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Yenan in June 1937:  
Talks with  
the Communist Leaders

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T. A. BISSON

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陸世驥題

Yenan in June 1937:  
Talks with  
the Communist Leaders

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Center for Chinese Studies  
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T A. Bisson's first book was *Japan In China* (Macmillan, 1938), written during the year of the Yen-an trip here described. He had been Far Eastern staff member of the Foreign Policy Association since 1929, preceded by graduate work in Chinese studies at Columbia and a China teaching period in 1924-28, first at a middle school in Hwaiyuen, Anhwei, then at Yen-ching University in Peking. In 1943, after wartime government service as economic analyst with the Board of Economic Warfare, he joined the International Secretariat of the Institute of Pacific Relations. The Secretariat published two of his books in 1945, *America's Far Eastern Policy* and *Japan's War Economy*.

In 1945-47 he was in Japan, first with the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, then as adviser to the Chief, Government Section, GHQ, SCAP. *Prospects for Democracy in Japan* (Macmillan, 1949) analyzed the entrenchment of old-line party leaders and business interests in government power. Publication of *Zaibatsu Dissolution in Japan* (University of California Press, 1954) came at the end of a 1948-53 professorship in the Department of Political Science at Berkeley.

During the late 'fifties and most of the 'sixties Mr. Bisson developed a pioneer small-college program of international studies at Western College for Women, Oxford, Ohio. His most recent publication has been *The United States and Viet Nam: Two Views* (Public Affairs Pamphlets, No. 391, August 1966).

# Foreword

There seems to be a time, in the history of revolutions—the time when John Reed wrote *Ten Days that Shook the World*, when Edgar Snow wrote *Red Star Over China*, when Herbert Matthews penetrated to the mountains of Oriente and came out with Castro's story—when the revolutionary leaders are extremely open, buoyant, confident. They have come through the desperate crisis passage which determines whether a revolution is going to succeed or fail. They can see the landscape of the future opening out before them, and as professional revolutionaries they are willing to predict, with an assurance that astonishes the rest of us, the course to be trodden through that still uncharted landscape. The outstanding thing about these conversations in Yen-an, recorded in Bisson's notes, is their astonishing clarity and prescience.

I will not comment on them in detail. They speak for themselves. I will add only a few personal notes. I was the man who planned the details of our route to Yen-an, knowing that officially the Kuomintang were permitting journalists and writers to get through to Yen-an but in fact were throwing obstacles in the way; and I was the man who found the Swedish mechanic, Effie Hill, in Sian, and persuaded him to drive us.

On the way up to Yen-an I worried about the possibility that I might have to be the interpreter between the Chinese leaders and the American interviewers. It has been my experience that interpreting is a desolating occupation. You have to concentrate so intently on each phrase, to be sure that you translate accurately, that at the end you have only a hazy idea of the interview as a whole. Actually we found in Yen-an (as I might have expected) that the Chinese interpreters were splendidly qualified and competent. I could therefore sit on the sidelines and get the "feel" of the proceedings.

It was an extraordinary experience. When an interview is going on, if you know both languages but are an auditor, not a participant, you can observe the art that can be deployed in such a conversation. The skilled man, when he is being interviewed, answers the interviewer's first question and then, while his answer is being translated back, infers from the first question (and later the subsequent questions) what the interviewer is driving at. This in turn enables him to answer in such a way that the interviewer, in fact, somewhat modifies the questions he was originally going to ask, and so the man who is being interviewed can largely shape the course of the interview. Apart from that, here were two Americans, not at all concerned with the subtleties of Marxist doctrine. They were not asking: "are you, in this, following the Stalinist line?" or "what about the Trotskyist position on this point?" They were intent on immediate

issues rather than the future, with some play-back on turning points during the 'thirties.

These questions were being answered patiently, courteously, and in very specific detail by the top men of the Chinese Communist Party. Anybody looking back now at Bisson's record of these conversations can see that the answers provided an astonishingly complete intelligence report on the program and intentions of the Communists, which they revealed fearlessly because they were confident that they already stood at a historical juncture from which they could clearly see the way forward. Whether Chiang Kai-shek honestly implemented the new United Front or treacherously sabotaged it (or was forced to sabotage it by "class contradictions" in his own party) they were sure that the tide of the coming war of survival against Japan would sweep more and more mass support to their side—and they were not in the least afraid that their position would be weakened or their actions cramped if Chiang Kai-shek knew all about what they thought.

There is another human detail that I think is most revealing of Chairman Mao's mind. Bisson mentioned Mao's effort to persuade Effie Hill, our Swedish mechanic-driver, to stay in Yen-an and take charge of the maintenance and repair of Yen-an's battered fleet of trucks and cars. Now Effie was a prime example of that picaresque genus, "the parson's profligate son," of whom there were quite a lot in old China. His parents were Swedish Lutheran missionaries. He had grown up on a sector of the Inner Mongolian frontier long ago settled by Chinese colonists where the local Chinese dialect (which was in fact his native language) was considered by other Chinese to be especially uncouth and comic. He had a rare gift of clowning in this language, to attract laughter and sympathy. With an incomplete education he had drifted about Northwest China for a good many years, although still a young man. He had driven cars for Chinese merchants, Chinese warlords, and the Sven Hedin Sino-Swedish Expedition in Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang. He had an incredible knowledge of the seamy side of frontier life—brothel slang, drinking slang, folklore, bandit lore.

At the same time Effie, in spite of his fantastically complete understanding (in certain ways) of his special Chinese milieu, had also a kind of racist contempt for it. His attitude was, "this is a world of skulduggery and crooked dealing. I know the way these Chinese think—but with my extra margin of being a white man, I can always out-doublecross them." Socially, I think, he would have to be called a lumpen-bourgeois. He knew little of politics except on the level of "who gets away with the boodle," but he had a detestation of communism. He must have had a deep instinct that it would ruin his raffish way of life.

It is interesting that Chairman Mao, while he was polite, considerate, and patient with us Americans, really tried as hard as he knew how to

retain this déclassé Swede in Yen-an. And why not? American intellectuals come a dime a dozen. There is a new crop every generation. But a European motor mechanic, with an earthy command of a genuinely peasant dialect, able to show what you do with machinery and explain how you do it—that would be a treasure. I am glad to be able to record also the opinion of Effie Hill, the gut-reaction anti-Communist. On the way back from Yen-an, I asked him, “Well, now that that’s over, what do you think of Mao Tse-tung?” His answer was, “I’ve been with all kinds—merchants, warlords, intellectuals, Kuomintang political big-shots. But this is the only Chinese I have seen who could unite China.”

Bisson has described how Edgar Snow helped us in making contacts for going to Yen-an. It is with both pride and sadness that I date this from Ed’s house in Switzerland.

Eysins, Vaud  
Switzerland  
Aug 1972

OWEN LATTIMORE

## Preface

The materials for this brief monograph come from two small notebooks, both written in pencil but still entirely legible (*see photograph 1*). One is a journal of the events of our trip, including the days spent at Yen-an. The other contains the notes taken during the interviews with the Communist leaders. That they have stayed with me through the many moves in the years since is testimony to the importance I attached to them, though until recently I had not thought of using these sources for a full and considered account. By now the camera shots have acquired a special value, not so much for the Yen-an scenes of 1937 as for the faces and figures of Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, and Chu Teh, shown in their early middle age: Chou, the youngest, was then 37.

As told by the notebooks, the story is in three parts: the interviews, the four days at Yen-an, and the road-and-river adventures of a trip by car between Sian and Yen-an in time of spring flood. Some of Mao's 1937 statements have an extraordinary relevance to the events of today. The reception of President Nixon at Peking in 1972 merely underlines Mao's earlier dictum on the requirements of a pragmatic Communist policy. His two interviews, as I indicate in my discussion, show an exceptional clarity of thought and expression, even when taken down in rough notes through an interpreter. For some of his references to events of the 1930s I have nevertheless felt it necessary to insert parenthetical explanations. Such references were clear at the time, but much less so with the passage of 35 years. A few footnotes to the interviews with Chu Teh and Chou En-lai are also explanatory or else serve to carry forward later developments on the subject in question.

The concluding chapter gives some expression to the feelings stirred by a first-hand sight of Yen-an, not unlike those of Edgar Snow or of later foreign visitors who saw it during the war. Our visit came at a time when the Kuomintang-Communist united front negotiations had already reached a large measure of agreement. That event marked a watershed in modern Chinese history. Drawing on our talks at Yen-an, and on my own knowledge of this period, I have tried to suggest the centrality of its role through the war and in the postwar *dénouement*.

T. A. BISSON

June 30, 1972

# I

## The Setting

In 1937 a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship had enabled me to spend the entire year in the field working on a study of China-Japan relations. The first months in Japan were followed by two weeks of travel and observation in Korea and Manchuria. By late March my wife and I were settled comfortably in Peking. In many ways it was like a homecoming to us. There were old friends from our language school days, and old faculty colleagues of mine from Yenching University. During these last prewar months the city was a lively and fascinating place. Edgar Snow was there, working on the first draft of *Red Star Over China*. News correspondents, visiting scholars, and resident students, European and American, were met on every hand.

It must have been in April that Owen Lattimore approached me with a suggestion that we make a try for a visit to Yen-an. At first glance the difficulties seemed almost too great, but we clung to the idea and began to explore ways and means. Such a trip fitted in nicely with my project, and more so as the rumored Kuomintang-Communist negotiations came to assume a central position in the Chinese political scene. My talks with Nanking officials in May, taken with events as the spring wore on, served to make it seem both logical and necessary.

In these early months of 1937 a primary focus of developments lay in Japan. The highlight of my stay there had been the February national election, with its clear demonstration of the strong pro-party and anti-militarist sentiment running in the electorate. But the non-party, or really anti-party, "national union" cabinet eventually formed by Prince Konoye on June 3 starkly repudiated the electoral mandate. In talks early that month in Peking and Tientsin I expressed the view that it represented a war cabinet. Chinese friends whom I saw during the spring tended at first to stress an apparent relaxation of Japanese pressures; but by early June, before we left Peking, this feeling had become much less sanguine. At Yen-an we were to find that a Japanese attack was held to be a certainty; only the timing of the attack was in question.

During these months the political pattern in China was subtly shifting, and marked by much uncertainty. Only later could it be seen that the underlying signs pointed toward a wider acceptance of Nanking's primacy on the basis of its firmer stand against Japanese aggression. Civil disunity was being overcome. Kwangtung had come under Nanking's control, facilitating hurried completion of the Canton-Hankow railway line. The

neighboring Kwangsi leaders, Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi—most strongly anti-Japanese of the regional satraps and long at odds with Chiang's non-resistance policy—now seemed to be working with Nanking. On May 11 General Sung Che-yuan, the Peking-Tientsin area leader, went into a two-months' retirement at Loling, his birthplace, taken to escape pressure on a scheme involving Japanese exploitation of North China resources. Such pressure itself belied Japan's mask of moderation. On the Chinese side the incident was doubly significant: as a sign of Nanking's stiffer resistance to Japanese demands, and of its growing authority over the semi-autonomous leaders in the north.

The linchpin of this unification process lay elsewhere—in the new relations apparently being established by Chiang Kai-shek with the Yen-an leaders. A vital issue was at stake. Were the Communists and the Kuomintang, after ten years of bitter civil war, now sinking their differences, with whatever compromises, in a common front that could only be intended to halt Japan's advance? If so, it could be said that Chou En-lai's December 1936 talks with Chiang Kai-shek, during the Generalissimo's detention at Sian by the Manchurian troops, had led to a sharp turn in China's internal politics. Most of all, these events had seemingly worked a striking change in Chiang himself. The shock of the Tungpei rebel outbreak had proved strong enough to upset his old fixed policy markers—to force on him a new realization of the depth of a sentiment rapidly becoming nation-wide that opposed further non-resistance to Japan and so, of necessity, any further continuance of the anti-Communist campaigns.

But was this really the case? Observers in the spring of 1937 felt no such certainty. Many signs pointed in this direction, others could only be surmised.<sup>1</sup> Some of the surface indications seemed clear enough. On January 6, Nanking had closed down the Bandit Suppression Headquarters at Sian. Nor was fighting resumed in February, when forces under Chiang's direct command took over full control of Sian and its environs. Yen-an's united front proposals to the Kuomintang plenary session of February 15–21 were made public. On March 15 a long Communist manifesto had requested the opening of direct negotiations. If they had started, the strictest secrecy was being maintained. Were they actually taking place and, if so, what progress was being made?

At the end of May I took these questions with me to Nanking. My answer came during an interview with Ch'en Li-fu, one of the chief architects of Chiang's party machine. It was not the best source, certainly not that of a direct participant in the negotiations. Though not at all communicative, he was revealing in the vehemence of his defensive attitude. The paramount issue was the National Government's authority. This, he insisted, over and over again in many ways, the Communists must accept.

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<sup>1</sup> For the many facets of this transition period see Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York, Modern Library, 1944), Part 12.

It was enough. No inkling of how the negotiations might be getting on, but no doubt could remain that they were taking place.

On my return to Peking our preparations for the trip to Yen-an went forward rapidly. There were no longer just the two of us. Philip Jaffe, and his wife Agnes, long interested in Far Eastern affairs, had just reached China in the course of a round-the-world tour. When they heard of our plans, they were eager to join Owen and me in the adventure.

My journal begins only with the trip itself and so has no details of the planning, either before or after we became a party of four. I recall that Edgar Snow offered many useful suggestions and helped in contacts with persons who might aid us on our way to Yen-an. His first wife, Peggy Snow (Nym Wales), was then at Yen-an and he hoped that she might return with us.<sup>2</sup> Our itinerary was to take us by rail to Taiyuan, from there south through Shansi province, then across the Yellow River and on the Lunghai Railway to Sian. We were forewarned that getting official travel clearance out of Sian for the north might prove difficult. Just how we would cover the last stretch to Yen-an, assuming clearance, was still to be worked out.

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<sup>2</sup> At this time Nym Wales collected interviews at Yen-an for five months; her autobiographies of 24 Communist leaders in *Red Dust* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952) are a prime source on the history of the movement.

## II

# To Sian—and an Escape

We left Peking by late morning train on Monday, June 7. Our four days of travel to Sian, with a detour that took in Taiyuan, were uneventful. The first leg ended at Shihchiachuang, where we were routed out before dawn on Tuesday for the change to the Chengtai Railway. Mountain scenery on that afternoon's run to Taiyuan was spectacular; with a second-class coach largely to ourselves, it was altogether delightful. Except for Owen we were all in new country and enjoying it like tourists.

The stopover in Taiyuan was at a good hotel, a pleasant interlude between two nights on the sleeper. On Wednesday we turned south down through a good part of Shansi province, with the mountains giving way to wide stretches of cultivated fields. By noon on Thursday we were crossing the Yellow River at Tungkuan. The last leg was in a luxurious Lung-hai Railway coach on a five-hour stint to Sian, which we reached at eight that evening.

Comfortably settled in modern hotel rooms at the Sian Guest House, our minds were not easy, for the difficulties of the project now began to press in on us. The Kuomintang authorities, not liking the favorable reports by recent foreign visitors to Yen-an, had closed down on travel to the north. Lengthy passport examinations had featured our arrival at the railway station. Once installed in the Guest House we had our passports examined again, this time by the military police. For such as us Sian was clearly the end of the line, at least so far as the authorities were concerned.

Assuming this hurdle could be passed, the means of transit presented a second, hardly less difficult problem. There was no comfortable rail line to Yen-an; instead, a stretch of some 250 miles over dirt roads and rivers flooded by heavy spring rains.

A third matter also created uncertainty. From an underground contact man in Sian we were able to secure a letter of introduction to the Communist authorities in the north. Its value would not be established until we encountered the first Red Army outposts. We had reached Sian on June 10, but a week had passed before we could engineer a leave-taking.

The mode of transit was settled first, almost by freakish accident. On arrival Owen had quickly run into one Effie Hill, scion of a Scandinavian missionary family in Inner Mongolia (*see photograph 2*). The two immediately hit it off, if indeed they had not known each other earlier. I still remember a long night of singing over beer mugs in one of the rooms, featured by selections in Mongol sung by both Owen and Effie. On the

second night, also passed in jest and song, Owen confided our plans to Effie and sought to enlist his help. By chance he was just giving up his gasoline agency in Sian and transferring to Shanghai. Among many other assets, he still owned an old weatherbeaten Dodge car whose idiosyncrasies we were to experience on the road. Over dinner on the 17th, Owen and Phil broached the prime question: would Effie, for a good payment, undertake to drive us to Yen-an? He would, and the next morning we were on our way.

We had meanwhile been wrestling with the central obstacle. How could we pass unchallenged through the Sian city gates, specifically the North Gate that would set us on the road to Yen-an? The device adopted seemed overly simple, one that we were continually questioning in those anxious days. It had to answer, since we could think of nothing better. Never were foreign visitors more tourist-minded, more taken up with the sights in and about Sian—actually of great interest, both historic and scenic.

