

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.
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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.

CHAPTER 7

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 foreigner 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 semicolony, 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

ne'er-do-well elder brother [China] turned a dope fiend and a rogue but the younger [Japan], lean but rugged, and ambitious, ever dreamed of bringing back past glories to the old house . . . and worked hard to support the house. The elder . . . sold him out to their common enemy. The younger in a towering rage beat up the elder—trying to beat into him some sense of shame and awaken some pride in the noble traditions of the great house. After many scraps the younger finally made up his mind to stage a showdown fight.¹

The showdown fight began in 1937, even before Matsuoka's article had been published, and ended only with the Japanese defeat at the hands of the United States in 1945. The Japanese had presumed that they would gain a quick military victory, which would lead to the fall of the Nationalist government and enable Tokyo to establish a friendly puppet government in China, as it had done in Manchuria. Japan did not have the human resources to occupy China physi-

cally. Its calculations went wrong when the Nationalists decided not to surrender but to withdraw into the interior to carry on the war from Chongqing, which became the wartime capital. Chiang Kai-shek had traded space for time: he had abandoned China's modern cities and the industrial/commercial sector for the agricultural hinterland.

Consequently, although the Japanese did gain quick military victories, they could only consolidate their hold over some of the northern provinces; occupy the lower and middle reaches of the Yangtze valley, which contained the important industrial cities of Shanghai and Wuhan as well as the Nationalist capital at Nanjing; and occupy some coastal cities and the Guangzhou area in south China (please see map). Vast areas of China remained outside Japanese control, and both Nationalists and Communists contested Japanese attempts to control districts peripheral to their areas of direct occupation.

In 1939, the Sino-Japanese war became a part of the global conflagration, World War II. The entry of the United States into the war in 1941 not only diverted Tokyo's attention from China but sealed Japan's fate. After Japan's defeat the Nationalists and the Communists, who had formed a United Front to fight the Japanese, restarted their old hostilities. The civil war ended in 1949 with the defeat of the Nationalists (who moved their government to Taiwan) and the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

miles from Beijing, reported one of their soldiers missing. The Japanese commander demanded that he be allowed to search the town but was denied permission. Although the missing soldier turned up shortly afterward, a skirmish occurred between the Japanese and the Chinese troops, with neither side gaining any major advantage.

On the surface this was a trivial incident, and the local Chinese officials tried to pacify the Japanese to avoid further trouble. But locally arranged terms did not bring peace. Tokyo had decided to use the incident to further its designs on northern China, and within a few weeks Japanese troops in the area increased from 7,000 to 160,000. Chiang Kai-shek, too, concluded that the time for determined resistance had arrived and decided to check any further encroachment on Chinese territory; he ordered four divisions north of the Yellow River, while suggesting to the Japanese that the matter should not be settled at the local level but diplomatically between the two national governments.

Chiang, however, had not worked out any proper plan for the defense of the northern provinces. Indeed, his chief political and military representative in the area, General Song, made a detailed agreement with the Japanese commanders on July 19 without informing Nanjing. But "incidents" continued, culminating in a Japanese ultimatum to Song to withdraw his troops from the Marco Polo Bridge sector by July 27. Song rejected the ultimatum but chose at the same time to withdraw his troops from Beijing. When the Japanese started large-scale operations on the morning of July 28, 1937, World War II had begun.

The Japanese did not declare war on China and continued to refer to this massive military operation as the China Incident or the China Affair. Nor did the Chinese, for that matter, make a declaration of war until December 9, 1941, two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the entry of the United States into the war against Japan. It is a reflection on the nature of modern international law that until December 1941 neither the League of Nations nor any third power used the term *war* for what was going on in China.

China: 1934-1945



THE SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR: 1937-1945

The details of the Second United Front (see last chapter) between the Nationalists and the Communists were yet to be fully worked out when the Lugouqiao (also popularly known as the Marco Polo Bridge because the Venetian had mentioned it in his memoirs) Incident took place on July 7, 1937. On the night of what came to be known as the Double Seventh (seventh day of the seventh month), the local Japanese forces on maneuvers near the Chinese garrison town of Wanping, a few

The first and the most aggressive phase of the war lasted for a year and a half, until the end of 1938, when the Japanese had achieved all their major Military goals.

North China. In north China, within a few months of the opening of the hostilities, the Japanese had advanced west into Inner Mongolia, southwest into Shanxi, south into Henan, and southeast into Shandong. By the end of 1937, other than the part of Inner Mongolia that lay beyond the Great Wall, all the area enclosed by the Great Wall in the north, the Yellow River in the west and south, and the ocean in the east was in the hands of the Japanese.

The Japanese line of occupation on the west was the traditional border between the provinces of Shanxi and Shaanxi. Since Shaanxi was the headquarters of the Communists, this became the line of confrontation between them and the enemy. By August the Second United Front had finally been regularized, and the main body of the Red Army was named the Eighth Route Army of the Nationalist forces. At places the Nationalist and the Communist troops had offered strong resistance and fought with great courage, but they were no match for the better-equipped and better-trained Japanese.

In December 1937 the Japanese set up a provisional government at Beiping under a Chinese collaborator to administer the provinces south of the Great Wall. They also established an autonomous government of Mongolia in Kalgan.

Central China. Developments in central China followed the pattern set in the north: An "incident" in Shanghai in August 1937 led to the landing of Japanese troops and large-scale military confrontation between 300,000 of the best Nationalist troops and 200,000 Japanese. The Chinese troops fought with determination and courage, sustaining terrible losses, but by early November they were forced to retreat. The Nationalist government formally declared the transfer of the capital from Nanjing to Chongqing, 1,500 miles upriver, in November 1937, although it made Hankou its headquarters for a brief period

before withdrawing to Chongqing. The way was now open for the Japanese troops to move upriver to Nanjing, which they occupied on December 13. The looting, rape, murder, and merciless killing that the Japanese troops indulged in Nanjing horrified the foreign residents who, as "neutrals," remained untouched. An American professor at Nanjing University described what he saw as follows:

On Tuesday the 14th the Japanese were pouring into the city—tanks, artillery, infantry, trucks. The reign of terror commenced, and it was to increase in severity and horror with each of the succeeding ten days . . . Over a hundred women that we knew were taken away by soldiers . . . but there must have been many times that number who were raped in their homes . . . Several big fires raging . . . started by the soldiers . . . Some houses are entered from five to ten times in one day and the poor people looted and robbed and the women raped. Several were killed in cold blood, for no apparent reason whatever.²

The "Rape of Nanjing" is one of the most horrifying of the stories depicting atrocities committed by victorious troops against a totally unarmed and helpless civilian population and disarmed prisoners-of-war. Estimates vary but conservatively speaking, 20,000 women were raped once or repeatedly (many died on the spot, many others committed suicide) and many thousands of men, women and children, and POWs were ruthlessly butchered. According to Beijing, "Within only six weeks after the fall of Nanjing the Japanese military apparatus had slaughtered more than 340,000 Chinese POWs and civilians."³

Besides the killings there was widespread looting and one-third of the buildings in the city were burned down. A certain amount of savagery and brutality accompanies all military action, but the behavior of the Japanese troops was shocking because of the general image that the Japanese, as a people, were highly disciplined and decorous. That image was shattered when diplomats, journalists, and other citizens of neutral nations residing in Nanjing spread the news of Japanese atrocities. The Chinese continue to harbor a bitter memory of, what they term, "the Oriental Holocaust" and they insist that the Japanese not forget it either.

The second phase of the war lasted through 1938. Instead of driving on westward to Hankou, where the Nationalists were preparing to make the next stand, the Japanese decided to consolidate their position by linking their forces in north and central China and encircling the Nationalist troops in the Shandong-Henan area. The operation was far from a total success. The Japanese northern armies, coming south along the Tianjin-Pukou railway, seized Jinan in December 1937, but they found themselves overextended by the time they reached the southern border of Shandong. Here, near the small town of Taierzhaung, they suffered a heavy defeat (April 1938). The Chinese armies then managed to retreat by taking drastic action: They breached the Yellow River dikes near Kaifeng and flooded millions of hectares of the countryside. This victory, although it brought untold misery to millions of peasants, boosted the morale of the Chinese troops; in the long run, it had little impact on the course of the war.

