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THE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT: 1928-1937

THE FAILURE OF NATIONAL REINTEGRATION

The unification of China was officially announced when the Guomintang forces occupied Beijing in June 1928. The formal structure of the Nationalist government, under Chiang Kai-shek as president, was inaugurated in Nanjing on October 10, the anniversary of the 1911 revolution. Beijing (Northern Capital) was renamed Beiping (Northern Peace). Technically, the first stage of Sun Yat-sen's three stages to constitutional government (military unification, followed by six years of political tutelage, leading to constitutional democracy) had been completed.

The Guomintang, having established a single-party dictatorship, theoretically could now begin the process of instructing and guiding the people toward democracy. It is debatable whether a conservative party leaning toward authoritarianism could have achieved this goal even under ideal circumstances. But the circumstances were far from ideal. Behind the facade of unification the country still remained divided, and periodic insurrections by warlords and the Communists forced Nanjing to continue to concentrate its efforts on internal pacification, through military action, at the expense of

constructive national endeavors. The role of the military in Chinese politics also expanded because of Japanese expansionist policies aimed at dominating China. Military expenditures and foreign debt payments absorbed over 80 percent of the revenues in 1928-1929, and between 1929 and 1937 (when the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out) the figure never fell much below 66 percent. National reintegration was further hampered by the factional and clique troubles within the Guomintang which kept the party from functioning as a monolithic body that could have provided cohesive and uniform policies.

Party Troubles and Civil War

The Guomintang success was hailed by the war-weary Chinese, particularly by the urban intelligentsia, who hoped that the revolution would at last bring strength and prosperity to the nation and restore its dignity in the eyes of the world. National elation, however, did not last long. Within a year or two it became clear that the Guomintang had lost its revolutionary drive and that its leaders were squabbling for public office to gain personal status and build up private fortunes.

By its very nature the national government during the period of political tutelage (which because of political reasons was never

concluded during Guomindang's twenty-one years rule—1928–1949—over mainland China) was not popularly elected. In the absence of any democratic controls, the power of the executive could only be checked by the party because the other branches of government, lacking a system of mutual checks and balances, were weak and could not make the president and the Political Council responsible to them.

But the party, too, could not perform this supervisory function because there was no separation between the party and the government. Indeed, the Political Council (the executive) was a subcommittee of the Central Executive Committee of the party. Besides, the party lacked a tight organization, a clear-cut ideology and discipline; it was badly split between the left and the right wings under Wang Jing-wei and Hu Han-min, respectively. While appearing to act as a mediator between Wang and Hu, General Chiang was able to strengthen his own position and even managed to separate his military command from the offices of the national government.

Chiang had no great respect for the party. As early as 1928 he declared that party members had become degenerate and were "struggling for power and profit" instead of making sacrifices for the revolution.¹ He was right in his estimation, but it obviously did not occur to him that he was partly responsible for this state of affairs. The indiscriminate expansion of the party and the absorption of the warlords and old-style bureaucrats into its organization had diluted the idealism that may have existed before 1927. After the break with the CPC in 1927, the party's purge of its Communist and pro-Communist left-oriented liberals, although in no way helping to bring unity to those who remained behind, did mean that the party had lost its dedicated activists. It now became dangerous for party members to display any signs of revolutionary activism associated with mass movements.

Chiang, whose devotion to the cause of Chinese nationalism cannot be questioned, sincerely believed that he alone was a true follower of Sun Yat-sen and his worthy heir. He

therefore had to ensure that he was in an unassailable position to carry on his work as the unifier of the nation and as its modernizer. Since Chiang's self-perception was challenged by Wang Jing-wei and Hu Han-min, who also believed that they were rightful inheritors of the revolutionary legacy, Chiang employed various methods to maintain his position. Western scholars have often condemned these methods because they were counter to the expectations of Western liberal thinkers who wanted Chiang to introduce democracy into China. But however deplorable Chiang's actions may appear, they fitted into the pattern of political behavior of the day.

Chiang publicly extolled Sun Yat-sen's Three Peoples' Principles ideology, but he was actively concerned only with that part of Sun's philosophy that demanded the establishment of a strong, single-party state under a strong leader. According to Chiang's interpretation of Sun, individual freedom was equated to state authority. As he put it, "The command of the state should be regarded as the free and voluntary will of the individual."² Instead of giving the country human rights and a rule of law, Chiang called for absolute loyalty to the state by an ethically enlightened citizenry. The ethics were to come from a revival of traditional Confucian virtues of loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, love, sincerity, righteousness, harmony, and peace. This doctrine, discussed later in the chapter, formed the basis of Chiang's New Life Movement (inaugurated in 1934) and was intended to renovate the moral life of Chinese society.

The party, the army, and the government were riven by numerous small and large factions, but Chiang managed to get his own cliques into positions of power while balancing and playing off antagonistic groups. He developed a tight police and security network and gained control over financial, military, and party affairs.³

The C.C. Clique—led by the brothers Chen Guo-fu and Chen Li-fu, close friends of Chiang Kai-shek—became the most important faction within the party to back Chiang.

The C.C. Clique (CCC) represented the hard-core anti-Communist elements in the party and drew its membership from the elite classes: intellectuals, bureaucrats, military officers, and leading business entrepreneurs. By the 1930s 25 percent of the members of the Central Executive Committee were members of the CCC and the CCC dominated the party organization bureau, controlled the intelligence network, and had established branches in the government at national and local levels. Besides penetrating the military, the trade unions, and the educational and cultural organizations, the clique established newspapers, journals, and publishing houses to influence the communication media. The C.C. Clique also got into banking operations.

Whampoa military graduates (many of whom rose to become high military officers) who swore loyalty to Chiang Kai-shek contributed to the establishment of the Whampoa Clique and the Blue Shirt Society. The Whampoa Clique constituted over 50 percent of the military men in the Central Executive Committee, it controlled the party organs in the army and represented the power of what may be termed Chiang's personal army.⁴

The Blue Shirt Society was a well-organized political machine whose activities have been compared by some scholars with the Fascist movements in Europe and with Mussolini's Black Shirts and Hitler's Brown Shirts. Like their European counterparts the Blue Shirts glorified their leader, exalted the state, accepted the need for totalitarian controls, rejected democracy, and used terrorism and violence to liquidate opponents of the party and the leader. The Blue Shirts invoked the restoration of certain traditional Confucian cultural values, which Chiang also supported in his New Life Movement. However, the manner in which the Blue Shirts tried to propagate these noble values proved terribly counterproductive. Their clandestine activities brought terror and fear to the hearts of many innocent citizens of China, undermining the morale of those in government and the military who may have displayed an independent attitude. The Blue Shirts made

China a more authoritarian state than it need have been. The costly activities of the Blue Shirts were financed by Chiang Kai-shek himself.

Another clique worthy of mention was the Political Study Clique, an extra-party faction whose members were interested in "increasing their hold on the provincial administration and also on the larger financial and business concerns of the country, whether private or government."⁵ The Political Study Clique also supported Chiang Kai-shek and looked on him as their patron.

These and other cliques came into conflict, and mutual rivalries developed that only helped to strengthen Chiang's position. However, factional politics meant that the party could not work out a cohesive policy of reform and, more important, that Chiang lacked absolute authority even while appearing to be in total control.

Chiang's Internal and External Troubles: 1929–1936

From the very day Chiang Kai-shek assumed power he faced major trouble from four sources, three from within the country and one from without. Within, Wang Jing-wei and Hu Han-min challenged him for national leadership; the erstwhile warlords resisted Chiang's attempts at centralization of authority; and the CPC, after being ousted from the united front, began to build up its armed forces and establish an independent government in the countryside. All these rivals, at one time or another, posed a military threat. Between 1928 and 1936 Chiang had to suppress no less than 23 revolts. Externally, the Japanese expanded their aggressive activities, absorbed Manchuria into their empire in 1932, and began to encroach on China's northern provinces, which led to full-scale war in 1937.

Chiang realized that the unity of China was illusory and that internal pacification was necessary before Nanjing could declare war on Japan. Although he was to be condemned for this attitude, as a military thinker he was right in his assessment.

Trouble from Warlords and Party Leaders: 1929-1930

Although it may be technically incorrect to use the term *warlords* to designate the locally powerful military commanders who had opportunistically joined the Guomindang and were now in command of Guomindang armies (which were often no other than their own troops from the pre-Guomindang days), the term is valid because these figures retained warlord attitudes and tried desperately to retain their autonomy within the Nationalist government. They resented Chiang's efforts at demobilizing the inflated army, since warlord forces would have been the first to be disbanded, and his efforts to increase provincial contributions to the central revenue.

The major warlord areas were Gansu-Henan-Shaanxi under Feng Yu-xiang, Shanxi-Hebei under Yan Xi-shan, and Guangxi-Hunan-Hubei under Li Zong-ren and Bai Chong-xi. Feng also laid claim to the whole of Shandong, which had been partially under Japanese control since 1915. The provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Chahar, Ningxia, Qinghai, and Xinjiang had yet to be fully incorporated into unified China and continued to be ruled by several minor warlords. Zhang Xue-liang, a case unto himself, had taken over power in Manchuria on the death of his bandit-turned-warlord father, Zhang Zuo-lin, who had been assassinated by the Japanese in 1928. This left Chiang Kai-shek in control of the rich lower Yangtze valley provinces of Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Jiangxi and with influence in Guangdong.

The first challenge to Chiang's authority came from the Guangxi generals Li Zong-ren and Bai Chong-xi. These generals split from the Nanjing government in early 1929 over the question of territorial control and began military operations to expand their area of influence. Chiang had to take punitive action to quell this rebellion.

Later in the same year it was the turn of the "Christian General," Feng Yu-xiang, to rise against the Nationalist government.

Some idea of the confused nature of affairs becomes apparent when it is borne in mind that Feng was a very important figure in the Nationalist government: He was a member of the State Council, vice-president of the executive Yuan (deputy prime minister), and minister of war. However, to Feng the maintenance of his hold over his private army was far more important than all these offices and so he rose against the National government when Chiang attempted to demobilize some of the troops in the swollen armies of the warlords. Feng had also been incensed by the fact that Chiang had taken control of Shandong after the Japanese, having recognized the Nationalist government in March 1929, withdrew their forces from there. Feng believed that the area fell legitimately into his zone of control and that he should have been given the right to extend his authority over Shandong.

Feng accused Chiang of designs that favored his own troops over those of Feng and of policies that were intended to starve Feng's army by withholding funds. Feng declared his independence of Nanjing and in turn was dismissed from all his posts. Chiang bought off some of Feng's generals, who defected to the national government with 100,000 of Feng's best troops and also opened Henan to central control. When war came in October 1929, Feng was defeated.

These developments troubled Yan Xi-shan because every move that strengthened the hand of Chiang Kai-shek spelled the end of warlord power, his own included. In early 1930 Yan joined forces with Feng; gained the backing of Li Zong-ren and Bai Chong-xi; and far more important, won the support of Wang Jing-wei and other factions in the Guomindang that opposed Chiang and wanted to reorganize the party. The "reorganizationist" members of the Guomindang met in Beijing and established an opposition government with Wang, Feng, and Li Zong-ren in the leading posts and Yan as chair of the State Council. This formidable coalition posed the most serious threat Chiang had faced so far. Fifty-seven generals and dozens of politicians,

headed by Wang Jing-wei, sent a spate of telegrams to Chiang denouncing his government for bribery, corruption, and dictatorship and demanding that Chiang resign from the presidency and retire from politics.

