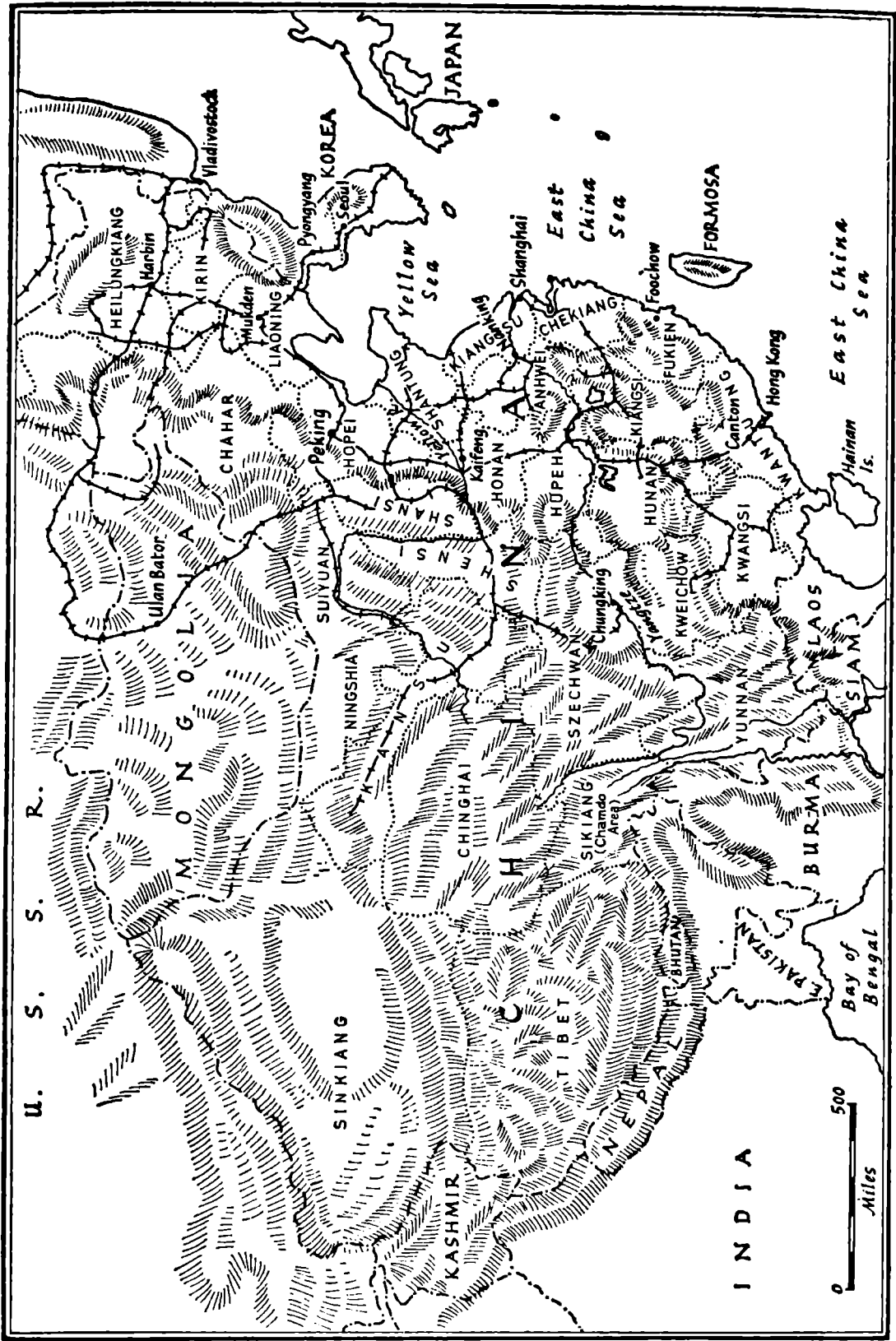


Edgar O'Ballance

**THE
RED
ARMY
OF
CHINA**



The Red Army of China

A SHORT HISTORY

EDGAR O'BALLANCE

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Author's Preface

'Let China sleep, when she wakes the world will be sorry.'

NAPOLEON

For many, many years the Chinese soldier was a figure of fun as he reluctantly trudged along on the line of march with his parasol, carrying a singing bird in a cage. Chinese battles were renowned more for their noise than for their casualties. Chinese soldiers were more inclined to retreat from than advance into battle, and to change shamelessly over to the winning side at the first opportunity. The 'Yellow Peril' was never taken really seriously, and territory was filched from the decaying Chinese Empire almost without military effort.

Today reports filtering through from Red China tell a vastly different tale, making the West uneasily aware that the old military order has changed with a vengeance, and that the modern Chinese soldier is brave, dedicated and determined. How has this change come about?

The yellow dragon is waking from its long sleep, stretching its claws and breathing fire. How sharp are its claws and how fierce is it? Is it a 'paper tiger' (a common Chinese expression) to be laughed at, or is it a dangerous monster to be feared? Is Mao Tse-tung a military genius, simply a shrewd politician, a Chinese Stalin, or did events merely thrust his role upon him?

Many myths, rumours, fallacies, exaggerations and misconceptions are widely current, and it may be hoped that this account will do much to lay them. It is the story of the Red Army of China, and it tells of how the change has been wrought. From it may be deduced some of the answers to the questions just posed.

It tells briefly of the painful birth of the infant Red Army, its desperate early struggles, and how the two great characters, Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung met in the mountain fastness of a traditional

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bandit lair to form a lasting partnership. There they pooled their ideas, both military and political, to evolve the dogmas and the plans which ultimately led to a Red victory in China.

It tells of the merciless extermination campaigns launched by Chiang Kai-shek against the Red Army groups, and how very nearly successful they were. Chiang Kai-shek forced the remnants of the Red Armies to retreat across a whole continent before they were able to reach the comparative security of Shensi, in the remote north-west corner of China.

The Japanese attack on China in 1937 was timely from the Red Army's point of view, as it undoubtedly diverted the attention of Chiang Kai-shek and his German advisers just as he was about to launch another huge extermination campaign, which might have been successful.

The Red Army joined the 'United Front' with the Nationalists against the Japanese invader, but it did not work well and soon broke down, after which the Sino-Japanese War devolved into a three-sided struggle. The Red Army at first essayed a number of offensive guerilla operations against the Japanese in North China, but the Japanese reaction to the 'Hundred Regiments' Campaign' shook it hard. When it was realized how tough the Japanese were, a sort of unofficial armed truce settled on North China between the Red Army and the Japanese, interrupted only by spasms of Red guerilla warfare.

It was only when World War II was drawing to a close and the Japanese occupation troops were thinning out, that the Red Army expanded and leapt into life overnight, moving into their retreating footsteps.

Then followed the battles against the Kuomintang for Manchuria, which after some reverses the Reds won. With Manchuria in their hands they were able to divert all their forces into China proper. In this civil war several notable battles occurred, such as those for the Peking Pocket and for Shanghai, but one stands out—the Battle of Suchow, or the Hwai-Hai Campaign as the Reds call it. After long years of guerilla warfare the Red Army successfully fought a conventional positional battle which is a classic example of encirclement and destroying enemy forces piecemeal. This was the beginning of the end for Chiang Kai-shek. The morale in the Nationalist armies drooped steeply and the desertion rate increased.

The crossing of the wide Yangtse River by nearly three-quarters of

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a million men with no special equipment is a great military achievement in itself, although the enemy opposition, especially in the eastern sector, was not so serious, and treachery eased the way forward.

By the end of 1949, Chiang Kai-shek and the remnants of his Nationalist forces had been driven from the mainland to seek refuge on Formosa. The gigantic Red Army, which had swelled to a probable strength (though neither the Red Army authorities nor anyone else knows the exact figure) of 4½ million, paused, panting, excited and astounded by its own achievements.

The Red Army was hardly given time to recover its breath before it was plunged into the Korean War, where it came into contact with Western armies for the first time. In Korea it received its first large influxes of modern equipment and it learnt many lessons the hard way. In Korea it was forcibly brought to the notice of the West that, properly trained and led, the Chinese would make fine fighting soldiers, a fact which had been noted by Sir Garnet Wolseley nearly a hundred years before, but which few had believed since.

A final chapter collects together such facts as are known about the present-day Red Army for the benefit of the military student and of such others as are interested in military detail.

In writing this story I have been faced with a mass of evidence, frequently conflicting and often of doubtful reliability, through which I have had to sift to try to find out what actually did occur. Few records were made at the time, and many accounts of incidents and battles were written long afterwards, when either the memory had faded or the mind had been conveniently refocused. The precise numbers of troops engaged, and sometimes even the exact dates on which battles were fought, are variously given, and in such cases I have had to select the most probable figure or day. On many occasions it is doubtful whether either side knew its own strength, let alone that of the enemy, and, especially in the Civil War period, both made extravagant, inflated claims.

The whole unvarnished story of the Red Army of China may now never be told or revealed in its entirety, but I have been able to fit together sufficient pieces of the jigsaw to make a reasonably accurate short story of a general nature. What I have written is most probably what did happen.

Chinese names are extremely confusing to a Westerner. Many are irritatingly similar. For instance, we have two provinces lying side by

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side, one called Shensi and the other Shansi. Other provinces with similar sounding names are Hopei and Hupei, Kiangsi and Kiangsu, Honan and Hunan, to quote but a few examples. Also many places have two or more names, so that, for example, Tsinan is also Chinan, Kunming is also Yunnanfu, and Peking is also Peiping. Spelling also tends to vary on different maps.

As regards the names of persons, the family or surname is always shown first (e.g. MAO), followed by his personal or, as we would say, Christian or forenames, usually hyphenated (e.g. Tse-tung). Thus we have Mao Tse-tung, opposite to the Western style.

As to the Western mind a long string of Chinese names, many of them similar, is confusing, hard to digest and harder still to remember and differentiate, I have used hackneyed, or coined, descriptions to attach to some of the more important personalities for the purpose of easier identification, such as Feng, the Christian General, Liu, the One-Eyed Bandit, and Ho, the Ex-Bandit, and so on, to try and distinguish them from the other Fengs, Lius and Hos. A list of these sobriquets is given in Appendix 'B' as an aid to easy reference.

EDGAR O'BALLANCE

1

The Dragon Awakes

By the beginning of the twentieth century China was drifting hopelessly towards a state of 'war-lordism', a state of affairs which although generally regarded as traditional, had really developed and spread since the Taiping Rebellion owing to the lack of a strong central government.

The Chinese 'war-lords', like the robber barons of old, were at first provincial governors who maintained private armies to keep their provinces in order and to collect taxes. As they became self-sufficient they became virtually independent of Peking. They schemed, plotted and fought against each other as they ravaged the land for their own personal gain.

There was general dissatisfaction with the government of China, which was a weak, degenerate muster of corrupt officials, and on October 10th 1911, when a plot to overthrow it was revealed at Hankow, a train of events was started which caused a number of the more powerful war-lords briefly to sink their differences and merge together to bring about the downfall of the régime.

One of the most prominent Chinese revolutionaries, Sun Yat-sen, who was in exile, hurried back to China where, because of his reputation, he was nominated to be the provisional President; but as he wanted to initiate many constitutional reforms, he was pushed aside by the war-lords. The merging of the war-lords did not last and they soon fell apart again. One of them, Yuan Shih-kai, with the support of some of the others, gained the Presidency.

Sun Yat-sen decided to form a strong political party on modern lines, which became known as the Kuomintang, the 'National People's Party', or by its initials as the KMT; it developed quickly and became influential. In 1913, he persuaded the war-lords of the

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provinces of Kwangtung and Kiangsi to rise in revolt against the nominal Peking government, and he ordered all members of his KMT to give active support. This was unsuccessful and Sun Yat-sen was forced to flee to Japan. A young officer named Chiang Kai-shek took part in this abortive rebellion, and upon its failure became one of Sun Yat-sen's secretaries.

Towards the end of 1915 there was another revolt in the province of Yunnan. This set an example, and several of the other southern provinces rose in a confused pattern of rebellion. A government for 'South China' was set up at Canton. In Peking, Yuan was pushed aside to make way for another candidate who was put forward by the northern war-lords.

The year 1916 began an era of blatant war-lordism, the several contenders for power struggling and intriguing against each other; greed and ambition quickly led from chaos to spasmodic civil war. Soon any unscrupulous, ambitious, energetic person, were he able to raise enough military support, or merely by intrigue, could become a 'war-lord', and many did so. Leaders of robber bands moved in and by force of arms became 'war-lords' of provinces. They rose and fell, flourished and foundered, but for a brief hour were the absolute dictators of the territory they controlled with their armies. The Peking Government was still the official one in the eyes of foreign powers, and the key to it was held by the northern war-lords.

Sun Yat-sen moved from Japan to Shanghai, and then to Canton, where a shadowy silhouette of a government of 'Southern China' survived under the precarious, fickle protection of the local war-lord. In Canton Sun Yat-sen tried to gain influence with this government, but his views were too democratic, and he was ejected. He then concentrated upon making his KMT a powerful political force. Meanwhile Lenin, attracted by events in China, began to show an interest. Conversely, it is very true to say that the Chinese revolutionaries showed a deep interest in the recent successful Russian Revolution.

The Chinese Communist Party formally came into existence at a conference held at Shanghai in 1921, under the chairmanship of Chen Tu-hsiu, who became its first Secretary-General. There were twelve founder-members present, all of whom could be thought of as intellectuals. A student named Mao Tse-tung was one of them. This organization became known as the Kun-chang-tang (usually translated as the 'Share Production Party'), the KCT. A Comintern

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adviser helped in the initial organization, and it was controlled by a Central Executive Committee.

About the same time branches of the KCT were founded in both France and Germany, where there were numbers of Chinese students. Chou En-lai¹ was a founder-member of the French branch, and Chu Teh² was an early member of the German branch.

The KCT decided to co-operate with the KMT in an effort to create a united front against the Peking Government, but in spite of this open and apparently full-hearted co-operation, the Communists never forgot their true aims, and they merely adopted this as an expedient.³ The Chinese Communists hoped, first of all to bend the KMT to their own purposes, and later to absorb it completely.

Meanwhile Sun Yat-sen, having unsuccessfully sought military aid from Britain and America, was in the act of negotiating for the employment of German ex-officers, when Russia stepped in quickly. Lenin, although interested in China, had so far been preoccupied with affairs in his own country, but in January 1923 Joffe, a Russian envoy to China, contacted Sun Yat-sen in Shanghai, where he had temporarily taken refuge again, and after some hesitation an agreement was reached between them.

Joffe was not impressed by the Peking régime to which he had been sent, and he was of the opinion that the unification of China could best be brought about if support was given to Sun Yat-sen and his party. Apart from wishing to sow the seeds of Communism firmly in China, he was somewhat perturbed at the rise of Japan in the east and wanted to foster an alliance between a sympathetic Chinese Government and his own country, Russia.⁴ The Peking régime was hardly sympathetic to Russia.

It was agreed that the KMT would have to build its own army, and also to establish a military academy to produce the right sort of officers to lead it. Later that year Chiang Kai-shek, now one of Sun Yat-sen's confidants, went to Moscow to study Russian military

¹ The present Prime Minister of Red China.

² The 'Father of the Red Army', and its commander-in-chief for many years.

³ It may be somewhat mystifying to find the Communists struggling for power *within* the KMT. It was part of the KMT-KCT agreement that the Communists could join the KMT as individuals so that there was not merely collaboration between the two parties, but also an overlapping membership.

⁴ Russia gave (or lent?) to Sun Yat-sen 3 million roubles to further the cause of the Revolution in China.

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methods. Chiang Kai-shek had been trained at a Japanese military academy.

In September 1923, a Russian, Mikhail Grusenberg, who became known as Michael Borodin,¹ arrived in Southern China with a staff of Russian advisers. Sun Yat-sen was strongly influenced by the success of the Russian Revolution, and at once took to and accepted Borodin, giving him a free hand. Sun Yat-sen badly needed an assistant with constructive ideas and ability. Borodin was that man. Borodin was a very astute person who, although not speaking Chinese, slowly attained a position where he practically controlled the KMT.

At this stage neither the KMT nor the KCT cared much about the Chinese peasants. Mao Tse-tung, as a KMT official, was allocated the task of dealing with them, but his other job, that of editing the KMT newspaper, was considered to be far more important.

Russian military assistance was also given and a Russian military mission, under General Vassily Blucher, a hero of the Russian Revolution, who assumed the *nom de guerre* of 'Ga-lin' or Galen, arrived in Southern China with a large staff to set about organizing an army for the KMT. Such troops as the KMT then had control over, who barely amounted to 800 local levies, were organized into units and training on Russian lines began.

The most important event in the early military history of the KMT was the establishment of the Whampoa Military Academy. This military training college was jointly planned by Joffe, the Russian envoy, and Liao Chung-kai, a pro-Russian revolutionary; who was Sun Yat-sen's right-hand man. Its object was to produce officers for the new revolutionary army and to give them a sound political, as well as military, training. It was modelled on the lines of Trotsky's Red Military Academy, and there was joint control, both political and military, at all levels.

Sun Yat-sen and the prominent KMT members were again installed in Canton, operating a shadowy government, so this academy was set up at Whampoa, on the river close to the port. Liao Chung-kai became the political head, and Chiang Kai-shek, the only KMT military officer who had any knowledge of Russian methods, was

¹ Borodin was a Russian Communist of Jewish origin, who emigrated to America, where he spent some years. He worked as an 'agent' for the Communist International from 1918 onwards. He was expelled from Britain in 1922.

Borodin was arrested in Stalin's Great Purge and is believed to have died in a concentration camp.

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appointed the military commander. The 'chief instructor' was General Galen, who controlled a staff of both Russian and Chinese officers. A few of the Chinese instructors had been trained in Japanese military academies, and the Japanese gave some small material assistance in the early days.

Chiang Kai-shek proved to be a popular commander and under his guidance the academy was an immediate success. He set to work to build up and develop a strong *esprit de corps* among the students. He had a strong personality and attracted a personal following, which from the start was eyed jealously by the political officers, most of whom were Communists.¹

Whampoa opened in May 1924 with some 500 cadets, but this initial strength quickly rose. The urgent need was to produce young officers of the right sort as quickly as possible, and with this in view the course of instruction at first lasted for six months only. As the cadet strength grew, this was extended to twelve months, and later the course was lengthened to two years. The first courses, or intakes, were armed and trained as infantry only, but as other material and arms became available, wings were formed for specialist training, such as for artillery, signals, engineers and administration.

Initially, Whampoa possessed very few arms; it is believed less than 1,000 rifles and pistols. Such arms as were in Canton were under the direct control of the local war-lord, and may have amounted to some 4,000 to 5,000 small arms of various sorts. The KMT had an uneasy alliance with the local war-lord, and the Whampoa Military Academy existed very much on sufferance.

In October 1924 the situation changed, when Russia sent about 8,000 rifles and a stock of ammunition, and from that moment Whampoa became a factor to be reckoned with. Later more Russian arms followed, including a few artillery pieces, and half-a-dozen aircraft.

The cadets themselves were formed into small units with the senior cadets acting as junior officers. The KMT now had the nucleus of an armed force upon which it could count, reliable, dis-

¹ Among the several Communists who were briefly at Whampoa as Political Commissars were Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai.

Another was Li Fu-chun, who in 1958 organized the 2 million 'backyard' furnaces in the Great Leap Forward. He had negotiated the 30 Year Treaty of Alliance with Stalin in 1950 and also had arranged the Soviet aid to support the first Chinese Five Year Plan in 1953. In that year he was appointed Chairman of the State Planning Commission.

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ciplined and well-trained, a combination very unusual in Chinese armies of that period.

It was not long before the services of these young Whampoa cadets were required in the field. It was decided, as soon as the first large consignment of Russian arms arrived, to take action to make the base at Canton secure. Under Chiang Kai-shek the companies of cadets marched out to engage the local military force, successfully scattering it in a series of scuffles. Within a few days the troops of the local war-lord had either been driven out of Canton or absorbed into the growing KMT force. At this period Chinese troops were notorious for quickly and frequently changing sides. General Galen was active and probably a share of the success should be credited to him, as he was the seasoned, forceful soldier with plenty of practical experience upon whom Chiang Kai-shek leaned for advice and support.

Next, with this exhilarating success behind him, Chiang Kai-shek, with his Whampoa cadets, turned his attention to clearing the area surrounding Canton. Between November 1924 and March 1925, the tiny KMT army fought a number of small actions during which the local troops were swept out of practically the whole of the province of Kwangtung. Many of the Chinese troops—in the current fashion—came over to the KMT side, and its army began to swell. Again, Galen contributed largely to these successes by his advice and shrewd planning.

These operations made Canton, the KMT base, more secure, and Chiang Kai-shek, the leading Chinese figure responsible for them, was formally appointed to be the second-in-command of what was called in the first place 'The People's Party Army'. Also, he was given a seat on the Central Executive Committee of the KMT.

The newly acquired troops were officered by Whampoa cadets, who trained and disciplined them, and by April 1925 this little KMT army had a strength of over 3,000 men. It was organized on the Russian pattern, and its drill, training and tactics reflected their views deeply at this stage. A few weeks later, when the strength had risen to over 5,000, Chiang Kai-shek was appointed to be the commanding-general. He still retained his seat on the Central Executive Committee and his position as military head of the Whampoa Academy. His star was rising.

Whilst the KMT had been consolidating at Canton and trying to build up an effective rival government, that at Peking nominally

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ruled the bulk of China, as most of the war-lords paid it lip service. In an attempt to come to some agreement, Sun Yat-sen went to Peking, and died there on May 30th, 1925.

The death of Sun Yat-sen caused blank confusion in the ranks of the KMT, and although several eagerly sought to step into his shoes the fact was that there was no outstanding personality with a sufficiently powerful following ready to take over. Borodin advocated committee rule and his view was accepted, the Central Executive Committee governing as a body. Borodin was, and hoped to remain, the principal backroom boy.

Under the authority of this Committee the Nationalist Chinese Government was officially set up in July 1925. Within the Committee itself several factions were struggling for power, the chief of which were the Communists on the one hand and Chiang Kai-shek on the other, with Liao Chung-kai, as the Chairman, in the centre trying to keep the peace.

In August, Liao was assassinated, reputedly by right-wing KMT elements—no one is quite sure—after which the Communists and Chiang Kai-shek competed almost openly for power. With the backing of many Whampoa instructors and cadets Chiang gained an influential following, and his ascendancy after the death of Sun Yat-sen and the assassination of Liao Chung-kai was noticeable and obvious. The Whampoa cadets formed a small separate brigade group in the new Nationalist Army (as it can now be called), of which Chiang Kai-shek kept personal control.

2

The Northern Campaign

It was further decided to strengthen the Canton base and to clear the surrounding area preparatory to extending the influence of the Nationalists (as the KMT can now be called), and Chiang Kai-shek took the field again at the head of the tiny Nationalist Army late in August 1925. A six-week campaign ensued against the troops of the local war-lords. The Nationalist Army was divided into two brigades: one composed of Whampoa cadets, which was the spearhead throughout, the other of Cantonese troops.

Chiang Kai-shek led his army both northwards into Hunan and westwards into Kwangsi. There were a number of engagements against the troops of the war-lords, whose fighting spirit and ability were not great. By the end of October, most of Kwangsi and part of Hunan, as well as practically all Kwangtung, were under Nationalist control. A large number of the defeated men were won over and enrolled into the Nationalist Army, which soon numbered over 15,000.

Later in the same year Chiang Kai-shek undertook another short campaign, this time against the war-lord of Yunnan, whose troops were threatening him from the west. Again, with his trained and disciplined Whampoa cadets in the vanguard, he was successful. Many Yunnanese troops elected to enter the ranks of the Nationalist Army, whose strength soared to the 80,000 mark.

This achieved, Chiang Kai-shek reorganized his army, dividing it into six brigades. At the insistence of the Central Executive Committee, no doubt on the initiative of Borodin, political officers or commissars were appointed to the various formations to ensure that the army remained under strict Party control. These political officers were responsible for educating the men politically, especially those who had been recruited from war-lord armies. They were the

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Party's watchdogs. At first their influence and authority were not great, and in some formations they had no power at all, as the military commanders would not countenance such an innovation. The brigades, although very uneven in size, were patterned on the Russian model, which General Galen strongly advocated and at the headquarters of each of them was a handful of Russian military advisers. As he was much respected, his advice was followed in most military matters. In these small campaigns he had been the shrewd and constant adviser to Chiang Kai-shek in the field, and his advice had produced results.

By the end of 1925 it was more than clear that two factions, hostile to each other, had arisen in the Nationalist Army; one was the Communist group and the other was the Whampoa group. Obviously differences began to appear as the two struggled for supremacy. The Communist Party strove to infiltrate into the whole army as well as trying to gain control of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT. Chiang Kai-shek tried to match them and was able to keep the Communist influence in check to some extent, refusing to appoint any Communist officers to his own 1st Brigade, or to give them key posts at Whampoa.

In February 1926, the Nationalists were joined by Li Tsung-jen, the war-lord of Kwangsi, who brought his army with him. This meant that Chiang Kai-shek now had over 100,000 men, which he formed into seven 'corps', of which the three strongest were the 1st (his own), the 4th (Cantonese troops) and the 7th (Li Tsung-jen). The others were smaller in size, remaining under the war-lords who had brought their men over to join the Nationalists.

The 1st Corps was commanded personally by Chiang Kai-shek, and he excluded from it as far as he could all Communist influence, but he was not completely successful in this. It consisted of three 'brigades', two of Whampoa cadets, and one of enrolled soldiers who had changed sides, which was officered by ex-Whampoa cadets. The 1st Corps had a strength of about 30,000.

The 4th Corps consisted largely of Cantonese workers, and contained an element of the Communist-trained 'Workers' Guards'. It was given more than its fair share of the Russian arms available, and was Communist-dominated to a great extent. General Galen had devoted some considerable attention to this formation. It also had a strength in the region of 30,000.

The 7th Corps was in fact the army that Li Tsung-jen had brought

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with him from Kwangsi. It numbered about 20,000 and remained intact under his command. Li of Kwangsi was an able and experienced general, and was reluctant to have political officers in his formations.

Chiang Kai-shek formed a Military Council, on which sat, with equal rank and status, all the half-dozen or so war-lords who had joined him with their forces. This Military Council in fact controlled the army, in spite of Communist efforts to undermine its authority. The Communists gained a bare majority on the Central Executive Council, and decreed that political officers had the power to countermand military orders. This rule was received with varying degrees of enthusiasm by the corps commanders, and was only allowed to work in the 4th Corps.

During the opening months of 1926 the struggle between Chiang Kai-shek and the KCT deepened. Suddenly, he struck a blow at it, when on March 20th he arrested many Communist leaders, political and army officers and other workers. The occasion was during a Communist-inspired strike at Canton, and he chose a time when both Borodin and General Galen were away visiting a northern war-lord, Chang Tso-lin of Manchuria.

As soon as he heard what had happened, Borodin hurried back to Canton to try and repair the rift, which he did by persuading the KMT and the KCT to combine to undertake the 'Northern Campaign' to unite China. This had long been the dream of Sun Yat-sen, but whenever it had been previously raised Borodin had counselled against it on practical grounds. He persuaded the Communists to drop factional quarrels and to co-operate, at least in appearance, on this project, which they sulkily agreed to do.

Until this moment, Borodin and all the other Russians in China concerned with the Nationalist movement had been under the impression that they were using Chiang Kai-shek for their own purposes; now they were not so sure. From this date Russia was less generous with arms and other supplies, and more selective in their distribution. A larger proportion of such aid and money as was received now went direct to the 4th Corps.

Although the Northern Campaign had been talked about for years, nothing had been done about marching northwards to reunite China by force under the Nationalist flag, mainly because the northern war-lords could muster about three-quarters of a million troops, some well armed and fairly well trained. When the KMT had no army, and when it had only a tiny one, talk of such a project was not

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taken seriously, but now that the size of the Nationalist Army had grown, it was less academic. In the spring of 1926 Chiang Kai-shek had nearly 150,000 troops, although not all were armed, and in many cases the state of their training and discipline left much to be desired. Russian supplies distinctly slackened off and Russia began to off-load indifferent Japanese and German arms on to the Chinese.

Once the seed was sown, Chiang Kai-shek and his supporters in the Military Council were eager to start marching northwards, even though inferior in overall numbers to the enemy. However, Borodin, once he had closed the rift between the KMT and the KCT, cooled off and was no longer so enthusiastic. He again counselled caution as he was not too sure that such a campaign would be successful; he had no wish to see the Nationalist movement completely smashed.

General Galen also was in favour of waiting a little longer, but economic factors did as much as anything else to prod Chiang Kai-shek into embarking upon the Northern Campaign. So far he had been completely dependent upon Russia for his arms and ammunition, and now that source was fast drying up on him. Owing to Nationalist liaison with Russia and seeming co-operation with the Chinese Communists, the other world powers viewed the movement with suspicion; they suspected that the ultimate object was to raise a Communist revolution in China, probably in conjunction with Russia, and accordingly placed an arms embargo on Chiang Kai-shek.

Chiang Kai-shek wanted, and had to have, in order to continue to exist and expand, independent sources of arms and ammunition, so he turned his eyes and thoughts towards the three existing Chinese arsenals, at Shanghai, Nanking and Hanyang, each nominally under the Peking Government, but in fact under the control of a local war-lord. They were not large arsenals, but they produced quantities of small arms and ammunition, and were capable of expansion. Also, the province of Kwangtung, even with its rich port of Canton, would not be able to feed and maintain his large army for very much longer. Almost the whole of the revenue went to the military budget, but even so the bulk of his soldiers were unpaid.

To the north of Kwangtung, the war-lord of Hunan, Tsang Shen-chih, who was faintly inclined to sympathize with the Nationalists, was suddenly attacked, in April 1926, by another war-lord called Wu Pei-fu, from Honan, the province a little further still to the north. Wu defeated the Hunanese troops, and then glanced menacingly southwards at Canton.

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Seizing this opportunity to get in an early blow, Chiang Kai-shek dispatched his 7th Corps, under Li of Kwangsi, to deal with Wu. During the month of May Li of Kwangsi defeated Wu and his men, driving them back northwards. Many of Wu's troops changed over to the winning side and were incorporated into the Nationalist Army, which became over 200,000 strong.

This victory caused enthusiasm for the projected Northern Campaign to rise, and Borodin's words of caution were not listened to. General Galen was now of the opinion that the Nationalists had more than a fair chance of taking most of China south of the River Yangtse, which he thought was a sound first phase, so his opposition was only lukewarm. The KCT was not keen either and did not want to begin fighting the northern war-lords just yet, as it had been badly shaken by Chiang Kai-shek's action against it in March; it wanted time to recover. However, Chiang Kai-shek, in spite of discouragement from Borodin and the reluctance of the KCT, carried the Military Council with him and made ready.

On June 9th 1926 Chiang Kai-shek was formally appointed Commander-in-Chief of all Nationalist forces with almost absolute powers. He was given full control over the political officers, and in addition had his hands firmly on the purse strings. The Communists muttered and chafed; they still harboured bitter feelings over the March incident, but they could not carry the conference with them. The Russians, in spite of General Galen's cautiously optimistic views on the possible outcome, were of doubtful assistance, because they feared the Northern Campaign might fail and the Nationalist Army be destroyed.

Opposing Chiang Kai-shek were five major war-lords, who had an estimated combined strength of about three-quarters of a million soldiers. But it was an uneasy coalition, if indeed it could be called a coalition at all, as they were vain, proud, jealous and suspicious of each other. A sixth major war-lord, as yet uncommitted, lurked in the background. The armies of these war-lords were completely independent of each other, and were in all respects 'private armies'. Their state of efficiency, discipline, arms and equipment varied considerably.

Between them these six war-lords controlled most of north and central China, as they were the only ones with effective military power. There were several other minor war-lords, some of whom were little more than bandit leaders, but they held only local sway in

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limited areas, either because their domains were almost inaccessible or because they had an alliance with one or another of the major war-lords.

The most powerful of the war-lords was Chang Tso-lin, who controlled most of Manchuria, and his army of about a quarter of a million men was well armed and equipped by Chinese standards. Chang had many Japanese officers in his employment, which accounted for the comparatively high state of efficiency and training. Chang controlled Peking and thus had the primary say in who was to be the President of the Peking Government.

Next, ensconced in the northern province of Shansi, was Yen Hsi-shan, whose army was smaller, being about 40,000 strong, and although fairly efficient, was less well armed. Yen was widely known as the 'Model Governor', a sobriquet bestowed upon him by the missionaries for the way in which he administered his province, but they seemed somehow to overlook the fact that his wealth came from opium which he grew in profusion in his domain, and that he also possessed the full complement of other Chinese war-lord vices.

Shantung province was controlled by another Chang, this time Chang Tsung-chang, whose authority extended into the provinces of Anhwei and Hopei. His army was in a fair state of efficiency and he employed Japanese officers.

Wu Pei-fu of Honan we have briefly met. He enjoyed some British support and at one time had been in control of the Peking Government. His headquarters were at Wuhan¹ and his influence spread over much of central China, particularly along both banks of the River Yangtse to the west of Wuhan, reaching well into the province of Szechwan.

The fifth war-lord was Sun Chuan-fang, who was based on Shanghai, and who controlled large slices of Chekiang, Anhwei and Kiangsu. His army was fairly efficient and he employed Japanese officers. Sun also enjoyed a measure of British support and he held the city of Nanking, which contained an arsenal.

The sixth war-lord was Feng Yu-hsiang, who controlled the province of Suiyuan, in Inner Mongolia. He was known as the 'Christian General', a sobriquet given to him by the missionaries, as it is alleged that he at one time temporarily professed Christianity, much to their delight. Feng, who was as yet uncommitted, had about 60,000

¹ Wuhan is the name given to the three industrial cities of Hankow, Hanyang and Wuchang, which are fairly close together.

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troops, and although small, his army was the best disciplined and therefore potentially the most dangerous. He was cruel and brutal, but all the same he was a shrewd politician and an able general.

There were strong traces of Japanese military influence in all the war-lord armies, as the Chinese were impressed by the Japanese victories over the Russians in 1904-5. The war-lords who could afford to do so employed Japanese mercenary officers, and those who could not copied Japanese organization and methods as best they could. There were, of course, many other foreign military advisers in China, but the Japanese were favoured and predominated.

The types of arms and the numbers in the war-lord armies varied, again according to wealth. In all cases the bulk of the arms consisted of rifles of Japanese, German, Russian or British origin, and only the richer war-lords had machine-guns in any number or artillery pieces. There were a number of arsenals in China, other than the three previously mentioned, most of which were capable of producing small arms ammunition; some were capable of producing copies of foreign rifles. The major war-lords all possessed one or two military aircraft. On the other hand the minor war-lords invariably had more primitive arms, such as older types of rifles, or even swords and spears.

Such was the line-up of the northern war-lords against which Chiang Kai-shek could muster some 200,000 troops, who were still organized into seven corps, all now swollen to an average strength of 30,000 men. The Nationalist Army bore strong traces of Russian influence and organization.

Chiang Kai-shek's plan (or, as is often alleged with some truth, Galen's plan) was to strike northwards with two separate columns, one to clear the province of Hunan, and then go on to Wuhan with the eventual aim of contacting Feng the Christian General, and the other column to march on Nanking by way of Fukien and Chekiang.

Chiang Kai-shek advanced northwards from Canton with the majority of his force, including the 4th and 7th Corps. The 4th Corps, it will be remembered, was strongly pro-Communist, and throughout this move the Communists did what they could to turn matters to their own advantage.

Within a week he relieved the pressure exerted by Wu of Honan, and which had been renewed, on Tsang the friendly Hunanese war-lord, and he was able to persuade Tsang to come over to the Nationalist side. Tsang was given a seat on the Military Council, and his

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army, which he brought over with him, was designated the 8th Corps.

After pausing briefly, Chiang Kai-shek pushed forward with three corps, the 4th, the 7th and the new 8th, and as the result of one or two indecisive engagements Wu's army fell back. Although there was fighting, much of it was on the old Chinese pattern, and there was more noise than spilt blood. Wu's troops were not anxious to fight any deadly, prolonged battles and so gave ground when faced by a determined enemy. The Nationalists entered Wuhan in August 1926, and the first phase of the Northern Campaign was over.

This victory had been aided by propaganda by which the Nationalists stirred up public sympathy for their cause in the northward advance. This was largely undertaken at the instigation of Borodin, who was obviously influenced by the success of such methods in the Russian Civil War. Efforts were made to excite and enlist the support of the people, something new to Chinese warfare. The Nationalists loudly campaigned against the unpopular cockshies of China, such as landlords, employers and foreigners, and they spoke of land reform, the abolition of usury and other crying injustices.

Whilst this was in progress, the other prong of the northward movement, which consisted mainly of the 1st Corps, 'Chiang Kai-shek's Own', moved through the provinces of Fukien and Chekiang, meeting little serious opposition, aiming at Shanghai and Nanking.

The Communists were fully aware that Chiang Kai-shek was alive to their motives, but they still considered the northern war-lords to be the chief enemy, so they bided their time and persevered in the uneasy partnership. But when there was no sign of Chiang Kai-shek relaxing his tight rein over them, they decided to gain control over at least part of the Nationalist Army, so that they would be able to have some military freedom of action and a more clear-cut say in the Military Council. Many small units were already under complete Communist control, but as yet no large formations, not even the divisions of the 4th Corps, were completely Communist, as holding executive positions in them were members of the Whampoa group loyal to Chiang Kai-shek. All Communist energy and attention were therefore directed to gaining complete domination of the 4th Corps, and then of other formations. The Communist efforts to suborn the 4th Corps met with some success.

The 4th Corps had been first on the scene at Wuhan, and at once the Communist elements began to percolate in and around the city of

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Hankow, and then into Hanyang, after which they extended their activities to the surrounding countryside.

There was a brief siege outside the walled city of Wuchang, during which the troops of the war-lord moved round and attacked the Nationalist Army in the rear. There was confused scuffling for several hours, but the local troops had no heart for 'fight to the death' battles, and they eventually withdrew. The whole of the Wuhan complex was then in Nationalist hands. Although it nominally fell to the Nationalists, the Communists had by this time virtually gained control of the 4th Corps, so that it meant this vital industrial centre was in Communist hands. With such a firm base to sit upon they began to ignore Chiang Kai-shek.

It was now more apparent than ever before that the Nationalist Army was splitting into two parts, one Communist-dominated and the other loyal to Chiang Kai-shek. At this moment the key to power was the 7th Corps, commanded by Li of Kwangsi, who momentarily swayed between the two magnets. Communist attempts to win Li over to their cause were unsuccessful, and after some initial hesitation he spoke up for Chiang Kai-shek in a firm voice. Li's loyalty made the position of Chiang Kai-shek paramount, if not completely supreme, and the 4th Corps once again gave him nominal allegiance. For a few days the whole situation had been tense and tricky, and had Li's choice been different, the history of China might have taken another course.

As soon as Li's allegiance was satisfactorily made apparent, Chiang Kai-shek, shrewdly appreciating the situation and the fact that the Communists were becoming very firmly established in Wuhan, or in other words that in the existing circumstances there was little immediate prospect of his gaining effective control of the Hanyang arsenal, turned and moved quickly eastwards with his 7th and 8th Corps towards Nanchang and Nanking. Rather than stay and tussle for power with the Communists from a poor strategical position, he decided to secure other sources of supply further east as soon as he could. Also he was urged to take this course by General Galen, who had his eyes on the rich city of Shanghai. He hoped to link up with his 1st Corps, which was moving up by the coastal route.

Turning north-east, with the 7th Corps leading, Chiang Kai-shek, moving along the line of the River Yangtse, cut through minor opposition from war-lord troops fairly quickly. With only a brief check at one or two points the 7th Corps entered Nanchang in triumph. For

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achieving this rapid and successful march the 7th Corps received the nickname of the 'Flying Army'.

Having occupied and settled himself in Nanchang, Chiang Kai-shek demanded that the Nationalist capital be moved there from Canton, but the Communist-dominated Central Executive Committee would not agree, and instead urged that it should be moved to Hankow. Perturbed at this, Chiang Kai-shek personally visited the 4th Corps in the Wuhan area to try and bring its commanders round to his way of thinking. He saw that the Communists had not only gained a hold on the townspeople and the peasants, but were experimenting with confiscating land, dividing it out amongst the peasants and with setting up local governments on the Russian revolutionary pattern. The leaders of the 4th Corps insisted that Hankow should be the new provisional capital, so the unsuccessful Chiang Kai-shek had to return to Nanchang, where for the first time he spoke openly against the Communists and their activities.

This caused the breach to widen until there were literally two separate armies, one, the larger under Chiang Kai-shek, with its H.Q. at Nanchang, and the other under the Communists at Hankow. Two separate governments also sprang up, one at Nanchang and the other at Hankow. To Hankow flocked many Communists, some foreign, some Chinese, some notable, some unknown, some visionary and some practical, together with a few Comintern agents, all wildly anxious to participate in what they hoped would develop into the future Communist Government of all China.

During the winter of 1926-27 there was a state of passive hostility, as the two rival governments and armies growled at each other. The activities of the Communists within his own formations caused Chiang Kai-shek some concern, but he took no action for a while.

The 4th Corps had swollen to a strength of nearly 50,000, and it was reorganized during the winter ready to take the field in the spring against Wu, the war-lord of Honan, to the north. It was divided into three 'brigades', which were known as the 4th, 11th and 20th Armies,¹ all commanded by Communists. The 4th Army, commanded by Hwang Chi-hsiang, contained most of the veterans from the Canton

¹ The term 'army' in Chinese parlance has little to do with the size of the formation referred to, but is largely a prestige title which is loosely and universally used to denote almost any formation regardless of size. As certain formations became well known as 'armies', such as the 11th Army or the 20th Army, this term will be used, even though at times they sank to less than battalion size.

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area, and was in itself almost completely Communist. The 11th Army was commanded by Yeh Ting, an ex-Whampoa cadet, whilst the 20th Army was led by Ho Lung, a peasant, who had risen by the traditional Chinese method of first of all becoming a successful bandit, before being commissioned into a war-lord army in return for bringing his bandit group with him.

The 4th Corps as a whole became known as the 'Ironsides', although that title strictly belonged to the original smaller 4th Corps. At this period, it has since been established that only about thirty per cent of the personnel in this corps were Communists, but most of them were very active.

Early in the spring, Chiang Kai-shek began to move towards Nanking, which he entered on March 24th 1927. Three days later occurred the notorious 'Nanking Incident', in which Nationalist troops ran riot through the city, robbing, burning and pillaging. The property of foreigners in particular suffered, and some were killed and injured. It was alleged that the Communist political officers goaded the troops into attacking foreigners and their property in the hope of widening the existing differences between Chiang Kai-shek and other foreign governments. He was already highly suspect in many quarters owing to his contacts with Russia and his Russian advisers. Certain foreign governments reacted strongly to the Nanking Incident; their gunboats shelled Nanking and foreign marines landed in the city to protect their nationals.

Meanwhile, in furtherance of Communist policy in Shanghai, Chou En-lai was not idle, but called a general strike on March 21st, persuading about half a million workers to come out. He proclaimed a 'Citizen's Government', and is reported to have been able to muster and arm nearly 5,000 members of the Workers' Guards, whom he organized into six units. But his authority in Shanghai was not paramount, nor were the Communists over-popular there at this stage, and Chou's strike bogged down in factional fights.

There was considerable internal strife in the Chinese parts of the city of Shanghai, especially between the KCT and KMT elements. The Communists did not have much success in the street fighting, and Chiang Kai-shek entered the city a few days later, encountering little opposition. He was soon able to restore order and assert his authority.

Alarmed by the successes of the Nationalists, and viewing with deep suspicion the Russian contacts with the 'rebels' in Southern

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China, the Peking Government on April 6th raided the Russian Embassy in Peking, and found there a number of documents incriminating Russia with the Nationalists. One document in particular, later known as the 'Roy-Stalin Letter', hurt Chinese pride and dignity. There was a feeling of revulsion against the Chinese Communists when this was made public.

Whilst he tolerated and seemingly collaborated with the Communists, Chiang Kai-shek knew that as long as he did so he was assured of the hostility of the Western powers and would get neither arms, money nor support from them. Therefore, supported by his Military Council, he struck hard at the Communists in Shanghai on April 12th 1927.

At the end of three days it is believed that he had killed at least 5,000 Communists in this purge. All suspected of Communist sympathies were removed from any position of authority, whilst known Communists were either killed or driven underground. A few managed to reach the shelter of the International Settlement, a few others fled abroad and a few were able to make their way westwards towards the sanctuary of Hankow.

As a matter of interest, Chou En-lai was captured and sentenced to death, but a friend he had made at Whampoa, where Chou had been on the staff for a short time, arranged his escape. Chou was already exhibiting talents and an aptitude for diplomacy which were later fully exploited by the Communists, so we can conveniently refer to him in future as Chou the Diplomat.

Chiang Kai-shek ordered the abolition of all political officers in the armed forces, and after clearing Shanghai turned his attention to Canton, then to other cities and towns under his control and then to the wide countryside. Throughout May and June this blood bath continued. These violent and drastic massacres severely shook the KCT, and only in the area controlled by the Hankow Government, where Chiang Kai-shek's writ did not run, did the Communists find some measure of security.

It must be said that this deadly weeding out by Chiang Kai-shek was not entirely one-sided, and in places where the Communists were in control, or were able to do so, they massacred any KMT members suspected of right-wing sympathies. There was a pause, and then in desperation they reacted, instigating a peasant rising in Hunan. Chiang Kai-shek dealt with this ruthlessly, and large numbers of Communists and peasants were killed.

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The Communist surviving leaders were dispersed, several making their way to Russia, whilst a few others, including Mao Tse-tung, lay low for a while and then managed to reach Hankow. Soon after the Shanghai purge there was a meeting in Hankow of such Communist leaders as were able to get there, but they would not accept Mao's proposal for a general arming of the peasants. Within the KCT Mao was far from being popular or influential, and was constantly having differences with the leaders, mainly over his pet peasant policy.

The separate Hankow Government was a coalition of Communists and left-wing KMT, nominally under the leadership of Wang Ching-wei, who had been one of Sun Yat-sen's secretaries, and within it a struggle for power and influence developed among several prominent personalities. When it was revealed that the Comintern had told Borodin to order the KCT to confiscate land and distribute it to the people, Wang, upset by the Russian arrogance, dismissed all the Communist members from his government and entered into secret talks with Chiang Kai-shek.

Meanwhile, the bulk of the 4th Corps was in the field against Wu's army, to the north of Wuhan. There was a series of engagements in which the fighting was particularly severe for China. Wu gave ground, but in the process the 4th Corps suffered very heavy casualties, and its advance came to a halt.

The balance of power at this stage was held by Feng the Christian General, as his army was in a good strategical position in Honan.¹ Feng decided that the Wuhan area was, or should be, his, and when Chiang Kai-shek agreed to this in June 1927, Feng at once went on to the Nationalist side. Chiang Kai-shek then delivered an ultimatum to the Hankow Government, which proved to be the final blow. By mid-July the members of this government had either changed sides or were in flight.

Mao Tse-tung has since laid the blame for the collapse of the short-lived Hankow Government at the door of Borodin for withholding his active support, but the truth was that Borodin saw the writing on the wall. He had lost his influence over Chinese affairs and the Nationalists no longer listened to what he had to say.

Disillusioned, the battered 4th Corps turned round and began to

¹ Feng, the Christian General, had that spring temporarily occupied Urga (Ulan Bator), in Mongolia, and was now looking for further fields to conquer. He toyed with the idea of joining Chang Tso-lin, of Manchuria and had he done so, together they would have been strong enough to sweep through China.

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march homewards to Canton. A few days earlier, Chiang Kai-shek had crushed with a heavy boot a Communist-inspired peasant rebellion in Hunan, and then another in Hupei. In their first dedicated flush of enthusiasm the Communists had been severe on peasants who would not co-operate, so much so that the peasants were glad to be rid of them, preferring the old-style parasitic war-lords as the lesser evil.

This left Chiang Kai-shek master of most of the provinces south of the River Yangtse, and he now felt strong enough to break with Moscow, eject the Russian advisers and move over into the anti-Communist camp. On July 27th Borodin, General Galen¹ and other Russian advisers were expelled from China, whilst many others were arrested. Once this was done, the sympathy of the Shanghai businessmen and of some foreign powers veered towards him, and money, arms and military supplies began to trickle slowly in.

¹ When General Galen (Blucher) returned home to Russia he was given command of the Far Eastern Army. In July 1938 he defeated the Japanese in a battle near Vladivostok, after which at the height of his career (he had been appointed one of the first five Marshals of the Soviet Union in 1935), he disappeared in Stalin's Great Purge.

The world is entirely without information as to what his ultimate fate was.

3

The Birth of the Red Army

Battered and bleeding, down but not quite out, the Chinese Communist Party struggled desperately for life. In Shanghai, Canton and other cities it went underground, whilst in the countryside the Communists grouped themselves together wherever they were able and wherever they felt some measure of security. In the Nationalist Army the secret Communists, their sympathizers and other left-wing elements lay low, watching quietly, hardly daring to make an overt move.

Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek was under the impression he had crushed the rival Communist movement for good and all, and that there remained but a few extremists of little account to be caught and dealt with. He thought that the harsh measures he had taken would be both a lesson to all who tended to favour Communism and also a warning to anyone who might try to oppose his policy. Briskly he turned his attention to resuming the interrupted Northern Campaign to unite China. He was just in time, as the northern war-lords, under Sun, formerly of Shanghai, were mustering their men.

The traditional birth of the Chinese Red Army dates from August 1st 1927 and took place in the city of Nanchang, where an ex-war-lord general, Chu Teh, a secret Communist, was the garrison commander. Chu Teh had been an officer in the old Imperial Army, having graduated from the Yunnan Military Academy,¹ after which he spent some two years in that province fighting on the Indo-China frontier. In 1916, when Yuan Shih-kai tried to make himself Emperor

¹ Agnes Smedley insists that Chu Teh was a lowly peasant. He told her so himself, she writes, and she appears to have believed him implicitly without checking the facts. One is somehow inclined to doubt this. Today, in China it is fashionable for the leaders to profess their 'peasant' origin. But there were peasants and peasants in the old China.

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of China, Chu Teh was a brigadier under the famous General Tsao Ao, who led the revolt against Yuan from Yunnan. After this Chu Teh's career was that of a typical Chinese general, consisting of periods of fighting, changing sides, looting and accumulating wealth. He is reputed to have adopted the opium habit and to have acquired several other traditional vices of his contemporaries.

Suddenly Chu Teh had a change of heart, broke himself of the opium habit, studied in Europe and became a secret Communist. As an experienced general, and a notable and popular one too, he soon found employment on his return from Germany in the Nationalist Army as soon as the Northern Campaign was projected.

When the Hankow Government collapsed, the Nationalists moved in and gradually took over the Wuhan region, but there remained parts where their control was not absolute. It will also be remembered that several units of the old Communist-inspired 4th Corps had begun to march homewards. These temporarily halted at Nanchang.

