

OTTO BRAUN

A Comintern Agent in China

1932-1939

一个共产国际顾问在中国

奥图·布朗著



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1932 - 1939

Otto Braun

*Translated from the German
by Jeanne Moore*

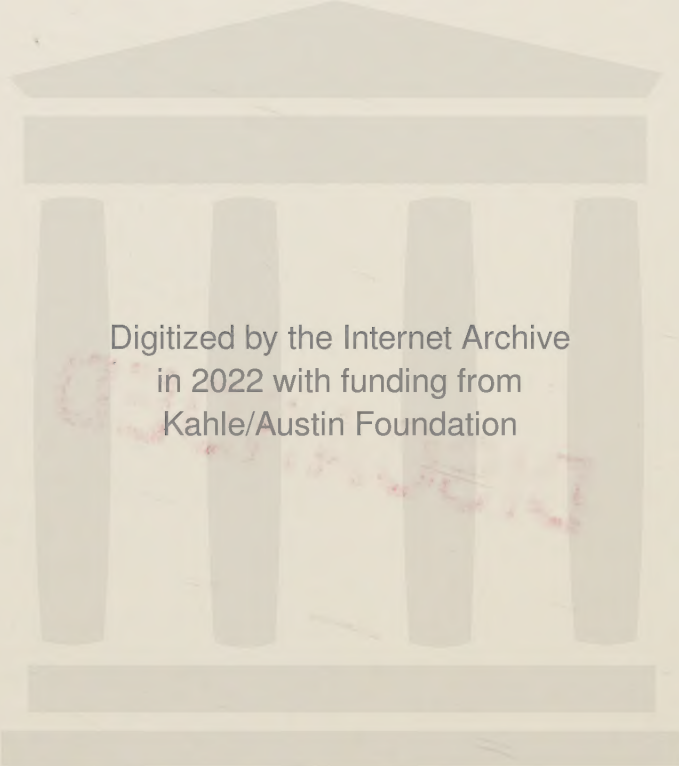
Introduction by Dick Wilson

The only foreigner to take part in the Long March, Otto Braun was a Comintern agent of German nationality who spent the years 1932 - 39 as a military adviser to the Chinese Communist Party. His memoirs, one of the few inside reports we have on the CCP and the Red Army during these critical years, are an invaluable historical source, providing many insights into the political and military developments of this period and a wealth of factual data. His book is one of the half-dozen memoirs of the Chinese Revolution that must be regarded as basic in the field.

Braun began his mission in Shanghai, where the Central Committee had its secret headquarters. In early 1933 he moved with the Central Committee to the Red Army's headquarters in Kiangsi, where he remained until the beginning of the Long March in October 1934. He continued to serve as military adviser in Yen-an until 1939, when he fell out with Mao Tse-tung and was recalled to Moscow.

Braun provides new information on many key issues of the period, notably Mao's policies toward the Fukien Rebellion and the Sian Incident, the break in radio communication with Moscow during 1934 - 6, the strategy of the Long March, and the Tsunyi Conference of 1935, at which Mao became the party's undisputed leader.

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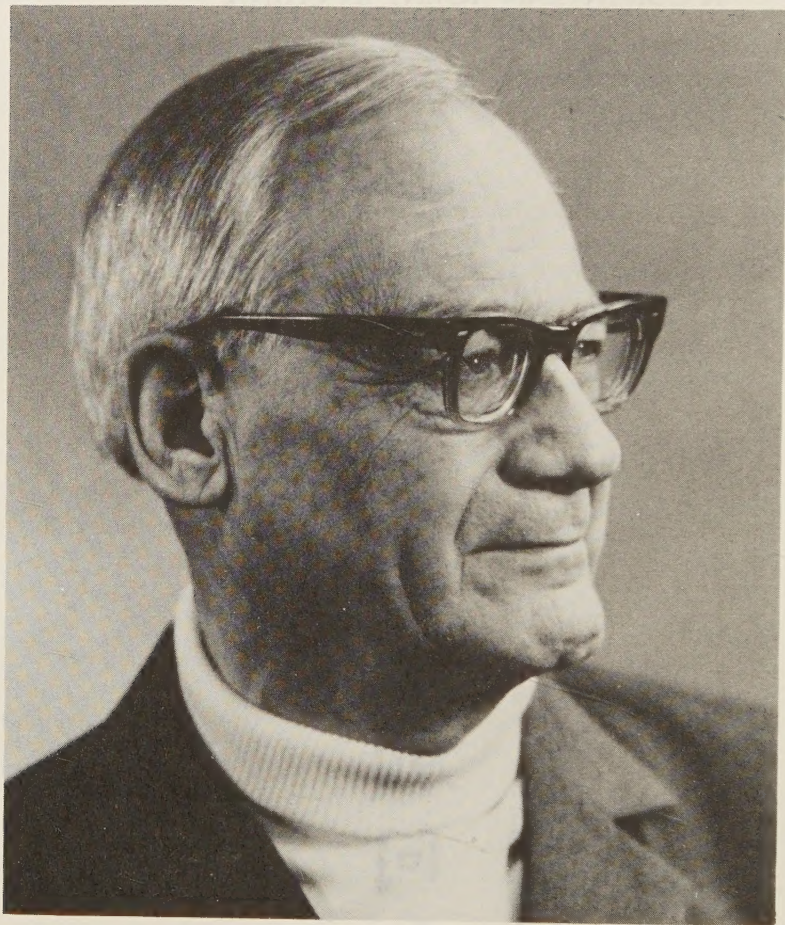


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A late portrait of Otto Braun (1900 - 74).

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Agent in China
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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY JEANNE MOORE
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY DICK WILSON

Stanford University Press
Stanford, California
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PLATES

A late portrait of Otto Braun

frontispiece

between pages 180 and 181

Sun Yat-sen

Members of the newly-formed CCP leadership, 1931

Leaders of the Chinese Red Army in Kiangsi, 1931

Wang Ming and other leading members of the ECCI, 1935

The mountain range on the Kwangtung-Hunan borders crossed
by the Central Army Group.

Hanging bridge, West Yunnan

Typical rock caves, Shensi

General view of Yen-an

Units of the 8th Field Army approaching Yen-an

Students of the K'ang-ta hoeing fallow land

The Author giving tacting instruction in the K'ang-ta

The Author in Yen-an, 1939

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INTRODUCTION

by Dick Wilson

When the young German schoolmaster Otto Braun (1900 – 74) stepped off the gangplank at Shanghai in 1932 to take up a hazardous assignment as Comintern military adviser to the Chinese Communist Party, no one — least of all himself — could have anticipated just how crucial his role would be and that his testimony about the years that followed would become unique. By an accident of history Braun became the only Westerner to take part in the epic Long March of the Chinese Communist Party leadership and Red Army in 1934 – 5, from Kiangsi in southern China to Shensi in the north. He thus witnessed not only the unexpected salvation of the beleaguered CCP from extermination at the hands of its right-wing enemy, the Kuomintang Party, but also the take-over of Chinese Communism by the rural and nationalistic Mao Tse-tung from the younger urban intellectuals who, trained in Moscow, were always ready to follow the Russian lead in international communist affairs.

Braun was noticed in 1936 by Edgar Snow, the first Western correspondent to reach the new Communist base in Shensi, as a “blond-haired and blue-eyed aryan” with a Chinese name (Li Te). The German had participated in all these developments and had seen both the political and military manoeuvres at first hand. But since he did not solicit contacts with the few Western visitors to the Communist headquarters in northwest China in the late 1930s, distrusting their motives, his actual identity remained a mystery right up to the 1960s.

In fact, after his influential three years of service to the military leadership of the CCP from 1933 to 1936, and another three years when Mao made him a scapegoat for the setback of the Red Army’s evacuation of its Kiangsi base in 1934, Braun waited impatiently for his recall to the Soviet Union and to his German homeland. Not until the summer of 1939 did this come, and so anxious was Braun to leave China that he was said to have sat in the Russian aeroplane as soon as it landed and refused to budge again until it took off. In Moscow he found that charges were furnished against him by Chou En-lai and other senior Chinese comrades about his conduct in China. Luckily they were not taken with full seriousness by the Moscow authorities and he was merely told to go home and say nothing about what he had done in China. That silence he preserved faithfully for twenty-five years while Western historians continued to speculate on the identity of that “blond-haired and blue-eyed aryan”.

Only in 1964, in the East German newspaper *Neues Deutschland*, did Braun reveal himself and his role, in an article highly hostile to Mao.

The Sino-Soviet split and the polemics which the Kremlin and its East European allies launched against Mao's regime in the 1960s enabled Braun at long last to speak about his work in China with official approval. A few years later his recollections were serialised in *Horizont*, and towards the end of 1973, a few months before his death, Braun published his Chinese memoirs as a book. The present volume is a translation of that work.

In the circumstances it might be asked how authentic Braun's view of Chinese politics is. He made no secret of the ideological motivations of his writing. "I look upon my notes", he insisted, "as a weapon with which to expose the Maoist manipulators of history and to promote the politico-ideological struggle against Maoism." His years in China were guided by a determination to "champion the interests of the Soviet people" — as embodied in the policies of the day of the government of the Soviet Union.

There were other similar anti-Mao "exposés" by participants or eye-witnesses of the Chinese revolution who subsequently swung round to the Kremlin's line, including the testimony of Wang Ming who was for a time the most senior figure in the CCP but whose memoirs, humiliatingly, are published in Moscow rather than in Peking, and of P.P. Vladimirov who in a sense took over the story where Braun had left off, dealing with the CCP in the early 1940s.

Whatever the intentions of its original publisher, however, Braun's book rises above the others. Unlike Wang and Vladimirov, this is not larded with puerile polemics or matter suspected by critics to be fabricated. Apart from brief ritual incantations against Maoism, Braun has a genuine story of his own to tell, and although he developed in China a strong aversion to Mao's personality and politics, that is not the main thrust of his writing. He tries to give an objective picture of the events which he covers, and his sincerity is attested to by such a scholar as Dieter Heinzig, the West German sinologist, who corresponded with Braun in his later years. Braun may depict Mao as largely black, or Po Ku and Wang Ming, the internationalists with whom he found it easiest to work, as almost entirely white. But what he has to say about most of the other leading personalities in the Chinese Communist leadership, including Chou En-lai, Peng Te-huai and Lin Piao, is in credibly varying shades of grey.

What is particularly valuable is Braun's description of Red Army operations between the latter part of 1933 and the early part of 1936. This was his professional specialism, although he was not himself a soldier tested in the field. He had stood on the barricades of the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919, made a sensational escape from a Berlin prison and gone on to be trained for three years at the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow. These were credentials enough for the

inexperienced Chinese comrades, and Braun's reports on their military activities convey accuracy and credibility.

When it comes to politics, however, the matters at issue are less concrete, and Braun suffered from the disadvantage of being ignorant of the Chinese language, culture and history. This was something which he managed gradually to make up for during his years in China, but by the same token that he had more time for study, he had less to observe — because he was less accepted in the decision-making circles of the Chinese Communist Party after Mao's ascendancy in 1935.

The exigencies of the Comintern service brought Braun, like many predecessors, to China without language training. As Edgar Snow reported nearly four years after Braun's arrival in China, he "had not spoken a word of Chinese when he first immersed himself alone with his Oriental comrades, and he still had to conduct all his serious conversations through interpreters or in German, Russian or French." Actually Snow himself was able to exchange a little English with Braun over a game of tennis. But with the Chinese the German had to use Po Ku, one of the more Westernised of the Chinese Communist leaders, as an interpreter. Indeed these two, with complementary qualities, combined briefly to exert a formidable authority.

Braun reached China at a time when the Chinese Communist Party, barely a decade old, was under the domination of a group of young Moscow-trained students who had spent the later 1920s at Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow. Returning to China in the spring of 1930, these bright young hopes of Chinese communism were quickly dubbed the "28 Bolsheviks" or the "Stalin Group" faction. The ablest and most ambitious of them succeeded, with the help of the Comintern, in taking over the leadership of the Chinese Party. What Braun was able to witness during his sojourn in China in the mid-1930s was the successful eviction of this Russian-oriented and Russian-imposed group by a fully indigenous leadership under Mao Tse-tung. Among the outstanding members of the 28 Bolshevik group, with whom Braun collaborated most actively, were Wang Ming and Po Ku.

In the autumn of 1932, as Braun took up his Comintern duties in Shanghai, Wang Ming, the Communist Party general secretary, returned to Moscow. He handed over his position to Po Ku, who ensured that the 'Stalin Group' within the Chinese Communist Party maintained its ascendancy for the following two and a half years. At this time Mao Tse-tung had no great influence on the leadership of the Party, having chosen to work in the rural areas rather than in the big cities where his colleagues among the founders of the Party cut their revolutionary teeth.

Mao had established a certain military authority as a result of the base which he had successfully founded, with Chu Te, around Chingkangshan in Kiangsi Province, but he was out of the mainstream of Chinese

Communist Party activities. He did not even have, as one might have expected, the leading post in the Central Bureau for the Soviet Areas which in 1931 became the Party's main organ for its work in the various Red bases scattered across China. Mao was nevertheless an ordinary member of the Bureau, as Braun confirms, and he soon acquired further posts enabling him to strengthen his political position. But in August 1932, just before Braun's arrival, Mao had to yield his political leadership of the army to Chou En-lai who was then collaborating with the 'Stalin Group'.

In 1933 Braun reached the Kiangsi Soviet, having sweated for two days under the deckboards of a small junk up the Han River. The Kiangsi Soviet was the main battlefield on which the future of Chinese communism was to be decided, and where the indigenous Mao and the Russian-influenced intellectuals were vying for control. Braun exercised at first a considerable authority. It seems in effect that he took over the supreme military command of the Red Army in April 1934, replacing Mao's famous soldier-partner, Chu Te — and also to some extent displacing Chou En-lai, whose role as political commissar gave him a strong voice in military affairs. Braun made an impact as a military theoretician, publishing in the CCP's military journal a series of eight articles under the pseudonym Hua Fu, rejecting not only Mao's guerrilla strategies but also Chou En-lai's concept of a war of fixed positions. Instead Braun advocated the tactics of "short, swift thrusts" about which controversy raged in the Party for many years afterwards.

Edgar Snow asked one of the Red Army generals how Braun was able to throw his weight about so much. He was told that the German was "very confident and very authoritative. He pounded his fists on the table. He told Mao and others that they knew nothing about military matters; they should heed him." Why did the Chinese comrades put up with such treatment? "He had the prestige of the world communist supporters behind him." Actually, of course, Braun was merely an adviser and had no authority to give orders in Kiangsi or anywhere else in China. He himself told Snow, very reasonably, after it was all over: "Chinese psychology and tradition, and the peculiarities of the Chinese military experience, have to decide the main tactics in a given situation. Chinese comrades know better than we do the correct tactics of revolutionary warfare in their own country."

Yet it has been demonstrated that Braun was brash enough to add criticisms in brackets to an essay which Lin Piao had written on war and revolution, like a teacher correcting the essay of a pupil. A Chinese scholar summarised Mao's view of Braun as "a despotic authoritarian who monopolised the work of the Revolutionary Military Council, the supreme areopagus of military power in the Chinese Soviet Republic"

In particular Braun was blamed by the Maoist leadership from 1935 onwards for two allegedly costly mistakes by the Red Army in the Kiangsi Soviet, namely the failure to take advantage of the mutiny of the 19th Army against its Kuomintang bosses in neighbouring Fukien in 1933, and the insistence on positional warfare to meet Chiang Kai-shek's 5th Encirclement Campaign which forced the Communists to leave Kiangsi and embark on their Long March. Yet a Kuomintang general fighting against the Communists described Braun as the "brains trust" of the Red Army.

For his part, Braun in his book is very scathing of Mao's part in a military excursion into Sinkiang in 1936. This affair remains mysterious, but there is no doubt of Braun's vendetta with Mao during his final years in China. The Chinese leader gave him a perpetual brush-off from meetings of importance in Yen-an. Braun found that Mao's "knowledge of Marxism . . . seemed superficial", and that his pronouncements were full of aphorisms, the product of a pragmatic utilitarian mind which had not come to grips with the philosophical premises of communism. Braun ridiculed Mao's determination of class status by such subjective criteria as income and concluded that his real goal was that of complete personal power. It is not perhaps surprising that this German communist even finds a word of praise for one of the leading (and extremely hostile) historians of Chinese communism on the Kuomintang island of Taiwan.

True to his sense of purpose and high intellectual standards, Braun tells us little in this book about himself or the trivia of life. It is from others that we learn of the incredible difficulties that he faced, particularly on the Long March itself where he could never get big enough shoes to wear or food to his liking. The photograph of him after the Long March shows a prematurely aged man with shrivelled gums bearing no resemblance at all to the well-dressed retired professional in Germany in the 1960s. He never lost his preference for bread over rice, and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party had to find him a baker (later he tried to get his Chinese wife to make bread). Persistent deprivations led him in the end to make his own sausages, which visitors found hanging up to dry outside his door'. In addition to this he was a heavy smoker and it was alleged that a courier had to cover the 600 miles from Kiangsi to Hongkong and back to obtain good quality tobacco and wine for him. An addiction to nicotine proved to be one of the few things drawing Braun and Mao Tse-tung together. They conducted joint botanical research during the Long March by testing out various kinds of leaf as a substitute for tobacco.

Unkind things were said by the Chinese about Braun's sex life in China. One story has it that the somewhat puritan Chou En-lai was irritated by Braun's need for feminine companionship after his arrival

in the Kiangsi base. Eventually he married a girl called Hsiao who was to desert him during the Long March. Snow relating the story that Braun's "Chinese wife" in the northwest was the same girl who had come with him from Kiangsi. Later, however, Braun was said to have divorced this rural companion and married a Shanghai actress, a companion of Chiang Ch'ing — which would provide another curious link at the personal level with Mao Tse-tung. These things did not lead Braun into bad repute or unpopularity. Another source noted that the Chinese called him *Li Te Tung Chih* — the virtuous comrade Li.

A final comment that should perhaps be made on the pages that follow, given the gap of a quarter of a century between the experience and the writing, is the degree of accuracy in detail to be expected from the text. Braun is totally honest about this, and he says frequently that he cannot remember the name of this or that person, this or that place. In describing his experience on the Long March he tells of a diary being lost while fording a river, and he even suggests that the loss may have been intentional on the part of his critics and enemies. He says that this diary had all his notes about what he had done and seen and heard in China up to then, and one shudders to think of the difficulties which he must have had in recreating those details afterwards. In Moscow in 1939 Braun boasted of being able to give an oral report on the military affairs of the Chinese Red Army for the preceding six years based entirely on memory.

It is, then, an odd story. An idealistic and puritanical young German goes to China without any language or culture training, to tell his Chinese comrades how to make Marxist revolution. He backs the wrong side and leaves China a frustrated and angry man. Twenty-five years later he writes his memoirs, giving us a new insight and new information about a particularly obscure period of modern Chinese history. For all the difficulties and deficiencies, it is for the most part a convincing document and one for whose belated appearance we should be grateful.

How did Mao Tse-tung climb, against so many odds, to the most dominant position in the Chinese Communist Party and subsequently the Chinese People's Republic? How did leaders like Chou En-lai, backed by the Soviet Union and the international communist movement, come to find it necessary to bow to Mao? How did the Red Army, enfeebled by five successive vicious military campaigns on the part of the Kuomintang, succeed in escaping from defeat in Kiangsi and carving out, against even higher odds, a new future in northwestern China?

These are among the tantalising questions on which Otto Braun now sheds new light.

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

Agitprop	Agitation and propaganda, i.e. in Communist countries the political education of the people through lectures, the press, election meetings, and so on.
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
KIM	Communist Youth International
KMT	Kuomintang
Profintern	Red Labour Unions International

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Author's bibliographical references, notably to the 3-volume *Selected Works* of Mao Tse-tung, published in *Chinese* in Peking in 1951 - 3, have been given in their original form.

1

SHANGHAI, 1932 – 1933

AFTER graduating from the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow in spring 1932 I was assigned to China by the ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International). Roughly speaking, it was my job to act as military adviser to the Chinese Communist Party in its two-sided fight against Japanese imperialist aggression and the reactionary régime of Chiang Kai-shek.

Within two weeks I was on my way to Manchuria on the Trans-Siberian Express, dressed in West European clothes and furnished with an Austrian passport. From the railway terminus I proceeded to Harbin, which served as a base for several investigatory trips. One of these took me to Shanghai, where I finally settled in the autumn of 1932. This part of the journey, like the first, passed without incident.

Because attacks by Chinese patriots from the *kaoliang* (sorghum) fields bordering the South Manchurian Railway were an everyday occurrence, the train which carried me to Dairen was guarded by Japanese soldiers. From Dairen I travelled by steamer to Shanghai. Needless to say, I was incessantly spied upon by White Russian guards and Japanese secret agents, but otherwise remained unmolested.

In Shanghai I first put up at the Astor House, a hotel in the old English colonial style frequented by foreigners. After several weeks I moved into an American apartment house. I thus maintained the necessary social background to move about unsuspected, for, unlike other foreigners, I did not open a business nor did I pursue a demonstrable profession.

Shanghai offered the typical picture of a seaport ruled by imperialists. Japanese, American, French, and British warships lay at anchor where the Huang-p'u emptied into the Yangtze. The International Settlement and the French Concession were administered by foreigners with their own police forces. The markets overflowed with imported goods, chiefly from the United States. Fortunes were made through the exploitation of female and child labour, munitions sales, and opium smuggling. Foreigners amused themselves at polo matches and dog races or in the countless nightclubs, dance halls, and sailors' bars.

On the waterfront, just outside the foreign settlements, the streets swarmed with filth-ridden beggars and coolies. Half an hour by car from the centre of the city lay the ruins of the Chinese suburb Cha-pei. Early in 1932 the Japanese aggressors had reduced it to rubble and ashes in an attempt to subdue Shanghai. For weeks foreigners watched the battle

through field-glasses from the quiet roof gardens of their hotels and apartment houses much as if they had been seated in a theatre.

It was quiet now in Shanghai — deceptively quiet. Chiang Kai-shek's henchmen, supported by the international police, were combing the textile factories by day and the Chinese Quarter by night in search of Communists. Those who were caught faced a horrible choice: to become traitors or be killed. Thousands of the best Party cadres in China had already suffered the same fate. Gangster bands, with which the Kuomintang had been working for a long time, and Chiang Kai-shek's fascistic "Blueshirts" assisted the police. This systematic extermination campaign, which had continued unchecked since 1927, forced the Communists into deepest secrecy.

Because of this, it was extremely difficult to obtain a clear picture of the social conflicts which simmered under the surface and sporadically flared up in strikes and other protest activities. It was much easier to ascertain the mood of the urban middle class. The petty bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, especially the students, were decidedly nationalistic and displayed an unconcealed xenophobia that was by no means directed exclusively at the Japanese aggressors. This sentiment, manifested in the most diverse ways, was without doubt the expression of an authentic national crisis. However, many comrades of the Comintern Office and of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) considered it to be evidence of a new revolutionary "rising tide". This was inevitably to lead to political miscalculations and a charting of goals which did not reflect the actual state of affairs. But more of this later.

The White Terror forced a strict observance of the rules of conspiracy. Recent history was not without its warnings. In 1930 the Comintern agent Noulens-Ruegg had been arrested and his office, full of important documents, sacked. Only by bribing the corrupt Chinese judge was it possible to avert his death sentence and execution.

Within a few days of my arrival, I got in touch with Comrade Arthur Ewert, the Comintern representative to the Central Committee of the CCP, whom I already knew quite well from Party work in Germany. Several years later, he and his wife Szabo were arrested in Brazil and hideously tortured. Another member of the Comintern Office was a Russian comrade who passed himself off as an émigré. As a member of the OMS (Division for International Communications), he was responsible for security and the regulation of all technical and financial problems. There were also two American comrades representing the KIM (Communist Youth International) and the Profintern (Red Labour Unions International).

As mentioned earlier, the conditions under which we worked were hazardous. We non-Chinese, of course, could meet in relative safety, for we were furnished with "clean" passports and lived in the International Settlement or the French Concession. We had only to exercise the necessary caution, mix exclusively with foreigners in public, occasionally visit a club, and otherwise behave as inconspicuously as possible.

Because of the greater difficulty in meeting leading Chinese comrades, only Comrade Ewert and I maintained direct contact with them. Usually we visited the Central Committee's underground hiding place together once a week. This was a house in a block of newer buildings and was well secured. We were allowed to enter only if a pre-arranged sign — for example, a lamp in a certain window or a half-drawn shade in a lighted room — was present. Twice we turned back because there was no sign and took refuge in an emergency meeting place outside the house to arrange our next rendezvous. In both cases we learned that the signal was missing solely as the result of neglect. Otherwise, contacts of this sort worked perfectly. There were neither incidents nor arrests during my entire stay in Shanghai.

In the Central Committee house Comrade Ewert and I discussed critical political and military problems with the Central Committee secretaries Po Ku (Ch'in Pang-hsien) and Lo Fu (Chang Wen-t'ien). Both had studied in the Soviet Union and spoke excellent Russian. Lo Fu, who had also studied in the United States, spoke English, so we were able to manage without an interpreter. Sometimes, although not often, other Chinese comrades participated in our discussions. Among these were certainly K'ang Sheng, although I cannot remember him, and later Slavin (Li Chu-shen) and Mitskevich (Sheng Chung-liang). These last two returned from the Soviet Union in 1933, and, after their arrest in 1934, became traitors.

The Central Committee's Secretariat maintained regular radio and occasional courier contact with the ECCI in Moscow on the one hand and, on the other, with the Central Soviet Area, which contained the Provisional Revolutionary Government of China and the base of the main forces of the Chinese Red Army (the Central Army Group). Radio communication between the Shanghai Comintern office and the ECCI was also successful at this time because, although the former did not have a radio station of its own, it broadcast over that of the Central Committee. The Central Committee had already lost regular contact with the outlying soviet and guerrilla districts. The little contact they had depended on infrequent delegations and couriers — and since these were often *en route* for weeks at a time this had an extremely restrictive effect on the work as a whole. The same was true of communications with Party organizations in other large cities and industrial



China: Administrative organisation at the beginning of the 1930s



centres in the hands of the Kuomintang (KMT), including the Central Committee's bureaux in Peking, Wu-han, and Canton.

Comrade Ewert introduced me to Agnes Smedley, who was in Shanghai collecting material for her book *China Fights Back*. The Central Committee's Secretariat permitted her to meet many comrades from the Central Soviet Area. She transcribed their reports of the battles of the last few years there practically word for word, and I was the first to whom she gave them to read. Although they were very subjective and often greatly exaggerated, these accounts were of great help to my achieving an understanding of the peculiarities of the Chinese revolution. Of greater importance was Smedley's personal connection with Sun Yat-sen's widow, Sung Ch'ing-ling. She was openly critical of Chiang Kai-shek and cultivated ties with oppositional Kuomintang members, with Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai, commander of the 19th Route Army, with representatives of the Kwangtung and Kwangsi provincial governments, and with émigré Chinese politicians in Hong Kong.

When I began my work in Shanghai I did not have a sufficiently clear idea of the political situation in China or of intra-Party relationships. The only military information available was inadequate, and even contradictory. Although a chief adviser was on his way from Moscow, he was unexpectedly delayed. Thus, practically from the first day on, I had to deliver judgements and recommendations on military matters.

A series of talks with Comrades Ewert, Po Ku, and Lo Fu provided me with a general, if somewhat incomplete, political picture. It placed the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Communist Party — and this is admittedly oversimplified and lays no claim to historical periodization — in the third stage or phase of their development.

The first phase, roughly from the Communist Party's founding in 1921 to Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal of the national revolution in 1927, was essentially characterized by a united front of the Chinese Communist Party with the Kuomintang, which was under Sun Yat-sen's leadership until his death in 1925. This policy of alliance was energetically supported by the Soviet Union and the Comintern. In spite of left sectarian, but, above all, right opportunist mistakes of the as yet ideologically unsettled Party, it was possible to create strong organizations in the few industrial centres and major cities and to win a certain influence in the National Revolutionary Army in Canton. By contrast, great weaknesses were evident in the leadership of the anti-feudal peasant movement against the big landlords and village usurers. Carried along by the revolutionary wave that swept the entire country, the National Revolutionary Army seized political power in southern and central China in the Northern Campaign of 1926 – 7.

The anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution suffered a defeat when Chiang Kai-shek (after Sun Yat-sen's death, leader of the Kuomintang and commander of the National Revolutionary Army) came to terms with the British and American imperialists and the native militarists and feudal lords. The Comintern's Sixth World Congress of the Chinese Communist Party characterized it as an incomplete bourgeois democratic revolution that would solve neither the national nor the agrarian problem. Furthermore, despite a certain anti-feudalist leaning, it lacked a clear class character. The attempt to pursue an alliance with the Kuomintang's left wing, or, in somewhat different words, to split the Kuomintang, had foundered. From that point on, the struggle would be led by the CCP alone, supported only by peasants and workers.

This represented a historical turning point, the beginning of the second phase. The watchword of national revolution was replaced by the rallying cry of social revolution. Although its main content remained the agrarian problem, many, including members of the Communist Party, understood it to mean a more or less pronounced proletarian, socialist revolution. Not only the *compradores* — that is, the big finance and trade bourgeoisie — but the national bourgeoisie and the urban petty bourgeoisie as well, which had previously been counted among the driving forces of the revolution, became reactionaries. Workers and peasants, falsely included in the very broadly conceived concept "proletariat", were seen as the only true revolutionary forces. This meant a total renunciation of the policy of alliance with the middle classes and led to a new left sectarian attitude which dominated the Party leadership until 1930 and has come down in history as the "Li Lisan Line".

Two circumstances favoured this development. First, owing to the massive White Terror campaign, the number of working-class Party cadres in the larger cities and industrial centres had greatly diminished. Second, thanks to revolts of former National Army units that had allied themselves with peasant guerrillas, revolutionary armed forces and bases emerged in the interior of the country. Thus the emphasis of the class struggle shifted from cities to the countryside, from the working class to the peasantry, and from political to military action. In an extravagant over-rating of its own strength, the Party leadership decided to seize power in one province, then several provinces, and finally in the entire country. This was to be achieved through armed uprisings within cities and massive assaults by the revolutionary armed forces from their rural bases. This adventurist, ultra-leftist policy cost many lives, and, although the ECCI was able to break it by 1930, it was not completely corrected.

After the Sixth Party Congress, the Central Committee gathered in

January 1931 for its Fourth Plenum. It re-pudiated the offensive "putsch" line of Li Li-san and replenished the Politburo and its Secretariat (the Standing Committee) with Marxist-educated and internationally tested cadres. With this, the Chinese Communist Party entered the third and latest stage in its development. According to my information, the new Standing Committee included Wang Ming (Ch'en Shao-yü), Chou En-lai, and the old Secretary-General of the Party, Hsiang Chung-fa. After Hsiang was murdered by the class enemy, Wang Ming succeeded to his position. By 1931, however, he was already in Moscow, where he represented the CCP until 1937. Towards the end of 1931, after Hsiang Ying had already gone there, Chou En-lai set out for the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet Area to assume direction of the newly established Central Committee Bureau. Po Ku was elected Secretary-General and, together with Lo Fu, directed Central Committee affairs from Shanghai.

The new Party leadership lacked a coherent conception of both the political situation and the further progress of the revolution. The Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee spoke of a new upsurge in the revolution and presented the thesis that only the soviet areas could save China. The Comintern Office in China and even the ECCI in Moscow supported this idea. The springboard for a new advance was perceived in the popular movement which had grown rapidly with the acceleration of Japanese aggression since 1931 and in the remarkable expansion of the revolutionary forces and their bases, the soviet areas. In stark contrast to this was the weakness of the Party and the workers' movement in general within Kuomintang-controlled regions. Despite the official judgement of the situation, there was more and more talk of a depression or trough in the revolution.

This version was heard mostly from the Kiangsi-Fukien Soviet and was circulated by Mao Tse-tung whenever Chiang Kai-shek succeeded in restoring peace between the central Kuomintang government in Nanking and regional warlords. The soviet areas, explained Mao (whose person united all military and political power in Kiangsi until the arrival of Hsiang Ying and Chou En-lai), were Red islands in a White sea and could survive only if the White rulers waged internecine war. Contradictions in their ranks made them vulnerable to attack, whereas their united strength called for immediate withdrawal. As long as there were no permanent soviet bases, this was certainly a useful strategy for guerrilla warfare. But as political theory it was to have disastrous consequences.

Far more critical than the vacillation between "high tide" and "trough" were the different, even contradictory positions taken on the basic principle of the revolution. The Comintern Office and the Party leadership in Shanghai rejected the notion of proletarian revolution,

advocating in its stead the old programme of democratic, that is, anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist, revolution. This was to evolve into a socialist revolution under the leadership of the soviets, which they regarded as the revolutionary democratic dictators of the workers and peasants. No one gave much thought to a non-capitalist road of development, which was understandable given the objective conditions at the beginning of the 1930s. We felt that the soviets would serve as a means to win over the broad masses in city and countryside for the national and social liberation struggle. We therefore faced a double task. An intensive propaganda and organizational campaign would have to be pursued in spite of the White Terror. At the same time, the revolutionary armed forces and rural bases were to be strengthened and enlarged. As early as 1932 – 3, the arch-enemy — and I would like to stress this specifically — was considered to be Japanese imperialist aggression. The indirect enemy, particularly in the military struggle, was nevertheless the Kuomintang and the various provincial generals.

But because the soviet areas had to deal with this indirect enemy day in and day out, they came to equate enemy number one, especially in Kiangsi-Fukien under Mao, with Chiang Kai-shek. Mao claimed that a war against Japan was doomed unless Chiang Kai-shek was defeated first. This meant that, as in the Li Li-san period, the internal civil war was being wrapped in the banner of proletarian revolution. This could not help but influence policy in the soviet areas: for example, in the false, sectarian attitude taken towards rich and middle peasants; in a property law providing for the confiscation of all land, including that of peasants; and in a reign of terror directed against potential allies and even dissenting Communists. In time, the Communist Party in Kiangsi-Fukien alienated even the masses.

The different views regarding the two-front struggle against imperialism and feudalism were sometimes dismissed as hair-splitting. The cold facts, especially the campaign Chiang Kai-shek had been leading against the soviets since 1930, gradually oriented even the Comintern Office and the Politburo of the Central Committee towards an acceptance of soviets and civil war. Occasional declarations on the anti-Japanese struggle did nothing to change this. On the recommendation of the ECCI and following a resolution of the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee in 1931, the First Congress of workers, peasants, and soldiers was summoned in Kiangsi, and a Provisional Revolutionary Government was established with Mao Tse-tung at its head, and a revolutionary war council with Chu Te as chairman. The main tasks of the Party were defined as the reorganization of the revolutionary armed forces into a regular Red Army, the consolidation and enlargement of the soviet areas, and the intensification of guerrilla warfare in Kuomintang-controlled territory.

Although deviant opinions were voiced, at first only allusively, the Comintern Office and Party leadership remained unyieldingly firm on two important questions. We considered the hegemony of the working class, even and especially in a backward, agricultural nation such as China, to be legitimate and indispensable. Accordingly, the training of proletarian cadres would have to be intensified. Because of the conditions prevalent in China — widespread illiteracy, unbridled White Terror, and so on — leading Party cadres had been recruited almost exclusively from among intellectuals of petty bourgeois, bourgeois, and even feudal backgrounds. Mao Tse-tung, on the other hand, continued to express the opinion he had held since 1927, that the working class had exhausted its leadership role. The main girder of the revolution was the peasantry and its bulwark the village.

He shared Li Li-san's opinion that the centre of world revolution had shifted east from Russia to China, just as it had from Germany to Russia in 1917. The primary contradiction in the world, therefore, was no longer the antagonism between the socialist Soviet Union and the capitalist states, but the struggle between Imperial Japan and China. He therefore concluded that the Soviet Union had an obligation to help revolutionary soviet China at any cost, even the cost of war, while a victorious revolutionary China took up the task of furthering world revolution. Because these thoughts had not yet hardened into a fixed concept, but were issued in the aphoristic comments of which Mao was so fond, we only became aware of them with the passage of time. Nor did anyone attach to them the importance they deserved. This was to prove a great mistake.

It is superfluous to mention that all of us advocated the opposing point of view. We saw the primary contradiction of the world as the conflict between the forces of socialism, led by the Soviet Union, and the imperialist states, most conspicuously and aggressively represented by the later Axis powers — Germany, Italy, and Japan. The Soviet Union, then the only socialist nation in the world, was the quintessence of proletarian revolution for us and we considered it our sacred and international duty to protect it against adventurist projects as well as enemy attacks.

With what I regarded then as a rather confusing political scene for a backdrop, I focused my activity on obtaining as accurate an idea as possible of military operations between Japanese and Chinese forces, including both anti-Japanese partisans and groups of anti-Japanese Kuomintang generals. I was also occupied with the conflict between the Red Army and the Kuomintang troops fighting it. Naturally, the second matter was in the foreground of our discussions. Because of this,

we were forced to confine the concrete work of situation reports and decision-making, for better or worse, to suggestions to the Central Soviet Area, with which alone we were in direct contact. I also frequently sent microfilmed situation reports with sketches to Moscow by courier.

Paradoxical as it might seem, my greatest difficulty lay in properly assessing the strength of the Chinese Red Army. I was generally well informed about the Kuomintang armies, largely because the Central Soviet Area intercepted and deciphered virtually all the enemy's radio messages. On the other hand, news of our own forces, their numbers, locations, and operations, was unclear, contradictory, and sometimes wildly exaggerated.

In spite of this, I eventually obtained a general view of the revolutionary forces and their territorial bases. When I returned to Moscow in 1939 I delivered an exhaustive report from memory. It forms the basis for the following remarks on the military state of affairs in 1932.

Between 1927 and 1932 the Chinese Red Army emerged from three groups in southern and central China: rebellious peasantry, local bandits, and mutinous units of the National Revolutionary and other armies associated with the Kuomintang. The first peasant guerrilla divisions arose in 1926–7 in the wake of the National Revolutionary Army's passage through Hunan and Kiangsi. They grew to imposing strength in the so-called Autumn Harvest Revolt of 1927, which was initiated by the Central Committee of the CCP and directed in Hunan by Mao Tse-tung. It was said that 4,000 to 5,000 men were organized into the 1st Division under Mao's command. Nevertheless, costly and unsuccessful attacks on cities and hasty retreats into the mountains reduced the numbers of this first peasant division to only a few hundred. The survivors dug in on Ching kangshan, a natural mountain redoubt, and from there launched raids throughout the vicinity. Mao's division received reinforcements which were remarkable in the military sense, but politically questionable, in the form of two robber bands that had long kept a hide-out on Ching kangshan.

In this context I would like to insert a word about Chinese secret societies and robber bands or "bandits", a category in which the class enemy included Communist organizations and revolutionary forces throughout the civil war of 1927–36. These bands had been composed from time immemorial of the poorest peasants who had escaped from feudal bondage and waged guerrilla warfare against the big landlords and village usurers. Under the leadership of gifted military commanders they grew into larger bodies and units, which were often respected by the local military and sometimes even incorporated into the regular army. Some of them degenerated, indiscriminately pillaging, robbing, and murdering. Others, particularly the most successful,

joined the peasant guerrillas, as for example the two above-mentioned bands on Ching kangshan, or, although I never discovered the details, Ho Lung's on the Honan-Hupeh border, which had earlier been annexed by local Kuomintang troops. Possibly the same might be said of the Honan-Hupeh border district, the later base of the 4th Corps. Yet the bands played a negligible role in the Red Army, and, with time, were politically integrated.

Without question, the rebellious units of the National Revolutionary Army provided the foundation and chief strength of the Chinese Red Army. In later years mutinous divisions of Marshal Feng Yü-hsiang's National Army and of several southern Chinese provincial generals joined their ranks. After the August 1927 uprising in Nan-ch'ang the main body of these troops, about 10,000 strong, pushed southward through Hunan - Kiangsi as far as Kwangtung under the leadership of Chu Te, Yeh T'ing, Fang Chih-min, and other Communist generals. Because these were almost exclusively divisions from the former Kuomintang's 4th Army "Ironsides", they retained this name. In one battle after another they mobilized the peasantry and established temporary bases. In early 1928 Chu Te led them to Ching kangshan where they linked up with Mao's division, incorporating its 1,000 men as the 1st Regiment of the 4th Army. These forces were known as the Chu - Mao Army and later formed the backbone of the Central Army Group's 1st Corps.

In July 1928 the 5th Independent Kuomintang Division, commanded by P'eng Te-huai, went over to the Red Army. It merged with several mutinous regiments of the Kiangsi Provisional Army to become the 3rd Corps. Later, towards the end of 1929, a brigade which seceded from Feng Yü-hsiang's National Army in Ning-tu provided the body of the 5th Corps under Tung Chen-t'ang.

In this manner, from 1930 to 1932, the main forces of the Chinese Red Army came together in southern China. A similar process was underway in central China. Under the command of Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien, several units which had participated in the 1927 Nan-ch'ang uprising fought their way to the Anhwei - Honan - Hupeh border triangle. They became the 4th Corps of the Red Army. And in the Hupeh - Hunan border region, at the midpoint of the Yangtze River, Ho Lung established a base for his troops, later the 2nd Corps.

At first, the Red Army's operations resembled pure guerrilla warfare with no definite bases. Towns and villages were seized and abandoned; battles were won and lost. There was no real central leadership. The situation changed in 1929 when Mao Tse-tung, by mandate of the Central Committee, created the Front Party Committee. This subordinated the provincial and regional Party committees and achieved a sort of supreme command over all revolutionary forces, civilian and

military, although not without the application of terrorist methods. The co-ordination of relatively stationary soviet bases and the formation of regular military forces was not accomplished until 1930 – 1.

At about the same time the main antagonist ceased to be local generals and provincial governors, whose armies had a small striking force, and became Chiang Kai-shek; in the last few years Chiang had managed to consolidate most of China under his sway. Thanks to extensive economic, political, and military support from the imperialist powers (the United States and Great Britain especially, but also Germany), he already commanded an army with modern equipment and training. In 1930 – 1 he launched three campaigns against the most important soviet areas. Although they all ended in defeat, enemy troops penetrated deep into the soviet areas, even temporarily occupying Jui-chin, the Red capital of Kiangsi. These campaigns were doomed to failure because they were undertaken without careful preparation and without sufficient attention to economic, political, and geographical realities. The enemy's tactics in particular were not in keeping with the new requirements of organized guerrilla warfare. The long enemy columns advanced swiftly into the mountainous terrain without adequate cover, not to mention fortifications, thereby exposing themselves to surprise attacks. Individual columns, entire regiments and divisions, which enjoyed little mutual protection because of their commanders' rivalries, were outflanked, encircled, ambushed and annihilated, deep inside soviet territory.

The Red Army's tactics were successful but costly. Our troops' losses, especially in retreats, were enormous. They were even greater among the civilian populace, for the enemy raged mercilessly through temporarily conquered soviet land. The Central Committee's offensive strategy of the Li Li-san period, which had led to reckless attacks on enemy centres, had been no more disastrous than the 4th Corps' assault on Wu-han or those of the Central Army Group against Ch'ang-sha, Kan-chou, and other cities.

Political work among the native population and the troops left much to be desired. The development of the Red Army had likewise suffered. I was told that in several units, especially in the 4th Corps and the Central Army Group's 5th Corps, feudal habits persisted: infringements against civilians, a mechanical enforcement of discipline, and the crude, insulting, even corporal punishment of subordinates. Such incidents, which I was in no position to verify, apparently represented the unhealthy influence of old military traditions — and, perhaps, the usages of former robber bands.

As already mentioned, there were excesses in the application of terror against counter-revolution. Prisoners-of-war, Party cadres, and Red Army soldiers as well as authentic class enemies fell victim to mass

arrests and executions. Big landlords' estates, even entire villages, were burnt to the ground. There was a perceptible change in conditions after 1931 which contributed substantially to the consolidation of the soviet areas and the strengthening of the Red Army. The Army comprised almost exclusively poor peasants and professional soldiers, with the latter group forming the main source of commanders at all levels. There was a much smaller percentage of *lumpenproletariat* elements. Industrial workers, only barely represented, were recruited chiefly from Canton and the temporarily captured cities Chi-an, Kan-chou, and Ch'ang-sha. This unfortunate social composition was only to worsen with time.

According to reports that I received in 1932, members of the CCP and the Communist Youth Organization made up fewer than 20 per cent of the men and commanders of the Red Army, even though for a while entire villages and units were enrolled automatically into these two groups.

In spite of these handicaps and failings, by 1932 the Red Army was able to create stable soviet bases with their own command staffs, and complete the transition to large, regular fighting units. Some isolated regions, of course, remained no more than guerrilla bases.

Once the Central Committee's new Politburo was formed at the January 1931 Plenum, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government and Revolutionary Military Council were set up in Jui-chin, communications improved between the armed forces and the Party leadership. Of greater importance, however, was the dispatching of Hsiang Ying and Chou En-lai to the Central Soviet Area, and of Chang Kuo-t'ao to the 4th Corps. The appointment of Politburo members to political and, later, military leadership in these large soviet regions was to become a factor in Mao's rise to power. By 1932 regular communication with other bases and units of the Red Army no longer existed.

In 1931 - 2 a reorganisation of the armed forces was completed, having been begun in 1929 - 30. The various designations and numberings of the units were made systematic; the armies, hitherto numbering a dozen or so were formed into regiments and divisions as far as possible; rearline services such as training, logistics, and medical facilities were co-ordinated.

I cannot say to what extent this reorganization affected areas outside the Central Soviet Area. In isolated areas there were supposed fronts, armies, and army groups, although few of them numbered even a thousand men. To this day they continue to haunt the pages of Maoist historiography.

The information I obtained from the Central Committee on the soviet territories, their population and armed forces on the eve of Chiang Kai-shek's 1932 Fourth Campaign was as follows.

The Central Soviet Area extended over a contiguous and relatively stable region of 50,000 to 60,000 square km in East Kiangsi and West Fukien with a population of between 4 and 5 million. It was the base of the Central Army Group with its 1st, 3rd, and 5th Corps. These totalled five, later six, divisions with 25,000 men and 15,000 to 20,000 rifles. In addition, there were a number of independent and local regiments and divisions with an approximate total strength of 30,000 to 40,000 men and 15,000 to 20,000 rifles. Their combat effectiveness was very uneven and certainly much inferior to that of the regular forces. There were also peasant self-defence organizations such as the Red Guards, Young Guards, and so on, who were sparsely, if at all, armed. Their combat activity was limited to fending off occasional attacks by the Mintuan, a militia kept by the big landlords, and to providing an auxiliary to the regular forces.

In the north and west of the Central Soviet Area there were an additional three bases with which there was only infrequent contact. In the Kiangsi – Chekiang – Anhwei border triangle was a fiercely embattled guerrilla zone of 15,000 square km and just 1 million inhabitants. Here Fang Chih-min commanded the 10th Army with its 5,000 to 6,000 men and 3,000 to 4,000 rifles. In the southern sector of the Hunan – Kiangsi border, where the railway from Wu-han had been laid out but not yet completed, two formerly independent divisions, the 17th and the 18th, were unified under Hsiao K'e. Their land contained 15,000 square km and between 1 and 1.5 million inhabitants. Their total strength amounted to 10,000 men and 7,000 to 8,000 rifles. Fang Chih-min and Hsiao K'e were veteran Communist leaders and ensured a firm political control in these two regions.

A different situation reigned in the Hunan – Kiangsi – Hupeh border region, base of the independent 16th Division. At one time it controlled 12,000 square km and half a million inhabitants. But it was unable to create a durable political leadership or carry out policies suitable to its population. The division eventually disintegrated and the base was lost.

The second-largest soviet area, with a territory of over 40,000 square km and a population of 3 million, lay in the Honan – Hupeh – Anhwei border triangle north of the Yangtze River and east of the Peking-Wuhan Railway. The 4th Corps (often called 4th Army, Front, or Army Group) with 12,000 to 15,000 men and about 10,000 rifles, provided its regular armed forces. Here too there were independent and local forces, some 5,000 to 6,000 soldiers strong. After the withdrawal of the main forces, these were organized into the 15th Corps. (Actually it was the 25th Corps, but I did not become aware of this until the autumn of 1935 in Shensi. For the sake of authenticity, I shall use the designation "15th" until that point in time. See page 142 below for comparison.)

The Central Committee invested Chang Kuo-t'ao with authority for the political, and, increasingly, the military administration of the area. I do not know for a fact if there was a Central Committee bureau there, but I think it probable.

Finally, there was the 2nd Corps' territory in the mid-point of the Yangtze River in the Hupeh – Hunan border region. It controlled 20,000 square km with 1 million to 2 million population and 10,000 soldiers.

In all, there were six larger soviet and guerrilla regions covering 150,000 square km and having a regular fighting strength of 65,000 to 75,000 men with 45,000 to 50,000 rifles.

In the spring of 1932, at the beginning of Chiang Kai-shek's Fourth Campaign, the territorial expansion of soviet bases had reached a peak. This was true even excluding the guerrilla bases which supposedly existed in Kwangtung, Fukien, and Szechwan. The regular armed forces, on the other hand, had not yet attained their greatest strength. Soviet territories constituted 3.5 to 4 per cent of the land area of Inner China and 2.5 to 3 per cent of the population. The disparity is explained by the fact that most soviet bases were to be found in thinly settled and mountainous provincial border zones. Furthermore, years of civil war and the enemy's extermination campaigns had taken their toll.

These were the data available to us in Shanghai on which we based our political and military decision-making regarding the conduct of the war. Naturally, they could serve only as a general orientation. Their statistical value at any given time was affected by dynamic developments in both "Red" and "White" regions. This was especially true of 1932, a year that brought with it political and military changes of far-reaching significance.

Chiang Kai-shek succeeded in further strengthening his governmental power, curbing the power of provincial governors and generals, and in subordinating, on paper at least, their troops to his supreme command. Below the surface, however, rivalries and intrigues in the Kuomintang multiplied, breaking into the open from time to time. This state of affairs increasingly influenced the thinking of the Central Committee, as well as of Mao Tse-tung. "Exploit the contradictions in the hostile camp" became an almost magical formula to master all difficulties and to accomplish what the ECCI had set as the chief task of the civil war: the consolidation and expansion of soviet territory. This outlook received an additional impulse from the growing popular resistance to Japanese aggression, which tore open old and new rifts in the Kuomintang. But more of that later.

Internal difficulties appeared in the Central Soviet Area as well. After

the Central Committee Bureau was established and Mao's Front Party Committee was dissolved, grave conflicts broke out between Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung. This was the earliest indication of the development of two factions, the Marxist-internationalist and the petty bourgeois nationalist, although I must confess that I was unaware of this at that time. In an enlarged conference of the Central Committee Bureau which took place in August 1932 in Ning-tu, Mao was strongly criticized for his leftist sectarian mistakes of the past, especially in dealing with rich and middle peasants, and for his land policy and terror régime. His bias towards military struggle — the so-called "barrel of a gun" policy — and the surrender without resistance of soviet territory as a result of his tactic of repeated retreats were condemned as "military opportunism" and "passive defence". He remained chairman of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and a member of the Central Committee Bureau and Revolutionary Military Council, but lost his dominating influence and previous position of power. It was difficult to determine from Shanghai whether he was forced out of leadership or withdrew himself, as he had done several times in the past in order to await a favourable opportunity for a "comeback". Presumably both were true. At any rate, he was replaced in the Military Council by Hsiang Ying and in the Front Command of the Central Army Group by Chou En-lai.

In the winter of 1932 – 3, we were still discussing this conflict in the Central Committee's Shanghai hide-out. Comrade Arthur Ewert and the Party leadership, personified in Po Ku and Lo Fu, disagreed with the "shelving" of Mao Tse-tung. In a directive to the Central Committee Bureau in Jui-chin, they emphasized the "necessity of bringing Mao Tse-tung around" and emphatically recommended coaxing him into co-operation. The ECCI expressed a similar opinion in March 1933. It was my impression that all — the Comintern Office, the Central Committee's Secretariat in Shanghai, and (because these two were the ECCI's source of information), the ECCI as well — were motivated mainly by the consideration that Mao Tse-tung had great influence and a strong following in the Central Soviet Area and that they would have to co-operate with him because a rupture might have a disastrous effect upon the destiny of the Central Army Group and the entire Central Soviet Area. But it was difficult at our distance to assess the true situation in the Central Soviet Area. This was one motive, if not the primary one, in the Party leadership's move in 1933 to the Central Soviet Area.

Undamaged by internal differences, the consolidation of the Central Soviet Area made great strides between 1931 and 1933. This applied to all spheres: economic policies, the strengthening of the Party and Soviet executive bodies, but above all the construction of regular armed forces.

There was an animated exchange of radio messages between Jui-chin and Shanghai, and because all those of a military character passed through my hands after my arrival in Shanghai, I was excellently informed of the most important developments.

A General Headquarters was established in the Revolutionary Military Council which was responsible for troop logistics, training, rear-line services, and directing the operations of the independent, local, and guerrilla units. For these purposes the Central Soviet Area was divided into four military sectors: the southern with its headquarters in Hui-ch'ang, the northwestern with headquarters in Ning-tu, the eastern or Fukien sector with headquarters in Ting-chou (Ning-hua), and the northeastern with its headquarters in Nan-feng, then in Li-ch'uan. These were under the command of district commanders, who had telephone or radio contact with General Headquarters. In this way, situation reports could be passed on without delay and operations accordingly co-ordinated. Liu Po-ch'eng, an experienced general, was Chief of Staff, whereas Hsiang Ying, a Central Committee member, Deputy Chairman of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and Acting Chairman of the Military Council, was responsible for overall direction.

The institution of commissar was made the rule for all units, regular or not. A political administration to be directed by Politburo member Wang Chia-hsiang was created. Chou En-lai, who was also organizing the work of the Front Headquarters, was appointed Chief Commissar of the Central Army Group.

Commanders and political workers were trained in two infantry schools, while gunners and engineers passed through a special school for technical troops. By autumn 1934 3,000 to 4,000 cadres had taken part in these intensive courses. A military academy was planned for senior commanders and commissars, but it did not materialize until the end of 1933.

These and other measures, all designed to develop a strong regular army and consolidate territorial bases, were benefited by the fact that, after the failure of the Third Campaign, Chiang Kai-shek undertook no sizeable offensives against the Central Soviet Area until late 1932. This is not to say that he and his generals were standing idle. On the contrary, they had learned their lesson well in the last few years and were carefully planning the next and Fourth Campaign.

To finance it they withdrew all silver coinage, the basis of the national currency, from circulation and hoarded it in the central banks. It was replaced with paper money which quickly became devalued. They obtained large-scale loans from the imperialist powers. The United States granted Chiang Kai-shek two loans totalling \$90 million, of which half was ear-marked for the delivery of no less than 850 reconnais-

sance, tactical, and bomber aircraft. The United Kingdom contributed £25 million, France 40 million gold francs, and Germany 40 million Marks. All the technology of modern warfare — artillery, tanks, mortars, and automatic weapons with ample ammunition, plus equipment for road and fortification construction and a communications network — flowed into the Kuomintang arsenal. Even the Japanese slackened their advance to allow Chiang Kai-shek to set all his troops against the Communists with a minimum loss of political prestige. Hundreds of foreign military advisers sat in Nanking and in the headquarters of various Nationalist armies. For the most part they were Germans, headed by such well-known generals as Wetzell, Kriebel, and von Seeckt, who was relieved in 1933 by von Falkenhausen. There were also Americans, as for example the famous airman Colonel Lindbergh. They reorganized the Kuomintang armies, particularly that of the Central Government, and instructed them in the latest tactics and in the use of modern technology. They also drafted a plan of operations in which the strategic principles which were to be refined and perfected in the Fifth Campaign could already be recognized.

The Fourth Campaign began in the summer of 1932 and lasted until the beginning of 1933. Between 100,000 and 150,000 men in twelve élite divisions of the Central Government, including one cavalry division, marched against the 4th Corps of the Red Army. Four Central Government divisions and several from Hunan, at least 50,000 men in all, assembled against the 2nd Corps. Other Hunan provincial troops, numbering roughly 60,000 to 80,000 men, confronted the 6th Corps and the 16th Independent Division. The 10th Army was faced with two élite divisions of Chiang Kai-shek's and Chekiang provincial troops, or about 20,000 to 30,000 men.

It should be remarked in passing that data on provincial troops were always less exact than those of the Central Government. To complicate matters, although most of the divisions were organized on the German model of three infantry regiments plus an artillery regiment and special troops, others were composed of two to three brigades with six to nine regiments. There was also a considerable difference between the established and effective strengths. Figures therefore varied tremendously.

The greatest concentration of enemy troops was directed against the Central Soviet Area. On the northern front, east and west of the Hsü River, stood at least twelve divisions and on the western front three. The 19th Army with five divisions and Fukien provincial troops were on the eastern front. The six to eight divisions of the Kwangtung Army advanced from the south. This force of almost thirty divisions or 250,000 to 300,000 men tightened the circle around the Central Soviet Area. After the initial thrust, the Kwangtung and Fukien troops lapsed into passivity, evidently unwilling to shoulder Chiang Kai-shek's burden

alone. The élite divisions to the north and west were advancing, but very slowly, devoting their energies mainly to the construction of roads and fortifications.

The main brunt of the Fourth Campaign was directed against the 2nd and 4th Corps of the Red Army. Once he controlled the big industrial city of Wu-han and the Yangtze sea route, Chiang Kai-shek was assured of unhampered reinforcements and manoeuvring ability.

I learned nothing more definite about the course of operations in this stage of the campaign because contact with both corps was lost in the late summer of 1932. Newspaper and press reports indicated that the 4th Corps was being forced westward. When it crossed the Peking – Wu-han railway the enemy promptly occupied and fortified it so blocking its return route. The main forces of the 4th Corps continued their westward march along the Honan – Hupeh border, until they reached an area in southern Shensi – northern Szechwan which already served as a base for small guerrilla bands. Local and independent units remained behind, later combining to form the 15th Corps. The soviet area shrank to one-third of its former size. But even this had to be written off as lost within a year owing to the Kuomintang army's systematic extermination drive.

Why this base was lost was never analysed. When I asked about it in Shanghai, Po Ku offered two possible reasons. First, political work among the troops and civilian population had been inadequate. 'Feudal practices' were not yet overcome and the people and economic resources were not mobilized. Second, the 4th Corps had pursued a war of movement against the enemy's outer communications lines. This dissipated its effort in secondary directions while neither defending soviet territory nor engaging the enemy in a decisive battle. He qualified his remarks by adding that his information was not necessarily reliable. However, he emphatically rejected the suggestion that the 4th Corps had acted in obedience to orders from the Shanghai Party leadership.

I later posed the same question in Jui-chin, for the answers seemed imperative to me for the Central Army Group's strategic planning in the Fifth Campaign. Chou En-lai permitted Po Ku's conjectures to stand, but added no further comment. Mao Tse-tung similarly withheld judgement, drawing attention instead to the "great victory" of the 4th Corps in its westward march. This defensiveness was understandable, for basically Chang Kuo-t'ao and Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien, respectively political commissar and commander of the 4th Corps, had employed the same guerrilla tactics that Mao advocated. After his break with Chang Kuo-t'ao in the summer of 1935, Mao characterized the performance of the 4th Corps as "flight before the enemy".

Ho Lung's 2nd Corps also yielded to the enemy advance. It abandoned its base south of the Yangtze and moved west into the

Hunan – Kweichow – Szechwan border triangle, where it too found smaller guerrilla units. There, in 1932, Ho Lung founded a new soviet base and held it successfully for over a year. No one criticized his capability as a commander; on the contrary, Mao later praised him excessively when he perceived in him a dependable supporter.

The 6th Corps and the 10th Army managed to hold their bases, although they were hard pressed and forced to give up territory.

The 16th Independent Division behaved somewhat differently. It fell back without fighting — even before the weak pressure of the Hunan troops — and disbanded into groups of company, or, at most, battalion strength. They continued a sort of guerrilla war, but one that resembled bandit raids in which the greatest harm was inflicted on the local population. To conclude this episode somewhat out of chronological order, I might mention that the 16th Division's commander, Kung Ho-ch'ung, came to Jui-chin in 1934 and delivered an exaggeratedly favourable report on the status of his forces. Chou En-lai, who doubted the veracity of his account, sent him to study at the Military Academy. I spoke with him there. He was most displeased with the notion that he had anything to learn. He already knew how to fight: you could always hold your own with a couple of machine guns, and all that prattle about regular armies and modern tactics was nonsense. He demanded to be returned to his division. Mao interceded on his behalf and his wish was granted. Not long after, he betrayed the revolution and went over to the enemy.

Incomplete and contradictory as our information was about the first stage of the Fourth Campaign (as mentioned above, much of it came from newspaper releases), one thing was certain: the 2nd and 4th Corps had surrendered their former bases, but they had preserved their forces. In fact, the 4th Corps actually increased its numbers in several successful battles with provincial troops during its westward march. The 6th Corps and the 10th Army had maintained their bases with bearable losses. The lost territory had been of dubious value.

