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**THE CHINESE CONQUER CHINA**

## **Books by ANNA LOUISE STRONG**

The Chinese Conquer China

I Saw the New Poland

Peoples of the USSR

Wild River

The Soviets Expected It

I Change Worlds

One Fifth of Mankind

China's Millions

# **THE CHINESE CONQUER CHINA**

**ANNA LOUISE STRONG**

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To EMILY PIERSON and RAYMOND ROBINS  
who helped pick up the pieces of a shattered work



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## THE WHITE PAPER—FOREWORD

One of history's great confessions has been published by the State Department: "The United States' Relations with China," commonly called the White Paper. Reading it together with my galleys, I envy the superb reporting available to diplomats. All the necessary knowledge about China was in their hands years ago.

They knew in 1943-44 that the Chinese Communists were "the most dynamic force in China," that "they exist because the people permit, support, and whole-heartedly fight with them," that "this is based upon . . . an economic, political and social revolution . . . moderate and democratic," which "improved the conditions of the peasants." They knew that "the common people, for the first time, have something to fight for," and that "the people will continue to fight any government that . . . deprives them of these newly won gains." They knew that "there is little if any evidence of material assistance from Moscow," despite "close and conscious affinity in aims."

From scores of reports the State Department knew that Chiang's government was "no longer representative of the nation," that it was "demoralized and unpopular . . . reactionaries indistinguishable from war lords of the past," that it was not even a trustworthy ally against Japan, since the Yalta Agreement had to be concealed from Chungking lest "it become available to the Japanese almost immediately." They knew "Chiang's feudal government cannot long coexist alongside a modern, dynamic government in North China."

They knew in 1945 that Chiang intended to launch civil war and that "the Communists would inevitably win." So General George C. Marshall went to China "to assist the National Government to establish its authority over as wide areas as possible." He withdrew in 1947, warning Chiang that his "military campaign would fail . . . and eventually destroy the National Government."

Knowing all this, the powers that be in Washington made the American people pay "more than 50 percent of the monetary expenditures of the Chinese Government" for four years. They sent Major General David Barr with a United States advisory group to inject American know-how into that doomed campaign. None of the battles Chiang lost—we have Secretary Acheson's word for it—"were lost for want of arms or ammunition." They were lost for lack of "the will to fight."

As one immortal example, "the Chinese Air Force . . . although it had over five thousand United States trained pilots, accomplished little. . . . There was an ingrained resentment in the Chinese Air Force against killing Communists who had no air support." No words of mine can equal that reporting by General Barr! Nor can any conclusions of mine be as convincing as the March 1949 dispatch from the American consul general in Tientsin: "Americans . . . who had the unhappy experience two months ago of witnessing the capture of Tientsin by Communist armies equipped almost entirely with American arms . . . handed over practically without fighting by the Nationalist armies

in Manchuria . . . have expressed astonishment . . . that Congress considers another billion and a half loan."

In the end Ambassador John Leighton Stuart had to report: "Our China Aid Program is condemned, even by its direct beneficiaries, as a factor prolonging civil war. . . . We bear the onus for supporting and keeping in power an unpopular regime which does not have the interests of the country at heart. . . . We are blamed."

Why did Washington pursue a policy so suicidal? Why do they pursue it still? The White Paper gives but few indications, but these are significant.

There is the plaintive voice of President Truman on March 11, 1948: "We did not want any Communists in the government of China or anywhere else if we could help it." There is the bluff military statement of Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer—small wonder his 1947 report was suppressed till now—that Communist control of China would result "in denying us important air bases for use as staging areas for bombing attacks," whereas Washington wanted a China that would "not only provide important air and naval bases but also from the standpoint of . . . manpower, be an important ally." These revelations will not increase America's popularity in a peace-hungry world.

Our diplomats had the knowledge and our war lords used it. Now the American people must have it, to use for their own interests. This book is for them, not in the talk of diplomats, but in stories, pictures, conversations, to tell them of the life of the Chinese people, the aims of their new leaders, the policies by which they won and by which they begin to rebuild their country. For the interests of the American people and the Chinese people are not alien to each other, but akin. They are friendship, peace, business, governments responsible to their citizens, and, based on these, a stable, expanding, prosperous life.



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# 1. MEMORIES COME CROWDING

At dusk the wind changed and the boatmen smiled. Now they could sail swiftly across the wide river. "Our Mao Tze-tung has borrowed the east wind for us. It is a sign."

Then the night of April 21, 1949, was split by flame as the artillery shells ripped over the waiting men into the enemy positions on the far shore. A signal flared. Thousands of small boats swept through the enemy's fire and over the shell-torn water, their white sails filled with the good east wind. Day broke on the Chinese People's Liberation Army pursuing Chiang Kai-shek's soldiers through villages south of the Yangtze. Old women were bringing boiled water, saying: "We have waited for you so long, but you are over the river at last."

That incredible crossing of the Yangtze River by a million men in small boats in a three-day battle on a three-hundred-mile front shook the ancient order of Asia. The shells that struck four British warships were a barely noticed incident to



the Chinese; even London found no way to protest. The hundred years were past in which armed foreigners had right of way in China. The Chinese people were taking over their country.

River ports, cities, and fortresses fell like ripe plums in a peasant's basket. Nanking was taken on the fourth day. In Shanghai the city postmen went out to show the way into the city; the conquerors came, marking the intersections with arrows. They refused gifts of food and even of boiled water, "not wishing to bother the people." They slept on the sidewalk around the Bank of China but did not enter. "There is money inside; it might make trouble if we went in." Here was the strongest army ever seen in China. It was humble to the humblest and proud to the proudest. They were peasants, disciplined and led by Chinese Communists.

Many Americans shuddered. "Is it Moscow's power that marches?" But the victors came with American guns! They exulted by radio: "The strength of the Chinese people is mightier than the most excellent American weapons; we have captured the weapons sent against us." They called themselves the Chinese People's Liberation Army. They were the first Chinese in a hundred years who won without foreign advisers.

Who was this Mao Tze-tung who gave the order: "Advance to liberate the whole country. . . . Defend the independence and integrity of Chinese territory and sovereignty," and who "borrowed the east wind" for his boatmen? He was the son of a Chinese peasant; he had never been abroad. After a university study of the ancient Chinese classics and modern Western learning he had accepted the analytic methods of Karl Marx. He was a master in applying this analysis to Chinese conditions and the problems of the Chinese people. Blockaded for more than twenty years in the heart of China's rural areas, he had planned and organized from a cave in the arid northwest for the victory of this day. He claimed to be carrying forward the revolution begun by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and fulfilling his "Three People's

Principles"—People's Nationalism, People's Democracy, and People's Livelihood—which, said Mao, "tallied" with the immediate program of the Chinese Communists.

Was it really that same "national revolution" that Sun Yat-sen had fathered, that "Great Revolution" interrupted for more than twenty years by Chiang Kai-shek and Japan and America? It was clear that most Chinese thus saw it. Hundreds of millions of peasants said: "At last we have land." Millions of workers were getting a collective voice in the industries; they had been with this revolution from the first. Small businessmen were saying: "It can't be worse than the brigandage of Chiang. The Communists permit free enterprise."

And where were the patriotic intellectuals, those scholars whose sanction has determined legitimacy of government in China for thousands of years? Many had long been slipping through the battle lines to join the new regime. College students flocked to the marching banners and learned how to organize cities. They particularly saw this as the "national revolution" to free China from foreign control. Higher-up intellectuals in the Democratic League broadcast from Peiping: "The liberation of all Asia begins."

The peoples of Asia were watching, from India and Japan to Indonesia. For all Asia was suffering the birth pangs of the "people's revolution." And the first-born of the new Asia was here.

I, watching across a continent and an ocean from a home in Connecticut, aching so to be in China, was saying: "This is not only China's Great Revolution. It is the century of the common man marching down through Asia arousing the billion people in South and East Asia who are half the human race. They have been the backward half, the hungry, the unlettered. Now they are the ones who forge ahead. China makes a pattern; China is their newest, nearest model. China is also a new power in the Pacific, strong enough to stabilize world peace. This may mean a shift of forces stopping a third world war."

Memories came crowding of the changes I had seen in China in more than twenty years.

First of all there was that famous strike in Hong Kong when a hundred thousand Chinese workers left the city, flinging picket lines along the coast to keep trade from the British port. Hong Kong was losing a million dollars a day and begging London for help. The American consul said to me: "You know those ghost towns in the West when a gold rush passes by? I wonder if that can happen to the greatest port in the East."

There was no government in the modern sense in China in those days, in 1925. War lords ruled counties and provinces, selling China piecemeal for foreign support. Peiping was a diplomats' capital for the convenience of foreign powers. Fanny Borodin said to me in Peiping: "Come to Canton. That's modern China! I'll get you a permit." Thus I learned that her husband, Michael M. Borodin, was "high adviser" to Dr. Sun Yat-sen's new "national government," invited by Dr. Sun from Russia when no other foreign power would deal with him at all.

The British steamer anchored off Shameen, outside Canton. A Chinese motorboat put off from shore, flying a new flag—the white sun on a blue sky—that was soon to take all China. Fanny Borodin sat in the stern and was visibly relieved when I stepped in quickly. "I was afraid you might bring someone else. The strikers would only give permit for one. It's the first permit for weeks to meet a British boat. They want you to see their new national government in Canton."

That was the Kuomintang with the Communists as members—an uneasy alliance. Silk-clad officials feared the rude strength of these workers, whose strike they used against their British rival, Hong Kong. Strikers scowled at silken officials yet claimed their hospitality against the "imperialists." There was friction in the very air of Canton. There was also power. In the strict harshness of those strikers, in a mass meeting of two thousand women workers, I felt for the first time the power of the Chinese people to take over their land.

I saw that power broken on the Yangtze after two years. Always that mighty waterway, patrolled by foreign gunboats, cut China in half by a barrier that only a people greatly unified could pass. Chiang seized control in Nanking by agreement with Shanghai capitalists and foreign powers. Two thirds of his Central Committee was still inland, ruling from "Red Hankow." There Borodin quipped, introducing me to a leading Chinese:

"Miss Strong is unlucky in her revolutions. She came too late for the one in Russia and now she is very much too soon for China."

I flung back, nettled: "I'm young enough to stick around and see this one through." I did not know that this was his last desperate month as "high adviser" and that he would soon be fleeing north. Nor did I dream how long this Chinese revolution would take and that I should fail to reach it when it came.

For how fast that "people's power" rose then in Hunan! How quick to organize was that Chinese peasantry! How sharply and accurately they cut to the heart of the need: "people's food" for rice control; "people's tribunals" to try big scoundrels; "people's schools" for the poor. No one who saw that "people's power" in South China, even in its shattered remnants as I did, ever forgot it. Mao Tze-tung saw it at its height and built his future policies on it. But few people then had heard of Mao. Twenty-two years later, sorting old files in Moscow, I picked out carbons of old letters, hoping to take them through to China, to show that long ago in 1927 my judgment of that peasants' rising in Hunan had agreed with that of Mao Tze-tung. I only wrote about it; he saw and planned and built.

What power was also in the upturned faces of the All-China Federation of Labor, representing four million organized workers in fourteen provinces, meeting in the heat of a Hankow summer, when the sweat poured down your body where you sat. They had crossed battle lines to come to organize their country against the "imperialists" of the world. Yu, the transport agitator

from Shanghai, and Ma, the veteran printer from Canton, and that old miner from Hunan who still reckoned time in terms of dynasties. Slim textile workers in their teens jested, like college girls evading a teacher, about the torture and death they must evade on their journey home.

Those workers poured into the foreign concessions along the Yangtze—the islands of foreign rule in the heart of China—and took them back by the Chinese people's unarmed might. Upper-class officials in Hankow were terrified; they wanted to give the concessions back. Power was not in them. They were frightened by the strength of the people's support. So Hankow fell.

For twenty years the power of the Chinese people was split and its greatest part was underground. Always I knew that someday it would arise to stay. After Hunan's peasant rising I felt that this would be new power, a new theme in the symphony of nations—the genius of an old, wise, understanding people born anew.

I never cared to see Chiang's rule in Nanking. It was a bitter caricature of that great and honest people's might. But after ten years I went in 1938 to China when Japan's invasion forced a partial Chinese unity. Chiang's German-trained army had been broken at Shanghai and Nanking; he had made Hankow his emergency capital. His big Chinese capitalists were in Hong Kong saving their personal fortunes. His foreign patrons, America, Britain, and France, were selling scrap iron to Japan and blockading China from the south. Only a thin line of aid came from Russia across great deserts. Chiang was forced back upon the Chinese people.

That was Chiang's moment. All patriots rallied around him. He rode a bicycle unguarded through Hankow. A woman of his family told me: "He only wanted power. Now he wants also popularity. He is happy when his picture is cheered in the movies." That was Chiang's chance to unify China and go down

in history as her savior. He remained a war lord married to Big Business and cherishing personal hates. His moment passed.

I went north to the war zone by Marshal Yen Hsi-shan's special train to visit the already famous Eighth Route Army of the Communist general, Chu Teh, which was operating widely behind the Japanese lines. The private train was war-zone type, grim. Dining-car windows were broken, with zero weather outside. I put water in my soap dish on the dining-car table to see what would happen. It was ice in forty minutes. We used charcoal braziers in the sleeping compartments till one man fainted from the fumes. You couldn't walk in the aisles at night for the jumble of arms, legs, and bodies of Yen's sleeping guards.

Since Yen was commander of the Second War Zone, the Communist troops of Chu Teh were technically under him. Yen said they were "obedient." "All the troops in my war zone are." You could believe it if you liked. Actually Yen was an aged feudal lord with no military sense. If he ever gave any clear orders, which I doubt, he couldn't get out in the hills to check. He adored conversations on the philosophies of social change and was far more interested in playing with utopias than in the unpleasant drudgery of the Japanese war. I had many train talks with him. He bowed politely to Communism but dismissed it as infantile. His theory of the moment was social reform by abolishing money, but he was receptive to the single tax and to the "share the wealth" of Huey Long. His poise was classic, his speech unhurried; his gesturing hands, rhythmic as a dancer's, built and demolished states, measured out time and space, caressed towns and villages. Autocrat of Shansi, though chased from his capital, Yen still knew himself God.

Even Yen had his moment. When he moved to a Shansi cave instead of going to Peiping as puppet ruler for Japan, he gained much face among patriots. It was a very elegant cave, with a suite of rooms and excellent rugs; it was a good bomb shelter too. If Yen could have died in the war zone, or if, living on, he could have kept those gesturing hands from meddling in

the fate of the people, he might have become an honorable ancestor. In the end the Shansi peasants hated Yen even more than they hated Chiang. There's an old Chinese proverb: "You'll never convince the mouse that the lion is more terrible than the cat." Chiang was their distant lion; Yen, the local cat that pounced. All those utopias, with Yen as master, beggared them more than ordinary war-lord looting did. Yen was again chased from his province in 1949, this time by his own people. He became the last symbol of fugitive government in alien Canton.

One man on that train will be remembered: Professor Li Kung-po, a jovial patriot just out of Chiang's jail, who was going north with six hundred students to open a University of National Revolution under Yen. "We have twenty-five hundred applications already," he told me. "Why do they come? They are from a leisured class that likes peace and easy life. Here they are rushing like crazy men to get to the front. They travel in freight cars like common soldiers. They know they will freeze in Shansi and have only danger and bad food. None of this worries them. If they worry at all it is because they are not sure what this university will be, if it will really be useful to the nation." His laugh rang out. "And can you blame them? Even I, who organize it, don't know what Yen will permit. I know we must awaken the people, organize, train, and arm them, get new blood into government. I know it is more important to hold these Shansi hills, which are centers of coal and iron, than to waste so many armies trying to hold Shanghai."

Li Kung-po went gallantly into the hills. His University of National Revolution failed. What could you do under Yen? Then Li spent two years organizing education in Communist areas behind the Japanese lines. When I saw him again in 1940 in Chungking he gave me a set of posters he had brought out through considerable danger. Their bad dyes are fading, but I treasure them still. Li was assassinated by Chiang's gangsters in Kunming. He died a good Democratic Leaguer. He lives forever among the students of his land.

Everyone had his chance in that great resistance—Chiang and Yen and Li, the Communists and the Kuomintang. The Communists released the energies of the people fearlessly; Chiang checked them. Thus the Communists, starting as outlaws, won.

Whatever national unity was built in that first year of the Japanese war was breaking in 1940 when, as the first foreigner to fly via the new air route, I flew from Moscow over the Sinkiang deserts to Chungking. Chiang was now using his best troops to blockade the Communists, saving his American-given supplies for later civil war. Some fifty of his generals in the war zone had gone over to the Japanese and were condoned in Chungking because they were fighting the Communist-led resistance. It was called "beating the enemy by curved-line method." A deadly jest went around: "Japanese are only lice on the body of China, but Communism is a disease of the heart."

Chou En-lai, diplomatic representative for the Communists, half underground in a Chungking slum but still relatively safe because he had once saved the life of Chiang Kai-shek, gave me in several nights a long account of armed clashes between Chiang's generals and Communist-led forces. Strife had been increasing for two years, but both sides still suppressed the news. "Do not publish unless I send you word," Chou told me. "We will not increase friction by prematurely revealing these clashes. But I want the account in trustworthy hands to release abroad if Chiang, as we fear, attacks more seriously."

Chiang's generals massacred ten thousand of the New Fourth Army within the month: officers' families, hospital, the whole rear guard. At that time I was on a boat to San Francisco, and the message met me in New York: "Now publish what you know!" So the tale of two years of hidden war, suppressed in Chungking, broke in New York.

One encounter that time in Chungking had a meaning I learned much later. Li Kung-po, giving me news of the peasants' resistance in the north, invited me to a conference of leading



intellectuals. A score of eminent personages from educational, business, and welfare organizations, they seemed to have few points in common but a joint hunger for free speech against Chiang's growing oppressions and a complete innocence of how political parties are organized. They even asked advice from me, a roving journalist. I took it for polite gesture, but I gave apologetically a bit about the technical forms of federated parties worked out in our Washington Commonwealth Federation in Seattle. They seemed to find it new. I thought them—God forgive me!—a decent, ineffective lot. Six years later a dignified gentleman in Shanghai, wanted by Chiang's police, asked: "How do you like the thing you helped us start?"

"What thing?"

"Our group you met in Chungking—at later sessions formed the Democratic League." Yes, that is how political movements are born—and grow.

In 1946 I again returned to China. The chance of twenty years had come. Those areas of the north that the world called "Communist" and that called themselves the "Liberated Areas" had grown mightily behind the steel curtain of the Japanese war and Chiang's blockade. A few daring reporters had reached Yen-an, but other, greater areas had been unreached. Now suddenly they became accessible through what we called the "Marshall truce." A kind of super-government called "Executive Headquarters" was in Peiping under American chairmanship. From it American army planes flew to nearly forty points in North China and Manchuria where "truce teams" functioned, also with American chairmen. This gave the American air force access to all China as far as the Soviet border. It also opened the Liberated Areas to correspondents who had time and will.

The chance was superlative—and temporary. I seized it. I traveled the Liberated Areas nine months, getting the basic material for this book. Then civil war closed on Yen-an in March

1947, and Executive Headquarters, with its planes and truce teams, was withdrawn.

It was Mao Tze-tung who told me that I should leave Yen-an on the last plane. "Otherwise it might be two years before we could send you out to the world. You have seen our areas very widely. Take the story out, and later you may come back." Yen-an was under bombing, almost evacuated; he himself was living miles away in the hills.

I wanted to stay and go into the hills with them because they were such friendly people and because they were making world history. Never in my life had I felt so close to the human power that builds the world as there in that isolated, beleaguered Yen-an. Sidney Rittenberg was staying, the North Carolina lad who had traveled to Yen-an on foot for thirty days at my suggestion; he gave me what he had gathered on the way. That Cornell farm specialist Engst was staying, moving north to Inner Mongolia, teaching how to save cattle, designing simple farm tools for the factories to make in spring. The Friends' Ambulance Unit was staying, moving with the civilian hospital. But these were younger people with specialties the Chinese needed.

I knew that I couldn't stay. I couldn't keep up with their march.

They put it very politely: "You have now the only story of our areas. All past books are out of date. They were only about the Yen-an area, which is now the smallest of all. They were only about the war with Japan, when America was our ally and we sought a united front with Chiang Kai-shek. But now is a different time when Chiang, with American aid, seeks to destroy us. This changes all policies, our land reform, our strategy. So yours is the only story now, the only book. Take it to America. Tell the world how we are winning. Then, when we again have contact with the world, you will return."

That was the kind way to put it, the "face-saving way." It also was true.

America wasn't interested. I sat in Shanghai and wrote. I

poured stuff into America. I cabled literary agents and lecture agents and friends that I should come home with my tale.

"China's dead," they answered. "The Communists are washed up. Come back by Russia and Europe. That interests us now."

Indians and Japanese were interested, and people from the South Seas. Some of them working for UNRRA came to see me. "Everybody wants to know about those areas." I gave them a copy of my manuscript. Later I heard that Bombay and Calcutta fought for the rights to my China book.

A Japanese made six copies; there were four hundred pages now. "We don't know how much MacArthur will let us publish," he said. "Japanese of all political views are much interested in the Chinese Communists. They were the only Chinese who beat back the armed might of Japan."

These people of Asia grabbed especially any old scraps I had of the writings of Mao Tze-tung. There were six or seven of his earlier speeches on literature, financial and economic problems, government, strategy, that had been badly translated and badly copied in Yenan as handouts to correspondents. Few took them; they had only historic interest and were hard-to-read carbons. But Indians copied and recopied them to spread around.

"Only two copies of Mao's works have reached us," an Indian said, "but already we know that for Marxists of Asia it is important to study Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism, but also to study Mao-ism."

"Is Mao already an 'ism'?" I smiled. He said that Mao was. "It is Mao who best applies Marxist analysis to the problems of Asia."

I gave up New York for the time and returned to Europe via Moscow, promoting China all along the way. North Korea would have taken my book sight unseen; they were avid for news. I had no extra copy; I sent one later, but I never knew whether it got there. East Europe also was especially interested. Mao Tze-tung had developed the theory of "new democracy" four years before they used it. Premier Gottwald in Prague and

Vice-Premier Rakosi in Budapest wanted to hear about China. I placed my book quickly all over Europe. It took a week for Czechoslovakia, forty-eight hours for Hungary, a week end for France. Later Berlin took it, Warsaw and Rome.

All lands in the throes of change were eager to know about China. But not America.

"We can get you debates on Russia," the literary and lecture agents said. "Nothing on China sells."

"It will," I urged. "The Chinese Communists will be all over the front pages in half a year." They weren't convinced. Not till the big, final victories came.

In Paris I met three representatives from the Liberated Areas. They had come from North China and Manchuria more recently than I had; they were even more confident than I. They told me the time was at hand when I might return via Manchuria, the route by which they had come. They thought they could help get the necessary permissions. Later they got news from China confirming the invitation. When they learned that I had a visa as far as Moscow, they seemed to think the rest would be easy.

"The sooner, the better," they said. "Events are near." They gave me letters of introduction for the Manchurian frontier.

In Moscow I applied for an exit permit as directed. I waited. Four months I waited in a Moscow apartment, getting the news by London BBC on a very poor radio, while the Chinese People's Liberation Army took Tsinan and Changchun, Mukden and Hsuechow, Tientsin, and Peiping. Chinese friend after friend went on without me and still my Soviet exit permit failed. Then just as the Chinese representative arrived who had, I believed, the power to arrange it, the Russians arrested me and sent me back through Poland. For five days in jail I wondered what I had stepped on. *They never told me. I still intend to know.*

That was the only time my Chinese friends ever invited me and the only time I failed to get through. That was the "Great

Revolution” which for more than twenty years I had awaited and which, when it came, I didn’t see.

Perhaps I had seen enough. Not all who hope may see it. Six hundred Chinese students and workers were executed in Shanghai in the last three days of the angry, dying regime, lest they hail the victors. They had hoped longer than I had; their loss was very much more.

For I can still look beyond the ocean and understand what I see. Not in phrases of theory but in pictures sharp and clear. That dark-skinned farmer Li who sat in my Yen-an cave cracking the lice from his shirt as he praised the “new society”; that girl agitator in Manchuria who “liquidated” a bandit chief of one hundred armed men; those thousands of students risking the concentration camps and the battle lines to reach swiftly organized “universities” where, sleeping in rows on floors, they learned how to “manage cities”; and that last talk in Yen-an with Chairman Mao.

Let us begin again then, where it all started, with those friendly days when I lived in a cave in Yen-an.

## 2. WHO ARE THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS?

### 1. THE CITY OF CAVES

Who are these Chinese Communists who so swiftly took China? Who proclaim “new democracy,” permit free enterprise, yet call themselves followers of Marx? Are they agrarian reformers from the back country? Are they the power of the Chinese people, conscious and organized? Or are they Moscow’s power?

It will take the rest of this book to answer these questions, for final answer can lie in no judgment of mine but only in the fullest account of what they say and do. We begin with Yen-an. Not as it is today, a small provincial capital in the “badlands,” with both the war and the glory departed. But Yen-an of 1946–47, the Communists’ number-one capital, their experimental station for twelve years. Yen-an at its high moment, when it made and passed into history. The Yen-an that no one will ever see again. Victory, no less than defeat, kills the past.

Our plane flew west from Peiping. During our three-hour flight the hills grew steeper and the valleys narrower until the

naked slopes seemed like the mountains of the moon. From the air few settlements were visible, for the people lived in caves in cliffs. Many hilltops were sliced off, flattened; I later learned that the flat tops were cultivated fields. Much land was barren. The deserts of Mongolia were not far.

The plane turned sharply down, raced dangerously between rock mountains, and struck rough grass where sentries stood on guard. Two trucks and some jeeps appeared on the wild field. One truck came from the Communists' military headquarters, the other from the liaison group of the United States Army, which had been in Yen-an ever since General Joseph W. Stilwell had established it during the war with Japan. I was to stay in the "American compound," now used by the Chinese Communists as their guesthouse for foreigners.

We jolted over a rough road above a shallow river and saw beyond it the ruins of a town. Once Yen-an had been a walled city, a western outpost of China against the desert, built at the junction of three valleys, marked from afar by a tall pagoda on a hill. When the Japanese had finished bombing there was no structure but that pagoda left. The people abandoned the heaps of rubble and dug themselves caves in the loess soil of the cliffs, such as the peasants of these parts have lived in for generations.

Yen-an's population was now sunk in the scenery, more than ten square miles of rugged hills. The mouths of their caves gaped at all levels. Smoke curled from stovepipes emerging from mountains. Up every valley one saw blue-trousered men and women—China's countrywomen also wear trousers—jumping gullies, wading creeks, climbing home by their steep, carved trails.

Our truck bumped over the bed of Yen River and dumped us into the American compound, an enclosure surrounded by an earthen wall and containing several buildings. Whittelsey Hall, the largest, built in memory of Lieutenant Whittelsey of the United States Air Force, who was killed in North China in our joint war with Japan, contained a social hall and dining room. A

long row of semi-caves, partly sunk into the cliff, had been officers' quarters but were also used for visitors now. A radio kept contact with Executive Headquarters in Peiping; a dynamo supplied light.

This compound, built for twenty men, had during the war with Japan been the center which, with the help of the Chinese Communists, collected military information for the United States Army from all North China. It had handled the rescue of more than one hundred American airmen shot down by the Japanese and rescued by Communist-led guerrillas. It was almost empty now. One lone American major, on duty as "observer," complained that his reports were disregarded.

"On my last trip to Peiping I found Executive Headquarters showing a Yen-an air force of twenty planes on its official map! Why do they take that stuff from Nanking instead of asking their own observer? I could have told them that Yen-an never had an air force, not even a single plane except the one that deserted Chiang and stands as an exhibition, without gasoline. Doesn't Executive Headquarters want to know?"

This officer was soon transferred. American observers to Yen-an were changed often—half a dozen different ones in the months I was there—probably because they so soon began to like the Chinese Communists or perhaps because they were never able to find the "Russian connection" they were all told to get. The only Russians around were two doctors who had flown in with Red Cross supplies and Chiang Kai-shek's permission sometime earlier from Manchuria when the Russians were still there. The doctors were left now with no contact with Moscow and no hope of getting home. They talked no politics but were very busy with medical work. Sometimes they tried to get Moscow programs on the radio given them by the hospitable Chinese, but the only good program they had time for came on at nine-thirty in the evening, which was just about the hour the Americans turned off the dynamo. Several times I sat in their room and heard them sigh with homesickness when a Tchaikovsky



symphony or a Ukrainian love song was casually cut in two. Some of the American observers were good-natured enough to have stretched a point and given that half-hour program if the Russians had asked them, but the Russians would have felt embarrassed to ask.

There were other foreigners in Yen-an: the Friends' Ambulance Unit of Australians and Americans, a Czech dentist sent by UNRRA, occasional correspondents, and some free-lance volunteers. These were luckier than the Russians; they used American planes to reach the world. In all parts of the Liberated Areas that I subsequently visited the United States Army and the civilians of all the countries it favored had very much better connections than the Russians had. When contact finally broke, it was broken by United States Army orders, not by the Chinese Communists.

The cave I first occupied was a large one, some twenty feet deep by twelve wide, and arched like a quonset hut. Its clay inner walls were whitewashed, its flooring of rough homemade brick. The front was closed by a wooden lattice in which door and windows were hung. These were light wooden frames covered with white paper and let in considerable light. The caves in the American compound had the added luxury of two glass windowpanes. There was not a piece of metal in the dwelling, not even a nail or tack.

The advantage of a cave is its cheapness. Metal is very scarce in rural China, and the blockade kept it out of Yen-an. When bombs fell, people gathered the scrap metal. Timber is also scarce, the eroded hills of Northwest China having long been denuded of forests. The cliffs are of dry packed soil that may be cut easily into dwellings. One needs only a few strips of wood, some paper, and some whitewash. A Yen-an cave cost hardly ten American dollars besides the owner's labor. A peasant told me he bought his two-cave home for five bushels of grain. More elaborate caves, faced with or cut in sandstone, cost a trifle more,

but Yen-an homekeepers didn't think them worth it. It was agreed that sandstone caves were chillier in winter, lacking the close blanket of the compact earth.

There were as many types and locations of caves in Yen-an as there are of houses in the outside world. Most of them were warmed by charcoal braziers; the Chinese, who wear padded winter clothing, do not indulge in the high house temperatures of the West. Cast-iron stoves in the American compound gave a high but fitful temperature with much dirt. A few Class-A caves had a heating system under the floor, like the "warm floors" of Korea. Theirs was the most delightful heat I ever knew. You could sit in the Russian doctors' cave with the door wide open to the freshness of a snowy landscape and still feel warmth from the floor. I ask nothing better than a Class-A Yen-an cave.

So let no pampered American sneer at caves as dwellings. They are cool in summer and warm in winter, insulated by the earth. After the distressing summer heat of Shanghai and Peiping, I took to my cave in Yen-an and for five days did little but sleep. Cool, refreshing sleep under blankets.

There was neither running water nor sewage system. Water came from wells; it was advisable to boil it. Light came from candles or tiny kerosene lamps, except in the few homes served by the American dynamo. Chinese peasants found candles and kerosene too expensive; they used home-pressed vegetable oil in tiny jars with a hanging cotton wick. This three-thousand-year-old contrivance gave enough light to prevent stumbling in a room. Public halls in Yen-an were lit by big oil lamps hanging from the ceiling; they were bright but fluctuated, and the burner sometimes exploded, to everybody's merriment.

Yen-an's caves were in clusters up some twoscore valleys. South of the old walled city, which because of the debris was no longer a center but a barrier, were the New Market, the Border Region Government with its bank and guesthouse—these were not caves but fair-sized buildings—then Yenda University with caves on many ledges and, several miles beyond, the experimental farm.

North of the ruined city lay our American compound and, facing it across the river, the military headquarters on low ground and the high Radio Hill. Farther north several rough roads led up different valleys to the party school; to Yang Family Village—where the Central Committee had headquarters—to Los Angeles Nursery, contributed by Californians; to the International Peace Hospital, donated by Madame Sun Yat-sen's China Welfare Fund; and to various residential clusters of leading Communists.

It was at least ten miles from the caves of Commander in Chief Chu Teh in the north at Date Garden to the experimental farm in the south. The doctors and some officials went horseback. The Americans and the Communists' military headquarters had a few trucks and jeeps. Most citizens plodded on foot. So life moved slowly and people lived at the places where they worked.

In this primitive life a typical inconvenience was Yen River. It divided Yen-an in two. In winter its smooth ice surface made the best highway for carts and jeeps. Spring had arrived when the first jeep broke through. In summer the river was a moody creature, rising violently with every rain. Its normal, muddy depth was in inches; jeeps, horses, and humans splashed through. A shower in the upper valleys would send a five-foot torrent strong enough to overturn a truck. When you looked at that suddenly impassable current you shuddered at the thought of the furious Yellow River, which carries the flood from hundreds of Yen Rivers. Rude bridges were thrown over the river in spring and fall but were removed before the season of high water, lest their valuable timbers be washed away.

There was no sense of hurry in Yen-an. 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. Living in a cave and stepping out always directly under the sky, one becomes aware of every rain, every snowfall, and the moon's month-long changes. Even in the midst of the winter battles, when the enemy was raiding

the frontier, people rejoiced in the new fall of snow that was "so good for the crops."

So Yen-an, 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 I lived there. When Chinese came from Nanking, Shanghai, or Peiping, they also felt this sense of rest. I recall how Chou En-lai, chief negotiator in Nanking, came to Yen-an from a breakdown in discussion and, leaving a breathless bunch of correspondents at the airport, fell asleep in a cave for the rest of the day. Hwang Hwa, one of Executive Headquarters' staff in Peiping, reached Yen-an sick from the strain of a year's fruitless battles and said a week later: "It is a miracle how well I feel; I eat so much and sleep so well." Yet Yen-an was under bombing then. Lu Ting-yi, who spent five months in Chungking and Nanking as delegate to the Political Consultative Conference, told me during his two months' vacation in Yen-an: "One ages more in five months in Kuomintang China than in five years here."

Party officials worked long hours in Yen-an with meager food to sustain them; in winter their meals were reduced to two daily, chiefly millet and greens. They worked in cold caves, sitting on wooden stools or benches, by tiny lamps that gave only dim light. But they seemed to work with little strain even under the approach of invasion. This was due in part to the restful simplicity of a life close to nature; in part to the comradely social life. It was due, above all, to the fact that in twelve years of Yen-an they had tested and adapted and fitted all their theories to the primitive Chinese countryside and the daily life of its peasants. They felt at home in the homes of the people, moving directly without fear.

A few modern facilities had been brought by the Communists into even this cave-dwelling region: the half dozen jeeps and trucks that ran on low-grade gasoline from a local oil well and refinery, a field telephone that jumped the river to important

places, a newspaper and a radio to connect with the outside world.

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 hand from local grasses. Five hundred feet higher up, by paths that were steep and slippery in wet weather, the staff of radio and newspaper lived on successive ledges, with their aerials waving in the sky from the peak. Their caves were small, barely six by twelve feet in size, heated poorly by charcoal braziers, and lit only by tiny oil lamps.

In these dim caves well-educated young people from many lands and knowing many languages monitored the news of the world. Here sat a youth with earphones taking down Associated Press news by the weak light. Near him another took down United Press dispatches. 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 *Emancipation Daily*, but it was all made available in digests for the Central Committee and for anyone who wanted to know. I could get much better news in Yenan than in Peiping. The dynamo necessary for this radio service and for the other radio contact with Liberated Area governments and field commanders of the widely scattered armies was far too precious to be used for lighting the caves of the radio workers or even the cave of Chairman Mao Tze-tung.

There was good company on Radio Hill; it attracted intellectuals irresistibly. Everyone there was a personality with a story. Editor Liao had been a diplomatic representative for the Eighth Route Army in a southern city, with presumable personal immunity, until 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 run railways. Half a dozen young Chinese ran the English-

language broadcast; they had come from Hong Kong, Singapore, Java, and even America to fight for their country against the Japanese, and thus eventually reached Yen-an. Among them was gentle-mannered Chen Lung from Java, whom we called "The Dragon" because that was the English translation of his name.

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

Social life was friendly and informal. Dinners, dancing, card games, theater—there were all these usual recreations, but with a quality of Yen-an's own. Dinners were usually for 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. Some played bridge but more indulged in a card game called "one hundred," which had two jokers and was peppier than bridge. General Chu Teh was a devotee of this game and had a childlike passion for winning. One of my few sad moments in Yen-an was when he politely invited me as partner and my inexperience made him lose.

The theater had expert actors; its costumes were as elaborate as any in Peiping. We saw the classic Chinese opera with tales of old dynasties. There were also short vaudeville skits—the Yang-kes—and regular modern dramas in three acts. The American Army made its contribution to Yen-an's recreation. The observer, in social repayment for the dinners and dances to which the Chinese invited him, showed Hollywood movies sent out for G.I.s. There was an epidemic just then of psychological

dramas of soul-tortured women having dreams. Yen-an's notables stared at the uncanny emotional habits of Americans.

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 for women as well as men. It faded to different tones of gray-blue according to length of wear and exposure to weather, for Yen-an had no good dyes. In winter it was replaced by a cotton-padded suit of similar material. There was some variety in colored socks and sweaters, which men as well as women knit. The sentry of our compound knit a pair of socks for me. Shoes were of heavy cotton, padded in winter, with soles of home-grown hemp.

The chief social event of the week was the Saturday-night dance, attended by many of the party leaders. Chu Teh came almost every week, Mao Tze-tung about twice a month. Chinese musical instruments mingled with Western, making dance rhythms of such ancient favorites as "Old Black Joe." There were waltzes and two-steps and one-steps and a four-step to Yang-ke music, which is like fox trot music but with more swing. People expressed themselves with easy freedom. Those who wanted to stamp, stamped; those who wanted to glide, glided. Some professional dancers of the theater brought the agility of acrobats to the floor. Among the leaders of party and government, the "little devils" who served as orderlies—what the rest of the world would call coolies—also whirled gaily. I laughed to imagine the scene transferred to Chiang's Nanking or, for that matter, to Washington. We may have known something like it in Jackson's days.

Surroundings were crude, but the easy fellowship turned crudities into fun. Dance-hall windows were open even in winter since people danced in their padded clothes. Once when the floor was sprinkled with water to keep down dust, water drops froze near the windows, causing merriment when the dancers slipped. On another occasion peanuts were given out 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 faster and faster to a final bang.

Meet, then, the four leading Communists as they appeared at Yen-an 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 to take on one of the Yang-ke acrobats or the Russian doctor, Orloff, who liked to stamp it Cossack style. But always one returned to Chou En-lai as number-one dancer. His control, his easy grace—one imagined these qualities in his discussions in Nanking.

Liu Hsiao-chi, who next to Mao 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 with 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, no matter what the band played. If you were caught with Chu Teh when they gave an enticing waltz, you might look longingly at that perfect dancer, Chou En-lai, stepping it with the equally perfect Mrs. Mao Tze-tung. But at the end of the evening, when you were too tired to walk or stand, you could still dance with Chu Teh. His rhythm had an effortless, sturdy persistence that was easier than sitting still.

Mao Tze-tung, the leader, sat out most dances; so many people wanted to chat. When he took the floor it was with easy definiteness, as if he "gave the party line" to the band. Some people have said that he has no sense of rhythm; with this I disagree. He has a firm and delicate sense, and the rhythm is his own. He kept the friendliest contact with the music, yet never slavishly submitted. As his partner you had to pay close attention, yield watchfully,



move at slight indications. But if you got his rhythm he brought you out bang! with the band at the finish. It was in several ways a triumph to dance with Chairman Mao.

Best of all in my Yenan life were the conversations. Yenan talk was very good. All interviews had a spacious quality. Because of difficulties of transportation and lack of clocks, appointments were made not for a precise hour but for the half day: "in the morning," or "in the afternoon." They often included a hospitable meal which went beyond the usual millet and greens. One really got acquainted with people in Yenan interviews. There were long afternoons which Lu Ting-yi, chief of information, devoted to giving me the history of the Chinese Communist Party. There was the full day spent with Liu Hsiao-chi, when he outlined Mao's "new inventions in Marxism" from ten in the morning till five in the afternoon, with an intermission when the orderlies brought lunch.

One term was heard more often than any other. It was "the people." The Chinese people, the people of the world were always the ultimate reference. "Go among the people." "Learn from the people." These were the slogans. They seemed much deeper than slogans. They seemed to express an ultimate love, a final faith.

General Chu Teh was a military man who had expressed himself in battles for thirty-five years, ever since he took part in the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty in that 1911 revolution that established the Chinese Republic. 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 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, and troubles the waters; 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 jagged 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."

Chu Teh lived peacefully in his cave. All those rumors that spread from Nanking about his personal appearance in this or that war zone were pure legend. He had radio contact with the front, but Yen-an had no planes or rapid transport. It was no center of frantic motion. Details of execution and much local initiative were left to the leaders of each county and the commanders on each front.

Yen-an was their source of slowly and carefully determined policy, of ideas.

Not for many years, and perhaps never, had I so felt my concepts of the world sharpening, developing, as in those Yen-an talks. I had known in my life two great systems. I grew up in the American way of life; my people had been born in it for hundreds of years. I took part in some of its battles: for women's suffrage, for better forms of democracy—the initiative, referendum, recall, the Roosevelt New Deal. Then I learned to know the Soviet system. I went there almost at the beginning of the Russian Revolution, married there, organized a daily paper there, traveled all over the country, and wrote about it for years. I thought I had a fair grasp of two great systems, what each has to give the world, what makes each tick. Then here in China was something different from either. A new birth of the world's most ancient people.

The people in Yen-an, the thinkers and the builders of this new creation, men with sharp minds, deep thoughts, and a world-wide view, were willing to take long hours for explanation and discussion, which few people in America or Russia will do any more. I wonder if they will ever again have time for it in China, now that they must manage the land. In Yen-an there was time and space; there was expansion of thinking. It was like Columbus

sighting America. It was "dawn coming up like thunder across the bay." It was like being young again.

## 2. THEY THOUGHT BACK OVER HISTORY

The Chinese Communists had no illusions about Yen-an. They smiled at my enthusiasm for the place. One of the younger men told me, a bit caustically, that it was all right if you could ride in a jeep, but that if I had to wade Yen River, as he did, I'd want warmer water. He came from a town in the south.

Most of the Communists who came were originally southerners who felt Yen-an as exile in a harsh land but who made of it an experimental station and a base. Later people traveled here from the growing Liberated Areas for consultation or to make reports. It took them weeks or even months, as once it took Americans to ride by horse from Maine to Washington. So they came for no short interviews but for discussions lasting many days or for study that might take months. Here they thought back over history and learned from past mistakes.

An engaging trait of the Chinese Communists is their readiness to admit mistakes. They do not belong to the brand of politician who is always right. Once in 1937 Peng Teh-hwai, deputy chief of Communist armed forces, came to dinner with us at Bishop Root's home in Hankow. The bishop, a genial head of Episcopal Missions, teased Peng about a "kidnaping" of missionaries by local Kiangsi Communists some years before. All of us knew that the bishop had long since written off that incident, for the missionaries had not been ill treated; they had been taken to care for some wounded peasant-soldiers and then let go. But poor Peng, a famous strategist, whom we all expected to defend the action on the ground of the soldiers' need or even on the ground that missionaries were "agents of foreign imperialism," blushed and stammered like a boy. "We were rather green and hotheaded then," he admitted. It made one feel affectionate for that stocky, apologetic Peng.

The history of the Chinese Communists can be given today with fortunate clarity just because, in 1943-45, they thoroughly discussed, in all their far-flung units, their past mistakes. Since those units were fighting almost daily skirmishes with Japanese at the time, it is to be assumed that importance was attached to the study of this history. They came to certain joint conclusions about past successes, failures, mistakes, and their future program. The decisions were taken at their Seventh Party Congress in April 1945.

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

Lu Ting-yi distinguished three periods in the party's history: the "Great Revolution," begun by united Kuomintang and Communist forces but broken by the split in 1927; the agrarian revolution and first civil war, which ended with the "Sian incident" in December 1936; and the period of anti-Japanese resistance, during which there was a "Chinese national united front." This united front was marred by armed clashes between Kuomintang and Communist forces from 1939 onward and was breaking finally as I sat there in Yen-an. A fourth period—the present civil war—began with Chiang's all-out attack in July 1946 and is closing with the 1949 victories of the Communists.

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 have taught us to avoid such mistakes later."

The Chinese Communist Party was born in the revolutionary upheavals that swept the world at the close of World War I. Under the strain of that war and the influence of the Russian Revolution that followed, all forward-looking classes in China were aroused. First came the famous May Fourth Movement, begun by the Peiping students in 1919—the movement that

overthrew a traitor cabinet and blocked Japan's Twenty-one Demands. Then China's first trade unions appeared, her first peasant unions. The Chinese Communist Party held its first Congress in Shanghai in 1921. Three years later, in January 1924, Dr. Sun Yat-sen's party, the Kuomintang, held its first national congress and admitted the Communists as members.

In this first period of coalition the Communists were part of the Kuomintang. Dr. Sun Yat-sen agreed to include them because years of bitter failure had shown him that his party of patriotic businessmen and intellectuals could free China neither from "imperialists" nor from war lords without strong help of the workers and peasants. The Communists agreed because they also held that the first job was to free China as a nation and, internally, to overthrow feudal rule, and that for this the help of progressive businessmen was needed. They hold this same view today.

Dr. Sun's "Three People's Principles," which, with different interpretations, have been the Bible for every movement in modern China, were given their most detailed and radical formulation at that first national congress of the Kuomintang in which the Communists also sat. They were supplemented by the "Three Great Policies": friendship with the U.S.S.R.; co-operation of Kuomintang and Communists; organization of workers and peasants.

Success was terrific as long as the coalition held together. It gives a pattern even for today. Patriots flocked to Canton to fight for their country, as in 1949 they flocked to Peiping. When the joint revolutionary armies marched north in 1926 under General Chiang Kai-shek, provincial war lords quickly collapsed, much as the Kuomintang armies disintegrated under the 1948-49 drive of the People's Liberation Army. In both cases the path to victory was smoothed by the peasants and workers rapidly organized by the Communists. Four hundred thousand members of peasants' unions in Hunan Province alone acted as spies, guides, and labor for that early northward march.

This was never again matched until more than a million Manchurian peasants organized to assist Lin Piao's southward sweep from Manchuria in late 1948.

Victories of that earlier "Great Revolution" set hope aflame through all China. The organized workers of Shanghai, led by the Communist Chou En-lai, themselves threw out the local war lord and gave the city to Chiang without battle. To Chiang this port was 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. He slaughtered five thousand in Shanghai alone. He threw out a majority of the Kuomintang Central Committee and reorganized the party around his personal dictatorship. Then, buttressed by foreign support, he set out to eliminate all opponents, especially the Chinese Communists.

The "Great Revolution" was suppressed. The game of war-lord politics resumed. But the striking similarities between that earlier northern expedition and the present Communist victories raise the question: Can the same betrayal happen again?

The Communists say that it won't. They still accept as "immediate program" the principles of the coalition of 1924. They still hold that government must include "all revolutionary classes" and that this means also the patriotic businessmen, today represented through the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang. The difference is that leadership in the coalition has passed from the Kuomintang to the Communists. Moreover, the Communists have learned things in twenty years.

Lu Ting-yi, in our Yen-an discussions, did not even bother to blame Chiang for that early collapse. He analyzed what a "correct policy" by the Communists might have achieved. He said they had yielded too easily in those early days. At that time they were led by 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, "was his submission

to the bourgeoisie"; i.e., to Big Business represented by 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 must be removed. That was the time, the Communists now think, to have made their stand. They had helped so well in organizing the joint armies that three of Chiang's four armies were under their influence. Chen Tu-hsiu submitted to Chiang's purge in the interests of "harmony."

"This submission left us unprepared to resist Chiang's bloody massacre later," said Lu Ting-yi. "We must know how to unite with the bourgeoisie on some points and struggle with it on others. Chen Tu-hsiu only united and did not struggle. So the bourgeoisie gained its ends through us and thwarted ours."

Another mistake was the southward march in 1927 after the Nanchang uprising. Part of the Kuomintang armies in Nanchang revolted, went over to the Communists, and started south toward Canton. "We had strong forces in Nanchang; we should have held the city or established a rural base nearby," is the present judgment. "But we lacked experience and confidence and started south out of an old-home feeling for Canton. Our armies were defeated near Swatow and dispersed. Only a thousand men were left under Chu Teh when he moved into Hunan next spring."