The Japanese then turned their campaign westward and moved up the Yangtze to Wuhan. By the end of October the great industrial and commercial center was in their hands, and the Nationalists retreated further west toward Chongqing.

The South. In the same month (October 1938) the Japanese opened a southern front in Guangdong and occupied the important port city of Guangzhou, thus blocking the last ocean route for Nationalist supplies from abroad. Access through Indochina via the rail route from Haiphong to Kunming was cut with the fall of France in 1940; that via the Burma Road, from Lashio to Kunming, was lost when Japan occupied Burma in 1942.

Despite their success, the Japanese had failed in their primary aim, which was to destroy the Nationalist government and replace it with a pliable, friendly regime that would willingly collaborate with Tokyo. They had achieved control over the northern and central plains and the coastal cities, but a much larger part of China remained in the hands of the Nationalists and the Communists. According to a U.S. War Department report

(July 1945), the total area of occupied China proper in 1943 (i.e., China below the Great Wall) was nearly 345,000 square miles, with a population of 183 million. But of this area the Japanese actually controlled only about 82,000 square miles, with a population of 70 million (the total population of China at this time was about 450 million); the Nationalists controlled 41,000 square miles (population 16 million) of this supposedly Japanese territory; the Communists controlled 155,000 square miles of it (population 54 million); and the remaining 67,000 square miles was "no man's land" (population 43 million), contested by the Nanjing puppet regime, the Nationalists, and the Communist guerrillas.

Popular resistance continued to grow and anti-Japanese feelings reached a high point during the later stages of the war when the Japanese in utter desperation unleashed the barbarous policy of "burn all, kill all, and loot all."

From 1939 to 1944 there was a general lull in the operations. The Japanese capacity for further expansion in China was acutely impaired when the United States entered the war in December 1941. Chiang Kai-shek continued to fight halfheartedly, correctly anticipating that sooner or later Japan would be defeated by the Allies. Having lost the biggest arsenals in Nanjing, Hankou, and Taiyuan, Chiang was left with a huge army that sorely lacked sophisticated weaponry.

Harassed by the U.S. Air Force and fearing that the U.S. Navy might cut the sea connection with their Southeast Asian territories, the Japanese started a series of campaigns in 1944 in south and central China to destroy American air bases and to take over the remaining southern railroads. The railroads would have helped the Japanese to establish an overland link with Japan-occupied Indochina. But this was the last gasp of a nation that was on the verge of total collapse.

THE WAR AND THE FOREIGN POWERS

When the Sino-Japanese War began in 1937, the major foreign powers were sympathetic to China but did little to help the country. The

British maintained strict neutrality to protect their interests in the Japanese-held regions of China. In any case the attention of Britain and France was soon absorbed by the aggressive policies of Hitler's Germany: Germany occupied Austria in 1938 and Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1939. This led to the outbreak of World War II, after which neither Britain nor France could be expected to come to China's aid.

The United States, which had yet to recover fully from the devastating economic crisis of the early 1930s, also followed a policy of nonintervention and limited its actions to the issuing of high-sounding moral statements about the need for nations to observe international agreements faithfully and avoid interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. At the same time the United States continued to sell petroleum, iron, steel, and other goods, that could be considered war materials, to Japan. The U.S. Neutrality Act (proclaimed in September 1937) which barred the transportation of arms, ammunition, or implements of war in vessels owned by the U.S. government or flying the American flag, only hurt the Chinese.

By September 1937 the Japanese had proclaimed a blockade of the entire China coast, except for Qingdao and Hong Kong. Although the blockade was illegal (there was still no declaration of war) it resulted in the European powers' canceling many of their military supply agreements with China. No one wanted to annoy the Japanese, even after British and American ships on the Yangtze had come under Japanese air attack.

A similar spirit of appeasement dominated the meeting of the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty (signed in 1922 to protect the territorial integrity of China), who met in Brussels in November 1937. Japan did not attend. While recognizing that the war in the Far East was of concern to the whole world, the powers felt it sufficient to urge upon Japan and China that they resort to peaceful processes. There was not even a discussion of Japan's violation of the terms of the Nine-Power Treaty.

Only the Soviet Union came to China's aid. Faced by potential trouble from the Axis powers on both its western and eastern fronts, Moscow concluded a nonaggression pact with the Nationalists in August 1937. Under the rubric of neutrality the Soviets actually provided assistance to China. Between 1937 and 1939, even when the war in Europe made things difficult for the Soviet Union, Soviet aid to the Nationalists amounted to about \$300 million, which more than equaled all the credits China received from the Western powers from 1937 to 1941. Soviet supplies, most of which came overland, included aircraft, arms and ammunition, military vehicles, and gasoline. Soviet volunteer airmen also helped the young Chinese air force in the defense of China. But aid from Moscow dwindled after 1939 and ended when the USSR, in direct violation of its treaty with China, signed a neutrality accord with Japan in April 1941. Soviet national interest had prevailed over its solemn international agreement with China.

Germany, which had been helping Chiang Kai-shek modernize his military and whose advisors were still working for Chiang, had signed an anti-Comintern pact with Japan in 1936. It appears that Germany tried to persuade Japan to bring the China war to a negotiated conclusion, fearing that unless Japan could get out of the China quagmire, it would lose its value as an ally against the Soviet Union. However, the attempt by German diplomats in Japan and China to act as mediators (October 1937) failed because the terms of settlement submitted by Japan were totally unacceptable to Chiang Kai-shek, who rejected them in no uncertain terms (November).

The Germans lost interest in the matter but negotiations between China and Japan continued and although the Japanese demands became even stiffer after the fall of Shanghai and Nanjing, some in the Nationalist party felt that capitulation would be better than utter defeat. Wang Jing-wei was one of those who would have liked to come to terms with Japan. Chiang, however, stood firm. On New Year's Day 1938 he gave up all his political posts (temporarily) to devote himself entirely

to the war. By the end of the month the two countries withdrew their ambassadors; Japan declared that it would no longer deal with the Nationalists but would help in the establishment of an independent Chinese regime.

In mid-1938, having failed to win over Chiang Kai-shek, Japan inaugurated the Reformed Government of the Chinese Republic at Nanjing but could find no Chinese personality of any stature to head it. The Japanese approached some well-known figures such as Wu Pei-fu, the veteran warlord who was living in retirement in Beiping. But these people turned down the invitation, fearing that if they accepted it they would be looked upon as traitors by their compatriots.

So it must have been most gratifying to the Japanese to learn that Wang Jing-wei, a leader who had been so close to Sun Yat-sen, had surreptitiously fled in frustration from Chongqing to Hanoi on December 21, 1938. Wang's frustration stemmed from the fact that earlier that year Chiang Kai-shek had been elected *zong-cai* (the title is often translated as Director-General, but since the office gave virtually absolute power to Chiang, a better translation is The Leader) by the National Congress. Wang Jing-wei, although given the title of deputy-*zong-cai*, was left without power. It was thus no coincidence that the prime minister of Japan made a statement on December 22, announcing that Tokyo was ready to collaborate with a new Chinese regime to establish its "New Order in East Asia." Wang, who had maintained secret contacts with the Japanese and was known to have pro-Japan sentiments, promptly issued a telegram to Chiang recommending that the generalissimo make peace with Japan. Chiang, of course, rejected the overture.

By mid-1939 Wang had made his way to Shanghai, where he spent the rest of the year secretly negotiating with the Japanese on a plan for a respectable and autonomous Chinese regime to work closely with Japan. However, this "new order" that Japan devised made China a dependency. In early 1940 the plan was leaked to the press in Hong Kong and Chongqing. Wang came under strong

public condemnation in Free China, but he nevertheless proceeded to establish a "National Government of China" in Nanjing that he patterned after the government in Chongqing, using the Nationalist flag and swearing allegiance to the Three Principles of the People. As head of the "legal" government of China, Wang invited the Nationalist party and government officials in Chongqing to join him. Although some members of the Guomindang Central Executive Committee and a few of the generals went over to Nanjing, the gesture was largely futile.

By exploiting the declining fortunes of Japan, Wang, from 1940 until his death in late 1944, did succeed in raising the prestige of Nanjing and gained for his China the nominal status of an ally of Japan (October 1943). Whatever else he may have failed to do, Wang helped to ameliorate the condition of the Chinese under his administration and was fairly successful in keeping them from being molested and attacked by the Japanese troops. Consequently, when Japan fell there was little public violence directed against those who had run Wang's government.