Chiang defeated the Guangxi generals before the coalition was fully established, but the heavy fighting in Henan and Shandong was indecisive. At this critical moment the balance of power was held by the Manchurian warlord Zhang Xue-liang, and both sides approached him for support. On September 19 Zhang, won over by various promises, declared his loyalty to Nanjing and moved his troops south to Beijing. The coalition and the short-lived Beijing regime collapsed and another crisis was over, although not without some further bitter fighting. The war had cost 240,000 casualties, with thousands of peasants uprooted and the province of Henan laid waste.

Trouble from the Communists: 1930-1931.

By the end of 1930 the frontline leaders of the CPC operating in the countryside, particularly Mao Ze-dong and Zhu De, had built up an army of several tens of thousands (the Red Army). Taking advantage of the difficulties faced by Chiang Kai-shek, they had established a territorial base, an autonomous soviet, in southern Jiangxi. The word soviet, borrowed from the Soviet Union and used in transliteration by the CPC, meant a government run by the local masses. There were similar soviets in other parts of the country, but the one under Mao, with its capital at Ruijin, was the biggest and the most important.

However, the underground headquarters of the CPC was still in Shanghai, and the official policy of the CPC still aimed at leading a city-based proletarian revolution. In mid-1930 the frontline leaders were ordered to capture the cities of Changsha and Nanchang and thus help promote the true revolutionary cause. Although the Red Armies failed to take Nanchang and held Changsha for ten days only, it was becoming apparent that CPC armies had begun to pose a real threat to the central government. After defeating the Feng-Yan coalition, Chiang Kai-

shek turned to the problem of suppressing the Communists.

The first Communist-suppression campaign (sometimes also referred to as the Communist-encirclement or Communist-annihilation campaign) was launched in December 1930. It was a total failure. What the Communist troops had failed to achieve in the cities, Mao managed to achieve in the countryside. Using guerrilla tactics Mao mauled the Nationalist armies, capturing a general, killing 9,000, and destroying large quantities of supplies.

Chiang Kai-shek was not accustomed to military failure, so he followed up the first campaign with another in April 1931. The Nationalist troops, numbering over 100,000, were under a well-known general, but their fate was no different from that of their comrades in the earlier expedition. It has been suggested that Chiang did not use his best troops and that the armies of the second Communist-suppression campaign were made of units belonging to warlord armies (like the troops of Feng Yu-xiang, who had defected to Nanjing in 1930), which Chiang was happy to see destroyed—therefore, the failure. Regardless of how true this assessment is, and indeed it may be very true, the fact remains that Mao Ze-dong's guerrilla-style warfare was something wholly new to Chiang. The Nationalists had yet to learn how to deal with an elusive enemy who became visible only when least expected.

In July 1931 Chiang opened the third campaign against the Communists, this time putting himself in direct command. The Nationalist forces were successful in the beginning, driving the Red Armies before them and forcing them to retreat in the direction favorable to the Nationalists. In August, however, heavy rains set in, which favored the guerrillas, and Mao was once again able to extricate his troops and inflict heavy damage on the enemy. But the campaign was by no means over when Chiang had to turn his attention to crises elsewhere. Trouble came from Manchuria in the north and Guangdong in the south.

BACKGROUND OF THE MANCHURIAN CRISIS

Officers of the Japanese troops posted in Manchuria (the Kwantung Army) to protect Japanese interests there assassinated the Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuo-lin in June 1928, just days before the Nationalist northern expedition had triumphantly entered Beijing. Their hope was that Zhang Zuo-lin's son, Zhang Xue-liang ("the Young Marshall"), known as a weak-charactered playboy addicted to drugs, would be more friendly to Japan and keep Manchuria out of the Nationalist jurisdiction. Despite Japanese pressure on him to preserve Manchurian autonomy, Zhang Xue-liang, in December 1928, pledged his loyalty to Nanjing and raised the Nationalist flag in Mukden, the capital of Manchuria. In return Nanjing confirmed Zhang's authority in the province and rewarded him with the post of commander-in-chief of the Northeastern Border Defense Army.

Apart from annoying the Japanese, this act of Zhang also raised tensions between Nanjing and the Soviet Union. The break between the Nationalists and the Soviets in 1927 (after the Borodin fiasco) had ended direct contact between them, but the Soviet special position in Manchuria had, so far, remained unimpaired because (a) Zhang Zuo-lin had never accepted the authority of the Nationalist government, and (b) the technically legal pre-1928 warlord "government of China" in Beijing, with which the Soviet Union had maintained diplomatic relations, had never challenged Soviet privileges in Manchuria. With the liberation of Beijing and Zhang Xue-liang swearing loyalty to Nanjing, the situation changed radically because the northeastern Manchurian provinces had come under the direct jurisdiction of the Nationalist government. In mid-1929, the Nationalists, who resented Soviet domination of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER was supposed to be run jointly by the Rus-

sians and the Chinese) and looked with suspicion on Soviet activities that were aimed at promoting communism in the region, used their authority to reassert control over the CER.

The Soviet Union "broke off" the now-nonexistent diplomatic relations and attacked the CER region with aircraft and tanks. The Chinese suffered heavy casualties, and the undeclared war ended with Nanjing signing the Khabarovsk Protocol (December 1929), which restored the status quo ante. Nanjing also agreed to hold negotiations to settle other outstanding issues and to establish diplomatic relations. Bilateral meetings were begun in 1930 but ended inconclusively when the Japanese invaded Manchuria in September 1931.

Zhang and Nanjing had underestimated Japan's involvement in Manchuria. From the Japanese point of view, both the Soviet victory and the rising tide of anti-Japanese sentiment in China were a threat to Japan's strategic and economic interests. While procrastinating over Japanese requests to implement the agreement they had worked out with Zhang Zuo-lin in 1928 to build certain railway lines, Nanjing aggravated the situation further by building a separate railway system to compete with the Japanese-run South Manchurian Railway (SMR) and concurrently launching a campaign for the recovery of the SMR.

The world economic depression of 1929–1930 and the shrinking of foreign markets had a particularly harsh impact on Japan which needed export earnings to buy crucial raw materials, like iron, that the homeland lacked. The militarists and the ultranationalists in Japan believed that resource-rich Manchuria could provide Japan with coal and iron and also be a market for Japanese goods, if only it could be firmly brought into the Japanese sphere of influence.

Japan's Invasion of Manchuria: 1931.

On the night of September 18, 1931, while Chiang Kai-shek was bogged down in Guangxi and a considerable part of Zhang Xue-liang's Manchurian forces were still south of the Great Wall in Beiping, Japanese troops set off a bomb on the South Manchurian Railway track just outside Mukden (Shenyang). Then, on the pretext of protecting the railway from an attack by the Chinese, they seized Mukden. Within the next few weeks they took possession of several other key centers.

Chiang Kai-shek's reaction to this development was to halt the campaign against the Communists and promptly return to Nanjing to face the Manchurian crisis. As can be imagined, the Chinese were shocked by the Japanese action. There were massive anti-Japanese demonstrations in the cities and boycotts of Japanese goods. Most segments of the urban population publicly demanded that Nanjing turn its guns against the invaders. But Chiang, who calculated that it would be better to entrust China's case to the League of Nations than to start a war, instructed Zhang Xue-liang (whose forces that had remained behind in Manchuria outnumbered those of the Japanese and could have put up a resistance) not to fight.

By the end of the year the Japanese had cleared Manchuria of Zhang's troops. In March 1932, scorning the findings of the League of Nations and the weight of world opinion, Japan established the puppet state of Manchukuo under the regency of Pu-yi, the last Qing emperor, who had abdicated the Dragon Throne in 1912. The Japanese action had far-reaching repercussions: It changed the power balance in East Asia; it helped drive Japan onto the path of militarism; it made the West suspicious of Japanese long-range goals; and it can be seen to mark the first stage leading toward World War II.

Another Rival "National" Government—Guangzhou: 1931. The trouble in south China was connected with Chiang's differences with Hu Han-min. In response to the

demands made by Wang Jing-wei, Feng Yu-xiang, and Yan Xi-shan, the leaders of the 1930 abortive rebellion (see above), that China should have a constitution Chiang decided to convoke a national assembly and adopt a provisional constitution. Hu Han-min was adamantly opposed to this move because he believed that, as Sun Yat-sen had planned, a period of political tutelage was absolutely necessary before a constitution could be inaugurated. Rather unwisely, Chiang put Hu Han-min under house arrest (February 1931), which only precipitated another major party crisis. Some members of the Central Supervisory Committee of the Guomindang impeached Chiang for his illegal action. Southern warlords supported the impeachment, and in collaboration with anti-Chiang politicians, Wang Jing-wei included, they set up a parallel "national" government in Guangzhou (May).

In September, when the Nationalist troops were locked in combat with the Communists, troops from Guangdong and Guangxi marched into Hunan. But the September 18 Mukden incident, when the Japanese unleashed their forces in Manchuria, saved the nation from becoming embroiled in another civil war, and the Southerners agreed to a peace conference in October. There the Southerners demanded that Chiang resign his position as chair of the State Council; that the post of commander-in-chief of the land, naval, and air forces be abolished; and that no military man should be president of any of the five Yuan. Obviously their intention was to eliminate Chiang from the political arena.

These were dark days for Chiang. Condemned within the party by both Wang Jing-wei and Hu Han-min, the greatest of the Guomindang leaders, he was also attacked publicly, particularly by nationwide student organizations, for having betrayed China on the Japan front. Saying that "the affairs of the country have come to such a critical pass that unless we can step up the process of national unity and solidarity, we will not be able to meet successfully either the problem of foreign aggression or the aspirations of the Chi-

nese people,"⁶ Chiang resigned from his various posts on December 15, 1931. Chiang's retirement, which reminds one of a similar action he had taken in 1927, saved face for those who had opposed him and gave the two sides an opportunity to achieve a measure of national reconciliation. But as in 1927, it was not long before the Guomindang was forced to persuade Chiang to resume office.

The Reorganized Nationalist Government

While the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang was trying to rework the constitution to reduce the powers of the president and ensure that the executive Yuan would control the armed forces, the Japanese forces began an offensive against Jinzhou (December 24, 1931), the last major Nationalist stronghold in Manchuria. Zhang Xue-liang was asked to make a stand, but his demoralized troops withdrew. The opening days of the new year, 1932, saw the Japanese complete their conquest of Manchuria. The inexperienced leaders of the reorganized Nationalist government (in which neither Hu Han-min nor Wang Jing-wei was in a position of authority) panicked and begged Chiang to return to Nanjing. Chiang delayed his acceptance of the invitation until he had the top party politicians, military figures, civic leaders, and even students beseech him to return and until he felt sure that he would not be denied real power.