Chiang Kai-shek extravagantly over-estimated his success, believing the main forces of the 2nd and 4th Corps to have been annihilated. This was printed not only in newspapers but in secret reports as well. He therefore entrusted the pursuit to weaker, provincial troops, which suffered heavy defeats. Most of his own élite divisions were diverted to Kiangsi. Another reason for the modification of his plans was certainly the situation in the Central Soviet Area, which had become formidable, thanks to the mobilization of the inhabitants and the reorganization of its armed forces and active operations. The high degree of merit earned by Chou En-lai, Hsiang Ying, and Wang Chia-hsiang, then the core of Marxist – internationalist cadres in the political and military leadership, cannot be questioned.

In the summer of 1932, the Central Army Group opened an offensive against Kan-chou. Although the city was not captured, the offensive did result in the expansion and consolidation of soviet territory east of the Kan River. Mao Tse-tung and his adherents kept sulkily aloof, dismissing the operation as a "military adventure" because it was only partly successful.

In autumn 1932 it became clear that Chiang Kai-shek was planning to force a decisive battle on the Central Soviet Area's northern front. The Fourth Campaign entered its second stage. I was excellently informed of the Kuomintang troops' advance. On my recommendation and the agreement of the Comintern representative, the Party leadership in Shanghai suggested to the Central Committee Bureau and Revolutionary Military Council in Jui-chin that the Nationalist offensive be forestalled with a counter-attack. Accordingly, the Central Army Group was shifted to the northern front or, more exactly, to the northeastern military sector, where the enemy's system of fortifications was incomplete. Its task was to extend soviet control in northeastern Kiangsi and link up with the 10th Army. This would provide an advantageous springboard for attacks on the enemy's flank and rear. The operation soon produced its first success. The city of Li-ch'uan, wedged into the northeastern military sector, was seized, and, through the resultant spearhead, contact with the 10th Army was achieved.

We learned in the meantime that strong forces of Chiang Kai-shek under the supreme command of his finest general, Ch'en Ch'eng, were lining up for an offensive between the Hsü and Kan rivers in the direction of Lo-an – Ning-tu. Therefore, again following my recommendation, the northeast operation was cut short and the Central Army Group (the 1st and 3rd Corps) was marched off towards Lo-an. In Nan-feng it crossed the Hsü River without being observed by the enemy and caught the advancing 11th, 14th, and 52nd Divisions of the 18th Kuomintang Army by surprise. The first two divisions were annihilated and the 52nd was almost completely captured, including its commanders.

This ended the Fourth Campaign. Chiang Kai-shek suspended the offensive and ordered all troops to devote themselves exclusively to the construction of fortifications and lines of communication. His German advisers drew up a new plan of operations. The Central Soviet Area was granted a respite until the autumn of 1933.

The relative passivity of the Central Government's troops was dictated by political as well as military factors. At the beginning of 1933 the Japanese militarists broke the standstill agreement they had made with Chiang Kai-shek the previous year. Their troops pushed from

Manchukuo (Manchuria) over Shan-hai-kuan into northern China and over Jehol into Chahar. Chiang Kai-shek took virtually no action, being entirely preoccupied with his Fifth Campaign, which was to bring about the decisive victory against the Communists. It is probable that he was not displeased to see the all too independent generals and governors of the northern Chinese provinces weakened by the Japanese alone.

Meanwhile, the renewed aggression sparked off a powerful anti-Japanese movement, especially in northern and central China. Openly or secretly, and for whatever motives, many Kuomintang generals sympathized with it. Among them were Chang Hsüeh-liang, who, after the Japanese occupation of all northeastern China, was transferred to the northwestern province of Shensi with the Manchurian Army; Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai, who, after his heroic defence of Cha-pei, the Chinese suburb of Shanghai, was quasi-disciplined by having his 19th Route Army transferred to Fukien to fight Communists; and Feng Yü-hsiang, whose sphere of influence, Inner Mongolia, was directly threatened by the Japanese. The Comintern Office and Party leadership in Shanghai saw this as a favourable opportunity to mobilize the broad masses against imperialist Japan and to force Chiang Kai-shek into fighting the Japanese rather than the Communists. Even if this plan did not succeed, it was hoped at least temporarily to defer his offensive plans against the Central Soviet Area while he regained control over refractory generals.

An ECCI directive which appeared in January 1933 confirmed our judgement of the situation. It contained the suggestion that, in view of the rapidly growing national crisis and anti-Japanese mass movement, we should ally ourselves with any and every Chinese army or group in a common struggle against Japanese aggression. Our offer of assistance should hinge on three conditions: an immediate suspension of all attacks on soviet territory and the Red Army, the granting of democratic rights and freedoms, and the arming of the people.

All of us in Shanghai were in complete agreement with the political import of this directive. It was the first step in the formation of a new national united front.

By Central Committee resolution, a manifesto was released announcing the readiness of the Provincial Revolutionary Government and Red Army to join in a common struggle against Japan. It bore Mao Tse-tung's and Chu Te's signatures. If I am not mistaken, it was drafted by Lo Fu and we deliberated on it in the Central Committee house. Comrade Ewert also discussed it with other Comintern agents.

Our manifesto had the desired effect. In Kuomintang circles, even in Nanking, voices were heard calling for an alliance of all political and military forces, including the Communists, against Japan. Feng Yü-hsiang and T'sai T'ing-k'ai made similar declarations. According to

press reports, the governors of Kwantung and Kwangsi were of like mind, but waited in the background. Their concern was less the fight against Japan than the preservation of their provincial autonomy: the success of Chiang Kai-shek's campaign in the Central Soviet Area would probably endanger their own rule.

Two obstacles blocked the realization of the manifesto's proposals. The Chinese comrades, even those within the Party leadership, entertained a certain scepticism as to whether it was possible to fulfil the three conditions. They tended to regard the anti-Japanese declaration less as a call to action than as a propaganda act, designed to undermine Chiang Kai-shek's pressure on the Red Army. Inadvertently, they were beginning to echo Mao Tse-tung's insistence on exploiting contradictions within the Kuomintang as necessary to victory in a civil war. They also pointed out the objective difficulty of contacting and negotiating with those Kuomintang generals who were anti-Japanese.

In the spring of 1933 Feng Yü-hsiang announced his decision to open a counter-attack against the Japanese, and renamed his forces the "United Anti-Japanese Army". After exhaustive discussions on the situation, the Comintern Office and Party leadership in Shanghai thereupon resolved to order the Peking Central Committee to get in touch with Feng Yü-hsiang and to support him with a mobilization of the broad masses. Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai was to be contacted with the help of Sung Ch'ing-ling. The Chinese comrades had no plans for Chang Hsüeh-liang, because of his reputation as a politically lightweight playboy.

I participated in the relevant discussions and was directed to go to Peking to meet an agent of the Central Committee. At the same time a Chinese contact-man was sent from Shanghai to serve as interpreter. Together with him I was to seek out Feng Yü-hsiang in Chang-chia-k'ou (Kalgan) to reach concrete agreements commensurate with the ECCI directive. Unfortunately the contact-man did not appear at the agreed meeting place because, as I learned after my return to Shanghai, he had been arrested. For days I waited for him at various times in a bar, watched distrustfully by suspicious-looking characters. One of these fellows finally addressed me in Russian. That was enough for me. To cover my tracks, I looked up the American journalist Edgar Snow, to whom Agnes Smedley had given me an introduction to be on the safe side. I hoped to persuade him to accompany me to Feng Yü-hsiang in his capacity as a journalist. But he would have nothing to do with it. Instead, he and his wife took me on excursions through the outskirts of Peking during which we probed each other mistrustfully and pursued non-committal political discussions. I returned to Shanghai empty-handed.

Feng Yü-hsiang's campaign soon collapsed. And for reasons I could

not then explain, communication was never established with Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai. Obstructionism or disagreements in the secret Shanghai house of the Central Committee may have played a role. I think it more probable that Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai did not want to expose himself because of pressure within the 19th Army leadership by followers of Chiang Kai-shek.

Be that as it may, the chance to turn from civil war to a national revolutionary war, however slight it might have been, was now lost. But Party work in Kuomintang-controlled China continued. Although the emphasis remained on building a national united front against Japan, more attention than ever was given to the Central Soviet Area and its armed forces.

Conditions in Shanghai were becoming increasingly difficult. By the end of 1932 and early 1933 serious consideration was being given to the question of whether it would not be more expedient for the Politburo of the Central Committee and its Standing Committee to move to Jui-chin. With the greater part of their membership in Moscow or in the Chinese soviet bases and Red Army, they were hardly more than skeleton organizations. At first Po Ku and Lo Fu regarded it as no more than a matter of practicality. There was later the additional consideration that the Central Soviet Area's political administration would be substantially strengthened and that the tension felt between the two factions surrounding Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung since the Ningtu Conference might be reduced.

The ECCI was asked for advice. At the beginning of 1933 it sent its agreement, in which it took note of both the avoidance of further arrests in Shanghai and the improvement of Party and soviet activity in Kiangsi. In the spring of 1933 Po Ku, Lo Fu, Ch'en Yün (who, to the best of my knowledge, was responsible for trade union activity), and several other comrades of the central Party apparatus travelled to the Central Soviet Area. One Central Committee office, that of K'ang Sheng, remained in Shanghai. After his return to Moscow, however, it was run by Slavin and Mitskevich.

Before their departure Po Ku and Lo Fu requested of Comrade Ewert that I be sent to Kiangsi as well. He asked me how I felt about this. Because I could see that my work would be somewhat limited in Shanghai after the Party leadership's transfer to the soviet area and since the top military adviser was expected any day, I agreed with the proposal, provided a corresponding order could be obtained from the ECCI. Ewert and Po Ku radioed this to Moscow. In spring 1933 they received an affirmative response. I was to be made available to the Central Committee of the CCP as an adviser without authority to issue

commands. I received no further instructions or directives. For technical reasons, my departure was postponed until autumn. This interval was used to prepare myself thoroughly. I studied all available literature on China and began to learn Chinese.

Some time in the spring of 1933 the chief military adviser arrived in Shanghai. It was Manfred Stern, Fred for short, who later became known as General Kléber in the Spanish Civil War. He had travelled by way of Europe, America, and Japan, was months late, and had missed all pre-arranged meetings. Fortunately we knew each other quite well from Moscow. We ran into each other on the street one day and I put him in touch with Arthur Ewert. Although Fred, as chief military adviser, was my superior, I maintained my ties with the Shanghai Central Committee's hideout as contact-man for security reasons.

Unfortunately, Fred and I were soon at odds over questions of political as well as military significance. Our conflict centred on the CCP's relationship with the 19th Kuomintang Army. As mentioned earlier, at the beginning of 1932 it had bravely defended Cha-pei, the Chinese workers' suburb of Shanghai, against a Japanese assault. The Communist Party supported it on this occasion, thereby winning many new members to its ranks. Then Chiang Kai-shek negotiated with the Japanese, brought the battle to a halt, and transferred the 19th Army to Fukien in order to free his own troops there for the Fourth Campaign. His 'Blueshirts' and military gendarmerie carried out a purge. Nevertheless, anti-Japanese sentiment, now compounded by anger with Chiang Kai-shek, who was blamed for the national betrayal, remained undiminished among the troops and their officers. After a single advance in the autumn of 1932, which (for reasons I shall discuss shortly) brought it considerable if temporary territorial gain, the 19th Army came to a halt. It undertook no further attacks on the Central Soviet Area and seemed to lose interest in the fortification-building that was to have completed the blockade in Fukien. It is true that Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai, when the vague possibility of joining Feng Yü-hsiang in an anti-Japanese front presented itself early in 1933, did not back his words with deeds. But, in the opinion of Comrade Ewert and myself, he remained a potential ally in the sense that the Central Army Group should refrain from attacks on him and concentrate entirely on the northern front, that is, on Chiang Kai-shek's troops.

Fred, for his part, suggested soon after his arrival that the lull on the northern front be used for an offensive engagement in Fukien. He offered two arguments, only vaguely related to each other. First, he intimated the possibility of military aid from the Soviet Union for the Central Soviet Area. To Ewert and me such assistance appeared totally illusory, given the international scene and conditions within China. The Soviet Union had recently restored diplomatic relations with the

Nationalist régime. Even without the risk of serious political complications, the purely technical difficulty of transport was overwhelming. Fred argued that this could be accomplished by airlift or a military drive to a coastal harbour. Second, he claimed that Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai had proved himself unreliable during Feng Yü-hsiang's campaign. Our strength would have to be demonstrated in his eyes before we would win him as an ally against Japan and Chiang Kai-shek. "Strike first, talk later!" he replied to my protests and declared that, even if it did not bring Ts'ai to heel, a successful attack on the 19th Army would secure our rear and the exposed flank in Fukien for the impending decisive conflict with Chiang Kai-shek. We could always shift afterwards to active harassment against the Central Government's troops in the north.

Fred's suggestion was energetically supported by the Shanghai Central Committee bureau. Even the Politburo of the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Military Council radioed their approval from Jui-chin. Comrade Ewert, who initially had shared my opinion, was persuaded to the other point of view. Po Ku had strong misgivings at first, but was voted down. He later told me that Mao's endorsement of the operation contributed substantially to its acceptance.

In short, the plan was ratified and in the summer of 1933 the Central Army Group was marched towards the southwestern military sector. The 5th Corps provided the operation's cover against the Kuomintang troops in the south. The 1st and 3rd Corps advanced speedily on a broad front into western Fukien without meeting serious resistance. They suffered several thousand casualties, due mainly to malaria and foot-sores, which were to be expected in a subtropical summer. The number actually wounded and killed was very small. Within three months these two corps captured several towns and carried off a good booty of weapons, ammunition, food, and clothing. The 19th Army, which had fought the Japanese so splendidly eighteen months earlier, seemed hardly willing or able to fight now. Left to its own devices by the governor of Kwangtung and the Central Government's forces, it avoided battle in open terrain, limiting itself to the defence of fortified cities. It withdrew slowly along an older set of barricades on the Fu-t'unch'i and Sha-ch'i rivers. Then, towards the beginning of October, the offensive came to a halt in Nan-p'ing.

After this operation, in which Fukien provincial troops and some divisions of the 19th Army were severely beaten, representatives of the Red Army and Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai concluded a cease-fire. Since I was never briefed on the details of these events, which took place during my journey to the Central Soviet Area, I do not know whether it was because of our offensive or in spite of it that the armistice was arranged.

In a purely military sense, the operation was an indisputable success.

It resulted in the acquisition of considerable territory and rich booty, and ended in a standstill agreement. The targeted goals were achieved. On the other hand, once our northern front was left exposed by our main forces, Chiang Kai-shek drove his fortifications wedge along the Hsü River as far south as Nan-feng, and, in a surprise attack, captured Jui-chin. Most of the land won in northeastern Kiangsi at the end of 1932 was lost, the gap in the Kuomintang blockade was closed, and communication with the 10th Army was severed. The Central Army Group had to be thrown back to the threatened northern front in forced marches. Thus the advantage secured in Fukien was more than outweighed by the favourable line of departure Chiang Kai-shek had gained for his Fifth Campaign.

The concomitant political circumstances of the Fukien operation were no less disquieting. In the heated discussions that preceded it in Shanghai and followed it in Jui-chin, tendencies emerged that were fatally reminiscent of the old Li Li-san thesis that China was the new centre of world revolution and that the Soviet Union should assist in her inner struggle regardless of international complications. The policy of a national united front against Japan, which was heralded by the ECCI's January directive, was firmly supplanted by civil war against the Kuomintang. Forming alliances in a national revolutionary liberation struggle was replaced by exploiting contradictions within the Kuomintang to achieve military success. The already apparent orientation towards rural soviet bases and the Red Army was sustained.

Naturally, I could not see this ominous shifting of political priorities so clearly and, therefore, so critically in 1933 as I can now with hindsight. But the direction was unmistakable. The principle of the hegemony of the proletariat in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist revolution, already weakened by objective conditions, was now jeopardized subjectively as well.

2

IN THE CENTRAL SOVIET AREA, 1933 – 1934

BY the end of September 1933 preparations for my journey had been completed. All members of the Comintern Office gathered for a last time to deliberate on the situation. Comrade Ewert attached special importance to my contributing to a reconciliation of Party, Government, and Army. This was in reference to past animosity between Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, which he did not consider to be yet overcome. The Profintern and KIM agents stated their own special wishes. As was only to be expected, I received most instructions and suggestions from Fred, inferring from them that he was counting on armaments assistance from the Soviet Union and was nurturing ideas of a large-scale regular war. He directed me to have an airport built as quickly as possible, to set up fortified positions in the northern front between the Kan and Hsü rivers so that the enemy could be restrained there by weaker forces, and, after the conclusion of the Fukien Operation, to consider a big offensive to penetrate enemy centres as far as Nan-ch'ang or even the Yangtze River. Although the reversal in the military situation had not yet come about and could not therefore have been known to us, I voiced scepticism at these plans. He thereupon strictly ordered me to execute all his directives while in the Central Soviet Area, calling attention to the fact that he was the Comintern's chief military agent. He then provided me with a secret code, to ensure direct communication in an emergency. Comrade Ewert restrained him somewhat by reminding him that the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CCP and the Revolutionary Military Council were entitled to the last word in all decisions.

I left at midnight for the harbour, provided with a small carrying case and a few hundred dollars to cover unforeseen needs. There I boarded a British coastal steamer. This had the advantage that no prying questions were asked. As a precaution I procured an inland visa, which, admittedly, did not grant access to "Bandit Fighting Zones". The steamer brought me to Swatow (Shan-t'ou). In the only European hotel in this southern Chinese port, I met the Chinese contact-man as arranged. Wang, as he was called, was a member of the security department and spoke fluent English. Raised in a Christian mission school, he had been a military chaplain in Feng Yü-hsiang's army before becoming a Communist. (I met him again in Yen-an in 1937; he was working in the press department of the Central Committee and as an interpreter, but was still entrusted with security and contact assignments as well. It was he, for example, who arranged

the meeting between Edgar Snow and Teng Fa.)

The next morning Wang relieved me of my case (it was returned to me, contents intact, in Jui-chin) so that I could claim to be a harmless tourist on a day's outing if we were stopped on the way. Then we travelled inland to the district city of Ch'ao-an which marked the beginning of the "forbidden zone". Before we reached it, a KMT guard stopped us. He examined my passport, but finally let us proceed. Wang had persuaded him that I was an archaeologist on a visit to a nearby historic temple.

Without further incident we arrived at the Han River. Waiting for us there was a second contact, who, to my disappointment, could speak no foreign language. Thereafter I was to meet him repeatedly. He lost his life on the Long March in a Mantze ambush in 1935. Wang took his leave and my new companion led me to a junk which lay moored to the shore under the overhanging branches. I crawled into the narrow space between the deck and bottom planks. There I was forced to remain, stretched out flat and motionless, for two days and nights. Then late in the afternoon it moved away. Through the night a steamer towed it upstream along with many other craft. There were many stops. Several times, I heard footsteps above me, probably during inspections, and brusque questions and orders; from below came the rippling sound of water. On the third day I was allowed to come out on deck. The boatman took his vessel up a tributary of the Han River, and after sundown we stole ashore near a village. There, in a secluded house, we were received by men armed with Mauser pistols. These were the first Red Army soldiers I had ever seen.

We were still in KMT territory. The next evening we moved off. In single file we negotiated narrow paths between rice fields, around the corners of houses and past the fences of pitch-dark villages into the mountains. Suddenly, gunshots burst out ahead of us. We had to turn back. We were more fortunate the next night, and when dawn broke a good stretch of the way was behind us. After two nights we reached no man's land. A local battalion awaited us. We continued through mountains and valleys, now in daylight. Everywhere rice-fields were clogged with mud, yam-fields overgrown with weeds, sugar going to seed, and houses burnt to the ground, with hardly anyone in sight. Such were the visible effects of years of civil war.

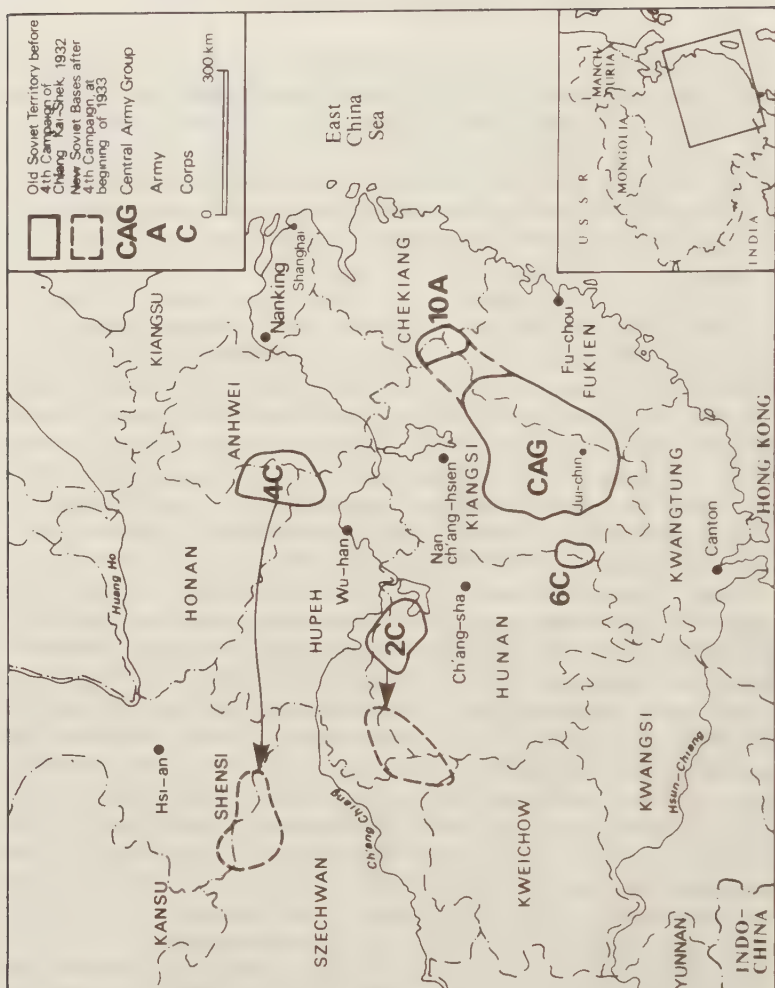
Again we ascended the mountains, right up to the ridge. As we crossed the border into Kiangsi province, the scene became far more hospitable. We entered a broad, fruitful plain with harvested fields, tidy houses, and industrious inhabitants. I had travelled the entire distance like a deaf-mute. The snatches of Chinese I had learned were useless to me: they were in Mandarin, the language of Peking, whereas my companions spoke only the Kwangtung or Fukien dialects. I rode or

walked, an enormous straw hat on my head and my face concealed by a sweat cloth, surrounded by bodyguards who warded off the curious. So it remained until we arrived in the Red capital, Jui-chin, which had already been almost completely destroyed in bombings by the KMT air force. We called a halt at a few isolated houses some distance from the ruined city. After we had waited several hours a somewhat haggard-looking middle-aged man appeared, smiling broadly, with a group of bodyguards following close behind him.

It was Teng Fa, a member of the Central Committee and security director for the Party and Government. I became well acquainted with him over the next few years. A man of inexhaustible good humour and with romantic leanings, he had a passion for arranging horse races and sharp-shooting events. His security guards were equipped with broad, curved executioners' swords, the handles of which were adorned with bright red scarves. As far as I can judge, he carried out his duties conscientiously and without bias, and did not involve himself openly in internal political strife. In April 1946 he was killed in the same airplane crash that claimed the lives of Po Ku and Yeh T'ing.

Teng Fa greeted me with a few broken Russian phrases and guided me to an isolated farmhouse. There I met two comrades who spoke very good Russian and who, in fact, had been assigned to me as interpreters. Both had studied in the Soviet Union. One of them was Wu Hsiu-ch'uan, who translated for me at meetings of the Politburo and its Standing Committee, and of the Revolutionary Council. This he did, in my estimation, with great precision throughout. In 1935 he was admitted to the External Affairs Office, won Mao's confidence, and gradually worked his way into the Central Committee as director of the Division for International Communications and a deputy Foreign Minister. I last talked to him in Lan-chou on my flight back to Moscow in 1939. He was directing the branch office of the Party and Government there and acting as a liaison officer to the Soviet base commander.

I saw him from a distance in 1963 at the Sixth Party Conference of the Socialist Unity Party of the German Democratic Republic. I also heard his crude attacks against fraternal socialist parties, for which he had to be called to order. But in the so-called Cultural Revolution, it was his turn to be chastised. In a Red Guard wall newspaper of 13 April 1967, the text of which I have obtained in English translation, he was denounced "for his opposition to Mao's revolutionary line and to Lin Piao, for his friendship with Yugoslav and Soviet revisionists, and for his attacks on K'ang Sheng and the leadership group of the Cultural Revolution". At the "world-famous (!) Tsunyi Conference of January 1935", it declared, "it was none other than Li Te, that great renegade, who most vehemently opposed the military course of Mao Tse-tung. Everything Li Te reported and perpetrated at the Conference was



The major Soviet areas before and after the fourth campaign of Chiang Kai-shek 1932 - 3

directed against Mao Tse-tung and it was none other than Wu Hsiu-ch'uan, that rotten egg, who faithfully translated Li Te's reports and speeches."

The other interpreter was a northern Chinese whose name I have forgotten. He possessed solid military knowledge, attended mainly to training matters, and worked for me at the Military Academy. In Yenan too, until my departure, we worked together in the K'ang-ta, or the "anti-Japanese cadre school", as the Military Academy was called after the start of the anti-Japanese war.

A bodyguard comprising some very young Red Army soldiers with Mausers and swords was also placed at my disposal.

That same evening I was visited by Po Ku and Lo Fu. They told me that my home was in the barricaded zone where all central institutions — the Central Committee, the Provisional Revolutionary Government, the Revolutionary Military Council, and the Red Army's General Headquarters — were billeted. The buildings of the Central Committee and General Headquarters were just five minutes away on foot. KMT planes had located the zone long ago and bombed it almost daily. Everywhere one looked there were dug-out shelters and slit trenches, but these afforded only relative protection once the Nationalist air force began dropping 500 to 1,000-kilo delayed-action bombs. We therefore went to another area, even farther away from Jui-chin. The local inhabitants moved freely through the barricaded zone. Men, women, and children were working indefatigably to bring in the second harvest of the year. They carried rice, yams, and pickled vegetables to a central depot. Even pigs and chickens were delivered. They wove bast and straw sandals for the Red Army soldiers, and made uniforms from imported cotton.

Po Ku and Lo Fu briefed me on the economic, political, and military situation in the Central Soviet Area. I will go into this later. Here I would simply like to touch on another matter relevant to the latest military developments. Both men expressed satisfaction with the success of the Fukien Operation, which at this time — mid-October — was essentially concluded, and indicated the possibility of an agreement with Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai. This actually came about at the end of the month. They were anxious about conditions in northeastern Kiangsi. In fact, news of the loss of Li-ch'uan arrived about the same time as I did. This led them to condemn in no uncertain terms the conduct of the Northeast military sector's commander, Hsiao Ching-kuang. He had reportedly surrendered the city without a fight and fled with the independent units under his command, leaving the local forces to their fate. They branded it as regression to outmoded forms of guerrilla warfare,

which, in view of the recent emergence of consolidated soviet bases and the enemy's blockhouse warfare, could not but lead to the loss of strategically important points or even of larger areas. This had already occurred in 1933, when Lo Ming, then Secretary of the West Fukien Regional Party Committee, and other political and military leaders of this district, were forced into a hasty retreat by a KMT advance which included the newly transferred 19th Army. It was only now that the lost territory could be recovered.

Po Ku warned me against broaching the topic in the Revolutionary Military Council. This was a sensitive subject with Mao Tse-tung, for he basically supported the same line as Lo Ming and Hsiao Ching-kuang. I took this advice to heart. It surprised me, therefore, when shortly afterwards, in mid-December, Chou En-lai published an article entitled "Against the Lo Ming Line Advocated by Hsiao Ching-kuang in the Red Army". It stated that this course had deep roots in the Red Army, especially among independent and local units, and that the struggle against it would represent an important factor in the victory against Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Campaign as it had in the Fourth. Mao Tse-tung, on the other hand, took Hsiao Ching-kuang, a fellow-Hunanese who was somehow involved in his political machinations around 1930, into his personal protection and foisted the blame for the loss of Li-ch'uan on to the Party leadership under Po Ku, which he characterized as left or right opportunist as the occasion demanded.

The evening was also spent demarcating the scope of my activity with the Red Army. It was decided that I should devote myself to matters of military strategy, operational and tactical leadership, and the training and organization of troops and behind-the-lines services. We emphatically agreed that I should abstain from political affairs. I therefore took part only in those meetings of the Politburo and the Standing Committee in which military questions were discussed.

Po Ku and Lo Fu further informed me how, as the only Central Committee secretaries present in Jui-chin, they had divided their own work. Po Ku was responsible for the Party and Army, and Lo Fu for the Government and local soviets. This division was to have momentous consequences, for it placed Po Ku in Mao Tse-tung's direct line of fire when the latter tried to regain his former position of power. Lo Fu, however, would eventually come under Mao's influence in his work with him in the Government. This still lay in the future. For the time being the two secretaries were like-minded and sympathetic comrades.

Before we broke up, Po Ku requested that I should stay inside my house as much as possible until further notice. He felt that this was advisable for my safety as a "foreign devil" and in view of the constant KMT clamour about "Russian agents". I could not really see this, but I complied nevertheless. As it was, a few days later I went down with a

foot infection. My feet were grossly swollen and covered with boils. The doctor explained that it was a common tropical disease carried by swamp water and mosquitos. It tied me to the house for a month and a half.

Several days after this talk, there was a meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council in my house. Po Ku, Lo Fu, Mao Tse-tung, Hsiang Ying, Liu Po-ch'eng, and two or three other comrades whose names I have forgotten, including the secretary of the Youth Organization, were present, but three prominent comrades were not there. Chu Te and Chou En-lai were at the front; Wang Chia-hsiang, badly wounded by bomb splinters in 1932, lay in the infirmary. Throughout 1933 he seldom appeared in the Politburo or Military Council, to which he belonged.

The meeting was chaired by Mao Tse-tung or Hsiang Ying. Po Ku introduced me. Mao greeted me with stiff formality, acknowledging the successful counter-offensive on the northern front in the winter of 1932 - 3. He said he knew that the impetus for it came from me, and concluded from this that I shared his belief that the enemy must be hit in quick short strikes against his inner and outer lines of communication. Then the talk turned to recruitment and logistical problems. Hsiang Ying ended with a brief survey of the situation at the front. It seemed that the entire Central Army Group was being marched to the northern front. I was asked how I would plan the rest of the operation. Mindful of Fred's instructions, I suggested engaging the enemy in positional warfare to the north between the Kan and Hsü rivers, committing the 5th Corps (one division) south of Li-ch'uan to defence, and advancing far to the northeast with the 1st and 3rd Corps (five divisions), as had been planned a year before. The proposal was accepted and a resolution to that effect passed.

I describe what occurred at these first meetings in some detail because they reflect the pattern of subsequent briefings and deliberations. Po Ku and Chou En-lai took care to discuss all military questions with me beforehand and supported my suggestions in the Military Council. This was only natural, because both had special jurisdiction over this area of work. But over time, despite my repeated affirmations of the purely advisory nature of my office, this created the false impression that I possessed absolute authority. Perhaps Po Ku permitted this misconception to develop in order to strengthen his own voice. But when dissensions erupted Mao exploited it skilfully to undermine Po Ku's position as General Secretary of the CCP.

The figures I gathered in the next weeks and months to augment my earlier information indicated that the Central Soviet Area was well prepared for Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Campaign. Its external situation,

however, presented difficulties. Communication with the 2nd and 4th Corps and with the 10th Army was broken, and was only sporadic with the 6th Corps and 16th Division. This eliminated the possibility of a coordinated action with these units. Except for the 16th Division, the dissolution of which was already considered imminent, they had managed to maintain or recover their essential combat strength. The 4th Corps had even gained somewhat. But the soviet bases themselves were partly or totally lost. And then there were unfavourable political factors such as the weakness of Party activity in areas controlled by the KMT, the fact that there was no political disintegration among the enemy troops, and the inadequate development of guerrilla warfare in the enemy's hinterland.

The Central Soviet Area was therefore on its own. Its territory had been reduced to well below what we had imagined in Shanghai. The newly conquered region in Fukien could not yet be regarded as in our control, and the recently severed part of northeastern Kiangsi could no longer be so regarded. At most, 40,000 square km were secure from the enemy. My personal observations during many trips to the different fronts convinced me of this. The consolidated area extended from Jui-chin an average distance of 100 kilometres in all directions. To the south the distance was considerably less, and greater to the north. An area roughly equal in size was formally under soviet administration, but was none the less constantly fought over by local Red Army and enemy units, especially Min-t'uan and provincial troops. Many of these districts had already been cut off by the KMT system of fortifications.

Nevertheless, the economic situation inside the enemy blockade was not bad. The agricultural produce sufficed for the feeding of the local populace, and, in part, for the Red Army as well. The latter largely satisfied its needs in weaponry, food, and uniforms through raids on KMT areas, as for example in the summer and autumn of 1933. In addition to this, there was a rather brisk trade over southern Fukien and northern Kwangtung. Tungsten, tobacco, and other products were exported; urgently needed basic commodities, such as salt, cotton, and petroleum, were imported.

Political work among the people had improved since the establishment of the Central Committee in Kiangsi and was even further reinforced when the Politburo assumed direct control in the spring of 1933. The results were evident not only in an increased delivery of food and production of clothing and other equipment for the Red Army, but in a great influx of volunteers to its ranks as well. This made possible the formation of numerous new regular units in late 1933: the 3rd Division (later the 9th Corps); the 6th Division (integrated into the 3rd Corps); the 14th and the 15th Independent Divisions which were manned overwhelmingly by Youth Organization members and therefore sometimes

called the KIM Divisions (later merged into one division and placed under the command of the 1st Corps); the 19th, 20th, and 21st Divisions (later amalgamated as the 7th Corps); and the 22nd and 23rd Independent Divisions. On the basis of the records at General Headquarters, the Central Committee determined that the recruitment of soldiers and the formation of new divisions had been marred by errors and failings. Too often the principle of voluntarism was not observed by the local soviets, who replaced persuasion with administrative measures. This contributed to a very high percentage of draft-dodgers, absentees, and deserters. With regional variations, it averaged at 20 – 30 per cent. Not enough care was exercised in the selection of commanders and commissars. For this reason, the losses in dead and wounded, but mostly sick and deserters, in engagements by new units was sometimes as high as 50 per cent, whereas the normal casualty rate in older divisions stood at 10 – 20 per cent. Finally, the establishment of so many new units impaired the ability of existing ones to replace their losses.

Still, the regular armed forces had grown to at least 40,000 men who, because of the success of the 1933 operations, were better armed than previously, particularly in machine-guns. The lack of heavy weapons, on the other hand, was as critical a problem as ever. There were captured mortars — or, more precisely and in the colloquialism of the time, “mountain mine-throwers” — which could be carried in disassembled parts on the backs of mules, and field guns. But as there was no ammunition these weapons were useless. Rifle and machine-gun ammunition was produced in our own workshops by re-using spent cartridges. From 1933 an arsenal was manufacturing hand-grenades and repairing light infantry weapons; by 1934 it was producing mortar shells on a makeshift basis. The staffs and troops were adequately supplied with intelligence apparatus, particularly radios and telephone cable. The former served reconnaissance as well as communication purposes. With their help many of the reports and orders of the central KMT headquarters were intercepted and deciphered. Our senior staffs functioned quite well, chiefly owing to the efforts of Liu Po-ch’eng. Admittedly, in some divisions and in most regiments staff activity was confined to subordinate auxiliary paperwork. The support services, such as logistics, reinforcements, and medical facilities, performed adequately, given the limits in means and manpower. The baggage train with its great number of porters, cooks, and other non-military workers was as much an encumbrance as a necessary service.

Liu Po-ch’eng developed three different models for the organization of regular units. After I evaluated them they were approved by the Revolutionary Military Council. In essence, their structure corresponded to that of the Soviet Red Army; but numerically in men,

weaponry, and equipment they were far inferior. According to the plan, the division consisted of three rifle regiments, a mortar detachment (with between two and six mortars), a reconnaissance company, an intelligence company, and a staff (guard) company. Each regiment was divided into three rifle battalions, a machine-gun company, and a reconnaissance platoon, an intelligence platoon, and a staff platoon; and in each battalion were three companies, each consisting of three rifle platoons with three squads of ten men apiece. The authorized strength of the division varied by type. It was stipulated that there should be 7,500 men with 3,500 – 4,000 rifles, 120 – 150 light and heavy machine-guns and two mortars for the 5th, 7th, and 9th Corps, and 6,500 men with 3,000 rifles and 40 – 50 machine-guns for the independent divisions. The actual strength in men and arms was, as a rule, much lower, especially in the independent divisions. In some it dropped as low as 3,000 – 4,000 men and less. Even the 5th Corps, which I observed, camouflaged in an improvised cover of foliage, while it was passing close to Jui-chin on its march from Kwangtung to the northern front, numbered hardly 5,000 men at this time.

The new organizational structure proved a general success. Our disadvantages in confronting the harsh conditions of the 5th Campaign were the relative weakness of the lower formations (platoons and squads), limited fire-power due to the scarcity of machine-guns and ammunition, and the high proportion of hastily trained soldiers with little experience.

These shortcomings were partly balanced by the quality of the political work among the troops and prisoners-of-war in 1933 – 4. This bore fruit in the enhanced self-discipline within the Army, model behaviour towards the civilian population, and exemplary fighting morale. During the year of my stay in the Soviet Area, I heard of only one gross violation of discipline. Two scouts disguised as KMT soldiers raped a woman behind the enemy's lines. When they returned from their mission, they were brought before a drumhead court-martial and executed. Let me repeat that this was a drastically exceptional case.

Strong traces of the old guerrilla mentality were still evident among the senior commanders and in independent and local units. This was demonstrated not only by the behaviour of Hsiao Ching-kuang mentioned earlier, but also by an incident which I experienced on my first trip to the northern front in December 1933. A commander was designated by General Headquarters leader of an independent division. But the man in question proceeded directly to the front headquarters, refused the order, and demanded categorically that he be assigned to the 3rd Corps instead. This was even the subject of a little disagreement I had with Chou En-lai, who advised me that I must allow for the mentality of such cadres.

I had suggested as early as the summer of 1933 in Shanghai that a military academy be founded in order to raise the quality of senior and middle military leaders. One was already in operation when I arrived at Jui-chin, but it was still in its infancy. There were about one hundred students, all veteran junior and middle-rank commanders. By late 1934, however, their number had increased to several hundred. Apart from giving occasional political lectures, the leading comrades paid them little attention. Only Liu Po-ch'eng and Chou En-lai revealed an interest. With the assistance of my interpreter who was well versed in military knowledge, I took special charge of tactical instruction, delivered lectures, and conducted seminars and war games. This was urgently needed because, up to my arrival, military subjects had been taught exclusively by captured KMT officers, among whom was the commander of the 52nd Division (his name has slipped my mind). This general once tried to incite his former subordinates to revolt, and in early 1934 he unsuccessfully attempted suicide. Chou En-lai requested that I talk with him. He explained that he could not reconcile his conscience with training Communists to fight Chiang Kai-shek, head of the National government. Shortly afterwards he disappeared. Probably he was shot.

The Nationalist officers taught military tactics from German field manuals, including one entitled "Command and Combat with Combined Arms". This was an absurdity, for we had no heavy weapons and therefore could not wage large-scale warfare in the classic sense. I endeavoured to devise tactical principles for a mobile war with light infantry, corresponding to the Red Army's guerrilla tradition and to the requirements of combat against an enemy with modern equipment. But the vast majority of KMT officers showed no desire to change their ways. We eventually replaced them with our better students. One exception, by the way, was a young engineer major who distinguished himself on the Long March in the building of the bridge over the Wu River in eastern Kweichow and later joined the Party. Nevertheless, when he was granted leave to visit his home just after the start of the anti-Japanese war in 1937, he did not return.

Let me turn, finally, to the social and political structure of the Red Army. A survey by the political administration provided me with an illuminating insight into how the Central Army Group was made up in the summer of 1934. The study reported that its composition was: 66 per cent peasants, 30 per cent workers, and 40 per cent miscellaneous. I cannot regard the figures as reliable on this point, for they are obviously rooted in the blurred and even false class definition, which, under Mao's influence, relegated farm hands, coolies, and disreputable elements to the working class. In reality, recruitment statistics clearly showed that the percentage of genuine workers was much smaller and

that of peasants and miscellaneous correspondingly higher. They also indicated that 77 per cent of the total effective strength came from the native population of the Soviet Area and 7 per cent from prisoners-of-war; 4 per cent were listed as deserters to the Red Army and 12 per cent were former members of the KMT forces. The last category certainly represented the old nucleus — or what was left of it — which had coalesced after 1927 from rebel troops of the former National Revolutionary Army. The age span was favourable: 1 per cent were under sixteen years of age, 51 per cent were between sixteen and twenty-four, 44 per cent between twenty-four and forty, and four per cent over forty years old. Some 28 per cent belonged to the CCP, and over 10 per cent of the Army was in the Communist Youth Organization. The proportion of Communists had risen by 50 per cent between 1932 and 1934 and had even doubled if one includes the Young Communists. Commanders contributed 27 per cent of the Party membership, political workers 10 per cent, soldiers 40 per cent, and individuals in headquarters or support services 23 per cent.

The survey also underlined the overwhelmingly peasant character of the Army. This was to become ever more evident in the following years. But it also demonstrated that the Army stood under the undisputed leadership of the Communist Party, which guaranteed its high discipline and fighting morale. Even amid the trials of the fifth Campaign and the Long March these qualities were maintained.

The plan for Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Campaign was an unprecedented combination of political, police, and military measures. To improve the reliability and discipline of the troops, the military police were reinforced, and political departments, consisting mainly of the fascistic "Blue shirts", were set up in all units. In order to break the resistance of those left behind in captured and occupied territory, a system of "mutual responsibility" was introduced, and reactionary "self-defence organizations" of the Min-t'uan type were given practically unlimited administrative and supervisory powers. The "New Life" movement was initiated. This was supposedly designed to pacify the countryside, reconstruct cities and villages destroyed in the civil war, and "stabilize" the economy. Actually, its conjunction with other measures marked the return to old, half-feudal conditions. "Reforms" which pretended to remove the worst abuses of serfdom served as bait for the peasants, but in reality restored to landowners and usurers property titles which had been abolished under soviet control. It was hardly to be expected that the people would allow themselves to be impressed by these steps. They did, however, seem to have some effect among the KMT troops; at least, there were hardly any deserters or prisoners-of-war during the Fifth Campaign.

Still, the principal innovation was the new military plan devised by the German advisers after the failures of the Fourth Campaign. Its basic intention was to conduct a large-scale strategic offensive, outward from a single base in different directions, to gain an operational superiority in each of these directions, and to withstand any attack solely with defensive means while constructing an ever more solid bunker system in a step-by-step advance. It would be without any doubt a lengthy and costly enterprise. But the German experts believed that, within the course of one or two years, it could, and must, lead to the complete fragmentation of the Central Soviet Area and the eventual stragulation of the remaining "islands". These siege operations, they felt, would increasingly deprive the Central Army Group of its freedom of movement. It would be gradually worn down, and finally holed up and annihilated.

The military prerequisites for this were at hand. The still ample funds loaned by the imperialist powers in 1932 enabled at least the Central Government's troops to reorganize and rearm on modern lines. The German and other foreign advisers directed training in the new heavy weapons and in troop deployments along the two principal axes of advance. The rear lines and support routes were well secured by the construction of motor roads and concrete bunkers, the so-called block-houses.

With this as a foundation, Chiang Kai-shek alerted no fewer than forty divisions for the Fifth Campaign against the Central Soviet Area. The campaign against other Red Army bases and units was entrusted largely to provincial troops. They merely received some underpinning in the form of between two and three of Chiang's own divisions in each operational direction. In addition, there were five divisions of the 19th Army, between six and seven divisions of the KMT Army, and between three and four divisions of the Hunan Army prepared for action against the Central Soviet Area. This represented a total military strength of between fifty and sixty divisions with about half a million men, or, in other words, a numerical superiority of more than ten to one. There could be no comparison in firepower. Five hundred aircraft bombed the fronts and interior of the Soviet Area almost incessantly in relays. We had practically no serviceable anti-aircraft guns; our most important protection against air attacks as well as in ground fighting was a masterly use of camouflage everywhere. Approximately 1,500 mortars and field guns confronted our two dozen, and even these were mostly useless for lack of ammunition. The disparity in machine-gun strength was not so pronounced, but even here there were twenty or thirty of theirs to every one of ours. Our chief weapons were and remained rifles and hand-grenades.

We were well informed of Chiang Kai-shek's plans. There were to be

seven primary lines of attack, three of which were on the northern front, with the immediate object of taking Yung-feng, Kuang-ch'ang, and Chien-ning. In the west, the first strike was to be directed against Hsing-kuo, on the southern front against Hui-ch'ang, and on the eastern front against Ch'ang-t'ing and Ning-hua. At each of these points, between three and four divisions stood ready for the advance. In addition, Ch'en Ch'eng's army with between ten and twelve élite divisions waited in the northeast to attack any front sector at any time. The other ten to fifteen divisions were posted in the blockhouses themselves to provide cover for the troops who were attacking.

It was clear that this plan was aimed at driving armoured wedges deep into the heart of the Soviet Area in the seven assault directions, while by-passing the regions between them so as to isolate and then "mop up" each one individually. Fortunately no simultaneous concentric offensive took place. The Hunan and Kwangtung troops delayed and the 19th Army left formation. The rivalries and conflicts of interest which lay behind this behaviour offered new possibilities to "exploit the political contradictions in the enemy camp" and to compensate for his overwhelming military superiority by concentrating our main forces on one of the northern fronts.

From the very beginning, the enemy had consistently adhered to the tactic of offence by defensive means. When he advanced, he was accompanied by a rolling barrage of aircraft and artillery. Even when he met no resistance, he dug in after every 4 - 5 *li* (2 km). He built blockhouses, which stood within sight and firing range of each other, on all roads and in every town. From these fortifications, which could hardly be challenged by our light infantry weapons, he extended himself only so far that he could fall back if we attacked. Incidentally, the enemy's blockhouse system, which the Red soldiers sometimes disdainfully termed the "turtle tactic", was not altogether unprecedented. It had by now been employed for several years and had gradually led to a virtually impregnable blockade of the Central Soviet Area. The blockhouse system was most strongly built and most deeply staggered in the north. Its front line stretched from Kan-chiang, north of Yung-feng, to Li-ch'uan, south of Lo-an and Nan-feng. Its backbone was formed by the Hsü River, which was well fortified on both banks from Fu-chou to Nan-feng. In the west, the main line of fortifications ran along the Kan River to Kan-chou and from there farther to the south, north of Hsin-feng and south of Hui-ch'ang to the Fukien border. To the east, that is in western Fukien, the blockhouses were never completed; after our 1933 summer offensive they were largely abandoned or destroyed. For a while there was a gap in the northeast, which the enemy planned to close after the capture of Li-ch'uan by extending its fortifications over

the cities Kuang-ch'ang and Chien-ning — which, however, were still in our hands.

The Central Committee, the Soviet Government, and the Military Council responded to Chiang Kai-shek's strategic plan with energetic measures. Under the political slogans "Everything for the front!" and "Do not surrender one foot of territory!", they mobilized the masses. Especially successful were the attempts to maximize agricultural production and to achieve an equitable distribution of produce and imported goods. Increasingly, a policy of independence and self-reliance was adopted. A new enlistment drive was undertaken which lasted throughout 1934. According to official figures it resulted in 100,000 volunteers, 60,000 of whom entered the regular units. The others were unfit for service, deferred for other reasons, or assigned to local self-defence organizations. But even this 60 per cent sufficed to compensate for the losses of a year's heavy fighting and even to create a certain reserve.

In the first phase of the Fifth Campaign, that is October-December 1933, the Revolutionary Military Council committed the Central Army Group to the northern front, chiefly the northeast sector. Taking advantage of the fact that the enemy's fortifications belt was not yet finished there, it was to encircle and attack the outer flank of Ch'en Ch'eng's army. This, however, was to be done without thrusting into centres in the enemy's rear in Chekiang – Anhwei, as Fred had suggested, because of the danger that it would be cut off and prevented from returning. There was a major battle at the end of October between our 1st and 3rd Corps and three to five of Ch'en's divisions. The enemy was routed, but not destroyed, because he immediately dug in near his base in Li-ch'uan and switched to defence, giving full play to his superior fire-power. Two other conflicts in this area also ended indecisively after initial successes.

In November the 1st and 3rd Corps shifted the weight of their operations from the northeast, where the enemy had resumed his block-house construction as planned, to the Hsü River in order to gain a lead on the central assault column, which was forging its way from Nan-feng to Kuang-ch'ang. There was a series of skirmishes in which we managed to gain tactical successes but not decisive victories. Every time we attacked, the enemy withdrew into the protection of his fortifications under cover of a barrage of fire. Even Ch'en Ch'eng's main forces, which soon arrived to reinforce the central column, avoided a decisive battle. This combat activity, generally subsumed under the name Ch'ü-wan Operation (after the river Hsü, which is also pronounced "Ch'ü"), dragged on for over a month. It finally petered out into small individual attacks on our part.



The Author's route from Shanghai to Jui-chin (with the Central Soviet area after the stand of Spring 1933)

We experienced the same in December when Ch'en Ch'eng again tried to advance from Li-ch'uan to Chien-ning. Our 3rd and 5th Corps attacked him here as well, but could only hold him off, without making headway.

In these three months, the Central Army Group had to content itself with a series of tactical successes. It could not achieve its primary goal, which was the enemy's destruction in one great out-flanking manoeuvre and open battle. The KMT offensive was merely braked. But the enemy fell short of his aims also. He was unable to take Kuang-ch'ang or Chien-ning. He did, however, succeed in lengthening his blockhouse system from Li-ch'uan to Shao-wu in northwestern Fukien.

The fighting in the first phase of the Fifth Campaign was analysed by the Military Council and front headquarters. Lin Piao was displeased that, during the Ch'ü-wan Operation, the 1st Corps had been ordered to follow up its initially successful attack by pursuing the enemy into his fortified area without a secure return route. P'eng Te-huai objected to any division of the main forces. Had the 1st Corps been on hand in the December battle southeast of Li-ch'uan, he argued, a decisive victory could have been obtained. Mao seized upon this critical remark to speak out vehemently against the tactic of engaging the enemy in his main operational directions and of counter-attacking him whenever he moved out of his fortified zone: this robbed us of the initiative and of the possibility of dealing the enemy a devastating blow under advantageous conditions, namely against his rear communications lines or in the interior of the Soviet Area. No one objected in principle to this strategy which he called offensive defence. We were all for it. But Mao could not explain how mobile warfare was to be achieved in view of the enemy's blockhouse technique. The attempt to force a decisive conflict on his lines of communication in northeastern Kiangsi had produced nothing of strategic value. Favourable conditions for a battle in the interior of the Soviet Area were unlikely, so long as the enemy did not permit himself to be lured in, that is, until he abandoned seige operations — and the experiences of the last three months demonstrated that he did not dream of doing this. He could therefore continue his penetration drive unmolested while we waited. This would mean our surrender of important sections of the Soviet Area without an opportunity to strike a fatal blow at the enemy. These considerations, which coincided with my assessment of the situation, dominated the discussions in the Revolutionary Military Council.

Before this meeting, about the end of November, Po Ku and I had visited the front headquarters, then near Chien-ning. Apart from our wish to confer on military strategy and tactics with Chu Te and Chou En-lai, there were some ambiguities and misunderstandings about the

relationship of the Revolutionary Military Council and the front command which required clarification.

The most important question was that of jurisdiction. I had thought that the front command was subordinate to the Revolutionary Military Council and carried out its directives. I soon discovered this was not the case. The front command acted on its own initiative, at least so far as the deployment of the Central Army Group was concerned. It relied on its superior knowledge of the changing military situation, since it alone was provided with all the means of technical reconnaissance by radio and the additional intelligence services of agents and scouts. There remained but little for the General Headquarters as a department of the Military Council, except the training of independent and local units and securing the organization of recruitment, training, reinforcements and supplies. This division of the military leadership hampered the co-ordination of combat operations, fostered guerilla-ism, and facilitated Mao Tse-tung's game of playing individuals off against each other.

Our journey (I was still unable to walk, only ride) lasted just three days. On the way we rested in posts along the lines of communication, which made a decent if inevitably somewhat crude impression, and in a field hospital, which, despite poor facilities met hygienic requirements. A field telephone cable ran from Jui-chin to Chien-ning. The posts as well as the soviets in the towns we passed were also connected to it. In some localities, there were posters calling for greater productivity. In short: a peaceful scene, but one filled with political activity. Once we passed a cliff fortress, out of shooting range; I was told that it had long housed a big landowner's private band and that it had survived because it had ample stores of provisions and water — there was a natural spring.

On the evening of the third day, we arrived in Chien-ning. Chu Te and Chou En-lai received us at the front headquarters, which was scattered over a dozen houses. With the guards, it numbered several hundred people. Among them was an entire company of *hsiao kwei* (little devils) as the mostly very young members of the reconnaissance detachment were lovingly called. They maintained constant shifts twenty-four hours a day to intercept and decipher KMT radio messages. In the next few days we covered certain topics in detail.

The first concerned the relationship of the Revolutionary Military Council to the front command and that of the General Headquarters to the front headquarters. We quickly agreed that the integration of both headquarters would be the best solution. They both employed the same means of communication with their troops — field telephones and radio. Because of the relatively small distance between the centre and the front, personal contact with troop leaders presented no insurmountable difficulties. In addition, Chu Te, chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council and commander-in-chief of the Red Army, and

Chou En-lai, Politburo and Military Council member and chief political commissar of the Red Army, could exercise their functions far more effectively at Jui-chin. All ambiguities over jurisdiction would be eliminated at one blow. The direction of larger combat operations could be entrusted, as the situation required, to the commander of the 1st or 3rd Corps, that is, Lin Piao or P'eng Te-huai, or to a leadership panel of the Military Council. This proposal was seconded by the Military Council and implemented at the beginning of 1934.

Six years later, Mao Tse-tung's brother Mao Tse-min claimed in Moscow that I had in this manner tried to remove Chou En-lai and Chu Te from their positions of authority, but that Mao Tse-tung had seen through the manoeuvre and protested vigorously. This contrived, slanderous imputation, a typical example of Maoist intrigue, was so absurd that even Chou En-lai, who by then had long since sided with Mao, declared that he knew nothing of it.

A riddle to me at this time was the relationship between Chou En-lai and Chu Te. My impression was that all military decisions were made by Chou En-lai. This was certainly true of the Ch'ü-wan Operation, the second subject of our discussions. Po Ku indicated that Chu Te had receded into the background years earlier. Mao had seized the military leadership for himself in 1929, but was relieved by Chou En-lai in 1932. I realized that intra-Party conflicts were at play here and inquired no further. I shall return to the little I learned about this many years later.

There was total accord among us in our judgement of the military situation. The Ch'ü-wan Operation was to be abandoned as soon as possible, once Ch'en Ch'eng's main forces were massed on the Hsü River and a new assault mounted on the part of the northeastern front left partially exposed by the enemy. I dutifully presented Fred's old plan, which had in effect already been rejected by the Revolutionary Military Council. This called for a fortified line between the Kan and Hsü rivers and a deep thrust into the enemy's rear in the northeast. I did not conceal my own scepticism. We were all completely aware of the impracticability of this type of positional warfare. Still we considered Chien-ning and Kuang-ch'ang to be strategically important points that ought to be held. Accordingly, blockhouses were to be built in the vicinity of Kuang-ch'ang in order to obstruct the most convenient path for the enemy assault columns' approach and to secure the river crossing on the Hsü for our own surprise attack. These decisions were conveyed to the Military Council and given its approval.

While we were in Chien-ning, Hsiang Ying relayed a message from Shanghai stating that Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai was contemplating a revolt against Chiang Kai-shek. He was relying on the political support of finance minister Sung and other oppositional KMT politicians. The governors of Kwangtung and Kwangsi would at least remain neutral.

The Comintern Office and the Shanghai bureau of the Central Committee felt we should exploit these new contradictions in the enemy's camp to deal Chiang Kai-shek a devastating blow. The military representative of the ECCI (Fred) recommended that, as soon as Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai opened his attack, the Central Army Group should break through the enemy positions on the northwestern front, cross the Kan River to outflank the KMT troops, and advance on Nan-ch'ang in their rear. Chu Te, Chou En-lai, Po Ku, and I agreed in principle and drafted a proposal to this effect. For want of information, we did not at this time go into the political and military details necessary for its implementation. Po Ku felt that this should be done in Jui-chin in January 1934 with the participation of all leading comrades. Hsiang Ying telegraphed that the Revolutionary Military Council had already granted its provisional agreement to the plan.

In view of the new turn of events and the probability of a regrouping of the main forces to northwestern Kiangsi, the front command left the 1st Corps near Kuang-ch'ang, while the 3rd and 5th Corps (four divisions) launched a new large-scale assault southeast of Li-ch'uan. The dispersion of forces certainly had a negative affect on the outcome of the operation and was rightly criticized by P'eng Te-huai.

Po Ku and I returned to Jui-chin by a roundabout way. We scouted the terrain around Kuang-ch'ang. I gave instructions for the construction of bunkers that would be camouflaged from view and secure against bombs and artillery fire. This was desperately needed, for up till then the improvised embrasured domes offered excellent targets for the enemy.

In January 1934 the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the CCP convened not far from Jui-chin. This was followed at the end of the same month by the second National Soviet Congress. Three years had passed since the Fourth Central Committee Plenum, at which the membership of the Politburo and Central Committee was replenished with Marxist-Internationalists. Now it would be seen to what extent earlier differing views on the Chinese revolution had been reconciled and a fruitful co-operation with Mao Tse-tung and his followers in the Central Soviet Area assured.

There was good reason for hope. Under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninist cadres, who abided loyally by the directives of the ECCI, the economic and political situation in Kiangsi-Fukien was stabilized — as even Mao would have to admit — and the military forces consolidated. In contrast to the severe conflicts in Ning-tu in 1932, there was a closer and more conciliatory contact between the central leadership and the local and military cadres, many under Mao's influence. I can testify from

my own experience that Po Ku, as General Secretary of the Party, did his utmost to establish a good relationship with Mao Tse-tung. These efforts, however, were not honoured by Mao. He did begin again to participate in Government and Military Council affairs at this time, but conducted himself with the greatest reserve in his personal relations. Even before the Central Committee Plenum he introduced a note of discord into the apparent harmony by stating that his poor health would not permit his participation. He actually did stay away. Po Ku remarked sarcastically that Mao was once again suffering from a "diplomatic disorder" because he was offended that Lo Fu rather than he was to give the report "On the Chinese Soviet Movement and its Tasks" and that his demand to be admitted into the Politburo's Standing Committee had not been granted.

On a superficial level there seemed to be no essential difference of opinion. All resolutions at the Central Committee Plenum and Soviet Congress were passed unanimously and Mao, who delivered the main speech at the Congress, seconded the political line represented by the directive of the Central Committee Plenum. But it must not be overlooked that opinions were expressed in the course of both conferences which hazardously approached those of Mao Tse-tung. Since I did not myself take part in the Central Committee Plenum and the information I obtained was therefore possibly imprecise, I am relying on the 1935 Moscow edition of the official documents with a foreword by Wang Ming. This implies that the directives of the Central Committee were at least in accord with the views of the ECCI.

Both bodies characterized the Chinese revolution as bourgeois-democratic with a definite anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character and it was emphasized that "only the soviet way" (understood as the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants) "could save China from the KMT way of imperialist colonial domination." The soviet government, the directive stated, sincerely wished to join forces with the enemies of Japan and imperialism in a joint struggle for the national revolution. But then, proceeding from the thesis that all bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties in China were politically bankrupt and deeply entangled in imperialism and feudalism, it concluded that only a revolutionary war could destroy the KMT and the armed forces of imperialism and achieve a final victory in all of China. Therefore, a strict co-ordination of all military engagements in the different soviet territories should be pursued, in order to create new revolutionary bases and to capture central cities. Apart from the fact that such a plan was practically unworkable, because virtually no communication existed with the revolutionary bases and troops outside the Central Soviet Area, it was based on two assumptions which were unrealistic at that time. First, it judged all non-Communist and non-soviet forces in the country

to be a monolithic reactionary mass and thus concluded that its foremost task was armed struggle against the KMT and its accomplices, that is, civil war. In the Congress' resolution "On the Red Army", it declared this army to be the sole armed force in the struggle against Japan and the crux of the entire Chinese revolutionary movement. This was peculiar, for the ECCI directive of January 1933 had clearly raised the possibility of alliances with oppositional KMT factions and military in the national revolutionary liberation struggle. That this opportunity indeed existed is proven by Feng Yü-hsiang's behaviour in spring 1933 and the resumption of negotiations with Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai at his initiative in January 1934, that is, at the same time as the Central Committee Plenum and the Soviet Congress were conferring. Second, it presumed a new revolutionary rising tide, whereas in connection with the military line of strategic defence by tactical offense, which arose from a sober assessment of the situation, the revolution was characterized, as Mao sometimes put it, as "in a trough". Mao's one-sided orientation towards the military went so far as to advocate that even political activity in the White areas was to be chiefly the province of guerrilla groups. This reflected a gross underestimation of political mass work being accomplished by underground Party organizations in KMT-controlled China.