Nowadays there are differences of opinion as to the precise importance of the part played by Chu Teh in the birth of the Red Army, but there can be no doubt whatever that it was a dominant and leading one, as he was a strong personality with a high reputation.

After a secret conference, on August 1st Nanchang was taken over by the Communists. This coup was effected by Yeh Ting, the ex-Whampoa cadet, and his 11th Army and Ho Lung, the ex-Bandit, and his 20th Army, co-ordinated and guided by Chu Teh, who himself led about 1,000 from his own garrison. The Nationalists were taken by surprise, and in any case had insufficient troops in the area to do anything about crushing the rising. For several days Chu Teh and his 'Red Army' (as we can now conveniently refer to the Chinese Communist forces) was in complete control of Nanchang and the surrounding area.

A Revolutionary Committee was set up, and it decided to march to Canton to establish a Communist Government in that port. This march began and Nanchang was evacuated, but almost at once there were desertions, although the Reds met no opposition until they neared the Kwangtung border. This Red force moved in two columns which gradually became weaker and weaker in numbers. At the Kwangtung border, owing to circumstances, the two columns had to part company, and both changed direction slightly, as it was decided first of all to take the seaport of Swatow.

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The column led by Chu Teh ran head-on into some Nationalist troops near the town of Juikin, suffering heavy casualties, which caused it to recoil sharply. To avoid complete disaster and to keep his men together, Chu Teh changed direction again and moved eastwards into the province of Fukien, weaving and dodging to avoid Chiang Kai-shek's troops. Indirectly, Chu Teh made towards Swatow, and although for most of the way his route was barred only by the Ming Tuan, the landlords' militia, which was of doubtful military value, his progress was slow.

Meanwhile, the other column of the infant Red Army, which was led by Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, accompanied by Chou the Diplomat, was successful. He occupied and held Swatow for ten days, until he was forced to evacuate, partly because foreign gunboats appeared off the coast to bombard him, partly because the Red momentum was running down and the inexperienced Red Army was meeting many administrative problems for the first time, and partly because regular Nationalist troops were stimulated to take action against him. The Reds hastily evacuated Swatow, and retired into the countryside, becoming badly scattered in the process.

Chu Teh's Red column never reached Swatow, being defeated by Nationalist troops whilst still some miles from it. Chu Teh gathered together as many of his men as he could and retraced his steps into the province of Kiangsi, where early in December 1927 he halted at the town of Tayu. By this time he had less than 2,000 men.

The precise number of Red soldiers who had triumphantly marched out from Nanchang a few days after the successful August 1st Rising is not known with any degree of accuracy. Varying estimates have been given from different sources, but it may have been in the region of between 6,000 and 7,000, of whom about half went with Chu Teh, who was accompanied by Yeh Ting the ex-Whampoa cadet, and the remainder with Ho Lung the ex-Bandit.

After a brief halt Chu Teh moved on to the town of Ichang in Hunan, but Nationalist troops deployed and forced him out again, so he moved to another town called Leiyang, where he attempted to settle down. During the next four or five months he had several brushes with war-lord troops and was compelled to move on a number of occasions. Even so, he built up his fighting force to a strength of about 4,000, although only about half that number had fire-arms, which were mainly rifles of different sorts.

Whilst the occupation and retreat from Swatow were in progress,

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as soon as he heard of the August 1st Rising, Mao Tse-tung organized a small Red force at Hankow where he was. Estimates of its strength vary, but it was probably about 1,000 armed men, some of whom were Nationalist troops from the Hankow garrison who had revolted whilst the rest were miners from Hanyang.

Mao Tse-tung left Hankow and moved through a countryside which was infested with Ming Tuan, the landlords' militia, which although of no great fighting ability was of intense nuisance value and indeed a real danger to Mao Tse-tung's small body of men. He made his way to the city of Changsha, where he was able to raise another unit, this time of militant peasants.

Mao Tse-tung now divided his Red force into three sections, the ex-Nationalist troops, the Hanyang miners and the Changsha peasants, and grandiosely named them the 'First Workers' and Peasants' Army'. True, his was the first military formation to have an official title, but although it had a continuous existence, it appears that it has only received such prominence because of his subsequent dominant position. Chu Teh's Red force at Nanchang must be regarded as having been first in the field, even though only by a few days, and Chu Teh has the prior claim to be regarded as the 'Father of the Red Army of China'.

Mao Tse-tung and his 'First Workers' and Peasants' Army' had nothing but bad luck, becoming disastrously involved in several engagements with the Ming Tuan. Also, in the current Chinese fashion, many of his men deserted him. The commander of his ex-Nationalist troops, with all the men, changed sides and returned to the Nationalist fold. Another ex-Nationalist officer who had been entrusted with a command also proved to be a disappointment, and walked out on Mao Tse-tung a little later.

Mao Tse-tung and his small Red force were harried from pillar to post by the Ming Tuan, so he decided that the best plan would be to move to some remote, secure place to rest, build up and consolidate his command. He was down to less than 1,000 men, and he could not carry on as he was without risking annihilation. He therefore made his way to a traditional bandit lair near a place called Chin Kan Shan in Hunan, which he reached after a painful and humiliating retreat.

Chin Kan Shan was an inaccessible, mountainous patch of ground, about twenty miles square, near the borders of the provinces of Kiangsi and Hunan, and owing to its remoteness and easy defensibility had for centuries been a sanctuary for bandits and other fugi-

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tives. Once there, Mao Tse-tung was temporarily secure for the winter months.

Thwarted in his attempt to hold Swatow, and scurrying round the countryside of Kwangtung just one jump ahead of Nationalist troops, Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, together with Chou the Diplomat, made contact with Peng Pai, who had collected together about 2,000 of the Red soldiers who had been scattered when they were driven from the sea port.

Peng Pai was a bandit from the province of Szechwan, who had been converted to Communism. He had originally been in Yeh Ting's 11th Army, and had marched with Chu Teh's column when it left Nanchang. When Chu Teh was repulsed in battle, Peng Pai had flaked off to stay behind in the area to collect stragglers, while Chu Teh moved on. Peng Pai was one of the original successful 'guerilla leaders' in the field to whom the Red Army owes so much. There were many of them, of course, courageous and enterprising personalities, who did sterling work at this stage of the Red Army's existence and development, but they were either soon killed or captured or attained merely local fame. Peng Pai briefly hit the headlines, but he is representative of a band of nameless, unknown stalwarts without whose ability and sacrifices there would probably be no Red Army today.

Ho Lung and Chou En-lai made plans to seize Canton, and an unsuccessful attempt was made on December 11th 1927 which later became known as the 'Canton Commune'. There were two days of extremely bloody fighting which went against the Reds. Many of Ho Lung's followers were killed and others captured, while the remainder had to go underground or retire rapidly into the depths of the surrounding countryside. Chou the Diplomat went to the International Settlement of Shanghai, while Ho Lung escaped with a small group to Hong Kong, whence he made his way back to Hankow.

Peng Pai again collected together a number of the scattered men and moved inland where he temporarily settled down near Hailofeng, in the province of Kwangtung. Another group of dispersed Red soldiers were gathered together by Ku Ta-chen, another early Red leader of enterprise. Ku had taken a leading part in the street fighting in the Canton Commune. Ku kept his men intact and after many escapes and adventures eventually joined up with Chu Teh in Hunan.

The fact that the Soviet Consulate had been used in the Canton

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Commune gave Chiang Kai-shek the excuse to close down all the remaining Russian consulates in the coastal areas of China under his control.

Owing to the disorganized state of China, the disunity of the warlords, dissension amongst the Nationalist generals and geographical factors, a number of Communists were able to establish themselves in isolated parts of the country or where the population was favourable to them and was able and willing to shelter them. The Communist idea had definitely taken root in a tiny, but intensely dedicated, section of the people. These groups were often widely separated. Some had a very short life, being either overrun by Nationalist or other troops or simply disintegrating under adverse pressures.

Other groups remained intact throughout, but had frequently to move from place to place to avoid Chiang Kai-shek's attention. Yet others flourished and managed successfully to establish a form of Communistic government in the territory they controlled, confiscating and redistributing the land. A few formed their own armed forces, properly organized, armed, disciplined and trained. These Red forces varied from a score or so of riflemen to a few thousand armed soldiers. It is neither possible nor necessary to record in detail the story of each of these shifting Red centres and their armed detachments, but only to mention the major ones which had a continuous existence and which eventually had some bearing or influence upon the development of the Red Army.

By February 1928, about six months after the birth of the Red Army at Nanchang, the following main Red 'armies' were in existence:

North Shensi Soviet, under Liu Tsu-tan the Turncoat.¹

West Hunan Soviet, under Ho Lung the ex-Bandit.

North-East Kiangsi Soviet, under Fang Chih-ming.

Central Hunan Soviet, under Chu Teh.

Eastern Kwangtung Soviet, under Peng Pai the Guerilla Leader.

Chin Kan Shan Soviet, under Mao Tse-tung.

Eastern Hupei Soviet, under Hsu Hai-tung the Peasant.

Anhwei Soviet, under Hsu Hsiang-chien the Ironside.

At this stage all were more or less completely independent of each other, having practically no communication and little knowledge of the others' existence. All were primarily concerned with their own survival.

Circumstances were somewhat favourable to the Communists in

¹ See Appendix 'B'.

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this respect, as apart from the huge distances involved, coupled with lack of good communications, the only military opposition was from the Ming Tuan, the ragged, ramshackle landlords' militia. Had Chiang Kai-shek and the full weight of the Nationalist Army been free to move against them, the story may have been different, but he was again deeply involved fighting the northern war-lords.

On August 27th 1927 a strong Northern force under Sun, formerly of Shanghai, had attacked the Nationalists, and for a time Nanking was in distinct danger of being overrun. For five days there was confused fighting and struggling, which ended with the Battle of Lungtan, in which the Nationalists were victorious. Over 30,000 of Sun's troops surrendered and changed sides, most of them being at once absorbed into the Nationalist Army.

However, in spite of this victory differences began to appear in the Central Executive Committee of the KMT. Chiang Kai-shek had not yet succeeded in getting full control of the KMT, and as a result of these differences he stood down. The Nationalist Government was then run by the Committee. In fact, after Sun's threat receded things pretty well stood still and little constructive work was done at all. Thus, in this period of Nationalist stagnation the newly born Red centres and their armed forces were able to draw breath and live.

Each of these Red centres, or "soviets", as they may be called, was left to its own devices, to sink or swim, and there was no effective central control, neither was there any means of providing mutual help in an emergency. Such guidance as there was came from the underground Central Executive Committee of the KCT based on Shanghai, from where it exerted a shadowy influence, vaguely trying to direct the policy of the spasmodic, epileptic Communist infant. Because of his failures, or perhaps more because he rigidly opposed KCT policy, in that he now openly pressed his theory that it was the peasants and not the urban workers who were the backbone of the Communist revolution, Mao Tse-tung was removed from the Central Executive Committee.

Taking full advantage of Nationalist inactivity and preoccupation, other Red soviets sprang up in many parts of the country where conditions were suitable. Some were small and did not last, but a few were more durable and either remained in continuous existence or eventually merged with others. One of the most important of these was established in Kiangsi province near the town of Kian, and another strong one developed in Western Fukien.

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The soviet in Eastern Hupei, under Hsu Hai-tung, who was one of the few genuine peasants amongst the Red leaders and so can be referred to as Hsu the Peasant, spread and merged with the one in Anhwei, under Hsu the Ironside. Chang Kou-tao, one of the founder members of the KCT, became the Chairman of this enlarged soviet, taking over the political guidance. He can be called Chang the Chairman. This soviet developed quickly, becoming the largest and strongest at that period. It became known as the 'Oyuwan' Soviet, this word being made up from the initial Chinese letters of the ancient names of the three provinces, Anhwei, Honan and Hupei, into which it spread.

Hsu Hsiang-chien was appointed to be the military commander. He had been a brigade commander in the old 4th Corps, the Ironsides, and he had later taken part in the unsuccessful Canton Commune, with Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, and Chou the Diplomat. Hsu escaped and made his way back to the Wuhan area where he joined forces with Chang the Chairman. This Hsu can be known as Hsu the Ironside.

It was to the Oyuwan Soviet that part of the Central Executive Committee moved as soon as it could, and for a time this soviet was the central and most important one, which formulated and controlled such policy as the Reds were able to put into practice.

During the winter of 1927-28 at Chin Kan Shan, Mao Tse-tung was joined by two small bandit groups, and he then formed his force into three units. For a few months these two bandit leaders served him well, but when they later objected to some of his Communistic practices, they were killed.

In the early spring of 1928, Chu Teh, with his small force of almost 4,000 men, found his position in Central Hunan none too secure. Chiang Kai-shek, who had resumed his former authority, realizing that the Reds had not been obliterated, ordered the war-lords to move against them and wipe them out. Because of the Red policy of confiscating land the war-lords were only too pleased to comply whenever they were able.

Chu Teh had made contact with Mao Tse-tung and, deciding to join him, arrived at Chin Kan Shan in May 1928. Thus began a long and successful partnership. The two men had not personally met before. At Chin Kan Shan, Chu Teh, the experienced general, took over military matters and at once set about reorganizing and breathing fire and life into the combined Red force. Chu Teh inspired

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confidence and all unconsciously looked to him, while Mao Tse-tung, who was still of comparatively little importance in the Red hierarchy, sat back and let him carry on. In the early days Chu Teh was the dominant leader and the driving force, while Mao Tse-tung was of much lesser stature, although Chinese Communist historians have now reversed the roles played by these two men, putting Mao Tse-tung always first and Chu Teh second, right from the very beginning. It is true that Mao Tse-tung gained the ascendancy in due course, but this took time.

In May 1928, Chu Teh had about 10,000 followers all told at Chin Kan Shan, but only about a quarter were armed, mainly with a variety of rifles. Such arms as they had were those brought over by ex-Nationalists or those captured from the Ming Tuan. Ammunition was scarce. More Reds made their way to Chin Kan Shan, but at this stage it was Chu Teh's name which was the magnet that attracted them to this secure base. Mao Tse-tung was still considered to be a rather difficult failure. As more Reds joined him, Chu Teh divided them and put them into new units. He also enrolled 'partisans', on a part-time basis, as well as building up and training a 'regular' element.

Chu Teh spent the remainder of the year 1928 disciplining and forming his army, while Mao Tse-tung concentrated upon the political side of affairs, devoting most of his time to setting up a form of soviet government and to political education. The two men took to each other and worked well together. Chu Teh, the military expert, at once appreciated Mao Tse-tung's shrewd political acumen and began openly to support his views and push him forward.

Chin Kan Shan was the cradle of the Chinese Red Army, and it was there that Chu Teh really earned the right to be known as the 'Father of the Red Army'. At Chin Kan Shan his ideas were put into practice and his tactical and other views on military matters accepted. Chu Teh's army became the model which all other soviets eventually copied. He did not always favour Russian methods and the Russian pattern.

Mao Tse-tung, the far-seeing, peasant-minded politician, evolved certain rules of conduct to be observed towards the peasants, upon whom he was now openly relying and whom he hoped to rally to his banner *en masse* to use as a 'background' against which to prosecute the war against the Nationalists. The main rules were that the peasants must be treated with courtesy, nothing must be taken from

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them unless it was first paid for, and anything borrowed must be promptly returned. This was a novel and unusual approach for Chinese soldiers to adopt, as for centuries, army after army of one sort or another had thoughtlessly and ruthlessly trampled over and batted on the peasants. To the Chinese mercenary soldier the Chinese peasant was the lowest form of life, and this opinion was reciprocated heartily by the peasants themselves, who had a proverb which said that, 'One does not make good iron into nails, nor good men into soldiers.' The two were chasms apart, and now Mao Tse-tung was not only trying to bring them together but eventually to integrate them.

It was also at Chin Kan Shan that the four 'Golden Rules' of warfare were evolved, which were really nothing more than the age-old principles of guerilla warfare. As long as the Red Army applied them it was invariably successful, and when it did not it frequently failed. Today, Mao Tse-tung is widely accredited with being the author of these rules, but the strong probability is that they originated with Chu Teh, who had had wide experience of guerilla warfare on the Yunnan borderland some twenty years before. Perhaps Mao Tse-tung polished them up and put them into attractive slogan form.

At this stage Mao Tse-tung appears to have had little military knowledge, and it was not until some years later that he discovered he was a strategical genius. One more than ever suspects that all the ideas of warfare and strategy upon which today he discourses so profoundly were originally those he learnt from his friend, Chu Teh.

Each of the four Golden Rules, in Chinese, consists of four characters only, and the most widely accepted translation of them is:

1. When the enemy advances—we retreat.
2. When the enemy halts—we harass.
3. When the enemy avoids battle—we attack.
4. When the enemy retreats—we follow.

In addition, between them, they laid down three other basic rules of conduct to be rigidly followed by all Communists, be they cadres¹ (active political workers), soldiers, partisans or peasants. They were known in the first place as the 'Three Cardinal Rules of Discipline'. These were:

1. Obey all orders.

¹ Known in Chinese as Kanpu, meaning loosely a minor leader.

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2. Take nothing from the peasants.

3. Pool all confiscated goods.

This meant that all supplies were to be taken only from the landlords, the Ming Tuan and the Nationalists.

Another rule insisted upon by Chu Teh, unusual in China, was that of field sanitation. Previously Chinese troops had never paid very much attention to this and seldom built latrines. The consequent undesirable results can be imagined.

When these matters of general conduct and military policy were hammered out, Mao Tse-tung concentrated upon political matters, leaving Chu Teh to forge the military instrument.

Chu Teh's force eventually became known as the 4th Red Army, which indicated the then relative importance of the Chin Kan Shan Soviet. This designation was allotted by a quorum of the Central Executive Committee at the Oyuwan Soviet, whose military force bore the title of the 1st Red Army. The designations of the others will not be mentioned in detail as many were changed a little later on.

During the spring of 1928 the troops of Ho Chien, a war-lord of Hunan, moved against Chin Kan Shan, but the operation was rather disjointed and half-hearted, as although two separate attacks were made on this Red base, both were fairly easily repulsed. Chin Kan Shan was a natural defensive bastion. After these failures the war-lord troops sat down in a ring around the fortress area in an attempt to starve the Reds out. Although Chin Kan Shan was virtually besieged, it was not, however, completely sealed off, and the Reds could filter through the enemy lines.

Two or three sorties were made by the Reds against the war-lord troops, but they had very limited success, and they brought home to Chu Teh the fact that his men would have to undergo a period of strict training before they would be capable of successfully taking the field even against the second-rate troops that had been ordered up against him. Therefore the Reds at Chin Kan Shan settled down for a year in a state of partial siege. They planted and grew their own crops and everyone, soldiers included, had to work in the fields in turn. As more Communists were attracted to this base, it became overcrowded and as a result food was scarce.

In January 1928, Chiang Kai-shek had been reappointed Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist forces, and he had at once moved out against the northern war-lords. By June, Peking had fallen to him. He was then able to spare more attention to deal with

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the mushroom-like growths of Red soviets that were dotted about the interior of the country. He ordered the war-lords everywhere to redouble their activities, and against the main Red soviets he moved formations of his 'regular' troops.

The force surrounding Chin Kan Shan was thickened up by Nationalist regular soldiers, and increased in size until it numbered about 40,000. In July Chiang Kai-shek gave the order to tighten the blockade, in which month, a Nationalist brigade commander named Peng Teh-huai,¹ with several of his units, went over to the Communist side, moving inside the perimeter he had previously been besieging.

Peng, an ex-Whampoa cadet, was a valuable gain to the Reds, as they particularly lacked experienced, trained military leaders. He can be known as Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier.

Throughout the country, wherever they felt strong enough, the various Red soviets essayed local expansions, but frequently these had little success despite weak opposition. The scattered components of the infant Red Army were not yet strong enough.

In Shensi, for example, the Reds, under Liu Tsu-tan the Turncoat, with the co-operation of some local partisans, gained control over part of the countryside, and he was able largely to confine the war-lord troops to the towns. Emboldened, the Shensi Reds tried more ambitious tactics, but their attempts to assault the towns themselves all failed badly. On the other hand, local units sent into the hills against them were also unsuccessful.

The large Oyuwan Soviet did expand its area during 1928 and 1929. Although the strength of its armed force, the 1st Red Army, rose to over 6,000 armed men, it was far less efficient and disciplined than that of Chu Teh, to whom gradually all Red military commanders seemed to look for example, advice and military guidance.

In the autumn of 1928 there was a meeting of delegates from many soviets, held at Chin Kan Shan. Mao Tse-tung was the chairman, and it was probably at this meeting that he was able to impress his personality for the first time upon a wider field and to initiate the beginnings of his later reputation. Certainly, from this moment his star began to rise.

¹ Almost illiterate, later to become the Defence Minister of the Peoples' Republic of China. He was relieved of this post for objecting to his army being used so extensively to work on farms, building dams and other projects to the detriment of training.

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Several matters seem to have been agreed at this meeting of which the main ones were to continue to divide land out amongst the peasants, to give good treatment to all prisoners and to arm the peasants. The latter resolution was against the existing policy of the Central Executive Committee of the KCT.

Just previously the Central Executive Committee had met in Moscow, where under Russian pressure all the leaders had agreed to sink their differences and to co-operate. At this Moscow Congress Li Li-san assumed the effective leadership.

By autumn of that year, Chiang Kai-shek had completed the unification of China, and was able to pause to take stock. He knew he had not completely crushed the Reds, but he still did not correctly estimate their true strength of purpose or numbers. He seemed to assume that many of the Red soviets were simply groups of bandits, or other armed groups led by potential war-lords, whom he could later either crush or buy over. However, for the winter months things remained fairly static on the Nationalist front, whilst Chiang Kai-shek prepared for the future.

At the turn of the new year of 1929, Chu Teh had an army of just over 5,000 armed and trained men, so it was decided to cut through the passive ring of encircling troops to wander afield either to link up with other Red soviets or to encourage peasant risings. Accordingly, with about 4,000 Red soldiers and as many more followers, Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung successfully broke out from Chin Kan Shan on the night of January 29th 1929. During the ensuing weeks, Chu Teh cleared part of the countryside of southern Honan, pushing aside the Ming Tuan, before turning to march into Kiangsi.

Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek was beset with the problem of holding together his huge armed forces, which numbered over three-quarters of a million men. He had divided his troops into four separate 'armies', keeping personal control of the 1st Army himself. Under his overall generalship Nationalist generals and war-lords argued and squabbled amongst themselves. The army of Feng the Christian General caused him immediate anxiety, as did that of Yen the Model Governor, and before the end of the year he was in open conflict with both of them.

This and other matters concerned with consolidating his gains occupied most of his attention, and he was accordingly only able to give fleeting thoughts to the growing Red soviets. He merely ordered that they must be contained and crushed. A few, in fact, were over-

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run, but the stronger ones remained in existence. All were blockaded to some degree, but owing to the indifferent quality and disjointed co-ordination of the troops this was invariably largely ineffective and incomplete.

The base at Chin Kan Shan had been left in the care of Peng the ex-Nationalist brigadier, who had about 1,000 armed men at his disposal. As soon as the Nationalists reacted to Chu Teh's break-out, the encircling pressure increased, fresh troops were moved up, and in April 1929 they assaulted, breaking through into the inner defences and forcing out Peng and his men.

After this defeat Peng was able to collect together only about 700 soldiers and a few others. He then marched off in the direction where he thought Chu Teh and the 4th Red Army might be. The Reds as yet had no long-range wireless inter-communication, nor in fact anything at all of this nature, and for a time the paths of the two Red forces crossed and recrossed without their meeting.

As Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung moved through west and south Kiangsi they encouraged peasant risings and established tiny soviets wherever they could. A group of these were formed and a small armed force, known temporarily as the 6th Red Army, was raised for their defence by Chu Teh. Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung moved on, but when they had gone the Ming Tuan returned and attacked this Red soviet, destroying it and slaughtering many hundreds of peasants. A few remnants of the broken 6th Red Army managed to struggle back to join up with Chu Teh's 4th Red Army, which was slowly increasing in size.

This sort of tragedy was repeated on several occasions in this and other parts of China. All was well when a fairly large Red Army was there, but when it moved on the more or less defenceless peasants were massacred by the Ming Tuan.

During the summer of 1929, Chu Teh marched and counter-marched across Hunan, Kiangsi and Fukien, pushing the Ming Tuan aside as he went. Generally, it can be said that he had the freedom of the countryside, but his one or two tentative assaults on towns were not successful. One or two he did manage to occupy by stealth, but he did not remain in them for many days.

Eventually, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, whose force had increased to almost 1,500 armed men, joined up with Chu Teh. Together they moved and took the town of Juikin, near the border of Hunan and Kiangsi, where they stayed for a while. During this period

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of wandering Mao Tse-tung, who had accompanied Chu Teh all the way, had concerned himself mainly with political and civil matters. Once in Juikin he set about organizing a Red soviet.

Meanwhile, in north-west China a famine was raging, which was turned to their advantage by the Reds. The leader of the Shensi Soviet, Liu Tsu-tan, an ex-Whampoa cadet, had been at Hankow during the 1927 purge, after which he moved first to Shanghai, before returning to his native Shensi, arriving there in 1928. The following year he organized and led a peasant revolt, but this was suppressed by Feng the Christian General, Chiang Kai-shek sending aircraft to enable Feng to do this.

However, a small nucleus of Red fighters clung together under Liu and hid in the hills, where he kept the Communist spirit alive for as long as he stayed with them. A little later on, in typical Chinese fashion, Liu defected and accepted a commission in the army of Feng the Christian General, so that we can conveniently refer to this Liu as Liu the Turncoat. A few small groups of Red guerilla fighters remained active in the Shensi hills.

In the autumn of 1929 a conference, attended by delegates from most of the Red soviets and by some members of the Central Executive Committee of the KCT, was held at Juikin, under the chairmanship of Mao Tse-tung. There was much plain speaking and differences were aired. Mao Tse-tung was accused of selfishly retreating to a safe lair in the remote mountains and of ignoring the urban workmen. Counter charges were made by Mao-Tse-tung. He answered logically and convincingly all the questions and arguments that cropped up, and his personal influence increased.

Again, owing to the preoccupation of Chiang Kai-shek, the Reds were left much alone during the winter of 1929. Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung, with the 4th Red Army, moved to the town of Kutien, in the province of Fukien, where a Red soviet had been established in the mountains nearby.

In January 1930 another conference, under Mao Tse-tung's chairmanship, was held at Kutien. In this role Mao Tse-tung was at his best. It was decided that the Red Army was the vital and essential instrument, not only for survival, but to further future Red policy. It was now to have the first priority in everything and was to be increased in strength. At this conference all aspects of the Red Army were discussed. Mao Tse-tung complained that many of the Red 'commanders' and soldiers were not serious enough, and that they

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retained their old 'imperialist' habits, without specifying precisely what these were.

Also, lack of discipline came under fire and steps were to be taken to tighten it up. The high state of discipline in the 4th Red Army was entirely due to Chu Teh's personality and leadership; in the other armies and detachments it was not nearly so good, whilst in some it was bad. Political education of the Red soldier was to be redoubled, with the emphasis placed on discipline, and the early rigid 'equality' between commanders and men was modified to some slight extent.

It was to remain essentially a democratic army with no ranks or special privileges for anyone. The exception was the indefinite rank or title of 'commander' or 'leader', which meant anyone in charge of any formation, from a section to an army. There were still no badges of rank and the 'commanders' had to announce their identity and designation before giving out their orders. Before any battle, action or march, all the troops were drawn up and the project discussed, during which discussion any soldier could voice his opinion. After the action, again all assembled to analyse it, when not only were individual soldiers discussed and criticized, but also the 'commanders' themselves. In the very early days punishments were often harsh and salutary, and those who disobeyed or failed in battle, after their shortcomings had been fully discussed and commented upon by their assembled comrades, were frequently shot.

The 'regular' troops of the Red Army, as opposed to the partisans and other followers, began to be dressed in 'uniform' and all wore a red star as their cap badge.

During 1929 and 1930 Chiang Kai-shek was still very busily engaged in consolidating his gains. Feng the Christian General had formed a coalition with Yen the Model Governor, and Chiang Kai-shek was forced to move against them with part of his army. In the ensuing scuffles Yen was defeated and forced to flee. He then spent some time in exile in Dairen.

Looking over his shoulder, Chiang Kai-shek saw that there were several vigorous, fair-sized Red soviets in his territory, and he knew that he must do something about them as soon as he could. One of the most dangerous, he thought, was that in Fukien, under Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung, with its headquarters at Kutien, so he ordered the war-lord of Yunnan to move up his troops and destroy it. Chu Teh, in command of the 4th Red Army, took the field against the

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Yunnanese troops in April 1930, and in a series of actions succeeded in scattering them by July.

In June 1930 the four main Red military groups were redesignated as 'corps', and the growing influence of Chu Teh can be gauged by the fact that his formation became known as the 1st Corps. The new designations were as follows:

1st Corps—in Fukien, under Chu Teh.

2nd Corps—in Hunan and Hupei, under Ho Lung the ex-Bandit.

3rd Corps—in Kiangsi, under Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier.

4th Corps—the Oyuwan Soviet, under Hsu the Ironside.

As far as can be ascertained with any accuracy the total strength of armed soldiers only amounted to about 20,000, although there were as many more semi-trained men, which included 'regulars' without arms, and partisans. The arms were still mainly rifles, many elderly, although a handful of automatic weapons had been acquired. There was no standard formation, and the corps varied considerably in their pattern, some following the Russian model and others adopting features from other foreign armies. Chu Teh vaguely favoured the German ideas which he had come to admire while in Germany.

Li Li-san, the political head of Communist affairs, still lacked faith in the peasants and would not agree that they were of more value to the movement than the industrial workers. Li advocated attacks on cities and towns—the bigger the better, he felt, as he held the view that if large ones, such as Hankow, Changsha or Nanking, could be taken and held, the Communist movement would advance more rapidly. From a purely military point of view Chu Teh did not agree with Li; he was of the opinion that while some cities might be taken, they could not be held, as the Reds had no heavy weapons.

The new policy of the Central Executive Committee was that all arms available should be given to the 'regular' Red armies to further this purpose, which meant taking many weapons from the partisans who generally had been allowed to keep what they had personally captured. Mao Tse-tung was firmly against this, as was Chu Teh, but they were overruled. Mao Tse-tung insisted that the Red Army should not stay and hold ground in the face of superior forces, or it would invite destruction, but that adherence to the four Golden Rules was the only sure way of waging successful warfare with their slender resources. To abandon the partisans, who were locally rooted, to their fate without any arms whenever the Red Army

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moved on would be to invite their slaughter, as had happened so often before. With arms they would have a better chance of survival, especially against the Ming Tuan, who were not over-keen on facing bullets. These arguments were put forward, but the Committee were not impressed, and it was decided to go ahead with a policy of taking and holding cities.

To put this into effect a partial reorganization was carried out and an effort made to get the corps into some neater pattern. All Red soldiers had to take an oath of allegiance to the Party.

The city of Changsha was selected as the first objective. The first body of Red troops to move towards this city was the 2nd Corps, commanded by Ho Lung, the colourful ex-Bandit, who had a strength of about 6,000 armed men in a fairly good state of training. After some fighting, he was able to seize Changsha, forcing out the troops of Ho Chien, the local war-lord. This was a victory, not only for Ho Lung and his 2nd Corps, but also for the policy of Li Li-san, and a defeat at the conference table for Mao Tse-tung.

However, foreign powers with interests in China became alarmed by this Communist success, and their gunboats converged along the Yangtse River to open fire upon that city, keeping up a continuous bombardment. From the landward side the Reds were besieged by Ho Chien's men, who had been persuaded to return to the fray. Caught and pressed between these two forces and having no artillery, Ho Lung the ex-Bandit was obliged to evacuate, after being in possession of Changsha for ten days.

In spite of this setback Li Li-san's policy of taking cities was still pressed forward and Chu Teh was ordered to take Nanking. Marching there with his 1st Corps he assaulted that city in the last days of July. He was unsuccessful, suffered heavy casualties and was forced to withdraw after only two days' fighting. Chu Teh was then joined by the 3rd Corps, commanded by Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier. Together they were ordered to march and re-take Changsha.

The 1st and 3rd Corps arrived before Changsha in the first week in September and a combined attack was launched, but meanwhile the city defences had been improved and stiffened. Barbed wire had appeared and mines had been planted. The old Chinese trick of driving cattle before them in the attack to explode the mines and trample down the barbed wire seemed to misfire. More machine-guns were mounted on the city walls, which spat fire at the Reds. Nationalist aircraft flew over and periodically bombed and machine-gunned

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the Red formations on the ground. Casualties were heavy and the attackers fell back to lick their wounds.

After a pause for a couple of days another determined assault was mounted, but the result was the same: heavy loss of life, inability to penetrate the wire or breach the minefield, owing mainly to the lack of heavy supporting artillery. Again, exhausted, balked and bleeding, the Reds withdrew from the fray. On his own initiative Chu Teh called off the operation and both Red corps moved into the depths of the countryside.

Next, the battered 1st and 3rd Corps turned and marched towards Kian, in Kiangsi, to which they laid siege. This city resisted all their efforts for about two weeks, but it was finally occupied by the Reds on October 4th 1930. Chu Teh and Peng now had between them, it is thought, almost 15,000 armed men, but no artillery. Without artillery, Chu Teh did not feel he was strong enough to hold this city, so the Red troops evacuated Kian and moved into the mountainous area just to the north. It was here, at Kian, that presses and other printing materials fell into Red hands for the first time, and from that moment a small, but constant, stream of propaganda pamphlets began to flow.

Chu Teh, supported by Mao Tse-tung, then openly repudiated the policy of the Central Executive Committee, and insisted upon following one of guerilla warfare. After some argument, Chu Teh's protest was accepted, and Li Li-san, who still insisted upon taking cities first, was voted down. Li lost much of his influence with the failure of his policy, and a little later went to Russia. With Li out of the way, one of the strongest and most influential personalities of the KCT was removed from Mao Tse-tung's path.

Chu Teh argued that the war could not be successfully prosecuted by the distant, often out-of-touch Central Executive Committee, which should stick to political matters in any case, so after some deliberation it was decided to set up a Revolutionary Military Council, which was to be the supreme authority in the field, being subordinate only to the political control of the Central Executive Committee. It was to consist of the military commanders of each of the four corps and their chief political officers. There was dual command at all levels in the Red Army, both political and military, with the political officer having the power to override the decisions taken by the military commander. Chu Teh was appointed Commander-in-Chief, and Mao Tse-tung was appointed Chief Political Officer, of

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the whole of the Red Army forces wherever they were. Mao Tse-tung also became Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council.

It was decided to expand all Red Army formations. The 1st and 3rd Corps, for example, were merged to become known as the 1st Front Army. Within the next few months many formations underwent a change. 'Corps' swelled into 'Front Armies', whilst other corps and divisions were formed, merged, amalgamated or expanded. Several small, independent 'armies' cropped up here and there, some of which were, in fact, less than battalion strength. There is little point in cataloguing all this detail.

Chu Teh retained personal control over the 1st Front Army, in addition to carrying out his duties as commander-in-chief, which were mainly advisory; and perhaps because of this it became the best Red Army formation of them all. Over the other Front Armies and detachments Chu Teh had but a watery, distant authority at the best. Although as commander-in-chief he laid down the military doctrine to be followed, the detached commanders interpreted it in their own way, if at all. Chu Teh's advice was not always followed, especially in the Oyuwan Soviet to the north of the River Yangtse.

Chu Teh laid it down that Red troops were to fight no battles against superior, or even equal, numbers, and insisted that they should first concentrate upon the Ming Tuan, the landlords' militia, partly because its members were of poor fighting material, partly because they were fairly easily persuaded to change sides, and partly because they had arms which the Reds desperately needed. Every effort was made to win over Chinese troops of any sort to the Red cause.

As regards attacking, the Red soldiers were only to attack when sure of success, and when they had all the advantages, such as superior numbers and the element of surprise. Before going into action they were to take great pains to reconnoitre a line of retreat. They were to practise rapid dispersal, and conversely, rapid concentration, preparatory to an assault. All efforts were to be made to conceal the positions of the main bodies of Red troops. Lastly, but by no means least, the principle of mobility was drummed into all ranks. In a country where the terrain was such as it is in China, this was all too often the key to the successes of the Red Army.

Discipline was tightened up, aided by Mao Tse-tung and his persistent programme of political education for the men. All Red soldiers were given two hours political training every day. Orders,

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after discussion, were to be obeyed implicitly, and the Reds became more ruthless than before to those who disobeyed in battle. After discussion and 'explanation' men found guilty before the assembled soldiers were frequently liquidated. Chu Teh insisted upon other forms of campaign discipline, such as that only boiled water be drunk, and this practice was so instilled that in time it became something of a fetish with Red soldiers everywhere. To anyone who knows the old China, the value of this rule cannot be over-estimated. Also, Chu Teh persevered with his insistence upon latrine discipline in the field, which did much to keep down disease in the Red ranks in the ensuing years.

Chu Teh also laid it down that the partisans, or part-time soldiers, should be enrolled in large numbers. These were to be politically educated and disciplined, and given as much military training as possible; when arms were available or were captured by them, the partisans were to have them. However, the prime purposes of enlisting partisans were partly to gain intelligence and to give warning of the approach of the enemy, and partly to form a handy, ready-made supply and communication service.

These partisans, in the first years, were not expected to move away from their home districts, and if the Red Army troops were driven out or moved on, they were expected to keep their arms and go underground. Red cadres would be left with them to keep the spirit of Communism alive, and to maintain the link that had been forged with the Red Army. The ready-made supply service the partisans provided was very important to the regular Red Army as it meant that every Red soldier was literally a front-line fighter, and none had to be diverted from this task to fetch or carry.

In the political field Mao Tse-tung was busy scheming and working. He experimented with distributing land that had been taken from the landlords, educating the peasants politically, forming local soviet governments, and training his political workers.

4

The Extermination Campaigns (October 1930—October 1934)

Chiang Kai-shek, well aware that the Reds were firmly establishing themselves in parts of the country, meant to do something about it as soon as he could, but as we have seen his attention so far had been fully occupied elsewhere. The war-lords who had allied themselves to him for the Northern Campaign soon began to resent his central authority, and one by one a number of them revolted against him.

In 1930, Chiang Kai-shek was joined by his first German military advisers, but in the punitive campaigns he undertook against the war-lords he did not heed their advice very much. However, on the few occasions when he did he was successful.

Once he had asserted his authority over the unruly war-lords he turned his eyes angrily southwards to the most prominent Red base, that in the region of the borderlands of the provinces of Kiangsi and Fukien, under the control of Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh. He decided to eliminate it first, and for this purpose he detailed off some eight divisions, comprising about 100,000 of his regular troops fresh from their victories, under General Chang Hwei-chang.

At the same time Chiang Kai-shek ordered his other generals and war-lords to take whatever action they could against any Red bases in their areas. He indicated in particular the two other main ones, the Oyuwan and Hunan Soviets. A few token moves were made by the Nationalists against them, which were little better than half-hearted feints. Hsu the Ironside of the Oyuwan Soviet hardly saw any action, and Ho Lung the ex-Bandit saw rather less.

Chang, the Nationalist General, moved south with his eight divisions, approaching the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet from three different directions, hoping thereby to trap as many Reds as possible, but his

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intercommunication between, and the control of, his divisions were poor, and this operation did not produce the hoped-for result.

Against him, Chu Teh, commanding the 1st Front Army, was able to muster about 40,000 men, about half of whom were armed. They were divided into small, almost independent units, and using them Chu Teh fought a war of avoidance and manœuvre. He frequently moved his headquarters, and ordered the mobile columns, into which he grouped his units, to be constantly on the move.

Chu Teh's tactics were successful, and as long as the Red column commanders obeyed his directions to avoid contact with the enemy, all went well. However, when they chose to ignore his orders, as they occasionally did, they were defeated and suffered loss. The isolated attempts to attack were not usually prolonged, for, when they realized the strength of the enemy, the Reds quickly faded away into the hills again.

There was, in fact, no action of size or note until the last days of December. In the meantime, Chang the Nationalist General and his men had marched hundreds of fruitless miles. The Nationalist troops had become weary, frustrated and reluctant. When he had got the enemy into this frame of mind and condition, Chu Teh decided to strike. He concentrated as many of his mobile columns as he could, and they suddenly descended from the hills on the Nationalist force near a place called Langtang, where Chang the Nationalist General and most of his troops, perhaps five or six divisions, were resting.

A spasmodic, protracted battle ensued, which lasted for three days. At first the Reds had the advantage of surprise and in their initial rush succeeded in overrunning one of Chang's divisions, capturing the divisional commander, his staff and practically all the men. Nationalist divisions at this time varied in strength, but averaged about 10,000. This one was certainly scattered, and the Reds claim they took about 9,000 prisoners. The other Nationalist divisions had difficulty in remaining intact and holding out against the multiple pin-pricking Red attacks, but as time dragged on these Red assaults became disjointed and uncontrolled.

The impetus faded and then folded up; the Red troops disappeared into the hills, taking with them, apart from the prisoners mentioned, over 8,000 rifles, quantities of ammunition, machine-guns and mortars. Perhaps the most important items of all captured were some radio sets and other intercommunication equipment—the first to be possessed by the Red Army.

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Chang the Nationalist General pulled his force together, and recommenced chasing shadows. After a fortnight his men were utterly exhausted, and so the '1st Extermination Campaign', as it came to be called, came to an ignominious stop.

After the battle of Langtang both sides were ruthless in their treatment of prisoners. The Reds executed the captured divisional commander, his staff and all other Nationalist officers who were caught, as well as all other ranks who would not willingly join them. The Red resolution to treat all prisoners with consideration was completely ignored in this instance. On the other side, Chang took similar measures.

In the battle of Langtang the Reds did not have it all their own way, even when they had the initial advantage of surprise, and while their casualties are not known precisely—they may have been in the region of 3,000—it has since been admitted by them that over fifty per cent of them were 'commanders'. If this was so, and upwards of 1,000 junior leaders as well as those at higher levels were put out of action, it accounts for the fact that Chu Teh lost control over the battle after it had been raging for some hours.

The two other main reasons for loss of control and high casualties were poor discipline and lack of communications. Not all Chu Teh's orders had been obeyed, and Chu Teh, the strict disciplinarian, did not like that.

During this campaign, which lasted for about four months, the Red 1st Army had been severely tested and shaken. There had been one regimental mutiny, one smaller mutiny, and several other outbursts of dissidence and reluctance to fall in with Chu Teh's plans. Apart from fighting a protracted battle against an enemy of superior strength he was faced with continual difficulties made by his subordinates. Chu Teh had to pause to put his own house in order in the middle of the campaign, and he did it firmly and ruthlessly. It is reported that he converged upon the mutineers and 'liquidated' them all. The mutinous troops had been mainly ex-Nationalists who had changed sides.

It is noticeable that the strength of the 1st Front Army sank in this period from about 40,000 down to about 20,000 men, the losses being due to battle casualties, desertions and liquidations. Little is ever said about deserters by the Reds generally, who usually conveniently grouped them under the heading of 'captured by the enemy in battle', but desertion, especially in the early, difficult days, was a real problem to them, and one which took a heavy toll.

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The result of the battle of Langtang and the whole campaign, in spite of mistakes and misfortunes, gave the Reds confidence in themselves and their new army; when Chang the Nationalist General withdrew, they remained in possession of a very large stretch of borderland territory, encompassing much of the provinces of both Kiangsi and Fukien.

Chu Teh took stock of what was wrong and set to work to put it right. Nationalist aircraft came over periodically on bombing raids, causing him to continue to move his headquarters at intervals, but the Nationalist ground forces left him alone for the remainder of the winter. Therefore he had a respite of about four months.

He made good use of that time and first of all formed his collection of units, which was all he really had, into 'divisions', which he made the basic field formation. These divisions varied in size and composition as he experimented, but averaged for a while about 3,000 men, being formed loosely on the 'triangular' system, having three 'regiments', each of three battalions, each of three or more small companies. Chu Teh also formed small 'engineer' detachments from the miners who had joined him, and one was attached to each division. This was his first, and for a long time only, specialist arm. The captured machine-guns and mortars he distributed among the units, and did not at this stage brigade them.

Chu Teh set about moulding these formations into a workable, malleable instrument, which he did by personally appointing the 'commanders' at the various levels, and by supervising their training very closely. He had started a training centre about twelve months previously to train the men themselves and also the junior commanders, and this he enlarged until it was able to cater for about 800 at a time. He also broadened its scope, and made it more of a 'commanders' training school, to provide courses for company and platoon leaders, who soon formed about half the students. In addition, Chu Teh began training courses for the senior 'commanders', that is at battalion, regimental and divisional level.

He remembered the communications failure at the battle of Langtang, and set up a signal school, laying special emphasis on the need to become proficient in this sphere, both in battle and in guerilla warfare. The radio equipment just captured enabled this to be done. Chu Teh's chief of staff, newly returned from Russia, Liu Po-cheng, the One-Eyed General, was given the special responsibility of directing and supervising training.

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Liu Po-cheng had formerly been an officer in the army of the warlord of Szechwan for many years, and had taken part in the revolution of 1911. By 1913 he had become a brigade commander, losing an eye in the fighting that year. He was attracted to the programme of the KCT and became a Communist at Wuhan in 1926. In 1928 he went to Russia, where he studied for three years.

Discipline was not forgotten and was improved, mainly by intensifying political education. In each division a 'Soldiers' Committee' was formed, which was made responsible for maintaining discipline and distributing confiscated goods. Men who offended against the discipline regulations were brought before this Soldiers' Committee, which punished them. There was a shortage of food in the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet during the early part of 1931, and it was rationed out by the Soldiers' Committees.

'Partisan' units were formed from the peasants to whom land had been given, and these were given some military training. At this period they were usually allowed to keep what arms they captured themselves, otherwise they were largely unarmed, except for grenades, swords and knives. They were expected to remain in their own district and either take to the hills or go underground when Chu Teh's army was forced to move on.

Chu Teh recruited where he could for his regular force, but the field was small, and his 1st Front Army remained in the region of 20,000 men, all of whom were armed, mainly with rifles of different sorts. His stock of machine-guns was slowly increasing.

The respite came to an end in May 1931 when Chiang Kai-shek ordered what became known as the '2nd Extermination Campaign' to commence. Its primary object was to eliminate the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet. These campaigns, of which there was a series, became known as 'Extermination Campaigns', or 'Anti-Red Campaigns', as the declared object in all cases was to exterminate all Communists and their sympathizers.

This time at least 15 divisions were allocated for this purpose, amounting to about 150,000 men, who were put under the command of General Ho Ying-chin, the Nationalist Minister for War, who was entrusted with this operation. Another 50,000 or more war-lord troops were ordered to move against the other Red bases, particularly that of Oyuwan.

During the summer of 1931 the Oyuwan Soviet, which already included a population of about two million people, was partially

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surrounded and some minor offensive operations were undertaken against it by local troops. Hsu the Ironside, the military commander at Oyuwan, was able to hold these quite comfortably and he managed not only to retain all his territory but to expand slightly in the course of the year.

The Hunan Soviet, under Ho Lung the ex-bandit, was also able to expand during the year until it embraced about one million people. It was in a fairly good strategical and tactical position and throughout these Extermination Campaigns suffered far less than did the two other larger Red bases.

Ho Lung, who was a native of Hunan, based his soviet to the west and north, but bordering upon, a huge lake, known as Tungting Lake,¹ just south of the River Yangtse. In this territory of hills, rivers and lakes the ingenious Ho Lung found full scope for activity. He was a dashing, colourful character, debonair and resourceful, although nearly illiterate. Photographs of him about this period show him with a dapper 'Clark Gable' moustache. He became a Communist when he joined the Nationalist 4th Army at Wuhan in 1926, but prior to that his adventures as a leader of peasant revolts, banditry, political intriguer and war-lord make fiction pall. A host of tales are told about him. One is that after the failure of the Canton Commune and his escape to Hong Kong, he returned to Hankow and was given four rifles with which to start an army in the hills. A few weeks later he was at the head of 1,000 armed men.

Ho the War Minister formed his divisions up behind a line of defences that had appeared, and which stretched across the north of the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet, sealing it off to some degree from the north. This 'line' was really little more than a few shallow trenches with the occasional earthwork, but it was the beginning of a proper defensive line designed vaguely to prevent Red expansion northwards.

Chu Teh's idea was to draw the Nationalists from this defensive line and lead them a dance in the mountainous terrain of the Red base, which he had done with some success in the previous campaign. This time with his improved communications he hoped for even better results, and he gave his divisional commanders strict orders to avoid contact with forces of superior strength, but to turn and cut off Nationalist stragglers whenever the opportunity offered, with the primary object of capturing weapons and supplies.

¹ Also sometimes referred to as Hunghu Lake.

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Chu Teh need not have worried, as Ho the War Minister had no intention of staying behind a defensive line, and at once advanced into Red territory on a broad front to seek the Reds and bring them to battle. But the area was now too vast and difficult, and the Reds too elusive and well practised in guerilla warfare. There were no battles of any note with the Nationalists, but occasionally when the Reds struck at small units they did not have it all their own way, mainly because of superior Nationalist fire-power, and as a result their losses were heavy.

While determined to avoid battle with regular Nationalist troops, Chu Teh decided he was strong enough to strike at war-lord troops, who were not so well armed, trained or disciplined. Feng the Christian General had just come to terms with Chiang Kai-shek and large detachments of his army were sent to reinforce Ho the War Minister in this Extermination Campaign. Feng's men were reluctant to fight and Chu Teh easily pressed them backwards, capturing many with their arms and equipment. Ho the War Minister had swiftly to move up some of his regular divisions to stop the rot. The Reds again melted into the hills.

Chu Teh then moved the bulk of his Red soldiers to the east to hit at the army of the war-lord of Fukien, who had been ordered to contain this Red base along its eastern edge. The Fukien troops were not keen to fight either, although one fairly large-scale action took place in which, despite the reluctance and low quality of the enemy, the Reds again suffered fairly heavy loss. This action was indecisive.

Next, Chu Teh collected his army together and marched south to strike at the army of the war-lord of Kwangtung, who had been ordered to move north against the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet. There were a few skirmishes, during which the Reds captured arms and prisoners; after this the Kwangtung troops could not be persuaded to move any further north.

Meanwhile, Ho the War Minister who was poking southwards into the Soviet area with his regular divisions, found himself up against avoidance tactics. Impossible as it was to bring the Reds to battle, the 2nd Extermination Campaign fizzled out six weeks after it started. The Reds were left in possession of an even larger area of territory than they held formerly. They had overflowed into the province of Fukien especially, and also southwards to the border of Kwangtung Province.

Another reason for abruptly terminating this campaign and for

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withdrawing Nationalist troops was the quarrel and jealousies between the war-lords and the Nationalist generals themselves, who could not agree to work together. Ho the War Minister was unable to persuade them to co-operate under his command.