After his release from house arrest in 1931, Hu Han-min had shifted his residence to the British colony of Hong Kong. Although he continued to give moral support to the leaders of Guangdong and Guangxi (who maintained a state of virtual autonomy) and persisted in attacking Chiang Kai-shek, Hu Han-min withdrew from active national politics. He died in 1936.

Wang Jing-wei, who had opposed Chiang Kai-shek ever since 1927, headed the Association for Reorganization of the Guomindang, which aimed primarily at reducing the growing power of Chiang. He had twice tried to establish a rival national government but failed. The 1931 resignation of Chiang

Kai-shek had given Wang another opportunity to fulfill his ambitions but, unfortunately, Japanese aggression in Manchuria impressed the feuding Guomindang factions with the need to put aside their differences and Wang to make peace with Chiang. Prompted by the party leaders, Wang met with Chiang in the middle of January 1932, and by the end of the month both of them were holding important government offices. However, whereas Wang was appointed president of the executive Yuan (the equivalent of prime minister), a post he held from 1932 to 1935, Chiang was only made a member of the Military Affairs Commission (MAC). Theoretically, this appointment not only reduced the civil powers that Chiang had exercised before his resignation but also severely limited his current military authority because other members of the MAC were his erstwhile enemies Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan and his erstwhile subordinate Zhang Xue-liang.

But Chiang knew that all this maneuvering could not take away from his real power. A few weeks after Chiang took office, the government was forced to appoint him chair of the Military Affairs Commission and chief of the general staff. These appointments were supposed to give him a freer hand in the exercise of his military authority, but Chiang soon stopped consulting the other commission members altogether and started using the commission's powers arbitrarily. His authority and role were further enhanced because of the continued military aggression by the Japanese and the internal war that Nanjing had to wage against the Communists. It must be remembered that Wang Jing-wei was no more enamored of the Communists than was Chiang.

Chiang also made effective use of the various party, civil, and military factions that dominated politics and were sworn to support him. Over and above all these developments, Chiang's relatives H. H. Kung and T. V. Soong held important posts in the cabinet and could thwart Wang Jing-wei's plans. Indeed, by the end of 1932 Wang felt so frustrated that he departed for Europe for six months, leaving the government in the hands

of T. V. Soong. It should be noted that during the years 1932-1935 Chiang did not occupy the position of absolute power that he had before his resignation; despite his frustrations, Wang Jing-wei was the head of the civil government. If most foreigners continued to look on Chiang as the number-one person in China, as no doubt many of the Chinese did, too, it was only because in those troubled years the commander of the armed forces was always in the news and in the public eye.

More Trouble with Japan—The Shanghai Incident: 1932. The strong anti-Japanese feelings, which were further inflamed by the collapse of Jinzhou, created an explosive situation in Shanghai, where several thousand Japanese resided in the International Settlement or the adjoining Chinese district of Chapei. On January 18 a group of Japanese was attacked by some Chinese, and one person subsequently died of his injuries. The Chinese police arrived too late to arrest the culprits. Over the next few days some of the local Japanese residents retaliated by attacking Chinese property; other Japanese held a mass protest meeting and passed resolutions calling on the Japanese government to send a military force to suppress the anti-Japanese activities.

The Japanese consul-general then presented to the mayor of Shanghai a series of demands, the most important of which were a formal apology, arrest of those responsible for the death of the Japanese, suppression of the anti-Japanese movement, and immediate dissolution of all anti-Japanese organizations. The mayor protested that he could not comply with the last three demands. However, when the commander of the Japanese naval forces lying off Shanghai threatened to take direct action if a satisfactory reply was not forthcoming, and faced with an ultimatum (deadline 6 P.M., January 27, 1932), the mayor accepted the demands. To prove his sincerity, the mayor went so far as to order the Shanghai Anti-Japanese National Salvation Association to close down.

On the night of January 28, with no consideration of the manner in which the mayor

had humbled himself, the arrogant and self-confident commander of the Japanese navy marched his marines into Chapei to remove all "hostile defenses." But he had not reckoned that the locally stationed troops of the Nineteenth Route Army would offer a stiff resistance. Infuriated, the Japanese commander ordered an aerial bombardment of Chapei and sent for reinforcements from Japan.

Despite the terrible civilian losses and material destruction, the Japanese reign of terror could not immediately subdue the fighting spirit of the Chinese troops. War continued through February. By the end of this period about 50,000 Japanese troops and a flotilla of cruisers and destroyers had been rushed to Shanghai. Three cruisers and four destroyers were sent upstream and anchored off Nanjing; one of them even fired a few rounds into the capital city. The Nationalist government moved to Luoyang. The Chinese forces, however, could no longer defend their positions after the Japanese landed troops in the open country near Wusong and outflanked Chapei. After 33 days of a bloody but heroic defense, the Chinese troops were forced to withdraw and a truce was declared (March).

The Nineteenth Route Army had become a national symbol of courage and patriotism, and the names of their commanders became household words. Shortly after the signing of the truce Chiang moved the Nineteenth Route Army from Shanghai to Fujian (May 1932), ostensibly to fight the Communists entrenched there. It has been suggested that since this army belonged to the Guangdong faction of the Guomindang and therefore did not owe loyalty to Chiang Kai-shek, its popularity posed a threat to Chiang's power and he hoped that it would be destroyed by the Communist forces. This would perhaps explain why the Nineteenth Route Army later revolted against Nanjing.

The truce agreement with Japan was, to say the least, extremely unpopular. Many felt that the Nationalist government should have made an all-out effort against the enemy. But Chiang saw the situation differently. Shang-

hai was only a pinprick. Real Japanese aggression was in the north. There, taking advantage of the fact that Nanjing's attention was temporarily diverted to Shanghai, the Japanese were completing their subjugation of Manchuria. Chiang foresaw that Japanese aggression would not stop with Manchuria, but he felt that Nanjing, weakened by internal discord, was not in a position to confront the sophisticated, modern armies of Japan. China had to deal with its domestic problems first, to attain true internal unity and pacification before it could declare war on Japan.

The Communist and Japanese Fronts: 1932-1933. The third Communist-suppression campaign had been halted because of the Manchurian crisis. The Communists used this period of respite to enlarge and reorganize their armies and to set up a rival central government of their own. Within a month and a half of the Mukden incident, the CPC held the First All-China Soviet Congress (November 1931) at Ruijin and promulgated the constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic (CSR). Mao Ze-dong was elected chair (president) of the CSR and Zhu De, chair of the Military Commission. Apart from Mao's Central Soviet District (the Jiang-xi Soviet), the CSR exercised jurisdiction over seven other, smaller soviets, isolated pockets under Communist control, located in seven central and southern provinces of China. According to Mao's estimate, the CSR had a population of 9 million. In April 1932, just after truce was declared in Shanghai and just before the cease-fire agreement was formally signed, the CSR declared war on Japan. Since there was no point of contact between the soviet districts and Japan, this was a political move intended to gain popular support and put Nanjing in a bad light. Chiang was not impressed.

He launched the fourth Communist-suppression campaign in June 1932, with the Nationalist troops simultaneously attacking the more important of the soviet zones. Chiang transferred his personal headquarters to Hankou and moved against the Hubei-Henan-Anhui Soviet District, the second

biggest soviet, with a population of 2 million and an army numbering over 100,000 men. Chiang was successful in driving the Communists out of this strategic area, which lay in the heart of the rich Yangtze valley and straddled the north-south railway link; however, he failed to annihilate the Red Armies, many of which just melted away from the front only to reappear elsewhere later. Thus, for example, Zhang Guo-tao entered Sichuan with his Fourth Front Army and established a soviet there.

In December, after completing this part of the campaign, Chiang Kai-shek returned to Nanjing and prepared to turn his attention to Jiangxi, where the campaign was not progressing well. Once again Japanese aggressive actions intruded on the internal scene. Ever since the establishment of Manchukuo, Nanjing had been aware of Japan's intention to absorb the northern province of Jehol (Rehe). In the eyes of the Japanese, that Jehol had been under the control of Zhang Zuo-lin and Zhang Xue-liang, the warlords of Manchuria, was reason enough for it to continue to remain under the jurisdiction of Mukden. Besides, Jehol was strategically located as a buffer between Manchukuo and both China proper and the Soviet Union.

On the night of January 23 the Japanese army created an incident at Shanhaiguan (the pass where the Great Wall meets the Yellow Sea) and forcibly occupied it after bombarding it from the ground, the air, and the sea. Nanjing ordered Zhang Xue-liang to move his troops north to protect Jehol. This was looked on as a provocation, and the Japanese foreign minister declared that

[T]he Great Wall is the dividing line between China on the one hand and Manchuria and Mongolia on the other. . . . Regular troops of Chang Hsueh-liang's [Zhang Xue-liang] army have crossed national boundaries into Jehol province. . . . The so-called Jehol question is purely a matter of domestic concern for Manchukuo.⁷

On February 25, 1933, the day after the assembly of the League of Nations adopted a resolution that its members would not recog-

nize Manchukuo, the Japanese Kwantung Army invaded Jehol and within days took it over. In the next two months the Japanese occupied the passes in the Great Wall and threatened Beiping itself. The Nationalist troops made a better showing in Hebei than they had in Jehol, but in the long run Nanjing had to acquiesce to Japanese demands and sign a truce agreement (Tanggu, May 31, 1933). The humiliating agreement allowed for the creation of a demilitarized, neutral zone between the Great Wall and Beiping, an autonomous buffer zone in China proper where Nanjing could not exercise its sovereignty to post Chinese troops but where the Japanese, by virtue of the Boxer protocol, could maintain garrisons.

Chiang Kai-shek looked on these developments as a national humiliation, but he still maintained that Nanjing's enemy of the moment was the CPC and its soviets:

Our country is confronted with a crisis which is both internal and external. Internally, the ruthless Communists have been killing and burning day after day. Externally the Japanese imperialists have been committing incessant aggression against our country. The Japanese imperialists attack us and even plan for our extinction. Owing to the existence of the Communist bandits, we cannot offer unified, effective resistance to the aggressor . . . Internal disorder is the surest way to invite foreign aggression.⁸

But the fourth campaign against Jiangxi ended as disastrously as the previous three. By March the Nationalist armies were in disarray; three divisions had been destroyed, and over 20,000 soldiers had been taken prisoner. But if they had failed to dislodge the Communists, the Communists also had failed to force the Guomindang withdrawal from Jiangxi.

The Last Anti-Communist Campaign: 1933-1934. Correctly believing that the Japanese had achieved their immediate goals and were unlikely to create any more trouble for some time, Chiang Kai-shek turned his full attention to the anti-Communist campaign. He moved his headquarters to Nanchang

and made careful preparations to ensure success. His strategies were both modern and traditional. The modern elements included sophisticated weapons (scouting planes and bombers) and a group of German generals (including Von Seeckt, who later commanded Hitler's army of occupation in Belgium) who were helping to train the troops in techniques of modern warfare. Chiang borrowed traditional elements from the tactics employed by Zeng Guo-fan to suppress the Taiping rebels: Increase the sense of loyalty and discipline among the troops and raise their morale by combating corruption; establish strict control over the countryside surrounding the enemy by raising self-defense units in the villages and introducing a system of mutual responsibility on the "bao-jia" basis. The aim was to deny the enemy support or help from the surrounding countryside and force it to withdraw into an ever-shrinking pocket. Chiang called this plan "70 percent political, 30 percent military."