For Chiang's government in Chongqing, Wang's defection and creation of a puppet government had been merely one of a number of blows. In a manner of speaking, 1942 was the darkest war year for Chongqing. The Japanese, having already effectively blockaded the Chongqing government by seizing all of China's ports, now cut off its rail connection to Vietnam and the road link to Burma. Although access to the Soviet Union was still open, the Soviets had turned their back on China by signing a neutrality pact with Japan and acknowledging the independent status of Manchukuo (April 1941).

The American entry into the war, however, began to alter the situation for China, and Chongqing at last declared war against the Axis powers. The Allies established a China-Burma-India theater of war and appointed Chiang Kai-shek as the supreme commander of the China theater (January 1942). In the summer of 1941 a group of

American volunteer pilots, the famed Flying Tigers under General Claire Chennault, had already begun to fly supplies over the "hump" (the Himalayan Mountains) from India. In 1942, the group was given an official status as the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force. Supplies by air, however, were not an adequate substitute for road or rail transportation, and many of the heavier weapons could not be brought to Chongqing. During the first three years the total tonnage airlifted to China was about 650,000 tons, but nearly 60 percent of the cargo was gasoline and oil, most of it intended for Chennault and his air force. Not until the opening of the Burma Road in 1945 did the situation really improve for Chongqing.

From 1942 to 1946 the United States gave the Nationalists nearly \$2 billion in credits and lend-lease aid. But more than the aid, which in view of China's size was not really that considerable, China was at last accepted as one of the Big Four, a power equal theoretically to the other three allies. This great power status was bestowed on China by President Roosevelt, over British and Soviet objections, in the hope that a strong, unified China would exert an effective influence in establishing peace and stability in postwar East Asia. Britain and America revised their treaties with China, ending the unequal treaty system; they also pledged that Manchuria, Formosa (Taiwan), and the Pescadores would revert to China after Japan was defeated. In 1945, when the United Nations came into being, China was allotted a permanent seat on the Security Council.

The Americans had been greatly impressed with the image of the plucky, poorly armed Chinese putting up a heroic resistance against the Japanese juggernaut. However, as Chinese-American military collaboration increased and America prepared an extensive program to train and equip Chinese air and ground forces, frictions began to arise. The Americans became critical of Chiang's incapacity, or lack of desire, to reform the inefficient army organization and eradicate deeply rooted abuses in the government system. Impatience and contempt began to replace

their original sympathy, and apprehensions grew that Chiang, who had 400,000 of his best troops deployed in blockading the Communists rather than in fighting the Japanese, was not directing his main efforts against Japan but preparing for another war with the CPC.

However, as Barbara Tuchman points out, the corruption and the contempt were mutually shared:

The average American [soldier] in China, without his usual beer and PX supplies for which [air transportation] space could not be spared, disgusted by the surrounding squalor and filth which afflicted him with diarrhea, worms and every variety of intestinal disease, alienated by the callous cruelties of Chinese life, and with little understanding of the long deprivation and hunger for goods that led Chinese theft and graft to flourish . . . came to regard all Chinese as corrupt, inefficient, unreliable, triple-damned, steal-you-blind, hopeless, sloppy sons-of-bitches. . . . The average Chinese found the Americans stupid, profligate, coarse, contemptuous, often brutal and easily corruptible. . . .

Lend-lease provided limitless opportunity for mutual antipathies. No item, from medicine to half-ton trucks, was not for sale on the black markets of Kunming. . . . Americans were not slow to share the graft. Smuggling of gold, sulfa drugs, foreign currency, cigarettes [sic], gems . . . was carried on by American Air Force, Army, Red Cross and civilian personnel for an estimated take of over \$4,000,000 by the end of 1944.⁴

In 1945 there were 70,000 American servicemen in China, half of them posted at Kunming. The American attitude toward women was particularly reprehensible; an official inquiry had to be instituted to investigate the Bordello affair, which involved smuggling girls from India and Guilin into Kunming.

Even more important was the friction between Americans and Chinese at the highest level. During the first two years of the alliance, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek put pressure on Washington for increased supplies by periodically hinting of a separate peace with Japan. General Stilwell, a blunt, outspoken man who served as chief of staff to

Chiang, found it difficult to work with the generalissimo because Chiang was a master in delaying tactics—postponing decisions, watering down proposals, and avoiding issues that did not appeal to him. In 1944, to counter the Japanese offensive in China, President Roosevelt asked Chiang to give Stilwell unquestioned authority to command all Chinese and American forces in China. Chiang, who feared that this would lessen his military and financial power, countered by demanding Stilwell's recall. Chiang reasoned that since Stilwell had brought the message to him, he had been made in effect Stilwell's subordinate, a situation no nationalist Chinese would tolerate. Chiang threatened to break with the Allies and fight the war without foreign aid. So Chiang got his way, and General Albert Wedemeyer replaced Stilwell.

In any case, the U.S. decision to attack Japan from the ocean (island-hopping strategy) rather than from the Chinese mainland reduced China's importance in the war. The United States also compromised on the notion that China could become a great power and help in establishing postwar stability. Instead, Roosevelt and Churchill turned to the Soviet Union to play this role. At the Yalta conference in February 1945, in return for Stalin's agreement to enter the anti-Japanese war after the defeat of Germany, they accepted his demand for the Soviet Union to be allowed to regain the rights in China that it had lost to Japan in 1904. Despite China's theoretical status as a great power, this agreement, kept secret from Chongqing, decided the future disposition of Chinese territory without consulting China. The Soviet demands included the restoration of the Russian lease of Port Arthur as a naval base; the internationalization of the port of Dalian, with recognition that the Soviets held a pre-eminent interest in the port; Sino-Soviet joint operation of the South Manchurian and the Chinese Eastern Railways; and the preservation of the status quo of Outer Mongolia, which meant the recognition of the independence of the People's Republic of Outer Mongolia.

Because of the adverse reports from disgruntled Americans in China and the resulting negative image of China, many have tended to ignore China's contribution to the Allied victory over Japan. It would be unfair to China to forget that the Nationalist army lost nearly 3 million officers and men (206 of them generals) in the war and that the Chinese forces kept 1.28 million Japanese troops tied down in China—troops that could have been effectively used against the United States in the Pacific.

NATIONALIST CHINA: 1937-1945

If the relatively favorable prewar conditions had not helped the Nationalist party to introduce reforms and truly reintegrate society, the wartime situation could only make matters worse. The Japanese invasion had not only cut off the Nationalist government from the coastal cities and the lower Yangtze economic zone, the industrial and commercial areas from where it had drawn its income and financial support, but also isolated it from the rest of the world.

In 1937 the Nationalists had moved some factories into the interior and later tried to establish a few industries in west China. These efforts were not inconsiderable, but industrial production was still far below Free China's needs.

The scarcity of raw materials and finished products became a fact of life. Inflation and prices spiraled, making life difficult for the average wage earner; the wholesale price index increased from 100 in 1937 to 2,617,781 in 1947,⁵ and interest rates on loans went up proportionately.

One reason for this development was that the Nationalist government, deprived of its earlier revenues, now became primarily dependent on the land tax, which on the average amounted to about 15 percent of its total expenditures. The government financed its deficit by issuing new notes, which in turn contributed to the inflationary forces. The note issue increased from 1.7 billion Nation-

alist dollars in 1937 to 163,332.8 billion in 1948.⁶ Inflation bred massive corruption, and corruption bred demoralization.

