke-building and in reclamation generally. It secures arms by capture from the enemy and by home manufacture in provincial arsenals. It secures a part of its manpower by capturing and converting the enemy.

In all actions, the regular army relies on the help of the "people's militia." This is an organization of local fighters, consisting largely of peasants, which costs the taxpayers nothing, since they feed themselves from their own crops. They are an arm of the civil government; members must be accepted by the county authorities before being allowed to bear arms. Most of them are peasants who acquired land through the land reform. They are strong enough to protect their lands from local landlords. They are not expected to fight outside of their county, but they cooperate at once with the regular army if an invader enters their county.

The entire strategy of the People's Armies is based on close but flexible cooperation between regular armies and "people's militia." The army supplies the militia with training, surplus arms, and over-all strategy; the militia supplies local knowledge and the sudden, temporary additions of manpower on which successful "surprise encirclements" depend.

THE STRATEGY is based on a cold-blooded estimate of all the resources—military, political, economic—of the opposing sides. The enemy has superiority in weapons, and in foreign support. Against these the "People's Armies" have the peasants' support, knowledge of the terrain and of the enemy movements; they have local militias who will fight hard in defense of their homes.

How shall these superiorities be brought into play?

"We let them penetrate to the heart of our area," Com-

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mander-in-chief Chu Teh told me. "They establish themselves in walled cities. When they send out detachments for grain we chop them off. When we have chopped them enough we take back the cities." It sounded crude and unlikely but it worked.

In "Broken Cliffs Village," near Yenan, I saw how the local peasantry prepared. The women sat placidly in the sun making shoes for the army. The men sent off the grain tax ahead of time "because our army needs it and to get it out of the way." They buried the rest of the grain, each family going out at night to hide its own grain, "so that if anyone is caught and tortured, he can't tell much." As Chiang's army approached, the older unarmed men prepared to take the women and children to the hills; the younger men, organized as village militia, remained to harry the invader in cooperation with the "People's Army." The militia here had not even rifles but only homemade lances. But their morale was firm; they expected to take rifles from the enemy, as the militia in other areas had done before. They were eagerly watching for Chiang's expected parachutists, for every peasant knew how many strong silk shirts could be made of a captured parachute!

In the first stages of the present civil war, Chiang held the initiative. He had more manpower and vastly superior arms. So when Chiang's armies approached, the People's Armies hastily evacuated any cities that Chiang wanted. Cities were to them no asset but only traps in which they could easily be shelled or bombed. The Peoples' Armies scattered and hid out where Chiang could not easily find them. Chiang took one Liberated Area capital after another; at one time or other he took two hundred cities in the Liberated Areas. In the press of the world, Chiang was winning. You could look on the map and see how much territory he got.

What the map did not show was how little control Chiang had of the rural areas between those garrison cities, how little he could cash in on the countryside through which he had passed. After a year of war raging over an area equal to the United States east of the Mississippi, Chiang had not been able to open a single railroad across North China. Communist guerrillas looked down on Peiping from the Western Hills and interrupted traffic between Peiping and Tientsin. Then Chiang began to lose the cities he already had.

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The Peoples' Armies concentrated not on taking cities and territory but on "annihilating" Chiang's forces. Even the small boys in Yenan knew that. In those grim days when they evacuated the city, the boys kept count happily of "annihilated brigades" as American boys do of World's Series baseball games.

The aim of their strategy was that their own force should grow and Chiang's force diminish. They followed this strategy until the tide turned toward victorious advance.

I FOUND it irritating at first to hear the Peoples' Armies counting their "victories" while Chiang was steadily taking their county towns. I discussed their strategy with the chief of staff of Liu Po-cheng's area, in Wu An county, in late 1946. Chiang had taken twenty-five county seats in this area, yet the Peoples' Army talked of victory.

"What victory?" I demanded. "Isn't Chiang taking your towns?"

"Certainly," they replied, "but this is very good for us. We have traded these towns for sixty thousand of Chiang's men. . . . But that isn't all. The towns Chiang takes begin to fight for us. It works like this. Chiang sent five hundred thousand men against our area. We have only 300,000 in our regular army in this area, and they are much worse armed than Chiang's. But when Chiang takes towns, he must tie up men to garrison them. The twenty-five cities he has taken have tied up nearly two hundred thousand of his troops, besides the sixty thousand we killed or captured. We ourselves never tie up men in garrison duty for this is done by the local militia. So now we have already more active forces in the field than Chiang has, and shall soon be ready to counter-attack." Sure enough, they did counter-attack and got not only Chiang's troops but all of the cities back!