Chiang discarded conventional modern tactics of pitched battles and attack. His army of nearly 800,000 moved slowly, building roads and countless blockhouses interconnected with machine-gun and artillery fire. It imposed an economic blockade on the enemy and forced it to counterattack.

While the Nationalist troops were converging on the Jiangxi soviet and all appeared to go well with the campaign, an incident took place that proved (if proof was still necessary) that Nanjing commanded precious little unity within its own ranks. In November the Nineteenth Route Army, posted in Fujian and supposedly playing an important part in the current anti-Communist campaign, revolted and proclaimed the establishment of the People's Revolutionary Government. Some of the generals of the Nineteenth Route Army, the anti-Japanese heroes from Shanghai who had long harbored ill will against Chiang, were persuaded by certain anti-Chiang liberal and left-wing Guomindang politicians that they would get popular support and the backing of various warlords if they called for a national united front to fight

the Japanese. They were also assured help by the Communists.

But when the showdown came the rebels got no help from any source. It would have been tactically advantageous to the Communists if they had come to the support of the Nineteenth Route Army and broken the strangle hold of the encirclement campaign. However, there was a factional struggle within the CPC leadership, and Mao managed to thwart those who wanted to help the army. On the other hand, the army's alliance with the Communists had alienated the conservative warlords and other Guomindang leaders. Chiang moved swiftly against the rebels. Within two months the crisis was over and the leaders of the rebellion forced to flee to Hong Kong.

Chiang could now turn once again to his main task of liquidating the Communists. By May 1934, it was becoming clear to the CPC leadership that the Communist territory was fast shrinking, that the dwindling and impoverished peasant population was no longer in a position to offer adequate support, that there was a growing shortage of military and other supplies with no chance of replacement, and that the Red Army was uniformly unsuccessful in holding back the enemy. In July the Communists tried to sneak out two columns of about 8,000 men each to divert the Nationalists, but the tactic only resulted in the bulk of this force being annihilated. With no alternative left but flight, the Communists decided to abandon the Jiangxi soviet. Thus, on October 14, 1934, began the long march of the main forces of the Red Army and some support units, numbering about 100,000 persons. Twelve months and 12,500 kilometers later, about 10,000 reached the safety of northern Shaanxi. Before the fifth campaign the Red Army had grown to a strength of 300,000; at the end, it was less than 30,000. However, the CPC under the leadership of Mao Ze-dong entrenched itself in Shaanxi and began its recovery, which ultimately led to its victory over the Nationalists.

How Mao gained the leadership of the CPC needs some explanation. Mao, as head of the Jiangxi soviet, had had a relatively free

hand to carry out his programs and policies without interference from the CPC leaders who were working out of Shanghai. But this changed when, in January 1933, the CPC headquarters shifted from Shanghai to Rui-jin. The Central Committee of the CPC could now take cognizance of the unorthodox policies followed by Mao Ze-dong. Mao was removed from several of the important posts he occupied and his guerrilla warfare and other policies discarded. Later, after Mao had gained control of the CPC during the Long March, Communist historians would contend that if he had still been in command the Communists would not have suffered from the 1934 debacle. (The subject is dealt with in detail later in the chapter.) It appears that regardless of who was in command the Communists could not successfully have countered the carefully organized campaign of Chiang Kai-shek. However, total victory eluded Chiang Kai-shek because the Communists had after all slipped through his net.

Sino-Japanese Relation: 1934-1936

From the Mukden incident (1931) through the Shanghai incident (1932), the occupation of Manchuria (1932), the annexation of Jehol (1933), the declaration of east Hebei as a demilitarized zone (1933), and the establishment of the independent kingdom of Manchukuo under Emperor Kang De (from regent, Pu Yi was made emperor) in January 1934, the cumulative effect of the Japanese actions was to keep Chinese passions inflamed.

No major incidents took place in 1934, although the Japanese enunciation of their official policy toward China (the Amai Declaration, April 1934) was most disturbing because it asserted that Japan would not permit any foreign power to limit Japan's special rights and interests in China. The statement was received with alarm not only in China but also in all the Western capitals, and Japan had to confirm that it would continue to observe the Nine-Power Treaty (1922) and the principle of the Open Door.

Moscow, conscious of the danger posed to the Soviet Union by the Axis powers in the

West and Japan in the East, in March 1935 sold the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchukuo (which meant to the Japanese) in an effort to consolidate its eastern front. This sale naturally also aided Japan's consolidation of power in Manchuria and eliminated Chinese national interests in the railway.

In May, on the pretext that two Chinese editors of pro-Japanese newspapers had been assassinated in Tianjin, allegedly by anti-Japanese elements, the Japanese army demonstrated before the offices of the Hebei provincial government and Japan pressured Nanjing to agree to the withdrawal of Nationalist troops from Hebei and the abolition of all Guomindang secret service organizations in Beiping, Tianjin, and the province of Hebei (Ho-Umezu Agreement, June 1935).

Elsewhere, using a similarly flimsy pretext, the Japanese pressured Nanjing to dissolve the Guomindang organs in Chahar, vacate their troops from central north Chahar, and suppress all anti-Japanese organizations.

If Nanjing hoped that these concessions would placate the Japanese and help to bring about a rapprochement between China and Japan, it was mistaken. By September the Japanese military, which was acting with hardly any restraints from Tokyo, began to hint at the need to remove the five northern provinces of Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi, Chahar, and Suiyuan from Nationalist jurisdiction and make them "autonomous." It was made to appear that the local Chinese themselves were demanding autonomy. As an example of how this could be implemented, the Japanese established the East Hebei Anti-Communist Autonomous Government, a puppet regime staffed by Chinese collaborators (November).

From January 1932 to November 1935, China's foreign policy was conducted by Wang Jing-wei in his capacity as prime minister and foreign minister. Although Chiang Kai-shek's influence in the formulation of foreign policy was not nominal, he remained in the background. Inside China mounting public sentiment against Japan was coupled with a sense of frustration and anger against the

Nationalist government which appeared to be bent on appeasing Japan and repressing anti-Japanese nationalist organizations. On November 1, Wang Jing-wei, who was suspected of personally being pro-Japanese, was shot and wounded by an irate citizen. Wang resigned his official posts and left for Europe to seek medical care, whereupon Chiang Kai-shek was elected to replace him as president of the executive Yuan (prime minister).

Chiang, once again the civil and military leader of the Nationalist government, was now forced to face the brunt of all the criticism: from patriotic nationalistic Chinese, who demanded resistance to Japan; from politically active students, who re-created the spirit of the May Fourth Movement (known as the December Ninth Movement after a demonstration on that date in Beiping); from liberals, who wanted reforms that would make the Guomindang more democratic; and from the Communists, who exploited the situation by advocating a united front to fight the Japanese.

The Japanese-sponsored autonomy movement in the northern provinces was vigorously opposed by students and professors in Beiping. In November they passed a resolution urging the central government to "use the strength of the entire nation to maintain the territorial and administrative integrity of China."⁹ The resolution was signed by the chancellors of Beijing National, Qinghua (Tsinghua), and Yanjing (Yenching) universities as well as by professor Hu Shi and several other cultural and educational leaders.

The Japanese, behaving as if they were already masters of Beiping, forcibly detained the chancellor of Beijing National University for questioning. This was the background to the December Ninth Movement, and it led to a massive resurgence of student demonstrations in almost every city of China; associations for national salvation, backed by Communists and liberal thinkers, were formed across the country.

Hoping to take the initiative out of Japanese hands Chiang, in December 1935, tried to solve the autonomy issue by reorganizing the government of the Hebei-Chahar

region and to make it semiautonomous and ostensibly "neutral." Although, of the 17 members of the Hebei-Chahar Political Council 7 were well known as pro-Japanese, the chair of the council was General Song Zhe-yuan, a committed Nationalist, whose troops were the first to take part in the Second Sino-Japanese War when it started on July 7, 1937. With General Song in a position to counter pro-Japanese influence Chiang's strategy did work and the Japanese were temporarily forced to postpone their plans for North China.

Nanjing, however, could not stop the Japanese from using their dominant position in the area to smuggle Japanese goods into northern China, which meant a considerable loss to the Chinese Customs. Even worse, the Japanese also tacitly encouraged the growth of narcotic traffic (heroin and cocaine) in the demilitarized and autonomous zones.

The respite for Nanjing was, in any case, short-lived. In the latter half of 1936 anti-Japanese incidents were on the rise again (a few Japanese were attacked and some were assassinated in various parts of the country), leading the Japanese to present a set of seven demands to the Nationalist government (September 26, 1936). The most important of these were autonomy for Hebei, Chahar, Shandong, Shanxi, and Suiyuan; a joint Sino-Japanese front against communism; employment of Japanese advisers by Nanjing; and suppression of all anti-Japanese movements. Nanjing countered with a set of its own demands, which called for an annulment of the Shanghai and Tanggu agreements, dissolution of the East Hebei government, and suppression of smuggling. While negotiations dragged on, an incident took place in Chinese politics that changed the course of history.

The Xian Incident: December 1936

Japanese pressure on northern China and the Nanjing regime had created national sentiment that opposed the continuation of the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists. Even the Guangdong-Guangxi warlords stirred up an abortive rebellion in 1936, ostensibly to force Nanjing to resist

Japan. The CPC, now established in Shaanxi, also exploited this sentiment and called for an anti-Japanese, national united front.

The Communists had long recognized the propaganda value of an anti-Japanese stand. As early as 1932 they had declared war on Japan, and when they escaped from Jiangxi in 1934 they announced that they were "marching north to fight the Japanese invaders";¹⁰ in August 1935, the CPC issued an "Open Letter to All Fellow Countrymen on Resisting Japan and Saving the Nation"; in December 1935 Mao Ze-dong delivered a report entitled "On Tactics against Japanese Imperialism," which recommended that the party should be prepared to unite with "the students, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie throughout the country"¹¹ to form a revolutionary united front.

The CPC propaganda appealed particularly to the Manchurian troops, the Northeastern Army of Zhang Xue-liang, who had been shifted to the northwest after their withdrawal from Manchuria to suppress the Communists in the Shaanxi-Gansu area. In January 1936, Mao Ze-dong, Zhou En-lai, and Zhu De issued a "Letter to All Officers and Men of the Northeastern Army," which appealed to Zhang and his troops to cease fire and join hands with the Communists to drive the Japanese out of China. If this were done, the troops naturally could go back home to Manchuria.

By midyear secret contacts were established between the Communists and Zhang Xue-liang (Zhou En-lai personally met with Zhang in April), and they agreed on "mutual non-aggression, mutual help, [and] exchange of representatives."¹² It appears that Zhang was won over to the united front cause and that he willingly accepted Communist representatives to help promote anti-Japanese propaganda in his army. The Communists had similarly infiltrated the Seventeenth Route Army of General Yang Hu-cheng, who was the other important commander of Communist-suppression forces in the area.