It must be granted that a similar line of reasoning ran through Wang Ming's foreword, written in Moscow after the Thirteenth ECCI Plenum. In this as well, the Chinese soviets were described as a new and special type of state, which, in view of the absolute bankruptcy of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties and of their close involvement with imperialism and feudalism, would succeed in a bloody, protracted war between revolution and counter-revolution. Wang Ming then expanded on the evolution of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist bourgeois revolution — which already contained socialist elements — into a proletarian revolution and the prospects for a decisive victory of the Chinese soviet revolution. Should it triumph before proletarian revolution succeeded in the most important imperialist nations and the outbreak of a second world war, he wrote, it might unleash a second wave of revolution in the world and prevent the war altogether. But if Japanese imperialism mounted a criminal war against the Soviet Union before this happened, the CCP and the workers and peasants it represented should use the war to complete its national revolutionary mission and liberate all other peoples in the Far East from the imperialist yoke. Although Wang Ming had clearly defined the central task of the CCP — the armed defence of the Soviet Union, fatherland of the workers of the entire world — the old Li Li-san and Mao Tse-tung thesis of China as the new centre of world revolution unmistakably permeated his remarks.

How could Wang Ming, the representative of the CCP to the ECCI, have advocated such thoughts? I was certain that he was being misled by biased and exaggerated information. Possible evidence of this is his statement that one-sixth of Chinese territory was ruled by the soviets, although he rightly qualified this in adding that they were fragmented and economically backward areas. In reality, however, at the outset of the Fifth Campaign, soviet-dominated land barely included 3 per cent of Inner China, that is, 120,000, at most 150,000, out of a total 4,000,000 square km, and about 2.5 per cent of the population. A slight decline was registered towards 1932. This was serious because the new bases of the 2nd and 4th Corps were not yet consolidated. What had expanded were the armed forces of the Central Soviet Area and the 4th Corps. Another instance of misinformation was a statement on the supposed political disintegration and military weakness of the KMT troops and on the numerical strength of the Red Army. Mao had given justification for the latter assertion at the Second Soviet Congress when he called for the immediate creation of a one million-man army. Similarly, the Central Committee Plenum's directive had advocated the formation of "new armies, new divisions and corps", an appeal that took little account of realistic possibilities.

The influence of leading Marxist-Leninist cadres was evident when mention was made of a decisive struggle against the onerous traditions of guerrilla-ism, of the rise in voluntary self-discipline, of the redistribution of expropriated land, of a correct class line which included a close affirmation of the leading role of the working class in all organs of soviet power. What is noteworthy is that neither the Central Committee Plenum directive nor the Congress resolutions went into the matter of the international workers' movement. Even the Soviet Union was ignored, except for a few verbal flourishes at the outset of Mao's speech. The documents' discordant, almost contradictory character, especially in the Central Committee Plenum directive, can be explained as an attempt, and a successful one at that, to secure their unanimous adoption. This indicated a certain balance of power between the Marxist-internationalists and Mao's coterie. But an early acquiescence in Mao's views of important points was also visible. Despite conciliatory speeches at the two assemblies, there were sharp differences of opinion behind the scenes. These centred, as far as I know, on three matters: a reformation of agrarian policy, methods of warfare, and the relationship to the Soviet Union.

As could hardly be otherwise expected, the Central Soviet Area's was a war economy — what might be called "war communism". However, grave mistakes had been committed in the implementation of past agrarian policy. Mao Tse-tung had conducted an extremely harsh "leftist" course which had gone so far as to liquidate not only big land

owners and usurers, but rich and even some middle peasants, labourers, and small vendors. He had exacted a total nationalization of all land, including that of peasants, and its redistribution according to "mouths". At the same time, Red soldiers and their families were frequently being passed over in the reallocation of land and fed with hopes of the "final victory". There were excesses also in the establishment of co-operatives — coercive administrative measures and precipitate, indiscriminate alliances.

These old errors, the manifestation of a leftist sectarian outlook, or, more generously expressed, of a mistaken, over hasty anticipation of socialist revolution, had by now been largely expunged. Mao Tse-tung and Lo Fu, who had previously inclined towards a "leftist" course, executed a brusque about-face. As so often happened, Mao leapt from one extreme to another. He now championed a modification of the policy towards big landowners and usurers and more freedom for private enterprise and business. The emphasis here is on freedom, for even the ECCI and the Central Committee were advocating a relaxation of economic restraints. Perhaps Mao was contemplating a Chinese version of the New Economic Policy, which superseded war communism in Soviet Russia in 1921, hoping thereby to ease the economic situation and to expand the social base of the soviet government under the KMT blockade. He added the correct slogan "Everything for the front!" and a second slogan "Everything for the peasants!" This, however, implicitly raised the question of class, in so far as he defended his long-standing orientation towards the rural population and further diluted the guiding principle of the hegemony of the working class. The discussions of warfare methods revolved round the relative importance of regular and guerrilla engagements, and, thereby, of regular and guerrilla troops. Actually, this had been a steadily increasing problem since the reorganization of the revolutionary armed forces in 1931 - 2. Evoking the "victorious experiences" of the former six years, Mao endorsed the old technique of exclusively guerrilla warfare, with no regard to the possible necessity of surrendering territory or to the enemy's blockhouse system of the Fifth Campaign. His views, however, met with resistance from some of his own adherents, as well as from the central Party leadership. I remember that Hsiang Ying approached me on this, requesting that I write the draft for the resolution "On the Red Army". I declined, because I considered that it would be an inadmissible interference in the political affairs of the Central Committee Plenum and Soviet Congress. But Po Ku, Hsiang Ying, Chou En-lai, Liu Po-ch'eng, and I discussed it among ourselves. We concluded that both forms of warfare and troop organization should be sanctioned and that the mobile war, whether in larger regular units or as guerrilla activity, should be accepted as a generally valid principle. Mao finally agreed to the idea

and defended it in his speeches and resolutions. An attempt would be made to check the continuing insolence of some guerrilla leaders and local commanders through tighter organization, stricter subordination, better co-ordination, and "iron discipline".

The relation to the Soviet Union was scarcely considered. Until then, the slogan had been "Help the Soviet Union!", which corresponded quite closely to the international slogan "Hands off the Soviet Union!" Now Mao declared privately that this was outdated and should be replaced with "Help China!" This underlined his petty-bourgeois, nationalist outlook that the principal contradiction in the world was no longer that between the socialist Soviet Union and the imperialist powers, but rather the conflict between China and Japan and its inevitable concomitant, the domestic struggle between the soviet areas and KMT China. All else should be subject to this. The full theoretical and political import of the slogan "Help China!" was not yet recognized. The Party leadership, which was itself not free of such tendencies, therefore attached no importance to it, as is clear from Wang Ming's foreword.

The Fifth Plenary Congress admitted new members to the Central Committee. It selected a new Politburo, to which Mao Tse-tung belonged (if I am not mistaken), and confirmed Po Ku as General Secretary.

The Second Soviet Congress, for its part, installed Mao Tse-tung as chairman of the Executive Committee of the "Provisional Central Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic", but not as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. Lo Fu was appointed to the latter office by the Central Committee Plenum while remaining Central Committee Secretary. Hsiang Ying and Chang Kuo-t'ao were re-elected in absentia as deputy chairmen of the Executive Committee. Po Ku and Lo Fu were now formal members of the Revolutionary Military Council.

The Marxist-Leninist cadres thus assumed key positions in the Central Committee and Government. Still, it would be false to assume that their political line prevailed. In truth, neither the Fifth Central Committee Plenum nor the Second Soviet Congress brought about a settlement of the deep-seated differences of opinion. The door remained open for future conflicts.

One reason for this, as I have tried to demonstrate with examples known to me, is that Marxist-Leninist cadres in the Party leadership assumed a placatory attitude towards Mao, avoided clear-cut decisions, and sought compromises. In fact, in some critical matters, they even succumbed to his influence. This occurred, among other instances, in a disregard of national-revolutionary forces in the KMT camp, as underestimation of the enemy, an overestimation of our own successes, and

above all, a policy realignment stressing civil war, armed struggle, and rural soviet bases. They were encouraged, no doubt, by the CCP representative to the ECCI.

A further cause might have been the petty-bourgeois, peasant milieu in which the Second Soviet Congress took place. To some extent it constituted a breeding ground in which the influence of Mao Tse-tung and his supporters in the local Party and Army leadership flourished. Even the Mandates Examination Commission's figures revealed that only eight industrial workers participated in the Congress. Also ranked as "workers" were 244 artisans, 53 coolies, and 122 farm hands. The addition of the 303 poor peasants, 25 middle peasants, and 66 miscellaneous (vendors, intellectuals, and so on) whose presence was recorded results in a social composite of the poorest levels of the rural population plus a certain portion of the petty-bourgeois "middle class".

Let me insert that the numbers themselves are questionable. I took part in the Congress as a guest, sitting behind a partition. The hall held at most no more than 700 to 800 persons. But the minutes noted 700 delegates and 1,500 guests from Nationalist China and foreign lands. I saw not one foreigner. As for the delegates and guests from other soviet or guerrilla areas or from KMT China, Po Ku informed me that hardly any had penetrated the blockade.

Mao Tse-tung had cause to be satisfied with the Congress, for it confirmed his standing as political leader of the Central Soviet Area. With this foundation, he prepared his revenge for the double defeat he had suffered in the Central Committee. Maintaining the semblance of political unity and comradely co-operation, he took up anew his struggle for the leadership of Party, Government, and Army.

At this point I should like to enter some observations on leading personalities with whom I became acquainted during the first few months of my stay in the Central Soviet Area. These are, admittedly, only sketches — and first impressions are unavoidably influenced by later experiences. For the sake of completeness, I include information derived from conversations and other sources. The number of individuals I knew well personally was small. Even after the relaxation of the "security measures" and the healing of my feet, my movements were largely confined to regular visits to the Central Committee, to the General Headquarters and Military Academy, and to five trips to the front. Naturally, the names of many persons I met have vanished from my memory.

The most prominent figure was indisputedly Mao Tse-tung. A slender, almost willowy man in his forties, he first struck me as more a philosopher and poet than a politician and soldier. On the infrequent

occasions when we met socially, he maintained a solemn reserve, but prompted others to drinking, story-telling, and singing. He himself usually contributed only aphorisms which sounded harmless enough, but which always carried a pointed meaning and sometimes a spiteful allusion. For example, for a long time I could not accustom myself to the strongly spiced food, such as hot fried peppers, which is traditional to southern China, especially in Hunan, Mao's birthplace; this invited his mocking remarks: "The food of the true revolutionary is the red pepper" and "He who cannot endure red peppers is also unable to fight." When the question of our main forces' breaking through the encirclement of the Central Soviet Area first arose he commented non-committally with a phrase from (I believe) Lao Tzu: "A bad butcher splits the bones with a cleaver; a good butcher severs them with a blunt knife." He was fond of drawing on images from folklore and quotations by philosophers, military men, and statesmen of Chinese history. I was told that the later famous eight political* and four tactical** principles of the Red Army were at least partially inspired by the slogans of the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion in the nineteenth century. In accordance with the "Treatise of the Art of War" by Sun Tzu, a Chinese general of antiquity, he laid down the thesis that an army should seek battle only when victory was certain. This did not prevent him on the Long March from citing the same Sun Tzu to the effect that soldiers should be set in places from which there was no escape. They would then die, but not flee, and in the end triumph. Even the maxim with the red pepper was varied by situation. In Yunnan it was the opium lumps which served as a means of barter and in Sikang it was the lice, which nearly consumed us, that had to be suffered as hallmarks of the true revolutionary. Such expressions, metaphors, and images betrayed his utilitarian, pragmatic mind. But they had the desired effect, for they were always rooted in concrete

*1. Hang up all doors when you leave a house. [Doors were used as beds by soldiers in China. *O.B.*]

2. Roll up the straw mats on which you sleep and return them.

3. Be friendly and polite to the inhabitants and help them when you can.

4. Return everything you borrow.

5. Replace all damaged goods.

6. Be honest in all transactions with the peasants.

7. Pay for everything you buy [*sic*].

8. Be clean and be especially certain that latrines are installed far from dwellings.

**1. When the enemy advances, we retreat.

2. When the enemy halts and encamps, we harass him.

3. When the enemy wants to avoid battle, we attack him.

4. When the enemy withdraws, we pursue him. »

events. Mao did not employ them only in personal conversation; they were also worked into his speeches and developed into catchy slogans of revolutionary pathos. I often witnessed how he was able to sweep away his audience of peasants and soldiers with his words.

Of course he also made use of Marxist terminology, in so far as he was familiar with it. His knowledge of Marxism, however, seemed superficial. Po Ku confirmed my impression and provided plausible reasons for it. Mao had never lived abroad and spoke no foreign language. There was a lack of Marxist literature. What was available was derived from secondhand sources. Primary documents could be listed on the fingers of both hands.

Even worse, Mao distorted Marxist concepts, instilling them with new meanings. For example, he frequently spoke of the proletariat. But this word came to include not only industrial workers, but all who made up the poorest population — agricultural labourers, tenant farmers, artisans, vendors, coolies, and even beggars. He was therefore not basing class on “position in an historically determined system of social production”, but on income and living standard. This crude perversion of the Marxist class system enabled Mao to determine the class character of various groups according to subjective standards, and, in effect, to deny the leading role of the working class. The hegemony and dictatorship (he used both terms) of the proletariat were reduced to the rule of the Communist Party, embodied in the power of the Red Army, since for him the class struggle took the form of civil war.

Po Ku and other Marxists recognized all this, as I gathered from conversations on the subject, but did nothing to deter it. They — and this conformed to ECCI policy — did not want to break with Mao Tse-tung, especially not over “theoretical” questions, for they were fully aware that he controlled a wide mass following in the Central Soviet Area. Of greater importance than his popular support was the fact that his influence was rooted in the years of armed struggle which bound him indissolubly to the peasantry. He disdained “city folk” who had no part of this. Because he had virtually no contact with the industrial working class, the heroic covert struggle of Communists outside the soviet areas held little or no meaning for him. The only thing that counted was the armed struggle of a peasant army. Obsessed with the idea that he alone was called to lead the revolution, as he knew it, to victory, he could justify anything that brought him closer to his goal: complete personal power.

He had practically achieved this ambition in 1931 in Kiangsi-Fukien. This had been preceded by intense intra-Party conflicts between Mao Tse-tung as plenipotentiary of the Central Committee and chairman of the Front Party Committee on the one hand and the Hunan Provincial Party Committee and the Regional Committees of Kiangsi and Fukien

on the other. I was able to learn a little more about this than in Shanghai, but not much. To summarize the hints made to me: Mao, backed chiefly by military devotees, forcibly abolished the provincial and regional committees in 1929 – 30. Then, under the pretext of struggling against counter-revolution (that is, the "Anti-Bolshevik League" comprised of real or supposed Trotskyists and Social Democrats), he was said to have physically liquidated many Party cadres who opposed his policies, including soldiers, political workers, commanders, and workers who, after the suppression of the 1927 Canton Commune and the capture of Ch'ang-sha in 1930, were driven to the Red Army. I was amazed by this but paid no more attention to these unconfirmed rumours. Only now have they been corroborated in all their horrifying detail by documentary materials. But at that time everyone believed and hoped that this unhappy period of inner strife had been overcome. Chou En-lai described the terror tactics employed then by Mao as "excesses in the fight against counter-revolution"; Hsiang Ying preferred the naked words "factional struggle".

After the Fourth Central Committee Plenum Mao's authority in the Central Soviet Area was seriously jeopardized. The arrival of the Central Committee office in 1931, the Ning-tu Conference in 1932, and, finally, the 1933 arrival of the Politburo and Secretariat of the Central Committee in Jui-chin were interpreted as danger signals. His influence noticeably declined. He unsuccessfully lodged his claims with the Fifth Central Committee Plenum. From then on he changed his tactics in the struggle for leadership of the Party and Army. We all respected Mao as a popular revolutionary leader and sincerely tried to find some common ground with him. But he, well-versed in political intrigue, contrived secret plots, not only to win back his lost influence, but now to seize the leadership of the entire Party for himself.

To this purpose he organized a group of oppositional local and military cadres who had a history of supporting him in his struggles against the Party Committees of Hunan, Kiangsi, and Fukien. Some of the members of this inner-Party faction were Ku Po, Tseng Shan, and Mao's secretary Ch'en Cheng-jen. In 1930 – 1 he had elevated them to leading Party and Government positions in Kiangsi. They were now rather inconspicuous; I would never have suspected that they would later return to the fore. Mao's brothers Mao Tse-tan and Mao Tse-min were among the group too, but dealt only with lower-level economic and financial matters. His protégés Lo Ming and Hsiao Ching-kuang and the Army cadres Lin Piao, division commander Ch'en Yi, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, then editor of the Army political department's journal *Red Star*, also joined the conspiracy.

Mao's unwilling adversary was Po Ku, who, as General Secretary of the Central Committee, was responsible for political and the ever more

problematical military affairs. Just in his mid-twenties, he was well educated on a theoretical plane, and, despite his youth, politically experienced. Nevertheless, he permitted himself to be guided in military decisions by my suggestions and Chou En-lai's directives. A friendship developed between us which endured the troubles of the later years. From innumerable conversations with him I knew that he did not share Mao's views on many points, but considered co-operation with him imperative in order to influence him in the Marxist sense and to safeguard the unity of the Party. He remained steadfast to this, even after Mao had "disposed of him", until his tragic death in 1946. His "loyalty" was even to mislead him to vigorous support of Mao's policies later on. Only the authority on the Comintern and the interests of the Soviet Union constantly remained higher in his eyes.

Lo Fu, older and more broadly educated than Po Ku, championed (as he did) the proletarian class character of the Party and spoke out often and disparagingly against the petty-bourgeois-peasant ideology of Mao Tse-tung. Nevertheless, as Central Committee Secretary for governmental and soviet policies and even more as the new head of the Kiangsi-Fukien government, he eventually came under Mao's influence and veered over to his side. Mao's military concepts were the chief inducement in this, for he was evidently convinced that they were correct in the context of the Central Soviet Area's situation. This did not cause him to relinquish his own standpoint. After he succeeded Po Ku as General Secretary of the Central Committee he frequently came into conflict with Mao and was finally dropped by him altogether in the 1960s.

The most energetic and versatile of the leading Communists was Chou En-lai. A man of classical Chinese and modern European education, vast revolutionary and international experience, and of outstanding organizational and diplomatic abilities, he was constantly adapting himself to changing circumstances. He was chairman of the political department of the Whampoa (Huangpu) Military Academy and in the KMT National Revolutionary Army when Chiang Kai-shek was director of the Academy and commander-in-chief of the Army. He had organized the Shanghai and Nan-ch'ang revolts in 1927, but, as a permanent member of the Central Committee and Politburo since the late 1920s, he had either encouraged or tolerated the mistakes of Ch'en Tu-hsiu or Li Li-san. As director of the Central Committee Bureau in the Central Soviet Area, he had displaced Mao as a power in Party and Army. Now he supported Wang Ming and Po Ku; supported, that is, the line of the Comintern and Standing Committee of the Central Committee's Politburo, to which he still belonged. Many commanders were former students of his from the Whampoa Academy. The military successes of the Fourth Campaign, for which he took sole credit, had

added to his prestige. After the merger of the front headquarters with General Headquarters, the conduct of the war was entirely in his hands. In effect, he commanded the entire armed forces, including the independent and local units. It is noteworthy that, in response to a questionnaire in late 1939, he stated that from 1932 to 1935 he was commander-in-chief of the Chinese Red Army. During the Long March, when he suspected that Mao was gaining the upper hand, he went over to his side at once and became (as I believe), at least partly against his better judgement, his most faithful champion.

As far as I know, Hsiang Ying was the only worker in the Politburo apart from Ch'en Yün. Both were well-known union leaders and strike organizers during the 1920s in KMT China. Hsiang Ying had instigated the great railway strike of February 1923. Once Chou En-lai was in control of the Revolutionary Military Council, Hsiang devoted himself mostly to recruitment and logistical matters and to local self-defence and guerrilla detachments. This he did quietly and competently without fuss. The evening before the Central Army Group left Kiangsi he spoke quite openly with me. I shall return to this later.

The highest ranking military leaders were, without exception, professional soldiers, and, until Lin Piao, had all been generals or colonels in the Northern Campaign.

Chu Te, already a legendary hero of the civil war but a frugal and modest man, had taken part in the 1911 revolution. In 1922 he entered the Communist Party — in Germany no less — and after the Nanch'ang Revolt he led the revolutionary troops of the 4th Army to Kiangsi, where he joined Mao Tse-tung's peasant army in 1928. What happened then I learned in snatches from Po Ku and Hsiang Ying, who seemed poorly informed, and Chu Te, who very reluctantly went into details in answer to my questions. In the conflict between Mao Tse-tung and the Hunan Provincial Committee, Chu and Mao came to odds. Chu Te criticized Mao's military tactic of retreat to Ching kangshan. Mao accused him of "theoretical ignorance" and "opportunist deviations" because he complied with Provincial Committee directives and led an unsuccessful campaign into southern Hunan. After the reunion in 1929 Mao systematically undermined Chu Te's authority as a military leader and lured his political commissar Ch'en Yi and Lin Piao, then still a battalion commander, to his side. He had soon won over P'eng Te-huai and Liu Po-ch'eng as well. Chu Te surrendered. Formally he remained commander-in-chief, but he no longer exercised an independent, decisive role. And in my opinion, nothing has changed in this respect to the present day.

I was not sure how to consider this story, which, as I said, was pieced together from shreds of conversations. None the less, it did offer one explanation as to why Chu Te, a general of great experience and

unshakable loyalty to the revolution, had so little influence on political and military policy. Today this story, as much else, is confirmed by recently discovered documentary evidence.

In contrast to Mao, who avoided any private contact and rebuffed my attempts at personal discussions, Chu Te visited me often. We visited the front together two or three times. His main concern in our talks was that I should understand Mao's views. He usually recounted incidents from campaigns of the Red Army, presumably to provide creative stimulus for solutions to the current situation.

The same was done by Liu Po-ch'eng, the "one-eyed dragon" as he was called because of his renowned courage and the loss of an eye in battle. He too had participated in the revolutions of 1911 - 13 and 1925 - 7. Afterwards he studied in the Soviet Union, but spoke little or no Russian. He was superb at staff work, but felt himself superfluous after Chou En-lai took over the General Headquarters. His love was reserved for combat; his wish was to lead troops again. Politically he was virtually invisible.

The most striking figure among the corps commanders was P'eng Tehuai. Since joining the Red Army with the troops under his command in 1928, he had supported Mao Tse-tung, in whom he saw the inspired leader of the revolutionary armed forces. This does not mean that he agreed with everything, however. As active politically as he was militarily, he did not mince words when he believed himself in the right. With remarkable directness he criticized both costly positional battles and dissipating guerrilla activity. His corps, the only one composed of three divisions, was the strongest numerically and the best trained in regular warfare. He was therefore always given the most difficult assignments and was constantly extricating himself from impossible situations. From occasional conversations with him and his Soviet-educated political commissar Yang Shang-k'un, I gathered that both were internationalists and true friends of the Soviet Union. This may have determined their tragic fate in the 1960s.

Lin Piao was by far the youngest of the corps commanders. A graduate of the Whampoa Military Academy and a company commander in the Northern Campaign, he was rapidly promoted after 1927 to battalion and then regimental commander. He had commanded the 1st Corps since 1931, which was famous for the speed of its two divisions and was therefore especially well suited for encirclement and outflanking manoeuvres. Lin Piao was indisputably a brilliant tactician of guerrilla and mobile warfare. He recognized no other form of fighting. And he allowed no intervention in military affairs, especially with regard to operational and tactical leadership. Politically, on the other hand, he was a blank page on which Mao, to whom he was blindly devoted, could write whatsoever he chose. He was transformed into the

tool of Mao in the latter's struggle against the Central Committee under Po Ku.

Lin Piao, like his idol Mao Tse-tung, avoided all personal intercourse. He was far overshadowed in sociability by his political or security commissar, Lo Jui-ch'ing, another who had arrived at the Red Army by way of the Whampoa Academy and the National Revolutionary Army. For decades Lo enjoyed the confidence of Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao. Then, in the "Cultural Revolution", these two delivered him to the persecution of the "Red Guards" as a supposed accomplice of Liu Shao-ch'i.

I cannot say much about Tung Chen-t'ang, commander of the 5th Corps, which until autumn 1934 had only one division. He was a robust soldier who carried out all orders conscientiously. I never noticed anything of the "feudal traditions" and "militaristic habits" attributed to him. For some obscure reason his troops had the reputation of being effective only in a defensive role and were committed accordingly. But they also did well on the offensive. In 1935 I myself witnessed their courageous assault on a cliff fortress in Kweichow held by provincial troops, in which they suffered hardly any losses. In 1936 Tung Chen-t'ang was killed while leading his men in battle in Kansu.

I had relatively little to do with Wang Chia-hsiang, Ch'en Yün, and other leading Communists in the Central Soviet Area. They were not to gain prominence until later and will therefore be treated in more detail further on.

I do not remember Liu Shao-ch'i, who was also active in the Central Soviet Area and was said to have been sent at the outset of the Long March for political work. Evidently he had not yet assumed the dominating role that would be his in subsequent years and had nothing to do with military matters.

While the Fifth Central Committee Plenum and the Second Soviet Congress were still in session the "Fukien Incident" broke out. In November 1933 Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai publicly defied Chiang Kai-shek and proclaimed a "Revolutionary People's Government" in Fu-chou, the provincial capital of Fukien and seat of his headquarters. Its main platform was the cessation of civil war against the soviet areas (what the 19th Army had in effect already done) and the joint struggle with the Red Army against the aggression of Japan and the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek. In mid-January, two envoys (P'an and Ch'ang) arrived in Jui-chin to reach a concrete settlement. Po Ku informed me that they possessed only very limited authority. Still they were to negotiate Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's offer of economic aid for the Central Soviet Area and a military co-ordination of the Red and 19th armies. With regard to the latter item, Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai did not envisage giving direct support at first, but

merely the conclusion of a non-aggression pact and agreement on a demarcation line. There were two probable motivating factors in this. First, after the experience of our 1933 offensive, he may have feared that the Red Army could occupy his territory and "swallow" him and his army. On the other hand, he felt he had to take into consideration the politically moderate elements in the army leadership and in the Kwangtung provincial government on whose benign neutrality he relied. In early or mid-February, when his situation was rapidly worsening, he changed his mind. But it was already too late.

Chiang Kai-shek was quick to recognize the potential threat to his régime should the "Revolutionary People's Government" succeed with the support of the Red Army and other oppositional forces in southern and northern China. He therefore abruptly broke off his campaign against the Central Soviet Area and threw a large part of his troops against the 19th Army. Ten to fifteen divisions, that is, practically all assault columns stationed on the northern front, were transferred to northern Fukien to capture Fu-chou in a swift advance. He held Ch'en Ch'eng's divisions ready north of Chien-ning in order to cover the exposed right flank of his advancing troops, should we try to intervene in Fukien, or thrust even more deeply into our northeastern sector which our main forces had left open. The garrison troops of the block-house system remained in position.

The Revolutionary Military Council decided to concentrate the 1st, 3rd, and 7th Corps, and the 34th Independent Division, in all seven combat-ready divisions, for an offensive engagement. They were still thinking in terms of executing the plan Fred had outlined in December. Accordingly, the 6th Corps, which was operating independently in the southern Hunan-Kiangsi border region, advanced northwards, west of the Kan River. The 5th Corps stayed in the area of Chien-ning, the 9th Corps on the Hsü River north of Kuang-ch'ang, the 23rd in the northwest, and the 22nd Independent Division in the south. However, of the six divisions these represented, only three (namely the one permanent division each in the 5th and 9th Corps and the 22nd Division), had any combat value. The others (the 14th, 15th, and 23rd Divisions) were new formations and only conditionally effective.

So it was that two-thirds to three-quarters of all regular divisions, in fact the best troops, of the Central Soviet Area stood ready for an offensive. But it never materialized. Rather than acting vigorously, the Central Committee and Military Council discussed for almost a month how the political situation should be correctly assessed and which military orders should be issued.

There were three differing opinions concerning a political appraisal of Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai and the 19th Army. Po Ku was the only one to argue — although he may have been halfheartedly supported by Chou

En-lai — that this offered a unique opportunity to form a new national united front and create an anti-Japanese phalanx that would extend far beyond the borders of the Soviet Area and could be supported by the broad mass of the people in KMT-controlled territory. He therefore urged that Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai be supported even, despite his own misgivings, militarily.

The Shanghai Central Committee Bureau on the other hand warned repeatedly and insistently against trusting Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai. It claimed he was closely associated with the third party (the Social Democrats) which took a stubbornly anti-Communist stand. His display of defiance against Chiang Kai-shek was seen as no more than the usual squabbling between warlords, which should be exploited to its utmost in order to bolster the Communist position in the civil war. The Comintern representative expressed a similar opinion and seemed to approve of Fred's plan.

Mao Tse-tung characterized Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's meeting as an "attempt on the part of the ruling reactionary class to stave off its approaching downfall by a new deception of the masses". Therefore, he concluded, we could not immediately and directly support the 19th Army and the "Revolutionary People's Government". As events unfurled he continued to criticize the Fukien government for its "inconsistency" because of its "non-fulfilment of obligations towards the Central Soviet Government and the Red Army" (whereby he meant the promised materiél and economic help) and for its "passivity and indecision". He admonished us to "act cautiously and avoid unconsidered steps". Not until the 19th Army defeated Chiang Kai-shek's troops in northern Fukien should they be actively supported.

Po Ku gave in, for he could not succeed in getting his proposals accepted. The Central Committee agreed that the contradictions in the enemy's camp should be exploited in order to subvert Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Campaign. Furthermore, a vehement dispute erupted between Shanghai and Jui-chin. This had even more disastrous effects than the political differences of opinion because it in effect complied with Mao Tse-tung's delaying tactic.

In accordance with Fred's plan, the 1st Corps was moved up to Yung-feng and the 3rd and 5th Corps were put on the alert in Kuang-ch'ang. Meanwhile, Fred radioed a detailed plan sanctioned by the Shanghai Bureau, which would have had our main forces overrun western Kiangsi as far as the Hunan border by the end of the month. Its most ambitious instruction was to capture Ch'ang-sha as well as Nan-ch'ang. This was so reckless and out of keeping with reality that it was soundly rejected by the Politburo. I too opposed it. I had favoured Po Ku's idea for an offensive operation in northern Fukien. But I had not voiced my opinion in the Military Council, feeling bound by Fred's directives. Now

I radioed my own objections, identical to those of the Politburo and the Military Council, back to Shanghai. This triggered off a frenzied exchange of radio messages, including some in Fred's secret code that were obviously meant for me alone. Referring to his position as military agent of the ECCI and my immediate superior, he ordered me to carry out his orders regardless of opposition.

This placed me in a difficult situation. Up to this point I had conscientiously obeyed all Fred's instructions. For example, I had arranged for a provisional airstrip to be laid out near Jui-chin although I considered it futile, even damaging. It could only arouse illusions of technical assistance from the Soviet Union which would then sour into disappointment and resentment. As it happened, the airstrip never was used by us, but it did serve the KMT air force quite well later on. Similarly, against my better judgement, I had recited Fred's suggestions in the Military Council about a fortified line between the Hsü and Kan Rivers and an offensive in the northeast deep in the enemy's hinterland. In this case, however, relying on my superior knowledge of the situation, I had reduced them to a defensible scale. But his present plan was downright inoperable. To eliminate any doubt whatsoever, I suggested that the 1st Corps reconnoitre the area around near Yungfeng to determine whether the enemy's deeply layered blockhouse system east of the Kan River could not be penetrated. In the meantime, Hsiao K'e sent word by courier that the 6th Corps had encountered unassailable fortifications west of the Kan and been forced back.

At this point Chiang Kai-shek's forces already occupied northern Fukien and were marching towards Fu-chou. The 19th Army, hopelessly outnumbered, resorted to delaying tactics, not daring a decisive battle. There were signs of disintegration in its leadership. I felt we must act at once to save what we could. I therefore suggested on my own initiative, without waiting for the ECCI's assent (Po Ku told me later that it arrived much too late and in essence replied that only the Revolutionary Military Council had the authority to make military decisions), that the seven divisions of our assault group be diverted to Fukien at once to attack the Nationalists' right flank near Nan-p'ing and thereby to relieve the 19th Army. The Politburo and Military Council unanimously approved a resolution to this effect. Even Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai, aware of the extremity of his situation, finally agreed to a Red Army advance into central Fukien.

From this point onwards events tumbled past each other too fast to follow. Our 1st and 3rd Corps pushed towards Nan-p'ing in forced march. The 7th and 34th Independent Division covered their left flanks against Ch'en Ch'eng's army in the region east of Shao-wu. While this was happening one of Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's generals switched his allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek. Because his division controlled Chien-yang,

Chien-ou, and Nan-p'ing, we could no longer cross the Min River and were forced to change the course of the entire assault group to the south-east. In mid-February Fu-chou fell. The 19th Army, its leadership shattered, capitulated. Only in southern Fukien did isolated units offer some resistance. In central Fukien our assault group defeated the over-extended New 52nd Division and occupied a fairly large area covering the cities of Sha-hsien, San-ming, Yung-an, and Yü-ch'i. But it was too late to deflect the course of events. All we could try to do was to provide a safeguard for the men and equipment of the 19th Army. And this was successful, even if not to the desired degree.

After the fall of Fu-chou, which sealed the fate of the 19th Army and the "Revolutionary People's Government", Chiang Kai-shek removed the greatest part of his troops from Fukien and transferred them to their former positions on the northern front with the evident intention of resuming the Fifth Campaign before our main forces could return. Ch'en Ch'eng launched a surprise attack on Chien-ning but the city was stoutly defended by the 5th Corps. The Military Council ordered the 1st and 3rd Corps back to the northern front, which was becoming the main theatre, because enemy assault columns were starting up. The 7th Corps and 34th Division remained behind in the newly occupied area to prevent or at least impede the complete occupation of Fukien by Chiang Kai-shek's troops and the formation of a new line of fortifications. They were later joined temporarily by the 9th Corps.

Although the weakness of Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's Revolutionary People's Government was revealed by the Fukien Incident, it had offered the CCP and the Red Army a certain possibility of halting Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Campaign and taking an important step towards an anti-Japanese national united front. But this would have required immediate and decisive action — lacking because of political disunity and the military strategy to which that gave rise. The erroneous assessment of the situation by the Comintern Office and the Central Committee Bureau of Shanghai, which Mao Tse-tung shared and abetted with his sceptical temporizing and unrealistic demands, once again misled the Politburo into adopting a course of "exploiting contradictions in the enemy's camp" and away from the correct position initially advocated by Po Ku, of providing Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai with swift and direct assistance. Fred's adventurist strategic plan of an impossibly grand offensive against enemy centres in the northwest and the obstinacy with which it was propounded hindered the Revolutionary Military Council from arriving at the only proper decision, that is, to throw the main forces into northern Fukien and there, together with the 19th Army, to seek a decisive battle. When the Council finally came round to this view it was already too late and the chance was lost. I cannot spare myself from criticism. Under the double pressure exerted by Fred in Shanghai and Mao in Jui-chin I too

hesitated, just as the Military Council did, to come to a timely decision.

After the Fukien Incident the prospects for continued struggle against the Fifth Campaign worsened abruptly. Chiang Kai-shek had not only crushed Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's revolt; he had also intimidated and weakened opposition throughout the country. He formed a new front in Fukien during 1934, which, despite gaps in its system of fortifications, aggravated economic conditions in the Central Soviet Area and, with its own rear secure, forced the Central Army Group to fight while completely encircled. This contributed to the protracted nature of the war and ended in the necessity to break out of the blockade.

One year later Mao Tse-tung used the failures of the Fukien Incident as a primary weapon in seizure of the Party and Army leadership. He labelled the 19th as "a group within the counter-revolutionary camp, which had resorted to an even greater deception of the masses in order to maintain the power of big landowners and capitalists." Supposedly, the Party had correctly realized that it was necessary to exploit the contradictions in the enemy's camp in order to effect a breakthrough of the enemy encirclement. But "Po Ku and others", he claimed in a shameless distortion of the facts, had committed "the Red Army to a senseless assault against the fortifications near Yung-feng rather than demolishing Chiang Kai-shek's main forces in alliance with the 19th Army". Mao prudently refrained from mentioning weeks of debate in which he himself had played a no less disastrous role than the Shanghai Central Committee Bureau or, unfortunately, the Comintern Office.

In the midst of the Fukien Incident, in late January and early February, I made my second trip to the front, this time with Chu Te. Shortly beforehand, Fred's detailed scheme for the grand offensive in the northwest had arrived at Jui-chin. The Revolutionary Military Council resolved to reject it outright. It was decided to regroup our main forces in northern Fukien before the 1st Corps withdrew from the northern front, but to press forward with the reconnaissance mentioned earlier. The object of our trip was to discuss strategy and tactics with the commanders of the 1st, 5th, and 9th Corps. Lin Piao was outspoken in his displeasure with the 1st Corps's transfer to Yung-feng — which was being done in compliance with Fred's plan — and with the reconnaissance he had been ordered to carry out. On the other hand he greeted the decision to support the 19th Army from this point on and agreed to have smaller detachments probe the enemy's blockhouse system near Yung-feng.

I gave my first lecture during this visit, before a large audience, chiefly senior and middle-ranking commanders of the 1st Corps. I pre-

sented my own ideas on tactics to be pursued in the Fifth Campaign. No objections were voiced.

North of Kuang-ch'ang and Chien-ning, as everywhere on the northern front at this time, the enemy was quiet. Tung Chen-t'ang was confident that he could rebuff an advance by Ch'en Ch'eng and hold Chien-ning. The commander of the 9th Corps, with whom we spoke in Kuang-ch'ang, expressed similar sentiments. Both stressed, however, that the involvement of the 1st and 3rd Corps, or at least one of them, would be imperative if Chiang Kai-shek's main forces resumed the offensive. Otherwise Chien-ning and Kuang-ch'ang could very well be lost.

Their fears were realized. Chiang Kai-shek had hardly disposed of Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai when his assault columns renewed their offensive with the well-tried tactics of slow advance and the systematic construction of fortifications. From late February to early April, there was fighting in the northeastern sector between Ch'en Ch'eng's army and our 1st, 3rd, and 5th Corps. Both sides suffered heavy losses, but neither could claim a decisive victory. In early April the enemy shifted the weight of his attacks to the Hsü River with the aim of capturing Kuang-ch'ang. The situation was frequently and exhaustively discussed in the Politburo, its Standing Committee, and the Revolutionary Military Council. Everyone, including Mao Tse-tung, agreed on the assessment of the situation itself. Opinions diverged on the question of what strategy and tactics should be adopted. Briefly sketched, the picture was as follows.

Militarily the Central Soviet Area was now completely encircled. The blockade extended along the entire northern and northwestern front from Nan-p'ing to Chi-an, and, in the west, to Kan-chou.

The broad and sturdy blockhouse system already rendered penetration and outflanking operations in the enemy's rear impossible. The experience of the last half year demonstrated that they were inevitably brought to a halt in the fortifications zone. In the south the encirclement was somewhat more permeable; it was at its weakest in southwestern Fukien.

Persistently the enemy continued to attack in the north, pushing his fortifications wedge towards Chien-ning, Kuang-ch'ang, and Yung-feng. His next important objective was Kuang-ch'ang. Meanwhile, the Hunan troops began a slow advance towards Hsing-kuo and the Kwangtung troops towards Hui-ch'ang without displaying much activity.

Strategically, we were on the defensive. Still, we could not permit ourselves to sink into a positional war, but had to solve the double task of protecting the Soviet Area and preserving our essential strength through tactical manoeuvres and attacks. This in itself was no new revelation. It was the "how" under degenerating circumstances that

required new ideas. There were three possibilities. First, our main forces could break through the encirclement to attack and destroy the enemy in his hinterland unimpeded by the blockhouse system. This plan was first presented by myself late in March 1934. I added that the breakthrough's only hope of success would be at the enemy's weakest point (in the southwest or southeast), that it should be well prepared, and that it should not be directed against enemy centres as these were becoming stronger. We would temporarily forfeit some territory in such an operation, but it would ensure the survival of our forces and our operational freedom of action.

However, everyone objected to this, no one more vigorously than Mao Tse-tung. He pleaded that the possibilities for a decisive victory in the interior of the Soviet Area were by no means exhausted and advocated a return to the old tactic of luring the enemy deep into Soviet territory. This second variant also met with disfavour. The majority felt that, in view of the enemy's tactics, this would merely relinquish territory with no guarantee that we could engage and defeat the enemy.

As a third possibility I suggested we continue the tactic of short, swift thrusts whenever the enemy moved out from his fortified lines, but to allow him more leeway than in the past, so that he would make "bigger jumps" and more certainly fall "into the trap". This last plan was approved and it was resolved to commit the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Corps to the north front to face the enemy column advancing from Nan-feng to Kuang-ch'ang. The 7th Corps, the 34th Division, and the newly formed 24th Division were to operate in southern Fukien as a guard against the Kwangtung troops. This they did successfully, for they still enjoyed a certain freedom of movement.

In late March and early April P'eng Te-huai led a co-ordinated flank attack by the main forces against the enemy assault column south of Nan-feng. The 3rd Corps broke through and pushed far to the north. But then Ch'en Ch'eng's "Fire Brigade" intervened and employed the superior war technology of the Nan-feng blockhouse system to switch to the counter-offensive. The 3rd Corps was threatened with being cut off. It managed to fight its way back but suffered devastating losses. Our offensive had come to grief.

After this, in April, the enemy prepared to take Kuang-ch'ang. Although the city itself was insignificant the Party leadership considered it a strategically critical point because it barred the way into the heart of the Soviet Area. The leadership also believed that unresisting surrender would be politically indefensible. It was therefore unanimously resolved, in a Military Council meeting at which Mao was present, to seek battle in the vicinity of Kuang-ch'ang. After the partial success of Ch'en Ch'eng's army the enemy increased somewhat the otherwise slow pace of his advance. The Military Council decided in a

second meeting, again in the presence of and with the approval of Mao Tse-tung, to launch the new offensive in the approaches to the city. This would permit the enemy a rapid advance, thereby employing a modified version of "luring into soviet territory" and allowing us to deal him an annihilating blow against his exposed flank. This operation dragged out over two weeks but produced no results, because the enemy gave us no opening.

In late April a leadership panel of the Military Council, to which Chu Te, Po Ku, the acting director of the political administration, and I belonged, proceeded to Kuang-ch'ang to effect a better co-ordination of our main forces in the concluding phase of the operation. Po Ku heard rumours at this time that Mao Tse-tung was telling his supporters in the Army, "Obey in words, resist in deeds." This cannot be proved of course, but there were indirect substantiations. P'eng Te-huai indicated as much in a talk with the corps commanders on the eve of the Kuang-ch'ang battle. He was furious at being left alone in the operation at the beginning of April, even though the 1st and 9th Corps were near by.

Through intercepted messages we learned that the enemy was preparing a heavy attack for 30 April, that is, the next morning. His fortified lines lay 15 kilometres north of Kuang-ch'ang. An inspection of the bunker zone revealed that, despite earlier instructions, it was insufficiently fortified and could withstand neither bombs nor artillery fire. So it was resolved not to defend the city, but to evacuate it at night, to let the enemy approach the city and to attack him on open terrain west of the Hsü River while the 9th Corps covered the river crossings and the east bank.

Chu Te issued orders to this effect. On 30 April the 3rd Corps attacked the advancing enemy, perhaps a little too early; that will never be determined. The 1st Corps, which was executing an outflanking manoeuvre and was supposed to sever the enemy's line of retreat to his fortifications area, moved too slowly and the enemy dug in before a real battle could be forced. Isolated again, the 3rd Corps sustained serious losses under the enemy's vastly superior fire. The latter was able to bring up reinforcements unhindered and to send in aircraft and artillery, while the 1st Corps stood aside. Chu Te, after a brief meeting of the leadership panel in the late afternoon, ordered a cease-fire and retreat, which ensued in an orderly fashion. The enemy did not follow us nor did he enter Kuang-ch'ang until the next day or the day after. A mutual cease-fire came into effect. The 3rd Corps was allowed to recuperate and was reinforced with men and weapons from the 14th Division. This division, according to the report of the acting director of the political administration, was not politically consolidated or combat-effective. The larger part of the 14th Division was integrated into the 15th Division,

which later was assigned to the 1st Corps as its 3rd Division.

On 1 May I spoke at a meeting of the 3rd Corps on the International Working Class Day of Struggle and commented, as I had earlier before the 1st Corps, on the tactics to be employed against the Fifth Campaign. I had already rejected the false practice (chiefly perpetrated by the independent and local units) of excessive bunker construction and short, swift retaliatory strikes which left no room to manoeuvre. I summarized my talk in an article which appeared in the military and political periodical *Revolution and War* (see the appendix below).

The Kuang-ch'ang operation occasioned a re-examination of the strategy and tactics of the 5th Campaign by the Politburo and Military Council. I reported to both bodies and again declared, as I had done in March, that the enemy's blockhouse war rendered hopeless a decisive victory within the Soviet Area. We should therefore begin operations at once for a breakthrough of our main forces in order to regain open operating space. At the same time new fronts should be created outside the Central Soviet Area, say, in Hunan by the 6th Corps or by the 7th Corps in Fukien, in order to engage and divert the enemy by threatening his rearlines. I concluded with the recommendation that the enemy be granted a "little breathing space", even at the cost of partial territorial loss, in order that we might strike at him with greater mobility. This plan included the independent and local troops, for, as the main forces were withdrawn, they would have to take charge of the harassment of the enemy along his primary assault direction.

Mao objected to the breakthrough suggestion. Such a scheme was at the very least, he felt, premature. The objective conditions for the annihilation of the enemy within the Central Soviet Area still existed. But the vast majority of the Politburo and Military Council members spoke out in favour of the breakthrough and the other operational and tactical plans I suggested.

Discovering himself in the minority, Mao Tse-tung began his partly open, partly covert struggle against the Party leadership. The failure of Kuang-ch'ang, which he termed a "catastrophe" was used to accuse Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and me — the "military troika", as he called us — of a range of mortal sins: passive defence, blockhouse warfare, dissipation of forces, and frivolous decisions to start battles without certainty of victory. He repeated these incriminations now at every available opportunity in order to downgrade us in the eyes of the military commanders. He did not even flinch at personal defamations. This was carried on less at official meetings than in private conversations with his entourage. I was chosen as his main target because, under the circumstances, I was the most vulnerable. Playing on the national pride and xenophobia of his compatriots, he spread the claim that the Chinese revolution and the struggle of the Chinese Red Army were

distinguished by peculiarities that no foreigner could hope to understand. At first this was directed against me alone, but it was eventually developed into a general political thesis.

In the Politburo he deputed Lo Fu, who by this time had already taken his side, to plead his cause. Inexperienced in military affairs, but literate and well-spoken, Lo Fu readily adopted Mao's arguments, but expressed them better and thus had little trouble finding an audience. This was especially so because he avoided the nationalistic undertones which always resonated about Mao. Lo Fu and Po Ku fell into heated dispute over the Kuang-ch'ang Operation. Lo Fu said there should have been no fighting on such unfavourable terrain and with such a disparity in relative strengths. Po Ku reproached him for taking the same attitude as that ascribed to Plekhanov by Lenin when, after the 1905 Moscow revolt, the former coined the archetypal Menshevik statement: "They should not have taken up arms." He also reminded Lo Fu that the decision to seek battle near Kuang-ch'ang was unanimous in the Politburo and War Council. That is, it was determined by his and Mao's vote as well. If I might be permitted to anticipate matters: that this entire dispute served only factional purposes is proved in that Mao Tse-tung later, namely at the conference at Tsunyi, praised both the decisions to fight and then to withdraw from Kuang-ch'ang as perfectly correct.

In order to bolster his position in the Military Council, Mao had his lackey Lin Piao write a report from the front in which he too urged a purely mobile war within the Soviet Area and fighting only when the terrain was advantageous and the victory assured. I replied, admittedly not too graciously, that one should not make a fetish of terrain and that victory was never certain before a battle.

After these first gruff confrontations tempers cooled for a while, outwardly at least. Mao increasingly avoided meetings of the Military Council in order to continue the factional struggle in secret. The next ally he enlisted was Wang Chia-hsiang, director of the Army's political administration and a member of the Politburo and Military Council. He was hardly in evidence, however, because of serious wounds. He had to take opium to dull the intolerable pain of wandering bomb splinters in his body. Mao Tse-tung, Lo Fu, and Wang Chia-hsiang formed the political leadership — the "Central Triad" — of the faction which waged a subversive struggle to take over the Party and Army leadership. In time they drew other Politburo members to their side, mainly Army commanders. Thus Mao Tse-tung managed to split the Politburo and to infiltrate the Revolutionary Military Council until, in autumn 1934, at the outset of the Long March, he considered the time ripe to act openly.

In early May the Central Committee assigned me the task of drawing up a quarter-year plan for military activity from May to July 1934. It was based on the three matters resolved by the Revolutionary Military Council: preparation for the main forces' breakthrough of the blockade, operations by independent units in the enemies' rear, and a partial relaxation of resistance directly on the front in favour of a greater flexibility in the interior of the Soviet Area. The draft was sanctioned by the Politburo and was worked out in detail by Chou En-lai. Among other things, the plan provided for the logistical security of the Red Army by creating stores of food and winter uniforms; the installation of a new arsenal for the repair of machine guns, trench mortars, and field artillery; the political and organizational intensification of the recruitment of volunteers; the reorganization of the armed forces to bring all divisions to full combat strength and to incorporate them into corps of at least two divisions each; and the implementation of a basic training suited to the needs of mobile warfare. As for the last point, I composed an operational-tactical directive which was transmitted to the senior military leaders in the summer.

Thus, in May 1934, preparations for a breakthrough were launched. At the end of the month, the Military Council elevated the plan to a decree. To my knowledge this was done without protest from Mao Tse-tung, although his restraint was due to the requirements of factional struggle, not agreement. A general outline of the plan was sent to the ECCI by way of the Comintern Office in Shanghai. Po Ku informed me that it met with approval in Moscow.

Politically, organizationally, and militarily the plan doubtless had certain failings which would hinder its implementation. Virtually all the Central Committee's political work was confined to the Soviet Area. It was performed under the old slogans "Everything for the front!" and "Surrender not one foot of territory!" Neither the meagre possibilities for political reconnaissance among the KMT troops and the populace of the White districts, nor the expansion of guerrilla warfare in the enemy's hinterland were exploited.

As before, the reorganization of the troops led to excesses. These consisted mainly of establishing new units and divisions rather than replenishing the old corps and divisions to their capacity. Some weaker units were disbanded, but, because of the high number of losses in 1934, most units contained a disproportionately large number of inexperienced recruits. This was especially true of the newly formed 8th Corps and the reinforced 5th and 9th Corps.

The operational and tactical principles decreed by the Revolutionary Military Council were only slowly enforced. Because the enemy persisted in his tactics, there was no decisive battle even though we gave him greater latitude. Nor did we seek such a battle once the decision

had been made for the breakthrough. Fighting was at first confined to short surprise attacks. This narrowed our own initiative and led to frequent changes of front with exhausting troop transfers.

Still, we achieved some notable successes during the spring and summer, which moved Chou En-lai to develop a theory of strategic victory through tactical successes in protracted war. He defended his thesis in several articles that he wrote for the Army periodical *Red Star*. They were an attempt to find a theoretical basis for the dual nature of military policy — on the one hand, preparation for a break-through and fighting along the enemy's rear lines; on the other hand, battles on our own inner lines. In reality the overall strategic situation was unaltered by our partial successes. The enemy did suffer defeats, but continued unperturbed the construction of wedges of fortifications on his chief operational routes.

In late May and early April Chien-ning was captured. The enemy advanced from there and from Kuang-ch'ang in two assault columns towards Shih-ch'eng. North of here the 1st and 3rd Corps led a surprise attack. Two to three enemy divisions were hit badly but managed to return to their lines, leaving little booty behind.

In June, Hunan and Central KMT troops occupied Yung-feng and Hsing-kuo and from there advanced concentrically against Ning-tu. The Kwangtung forces also stepped up their activity. The provincial governor Ch'en Chi-t'ang evidently feared that his own power would be jeopardized should Chiang Kai-shek's troops push through the Soviet Area as far as the Kwangtung border. Since the southern front would be manned only by independent and local units the Military Council sent me to inspect the area round Hui-ch'ang with the head of the operations department of General Headquarters. We both came to the conclusion that the bunkers built in the old manner were unfit for defensive purposes. Furthermore, they would certainly provide the enemy's war machine with splendid targets. The units stationed there appeared incapable of successful regular combat. They were weak numerically and poorly armed and trained. But, under the circumstances, reinforcing them at the expense of our main forces was out of the question. The enemy was behaving extremely cautiously, almost fearfully, even in the smallest encounter. For all these reasons we directed the military sector commander merely to harass the enemy troops and impede their advance without becoming involved in serious fighting. I reported this to the Military Council and the directive was approved. Our judgement proved correct. Hui-ch'ang was not taken by the enemy until autumn 1934.

Shortly thereafter a leadership panel comprised of Chu Te, Po Ku, and myself travelled to the northwestern front via Ning-tu. The 1st and 3rd Corps were concentrated there by order of General Headquarters in

order to deliver a blow against the enemy assault column advancing south of Yung-feng. There was only one early successful engagement by the 3rd Corps, after which the enemy withdrew into his fortified lines. On all fronts except in Fukien there was a pause in the fighting. The enemy did not undertake large-scale attacks for the remainder of the summer, basically confining his activity to consolidating his fortifications and advancing, if at all, step by step.

On this fifth and last visit to the front I talked at length with Lin Piao, who defended his and Mao's old tactical views. I suggested that he work them into an article for *Revolution and War*, which he did. Actually, our public disputes were meaningless in view of the Military Council's May resolutions. Po Ku and I saw them more as a stratagem to deceive the enemy about our true intentions, for we assumed his agents read our newspapers. P'eng Te-huai also participated in the discussion. We had no differences of opinion.

The 6th and 7th Corps' operations along the enemy's lines of communication contributed substantially to a stabilization on the northern front by diverting and engaging a part of his forces. This permitted us the relative leisure to step up reinforcements and training for the Central Army Group's main forces.

In early summer 1934 a small group of political and technical cadres with radio equipment and a code made its way to the 6th Corps. This provided the Central Committee and Military Council with precise and detailed information on the state of the soviet area there. It was far worse than we had imagined. The territory and armament of the 6th Corps had drastically diminished. On the other hand, Ho Lung's 2nd Corps, with which we had no direct communication, was supposed to have consolidated its new base in the Hunan - Hupeh - Szechwan border region. This was of great strategic significance. Situated near the Yangtze and at the juncture of the most developed provinces of Inner China, it offered an excellent springboard for extensive political activity and military offensives. The Revolutionary Military Council therefore ordered Hsiao K'e to surrender the 6th Corps' old base and to merge with Ho Lung under the watchword of "Anti-Japanese War". The commander of the Independent 16th Division was directed to return to his base from Jui-chin and to divert the enemy towards Nan-ch'ang. This never happened. As I have already recounted, he went over to the enemy.

Meanwhile, the 6th Corps successfully broke through two fortified lines in eastern Hunan and marched through southern Hunan to Kweichow without serious losses. Its path lay somewhat northward of the march route later followed by the Central Army Group. Along the way it was able to radio valuable information about the enemy block-house system. At Kweichow it turned sharply northward arriving at the

base of the 2nd Corps in the autumn of 1934. This reopened radio contact between them and ourselves, if only for a short while. The two corps combined forces. Ho Lung assumed supreme military command, Hsiao K'e the political directorship. They operated with varying success in northern Hunan until the summer or autumn of 1935 when they turned westward to retrace passage of the Central Army Group.

In late July or early August 1934 the 7th Corps, comprised of the 19th Division with about 7,000 combat troops, broke out of southwestern Fukien. Declared as the "Anti-Japanese Vanguard of the Red Army", it was to wage a guerrilla war in Fukien and unite with Fang Chih-min's 10th Army to effect a joint harassment of the KMT's strategic hinterland in the Kiangsi – Chekiang – Anhwei border region. After settling accounts with Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai, Chiang Kai-shek stabilized the situation in Fukien and started the two earlier scheduled assault columns towards Ning-hua and Ting-chou. The Military Council therefore supported the breakthrough of the 7th Corps with a grand offensive of the 1st Corps, 9th Corps, and the 24th Division at Ting-chou. They defeated one or two enemy divisions and captured a rich booty of weapons. Then another cease-fire set in. The 7th Corps pushed into Inner Fukien and then turned north. On the Chekiang border, however, at the beginning of 1935, it encountered superior enemy forces and was badly beaten. The survivors fought their way to the 10th Army but the latter was itself extremely hard pressed, and, as we learned from KMT radio broadcasts, almost entirely wiped out in 1935. Fang Chih-min, one of the outstanding leaders of the 1927 revolts, was taken prisoner and executed.

In August 1934 the Politburo and Military Council deliberated on the military situation. It was pronounced generally satisfactory. The May-July quarter-year plan had essentially been implemented. The victories of Shih-ch'eng and Ting-chou and the diversionary tactics of the 6th and 7th Corps had practically brought the enemy's assault columns to a halt in all his main operational directions. It could be said that Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Campaign, in spite of numerous skirmishes which continued to occur particularly in the north, had come to an end. Yet the enemy had undeniably attained his immediate aims in the north and west and had come dangerously near to achieving them in southern and eastern Fukien. He concentrated more than ever on blockhouse construction, not merely securing his lines of communication, but adding transversal fortifications to isolate the soviet regions between the wedges.

At this time we received our first reports that the enemy was consolidating the existing fortified belt and building new ones behind his lines all round the Central Soviet Area. We concluded that Chiang Kai-shek,

warned perhaps by the 6th and 7th Corps' activities, was expecting a breakthrough attempt by our main forces and doing his utmost to prevent it.

Everyone agreed that, under these circumstances, to seek a decisive battle within the Soviet Area would be senseless. Even Mao Tse-tung refrained from further protest and withdrew almost completely from meetings. I assumed he was once more attending to his "impaired health" in the governmental complex in the restricted zone. It was not until much later that I learned he had been in the district city of Yü-tu with the 1st Corps since at least September. Many years later he spread the perfidious lie that Po Ku and I had exiled him to this place under the pretext of having him examine possible break-through points.

The Politburo requested me to draft a new quarter-year plan for August to October. It was revised by Chou En-lai, approved by the Standing Committee of the Politburo, and transmitted in outline form to the ECCI by way of Shanghai. The preparation of this plan triggered off the first serious difference of opinion between me and Chou En-lai. My original thought had been to penetrate the blockade with the 3rd Corps, but otherwise to maintain a strategic defence in the interior of the Central Soviet Area. I felt that this would guarantee the return of the main forces, although this was certainly problematical in view of the enemy's many-layered fortifications belt. At the very least it might preserve the Soviet Area as a very strong guerrilla base in the long term.

Now Chou En-lai vehemently urged the evacuation of the entire Soviet Area, including all institutions, rear-line services, installations, and a large part of the independent and local units intended for mobile and guerrilla warfare in the interior of the Soviet Area and its border districts. Po Ku negotiated a compromise in which Chou En-lai, who directed the general preparations, retained the upper hand. The number of persons to be evacuated was only slightly lowered — 10 to 20 per cent according to my estimates. The result was that combat troops were unduly burdened by non-combatants. This could not but hamper their freedom of movement. The fighting ability of the newly formed units also left something to be desired. But these troops, who would have been totally adequate in guerrilla warfare, were denied to the Soviet Area. Nevertheless, events were to demonstrate that a sufficient number of cadres and soldiers remained behind to carry on the fight.

These discussions did not, as far as I remember, take place in the Military Council or Politburo, but privately among Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and myself. They proceeded in a perfectly congenial atmosphere. Outwardly we advocated a common line.

The August plan already contained all the essential elements of the final breakthrough decree issued by the Standing Committee in late August. Our chief political slogan called for the mobilization of all

forces in the soviet regions and the broad masses in all the rest of China to struggle against the Japanese invaders. Subordinate to this were the "strategic" slogans pertaining to a grand offensive against the KMT as the primary obstacle in the anti-Japanese war and the continued active defence of existing soviet regions. In its fundamentals this was also a political programme. Today it is distorted in Maoist historiography by the claim that, at this time, Mao conceived the ingenious idea of a co-ordinated deployment of all revolutionary armed forces against the Japanese aggressor. Apart from the fact that he remained aloof from the preparation and implementation of the break-through plan, as I have made clear in my portrayal of intra-Party events, no one dreamed of a march north to fight the Japanese. The anti-Japanese struggle was a political rallying point, of course, but it was by no means the military strategy of the Party and Army leadership. The breakthrough was initially intended to force open the trap which the Soviet Area was increasingly becoming, to gain open operating space, and, if possible, to create a large new soviet base in southern China, somewhere near the Hunan-Kweichow border, with the assistance of the 2nd and 6th Corps.