Ten years of civil war was the price the Chinese people paid for the great split. By 1934 China had sixty-five million homeless peasants, according to Professor Charles Hodge in *Asia Magazine*—a number half as great as the population of the United States. Chiang's anti-Communist war became the excuse for the jailing, torture, and murder of all vocal democrats.

The Communists survived. Membership dropped from fifty thousand to ten thousand in the storm of Chiang's first repres-

sions. Chen Tu-hsiu, discredited, was removed as leader. Painfully the ranks formed around new leaders. "These made mistakes in the other direction," said Lu Ting-yi. "For many years there were mistakes of the left."

The first "leftist" mistake was the launching of uprisings in isolated cities in the winter of 1927-28 after Chiang's seizure of power. The initial uprising, the Canton Commune, which lasted three days and was drowned in blood, is still considered justified. One such attempt was needed, said Lu, "to announce our program to the people." When this uprising failed it should have been clear that later ones, in Chiang-policed cities, were just a bloody waste. Communists, in other words, should not have battles just to have battles. They should fight when there is good chance of victory.

A more successful movement began far from the cities, in the hills of South China, under a new leader, Mao Tze-tung.

Mao, at that time in his early thirties, was the son of a Hunan peasant. When the Communists were bloodily suppressed in the cities he turned to the peasants of Hunan. In the spring of 1928 his Peasants' Self-Defense Corps met the remnant of the revolutionary army under General Chu Teh and 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, one need not expect the "democratic revolution" to take all the 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 war lords overlapped. Here Mao diverged from the European pattern of revolution and did his own thinking on the basis of Chinese conditions. Borders between countries are fortified in Europe; they are no place for new regimes to start. In feudal rural China a war lord's strength decreased as one left his capital. In the no man's land between war lords, then, peasants might most



easily set up self-defense. Armed bases which gave the peasants land, democratic government, and means of defense might last through periods of "revolutionary ebb" and could later expand throughout the nation.

By 1930 the Communists had ten such "Border Regions." How well Mao reasoned is shown by the fact that some of them survived until they were absorbed into the Communist-led China of today!

These first successes went to the heads of some of the leaders, and the so-called "Li Li-san line" developed in 1930. Li Li-san, who had entered the party as a labor organizer in Shanghai, mocked the rural regimes as far away, unimportant. The time had come, he said, to take big cities. The Communists took Changsha, the capital of Hunan; they talked of taking the Wuhan cities and starting revolts in Shanghai and Nanking. They corrected this policy a few months later, but only after they had been dislodged from Changsha by foreign gunboats. They had advertised themselves beyond their strength; they paid for it. Foreign governments now prodded Chiang to suppress the Communists. They gave him arms and military advisers. Within one year, from autumn of 1930 to 1931, Chiang launched three "extermination campaigns" against the Communists' largest area, that of Kiangsi, which was under the leadership of Mao Tze-tung and Chu Teh.

Never again did the Chinese Communists go in for the premature taking of cities, stirring up foreign attention and intervention thereby. Thereafter they held back almost excessively from cities until they had overwhelming power.

Mao Tze-tung's rural regimes kept growing. They defended themselves; they created a peasant democracy. In 1934 they held their second congress, with seven hundred deputies elected in many far-scattered areas. Local governments made reports on land division, irrigation, schools, sanitation. One report noted 1,423 co-operatives. Of Chiang's five "extermination campaigns" against these areas, the first four failed utterly. Many of Chiang's

soldiers, who were poor peasants, went over to the Communists.

New mistakes then weakened the Communists. A group known today as the "dogmatists" gained intermittent control of policy from 1931 on. They could quote Marxist theory in overpowering detail—but their ignorance of China's practical conditions was catastrophic. Under them the Communists finally lost their Kiangsi base.

"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 co-operate with us. Our dogmatists were too orthodox to join hands with 'that bourgeois.' Thus we lost the chance of victory." Lu put it mildly. Fukien provided an outlet to the sea; such an anti-Japanese alliance in China as early as 1934 might even have stopped or shortened the later Pacific war. The Communists will not make that mistake again. General Tsai is in their coalition now.

When they failed to make an alliance in 1934, Chiang destroyed Tsai's army and then encircled the Communists. He mobilized nearly a million men against them, sending four hundred thousand against their Kiangsi base. He made an encircling blockade and slowly tightened it for a year. A million peasants were killed or starved to death, by Kuomintang estimates.

The main Communist armies, to the number of ninety thousand, finally broke the encirclement and began the famous Long March, one of the great marches of all history. Eight thousand miles they went over some of the world's roughest country, taking many women and children along. They zig-zagged south 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. More than a year they marched, with almost daily skirmishes and many critical battles. Besides defeating or eluding the armies of Chiang, they broke through the armies of ten provincial war lords and took

sixty-two cities. They crossed six territories of aboriginal tribesmen, some of which had not been penetrated by any Chinese force for a generation. They performed incredible feats of valor, such as the crossing of the Tatu River, where thirty volunteers, in the face of machine-gun fire, swung hand over hand from the suspension chains of a dismantled bridge, stormed the guns, and replaced the floor of the bridge for the army.<sup>1</sup>

No Chinese Communist today is willing to say that the Long March was the result of a mistake. It is too heroic a tradition for anyone to disavow. But they will tell you that its cost was very heavy, that the membership of the Communist Party and the size of its army had reached three hundred thousand in the height of the Kiangsi days and sank to forty thousand by the end of the Long March. They will say "it might have been avoided" by correct tactics in Kiangsi. "The dogmatists went in for too much positional warfare; with our present 'dispersal' technique we could have filtered around Chiang's blockhouses," said Lu Ting-yi. The Long March itself, he added, began with the disastrous strategy of straight-line marching in large masses, heavily bombed from the air, and might have ended in final catastrophe had not the leadership been changed.

In the midst of the Long March, at the historic Tsenyi Conference in January 1935, the leadership of the dogmatists, whose rigid theory had all but destroyed the Chinese Communists, gave place to that of Mao Tze-tung. There was a sharp struggle over it, for it was a matter of life or death. "Mao Tze-tung's leadership made of the Long March a military miracle," said Lu Ting-yi, "and brought us to Yen-an."

Such were the heavy losses and the harsh lessons through which the Chinese Communists came, in October 1935, to North Shensi at the edge of the deserts and began to build again in a barren land. No more for them the rich moist soil of the

<sup>1</sup>Fulllest English language account in *Red Star over China*, by Edgar Snow.

south that gave two crops a year. Theirs were the "badlands," where peasants wrung a bitter living from an eroded soil in an arid climate. The great famine of 1928-30, barely over, had killed three to six million people, leaving wasteland and banditry. In such a land the newcomers tried their policies under the hardest possible test conditions.

They made North Shensi blossom. In ten years they doubled the cultivated area, doubled the crop. They developed small industries and co-operatives. They increased primary schools seventeenfold. They established the first secondary schools, the first university, the first hospitals in an unlettered region of witch doctors. They devised here a system of voting for illiterate farm hands. They created, out of desperate need, their unique, partly self-supporting government and army.

It was done in endless war with the desert. It was done against age-old apathy of peasants who for centuries had failed. It was done against 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 Yen-an the nine years' civil war was ended by the "Sian incident." Chiang Kai-shek, going to Sian to force his generals there into another expedition against the Communists, when all China flamed with desire to resist Japan, was forcibly detained by his own officers. He was set free only after negotiations in which people of many persuasions took part, the most important factor being that the Communists sent Chou En-lai to Sian to urge Chiang's release. This was the same Chou En-lai who had once given Shanghai to Chiang and on whose head Chiang had later put a price. The Communists never regretted their part in freeing Chiang, not even later when Chiang's bombs were falling on Yen-an. For the "Sian incident" led directly to a wide Chinese unity against the Japanese invader and to a nationwide resistance in which the Communists won a growing share.

It was during those years in distant, primitive Yen-an and in the new Liberated Areas built behind Japanese lines that the policies of the Chinese Communists became fully integrated with the Chinese people's needs. Mao Tze-tung's leadership fully developed. In the quiet of a Yen-an cave he wrote his major works.

In April 1945, four months before Japan's surrender and in the Chinese Communists' tenth Yen-an year, they held their Seventh Party Congress. They called it the "Congress of Unity and Victory," though unity with the Kuomintang was lessening daily and the final victory over Japan had not yet come. But the Communist Party itself had grown to 1,200,000 members, who had discussed for two years their history and their future policy. "There was a great sense of unity and victory," said Lu 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."

For the first time Mao Tze-tung was formally elected chairman, though he had been acknowledged leader for many years.

### 3. MAO TZE-TUNG

When Mao Tze-tung talks for China in the councils of nations he will bring a sardonic wit that will make the debates brighter reading and may topple some statesmen's ivory towers. A sample is his remark about Nanking's last "peace negotiators": "Their mouths are reading aloud the Communists' Eight Points, their hands are shielding the war criminals, their eyes are looking toward the United States, and their feet are walking toward Canton." It is a sharp caricature of men whose peace proposals were a delaying action, giving time to seek American aid for war.

Mao's quick wit often caught me unawares in Yen-an. When I once commented on Yen-an's restful life he bade me, with a touch of banter, to note the contrast between Chiang Kai-shek

and Chu Teh. "Both have just celebrated their sixtieth birthday. Chiang's hair is all white while Chu Teh has only a few gray hairs."

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

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

On another occasion I complimented Mao on the fine climate of "the place he picked." I like dry climates. He replied in a flash: "We didn't pick it."

Till then I had believed that the Communists came to Yen-an in a kind of triumph after that famous Long March that "aroused all China against Japan." Historians may thus tell it; they can make a case. There was certainly triumph in surviving that terrible battering and in breaking through Chiang's troops and the war lords of ten provinces. And they did do as much "arousing" as they could on the way. But Mao claimed no such alibi. He chose to note that they came to Yen-an because they were chased out of the good rice lands of the south and could stay in this dust bowl because it was so poor and far away. Mao never overstated victory.

Like everyone else in Yen-an, Mao lived in a cave. He changed his residence often, perhaps to be near groups whose problems of strategy, land reform, or financial administration he was studying, or perhaps because of danger that might threaten him as China's number-one Communist. When Chiang's first bombs fell on Yen-an in August 1946, in the early days of my visit, they fell not far from the cave in which Mao had lived a fortnight earlier. Many Yen-an people thought they had been aimed at the chairman. Except for this occasional change of residence, Mao went about informally without concern.

My first interview with him was postponed by the rising of Yen-an River because of a morning shower. The following day the river subsided and my interpreter and I went to Mao's home by autotruck, 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 cornstalks 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. I was glad to see that Lu Ting-yi had come as official interpreter for our talk.

Mao Tze-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 forehead 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 poised friendliness.

We sat on the flat clay terrace under an apple tree while the late afternoon wore on and sunset glorified the arid 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 about 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. 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's mind swept easily over the world, including many lands and epochs in his view. He questioned me first about America. On many American events I found him better informed than I. This was surprising because for twenty years there had not been even a postal service to connect him with the world. But he planned the smuggling in of knowledge as carefully as the strategy of war. The information collected for him by those tiny receivers in the radio caves that monitored the news was surprisingly complete. He also used his brief contact through Executive Headquarters' planes to bring in books and pamphlets from many lands. Many recent American books had been translated for him fully or in digests. When foreign visitors came to Yenan they were asked to tell about their respective countries.

Mao thought the talk about war between America and the Soviet Union—this was late 1946 and the cold war had been going on for a year—was largely a “smoke screen blown up by reactionaries to hide the more immediate conflicts.” War might eventually come, but he thought it could be prevented. He took it for granted that the U.S.S.R. didn't want it and that only “the right wing of American monopoly capital” did. The war talk and the anti-Soviet fear that was stirred up was useful to “American monopoly capital,” for it gave it an excuse for attacking the American people's living standards and civil rights, and also a weapon for bringing “the other capitalist countries” under American control. But to make war on the U.S.S.R., said Mao,



would not be so easy. Such a war could not be made directly; "it must be made through other countries and especially Great Britain, France, and China."

Mao laughingly made his point by placing teacups and little white wine cups on the table, showing the "American imperialists" fenced off from war by the "American people," and separated from the U.S.S.R. by a long zigzag line of other countries, none of which wanted to be dragged into war. He filled in the line with matchboxes and cigarettes, jesting about which land each represented. The "co-operation of the peoples" was, he said, strong enough, if properly aroused, to prevent World War III. He thought this co-operation could win out; otherwise World War III would come.

It was a delicious meal that Mrs. Mao set before us, much of it from the ripe tomatoes, onions, beans, and peppers grown 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 Yen-an 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."

We talked on over fresh cups of tea while Mrs. Mao put the small daughter to bed in the adjoining cave. Mao's direct speech, wide range of knowledge, and poetic imagery made his conversation the most stimulating I have ever known. I have never met a man whose metaphors were so sharp 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 imperi-

alism" he said: "It becomes lonely. So many of its friends are dead or ill. Even penicillin will not cure them." In speaking of "reactionary rulers" he said: "They are paper tigers. Terrible to look at but melting when the rains come."

The words "paper tiger" seemed to strike him; he stopped to be sure I got the exact flavor. Lu Ting-yi gave it first as "scarecrow." Mao stopped him and asked me to explain what a scarecrow was. Then he refused the word. A paper tiger, he said, is 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 rain 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 Tze-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." (Later the "paper tiger" metaphor appeared in one of Mao's articles. I had the feeling that many such metaphors occur to him in conversation and are afterward developed for use.)

Despite the laughter with which Mao Tze-tung disposed of Chiang, he would not predict his own victory. Other Communists were already estimating the time it would take. Mao said: "We have fought twenty years; if need be we can fight for another twenty." He already envisaged, in Yen-an in 1946,

the possibility of large-scale armed foreign intervention. Chiang would not be so difficult to overthrow. But behind Chiang there were other forces, world-wide, that had suppressed China's full independence ever since Britain forced foreign goods upon her in 1842 through the Opium War. How long the full victory would take he could not say. It depended on many countries, on the development of the "democratic forces" on a world scale.

"What is the strength of the imperialists? It lies only in the unconsciousness of the people. The consciousness of the people is the basic question. 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 have power 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.

Mao 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 world have turned against it." In any case it would give no final answer. There was a touch of grimness in his laughter as he added: "Even in Bikini they didn't kill all the pigs."

"The birth of the atom bomb," he stated 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."

It was nearly midnight when 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 autotruck waited. Good-bys 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 Yen-an hills.

Mao Tze-tung was a legend all over China, far beyond his own areas, among illiterate peasants, who combined his name with Chu Teh's and even thought of them as one man, "Chu-Mao." On the famous Mount Omei, where Chiang went for summer rest from Chungking, peasants revealed rifles to an American friend whom they trusted, saying: "When the time comes we are ready. Life is better under Chu-Mao." There were no Communists among them; no one had come to tell them what to do. Wherever peasants felt unbearably oppressed by landlords and war lords, the hopeful legend ran of "Chu-Mao."

Mao Tze-tung was born in 1893 in a village in Hunan, the province that is the heart of South China. His father, a poor peasant who served many years as a soldier, had been able, in Mao's childhood, 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.

As a schoolboy young Mao 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 put down the peasants. On another occasion the boy saw hungry peasants seize rice successfully from landlords. This turmoil of the people affected the young Mao as he grew.

For some time he had the snobbishness of the intellectual, and nowhere were scholars more "superior" than in China. Mao later confessed to a writers' congress in Yenan how embarrassed he used to feel when he carried his baggage on a bamboo pole in front of students, "who could not bear the weight of anything on their shoulders or carry anything in their hands." He felt himself half peasant, half student, and it irked him. "I felt that the cleanest people in the world were the intellectuals. Workers, peasants, soldiers were dirty people. I was willing to borrow the clothing of students but not of workers." Subsequently, by living among peasants and workers, Mao experienced an inner conversion and felt that "the cleanest people are workers and

peasants . . . even if their bodies are plastered with cow dung." Today Mao will entertain a louse-ridden peasant overnight in his home without a second thought. He recommended his own experience to the writers.

Mao was a man of twenty-seven when he became a Marxist. He was active in the Peiping Students' Movement—that famous May Fourth Movement in 1919. For a time he supported himself as librarian in the university; when his armies took Peiping nearly thirty years later, they found the librarian under whom Mao had worked still there. In 1920 Mao married. He broke tradition by refusing the wife his parents had chosen and taking his own bride, a fellow student. This free choice and the ten years of married life that followed were celebrated by young Hunan radicals as the "ideal romance."

Those years of personal romance included the happy years of honeymoon between the Communists and the Kuomintang. How close that political union was is shown by the jobs Mao held in both parties at the same time. He attended the first national congress of the Communist Party in 1921 and was also a delegate to the first national congress of the Kuomintang in 1924. The Kuomintang made him a member of its Shanghai Bureau, then editor of its political weekly, and later the chief of the propaganda department which trained peasant organizers. Clearly Mao was from the beginning an able political organizer in many fields.

His first important political analysis and his first known clash with the early leadership of the Communist Party came in early 1927. Mao was sent to Hunan in January to investigate the Peasants' Unions that were seizing power. He inspected five counties and wrote an account. It was buried in two obscure bulletins. Chen Tu-hsiu, then secretary of the Communist Party, would have none of it. It is a Communist classic today. Those thirty-two days spent by Mao studying Hunan peasants may have a more lasting effect on China's history than Chiang Kai-shek's seizure of power in Nanking a few months later.

Mao got a vision there of the possibilities in the Chinese peasant. "In four months," he wrote, "an unprecedented revolution was staged. The centuries-old privilege of the feudal landlords was shattered and the peasants' unions became the sole power. . . . What Dr. Sun Yat-sen tried but failed to accomplish in forty years is done by the peasants in a few months." Mao brushed aside the criticism made by many, made even by his party leader, Chen Tu-hsiu, that the peasants "went too far." He wrote: "Revolution is not an invitation to a banquet . . . a drawing of a picture, or of the making of a piece of embroidery that can be undertaken at leisure. It is a revolt."

Qualities that were to make Mao Tze-tung a leader came out in this report: his quick response to the peasants, his stubborn convictions, and a vivid imagery lacking in most Marxists. The sequel showed another important quality: Mao's skill in finding expression for his convictions without breaking the unity of a party whose leadership opposed him. When Chen Tu-hsiu called Mao a "hothead" and pulled him out of Hunan, Mao was promptly elected president of the All-China Peasants' Union, an organization with which no Communist could quarrel and in which all his own enthusiasm could be used.

Mao and his young wife must have reached life's heights both of personal life and of successful endeavor. Then came the great Kuomintang-Communist split. Mao became an outlaw leading an armed band of peasants, with the price of a quarter of a million dollars on his head. His wife and sister were murdered in 1930 by a Hunan war lord because of their relation to Mao. His present wife is his third.

As a leader of what outsiders called "Communist bandits," Mao rose through the qualities he had already shown: his closeness to the Chinese scene and the intimate needs of its peasants; his genius for analyzing what he saw; his simple, colorful, forceful expression of ideas, and a toughness of conviction which he yet knew how to hold within the framework of a political organization.

In the winter of 1927-28, when it was the policy of the Communist Party to organize revolts in cities—all of which failed—Mao left the cities, went into an inaccessible region, and set up the peasant regime that survived. When the adventurous Li Li-san, in 1930, mocked the rural regimes as “trivial” and the party, under his influence, ordered the ill-fated taking of Changsha, Mao worked on as chairman of a rural government in Kiangsi and developed the forms of life that spread.

He is known as a tough fighter in political struggles. “His wrath can be lethal,” said one of his friends in Yen-an. Yet when he was finally elected chairman of the Communist Party in 1945 at its seventh congress and many former leaders were so discredited by the two-year discussion of past history that they might have gone down in permanent disgrace, Mao Tze-tung himself intervened to save his former antagonists.

“Those comrades who have made mistakes, no matter how costly and grievous,” he said, “if they admit their mistakes honestly and 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 a united party out of strong men who had fought for opposing views.

For Chinese Communists Mao Tze-tung is the number-one Marxist, whose analysis best charts the path. His strength as a popular leader, however, comes not only from his grasp of fundamental needs and his skill in deciding which step comes first, but also from his ability to make his knowledge and program clear in simple, vivid words. He brightens Marxism with sharp metaphor, and his phrases become proverbs.

Everyone in Yen-an, for instance, who had felt the chill draft in the air-raid shelters—those caves with tunnels that went right through the hill—chuckled when Mao, discussing “certain wayward tendencies in the party,” said: “These are no longer dominant with us, like the winter wind that fills all space,

but are more like the little draft from the air-raid shelters.”

In a famous attack on dogmatism 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 a kind of magic 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.”

The shock which such words brought—and were intended to bring—to dogmatic Marxists is only equaled by the shock of the following words to the usually self-conceited Chinese students:

“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 try to 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 that those who have only book knowledge and no practical experience would be more humble.”

Mao is not only a leader of Communists and a popularizer of Marxism. He is a man of general education who can meet with scholars anywhere on equal terms. 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 peasant proverbs. He also moves easily among the philosophers of the West, from the early Greeks down to those



of the present day. Mao studied for years in Peiping universities before he adopted the method of Karl Marx.

He is also a poet of no mean ability, though he has little time to indulge this talent. On his airplane trip to Chungking in 1945 in the American Ambassador Patrick Hurley's plane—the only time in twenty years he went outside his blockaded area—he composed a poem on China that astonished the literati of the Chinese capital. They had expected an uncouth agitator from the northwest caves; they met a man whose philosophic grasp and literary style were beyond their own.

Mao's sense of words, which he feels both as a poet, a student of many philosophies, and a Marxist, enables him to satisfy many inquirers whom other Communists have disappointed. Editor Yu, who had often acted as Mao's interpreter, told me of the American who came all the way to Yen-an to prove to Mao that Communism is a religion. He had argued it in Nanking with Chou En-lai and others, who told him: "No, it is a science." Unsatisfied, he sought the fountainhead.

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

The "convincing" of Mao took only fifteen minutes. The visitor expounded his views and paused for breath. Instead of arguing, Mao replied: "You can call it a religion if you like, the religion of serving the people." Few Marxists anywhere in the world would have made that remark; Mao himself would hardly use it in a party debate. But he knows when it is useful to argue over definitions and when it is not. He knows the many human meanings that may exist in a single word. The pilgrim went home delighted with his brand-new slogan. Mao had set him a goal in words he knew.

This talent will serve Mao well as leader of a coalition government in which not only the Communists but many other parties take part.

To such a coalition Mao Tze-tung brings a knowledge of the Chinese people through close touch, deep analysis, and a study

of their long history. He brings a faith in the Chinese people which is not idealism but an ever-present awareness of their capacities, their endurance, and their response which he is able to arouse. He brings an ability to chart a path, to put first things first, to estimate which conflict takes precedence. He sees himself and his party in a framework of China and the world.

I was never able to get him to say that the Chinese Communists would win. It was always that the Chinese people would win and that the Communists would succeed if they did thus and so. Parties, for him, will last as long as they serve the people.

He knows that his own work shall be thus judged.

#### 4. HE CHARTED A PATH

"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 was arguing with Mao Tze-tung. "If Americans knew that you stood for democracy they would be for you. Why handicap yourselves with that name?"

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

In the Taiping Rebellion in the 1850s, he pointed out, the Western Powers gave armed help to the Manchu Emperor to crush the Chinese peasants in a slaughter that cost tens of millions of lives. Again, from 1900-17, when no "Russian bugaboo" existed, the Western Powers gave money and arms to help reactionary war lords against Dr. Sun Yat-sen's fight for a democratic republic. Again in 1925-27, when the northern expedition of the Kuomintang was overthrowing war lords in South China, the Western Powers opposed the Kuomintang until Chiang Kai-shek suppressed all democratic organizations

and massacred 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?"

The Chinese Communists regard themselves as continuing this long struggle. This time they intend to win. They base their hope neither on foreign aid nor on sudden violences, but on careful study of the sources of political power. Wherein, they ask, lies the strength of a nation? How can this particular nation, China, become independent, prosperous, strong? Whence comes sound leadership, and on what classes of the population can this leadership depend? What must be done to win the support of the necessary classes? What are the stages of victory?

As Chinese trying to solve the problems of China, using their own ideas and also any valid ideas they find in the West, they adopt specifically the method of social analysis known as Marxism. To be exact, as they gave it to me: "Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism is the method of thinking we use." The Russians also use this method of thinking. Since the Chinese face different conditions, their answers are in many cases different. We noted in the previous chapter the way Border Regions were formed on the edges of provinces because of Mao's analysis of the conditions of the Chinese rural areas. The thought of the Chinese Communists is not dependent but creative. Its creative quality is especially marked in Mao Tze-tung.

Mao's first work that won notice outside the ranks of Communists was *Protracted War*, in 1938, an analysis of China's war with Japan. It was the most important book of its kind to appear in China during the war. At a time when many Chinese despaired, while Chiang Kai-shek waited for America, Britain, and the U.S.S.R. to enter the war and decide his fate, Mao Tze-tung declared that the Chinese people themselves, if suffi-

ciently united, could drive out the invader. His analysis of the three stages—Japanese penetration, stalemate, and victorious counteroffensive—was parroted even by foreign military experts who never knew whence it came. The basic theory of this work applied also to the Chinese Communists' later civil war with Chiang and to all wars of colonial peoples against better-armed invaders.

Mao's *New Democracy*, published in 1940, was another bugle call to China's patriots. It was written to answer the pessimism that spread as a result of the treason of many generals and the repressions ordered from Chungking. Was China a lost nation? No, Mao declared, China was not lost. Even if the whole Kuomintang turned traitor, there were reserves of strength in the Chinese people. They would win victory, both against Japan and in their internal revolution. Mao analyzed the road to this victory and the kind of government that could best lead to victory and to prosperity after the war. Not the dictatorship of one party, whether Kuomintang or Communist, not the forms of "bourgeois democracy" copied from the West, not a "dictatorship of the proletariat" as in the U.S.S.R., but a "new democracy," a coalition of "all revolutionary classes," workers, peasants, intellectuals, and even such capitalists as oppose feudalism and foreign imperialism.

The *New Democracy* marked a turning point in China's revolutionary thinking and influenced the revolutionary thought of the world. It was translated and published in Moscow in both English and Russian and reviewed as a "new Marxist classic." It may be assumed that it influenced the thought of men who later established somewhat similar governments in eastern Europe. After five years of testing in the growing Liberated Areas of China, its theses were expanded in Mao's report to the Seventh Party Congress in April 1945 and published under the title *On Coalition Government*. Mao Tze-tung stated at this time that the program of "new democracy" would be valid "for several dozens of years."

These three works were Communist classics for general circulation. They were clearly patriotic plans for China's independence and strength. During the civil war that soon came they were compulsory reading for captured Kuomintang officers. More than one such officer wept on reading them, saying: "If we had known that there were such ideas for China, we would not have fought the Communists."

More revealing for our purpose is another work that Mao wrote in 1939 but published to the world only recently. For ten years it circulated secretly among Communist leaders. *The Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party of China* not only gives a far more detailed analysis of China's history and her many peasant revolutions, but states both the Communists' immediate aims and their long-range ones. As one reads, the reason for delay in publication becomes clear. The work contains a frank estimate of the different "allies" the Communists sought and how far one could depend on them. It would not have been politic, when all parties in China were presumably fighting the Japanese invader, to publish a judgment as to which ones would quit.

The release of this work today gives illuminating forecast of the Chinese Communists' full program and of what, in Mao's opinion, different classes in China will do.

Mao states flatly, as a Communist leader to other top Communists, that the most important fight today is for China's independence as a nation and that all classes in China who fight honestly for this are allies for the duration. "To carry out the national revolution in order to overthrow imperialism is the first and foremost mission," he writes. A second "immediate task" is to overthrow feudal elements; i.e., war lords and landlords. These two tasks are correlated and immediate, since imperialist and feudal forces "conspire hand in hand." Since the imperialists are the stronger of the two and their oppression more severe, they are Enemy Number One.

All other conflicts in China are secondary, says Mao. The con-

flict of the working class with the capitalists, however important in other lands, is secondary in China today. The fight for China's independence comes first.

Mao Tze-tung's own brother lost his life through the Chinese Communists' devotion to this principle. In 1938 Dictator Sheng of the great desert province Sinkiang invited the Chinese Communists to send experts to help modernize his province. His currency was useless, his irrigation systems destroyed, and he faced chronic revolts of the native tribes. The Communists knew that Sheng was a dictator and that he forbade them to carry on even the preaching of democracy in his province. Nonetheless, they accepted his invitation because Sheng was anti-Japanese and Sinkiang was strategic. A delegation of some forty experts, under the leadership of Mao Tze-min, the Communist chairman's younger brother, went to Sinkiang, reformed the currency, reduced forty kinds of taxes to ten, set up four model county governments that were widely copied, increased irrigation, and established the first secondary schools and the first university. Their policies also calmed the native tribes. Later, under Chiang's pressure, these Communists were jailed, together with some fifty thousand miscellaneous believers in progress in Sinkiang. The younger Mao and two other leaders were murdered in jail. Those who survived got back to Yen-an in 1946 during a brief truce. It was from the younger Mao's widow, who had borne his child in jail, that I heard of the attempt to help Dictator Sheng because he was anti-Japanese.

Having settled the principle that the fight for China's independence as a nation comes first, Mao Tze-tung takes up the question: What classes in China can be trusted to carry through the "national revolution" against foreign oppression and the "democratic revolution" against feudalism? Who are the enemies? Who are the allies? How stable are the allies?

In answering this for his fellow Communists, Mao breaks down the Chinese people into five main classes: landowners,

bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, peasantry, and the working class or proletariat. The first two classes are enemies; the last three are the "forces of the revolution."

The fascinating thing about Mao is the number of exceptions he then proceeds to make. He splits one class after another into subdivisions, analyzing the nature of each. Landlords may be "enemies as a class," but not every landlord is. Big landlords are especially apt to become traitors, going over to Japan or to any invader. Some smaller landlords, and especially their children who have studied in college and gained patriotic ideas, may fight sincerely for China's independence. If they do, says Mao, "they deserve our co-operation."

Nor is "big business" an enemy without reservations. Most big business in China is of the comprador type, agents of foreign capital who will sell China for their own profit. But one can co-operate even with some of these at times, because they serve different foreign nations. When Japan attacks, the pro-American "big business" will fight for China. Co-operate with them, says Mao, but watch them, for later they will sell China's interests to America.

The purely Chinese capitalists are "a comparatively good ally." Most of them are not big capitalists, for China's national capitalism only began at the dawn of the century and has had to fight the more powerful foreign capitalism. These "national capitalists" exploit workers for profit as all capitalists do. But they will fight for China's independence so that their own business can survive. They will also fight to increase production, and this is in the interest of the nation. Mao therefore proposes that the workers should not make demands that bankrupt these capitalists but should help them make profits and demand a share. But watch them, he warns, lest they become monopolies and sell out the interests of the nation.

The "forces of the revolution" include the petty bourgeoisie (professional men, handicraftsmen, small enterprisers), the peasants, and the working class. All these suffer oppression and

will fight for an independent, democratic China. Mao's detailed characterization of these classes will appear as we come to them in later chapters. The peasants, being four fifths of the population, are the "strongest force," but the proletariat, though much smaller, is stated by Mao to be "the leading force." Why should it lead and how can it lead when it is so much smaller than the peasantry and so much less educated than the bourgeoisie? Mao's answer is that the Chinese workers suffer a "triple oppression"—of imperialists, capitalists, and feudal lords—whose "ferocity is seldom found elsewhere in the world." They have therefore a very resolute will. He also states that the working class in China is "older and more matured" than the Chinese capitalists, since the working class grew up in foreign enterprises before a Chinese capitalism existed. The resolute will and the "maturity" of the Chinese proletariat and its close affinity to the peasants give the reason for its "leading role."

What kind of revolution is it that the proletariat is leading? Is it the Russian type or the kind that earlier gave birth to the capitalist republics of the West? Mao makes two statements that seem at first a paradox. The revolution in its present stage is "clearing the way for capitalism. . . . The dagger of the revolution should not be directed against capitalism in general . . . but against imperialist and feudal monopolies." Mao thereupon adds that "the future of the Chinese revolution will be not capitalism but socialism," that while "clearing the way for capitalism" it is also "creating the preliminary conditions for socialism." Socialism, says Mao, will eventually win out. How? We shall study this in some detail when we consider free enterprise.

The task of the Communist Party, Mao tells its leaders, is to "complete the new Democratic revolution" and then, when the necessary conditions arrive, to steer it into the socialist stage. During the first stage the Communist program "tallies" with that of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, but it will pass beyond his in the second stage.



Anyone who has taken the trouble to follow Mao's reasoning will feel that in his hands Marxism is a very flexible weapon, handled by a master of social analysis. He and his Chinese comrades are making new contributions to thought. One should add that stimulating conversation I had with Liu Hsiao-chi in Yanan, when for an entire day he described what he called "Mao's inventions in Marxism." On every kind of problem, Liu stated, "the nation, the peasants, strategy, literature and culture, finance and economy, methods of work, philosophy," Mao has given a "new development" to Marxist thought.

Even the concept of the "proletariat," said Liu, gets a new meaning in China. "According to Marx, the industrial workers lead the revolution. . . . But in China we have very few such people. . . . So Mao Tze-tung has been training another kind of people—the farm hands and poor peasants in the army—who have the same qualities of discipline and devotion that the industrial workers have. They give their lives in the fight against foreign and native oppressors even when very young. They fight now for the 'new democracy,' but when the time comes for socialism, they will be ready to build that too."

The role of the peasants in the revolution is also, said Liu, "an invention of Mao's." Peasant revolts in past history lacked discipline and continuity and therefore failed. This is now overcome by the cohesion and devotion of the peasants organized in the People's Liberation Army, who are not only fighters but organizers of land reform and village progress.

"Today we permit capitalism; we even encourage it with government loans. We even advocate co-operation between workers and capitalists under certain conditions. There is no hint of this in Marx. Lenin spoke of it once, only to condemn it. In the older capitalist lands such co-operation betrays the workers' interests, but in semi-colonial lands like ours workers have common interests with native capitalists against foreign monopoly capital. In our national industry, workers should increase production and capitalists should improve the workers'

conditions; only so can our national industry survive against foreign competition. This industrial policy is applied in all three kinds of industry: public, co-operative, and privately owned."

The military strategy by which the Communists grew from an army of three thousand to three million in twenty-one years of fighting, the labor-exchange brigades which increased farm production through the hard years of war, the supply system that enabled closely blockaded "anti-Japanese bases" to grow into mighty Liberated Areas while sharply decreasing taxes—all these are some of "Mao's inventions in Marxism," as listed by Liu. None of these methods had been previously used elsewhere. They will form the theme of later chapters.

All of these policies were developed through struggle, through losses and victories on the soil of China. By 1949 the Communist Party of China had grown to more than three million members in control of their country's destiny.

We are ready, perhaps, to consider that question: Are the Chinese Communists satellites of Moscow or are they what the West calls democrats? The answer seems to be that they are neither. They are Chinese.

They use the Marxist method the Russians use, but it gives different answers under new conditions. They achieve the same "bourgeois democratic revolution" that built capitalism in the West, but they say that a different leadership will guide it to socialism.

There is no indication that they take orders from Moscow and very little that they even seek advice. The U.S.S.R. helped Sun Yat-sen's first government with advisers but withdrew them in 1927. Thereafter the U.S.S.R. dealt only with Chiang's recognized government and had little direct contact with the Chinese Communists. A representative of the Communist International was with the Chinese Communists in their Kiangsi days and the early Yen-an period. Mao Tze-tung disagreed with him persistently; eventually he left. When I visited Chu Teh's

headquarters in 1938, two Tass correspondents came briefly, while ten others were visiting Chiang's other battle fronts. It was plain that these were the first Russians most of Chu Teh's men had seen.

No Soviet help in arms to the Chinese Communists as they rose to power and attained their victory was ever proved. General George C. Marshall twice stated this in interviews and he had means of knowing, for his planes and truce teams covered China to the Soviet frontier. In Manchuria I asked one of Lin Piao's officers if he had ever seen Russian weapons. He answered no, then caught himself and added with a grin: "There were a few rifles that Russia sent to Chiang early in the war with Japan. Chiang used them against us and we captured them. Those were the only Russian weapons I have ever seen."

The Chinese Communists rose to power not through any foreign aid but because, as General George C. Marshall admitted in reporting from China, "they succeeded in identifying their movement with the popular demand for change"; because, to quote an official 1944 report to the State Department, now published in the White Paper: "The common people for the first time have something to fight for."

The Chinese Communists expect to think out their own problems. Whenever I asked the humblest Chinese Communist what Moscow thought about some phase of land reform or strategy, he would answer in surprise: "We never ask what Moscow thinks of such things. We ask what is good for us."

Nonetheless, the Chinese Communists have unquestionably a basic kinship with the world's Communists and especially with those of the U.S.S.R. Mao Tze-tung himself affirmed this in his July 1, 1949, address on the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party's founding. "Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin gave us weapons. Not machine guns but Marxism-Leninism," he stated, adding that it was "the gunfire of the October Revolution" in Russia that had awakened China some thirty years ago to the knowledge of Marxist method.

Mao added words of a joint loyalty so explicit that they led Secretary Acheson to the bitter deduction that "the Chinese Communists have forsworn their Chinese heritage and publicly announced subservience to a foreign power." Let us examine Mao's precise words. The Chinese Communists, he says, have learned two basic things in twenty-eight years' experience: (1) "to awaken the masses in the country; (2) to unite in common struggle with those nations that treat us on the basis of equality and with the peoples of all countries." In the present "era of imperialism," he declares, "it is impossible" for the "people's revolution" in any country to win "without the aid of international revolutionary forces." Among those forces making possible the "Chinese people's victory" Mao lists the existence of the Soviet Union, the victory of the "anti-fascist forces" in World War II (and especially the victory over Japan), the "new democracies" of Europe, the insurgent "peoples of the East," and "the struggles of the . . . people in the United States . . . and other countries . . . against reactionary ruling cliques.

"Internationally," Mao affirms, "we belong to the anti-imperialist front, headed by the U.S.S.R."

These words, which seem simple to the uninitiated, will be analyzed and discussed by Marxists of China and of other countries for years to come. The most serious controversy among Marxists of this decade—since the Stalin-Trotsky controversy determined that socialism can be built in a single state—concerns the relation among new Communist-led states as these arise. How far do they remain separate and sovereign? How far do they submit to new international forms superseding the nation? If there is some new international form, how is it ruled? In one way or other, this is a basic problem not only for Marxists but for all nations in today's interdependent world. The answers are not yet determined, but the struggles from which the answers will come are here.

No, Mao Tze-tung has not declared "subservience" in the crude sense of Secretary Acheson's words. He does not call the

U.S.S.R. the "leader" to be followed always, still less the "General Staff" to give binding orders. Yet he implies deeper and more permanent allegiance than merely to an ally. His words, "the head" of "the anti-imperialist front," suggest not yet the strict organization of an army, but rather a joint line-up in which the U.S.S.R. is at least, to use a paradoxical but fruitful phrase, "first among equals." Not obedience is declared, but certainly a profound respect and loyalty—for a worldwide cause rather than for "a foreign nation."

The formulation in action and in diplomatic relations is yet to be made. It may take years of adjustment and discussion. The practical question of what this may mean for China's foreign relations must be reserved for our final chapter.

## 5. HOW THEY FOUGHT 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. Later America's aid to Chiang Kai-shek, also to save China from Communism, equipped the People's Liberation Army so that it swiftly took the rest of China, becoming the strongest army East Asia had ever seen. Mao Tze-tung's most sardonic jest had no such irony as this.

When the Japanese war began the Communists had only a barren territory in the northwest, some 33,000 square miles with 1,500,000 people, with their capital at Yen-an. When it ended they had more than 800,000 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.

When Japan deeply invaded China in 1937, Chinese of all persuasions rallied against the invader. The Communist forces of General Chu Teh, reorganized as the Eighth Route Army of the National Government, were 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; let them die for the country that Chiang later would unify. There was irony in that, too, for the Communist areas grew by fighting.

Japan's first defeat in China was suffered at the hands of the Eighth Route Army in Pinghsing Pass in North Shansi. This battle, though Chiang never gave it credit, saved Nanking from premature encirclement and preserved Chiang's 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. As the invaders moved into the Shansi highlands, the fast-hitting Eighth Route lads under Lin Piao struck from the cliffs in a surprise attack. The Japanese debacle here forced the diversion of Japanese troops from the Peiping-Hankow drive to relieve the Shansi forces. Thus Hankow was saved for a year, to serve Chiang's government as a base when Nanking finally fell.

To North China peasants that Pinghsing Pass victory was important for another reason. Here they first learned that the terrible invaders could be beaten "if you fought correctly." A plowman who took part in that battle told the tale to Sidney Rittenberg long after.

"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 any weapons? We met an Eighth Route soldier and went to the woods for a talk. Then we saw a Jap officer and seven soldiers coming across a meadow, searching. My friend and I began to shake all over. The Eighth Router said: 'Take it easy! If you run they'll see you. Watch what they will do.'

"We waited, and the Japs came straight toward us. The Eighth Route soldier said: 'Let's go into that hut.' We went into an empty cabin nearby. We looked through the torn paper in

the window. My chum whispered: 'Old gentleman in heaven, they are coming right here. We are lost eggs. Maybe we can run out the back door; some of us might 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.' We expected death. 'Keep quiet,' he said, 'and see how to fight.' Then suddenly that Jap officer was right in the door with the seven men 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 from our village went with the Eighth Route into the battle of Pinghsing Pass."

The ecstasy of peasants who found that they could fight against invaders was the force that carried Yen-an to the sea.

"We believe that the hope of saving China lies largely in the mobile units of North China," Chu Teh told me at his Shansi headquarters in January 1938. "We will keep Japan from consolidating her gains and from using North China as a base against the rest of the country."

At that time, in the seventh month of the war, Chu Teh's men had restored local Chinese governments in several dozen counties that had previously been lost to the Japanese by Chiang's regular armies. The lines of future advance were already clear at the military conference with three divisional commanders from bases on the other side of the enemy lines. Scholarly, spectacled Liu Po-cheng—the "One-eyed General"—went east to a base in Southeast Shansi; this was to expand by the end of the war with Japan to a great Liberated Area of thirty million people in the heart of North China. Black-bearded, jovial Ho Lung went north, where he built the Shansi-Suiyuan Liberated Area, checking Japan's advance toward strategic Sinkingiang. Lin Piao, the youngster of the lot, with the mien of a shy

student, held an anti-Japanese base in Northeast Shansi, whence he later went north to take Manchuria.

These areas grew not quietly in orderly country, but in war-torn provinces ravaged by both invaders and bandits. A small, disciplined force penetrating such territory with a clear political program and a method of successful fighting quickly multiplied to many times its original size.

Commissar Li Ching-yu, as one minor example, was sent into South Hopei early in the war with eight hundred armed men. Within a year he had twenty thousand armed men and had driven the Japanese-appointed governments from thirty counties, substituting Chinese governments chosen by the peasants and the troops.

How did Commissar Li perform this miracle? He told me years afterward in Yen-an.

"I found five kinds of armed bands all fighting each other. There were defeated Kuomintang troops, newly organized puppets, some Japanese, some bandits, and some local peasants' bands trying to defend their villages. We set out to make 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 political program was as important as the military. "It was not enough to urge folks to resist Japan," explained Commissar Li. "Farm hands and half-starved share croppers thought only of food. We set out to improve their livelihood."

Li's organizers went into stables where farm hands slept and learned their troubles. These men worked in the fields all day and guarded their masters' property all night for a wage of two or three hundred pounds of grain a year. Not enough to feed one man properly, much less a family. Li encouraged farm hands' unions, protected by the army. Wages rose to eight hundred pounds of grain, which could feed a man and wife. Farm hands



got collective agreements which gave them an occasional day's vacation at village fairs and "wine to comfort them" when they dug out the human offal from toilets for fertilizer. These homely improvements gave the men something to fight for. Share croppers' unions similarly got the rents reduced.

Soon these peasants were electing "people's governments," which they defended with their lives. Li's thirty counties were only one area among dozens thus liberated and led against Japan by Chu Teh's multiplying troops.

While the Eighth Route Army thus expanded across North China, a similar army, the New Fourth, was formed on the Lower Yangtze and commissioned—originally—by Chiang Kai-shek. Its tasks were especially hazardous, for it operated among some of the heaviest Japanese concentrations in China. Its exploits were spectacular, its raids on the Shanghai-Nanking Railway frequent; in the autumn of 1938 it hoisted the Chinese flag over a Japanese airfield within sight of Shanghai. The peasants of East China called it "World Army Number One" and "soldiers of God."

By the end of 1940, a full year before America came into the Pacific war, the Liberated Areas of North and East China, beginning as small islands of resistance in a sea of Japanese invaders, had grown until they made continuous contact across the country from Yen-an to the sea. They struck across Japanese-held railways and isolated Japanese troops in their fortress-cities. The Japanese held the strategic centers, but they could not consolidate or exploit the territory. So amazing were these Chinese successes with such slender means of war that it seems that Mao Tze-tung was right in his *Protracted War*: if the much larger, better-armed forces of Chiang's central government could have rallied the Chinese people in this manner, China herself, alone, could have worn down Japan, thus preventing the later attack on the United States at Pearl Harbor.

Chiang's generals, far from emulating these methods, bitterly opposed the "unruly expansion" of the Communists. They tried

to disband or weaken the Communist-led forces. A three-cornered war developed. The massacre of the New Fourth's headquarters and rear guard by Kuomintang forces in January 1941 was the first signal to the world of the internal clash. In 1943 Chiang ordered the Communist Party disbanded. In 1944 he ordered their armed forces reduced to one tenth their existing size. He had long ceased to give them wages and ammunition, as he did for the first troops in the first year of the war. But the Communists now drew taxes from large Liberated Areas and made arms and ammunition in county arsenals or captured them from the enemy.

The Communists did not disband on Chiang's orders. "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?" Mao Tze-tung asked pointedly in 1945 at the Seventh Party Congress. By figures compiled a few months earlier the Communists claimed to have re-established Chinese county governments in 591 counties, or 82 per cent of the 791 counties lost by Chiang's regulars to Japan. They claimed that their troops were engaging 64.6 per cent of the 560,000 Japanese troops in China and 95 per cent of the puppet troops, while Chiang's regular troops, with much greater resources and with foreign aid, were doing far less.

American military intelligence confirmed this claim sufficiently so that Colonel Joseph W. Stilwell, as chief of American 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 specifically demanded that American arms, supplied to Chiang against Japan, should not be hoarded for later use against Chinese. Chiang demanded Stilwell's recall and got it. American policy suffered a rapid change under the new ambassador, Patrick J. Hurley, and the new commander, General Albert C. Wedemeyer. By the spring of 1945 Chiang used American arms to attack Chinese Communists while the war with Japan was still on.

Japan's surrender caught all China unawares. Chiang Kai-shek, routed by the last Japanese attacks, was penned up in Southwest China with so many hostile Chinese of one kind or another between him and the ocean that he could not get out without help. Except for his foreign support, he had become little more than an inland war lord. The Communist-led armies were well placed to take over the Japanese-held territory, which consisted chiefly of strips of railway and garrison cities, islands in a sea of the Liberated Areas.

"Take the cities. Take the railways. Disarm the Japanese," was the order issued from Yen-an by Chu Teh.

The peasant armies of the Liberated Areas drove on the Japanese-held cities with a vigor inspired by Japan's surrender. They took eighty-five county seats and five Shantung ports in the last ten days of August 1945. By September they had doubled the number of "liberated" county towns. The gain in territory was not large, for they already held most of the rural regions, but the gain in cities was immense. They were awaited in Shanghai and Nanking and could have taken those cities. They refrained, fearing trouble with America.

Chiang's policy—and that of America—was to stop these Communist victories at once. Chiang ordered Chu Teh's armies to stand still. Mao Tze-tung, aware of past history, did not comply. Chiang meanwhile contacted some fifty-two Kuomintang generals who had previously gone over to the Japanese and who were therefore in the disputed territory already; Chiang made them his agents against the Communists. The Japanese were ordered, in supplementary peace terms on 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." So the Japanese attacks in North China actually stiffened for a time after the formal surrender. The Japanese announced that they were fighting now on orders from Chiang and from America. This did not enhance Chiang's popularity in North China or America's prestige!

America put ships and planes at Chiang's disposal to rush his armies into North China and Manchuria in what was, up to that time, the "greatest air lift in history." It cost the American people \$300,000,000. It convinced the peasants of North China—as we shall see in discussing the armed forces—that Chiang did not intend to co-operate with them in victory but to subdue them with American aid.