The Peoples' Armies avoid battle until they feel sure that they will win. They plan to fight only when they can surround the enemy suddenly with overwhelming force. By their superior information, the use of forced marches, and the help of local militia, who can be mobilized quickly in large numbers for short engagements and then sent home, they seek to create special areas in which they can attack with several times the force the enemy has.

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The balance sheet of this strategy is the harsh, practical budgeting of the poor. "We cannot afford a battle in which we merely repel the enemy," they said to me often. "He will only return with fresh munitions while we have used up ours. We must only accept battle when we can gain in men and munitions, coming out of the battle with more men and munitions than before." This sounds like an incredible balance-sheet, but it worked.

When the Peoples' Armies finally give battle, the typical form is the surprise encirclement. An example was given me by Colonel Chang Tse-chang, chief of staff of the forces which successfully encircled Chiang's "First Division" in South Shansi.

For six months Hu Tsung-nan, one of Chiang's ablest generals, had pushed up the railroad into South Shansi. The regular forces of the Peoples' Armies retreated, taking the rails with them into the hills. By autumn General Hu held quite a stretch of railway line—without the rails. He itched to come to grips with that elusive "Communist main army" and finish it once and for all. So the Communists allowed word to reach him that their main forces were at An Tze, some seventy miles northeast.

General Hu sent three divisions converging on An Tze. Fifteen miles out from his headquarters he lost his First Division, the flower of Chiang's American-equipped troops!

The regular forces of the Peoples' Armies had been much nearer than An Tze. They lurked close outside of General Hu's headquarters, informed of all of his moves. When the First Division camped on its first night out, the regular armies, augmented by local militia, swept around it, isolating it and attacking with machine-guns and small artillery. The division commander radioed for help. No help reached him, for all the forces that might have been sent to his aid found themselves suddenly attacked by local "peoples' militia," which were not strong enough to "annihilate" but plenty strong enough to hamper and detain. The isolated First Division fought for twenty-four hours and then surrendered, losing sixten hundred killed and wounded and fifty-seven hundred captured.

The fifty-seven hundred prisoners marched north on the dusty road, wearing their American-made uniforms, and those "garrison hats" that look so natty in American magazine pictures. The Chinese peasants mocked them as they passed.

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"Look at those made-in-America hats! Look at those made-in-America soldiers, come to kill Chinese people." By the end of the day the soldiers had thrown all their garrison hats away and were begging for the practical inconspicuous caps of the Peoples' Army! Within another week it is safe to say four-fifths of them had entered the Peoples' Army as new recruits.

In choosing which enemy detachments to encircle, the Peoples' Armies usually pick the best armed. They do not like to fight General Yen Hsushan, of Shansi, because his troops are so poorly equipped that "there is no profit in capturing them." They prefer American-equipped divisions. Liu Po-cheng's men had a competition between detachments as to which could capture the most American arms. A former Kuomintang officer reported in a Hongkong paper that the Peoples' Armies had encircled and captured two American-equipped divisions near him, but had sent a consoling New Year's greeting to his division: "Do not worry. You are not our objective for you have no American arms!"

THE LARGEST encirclements took place in Shantung. Chiang's losses there were fabulous in the first year of civil war. A single encirclement is said to have cost him 57,000 men. While Chiang's attention was concentrated on taking the Communist capital, Linyi, the Communist-led forces abandoned Linyi, and went north by forced marches, mobilizing tens of thousands of the local militia as they went. They fell upon Chiang's northern column of seven divisions, trapping it in a narrow valley five miles long between high cliffs. Fierce battle continued for sixty-five hours after which all that was left of the seven divisions surrendered. With them was captured General Li Sien-chow, deputy commander of Chiang's entire Shantung offensive.

The captured General Li later gave an interview, blaming Chen Cheng, Chiang's chief of staff, for leaving him in the lurch. Chen Cheng got a prestige victory—his taking of Linyi made headlines even in the American press—but the Communists actually gained strategically. By that prestige victory, Chiang lost not only 57,000 men, but the control of the strategic Tsinan-Tsingtao railroad, on whose use he had relied to pry open the great north-south Tientsin-Nanking line.