One segment of the population that became increasingly alienated from the government was the intellectuals. At the beginning of the war China's intellectual elite had accepted Chiang as the leader of the country and given him wholehearted support for standing up to the Japanese. Entire universities, with all the students and professors, moved into the southwest, carting their libraries with them. They used whatever means of transport they could get and often traversed long distances on foot. When the war resulted in a stalemate and government policies toward the Communists began to change, the intellectuals became disillusioned. Shrinking wages and smaller allowances meant deprivation but may not necessarily have driven the intellectuals to revolt; it was the government's attempts to intimidate intellectuals and suppress all critical and liberal opinion (condemned as leftism) and its use of repressive measures (such as arrest, physical torture, and sometimes execution) that turned their bitterness against the Guomindang into support for the Communists. John King Fairbank records a conversation he had in 1943 with the left-wing novelist Mao Dun in Chongqing that sheds some light on the plight of the writers:

[Mao Dun said] everyone is publishing more and more translations because they are easier to get past the censors . . . (and) one is likely to make enough to eat, whereas if you write an article or short story in the effort to feed yourself and the wrong idea slips in, there goes your rice [livelihood]. He [said] the censorship and secret police are now annoying every writer he knows or has heard of.⁷

The press was gagged, and large signs announcing "It is forbidden to discuss national affairs" were posted everywhere. Secret police frequented restaurants, clubs, schools, and colleges to listen to conversations and catch the unwary.

Adding to this depressing intellectual environment, in 1943 Chiang Kai-shek published *China's Destiny*, in which he gave his analysis of China's ills and prescriptions for treating them. Chiang distorted history and used bits and pieces of undigested information regarding the West to "prove" that China's political, social, and economic problems all stemmed from the pernicious effect of the unequal treaty system. He castigated Westernized Chinese intellectuals and advocated the revival of traditional Confucian social and political values, particularly the need for the people to follow authority loyally and unquestioningly. Chiang had failed to understand both the depth of the popular resentment against his government and the intellectual climate of the day, as may be seen from the following excerpts from *China's Destiny*:

(A) We [can] rightly claim that the unequal treaties were the main cause for our failure to build a nation. For the past hundred years, the oppression of the unequal treaties caused political disunity, economic paralysis, and social chaos in China. The people developed a sense of inferiority; their ethical standards degenerated; and they were unable to feel a sense of shame.⁸

(B) After the conclusion of the unequal treaties, China's academic and intellectual circles lost their self-confidence and blindly echoed foreign theories. . . . They came across Rousseau's doctrine of "the natural rights of man" and then maintained that China's Revolution and the European Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries were part of the same fight for "freedom." . . . [The Europeans] subject to ruthless absolutism . . . [had no solution but] to fight for "freedom."

. . . the government of China under successive dynasties . . . generally adopted a magnanimous attitude towards the people . . . According to Sun Yat-sen, "The Chinese people had long had great 'freedom' and it was not necessary for them to fight for it." Therefore, he said that the objective of the Chinese Revolution was opposite to that of the European Revolution . . . "To resist foreign oppression, we must curtail 'individual freedom' and form a solid organization."⁹

(C) Today the unequal treaties have been abolished. . . . Our citizens must awake and repent, mutually encouraging each other to regard the observance of the law [i.e., following the fiat of the government] as a virtue and the shouldering of responsibility as an honor. . . . To seek "freedom" we must understand its intrinsic nature; to uphold government by law we must form the habit of obedience to law.¹⁰

As difficulties increased, Chiang Kai-shek became more dictatorial and more aloof. He surrounded himself with sycophants and yes men—mediocrities because he put a premium on loyalty rather than ability. High officials found it difficult to get an audience. Often after waiting for weeks, they would have to get the leader's ear through his charming American-educated wife, Soong Mei-ling. The confidantes of his court were members of three families, two of them connected with his wife: her brother, T. V. Soong, and her brother-in-law, H. H. Kung (married to Soong Ai-ling); the third family was that of the Chen brothers, Chen Guo-fu and Chen Li-fu (the organizers of the so-called "C.C. Clique"). Between them they controlled the party, the government, the military, and all the national finances. They, or those close to them, amassed huge fortunes while millions of Chinese starved.

Chiang, The Leader, held 82 civil and military positions. He believed that he knew what was best for the country and that he was competent to direct personally all matters of policy. He often interfered in the work of his subordinates and did not hesitate to bypass responsible officials to give direct and contradictory orders to those below them. (It will be seen later that Mao Ze-dong had a similar view of his competence and leadership role.) Chiang took an inordinate interest in trivial matters, such as personally screening students applying to go to the United States for studies, while weighty national issues requiring urgent consideration lay pending. This practice led to confusion and a drastic decline in the effectiveness and morale of the government and military personnel.

One would expect that, as a military leader, Chiang would at least have kept his army in shape. But even here he lost contact with the fighting man and tended to accept the glowing reports submitted to him by his corrupt but loyal generals. Indeed, on paper the Nationalist forces looked formidable, but Chiang's armies were in poor fighting condition. As General Stilwell, whose objective and expert judgment can be trusted, summed up the situation in 1944, his findings were:

1. That the average strength per division instead of 10,000 is not more than 5,000.
2. That the troops are unpaid, unfed, shot with sickness and malnutrition.
3. The equipment is old, inadequate, and unserviceable.
4. That training is nonexistent [sic].
5. That the officers are jobholders.
6. That there is no artillery, transport, medical services [etc., etc.].¹¹

According to General Wedemeyer, Stilwell's successor in 1944, half of Chiang's troops were suffering from starvation.

When Japan surrendered suddenly after the Americans dropped the deadly atom bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, China entered a new phase. There was a moment of great jubilation, and Chiang Kai-shek's prestige soared again. But nagging questions bothered thoughtful Chinese, and only time could provide the answers. Was the Nationalist government, now back in Nanjing, ready for the task of social and economic reconstruction? Would the National Constituent Assembly, promised within a year of the cessation of the war, end the paternalistic authoritarianism of the regime and introduce democracy to the country? Would Nanjing be able to pacify the Communist opposition and re-exert control over north China? As it turned out, the Guomindang failed in all these spheres. By the end of 1949 it was driven out of the mainland and forced to retreat to Taiwan. Why this happened may be understood in light of the

growth of Communist party power during the war.

THE CPC AND THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR

Mao and the Second United Front: 1936–1945

As noted earlier, the Japanese troop movements in North China in the 1930s had created a national sentiment demanding that the Nationalists cease their internal war and turn their attention to defending the country from Japanese aggression. In mid-1935 the Comintern, reflecting Moscow's fears of the Axis powers, had called for the Communist parties all over the world to establish united fronts (UFs) with domestic regimes. The CPC leaders, who had long advocated that the Chinese must unite to face the Japanese challenge, issued a declaration of war against Japan on August 1, 1935, while they were still on their exhausting Long March. However, it was not the intention of the CPC leaders to collaborate with the Guomindang; the envisaged united front was to include "all people, all parties, all armed forces, and all classes" opposed both to Japanese imperialism and to Chiang Kai-shek. It was Comintern pressure that forced the CPC to change its policy and accept the idea of a united front with Chiang.

By the end of 1936, as a result of the Communist propaganda among Zhang Xue-liang's troops and the house arrest of Chiang Kai-shek, the Second United Front was established. There was, however, a significant difference between the Second United Front and the first. The First United Front (1922–1927) had been a "united front from below," in which the Communists had worked as "a bloc within" the Guomindang to help the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution. The Second United Front, although accepting the leadership of the Nationalist government, was a "united front from above" because, despite the superficial changes in the structure and policies of the Communists, it was an alliance of two parties,

if not two independently armed governments. This reality is perhaps best revealed in Zhou En-lai's analysis of the Second United Front made in 1945, when the united front for all practical purposes had already collapsed:

[In 1937, the Guomindang had four demands] that we abolish the Red Army, abolish the political power of the Soviets, discontinue Red propaganda and stop class struggle. The word "abolish" was open to different interpretations. Once the Red Army was redesignated, you could say there was no longer a Red Army, but it would still exist; once the name of the Soviet areas was changed, you could also say there were no more Soviets, but they would still exist. "Discontinue Red propaganda and stop class struggle" meant that we were not to carry on political activities in the area under Kuomintang [Guomindang] rule [but could continue to do so in the Communist-held areas]. So there was peace, but beneath the calm waters there was a reef. And it is still there today [1945], they are bent on physically abolishing our armed forces and political power."¹²

In the Second United Front the Communists managed to retain their territorial base, their political autonomy, and their armed forces.

The Second United Front was based on mutual suspicion and distrust between the two sides, but there were members of the CPC who would have liked to offer more genuine cooperation to Chiang than Mao intended to give. Between 1937 and 1942 Mao managed to get rid of this opposition. Only after 1943, when Mao became the chairman of the CPC, can it be said that he achieved full power. The fact that he had managed to hold on to his dominant position between 1936 and 1942 was due to his control of the armed forces. Like Chiang, Mao had realized that power stemmed from the barrel of a gun, but unlike Chiang, Mao also wanted to be a genuine leader of a strong party. For this reason Mao never took on a military rank, although he controlled the military and even personally directed some battles the Communists had fought.