"Chiang and the puppets, the Americans and the Japanese, all co-operated to fight the 'People's Armies,'" was the way the peasants of North China put it.

The dignity of the great American ally, till then adored in China, was shaken by incidents in that mad rush. I owe to the mayor of Chefoo a choice tale of the unsuccessful American attempt to take his port. No doubt there is another side to it, but it will pay us to see how the Chinese mayor regarded it. American naval vessels, he said, entered Chefoo Harbor 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 the Americans might take a look, but that it was "unseemly for an allied power to take a Chinese port from a Chinese army." Discussion grew more acrimonious through several days, till the mayor remarked: "It would be a pity if World War III should start in Chefoo!" The Americans then withdrew to their ships, asking the Chinese to come on board the next morning for an "important conference."

That midnight two hundred motorboats full of puppet troops recently serving Japan arrived from American-held Tientsin and seized an uninhabited island facing Chefoo two miles out. Shore sentries reported them. 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 without notice and without waiting for that "important conference." All Chefoo folk concluded that the

Americans had planned that puppet attack in order to take the port themselves as "mediators."

To settle such conflicts Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley flew to Yen-an and brought back Mao Tze-tung—under American guarantee of his personal safety—to confer with Chiang Kai-shek. An agreement was signed on October 10, known as the Double Tenth Agreement. The Communists pulled their forces out of certain areas, chiefly those south of the Yangtze and around the ports of Canton and Shanghai. Chiang agreed—as he had done so often—to stop hostilities, grant civil liberties, legalize all political parties, and reorganize all troops into one national army. Since Chiang refused any recognition to locally elected governments in the Liberated Areas and would not fix the ratio at which Communist armies should be combined with those of the Kuomintang, Mao reserved the right to defend his areas till a national coalition government should be formed.

Before, during, and after the signing of this treaty the battles kept on. Four days before the signing Chiang launched a large-scale attack on the Communists in Central China. Two days after the signing he issued to his generals printed instructions on "fighting Communist bandits." Even the Communist forces that evacuated the areas south of the Yangtze, according to 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. These forces were decisively defeated, one of the armies joining the Communists.

Chiang clearly did not have enough forces in North or Central China to subdue the Chinese Communists. A new approach must be found.

The new approach was "made in America." Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley was withdrawn; his name was linked in Chinese minds with civil war. General George C. Marshall arrived as the special envoy of the President of the United States, announced as mediator and bringer of peace. He was understood

to be carrying out the policy of the Big Three, adopted at the recently adjourned Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers and restated by President Truman in December 1945: a democratic coalition government for China, formed by mutual consent of all political parties, after which all foreign troops—American and Russian—would withdraw.

A cease-fire order was signed on January 10, 1946, and Marshall added his name to those of Chiang and the Communists. Military positions were to be frozen as of January 13, pending the formation of a national coalition government. A later cease-fire order was signed for Manchuria.

As fixed by those agreements, the Liberated Areas reached from the mouth of the Yangtze opposite Shanghai to the Amur River on the north, and 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 twentyfold growth of the Communist-held lands, won in war against the Japanese.

Hope flamed through China—the hope of peace.

The Political Consultative Conference representing all parties met on January 10 with Chiang in the chair. The delegates cheered when he handed them the cease-fire order signed that morning. He did not say how grudgingly, under what pressure by Marshall, he had signed. His opening speech pledged again the freedoms that China's progressives demanded: freedom of person, speech, press, assembly; equal legality of all political parties; local self-government and popular elections; release of political prisoners. Then in three weeks the delegates settled five basic questions of China's future government. They agreed on a coalition in definite proportions for the transition period; on methods of peaceful reorganization of the state; on the way a National Assembly should be called; on the form of constitution it should consider; and on the reorganization of the armies by reducing and combining all existing armed forces into one army

controlled by no party but by a democratic coalition government.

Everything in those resolutions was passed unanimously by rising vote with Chiang Kai-shek in the chair. The most notorious reactionaries of the Kuomintang also sat in that conference and voted for those resolutions too!

People all over China were happy. Many were hungry, many were naked, millions had died, and tens of millions were homeless, but peace had been settled. Great mass meetings in all the cities of China applauded the PCC decisions. It was the highest tide of hope in nearly twenty years.

The secret police were not happy. They would lose power and graft. Many high generals were unhappy. They would lose the loot of military rule. "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 graft of a war zone, whose war lord appointed all civil and military officials, was not to be given up lightly.

So the hopeful mass meetings, while they were applauding the unanimous decisions, were broken up by Chiang's police. The great student demonstrations welcoming Marshall, the "peace bringer," were smashed by the Shanghai garrison troops. 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 took unilateral action to legalize the dictatorship. On April 1, Chiang himself declared that the form of constitution agreed on by the PCC was unacceptable and that the government must "take over Manchuria." He failed to mention the cease-fire order concerning Manchuria that he had signed three days before.

Now the Chinese had eyes on Marshall. Chiang's promises had been so often broken; they were not seriously believed. But Marshall's name was on that cease-fire order; America was involved, not only Chiang. More than America was involved, for

Marshall was carrying out the Big Three decision of the Foreign Ministers. So the Chinese hoped and waited for Marshall somehow to bring them peace.

North China bristled with points of conflict. There was no simple border line. Chiang, with an American air lift, had taken most of the previously Japanese-held positions. He held scores of isolated cities surrounded by Communist-led peasants. He held bits of railway that led nowhere, for the Communists held the bits between. In much of this territory Chiang's representatives were those same generals who had for years been fighting for the Japanese. The local patriots had never submitted. Nor would they now submit to such generals, even when whitewashed by Chiang.

To resolve these conflicts Marshall set up in Peiping the Executive Headquarters to which we have earlier referred. Kuomintang and Communist representatives worked here in equal numbers under American chairmanship. Truce teams, with American army officers as chairmen, were located in thirty or forty disturbed centers to prevent conflict by talk. Seldom in history has any nation thus trusted itself to guidance by representatives of a foreign power.

The first great test of peace through Marshall's truce teams came in the Central Plains Liberated Area, a large but loosely held sector north of Hankow. Once it had had forty-five million people in parts of five provinces, but its southern part had been given to Chiang through the Double Tenth Agreement, while the northern part was split into many islands by attacks from Chiang's troops. The cease-fire order of January 10 made not the slightest change in the fighting here; Kuomintang troops were nibbling the area to pieces. So a truce team flew to Loshan on the area's border and a special agreement was signed.

The "People's Armies" celebrated the agreement with processions and banners reading: "Peace is Precious." They brought baskets of fruit to give to Chiang's soldiers. But Chiang's officers kept their men away. The Communists dismantled their forts by



agreement; the Kuomintang troops kept theirs and built more. The Communists demobilized fifteen thousand men as part of the Marshall "army reorganization plan." As these men went home with their truce-team passes and reached regions held by Kuomintang armies, many of the now unarmed men were beaten to death on the road.

The Communists offered to give up the area if their remaining sixty thousand troops were given safe-conduct to other Liberated Areas farther north and if the locally elected village and county governments would be respected. Chiang refused. He thought he could take the area anyway. He intended to annihilate those sixty thousand troops. For several months special emergencies brought truce-team visits, postponing Chiang's all-out attack. Finally at the end of June some five hundred thousand Central Government troops crashed into the area from all sides and took it over, while the sixty thousand Communist soldiers escaped by a dispersal technique that will be described later.

Chiang got the area, which had been offered to him without battle. He lost some face, for he had set his aim on liquidating those sixty thousand men and had failed. From the Central Plains his armies next drove east into North Kiangsu and north into South Shansi. The civil war widened until it became one of the greatest civil wars in all history.

The first casualty of that war was the dream of peace by Marshall negotiation. All over China people awoke to the knowledge that the truce teams were not bringing peace. Tentatively at first and then in firmer tones, the Chinese press, even in Kuomintang areas, began to analyze the Marshall methods. "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 the Central Plains was taken by Kuomintang troops, Marshall did not stop it. But when General Li [the Communist escaping from Central Plains] 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 toward Harbin."

Bigger, bloodier battles were occurring under the Marshall truce plan than had been produced by the Hurley "war policy." This became clear. In Hurley's time Chiang had been able to mobilize only one million men against the Liberated Areas; now he attacked with two million. In Hurley days Chiang had twenty American-equipped divisions against Japan; now he had fifty-nine against the Chinese Communists. In the Hurley period Chiang was able to attack only the fringes of the Liberated Areas, using chiefly Japanese and puppet troops; under the "Marshall truce" he penetrated deeply, with his "very own" best divisions, American-trained and equipped.

All over China people began discussing the question of Marshall's "sincerity." It was a favorite dinner subject among correspondents and among sophisticated Chinese. Marshall, they 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 effect of that cease-fire order became clear in Yenan in August when the radio announced that America had given Chiang two billion dollars' worth of surplus war supplies<sup>2</sup> just six weeks after he had begun his all-out civil war. "This is the success of Marshall," was said to me in bitter irony. "A special envoy must have results." The implication was that Marshall's "truce" had quieted America and made possible the unilateral aid to Chiang for civil war.

When I asked Peng Teh-hwai what he thought of Marshall's sincerity, the deputy commander in chief shrugged 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

<sup>2</sup>Later stated as worth \$800,000,000, but by what standard?

attack us. He did it under the cease-fire order more effectively than he could have done it any other way."

Despite this bitter judgment of the "Marshall Truce," the Chinese Communists welcomed Executive Headquarters' planes to their areas for seven more months. The contact with the world was of use to them too. I used this transport—it was open to correspondents—to study in detail the life of the new China, visiting many areas, sometimes just before the last connection broke. For under the eyes of truce teams who pulled out just before Chiang's assaults, Chiang's armies took one Communist "capital" after another: Hsuanhuatien, Hwaiyin, Chengteh, Kalgan, Linyi, and Yen-an.

The Communists' reliance was not on these capitals. It was in the rural life of the wide territory they continued to hold and organize.

### 3. THE POLITICAL STRATEGY

#### 1. "YOU'RE GOING TO GET LICE"

"Make up your mind to it now. You're going to get lice. You're going into the rural districts and you're not going to stay with landlords and rich farmers but with farm hands and share croppers. You're not going to be snooty toward your hosts, either. You're going to get close to them. So there's no way out of it. You're going to get lice."

Liu Hsaio-chi, top Communist next to Mao in Marxist theory, was telling one hundred young people what to expect. Most of them were city-bred students who had come "to serve the people." They had high standards of personal cleanliness; they were going out to organize land reform. "You're going to get lice," was the first warning their teacher gave.

"And don't get the idea that you're going to the peasants with a big stick from Yenan to tell them what to do," Liu continued implacably. "Your job is to learn what the people want and help them get it. Awaken the people's will, then organize it. 'From the people and to the people' must be your policy."

These instructions raise the basic problem of politics and the different ways in which people approach it.

Here are a billion human beings in southeast Asia. They are hungry, they are illiterate, they are backward in farm methods, they are dying by millions from disease, from ignorance, from oppression. Can they become heirs to what is best in civilization? Can they become equal rulers in this century of the common man? If so, how set about it?

A passion to "go to the people" seized thousands upon thousands of Chinese young folk of the educated classes in recent decades. It was not invented by the Communists; it preceded them. It began in the great patriotic rising of the students in 1919, the May Fourth Movement that spread from the Peiping universities until it overthrew the traitorous Anfu clique. That was perhaps the only time in history that students overthrew a government, but China has honored the scholar as leader for thousands of years. Those students so ached to arouse their countrymen against Japan's aggression that they stirred even the sluggish peasants. The idea grew that only when China's peasants stood erect on their own soil could China be free and strong.

From that time on, in recurring national crises, China's educated youth offered themselves for patriotic work among the people. Chiang Kai-shek's regime found little use for their unbridled zeal and increasingly suppressed them. So the Communists inherited them and found not only a use for them but a political theory to guide their work. Without the participation of the "revolutionary intellectuals," said Mao Tze-tung, the "People's Revolution" will not succeed. But these intellectuals have an inconstancy and an individualism which must be "cured by prolonged struggle in the midst of the masses of the people."

The "People's Revolution"—which is Mao's dynamic term for "democracy"—thus demands close mingling of the ablest minds from the schools with the most backward tillers of the soil. City folk cannot make solutions for peasants. Nor have the peasants

been able in four thousand years to make the solution for themselves. The most energetic thinkers must mix with the people in deep intercourse; they are the sperm to fertilize the unawakened ova in the peasantry's dark womb. Only thus can the new democracy and the new and greater leaders of the people be stirred into life and grow.

A first incidental test is this matter of vermin. "Eighty per cent of the human race is lousy," the famous surgeon, Dr. Leo Eloesser, told me when he was working for UNRRA in China. I don't know who got the percentage, but it is probably true. The saints of the Middle Ages knew what it cost to mingle with "God's poor"; they offered as a sacrifice the cooties they endured. Modern reformers are more fastidious. When I asked the Yen-an leaders for permission to go with their evacuation to the hills and Lu Ting-yi warned me that on some days there might be no food, I replied: "I'm not so much afraid of a day without food as of the chance of—well, running into vermin."

Lu shouted with laughter. "Chance? But it's a certainty," he cried.

How tough the Chinese Communists were with their young adherents in this was shown by the experience of a girl graduate from the Yen-an Normal School. She came from a rich Kiangsu family; her father owned a factory. She left home to join the Communists and prepared to be a teacher. She was sent to organize a winter class in a village that had never had a school. After one night in a peasant's cave she came back in tears.

"Everything is so filthy and I am getting cooties. They don't want a school anyway."

Her teacher comforted her but warned her: "You said you came to 'serve the people.' If you give up now, you are finished."

"But they won't even let me clean the place. The old mother got angry when I tried."

"Who are you to put an older woman's home to rights?" the teacher reproved. "You are the youngest, the least. You are the guest. Behave like a guest and win the respect of your hosts."

The abashed girl went back to the dark cave dwelling. She was admitted without enthusiasm. She slept on the family *kang* with the grandmother and two dirty children. Next morning she had vermin in her hair. When she bit into her steamed bread—North China peasants make bread by steaming—she even found a louse in the bread. Courtesy forbade her to throw it away; her hosts were looking at her. She ate it, louse and all, lest they think her fussy. It was an act which nobody but the Chinese Communists—and St. Francis of Assisi—would approve.

Soon the bedraggled wife allowed the newcomer to carry the filthy baby. She cleaned the vermin from the baby's hair. Soothed by the cessation of itching, the child stopped fretting. The mother let the city girl look after it oftener.

Slowly they began to accept her. She was still the youngest, the least. She saw babies grow ill from conditions that killed six out of every ten Shensi babies in their first months. The mothers disregarded her ideas because she was unmarried. So one day, desperate at the casual murder of babies, she spoke of "my baby" at home. It was her sister's, but she had helped care for it. She let them think she had a husband with the army and was working to support a child. After that they swapped baby tales easily. Did she know, they asked, about that new-fangled hospital in Yen-an that claimed to save most of the babies? And without silver amulets to ward off demons? She did.

Soon she was showing them Chinese characters for simple objects. She told them tales about the world. About the rice growing of the south and the ships on the Yangtze to people who had never seen rice growing or ships. These seemed fairy tales, but they liked to hear. When the head of the township government saw that the women accepted the teacher he secured the loan of a large room for her use. He was willing enough to have the prestige of a good winter class. The men came also, at first for the stories and then for the pride of "learning characters," which is Chinese for learning to read.

So she succeeded. When March sowing put an end to the

classes the peasants all offered her gifts; her food had been her only pay. She refused at first but in the end took four pairs of slippers made by the women from bits of cloth. These were her winter salary. More than these she prized four letters that came to her later when she was nursing at the front. Four babies had been born and the mothers thanked her for the new ideas she had given. For the first time in many births their babies had remained alive.

These young intellectuals must win respect by the standard of peasants. A youth of twenty, a graduate of the Lu Hsun Art School, went to teach a winter class at the edge of the Mongolian deserts. He had few pupils, for homes were scattered and the weather cold. One evening after class it was snowing; a boy, living three miles away, was afraid to go home for fear of wolves. The young teacher accompanied him, lost the road on his way back, and fell into a deep drift in a ditch, injuring himself so that he succeeded only with difficulty in crawling back to the school. When the story spread he won many pupils. The young man's devotion and ability to "take it" had convinced those stubborn peasants that learning was worth while.

When sowing time brought the end of the winter class the peasants refused to let the teacher go.

"I must obey my superior's instruction," he told them.

"But your superior must obey the people. The people, that's us!" Not for nothing had those peasants heard the propaganda of "democracy." The young man, touched, arranged to stay and open a regular school. He had qualified as one of the people's "leaders."

To mix with the peasants and win their approval were required not only of green young graduates but were the basic technique for all would-be political leaders. "Only by becoming a pupil of the people can you educate them," said Mao Tze-tung. "If you consider yourself a master of the people, then, no matter how great your talents, the people will not need you."



"Never in Chinese history have intellectuals had such close relations with the Chinese people," said Miss Cheng Hsueh-chao, a writer. "Never has there been such a penetration of people with culture down to the very bottom of the Chinese peasantry."

Miss Cheng, who spent nine years in France before she came to Yen-an, was living in one of the caves of the Cultural Association up a steep, slippery path near the top of a cliff. She was not a Communist, but she felt that the Communists had given her a chance to function. Years back, in what now seemed another epoch, she had been the daughter of a silk merchant near Shanghai. As a young student she had taken part in the women's rights movement in 1925-27, the years of the "Great Revolution." When Chiang seized power and began to slaughter her friends, she fled abroad, a disillusioned young woman. For nine years she lived in France as a correspondent for a Chinese paper, then returned in 1935 to take part in her country's resistance to Japan but was shocked by what she found.

"If you even said you wanted to resist Japan, Chiang's police arrested you. I had supposed that the 1927 oppressions were over, but they had become much worse. A word of mine might bring disaster on family and friends. After the relatively free life of France I could not endure this. I went to Nanchang and then to Chungking but found no freedom anywhere until I came to Yen-an.

"I think Mao Tze-tung's views on literature are very sound," Miss Cheng continued. "In the past we writers copied Chinese classics. Then we came in touch with the West and tried to ape Shakespeare and Molière. Mao calls us to know the people of our country, to go among them and portray their life. When we go to the villages it is a double benefit. We impart some ideas of sanitation, some general enlightenment. Meanwhile we ourselves gain more intimate knowledge of our country's life. I especially need this because I spent so many years abroad. But most of our writers come from the upper class and do not know the Chinese peasant.

"Writers, more than most people, need spiritual food," she concluded. "A writer's life is very satisfying here."

I looked around at the shallow cave in which this well-poised woman of forty lived. Above a floor of hard, uneven earth the whitewashed walls arched to a ceiling ten feet high. At the back of the cave stood a bed of boards on trestles. On it a bag of straw had been neatly shaped into a mattress under high-puffed pillows and meticulously folded quilts. A small dressing table of unpainted boards held a tin washbasin. A table for writing stood under the paper window. Two stools completed the furniture. Miss Cheng kept her clothing in a suitcase under the bed and stacked her books and papers on the earthen window ledge. From a box of charcoal she fed the brazier near the door.

This was the home of a successful writer—Yenan style. Miss Cheng pointed out that the cave was dug "to fit the needs of a writer." It had a much bigger window than a peasant's cave. I glanced at the paper window; it was torn in several places, letting in the zero air. "A bit breezy." She smiled, catching my glance. "People of our education go in for light and fresh air. But this makes more charcoal necessary. The peasants cannot afford charcoal. They burn weeds and hold the heat by having few windows. Our writers' standard is still a bit higher than theirs."

Miss Cheng had her own views on vermin. "Not every peasant has lice," she assured me. "They don't like lice any more than you do. They get rid of them as soon as they can afford soap and a change of underwear." Not being an organizer of land reform but a writer who volunteered as a teacher of winter classes, Miss Cheng was not required to live with farm hands and share croppers. She stayed with middle peasants or even with rich ones and found them very hospitable. She had mastered the approach to a peasant home.

"We bring them a little excitement and a little knowledge and we take care not to add to their work," she said. "We take our own millet and help the housewife cook it. We help our

hostess in other work, sweeping the ground, feeding the animals, grinding the millet. So they are glad to see us come."

"But I thought the donkey grinds the millet." I had taken photographs of blindfolded donkeys pulling the heavy grindstone around and around.

"That is in wealthy families," laughed Miss Cheng with superior knowledge. "In most families the peasant or his wife turns the grindstone—usually the wife. It is a hard job and makes you very dizzy." When Miss Cheng writes about a farming family she will know how grinding millet feels.

This energetic writer had become a specialist on village life in many provinces. She had visited villages in Szechwan under Chiang's rule. "Hungry, half-naked people, with no grain left for seed. Plenty of lice there." She had also journeyed on foot from Yen-an to Harbin in Manchuria and back again, a year's march, just after the war with Japan getting material for a book on the way. She found these peasants "very active-minded, full of enthusiasm for production and learning. Very different from peasants under the Kuomintang."

Miss Cheng had thoroughly mingled with the people of the Chinese country. She found a satisfying life.

Every Chinese of the upper classes who "goes over to the people" faces his own special problem. Each is an individual, with a standing and stake in the old society, even though he found it too oppressive to endure. Many had to flee under false names, lest their families suffer. A doctor in an UNRRA-equipped hospital in Shantung learned that his parents had been killed in Shanghai by Kuomintang agents "to teach people not to work for the Communists."

Still people kept coming by the thousands. During the war with Japan they came via Sian; Chiang's military kept a concentration camp there for unwary democrats trying to get through. Later they slipped more easily from Peiping to Kalgan, feigning a summer's trip in the Western Hills. From Shanghai they made

it across river to North Kiangsu or by boat to some Shantung port. All of these were dangerous but much-traveled ways. The flood of intellectuals crossing over to the Communists increased as the civil war went on. When the People's Liberation Army began taking the big cities in 1948-49, many intellectuals remained in these cities or went to them in order to await the new regime. Thus most of the faculty and students of Peiping's universities remained.

By no means were all who "crossed the line" Communists. Most were just patriotic intellectuals who felt that Chiang Kai-shek was selling out the country to Chinese grafters and to foreign powers, and who saw in the Chinese Communists the leadership that could "complete the national revolution"; i.e., make the Chinese supreme in their own land, prosperous and strong.

One of the famous arrivals during my last days in Yen-an was a man of this type, Judge Chen Ching-kun. He was no radical. He was a celebrated jurist who had written more codes of laws than anyone else in China. He had been a judge of the Supreme Court and was professor of law in Chaoyang University. When Chiang Kai-shek came to Peiping after Japan's surrender he called on the judge to ask his "advice on government." Here I quote the account of Fifth Daughter Chen, who is given to picturesque exaggeration: "And my father told him how corrupt that rotten government is and Chiang promised to reconsider." Clearly Judge Chen was one of the higher-ups.

The judge got his revolutionary start at the big mass meeting held in Peiping to celebrate Chiang's promise of the "four freedoms"—the meeting that was broken up by Chiang's secret gangsters. Judge Chen was chief speaker on the platform and was hit by a bit of rock. He picked it up and shouted: "I am not a man to be cast down by a single stone."

If you met him in anyone's home you wouldn't think him capable of such action. He is a dignified gentleman who bows himself into and out of conversations. It must have taken an

blue rugs and silken coverlets evacuated from Kalgan, and given better food than generals or governors in the Liberated Areas got. It was perhaps the best racket in Communist China.

Judge Chen was, of course, in a different category. If the new society should need a code of laws or a constitution that would pass in the highest circles, he was there with the goods. Meanwhile he could make speeches. And did. He made speeches almost every night along the road. The younger folk would be exhausted by the long day on foot or in springless carts, but old Judge Chen could always make a speech. In villages, in county towns, in army camps, to everyone.

His best theme was "Chiang and American Imperialism, Last Flicker of a Dying Flame," proving that imperialism was on its way out in this century of the common man. He capitalized his own past in high-flown style, listing the degrees he had taken, the courts he had sat in, the codes of laws he had written, and the millions he had been making when he decided to abandon the Kuomintang. He would end: "I tell you this to show that, in our country's present crisis, that dictatorial, civil-war, sell-the-country regime of Chiang is too much for even a propertied man like me."

As a village agitator the judge had limitations. His speech was erudite, not easily understood by common folk. The peasants strained to follow. His spirit was understood and made a big impression. After one of his speeches a peasant rose to declare: "When folks like Judge Chen come over to the people, this is the turning over of earth and heaven."

Old Lady Chen traveled with him. She was the *grande dame* type. She traveled in a mule litter and once got tilted out onto the road. I never dared ask Lady Chen what she did about the cooties, any more than I would have asked a Mrs. Astor of New York. I have no doubt she faced them. The judge and his lady had lived soft for sixty years in the lap of a feudal society. But they stood up well on the road.

The Chens were a very big family and made their home in a

whole string of caves in Yen-an. Sometimes they came to the movies in the American compound and stared at the Hollywood offerings in a dignified way. The judge was known to be writing; at times, in some statement of policy, I thought I detected his legal touch. I last saw him at Mao Tze-tung's dinner party on Chinese New Year's. He sat at the big round table with Mao and several top Communists.

The judge remarked how odd it was that a man of his conservative tradition should have come "to join hands with Communists."

"That's nothing," retorted Mao. "I was brought up a Buddhist."

Later the judge began laying down the law. "Legally speaking," his voice boomed out, "Chiang Kai-shek and his general staff must be rated war criminals." Everybody laughed, and the judge seemed happily at home. I have wondered since if that "war criminal" charge that the Communists later hurled at Nanking, in exchange for the epithet "Communist bandits," started right then and there with old Judge Chen.

Fertilized by repeated intercourse of the patriotic intellectuals with the peasantry, a simpler, steadier leadership was born from the womb of the people: the "labor heroes" of the villages, the disciplined farm hands and peasants in the army. Far away beyond the lines of battle grew yet another leadership to which this newborn rural leadership was from birth pledged in marriage: the industrial working class, organizing underground in Chiang's big towns.

But before the maturity for that marriage there was yet long growth.

## 2. THE BEAN IN THE BOWL

When Yang Pu-hao, illiterate labor hero of Yen-an County, discussed with me the changes brought by what he called the "new

society," he said: "The biggest change is that there was no voting in the old society, but now everybody votes."

"How did you vote?" I asked, for I knew that Yang could not read well enough to mark a ballot.

"I dropped my bean in the bowl. They gave me the bean outside the cave and I went into the cave where the bowls were, one for each candidate. Afterward we all watched while they counted the beans."

"Is the voting secret or can people see you?"

At first Yang insisted that the voting was secret since "the committee and the other voters stay outside and I go into the cave alone." When I asked how he could tell the bowls apart, he replied that they were marked with the candidates' names and there was a man in the cave to tell him which was which. I suggested that this man destroyed the secrecy of voting. Yang hotly insisted that the man was merely a needed convenience. "We chose him for this in our meeting because he can read and is just. He tells me which is Wang's bowl and which is Chia's, but he does not tell me which to choose. I chose Wang because he is more energetic and also very honest."

"So there were two candidates," I commented.

"This time there were two. Last year there were four. Two years ago there were eight or nine."

"So you have voted three times?"

"I have voted three times with beans for village chairmen. I also voted for the County Congress and for the Border Region Congress. Before all this I voted by raising hands in a meeting. The bean in the bowl is better."

Labor Hero Yang was clearly an expert in voting. The bean in the bowl may not be the last word in technique, but it was good enough for Yang. His manner left no doubt that no alien intruder like me could tell him how to vote.

The bean in the bowl was the method that spread from Yenan across China for people who could not read and write. Educated Chinese know, of course, that there are more advanced tech-

niques. Printed ballots were used in the Yen-an municipality, in Harbin, Tsitsihar, and most of the towns. Educational campaigns urged voters to learn to read at least the candidates' names. Meanwhile the ways of voting were accommodated to the voters. Tens of millions of Chinese have indicated political choice by the bean-in-the-bowl method who under our American or European systems could never have voted at all. The literacy test for voting, which Westerners take for granted, would deprive four fifths of Asia of the vote. Worse than that, it would confine voting to the upper classes. So our Western method would seem to Chinese peasants undemocratic and unjust.

The earliest attempts to introduce popular choice of officials in China on the basis of one vote for every adult were made by the Communists. For twenty years they practiced various kinds of elections in their areas. They consider that the first step is not the election but the arousing of the people to take an interest in elections. Only if the people have a sense of their own power and can get something they want by voting will they turn out in any number to vote.

In coming into a new area the Communists first aroused the people by slogans and agitation. During the war with Japan the slogans were: "Down with Japs and traitors," and "Down with excessive rents." Later they concentrated on "Land to the tiller." They promoted the idea that "the people" have the power and the right to overthrow corrupt officials, to reduce rents, to punish war criminals, and even to confiscate land. They organized peasants' unions, women's associations, labor unions, and even merchants' associations in advance of government. In all of these they saw to it that the poorer people, hitherto voiceless, got prominent part. If a previous local government existed and was willing to co-operate, the Communists tried to "democratize" it through pressure of these "mass organizations." If the government had run away, they set up temporary governments from representatives of the mass organizations and only then prepared to hold elections. In such elections the active



members of the new organizations quite naturally received the votes.

This realistic political strategy was based on an analysis of the elements in the rural districts as to natural political allegiance and economic worth. Landlords and rich peasants, said Mao, made up less than 10 per cent of the population and are natural antagonists anyway. Middle peasants made up 20 per cent of the rural population. No policies that antagonized them should be adopted. Their attitude "determines whether or not the revolution will succeed." The real, positive appeal was, however, to the poor peasants and farm hands who, according to Mao, formed 70 per cent of the population. These were the "main force" of the Chinese revolution. Poor peasants' leagues were therefore first organized and helped fix policy for the wider peasants' unions. Governments formed on such a base were naturally strongly loyal to the Communists. It was shrewd tactics, but it can also be defended as the essence of democracy. To give 70 per cent of the population a better life, and then base government on that majority, is sound politics anywhere.

An initial difficulty with this method was that it was precisely the "responsible elements" with some experience in leadership who stood aloof. I often heard American missionaries in Peiping decry the "irresponsible elements the Communists put in power." Some of this criticism was prejudice; some was well founded. Capable village or county chiefs do not exist in excessive numbers anywhere. Once the Communists had their secure majority, however, they induced more experienced leaders to take part. Even landlords or ex-landlords were admitted to government if they showed a loyal patriotism. Thus the old philanthropic landlord, An Wen-chin, at first led the anti-Communist movement and later became vice-chairman in the government of Yen-an Border Region. He stated, supporting the land reform that took his acres:

"The rich have lands from east to west; the poor haven't land even to stick a trowel in. In this way our China cannot be

prosperous and strong." There are ex post facto patriots in all countries.

The literature of the new China is full of criticism of badly run elections and corrupt governments where "the people do not take sufficient part." A delightful novelette, *Little Second Blackie Gets Married*, has a penetrating description of two village gangsters who remain in power under the new regime. Two brothers, Chin and Shing, had grown rich through former tie-ups with bandits, helping in the kidnaping of men and then negotiating the ransom. They kept village power even after "liberation."

People in those hills were not very brave to begin with. After several months of great chaos in which many people died, it got so that nobody was willing to stick his neck out. Other big villages had already elected their governments, had all the "Save the Nation" societies, the Peasants', the Women's, the Young Folks'. . . . But in Liu Family Pass, except for an organizer sent by the county, nobody was willing to be active in politics.

So when an election was held, Shing got himself elected village chairman and Chin became chief of the militia. "For folks weren't going to stop anyone who was willing to take part in politics." From this time the two gangsters were "more terrible than before," using the village militia as personal servants and taking such grain, money, and women as they chose. Finally they jailed the young hero and heroine on ridiculous charges and were deposed in the resulting struggle by a meeting at which "the people at last spoke out."

The new China is thus fully and ironically aware that there is no royal road to good government, that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

In recording the "people's will," different methods have been tested.

The first elections in Yen-an were by show of hands in open meeting. All men and women over eighteen had the right to

vote. Two thirds of the men usually attended these meetings and a smaller proportion of the women. There were many competing candidates and considerable discussion. Such meetings elected village chairmen; other similar meetings elected delegates to county and Border Region congresses.

By the time the Liberated Areas had spread from Yanan to the sea, the bean-in-the-bowl method was preferred. I collected many local variations.

In Leftwood Village near Harbin the ten candidates for village chairman sat in a row on the platform with their hats behind them. The voters formed in line and went behind the candidates to cast their beans. The chairman thus elected met with chairmen of eleven nearby villages to form the council of the larger unit, the Chu. Wang Sun, the energetic and popular Chu chairman, laughed when I asked if he had ever before taken part in government.

"I was a farm hand; I couldn't even eat before the land reform. How could I then take part in government?"

A priceless account of the first election ever held in a village of North Hupeh was given me by Sidney Rittenberg, who saw the whole sequence from nomination to election. First a general meeting was held for nominations. Four hundred villagers came and four candidates were proposed from the floor. There followed a week of wide discussion. Then a final meeting was called to elect. The four candidates sat on the platform with a deep bowl in front of each. They made their final speeches. Since nobody in the village had ever heard an election speech it was hard for them to know what to say.

Most of the candidates spoke about as follows: "I don't see why anyone should choose me. I'm just old Wang, stupid and clumsy, as you all know. But if you elect me I'll try to fix this irrigation so that everyone gets his fair share of water, and I'll fight for a democratic tax program." (This meant a progressive tax on higher crop incomes; the village council distributed the tax within the village.)

One of the candidates was the primary-school teacher. He spoke as if he felt the challenge of history. "This is the first time in two thousand years that the people of this village have the chance to say what they want in government!"

The voters then marched single file out of the hall, passing a table where the election committee gave to each voter one white pebble and three black ones, this being a region without beans. They returned by another door and were told, in the interests of the secrecy of voting, to put their closed fist into each bowl in turn, releasing the white pebble into the bowl of the chosen candidate. Everyone followed the correct procedure with the black pebbles, dropping them with deepest secrecy, but most of the voters held the white pebble high, looked around the room, and dropped it ostentatiously. It was tactful that rejection be secret, but why conceal approval from the chosen one?

"This final moment took everyone by storm," declared Rittenberg. "People regarded elections rather skeptically during the nomination and the week of discussion, but they grew very excited when they found themselves actually choosing."

The schoolteacher was elected. At once he reconvened the meeting to criticize the election procedure. "Our people never voted before, so we couldn't resist showing off," he said. "Next time we must overcome this and have a truly secret ballot." Everyone agreed.

Disputes over irrigation water formed the life-and-death business of local government in this locality. Formerly the rich landowner squeezed the small peasant badly in this matter. Disputants went to the county magistrate, who consistently favored the most powerful. Through the new democratic elections new methods of water control appeared. The village chairman—or county magistrate if the area was larger than a village—called a meeting of all people whose lands would be affected by the water supply in question. They worked out a plan by which nobody would be ruined. Then everyone voted on the plan.

"That is what democratic government is," bragged a peasant in a South Field Village conference.

Everywhere I went in the new China I found the people proud of their elections. I especially recall Broken Cliffs Village, a cluster of caves on a hill not far from Yenan. As we came up the ravine the villagers emerged from holes in the earth at different levels above us and stood looking down, sharply outlined against the blue sky. On a flat bit of beaten ground a blindfolded donkey was threshing grain, pulling a heavy stone roller around and around. It seemed a prehistoric village of cave men, infinitely removed from the present day.

I asked the nearest people for their chairman. They indicated a fifty-year-old man with a shrewd, kindly face who sat on a mound of earth spinning white wool in the sun.

"How did he get to be chairman?" I inquired.

"We elected him last year," several told me. Then one man volunteered with a challenging glance: "And we can recall him any time we like. We've democratic government now."

It was uncanny to hear people who economically lived almost in the Stone Age, growing hemp to make their own shoe soles, not yet affording kerosene or candles but using their own hemp oil for light, boast about their right to recall their mayor as we used to boast in Seattle in our most energetically democratic days!

Governments of villages, counties, and large provinces are set up by this method of voting. The county, or *hsien*, remains, as it always has in China, the basic unit of government. Yenan County government was typical.

Magistrate Tsao, chief official of the county, clad in the usual blue cotton suit, received men in his large whitewashed office in the county building, seven miles out from town. He came from a local middle-peasant family and had finished the secondary school. He had held office three years, having been twice

re-elected. Under him came all matters of local government: finance, courts, education, police, local militia.

"My chief job," he said, "is to increase farm production. First honors go to our labor heroes." He nodded his tribute to Labor Hero Yang, former farm hand, now energetic tiller of his own soil and Tsao's first lieutenant in the "production drive" that had added seventeen thousand acres of reclaimed land to the county in three years. Yang grinned.

Two other members of the county council bowed more formally as they were introduced. A smiling, elderly man in a black skullcap proved to be a former landlord named Chang. A stocky man in his forties named Sung had been chief of the county police in the old society and was now organizer of village dramatic groups. These two had fled for their lives when the Communists came but had returned and made their peace. I asked each of them, as I had asked Yang, what the biggest change in the new society was.

Tsao said: "The biggest change is that formerly officials were appointed from the top down, but now they are elected from the bottom up. Formerly the Central Government appointed the provincial governors, and these named county magistrates, who selected officials lower down. Today the voters choose directly our county congress of forty-nine members; these select the magistrate and the permanent council of thirteen."

"Formerly you bought official jobs and made a profit on them," grinned ex-Policeman Sung. "I bought my job as chief of the county police as my father and grandfather did before me. I made my profit by taking taxes from the people. I also had the right to license gambling houses and keep part of the fees. Nobody now gets rich from being an official."

"The chief difference is that now there is order," stated ex-Landlord Chang. "I was a landlord with three thousand acres, all the land of eight villages. But only eight hundred acres of it were cultivated. People couldn't live on the good valley land because of bandits, and they wouldn't cultivate the hill land

because it couldn't pay the taxes. Twice I was kidnaped for ransom. My life was never secure. And what is a man's life for but to have food and clothes and friends," he concluded with a courtly bow.

I had my suspicion of that ex-landlord; he was so very smooth. After he stepped out Magistrate Tsao remarked: "Chang has plenty of money. He had a fortune in silver bars and invested it to start the local paper mill. This is a very profitable industry, for the Communists print many newspapers and books. Let him make money as long as he does something useful."

Both Chang and Sung wanted me to believe that they were loyal to the new society. At least they had managed to fit into it, how sincerely was anybody's guess. Months later I met Chang climbing Radio Hill on Chinese New Year's with a gift of precious old wine for Editor Liao. The *Yenan Emancipation Daily* was his best customer!

"Our two biggest achievements of the past twelve years are the formation of democratic government and the development of production," said Lin Tsu-han at the headquarters of the Border Region People's Congress, over a delicious meal of curdled chicken and rice. Those are big words, but Lin Tsu-han should know.

White-haired Lin Tsu-han was an old-timer in China's fight for democracy. He was a personal friend of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the chief of finance in that early coalition "national government" in Canton. In the great split he went with the Communists. His dignity, wisdom, and mellow personality made him an able administrator. He was at the time chairman of the Border Region Congress, a post equivalent to governor.

"We have had three general elections from the bottom up to the Border Region Congress," he told me. "It was after the second congress that we introduced the 'three-three system' now followed in all the new territories."

The "three-three system" is a pledge by the Communists that

they will restrict themselves to one third of the government posts even in regions where they might take all the positions. Its purpose, Governor Lin explained, is to break away from the one-party dictatorship maintained elsewhere by the Kuomintang and to prevent overenergetic local Communists from unduly dominating less politically minded people who, without such an agreement, might fear to run against the Communists. The system was based upon Mao Tze-tung's analysis of the present stage in China which demands an alliance of "all revolutionary classes." The Communists consider themselves the spokesmen for the working class and the great mass of the peasantry, but they believe that small businessmen, professional men, and even "forward-looking landlords" should be drawn into government.

"The best ideas come from discussion among democratic people of many kinds," said Governor Lin. "No one class has all the good ideas."

All governments set up in the new China have therefore contained people of many parties, social classes, and religions. The first city council in Harbin included Moslems and Mongols, members of the gentry as well as workers and peasants. The county councils elected in 1946 in Northwest Shansi contained both Communist and Kuomintang members, Christians, Moslems, and Buddhists, as well as the followers of Confucius.

The Communist policy in this is well established. It is continued in their plans for a federal government of all China, in which many smaller political parties join, the professional men and business groups being represented by the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang and the Democratic League, now reorganized as a political party. The Communists have the leadership, but the program on which they combine is still the old Sun Yat-sen program. The Communists expect to advance beyond this, but how fast they will do so nobody can predict.

This depends not only on the Communists but on the people of China, the oldest people on earth and one of the shrewdest. They have learned from the Communists and through beans in



a bowl how to speak. But all they will say and when they will say it not even the cleverest Communists know.

### 3. TAXES—THE “PEOPLE’S BURDEN”

“Why don’t you build a bridge over Yen River?” I asked a bit rudely of Fan Tse-wen, the neat little chief of finance who came to my Yen-an cave to expound his budget. “Why do you fight so fiercely to cut the taxes? In America we would let them stay at 12.3 and use them for some roads and bridges.”

Mr. Fan nodded politely. “Roads and bridges are very good,” he said, “but the people would rather eat.”

This brought me back with a jolt to the harsh economy of Asia. I had been thinking in Western terms. To me, an American, good roads and bridges were one of those absolutes, always desirable. They were a sign of progressive government. Now my interview with the good Mr. Fan had been postponed for a day by a sudden rising of Yen River, over which there was no bridge. And right in the Communists’ number-one capital!

So when Mr. Fan began bragging about low taxes, saying that they had been as high as 45 per cent of the crop under the old regime of the war lords, but the new regime had succeeded in cutting them to 14.7 per cent, then to 12.3 per cent, and this year to 8.3 per cent of the peasants’ income, his passion for tax cutting made me impatient. This economy kept the region backward. A peasant miserliness!

I began to reconsider. “How much food do you have?” I asked.

Mr. Fan drew figures from his sheaf of statistics. He showed how the cultivated area of the region had grown from 1,400,000 acres in 1936 to more than double that amount in 1946, with final figures not yet in. He showed a grain crop of 11,200,000 bushels and a population just under 1,600,000, which was increasing by some 60,000 refugees a year.

Three facts were clear at once from a little arithmetic. First,

that the grain yield was low. Hardly more than five bushels per acre. The first need was increased yield if possible on these arid lands. Till then, economize!

The second fact was that the average food per person was a pound of grain per day. If grain was fed to chickens or cattle or sold for cotton imports, the food ration would be reduced. So the livestock must eat grass and the chickens scraps and the clothing must be much-patched. Any government extravagance, such as diverting farm labor to road building, might starve the people. I recalled that spectacular famine in this area before the Communists came.

The third clear fact was that Yen-an Border Region, poorly fed as it was, attracted refugees from worse-fed areas nearby. It was not easy to come here past Chiang's military blockade; you had to leave everything but the rags on your back and come at a run. Yet people kept coming because there was more food here. Doctors in Yen-an hospitals said that resistance to disease was better than in fertile southern regions that were poorly governed and heavily taxed. Bodies survived in Yen-an because they were regularly fed.

Any government that wants to serve such people must cut expenses to the bone. The first task in Asia for any government that is "of, by, and for the people" is not roads and bridges. It is to improve food production and meanwhile to get clothing, schools, and government without paying too much for these in food. Mr. Fan's pride in tax reduction was no blind worship of economy. He wanted the people to eat!

Peasants dying of hunger are not much enamored of good roads. In China they often resented new roads with reason. Their land was taken for roads without payment. Their labor was taken to build roads, also without payment. And when the road was built, the ordinary peasant was not allowed to use it, for his old-fashioned cart spoiled the surface with its sharp iron wheels. The approach to every bridge and good highway had deep holes dug in such a manner that autotrucks could pass, but a horse

pulling a cart would be crippled. Such good roads were made for officials who came to the farms to take the grain. They were made for the governing class, not for the governed. My American passion for roads was checked by these facts. I admitted it: eating comes first!

The Chinese have an expressive word for taxes. They call them the "people's burden." No nonsense there about public funds for public improvements. Just the extra burden on the bent backs of the people for the support of officials. That's how people of Asia have seen taxes for four thousand years.

Ex-Policeman Sung of Yen-an County listed for me some of the former taxes. There was a tax for the army and another tax for army uniforms and a third for an army expedition. There was a tax for owning an animal and another for driving it through the county. There were thirty or forty more kinds of taxes. The opium-planting tax was a curiosity. Opium planting was forbidden, but officials needed the revenue they got from taxes and fines on opium, so they taxed the peasant for opium whether he planted it or not. This made it necessary to plant it, for no other crop was valuable enough to pay the opium tax.

"Taxes might be more than all a man had," declared Sung. He gave examples of men who sold everything they had to pay the tax.

There were frequent suicides in Chiang's China of peasants who could not pay their taxes. On rare occasions there was a suicide of some conscientious official. In Shanghai in the summer of 1946 they were talking of the suicide of Rice Collector Cheng in Kiangsi. He received orders to collect a certain amount of rice for Chiang's army within a month. The government wouldn't accept money payments, for the army needed food. The peasants didn't have the rice, so they sold cattle and land to buy rice at black-market prices to pay the tax. Peasants committed suicide; one old woman hanged herself in the home she lost through the tax. Honest Cheng couldn't endure enforcing this tax, so he jumped into Tungting Lake, leaving the statement

that he could no longer be faithful both to his government and his people, and his only road was death.

The Communists faced squarely the problem of the cost of government in terms of the low standard of eating in China—and let no one deny that it is a bitter problem. They cut out high-priced officials long before they came to Yen-an, paying their army and civil service bare rations and clothes. Then a crisis came that demanded even more drastic measures. Food became so scarce that if government and army ate the people would starve.

This crisis was caused by the blockade imposed in 1939 by General Hu Tsung-nan.

The Yen-an area was never able to feed many soldiers. The army was sent out of the area and to the front against Japan. But when the Japanese attacked Yen-an from the north in 1939, Hu Tsung-nan seized the chance to attack from the south and annex five counties. The Communists had to bring back troops to defend the Yen-an Border Region and had to feed them. Since they had lost some territory, it was harder to feed them than before.

Under this necessity the Chinese Communists made a “new invention.” They created a partially self-supporting government and army. How it was done is told in a remarkable report made by Mao Tze-tung in December 1944, *On Financial and Economic Problems of the Border Region*. It is a Communist classic now, for the method of the “self-supporting government” spread across the Liberated Areas. It was epoch-making in its success.

“The Kuomintang stopped all supplies and blockaded us, hoping to starve us out,” reported Mao. “We nearly reached the point of having no clothes to wear, no oil to cook with, no paper, and no vegetables. The soldiers had no shoes and the civil service had no blankets. . . . The Kuomintang thought our difficulties insurmountable; they daily expected our collapse.”

Some of the Communists proposed still greater economies by dispensing with part of the army and government. “If we do

that," argued Mao, "we shall go backward till we cease to exist at all." Some wanted to ignore the war and have a "magnanimous government" that would be lenient with the people. Mao argued: "If we do not fight this war to victorious conclusion, our so-called magnanimous government will be only a part of Japanese imperialism." Others proposed to take what the army and government needed regardless of the people. This, said Mao, "is the Kuomintang policy which we absolutely must not copy."

Then Mao gave an analysis of the relation of a government to its people in wartime which might well be thoughtfully considered by any government anywhere:

Our financial problem is to supply the living and working expenses of tens of thousands of soldiers and government workers and the costs of the war of resistance. . . . During war the government must demand help from the people and the people understand this. . . . But if we demand help from the people we must also see that their economy has what is necessary for growth and replacement. Proper steps must be taken to help develop the people's farming, animal husbandry, handicraft, salt production, and commerce. Only if the people are able to replace what they have to give up is it possible to carry on the long-term war of resistance.

The solution proposed by Mao was a double production drive to increase "both public and private production." Peasants were urged to reclaim wasteland, and taxes were adjusted to encourage this. Labor-exchange brigades were promoted in ways to be described later. The army and civil servants were also asked to produce as much as possible of their own food. It was called the campaign for "self-supply." Men who were already working for rations were told to keep on working and to help produce the rations.

"In 1941 and 1942 the supplies obtained by the army, the organizations, and the schools through their own efforts were actually the larger part of their total requirements," reported Mao Tze-tung. "This is a miracle never before achieved in Chinese history and forms our unshakable material foundation."

How does this work out in individual cases? Let us return to our friend Mr. Fan, who discusses taxes sitting in my cave in a blue cotton suit that looks newer than most people's with a fountain pen in his pocket and with gray socks and velveteen slippers that give him an almost citified air. How does he live and whence does he get these relatively decent clothes?

"What do they pay you as finance minister?" I asked.