Our scouts discovered that the enemy's weakest point was in the seam joining Hunan and Kwangtung-Kwangsi. There were four fortified lines here running from north to south. They covered a breadth of 200 to 300 km with a distance of 50 to 60 km between each line. The most critical east-west routes were connected by additional blockhouses. Yet these fortifications could not be compared in strength with those on the other fronts, especially the north and northwest. Another consideration was that this direction would give us a substantial lead over Chiang Kai-shek's pursuing troops. The Kwangtung and Kwangsi troops would permit themselves to be drawn into costly battles and to be weakened relative to the Central Government's forces. This suited our strategy of avoiding decisive battles in the fortified zone, which might entail incalculable risks, and to strike at the enemy only when we reached adequate open space for mobile warfare.

The organizational measures stipulated in the May plan — the securing of provisions, winter clothing, and munition stores as well as troop training — were even further intensified. The redistribution of forces and means between the Central Army Group and the Soviet Area continued. The former's strength swelled to five corps with twelve divisions and two route columns of non-combatants, in accordance with Chou En-lai's evacuation scheme (exact figures are provided below). The latter's remaining independent forces diminished to between 10,000 and 12,000 soldiers plus a much higher but poorly armed and inexperienced number of self-defence organizations. The division of political departments and cadres proceeded in conformity with this plan as well. Only the central ones were prepared for the breakthrough,

whereas almost all the local ones stayed behind. The Soviet Area was placed under the political leadership of Hsiang Ying and the military directorship of Ch'en Yi.

The August plan set the date of the break-through for late October or early November. Our information was that Chiang Kai-shek was planning a new large-scale concentric offensive at this time to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the Soviet Area.

In addition, this is the most favourable time in southern China, geographically and climatically, for marches and battles. Let me remark in passing that Mao Tse-tung has inverted the truth with regard to the breakthrough schedule. In spring he objected to the very idea of a breakthrough. In summer he called it premature at best. Afterwards it was declared dangerously belated.

The most critical factor was secrecy. Only then could the element of surprise, an absolute condition for success, be assured. Therefore only members of the Politburo and Military Council were informed. All others, even the senior military commanders, knew of it only in so far as they were to execute certain manoeuvres in their areas of jurisdiction. By early September the corps of the Central Army Group were withdrawn to inoperative positions. At the end of September, once the final and irrevocable decision had been made, they were moved to their forward lines. The highest-ranking cadres received their instructions. The middle and lower cadres had to be content until the very end with political slogans and explanations that a large-scale offensive was pending. Not until a week before we broke camp did they learn what was behind this. Mao Tse-tung later made use of this to censure the Party leadership. He especially criticized Po Ku and Chou En-lai for insufficient political preparation of the march.

At the beginning of September Governor Ch'en Chi-t'ang of Kwangtung unexpectedly offered the Red Army a secret armistice. Apart from the Kwangtung troops' advance on Hui-ch'ang, which proceeded at a snail's pace, and frequent strikes by the Min-t'uan bands, the southern front had been relatively quiet since 1932. Ch'en Chi-t'ang, who was apparently informed of Chiang Kai-shek's new campaign, now feared that it might imperil his own authority. Until now the Soviet Area had shielded him from direct confrontation with Chiang Kai-shek. Negotiations lasted the entire month. Po Ku consulted the ECCI, which asked if, under these circumstances, it would be possible for the main forces to continue fighting inside the Soviet Area. The Politburo, however, persisted in its breakthrough plan, because the enemy's net was closing. There was also the constant threat from Yü Han-mou, Commander of the 1st Kwangtung Army, on our southern front. He was known to be a party liner, loyal to Chiang Kai-shek, and might attack us at any time. The only possible exit for us was through the sector controlled by

Kwangtung troops. If we did not take advantage of this, the breakthrough itself would be in doubt. The negotiations continued, but, on our side at least, served primarily to camouflage our strategic plans.

The radio exchange with the ECCI was to be the last for a year and a half. The Shanghai Central Committee Bureau's personnel were arrested by the KMT secret police and its broadcasting equipment confiscated. All communication with the Comintern Office and the ECCI was severed. The total isolation of the Central Committee from the outside world was to play an inestimable role in the further development of the Party. It gathered even more significance when it lasted into 1936, the year of the Comintern's Seventh World Congress, which determined the strategic and tactical course of the Communist and workers' parties. One of the speakers was Wang Ming. He read a paper on nationalism and colonialism, stressing the necessity to end the civil war in China and to form a new united front in the national liberation struggle against the Japanese aggressor. This was in total accord with the general strategy of the Comintern to mobilize all progressive forces in the world for a joint resistance against fascism and war.

The Central Committee's isolation was most convenient for Mao Tse-tung. It freed his hands to intensify his partisan contest for the Party leadership. He did not hesitate even to reinterpret previous directives of the ECCI and the Shanghai Comintern Office to serve his own purposes and to combat the Marxist-internationalist cadres.

His intrigues were unwittingly advanced by the treachery of Li Tsushen and Sheng Chung-liang, the leading members of the Shanghai Bureau. Arrested and threatened with execution, they joined the KMT secret police. Everything that was known and confided to them was betrayed. This resulted in the seizure of many leading cadres in the White areas, the collapse of central and local Party organizations, and the loss of important documents.

It was probably in this manner that Chiang Kai-shek learned of our breakthrough intentions. Fortunately this could only have been in the most general terms, since the concrete details, such as the assault route and appointed time, had not yet been determined and therefore not communicated to Shanghai. However, several circumstances indicate that he did indeed know of our plans. First, there was the above-mentioned construction of additional fortifications on the Nationalists' own rear lines, which was done in August and September, after the start of the 6th and 7th Corps' operations. Second, it explains the abrupt offer of a cease-fire by Ch'en Chi-t'ang. Third, we intercepted KMT radio messages which certified that Chiang Kai-shek was advancing the deadline for the start of his grand offensive by a month.

In the last days of September his assault columns resumed movement.

The Communist Party and Army modified their plan according to their excellent intelligence reports.

By the end of September the main forces had assumed their final concentration positions. They had already been relieved at the front by independent and local units, which were to remain behind and delay the KMT forces by diversionary tactics. All other preparations were accelerated and essentially completed by 1 October. On 16 October the route columns broke camp, and, under cover of darkness, made for their forward lines unobserved by the enemy.

3

ON THE LONG MARCH, 1934 – 1935

ACCORDING to my notes from 1939, which were based on 1934 estimates of the Red Army General Headquarters (only the number of machine-guns is crudely assessed), the Central Army Group's actual strength at the time of departure totalled 75,000 to 81,000 men. Of these, 57,000 to 61,000 were combat troops with 41,000 to 42,000 rifles and more than 1,000 light and heavy machine-guns. The force was divided into five corps.

The 1st Corps, made up of the 1st, 2nd, and 15th Divisions, numbered 16,000 to 18,000 men; 14,000 to 15,000 of them were combat troops with 9,000 to 10,000 rifles and 300 to 350 machine-guns.

The 3rd Corps was composed of the 4th, 5th, and 6th Divisions, some 15,000 men, of whom 12,000 to 13,000 were combat troops with 9,000 rifles and about 300 machine-guns.

Because these two corps served as assault groups carrying the main burden of breakthrough operations, they were also provided with two field guns, each with several hundred rounds of ammunition for direct fire, and had common use of 30 to 40 light mortars with about 3,000 shells produced in our arsenal.

The 5th Corps, comprised of the 13th and 34th Divisions, numbered 11,000 to 12,000 men of whom 10,000 were combat troops with 6,000 rifles and 150 to 200 machine rifles.

The newly formed 8th Corps, made up of the previously independent 21st and 23rd Divisions, contained 10,000 men. Some 8,000 of these were combat troops with 6,000 rifles and about 100 machine-guns.

And, finally, there was the 9th Corps, which was composed of the 3rd and 22nd Divisions and totalled 11,000 to 12,000 men. Of these, 10,000 were fighting men with 7,000 rifles and 150 machine-guns.

Every combat soldier carried one or two hand grenades, every rifle had 70 to 100 cartridges, every light machine-gun was accompanied by 300 to 400 rounds of ammunition and every heavy machine-gun by 500 to 600.

All units, up to and including divisional headquarters, had an ample supply of radios, field telephones, and other means of communication. This was also true of the two evacuation columns, which were provided with sufficient military protection to defend themselves independently for a short time if necessary. The first of these, the strategic or command column, included members of the Central Committee, of the Government, and of the Military Council with General Headquarters. Directly



The Central Soviet Area at the time of the Long March, October 1934

subordinate to this last group were the staff troops. These comprised an intelligence battalion, an engineers' battalion (responsible mainly for road and bridge construction), and an anti-aircraft company. A cadet regiment drawn from the Military Academy and the three military schools attended to security. This regiment was made up of two infantry battalions and one specialist battalion armed with six light mortars, six heavy machine-guns, and an adequate number of light machine-guns and Mauser pistols. Altogether, this column totalled 4,000 to 5,000 men of whom 2,000 were combat troops with 1,500 rifles in addition to the arms listed above.

Support services were the province of the second column. This included a field hospital and various other institutions, as well as groups of Party and Government officials. The largest part of it, numerically speaking, was the reserves division. It was composed of recently recruited pack-carriers who, among other things, transported hundreds of bundles of leaflets, chests of silver bullion, and arsenal machinery. It was planned that, as their burdens decreased over the course of the march, they would be integrated with the combat troops as replacements for the inevitable losses. Members of the reserve division were, for all practical purposes, unarmed, for the spears, swords, and daggers they carried could hardly be counted. This column was guarded by a combined regiment of security troops. In all, it numbered 8,000 to 9,000 men of whom 2,000 were combat soldiers with more than 1,500 rifles and Mausers and a few machine-guns. The strength of the combined regiment of security troops varied greatly because it furnished body guards and escorts on demand for leading Government and Party officials and General Headquarters.

Rations, mainly rice and salt, were carried on the person of each participant for about two weeks. After that, we were obliged to tap local food sources through purchase or requisition.

The above data demonstrate that it was certainly not a "nation emigrating" as Edgar Snow purported in *Red Star Over China*. Nor was it a "precipitate, panic-stricken flight", as Mao Tse-tung later alleged. It was a well thought out operation, painstakingly prepared over time, and, although it did take on the character of a retreat later on, it was not initially regarded as such.

I therefore consider false the standard historiographical version, created by Mao Tse-tung, which claims that the breakthrough of the blockade was the result of military defeat and pressure from the enemy. It was not a defeated army, but a fully intact army, that forced its way through the blockade. Its leaders reached their decision voluntarily, based on the sober reflection that the general strategic situation was worsening. The problem was simple: should an area which was being slowly strangled, which was exhausting its resources, and which offered

its armed forces less and less freedom of movement continue to be defended? Or should the active strength of the army be preserved and the necessary latitude secured to wage a mobile war in which the enemy might be defeated and a new soviet base created without giving up the old one altogether? The questions answered themselves, if our strategic priority was considered to be the use of the Central Army Group as an important element of the revolutionary forces to thwart the enemy's strategic intents and to create the best conditions for the continued armed class struggle.

None the less, it can be said that the soviet movement in China had suffered a political defeat. The experience of Chiang Kai-shek's Fourth and Fifth campaigns had proved that relatively small and isolated soviet bases could not be maintained for long under the international and domestic conditions of the mid-1930s. Even objectively, this task was being pushed into the background as the class struggle merged into the national revolutionary war of liberation and the soviet movement was superseded by the united front.

When the figures quoted above are compared with those of earlier years it is clear that the units of the Central Army Group had improved, numerically and in weaponry. The same can be said of their tactical training and political education as well. It can be added without any exaggeration that they had reached the pinnacle of their development up to this time. The summarily stated figure of 100,000 soldiers was invented for propaganda purposes and is simply not true. It was closer to half of that. First of all, the total number of march participants amounted to no more than about 80,000 persons. Second, the ratio of combatants (excluding the baggage train) to non-combatants of the evacuation columns (including the escort and staff troops) was roughly three to one. Another factor to be considered was that the effective strengths of the twelve divisions varied. The seven veteran parent divisions (the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 13th) of the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 9th Corps stood in sharp contrast to the virtually inexperienced 15th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th Divisions. Even within the parent divisions, a large percentage of soldiers had not been recruited until 1934. In spite of these very real and serious deficiencies, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Central Army Group commanded a powerful fighting force equal to the new task before it.

For the sake of completeness I will now cite the strengths of other, independently operating, detachments of the Chinese Red Army, as far as they were known to us. These figures reflect the situation as assessed by General Headquarters at the end of 1934.

After battles involving heavy losses the 10th Army and the 7th Corps still had 6,000 to 8,000 men with 5,000 to 6,000 rifles. They were based in an area which varied from 5,000 to 7,000 square km with just half a

million inhabitants. After the withdrawal of the main forces from the Central Soviet Area they were placed under the command of Hsiang Ying and Ch'en Yi. Contact with them was lost, however, by 1935.

After it merged with the 6th Corps, the 2nd Corps numbered 15,000 to 20,000 men with 10,000 to 12,000 rifles. Its base covered up to 20,000 square km, but with a population of no more than one million.

In the former base of the 4th Corps, local detachments were combined into the 15th Corps under the command of Hsü Hai-tung. It came to 5,000 to 6,000 men with 4,000 to 5,000 rifles. Because its position in the old soviet base had become untenable, it marched to the northwest late in 1934. I cannot say for sure if this was done with the Central Committee's approval.

The 4th Corps, with which no communication existed, was the subject of fantastic speculation. It was claimed that, after defeating local landlords, it had established a base in northern Szechwan supposedly covering 20,000 square km and one and a half million inhabitants. For a while it even controlled 40,000 square km and a population of three to four million. But in the summer of 1934 it was forced further west by a combined force of Szechwanese troops and four to five of Chiang Kai-shek's divisions applying a fortifications tactic similar to that employed against the Central Army Group; there, as rumour had it, in the Szechwan-Sikang border region inhabited primarily by national minorities, it created a large, new base and established a federal soviet government. Totally contradictory and no doubt greatly exaggerated statements concerning its strength changed the number of combat troops from 100,000 to 300,000. General Headquarters offered a more sober estimate of 30,000 to 40,000 men, relatively few machine-guns and no heavier weapons. The striking difference can perhaps be explained in that the 4th Corps evacuated part of the local population when it left its base.

This rather sketchy and by no means reliable information was derived primarily from enemy sources. What it does indicate without a doubt, however, is that most of the independently operating units of the Chinese Red Army had abandoned their bases by 1934 to preserve their fighting capability. Where local conditions did not permit this, as was the case with the 10th Army, they were annihilated.

On the evening of 16 October, the day that the command column broke through the blockaded zone, Hsiang Ying asked if he might speak to me privately. I therefore stayed behind with my escort, catching up with the command column the next day. Like all the others, it marched only at night under cover of darkness. Wu Hsiu-ch'uan served as interpreter for the discussion, which lasted all night. As the commander of the

remaining troops, Ch'en Yi, did not take part only the three of us were present.

Hsiang Ying displayed remarkable optimism. Chiang Kai-shek's latest campaign had already begun. Since our independent units were no longer able to provide any more than delaying action, the Kuomintang troops had accelerated their advance and were about to take Hui-ch'ang. None the less, Hsiang Ying did not consider the political and military situation to be hopeless. The contiguous soviet territory still covered 25,000 to 30,000 square km, not to mention several "islands" in which soviet governments still existed. The remaining population numbered two to three million. Of course, he admitted, a quite swift decrease was to be expected, since it was certain that the enemy would occupy and "mop up" the villages and farms in his route of advance as well as the few cities that had been in our hands. This did not particularly discourage Hsiang Ying, for, as he pointed out, the evacuation of all endangered points had been in process for one to two weeks already. Civilian facilities, cadres, and provisions had been moved to the virtually inaccessible mountains. The most perceptive inhabitants, especially those belonging to local self-defence organizations, were following them voluntarily. The economic problems that were bound to arise, however, presented a serious problem.

He advocated that the independent units under Ch'en Yi's command be even more decentralized than before and that they engage in guerrilla warfare from mountain bases. The rugged mountain ranges in the Kiangsi – Fukien – Kwangtung border regions offered excellent possibilities for this.

Time was to prove the wisdom of Hsiang Ying's words. By the end of 1934 Chiang Kai-shek's troops had entered the ruins of the former Red capital Jui-chin. But then the main body of his élite divisions had to be thrown into hasty pursuit towards Hunan and the provinces further west. Not only did the core of the revolutionary forces in Kiangsi remain intact for years, it even received a certain reinforcement from soldiers whose units had been cut off and who had made their way back to the former Soviet Area. That being the case, Hsiang Ying and Yeh T'ing (who replaced Ch'en Yi in 1937) were able to organize the New Fourth Army with a strength of 12,000 to 15,000 men. However, when the army marched north in 1941 with orders to engage the Japanese from the rear, it was ambushed by Kuomintang troops and suffered heavy losses. Hsiang Ying was killed; Yeh T'ing was imprisoned.

It was rumoured that this incident was deliberately provoked by Yen-an, which issued orders contrary to its agreement with the Kuomintang. Recent studies have confirmed this suspicion. They indicate that the New Fourth Army did receive an order from Kuomintang authorities to proceed north of the Yangtze and attack the Japanese

from the rear. Their departure was delayed because Mao Tse-tung issued a counter-order, with the apparent intention of consolidating the "revolutionary base" south of the Yangtze behind Kuomintang lines. When, after a good deal of vacillation, the New Fourth Army finally did break camp, the Kuomintang was already massed against it. In attacking the route column, they concentrated their particular attention on staff officers. Thus Hsiang Ying became the victim of Mao Tse-tung's and Chiang Kai-shek's mutual duplicity in the anti-Japanese war. That Hsiang's death was not altogether undesirable is suggested by the fact that Mao had already denounced Hsiang as a right opportunist at the Central Committee's 6th Plenum in 1938. His only crime was that he remained true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism and had constantly championed the policy of the united front in the national liberation struggle. But with these remarks I have rushed ahead of events.

Hsiang Ying's optimism in our nocturnal discussion of the former Soviet Area's future prospects was balanced by his general concern for the Communist Party and Red Army. Because we had to converse in my interpreter's presence, he chose his words with caution. He regretted above all that the seriously ill Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai had to remain behind. Let me insert here that, by the time I arrived in Kiangsi, this outstanding revolutionary leader, who had spoken out courageously against Mao Tse-tung's political escapades and who had advocated policies in conformity with Comintern objectives, had already lost his former influence. As far as I know, he still belonged to the Central Committee, and, as People's Commissar for Education and Culture, to the Government. But he was hardly in evidence. Whether this was due solely to the gravity of his illness or whether political intrigue played a role is beyond my knowledge. During an attempt to evacuate him from the Soviet Area in 1935 he was taken prisoner by Kuomintang henchmen and executed. None of this prevented Mao and the "Red Guards" in recent times from vilifying him and striking his name from the history of the Chinese Communist Party.

Hsiang Ying made distinct allusions to the terrorist line of Mao Tse-tung and his persecution of loyal Party cadres in about 1930. He warned against underestimating the seriousness of Mao's partisan struggle against the Party leadership. His temporary restraint was due only to tactical considerations. He would be able to rely on influential cadres, especially in the Army, and with their help would avail himself of the first opportunity to seize exclusive control of Army and Party. I shared Hsiang Ying's fears. But when I told Po Ku of our discussion several days later he was more confident. He said there were no differences about the general political principles of the Party. Since the Red Army had switched over to a mobile counter-offensive the earlier debate over

military strategy had ceased. He had talked this over with Mao and was positive that he would not consider provoking a crisis of leadership that might endanger the Central Army Group's fate. This was a mistake on the part of Po Ku.

The Central Army Group made for the extreme southwestern corner of Kiangsi. It marched in three columns through the relatively enemy-free gaps between Kan-chou and Hui-ch'ang. Here it was to break through the first fortification zone near Hsin-feng and cross the T'ao River, a tributary of the Kan. This sector of the front was defended by the 1st Division of the Kwangtung Army. Its positions as well as our own approach and attack routes were reconnoitred to the last detail. Within a few nights our troops reached their lines. Applying the full force of our artillery, the 1st and 3rd Corps broke through the enemy positions in a surprise move and smashed the 1st Kwangtung Division. They themselves suffered almost no casualties. The operation was a complete success, as even Mao Tse-tung was forced to admit.

The march to the Kiangsi - Hunan border, the site of the second fortified ring, continued without delay. The three columns were grouped so that the main forces would advance against the Kwangtung and Kwangsi troops, who were becoming very active to our front and left, whereas the right and relatively weak flank moved north, where the Central Government troops were not yet in a position to pursue. The central column was made up of the 3rd Corps as an assault force, the command column, the support column, and the 5th Corps as rearguard. The right column, which attended to the protection of the northern flank, was made up of the 8th Corps. The left column, which served as a second assault force and protection for the southern flank, was made up of the 1st Corps with the 9th Corps following as rearguard. It was to seize the fortified mountain passes on the Kwangtung border and repulse attacks by the Kwangtung and, later, the Kwangsi troops.

The second fortification ring was successfully penetrated by the 3rd Corps. The 1st Corps, on the other hand, was unable to take the passes in the unsurveyed mountain terrain. It found itself marching without maps over narrow suspension bridges and through precipitous gorges. The Kwangtung Army, which was being hastily reinforced, presented an immediate threat. In order to avoid enemy flank assaults and natural barriers the 1st Corps was forced to turn back and link up with the central column. Almost a week was lost by this, permitting strong Kwangtung and Central Kuomintang forces to pursue and engage the 5th and 9th Corps in days of bloody rearguard battles.

This incident was immediately exploited by Mao Tse-tung, Lo Fu, and Wang Chia-hsiang (the "Central Triad") in a vigorous attack

against Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and, above all, me. We conceded that a mistake was made in determining the 1st Corps' route, but it was not, as Chou En-lai expressed it, "of a systematic nature". What was to blame was faulty intelligence. Mao had good reasons for wanting to keep Chu Te out of this matter. But because he took our part, Mao's attempt to rekindle the factional struggle in Party and Army failed. From this time on, though, he made no secret of his endeavours. He opposed every strategic decision and especially criticized any suggestion coming from me. Disregarding the order of march, he stayed with this, sometimes with that corps, exerting his influence on the commanders of various corps and divisions. Gradually, he was able to induce a certain insecurity and discord among the leadership. The process was aided by the feelings of many march participants, especially those in newly recruited units and in the support column. The difficulties of the breakthrough operation had shattered them. Many regarded the present situation as no more than a retreat and wanted only to return home. Mao did not oppose such sentiments; he encouraged them. Our increased speed, necessitated by the time lost in the second fortifications zone and by the enemy's close pursuit, offered him the perfect opportunity, for the number of deserters was growing daily.

Thanks to our forced tempo we did succeed in breaking through the third and relatively weakly defended fortifications ring on the newly laid out section of the Wu-han – Kwangchow railroad before Chiang Kai-shek's units arrived. The march to the fourth fortifications zone, the last known to us, was also covered successfully despite great difficulties with the roads in the Hunan – Kwangsi border region and the constant pressure of Kwangtung troops on our rearguard. Intercepted radio messages informed us that three to four of Chiang Kai-shek's divisions under the command of General Chou were moving in parallel pursuit to the northern Kwangsi city of Ch'üan-hsien, where the crossing of the Hsiang River was planned. Chiang Kai-shek planned to corner our main forces here and destroy them as they forded the river.

When our vanguard reached the city it discovered that Chou had arrived there first. A brigade was occupying the city; his main forces lay in ambush not far away. Like most of the older cities in Inner China, Ch'üan-hsien was surrounded by high, strong walls. Storming the city appeared impossible with our means. At the very least it would have demanded great sacrifices in time and lives. A battle in the immediate vicinity did not seem promising, for the terrain offered little possibility for deployment and the population was composed chiefly of national minorities, Yao and Miao.

I therefore suggested that we bypass Ch'üan-hsien to the south and force the crossing of the Hsiang River there. After breaking through the fourth fortifications zone we could press on at once to the Kwangsi –

Hunan - Kweichow border triangle, which, according to our information, was free of enemy fortifications. Mao objected flatly to this plan. He demanded that we engage Chou's army in battle. Lo Fu and Wang Chia-hsiang supported him. When it came to a vote in the Military Council Chu Te, Chou En-lai, and Po Ku opted for my suggestion. Chu Te's vote as chairman decided the issue.

Meanwhile, two precious days had been lost and with them the element of surprise. The situation was complicated by the fact that strong contingents of Kwangsi troops had closed in upon our flank. The 1st and 5th Corps were able to repulse these and the 3rd Corps broke through the fortifications line, but the incident involved heavy losses. The 5th Corps was hit especially badly, for its 34th Division was cut off and never was able to rejoin the main forces. Some of its units turned back to Hunan, where they engaged in local guerrilla warfare and later joined the 2nd Corps. Others fought their way back to Kiangsi.

The 21st and 23rd Divisions of the 8th Corps and the 22nd Division of the 9th Corps also saw their ranks critically thinned. But this was due less to combat than to disease and desertion, for, apart from some escort and rearguard skirmishes, they had been involved in little fighting. The same applied to the security regiment and the reserve division of the support column. Over the two months of the breakthrough operation much of our equipment had been either exhausted or found superfluous. After crossing the Kiangsi - Hunan border, the leadership decided to abandon the heavy machinery and tools to improve the central route column's mobility. Freed of their burdens, most of the pack-carriers also remained behind, seeking shelter among the local populace or making their way home.

In short, the greatest losses occurred within the newer units composed, in accordance with Chou En-lai's evacuation model, primarily of inexperienced recruits and volunteers. General Headquarters estimated that these units lost up to 50 per cent of their men by the time the city of Li-p'ing in eastern Kweichow was captured. In the reserve division, the figure stood at 75 per cent. They evidently stood the remainder of the march to Tsunyi quite well, for the number cited there was about the same. Casualties in the main forces, that is, in the veteran divisions of the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 9th Corps, remained within modest limits.

As heavy as these losses were, by the middle of December 1934 or two months from the time it set out, the Central Army Group had penetrated the many-layered fortifications ring that the German military specialists had pronounced impregnable. Their route columns had covered 500 km of difficult terrain, and regained open room for mobility. Chiang Kai-shek's plan to annihilate them in the fortified region had failed. The fighting strength of our armed forces had been

preserved. One could even say that it had risen qualitatively in so far as the encumbrance of the ponderous support columns had been largely removed. These circumstances in fact produced the necessary conditions for the Central Army Group's final success during and after the Long March.

The same Hsiao Ching-kuang, who had forfeited the Central Soviet Area's northeastern military sector without a fight at the beginning of the Fifth Campaign, distinguished himself again through his infamous behaviour in the fighting near Ch'üan-hsien. I can no longer be certain which unit he commanded and the Chinese chronicles, of course, ignore the episode. It was probably the 34th Division, but it might also have been the 8th Corps or one of its two divisions. However, what is certain is that, when an enemy unit unexpectedly approached his headquarters, he escaped with the staff guard, leaving his troops to their fate. They were cut off and dispersed. But he reported to General Headquarters as if nothing had happened. Understandably, this exhibition of cowardly irresponsibility was the subject of heated discussions. I insisted that Hsiao be brought before a court-martial. But Mao Tse-tung came to his defence and Hsiao got off with a transfer to the support column. When I met him again in 1937 he was chief of staff of the North Shensi garrison troops in Yen-an. In 1955 Mao made him an admiral. As for my remarks regarding this incident, Mao used them in Tsunyi to charge me slanderously with having applied "methods of intimidation and punishment".

The Central Army Group continued its westward march as planned, although with a small but significant tactical variant. It adopted a more northerly course, moving away from Kwangsi in the direction of the Hunan – Kweichow border. It thus passed from forbidding mountain ranges inhabited by national minorities back into friendlier regions with an exclusively Han population. Moreover, the Kwangtung and Kwangsi troops abandoned their chase, remaining within the borders of their no longer threatened provinces. This removed the danger from our exposed southern flank, for the local garrisons and Min-t'uan bands could inflict no serious damage. On the other hand, General Chou was continuing his parallel pursuit to the north of our route. Fortunately for us, he did not attack. It could be that he did not feel himself capable of doing so outside the fortified area — as long as he lacked significant Kuomintang reinforcements. Towards the end of the year we crossed the Kweichow border and took the city of Li-p'ing against little resistance from the provincial troops stationed there.

During a halt General Headquarters undertook a tentative check of our forces which formed the basis for a comprehensive reorganization.

The 8th Corps, the 22nd Division of the 9th Corps, and the reserve division of the support column were disbanded. Their members were used to replenish the ranks of the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 9th Corps. The Central Army Group was comprised again of eight combat-ready divisions: three each in the 1st and 3rd Corps and one each in the 5th and 9th Corps. As far as I can recall, figures on these divisions' effective strengths were not quoted. There must still have been at least 45,000 combat troops. This was comparable to the situation when we left the Central Soviet Area, before the incorporation of independent and local units in accordance with Chou En-lai's evacuation scheme. It remained essentially unchanged until Tsunyi. The slight losses in Kweichow were offset by recruiting volunteers from among the prisoners-of-war and peasants. Anyway, Chou En-lai, as a member of General Headquarters was in a position to know, and he released the same figure of 45,000.

The number of non-combatants decreased sharply. This happened more in the support column than in the command column, but both dropped to, at most, 3,000 to 4,000 men, probably even less. The security regiment of the military schools and Military Academy and the regiment of security troops were reorganized into battalions. In general, the ratio of combatants to non-combatants improved. It now stood at six to one, instead of the earlier three to one. Furthermore, because cumbersome baggage had been abandoned — including heavy weapons, since their ammunition had been exhausted — the Central Army Group had achieved greater mobility. In short, all the prerequisites for a war of movement were present. It was just a question of deciding which strategic goal we should pursue.

Before we reached Li-p'ing there was a running debate over the future of our operations. Referring to our original plan, I suggested that it might be advisable to permit Chou's army, and others who were pursuing us in parallel routes or hurrying on ahead to strategic points in the west, to overtake us. We could then veer north, behind their rear lines, and link up with the 2nd Corps. Supported by their base and reinforced by Ho Lung and Hsiao K'e's troops, we could attack the enemy in the open and establish a large new soviet base in the Hunan - Kweichow - Szechwan border triangle.

Once again, Mao Tse-tung brusquely rejected my suggestion. He insisted that we continue westward into the interior of Kweichow. This time he was supported not only by Lo Fu and Wang Chia-hsiang, but by Chou En-lai as well. This was the first indication of Chou's shifting of allegiance to the "Central Triad". Mao thus forced through his counter-suggestion. It was on this occasion that he first expressed the notion of abandoning the plan of a soviet base south of the Yangtze with the 2nd Corps. As an alternative, he proposed that we march to Szechwan to join up with the 4th Corps. He made no comment as to

how this was to be done. No one in our group knew exactly where the 4th Corps was then, for there had been no communication between us for a long time. Radio contact with the 2nd Corps, incidentally, had been lost also.

I had difficulty following the discussion and left as soon as possible. Since autumn 1934 I had suffered from severe tropical malaria and it was especially acute at this time. My condition was not to improve until we reached the highlands of northern Yunnan in the spring. Therefore, I did not learn of the final decision until I saw the written orders. When I asked Chou En-lai for more detailed information he responded with an irritation unusual in such a quiet and self-possessed man. The Central Army Group needed a rest, he said, and it would most likely find it in Kweichow, where the enemy was relatively weak. Po Ku felt that we could always move north from Kweichow and that it was probably true that we would face little resistance there.

After the capture of Li-p'ing there was another conference in which Lin Piao and P'eng Te-huai took part. I was not present because of a high fever. Asked beforehand for my opinion, I told Chou En-lai that we should shift our direction to the northwest in order to avoid the provincial capital Kuei-yang. According to our intelligence reports, six to seven partially motorized élite divisions of Chiang Kai-shek's forces were approaching the city. We could cross the Wu River, destroy the weak provincial troops of Kweichow, liberate the area north and west of the Wu-chiang using Tsunyi as a temporary base, and engage Chiang Kai-shek's advancing forces in battle. Although, with the exception of the last item, this plan complied with Mao Tse-tung's ideas expressed at the last conference, he harshly rebuffed it. The remainder of the march to Tsunyi differed from my suggestion only in a few tactical moves initiated by Chou En-lai.

The 300 km from Li-p'ing to Tsunyi were covered under most advantageous conditions. The terrain permitted an easy pace, because it was free of fortifications, and yet it offered adequate camouflage against air attacks, which increasingly supplemented or replaced ground pursuit. Although the region was poor and its resources meagre (Kweichow was the most backward province of southern China), provisions presented no difficulty. We captured several cities, including the rich trade centre Chen-yüan, and requisitioned such abundant supplies from big landlords, merchants, and usurers that we not only satisfied our needs but were also able to distribute some of it to the poor. The inhabitants greeted us with friendliness; some even sent delegations ahead to meet us. The only direct military action that we experienced was with Kweichow provincial troops. They were not better armed than we and decidedly worse trained, not to mention their low fighting morale. We literally drove them away before us.

The main obstacle on the way proved to be the Wu, a broad and torrential river on which the Kweichow troops had set up defensive positions. All boats had been taken away and secured to the far bank. But the 1st and 3rd Corps' vanguards crossed over on hastily constructed bamboo rafts and set up bridgeheads on the other side. Under their cover, most of our troops followed on two bamboo bridges which had been built within forty-eight hours. Here again, the enemy fled in panic after some initial resistance.

The next day we learned that two or three divisions, most likely from Chou's army, were advancing in forced march to the Hunan border, apparently in a belated attempt to surprise us when we crossed the river. This offered a unique opportunity to ambush and destroy these divisions, for they would have to cross the river themselves and we could wait for them on the other side. I felt duty bound to submit this idea. But Mao Tse-tung wanted to hear as little about it as possible. A victorious battle at this point would have thwarted his plans. He was pressing on to Tsunyi, for he judged the time ripe to strike the long-awaited blow against the Party leadership and to regain control of the Army. Then he would no longer require a resolution of the Military Council; his word would suffice.

We covered the short distance from the Wu River to Tsunyi in two to three days. The Kweichow troops in this area no longer put up a fight. Either they fled this part of the province or simply disbanded. Rather than commit his remaining four or five divisions, Governor Wang Chia-lieh pulled them further back to the west. Thus at one blow the Central Army Group liberated a region of about 15,000 square km, although, it must be confessed, with a very small and rural population. As well as occupying Tsunyi, the governor's place of residence, it also took the trade centre of T'ung-tzu, thereby controlling the important road between the riverport of Chungking and the provincial capital Kueiyang.

Our entry into these towns was so unexpected that their sizeable populations — Tsunyi had close to 10,000 inhabitants and T'ung-tzu even more — had no time to flee. Even Kuomintang officials, big landlords, and rich merchants were still there. Enormous stores of food and textiles fell into our hands. Still, captured goods in terms of weapons and ammunition, which we urgently needed, were negligible.

The Politburo of the Central Committee issued orders to establish a base here, leaving open the question as to whether it was to be temporary or permanent. The Central Army Group's political administration, the political departments of the corps and divisions, and especially the Party and Government cadres of the command reserve displayed feverish activity. Agitprop brigades were formed, mass meetings were held, revolutionary committees were founded, confiscated provisions

and work tools were distributed to the needy, and self-defence units were organized. Even the first stages of land reform were contemplated.

The Army enjoyed a respite of about two weeks, for Chiang Kai-shek had called a halt to the fruitless pursuit campaign. He needed time to regroup his forces and to co-ordinate their activity with that of the Kweichow, Yunnan, and Szechwan provincial troops.

The situation was hardly that described by official Chinese historiography, according to which "under the extremely difficult and dangerous conditions during the Long March, the Party succeeded in preserving and steeling the core of the Red Army, thereby rescuing itself and the revolution from danger" (Ho Kan-chih, *A History of the Modern Chinese Revolution*, Peking, 1959, p. 265). On the contrary, the Central Army Group had not enjoyed such freedom of movement for a long time. It was in a position to seize the initiative.

Mao Tse-tung used the break to force the convening of a so-called "enlarged" session of the Politburo of the Central Committee. This posed little difficulty because he knew he had most of the Politburo members present in Tsunyi behind him. Apart from Lo Fu and Wang Chia-hsiang, there was Ch'en Yun, and, less enthusiastically, Chou En-lai. But that was not enough for him. Members of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, members of General Headquarters, and commanders and commissars of corps and divisions were also invited to the conference which took place on 7 – 8 January 1935. They formed the great majority, and, contrary to Party regulations and norms, were granted decisive as well as advisory voting powers. Of the thirty-five to forty participants fewer than one-third, probably one-quarter, were members of the Central Committee, not to mention the Politburo. That is true even if one allows for the by-elections at the Central Committee's Fifth Plenum in January 1934. This was the first peculiarity of the conference. One cannot but be reminded of the latest "Central Committee meetings" in China before the so-called Ninth Party Congress, in which Mao troopers and Red Guards out-numbered and terrorized the few Central Committee members present.

The second peculiarity was that, almost as if by prearrangement, all the basic problems of the revolution which urgently required resolution, such as the hegemony of the proletariat, the primary contradiction in the world, and the necessity of a national united front, were excluded from consideration. Neither the international situation nor the relationship of the Chinese Communist Party to the Soviet Union, not even the struggle of the Communist Party in Kuomintang-controlled areas was discussed. Even the future of the anti-Japanese struggle, the main rallying cry of the Party and the Revolutionary Government, was

ignored. The only issues permitted on the agenda were the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Campaign and the first stage of the Long March. Considering the composition of the conference, this selection of topics guaranteed the success of Mao's reactionary programme. He prudently took care not to attack the general line of the Central Committee. Instead, he summarily declared it correct and merely mentioned "partial right opportunist errors". He was later to condemn the identical "errors" as the "third left deviance". The main force of his criticism was aimed at the strategy and tactics of the Central Army Group, that is, at purely military matters.

Before I go into the proceedings of the "Enlarged Conference of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party" at Tsunyi, I think it necessary to make several general remarks on the background of the conference. In so doing I rely on documents whose accuracy I have no reason to doubt.

What did Mao Tse-tung want at Tsunyi? It was obvious that he wanted revenge for the criticism he had suffered at the Sixth Party Congress in 1928, as well as for his defeats at the Central Committee conference at Ning-tu in August 1932, and at the Plenum of the Central Committee at Jui-chin in January 1934. At Ning-tu his political and military dictatorship of the Central Soviet Area was broken, mainly because he stubbornly adhered to his "retreat to the mountains" strategy without regard to territorial loss or the interests of the population. Now there emerged the possibility — years of partisan struggle had been directed at bringing it about — that, by demagogic exploitation of isolated organizational and tactical mistakes, but especially through concocted claims and slanderous imputations, he could discredit the Party leadership and isolate General Secretary Po Ku. He would rehabilitate himself completely, take the Army firmly into his grasp, thereby subordinating the Party itself to his will.

Why could he dare this at Tsunyi? First, the breakthrough operation had compelled all political work to take place within a military framework. As mentioned above, the Army was comprised almost entirely of peasants and commanded by professional soldiers. In the years of joint struggle Mao had gained many adherents among military leaders, and, to some extent, among political workers. The evacuation of the Central Soviet Area had aroused a certain dissatisfaction and insecurity which he systematically fomented.

Second, many of the old revolutionary leaders, men who had enjoyed great standing in the Party such as Li Ta-chao, Chang T'ai-lei, P'eng Pai, Teng Chung-hsia, Yün Tai-ying, Lo Yi-nung, Hsiang Chung-fa and Ts'ai Ho-sen either had died in civil war battles or been murdered by the class enemy. Others, such as Ch'ü Chiu-pai, Wang Ming, Hsiang Ying, Fang Chih-min and Chang Kuo-t'ao (except for Ch'ü and Fang

all members of the Politburo), were not present at Tsunyi. Otherwise the Party leaders were relatively young cadres — Wang Ming, Po Ku, Lo Fu, Chou En-lai — of whom only the last had a backing in the Army.

Third, when all is said and done, the Party was not ideologically stable and the membership of the Central Committee was more or less determined by chance. Some 80 per cent of its members and candidates were not elected at the Sixth Party Congress, but appointed at a later date. It was the same situation in the Politburo. In 1934 figures released on the social background of the Central Committee showed that only 11 per cent were workers; 26 per cent were peasants, another 26 per cent were professionals and intellectuals, and 37 per cent came from the land-owning and merchant classes. It is no wonder that 36 per cent of this group proved itself disloyal at one time or another.

The fact that the Party was totally isolated from the outside world from 1934 to 1935 was to have particularly disastrous consequences. It could receive neither guidance nor help from the Comintern, the embodiment of the international Communist workers' movement. Therefore the petty bourgeois, peasant, provincial, and nationalistic sentiments of Mao Tse-tung could prevail against those of the Marxist-Leninist cadres. In fact, some of these cadres espoused the same views themselves at times.

So it was that, when the "Enlarged Politburo Conference" opened, the Party and Army leadership had little idea what our next step should be. The original plan of creating a soviet base in southern China with the 2nd Corps was abandoned at Mao's instigation. He claimed it was unfeasible. The establishment of a base in Kweichow bore an impulsive, if not spontaneous, character. The plan to link up with the 4th Corps, which seemed to interest Mao, remained unresolved because no one knew how to realize it. No one dreamed of marching north to Shensi, Kansu, and Ningsia provinces to fight the Japanese invaders. The Party leadership did not even know there was a soviet base there. They learned this for the first time in the summer of 1935, from Chang Kuo-t'ao. The well-proclaimed story that at Tsunyi Mao Tse-tung conceived the ingenious plan of co-ordinating all units of the Red Army in an advance against Japan is pure fiction. Nothing proves this more clearly than the conference "resolution" itself.

If all these circumstances are considered, it is understandable how Mao exerted such influence over the Central Committee and Politburo members at Tsunyi that Po Ku had no choice but to sanction the conference with its irregular composition and restricted agenda. He fully expected that Mao and his followers would direct a strong attack against him, Chou En-lai, and myself. But he was also hoping for a detached analysis of our situation and a co-operative attempt to solve the

problems confronting the Communist Party and the Red Army. He was to be disappointed, for Mao had but one thing in mind: to turn the conference into a criticism session and effect a change in leadership.

Po Ku opened the conference with the report of the Politburo's Standing Committee. Chou En-lai then discussed details of the Central Army Group's strategy and tactics. Both adhered to the stated format: the status of the struggle against the enemy's Fifth Campaign and the first stage of the Long March. They proceeded from the thesis that the political and military line of the Central Committee was generally correct. They listed a number of reasons, objective and subjective, for the relinquishment of the Central Soviet Area. To the objective they included, first, increased support of Chiang Kai-shek by the imperialist powers in the form of monetary loans, modern weapons and military advisers, which permitted Chiang to consolidate his central power and develop a formidable military superiority; and second, the weakness of the revolutionary, that is, Communist movement in Kuomintang China. The subjective factors were insufficient political work among the population of the White regions and among enemy troops, poor deployment in the guerrilla war, and, finally, tactical and operational mistakes in carrying out a basically sound military strategy.

Po Ku laid greater emphasis on the objective factors; Chou En-lai on the subjective. In so doing he subtly distanced himself from Po Ku and me, thus providing Mao with the desired pretext to focus his attack on us while sparing him. This could be discerned, for example, in his attribution of Chou En-lai's errors, such as his thesis of achieving strategic victory through tactical victories in protracted warfare, to Po Ku and me. Or, he omitted names when criticizing the excessive burdening of the Central Army Group with non-combatants during the breakthrough operation.

After Po Ku and Chou En-lai finished speaking Mao gave a speech, the main speech, in fact, of the conference. In contrast to his usual wont, he made use of a painstakingly prepared manuscript. He pronounced Po Ku's talk "fundamentally false". Po Ku had "overestimated the objective difficulties, especially the power of imperialism and Kuomintang reaction", and "underestimated the revolutionary situation" which supposedly existed then in China. This misled him into an "opportunist line of reasoning" that it was objectively impossible to triumph over the Fifth Campaign.

The fact that the Red Army's mobility had been greatly limited by the enemy blockade of the Central Soviet Area and that it had been forced to fight against the slowly encircling Kuomintang forces and a fortifications system they had constructed and refined over many years

was blamed on Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and myself. For we had "substituted a purely passive defence," had "waged positional warfare instead of a war of movement," and had tried to "check the enemy offensive" instead of "destroying the enemy with a decisive victory." As must be obvious from my account of the battles in Kiangsi, these charges were outlandish. None of us was ever a supporter of passive defence or of positional warfare. With the exception of the breakthrough operation, all disputes that had arisen before the Tsunyi conference or, more precisely, after the battle of Kwangtung, had involved isolated tactical decisions.

It was typical of Mao's demagoguery that, in keeping with the resolutions of the Fifth Central Committee Plenum and Second Soviet Congress, he spoke of a "rising tide in the revolutionary situation". At the same time, he still was talking of a "trough in the revolution" as he had at Jui-chin. From this he deduced the theory of "strategic defence" from which one could and must switch over to the counter-offensive when conditions permitted.

No less demagogic was the assertion Mao made with complete distortion of the facts, that the leading comrades of the Central Committee and of the Revolutionary Military Council had "often and carelessly ordered the storming of fortifications" during the Fifth Campaign, but in the withdrawal from the Central Soviet Area had "recourse to flight without fight", thereby pursuing a "childish game of war".

Each of these charges could easily be refuted, but that would mean repeating myself. I believe the sober account of events in the Soviet Area and the first stage of the Long March I have delivered up to now sufficiently proves the untenability of Mao's incriminations. I exclude from this, of course, certain mistakes and failings that I have already mentioned in another context. Let it be noted, however, that these were grossly magnified and generalized in Mao's speech. In any case, two facts remain incontrovertible. In the course of a year, from October 1933 to October 1934, the small and poorly armed Red Army not only held its ground against half a million Kuomintang troops supported with the most modern war technology, but also inflicted on them severe defeats. It then regrouped itself in perfect order and successfully broke through the four stage encirclement, preserving the strength of its combat troops. And Mao could call this a "childish game of war"!

At Tsunyi and afterwards, Mao tried to redefine matters as if there was a dispute involving two fundamentally different military strategies: his correct one and the false one advocated by Po Ku, Chou En-lai, myself, and others. One could perhaps speak of differing opinions in the first years of the Red Army. But it was Mao Tse-tung, in his Ching kangshan mountain base, who alternated between a truly passive defence and a "vagabond war" in the form of strikes and raids. Later, in

line with the adventurist offensive theory of Li Li-san, he had attacked enemy cities and fortified centres. Then, in the early 1930s, he espoused the policy of retreats to the mountains. Actually, after the Central Committee's Fourth Plenum in 1931, there was, in essence, a unified strategic concept. It was developed through the collective efforts of the Comintern, the Central Committee of the CCP, and such outstanding political and military leaders of the Chinese Red Army as Chu Te, P'eng Te-huai, Fang Chih-min, Ho Lung, Liu Po-cheng, and many others and was modified over time as the situation required. Even Mao Tse-tung contributed his share, although it must be noted that his military ideas were in no way distinguished by logical consistency nor had they anything in common with that "one correct" strategy he ascribed to himself at Tsunyi.

Where Mao's speech touched on jointly conceived strategy it contained several inalienable principles of the revolutionary war in China. No one disputed these. As already mentioned, the disagreements before and at Tsunyi concerned tactical problems. It remained for Mao to accuse of right opportunism and "misunderstanding and violating the strategic principles of the Chinese Red Army" those whose opinion on these matters differed from his own.

The "Resolution of the Enlarged Conference of the Politburo" at Tsunyi, which presented an edited and revised version of Mao's speech, thus identified "the line of mere defence" with "a concrete manifestation of right opportunism". This false line was rooted in an overestimation of objective difficulties, but especially in the underestimation of the strength of the Red Army and the soviet bases.

Ten years later we read exactly the opposite in the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party" written by Mao Tse-tung and adopted by an enlarged Central Committee Plenum on 20 April 1945. It states that the spokesman of the "left deviation" (Po Ku in his leadership of the Central Committee) had described "the enemy encircling the revolutionary base areas as 'terribly shaky', 'extremely panicky', 'approaching final extinction', 'collapsing at an accelerating speed', 'totally collapsing', and so on.'" And further, "The exponents of the third 'left line' even held that the Red Army enjoyed superiority over the entire Kuomintang forces, which outnumbered it many times, and therefore kept on pressing the Red Army to make reckless advances regardless of the conditions and even without resting" (Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, vol. III, Peking, 1953, p. 204 [Chinese]).

In order to support his thesis that the Party leadership had pursued a false policy during the Fifth Campaign Mao did not hesitate in distorting political slogans, which he had to recognize as correct in themselves, into strategic objectives.

He claimed for example that the rallying cries "Don't give up one

foot of soviet territory!" and "Defend soviet territory to the death!" were applied by Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and others as military directives, thus inflicting immeasurable harm on the Red Army.

Mao's most extravagant falsification of historical truth, however, was his portrayal of the so-called Fukien Incident of early 1934. Since I have already gone into it at some length I shall be brief here. It cannot be denied that the Party leadership failed to lend effective and timely support to Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's 19th Route Army. This was, more than anything else, a political mistake. But in conjunction with Fred's adventurist plan, it had disastrous military effects and undermined the remainder of the struggle against the Fifth Campaign. Nevertheless, if my memory serves me correctly, it was Mao Tse-tung, as well as the Central Committee and Comintern Office in Shanghai, who warned against Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai and objected to a direct and immediate link-up of the Central Army Group with the 19th Army. At Tsunyi, Mao simply inverted the facts. He slanderously charged Po Ku and the Politburo's Standing Committee with not having "comprehended, that the existence of the 19th Army and the Fukien People's Government was very advantageous to us." Despite this he went on to describe the 19th Army as no more than a group in the counter-revolutionary camp that had resorted to deception of the masses while clothing itself in the mantle of socialism to preserve the power of landowners and capitalists. Then Mao laid down the principle that "any and every group must be supported in the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek." This was a highly dubious modification of a policy which was of itself correct, that is, the exploitation of contradictions in the enemy's camp. In the next few years Mao was to develop this into a practice of allying himself with local warlords to subvert the formation of a national united front, for his primary concern remained not the national revolutionary war against Japan, but the civil war against Chiang Kai-shek.

This did not prevent him from accusing Po Ku and others, who had spoken out for a close co-operation with the 19th Army from the very beginning, of sectarianism. Apparently he was calculating that the vast majority of conference participants were unfamiliar with the background of the unfortunate Fukien Incident and that, furthermore, there was no way for anyone to obtain the facts of the matter.

Finally, in order to defame me and isolate Po Ku, Mao turned his attack on leadership techniques. He called them "extraordinarily bad". I was accused of having "monopolized work in the Military Council" and of "abolishing collective leadership". Dissenting opinions in military matters not only "remained unconsidered, but were suppressed by all means available." Thus the "autonomy and initiative of lower commanders were strangled." How a single foreign adviser without power to command, knowledge of the language, or contact with the

outside world was supposed to have accomplished this feat remained his secret. He tried to explain it by saying that the Politburo had "paid too little attention to strategic and tactical problems and its Standing Committee [read Po Ku] had actively encouraged the introduction of these errors."

The number of those who participated in the decision-making process was admittedly small. But that the majority of the Military Council, to which most of the Politburo members belonged, "had more than once presented their correct views and on many occasions energetically advocated them . . . without making the slightest impression" on Po Ku and me, was simply untrue. Mao was identifying his group, "the Central Triad", with the majority of the Military Council. (I have already described in detail the actual state of affairs: in reality, the collectivity of leadership was violated mostly by Mao himself and, to some extent, Lo Fu and Wang Chia-hsiang, who, in the interests of partisan subversion, increasingly boycotted meetings of the Military Council.) This version was first circulated years later, after the actual context was forgotten, in order to lend credibility to the incredible claim that I had in some way forced my will on the Politburo and its Standing Committee.

At the conclusion of his speech Mao suddenly struck a very optimistic tone. "The essential strength of our Army has been preserved," he said, in contradiction to his earlier assertion that losses in the Red Army had "reached an unimaginable proportion." He proposed the creation of "a new soviet base in the expanses of Yunnan, Kweichow, and Szechwan", a task which, he emphasized, could be accomplished only "in hard struggle" and "not without bloody battles". This so drastically worded ambition hardly varied from the strategic concept worked out before the breakthrough, when one allows for the westward shift of the new base. If and how a juncture with the 2nd or 4th Corps was to be effected was left open, nor was it discussed at all during the conference. Mao either could not or did not wish to admit alternatives.

Since all basic political questions had been excluded from consideration, the most urgent problem of all, namely, the Party's stand on issues, remained unresolved. Not a word was said about the national crisis brought about by Japanese aggression or about the mobilization of the masses for an anti-Japanese struggle, although the latter had been a watchword of the Red Army since 1931 and was a matter near and comprehensible to the entire Chinese people. This was hardly surprising. The military rather than the political struggle had always been of the highest importance to Mao Tse-tung and it had taken the form of civil war against Chiang Kai-shek rather than a war of national liberation against the Japanese. This was obvious in his speech and is still recognizable in the later, edited "Resolution".

Mao was pursuing two tactical goals at the Tsunyi Conference. He wanted to win the majority of the conference participants for himself and, simultaneously, at least neutralize his "adversaries".

On the one hand, he forced two groups in the Party leadership into a "we" and "they" confrontation. "We" — the accusers — were himself and his followers. "They" — the accused — were myself, Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and others. Even the format of his speech resembled a state prosecutor's indictment, and the "Resolution" derived from it a bill of indictment. We find in the "Resolution", for example: "*We* do not deny the fact that the construction of fortifications caused us additional difficulties in the struggle against the Fifth Campaign, but *they* radically underestimated these fortifications from the very first." Or, "*We* dispute as little as do *they*, that the Red Army is technically backwards, but *we* are the ones who have advocated technical improvements." And so on.

On the other hand, Mao, who knew very well how unfounded most of his accusations against the Party leadership were, was forced to move carefully. So, as mentioned above, he declared Po Ku's report "fundamentally false" and the military strategy of Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and myself to be error-ridden and dangerous, but confirmed at the same time that "the political line of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party had been irrefutably correct over the one and a half years of difficult struggle against the Fifth Campaign." After charging Po Ku with all mortal sins and saddling him with the blame for having abandoned the Central Soviet Area, he weakened his incriminations by admitting that it was solely a matter of "partial political mistakes". In general, apart from slanderous imputations and conscious falsifications, his speech was marked by great confusion and numerous contradictions. It can be seen from this that Mao was not dealing in solutions to critical problems, but in an unprincipled factional struggle to gain control of the Party through the Army.

No conference participant could fail to notice the partisan nature of his speech. Therefore, as can be read in the "Resolution", Mao had to guard against having his performance and that of his followers dismissed as "unprincipled personal nagging". This was in fact whispered about, since Mao's role-casting for himself, Lo Fu, and Wang Chia-hsiang, not to mention Lin Piao, who cultivated an especially rude tone, was all too obvious. Chu Te, P'eng Te-huai, and Liu Po-cheng objected moderately, even reservedly. Most of the onlookers waited in silence, as if they were receiving orders.

Po Ku stood by the statements in his opening report, although he did let it be understood that he agreed with the criticism of certain operational and tactical decisions and was willing to co-operate loyally with the realization of the line established at Tsunyi. But it was not until

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some time later that he acknowledged the "Resolution". Chou En-lai, as was to be expected, went over to Mao's side with flying colours. As for me, I had trouble following the two days' proceedings, because Wu Hsiu-ch'uan translated incompletely and with visible reluctance. I therefore refrained from taking a position until I could obtain and work through a copy of the minutes or at least the written resolution. I also requested permission to spend some time with the 1st Corps so that I could better acquaint myself, through direct experience at the front, with the Chinese civil war so highly extolled by Mao. This was granted.

The celebrated "Resolution" was finally formulated, but, to my knowledge, was not available in writing. Also, as far as I know, there was never a formal vote. In all probability, Mao's talk was approved by acclamation afterwards, if one can describe passive acceptance in this way. But there can be no doubt that most of those present were in agreement. Considering the composition of the conference and the extent to which the "Central Triad" prepared the ground, this could have been predicted.

In an ensuing session of the Politburo, organizational matters of great importance were treated. Mao Tse-tung was supposedly to become Chairman of the Politburo or even of the CCP — a post which, until then at least, did not exist — and Lo Fu was to replace Po Ku as General Secretary of the Party. For a long time I believed this to have been indeed the case and statements by leading Chinese comrades seemed to confirm this. This version is still to be found in the 1968 edition of Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* (London, p. 515). Documents I have seen in the meantime persuade me that I was mistaken. Mao was only called into the Standing Committee. Po Ku remained General Secretary for the time being. Not until a month later did he consent to surrender his post to Lo Fu, although he remained a member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee. These facts indicate that Mao's "victory" at Tsunyi was not so complete nor his predominance in the Politburo so secure as they appeared to me at that time.

Nevertheless, the extended Politburo conference at Tsunyi represented a first and important step in Mao's usurpation of power in Party and Army. He found his strongest backing in the latter. With the aid of Lo Fu he dislodged Chou En-lai as chief political commissar and *de facto* commander-in-chief and assumed this position himself. Thus he strengthened his control in the Army as well as in the Government. In the Politburo and its Standing Committee he achieved an equally decisive influence. Over the course of the next decade this concentration of power led to a one-man rule enabling him to carry out his anti-Marxist and nationalistic line whereas the influence of those Party members who remained true to Marxism-Leninism greatly diminished. They still enjoyed a certain latitude, however, for the democratic process of

decision-making in the Politburo could only gradually be abolished. Agreement was also possible as long as the revolution bore an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character and the military situation remained critical. These considerations persuaded Po Ku to continue at least to cooperate with Mao Tse-tung. Mao, for his part, did his best to win Po Ku to his side, going so far as to make him temporarily one of his closest political advisers when dissensions and discord had erupted in the old "Central Triad".

Po Ku assumed that sooner or later communication with the ECCI, where Wang Ming served as representative of the CCP, would be restored and that the political line would be "straightened out". His hope was Mao's fear. Directly after the conference, therefore, Mao sent Ch'en Yün to Moscow to assure his newly won power internationally. Ch'en Yün simply remained behind when the Central Army Group resumed its march. Fortunately, he reached his destination, although not until some time after the Comintern's Seventh World Congress.

His orders were not limited to reporting to the ECCI as Mao's spokesman. I later learned that his chief duty was to persuade the Soviet government to grant the Chinese Red Army military assistance. This explains why Mao, first in Sikang and then in Shensi, insisted so strongly on establishing contact with the Soviet Union over: Germanism Sinkiang or Inner Mongolia. It also reveals a lack of confidence in the strength of the Red Army which stands in glaring contrast to his words.

Evidently Mao also sent envoys to other Chinese Communist armies. I never have learned the details on this. I only saw that a detachment of platoon to company strength moved off to northeast Kweichow and concluded that it was seeking contact with Ho Lung and Hsiao K'e. Possibly it was conveying a directive to link up with the Central Army Group. This would explain why they gave up their base in 1935 for no apparent reason, turning toward southern Hunan and then west in the tracks of the Central Army Group. Incidentally, this would refute Mao's claim at this time that it would be impossible to contact the 2nd Corps or co-ordinate actions with it. But these are merely speculations. What is certain is that Chang Kuo-t'ao of the 4th Corps later mentioned in his memoirs that he had been informed of the Tsunyi conference by the end of January.

Before going on, let me insert a few remarks about the "Resolution of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party 'On the Results of the Struggle against the Fifth Enemy Campaign' adopted at the (Enlarged) Conference of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on 8 January 1935 at Tsunyi", as the official title of the document reads.

My suspicion, based on my own observations, that neither a set of minutes nor a definite resolution in written form existed, grew into certainty. Several times after the conference I repeated my request to see the documents, only to be put off with empty promises. In the course of time the subject was dismissed altogether. In fact, I was not to see the "Resolution" at all during my stay in China nor after my return to the Soviet Union. Not until 1967 did I obtain a Russian translation, and it was 1970 before I had an English one.

Even members of the Politburo — I can say this with certainty in the case of Po Ku — were not to see the documents until the end of the 1930s. The ECCI had the same difficulty. It was understandable that Ch'en Yün, who was travelling through White territory, could carry nothing written to Moscow. But by the summer of 1936 regular radio communication with Moscow was restored. This was extended to personal contact in the following year. Still, it was years before the complete "Resolution" found its way into Comintern hands. Even this did not take place through official channels — the 'Resolution' was passed surreptitiously to the Comintern at the end of 1939 in order to denounce me and discredit Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and other former "enemies" of Mao Tse-tung in the eyes of the ECCI.

To the best of my knowledge the "Resolution" was first published in China in 1948 in a volume of Mao Tse-tung's selected writings published by the CCP office for Shansi, Hopeh, and Shantung provinces. In 1957 the Chinese People's University of Peking Press included it in volume III of *Documents of the History of the Chinese Revolution*. This edition was the basis for the Russian translation. I do not know from what source the English translation which appeared in 1969 in the London periodical *The China Quarterly*, no. 40, was derived; it does not differ essentially from the Russian translation. What is noteworthy in both versions is that the names Po Ku and Chou En-lai no longer appear, but are replaced respectively by "XX" and "XXX". That is because Po Ku and Chou En-lai in particular had been "rehabilitated" in Mao's eyes and no longer needed to be mentioned by name. Since, apart from the introductory sentence, both are designated "XX" in the published "Resolution", speculation arose among Western China specialists as to who was meant. I was initially called by my Chinese name, Li Te, and then by the literary pseudonym Hua Fu. The latter, incidentally, was attributed to me without my knowledge. The form Li Te disappeared from the document and only Hua Fu remained.