The American correspondent, Betty Graham, who reached

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the scene shortly after one of these Shantung encirclements, saw the "great heaps of American-made equipment," the "cocky young village militia" who had come from scores of villages to help, and who were returning home laden with arms, and "tens of thousands of prisoners" filing to the rear. Later the UNRRA workers in Shantung reported seeing these same prisoners, disarmed and released, hiking home across country. Their captors had given them "travel money" and told them: "Go home, there are too many of you for Shantung to feed!"

"This is not guerrilla warfare," said the chief of staff to me in Yenan. "It is mobile warfare by regular troops of very high quality." He added that the captured equipment was used at once in an attack on walled cities in Shantung. "Here our style changed for we had better weapons."

As the Peoples' Armies capture more and better weapons, their style of warfare changes. After Chen Keng had captured the weapons of five brigades in South Shansi, he stormed five walled cities, breaching the walls with artillery fire. In the second year of the present civil war, the Peoples' Armies began to take large cities. Their major objective, however, remains the annihilation of the enemy fighting strength.

"We study what weapons we have in order to use them to best advantage," said Chen Yi, commander in chief of the East China Peoples' Armies. "We have studied all possible ways to win with rifles. Now that we have American tanks, bazookas and howitzers, we study these. But if we had only knives, we should study how to win with knives. We would not use knives on a battlefield against modern equipment. But sooner or later, the enemy would come in small groups to our villages, and then we would use knives."

AN ESSENTIAL part of the strategy of the Peoples' Armies is a technique for converting captured men. The men are disarmed but they are not treated as enemies. They are not even called "prisoners." They are spoken of as "men who laid down their arms."

Officers are separated from soldiers and sent to a special "officers' school" in the rear. A few of these change sides but they are not usually wanted in the Peoples' Army. "It is very hard to change the thinking of a feudal officer," said General

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Liang to me in the Four Provinces Area. Most of the captured officers, he thought, would finally "just go home." "They are little use to Chiang again," he stated. "Chiang doesn't trust them any more."

Rank and file soldiers are approached by political workers. "Bitterness-revealing meetings" are held at which they are invited to tell the sad story of their lives. They weep in telling how the landlord oppressed them, how the army grabbed them . . . in a week or two they are asked to choose either to go home or to join the Peoples' Army. If they choose to go home they are given a small sum of "travel money." Many of the captured men live too far away and dread lest they be captured again by Chiang's army. About eighty percent of them choose to remain with the Peoples' Army.

"They are attracted by the democracy of our army, by the fact that they can talk freely with officers," said General Liang. "Most of them are poor peasants and they are moved by our land reform. We mix them among other soldiers and instruct our experienced men to make them feel at home by especially friendly treatment."

I talked to two ex-prisoners who were working at army headquarters in the Four Provinces Area.

Li Jung-chih, a homely looking man of forty-six, told me that he had been a merchant in a small town in Szechwan. In 1940 he went to a town forty miles away to collect a debt. "The recruiters grabbed me on the way. I never got the chance even to send word to my old mother. I have never heard from home in seven years."

"Couldn't you run away? Did they bind you?" I asked, for I had seen long lines of conscripts roped together in Chiang's territory.

Li replied that they had bound many others but he had escaped this indignity by giving his word not to escape. "I told them that I am an honest merchant and my word is good." He had been beaten many times. "In the Kuomintang Army," he said, "an officer may beat a soldier at will." Nonetheless he had fought as an obedient disciplined soldier until one dark night, in September, when Chiang's 45th Division was ambushed.

"We were attacked from all sides and fell into confusion. A thousand of us were captured. My mind was full of the thought that the Communists would kill us all as our officers had said."

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Li was "given a rest" for several days and then asked whether he wanted to stay or go home. He replied: "I am too old to fight; give me a job in the rear." He was sent to headquarters as cook.

When I asked why he didn't go home he answered: "It is very far to Szechwan. The Kuomintang would grab me on the way."

The second ex-prisoner, young Li Teh, was seventeen and small for his age. Three years earlier, as a printer's apprentice in Szechwan, he was sent outside the city wall to draw water. The recruiter grabbed him and began to tie him up but desisted when Li promised not to run. He became an orderly in Chiang's 30th Army.