On the 12th we visited the Confucian temple, the White Pine Forest, and a deservedly famous Muslim mosque. A rebuilding project was going on at one point, and so we missed the Nestorian tablet, which was under wraps. On the 13th we hiked along one of the nearby mountain trails and had a refreshing swim in the full pool of clear water at Feng Yü Kou (*see photograph 3*). Next morning was to see the big excursion, taking us well outside the city's limits to Hua Shan, where Yang Kuei-fei's noted stone impress could be viewed. It was interrupted—and, in the end, rescheduled to mask our getaway.

For now the rains came, not lightly but in deluges. They lasted for three days, putting a brake on our excursions and giving rise to worry over road conditions. Confined mostly to the Guest House, we mooned disconsolately around the rooms. Even so, with clearing intervals on two afternoons, we set foot on the Silk Road outside the West Gate on the 15th and discovered another mosque on the 16th. One of these days, the mud was so deep that we gave up a search for the famous Lama Temple.

At last, on Thursday, the skies cleared and we motored to the outskirts, with a long hike along the city wall to the Wo Lung Ssu temple, dating back to the Han dynasty but now housing a Buddhist Y.M.A. school with some 500 students. Our route back took us through the North Gate. Challenged by the military guards, we answered with the statement that had served us so well—we had been sight-seeing. From this gate, we now hoped, we would soon be making an exit.

That night's agreement with Effie provided us with the needed car, and, as it turned out, an even more valuable driver. We decided to make the start the next day. The car had to be stocked, both with food and gasoline. George Fitch, a local American oil company man, had been with us on some of our touring and now supplied the gasoline we needed.

Friday morning, the 18th, we repacked the car at Effie's place, avoiding observation at the Guest House. Two cans of gasoline, each of 20 gallons, were tied to the sides of the car. It seemed suspiciously overloaded, even for a trip to Hua Shan, but smothering this last doubt we were off. Challenged at the North Gate exit, Effie, in his perfect Chinese, said that we were *yu-wan* (sight-seeing), taking our *hsing-li* (baggage) with us. With the customary Chinese gesture he presented his card, noting that he was doing local business in Sian. It worked, and we were passed through. Now at last we were heading north on the road to Yenan.

### III

## The Yen-an Road

The journal catches only the bare outlines of our stay in Sian: one could wish for more particulars on a tourist sight or a Mongol song-fest. Or, though here the reserve was probably deliberate, on that shadowy figure Tse Jung, our Sian contact man whose letter we took with us. Once out the North Gate there is a marked change. No detail is missed, down to an exact timing of events. Cameras, too, are working overtime, so that a snapshot is there to illustrate scene after scene in the penciled jottings. In what follows, the journal's clipped sentences and present tenses are often retained.

*Friday (June 18)*

Barely outside the North Gate the road divided into two forks. One of these was muddy beyond belief, beginning with a pool of water almost a small lake. The route to Sanyuan, a local shopman told Effie, lay along this fork. So the car rocks crazily through the muddy pool, stalling just as it comes out. A slight omen of things to come, but our spirits were high that morning. Occasional deep mudholes are taken in stride, with stops to let the engine cool. Happily on our way, we rolled along for an hour or more, little suspecting that we would not see Yen-an for four days.

It was still well before noon when we came to the Ts'ao T'an, a smallish tributary of the Wei River. Greeted with shouts of *kuo pu ch'i* (can't be crossed), we stared at the scene. Usually an almost dry bed easily forded at this point, the stream was a muddy torrent three feet deep. The bank swarmed with people, ox-carts, and bicycles, but none were daring to breast their way across. A car was out of the question. Hearing of a ferry some miles down river, we tried to drive to it but the side roads were impassable and so we had to turn back. It would have done no good; on further inquiry, we learned that the ferry boat was not big enough to take a car. Tea and some bowls of *mien* (noodle soup) from the nearby village eked out a cold lunch, taken beside the car.

The afternoon dragged past slowly—a bit of reading, some hands of bridge. Owen and Effie sang and told of former travel ventures. I brought the log up to date. We were diverted for a few moments by a rare sight, a plane passing overhead. At Yen-an we were to learn that it carried Chou En-lai, returning from a negotiating session with Chiang Kai-shek at his Kuling summer headquarters.

Dinner by the car on hard-boiled eggs, crackers and cheese, and some

canned fruit (*photograph 4*). Bedded down early with the rushing waters sounding in our ears. Spreading mosquito nets from the front and back tops of the car, we passed the night on the river bank, not too comfortably.

*Saturday (June 19)*

Awake before six—to look out once more on the river's surging crests. Made do with some of the tinned foods, and reconciled ourselves to more waiting. Our few books again a recourse, and Owen and I introduce Effie to a game of "500." Occasional trips to the landing now bring favorable reports—the river is "going down fast," as Effie had predicted earlier.

Late morning, and from upriver salvation appears: in the shape of a sizable ferry scow working its way to the business waiting at the landing. Car now measured for a fit—and just made it. We set about a task soon to become routine. All heavy articles taken out of the car. Effie then maneuvers it across two quaking planks onto the scow, and finally whooshes up through mud of the opposite bank to solid ground (*photographs 5 and 6*). By various means—wading, carried piggy-back, or by cart—the rest of us get across with the duffel (*photographs 7 and 8*). Our first triumph on the road, except that we were well into our second day and could reckon perhaps 10 miles covered.

Still, with troubles now seemingly over, spirits revive. At the Ching Ho (Crystal River) a large pull-rope ferry scow takes us without difficulty, along with horses, ox-carts, and other passengers (*photograph 9*). Road still deep with mud and some bad fordings as we went on. The car has its limits: with water at two feet Effie drives it across on the river bed, but three feet threatens the engine and requires a ferry. Next the engine turns odorous. The headlamp wire, drawn in by the fan belt, had locked the generator. Effie just yanked out the wire and we were off again. The road continued passable and at six we pulled into Sanyuan—for a two-day run of 25 miles.

Should we crowd our luck and keep going? By seven, after a bite and some car tinkering, we were off for Yaochou, 30 miles further on. Our songs, carrying over the quiet evening country-side, now began to feature a special theme of "One More River to Cross." But our gamble paid off; there was no mishap, and before ten we were at the Yaochou walls.

Here a new difficulty cropped up—the gate was closed, and the military guards wouldn't open to us. In a brief strategy parley we decided to show Tse Jung's letter, with some concern as to its reception. It worked, and we were admitted. Not seeing much in the dark, we found our way to an inn. Some hot Chinese dishes for a good meal. Also, a fine broad *k'ang* for the night: troublesome, despite a lavish spread of bug powder on mats and blankets.

Next morning we were able to take in Yaochou. Politically it was the vestige of an earlier day, with sufficient Communist influence to account

for our admittance. We saw a few Red Army men on the streets, but soldiers were mostly from General Yang Hu-cheng's old units that had joined the Sian uprising in December 1936. One store showed a picture of Mao Tse-tung, two others had pictures of Stalin.

### *Sunday (June 20)*

Repacked car, duffel tightly stowed, and off before seven. Our best day lay ahead of us, despite some anxious moments. We were now in loess country, barren and hilly (*photographs 10 and 11*). Toward noon the hills grew higher, but greener and with some scrub trees. Lunching beside the road at Chungpu, we had put a solid 80 miles behind us in six hours.

Luck deserted us that afternoon, mostly up and down the loess hills and along a high plateau. Again the trouble was a river—the Lo Ho, there to be crossed every time the road debouched from the hills. A ferry handled the first nicely (at a 50-cent charge), with but one bad moment as the car teetered scarily on the two boarding planks.

Reports of a cloudburst upriver now reached us, and at the next crossing the bridge was down. The river had flooded the banks but the waters were not above the two-foot margin, setting up a try for a drive through. Unloaded the car, wading across wide stretches of water with the duffel bags. Car then carried the river safely, until halted by the far bank's overhang, where it sank deep in the mire. Ropes now attached, and many hands lay to, but to no effect. At last a new and stronger power is hitched up, and the ox pulls the car out (*photographs 12 and 13*).

A high mountain road supplied the day's last excitement. On one of the crests both hillsides had crumbled away, leaving frightening declivities on each side. Again we were all out, holding our breaths as Effie took the car safely over the narrow roadway strip, with no sign of further crumbling (*photograph 14*).

By 6:30 we had reached the little village of Chiaotaochen, garrisoned by some Red Army cavalymen. Told of more crossings ahead affected by the cloudburst, we decided to call it quits. That day had seen a record 120 miles put behind us, and the next should see us easily to Yen-an. For sleeping quarters we chose the gatehouse, fearing the worst as we spread the bedding on the *k'ang*. But we dined well, helped out by some Chinese dishes—and for gallery a crowd of local observers. Also, I was able to jot down some notes before we took our allotted parts of the *k'ang*.

### *Monday (June 21)*

Up at 5:30 and quickly off, warmed by some cups of hot tea. In trouble from the start, it was mid-afternoon before we had covered the 40-mile stretch to Kanch'üan (Sweet Spring). Wide, deep gullies scoured in the loess roads proved nearly as troublesome as the river crossings. On a steep hillside car in danger of toppling over and off, wheels deeply stuck

and spinning, and a big crowd gathers before we finally pull it out. Next comes a flooded Lo Ho ford, with roadbed impassable. We detour for a better stretch—the car takes the river bed safely, but gets stuck on the far side. Out of this only to be in again, much deeper, against the top side of the bank—here a long delay before some Red Army men haul it out. Coming now to a small village, we rest up over a late breakfast of eggs and some bowls of millet.

Off again at noon, only to run into the day's worst trouble, this time with the car, which had decided that enough was enough. As we pull up the far side of a gully, the engine begins to sputter. But the usual nursing job has lost its magic—the car makes a few yards and then stops. Effie tries the spark plugs, finds them seemingly O.K.; with the gas not feeding, he next blows out the feed line. The all's well is premature—after making a short distance the engine dies again. By now it was eleven and a full halt is called.

A three-hour interval follows, as Effie has it out with the car. I add more notes to the log, but for the most part we can only stand about, watch, and wait. No chance to buy new parts, but Effie showing his stuff as a car mechanic. He takes the carbureter apart, cleans it, worries a while over the ignition, then back to the carbureter, and at last settles on a throttle fault. This fixed we're off again, engine much improved even if still missing a bit.

Another hour on the road before pulling into Kanch'üan, the day's first objective. An historic town from very early times, it supplies us with a good restaurant lunch and, more to the point, Effie with a new set of spark plugs. Great crowd watching as he installs them and gives a last pat to the engine. Nearly four o'clock as Sweet Spring is left behind and we're off on the last 30-mile stretch to Yenán.

But now all goes well and some two hours later we are at the Yenán gate. Here the sentry examines our letter cursorily and waves us in; word of our coming has no doubt preceded us. Up the street a special scene unfolds: Phil and Agnes run into Peggy Snow who, for a moment, puzzles over Phil and then throws her arms around Agnes. Led at once to our quarters in the *Wai Chiao Pu* (Foreign Office), where the Jaffes were assigned a big room and *k'ang* and the rest of us another. Here we washed and cleaned up, and had a full change of clothes—the first since leaving Sian. The days on the road dropped away like a bad dream.

And next, topping all, we were served a good set of Chinese dishes—fair enough, since the day was by no means over. Our welcome took the form of an impromptu social get-together, delightfully informal, people dropping in and out. We moved about, meeting this guest and that, nearly all of whom would be speaking English. Polite inquiries on how we had fared coming up, not a subject to dwell upon in the presence of veterans of the Long March.

Mao Tse-tung came early and stayed to the end, one among the others, thoroughly enjoying the party. Another notable was Tung Pi-wu, old associate of Sun Yat-sen, working at this time on formation of the Border Region's first elected government. Ting Ling (*photograph 17*), revolutionary poet and novelist just freed from a Kuomintang jail, was in the feminine contingent with Agnes and Peggy.

With the civil war at an end, a major topic of conversation was the new outlook for political prisoners under detention by Nanking. For Y.H. Chang, advisor to the student branch of the National Salvation Association, the issue was of particular concern. Seven of its leaders were still imprisoned, but hope for their release was now entertained, since their "premature" struggle for resistance to Japan was now becoming national policy.<sup>1</sup>

Before long an improvised process of self-entertainment had taken over. Some Young Guards showed up and sang their Red Army songs. Effie obliged with some of his Mongol songs, for a real hit. But this was not enough—the rest of us had to take our part. What do Americans sing on such an occasion? Edgar Snow had been similarly embarrassed; but no denial is permitted. My memory recalls a feeble rendition of "My Old Kentucky Home," with better luck on the finale, "One More River to Cross."

Our initiation ended around midnight. This first glimpse of Yen-an was unexpected and somehow caught us unprepared. An extraordinary lightness, a gaiety almost, had marked the whole affair. The impression left was elusive; as an experience it could only be sensed. It was most attractive and would grow on us.

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<sup>1</sup> They were released on July 31, when the war was underway, after an eight-month detention. One of them interviewed Chiang Kai-shek, assuring him of their determination to help resist the Japanese invasion. The ban on the movement's songs was lifted, and its stirring nationalist tunes allowed to be broadcast.

## IV

### Yenan

That first evening had ended, back in our rooms, with another hour working over questions for the interviews. It was an earnest of thing to come. Three days followed, each packed to the brim; and two more nights, each again into the small hours. A succession of varied engagements filled nearly every waking minute. My hurried notes, as a result, read more like lists than fleshed-out descriptions of events—though there is compensation in the rich collection of camera shots.

The interviews were of course our main objective and took most of the time. Hardly less exciting was the Yenan scene itself, with its wall, river, and pagoda, the life of streets and shops, and the Red Army detachments—often singing as they marched. There was always the thought: here is the heart of the Chinese Communist movement. Hardly any outsiders had preceded us in reaching it. Notably, of course, there was Edgar Snow, and he had produced some news and magazine despatches. But *Red Star* was still being written.

Mao and his colleagues were most generous of their time. We had arrived at an opportune moment. Except in a few remote and scattered areas far to the south, no fighting was taking place. The united front negotiations were going well. In this month that preceded the outbreak of the Japanese war, something approaching a political lull existed at Yenan and elsewhere in China.

#### *Tuesday (June 22)*

Our first morning took us to the Resist-Japan University (Chung-kuo jen-min k'ang-jih chün-cheng ta-hsueh), key Communist organ of the anti-Japanese struggle.<sup>1</sup> On the way our cameras were able to catch one of its military units on maneuvers. Then, at the school itself, an exciting surprise: Chu Teh was lecturing to one of the classes (*photograph 20*). This was our first sight of the burly, strong-featured Commander-in-Chief, looking just as we had imagined him. Soon he adjourned the class, came out to the entrance, shook hands all around, and good-naturedly stood for pictures. One of these, in particular, is a superb likeness, showing him in the full vigor of his 49 years (*photograph 21*).

By noon we had talked with a number of the students and the faculty. Spirit and morale were impressive, almost in inverse ratio to the bareness of dormitory and class-room. There was a wry fantasy to the thought that

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VI for a detailed treatment.

these people, with such facilities as we saw, were preparing for the role of Yen-an's shock force in a war with Japan. We missed seeing Lin Piao, the University Director, who was laid up with severe fractures suffered in a horseback accident.

A lengthy interview with Mao Tse-tung, high point of our visit, took up the entire afternoon. Mao hosted us in the plain study of his cave-dwelling, then conveniently located just above the city, unlike the more dispersed caves forced on Yen-an later by the wartime bombings. With the interpreter added, our party quite filled the room.

By now we were used to the atmosphere of easy informality, furthered in this case by a pleasant tea-break. All was unhurried yet all was business-like, with no time wasted. Mao took the lead at once and held it throughout, still managing to keep the talk on a give-and-take basis. With pauses by Mao after every few sentences, and the interpreter's perfect English, there was ample time for complete note-taking.

Mao had no doubt repeatedly handled the subjects under discussion in recent party debates on the united front policy. Nevertheless, considering that he was here speaking off the cuff, much as in ordinary conversation, the interview itself is the best witness to the clarity and power of his intellect.<sup>2</sup> I now recall thinking, as I first transcribed this interview in the fall of 1937 at Peking, that if the paragraphs were being edited for book publication no changes would be needed.

Then 43, Mao's spare figure and agile movements carried an air of youthfulness, almost a boyish quality (*photographs 22 and 23*). His strength and magnetism grew on one, along with the sensing of a deep inner reserve that somehow left him untouchable. Less expected was a sudden flash of humor, coming at the outset of the interview. Not recorded in my notes, it has remained vividly in my mind through the years. Mao had begun the afternoon by asking us to identify ourselves and indicate what we were doing. Told by one of us, after the first statements, that Mr. Jaffe was a large wholesaler of Christmas cards, Mao's comment came, without so much as a moment's hesitation, "God bless the Christmas card business!"

Dinner that evening was at Chu Teh's quarters, somewhat more spacious and conventional than Mao's. The guests included Mao, Chou, Po Ku, and others (*photographs 26 and 27*). Afterward, while waiting for dusk and the theater, there was a long twilight visit in the courtyard. Our group then moved off to a large barn-like building, with seats for several hundred people and a good-sized stage.