Mr. Fan replied that he received "from the people's burden"—i.e., from taxes—seventeen ounces of grain daily and a monthly ration of four and a quarter pounds of meat, one pound of salt, one pound of cooking oil. He also got a cotton suit and a set of underwear every summer and a padded suit of winter clothing every two years. That was all! So Mr. Fan's services as chief of finance for a large region cost the people somewhat less than five American dollars a month. Little enough to pay for that high intellectual forehead and secondary-school education of his!

But this is impossible! How does Mr. Fan live? The answer is that he belongs to a producing co-operative composed of all the employees of the department of finance. Every member contributes some labor; the co-operative has also some full-time employees who keep the continuity of the enterprises. They reclaimed land for a vegetable garden in one valley and for a pig ranch in another. They run a flour mill and three commercial shops, which serve the co-operative members and also make profits. From these enterprises Mr. Fan gets two additional pounds of meat per month, a pound of vegetables and of charcoal daily, some home-grown tobacco for smoking, and such extras as soap, shoes, socks, and a toothbrush. Those snappy velveteen shoes were thus secured by extra labor outside his duties as chief of finance.

Every government department similarly produced food and clothing in its off moments. If you called on a government leader or university professor you might find him planting tomatoes or turning a spinning wheel on the terrace. The hillside paths to Chu Teh's and Mao Tze-tung's caves were lined with cornstalks

and tomato vines. The interpreters in the American compound worked in off hours on a plot a mile away in the hills. The Cultural Association had a farm on reclaimed land where a few people lived all the year but where well-known writers, sculptors, and musicians helped at harvest.

Not everybody liked it. In Kalgan I met a disconsolate youth who had been deeply disappointed in Yen-an. He went there to study and he felt that he had done "hardly anything but plant potatoes." Yes, it was a hard life! But the cost to the people of having a government certainly grew cheaper. "In the old society I had one hundred and fifty policemen under me in this county, all collecting money from the people," said ex-Police Chief Sung. "Now the county has just forty and they raise most of their own food!"

The most spectacular success was the self-supporting army, which fed itself by reclaiming wasteland at Nanniwan. When the blockade created that crisis and an army was needed to defend the Yen-an region, ten thousand men under Wang Chen moved to Nanniwan, assigned to home defense. They found there no houses or caves, no food or tools, no peasants, nothing but land gone to waste. They brought with them a small supply of grain, enough for famine rations. They dug a few caves, planted vegetables for a quick food supply, logged trees, and sold them to the nearest settlements for grain. From a great iron bell discovered in an abandoned temple the army blacksmiths made tools. These details show how the area had gone back to wilderness through past drought and bad government.

Within a few years there was a thirty-five-thousand-acre farm at Nanniwan cultivated by the army. In its training period and at all times except when actually fighting, the army of Yen-an Border Region supported itself. More than that, Nanniwan produced surplus to feed wounded and disabled soldiers.

The effect of all this was that government actually grew cheaper even while its activities in schools, hospitals, and some road improvement increased. The taxes on those sheets kept by

Mr. Fan kept going down. They were moreover graduated to lessen the burden on the poorest. In the old society landlords were exempt from taxes as an honor, but now the poorest peasants were tax-exempt. Those just above the poorest paid 2 per cent of their crop in taxes, the middle peasants averaged 8.1 per cent, the rich farmers 13.6 per cent, and the few remaining landlords 22.6 per cent of their harvest.

How did this affect the livelihood of the individual farmer? Let us note the homely details.

In a two-cave home a few miles up the valley I called on a peasant named Wong. It was autumn and the rooms were so full of crops that I wondered where he put the family. He told me they lived in his "other home," a suite of five caves farther in the hills. Formerly he lived only in the hills because there were so many bandits that it was not safe to spend the night in the valley. Two years ago he had bought this two-cave home in order to work his valley land more efficiently. His wife and small son stayed with him here; his father, mother, and sister remained in the hillside home to pasture the animals; they had two oxen, a donkey, and a hundred sheep.

Wong attributed his expanding life to the new society. "Formerly all my crops were not enough to pay my taxes. In the last years of the old society my taxes were one hundred silver dollars and I had to sell 250 bushels to get this sum. My entire crop was only 165 bushels. I borrowed money to pay my taxes and sold a few sheep each month to pay interest. My sheep were nearly gone and I still owed a year's taxes when the Communists came. They canceled old taxes. The new taxes were paid in grain and are not so high. Instead of selling sheep I got more sheep every year. This year I must sell sheep, for there are now so many sheep that there is not enough grass. So the villages are dividing the pastures and everyone must sell a few sheep."

Wong cheerfully gave me the details of his income. His crop that year was 165 bushels, his tax 16.5 bushels; he needed 55 bushels for his family's food and clothing and had lent 18



bushels to some refugees. "Chairman Mao says we must help these refugees so that they will soon produce and our Border Region will be strong. Chairman Mao told us to raise three years' food in two years, but I have done better. I have raised two years' food in one!"

"You talk very frankly about crops and taxes," I commented. "Would you talk thus under the Kuomintang rule?"

"Of course not," laughed Wong. "I would be afraid to tell."

"Why are you not afraid now?"

"There is a new spirit now for twelve years. One gets out of the way of being afraid for a few rash words."

When the system of "self-supply" spread to other Liberated Areas, these at first had greater difficulties than the Yen-an area because they began as small anti-Japanese bases, carrying on almost daily battles. As the enemy was driven out and the areas enlarged they went ahead faster than the Yen-an area because they were more fertile.

"This supply system of ours," Liu Hsiao-chi told me, "makes it possible for our Liberated Areas to maintain an army and civil service totaling two or three million people without greatly burdening the people's livelihood. This enables us to carry on a wide war of defense, indefinitely and without debt, till victory."

The system varies with different areas and conditions. In Shantung in 1946, when there were many heavy battles, the civil servants raised 40 per cent of their support while the army raised 30 per cent. In doing this the personnel of army and government opened many small co-operative industries such as oil-pressing plants, soap, tobacco, and textile factories, iron foundries, and print shops, thus supplying needed consumer goods.

In Manchuria, where there was no food shortage but a big surplus, I saw no evidence of government officials raising their own food. Their money wages were still extremely small; the mayor of Harbin received the equivalent of ten American dollars

a month while the railway workers got five. Mayor and railway workers alike also received payment in grain, one hundred pounds a month, enough to feed a family.

As areas increase in prosperity, the need of self-supply diminishes, but the lessons learned in government economy remain. Finance Minister Nan in Kalgan told me that the area whose finances he administered, and which had grown during the war with Japan from a small base in the hills to a territory with thirty million population and abundant resources, had "run its government on a balanced budget throughout the war with Japan." When I commented on this as a miracle, he smiled. "What else could we do?" he said.

"We shall have a deficit this year," he admitted, "because we are running a government for thirty million people on taxes collected last autumn from only eighteen million. It is the penalty of sudden growth. Even so, we might have managed but for this constant civil warfare. The Kuomintang troops are nibbling at 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?" I asked. "By printing currency?"

"Oh no," he said. "We don't believe in that. When the taxes run out in the last month or two of the year we'll borrow from the state bank's surplus, the accumulated profit of past years. We'll repay when new taxes come in. The only drawback is that for a few months the bank will be short of funds to lend to private enterprise. That isn't serious, for the big loans to farming are not needed till spring."

I stared at this placid financier who talked such hard sense and thought of the trillions Chiang printed in Nanking and the billions he borrowed from America to finance a regime that had twenty times the resources of that area administered by Mr. Nan.

In the large Four Province Area north of the Lunghai, where

the government had moved to the hills, Governor Jung told me that this area also had been able to balance its budget from 1942-45, the last years of war with Japan, on a tax rate that took only 10 to 13 per cent of the peasants' crops.

"This year we shall have a deficit because we drew up our budget in January when we did not expect the civil war. Also we are administering a very much larger area than we drew taxes from. But this is just a temporary difficulty."

When I dined with the government chiefs of this area 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 just decided to give this up "to save the budget in the new emergency of our self-defense war."

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

The rations, which were the real salary, consisted of two meals daily of rice or wheat with soup and two vegetables. They also received two summer suits a year—this being a warm area—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. "See those patches inside? Those are this year's goods. One third of the padding is also new." Everyone guffawed.

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

"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 place with the state bank that makes the loans to farmers. This is just the cash on which we run the government for an area of 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 the argument?"

I got a different answer from the obvious one I expected. Everyone grinned as 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!" Everyone laughed some more at that.

## 4. THE ECONOMIC POLICIES

### 1. "LAND TO THE TILLER"

The Chinese Communists saw the "land to the tiller" program as the economic base for everything else desired: for political democracy, free enterprise, and military strength. When I once asked Mao Tze-tung whether he had any doubts of final victory he did not even mention the army but replied: "That will depend on how well we put through the land reform. Chiang will certainly fail because he goes against the needs of the peasants. If we can solve the land problem, we shall win."

This was said when Chiang's troops were closing on Yen-an. Land still remains the basic problem after all the military victories.

Land is an old problem in China. "Land to the tiller" has been preached at intervals for two thousand years. About the time of Christ an emperor named Wang Mang, seeking stability of empire through a decent life for its farming folk, decreed all lands the property of the state to be divided among the tillers

under state protection. The wealthy and powerful assassinated him in A.D. 23. More than six hundred years later Li Shih-min of the great Tang Dynasty gave lands "in perpetuity" to the tillers, thus laying the base for China's Golden Age. Then Wang An-shih, with his "Young Shoots Law" in the Sung Dynasty, gave state loans to peasants on security of growing crops. By evasion, corruption, or force, the landlords remained or returned.

Peasant revolutions demanding land were chronic through the centuries. Mao Tze-tung lists<sup>1</sup> fifteen of them from the great revolutions that ushered in the Han Dynasty two hundred years before Christ down to the Taiping Rebellion of the past century. The scale of these revolutions was, said Mao, "unequaled in the world." They changed dynasties but failed to change the peasants' lot. Peasant revolutions "were used by landlords and nobles as steppingstones." The feudal system remained, essentially unchanged, three thousand years.

In modern days Dr. Sun Yat-sen wrote "land to the tiller" into the first platform of the Kuomintang in 1924 and gained thereby the peasant support that brought the joint revolutionary armies north to the Yangtze. Chiang Kai-shek, while suppressing peasants' unions and murdering their leaders, never dared officially to renounce that program. He merely failed to practice it.

How then do the Chinese Communists hope to succeed when emperors and peasant revolutions for thousands of years have failed?

They expect success, first, because feudalism is out of date on a world scale. Machine production smashes it. It has already been replaced by capitalism in much of the world and by socialism in the U.S.S.R. Even China is only semi-feudal now, since foreign and Chinese capitalism exists in the cities.

Second, the Communists do not confine themselves to laws and handouts as emperors did. They arouse the peasants to take the land and, with it, power. "Don't make the mistake of giving land to the peasants," the organizers are told. "We

<sup>1</sup>*Chinese Revolution and Communist Party of China, 1939.*

Communists are few and have no power to give land. Only if all the peasants do it, will it be done."

Third, they give disciplined leadership to the peasant revolution, which such revolutions lacked in the past. Peasants are scattered; their past revolutions were led by individual leaders who rose on the peasants' backs to personal power. This revolution must be led by a continuing class that is bone of the bone of the peasants, but organized: by farm hands and poor peasants disciplined through the new type of army, and by the industrial working class in the towns.

Fourth, the Communists apply their Marxist analysis to the peasants. These are not all one class. There are rich ones, middle ones, and poor ones. Their interests are not the same. Rich peasants are those who hire labor, have considerable marketable surplus, rent out land, or lend money; they are like landlords except that they also engage in field labor. Middle peasants are those who can feed themselves from their land, with perhaps a small surplus. Poor peasants have no land or so little that they cannot live from it but work part or all of the time as laborers or share croppers. Mao Tze-tung estimates that landlords and rich peasants form 8 per cent of the rural population, middle peasants about 20, and poor peasants and farm hands about 80 per cent.

The technique of land revolution, therefore, is: "Organize from the bottom up." Form a poor peasants' league to satisfy the demands of those who are "the great mass of the peasantry." Draw in, then, the middle peasants. "They must be won. . . . Concessions must be made to them," says Mao. Give government jobs to their "active elements," for they have more education than the poorer men. Rich peasants, themselves working the soil, should not be "prematurely antagonized," lest this injure production, but they are natural enemies. Landlords, being unproductive, may be dispossessed as soon as there is community support.

Lastly, the Communists hope for success because their land reform is part of a wider program. The "three great economic

policies of the new democratic revolution," as given by Mao Tze-tung, are: (1) confiscate land of the feudal classes and put it under the ownership of the peasants; (2) confiscate monopoly capital (especially that of the Four Great Families and Kuomintang bureaucrats) and put it under the ownership of the people's state; (3) protect national industry and commerce; i.e., ordinary free enterprise. Of these policies, the land reform comes first because the peasants are four fifths of the population and because industry cannot develop except as the peasant becomes a free enterprise farmer, buying commodities.

How do these theories work? Let us first see what landlordism meant in China.

There are no full statistics of the extent of landlordism. Figures were collected from villages during the land reform but have not been combined for China as a whole. Mao Tze-tung estimated that 70 to 80 per cent of the land was held by landlords and rich peasants. In villages of North China that I visited, landlords, not counting rich peasants, held half to three fourths of the land. In a South China village—Yungfeng in Hunan Province—a German missionary told me in 1927: "All the land around is owned by twenty families, who let it out to share croppers, take half the crop, and hoard the rice till peasants who produced it riot from hunger at the granary doors."

For millions of the soil tillers the question was one of life or death. They made revolution not to live better but in order to live at all. From three to six million people died in the North Shensi and Kansu famine in 1928-30.<sup>2</sup> In one county 62 per cent of the population died; in another, 75 per cent. Deaths could have been prevented if the peasants had owned their crops. Similar losses took place in the Honan famine during the war with Japan.

When families are dying out and girl daughters being sold into slavery, the property rights that compel this lose sacredness in people's eyes. Landlords hired armed retainers to protect

<sup>2</sup>Dr. A. Stampar, *Report on Northwest Areas*, Nanking, 1933.



their power. A mission-school girl told me in 1927 of the landlord in her Honan county who had seventy "armed bullies"; they broke up a peasant attempt to form a union, killing thirty men. Chiang Kai-shek's method of creating order was to give the landlords control of the county police. Landlordism increased through violence during the Japanese war. Some landlords betrayed neighbors to death and obtained their lands. A local ruffian in Hunan near the Tungting Lake seized a farm of 3,300 acres by driving out 196 peasant families. In this violent requisition three peasants were killed, a woman hanged herself, and sixty-eight homes were destroyed.

On Chinese New Year's Eve in Yen-an I asked half a dozen young Chinese who wrote for the English-language radio to tell me what they considered the most important thing about the new China. Was it the form of government? Of industry? The fortunes of the civil war?

In the lamplit cave of Editor Liao there was silence. Peanuts cracked and the small teacups went around. Then Chen Lung, our "Gentle Dragon" from Java, spoke. "I think it is the life of the common people. Formerly they were like slaves, hungry, poor, manhandled by the landlord. Now they are free. They are still backward, illiterate, superstitious. They have only taken one step on the road to a good life. But the peasant has become a human being. That is because he has his own land and the feudal system is smashed."

"Stop there," I interrupted. "When you say 'manhandled,' how much is figure of speech and how much fact?"

All of them laughed. All of them knew cases of "manhandling." One of the girls had come from a big landlord family in the area north of Peiping. Her father could ride horseback many days without leaving his land. Her mother used to string peasant women up by the arms and beat them because they failed to please her in some feudal duties she exacted. This made the girl break with her family when she was a student. She hoped

the peasants "settled accounts" very thoroughly with "that old man and woman."

"When the landlord goes into the countryside," said the Dragon, "there is an aura of terror about him. Every peasant fears lest this lord come to his house. Then he must at once serve the best food and perhaps kill his last chicken, when his own wife and children have not tasted flesh for weeks. In all dealings with share croppers the landlord keeps the accounts. I once asked a peasant why he didn't even look at the bills against him when the landlord wrote them down. The man stared as if I were crazy. 'Do you think I want my head knocked in?'"

"Asiatic feudalism is a brutal feudalism," said the youth from Singapore. "Now after thousands of years a change has come. It is the change in the peasant. You foreign writers do not grasp it. You write books on China about the Kuomintang and Communists, about the Democratic League and war lords—not bad books. But how often in these books do you meet a peasant? Yet the peasants in China are four fifths of everything. You have to get down to Chang Number Three and Li Number Four." Then he smiled, explaining: "That's Chinese for 'Tom, Dick, and Harry.'"

Outside the cave I stood on the high ledge overlooking three valleys. The moon rode high over Yen River and the light crusted snow of the hills. A procession of lanterns far down near the municipal building was lighting the path "for the god of wealth" into the coming year. I knew that Chiang's troops were advancing against us from Sian. Half the radio equipment had already gone to the hills. But these young people, whose city was soon to be lost, whose own lives were in danger, stressed the primary importance not of Yenan, not of the Chinese Communists, not of the war, but of the everyday life of the Chinese peasants, whom nobody had considered important for thousands of years.

That was Mao's standard of values; they had learned it well.

The Chinese Communists have tried three different ways of getting land into the hand of the tiller in the past twenty years. Their early regimes in South China took all the land from landlords and rich peasants and gave to the tillers. Today they criticize this early method as "ultra-left," since landlords were allowed to keep no land at all, while rich peasants were given the poorest lands. It was retaliation, not sound economy.

Land confiscation was given up during the war with Japan for the sake of national unity against the invader. A program of rent reduction was substituted, to enforce laws long since approved by the national government but never enforced. When energetic peasants' unions enforced rent reduction, landlordism became so unprofitable that landlords were often willing to sell land to tenants on easy terms. Then the unions helped the peasant buy it with co-operative credits. But rent-reducing laws are not self-enforcing, as even America has learned. Where landlords have ruled for centuries, as in China, peasants feared to complain. Larger landlords were backed by the Japanese. The hatred this aroused among peasants touched off the postwar revolutionary land reform.

When the war with Japan ended, new methods of land reform began on the peasants' initiative. Landlords who had been enemy agents were captured, tried before people's tribunals, and deprived of ill-gotten lands and sometimes of their lives. Lesser landlords were called before village meetings to "settle accounts" for past evasions of rent laws. Honan peasants told me proudly: "We had the land reform half done before the Communists decided to do it." The party secretary of South Hopei confirmed this in different words: "When we saw what the peasants were already doing, we decided that the time had come to break feudalism once and for all."

The decision to take landlords' land by a combination of methods was made on May 4, 1926, by the party's Central Committee. Nearly a dozen techniques were used under different conditions, all designed to get land into the tillers' hands. The

active agent was not the government but the peasants' union, protected by the People's Liberation Army and helped by organizers from the party, the army, and other institutions.

Among the methods listed for me by the Research Section in Yen-an were: confiscation of land of Japanese and traitors; of "black land" which landlords did not report to evade taxation; of land illegally taken from peasants; of land seized by loan sharks to cover illegally high interest; of special lands such as those of the Manchukuo government or of former emperors. In areas long under Communist control where there were fewer feudal abuses, lands were purchased by the provincial government and resold at half price to peasants, payments in both cases being in grain over a period of ten years. There was a "land donation movement" in which "enlightened landlords" gave land. A realistic organizer in Manchuria told me: "This voluntary donation is not so very voluntary; landlords think that by showing friendliness they can keep more than if they go through a 'settling of accounts,' and this is true."

The typical method in this period was the "settling of accounts" meeting, also known as a "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 row wore red arm bands. These were Young Vanguard, who led in shouting slogans or repeating decisions.

There had been no peasant union in Back Village until the past few days. Then a dozen peasants in the field had discussed the land reform that had transferred land in nearby villages and had opined that "it's time we did it too." They talked it over secretly with twenty more and then 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 under the Japanese had been township chief, a typical boss, hard-faced, domineering. A lean, middle-aged peasant was challenging him.

"And wasn't it you who took the common land along the railroad?" (This 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 Young Vanguard 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 own son and take two sons of mine?"

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

"Then pay for that 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 Vanguard shouted.

An old woman made her way painfully forward on bound feet and addressed the former boss. She was trembling at her own daring, but the meeting had given her courage. "Remember," she quavered, "the eighteen dollars you squeezed from my old man in the days when eighteen dollars was a year's bread?"

"I remember," admitted Mei.

"Then pay five bushels of grain to settle accounts," she pled.

Her timidity moved the crowd. "Five bushels isn't enough; make it ten," shouted a voice. "Ten bushels," said the young men's shouts. "Add interest at the rate he charged," yelled another, and everyone laughed.

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, pay up if you want to belong to the people." It was a

striking formulation. Finally he was told to "think it over" till the following night, when the village was prepared to "struggle with him" again.

An elected committee of eleven was listing the claims presented. "We shall have to struggle with that Mei for many meetings," the local chairman explained. "He is tough."

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

"He will yield 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 village nearby, where the accounts had been successfully "settled." The biggest landlord there had been a man named Yang, who had owned one hundred and twenty acres. In America this would be only a family farm, but in this part of China a man with half an acre per member of his family rated 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 had 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 received none. Each of these women was awarded an acre of land by the meeting. Yang proved soft metal; almost at once he admitted that "all of my land is not enough to meet the just claims against me." He told his neighbors that he "offered it all." They "let him keep" twelve acres, which made him twice as rich as anyone else in Peaceful Wall. How long he kept it is uncertain; by the following year the peasants had the right to take the rest.

Before the reform there had been 26 landlords in Peaceful Wall owning 1,000 acres, 164 self-supporting peasants owning 766 acres, 233 share croppers and 200 farm hands. After the

reform there were no landlords, share croppers, or farm hands. All the families were middle peasants, averaging three acres per family. The holdings were not fully equal, but every family could live from its land at the prevailing standard. Every family felt the stimulus of free enterprise, freedom to invest in small tools, in irrigation, since the crop would be his own.

The land reform, 1946-47 model, was thus not confiscation pure and simple. It was a campaign to get land into the hands of the tiller by purchase, by gift, by fines, by social pressure, by confiscation, by every means that the community would support. No attempt was made at this stage to get absolute equality of holdings. The aim was to arouse the peasants and bring them into action, to break the landlords' power, to lift the great mass of peasantry from the ranks of hands and croppers into that of middle peasants.

After a year and a half of these miscellaneous methods had aroused the peasants, tested the methods, and broken the landlords' power, a National Agrarian Conference was held in September 1947 at which delegates from all the Liberated Areas adopted a "basic program" on agrarian law. Land both of landlords and of rich peasants was to be equally distributed to give equal share to every member of the rural population. Peasants' unions were designated as "legal organs" for carrying out the distribution. As soon as representative government was established, this became supreme authority, with the peasants' unions acting as assistants.

The program differed in important ways from previous agrarian revolutions in other countries. Landlords and rich peasants were not entirely expropriated but were given the usual peasant norm. Women received equal share, retaining their individual rights even inside the family. Land was not nationalized; the peasant "got title," and land might be bought and sold "under certain conditions." Much flexibility was allowed to fit local situations. Inner Mongolians, for instance, were relieved to be told: "Equal division of land and livestock does not apply to

nomads." When a land division had already been made, even if not fully according to program, no new division was ordered "unless the peasants demand it."

In any given area the land reform "must meet the demands of a majority of the people." To ensure this the government "guarantees and protects the rights of peasants to criticize and impeach officers of the government and of peasants' unions for violation of democratic rights."

The most surprising difference from past agrarian revolutions is found in the section listing those who have the right to land. After mentioning the peasants and the families of men of the People's Liberation Army, this amazing clause occurs: "Families of the rank and file of the Kuomintang Army, employees of the Kuomintang governments, members of the Kuomintang, and others connected with the enemy who live in rural districts shall be given land on the same basis as the ordinary peasants." War criminals do not themselves have right to land, but "members of their families who do not take part in their crimes" have equal land rights with others. Contrast this with the treatment of Tories in the American Revolution or of kulaks in the Russian Revolution. Jen Pi-shih, of the Communists' Central Committee, explained in a long analysis: "Even criminal elements whose crimes do not deserve the death sentence must be given necessary land and property or they will turn to rob and bring social insecurity."

Under this new code the land reform became more fundamental and the struggle sharper in late 1947 and all of 1948. Landlords who had taken the earlier stage as a temporary adjustment saw that this was the end. Reports came of a woman landlord in Shantung who burned her barns rather than let the peasants get them, of landlords who poisoned noodles so that nineteen members of a village land-distribution committee were poisoned, one of them fatally. Other landlords sought to join the Communist Party or gave their daughters in marriage to local organizers, hoping to evade the law. These were usually exposed



in peasant meetings. "Elimination of feudal classes is a ruthless struggle," stated Jen Pi-shih.

There was, however, restraint even in revolution. When one village listed 22 per cent of its population as landlords and rich peasants, a county organizer was sent to tell them: "That can't be. Landlords are about 3 per cent and rich peasants 5 per cent of the population. Count again." A recount showed that some had been listed because their fathers had been landlords or they themselves had been before the war with Japan. Reclassification was ordered, and nobody's past was counted. When Landlord Ma Kuan-sheng in Shantung was forced to sell his dye company to meet his tenants' demands, higher authority ordered it returned to him with the ruling: "Ma's business as an industrialist must not be touched; his debts are limited to his property as landlord."

"Land reform is completed in an area involving 100,000,000 peasants," stated Mao Tze-tung in November 1948.

Despite this success, and despite the crystallization of new law and a new technique, land reform in new areas was still expected to go through the same stages of gradual development. When the People's Liberation Army crossed the Yangtze, Mao's accompanying proclamation urged peasants in South China not to initiate premature land reform or uprisings but to form peasants' unions and await the coming of the army, and meanwhile to labor industriously on the landlords' lands. He stated that the land reform could not be accomplished until there was strong peasant organization, and that even then the first stage would probably be reduction of rents, rather than immediate distribution of land.

"What if landlords, during the period of rent reduction, sell land and put the money into some industry?" was widely asked.

"We protect and encourage such industry," replied Jen Pi-shih.

One senses here the practical, tolerant genius of the Chinese people, bringing to birth the future with no more than the

necessary violation of the past, wasting neither the productivity of the land nor that of the human being, knowing that even in war the future reconciliation must be planned.

## 2. THE NEW FARMER

One of the first results of the land reform was that many farm hands were able to get married. The radio news from Mulberry Gardens in Shantung made this amusingly clear. Parents with daughters said—I quote the Chinese radio: “We will no longer marry them to old men of wealth, for living on rents is not reliable. Better give them to young, industrious tillers of the soil and join them into the ever-renewing river of farming people.”

“No girls would look at us farm hands before,” young Chang was quoted as saying, “but now as a free man I hope for the honor of marriage.” He had received in the land reform two thirds of an acre! Just what the new China will do when the population from these marriages increases the pressure on the land is a problem for tomorrow. A possible answer is being prepared through production drives.

If for the young man the land reform meant a chance for marriage, for older men it meant more food for the family. A poignant New Year’s letter received by Mao Tze-tung from peasants of Chuning Village in South Shansi gives the homely details of change in the peasant’s life.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MAO,

We have all turned over a new life. We have settled accounts with eleven families of landlords and despots and have got back all that good earth that our ancestors cultivated—that good flat land by the river—and it is our own land again. We reckoned up and got back silver dollars that they took from our sweat and blood. We have bought cows and donkeys and have means to heat our caves. All of us have pillows on our kang.

On the last day of the lunar year almost every family had folks going to market to buy mutton for dumplings, red paper for New

Year's scrolls, and cloth toys for the children. We all bought pictures of you! When we think of the former New Years, burrowing into holes and creeping through tunnels to escape the loan sharks, and now think of having meat dumplings, we are happy in our hearts. After New Year's we will get up production, working according to your way.

We heard that traitor Chiang was going to attack Yen-an where you live. But it's no use for him to plan. Even if our heads parted from their shoulders, they would bounce up at him two or three times.

It is hard to realize from the tone of this letter that a war was going on right there in South Shansi and villages like this were changing hands many times. Wars are an old grief to Chinese peasants. The land reform was new. To young Chang and the writers of that letter the chance of getting a wife or of feeding the family was more exciting than any war.

The land reform is followed at once by the production drive. Its first aim is to produce enough food so that the farming family may eat throughout the year; its second aim is to produce clothing through the women's labor without depleting the supply of food.

The first production drive was made in Yen-an Border Region to meet the emergency of the Kuomintang blockade, which so increased the natural difficulties of this arid region that everyone, including the army and civil service, had to produce food. Peasants were urged to produce reserves against years of drought. Forms of more productive farm labor were sought.

The labor-exchange brigade, led by labor heroes, was the form developed. It took some time to develop the exact method, for peasants are sticklers for traditional ways. The first form tried was called "mutual-help brigade" to assist soldiers' families. The county sent an organizer to form a brigade of which he became the head. The peasants didn't take to it; both name and method seemed foreign.

Mao Tze-tung had long discussions with peasants from different areas; he studied intensively the methods of labor they used.

There was an old custom by which relatives or neighbors exchanged labor: you help on my land today; I help on yours tomorrow. The practice had standards: one day's labor of a mule or draft cow equaled two days' of a man. This labor exchange was common but not steady; minor frictions quickly broke it. The Communists stepped in, stabilized and developed it, saying: "Mediate quarrels! Stop famines!" They took the old name but expanded the labor exchange to larger groups.

Another form of joint labor was known as the T'ang Chang Pantze—"Squads of the T'ang Dynasty Generals"—and goes back twelve hundred years to China's Golden Age. An emperor of that time sent troops to cultivate land near Sian; these troops, with a squad as unit and a corporal as leader, tilled more land per man than the individual peasant. The name survived to designate a squad of farm laborers working by a certain method. Village artisans and poor peasants whose land does not occupy all of their time form such groups, specializing in seasonal jobs. They share alike in the income except that the go-between who negotiates jobs gets one share for this and a second share if he also works in the field. He must, however, advance food and feed the squad on rainy days when nobody hires them. The squads are popular because they do so much work in a short time.

Both types of group labor proved more productive than individual labor. If the peasant Ma had six acres, and Wu had five, and each had an ox, neither could plow all his land; by yoking the oxen all the land could be plowed. Group labor of three to ten persons proved especially productive in haying, cultivating, and harvesting. One urges the other on. One man can bring the meals for all, but if each goes home from the field many hours are lost.

Joint labor improved village life in other ways. It made it easier for children to go to school. Formerly the small boy had to tend the family sheep, but one man can tend sheep for several families, releasing the young boys for school. Labor-exchange units became centers for newspaper reading and for

learning to read and write. The best brigades were praised in the papers and were invited by magistrates to a feast. Their leaders became labor heroes, appearing in public conferences or elected to county and regional councils, thus entering government.

"This is one of the ways in which the real leaders of the people are picked out," said the chief of reconstruction to me.

Wang Lin, for instance, was a young enthusiast who organized a labor exchange in Third Village near Yen-an. The account of his troubles would fill many painful but inspiring pages. Two members were old and could do little work; another was young and resented doing more than his share. A fourth felt himself a failure because at the age of forty he had not yet secured a wife. These homely difficulties were met by Wang Lin with the lofty words: "All difficulties can be solved if we are one in our minds. Have not the Communists with empty hands in ten years shaped a world?"

Fortunately Wang had not only a good slogan but infinite care for detail. When an inexperienced youth cut off wheat together with grass, Organizer Wang had him work side by side with the best farmer; by autumn the boy was head of a squad. When seventeen-year-old Chen shirked because his day's work counted only half a day, Wang assured him: "You'll get full pay when you do full work." Soon the group voted that Chen was "worth a man's pay." When hard-working but quarrelsome Li lost his father by death in a village ten miles away, Wang had the brigade bring the body back and planned an elaborate funeral. Li became friendlier to everyone.

Soon the labor exchange was "working as a family." It included fourteen households with 28 able-bodied men, 16 animals, and 107 acres of land. (When spring plowing was over, the animals were used in a transport co-operative, using the labor of four men.) Two men hauled water for all the households and took food to the field workers. Three boys collected firewood for all the homes. The rest, working steadily in the

fields, not only cultivated all their 107 acres but reclaimed 51 acres of wasteland. The county gave them a banner as "Number-One Brigade."

Wang Lin was elected a labor hero in his village. He is one of those farmers of whom new leaders are built.

The change in the life of the individual labor hero is well seen in Farmer Li. He sat in my cave in Yen-an, smiling his modest, ingratiating smile, as curious to see his first American as I was to meet a labor hero of Yen-an. He was sent to me by Commander in Chief Chu Teh, at whose home he had spent the previous night.

Li's body moved thin and agile in homespun whitish trousers, long since discolored with streaks of yellow-brown. Above high cheekbones a fuzzy towel was twisted to a turban that also had taken the color of dust. His bare brown feet were held in rope-soled canvas slippers whose basic color seemed black. Li seemed a wiry bit of life emerging from native earth.

From time to time he thrust his hand inside his dusty cotton jacket, pulled out a louse, cracked it, and threw it on the floor. He was not aware that he was doing it; it was habit long acquired. He was not shy at being interviewed even by an American who had come so far. That the interviewer was a woman gave him a sense of almost indelicate daring. Li grinned; he was in the modern world! Li was a success!

In the days of what Li called the old society he had come to Yen-an County, a boy of fourteen fleeing from a famine, begging food on the way. He secured a job as farm hand for a landlord and was given the use of a cave in the side of the cliff. His family followed him—a mother, sister, four brothers—for none of them had a job as good as the youngster Li.

Eight years Li worked for the landlord. In later years, as a man grown, he received for his work ten dollars a year and food, millet, and vegetables twice daily, and one towel a year to protect his head from the sun. His older brothers worked for the

landlord at harvest for one dollar a month and food, but the food was only while they worked. The youngest brother was shepherd for the landlord, getting food all year but no pay. Li's wage of ten dollars a year bought food for everyone in slack seasons. Even though they ate only millet mixed with many husks and slept much in winter to keep from eating, the food was not enough. At every harvest Li would find himself owing two or three dollars, a fourth of a year's pay.

"Never mind, you'll work for me another year," the landlord would say.

At first Li got his cave for nothing. But later the landlord took two share croppers and rented the cave to one. He said he would furnish door and windows if Li would dig another cave. Li dug it, but the door and windows did not come for a year. So the family lived one winter in a cave open to the weather; the mother grew ill.

The landlord was impressed by Li's industry and wanted to hold him. "If you'll work for me ten years," he offered, "I'll buy you a wife." Li wanted a wife, but ten years seemed too long. "Five is enough," said Li, so no agreement was reached.

Li therefore worked for the landlord as before till the "revolution" gave him land in 1935. To Li the revolution was simple and beneficent. Workers came out from town, saying: "Plant as much as you can and none will be the landlord's." Li planted twenty-five acres; at harvest it was his.

"What makes you a labor hero?" I asked him.

"My village chose me. Afterward the County Congress of Labor Heroes chose me too."

The boy of the compound brought tea and poured it. Li sipped with noisy appreciation and went on: "I planted more land than anyone in the village. I put on much manure. I cultivated much. Most people do not plant the edges of the land; it is in steep terraces and the oxen cannot plow the edge. So mice and pests live there and eat. But I broke the edge with a spade and planted it." He paused, as if wondering what more to offer.

"I also dig ditches to water the lower land. I store water when the rains come; later I spill it on the soil." He relaxed in his chair, content.

"So all this makes you a hero, a champion?"

Li thought, then shook his head. "To be a hero it is not enough to get good crops for myself. I organized a labor exchange. All plant more land." Li could not give the details consecutively. Bits came out, such as: "In the meeting for taxes they said Wang must pay two bushels. Wang cannot pay; his crop was bad in the drought. So I paid Wang's two bushels. I got one hundred sacks of potatoes. Twenty sacks I gave to refugees for seed. Mao Chusi—Chairman Mao—says we must help these strangers who flee to us so that they may quickly produce and our Border Region be strong."

Li, so much was clear, was a village hero because he produced well and helped the neighbors produce. He was a good citizen, working for himself, his village, and his Border Region. He was still illiterate; he was more than a little superstitious. The babies died in his valley and the neighbors moved away because it was "unlucky" there. Li was sticking it out. He had begun to believe the woman from the hospital who said it was the water. Li boiled his water now.

Such was the hero who had come to town with a present of eleven bushels of grain for Chairman Mao Tze-tung and General Chu Teh. It was his own idea. "This is food for a year so they won't have to do their own production work," he said. He had slept one night in Mao's cave and a second night at the home of General Chu. His eyes gleamed brightly as he told me: "Mao Chusi gave me a present of rice cookies and sugar, and General Chu gave me tomatoes that he grew in his garden. He gave me a dinner of rice with six dishes! Never in the old society could a peasant have a banquet of rice with a general. Truly, our society is new!"

I saw him later plodding down the road with his donkeys, flicking them with a long whip in a cloud of dust. Once a farm



hand who hardly ranked as human, now an honored citizen of the new society through his industry in producing food.

When the problem of food is settled, clothing comes next. They are part of the same problem, for if a woman can clothe her family by her own labor without selling crops for cotton goods, this adds to the food supply.

Here we come to the technique of the industrial co-operatives, known as "Indusco," introduced into China by the Australian, Rewi Alley. Many years and much money were spent starting Indusco groups in Kuomintang China, where they were persecuted by greedy officials in various ways. But once Rewi Alley got to Yen-an in 1939 and opened a depot with ten branches and a total capital of five hundred American dollars. The idea clicked so well with the new policies that by 1945 there were 882 co-operatives with 265,777 members, as many members as there were families in the whole Border Region. Most of the members had never even heard of Indusco; there were just local co-operatives of many kinds. They were the major section of the region's industry.

The most successful ones, which really made a dent on the area's economy, were those whose aim was not profit, but the supplying of the members' needs. Certain adventurous co-operatives that went in for high financial profits went broke when the sudden end of the war with Japan flooded the area temporarily with factory-made goods from outside. But the South Yen-an Spinning Co-operative and the others like it were inflation- and deflation-proof.

This spinning co-operative had more than twenty-five hundred members, two thirds of all the families in southern Yen-an. Each member received two pounds of raw cotton and was required to return one pound of spun yarn. That was all; no money changed hands. The spinner kept the extra yarn, from nine to eleven ounces, depending on her skill. She could weave this into cotton cloth or exchange it for cotton goods in the weaving co-

operative, which owned a small factory. A woman spinning at home in her spare time could earn in a month enough cotton goods for a suit of clothes. In six months she had the family clothed in summer wear and began to earn the padded clothes for winter. While doing this she never worried about currency inflation and never sold a pound of the family grain to buy clothes. The man of the family quite naturally appreciated such a wife. It was what the Communists called "raising the woman's economic status as a first step to sex equality."

All this barter economy and home spinning seemed much more like Gandhi's movement in India than like anything preached in Moscow. I often wondered if the Russians, with their zeal for big industry, wouldn't think it insignificant. But it certainly suited that Chinese area. Spinning and weaving quickly became the largest industry after farming in Yanan Border Region. The spinning wheels, made at home, were much cruder than those which the West abandoned a century ago. Getting raw cotton was a problem because the area is dry and cold. The experimental farm found a way of pruning that forced the cotton to open early before the cold killed it. Cotton planting in suitable land was encouraged by tax exemption. In three years the cotton acreage grew sevenfold. A "three-year economic plan" was inaugurated that would have made the area self-sustaining in cotton, all spun and woven in the women's co-operatives. It was halted by the invasion but has probably resumed again.

What will happen to this home industry when machine-made goods come? Nobody worried about that. Most people thought the home industries would last a long time because they filled the empty hours of the farming year. Besides, machine-made goods are not as durable as those that are home-made. But if people want factory goods, the co-operatives already have a few factories and will have more. It will depend on what the people want; the means for an easy and painless transition are already there.

For the change in the life of a village made by a labor hero we take you next a thousand miles east to Shantung. Here the new propaganda reached Seaview Village, a poverty-stricken hole. All the good land had been lost to absentee landlords bit by bit. Of seventy families, forty were "beggar sticks" going out every morning to beg for food. Every evening the hungry women and children stood on the edge of the cliff to watch the beggars return.

Young Chang of Seaview was an orphan, a farm hand at fourteen. For eight years as a farm hand he fed on grain husks mixed with wild grasses. In 1939 the Eighth Route Army came with its rent-reduction program. The price of land went down and Chang was able to buy one third of an acre. He began to follow Mao Tze-tung. Nobody in Seaview thought much of the labor exchange, but Chang had faith. He got six families together. At first he did most of the work; he weeded fields and repaired roofs for men too lazy to care. Slowly he shamed them; work began and others copied the idea. When the county expert advised irrigation, most of Seaview said, "No use," but Chang's brigade dug a well near their lands. The rain failed; ten families saved their crops from that well. Seaview dug twenty-two wells within two years.

Today this village of beggars has no more beggars. Seaview operates a production plan under Chang's leadership. Teams of small boys specialize in killing locusts. Groups of "young heroes" weed crops and carry water for the village teacher and the families of absent soldiers. Women's groups compete in spinning and weaving; all families have new clothing produced by their womenfolk.

Chang himself has three acres and a cow. He has a wife and a six-year-old son who learns of Mao Tze-tung, much as American boys learn of Santa Claus, as the distant saint who gave him his *mantoo*, his bun of good white bread. For it was in 1942 that Chang and his family began to eat bread of real grain all the year through!

Chang has organized peasants' unions in more than two hundred villages. He is a leader of the new way of life.

An important organization for stimulating community progress is the Congress of Labor Heroes, on a county or provincial scale. Villages elect heroes; this is not a government job but a position of prestige. Heroes hold congresses.

I attended such a congress in Wu An County in South Hopei. It was semi-secret, held not in the county seat but in a small village several miles away to avoid the attention of Chiang's planes. I was driven out of town by a truck to a spot where two men hailed us from the road. Thence we took a foot trail past two villages to a third one where gaily colored banners showed that the congress was being held.

It began with a bugle call and a flag raising in an open field—no red flag, but the same Chinese flag that flew over Nanking. We entered a space that by courtesy was called the meeting hall. It was a bit of ground protected from sun and wind by strips of matting nailed to a framework of poles. The stage was bright with colored paper decorations and a huge portrait of Mao Tze-tung. Low benches for a thousand people were set on the ground. Fifteen or twenty labor heroes were chosen as a "presidium" and walked to the stage, they were farmers in patched clothes, young men in blue cotton, bound-foot women walking with a tottering sway but proudly.

Here was Sun, a "rising-up" hero, a leader of land reform who had achieved a satisfactory land division in his village. Here was War Hero Li who, working underground in a village, had personally killed twelve Japanese. There were heroes who had organized successful brigades for farm production, and co-operative heroes who had organized good co-operative stores. A sixty-year-old woman, Wang Chih-tze, was "heroine of spinning and weaving," for she could spin ten ounces of cotton per day, the average of others being five ounces, and weave sixteen feet in a day against a general average of eleven feet; she was teaching all the younger women.

"You heroes represent the new society," said the chairman in opening the meeting. "You are those who overthrow feudalism and improve the people's livelihood. The first step was the land reform, the second is production. We must open a big production drive."

It was an eight-day congress to formulate a production plan for the county. The first day's "welcome to the heroes" was followed by two days of group discussions in which heroes of each specialty—wheat growing, spinning, or co-operatives—exchanged experiences and discussed technical methods. Then there were two days of "big meetings," in which each group reported to the general congress. Finally they elected the "best of the best" as county heroes and adopted, under their leadership, a production plan for the coming year.

The production drive was thus copied neither from the state planning of the U.S.S.R. nor the civic-improvement campaigns of American commercial clubs, but had elements of both. The county's technical experts helped draft the plan and the county gave credit and seeds. But these volunteer leaders, selected first by their own energy, then by the approval of their village, and finally by the choice of their fellow delegates, adopted the plan and put it to practice.

These labor heroes were the driving force of economic progress in the county. The elected county heroes went later to an Area Heroes Congress to form a yet wider economic plan.

"Teamwork without boundaries" is the striking phrase applied by the writer Shen Chien-tu to the expanding community spirit that grows from the labor brigades and the congresses of heroes.

A spectacular example of such teamwork was the "Kill Locusts Campaign" in South Hopei and East Shansi in 1944. Formerly the peasants' only recourse against locusts was to burn joss sticks in the temple or to beat loud drums that drove the pests from field to field. But in the 1944 locust plague many counties mobilized against the enemy. "Kill locusts teams" were formed in every village. Each county had a correlating committee under a

regional headquarters. They had no modern equipment, but they fought. Children competed; old men and women went to the fields. Different tactics were used. Some hunted locust eggs; others went before dawn to kill when the dew chilled the locusts' wings, making flight sluggish.

In the three most seriously affected counties 130,000 people were mobilized in "kill locusts detachments." They surrounded infected regions, burning, beating, putting locusts into bags. They used battle talk. One county reported to another: "Locusts are in strong force in such a place." "Punitive detachments" went as "allies" to other counties. In one week more than three thousand tons of locusts were collected and the entire area cleared. The region became so locust-conscious that if one locust appeared people turned out to hunt eggs.

Floods and drought are fought in similar ways. When a drought destroyed a million acres of young shoots in South Chahar in the spring of 1946, much of the land was quickly re-sown by labor brigades. When four million people faced famine in North Kiangsu in 1946 and all UNRRA aid was delayed by Chiang's military, the local governments fought the famine by this new teamwork. Famine victims were formed into brigades for spinning, fishing, oil pressing, and transport. Two hundred thousand were employed to dredge the Grand Canal; two hundred thousand more for salt transport. Seed and food loans were made both by the Liberated Area government itself and by private persons under government guarantee of repayment—a method of quick relief now widely employed. When UNRRA finally arrived with quite inadequate help, they found that much of the desperate need their experts had previously reported had already been relieved. The area had been saved by organized mutual help.

An amazing job of railway building was done by the organized help of peasants during the southward drive that carried the Communist-led armies across the Yangtze. In much of North

China railway lines had been reduced to rubble. Rails and ties were gone, embankments leveled and plowed over till only the local peasants knew where the right of way had run. Chiang's troops still further wrecked lines as they retreated, blowing up bridges and running bulldozers over the tracks.

Railway builders arrived, but they had no rails. The peasants brought rails, digging them out of the sandy places and caves where they had hidden them during the war with Japan. They brought them over the mountains, eight men to a rail, till 174,000 lengths were restored on a single stretch. Hundreds of miles of track were thus returned from their hiding place in Chinese earth.

The peasants located the right of way. Each man knew where in his field it had gone. Sixty-five miles on the Tientsin-Tsinan stretch had been plowed under, but sixty thousand peasants restored the railway bed in three days with their hoes and barrows. Lacking ties, they sent sample ties to the villages; the peasants made duplicates, bringing them in by oxcart, wheelbarrow, and on donkey-back. They were paid in government certificates in lieu of their tax to use at harvest.

It is nothing new that Chinese peasants build railroads. Japan and Chiang Kai-shek conscripted plenty of labor for such work. What was new was the way it was done. Big welcoming feasts were held for the arriving builders, not unlike the welcome American settlers gave when railroads went West. The peasants wanted railroads now; formerly they had been indifferent or hostile to them. Formerly railroads brought tax gatherers while poor peasants lacked money or permits to ride. Now that they had land and a market surplus they wanted connection with the towns. They had a new faith as citizens in government and took its certificates in advance.

Thus the peasant changes into a farmer. For a peasant is a feudal tiller, paid in kind and fearing government. An independent farmer is the base of democratic government and of all free enterprise. He is a man of the modern world.

### 3. FREE ENTERPRISE

The policy of the new China toward private enterprise and all forms of capitalism was clearly given by Mao Tze-tung and Chu Teh in an "Eight-Point Proclamation to the Chinese People," issued in April 1949, when they ordered their armies to cross the Yangtze and "liberate all China." This proclamation contained two points on industry:

All privately owned factories, stores, banks, warehouses, vessels, wharves, etc., will be protected.

Bureaucratic capital will be confiscated. All factories, stores, banks . . . railroads, postal, telephone, telegraph, and electric power services, etc., operated by the reactionary Kuomintang government and big bureaucratic elements will be taken over by the People's Government.

Private enterprise in industry, commerce, and even in banks, is thus not only permitted but is guaranteed "protection"; "bureaucratic capital"—the monopoly capital owned largely by Chiang Kai-shek's upper clique—is to be confiscated as property of the new government.

It is significant that Mao Tze-tung signed this, not as chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, but as "chairman of the Chinese People's Revolutionary Committee," indicating that this is a platform on which the Communists have agreed with their allies: the Democratic League and the left wing of the Kuomintang. It is thus not a purely Communist program but a coalition one for China.