In some instances the triumphant Reds eagerly followed the withdrawing enemy, penetrating the 'defensive line' to the north of the Soviet in one or two places, but they were sharply recalled by Chu Teh.

Despite the fact that there had been no set battles, Chu Teh's losses probably exceeded 2,000. Again, about half of this figure, whatever it really was, was later admitted to be 'commanders'. Many of the wounded ones, of course, afterwards returned to the fray. The keynote of bitterness and ruthlessness, as in all civil wars, predominated on both sides, and the Reds continued their practice of shooting all captured Nationalist officers.

After the mutinies of the previous year and the other similar troubles, Chu Teh, although he desperately needed recruits to make good his losses, became more selective when enrolling ex-Nationalist soldiers. He still took them, but they were carefully screened and greater attention was paid to their political education. Those captured soldiers not wanted by the Reds were usually released after being disarmed, or perhaps were kept for a short while only to either work or be indoctrinated.

The strength of the 1st Front Army rose to about 30,000 all with arms, and Liu the One Eyed General's training centre worked overtime training new 'senior commanders' and junior leaders.

Annoyed by these two failures to eliminate the major Red base, Chiang Kai-shek personally took charge of and set in motion what became known as the '3rd Extermination Campaign'. He concentrated about 30 divisions, most of which were regular ones, supplemented by some war-lord formations.

In July 1931, within a month of the termination of the last campaign conducted by Ho the War Minister, Chiang Kai-shek suddenly descended with his assembled force on to the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet. He aimed to take Chu Teh by surprise, and nearly did so, as four weeks was an incredibly short time to muster and move about 300,000 troops by the then Chinese standards.

Again, Chu Teh relied upon tactics of avoidance and as his territory was now quite extensive he was mainly, but not always completely, successful. Generally his mobile columns were able to dodge

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the Nationalist troops, and yet at the same time were strong enough to be able to attack small Nationalist units when the situation was favourable.

As long as the Reds stuck to Chu Teh's four 'Golden Rules' of guerilla warfare they did well. However, sometimes they became ambitious and did not always do so, when they invariably met with disaster. Also, the Red columns were sometimes not able to keep out of the way of the enemy, as the Nationalists developed an intelligence system in the region, which, although by no means as efficient as that of the Reds, was sufficient to be a great danger to them. A number of Red troops and partisans fell into Nationalist traps and were destroyed. Also, Chiang Kai-shek was beginning to listen more to the advice of his German advisers, and whenever he did so he profited.

The military situation was rapidly becoming adverse for Chu Teh when he was saved by the bell: the Japanese began making aggressive moves in northern China. Chu Teh's 1st Front Army, which had a probable strength of 30,000 in early June 1931, had dwindled to less than 20,000 two months later. In other words, 10,000 casualties.

The event known as the '18th September Incident' occurred on that date, diverting all Chiang Kai-shek's attention. The '3rd Extermination Campaign' continued for a fortnight longer, but the sting had gone out of it and it faded away rather abruptly. Acting on the advice of his German advisers, Chiang Kai-shek had formed a partial screen of troops around the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet, and when he left he ordered that it should remain.

The Reds breathed a sigh of relief. They like to boast that this was another Nationalist failure and another Red victory, but for them it was at best a drawn match. The 1st Front Army had been seriously harried, and Chu Teh's losses had again been heavy, especially in 'commanders', even though no positional battles had been fought. On the credit side, Chu Teh had captured arms, ammunition and supplies, and within weeks was able to build up his force to a strength of about 30,000. Also, the ring around the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet was neither complete nor cast iron, as it was manned by war-lord troops and Ming Tuan.

Meanwhile, Japan was in an imperialistic mood, having had designs on Manchuria for some time. The Japanese held special privileges in that country and they controlled much of Southern Manchuria through owning and operating certain of the railways, and through their lease of the Kwantung Territory in the peninsula of

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Liaoning. During the summer of 1931 there had been a series of minor incidents which culminated on September 18th, when one such incident occurred in which part of the Japanese-owned railway was blown up near the city of Mukden. The Japanese at once occupied Mukden and in the next few weeks took over most of the other cities in Manchuria.

The war-lord of Manchuria was Chang Hsueh-liang, who was known as the 'Young Marshal', because he was only thirty-three years of age. He had inherited an army of about half a million men from his father, Chang Tso-lin, who had been killed by a bomb explosion in 1928 when withdrawing before Chiang Kai-shek in the Northern Campaign.¹ The Young Marshal was a friend of Chiang Kai-shek and was also a firm believer in the League of Nations. On the advice of Chiang Kai-shek he withdrew southwards from Manchuria towards Peking with all his army, hardly firing a shot.

In January 1932, fighting broke out in Shanghai between Japanese and Chinese troops, in the course of which the Japanese destroyed a large section of the native parts of the city. In this fighting, which lasted for three months, the Chinese troops were driven back, but they put up a much better show than had been expected of them.

In Manchuria, the Japanese stimulated local government sympathetic to them, and in February 1932 set up a puppet state called Manchoukou under Hsuan Tung, or Henry Pu Yi² as he became widely known, who had been the last of the Manchu Emperors of China.

In January and February 1933, the Japanese extended and occupied the provinces of Jehol and Chahar, after which Chang the Young Marshal resigned and went off to Europe.

In April 1933, irritated by raids by the Chinese and Manchurian irregulars, the Japanese advanced to the Great Wall, the Chinese withdrawing before them. The next month Chiang Kai-shek patched up a truce and the scuffling died down, but the tense, uneasy atmosphere prevailed. The Nationalist Army was in no fit state to wage a

¹ Chang Hsueh-liang, the Young Marshal, with his army, had clashed briefly with the Russian Far Eastern Army in 1929, which was then under the command of General Blucher (who had operated in China under the name of Galen). General Blucher defeated the Manchurian troops and temporarily occupied a portion of Manchuria.

² Henry Pu Yi is now working as an ordinary gardener in Peking, apparently living quite contentedly under the Communist regime, according to Lord Montgomery. (*Sunday Times* 12th June 1960.)

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war against the efficient Japanese war machine, and Chiang Kai-shek took the only course possible, but his seeming reluctance to fight gave the Reds and his other enemies fuel for propaganda against him. Anti-Japanese feeling rose in China.

Another interesting event, showing the way things were done in China, occurred in 1931, when Yen the Model Governor, the ex-warlord of Shansi province, who was in exile in Dairen, returned to China and, after having given Chiang Kai-shek warning in advance of Japanese intentions, was rewarded by being reinstated as Governor of Shansi, with full control over his former army.

All this added up to the fact that the Chinese Reds had an eighteen month respite in which to consolidate and expand. It was used to good purpose, both politically and militarily.

The Hunan Soviet, under Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, had remained fairly secure and unshaken under his swashbuckling leadership. He had organized a 'fleet' of small craft for use on Tungting Lake, and the adjacent lakes and rivers. Frequently he moved many of his units swiftly across Tungting Lake both to take the enemy by surprise and to escape from them.

During the '1st Extermination Campaign' the Nationalists had used some cavalry squadrons to attack Ho Lung, but he turned the tables on them, capturing several hundred horses. This enabled him to organize and give each of his regiments a small, light cavalry reconnaissance detachment. Thus, in addition to having a 'private navy', Ho Lung was the first Red Army commander to incorporate cavalry into his command. The early Red commanders generally had little faith in cavalry, preferring infantry.

The Oyuwan Soviet, under the political guidance of Chang the Chairman and the military leadership of Hsu the Ironside, had not been seriously affected by the side-effects of the three Extermination Campaigns. Hsu's 4th Front Army had developed steadily, suffering far less than the 1st Front Army. Both these soviets had expanded in area, influence and population.

It had been the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet and the 1st Front Army under Chu Teh which had been badly rattled and which urgently needed breathing space. Chiang Kai-shek identified Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh as the chief 'Red Bandits', put a large price on their heads, dead or alive, and had concentrated upon smashing their soviet first of all. Had it not been for the timely intervention of the Japanese aggression and the resultant change of focus of public

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opinion in China, he would in all probability have succeeded that autumn. It is not generally realized how bad the military situation was with the 1st Front Army, since its seriousness has been glossed over.

The vindictive persecution of Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung obviously did much towards building up their prestige and standing as the leaders of the Chinese Communist movement at the expense of members of the Central Executive Committee, or even the personalities in the Oyuwan Soviet. The Central Executive Committee, which had previously expelled Mao Tse-tung, still functioned and claimed to be the supreme KCT authority.

As soon as Nationalist pressure eased up in September 1931 Mao Tse-tung saw which way the wind was blowing and correctly estimated that he had a period of some months both to advance his own influence and to forge and strengthen the political bond between the other Red bases and himself. In other words, he set about the task of making himself the dominant Red personality and Communist leader in China. He had already achieved that position in the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet.

In December a 'Central Soviet Government', with its capital at Juikin, was set up, which became a *de facto* Red government, existing parallel with the Central Executive Committee. The Oyuwan delegates seemed to have private reservations about this, but nothing was voiced openly. Perhaps slightly injured prestige was involved, as initially the Oyuwan Soviet had been the paramount one.

The three main Red armies totalled about 60,000 riflemen, divided roughly as follows:

The Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet	30,000
The Oyuwan Soviet	20,000
The Hunan Soviet	10,000

Each soviet had numbers of machine-guns of different sorts as well as a collection of mortars, but as yet only Ho Lung the ex-Bandit had any artillery, having captured about twenty small guns from the Nationalists. So far practically all the arms possessed by the Red armies had been captured. The Reds had no aircraft at all.

These armies were now officially known as 'Front Armies', and were as follows:

1st Front Army—Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet, commanded by Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, although Chu Teh took a very active interest in it.

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2nd Front Army—Hunan Soviet, commanded by Ho Lung the ex-Bandit.

4th Front Army—Oyuwan Soviet, commanded by Hsu the Iron-side.

It is not certain why the 3rd Front Army was omitted. This designation may have been reserved for either the North Shensi Soviet force, or another less successful Red soviet which had a short life in Szechwan, but which had showed promise of great things at one stage. There are one or two confused mentions of a 3rd Front Army, but they do not elucidate much.

During this respite the Red bases expanded slightly, and that of Oyuwan, for example, eventually encompassed a population of about three million.

The Reds early tried to bend the Japanese aggression on China to their own advantage, and even though they were not in contact with or even near the Japanese, they urged Chiang Kai-shek to make a truce with them so that they could jointly fight the invaders. Chiang Kai-shek made no answer to this offer. In February 1932, Mao Tse-tung's Red Government formally declared war on Japan in a proclamation issued from Juikin.

During this year the Nationalist blockade of the Oyuwan Soviet was completed, but not before a certain amount of expansion had taken place. The ring around the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet was strengthened, but again not before the Reds had pressed out a few bulges. This soviet, at its maximum, also contained about three million people. Later in the year a few war-lord troops and Ming Tuan, who were surrounding it, were replaced by regular divisions.

In general throughout 1932 very few offensive operations were essayed by the Reds, and a sort of unofficial, passive hostility prevailed. One of the exceptions worthy of a brief mention was that Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, fitted out two 'gun boats' on the Yangtse River which he used to bombard Japanese and Nationalist shipping, as well as frequently firing barrages from his guns which he kept moving up to the river bank for this purpose. Ho Lung's 'mobile artillery' increased as he made successful raids, until he had over forty guns of different sorts. Otherwise, the one or two operations that were mounted did not have much success.

The two large Red bases were now in a virtual, even if not watertight, state of siege, and the Reds realized that they would have to rely upon their own efforts to survive. They had not a friend in the

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world at this stage. Russia, a country which one might reasonably think would have been sympathetic and helpful, was curiously aloof and cold, and apart from sheltering and allowing Chinese Communists to hold meetings on her territory did nothing material to aid the Reds in China. Not a single gun or round of ammunition was given by Russia to the Chinese Communists. Crops were planted and the regular troops as well as the partisans were paraded to work in the fields. Thus, the tradition of being a 'worker-fighter' was early implanted upon the Red soldier. Whenever possible factories were set up to manufacture ammunition and grenades in the soviets, and other essential industries started, to produce such things as paper, clothing and soap. At Juikin a fairly large arsenal was established with the object of turning out copies of foreign small arms, as well as mortars and ammunition.

One incident of note occurred in the autumn of 1932, which has since become known as the 'Ningtu Rising'. On this occasion the Nationalist 28th Route Army, under Ten Chin-tan, came over to the Red side almost *en bloc*. Ten brought with him about 20,000 armed soldiers, who were incorporated into the 1st Front Army, becoming known as the 5th Corps. Apart from the tremendous material gain, this was considered to be a political triumph for Mao Tse-tung and a blow to the policy of Chiang Kai-shek.

The numbering and even the designation of the Red Chinese formations was a confused pattern which followed no neat, tidy or understandable sequence. Chu Teh obviously tried to bring some sort of methodical order into the numbering of the Red 'corps', but appears to have had only limited success.

Western sympathy veered over to Chiang Kai-shek as the result of Japanese aggression, and many countries were now prepared to sell him arms and give other military assistance. Aircraft, tanks, armoured cars and artillery, as well as modern small arms, flowed in, and with them came foreign military advisers. American, German and Italian flying instructors appeared to help train the Nationalist air force, some even flying on active operations with it.

On the completion of the Northern Campaign, Chiang Kai-shek could probably muster about 200 aircraft, but this number had fallen to less than 100 by 1931, at which time Nationalist China had only about seven squadrons, each of about ten aircraft, which could be relied upon to take the air. Such aircraft as he had were used against the Red bases. Eyeing Japan apprehensively, America gave military

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aid to help China modernize and reorganize her huge, but chaotic, lumbering army. Special attention was paid to the air force.

Looking to North Shensi, it will be remembered that the promise of a large base developing there had fallen flat, as the organizer Liu Tsu-tan (Liu the Turncoat) had changed sides and entered the army of Feng the Christian General. For a while Liu, as a war-lord colonel, chased bands of guerillas that frequented the hills of Shensi province. Then suddenly, in 1931, he had another change of heart, deserted his master Feng, and went over to the Communist side again. He took over the leadership of the Red guerillas he had been so recently hunting, and gained possession of the small town of Pao-an, where he began to form a Red 'brigade'. When he had done this, Liu moved out against the Ming Tuan, and for some months put into practice some of the Communist doctrines as regard confiscating and dividing the land among the peasants. Liu was undoubtedly a brave, enterprising character, and a good practical leader in the field.

Feng the Christian General, who was ordered by Chiang Kai-shek to eliminate this Red pocket, sent his army to crush his former officer. After a little while, Liu came to an agreement with Feng, was pardoned and regranted his commission in Feng's army. Once more Liu became a respectable bandit-chaser.

This did not last, and in 1933 Liu the Turncoat yet again changed sides. This time he established a small Red soviet in the Shensi hills, collected groups of Red guerillas together and attacked the Ming Tuan wherever and whenever he could. This Red base developed quickly as he was a good organizer. This time Liu stayed Communist.

As soon as he concluded a truce with Japan, Chiang Kai-shek resumed his operations against the Red bases, beginning in April 1933 what was known as the '4th Extermination Campaign'. It lasted for about six months and was directed against both the Oyuwan and the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviets. About half a million regular troops were concentrated for this purpose under the overall direction of Chiang Kai-shek himself.

Local war-lords were ordered to move against the Hunan Soviet of Ho Lung the ex-Bandit and the Shensi Soviet of Liu the Turncoat, but they had little success to report as they pursued these tasks with little energy.

The German General, Von Seeckt, with a staff of military advisers, had recently arrived in China and he was keenly watching events and summing up the situation.

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Nationalist columns forced their way into the two Red bases in an attempt to sweep them clear, but in both cases the Reds practised their former tactics of avoidance, although not always with complete success. In the Oyuwan Soviet in particular the Nationalists carried out a policy of razed earth. They moved whole sections of the population, as well as killing many hundreds of Red partisans who had been left defenceless when the 4th Front Army of Hsu the Ironside had perforce to move on.

Occasionally, when almost forced into a corner, the Reds in desperation tried their hand at positional warfare, forgetting the doctrine laid down by Chu Teh, the Commander-in-Chief. Whenever they did so their losses were heavy. Throughout, Nationalist aircraft supported the ground forces, bombing and reporting back positions. Hsu's 4th Front Army, which had risen to a maximum strength of about 80,000 men, very quickly sank to less than 60,000. His losses more than exceeded his gains, both in men and material, but despite all this Hsu skilfully managed to keep the bulk of his army intact and clear of the Nationalist forces.

In the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet the tale was much the same. Chu Teh fought a war of avoidance, preventing his men from attempting positional battles, and thus, in spite of almost daily bombing raids from Nationalist aircraft, the casualties of the 1st Front Army were less than those of the 4th Front Army. Also, there does not seem to have been as much bitterness towards the inhabitants in the provinces of Kiangsi and Fukien, although large numbers were removed from their homes and hundreds killed. Chu Teh and his army were only engaged in two battles of any size and consequence, in which it is claimed they captured over 10,000 rifles, and quantities of other military material.

The shrewd, watching General Von Seeckt realized that the strategy of Chiang Kai-shek was all wrong, and that the Reds were leading him a dance and might continue to do so for a very long time. Chiang Kai-shek was not getting to the heart of the problem, which was to destroy the elusive Red formations.

While the 4th Extermination Campaign was in progress, the Nationalist 19th Route Army, from Kwangtung, under General Tsai Ting-kai, which had distinguished itself in the fighting in Shanghai against the Japanese in 1932, had been moved from that city into the province of Fukien, near the seaboard. China's truce with Japan did not please General Tsai, neither did he like Chiang Kai-shek's pre-

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occupation with eliminating Chinese Reds to the comparative neglect of the Japanese, his country's enemies.

Suddenly, in the autumn of that year, 1933, General Tsai registered his protest against Chiang Kai-shek's lack of energy and positive action against the Japanese, and offered to make a truce with the Reds in the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet if they would join up with him to fight the Japanese.

There was some lively debate in the Red camp over this offer and some suggested spreading the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet out eastwards to merge it with the territory occupied by General Tsai's 19th Route Army, in which case a really large slice of China would be in hands hostile to Chiang Kai-shek. Others were not so sure. The Comintern representatives in Shanghai were all dead against this move and did all they could to discourage it. The Comintern still hoped to bring about a rapprochement between the KCT and the KMT. Russia was still of the opinion that Chiang Kai-shek was the only man capable of uniting China and had no great hopes of the Chinese Reds ever achieving a dominant position. Russia was also perturbed by the rising strength of Japan and of her probable imperialistic intentions, and had no desire to see China torn in half and rendered impotent by civil war. In that year, 1933, Russia reopened diplomatic relations with Nationalist China. Under these pressures, Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh reluctantly rejected the offer to join up with the 19th Route Army.

As something by way of a consolation prize in return for following its advice, the Comintern representatives arranged for a handful of military equipment to be sent and smuggled through to the Reds. This was the only outside aid they ever received from any foreign power in their struggle against Chiang Kai-shek until 1945.¹ The precise nature and quantity of this consignment is not known, but it is thought to have been very small indeed, and today the Communists do not mention it. This was not repeated.

Mao Tse-tung now freely admits that this refusal to join up with General Tsai was a big mistake. What happened was that when this decision was made by the Reds, Chu Teh drew his troops in from the east leaving sections of Fukien empty, thus reducing the area of the 'overlap' of the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet into Fukien province. A wide, empty corridor was thus available for a large Nationalist force

¹ When the Russians in Manchuria probably 'handed over' large quantities of Japanese arms and stores on orders from Moscow.

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to move along to surround the rebel 19th Route Army. Nationalist troops, acting under the advice of General Von Seeckt, forced it to fight a positional battle in which it was no match for superior arms and numbers. Aircraft, tanks and heavy artillery beat down on the rebels until they were all annihilated.

When this happened, Chu Teh withdrew his troops even further from the east—although a good slice of Fukien province was still taken in, including the Red capital, Juikin—and from this moment onwards this soviet can be more aptly referred to as the ‘Kiangsi Soviet’.

As yet there were no foreign military advisers with the Reds, but in 1933 one arrived, a German. His services were obtained in an effort to combat the strategy and tactics advocated by the German advisers who were obviously influencing Chiang Kai-shek.¹ He was a Prussian officer who had served in the First World War, and had later attended the Russian Red Military Academy. He took the Chinese name of Li.²

Chu Teh, influenced by the military efficiency and ability of the Germans, had been in favour of his employment, and it was hoped that Li the German would be able to help the Reds anticipate some of General Von Seeckt’s moves against them.

About this time Po Ku, who had become the provisional head of the Central Executive Committee of the KCT, moved into the Kiangsi Soviet and began to take a hand in affairs, somewhat to Mao Tse-tung’s embarrassment and dislike.

General Von Seeckt unfolded his plan to destroy the Reds, and, convinced and impressed by Von Seeckt’s rapid and successful destruction of the rebel 19th Route Army, Chiang Kai-shek listened to what he had to say. The plan was to construct lines of trenches with blockhouses at intervals to encircle completely the Reds in their bases, and then move slowly inwards, clearing and depopulating the country, sector by sector.

General Von Seeckt pointed out that it would take time, men and money, that it would not be spectacular, but it would be sure. Instead of fruitlessly chasing shadows the Nationalists could slowly pull the noose tight around the Red bases. Chiang Kai-shek agreed to all

¹ In 1934, Chiang Kai-shek had his maximum number of German military advisers, which was sixty-four, according to Liu, *Military History of Modern China* (1956).

² I have not been able to discover the true name of Li the German.

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General Von Seeckt's proposals, and the 4th Extermination Campaign was peremptorily called off in October 1933. Almost imperceptibly it was succeeded by the 5th Extermination Campaign. Determined to crush the Reds, Chiang Kai-shek gave Von Seeckt a free hand and nearly a million troops, the best half of his army.

The 5th Extermination Campaign lasted for a year, at the end of which, in desperation, both the 1st Front Army in the Kiangsi Soviet and the 4th Front Army in the Oyuwan Soviet broke out through the throttling ring of Nationalist works to make for the mountains in the west and the north.

Von Seeckt planned first of all to eliminate the two larger Red Soviets, Kiangsi and Oyuwan, and to leave the Hunan Soviet and the other smaller ones until later. In October 1933, he moved nearly half a million regular Nationalist troops against the Kiangsi Soviet, which he completely surrounded. Against this opposition Chu Teh could muster about 200,000 soldiers and partisans, of whom only about half were armed. The small arsenal at Juikin had been able to turn out grenades and mines in quantity, and also to successfully refill empty cartridge cases, but was unable to produce small arms at all. The Reds had a secret buying mission which percolated amongst the Nationalist troops, but this had only limited success in bribing men to let them have their weapons.

Against the Oyuwan Soviet, Von Seeckt moved about 300,000 regular Nationalist troops, who likewise completely surrounded it. The remainder of the troops at his disposal he sent to contain the Hunan Soviet.

The plan and operation in both cases were the same; the encircling troops turned inwards and dug a trench where they stood, which stretched for mile after mile. Then small blockhouses were erected at frequent intervals with machine-guns mounted to cover the line of the trench. When both Red bases were thus hemmed in, Nationalist troops began to move inwards sweeping sector by sector. The peasants were moved *en masse* and the ground was razed. Nationalist troops then halted and began to dig another similar containing line, and so on. In the Oyuwan Soviet there was again bitter slaughter, which was not quite so extreme in Kiangsi.

Tanks and armoured cars continually patrolled the endless miles of trenches, while aircraft droned overhead bombing the Reds within. Although having only about 130 operational aircraft in all, Chiang Kai-shek used every one against the Red bases. Nothing

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could slip through this encircling band, and Red infiltration and expression was stopped dead.

Week after week, and month after month these creeping tactics were continued, throughout the winter and on into the spring of 1934, by which time it has since been estimated, for example, that half the original area encompassed by the Oyuwan Soviet had been laid to waste.

By depriving them of territory Von Seeckt was forcing the Reds to adopt positional warfare in which, without supporting artillery, they were at a distinct disadvantage when faced with tanks and guns. As they stepped back, pace by pace, they had correspondingly less and less space in which to twist and turn, and so were forced to abandon their previously so successful avoidance tactics. The Reds were jockeyed into taking up defensive positions to protect themselves.

In the twelve months this campaign lasted, Chu Teh's 1st Front Army suffered over 60,000 casualties, while Hsu the Ironside's 4th Front Army exceeded that figure. The Nationalists admitted that over one million peasants may have been killed in this campaign, but the true number must have been very much higher, and can probably never be accurately assessed. During this period no hard blows were struck, there were no big battles: it was simply a state of siege with the outer walls of the castle being pushed slowly inwards all the time.

By the summer of 1934 four great separate belts, each many miles apart, had wrapped themselves round both the Kiangsi and the Oyuwan Soviets. It was seemingly just a matter of time and patience before the Reds were exterminated like rats in a trap. There was, it is true, still plenty of space left within the Red bases, but the writing was on the wall—the Reds no longer had the full freedom of the rivers and the hills. Now, whichever way they turned, before long they banged their noses against the encircling ring.

The Reds took the only possible decision to save themselves and safeguard the future of their movement, and that was to break out through the restricting bands before they were drawn too tight, and to make for more secure country. China is a big place, and there were alternative sites, especially in the west and north. In positional warfare the ill-equipped Reds were doomed; their only hope of survival lay in mobile operations and guerilla warfare.

Some say that the decision to break-out was made in January 1934, and others in September of that year. It was probably talked about in the January, and the firm decision reached in September, by which

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time the disastrous course of military operations gave them little alternative.

Ostensibly, as the Reds gave it out and have since insisted, their sole intention was to move all their military forces from central and southern China to some part of the country where they could form a strong 'Anti-Japanese' base, from where they would be able to attack the popular enemy, Japan. The plain military fact of the matter is that had they not broken out when they did they would have surely been swamped and annihilated. It was a partial triumph for General Von Seeckt and a partial defeat for the Reds as they retreated from both the Oyuwan and the Kiangsi Soviets, although in history retreats are frequently converted into victories.

The Reds were rather bitter about the circumstances in which they found themselves and perhaps more than a little frightened, but now, years afterwards, they put the blame mainly on two people: their foreign adviser, Li the German, and Po Ku the provisional Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the KCT. The Red military leaders alleged that Li advised them wrongly, having over-estimated the capabilities of the Reds and under-estimated those of the Nationalists, and was thus largely responsible for causing them to adopt the wrong tactics. This cannot be true, and indeed the evidence seems to be that Li, when they listened to him, did much to save Red casualties by accurately forecasting many of Von Seeckt's moves. Li the German remained with the Reds as a military adviser, but was down-graded from his seat on the war planning committee, and relegated to training matters.

As for Po Ku, the nominal head of the Chinese Communist movement, it is alleged he made bad appreciations and urged the Reds to fight positional battles, and that he interfered with the conduct of the battles themselves with disastrous results. As the Reds had no option but to adopt positional warfare in the latter stages, one suspects that there was a clash of personalities and more than a little jealousy on the part of Mao Tse-tung. The fact that Po Ku and Mao Tse-tung frequently differed at the conference table gives some indication why so much of the blame was subsequently laid at the door of the unfortunate Po Ku.

One or two other political characters, some actual members of the Central Executive Committee, also came in for a small share of the blame for the lack of success in the 5th Extermination Campaign, but it is noticeable that they all seem to have differed with Mao Tse-tung

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on occasions. In the Oyuwan Soviet the whole blame for this disastrous campaign is laid outright not, as one might reason, on Hsu the Ironside, the military commander, but on the political leader, the Chairman of the Soviet, Chang Kou-tao; but as he later defected to the Nationalists as well as openly differing with and sneering at Mao Tse-tung, this perhaps cannot be wondered at.

No one individual in that community of committees and dual command can really be held solely to blame. If blame must be apportioned out then some of it should be borne by both Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh, of whom it could be said they could have made a better appreciation and moved out from Kiangsi before things got so hot. The truth is that weight of men, materials and superior strategy were against the Reds, who lacked heavy artillery, aircraft and armour which might have enabled them to stand up to the Nationalists.

One other event can be conveniently described here, and that is the sudden expansion of the Shensi Soviet. By late 1934, Liu the Turncoat had a rather fluid Red base in the Shensi hills and an armed force of about 1,000 guerillas under his control. In September 1934, the Oyuwan Soviet was ordered by the KCT to send a detachment of Red troops and cadres to link up with and strengthen the Shensi base. This was obviously in the nature of a reconnaissance expedition to scout out the lie of the land and to see what the possibilities were of establishing a large Red soviet there in the future.

Hsu the Ironside gave this task to his namesake, Hsu Hai-tung, Hsu the Peasant, whom we have met before. With his division, known as the 25th Red Army, which was about 8,000 strong, Hsu the Peasant broke through the Nationalist encirclement around the Oyuwan Soviet and moved north-westwards towards Sian, the capital city of Shensi province, which he skirted, to make successful contact with Liu the Turncoat in the hills of Shensi.

Hsu the Peasant stayed in Shensi for the winter, during which time he helped Liu recruit and train a larger force, which grew to about 5,000 armed men, the arms being seized from the Ming Tuan or obtained by bribery and raids from Nationalist stores and armouries. The Communist converts were mainly hillmen and Liu divided them into two regiments which were known as the 26th and the 27th Red Armies. As they expanded the Reds took over the town of An Ting, which became the centre of their soviet.

In the process of expanding this soviet, Hsu the Peasant came into contact with the Ming Tuan on many occasions, and also clashed

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with the troops of Feng the Christian General, who regarded Shensi as his own private preserve. This Red Soviet spread to the border of the province of Kansu to the west.

When he had given Liu this rousing encouragement and help, Hsu the Peasant moved on with his own small army into Kansu to explore further possibilities. The province of Kansu was inhabited mainly by Chinese Muslims, and dominated by groups of mounted troops under four generals, who were in fact, semi-independent petty warlords.

Hsu the Peasant had several brushes with one prominent Muslim general, known as Ma Hung-ping. This was cavalry country and Hsu, being on foot, was hustled from place to place. He then made his way northwards into the adjoining province of Ninghsia, in Inner Mongolia.

When Hsu had left Shensi the troops of Feng the Christian General moved against Liu the Turncoat. In a series of encounters Liu was squeezed out northwards, so he made his way with his 5,000 men into the north-western part of Shensi where he again met up with Hsu, who had little success to report in Kansu against the Muslims, nor saw many prospects in Ninghsia.

Hsu the Peasant and Liu the Turncoat decided to merge their forces and form a Red soviet where they were, in the hills of north-west Shensi, to build it up and to prepare the way for the main Red armies. This became known as the North Shensi Soviet, and Liu became its first Chairman and Hsu its first military commander. The amalgamated force, which amounted to about 13,000 men, became known as the 15th Corps.

Chinese Muslim cavalry buzzed angrily on the outskirts of the hill country to the west of the soviet. To the north-west the territory was controlled by another Chinese Muslim general, Ma Hung-kuei, who was reputed to have an irregular force of about 30,000 mounted troops at his call, and who was based upon Ninghsia City.

In August 1935 there was an engagement between the Red troops of Hsu the Peasant and those of General Ma the Muslim, in which the Muslim cavalry was defeated and scattered. A certain amount of arms, equipment and horses was captured. This sharp lesson kept the Muslim cavalry at arm's length for the time being.

Meanwhile, the Central Executive Committee of the KCT, perhaps not trusting Liu the Turncoat overmuch, especially now he had under his hand and control a flourishing Red soviet, and what was

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probably to be the future main Red Army base, sent a senior political officer, named Chang Ching-fu, to take over from him and to be the Chairman of the North Shensi Soviet. Liu accepted this decision quite equably—maybe as he had nowhere else to go—and remained working under his new master, whom we can refer to as Chang the Politician.

5

The Long Marches

Returning to Central and Southern China, by the autumn of 1934 the positions of the 1st Front Army in the Kiangsi Soviet and that of the 4th Front Army in the Oyuwan Soviet were becoming desperate. Each was in a state of siege, each had suffered enormous loss of life, and both were short of food, ammunition and other supplies. The Hunan Soviet was not in such dire straits.

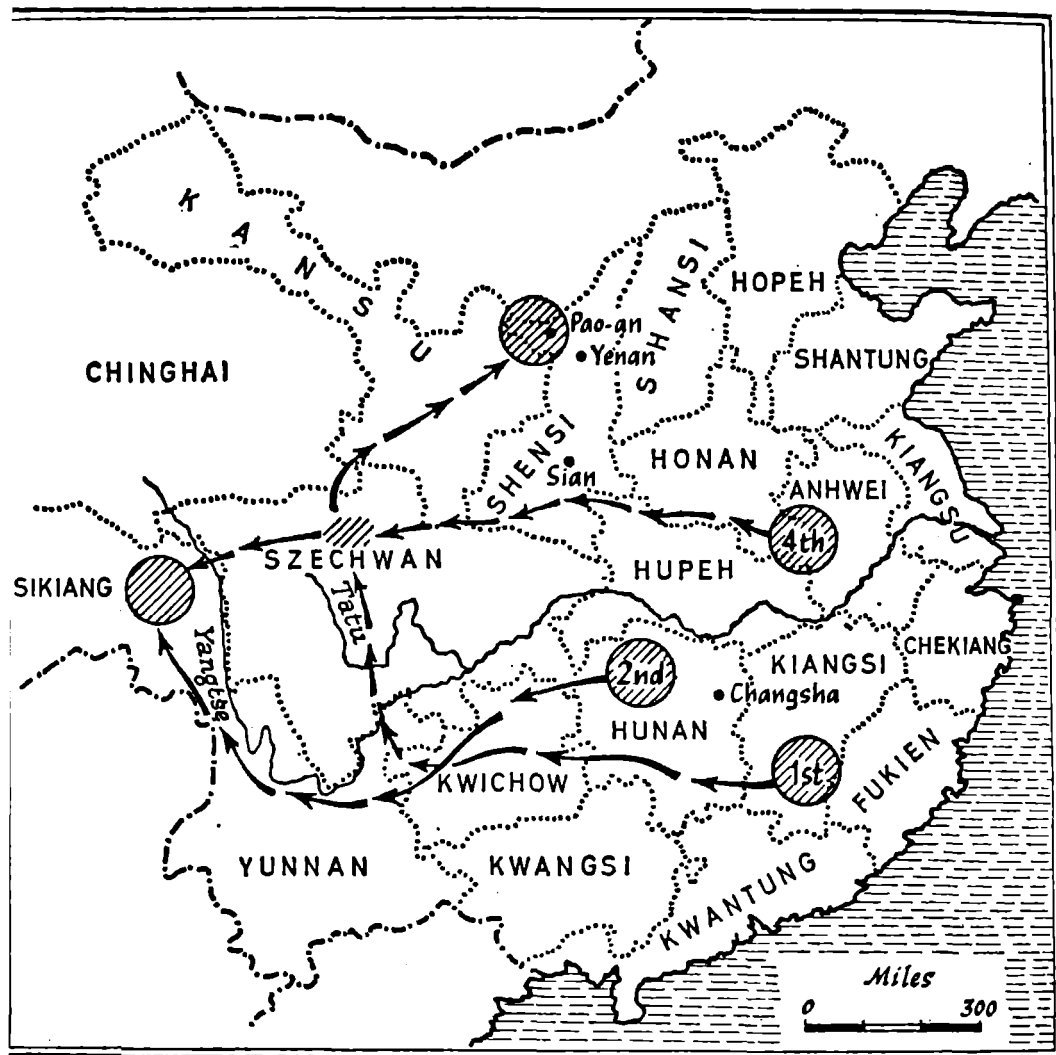
The plan evolved was that the armed forces and the governments of these three soviets should break out through the encircling Nationalist rings, and march to the north-west to either the provinces of Kansu or Shensi, where Hsu the Peasant had been sent to spy out the land. Somewhere there, in the remote north-west, precisely where they were not too sure, they would establish a joint, strong 'Anti-Japanese Base', which would be self-contained, where they would be able to recover from the severe blows they had been receiving, rebuild and consolidate both the Red Army and the Chinese Communist movement.

The moves to this base in the north-west can be known as the 'Long Marches', and while they were in fact retreats, or at the best perhaps strategies of avoidance, they became military epics worthy of serious study. It is generally thought that there was simply just one 'Long March', the one carried out by the soldiers and cadres who accompanied Mao Tse-tung, but as we shall see there were at least three separate major ones. Unfortunately less detail is known about the other two, and they are now in retrospect heavily overshadowed by that of Mao Tse-tung, but none the less they faced as great, or greater, difficulties and hardships. Several other smaller bodies of Red troops also made 'Long Marches' to the north-west, but their trials and adventures are largely unrecorded and unsung. Some

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marched alone all the way, while others joined one or the other of the main armies *en route*.

Once this decision was made active preparation began in the Kiangsi and Oyuwan Soviets. The machinery from the small arsenal and the few small factories that had been set up was dismantled and



a portion of it packed for transportation on mule back. Other equipment, such as printing presses, sewing machines and tools of different sorts were bundled up also, while everything else of a similar nature which could not be taken was either destroyed or dispersed and hidden away.

The intention was that the whole of the 'regular' army, with all its arms, plus the complete soviet governments, would move out, together with selected partisans and cadres. All were carefully screened and only the youngest and fittest were chosen. Emphasis was laid on

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youth, and the youthfulness of many of the 'soldiers', who were often in reality only 'Vanguards', a sort of military youth organization, was amazing, a fairly large proportion being in their very early teens.

It was also the intention to leave behind partisan groups with political cadres with them who could either take to the hills and lead a wandering existence, hovering around a certain locality, or go underground and revert to being seemingly harmless peasants by day. The cadres would remain with them to mingle with the peasants and workers, whom they would educate and indoctrinate, to keep alive the spirit of Communism. Thus the seeds for future Communist expansion would be ready to burst into bloom whenever circumstances again became favourable.

The main Red Soviets were now in touch with each other by radio, which had not been the case formerly, and although communications were scratchy and unreliable, they were rapidly improving.

The 4th Front Army under Hsu the Ironside numbered about 70,000, and was divided into four corps. Political personnel and a huge transport column brought his numbers up to the 90,000 mark.

Hsu broke through the Nationalist blockade to the north-west into the province of Honan in October 1934. He fought a series of battles to pierce the surrounding lines, in which his losses were severe, but in spite of bombing by aircraft he managed to hold the gaps open until the whole of his force had stumbled through.

Hsu then set off in the direction of Sian in the province of Shensi, the 4th Front Army and its followers moving in four columns. Once clear of the Nationalist encircling area he did not have a great deal of opposition, as Chiang Kai-shek had his attention diverted by the break-out from the Kiangsi Soviet to the south, which was happening about the same time, although he ordered the war-lords and the Ming Tuan to deal with the Reds moving to the north-west.

Frequently the 4th Front Army, especially in the first weeks of what became a march at a fairly leisurely pace, came into contact with the Ming Tuan, but the advanced units of the Red Army scattered them with little difficulty, and in the process added to their number of arms.

The war-lords eyed this huge army warily, and having no desire to be defeated individually in battle by it and so have their own armies destroyed, prudently kept clear and practised their customary strategy of promising Chiang Kai-shek that they would take steps to eliminate the Reds while in fact doing absolutely nothing. Had the

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war-lords all combined they could have perhaps scattered Hsu's army, or at the least made his passage very difficult, although some are not quite so sure. In any case, they did not. Each of the war-lords secretly hoped that the other war-lords would attack and be mauled. Each secretly meant to ensure that his own personal army remained intact and so kept out of danger.

Hsu's main problem was the periodic attacks from Nationalist aircraft, which caused his heaviest loss. After the first difficult stages, it would perhaps be fair to say that the march of the 4th Front Army was more a test of endurance than a fighting retreat. Week after week through the bitter winter weather of North China, which caused many to fall out, the 4th Front Army continued to crawl northwards across the province of Honan, and then over the border into Shensi. The severe weather and lack of sufficient warm clothing and blankets caused many deaths.

In late February 1935 Hsu halted his force just south of Sian for a rest and a refit. Its strength had sunk and his large transport column was much reduced in size by the intermittent, but often accurate, bombing. There were mutterings from certain sections of the troops, most of whom came from central China, who were having second thoughts about moving to such a far corner of the country, inhabited only by 'barbarians'. They wanted either to return to central China or march by a devious route to southern China. There had been many dissensions.

Chang Kou-tao (Chang the Chairman) also seemed to have second thoughts about the wisdom of establishing a base so far away from the centre of power, and he began to wonder whether it would not be better for all the Red Armies to unite and temporarily establish a secure base in Western Szechwan, preparatory to again moving into the Yangtse Valley. He may also have been influenced in this by the fact that, although so far he had had no major contact with the armies of the war-lords, these, now alarmed at his proximity to Sian, were growling and showing their teeth menacingly.

The Young Marshal was back again with his Manchurian Army, reputedly 'hirsting for action, Feng the Christian General had begun to move southwards, while Yen the reinstated Model Governor was mustering what troops he could on a war footing. Again, the reports from Hsu the Peasant, who had been sent to the far north-west, were not encouraging. He reported that there were at least four Chinese Muslim cavalry groups roaming the wilds of Kansu province, all

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hostile, who could harass with ease such a ponderous, slow moving mass of humanity as the 4th Front Army and its followers formed.

Chang the Chairman asserted his authority and in the following weeks became the dominant personality, completely overshadowing Hsu the Ironside. So far, Chang had kept to political matters leaving the military side of affairs to Hsu, but now he took on both functions and responsibilities. Hsu seemed to be content to take a back seat and let Chang carry on.

After some indecision, Chang the Chairman decided to change direction and move westwards into Szechwan to wait there for the 1st Front Army, when he would try and persuade Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung to fall in with his plans and abandon the idea of putting all the Red Army eggs into one remote basket. In March 1935 Chang continued his slow amble towards the western borders of Szechwan. The country was more difficult, and on the way he had several skirmishes with local forces.

By early June he had reached the region known as the Sunpan, in Szechwan, where he settled down for a rest and to wait for the 1st Front Army to arrive. By this time the 4th Front Army was reduced in number to about 50,000 troops. Chang set up his headquarters at a place called Weiko, and his four corps were distributed around. Owing mainly to the sparseness of population in this region, its remoteness and the size of his army, apart from a few disjointed raids by local troops he was left much alone. His men soon recovered from their hardships and became more cheerful.

Returning now to southern China, the 1st Front Army was less fortunate and had a far rougher passage, as Chiang Kai-shek concentrated most of his attention on it. Chu Teh had a strength of about 90,000 troops, and in addition had another 10,000 political personnel and Vanguards, who were selected to accompany him on the march. About 13,000 partisans, not all armed by any means, and cadres, under Chen Yi, an ex-Whampoa instructor,¹ were left behind. They were to hold the Soviet area as long as they could after the Red Army had departed before dispersing to remain in the locality.

The first stage of the break-out occurred when the Red troops, and those who were to accompany them, concentrated in the southern part of Kiangsi province. The places of the troops were taken by

¹ Chen Yi had been a political officer to a battalion in the Northern Campaign, and had gone over to the Reds in 1927. In 1958, then a Red Army marshal in rank, he took over the post of Foreign Minister from Chou En-lai.

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partisans and the movement was by night as Nationalist aircraft were frequently overhead during the hours of daylight. This concentration was accomplished without the Nationalists being aware of it.

The 1st Front Army was now divided into five corps, and the two leading ones were commanded by Lin Piao (1st Corps) and Peng Teh-huai the ex-Nationalist Brigadier (3rd Corps), both of whom took turns in leading the 1st Front Army throughout the whole length of the march. Lin was also an ex-Whampoa cadet who had joined the KCT in 1927, and as he had a flair for strategy he can be conveniently referred to as Lin the Strategist.

These two corps struck suddenly at the inner Nationalist restricting belt in two places in the south-west as soon as it was dark on the night of October 21st 1934, and the fighting continued during the hours of darkness. The main trench was assaulted, swamped and taken, and then the blockhouses fell one by one until a large gap appeared. Within two days the whole column, with its huge transport section, which alone was over 5,000 strong, was through the first ring. Surprise was complete, and the Nationalists were slow to react.

The Reds then made their way straight to the second Nationalist restricting belt, which was about 100 miles farther on, moving only by night. Aircraft tracked and harassed them but their daytime camouflage must have been fairly good as Chiang Kai-shek and his German advisers seemed to be of the opinion that this was merely a feint intended to draw off troops so that the real break-out could be made elsewhere, presumably in the north or the north-west where the terrain was more suitable and might hinder pursuit. Also, the show put up by the partisans in the Red 'front lines' and the minor operations undertaken by them under the direction of Chen Yi gave them the idea that the bulk of the Red Army remained in position.

The second restricting ring was just over the border in Hunan, and the two leading corps, assaulting on a wide front, broke through it on the night of November 2nd. The gap was kept open while the ungainly mass, into which the 1st Front Army had devolved, sprawled through. It had been moving in two columns, side by side, when the march first began, but now it was straggling badly, being about ten miles in length: it was no longer possible to conceal its size and intention from the air.

This was the first moment that Chiang Kai-shek and General Von Seeckt were sure that this was the real break-out, and they quickly gave their attention to dealing with it. Divisions of troops were

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moved towards the area to intercept the Reds and extra aircraft were employed. It must be remembered that the break-out from the Oyuwan Soviet was taking place at the same time, but after a brief hesitation Chiang Kai-shek decided that his main effort was to be against Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung.

Chu Teh now urged everyone to quicken the pace as it was vital to cover the next few miles to pierce the third restricting belt before Nationalist reinforcements could be effectively moved up against them. The Reds hit this line where it ran near the Canton-Hankow railway, on the night of November 10th. Again the corps of Lin the Strategist and Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier led the assault against this line of trenches and blockhouses. There was a bloody fight lasting all night, but by dawn a huge gap had been torn in the Nationalist defence line. Red losses had been heavy, but after lying low during the day the whole of the 1st Front Army scrambled through the following night.

It now became a desperate race by the Reds to the fourth Nationalist restricting belt, the original one constructed, which was another 100 miles or so distant, against Nationalist divisions which were closing in on that sector. The Reds hid by day from aircraft and then marched as fast and as far as they could during the night, changing direction slightly each time. On the night of November 29th the two leading corps assaulted the final barrier, smashing through it. They had moved faster than the reinforcing Nationalist divisions, but they were not out of the wood yet. Although through the four blockading bands they had to press on fast to retain their lead.

So far in these engagements Chu Teh had lost about 10,000 men, and a proportion of his large baggage train had not made the grade either. Re-formed into two neater columns, the 1st Front Army now moved westwards through the province of Hunan towards that of Kweichow. This time only local war-lord troops and Ming Tuan barred the way, and they were brushed aside with little difficulty. However, progress was slow, mainly owing to the cumbersome baggage train.

Daily, Nationalist aircraft came over to bomb them, in spite of which the Reds continued to move by day in the two huge columns, keeping to a set course, thus enabling the Nationalist aircraft to anticipate their route. For a month this continued until the shelter of the more broken country just inside Kweichow province was reached, by which time it is thought that the Reds had suffered over

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30,000 casualties, mainly from aerial bombing, although there was a hidden number of deserters in this figure. Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung limped over the border with barely 60,000 men and women all told. The proportion of women who took part in this march is not known, but may have been as high as ten per cent. They were practically all young, dedicated Communists.

Meanwhile, back in the old Kiangsi Soviet area, under Chen Yi, the partisans held out solidly against the Nationalists and it was almost three months before Chiang Kai-shek's men were able to penetrate and traverse the area. A few places were never overrun and fourteen small Red groups remained in continuous existence.

After a successful action against the troops of the war-lord of Hunan, the 1st Front Army crossed into Kweichow province, in January 1935. Chu Teh paused to take stock. He had broken clear, but the price had been heavy and he calculated that he had many battles to fight and a long way to go before he was safe, so he sat down to reorganize his army and to change his tactics. He drastically pruned the unwieldy transport column, which in future was to move at night in small batches and to lie hidden by day. Instead of marching on a set course, Chu Teh moved his force in several columns which constantly changed direction and weaved about. The troops were to move frequently by day.

Chu Teh moved towards the city of Tsunytia, where a political conference was held at which Mao Tse-tung took the leading part, and then the Reds, almost casually, crossed and recrossed the province of Kweichow. Chiang Kai-shek now took a personal interest in the 1st Front Army and at once flew to Kweiyang, the capital of Kweichow province, to direct operations. His troops were slowly converging on this province, where Chiang Kai-shek planned to trap and crush the Reds. Once in Kweichow, the Nationalist troops ponderously chased the Red columns. Occasionally Chu Teh struck back at the Nationalists, but mainly he kept out of their way. More frequently, whenever opportunity occurred, he hit at the Ming Tuan, who were less effective, and from them he gained his weapon and ammunition replacements.

Once in Kweichow province the pace slowed down. Mao Tse-tung and his cadres took full advantage of this and went into energetic action, visiting all the villages, never losing a chance of talking to and lecturing the peasants. Mao Tse-tung was both recruiting and educating, as well as dropping off cadres at suitable spots to stay and

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continue the work. Even the non-Hans, that is the non-Chinese stock, were not ignored and when some time was spent in the tribal area of the Miao, one of the several primitive peoples who inhabit the distant frontiers of China, the Red cadres moved amongst them teaching and preaching.

In all the 1st Front Army spent about four months in the province of Kweichow, moving first indirectly north with the intention of crossing the Yangtse River as soon as it could, and then when this was blocked off, moving vaguely south-westwards again. During this period the Reds recruited some 20,000 peasants for the Red Army, and as they went along left behind them about 10,000 political workers and soldiers in the villages. This meant that Chu Teh's force was now about 70,000 strong, still organized into five corps and a baggage train.

While in Kweichow there seems to have been some vague expectation that the 1st Front Army would be joined by the 2nd Front Army of Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, but this did not happen. Ho Lung, in his Hunan Soviet to the north-east, had about 40,000 trained troops and political workers under his command before being joined by a local war-lord, who brought with him an army of about 15,000 men, thus boosting the strength of the 2nd Front Army up to about 55,000. Ho Lung's soviet was doing well, and he worked amongst and controlled about one million peasants. His tactical position was quite good also, as, owing to the lakes and rivers upon which he based his position, it was almost impossible for the Nationalist and war-lord troops to completely and effectively surround him. His soviet was self-supporting in food, and he had established a small arsenal, a powder factory and one or two other essential industries. Ho Lung, the happy ex-Bandit, showed no signs of moving.

Chiang Kai-shek, realizing the probable pattern of Chu Teh's strategy, anticipated that his route would be to move north, cross the Yangtse River to march into the province of Szechwan, where there was little but Ming Tuan, the ill-equipped and ill-trained landlords' militia, to oppose him, and where the terrain would make it difficult for his modern Nationalist formations to bring them to battle.

Chiang Kai-shek withdrew over twenty divisions from central China and spread a number of them along the north bank of the river in Szechwan, to prevent a crossing being made. Part of the remainder he used to block some of the routes to the river from the south, and the rest, supported by war-lord troops, were to drive the

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Reds into a killing area just to the south of Chungking, where he hoped to trap them.