All of this forces the conclusion that the Tsunyi "Resolution" is actually a much later revised version of Mao's speech. It was used as the basis for his lectures at the Red Army's military academy in 1936 and 1937 and for subsequent writings, especially *Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War*.

What is significant is that the Tsunyi conference and its "Resolution" were virtually covered up for years, but then resurrected as an important political weapon. It is remarkable that Mao Tse-tung uttered not one syllable about Tsunyi in the interview he granted the American journalist Edgar Snow in 1936. He merely said that two important errors were made during the Fifth Campaign. To quote from *Red Star Over China*: "The first was the failure to unite with Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's army in 1933 during the Fukien Rebellion. The second was the adoption of the erroneous strategy of simple defence, abandoning our former tactics of manoeuvre."

Not another word!

How can such behaviour be explained? In my opinion there are three reasons, all related to Mao Tse-tung's pursuit of one-man rule in Army, Party, and Government and the realization of his petty bourgeois-nationalist power policy. In the first year after the Tsunyi conference his position was still insecure. During the Long March and afterwards, therefore, he exerted himself to win the Politburo to his side, an effort in which he largely succeeded. Even I was drawn into this tactical game. As the "Resolution" would have been an embarrassing obstacle to this, it remained well guarded in Mao's renowned documents case.

After the resumption of regular communication with the Comintern, but especially after the beginning of the anti-Japanese war and the arrival of Wang Ming in China, international currents regained an influence within the Party leadership. To thwart defections from his camp Mao played the "Resolution" as a trump card in Moscow. It was supposed to serve as evidence that his strategy and tactics had been the only correct ones in all phases of the revolutionary war from 1927 onwards.

After the purge that took place in the campaign to "rectify working habits" in the early 1940s and after the defeat of Japan, Mao's position was so assured that he could bring the "Resolution" before the Chinese people. The fact that the Tsunyi conference coincided with the rise of the anti-Japanese mass movement in China may have played an important role in this decision. It helped found the historical legend that the conference had effected a reversal in the policy of the Communist Party, that is, a turning towards a national-revolutionary war against the Japanese aggressor. As mentioned above, nothing of the sort can be found, even in the later, revised "Resolution". In reality, the new policy was formulated at the Comintern's Seventh World Congress and executed by the Chinese delegation to the ECCI under Wang Ming. Mao, on the other hand, persisted in his old policy of civil war, even if it did contain some new tactical variants.

Another significant factor may have been the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943. This allowed Mao a free hand to pursue his

nationalist course and to repress, even eliminate, the internationalist-minded Party cadres. Once the "Resolution" had exhausted its usefulness in the struggle for Party leadership, it could disappear. At any rate, it is no longer included in any of the historical accounts to which I have access. Not until the Cultural Revolution did it reappear. And such things could happen again in any future power struggles.

After the Tsunyi conference the Politburo and Military Council endorsed Mao Tse-tung's strategic concept and passed it on to commanders and political workers in a series of directives. There were two main objectives: the creation of a new base in the Kweichow – Yunnan – Szechwan border triangle and the crossing of the Yangtze to join the 4th Corps. Only the first item conformed to Mao's remarks at the conference. And it must have been clear to everyone that the two goals were incompatible. The navigable section of the river, from Chungking to the mouth of the Min River, could easily be sealed off by the enemy, for whom the use of a river patrol would provide a convenient line of communication. If we did succeed in crossing the river, a return to or even communication with bases to the south could be ruled out. Mao realized all this of course. Apparently he was trying to keep both possibilities open. But, first of all, he tried to force a crossing at the narrowest point in the river and march the Central Army Group in a general northward direction.

As for myself, I set off for the 1st Corps' headquarters, escorted by a platoon of security troops. For almost two days I travelled, completely unmolested, somewhat off the main route to Chungking, which led more to the northwest. On the afternoon of the first day I met Tung Chen-t'ang, commander of the 5th Corps, which had just captured a mountain fortress defended by Kweichow troops. He was sitting in an old temple, at the height of the pass, very pleased with the success they had achieved. He told me that his corps was assigned to cover the rear and left flank of the 1st Corps, which was already a day's march further north. So I hastened on my way. We spent the night in a small village. The inhabitants were friendly, but reserved. I noticed no signs of political work among them. They stated, however, that "Reds" had passed through their village not long before. It was not until early evening the next day that we encountered guards from the 1st Corps and shortly thereafter we arrived at its headquarters.

Lin Piao received me with sullen correctness. He did not address himself to the military situation and largely ignored me in the following weeks. He left it to Lo Jui-ch'ing to brief me on operations. According to him, the 1st and 3rd Corps were marching in a broad front west of the road to Chungking in the hope of finding a crossing point above the

harbour. The 5th Corps was providing cover between them and Yunnan and the 9th was being employed on the right flank of the main forces as reconnaissance, and, if necessary, to fend off enemy troops from the lower course of the Wu River.

Mao and Lin probably expected that enemy forces would not be able to seal off the whole of the Yangtze on time. Indeed, the Hunan troops were occupied with the 2nd Corps and the main Szechwan forces checked by the 4th. Moreover, there was supposed to be friction between various Szechwanese generals and Chiang Kai-shek, who had moved his headquarters to Chungking. The Central Kuomintang forces themselves were somewhat dispersed. Some divisions were reinforcing the defence of the Yangtze, simultaneously curbing rebellious Szechwan generals. Others were stationed in fortified positions on the Wu. But the majority were either preparing Kuei-yang for defence or marching on Tsunyi from the west.

To take advantage of the time element the 1st Corps pushed towards the Yangtze in forced march, covering between 40 and 50 km a day. The soldiers did not, strictly speaking, run, but jogged in their light cloth shoes and straw sandals, slowly and reserving their strength, at a pace which allowed them to cover great distances without serious symptoms of fatigue. This "endurance run" technique justifiably earned the 1st Corps its reputation as a "mobile army". They were favoured by the moderate terrain. Only the more densely populated districts to the north, which required time-consuming reconnaissance and security precautions, eventually slowed their pace.

Not once did we catch sight of the Yangtze. After crossing the Kweichow – Szechwan border, which here, as everywhere else, was formed by a mountain range, we encountered superior enemy forces. We fought, but broke away, unable to force them from their positions.

About this time Mao Tse-tung came to a briefing in Lin Piao's headquarters at which I was present. Interception of radio messages and reconnaissance had informed us that Chiang Kai-shek was planning to encircle the Central Army Group in the Kweichow – Szechwan – Yunnan border triangle. Nine to twelve Szechwan regiments had dug in south of the Yangtze. Central Kuomintang forces of unknown strength deployed behind them. The Yunnan provincial troops were massed to the west. General Chou's army was marching on Tsunyi from the east, with six to eight divisions in several columns. To the south, around Kuei-yang, were four to five divisions from Kweichow and some of Chiang Kai-shek's which had been transferred there earlier.

Mao Tse-tung persisted in his plan to cross the Yangtze and link up with the 4th Corps. He and Lin Piao decided to turn westwards, overrun the Yunnan troops, whom they considered to be the weak link in the

chain, and look for a good crossing point further upstream between the riverports of Lu-chou and Yi-pin.

Accordingly, the 1st Corps crossed the Ch'ih-shui River and advanced from the southwest corner of Szechwan to the border of Yunnan without meeting serious resistance. But, since they were repulsed by Szechwanese troops north of this point, they then turned south in a time-and-energy-consuming manoeuvre as Lin Piao tried to avoid major battles. The same happened to other corps, especially the 3rd, whose erratic route crossed that of the 1st more than once. When Yunnan troops finally appeared ahead and on the south flank, the situation became critical. The 1st Corps advanced, fell back, wheeled aside, and circled in an ever-contracting area, so that it passed through some districts two or three times.

Once more Mao Tse-tung turned up to see Lin Piao, who this time was looking decidedly sour. As emerged from the conversation, which I again witnessed, units of the other corps were already retreating to the southeast. There was nothing left for the 1st Corps to do but to join their withdrawal, first to the north and then to the southeast in the general direction of Tsunyi. After a month of exhausting and fruitless wandering, the Central Army Group had realized neither of Mao's two objectives. It puzzled me why, after the first and only battle with the Szechwan troops and the subsequent shift westwards, no serious effort was made to probe the effective strength of the Yunnan troops or penetrate their positions. This seemed to me to me the easiest way to foil Chiang Kai-shek's encirclement plan and find a suitable place to cross the river, since the enemy's positions were not supported by a permanent bunker or blockhouse system, but by light field fortifications. But I was not asked for my opinion, and, furthermore, would have been unable to make a concrete suggestion, for my information of the enemy's situation and our own troop movements was less than complete.

In their retreat west from T'ung-tzu the 3rd, 5th, and 9th Corps overwhelmed dispersed units of Kweichow troops (which had marched north from Tsunyi) and then, not far from Tsunyi, made a surprise attack on General Chou's army. The 1st Corps arrived at just the right time to thrust into the enemy's flank. According to the situation report of General Headquarters, two or three enemy divisions were badly beaten, several thousand prisoners were taken, and large stores of weapons and urgently needed ammunition were captured.

Inspired by this success, the Central Army Group then turned against a second column of Chou's army to the northeast of Tsunyi near Jen-huai. However, Chou's troops took up defensive positions and repelled our attack, inflicting heavy losses. Even a division commander fell. None the less, the partial victory of Tsunyi was a remarkable success. It

salvaged Mao's position which the abortive operation in the three-province border region south of the Yangtze had jeopardized.

In Tsunyi I rejoined the central command column. The city presented a desolate sight. Shops and warehouses were empty; the homes of the rich landlords and merchants, including the governor's summer residence, were boarded up or half destroyed and plundered. Here and there shreds of posters and defaced slogans of our political workers hung on house walls. These were the only traces of the sovietization which had been so ambitiously started at the beginning of the year.

The Politburo and the Military Council were going to have to make some quick decisions, for General Chou, despite his partial defeat, was quickly regrouping his forces and receiving reinforcements from the north. Their meeting was not without definite, if guarded, criticism of Mao's north operation. Lo Fu, who had by now replaced Po Ku as General Secretary of the Central Committee, characterized it as an imprudent and ill-conceived undertaking and said that, under more favourable conditions, a victory over Chou's troops could have been achieved earlier and a new soviet base established in Kweichow. Although he did not expressly say so, this amounted to a belated agreement with my plan to strike at Chou's advance detachment when it crossed the Wu River. Wang Chai-hsiang was chiefly annoyed by the fact that operational decisions were, in effect, being made by Mao alone. The old factional "Triad" was beginning to disintegrate. A "Military Command Panel" made up of Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, and Wang Chia-hsiang was formed as a compromise, but little was changed by this. Mao remained chief political commissar and, therefore *de facto* commander-in-chief. Chou En-lai had overall direction of General Headquarters. Wang Chia-hsiang was still responsible for political work in the Army.

Finally, in consideration of the losses suffered in the North Operation, organizational reforms were planned to raise the effective strength of the parent divisions. The 1st Corps was to disband its 15th Division and the 3rd Corps its 6th. Both were then composed of two divisions each. They, as well as the 5th and 9th Corps, received modest reinforcements in the form of volunteers from prisoners-of-war and peasants. In addition, as much of the remaining heavy baggage as possible was left behind.

The strategic plan of crossing the Yangtze and linking up with the 4th Corps was ratified. Admittedly, no one could say precisely what tactics should be employed. In view of the situation, however, there was little alternative but to withdraw to southern Kweichow and then to veer towards northeastern Yunnan to find a new crossing point on the Chin-sha, the upper course of the Yangtze. To my knowledge, a formal resolution to this effect was not passed.

After undergoing a hasty political processing and making the usual pledge never to fight against the Red Army, the prisoners were released. Only a handful volunteered to join our troops. At the beginning of March 1935 the entire Army Group broke camp for the Wu River. This time it crossed in the opposite direction, further upstream and without difficulty.

For all of March and April 1935 the Central Army Group marched through southern Kweichow and eastern Yunnan, constantly harassed both by provincial armies waging a sort of "pin prick" war against our flank and rear guard, and especially by strong Kuomintang forces operating in three groupings. Chou's army pursued to our rear. In front of us two more Kuomintang armies, based in the provincial capitals of Kuei-yang and K'un-ming, tried to bar our passage to the Chin-sha River. Kiangsi troops also stood ready to attack should we be forced south.

Obsessed with the idea of finding a place to cross the river, Mao Tse-tung and his Command panel avoided larger battles although there were many promising opportunities. There was no fortifications system to inhibit our mobility, except for the high and ancient city walls frequently encountered in Inner China. And the extremely mountainous terrain rendered it more difficult for the enemy to concentrate his numerically superior forces.

Although I received intelligence reports and briefings from General Headquarters on a regular basis, only an approximate description of our route in these two months is possible because it was constantly changing. From the Wu we marched south, keeping east of Kuei-yang. Since strong enemy forces were stationed in garrisons there — five to six Kuomintang divisions and several Yunnan brigades — an attack from the enemy had to be anticipated. Therefore some of our units moved southwards in the direction of the city and reached the airport, which lay 25 km before it. There they destroyed military equipment and aircraft on the ground. Apart from skirmishes with the guards there was no fighting, for the enemy was evidently geared towards defending the city itself or had marched off too late. In any case, our units rejoined us unharmed.

Once Kuei-yang was behind us, we turned west towards Yunnan. The city of Kuan-ling, where there was no garrison, was captured in a surprise move. If I remember correctly, it was the city officials themselves who opened the gate, because they believed our troops to be from the Kuomintang. This was not an infrequent occurrence during this stage of the Long March, when fronts so often changed. On the road from Kuei-yang to K'un-ming we captured a Kuomintang staff vehicle.

Not only did it contain orderly officers on the way to Kuei-yang, but also invaluable medicaments and topographical maps. Meanwhile, enemy forces pursued us closely from the north and east. Our main forces wheeled aside to the southwest, where they occupied the city of Lo-p'ing with the same ruse as that employed at Kuan-ling. From there they turned to the northwest in an unsuccessful attempt to capture Ch'ü-ching. The 5th or 9th Corps then feigned an attack against the provincial capital of Kunming; according to rumour this created such a panic that Chiang Kai-shek supposedly made off for Indochina with the utmost speed. But in the meantime the main body of our forces moved westward in a forced march and occupied the city of Yüan-mou. Inexplicably, it was not defended, even though it was only 50 km south of the Chin-sha.

This brief operational outline might give the impression that this segment of the march proceeded according to plan and was purely and simply a victory campaign for the Red Army. It is certainly portrayed as such by Maoist historiography. In reality it was nearly the opposite. The march increasingly resembled a retreat and eventually degenerated into outright flight. In its effort to avoid battle the Army Group pursued a zigzag route with endless parallel, forward, and backward marches, diversionary movements, and even circles. Forced marches of 40 to 50 km were the rule. The command column, which followed relatively few detours, once covered 70 km. Marching was done at night because the Kuomintang air force flew incessant sorties during the day, bombing and strafing us. Especially insidious were the low-flying planes. Hugging the ground, they would rise up from behind an elevation without a sound and immediately machine-gun fire would be raining down upon us. The advance, flank, and rear guards endured dozens of attacks, occasionally on all sides at once.

The situation worsened when we crossed the jagged mountains on the Kweichow – Yunnan border. The narrow path led up and down sheer cliffs. Many horses fell and broke their legs; only the mules kept their footing. Rations were becoming an ever more critical problem as we advanced into Yunnan. There was hardly anything to eat in the mountains. Soldiers sliced flesh from dead horses until nothing but the skeletons remained. Even in the plains few vegetables and little rice were found. But everywhere the eye looked, poppies swayed in the wind. High rents, oppressive taxes, and inland duties had made opium cultivation the only possibility for the peasants to eke out a semi-endurable existence. Even we used confiscated raw opium as our chief means of exchange. With its good durability and easy divisibility it was willingly accepted everywhere as money. There was no alternative but to tolerate opium smoking among the locally recruited pack-carriers and soldiers. It was otherwise strictly prohibited in the Red Army.

The troops were showing increasing symptoms of fatigue, as my own experience can testify. If we marched by day, we did so in small groups, maintaining a set distance from one another and camouflaged with branches and grasses. When planes buzzed over us, we simply threw ourselves down on the side of the road without looking for cover as we used to do. If bombs began falling in a village or farm where we slept, I no longer woke up. If one landed close to me, I just turned over. One night as we marched through a plain, I literally fell asleep while walking and when the road curved I continued straight ahead into a nearby stream. Not until I was completely immersed in the cold water did I wake up.

One can imagine then what it was like in the Army as a whole. The number of deaths, more from disease and exhaustion than battle wounds, increased daily. Although several thousand volunteers had been enlisted since the beginning of the year, the ranks had visibly dwindled. What was most admirable — and I want to emphasize this — is that, despite everything, the self-discipline and fighting morale of the soldiers remained unbroken. But the mood of the leading cadres, who had an overall view of the predicament, darkened as the Army moved westward. Dissatisfaction with Mao Tse-tung's leadership assumed such proportions that a new power struggle was a real possibility. Mao's harshest critics were his erstwhile most ardent and reliable supporters: Lo Fu and Lin Piao. They openly blamed him and his Command Panel for "flight before the enemy" and "military bankruptcy". P'eng Te-huai and his political commissar, Yang Shang-k'un, basically agreed with this. Chou En-lai and Wang Chia-hsiang, who were affected by the criticism as much as Mao himself, let matters take their course. They adopted more of a passive "wait-and-see" attitude. Chu Te behaved similarly and refrained from attacking Mao. Po Ku mentioned to me his fear that a renewed power struggle would fracture the Party and Army leadership. This would have to be prevented by any possible means, for otherwise the Central Army Group was doomed.

This was a genuine crisis, not an artificially contrived one as at Tsunyi, and it sharpened dangerously over the next weeks. Because I have yet to find the details of this development in any history it seems appropriate that I shed what light I can from personal discussions. All these exchanges took place in Yunnan, probably somewhere between Ch'ü-ching and Yuan-mou.

One day Lo Fu, with whom I normally had little contact, joined me during a march and began talking of what he termed the catastrophic military predicament engendered by Mao's reckless strategy and tactics ever since Tsunyi. Although the failure of the North Operation was compensated in part by the victory near Tsunyi, the present westward flight could destroy the Army. He mentioned the annihilation of entire

armies in the Chin-sha river basin during the "Three Kingdoms" period and in the the nineteenth century T'ai-p'ing Rebellion. To spare the Red Army a similar fate, the Command Panel had to be replaced by competent military leaders. He named Lin Piao, P'eng Te-huai, and Liu Poch'eng as his choices. Naturally he did not express himself so plainly or directly. He spoke in greater detail and circumlocutions. But the meaning of his words could not be mistaken. Recognizing his honest concern, but not judging the situation quite so pessimistically, I answered that everything depended on whether or not we succeeded in crossing the Chin-sha. Even if we did not, we might still be able to fight our way back to Kweichow. Under no circumstances should we continue this endless march to the west. But I could not agree to a change in leadership at this time. Lo Fu appeared disappointed with the outcome of our discussion.

Afterwards I conferred with Po Ku, who expressed himself as mentioned above. He shared my opinion that a war of movement in southern China would be preferable to being pushed further towards Burma or even Tibet.

A few days later Mao Tse-tung invited me to talk to him. He touched on two main points. The military situation was serious, he admitted, but he insisted that somewhere and some time we would succeed in crossing the Chin-sha and effect a juncture with the 4th Corps. The possibility that the Red Army might be forced to march very far upstream before finding a place to cross did not seem to frighten him. He even revealed a plan — for the first time, I believe — to lead the Central Army Group over Sikang and Tsinghai into Sinkiang. From there he would try to contact the Soviet Union and request immediate assistance. He rejected my alternative of reversing the front and penetrating the enemy's crescent formation. It was a totally dispassionate conversation. Only the name Lo Fu brought a sharper tone to his voice. Lo Fu, he said, had panicked and was intriguing against him. Finally, he invited me to join his marching group so that we could consult each other before any decisions were made. This was a ploy, of course, to win my support. A little later, when Mao was sitting somewhat more firmly in the saddle, he lost interest in my advice.

This episode alone indicates the existence of a genuine crisis of leadership. Shortly thereafter a meeting of the Military Council and corps commanders was held. I remember this occasion very well because the farmhouse where it took place was bombed. One bomb landed so near that the walls shook and the plaster tumbled down on us. Everyone remained calm and moved to a nearby trench to continue the discussion.

Chou En-lai briefed us on Chiang Kai-shek's plan to destroy the Central Army Group on the Chin-sha River. His army, reinforced by

Yunnan and even Hunan troops, was advancing slowly but irresistibly in several columns. Fortifications were again being constructed along their path. All boats on one side of the river for hundreds of kilometres up and downstream had been removed to the other side. In some places they had even been burned. Much of the debate which followed, however, centred on the casualty-fraught events of the past few months rather than on future tactics.

General Headquarters estimated our effective strength at 22,000 combatants. This meant a loss of more than half our men since the Tsunyi conference. The actual rate of casualties was even higher, about two-thirds or 30,000 men from the parent divisions, for in the same period of time their numbers had been raised by one-sixth through the enlistment of volunteers. Virtually all the fatalities had been caused by the march itself or unintended but perforced battles. The only battle undertaken at Mao's initiative had cost relatively few lives. The command and support columns still contained about 3,000 men, so they had fewer losses to register than the parent divisions.

Surprisingly, there was never an open confrontation between Mao Tse-tung and Lo Fu in the Military Council. It was agreed that the crossing of the Chin-sha was imperative. A change in the leadership was never mentioned. Mao apparently succeeded in persuading a majority in the Politburo and Military Council that any alteration in the command structure would negatively affect our combat performance. Lo Fu would have to acquiesce — for the common welfare. This was hardly a solution to the question of Mao's leadership. Ultimately this position hung on the success of the Chin-sha operation.

The crossing of the Chin-sha, which marked the border between Yunnan and Szechwan, succeeded thanks to a strategem. The 9th Corps moved upstream and began preparations for rafts and a bridge. Our main forces followed. Informed by air reconnaissance of these movements, Chiang Kai-shek threw all available troops at this point. Meanwhile a vanguard battalion under the command of Liu Po-ch'eng marched in the opposite direction towards Chiao-ch'e Ferry, northeast of Yüan-mou. Liu, a native of Szechwan who had served there many years after the 1911 revolution, was an expert on local conditions. The south bank of the Chin-sha was flat here and no problem to occupy. But on the north side towered a cliff wall which had been converted into the formidable stronghold of a Szechwan garrison.

There were also a few boats. Liu Po-ch'eng fitted his men out with the highly visible blue and white insignia of the Kuomintang and dressed himself in the uniform of a senior Nationalist officer. He then forced some local dignitaries to accompany him. The enemy mistook them for

reinforcements, and, at Liu's request, sent a boat big enough for a platoon to the south bank. Liu crossed over, conferred with the fortress commandant and managed to have more boats sent to the south bank. His deception resulted in the almost immediate and bloodless surrender of the Szechwan troops. This took place a few days after 1 May 1935.

Our main forces followed in forced march. Although passage over the 200m-wide and turbulent river went on day and night, it took nearly a week. Just as the last platoon of our rearguard set out, the advance troops of Chiang Kai-shek's troops appeared on the south bank.

Meanwhile, Liu Po-ch'eng was leading our vanguard further north in the direction of Hui-li. The way led through hilly, forested highlands inhabited by the Lolo, who waged relentless guerrilla warfare against Chinese officials and their troops. With the help of Lolo leaders whom he had freed from Kuomintang imprisonment Liu concluded a treaty assuring peaceful passage and food for the Red Army. Shortly afterwards the pact was sealed with great fanfare by Mao Tse-tung and Chu Te. This was most fortunate for it allowed us to turn our entire attention to the Szechwan forces stationed along the only northward road.

Liu also tried to capture Hui-li in a surprise attack, but the city was surrounded by high, impregnable walls and a forbiddingly open field of fire. After several days the main forces were forced to abandon this endeavour. But since the enemy brigade was interested only in its own defence we were granted several days' respite.

Mao Tse-tung praised the crossing of the Chin-sha as a decisive strategic victory. At his prompting, a meeting of the Politburo was convened in mid-May not far from Hui-li. This time there were no "outsiders", that is, non-Politburo members. Not even Lin Piao and P'eng Te-huai were present. I was invited at the last moment, but without my interpreter. Po Ku acted in his place, but of necessity confined himself to sketchy information on the substance of the deliberations and the translation of my remarks.

Lo Fu opened with a short briefing in which he largely withdrew his earlier criticism and request for a change in the military leadership. Mao then spoke, moving to the offensive. He accused Lo Fu, Lin Piao, and others of sectarian activity and lack of faith in the revolution. This manifestation of right opportunism would have to be fought. His strategy had been proved correct by the crossing of the Chin-sha River. It was now imperative that the second part of the problem be solved, namely, the juncture with the 4th Corps. Chou En-lai and Wang Chia-hsiang seconded this, although in moderate tones and with an absence of political labelling.

Chu Te, Po Ku, and others whose names I have long since forgotten also lent their support to Mao. But they too ignored his characterization of a political "opposition" and stressed the necessity of returning to

China proper as soon as possible. When asked for my opinion, I said the same, although I added, "We want to talk about the present, not the past, and in the present situation there is no alternative." Mao was visibly angered by this statement and held it against me for a long time.

Without a formal vote it was eventually agreed that we should continue into northwest Szechwan to link up with the 4th Corps, which was supposedly out there somewhere, and establish a large base. All pledged themselves to preserve the solidarity of the existing political and military leadership and to oppose deviations.

What influenced the Politburo, including Po Ku, to reach decisions that could only strengthen Mao's position? Political differences regarding the basic principles of the revolution had been completely overshadowed by the military situation. Not even the question of civil war or a united front was discussed. The Central Army Group and the 2nd and 4th Corps were locked in mortal combat with Chiang Kai-shek and local warlords. Any division in the hierarchy meant a weakening in the Red Army and had to be avoided at all costs. The tragic events which occurred shortly afterwards, resulting from the quarrel between Mao Tse-tung and Chang Kuo-t'ao, confirmed the validity of this assertion.

Once the Chin-sha was behind us the strategic situation improved. We had shaken off Chiang Kai-shek's pursuit. The road leading north was clear. Now we had to prevent the enemy from pushing us further westward into the inhospitable Tibetan highlands. What could happen under such circumstances was seen in the bitter experiences of the 2nd and 4th Corps. After penetrating well into Sikang they fought their way from Tsinghai to Kansu, suffering unspeakable hardships and heavy losses.

But it was also evident to everyone that the Hui-li resolution was forcing the military leadership into even more difficult tactical decisions. For example, it was determined that we would cross the Ta-tu River. This was a powerful tributary of the Min River and formed the geographic and ethnographic, although not the political, border between Tibet and Szechwan.

These were not my thoughts alone. When I talked to Po Ku and others about it they agreed that in the increasingly critical situation anything potentially divisive must be put aside. All were aware of the possibility that Mao would use the military emergency to paralyse any challenge to his authority.

Although the march through the highlands between the Chin-sha and Ta-tu Rivers was difficult it compared favourably with the conditions of the previous months. The terrain offered enough protection against air raids to allow us to travel during the day. The benign neutrality of the

Lolo and the relative passivity of the Szechwan troops permitted almost unimpeded progress. Even our provisions were adequate. They actually improved shortly before we reached the Ta-tu, when a large food store-room in an enemy depot was plundered. The crossing of the Chinsha had recharged the soldiers' morale. Differences of opinion had apparently vanished.

Our judgement of Chiang Kai-shek's military intentions proved correct. He was massing his forces to prevent our passage into Inner Szechwan. Yunnan and Szechwan troops were sealing off the east bank of the Ta-tu. Our pace was accelerated to forestall them. We covered 30 to 40 km a day on mountain paths in order to reach the ferry near Shih-mien. When the 1st Division arrived the ferries and all other boats had already been moved upstream or destroyed. Fortunately a boat was discovered hidden in the bushes. In the morning a platoon started to cross, covered by machine-gun fire. Sitting on a high precipice on the west bank, I watched the boat struggle through the raging mountain river for nearly an hour. From my lofty post the enemy could easily be seen on the flatter and lower bank. About a regiment lay there, in deeply graduated defence positions. Nevertheless, our platoon landed on the far shore, routed the enemy outposts with hand grenades, and formed a small bridgehead. Other platoons followed. But hardly more than a battalion, at the very most two, could be carried over that day. By the next day, the crossing point was bombed by Kuomintang aircraft.

It was therefore decided to move the main forces north to K'ang-ting and to attack Lu-ting. The latter was the site of an eighteenth-century suspension bridge — the only bridge spanning the Ta-tu. It formed part of the ancient imperial road connecting Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, with Ch'eng-tu, the capital of Szechwan. When the 2nd Division approached the high west bank opposite Lu-ting a Szechwan brigade had already set up defensive positions and removed over half the planking from the bridge. They also had tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to burn the planks and sever the iron chains. Volunteers were recruited and sent forward. Some moved hand over hand from the base chains, some balanced on chains forming a sort of balustrade right and left. They were covered by massive fire directed at the enemy's front line. Half a dozen fell into the raging waters, but the others managed to reach the still intact half of the bridge. From there they threw hand grenades at the pinned-down and unnerved defenders. Other units followed immediately in the same fashion. The enemy, seeing itself threatened on its left (south) flank by the arrival of the 1st Division from Shih-mien beat a hasty retreat. In its place came Chiang Kai-shek's air force, which opened an unremitting bombing attack on the suspension bridge. To our good fortune, it was not hit. The planking was restored and the

entire army, with the exception of the 1st Division of course, crossed over to Lu-ting during the next few days.

Thanks to the heroic and self-sacrificing struggle of the Red Army soldiers the immediate tactical goal of entering Inner Szechwan, and, therewith, China proper was attained. But the attempt to move further eastward failed. By the second or third day Chiang Kai-shek succeeded in stopping our advance with his and Szechwan forces. The Central Army Group turned north.

I no longer remember details of the march up to our meeting with the 4th Corps. From the beginning to the middle of June we passed through the Szechwan - Sikang border region, ever closer to the watershed of the Yangtze and Yellow River basins. Geographically and ethnographically, this area belonged to Tibet. There were hardly any roads. We went up over the mountain ridge separating the Tibetan highland from China proper on steep, narrow paths. Rivers in full spate had to be forded, dense virgin forests and treacherous moors crossed, mountain passes four to five thousand metres high surmounted. Although summer had already begun the temperature seldom rose above 10°C. At night it sank to almost freezing. The sparse population was comprised of Lolo and national minorities of Tibetan extraction traditionally called *mantzu* (barbarians) by the Chinese. In a state of patriarchal, feudal dependence to Lama princes and threatened with reprisals by Kuomintang officials, the inhabitants drove their livestock away and hid in the mountains and forests. There they lay in wait to ambush small groups and stragglers. More and more, our route was lined with the bodies of the slain, frozen or simply exhausted. All of us were unbelievably lice-ridden. Bleeding dysentery was rampant; the first cases of typhus appeared.

It was on this part of our journey that a misfortune occurred and to this day I do not know whether it was the result of malice or pure chance. As we were fording a shallow but swift river, the mule carrying the metal chest with my personal effects fell. Everything was recovered with the single exception of the diary I had kept fairly regularly since my arrival in Kiangsi. The dates, names, sketches, and statistics I had entered were irretrievably lost. I rewrote them later as well as I could from memory, but, naturally, they could not replace the diary.

About the middle of June our third attempt to climb over the mountain crest succeeded. The small town of T'ien-ch'üan in western Szechwan was captured. Here we obtained the first genuine news of the 4th Corps, which was purportedly on its way to Mao-kung (Hsiao-chin). The Central Army Group set out immediately in this direction. The mountain crest was surmounted once more and the march continued over the highlands, now in a northwesterly direction. In little more than a week the command column reached Mao-kung. The troops found

lodging in the widely scattered houses and farms their inhabitants had abandoned. General Headquarters still estimated the Central Army Group's strength to be 15,000 to 20,000 men, including non-combatants.

In or near Mao-kung the Politburo or Military Council convened (but it might have been simply an informal discussion). Mao Tse-tung, Chu Te, Chou En-lai, Lo Fu, Po Ku, Wang Chia-hsiang, and I were among the participants. On the march from T'ien-ch'üan to Mao-kung Mao had restated the intention he had divulged to me in Yunnan to request the Soviet Union from Central Asia for matériel and technical assistance. This was not said to me, for he knew my disapproval. But from Po Ku I gathered that Mao was trying to win him, Lo Fu, and Wang Chia-hsiang to this plan, and Mao's line of reasoning bore an astonishing similarity to that expressed shortly thereafter by Chang Kuo-t'ao.

In the meeting Mao spoke of establishing a state of national minorities in the Szechwan – Sikang area. With this as a base, the main forces could advance over Tsinghai or Kansu to Sinkiang. From there, a direct link with the Soviet Union could be made and comprehensive aid for the Red Army obtained. In suggesting this plan, he betrayed not only his disbelief in the intrinsic strength of the Chinese revolution, but also that he was returning to his old notion that China was the centre of contradictions in the world and that the Soviet Union was to play a mere assistant's role in their solution. At this time there was no question of a national-revolutionary war against the Japanese aggressor, but only of a civil war directed against the Kuomintang. He undoubtedly calculated that the advance towards Sinkiang, if it succeeded, would lead to a serious diplomatic and even military conflict between the Soviet Union and Nationalist China. That was precisely his intention. Should the tigers tear each other to pieces in the valley, Mao wanted to watch, sitting on the mountain, as had been the proverbial behaviour of Chinese feudal princes in antiquity and — I quote his own words — “to draw two great profits from one small investment”.

The investment was not so small. Most members of the Politburo and Mao himself realized that a continuation of the march over the icy passes and through the high moorland, stony deserts, and salt plains of Central Asia would certainly engender terrible losses. Mao seemed prepared to pay this price. The majority of those assembled, however, spurned his suggestion. It was my impression that the decisive consideration was less the inadmissibility of entangling the Soviet Union in Chinese domestic affairs — and thereby precipitating a conflict of indeterminable consequence between it and Nationalist China — than the fear that the inevitably high rate of casualties would lead to a catastrophic weakening, possibly even the downfall, of the Red Army. To this extent, the rejection of Mao's suggestion did not signal the victory

of an internationalist line over a nationalist one. Sheer military commonsense had prevailed.

It was resolved to pursue the march northward, or more exactly north-eastward, to return to an area settled by Han Chinese. The province of Kansu was set as the operative goal: from there we could then turn to either Ningsia or Shensi. Surprisingly enough, Mao complied with this decision. He later dissociated himself from his suggestion and even argued against it. This abrupt 180 degree turn-about was the outcome of various circumstances which developed after our union with the 4th Corps.

We stayed in Mao-kung for several days. A unit of the 4th Corps arrived shortly after we did with an envoy from Chang Kuo-t'ao and Hsü Hsiang-Ch'ien. He reported that they and their staff were to be found one or two days' march further north in Liang-ho-k'ou district. The central command column broke camp at once.

On the way I learned from Po Ku some important news which the 4th Corps' envoy had communicated to the Party and Army leadership. According to this, the Japanese militarists were continuing their aggression in the north with renewed vigour and were pushing further west into Inner Mongolia. The popular anti-Japanese movement in China was catching hold in more and more circles, especially large cities and industrial centres, and not only among workers and intellectuals but in the middle classes and national bourgeoisie as well. It even won ground in the Kuomintang armies, up to and including the most senior officers. This news confirmed and extended our own information, which we had drawn from intercepted radio messages.

The other news was quite unexpected. The 4th Corps, whose strength was set at 50,000 men, in contrast to the number given earlier, was supposed to occupy an area of 30,000 to 40,000 square km in western Szechwan and eastern Sikang. It was very sparsely populated and 95 per cent of the people were national minorities — Tibetan, Miao, Lolo, and Hsifan. In consideration of this fact, Chang Kuo-t'ao was planning the formation of a federal government. Cadres of the 4th Corps were setting up local bodies which were to lay the ground for a state of nationalities. This presented a good springboard for communication with the Soviet Union. Depending on the military and political situations, it could also serve as a base for the continued struggle against the Kuomintang or in the inevitable anti-Japanese war.

Finally the 4th Corps disclosed that the divisions left behind in the old base in 1932, when the situation had become untenable, had made their way back to southern Shensi and were waging a successful guerrilla war in the Shensi – Kansu border region as the independent 15th Corps.

Po Ku reacted to this news with mixed feelings. On the one hand he welcomed the prospective union of the Red Army's forces. On the other he feared that Mao Tse-tung might adopt Chang Kuo-t'ao's policies, which so closely resembled Mao's recent suggestions, and force them on the Politburo. As I have already indicated, the future proved this fear to be unfounded. Po Ku attached great significance — and I agreed with him completely — to the news of the 15th Corps. Both of us felt that it could substantially support and facilitate the breakthrough into Kansu-Shensi, a plan which had virtually been decided upon by the Politburo.

In mid-June the command column entered Liang-ho-k'ou. Chang Kuo-t'ao, a tall, stately man about forty, received us as a host would his guests. He behaved with great self-confidence, fully aware of his military superiority and administrative power. Figures on the effective strength of his troops at the time of our arrival are not available to me. But even if one did not accept the stories of the 4th Corps' supposed strength, it was obvious that it was at least twice as large as the Central Army Group. His troops firmly controlled the region west of the Min River's upper course, from Mao-kung in the south to Mao-erh-kai in the north, and far into Sikang. His cadres exercised all local political power. However, it should not be overlooked that in the eastern portion, sparsely settled to begin with, virtually all the inhabitants had fled to the mountains and forests. It was more an occupied than a liberated region. Still, the 4th Corps controlled most of the area's meagre resources, which were essential for the care of tens of thousands of Red Army soldiers.

This was not the only reason why Mao Tse-tung and the Politburo would have to come to terms with Chang Kuo-t'ao. His sheer personality and the great esteem he enjoyed within the Communist Party and Red Army compelled it. He was every bit as ambitious as Mao. He too was a co-founder of the Party, but unlike Mao he had been a member of the Politburo for years. He had participated in nearly all Chinese Communist Party Congresses. The ECCI knew and respected him. His services as the Central Committee's plenipotentiary in the Hupeh – Honan – Anhwei Soviet and as the 4th Corps' chief political commissar had been extolled repeatedly by Mao himself, especially at the Second Soviet Congress at Jui-chin. He had complete authority over the commanders, commissars, and soldiers of the 4th Corps. As chief political commissar, he made all strategic decisions. The commandant, Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien, was totally eclipsed by him.

A contest between Mao Tse-tung, with the Politburo, and Chang Kuo-t'ao for control over Party and Army was inevitable. The cohesion of the 4th Corps and the shortage of time ruled out the possibility of partisan struggle such as the one Mao led in Kiangsi. The conflict would have to centre on the political analysis of the situation and future military

strategy. This encouraged hope that it would be carried out on an objective, rather than a personal, basis. Just this seemed to be indicated by high-level discussions in the last week of June, although I did not have access to the proceedings.

I was invited to an official meeting of the Politburo on 28 June, 1935. To my knowledge, no other "outsiders" were present. The conference proceeded remarkably peacefully. Evidently the most important matters had been resolved in the preceding discussions. Chang Kuo-t'ao generally repeated his envoy's message to the Party leadership in Mao-kung. He emphasized the strengthening and consolidation of the Szechwan – Sikang base. The other participants, including Mao Tse-tung, took note of his words without raising any real objections. They merely wanted it understood that the Szechwan – Sikang base was to be a temporary halting point and that the march to Kansu – Shensi would be continued once the troops were rested and reorganized. I shared this opinion. Political considerations hardly played a role in the exchange of views. The anti-Japanese struggle was mentioned only in passing and the national united front not at all. The points of contention were military. The Kuomintang's main forces were in the process of regrouping. The only larger units were on the east bank of the Min. In the north and south the enemy would have to undertake time-consuming preparations, such as resupplying, before advancing. There was as good as no Kuomintang threat from Tibet in the west.

Our chief difficulty lay in the lodging and provisioning of our troops. They were widely scattered and changed their garrisons often. Evidence of this problem was the Liang-ho-k'ou compromise to displace the main forces north-ward.

Differences of opinion were only apparently bridged; no final strategic decision was reached. It was resolved, however, to reorganize the United Army and its command structure. The Central Army Group was renamed the 1st Front Army; the 4th Corps became the 4th Front Army. This may in fact have occurred somewhat later, in So-mo or Mao-erh-kai. Historians relying on Chinese sources have erroneously assigned this event a much earlier date. The point about the time of the name change is unimportant as long as one realizes that the date has been advanced to obscure the relative strengths of the two armies at the time of union. From here on, I shall use the generally recognized newer names.

Far more important was Chang Kuo-t'ao's appointment as chief political commissar of the United Red Army. Chu Te was named commander-in-chief and Liu Po-ch'eng became chairman of General Headquarters. The Revolutionary Military Council disappeared from the picture without being formally dissolved. Since the chief political commissar generally made all important military decisions in the

Chinese Red Army, Chang's new position represented a severe setback for Mao, who was thereby ousted from first place. Even Chou En-lai receded into the background, although this was also due to serious illness. He was carried on a stretcher for weeks when the march resumed.

Why did a majority of the Politburo and even Mao Tse-tung agree to such concessions? Since the Liang-ho-k'ou conference took place in a closed circle and Chang Kuo-t'ao was the 4th Front Army's only representative in the Politburo, he could hardly have applied personal pressure or blackmail, as was sometimes later claimed. His appointment was the simple recognition of the fact that the 4th Army's strength and his cadres' political control of the Szechwan – Sikang border region had made him the most powerful man in the Red Army. This of course increased his influence in the Party as well, which was forced by circumstances to work within and through the military apparatus.

Neither Mao Tse-tung nor Chang Kuo-t'ao was pleased with the results of the Liang-ho-k'ou talks. Mao was doing his utmost through his followers in the Politburo and 1st Army to upset Chang's position in the United Army. Chang, on the other hand, was trying to secure leadership of the Party as well. The conflict smouldered a while until, propelled by external circumstances, it exploded into a rupture of Army and Party.

But before I go into these matters in any detail, let me insert a few remarks on relations among various units of the United Red Army and between the Army and the indigenous population of the Szechwan – Sikang border region.

There was some talk of integrating the 1st and 4th Armies in Liang-ho-k'ou, but nothing was really done about it. Only a few higher command functions were reshuffled and the 5th and 9th Corps, which now numbered just 2,000 to 3,000 men each, were attached to the 4th Army for logistical reasons. The 4th Army assigned 15,000 men to the 3rd Corps as replacements and granted it and other 1st Army units matériel assistance, mostly in the form of food.

It was able to do this in the first weeks after our arrival because, as mentioned, it had the border region and most of its resources firmly in hand. It also was willing to ease the 1st Army's situation. The few 4th Army units I actually saw made a good impression on me. They were fresher than our exhausted soldiers, better dressed, and more strictly disciplined. I emphasize the last because the most unbelievable rumours were spread later on concerning their supposed militaristic, even bandit-like character.

Naturally I have no way of knowing to what extent their discipline might have been enforced by harsh methods. I also consider it possible that, with the horrible privations the 4th Army was to suffer in the next few years, discipline may have slackened, even disintegrated altogether.

During the next two months of our sojourn in the border region the good relations which initially existed between the 1st and 4th Armies spoiled. One cause may have been the political "whisper campaign" disseminated by both Mao's and Chang's adherents. But the main reason was certainly the increasing logistical difficulties. Supposedly this even led to several armed clashes in July. I was told that not far from Mao-erh-kai units of the 4th Army encircled a regiment of the 1st Corps. I never witnessed such incidents myself, even when the split came.

As for our relationship with the local population, it was even worse than on the march from Lu-ting to Mao-kung. To put it more precisely, there was none at all. If we encountered few people south of Mao-kung, to the north we saw no one, although western Szechwan was almost exclusively Han Chinese. Towns and farms were abandoned, food stores hidden or carried away, animals were driven off. There was nothing to be bought or confiscated from landowners. For better or worse, we were forced to take every crumb we found and continuously send requisition parties into the mountains to hunt stray livestock. The further north we went, the worse our situation became. Covering our present needs was not the sole problem. We had to provide for the march ahead, for we knew it would lead back over high moorland and glacier passes. Near Mao-erh-kai, where we stayed about a month preparing for our continued journey, we harvested the half-ripe grain — barley, sorghum, and others. We plucked the green kernels from the ears and dried or roasted them. Even this simple fare was stretched with ground bark, wild herbs, and "vitamin rich dirt". We did without salt for months. These were the conditions under which we lived until the Kansu border was crossed.

No wonder that the Miao, Lolo, and Sifan mountain people, all farmers or livestock breeders, used every opportunity to attack our requisition troops. "A man's life for a sheep" became the current saying, although this may have been coined somewhat later, for there were no sheep in the Szechwan – Sikang area, just broad-hoofed horses, and cattle, yaks, goats, and smaller livestock. Only in the settlements and valleys were we safe, because the fugitive population was afraid to come down so far.

The situation was supposed to be better further west, towards the Tibetan border, where the 4th Army's troops were. If unconfirmed reports can be believed there was even a provincial committee of the CCP and a regional government including representatives of national minorities.

In spite of the adversities and privations the Red Army profited from the month's rest near Mao-erh-kai. The Kuomintang armies were far away. Even their bombers seldom strayed over here. Mid-summer

weather made life at these great altitudes bearable for the southern Chinese who still comprised the bulk of the 1st Army's soldiers and commanders. Losses, therefore, remained very low, especially since there were no forced marches or fighting worth mentioning.

In accord with the Liang-ho-k'ou resolution, the United Red Army advanced north at the end of June. The whole land through which it passed was literally scrubbed for food. The central command column moved towards Mao-erh-kai by way of So-mo, a sprawling village of several hundred houses and farms. In So-mo the Politburo of the Central Committee held a meeting at the beginning of July.

The primary impetus of this was the differences of opinion about which march direction and choice of military theatres would best lead to the establishment of a new soviet base. The Party and Army had already concluded that the shortage of food and clothing, the hostile attitude of the native population, and the threat of impending entrapment by superior Nationalist forces meant that a longer sojourn in the Szechwan – Sikang border zone, not to mention a winter in the Tibetan highlands, could have disastrous consequences for the Red Army.

Chang Kuo-t'ao gave the briefing. He suggested that, without altogether abandoning the present Szechwan – Sikang base, the main forces should march into Tsinghai and try to contact the Soviet Union for help from Kukuror across Sinkiang. If this proved impractical, contact might also be attempted across northern Kansu. It can clearly be seen that this was the same plan he had advocated in Liang-ho-k'ou, and that Mao had proposed even earlier. Now, of course, Mao supported the counter-suggestion of Lo Fu, Po Ku, and other Politburo members to proceed first into southern Kansu. This variant reflected the Politburo decision reached in Hui-li and Mao-kung. Nothing was resolved at this time. The main forces continued their march northwards to Mao-erh-kai. The command column also resettled there until the beginning of August.

The debate over the United Army's future direction continued throughout July. It received new sustenance from the report that, apart from the 15th Corps, there were local troops in Shensi headed by the popular guerrilla leader Liu Chih-tan. There was also a small but stable soviet region with a provincial Party committee and a revolutionary government led by Kao Kang, a Communist known to several Central Committee members.

This news encouraged the majority of the Politburo in its conviction that the Red Army should push on across Kansu to Shensi and reinforce the base there for the 'two front-war against Kuomintang reaction and



The Long March showing earlier and later Marches



Japanese aggression". The quotation marks do not designate a quotation here. I merely want to point out that the old thesis of civil war and soviet-based revolution was as strong as ever. Still, the political slogan of war against Japan which had been proclaimed years before in Kiangsi was materializing for the first time in military strategy.

Mao became one of the most zealous backers of the Kansu – Shensi direction. I have no reason to believe that he did not do this out of an understanding of the military and political imperatives. But he was certainly guided by other motives as well. He knew that he had the Politburo's support on this point and hoped thereby to isolate Chang Kuo-t'ao, who persisted in his deviant opinion. It was no accident that such terms as "trough of the revolution", "defeat", "retreat", and others disappeared from his vocabulary. Instead, he now spoke of the 1st Army's victory on the Long March, of the coming conquest of a large new soviet area in northwestern China, and the restoration of the "Central Revolutionary Government".

By contrast, Chang Kuo-t'ao called the abandonment of the Central Soviet Area and the 1st Army's march a defeat. He further declared the thesis of the victory of soviet revolution in one or several provinces, then in all of China — which preceding Central Committee meetings and the Tsunyi conference had developed — to be no longer operative. The soviet revolution was in a period of decline. It was not revolution that was needed now, but war against Japan. But the Red Army was too weak to fight Japan and the Kuomintang as well. It should therefore wait in a temporary base in western Szechwan or Kansu until it obtained Soviet assistance and was strong enough to force the Kuomintang into a posture in keeping with the popular anti-Japanese movement.

After the anti-Japanese war began in 1937 I heard from various sources that both Mao Tse-tung and Chang Kuo-t'ao had envisaged a national united front against Japan years earlier. In my opinion, this is not true. On the other hand, it is indisputable that Chang Kuo-t'ao's political analysis, if not the military conclusions he drew from it, more closely approached reality and the resolution of the Comintern's Seventh World Congress than did the views of Mao Tse-tung and his supporters in the Politburo. Knowing the pertinent documents, I can now confirm that theirs was an expression of left sectarianism.

In the course of discussions Chang Kuo-t'ao levelled a direct attack at the Central Committee, more specifically at its Politburo. He challenged the validity of the resolutions at the Central Committee's 5th Plenum, but especially those of the so-called enlarged Conference of the Politburo at Tsunyi. He argued that they were passed by appointed, rather than elected, members of the Central Committee and Politburo. In the latter case, decisions were made by individuals belonging to neither body. Only two Politburo members, namely himself and Chou

En-lai, had been duly elected. The co-opting of Mao into the Politburo and his designation as secretary of the Central Committee violated Party statutes. Furthermore, at Tsunyi the Central Committee demonstrated its political and military bankruptcy. To strengthen the Party leadership and to correct its policies, qualified cadres from the 4th Army had to be admitted to the Central Committee and Politburo.

I did not take part in these discussions. Shortly after arriving in Mao-erh-kai I was assigned to the United Military School. This lay a dozen kilometres from the Central Committee's quarters. This in itself was hardly a great distance, but owing to the constant possibility of attack by local inhabitants, it could not be covered without a strong escort. I remember doing this twice, at most three times, during the entire month of July. Therefore my information is second-hand, derived chiefly from Po Ku and supplemented by later conversations. All the same, I infer that the documents to which I have access agree with the actual course of events.

I still do not know why and by whom I was transferred to the United Military School. Neither the problem of housing or education was a determining factor. I did give quite a few lectures on tactics and led a couple of seminars and map manoeuvres, but usually I participated in "harvesting" and even joined a requisitions group twice. I suspect that Chang Kuo-t'ao wanted me out of the way since I had spoken out vigorously against his strategic views from the beginning. Mao Tse-tung certainly laid no great value in my presence, especially when Chang Kuo-t'ao launched his attack on the Tsunyi conference. Perhaps it was considered useful to have a loyal spokesman of the military plan favoured by the majority in the Politburo (and despite my reservations regarding the Tsunyi conference, I was considered as such) in the Military School. It had been merged with the Military Academy into a battalion, but was comprised mostly of 1st Army cadres. The Director of the School was a 4th Army division commander whose name I have forgotten. He was accompanied by a private machine-gun platoon with which, he took care to recount, he plunged into the thick of any battle. Half a dozen scars on his body testified to his courage. He was very friendly in his dealings with me, but paid as little as no attention to the training. He obviously did not think highly of modern troop leadership and staff work. It was his stated belief that a commander must always set a personal example to his men. His escort party behaved with correctness, but maintained a certain aloofness, obeying his order only. I mention this, because it confirmed my first impression of the 4th Army. At the same time it indicates the reserve which increasingly characterized its dealings with 1st Army cadres.

In the first days of August 1935 the Politburo met again in Mao-erh-kai to confer on "the political situation and future tasks following the

unification of the 1st and 4th Armies''. I truly cannot say whether or not I took part in this. Evidence that I did not is that I can no longer remember details of this important conference. Also, the particulars of the resolution passed on 5 August were not known to me until later and then only from the military side. Incidentally, the observance of secrecy with regard to the political debate was understandable, as was the case with the Tsunyi conference, for otherwise the legend of the Red Army as the vanguard of the national anti-Japanese united front would have been undermined. To my knowledge, the resolution was never made public.

Three circumstances favour my participation, at least in the discussion of military problems. First, at various occasions during the 1930s I made detailed and accurate statements on the proceedings. But it is possible that I obtained the appropriate information later on. Secondly, I was recently informed that Chang Kuo-t'ao accused me in his memoirs of assuming a pro-Maoist attitude in Mao-erh-kai. That, however, could just as easily refer to my opposition to his military plans in Liang-ho-k'ou or So-mo. Thirdly, when the march was resumed directly after the conference I did not fall in with the Military School, which did not join the command column until several days later, but travelled with the Central Committee.

I feel that the significance of the conference and its resolution justify my use of pertinent documents to supplement my portrayal of events, especially since I am quoted several times.

The resolution opened with a declaration that the Japanese imperialists were intensifying their policy of conquest in China and were already founding a "North China state" under its sovereignty. But no conclusions were drawn from this. The relationship of the revolution to the national crisis and the upsurge in the anti-Japanese movement were not treated. On the contrary, the CCP was geared as ever to a soviet revolution against "reactionary KMT leadership". The United Red Army was assigned the task of marching its main forces north, destroying the enemy (the Nationalist Army, mind you!) in mobile warfare, and creating a large soviet base in Szechwan – Kansu – Shensi. This would then serve as a hinterland for the spreading of revolution throughout China. Referring to the successes of the 2nd and 6th Corps to the south (of which virtually nothing was known) and of the 25th, 26th, and 27th Corps in the northwest (by which was meant the 25th Corps and the local units of Liu Chih-tan and Kao Kang in Shensi) and to the union of the 1st and 4th Armies, the resolution declared that China, now as always, was in a revolutionary situation. The soviet revolution was on an upswing, not a depression. As for the political situation, especially with regard to the revolution, Mao Tse-tung's views, supported by a majority in the Politburo, prevailed over those of Chang Kuo-t'ao.

After a most summary analysis of strategic moves and an enumeration

of the difficulties "the counter-revolution led by Chiang Kai-shek" was encountering, the resolution continued: "The northwest provinces are in an area in which the ruling Chinese reactionaries and the imperialists have but slight influence and which border geographically on the Soviet Union, fatherland of the international proletariat, and the Mongolian People's Republic. This creates advantageous conditions for the development of the soviet revolution and the Red Army."

Even if the Mao-erh-kai resolution, which Chang Kuo-t'ao helped draft, is considered a compromise, it is still obvious that no real difference separated Mao Tse-tung and Chang Kuo-t'ao in their orientation towards northern China and the possibility of Soviet Russian aid. Mao and his followers were not to level charges against Chang Kuo-t'ao on this point. Let me add in passing, that this attitude was hardly unprecedented. Already in the early 1920s the progressive "Christian" Marshal Feng Yü-hsiang had based himself in the northwestern provinces and Inner Mongolia during his struggle against the reactionary generals Chang Tso-lin in Manchuria and Wu P'ei-fu in northern and central China. Opinions similar to those expressed at Mao-erh-kai were voiced during the national revolution of 1925–7, but in the context of the national liberation struggle rather than soviet revolution. Much of the conference was devoted to praise for the "fraternal union of the 1st and 4th Armies". It had, it stated, qualitatively as well as quantitatively multiplied the military strength of the soviet revolution many times over, opening new prospects for its victory. Everything should be subordinated to the interests of the revolutionary war, the annihilation of the Kuomintang Army, and the creation of the northwest soviet base. Accordingly, an accelerated programme for agrarian revolution, the struggle against counter-revolution, and so on, was planned.

Relations between the 1st and 4th Armies and their collective relationship to the national minorities were the focus of long and heated arguments. It was not the best of times for "fraternity". This was seen, among other things, in that the Long March was pronounced a heroic accomplishment of the 1st Army, but the enormous losses, the soldiers' exhaustion, the poor morale of many cadres, the inadequate political work, and insufficient discipline were criticized. The resolution urged that the 1st Army learn from the 4th Army's positive experience.

The achievements of the 4th Army in mobilizing national minorities against imperialism, the Kuomintang, and domestic exploitation were praised. The formation of independent national states in a future "Union of Chinese Soviet Republics" was recommended. On the other hand, the Politburo considered Chang Kuo-t'ao's establishment of a federal soviet government to have been premature, if not altogether mistaken.

Finally, the conference turned its displeasure against right opportunist deviants who "doubt the rising tide of the revolution" and "consider the strategic actions of the Central Committee to be false", as well as against advocates of ultra-leftist sentiments who, in their underestimation of the enemy, displayed a tendency towards military adventurism. These problems were formulated very generally and without naming names, although they formed a clear and critical reference to Chang Kuo-t'ao. He, for his part, succeeded in having a motion accepted that provided for the recruitment of 4th Army cadres for political work and the best of these admitted to the Central Committee.

All in all, the Mao-erh-kai conference eased some of the political tension between Chang Kuo-t'ao and Mao Tse-tung, who was supported by the majority of the Politburo. Both sides made concessions, but the old general line of the CCP as set forth at the 5th Plenum of the Central Committee remained essentially unchanged. In fact, the formation of a national united front against Japanese aggression was not even considered once. Chang Kuo-t'ao's feeble efforts in this direction were dropped.

Ironically, on 1 August 1935, that is, about the same time as the Mao-erh-kai resolution was adopted, the Central Committee representatives to the ECCL in Moscow issued an "Appeal to the Entire Chinese People for Resistance to Japan and the Salvation of the Homeland" in the names of the Central Executive Committee of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic and of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. All were summoned to join forces and fight together in the face of Japanese aggression, regardless of any minor discord among themselves. The formation of a "United People's Government of National Defence" and the organization of "United Anti-Japanese Armed Forces" were urged. The only conditions placed on the KMT were the suspension of all attacks on soviet territory and the commencement of war against Japanese imperialism. This manifesto, which contrasted so sharply with that of Mao-erh-kai, was based on the resolution of the Comintern's Seventh World Congress calling for a world-wide struggle against war and fascism. Isolated as we were from the outside world, we knew nothing of this. Not until later, maybe not even until Shensi, did some incomplete and possibly garbled information of the Seventh World Congress and the manifesto reach us.

Thus it happened that, in 1935, the CCP leadership was pursuing two independent and contradictory political lines. One of them, favouring continued civil war, was directed by Mao Tse-tung and approved by Central Committee and Politburo members in the Red Army. The other, which strove for a national united front against Japan, was supported by the ECCL and the minority of the Central Committee

then in Moscow with Wang Ming. Not until 1936 - 7 was this contradiction at least temporarily resolved.

If a partial consensus had been achieved in Mao-erh-kai on the political purpose of the northward march, the dispute over its strategic direction broke out anew. Chang Kuo-t'ao returned to his old plan of marching through Tsinghai to Sinkiang or, if that proved impossible, to northern Kansu. Mao Tse-tung and the majority of the Politburo insisted on pushing immediately to southeastern Kansu. It would require an exit route complicated by battles with national minorities, but would result in a favourable economic and political environment for the Army.

This question ended in compromise also, one that was to a certain extent predetermined by the July reorganization of the armed forces. The United Red Army was divided into two march columns that were to advance separately to Kansu, where they would meet. The left, or west, column, comprised of the 4th Army's main forces and the 5th and 9th Corps, was under the command of Chu Te and Chang Kuo-t'ao. Because these two possessed supreme command over the entire United Army, they were accompanied by General Headquarters. Their march route led west from Sung-p'an to A-pa (Ngapa) directly through the "Great Grasslands" — the high moorland forming the watershed between the Yangtze and Yellow River basins. From there they were to turn northward in the general direction of Lan-chou. The right, or east, column was made up of the 1st Army's 1st and 3rd Corps, a few 4th Army units, the original command column with the Politburo and military school, the cadre reserve, and the remaining support services. It was commanded by Hsü Hsiang-Ch'ien and Ch'en Chang-hao, both adherents of Chang Kuo-t'ao. Their route led along the edge of the "Great Grasslands", via Sung-p'an to Pa-hsi, and over the lofty mountain chain to Kansu.

From a military standpoint, the arrangement of the United Red Army's forces and its columns' march directions appeared most unsatisfactory to me. Two-thirds of the actual combat troops were committed to a march through the unpopulated, marshy, high moorland. While a serious enemy attack was unlikely, so were the chances of finding food or overcoming the geographical obstacles. The other third of the fighting forces, burdened with non-combatants, moved east of the other column towards the north, practically providing it with flank protection. The enemy could easily attack and defeat the right column from the Min River or in the Min mountain passes before it reached Kansu. Matters were further complicated by the separation of the Army and Party leaderships. The former, embodied in Chang Kuo-t'ao, Chu Te, and Liu Po-Ch'eng, was with the left column; the latter, namely Mao Tse-tung and most of the Politburo, was in the right column. The only contact between the two was by radio. Combined action in battle would be impossible until they both reached Kansu.