The performers put on a highly varied show, half drama and half variety. There were skits by some members of the Young Guards, known colloquially as the "Red Devils," and a ballet piece danced to the small Chinese reed organ. A scene from Gorky's *Mother* was presented, but

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IX.

most of the plays were of local vintage. Often with but one act, they invariably carried a message. Some themes were social: against superstitious beliefs and practices, for exercise and a strong body. Others were political: against Japanese aggression, for democratic elections and the united front.

Mao, Chu Teh, and Po Ku were with us, taking it all as it came and joining in the noisy applause. Another viewer that evening was Chang Kuo-t'ao, whom we met after the show at the back of the theater. His case history is an illustration of the differing Chinese and Russian political styles. Opposed to the united front policy as a compromise of revolutionary principle, he was then under a cloud in Yen-an. Yet, so far as we could see, restrictions on his movements were minimal. Finally expelled from the party in 1938, he found his way to Hankow, where he briefly joined other party dissidents before moving on to Hongkong and the United States.<sup>3</sup> No doubt Mao's differences with Chang occasioned his several references to Trotskyism in our interviews. Today, Mao's new application of his 1937 dictum that policy cannot be against all imperialists at once has stirred more party ructions, with Lin Piao taking Chang Kuo-t'ao's place.

### *Wednesday (June 23)*

A leisurely breakfast slowed down the pace a bit, most welcome after the late theater party. We woke to a heavy rain, making for muddy going in the Yen-an streets, and raising a passing thought for road conditions on the return trip.

By mid-morning we were with Chu Teh for our second major interview<sup>4</sup> His open, hearty ways were always a delight; after seeing him so much, we had come near to adopting him as our mentor. His years of study in Europe, mostly in Germany, sat lightly on him. His camera shot comes clear—the authentic peasant face of the Chinese revolution. His sentences, usually short, direct, and clear, were a boon to the note-taker.

We now had our first sight of Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien, who dropped in toward the end of the interview. These were military men, speaking to military matters. The unusual fact was how easily they strayed onto political issues and how central these were to their approach. A large map of China's far west was produced, with Owen's knowledge of Sinkiang being drawn upon—again it was political affairs. Though the Red Army was

<sup>3</sup> A long history lay back of this final split. Mao and Chang had been early friends, co-founders of the party, and at times rivals for the leadership. At one point on the Long March, their differences threatened disaster. Chang had not been present at the Tsunyi Conference, in Kweichow, that finally made Mao the party leader. Later, in Szechwan, his refusal to move his army north to Shensi with Mao's army had dangerously split the Red forces. In the end, however, events had forced Chang to change his mind, and the potentially critical results of the breach were overcome when both armies were reunited in Kansu in the fall of 1936.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter VII.

not engaged in battle at this time, a corollary might still be added to Mao's famous phrase. For these Yen-an leaders of 1937 it would seem to run: "politics makes the gun shoot straight."

Our afternoon interviews began with Po Ku, who held the post of Chairman of the Northwest Soviet Government. Issues under discussion, chiefly land policies and elections, were to become the effective determinants of China's domestic wartime evolution.<sup>5</sup> In the political field the united front policy advocated by the Communists called for elected governments. On their side it was already being implemented. In the Border Region, an elected government was replacing the Soviet government that had been customary in Communist-ruled areas for almost a decade. During the war the Communists established elected governments throughout the extensive North China areas taken from the Japanese.

On the economic side, in the united front negotiations, Yen-an had appealed to Sun Yat-sen's principle of the people's livelihood, accorded lip service by the Kuomintang, as sanction for its moderate agrarian reform proposals. By June 1937, in new Communist-controlled areas, this new program was already being fully applied. Replacing the policy of revolutionary land confiscation, it enforced reductions of exorbitant landlord rent and interest charges. Landlords, too, if they abided by the new regulations, were thereby encouraged to join in the anti-Japanese struggle.

Po Ku's comments made it clear that the Communist united front proposals, in their broader outreach, sought to build a socially progressive democratic republic as a needed support to the war effort. To succeed, it required Chiang Kai-shek's cooperation, but Chungking neither held elections nor curbed landlord exactions in the Kuomintang-ruled areas.

Owen stayed on with Po Ku for a more detailed picture of the Border Region's national minorities policy.<sup>6</sup> The rest of us had a second interview with Mao, notable for its frank statements on the coming socialist revolution in China, its necessity and its certainty.<sup>7</sup>

For once we had dinner by ourselves in our own quarters. A long evening with Chou En-lai followed, ending well after midnight. His work on the united front negotiations was demanding, and we had seen less of him than the others. A dapper figure, with a wisp of moustache, he set off the ordinary Red Army uniform with special distinction. He looked the part of an intellectual, yet was an old party man like the others, with some hair-raising escapes in underground assignments. He, too, was a man of the Long March. In his case a background of European experience fitted. Saying that he lacked practice, he was nevertheless willing to carry on the interview in English, the one time this occurred.

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<sup>5</sup> For the interview see Chapter V; for further interpretation, Chapter XII.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter V includes data copied into my journal from Owen's notes on this interview.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter X.

We now learned that the plane we had sighted on the trip was Chiang Kai-shek's personal plane, returning Chou to Yen-an from a Kuling conference. That night, talking with a principal in the negotiations, the fog that had veiled them in outside China lifted.<sup>8</sup> Chou was willing and anxious to give the facts, showing no hesitation in supplying detail even on delicate issues still unsettled. Chiang Kai-shek, on the other hand, had strong reasons for keeping them under wraps, if only to disarm the rightist opposition from inner Kuomintang circles. As for the Japanese, there was little going on in China at the time that they didn't know.

The detailed picture of the negotiations supplied by Chou was startling, even though we had picked up a good deal of it in our previous interviews. For the first time we became fully aware how far they had progressed and how close to agreement the two sides were on all essentials.

*Thursday (June 24)*

Our last day in Yen-an, and that morning we faced our stiffest ordeal—speeches before a large public meeting. Hosts were the officers of a Red Army unit; the audience, its men who were then in training. Chu Teh presided. The outdoor gathering offered a picturesque sight. A large level square was filled with some hundreds of uniformed men, seated on long wooden benches. In front was a simple wooden table for the speakers. Off in the hills, the Yen-an pagoda could be seen (*photographs 28, 29, and 30*).

The talks were interpreted at intervals as they went along. Phil spoke first, then I, then Owen. My notes give nothing of what was said and I recall nothing, apart from a minor exception that may tell something of how the mind works. In the course of my talk the interpreter's phrase *chung chien* caught my attention so strongly that I have never forgotten it. With this clue I can partly reconstruct a sentence to the effect that in Yen-an "we stand *at the center* of the anti-colonial and anti-feudal revolution in China and Asia."

After the meeting we enjoyed a period of relaxation over a Chinese lunch at quarters. Owen spent a good part of the afternoon in talks with some of the minority people at Yen-an: Mongols, Tibetans, Muslims, and others. The rest of us crossed the river with Chu Teh to the party school. Accompanied by its director, Lo Mai (Li Wei-han), we visited classrooms and dormitories, barer if anything than those of the University, and equally short of books and other teaching accessories. Under an evidently acceptable arrangement, the school was housed in a former Catholic church building. We were told that a united front policy now applied to religious matters. All religions operated freely, unlike earlier policy in the Kiangsi-Fukien and other Soviet districts. Relations with the local Catholic missionaries were cordial. Books sent in to Yen-an from the out-

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter VIII.

side could be addressed: T'ien Chu T'ang (Catholic Church), Fushih (*i.e.*, Yen-an), Shensi, China.

Returning, we had a brief look at Yen-an's motor school. The demonstration car was a Ford, but evidently the main task was that of keeping the Red Army trucks in repair. A byplay had meanwhile been occurring on the side that closely affected us. Mao had invited Effie to stay on at Yen-an and take over management of the motor pool. Effie, however, proved unwilling. Our party had been unable to supply a recruit, but thinking of the return trip we all breathed easier.

With these afternoon events, our visit to Yen-an was coming to its end. Packing chores were completed, with the car our main concern. We were able to stock it with a gasoline supply that would hopefully see us back to Sian.

Mao, Chu Teh, Chou En-lai, and Po Ku were all there to see us off. Last exchanges of good wishes and then the good-byes. No change in the easy informality, that now touched us more deeply. It was a brief leave-taking, and we set out on the trip back almost casually. The full days at Yen-an had left little time for reflection, either on what we had seen or what it all meant. That would come later.

## V

# The Border Region

During our ten days on the road we had some glimpses of the larger region controlled by the Communists, but they were fleeting, unlike Edgar Snow's wide travels in the area in 1936. The gap was filled in part by our interviews with Po Ku, then chiefly responsible for the Border Region's administrative affairs. I have organized his information under three subject headings, retaining the first person as he used it. It is especially useful for detail on the policy adaptations to the united front agreements being made in the spring of 1937.

### *General Features*

In many ways the Shensi-Kansu-Ningshia Border Region is similar to most of our earlier Soviet districts. These have usually taken in border areas of two or more provinces, in remote mountainous regions where communications are difficult. One difference is that today's Region ranks among the poorest, very different from the richly productive Kiangsi base. It is thinly settled with a small population of about 1,400,000. Its economy rests almost entirely on small valley agriculture, supplemented by the cultivation of terraced mountain sides. There is some oil and coal near Yenchang in north Shensi. The fields do not seem very productive, although they would no doubt do better with better techniques.<sup>1</sup>

We took the Region over piecemeal in 1935-1937, though we had small forces operating earlier in parts of it. In Shensi the more northerly districts were occupied first. Liu Chih-tan's partisans took Wayaopao in October 1935. Paoan, our first capital, was taken in the spring of 1936.<sup>2</sup> For some 18 months we laid siege to Yen-an, held by a Kuomintang division. After the Sian incident, this division withdrew and we entered Yen-an early in 1937. Also, at this time, our forces moved south into the San-yuan-Yao-chou area. Meanwhile, the Kansu juncture of the Long March armies in the fall of 1936 had added sections of Kansu and Ningshia to the Region.

### *Land Policy, Taxes, and Farm Aid Measures*

Before we came, the landlords controlled the land system. Land itself

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<sup>1</sup> The meagreness of Po Ku's comment is a startling reflection of the time, as seen against the years since 1949 with the rapid growth in the exploitation of North China's mineral resources, including rich oil fields.

<sup>2</sup> It was at Paoan that Edgar Snow talked with the Communist leaders in 1936.

Communist Party program, the iron will of the enemy front will be broken. Whether it be Japanese influence, the pro-Japanese groups, or the wavering elements—one and all will be destroyed by the struggle of the people led by the Communist Party. We, not they, will have the long life. Our American friends will see the result.

*May not Britain be strengthening China as against Japan to prevent war and protect her interests, and by balancing one against the other be using both against the Soviet Union? Could this not also envisage a Fascist military dictatorship at Nanking that might later attempt to crush the Chinese Communists?*

The strengthening of British influence in China is a contradictory phenomenon of today. In the fight against Japan, because of China's colonial position, it is possible for a third power to strengthen its position in China. Can it then be said that this is pushing the tiger out the front door and letting the wolf in the back door? No, that would not be correct. This question must be treated differently.

Japan cannot be considered the same imperialist power as Britain. One is tied up with the aggressive front, the other is not. To treat them equally would not be right. If we treated them as equal imperialist powers, we would in the end have to fight them both, or have to fight all imperialism at once. This would be wrong and dangerous. It is a conclusion drawn only by the Trotskyists, that we must fight against all imperialists. On its face it seems very revolutionary, but it really drives Britain to the side of Japan. It is making a net to catch yourself with.

The policy of the Communist Party is just the opposite. We must get help to fight Japan from any country that opposes it. We know from experience that if China is subjugated by the Fascist powers, as in the case of Manchuria, there is little to be gained from Trotsky's beautiful phrases. As to the help extended to China by other imperialist powers, it must be in a special category of its own. The policy of such powers must differ from that of Japan. Principally, it must differ on this point: that China's sovereignty is preserved.

Formerly Great Britain was the leader in the crusade against the Soviet Union; the holy task of the British Empire was to fight against Bolshevism. Now Germany and Japan are taking over this task, and Britain is changing its attitude toward the Soviet Union. Today it adopts the conservative policy of maintaining the position it has. Although Britain does not like the Soviet Union, the new situation means that it cannot like Germany and Japan very much. Of course, the Anglo-Saxon peoples have always prided themselves on their freedom of thought. They can have any kind of thought they like, but in the end they must come to the conclusion that it is better to preserve their privileges with the help of the Soviet Union. Thinking is not always the same as acting.

*What political advantages were gained by foregoing the possibility of forming a united Northwestern Army [the Manchurian and Red armies united against Nanking] during the Sian incident and after?*

In the first place, China did not enter the Fascist front [as threatened in the ominous political upheaval at Nanking led by General Ho Ying-chin while Chiang was being detained at Sian]. Secondly, as I have just explained, the task of unifying all patriotic forces in China to fight Japan achieved the first steps toward success. Only through such a policy can China be saved.

*In the student elections at Yenching after the Sian incident, the left forces seemed in doubt as to what course to pursue. They did not strongly contest the election and as a result the reactionary students won control of the higher offices in the union. More recently, a meeting of Yenching student union delegates, called by the new leadership, voted to withdraw from the Peking student union. Could this be a symptom indicating the difficulty faced by the mass movement in understanding the new line and following it correctly?*

Such conditions reflect one type of reaction to the Sian incident. At its outset this was an anti-Chiang Kai-shek uprising, a feature that changed only after the efforts made by us. Later it was converted into general unity, under the acknowledged authority of Chiang Kai-shek. It was the Red Army which thus converted mutiny into consolidation. By this move the Communists did not lose ground; on the contrary, Communist strength and influence have advanced greatly throughout China. At first sight, it may seem that our influence at Yenching has somewhat lessened, but this is only a partial view. In point of fact, if we take the universities and cities of the country as a whole, Communist influence and authority are not decreasing but increasing. We are convinced that the students will see the whole situation clearly and recognize the success of our policy in the Sian affair.

*Does not acceptance of Nanking as leader of the national forces tend to confuse the students and other mass organizations? What lines of action can be taken to avoid this difficulty?*

The masses will have no doubt as to the question of leadership. Leadership depends not on the weight of forces but on the program and the efforts made by the leader. The Communist Party does not have its own partial interests to serve. It serves only the interests of the majority of the people, of the nation, the toiling masses. If the fight succeeds, if Japan is turned back, if events move in this direction, it means that the movement is under the leadership of the Communist Party. The way pointed out by the Communist Party, the only way to save the nation, cannot be obstructed by any kind of force. If the whole nation goes the way of the

does not stand alone. Germany is in this Fascist bloc, and also Italy. They try to induce the Chinese ruling class to join their front. They want China not only as a colony but also as a force to use in the fight against the peace front. This is the first menacing factor.

2) The pro-Japanese clique within the Chinese ruling class, and Trotskyism in the social field.<sup>3</sup> They fight, and are fighting, against the united front policy and the three main slogans. This is the second factor of danger.

3) The danger of irresolute, wavering elements. These exist in the ruling class and in society at large. They agree with the principle of fighting Japan, but not with giving democratic rights to the people. The difficulty is that they have one foot in one boat and one in another; in the end they will either be drowned or else will stand with both feet in the Japanese boat. This is the element that provoked the student clashes at Shih Ta [Normal University] in Peking on May 4, and which keeps the National Salvation leaders in prison. Yang Li-k'uei of Shih Ta is one of these elements.<sup>4</sup>

These three groups, domestic and foreign, occupy virtually the same position: essentially, they are opposed to the united front policy of the Chinese people. Whether the united front tasks can be accomplished depends on whether the anti-Japanese elements, the democrats who stand for reform of Nanking's system, all those who are for consolidation, can overcome these three types of opponents. If so, the slogans can be realized; if not, the way will be hard. The outcome will be decided by the struggle between these two fronts.

As to how the struggle between the two is proceeding, it should be observed that the anti-Japanese front has taken the first steps toward success. The prime feature is that China was prevented from entering the Fascist front and has turned to the anti-Fascist front. On this key issue Japan has been defeated. The Communist Party has done all in its power to prevent China from entering the Fascist front. This was expressed in the long period of its work before the Sian coup, with its efforts for the concentration and centralization of all Chinese forces in the united front. It was also expressed in the peaceful solution of the Sian incident, instead of exploiting it on the lower plane of trying to create an advantage for ourselves in the civil war. It was further expressed in the policies and actions of the Communist Party after Sian, directed toward the uniting of all Chinese forces to fight Japan.

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<sup>3</sup> Ultra-leftists, like Chang Kuo-t'ao, and so unwilling to accept the compromises required to establish the united front.

<sup>4</sup> Yang Li-k'uei, chairman of the Normal University physics department, made widely publicized charges that the Peking Student Union was receiving Communist funds, but never produced any facts to support his allegations. See John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China: 1927-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 141.

into two rival sectors: the one desiring peace and the status quo, the other made up of the Fascist aggressors and provokers of a new world war. The relative change in British Far Eastern policy [somewhat opposing Japan's actions] has also had an influence on Nanking. From these two factors come the last factor conducive to change at Nanking, that is,

3) A differentiation in the ruling Kuomintang class and party. It has several groups and cliques, but fundamentally there are two blocs: the pro-Japanese and the anti-Japanese. This differentiation had already begun in September 1931. But only with Japan's North China "autonomy" movement of 1935 did a kind of public opinion form within Kuomintang areas that China must and could resist Japanese aggression. Formerly this opinion was shared by only relatively few persons, now it became more general. In 1936 it became so widespread that it exerted an influence on Nanking politics and policy, having a real effect for the first time.