The Reds marched and counter-marched, sniffing suspiciously along the south bank of the Yangtse for a suitable crossing place. Suspecting a trap, Chu Teh gradually pulled his forces away until they were concentrated in the western part of the Kweichow province. As things appeared to be getting a little out of hand, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the Yunnan Army to move up from the south, assisted by a few Nationalist divisions, to drive them back into the trap.

The trap seemed about to be sprung. Looking around, Chu Teh saw that only the mountainous barrier to the west was not blocked by hostile troops. He decided to make a feint southwards, and under cover of it, march his main force rapidly into the mountains to the west, to try and cross the Yangtse River in its upper reaches. In April 1935, a Red corps moved rapidly southwards, neatly avoiding the Yunnan Army, commanded by a war-lord, which was moving slowly northwards, and by forced marches entered Kunming, the capital of the province of Yunnan, which it temporarily occupied. This caused some alarm, and at once the Yunnan Army turned about and made for home, while other Nationalist divisions were also diverted in that direction. Chiang Kai-shek suspected that Chu Teh was making a break southwards.

Whilst this feint was in progress Chu Teh led the 1st Front Army across northern Yunnan province towards a curve in the Yangtse River, and having reached it began moving parallel with the river searching for a crossing place.

As soon as this feint had succeeded in making the Nationalist and war-lord troops march outwards, the Red corps evacuated the city of Kunming just as Chiang Kai-shek's men began to close in round it, and cut across country to join the main body at the River Yangtse.

Moving along the south bank of the river, the Reds quickly passed through the tribal area of the Shans, another primitive border people, amongst whom Mao Tse-tung's cadres went preaching the Communist gospel, but with little success.

Once Kunming had been evacuated by the Reds, Chiang Kai-shek flew to that city to direct operations. He ordered all boats and ferries to be withdrawn to the north bank of the river, and deployed his troops preparatory to closing in on the 1st Front Army, which he thought had fallen into another trap, as in this region the Yangtse

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River is swift flowing, running through deep mountain gorges and defiles, and had but few crossing places.

Not content with this, Chiang Kai-shek ordered that all boats and ferries be burnt and all bridges destroyed, but this order was not generally carried out. Boats were precious and once a bridge was destroyed there was scant hope of its being rebuilt.

The first crossing place Chu Teh made for was known as Leng-Kai, where there was a ferry, but this was one occasion when Chiang Kai-shek's orders had been obeyed. The ferry boat had been burnt. The Reds began to build a bamboo bridge, but it was obvious that this task would take time, and it was started mainly as a ruse.

As the Reds concentrated at Leng-Kai, converging on to it in three columns, a strong detachment marched swiftly along the south bank of the Yangtse River to the next ferry, which was at a place known as Chou Ping Fort, where there was a larger village on the north bank and a smaller one on the south, both garrisoned by troops of the war-lord of Szechwan. Here the ferry boats had not been burnt, but were tied up on the north bank.

The Red detachment arrived at the village on the south bank on May 4th and, wearing captured Nationalist uniforms, were able to enter it and disarm the small garrison, after which they persuaded the villagers to call the ferry boats over. The Red soldiers entered them, crossed and disarmed the garrison on the north bank. The ferry at Chou Ping Fort was in Red hands, and the remainder of the 1st Front Army forsook the bamboo bridge and converged there, being ferried over to the north bank as they arrived. This operation, of crossing the Yangtse River, took nine days in all, and was only just completed in time as Nationalist troops appeared on the south bank as the last boat-loads of Reds were being taken over. This time the boats were burnt, and Chu Teh and his men marched off northwards leaving the troops of Chiang Kai-shek fuming on the south bank of the Yangtse River.

Again, accurately anticipating future Red moves, Chiang Kai-shek flew to Chengtu, in Szechwan province. He realized that the Reds, who were marching northwards, would be moving through very difficult country towards their next major obstacle, the River Tatu, a large tributary of the Yangtse River, and he gleefully planned to annihilate the 1st Front Army there and so repeat Chinese history. (On June 18th 1863, a large part of the 'Taiping Army', under Shih Ta-kai, was trapped and slaughtered at the self-same spot.) Chiang Kai-shek

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moved his Nationalist and war-lord troops, who slowly converged on to this region of the Tatu River.

Once over the Yangtse River, Chu Teh moved quickly northwards to enter the territory of the Lolos, another primitive people on the Chinese border. Living in a remote area of mountain and forest, the Lolo had never been absorbed or over-awed by the Chinese and had remained perpetually hostile to them. The terrain, and the fact that Lololand was a convenient buffer state to the succeeding generations of Chinese, had enabled them to stay virtually independent. The Lolo structure of society was unusual, being based on a sort of feudal system, in that there were 'White' Lolos and 'Black' Lolos, the former being the masters and the latter the slaves.¹

Before entering Lololand, Chu Teh held a military conference of all his commanders at which he issued instructions that all in the 1st Front Army must be courteous to tribal peoples they came into contact with, a departure from the normal Chinese attitude towards them. Chu Teh again emphasized his dicta on prompt obedience to orders, care of weapons and sanitation. He took this opportunity to lecture on the subject of punctuality, something contrary to the normal Chinese soldier's nature, also stressing the importance of timing and co-ordination in the field.

Chiang Kai-shek anticipated that the Reds would meet difficulties and that it would take some time for them to get through traditionally hostile Lololand. He miscalculated: the Reds managed to gain the confidence of the Lolos, mainly perhaps by raiding the border towns and releasing Lolo hostages who were held by the Chinese as a means of security against raids from a warlike people. The Reds treated the freed hostages kindly and in return their passage through Lololand was expedited, guides and provisions being provided.

Nationalist aircraft completely lost sight of the 1st Front Army as soon as it entered the forested part of Lololand. The result was that the Reds suddenly debouched from the trees to hit the River Tatu, at the town of An Shung Chang, in the third week in May, at least a fortnight before Chiang Kai-shek expected them.

The town is on the northern side of the river with only a small village on the south bank, and a ferry between the two. The ferry boats had not been destroyed as ordered. An Shung Chang was garrisoned by a regiment of the army of the war-lord of Szechwan

¹ Both were of the same 'colour', it was just an expression used to differentiate the two classes of Lolo society.

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whose strength is not accurately known, but may have been in the region of just over 1,000.

When the leading detachment of the Red troops appeared they saw one ferry boat tied up to the south bank. The Szechwan regimental commander, who was visiting the village, was at once captured together with his escort. The Reds seized his boat, which was a large one, and about eighty of them piled in to cross the river.

The war-lord troops had been alerted and the landing at An Shung Chang was opposed. The Reds had to spray the bank with machine-gun fire before they were able to leap ashore to scatter the defenders with grenades. With a rush, the other two large boats (there were three in all) were quickly captured.

These boats were sent back to the south bank to bring more Red troops over, while the landing party held the beach-head. When Red reinforcements arrived, an attack was put in which cleared the war-lord troops from the town. They retired into the surrounding hills, where another assault later that day dislodged them completely.

Ferrying began, but the river rose in flood. It was the month of May and the snows of Tibet and Szechwan were melting, which made this a slow business, and when, three days or so later, Nationalist aircraft appeared overhead for the first time, only about 8,000 men, the 1st Corps, commanded by Lin the Strategist, had crossed over to the north side of the River Tatu.

Divisions of Nationalist and war-lord troops were marching rapidly on to An Shung Chang. With a divided force, the situation the Reds found themselves in was not too good. Crossing places were few and bridges over the river even fewer, the next one being about 100 miles or so to the west, where there was a chain suspension bridge over a gorge, at a village known as Lui Ting. This was the last crossing place to the west before entering Tibet.

In view of the poor tactical situation and the nearness of the approaching troops, the Reds decided to turn westwards and make for the Lui Ting bridge. On the north bank of the River Tatu the corps of Lin the Strategist set off. Moving parallel with it, but on the south bank, was the corps of Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier. Both marched as fast as they could, while the main body under Chu Teh followed along the south bank of the river. This was obviously a crucial move as, if the Reds failed to seize the bridge, it would mean a long and difficult detour through the icy blankness of Tibet, or having to turn and fight their way back through hostile Yunnan province.

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The next day the corps on the north bank of the river ran into some war-lord troops and was delayed while it dealt with them, but on the south bank, Peng and his men drew on ahead.

At this time, and for weeks before, there seems to have been no doubt that in the many critical, difficult and trying periods such as this, the Red leaders who inspired the troops were Chu Teh the Commander-in-Chief, Liu the One-Eyed General, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier and Lin the Strategist. Chu Teh, the experienced veteran, was the one to whom all automatically looked, and he remained steady and dependable. The initiative and drive came from Liu, Peng and Lin, all of whom were probably more intelligent and able than their master, Chu Teh. Mao Tse-tung seems to have trailed quietly along in the background, but he just as firmly asserted himself whenever that was necessary. He exerted and built up his influence by being the chairman of every committee that was formed. While as yet saying very little on military matters there was no doubt that Mao Tse-tung was shrewdly watching, filing away the lessons learnt in his mind and pondering over them.

On the morning of the third day of this forced march to the vital bridge war-lord troops again appeared on the north bank opposite to where Peng's men were, and a race developed between the two forces as they both sped along on either side of the river making for the bridge at Lui Ting. The Reds won, reaching the bridge on the afternoon of May 30th 1935.

At this point the River Tatu runs through a deep gorge which is about 900 feet wide.¹ The village was on the north side, where a detachment of the war-lord of Szechwan's army was stationed. The bridge itself consisted of some twenty huge iron chains, slung across the gorge and embedded in the rock on either side, over which footboards were normally lashed. Chiang Kai-shek had ordered this bridge to be destroyed, but instead of doing so, as the prospect of ever getting it repaired again was remote, the war-lord troops had simply removed the footboards from about two-thirds of the distance from the south side. About 300 feet of footboarding remained on the defender's side. The whole bridge normally swayed, resting as it did on articulated chains, but now that part from which the footboarding had been removed consisted of a mass of chains which writhed whenever the wind caught them.

Immediately a platoon of Red volunteers, with their rifles slung

¹ Precise estimates vary.

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and with grenades in their pockets, scrambled on to the loosely swaying iron chains and began swarming along them under the cover of machine-gun fire from their comrades. The Szechwan troops fired at the attackers, who crept along the chains towards them like rats along a ship's mooring rope. A few were hit to drop into the swift flowing river below. As they neared the north bank the footboards on the bridge masked the fire from the defenders to a large extent, so the Szechwan troops set fire to the boards. But it was too late; the Red volunteers clambered on to them, dashed through the flames and with grenades cleared the bridgehead.

Other Red volunteers followed, climbing along the swinging chains, to reinforce an assault that was put in on the village. Shortly afterwards the troops of Lin the Strategist, racing along the north bank, reached the village too, and together the Reds drove out the Szechwan troops, who may have numbered about 1,000 in all.

The battle for the bridge at Lui Ting had lasted about an hour and in the course of it seventeen Red soldiers had been killed. It was an action which demonstrated the courage and ability of the new Chinese soldier, and was in distinct contrast to the popular opinion of those days. This is, quite rightly, regarded by the Red Army as being one of their most colourful military exploits.

Like many another battle famous in history one might well argue that heroic though it was, it was completely unnecessary and need never have been fought at all. Lin the Strategist with some 8,000 soldiers was only about two hours behind, and had the Reds sat down and simply waited, he could have seized the bridge with little trouble. However, it gave the morale of the 1st Front Army a terrific boost and proved to be a tonic at a time when one was needed.

The main body of Chu Teh's force began to arrive that evening and as soon as the bridge had been repaired, started to cross the River Tatu. The next day a few Nationalist aircraft flew over Lui Ting and dropped some bombs, but by the end of the day most of the 1st Front Army had safely reached the north bank.

Once clear of the Tatu River, and now some distance ahead of the pursuing Nationalist troops, Chu Teh paused briefly to rest and re-organize. His force was now down to about 55,000, and he still faced an extremely difficult 200 miles or so before reaching the Sunpan area where the 4th Front Army was waiting, in which distance he had to cross several major mountain ranges which barred his route.

The terrain was practically uninhabited and for the first time the

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Reds had shaken themselves free from all Nationalist and war-lord troops, but they faced a severe test of endurance in which over 10,000 of them fell by the wayside. Only one skirmish occurred in this part of the march and that was in the middle of June 1935 when they were attacked by a large group of Tibetan bandits. The Tibetans were defeated by the Reds, who seized many horses, as well as a few arms and other goods.

To cross the last mountain range, which is permanently ice-covered and trackless, they had to carry their own food and supplies for ten days. Hundreds died from exposure, cold and exhaustion at this hurdle, and most of the remaining baggage animals were lost.

During the first week in July the 1st Front Army struggled slowly down from the last mountain obstacle into a sheltered, but barren, valley where, utterly exhausted, it sat down and panted for breath. It was a week before Chu Teh and the main body of the force were fit to continue marching northwards.

As soon as he had recovered a little, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, with his 3rd Corps, set off in advance of the 1st Front Army, moving first through some thirty miles of tribal territory, this time inhabited by the Fans, a primitive tribe of Tibetan stock, who proved to be hostile. The Fans rolled stones down on to the Reds and Peng had to pause on several occasions to undertake punitive assaults before he got clear of them to reach the Black Water River, a fairly formidable barrier, on the other side of which appeared Red patrols which had been sent south from the 4th Front Army to contact him.

It was the custom in these parts to bridge the rivers by a crude, elementary form of rope suspension bridge, but all these had been cut by the Fans. Peng therefore had to make his own rope bridge, which did not take very long. Crossing over and moving on northwards, he made contact with the 4th Front Army in an area known as Meoerhkai, which was about seventy miles from the Sunpan district, where the main body of Chang the Chairman's force was waiting.

The remainder of the weary 1st Front Army followed on more slowly, arriving in dribblets day by day until all were gathered in. When all heads were counted, less than 45,000 remained out of the original figure of nearly 100,000 who had left the Kiangsi Soviet, and the several thousands who had been recruited *en route*. True, not all those missing were casualties, as many hundreds had been left as cadres in districts through which the Reds had passed to spread the

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word of Communism, but even so, the wastage due to battle casualties, deaths through exhaustion, similar causes and desertion had been well over fifty per cent.

A small number of women, to whom Mao Tse-tung's teaching of emancipation and equality appealed, survived these ordeals. It is reported that one woman with 'bound feet' made this march also.¹

The two Front Armies settled down a few miles apart from each other, whilst their leaders conferred and planned the future. Chang the Chairman had about 50,000 troops, so that together the two armies totalled about 95,000. In round figures both were roughly the same strength, but that of Chang was in much better shape as it had not had such a gruelling march and was slightly better equipped.

The leaders conferred together and at once differences of opinion were apparent. There was a sharp clash of personalities between Mao Tse-tung and Chang the Chairman. Mao Tse-tung alleged that Chang had veered from the 'party line', had not politically educated his men properly, sneered at Chang's personal bodyguard of soldiers and claimed that he had developed all the trappings of a war-lord. On the other hand, Chang, a fellow founder-member of the KCT, looked down with distaste upon Mao Tse-tung, whom he had once helped to expel for his upstart ideas and opinions. The two did not get on at all together.

Chang wanted to march into mountainous Sikang,² adjacent to Tibet, to rest and train, preparatory to descending on the Yangtse Valley to reassert Communist influence in the heart of China and to rouse the movement there. Chang was little concerned about Japan and did not even pay lip-service to the expression 'Anti-Japanese Base'. However, Mao Tse-tung doggedly stuck to his view, which was that it would be best to move to the Kansu province, or somewhere in that region, and build a base there. Mao Tse-tung was fully alive to the value of paying at least lip-service to the wide-spread, current anti-Japanese feeling in China.

For three weeks these conferences and arguments continued, and

¹ This refers to the old Chinese custom in superior or genteel families of binding the feet of female children when very young to prevent their growing normally so as to differentiate them from peasants, who had to work. It was both a social and a practical debility. Women with 'bound feet' were virtually crippled and could only hobble along. The difficulties this unfortunate woman faced and overcame can only be imagined, especially when the animal transport gave out over the mountains. Who she was, or how she fitted in, seems to be lost to posterity.

² Also shown on some maps as Chwanpien province.

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then as there were no signs of any approaching agreement forthcoming, the forces decided to split and go different ways. Chang the Chairman was determined upon his own particular course of action, whilst Mao Tse-tung was equally determined to move north to establish a Communist government.

Whatever the arguments were at the time, either for or against each course, or who was on whoever else's side, is of small moment as the fact remains that Mao Tse-tung, with three corps of the 1st Front Army and his political cadres, some 30,000 in all, moved off towards Kansu province, while all the remainder moved westwards. The latter included all the 4th Front Army, under Chang the Chairman, and the remainder of the 1st Front Army, amounting to the other two corps, under Chu Teh, the Commander-in-Chief.

It has since been alleged that Chang the Chairman was the fly in the ointment and he is habitually pictured as the difficult, sneering character, who would not be swayed by the superior reasoning of Mao Tse-tung, and therefore was wholly and completely in the wrong, but this must be taken with a pinch of salt. Chang was a Communist then—of this there can be no doubt—but he had a mind of his own, a plan of his own, which he put into operation. That it did not meet with the same amount of success as did that of Mao Tse-tung was the result of a combination of circumstances.

The part played by Chu Teh is more obscure, as he, with 15,000 men, went off with Chang the Chairman and not with Mao Tse-tung. The now official Communist version is that, although violently disagreeing with the policy of Chang, he nevertheless went along with him to keep an eye on him, which does not sound over-convincing. It must be remembered that Chang had about 50,000 troops, while Chu Teh had only about 15,000. Chu Teh's story—that he was virtually kept a prisoner by Chang for a year whilst in Sikang—also seems a little thin. The true reasons why these moves were made is difficult to divine, but we do know what did actually happen, although the causes cannot be satisfactorily explained.

Nationalist aircraft had found the two Red armies and started desultory bombing. Chiang Kai-shek had set some of his regular divisions marching towards the Sunpan area, and also the troops of the local war-lords were getting bolder, so it was clearly time for the Reds to think of moving on. In August 1935 Mao Tse-tung moved off leaving Chang to his own devices. Chang marched westwards a few days later, and with his 4th Front Army made his way through the moun-

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tains into Sikang province, where he settled down, spending his time organizing tribal governments and working with his political cadres.

Chu Teh, taking the remaining two corps of the 1st Front Army, and his Chief of Staff, Liu Po-cheng, the One-Eyed General, followed on and camped next to him. There certainly does seem to have been some reserve between the two groups, which remained separate, but Chu Teh appears to have accepted the situation quietly and to have done little about anything. His political acumen was not up to the standards of his military abilities. Chu Teh did not, or either was not able to, assert his authority as Commander-in-Chief. Chang pretty well ignored him.

Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, who was esconced in his Hunan Soviet, was now firmly ordered to move to the west (by whom it is not clear) to link up with the Reds in Sikang.

Returning to Mao Tse-tung, who had left with the three other corps of the 1st Front Army to set up a central Red government, on the military side, Lin the Strategist and Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier were the two most prominent military leaders who accompanied him, but many leading political personalities, such as Chou En-lai the Diplomat and Li Fu-chun also elected to go with Mao Tse-tung.

The first miles of his journey were through the Fan tribal territory, and again the tribesmen proved to be hostile, rolling stones down on to the Reds. The Reds promptly changed their tactics and instead of oozing politeness and courtesy, Mao Tse-tung advocated a policy of forcibly seizing hostages, supplies and guides. There were several skirmishes in which the Reds suffered loss.

The next stage of the journey was through the province of Ching-hai, and Mao Tse-tung's next major obstacle was not a mountain range, but a wide belt of swampy grassland, over 200 miles in depth. This consisted of a tangle of very tall grass, sometimes ten feet or so in height, set in marshy ground. Mao Tse-tung forcibly commandeered the supplies he required from the Mantsu tribe, another primitive border people, before entering this grassland wilderness. Throughout the ten days it took the Reds to traverse this obstacle it rained all the time. This was regarded as being more exhausting and exacting than any of the mountain ranges previously painfully crossed, and many stragglers were lost, while others were sucked into the treacherous swamps, as they waded through a blind jungle of tough, dense grass.

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Chiang Kai-shek now came into the picture again, and his aircraft began to trace the column. He planned to block the way into Kansu province, and to do this brought up a number of his regular divisions. He also ordered the troops of the Muslim generals, nominally under his government, to attack the Reds whenever possible.

In the early days of October 1935 Mao Tse-tung neared the Kansu border, where his leading troops came into contact with the Nationalist regular 19th Route Army, which was really a corps, which Chiang Kai-shek had manœuvred into position to stop him. There were three engagements in which Lin and Peng, the two Red corps commanders, forced a deep wedge through the Nationalist blocking force sufficiently wide to enable Mao Tse-tung's column to break through into the open spaces of Kansu province.

As soon as the Reds came into the open country they were rushed by the Chinese Muslim cavalry groups, but the ability of these irregular units was overrated, and they came off second best in half a dozen encounters. In one skirmish the Reds were successful in capturing a large number of horses, which did much to solve their transport problems. Generally, the Chinese Muslim cavalry was no match for the veteran Red fighters.

However, the horsemen hovered about the flanks and rear, ever on the look-out for stragglers, but apart from this Mao Tse-tung was able to move through Kansu almost unmolested on this the last stage of his long journey. Mao Tse-tung's men joined up with those of Hsu the Peasant on October 20th 1935, when he made contact with the North Shensi Soviet, formed there originally under the leadership of Liu the Turncoat, but now under the chairmanship of Chang Ching-fu (Chang the Politician).

Mao Tse-tung brought in with him slightly less than 20,000 men, having lost about 10,000 since leaving Chu Teh. He was not such a good tactician, administrator or organizer as was his Commander-in-Chief, although his superior in politics and strategy, as is shown by the fact that in the few battles he had fought he had lost one-third of his soldiers.

The Long March of Mao Tse-tung had come to an end:¹ he had

¹ The distance covered by Mao Tse-tung and his men (and women) was somewhere between 6,000 and 8,000 miles—estimates vary—in any case it was a long way, and it is, which ever way one looks at it, a military epic of some magnitude. Edgar Snow says '6,000 miles', while Agnes Smedley says '8,000 miles'. Snow also reports that Mao Tse-tung claimed that his 20,000 survivors had been on the march for 368 days, of which they spent 235 days actually on the move, averaging

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reached his secure base. He at once gave attention to enlarging and consolidating the soviet, and to establishing a Communist civil government. His military commanders—Hsu the Peasant, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier and Lin the Strategist—set about clearing the surrounding district, and in a very short time Mao Tse-tung was able to move into the town of Pao-An, which he made the temporary Red capital.

Meanwhile, in response to orders, Ho Lung wound up his Hunan Soviet, and reluctantly prepared to leave. In the spring of 1936 he made the break-through with about 45,000 troops and active followers, leaving about 10,000 soldiers and cadres behind in the area.

His route was south-west through Hunan into the province of Kweichow, where Chu Teh had spent four months wandering, where he at once began to probe for a place to cross the Yangtse River. Ho Lung's 'Long March', for this is what he had just started, was probably the most hard fought one of all, as his route was cluttered with Nationalist and war-lord troops who buzzed angrily around his ears all the time. He was never free of them until he got right into the mountains on the border of Tibet, and few days went by without a skirmish of some sort, with a major battle being fought by the 2nd Front Army on the average of once a week. Unfortunately, very little accurate detail of this is available. Countless stories are told of the exploits of Ho Lung and his men in this difficult phase, and the extremely high quality of his leadership was amply manifest.

In the province of Kweichow, like Chu Teh before him, Ho Lung was unable to reach the river and, again like Chu Teh, had to turn south and march across part of the province of Yunnan. Once in Yunnan, Ho Lung the ex-Bandit went farther westwards than Chu Teh had done, and benefited from this in that he was fortunate enough to find more suitable routes over the formidable mountains which had cost the 1st Front Army so many casualties.

Ho Lung entered Sikiang province from the south-west, with only 20,000 men left, to join up with Chang the Chairman and Chu Teh in July 1936. Of the 25,000 men he had lost in the course of this Long March the greater number were battle casualties, suffered in his many contacts with the enemy.

24 miles a marching day (which would mean about 5,640 miles), crossed 18 mountain ranges, 5 of which are perennially snow-covered, crossed 24 major rivers, 6 aboriginal districts, marched through 12 provinces, broke through the armies of 12 war-lords and temporarily occupied 62 cities and towns. He might be largely right.

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During the twelve months or so that Chang the Chairman and his 4th Front Army, with Chu Teh, had been in Sikiang, circumstances had changed. Once Ho Lung the ex-Bandit arrived he ganged up with Chu Teh, who with this support, began to speak up. The 4th Front Army had dwindled to less than 45,000, largely through desertion, so the two groups were roughly of equal strength. The morale of the 4th Front Army had sagged in this period.

Ho Lung was a forceful, but charming, character, and most people who had some knowledge of both agree that he was a more shrewd and able military leader in the field than Chu Teh, in spite of being almost illiterate. Ho Lung forced Chang the Chairman to recognize Chu Teh in his position as Commander-in-Chief, which so far Chang had not done. At the same time it was tacitly understood that Chang should keep personal command of his 4th Front Army. Chang had not been having much political success amongst the tribesmen, also food was becoming short in Sikiang province and he had been in conflict with the troops of the war-lord of Szechwan, who was daily getting bolder. The value of loudly mouthing an 'anti-Japanese programme' was now openly obvious, and Red concentration at the Anti-Japanese Base in the north-west was more than ever sound policy.

As there was now no doubt that Mao Tse-tung's plan had proved to be the wiser one, Ho Lung and Chu Teh persuaded Chang the Chairman to move with them to join up with Mao Tse-tung in his North Shensi Soviet.

In August 1936, the 2nd Front Army, the 4th Front Army, and the two corps of the 1st Front Army, about 80,000 in all, left Sikiang province and marched towards Shensi, following much the same route as had Mao Tse-tung, and facing and overcoming similar hardships and difficulties.

This was the last of the Long Marches.

Contact was made in southern Kansu province with a large detachment of Red troops from the North Shensi Soviet, who had been sent southwards to meet them, both to help clear the way and to guide them in, at the beginning of October 1936. Hostile bands of Muslim cavalry haunted this region.

For some days Red troops and followers under Chu Teh and Chang the Chairman dragged their way in, until the last detachments under Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, who had commanded the rear guard throughout, limped in with his men on October 20th 1936.

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Of the 80,000 Reds who left Sikiang only about 50,000 survived this march to walk into the North Shensi Soviet. 30,000 had fallen by the wayside. It is probable that of this figure of 30,000 missing, about equal proportions were killed, died through exhaustion or for similar reasons, or had deserted.

6

The North Shensi Soviet

(October 1935–July 1937)

Fresh in from his Long March, Mao Tse-tung found that Hsu the Peasant was holding the North Shensi Soviet with about 15,000 soldiers, and that the Chairman of the Soviet was Chang Ching-fu—Chang the Politician—who had been sent to take over by the distant, and now scattered, Central Executive Committee of the KCT, which still exerted an influence on Chinese Communist policy and claimed to be its official spokesman abroad.

Mao Tse-tung did not like the look of Chang the Politician, or, perhaps more to the point, resented the outside interference of the KCT Committee which had appointed him, so he removed him from the chairmanship and reinstated the former holder of that office, Liu the Turncoat.

Counting the 20,000 troops he had brought with him, Mao Tse-tung thus had a total effective military strength of about 35,000 armed, trained and disciplined men. He appointed Peng Teh-huai, the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, to be the senior commander, but at the same time he kept a firm hand on the military rein himself. Mao Tse-tung had gained a strong hold on that section of the Red Army he had brought along with him on the last stage of his Long March. Moreover, Mao Tse-tung discovered that he had a natural aptitude for strategy and had acquired a liking for it, so he intended to retain that control so as to be in a position to put his theories into practice.

The base that Hsu the Peasant had carved out for the Reds covered a fairly extensive area which flooded out around the spot where the three provinces of Shensi, Kansu and Suiyuan meet. It consisted largely of territory which at that particular moment was a sort of 'no man's land', being just beyond the effective reach of adjacent war-lord armies.

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Mao Tse-tung walked into Shensi at a time when three war-lord armies, each virtually independent of the others, were in North China facing the Japanese in Manchuria, each motivated by fear and distrust of them, and to some extent of each other. The largest was that of the Manchurian war-lord, Chang Hsueh-liang the Young Marshal, which, although shrinking daily from desertions, still consisted of roughly 150,000 men. This was standing in the province of Hopei, just south of Peking.

The Young Marshal had returned from his trip to Europe in 1934, cured of his opium habit, fit and enthusiastic to lead his army to take back Manchuria from the Japanese by force. Reinstated to command by Chiang Kai-shek, his officers and men welcomed him back, perhaps because of his prestige and position rather than for his personal popularity. Without his leadership, in a 'foreign land', the Manchurians had been rather like sheep without a shepherd, with no one to care for or take an interest in them. Morale in the Manchurian Army, which had been steadily deteriorating, perked up again on his return. His army possessed both artillery and cavalry regiments.

Next door, in Shensi province, was the army of Yen Hsi-shan, the opium-rich Model Governor, who may have been able to muster about 40,000 troops in all, and who glanced apprehensively at the Japanese Army in Manchuria.

Farther to the west, in the adjacent province of Suiyuan, was the army of Feng Yu-hsiang, the Christian General, who had over 60,000 troops under his command. Feng was crude but efficient, and his army was one of the best disciplined and most able in China, but it was spread over a large expanse of territory and reached down to cover much of the province of Shensi.

To the west of the Red North Shensi Soviet, in the wide open spaces of Kansu and the province Ninghsia, lying to the north of it, were the cavalry armies of the Chinese Muslim generals, who with their horsemen dominated those sparsely populated regions.

Once he had settled in, Mao Tse-tung ordered Peng, his military commander, to further extend the area encompassed by the soviet. Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier set to work and first of all, using the bulk of his force, cleared a large section of country to the west, moving well into the province of Kansu. The Chinese Muslim horsemen generally melted before him. Peng then turned northwards and marched some distance into the province of Suiyuan, without meeting much opposition either. Then he returned to Pao-An, the town

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where Mao Tse-tung had set up his government. Concentrating his force again, Peng this time moved southwards in the province of Shensi towards the strategically desirable city of Yen-an, which Mao Tse-tung coveted. Here Peng met with less success.

After about a month of energetic campaigning, Peng had expanded the size of the Red soviet considerably, but he had not been able to take any cities or large towns, which were all held by detachments of war-lord troops, so therefore it can be said that the Reds really only controlled the countryside.

Deciding to crush the Red base in North-West China before it prospered, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the Young Marshal to move into southern Shensi with his complete Manchurian Army to destroy it. Somewhat suspicious, and a little reluctantly, the Young Marshal moved out from Hopei province in October 1935, and later that month came into contact with Peng's troops in southern Shensi. The Young Marshal did not want to use his army to fight the Chinese, even though they were technically 'bandits' or 'rebels', but he did as he was told. The next month, November, there was a series of engagements between the Reds and the Manchurians, most of which were inconclusive, although the Reds were forced to give ground.

The main reason for lack of success on the part of the larger, better-armed Manchurian Army was that the Young Marshal had been conditioning his men to attack the Japanese and so recover their homeland. He was not over-keen on being diverted from this task nor were his men. The desertion rate was stepped up, and the further he moved away from Manchuria, so the reluctance of his men increased.

Desultory skirmishing continued until January 1936, during which time the Reds captured a number of Manchurians, whom they indoctrinated and then released to return to their units. The Reds concentrated in particular on the captured officers, with whom they had some success.

Both Feng the Christian General and Yen the Model Governor had been ordered by Chiang Kai-shek to close in on the Reds and destroy them, but both chose to ignore this direction, being more concerned with what the Japanese might suddenly do in Manchuria.

Even though they had given way before the Manchurian Army attacks in December 1935, the Red North Shensi Soviet covered a large area, still taking in huge slices of the provinces of Kansu,

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Suiyuan and Shensi, and although they had not been able to take any cities they controlled the countryside where they were. The soviet included a population of about two million people, upon whom Mao Tse-tung and his political department got to work.

As Peng, the military commander, was fighting to enlarge the soviet, Mao Tse-tung was organizing, planning and consolidating. Right from the very start his long-term policy was clear. This was to be a strong permanent base—the base—the nursery of the future gigantic Red Army which he planned would conquer China, and of the Communist political machine which would convert all the Chinese to the doctrines of Marx and Lenin as interpreted by Mao Tse-tung. In this base Mao Tse-tung intended to consolidate in his own hands all power, both military and political, and here he intended to forge the instruments to enable him to do this.

The North Shensi Soviet contained a fair amount of good agricultural land, which could provide sufficient food, and the policy Mao Tse-tung put into practice, of confiscating the land and dividing it among the working peasants, ensured that the food would be available to the Reds.

Mao Tse-tung knew that the struggle ahead would be long and economically difficult, and that his base must be self-contained as far as possible. To this end he began to establish small essential industries. When he arrived there was no industry whatever. In Shensi were deposits of coal, and also a few small oil wells which had been experimentally operated by foreign firms but had been abandoned. Thus he was assured of fuel.

A small arsenal was set up which was intended eventually to turn out small arms and ammunition, as well as mines and hand grenades. Some of the necessary items of machinery, with others, had been carried on the Long March, which also enabled simple mills and factories to be started in a small way. For example, paper was manufactured, as were soap, shoes and textiles. The sewing-machines brought from Kiangsi were soon producing Red Army uniforms. Other basic industries came into being as soon as materials, machinery or skilled workers became available.

The North Shensi Soviet was rich in natural salt, which was normally exported to the rest of China. The Reds developed this export trade and countless sacks of salt were smuggled out into Nationalist and war-lord territory in return for essential items and other manufactured goods needed. The person responsible for all

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this was Yieh Chih-chiang,¹ who had been in charge of supplies for the Red Army for some years, and was the army's 'quartermaster'. Yieh maintained a trickle of trade throughout the blockade and kept the soviet reasonably well supplied. He had accompanied Mao Tse-tung on his Long March.

In December 1935, the Japanese pressed forward, forcing the withdrawal of all Chinese officials and armed forces from the Manchurian province of Chahar, and the north-eastern parts of Hopei province too. The threat could hardly be made more plain. The Young Marshal became more reluctant to expend his energy and men in fighting Chinese instead of Japanese, and his troops came to a halt.

The other prominent Red military leader, Lin Piao the Strategist, was given the task of developing a military training centre and political school combined, which he set up in the caves surrounding Pao-An. The cadre of the politico-military school that had functioned in Juikin had remained together, keeping a separate existence during the Long March of the 1st Front Army, and had operated whenever possible. Although the town of Pao-An was in Red hands, owing to the occasional bombing raids, the Red Government and Army G.H.Q., and indeed the factories and workshops which were springing into life, were housed in these caves, of which there were many in the low hills surrounding the town.

The school was known as Kangta,² and at first had about 500 students, but was enlarged within a year to take nearly 2,000. A variety of military training courses were run, such as for senior commanders, for battalion commanders and for junior commanders. Political training was inter-mixed with military training. Specialist training was also catered for, but for some time this was confined to the engineers and communications sections. Later, a cavalry wing was added, as Kansu province was largely cavalry country, then heavier weapons wings, such as mortars, medium machine-guns and artillery were tacked on as such weapons were accumulated.

Radio communication rapidly became efficient and Mao Tse-tung was in touch with many of the half-smothered Red Soviets left behind in China, as well as the Red underground in such cities as Nanking and Hankow, and some of the capitals of the outer world.

¹ Now most of the credit goes to Li Fu-chun, the present Chairman of the State Planning Commission.

² Made up from Chinese initial letters.

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Mao Tse-tung was rising steadily head and shoulders above his colleagues, as smilingly and blandly he put his policy into force, which was basically built upon the peasants. Some of his political officers were not too keen on this emphasis and would rather have copied the pattern of the Russian Revolution and laid stress on the urban workers, but the continued lack of success in taking cities allowed the Chinese Communists little alternative. Mao Tse-tung's programme of land distribution and the consequent freedom from rapacious landlords and war-lords pleased the peasants, and he soon had the majority of them eating out of his hand. He made special efforts to attract youth.

When the Manchurian troops of the Young Marshal virtually ceased fighting against the Reds because of disturbing events in Manchuria, the Reds, losing no time and no advantage, turned elsewhere to expand. In February 1936, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier moved with his men against Yen the Model Governor, with the intention of eating into his territory. Leaving just a covering screen to hold the Manchurian Army in the south, he moved with his main force to the north-east. While he was away, Chou the Diplomat began a campaign of another sort: to try and soften the Manchurian attitude towards the Reds.

For some two months Peng fought against the troops of Yen the Model Governor, trying to push his way across the Yellow River into Shansi province. He was not successful and had to withdraw. In March during this fighting, that colourful but changeable character, Liu Tsu-tan (Liu the Turncoat) was killed while gallantly leading the Reds into battle.

During the summer of 1936 there was a virtual stalemate around the borders of the Red North Shensi Soviet, as although Chiang Kai-shek urged the surrounding war-lords to attack the Reds, they were reluctant to do so in view of the Japanese threat. During this period of inactivity, Chou the Diplomat made contact with the Manchurian Army. A number of captured officers had been indoctrinated, well treated and then sent back to their own units, where they told the Young Marshal of the aims, determination and morale of the Red Army.

The Young Marshal was impressed and secretly received Red emissaries, of whom the leader was Chou the Diplomat. His aim was to propose a 'United Front', and to persuade the Manchurian troops to stop fighting the Reds, and instead join with them to fight the

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Japanese. It was perhaps mainly because the disappointed and discontented Manchurians were fertile soil that Chou had some success. He was able to persuade the Young Marshal to accept a number of his political officers as instructors in the Manchurian Army Officers' School, which had been set up in Sian. This fact was concealed from Chiang Kai-shek.

The Young Marshal still thought that Chiang Kai-shek was honest and straightforward in his declared intention to stand up against the Japanese, believing it to be his primary purpose. He was merely beginning to think that Chiang Kai-shek might be a little misguided and dilatory, and inclined to chase hares.

The strength of the Manchurian Army had shrunk to less than 130,000 men, mainly through desertions, and morale was again drooping. Mao Tse-tung gave orders that while Chou the Diplomat was engaged in persuading the Young Marshal to form a United Front with him, no more Manchurian deserters should be encouraged, and that enlistments of prisoners and others in the Red Manchurian brigade he had formed, should be stopped.

In May 1936, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier advanced to Yen-an, a walled city with strong fortifications and cradled in a bowl of hills, and he settled down to besiege it. Food and supplies were dropped from the air by the Nationalists on to the Yen-an defenders, but in June Peng gave up the attempt and withdrew. The Reds had again failed to take a defended city.

In September 1936, Chiang Kai-shek began to prepare to resume his offensive against the Reds, and he moved about 50,000 of his regular troops—about five divisions—into southern Kansu province to seal off the Red Soviet from that direction. In the following November the troops of Chiang Kai-shek came into contact with the Reds, and in the fighting the Reds were driven back some distance, but the Nationalists did not follow up this advantage. This Nationalist thrust died down and these divisions stayed where they were. Red cadres contacted them to try and persuade them to join a United Front to fight the Japanese, but they had no success. The shrewd Mao Tse-tung lost no opportunity of diverting the forces opposing him and directed his propaganda to persuading both Nationalist regular and war-lord troops not to fight him for this reason.

As has been related, in October 1936 the remainder of the Red Army, which had united in Sikang, arrived in the North Shensi

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Soviet, skirting the Nationalist troops settled in southern Kansu. This brought the military strength of the Red base up to about 95,000 troops in all, made up of the 50,000 brought in by Chu Teh, Chang the Chairman and Ho Lung the ex-Bandit; the 20,000 brought in by Mao Tse-tung and the 15,000 men of Hsu the Peasant, together with another 10,000 Manchurians and Chinese Muslims who had been persuaded to come over to the Reds.

The whole of the effective Red Army was now concentrated in north-west China, and Mao Tse-tung set to work to reorganize it. Issuing orders and instructions, he decreed that the armed forces of the Red Government should consist of the regular element, the independent armies, the guerillas and the home guards. He allotted each a particular role and wrote memoranda on organization, strategy, tactics and training. Mao Tse-tung became the military pundit. Chu Teh had resumed his position as Commander-in-Chief, and Liu Po-cheng the One-Eyed General resumed his former post as Chief of Staff.

The regular element of the Red Army was formed into seven divisions, all organized loosely on the 'triangular' pattern. There was dual command, both political and military. Its task was the defence of the soviet and preparation for future expansion. Although divided more or less neatly into seven divisions, the Red Army remained basically in its old Front Army groups, which could now be likened to corps, each having two divisions. The seventh division was formed to protect G.H.Q. Details of political instruction and military training were laid down by Mao Tse-tung.

By independent armies he meant the two brigades, one Manchurian and the other of Muslim troops. He ordered that no more Muslim soldiers be accepted. This was partly because their fighting ability and discipline were not highly regarded by him, and partly because they were proving largely unsusceptible to Communist propaganda. Mao Tse-tung knew the limitations of horsemen in the war he was preparing to fight. He had his eyes on non-cavalry country, and he knew he could not afford the expense of maintaining a large, costly cavalry contingent that would generally be of little use to him in it. For the time being the Chinese Red Muslim brigade remained intact.

The Red Manchurian brigade also remained intact for the time being, although its recruiting had stopped for another reason.

The guerillas, who were allotted a roving, harassing role, were to be organized into independent companies and platoons, and were

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detailed to work in certain areas. They were to dominate the countryside whenever Nationalist and war-lord troops held the cities and towns. Their task was to control the communications, and raid when necessary to gain both supplies and information—in short, to enable the regular element of the Red Army to be mobile and not to be wastefully dispersed. The independent platoons, each of about forty men, were self-contained and divided up into a small headquarters and three infantry sections, or squads. The companies generally, but not always, had three such platoons.

The home guards, or militia, as they later came to be called, were to be formed from the peasants to whom land had been given. Their organization was elementary, consisting of company and platoon sub-units only, and their main task was the defence of their own villages. They had an additional role, which was to provide the supply and transport services for both the regular element and the guerilla units. No special line-of-communication units were formed, and only a bare minimum of personnel were employed on logistical duties.

Both the regular forces and the guerilla units had to perform a period of manual work daily when not on operational duty, as well as to listen to political instruction.

Women were enlisted on equal terms in all sections of the armed forces, and while in theory they were all armed and trained front-line fighters, in practice they performed many of the essential logistical tasks. In the seven divisions there were ammunition, supply, transport, medical and intelligence sections, and these were frequently staffed largely by women, as was the political department. In spite of propaganda, the proportion of women in the combatant units was always small.¹

Another organization, which was properly part of the armed forces and which blossomed out and expanded in the North Shensi Soviet, should be mentioned: the 'Vanguards'. In this militant youth body there hardly seemed to be any minimum age of entry. The members, both male and female, received some elementary military training and drill, but were employed as messengers, orderlies and sentries.

The Reds were in possession of a very diverse armoury of weapons consisting mainly of captured Japanese, German, British and American patterns. They also had a few Chinese-made 'copies'.

¹ No reliable figures are available, and the best guess may be that women never formed more than ten per cent at most of the total fighting personnel in the field.

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There had been no direct contact with Russia, and the Russians did not influence the growing Red Army at all. A mixture of foreign influences was vaguely traceable in the shape Mao Tse-tung was hammering out, but these were mainly either Japanese or German. The only Russian arms the Reds had were the tiny handful given to the Kiangsi Soviet in 1933 for not joining up with the rebel Nationalist general, General Tsai and his 19th Route Army. A few more had been captured from the troops of Feng the Christian General, who had acquired some when he had raided into Mongolia. The Reds had a mixed bag of probably about 2,000 medium and light machine-guns.

The whole of the regular element was now armed, as were the majority of the guerillas, who soon numbered about 30,000. As further arms were captured they were distributed to both the guerillas and the home guard. Mao Tse-tung was insistent on arming the peasants, but he was practical enough to ensure that they first be politically educated and passed as reliable.

Chu Teh, always a strong disciplinarian, took special steps to improve the discipline of the army, with Mao Tse-tung's encouragement and with the active help of the political department. Concern for the rights of individuals had long vanished in the Red Army. The discipline was of a high standard for the China of those days, and all who came into contact with the Red Army before 1937 remarked upon this unusual feature. It was disciplined off parade as well as on, again highly unusual for the country and the era. The next best disciplined force in the area appeared to be that of the brutal, but competent, Feng the Christian General.

All the regular soldiers began to be clad in a standard uniform, of a darkish colour, designed vaguely on the style then in vogue in the Russian Army. Red collar patches indicated regular troops. All, regulars, guerillas and home guards wore a uniform cap, with a red star as the cap badge. There were still no formal ranks, except for the indefinite one of 'Commander', or 'leader', meaning someone in command of a unit, be it a section or a division. However, it was noticeable that within months Mao Tse-tung in his writings began to refer to 'officers and men', and for example, he sternly forbade his 'officers' to beat or ill-treat their 'men'.

In theory all were equal, and certainly there were no distinguishing badges of rank, but as time went by slight distinctions crept in. For example, although the officers ate with their men they slept in

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separate quarters, the senior ones were saluted and many had a horse to ride, as well as a personal orderly or batman.

One of the Red military leaders who began to come to the fore about this time was Nieh Jung-chen,¹ who was the chief political officer to one of the divisions. He was the son of a wealthy landlord, well educated and had visited both France and Russia. Converted to Communism, he had been a political instructor at Whampoa, had taken part in the Northern Campaign, had been with Chou the Diplomat at the unsuccessful Canton Commune in 1927 and had taken part in the Long March. Nieh was sent off with 1,000 riflemen and 1,000 other Reds to form a soviet in north-west Hopei province, then a sort of 'no man's land'.

Shortly after the arrival of the bulk of the Red Army in the North Shensi Soviet, there was a brief tussle for power between Mao Tse-tung and Chang the Chairman, who had disagreed with Mao Tse-tung when they met in Szechwan and who had taken off the greater part of the Red Army to Sikiang. This came to a head in April 1937, when Mao Tse-tung successfully denounced Chang, who was forced to confess his errors publicly in true Communist style. Chang was degraded to a comparatively unimportant job.² Mao Tse-tung had proved himself to be so right and Chang so wrong.

This was the final incident that really capped Mao Tse-tung's undisputed leadership. He continued to assert his control by being the chairman of every committee of any importance, a role in which he excelled. Mao Tse-tung became generally known and habitually referred to by one and all in the soviet as the 'Chairman'.

Mao Tse-tung not only seized and kept the political leadership but he also retained direct control and authority over the armed forces through Chu Teh, his commander-in-chief and his old friend, but now definitely slightly his subordinate. The old equality of the days of the Long March had faded. Chu Teh ensured that all military commanders kept in line, and in all matters he was Mao Tse-tung's faithful watchdog. Chu Teh was not the brightest or the most able general Mao Tse-tung had—but he was the most reliable.

¹ Now one of the Deputy Prime Ministers of the Peoples' Republic of China.

² Chang the Chairman accepted his lot with apparent resignation and stayed working in the North Shensi Soviet until the summer of 1938, when he was smuggled to Hankow in an aircraft by a group of visiting Nationalist officers, where he changed sides and went over to Chiang Kai-shek, taking a position in the 'Blue Shirts', the Nationalist political police.

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Perturbed by the lack of action against the Reds by the Manchurian Army, in October 1936 Chiang Kai-shek personally visited Sian to see for himself what was wrong. He saw that the Manchurian troops were reluctant to fight the Chinese Reds, but were far more concerned about the activities of the Japanese in Manchuria, and that the Reds had infiltrated in amongst them. The Young Marshal proposed a United Front with the Reds against the Japanese, but this did not go down well with Chiang Kai-shek, who ordered him to dissolve his military school and to expel all the Red instructors.

Immediately afterwards, Chiang Kai-shek called a conference at Loyang, in Honan, where he openly declared the Reds to be the main enemy, who must be dealt with first. This disturbed the listeners, who included Feng the Christian General, Yen the Model Governor and the Young Marshal, who all agreed that the Reds might be an 'enemy', but they could not subscribe to the theory that they were the main one, nor that they should be dealt with first.

In spite of murmurs of protest, Chiang Kai-shek was determined and took measures to prepare for what he intended to be the '6th Extermination Campaign'. Realizing that the Manchurian Army was useless for this purpose, he moved up another fifteen of his best regular divisions, amounting, together with those already standing in southern Kansu, to nearly 200,000 troops, with the intention, as a preliminary move, of replacing the almost friendly Manchurian soldiers facing the Reds in central Shensi.

To co-ordinate this campaign against the Reds, Chiang Kai-shek called a war conference at Sian, in Shensi, arriving there himself on December 7th 1936. Sian was now the temporary G.H.Q. of the Young Marshal, Feng the Christian General and Yen the Model Governor. As the Reds also held part of the countryside almost verging on to that city, it became the common focal and liaison point. Chiang Kai-shek attempted to sow dissension to try and divide the loyalties of the Manchurian Army divisional commanders, but all were suspicious of his intentions.

Suddenly, on December 11th, Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped and taken before the Young Marshal and Yen the Model Governor, who were both extremely worried about the Japanese threat and the diversion of the Nationalist effort away from it. It is almost certain that the Reds had no hand in this kidnapping, although they had representatives in Sian at the time. They claim in fact, that as soon as they heard about it they sent Chou the Diplomat to Sian specially to

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plead for the safety of Chiang Kai-shek in the interests of national solidarity.

Whilst Chiang Kai-shek was held prisoner the whole of Nationalist China held her breath. His personal safety was feared for as he was in the hands of shrewd, ruthless men, and immediate rescue was out of the question.¹ Chiang Kai-shek was held prisoner for a fortnight, during which time it is still not generally known with any certainty what took place. Then, on December 25th, he was just as suddenly released, having agreed to end his campaigning against the Chinese Reds and to concentrate upon the potential Japanese threat.

The Young Marshal voluntarily flew back to Nanking with Chiang Kai-shek, presumably as a token of good faith. Once in Nanking, Chiang Kai-shek turned on him, had him arrested, tried and imprisoned.²

Chiang Kai-shek moved quietly, but viciously, and in January 1937 he sent a Nationalist general, Hu Tsung-nan, to take over the Sian Sector. Hu was a notorious anti-Red, who scattered the Communist sympathizers, broke up the military school at Sian and dispersed the Manchurian divisions, replacing them with his own. A few Manchurian units went over to the Reds, as did a large number of deserters. Mao Tse-tung reversed his previous decision and accepted them. His Manchurian brigade swelled in strength.

While the 'Sian Incident', as the kidnapping of Chiang Kai-shek was known, was taking place, the Reds, losing no single opportunity, expanded their soviet until it included practically all the countryside of the province of Shensi, which they sowed liberally with small units of guerillas. The Red Army again moved towards Yen-an, held now by the Manchurian troops of the Young Marshal, who were reluctant to clash with it. In the last days of December, they evacuated, and the Red Army walked in and took possession without a shot being fired. Mao Tse-tung was jubilant and at once moved there with his Government and his Red Army G.H.Q. Yen-an was formally de-

¹ China recalled apprehensively how in November 1924, Feng the Christian General had driven the former Emperor of China, Pu Yi, from Peking, where he had been allowed to reside, and forced him to seek Japanese protection while he angled for supreme power for himself, and wondered if it was not another of his plots instigated for a similar purpose.