I have long pondered the possible rationale for this extraordinary arrangement. One guess is that, since Chang Kuo-t'ao did not succeed in reorganizing the Central Committee and Politburo to his liking, he wanted at least to retain control of his own command. He apparently had not given up the idea of establishing communication with the Soviet Union from Sinkiang. That must have been very convenient for Mao Tse-tung. He remained undisputed head of the Party. In fact, his position was strengthened. Even if Chang Kuo-t'ao managed to carry out his strategic plans he would do so only at the cost of greatly weakening the 4th Army, whereas the fruits of his accomplishment would fall into the lap of Mao Tse-tung as leader of the Party and of the Red Army in Inner China. Naturally these were mere speculations and I was very cautious about expressing them. Even Po Ku, the only one to whom I spoke of this, reacted with displeasure. He correctly pointed out that I was the one who had advocated returning to China proper and approved the march direction over northwest Szechwan – southeast Kansu to Shensi. He was right and I still felt this way. Yet I was disturbed, not only by the military risk but also by the physical separation of the political and military leaderships. In view of the rivalry between Mao Tse-tung and Chang Kuo-t'ao it harboured new fuel for conflict. My worst fears were soon to be surpassed.

A few days after the Politburo meeting, both columns set out on the new march. First the right one moved northwards, then the left turned to the northwest. The right column's route, the only one I can describe from experience, led back into mountainous terrain. This quickly changed into a high plateau, about 4,000m above sea level. Here began the most difficult part of the march. A deceptive green cover hid a black viscous swamp, which sucked in anyone who broke through the thin crust or strayed from the narrow path. I myself witnessed the wretched death of a mule in this fashion. We drove native cattle or horses before us which instinctively found the least dangerous way. Grey clouds almost always hung just over the ground. Cold rain fell several times a day, at night it turned to wet snow or sleet. There was not a dwelling, tree, or shrub as far as the eye could see. We slept in squatting positions on the small hills which rose over the moor. Thin blankets and large straw hats, oil-paper umbrellas or, in some cases, stolen capes, were our only protection. Some did not awaken in the morning, victims of cold and exhaustion. And this was the middle of August! Our sole nourishment came from the grain kernels we had hoarded or, as a rare and special treat, a morsel of stone-hard dried meat. The swamp water was not fit to drink. Still it was drunk, for there was no wood to purify it by boiling. Outbreaks of bloody dysentery and typhus, which had subsided

somewhat in Sikang, again won the upper hand. These harrowing conditions lasted over a week. We were fortunate that the enemy could attack us neither from the air nor on land.

We finally began our descent into friendlier surroundings with gardens, fields, houses, and enormous lama temples resembling castles. Here too most of the inhabitants had fled. Before us lay Sung-p'an, a small town with thick walls. Enemy troops had already advanced from the Min River and occupied it so we veered westward. A few days later we reached Pa-hsi, our first goal south of the Kansu border, and called a halt. In this area, where there were more than a few towns with lamaseries, we supplied ourselves with food. We harvested the nearly ripe grain and vegetables, and slaughtered every head of livestock we could find. It was already the end of August. Before us, in the distance, we saw the snowy peaks of the Min mountains, an obstacle difficult to surmount in autumn, and nearly impossible in winter. We made our preparations for the next few months with the utmost haste.

Meanwhile, the left column had also reached its first destination, the small town of A-pa, south of the Tsinghai border. But there it remained, hopelessly stranded. We learned through several radio exchanges that, owing to high water and a lack of bridge-building materials, it was entrapped by flooding rivers coursing in all directions. Without food or lodging, the troops camped in open fields under worse conditions than I described above.

Chang Kuo-t'ao finally decided to turn his column round. He ordered the right column to join the retreat. I do not know whether this order was directed only to Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien and Ch'en Chang-hao as commander and political commissar of the right column or whether it was also sent in the form of a briefing to the Politburo or the effectively non-existent Military Council. I regard both as probable, for Mao Tse-tung convened the Politburo to deliberate on the turn of events. It concluded that a retreat through the swampy steppes, and, above all, the unavoidable wintering in the Sikang highlands would be disastrous for the Red Army, in view of the lack of clothing and food, the hostile attitude of the native population, and the slow but sure advance of the KMT forces from three sides.

What happened next is very confusing. I was told that Mao Tse-tung tried to convince Chang Kuo-t'ao that the best solution would be for the right column to continue northward, but for the left column to retrace its steps in order to follow it as soon as possible. But Chang Kuo-t'ao persisted in his decision and gave Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien a second order to break the resistance of the Central Committee, by force if necessary. The Politburo, fearing a *coup d'état* by Chang Kuo-t'ao's adherents, then passed a resolution to continue the march to Kansu.

If this really was the case — which I doubt, for Po Ku at least voiced

serious doubts — then the Politburo assembled very quickly indeed. I knew nothing of it and accepted in good faith the news when I received it after we broke camp. The departure itself occurred by night and in fog. Apparently not all divisions of the right column received the order, just those of the 1st Army. As for me, I was sent to the Military School to march off the personnel. This I did. Characteristically, the commander stayed behind with his men. In the morning, I joined the command column with the School.

The departure of all other units of the 1st Army took place the same way. During the next few days there were stories that 4th Army divisions belonging to the right column tried to overtake and bring us back, at one point with force. Then they assembled after all and started back under the command of Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien. Later I heard that they encountered the left column near Mao-erh-kai. Thus the once United Red Army split apart.

In the course of time different versions of what actually happened emerged. All were similar in that they alleged objective reasons and put the blame on Chang Kuo-t'ao.

In one story Chang Kuo-t'ao had issued the retreat order only to divisions and cadres of the 4th Army, not to the entire right column. This is totally incredible. If it had been so, there would have been no necessity for Mao Tse-tung to have the 1st Army suddenly and secretly break camp for Kansu. On the other hand, as chief political commissar for the United Red Army, Chang Kuo-t'ao could hardly have been interested in a cleavage. According to Red Army custom he fully possessed the right to order the entire right column to retreat when the left column was caught in a hopeless situation. My knowledge of Chu Te's personality leads me to believe that he co-signed the order, just as he had signed all orders for years, whether from Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, or Chang Kuo-t'ao. The rumours which later circulated about Chang Kuo-t'ao's having forced Chu Te and other leading 1st Army cadres to submit to his will have never been confirmed even by the individuals in question. In the 1960s, during the so-called Cultural Revolution, Chu Te was expressly charged with not having resisted Chang Kuo-t'ao.

In another story the KMT advance led to the "separation" (note: not "split") of the 1st and 4th Armies. There are two variants of this. One claims that the enemy drove a wedge from the north between the right and left columns. The other purports that the enemy, based in the occupied city of Sung-p'an, penetrated the right column in such a way that the 4th Army divisions could not follow and were forced to retreat. This simply cannot stand in the face of the known facts. Mao's own and therefore the quasi-official version was transmitted to Edgar Snow in 1936. In *Red Star Over China* (London, 1965), we read on p. 202: "Here [in western Szechwan — O.B.] the two armies divided, part of

the southerners continuing northward while the rest remained with the 4th Army in Szechwan. There was disagreement about the correct course to pursue. . . . The period of indecision was ended by two factors. First was an enveloping movement by Chiang Kai-shek's troops moving into Szechwan from the east and from the north, which succeeded in driving a wedge between two sections [which ones? — *O. B.*] of the Red Army. Second was the rapid rise of one of the hurried rivers of Szechwan which then physically divided the forces, and which suddenly became impassable. There were other factors of intraparty struggle involved which need not be discussed here.'

This is how simple and innocuous the story of the Red Army's rupture sounded out of the mouth of Mao Tse-tung. He was the only one who actually profited by it. He rid himself of political and military pressure from Chang Kuo-t'ao's side and won time to consolidate further his personal position of power. As the sole and undisputed leader of the small but devoted 1st Army, he exercised a decisive influence over Politburo members in the right column. It still contained the largest grouping of Politburo personages and therefore claimed the right to speak in the name of the Chinese Communist Party and its Central Committee.

Somewhere north of Pa-hsi the Politburo met again. I cannot remember the exact place and time, but that is not important. The official historiography sets it in Pa-hsi at the end of August. This seems impossible to me because of the circumstances. The meeting can only have taken place in early September after the 1st Army had completed its severance from the 4th Army. This is also evident from the nature of the resolutions, which dealt with political and military matters. They remain clearly etched in my memory because I took part in the discussions.

Chang Kuo-t'ao's behaviour was condemned as contrary to Party principles. The 4th Army under his and Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien's command was characterized as imbued with feudalistic militaristic traits. Supposed excesses against the native population in Szechwan, unjustified coercion, torture, and shootings were mentioned. All the same, radio communication with the 4th Army would be maintained to influence its operations, its cadres, especially Chang Kuo-t'ao, and "to re-educate through patient persuasion". It was assumed that Chu Te, Liu Poch'eng, and other 1st Army cadres would actively assist in this endeavour.

"Bringing influence to bear" and "re-education" proved totally ineffectual, if I may be allowed to anticipate events. The two sides bombarded each other with radio messages, in which the recipient was invariably accused of betrayal of the revolution, flight before the enemy, usurpation of the Party leadership, and similar crimes. Finally,

Chang Kuo-t'ao openly contested the legitimacy of the Politburo of the Central Committee, or rather of the Politburo members with the 1st Army, declaring that he would submit only to the ECCL. He founded his own Central Committee and Politburo and even his own Military Council. Most members of this last body were selected from among the leading cadres of the 4th Army. However, there is no concrete evidence that he excluded or brutally oppressed 1st Army cadres, although the information I received led me to believe for years that he did. I even included it in my Moscow report at the end of 1939. Equally invalid are the claims that Chang created these organizations directly after or even before the Red Army's split. Within the 1st Army's leadership it was well known that this did not take place until the end of 1935 at the very earliest.

But let us return to the Politburo's conference at Pa-hsi.

The 1st Army was reorganized. According to the information of our Headquarters, now much smaller and filled overwhelmingly with former General Headquarters staff, the Army's effective strength now stood at only 9,000 to 12,000 men, of whom 7,000 to 10,000 were combat troops. Later figures which cite 30,000 are very clearly doctored. The Kansu and Shensi divisions, whose independent existence and actions were bluntly ignored, were simply incorporated into the statistics. The 1st Corps was still made up of the 1st and 2nd Divisions, each with two regiments of four companies. The 3rd Corps, which totalled 3,000 to 4,000, dissolved its divisions. It also had four regiments with four companies each, but under the direct authority of the Corps. The command and support columns with the school, escort troops, and all civilian agencies remained at an unaltered 2,000 to 3,000 persons. P'eng Te-huai was named commander of the 1st Army; Mao Tse-tung became political commissar. The political morale of the men and their commanders was characterized as very high despite fatigue, hunger, and disease. They were especially praised for not faltering when the 4th Army was left behind.

The strategic goal of the march was the subject of some controversy. The only thing everyone could agree on was the operational direction towards Kansu. But what then? Now that Chang Kuo-t'ao no longer posed a threat, Mao returned to his original idea of Sinkiang. Lo Fu pleaded for Ningsia. Po Ku, Wang Chia-hsiang and others, including myself, spoke out for Shensi. In the end this last suggestion was adopted unanimously. It was resolved to link up with the units already in the Shensi area, to build up the existing base, and then to determine our subsequent strategy.

This part of the march was to be guided by the political watchword: "Struggle against Japan". Accordingly the 1st Army received the additional name "Anti-Japanese Vanguard". This provided Mao Tse-tung

with a pretext to claim in October 1938 that "the Central Committee and the main forces of the Red Army" (!) had "implemented a new policy, that of the anti-Japanese national united front" (Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, vol. II, Peking, 1952, p. 493 [Chinese]). In reality, the weakened 1st Army had no choice but to march to Shensi. It was the shortest distance to both military reinforcements and a soviet base. This explains the unanimous decision. My own feeling about the initial divergence of opinion is that Mao was trying to keep his options open over the immediate future, whereas Lo Fu clearly was seeking an interim solution.

The march to Kansu was exceedingly difficult. We first descended into the steep gorge cut by the Pai-shui River, then up over the Min Mountains through partially snow-filled passes. The route continued approximately along the Szechwan – Kansu border, turning down to the Pai-lung River which we crossed on its upper course. Except for native snipers, this stretch was void of enemies. But the barren precipices presented almost insurmountable natural barriers, all the more so as the narrow mountain paths and the few suspension bridges, more swaying catwalks than anything else, were destroyed in places. We painstakingly climbed one cliff after another. Let me illustrate this with an example. Above us a sheer wall, below a storming river, on the far bank a town, the path blocked by boulders, and fire directed on this blockade from the town, fortunately with an antiquated weapons system. We could not turn back; it would cost too much time to wait through the night. So over! And we succeeded, at the price of several dead and wounded. We experienced this and similar situations on an almost daily basis.

At the Kansu border we encountered regular, although still weak, enemy forces. Just north of the Pai-lung River we had to go up over a high pass. This already belonged to the next mountain chain, and, in a sense, formed the entrance to Kansu. The pass, occupied by Kansu troops, was taken by surprise. We also captured other passes defended by advance troops of General Hu Tsung-nan's 1st Kuomintang Army. These were small skirmishes rather than battles. At the end of September, the 1st Army came to the area of Min-hsien. For the first time in four months, with one or two exceptions in western Szechwan, it encountered numerous towns whose inhabitants had not fled. This meant we could supply ourselves amply with provisions without resorting to the coercive methods of Sikang. Most of the people were Chinese Muslims who generally greeted us with friendliness, in some places even like old acquaintances, which astonished me greatly.

This conundrum was solved when we met envoys from the Red Army's 25th Corps. They briefed us in detail about the situation in Kansu and Shensi. The 25th Corps was chiefly composed of younger people, which was why it called itself a Pioneer Corps, and was under

the command of Hsü Hai-tung. After the 4th Army departed from the Honan – Hupeh – Anhwei soviet or after it left the temporary southern Shensi – northern Szechwan base (I heard both versions), the 25th Corps marched in the direction of northern Shensi and there merged with Liu Chih-tan's 26th Corps to form the 15th Corps. This news irritated me because, according to the admittedly unconfirmed information I received earlier (see p. 15 above, and elsewhere) the 15th Corps had already emerged from the remnants of the 4th Army which had remained behind in the former Honan – Hupeh – Anhwei soviet region. I suspect that an error in translation was at fault and that the 25th Corps was actually meant. I cannot say what became of the earlier mentioned 27th Corps, because the reports were so contradictory. I assume it was integrated into the 15th Corps.

The military activity of the 25th Corps was deliberately suppressed for a long time and is still played down. It is not difficult to guess the reason for this today. In the Maoist version of history, Mao Tse-tung is supposed to have valiantly led the 1st Army into Shensi in the face of far superior enemy forces. What is deleted is that once Hsü Hai-tung heard of the 1st Army's approach, the 25th Corps immediately broke camp and attacked Hu Tsung-nan's troops in their rear, thereby providing the 1st Army a relatively unimpeded entrance into Kansu – Shensi. When I heard this, I understood why the mountain passes on the Kansu border were secured so quickly and with such small losses and why the remainder of the march presented no serious difficulties.

There was another conference in Min-hsien, a sort of council of war. Apart from the Politburo, it included P'eng Te-huai and possibly a representative of the 25th Corps. Although a march across northern Kansu to Sinkiang or Ningsia was considered briefly, they stuck to the earlier decision to continue towards the soviet base in northern Shensi but at an increased tempo.

The determining factor in these proceedings was the latest disclosure of the situation in northern Shensi. We could supposedly count on a reinforcement of 10,000 to 12,000 regular troops. More than half a dozen districts were said to be in Communist hands. There was also an additional area of almost double the size in which the enemy controlled only the larger districts and the more important routes. On the other hand, it was known that Hu Tsung-nan was massing his main forces north of Min-hsien in order to seize the provincial capital. This effectively blocked our passage to Ningsia and Sinkiang. In northern Kansu and in the long narrow passage of western Kansu bordered to the south by the high mountain ranges of Tsinghai and to the north by the dry steppes and stone desert of Inner Mongolia, there were the formidable troops, mainly cavalry, of the "Three Ma's" — Muslim generals determined and able to deflect any advance through their domain.

Shensi was not devoid of enemy forces either: quite the opposite! Hsi-an was the headquarters of the 10,000-man strong Northeast Army under Chang Hsüeh-liang, whom Chiang Kai-shek had withdrawn from Manchuria in 1931. In the Kansu – Shensi border region and on the north bank of the Wei River were two or three divisions commanded by the provincial governor of Shensi, General Yang Hu-ch'eng. The political morale of these two armies, however, left much to be desired. From the soldiers to the highest commanders, they would have much preferred to fight the Japanese than the "Reds". They therefore limited themselves to the defence of strategic points and fortifications.

All of this argued so strongly for the march to Shensi that an alternative was not even considered. The Sinkiang variant was renounced once and for all. I was immensely relieved.

While we conferred, Lin Piao led the 1st Corps to the T'ien-shui River where the 25th Corps had set up a bridgehead to ensure our crossing. We put the river behind us at the end of September, shortly before the Kuomintang troops reached the crossing point.

We proceeded in a northeasterly direction, roughly following the Kansu – Shensi border. In a sense the 25th Corps acted as our vanguard. It routed a cavalry unit of General Ma Hung-pin near P'ing-liang, then turned eastwards towards Ho-shui and Ch'ing-yang to engage Yang Hu-ch'eng's and Chang Hsüeh-liang's troops from the rear. The 1st Army continued to the northeast without meeting serious resistance.

Chinese Muslims predominated in the part of Kansu we crossed and I must say that their religious constraints were strictly observed. The political administration issued instructions forbidding, for example, entering houses and mosques, using the cooking and eating utensils of the people, and eating pork. Our department did not go unrewarded. We had no logistical problems and there were enough big landlords to expropriate. The inhabitants, severely oppressed and exploited by Kansu warlords, gave us much useful advice. Since our passage through Lolo territory this was our first benign contact with, not strictly a national, but a religious minority. This was to have an enduring impact, as was evident when the Red Army extended the soviet domain, or rather its sphere of influence, to this area in 1939.

The landscape changed dramatically as we moved northward. We entered the loess country of northern Shensi, where narrow gorges sliced the barren plateau. Cave dwellings more frequently replaced houses. Grain and vegetable fields became more scarce. We noted that a poor, partially calcified land lay before us.

In mid-October the 1st Army fought its last battle. I no longer know where it took place; I suppose not far from Wu-ch'i-chen district. At any rate, it must have been near the soviet border for shortly thereafter we met the first "Red Guards". I remember the battle quite well. Our

way was barred by a cavalry brigade of the 17th or Northeast Army. Mao Tse-tung decided to attack. Before an assembly of Red Army soldiers he explained the significance of the forthcoming conflict. It would open the door to a new soviet base and bring the Long March to a victorious conclusion. His speech, prepared and supported by similar slogans of the political administration, electrified the audience. The morale of the troops, already good, was raised to new heights.

Sure of his success, Mao Tse-tung asked me to accompany him and P'eng Te-huai to the command post on a neighbouring hill. From there we observed the course of the battle, which lasted only a few hours. The creviced terrain was to our advantage. The enemy cavalry, which did not dismount, could not deploy in the narrow gorges and presented ideal targets exposed on the high plateau. When it was routed Mao and P'eng shifted the command post forward. Unfortunately I had to remain behind because my horse had long since gone the way of all flesh and my pack mule was miles behind with the baggage train. I did not catch up with the army commanders in the command column. Incidentally, I was given a captured horse the next day, steady and well trained. Several weeks later I traded it with Wang Chia-hsiang for a Chahar pony which was so unruly that it could be controlled only with a (makeshift) curb-bit. He served me well up to my departure for Moscow in autumn 1939.

Our losses were low in this last battle on the edge of the soviet territory. The enemy's were quite substantial. We took little booty — about a hundred horses, a few weapons, and some ammunition. According to the political administration's bulletin, our prisoners' statements testified to the aversion not only of the soldiers but also of many officers to continuing this endless civil war and their wish finally to engage Japan in the field. After the usual first aid and cursory political instruction they were released. Most of them returned to their units, there to spread the message of civil peace and anti-Japanese war.

Now we were in soviet territory. The people greeted us everywhere with friendliness. In the few larger villages, representatives of the local soviets and peasant self-defence groups came out to meet us. Slogans written in white chalk glowed on the walls of the loess caves.

After about two days we reached Pao-an, a small town of hardly any houses but many large cliff-side caves. I was told that these dated from the building of the Great Wall about 2,000 years ago and for a while were the headquarters of either the first Chinese emperor Shih Huang-ti or his viceroy. I do not know if this is true. Certainly there was nothing to betray their erstwhile splendour.

Here we met the first regular troops of the 15th Corps. They were of battalion, at most regiment, strength and evidently were employed as a reserve force against the frequent Mintuan and provincial attacks.

To our surprise Liu Chih-tan, former commander of the 26th Corps

and, as far as we knew, at present commander-in-chief of the 15th Corps, was staying here too. We learned that he had recently been removed from his command. How this had come about was obscured by the most fantastic of rumours. I was never informed of the details and current Chinese historiography does not offer a satisfactory explanation. Edgar Snow describes it — and this could well be Mao Tse-tung's minimizing version — as a "curious thing" (see *Red Star Over China*, London, 1968, p. 212). He relates that in summer 1935, about the time that the 25th Corps arrived, a mysterious Central Committee agent appeared in northern Shensi. As a sort of chief auditor, he screened political activities, uncovering right and left opportunist deviations. With the support of the local authority he arrested Liu Chih-tan, Kao Kang, and a number of his colleagues. They did not resist, even though they knew they had the people and a superior armed force behind them. Hsü Hai-tung assumed command of the 15th Corps. Mao Tse-tung and the Politburo investigated the incident, declared the charges unfounded, and restored Liu Chih-tan and all others apprehended to their former positions.

Because the "Central Committee agent" had been active in the Hupeh provincial committee of the CCP and had possibly come to Shensi with the 25th Corps, early rumour claimed that it was a political intrigue by Chang Kuo-t'ao, who wanted to see his own people in leading military and governmental positions. This story could not hold water because everyone was aware of Chang Kuo-t'ao's resistance to marching into Shensi. It was replaced by another version stating that Hsü Hai-tung had tried to seize military power himself. But this made little sense, since the 25th Corps was numerically inferior to the 26th Corps. The commotion finally petered out. Only the local security authority came to grief as the scapegoat. The others, even the "Central Committee agent" and Hsü Hai-tung, who had supposedly triggered off the "crisis", continued to exercise responsibility, rising to high posts in Communist China after 1945. Liu Chih-tan was killed in the spring of 1936 as he was covering the main forces' crossing of the Yellow River during the so-called East Expedition. When Kao Kang became government head of the Northeast Provinces (Manchuria) in the 1950s he was driven to suicide by the Maoists in a vile slander campaign, if not actually murdered.

Once again, the only one who profited from all this was Mao Tse-tung. As arbitrator who solved the crisis quickly and to the satisfaction of all involved, all political and military power in the soviet area devolved upon him of itself, especially since he acted in the name of the Politburo. This suggests a possibility that was never discussed openly, although some, including Lo Fu (not to me, of course) dropped hints to this effect. It is probable that Mao Tse-tung was personally acquainted

with Hsü Hai-tung and convinced of his loyalty. On the other hand, he was unfamiliar with Liu Chih-tan and Kao Kang and had reason to fear that their administrative power and military superiority to the 1st Army might lead to a situation similar to that with Chang Kuo-t'ao in Szechwan – Sikang. What could have interested him more than to play the 25th Corps against the 26th with Machiavellian cunning, thereby creating an artificial political crisis which established his predominance upon arrival? As I said, this is simply speculation. The facts will never be known.

In Pao-an the command and support column separated from the combat troops of the 1st Army. It proceeded to Wa-yao-pao, the only district city in northern Shensi firmly in the hands of the Red Army and the seat of the Central Committee's regional bureau and of the local soviet government. The armed forces commanded by P'eng Te-huai marched towards the southeast along the Lo River to join the 15th Corps' main force, which was besieging the city of Kan-ch'üan.

On 20 October 1935, almost a year to the day we broke through the blockade in Kiangsi, we entered Wa-yao-pao. The Long or Great March, as it was henceforth called, had ended for the 1st Army. Originally planned as a large-scale operation, militarily speaking it dissolved into a strategic retreat, not turning into an advance until its last phase. It had demanded extraordinary sacrifices. When it entered northern Shensi the 1st Army numbered 7,000 to 8,000 men, of whom 5,000 to 6,000 were in the regular divisions. These were battle-steeled cadres who later formed the backbone of the Party and Army in the anti-Japanese War and in the subsequent People's Liberation War. At its critical turning-point, after the auspicious union of the 1st and 4th Armies, the Army and Party were torn asunder. Finally, and this was to have disastrous consequences, the March helped consolidate the peasant and soldier brand of communism preached by Mao Tse-tung. It obscured, perhaps even deliberately, the day-in and day-out struggle of the Chinese urban working class, which was no less dedicated or heroic and ran even greater risks.

Despite these grave and negative moments, the Long March did represent a political victory for the Chinese Red Army. It had braved an enormously superior enemy force, penetrated its fortifications and encirclements, defeated it a dozen times and out-manoeuvred it hundreds. It had covered 10,000 km, been through twelve provinces, traversed eighteen mountain ranges, five of which were covered with perpetual snow and ice, and had crossed twenty-four broad rivers. This is an enduring accomplishment which testifies to the great courage, stamina, and revolutionary spirit of the fighters of the Chinese Red Army, a peasants' army under the leadership of the Communist Party.

As we rode into Wa-yao-pao, our headquarters for the coming period,

Po Ku and I discussed the geographic significance of the new base in the light of Japanese, Chinese, and Soviet politics. We agreed that it offered a good opportunity to bind the national-revolutionary liberation struggle of the Chinese people with the world-wide fight against war and fascism. Could Mao be persuaded that we must take our positions in this international battlefield under the command of the Communist International and the Soviet Union? Or would he revert to his old thesis that China was the centre of world contradictions and, true to his maxim of pitting the "tigers in the valley" against each other, continue to manoeuvre the Soviet Union into a conflict with Nationalist China or even Japan, in spite of its declared policy of peace?

This danger existed. After the experiences of the past few years we considered it a real possibility. It would be very difficult to stave off deviant tendencies in the Politburo under present circumstances. We both felt that a restoration of regular communication with the Comintern promised the best hope of redirecting the Chinese Communist Party. Po Ku decided to request that a liaison officer, like Ch'en Yün, be sent to Moscow for just this purpose.

4

SHEN – KAN – NING, * 1935 – 1937

THE new base in northern Shensi covered an area of 30,000 to 40,000 square km. It extended from about the Kansu border in the west to near the Yellow River in the east and from the Great Wall in the north to Fu-hsien in the south. But all the towns except Wa-yao-pao and most of the larger villages were occupied by the enemy, who also controlled the only motor road from Hsi-an to Yen-an. Apart from the fertile river valleys it was desolate loess country — treeless, scored with deep gullies, alternately drought- and flood-stricken. The indurate loess soil yielded little fruit, in so far as it was cultivated at all.

Our usual daily ration consisted of three bowls of millet with some pickled cabbage. The only pleasant aspect was the dry continental climate, which, despite radical temperature fluctuations and occasional sandstorms from the Gobi, had a generally beneficial effect on our health. On the other hand, it led to many outbreaks of trachoma and skin disease. There were several cases of smallpox.

This region had been regarded since antiquity as one of the poorest and most backward in all China. Only the townspeople and big landlords had houses. The peasants and their few cattle lived in caves which were forced into the loess cliffs like tunnels. The villages, widely scattered, numbered four or five farms; the larger ones no more than a dozen. Not only were food and clothing scarce, but there was sometimes a lack of water. The area was, then, in spite of its great expanse, sparsely settled. The rural population hardly came to more than half a million.

The KMT press gloatingly predicted that the Red Army could never survive here. There was nothing with which to clothe or feed it and hardly any men to replenish its ranks. The march from Szechwan to northwestern China was a march into death, it reported. This of course was utter nonsense, but the difficulties were plentiful enough and they had to be mastered.

Among them was that the soviet area was by no means consolidated. Min-t'uan bands and provincial troops remained a genuine threat. A couple of times they even approached the city walls of Wa-yao-pao. They could do this with impunity because the Red Army operated exclusively along the shifting borders or outside the soviet area. Until late 1935 this meant in the south and southwest against Chang Hsüeh-liang's Northeast Army.

In my 1939 report I estimated the Red Army's effective strength in * Shensi – Kansu – Ningsia.

northern Shensi at 16,000 to 19,000 combat troops. Some 5,000 to 6,000 of these were assigned to the 1st Army, 7,000 to 8,000 to the 15th Corps, and 4,000 to 5,000 to independent and local units. Chou En-lai provided Edgar Snow with somewhat different figures. According to these, the 1st Army numbered 7,000, the 15th Corps including the independent units under Liu Chih-tan 10,000, and Hsü Hai-tung's 25th Corps 3,000 men; in other words, a total of 20,000. The disparity in total troop strengths is insignificant. What does matter is the variation in figures for individual units. This is largely to be explained by two reorganizations that were undertaken one immediately after the other. The first was effected shortly before our arrival in northern Shensi, the second shortly thereafter. Once he was convinced of the loyalty of Lui Chih-tan and Kao Kang, Mao merged the 1st Army, which was redesignated the 1st Corps, with the 15th Corps and hitherto independent units to form the new 1st Red Front Army. I was unsure of the 25th Corps' situation. It was probably either incorporated into the 2nd Corps or continued to operate independently. P'eng Te-huai was commander-in-chief of the 1st Front Army; the chief political commissar was Mao Tse-tung himself. The new 1st Corps was commanded by Lin Piao; the 15th Corps by Liu Chih-tan.

In November 1935 the 20,000 men — at most — of the 1st Front Army faced 200,000 Kuomintang troops, a tenfold superiority. The soviet area was blockaded in the south by ten to twelve infantry and two cavalry divisions of the Northeast Army with nearly 100,000 men. Their positions extended north as far as the distant outpost of Yen-an and equally as far west into southern Kansu. In the east, two divisions of Yang Hu-ch'eng's 17th Army near Yi-ch'uan and two other divisions in the vicinity of Sui-te guarded the Yellow River crossings. Hu Tsung-nan's 86th Division, which will be mentioned again, secured the north from its stronghold in Yü-lin. Besides this, there were another four to five divisions under Hu Chung-nan in Kansu as a reserve, so to speak. There were an additional three to four infantry divisions and cavalry units of unknown strength — in all perhaps 50,000 men — of the "Three Ma's", whose garrisons stretched from Ningsia across Kansu to Tsinghai.

Nevertheless this impressive troop strength was deceptive. First of all, the units' garrisons were positioned far apart from one another. They were spread over 800 km from east to west, and about 500 km from north to south. Second, as I have already indicated, they essentially limited themselves to the defence of fortifications and important roads, without daring major assault operations. And they refrained, when they did advance, from the proved but cumbersome and time-consuming blockhouse tactic. There were two main reasons for this: the low combat morale in the Northeast and 17th Armies and the rivalry of provincial

generals among themselves as well as between them and the commanders of the Central Government's forces. The result was passivity, temporizing, and a lack of co-operation, depriving the enemy's numerical superiority of its full impact.

This allowed the Red Army to move freely and to attack individual enemy units under conditions of its own choosing. Even before the arrival of the 1st Army, Liu Chih-tan and Hsü Hai-tung had destroyed two brigades of the Northeast Army and given the 110th Division a severe beating. In November the new 1st Front Army under P'eng Tehuai (Mao Tse-tung was in Wa-yao-pao) inflicted heavy losses on the 109th Division. Chang Hsüeh-liang thereupon made his feeble attempt to observe Chiang Kai-shek's order for an offensive. Then he agreed to a secret cease-fire with the Red Army, which was negotiated on our side by Chou En-lai and Po Ku. In order to maintain appearances it was stipulated that our troop movements would be convincingly co-ordinated. Other enemy troops, especially the 17th Army, generally avoided combat. The military situation had stabilized.

Meanwhile the Party leadership, that is, Mao Tse-tung and those Central Committee members in northern Shensi, turned to the internal affairs of the soviet area. It was arranged into a north and south sector as well as two independent districts, one in the northeast (on the far side of the Yü-lin – Sui-te road) and one south of Yen-an. Corresponding regional and district Party committees and local soviets were established. Each had its military commission whose task it was to recruit volunteers for the Army and to direct local units and self-defence organizations. The Central Committee filled the leading positions in these bodies with people from its cadre reserve and well-screened local functionaries. There were, to my knowledge, no elections. In this manner the Central Committee took the Party and soviet apparatus firmly in hand.

At the same time a provincial Party committee was organized in Wa-yao-pao which included Central Committee members. The Provisional Revolutionary Government was recast as the central body of the new soviet. A military leadership organ was created, although I can no longer say whether it was as Revolutionary Military Council of the Government or Military Commission of the Central Committee. It was probably the latter case, for the Government had a merely subordinate role. Furthermore, documentary evidence of the Military Commission of the Central Committee dates from this period.

I ought to insert here that the relationship between these two military bodies — the Military Council of the Government and the Military Commission of the Central Committee — was never altogether clear to me. Presumably they had both been in Jui-chin. But I was scarcely conscious of the Military Commission's existence, perhaps because its

membership largely coincided with that of the Politburo or, rather, its Standing Committee, maybe even with the "Troika" (Po Ku, Chou En-lai, Li Te). The conferences and resolutions of the Military Council, on the other hand, are firmly stamped in my memory.

As already mentioned, the Military Council lost its importance after Tsunyi and it is probable that it was supplanted by the Military Commission, in which Mao Tse-tung made all decisions and Chou En-lai implemented them. This, however, was further altered after the unification with the 4th Army and the break with Chang Kuo-t'ao. Now there was an independent Military Council and a second Central Committee in the 4th Army and the 1st Army's Military Commission to which most members of the old Central Committee and its Politburo belonged.

In northern Shensi Mao Tse-tung controlled the three leading institutions. He was represented in the Central Committee by Lo Fu, who co-ordinated all leadership activity; in the Government by Po Ku, who initially tended to internal reorganization, later to "external" affairs; and in the Military Council (let us retain this designation) by Chou En-lai, who established a new General Headquarters and maintained contact with the Front Army, but was also intensely involved in the training of independent and local units.

A report from this Headquarters revealed that, despite the sparse native population, the recruiting drive had resulted in 4,000 to 5,000 volunteers over the winter of 1935-6. These entered the Front Army, local units, and support services.

Although I did take part in staff work, most of my activity was centred in the Military Academy. This was newly formed and numbered several hundred men, members of the 15th Corps and veterans of the Long March.

The soviet area's economic state remained precarious. Occasional strikes by independent units into bordering Kuomintang regions and the restoration of a modest commercial traffic via Yen-an brought little relief. The most important sources of goods were compulsory "deliveries" (a sort of the tithe) and requisitions from rich and middle peasants, speculators, and counter-revolutionaries. The latter two labels were applied especially generously.

For a time a radical form of "war communism", reminiscent of the late 1920s and early 1930s in Kiangsi, emerged, which naturally hindered the political consolidation of the soviet area. It was later replaced by a system of "self-reliance" which fluctuated as the domestic line changed in conjunction with the united front tactic. It was not until 1938, however, after the beginning of the anti-Japanese war, that it attained its full development.

The economic difficulties raised questions about our future course.

Should the 1st Front Army seek out another base or expand the existing one? Where could a new one be found? They were basically the same questions that could not be answered in the Szechwan – Sikang border area. Notions of arms and technical assistance from the Soviet Union regained their old sway. In a meeting of the Politburo or Military Council Lo Fu suggested an advance across Ningsia through Inner Mongolia to the Mongolian People's Republic. It was the most feasible route to the Soviet Union. It passed through the northern part of the steppes and desert, but was relatively short. The only troops to be encountered would be local ones, chiefly Ma Hung-pin's. The proposal was neither accepted nor rejected. Some of those present pleaded for a campaign to Ningsia, but with the more limited aim of broadening the soviet area in the direction of Ningsia and Kansu to gain a larger base with richer resources. As I remember, Po Ku, Chou En-lai, Wang Chia-hsiang, and P'eng Te-huai advocated this. I too was of this opinion. There was brief reference to Sinkiang, but only in regard to the 4th Army. Mao Tse-tung remained conspicuously aloof. He merely indicated that there were other possibilities, for example, an invasion of the rich province of Shansi and from there contact with the Mongolian People's Republic by way of Suiyuan. This would kill two birds with one stone. It would secure the economic survival of the base and open up a mobile war against the Japanese aggressors and their Chinese lackeys, which would certainly unleash a general popular war. The meeting ended inconclusively.

Po Ku later told me that both Lo Fu and Mao Tse-tung seriously considered marching the 1st Front Army into the Mongolian People's Republic. Lo Fu wanted to do this without incurring major political or military risks that might lead to international complications. Mao, for his part, wanted a spectacular advance of the Red Army as the "anti-Japanese vanguard" in order — and this is my opinion now — to provoke a conflict between the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic on the one hand and Nationalist China or Japan on the other. This is why he did not send a courier to Moscow. Not until after the so-called East Campaign did he dispatch Teng Fa, not to obtain information and instructions (he had received these in the meantime) but to discuss armament deliveries.

In late November or early December, when political and military strategy were still undecided, Chang Hao — Central Committee candidate, member of the CCP mission to the ECCI, and delegate to the Comintern's Seventh World Congress — arrived in Wa-yao-pao. He had supposedly parachuted from an aircraft in the northern part of the soviet area. At any rate, he went about for weeks in a fur-lined flying

suit of Soviet design. The ECCI had done what Mao Tse-tung had failed to do. It placed such a high value on re-establishing communication that it sent an entire group for this purpose which was to pass through Inner Mongolia as a trade caravan. They were reportedly waylaid by bandits and killed to a man.

Chang Hao had to reckon with the possibility of enemy capture as well. He therefore brought neither documents nor a radio code. Communication by radio, by the way, was not restored until summer 1936. But he did deliver an oral account of the Comintern's newly announced strategy and tactics, of the 1 August 1935 manifesto of the CCP representatives to the ECCI in the names of the Central Committee and the Chinese Soviet Government (cf. page 134 above), and, most important, of the consultations of the CCP representatives in Moscow carried out in association with the Seventh World Congress on the initiative of the ECCI, which culminated in an appeal published on 25 November 1935, similarly in the name of the Central Committee of the CCP.

This report and the inferences which could be drawn from it occupied the Party leadership through most of December. I did not attend the meetings — since they concerned the forging of a basic political line — and was consequently incompletely informed. Nor did I see a copy of the resolution passed on 25 December, although I did hear excerpts. As far as I know it was then passed on to the ECCI in spring 1936, but never published in its entirety.

I was, however, present at a conference of Party activists on 27 December, in which Mao substantiated and elucidated the resolution. This speech is included in his *Selected Works* (vol. I, Peking, 1951, pp. 139-65 [Chinese]) under the title "On the Tactics of the Struggle against Japanese Imperialism", but so extensively "edited" that the rendering contained in the *Works* cannot be considered an authentic document. In this case then, I would like to resort to documentary material supplemented by my own impressions. The 25 November Moscow Appeal was based on the premise that the patriotic anti-Japanese movement in China had been experiencing a new upsurge since the summer of 1935. It called all people, all parties and armies to a national conference for the salvation of the homeland. Representatives of all parties, groups, societies, and armies opposing Japan should jointly work out practical measures for the mobilization and unification of all patriotic forces in the land. The KMT, then indisputably the most prominent political force on the national level, was expressly invited to participate in the conference.

The Appeal was followed by a petition to all troops and their commanders, again including Chiang Kai-shek, which stated: "We declare, that we are resolved to give our full support to any government

of national defence, regardless of how it came to be; that we are resolved to be the first to enter a united army of resistance, regardless of how it was raised. We desire a close co-operation with all truly anti-Japanese armed forces, whether they have fought against us or not.”

The line advocated in these documents opened the possibility of genuine co-operation with the KMT. The objective prerequisites for a broad united front were present. Japanese aggression was already threatening all classes and groups in China, including the ruling upper class and even the American and British imperialists on whom the Nationalist government depended.

The Politburo resolution of Wa-yao-pao, drawn up for the greater part by Mao Tse-tung, emphatically disavowed this possibility. Mao correctly described the working class, the peasantry, the urban middle class, and the young intelligentsia as the primary driving forces of the “national revolution” and the national bourgeoisie as faltering and divided. But then he excluded from the anti-Japanese struggle the *comprador* bourgeoisie, the feudal landowners, senior officials, and “big warlords” because they were “inveterate enemies of the people”, “lackeys of the imperialists”, and “traitors”. This signified a rejection from the very start of any joint effort with the KMT and especially Chiang Kai-shek, and a confirmation of the “struggle on two fronts” line — that is, struggle against the external and internal enemy. In short, it signalled the continuation of civil war. The 25 December resolution literally reads: “Our Party’s tactical line will emerge victorious in the mobilization, incorporation, and organization of all revolutionary masses in the struggle against the arch-enemy in the present stage, Japanese imperialism, and against the chief traitor of the people, Chiang Kai-shek . . . the civil war must be linked to the national-revolutionary war.”

And on 27 December Mao reiterated before the Party activists: “It is necessary to wage war simultaneously against the forces of foreign imperialism and domestic counter-revolution”.

This was a reckless, sectarian statement which neither corresponded to the factual power structure in the nation nor served the political objectives of a broad national united front and a democratic people’s republic. Indeed the Wa-yao-pao resolution contained many contradictions, because Mao Tse-tung’s line was worked into the platform presented by Chang Hao.

In his speech to the Party activists Mao attempted to conceal the conflicting nature of the resolution by employing crude “dialectics” and resorting over and over to the phrases “on the one hand, on the other hand”. On the one hand, national crisis; on the other hand, a revolutionary rising tide. On the one hand, united front against Japan; on the other, struggle against the KMT and Chiang Kai-shek. On the one

hand, condemnation of warlords; on the other, exploitation of the contradiction between them and the Central Government in order to undermine Chiang Kai-shek's position. And so on and so forth.

Mao's metaphor of the satiated and the hungry dogs was especially caustic. He depicted Chiang Kai-shek as a satiated dog; the refractory warlords of Shensi, Kwangtung, Kwangsi and so on, as the hungry ones. Treaties and alliances with the latter against the Central Government he considered not only permissible but indispensable. This, of course, called the "national united front" itself into question.

Mao's crude and systematic over-simplifications disguised the fact that the KMT was not the monolithic entity it was portrayed as being. Nor was Chiang Kai-shek free of Japanese criticism. The deeper the Japanese penetrated into China, the more he was pressured by his Anglo-American patrons, the patriotic mass movement, and a large number of his own adherents to prevent China's total enslavement to Japan. The Japanese militarists had openly proclaimed their intention to destroy the Chinese Red Army, Chang Hsüeh-liang's Northeast Army, and, ultimately, Chiang Kai-shek's armed forces. After careful study of the 1 August and 25 November Moscow documents Chiang Kai-shek seriously considered the possibility of negotiating with the Communists. But Mao's line of two-front war forced him from this course and provided him with the argument that, since the Communists had excluded the KMT and him personally from a national united front, he had no choice but to continue the fight against the CCP and the Red Army.

Did Mao Tse-tung seriously expect victory in the two-front war he heralded? Of course not! His plans were based on the belief that a new world war was imminent and would certainly be followed by worldwide revolution. The 25 December resolution stated: "The foolhardy wars of the Japanese imperialists in China and the Italian imperialists in Abyssinia already harbour the seeds of the second world war. This will lead to a situation in which the Chinese revolution will no longer be isolated." Moreover, "since the Soviet Union's policy of peace towards Japan has been proved a failure, and since Japanese imperialism is engaged in provocative acts against the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union will be ready to advance against the aggressor at any time. In this way, the common goal — the defeat of Japanese imperialism — will merge the Chinese revolution, the Japanese revolution, and the Soviet Union's fight against the aggressor into a united struggle."

This was the crucial point. As subtly as it was expressed, the Li Li-san concept, which Mao anticipated in 1923 and supported in 1930, but which was repudiated by the ECCI and the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the CCP in 1931, could not be concealed. It was founded on the hope that the Soviet Union could be lured into an

armed conflict with the imperialist forces which would unleash a world war, foment world revolution, and thus assure the victory of revolution in China.

In his interviews with Edgar Snow in the summer of 1936 Mao Tse-tung himself testified that he was indeed relying on a manipulation of the strategic situation of the soviet base in north western China to draw the Soviet Union into war with Japan. In response to the question whether he believed that the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic would take part in such a war and come to China's aid, he said, "Of course! The Soviet Union is not an isolated nation and cannot ignore events in the Far East. She cannot remain passive." And he stressed, "The struggle against Japanese imperialism is a world wide task and the Soviet-Union, as a part of the world, will not be able to remain neutral." I must admit that this matter preoccupied me incessantly. Throughout 1935 Chang Kuo-t'ao and Mao Tse-tung, enemies that they were otherwise, repeatedly tried to manoeuvre the Soviet Union into a conflict with Nationalist China or Japan. Was Mao Tse-tung correct when he wrote in the Politburo's resolution to the effect that the Soviet Union's peace policy in the Far East had failed? As badly informed as I was, I emphatically rejected this conclusion. To be perfectly sure, I asked Chang Hao for information on Moscow's view of all this. But he evaded any discussion. In fact, he avoided all contact with me. So I had to deal with the problem on my own.

For the sake of completeness I add that even the class issue was watered down in the Politburo resolution. It was certainly logical that the future people's government should guarantee not only social rights for the working masses, but economic liberties for the national bourgeoisie (read the property owners) as well, even though Mao's comments "that, in the present stage of democratic revolution, the struggle between labour and capital had its limits" and "that social legislation will not be directed against the self-enrichment of the national bourgeoisie" did seem rather extreme. What did appear doubtful to me was the passage in the resolution that proclaimed the CCP as the vanguard of not just the proletariat, but of the entire nation. As such it would incorporate all those who wished to work for the goals of the Communist Party, regardless of social station or background. In order to broaden the organizational base of the Party its doors would be open to millions of new members. One need fear neither careerists, political illiterates, nor bad class elements. The Party would educate them.

This introduced the danger that the CCP, already a party of poor peasants led by bourgeois elements, would further lose its proletarian class character and devolve into a hazy, national, class-indifferent group. It is worth noting that Mao did not elaborate on this problem

in his speech before the Party activists.

The difference, not to say the contradiction, between the Moscow appeals of August and November and the 25 December resolution is striking. The Politburo in Wa-yao-pao did formally base its resolution on the direction of the CCP representatives in Moscow and the ECCI directive delivered by Chang Hao. It was, however, so extensively "supplemented" and "improved" that it was in fact transformed into their opposite. All the same, the resolution marked an advance over the 8 August Mao-erh-kai resolution in that it was in fundamental agreement with the united front policy and replaced the watchword "soviets" with the demand for a "people's republic". But there was virtually no change in its stance toward the KMT, Chiang Kai-shek, or the civil war. This impeded and endangered the formation of the anti-Japanese national united front from the very beginning.

To lend the resolution greater force Mao increased the size of the skeleton Politburo, already more or less his vassal. Only seven of the fifty Politburo and candidates were present in northern Shensi. They were Mao Tse-tung, Lo Fu, Po Ku, Chou En-lai, Wang Chia-hsiang, Teng Fa, and K'ai Feng (secretary of the Youth Organization?). Of the other eight, three were in Moscow and five were in other parts of China. P'eng Te-huai and Chang Hao, both Central Committee members, were abruptly co-opted into the Politburo in order to obtain a quorum.

This was not without its consequences. The secret cease-fire agreement with Chang Hsueh-liang enabled representatives of the Party leadership to travel via Hsi-an to Nationalist China and establish contact with underground Party organizations. These cells contained Chinese Communists from the Soviet Union and other nations, who had managed to kindle a mass movement among the youth, especially the students, that was politically based on the 1 August and 25 November appeals. I heard rumours that followers of Mao Tse-tung tried to rechannel this movement in the direction of the 25 December resolution, invoking the authority of the Politburo. I cannot say whether that is correct or not. What I can say with total certainty is that Mao followed the political resolution with a military plan which illuminated his actual intentions.

At the beginning of 1936 Mao Tse-tung called for a meeting of the Politburo or Military Council (their composition was to a great extent identical) in which I participated. In outlining his new strategy he gave top priority to securing technical and military assistance from the Soviet Union. With this end in mind, the 1st Red Front Army was to advance to the border of the Mongolian People's Republic and establish contact with the Soviet Far East Army. The execution of the plan would proceed

in three stages: first, the consolidation of the soviet area in northern Shensi and preparation for a Yellow River crossing towards Shansi; second, the annihilation of the provincial troops stationed there under Governor Yen Hsi-shan and the establishment of a new base in Shansi; third, a northern advance through Suiyuan or Chahar provinces to the Mongolian People's Republic.

The third stage had not been worked out in detail. It was presented as a sketchy proposal. Still, I promptly objected to it and suggested that the Red Army's combat activity be limited to western Shansi. Otherwise both the national united front and the peace policy of the Soviet Union would be jeopardized. However, no one supported me on this. Those present agreed on Mao's plan, albeit without great enthusiasm and with some reservation. Lo Fu noted that Mao's goal could be equally or more easily attained by a campaign through Ningsia. Chou En-lai emphasized that the northern Shensi base should not be abandoned under any circumstances. Mao saved his sharpest attack for me alone, in which he was zealously assisted by K'ai Feng and Chang Hao. I had the impression that the latter was a close adherent of Mao. In the end, all approved the plan in principle. I was excluded from all meetings until the departure of the 1st Army. This may have been the result of my remarks. Or perhaps no military matters were discussed at the other assemblies.

Over the next few weeks I learned in private conversations that opinions within the Politburo were not as harmonious as I had at first been led to believe. For example, P'eng Te-huai spoke sarcastically of a resumption of the Long March with inadequate forces. Wang Chia-hsiang expressed the fear that military over-extension could mean political isolation from the popular anti-Japanese movement. Po Ku, in frequent personal discussions, shared my misgivings but said that "nothing is eaten as hot as it is cooked" and the best way to restrain Mao's recklessness was to remain close to him and to apply persuasion. He also told me that not only the Military Council, but the entire Politburo with the exception of Chou En-lai, was preparing to accompany the Army on its campaign. This struck me as even more objectionable, for it came frighteningly close to a surrender of the existing base. Chou En-lai did not voice an opinion on this. He merely shrugged his shoulders, content to remain behind as the senior political and military leader of northern Shensi. He let it be known that he intended to assume command of the soviet area should the 1st Front Army not return.

Towards mid-February I suddenly received orders to prepare for the march and to attach myself to the 1st Front Army's supreme command. In the meanwhile I had thought of nothing but the implications of Mao's plan. I finally concluded that it conflicted with the interests of the international workers' movement as reflected in the resolutions of the Comintern's Seventh World Conference on the struggle against

fascism and war. Nor could it be reconciled with the interests of the Soviet people, who would certainly feel obligated to enter into the war that was certain to erupt if Mao's plan succeeded. Once before, at the time of Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai's revolt, I had been plunged into a state of mental turmoil. Now, however, incomparably more was at stake.

Again my mind reviewed everything I knew of Mao Tse-tung's standpoint regarding the Soviet Union, whether through hearsay or my own experience: his statements at the CCP's Third Party Conference in 1923 that only military struggle assisted by Soviet Russia would ensure the victory of revolution in China; his support in 1930 of Li Li-san, who wanted to lure the Soviet Union into armed conflict with imperialism, especially Japanese; his often-expressed displeasure that the Soviet Union had withheld aid to the Chinese Red Army since 1927 but had concluded a peace treaty with the KMT; his notion, repeatedly stressed since 1934, that the primary contradiction in the world was the conflict between China and Japan and that therefore the decisive factor in the world revolutionary struggle was the fight of the Chinese people against Japanese aggression and KMT reaction; his plans since 1935 to draw the Soviet Union into conflict with Nationalist China and Japan by marching the Chinese Red Army through Sinkiang.

I considered Japanese provocations that I myself had witnessed on the East China Railway in Manchuria and the peace-keeping policy of the Soviet Union, which had eliminated such incendiary material from the world. But I also knew that Japan had begun using its puppet state Manchukuo to strike blows against the Mongolian People's Republic in the hope of creating a greater Mongolian state under its mastery. This would have meant a direct threat to the Soviet Union. What I could not know was that Mao Tse-tung would declare to Edgar Snow in summer 1936 that "Outer Mongolia [the Mongolian People's Republic — O.B.] would automatically become part of a Chinese federation after the victory of the Chinese Communist revolution." So he could very well have marked the Mongolian People's Republic as a future Chinese Red Army base.

A 6 March 1936 article in the KMT newspaper *Shenching Jipao*, which only recently came into my hands, indicates that my line of reasoning was not far off the mark. It reads: "The Red troops are pursuing two goals in their advance on Shansi: first, to unite themselves with Outer Mongolia and obtain help from the Soviet Union; second to provoke Japanese intervention by posing a threat to Hopeh and Chahar. Should the Reds realize these aims, it could precipitate a definite danger for the Nanking government".

After sleepless nights of self-examination as a Communist and internationalist, I decided to write a letter to Mao Tse-tung and the Politburo in which I set down my thoughts, protesting against the 1st Red Front

Army's march to the Mongolian People's Republic. It was a very long letter and I can no longer reconstruct it in full. But I would like to cite three points from a report I submitted in Moscow in 1939. I first argued that the "Chinese Red Army's drive to the border of the Mongolian People's Republic endangered the Soviet Union's peace policy and could have served as a pretext for a Japanese attack against the Mongolian People's Republic." That, I said, would have compelled the Soviet Union to intervene and provide protective assistance for Mao's adventurist policies, with no regard for the effects on the world Communist movement and the Soviet peace policy. Second, I added that the "chief task of the Chinese Red Army, which paralleled the political task of the CCP, namely, the formation of an anti-Japanese united front, was not to obtain technical aid from the Soviet Union, but to engage in combat activity in Inner China directed towards the creation of a broad anti-Japanese united front and the defeat of the pro-Japanese traitors' forces." Mao Tse-tung's plan to push into Shansi did not serve this end. On the contrary, it rekindled the civil war and provided the Japanese with an additional excuse to expand their aggression in northern China (as actually did happen). Third, I wrote, evoking P'eng Te-huai's remark, that "a new Long March of the main forces to the Mongolian People's Republic, from which they might well not return, would have called into question the very existence of the soviet area in northern Shensi."

After the letter was translated from Russian to Chinese I handed it to Chou En-lai. He promised to have it copied for distribution to the members of the Politburo. I do not know if this was done. At the same time I said that I would not take part in the campaign. A few days later the Politburo, Military Council, part of the Headquarters staff and support services left the city to join the Army. I remained behind in Wai-yao-pao.

I never received an answer to my letter. Or did I? A little later Chou En-lai confided to me that a message had been radioed from Shansi in which the Politburo denounced my attitude as opportunistic and accused me of not comprehending the nature of the Soviet Union's peace policy, of overestimating the enemy's forces and underestimating the strength of both the Chinese soviet movement and the Chinese Red Army. Chou En-lai passed on these judgements without comment. He suggested that, in addition to my activity at the Military Academy, I resume Headquarters staff work. I would help set up defences for the new base against surprise attacks or raids.

Although the only military forces at his disposal were the Military Academy, independent and local units, and staff and escort troops — no more than a few thousand men in all — Chou displayed confidence. He was counting on the cease-fire with Chang Hsüeh-liang and

the passivity of Yang Hu-ch'eng. Fortunately this confidence was well founded. The soviet base in northern Shensi was never in serious danger during the several months of the 1st Front Army's absence. Of course, it should not be forgotten that the Army was never at too great a distance and could have returned at any time. It never did complete the second stage of Mao's plan. But who would have foreseen that?

Only Min-t'uan bands occasionally broke into the interior of the soviet area. Usually on horseback, they raided villages, murdered, and plundered. But they always withdrew afterwards. Once a group of this sort, several hundred men strong, overran a village close to Wa-yao-pao. It was feared that the city itself would be attacked. Chou En-lai alerted all available forces to its defence, whereas I mobilized the Military Academy to drive off the attackers. There never was a battle. The bandits were warned at the last moment and quickly made themselves scarce, scattering their precious booty — mostly food and horses — in their flight. Pursuit would have been futile so we returned to Wa-yao-pao. Still, the bandits seemed to have learned their lesson for they never again ventured near the city.

I recount this episode only to illustrate how satisfactorily Chou En-lai and I worked together. Reports from the front, which unfortunately were few and far between, were passed on to me by Headquarters on a regular basis. Occasionally Chou En-lai gave my interpreter newspapers brought by military courier from Shansi and conversed with me in English about military and political events to keep me up to date.

As for the "East Campaign" — as the 1st Front Army's enterprise was later called — on 20 February its main forces were somewhere in the broad expanse between the two cities held by the 17th KMT Army, Yi-ch'uan and Sui-te, beyond the Yellow River (Huang ho). The weak Shansi provincial troops stationed on the east bank offered little resistance. The march resumed smoothly at first. The provincial governor Yen Hsi-shan would not accept open battle although he commanded somewhat over 60,000 men, in other words, a two- to threefold superiority. He concentrated instead on the defence of the cities and fortifying the road from Wu-pao on the Yellow River to Ch'i-hsien on the Fen River to prevent a Red Army assault on the provincial capital T'ai-yüan. The 1st Front Army was therefore able to take all districts within the triangle formed by the Yellow and Fen Rivers and the above-mentioned road in the north — an area of about 25,000 square km.

This shifted the main burden of the fighting to the 15th Corps. As the northernmost column it had the Yellow River at its back and its left flank against Yen Hsi-shan, whose main forces were positioned south of T'ai-yüan.

The 1st Corps, conveying the Politburo, Military Council, and supreme command, was able to operate with relative freedom. It

penetrated the rich Fen River valley, through which ran the Ta-t'ung-P'u-chou railway, and expropriated landlords and merchants, recruited volunteers, and replaced the KMT officialdom with new local governing bodies. According to figures released by Headquarters, the number of recruits came to 5,000 to 6,000. Plundered currency came to over half a million silver dollars, an enormous sum by our modest standards. There were also ample stores of food (rice, oil, salt, etc.), textiles, and, although in small measure, weapons and ammunition. Supply columns carried the booty to northern Shensi, where Chou En-lai was setting up rear-line posts to be administered by Mao Tse-min, Mao Tse-tung's younger brother.

The stated political ambition of the 1st Front Army was "to resist the Japanese land robbers and to punish the guilty betrayers of northern China's autonomy" [that is, of *de facto* secession — *O.B.*]. One day, after the 1st Front Army's departure, Mao called for a national conference in the name of the "Central Government of the Chinese People's Republic". This was apparently in accord with the 25 November 1935 Moscow statement. Actually it pursued the deviant political line of the 25 December Politburo resolution.

Two factors undermined its credibility. First, it contained a series of stipulations with which it was certainly impossible for Chiang Kai-shek to comply at this time: an end to the KMT's "one-party dictatorship", the release of all political prisoners, and the establishment of "normal" relations with the "People's Government", as the former Revolutionary Government now called itself. On the agenda for discussion was the immediate termination of diplomatic relations with Japan, the dispatch of a "punitive expedition" into Manchuria, and similar proposals. It was suggested that the conference be held in northern Shensi. What weighed more heavily was the gross contradiction between words and deeds, for everyone knew that the campaign in Shansi reopened the civil war. In the event, Chiang Kai-shek ordered his armies, which were south of the Yellow River in the Honan - Kiangsu area, to break camp for Shansi at once to support Yen Hsi-shan. Simultaneously, the Northeast and 17th Armies were to seal off the Yellow River, in order to prevent the 1st Front Army's return to northern Shensi, and to occupy its virtually unprotected base.

By late March the enemy's march east of the Yellow River was essentially completed. The Central KMT forces under General Ch'en Ch'eng's supreme command — in all twelve to fifteen divisions — took up positions along the Fen River and the railway that followed its course, set up fortifications, and, supported by the towns in the hands of the Shansi troops, began a slow advance west in several columns of two to three divisions. Yen Hsi-shan's troops followed suit in the north. The enemy applied the same blockhouse tactic used

during the Fifth Campaign against the Central Soviet Area. Our military situation steadily worsened during April. The 1st Front Army's area of operations between the Yellow and Fen Rivers was shrinking. Mobility was restricted and a decisive battle impossible or, at least, very costly. And to what end would a battle be fought now? Breaking through the fortifications on the Fen River — the direct route to Suiyuan was barricaded — in order to push on across eastern Shansi to Hopeh and further toward Chahar?

The future was incalculable. Severed from its base, the 1st Army would have to fight superior KMT forces which, from their point of view, had the choice of restoring the prior situation in Shansi, that is, throwing our 1st Army back over the Yellow River themselves or leaving this to the Japanese militarists who stood ready to attack at their rear. The latter variant would have signalled the loss not only of Chahar and Hopeh — this was already inevitable — but of Suiyuan and Shansi as well.