Have the Communists, then, gone in for capitalism? Or is there some hidden intent to trick people into Communism before they are aware? Let us visit Kalgan, a city of two hundred thousand inhabitants northwest of Peiping, as it was when the Communists had had it a year. It was their first attempt to organize the life of a fair-sized city containing private business on some scale. There was a wheat-growing hinterland, a fur and sheepskin



trade with Mongolia, and some small industries based on these.

Our plane bumped to a stop on an airfield made from a cow pasture. In a new reception office we were 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, pears, apples at one quarter the prices in the then Kuomintang-held Peiping. Streets were full of the cheerful bustle of shoppers. Repair men were tearing up a road. Down a wide thoroughfare came a group of children dancing, doing a Yang-ke to the joy of the populace. Despite the national differences, it felt like an early Helena or Spokane, a raw city enjoying a boom.

The "Guesthouse" was a four-acre garden with small new houses inherited from the Japanese military staff. We had a French-style luncheon and a Chinese-style dinner; the Chinese chef had studied cooking in France.

People were easy to meet, ready to talk, informal. They knew the manners and phrases of the Western world.

"Tell Henry Wallace that this is the one 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."

Finance Chief Nan could meet any Western businessman and talk his language. His business suit of gray wool trousers and blue wool jacket was well made, not like those shapeless clothes of Yen-an. Nan was not country; he was town. The casual efficiency with which he balanced his budget has already been mentioned. He was brisk and a shade too Rotarian. When I exclaimed: "Industry not taxed?" I found that this was a newspaper headline, not scientific statement. Explanation was required.

"Theoretically we intend to tax industry," he stated, "but at present we want industry so badly that we give tax exemption for a varying length of years, depending on how much we need the industry. Liquor and cigarettes have no exemption; we tax them now. We give two to five years' exemption to textiles, glass,

farm implements, iron and steel, machine building, electric appliances, and the making of such raw materials as alcohol, dyes, and carbon. If anyone will start such industries we will not only give tax exemption and loans at low interest from our state bank, but help with his transportation and relief in any unexpected calamity."

A dry little smile curved Mr. Nan's lips as he added: "Unexpected calamity—that means insurance against Chiang's bombing. Transport help means that in any invasion the army transport will take the plant to a safer location."

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

Governor Sung, a benevolent professorial man who came for dinner, was explicit about the intent to encourage private enterprise. "We want every kind of production, state-owned, co-operative, and private. We aim to remove the obstacles that feudalism places in the way of capitalism so that capitalism may thrive and grow."

Sung offered six million bushels of grain for immediate export, "and as much wool as you like the moment we can tell our shepherds that export is possible." As a result of the land reform, he said, 1,700,000 acres of wasteland had been reclaimed and 370,000 acres of dry land irrigated, the yield on these last rising from fourteen to thirty-two bushels per acre. "Crop increase on that newly irrigated land alone is six million bushels. There's our grain export! There's our base for increased industry and trade!"

Factory production, he said, was higher in general than before the war but had fallen in some lines owing to the Kuomintang blockade. Production of small farm tools was booming. Eight million small tools had been made in one iron center in Ping Ting County during the year. "That's from the land reform. Farmers are buying four and five implements per family."

The area of which Kagan was capital—it had thirty million people—was self-supporting in food and raw cotton. It wanted

textile machines. "If any American will start a spinning mill, from a small one up to forty thousand spindles, we'll pay well."

"In what?" I asked.

"In wheat, furs, wool, or local currency. His trouble would be to get it past those thieving Kuomintang generals between us and the sea.

"What is the matter with your American businessmen?" Sung continued. "I quite understand that your war lords and monopolists prefer to deal with the Kuomintang. They want to buy our ports and skies and pay with billions of the American people's money for civil war. But haven't you any free-enterprise capitalists who want to do honest business? Our areas are the market for them. Farmers on their own soil produce surplus and are eager for goods."

I found the boom atmosphere startling. I had forgotten that when capitalism breaks out of feudalism it comes as a liberating force. Kalgan felt the surging energy from farm areas in the throes of land reform. Private trade and industry were unashamed and ardent. They obtained loans from the state. The Communists were proud of everybody's profits. Later I heard Chinese Communists say that Kalgan made "mistakes of overconfidence." Possibly they were a trifle drunk from their cup of new productive power.

The president of the Chamber of Commerce, a portly merchant in a long silk gown, served fragrant jasmine tea in exquisite porcelain as he gave some business facts. In one year of the new regime, he said, industrial and commercial enterprises had grown from 1,980 to 3,150, while market booths had increased from a couple of thousand to thirteen thousand.

There were fifty-one branches of commerce and industry, each with its own guild. Furs and skins from the Mongolian steppe, cotton and silk from Hopei, flour and cereals from Chahar were the most important. There were large, solid, and very old private firms still doing business, and also new firms, many of

them organized with the help of government funds. All enterprises were members of the Chamber of Commerce. Its affairs were handled democratically. Formerly big firms dominated the Chamber, but now its Executive Committee was elected by the members on the principle of one vote per enterprise. They followed a new policy of choosing one third of the Executive Committee from the big enterprises, one third from medium enterprises, and one third from the market peddlers, who had had little voice before. The merchants, it seemed, had been intrigued by the Communists' "three-three" policy, whereby no single interest could dominate.

Trade still had aspects of the Middle Ages. Some Moslem livestock handlers had driven \$20,000 (gold) worth of cattle to the Peiping market the previous March and had been jailed by Chiang's police as "Communists." The Kalgan Chamber of Commerce had appealed to Li Tsung-jen, then military governor of Peiping. Li wanted a steady meat trade for his army, so he signed an order for the cattlemen's release. The Political Police had not, however, complied. They delayed, arguing: "If we set them free, they'll want their cattle again. We've sold them and spent the money." The unhappy Moslems remained in jail to hide the thievery of the police!

Despite such unfortunate incidents, trade and industry went on with much more profit than loss. "The net profits of most enterprises has been between 20 and 30 per cent on their capital in just the past three months," the merchant said. "The land reform has stimulated the farmers' trade. Recent purchases of fruit, cakes, wines, meats, and luxury foods for the Harvest Moon Festival totaled half a million gold dollars in Kalgan markets. This is a real boom!"

The governor and silk-clad merchant had spoken as such men might in any young, expanding capitalism. What of the labor unions? All earlier capitalisms suppressed trade unions, which fought their way slowly into life. But here there were in a single

year 410,000 organized workers in the five-province area of which Kalgan was capital. What did this portent mean?

In a 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 in his pocket; he is chairman of the Provincial Federation of Labor. Meet grizzled, middle-aged Hsiao Ming, in blue denim, chairman of the 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 proudly gave organizers to the rest.

The history of that Railway Workers' Union is the history of the labor movement in this part of North China. It dates from 1921 and has struggled sometimes legally, more often illegally, without a break. It was born legally in the great successful strike of 1921. It was bloodily repressed after the unsuccessful strike of 1923. It gained new strength from the distant surge of the 1925-27 Great Revolution which sent its waves a thousand miles across China. When Chiang slaughtered workers in Shanghai the Kalgan workers were also forced underground again. There were dark years in which many trade unionists paid for their activity with their lives. Except for a brief upsurge of civil liberties under Marshall Feng Yu-hsiang in 1933, no trade unions were legal again for nearly twenty years, till the Communist-led armies liberated Kalgan. Twenty-four years of struggle, most of it underground!

Trade unions sprang into life as soon as the area was liberated. "Even if there had never been a union in a particular factory," they explained, "there would be old workers who had once been union members somewhere. They would start a union." The unions appeared first in factories, then affiliated into local federations, and then began to combine into central unions according to industry. This latter process was not complete at the time because of difficulties of communication in the civil war.

Benefits began before the unions were fully organized. "Our new government doubled all wages by decree the first month and

raised them 30 per cent more in the second month," they said. "The workers were starving and something had to be done at once. By the third month of liberation the trade unions had already made investigation into rational and irrational wage scales. We decided to base wages on the cost of millet, adjusted every month." So they got what they called a "rational wage scale," a wage based on the cost of food, in the third month!

Wages, they said, ranged from 250 pounds of millet per month for an apprentice, 300 for an unskilled worker, and up to 900 for a skilled technician or manager. "Under the Japanese a worker was hungry, but now even an unskilled worker can 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. But how would it seem in Shanghai where workers were rioting for rice? Reckoned in food, it was the highest wage I had found in China. Clothing, they said, was bought cheaply through workers' co-operatives, helped by credits from state or industry. Housing needs were met by repairing broken buildings or by taking over houses vacated by Japanese. Schools were run by every trade union for its members.

"But the biggest change," said H. C. Ma, "is the raising of the worker's status. This includes the right to organize, to take part in collective bargaining, to take part in production plans, to take part in government." One third of the members of the Kalgan Municipal Council were trade unionists.

This, they said, was what the trade unions had accomplished in their first year of open organization. They had no fear that this "capitalism" would run away with them. They were as strong, or stronger, than the capitalists. So they co-operated with the capitalists urging them on to make profits, from which all might benefit. They had collective bargaining, with access to the management's books. They shared in making the production plans for the industry. They felt their hands on the wheel.

Was this, then, captialism? Not quite like any the world has hitherto known. Nor was it socialism—yet.

I went to check their claims in some of the factories.

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 to make various kinds of consumer goods. Private capital had been invited to take shares and had done so, for the syndicate was making money. Nobody seemed to worry as to whether the syndicate or any of its factories would become state or private enterprise eventually. They wanted people to have soap. The factory produced three kinds of excellent hard-milled soap: laundry, toilet, and carbolic.

I met the manager and three members of the shop committee in the main office. They were all about equally well dressed. A rank-and-file worker, who had just bought a new blue cotton suit through the co-operative, was a shade the best dressed of the lot. Everyone was friendly and easy. The manager, in patched blue overalls, was a chemist brought from Peiping for his technical knowledge. He answered a few questions about the business and left me with the workers.

Wages? These, they said, ranged from 242 pounds of millet per month for apprentices to 880 pounds 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 reckon when prices were always rising? Possibly sixty pounds of millet for a skilled man. 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."

Wage disputes were infrequent since everybody received several times as much as they had a year ago. "Some workers wanted still more, but the shop committee went over the books and

found that if we took more it would ruin the business. We explained to a general meeting and everyone was satisfied."

The most important benefit, they all insisted, was that "formerly you had to keep your mouth shut, but now you can speak freely." Strike? "Of course you could strike, but why should you? Everyone would just get less. No matter what the trouble—wages, clothing, housing—you can discuss it and change it."

"What problems," I asked, "do you discuss with the boss?"

To my surprise they said that the most recent discussion was about clothing. Everyone needed new clothing, and it was cheaper to buy it wholesale, but the workers' co-operative did not have enough money. They asked the manager to lend the factory's credit. The discussion concerned technical details of amount, security, and repayment. The loan had been granted and repaid in three months. No worker considered himself beholden to his boss for this clothing; his co-operative had made a fair deal. Through a similar loan the co-operative also bought food staples in large quantities after harvest, when food was cheapest.

This factory was too small to have a paid union organizer. The shop committee of five all worked in production, attending to union duties in their spare time. They had been elected by secret ballot in a meeting; the workers wrote their choice on paper slips. Most of the workers could read well enough to copy names from a blackboard. If they couldn't, there was a Fair Election Committee to help. The shop committee divided its own work: one man as chairman, one as organizer, one for grievances, two for education. The latter seemed twice as important as anything else.

"Every worker attends some class," they stated, showing me the two large rooms used for study in the morning and for recreation in the evening. Classes met for an hour at seven in the morning, when they were fresh before work. The more advanced had a teacher paid by the Kalgan City Labor Council; the less advanced were taught by a worker of the plant. They studied



reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, industrial practice, and a bit of geography and hygiene. A small group of the better educated met with the manager for a course on current events and gave the news to others in conversation during the day.

That was Kalgan—town of enterprise, public, co-operative, and private—where private business made good profit but where the trade unions were at least as enterprising as the capitalists. Was Kalgan typical?

I went to a much bigger city, Harbin, in Manchuria. Here I visited a large flour mill and a department store, each privately owned by an absentee owner. In each I talked to both management and workers.

“We have free trade again for the first time in fourteen years,” said the manager of the flour mill. “The Japanese and the brief Kuomintang regime that followed them had a state grain monopoly; our mill was hired only for milling. But now we again buy grain and sell flour freely, as before the Japanese came.” Two members of the shop committee said the workers got twice their former wage and also a share in profits. They seemed to know the business as well as the manager did.

The Tung Faho Department Store has been a famous Harbin enterprise for a generation. It went bankrupt under the Japanese and remained closed under the Soviet army and the Kuomintang. Under the present regime the clerks, who lived in a building in the courtyard, decided to revive the business. The owner lived in Shantung, a thousand miles south beyond a battle front, but they reached an agreement with his agent. The workers took only their food at first, but money wages were credited to them on an agreed scale, to be paid from future earnings; they also got more than half the profits. The agent demurred at first, but the workers argued that the store was empty and in debt and the clerks were taking most of the risks. So the agent agreed.

“Why didn’t you organize a co-operative store instead of recognizing a bankrupt owner?” I asked.

"We got credit on the name he built for twenty years," they answered. "That is more than the debts."

It was a straight business answer—the "square deal" ethics of free enterprise in its early stage.

Is this, then, capitalism? Yes—and no! At present it is a mixture, some hang-overs of feudalism, some energetic free-enterprise capitalism, some socialism in the form of public ownership of monopolies, utilities, and key industries. As Mao said: "The new democratic revolution is clearing the way for capitalism . . . it is also creating the preliminary conditions for socialism." The Communists intend that that socialism shall eventually prevail.

Just now they are building up all of China's industries and take pride in the way the private industries increase. As their armies swept south through China they published figures to prove how private industry grew under their regime. In Loyang, they claimed, shops and industries increased 33 per cent in the first month after liberation; in Weihsien they doubled in five months; in Central Shansi the local government gave loans to sixty-eight small coal mines, thirty-seven salt refineries, and the makers of a famous wine; in Tientsin the new municipal government gave loans to start 562 production groups of handicraftsmen. Even in Shanghai, American correspondents noted that "industry is gathering momentum as shown by rising power consumption."

Nor was the policy of "protecting private business" a misnomer. When the Communist-led armies took Tsining, a small northwestern city, they notified merchants to come and get their goods from trains in the captured railway station. Before the merchants, some of whom lived in outlying towns, could arrive, the Communists lost the city in a counterattack. They pulled the trains of private goods out of town with them and brought them back when they retook the city. They thus saved from ruin fourteen merchants, one of whom said: "I'll vote for the Communists with both hands." In the coastal cities where the ad-

vancing armies found the big monopolies, most of them owned by Chiang's relatives and other high officials, they took these over for the state. The Bank of China, reorganized as the People's Bank of China, was put in charge of gold, silver, and foreign currency regulations. Private banks were permitted to carry on the normal banking business of deposits, loans, safekeeping, and even foreign remittances under control.

What industries are allowed to private capital? An Industrial and Trade Conference of North China, attended by delegates from state industry, private enterprise, and trade unions, laid down policies in May 1948. "No war industry or other key industry controlling the people's economy or monopolistic in nature can be left to private capital. . . . All other industries and trades are open . . . a vast field in the consumer-goods industries remains to them." Government industry "takes the initiative in stabilizing prices" and "actively helps private industry that is needed by the nation." Banks and trading companies are to "work together to buy up commodities when they overcrowd the market and release them when there is shortage."

A particularly interesting clause stated that "Communist cells in trade unions refrain from demanding increase in wages but strive for increase of production and cost reduction." This was further elaborated by the All-China Trade Union Congress held in Harbin in the summer of 1948. Rumors were rife that as soon as the Communists established their power they would swing to a line of greater repression—it was said to be the "Moscow line," presumably advocated by Li Li-san of Manchuria. But Li Li-san himself, as vice-chairman of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, issued a statement that indicated that private capital would be handled gently. He told the Chinese workers that a reasonable profit must be allowed to private capital to induce it to co-operate in the common task.

"Reforms must be gradual, not violent. We come not to disturb but to supervise," said the well-known Communist economist, Chen Po-ta, whose book, *China's Four Big Families*, had

been a devastating analysis of the ownership of China's economy by four interrelated families, headed by Chiang Kai-shek. "If we are to reform industrial enterprises we must first learn all the ins and outs of their working. Only then should there be introduced rational reforms."

"Management and workers are equal and each should respect the other," said the secretary of the Communist Party of Shanghai in a conference with that city's industrialists in June 1949, a month after the taking of Shanghai. He told them that he was quite aware that raw cotton had to be imported and that they would be allowed to export cotton yarn and piece goods to pay for it.

In Shanghai it became plain that, while internal trade was far freer from government restriction than it had been under the Kuomintang, foreign trade would be controlled in the interest of keeping essential commodities in the country, unless they were replaced by more needed goods from abroad. The flooding of Shanghai's market with Coca-Cola, cosmetics, California oranges, and similar luxury goods would be discouraged, while encouragement would be given to the import of machinery or materials for China's own industry. Taxing was sufficient for this; prohibition was not needed.

China, it was clear, would try to become self-supporting. When American correspondents cabled that Shanghai would die without American help, since "60 per cent of her rice, all of her fuel oil and gasoline, and most of her raw cotton came from the United States," a significant answer appeared in the local Chinese press. It was indeed unwholesome, said the writer, for a city of six million people to be dependent on foreign handouts. This should be changed. Perhaps even now things were not so bad as the Americans feared. Rice was reaching Shanghai from the Yangtze ports, now that good relations with the peasants had been restored. The price of rice had even gone down by 20 per cent. Shanghai could use Chinese coal, as she did before the Americans were so anxious to sell fuel oil. Some cotton must be

imported, but Chinese peasants were producing much rough cotton, suitable for simpler goods. The writer concluded: "The Americans seem more worried about Shanghai's survival than we Chinese are."

The new China's policy is thus to build up Chinese industry, private as well as publicly owned. Is this, then, a brief "New Economic Policy" such as Russia had, lasting five years, after which private businessmen were thrown out and many of them arrested? Probably not, for in China the private businessmen are not disfranchised and despised as they were in Russia during the New Economic Policy. They sit in the new government of China as "allies." Private industrialists, represented through the Democratic League and similar parties, do not even have to believe, as the Communists do, that socialism will eventually win. They can hope for expansion of their own business if they like.

How, then, will private capital, beginning in small industries, be prevented from expanding until it becomes monopoly capital? Laws are not enough; laws against capitalist combinations are easily broken, as Americans know. Mao Tze-tung relies on the public ownership of the commanding heights of industry and on the strength of the Chinese working class, which, he says, is "older and more matured" than the Chinese capitalists. When I saw how fast those workers organized in Kalgan and how in Harbin they knew the business better than the boss did, I felt that Mao was right.

How long will private enterprise be allowed? Mao Tze-tung says it will last a long time. In one place he said "several decades"; in another, that private capitalism would last longer in China than in today's Europe since China is more backward. Elsewhere he said that the pace might be hastened by the world situation. All these remarks seem reasonable. It's the risk free enterprisers take anywhere.

## 5. BUILDING THE NEW SOCIETY

### 1. SCHOOLS GO TO THE PEOPLE

Students from Chiang Kai-shek's China slipped across the battle lines by the hundreds in 1948-49 as the People's Liberation Army drove south. Somehow they arrived at the North China University, whose location was still secret in the hills. They came by twos and threes. The long gowns and permanent waves of the girls, the foreign shoes and shirts of the men marked them as newcomers. Quickly they donned the northern uniform of padded blue cotton, padded cloth shoes, caps with visor and ear flaps.

They slept on boards in long dormitories. They ate millet and greens twice daily. They carried collapsible stools to sit on in classroom and library. They studied different technical jobs, but their main study was to adapt to a new manner of life: to work together, to criticize themselves and others without rancor, to live with peasants and like it. They spent a few weeks in peasant homes and helped with the farm work; they also

met merchants and manufacturers and learned a smattering of industry and commerce. They prepared to handle the new cities taken by the People's Liberation Army.

They were China's youth, learning quickly to lead and to organize the new China. And this was only one of very many such universities.

Years before this drive began, the preparation was made in the arid hills of Yen-an, among peasants who had no use for schools. "We had to prove that schools could help them in their daily living," said Superintendent Kao of Yen-an Border Region. "It was an uphill job."

Kao Yung-ping, chief of secondary schools for the Yen-an area, was unlike any school superintendent I had ever met. His bare brown feet were thrust into canvas slippers. His dark skin was smoothly drawn over high cheekbones. His stiff black hair stuck straight up. His jacket and trousers didn't match, for the trousers were dark blue cotton of civilian issue while the light blue jacket dated from his years in the army, as was shown from insignia it still bore. But that he was a learned man was clear from the fountain pen stuck in his pocket and the eager intellectuality of his young face.

"When we got here in 1935 from the Long March," he continued, "only one per cent of the people here could read. There were eighty primary schools in a region of 1,500,000 people, and one higher six-year elementary school. No secondary schools or higher institutions at all. We opened a normal school to train teachers in the autumn of 1937. We had twenty students, most of whom had made the Long March."

What dreams they had had of bringing swift education to a backward area! The superintendent sighed as he recalled. A compulsory education law was passed. It remained a dead letter. The peasants didn't want to learn to read. For farm boys on the edge of starvation, those difficult Chinese characters seemed a waste of time. They had to tend sheep and cut firewood. As for girls, it was immoral for them to think of learning at all.

The peasants' first need was higher production. The teachers admitted it. They must prove that schools could help in this.

The story of Teacher Tao shows what was expected of a primary-school teacher. She was chosen as "heroine of education," and her tale was printed with woodcuts and circulated widely as an example of how a teacher should behave.

Teacher Tao "lived with the people." When a little girl was lazy and got up too late to do her household tasks before school, Teacher Tao challenged her to a competition and herself got up laughingly at five in the morning. When a small boy named Wen proved a perfect pest at home and in school, declaiming from table tops with a painted face like an actor, or taking off his trousers to run about the yard, Teacher Tao, though told by the father: "Be strict, punish him," would hug the boy, wash his face, catch the lice in his coat. Thus she won his trust till he "talked to her about everything."

Visiting Wen's home, Teacher Tao observed his idleness and asked why he didn't help in family tasks.

"Why must I carry two buckets of water? I only drink two bowls!" retorted young Wen.

The teacher glanced at Wen's sister cooking the millet and asked: "How many bowls of millet does she eat?"

"Two," admitted the shamefaced Wen.

"Does she cook also for you?" asked Tao. The boy got the point and whispered: "I'll have to improve."

Through a painfully long series of episodes Teacher Tao displayed limitless affection and ingenuity until young Wen behaved well at home and in school. He "carried the water, fed the pigs, swept and cleaned the ground." His father said: "That Tao is a real teacher. She has changed my son to a good boy."

Many such hard-won successes at last convinced the village that a teacher was of use. The villagers gave thirty bushels of grain for the pupils' meals and two acres of land—cultivated by a labor brigade—for the school's support. They elected Teacher Tao "heroine of education" and "voluntarily gave her soap, a



handkerchief, shoes, and eggs!" Her school increased "till she had forty pupils!"

Forty children! To Western readers it will seem that Teacher Tao made heroic efforts for a very small success. Teachers in backward villages of Asia may better judge her worth. Her school was voted a model by the Congress of Culture in Yen-an; her "style of work" was recommended to other teachers by no less a person than Mao Tze-tung. Hers was the type of patient, unlimited devotion that built those first primary schools.

Superintendent Kao made no claim to full success. Only 15 per cent of the children in Yen-an Border Region were in school when I talked with him in 1947, but this was fifteen times as many as there had been ten years before. The original eighty primary schools had grown to 1,302; that single elementary had blossomed into sixty-six. There were seven secondary schools and a university with five faculties. It was not a bad growth for ten years.

Wherever there is a primary school the teacher is expected to organize at least one winter class for adults. These teach not only reading and writing, or, as the Chinese put it, "learning characters." There are classes for peasants on seed selection and simple plant diseases, and classes for women on home hygiene and care of babies. Such subjects are taught even to people who cannot yet read. These winter classes are started even in places that have never yet had primary schools. A thousand "cultural workers" from Yen-an—writers, musicians, sculptors, nurses—volunteered every winter for three months to open such winter classes in backward villages.

At the other extreme was the highest institution of learning, Yen-an University, or "Yenda." Its assembly hall stood on a plateau overlooking Yen River; classrooms and dormitories were in caves on successive ledges of the upper cliff. It was a high and hazardous climb by irregular clay steps to those upper ledges where I met several professors and students as well as the president.

The president of Yenda at the time of my visit was a member of the Democratic League who had been a noted educator in Sian until Chiang's gangsters kidnaped him because of his democratic views, beat him up, and left him for dead in a country ditch. Kindly peasants found him, nursed him back to life, and helped him escape to Yen-an.

Yenda, he told me, was much smaller now than formerly. During the war with Japan it had been the Communists' key university, with twelve hundred students. More than three thousand graduates had gone to organize the people's resistance and the new local governments as the Liberated Areas grew. Later, as these new regimes extended to the sea, most of Yenda's faculty and students went to other areas to start new universities there. The Medical School and the Art School, as examples, had been transferred to Kalgan and later to the North Shansi hills, where they were part of the new North China University.

So Yenda was no longer the famous central university to which students from all provinces of China came. It was only a local university, serving local needs. Its three hundred and fifty students came almost entirely from the farming families of Yen-an Border Region and were preparing for jobs in the government or the organizations there. They planned to become magistrates, judges, military commanders, newspaper editors, and teachers of secondary schools. Most of them had already been teachers of primary schools or minor officials. They came to Yenda to combine theory with their previous practice. All university facilities, including the students' food and clothing, were supplied by the Border Region government. Extra comforts such as towels, toothbrushes, and additional vegetables came from the students' co-operative production.

The aim of Yenda education, according to the professors, was to make the students "think actively." Before a class convened the professor wrote out the subjects he intended to cover and recommended reference books. Each class was divided into many study groups, each with its leader. The professor consulted

these leaders to know what questions were most raised. When the class finally met its session lasted an entire day. A morning lecture was followed by questions; in the afternoon the books the students had read were discussed. This often lasted late into the night. The concentration of an entire day on a subject was to give time "to think about it in all its aspects."

A student had five such classes in the week, but a professor had only two. He spent the rest of the time compiling the textbook, which was written from the collected experience of the Border Region on the basis of the students' questions; it was mimeographed at the university.

Yenda students had close relations with the branches of government for which they were preparing. Law students, for instance, not only attended courts but were admitted to committees of the legislature, where they took part in discussing new laws. Chiefs of government departments often lectured at Yenda.

All student affairs were handled through student self-government. Many practical problems of daily life were discussed in their meetings. The most burning of these was the problem of marriage. Most students had had marriages arranged for them by their parents and were much dissatisfied. After long discussion the general view was that if the marriage had not been consummated the couple should terminate it if they did not like each other, but that if marriage had been consummated they should "try to get along." Thus they reached through their own discussion the normal modern view of a world far wider than Yenda. But Yenda students were more strict with themselves than students in less strenuous colleges. All agreed that while in the university they should give their time to study and not to love-making.

It was never as hard again to organize schools as it had been in Yen-an Border Region. As the Liberated Areas spread to the sea and throughout all China they reached more productive

and hence more progressive areas, where the methods brought from Yen-an had very quick results. A million and a half children were quickly enrolled in schools by 1947 in the Liberated Area of Shantung, and an equal number in the provinces just north of the Lunghai Railway which I visited. Here one found reading circles and evening classes in practically every village. Each of these large areas had secondary schools whose pupils numbered tens of thousands. They also set up universities with amazing speed, teaching such subjects as forestry, engineering, railway management.

The wide-awake energy of the children was impressive. At the physical culture review of ten thousand school children I saw in the public park in Tsitsihar, one class—believe it or not—sang a song of welcome to me, the American guest who had arrived the night before. They had written it and rehearsed it after two in the morning. These children were especially proud of their feat and thought it entitled them all to file to the reviewing stand and shake my hand.

That physical culture review would have done credit to any country. Boys in white caps and shirts. Girls with big paper flowers or with red rosettes on long wands. Drills, songs, marches—the things school children do all over the world on national holidays. I noticed especially the pictures, the songs, and the slogans, for these would show what the schools taught the children to believe, what heroes to honor. Here were no pictures of Marx, Lenin, or Stalin, as one might expect under a regime in which Communists play a leading part. This was a national holiday, and no foreigners were featured, only Chinese.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen was the great hero whose portrait shone on posters and on big floral stars. His was the name and tradition. Two little children carried a big star with Dr. Sun's portrait wreathed in flowers and set it up facing the tribune. Other youngsters brought smaller stars to put at the feet of the big one. These showed Mao Tze-tung, Chu Teh, Chou En-lai, and other Communist leaders, but it showed them as honoring

Sun Yat-sen. There were pictures of non-Communists also. There was no picture of Chiang Kai-shek.

About Chiang these Manchurian children 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.”

The Communists were hailed as the saviors of China, the nation. There was no mention anywhere of the U.S.S.R.

They sang about Mao Tze-tung:

“Since Mao Tze-tung came to us  
There is sunshine,  
There is democracy,  
There is the rule of the people.”

From the school celebration I was whirled out of town to a village and back to a dozen festivities. It was after midnight when I reached my room. Delegations were waiting there from the boys' high school and the girls' high school to ask—no, to demand—that I visit them in the morning and make speeches to their assemblies. A third delegation from the school authorities told me the children had been disappointed because I had not stayed to see *all* their physical culture demonstration. Those who hadn't been seen wanted to put it on again for me. The school authorities had compromised by inviting me to a special review of the prize-winning groups. It was fixed the next morning for seven o'clock!

I came down sleepy and shivering, pulling my fur coat close. I sat on a bench in the wind and watched those lithe young bodies, clad only in shorts, go through maneuvers. I was duly impressed by the primary-school children who threw themselves on the ground and “stalked the enemy” in bayonet drill. I was impressed by graceful, lively dances with flowers and hoops, by the imitation of two battleships with flags waving and engines

rolling right in front of me. I was impressed by the verve with which they sang:

“Chiang Kai-shek, he has a black heart,  
He sold out Manchuria with both hands.  
But the people will defend our Liberated Areas.  
If anyone comes to take our grain  
We'll fight to death and to victory!”

I knew right there that Chiang Kai-shek would never get Manchuria. He could never have conquered those school children of Tsitsihar!

The regular schools are only part of the machinery for educating people. Every institution had its study groups. In the little rug factory of Yenan, the soap factory of Kalgan, the big flour mill in Harbin, all workers attended classes daily, usually in the first morning hour when they were fresh before work. Every army detachment had similar classes. In the jails of Yenan and Kalgan the prisoners gave two hours instead of one to study, because they had more spare time.

It is hard to learn to read Chinese. Instead of an alphabet there are many thousands of characters, so many and so complicated that in past centuries only a small group of the well-to-do had the long leisure to learn. The written language became a “secret language” of the upper class, increasing the gulf between rulers and ruled. Today in the new China “learning characters” becomes almost a national sport. If you study three years you may know a thousand or fifteen hundred characters and can read the “simplified newspaper,” but not yet a real book.

A famous drive for “learning characters” was started by the peasant, Jen Huang-hua, who lived on the bank of the Yellow River. Ten years ago he felt the urge to educate his neighborhood. He induced one man from each nearby village to attend a class in Jen's home. They came once in ten days for the evening and learned five new characters, then went back and taught these to other groups in their villages. When this chain teaching

had gone on for ten years, Jen's pupils numbered ten thousand and his system of classes covered more than an entire county. The most advanced of his pupils could read five or six thousand characters.

A new system of "learning characters" was invented by a young soldier named Chang Yu-tze. He devised it from his own hard struggle and disappointments. He had herded cows from the age of nine and plowed the land from the age of twelve and had never thought of learning to read. After he joined the Eighth Route Army his ignorance embarrassed him. A comrade was reading the paper aloud and Chang learned that the enemy had fired on civilians in his home county. He wanted to write home but could not scratch a single character and was ashamed to ask others lest they think him homesick. Shortly after, as sentry at a city gate, Chang was much worried because four merchants presented a road pass and he could not read the number of people mentioned in the pass and feared he might let enemy agents come in. He had a heated quarrel with the men, trying to detain them.

Chang joined the class that was formed in his company. Lacking a textbook, the teacher prepared a small reader called *A Thousand Hard Characters*. It was so monotonous that most of the pupils quit. Chang stuck it out for two years till he learned all the thousand and got a mark of "excellent." Then newspapers and pamphlets began to reach the army and Chang found to his dismay that he could not read them. He had learned complicated characters of little use.

Two years' work lost! It would have discouraged most people, but Chang was a determined lad. He invented his own method. Picking out items in the newspaper, he learned them character by character, asking the meaning and pronunciation from anyone who knew. Soon he recognized enough characters to take interest in the contents. He began to write letters home, asking for the characters he needed from anyone who could write. From every letter he learned thirty or more new characters.

When Chang felt that he "stood at the threshold of full literacy" he began to help others. He never made the mistake his teacher had. He picked characters that people needed. He became an ingenious propagandist for learning. Showing a note of the new currency to the old horseman Wang, he said: "Fifty of this is worth a thousand of the old money." Wang at once complained that he was always being cheated because he could not read the numbers on the money. Chang taught him numbers.

Chang's enthusiasm so infected the entire company that its progress "without even a trained teacher" impressed the brigade's political commissar. He learned about Chang's method and publicized it in the army press.

Ideas spread rapidly through the new China even to people who cannot read. There are regular newspapers for educated people; items are read aloud in newspaper-reading circles. "Simplified newspapers" circulate among people just learning to read. "Village newspapers" are printed on a blackboard in the public square and are also read aloud. When Rittenberg crossed North Shansi on foot he found that even the smallest village—without wheeled carts, using donkeys for transport; without electric light or kerosene or even candles, using homemade hemp oil with a homemade wick—had nonetheless its "newspaper." Most of the space was given to local news: labor heroes who made records in production, or sinners who must be "struggled with" for some fault. There would also be brief news of China's civil war and international news.

I came upon the "vocal broadcast" in Wu An County in North Honan. It is an ingenious adaptation of the old town crier. A loud voice was shouting from a rooftop a block away while people stopped in the streets to listen. I asked what the man was shouting and was told he had just said: "Today a foreign woman writer arrived in our city to visit our army and



government." I took this for a joke, but it proved to be a fact. My arrival was "news" on the "vocal broadcast."

These broadcasts had begun on local initiative. Nobody could tell me whether they were common in other districts, but if not, they will doubtless spread. The local village or town ward chooses a man to do the shouting. He gets material from the newspapers or from government departments and edits it himself. His shouting lasts fifteen minutes, giving only the high lights. It ends with an invitation to a "news reading" which follows, and where those who wish may hear more details. Fascinated by those broadcasts, I collected samples of the "shouts."

Most of them were local news. "Hello! Hello! Listen! Today Li Shun-yuan of our village, he himself reclaimed eight tenths of a mou of land. So Li has glory of today. Tomorrow let everybody work to surpass Li!" The civil war, then raging on the edges of this region, was alluded to in picturesque terms: "For eight years we cooked a pan of rice and now they try to take away this pan of rice that we cooked in bitter days." The first broadcast I heard ended with the startling shout: "Mothers! Oh, Mothers! The wolf is coming to eat your baby! All young men! Rise to defend your homes!" It was a summons to a recruiting drive against the invasion by Chiang Kai-shek.

Blind minstrels have also been pressed into the service of education. It is an old custom for the blind to become minstrels. They are led about by small boys and are hired to entertain guests at feasts. They tell stories to an accompaniment of musical instruments. There are three kinds of these instruments, and some minstrels manage to use all three at once: a long, stringed instrument held on the arm, a clapper of two pieces of bamboo struck by moving the knee, and a bell that is hit by a stick.

Good minstrels are welcome everywhere. There were two hundred of them in Yen-an Border Region. Formerly they told tales of war lords and demons. After an invitation to Yen-an and a little instruction in the ideas of the new regime, they began

singing new stories that spread the new ideas. Han Chi-chiang, one of the most famous, makes up his own songs but often bases them on fact. His best-known song—"Liu Shao-erh's Petition," a tale of buying in marriage—is told later in this book.

A unique and popular method of propaganda is found in a combination of dance, song, and drama known as Yang-ke. This was originally the name of a folk song and dance performed by peasants in the fields. It was developed as an instrument of anti-Japanese propaganda during the resistance to Japan. The traditional clown, who amused audiences by taking a beating, was replaced by a Japanese or a "puppet." The literary possibilities of Yang-ke were discovered after Mao Tze-tung, in the Writers' Congress of 1942, urged writers to study folkways of expression. By 1946 there were six hundred Yang-ke troupes, amateur and professional, in Yen-an Border Region. One person in every twelve knew how to "do a Yang-ke."

Yang-ke is a very flexible form. It always includes music in a catchy rhythm not unlike the fox trot, and also singing, dancing, and sometimes dramatic acting. It may be performed in the open air or indoors. It spread rapidly through all the areas of the new China.

One of the first sights I saw in Kalgan was a group of children dancing a Yang-ke down the street. In Yen-an I often saw Yang-ke dramas on the streets or in fields. On every holiday the various amateur and professional troupes would put on performances and crowds would gather at once. Most villages had their own troupes which often wrote their own plays.

The Yang-ke dramas, the minstrels' songs, the winter classes, the village newspapers are only the forms through which new thought flows. Expressed in these forms is the awakening life of a people.

The millions of young folk who organize their study groups and singing circles, the older ones who "learn characters" in

winter classes and in factory groups are the people of China who are seizing education—not receiving it passively but seizing it—to the end that their new life may be different from the old.

## 2. THE WOMEN TAKE PART

One of the most fascinating young women I ever met anywhere was a slight, flamelike creature in Manchuria who had personally “liquidated” a bandit chief called “Northern Tyrant.” She wore the blue winter uniform of the Joint Democratic Army, and her energy wore her thin even under those padded clothes. She looked less than twenty, but she said she was twenty-five. She was traveling by train out of Harbin with the young officer to whom she had just been married. There was a bright purity in her face that made one want to shield her from the evil in the world. But she had seen plenty of it as organizer for the land reform in Chiaotung County.

When Li Pai-chung spoke of her work her eyes shone with a high patriotism that had begun years ago when Manchuria was invaded by the Japanese. “There was nothing I could do then,” she explained, “for I was still in elementary school. But when the war spread to China in 1937 I was already in secondary school and I volunteered for patriotic work. I gave all my time to it for two years—I lived in Kuomintang territory then—but in 1939 the Kuomintang began arresting people for patriotic agitation. I was arrested but escaped and made my way to the Liberated Areas, for I had already many friends among the Communists.”

Thus Li 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 twenty thousand 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 that they demanded eighty; then he took bribes from forty for "releasing" them. When the Japanese rationed cotton goods Kan kept the best for his friends, giving only the worst shoddy to the peasants. Thus his hundred and fifty acres grew to nine hundred, with livestock and buildings in proportion. Kan handled his farm hands so that he owed them nothing at the end of the year. Often one saw in Kan's court a row of kneeling share croppers whom he was beating and kicking because they had failed in some way. After Japan's defeat Kan got a credential from Chiang Kai-shek's military representative in Changchun to organize a band of one hundred armed men and kept on terrorizing the countryside. Twice his band had skirmishes with the Joint Democratic Army, but Kan's connection with them was not widely known.

The discovery of Northern Tyrant came in this wise. One of his farm hands 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 pay.

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

The farm hand retorted, "I'll report you to the peasants' union."

Kan drew his Mauser and the worker ran. He ran south to the railroad and reported Northern Tyrant to the county bureau where the young organizer Li was working.

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

How does a thin girl you could knock down with a sweep of the 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; the other ninety were just 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 that we shoot Kan. This we did." She said it with that bright, pure glow in her face.

Few women in any country or any era have made a greater break with the past than girls like Li. For centuries Chinese women were taught to find fulfillment only in the family. They had "three obediences," to father, to husband, and later to son. They were sold in marriage by arrangements between parents. Their feet were bound as a means of keeping them from active life. The higher the woman's status, the more cruelly were her feet bound in childhood. "Pepper feet"—the size of a pepper—could be produced only by bending the toes so far under that the bones broke. This made a bride desirable; her tottering sway was likened by Chinese poets to that of a lily.

The first steps toward a wider life came, as in other lands, with the coming of factory production. This gave the woman a new economic status but also a new slavery. A group of young textile workers told me in 1927 in Shanghai the many forms of woman's oppression, voice echoing voice like a chant. "By the old custom women were not permitted to walk out of the house. They were forced into marriage, and the marriage relation was embittered. When they worked in factories they were oppressed by foremen and also had housework to do after the twelve-hour factory day."

An explosive "freeing of women" came in 1925-27 with the "Great Revolution." "Bobbed-hair girls" in uniform marched north with the joint Kuomintang-Communist armies, preaching women's equality and the right to "free marriage," which meant the right to marry at their own choice instead of being sold in a family-arranged wedlock. They formed women's unions and obtained divorces by announcements in newspapers. This deeply shocked the conservative countryside. When local war lords came to power again under Chiang, thousands of girls and women were killed on the evidence of their bobbed hair alone.

In the twenty years that followed, the women of the upper classes and of cities took discreet part in public life. They joined

women's societies and welfare associations; the women I met in such organizations differed little in views or manner from women in similar organizations in America. During the war with Japan, Chinese women did the usual kinds of war work: made bandages, shirts, and shoes for soldiers, sold bonds, and carried on other patriotic activities. Young enthusiasts tried to arouse peasants or help refugees or even go to the front to care for wounded, but as the Kuomintang grew more reactionary the women's initiative and many of their organizations were suppressed.

In rural districts the awakening of women went more slowly. Peasants were little affected by the talk of "women's rights." Girls were still sold in marriage and might be little better than slaves in their husbands' families. The husband's income belonged to his parents; unless they favored the young bride she might have no means to buy her baby's clothes. When several married sons lived in one family home the parents often favored the wife of one and ill-treated the others. This led to embittered family life.

The Chinese Communists have always recognized the equality of women and their right to free choice in marriage. They have always encouraged women to carry on any work for which they had capacity, even the leading of armed forces. Mrs. Chu Teh, whose personal name is Kang Ke-ch'ing, was a former kitchen slave and cowherd who ran away from her master in 1927 and organized the Women Vanguard, more than three thousand women armed with everything from kitchen knives to rifles. When Chu Teh appeared in their district in 1928, the women joined him. On the Long March two battalions of these women defeated and disarmed a brigade of Szechwan troops. Mrs. Chu Teh, who could not read a single character when she joined the army, became a college teacher and an organizer of nursery schools.

When the Communists came to Yen-an they found one of the

most backward regions in China. The countryside was not only untouched by any suspicion of women's equality, but it was riddled with superstitions, including many about childbirth. Women would not tell their husbands when they expected to give birth lest he "scare the child back." They hid themselves to give birth and cut the cord with their teeth or with a bit of porcelain because metal was "unlucky." The area had two thousand witch doctors who beat women and jabbed them with sharp instruments, often killing them in the process of "letting out the evil spirits." All of this led to a high infant mortality.

The marriage law passed by the Communists in this region sought the "realization of free marriage and the equality of men and women." It provided that "union between a man and a woman should be voluntary," that "forced marriage and marriage by purchase are forbidden." But even after twelve years of Communist rule the selling of girls in marriage remained the common form among farming folk.

One amusing result of the new marriage laws was that the price of brides grew cheaper. The same Farm Champion Li who came to my cave to discuss the new society told me that he "got a wife from the revolution. She cost me only twenty dollars. I could never hope to get a wife before."

How did the revolution make wives cheaper? When I asked this, Li seemed perplexed. "Her father knows that I have land now," was his first answer. After more thought he added: "A wife can leave a man now if she does not like him, so people will not pay so much."

The stubborn resistance of the peasants to the new ideas finally forced the Communists to make a new approach. Miss Ts'ai Ch'ang, chairman of the women's movement, told me: "Our slogans in the rural districts are no longer 'free marriage' and 'women's equality,' but 'save the babies' and 'for a prosperous family.' We made a mistake when we emphasized women's rights to such an extent that we antagonized the peasants. The conflict between men and women weakened the united struggle

against the Japanese enemy and against the landlord. Besides, equality of women and freedom of marriage cannot be secured in this manner."

Under the slogan of "save the babies," women are given education in child care; thus the importance of their work is emphasized. Under the slogan of "prosperous family," women learn to spin and weave and produce the family clothing, thus raising their economic weight in the home. Some 160,000 women in Yen-an Border Region joined this movement, one third of all the adult women in the area.

At the same time public opinion was aroused against wife beating as a form of oppression. If the women's association could not persuade the husband to act humanely, they might call a "struggle meeting" and inform the village of his oppressive acts. A notice would appear on the village news board: "Wang—beats his wife; let him stop or we'll see to it," signed by the women's association of the village.

A new type of family began to develop in the Liberated Areas. It is hard to secure harmony in a large family consisting of parents, several sons with their wives, and many grandchildren. Such families, which in the Western sense are not families but groups of relatives, are common in China. It is not always possible or desirable to split them into the smaller family units of the West.

Such large families often become "democratic families." They have family councils, elect a head, and set quotas of work for each member. Any output above the quota is divided, four fifths to the producer and one fifth to the family fund. These "democratic families" even have "three-year plans" in terms of increased crops and livestock.

The family of Chen Teh-fa, for instance, consisted of two aged parents, three grown sons with their wives, and many small children. Since the "Old Man" was often absent, the "Old Mother" ran the home. She treated the wives unequally, and they all hated each other. At last Teh-fa, the oldest son, called a



family council and said: "Our production is low and we remain poor because of our many quarrels." They decided to make Teh-fa the head of the family. First he apportioned equally all necessary household labor. When this work was justly apportioned each wife had equal time for such extra activities as spinning and weaving. Each woman was allowed to keep four fifths of the income from this extra work. Soon the family became prosperous and most of the quarrels stopped. Even the "Old Mother," who at first resented her loss of power, became reconciled by the new prosperity.

During the war with Japan women of the occupied area took part with men in a common resistance to the enemy. Some were even active in warfare. Liu Yia-shung, a graduate of Peiping Normal College, organized a "dare to die" corps of women guerrillas of which she was political director. She is today the head of the government for one of the Southeast Shansi sub-areas. The famous Madame Chao, mother of a guerrilla commander near Peiping, was a simple old lady in a blue cloak who engaged in gun running through the enemy lines. An unnamed "Chinese mother" described by Li Po concealed anti-Japanese posters in her laundry and pasted them up with starch in prominent places while quietly washing clothes in a village stream.

In the Kiaotung Peninsula of Shantung, not far from the naval base of Tsingtao, is the Valley of the Five Tigers, so called from five local heroes of the anti-Japanese resistance. Two of these "tigers" were girls in their teens, Precious Jade and Sweet Jasmine.

Precious Jade—which is the meaning of her name Sun Yu-min—won the title "heroine of the rifle" because she once shot eighteen Japanese in less than an hour. She was eighteen years old at the time, a tall, angular girl with a shy, childlike smile.

"I was lucky," she said, "in my first practice. At first I was afraid to touch a rifle. I thought it might shoot the wrong way. I

was watching the boys on the militia practice field when I was sixteen. They weren't doing very well and they asked me in joke to try a shot. I hit the bull's-eye and the joke was on them. 'Can't you boys hit that great big thing?' I asked. The boys got mad and dared me to try again."

The girl took up the rifle and shot three bullets. They all hit the target. The militia applauded, and after that the girl was always "practicing." Even when she carried her hoe to the field she carried it "like a rifle." She tried to join the militia but was refused. Then her brother was killed by the Japanese and she "knew that she had to take his place." In the morning they buried the brother; in the afternoon she went to target practice with his homemade "fire stick." This time they let her stay. She got two Japanese with her homemade weapon and was given a captured cavalry rifle as reward.

She shot those eighteen Japanese in 1945, not long before Japan surrendered. Seventeen local Chinese mine-laying teams were laying mines, with five hundred sharpshooters as lookouts. Precious Jade was one of these, hiding on a slope behind a tree.

"There was a road at the bottom of the hill with a brook running beside it," is how she tells it. "A Japanese army truck came along and stopped by the brook. They all got out to take a bath. They must have been green recruits, for they left their rifles in the truck. That gave me a head start with my repeating rifle. I got eighteen. They were behind the truck, shooting at me. There were three Japanese left when I ran out of bullets. So I had to get away fast."

Precious Jade has a chum who is a little older, known as Sweet Jasmine Chen. She joined the women's association of her village in 1941. But their tasks—to sew and spin for the army—seemed to her "too simple," so she organized a special "girls' team" for more active work.