² The Young Marshal was kept prisoner by Chiang Kai-shek for twenty-four years, and when the Nationalists evacuated the mainland in 1949 he was taken with them to Formosa. He was quietly released in August 1961 and is apparently living on the island privately.

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clared to be the Red Capital on January 1st 1937, and at the same time Mao Tse-tung changed the title of his soviet from the 'Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic', which he had christened it when he arrived in the north, to the 'Chinese People's Soviet Republic'.

In February 1937, Mao Tse-tung appealed to the Nationalists to form a United Front with him against the Japanese, and he sent Chou the Diplomat to Nanking. He offered to change the name of the Red Army, place it under Nationalist command, to stop confiscating land, and to form his soviet into a special area to be administered by the Reds under the Nationalist Government. Chiang Kai-shek hesitated, but taking this offer for weakness, insisted that first of all four of Mao Tse-tung's seven divisions must be disbanded, and the other three staffed with Nationalist officers. Mao Tse-tung then suggested an exchange of officers, but Chiang Kai-shek made no reply and Mao Tse-tung's appeal came to nothing.

How sincere this offer was, and how fully Mao Tse-tung intended to implement it should it have been accepted, is open to speculation. Sensing the temper and feeling of the Chinese people, Mao Tse-tung was flogging the anti-Japanese donkey as hard as he could with the object of embarrassing the Nationalists. Chiang Kai-shek was seemingly alone in fully recognizing the potential danger the infant Red Army presented, and the need to kill it before it grew up, but, owing to other pressures, he was hamstrung and unable to do anything at that moment.

Because of public opinion, and because he could not carry the war-lords with him in this respect, his projected '6th Extermination Campaign' was suspended, but during the spring of 1937 over 200,000 of his regular troops remained to form a blockade line against the Red North Shensi Soviet.

In May 1937, Mao Tse-tung, ever susceptible to the anti-Japanese feeling sweeping through the country, again changed the name of his soviet, this time to 'Special Area Government'.

During the early summer of that year from a military point of view things remained static, although extremely tense. Meanwhile, Mao Tse-tung did not neglect his own party politics and he brought the membership of the KCT up to about 40,000, all of whom were carefully screened and trained: they were specially selected cadres under his personal control. Mao Tse-tung had gained full domination over the Red Army, and he now worked to seize the exclusive reins

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of the KCT party machine. Several members of the Central Executive Committee were scattered about, either in Shanghai, underground in China, in Russia, or elsewhere. He was insuring against their ganging up on him in the future. He had never forgotten that they had done so once before. The names of some of these members still carried weight in the Communist world, some were in direct contact with the Comintern agents (which Mao Tse-tung was not) and most of them insisted on their right to speak for the KCT and to assist in making its policy.

7

The Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)

A minor clash between Japanese and Chinese troops on the night of July 7th 1937, at Lukouchiao¹ was the spark that started the eight-year-long Sino-Japanese War, and within days five Japanese divisions were poised near the border waiting to strike southwards into China.

The Sino-Japanese conflict can conveniently be divided into three main phases, which are as follows:

1. The initial Japanese advances into China, which lasted until October 1938.

2. The period of virtual stalemate, from October 1938 until June 1945.

3. The Japanese withdrawals, from June 1945 until August 1945.

From the point of view of the Chinese Red Army this 'Anti-Japanese' struggle, as the Reds insist upon calling it, can also be divided into three separate phases, which are:

1. The semblance of a 'United Front' with the Nationalists, when they together fought the Japanese, which lasted until the end of 1940.

2. The long period of guerilla activity, seeping 'between' the Japanese lines, slow expansion and consolidation.

3. The hasty rush to occupy territory evacuated by the Japanese in the spring and summer of 1945.

On July 25th, the Japanese divisions launched themselves at Peking, and three days later the Chinese garrison left quietly by night. The Japanese then directed their attention to Tientsin, which they attacked on the 29th, and on the 31st its Chinese garrison moved out. The invaders then began to move southwards and westwards

¹ The Marco Polo Bridge, near Peking.

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along the roads and the railways. Kalgan, the capital of Chahar province was evacuated by the Nationalist Chinese on August 27th in the face of Japanese pressure.

Meanwhile, on August 13th, fighting broke out in Shanghai. The next day the Chinese Nationalist air force went into action against Japanese shipping lying nearby, mustering all available aircraft for this purpose. This 'Hundred Plane' raid was not very successful, as the Chinese lost many aircraft as well as unfortunately dropping a few bombs on the International Settlement.

The Chinese ground forces did better, managing to retain a foothold in Shanghai for three months. Shanghai was a 'shop window', and Chiang Kai-shek, who hoped to receive foreign aid and arms, sent some of his best troops to that city as reinforcements. After putting up an unexpectedly fierce resistance, which impressed foreign observers, the Chinese were finally driven out on November 1st.

Alarmed by these events, on August 21st, Russia signed a non-aggression agreement with Nationalist China. Russian help was given. Russia sent about 400 aircraft to bolster up the Nationalist air force, but it did not make much difference as the Chinese pilots were no match for the Japanese in the air. During the next twelve months, Chiang Kai-shek watched his air force being virtually destroyed, after which he kept his few remaining aircraft well out of the way of the enemy.

Officially sponsored 'volunteers' were also sent from Russia to fight for Nationalist China at this time. They were practically all airmen, with their own aircraft, which amounted to six squadrons, being four of fighters and two of bombers. These Russian 'volunteers' stayed fighting with Chiang Kai-shek until 1939, when they were recalled to Russia. During their service in China, the Russian 'volunteers' did practically all the air fighting and bombing against the Japanese.

Chiang Kai-shek called upon all China to unite behind him to resist the invader, and Mao Tse-tung was quick to make capital out of this. He closed down Kangta, the military training centre at Yen-an, which had over 2,000 students, many of whom were attending senior staff and tactical courses, and loudly proclaimed that the Reds were making ready to fight the Japanese.

In August, Chu Teh and Chou the Diplomat flew to Nanking for a conference with Chiang Kai-shek, and as a result Chiang Kai-shek accepted a United Front in principle, but for the time being would

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not put it into practice. Later, however, when Nanking, his capital, was threatened by Japanese advances, he agreed to do so. On September 9th, formal permission was given by the Nationalist Government for the Red troops in the north to be recognized and formed into what was known as the 8th Route Army. Chiang Kai-shek obviously hoped that the Reds would be battered to pieces by the Japanese soldiers, and he would thus be relieved of their obnoxious presence.

In return, Mao Tse-tung agreed to fight the Japanese under the overall direction of Chiang Kai-shek and to stop expanding his soviet. He also agreed to change the name of the soviet to the 'Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region', which came to be more commonly known as the 'North-West Border Region', or simply the 'Border Region'. Mao Tse-tung had wanted full recognition for all the other Red soviets that remained alive in the different parts of China, but Chiang Kai-shek would not agree. This seemed to him to be a ruse to demand arms which could eventually be used against himself.

Guerilla warfare, which was all the Reds had to offer, was not highly thought of at that stage, as all hopes were pinned on the regular Nationalist army, which was putting up an initial good performance in Shanghai. On the other hand, there was a section of the Red military leaders which did not rate Japan's chances of success too highly, and which was inclined to feel that a Nationalist victory was inevitable. The agreement to the formation of the 8th Route Army was a compromise, the best bargain that could be obtained by the Reds at that time.

The 8th Route Army consisted in the first place of three divisions of picked personnel, with a strength initially of about 45,000 men. Chu Teh was appointed to command. The divisions were numbered as follows:

115th—commanded by Lin Piao, the Strategist.

120th—commanded by Ho Lung, the ex-Bandit.

129th—commanded by Liu Po-cheng, the One-Eyed General.

These divisions were formed from the old Front Armies, which had remained more or less intact, and the 115th Division contained most of the old campaigners of the old 1st Front Army, led for years by Chu Teh, and then brought to the north-west by Mao Tse-tung, when Lin the Strategist was the active commander. Nieh Jung-chen was the second-in-command of this division.

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The 120th Division was made up largely of elements of the old 2nd Front Army, which Ho Lung had brought from Hunan province. The 129th Division consisted of most of the old 4th Front Army, which had come from the Oyuwan Soviet under Chang the Chairman and gone to Sikang. Hsu the Ironside was second-in-command of this division. In the first place each of the divisions had two brigades, each of two regiments which had a varying number of units.

Quantities of ammunition and sums of money were sent by the Nationalists, and Mao Tse-tung withdrew the local 'Red' currency which he had circulated in the Border Region and issued Nationalist money in its place. The Reds had hoped for arms, but were unlucky as none were forthcoming. Although they had established one or two small arsenals, they had not yet succeeded in producing any of their own, and also they were having difficulty in producing certain types of ammunition for their wide variety of weapons.

Little else was sent, although many things were asked for. The Red soldiers still wore their old dark-coloured or black uniforms with the Red Star as their cap badge. Later on, a few Red units changed this for the White Star of the Nationalists. The Nationalists generally wore a uniform of a bluish colour, and gradually the 8th Route Army changed to that shade too.

When the 8th Route Army had been formed, the Red Army still had between 50,000 and 60,000 soldiers left, who remained in the Border Region, under Peng Teh-huai, the ex-Nationalist Brigadier who stayed with Mao Tse-tung as his military adviser.¹

As soon as it was organized, the 8th Route Army moved eastwards into Shansi province, under Chu Teh, each division moving separately on a different axis. It became part of what was known as the 18th Army Group, under the command of Yen Hsi-shan the Model Governor, who in spite of having been a party to the kidnapping of Chiang Kai-shek so recently at Sian, was designated commander of that sector, which was called the 2nd War Zone. The whole of China was eventually divided up into territorial 'war zones', and all troops in them came under the control of the zone commander.

Yen would only allow the Reds to enter the Shansi province, his own personal domain, on the condition they left the peasants strictly alone. This undertaking was apparently given, but was not

¹ Mao Tse-tung's statement made in 1937 that the Reds had only 30,000 soldiers cannot be taken seriously and must have been written for propaganda purposes.

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observed. Technically, Yen insisted that the Reds were there by his invitation.

After taking Kalgan, the Japanese entered Shansi province, when two divisions of the 8th Route Army, the 115th and the 120th, were moved eastwards over the Yellow River to meet them. First contact was made by Lin the Strategist, with his 115th Division, when he caught a small Japanese brigade in a trap on the night of September 26th, as it was moving through the Great Wall where the roadway went through a pass known as the Ping Sing Pass. A partly-mechanized Japanese force was advancing down this solitary motorable road. Lin allowed the bulk of it through the pass and then attacked its flanks when the column was badly strung out. The whole Japanese force was scattered and the remnants withdrew. Lin captured, or at least had under his hand, 5 tanks, 5 armoured cars, 50 field guns and about 100 other vehicles. With the exception of the artillery, he was obliged to destroy all this captured equipment, for the simple reason that his men did not know how to handle or move it.

The Battle of Ping Sing Pass is highly rated by the Reds as an important victory. It was certainly a model ambush, but as the odds were three-to-one against the Japanese, and as Lin did not remain to block the gap, its strategic importance was small.

The Japanese advanced into Shansi from the north-east, making for Taiyuan, the capital, moving along the railway line. Yen the Model Governor, commander of the war zone, had his G.H.Q. at Taiyuan, and he mustered all available troops, Nationalist, Manchurian and Red, to stop and hold the enemy. Reinforcements were also sent from the neighbouring province of Hopei. After some fighting the Japanese were halted some miles short of Taiyuan on October 13th.

Further north the Japanese were also moving along the other railway line, from Peking to Paotow, in the province of Suiyuan. Here they had more success and local troops fell away before them. On October 5th, Kweisui, the capital of Suiyuan, fell, and by the 17th, they had reached and taken Paotow, the railway terminus.

This achieved, the Japanese turned southwards and reinforced their thrust towards Taiyuan. The Chinese troops were driven back and the town was evacuated on November 9th. As winter settled on them, the Japanese advance bogged down and came to a stop. The 'front' in this part of China was stabilized temporarily. In any case

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this was a side-show, as Japanese attention was elsewhere. As the Japanese came to a halt, Chu Teh established his G.H.Q. in the Wutai Mountains, in north-east Shansi, with his three divisions spread out in the north, and east, of that province, where all settled down for the winter.

Having taken Shanghai, the Japanese turned inland to close in on Nanking, the Nationalist capital, approaching it from several directions. The main Japanese force, of some five divisions, hit the outer defences of the city on December 4th. Already, a fortnight before, Chiang Kai-shek had removed his government inland to Hankow, also on the Yangtse River. By the 12th the Japanese had fought their way to the city walls of Nanking, and on the next day the Chinese troops evacuated. Then followed what became known as the 'Rape of Nanking'. The Japanese troops were let loose to rob, burn and pillage as they wished. It has since been estimated that over 200,000 Chinese, military prisoners and civilians, were slaughtered amid scenes of extreme barbarity.

The following year, 1938, was one of success for the invaders, as they advanced inland along the railways. In Shansi province, Yen the Model Governor was forced back southwards to the Yellow River, and all the cities and towns on the North China railway system fell into Japanese hands. The story was the same in Central China, the cities and towns on the railways falling one by one to the enemy.

The Japanese pressed especially hard along the line of the Yangtse River, and Hankow fell in October 1938. Chiang Kai-shek moved his government still farther inland, to Chungking, also on the Yangtse River, but farther westwards and sheltered by a mountain mass to the west of the town of Ichang, through which the river flowed by deep gorges.

In South China, the Japanese did not venture inland, but contented themselves with taking the principal seaports. Amoy, in Fukien, fell in May and Canton in October. Swatow was added in June 1939, and so was Hainan Island.

During 1938, the 8th Route Army undertook a number of sorties against the Japanese in North China, but these did not amount to much strategically and were made with the primary object of seizing arms and ammunition. Blatantly ignoring the directive of Yen the Model Governor, that they must not make contact with the people, the Reds got to work organizing soviets wherever they happened to be.

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Chu Teh remained in the Wutai Mountains, a large area well suited to guerilla operations, where the provinces of Shansi, Chahar and Hopei meet. A strong Red base developed. He had been joined by several 'leftish' units of Yen's army, which had broken away from the Model Governor in Taiyuan just before it fell to the Japanese.

Ho Lung the ex-Bandit, with his division, was farther north and had formed a Red base in an area on the Shansi-Suiyuan border, from where he carried out minor guerilla operations, pecking with ease at the thin Japanese line spread along the northern railway in his quest for arms.

Lin the Strategist had moved with his division into Hopei, the next province to the east, where he established a base and began similar operations. Lin was wounded during this guerilla activity and soon had to return to the Border Region to recuperate.¹ Another Red soviet was established by Red troops under similar conditions in the Shansi-Honan border area.

By the end of the year the Japanese had penetrated into Shansi province as far as the Yellow River, but they only really held the cities and the towns, so the Reds were able to move about in between them, especially at night. Thus the Reds spread across most of North China, percolating into the blank spaces between the railways and the roads on which the Japanese based their occupation forces. Wherever they trickled, ignoring their agreement, they at once set to work to establish Red soviets, to educate the people politically, and to confiscate land to divide out amongst the peasants who worked it.

With a keen eye on anti-Japanese propaganda, the Reds boldly put forward their military claims, all of which were largely true. They said that in the first twelve months of the fighting, the 8th Route Army had inflicted over 34,000 casualties on the Japanese, and captured from them over 6,000 rifles and over 200 machine-guns. Ho Lung, for example, had raided a Japanese airfield and damaged 24 aircraft, and many other nuisance raids were made.

On the other side of the ledger, they admitted to having suffered over 25,000 casualties, of whom over one-third were killed. The Red Army never at any time found the Japanese soldier to be easy meat,

¹ Lin Piao was several times wounded, and he also suffered from a chest complaint which kept him from active service for long periods. In September 1958, he became the Minister of Defence, relieving his old friend, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, who was regarded as something of a scapegoat, it being alleged that he disapproved of the army doing too much productive work, and so had hindered the 'Great Leap Forward'.

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and before long the Reds took to minimizing the casualties inflicted on them by the Japanese, for reasons both of prestige and morale.

Meanwhile, events proved favourable to the Reds in Central China, and in April 1938, when the Japanese began to advance inland along the Yangtse River, formal permission was given by the Nationalist Government for them to concentrate the fighting elements of the fourteen existing Red Soviets, which had survived the 5th Extermination Campaign, into a formation to be known as the 4th Route Army, which was to fight the Japanese under the direction of Chiang Kai-shek. These surviving soviets were scattered about in Kiangsi, Fukien, Kwangtung, Hunan, Hupei, Honan, Chekiang and Anhwei, and their military forces, which varied considerably in strength, were ordered to gravitate to an area on the south bank of the River Yangtse, in Southern Kiangsu, between Shanghai and Nanking. This selected site was adjacent to the Japanese lines of communication, and the 4th Route Army would be in a position to threaten the enemy's flank and rear. Again, Chiang Kai-shek probably hoped that the Reds would provoke the Japanese into a massive retaliation which would destroy them for him.

Many of these Red detachments had to move through hostile territory, held either by the Nationalists or by the Japanese, in order to reach the rendezvous. Chiang Kai-shek ordered all those who had to go through Nationalist territory to avoid the cities and the towns and to make no contact with the people. Many marched by night for their own security.

By June 1938, about 4,000 had arrived at the selected place, and by August the remainder, another 7,000, were also in position. Thus the new 4th Route Army began with a strength of about 11,000 in all, and Yeh Ting, one of the founders of the Red Army, who had commanded the old 11th Army at the Nanchang Rising in 1927 and who had remained behind in Kiangsi in 1934 instead of going on the Long March, was appointed to command it. Hsiang Ying was selected to be his deputy commander. The 4th Route Army was nominally of divisional strength and structure, and was forbidden to recruit. Unlike the 8th Route Army, the 4th Route Army was dressed in lighter coloured uniforms, and its soldiers were sometimes mistaken for Japanese.

The area given to the 4th Route Army on the south bank of the lower reaches of the River Yangtse, encompassed about 5,000 square miles. To the north, across the river, and to the east, was Japanese

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occupied territory. Once the Reds were in position, the territory to the south and the west was 'blocked' off by a strong Nationalist route army, which had orders to see that the Reds did not expand in either of those directions. Thus, the Reds were only permitted to move one way—into Japanese-occupied country.

The Japanese paid little attention to the 4th Route Army, and for their part the Reds carried out only a few raids on the Japanese lines-of-communication positions, apart from which they remained fairly passive. Although not pressing military activities very hard, they by no means neglected political ones, and at once, disregarding all instructions and promises made not to interfere with the people, they set about turning their area into a soviet. They recruited from the population and by the end of 1938 the strength of the 4th Route Army had risen to about 30,000, not all of whom were armed at this stage.

At first the 4th Route Army was merely a collection of 'regiments', the soldiers from each of the soviets remaining together in their groups which were very unequal in size, but as recruiting progressed these blossomed into divisional strength on a more consistent pattern. It was never so neatly arranged in precise formations as was the 8th Route Army, and for several months its structure was indefinite.

A certain amount of money and ammunition was given to it by the Nationalists, who hoped that this would encourage the Reds to prove their worth by pin-pricking the Japanese flanks, but when it became more than obvious that the Reds were doing absolutely nothing of the sort, the supplies and money tailed off.

Wherever they could, as they advanced and occupied the country, the invaders established Japanese-sponsored local Chinese governments, and in this sphere they had some success. In December 1937, they established a puppet Chinese régime in Peking, and authorized the enlistment of Chinese puppet troops to keep order in the countryside under the control of the local puppet governments. The Chinese puppet government was moved to Nanking in 1938. In March 1939, the Nationalist Prime Minister, Wang Ching-wei, defected, flew to Indo-China and then to Shanghai, where he made a secret agreement with the Japanese. As a result he was installed as head of the Chinese puppet government.

About the same time, some 50,000 Nationalist troops changed sides, deserting Chiang Kai-shek and electing to serve the puppet government. Thus, Wang the Puppet acquired the nucleus of a

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puppet army, which over the next three years grew to a strength of 800,000, nearly two-thirds of whom were ex-Nationalist soldiers.

It was now obvious to all that the war was going to be a long one, and as the weaknesses of the Nationalists were disclosed, they gave little cause for confidence, so that defections became more frequent. Desertion was a serious problem which Chiang Kai-shek was faced with throughout the war, and in March 1939, he executed a general¹ whom he suspected of being about to desert with his men.

The Japanese held all the main cities in Northern and Central China as far west as Hankow, and although they also controlled the land communications, they did not have a firm hold on them. The railways and main roads were merely patrolled, the Japanese being only interested in a narrow strip of land on either side. The wide open spaces in between these strips of enemy-occupied territory were left vacant to be filled in either by Chinese puppet troops, Reds or just plain bandits. In South China, the Japanese simply held the ports of Canton, Swatow and Amoy, and did not attempt to penetrate inland at all. The port of Foochow proved to be a lively place, and it changed hands several times.

The Japanese thrust along the Yangtse River had come to a stop at the foot of the mountains to the east of Ichang. In 1939 they made only two main advances, which were southwards. One was in March, to take the city of Nanchang, and the other occurred in September and October, to take Changsha. Apart from this they did little else. They had in fact outrun their strength, and were a little unsure how the Chinese would react. They paused and waited for the expected strategic counter-attack, which did not materialize, although local operations against them were set in motion here and there. For example, the Japanese were ejected from Changsha in October 1939.

The Japanese had hoped for a quick victory, but instead Chiang Kai-shek was retiring before them into the vast interior of China. The manpower figures and potential also worried them. The Japanese had about 35 divisions in China, amounting to about 1·2 million men, but the Chinese Nationalist Army already exceeded 3 million, and was climbing to the 4 million mark as more men were conscripted.

From this moment the Japanese launched no more strategic offensives in China during the war, and their actions were henceforth limited to either local tactical ones or to punitive operations.

¹ General Shih Yu-san, commanding the 6th Route Army.

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In the north, the Japanese stopped short of attempting to penetrate Shensi province, and so Mao Tse-tung remained undisturbed in his remote North-West Border Region, where he sat and schemed, issuing a stream of directives and orders to both his military and political personnel. The far-seeing Mao Tse-tung also realized that the war was going to be a long one, but he knew that China had the advantages both of space and population, so he strongly advocated a policy of guerilla warfare. He urged that guerilla bases be established in the mountainous areas between the Japanese-held communications, in the type of country where mechanized troops would be at a disadvantage.¹

In Yen-an, Mao Tse-tung discoursed learnedly upon the problems and aims of guerilla warfare, insisting that the basic principle was to preserve oneself and to annihilate the enemy. To both the 4th and 8th Route Armies he gave the following instructions:

1. To carry out limited, controlled offensives.
2. To establish strong bases.
3. To develop mobile warfare.
4. To co-ordinate guerilla and regular warfare.
5. To develop correct relationships between 'officers' and men.

The bases were to be in secure, mountainous territory where Japanese mechanized troops could not easily penetrate, and were to be established in the first place by the regular elements of the Red Army, which were responsible for protecting them. The next step was to develop the soviet, and to form guerilla units which could move out to strike the enemy, and home guard units which could assist the regular elements in the defence of the base. The guerillas were to come under the command of the regular army commander, while the home guard units usually came under political control.

To the 8th Route Army, with which he was in closer touch than the 4th, he gave implicit instructions regarding the strengthening of discipline, the conduct of 'officers'² towards their men, the creating

¹ Mao Tse-tung has since admitted that his primary concern was to establish strong Red bases and to build up the Chinese Communist movement. His anti-Japanese mask was worn for a purpose, but to good effect.

In a later interview he said, 'Our determined policy is [was] 70 per cent self-development, 20 per cent compromise, and 10 per cent fight the Japanese.' *Time* (USA) 1st December 1958.

² Mao Tse-tung continually referred to 'officers' and 'men', thus implying that there was a difference in status, which he would never openly admit at this period, except to insist that the 'officers' had no privileges.

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of good relations between the army and the people and good treatment of prisoners. In the political field, Mao Tse-tung was hard at work training cadres, and the 40,000 political workers he had in 1937 developed into 800,000 by 1940. These were, it is true, all technically merely 'party members', but all in fact were either active, or potentially active, political workers. Mao Tse-tung was preparing for future expansion.

Mao Tse-tung emphasized the strict necessity for party discipline, and insisted that all individuals must subordinate themselves to the organization, and that the minority must give way to the majority. He said that the 'lower levels' in the party must be subordinate to the 'higher levels', and that every single member was subordinate to the Central Executive Committee,¹ of which he was now the Chairman. He also reissued the Three Cardinal Rules of Discipline and the 'Eight Reminders', and everyone had to learn them off by heart.²

Already in 1938, apart from controlling the North-West Border Region, the Reds had five other large, flourishing soviets in the blank spaces left in Japanese-occupied territory, each of which had its own armed force. These were:

1. *The Hopei-Shansi-Chahar Soviet*, in the region of the Wutai Mountains, controlled by Nieh Jung-chen, which was the largest and most progressive of all, and was held up as the model soviet.

2. *The Shansi-Suiyuan Border Region*, controlled by Ho Lung the ex-Bandit.

3. *The Eastern Hopei Soviet*.

4. *The Shansi-Honan Soviet*.

5. *The 4th Route Army Soviet*, on the south bank of the River Yangtse.

The United Front between the Reds and the Nationalists never

¹ By this he meant the Central Executive Committee he had formed himself and not the old one of the 1927-1935 days.

² These were, and continued to be, widely and variously interpreted by the different formations. It was not until October 1947 that they were precisely codified by a GHQ order.

The Eight Reminders were:

1. Politeness to the people.
2. Be fair in all dealings.
3. Return everything borrowed.
4. Pay for everything damaged.
5. Do not bully the people.
6. Do not damage crops.
7. Do not flirt with women.
8. Do not ill-treat prisoners.

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worked well, as both were deeply suspicious of the other. Chou the Diplomat remained at the Nationalist capital, Chungking, to try to further good relations, but during 1939 these deteriorated sharply. The fault was mainly that of the Reds, who were openly sovietizing the land and the peasants in the territory they occupied, blatantly ignoring Chiang Kai-shek's orders to cease all political activities. Chiang Kai-shek was well aware what the Reds were up to, and was alarmed. Despite their extensive claims of battles fought and victories gained over the Japanese, they had fought no large action at all and their raids had been confined to acquiring arms, ammunition and equipment. Chiang Kai-shek still refused to give them any arms.

In spite of the adverse Japanese position, Chiang Kai-shek ordered military action to be taken against the North-West Border Region. General Hu Tsung-nan, the anti-Red, was still in command of the Honan and southern Shensi area, which was known as the 1st War Zone, and he was told to move against it. Nationalist aircraft were given to General Hu and in December 1939 he attacked the south-west corner of the soviet, denting it quite deeply. Mao Tse-tung hastily withdrew troops from other parts of North China and rushed them in to hold the bulge.

At the same time, the Japanese took punitive action against the south-east corner of the Border Region, and adjacent Nationalist divisional commanders stood by and watched without interference. One actually joined forces with the Japanese in an attack on the Reds.

Squeezed hard, Mao Tse-tung had difficulty in holding the enemy back, and in spite of his reinforcements, he had to retreat step by step, to keep his front intact. By the end of the month the Border Region had been compressed and reduced in size by at least one quarter. Likewise, its population shrank from 2 million to less than 1½ million. The semblance of United Front trembled and shook, nearly falling apart, while Chou the Diplomat at Chungking did his best to prevent it from breaking down completely.

Having thus constricted the Border Region, General Hu the anti-Red began to build a containing line to hem in the Reds securely, and he was given extra troops for this purpose. Nationalist and war-lord troops guarded the Red Soviet on three sides, while the Japanese lined the fourth one. Infiltration became more difficult, but not impossible, especially through the part of the containing line manned by the troops of Yen the Model Governor.

Throughout 1940, the Japanese remained fairly static, although

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they continued to push forward along the Yangtse River. In June Ichang, the gateway of the Yangtse gorges, fell to them. Having more or less the freedom of the air, they frequently bombed Chungking and other Nationalist cities. In North China, the invaders were beginning to become irritated by the pin-pricks of the Reds and responded by establishing small strong points and block-houses along the railways and roads, which they patrolled more heavily.

By the middle of 1940, Mao Tse-tung was ready for action. Determined to put the Reds on the map once and for all, to repudiate the constant Nationalist sneer that they were doing nothing but raid for arms for their own sinister purposes and had no real intention of fighting the Japanese, he launched in August what became known as the 'Hundred Regiments Campaign'. This was the only real strategical offensive mounted against the Japanese by the Reds in the whole war. Mao Tse-tung claims that the 8th Route Army, which included all his military forces in North China, was then about 500,000 strong, which was probably about right, so the 'Hundred Regiments' would be all the soldiers he could muster for the operation.

The Hundred Regiments were launched simultaneously against Japanese installations, blockhouses and communications in North China. The Reds first of all hit at the railways and then the roads. The momentary shock and surprise caused the Japanese troops to retire into their blockhouses and camps, which were next attacked. This campaign lasted for several weeks, during which the Red pressure was kept at a high level. The Japanese were slow to react, but when they recovered themselves they took strong punitive action, which severely rattled and mauled the Red regiments, and sharply brought the campaign to a standstill.

It is certain that a great deal of damage was done; reports vary as to the precise amount, but the Reds claim, perhaps correctly, to have destroyed about 300 miles of railway and 900 miles of roads, as well as numerous blockhouses and bridges. They also claim to have caused 20,000 casualties to the Japanese, and to have inflicted about 30,000 on the Chinese puppet troops.

The Reds are silent over their own losses, which may have been double the combined totals of those figures. Perhaps somewhere in the region of 100,000 killed was the price they paid. The Hundred Regiments Campaign is regarded by the Reds as a great victory, but it was a costly one, and of doubtful value, as it drew attention to

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themselves. Previously, the Reds in North China had been regarded as a minor nuisance and to be on a par with the many groups of bandits which roamed the country and had not merited any special attention. Now the Japanese reconsidered.

By December 1940, the 4th Route Army in Central China had reached a strength of about 40,000, and was divided into four small divisions. During the two years of its existence it had done little in the military sphere except raid for arms and ammunition. On the political side, the Reds had formed the whole area they occupied into a flourishing soviet, the land being divided out amongst the peasants. Guerillas had been enrolled and home guards trained to defend and support the local Communist governments.

Seeing what was happening, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the 4th Route Army to move, which it was very loth to do. He alleged that the Reds were plotting to extend their soviet area eastwards to Shanghai, which was quite probable. After some argument and delaying tactics in which the Reds first demanded and then haggled over back pay, arms and ammunition, the 4th Route Army reluctantly agreed to move. Then followed a quibble over the route to be taken. Chiang Kai-shek ordered it to move north across the Yangtse River, along roads which the Reds alleged were too dangerous.

However, late in December 1940, the 4th Route Army began to cross over the river. By January 7th 1941, three divisions were over, leaving just one remaining on the south bank, together with the bulk of the headquarter staff, both political and military. On that date a Nationalist Route Army suddenly moved in and attacked all those Reds remaining on the south bank, who numbered about 10,000. Of this number, only about 1,000 escaped. Of the 9,000, about half were slaughtered where they stood, being taken completely by surprise, and the other half were taken prisoner and put into a concentration camp. The commander, Yeh Ting, was wounded and taken prisoner, and his deputy, Hsiang Ying, was killed.

Chiang Kai-shek alleged that the 4th Route Army had refused to obey his orders, and he officially 'disbanded' it.¹

The three divisions of the 4th Route Army on the north bank, being in Japanese-occupied territory, were safe from the Nationalists. Chen Yi now came to the fore and was appointed to be the new military commander. Under his leadership, the 4th Route Army moved off in search of a suitable site where it could form a new soviet.

¹ The Nationalists refer to this as the 'Huang-Chiao' incident.

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One was found not far from the River Yangtse, and the Reds settled down to repeat their former activities.

The Nationalist attack on the 4th Route Army caused the final break in the thin veneer of the United Front, and from January 1941 until 1945, there was what amounted to an armed truce between the Reds and the Nationalists. Each left the other alone. The North-West Border Region, the 4th Route Army and the 8th Route Army braced themselves for attacks which did not materialize. Chiang Kai-shek had decided upon a policy of containing the Reds, hoping meanwhile that the Japanese would destroy them. All money and supplies from Nationalist sources ceased, and Mao Tse-tung again issued his own currency.

An exception to this occurred in April 1941, when the Muslim armies to the north-west of the Border Region temporarily banded together to attack it. On the Kansu and Ninghsia sides of the Border Region there was fighting for several weeks which eventually died down as the Muslim generals quarrelled amongst themselves. The Reds lost no territory to the Muslims and their casualties were not heavy.

The blockade of the Border Region was rigidly enforced by General Hu the anti-Red, the commander of the 1st War Zone, and the best reinforcements the Nationalists could produce were sent to him. His strength rose until he had nearly half a million men under his command. The blockade line, known as the 'Protective Line', was now a deep trench, with supporting trenches, earthworks and blockhouses at intervals. This was strengthened and reinforced.

The North-West Border Region was fairly self-contained as regards the essentials of life, such as food and clothing, and to complement them other industries were started in the caves around Yen-an as and when possible. Soon Mao Tse-tung had over 7,000 'industrial workers' employed in producing such items as paper, soap and chemicals. The smuggling of salt through the blockade line in exchange for scarce necessities continued, although on a much more restricted scale than formerly.

Although Chiang Kai-shek had decided to leave the Reds to stew in their own juice for the time being, the Hundred Regiments Campaign had caused Japanese attention to be focused on them. The Japanese had not previously considered them seriously as their nuisance value had been comparatively small, but now the plan of operations changed. During the winter of 1940-41, the Japanese

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lashed out with a number of punitive campaigns, which owing to the weather were of limited scope and duration, although in them heavy losses were inflicted upon the Reds.

By the spring of 1941, the Japanese were ready to take more serious action and several divisions moved, first of all through Shansi province, pushing the Reds aside, to force the Nationalists under Yen the Model Governor back across the Yellow River. This was practically the last offensive operation against the Nationalists in the north, and after it the 'front line' between the Japanese and the Nationalists was more or less static until 1945.

This done, the Japanese switched to attack Red bases and in the course of the summer of that year they reduced by half the total area held by the Reds. On the plains of Shantung, for example, where some Red soviets had appeared, the Reds were literally forced 'underground' by day to hide themselves, and bitter 'tunnel warfare' developed. The Japanese systematically sealed off these 'tunnels' and destroyed the Reds in them by the thousands.

After Pearl Harbour, so as to be able to turn their full attention elsewhere, they decided to settle with the Reds in North China once and for all, so in the spring of 1942 they renewed their offensive with vigour. This bitter punitive campaign became known as the 'Three Alls'—'Kill all, Burn all and Loot all', a ruthless policy of destruction and razed earth was practised.

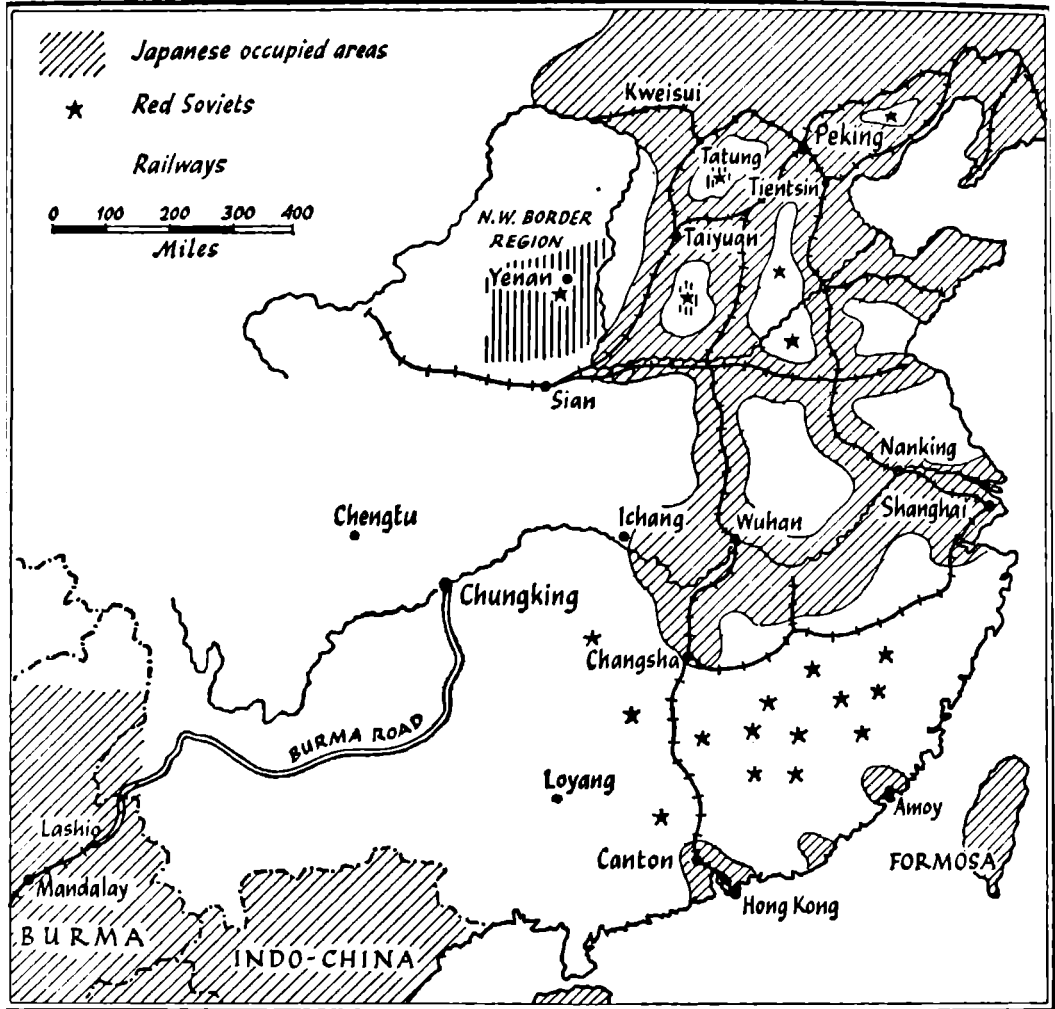
The measure of Japanese success can be estimated by the fact that, by the end of 1942 the population in the territory still left to the Communists had shrunk to less than 50 million, not all of whom were under Red influence. In 1940 the Reds had boasted that their bases and soviets encompassed a population of over 80 million. The 8th Route Army, which had reached a strength of 500,000 in 1940, had shrunk in the same period to less than 300,000, despite the fact that many thousands of militiamen had been drafted in to make good the losses. This meant that perhaps half the 8th Route Army had either been killed, seriously wounded, captured or had deserted. At the end of 1942, the Japanese let up and the battered, bleeding, badly-shaken Red Army was able to catch its breath.

Looking briefly at the wider world for a moment to see how Chinese affairs fitted in, we see that in December 1941 occurred Pearl Harbour, bringing America into the war, which swelled into a gigantic world-wide conflict in which China was but one of several theatres. An American Military Mission had arrived in Chungking

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in October 1941, and in March 1942 General Stilwell took over the command of American forces in Burma, China and India, and was appointed to be Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek. Soon American volunteers were flying with the Nationalist air force.

Burma was overrun in 1942, and the 'Burma Road' to Chungking closed. Chiang Kai-shek was again landlocked, but soon American supplies began to reach him by air over the 'Hump'¹ from India.



The Battle of Stalingrad took place in February 1943, until which moment few in China, Red or Nationalist, believed that the Allies would win the war. For both of them it was the turning-point when rethinking took place.

The Japanese were now preoccupied in the Pacific and South-East Asia, and their offensive against the Reds in North China died down. Japan for the moment was content to live and let live, although, when

¹ The American expression for the Eastern Himalayas.

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provoked, she periodically unleashed savage punitive campaigns. China was now clearly divided into three distinct parts, Japanese-occupied, 'White' China, consisting of the areas controlled by the Nationalists, and 'Red' China, consisting of those occupied by the Communists.

For the Reds the year of 1943 was one of recovery from the severe bashing they had received during the previous months from the Japanese. In 'White China' the large Nationalist Army lay sprawled and inert. It had topped the 5 million mark, and was still conscripting more men. By the end of 1943 the Reds felt better, and 1944 can be described as a year of Red expansion and modest success. They claimed (inaccurately) to have taken part in over 40,000 engagements during this year. They also recovered most, but not all, the territory in the outlying soviet states that had been so recently snatched from them by the Japanese. The North-West Border Region, however, was not able to expand at all, as it was still tightly ringed by nearly half a million of the best Nationalist troops.

In 1942, Mao Tse-tung had called his old friend and colleague, Liu Shao-chi, who had been left behind in Central China and had not accompanied him on the Long March, to Yen-an to organize and train his political cadres. Liu became an expert at what is now known as 'brain-washing'.¹ Some twelve months later, Mao Tse-tung's political workers, who so far had been learning, making their mistakes, gaining experience and experimenting with methods of mass mobilization and education, were released to flood through North China to help expand the bases and soviet states.

The first object was to make all bases self-sufficient, especially in food. Those with additional natural resources were urged to develop them and cottage industries were encouraged. Some soviet states were naturally better or worse off than others. A frantic 'production drive' was put into operation everywhere in all spheres, in which women played a big part. Mutual aid teams and other co-operative methods were introduced. The regular army was expected to take a full part in this production drive and the example was set by the 'officers', who rolled up their sleeves and took a hand.

The North-West Border Region led the way in 'industrialization' and it boasted of a small radio assembly plant, as well as being able to produce electrical parts, telephones and batteries. The arsenal continued to turn out quantities of mines, grenades and ammunition,

¹ Liu Shao-chi had been active in Shanghai in 1927. In 1959, he was appointed Chairman of the Chinese Republic in place of Mao Tse-tung.

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but still so far failed to manufacture small arms. The number of 'industrial' workers rose to about 12,000.

As the Japanese everywhere were generally passive, did not look for trouble and only occasionally mounted a punitive expedition, the Red bases were able to expand and establish themselves firmly. The Japanese did not interfere with, or seem to care about, their political activities.

In Central China, the inoffensive 4th Route Army, sitting quietly near the Yangtse River, increased in strength until it numbered about 80,000, being organized into about a dozen divisions under Chen Yi. The offensive operations of both Red Route Armies were restricted to raiding for arms, equipment and stores, and neither, apart from this, did anything calculated to provoke Japanese retaliation.

The 8th Route Army, which term now definitely included all the regular troops in North China, had been brought up to, and remained at, a strength of about 400,000. It was divided into two categories, the 'regional' forces and the 'main' forces. The 'regional' forces were those divisions and regiments which were sent out to found and hold a base area behind, or between, the Japanese lines, and were expected to stay as the permanent garrison. The regional units were expected to become self-supporting in that they worked their own land and managed their own farms. There were, for example, over 50,000 'regional' troops engaged in guarding Yen-an, the Red capital. These men were encouraged to marry and to take a lasting interest in their settlements.

The 'main' forces were the mobile divisions and regiments, which were in reserve and were available to be rushed anywhere. They were used either to move out to raid or attack the enemy, or to assist any base which was threatened or attacked. They were mobile only in the sense that they were movable. All the personnel, of course, walked, the exceptions being the commanders and many other 'officers', who by this time had horses to ride.

The task of the regular army as a whole, and especially of the 'regional' troops, as laid down by Mao Tse-tung, was to protect, educate, mobilize and organize the people, and to help to raise production.

The independent companies and platoons of guerillas, which were now a branch of the regular army, were more rigidly controlled than formerly, and their activities co-ordinated by the regular regional commander. No longer could they roam and raid freely, where and

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when they wished, and they could only undertake independent operations with permission. Their main function devolved into that of guarding the local soviet governments.

The part-time Red soldiers, who had first been known as Home Guards, and then as 'Self Defence Corps', now blossomed out into a huge organization called the Ming Ping, or 'Militia'. This was supposed to be a purely volunteer territorial force in which the peasants who had been given land devoted a certain amount of their time to military training and to guarding their soviets. As time went on and more and more militiamen were required, the 'volunteer' façade became tarnished.

The Militia became the reserve for the regular forces, and as casualties occurred, militiamen were drafted in as replacements. The size of the Militia was probably governed by availability of leaders and instructors, but as the former were churned out from Kangta, the military training centre at Yen-an, the Militia grew in strength.

Mao Tse-tung sent out explicit instructions as regards its organization, conditions and training. He had a future use for it—it was to provide the material for rapid expansion of his regular army when he was ready. The Militia was drilled, disciplined and taught to use firearms, lay mines and practise elementary tactics. The militiamen were to be used primarily for home defence, and could only 'volunteer' to go out on raids or operations with the regulars, which many of them did. They were not under the regular army, but were required to provide transport and a supply service for it whenever it operated in its area, as well as providing labour, messengers, sentries and guides as required. The Militia remained strictly under the control of the local soviet governments. Whenever more replacements were required for the regular forces, the local soviets selected which militiamen should be sent. At first there were plenty of volunteers, but as the demand rose they had to be detailed.

The Ming Ping, well organized, trained and disciplined as instructors and leaders became available, during 1944 soared to a strength of 2 million. Not all were armed by any means, but a proportion had captured Japanese arms, while the remainder had to be content with grenades, explosives, bayonets and knives. Generally, throughout the Red Army there was an acute shortage of ammunition, and little, at times none at all, was expended or 'wasted' on training. Frequently the first shots a recruit ever fired were at a real, live enemy.

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By the end of 1944, apart from the North-West Border Region which was still rigidly contained and still only included a population of about 1½ million, there were at least 13 other Red bases of some size and stability, each having its own armed force. There were 4 in North China, 8 in Central China and 1 on Hainan Island, in South China. The largest was the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Soviet under Nieh Jung-chen, which controlled a population of nearly 20 million.¹

Meanwhile, the picture presented by the huge, shambling, inert Nationalist Army was hopeless and pitiful. By the beginning of 1944 it had reached a numerical strength of 5·7 million men, but in the period of four years since the Japanese strategical offensive ceased it had deteriorated considerably. Owing to the blockade of the land-locked Chiang Kai-shek Government there was a shortage of practically everything, which led to corruption, hoarding, speculation and graft. The main Nationalist-held cities, especially Chungking, were frequently bombed, which added to the general dejection.

A few of the more lively, patriotic commanders of the Route Armies essayed operations against the Japanese in various parts of the country, but these were of a limited or local nature and were not part of an overall strategic plan. They were neither followed up nor supported. The Nationalist Chinese troops fought some good battles; for example, the city of Changsha changed hands several times, as did the port of Foochow and there were other commendable actions and operations elsewhere. But the strategic plan of Chiang Kai-shek appeared to be one of sitting tight and waiting for the Allies to destroy the Japanese for him.

Now firmly in the Allied camp, Chiang Kai-shek asked for, and received, military and other aid. The difficulty lay in getting it to him.

¹ Harrison Foreman quotes 15 'Resistance Centres' about this time, which he lists as follows, but one or two had only sketchy or elementary armed forces:

<i>North China</i>	North West Border Region Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Soviet Shansi-Hopei-Honan Soviet Shansi-Shantung-Honan Soviet
<i>Central China</i>	Northern Kiangsi Soviet Central Kiangsi Soviet Southern Kiangsi Soviet Central Anhwei Soviet Eastern Chekiang Soviet North Hwai River Soviet South Hwai River Soviet Canton Soviet
<i>Southern China</i>	Hainan Island Soviet

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As has been mentioned, when the 'Burma Road' to Chungking from Burma was blocked by the Japanese, supplies were flown over the 'Hump' in American aircraft from India. Later, when the 'Burma Road' was reopened, supplies also flowed along it to him.

The American Military Mission in Nationalist China gave assistance and advice to reorganize and modernize Chiang Kai-shek's vast army. It was reduced in size and shrank to less than 4 million. The plan was that it should eventually consist of about 340 divisions, modelled on the American pattern, each of about 12,000 men. A brisk start was made, and General Stilwell took out some Chinese divisions to India where they were equipped and trained. The Nationalist Chinese air force was rebuilt by the Americans, and began to take action against the Japanese.

One might now have reasonably expected Chiang Kai-shek to take the offensive and clear the Japanese from his country. He was receiving military supplies, he had reorganized his force to a large extent and the Japanese occupying divisions were of second-rate quality. The Japanese troops in China at this period amounted to about 1·8 million, but the best half million of them were immobilized in Manchuria facing the Russian Far Eastern Army. Chiang Kai-shek, however, did nothing, he merely sat still and hoarded all the military material he could lay his hands on.

He saw that the fortunes of war had changed radically and that the Allies were winning, and he had his eye on the problem which few but he discerned at this stage: that of Communism. To the half-million troops who were engaged in blockading the North-West Border Region he sent many modern arms and much other equipment he received from the Allies. General Stilwell tried to persuade him to change this policy and to concentrate wholly upon fighting the Japanese, but Chiang Kai-shek would not listen. Differences of opinion led Chiang Kai-shek to engineer Stilwell's recall to America in October 1944.

Since January 1941, the North-West Border Region had been sealed off from the outer world and no foreigner was allowed through to visit, although one or two in fact did filter in. The main contact between the two Chinas was the smuggling that went on in the sector held by the troops of Yen the Model Governor. However, in May 1944 a party of foreign journalists was allowed to visit the Red base, and they gave publicity to its activities and potentialities. An airfield had been constructed at Yenan, despite the fact that the Reds had no

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aircraft of their own, and on July 22nd a small American Military Mission landed there to gain information about the Reds, their army and their intentions, and to see what were the possibilities of activating them into large scale aggression against the Japanese.

Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung loudly claimed that they had been actively fighting against the Japanese since 1937, while the Nationalists had been passive or regressive. Facts and figures of battles fought, casualties suffered and inflicted, and prisoners taken were quoted, and the Americans were shown piles of captured Japanese arms and equipment. The Reds claimed that they were basically self-sufficient and only asked for modern small arms, field artillery, anti-aircraft guns, tanks, vehicles and aircraft. Duly impressed by what they had seen and heard in Yen-an and unimpressed by the inactivity of Chiang Kai-shek, the Americans seemed to be about to force him to let the Reds have a proportion of the military supplies they were sending him, and it was perhaps because of this as much as anything else that he insisted upon Stilwell's recall.

At the beginning of 1945, Mao Tse-tung like Chiang Kai-shek saw that there was little doubt about the final outcome of the World War, and he put into operation the first part of his far-sighted plan. He ordered the expansion of the regular Red Army, which was accomplished within a matter of days. The 8th Route Army, which term included all the Red armed forces in North China, doubled in strength, from about 400,000 to 800,000. The 4th Route Army, which included all the Red armed forces in Central China, shot up from 80,000 to about 110,000. The man-power and woman-power¹ for this expansion was drawn from the Militia, from which the volunteer character had entirely disappeared.