*What groups or individuals at Nanking favor or oppose the united front? What evidence is there of progress toward the democratization of the Nanking government? Do you expect further progress along this line in the near future?*

We come now to the next phase, that of the present and the future. The change in Nanking's policy, which began during the Chang Ch'un-Kawagoe negotiations, continued and was clearly expressed in the Third Plenary Session of February 1937. At this meeting Kuomintang policy showed real change in various fields. Now its attitude to Japan became even stronger and a policy of internal peace was formally adopted, i.e., no civil war. This development tied in directly with the policy of the Communist Party, which had long advocated the need to unify all Chinese forces to fight Japan.

At present the most vital next step is a change of Nanking's policy in relation to democracy. The Kuomintang did not resolutely give up the prime feature of its rule, its military dictatorship. This change Nanking has not made. This is now the most important task—the realization of democratic reform. In order to consolidate internal peace and unite the country, democracy is the fundamental requirement. Without it, the task of resisting Japanese aggression cannot be effectively carried forward.

So today the mass slogans are these: (1) internal peace; (2) democratic reform; and (3) anti-Japanese war—all under the general slogan of the national united front and a democratic country. In this period the three factors noted above as influencing the Kuomintang's policy will have a growing influence on the Chinese people. With the help of these three factors, we can realize the three slogans.

As to the groups opposing the united front, they may be considered under three heads:

1) On the international side, chiefly Japanese imperialism. But Japan

ward Japan. At this session it declared that if Japan would not further violate Chinese sovereignty, would not take more territory, it would not fight. Thus it explained the limit of sacrifice it was prepared to make, defining this as the maintenance of the status quo. The actual steps taken to represent this change of line were the negotiations between [Foreign Minister] Chang Ch'un and [Ambassador] Kawagoe [September 15–December 3, 1936], when Nanking rejected the Japanese demands. From 1931 to 1936 this was the first time that Nanking showed any evidence of a change in its capitulation policy.

*Are these periods related to an inner political struggle at Nanking? If so, who are the main groups involved in this struggle? What social-economic forces do they represent?*

Now we shall consider the reasons for Nanking's change of policy. Three main factors are responsible for the change.

1) The anti-Japanese struggle waged by the Chinese people, the patriotic troops, the Communist Party, and the Red Army. This includes the Manchurian volunteers, the Nineteenth Route Army [at Shanghai in 1931–32], Chi Hung-chang's army that fought the Japanese in Chahar in 1933, the victories of Fu Tso-yi's troops defending Suiyuan in November 1936, the student demonstrations, and the National Salvation movement of wide masses of the people.

The Kuomintang thought that Japanese aggression could not be resisted. We know that the Manchurian volunteers have resisted, and are still resisting. The Kuomintang thought that the anti-Japanese movements of the people would give Japan a pretext to carry its aggressions further. Actually, these actions gave such serious blows to Japanese imperialism that it hesitated to occupy more territory; they discouraged and disheartened the Japanese. The Kuomintang thought that China's military strength was not sufficient to fight against Japan. In reality, the Shanghai War and the Great Wall wars [in Chahar and Suiyuan] proved that China could resist, and they stopped Japanese aggression for a time.

The Kuomintang thought of the Communists as the eternal, irreconcilable enemy, but did not look upon Japan as the enemy. So the Kuomintang sought to exterminate the Communists, but the Communist united front policy gained such great influence that it forced the Kuomintang to take stock of the successes won by it. This was the basic cause leading to a change in Nanking's policy toward Japan. From this point the Kuomintang began to realize that in the people lay the real and whole national strength. It began to feel a little bolder and more courageous, and so the united front movement had reduced its fear of Japan.

2) A second factor lies in the international situation. The sympathy of the Soviet Union with China in its struggle against Japanese aggression may be taken for granted. Today, also, the capitalist world is divided

## IX

### Interview with Mao Tse-tung, June 22, 1937<sup>1</sup>

*What has been the evolution of Nanking's policy toward Japan since 1931? Is it possible to distinguish several phases in this development?*

Two periods may be distinguished. The first period began on September 18, 1931, and ended with the Kuomintang Second Plenary Session of July 1936. In this period the Kuomintang pursued its characteristic policy: it depended on imperialism, made concessions to imperialism, and suppressed the people.

After September 18 it gave up Manchuria unconditionally. Due to the Shanghai War [of 1931–32] the Chinese bourgeoisie were afraid of Japanese imperialism. They had prepared no defense works at all in the coastal provinces, and were ready to give up these provinces to Japan. During the Shanghai War they prepared to move to Loyang as the provisional capital, and then to Sian if necessary. Only after Nanking saw that Japan began the Shanghai War as a means to legalize the seizure of Manchuria, and that the Japanese troops had no intention of occupying the coastal provinces, and that Great Britain and the United States made some efforts against Japan—only then did Nanking decide not to move the capital. So they returned to Nanking, but they were still afraid of Japan and continued so until after the North China developments of November-December, 1935.<sup>2</sup>

In 1935 Japan wanted to occupy North China at once and so frightened Nanking that it signed the Ho-Umetsu agreement [of July 6, 1935, giving Japan special rights in North China]. This attitude still prevailed at the Fifth Congress, in November-December, 1935. At that time, Nanking continued to say that if peace was possible it didn't want to fight, i.e., it was prepared to surrender further.

Only in July 1936, at the Second Plenary Session [of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee] did Nanking begin to change its tone to-

<sup>1</sup> My transcription of this interview appeared first in *Amerasia* (October, 1937); a few brief excerpts from several of the interviews were given in my *Japan in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1938). Some parenthetical explanations have now been added, and a few slight changes in wording made.

<sup>2</sup> Japan's North China "autonomy" movement had set off large student demonstrations in Peking and Tientsin that spread over the country, with National Salvation Association branches being formed in the big cities. See *Japan in China*, chapters II-IV.

geois-democratic revolution. We would reply: yes, of course, except that the large role being played by proletariat and peasantry makes it somewhat different. But the bourgeois-revolutionary task today is not small or unimportant. It seeks to uproot foreign imperialism and Chinese feudalism. These aims do not stand in opposition to a future socialist revolution; they are essential elements of it.

True, this new program means a change in our past policy. It means changing the worker-peasant democratic system into a national democratic system, one which will exclude the traitors but include the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the landowners along with the workers and peasants. It means also a change in method. For ten years we used revolutionary means, an armed struggle, to build up the worker-peasant democratic system. Now we want to use the political struggle, a peaceful struggle, to create the national democratic republic.

Still we cannot say there is no basis for hope. Two facts stand out. First, the Japanese invasion hurts all classes in China. Now it is not only Manchuria but also North China. There Japan's moves have disturbed the Chinese bourgeoisie, and also the Western imperialists. Second, the Kuomintang and the Communists have been fighting each other for ten years without result. Neither side has won. Although Chiang controls most of the provinces and most of the people, he cannot destroy the Communists. And today Nanking must face the fact that the Japanese want to take the Yangtze and Yellow River valleys. It has used large forces and large sums of money in its anti-Communist campaigns, but without success. The civil war prevented even the defense of Shanghai.<sup>12</sup> If no agreement for common action is reached, Nanking will be unable to hold its own bourgeois base.

On our side we also have good reason to conclude a united front agreement. We can push ahead with the anti-Japanese struggle and extend it to all parts of China. The mere existence of the united front negotiations is a stimulus to mass anti-Japanese sentiment. It thus offers a base on which to organize the whole Chinese people. On the other hand, if the Sian incident had been handled provocatively, the civil war would have spread and grown sharper.<sup>13</sup> Only the Japanese would have gained, not Nanking and not us.

*Is it possible to build the democratic republic in China today?*

The creation of the democratic republic is by far the most difficult task. It is not the same as ending the civil war in order to bring about a united anti-Japanese struggle. Its achievement has only just begun. Previously we both had our political systems: the Kuomintang its military dictatorship, the Communists their worker and peasant democratic system. Now we have to learn to cooperate in the establishment of a single united democratic republic.

Such cooperation can only be achieved little by little. First, it comes in the anti-Japanese struggle. With this, the advances needed in the political field become possible. Both must go together, but one before the other, like the wheels of a bicycle, not in parallel like the wheels of a rickshaw. Preparation for the defensive war against Japan comes first, then the movement for a democratic republic. Of course each affects the other. The wheels move together, but the anti-Japanese movement is the front wheel.

Some might say that this political objective looks much like a bour-

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<sup>12</sup> In the winter and spring of 1931-32, during Japan's attack on Shanghai, when Chiang Kai-shek failed to commit his regular divisions and left the fighting to the Nineteenth Route Army.

<sup>13</sup> At Sian in December 1936, Chou En-lai himself was the mediator who persuaded Chang Hsueh-liang's young Manchurian officers to release Chiang Kai-shek and return him to Nanking in the interest of a united anti-Japanese front.

tang supporters already chosen by a number of provinces. However, it wants to appoint these 240 members, even though they would still be a minority in the Congress. We want these delegates elected by the various non-Kuomintang groups that are given representation. Nanking has already published a draft constitution, and is merely having the Congress give its approval. We want the delegates to frame a new and more democratic constitution. We also urge that the Congress be empowered to discuss the national crisis and to draw up a national program designed to meet it.<sup>10</sup>

As to the calling of a National Defense Conference, the time for it is not yet ripe. If Nanking called such a Conference today many of the Chinese military leaders outside the government would not dare to come. They would attend only if Chu and Mao were to appear at Nanking. If Nanking invites us we would like to go to a Defense Conference. It would not be good for all of us to go at once together, but one at a time would be possible. The Nanking military sent a research team here at the end of May to assure themselves that we really support internal peace and a united national defense. We would like an investigation tour by our people to inspect the defense measures that Nanking has talked about.

A major issue is that of the concrete steps needed to improve the people's livelihood, one of Sun Yat-sen's urgent behests. We have many specific proposals in this field that we wish to discuss with Nanking. An effective national defense program must deal with the vital matter of the people's livelihood. Once the military side of the united front program is worked out in agreed form, we will bring up this question for the detailed consideration that it requires.

*How do you view today's outlook for the united front?*

On this question it must be kept in mind that in China a united front is quite different in form and content from a popular front in Europe or America. Here two parties have been fighting each other in ten years of military struggle. Here there is a revolutionary party with its own area, military forces, and political system, and a reactionary party. Outside of these no other parties really exist. Kuomintang rule is based on the privileged groups: Communist rule, on the proletariat and the peasantry. Externally, Nanking has close ties with the imperialist powers, but not with the Soviet Union. So it is hard for us to believe the united front can be built up. Even some Communists doubt this can be achieved.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Such a Congress, meeting at Hankow from March 29 to April 1, 1938, drew up a "Program of Armed Resistance and Reconstruction." Its Kuomintang delegates allowed inclusion of some liberal generalities, but not consideration of a reformed constitution. A new People's Political Council, weak in powers and controlled by its Kuomintang members, collapsed in 1940 when Chiang Kai-shek expelled its remaining non-Kuomintang members. For further detail, see Chapter XII.

<sup>11</sup> As, for instance, Chang Kuo-t'ao (see Chapter IV).

of mediation procedures, as by some type of arbitration committee, all-important.<sup>4</sup>

*What other points are at issue?*

There are many, in both the military and political spheres. In our territory we would like to become a special region, under our own elected government. We have proposed as its name the "Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia Border Region." Nanking opposes these suggestions. It wants the formal status of the existing provinces retained. Chiang Kai-shek even wants to appoint officials in this district, we want them democratically chosen in open election by the people. If agreement is reached on this matter, we are prepared to hold an election by July 15.<sup>5</sup>

As to military issues, our forces still operating in certain partisan areas to the south present a special problem. Nanking would dissolve and disarm them, we cannot accept this.<sup>6</sup> But the prime military issue is largely settled. Our main Red Army units will stay intact under their own commanders.<sup>7</sup> Nanking opposes any high-sounding names for them. This formal question presents no difficulty. We don't care about names but about content. So our units will be given numbers to accord with those used in the National Army, as was the case in the Great Revolution of 1924-1927.<sup>8</sup>

Prisoner release is still being negotiated. Only in Shensi and Shansi have all political prisoners been released. In the lower Yangtze provinces there are still 4,000 or 5,000. Many of these prisoners are not Communists but suspects. The Kuomintang says 3,000 but we think there are more. Add some 3,000 in the southern provinces. Add, again, 3,000 prisoners of war, and all told the number comes to at least 10,000. Several hundred war prisoners have now been released; many of them have come here. The still imprisoned National Salvation leaders are a special case.<sup>9</sup>

As to the National Congress, Nanking has made some concessions but they are not adequate. It has agreed to add 240 delegates to the Kuomin-

<sup>4</sup> No such formally constituted organ ever met regularly; liaison was informally maintained, with growing difficulty.

<sup>5</sup> Nanking gave at least tacit consent to the special Border Region, not insisting on the appointment of a governor. Its election was held on schedule, a pattern for the elected governments formed later in the North China guerrilla base areas freed from the Japanese by their local populations under Communist leadership.

<sup>6</sup> Unlike the main Red Army, these partisan units were scattered in pockets over many provinces. Chu Teh's earlier comments show the various locations of these units. The compromise settlement reached here was typified by the New Fourth Army, formed out of Kiangsi and other partisan forces and assigned the lower Yangtze valley as its operating area under its own commanders.

<sup>7</sup> Nanking, that is, merely gazetted the commanders of Red Army units.

<sup>8</sup> And so the Eighth Route Army for North China, or the New Fourth Army for the Yangtze valley.

<sup>9</sup> Released on July 31, soon after the war had started.

strong unified central military organ for the planning and conduct of the defensive war against a Japanese invasion.

So far we have had five negotiating sessions: three at Sian, one at Hangchow, and the latest at Kuling. At Kuling Nanking's representatives included Chiang himself, Madame Chiang, and T.V. Soong.<sup>1</sup> We reached a detailed set of agreements. A sticking point exists on the Arbitration Committee to handle disagreements over their application. It is to consist of six members, three from each side, with Chiang as chairman. We do not want him to cast the deciding vote, he insists on doing so.

*How far have these points been implemented?*

On our side we have ended all activities against the Kuomintang. The Japanese try to stir up the Chinese regional militarists against Nanking, but they are failing.<sup>2</sup> We have also put a stop to confiscation of the lands of landlords. We are ready to drop the name Red Army and reorganize our forces as units of the National Army. Also, we are prepared to replace the Soviet system here in our area with an elected government. A public statement on the negotiations should be issued shortly, perhaps within a month, and these last two steps will be taken at that time.<sup>3</sup>

On its side Nanking has ended military attacks on the Red Army. It has lifted the economic blockade on our region and is now supplying three-fifths, or \$300,000 of the \$500,000, of the monthly food allowance due our troops as units of the national army. If the talks succeed, we expect our forces will receive the full amount.

There is a negative side: Nanking's moves toward political reforms have so far been meagre. Still, the atmosphere is altogether new and a sharp turn for the better has occurred. The ending of the civil war was the first step needed. This has taken place and further advances can now be made. Negotiations are continuing, though there is still not full success. It is hard to learn to cooperate after ten years of conflict.

We want a national program agreed to by both sides, with guarantees for its realization. This is possible, but its full content has not yet been discussed in any detail. How the military commands of the Kuomintang and Communist armies are to work together is still under negotiation. These two questions may not be wholly settled even after the statement is published. Many new issues will arise, which makes the establishment

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<sup>1</sup> Chou had just returned to Yen-an from this conference.

<sup>2</sup> Communist influence was now a strong inhibiting factor on any such actions: the goal was unification.

<sup>3</sup> It seems that July 15 was the date set for the statement; but two weeks after this interview the war had started. In September 1937, instead of one agreed document, Nanking and Yen-an issued separate statements, each stressing the understandings reached from its point of view.

## VIII

### Interview with Chou En-lai, June 23, 1937

*What is the status of the united front negotiations?*

In broad terms, agreement now exists on the fundamentals of a general settlement, but concrete details must still be worked out on a number of issues. Our essential position was stated in our telegram to the Third Plenary Session [of the Kuomintang's Central Executive Committee, February 15–21, 1937] made public by Nanking at the time.

We then made a number of pledges and accompanied them by a number of requests. Let me summarize the formulations developed in the course of the negotiations, now somewhat more detailed.

We have offered four pledges:

- 1) Cessation of all efforts to overthrow Kuomintang power.
- 2) Cessation of the policy of land confiscation.
- 3) Replacement of the Soviet system by a democratically elected government in our Special Area [the Border Region].
- 4) Renamed the National Revolutionary Army, the Red Army will operate under the general leadership of Nanking's Military Council for prosecution of the anti-Japanese war.