Chinese newspapers, basing their stories on Japanese reports, were already writing of an alliance between the Chinese Red Army on the one hand and the Comintern and Moscow on the other. The Japanese warned that northern China and Mongolia, which they claimed as part of their sphere of influence, were being threatened by the Reds. This was why they had to reinforce their troops in northern China: to protect Hopeh, Chahar, Suiyuan, and Shansi from the Communists. They forced the so-called political councils of Hopeh and Chahar to sign an agreement "on the struggle against Communism in North China" which, in effect, conferred sovereignty in both provinces to the Japanese occupiers. Interestingly enough, this agreement was expressly directed against Chiang Kai-shek as well as the Communists. In short, Mao Tse-tung's East Campaign exacerbated the Chinese civil war, bolstered the reactionary pro-Japanese elements in China, and presented the Japanese with a pretext to build up their strategic positions against China, the Mongolian People's Republic, and, ultimately, the Soviet Union as well. This was how things stood, whether or not it was Mao's intention.

Mao, the Politburo, and the Military Council finally chose retreat to Shensi. This was possible only because Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng did not follow Chiang Kai-shek's order to seal off the Yellow River crossing. Po Ku assured me, when we met shortly thereafter, that military factors had decided the issue. Mao Tse-tung had realized that his strategic plan could not be implemented at this time. The one positive outcome of this is that the national united front policy was more seriously pursued than before.

Dissension within the 1st Army itself might also have played a part in the decision or at least in hastening it. As mentioned earlier, the 15th

Corps bore the brunt of the fighting. The 1st Corps repeatedly ignored orders from the supreme command to support it. Consequently, the 15th Corps suffered unnecessary losses, especially during the retreat and while covering the Yellow River crossing. Its commander Liu Chih-tan was killed. Lin Piao was reprimanded by the Politburo for his conduct and was temporarily removed from his command and named director of the Military Academy.

In the last days of April 1936 the 1st Red Front Army returned to northern Shensi. A week later, in early May, Mao summoned a meeting of the Politburo in a town somewhere east of Wa-yao-pao. Chou En-lai informed me that I too was invited. The next morning we rode together to the place of the meeting, arriving in the late afternoon. That evening Po Ku sought me out, on Mao's prompting as he made clear, in order to persuade me to speak out in self-criticism the next day. Mao set a very high value on consensus. He was hoping the meeting would eliminate discords within the 1st Army and obviate any "misinterpretations" regarding its return. I declared my agreement. Actually I was relieved that the operation had more or less proceeded according to my expectations and that the basis for my fears concerning the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic was removed. Consequently, a "conciliatory" mood pervaded the meeting, which was also attended by Military Council members who did not belong to the Politburo. Mao acted the role of accommodating and benevolent victor. He delivered a platform-like speech in which he executed an abrupt about-face. This was the sort of performance I had already experienced several times, especially after our unification with the 4th Army. It had evidently been discussed beforehand with the Politburo, for all of them expressed approval. I acknowledged the correctness of the Politburo's criticism of my letter (for the outcome of the East Campaign had rendered it pointless) and extolled Mao's strategy and tactics of mobile warfare. He, in turn, generously deigned to praise my action against the Min-t'uan. Others, such as Lo Fu and Wang Chia-hsiang, who had hardly been enthusiastic over Mao's original plan, registered their apologies and belated approval. Only Lin Piao sulked and kept silent, but this was out of personal rather than political vexation.

It is unnecessary to go into the particulars of Mao's speech for it was essentially identical to the 5 May proclamation, which was published as the "Telegram from the Supreme Command of the Chinese Red Army to the Military Commission of the Nanking Government, to all land, sea, and air forces, to all parties, groups, organizations, newspaper publishers, and all compatriots who do not wish to carry the yoke of colonial slavery" and can be read in Mao Tse-tung's *Selected Works*

(vol. I, Peking 1951, P. 264 [Chinese]). I only want to highlight several points.

First and most important, it should be remembered that there was no more mention of the strategic plan Mao had developed at the beginning of the year. There is not one syllable of this nor of the meeting itself to be found in present day Maoist historiography. Instead, Mao repeated what had been declared in the 21 February appeal, namely that the anti-Japanese vanguard of the Chinese People's Red Army under the leadership of the CCP "had undertaken the East Campaign in order to initiate resistance against the Japanese land robbers and to punish Chinese traitors." In truth, the latter label should have been applied only to members of the Hopeh and Chahar political councils who had actually negotiated with the Japanese. None the less, it was against the Shansi and Suiyuan governors who were resisting Japanese pressure that the thrust of the campaign was to have been directed. It therefore seemed all the more remarkable when Mao claimed that the East Campaign had dealt the Japanese imperialists and Chinese traitors a devastating blow and had given the Chinese people's struggle for national liberation new impetus. Events were to prove nearly the opposite.

Mao explained his decision to retreat by saying that, after the Shansi and Central Government troops blocked the path to Hopeh and Chahar, the 1st Front Army attempted to avoid civil war in the interests of the united front. A fratricidal conflict would only have worked to the advantage of the Japanese and the traitors. So political, not military, considerations were the governing factors. He even went so far as to say that, after the many and great victories in western Shansi, a breakthrough of the blockade on the Fen River and a continued advance towards Hopeh were militarily totally feasible.

It might appear peculiar that the audience accepted all of this as the unvarnished truth, although they certainly knew better. However, Mao's position in the Politburo and Military Council was so strong at this time that no one dared contradict him publicly. There was also the fact that, viewed as a limited incursion, the East Campaign was an undeniable success. It had brought in new land and booty and had strengthened the Army in both weapons and men. Finally — and this was of decisive importance to the internationalists — the meeting introduced a new development in the united front policy. It incorporated the KMT and Chiang Kai-shek and stressed an end to civil war "because the final liberation could be effected only by the common struggle of the entire Chinese people." The policy of the ECCI seemed to have prevailed at last.

It must surely have struck the critical observer that the political line advocated by the Politburo meeting and the 5 May telegram was rather rhetorical in character and stood in clear contradiction to actions. Mao

and the Politburo were as committed as ever towards alliances, not with the Central Government under Chiang Kai-shek, but to regional military strongmen — Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng in northern China, in southern China the governors of Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces — who resisted the Central Government at any given opportunity. This further undermined the national united front, for, in the circumstances, it could not be realized without Chiang Kai-shek.

As for the demand for a cessation of civil war, it is interesting to note that this was to be effected within a month in Shansi, Shensi, and Kansu, that is, in the 1st Army's operational area. Mention of southern and western China, where the 2nd and 4th Armies and various guerrilla detachments were engaged, was vague and largely without temporal or geographical limitations. It should not be forgotten that the Politburo spoke in the name of the entire Party and the Military Council, or rather the Supreme Command, and in the name of the entire Red Army in the whole of China. It was certainly not by oversight that Ningsia was passed over in silence in those passages dealing with the soonest achievable cease-fire.

Mao made use of the occasion to reaffirm the thesis, which he had first invented at Tsunyi and which has become the accepted one in Chinese (and not only Chinese) historiography. This purports that the Red Army's Long March was from its inception and in all its phases a circular advance against the Japanese aggressors proceeding according to Mao Tse-tung's plan.

At the conclusion of the meeting military strategy for the immediate future was decided. Or, more precisely, it was revealed, since it had been determined beforehand. It was aimed at a westward expansion of the northern Shensi soviet area and building it up as an anti-Japanese base. This would be done in two ways: first, through the political infiltration of Chang Hsüeh-liang's and Yang Hu-ch'eng's armies; second, by a lightning assault on Ningsia and Kansu to surprise and destroy the forces of Ma Hung-k'ui and Hu Tsung-nan. Another task contemplated was, if possible, to link up with the 4th Army and the 2nd Corps, which were at this time wending their way northward after protracted fighting and marches. (I shall return to this later). A third project was in the wind, but remained unspoken — the establishment of direct contact with the Soviet Union. Presumably this matter was reserved for Mao's most intimate circle. I did not hear of it until later. Lo Fu's old plan of a march across Ningsia to the Mongolian People's Republic was considered but rejected in favour of the still older variant of securing arms and other forms of assistance from the Soviet Union via Sinkiang. Chang Hao supported this idea, referring to the fundamental willingness of the Soviet government to provide help to the Chinese Red Army

by these means. Teng Fa was ordered to go to Moscow to negotiate concrete terms to this effect. Ha-mi, a caravan station not far from the western Kansu border where an airstrip had been constructed and then abandoned by the German airline Lufthansa, was contemplated as the delivery site.

The new strategic plan was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned and the day was concluded with a victory celebration. I imprudently did not attend this, thereby causing Mao Tse-tung to take offence. The next day the Politburo, including Mao Tse-tung, set out for Wa-yao-pao. The military commanders left for their headquarters. A few days later, the 1st Red Front Army marched for Ningsia.

In Wa-yao-pao I was compelled to transfer from my quarters, a tunnel-like stone house built similarly to the loess caves, directly adjacent to General Headquarters. Mao took this dwelling for himself. I was assigned to an empty farmhouse outside the city wall. From this time on I no longer participated in Politburo or Military Council meetings. I was invited only to Party activist assemblies or Party conferences and, infrequently on unusual occasions, to private discussions.

I otherwise continued my work at the Military Academy and tended to the training of a cavalry regiment, the first in the Chinese Red Army. This was comprised of a couple hundred horses from Ningsia, some stolen from Ma Pu-ch'ing's cavalry, some from a wild Mongolian herd, and as many men who could or wanted to ride. Although I was not a cavalryman the knowledge and experience I had acquired at the Frunze Military Academy commanding the cavalry division and in manoeuvres in Belorussia and the Ukraine sufficed to perform the task at hand, which was, incidentally, a great deal of fun for me.

Our sojourn in Wa-yao-pao was nearing its end. Late in May the 86th KMT division at Yü-lin took advantage of the 1st Army absence and the relative lack of protection for the soviet area. It appeared without warning before Wa-yao-pao, where many central institutions but as good as no troops were situated. Mao instructed that the city be evacuated immediately without a fight. This happened so quickly that I, for example, did not receive this order until one hour before departure. All institutions were transferred to Pao-an, which we reached the next day or the day after. The affair was so shameful that Wa-yao-pao is never and nowhere mentioned as the provisional Red capital that it was.

I was told that, shortly thereafter, a group of Chinese comrades with radio equipment and codes made its way from the Soviet Union through Mongolia to Ningsia, where it was directed on to Pao-an. From this point on there was a direct communications link between the ECCI and the CCP in Pao-an. This certainly had a positive effect on the

political line of the Central Committee of the CCP and reinforced the influence of the Marxist-Internationalist forces in the Party leadership. But this is not to say that Mao Tse-tung modified his fundamental views. The recipient of biased and incomplete information, I believed for a long time that he had indeed done so and that from this time on the CCP more or less conformed to the ECCI policies aimed at ending the civil war and establishing a national united front for the common struggle against the Japanese aggressors. Since then the study of pertinent documents, especially records of ECCI directives to the Central Committee of the CCP, have set me right. Naturally Mao could not ignore the ECCI's instructions, at least not yet. But he had long ago mastered the trick of reinterpreting their meaning to his advantage and could channel his acolytes in the Politburo into the desired direction. This gave rise to a double-faced policy which displayed both left and right opportunist characteristics, even if it did produce certain limited successes. So it was throughout 1936.

One certainly positive achievement, due largely however to Chou En-lai's diplomatic skill, was the secret agreement on "mutual non-aggression and co-operation for the purpose of resistance to Japan" made with Chang Hsüeh-liang, who soon afterwards formed an alliance with Yang Hu-ch'eng. This agreement ensured the viability of the soviet area in northern Shensi and enabled our 1st Army to operate freely in Ningsia and Kansu. In addition, Chang Hsüeh-liang provided us with money, uniforms, and weapons. His political concessions were even more important. He allowed, secretly of course, unimpeded traffic through Yen-an and Hsi-an between the Central Committee and Communist organizations in Nationalist China, the maintenance of an undercover Party office in Hsi-an — the site of his own headquarters — and "assistance in the anti-Japanese education" of the Northeast Army, that is, political agitation among his soldiers and officers.

As Chiang Kai-shek was simultaneously stepping up the activity of his military gendarmerie and "Blue Shirts" in the Northeast Army, a grotesque situation emerged in which both sides were waging a "war in the dark" for the political conquest of Chang Hsüeh-liang's troops.

Mao Tse-tung's adventurist two-front policy with Japan could not be separated from the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek. The popular masses could broaden the latter into a powerful and genuine national revolution.

This resolution was in obvious contradiction to the 21 February appeal and the 5 May telegram. The Politburo's partiality for the southwestern warlords in the rebellion against the Nanking Central Government under Chiang Kai-shek could only serve the interests of the Japanese aggressors.

The ECCI condemned the resolution as ridden with errors. "It would have been better," it radioed, "to have taken a firm stand against the outbreak of internal dissension, provoked by the Japanese imperialists."

The southwestern group's enterprise collapsed before a large-scale battle took place because some of the highest commanders went over to the Central Government with their troops. This may have averted a catastrophe of incalculable dimensions. In August Po Ku told me, almost as an anecdote, that there had been talk with the closest circles of the Party leadership of a joint operation with the southwestern group to remove Chiang Kai-shek and open the anti-Japanese war. Kwangtung and Kwangsi troops were to have advanced from the south and the 17th and Northeast Armies from the north onto Nanking, while the 1st Red Front Army was to take up positions against Japan in Inner Mongolia or northern China. This story sounded so far-fetched that I still do not know whether he was telling the truth. In any case, whether or not such a plan existed, it was overtaken by events.

Not affected, on the other hand, were Mao Tse-tung's political views, which lay at the bottom of this questionable strategy, just as they did in the "East Campaign". They had as their goal — I dare claim this with hindsight — to split the Kuomintang, to form a block with Chiang Kai-shek's enemies and to overthrow the Nanking Central Government, all under the standard of the anti-Japanese United Front. This is the only possible explanation of Mao Tse-tung's political and military strategy in 1936. It was not without reason that the 1st Red Front Army felt obliged to repudiate rumours to this effect as "lies and slander" and to attribute them to "Japanese imperialists and Chinese traitors". But still the slogan was heard in the soviet area: "First defeat Chiang Kai-shek, then the Japanese." After 1937 it was supplanted by "Victory for no one", that is, for neither Chiang Kai-shek nor the Japanese. For the sake of appearances to the outside world, of course, Mao was being increasingly pressed to champion a national united front policy. The extraordinary growth of the anti-Japanese popular movement throughout the nation, coupled with the resolute language of the ECCI, forced this stance.

The Politburo therefore addressed an open letter, in accordance with the ECCI directive of August 1936, to the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek with the demand to cease "the civil war and to join hands in resisting Japanese aggression". In the same document Chiang Kai-shek was criticized for having shattered the nation and provided support for the Japanese militarists by waging a civil war against the Communists and passively tolerating the Japanese theft of Chinese territory.

It was also at the insistence of the ECCI that the Politburo passed a resolution in mid-September "On the new situation of the resistance

movement against Japan to save the nation and on the democratic republic". Compared with earlier documents, it represented small but definite progress. Still it declared a necessity "to pressure the Nanking KMT government and its armed forces into joining the resistance struggle against Japan and to proclaim the slogan of 'the founding of a democratic republic' ", for this would be the best means of consolidating all anti-Japanese forces, securing the territorial integrity of China, and averting the impending disaster that loomed over the Chinese people. Even in this document there was no express correction of the false position assumed towards Chiang Kai-shek in the 25 December resolution, which was censured by the ECCI. Not one syllable referred to Chiang Kai-shek, although the necessity was stressed "to win all possible representatives of the ruling classes for the anti-Japanese war" — and note the reasoning behind this — "in order to broaden the national united front against Japan and to strengthen all the more our own position and forces".

In October the "Central Soviet Government and the Military Council of the People's Red Army of China" finally issued an order prohibiting all Red Army units from undertaking offensive engagements against the KMT armies, permitting them merely to take defensive measures if attacked. This, it should be pointed out, was at the same time that the bulk of the 4th Front Army, isolated in Kansu, had to endure costly battles which ultimately led to its *de facto* dissolution. The order went on to say that all prisoners-of-war would be released with their weapons if their detachments wished to fight against Japan or serve in the Red Army. This was hardly an innovation, for the Red Army had for many years followed the practice of either releasing its prisoners-of-war, with the exception of senior officers, or integrating them into its own ranks. This was because it lacked a suitable hinterland and facilities for keeping them. As for the last point, which would have had those KMT armies assuming positions in the anti-Japanese battle front supported rather than hindered, it was purely rhetorical. As long as no concrete understanding was contemplated with military leaders in the Nanking Government or with provincial governors, it could have applied only to those within the Red sphere of influence, in other words, the 17th and Northeast Armies which of course had already made secret pacts with the 1st Red Army.

The basic questions of how the national united front was to be achieved and what form the relationship to Chiang Kai-shek and his armies would take remained unanswered in the August open letter, just as they had in the September resolution and October order. Nevertheless, all these documents conveyed the impression that they were in perfect harmony with the Comintern's political line, to the extent it was known to us after the Seventh World Congress. I and many others were

deceived by this. Mao Tse-tung and his coterie could indeed say that they did everything in their power "by peaceful means, to unite China, to set up a democratic republic, and to expel the Japanese imperialists from the nation". This was made all the easier for them because the Comintern's instructions were made known only to the Politburo and, sometimes, to a few senior military commanders. All other Party functionaries, army cadres, and myself were kept in the dark. What I did learn was gathered piecemeal from conversations with Po Ku and others. Mao's directives, on the other hand, were issued exclusively in the name of the Politburo and widely circulated.

In its September 1936 resolution the Politburo formally accepted the ECCI's criticism concerning the statement in the 25 December 1935 resolution that everyone who so desired might join the Communist Party regardless of class background or attitudes. I cannot say whether or not this reproof had any effect. Judged by personal observations, it changed practically nothing. Po Ku, then either chairman of the local soviet government or responsible for it in the Politburo, expressed scepticism. It disturbed him that Mao Tse-tung was seriously considering admitting Chang Hsüeh-liang into the Party in order to "have him and his Northeast Army more firmly in our grasp". There evidently was some discord in the Politburo on this matter, because the ECCI was consulted. The plan was then dropped because it met with such violent opposition.

This is not to say that the ECCI was fundamentally inimical to cooperation with Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng. On the contrary, it approved of interaction with these warlords as long as they acknowledged the anti-Japanese united front and permitted Red Army political agitators to work among their troops. However, Mao was interested in something less modest. He wanted the Red Army, the Northeast Army, and the 17th KMT Army to combine as a "United Anti-Japanese Army of the Northwest" and to form with Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng an "Anti-Japanese Government of Northwest China" covering Shensi, Kansu, and Ningsia provinces which would plot against Chiang Kai-shek and liquidate his government. The underlying principle of this vision — for under the given circumstances Mao's plan could not be called anything else — was hardly new. It had been born in the 1920s and was enmeshed in speculations about military, or at least technical, assistance from the Soviet Union (cf. pp. 133 and 155 - 6 above). In order to approach his goal he even toyed with the idea of offering Chang Hsüeh-liang supreme command of the "United Anti-Japanese Army". He also spoke of providing the Suiyuan provincial government with direct military support in the eventuality of a Japanese attack, which would have extended the "Northwest Government's" territory into Inner Mongolia. Because I

gathered this from snatches of conversations, I cannot say whether the Politburo actually deliberated on these plans nor whether the ECCI was informed. It can be safely assumed, however, that they did not coincide with the ECCI's own ideas.

Mao Tse-tung defended his peculiar version of the united front policy before the Party activists with the argument that Chiang Kai-shek, influenced by the powerful, reactionary pro-Japanese wing of the KMT hierarchy, still adhered to the dictum of first defeating the Communists and then repulsing the Japanese. The latter was to be achieved not through military engagements, but through diplomatic negotiations. Chiang Kai-shek could be detached from the reactionary wing and persuaded to end the civil war and agree to a national united front for armed struggle against Japan only if subject to the double pressure of the anti-Japanese mass movement in all of China and the anti-Japanese North-western Army and Government.

This sounded thoroughly convincing. Did we not read and hear daily that Central KMT troops had joined the warlords of the southwestern provinces in an unremitting struggle against our 4th Army, 2nd Corps, and guerrilla districts? And it was equally well known to all that Chiang Kai-shek, at least since the "East Campaign," was preparing a new drive against our 1st Army that was to effect its complete encirclement and destruction in the new Shensi – Kansu – Ningsia soviet area (abbreviated to Shen – Kan – Ning). What I did not know (nor anyone else outside the highest circles) and discovered only recently in pertinent documents was that in the summer of 1936 Chiang Kai-shek directed the military attaché of the Chinese embassy in Moscow to probe the possibility of a concerted action with the Chinese Red Army against Japan. He was correctly referred to the Central Committee of the CCP in Pao-an. It could be that the documents cited above, particularly the open letter, were in response to this. I cannot judge today how serious these political feelers on both sides were. I tend towards the view that both Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek were hoping to improve their positions for the new onslaught of internal conflict which they deemed inevitable. At any rate, the fact remains that their political moves neither mitigated nor otherwise influenced the civil war, which continued unabated throughout 1936.

Nevertheless, the military events of this year may have played an important role in the political decisions of Mao Tse-tung and the Politburo. I mean this in a double sense: first, with regard to an independent approach to the national united front which would have contradicted ECCI policies and undermined the Nanking Central Government; and, second, the elimination of Chang Kuo-t'ao, who,

owing to the numerical strength of the 4th Army, was the only viable contender for Mao Tse-tung's leadership position in the Party.

In accord with the strategic plan adopted in spring 1936 after the East Campaign, the 1st Army moved into Ningsia, where it defeated several of Ma Pu-ch'ing's or Ma Hung-kuei's regiments, but came to a halt at the Ch'ing-shui River, a tributary of the Yellow River. Then, in summer, it moved south towards the Kansu border region and successfully penetrated the upper course of the Ching River. There they were delayed by troops of the "Three Ma's", which were being hastily reinforced by divisions from Hu Tsung-nan's 1st KMT Army. The enemy dug into defensive positions on the banks of both rivers and along the P'ing-liang - Ku-yüan - Hei-ch'eng-chen road, which lay between them. There they awaited the arrival of the 1st KMT Army's forces, which were to go over to the counter-attack when they reached the Wei River.

This essentially concluded the first stage of the 1st Red Army's operation. It had not, admittedly, attained the large scale originally envisaged. Still, it did extend the soviet area by 15,000 to 20,000 square km. This region, however, was settled very sparsely and almost entirely by Muslims. To my knowledge, the 1st Red Army's forces remained here until the end of the year. Its commander, P'eng Te-huai, made his headquarters in the town of Ch'ing-yang, in the extreme northeast corner of Kansu. Chou En-lai, in a sense Mao Tse-tung's deputy, visited the area as chief political commissar to organize its administrative integration and political mobilization. I can no longer say to what extent soviet governing bodies were established. Mao himself remained in Pao-an the entire time. I saw him almost daily, for his cliff dwelling was immediately adjacent to my own. We never had any closer contact. Our interaction was limited exclusively to the exchange of pleasantries. One factor in this, although certainly a minor one, was that I no longer had a regular interpreter and the Chinese I had acquired up to this point was still rather meagre. The deep-seated reason, I am sure, was Mao's resentment of my letter to the Politburo.

I was still in receipt of periodic front reports through headquarters, if the exceedingly modest intelligence left behind in Pao-an can be regarded as such. They informed me that the 1st Army confronted two operational tasks — it was already autumn by this time. First of all, it undertook measures to re-establish contact with the 4th Army and 2nd Corps, which at this time were fighting their way from Sikang to southern Kansu. Second — and this included the independent and local units as well — it was preparing itself to counter-attack Chiang Kai-shek's new encirclement and annihilation campaign against the Shen - Kan - Ning soviet area. There was no definite strategy in this regard. This was understandable because there were two

unknowns complicating the calculations: Chang Hsüeh-liang's and Yang Hu-ch'eng's actions when the situation became critical and Chang Kuo-t'ao's plans for the 4th Army. I heard that Mao Tse-tung was even considering where the 1st Army should break through if necessary.

Monstrous rumours were whispered about the 4th Red Front Army after the split and I strongly suspect they were circulated intentionally. One indication of this was that their intensity varied according to our relationship with Chang Kuo-t'ao. The rumours reached a high point in the winter of 1935 - 6. There was talk of a complete collapse of discipline in the leadership of the 4th Army, an unbridled terrorization of both the Chinese and minority populace, robbery, looting, and even instances of cannibalism. Chang Kuo-t'ao was denounced as an enemy of the Party and the revolution and as a common bandit who shunned every battle, seeking his own safety in flight. In summer and autumn 1936, as the 4th Army was marching northward with the 2nd Corps, all innuendoes of this sort were quelled only to be unleashed again when the bulk of the 4th Army perished in the "West Campaign". In the end, I no longer knew what I was supposed to believe. Once before I had heard condemnatory remarks aimed at Chang Kuo-t'ao and the 4th Army but had been persuaded by my own eyes that, even if they did have some foundation, they were still grossly exaggerated. Of course, the situation may well have changed in view of the extreme conditions under which the 4th Army was forced to operate. And I criticized as emphatically as all others Chang Kuo-t'ao's formation of a separate central committee and military council.

I was most confounded by the information gleaned from the radio and confirmed by the KMT press, insofar as it was available to us. It appeared that the 4th Red Front Army, with the 5th and 9th Corps of the former Central Army Group, turned south in summer 1935 and recaptured several western Szechwan cities, such as Mao-kung, Lu-shan, T'ien-ch'üan, which the enemy had taken and fortified. In the winter of 1935 - 6 they tried to push further south, perhaps in order to join the 2nd Corps, perhaps to reach a more propitious area to pass the winter, and advanced sporadically towards the lower course of the Ta-tu River. There, however, they were stopped by superior Nationalist armed forces and returned to Sikang in spring 1936. They marched up along the Ta-tu and Ya-lung Rivers and occupied an enormous expanse, extending nearly to the Tibet and Tsinghai borders with an area of 100,000 square km. Chang Kuo-t'ao had already realized a long-standing ambition in establishing a federal soviet government in western Szechwan. After the conquest of the city of Kan-tzu in northeast Sikang he founded the first Tibetan people's government, installing as its formal leader the "Living Buddha" of the area, who, as

the highest-ranking lama, embodied both temporal and spiritual authority.

According to our information, at this time the 4th Army, with the 5th and 9th Corps, together comprised six corps, each with ten to twelve divisions of widely divergent strengths. Chang Kuo-t'ao headed the separate central committee and revolutionary military council he created. Chu Te was commander-in-chief, Ch'en Chang-hao chief political commissar, and Wang Hung-nung chief of staff. In effect, leading cadres of the 4th Army filled all key positions. But, as I have remarked elsewhere, there were no real indications that cadres of the former Central Army Group were relieved of their commands or in any other way subjected to discrimination or persecution, as was claimed in Pao-an and, later, in Yen-an. Only the name of Liu Po-ch'eng, oddly enough, did not appear in the list of Army leaders.

Figures on the numerical strength of the 4th Red Front Army in Sikang were conflicting. KMT newspapers wrote of 70,000 men, presumably incorporating Ho Lung's armed forces. Our own approximations ranged between 40,000 and 50,000. In any case, in summer and autumn 1936 the 4th Army still constituted a very respectable military force. The case of the 2nd Red Front Army, as the consolidated 2nd and 6th Corps were now called (and from now on I shall use this term), was quite different. To my knowledge, there was no communication between it and our headquarters up to our arrival in northern Sikang. I did not learn more about it until the summer of 1936, that is, a year after it left its former base. At the line of departure, it supposedly contained about 40,000 men, a number I pass on with all possible reservations. Actually, it could hardly have exceeded 30,000. Even this would have signified a twofold increase over 1934 estimates (cf. pp. 84 - 5 above).

The 2nd Army marched into southern Hunan then veered west and crossed the Wu River at its upper course north of Kuei-yang. It was subsequently forced further south to the forbidding mountains dividing Kweichow and Yunnan provinces which we had surmounted earlier. North of K'un-ming, they could again move towards the west. This must have taken place in the winter of 1935 - 6. Pursued by vastly superior KMT forces almost to the Mekong, they finally succeeded in fighting their way north and crossing the Chin-sha River near Shih-ku, that is, far above the 1st Army's crossing point. A strong division, possibly headed by the Army leadership, marched through the highlands directly to Kan-tzu, where Chang Kuo-t'ao had set up his headquarters. In its march the 2nd Army endured obstacles and privations comparable to, if not even greater than, those suffered by the 1st and 4th Armies. According to official estimates, when it established radio contact with Pao'an through 4th Army headquarters in summer 1936, it

still numbered 15,000 to 20,000. Chou En-lai felt 15,000 was closer to the truth.

In Kan-tzu the leaders of the 2nd and 4th Army conferred on the current situation and future strategy. It was decided to leave Sikang in the summer and to proceed to Kansu together, although preserving the separate organizational identities of the two armies.

This ambiguous resolution was discussed in Pao-an, in fact at one of the rare meetings to which I was now admitted. I no longer know within which body it was held, nor if it was before or after the final decision had been made in Kan-tzu. It was preceded by a hectic exchange of radio messages in which the Politburo, appealing to past ECCI directives, demanded an end to the schism in the Party and Army and urged an amalgamation of the three Red Front Armies to create a firm basis for a national united front and an advantageous deployment zone for the anti-Japanese war. Chang Kuo-t'ao had to submit to these arguments, especially since the Politburo's radio communiqués were co-signed by Ch'ang Hao as representative, or at least spokesman, of the ECCI. A reconciliation was further eased for Chang Kuo-t'ao because, as he himself wrote in 1938, his differences with Mao Tse-tung had "diminished after the Comintern directives of December 1935 on the anti-Japanese national united front".

There was good cause for the emphasis Mao Tse-tung gave to the 2nd Army's independence. Ho Lung and Hsiao K'o were his old comrades-in-arms and were considered reliably loyal to him. Together with the 1st Army their forces provided a counter-weight to the 4th Army, which was still numerically superior or at least equal to them both. Politically, they definitely bolstered the influences of those leading cadres in the 4th Army, such as Chu Te, who sincerely wished for a reconciliation between Chang Kuo-t'ao and Mao Tse-tung.

Thus the resolution was accepted and approved on both sides and was acted upon immediately. The 2nd Army and the widely dispersed body of the 4th Army assembled near Sung-p'an and from there followed the general march route of the 1st Army. They successfully reached the southeast border of Kansu, but then encountered five to six divisions of the "Three Ma's" stationed there and several of Hu Tsung-nan's units which were advancing against our 1st Army. The 2nd and 4th Armies suffered heavy losses, largely because of their lack of co-ordination. As for the 1st Army, remarkably it did not intervene with a diversionary manoeuvre. In October one or two 1st Corps regiments simply moved towards Hui-ning, where advance parties of the 2nd and 4th Armies were already arriving. Led by these regiments, the 2nd Army marched in an easterly direction and linked up with the 1st Army. Its effective strength was given at this time as 10,000 to 12,000 men. Ho Lung went to P'eng Te-huai's headquarters in Ch'ing-yang. I heard nothing of

Hsiao K'o. Nor, as far as I know, was his name mentioned on subsequent occasions. Kuan Hsiang-ying replaced him as chief political commissar of the 2nd Army.

The 4th Army resumed its northward march in the direction of Ningsia. It reached the Yellow River near Ching-yüan, a city northeast of Lan-chou. Its main forces crossed the river to begin the fateful "West Campaign" which was to lead to its tragic downfall.

A long time passed before I understood the background of the West Campaign. I was not consulted by the Party and Army leadership, which had decided upon this undertaking, and nothing was to be learned from staff documents to which I had access. I merely heard it said in conversation that Chang Kuo-t'ao had been instructed to form an independent "West Army" of 4th Army units to march through Kansu to Sinkiang. There he was to receive munitions and other aid supposedly supplied by the Soviet Union. Chang himself was to come to Pao-an in order to assume the positions due to him in the Central Committee, Military Council, and Government.

This certainly sounded plausible. I knew, if only in a general way, that Mao Tse-tung had not abandoned his old plan of obtaining assistance from the Soviet Union via Sinkiang. And on this point his ambitions coincided with those of Chang Kuo-t'ao. Chang could have no second thoughts about coming to Pao-an because he had long been a proponent of the national united front and had no reason to suppose that this was not now the official platform of the CCP. He therefore formed the "West Army", placed it under the supreme command of Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien, to whom he assigned Ch'en Ch'ang-hao as political commissar, and left for Pao'an with Chu Te, Liu Po-ch'eng, and other leading cadres.

This was one interpretation of the West Campaign. I repeat that I gleaned this from conversations, not from an official source, but it was in keeping with my understanding of the situation. The only notable aspect of this was that the main forces of the old 4th Army were subsumed by the "West Army" along with Tung Chen-t'ang's 5th Corps. The figures on their initial strength varied between 25,000 to 35,000 men. Only 6,000 to 7,000 4th Army men remained on the east bank of the Yellow River and these accompanied Chang Kuo-t'ao, Chu Te, and others to Shen - Kan - Ning. This meant that, after the unification of the 1st and 2nd Armies in the Soviet Area, Mao Tse-tung enjoyed undisputed military superiority.

Soon thereafter, a new version of the West Campaign was officially disseminated which completely and fundamentally contradicted the first. This one contended that Chang Kuo-t'ao undertook the West

Campaign of his own volition and against the express orders of the Central Committee to effect a juncture with the 1st Army. Chang had directed the 4th Army to cross the Yellow River and march to north-western Kansu, from where it was to establish contact with the Soviet Union. The two sides agreed on the strategic goal. The critical difference lay in the assignment of responsibility for a campaign that was rapidly being perceived as a failure (by November or December 1936).

I regarded the new version with scepticism at first but accepted it over the course of time. The charges levelled against Chang Kuo-t'ao by Mao and his adherents contributed to my thinking. They bore an official Party character and were virtually my only source of information on this matter for years. Then there was the precarious military situation at the end of 1936. With the elimination of the "West Army" the numerical strength of our regular troops was nearly halved. The most persuasive support for the second version came from Chang Kuo-t'ao's own behaviour. In April 1938 he left Yen-an to go over to the Nationalists. There he publicly accused the Central Committee of the CCP of debasing the national anti-Japanese united front policy to suit its own partisan ends. I shall return to the political controversies which preceded and followed this move. Here I want merely to trace military developments. In recounting these events I am conforming to the reports I delivered in Moscow in late 1939, because they best reflect my perceptions of affairs at that time.

As mentioned above, after our 1st Army's East Campaign, Chiang Kai-shek began exploring the possibility of Moscow's acting as a mediator with the CCP while simultaneously he prepared a new encirclement and annihilation campaign against the Shen-Kan-Ning Soviet Area. He relied primarily on the armies of Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng, in all twelve to fifteen divisions, directing them to advance from the south and east. To the extent that they complied with the order, their offensive was a pure farce. Every step was discussed beforehand with our representatives in Hsi-an and all troop movements proceeded extremely slowly and without fighting. On our side, only local and guerrilla units actually confronted the "enemy".

In early autumn Chiang Kai-shek committed his own troops. He concentrated three to four divisions near Ta-t'ung so that, with the three to four Shansi divisions stationed north of T'ai-yüan, he had seven to eight combat-ready divisions northeast of the soviet area. A second Central Army group of two to three divisions, probably the same one that was operating earlier in Kansu, made a surprise entrance into Ningsia in the northwest. To the west, in Kansu, there was still Hu Tsung-nan's army positioned along the Ch'ing-shui River and the "Three Ma's" troops, together another eight to ten divisions. The only break in the encirclement was to the north, but this faced on to steppes and deserts. The

apparent provocation or, better said, pretext for Chiang Kai-shek's advance into Shansi and Ningsia was provided by an invasion, with Japanese backing, of puppet troops from Manchukuo and Chahar. Now, although they were being pushed back by Suiyuan provincial troops acting alone, Chiang Kai-shek seized the opportunity to complete the blockade of the soviet area, waving the standard of anti-Japanese resistance.

In a surprise move the Central Army troops which had penetrated Ningsia captured Ching-yüan before the 4th Red Army had completed its crossing of the Yellow River. A quarter of the army — including Chu Te, Chang Kuo-t'ao, and other leading cadres and portions of the staff and support services — was cut off. The troops who had crossed, the "West Army", either could or would not turn back and, steadily pressured by the enemy, continued their march in a general north-westerly direction.

The troops left behind wended their way eastward under Chu Te and Chang Kuo-t'ao. Around 4,000 to 5,000 combat troops joined up with the 1st Army. The remainder, about 2,000 men not directly involved in combat operations, arrived in Pao-an during the first days of December 1936 with Chu Te, Chang Kuo-t'ao, Liu Po-ch'eng and others at their head.

I was a witness to the dismal spectacle. The men's uniforms were makeshift and ragged. Even lama robes and other articles of Tibetan clothing were in evidence. Discipline, however, to judge by the fleeting outward impression, was intact. And the armaments of the staff and escort troops, among whom was a conspicuously large number of body guards, left nothing to be desired. The already customary official reception with the review of a company of honour was omitted. Only the highest-ranking cadres were given accommodation in Pao-an. All others were sent to houses and caves in the surrounding area.

I was astonished to read a quarter of a century later in Agnes Smedley's book *The Great Road: the Life of Marshal Chu Te* (Berlin, 1958, pp. 549 ff.) that the 4th Army had obtained 40,000 new uniforms from the 1st Army in Kansu. She supports this statement with supposed letters and diaries of a Hatem, whom I shall discuss later. And her portrayal of the "reunion" of the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Armies, which is attributed to the same source, contains in my opinion more fantasy than truth. According to what I heard in Pao-an and found confirmed by the course of events, the "West Army" was unprepared logistically for the extraordinarily harsh conditions of its winter campaign in northwestern Kansu. Its numerical strength diminished rapidly. In December 1934 — when it suffered its first serious defeat, and the 5th Corps, whose commander was killed, ceased to exist — it still contained 15,000 to 20,000 men.

The further the "West Army" moved along the narrow corridor between Tsinghai and the Gobi desert, the greater were its losses. Its march route led through regions settled chiefly by Muslims of Turkish extraction. Driven by the extremity of the situation, its soldiers resorted to indiscriminate seizure of food, clothing, and habitations, sometimes in gross violation of religion-based mores. The indigenous people offered increasing resistance and actively supported the local Muslim generals. Freezing temperatures and disease, hunger and exhaustion thinned the ranks of the "West Army" as effectively as the dozens of battles — seventy according to the Nationalist press — it underwent in the months between November 1936 and March 1937.

In this desperate situation the supreme command of the "West Army" faced three possibilities: retreat to Shen – Kan – Ning, breakthrough to Sinkiang, or disbandment and conversion to guerrilla warfare. The third variant was adopted when, in March 1937, the "West Army" was decisively defeated near Chiu-ch'üan and Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien was seriously wounded. A group of about 800 to 1,000 soldiers fought its way to safety in Ha-mi, Sinkiang. Most of the leading cadres, including Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien, reached the soviet area with small escort units or their bodyguards. Several thousand men were taken prisoner. Some of these eventually arrived in Shen – Kan – Ning after the outbreak of the anti-Japanese war. Altogether no more than 3,000 to 4,000 men from the "West Army" were left.

The story that Chang Kuo-t'ao bore the sole responsibility for the destruction of the "West Army" was entered into official Chinese historiography. It served Mao Tse-tung as a welcome implement to undermine what influence Chang Kuo-t'ao still possessed as a member of the ECCI and the Politburo. As early as late 1936 he branded "the course of Chang Kuo-t'ao in retreat as a crass example of fear before the enemy" in lectures he delivered at the Red Army's military academy in Pao-an on the strategic problems of revolutionary war. The destruction of the "West Army" west of the Yellow River, he continued, "revealed the total bankruptcy of this line." The official edition of Mao Tse-tung's works contains notes stating: "At this time [autumn 1936 — *O.B.*] Chang Kuo-t'ao obstinately persisted in his fight against the enemy and steadfastly furthered the course of retreat and liquidation" (Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, vol. I, Peking, 1951, pp. 197 and 240 [Chinese]). And in October 1938, that is, after Chang Kuo-t'ao's flight from Yen-an, Mao summarily condemned his line as "right opportunism, which linked Chang Kuo-t'ao's course of retreat, military deviation, and anti-Party behaviour" (Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, vol. II, p. 493 [Chinese]).



Sun Yat-sen, revolutionary democrat and spiritual father of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of 1911 - 13 and 1925 - 7.



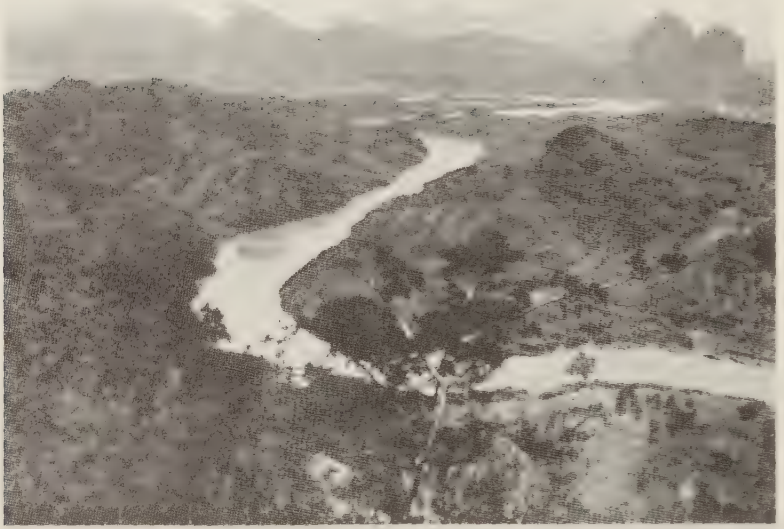
Members of the newly-formed (in 1931) leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. *L. to r.:* Po Ku, Chou En-lai, Wang Ming.



Leaders of the Chinese Red Army in Kiangsi, 1931. *L. to r.:* Fang Chih-min, Chu Te, Teng Fa, Hsiao K'e, Mao Tse-tung.



Wang Ming among the leading members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International at that organisation's VII. World Congress in 1935. *L. to r.: (front) Georgi Dimitroff, Palmiro Togliatti, Wilhelm Florin, Wang Ming; (rear) Otto Kuusinen, Klement Gottwald, Wilhelm Pieck, Dmitri Manuilski.*



The red mountains in the border zone between Kwangtung and Hunan, crossed by the Central Army Group.



One of the many hanging bridges in West Yunnan.



Typical rock caves in Shensi.



General view of Yenan.



Units of the 8th Field Army approaching the town gate of Yenan.



Students of the Kang-t'a hoeing fallow land.



The Author giving tactical instruction in the Kang-t'a.



The Author in Yen-an, 1939.

Regardless of the question of responsibility for the West Campaign, by December 1936 we faced the problem of if and how the Red Army units assembled in Shen - Kan - Ning (numbering 30,000 to 35,000 regular troops and an additional 5,000 to 6,000 men in independent units and garrisons) could support the "West Army" to free it from what was already being recognized as a critical predicament. In my opinion, this was feasible even though the encirclement of the soviet area was nearly complete. There was no threat of a genuine offensive from the south and east. The only active front was to the west, which was the concentration zone of our entire regular forces — the 1st and 2nd Armies and the survivors of the 4th. On the enemy's side the fighting centred on Hu Tsung-nan's army, because the divisions of the "Three Ma's" and of the Central Government in Kansu and Ningsia were engaged largely with the "West Army". It was a perfect opportunity to advance into Kansu. But the Red Army's supreme command abided by its decision to refrain from offensive activity. Even when Hu Tsung-nan began to move from the Ch'ing-shui River to the Huan River our troops were restricted to mobile defence and delaying tactics. Not until Huan-hsien did they execute a short swift counter-strike, destroying an enemy brigade. Hu Tsung-nan's army withdrew to its line of departure. Our troops did not pursue them. The situation was stabilized, but the "West Army" was abandoned, not relieved. Nor was the encirclement of the soviet area broken.

The question of an advance into Ningsia or Kansu was discussed within the Party and Army leadership. A plan that had been dropped earlier because of ECCI opposition was revived. This would have us form an alliance with Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng to create a base of the united anti-Japanese armed forces in the north-western provinces. I did not know what was happening behind the scenes and therefore could not know that this plan "modified" an ECCI recommendation to conform with Mao's thinking. Incidentally, this plan was soon to disappear, although not for ever. Chang Hsüeh-liang did not seem particularly interested. His own ambitions took another direction. And Mao certainly laid little value on co-operation with the "West Army", which in the meantime had moved further northwest.

Chiang Kai-shek tightened his noose about the soviet area and intensified the work of the "Blue Shirts" and military gendarmerie in the Northeast Army. Mao Tse-tung, who had obviously written off the "West Army" and regarded a defence of Shen - Kan - Ning with little enthusiasm, conceived a new strategic variant of the earlier East Campaign. If there were no political changes to ease the military situation he would have the entire regular Red Army break through towards the south near Ching-yüan between the armies of Chang Hsüeh-liang and

Hu Tsung-nan and then either start over the Wei River to march through southern Shensi into Honan or force the Yellow River again proceeding in the direction of Shansi – Hopeh. I have no idea whether he intended a war of movement behind the Nanking Government forces or an advance against the Japanese puppet troops in Hopeh and Chahar. Perhaps he was contemplating both. Then as later, the anti-Japanese war and the civil conflict were intermingled in his strategic concept. I assume that this adventurist plan was discussed fairly openly, because I heard of it. But it was never implemented because the Hsi-an affair intervened, completely transforming the political scene.

Before I go into this, let me augment the above with a few remarks concerning the political stance of Mao and his adherents in the Politburo towards the "West Army". I derive this information from documents which I did not discover until considerably later.

Rather than granting the "West Army" direct and immediate support, which on military grounds was certainly possible at first, the Politburo requested help from the ECCI. Precisely what form this assistance was to take cannot be discovered from these documents. But it can be safely assumed that a military, at the very least a political, intervention by the Soviet government was contemplated. Naturally, given the state of affairs, neither of these courses came into question. Instead, the ECCI gave the CCP's Central Committee practical advice. It suggested that pressure be applied to the "Three Ma's" through Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng to persuade them to unite their troops with the Red Army if necessary for a joint advance into Kansu. It further recommended that the Nanking government be urged to desist from civil warfare in the interests of the national united front against Japan, with particular attention to the "Three Ma's" operations against the "West Army". In view of Chiang Kai-shek's diplomatic feelers in Moscow, this was perfectly possible, especially after the Hsi-an events. These and similar proposals to rescue the "West Army" from its hopeless situation by political means were either ignored or, as mentioned above, so "modified" that, intentionally or not, they only rekindled the flames of civil war.

In the afternoon of 12 December 1936 there was unusual agitation in Pao-an. The field telephone which connected Mao's quarters with the Party, Government, and Army leadership was signalling a storm. Mao Tse-tung himself, who customarily worked at night and made a point of sleeping until midday, appeared outdoors very early. Chou En-lai came to see him, and somewhat later Lo Fu, Po Ku, and several others turned up as well. What had happened?

I was first told the big news by a bodyguard. Po Ku, who looked in on

me in passing, confirmed it. Before dawn officers of the Northeast Army had arrested Chiang Kai-shek in Hsi-an and were holding him prisoner in a hotel under the tightest security by order of Chang Hsüeh-liang. The news spread with lightning speed throughout the entire place. It produced a genuine rapture, for Chiang Kai-shek was the most hated man in the CCP and the Chinese Red Army. He had tortured and murdered tens of thousands of Chinese workers and peasants. Hundreds of thousands had died in the civil war, for which he was held responsible.

On the evening of this or the next day there was an open air meeting, in effect a public gathering of all Party members, Army men, and soviet functionaries in Pao-an and its vicinity who could be set on their feet. There were few civilians to be seen, as there were hardly any in Pao-an. I was among those present. Mao Tse-tung spoke first, then, as far as I can recall, Chu Te and Chou En-lai. The gist of the speeches was (I had them explained to me afterwards, because I did not come close to understanding everything) that the time had come to settle accounts with Chiang Kai-shek as a traitor to China's national interests and to bring him before a people's court. His liquidation would clear the way to a national unification to repulse Japanese imperialism. An immediate cessation of domestic power struggles, especially the civil war against the Red Army and the persecution of Communists must be demanded of the Nanking government. Negotiations should be undertaken on the formation of a coalition government with the inclusion of Chang Hsüeh-liang as commander-in-chief of the Northeast government and Yang Hu-ch'eng as governor of Shensi and commander of the 17th KMT Army as well as of representatives of the CCP and anti-Japanese organizations in Nationalist China. The entire nation and all its armed forces should be mobilized for the war against Japan and its accomplices in the KMT. The speeches were received with great enthusiasm. No one seemed to perceive the contradiction between the call for national unity and the demand for Chiang Kai-shek's liquidation, a step that would have certainly led to serious domestic strife and foreign complications. In the following days and weeks the Central Committee in Pao-an exhibited feverish activity. Chou En-lai and Po Ku left for Hsi-an to negotiate future policy and Chiang Kai-shek's fate. It was from Po Ku, who returned to Pao-an once or twice in order to discuss courses of action with Mao and the Politburo or Military Council (the military commission of the Central Committee) as the situation rapidly became more complicated, that I learned fragmentary details of the proceedings, which only partially conformed to official statements.

He told me for instance that Chiang Kai-shek initially rejected any negotiations and rigidly refused to speak to a representative of the CCP.

Even Chou En-lai, his former colleague in the 1925 – 7 revolution, was rebuffed. He defended his policy before Chang Hsüeh-liang as the only correct one under the given circumstances and accused Chang of provoking a crisis which jeopardized his — Chiang's — work for the unification of China and nullified his efforts to halt further Japanese encroachment on Chinese territory.

Chang Hsüeh-liang first considered delivering Chiang Kai-shek to the Communists but then rejected this idea. Otherwise his thinking was dominated by Chou En-lai, who none the less kept in the background as Mao had directed.

Po Ku indicated that there was information that the governments of the United States and Britain, as well as of the Soviet Union, disapproved of the Hsi-an operation. He said nothing more definite than this and I, like most others, had little idea of the international repercussions of Chiang Kai-shek's capture.

The involvement of the CCP leadership in the rebellion of the two KMT generals was never clarified. On an official level it was emphatically denied from the very beginning. Everyone believed that events had taken the CCP by surprise and Po Ku assured me that even he had known nothing of it beforehand. There were, however, indications that Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai at least were informed. Chiang Kai-shek came to Hsi-an in order to bring Chang Hsüeh-liang into line. Through his agents he was already more or less aware of their connection with the Red Army and was hoping to induce them to more vigorous offensive activity. For his personal safety, he had sent ahead a regiment of military police and set up quarters outside Hsi-an rather than in the city itself. Naturally, none of this escaped our representatives in Hsi-an, who were in close and constant contact with Chang Hsüeh-liang's headquarters. It was also striking that, at the precise moment of the mutiny, all Politburo members and several senior Army leaders in Shen – Kan – Ning, especially Chou En-lai, who until then was usually to be found at the front or elsewhere in the soviet area, turned up in Pao-an. And, finally, Chang Hsüeh-liang expressly stated in his talks with Chiang Kai-shek that he did not bear the sole responsibility for the "uprising". He shared it with many others.

What is certain is that Mao and the Politburo explicitly supported the rebellion from the very first. The direction followed by the meetings is in itself ample proof of this. In addition it is confirmed by others, such as Edgar Snow, who of course does not name his informant. It is expressed above all in the Central Committee's appeal to the Nanking government on 15 December, probably originated by Mao himself. This says: "The news of the events in Hsi-an and the capture of Chiang Kai-shek was a surprise to us. But these events result from three errors in Chiang Kai-shek's policies: first, the capitulation in foreign policy;

second, the campaign against the Red Army; and third, the suppression of the people." And further: 'If you wish to distance yourselves from Chiang Kai-shek and the pro-Japanese group, you must show resolve and accept Chang Hsüeh-liang's and Yang Hu-ch'eng's demands to end the current war, relieve Chiang Kai-shek of his posts and bring him before a people's court, form a united front government of representatives of the various parties and groups, armies, and social classes, abandon the practice of dictatorial power as exercised by Chiang Kai-shek and of bureaucratic administration, grant the people democratic freedoms, lift restrictions on the press, amass all military forces in the country and dispatch them to Shansi and Suiyuan for armed resistance against Japan.'

Thus, in less than three days, a common political platform had been negotiated between Po Ku and Chou En-lai on the one side and Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng on the other. As for the last point, that is, committing military forces to Shansi and Suiyuan, it was sheer demagoguery and euphoria. Chiang Kai-shek had already done this. Admittedly, it was only ostensibly for the fight against Japan and its puppets: it was actually to close the blockade and for the final concentration before the new offensive against the soviet area. After Chiang Kai-shek's capture the massing of military forces was implemented with great fervour by Nanking war minister Ho Ying-ch'in and other influential members of the pro-Japanese wing of the Kuomintang and the Central Government. Their goal was to march them into Shensi to destroy the armies of the two rebellious generals as well as the Red Army. They did not, however, believe that Chiang Kai-shek's liberation could be effected in this way; indeed, it would have been in fact neither in their interests nor in those of the Japanese. Under these circumstances the 15 December appeal, inspiring as it sounded, could serve only as propaganda because it was directed at politicians who were unreservedly reactionary and more friendly to Japan than Chiang Kai-shek himself.

In place of the loudly heralded national united front to resist Japan, a new large-scale generals' and civil war was in the offing — which could benefit only the Japanese aggressors. Mao Tse-tung and his adherents were doubtless aware of this fact. It is not insignificant that the 15 December appeal spoke of "the current war".

Military matters were broached in the first days of talks in Hsi-an. An "Extraordinary Committee of the Anti-Japanese Army" was established with Chang Hsüeh-liang at its head and Chou En-lai and Yang Hu-ch'eng among its members. It was to exercise administrative and military authority in all of Shensi with the eventual prospect of encompassing other northwestern provinces and of forming an "anti-Japanese northwestern government" independent of Nanking. It was the third

instance within a relatively short time that Mao Tse-tung promoted his idea not only of having the Soviet Union provide rear cover, but of manoeuvring it into a direct conflict with Nationalist China and Japan.

Chang Hsüeh-liang assembled his Northeast Army around Hsi-an and urged the Red Army's supreme command likewise to transfer its main forces to the south, so that the expected offensive by the Nanking troops could be repulsed in a joint action. In the course of these troop movements Chang abandoned several towns along the road to Hsi-an hitherto held by the Northeast Army, including Yen-an, Kan-ch'üan, Fu-hsien, and Lo-ch'uan. Red Army units immediately occupied them. Their main forces took up lines of departure to the northeast and northwest of Hsi-an. Some smaller units remained in Kansu and Ningsia. Others relieved Yang Hu-ch'eng's troops in the north, occupied the city of Ting-pien on the Great Wall, and penetrated to the vicinity of Yü-lin.

In this fashion the CCP and Chinese Red Army extended its control over an additional one million people and several tens of thousands of square kilometres without the firing of a single shot. This increase in their power was considerable, but was taken entirely at the expense of the Red Army's allies.

These military measures crassly contradicted the appeal to the Nanking government. The demand to throw all armed forces in the nation to the north had continued: "When that happens, the 200,000 men of our Red Army will join with your troops to draw up a national revolutionary front in the relentless struggle to liberate our nation."

Let it be noted in passing that the figure 200,000 approached accuracy only if Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng's armies were included.

The Red Army in Shen - Kan - Ning, directly subordinate to the supreme command in Pao-an at this time, numbered little more than 40,000 men in both regular and irregular units. The "West Army", which, completely severed, had to operate independently, still had 15,000 to 20,000 men. In the former soviet bases, particularly in Kiangsi and in the regions traversed in the Long March, there were guerrilla detachments of varying strengths, which, according to probably inflated official estimates, totalled another 40,000. However, they were widely dispersed and because there was no communication with them they lacked any central co-ordinating direction. There were, therefore, in all of China about 90,000 to 100,000 Communist troops, of whom half were in the south and west of the country. The supreme command actually controlled only the 40,000 men in Shen - Kan - Ning. This figure tallied quite closely with the one officially registered in 1937, when the Red Army was reorganized as the 8th Route Army.

In the midst of this intensified military activity on both sides after the capture of Chiang Kai-shek, the policy of the "patriotic generals" (as Ho Lung — certainly not without the approval of Mao Tse-tung — described Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng in a public statement), which was encouraged, perhaps even inspired, by the Central Committee in Shensi, quickly entered an impasse. Appeals and declarations were radioed daily from Pao-an and Hsi-an to the rest of the nation. There was no response. Although they too had been persecuted and imprisoned by Chiang Kai-shek, the members of the anti-Japanese movement in Nationalist China refused to join forces with the rebels in Hsi-an. They correctly saw that as a threat to the desired united front. In this they were supported by the broad popular masses of China, who were inspired by the military success of Suiyuan, and pushed for war against Japan. Even the Chinese warlords, who traditionally defended their provincial autonomy against central authority, set themselves apart from Chang Hsüeh-liang and Yang Hu-ch'eng. The "national revolutionary" group in Shensi, and thereby the CCP, found itself in an isolated position and one can safely assume that Communists in KMT China, or at least a good part of them, regarded the policy of their party's leadership with non-comprehension and concern.

Literally overnight there occurred a sudden turn-about which, as I confidentially learned, was impelled by a radio message from the ECCI in Moscow. It was even rumoured that Stalin had personally intervened and sent Mao Tse-tung an ultimatum. Chou En-lai and Po Ku were recalled from Hsi-an. The Politburo hastily convened. After a good deal of heated discussion it was decided to drop the demand that Chiang Kai-shek be tried before a people's court and instead simply to negotiate with him on a general *démarche* towards democratic conditions and to effect his release.

I do not know the precise circumstances surrounding this decision. Edgar Snow writes, again without naming his informant, that Mao Tse-tung stamped his feet with rage at the radio message and that Chou En-lai mentioned to a confidant that this was "the most difficult decision of our lives". Whether this is true or not is not crucial. What cannot be doubted is that Mao Tse-tung endeavoured to force his sectarian, adventurist policy on the ECCI and continued to defend it after the radio message had been received. Po Ku and Lo Fu at least accepted the ECCI line immediately. Mao did not reverse his position until he realized that he could not have his way.

I emphasize this, because Mao, in a gross falsification of historical truth, later attributed the chief glory for a peaceful settlement of the Hsi-an conflict to himself. He claimed for instance on 28 December 1936, in his "Response to the Statement of Chiang Kai-shek", that "the Communist Party insisted on a peaceful settlement of the Hsi-an

incident and spared no effort to attain this goal” (Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, vol. I, Peking, 1951, p. 245 [Chinese]). This version is to be found today in the annals of official Maoist historiography. In the pamphlet *A Thirty Year History of the CCP* by Hu Cn’iao-mu (Berlin, 1954, p. 50) one finds: “The Communist Party considered it necessary under the circumstances to conclude the Hsi-an incident in a peaceful manner so as to counter the attacks of Japanese imperialism. Chiang Kai-shek was released and domestic tranquillity returned.”

Despite the publication of numerous documents which have in the meantime soundly refuted this interpretation, this historical falsehood still influences well-meaning but badly informed writers. An example of this can be seen in an article in the *Moscow New Times* (no. 13, 1969, pp. 6 – 7) which states that, after the capture of Chiang Kai-shek “the henchman of thousands of Chinese Communists was unexpectedly saved by Chou En-lai, whom Mao had sent to Hsi-an. . . . Chou persuaded the rebels to spare Chiang Kai-shek and let him go. Mao explained his part in the affair in declaring his wish to save Chiang Kai-shek from certain death so that he might join with the Communists in a common struggle against the Japanese troops who had invaded China.”

If we — and by this I mean all senior cadres of the CCP in Shen – Kan – Ning with the exception of the very highest leadership — were halfway informed of the domestic political context and consequences of the Hsi-an adventure, its international implications were concealed from us for a long time. At that time we did not yet know of the provocative allegations in the Japanese press that the Hsi-an incident had been instigated by Moscow to serve as a signal for a new Communist conspiracy throughout the Far East and that Chang Hsüeh-liang had established a new government with the Chinese Communists and concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with the Soviet Union. And naturally we could know nothing of the official denial by TASS nor of the leading article in *Pravda* on 14 December and other Soviet commentaries, not to mention the exchange of telegrams between the ECCI and the Chinese Central Committee which warned in no uncertain terms of the danger of devastating civil war in China and China’s complete enslavement by Japan and which promoted a peaceful solution to the conflict. These telegrams were not published until most recently in the book *Georgi Dimitroff: a Leader of the International Communist Movement* (Moscow, 1972).

It would be superfluous to go into the background and ramifications, national and international, of the Hsi-an incident. They have been examined in the publications of Soviet and, although in a distorted fashion, Western researchers. I would simply like to refer to K.W. Kukishkin’s contribution “The Comintern and the Anti-Japanese National United Front in China” to the book *The Comintern and the*

East (Moscow, 1969), which contains illuminating material on the development of the united front up to 1943.

After the Politburo's decision in Pao-an the negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek, in which Chou En-lai, participated, were speedily and successfully concluded. Chiang was released after his spoken promise to reorganize the KMT and Nanking government and to replace pro-Japanese elements with anti-Japanese, to release leaders of the patriotic movement and all political prisoners, to grant the people rights and liberties, to suspend the "punitive expedition" against the Communists, and incorporate the Red Army into the resistance against the Japanese aggressors, to convene a "conference for the salvation of the nation composed of representatives of all parties, social classes, and armed forces in order to work out a common programme for the struggle against the Japanese aggressors, to arrange a closer co-operation with those nations sympathizing with China's struggle against Japan, and to undertake other concrete measures for the salvation of China."