The Nationalist military action against the Communists thus came to a virtual halt. Chiang was not entirely ignorant of Zhang's

and Yang's interest in the united front, but he was busy from June to October suppressing the Guangdong-Guangxi warlords. In October Chiang visited Xian to impress on Zhang and Yang the need to vigorously carry out the annihilation campaign. He reprimanded them for their halfhearted approach and, of course, rejected their suggestions regarding a united front. Chiang then moved to Luoyang and began personally to map out plans for the campaign. He redeployed 30 of his crack divisions and ordered the air force to the front.

On December 4 Chiang returned to Xian to announce that the campaign would be launched on December 12. Having failed to convince Chiang of their point of view, Zhang and Yang faced the prospect of either fighting the Communists—which they themselves were not inclined to do, and their officers and men may have refused to do—or facing a humiliating transfer. So they placed Chiang Kai-shek under house arrest (the term *kidnap*, used popularly for the incident, is not quite appropriate) on the night of December 11-12.

The next two weeks were a period of high drama: Zhang did not know what to do with his "prisoner," who showed great personal courage and demanded that he be either released or shot; the Communists were caught by surprise—some of them (it appears that Mao may have been one of these) wanted Chiang to be executed; Moscow, fearing that the death of Chiang would result in civil war and serve Japan's imperialistic designs, called for the release of Chiang and forced the CPC to follow suit; for reasons similar to those of the Soviets, the British and the Americans also wanted to see Chiang released; some pro-Japanese and anti-Chiang Chinese called for punitive action against the rebels, including aerial bombardment of Xian, without regard to the fact that this would endanger Chiang's life.

Zhang Xue-liang was caught in a dilemma. He had wanted to remonstrate with Chiang but was not a disloyal officer who wanted to get rid of his commander-in-chief. He invited a Communist delegation, headed by Zhou

En-lai, to Xian and also welcomed a group from Nanjing that included Soong Mei-ling (Chiang's wife), T. V. Soong, and William Henry Donald (Chiang's friend and advisor). The secret and open negotiations among the three parties, Zhang/Yang, the Communists, and Chiang's people from Nanjing, were carried on until December 24, when agreement was reached on six points. The most important of them called for ending the anti-Communist war and establishing a united front to fight the Japanese. According to recent revelations by Beijing, Zhou En-lai finally met Chiang Kai-shek on December 24, and Chiang accepted the six-point proposal. In Chiang's published account, he denied any such pledge. But from later developments one can surmise that Chiang, although he signed no documents, did agree to form some kind of a united front with the Communists.

Against the wishes of many in Xian who would have liked to lay down conditions for Chiang's release, Zhang Xue-liang saved Chiang's face by spiring him out of Xian on December 25. Zhang accompanied Chiang to Nanjing, where Zhang was put under house arrest as Chiang's prisoner.

Ironically, the Xian incident created a strong nationwide adverse reaction to Chiang's detention, and the generalissimo regained much of the stature he had acquired during the northern expedition. When the news of his release was broadcast, there was spontaneous rejoicing, and expressions of relief and thanksgiving were voiced everywhere. His authority was strengthened further when it came to be known that the civil war was over and that Chiang was going to lead the nation against Japan.

Since the actual conditions under which the united front was to function were yet to be fully defined, the first months of 1937 were spent by the two sides exchanging proposals and counterproposals. Before the final agreement could be announced, the war with Japan had begun on July 7, 1937. Under the terms of their collaboration, the CPC discontinued its policy of armed uprising to overthrow the Nationalist government,

renamed its Shaanxi soviet Special Region of the Republic of China, allowed its army to become a part of the National Revolutionary Army under the jurisdiction of Chiang Kai-shek's Military Commission (its name was changed from Red Army to the Eighth Route Army), discontinued its policy of confiscating land from the landlords, and accepted a democratic system based on universal suffrage. In practice these changes meant little because they neither brought a greater Nationalist presence to the Communist area nor took away from the civil and military power and authority the Communists actually exercised.

The Nanjing decade (1928–1937) ended without Chinese society being truly reintegrated and without a central government that truly exercised jurisdiction over the whole country. The Guomindang had failed to produce an ideology or an organization that could bind the nation together. Many provincial governors, who were often the local warlords from pre-Nanjing days, not only retained a sense of independence and autonomy but also periodically chose to form alliances and rebel against Nanjing; the Guomindang was grievously factionalized, and leaders of Wang Jing-wei's stature tried to establish parallel "national" governments; the military component of the Nationalist government was virtually outside the control of the civil government; the armies of the Nationalist government owed loyalty to their commanders rather than to the state; political participation was limited; and programs of social reform had marginal significance.

Why did the Guomindang fail? Many reasons may be cited, but the primary one was built into Sun Yat-sen's program of a three-stage approach to constitutional government. By 1937 the Guomindang had yet to complete the first stage: the military unification of China. Theoretically that stage was achieved in 1928, but the northern expedition had perpetuated warlordism rather than destroyed it. Most scholars have blamed Chiang Kai-shek for Nanjing's failures. It is true that Chiang emerged as the key figure in China and soon after the start of the Sino-

Japanese War became a virtual dictator, but can he be held responsible for the weaknesses of the party and the government? These weaknesses reflected the shortcomings of traditional Chinese political culture that still held China in thrall: the authority-dependency syndrome; the ingrained habit of looking for a single powerful figure to lead politics rather than an acceptance of politics through a complex network of institutions; politics still working through factional loyalties, nepotism, corruption, and intrigue; and the systems made little distinction between public office and private life, between public property and private property. China had not found it easy to introduce modern institutions that could impose accountability on the party or the government. This development has not taken place even today in Communist China, over 60 years later. If Chiang is to be blamed, it should be for insisting that the northern expedition start in 1926. Had he waited a few years or even a year, the Guomindang might have been in a position militarily to defeat the warlords and not be forced to make alliances with them.

Regardless of these considerations, on the eve of the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) China was more unified than it had been for a long time; Nanjing controlled 25 percent of the land area and 66 percent of the population of China.¹³ Could Chiang have done better than he did? Yes, perhaps, if he had not been so obsessed with finding a military solution to all his problems.

THE MODERNIZATION OF CHINA: 1928–1937

By the 1930s China presented that unique combination of modern and traditional elements that many Westerners seemed to find so attractive. Basically, this was a mix of Westernized lifestyle, a product of modern cities, and the traditional lifestyle followed by the majority of the population in the countryside. The major cities of China had become cosmopolitan: A visitor could live comfortably in

a modern hotel with modern conveniences like flush toilets and bathtubs, travel in imported limousines, use conveniently located post and telegraph offices for sending messages back home, meet Westernized Chinese who dressed in Western clothing and spoke English (the most popular foreign language), and do business with modern-style firms and banks.

This thin veneer of modernization gave the wrong impression to many who came to believe that China had made tremendous progress under the Nationalists. In the larger context of the country as a whole, the achievements of the Nanjing regime were significant but limited.

The weaknesses of the central government, whose authority did not extend over all the provinces, lay in four spheres. The first was lack of coordination among the five Yuan, the five branches of government; and within the executive Yuan, the most powerful Yuan, the military was virtually independent. Second, since authority was in the hands of the military chief, Chiang Kai-shek, national priorities were viewed as analogous to military goals, and 60 to 80 percent of the scarce resources were allocated to the maintenance of the military and the servicing of foreign debts, both nonproductive expenditures. Third, because a majority of government officials owed their jobs to various warlords and influential politicians, the central bureaucracy lacked cohesion and efficiency, which was made worse because senior officials had multiple overlapping appointments. Fourth, the government's administrative control ended at the district level, even in the provinces over which Nanjing had direct jurisdiction.

In an attempt to provide cohesion to the government and the people and revitalize the nation, Chiang Kai-shek inaugurated the New Life Movement in 1934. According to Chiang the revolution demanded discipline, which the Chinese people sadly lacked because of selfishness and the absence of social consciousness. However, the nation could be transformed if the Confucian virtues of *li*, *yi*, *lian*, and *chi* (propriety, justice, hon-

esty, and self-respect) could be revived and popularized. To achieve this end, 95 rules of proper conduct were enunciated and propagated among the people. Obviously Chiang was trying to utilize traditional morality to inculcate new habits that conformed to ideas of modern hygiene (e.g., not to spit in public) and new attitudes that conformed to modern ideas of loyalty and self-sacrifice for a national cause.

The heart of the movement lay in Chiang's desire to mobilize the nation on military lines. As he himself put it, "Stated simply [the New Life Movement] is to thoroughly militarize the lives of the citizens of the entire nation so that they can cultivate courage and swiftness, the endurance of suffering and a tolerance for hard work, and especially the habit and ability of unified action, so that they will at any time sacrifice for the nation."¹⁴

Within a year it was clear that the New Life Movement had failed because its neotraditional ideology was out of joint with the needs of the times and because it attempted to revolutionize society from above and came to be identified with authoritarian and repressive leaders who reflected none of the New Life virtues in their own lives.

As for economic growth and development, China continued to expand, albeit slowly, its light and staple industries and communication systems, the foundations for which had been laid in the early decades of the twentieth century, most of them centered in the coastal and riverine cities connected with the foreign presence. The Nationalist government helped this process by introducing a modern financial system: an annual budget; streamlined revenue collection and centralized industrial taxation; establishment of the Central Bank of China; restoration of tariff autonomy to China (a major change in the unequal treaty relationship); abolition of the *likin* tax, which had become an impediment in the growth of internal trade; and the abolition of the variable unit, the *tael*, to be replaced by the silver dollar (*yuan*) as the standard national legal tender. The govern-

ment also founded the China Development Finance Corporation, whose goal was to promote industry and commerce by developing the domestic money market and encouraging foreign investment. Another achievement during the Nanjing decade was the completion of the Guangzhou-Hankou railroad trunk line and several branch lines (about 3,000 miles); also about 15,000 miles of highways were constructed. Much of the credit for these accomplishments goes to T. V. Soong, the financial genius of the Guomindang.

But even in this successful modern sector, Guomindang policies were basically regressive and did not encourage capital growth, savings, and investment. On the larger national level the Guomindang, representing the landlord-bourgeois class and lacking authority at the local level, could neither gather any of the land taxes (it had agreed in 1928 that the provinces could retain them for their use) nor carry out any of the much needed land reforms. By the same token it could not even implement the Land Laws, which had been so enthusiastically enacted in 1930. The Land Laws would have reduced the land rent to 37.5 percent of the harvest and thus ameliorated the plight of the exploited tenant farmers, who formed the bulk of the peasantry and lived in abject poverty. As for the provincial authorities, most of them were more interested in squeezing as much as they could out of the land than in reconstruction projects.

Some considerable advance was made in the educational field, although actual achievements fell far short of the idealistic plans announced by the government. Under these plans, the government was given the authority to establish direct, centralized control over all levels of the national educational system, from the primary schools at the bottom to the universities at the top (including privately run schools), so that it could achieve, in stages, universal primary education and the eradication of adult illiteracy by the year 1949 and could modernize education at the secondary and tertiary levels. At the primary and secondary levels, common textbooks, approved by the central govern-

ment, were to be used throughout the country; the curricula, which allowed for no electives, were devised to improve the students' physical bodies, inculcate traditional ethics and nationalistic values, and train them in subjects that would provide skills to build the country.