We have asked the Kuomintang to take five steps:

- 1) Cessation of the anti-Communist campaign.
- 2) Formation of a democratically elected government, guarantee of full civil rights including freedom of the press, release of all political prisoners, and legal status for the Communist Party.
- 3) Revision of Nanking's electoral regulations and program for the proposed National Congress. All parties and groups should be able to send their representatives to the Congress. It should have power to draft a new democratic constitution and to discuss a program to meet the national crisis.
- 4) Full preparations for a defensive war against Japan, with measures to strengthen the national defense economy and effective steps to improve the people's livelihood.
- 5) Reconsideration of Nanking's decision against summoning a National Defense Conference. It should be held in order to establish a

*How many of your people survived the Long March?*

Among the 90,000 Red Army troops now in the Border Region, only 20,000 to 30,000 are from Kiangsi. The rest were mostly recruited in Szechuan. Many lagged behind. They were tired out, cut off, or killed. Some are still in the scattered partisan areas. Our losses were very heavy on the Long March, possibly up to 30,000.

At its peak in 1934, in the Kiangsi-Fukien base, the Red Army numbered over 200,000. These were all regulars, in addition to the popular armed forces. Losses were very big in Chiang's fifth anti-Communist campaign. They came not so much from the bombings by Chiang's American planes as from frontal Red Army offensives against the better-equipped Nanking divisions.

*How do you view present relations with the Kuomintang?*

Nanking has never been receptive to our long-standing united front policy, but under recent conditions we have been able to pursue it energetically. The internal peace now achieved is a measure of its success. But class antagonism has not been abolished. There is still the bourgeoisie, and still the proletariat and the peasantry. There are still two parties. They do not want us to grow, they even want us to shrink. In the current period we expect to maintain our present strength. When war comes, they must get help from us if they are to fight to victory. Under such circumstances our strength must increase. We have a big cadre reserve here. It can be used to expand our forces quickly in wartime. We expect to be fighting under a unified war plan with Nanking, which will help greatly when war comes.

China must depend on its peasant and worker strength if it is to fight Japan successfully. Only the Communists can develop this mass movement. So Nanking must cooperate with us. The war must be a total war. Even all the 400 million Chinese are not enough. The Kuomintang is mistaken if it thinks to use only its strong regular forces, with help from the Western imperialists. In that case it does not understand that a semi-colonial country cannot defeat the modern Japanese armies. Only a mass popular resistance can win such a war. This is why political reform is needed, this is the best reason to have democratic rights for the people.

*A peace front is forming in the outside world. Must we have a war to help a Chinese revolution?*

In a peace front it is necessary to stop the aggressor. Hitler may want war, Japan is waging it. Manchuria is occupied, North China is threatened. By resisting Japan, China is coming closer to the peace front. Here there is also a revolutionary movement, because the Japanese struggle is accompanied by a struggle for democracy, better livelihood, and economic reconstruction. Both go together in China. By resisting aggression, China is for peace not war. It is also true that along this path the Chinese revolution gains. It will advance strongly in a victorious war with Japan. It will move ahead even without immediate success in battle or with only partial success. It will contribute to defeat of the aggressors in the entire world.

*What relations do you have with the Soviet Union?*

Our communications are solely by letter. There is no radio or other communication. Recently there has been some improvement, with more magazines, newspapers, and so on getting through. We receive no material support from the Soviet Union, either in arms or other supplies.

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after the end of the Sino-Japanese War, as well as the first key military victory of the Communists in Manchuria in 1948.

control the localities. They must use slogans of a kind to get the people to follow them. But today the people lean toward our policy of unity and anti-Japanese struggle. This movement of theirs cannot strengthen a reactionary Nanking program. Our people and others working in it will see that it becomes a genuine anti-Japanese force.

This is particularly true of the popular forces training movement here in the north. In the south it is a mere propaganda exercise, with little real work done. But here there is some effort to enlist our help in the movement. Already the lower ranks are reaching out for this help, though not Nanking's high military officers. So there is the chance to build from the bottom up. Here, with cadres trained for the anti-Japanese struggle, we can look to the development of good partisan forces in wartime.

*Is a military defense at all possible in the north?*

Our first lines of defense against a Japanese attack would have to be in the Peking-Tientsin area, in Inner Mongolia, and along the coast. These lines probably could not be held. The fall-back would be to the Yellow River line, where there are some fortifications but not too strong.

Troop units and leaders in the north are none too good. Planning for joint action by the northern leaders with Nanking has hardly begun. The northern troops under such men as General Sung Che-yuan are both subject to Japanese pressure and influenced by our movement. The lower officers are very anti-Japanese, but their higher command has no plan of what to do. Once war comes these units will be destroyed one after another.<sup>1</sup> Here, above all, conditions show the need to consolidate all Chinese forces under a unified command and to work out a common plan for the war of resistance. We are trying to see that the various northern units are coordinated with a central national command.

*What progress are the Manchurian volunteers making in their struggle against the Japanese occupation?*

This year there has been some increase in the activities on the Korean border, in eastern Fengtien and eastern Kirin. The growth of small guerilla warfare groups has been more systematic. The Hung Hu-tze bandits are being gradually eliminated, with some remnants joining the Communist partisan units, recruited mainly from the peasants. Recently new volunteer groups have been formed in Jehol and Chahar, where they now number 50,000 to 60,000.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An exact forecast of events that summer, when the Japanese forces quickly overran the North China provinces. Chu Teh's statements furnish strong evidence of Yen-an's sound estimate that the future in a North China under Japanese attack would provide full and free opportunity for a Communist-led defense.

<sup>2</sup> Illuminating data for this early period in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, where such partisans greatly increased during the war. These forces strongly aided the Communist move north from Yen-an to Kalgan against Kuomintang attacks soon

## VII

### Interview with Chu Teh, June 23, 1937

*What is the status of your military forces?*

The Red Army in this region under our direct command with radio connections numbers over 90,000. We have partisan forces in a number of different areas: southern Shensi, the Fukien-Kiangsi border, the Honan-Hupeh-Anhwei border, northeastern Kiangsi, the Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi border, the Kwangtung-Hunan border, the Kwangsi-Hunan border, and the Shensi-Szechuan border. They exist in groups of from 1,000 to 3,000; it is hard to estimate their exact total. Connections with some of these groups are still maintained, but not with all; at best they are none too good. The Kuomintang knows of these partisan units and in several cases is engaged in campaigns against them.

The 90,000 troops here in the Border Region are in general well armed. Other supplies, such as clothes, food, equipment, had not been so good at first, but since the Sian incident this aspect has much improved. Even so, the general situation is not entirely satisfactory. There are no reserves in regular training over and above the core army of 90,000. South of Yen-an to Sanyuan, there are professional partisan forces of somewhat over 10,000. The part-time partisan militia forces are considerably larger; they are responsible for maintaining order in their districts. As against the small numbers in the armed forces, a positive factor is our large reserve of trained cadres. In a war with Japan they would be a major resource.

*Nanking has been organizing "popular forces." What is their significance?*

The Kuomintang's national military training movement is different in the south and in the north. In the south it was formerly aimed against us, though now this may be changed. In the north, a more anti-Japanese appeal is used as a bridge to move from a mercenary soldiery to a broader-based conscription system. After training in the People's Military Institutes, the new forces are to be used to back up the regular national army. They cannot take the place of Chiang's trained divisions, but only strengthen them as a supplement. Despite a big publicity stir about it all, actual results have not been very great.

For the Kuomintang it is difficult to establish a mass popular base. It must be guided from the top, that is, by the landlords and gentry who

Kiangsi printing works could not be easily replaced. Most of the textbooks were mimeographed—not too clearly in those we saw—and were read with difficulty. One of the photographs gives a good view of a classroom and its equipment. Dormitory rooms were spartan, and living conditions hard. Students we met, not a few from privileged backgrounds, were evidently taking things in stride and bearing their own witness to the Yen-an spirit.

company level. The military studies, however, centered on the strategy and tactics of regimental or larger units, and specialized courses were given for the highest command grades: regimental, division, and army corps. In one room mechanical instruments were scattered about, indicating that map study was an essential part of the instruction. On the military side, faculty instructors were experienced commanders, up to Chu Teh himself.

Having said this, it must be noted that political subjects made up the larger part of the curriculum. These included study of the works of Marx and Lenin, and also of Stalin; history of the modern Chinese revolutionary movement, beginning with the Taiping Rebellion; political science and political economy; and philosophy, with emphasis on the dialectic. They were of course required for the army men. One of the key subjects was practical work in the tasks and methods of political organization. A prime element of study for all, it was especially so for the students undergoing specific training for such work.

These latter, some 500 in all, were the distinguishing feature of this new Resist-Japan University. Coming very largely from Kuomintang areas, most of them were intellectuals, many having been students in various universities, and about 70 were women. Virtually all were already advanced political workers, with experience in the Peking-Tientsin Student Union or in branches of the National Salvation Association, where centers of the struggle to organize resistance to Japan existed. They came usually on recommendation of their local party units or officers of the Association. An occasional student, showing up at Yen-an without preliminary notice, might be vouched for by persons already there or else get letters from his locality.

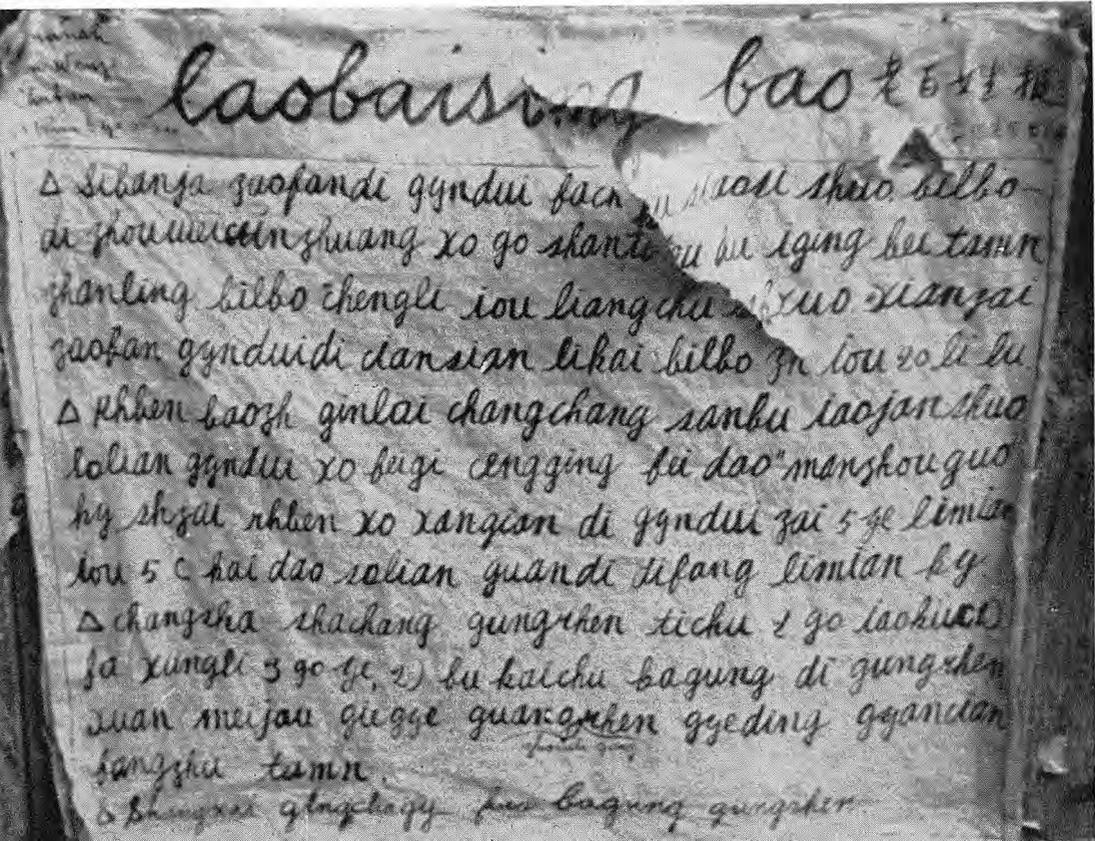
For these political trainees, as for the army men, strict military discipline was enforced. The women were excused from military drill, for which daily physical training was substituted. The study routine, moreover, featured some of the progressive aspects of modern pedagogy. Three hours were taken up by class work, and three by individual preparation. But group discussion, with instructors usually participating, was also allotted three hours. Textbook study was minimal, owing perhaps in part to the scarcity of books. It may be assumed that the group discussions played a most significant role in the instruction. The brief training period of four months, designed to meet the need foreseen for large numbers of political workers, again demonstrated the Yen-an leaders' belief that war was close at hand.

There were about 20 full-time instructors, with Mao and the other leaders evidently doing considerable lecturing. They were severely handicapped by a shortage of books, even to the works of Marx and Lenin. Little in the way of a library had survived the Long March, and the large



30. The author has his say.

31. A wall newspaper in Yen-an, *The People's Paper*.





28. The Yanan meeting to hear the foreign visitors.

29. Chu Teh opens; Philip Jaffe waits to speak.





26. Yen-an's Big Four: Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, Po Ku (Ch'in Pang-hsien), Chu Teh.

27. Hsu Meng-ch'iu, political commissar and historian, whose legs were amputated after being frozen on the Long March.





24. Young Guard  
buglers.



25. Chu Teh and  
Mao Tse-tung.

22. Mao Tse-tung.



23. Mao Tse-tung.





20. Classroom at Kang-ta. The slogan is *Struggle for a Democratic Republic*, but the hammer-and-sickle is still being used.

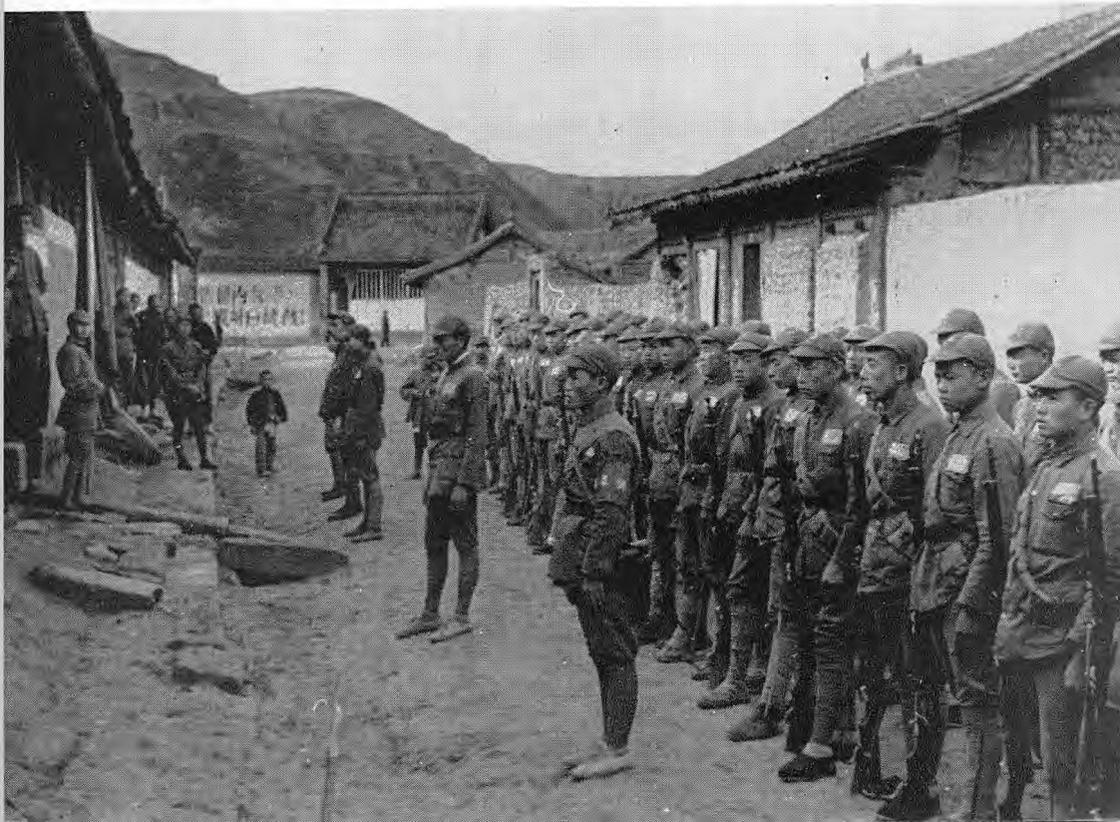


21. General Chu Teh.



18. The Chinese People's Resist-Japan Military and Political University.

19. A Communist military unit in Yen-an. The slogan on the wall (not fully visible) includes *Domestic Peace* and *United Resistance Against Japan*.





16. Reunion in Yen-an:  
Philip Jaffe, Peggy  
Snow (Nym Wales),  
Owen Lattimore,  
Mao Tse-tung,  
T. A. Bisson,  
Agnes Jaffe.