Two of the CPC leaders who contended for Mao's position, or at least strongly opposed Mao's interpretation of Comintern policies, were Zhang Guo-tao and Wang Ming. Zhang, as mentioned earlier, had lost much of his credibility because of the failure of his attempts to chalk out an independent course of action during the Long March. Mao had helped in Zhang's fall by not sending any relief when Zhang was under attack by Chiang's Muslim general in Gansu in mid-November 1936. After his defeat, when Zhang returned to the CPC headquarters (Mao's headquarters) in Baoan in Shaanxi, he had no army left and posed little threat to Mao. Mao's supporters attacked Zhang for the crimes of "right opportunism, bankruptcy of leadership with regard to the Fourth Front Army, and opposition to the Party and the Central Committee [the crime of 'banditism']"¹³ In 1938 Zhang defected to Chiang Kai-shek; in 1949, when the People's Republic was established, he moved to Hong Kong and later to Canada, where he wrote his memoirs.

Wang Ming, a graduate of Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and leader of the 28 Bolsheviks, had become general secretary of the CPC in 1931. He was then only 24 years old. From 1932 to 1937, Wang was Chinese representative to the Comintern and a member of the Comintern's Executive Committee; he acquired the reputation of being a theorist and gained the respect of Stalin. It was to be expected that when he returned to China in 1937, he would consider himself an official interpreter of Comintern policies. He favored close cooperation with the Guomindang, even recommending the integration of the Red forces with those of the Nationalists so that all armies could be under a single, unified high command. Mao, of course, did not want to lose his capacity for independent action. Fortunately for Mao friction between the CPC and the Guomindang soon proved the futility of Wang Ming's stand.

The united front appeared to work fairly well in 1938, but troubles between the two parties began in 1939 when local Nationalist and Communist guerrilla forces operating

behind enemy lines began to clash over jurisdictional rights. By the end of the year Wang Jing-wei defected to the Japanese and the CPC was not sure that the Nationalist government would not come to terms with the Japanese. On their side, the Nationalists, too, had every reason to doubt CPC's allegiance to the united front because, in the same year, 1939, Mao openly supported the Soviet-Nazi nonaggression pact and argued that Chamberlain was as much to blame for the war as Hitler.

In the winter of 1939–1940, because of the lack of a unified military command, the Nationalist Ninety-seventh Army was attacked by the Communist Eighth Route Army for entering "Communist territory". In 1940 the Nationalists started a blockade of the Communist base area and ordered the Communist New Fourth Army to move north of the Yangtze River. On the pretext that the New Fourth Army had not followed the instructions, the Nationalist forces attacked it and almost wiped it out. The New Fourth Army was abolished by Chongqing, but it was reformed by the Communists and continued to operate south of the Yangtze. This was the first major clash between the Guomindang and the CPC, and it was an indication of how the future relations were going to unfold.

It is because of these developments that Wang Ming's importance had begun to wane and from 1938 on he came under increasing attack from Mao's supporters. However, Mao, apart from outmaneuvering his rivals, had also proved that his policies could succeed in expanding the power of the CPC. The Guomindang strategy of positional warfare (which Chiang also wanted the Communists to follow) had led to defeat and retreat, whereas Mao's guerrilla units managed to establish anti-Japanese guerrilla zones behind enemy lines or in provincial areas where neither the Nationalists nor the Nanjing puppet regime had strong control. The only positional battle fought by the Communists was the Hundred Regiments Campaign in 1940, under the command of Peng De-huai, who had not consulted Mao. The campaign ended in defeat and heavy losses.

As the Communists managed to enlarge their control over the guerrilla zones, the zones were gradually converted to "liberated areas," with local party committees and a government structure paralleling the headquarters in Yan'an. By the end of the Sino-Japanese War, liberated areas existed in much of north and central China: the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei base with a population of 25 million and covering 108 *xian* (districts); the Shanxi-Hebei-Henan base, population 7 million in 59 *xian*; the Hebei-Shandong-Henan base, 18 *xian*; the Shanxi-Suiyuan base, population 3 million spread over 330,000 square kilometers; the Shandong base, population under control by 1943, 15 million; and the bases established by the New Fourth Army in Hubei-Henan-Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang. There were also some smaller bases in the south, in Guangdong, in the Guangzhou delta region, and on Hainan Island.

The CPC territorial expansion helped the growth of the Communist army and the party. This growth took place primarily between 1937 and 1939, when the Japanese had left the countryside of north and central China virtually uncontrolled and from 1944 to 1945, when the Japanese had to withdraw many of their troops. By 1940 the main Red armies, the Eighth Route and the New Fourth, had grown to 400,000 and 100,000, respectively. However, from 1940 to 1943 the Japanese fort and blockade strategy, similar to the one used by Chiang in his fifth Communist-suppression campaign, plus a policy of "burn all, loot all, kill all," was temporarily successful in containing further Communist expansion; indeed, the numbers of Communist troops fell some. But when the Japanese, because of the demands of the Pacific war, had to reduce their local forces, the Communists heightened their activity, and within two years their regular armies numbered about 1 million, and they were in control of areas with a total population of 100 million. Of course, all this expansion was in defiance of the Chongqing government (the territorial expansion was in Guomindang areas far more than in Japanese occupied territories)

and the Comintern line, which continued to stress cooperation with the Guomindang.

The membership of the party rose from 40,000 in 1937 to several hundred thousand in 1942, to 1.2 million in 1945.

Mao's Doctrines and the Rectification Campaign

The establishment of the scattered "liberated areas," some of them with little contact with the Communist capital at Yan'an; the rapid expansion of the party and the army; and the continued presence of leaders like Wang Ming posed several problems for Mao Ze-dong. It was necessary for all party members and troops to be so thoroughly indoctrinated that even when located far from Yan'an, in some remote base area and in a situation in which they had to act independently without being able to consult with headquarters, they would act in keeping with party policies. Many of the newly recruited party members were illiterate or semiliterate peasants. The local cadres often made serious political mistakes, such as killing off rich peasants and landlords and dislocating production.

It was also necessary for the indoctrination to be based on a single body of thought, not open to contradictory interpretation. As long as Wang Ming and his supporters remained unchecked, there was always the danger of the emergence of two lines. For example, it was intolerable to Mao that Peng De-huai had followed the Wang Ming line when he fought his Hundred Regiments campaign.

So, early in 1942 Mao launched a massive campaign for the Rectification of the Party's Style of Work (*zheng feng*). The campaign aimed at cleansing the party of incorrect ideas and purging it of undesirable elements because, as Mao said,

[For the complete overthrow of the enemy] we must keep our ranks in good order, we must march in step, our troops must be picked troops and our weapons good weapons. Without these conditions the enemy cannot be overthrown (The problem facing our Party) is quite serious. . . .

[T]here is still something wrong with our style of study, with our style in the Party's internal and external relations.¹⁴

The rectification of "work style" was based on Mao's "thought," which had sinified Marxism-Leninism, as the sole orthodox ideology. As early as 1938 Mao had insisted that "Marxism must take on a national form before it can be applied." Now he was going to see to it that this was done, for it would not only bring uniformity to party thinking but consolidate his hold over the party.

Mao particularly denounced "foreign formalism," attacking doctrinaires who quoted Marx and Lenin but did not comprehend the reality of the Chinese situation (Mao considered Wang Ming as being one such theorist). The campaign can thus be seen as an indirect attack on the Soviet influence in the CPC and Mao's attempts to exert his independence of all foreign interference and provide the CPC with an independent philosophic basis. Although the Comintern had not interfered with the CPC since 1935, Mao welcomed its dissolution in 1943.

By 1942 Mao had written extensively on party and military affairs and had even dealt with theoretical issues—two and one-half volumes of the first three volumes of Mao's works consist of his writings between 1936 and 1945. Although Mao was at his best when dealing with concrete issues and his essays on philosophical subjects displayed a certain lack of depth, Mao's writing provided ample material for study during the rectification campaign of 1942.