There was no doubt that the regular element of the Red Army could have been expanded many months previously, but that Mao Tse-tung had kept it at its former strength for reasons of economy. More men and women were co-opted into the Militia to make good the gaps caused by these large drafts into the regular army, and it soon regained, and then, exceeded, its former figure. Mao Tse-tung's political cadres had also risen in number to about 1.2 million.

Mao Tse-tung made ready for a spring offensive, both politically and military. The morale of the Red Army was good, having been fed on a constant diet of small guerilla successes. In the political field

¹ The woman-power still formed only a tiny percentage, but reliable figures are absent.

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the restricting blockade around his G.H.Q. irked him, and he loudly campaigned for a coalition government to be composed of both Nationalists and Reds to prosecute the war against Japan. Chiang Kai-shek remained unresponsive.

In April, when all was ready, Mao Tse-tung took the second step in his master plan, and ordered expansion of Red soviets everywhere to begin. Within weeks, both their area and population had increased. As Japanese divisions were thinned out in China to be sent to the Pacific theatre of war, Red soldiers moved in behind them in their retreating footsteps. The Red task of expansion was made easier by this Japanese process, but it was no clear-cut walk-over and often the Reds had to fight very hard. It cannot be said that they ever clearly defeated the Japanese in battle. Generally the reverse was the case, and they were only able to extend as the Japanese evacuated territory. In several of the engagements fought the Reds suffered heavy casualties.

The fourteen large Red soviets became nineteen, and soon Mao Tse-tung boasted that he controlled a population of 95 million, held over 300,000 square miles of territory, and had over 500 miles of coastline in his hands.¹

During this period of expansion, the Red military leaders predominated and led the way, while the political officers kept discreetly in the background, concentrating upon prisoners and peasants. No peasant, for example, was incorporated into the Militia and armed until he had been politically educated. Officer prisoners were no longer shot out of hand and efforts were made to win them over. The political officers generally had little time to interfere with the senior military commanders and the course of campaigning. The senior military commanders were, of course, trusted veteran Communists and good party members.

In June 1945, the Japanese began to withdraw completely from the Ichang Front, in Central China, back along the line of the Yangtze River. Nationalist troops followed cautiously. In North China, the Japanese formations stayed in position a little longer, but the writing was on the wall, and in the last weeks of June, they too began to withdraw towards the coast.

¹ In May 1945, Mao Tse-tung claimed that he held parts of the provinces of Liaoning, Jehol, Chahar, Suiyuan, Shensi, Kansu, Ninghsia, Shansi, Hopei, Honan, Shantung, Kiangsi, Chekiang, Anhwei, Kiangsu, Hupei, Hunan, Kwangtung and Fukien.

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As soon as this happened, General Hu Tsung-nan, the anti-Red commander of the 1st War Zone, who throughout had been in charge of the blockade, woke up and mounted an all-out offensive against the North-West Border Region from the south. But Chu Teh was ready for him. For three weeks there was fierce fighting between the Nationalist troops and the Reds along the Protection Line reminiscent of the trench warfare in Flanders in the First World War. The Reds generally managed to hold their positions and when General Hu's offensive was spent, the fighting died down, both sides remaining in much the same places as they were before, although in one or two sectors the Reds had been pushed back slightly. In this fighting the Reds captured their first American arms and equipment from General Hu's Chinese troops.

An uneasy lull followed as both the Reds and the Nationalists suspiciously watched each other.

On August 6th, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

On the 9th, Russia declared war on Japan, advancing into Manchuria.

On the 14th, the Japanese accepted the Allies' demand for an unconditional surrender. The eight-year-long Sino-Japanese War had come to an end.

The Reds claim that during this war they captured half-a-million Chinese puppet troops, 3,500 Japanese and 34,000 Nationalist troops, and also over 200,000 rifles, 3,000 machine-guns and 150 artillery pieces. These figures may be largely correct. They also claim they resisted 120 Japanese attacks and took part in over 20,000 engagements against them, but there is no way of checking the latter figures, though they may be fairly accurate. As regards their losses, they admit to over half-a-million casualties, but the true figure must be very much higher, and may be somewhere in the 2 million bracket.

8

Civil War

When World War Two suddenly ended, Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh were quick off the mark; in fact they beat the pistol, as Red troops were already moving towards Manchuria, ostensibly to co-operate with and aid the Russians, who, having declared war on Japan, had entered that territory. The Reds saw that if they acted quickly they could seize large areas of Japanese-occupied territory before the Nationalists could reach Manchuria, and, what was perhaps more important, they could get their hands on Japanese war material. The Japanese were standing helpless and bewildered, waiting for orders. It was a race to see who would obtain the ground and the material, the Reds or the Nationalists.

Chu Teh gave his waiting army the green light and everywhere it began to expand into Japanese-held territory. Especially did he urge his men to penetrate throughout North China and Manchuria. He ordered Red troops to demand and accept Japanese surrenders, and to disarm and strip them where they stood. They were to seize all arms, ammunition and stores; by force if necessary. Many towns and small Japanese garrisons were taken by trickery, the myriad small bodies of Reds alleging that they had full Nationalist authority to accept all surrenders. In some instances the Reds posed as Nationalists to gain possession.

Lin Piao the Strategist, from his East Hopei Soviet, trotted into Manchuria, through Jehol province, with just over 20,000 men, moving on a wide front. At the same time another, larger, force of Reds moved into that country from Shantung province to join him. A second wave of Red troops followed.

The Reds made an uneasy contact with the Russians. The truth was that they did not quite know how the Russians would react to their presence in Manchuria and they were a little apprehensive.

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Therefore, Mao Tse-tung gave strict instructions that incidents with the Russians must be avoided at all costs and on no account must the Reds come to blows with them, but rather if there was any possibility of friction they should give ground. The result was that the Russians occupied the main cities of Manchuria almost at leisure and sat down on the communications, while the Reds, who were flooding through the countryside, were brought up short. The picture became one in which the Russians were in possession of the cities, towns and the railways, while the Reds occupied large sections of the countryside.

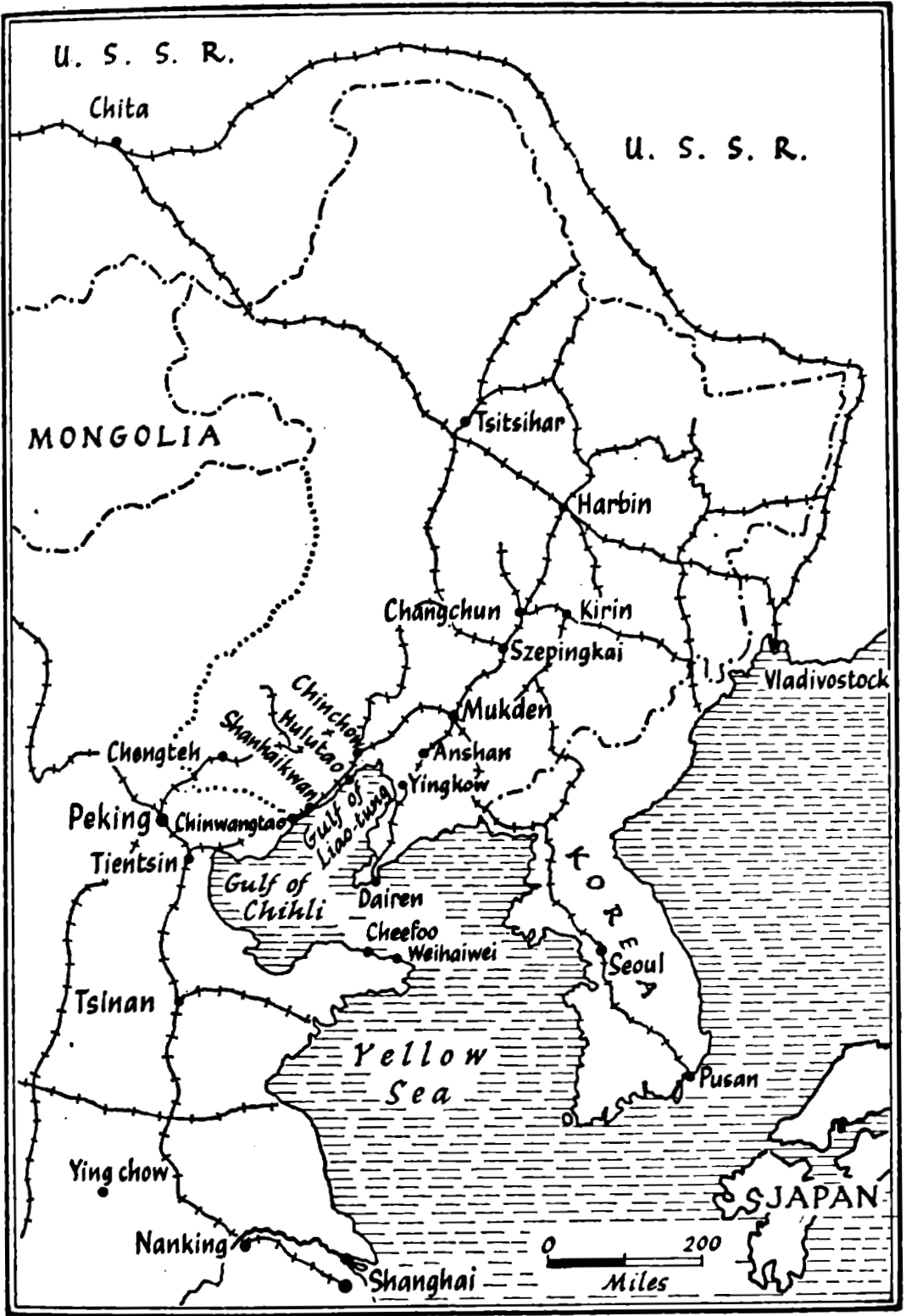
Precise details of the nature and extent of the contact between the Reds and the Russians are not known, and both countries are now silent on this matter, which remains open to speculation. The Reds claim that by their shrewd, swift move into Manchuria they got their hands on over 300,000 small arms, 140,000 light machine-guns and 3,000 guns, together with huge stocks of ammunition, and quantities of other military stores and equipment. How this was done is not clear.

By an Allied Agreement the Russians were to accept the surrender of the Japanese armies in Manchuria, which they did, *before* the 8th Route Army arrived, and thus would gain control over the major part of the Japanese arms and stores. Therefore it could hardly have been 'grabbed' by the Reds without friction with the Russians, of which there is no evidence. The Chinese Reds could have gained small stocks of ammunition and stores from isolated Japanese garrisons, and arms from deserters and stragglers, but nothing like the quantities claimed, and which indeed it is almost certain they possessed for their coming fight against the Nationalists in Manchuria. It is hardly possible, for example, that the Chinese Reds could have gained possession of large numbers of vehicles, tanks, aircraft and field guns, unless they had been handed over to them by the Russian generals acting on orders from Moscow.

This is a point which cannot be determined until more evidence comes to light.

Once inside Manchuria, Lin the Strategist began a recruiting campaign to build up his force, and he enlisted a wide selection of troops, almost regardless of who they were, such as local Manchurians,¹ Manchurians who had been in Japanese captivity, Chinese and Manchurian puppet soldiers, as well as Mongolians and Koreans.

¹ The population of Manchuria was then more than 30 million.



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Within days his strength rose to the region of 80,000, after which he became slightly more selective in his choice and it soared less rapidly, but it continued to grow nevertheless. Less openly Lin, with a shrewd eye to the future, recruited some Japanese armoured personnel, artillerymen and other technicians to instruct his men how to use the heavy equipment he had gained. The Reds were now in possession of heavy guns, tanks, vehicles and modern signalling equipment which they had not the faintest idea how to manipulate. To Lin the Strategist must go the honour of forming the Red Army Armoured Corps, as he grouped together the sixty or seventy Japanese tanks that had come into his possession and, with about 300 Japanese soldiers, began to train the nucleus. At first the Japanese soldiers actually manned the tanks in action, as indeed they also fired their guns for the Reds against the Nationalists.

Chiang Kai-shek was much slower off the mark, and was also separated by a much greater distance from Manchuria than were the Reds. China was badly off for internal communications, and, to make matters worse for the Nationalists, as they moved towards and into Manchuria the Reds deliberately did their best to destroy such as there were with the object of delaying them. Particularly in the provinces of Anhwei, Honan, Kiangsu and Shantung was this policy put into effect and the road and railway systems dislocated.

The end of hostilities with Japan had left the main effective Nationalist force, known as the Central Army, huddled together in the area of the upper Yangtse Valley. The Central Army was built around thirty-nine American-trained divisions, half of which were completely equipped with American material and arms. It was the best equipped and trained of all the Nationalist armies. The other main Nationalist armies were widely separated, being in Shensi, Shansi, Kweichow, Kiangsi, Szechwan and Yunnan.

Chiang Kai-shek knew the importance of reoccupying the eastern Chinese cities and Manchuria as quickly as he could, but he must have given little thought to this matter beforehand, as apparently he had no plans ready for this contingency. When he saw the swift steps taken by the Red Army, and realized the comparative immobility of his Central Army, he asked America to help him. He asked for aircraft to fly his troops to the northern and eastern cities, and suggested that the Americans take over Manchuria from the Russians on his behalf and hold it until his Central Army could relieve them.

America agreed to help Chiang Kai-shek reoccupy the northern

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and eastern cities by lending him transport aircraft for this purpose, but would not agree to go as far as occupying Manchuria with American troops. They suggested that the nearer Chinese armies in north and north-west China could be used, but as Chiang Kai-shek did not completely trust them he refused. He insisted that the Americans transport men from his Central Army to Manchuria, but they considered that it would be over-extending his military force.

Chiang Kai-shek was still practically alone in recognizing the full portent of the Red threat in China. The Americans generally regarded them as little more than bandits, with whom Chiang Kai-shek could deal later when he had regained full control of Eastern and Central China. While the Reds busily wormed their way forward there was petulance and hesitation in the other camp, and it was not until the beginning of September that American aircraft began to fly Nationalist troops into Nanking, Shanghai and Peking. It was just in time, and had this not happened when it did, all China north of the Yangtse River would have fallen at once to Mao Tse-tung and the Red Army.

Political considerations eventually overcame the military, and it was agreed that the Americans would transport Nationalist troops into Manchuria both by sea and air. Meanwhile, American marines landed at certain strategic points in North-East China.

The Red tide was seeping into Japanese-held territory and the order from Chiang Kai-shek to the Reds to stay where they were and to take no action was completely ignored. He then gave out instructions that the Japanese were not to surrender to the Reds, but to resist them by force, and for the Chinese puppet troops to take over and keep order until Nationalist soldiers arrived. Several clashes took place between Reds and Japanese who resisted attempts to seize their arms, and also between the Reds and the Chinese puppet troops.

As they advanced they dispensed Communist propaganda, and also carried out ruthless executions of those who stood in their way, or were suspected of intriguing against them. The Reds seized Weihaiwei, established themselves around Tientsin, sat firmly on the Tientsin-Peking railway, and occupied most of the land around the Gulf of Liaoning. Farther south they had taken Wuhu, and held extensive areas in the Lower Yangtse Valley, as well as stretches on the north-east coast in the provinces of Shantung and Kiangsu.

America was concerned at the possibility of widespread chaos and

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open civil war, and made an attempt to unite the country under Chiang Kai-shek. The American ambassador, Patrick Hurley, endeavoured to bring the two sides together to negotiate. On the third time of asking, Mao Tse-tung agreed to meet Chiang Kai-shek to discuss matters, and he and Chou the Diplomat arrived at Chungking on August 28th. Chiang Kai-shek scored a diplomatic triumph on the same day, when it was announced that the Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship and Alliance had been signed. This meant that officially Russia recognized the Nationalist government as the lawful and rightful one of all China, which left the Red delegation very much in the air and at a disadvantage.

Stalin had no great opinion of the Reds at this stage, and felt that the unification of China could be best brought about under Chiang Kai-shek, whom he thought to be the only man capable of doing the job.

In the discussion, Chiang Kai-shek demanded that the Red Army formations be incorporated into the Nationalist Army, but Mao Tse-tung refused. Other political issues were discussed, but no agreement was reached. Complaints and recriminations were made. The Reds alleged that both Japanese and Chinese puppet troops had attacked them on Chiang Kai-shek's orders, and they complained of the aid America had given him.

Whilst these negotiations were in progress, as soon as his slow-moving Central Army had shaken out a little, Chiang Kai-shek ordered four offensives to be mounted against the Reds, which were as follows:

1. All Nationalist forces in the Lower Yangtse Valley were to attack the 4th Route Army, commanded by Chen Yi, which was loosely grouped south of the river in areas adjacent to Nanking, Shanghai, Ningpo and Hangchow.

2. Troops from the Central Army were to drive northwards from Hankow along the railway line.

3. In the north, the army of Yen the Model Governor was to take the offensive in Shansi against the Reds commanded by Ho Lung the ex-Bandit.

4. Farther north, Nationalist troops, commanded by Fu Tso-yi, were to take Kalgan and assert Nationalist control over the railways in that region.

Attacks were made on the scattered elements of the 4th Route Army, which were successful owing mainly to superior fire power,

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and as a result it was forced from its positions, Chen Yi withdrawing further into the province of Kiangsu and that of Anhwei, destroying roads and bridges as he went.

In Honan, the Nationalists faced the same problem of being unable to pursue the retreating Reds effectively, owing to the damage done to communications. Intensely worried about this wholesale destruction which tended to immobilize his men, Chiang Kai-shek made an offer to stop his offensives if the Reds would in return only cease destroying communications. This was not accepted and the damage continued.

In North China, Fu Tso-yi had been repulsed in his attack on Kalgan, the centre of the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Soviet, of Nieh Jung-chen. Yen's offensive in Shansi did not meet with much success either, and instead of attacking Tatung by the end of October he was driven on the defensive again by Ho Lung the ex-Bandit.

After some weeks of fruitless talks in Chungking, on October 10th Mao Tse-tung flew back to Yen-an leaving Chou En-lai behind to do what he could for the Red cause and to keep a watching brief.

On October 3rd, American marines had been landed at Tientsin, and at other places in North-East China a few days later. Chinese troops were embarking in American ships ready to be taken to that part of China. Generally, in October activity centred around the Gulf of Liaoning and the Gulf of Chihli. When American ships carrying Chiang Kai-shek's troops were approaching, the Russians handed over the ports of Chinwangtao and Yingchow, which they had occupied along with several others to the waiting Reds, and a few days later the port of Hulatao also.¹ This meant that the Reds controlled a large slice of the fringe of these two gulfs and several of the smaller ports.

At the end of the month the first Nationalist seaborne troops arrived in North-East China to find the Reds in position to oppose their landings, which they did. Eventually, the Nationalists forced a landing and got ashore at Chinwangtao. Once ashore, they concen-

¹ Why the Russians should have done this is by no means clear, as according to the Sino-Soviet Treaty of August 1945, the Russians agreed to hand over Manchuria to the Chinese Nationalist Government. One theory is that at this period Stalin aimed at making Manchuria an exclusive Russian sphere, nominally under the sovereignty of the Chinese central government, but run by a combination of Communists and the former Tungpei faction (supporters of the Young Marshal). The Americans at this time seemed ready to acquiesce as they made no protest at the closing of the Manchurian ports, although Chiang Kai-shek asked them to do so.

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trated and began to build up their strength. Next there was a fierce scuffle for the small port of Shanhaikwan, where the Great Wall touches the sea, which the Nationalists won on November 10th. Although formally recognizing Chiang Kai-shek's government, and despite the recent Sino-Soviet Treaty the Russians had been most unco-operative over Manchuria, and it was not until November that they agreed to allow Nationalist troops to be flown into Changchun.

As soon as they could the Nationalists began to drive inland, and on the 22nd, succeeded in forcing a pass in the hills in the north-east of Peking, thus breaking through by land into Manchuria. Sabotage of the Peking-Tientsin railway continued while the Nationalist build-up progressed, with the object of retarding movement. Once they had forced their way into Manchuria, Red opposition lessened, and the Nationalists moved slowly north-eastwards to arrive before the town of Chinchow. On the 27th, American-airlifted Chinese troops officially took over Changchun from the Russians.

In North China, Ho Lung the ex-Bandit gained control of most of Shansi and then moved on to besiege both Paotow and Kweisui, in Suiyuan province. As the Nationalist strength increased, so were they able to recover themselves and push back the Red pressure to some extent. The waves of Red infantry became less effective against superior fire power and weapons. The sieges of Paotow and Kweisui, and other small Nationalist-held towns, were lifted in December as the Reds faded away. The Red Army was not yet ready for positional warfare, nor were the Red soldiers over keen on continually advancing into a hail of deadly fire with only small arms to combat it.

A mass infantry attack made by over 40,000 Reds from the East Shantung Soviet on the town of Lincheng, on the 'vertical' Tientsin-Pukow Railway, also failed miserably.

On November 27th, General Marshall was sent as the special envoy of President Truman, with the task of trying to bring about the unification of China. Marshall hoped to be able to separate the two Chinese armies from politics, and to reconcile and amalgamate them. He conferred with both Nationalist and Red leaders, and to this end dangled promises of economic and military aid.

He first of all made an effort to stop the fighting, and was successful in bringing about a cease-fire on January 13th, 1946.

Chiang Kai-shek had asked for a U.S. Military Mission to help him reorganize his army, which he had begun to reduce by wholesale demobilizations with the idea of reducing it to about one quarter

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of its strength (of 5.5 million) by June 1946. Within weeks 1½ million men were released.

It was provisionally planned that the Nationalists would only retain the 39 American-trained divisions, all in the Central Army, and about 180 other selected ones.

There was discontent in the upper ranks as the 'Whampoa clique' intrigued to obtain all the key commands and appointments. Especially in the Central Army was this the case, where ex-Whampoa instructors and ex-cadets were promoted over the heads of others regardless of qualifications or efficiency. Officers were included in this drastic demobilization scheme, and by the end of the year over 200,000 had been discharged, many of whom were professional soldiers. A proportion, having little else to turn to, went over to the Reds, as did also thousands of the discharged men, the majority of whom had few prospects in civilian life.

The position in Manchuria after the cease-fire came into effect was rather confused. The Nationalists were unsure of the intentions of the Russians, whose presence and silence embarrassed them. Originally the Russians had promised to evacuate within three months of the end of the Second World War, but they had changed their minds when they saw the wealth of plant and machinery in Manchuria. Having suffered so much industrial devastation themselves, they decided to appropriate the lot instead of waiting to share it with others of the Allies, China in particular, which might have a claim on a proportion of it. Ruthlessly and systematically, Russia stripped Manchuria, and while this was going on, she passively obstructed and retarded the Nationalist occupation. The Nationalists were standing first on one leg and then on the other in their anxiety to gain full control of the country one step ahead of the Reds.

Whilst Chiang Kai-shek's men were impatiently waiting outside Manchuria, the Reds inside were increasing the area of territory they held. Already, they were in sections of the countryside in strength, and as the Russians evacuated the smaller towns after having stripped them, the Reds stepped in smartly on their heels.

During the cease-fire, which was fairly effective in Manchuria and North China, although not quite so much so elsewhere, both sides prepared for the future. Hostilities, however, never completely ceased. The Nationalists, moving by land, eventually entered Mukden in March, when it was evacuated by the Russians. A Red attempt to seize it as the Russians pulled out was frustrated after some street

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fighting. Generally, the Reds avoided conventional attacks, and only made one successful one, on Szepingkai,¹ a rail town about ninety miles north-east of Mukden, which the Nationalists had occupied. Whenever they essayed positional warfare at this period, the Reds lost heavily.

The Nationalist plan had been to concentrate all their military efforts on taking over Manchuria, but this was later watered down as attention was given to subsidiary thrusts in North Shansi, Hupeh and Shantung. Shantung, where the Reds had built up a large force, was the vital province on the eastern seaboard, which lies between Nanking and Peking.

During this cease-fire period the Reds were not idle either, and Lin Piao the Strategist, who had been placed in charge of all Red operations in Manchuria, was busily recruiting and training his men to use the war material they had gained from the Japanese. His force was very mixed, and special attention was given to politically educating the newly enlisted. Lin's force became known as the 'North-Eastern Army', and soon reached a strength of over 100,000. It was a predominantly infantry army, but also in addition to the small armoured corps, which was thriving and consisted of about a dozen platoons of tanks, Lin began to organize small artillery 'divisions'. He had blatantly used Japanese soldiers in the fighting at Szepingkai, where they had manned his tanks and fired his field guns.

Mao Tse-tung demanded joint control over Manchuria, to which Chiang Kai-shek would not agree. Mao Tse-tung was bitter about the amount of American aid that had been given to Chiang Kai-shek. But for the American transport facilities, Mao Tse-tung would have been in a much stronger position. The Nationalists themselves unblushingly demanded more U.S. assistance to help them defeat the Reds. When criticized by the Nationalists, General Marshall ordered an embargo on American arms.

The Reds flatly refused to take part in a coalition government under Chiang Kai-shek and negotiations collapsed. On April 15th 1946, they announced that they would take the offensive again in Manchuria, where Lin's North-Eastern Army had nearly doubled in strength, having been joined by all the military elements of the recently established Red bases in the less accessible parts of Manchuria and by other Red leaders who had slipped into that country through Shantung and by other routes in August 1945. In the follow-

¹ Also known as Ssuping, and Kaiguan.

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ing months there were further increases in strength of the North-Eastern Army until it was over 250,000.

The Reds concentrated upon the destruction of communications knowing how it would hamper and practically immobilize the Nationalists. Again, Chiang Kai-shek offered to withhold his offensives if the Reds would stop this destruction, keep clear of the Peking-Mukden Railway, and permit the Nationalists to occupy Changchun and Harbin. The Reds did not respond, but renewed their activities. They calculated that the advantage was theirs as their infantrymen could roam over the whole of the Manchurian countryside at will, whilst without conventional communications the better equipped Nationalist troops were tied to the cities and ports.

When the Russians evacuated Changchun, leaving it to the Nationalist garrison that had been flown in, there were pitched battles in the streets as the Reds made an attempt to forestall the transfer and seize the city. In this fighting at least three platoons of tanks, manned by Japanese, took part on the Red side. Also, in these assaults many of the guns were also fired by Japanese ex-soldiers. On April 19th, Changchun fell to the Reds.

At the same time to the south a battle had been raging for Szeping-kai, the rail town, for some days. This was also won by the Reds.

To the north the Reds massed and brushed aside the Nationalist garrison of Tsitsihar, when the Russians evacuated. As a result of the general energetic push by Lin the Strategist it was estimated that by the middle of May, when the Russians did in fact leave the country, the Reds held about seventy per cent of the territory.

Meanwhile, General Marshall continued his efforts to bring about a new cease-fire. He urged the Reds to hand over Changchun to the Nationalists, to stop occupying territory and to negotiate, but their only response was to press harder in Manchuria. Elsewhere in China, Marshall had more success, and after a flare-up in the area of Hankow he was able to impose a cease-fire in Central China which for a time was fairly effective. But as soon as he had achieved this another outbreak of fighting occurred in Shantung province.

With the Russians, the unknown quantity, out of the way, the field of action was left clear. The Nationalist forces in Manchuria amounted to over 200,000 troops, and this number was further increased as more arrived by plane and ship. They consisted mainly of well-trained and equipped men from the trusted Central Army, supported by local levies and detachments from other Chinese armies,

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particularly that from Yunnan. The main Nationalist-held cities were reinforced by air, and a strong land column with armour, ample artillery and air support, moved in a northerly direction from Peking. The Reds as yet had no aircraft to speak of. This column first of all hit a strong Red defensive position at the town of Kung-chu, about thirty-five miles south of Changchun, and after clearing it quickly, moved on to take Changchun on April 23rd. The Reds were driven out by a heavy artillery bombardment.

Towards the end of May, the Nationalists moved to Red-held Harbin, and in the course of several days' fighting, in which artillery was extensively used, the Reds were forced out of the town. They hastily retreated across country in disorder towards the Sungari River, a major obstacle, with the Nationalists in pursuit. They were only saved from disaster by a timely cease-fire, which came into effect in Manchuria on June 6th 1946.

In May, just before the cease-fire which General Marshall had brought about, the Nationalists mounted a fairly successful offensive against the Reds in the Central Plains, where a Red Army group, amounting to over 60,000 men, had developed. The Central Plains can loosely be described as the area between the Yellow River and the range of mountains just to the north of the River Yangtse, comprising large portions of Hupei and Honan.

A well-equipped Nationalist force, some 200,000 strong, mainly from the Central Army, surrounded the Reds on the plains and began to close in on them. After suffering a large number of casualties, a section of this Red Army group managed to break through from the restricting band; part of it escaped northwards to make its way into Shensi. The other part was forced to move southwards, where it took refuge in the Tahung Mountains, to join up with Red partisans already there. The Tahung Mountain Range joins that of the Tapieh Mountains, both of which run parallel with, and are about 80 to 100 miles north of, the Yangtse River.

The cease-fire of June 6th was extended, but it never worked well and soon broke down. By mid-July fighting was again raging in several parts of China. Chiang Kai-shek started a number of offensives against the Reds in the Lower Yangtse Valley, in Shantung, in Shensi, in North China and in Manchuria: everywhere Nationalist troops bustled into Red-occupied territory.

It can be said that the Civil War proper began in July 1946. Previous actions could be described as preliminary, the jockeying for

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position, and the testing of enemy reactions. Now the real war broke out.

The Chinese Civil War can be conveniently divided into two phases, which are:

1. From July 1946 until about July 1947, when the Reds were generally on the defensive.

2. From autumn 1947 until the end of 1949, during which time the Reds were on the offensive.

As war in China now broke out and swelled to a gigantic scale it is no longer possible in this brief work to speak of small battles, talk of small formations, or dwell on the thoughts and actions of individual commanders. A more general picture only of events can be given.

By July 1946 the strength of the Nationalist Army had been pruned to about 3 million men, of which Chiang Kai-shek used about 1.6 million of the best as his spearheads for his various operations. He hoped that an all-out autumn campaign by his better armed troops would break the back of the Red Army, destroy its real power and drive the remnants into the mountains where they could be contained and dealt with at his leisure.

In the same month, July 1946, Mao Tse-tung announced the creation of the 'Peoples' Liberation Army', the PLA, which was to consist, not only of the 4th and 8th Route Armies, but all the other Red Army groups which were developing and springing into life. The probable strength of the active Red Army, the PLA, may have been 1.4 million,¹ with, of course, a large semi-trained Militia to back it up. In the ensuing months, within the framework of the PLA, of which Chu Teh was the Commander-in-Chief, the following separate 'field armies' took shape and became known as follows:

1. The Yen-an Army, commanded by Peng Teh-huai the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, who was named the Deputy Commander of the PLA. This army still defended the North-West Border Region which contained the headquarters of the Red movement.

2. The East China Liberation Army, under Chen Yi, which was just to the north of the Yangtse River in Kiangsu and Anhwei.

3. The North-Eastern Liberation Army, under Lin Piao the Strategist, which was fighting in Manchuria.

There were several other 'blobs' and independent formations in

¹ *U.S. Relations with China* (Washington 1949) quotes 600,000 regulars and 400,000 militia, but this is thought to be too small an estimate.

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other parts of China, and yet more appeared as time went on, but their status was not so definite.

The East China Liberation Army, under Chen Yi, which contained the remnants of the old 4th Route Army, plus recent recruitments, had an active strength of about 70,000 armed and trained men. A strong Nationalist offensive to clear the Lower Yangtse Valley hit Chen Yi hard, and he was forced to give way to avoid being encircled and destroyed. His main base, a town called Jukao was swamped, in which fighting he lost about 20,000 men, after which the opposing Nationalist forces, which numbered about half a million men, swept northwards on a 250 mile front, driving the Reds before them. Chen Yi's men were forced to retreat in disorder into the province of Shantung.

Making a virtue of necessity, the East China Liberation Army had to put into practice the declared policy of Mao Tse-tung, that of mobile defence against a superior force. Some ambitious Red leaders, although giving lip service to Mao Tse-tung's doctrine, did not always follow it and as a result Red casualties were then very high, owing to superior Nationalist fire-power. Once in Shantung the impetus of the Nationalist drive faded out, and Chen Yi was able to sit down and catch his breath. In the latter stages of this retreat it was only the determination, energy and initiative of Chen Yi, and his deputy, Su Yu, that held the East China Liberation Army together. When the pressure was relieved, the remnants were regrouped in South Shantung, and more men recruited until Chen Yi's army again touched the 70,000 mark.

In North China Ho Lung the ex-Bandit was besieging Tatung, which after being surrounded and cut off for three days, fell to him at the end of August. The Nationalists meanwhile sent reinforcements to the north and began offensive operations. Very soon the newly established Hopei-Jehol-Liaoning Soviet was scattered, and by September the Nationalists controlled most of the province of Jehol. They then turned their attention to Red-held Kalgan, the centre of the large Shansi-Hopei-Chahar Soviet, of Nieh Jung-chen, and after some confused fighting it fell to Chiang Kai-shek on October 11th.

Throughout September and well into October, everywhere the Nationalists were successful in their offensive and thrusts, the Reds falling back before them. It has been estimated that the population under Red control fell during these weeks from about 150 million to

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just over 100 million¹ but there is no way of verifying that, nor can the area of ground lost be accurately calculated either. However, it is thought that they lost at least one quarter of the territory they had held on January 13th 1946, when the official cease-fire took effect.

In Manchuria, Lin's North-Eastern Liberation Army was also hard pressed, and had to give ground at several points. On October 25th the Nationalists took Antung, driving out the Reds with artillery fire, and a large section was forced to cross hastily over the border into Korea to escape destruction. It made its way back into Manchuria over the frontier farther to the north.

On November 9th, the Nationalists ordered a cease-fire.

Although generally it can be said that the Reds were more or less forced to give way everywhere they were squeezed, it did not mean to say that they had lost their offensive attitude; and while the policy was for them to avoid meeting head-on the better-armed Nationalists they still made raids in strength, hitting at the weaker formations and towns whenever they were able. A Nationalist division was wiped out in Shantung, for example, and another in Hopei, and yet another in Honan.

The North-West Border Region remained secure, and Red sorties prevented the union of Hu the anti-Red and Yen the Model Governor in Shansi. There were also other offensive operations, which claimed a large number of Nationalist casualties.

Despite the gains, all was not happy and well in the Nationalist camp, the picture being one of quarrelling generals and lack of co-ordination.

The cease-fire came into effect on November 8th, but this time it was the Reds who would not negotiate unless the military *status quo* of January 13th 1946 was restored. On the 20th, Chou the Diplomat, who had remained with the Nationalists, gave up and returned to Yen-an. Fighting was resumed, especially in Manchuria, which was the immediate prize the Nationalists thought they were winning.

By December 1946 the Nationalist Army had been reduced to about 2.6 million, the former Manchurian army, the Chinese puppet troops and many of the war-lord formations having been disbanded. Many of the men, having no other prospects, had gone over to the Reds. The main Nationalist Central Army remained the core of Chiang Kai-shek's armed forces, although it was now somewhat dispersed, as part of it had been sent to Manchuria and part to North China.

¹ There are several sets of figures, but all differ.

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Nationalist military forces in North China came under the command of General Fu Tso-yi, who had nominally been Governor of Suiyuan since 1931 and had his headquarters at Peking. General Fu had graduated from the Paoting Military Academy in 1908, and after having been a war-lord general for some years had joined Chiang Kai-shek. At one time he had been the commander of the Tientsin garrison, and during the World War had commanded the 12th War Zone.

In Manchuria the Nationalist forces came under the command of General Sun Li-jen, who had graduated from an American military academy, and had lately commanded the Chinese 1st Army in India, and then had fought in Burma.

Another Nationalist army, which was a force to be reckoned with, was that from Kwangsi, although it had no American equipment at all. It had been moved north of the Yangtse River and was engaged in winking out Reds from North Kiangsu and North Anhwei, in which task it was having a fair amount of success.

In the north-west another Nationalist army was still under the command of Hu Tsung-nan the anti-Red, containing the North-West Border Region. A few American arms had been allotted to it but its fighting quality had deteriorated somewhat in the years of stagnation in the tedious task of holding the Reds in position. Its strength had sunk to the region of 300,000.

The army of Yen Hsi-shan, the Model Governor, after rising to over 70,000, had shrunk down to 20,000 or so, but it was still active and reasonably well disciplined, and was co-operating with the Nationalist forces based on Peking. Yen, old and cunning, who had been a member of the Nationalist Government since 1932, was still a force in politics and continued to intrigue for position and power.

To the west of the North-West Border Region there were the Muslim cavalry armies, ineffectively hovering in Kansu province, giving only nominal allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek. There were also the less useful and efficient armies in Szechwan and Yunnan.

During December the Nationalist Kwangsi army continued its pressure and completely drove the East China Liberation Army northwards into Shantung, although Red guerilla elements were left behind in the hills of Kiangsu. Chen Yi joined forces with the several local Red detachments already operating there.

Chiang Kai-shek decided to clear Shantung and at the end of January 1947 he launched an offensive, using the Kwangsi army. Throughout February, Chen Yi and his men twisted this way and

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that, suffering considerable casualties in the process, only to be driven finally to take refuge in the mountainous areas after a series of costly defeats. However, whenever he could Chen turned and snapped back, and on at least three separate occasions he was able to strike suddenly to wipe out isolated Nationalist divisions. The Reds also made reprisal raids and temporarily recaptured several small towns. At a place called Meng Liang, Chen Yi made a successful surprise attack, scattering the Nationalist force and capturing much equipment, but generally he was very much on the evasive defensive, and was obliged to stay in the hills overlooking the plains, which were dominated by Chiang Kai-shek's men.

By the end of March this Nationalist offensive in Shantung died down and the harassed Chen Yi and his East China Liberation Army were given a respite in which to lick their wounds and recoup.

At the same time, General Hu Tsung-nan the anti-Red was ordered to mount an offensive against the North-West Border Region, which he began on March 16th, when he broke through the Red defence lines and made for Yen-an. Mao Tse-tung hastily abandoned his capital and moved with the Yen-an Army to the east. After clearing the area of Yen-an, General Hu's offensive died down, he complaining that he was not being properly supported from Nanking. It seems as though rivalries between generals were the root cause of this decision. Had he continued and pursued the Yen-an Army he probably would have been able to smash it and scatter the Red Government headquarters before other Red forces could come to its assistance.

When Chu Teh and Peng Teh-huai the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, leading the Yen-an Army, turned eastwards they bumped into more Nationalist troops, and the engagement ended disastrously for the Reds. Other unsuccessful thrusts were tried in other directions. The plain fact seems to be that Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh were literally saved because Hu the anti-Red had halted his offensive.

In Manchuria, the North-Eastern Liberation Army was still engaged in evasive defence. On March 3rd, the Nationalist general Sun Li-jen made a forced march and trapped a Red army group of about 60,000 men which was besieging a town called Tehwei, some sixty miles to the north-east of Changchun. At least 20,000 Reds were killed and the rest scattered: few prisoners were taken.

Then followed a pause until mid-May, during which the Nationalist armies stood still. The reason seems to have been disagreement

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among the generals commanding in the field and the indecisiveness of Chiang Kai-shek. There was confusion and uncertainty in the chain of command, as many generals, mainly the Whampoa clique, had the right of direct access to Chiang Kai-shek, which they seldom hesitated to use when it served their purpose. In the latter part of May the Nationalist offensives were resumed, but in a weaker, disjointed and more haphazard manner.

By mid-June 1947, the Reds, having recovered somewhat, attempted to take the offensive in several places, but without much success, although several isolated Nationalist divisions were gobbled up. It was estimated that by June 1947, the number of active front-line Nationalist divisions had shrunk from 118 to 85.

Several divisions of the North-Eastern Liberation Army, amounting to about 60,000 troops, under Lin Piao attacked the strategically desirable town of Szepingkai, and in their assaults on it the Reds used artillery fire on a large scale for the first time. The Reds closely invested the town for eighteen days but were unsuccessful in their attacks, and were eventually driven off by a large Nationalist column which marched out from Mukden to deal with them. In the meantime, the Reds had created havoc with all the Manchurian railways, making them virtually useless.

During the summer of 1947 Nationalist operations again came to a standstill, or were rendered impotent by dissension amongst the generals. Such activity as there was centred around the Gulf of Liaoning, where the Reds held large sections of the coastline, and so were in a position to make Nationalist landings difficult, as well as being able to harass their communications.

On August 27th, the Nationalists made the first amphibious landing of the war when they took the small port of Shichiuso, driving out the Reds after a preliminary bombardment. Then a swift Nationalist move inland followed which outflanked the retiring Reds, who were caught and scattered. Later, other ports on the Gulf of Liaoning were taken by Chiang Kai-shek's men, Weihaiwei, the last, falling to them on October 7th.

At the end of the first year of the Civil War proper, honours generally went to the Nationalists. After at one time holding as much as four-fifths of Manchuria the area occupied by the Red North-Eastern Liberation Army had been reduced considerably, and it had been battered by the better armed Nationalist troops.

In Shantung, Chen Yi and the remnants of his East China Libera-

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tion Army were recovering from their defeats. Only lack of Nationalist energy and co-ordination enabled it to remain in existence.

The North-West Border Region, for so long the seemingly stable seat of the Red Government, had been upset and the Yen-an Army was hovering uneasily in vague conflict with Muslim cavalry troops to the west of the area of Lanchow, in Kansu province. Elsewhere Red Army groups had drawn in their horns.

The Reds were in fact little better off than they had been in August 1945, before Mao Tse-tung launched his expansion programme into Japanese-occupied territory one step ahead of Chiang Kai-shek, and although they held wide stretches of the Manchurian countryside they had lost wide acres in North, Eastern and Central China. They claimed to be continuing widespread guerilla activity, which was true, but it was on a much more restricted scale than formerly.

The shrewd, ambitious master plan of Mao Tse-tung, which had been to seize all China north of the Yangtse River, had been forestalled by the fact that America had given transport facilities to the Nationalists. In their first flush of enthusiasm and success, the Red formations had experimented with direct attacks, but with little success against a better armed enemy. Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh were then forced to insist that all PLA formations revert to the tactics of avoidance whenever faced by superior forces.

9

Red Victory in China

Having failed in his bold bid to gain control over the greater part of China, Mao Tse-tung, far from being despondent, sat down and made plans for the next stage in his dream of conquest. He saw that his PLA troops were no match for those of Chiang Kai-shek, neither in numbers nor in weapons, so he gave strict instructions that evasive action must be taken. Whilst he permitted limited offensive operations when circumstances were favourable, he knew that it was most important, above all, that his armies remain intact. With this in mind Chu Teh gave orders for limited offensives to be taken over the widest possible area in the summer of 1947 to distract the Nationalists whilst he prepared for a winter offensive in Manchuria, to which he gave top priority. He decided to deal with the Nationalist armies one by one, and for strategical and economic reasons selected the Manchurian one to be first.

Liu Po-cheng the One-Eyed General moved southwards from the Shansi-Hopei-Honan Soviet across the Central Plain, and on August 11th crossed the 'horizontal' Lunghai Railway. By the end of that month he had reached the Tapien Mountain Range to join up with the Honan-Hupei-Anhwei Soviet, which had been reinforced by a large group of Red soldiers who had escaped the encirclement on the Central Plain the previous year. Liu remained there to organize and build up a Red military force, which became known as the Central Plains Liberation Army.

Also moving southwards in conjunction with Liu, was Chang Keng, with another Red force. He made his way into Honan province towards the Tahung Mountain Range, where he settled down to organize the Red military elements in that region. He later merged with, and became part of, the Central Plains Liberation Army under Liu the One-Eyed General.

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In Shantung, when he had recovered from his beating, Chen Yi roused his army and began to become active in the central and south-western parts of that province. In September 1947, he switched his operations to the vicinity of the 'horizontal' Lunghai Railway, and began to disrupt it.

In Manchuria, although the main offensive was to be the winter one, the limited Red offensive had considerable success due to the hesitant, wavering policy of Chiang Kai-shek. On October 4th, for example, the Reds assaulted and took the rail town of Kungchuling, which was about forty miles south-west of Changchun. Two days later Lin Piao led an attack on Szepingkai, which was about ninety miles to the north-east of Mukden, which succeeded.

Other towns on the Manchurian railway system fell to the Reds one by one. The main object was to recover as much of the countryside as possible and then to sever the railway communications so as to isolate the major Nationalist garrisons. By autumn the Reds again held about four-fifths of the country, having recovered by seeping movements most of the territory previously lost.

Despite losses suffered in the Nationalist offensives of 1946-47, which must have been considerable although no accurate figures are available, the overall active strength of the PLA rose to about 1.6 million by the autumn of 1947. This increase came partly from the Militia, but also from recruiting ex-Nationalist troops who had either been captured or had defected. During this summer and autumn emphasis was laid on political education of these new entrants into the Red Army. The strength of the North-Eastern Liberation Army rose as Lin the Strategist enlisted thousands of demobilized Manchurian troops, who had been rather badly and thoughtlessly treated by the Nationalist generals, who held them in low regard.

The limited autumn offensive caused Red morale, which had been dropping owing to the policy of constant retreat in the face of Nationalist superiority and heavy casualties, to perk up again with these small successes. In his autumn activities, Lin claimed to have inflicted over 70,000 Nationalist casualties in Manchuria, but he was silent as to his own. In Shantung, Chen Yi claimed over 60,000 in the same period, but again without a word as to his own losses.

Owing to Nationalist strategy which had devolved into merely garrisoning the large cities and guarding the communications, the Red troops in many instances had the complete freedom of the

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countryside. Having manœuvred Chiang Kai-shek's men in Manchuria into the big cities, gained possession of most of the countryside and cut most of the railway communications, Chu Teh, the Commander-in-Chief, gave orders for an all-out winter offensive to begin in Manchuria, with the object of gaining complete control of that country. This offensive, he estimated, amongst other things, would relieve pressure on the Yen-an Army in Kansu, and the other Red bases. The priority was to be Manchuria first, and then North China, before moving southwards. However, all other Red forces were ordered to make local offensives to engage as many Nationalist troops as possible.

In early December 1947 Lin the Strategist began his winter offensive, by which time the Nationalist forces in Manchuria were cooped up in Mukden, Changchun, Kirin and a few other towns along the railways, many of which were closely invested. As this pressure mounted, Chiang Kai-shek was obliged to use aircraft to feed his beleaguered garrisons. Apart from being a very costly process financially,¹ from a military point of view it diverted the aircraft from military purposes, although generally in the Manchurian fighting the Nationalists made little effective military use of their air force. The Reds still had very few aircraft.

At the end of 1947, taking stock, Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh estimated that the war would last for another five years, and they began to plan and prepare accordingly. The strength of the PLA was to rise, but comparatively slowly, as more attention was to be given to political education, especially of the recruits from the Nationalist, Manchurian, puppet and other armies. There had been difficulties and occasional reluctance of some of the soldiers who had changed sides to fall in wholeheartedly with Red ideas.

Appreciating the situation, Mao Tse-tung saw that whilst his own armies were more or less intact and well disciplined, those of Chiang Kai-shek were falling to pieces owing to dissension amongst the generals. He saw that if this trend of events continued there could be no doubt about the final outcome and that victory would be his in time. His armies were led by the same trusted, battle-tried commanders, who had held responsible posts for years. There had been remarkably few changes in the higher commands, even for mistakes

¹ How the Red policy of besieging the large cities paid off can be assessed from the following: 'Half a year's military budget went on supplying a single city, Changchun, for 2 months and 4 days.' *Military History of Modern China*, by Liu.

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or failures: the Red hierarchy clung together loyally. On the other hand, Nationalist commanders were frequently changed, and the generals constantly intrigued for position against each other.

In December 1947, Mao Tse-tung gave a summary which he called the 'Present Situation and our Tasks', in which he reviewed the comparative positions on both sides and gave guidance to the senior commanders as to a slight change of emphasis for future operations. He wrote:

Strive to annihilate the enemy in mobile warfare but at the same time pay attention to tactics of positional attack for seizing enemy strongholds and cities. In the matter of siege operations, resolutely seize all the weakly defended enemy positions or cities. In the case of an enemy position or city defended with medium strength, seize it at an opportune moment when circumstances permit. In the case of a strongly defended enemy position or city take it only when conditions are ripe.

At the same time he reissued, with emphasis, the 'Ten Commandments',¹ and the 'Eight Reminders' of conduct.

The PLA was still literally a mass of infantry, marching on its feet and carrying its rations, a bandolier of rice or millet, enough to last the man about ten days. It was armed with a variety of rifles and, in Manchuria at any rate, had almost enough light machine-guns to give one to each platoon. Ammunition was a problem, and was very scarce. The main source of supply was from the 'front', from the enemy, and many raids and minor operations were launched with the specific object of obtaining ammunition. Enemy dead and prisoners were always thoroughly searched, and every round was carefully collected.

The Reds were experimenting with unfamiliar heavy equipment which they had seized from the Japanese as well as the new U.S. material captured from the Nationalists, but as yet they neither knew how to handle nor employ it. It was estimated that they had at least 6,000 guns of different sorts, the bulk of which were with the North-Eastern Liberation Army in Manchuria, and most of the remainder with the East China Liberation Army. In both these two Red armies small artillery 'divisions' were formed and functioned as such. The Red commanders seemed to like and immediately take to this arm, and a fair state of proficiency was reached. Numbers of ex-Nationalist artillerymen were employed.

¹ See Appendix 'A'.

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The Reds still had few armoured vehicles, and the bulk of such as they possessed were elderly Japanese models. Most were in Manchuria, where Lin the Strategist was engaged in building up a small armoured corps. A few Japanese instructors and drivers lingered on, but the corps was soon composed predominantly of ex-Nationalist tankmen. Lin had already on several occasions used platoons of tanks in battle, but they had not been very effective mainly due to lack of appreciation of their capabilities and lack of experience on the part of the Red commanders. American vehicles began to be added to this small corps.

With the start of the winter offensive in Manchuria Red policy changed and hardened. No longer was the Chinese traditional 'avenue of escape' left open to the enemy on the battlefield—he was completely surrounded and then either killed or captured.

In mid-December 1947, the battle for Mukden began as the Reds closed in round it. Lin Piao brought a large part of his artillery into action against this city, and only extensive counter-bombardment, together with the occasional aircraft sortie held the Reds at bay. Several unsuccessful Red attacks were made.

Changchun was also surrounded and assaults made on it.

On February 19th, 1948, the Reds overran Anshan, the ironworks town on the Mukden-Dairen Railway.

Next, they massed and closed in on Szepingkai, the scene of their previous reverses. A huge infantry attack captured it on March 18th. On the same day, Kirin was evacuated by the Nationalists owing to heavy Red pressure. At both places the Reds gained large quantities of munitions, including much modern U.S. material. To the southwest of Manchuria, the Nationalists struggled to keep the 'Liaoning Corridor' open. This consisted of the strip of land through which ran the Peking-Mukden Railway.

By the end of March the winter offensive in Manchuria was spent and the fighting died down, remaining more or less quiet during the following summer. The Red artillery was desperately short of shells. Despite several massed infantry attacks, the North-Eastern Liberation Army was unable to reduce the four remaining major Nationalist garrisons of Mukden, Changchun, Chengteh and Chinchow. But it must be said that by this time these garrisons were jumpy, and short of ammunition and supplies. Morale was falling.