17. Ting Ling.



14. Scylla and  
Charybdis.  
Effie at the helm;  
Bisson the guide.



15. The gate of  
Yenan. The  
slogans: *Unity  
Through Peace,  
Consolidate  
Against  
Aggression.*



12. Trouble at the Lo Ho.

13. Ox power saves the day.





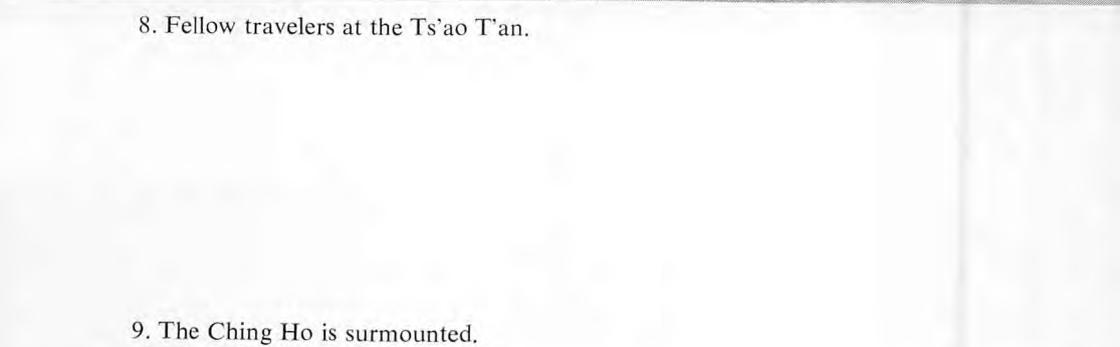
10. Loess country.



11. The same.



8. Fellow travelers at the Ts'ao T'an.



9. The Ching Ho is surmounted.





6. A modern Charon  
at the Ts'ao T'an.



7. But passengers (Phil)  
go by foot.



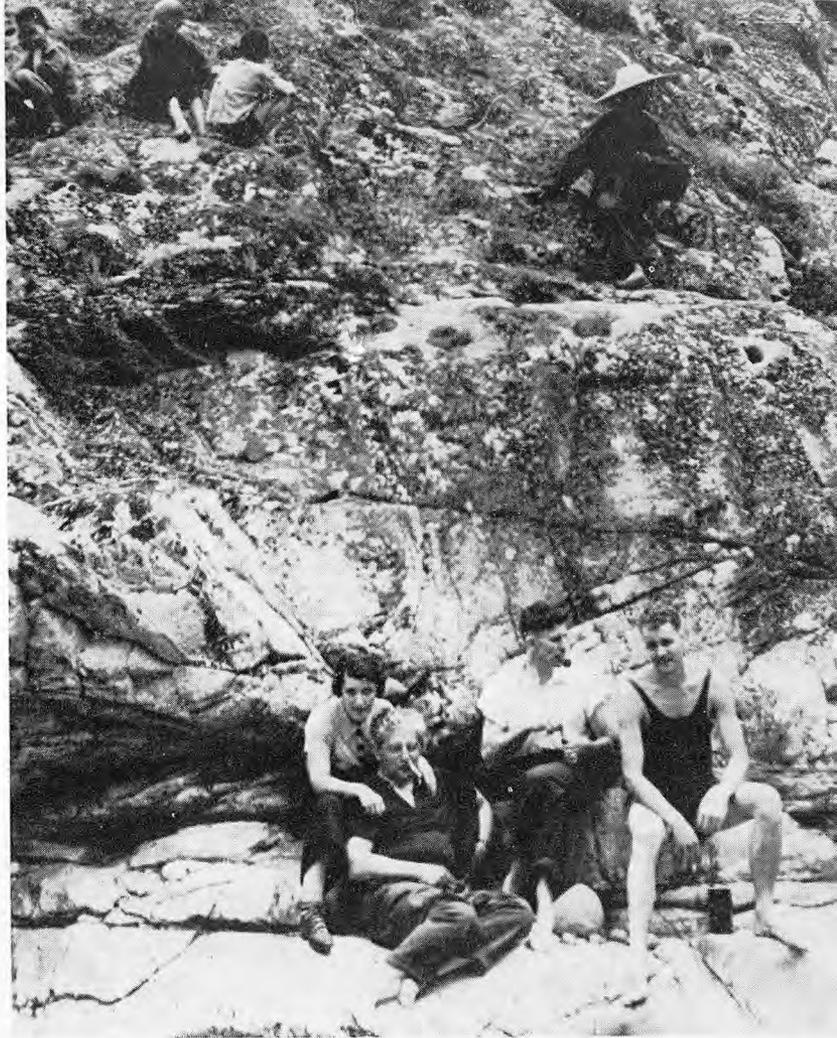
4. Waiting for the Ts'ao T'an ferry.

5. Across the Ts'ao T'an.





2. Effie Hill.



3. Avid tourists (Agnes and Philip Jaffe, T. A. Bisson, George Fitch), with native "sightseers" in the background.

use his translator.  
Home after midnight.  
Thursday, June 24.

Mass meeting in  
morning. Phil spoke  
first, then I, then  
Owen. To officers  
of one of the Army  
corps - ~~recruiting~~  
training, mostly these -  
also others. Lunched  
at home and took it  
easy. Sat around and  
talked. Then Owen

talked to minorities  
(20 - only 2 Mongols,  
Muslims about six,  
Tibetans of 2 kinds  
(about 8) - 1 Kolo, 2 or  
3 Miao of Yao.)  
While we (Agnes, Phil,  
and I) went with  
Chu Teh and Wang  
across river to the  
party school - talked  
with head, and in-

First Why China cannot become capitalist  
Because both in present and  
past a semi-colonial country,  
Chinese Bourgeois. Dreams of this future.  
But neither China's condition nor  
present period permits.

China not prep. for long  
s-c. position, had it in  
past. Now preparing for  
independent position. This  
struggle is prog. under lead  
of the proletariat, and  
is fundamentally different  
from the history of con-  
structing democratic  
states when bourgeoisie  
took the lead. Because  
the bourgeoisie of semi-c. <sup>of semi-c.</sup>

country is weak, lacks <sup>9</sup>  
energy, cannot take up  
the task. Proletariat  
must take it up. Since  
an indep. dem. republic is  
diff. from the b-d.  
republic in history, it  
is the united front of  
the proletariat, peasants &  
part of the bourgeoisie  
in form of republic. Without  
lead of prol., no rev.  
pos. in China. This condi-  
tion determines the possibility  
that China can pass directly  
into socialist future without

with Japan, it was the top-level training school both for military officers of the higher ranks and for political workers equipped to organize resistance in Japanese-occupied areas. The attention directed to this second end was the chief aspect of the new departure. For the first time a substantial number of the students was enrolled from outside the Communist-ruled area. The situation now envisaged, one that soon became an actuality, was that the Communist forces would be operating in extensive new districts with the vital task of organizing the people for armed resistance. It was as though the guerrilla base areas formed later behind the Japanese lines were already factual constructs in the minds of the Yen-an leaders.

In June 1937 the University enrolled approximately 1,500 students. They came from all over China, with virtually every province represented, including a small group from the national minorities. It was a youthful body, with nearly 70 per cent of the students ranging between 20 and 25 years of age. Still, they were a far cry from the ordinary group of college students. They represented an immense fund of practical experience, both in direct military combat and in various organizing activities of a political nature. It was the maturity and disciplined enthusiasm of these students, as well as a faculty that included the Yen-an leaders themselves, that placed the school on a university level, despite the rather brief terms of residence.

The provenance of the student body made the school quite different from such previous Communist educational enterprises as existed, say, in the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet. About two-thirds of the students, mostly army officers, were from the Communist districts, but one-third, those being trained for the tasks of political organization, were recruited from non-Communist areas. These two segments of the student body must be considered separately, though there was considerable overlapping, mainly on the political side, in the subjects studied.

The training of a new type of student for a new political task did not alter the University's primary role, that of a higher school for army officers and, to a much lesser degree, for public officials. About 1,000 of the students were army commanders, political commissars, or high government personnel. Much the larger number were ranking military officers, from company to division commanders. Many of them had been wounded five or six times and most had probably been on the Long March. Eighty per cent were peasants or workers, and nearly all were party members. Their objective was the higher command posts of the Red Army. The course was being extended from a period of eight months to a full year, though with the outbreak of war it was cut back again.

At Yen-an, army units were constantly marching, drilling, and singing in the streets, or engaged on maneuvers in the nearby fields. Practice, as we saw it, seemed largely directed to small-unit operations, hardly above

## VI

# The Chinese People's Resist-Japan Military and Political University

When we visited it in June 1937 this famous Communist school of the wartime united front was only a few months old. Already its reputation was high and soon it would be the beacon of revolutionary-minded students throughout China. Its correct name, as here given, fully describes it: an organ of the Chinese people's anti-Japanese struggle with instruction centered on the military and political arts.

A new creation designed to meet the special needs of the united front program that assumed primacy in 1937, it was as always the outgrowth of previous Communist experience. At Paoan in July 1936, Edgar Snow had seen its immediate predecessor, then known as the *Hung-chün Ta-hsueh*, or the Red Army University. That name showed it as still the organ of a revolutionary movement with its own separate army and government. The change of name took place early in 1937 with the shift to Yen-an, new capital of the emerging Border Region. It was symbolic of a more profound change, the swift formation of an anti-Japanese front between Nanking and Yen-an within a period of months.

At this time a further change in the school, which has been less noted, was also made. The Paoan institution was divided, with only its higher levels transferred to Yen-an. A new infantry school was set up at Chinyang, a village in Kansu. Here the students were recruited mainly from the lower ranks, from privates to squad and platoon commanders. Instead of the instruction day of nine hours at Yen-an, only six hours were required at Chinyang, with one day a week off in each case. Two hours a day were devoted to infantry instruction, covering squad, platoon, and company maneuvers. The other four hours were taken up with political education, stressing both principle and practice. After an eight months' course the students normally returned to their former military units. The political emphasis was strong, but not exceptional in the Chinese Communist approach. There was little to distinguish this Chinyang infantry school from previous Communist military training organs, except that here too no doubt the political instruction was now heavily weighted to the needs of a united anti-Japanese struggle.

It was at Yen-an, during the early months of 1937, that a unique educational institution emerged, with a character that diverged from normal practice in essential ways. Designed primarily to meet the needs of a war

You are right, of course, when you refer to Mongol separatism as evidenced by Prince Te Wang's support of Japan's aggressive moves in Inner Mongolia. In large part this is the outcome of wrong Nanking policies, both political and economic. The Mongols must choose their own officials; Nanking should not appoint them. Taxes should be levied by the Mongols themselves and applied to their needs; the Kuomintang levies should be abolished. Until very recently the Mongols have been losing their lands to the Hans. Where lands taken from them still present serious issues, they should be returned to them.

These are basic programmatic principles, but they must be supported by specific political measures directed toward democratic ends. In respect to the Mongols the task is a delicate one: the princes should be respected and helped by us, but not in such a way that their added strength enables them to abuse their power.

Thus, on the one hand, we must work with the constituted authorities in Mongol areas, that is, with the ruling princes. Formal assistance, in the way of arms and supplies, goes to them. It is not easy to win their confidence. They have good reason to distrust the Chinese. We are now giving Salt Lake entirely to the Mongols, but they are afraid it is a trick. Our program must demonstrate that the Communists are pro-Mongol, not anti-Mongol.

On the other hand, we must work with the Mongol people as well as with the princes. We must create a Mongol popular movement, with enough strength to defend people's needs. As an example it was some of the small Chinese merchants, more in touch with the people than with the princes, who asked us to let them bring some Mongols to Yen-an for discussions. The type that came were not from the top but from the little people. They can exercise some influence. It was such popular pressure that recently prevented the Wusun banner from attacking the Otok banner. We think it possible to enroll the princes in the anti-Japanese struggle, instead of pushing them into Japan's hands. This must be done, while still trying to protect the Mongol people from abuses of princely power.

Prince Te Wang's case is an example of what to avoid. He is a true national leader of his people, who resisted measures that Nanking tried to force on him. He has democratic leanings, but was unable to make his people understand them. The other princes opposed him, making his situation intolerable. Alienated primarily by mistaken Kuomintang policies, he fell into the hands of Japan and sought to turn Mongol nationalism against Nanking in collaboration with Japanese imperialism. With the right policy this need never have happened.

atives. Last year we advanced \$100,000 to the cooperatives for the purchase of plows, seeds, cattle, and other items, and this year we have allocated the same amount for these purposes.

The work on the Region's peasant cooperatives is only now beginning to show results. So far they are of the simple, traditional *pang mang* (mutual self-help) type, not of any pro rata sharing of products by the individually owned peasant farms. Many of them, or most of them, are consumer cooperatives, now with a membership of 100,000 peasants. There are also labor cooperatives for help during the peak demand periods of sowing and harvesting. Some beginnings of production cooperatives may be said to exist in the handicraft industries of ironsmiths and carpenters, and in the women's spinning and weaving crafts.

### *Policy on the National Minorities*

At its base our policy toward the national minorities stresses the principle of self-determination. In what directly affects them the minorities must be able to make their own decisions. To this there are a number of practical applications.

The first is political self-determination. In regions where the Mongols, Muslims, or others are in the majority they must have autonomy. Where they are a substantial minority they must have a committee to represent them.

A second requirement is that of religious freedom. No restrictions should exist on the minorities' practice of their religions. In the case of the Muslims, for example, this takes in mosques, the *mullah* (Muslim religious teachers), and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Again, there must be language freedom for the minorities. No restrictions should be placed on the use of their languages, either in schools or in their press and publications. In this field, moreover, they should receive government financial help. The cultural levels of all, the minorities as well as the Hans (ethnic Chinese), must be raised.

Finally, special measures are needed in the field of taxation. All Kuo-mintang taxes, official and unofficial, must be removed, and a new suitable tax system established.<sup>6</sup> Better living conditions for the minority peoples must be the goal.

These measures are right and necessary in themselves, but they also bear a special relation to the present national crisis. There must be unity of all our ethnic groups in the struggle against Japan. For the minorities, this struggle is today taking on a wider outreach that extends to China's borders and beyond. Already the Mongols of Outer Mongolia are threatened by Japan. An international front of all Mongols, and of the Turks, must be organized.

<sup>6</sup> Po Ku is speaking with special reference to the Border Region, set in an area relatively close to the majority of the Mongols and Muslims in China.

applied. Still others have opened up new lands and their right to them is recognized. In the national anti-Japanese front now forming, the landlords too have their place, but not one that means exploitation of the peasant. The experience of the Manchurian volunteers has taught us that even the landlords can oppose the Japanese.

We have not felt that reductions of rent and interest charges, or even the land division, were enough to secure the peasants' livelihood. Much more help has been needed, especially now, and especially in this area where the economic situation has been bad for some years. It became critical last year when withdrawing Kuomintang troops, mostly in Shensi, laid waste to major sections of the Region.

Military demands were urgent in 1935 and 1936, but some emergency measures were put into effect immediately. Of these the most important related to taxes, often a burden on the peasant as serious as rents or interests. For 1936 all taxes and levies were remitted. Now, in 1937, with the ending of military operations, we have still postponed the levying of new taxes. Apart from land, there are few other resources in the Region that can be taxed. An exception is Yen Ch'ih (Salt Lake), in northern Shensi, which is quite productive. Here we have continued the salt tax at one-fifth of the former Kuomintang levy, but have turned over half of the proceeds to the Mongols in the northern districts.<sup>4</sup>

Our revenues, as your question implies, are not large, but then our administrative costs are quite low. We have few public officials and these are not paid high salaries. Also, Nanking now supplies much of the food ration of our armed force regulars. To an extent our army is self-sufficient, with some units cultivating allotted sections of the public lands.

We have also introduced a series of farm aid measures, both on a short-term and long-term basis. Direct relief has been given in some near-famine areas, where crops and fields were laid waste. This year we have allocated \$60,000 for such relief, used largely for the purchase of food-stuffs from Shansi province.<sup>5</sup> We are urging the Kuomintang famine relief commission to give aid to the peasant famine victims in our districts. The commission has promised aid, but thus far has actually supplied a total of \$9,000, or \$1,500 each for six of our *hsien* (counties or districts). On the whole the Border Region has managed to avoid critical famine conditions. In the nearby Kuomintang areas, with landlords dominant and squeeze and corruption prevalent, the situation is much worse.

Our program is also concerned with the more basic and long-term requirements of efficient and productive farming. The government affords help to the peasants in land cultivation and in the organization of cooper-

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<sup>4</sup> Perhaps an interim tax measure, for Po Ku speaks later of the transfer of Salt Lake to the Mongols.

<sup>5</sup> The figures are in Chinese dollars, worth considerably less than the American dollar even in Chinese prices.

was not the real problem here; land was abundant relative to the people, who were too few. Yet the landlords owned much of the best land. Along with high rents, interest charges were the most serious issue. The landlords were money lenders in many ways: on money loans, the pawning of goods, or charges on rented tools and plow cattle. Rates were as high as 10 per cent a month. To relieve the peasant from exploitation, assuming no land division, the struggle on this front is critical in most of China.

In 1930 there was a big famine here, resulting in greater concentration of land ownership. The landlords acquired most of the good plots along the rivers. Poor lands on the mountain sides were not much wanted. If they were acquired, it was usually the entire mountain side.