"My officer did not beat me often," he said. "Only sometimes very hard with bamboo on the hand. He cursed me very much. I wanted him to write to my mother and brothers where I was but he wouldn't. I cannot write and anyway I had no stamp!"

Young Li's detachment was surrounded and captured after forty-eight hours of fighting. He was badly wounded in the hand. "The Eighth Route sent me for a month to hospital," he said. This impressed him, for soldiers in Chiang's armies get little care.

When the officers in the hospital told him: "If you like to go home we will give you money for the road," he answered boldly: "No, I will stay here and follow Mao Tse-tung."

When I asked him why, he replied: "The Kuomintang would catch me. Officers here are good. Why should I go back to be beaten again?"

Li had been sent to the rear as too young to fight. He had told nobody that he was a printer. He didn't want to be a printer. "I like better being a headquarters' guard," he said with pride.

Generals of the Peoples' Armies in different areas told me that from one-fourth to one-half of their forces are now composed of these former prisoners of war. They said that these recruits improve the quality of the army. "They have experience of modern weapons. They are very loyal. For they have felt the oppression of the Kuomintang on their own bodies more even than the peasants of our areas have." General Liang related how a former prisoner, after two months in the Peo-

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ples' Army, exhibited five rifles that he had captured, and bragged to the general: "I never captured a rifle for Chiang but I have captured five for you."

"THE KUOMINTANG goes bankrupt but we can fight forever," said Lu Ting-yi to me, in Yenan. "Our areas support themselves by the production movement based on the land reform. Our army produces more than half its food and clothes. Our transport problem is small for we keep the army where the food is, except for quick forced marches to achieve an encirclement. For ammunition we depend on the enemy. What is necessary is to give the people something to fight for, and organize them. Then we can always win."

"Where else in world history," said Peng Teh-hwai, deputy commander-in-chief, "will you find an army of a million and a half that gets its replacements in men and munitions from the enemy and thus grows steadily?"

On one of the dark days of the civil war—the day when word reached Yenan that America had given two billion dollars worth of war surplus to Chiang, Mao Tse-tung said to me, a bit sadly: "In the end we can rely on Chiang's soldiers. We lose men but also we capture men and they come over to us. Thus we advance." . . . With a whimsical smile he added: "Chiang's soldiers are very good soldiers. They need only a little political training."

Mao's strategy was confident because, even in Chiang's troops that came to kill him, he saw the long-oppressed peasantry of China which could not remain his foe. For it is not only the Peoples' Armies that march through China, but a people's revolution, rising against both the feudalism of centuries and the modern might of America and changing the land relations and the political thinking of the oldest, most populous nation on earth.

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Chapter XIII

THEIR LINE HAS GONE FORTH

"If the Chinese Communists did not call themselves Communists, thus raising the Russian bugaboo, they would not be so misunderstood in America," a New York correspondent argued with Mao Tse-tung. "If Americans realized that you stood for democracy, they would support you. Why handicap yourself with that name?"

Mao Tse-tung replied that the trouble was not in the name. "For more than a hundred years and without reference to Russians or Bolsheviks," he said, "the Western Powers have always supported anti-democratic rulers in China."

In the T'aiping Rebellion, in the 1850's, he instanced, the Western Powers gave armed assistance to the Manchu Emperor to crush the Chinese peasants in a slaughter that cost tens of millions of lives. Again, from 1900 to 1917, when no Russian "bugaboo" existed, the Western Powers gave money and arms to help reactionary warlords against Dr. Sun Yat-sen's fight for a democratic Chinese Republic. Again in 1925-27, when the Northern Expedition of the Kuomintang was overthrowing reactionary warlords in south China, the Western Powers opposed the Kuomintang until Chiang Kai-shek suppressed all democratic organizations and slaughtered workers and peasants, after which they gave him financial and military support.

"In the hundred years since the Opium War," Mao concluded, "how many movements of liberation have been liquidated by the imperialists!"

"Today, the right-wing of American monopoly capital seeks to rule the world," he continued. "These reactionaries fight democracy everywhere, whether on the borders of the U.S.S.R. or in the Philippines, whether in Greece, Indonesia, China, or in the United States. The nature of the struggle remains the same. The fight is between democracy and anti-democracy, not between Soviet and anti-Soviet. But there is this difference since the smashing of Hitler and the Japanese militarists. It

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is that the peoples of the world have become more conscious. That is why the imperialists cannot start a third world war at once."