Mao's goal of the rectification campaign was to weed out three wrong tendencies that he felt had emerged in the work style of party members: *subjectivism*, *sectarianism*, and *formalism*. Subjectivism, which led to dogmatism, came from overemphasis on book learning ("many intellectuals . . . fancy themselves very learned and assume airs of erudition without realizing that such airs are bad and harmful . . . workers and peasants know more than they do"¹⁵) and could be rectified by involvement with practical work.

Sectarianism was an assertion of independence and an incapacity to wholeheartedly subordinate oneself to the majority decision as represented in central orders. Formalism was reflected in stereotyped writing, replete with meaningless but high-sounding quotations from theories worked out in the Soviet Union that had little relevance to Chinese reality. Such writing intimidated the people rather than establishing communication with them.

During the campaign, all party members were ordered to devote two to three months to study and discuss designated materials, critically analyze their own behavior and attitudes and allow others to criticize them, make public confessions of their failings, and thus rectify their erroneous ideas. The campaign lasted two years and stilled all opposition to Mao. Those who still disagreed with the "Great Helmsman" learned to keep their thoughts to themselves. The guidelines worked out by Zhou En-lai for himself during *zheng feng* are a good example of basic Maoist thought:

1. Study diligently, grasp essentials, concentrate on one subject rather than seeking a superficial knowledge of many.
2. Work hard and have a plan, a focus and a method.
3. Combine study with work. . . .
4. On the basis of principles, resolutely combat all incorrect ideology in others as well as in myself.
5. [M]ake the most of my strength and take concrete steps to overcome my weaknesses.
6. Never become alienated from the masses; learn from them and help them. Lead a collective life. . . .
7. Keep fit and lead a reasonably regular life.¹⁶

In 1942 Mao also addressed himself to the question of art and literature. He attacked writers for having petty bourgeois ideas, for thinking that they knew best what was good for the people, and for wanting independence from party control. Mao declared that literature must serve "workers, peasants, and soldiers"; that writers must

study the masses and bring their writing standards down to the level understandable by the masses; that literature and art were "subordinate to politics," which meant that writers must understand "class politics, the politics of the masses"; and that writers must destroy the "creative moods" that are "feudal, bourgeois, petty bourgeois, liberalistic, individualist, nihilist, art-for-art's sake, aristocratic, decadent, or pessimistic."¹⁷ These lectures were added to the *zheng-feng* materials studied by writers and artists.

After two years of the rectification campaign, the CPC Central Committee in 1945 adopted the Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party, which claimed,

Ever since its birth in 1921, the Communist Party of China has made the integration of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution the guiding principle in all its work, and Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory and practice of the Chinese revolution represent this integration. . . . In the course of its struggle the Party has produced its own leader, Comrade Mao Tse-tung [who has] creatively applied the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, the acme of human wisdom to China.¹⁸

The resolution then goes on to say that whereas Mao was always correct, the party between 1921 and 1935 thrice suffered serious setbacks because of leftist mistakes made by leaders who had not followed Mao's line (e.g., Wang Ming's left line had resulted in the collapse of the Jiangxi soviet) and that Mao could do nothing about it because his leadership over the party and army was decisively established only in 1935. This reinterpretation of party history became the standard basis for all future history writing until Mao's death. The myth of Mao's infallibility had received party endorsement.

By 1945 Mao, at last in absolute command of the CPC, was ready for the long-awaited showdown with Chiang Kai-shek.

Mao Ze-dong and the Peasantry

In the larger context of the Chinese revolution and of his struggle against the Guomindang, Mao's control of the party would, in itself, have meant little if he had not also gained the genuine support and backing of the primarily peasant population of the communist-controlled areas. Mao, as we have noted earlier, had always considered the mobilization of the peasantry as a fundamental goal of the party. Even his Rectification Movement was meant to ensure that party members and communist intellectuals would be able to work with, and among, peasants with humility and understanding; "never become alienated from the masses; learn from them and help them," as Zhou En-lai had admonished himself in the list of things to do (see above). This alone would earn the CPC the true respect of the peasant masses.

The Sino-Japanese war had dislocated the life of millions of peasants and Mao saw in this a golden opportunity to apply his theories concerning the role of the peasantry in the revolution. The ruthless policies of the Japanese made it easier for the communists to use anti-imperialist, nationalist sentiment to mobilize the peasants to their side. "Modern nationalism" that had come to the cities in the years following the May Fourth Incident, now spread through the countryside, nurtured by the communist cadres.

The wave of nationalism would not have been sufficient to fulfill Mao's great mission if it had not been accompanied by several actions and policies of the CPC that helped to bond the communists with the peasant masses scattered behind enemy lines. At the very minimum, in areas that were only partially under the military control of the CPC, the communists helped the poorer peasants to gain a better deal from the landlords, helped them in bringing in the harvest, brought in mobile medical clinics to look after their ill and wounded, and never ever took anything from the peasants without paying them for it. In the process some of the peasants would become genuinely inspired by the communist

vision and join the party as "activists," doing various jobs for the party such as gathering local intelligence.

In other areas where the party's military and political control was better established, the party would go a step further and carry out land reform by liquidating the landlords (who were often Japanese collaborators and could, therefore, be targeted as "national traitors") and distributing their lands to the poorer segments of the village population. This was a very popular policy and it gave the party an opportunity to spread its ideology by involving the peasants in the reform process and encouraging them to denounce the landlords as class enemies. Mao, who had ever since his 1927 Hunan Report (see earlier chapter) consistently extolled the revolutionary impulse and the innate wisdom of the peasant masses, could now apply his ideas on a larger scale.

Mao's approach may be condemned as not being true to orthodox Marxism-Leninism but it cannot be denied that, during the period of the Japan war, his populist policies won the willing support of the peasant masses and enabled the CPC to extend its power and authority over large areas in China. And this gave Mao an edge over Chiang Kai-shek when the civil war broke out.

THE FINAL STRUGGLE FOR POWER: 1944-1949

The American Interlude

The Sino-Japanese War had drawn the Americans into the Chinese scene. The large numbers of American military advisors, diplomats, and civilian China experts attached to the U.S. embassy that thronged Chongqing somehow came to believe that they had the power and the wisdom to guide the Chinese revolution and to help in remaking China. Since they were providing aid, it seemed obvious to them that they had the right to intervene in China's internal development. At least they thought so until events proved how limited

their understanding was of the Chinese reality. In some ways their failure can be compared to that of the Soviets in the 1920s. In 1949, after having been thrown out of China by the Communists, who established the People's Republic in that year, the Americans returned home to debate the issue of which of them had contributed to America's loss of China.

After its entry into World War II, the United States had two basic interests in China: to mobilize the Chinese to help in the war against Japan and to prepare a strong, stable, united, and pro-American China to become the principal stabilizing factor in East Asia after the war. Only such a Chinese state could keep Soviet influence out of the country and become a substitute for Japan in balancing Soviet power in the region.

These two interests began to coalesce in 1944. To mobilize Chinese war potential fully, the Communists had to be included in strategic calculations; to prepare China for its postwar role, the Guomindang government had to be made more liberal and democratic; to avoid a civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists (which would draw Soviet support for the Communists and might result in Moscow's domination of China) after the collapse of Japan, Chongqing was to be encouraged to establish a more representative government that would include the Communists; and the Nationalists were not to be given too much aid lest they feel strong enough to start the civil war. But at the same time, aid was not to be too little lest it keep them from economic and political recovery. As one of the American diplomats wrote in 1944, "[We must] use *our tremendous influence* with the Kuomintang [Guomindang] to promote internal unity on a foundation of progressive reform (emphasis added)."¹⁹ There were, of course, differing views on how America was to achieve its policy goals.