In the Border Region areas first occupied, we took the lands from the landlords and divided them among the peasants. Peasant militia, formed to guard the land division, replaced the previously oppressive *min-t'uan*, the landlord militia.

This land division occurred on a village-to-village basis. Confiscated lands were divided among the poor and middle peasants by decision of the village people. After the division the peasants owned all lands as private property, with one exception. Five per cent of the land was normally made public land, tilled collectively by the village peasants. Revenue from this land was used for schools, roads, bridges, and other village services. This revolutionary-democratic land policy, with the big landed estates confiscated and divided, was in effect up to the Sian incident of December 1936.

Since then the united front land policy has been applied in all newly occupied districts.<sup>3</sup> Lands are no longer divided but the landlords must observe special regulations. Rents are lowered, with the maximum set at 30 per cent; the old rates had often been as high as 50 per cent. The peasant has the right to bargain with his landlord for a rental charge below the maximum. Usurious loans are prohibited, with maximum interest rates set at 2 per cent a month. Also, in towns and cities, the high rents formerly charged for houses or rooms have been reduced.

When one sees the extreme landlord exploitation of the Chinese peasantry, there is no need to defend our policy of revolutionary land confiscation and redivision. Today, however, there is a new policy. In the interest of the anti-Japanese front we want to win over the landlords, not fight with them. As the situation stands today, the status of the landlords in our areas is not a simple black-and-white picture. Many landlords fled when the lands were divided. A few, of the lesser ones, stayed and received small shares like the peasants. Some are in newly occupied areas where no land division has taken place but where the new regulations are being

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<sup>3</sup> Except in southern Shensi, such newly occupied areas were small. They only became large during the war. In the extensive North China guerrilla bases then formed, the united front land policy was fully applied.

It is impossible for Britain to establish the kind of Far Eastern balance of power you have outlined. It is true that Britain long ago adopted the balance of power policy and has traditionally followed it. But if the sides of the balance are unequal, it is necessary to add here and subtract there in order to achieve a balance. Under contemporary world conditions, any such balance can only be temporary. In Europe, Britain wants to establish a balance, but the Fascist powers may be depended upon to destroy any balance that may be set up. To help itself, Britain is obliged to help the forces of the peace front, the democratic forces.

In some cases, because of the rapid advance of the Fascist powers, Britain must utilize the anti-Fascist forces, which are often revolutionary. So it cannot obstruct the growth of the revolutionary anti-Fascist forces. The policy of compromise, of balance of power, allows the revolutionary forces to grow. The examples of France and Spain illustrate this process. In these two countries there exist certain pro-Fascist forces, but it is too dangerous for Britain to permit these elements to gain power. So, though Britain does not like the united front governments, it must somehow cooperate with them. There are many contradictions in current British policy. Its compromise procedure also helps the Fascists to rise, but the flood of Fascism carries the revolutionary wave up with it and thereby the Soviet boat floats higher.

The situation in China today has some analogy to the position of Franco in Spain. The Whampoa clique [military rightists at Nanking] faces two enemies—the Communist Party and Japan. If it forms an alliance with Japan to fight the Communists, it plays the role of Franco. As in Spain, there would be a civil war with the revolutionary forces of China. If the Whampoa clique wants to fight Japan determinedly, it must deploy the unified strength of the Chinese nation. Then it must embrace the program of the Communist Party, and so it cannot obstruct the growth of the Communist movement. Either way, the influence of the Communist Party will increase.

As to a Kuomintang military dictatorship, it is very clear that from September 18, 1931, to now, as well as earlier, Nanking has always been a military dictatorship. Up to July 1936 there was dictatorship plus a pro-Japanese policy. Now that it has changed its foreign policy, it must also change its domestic policy. It is impossible for the Kuomintang at one and the same time to suppress the people and fight successfully against Japan. It may be true that Nanking is not deeply and permanently committed to an anti-Japanese policy. There is not yet the anti-Japanese war, not yet democracy. This can only be a temporary situation. The present period bears a transitional character; it is passing from one stage to another. We are now in the midst of this transitional period.

The same holds true in the word at large, so it is possible to observe many unhealthy phenomena. In China we see the arrest and trial of the

National Salvation leaders, the suppression of the mass movement, the remnants of the old policy not yet fully given up. On the other side is the struggle of the healthy trend against the evil remnants. It is not necessary to be over-anxious, because we can see the other side. Look objectively at the struggle that is going on; this struggle is the specific characteristic of this period. If some Kuomintang members keep to the old policy and don't want to change, they are free to adopt such an attitude. But the new anti-Japanese, democratic forces are growing up and will call a halt to the activities of these people. Even Justice [Charles Evans] Hughes must change a little, or be carried away.

# X

## Interview with Mao Tse-tung, June 23, 1937

*Where should the students and intellectuals stand today?*

To pose this question as an alternative—either with Nanking or with the Communists—is not correct. In the past some of the students stood with the Communists, some with Nanking. Now there is a common future in the united front, in a united democratic republic. On the program of the anti-Japanese and pro-democratic front, we can unite the large majority of students and intellectuals. Only a small fraction on the right will waver.

In the past, the intellectuals suffered oppression from Japanese imperialism and also from Nanking's military dictatorship. This feeling of oppression, from outside and from within, was not limited to the intellectuals. It was felt by the bourgeoisie, too, who also suffered both external and internal oppression.

Today there is a new perspective. The condition is that we abolish our Soviet system and that the Kuomintang abolishes its dictatorship, that both sides unite to create a democratic republic. This is the demand of the majority of the people. If it is not met, if the program does not move forward, Nanking's position grows weak and to maintain its position becomes difficult. So there is an effort from the two sides toward the same political goal—the anti-Japanese united front. And with this goes the necessity to struggle against the opposing force—the united front of Japanese imperialism and the pro-Japanese cliques in China.

*How do you expect the united front to develop in the future?*

The united front is of course composed of different groups; it is the struggle between them that will determine its future. It will evolve in different phases which cannot be foreseen in detail.

Basically, as its constituents, there are the proletariat, peasants, and petty bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the national bourgeoisie on the other. They have some things in common, some not in common. The common points should and can unite these two hands of the front, but at the same time the differences between them bring about a struggle which develops unevenly. This is the way the question must be posed.

The future, moreover, is affected by external events, occurring on the international scene. It therefore turns on developments both within and

without China. One thing can be said. The alternative is clear: victory of the aggressive front of Japanese imperialism, or victory of the Chinese united front. All depends on the result of the struggle between these two forces.

For the immediate future, in China's domestic affairs, achievement of the democratic republic is the broad objective of the united front. All groups have a share in its benefits. The elementary task is the improvement of the livelihood of the peasants and workers, and also of the intellectuals. There is the further task of solving certain problems of the bourgeoisie, threatened by colonization and bureaucratic capitalism. These are the tasks of the first stage of the united front program.

After the democratic republic has been created, the task of achieving a socialist revolution for China is next on the agenda. China has no chance to become an imperialist or capitalist country. Its future is, first, the democratic republic and, second, the socialist revolution.

*Why do you think China cannot become a capitalist country?*

First, both in the present and in the past it has been a semi-colonial country. The Chinese bourgeoisie may dream of such a future. But neither China's existing condition nor the demands of the present period permits.

China is not preparing for a longer semi-colonial status. It had this in the past, but now it is preparing for an independent position. The struggle for this end is progressing under the leadership of the proletariat. It is fundamentally different from the history of the building of the Western democratic states when the bourgeoisie took the lead. The bourgeoisie of a semi-colonial country is weak. It lacks the necessary energy and cannot take up the task. The proletariat must take it up. An independent democratic republic in China is thus different from the bourgeois-democratic republic of history. It is the united front of the proletariat, the peasants, and part of the bourgeoisie in the form of a republic. Without the lead of the proletariat no revolution is possible in China. This condition determines the possibility that China can pass directly into a socialist future without having a capitalist era.

Today a second condition also exists. The struggle against the oppression of the imperialists is accompanied by changes in the imperialist countries and within the imperialist structure. It is impossible to reason that after Japanese imperialism is driven out of China it can still maintain its customary position in China. Can one argue that after the failure of a war of aggression by Hitler he would continue to maintain his power in Germany? Present wars are different from the war of twenty years ago. Today's wars against Fascism are revolutionary; in the last war both sides were counter-revolutionary. Thus, in the light of existing world conditions, China has the possibility of moving directly to socialism without passing through a capitalist stage.

There is, finally, a third major condition to note. The existence of the Soviet Union has decisive influence, not only with regard to China but other countries as well. Isolation is as impossible for the Soviet Union as it is for the United States. It either exists with victory of the socialist revolution or it goes down to defeat.

On the basis of these three conditions, these facts of today's world, our conclusion is that China can avoid capitalism and realize socialism directly. How soon a socialist revolution might occur cannot be known at the present stage. It depends on developments in China and in the world at large. China carries a heavy load on its back. For the Chinese proletariat alone the task is impossible; we need the help of the proletariat of other countries. In the same way, the proletariat in the imperialist countries must get help from the colonial and semi-colonial countries. This is the way Lenin formulated the problem of revolution. For our part we are prepared for a long hard struggle.

*Might capitalism exist during the transition to socialism?*

Yes, and it is necessary. It strengthens the anti-Japanese front. But in a period when the proletariat is leading a war against imperialism and for internal betterment, the outcome cannot be mere reformations. The leadership of the proletariat makes it possible to transform war into socialist revolution.

*Is American isolationism a bar to joint action?*

Many people in the United States are thinking and talking of isolationism today, but in fact America is not isolationist. As in other capitalist countries, the United States is divided into two parts—one the proletariat, one the bourgeoisie. Neither side can have this isolationism that is talked about. Capitalism of the imperialists has a world nature. It must exist in relation to the whole world. The proletarian revolution, too, needs the help of the world proletariat. If isolationist feeling exists among Americans, then we need to explain that it is impossible.

In the position China is in, we not only need the help of America, we must also use the contradictions between American and Japanese imperialism. The relation of American capital to China is the same as that of other imperialist countries. Among them there exist points in common and also points of difference. The point common to all is that all are exploiting China; the contradiction is in the struggle among them, whether British, American, Japanese, or German capital, to monopolize China. If China is to be subjugated by one, it will not only be bad for the Chinese people, it will then force the other powers to retreat from China.

Here, then, is a point China holds in common with the United States: in foreign policy there is the possibility that we may come together. We are different from Trotsky. Our united front is anti-Japanese, not anti-

all-imperialists. Only the proletarians and oppressed of the world have interests in common and no points of conflict. The proletariat and the people of other countries are our best friends. The Americans who visit our place come not for commercial reasons but for friendship. We entirely agree with your policy of struggling to have the United States take a positive stand against Japanese aggression in China.

The Chinese revolution should not be viewed in isolation. It is but one part of the world revolution. It has its special characteristics, but fundamentally it is similar to the Spanish, French, American, and British people's struggles. In their inherent nature, these struggles are all similar, all are for the progress of the world. The broad sympathy for China among the American masses gives evidence of this similarity. They are concerned about the fate of the Chinese people, we are also concerned about their fate. Please convey this message to the American people. In China there is oppression by imperialist and feudal forces; in America oppression also exists, but not from these things. That the joining of our two countries in a united struggle can lead to an entirely new world is the hope common to us.

## XI

### Return to Sian—and Peking

More than once, while at Yen-an, premonitions over the return trip had visited us. They were amply justified. What had taken four days coming took six going back, and a slump in morale made it seem twice as long. The trip up had been all novelty, adventure, and eager expectation; the return was compounded of troubles, delays, and endless frustrations. Not only had additional rains made roads and rivers more difficult, but the far more balky car was having its own letdown. Effie nursed it like a child until one became sure that only the fellow feeling between them cured its tantrums. My collection holds few pictures of the return trip; perhaps film was now scarce or else the urge was not there. But the notebook again covers the road, river, and car troubles with lavish detail, the result no doubt of the long and frequent delays. Although the story now becomes anti-climactic, its more dramatic episodes might be kept.

A youthful detachment at Kanch'üan, reached Thursday night after a two-hour stint from Yen-an, brought our closest touch to the Red Army and the Long March. One youngster had marched through Kweichow, Yunnan, Szechuan, and Kansu—he was 19 years old. Then it was our turn—a barrage of questions, mostly on the United States, with Owen trying his best to satisfy them. Perhaps the last photo of the trip shows us at the room's table, and the little notebook being written up.

We took to the *k'angs* in a thunderstorm and the rains continued all next morning. Off after lunch to an epic afternoon on an impossible road: landslides that half filled it or deeply scoured gullies, and river crossings with bridges always down. With the engine misbehaving, there was a succession of seemingly hopeless situations. Once we came to a huge rock deposited in the middle of the road. With smaller rocks piled against it on the inner side, Effie careened up and over—one set of wheels on the big rock, the other on the smaller ones. Two Lo Ho crossings were the worst: at one the car nearly toppled off an improvised bridge, at another it took some salt-carrier donkey men and finally some Red Army soldiers to haul us out of a muddy bank.

Late in the day came the final crisis, as we worked up a long hill crossed by deep washed-out gullies. Spading out and clearing paths, then backing up for second tries, the lower level gullies were somehow crossed. But as dusk came on, near the top of the hill, the biggest gully of all appeared. Again the picks and shovels to clear a path through, but in the test the car came to a stop halfway across, tilted to one side with

wheels sunk deep in mud. Long cranking, but engine wouldn't start. Even with help by the three donkey men there was no getting the car out. More help was needed.

A village lay somewhere over the hill and help was sent for via the donkey men. Soon Phil, Agnes, and I, of no help to Effie and Owen at the car, followed off up the hill to make sure help would come and to arrange for the night's accommodation. Splashing in and out of mud puddles, we set off on our climb about 9 P.M. Clearing the dark cut after an unexpectedly long hike, we were greeted by a newly risen full moon—a huge orb on the horizon, with one bar of cloud across its lower half. Our cheer was short-lived. Trudging up and down small hills, dead tired, thirsty, hungry, the promised mile or two to the village began to seem endless. At one point, fearing we were lost, we almost turned back; blankets as well as our small food hoard lay back in the car.

Deciding to make for the top of a high hill still up ahead, we now had our reward—a big crowd of men, 14 in all. They asked if they were still wanted, and I told them to go ahead and *pang mang* (help out). The village, they told us, lay just ahead. And so we topped the hill, but still no village in sight. But from nearby came a homey sound—the clucking of some chickens. Reassured, we flopped down beside the road for a breather. Some time after ten we dragged into the village, actually Chiaotaochen, but at first unrecognized by us.

It was Phil who thought he recalled the gatehouse where we had spent our last night on the incoming trip, but Agnes and I were dubious. At this point a Red Army man showed up. To our surprise he was very suspicious—had received no word about us. In this crisis my shaky Chinese, jeered at cheerfully by Effie and Owen, was of no help, as I tried to say we were looking for an inn where we had stayed some nights back. But by now the usual crowd had gathered over such an affair, and soon came to the rescue. Some of the bystanders had recognized us; the Red Army man heard them out, then simply pointed to the gatehouse. It was our old Chiaotaochen quarters!

The woman recognized us as we went in, spread out straw mats, and brought us a basin of washing water and some hot water to drink—with apologies, no tea leaves were to be had. The day had been long and we lay like logs on the mats, wondering how the car was doing. And then, soon after 10:30 we heard the engine's familiar sputter. (Back at the cut Effie and Owen had a crudely filled-in roadway across the gully by the time the *pang mang* corps arrived; they had simply lifted and pulled the car out by main force, and once put in gear the engine had started.) Now we were all in together, and so unpacked, spread out the bedding, and dined—tea (ours), a can of cold beans, cheese and crackers, and a nip of whiskey around. We had covered 40 miles that day.

Woke Saturday, our second full day on the road, to a heavy rain that

lasted all day and washed it out completely. Agnes wrote a letter home; I added the previous day's adventure to the notebook; we played cards. Effie tinkered with the fan belt, but scored his coup by turning up with a chicken (60 cents); tough but good, the soup especially.

Up at 5:15 on the third day; a snack of tea, packed, and we were off, fog clearing under a strong sun. The Lo Ho there again, worse than ever; bad enough in the morning, but with the worst held in reserve. Two hours of heavy work at the first crossing—plating the mud bottom with rocks, laying paths from the banks on both sides. But car sticks at once on near side. Water high, with stiff current, and engine threatened. Unloaded car and carried bags to safe ground—also fan belt, points, and spark plugs (wrapped in shirts, socks, and handkerchiefs). Jacked up car's two front wheels with two big planks, lifted car up and out of the mud-hole. Replaced fan belt, points, and plugs. Success! Effie now takes car straight across through two feet of watery causeway and up the far bank without a hitch. More trouble at next steep hill, but by noon a special breakfast at Lo Ch'uan—omelette, pork and vegetables, *tou fu*, soup, rice, and tea, topped off with some good Chinese *chiu*. Another 20 miles covered that morning.

Off again on the plateau, now approaching the hazardous spot where the road had washed out to barely the car's width (*photograph 14*). A repair crew was working on it—building a new semi-circle of road hugging the hillside just below the washout. The engine, sensible as ever, now refused to start. But with a true Chinese yo-heave-ho, the road gang simply hauled it around and over the detour.