The constant talk about war between the U.S.S.R. and America, said Mao on another occasion after dinner in his home, is "from the standpoint of the present largely a smoke-screen raised by the reactionaries to hide the more immediate conflicts. These are between the American reactionaries and the American people, and between American imperialism and the other capitalist lands.

"I do not say that the American reactionaries do not wish to fight the Soviet Union. Certainly they wish to do so. They dream of wiping out that socialist country that blocks them in their bid for world domination. But it is clear that if America wants to fight Russia, she must do this through other countries, and especially through England, France and China. So one cannot but suspect the purpose of the reactionaries when now, with World War II barely ended, they stir up so much talk of war and create such a war atmosphere. The American reactionaries use anti-Russian fear as a pretext to suppress the American people and to bring the rest of the capitalist world under American control. It is a trick very like that of Hitler. He also raised the 'Russian bugaboo' and used it to suppress first the German people and then all the other countries of Europe."

Mao laughingly made his point by placing the after-dinner teacups and little white wine cups in a diagram on the table.

"See! Here are the American imperialists." He set a big tea cup at one end of the table. "And around them are first, the American people." A ring of white porcelain wine cups was placed. "Now here is the U.S.S.R." He set a big tea cup at the other end of the table. "And here are the other nations." The space between the two antagonists was filled by a zigzag line of cups of all sizes—Mao laughed as he placed them—with cigarette boxes to fill in.

"Now, how can the American imperialists fight the Soviet Union? First they must attack the American people. They are already doing this, using anti-Soviet fear as excuse to suppress the American people both in their living standards and in their civil rights. But to instigate war, they must attack the American people very much harder. American reactionaries prepare

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to introduce fascism in America for without this they cannot make war. The American people should resist this, and I believe that they will.

"But suppose the American reactionaries get past the line of the American people. Next come the other capitalist countries. Here, in the Pacific, America already controls more than all the former British sphere of influence. She controls Japan, Kuomintang China, the South Pacific and half Korea. She has long dominated Latin America. She thinks of controlling the British Empire and Western Europe. She uses finance capital to subjugate Great Britain and other capitalist countries. She uses commerce to bring pressure on the economic fabric of all the capitalist lands. She stirs up anti-Russian fear to the same end: to make these countries her dependencies.

"Will the people of all these nations wait to be subjugated? Certainly not! They will resist! The American reactionaries will one day find themselves opposed by the whole world.

"In the postwar world a very great people's movement has been developing for peace and democratic liberties. This movement must of necessity move toward victory." Victory will come, Mao stated, through the "cooperation of the peoples." The American people, themselves oppressed by reactionaries, should make common cause with the people of all the other lands against the attacks of American imperialists in their respective countries.

"Only the victory of the people in such a struggle can avert World War Three."

THESE interviews came at last to an end for me in Yenan. The Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region, of which Yenan was capital, came under attack. For three months the troops of Hu Tsung-nan, the bitter Sian general, were raiding its frontier. Finally, for a week or more, the "American planes" came over, watching, sweeping low. So the life of Yenan swiftly began to withdraw to the deeper hills where I could not follow. I had to leave on one of the last Executive Headquarters' planes.

"Otherwise, it might be a year or more before we could send you out to the world," they said.

For the Chinese Communists this Yenan was no longer the sole base of their activity. It was not even their most important base. Their line had gone forth through all North China and

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Manchuria; there were a thousand towns and ten million peasants' homes that would welcome Mao Tse-tung. Their thought had gone forth into all China; it influenced movements even in India and Burma and Indonesia. Nothing vital depended any longer on this primitive cluster of caves in China's northwest.

There was, of course, some sentiment about Yenan but only once did I hear it expressed. Lu Ting-yi burst out under the prodding of a prying correspondent, who flew in to check the last days of Yenan: "What was this Yenan? Hunger, opium, prostitutes, syphilis, bandits! We have made it a place where no one steals and no one starves! And now we must leave it. Three thousand children go out this week into the winter night. Many of them will die of catching little colds. And they can't travel by day because of the planes!" That was the one time I heard anyone get passionate about Yenan. His own wife and child had left the night before.