The making of U.S. national policy toward China was also affected by the changing attitudes of Americans in Chongqing, many of whom were academics (the China experts) and journalists. Their personal sense

of democracy, humanity, justice, and efficiency was offended by what they witnessed in Chongqing. They could not tolerate the harsh, dictatorial nature of the government and the corruption, nepotism, incompetence, and apathy that surrounded it. They were more at ease with the left-wing intellectuals in Chongqing and fell in love with the image of the Chinese Communists; with, in the words of John Fairbank, "the sunny vitality and homespun egalitarianism of the CCP [CPC] at Yan'an [Yan'an] . . . already famous from Ed Snow's *Red Star Over China* . . . Yan'an glowed in the distance."²⁰

Although there was a state of undeclared war between the Nationalists and the Communists, the united front was supposedly still intact. In the negotiations carried on between the two sides in May 1944, the position of the Nationalists was that the Communists had broken their original agreement by increasing their army strength and area of jurisdiction beyond what had been authorized. The Communists, on the other hand, insisted that the liberated areas were run on Sun Yat-sen's principles and that their armies had been organized for national defense, both legitimate actions; their grievance was that they had received no funds or equipment since 1940.

It is at this stage that the Americans first became interested in trying to break the stalemate. In June 1944 Henry Wallace, U.S. vice-president, visited Chongqing and got Chiang to agree that a small American military observer mission could be posted at Yan'an. The observer group was favorably impressed by the idealism and dedication of the Communists (who lacked every modern amenity) and the high morale of their troops. The Communists, realizing that the American mediation could bring them supplies and raise the CPC national profile, were most cooperative and agreed that China needed a coalition government.

In August General Patrick Hurley was appointed personal representative of President Roosevelt in China to smooth the differences between Stilwell and Chiang and get the Guomindang and the Communists to col-

laborate more fully. By early November Stilwell had been replaced by Wedemeyer and Ambassador Gauss by Hurley. Hurley was now free to devote himself to the task of getting the Nationalists and the Communists to work together. Why were the Americans so ready to include the Chinese Communists in their calculations, when they were so deadly afraid of Soviet communism? The answer is that the Americans were convinced that the Chinese Communists were not real "communists" but nationalist agrarian reformers. This image was propagated by American journalists who had visited Yan'an (witness the *New York Times* report from China: "The CPC system now might be described as agrarian or peasant democracy, or as a farm labor party") and was assiduously projected by Mao himself. As he told John Service, an American political officer who was a member of the observer mission,

Between the people of China and the people of the United States there are strong ties of sympathy, understanding and mutual interest. . . . China's greatest post-war need is economic development. . . . America is not only the most suitable country to assist this economic development of China: she is also the only country fully able to participate [in this endeavor]. . . .

The Chinese Communist Party . . . is the party of the Chinese peasant (emphasis added). . . . The Communist Party will be the means of bringing democracy and sound industrialization to China. . . . America does not realize her influence in China and her ability to shape events there.²¹

The Soviets also aided in establishing this myth. Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, told Hurley in August 1944 that the Chinese who called themselves Communist had no real relation to communism and that once their economic conditions had improved they would forget this political inclination.²²

On November 7 General Hurley visited Yan'an for three days and worked out a draft Guomindang-Communist agreement with Mao Ze-dong (the Communist Five Point Proposals), which included the clause that the reorganized national coalition government should include the CPC representatives, as

should the envisioned United National Military Council. Hurley considered the terms fair to both sides. Chongqing, however, submitted counterproposals that the Communists could not accept, and although Hurley optimistically continued the negotiations right up to the time of Japan's surrender, it was becoming clear that the gap between the two sides was too big to be bridged. As the negotiations proceeded, Hurley increasingly accepted the Guomindang line, which created an anti-American sentiment in the CPC.

When the war suddenly ended with the Japanese surrender, the Nationalists were not in a position to reoccupy immediately all enemy-held territory. The supreme commander of the Allied forces in the Pacific designated the Nationalists as the sole agency for accepting Japanese surrender in all parts of China except Manchuria, where the Soviets were given this privilege. After all, the Nationalist government was the internationally recognized legal government of China; even Moscow had signed a Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with Chiang on August 14, 1945. So Chongqing ordered the Japanese to surrender only to the Nationalists and not to the Communists, even if this meant that the Japanese had to hold on to their positions and fight off the Communists until the Nationalist forces could reach them. The Communists were ordered to remain in their positions, which of course, they did not; they moved to strengthen themselves by seizing as much territory and as many arms from the Japanese as possible.

At this time negotiations between the Guomindang and the CPC were still being carried on. Indeed, Mao accepted Chiang's invitation for discussions and went to Chongqing in person from August 28 to October 11, 1945. When Mao left Chongqing, Zhou En-lai stayed on to carry on the talks. By November this phase of the negotiations was over: Zhou returned to Yan'an, and Hurley resigned his post. The only reason why Chiang had invited Mao and Mao had accepted the invitation was that both sides wanted to impress America with their sincere desire for peace, democracy, and unity. Each side also

hoped to win over the neutral Chinese leaders and the third parties in China by this show of reasonableness.

Hurley's departure did not mean that America had given up hope of saving China from a civil war. General George Marshall, handpicked by President Truman, replaced Hurley and carried on the good work for another full year. The Americans were now clearly siding with the Nationalists and giving Chiang all the aid they could by flying his troops to North China and by allowing American Marines to disarm and repatriate the Japanese. In contrast to the American approach, the Soviets, who had declared war against Japan on August 8, poured their troops into Manchuria, refused to allow the Nationalists to land at Dalian to take over the northeastern provinces, and covertly helped the Communists to build up their forces and expand into certain areas of Manchuria. However, the Chinese Communists had to depend primarily on their own resources because the Soviets when they withdrew from Manchuria took all the industrial and other equipment they could lay their hands on, leaving some limited arms for the Communists. The Soviets, having gotten Chongqing to agree to the concessions that the Allies had promised Moscow in the Yalta conference, finally declared in November 1945 that they would vacate Manchuria by January 3, 1946. Actually the last Soviet troops did not leave until May 3.

Marshall was initially successful in getting the two sides to agree to a cease-fire and allow truce teams to monitor the front lines (January 1946). The truce, however, broke down in Manchuria, where the Communists began to take over areas being vacated by the Soviet troops and which the Nationalist government was determined to occupy. By April the Nationalists completed their takeover of Shenyang (Mukden), the capital of Manchuria, while the Communists had entered Harbin, Siping, and other strategically located towns. In May 1946 the Nationalist troops defeated the Communist army at Siping and took away that town from the CPC. Having suffered heavy losses at Siping, the

CPC decided to revert to the policy of strengthening their bases in the countryside and not try to hold towns and cities or maintain an unbroken military front. The Communists renamed their forces the People's Liberation Army (PLA), thus symbolically declaring their independence of the Nationalist government and the end of the united front. In the same month, Marshall persuaded the U.S. government to lay a temporary embargo on all exports of arms and ammunition to China, hoping that this act would frighten Chiang from proceeding with the civil war. Its futility soon became apparent when Chiang launched a nationwide military campaign to retake towns and cities held by the Communists. In August Mao made his famous statement:

[[T]he atom bomb is a paper tiger. . . . All reactionaries are paper tigers. . . . Chiang Kai-shek and his supporters, the U.S. reactionaries, are paper tigers . . . history will finally prove that our millet plus rifles is more powerful than Chiang Kai-shek's aeroplanes plus tanks . . . the day will come when these reactionaries are defeated and we are victorious.²³

General Marshall's efforts at getting the Nationalists to make the constitution, which was promulgated in December 1946, more democratic also failed. On January 7, 1947, Marshall left China, attributing his failure to the reactionaries who opposed him in the Guomindang and the "dyed-in-the-wool Communists,"²⁴ who were ruthlessly trying to gain their objectives.

The Americans had, at last, come to recognize the basic reality of Chinese politics: Chiang Kai-shek could not be bullied or cajoled into giving up his monopoly of power, and Mao Ze-dong could never accept a coalition government in which the CPC did not play a leading role; and the "moderates" and "liberals" who could have helped to democratize Chinese politics lacked "political power to exercise a controlling influence."²⁵

During the next two years the United States gradually disengaged from China and

cautiously prepared for the Communist takeover. However, because of internal pressures, the government had to continue aiding the Nationalists, even though on a considerably reduced scale. In August 1949 the U.S. government issued a white paper, *United States Relations with China*, strongly critical of the Nationalists and Secretary of State Dean Acheson asserted, "Nothing that this country [USA] did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities could have changed the result [of the Chinese civil war]."²⁶ Regardless of these actions, the Communists had become alienated and condemned the United States for its imperialistic behavior. The Nationalists, of course, felt that they had been denied support when they most needed it and were also antagonized.