Although the main emphasis was in Manchuria, there was activity elsewhere, and in December 1947 a large Nationalist force of over

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300,000 troops moved against the Central Plains Liberation Army. Liu the One-Eyed General, from his strongholds in the Tapiéh and Tahung Mountain Ranges, had been raiding down on to the plains of Honan and Anhwei, as well as southwards to the Yangtse River in search of arms, stores and recruits. Chiang Kai-shek decided to eliminate him.

Liu's Red columns on the plains practised the tactics of avoidance successfully, and this Nationalist force found nothing to hit at. It stopped short of entering the mountain ranges and when it came to a standstill began to gradually disintegrate. At this moment Liu the One-Eyed General turned and within weeks had scattered it. The Reds claimed to have inflicted over 180,000 Nationalist casualties. After this disaster the Nationalists withdrew, thus virtually giving Liu the freedom of the Central Plains.

This success enabled Liu to operate nearer the 'horizontal' Lunghai Railway, and on March 16th he took his first large town, Loyang, swamping it with infantry. His triumph was short-lived, as a few days later his men were driven out by a Nationalist counter-attack. Smarting at this set-back, the One-Eyed General regrouped his men and early the next month, April, attacked again successfully, this time retaining possession of the town.

In North-West China in March 1948, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, leading the Yenán Army, attacked General Hu Tsungnan, the anti-Red, and a sprawling three-day battle developed about sixty miles south-east of Yenán in which the Reds claimed that they killed or captured some 80,000 of the enemy. Although the fight did not end in a clear-cut victory for either side, as both withdrew, it was a decisive one for the Reds in this area, as it knocked the sting from Hu's tail. After this, even though he still had over 200,000 men, their morale deteriorated and the potential danger of the destruction of the Yenán Army was distinctly lessened. Hu the anti-Red tucked in his skirts and Chu Teh was able to re-enter Yenán on the last day of the month.

On the north-east China coast, under Red pressure the Nationalists withdrew from Weihaiwei and other ports on the coast of Shantung, retaining only that of Cheefoo.

Apart from activities in Central China, there was comparatively little activity in the spring and summer of 1948, both sides seeming to pause to reconsider and prepare. On the Central Plains Liu the One-Eyed General took and temporarily held Kaifeng, which is east

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of Loyang, on the 'horizontal' Lunghai Railway. With the aid of aircraft, Nationalist forces drove him out a few days later, but not before the Reds had laid their hands on stocks of munitions.

The Reds launched three limited operations in September 1948. The first was against the Liaoning Corridor, which did not have much success and was soon discontinued as heavy Red casualties were caused by superior enemy fire.

In Manchuria, Lin the Strategist embarked upon an operation that was costly and unsuccessful, when he launched some 140,000 of his men in a deliberate attack on the city of Chinchow. His North-Eastern Liberation Army had a probable effective strength of about 320,000.

In Shantung, Su Yu,¹ the deputy commander of the East China Liberation Army, mustered about 60,000 men and moved to attack Tsinan,² a vital railway junction, and a town before which the Reds had long hesitated. The East China Liberation Army had a probable effective strength of about 145,000. Su Yu assaulted with waves of massed infantry, but also used all his artillery as well. After an eight-day fight, Tsinan fell to the Reds on September 24th. Nationalist defections contributed to this Communist success. Again, large stocks of U.S. supplies were seized by the Reds.

The effect of the change of Red policy to one of the deliberate attack on strong points resulted in Chiang Kai-shek ordering his men to fight to the last behind the walls of the cities and towns. But Nationalist morale was slipping badly, and the number of defections to the Reds increased. The Nationalist war machine was disjointed and its chain of command in need of adjustment. Chiang Kai-shek still spasmodically poked his finger in the conduct of tactical battles, and the ensuing conflicting orders caused uncertainty and despondency.

In October 1948, Mao Tse-tung merged several of the North China Liberation areas together and formed a North China People's Government, the forerunner of the Chinese Communist Government of all China.

Chu Teh meanwhile made several organizational changes in the PLA, which had risen to an effective strength of 2.6 million. He

¹ Later to be Chief of Staff of the Red Army of the Peoples' Republic of China.

² Also known as Chinan.

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divided it up into five, almost autonomous, field armies, which were as follows:

1st Field Army—the former Yen-an Army, commanded by Peng Teh-huai the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, with its G.H.Q. now back in Yen-an.

2nd Field Army—the former Central Plains Liberation Army, commanded by Liu Po-cheng the One-Eyed General, which was operating south of the Yellow River, mainly in and around the province of Honan.

3rd Field Army—the former East China Liberation Army, commanded by Chen Yi, which was operating in the province of Shantung.

4th Field Army—the former North-Eastern Liberation Army, commanded by Lin Piao the Strategist, which was operating in Manchuria.

5th Field Army—the former North China Liberation Army, commanded by Nieh Jung-chen, which consisted of the various Red fighting formations in Shansi, Hopei and Suiyuan.

It took a little time before the newly formed field armies settled down in a neat pattern, and there were several other formations which remained independent until the end of the war.

Chu Teh remained the Commander-in-Chief, with Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, commanding the 1st Field Army, as his deputy.

The PLA was still a mass of infantry shambling sturdily along on its feet, but specialist units were appearing. The divisions into which it had been divided had an average strength of about 6,000 men, and were built on the triangular system. Each division had a small unit of field engineers, who were rough and ready, but efficient. More 'artillery' divisions were formed, but lack of shells prevented their full employment. Armour was still regarded with uncertainty as an unfamiliar gadget. The small tank units came under the direct control of the field army commander. A few Nationalist aircraft had been captured and training of pilots had begun, but the Red Army had yet to fly one on a military mission in action. In Manchuria and the north, the Mongolian cavalry had not proved very effective and had been allowed to waste away till its numbers were very small.

The strategy of the Red Army now began to change, and, although the old guerilla maxims and ideas still permeated the PLA, Chu Teh gave orders that more attention should be paid to positional warfare,

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and that one by one the Nationalist-held cities were to be assaulted and taken.

Lin the Strategist's attack on Chinchow marked the change from mobile defence to positional attack. In October 1948, the Nationalists in Manchuria were still confined to four cities, Changchun, Mukden, Chinchow and Chengteh, the remainder of the country being in Red hands. The initial assaults on Chinchow having been unsuccessful, it was decided, as a result of the recent dictum of Chu Teh, to move against Changchun to fight a set battle. Lin Piao had accumulated a sizeable store of shells and he deployed practically all his artillery against this city.

Changchun itself had been more or less under siege to some degree for over eighteen months, and conditions within were becoming rather desperate, as food, supplies and ammunition were all short. Despondency and discontent had set in among the defenders, who included large numbers of troops from Yunnan. Red assaults were mounted and under a fairly accurate artillery barrage the waves of infantry advanced with determination. The Yunnanese troops mutinied and the defence fell apart. On October 18th the Reds entered Changchun.

Lin the Strategist then turned his attention back to Chinchow, held by about 70,000 Nationalists. Within days he had diverted the bulk of his force and was opening the attack on the city.

In the Nationalist camp there was hesitation and divided counsels. The commander of the Mukden garrison, about 120 miles away, was ordered to march to the relief of Chinchow, but he first paused and then reluctantly marched with only a small column. Before he had got very far, Chiang Kai-shek, who had flown to Peking to direct the Manchurian operations, ordered him back into Mukden again.¹ Other Nationalist reinforcements were landed at Hulatao, but again only a proportion of them set out towards besieged Chinchow, the remainder staying indecisively at the port.

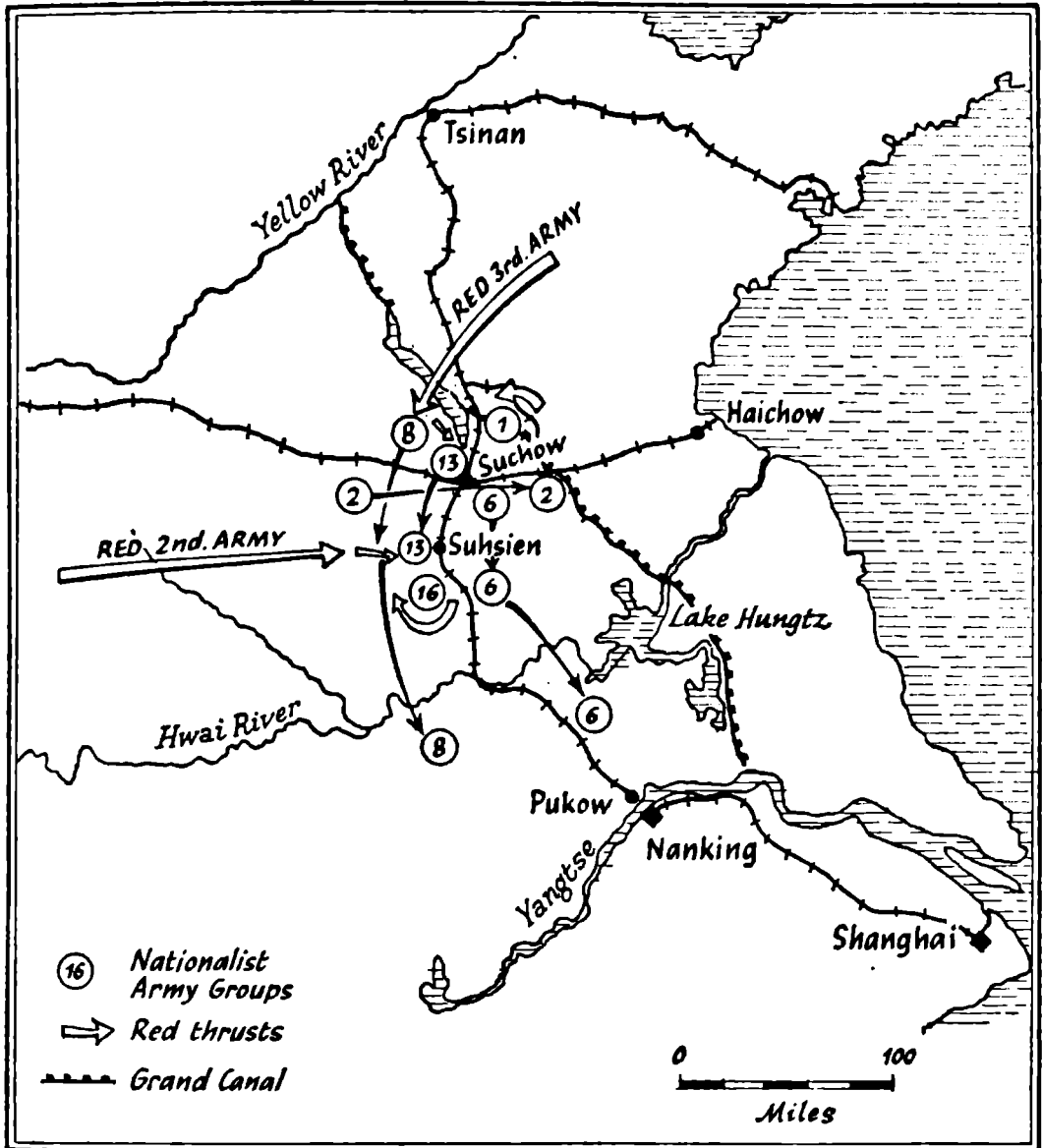
Inside Chinchow there was starvation and dissension. Several units defected from the Nationalists and this city also soon fell to the Reds.

Thus the only garrison of any size in Manchuria left in Nationalist hands was Mukden. The writing was on the wall and the united will to resist gone. The Reds closed in around the city, which surrendered

¹ It is alleged that at this particular stage Chiang Kai-shek made decisions without reference to his General Staff, which added to the confusion.

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on November 1st. Chengteh had also fallen, and the Reds became in fact the masters of the whole of Manchuria. The port of Yingkow, which the Nationalists had seized on October 11th, was evacuated by them on November 4th. The Reds took over large quantities of modern U.S. arms, vehicles and equipment.



In admitting the fall of Manchuria, Chiang Kai-shek said that there had been over three million casualties on both sides in the two years of fighting. He admitted the loss of seventeen divisions, but in fact in Manchuria over 300,000 of his best troops had been put out of action. Red casualties are not known, but they may have been at least equal. Even so, the strength of Lin's 4th Field Army had risen to about 360,000, and he began to regroup it for use elsewhere. For

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the first time the Red Army was stronger in numbers than the Nationalist one. The approximate figures in November 1948 may have been :

Red Army	3 million effectives
Nationalist Army	2·9 million troops

The Nationalists still retained strong forces in North China, commanded from Peking by General Fu Tso-yi, who controlled Tientsin as well as Peking, the railway reaching through Kalgan to Kweisui, and one or two other places such as Tatung, Tsingtao and Paoting. Most were more or less surrounded by Reds and some of the towns were virtually besieged. South of Peking the main Nationalist forces were grouped in the area of Suchow,¹ in northern Kiangsu, the junction of the 'horizontal' Lunghai Railway and the 'vertical' Tientsin-Pukow Railway.

It was decided to leave the 'Peking Pocket', as the area controlled by General Fu can be conveniently called for the time being, for Lin's 4th Field Army in Manchuria to deal with as soon as it recovered its breath. Chu Teh decided to strike at the Nationalist troop concentrations in the region of Suchow, which amounted to just over half a million men, using the 3rd Field Army, which was in Shantung, and the 2nd Field Army which was in lower Honan province. In the first week of November, the 3rd Field Army began to move southwards, whilst the 2nd Field Army began to march eastwards.

The strategic rail city of Suchow was vulnerable to encirclement, and the Nationalist generals wanted to form a defensive line farther to the south, in the region of the Hwai River, but Chiang Kai-shek was adamant that Suchow be held, mainly for prestige reasons.

There were six Nationalist army groups in and around Suchow, amounting to some fifty divisions, the 2nd, 6th, 7th, 8th, 13th and the 16th. The 8th Army Group was to the north-west and the 6th Army Group was to the south, whilst the 13th Army Group was stationed in the city itself. The 2nd Army Group was concentrated some miles to the west of Suchow, from which direction the Nationalists anticipated that Chen Yi would strike downwards from his concentration areas in Shantung. The 7th Army Group was some distance to the north-east in the region of the Grand Canal,² strung out along

¹ Also known as Hsuchow.

² An ancient work, over 700 miles long, connecting the Yangtse and Yellow Rivers. It had been damaged during the Japanese invasion in 1937-38, and large parts of it were disused.

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the Lunghai Railway. The 16th Army Group, which had a strong armoured column attached to it, was south of the town of Suhsien, about fifty miles south of Suchow.

The campaign opened on November 6th, when the Reds attacked and occupied a position north-west of Suchow near the position of the 8th Army Group, destroying one of its divisions in the process. Four other Nationalist divisions of this army group went over to the Reds, and as the result the 8th Army Group retreated southwards.

Next, instead of attacking as expected the stronger 2nd Army Group, Chen Yi drove a wedge into the weaker 7th Army Group, to the north-east and Suchow, using all his available men, amounting to over 180,000 divided into nine separate 'columns' or corps. Thus the Northern Front was split and the 7th Army Group partially surrounded. A ring of Red infantry was drawn around the 7th Army Group, and in the fighting that ensued at least ten Nationalist divisions were dispersed, but the Reds also suffered severe casualties and things got so much out of control that Chen Yi had to break off the fighting. Both sides claimed a victory at the Grand Canal, and as the remnants of the 7th Army Group remained on the field, it could have been theirs.

While the 7th Army Group was surrounded and fighting a battle for survival, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the still untouched 2nd Army Group, which was to the west of Suchow, to march to its relief. But the march was very slow, partly because of the heavy rain and sleet which turned the ground into deep mud, and partly a long standing feud between the respective commanders.

The removal of the 2nd Army Group from its commanding position, into a morass somewhere to the east of Suchow, enabled Liu the One-Eyed General coming from the west with his 2nd Field Army, now about 300,000 strong and also divided into nine 'columns' or corps, to strike directly at the rail town of Suhsien, fifty miles south of Suchow, without being threatened on a vulnerable flank.

When this happened, Chiang Kai-shek again interfered in the conduct of the battle and ordered the 6th Army Group and the 16th Army Group to move out against him. The Nationalist 16th Army Group had a strength of about 140,000 men, and the large mechanized column attached to it comprised most of the modern mechanized American material possessed by the Nationalists, having over 2,000 vehicles, many of them armoured.

The Red 2nd Field Army swerved to meet the Nationalists, coming

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into contact with them about twenty miles north of Suhsien. Liu hit the 6th Army Group with a bang. Two divisions were swamped almost at once, and the remainder after some fighting withdrew hurriedly southwards. Violent contact was next made with the 16th Army Group, and mud and ice immobilized the large mechanized column, which, when it saw that it was up against a mass of agile infantrymen, tried to make its way towards Suchow, to the north. This meant that the Reds had succeeded in isolating and cutting off from the Hwai River four army groups, the 2nd, 7th, 13th and the 16th.

When he heard that his 16th Army Group, with his *élite* mechanized column, was bogged down in the mud and in danger of being completely surrounded by infantry, Chiang Kai-shek told it to stay where it was, and ordered the 13th Army Group, garrisoning Suchow, which had not yet made contact with the enemy, to march southwards to its relief.

When the 13th Army Group moved out from Suchow, elements of the 3rd Field Army, of Chen Yi, moved in and took possession. The slow moving 13th Army Group had no better luck than the other Nationalist armies and when it ran into Liu's 2nd Field Army just south of Suchow, it was soon completely surrounded by Red infantrymen.

On November 17th, having recovered himself to a large extent, Chen Yi returned with his 3rd Field Army to attack the battered 7th Army Group in the region of the Grand Canal, and in the ensuing days completely destroyed it. The survivors, about 90,000 men, surrendered: and about 1,000 guns were also taken, as well as other equipment.

Having achieved this, Chen Yi remustered his men, marched westwards, waylaid and then surrounded the 2nd Army Group which was slowly struggling through the mud. A test of strength and endurance resulted, and within a fortnight Chen Yi had disposed of the 2nd Army Group.

Meanwhile, Liu the One-Eyed General had slowly strangled and destroyed the 13th Army Group and the 16th Army Group by sheer weight of infantry. Chen Yi and Liu Po-cheng joined forces again at Pengtu, which is only about eighty miles north of Nanking. Nationalist efforts to break-out from the throttling rings of infantrymen were ineffective. On January 10th the last large contingent of Nationalists in this area surrendered and the campaign ended.

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The Reds refer to this series of battles, which lasted for about sixty-five days, as the 'Hwai-Hai Campaign', from the Hwai River and Haichow, the eastern terminus of the 'horizontal' Lunghai Railway, but the 'Suchow Campaign' might be a more descriptive title. It was a masterly battle of encirclement and manœuvre in which six Nationalist army groups were enticed, drawn, surrounded and destroyed in turn by a horde of tough, agile infantrymen, who ran rings round the ponderous Nationalist formations which were hamstrung by the weather, the mud and the ice, and thus practically immobilized.

It was fought on an infantryman's terrain, and hard going at that, in which vehicles of any sort were a handicap. The tough Red artillerymen struggled through, hauling their small field guns by hand and doing devastating work with them. To support the gigantic movement of the two huge Red infantry armies, amounting as near as can be estimated to over 600,000 fighting men, the Reds ruthlessly conscripted local peasants to carry their ammunition and supplies on their backs, often on a 'day-to-day' basis, just as and when they wanted them. The Nationalists lost about half a million of their best men, of whom the Reds claim that over 300,000 became prisoners. The Nationalist air force, which probably could have done something to influence the battle, or at least have given good, accurate information from aerial reconnaissance, hardly came into the picture at all. This was the first really successful Red conventional large-scale battle, and the sudden and decisive victory left them breathless and unbelieving. They had out-manœuvred, out-witted and out-fought the best of the Nationalist troops. Nanking, to the south, beckoned them on.

After this defeat the Nationalists had hastily withdrawn southwards with what forces they could salvage, making a brief show of forming a strong defensive line along the Pengtu and Hwai Rivers. But in January 1949, they abandoned this and fell back to other positions, which were barely thirty miles north of Nanking. Exhausted, elated, but slightly bewildered, the Reds sat down in the Suchow area. They were neither ready nor able to follow the retreating Nationalists to deal a death blow.

In Manchuria, Lin the Strategist and his 4th Field Army, having recovered, started operations against the Peking Pocket, held by General Fu Tso-yi. Leaving Mukden towards the end of 1948, Lin Piao marched his men, carrying their own food, over rough country

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in which most of the conventional communications such as railways, roads and bridges had been destroyed, covering over 600 miles in a fortnight, to arrive at the outskirts of the Peking Pocket. This in itself was a commendable feat of endurance. Supplies, ammunition and a certain amount of foodstuffs had been moved by impressed labour. At the same time, Nieh Jung-cheng with his 5th Field Army, began to operate aggressively in North China.

By December 19th, 1948, Lin Piao had reached the edge of the Peking city defences and had seized the airfield, but instead of attacking, he settled down outside the city to wait for his artillery to arrive. Whilst waiting, he assaulted and took the port of Tangku, thus cutting off the Peking Pocket from the sea and blocking a possible evacuation in that direction.

Early in January 1949, Lin Piao began to close in on Peking. He employed heavy artillery concentrations, which showed that his gunners had improved considerably in skill. After nearly a fortnight of this bombardment, Peking, with its garrison of about 100,000 men, surrendered on the 15th of that month.

Nieh Jung-cheng's offensive in North China had not been so successful, and the Nationalists still retained Taiyuan and Tatung, which were controlled by the remnants of the army of Yen the Model Governor. There were also other Nationalist elements in Sian.

Southwards the Nationalists busied themselves preparing to defend Nanking, Hankow and other points along the Yangtse River.

The Red victory at Suchow, followed by the fall of Peking, completely altered the character of the war and a spirit of defeatism began to eat seriously into the Nationalist hierarchy and the ranks of the army. Previous defections had not been taken over-seriously, as they were a national trait. Now there were wholesale surrenders of Nationalist troops and defections of commanders and officers, which grew to embarrassing proportions in the ensuing months. Taken by surprise, unable to cope with them, unable to keep them properly in captivity and unwilling to let them loose, the defectors were incorporated into the PLA by whole units, under their own officers for the time being.

To say that there was dissatisfaction, confusion and dismay on the Nationalist side is an understatement. The Whampoa clique which was largely responsible for the existing adverse situation was discredited, and in January 1949, Chiang Kai-shek formally resigned

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office as President of Nationalist China. Li Tsung-jen¹ the Vice-President, became the acting President, but with only limited powers, as Chiang Kai-shek kept personal control of the KMT, and remained the power behind the scenes, issuing orders to generals and others. Li Tsung-jen (Li of Kiangsi, it will be remembered, who had joined Chiang Kai-shek in the early days), was not one of the Whampoa clique, and on several occasions had opposed him on points of strategy.

Chiang Kai-shek saw defeat in sight and began to prepare a safe refuge and retreat on the island of Formosa, to which he moved the gold reserves, many of his best troops, his air force and the bulk of the modern American equipment that remained to him. The U.S.A. was now distinctly cool towards him and military aid had tailed off. Stripping the mainland to fortify Formosa, he left Li, the acting President, to hold out against the Reds as best he could.

Li at once instituted cease-fire talks, but they were held up owing to the chaotic Nationalist Government situation. The Reds demanded an unopposed crossing of the Yangtse River, to which the Nationalists would not agree. Neither side could agree on the 'War Criminal' List either.

As the cease-fire talks dragged on during the first three months of 1949, the PLA devoted its attention and time to reorganizing, to absorbing the many thousands of ex-Nationalist officers and men, to intensive training and to political education. The Red political officers and cadres worked feverishly to educate the latest adherents.

The first really modern military equipment in any quantity, such as large guns, tanks, vehicles and wireless sets were acquired at the Suchow fighting. More was gained when the Peking Pocket fell.

Now Red commanders had to concern themselves with putting this equipment to good use on the battlefield. Even so, in positional warfare, the Red policy was still that of mass infantry attacks, in which wave after wave of soldiers were sent forward. Casualties did not matter—they now had so many men—as a few could always get through, and the piles of dead served to deaden and mask enemy fire.

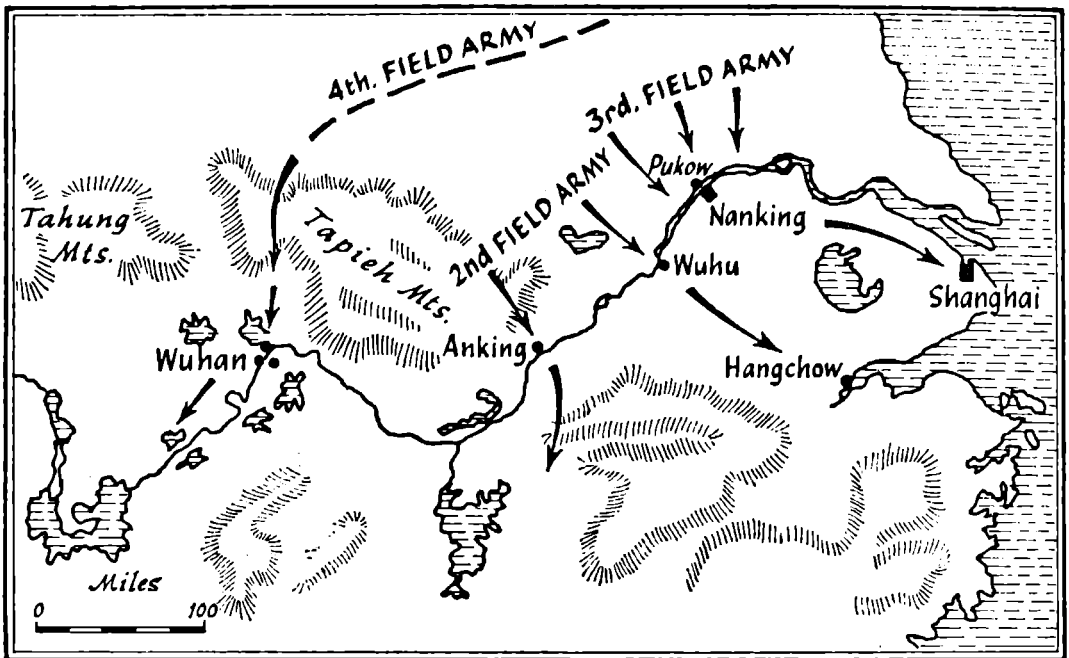
On the other hand, the Nationalist Army was down to less than 1·8 million effective troops, but of this number only about 350,000,

¹ Li Tsung-jen had commanded the 7th Corps of the first National Revolutionary Army in 1926. He later commanded for a time the 4th Group Army in 1928, after which he became the Governor of Anhwei. In the Sino-Japanese War he commanded the 5th War Zone, and was appointed to the National Military Council in 1945.

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based mainly on Hankow and Nanking, were under the direct control of Li the acting President. The military commander was General Pai Chung-hsu,¹ who was at Hankow.

Of the other intact Nationalist armies, that of Hu Tsung-nan the anti-Red, was still in the north-west, and may still have had over 200,000 men. Hu took his orders direct from Chiang Kai-shek, and in any case was remote from the scene of pending struggle. Another Nationalist army was that commanded by Tang En-po, and was based on Shanghai. Originally it had been about 350,000 strong, but Chiang Kai-shek syphoned off many of the troops to Formosa.



Li's plan, backed by General Pai of Hankow, was to regard the provinces of Kiangsi and Kwantung as the bastion of defence, and not Formosa. Chiang Kai-shek would not agree, neither would he allow Li the acting President to assume full powers. There was no co-ordination of command and matters were further complicated by Chiang Kai-shek pulling strings and pressing buttons behind the scenes.

As the troops of General Pai were thinly spread along the line of

¹ Pai Chung-hsu had been Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek in the earlier Northern Campaign, after which he had differed with his master and returned to his native province of Kiangsi. However, he rejoined Chiang and had been a member of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT since 1937, and had held the post of Deputy Chief of Staff. At one time he had been responsible for all air force matters.

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the Yangtse River between Hankow and Nanking, Li asked Tang En-po of Shanghai to move over a little and help him defend the river. This Chiang Kai-shek would not allow. Li hoped for a three-month respite in which to train his men and deploy, and then he thought he could hold the Reds along the Yangtse River for a year, after which he hoped the international climate might change in Nationalist China's favour.

Peace negotiations fruitlessly continued, until the Reds declared that if no agreement was reached they would resume hostilities on April 20th, 1949. None was reached, so on that date the Reds began to mount a gigantic operation to cross the Yangtse River in strength. During the previous weeks, both the Red 2nd Field Army and the 3rd Field Army had moved to the north bank, where they were collecting boats and building rafts. Chen Yi's 3rd Field Army, greatly swelled in strength, was deployed in a sector opposite Nanking, whilst Liu the One-Eyed General, with his 2nd Field Army, was deployed in a sector opposite Wuhu and Anking, farther upstream. Also marching hard to join in this coming battle was Lin the Strategist and his 4th Field Army, who had left the Peking area in March and was trekking across country, making for Hankow.

This huge Red operation began to slip into gear on the night of April 20th. In the East Sector, there was a short, preliminary battle for Pukow, the railhead of the 'vertical' railway to Tientsin, on the north bank of the river just across from Nanking, which was quickly won by the Reds. The crossing of the River Yangtse was never seriously opposed in the Eastern Sector. Nationalist morale had sunk and loyalties were wavering and falling. The Nationalist commander of Kiangyin, one of the key defensive positions, went over to the Reds at once and helped them across, as did many of the 170 Nationalist naval craft on the river.¹ The Nationalist air force hardly came into the battle at all, and soon thousands of boats and rafts were ferrying Red soldiers over.

As soon as Pukow fell, the Nationalists evacuated Nanking, which

¹ During the Red crossing of the Yangtse River an incident occurred which hit the world headlines when the British frigate *Amethyst*, taking stores up river to a British Embassy, got mixed up in the battle, coming under Red fire on the night of April 20th. The ship was crippled, ran aground and some 17 members of the crew were killed and another 20 wounded. Two other British warships attempted to come to her rescue, but were forced back to Shanghai by Red gunfire. On July 30th, the *Amethyst* slipped her moorings and navigating in the dark without a pilot, under some Red fire, successfully reached the open sea.

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Chen Yi and his men occupied on the 23rd. Chen Yi then deployed his 3rd Field Army and began to move south-eastwards towards Shanghai.

Farther upstream in the Western Sector, Liu the One-Eyed General and his 2nd Field Army, had a similar tale to relate. The crossing generally was only sketchily opposed and defections played into Red hands, making his task easier. Only in the region of Anking was it really resisted, when a number of Red casualties were suffered. Liu crossed at two main points, one in the area of Wuhu and the other in the region of Anking.

Once over the river, the section of the 2nd Field Army which had crossed near Wuhu, estimated to be about 300,000 troops, began moving south-westwards along the railway towards Hangchow. The other part of Liu's army, also estimated to be about 300,000 men, began to move on an eighty-mile-wide 'front', sweeping southwards into the province of Kiangsi. On the 24th, Chinkiang, the provincial capital, fell and the Reds had to stop to regain their breath.

The Chinese Communists make very much of an epic of the crossing of the River Yangtse, but in fact there was little actual fighting, as the morale of the Nationalists was very low by this time. But as the river itself was up to two miles wide at some points, the achievement of ferrying so many troops by improvised methods (perhaps over one million in all, although precise numbers at this stage get out of hand), and in such a short time is very praiseworthy.¹

Having crossed the wide Yangtse River, Chen Yi concentrated next upon taking Shanghai, held by General Tang En-po, who loudly declared he would make it a second Stalingrad. By the first week in May (1949) Chen Yi had surrounded the city from the landward, using about 350,000 men to do so. He then turned and started to move inwards.

For a fortnight or so there was skirmishing and desultory resistance on the outskirts, before the Reds gained complete possession of the city on the 27th of that month. The Nationalist garrison surrendered, while those who could fled to Formosa.

Meanwhile, after marching across the face of China, plodding grimly onwards, sometimes covering up to forty miles in twenty-four hours, Lin Piao and his 4th Field Army, numbering about

¹ In October 1957 the first permanent bridge ever laid across the Yangtse River was opened. It has a double track railway and a six-lane roadway over it. Thus it is now possible (but hardly practicable) to go by train from Hong Kong to Calais.

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400,000 men, arrived at the outskirts of Hankow. The Nationalists did not wait, but withdrew, and Lin was able to take possession without fighting. After clearing the Wuhan area, Lin turned westwards and moved up the Yangtse River valley clearing the north bank as far as Ichang. He then crossed the river and made for the city of Changsha.

In North China, Nieh Jung-chen, with his 5th Field Army, was busy liquidating small Nationalist pockets. On April 24th he launched an offensive against Taiyuan, and in the course of a five-hour battle he claimed to have killed or captured over 80,000 Nationalists. This broke the back of the resistance in Shansi province. Tatung fell to him on May 1st, and other enemy-held towns on the following days. Sian, the capital of Shensi province, and long a Nationalist strong point, was entered on the 12th. Nieh Jung-chen had more or less cleared North China.

In the north-west of the country, in June, the 1st Field Army, under Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier, took the offensive against Hu the anti-Red, and began to press him backwards into the province of Szechwan. In the course of these operations, Muslim cavalry attacked Peng's flanks, causing many Red casualties. This hampered and slowed down the Red operation.

Suddenly, General Hu the anti-Red, acting in conjunction with the Muslim cavalry, which still paid lip service to the Nationalist cause, stopped, turned and savagely attacked the Red 1st Field Army. Taken by surprise, for some days Peng was in considerable difficulties, and his men fell back. Hu had got the Reds on the run in North-West China.

But Hu was short of ammunition and other supplies, and as his appeal for them and for some air support to help him finish off this Red army was abruptly rejected by Chiang Kai-shek, his successful counter-offensive came to a halt. Hu had direct access to Chiang Kai-shek and seemed to take orders from him rather than have anything to do with Li the acting President.

Nieh Jung-chen, with his 5th Field Army, rushed to the rescue, and marching swiftly was able to hit the halted Nationalist force in the flank.

Hu pondered and hesitated as to whether or not he should continue his offensive. He hesitated too long. On July 12th, the combined 1st Field Army and 5th Field Army began to systematically drive him backwards and to clear North-West China. On the 14th,

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Paochi fell, and during the following week detachments of Muslim cavalry retired westwards, allowing the Reds to enter the province of Kansu without opposition. Hu the anti-Red retreated further southwards into the province of Szechwan.

The end was in sight: the Nationalist Cabinet resigned, and on May 30th, Yen Hsi-shan the Model Governor, then aged seventy-three, came to the fore to form another one. Li remained the acting President. The Nationalist capital had moved from Nanking to Canton, and then when Canton was threatened, to Chungking, only to have to be hastily evacuated briefly to Chengtu, in the heart of Szechwan, before it finally abandoned the mainland when the remains of the government flew off to Formosa.

On October 1st 1949, the formation and existence of the 'Peoples' Republic of China' had been announced.

By autumn practically all organized resistance on the mainland had ceased.¹ Changsha went over to the Reds as soon as they appeared in the distance. There was a sharp rebuff at Hangyang, where General Pai of Hankow made a brief stand and kicked back hard at the Reds, but it was only a flash in the pan. Chen Yi, with his 3rd Field Army, moved through the province of Fukien, and Canton was evacuated by the Nationalists on October 14th. In Szechwan, Hu the anti-Red surrendered, and successively the provinces of Kansu, Ninghsia and Shensi were cleared. The Nationalist governor of Szechwan defected. Then the remaining Nationalist-held cities, towns, areas and pockets either defected, surrendered or were evacuated. Like a house of cards the whole Nationalist defence structure and will to resist on the mainland crumpled and fell all at once.

The new year of 1950 found the uncouth, unsophisticated, open-mouthed PLA, nearly 4½ million strong, panting and triumphant, gazing in wonder at its own achievements. The claims on the balance sheets as published are unreliable, but it is quite probable that the Reds had lost at least 2 million killed in the four and a half years of civil war, since August 1945. They admit to 1½ million, but there is no way of accurately checking such facts. Neither is it possible to assess the number of wounded, prisoners lost or deserters the Red Army had. The PLA kept scanty records at the best of times, and the enormous figures involved in the last eighteen months of the war were completely beyond their primitive methods of accounting.

¹ By the end of September 1.7 million Nationalist troops had gone over to the Communist side since the Battle of Suchow.

10

Consolidation and Korea

Having cleared the Chinese mainland of the effective Nationalist armies, and taken over the *de facto* government of China, Mao Tse-tung had to turn quickly to matters of consolidation. His main problems were both political and economic. His trained cadres (the Communist Party had about 4½ million members at this time), energetically tackled the first and the Red Army gave a hand with the second, of which the pressing need was to ensure that there was enough food for the people to eat. There were also several military problems to solve. The Red Army had first of all to occupy physically the whole of China, and at the same time deal with Nationalist guerilla risings and raids, as well as to reduce and re-organize on a peace-time footing.

For the time being the five existing huge 'Field Armies' remained where they were, assuming control of the regions they found themselves in. During the next few months a number of independent Military Districts sprang up to fill in the gaps between them, all of which were directly responsible to the Red Army G.H.Q., in Peking, to which city Mao Tse-tung and his government had moved as soon as they could.

The 1st Field Army, under the command of Peng Teh-Huai, remained in the north-west of China, and was responsible for extending Red control right up to the borders of Russia and Mongolia. In late 1949, it marched across the Gobi Desert, setting up an endurance record in doing so as it had no special clothing or equipment. As Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier penetrated the farthestmost parts of the provinces of Kansu, Ninghsia and Sinkiang, he incorporated many diverse detachments of soldiers into his command, such as units of Muslim cavalry and other levies, as well as the remnants of the National force of Hu Tsung-nan the anti-Red, which had surrendered to him.

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The 2nd Field Army settled down in southern China, under the command of Liu Po-Cheng the One-Eyed General, and very soon he was openly aiding Ho Chi Minh, the Indo-Chinese political leader, in his fight against the French.

The 3rd Field Army, under the command of Chen Yi, settled on the east coast, grouped predominantly opposite Formosa. It was given the bulk of the modern equipment the PLA possessed, and its projected future role was to mount an invasion on Formosa.

The 4th Field Army, under the command of Lin Piao the Strategist, stayed for a few months in Central China and then slowly made its way back to Manchuria. This army still contained many Koreans, and about half its personnel were Manchurians.

The 5th Field Army, under the command of Nieh Jung-Chen, became the 'North China Reserve Army', covering the north of the country, with its G.H.Q. at Peking.

The primary job of all the Field Armies, apart from the 3rd, was to assist the Chinese Communist Government to rebuild the nation on the new political pattern, and to work manually at agricultural and other economic projects. Generally, the Red Army laid down its arms and took up the pick, spade and hoe: its military role faded into second place. The only real military activity was dealing with the bands of Nationalist guerillas which both roamed the country and also established themselves in the less accessible parts. These gradually decreased in number, although Mao Tse-tung admitted in 1950 that he still had over 400,000 to eliminate. It was not until the end of 1952¹ that the Reds were able to boast that they had at last cleared the Chinese mainland of all Nationalist guerillas, during which period it is thought that some two million guerillas and active sympathizers were killed. The Reds were in a ruthless mood and little clemency was shown. This coincided with other minor, but drastic, purges of a political nature which took place in the new China.

The primary task of the 3rd Field Army was to prepare for the invasion of Formosa. As reinforcements several divisions from the 4th Field Army, in Manchuria, were sent down to the east coast to join it.

The Reds were unfamiliar with the techniques of amphibious operations, and their limited experiences so far had been disappoint-

¹ In late 1952 the Minister of Finance, Po I-po, admitted that the Reds had liquidated 2 million 'bandits' in the preceding three years. The American estimates of 14 million executed in the land reform campaign of 1951 are considered to be too high.

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ing and discouraging. In October 1949, for example, they had used a force of some 40,000 infantrymen in an attempt to take the Nationalist-held Chinmen Island (better known as Quemoy), an 'off-shore' island, which ended disastrously. Being influenced by the practically unopposed crossing of the River Yangtse, this mass of infantry had been launched in small boats and on improvised rafts. It ran head-on into strong Nationalist opposition, and over 13,000 Red soldiers were either killed or drowned, and another 7,000 were captured. One or two similar attempts on a smaller scale to take Nationalist-held 'off-shore' islands had also been unsuccessful.

It was forcibly brought home to the Reds that they were not yet capable of launching large-scale amphibious operations against strong opposition, and so they were forced to pause to give attention to training and preparation for the projected assault on Formosa. Seeing the strength of Chiang Kai-shek's build-up on that island, the Reds had second thoughts and became cautious. The invasion was postponed for the time being as Chen Yi settled down to make more lengthy and thorough preparations.

The Red Army managed effectively to occupy the whole of China proper and its outlying provinces fairly quickly with very little trouble, apart from the 'blobs' of guerillas, which were contained and dealt with one by one. An exception was isolated and remote Tibet, a country which had long been considered part of the Chinese Empire, although since 1904 it had been more in the British sphere of influence, and Chinese sovereignty thus a fiction. In 1947, direct British influence was removed as the sub-continent of India became independent, so Mao Tse-tung decided that the time was ripe and the way clear for China to reassert her authority over this outlying 'province'.

The Reds planned that their invasion and military occupation should take place in the summer of 1950, but although the troops set off in the early spring, they were held up owing to the extremely difficult terrain, which they had underestimated, and were not able to work to their proposed time-table. In the western parts of the provinces of Sikang and Szechwan they had to construct roads through the mountains and build bridges over the many ravines. The Red infantry marched along slowly, constructing a road as they progressed to enable the motor vehicles carrying their supplies and provisions to keep pace with the troops.

The Red invasion force for Tibet was about 35,000 strong, being

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divided up into seven divisions. It was a two-pronged advance, five divisions from the 2nd Field Army, the main force, moved westwards through Szechwan, whilst the other two divisions, from the 1st Field Army, marched south-westwards through Sikang.

An excessive amount of propaganda was put out by the Reds in advance, and their agents started a successful 'jitter' campaign amongst the Tibetans themselves. As a result there was little fighting. Chamdo, the main eastern Tibetan outpost facing China, had a garrison of about 3,000 troops, and although ill-equipped and poorly trained, they prepared, and hoped, to halt the advancing enemy in this favourable defensive terrain. The leading elements of the Red Army reached Chamdo on the evening of October 18th, 1950, but instead of attacking straight away, made plenty of noise throughout the night, which caused the jittery Tibetan garrison to evacuate without fighting.

That was much the pattern of the Red invasion of Tibet in 1950 and 1951, although the advance at times was cautious and slow. The Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal ruler of the country, fled into India, and a settlement was concluded on May 23rd, 1951, although the Red Army did not succeed in taking complete possession of the whole of Tibet until the autumn.

In this brief campaign there was only one battle of any size, and that took place in the region of Chamdo, which is situated in the area inhabited by the Khams, a fierce, warlike tribe, which gave the Red Army troops a lot of trouble. One Red division was diverted into the mountains to cut off a large detachment of the Tibetan Army, which was retreating, and it ran into the Kham tribesmen, who had massed to bar its way. The whole division, over 3,000 Red soldiers, disappeared and was not heard of again.

There were several other skirmishes, all of a comparatively minor nature, which occurred as the Reds forced their way through the eastern part of Tibet. It is thought that out of the original total of 35,000 men who invaded Tibet, the Reds suffered at least 10,000 casualties, of whom perhaps 2,000 froze to death, 2,000 were killed in action, 3,000 'disappeared' and 3,000 died of fever.

The new written provisional constitution provided for the maintenance of armed forces by the new Chinese People's Republic, allowing for an army, an air force and a navy, and also authorized conscription. The nucleus of both a small air force and a navy were formed with the captured aircraft and naval craft.

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The regular army, 'regular' in that the men were mobilized for an unspecified and indefinite period, had reached a strength of about 4½ million by the end of the Civil War, whilst the Militia or rather the active and partially trained part of it, may have been in the region of 6 million: the Reds themselves do not seem to know precisely. During the first months of 1950, the regular army was reduced from 4½ million down to about 3½ million. There were many purges of ex-Nationalist troops and others who were considered unreliable politically, and this did much to reduce the overall strength, whilst many of the older and less fit were relegated to the Militia.

As the Reds claimed to have captured over 3 million rifles and other small arms, plus some 300,000 machine-guns, they had ample for the regular army and also some over for the Militia, but for the time being these were only sparingly doled out, the surplus being retained in central dumps and stores. The Reds also claimed that they had captured over 55,000 artillery pieces of different sorts, so the artillery arm was reorganized. Each infantry division was given a few guns, and also a few more artillery divisions were formed.

All captured armoured vehicles were accumulated, and most of them were allocated to Chen Yi's 3rd Field Army. He soon had over 600 tanks and 400 armoured cars under his command. The 4th Field Army retained a small armoured nucleus, but the others hardly had any armoured vehicles at all.

The military supply problem was acute, especially as regards the distribution of food, which was short. Previously, in the war years, the PLA had either lived on the country as it passed through or grown its own food; now it was given but a small proportion of the national output, which had to be expended in the most economic way possible. Regional supply bases were set up and a completely separate supply corps was formed, which was given the majority of the 20,000 motor vehicles the Reds possessed for the purpose of distribution.

Attention was given to developing the medical services, which had been practically non-existent so far, and hopelessly inadequate when on the move.

Throughout the PLA discipline was tightened up, especially in the areas of southern China. There were more political lectures, more work, more daily drill, less food and less leave.

A most remarkable feature, in retrospect, was the fact that throughout the Civil War there had been no contact between the

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Russians and the Red Chinese, let alone any help given.¹ When Mao Tse-tung drove Chiang Kai-shek from the mainland, Stalin appears to have been taken by surprise. However, he quickly reacted, and, shrewdly appreciating the new situation, reached out his hand in friendship. In December 1949, Mao Tse-tung went to Moscow, where he was fêted, and where he stayed until February 1950, when a defensive pact between Russia and Red China was signed. China accepted a small Russian loan, and allowed Russia to maintain bases at Dairen and Port Arthur. Russian military assistance was also promised. The Cold War was at its height about this time, and Stalin undoubtedly wanted to gain a predominant influence over the new Chinese Government, before any other nation could step in and help it.

By April 1950, over 3,000 Russian officers, advisers and technicians had arrived in China, charged with the task of helping to reorganize and modernize the huge, shambling Red Army. The Russians set about their work with energy and enthusiasm, and the Chinese anxiously fell in with their suggestions. Training schools, centres and cadres were set up, and under Russian guidance the reorganization slowly got under way. All spheres were touched upon, including not only the infantry, artillery, engineers, armour and transport, but also the air force, the navy and staff and senior officer training. The Red Army was desperately short of young officers, and the existing military academies were enlarged to take increased numbers of young cadets, who gained entry by competition.

The infantry division began to increase in size and came to resemble the Russian model, minus the mechanized elements. It was given a small integral artillery battalion.

The Militia was streamlined, and a number of purges reduced its strength to less than 4½ million. For almost two years, small fragments of it rose spasmodically in revolt against the Communist regime, or refused to fall in wholeheartedly with the Party ideals. There were many executions—how many precisely is unknown—and many thousands were put into concentration camps. Only thoroughly indoctrinated and reliable members of the Militia were given arms, and these formed only a small proportion.

No sooner had this programme of military reorganization been set in motion, than events in Korea caused Chinese attention to become focused on that country.

¹ With the exception of Manchuria in 1945.

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Korea, a peninsula attached to Manchuria and jutting out into the Yellow Sea, had been occupied by the Russians as far south as the '38th Parallel' when the Japanese surrendered in 1945. The Americans occupied the Korean Peninsula south of that line. Owing to the two different ideologies, two separate, conflicting Korean Governments came into being, and the country was virtually divided into two, an iron curtain falling down along the 38th Parallel. The North Korean Government was Communist, while South Korea had a regime which had been set up and sponsored by the Americans. Divided by a line on the map the two parts of Korea growled at each other.

With tacit Russian backing, on June 25th 1950, the Russian-trained and equipped North Korean Army attacked southwards over the 38th Parallel, and four days later was able to seize Seoul, the South Korean capital. It then pushed farther southwards until it eventually crammed the South Korean Army into the 'Pusan Perimeter', right on the southern tip of the peninsula. The South Korean Army was only saved from total defeat by the intervention of U.N. Forces.

In September 1950, U.S. troops made an amphibious landing near Inchon, on the west coast, and after a fierce battle recaptured Seoul. At the same time a strong U.N. land column pushed northwards from the Pusan Perimeter, which succeeded in bundling the North Korean troops back over the 38th Parallel into their own part of the country. U.N. Forces, continuing the movement, forced the North Korean troops farther back still, and were only brought to a halt a few miles south of the Yalu River, which, for much of the distance, forms the boundary between North Korea and Manchuria.

Russia had hoped that the North Koreans would achieve a speedy victory, which would have been the case but for the timely intervention of U.N. Forces. Now the boot was on the other foot, and the North Korean Army was in danger of being annihilated. This contingency seems to have been vaguely foreseen and provided for. About half the 4th Field Army had previously moved southwards into eastern China to reinforce the projected assault on Formosa, and in July 1950, Lin Piao was left with less than 120,000 troops in Manchuria.

As soon as the invasion of South Korea began, and particularly when the U.N. intervened, the divisions which had been detached from the 4th Field Army, began to move back towards Manchuria.

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By the end of August, practically all had returned, when Lin the Strategist had under his command about 250,000 men, which was believed to be his normal strength on the new peace-time scale.

In August there was a conference attended by representatives of Russia, Red China and North Korea, at which it is believed that Red China said she was prepared to intervene in the Korean fighting, if Russia would supply her with quantities of modern arms, vehicles and aircraft. Russia agreed to this. The next month, when the U.N. Forces were driving the North Korean troops northwards, preparations for active intervention were openly made. The formation of a 'Chinese Peoples' Volunteer Army' was authorized and announced, to be under the command of Lin Piao. Divisions of 'volunteers' were called for and these moved into Manchuria from Central, Eastern and Southern China. By the beginning of November there were about 850,000 Red Chinese troops massed near the Korean border.

U.N. troops had been halted a few miles south of the River Yalu, being held there by the remnants of the North Korean forces. During the last two weeks in October and the first week in November, ten Red Chinese 'armies', numbering over 300,000 men, crossed the river into North Korea.

These 'armies', were really 'corps', and each consisted of 3 infantry divisions, each of about 10,000 men, of whom some two-thirds were actual combat troops. Each division had an artillery battalion of 12 guns, but was basically short of all other technical equipment, especially of signal stores. The Red Chinese invasion force had few motor vehicles, and widely requisitioned local horses and carts, mules and also extensive coolie labour whenever necessary. The Reds hoped that huge numbers would make up for these short-comings, and were determined to embark upon a policy of mass infantry attacks.