Down again from the loess hills to the familiar Lo Ho, at a point where a chain ferry had given us one of our easy crossings the week before. This time it was not to be. The flood waters had carried away the cable, now lying somewhere down the river. Without it the ferryman wouldn't risk his boat in the swirling current. For five hours, until sundown, we sat around on the bank in a bright sun, broken only by trips to the landing for arguments with the ferryman. Finally we took refuge for the night in a mud-brick cottage on a nearby hill.

With morning our hopes were raised. The river was reported down and a Red Army truck now showed up, also wanting to cross. By afternoon things had begun to happen. Down river we could see men hauling the ferry chain out on the bank. Once they had dragged it to the landing, the problem was to get it across. Effie's suggestion to throw a rock over on a string was turned down. Instead, two squads of men passed a wire across a narrow stretch lower down, then walked up on each side letting it out as they came. With cable attached to the wire, and all manpower mobilized, us included, it was dragged across the river. The final act saw it attached to its side pillars.

Now at last we would be getting off, and we loaded the car for the

crossing. But the Red Army truck went first and, in debarking on the far side, slipped off the planks. We watched the efforts to dig it out, and waited; as dusk came on, we built a fire on the bank. And still the work with the truck went on, without result. Soon it was pitch-dark, and we gave up, lugging our things back up the hill for a second night's stay. In this bitterest blow of the trip, frayed tempers showed for the first time.

Morning of the fifth day, cool and sunny, saw us rolling off the ferry planks and again on the road; the truck, we learned, had not gotten off until daylight. A series of difficult fordings soon dampened our high spirits. That afternoon, with gas supply running low, the car's performance sank to its lowest ebb. The much patched-up fan belt would not hold, the radiator was leaking, water boiling out of the cap, and the engine doing poorly on its new kerosene-gasoline mixture. Another night on the road was coming up, the fifth since leaving Yen-an. The sixth day, it was hoped, would see us through the last 90 miles to Sian.

Next morning's omens were not too bad. A flour paste from the inn had plugged the radiator leak and Effie had turned up some blackmarket gasoline—5 gallons for \$15.00. All went well and by noon we had made Sanyuan. Still, the night had come before we managed the Ching Ho crossing, where another ferry chain had been washed away. For some miles a truck's headlights lit up the road, with us behind, nursing a weak battery. But soon it was charging again, and we had a last glimpse of the truck parked by the roadside. Then came an eerie time as we passed through the historic area of the ancient Han tombs, one tumulus after another looming ghostlike for a moment in the shadowy darkness.

It must have been about ten that we approach a railway bridge, and our last river to cross. Workers with lanterns stop us, their word: no crossing. The bridge, with some planks out, is being repaired. Wait till morning! This, on the edge of Sian. But Effie convinces them we will cross over carefully. So the car picks its way through scattered ties, then slowly over the stretch where the side-rails are out, and safely off the bridge.

On to Sian! over a road that to Effie means coming home. In the pouring rain the hard surface has a slippery coating of mud; one hand on the wheel, Effie leans out as the car skids along, deep ditches on each side. We begin counting the markers: 12 km., 8, 6, 4. Now the North Gate is close—what of the guards? As we draw up to the gate, a car is coming out. We slip through past it, with barely a nod and no challenge. Inside Sian! A stop at Effie's to drop off some bags, then our return to the Guest House. Cordial greetings from the Chinese manager (we had run up quite a bill), with only a why-so-long?

Our train left sharp at 11:10 the next morning—police panting up late, surprised we were off so soon. Goodbyes to Effie on the platform; some of his well-gotten proceeds, underwritten by Phil, were now cover-

ing his plane trip to Shanghai. Lazy afternoon: some talk of articles to be written, some notes in the journal. Last meal together, then more good-byes—Agnes and Phil were continuing on to Shanghai for their interrupted world tour.

Up at 3:40 with Owen Friday morning, July 2, for change from the Lunghai to the Pinghan line. Splashed around in the mud, barely making the Peking train, with no reservation. Secured a compartment and slept in clothes until 9:30, for a late breakfast. Shihchiachuang at 4:30—here ages back, on June 8, we had changed to the Taiyuan train. Arrived at Peking toward midnight, in a hard rain, but with Ed Snow and Eleanor Lattimore to meet us. Home with Ed for a long talk extending into the early hours.

Already, as we reached Peking, our days at Yen-an were a receding memory. War came five days later, on the night of July 7, and the rush of events that followed pushed the trip even further into the background. The early months of the war left no time for considered assessment. Only one thing was certain: the Yen-an experience would provide a baseline for our evaluation of the ensuing years of war and civil war.

## XII

### Reflections On Prewar Yenán

Full recognition of the opportune timing of our visit had to wait on the passage of years. We had been granted a fleeting glimpse of Yenán in the days just before the war. We had interviewed the Communist leaders in the first flush of their enthusiasm over formation of a united anti-Japanese front. Then, almost overnight, war had broken out. Yenán had become a wartime capital, and was to remain so for eight years.

In that prewar Yenán of June 1937 the words and demeanor of the Communist leaders reflected an extraordinary optimism. It was present in the social meeting of the first Monday evening, and the longer we stayed the more we caught this feeling, one that radiated nothing less than a glow of confidence. Should this have been surprising, or was it grounded in reality?

Time past, time present, and time future were in the minds of the Communist leaders, and all carried hopeful auguries. The Long March had been completed and was now justifying the hard policy choice that had dictated it. Yenán itself, only six months earlier, had become the capital of a newly established Border Region, considerably enlarged as a result of events attending Chiang Kai-shek's detention at Sian. Small in population and economically poor, it was nevertheless even larger in territory than the former Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet, and strategically located for major Communist action in the war with Japan thought to be close at hand. The Border Region itself was the concrete symbol, the successful outcome, of past actions.

Events of time present were uppermost, as one would expect, and these, too, were altogether encouraging. The long-standing objective of joint action with Nanking against Japanese aggression, going back to 1931-32 when Manchuria had been occupied, was now taking positive form. The civil war had ended, negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek for a broad agreement were making good progress, and the regional autonomous or semi-autonomous Chinese leaders were drawing towards greater unity under Nanking's authority. Apart from the fact that a Kuomintang-Communist entente was its most decisive support, the Communist leaders were using every means at their disposal to further this trend to unification. Full completion of the process came during the summer, after war broke out.<sup>1</sup> But the spring months of 1937 saw the key moves in the

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<sup>1</sup> For details, see *Japan in China*, pp. 278-280.

forging of Chinese unity, and the Yen-an leaders were at the center of the action.

They viewed the threat from Japan as the key to current developments and as working in their favor. Public opinion had ranged itself strongly against the non-resistance policy, debarring Chiang Kai-shek from further concessions to Japan. As war drew closer he needed Communist support, if only to guarantee the strength and authority of Nanking itself. It was this above all that had put a stop to his anti-Communist campaigns. A major component of time present was the closing out of a decade of civil war.

This gain was an immense one, and there was not the slightest indication that it would be lightly sacrificed, say, by turning the new situation to partisan advantage. Cooperation with Nanking, not conflict, was being sought. What counted for the Yen-an leaders, as we talked to them, was the national cause, the paramount need to turn back a Japan that had seized Manchuria, moved into Inner Mongolia and North China, and now threatened an even greater assault. National unity in order to face Japan with China's full strength was the *leit-motif* of all their statements.

Time future was an equally strong factor contributing to confidence; but in June 1937 it was foreshortened to a specific close-at-hand task, the coming war with Japan and how best to prepare for it, not merely by the Communists but by the nation as a whole. Almost, it would seem, the revolutionary cause had taken second place. Except, that the people's lot was being bettered in the Border Region and was being championed for all China in the program advanced in the united front negotiations; and that, further ahead, the socialist revolution was still the ultimate goal. Actually, it lay quite far ahead, as their strong efforts to further the creation of a democratic republic most clearly demonstrated.

Although our interviews dealt chiefly with immediate issues, they offered some useful clues on the Communist leaders' views of the future. For the short term they were extremely confident, based on assessment of the conditions that would emerge during a large-scale Japanese invasion. They would be free to organize the people in provinces neighboring the Border Region for a patriotic struggle against the invader, in which their appeal would be far stronger than in a civil war. The Resist-Japan University was an earnest of their intentions in this regard.

For the longer future the perspective was not so clear, but some of its general outlines might still be discerned. They would of course play their full part in the war, applying the rich experience of the civil war decade. They foresaw a protracted military conflict extending over years, a view soon to be expressed in Mao's most influential programmatic statement on the war.<sup>2</sup> Strength would derive from a total socio-political mobiliza-

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<sup>2</sup> *On the Protracted War*. This was a series of lectures delivered in Yen-an in May and June, 1938, and published in *Chieh-fang*, July 1938, no. 43-44.

tion of the people in the course of the long war. The principle applied equally to the Kuomintang, which also needed to mobilize the people to fight effectively.

As the war went on, it would be an objective arbiter of the respective contributions. It would test both sides, but under conditions in which the Kuomintang would have to change its style in order to retain its strength. There was little reason to believe that even Chiang's best divisions could fight the modern Japanese army successfully. Conventional military operations alone would not be enough for the Kuomintang. If its contribution was to be effective, it would have to go further. At this point broader criteria of a political nature entered into Yen-an's assessment of the future.

Its pressure for a progressive democratic republic, for political freedoms and social reforms, reached out beyond its narrow party interests. Yen-an was confident that its measures would gain popular support, but such measures were also needed to strengthen the National Government's political base. If the Kuomintang took the path of popular mobilization, if it helped to establish democratic institutions with rights assured to workers and peasants, it, too, would grow stronger. If it eschewed reform and continued to base its ruling power on landlord and bureaucrat, it would grow weaker. Were the Yen-an leaders too optimistic that Nanking might reform itself? Possibly, in view of the glow felt over achievement of the united front and expectations aroused in the talks with Chiang. Still, their bets were hedged. If Nanking did not reform, China would suffer but the Kuomintang would be the loser.

The essential Kuomintang need, as they saw it, resolved around a simple question—could Chiang Kai-shek break out of his self-imposed limitations? If he could, and did, they were prepared to support him. Their call for a democratic republic was a genuine one. If fully achieved, it would not mean the end of political struggle, but it would mean that the struggle would be transferred to the political arena, with both sides having an equal chance to win the suffrage of the Chinese people. Renewed civil war, after the Japanese war, was not inevitable.

If the longer future could not be clearly pictured, the short term expectations proved thoroughly justified. The opportunity, foreseen and prepared for, to mobilize resistance eastward from the Border Region in the conditions of a Japanese invasion, was fully exploited. Even the Yen-an leaders, in June 1937, may not have envisioned the extent to which their guerrilla bases would spread over North China in eight years of war. Still, one may be sure that they foresaw something of the expansion that actually occurred. One of the reasons for the Long March, after all, had been the hope of concentrating their forces in an area so much more strategic than the Kiangsi-Fukien or other southern districts.

Militarily, in these actions, the Communists had more than fulfilled their obligations assumed in the united front negotiations. At the outset

the National Military Council had assigned them operating areas "behind the Japanese lines," that is, in areas already lost by the Kuomintang armies. The Japanese had overrun most of North China in the early months of the war. At once the Communists had moved in and begun operations. Within a few years they had put a new face on a North China that had once seemed so securely in Japanese hands. Before the war ended, guerrilla forces growing into mass armies, based on a massive and intensive mobilization of the people against the invaders, had regained much of North China.

The extent of these actions becomes more striking when set against the declining curve of the Kuomintang military effort. Already, by 1940, the Communist-led forces were engaging 17 of the 40 Japanese divisions in China, or two-fifths of the total. In 1940-41, from July through June, Kuomintang armies inflicted 182,094 casualties on the Japanese, while the Communists inflicted 130,010, or 42 per cent of the total.<sup>3</sup> These ratios become more significant if one considers the disparity of resources on the two sides, rendered even greater by the steadily enlarging American aid to Chungking but none to Yen-an. The answer lay in the effective organization of the resources latent in the Chinese peasantry, their energy, their initiative, and their skills, attested to by every first-hand observer. Chungking effected no such mobilization in Kuomintang territory.

The disparity in military effort became even greater in the last years of the war, when Chiang Kai-shek committed fewer of his forces to battle and assigned 200,000 troops from his most heavily equipped divisions under General Hu Tsung-nan to a blockade of the Border Region. Yet the Communist struggle with the Japanese forces moved steadily forward. In North China, by 1944-45, the Japanese had been largely driven from the countryside. They were confined to the bigger cities and the railway lines, these latter being held by a series of fortified strong points manned by defensive garrisons.

An even greater disparity existed on the political side, where the goal proposed for the united front program had been the creation of a democratic republic with some minimum social reforms. In the summer of 1937, as the war began, an elected government was established in the Border Region. The guerrilla base areas in North China, ultimately embracing the stretch of provinces from Shansi to Shantung, all had elected governments. They were staffed by representatives of the local populations that had fought to free the areas, with Communists holding a fraction of the government posts. As undertaken in the united front agreement, the policy of revolutionary land confiscation was outlawed. But, throughout the area, landlords had to abide by the rent and interest reductions decreed as united front policy.

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<sup>3</sup> For these figures, see T. A. Bisson, "China's Part in a Coalition War," *Far Eastern Survey*, XII, No. 14 (July 14, 1943), p. 139.

Had the Kuomintang applied such measures, China might have witnessed a different postwar era. Some promise of change had been held out during the first war year, supporting the early hopes for genuine reform. But even the weak provisions of the 1938 Hankow "Program of Armed Resistance and Reconstruction," with no mention of elections or of curbs on landlord exactions, were not fulfilled.<sup>4</sup> By 1940 the early grant of civil rights was suspended, press freedoms abrogated, and political liberals jailed. No elections were held in Kuomintang territory; the landlords, as always, remained the rural mainstay of the Chungking regime. The National Government continued to be Chiang Kai-shek's military dictatorship, as it had been since 1927. The Generalissimo had proved unable to transcend his limitations, thereby forfeiting the chance to work with the Communists in building the democratic republic they were then prepared to establish.

By an historic irony the opportunity was again presented as a live option during General Marshall's mediation effort that ushered in the postwar era. Agreements reached in January 1946 at the Political Consultative Conference, with third parties as well as the Communists represented, laid out detailed provisions for a somewhat liberalized Constitution. Chiang Kai-shek was recognized as the "national leader" with wide executive powers, but the elective membership of the national legislature ensured a strong opposition. Although Chiang had publicly pledged himself to honor the PCC agreements, he quietly reversed his position and turned against them. In March 1946, with Marshall off in Washington, the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee approved changes in the agreements that emasculated them. Up to this point civil war might have been avoided, it was now made certain.

A train of events that may seem inevitable in retrospect is much more ambiguous at the outset. Chinese politics, in June 1937, was in the throes of a sharp mutation that would decide the nation's future. How clearly Mao foresaw the full revolutionary triumph of 1949 is an interesting question—though by its nature one not easily answered. Our group, for the most part, was caught up in the excitement of the drama we saw unfolding at Yen-an, almost from day to day. What it might mean for the longer future intruded only occasionally. Still, Owen at least had cast a bold look forward, expressed in an article written for but unpublished by *The Times* of London<sup>5</sup> Its last paragraph read:

Thinking it over myself on the journey back, it seemed to me that if Japan does not fight, the Communists will emerge as a legal party

<sup>4</sup> See above, Chapter VIII, note 10; text in *Chinese Year Book, 1938-39* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1939), pp. 337-338.

<sup>5</sup> But eventually published in Jerome Ch'en and Nicholas Tarling, eds., *Studies in the Social History of China and South-east Asia: Essays in Memory of Victor Purcell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 153-163.

with influence all over China and a sort of provincial status in the region they already control. If Japan fights, and the Communist theory of the relation between army and population in a "semi-colonial" country is correct, a large part of both army and people will go over to the Communists.

Of Yen-an itself the strong and lasting impression was not so much of the activities that we saw as of the spirit in which they were carried on. All foreign visitors, then and later, have remarked on the atmosphere at Yen-an, much easier to catch than to set down in words. It was this above all that drew liberal and revolutionary-minded students from all over China.

One quickly became conscious that a special quality of life existed in this rather ordinary Chinese town in a Shensi backwater. Surface phenomena illustrating it merely pointed to something deeper. Insignia of rank were absent, though a fountain pen might be tucked into the breast pocket of Chu Teh or Chou En-lai. Uniforms of commander and private were undifferentiated. One might take note of the conscious pride of a young Red Army bugler, but self-respect and dignity were characteristics evidenced by all. At the theater the leaders were spectators like the rest, occupying no special places. On the streets they were people like the rest, walking about without guards in complete security.

More comprehensively descriptive, if less tangible, was the phenomenon of an entire group of people imbued with a high moral enthusiasm. Selfish individual aims, so far as one could see, had been surrendered to a deeper loyalty. In the common cause all stood on a footing of equality. Each shared in the work to be done, and each shared in the spirit that filled it. These were halcyon days at Yen-an. One can understand why Mao Tse-tung has fought to retain that spirit and to extend it to all of China.