The Civil War

The civil war was launched in earnest by the Nationalists in 1947. Chiang had every reason to be confident that he would win the war. Besides the three-to-one advantage he had in regular troops, he also possessed superior weapons and an air force. But his forces were overextended and, like the Japanese, his troops had occupied the cities in areas otherwise controlled by the Communists (the Nationalists had even occupied Yan'an, the Communist capital!). Major General David Barr, head of a U.S. Army Advisory Group in China, recommended that Chiang withdraw from some of the northern cities and consolidate his position in central China, where he was at his strongest, but Barr's advice went unheeded.

By mid-1947 the Communists began their counteroffensive and isolated the Nationalist-held cities by destroying the railroads and other lines of communications. By summer 1948 the Communists had penetrated central China. In fall 1948, the Communists, who had captured a vast amount of weaponry from the defeated or defecting Nationalist troops and whose forces now outnumbered those of the Nationalists, mounted powerful attacks against the Nationalists in

Manchuria, north China, and central China, winning victory after victory.

The new Nationalist constitution was promulgated on January 1, 1948, and in April the new National Assembly elected Chiang Kai-shek president and Li Zong-ren, the one-time Guangxi warlord, vice-president. In midyear the Nationalists appealed to the Allied powers to intercede on their behalf and help in restoring the cease-fire. The powers rejected the appeal. The Communists agreed to reopen peace negotiations on conditions that were totally unacceptable to the Nationalists. Chiang Kai-shek thereupon retired from the presidency on January 21, 1949, hoping that Li could work out a better deal, but the Communists increased their demands, which now amounted to a call for surrender, and used the three-month period of negotiations, when there was a lull in the fighting, to regroup their forces.

On the night of April 20-21, the day after the fleeing Nationalists had shifted their capital to Guangzhou and rejected the CPC demands, the Communists moved south across the Yangtze River. By the end of the year China had been "liberated," except for Yunnan, Xinjiang, Tibet (which were absorbed later), and Taiwan.

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was inaugurated in Beijing with Mao Ze-dong as its head. The Nationalists moved their government from Guangzhou to Chongqing to Chengdu and finally in December to Taipei in Taiwan. Many of the foreign diplomats stayed on in Nanjing; the one surprising exception was the Soviet ambassador, who accompanied the mobile Nationalist headquarters until it moved to Taiwan.

An Assessment of the Communist Success

In the final analysis the Nationalist government was not overthrown by a "spontaneous proletariat uprising" (as orthodox Marxists would have wanted it) or even by a "popular revolution" (as Lenin had achieved in Russia) but defeated by an organized military government using military tactics and strategy.

At one level, the success of the Communists was largely due to the failure of the Guomindang leadership which had fostered a faction-ridden party wanting in principles; had perpetuated a corrupt, nepotistic, brutal government that had lost the support of the peasant masses (who were crushed by taxes and conscription); and had alienated the intelligentsia, the professional classes, the business community, and the bureaucracy; and which had, of all things, even allowed a military system to emerge that depended on incompetent generals and inefficient and demoralized armies that defected by the tens and hundreds of thousands. The result was that many politically important elements of the population had either begun to lean toward the Communists or become passive observers—not turning to the Communists but not interested in saving the Guomindang, either.

In contrast to the Guomindang, the CPC was a highly disciplined, ideologically indoctrinated party that controlled a dedicated and efficient army and had the unquestioning support of the rank and file. In the areas under its jurisdiction and the population under its control (both comparatively much smaller than those of the Nationalists in 1945) the CPC had brought land reforms, eliminated exploitative landlord and warlord traditions, introduced a relatively just and fair government system, and engendered patriotic and nationalistic enthusiasm. It was this policy, and not any abstract ideology of Marxism-Leninism, that had mobilized the people behind the CPC.

At the establishment of the united front, the CPC had discarded class warfare and accepted milder policies toward smaller landlords and other nationalist-minded segments of population that orthodox communists may have considered as "enemy classes." Even when the united front broke down, these policies (except for a brief spell in 1949) were not changed because Mao had realized that they were conducive to a more popular acceptance of the CPC leadership. And they did help in gaining adherents among the intellectuals and third parties in the Guomindang-held areas.

NOTES

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2. See Roger Pelisser, ed. and trans. Martin Kieffer, *The Awakening of China: 1793–1949* (New York: Putnam's, 1967) pp. 376–77.
3. Li Haibo, "Unforgivable Atrocity," *Beijing Review*, Vol. 38, No. 33, (August 14–20, 1995), p. 16.
4. Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China: 1911–1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 377.
5. Ramon H. Myers, *The Chinese Economy, Past and Present* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1980), p. 185.
6. *Ibid.*
7. John K. Fairbank, *Chinabound: A Fifty-Year Memoir* (New York: Harper Collins, 1982), p. 262.
8. Chiang Kai-shek, *China's Destiny & Chinese Economic Theory*, with notes and commentary by Philip Jaffe (New York: Roy Publishers, 1947), p. 105.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 209–10.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 212–13.
11. Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers*, arr. and ed. Theodore H. White (New York: William Sloane, 1948), p. 316; cited in Pelisser, *Awakening of China*, pp. 405–6.
12. *Selected Works of Zhou Enlai*, Vol. I (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981), p. 217. [Hereafter cited as Zhou En-lai.]
13. Chang Kuo-t'ao (Zhang Guo-tao), *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, 1928–1938* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1972), Vol. 2, p. 507.
14. *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Vol. III (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1967), p. 35. [Hereafter cited as SWM.]
15. SWM, Vol. III, p. 39.
16. *Zhou En-lai*, p. 144.
17. SWM, Vol. III, p. 94.
18. *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, abridged by Bruno Shaw (New York: Harper Collins, 1970), pp. 267–68.
19. See Lyman P. Van Slyke, ed., *The Chinese Communist Movement*, report of the United States War Department, July 1945 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 240.
20. Fairbank, *Chinabound*, p. 266.
21. Van Slyke, *Chinese Communist Movement*, pp. 218–19.
22. See Herbert Feis, *The China Tangle* (New York: Atheneum, 1966), p. 180.
23. SWM, Vol. IV, pp. 100–1.
24. *The China White Paper* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), Vol. II, p. 687.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 688.
26. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. XVI.

CHAPTER 8

FROM "LIBERATION" TO "INDEPENDENCE": 1949–1958

When Hurley was trying to get Chiang Kai-shek to form a coalition government in 1945, he proposed that as a first step a conference be held that would include representatives of the Guomindang, the CPC, and other parties, as well as nonpartisan leaders. In 1946, after Marshall had managed to get the two sides to declare a cease-fire, a "political consultative conference" was held in Chongqing, with CPC representatives taking part. But by the end of the year the negotiations for a coalition government had collapsed, and the CPC withdrew from the conference. The CPC withdrew because Chiang had unilaterally decided to convene the National Assembly and promulgate a constitution.

The National Assembly did meet, and a constitution was adopted on December 25, 1946. It was a purely Guomindang constitution and ended all hopes for a reconciliation with the CPC. In January 1949, when the Guomindang tried once again to start negotiations with the CPC, Mao demanded that the 1946 constitution be annulled, war criminals be punished (Chiang among them), and a new Political Consultative Conference be formed "without the participation of reactionary elements" (i.e., the right-wing Guomindang leaders).

By summer 1949, when the Communists had already occupied Beijing, it was clear

that it was only a matter of time before the Guomindang would be ousted and the CPC would take over the government. In preparation for this eventuality, Mao Ze-dong directed the CPC to convene a Political Consultative Conference of its own, representing various friendly parties and personages, as its first step in the formation of a coalition government. The CPC thus took over the role of the Guomindang.

In theory, by reforming the Political Consultative Conference—now called the *Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference* (CPPCC)—Mao not only derived his authority from the Second United Front but also took over the leadership of the "bourgeois-democratic phase of the revolution."

In June 1949 Mao provided the guidelines of the government-to-be in an essay entitled "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship."¹ The article, a mix of orthodox and semi-orthodox beliefs, reflects Mao's view of the Chinese Revolution, the current national and international situation, and the direction of future CPC policies. Many elements in the essay were to cause problems later.

The article begins by stating an orthodox Marxian view that the ultimate objective of the revolution, after it had led to the extinction of classes and class struggle, was to reach the stage when the state and the party