Mainly, the Communists took Yenan dispassionately. It had been their retreat and the base from which they had expanded. It had neither military nor economic value now. There were even good strategic reasons for leaving it. They believed that they could "annihilate" Hu Tsung-nan's forces at less cost, if they let him advance into Yenan and surrounded him there.

"If Chiang takes Yenan it begins his downfall," said Peng Teh-hwai, deputy commander-in-chief of the armies, discussing Yenan strategy with me. "He ties up men and munitions in a poor and distant place that yields him nothing, neither food, nor wealth, nor strategic values but only prestige. If he wastes real values for prestige, he is finished." Peng predicted that, at the rate the encirclement and annihilation of Chiang's divisions was going, the "People's Liberation Armies" would wear out Chiang's offensive power and go over to their own general counter-offensive before autumn. His estimate later proved correct.

On the night before I left Yenan I had a final talk with Mao Tse-tung. It was not in his home, for the evacuation of Yenan was nearly completed and Mao was living some ten miles outside the settlement, in preparation for departure further north. A bus load of Central Committee members came into town for the evening—movement by day was curtailed because of the

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planes—to attend a new play on the land reform. Afterwards I went with Mao and one or two others into one of the caves—for one was as good as another—and young orderlies brought charcoal braziers for heat, candles for light, and tea, melon seeds and candied peanuts for a farewell feast.

I spoke to Mao Tse-tung about the loss of Yenan, for his would be the responsible final words.

"If you ask whether it is better to lose the city or to keep it," he said, "of course it is better to keep it. But if we lose it, we are still all right. A people's war for livelihood and national independence is not decided by taking or losing a city but by finding a solution to the agrarian problem."

I showed him a letter that had come by previous plane from a friend in New York. It breathed high tension. "We are in for a hard and bitter era. Our progressives make no dent in American foreign policy. They must fight to save even their own skins. I hope that Chinese Communists have no illusions about what the American government may do."

Mao Tse-tung smiled. No, he had no illusions. But he thought the American progressives were inclined to overestimate the strength of the American reactionaries and to underestimate the strength of democratic forces. It is a psychological weakness among American progressives and to some extent among those of Great Britain, he said.

"The American reactionary has a heavy burden. He must sustain the reactionaries of the whole world. And if he cannot sustain them, the house will fall down. It is a house with one pillar."

It is true, he said, that American imperialism is very strong. But also it is very weak. One must analyze the nature of its strength. His words I must quote from quick notes and from memory.

"American imperialism is the strongest in history, but also the weakest in history. The skyscraper is higher, but the foundation is shakier. American capitalism seems strong not because of its own inner strength but because of the weakness of capitalism in all the other countries. It is a phenomenon of decay, not of blooming.

"Why do the imperialists help Chiang so enthusiastically? Not because he is strong but because he is weak. It is the same in Japan, in Greece, in Italy. Everywhere the reaction-

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aries are in danger. That is why the imperialists rush to help. It is only now that so many reactionaries in the world are in mortal illness. . . .

"Like all reactionaries in history, the American reactionaries will prove to be only paper tigers. It is the American people who are strong, who have lasting power. . . .

"What is the strength of the imperialists? It lies only in the unconsciousness of the people. The democratic forces can win without any insuperable difficulty. The basic question is the consciousness of the people. It is not explosives nor oil fields nor atom bombs but the man who handles these. He is still to be educated. . . ."

After a moment, he added: "Communist parties in all lands have real power also because they awaken the people's consciousness. Here, in China, we Communists are only millet and rifle. But in the end our millet and rifle will prove stronger than Chiang's airplanes and cannon."

"There is also the atom bomb," I said, "in the hands of the American military."

Mao Tse-tung replied that he doubted whether the atom bomb would ever again be used in warfare. "It's great bursting over Hiroshima destroyed it. The people of the whole world have turned against it." Whether or not it was used, it would not give the final answer.

"The birth of the atom bomb," he added after a moment, "was the beginning of the death of the American imperialists. For they began to count on the bomb and not on the people. In the end, the bomb will not destroy the people. The people will destroy the bomb."

At midnight the friendly orderlies brought fresh tea and new candles to the cave which, for Mao Tse-tung, was already only an evening's halt on the march. Light strengthened on the picture that remains with me forever: the white arch of the ceiling, the dark flags of the floor, the rough stools and tables, and Mao's face, relaxed and confident, as he discussed the future of the world.

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