It was one of those simple ideas that have a touch of genius. Whenever any emergency came—a local attack by the enemy, a harvest failure, or the death of a village boy in battle—the

girls' team would meet and discuss: "What is our duty in this?" Then men of the village went away to fight. "Our duty," decided the girls, "is to care for the families of absent militia." They carried water, washed clothes, cut firewood to help families of absent men. Then they began to learn to shoot.

On this the older women opposed them; criticism grew bitter. "Our duty," decided the girls, "is to mend this breach." They decided that girls who went in for military duty must forestall criticism by working in their own home much harder than before. "In the morning we worked hard to finish the housework. Afternoons we studied. Evenings we did guard duty on the roads." It was a strenuous life. The real success came when they formed the "letter-writing group," writing letters for families to their absent soldiers.

"The older women who could not write were much pleased with this service," said Sweet Jasmine. "Nobody opposed us any more."

Sweet Jasmine was married at the age of twenty and a war widow in less than a year. She is still the leader of the girls' team. Similar girls' teams have sprung up all over the Shantung Peninsula; they ask themselves: "What is our duty?" They are known as "Sweet Jasmine Girls' Teams." They seem to think that girls have a duty about everything, which very few people in China ever thought before.

A rapid change in the status of women has come in the past two years as a result of the land reform. The new Land Law entitles every farm woman to her share of land, equal to that of a man. This economic independence has given a new dignity, not only to the few pioneers of women's rights, but to women everywhere. Through active part in the land reform women have very widely entered public life. They join women's associations, take part in production drives, vote in elections, and are elected to office.

Old Mother Li in Tacheng County of Central Hopei organized

thirty-eight women and seventy men in a single day to "settle accounts" with local landlords. Within a short time the nine neighboring counties reported that thirty-seven thousand women, one half the total number, had joined local women's associations.

Ninety per cent of the village women were illiterate in the past; today, over fairly large areas, about half of them can read at least the simplified newspapers. Women come out to vote in increasing numbers. Eighty per cent of the women voted in the Yen-an municipal elections and 60 per cent in the surrounding rural areas. One third of the members of village councils in Hopei are women. There are already some women magistrates, women mayors, and women members of the People's Congress, the highest legislative branch of government.

Most women, of course, begin with some local activity which branches out from their home. There was the energetic Mrs. Shih, whom I met in Tsitsihar. She could barely read and write, but she was on the city council and was a fervent promoter of education. It came about through a bit of justice rendered by the new people's courts to her husband, who was a brickmaker employing four men. Under the Japanese rule he had been compelled to furnish large quantities of bricks without payment to a local tyrant known as "Wang the Second Tiger." After the liberation a people's tribunal compelled Wang to pay the brickmaker a large sum.

"I am satisfied that justice is done," said the brickmaker. "But what shall I do with the money? People will say that I profit by the government. Let us use it to build a school." This decision started a movement to remodel an old market building into a forty-room schoolhouse. Mrs. Shih became so happy in organizing it that she has promoted schools ever since. She became a noted citizen of Tsitsihar and a very effective speaker.

These new Chinese women have begun to appear at international congresses. They bring a contribution all their own. I can

describe it best by what happened in December 1948 at the International Congress of Democratic Women in Budapest, where the Chinese delegation became perhaps the most popular group there. They did not straggle in late and with individual demands, as so many of us Americans did. They did not bring an organized program for the women of the world, such as the Russian women had. They came quietly, modestly, taking without comment the rooms, the food, the seats given them by the hard-pressed Hungarian hostesses, making no special demands on the time or attention of anyone.

Soon it was clear that they were well organized, in at least five groups. One or two Chinese women would appear at every interview, on every trip to a village, factory, or school. They covered collectively at least five programs per day; then they met at night to compare notes. Meanwhile Miss Ts'ai Ch'ang, their chairman, was talking with women from India, Vietnam, Indonesia, as well as from America, Russia, England, and France. The Chinese delegation was organized, not to tell the women of the world what to do, but to learn everything they could for China. They probably took home more knowledge about the women of other countries and about every aspect of Hungary's "new democracy" than any five other delegations combined.

When fifty mass meetings and receptions were held in all the counties of Hungary on that final day, Chinese delegates appeared in several places. In each they left their mark. In one town the delegates were shown a workers' club, where some workers were playing ping-pong. Most of the delegates noted approvingly that Hungarian workers now had ping-pong. But the Chinese delegate said: "I can play ping-pong," picked up a racket, and joined in, to Hungarian applause.

Another county town entertained the visitors with the czardas dance. Most delegates applauded its gaiety and vim. The Chinese girl looked on, decided that the czardas could be mastered by anyone who danced the Yang-ke. Soon she was dancing the czardas to the end with the mayor of the town.

In those eastern Hungarian hills where peasant revolts never died in four hundred years till the recent land reform, a Chinese woman delegate spoke to a peasant mass meeting about China's land reform. Hungarian women flocked to the platform to embrace her, weeping, kissing her on both cheeks.

They didn't kiss the American women, the Russian women, or the French. To be candid, few of these seemed to be inviting kisses from Hungarian peasant women in shawls. They were stateswomen, making programs at high levels to abolish barriers between East and West. The Chinese women, of an alien race, a strange tongue, and a different continent, felt no barriers but spoke straight to the Hungarian people's heart.

### 3. THE NEW JUSTICE

When old Judge Chen Ching-kun, ex-member of the Supreme Court of China's earlier days, fled through the Western Hills to join forces with the Communists, he stopped along the way to study the new "democratic courts." He pronounced judgment in his rather pompous manner in three Chinese words far more meaty than their English near equivalents: "Their justice is elemental, uncomplicated, heaven-sent!"

Judge Ma Si-wu of the Supreme Court in Yen-an said it more simply, for Ma is a simpler man. "The difference between our courts and those of the Kuomintang," he told me, "is chiefly in control, procedure, and spirit rather than in the actual code of laws. We try to make the law close and convenient to the people." Everyone agreed that Judge Ma did.

In outer appearance Judge Ma was the shabbiest official who came to my Yen-an cave. He wore the usual suit of dark blue cotton, but the material had been badly dyed and had faded to a streaked and dingy gray. A cap of darker gray was stuck a bit askew above his big horn spectacles. Warm, white woolly socks flowered up from his dusty cotton shoes; these were a concession to his age of sixty years.

He was as easygoing as his own old shoes. Yet seldom have I seen a face that so combined intelligence, kindly humor, and authority as the countenance of old Judge Ma. He was also very energetic. I couldn't keep up with him on the climb seven hundred feet straight up to the Supreme Court on the high plateau beside the ravine that held the jail; the judge made it almost every day. He also traveled much to villages. Besides the twenty-nine county courts of the region he had organized a circuit court as a section of the Supreme Court itself, moving around to meet the people's convenience. Judge Ma was already a legendary figure in minstrels' songs and popular dramas because of his decisions on marriages and because of the leniency he showed to wives who murdered their husbands but who had been "much oppressed."

For thousands of years the law in China served the landlords and the officials. This was so well known that the ordinary citizen shunned the courts like the plague unless he had money enough to buy the judge. I picked up a few samples of former court decisions from abuses that exploded into light through the land reform.

A landlord in Shansi loaned food to a peasant, and the debt multiplied through high interest till the peasant could not hope to pay. The landlord exacted two acres of land in payment. Since the peasant was illiterate and the boundaries not well marked, the landlord had his servants plow the peasant's entire holding of four acres, annexing it all. When the peasant appealed to the court, the magistrate supported the landlord.

In Shantung there was the case of the landlord's hog that killed a peasant's chickens. The peasant killed the stray hog, not knowing to whom it belonged. The landlord took the peasant's half acre as a fine, leaving him landless.

Landlord Chi in Shantung bought the eleven-year-old daughter of a peasant as a household slave. He raped her when she was fifteen and threw her out of the house later because she became pregnant. Her father went to court about it, but Chi

induced the magistrate to frame the man on a charge of selling opium, which is technically punishable by death. Landlords selling opium were never punished, but this peasant father was executed, and the daughter hanged herself from despair. There were cases like this in every province.

Even an entire village might be helpless to secure justice against a landlord. There is a well of sweet water in a Shantung village over which a struggle went on for twenty-five years. Originally it was a community well in a village street. A landlord, coveting it, bought land on both sides of the street and then enclosed the well, guarding it with armed men. Three times in twenty-five years under different provincial rulers the villagers impoverished themselves to pay for a lawsuit, but each time the landlord bought the law. Only after the land reform of 1946 were the villagers able to take back the well and with it half of the landlord's land as a fine for his illegal twenty-five-year monopoly of their water.

Today in the new China the change is proclaimed by inscriptions over county buildings: "For the Service of the People."

The change is seen, according to Judge Ma, in the election of judges, in greater simplicity of procedure, in the use of mediation to avoid court costs, in the character of land and debt decisions, in leniency to women who murder husbands, and in people's tribunals for war criminals. "Court procedure is expensive and complicated under the Kuomintang," he said, "and very simple with us. We seek ways to make justice inexpensive."

The most novel way of making justice inexpensive and bringing it close to the people was the use of mediation as a substitute for going to court. Mediation may be done by a village meeting or an individual mediator. Judge Ma has often acted as mediator. Peasants in the past have often resorted spontaneously to local arbitration, but it was never recognized in law. Judge Ma developed it and integrated it with the entire court system. He thinks this educates people in the law.



"Criminal cases cannot be mediated," he told me. "Mediation applies only to civil disputes, local fights, land disputes, marriage problems. Mediation is based on three principles: it must be desired by both sides; the decision must fit with local custom and with government law; if either party disagrees he may still go to court."

A dispute arose over a family grave near Suiteh. A man, quarreling with his uncle, declared that the latter had put his son's grave in a place where "it destroys the luck on my land." He demanded that the grave be removed. The uncle appealed to a local mediator named Kuo. The latter talked it over with the older men of the village and decided that the nephew was just trying to humiliate his uncle but had gone too far to draw back easily without loss of face. Kuo brought the parties together, explained that the location of graves cannot affect "luck," and got the nephew to withdraw his demand.

Another of Kuo's cases was that of the "lazy wife," who was charged with "neglecting her husband's parents and brothers." The parents and all the married brothers lived together, and the woman's failure to do her share of the chores caused friction. One day the husband carried water for his brother, his wife scolded him for doing it, and the brother slapped the wife. The woman thereupon complained all over the village about the "brutal brother." Kuo, called in to mediate, discussed the matter and decided that it deserved a village meeting. The meeting decided that both parties needed a bit of punishment. The brother was ordered to repair a piece of village road while the wife was helped to work out a production plan which required her to spin five pounds of wool before March.

More serious than these homely, amusing disputes are cases involving land boundaries. These are often complicated, for land has changed hands in many ways through long generations, often without exact surveys. When such cases reach the county court in the new China they are commonly referred to village meetings, on the ground, as expressed in one such case, that

“that village knows more about this land than this court is ever likely to know.”

Such was the land dispute between two peasants, both named Niu, who inherited land from a common ancestor. In the days of the Ching Dynasty three brothers divided their father's land, each taking one hill, but marking no boundaries. The descendants of one of these brothers expanded with the generations into twenty families, while the descendants of the others showed no great increase. Finally in the 1943 production drive, Niu Kwan, one of the twenty now land-hungry families, organized the twenty families and went with twenty oxen to plow the hill of Niu Yang, saying: “Niu Yang can't cultivate it all anyway.”

The man of property, Niu Yang, may not have been able to cultivate all of his hill, but he strenuously objected to losing it. He took it to court, where the magistrate referred it back to village arbitration. A village meeting decided that, in the interests of food production, Niu Kwan might “borrow” eighteen acres from his landed relative for five years without pay. Everyone, including the contestants, agreed. Before the five years were up a far more revolutionary land reform divided the land more equally anyway. In the interim, however, village mediation kept food production going with a minimum of friction.

The system of village mediation proved very popular. In Yen-an County nineteen hundred cases were settled by mediation in a single year; in Fuhsien eleven hundred were similarly settled. The method spread to other parts of the new China. It is regarded as arousing the initiative of the peasants, educating them in the law. It is part of the bridging of the age-old gulf between the rulers and the ruled.

More serious cases reach the county courts. Civil cases are concerned chiefly with debt, marriage, and divorce. Judge Ma was a reservoir of amusing marriage cases which arose from conflict between old marriage customs and new marriage laws. The law forbids forced marriage and marriage by purchase; it

recognizes only those marriages which are by the wish of the two parties. But marriage by purchase and even by capture is still common in rural districts.

"We cannot interfere with such marriages unless one party brings complaint," explained Judge Ma with a smile. "If both agree, how can a court distinguish between purchase of a bride and an exchange of wedding gifts, which is legal in all lands? If complaint is made, we ask separately for the wish of both parties and dissolve any marriage to which either objects."

Very complicated bride purchases reached the courts. Many canny peasant fathers, having sold their girl children for future delivery as brides, used the "modern law" to annul the sales, in order to sell the now grown girls for a higher price. Such attempts to beat the law were discovered by the social friction they caused. Judge Ma told me tales for a whole afternoon; I relate the simplest ones.

A father sold his eight-year-old daughter as future daughter-in-law to the peasant Ma. (The Chinese word for "bride" is "daughter-in-law," since this is the important relation.) Eight silver dollars and a hundred pounds of millet were given for the girl, but she did not go to Ma's home, being considered too young. Later the father moved across the Yellow River to another province. Here he traded the now eleven-year-old girl to the son of a widow in return for getting the widow herself as his own new wife. Before the girl actually lived in wedlock with anyone the family moved back to Yen-an Border Region. On the way the peasant Ma kidnaped her, considering that he had bought her long ago! This case was brought into court by the girl's father. When the girl testified that she had gone with Ma unwillingly and did not wish to remain in his household, Ma was sentenced to jail for "enforcing marriage."

Most famous of Judge Ma's marriage cases is sung all over North China by minstrels under the name of "Liu Shao-erh's Petition." It was set to music by a famous minstrel and became the classic tale of "bought and paid-for marriage."

Liu, only daughter of a peasant, is betrothed at birth to a poor peasant's son. As she grows toward womanhood it becomes plain that she is beautiful enough to be worth real money. The father wins Liu's consent to a divorce by telling her that her betrothed is an ugly hunchback. He convinces the young man's father by telling him: "My daughter eats a lot, demands good clothes, and is lazy." So the contract is broken. Later the father sells Liu again to an opium-smoking landlord, "an old man over forty years." (This minstrel's tale reveals many things about the standards of the countryside.)

After the betrothal is agreed and the money paid, Liu, on a walk in the fields, meets "an old, thin, ugly man" who tries to take liberties. When she repels him he says: "I'm your husband." Liu goes home and weeps. A few days later she carries water to a labor-exchange brigade in the fields and is attracted by the stalwart young leader, a labor hero. A friend maliciously tells her: "That's the one you threw away!"

Soon the young couple elope. The angry father and the landlord husband go to the county court, where the magistrate rules by tradition: "The girl belongs to the landlord-buyer." But Liu, being energetic and also in love, takes the case to the Supreme Court, where our good friend Judge Ma Si-wu overrules the county magistrate and allows the pair to marry!

The minstrel's tale is clearly romanticized, but it was founded on an actual case. As the minstrel sings of "Liu's Petition" from village to village, the peasant women weep and greatly enjoy the tale. The audience always breaks up in discussions about "marriage by purchase" versus "free marriage." This, of course, is what the minstrel intends.

Criminal cases are first handled in the county courts but reach the Supreme Court if they are serious. According to Judge Ma, crime was diminishing. Death sentences must pass through three stages: they must be recommended by the county court, determined by the Supreme Court, and then approved by the chair-

man of the government; i.e., the governor. The death sentence was not given for an ordinary murder but for murder combined with a contributing crime. Of the six death sentences given in Yen-an Border Region during the year, two were for murder with adultery, three for murder with robbery, and the last was a Kuomintang spy who killed several people before he was caught.

Jails were supposed to serve purposes of education and productive work. The two jails I saw were utterly different from the frightful jails of old China, where prisoners died of filth, torture, and starvation. The Yen-an jail was in a ravine six hundred feet above Yen River, near the Supreme Court. The prisoners lived in caves not very different from those of the free population but located in a narrow cleft between high cliffs, with the entrance barred by a gate. I saw several women who had murdered their husbands sitting outside their caves spinning in the sun. There were in all 124 inmates from an area of 1,600,000 population. These included eighteen murderers, fifty-four thieves and bandits, fifteen assault cases, and ten "marriage breakers"; i.e., kidnapers of wives. They spent two hours daily in study classes and eight hours in productive labor. A small textile mill for this had been built in the ravine. This was the regional jail for serious offenders with sentences of a year or more. Lesser offenders stayed in the counties and did road work or farm work under surveillance.

In Kalgan, which was the capital of a much more populous area, the jail was in a large compound just outside the town. Prisoners and guards were playing ping-pong in the court as I entered. I asked for Little Shantung, who was a famous prisoner. They said he had "gone to town to buy tools." It was odd to find a prisoner "not at home." Two thirds of the prisoners here had been illiterate on arrival; all were learning to read. They made shoes and clothing in well-lighted workrooms. They had technical education, "current events," and "individual education"; i.e., the study by the prisoner of the source of his crime.

Little Shantung, the prisoner I later saw briefly, was the head

of the Prisoners Construction Corps, a group of sixty men who worked outside the walls, taking honorable part in the reconstruction of Kalgan, with only one armed guard. Little Shantung got his name from the province where he became a pickpocket at the age of twelve. For ten years he stole all over North China. Caught in Kalgan, he was sentenced to a year. After four months he wanted to "confess." "I sometimes thought of being honest in the old society, but there wasn't any chance," he stated. "I couldn't get enough to eat as a coolie and I had no education for anything else. But here you're giving me education and reward if I produce. If I don't become an honest citizen now, I'll be eternally disgraced." Little Shantung was now the star example and chief propagandist of the new society's justice.

Seven women in the Yen-an jail had committed adultery combined with husband-murder, yet had been given only jail sentences instead of the death penalty. The extraordinary leniency shown to women who murdered their husbands was explained by Judge Ma on the ground that they had been "much oppressed."

The woman Wei took a Yen-an merchant for lover, and the pair poisoned the husband so that he died. They got only an eight-year jail sentence because, as the judge stated, "the husband oppressed her much and she tried many times to get a divorce, but the husband prevented her by force."

If the courts of the new China are more lenient to husband-murder, they are much more severe to war criminals than are the old-style courts. Top war criminals were the only exception to the rule that death sentences required concurrence of county court, Supreme Court, and governor. War criminals might be tried by people's tribunals, mass meetings called under the chairmanship of local officials and especially elected persons. They might be executed on the spot. Such sentences were confined to flagrant cases.

One such execution was described to me by Colonel Chang of the Eighth Route Army in West Shansi. When the army

took Hsihsien, headquarters of one of War Lord Yen Hsi-shan's military districts, thousands of women from the villages poured into the city, demanding that the magistrate be "turned over to the people." This man had buried alive many peasants for evading recruiting, for failing to deliver the grain tax, or for helping the Eighth Route Army. The bodies of six men recently buried alive at his orders were dug up and put on the stage beside him in a mass meeting. Then people made accusations. One old woman tottered up on bound feet, crying: "You buried alive my two sons, one because he could not pay you grain and one because he acted as guide for the Eighth Route Army! Give me back my sons! If you can't pay, then pay with your life!" She took off her tiny shoes and tried to beat the magistrate in the face with them. Others made similar accusations. The people finally pulled the man off the platform and beat him to death.

A similar "people's execution" took place in a county town of Hopei, where the magistrate, acting as puppet for the Japanese, had delivered more than three thousand local people to death at the invader's hands. Thousands came from surrounding villages to bear witness against him. When the chairman of the people's tribunal finally asked: "What shall be done with this man?" the peasants pulled out long knives which they had brought to cut him into small pieces, after an ancient custom with the worst criminals. Three women had brought knives on behalf of an aged mother who lay sick in their village and who charged them: "That devil tortured to death my two sons; bring me a piece of him." Communists, however, sprang on the platform and declared that such a form of execution was not permitted, "since this is now an orderly, civilized country." They suggested death by shooting as an alternative; the sentence was carried through on the spot.

Such executions, which in quiet, law-abiding lands would be considered mob action, are regarded by the Communists as a

means of awakening people who have suffered mortal injustice to a sense that the people themselves are the final source of justice and that the people have power.

I asked old Judge Ma rather hesitantly whether anyone had ever tried to bribe him or anyone he knew. He did not take it amiss; he thought for a moment and then nodded.

“It didn’t happen to me, but I know of one case of attempted bribery here. A prisoner escaped and ten days later met a man who recognized him. He offered seventy thousand in national currency [about thirty-five American dollars at the time] if the man would agree not to give him up. The man could not arrest the prisoner by himself, so he pretended to bargain. The two met in a restaurant and the prisoner brought out the money. Then the man called out for his arrest. They took him back to jail.”

This was the only case of near bribery Judge Ma could remember. As I studied his open countenance I felt that he was telling the truth. The common people of China have for centuries been famed as one of the world’s most honest peoples, though their bureaucracy has been one of the most corrupt. As the courts are brought under control by the people, they become honest too.

The forms developed by old Judge Ma in Yen-an were later applied even in sophisticated cities. A month after the People’s Liberation Army took Tientsin the new Civil Affairs Department reported that, of 889 cases reaching it in February 1949, 526 had been settled by mediation, 225 were pending, and only 118 had been referred to the courts. Even minor criminal cases such as thefts were mediated. Certain difficulties were noted. Some arbiters tended to enforce their suggestions as if these were court decisions, which they were not. Some county magistrates resented an arbitration which preceded their consideration of the case in court. Some officers disposed of cases too casually



in order to make a record. These shortcomings were noted and efforts made to correct them.

The speed and cheapness of this method of justice, based on old peasant traditions of China, seem to have a contribution to make to the jurisprudence of the world.

## 6. THE MILITARY STRATEGY

### 1. THE ARMY IS BORN FROM THE PEASANTS

For twenty years the victories of the Chinese Communist armies puzzled military experts. They were “annihilated” again and again, but they came back stronger than before. Some mythical Russian aid was blamed, but no such aid was found. Then experts blamed the corrupt inefficiency of Chiang’s armies. But the Liberated Areas expanded as rapidly against the efficient armies of Japan.

These victories are possible because the army is born from the peasants, with the Communists acting as an experienced midwife. They are won by a conscious, intelligent mobilization of the Chinese people’s latent power. They are based on a unique correlation of three forces: the unarmed but organized peasants, the local People’s Militia, and the regular “People’s Army,” highly trained under able generals with a realistic strategy. All details of this technique profoundly interest the other insurgent peoples of Asia.

In Broken Cliffs Village near Yen-an I saw how the peasantry

prepared for the coming invasion by Chiang Kai-shek's armies. Women sat placidly outdoors in the sun making shoes for the army, using their home-grown hemp for soles. The men had sent off their grain tax ahead of schedule "because our army needs it and we want to get it out of the way." The rest of the grain they had buried.

I asked them where it was buried. They looked at me for a time without reply. The local man who had brought me assured them that I was "a friend who wouldn't tell." Grim smiles appeared on their faces.

"It isn't that we distrust you," said one of the older men. "We do not even tell each other. Each family goes out on a different night to bury its grain. If anyone is caught and tortured he doesn't know much." He added that there was one hiding place that might be shown, the nearest one. It was twenty feet from where I stood, right between the homes and the threshing ground. I could trace a circular unevenness in the stubble where he pointed, but I could not have found it again.

"This hiding place is known to us all," he said. "It is the grain that will be eaten first. It is for our village militia, who remain here to fight when our families leave."

This village, like most of China's peasantry, had old experience in grain hiding. Twelve years earlier, before Mao Tze-tung and the Communists came, the local war lord attacked them for some recalcitrance.

"We hid our grain and fled to the deeper hills," they said. "Some of our babies died from exposure. The enemy destroyed the doorposts and all wooden furniture, but they did not find our grain. So we came back, planted again, and lived."

"How long were you hiding out?"

"A year and a half. This time it will not be so long. We have a regular army now."

Thus the unarmed peasants prepared to survive invasion. They had suffered it, as have peasants of Asia, for thousands of years. This time it would not be so long or so hard. They had a new

confidence and some new techniques. Students from Yenda, under army direction, were circulating among the villages, pooling the experiences and methods of thousands. This time they would bury even the table tops and doorposts and fill in the wells. This time they would not merely flee. While the older, unarmed men took women and children to places of safety, the young men, members of the village militia, would hide out nearer home to harry the enemy in co-operation with the regular "People's Army."

The militia at Broken Cliffs had no rifles or even homemade shotguns. They had only long lances. They expected to take rifles from the invader. They knew that all over North China the peasants had done it, so why shouldn't they? Their morale was high. While the older men hoped against hope for peace, saying to me bitterly: "Why does America keep sending those planes and guns against us?" the young militiamen were eagerly watching for Chiang's expected parachutists. Everyone knew how many strong silk shirts could be made from a captured parachute. Their army's propaganda had told them this, assuring them that peasants who captured a parachutist might have that silk material for their own.

The People's Militia, or *Ming Pin*, is a local fighting force. Bound to the soil, it consists of peasants who raise their own food and fight for their own land. It costs the taxpayer practically nothing. It is an arm of the civil government. In its earlier stages its members had to be approved by the peasants' union; later they were accepted by the village government and by the county, thus recognized as having the right to bear arms. The militia is adequate to defend rural areas against bandits and against landlords or small war lords who attempt to assert power. It is not strong enough for large-scale war, but when its home area is invaded it can make the region "tough" for the invader. It then comes under direct guidance of the regular army and on special occasions, which will be discussed later, may furnish formidable assistance.

How the militia is born from the peasants was best seen in Shantung.

"Ever-Victorious Kee"—Kee Chang-sung in Chinese—was a Shantung militiaman. He was a boy with frank innocent eyes, a felt hat won in a skirmish, and a Mauser on a shoulder belt. He was seventeen when he joined to fight the Japanese. He had never heard of Communists.

"We suffered much in our village," he explained. "There was a Jap stronghold ten miles away and some armed forces near it that called themselves Kuomintang, and on the other side of us was Chao Pao-yen with his puppet troops. There were also ordinary bandits. All of these looted our village. So in 1941 my father organized twenty of us with homemade shotguns called 'fire sticks'; they load through the barrel and shoot one shot. Some bandits came and as soon as the village saw that we would resist them, fifty more of our neighbors joined to help. We caught those bandits on both sides; not one got away."

These peasants then learned that there was an army called Eighth Route in the next county that offered training to peasant militia. "We wanted training," said Kee, "but we were afraid to go for fear they would conscript us as other armies did. So we went at it cautiously. We sent a few men for six days—that was the training period then—and figured that if these came back, then others would go. They came back safely and we sent others, and the training grew to a fortnight and then to a month. People began to trust the Eighth Route Army. The army gave us hand grenades and taught us to capture rifles in skirmishes. Within the year we organized a county militia and the peasants planted special land to buy arms."

"Where could you buy arms?"

"From the puppet soldiers. They fought for the Japs but would always sell Jap arms." (Later Chiang's soldiers proved equally amenable.)

Month by month the strength of this peasant militia grew. For the first two years it was able only to defend its villages

against grain-requisitioning squads. By the third year it began to infiltrate enemy strongholds, laying mines inside the gates of towns. The puppet troops in the towns were losing morale; they stopped sending expeditions to the villages and shut themselves behind the town walls. Thus they were forced to buy food. "We made them pay with arms," said Ever-Victorious. As the towns grew hungrier, the families of puppet soldiers began going home to their villages. Soon they also were joining the local militia. "They were very useful," said Ever-Victorious, "in showing us the way into the walled strongholds."

Inventive genius appeared in the countryside. Yu Hwa-hoo, one of the older militiamen, was called "King of the Iron Melon" because of the land mines he devised. He was a middle-sized countryman in his thirties with a battered felt hat and a small puckered mouth stitched together not very expertly that time when the bullet went through. He had a full set of gold teeth given him by his fellow villagers to honor that same occasion. These gleamed when he talked.

Peasant Yu began his experiments with mousetraps, finding ways to set them off. Then he joined the militia and got explosives to "set off." The Shantung militia used forty-one kinds of mines; of these Peasant Yu invented nineteen. His most deadly invention was the "connected-action mine"; it was seven in one. When the enemy picked up the first victims, the next mine went off. Once Yu got forty Japanese with eighteen mines in one night. He went on "long-travel teams" all over North Shantung teaching peasants to lay mines.

Yet this King of the Iron Melon had a peasant soul, more stubborn to save life than to kill. He caught a Kuomintang agent who came to kill him, kept the man in his own house and talked to him three nights, till the fellow confessed that he had been sent to kill local peasant leaders, beginning with Yu. The peasants and even the Eighth Route Army asked for the spy's death. Yu wouldn't permit it.

"I reformed him in those three nights' talk," he explained later. "That man's in the peasants' union now."

In the fourth year of their existence the Shantung militia began taking the smaller walled cities. This forced the Japanese to send regular Japanese troops to reinforce their local Chinese puppets. Cities changed hands many times. There was not enough man power in Japan to hold all those cities against the ever-renewed local forces reborn from the Chinese peasantry.

Such were militiamen of Shantung. A great national monument in the Shantung hills near Chefoo, erected without benefit of Chiang Kai-shek, bears thirty thousand names of local patriots killed in battle against the Japanese. Half of them were of the regular Eighth Route Army; half were local militiamen.

When the war with Japan ended, Ever-Victorious Kee was a lad of twenty-one, commanding twenty-five hundred militiamen. His name "Ever Victorious" dates not from birth but from that big militiamen's rally that handed out medals and titles in celebrating the victory over Japan. These militiamen—six thousand of them now in Haiyang County—offered their services to the county government to repair roads and bridges. They thought the war was over; they expected peace.

The Shantung peasants hadn't bothered much till then about Chiang Kai-shek or the Communists. They had been fighting for survival against Japan. The Communist-led Eighth Route Army was their army, giving them training and weapons. Chiang, as a distant chief of all China, they were prepared to accept. But when Chiang commissioned that evil General Chao—who for years had been burning Shantung villages and burying Shantung peasants alive for the Japanese—as Chiang's own representative "to fight the Eighth Route and the Communists," then the Shantung peasants knew where they stood. They weren't taking "that devil Chao" from anyone. They didn't have to. They had been beating him with their own militia. When Chiang attacked in force, one third of the county militia volunteered for the regular Eighth Route Army.

In the spring of 1947 the Shanghai editor, Vic Schneierson, made a bicycle trip out from Chefoo with a motion-picture man, showing pictures in Shantung villages. He found the halls jammed with militiamen. They all had good rifles. The regular Eighth Route Army had captured so many American weapons from Chiang's invasions that they had given the Japanese arms to the militia.

"Grenades and land mines were just rolling around on the floor," Vic told me. "Not that they expected trouble. They were just proud of their citizens' right to bear arms." It was a new thought for Chinese, for generations accustomed to regard the fighting man as the riffraff of society.

As the militia grows out of the unarmed peasants' need to survive, so the regular army grows from the militia. The militia supplies most of the army's new recruits. The regular army supplies arms, training, and over-all strategy. Bound to no locality, the regular army is highly trained and highly mobile.

The Communist-led armies grew in twenty years of almost constant fighting. They have had different names at different periods. The first force of three thousand men organized by Mao Tze-tung and Chu Teh in 1928 in South Hunan was known as the Chinese Red Army; this grew to three hundred thousand men at the height of its strength but sank to forty thousand at the end of the Long March. During the war with Japan the Communist forces entered the national army under Chiang Kai-shek and were commissioned by him as the Eighth Route Army; a second Communist-led force that began on the lower Yangtze was also commissioned by Chiang as the New Fourth. These armies outgrew Chiang's control and totaled 1,120,000 men when Japan surrendered. Another rapidly growing force in Manchuria was called the Joint Democratic Armies of the Northeast. In early 1946 some four hundred thousand men were demobilized for the "army reorganization plan" of the "Marshall truce." When all-out civil war was launched by



Chiang in the summer of 1946, the Communist-led forces were rapidly enlarged by new recruits and reorganized as the People's Liberation Army.

The Communist-led armies have never had any trouble in getting as many recruits as they wanted. Commander in Chief Chu Teh told me in 1938 in his field headquarters that he had "twice as many" volunteers as he could accept. Arms and food were the limiting factor. Men without arms were told to join their local militia for training so that the army might later accept them. Even when the demands of all-out civil war in 1946 finally made recruiting necessary, the methods used were very different from those in the old-style armies.

In Chiang's China the kidnaping of men for the army was notorious. When a draft law was instituted according to population, a rich man whose son was drafted paid the recruiting officer to find a substitute. The money was supposed to go to the substitute's family, but in practice the officer pocketed it and kidnaped some poor man for the vacant place. Long lines of recruits, roped together, led off to the army like slaves, were a common sight.

By contrast, every soldier in the People's Liberation Army insists proudly that he is a volunteer. If pressure was applied, as it has been at times, it was social pressure. Meetings were held at which speakers said: "Our army needs men; we expect such a quota from this county." Communists and government officials were expected to be the first to give their sons. Militiamen volunteered, considering the regular army a promotion. Often the meeting refused some volunteer on the ground that he was the sole support of a family. Men who had no such excuse found their neighbors watching them, expecting them to go.

From whatever motives they come, when the list is made up they are all "volunteers," celebrated and honored as such by their community. They are given a festive send-off, in which they have horses to ride, paper flowers and rosettes to wear, special seats at puppet shows and Yang-ke dances. Gifts are given

to their families. In every way their community cheers them on. Under such circumstances the quota of recruits for a county is usually more than met.

"We asked for fifteen hundred for Wu An County and got twenty-five hundred," said General Liang Chun, chief of operations for a large area north of the Lunghai Railway. "We asked for fifteen hundred from Kaoping County and got three thousand. When we saw how enlistments were going we stopped recruiting in several counties where we had just begun. We could not send recruits back to villages from which they had been sent with celebrations. They would be disgraced at home."

The recruiting campaign in this area had been geared to the possibility that the civil war might last ten to fifteen years. They were recruiting in only one seventh of the counties, "for the war may be long and we do not wish to ask the same counties twice."

"How do you pick the counties?" I asked.

"We take first the ones that lie in the path of the enemy advance. The man power is displaced there, anyway, and ready to fight. Rear counties need their man power for production."

This type of conservative recruiting had brought "more volunteers than we can use."

"Why don't you take all the recruits you can get?" I asked.

Then General Liang revealed a remarkable fact. The regular army of this area was budgeted to a size that could be indefinitely kept up. "We may have to defend the area a long time, and we have fixed on three to four hundred thousand as the number we can sustain in our regular army without injuring the area's economic progress. This is not large enough for full defense of our cities if Chiang attacks in force; just now he has taken some twenty-five county towns. We could raise a larger army, but we could not feed it indefinitely. We have chosen a size that is large enough to defend our basic farming and eventually take back our cities."

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

The new recruits are taught at once that the army must "love and serve the people." This is a new and revolutionary departure for the Chinese countryside.

"A people's army differs in two main principles from a feudal army," said Lu Ting-yi, chief of information in Yen-an. First of all the army must serve the people. A feudal army serves a war lord and dictates to the people. A people's army never fights for a war lord or a clique but only for the people's interest in all its aspects. It is the people's armed might.

"Second, the officers must serve the soldiers. In a feudal army the soldiers are servants of the officers, disciplined by cursing and beating. This is not permissible with us. Of course a soldier must obey in battle. The officer says, 'Die here,' and the soldier dies here. But just because an officer has such power in battle, he must be the more subject to democratic control when there is no battle. At such times a soldier's errors should be corrected not by officers' reprimands but by discussion among his fellow soldiers, who may also criticize an officer's mistakes."

These principles are no trite propaganda. They are practiced and become effective for victory. How do they work?

The first thing taught to new recruits is good conduct when passing through the country. The "three main disciplines" and the "eight points of attention" are memorized in song. "Be courteous. Deal fairly in business. Return anything you borrow. Pay for any damage you do. Do not beat or curse the people. Respect the harvest. Do not insult women. Do not mistreat prisoners." And especially: "Do not take even a needle or a piece of thread from the people." The theme, "the people is our mother," is repeated until it takes effect. This attitude is in marked contrast to that of the old-style armies, which took what they wanted from the people and beat up those who objected.

A soldier or officer of the People's Liberation Army will stop and show his road pass when halted by a child sentry in a village; this never failed to amaze new arrivals from the old China, where armies rode roughshod over civilian rules. A member of

the Democratic League who escaped from Chiang's jail to "liberated Shantung" told how moved he was when he saw two soldiers break ranks in Chefoo to help an old woman carry a basket up a hill.

These habits are instilled not by officers' orders but in friendly discussions and often in songs. The Communist-led armies are singing armies. Rittenberg told me of the long line of singing men he met in the Shansi hills.

"Who raised more chickens than anyone else?" chanted the platoon leader. "Liu Wang-yi raised more chickens."

Everyone then joined in: "Liu Wang-yi raised more chickens. All study Liu Wang-yi." Since Liu was one of the marchers, one may assume that his morale in chicken raising increased.

"Who used to be a loafer and now advances in study?" continued the chanting, followed by another name, as the men wound over the summit and down the hill. There were also joking songs about each other, made up as they went along.

When the march began on Peiping, every company held soldiers' discussions. "Who is worthy to enter Great Peiping, our ancient capital?" The soldiers themselves rejected any man whose past infractions of discipline showed that he might disgrace their army's high reputation. Their standards indicated what any other army would consider excessive punctiliousness.

A hungry soldier marching into a town at the end of day picked up a stale roll from a deserted bread stand. At once a man behind him remarked into the air: "Not a needle or piece of thread from the people." The first man quickly put the bit of bread back.

Another soldier took a handful of peanuts from a peasant's field without paying. "Shall we sell our reputation for a handful of peanuts?" said the political instructor that evening. "One little theft of peanuts spreads right through a village and destroys the good name our army has earned by the discipline of years. You cannot hide anything from the people."

A squad billeted in a room in a poor district of Peiping re-

mained in the dark rather than use the electric light because they could not pay for it. If this seems to an American reader "much ado about nothing," let him see it against the background of the poverty of Asia. The poor people in that court had sold some of their clothing to pay the electric light bill for Chiang's soldiers, who had quartered there shortly before!

The army's service to the people is not confined of these acts of abstention. In the great fight against drought in Honan in 1943-44, the army helped dig nearly ten thousand wells and took active part in building dikes against floods, part of the army holding off the Japanese while the rest helped in construction. When spring sowing came, the army helped restore the damaged agriculture. Every soldier cultivated five sixths of an acre for his own food and one third of an acre for famine relief. Again, in the seige of Changchun in 1948, the People's Liberation Army loaned horses and carts to the peasants' harvest and themselves reaped grain for the peasants in areas under fire.

In their relation to women the Communist-led armies of China are probably the most self-controlled in the world and perhaps in history. It is difficult for a foreigner to learn of such matters, but Edgar Snow, who investigated for his *Red Star over China*, reported that the percentage of virginity among the army's young men was amazingly large. In part this is due to a very abstemious diet—two meals a day of millet or rice with vegetables but almost no meat. In part it comes from absorption in a cause. It must also be credited to the conscious discipline of an army which can survive only if it respects the strict family standards of the Chinese countryside.

When a young soldier of the New Fourth Army was court-martialed for rape and condemned to death, a foreigner who knew of the case protested that it was a shame to destroy a fine young fellow for "an affair which was not rape but in which the girl had led the man on."

"What the girl did has no bearing," was the grim reply. "If a peasant father considers his daughter's honor violated by a man

of our army, we must eliminate the cause. Unless the peasants can trust our army to sleep in their homes, knowing that their women are safe, our army cannot survive."

Peasants often speak of the Communist-led armies as "Sons-Brothers Army." The devotion shown by the army to the people is returned to the army by millions of simple folk.

During Chiang's assault on the Central Plains Area in June 1946, a small boy trudged up to the secretary of the government, who was walking at the moment with Rittenberg. The boy looked ten but said he was fourteen. He was burning with fever and gritting his teeth to keep going. He saluted and said: "Pao-kao—report!" He reported that a few weeks earlier he had been working in a hospital to the west when some of Chiang's men took the place, killed some patients, arrested and tortured others. "But I was so small that they just put me in jail." The boy nearly died of hunger in the jail but was finally given food by kind citizens who helped him escape. He hid in the home of a well-to-do farmer who had no sons and proposed to adopt him.

"As soon as I grew strong from food I ran away to report here."

"Why didn't you stay with a man who would feed you and care for you?" asked the secretary.

Still in a daze of illness, the boy 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 a hospital. In a week he was out, utterly happy in a new uniform.

"It is not easy to make a people's army," Lu Ting-yi told me in Yen-an. "Even our own generals found it hard to achieve the new democratic relations with soldiers. For officers from feudal armies like those of the Kuomintang it is all but impossible.

"But only a democratic people's army can get rid of feudalism and militarism. Only such an army can use our new strategy. Such an army, closely knit with the people, can never be vanquished, even by superior might."

## 2. AGAINST SUPERIOR ARMS

The strategy developed by Mao Tze-tung against superior arms is eagerly studied today by insurgent peoples of Asia, who face the superior arms of Europe and America. It was made to fit such people. The Chinese Communists had to win—and did win—against superior arms. They won not only through the quality of their armed forces but by a unique strategy.

The strategy is quickly grasped by simple folk but puzzles the experts. Military experts the world over wrote the Chinese Communists off as a serious fighting force when Chiang took their capitals in 1946–47 and especially when Yen-an fell in March 1947. But small boys in Yen-an, in the very hour of that city's evacuation, knew that "cities don't matter," that the job was to "annihilate brigades." They kept count of the annihilated brigades of Chiang Kai-shek as eagerly as American boys count baseball games of the World's Series. Meanwhile they nonchalantly moved with their mothers into the hills.

Strategy for thousands of years has been based on taking cities and strong points from which to dominate passive rural areas. Mao based his strategy on tough rural areas that could swallow the enemy forces piecemeal and later smother the strong points and cities. "We let them penetrate to the heart of our area," said General Chu Teh to me. "They establish themselves in 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, unlikely. But it worked!

Many Chinese Communist generals tried to explain to the world what they were doing. General Chen Yi of the East China Armies—who later took Shanghai—declared: "By orthodox military strategy we should deploy our best troops to defend our capital and consider how long we can hold it. We are not doing this at all. We are considering how many of Chiang's troops we can annihilate in their sorties, how long before his casualties

will force his withdrawal, and how to diminish his armies still further in their retreat. We would never make the mistake that Chiang made in 1937 when he used up all his best troops to defend Shanghai and Nanking. When these were taken, his armies were crushed."

General Liu Po-cheng, commanding the provinces north of the Lunghai, quoted a little verse about it, for Liu is a literary man:

"If you keep men and lose land  
The land can be taken again.  
If you keep land and lose men  
You lose both land and men."

"I have now traded seventeen empty cities for sixty thousand of Chiang's troops," he added. "It is said that Chiang likes the bargain and intends to keep on. That's all right with me."

I myself found it irritating at first to hear Liu Po-cheng's army talking of "victories," when they were steadily yielding county towns. General Liang Chun, his chief of operations, explained: "Chiang sent nearly five hundred thousand men against our area. We have only some three hundred thousand in our regular army, much worse equipped than his. We therefore evacuate cities as he approaches, taking everything of value. As Chiang takes cities, he ties up men to garrison them. Our territory is garrisoned by its local militia; our regular army is fully mobile at all times. Chiang has now tied up two hundred thousand men to garrison the cities he has taken; he has also lost sixty thousand men in battle. So our army equals Chiang's in the field and we are almost ready to counterattack." They did counterattack and not only took back the cities but swept to the Yangtze and beyond.

That little arithmetic lesson gave me a key that I never lost. From that time I knew that the People's Liberation Army was winning; I also began to see how.

To the press of the world it seemed that Chiang was winning in 1946-47. He took "Communist capitals" all over North China and some hundred and sixty cities. You could look on a map



—maps are marked in cities—and see how much territory he had won. Even in Moscow in the summer of 1947 I met the formula: “Too bad the Chinese Communists can’t win because they have no heavy industry.” Later this formula spread into the Balkans, where it annoyed one of my Chinese friends. When I insisted to some students of the diplomatic higher school in Moscow that the Chinese Communists were winning, they replied firmly: “Oh no, they’re losing all their cities.”

An authoritative three-column article by a Russian colonel, “One Year of China’s Civil War,” appeared that August in the *Red Star*, an organ of the Soviet armed forces, and stated: “Despite three months’ stubborn defense of their capital, Yen-an, the Chinese Communists were finally forced to yield it.” That colonel was thinking in terms of Stalingrad, where tens of thousands died to defend a city. He didn’t know Mao’s strategy. I had been in Yen-an during those three months and seen an excellent job of evacuation, even the careful burying of the bank’s plate-glass windows and the hardwood table tops, but not ten minutes of “stubborn defense.” This underestimation of Chinese Communist strategy in 1947 and the obvious surprise with which Moscow met the victories a year later seemed to indicate that Russian experts had little contact with the Chinese Communists’ General Staff.

Mao Tze-tung, and all who knew his strategy, took the loss of cities very calmly. Chiang was getting dismantled buildings and American headlines; he was losing troops. Chiang won prestige by taking Linyi, Communist capital of Shantung, which the Communists saw as “one more empty town.” Chiang lost thereby sixty thousand men and control of the strategic Tsinan-Tsingtao Railway. He won more headlines when he took Yen-an, the Communists’ most famous capital. The troops he tied up there never got out again. Chiang’s general, taking Yen-an, lost first his troops and then his own capital.

After a year of “victories,” mapped in the world press, Chiang had not opened a single railway across North China. Chiang

held plenty of railway stations, but the Communists held the right of way and had taken the rails to the hills!

The aim of the Communists' strategy was that their own forces should grow and the enemy forces diminish. They followed this aim till they won the war.

The Communist strategy is highly conscious. Its details were worked out by China's ablest generals, who studied war in the world's textbooks and practiced it for twenty years. Chu Teh's war practice covered forty years; he was an officer in the 1911 revolution that overthrew the Manchus. He told me that he had learned much from ancient Chinese wars as told in Chinese classics; he also studied Europe's battlefields after World War I, going over them with men who had fought there. All of these generals, however, give credit to Mao Tze-tung for the basic theory of their strategy, on which he has written several books.

Like all long-range strategy, it is both military and political. It begins with a cool estimate of all resources—military, political, economic—of the opposing sides. The enemy has more man power, more and better weapons and foreign support. The People's Liberation Army has one superiority: the support of the people if it can win it. If it fails in this it is finished. If it wins this support it must then know how to organize it for military victory.

Lu Ting-yi was not talking propaganda but military strategy when he said to me in Yen-an: "There must be full reliance on the power of the people for our survival, success, and development." This implies two faiths: the faith that your policies can win the active support of the people, and the further faith that the people of a large territory can successfully resist a technically superior foe. Operating on this faith, the People's Liberation Army performed spectacular feats. I list only a few: the swift crossing of "hostile" territory, the technique of "dispersal," the "surprise encirclements" by which it gradually "annihilated" Chiang's armies, and the mass conversion of captured prisoners.

Wang Chen's "Double Long March" never got into the world press. It was hidden by the veil of war. In 1944, when the Japanese were cutting down through Central China like a knife through butter and a half million of Chiang's men were collapsing, letting the enemy through to the American air bases in the southwest, the Communists sent Wang Chen clear across China to organize peasant resistance in the wake of the Japanese and prevent their consolidating the Hankow-Canton railway line. He went all the way from Yenan to Hong Kong and back again, stirring up and organizing peasant guerrillas everywhere. He took three thousand men, including troupes of noncombatant actors and Yang-ke dancers, a whole setup for arousing the countryside.

Wang had a bit of luck at the start. The Yellow River froze solid for him to pass, proving to all the peasants that Wang was "Big Magic," for the Yellow River almost never freezes. Except for that, Wang made his way in usual style. He came to the wide Yangtze, where the Japanese held all the river ports. Wang sat on the bank and talked with an old fisherman for two days. Then a fleet of small boats came to a lonely shore and took his troops across in the night. The last boat to cross was hailed by a Japanese motor patrol, but the fishermen's voices sounded lazy and the Japanese did not come near to search.

By luck and craft and by "full reliance on the people," Wang Chen made his Double Long March, organizing anti-Japanese guerrillas all along the way.