In actual practice, the plans came to naught because of the loose hold of the central government over the provinces and the lack of funds for education. Indeed, the financial mechanism that put the burden of funding primary schools on the counties and of secondary schools on the provinces (the center only funded the universities) meant that primary education made few gains; although there was a fourfold growth in secondary education during the Nanjing decade, it is higher education that benefited most from the new policies.

The lack of balance evidenced between the economic development of the coastal regions and the hinterland was also reflected in the educational sphere; the modern coastal and riverine cities had the best educational facilities (all the best-known universities were there), whereas some provinces in the interior had no institutions of higher learning at all. In many fields, the Western model had been so closely followed that the educational system was divorced from China's needs and circumstances; also, a great majority of the students devoted themselves to theoretical studies. The government did try to encourage higher education in the interior, and it also tried to make higher education more oriented toward science and technology. The total number of college and university students rose from 37,570 in 1930 to 41,610 in 1936, of which the number in natural sciences, agriculture, engineering, and medicine increased from 9,380 to 18,460, and the number in humanities, social sciences, education, and commerce dropped from 28,190 to 23,150 (all figures have been rounded off to the nearest 10). In any case 0.09 percent of the population could hardly be expected to introduce any significant social changes. They were elites who perpetuated elitism.

THE NANJING DECADE: A SUMMARY

Some historians of the Nanjing decade have praised the efforts of the Nationalist government, saying that although success was limited, the achievements indicated a trend that would have brought unification and reconstruction to China had the Japanese war not intervened. Others have condemned it because they believe that even if there had been no war with Japan, the Guomindang could not have brought about the socioeconomic revolution that China needed and many patriotic Chinese had been hoping for since 1911 because Guomindang ideology and organization failed to create the necessary infrastructure.

The truth, as is often the case, lies somewhere between these two extreme points of view. A decade is not a long enough period for any regime to have radically reorganized a state and society the size of China with its multifarious problems. However, China was in the process of change, a process that had begun long before the Guomindang came into power. What we must attempt to do is to assess the impact the Guomindang had on this process. Many successes of the Nanjing regime in the modernization of China were built on the developments that had already begun before it came into power (e.g., in the realms of education, industry, commerce, banking, communications, and transportation). Similarly, many failures of the regime were the result of traditional factors that still were very much alive (such as the authority-obedience syndrome, paternalism in politics, factional loyalties, and bureaucratism) or of the hybrids that had emerged during the last half-century (such as the role of a modernized military in central and regional politics).

What role did the Nanjing regime play, in this historical context, in the process of change? First, the Guomindang, after having accepted aid from the Soviet Union, became Bolshevized and turned against Western, democratic political models. The party could now compromise with tradition and confirm that the state was more important than the

individual, that democratic rights protecting the individual (or for that matter, the goals of democracy) were to be given lower priority than the goal of unifying and strengthening the state. It advocated the paternalistic, authoritarian rule of a single party, putting the party above the state. In this the Guomindang had the backing of many intellectuals who had become disillusioned with democratic experiments and who had shifted their demand from individual justice to justice for society. The frustration these intellectuals felt with the Guomindang, however, was not that the Guomindang had become dictatorial but that the dictatorship was ineffective in working for the benefit and welfare of society. By contrast, the benevolent authoritarianism of the CPC came to be looked on as a viable alternative. The milieu of the 1930s rejected the liberal democratic model and effectively killed the weak individual-oriented democratic movement that had emerged in the May Fourth era.

Second, although the Guomindang turned against the left and acquired a rightist coloration, the revolutionary socioeconomic goals it had initially advocated (e.g., the Principle of the People's Livelihood) continued to have a strong appeal. The regime's repressive policies only made the intelligentsia more acutely aware of the bankruptcy of the party, which still tried to hide its incapacities behind empty progressive mottoes and slogans. It is in this context that the attractiveness of the CPC has to be seen; however limited its political power, the CPC held forth a nobler vision of the future.

That politics in the 1920s and 1930s had become more left wing was also reflected in the growing field of modern Chinese literature, whose contribution to the making of the new milieu cannot be overestimated. The anti-Western, anti-imperialist reaction, which had begun with the May Fourth incident and the subsequent radicalization of the intellectuals, had a strong influence in shaping the literary world in the 1930s. Western imitation was not given up, but the writers turned increasingly to an investigation of the nature and function of literature. Reaching the con-

clusion that literature had a serious social purpose (in many ways similar to the view held by traditional Confucian scholars) and was therefore a didactic instrument, the writers, including those who had earlier clamored for "art for art's sake," accepted the path of social realism. The League of Left-Wing Writers was established in 1930, and most of China's outstanding writers became its members. Even those who kept aloof from the league accepted the idea that literature bore a heavy social responsibility. The harsh treatment meted out to liberal thinkers and writers by the Nanjing government only reinforced this trend.

These writers, by attacking the decadence of traditional society and demanding a social revolution, became harsh critics of the Guomindang and supporters, consciously or unconsciously, of the CPC. The nature of contemporary politics led even Lu Xun, who was not by instinct a Communist, to side with the CPC. Another popular writer, the novelist Mao Dun, used Marxist analysis in his novels to depict the exploitative nature of foreign and indigenous capitalists. Ba Jin, with leanings toward anarchism, became the idol of the younger generation because he described the sufferings and tribulations of youths trying to break away from the hold of the traditional family system. Lao She, who never joined any political or literary group, portrayed the lives of the common people, contrasting the intrinsic goodness of their nature and character with the rapaciousness of the society that exploited and destroyed them. Ding Ling, the most well-known woman writer of modern China, who first gained fame in 1928 (at the age of 26) with her stories depicting daring and independent heroines, turned to producing proletarian literature by 1931 and joined the CPC in 1933.

Third, the Guomindang, while exploiting nationalism, was unable to satisfy the nationalistic, antiforeign, patriotic urge for national unity. On the contrary, it helped to widen the gulf, albeit unconsciously, between the ruling classes and the ruled, between the Westernized high officials (70 to 80 percent

of whom had been educated abroad) and the lower echelons of the bureaucracy, between the educated elite and the masses, and between the modern industrial and commercial sectors and the traditional agricultural sector (i.e., between the city and the countryside). At the same time it failed to institutionalize avenues of group or sectional representation, thus leading to alienation, frustration, and socially destructive behavior such as nepotism, bribery, riots, strikes, demonstrations, and coups. This negative situation helped strengthen the revolutionary forces that promised to reintegrate the fractionalized society and politics of the day.

Last, and most important, the Guomindang failed to produce a constitution that could guarantee civilian control of the government and a proper balance of power within its main branches. A Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China for the Period of Tutelage was promulgated by Nanjing in June 1931, an Organic Law of the National Government was passed by the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang in December 1931, and a Draft Constitution of the Republic of China was promulgated by the Nationalist government in May 1936. These constitutional documents reflected shifting views on how to keep the military out of the executive and decrease or increase the powers of the presidency but had hardly any impact on the actual function of power and authority in the government. There was little in Chinese political tradition to sanctify these paper constitutions. For this same reason the Communist constitutions, later, would provide no better protection to the people than those of the Nationalists.

MAO ZE-DONG AND THE CPC: 1927-1935

The history of the CPC from 1927 to 1935 is crucial to understanding modern China because it was during this time that Mao Ze-dong rose to power and began to enunciate his ideas on the organization of the party and

the army and on revolutionary strategy. This body of ideas and theories, modified with the passage of time, came to be known as Maoism outside China and as The Thought of Mao Ze-dong inside China.

The period 1927-1935 can be divided into two phases: 1927-1932, when the CPC headquarters remained underground in Shanghai and soviets were established in the countryside, and 1933-1935, when the headquarters were shifted to Ruijin and took over direct control of the soviets.

From 1928 to 1932, operating in the countryside in a relatively independent fashion, Mao rose to prominence as a civil and military leader. He proved that he had the genius and the capacity to lead the revolution by organizing the peasantry. But not everyone in the party leadership agreed with Mao's ideas and policies. This became apparent from 1933 to 1935, when Mao came under attack and was removed from several of his key posts. But the collapse of the Jiangxi soviet helped Mao to return to power, and he assumed leadership of the party in 1935, during the Long March. He held this position until his death in 1976.

Mao's success in the late 1930s and in the 1940s made him a legendary figure in his own time and led to his virtual deification. However, because he made serious leadership mistakes that caused much harm to the party and the country after the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, since his death many of his policies have been denounced and discarded, and his contribution to the revolution is now being reevaluated.

A debate continues on how far Mao departed from orthodox Communist doctrine and added creatively to Marxism-Leninism. Even before the demythification of Mao began, many scholars had contended that Mao was in no way original and that most, if not all, elements of his ideas were available to him from one source or another. It is not possible here to relate the details of the Mao debate; it will suffice to note the techniques and ideas Mao used to achieve his success and

the reasons for his failures. It should also be noted that even Mao's harshest critics recognize his outstanding contribution to the Chinese revolution.

CPC Leadership: 1927-1932

From 1927 to 1932 the CPC leaders continued to formulate their policies on the presumption that the socialist revolution must necessarily have a proletariat base; therefore the party's future lay in the cities. In this it was closely directed by Moscow through the Comintern. What was new in the picture was the establishment of the Red Army, which was based in the countryside. Supposedly, this force would provide auxiliary help to the proletarian uprising. The party leader, not always the secretary general of the CPC, himself living a precarious underground existence in Shanghai, would evaluate the national situation. At some stage he would declare that the tide of revolution was rising and the time had come to occupy those cities where the proletariat was thought to be ripe for action. Orders would then be sent from Shanghai to the Red Army in the countryside to attack the targeted cities.

These operations invariably ended in disastrous failure. The Comintern would blame the failure on the current leader of the party and promptly replace him. Thus in 1927 Chen Du-xiu was replaced by Qu Qiu-bai; Qu, in turn, was deposed in 1928 in favor of Li Li-san; Li, who ordered attacks on Wuhan, Nanchang, and Changsha in mid-1930, was ousted by the end of the year. In 1931 the 28 Bolsheviks, a group of young Chinese students of Pavel Mif (director of the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and the chief Comintern expert on China), who were headed by Wang Ming, were given the leadership of the party. This group was also referred to as the Internationalists. By this time the Communist-backed, city-based labor movement had totally collapsed. No intelligent worker would risk joining a "red" union when it was virtually assured that its members would be massacred by the Guomindang.

Finally, at the end of 1932 the party Central Committee shifted to Ruijin, at last accepting the notion long held by Mao that the revolution could be won from the countryside.

Mao Ze-dong and the Party: 1928–1934

After the disaster of 1927, when party membership had fallen from 60,000 to about 10,000, Moscow directed the CPC to carry out an agrarian revolution, arm the peasants and workers for “spontaneous” revolutionary struggle, establish city-based soviets (local government of “soldiers, workers, and peasants”), and develop guerrilla warfare. Of course, nobody was certain how all this was to be done. Where were the new party members to come from—from the proletariat only, or could the peasants be included? Where were the soldiers for the army to come from? Should there be a standing army, which ran counter to the idea of a spontaneous uprising, or should there be only local recruits who would temporarily join in a local insurrection? If all efforts were to be directed in gaining city bases, what role were the guerrillas to play? Who was to train them and coordinate their hit-and-run campaigns?