During the first weeks in November, while the Chinese divisions were manœuvring into position, there was little activity other than aggressive patrolling on their part. On November 26th 1950, they attacked, launching 14 divisions along a wide front, with the intention of swamping as many U.N. positions with infantry as possible. The over-extended U.N. Forces had to withdraw, but were able to break clean and quickly pull out to drop back southwards to a defensive line near the 38th Parallel.

Despite this initial success, the Red Chinese soldiers were badly jarred and were unable and unready to follow their retreating enemy

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immediately. This was chiefly because for the first time they had to fend for themselves in a country where the population was alien and not too friendly, and partly because for the first time they had been abruptly brought face to face with real fire power, and it had left them white and trembling. Huge gaps had appeared in the ranks.

The PVA, the 'Peoples' Volunteer Army' as it was known, was so disrupted that it was about a fortnight before it pulled itself together again, and not until new divisions had been drafted in was it able to move south in strength. It was the end of December before the bulk of these fresh Chinese divisions had reached, and deployed, against the new U.N. defence line, just north of the 38th Parallel.

Promised Russian material began to flow, but extremely slowly, being at first mainly confined to motor vehicles and small arms. It is thought that this initial slowness was deliberate, as the Russians, not wishing their equipment to be damaged or destroyed unnecessarily, were reluctant to let the Chinese have heavy complicated weapons and machines until they had been trained to use them properly. However, during November the first few MiG-15s appeared over the Korean front, being flown by Russian-trained Chinese pilots. Until then the U.N. Forces had the complete freedom of the air, as the North Korean Army had practically no modern aircraft at all.

Having got themselves sorted out and ready at last, the new Chinese divisions bunched and attacked on January 1st 1951. Wave after wave of infantry hit up against the line of U.N. positions, and as fast as one wave was shot down, another appeared and moved forward. Under the sheer weight of these saturation and suicide tactics, the U.N. line bent. On the 4th, Seoul was taken by the Chinese.

During the ensuing days the same tactics were repeated, and the U.N. line was pushed southwards a little way over the 38th Parallel, although it generally remained intact. By the end of the month the momentum of the Red offensive was spent. The cost to the Chinese was again heavy and the Red casualties must have amounted to several tens of thousands, but fresh divisions were hurried southwards to replace those which had been decimated.

In February, the U.N. Forces, having been reinforced, attacked in strength and hit the Chinese hard before they had a chance to re-group their battered divisions. Lacking sufficient artillery and having no armour to speak of, the Chinese were unable to hold all the assaults. Whenever they were able, they held on doggedly right until

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the end, suffering in the process very heavy casualties. The worst day for them was perhaps March 7th, when it is thought that they had over 21,000 casualties in twenty-four hours.

The U.N. offensive continued with vigour, and on March 14th, Seoul was retaken, and the Chinese ejected.

By the end of the month the Reds had reached the limit of their defensive endurance, and were forced from their positions one by one. Within a few days the bulk of the Chinese 'line' had been pushed northwards over the 38th Parallel, leaving the Reds holding only a small piece of territory in South Korea. Chinese morale drooped and many prisoners were taken by the U.N. Forces.

Then followed a fortnight's lull, during which Peng Teh-Huai, who had taken over the command of the PVA from Lin Piao, brought up all his uncommitted divisions, putting a fresh 15 in the front line. Peng the ex-Nationalist brigadier now had about half a million Chinese soldiers in Korea under his hand, amounting to nearly 45 divisions, but of that figure already some 20 divisions had been badly shattered in the fighting, and had to be taken to the rear to refit and fill up with reinforcements. Peng had barely 30 divisions immediately available; and of them he was only able to use about half at a time. The old guerilla leader keenly felt the lack of space in which to manoeuvre, and was uneasy in the cramped conditions of the narrow peninsula.

By this time Russian artillery was arriving in Korea, and Peng, in preparation for resuming the offensive, mustered as many guns as he could. After a heavy artillery bombardment, he unleashed another massive attack along a wide front on the night of April 22nd-23rd, using about 15 divisions in a line. Again, the same tactics of the massed infantry attack, using small arms and grenades only, were employed. The Chinese had some success at several points, made some penetrations and forced the U.N. line back a little way.

A well-timed, large-scale U.N. counter-attack was then suddenly launched; and this both held and disconcerted the Chinese, whose movements, once the operation had begun, were not flexible. This was probably a result of having insufficient signal equipment.

By May 3rd, Peng's offensive had been extinguished. Chinese losses had again been severe.

There was then another fortnight's respite in which Peng the ex-Nationalist brigadier brought up and mustered all his intact divisions in Korea, which amounted to 21. These he flung desperately into an

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all-out attack against the U.N. line on May 16th, and in the ensuing five days' bitter fighting succeeded in pushing it back about fifteen miles. By the 21st, this offensive was spent. The tactics were the same and Chinese casualties were estimated to have been over 100,000 in the five days' fighting; in addition over 12,000 prisoners were taken. In 16 of the Chinese divisions Peng had committed there were over 50 per cent casualties. The PVA was still not receiving Russian material in any quantity, and was still basically an ill-equipped infantry army trying to flood the enemy defences with overwhelming manpower. Against the modern fire power the PVA was not doing so well. Without allowing the battered Chinese troops any respite, the U.N. Forces, again reinforced, counter-attacked in strength driving the Red divisions back over the 38th Parallel. Early in June 1951 the 'front' was stabilized.

The war in Korea lasted for another two years, but it devolved into a type of trench warfare, with two hard defensive lines facing each other across a stretch of 'no man's land'. Both sides dug in deeper and deeper. There was skirmishing and patrol activity, but in general little ground changed hands.

The last action was fought on July 27th 1953.

In the second half of 1951, owing to increased U.N. air power and the accuracy of the U.N. artillery, the Chinese were forced to confine their operations to night time.

The rear areas of the PVA in Korea were poorly organized and at times little short of chaotic. Peng relied upon the front defensive line to hold fast until he was able to sort this mess out and regroup his reinforcements. More Red troops arrived in Korea and the decimated divisions were replenished with manpower. Fresh divisions were also drafted in. Soon Peng had about 1 million men south of the Yalu River, and nearly 60 divisions available.

In August 1951, the first large batch of Russian material, including tanks, vehicles and artillery, reached the PVA, enabling Peng to go ahead with his reorganization. Each division had a small battalion of 12 guns, but in addition Peng formed several artillery divisions, each of 36 guns, intending eventually to have one in support of each of his 'armies'; that is, one for every three divisions. The tanks, T-34s, were used mainly as roving artillery, rather than in their armoured role. With the extra motor vehicles, he built up the service corps for the rear areas.

After the first wave of Russian material had poured in there was

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a slackening off. The economic factor now came into the picture. Previously the Reds had always captured all their war material, either from the Japanese or the Nationalists, but now they had had to pay for it with goods. It could never be said that the PVA was over-equipped. By the end of 1952, there were about 1,000 jet fighter aircraft, manned by Chinese pilots, flying over Korea. The standard and skill of the pilots steadily improved. With the cessation of hostilities in Korea, at first a large Red Chinese force was kept there, but gradually the PVA was reduced, until in March 1958, it was quoted as being about 350,000. By the end of that year the last of the PVA was being withdrawn from North Korea.

In the light of experience gained in Korea and because of the amount of Russian material received, in 1954, there was another general army reorganization, with the aid of an enlarged Russian Military Mission, aimed at modernizing, and going some way towards mechanizing, the PVA.

Lastly, perhaps a few words should be said about the Nationalists, under Chiang Kai-shek, still holding out on Formosa, where they have a well-armed, efficient force of about 400,000 men. The Nationalists also occupy a few 'off-shore' islands, close into the Chinese mainland, of which Quemoy and Matsu are the best known. Apart from the one or two early attempts by the Reds to rush these 'off-shore' islands, the Reds have been contented since to sit, watch and wait. A small group of islands, known as the Tachens, were given up by the Nationalists in 1955 because of difficulties in conveying supplies to them under the noses of Communist guns.

However, in the years since 1949, there has seldom been perfect peace, as the shore batteries of both Reds and the Nationalists have seldom been quiet for many days at a time. Again, in the air there have been frequent clashes between pilots of the opposing sides, and aircraft have been shot down in the battles.

The Chinese Civil War still continues.

11

A Few Facts about the Armed Forces of Red China

It may be of practical interest to conclude this brief history with a few notes on the strength, organization, development and other aspects of the present day armed forces in Red China and its components, which may be of value to military students, strategists and others concerned with China and Far Eastern affairs. Much of the information given is dated, at the latest, May 1961, and, of course, further developments and changes may have taken place since.

STRENGTH

Like all other Communist countries, the precise strength of her regular military forces is not made public, but enough information trickles through the bamboo curtain to enable certain deductions to be made with some accuracy. It is probable that the strength of the standing army is 4 million, or a little over; perhaps $4\frac{1}{2}$ million. It is huge, but in reply to doubts about such figures, one can only draw attention to the fact that the population of Red China is at least 650 million, and is rapidly increasing (it may reach 1,000 million in just over twenty years' time), and that conscription exists, which makes available about 50 million draftees each year.

At the end of the Civil War the regular armed forces (excluding the Militia) were just over $4\frac{1}{2}$ million strong, probably more, it being doubtful whether the Communists themselves really knew the exact figure, after which it was proposed to put it on a peace-time footing and reduce it to something like half that number. Demobilization began, but almost at once the Korean War occurred. A lot of weeding out was done, but replacements were pushed in from the Militia, which caused the overall strength to increase slightly. For a period

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the standing army was over 5 million, at which peak it hovered for a while.

Cuts were seriously talked about in 1955, and again in 1957, but in practice little was done to reduce the army, which only very slowly decreased to its present size.

ORGANIZATION AND COMPOSITION

The land force is divided into three distinct parts, the combatant element, which may amount to $2\frac{1}{2}$ million, the transport corps, which may have over 1 million men, and the line-of-communication units, which may have some $\frac{3}{4}$ million personnel, to which will have to be added the air force and the navy. All come under G.H.Q. at Peking, which is controlled by the People's National Revolutionary Council.

G.H.Q. is organized on conventional lines, with operations, intelligence, training, planning and other usual departments, with, in addition, the inevitable political department. Staffs of G.H.Q. and of the 'Front H.Q.s' are still rather small compared with similar Western formations, but are already showing a tendency to expand. In the early days and during the Civil War, staff work was primitive and rudimentary, but now it has become more formal and complicated owing to peace-time routine and the degree of modernization.

For the purpose of control and command the combatant land forces are distributed as six 'Fronts' and a few smaller military districts. When the Civil War ended each of the large 'Field Armies' was allocated a section of China and wide powers, both civil and military, were conferred upon the commanders over their areas. These 'Field Armies' became 'Fronts', and now are the largest military formation in China. They are largely, but not completely, regional in character, and have not moved since, although reinforcements and units have been drawn off from them to be sent to Korea, and at times other formations have been detached for other tasks, such as pacifying frontier areas or the invasion of Tibet. The few 'military districts' conveniently cover the remaining bits and pieces of China that are not included in the 'Fronts'. The Red Chinese 'Front', from a purely military aspect, is similar in some respects to the Russian 'Front'.

Of the combatant element of the armed forces, perhaps 90 per cent is infantry. The infantry division is still the basic field forma-

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tion, and three are grouped together to form a 'corps'. In turn, three corps form an 'army group', and each 'Front' consists of a varying number of 'army groups', plus supporting and specialist troops.

A slow change is taking place in the organization of the divisional structure. Until 1950 the infantry division was small, having an average strength of under 7,000 men, but under Russian influence the 'triangular' system was emphasized, after which divisions gained in strength, rising fast to about 11,000, and then on to 14,000 men. In 1959 there were just over 150 large infantry divisions, and another 300 or so infantry regiments and battalions scattered about the country.

In that year it was announced from Peking that there was to be a reorganization of the divisional structure, and that the Chinese would adopt a formation resembling the U.S. Pentomic division, which was to consist basically of five infantry units. There was to be no integral armour and little mechanization. Presumably that was to follow at a later stage.

Some insist that the combatant strength of the army is less than 2½ million men, but others feel that 3 million is a more accurate figure, in which case it was probably intended that one day Red China would have between 240 and 250 small 'pentomic' divisions.

However, although this change was put into gear in 1960 and some progress made, there are now signs that China—like other Great Powers—is having second thoughts about adopting this sort of formation. It seems that this change-over was slowed down, and perhaps now has stopped altogether. Red China seems undecided, and she may compromise. It is not yet apparent what her final answer is to be. Perhaps an eventual picture of some 200 medium sized 'triangular' infantry divisions will evolve. In any case, at present the bulk of the army is organized on the old basis of divisions up to 14,000 each.

TRANSPORT CORPS

Although the regular army as such is 'static' in that formations do not move from station to station in rotation, as is customary in Western armies, but stay put almost indefinitely, to administer 3 million men is no small task in itself. The problems of supply are increased to almost fantastic proportions by the size of the country and lack of ample good communications. There are few good, all-weather roads, although strategic ones are being constructed to

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traverse the continent as fast as possible, and as yet there are only a comparatively small number of MT vehicles. All the rivers are not navigable, whilst ranges of mountains and stretches of other difficult terrain provide handicaps. Away from the main strategic roads the most primitive forms of transport, such as wheelbarrow, the carrying pole and the human back, as well as animal transport and river craft, are still in use.

As a result a 'Transport Corps', which is a separate organization from the combatant army, has come into being, with its G.H.Q. at Peking also. At one time it was over 2 million strong, but has since decreased owing to slightly improved communications. At first it was comprised of some 40 territorial 'divisions', which embraced the whole country.

There was a reorganization of the Transport Corps in 1955, in which the country, for supply purposes, was divided into twenty-two regions, or territorial divisions. Since then the strength of this corps has steadily declined owing to more MT vehicles becoming available and more miles of roadway being constructed. Its strength may now be in the region of one million, but it is thought that any further reduction, if any is possible, may be offset by the corresponding increase in bureaucracy.

Much capital is made of the idea that the Red Chinese soldier, on only a bandolier of rice which he carries himself, can march and fight on almost indefinitely. The harsh fact is that he can only march for short distances and fight for short periods on such a Spartan diet, when, unless he can live off the country or further supplies are brought up to him, he will come to a sudden stop as surely as any Western soldier in similar circumstances. It is a fallacy to assume that the Red Chinese Army does not need a conventional line-of-communication. The Red Chinese soldier can only exist where he is, in barracks or camp, under peace-time conditions, on the premise that every three fighting men have another soldier to fetch and carry for them.

Further, it may be deduced that the figure of 3 million, as an estimated strength of the combatant element of the regular army, is the maximum number that can be fed and supplied under the existing arrangements. It should be borne in mind that Red Chinese Army units all have their own farms and grow up to 75 per cent of their own food. Should, for example, Red Chinese units and formations rotate on a normal peace-time system, when they would not be able

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to cultivate their own farms, many more than a million men would be required to move and supply them. There has, however, always been a hidden figure in regard to such matters in that the extra manpower necessary in any emergency is provided either by the Militia or by conscripted peasant labour. Therefore, when carefully analysed, the number of people required to keep one Red Chinese soldier fighting in the field, even at his elementary economic level, is not far short of that required in Western armies.

In the line-of-communication, or logistical, units, such as base workshops, supply points, hospital camps and offices, the personnel already number over half a million soldiers. It is thought that as mechanization and modernization slowly spread, the resultant bureaucracy will cause this figure to increase.

SPECIALISTS

There is only a tiny proportion of specialists and technicians in the army, which is predominantly infantry in character, but this is mainly owing to shortage of modern equipment. The specialists include such personnel as armoured crew, gunners, engineers and signallers.

As regards specialist formations, at least 10 divisions are either armoured, partly armoured or almost completely mechanized. There are also 5 or 6 heavy artillery divisions in existence and another 2 or 3 anti-aircraft regular divisions (although generally anti-aircraft duties fall to the Militia). The retarding factor in all these cases is lack of technical equipment, but as more becomes available the number of these formations will increase. It is thought that the immediate target is to have about 30 specialist divisions, but progress is slow.

A number of infantry regiments are 'motorized', and a few others are 'lorry-borne', mainly in the areas opposite Formosa.

The main other specialist formations are the field engineers, of which there are ample small field units. Each infantry division has one, which is capable of carrying out elementary field tasks, such as bridging, mine-laying and the use of explosives. There are two railway construction divisions, and other engineering units at the ports, as well as engineer construction formations which work on the large projects, such as dams, flood barriers and irrigation canals.

A number of infantry divisions, perhaps between 15 and 20, have received some form of amphibious training in preparation for the

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projected invasion of Formosa. About 300 landing craft are in use on the east coast. In addition, there are at least 3 airborne divisions.

MILITIA

Mao Tse-tung boasts that his Militia is 250 million strong, and such a stupendous figure makes one gasp, but closer examination shows that it is not quite all it seems to be, even supposing that this figure is correct. It may be true that 250 million people are regimented and drilled each day before being marched off to their work, but their potential military value as a whole is another matter. Only a small proportion is adequately trained, and a smaller proportion armed.

This gigantic Militia has always been Mao Tse-tung's pet idea and he has persistently pushed this scheme, which basically forms a second line of defence, a home guard and a shadow reserve for the regular army, as well as performing other essential functions, such as providing extra sentries, labour and intelligence. It also provides most of the military 'tail' and is the 'housewife' to the regular forces.

In the Sino-Japanese War Mao Tse-tung kept his regular army at a fairly low strength for economic reasons, biding his time while he trained and expanded his Militia. As has been seen, when he wanted rapid expansion, he was able to swell his army by half a million men in a few days.

During the Civil War the Militia rose to a strength of about 6 million, but when the war was over there were purges and dismissals. Its strength sank, but only momentarily, after which it rose again quickly to reach 12 million by 1953. It may have numbered 15 million just before the establishment of the Communes.

When the Communes were set up, the Militia grew to a gigantic size as all able-bodied people of military age were automatically incorporated into it. In such circumstances the figure of 250 million, on paper at least, does not seem so impossible. It can be said that the bulk of the Militia consists of a collection of workers who do a little military training and a lot of hard manual work.

For some 12 to 18 months there was a certain amount of confusion, and it was not until 1960 that the Militia became more regularized. Now it is divided into two parts, or categories, which for convenience can be called the 'Army Militia' and the 'Citizen Militia', the main difference being age and role.

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The Army Militia consists of both men and women between the ages of 18 and 25 years, who attend an initial two-month basic infantry training course, and thereafter perform at least two hours' drill a day. All not selected for service in the regular army are automatically drafted into the Army Militia, and so are the reservists when they have completed their regular service. The primary object of the Army Militia is to provide replacements for regular army casualties in time of war, and to provide personnel to fill out or form new units as required. Its state of training varies considerably from Commune to Commune, and only a proportion is armed.

The Citizen Militia incorporates all other men under 50 and women under 32. Its task is primarily home defence, and it either stays put should a Commune be attacked by the enemy, or takes to the hills in a guerilla role should it be overrun. Also its task is to provide the 'housemaid' services to regular units in the area, as well as to collect information and provide guides, sentries and any labour required. Very few arms are allocated and the pictures seen of militia-men and women drilling with wooden rifles are quite genuine and are not mere propaganda.

Of the Militia as a whole only about 30 million, as far as can be deduced, are in anything like a reasonable state of training, and this includes the 20-odd million ex-regular army reservists. All of these are not armed, but soon will be as small arms become available, but this is only proceeding as and when the personnel have been suitably indoctrinated and have proved to be politically reliable and loyal. It is doubtful whether more than that proportion, 30 million or so, will be armed at present.

The masses in Red China cannot yet be completely trusted with arms, and there have been rumblings and small revolts against the idea of being herded into Communes. Mao Tse-tung claims that 90 per cent of his people are with him, which means that at least 65 million are not. Detachments of the regular army, well indoctrinated politically, have been judiciously moved in to live with certain Communes, obviously as a safeguard against any spontaneous mutiny.

EQUIPMENT

Compared with modern armed forces of the major world powers, such as America and Russia, Red China is very badly off for military

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equipment, and it can be said that, comparatively, her army is still at the 'small arms' stage of development.

In the early twentieth century, Japan, America and European countries sold rifles and machine-guns to the central governments and to any war-lord who had money to buy them. The next step followed when small arsenals were established in China to both produce ammunition and to turn out copies of foreign arms. When the Nationalist Army had Russian advisers, quantities of Russian arms were sent to it, but this source dried up in 1927. When Chiang Kai-shek adopted German advisers, German arms took their place, which meant that there were abroad in China quantities of small arms of different sorts.

The infant Red Army seized whatever it could lay its hands on, and as it never succeeded in manufacturing small arms itself, continued with this policy of seizure throughout. When the Japanese surrendered the Reds gained huge quantities of Japanese war material in Manchuria (although we do not quite know how) and other parts of China, and so the Red Army infantry mass overran the Chinese mainland armed predominantly with Japanese small arms. After the Civil War small infusions of Russian arms were received.

Then the Reds began to think seriously about building up their war industries and to giving priority to the manufacture of rifles and machine guns. It was thought that the Soviet Military Mission would persuade them to standardize on certain Russian models, but this does not seem to have happened, as there are a number of types in production. The Chinese are apparently still experimenting and have not yet come to any firm decision as to which small arms to adopt universally.

On the whole, Red China is producing ample infantry weapons of conventional types—such as rifles, sub-machine guns, machine-guns, mortars, bazookas, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines—for her regular standing army, as well as for the trusted elements of the Militia. Small recoil-less anti-tank guns are making their appearance in large numbers also.

Ammunition remains a problem, one that has plagued the Red Army for years, primarily owing to the diversity of types of fire-arm in use, and perpetuated to some extent by the fact that the Red Chinese have not made up their minds on standardization. An interesting news item was released from Peking in 1958, which boasted

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that 4 million men and women had fired live ammunition that year. Truly a small proportion of the vaunted members under arms, and it could only mean that not even all the regular soldiers had fired an annual range course. The situation may not be so bad now, but ammunition cannot be plentiful, and the ingrained tendency to hoard lingers.

Foreign guns were accumulated by seizure by the Red Army in its early days, and were augmented by large quantities of Japanese artillery in 1945. The Red commanders used mainly Japanese artillery in the Civil War, and in the process became deeply interested in that arm, with the result that efforts are being made to increase it as fast as the industrial potential will allow. Russian guns were received during the Korean War. Now Red China is successfully manufacturing small field guns of different sorts, but has not yet produced those of larger calibre herself. Heavy artillery is still scarce. As more guns become available the tendency is to form more artillery divisions.

The Red Army has always been, and still is, short of motor transport. The first trucks she possessed in any number were gained from the Japanese in 1945. Several thousand Russian vehicles were sent during the Korean War and afterwards, but they were but a few drops in the ocean. An effort was made, and now Red China both assembles certain Russian models under licence and produces trucks of her own. Within her limited industrial potential she is determined to mechanize her large Transport Corps and also a proportion of her army. As yet production figures are comparatively small, but the stream is increasing and, as has been mentioned, a number of regiments are now lorry-borne. Also practically every formation and infantry division has a handful of military trucks of its own. The position will improve, but slowly, and Red China can hardly hope to keep pace with Western development and production in this sphere.

As regards armour, Red China is backward and poorly off indeed, as she is not yet able to manufacture her own tanks, although she is experimenting and has produced prototypes of light armoured vehicles. Practically all the Japanese armoured vehicles acquired in 1945 are worn out and fit for little more than training purposes. The majority of the armour she possesses today is Russian, received mainly at the time of the Korean War, and consists of slightly out-of-date models, such as the early Stalin tanks and SUs, and T-34s. This supply slackened off in 1954, when she discovered that she was

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expected to pay for all the military material she wanted from Russia: something entirely new to the Red Army.

Items such as radar equipment, machine tools and precision instruments have to be imported from Russia, although others, such as radio sets, are assembled in Red China.

As far as equipment is concerned, it can be broadly said that the Red Army, basically infantry as it is, is only equipped as such and lacks the required balance of heavy armaments. Red China, an agricultural country, has barely touched the fringe of industrialization and it must necessarily be some time before modern military material and heavy armaments are produced in a sufficient quantity to put her in the same category as, let alone on a par with, other Westernized armed forces of the world powers.

OFFICERS

It may be something of a surprise to know that Red China has a flourishing officers' corps, with many of the conventional virtues and faults of such a body. Officers in the Red Army were never 'elected' by their comrades, as is often supposed: on the contrary, right from the very beginning, they were carefully selected by the Party leaders and even more carefully trained. In the early years they were known as 'leaders' or 'commanders', but by 1945 or thereabouts, Mao Tse-tung was openly and explicitly referring to '*officers* and men'. Although never ostentatious, their status was never in doubt.

Until about 1945 all were still equal in theory (or at least nearly equal, as several subtle privileges and distinctions had crept in) and officers wore no distinguishing badges of rank; but they had a strong, underlying prestige and air of command, even if of a somewhat irregular nature. Discipline, coupled with the authority of an officer, was heavily emphasized in the Red Army.

Political training was as, if not more so, important to the officer as military, and the work, development, training and building-up of an efficient, reliable body of 'leaders' by Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh has been briefly described. The intense, single-minded dedication of this Communist officer body was watered down a little by huge infusions of Nationalist officers who came over with their men to the Reds in the Civil War, but Red victory was in sight and Red ideals and ideas were overriding and paramount.

Peace-time conditions and the arrival of the Russian Military

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Mission caused formalism to set in, and the officer's status and prestige were openly upheld under Russian guidance and influence, and made much more apparent. The Korean War accelerated this trend, which gathered momentum until in 1955 regulations were issued giving what in effect amounted to a charter for an officers' corps. Ranks were defined, smart uniforms were designed, distinguishing badges of rank were worn, saluting was compulsory, increased scales of pay according to rank were given, batmen fluttered about more openly and good conditions of service were laid down. The officers no longer took off their coats and set the example in working parties, but became aloof and detached. During the next three years these privileges, under the encouragement of the Russian Military Mission, increased and the Red Army officers' corps swelled, preened and glittered under the horrified gaze of the political officers and the older veterans, who, even if they did not exactly want all men to be equal, certainly did not desire such ostentatious differentiation.

Differences began to appear between the army and the Party, and the reaction to the disappointing 'Great Leap Forward' of 1958 was for the political officers to blame the regular army officers, alleging non-co-operation. Chu Teh stepped in and spoke up for the political faction against the army officers, loudly deploring the fact that they had concentrated upon professionalism and cut themselves off from politics.¹ It was immediately decreed that officers were to get close to their men and to the people again, and they not only had to buckle to in the fields and on constructional schemes and take a full part in all productive labour, but it was laid down that all officers, generals included, were to serve for one month each year in the ranks as a private soldier. This was not a popular innovation, but it had to be complied with at the time. This instruction still stands, but reports vary as to what degree it is avoided or has fallen into disuse. With the establishment of the Communes, and the resultant difficulties in running them, many regular army officers have been detailed off to lead and organize the 'work brigades' and 'work units' in them, all under strict political control.

The upper hierarchy of the Chinese Communist Party (with but

¹ He said that some officers 'advocate exclusively a military viewpoint, have a one-sided high regard for military affairs, vocation and technique and look down on politics and ideology and even dispute (the) contention that politics should take the lead'.

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few exceptions)¹ and the army have stuck loyally together through thick and thin, and there have been no blood baths in the higher ranks. The senior officers and those holding key commands are all veterans of the early struggles who are trusted, being of proved reliability. There were, however, minor purges in the medium and lower grades, up to divisional commander level, mainly of ex-Nationalist officers who had changed sides. Today, large numbers of ex-Nationalist officers are regular soldiers, many holding high rank, but it is noticeable that none holds an independent command or vital appointment.

The prestige of the Red Army officer appears to have suffered a minor decline after threatening at one period to eclipse that of the political officer, as the officers complain that having to do so much productive work and to serve in the ranks brings loss of respect which makes for difficulties in maintaining discipline. There are rumblings of discontent in the body of the officers' corps, in which there is a growing, younger, virile element, which did not take part in the early struggles or fight in the Civil War. The key to the future of China one day may well lie in the hands of this younger set who may push themselves forward as the older leaders fade away.

Like most armies today, that of Red China is faced with the difficulty of getting sufficient young men of the right type to come forward to take up the regular army as a career. The old military academies were taken over and others set up to train young cadets, who underwent an eighteen-month course (which has recently been extended) in which political instruction played a heavy part. On passing out the cadet must first serve for six months in the ranks before being commissioned.

As regards officers' further training, the usual staff, tactical and specialist schools of instruction for junior and medium grade officers exist on conventional lines. Staff training is still in its infancy, as staffs at headquarters are small in size compared with Western armies, but are tending to swell nevertheless. The training of senior officers was not specially catered for until recently, and the bulk of the senior commanders, being schooled in guerilla warfare, did not take to modernization too readily. In 1958 a Military Academy of

¹ The exceptions were mainly political personalities such as our old friend, Chang Kou-tao, Chang the Chairman, another was Po Ku, blamed by Mao Tse-tung for the disastrous ending of the 5th Extermination Campaign, and there were a few others.

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Science was opened for the training of senior commanders, which after a hesitant start seems to be blossoming.

Generally speaking, the average regular officer is patriotic, hard-working and capable of doing his job in the field, but his horizon tends to be narrow, and he lacks the high standard of formal education and technical training looked for in an officer in a modern, Westernized army today. He inclines to withdraw himself whenever he can and devote himself entirely to his military work, frequently to the neglect and detriment of party politics. The possibility that a military junta may arise one day, or a Young Officers' Secret Society develop cannot be overruled in the future.

THE MEN

As has been mentioned, conscription exists and up to 50 million draftees are available each year, so the required number for the regular forces is chosen by a form of selective service. The old muddles have been sorted out and the conscription system regularized, when the Conscription Law came into effect in July 1955, embracing all males. The conscript is called up at the age of eighteen and serves for three years. Volunteers can be accepted, but the precise proportion of them is not known. In addition to the regular corps of officers there is a cadre of 'long service' other ranks, who are the instructors, the warrant officers and the sergeants, many of whom are Communist veterans of proved reliability. Many are Party members (quite an honour in Red China) and others are politically active, so this cadre tends to counter-balance the professionalism of the regular officers.

The men themselves are sturdy peasants, accustomed to a simple life, who take hardships in their stride and have good powers of endurance. They have most of the good soldierly traits usually attributed to peasants everywhere, but also possess their drawbacks too, the chief of which are lack of initiative, lack of independent thought and over-cautiousness. This means that the non-commissioned officer class has its limitations. Also, like all peasants, the instinct for self-preservation is strong and they tend to lack the dash desirable in a lively, aggressive soldier.

Bodily the regular soldier is cared for quite well. He has two uniforms, a padded one for the winter, and another of lighter material for the summer. He has sufficient food, and is well fed by

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Far Eastern peasant standards.¹ His rations were cut slightly in the economy drive of 1959, but were soon restored, as the rulers of Red China believe that they must have a contented regular army behind them. In barracks or camp he eats two meals a day, of rice or millet, depending upon what part of the country he is in, with occasional fish or meat to make it more balanced. In the field he carries a bandolier of either rice or millet, which has to last him for up to ten days. His pay is small and buys few luxuries, and when his various compulsory savings deductions have been made, he spends the remainder on cigarettes, sweetmeats and cheap trinkets. The conscript is not allowed to marry.

The Chinese private soldier is almost illiterate and efforts are made, both in the regular army and the Militia, to correct this. A large cadre of teachers, of whom many are women, works hard to teach him to read and write.

Politically, he believes almost implicitly what he is told, and thinks that the wicked Western 'Imperialists' (undefined) are really doing their best to take from him what little he has.

He is patriotic and has an inbred dislike and suspicion of all foreigners. The Red Chinese private soldier would undoubtedly fight hard for his country against foreigners *in* his own country, but he lacks the fatalistic, 'do-or-die' attitude, and in adversity would probably seek the traditional 'avenue of escape' rather than fight a 'back-to-the-wall' battle.

WOMEN

In common with other Communist countries, Red China gave equality to women as part of its basic doctrine, and in the early days of the movement they were amongst the most valuable of its supporters. They had the most to gain and the least to lose. Young women played a very active part politically and were the Communist Party's best recruiting agents and workers.

At first women, who were nevertheless always in the overall minority, took their places in the ranks of the army, side by side with the men, and frequently fought in action against the enemy. These women were presented as true Amazons, equal to men in all respects, but this was quickly modified and, with a number of exceptions, they

¹ There is apparently a peasant saying in China now that, 'If you want a good meal, join the army'.

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became combatants more in theory than in practice. Although they were integrated into front-line units and went into action with them, they invariably filled the roles of stretcher-bearers, cooks, orderlies and did other menial and logistical tasks. These women carried, and were trained to use, small arms, and could handle grenades.

As far as can be seen, women as such made little impact on any battlefield, and in the Civil War, when the Red Army expanded at a fantastic rate as it incorporated ex-Nationalist and other soldiers into its ranks, the proportion of women became minute.

Today, there are no women combatants in the regular army, but all have to serve in the Militia. The women conscripted into the Militia are trained on similar lines to their male counterparts, but are not intermixed with them in the ranks, being in separate units. They are initially trained to use small arms and are taught minor infantry tactics, after which certain selected ones become drivers, anti-aircraft gunners, nurses, clerks, signallers and army teachers, whilst the remainder, the bulk, provide a huge military labour pool.

The exhibition squads of women soldiers, of which so many photographs are displayed for propaganda purposes, are from the Militia. There is also a much publicized squadron of women fighter pilots, and a few small squads of women paratroopers, all for demonstration purposes to impress foreign observers.

TRAINING

The training of the Red Chinese soldier is hard, thorough and to a small degree realistic, although it tends to be dull, repetitive and unimaginative. His day is long: he rises early and is at the disposal of the political officers before he has his early morning meal, after which he marches off to spend his day either in productive labour or on training. Again, after his evening meal, political instruction awaits him on several nights a week.

He is taught basic infantry drills and tactics, mainly of a guerilla nature and on a sub-unit level, which revolve around his infantry weapons. Little time is wasted on formal drill as such, but weapon training and care of weapons are emphasized. In spite of this, his marksmanship is poor and he fires little live ammunition. He is taught to aim in the general direction of the enemy. He does plenty of grenade throwing and practises mine-laying and mortar firing.

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Long distance route marches, both by day and night, are a regular feature, taking place at least twice a week.

Patrol work, infiltration and night movement across country are taught and widely practised, which means that Red Army sub-units have great mobility within a limited radius of action.

WORK

The Chinese Red Army is both a defender and a builder, and manual work plays a big part in its curriculum, for both the officer and the men. During the summer whole formations move out to help with the harvest, and for a few weeks a year over half the regular army is so engaged. In the field of constructional work, on flood prevention measures and on building and repairing canals, roads and railways, all soldiers have to do their full share. The infantry bear the brunt of this demand for unskilled manual labour, which is not over-popular.

Since April 1959, battalions, regiments and even divisions of the regular forces have been moved into certain of the Communes, both to keep order and to help with the work in the fields. Marshal Peng Tehhuai (the ex-Nationalist Brigadier) was relieved as Minister of Defence in 1959 because he did not approve of his regular troops spending so much of their time in this way. Many formations, except perhaps those on the east coast facing Formosa, spend more time on productive labour than on field training.

Red Army units do not move from station to station in rotation as is normal in most Westernized armies, and so are able to develop and work their own farms, thus growing a large proportion of their own food. They also grow their own vegetables and root crops, and raise livestock, as well as keeping pigs and chickens.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Red Army was born of, grew up and achieved its early successes on guerilla tactics. For years it was a mass of ill-trained infantry. Many of the officers then in command are still holding key positions today and guide its military thought. They are largely influenced by their experiences and they can never forget the old days. Many of them do not fully appreciate the necessity, importance or implications of modern military equipment or the difference it makes to strategy.

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The military precepts and doctrines of Mao Tse-tung are slavishly read by all officers. Mao Tse-tung has a surprising flair for military strategy, but his thinking and dicta are severely limited by his guerilla experiences. Generally, Red Chinese military thought can hardly be said to be progressive or advanced.

As regards tactics, a few of the less up-to-date Russian manuals have been translated into Chinese and modified slightly, and these are distributed and referred to at the centres of instruction. Red Chinese manuals of a similar stamp have followed and are current. Russian instructors have propagated Russian ideas and theories, which are used as a general guide.

Lessons learnt in Korea were only slowly and reluctantly accepted, and nothing out of the ordinary has emerged on Red Chinese initiative. For example, the mass infantry attack at night is still firmly believed in, and the Communist success against the French in Indo-China has not led them to think that it is unsound.

POLITICS

Communism, as interpreted by Mao Tse-tung, permeates the ranks of the armed forces, and absolute loyalty to the Party is the first essential for any soldier. A political department, within the armed forces, is responsible for his training and indoctrination in this respect, and instruction is given by the political officers to both officers and men daily. Every effort is made to ensure that they are politically conscious and to prevent them, the officers especially, from slipping into a detached professionalism.

The Party officials complain that the armed forces are always materially better off than the peasants, and whenever they are able they have a sly dig, especially at the officers' corps. The undercurrent of struggle between the officers' corps and the political department is apparent, and there are periodic weedings out of those officers who hold 'rightist' opinions, whatever they may be.

MORALE

It is difficult to gauge the morale of the Red Chinese soldier. It is reported that there have been rumblings of discontent within the country, but no exact details are available, and they may be merely wishful thinking. As far as is known, the regular army is content

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with its leadership and happy with its lot. All officers and men have been 'brain-washed'—at least superficially—and on the surface all is placid stability. There is no way of knowing just how deep Communist discipline and theories have penetrated into their minds.

The Chinese soldier has always been 'anti-foreign' and it is considered that he could be easily persuaded to fight against any invaders, although it must be said that he has not always done so in the past. A point to bear in mind is that the Chinese soldier has never successfully stood up to serious competition on the modern battlefield for any length of time. In the guerilla days, he always 'hit and ran', in the Civil War he faced the cracking, crumbling Nationalist armies, and in Korea he was a selected 'volunteer'. His aggressive qualities and his probable conduct in the face of superior modern arms are problematic. He has always been mercurial on the battlefield, and the chances are that deep down his character has not changed very much. His morale did not stand up to pressure on several occasions in Korea, for example.

It is interesting to speculate upon what might happen when one day all his Communist gods and ideals are shattered.

AIR FORCE

It was not until the later stages of the Civil War that the Communists were able to obtain aircraft in any number to use against the Nationalists. A school to train Red pilots was established in Manchuria, but Red aircraft in those days were invariably manned by ex-Nationalist pilots. Little action was seen by Red pilots as such in the Civil War.

In the Civil War the Reds never had more than 200 aircraft in operational use, but when all the Nationalist aircraft were seized in 1949, the infant Red air force swelled to about 500, though less than half of them were serviceable and air-worthy. Owing to lack of maintenance and spares this figure fell to about 150 fighters and 75 bombers and transport aircraft.

Then Russian pilots, instructors and technicians arrived, together with numbers of Russian aircraft. In March 1951¹ deliveries of the MiG-15 were made, and by the end of that year Red Chinese 'volunteers' were flying over Korea in action. The first batches of Russian aircraft were fighters, but in 1953 Red China turned her attention to

¹ A few MiG-15s had appeared over Korea before that.

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building up a small bomber group and transport command. Red Chinese pilots after a cautious and not too successful start, gained valuable experience flying over Korea. They improved quickly and very nearly, but not quite, reached something like parity with their opponents by the time the fighting ceased.

After Korea the air force was reorganized and expanded considerably. Precise details are not known, but most reports indicate that it now has at least 3,000 'fighter interceptors' and 'several hundred', perhaps up to 1,000 light jet bombers and transport aircraft, as well as a handful of other sorts of planes, such as reconnaissance ones and helicopters—all Russian types. The bulk of the fighters are still MiG-15s, but the proportion of MiG-17s is growing and a few MiG-19s have made their appearance. The bombers are mainly Ilyushin-28s. A few Red Chinese prototypes have been turned out, but none are yet in full production.

Flying schools, training depots and instructional centres have been developed under Russian guidance, and it is thought that the Red Chinese may have as many as 10,000 jet pilots: they certainly have enough to fly all their aircraft, and more besides. A reserve of pilots is being built up. In the aerial clashes with the Nationalists over the 'off-shore' islands in 1957,¹ and at other times, the Red pilots did not seem to be quite able to match the skill of their opponents, but they are running them very close.

The total air force personnel probably amounts to about half a million. The air force has always been able to 'pick' its men from a long volunteer waiting list, and it was early in the field with a smart new uniform. Morale is high and professionalism is rampant amongst the officers. It has a special *esprit de corps* which the political officers view suspiciously.

Red China is entirely dependent upon Russia, both for aircraft and for aviation fuel. Some Russian types are now assembled in China, but Red Chinese industry is not yet capable of producing modern aircraft in quantity, nor the necessary precision instruments that go with them. It has been estimated that a probable ceiling number of aircraft may not be more than 7,000—but the exact figure will ultimately depend completely upon Russian generosity. A vital point which should not be overlooked, is that Red China possesses no high-grade aviation fuel, and that every single drop comes all the

¹ There are over forty jet air bases on the Chinese mainland within easy reach of Formosa.

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way from Russia. Russia pulls the strings that manipulate the Red Chinese air force and will continue to do so for some time to come.

Gliding is widely encouraged, and Red China possesses numbers of troop-carrying gliders. The idea of crash-landing men in an initial assault, an emergency on a battlefield or as reinforcements has taken root.

NAVY

By comparison with the army and the air force the navy of Red China is small, and tends to be somewhat neglected. Red China is a land power and such resources and material as are available for the armed forces, primarily go to the other two services: the navy only has what is left over. The fact that the Chinese have always been reluctant to go to sea may be another retarding factor.

The navy has about 340 ships of various types, of which at least two-thirds are Russian, having been acquired, bought or loaned. The manpower strength is about 70,000 men. There are 2 cruisers, about 20 destroyers and over 30 frigates, the remainder being small coastal or river craft. More destroyers and frigates are under construction at the shipyards of Shanghai and Canton, and other smaller ships elsewhere, but production will be slow for some years for a number of restricting economic reasons. It is thought that about 25 vessels a year are being launched and that this figure will slowly rise to the 100 mark eventually. This, of course, includes the merchant marine. The navy also controls some 300 sea-going landing craft. More of these landing craft are being built, presumably with the projected invasion of Formosa in mind.

In addition, what is far more important, Red China has at least 28 long-range, ocean-going submarines, of Russian origin, and more are being acquired, the restricting factor being shortage of sufficient trained Chinese officers and ratings. It is thought that the object is to build up the submarine fleet to about 100 by 1963.

One can venture the thought that although the navy is the poor relation of the Red Chinese armed forces and has limited defensive ability, it is developing far-reaching nuisance value capabilities.

NUCLEAR POWER

There are constant rumours that Red China is about to explode a nuclear device, but at the time of writing this has not yet happened.

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Russia, despite overt protestations of solidarity and friendship, is apparently not prepared to go the whole hog and give Mao Tse-tung nuclear weapons.

It is not generally appreciated that Red China had thirty-six nuclear research stations in operation in 1955, established with Russian assistance, and that by 1958 she had her first atomic reactor working. Since then Red Chinese scientists have been working hard and it can only be a matter of time before she finds out the 'know-how' for herself. Rich deposits of uranium have been discovered in the Tienshan Mountains, in Sinkiang province.

One day the world will wake up and find that Red China, all uninvited, has become a member of the 'Nuclear Club', and then she will truly be a world power to be reckoned with.

Rocket sites, with missiles, have been established in Fukien and at other strategic spots in Red China, under Russian supervision, but so far it seems that they are not trusted with the nuclear warheads.

SUMMARY¹

The Red Chinese armed forces can be likened to a huge dragon, which sits and licks its lips in a self-satisfied manner, but only a few of its teeth and claws are sharp—many are missing. Nor can it walk very far, if at all. It is also completely dependent upon Russian fuel to enable it to spit fire.

The military hierarchy is ageing, lives in the past, is guerilla warfare minded, is cautious and reluctant to change with the times.

Shortly, the armed forces, in spite of their size, have only limited offensive capabilities, but many defensive factors are in their favour.

Lastly, should the Communist idols fall, or the Communist gods reveal their clay feet, a military junta might step into power.

¹ Reproduced from 'The Armed Might of Red China', by Major Edgar O'Ballance, in *The Military Review* (U.S.A.), November 1960 by the kind permission of the Editor-in-Chief.

APPENDIX 'A'

Here is a translation—there are several and they all seem to vary slightly—of the strategic principles laid down by Mao Tse-tung to be observed by all his senior commanders in the first part of the Civil War; in 1946 and 1947, all officers had to learn them off by heart. They have become more widely known as the 'Ten Commandments'.

1. First strike isolated and scattered groups of the enemy, and later strike concentrated, powerful groups.

2. First take small and middle-sized towns and cities and the countryside, and later take big cities.

3. The major objective is the annihilation of the enemy fighting strength, and not the holding or taking of cities and places. The holding or taking of cities and places is the result of the annihilation of the enemy's fighting strength, which often has to be repeated many times before they can finally be held or taken.

4. In every battle, concentrate absolutely superior forces—double, treble, quadruple, and sometimes even five or six times those of the enemy—to encircle the enemy on all sides, and strive for his annihilation, with none escaping from the net. Under specific conditions, adopt the method of dealing the enemy smashing blows, that is, the concentration of all forces to strike the enemy's centre and one or both of the enemy's flanks, aiming at the destruction of a part of the enemy and the routing of another part so that our troops can swiftly transfer forces to smash another enemy group. Avoid the battle of attrition in which gains are not sufficient to make up for the losses, or in which the gains merely balance the losses. Thus we are inferior taken as a whole—numerically speaking—but our absolute superiority in every section and in every specific campaign guarantees the victory of each campaign. As time goes by we will become superior, taken as a whole, until the enemy is totally destroyed.

5. Fight no unprepared engagements. Fight no engagements in

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which there is no assurance of victory. Strive for victory in every engagement. Be sure of the relative conditions of our forces and those of the enemy.

6. Promote and exemplify valour in combat. Fear no sacrifice or fatigue nor continuous action—that is, fighting several engagements in succession in a short period without respite.

7. Strive to destroy the enemy whilst he is moving. At the same time emphasize the tactics of attacking positions, and wresting strong points and bases from the enemy.

8. With regard to assaults on cities, resolutely wrest from the enemy all strong points and cities which are weakly defended to a medium degree and where the circumstances permit. Wait until the conditions mature, and then wrest all enemy strong points and cities which are strongly defended.

9. Replenish ourselves by the capture of all enemy arms and most of his personnel. The source of men and material for our army is mainly at the front.

10. Skilfully utilize the intervals between two campaigns for resting, regrouping and training troops. The period of rest and regrouping should not be too long. As far as possible do not let the enemy have breathing space.

(From *The Turning Point in China*, by Mao Tse-tung.)

APPENDIX 'B'

List of Sobriquets Given to Personalities

- Chang the Chairman.* Chang Kou-tao. A founder-member of the KCT, who became the Chairman of the Oyuwan Soviet. He differed with Mao Tse-tung, lost the tussle for supremacy and then defected to the Nationalists in 1938.
- Chang the Nationalist General.* Chang Hwei-chang. A Nationalist general who directed the 1st Extermination Campaign against the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet.
- Chang the Politician.* Chang Ching-fu. He was sent by the Central Executive Committee of the KCT to take over the North Shensi Soviet from Liu the Turncoat. He was removed from this position by Mao Tse-tung.
- Christian General (The).* Feng Yu-hsiang. A war-lord who ruled Shensi province. This sobriquet was given him by the missionaries as they allege that at one time he professed Christianity. He was cruel and brutal, but a shrewd politician and an able general, who was a party to the kidnapping of Chiang Kai-shek at Sian in 1936.
- Chou the Diplomat.* Chou En-lai. Now the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China. He joined the infant Chinese Communist Party in France when a student in 1921, and early showed an aptitude for diplomacy.
- Ho the ex-Bandit.* Ho Lung. A peasant who had risen by the traditional Chinese method of becoming first a successful bandit leader, before being commissioned into a war-lord army. He was in the 4th Ironside Division, and then commanded the 11th Army. With Chu Teh and Yeh Ting, he made the revolt that gave birth to the Red Army.
- Ho the War Minister.* Ho Ying-chin. The Nationalist War Minister in 1931, who was entrusted with the direction of the 2nd Exter-

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mination Campaign against the Kiangsi-Fukien and other Red Soviets.

Hsu the Ironside. Hsu Hsiang-chien. A brigade commander in the Ironside Division, who became the military commander of the Oyuwan Soviet.

Hsu the Peasant. Hsu Hai-tung. An early successful guerilla fighter, who was one of the few genuine peasant leaders in the Chinese Communist movement. He was a brigade commander in the 4th Ironside Division, after which he moved to the Oyuwan Soviet, from where he broke out to make a reconnaissance of the north-west region as a potential Red base.

Hu the anti-Red. Hu Tsung-nan. A Nationalist general who became the commander of the 1st War Zone, and who was responsible for containing Mao Tse-tung's North-West Border Region.

Li of Kwangsi. Li Tsung-jen. A war-lord who joined Chiang Kai-shek in 1926, and who, at a critical phase in the Northern Campaign, declared for him, thus tipping the balance of power against the Communists. When Chiang Kai-shek 'resigned' in January 1949, Li became the acting President of Nationalist China.

Lin the Strategist. Lin Piao. An ex-Whampoa cadet who became a Communist in 1927. He showed a distinct flair for strategy, especially in the early fighting. He became the Minister of Defence of the Peoples' Republic of China in 1958, taking over from his old colleague, Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier.

Liu the One-Eyed General. Liu Po-cheng. A war-lord officer who lost an eye fighting in 1913. He became a Communist in 1926, and went to Russia. On his return he was appointed Chief of Staff to Chu Teh.

Liu the Turncoat. Liu Tsu-tan. An ex-Whampoa cadet who became the leader of the Shensi Soviet. He changed sides on several occasions, but was eventually killed in action fighting as a Red leader against Feng the Christian General.

Model Governor (The). Yen Hsi-shan. A war-lord who ruled Shensi. This sobriquet was given him by missionaries who were impressed by the way in which he administered his province. They overlooked the fact that he possessed all the normal war-lord vices and that his wealth came from opium, which grew in profusion in his domain.

Peng the ex-Nationalist Brigadier. Peng Teh-huai. A Nationalist brigadier, who, when besieging Chin Kan Shan, went over to

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Mao Tse-tung. He later became the Minister of Defence of the Peoples' Republic of China.

Young Marshal (The). Chang Hsueh-liang. The war-lord of Manchuria, so called because at the age of thirty he inherited an army of half a million men from his father. He was a keen supporter of Chiang Kai-shek, and on his advice withdrew his army from Manchuria in the face of Japanese invasion. He was a party to the kidnapping of Chiang Kai-shek at Sian in 1936, and this resulted in his being kept prisoner by Chiang Kai-shek for twenty-four years.

Wang the Puppet. Wang Ching-wei. The Nationalist Prime Minister in 1939, who defected to the Japanese, and was installed by them as head of the puppet Chinese Government.

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