One specialty of the Communist-led armies is the technique of "dispersal." When surrounded by overwhelming enemy force, entire divisions of the People's Liberation Army can evaporate into small squads, or even scatter as individuals, filter through an enemy front, and reassemble at agreed points hundreds of miles away. The most striking example was in the Central Plains Area when Chiang sent some five hundred thousand men from all directions converging on sixty thousand Communist-led troops in North Hupeh in June 1946 in the battle that began the all-out civil war. By the mathematics of war the Communists were finished.

A strange incident occurred at the very beginning of that offensive. One of Chiang's regiments, spearheading the attack, marched right over and joined the Communists. Did Chiang's own men doubt his victory? Was the circle so fatal after all?

The Communists broke into small columns and disappeared into the countryside. The enemy lost sight of them. Their friends lost sight of them. The airplanes of the truce team couldn't find them. For two or three weeks nobody knew if they were alive or dead. Then far to the northeast a column appeared in Kiangsu and joined the Communist forces there. A week later the main force reassembled far to the west in the hills of South Shensi and another Liberated Area came to life. Two months later Wang Chen's forces, which had been part of the encircled sixty thousand, reached their home base in Yen-an, having circled far to the northwest and back. All over China the Communist-led armies chuckled that "the boys all got home."

The Communists avoid battle until they are sure that they can win. Mao Tze-tung once put it very bluntly: "Fight only when victory is certain. . . . Run away when it is impossible. Every military man admits that you must sometimes run away. Only they do not run as much as we do. We march much more than we fight. But every march is for the sake of the fight."

When an enemy with superior arms invades their territory, they are not interested in driving him back. "This is a loss to us," they told me, "for he will return with fresh ammunition while we have exhausted ours. We can only call it a victory when we can surround the enemy by surprise and capture both men and munitions. Every battle must leave us with more men and weapons than before."

They allow the enemy, therefore, to enter their territory, but they help to evacuate civilian personnel and property in his path. The main force of the People's Liberation Army retires where the enemy cannot find it. By the news that comes from the peasants the army knows when to strike. By surprise attacks

at the right place in the right moment a detachment of the enemy is encircled and liquidated. Thus they wear down the enemy's superiority. Only when the enemy's living force is worn down do the Communist-led armies go into counterattack to take back cities and territory.

The "surprise encirclement" is the typical strategy by which the Communist-led armies took back North China from Chiang Kai-shek. It is based on close, flexible co-operation between the regular army and the People's Militia.

An example of the surprise encirclement was given me by Colonel Chang Tse-chang, chief of staff for the forces that "annihilated" Chiang's 1st Division in South Shansi in late 1946. For six months Hu Tsung-nan, one of Chiang's ablest generals, had pushed upward along the railroads into this province. The regular People's Liberation Army withdrew, taking the rails with them. By autumn General Hu held quite a stretch of railway without the rails. He itched to come to grips with that elusive Communist 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 headquarters he lost his First Division, the flower of Chiang's American-equipped troops!

The Communists' regular army had been much nearer than An Tze. It lurked close to General Hu's headquarters, informed of his every move. When the 1st Division camped on its first night out, the Communists' main forces, swiftly augmented by local militia, surrounded it with overwhelming strength. The division's commander, General Huang, a personal friend of Chiang Kai-shek, radioed Hu's headquarters for help. No help reached him, for all forces that might have been sent were simultaneously attacked by local People's Militia and thus hampered and detained. The isolated 1st Division fought twenty-four hours and then surrendered, losing sixteen 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 natty but useless American garrison caps. The Chinese peasants mocked as they passed. "Look at the made-in-America hats! Look at the made-in-America soldiers come to kill Chinese people!" By the end of the day the soldiers had thrown all their garrison caps away and were begging for the practical, inconspicuous caps of the People's Liberation Army! It is safe to say that within another week four fifths had joined the Communist-led army as new recruits.

The largest encirclements took place in Shantung. Three surprise encirclements there in early 1947 cost Chiang close to one hundred thousand men. The American correspondent, Betty Graham, who reached the scene shortly after one of these battles, described the "great heaps of American-made equipment," the "cocky young village militia" who had come from scores of villages and who were returning home laden with arms, and the "tens of thousands of prisoners" filing to the rear.

"This is not guerrilla warfare," said the chief of staff to me in Yen-an, commenting on the foreign experts' view of Chinese Communist strategy. "It is not guerrilla war when you take fifty-seven thousand prisoners in a single three-day battle. It is mobile warfare by regular troops of very high quality."

In choosing which enemy divisions to encircle, the People's Liberation Army tried to pick the best-armed. It did not like to fight old War Lord Yen Hsi-shan of Shansi, for his troops were so poorly equipped that there was "no profit in capturing them." It preferred American-equipped divisions. Liu Po-cheng's men had a competition as to which detachment could capture the most American arms. A former Kuomintang officer told in a Hong Kong paper how the People's Liberation Army, after capturing two American-equipped divisions near him in Shantung, sent his division a New Year's greeting: "Do not worry! You are not our objective, for you have no American arms!"

As the People's Liberation Army captured more and better

weapons, its style of warfare changed. The equipment captured in those early Shantung encirclements was used at once to storm walled cities in Shantung. After Chen Keng captured five of Chiang's brigades in Shansi he was able to storm five walled cities, breaching the walls with artillery fire.

"We study what weapons we have in order to use them to best advantage," said Chen Yi, commander in chief of the East China People's Liberation Army. "We have studied all possible ways to win with rifles. Now that we have American tanks, howitzers, and bazookas, we study to win with 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."

Nothing could better illustrate the flexibility of the Chinese Communists' tactics and strategy.

The People's Liberation Army finds at the front and in battle its major source of replacements, not only in weapons but in men. An essential part of its strategy is a technique for converting the captured soldiers. It disarms them but does not treat them as enemies. It does not even call them "prisoners" but "men who laid down arms." When the men of Chiang's best American-equipped divisions in Manchuria were captured and taken to Harbin, they were met by great banners: "Welcome to the officers and men who laid down their arms!"

At once after capture officers are separated from the men and sent to a special officers' school in the rear. Few of them are wanted in the People's Liberation Army, since it is "so difficult to change the thinking of a feudal officer." At various times in the civil war groups of them were allowed to go home, since "when they have spent some time with us Chiang does not trust them any more."

Rank-and-file captured soldiers are approached by political workers and are invited to mass meetings at which propaganda

of many kinds is employed. Some ex-prisoners told me of "bitterness-revealing meetings" in which they were invited to tell the sad story of their lives, not unlike the open dramatic confessions of the Salvation Army. They wept in telling how the landlord oppressed them, how the army "grabbed them." Their fellow soldiers also wept at their emotion.

Within two weeks of their capture they are asked to choose either to go home or to join the People's Liberation Army. If they choose to go home they are given a small sum of "travel money." About 80 per cent of them prefer to remain, either because, as poor peasants, they are attracted by the new army's program, or because their homes are so far away that they fear they will be captured on the way by the army to which they have so recently belonged.

"They are attracted by the democracy of our army and by the fact that they can talk freely with officers," General Liang told me. "Most of them are poor peasants and 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 kindly treatment. If, for instance, one of them is wounded in battle and is carried to the rear by his fellow soldiers, this makes a very great impression, for nobody in the feudal armies ever values soldiers' lives. They are like men who have awakened in a new world."

I talked to two ex-prisoners who were working in Liu Po-cheng's headquarters, one as guard, the other as cook. Both had been kidnaped years earlier by Chiang's recruiters. Both had fought obediently for Chiang Kai-shek and had been taken in battle; they had not deserted. After capture they had been given a chance to go home but had preferred to join the new army.

Li Jung-chih, a homely-looking man of forty-six, had been a small-town merchant, kidnaped by Chiang's recruiters in 1940 when he was on his way to a nearby town to collect a debt. He had not had a chance to send word home for seven years. He



escaped the indignity of being bound—he said many others were bound with ropes—by pledging his word not to run away. “I said I was an honest merchant and had never broken my word.” He had been beaten many times by officers. “In the Kuomintang Army,” he said, “an officer may beat a soldier at will.” He had been captured with a thousand others in an ambush on a dark September night.

“My mind was full of the thought that the Communists would kill me, as our officers said.”

Li was “given a rest” for several days and then was asked whether he wanted to go home. He refused and asked for a job in the rear, saying: “I am too old to fight.” He was given a job as cook at headquarters. When I asked why he didn’t go home he replied: “It is very far to Szechwan; the Kuomintang would grab me again on the way. I will go home when peace comes.”

The second ex-prisoner, a lad of seventeen, was more emphatic in his new devotion. He had been kidnaped when he was a printer’s apprentice of fourteen. He became an orderly in Chiang’s Thirtieth Army. His officer cursed him frequently and occasionally beat him, but his main grievance was that the officer refused to write home to Li Teh’s parents to tell them what had happened to their son. “I cannot write,” said Li, “and anyway I had no stamp.”

Li’s detachment fought forty-eight hours in an encirclement before they surrendered. The boy himself was badly wounded and was deeply moved when his captors gave him hospital treatment for a month. When he was asked whether he wanted to go home he replied firmly: “No, I will stay here and follow Mao Tze-tung.” He had become a sentry at Liu Po-cheng’s headquarters and was very proud of this post.

Generals of the People’s Liberation Army have told me that from one fourth to half of their troops were composed of these former prisoners of war and that these recruits actually improved the quality of the army. “They have knowledge of modern weapons. They are also very loyal. They have felt the oppression

of the feudal army on their bodies more than the peasants of our areas have."

Former prisoners of war are often incredibly effective in inducing surrender of enemy troops. To soldiers tired of a futile war—most of Chiang's troops were in that category—the assurance of a former fellow that the other side "treats you well if you surrender" may have sensational results.

In one of the Communists' darkest moments of the civil war—that August day in 1946 when word reached Yen-an that America had given two billion dollars' worth of war surplus to Chiang Kai-shek—Mao Tze-tung said to me: "In the end we depend on Chiang's soldiers. We lose men, but also we capture men and these come over. Thus we advance." With a penetrating glance he added: "You think this perhaps too slow?"

"I think it very costly," I replied.

"Costly? Yes, but what can we do about it? We have no influence with the American government."

I made some stupid remark about the United Nations or the Big Three mediating the civil war. Mao shook his head. "They are not dependable. Only Chiang's soldiers are dependable." With a swift 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 the armies that came to kill him he saw the long-oppressed peasantry of China, which could not remain his foe. His strategy was based on eluding these armies when they advanced upon him with superior weapons, on catching their detachments unawares and encircling them with overwhelming numbers, and then on converting the surrendered men with their weapons to his own side.

### 3. HOW GOVERNMENT GOES UNDERGROUND

The only defense so far by which a government can laugh at atom bombs has been developed by the Chinese Communists.

Through a technique known as "dispersal" the government goes underground among its people, protected by their loyalty. No hostile airplanes can find it, and if found and attacked by air bombing, there would be only limited casualties.

It began very simply on the scale of a county government during the war with Japan. When county seats were attacked the magistrate and county council moved into nearby villages, where the peasants acknowledged and protected their authority. This mobility of county governments became routine. The tall, pleasant young mayor of Yuanping county seat in Shansi told Rittenberg, when the latter arrived in that city: "We'll soon be pulling out of town, for Yen's troops are coming to attack and our army is too far away."

"How will you manage?" asked Rittenberg.

The mayor did not seem much concerned. "Just as we did with the Japs," he replied. "We'll stay a week or two with the peasants till our troops can come and take Yuanping again." He proved an accurate prophet. Yuanping was lost and retaken within three weeks. It suffered some looting, but its people were experienced in hiding valuables. The real value lay in the soil of the farms where the grain was growing, untouched by the passing of troops. Any county government the peasants supported could move easily out of Yuanping and back.

The dispersal of the government of a large province is more complicated. I saw this take place in Kalgan, a city of some two hundred thousand which had been the capital of a large area with thirty million population, an area as large and populous as Poland. It was a prosperous center of expanding markets and many new industries. Then a bombshell broke. A small town one hundred miles to the west was unexpectedly taken by troops of Fu Tso-yi, provincials under Chiang.

"We fought badly in the west. Now there will be an all-out attack on Kalgan," said General Tsai, chief of foreign contacts for the area, with amazing frankness. He added: "You must return by plane, for we have begun to disperse."

In the three days before my plane came I saw the phenomenon known as "dispersal," the protection of the institutions of the people who had no anti-aircraft against the enemy's modern airplanes. Trucks and carts filled with people, provisions, baggage, and equipment began moving steadily out of the city. The North China University had gone a month earlier to be safe against any possible disturbance; its autumn term had opened in the hills a two weeks' journey south. The hospitals now moved; four of the UNRRA workers went with them to the cheers of the Chinese populace.

It was all in such quiet routine. I had ordered some letterheads from the printer. "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 price. General Tsai came to tell me: "The tailors are leaving tonight. If your plane fails and we take you overland we will bring back a tailor to supply your needs. Otherwise get your coat in Peiping." At the publishing house they were packing up the books. They said to me: "Take as many as you like." So I took two hundred books and sent them later to the Hoover War Memorial Library at Stanford University as the only extant collection of the Liberated Areas' literature.

At the "Guesthouse" I saw them roll up the beautiful blue rugs and the silken coverlets and pack them on trucks with sacks of provisions. Many writers left with that party to set up the new "Guesthouse" in the southern hills. As the truck pulled out they smiled and waved good-by, then burst into an Eighth Route Army song. The manager, the best interpreter, one house boy, and that excellent French-trained chef remained behind on General Tsai's orders. He 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, juggling, and short plays by enthusiastic amateurs in the big trade-union hall—which was to be bombed out of existence in a week. “Just like the old trade-union parties at home,” said Sidney Rittenberg, who had been an organizer in Carolina for the CIO. The chairman 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 American CIO. Everyone cheered. They had several times sent such cables but had never had an answer.

“Perhaps Chiang interferes with our cables, or perhaps our brothers in America do not even believe that we exist.”

They drew up their message by committee. It was like the messages of trade unionists everywhere. “We, organized workers meeting in bomb-threatened Kalgan, greet you on behalf of 410,000 organized workers of this area.” They listed their gains through organization and added: “All these gains are menaced by the bombs, guns, and planes that you American workers produce.” They ended with an appeal for world peace and democracy.

The meeting broke up swiftly. Many trucks and carts waited outside. Many were leaving that night and would travel till day-break. They had waited to say good-by.

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 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 last American plane. General Tsai took my hand in farewell. “Our lively, prosperous Kalgan lives now in your memory. Our dispersal is nearly completed. Kalgan will be a battleground.”

Rittenberg remained in Kalgan to see the final stages; he reported to me later in Yen-an. Tens of thousands of citizens left for the hills in the final week. Small factories, schools, and government departments sent people ahead to prepare a place and then moved out to the new locations. Besides this organized dispersal of institutions, some fifty thousand civilians took off spontaneously to stay with some relative in the country or take chances elsewhere rather than await the armed forces of the Kuomintang. At the end all travel was at night, for Chiang's planes were bombing and strafing by day. Finally Rittenberg himself left on an ancient truck loaded with machinery and with thirty incidental passengers who rode when the road was level and helped push on the hills.

For thirty days he traveled across country to Yen-an, at the very height of these battles, to see how much—or how little—the taking of Kalgan affected the life and government of the rural areas of which Kalgan had been the capital. He traveled without money and he needed none. He had a letter from the Kalgan authorities 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 him on that paper from Kalgan. Yet it was a paper from a city that had fallen, signed by authorities the world thought had ceased to exist.

In all those thirty days he was among peaceful, orderly, industrious, hospitable people. Only on the first day—leaving Kalgan under bombing—was he within sight of war. For the thirty million people of the area, their government had not fallen. It had merely moved from Kalgan back to the hills, to those same hills where it was born and nourished in the war with Japan. It was not even a government-in-exile, for it had moved not into exile but into the homes of its people. Kalgan money, not Chiang's money, still circulated in towns and villages. County

governments still arrested culprits, registered land or marriages; village militia patrolled the approach to villages, still in the name of the "Liberated Area of Chin-Cha-Chi."

A thousand or more students of the North China Associated University, evacuated weeks earlier from Kalgan, were living now in half a dozen villages. They had classes in the morning and spent the afternoons helping the peasants get in the harvest as a gesture of good will to their hosts. Farther on Rittenberg came to the "Guesthouse." The blue rugs and silken coverlets were still there. It was a glorified "Old Folks Rest" now for notable and aged officials who had "gone over to the people" and for whom there was no immediate work. A week later he was given an armed guard to take him past the besieged fortress city of Tatung, still held by Chiang's men. For a day or two this meant a cautious march, inquiring at every village. "Sometimes," said the guard, "those Kuomintang bandits come out from Tatung to raid."

Finally at the Yellow River crossing he met a student who was traveling to Harbin with his aged bound-foot mother. Four months on foot into the north and the deepening winter, with all the provincial capitals just taken by Chiang!

"But I have work to do in Harbin and we can still go all the way without leaving our Liberated Areas," the student calmly said.

While civil war closed around Kalgan I flew south to another great Liberated Area, where the government for thirty million people in parts of four provinces had sometime ago dispersed to the hills. I went to see what such a hidden government was like.

Hantan had been the capital of this area in the year after Japan's surrender. This was a city of fifty thousand on the long since inoperative Peiping-Hankow Railway. When Chiang began taking the provincial capitals of the Liberated Areas, General Liu Po-cheng decided not to await attack in Hantan but to

move beforehand to a hide-out in the country. There was still a truce team in Hantan which had some kind of contact with the area's government. I sent word through proper channels that I was coming, flew to Hantan, and trusted to 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 crusted with dust proved to be Dr. Chu of the area's health department. She had come for some Red Cross supplies, but her eyes appraised me and I wondered if she had also come for me. As I was considering whether to accept the colonel's invitation to stay with the truce team, an unobtrusive man at my elbow said quietly: "Perhaps you would rather stay with us."

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

"The Communists," he replied.

I turned to his ancient auto, tossing to Colonel Alexander the remark that I might drop in for dinner that evening. I was wrong. I dropped out of sight then and there and didn't reappear for a week!

Li Ti-hua was the name of my new companion. Only after a week in which he acted as guide and general Cook's agent did I learn that he was a colonel. This area, far from the great capitals, had few people who knew foreign languages. Colonel Li spoke a little English. So they sacrificed a colonel out of courtesy to a guest.

We picked up Dr. Chu and another official and jolted off to the north. The road seemed made of boulders set in bottomless dust. The springs of the auto were broken and the front door was tied on with rope. We spent the night at Wu An County seat in some offices of the county building. We were given hot water and towels, and we dug our faces out of the dust. Plank beds were set up in the rooms. Dr. Chu hospitably found for me an ancient cot with woven wire springs that sagged a bit. 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—by a route that I never recorded—to a village of several hundred stone houses built of native rock. They crowded one on the other, following the contours of rocky hills. I was given a room in this stony rabbit warren. Its polished tables and well-built kang—brick platform bed—indicated a well-to-do family. This house had been "borrowed" from a landlord—he was not at home, but his daughter-in-law was, left behind as the least significant member of the family—and was used as a hostel.

When I opened my door next morning to let in the warmth of the sun I saw a dozen young people in the court eating big bowls of yellow millet flavored with pickled vegetables. They stared at me with interest but scattered like shy deer when I got out my camera. Returning, they told me: "We are the bookstore, passing through to the new publishing center in a village seven miles from here."

Often as many as thirty people spent the night at our hostel. One night Miss Ts'ai Ch'ang, head of the women's organization whom I had last seen in Yen-an, arrived with a party on donkeys. They had been traveling a month on foot and on donkey-back, holding conferences among women. After meeting the leaders here they planned to go on to Shantung and Manchuria, a journey of several months more. I envied their physical endurance.

For two days Colonel Li arranged interviews in my room. I met thus the chief of the People's Militia for the area and the heads of the trade unions and the peasants' union. On the third day I recovered enough to go out to see the physical setup of army and government in this primitive place.

"Three types of organization are needed to direct 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 volun-

tary organizations; i.e., trade unions, peasants' union, womens' and youth associations, the co-operatives, the Communist Party. The top leadership of all these organizations can be reduced to about six hundred people. All of these live in villages not more than two miles away.

"Army headquarters is in this village. Two miles away is the civil government. Two miles in another direction live the chiefs of the voluntary associations. Other villages house our book department, newspaper, radio, and similar institutions of central importance. When any general problem arises, such as the 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 forces of army, government, and voluntary associations can be brought into play from here."

Such was the setup whose details I next observed.

A few doors down my street was army headquarters. Even after visiting it twice I could not have found it without a guide. The walls, the cobblestoned streets, the entrances—all looked alike. Inside one entrance stood a sentry; you didn't see him till you passed the outer gate. Then he stopped you; he had a bayoneted rifle. Passing him, you came to a court 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. 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 Commissar 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 G-1, G-2, and G-4. I am the commissar. The head of G-3 is absent today. Otherwise we are all here except our commander in chief, Liu Po-cheng, who has gone to one of the fronts. He can reach us any time by phone.

"That phone connects with ten thousand miles of line and one thousand instruments." He pointed to a telephone on one of the desks, the only modern instrument in the room. "We connect with all our fronts, with our rear services, with all our important towns, 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, an Underwood carbine, a Remington-Rand pistol. "Samples brought for study," they said. "Most of the captured weapons stay at the front for use. We have also taken heavy artillery, tanks, and bazookas."

They pointed to the maps on the wall. "Detail maps of our area. Taken from the Japanese. The Japanese made very good maps. We have mounted them on long strips of cotton so that they can be easily taken down, rolled up, or rehung."

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

"The city of Hantan was convenient to work in. It had better housing and electric light. But there are also advantages in a village. There are fewer distractions. A city tends toward bureaucracy. Here we can concentrate on quiet work."

He outlined the General Staff's daily program. They rose at six and gave the first two hours to individual study. "I personally am studying Chairman Mao's recent instructions on land reform and the reports that come from our villages," said Commissar Po I-po. "For theoretical study I am giving some time to Lenin's *Two Tactics*." At eight the staff breakfasted together on rice and two vegetables. Then they assembled for three hours' joint work, after which the heads of departments went to their various offices—G-1, G-2, and so on—to direct the work of their

subordinates. At four came the second and last meal, consisting of steamed wheat bread, two vegetables, and tea, after which an hour was given to walking or recreation. Evenings were for miscellaneous work.

"We have about two hundred men here at headquarters, not counting sentries and orderlies," concluded Po I-po. "We include here our operations, intelligence, departments of discipline and training, military administration, personnel, and signal corps. We do not have our rear services here; i.e., supplies, transport, medical department, weapons, and ammunition. These are placed according to convenience and reached by messengers, telephone, and radio. They need not even be in the same county."

Such was the staff that directed Liu Po-cheng's army of three to four hundred thousand men, fighting on several fronts and in four or five provinces over an area as large as France.

By a rough stone path I walked through rolling country to the village that housed the area's civil government. 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, less snappy, more civilian than at army headquarters. A mild-mannered woman named Sun Wen-hsu was secretary-general of the government administration of an area that, at the time of my visit, included 193 counties and thirty million people. She had an office in a stone-flagged room some ten by twenty feet in size, with paper windows giving light. She said she had thirteen offices for various parts of her work. Ten per cent of the civil service employees were women.

Two hundred top chiefs of government lived in this village in rooms assigned by the village authorities. Their sleeping quarters and offices occupied one hundred and fifty rooms. "We crowd the peasants somewhat," Miss Sun admitted, "but they consider it an advantage to have the government here because we

bring in many educated people—doctors, nurses, social workers—and this improves the schools and hospitals.”

I went sight-seeing with Miss Sun to see the offices of different departments. The finance chief had a ten-by-twenty-four-foot room with records neatly clipped to tapes along the wall. The chief of archives had a dirt floor but a high ceiling, giving large storage space. His mimeographing machine was probably the first the village had 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," "Highways," "Hantan Municipality." Piles of literature on the floor were waiting to be wrapped.

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

We stopped at the village co-operative, an unpretentious room to which peasants were bringing cotton and buying salt, kerosene, paper, and cigarettes. The manager said there were two hundred members in this village and that all the villages in the area had similar co-operatives.

Four o'clock dinner awaited us in Miss Sun's office with Governor Jung and a dozen department chiefs. They were well-educated people; most of them had university degrees. Chia Chien, the judge, had a law degree from Chaoyang University in Peiping. Fan Jung-yi, chief of reconstruction, took a degree in economics at Tokyo University. Yuan Chi-ho, chief of civil affairs, graduated from Shansi University as an engineer. Others came from similar institutions of learning in China or abroad.

These highly educated people lived and worked in good spirits on the standard of living of a not very prosperous peasant. They

were proud of their area. "Ours is a strong, self-sufficient area," said Governor Jung. "We can feed ourselves and have surplus. We can clothe ourselves and have surplus. We have grain, cotton, fruits, nuts, pepper, tobacco. We have coal and iron. We have everything we need but peace."

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

If, however, you approached a village by any one of a dozen paths, you found a small boy sitting on a rock or playing by the road. He would spring to attention and demand: "Your road pass, please." If you had no pass, you would be stopped.

"How would you stop us?" I asked one small village sentry, about eleven years old, who demanded passes from the three men accompanying me. "We are four grown people. We could walk right past you and there's nothing you could do."

"There is too," declared the boy. "I could yell, couldn't I? Then the militia would come running."

The village militia could handle any ordinary intruders. And if by remote chance some strong force of enemy troops should break through the regular army on the frontier, or if enemy planes should learn of the location and come to bomb it, then the entire area government and the army General Staff, with the chiefs of trade unions, peasants' unions, and the other voluntary organizations, could be on the move in an hour 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.

But was it really possible that this small group of merry people, living so isolated under such primitive conditions, held government power in an area of fifty-five thousand square miles and 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.

On my way back to Hantan I stopped in several villages. I attended a County Congress of Labor Heroes, who were planning production. I saw a review of militiamen outside Wu An County seat. Wherever I went it became clear that the hidden government I had seen in the hills was the area government that all local leaders recognized. They had elected it and trusted it to carry out their government affairs. It also became clear that the business of the area government was to correlate rather than dictate details. It could operate with that small, skeleton staff because so much of the public business was carried on by county governments and by voluntary associations of the people. I recalled that old American maxim that came from a day when America also had a decentralized economy: "That government is best which governs least."

That review of militiamen was impressive. There were four thousand in the field. They had no full uniforms, but all were distinguished in some manner chosen by their village: some wore green puttees, some tan ones, some had special belts or caps. All had rifles, many of which 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 asked for the floor and got it. They spoke well.

My presence seemed to interest them especially. The county authorities invited me into the reviewing stand and the crowd gave a friendly cheer for "the long friendship of American and Chinese people." Then they at once began to pass resolutions that I should "take the American navy out of Tsingtao." One

man asked if "the American correspondent" had any way of getting a letter through to the United Nations General Assembly, then meeting in New York. I replied that I was flying to Peiping and could air-mail a letter from there. So they cheered again and drew up their resolution, a hot one, effectively expressed.

"To the United Nations from the 330,000 people of Wu An County," they began. "We express our respect to all countries that labor for the peace of the world." Then they mentioned their "eight long years of resistance to Japan" and the present "traitorous attack by Chiang Kai-shek with American aid." 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 wrote that resolution through their own committee, unprompted and unhelped by any outsiders. It was clear 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 that area defending that hidden government in the hills.

After visiting this hidden government I was no longer disturbed when, six months later, I saw the evacuation of Yen-an. For three months—in the winter of 1946-47—the troops of Hu Tsung-nan, the bitter Sian general, had been raiding the frontier of Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region, of which Yen-an was the capital. During this period most of Yen-an's activities were "dispersed." The writers, musicians, sculptors, and other members of the Cultural Association went to organize land reform and winter classes in different areas. The Yenda students went into the villages, correlating the peasants' evacuation with news from the front. The women and children moved north into the deeper



hills. Half of the newspaper and radio station left to set up another base.

That famous International Peace Hospital, founded in the name of the Canadian surgeon, Norman Bethune, with the aid of funds from Madame Sun Yat-sen's China Welfare Fund, had celebrated its seventh anniversary a few days before. Now the sick and the mothers who had just given birth were carried in litters down the nine high ledges of caves, with the doctors and nurses following. Small babies lay in sheepskin-lined cribs hanging balanced on the side of donkeys.

Magdalen Robitzer, the UNRRA dentist, a Czech who recalled "the chaos and complaints in Czechoslovakia when Hitler came in," marveled at this "most orderly evacuation of any capital." "All day I worked in the dental clinic," she said, "on the children whose teeth most needed treatment. Next morning there was nothing left; they had moved in the night. In the evening as they packed they were laughing and singing. I talked with a kindergarten child whose mother was evacuated on the same day. He was going with the kindergarten; I asked why he did not go with his mother. He replied: 'She is not in my group.' Such understanding among children I have never seen."

The good Magdalen was a bit ashamed of her own baggage. She had cut it, she thought, to a camping minimum. Then she saw the hospital move out. She said: "But these are doctors who have worked here seven years, important specialists, a surgeon, an eye specialist, a bacteriologist. And they take nothing but the clothes on their backs and a small parcel in a handkerchief and set off on foot to the hills."

Finally, for a week or more, the "American planes" came over, watching, sweeping low. Then Mao Tze-tung told me that it was time for me to go. I must 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."

For the Chinese Communists this Yen-an was no longer the sole base of their activity. It was not even their most important

base. Their line had gone out through all North China and Manchuria; there were a thousand towns and ten million peasants' homes that would welcome Mao Tze-tung. Their thoughts had gone forth into all China and had influenced movements even in Burma, Indo-China, and Indonesia. Nothing vital depended any longer on this primitive cluster of caves in China's northwest.

There was, of course, some sentiment about Yen-an, 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 on Yen-an's "last days": "What was this Yen-an? Hunger, opium, 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; they can't travel by day because of the planes. Many of them will die of catching little colds." That was the one time I heard anyone get passionate about Yen-an. His own wife and child had left the night before.

Mainly the Communists took Yen-an 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 into Yen-an and surrounded him there.

"If Chiang takes Yen-an, it begins his downfall," said Peng Teh-hwai, deputy commander in chief of the armies, discussing Yen-an 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 troops for prestige, he is finished." Peng predicted that, at the rate the encirclement and annihilation of Chiang's armies were going, the People's Liberation Army would wear down Chiang's offensive power and start a counteroffensive by autumn. His estimate later proved correct.

On the night before I left Yen-an I had a final talk with Mao

Tze-tung. He was already living some ten miles outside the settlement, in preparation for departure farther north. A busload of Central Committee members came into town for the evening—movement by day was curtailed because of the planes—to attend a new play on the land reform. Afterward 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 Tze-tung about the loss of Yen-an, 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. The progressives make no dent in American foreign policy. They must fight to save even their own skins. I hope the Chinese Communists have no illusions about what the American government may do."

Mao Tze-tung smiled. No, he had no illusions. But he thought the American progressives were inclined to overestimate the power of the American reactionaries and to underestimate the strength of the 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, their house will fall down. It is a house with one pillar. 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."

At midnight the friendly orderlies brought fresh tea and

new candles to the cave which for Mao Tze-tung was already only an evening's halt on the march. Light strengthened on a 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.

# 7. THE CHINESE CONQUER CHINA

## 1. MANCHURIAN BASE

When Mao Tze-tung yielded Yen-an, he knew that he would finally take all China from the rural areas, advancing from his Manchurian base. He did not know how long it would take; with habitual reserve he allowed five years for what was eventually accomplished in scarcely more than two. He did not know what losses might come first; in one of our conversations he mentioned a possible loss of Harbin, which never fell. He knew two basic factors of power: that he had the peasants' support in much of China and surplus food in Manchuria.

Manchuria's strength was so clear that rumor ran among foreigners that Mao himself was moving to Manchuria when Yen-an fell. That was nonsense believed by people with no political sense. My own guess was that Mao would feel he owed it to North Shensi peasants to stay with them until the retaking of Yen-an was assured, and then might move with victory to a better center in North China. This occurred. Great China,

awakened nationally, would not take Manchuria as leader; nor will she take Formosa. Manchuria was a source of supplies: weapons and food.

Chiang Kai-shek might have had Manchuria if he had had the political sense of the Communists. The Russians drove out the Japanese for him, installed Chiang's appointees in all Manchurian cities, and protected them for eight months to give them a chance to organize government. The Americans brought in eight armies for Chiang, which should have been enough. At first the Manchurians wanted him. What happened was told me by a woman of Tsitsihar in rough words:

"In fourteen years of slavery to the Japs we forgot how that —of a Chiang sold us out in 1931. We forgot the rottenness of his Kuomintang. We only knew that we were all Chinese beating the Japs. We longed for our Central Government to come. Then they sent troops to boss our cities that couldn't speak our language, and they made common cause with Jap puppets and stole more cattle than the Japs. And now, if I could get my hands on that—of a Chiang, I'd bite his throat in two with my own teeth."

The hate of a disillusioned people spoke.

How did the Chinese Communists get Manchuria? What help, if any, did Russia give?

These questions took me far into the Liberated Area of Manchuria at the end of 1946. Chiang, with the aid of United States Marines, still held southeast Manchuria around Mukden and the coastal railway as far as Changchun. Thence I flew over the lines to Harbin by the American plane that supplied truce teams. Later I went on to Tsitsihar by the railroad run by the Chinese Communists' new regime. The United States State Department's representative in Changchun, appointed to go to Harbin when Chiang should take it, told me he thought that railroad wasn't running. But it was.

Harbin was a shopping paradise for American officers. They flew up from Changchun to buy their liquor. On the day of my

flight several officers made the round trip and brought back cases of prewar wine and vodka costing, they bragged, only forty cents a bottle. Harbin markets were glutted with food at bargain prices: butter at twenty-five cents a pound, meat at eight cents, eggs at twenty-one cents a dozen. The hospitality of the guest-house of the Joint Democratic Army—its large hams in thick, pink slices, its white breasts of chicken browned in butter and washed down with good wine—was a thing to write home about. They gave you good letterhead stationery on which to write it, too!

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

"No! No! I am guarding it," cried the horrified Chinese.

"Too bad," retorted the American. "If you shot my plane I'd get a week in Harbin."

The glut of food was a burden to Manchurians. Peasants froze naked among mountains of grain and beans. It took a ton of grain to buy six yards of cotton goods, ten tons of soy beans to buy one forty-yard bolt. Manchuria, food producer for the world, could not get its crops to market. It was blocked on three sides by the closed Soviet frontier, on the fourth by Chiang's battle front.

That was my first surprise in Manchuria, to find that the Soviet border was closed. "You can't even smuggle across it," said Harbin merchants. "It's tighter than Chiang's lines." They were sending caravans of carts into Chiang's territory to trade food for cotton goods. It took them a month to make the shopping trip that American officers made by plane in an hour. It was costly and dangerous, bribing Chiang's officers all along the way. But it was their only trade outlet till late 1948.

How the Chinese Communists got to Manchuria was a tale easy to get in Harbin. There were Communists among industrial workers when Japan invaded in 1931. They went to the rural

districts and organized Manchurian Volunteers. All through those years when America sold scrap iron to Japan, recognizing "Manchukuo," when Chiang Kai-shek forbade Manchurians to resist the Japanese, small Communist-led bands fought the invader. Most of those leaders of resistance were killed in the years of fighting, but those who survived rule Manchuria. (One young Korean comrade-in-arms who led Korean resistance in the Manchurian hills became President Kim Il-sung of North Korea.)

Governor Feng Chang-yung of the province of which Harbin is capital, gave me harsh details of his fighting days.

"You fought in snow and slept in snow. The snow would be over your knees and you stamped it down, built a fire, and slept. This was night after night and year after year. You ate grass. I myself know fifty kinds of wild grass to eat."

"Hasn't Manchuria grain?" I asked in surprise.

"Manchuria had Japanese," he replied grimly. "At first our movement was a big flame; we had fifty or sixty thousand armed men. The Japanese burned the peasants out of their villages to destroy our economic base. Even living in dugouts, the peasants fed us and we flourished. So the Japanese gathered the peasants into barbed-wire enclosures like concentration camps. Our bands still hid in the woods, and the peasants left food in the fields for us to find. But the Japanese controlled the crop through the landlords; any peasant suspected of feeding an outlaw was shot. We survived only in small numbers."

When the Soviet Army drove out the Japanese in a hard-hitting, lightening campaign in August 1945, the Manchurian Volunteers swiftly sprang up again. They mopped up Japanese in rural areas and small towns while the Russians were taking railways and chief cities. Meanwhile detachments of the Communist-led Eighth Route Army, already operating in South Manchuria, fought their way north until they reached the Manchurian Volunteers. General Lin Piao was sent by Yen-an to weld all these armed Chinese into one fighting force. Half of his troops, at the time of my visit, were men from North China,



half were local Manchurians. The Manchurian contingent was growing.

Ironically enough, the first stage of Lin Piao's journey north was made by American plane. Such planes flew out from the United States Army liaison group in Yen-an to pick up American airmen shot down over North China. On request from the Chinese in Yen-an one plane took Lin Piao along. Did the Americans realize how important this slim, intellectual-looking man was to be?

"What help did you get from the Russians?" I asked Lin Piao.

"None," he replied categorically. "No troops, no weapons, no advisers, nothing! Whatever men and arms came with the Soviet Army into Manchuria went back when the Soviet Army went. Whatever arms or war supplies they took from the Japanese they took into Russia or destroyed on the spot."

I checked this with others in Manchuria who were in a position to know. Few would even take the idea of Russian help seriously. "That's Chiang's propaganda," they said. All agreed that the Russians had done the main job of throwing out the Japanese and that this Russian advance, which took the railroads and chief cities, made it easy for daring Manchurians to disarm Japanese and their puppets in the rural areas and smaller towns. But Manchurians of all persuasions—including bandits—did this. Chinese in Mukden were said to have taken arms from Japanese dumps under the eyes of Russian guards as the Soviet Army came in. But I could learn of no Russian act that gave arms directly to Chinese Communists.

The Manchurians, on the contrary, took it for granted that the Russians had helped Chiang Kai-shek. The Soviet Army, they said, protected Chiang's appointees in Manchurian cities for many months as far north as Tsitsihar. Later a Russian major in the Soviet Far East confirmed this. "The Chinese Communists were very annoyed," he remarked, "when we threw them out of Mukden and put Chiang's men in." The Chinese Communists, he said, had been there first. "But what could we do? We had our treaty with Chiang."

That treaty with Chiang must have embarrassed the Russians. While Chiang officially asked them to stay longer to give him time to bring in more troops, his secret police instigated demonstrations in China denouncing the "Red imperialists" because they stayed. The American press echoed this, while United States Marines advanced into Manchuria themselves. Meanwhile Chiang's administration, from Soviet-protected cities, fought the Manchurian peasants. Chiang's method of organizing government was to contact landlords who had been Japanese agents for fourteen years and make them his agents to form "recovering armies" against the Communists. One prominent Harbin citizen who served as mayor in the first stage of Russian occupation, and who resigned when Chiang's appointees arrived, was murdered by Kuomintang gangsters under this second Soviet-protected regime.

The Manchurians did not seem to blame the Russians for it. They were sophisticated in the complexities of war. When I asked a shop-committee chairman in a Harbin factory what he thought of it, he considered a moment and answered: "Well, Chiang was their ally against Japan and everybody recognized him. The Russians got out when he started civil war."

The Russians themselves gave no such reason for withdrawal. They had cause enough when Chiang's forces, arriving in Changchun to take over from the Russians, instigated riots against Soviet citizens and consular offices in which Russians were killed. Moscow then announced that her troops would leave the rest of Manchuria without awaiting Chiang's armed forces. At Chiang's request they took with them the administrators he had sent to the northern cities, who feared to face Manchurians without protection. The Russians saved them, sending them home to Nanking through Siberia. It is interesting to speculate on what would have happened to the Chinese Communists if Chiang's generals had dealt decently with the Russians who gave them Changchun. But if war lords had political sense the story would be different from the start.

When the Russians left they closed the border. They could have used that Manchurian food surplus for their own Far East or their zone in Korea, both of which were deficient in food. They shut off Manchuria because, as the Soviet consul in Harbin told me: "We do not recognize this regime." He added: "I myself remain not as consular representative of Moscow but as representing a Manchurian national minority, the fifty thousand Russians who have lived here for decades." It was diplomatic punctilio, but he thought it important.

The most notable example of the Russian withdrawal was the railroad, formerly called the China Eastern, which had been built by the Russians nearly fifty years ago and in which they still had treaty rights. I rode on it from Harbin to Tsitsihar. It ran heroically but badly, stopping half an hour at every station to let engine and axles cool. There were no lubricants but home-made soy bean oil. A special grass was used to replace cotton waste; bits of tree bark were substituted for worn-out rubber washers. These worked because the Chinese railway workers, infinitely devoted, would stop trains, insert new bits of bark, and see that nothing broke.

Four thousand men sat on the ground in a railway workers' celebration in Tsitsihar, while 360 were given seats of honor and red rosettes on their coats as "heroes." They were men who had invented new ways to make that railroad run and were holding a conference on railway improvement. They were the coming technicians to replace the Japanese and Russians who had gone.

"We can run a year or two on our present basis with steadily improving service," said Railway Commander W. C. Kuo as he told how cars and locomotives were rescued and repaired. "Then we shall face new and more serious shortages. By that time we hope to find other ways of meeting our problems."

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

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

"But the Russians have a property right and a right to share operations of this road by treaty with Chiang," I protested.

"We have a war on and the Russians refuse to be caught in it," replied Kuo.

The Liberated Area of Manchuria thus began strictly on its own, a spacious land without connection with the world but with some thirty million people, growing to fifty million as the Communists took more territory. How did they win these Manchurian Chinese from Chiang?

Let us examine what happened in two villages.

Leftwood Village, near Harbin, had fifty-four families, thirty of which formerly worked as farm hands or share croppers on the land of Landlord Su. The Japanese made Su their agent to buy and sell grain, to handle rationed goods, to collect forced labor, and to distribute "rewards for good citizens." Su profited handsomely and dishonestly on all these transactions, growing richer and more hated.

"Su was worse than the Japs," the peasants said.

Chiang's administration, installed in Harbin by the Russians, continued Su as agent to raise an armed force against the Communists. Su had ninety armed men who lived by loot and bossed the township more arrogantly than before. In June 1946, after the Soviet Army left Harbin and Lin Piao's Joint Democratic Army came in, the Leftwood villagers asked help against "Su's bandits." Su fled; a village election and land reform followed. Once given land, most of Su's bandits were glad to settle to farming.

Wang Family Village, near Tsitsihar, had a similar tale, except that there was no landlord. The Japanese took all the land, using the peasants as serfs. "We got neither wheat nor millet to eat," they said, "but flour from acorns. Many died of it; they passed blood."

After the Japanese left, a "recovering army" of Chiang's took the village horses. Then Chiang's appointees in Tsitsihar claimed

the farms as city property but offered to auction the right to use them for a year. Twenty of the village families had money enough to rent; the other two hundred became share croppers. However, the Communist forces came before sowing time and told the peasants the land was theirs and they should divide it by village meeting without paying anyone. They promptly did so on the basis of an acre per capita. By harvest everyone was eating good wheat. There was plenty of poverty so far clothing was concerned; I saw a boy of thirteen running mother-naked between the huts on a freezing day. But with good bread that no longer poisoned their bowels, these peasants felt on the upgrade.

The reasons Chiang failed and the Communists succeeded appear from these examples. Everywhere in Manchuria's rural areas the "recovering armies" authorized by Chiang and led by landlords lived by requisitions which the peasants saw as loot. Governor Yu of Tsitsihar told me that these "recovering armies" had seized 10,500 head of livestock in Chinghsing County, 14,300 in Kannan County, 18,825 in Lungchiang County, and so on. The peasants might have yielded to this burden of feudal government if there had been no Communists. But when Communists urged them to resist the "Kuomintang bandits," they gladly did so.

Chiang's readiness to give the title "general" to leaders of armed bands that so soon declined to bandits also helped discredit him. Eleven such "generals" had recently been caught and convicted of trying to start uprisings. Their stories in court were laughed at all over Harbin.

The most picturesque among them was the "Living Buddha," who had a harem of "queens." He confessed during trial that in the war with Japan he had "given the word of God" through North China under the name of the "Golden Thread Great Religion" while spying for the Japanese against the Eighth Route Army. After Japan fell he contacted some of Chiang's generals, whose names he gave, and was sent to Manchuria to continue his work. To collect subsidies he reported that he had

three thousand armed men. In court he admitted that his force was "somewhat smaller."

His fantastic religion was a cloak for his secret armed organization. "I called myself 'Living Buddha' and claimed to remove all calamity. Anyone who preaches religion must claim this or he will get no converts," declared this remarkable man. Converts were required to show "sincerity" by kneeling all night alone before candles. "In this way I seduced ten virgins," he said. He got his "queens" by a combination of seduction and of terrorizing fathers. "But my real purpose," he declared, "was to occupy Harbin." He described his proposed conquest street by street. He had actually started an uprising but had not held the first city block! Such "Kuomintang generals" had made Chiang a joke.

Governor Lin Feng, highest civil official in Manchuria, told me that banditry had been serious in the first year after Japan's surrender. As the puppet armies dispersed, many of their armed members joined "recovering armies" or became ordinary bandits, looting on their own. There had been ten or twenty thousand of these marauders operating in bands as large as a thousand. At the time of my visit they had fallen to a total of two or three thousand in bands that never ran above two hundred.

I myself ran into a bandit battle on the train a few hours out of Harbin. I was traveling in the "army car" as the guest of General Lin Piao, who, though not himself present, had given me an interpreter and a bodyguard to carry my blankets and pillows and make me comfortable on the trip. The train halted in a field for half an hour. "The railway guards up ahead are fighting some Hunhuzes," they told me. "We are waiting to see if the track will clear."

"Hunhuzes are bandits," explained a fascinating young woman named Li whose story I have given previously. "The word means 'Red-beard' and dates from early bandits who hid their identity by red-bearded masks. Today's Hunhuzes are a mixed lot, including ordinary bandits and former Jap puppets, led by some

landlord who gets credentials from Chiang. We know this because we capture them with the credentials on them. Besides, they formerly bragged of their connection, but they don't any more."

After word came that we might proceed we moved slowly. For an hour we were in the zone of battle. We saw peasants fleeing in small groups, hiding livestock behind hillocks. "They have learned that dispersal lessens their losses," explained Li. Had the peasants learned it from the Communists, or the Communists from the peasants? Possibly both.

Armed guards stood on the roofs of one village, scanning the horizon. Once we heard a burst of machine-gun fire ahead. The men in our car opened the windows wider. Every man pulled out a rifle and trained it out of the window, ready to shoot. They scrutinized distant groups of horsemen.

"Are those Hunhuzes?" I asked about one such group.

"No, they are peasants," said Li's husband, putting down his rifle.

"How can you tell at this distance?"

"Don't you see the people walking near them? People on foot would be running from Hunhuzes."

Later we learned that the railroad guards had routed a band of two hundred Hunhuzes, capturing many. "They weren't attacking the railroad," Li explained. "They don't do that much any more. They attacked a village and the peasants' militia sent to the railway guards for help. The size of these attacks decreases as our territory becomes organized."

Governor Lin Feng gave me three reasons for the decrease in banditry. "Our army smashed them. The peasants organized self-defense. The land reform enables former landless men to live without turning bandit."

While Chiang tried to rule from landlords and generals down, the Chinese Communists urged the peasants to organize from the poorest up. The result was an explosion of political life that grew more confident day by day.

Peasants took land. Workers formed trade unions. Merchants organized trade across Chiang's battle front with the aid of government loans. Education enthusiasts opened schools. The poorest slum dwellers in Harbin started a Poor Folks' Housing Society, and for their slum-clearance scheme the city government gave them some houses from which Japanese had been sent back to Japan. I saw the leaky hovels from which they had come, with offal flooding the yards. I saw their neat new apartments—each family with a whole room—at almost nothing in rent. In Changchun under Chiang's rule, the former Japanese houses stood empty while officials wrangled over the graft.

The organization that began with the peasants, workers, and merchants then became government. The first provisional governments of provinces were set up by delegates from peasants' unions, trade unions, merchants' associations, and army units. These were replaced by elected governments, but elections were not at first uniform. By August 1946, one year after Japan's surrender, a joint congress of Manchurian provinces was held, adopted a program, and set up a Joint Administrative Committee to carry it out.

Every province was allowed to frame its own constitution, a right which Chiang had always refused. Certain principles however, were to be followed by all. These are indicative of the policies on which later governments in the new China will be based.