The Comintern and CPC leaders provided a shifting theoretical basis for action, but only those actually involved with activities in the countryside had to face the difficulties created by the contradictory, vague, or ill-defined guidelines. By early 1928 Mao Ze-dong, Zhu De, Peng De-huai, and others, having failed in their attacks on the cities and in inciting peasant uprisings (Mao had led the abortive Autumn Harvest Uprising in Hunan), had taken refuge in the Jinggang Mountains on the Hunan-Jiangxi border, traditionally a haven for bandits, and established a revolutionary base there. The idea of organizing a city-based soviet was given up. The Mao-Zhu forces, about 10,000 strong but with only 2,000 rifles in good repair, became the nucleus of the First Division of the Chinese Workers’ and Peasants’ Revolutionary Army; Zhu was the commander and Mao the political commissar. In Jinggangshan (Jinggang Mountains) Mao first began to experiment

with his style of party organization, guerrilla warfare, and the mobilization of the peasantry. Here he enunciated his famous tactical guidelines for guerrilla forces: “The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.”

In 1929, forced to retreat from Jinggangshan, Mao moved to Ruijin in southeast Jiangxi. Under Mao’s guidance, this area eventually became the biggest Communist base, the Central Soviet. As chair of the Front Committee, Mao commanded civil and military power, and he increasingly used his own judgment to strengthen the Red Army, expand the territory under his control, and fight off the Guomindang anti-Communist campaigns. These goals sometimes meant bypassing or rejecting instructions from the Central Committee and, consequently, friction between Mao and the party leaders: As early as 1929, Mao was criticized by the party headquarters for allowing peasant mentality to undermine the revolution and the party and for forgetting that the ultimate aim of the small soviets was to help the struggle in the cities and not sink into peasant guerrillism. This was a touchy subject with Mao because he was convinced that only the peasant masses could help the revolutionary movement. So Mao, in his reply to the Central Committee, although politely agreeing with the committee’s criticism, added,

[I]n our opinion it would also be wrong for any of our Party members to fear the growth of peasant strength lest it should outstrip the worker’s strength and harm the revolution. For in the revolution in semi-colonial China, the peasant struggle must always fail if it does not have the leadership of the workers [meaning the leadership of the CPC, which of course in Mao’s mind meant the leadership of Mao himself], but the revolution is never harmed if the peasant struggle outstrips the forces of the workers.¹⁵

By 1932 Mao was convinced more than ever before that in the absence of any control over urban areas and the proletariat, it was from the peasantry, particularly its poorer segments, that the party could draw its mem-

MAO ZE-DONG’S BACKGROUND: 1893–1927

Born into a comparatively well-to-do peasant family (“rich peasant” in Communist terminology) in Hunan in 1893, Mao was the eldest of four children. He seems to have favored his warm-hearted mother, a devout Buddhist, and hated his harsh, autocratic father, against whose authority he rebelled when he was only 15 or 16 years old. Psychohistorians trace many of his later actions to this love-hate relationship.

Mao insisted on becoming educated, against his father’s wishes, and succeeded in going to a higher primary school in 1909. Although his schoolmates generally did not accept him because he was six years older than most of them and far less affluent, Mao found modern education at the school exciting. He was particularly thrilled by the ideas on reform and revolution of such writers as Kang You-wei and Liang Qi-chao. In 1911 he went to study at the provincial capital, Changsha, and in the fall of that year became briefly involved with the 1911 revolution when he joined a revolutionary volunteer corps.

In Changsha Mao spent endless hours poring over magazines and books at the provincial library. He was a voracious reader and was soon familiar with the translated works of Thomas Huxley, J. S. Mill, Charles Darwin, and Adam Smith. In 1913 Mao entered the Fourth (later called the First) Teachers’ Training School in Changsha. He graduated from this school in 1918. These were the heady days of the May Fourth Movement, and Mao, like so many others, was fired by the spirit of the times. He had developed strong revolutionary instincts, but his ideas were still largely unstructured.

In 1918, at age 24, Mao went to Beijing University, where he worked as a library assistant under Li Da-zhao. Here he met Chen Du-xiu and other intellectuals who were soon to estab-

lish the CPC. Mao was deeply impressed by the views of the brilliant Li Da-zhao, who inspired his students with a vision of a new, self-reliant China and was one of the first Chinese to hail the success of the Russian Revolution. Mao’s thinking also turned left, but he was more of an anarchist than a Communist. Only in 1920 did he first begin to read Marxist writings. On his return to Changsha that year, he founded the Russian Affairs Study Group. The following year he served as one of the delegates to the first congress of the CPC and became secretary of the party’s Hunan branch.

From 1921 to 1923 Mao engaged in the more orthodox activities of the CPC such as the organization of labor unions and labor strikes. After the First United Front was established in 1923, Mao worked in the Guomindang organization in various posts, ending with the directorship of the Peasant Movement Training Institute in 1926. In 1927 he returned to his home province of Hunan to survey the condition of the peasant movement there. This led to his famous “Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan.”

Mao Ze-dong’s 1927 report indicated his growing faith in the possibility that the peasants could serve as the main force of the revolution, “a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves.”¹⁶ It was the debacle of 1927, when the First United Front came to its bitter end, that gave Mao Ze-dong an opportunity to establish a base in rural China and put into practice the ideas he had formulated during his early years with the CPC.

bers and recruit its armies. However, to gain the confidence of this section of the people, who formed a large percentage of the population and who were either tenant farmers or landless laborers, the party had to patiently and assiduously cultivate them. This could be

done by distributing land to them, protecting them from the exploitative control of the rich landlords (executing the landlords and confiscating their land was the practice generally followed; this act gave confidence to the poor peasants and served as a lesson for the rich

peasants who were allowed to retain their lands), educating and politicizing them, and always ensuring that the military treated them fairly and with respect. The masses were the water and the party the fish; without water the fish could not survive. These truths were self-evident, although it was never to be forgotten that the *elements déclassés* recruited into the army needed a thorough indoctrination to become dependably "Red." For that matter indoctrination and political education could convert anyone to the proper proletarian attitude. Mao had even recruited some of the local bandits into his army in Jinggangshan.

Since the warlord and Guomindang armies had alienated the peasantry with their brutal behavior, Mao attempted to convert his soldiers into local heroes who could be loved by the villagers. He insisted that they meticulously follow certain rules: not take "a single needle or piece of thread from the masses," turn in everything captured, speak politely, pay fairly for all they bought, pay for things they damaged, not hit or swear at people, not damage any crops, not take liberties with women, and not ill treat captives.¹⁷ Like most of Mao's "creative thought," this approach to military discipline and political training was a pragmatic response to a practical necessity. Mao wanted his army to be much more than a fighting force; it was to be a political instrument that spread propaganda among the masses, gave adult literacy classes, helped the peasants in farm work, and trained them as local militia; it was to be "a most powerful instrument of all in the coming revolution." Mao was the only CPC leader who wrote so extensively on war and military strategy.

From 1928 to 1930-1931, when the CPC was still trying to create a nationwide uprising, Mao had quietly come to the conclusion that the party did not need an urban base and that it could work out its destiny by holding one Red area in the countryside, slowly expanding it to engulf the entire country. The growth of the Jiangxi soviet testifies to the correctness of his view. By divid-

ing the soviet into military districts and sub-districts and by getting all citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 to join the "young vanguard" and the "Red guard" militia battalions or the women's associations, Mao had mobilized the entire population to provide intelligence, transportation, and supplies to the highly mobile units of the regular army. Nearly 80 percent of the army was locally recruited; 70 percent of it came from peasant background. When Mao wrote to the Central Committee in January 1930 that "the tactics we have derived from the struggle of the past three years are indeed different from any other tactics, ancient or modern, Chinese or foreign,"¹⁸ his pride is understandable and his exaggeration forgivable. By the end of 1931 Mao had not only been able to neutralize three encirclement campaigns by using guerrilla tactics but also severely mauled the Nationalist forces. Massive desertions of the Nanjing troops to the Communist side had augmented Mao's armies and equipment.

Until 1931 the dozen or so soviets, scattered in several provinces, remained autonomous units and were not organizationally integrated. In November 1931 the All China Soviet Congress, held at Ruijin, established the Chinese Soviet Republic and appointed Mao Ze-dong its president.

This change affected Mao's power base. In "his" soviet Mao had fused the party, state, and military systems into one and established "an independent kingdom" within the Communist movement. The constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic (CSR), however, separated the state and military structures. Under the new dispensation Mao was given command of the civil apparatus of the CSR, which in practice meant that he lost direct control of his own soviet. He was also made political commissar of the entire Red Army (in January 1931) which meant that he lost direct contact with his First Front Army. At the same time Mao was excluded from the Military Commission, which had supreme command over the Red Army and which was overwhelmingly comprised of the Internationalists.

At this stage the CSR was only a part of the *local* party structure, for the Communist Party underground headquarters was still in Shanghai, where party members continued being caught by the British or the Chinese police and incarcerated or executed. Ultimately the situation became so difficult that the leadership was driven to move to Ruijin in the winter of 1932-1933. The Internationalists now increased their criticism of Mao's deviations from the official line, accusing him of guerrillism, factionalism, peasant mentality, and party monopolization.

Seen from the Communist side the significance of the fourth Communist-suppression campaign of 1932 (discussed earlier) lies in the fact that it resulted in an open clash between the Internationalists and Mao over military tactics. Chiang had personally led his troops against the soviets in the central provinces of Hubei, Hunan, and Anhui and successfully defeated the Communist forces there. The Internationalists, backed by Zhou En-lai, favored a "forward and offensive line," which advocated the use of the Red Army as a regular army (vs. a guerrilla force), which would move "beyond the passes" (i.e., make a preemptive strike outside its area of strategic control to relieve the pressure on the besieged soviets). Mao dissented. Basing his opinion on his earlier experience, Mao felt that the chances of success would be greater if the enemy were "lured in deep" into the mountainous base area and destroyed by organized guerrilla tactics. Mao's recommendation was rejected. The Japanese activities in the north, which diverted Chiang's attention from Jiangxi, may have had something to do with the final outcome of the war, but the Internationalists felt smug because their plan appeared successful although the Hubei-Henan-Anhui and the Hunan-West Hubei soviets had been liquidated. Mao withdrew from active participation in deliberations, and his post of political commissar was formally assigned to Zhou En-lai in mid-1933.

In 1933 the Internationalists succeeded in diminishing the power of Mao Ze-dong but the bigger danger facing them was not Mao

but Chiang Kai-shek. Although Chiang had lost the fourth Communist-suppression campaign, all the signs indicated that he was going to return and that the next assault would be far more serious, perhaps impossible, to deal with. In fact, many local peasants had begun to flee the area, and the CPC, mobilizing for the Nationalist fifth encirclement campaign, found it difficult to reach its quota of new recruits to expand the strength of the Red Army to one million. Under these circumstances it would have been politically wise for the CPC to support the People's Revolutionary Government established in Fujian by the Nineteenth Route Army, which had revolted against the Nanjing government in 1933. But for various reasons this was not done.

In early 1934 the Internationalists continued to persecute Mao and his proteges, one of whom was Deng Xiao-ping; Mao was dropped from the Political Bureau (Politburo), the highest organ of the party leadership and removed from his post of chair of the Council of People's Commissars; and all of Mao's lieutenants in the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet government were replaced. Mao was now no more than a figurehead.

On the Nationalist front, Chiang, after having suppressed the rebellion of the Nineteenth Route Army, began his fifth campaign against the Jiangxi soviet. The strategy and tactics employed in this campaign were totally new. Neither the Internationalists' "forward and offensive line" nor Mao's "luring the enemy in deep" could have succeeded in coping with the new situation. Both tactics were tried after the Nationalists advanced into the Soviet territory, but they were ineffective. The Communists therefore decided, after radio consultation with Moscow, to retreat toward the northwest. It was during this "Long March" that Mao regained power. Whether or not Mao could have saved the Party from this debacle if he had been in power is a debatable point, but the official view today is that Mao's leadership role had been positive and correct and that it was "because of Wang

Ming's 'Left' adventurist leadership [Wang Ming was an Internationalist who had been appointed head of the Party], the struggle against the Kuomintang's [Guomindang's] fifth 'encirclement and suppression' campaign ended in failure. The First Front Army was forced to embark on the 25,000-li Long March and made its way to northern Shaanxi.... The Red Army of 300,000 men was reduced to about 30,000 and the Communist Party of 300,000 members to about 40,000."¹⁹

The Long March: 1934-1935

The Long March, which began on October 16, 1934, and took over a year to complete, was a desperate attempt at survival. A total of about 100,000 persons, including combat troops, cadres, and transport corps, carrying as much equipment as they could, fled westward. Women and children and 20,000 of the wounded had to be left behind, protected by an inadequate guerrilla force.

There were no definite plans about where the Communists were heading except that, at first, the goal was to join with the other Red forces still operating in Hunan. But the Nationalists had foreseen the possibility of this linkup; the Communists, who had moved west, through Guangdong into Guangxi, found the enemy waiting for them on the banks of the Xiang River. The battle that followed devastated the Red forces. The CPC, forced to give up its objective of joining with the Red Army in Hunan, decided to move to northern Sichuan, where the Oyuwan Soviet, under Zhang Guo-tao and his Fourth Red Army, was still intact. Pursued and harassed by the Nationalists, the Communists lost one-half to three-quarters of their force by the end of the year. They had also discarded all the heavy equipment they had brought with them.

At this stage Mao reentered the leadership circle with a suggestion that the Communists take the back route to Sichuan through Guizhou, where the Nationalists were weak. The First Army occupied the town of Zunyi, in northern Guizhou, on January 5, 1935. On the following day the leaders convened an

enlarged conference of the Politburo (enlarged by including pro-Mao Communist members who were not already in the Politburo). The Internationalists came under heavy criticism for their theories and policies, and they were blamed for all the failures and setbacks suffered by the party; Mao gained majority support for his mobile warfare and guerrilla military tactics, for which he had been disgraced. Zhou En-lai joined Mao in attacking the Internationalists, although Zhou earlier had been working with them against Mao. Mao's resumption of control over military affairs (as chair of the Military Commission and leader of the First Front Army), at a time when military affairs dominated all other party affairs, gave him the leading position in the party. Since there was no possibility of communicating with Moscow, Mao gained this status without Moscow's sanction. Mao's position was finally legitimized in 1943 when he became the chairman of the party.

After the Zunyi conference, the Long Marchers zigzagged their way through Guizhou and Yunnan to western Sichuan, crossing fast-flowing rivers and scaling steep mountains. Only about 10,000 of the original 100,000 reached the little town of Mougong in June 1935. Here this bedraggled group was joined by the 70,000 men of Zhang Guo-tao's much better equipped Fourth Front Army (the armies were now called Front Armies). Zhang, a graduate of Beijing University and a close associate of Chen Du-xiu and Li Dazhao, and who had been to Moscow and met Stalin, refused to recognize the legitimacy of the decisions taken at the Zunyi conference, which had not been approved by a party congress or by the Comintern. He believed that he was the rightful leader of the party, so he challenged Mao's newly acquired status. Zhang disagreed with Mao that the Communists should march north to Shaanxi. Instead he proposed alternative destinations. An attempt was made to placate Zhang by making him political commissar of the Red Army, which was divided into two columns: the right column under Mao and the left column

under general headquarters, led by Zhu De, the commander-in-chief, and Zhang Guo-tao, the chief political commissar. By this time the Red forces had reached the town of Maoergai.

This was Mao's first struggle for power. He solved the problem by surreptitiously slipping away with his units of the First Front Army and the central organs of the party while the rest of the troops were engaged in various military actions. According to Zhang Guo-tao,

The extraordinary move of Mao Tse-tung and others caused quite a stir among us. . . . Some of us pointed out frankly that Mao Tse-tung was playing the trick of the cicada shedding its shell. Taking advantage of the occasion when the northern route was cleared by the Fourth Front Army after heavy losses, he went away quietly, without sparing a thought for the majority of his comrades and the other army units.²⁰

In a huff, Zhang set up his own Central Committee and, instead of following in Mao's track, decided to go his own way, southwest to Xigang. After many further hardships, Mao reached northern Shaanxi in October 1935. In the summer of 1935 Zhang was forced to revise his plans and move to Gansu. There some of his troops joined Mao, but Zhang with 20,000 troops marched westward to Xinjiang, in the hope, perhaps, of making contact with the Soviet Union. He was routed on the way by a Guomindang Muslim general and had to retreat to Shaanxi, a broken man, no longer in a position to challenge Mao.

For Mao and his men the journey from Maoergai to Shaanxi, through the Qinghai swampy grasslands, had been difficult and nightmarish. Short of food and medical supplies, exhausted and cold, the Communists had to walk through the swamps, where one false step meant death. They had to drink stagnant water and eat wild plants and often had to sleep standing. When they emerged from the grasslands they were surrounded by hostile tribes, which fled the villages on seeing the Han soldiers, taking everything with

them and hiding their food stock. "Some men boiled cowhides [left behind by the tribals] for twenty-four hours and then ate; or they boiled big leather boots and drank the broth."²¹ Starvation, disease, cold, and accidents killed off large numbers. According to Dick Wilson's calculation, of the original 100,000 only 5,000 had survived the Long March.²²

Politically speaking, this force and the poverty-stricken soviet it had reached in northern Shaanxi represented no threat to the Nationalists, but the Long Marchers had a symbolic value that far transcended their numbers or their physical condition. They had become a legend: an indestructible force led by an indestructible leader, who could never be defeated in their quest for a just society.

Speaking in December 1935, shortly after his arrival in northern Shaanxi, Mao displayed a remarkable sense of self-confidence and optimism:

[The significance of] the Long March [is that it] is the first of its kind in the annals of history, that it is a manifesto, a propaganda force, a seeding machine. . . . The Long March is a manifesto. It has proclaimed to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes, while the imperialists and their running dogs, Chiang Kai-shek and his like, are impotent. . . . The Long March is also a propaganda force. It has announced to some 200 million people in eleven provinces that the road of the Red Army is their only road to liberation. . . . The Long March is also a seeding machine. In the eleven provinces it has sown many seeds which will sprout, leaf, blossom, and bear fruit, and will yield a harvest in the future.²³

Mao was right in his analysis. The Long March had turned communists into national heroes. Astounding stories of the stupendous courage with which they had faced unbelievable hardships and how they had sacrificed every material need to keep the flame of revolution alive, inspired thousands of youth to join the party and thousands of others to acquire a new and a healthier respect of the CPC. The Long March also brought internal

cohesion to, what was increasingly becoming Mao's party, by eliminating, or marginalizing, the "left" and the "right" wings in the party.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under the Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 5.
2. Quoted in Chester C. Tan, *Chinese Political Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), p. 164.
3. For an overview of the Guomindang cliques, see Hung Mao-tien, *Government and Politics in Kuomintang China* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972).
4. Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, *The Government and Politics of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 131.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
6. Quoted in Keiji Furuya, *Chiang Kai-shek: His Life and Times* (New York: St. John's University, 1981), p. 344.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 392.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 377-88.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 487.
10. Luo Ruiqing, Lü Zhengcao, and Wang Bingnan, *Zhou En-lai and the Xian Incident* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1983), p. 11.
11. *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. I (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), pp. 161. [Hereafter cited as *SWM*.]
12. Luo Ruiqing, *Zhou En-lai*, p. 30.
13. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p. 272.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
15. *SWM*, Vol. I, p. 123.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
17. *SWM*, Vol. IV (1961), p. 155.
18. *SWM*, Vol. I, p. 124.
19. *Resolution on CPC History (1941-1981)* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981), p. 6.
20. Chang Kuo-t'ao, *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, 1928-1938* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1972), p. 422.
21. Dick Wilson, *The Long March, 1935* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 216.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
23. *SWM*, Vol. I, p. 160.

THE SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR AND THE RISE OF CHINESE COMMUNISTS TO POWER: 1937-1949

In addition to regaining full tariff autonomy in 1929, the Nationalist government recovered control of some foreign settlements and leased territories. The occupation of the British concessions in Hankou and Jiujiang by Nationalist troops during the northern expedition in 1927 had led to negotiations resulting in their surrender by the British. This was followed by the retrocession of some other, rather unimportant, British concessions. Although British action may have confirmed the fact that all concessions and leased territories legally belonged to China, it had not in any significant way disturbed the superior position of the foreign powers. During the Nanjing Decade nothing was done to upset their legal privileges and rights, which included extraterritoriality, the right to patrol Chinese waters and to maintain garrisons on Chinese soil.

Although the Chinese continued to view all foreign powers as imperialists who had reduced the status of China to that of a semicolon, they had come to fear and hate the Japanese the most. Japanese policies toward China were, in part, molded by Japan's apprehensions of the Soviet Union and its advancement of Communism in Asia. And Japan was convinced that Chinese Communists needed to be suppressed because they were working for the Soviet cause. Japan tried, but could not obtain an agreement

from Chiang Kai-shek for Sino-Japanese cooperation toward this end; Chiang was as eager as the Japanese to suppress Chinese Communists but he was also a patriot who could not tolerate Japanese expansionist policies. As we saw in the last chapter, by 1937, Japan had established a major presence in north China and that diplomatic relations between China and Japan were severely strained.

The Japanese concept of "cooperation," as the quotation below reveals, was based on the notion that "East Asia" was like a single "house" (a single unit) jointly run by the Japanese and the Chinese. Since the Chinese were weak and had allowed themselves to be enslaved by the West, Japan had the duty to "liberate" the Chinese. Through a series of strangely convoluted arguments Japan tried to prove that it was a friend of China and that its actions in China were all for China's good. Matsuoka Yosuke, who was later to become foreign minister of Japan, expressed this idea in a colorful fashion in 1937:

One thing is clear even to a donkey running along an Asian highway: constant and hearty cooperation between the peoples of Japan and China . . . alone can work out the destiny of Asia . . . China and Japan are two brothers who have inherited a great mansion called Eastern Asia. Adversity sent them both down to the depths of poverty. The