1. General elections to be held quickly
2. Land of Japanese and traitors to be given to peasants
3. Government help and reasonable profits for private industry
4. Education in democracy for the armed forces
5. General education to be expanded and improved
6. Equality of nationalities: Chinese, Mongol, Moslem, Korean
7. Freedom of body, thought, speech, press, assembly, association, religion, travel, and choice of profession to be guaranteed



The committee elected to carry out this program, which was thus the actual government of Manchuria, was no Communist list but a roster of Manchuria's most famous native sons who for twenty years or more had fought for their country's freedom. It included former Kuomintang leaders, Democratic League members, and even Manchurian patriots of the old war-lord days.

Governor Lin Feng was a native Manchurian who had been active in the "Save the Nation" movement and kindred organizations since 1925. His first vice-chairman was Chang Hsueh-chih, son of a famous Manchurian despot and brother of the equally famous "Young Marshal," who is still, in 1949, interned by Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa for his part in the Sian incident. Other committee members were Kao Chung-min, who has lived in Manchuria fifty-five years and has held high posts under war lords and later became a leading adherent of Dr. Sun Yat-sen; sixty-one-year-old Ming Wu, once Dr. Sun's personal representative in Manchuria; General Lu Chung-tso, Manchurian-born, and almost the only officer of the old war lord, Chang Tso-lin, who ever distinguished himself in the war against Japan; Miss Han Yu-tung, native of Kirin, editor, professor, and woman's rights' champion since 1925, and a member of the Democratic League.

Governor Lin Feng outlined for me the immediate program: "Land reform comes first; more than half of our peasants have no land of their own. Next comes a unified tax system at about one tenth of the crop. These two measures will make school expansion possible; children of hungry farm hands cannot go to school. All of this together will give us the real elections. We have held elections of some sort everywhere, but the real elections can come only when all these measures have aroused the people's belief in politics."

By the summer of 1948 the Communist-led coalition held 87 per cent of Manchuria. They had taken it, ruined by many wars,

and nobody now asked what it once had produced for Japan. They asked what they had produced for themselves a year or two ago and what they were doing now. This was Lin Feng's report: a land reform 70 per cent completed, more than 1,139,000 acres of wasteland reclaimed in a year, two bumper crops; railroads running accurately; telegraph and telephone connecting all cities; a thousand coal miners promoted to administrative jobs by vote of their fellows, with coal production per man now 67 per cent above that under Japan; twice as much electric power as a year ago. Harbin industries tripled in three years. Antung's shipyards turned out ferryboats. Tsitsihar Cart Works had doubled in eight months the output of carts.

Sickles, plows, hoes, and other farm implements were being made in quantities all over Manchuria. Munitions were also made, more than twice as much as in the previous year.

Some 1,300,000 peasant volunteers stood ready, as soon as their harvest should be in, to act as transport for Lin Piao's army in the coming drive. Chiang's men might come with American ships, trucks, and planes, but the Manchurians came with 460,000 horses, 120,000 carts, and 170,000 stretchers borne by men. Some peasants brought only a carry-pole or a horse-whip but firmly believed that they would return with the latest American equipment for their Manchurian army, and with American rifles and tommy guns for their village guards.

The Manchurian base was ready. The drive for all China could begin.

## 2. THE PEASANTS TAKE THE BIG TOWNS

Young Soldier Chang jeered at the company cook: "Soon we'll be taking big towns! You'll go out for firewood and lose the way back. Houses are all alike there except for the numbers. You can't read numbers."

"Are numbers hard?" asked the anxious cook.

"Very easy." Chang graciously offered to teach. So the cook

learned numbers and the characters for simple things like "wood," "water," "fire," preparing for the big towns.

Liu's soldier comrades guffawed as they struggled with his peasant wife to get her to use the telephone. "That thing speaking" scared her like witchcraft. "Why should I learn when I'll never see another one?" she protested.

"You'll not find me in the big town without it," said her husband. So Liu's peasant wife conquered the telephone.

By 1948 China's civil war became a siege of the cities. Mrs. Sun Yat-sen, widow of the famous leader, foresaw this when Chiang Kai-shek launched all-out civil war in 1946. "It will be city against countryside, and the cities will starve," she said. She knew the forces struggling in China.

Our ambassador, John Leighton Stuart, didn't see it, though he was born in China and was president of the great Yenching University in Peiping for all his later years. I spent seven hours with him on a Sunday in the early summer of 1947. The Communists had just begun their first counteroffensive. Chiang had been taking their towns for a year; now they struck back. Ambassador Stuart saw that Chiang's victory was not as solid as he had thought.

He was painfully anxious for a peace talk. I think he hoped to crown his life by giving China not only some education but the supreme gift of peace. He had no idea how. He saw peace in terms of Chiang's rule, with the Communists a quiescent minority, blind to the fact that whenever the Communists went unarmed Chiang slaughtered them. Nothing I had seen in the Liberated Areas interested him; he had just one theme: "Can't we get them to Nanking for a peace talk?" He had no way of reaching the Communists. The Americans themselves had withdrawn their military liaison group, and the Communist leaders had vanished into the hills.

Finally I asked: "What kind of a peace talk? Does the fighting continue while they talk, or does fighting stop?"

He hesitated, then said firmly: "I would insist on an armistice for the duration of the conference."

"Just now," I asked, "when for the first time the Communists are advancing? Could you expect them to agree? Does Chiang offer any concessions?" He admitted that Chiang did not. "Besides," I continued, "how could there be an armistice in practice? Chiang's men are in a hundred or more cities, engulfed in a sea of peasants who side with the Communists. Will Chiang's men starve during the armistice or will they eat? If they eat, will you feed them by plane or will they take food from the countryside? Will the peasants give it or resist? Armistice won't hold ten minutes in conditions like that."

"We couldn't bring back all those troops," he stated, adding that America had already spent three hundred million dollars to air-lift even part of them to their present posts.

"Then the Communists expect to capture them," I said. "Of course they won't settle then on the old terms."

He went back to "armistice" as it was on the western front in World War I. Both sides down arms, play ball between trenches, while leaders talk. China's civil war was different. America made it different when she air-lifted Chiang's forces into all those fortress cities of North China.

The conflict of peasant with town was there already. For thousands of years those walled cities had been strongholds of feudal lords against peasants. Then the towns became Japan's strongholds and afterward Chiang's. The peasants would have cheered Chiang if he had let them take the towns for China, giving them some honest government for their pains. When Chiang tried to rule them through those same traitor generals who had tried to rule them for Japan, the peasants weren't taking it. They had learned that they need not yield to **those** fortress cities any more.

By autumn of 1948 the People's Liberation Army was ready to take the cities. The Manchurian harvests were good. The surprise encirclements had worn down Chiang's armies and

netted most excellent American weapons for the victors. The cities, shut off by the peasants, were hungry. So the campaign began.

Tsinan first! A city of eight hundred thousand, capital of Shantung, a great walled fortress on the Yellow River, where the north-south railway line from Nanking to Tientsin meets the east-west line to the sea. For ten years Shantung peasants had resisted the raids from Tsinan that grabbed grain, raped women, seized recruits—raids launched first by the Japanese and then by Chiang's general, Wang Yao-wu. Tsinan was strong. The great river swirled in flood around its south and the Tao Range guarded the north. A thousand concrete forts with barbed-wire entanglements, moats, and pillboxes reinforced the ancient walls. But Tsinan for a long time had been hungry.

When Su Yu's army moved against Tsinan, hundreds of thousands of peasant men and women took part. Millstones whirled, grinding grain for the troops. The army advanced through triumphal arches, through villages hung with colored paper lanterns, through peasant crowds shouting: "Take Tsinan! Take Wang Yao-wu alive!" Bridegrooms left wedding feasts to join that advance. "We'll first take Tsinan and then celebrate."

Tsinan, with its great walls and its thousand forts, fell in a storming assault of eight nights and days. Wang Yao-wu, who had boasted a year earlier: "I have wiped out the Communist forces in Shantung," was caught by alert peasant militia as he lay in a cart disguised as a sick merchant fleeing the town.

At once it was seen that the victors had made thoughtful preparation for government. Three months before the assault seven thousand picked personnel had gathered in a small town to study city management for Tsinan, the city they were yet to take. Some were former Tsinan residents; some had experience in smaller city governments. Their future tasks were assigned two months before the battle began. City departments formed, chose skeleton personnel, drew up regulations. Maps of the city were thoroughly studied. Each of those seven thousand

future leaders learned the technique of his own job and the over-all city policy.

Three things are needed to handle a city: correct policy, trained personnel, co-operation of the population.

The "correct policy" was announced in advance by radio: "All life and property will be protected. Foreign consulates and foreign nationals will be protected if they obey the laws. Private industry and trade will be protected; let it go on as before. Schools and educational institutions should continue their work. Enterprises belonging to Chiang's government will be taken over by the People's Government. Let their managers continue the job pending take-over; those who do so will be rewarded; those who sabotage will be punished. No government officials will be arrested except arch war criminals and those who engage in armed resistance; let them continue to work and protect the property and documents of their institutions. They will get jobs at the discretion of the People's Government."

How was this policy to be told to the people of Tsinan? This was no village where one could just call a meeting. The answer was posters, posters, POSTERS! The first troops went through the breached walls, climbing great tumbled heaps of bricks, with a rifle in one hand and a roll of posters in the other. "Shoot, paste; shoot, paste," grinned a soldier. Posters flowered on every wall and people gathered to read. Drama troupes also came. Musical evenings offered to the populace included a two-hundred-voice cantata singing the famous "Yellow River song."

It moved the new Tsinan Trading Company with two hundred thousand bushels of wheat, selling cheaply to break the price. Grain was paid for clearing streets of wreckage, leveling barricades, burying the dead; all unskilled unemployed were invited to take part in this. Twenty registration offices listed government employees—teachers, policemen, engineers, and others—who wanted to work under the new regime. Those who didn't might leave; often they had friendly send-off parties.

Cleverly the conquerors put their official radio at the disposal

of American missionaries to send news home. A radio message went to C. S. Davies of Philadelphia: "Dear brother, fighting is over. City quiet. I am safe and well." The Tsinan Presbyterian Church radioed its American headquarters: "We are safe in our own home. Fighting surprisingly short. Army of liberation impresses by high morale and friendliness to people. They protect churches and schools, proclaim freedom of religion. On Sunday we held communion without hindrance."

Eight hundred miles north of Tsinan, Changchun next fell to Lin Piao's Manchurians. The wide boulevards and tall government buildings of this city were designed by the Japanese for their "capital of East Asia." When I saw Changchun in late 1946 as the advance post for General George C. Marshall's Executive Headquarters, it was already a sick town. No Communist-led armies yet threatened, but the peasants shunned Changchun. Their boycott grew for a year and became a siege. Lin Piao's men encircled Changchun in the winter of 1947-48 and closed in. Hunger reduced the town.

Changchun fell slowly with little battle. Two hundred thousand civilians slipped gradually out of the city and passed through the lines to temporary homes. Lin Piao's men reaped grain in the suburbs and loaned three thousand army carts to transport crops for surrounding peasants; none of it reached the town. Chiang dropped food by plane for his troops, but even the food brought friction. The Sixtieth Army of homesick Yunanese claimed that most of it went to "Chiang's own," the American-equipped New Seventh. Every soldier in Changchun knew the situation was hopeless but feared to surrender. Their officers had warned: "The Communists kill prisoners."

Lin Piao's army began the "shouting war." They yelled through megaphones: "Brothers, come over! We'll send you home! Join us to free your homes as we have ours."

Squad Leader Tang went over with seven men. The Changchun officers said: "They buried them alive." But Tang himself

was shouting that evening: "Brothers, they gave me food." Soon letters and presents were exchanged between besieged and besiegers. "Thanks for the cakes, but we southerners long for rice," wrote a man besieged in Changchun. "Find some southerner to shout to us. We do not clearly understand your tongue."

The homesick Yunnanese were the first to surrender. Chiang himself precipitated it. He ordered them to break out of Changchun and fight their way to Mukden through one hundred and fifty miles of hostile peasants. The Yunnanese general preferred to surrender to Lin Piao. This let the besiegers into the eastern part of the city. Here mediators from Chiang's other generals approached them. Even while they negotiated, common soldiers began running over, saying: "Don't trust that general. It is we who want to surrender." When the high command surrendered it had already lost its troops.

Then Mukden fell, a city of nearly two million, Manchuria's greatest city, hub of southern Manchurian railways, a center of mighty industry much ruined now by the fatalities of war: Japanese sabotage, Soviet removal of Japan's war plants, Kuomintang looting and graft. Chiang flew three times to save Mukden; each time he demoralized it more. Mukden fell in many preliminary battles and in much chaos. Commander Miang of Chiang's 59th Division radioed after his surrender: "I got five contradictory orders in one day. One said: 'Retreat.' The next said: 'Hold.' The next: 'Attack eastward over the river.' And then: 'Flee south.' As we fled south we met large masses of our main forces, shouting: 'Break through to the north!' On this my last three battalions got away from me." Thus three great Kuomintang armies, American-trained and -equipped, were wiped out west of Mukden. The booty in weapons was enormous.

When Mukden fell on November 2 to Lin Piao's troops, the press of the world acknowledged that the Chinese Communists were winning. Nearly a thousand miles to the south the East China People's Army, which had taken Tsinan, moved next on Hsuehchow, Chiang's greatest military bastion and gateway to



Nanking, and took it on December 2. Farther inland, Liu Po-cheng swept south toward Hankow, while, farthest of all, the peasants of Shensi advanced under Peng Teh-hwai toward Sian, the mighty walled capital of that bitter general who had taken Yen-an two years before.

All over North China, from the sea and a thousand miles inland, the Communist-led peasant armies advanced on the Chiang-held cities. Meanwhile Lin Piao's Manchurians, hardly resting from their victories at Changchun and Mukden, but increasing their ranks with the surrendered Kuomintang soldiers and their fire power with the captured American weapons, drove south on Peiping and Tientsin, those famous cities, the beautiful ancient capital and its great commercial port.

They marched on foot six hundred miles in twenty days, carrying equipment on their backs. They came in peasant carts, drawn by stubborn oxen or mules. They drove American trucks, trailing American guns taken in Manchuria. They crossed half-frozen rivers, smashing their way by grenades. They drove over bleak mountains and sandy wastes and through the rocky passes of the Great Wall. As they entered the Hopei plain thousands of peasant carts met them and moved with them, carrying grain and fodder. Fifty thousand peasants in one East Hopei county, working in snow and wind, restored one hundred and eighty miles of road for the trucks in thirty-six hours.

Suddenly Lin Piao's infantry left the peasant escort, raced the last seventy miles in twenty-four hours without food or rest, and went straight into attack, routing the surprised Kuomintang armies around Peiping.

It was Christmas Day when the People's Liberation Army reached the two famous universities, Tsinghua and Yenching, in the Peiping suburbs, and were met by the faculty and students, who awaited the army there. But the walled city of Peiping and the port Tientsin were finally taken several weeks later. The Communists proposed terms of surrender to save destruction in the towns. Tientsin's municipal council negoti-

ated, but Chiang's troops in the city resisted. Tientsin was taken on January 15 in a twenty-seven-hour assault.

Peiping became an example of "peaceful occupation." It was held by Fu Tso-yi, a provincial general under Chiang, listed by the Communists as a war criminal, subject to trial by a people's tribunal with possible death sentence and confiscation of his ill-gotten gains. The Communists had him surrounded in Peiping. Everyone knew they could take the city. Everyone also knew that whoever damaged that beautiful capital would be blamed by Chinese everywhere. So the Communists told Fu that if he would surrender Peiping undamaged he and his officers might keep not only their lives but their property. The Communists considered this property stolen from the people, but they figured that Peiping was cheap at the price.

General Fu Tso-yi yielded. A military committee of seven took charge of the occupation, three appointed by Fu and four by the Communists. Fu's troops, withdrawing to the suburbs, were reorganized as part of the People's Liberation Army. Kuomintang officers who preferred to go home were given three months' pay, transportation for themselves, their families, and their property, and certificates that they had shared in the "peaceful liberation of Peiping."

When Lin Piao's men marched in, the reporters of the world for the first time saw the new might of the Communist armies. The mechanized section alone took two hours to pass. There were steel-clad armored cars, hundreds of Dodge trucks pulling field guns or anti-aircraft equipment. None of it was a Russian gift; it was captured from America. Two miles inside the gates the trucks were covered with boys and girls and workers who climbed up to greet the victors. The soldiers waved paper banners given them by the crowd. Some of them had "Welcome, Friend," chalked on their backs.

Peiping became the center for the rapid organization of the new China. The new All-China Students' Federation met there on March 1, 1949, representing more than a million organized

students from universities and secondary schools on both sides of the battle lines. It was fitting that students should be the first to assemble. They had begun this revolution by their May Fourth Movement in 1919 in this same city, just thirty years before. On March 5 the committee of the Democratic League arrived from its exile in Hong Kong; it had been suppressed in Chiang's areas since October 1947. Nine political parties in all, which had led a precarious existence under Chiang, moved their headquarters to Peiping. Even some of Chiang's own delegates, sent to Peiping to discuss peace terms, decided to stay.

The All-China Women's Congress opened on March 25 in the gorgeous throne room of the Imperial Palace, once inaccessible to common folk. Now it became more brilliant with the silk banners of those who had been the least regarded sex. Some of them came across battle lines; some returned from Europe with the greetings of the world's women.

Mao Tze-tung took up residence on the same day, March 25. No longer a Yen-an cave, but the ancient capital of China was his headquarters now. Many of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China came with him. They had just concluded a plenary session, held to discuss problems posed by victory.

"The center of gravity" must henceforth be placed in the cities, Mao had stated at that session. "The period of using the countryside to encircle the cities has ended. The period of leading the countryside from the cities has begun."

The news from North China spread easily into the south through many reporters, through returning delegates, and through the trade that was quickly re-established between Tientsin and Shanghai by direct deals with Chinese shipping companies over the head of Chiang's government.

This, it was clear, was no new war-lord conquest, no tentative regime seeking aid and recognition from foreign power. It was government that had arrived, government such as neither Chiang

Kai-shek nor anyone else in China had hitherto been able to establish. This was seen in the definiteness with which the new leaders took over cities, banks, and big industries with little waste motion. It was seen in their advance plans for food supply, trade, and industry. It was clear from the help given by peasants, workers, young intellectuals, and old civil servants. Government had come to China, based on wide loyalties.

Even while Lin Piao's men marched south on Peiping, the peasants in a thousand villages prepared to feed that city when it should be freed. Grain, cooking oil, and other products came over the hills and across the Hopei plain on peasant backs, by cart and wheelbarrow. This peasant activity had its own transport system, its road signs, medical service, and police. Thirty thousand tons of grain were stockpiled, awaiting Peiping's liberation. In part this was government planning to cut food prices. In part it was free enterprise of peasants and merchants who trusted the new government to deal honestly with markets.

Most striking was the rallying of the industrial workers to protect property, which they spoke of as "the national wealth." In Chefoo the power-station workers went several days without food to stay in the plant and protect it from saboteurs. In Tsinan the waterworks employees barricaded themselves and their families in the plant and held it against last-minute destruction attempted by the Kuomintang. In Tientsin the biggest paper mill in China was saved by its workers from demolition by retreating troops. They first sealed the warehouses and posted sentries against straggling looters. When the Kuomintang troops then shelled the mill with incendiaries, three hundred workers stayed three days and nights in the compound, piling sandbags over inflammable material, removing the delicate, vital parts of machines to safe places, putting out fires that started on the roofs. They brought the mill through battle almost intact.

Not all workers did this spontaneously. Leadership was needed too. A Chinese Communist source admitted that when the first armed men straggled in to loot a certain Peiping factory some of

the workers joined the looting, hoping to steal something to feed their families till better days. One hundred workers at once organized secretly and put up notices reminding everyone that future jobs depended on keeping the plant in good shape. Workers' thefts after this were methodical; they hid key parts in their homes to make the machines not worth stealing by others. Later they brought the parts back.

Railway workers did a brilliant job of saving equipment. Sixteen of them from Harbin came into Mukden with Lin Piao's troops. They found the great railway junction a jumble of mines, live wires, fallen telegraph poles, no electric lights, Kuomintang snipers still lurking, and eleven hundred cars somewhere in the dark, which Chiang's planes would seek as target at dawn. Groping at night in zero weather, they found two locomotives, discovered oil and water, and, with poor brakes and no signal system, pulled trains out of the station all night, scattering them far away from the danger of bombing. Then the railway workers began repairing locomotives and cars from the scrap heap and building the "Tientsin Special," the "Peiping Special," to take food to those newly liberated towns.

The great Fushun coal mines near Mukden were brilliantly protected by the miners. They are the largest coal mines in the Far East, with twenty factories around them, precious as the base for future industrialization of China. Coal production had fallen to almost nothing under the frictions of Kuomintang rule. Thirty-six thousand miners and industrial workers were still there. Secret meetings in every mine and factory set up "protection committees." Workers in the big power plant kept off saboteurs by grenades. Miners removed key parts of coal trains so that coal could not be taken away. While battle raged in Mukden they mined a thousand tons of coal for the new regime.

The new government seemed to have common sense and decision. One of the first headaches in Tientsin was the presence of twenty thousand stray Kuomintang soldiers who fled there

from Mukden and for whom the local Kuomintang made no provision, letting them beg and pillage. They had terrorized many shops into closing. The new regime set up reception centers, announced by posters. Within two weeks they handled eighteen thousand of the men, either accepting them for training, hospitalizing them, or giving them railway passes home.

Four hundred labor disputes were mediated in Tientsin in the first three months. Owners were told to pay a living wage and were helped to do it. Workers were told not to bankrupt business. In the Kailan mines, for instance, the management had paid no wages for three months because they couldn't move the million tons of coal already mined. Both sides appealed to the Industrial Department of the North China government, which called them to a discussion. It lasted four days. The management agreed to pay all back wages at once and to accept certain safety suggestions demanded by the miners. The government gave them a loan, arranged for 1,700,000 pit props from Manchuria for the safety measures, cut their tax on coal export in half, and got the railways to haul 10,000 cars of coal for them daily.

With eyes on these actions in the north, the *Shanghai Commercial Gazette*, still under Chiang's rule, noted that the new regime: (1) tried to preserve existing forms of organization and industrial activity; (2) restored utilities rapidly; (3) was careful in the difficult task of "take-over" and made good advance preparations for it; (4) announced that production would be increased "with unprecedented speed." "That remains to be seen," said the *Gazette*, protecting its objectivity in the eyes of Chiang's police. Later the *Gazette's* representative went to Peiping to help plan the new coalition government. Shanghai merchants had accepted the Communists not as bandits but as a new authority that might be better than what had gone before.

These were indications that a government was coming into being that could command loyalty from the Chinese people and bring order in the Chinese land.

"Victory is only the first step," Mao Tze-tung had said in

March to his fellow Communists. "Only when China is transformed from an agricultural country to a country with developed industry, economically independent, then only can the problem of China's independence and sovereignty be solved."

Details were added by Jen Pi-shih of the Central Committee. It would take three to five years, he said, to repair damages of China's industrial plants. Even then, industry would furnish only 10 per cent of the country's production, the rest coming from agriculture and handicraft. He proposed to increase the industrial plants in ten to fifteen years so that they should give 30 to 40 per cent of the national wealth.

Most foreign experts thought it would take ten years or more merely to repair damages in Manchuria. Mao Tze-tung may know the Chinese people better than they. "A strong and prosperous China will soon come into being," he stated, giving as ground for this confidence: "Though the economic heritage is backward . . . the Chinese people are brave and industrious."

China's independence as a nation was still stressed as primary. Full independence was still in the future, needing an economic base. Why had Jen's figures been so flexibly indefinite? Because the actions of foreign governments were not yet sure.

At the May Day army review in Mukden the first planes of the People's Liberation Army roared overhead. They were P-51 fighters and B-25 bombers given by America to Chiang Kai-shek, flown by their pilots to a new allegiance.

"Informed sources" in Washington, London, and Paris began to say that China's new regime might have to be recognized "if it fulfilled international obligations." Was America preparing to ask the Chinese Communists to pay for the planes she had given to Chiang?

### 3. AMERICA'S CHANCE IN CHINA

When the first Hong Kong ships came to the new Tientsin, exchanging lubricating oil, paper, and trucks for bristles, soy

beans, and coal, they claimed 100 per cent profit on some voyages. Sailors of the S.S. *Fillmore*, the first American ship to clear from "liberated Tientsin," reported in San Francisco that they had seen no beggars, nobody had sneaked on board to steal, and that it was the first time this had happened in any port of Asia. The next ship, *China Victory*, was warned by United States Military Intelligence to keep still.

In Tientsin the British colony dreamed of big trade with a much more honest China. Two years earlier I had heard them hope that someday they would get the inside track since "America is so compromised with Chiang Kai-shek." American businessmen in Tientsin held meetings, protesting: "Why doesn't our State Department deal with this new regime? We'll lose the China trade."

The State Department chiefs had weightier worries than American trade in one port. They, with the high brass, had lost China. They might lose Asia. The four to six billion dollars of "China aid" had been much worse than wasted. It had equipped the strongest army ever seen in East Asia, and this army was under a Communist leadership that was calling America "imperialist." And that wasn't the worst. The world concept of containing Communism inside the U.S.S.R.—surrounded by American air bases that could bomb it to bits from Greenland and Saudi Arabia at once—was destroyed. Communism had broken out to half a billion Chinese. Who knew where it would stop? Not even the most industrious stockpiling could now atom-bomb Communism to death without obliterating the world. Some new approach must be found.

No wonder the Washington policy makers seemed dazed. Did they want to deal with this new China? And could they? Did they want to smash it or contain it? And could they do that? Even American power was finite. What did these Chinese want?

The Chinese had told them very deftly a whole year earlier by a greeting card sent to the business firms of Tientsin on Chinese New Year's of 1948. At that time the Tientsin foreign



colony thought of Communists as those guerrillas who occasionally cut railroads or raided munition dumps in the suburbs. The municipal council had given millions for a great earthen wall with a moat around the town to keep the annoying fellows out. But the New Year's cards from the Communists to the business firms got in.

"We wish you long life and prosperous business. If we should take the city in this new year, do not be alarmed. We shall restore order quickly and welcome your business."

Tientsin's foreign colony exploded with laughter. But Lin Piao's troops took the city in just a year. They restored order quickly. They welcomed business. Most of the foreign firms stayed. Perhaps they had hardly noticed all the meaning of that greeting card, so gently was it worded. Business was welcome, but the Chinese would take the city. They, not the foreigners, would restore order. The order would be Chinese.

China's ports and territory have not fully belonged to the Chinese for more than a hundred years. In all those years foreigners have had rights on Chinese soil. Great Britain first forcibly opened China to the opium trade and also to cheap manufactured goods by the Opium War in 1840-42. Shanghai, Tientsin, and most Yangtze River ports grew up as "foreign concessions," ruled by foreign law and protected by foreign troops. When these lost their legal status—some through World War I and the rest through China's 1925-27 revolution—special rights for special foreigners remained. Japan's particular privileges in selected parts of China ended only with Japan's defeat in war. Then America got special rights and paid for them by loans to Chiang. These rights have ended now. Most good Americans thought piously of all we gave to Chiang Kai-shek as "aid to China." So did politely bowing Japanese tell me in 1940 of the financial sacrifice they made "to help our sister state of Manchukuo." They also were sincere. The Chinese saw it differently. And China now has won the floor to speak.

What are these new leaders saying? They say first of all that

China is a sovereign nation. They demand that foreign powers take their armed forces out of China "quickly." Armed troops of foreign powers have been on China's soil one hundred years!

What do they mean by "sovereign"? They show in actions day by day. They refused to recognize consular officers or ambassadors of foreign powers that had not recognized them. The U.S.S.R. got the point and closed its consulates as the People's Liberation Army came in, waiting until relations should be settled at high levels. We Americans left our consulates as "listening posts" and were annoyed when they found no access to a government to which they had not been accredited; we were outraged when, after "listening" for six months without accreditation, the consulates were called "spies." We Americans have been spoiled by the white man's habits in Asia and by dealing too exclusively with debtor nations. We have yet to learn the dignity of other people's governments. These new Chinese have "face."

Their dignity and sovereignty came out also in the demand for "a controlling voice in the peace treaty with Japan," on the ground that "the Chinese people have sacrificed the most" and that "the great victory of the Chinese people has changed the face of Asia." For four years General MacArthur has unilaterally decided the fate of Japan and has made the Russians, the British, and the Australians accept his decisions. These new Chinese refuse to approve MacArthur's actions on many important points. Americans may laugh at their announcement as "propaganda." The Japanese do not laugh. They know that no peace treaty rejected by this new China will work.

These are international indications of a government in China that is "national" in a sense the so-called "nationalists" of the Kuomintang never knew, that expresses the dignity of the Chinese people standing on their soil and facing the world.

What does this government offer America? It offers friendly relations; it offers business. "We are willing to establish equal friendly relations with all countries, including the United States

of America, and to protect the rightful interests of all nationals of foreign countries in China, including American nationals," they have stated officially.

They made it clear in Tientsin that they welcomed business. This was plain not only from the first huge profits of Hong Kong shippers, which might be temporary, but from the courtesy and speed with which the new officials adapted themselves. Their first regulations allowed only barter. It seemed reasonable to the Chinese not to send good things out of the country unless they were sure of getting equally good things back. Foreign firms denounced this "return to the Dark Ages." They were astounded when the Chinese Communists invited foreign businessmen to submit proposals for improving trade.

In Shanghai the new regime showed that it had gained experience quickly from three months in Tientsin. Foreign businessmen said that the regulations "avoided the mistakes made by Chiang." Men who had foreign exchange abroad were not compelled to turn it over to the government, as Chiang had ordered; they might use it to buy equipment and materials from abroad. Firms selling goods abroad did not have to barter; they got certificates negotiable in the market. Twelve Chinese banks and nine foreign banks were authorized to handle foreign exchange; these included three American banks: National City, Chase National, and Bank of America. Tonnage duties on ships, first set at twice the prewar rates, were promptly cut in half when foreign shippers said that this would stop ships from calling and proved it by giving the rates in world ports.

The new regime, in short, seemed businesslike. Americans and British expressed themselves as "amazed and gratified at its mildness, good sense, and quick decision."

The classic example that surprised everybody who had expected them to be dogmatic Communists was their treatment of the Shanghai Power Company. Here was a clear example of that "American imperialism" they denounced. This American-owned company supplied Shanghai's light and power, using

imported fuel oil. It was on the eve of a big expansion into a huge power monopoly for the whole Shanghai-Nanking-Hangchow triangle, all the cities at the mouth of China's greatest river. The capital for this was coming from American taxpayers in a roundabout way through Chiang Kai-shek by what was called the Sino-American Bilateral Agreement of July 1948, one of those agreements so typical of American postwar policy by which American taxpayers enrich American private monopolies in foreign lands. Chinese patriots said that particular Bilateral Agreement was "worse than the shackling treaties of Japan," that it was "throwing China's sovereignty at the feet of America." Perhaps Americans would also do name calling if a foreign monopoly owned New York's power and was expanding to Boston and Philadelphia.

Many people expected the incoming Communist regime to confiscate this "imperialist" company as the Japanese had done during the war with Japan. The power company let its fuel reserves fall to a two weeks' supply as the Communists came in. The new regime, instead of siezing the reserves or the property, brought \$100,000 in gold bars to the company as a gold-bar loan without interest, to buy fuel abroad. Why? Because Shanghai needed power and could get it only thus. These Communists faced facts and dealt politely. Did they also deal shrewdly and get some concessions from that power company in return for their loan? That's their secret; big moneylenders usually do. A news item later said that the company was re-converting furnaces from imported fuel oil to Chinese coal. It was adjusting itself to China.

That deal illustrated a statement Mao Tze-tung had made. He said China would not have full sovereignty until she had economic independence. She clearly hadn't full sovereignty yet when a foreign monopoly could shut off power from China's largest city. The Chinese Communists did not close their eyes to their country's weakness nor gloss it over with grandiloquent words as Kuomintang officials once tried to do. They faced the

weakness, analyzed it, made what terms they could. They didn't intend to stay weak.

Where will American business find such a market as this awakened China? Feudal lands with starving peasants and thieving officials are not good markets. The old dream of "four hundred million customers" for cheap American products fades before the brighter daylight reality of a brave, industrious people, owning their own land, who will stir its soil overtime with sticks today that they may harness the Yangtze rapids tomorrow. Here is a market for American capital goods that might stave off an American depression for years. Here is much more, a new power whose self-reliant people, developing their own land, can be partners in world peace.

Our businessmen knew of this market. They sought it through Chiang. They sought it through American monopolies controlling China's economic life and forcing her, when America should demand, to become the battleground for war against the U.S.S.R. That was the essence of the Truman doctrine and of the secret Wedemeyer report of 1947, now revealed by the White Paper. A Communist-dominated China would be "inimical to the United States' strategic interests," since it would "deny us important air bases for use as staging areas for bombing attacks," but an anti-Communist China would "be an important ally" not only in air bases but "from the standpoint . . . of man power." China cannot be had on those terms any more.

If we want China's friendship or her markets we Americans have first a liability to face. In the past four years our foreign policy in China has bombed to bits a century of good will.

Four years ago most Chinese loved America. To them America was the country that long ago won its own independence by a war against an imperialist power, that nation that had not imposed "unequal treaties" on China nor exacted "foreign concessions," that had used its share of the Boxer indemnity to

educate young Chinese. They knew us also as their ally against Japan.

Sophisticated Chinese knew that there had always been different kinds of Americans. A commodore named Tatnall in 1859-60 went in for the gunboat diplomacy, shot up the China coast, and produced an "American concession" in Tientsin. But President Lincoln gave it back. Later America's Open Door policy never allowed the Chinese either to open their door or shut it, but insisted that if any nation opened anything in China, America got in too. Owen Lattimore neatly called it "hitchhiking imperialism" or the "me too" policy. That use of the Boxer indemnity money was no altruism but farsighted business. It has created a Chinese educated class steeped in American ways of thought. Nor did America fight Japan for China. She fought when she was attacked in her own harbor. Then she proved a strong ally, turning the tide of battle in East Asia.

Because of this Chinese peasants gave their lives freely to rescue American airmen shot down over China. Even a young boy on the coast near Hong Kong evaded Japanese sentries again and again to feed a hidden American and bring him through to safety. A Chinese mother in Hopei smothered her baby to death in an underground dugout lest its wailing reveal the hidden American pilot to the Japanese passing overhead. Such was the loyalty of the Chinese people to America, their ally in their "war of independence."

All that loyal good will has been destroyed in the past four years.

"America" has become a name that frightens children. When Dr. Magdalen Robitzer, the kindly UNRRA dentist, went into a Yen-an nursery to tend to the children's teeth before the evacuation, her white skin started panic. "The American! The American!" shrieked the youngsters, rushing into the cold outdoors. They were finally calmed by their teacher's assurance that

the doctor was not an American but a Czech. They had never heard of Czechs, but the word was neutral. The dreaded Americans had not arrived.

What did those six-year-olds know of America? They knew that they ran to the air-raid shelter for safety from the "American planes." They knew that their fathers had said good-by and that they were setting out with their mothers into the unknown winter of the hills. They knew they must travel at night because the "American planes" swooped low by day. All this terror and loss was tied in their childhood minds with the word "American." Let diplomats and merchants of death explain that those planes were "aid to China." Chinese children and peasants knew that they came from America. They knew that they came to kill.

They killed women shopping in village markets, for market crowds were "targets." Long lines of peasants trying to repair the broken dikes and save the crops—these were a "target" too. There was that first civilian hospital taken by UNRRA to the people of North Kiangsu, who had suffered more than most from the Japanese and who were ridden with every kind of disease and quite without medicine. UNRRA officially informed Chiang's military of the location that it might be protected. The planes came over, swept low to identify it, and returned the next day for a "careful, methodical strafing," in the UNRRA doctor's words. In all this America was partner, her planes the instrument.

Shantung peasants had a grim joke about Americans. They suffered especially because they were so near the American naval and air base at Tsingtao, where the planes took off under the aegis of American instructors to shoot up the countryside. Thousands of acres of Shantung's flat land was unplowed, affording no shelter. Peasants in the hilly country had shelter caves big enough to hold an ox team. These peasants said that there was one good thing about the American training at Tsingtao. The Americans "kept such regular mealtimes" that a man could count on plowing "before nine in the morning, after five in the

evening, and between twelve and two at noon." There was not much left of the old good will for America in that jest.

Not only peasants have turned against America. Nine political parties of China—the Democratic League, the Save the Nation Association, and other small parties hardly known abroad—handed a document to the United Nations on October 21, 1948, that should have received attention in the American press. It was an appeal for help, drawn up in proper legal form, against the "American aggressions" and the "unequal treaties forced by America on China." These nine parties alleged that the huge sums given by America to Chiang's government had been of no benefit to China, having gone either for civil war or to enrich corrupt bureaucrats. They charged America with giving these sums in order to get from Chiang certain treaties that "oppressed China."

Nine of these treaties were listed, including "memoranda." They had fine official names: The Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation, or the Agreements on Educational Fund and Cultural Co-operation, or the Sino-American Bilateral Agreement. By means of these treaties, the nine parties alleged, China's finance, currency, trade, economic life, raw materials, army and navy, educational institutions, and even her methods of land reform were made dependent on America. The Chinese people lumped these agreements together under the name of the "treason treaties."

Such is the liability Americans face in seeking either friendship or business with China. But America has assets too.

America's industrial power is the first asset. America is the only country that can give the Chinese the industrialization they want as fast as they want it. The Chinese know it. The Russians know it too. A Russian said to me in early 1949 in Moscow: "The Chinese must get their industrialization from America. We can't give it to them." After a moment's thought he added: "Perhaps they will prefer their independence even with slower industrialization. It will depend on America's terms."



America's second asset consists in the large number of Chinese who have studied in American institutions. They speak English; they know American ways. There are hundreds of these for every Chinese who speaks Russian or who studied in Moscow. Even the Russians seem to recognize this natural "sphere of influence." As a trivial example I noted that at the strongly pro-Russian Women's International Democratic Congress in Budapest in December 1948, the Koreans and Mongolians were housed with the Russians, but the Chinese went in the Americans' hotel as if they belonged.

A third asset is the wide fund of knowledge Americans have of all parts of China, gained through missionary work and trade for more than a century. The common American assumption that Russians have deeply penetrated China because of the Communist victories is not borne out by facts. The Russians have special knowledge of northern Manchuria as far south as Port Arthur, for they built the railroad and there has been a Russian population there for fifty years. Elsewhere in China the American correspondents, missionaries, businessmen, and even the United States Army have had longer, more continuous contact, not only with Chiang's areas, but also with the Communist areas, than Russians have had.

Far from being general headquarters for the Chinese Communists' victories, Moscow seems to have been as much surprised by them as the United States State Department was. Why not? Lin Piao himself, who took Manchuria, later told the All-China Students' Congress: "The speed of the victories was beyond our expectations." If even the Chinese Communists were surprised, it is not unlikely that Moscow was, especially when, as we saw in discussing strategy, at least some Russian military experts thought the Chinese Communists were losing when they evacuated so many cities in 1947.

An indication of this surprise was the almost complete silence with which the Moscow press met those stupendous Chinese victories in late 1948. The taking of Mukden, which flamed in

banner headlines across the world, got six lines on a back page in Moscow newspapers. There was no more China news till Hsueh fell a month later. Six lines again appeared: "The North Shensi radio reports that the Chinese People's Liberation Army has taken Hsueh, the strongest military base of the Kuomintang Army north of the Yangtze." Period! That was all! Chiang's strongest bastion in North China fell and gets neither headlines, front page, nor editorial comment!

The mystery of that reticence was widely discussed in Moscow. Comment ranged from the hopes of foreign diplomats that the rise of this new "possibly independent" Communist power might be "dismaying to the Kremlin," to the excitement of Russian factory workers who held enthusiastic factory meetings on the bare news of those six lines. I heard one Moscow editor exult over the phone to a publisher: "They're winning! Doesn't that prove their theories right?" Before I had time to wonder just what the Russians had been quietly thinking about Mao's theories, he turned to me almost angrily. "You should have stayed in Yen-an! You should have sent out news to convince the world that the loss of Yen-an was not defeat!" The soundest comment seemed to be that of a Russian friend: "It seems that in view of these victories our estimate of China is being reconsidered at high levels and meanwhile our newspapers keep still." By the time Lin Piao took Peiping the Russian commentators caught up with him in long, scholarly analyses of Chinese Communist victories.

Today the Russians begin with no inside track, no exceptional knowledge. They have, however, an excellent reputation in China because ever since they gave back their "concessions" more than thirty years ago they have treated China consistently as an equal, sovereign nation, and because they did not intervene in China's civil war but withdrew their troops. These facts, together with the fact that both Russia and China are run by Communists, may give Russia the inside track soon.

To some extent that depends on America. For America's

fourth asset, if she really seeks friendship and business in China, is strangely enough the character of the Chinese Communists and of their leader, Mao Tze-tung. Despite their denunciation of America's foreign policy as imperialistic, the Chinese Communists have taught the Chinese people to distinguish sharply between "American imperialism" and the American people.

I found this distinction everywhere in the new China. Peasants of Broken Cliffs Village, on learning that I was an American, consoled me with: "Well, there are good and bad Americans, as there are good and bad Chinese, but this American government of yours and our Chiang Kai-shek are bad." That county militia review in Honan first gave polite cheers for the "long friendship of Chinese and American peoples" and then passed that firm resolution bidding me take my ships out of Tsingtao. In an East China hospital, where wounded men lay discussing the "American weapons" that wounded them, a soldier was heard to explain: "The trouble is not with the American people but with Tu Lu-man [Truman] and his reactionary government. If Lu So-fu [Roosevelt] had lived it might have been better." I could multiply examples from every province and town.

Americans have thus the heavy burden of their government's recent policies in approaching the new China of today. But if they quickly, firmly, and clearly scrap those policies and offer honest friendship and honest business, they will have probably more advantages in dealing with the new China than will the people of any other nation.

Strong interests in America already show that they will not want friendship or business with this new China. Shall we build up a country that will side with Russia in a crisis? they say. This question must be faced frankly, for on it depends America's path in peace or war. How far will the new China side with the Soviet Union? Will Mao be a "Kremlin satellite" or a "Tito?"

This book has been wasted paper unless it has shown that the Chinese are nearly half a billion people who are much awake

and who intend to be masters in their own land. The Chinese Communists won leadership, not by Moscow arms or gold, but by arousing the Chinese people to satisfy their own needs. The first of these needs today, as Mao himself proclaimed, is national independence. That was America's first need in 1776, before she could develop her West. Chiang fell not because of corruption; all Chinese rallied to his corrupt government when he led them in unity against the invading Japanese. Chiang fell when he launched war that split the nation's unity and signed "treason treaties" to pay for his arms.

No one can hold power in China today who sacrifices China's interests to any foreign power. Mao Tze-tung himself has helped to make this impossible. Even if he were not a patriot, he is too much of a realist to dream of selling out China. He could not if he would. But China's interests are not those that Washington prescribes to her. China has many common interests with the U.S.S.R.

The first common interest is in the peace of a long frontier, twice as long and far more complex than the American-Canadian border. China will not be drawn into a war with Russia on that border; any man or nation who seeks this will be accounted an enemy. Mao Tze-tung said flatly that if America attacks the U.S.S.R., China will side with Russia. He spoke as a Communist who cannot conceive that the U.S.S.R. should break the peace. He spoke also as a Chinese who knows that the Chinese people could more easily endure atom bombing from America than all-out war on that long border.

A second common interest may well be the joint development of modern transport across Asia, opening new riches and connecting backward peoples with the world's life. The Trans-Manchurian Railway to Dairen, the wartime highway across Sinkiang, should be only the first of the great transcontinental lines. This natural development was hampered in the past by the laziness of old, despotic empires and the rivalries of imperialist powers. Today's growth should be quick, inevitable.

China will gain land routes to Europe, Russia a many-sided access to the Pacific. Scores of ancient peoples, locked for long centuries in the Asian continent, will build their own sections of railway; their way to the world is opened by two nations whose policy toward minor nationalities will not impose the extinction the red Indians suffered when America developed her West. As the world's greatest continent seeks its shipping, new ports will grow on the China coast that may rival the North American ports. The United States might for decades have orders for railway and port equipment, but this presupposes a willingness to help the development of Russia, which is counter to American policy today. A change in this policy might stimulate an expansion that would increase prosperity for the world.

How will this new China vote in the United Nations? She will vote for what she considers her interests; one need not be surprised if on many questions these coincide with the interests of the U.S.S.R. Some Americans will find this sufficient reason for keeping her out and even for breaking the United Nations rather than admit a China whose vote we no longer control. Others may realize that a Security Council so balanced that Great Britain or France might occasionally disagree with the United States, seeking support from Russia and China, would give more reality to the United Nations than the automatic majorities America secures today. The United Nations might at last become an equal exchange between sovereign states, in which something was actually settled, instead of a whipping post for Russia from which she escapes by a veto. No vital interest of America would be endangered; the veto will work for her too! It might be wholesome for our diplomats to have to win majorities by other methods than the pressure of loans.

And what of Dairen, Port Arthur, the factories the Russians took from Manchuria, the minerals of Sinkiang? Those are China's problems, not America's. Must we Americans then manage the world? I venture a guess that the new China will be glad to share the railroad the Russians built on the terms Chiang

signed and America blessed. Those terms give Russia a "free port" in Dairen for goods from half a continent seeking warm-water shipping; they do not give a free port to America, who is on the other side of the globe. Those terms include a Sino-Soviet naval base at Port Arthur, with Russia paying for the installations, which is as natural as any American base in the Caribbean. Chiang didn't use his half of the naval base; the new China may. As for those Russian removals from Mukden, the Chinese have good bookkeepers and will not need American figures on what they lost. When they have time to take that rather complicated inventory, if they find that Russian troops removed more than the Japanese war industry that was pledged booty, they can put in a bill. Or they can let it go as payment for driving the Japanese out of Manchuria, in which Russia did a clean, quick job.

That's China's affair. Our affair is American business and American friendship with nations. If the powers that dictate American policy don't want any truck with this new China, we shall sit on our stockpile of bombs while the floods of our homemade depression rise around us. The rest of the world will trade with China, no matter what we say. Already the British Foreign Office spokesman has expressed a wish for such dealing. Even in MacArthur's constituency, Tokyo, top Japanese industrialists have formed a society for trade with the new China and have asked Sanzo Nosaka, a secretary of the Japanese Communist Party, for advice on how to approach the Chinese Communists! For Japan must have good relations with China or be supported by America for years.

Mao Tze-tung has warned the Chinese people that only the U.S.S.R. and its friends will be friendly, that the American government and other "imperialist nations" will destroy the new China if they can. What else has America's past policy left for him to say? What else does America's present policy indicate in Greece, in Turkey, in the world-wide ring of air and naval bases set up to "contain Communism"? What else do all these

reports mean now revealed in the United States' White Paper, showing that every possible method has been and is being considered, from a United Nations' mandate for Manchuria to an armed blockade around China and the inciting of armed revolts within it, to contain and destroy this new China of Mao Tze-tung? Mao has said: "We must either kill the tiger or be eaten by it." That is strong talk. But the "tiger" is not America; it is "imperialism," which the American people also fought in their day. Mao has stated that American monopoly capital is the world base today for the reactionaries of all nations. Most intelligent Americans say the same when they are not momentarily dizzied by the war scare against the U.S.S.R.

In the same statement in which Mao welcomed the U.S.S.R. as a natural friend of the new China he included also "the workers and the peoples of all nations." He considers the American people as China's natural ally and friend. The forces of world imperialism, based on Wall Street, are, in his view, the new China's enemy. They may blockade her or even send armed expeditions against her. Mao added words of realistic and almost brutal challenge: "They will do this if it is possible for them to do so."

Is it possible, then, for the chiefs of American monopoly capital, leading the reactionary forces of the world, to destroy this new China? It is not.

So the cold war began to die even in Europe as the Chinese People's Liberation Army won. America's hotheads saw that victory in a third world war was now impossible, even with the atom bomb. Russia's tension in Europe also relaxed, since her long border in Asia was secure. Hope appeared that world war might now be permanently prevented by the rise of this new and stable power.

This placed a choice before the American people who must pay the bills for their foreign policies and perhaps must pay the wars. Should they try any longer to settle the whole world's problems, from Prague to Dairen? Should they fight to make this

“the American century,” to enforce the American way of life, financed by American taxes, around the world—and inevitably fail? Or should they greet the century of the common man, in which America’s foreign policy was just to be “good neighbor”? The victories of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army pose that question. On our answer depends the American people’s future, but not China’s. America may determine China’s speed, but not her goal.

For China is four hundred and fifty million people. Their past for a hundred years was determined by every other nation. But now they have conquered their country. China’s future will be determined by the Chinese.





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