This agreement, which was not set down in writing and therefore not signed by the negotiators, was to remain secret for the time being to allow Chiang Kai-shek the time necessary to carry out the new policy. For the same reason, no definite deadlines were determined. In spite of this, we immediately heard all the details in Pao-an. Mao Tse-tung caused the agreement to be broadcast throughout China over Hsi-an radio and publicized in English with the help of, among others, Agnes Smedley. Chiang Kai-shek, whom Chang Hsueh-liang voluntarily followed as his prisoner, characterized the revelation in a statement delivered on 26 December in Lo-yang as a breach of faith. He evoked the Confucian proverb: "Let your words be righteous, your deeds resolute." Mao Tse-tung responded to this in the 28 December statement mentioned earlier. "Chiang Kai-shek bought his freedom by accepting the Hsi-an terms," he said. And he threatened, "The Chinese people will not permit Chiang Kai-shek to avoid honouring his promises; they will allow him no respite. If Chiang Kai-shek now hesitates to act on his word, the revolutionary tidal wave of the people's rage will sweep him away."

These public polemics jeopardized anew the impending united front. They demonstrate that, even after the conclusion of the Hsi-an incident, Mao continued to pursue his old sectarian policy aimed at the subversion of the KMT. And he provided the Japanese with a convenient pretext to intensify their pressure on the Nanking government. In a conversation with me Po Ku expressed no surprise at the publicizing of the secret agreement, nor at the 28 December statement. He felt that both should be regarded as tactical chess moves to force Chiang Kai-shek to implement the agreed conditions as soon as possible. He also voiced his conviction that ECCI policies, with the help of the CCP

representatives in Moscow, would ultimately prevail.

This sounded reassuring, but a certain doubt lingered. Especially when the rumour spread that Chiang Kai-shek had been released by Chang Hsüeh-liang without the knowledge of Chou En-lai and that when Chou tried to overtake them while they were supposedly on their way to the airport, he arrived only to see the plane with the two of them on board already in the air.

At the turn of the new year the Central Committee, the Revolutionary Government and all other central institutions, including the Military Academy and some garrison troops, resettled in Yen-an. For the next decade this was to be the "Red capital of China". In contrast to our march from Wa-yao-pao to Pao-an, which proceeded under cover of darkness and in the constant expectation of ambush, the move to Yen-an took place during the day with virtually no precautions and in high spirits. There were no more air raids. Chiang Kai-shek had fulfilled at least one of the conditions of his release, namely the cessation of offensive operations by the Nanking government troops against Shensi.

Yen-an was situated on a plane marking the juncture of three river valleys deeply embedded in loess hills. It was as different from Pao-an as day is from night. Within the fortified wall, which extended over a chain of hills far above the city on the north side, were hundreds of really decent-looking houses and farms. This was also true of the immediate vicinity. Many of them, the largest and most beautiful in fact, stood empty. Their inhabitants — big landowners, KMT officials, usurers, and merchants — had preferred to make a timely escape with their families. This provided a simple solution to the problem of quarters. I was assigned a small house with a neat front garden together with Dr Hatem, who by this time had acquired the name Ma Hai-te. He remained my dwelling companion until my departure for Moscow over two and a half years later.

There were still a good 3,000 inhabitants in the city. Farmers and small vendors sold meat, eggs, vegetables, and other edibles in the open-air market. The small shops and restaurants, even some very respectable establishments, remained open to business. In short, Yen-an reflected nothing less than peace and normalcy. We watched what to us was the unaccustomed civilian activity — as uninvolved spectators, for we had very little money. Now as before housing, clothing, and food supplies were handled by the appropriate departments of the local soviet government or rear-lines staff. This was not to change in any way over the following years.

On a political level Po Ku's optimism seemed well founded. The Provisional Revolutionary or Central Soviet Government continued to

exist in name. But a northwest office, over which Po Ku presided, was created to assume in time the functions of the former Central Soviet Government on a local level. In February 1937 the Central Committee chose the Third Plenary Congress of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT as the occasion to introduce formally a programme of civil order and co-operation. It essentially corresponded to the Hsi-an agreement, but until this time we had known only the other side's obligations. The Central Committee offered "Four Guarantees": the cessation of all armed struggle against the Nanking government; the modification of the Central Soviet Government into the government of the special administrative area Shen - Kan - Ning of the Chinese Republic; the integration of the Red Army into the Nationalist armed forces as the National-Revolutionary Army and its subordination to the Nanking government's Military Council; renunciation of the property confiscated from big landowners and usurers and implementation of an anti-Japanese national united front. The earlier demand for an immediate declaration of war was replaced with the slogan "Drive the Japanese from China, resolutely prepare for war."

On this foundation negotiations continued between the CCP and the KMT over the next few months. In Nanking they were conducted at the highest level between Chiang Kai-shek and Chou En-lai. A KMT delegation arrived in Yen-an for the same purpose in April 1937. The Politburo gave all indications that it was rechannelling its policy towards the creation of a national united front and a sincere reconciliation with the KMT and Chiang Kai-shek. With this, the Marxist-internationalist wing of the Party leadership made its influence felt. This group enjoyed a double support. It was backed by the mood of the people of China, especially in the area controlled by the KMT, which was calling ever more loudly for an end to civil strife and a commencement of war against the Japanese aggressors. This disposition was not limited to the popular masses. It increasingly took hold among the ruling classes, as evidenced by the reaction to the Hsi-an incident. Also, the stalwart position of the ECCI and the Chinese Communist delegation in Moscow exerted its own positive influence. These were the realities with which Mao Tse-tung had to contend. Only the future would reveal whether his apparent change of policy was sincere or the outcome of tactical considerations.

The new political policy suffered setbacks within both the CCP and KMT. Chiang Kai-shek had not emerged the glorious victor of the Hsi-an conflict as might have been surmised from the outside. Wang Ching-wei, Ho Ying-ch'in, and other reactionary and pro-Japanese elements in the KMT leadership in Nanking and the northern provinces did all in their power to obstruct, and, if possible, to prevent the alliance with the Communists. Under their pressure the Third Plenary Congress of the

Central Executive Committee of the KMT passed a resolution bearing the striking title "On the Total Eradication of the Red Peril" and offered in response to the Central Committee's "Four Guarantees" the following minimum demands: disbandment of the Chinese Red Army and all other armed Communist units; dissolution of the Chinese Soviet Government and its subordinate bodies; recognition of the three principles of Sun Yat-sen; cessation of Communist propaganda; and renunciation of the class struggle. Chiang Kai-shek tried to hedge by simultaneously promising freedoms and the release of political prisoners.

At first there were no true political improvements in KMT China. The implementation of the Hsi-an agreement was dragged out, most of the political prisoners remained in prison, there were no changes in the Nanking government, and few perceptible democratic reforms apart from a certain toleration of anti-Japanese forces, in so far as they were not still incarcerated, and the opening of communications with Yen-an, which had already existed before on a semi-covert basis. Even this modest "liberalization" alarmed the Japanese militarists. They attacked Chiang Kai-shek more openly and sharply than ever and threw additional troops into northern China.

The only authentic transformation came in the military sphere. Combat operations against the Red Army in Shen – Kan – Ning came to a standstill at the outset of 1937 and the central KMT troops were for the most part withdrawn and transferred to the north and east, thereby permitting the interpretation that they were to fight the Japanese aggressors and their Chinese puppets. I do not know if civil peace prevailed in the former soviet bases and guerrilla regions of southern and central China, but I infer as much for want of information to the contrary.

The one exception was Kansu, where battles between the "Three Ma's" and the West Army raged unabated to the bitter end, with no one exerting the slightest effort to intervene.

The final ruin of the West Army was most propitious for Mao Tse-tung. He immediately used it to eliminate Chang Kuo-t'ao as his arch-opponent and only rival in the Party leadership. This had been virtually impossible up to now. So long as the West Army was beaten but not completely destroyed, Chang Kuo-t'ao still had a formidable military force at his disposal. This was all the more true in that the cadres on the east bank of the Yellow River and that part of the 4th Army absorbed by the 1st Army remained loyal to him. Most of these cadres had been relieved in the meantime by commanders and political workers of the 1st Army and sent to the Military Academy or Party school for re-education, but Chang Kuo-t'ao's influence remained unbroken. The personal esteem accorded him as a founding member of the Comintern's Executive Committee and the Politburo of the CCP and as deputy

chairman of the Chinese Soviet Government lent him further weight, despite his rare public appearances. It was said that he had no desire to work actively and in the circumstances he had little opportunity to do so.

Now Mao considered the time ripe to settle accounts with him. Meetings were convened in military units, institutions, and cadre schools, particularly in the Military Academy and Party school. I was present at at least one of these meetings, either in the rear lines headquarters or at the Military Academy. It opened with the slogan "Expunge the errors of Chang Kuo-t'ao." In the Party press, there was a "Report on Chang Kuo-t'ao's false, rightist opportunist line". He was specifically charged with having lost faith in the revolution, pursuing a military strategy of desertion, and leading a factional struggle in Party and Army, practising a personal dictatorship, supplementing the training of the cadres with unjustifiably harsh punitive measures (familiar words!), and with having resorted to militaristic methods in regard to the popular masses.

With this as a prelude, an enlarged conference of the Politburo was held which included Government members and Army leaders. Because I was not invited, I can only repeat what I heard later. Chang Kuo-t'ao was told that his political, organizational and military leadership of the soviet areas — Hupeh — Honan — Anhwei and Szechwan — Shensi — had been fraught with errors. He had made serious mistakes in the establishment of soviets and in the suppression of counter-revolutionaries and mass movements. The main incriminations were related to the split of Party and Army and the wilful formation of a parallel Central Committee and Military Council. Finally, he was saddled with the sole responsibility for the West Army's annihilation.

Chang Kuo-t'ao rebuffed these accusations as slander, not only against himself but against the former soviet areas and 4th Army and refused to submit a self-critical statement.

During or shortly after this conference there was a remarkable occurrence which has remained a puzzle to me up to the present day. Cadres of the 4th Army — division, regiment, and battalion commanders — were supposedly plotting to flee Yen-an with 4th Army troops to wage an independent guerrilla war outside Mao Tse-tung's domain and perhaps even to create a new soviet base. If the enterprise had succeeded, Chang Kuo-t'ao was to have assumed leadership. The plan was exposed before it could be carried out and about fifty "conspirators" were secretly arrested. According to rumour, several who resisted were killed. The Central Committee set up an investigatory commission, a court-martial of sorts, under the chairmanship of the well-respected director of the Party school, Tung Pi-wu. None the less, nothing was revealed that would have incriminated Chang Kuo-t'ao or the

arrested cadres of the 4th Army. To the best of my knowledge the latter were released several months later and entrusted with military commands.

I recount this story with great reservations, for I witnessed none of it myself. Although I was in the Military Academy on almost a daily basis, because I gave tactical instruction there, and spoke with many 4th Army cadres including the division commander who was then commissioner of the Academy and made no secret of his sympathy for Chang Kuo-t'ao, I noticed nothing which might indicate a rebellion. This suggests that it was an act provoked to facilitate the removal of Chang Kuo-t'ao, with whom there were no real political differences at this time. The attempt failed in part, as Po Ku told me, because the ECCI intervened with the directive that all past discord be buried, because it was now imperative to maintain the solidarity of the Party and to pursue the policy of a national united front.

I do not know what happened behind the scenes. At any rate, Chang Kuo-t'ao was soon persuaded by Chu Te, Lo Fu, Chou En-lai, and others to submit a self-critical statement which appeared in the Yen-an Party newspaper. He admitted to "right opportunist errors" and "militaristic tendencies" which evolved into "crimes against the central Party leadership" without naming concrete incidents. The statement was so short and so vague that it clearly bore the stamp of unwilling compliance. Still, it introduced an apparent quieting of emotions, even if the tinder for conflict continued to smoulder below the surface.

The Party leadership returned its full attention to current tasks. This was urgently necessary because the new policy initially encountered misunderstanding and opposition both among the troops and the populace. The peasants feared that land redistribution and other agrarian reforms might be revoked. Many Red Army men saw the "Four Guarantees" as capitulation before the KMT and a shameful conclusion to ten years of sacrifice-fraught civil war.

The Central Committee therefore decided to undertake a large-scale educational campaign to explain to both the cadres and the masses the concessions made in the "Four Guarantees" of the declaration to the Third Plenary Conference of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT. Written guidelines issued as early as February and a later appeal to all Party members served as a basis for this. In both documents the "Four Guarantees" were described as an essential and permissible compromise to ensure domestic peace, achieve democratic liberties, and to launch the war against the Japanese aggressors in the shortest possible time. This compromise did not mean, however, a restraint on the CCP, they went on to say. On the contrary, it opened the way to Communist activity throughout the nation. And its leadership over the revolutionary armed forces remained unchallenged. The replacement of the

soviet system with a new democratic régime, the suspension of land seizure, the relaxation of economic policy, the redesignation of the Red Army and its subordination to the Nanking Central Government changed nothing. The goal was and remained the increase of the political influence and organizational strength of the CCP a thousand-fold in order to secure its leading role in the national revolutionary movement. Victory in the national revolution could not otherwise be achieved.

This argument was persuasive and produced the desired effect. I too was convinced of its correctness. The only thing that seemed odd was that there was no word about the resolution of the Third Plenary Congress of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT. It was silently acknowledged and dismissed. The "dissolution" of the Chinese Soviet Government and Red Army became "redesignation", "cessation" of Communist propaganda became its "intensification". The three principles of Sun Yat-sen were explained as a unified programme to be applied in the order nationalism, democracy, and socialism. No one renounced the class struggle, but it was reduced to struggle against pro-Japanese elements.

I had the vague impression that both Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung were playing at a game in which neither believed. They knew that war against Japan was inevitable and that it could be fought only with a united front, but each wanted to do this at the other's expense. The following years were to substantiate this impression.

In May 1937 a "Party Conference of the Chinese Soviet Area" convened, which was then renamed the "National Conference". According to my estimates about 150 delegates were present. The terms "National" and "delegates" must be qualified. They were mainly representatives of the central Party organs, local Party organizations, and the Red Army in Shen - Kan - Ning.

In addition, there were political workers who directed Communist cells in the Northeast Army as well as leading Party officials from northern China, particularly Peking. Representatives from central or southern China, most important the former soviet bases and guerrilla districts, were not to be found. Some members of the Politburo, such as Hsiang Ying, Wang Ming, and Ch'en Yün, were in Moscow. Nor is the term "delegates" correct for the conference participants because — with the possible exception of those from the KMT region — they were not elected from below, but appointed from above.

I was also invited and sat on one of the foremost benches so that I could better watch the proceedings. I understood at most only half of what was said. Although I had a translator, he was, unfortunately,

barely competent. Furthermore, my teaching responsibilities at the Military Academy continued during the conference, so I was absent for half days. Still, I was able to obtain a general picture of what turned out to be quite a turbulent event. Between sessions I conversed with acquaintances. Apart from Po Ku and others these included Yang Shang-K'un and former political commissar P'eng Te-huai, whom I now saw for the first time after a long interval. It was also to be the last, for soon after the conference he assumed directorship of Party activity in northern China. Fluent in Russian and as friendly as ever, he proved to be very helpful.

Lo Fu chaired the conference. The presiding committee was occupied by the most senior Army leaders and all Politburo members present. This included Chang Kuo-t'ao but not Chou En-lai, who was probably in Nanking at this time, and Wang Chia-hsiang, who was hardly to be seen at all due to serious illness.

The main speech was delivered by Mao Tse-tung under the title "Tasks in the Present Stage of the Anti-Japanese National United Front". By and large his statements conformed to the new political line, which had "stabilized" since the Hsi-an incident. The version contained under the newer title "Tasks of the CCP in the Period of Anti-Japanese War" in the *Selected Works* (vol. I, Peking, 1951, pp. 249–67 [Chinese]) is essentially correct and I therefore do not need to discuss it in greater detail.

Some portions of course deviate from the original talk significantly. This is hardly remarkable considering the fact that the 1951 rendition was the product of two revisions. In the first part, in which he set forth "the present stage of development of the external and internal contradictions of China", Mao again stated that the primary contradiction in the world was the conflict between Japan and China. There was, on the other hand, no mention of joining the "international peace front". Criticism of the KMT was much harsher. This marked the transition from the first to the second phase of the struggle for the united front, that is, from the watchword "nationalism" to the demand for "democracy and freedom" — naturally applied to KMT China — as the "central link in the revolutionary task of the present". He dealt with this theme further in the second part of his talk, in which he extolled the alliance of the "revolutionary classes". These included "workers, peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie", and still other "patriotic elements" such as big landowners. Class distinctions were blurred, as before, to facilitate the entry of such allies into the CCP. On the other hand in the last part of his speech Mao stressed the leading role of the CCP and of the National Revolutionary, that is the Red, Army. He warned of a revival of Ch'en Tu-hsiu's "rear guard policy", which caused the defeat of the revolution in 1925–7. He said that

the only alternatives were bourgeois democracy and socialism and that one must never lose sight of the ultimate goal. The total autonomy and unhampered initiative of the CCP and National Revolutionary Army within the framework of the united front were unnegotiable conditions.

The contradictions in Mao Tse-tung's statements prompted numerous questions and several objections from conference participants. These especially concerned the class line, the overemphasis on the role of the Army, and the practical implementation of the united front policy and its consequences. Nevertheless, the speech was unanimously approved after Mao Tse-tung responded in his concluding remarks. These also appear in volume I of the *Selected Works* (pp. 269 - 79) — devoid, however, of all polemics.

The second important speech, "On the CCP in the Last Decade", was given by Lo Fu. In this he defended the general policy of the CCP since the Sixth Party Congress in 1928 with the exception of the Li Li-san line, which, as he said, was quickly suppressed with the aid of the Comintern. He elucidated the struggles and sacrifices in the area controlled by the KMT in virtually the same words as those employed by Po Ku at Tsunyi. As the greatest achievements of the Communist Party in this period he named the mobilization of the Chinese people for the national liberation struggle; the raising of the consciousness and fighting strength of the workers, peasants, and petty bourgeoisie; the creation of the soviet régime and the Red Army; the new national anti-Japanese united front policy; and the development of the CCP into a party closely allied to the struggling masses. Of course he also justified the underground activity of the Communists and outlined a blueprint of both open and covert work in the "united front areas".

Lo Fu's talk was followed by a substantially favourable discussion and was approved by the conference delegates. Both speeches were published in revised form as pamphlets afterwards.

Chang Kuo-t'ao made few appearances at the conference. His seat in the presidium was empty most of the time. It seems that he nevertheless unintentionally caused a small uproar. At the insistence of the Politburo or presiding committee, he delivered a short self-critical statement, but added tersely that it would be false to judge the past in terms of the present united front, which, incidentally, he wholeheartedly supported. Then he left the hall. Several delegates attacked him vehemently. Several cadres who were present took him into their protection. Lo Fu brought the dispute to an end by reminding them that the Party leadership had already reproved Chang Kuo-t'ao and that that should be sufficient since his record contained merit as well as misdeeds.

The conference closed with the chairman's declaration that war with Japan was imminent and that all Communists should take up their

combat positions immediately. The Army's main forces should intensify their reorganization and prepare advantageous positions for mobile warfare. Comrades returning to the cities should go underground but at the same time re-establish Party and mass organizations to support the war by any and all means.

In summary, the "National Party Conference" of May 1937 can be regarded as a great step forward. The political line of the ECCI and of the Chinese Marxist-Leninists had prevailed. The CCP took its place in the national anti-Japanese united front, and, in a qualified sense, in the world front against war and fascism. This moment of triumph obscured the fact that Mao Tse-tung, who formally sanctioned the new policy at the conference, further strengthened his position in the Party leadership, which would enable him to realize a very different political and military strategy, as he had done several times in the past.

Lo Fu's prediction at the Party Conference proved correct. Two months later the great Sino-Japanese War began. In the short period of time remaining before this, measures were undertaken to comply with the conference resolutions and the negotiations in Nanking. Their implementation extended from 1937 into 1939.

The soviet area became a "special administrative district", later a "border area", with autonomous rights and was recognized as such by Chiang Kai-shek. Nominally, it formed a "part of the united republic" as Mao Tse-tung had announced. In reality, it remained an enclave separate from the rest of China, in a sense a state within a state. In the first few months even KMT officials, not to mention KMT officers, were forbidden entrance. Civilian offices such as the postal service, fire brigade, and registry remained under the exclusive control of the area government. Only the circulation of our own currency was discontinued.

Actually the term "separate enclave" is not entirely accurate. The borders were as vague and undetermined as before. When Chiang Kai-shek transferred the main forces of the Northeast Army and units of the 17th Army of Yang Hu-ch'eng (who had sought refuge abroad) further east there were vast regions stripped of troops, a sort of military vacuum. Units of the National Revolutionary Army, as the Red Army was now called, occupied these regions and established new local governing bodies displacing the KMT officials. This inevitably led to tensions which by the summer of 1939 had developed into armed clashes. In this fashion the Shen - Kan - Ning administrative area underwent considerable expansion. Towards the end of 1939 it supposedly encompassed all or much of twenty-three districts in an area marked on the east by the Yellow River, in the north by the Great Wall, in the west by a mountain

range running between Ningsia and Kansu, and in the south by the Ching River.

But let us return to early summer 1937. The Provincial Revolutionary or Central Soviet Government was dissolved and replaced by an area government under Chairman Lin Po-ch'ü, whom I never knew personally. Chang Kuo-t'ao served as deputy chairman until his flight in 1938. The area government envisaged an elected council, a parliament of sorts, as the first stage of a "new democratic system". But by the time of my departure it had not met and probably never did. "Councils" were set up on the city and district level in winter 1937 - 8, but I do not know if and how they functioned. In fact I noticed nothing at all that suggested elections, but this might be because my time was spent almost exclusively with leading comrades whom I already knew well and with colleagues in the Military Academy and rear-lines staff. I was acquainted with virtually none of the local Party and Army cadres who governed the special administrative area under the directorship of the Central Committee. I did see them on various occasions, but never knew who was who. Not even Kao Kang, first secretary of the area Party committee, made an impression on my conscious mind.

At the Party Conference Mao Tse-tung had also announced a plan of "economic reconstruction" to improve the living standard of the people and a "cultural programme" to eliminate illiteracy.

In two respects there actually was an eventual improvement in the economy. But it had little to do with planned "reconstruction". Merchants and other well-to-do individuals — even including some big landlords — who had fled from Yen-an, returned once it became known that they had nothing to fear. Trade with the outside world — that is, with Nationalist China — revived, if only for a short while and within the limitations imposed by a shortage of money and barter goods. The greater part of the "imports" was comprised of textiles, petroleum, salt, and other necessities, as well as of luxury items such as tea, sugar, rice wine, and tobacco.

On the other hand as the number of Party, Army, and administrative cadres increased, so did logistical difficulties. Then, when thousands upon thousands of refugees streamed into Shen - Kan - Ning from KMT areas occupied or threatened by the Japanese, there was no alternative but "self-reliance", complete autarky in the food-supply system which was developed and expanded over the next years. This was possible because the peasants had cultivated primarily the fruitful valleys, leaving the higher loess slopes and plains untilled. All organizations, military units, and schools now began to work this fallow ground with hoe and shovel. It was back-breaking work, as my own body can testify. But over time it was successful. The chronic lack of meat was remedied, although only temporarily and on a small-scale, by

rounding up livestock from the Ordos steppes and the border regions of Inner Mongolia with or without the consent of the tribal princes in these areas.

Smuggled Japanese wares were confiscated at first, and, in at least one case which I witnessed, publicly burned. This practice was soon abandoned, however, and these goods were either distributed by central institutions or their traffic altogether ignored.

To be fair I must point out that great efforts were expended in education. At least 90 per cent of the local people and a substantial number of the military, mostly those recruited in northwestern China, were illiterate. Simple, illustrated primers covering a few hundred characters typical of the vocabulary of peasants and soldiers served as educational materials for both children and adults in newly founded schools. I used these books myself to learn reading and writing. Beyond this, experiments begun by KMT linguists to create a romanized script corresponding to the colloquial speech (*pai hua*) were pursued and applied to the literature of Lu Hsün and other modern authors. This failed because of the peculiar structure and phonetics of the Chinese language and the babel of dialects contending with one another in Shen – Kan – Ning, where Chinese from all provinces were to be found.

The output of written material was doubled. The Yenán daily newspaper, the hectographically produced periodicals, and hand-written wall newspapers with the old, partially simplified characters were employed. There were also picture stories similar in format to modern comic strips.

Much was accomplished in the cultural sphere. Propaganda troupes, singing and dancing groups, and amateur theatricals grew out of Red Army and local popular traditions. The classical forms of the plays, songs, and ballads were usually retained, but they increasingly received new political content. In this connection I especially remember a New Year's feast with dragon games and parades in which several towns competed against one another. At the same time a realistic style was emerging in Yenán as in, for example, the production of Lu Hsün's dramatic tale *The True Story of Ah Q*. And there was an itinerant cinema. It showed films under the open sky from the Shanghai and other Chinese studios and, later, from the Soviet Union. It was extraordinarily popular.

I need hardly indicate that these generally successful efforts in the field of education and culture, as positive an effect as they had, were not an end in themselves. They became an important, if not the most important, means of mass persuasion. And I do not believe myself in the wrong when I venture the claim that incipient forms of the "mass line", which replaced democratic centralism as the predominant work and leadership style, were in evidence at this time.

I consider the role of self-reliance — a response to the objective requirements of the specific conditions of Shen - Kan - Ning in 1937 — equally significant in the development of the contemporary economic policy of the ruling body around Mao Tse-tung. Both had as little to do with the "United Democratic Republic" heralded at the Party Conference as most of the other practical measures. Shaped by the experience of civil and anti-Japanese war, they represent the foundation for the Maoist political strategy and tactics.

Mao Tse-tung's most insistent demand at the Party Conference was for the immediate reorganization of the Red Army as a National Revolutionary Army that would serve as the model for a national — that is, Nationalist — military force. In accordance with the agreement with the Nanking government, the troops in Shen - Kan - Ning were reclassified into three divisions. The organizational form of the units was modified when they were integrated into the Nationalist armed forces in that each division was now composed of two brigades and every brigade of two to four regiments, depending on the number of soldiers. In addition, an artillery regiment was attached to General Headquarters, equipped with mortars and light field guns. Each division or brigade received an independent regiment for special assignments, which was usually designated as intelligence, reconnaissance, or security troops, or, if necessary, as a reserve for Headquarters when a hasty intervention was imperative. From the regimental level upwards, the old triality (Party, Government, Army) persisted. A nominal concession had to be made with respect to political commissars. Chiang Kai-shek was adamant on its elimination. But that changed nothing. The political commissars became directors of the political and special departments, which increased considerably in personnel as their duties — political work within the Red Army, among the people, and among enemy or, rather, "allied" troops, and struggle against enemy agents, traitors, and saboteurs — became more specialized.

The effective strengths of the three divisions in early summer 1937 ranged between 8,000 and 10,000 men. The total strength of the National Revolutionary Army could not have exceeded 30,000 to 35,000 men including rear-line services staffs with their escort troops. By the end of the year, after the Army was committed to battle in Shensi, the number rose to about 40,000 according to official estimates in Yen-an. Most of the increase was due to the influx of KMT soldiers who joined its ranks after the first defeats on the regular front.

The garrison troops of the special administrative area were completely independent of the Army. They were commanded by the same Hsiao Ching-kuang who in autumn 1933 surrendered the city of Li-ch'uan in the northeast of the Central Soviet Area without a fight and who at the

end of 1934 on the Long March had fled from his command post (see pp. 33 and 91 above). In 1937 their effective strength was set at 4,000 to 5,000 men in five regiments. In the years 1938 and 1939, when the first violent incidents with KMT troops occurred, they were reinforced by three regiments removed from the front to a strength of 6,000 to 8,000. This number remained more or less constant up to my departure from Yen-an.

The garrison troops were supported by local militia detachments of the "Peace Corps". This was not centrally co-ordinated but was comprised of volunteers in cities and districts, who stood ready to back up the garrison troops in case of emergency. They supposedly operated several times in outlying border regions. I myself never saw them in action.

The Central Committee turned its special attention to cadre training. This took place less in the Party school, although it too was expanded, than in the Military Academy. A certain division of labour evolved. Only Party members were accepted into the Party school. After the conclusion of the short (three to six months') course, most of them went to Nationalist China in order to work there covertly or overtly as the situation demanded. The Military Academy, on the other hand, trained commanders and political workers on all levels — junior, middle, and senior cadres — for the National Revolutionary Army. Later it increasingly prepared them for guerrilla units and local administration behind the Japanese lines. Accordingly, the students, whose schooling also lasted up to half a year, were divided into contingents or, in a sense, faculties. When accommodation in Yen-an proved inadequate for the steadily growing number of students, part of the academy moved to the buildings of a former monastery outside the city. It achieved considerable fame over the years as the anti-Japanese college, or K'ang-ta.

Its enormous importance to Mao Tse-tung was evident in that he devoted great attention to it, as he had in Pao-an, and gave lectures there on military, political, and even philosophical matters. The most significant of these were later revised and compiled in his *Selected Works*, for example, "Strategic Problems of Revolutionary War", "On Practice", and others. Lin Piao was nominal director of the K'ang-ta; it was actually run by Lo Jui-ch'ing. The political course Mao was planning to pursue in the anti-Japanese war was already apparent in the cadre training. In brief, he wanted to maximize the influence and organization of the CCP throughout the nation, to secure control over the entire national liberation movement, and, towards these ends, to create bases for both Party and Army in the areas dominated by the KMT and the Japanese troops. This corresponded to the old slogan "Victory for none!", neither for the Japanese nor the KMT. The logical consequences of this stance were not recognized, so it was approved by all.

One exception to this might have been Chang Kuo-t'ao, but I cannot say this with certainty. Not until after the formal outbreak of war did discussion of this subject revive, beginning with the "Enlarged Conference of the Politburo of the Central Committee" in Lo-ch'uan at the end of August 1937.

5

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE ANTI-JAPANESE WAR, 1937 – 1939

ON 7 July 1937 the Japanese militarists provoked the incident of Lu-kou-ch'iao, also known as the Marco Polo Bridge, not far from Peking. Under a ludicrous pretext they stormed the bridge, and, after heavy preparatory bombardment, the small town Wan-p'ing, which lay beyond it. Despite a stubborn defence, the Chinese troops stationed there were massacred.

By the next day the news had reached Yen-an. It was announced in Party meetings that the Central Committee had immediately appealed to Chiang Kai-shek that he incorporate the entire Chinese people and all armed forces of the nation into the national united front and mobilize them for steadfast resistance against the Japanese invaders. The KMT and CCP would now have to stand shoulder to shoulder to rebuff the new Japanese attack and to drive the Japanese aggressors from Chinese soil. A manifesto was published the same day and circulated outside Shen – Kan – Ning, calling for immediate national revolutionary war. A few days later I heard that the senior commanders of the National Revolutionary Army drafted a telegram to Chiang Kai-shek in which they demanded that he order them forthwith to the front so that they might fight the Japanese aggressors.

For lack of precise information I cannot say to what extent these steps were implemented. I merely learned that, after the Lu-kou-ch'iao incident, Japanese and Chinese faced each other along the Peking – T'ien-chin railway and the Yangtze River. But the first great clash was followed only by smaller skirmishes. The Japanese were apparently seeking to gain time to bring up reinforcements. It was said that they negotiated with General Sung Che-yüan, commander of the 29th KMT Army and governor of Hopeh and Chahar, in whose sphere of jurisdiction the combat zone lay. He did not seem disinclined to a peaceful settlement, even though the "demilitarization" of the two provinces, that is, the withdrawal of all Chinese troops from Chahar and Hopeh, would have given the Japanese invaders a free hand in northern China. It was also said in Yen-an that even now Chiang Kai-shek hesitated to commit Central Government forces to combat. He could not bring himself to break with the pro-Japanese and anti-Communist elements in the KMT leadership and the Central Government, and, at the urging of these groups, strove for a compromise solution. He was hoping for British and American political mediation.

It was not until later that Chinese acquaintances, who had listened in on radio broadcasts, and Agnes Smedley, who came to Yen-an in late summer or autumn, informed me that on 7 July, that is, directly after the Lu-kou-ch'iao incident and before the publication of the Central Committee's manifesto, Chiang Kai-shek spoke out for a war to save the nation and promised General Sung Che-yüan reinforcements from Central Government forces.

In Shen – Kan – Ning I noticed little evidence in July and August of any hasty deployment against the Japanese. Certainly, a new East Campaign undertaken alone, without the sanction of Chiang Kai-shek and Yen Hsi-shan, governor of Shansi, was unthinkable. This is probably why military activity was limited at this time — sensibly, as I see it — to completing the Army's reorganization, assigning commanders and political workers from the K'ang-ta to troop units, and transferring larger units to the Yellow River region in north eastern Shensi.

Towards the end of July Mao Tse-tung delivered a speech which provided a certain clarification of what was for me and surely most of the others a very unclear situation. Using various concurring sources, I set the date at 23 July 1937. On this day the K'ang-ta, Party school, and central institutions marched as a body to the K'ang-ta parade ground at the Yen-an city gate. Everyone who so desired could join them. In short, it was a public meeting. Mao Tse-tung spoke of "the political line, practical measures, and the future of the struggle against the Japanese offensive" (see *Selected Works*, vol. II, pp. 299 – 307 [Chinese]). By way of introduction, he read the 8 July manifesto. Then he quoted not Chiang Kai-shek's 7 July statement, but passages from an interview Chiang had given on 17 July in his Lu-shan summer residence, in which he rejected any compromise with Japanese demands. These citations, in my opinion, are correctly reproduced in the *Selected Works*. But then Mao sharply criticized Sung Che-yüan for having capitulated before the Japanese and having agreed to apologize to the Japanese for the hostilities and to withdraw the 29th Army from the area east of the Lu-kou-ch'iao and Yung-ting River. Moreover he would suppress the popular anti-Japanese movement in northern China and create a joint Sino-Japanese front against Communism. These incriminations proved groundless. A few days later, in fact, the Japanese advanced in a broad front on Peking and T'ien-chin. A bitter battle developed at the gate of Peking in which the 29th Army lost thousands in dead and tens of thousands in wounded, imprisoned, and deserters. The Japanese captured both cities. One may judge the military aspects as one chooses, but there is not a shadow of doubt that General Sung not only did not capitulate before the Japanese, but that he also led the 29th Army into the fight. Two facts are worth noting here. First, news of the battle for Peking and T'ien-chin was only very belatedly released in Yen-an, and, second,

General Sung is no longer identified by name in Mao's *Selected Works*. Instead, there are merely general references to the possibility of betrayal, faltering, and concessions. Nevertheless, it was precisely on the basis of Sung Che-yüan's presumed capitulation and Chiang Kai-shek's delaying tactic that Mao Tse-tung constructed his thesis of one political line and two systems of practical implementation. The slogans he proclaimed in his speech were certainly correct and approved by the ECCI: general mobilization of all armed forces in the nation and of the entire people, domestic reform, and a realignment of foreign policy to meet the needs of an anti-Japanese war, that is, alliance with the Soviet Union and winning the sympathies of the United States, France, and Britain. These and other slogans culminated in the categorical conclusion that only a general popular war and an active, offensive war leadership could ultimately ensure victory.

Mao did not discuss the military strategy to be followed. However, he stressed the great strategic importance of the guerrilla war, although he conceded that such actions would have to be co-ordinated with the operations of the regular front troops. I mention this because Mao announced publicly, for the first time I believe, that the strategy and tactics of revolutionary war in China as he had presented them in his lectures at the K'ang-ta also applied to the anti-Japanese war. No fault could have been found in this had he not soon thereafter dismissed the condition of co-operation with the front troops and pursued a two-front war against the Japanese occupiers and KMT officials in which the emphasis increasingly shifted towards the latter. His reproaches directed against Chiang Kai-shek for drawing no practical conclusion from a correct political line, for continuing to tolerate traitors in his government, and for wanting to wage a limited defensive war without the participation of the popular masses indicate that he had contemplated this course from the very beginning.

The partial correctness of these accusations could not be denied. The question was whether these charges, although couched in warnings and admonitions, did not in fact represent a further step towards discrediting the KMT in the midst of the anti-Japanese war, thereby jeopardizing the attainment of hegemony in the national revolutionary movement. By no means did the speech strengthen the united front. It could only deepen the mutual latent distrust of the potential allies, especially since the second manifesto of the Central Committee was circulated throughout China.

After the Japanese had captured Peking, T'ien-chin, and Chang-chia-k'ou, they quickly pushed south along the railway to Nanking and Wuhan. The brunt of their offensive centred on their right wing, which was

assigned to take T'ai-yüan. Simultaneously in the north an army group attacked the Ta-t'ung railway junction to move on to Pao-t'ou, the capital of Suiyuan, the former terminal of the east – west railway. Their strategic blueprint was clear. The Japanese militarists wanted to occupy the northern Chinese provinces Hopeh, Shansi, and Shantung and to establish a new puppet state similar to that in Manchuria. If they succeeded in this and if, in addition to Chahar and Suiyuan, they took a firm hold on the heavily populated and developed eastern portion of Inner Mongolia, they would then control an extensive and strategically advantageous hinterland for their long-range plan of conquest. Their goal was more or less openly proclaimed as the creation of a "Pan-Asian Commonwealth". All of this could be discerned or at least deduced without difficulty from the news we received in Yen-an. What remained open for the time being was which "Pan-Asian" variant the Japanese would later endeavour to realize: the north or the south. The northern alternative, that is, the conquest of the Soviet Far East and Mongolian People's Republic with the subsequent separation of all eastern Siberia from the Soviet Union, could not be disregarded, especially if one took into account the Kwantung Army, those élite troops, expertly trained and armed, who waited in Manchuria, increasing in strength from year to year and who, as I know from personal experience, were already making all conceivable preparations for an offensive war in the early 1930s. The southern plan, the conquest of all of China with the possible exception of the distant western provinces and a later advance into Indo-China and the Pacific area, appeared no less likely in 1937. In August the Japanese made ready strong sea, land, and air forces for the capture of Shanghai. Their war fleet blockaded all Chinese ports far to the south. This of course would also grant them the possibility of moving from the coast up the Yangtze into the heart of China, to Nanking and Wu-han, in order to prevent or at least to minimize arms assistance to Chiang Kai-shek by sea route from the United States, France, and Britain.

It may appear out of place to delve into two variants of long-range Japanese strategic goals in connection with their imminent and readily foreseeable operations. None the less, they were in fact discussed in Nanking and Yen-an, as Po Ku, who took part in such talks, frequently mentioned. Chiang Kai-shek supposedly concluded that it was possible and necessary that the domestic front be consolidated quickly and under his leadership. Besides that, he had to drum up foreign aid from all sides, from the Soviet Union as well as from the Western imperialist powers. Mao Tse-tung on the other hand, who persisted in his belief that victory over Japan could be achieved only through a general popular war under Communist (read Mao's) leadership was oriented politically towards a cleavage in the KMT and militarily towards a guerrilla war in northern China. He did not exclude the possibility of a

conflict between the Soviet Union and Japan, but did consider the further weakening that would be suffered by KMT China should the Japanese choose the southern strategic direction.

During the second half of August the National Military Council of the Nanking Central Government incorporated the Red Army in Shen – Kan – Ning into the Nationalist Army as the 8th Route Army, which, observing the tradition of the 1926 – 7 North Campaign, was renamed the ‘‘National Revolutionary Armed Forces’’ of China. It was assigned to the 2nd combat zone of north Shansi, which was under the supreme command of the provincial governor Yen Hsi-shan. Chu Te was designated its commander with P’eng Te-huai as his deputy. The latter assumed *de facto* command at the front, because Chu Te spent most of his time in Yen-an. Lin Piao commanded the 115th Division (chiefly comprised of the former 1st Front Army and the 15th Corps), Ho Lung the 120th Division (the former 2nd Front Army), and Liu Poch’eng the 129th Division (the remainder of the 4th Front Army plus several previously independent units). At the beginning of September the 8th Route Army broke camp for Shansi, but not until Chu and P’eng had proclaimed publicly their total loyalty to Chiang Kai-shek. Only the garrison troops under Hsiao Ching-kuang remained behind in Shen – Kan – Ning.

Somewhat later, about mid-October, the Nanking National Military Council sanctioned the formation of the New 4th Army of Communist troops south of the Yangtze, primarily from the former Central Soviet Area, under the command of Yeh T’ing and Hsiang Ying. It was assigned to the third combat zone in eastern China, but, as far as I know, did not fight Japanese troops until the latter began their southward advance from Shanghai and Nanking early in 1938. Although Hsiang Ying, unlike Mao Tse-tung, faithfully adhered to the agreement with the KMT, there was from the very start friction between the new 4th Army and the local KMT troops commanded by reactionary generals. As early as the end of 1937 this led to the disarming of one of its units. And, finally, it culminated in the 1941 incident in which Hsiang Ying was killed and Yeh T’ing imprisoned (see page 87 above).

In the latter half of August the Soviet government concluded a non-aggression pact with the Nanking Central Government and granted it military and technical assistance. This was an invaluable contribution to the struggle against war and fascism in this part of the world. It gave moral support to the spirit of resistance of all Chinese patriots, provided political and military security for the Chinese hinterland along its borders with the Soviet Union and Mongolian People’s Republic, and ensured a direct logistical lifeline for the Chinese armed forces. Bases were set up in Urumchi, Ha-mi, and Lan-chou. Aircraft delivered

matériel to Shensi and Szechwan, which was then conveyed from there to the front. Later on, the old caravan route across Sinkiang was built up to allow transport by trucks. Hundreds of pilots and thousands of drivers were supposedly employed in this operation. There was even talk of Soviet combat fliers and military advisers. The indirect military aid to the Chinese armed forces provided by the restraining presence of the Soviet Far Eastern Army on the Japanese Kwantung Army cannot be underestimated.

The Sino-Soviet pact was publicly acclaimed in Yen-an, but its private reception was restrained. This was understandable. On the one hand it corresponded to Mao Tse-tung's plan to involve the Soviet Union in the Sino-Japanese war. A Soviet – Japanese war would have been extremely advantageous to the 8th Route Army in northern China. There were portents of a conflict and they soon increased. As is well known, in 1938 the Japanese militarists provoked hostilities with the Far Eastern Army on the Hassan Sea south of Vladivostok. Units of the Kwantung Army stormed the Saosernaya Heights on the Korean border. But they were sent home with bloody heads after ten days' fighting. A second attempt to test the combat strength of the Mongolian and Soviet troops was instigated in 1939 on the Khalkhin-Gol. After months of heavy fighting, the Japanese had lost tens of thousands in dead and wounded. These defeats certainly contributed to the Japanese choice of the maritime southern direction in the Second World War. That must have been a heavy disappointment for Mao Tse-tung, although he had reckoned with this possibility. He was to be granted ample compensation in 1945, however, in the offensive of the Soviet and Mongolian troops in Manchukuo and the capitulation of the Kwantung Army.

On the other hand, Mao noted with discomfort that the Soviet Union's military and technical aid primarily benefited the Nanking government, while at first, urgently needed medical supplies and political literature — newspapers, magazines and classic works by Marxist authors, especially Lenin and, naturally, Stalin — were overwhelmingly earmarked for Yen-an. Incidentally, it was in this manner that I occasionally obtained copies of *Pravda*. It was not to Mao's liking at all that the combat potential of the Central Government was thus strengthened. He deliberately overlooked the fact that the KMT armies, for all their misfortune in battle, carried the main burden of the war for the first year and a half and that assistance for them signified assistance for the entire Chinese people. Bitter sarcasm was voiced in Yen-an, such as "weapons to the bourgeoisie, books to the proletariat" or "the more advisers, the greater the defeats". The latter referred to the military advisers of fascist Germany who at this time were still in Nanking. I no longer know from whom I heard these, but they bear the mark of Mao's sayings. As for the Western imperialist powers, whose old spheres of

influence were seriously endangered by the rapid Japanese advance into China, France did nothing whereas Britain and the United States initially promised support but then failed to act. Britain did build a motor road from Burma to Yunnan, but closed it temporarily in 1939 in order to reach a *modus vivendi* with Japan. For its own purposes the United States tried to bring the KMT and CCP together, but when that did not succeed and the 8th Army won more ground, it performed a political about-face, the aim of which was to mediate the KMT's reconciliation with Japan under the banner of anti-communism.

I pass on this information in partial anticipation of later events in order to convey a general picture of how international aid to China was depicted to me and most other people in Yen-an. News on this subject was less than meagre, although, thanks to my reading of *Pravda* and other periodicals, Soviet and Western, I was somewhat better informed than others. By and large, I could not help but form the impression that the questionable behaviour of the Western imperialist powers was neutralized and the active support of the Soviet Union minimized. Occasional official professions of faith in the Soviet Union and its policies changed nothing in this. Only the solidarity of progressive people throughout the world was more or less properly acknowledged.

From the beginning Mao Tse-tung also made a point of disparaging or ignoring the combat activity of the Nationalist armies. I can testify to this with a small episode in which I was involved. In September or October 1937 the editor of the Yen-an military-political magazine approached me with the suggestion that I write a regular monthly review of military events based on the situational reports of the rear-line staff. I consented and after a few days delivered the first article, in which I gave an objective rundown of the state of affairs. About a week later he returned, excused himself, and explained with evident embarrassment that the article could not be printed. The entire series had been forbidden. I asked, "By whom?" He hesitated and then responded, "By Chairman Mao".

In this case, I did not consider the prohibition to be directed against me personally, for I had already been assigned by the Central Committee to write a long paper on the Spanish civil war and intervention war, anonymously of course, which was readily published and even praised. In winter 1937-8, on orders from the staff, I wrote several articles on tactics in uneven combat against modern weapons, that is, tanks, aircraft, and artillery, all of which appeared under the name of the translators. Only once was Li Teh inadvertently named as author. This earned a few words of recognition for me from readers, but censure for the editor. Still, it is not necessary to list these restrictions to win a clear idea of Mao's attitude towards the anti-Japanese united front and the National Revolutionary armed forces of China. The enlarged

Politburo Conference in late August, which included representatives of the 8th Route Army in Lo-ch'uan, shed much light on this matter. I was not invited to the conference and can therefore only recount what I learned from pertinent documents, personal conversations, Party meetings, and in a Yen-an assembly of Party activists that was convened towards the end of the year, probably in November.

Before the conference, by recommendation of the ECCI, the Central Committee published a ten-point programme for national salvation which, augmented by an introductory analysis of the situation and a conclusion, was passed at Lo-ch'uan as a resolution. Interestingly, it is to be found in Mao Tse-tung's *Selected Works* (vol. II, pp. 309 – 18 [Chinese]), under the title "On Mobilizing all Forces for the Attainment of Victory in the War against the Japanese Imperialists", even though it was composed in Moscow by Wang Ming and approved by the secretariat of the ECCI. As far as I can judge, the programme, which placed the highest priority on the struggle against Japan and encouraged the construction of the national united front on the basis of trustful co-operation between the CCP and KMT, found general agreement within Party circles.

The discussions themselves, however, centred on the KMT's responsibility for recent concessions towards the Japanese, for strangling the anti-Japanese popular movement, and waging a primarily conventional or one-sidedly governmental war. Once more the KMT was called upon to change completely and fundamentally its entire policy, to purge its government's structure, to accept and support the anti-Japanese mass movement, and to transform the governmental war into a popular war. This was not new in itself and was most persuasive.

The incriminations and demands took on deeper meaning in conjunction with an internal directive of the Central Committee. I never did see this myself, but Po Ku, who claimed to be its co-author, informed me of its general content. According to him, all Communists throughout China were to work actively within the framework of the united front, to infiltrate existing organizations or form new ones, and to try to secure leading positions in the Nationalist bureaucracy and armed forces, eventually to permeate them. The political struggle against the KMT and other political parties and groups, especially the Trotskyites, would not be relinquished. All opportunities for legal activity were to be exploited, but at the same time, covert activity everywhere was to be intensified.

Po Ku, who unreservedly advocated Mao's line, also told me that there were heated disagreements at the Lo-ch'uan conference on the national united front and the tasks of the CCP. These had mostly broken out between Mao Tse-tung and Chang Kuo-t'ao. Mao claimed, as he had done before, that Chiang Kai-shek was waging merely a half-hearted,

one-sided, partial war, which could end only in defeat. Sooner or later the Kuomintang would capitulate before Japan or, if a part of its armed forces continued to fight, would be devastatingly defeated. Then the CCP would assume the leading role in the nation. The CCP should therefore make no more concessions to the Kuomintang, but should act independently of it. In fact, it should act in opposition to it as soon as conditions allowed. Ultimately, it was a question of who would prevail: the KMT or the CCP, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat.

Chang Kuo-t'ao maintained for his part that, even if it were possible to isolate the right wing of the KMT, its core would remain unaffected. The war had increased esteem for it among the people and total war could very well develop. Every independent undertaking by the CCP was a challenge to the KMT and a blow to the united front. This would be a catastrophe for the Chinese people. A settlement agreeable to all must be worked out in face of the superior enemy.

Lo Fu finally suggested a compromise which stated that, while the Nationalists' conduct of the war did engender the risk of defeat, as long as millions could be mobilized for the anti-Japanese united front, the final victory was certain. This formula was accepted, but naturally it did not eliminate conflicting opinions on the united front.

There were also debates on the organization and strategy of the 8th Route Army. Chu Te, supported by Chou En-lai and others, advocated the formal integration of the 8th Route Army into the National Revolutionary armed forces, but emphasized that it should not be absorbed by it. He also favoured its subordination in operational matters to the Nanking Military Council or to the commander-in-chief of the second combat zone. In view of the poor logistical situation this offered the advantage that the 8th Route Army would receive pay and arms from the Nanking government. Mao continued to insist on the total organizational and operational autonomy of the 8th Route Army, because the Kuomintang was on the verge of political and military bankruptcy.

The problem of military strategy and tactics had not yet been settled. Chu Te and P'eng Te-huai recommended sincere co-operation with the Nationalist armed forces in compliance with the directives of the Nanking government. Both rejected any sort of positional tactics for the 8th Route Army, speaking out rather for, as P'eng put it, a combination of mobile and guerrilla warfare. Mao Tse-tung argued that the 8th Route Army, numerically and logistically inferior to the Nationalist troops, had no prospect of major military successes on the front and no possibilities of inciting a general popular war. He suggested that its operations be not limited to the assigned second combat zone, that is, Shansi, but instead to penetrate the Japanese lines so as to wage independently a purely guerrilla war, to establish a base in the mountains, to mobilize the people, and to expand it (the 8th Route Army)

through the constant creation of new units. This too ended in compromise. It was decided that the 8th Route Army would fight shoulder to shoulder with the KMT troops, but that, once the Front could no longer be held and the Japanese broke through, it would scatter its units throughout northern China and operate according to Mao Tse-tung's plan.

With this, as Po Ku expressly pointed out to me, Mao Tse-tung had his way at the Lo-ch'uan conference despite all the palliative compromise solutions. Moreover, decades later, Chu Te and P'eng Te-huai were disgustingly reviled by Mao's Red Guards for their stand at this conference. Chou En-lai, who always managed to turn his sails to the correct wind, was of course spared such aspersions.

In this and later conversations with me, Po Ku managed to portray Mao's strategy and tactics at Lo-ch'uan as being in agreement with the Nanking directives. For want of contradictory evidence, I therefore believed until recently that the northern Chinese region under Japanese occupation had been assigned to the 8th Route Army as its legitimate combat zone so that it could harass the enemy's lines of communication, hamper his resupplying operations, and hence weaken his main forces at the front. And I expressed the suspicion that Chiang Kai-shek entertained the ulterior motive of permitting the 8th Route Army to be destroyed in this fighting (cf. the Socialist weekly for international politics and economics *Horizont*, number 36/1969). The examination of relevant materials has now persuaded me that the first part of this conclusion was false. It was not Chiang Kai-shek, but Mao Tse-tung who determined the 8th Route Army's operational area to be the Japanese rear lines, in violation of the Nanking Military Council's directives. They substantiate that the national united front, which the reactionary pro-Japanese wing of the KMT leadership attempted to rupture, was also, if not immediately, undermined by our side through the Lo-ch'uan resolutions and their subsequent implementation. They also prove correct the concluding evaluation of Mao's intentions, which he himself reiterated and elaborated in his speeches, writings, and especially his K'ang-ta lectures during the late 1930s.

In the above mentioned issue of *Horizont* I went on to write: "Proceeding from the premise that the anti-Japanese war would be a lengthy, protracted conflict, Mao Tse-tung persisted in his belief that guerrilla war should be the primary form of struggle. The supporting strength of this struggle would be the peasantry; its bulwark the village. Therefore all efforts should be directed towards the establishment of extensive anti-Japanese bases deep within the hinterland of the enemy, who could control only the larger towns and major transport routes. It was the task of the Army, which, rather than being concentrated on decisive combat engagements, had to be decentralized and divided into

smaller detachments, to occupy all regions not controlled by the Japanese, to administer them and defend them against Japanese incursions as well as against 'measures by the KMT reactionaries'. Here already was evidence of the adventuristic tendency to adopt a wait-and-see attitude and to transform the anti-Japanese bases into anti-Kuomintang bases. The defeats of the Nationalists on the main fronts were to be exploited to expand its [the CCP's] own domain and army. Mao was reckoning that, as the Japanese hinterland grew, the deeper the Japanese would penetrate Inner China later on and the heavier the defeats the KMT armies would suffer."

I need not retract one word of this. Note that the issue at hand is not the preservation of the autonomy and independent initiative of the CCP within the national united front. Everyone was agreed on this, with the possible exception of Chang Kuo-t'ao. Rather it was a question of the double-pronged political and military strategy, which increasingly was directed more against the KMT than against the Japanese aggressors. The plan behind this was openly discussed by leading cadres at the K'ang-ta: first, lull the KMT to sleep through sham compromises; then force it out of northern China; and, when the Party and Army were sufficiently strong, divest it of leadership in the anti-Japanese struggle and political power throughout China!

Mao Tse-tung's underlying policy was deliberately concealed from the outside world. This was not difficult to do when at Lo-ch'uan, again excluding Chang Kuo-t'ao, objections were only timidly raised and were obscured by compromise formulae. In a statement published in Yen-an at the end of September the Central Committee reiterated its recognition of the three principles of Sun Yat-sen and emphatically committed itself to desist from all armed struggle against the Nationalist government, to refrain from the confiscation of big landowners' estates, to abandon the soviet system, to subordinate the 8th Route Army to the National Military Council of the Central Government, and to advocate democratic reforms for the whole of China. This statement was issued at the request of Chiang Kai-shek. As the immediate future was to show, nothing changed in Mao Tse-tung's line.

Military operations against the Japanese troops proceeded as could be expected. The KMT armies did not hold back the attackers. At the end of September T'ai-yüan fell, in mid-October Shanghai, mid-December Nanking. According to unconfirmed reports, by the end of 1937 the KMT forces had lost 300,000 men as dead, wounded, and imprisoned. The last category was disproportionately small, testifying to the heroism of the KMT soldiers despite the weakness of the armies and their generals. The Central Government moved to Wu-han.

In the northwest corner of Shansi the 8th Route Army set up a fairly large bridgehead on the east bank of the Yellow River that became its first fixed base outside Shen – Kan – Ning. Contrary to Mao's directives, it initially fought together with the KMT army and thereafter their combat operations were co-ordinated. To the left of the already retreating Shansi troops, they advanced between Ta-t'ung and T'ai-yüan towards eastern Shansi, then arrived at the flank and rear of the Japanese, who were hastily marching in a southerly direction. Where the loess highland dropped into the northern Chinese plain a road ran to T'ai-yüan over a pass 1,800m high, the P'ing-hsing-kuan. Here, the vanguard of the 8th Route Army, formed from the 115th Division and under the command of Lin Piao, ambushed a Japanese brigade. The latter could not deploy effectively in the narrow gorge through which the road led. The Communist forces annihilated it and took all its military equipment. Three hundred Japanese soldiers and officers were reportedly left dead or wounded on the battlefield. Lin Piao later said that he took the decision to attack the Japanese column of his own initiative, after he received no response to his inquiry from Yen-an, which was practically tantamount to rejection.

This victory was followed by a series of smaller successes, for example, near Hsin-k'ou and Ning-wu, both in northern Shansi, as well as near Kuang-ling, Lai-yüan, and other district cities in the uncertain Shansi – Hopeh border region. In one of these clashes, probably as early as that on the P'ing-hsing-kuan Pass, Lin Piao was wounded. At the end of 1937 or beginning of 1938 he returned to Yen-an and then continued on to the Soviet Union for medical treatment. It was said that he took a general staff course there also.

The 8th Route Army's achievements raised its prestige with the KMT troops. It also won the trust of the civilian population in the combat zones, which greatly facilitated the establishment of bases and the enlistment of recruits. The victory of P'ing-hsing-kuan, in particular, was effusively celebrated in Yen-an. Songs and ballads were composed and performed by entertainment groups and even by the traditional wandering minstrels. Meetings were held in the Party organizations and lectures read in the cadre schools, especially in the K'ang-ta. P'ing-hsing-kuan became a battle cry, a textbook model for the correctness of Mao's teachings on guerrilla warfare and, simultaneously, a condemnation of the "passive, defensive strategy" of Chiang Kai-shek. Hence, Mao Tse-tung distorted a victory, which, I repeat, was achieved against his wishes, into confirmation of his position and acclamation of himself.

It is nowhere mentioned that Nationalist troops participated in at least some of the successful battles in northern China. Indeed, living in Yen-an, one could not avoid the impression that the Nationalist forces were in a constant state of panicky retreat and total disintegration.

There may have been some basis for this. Chiang Kai-shek did not employ his élite divisions in northern China until later and then very sparingly. The provincial armies were not capable of storming the enemy, who, in arms and training, if not in numbers, was vastly superior. And then there was the incompetence and corruption of some generals, petty jealousies and disputes over jurisdiction, and long-standing mismanagement, which forced some soldiers whose rations were not forthcoming into raids against the people. All this contributed to a certain demoralization of the troops and irresolute, vacillating behaviour on the part of their leaders, some of whom over the course of the war were to practise open treason, go over to the Japanese, and establish Chinese-manned puppet armies primarily directed against the 8th Route Army.

Such acts of betrayal were, however, infrequent in the early months of the war. There were no significant incidents until 1938. Still, from the very beginning Mao Tse-tung unremittingly drew attention to them, for they provided him with a reason for the 8th Route Army's shift from co-operation to confrontation with the local KMT officials who remained behind the Japanese lines.

I saw the primary determinant for the enormous losses of men, matériel, and territory on the Chinese side in the inordinate discrepancy between the striking forces of the Chinese and Japanese armies. The latter had made good use of the element of surprise, the offensive position, incomparably better technical equipment and training, and higher combat morale. With what, apart from the negative factors already enumerated, could the National Revolutionary Army of China confront this. Disunity in the political leadership of the KMT, improvisation in the organizational structure and operational direction of the armed forces, and defensive positional warfare — these naturally took their toll on the troops, who were poorly prepared for a large-scale war against a foreign enemy superior in every regard. The Japanese therefore broke through even at those points where Chiang Kai-shek's élite divisions were employed, created a logistically favourable hinterland for themselves with the coastal provinces of Kiangsu and Chekiang, and opened up the way to central China.

Considering the general military situation in late 1937 I could not subscribe to the prevailing opinion in Yen-an, which attributed decisive strategic meaning to the 8th Route Army's victory at P'ing-hsing-kuan or its other successes behind Japanese lines. To be sure it heightened the readiness of the people to resist and strengthened the fighting spirit of the troops. The aura of Japanese invincibility was marred. It is equally certain that the Japanese were forced to patrol their occupied cities and to guard all roads and railways. Even so, in this early stage of the war, there were not so many such battles that the advance was substantially

impeded. The delay amounted to, at best, a few weeks, which did contribute to resistance along the regular front. The 8th Route Army did not significantly affect the overall state of affairs until 1938 – 9, when it established large bases north of the Yellow River.

The 8th Route Army's combat activity did have unforeseen consequences in Yen-an. In September the Japanese air force began to mount raids against the city. First there came reconnaissance flights, then bombers. Almost daily, several times a day, even in daylight, they unloaded demolition bombs, leaving behind levelled buildings and crater-scarred streets. After a year virtually the entire city of Yen-an lay in rubble. Only parts of the city wall remained intact.

Over the course of time, everyone moved to outlying farms or into caves, either older peasant dwellings or the newer tunnels that were dug out by the hundreds, later the thousands, around the city. One tunnel, several hundred metres in length, was cut through a hill situated between two valleys and transformed by the inhabitants into a sort of shopping area. Merchants called their wares; street vendors their food.

Mao Tse-tung moved into a very spacious cliff dwelling on the edge of the city which distinguished itself from other caves in that it was hewn squarely. It was centrally situated at the foot of a hill and was absolutely bombproof. He still used his former home, which remained undamaged for quite a while, for meetings and discussions.

Ma Hai-te and I were assigned to a farm dwelling five minutes from the city gate, half way up a hillside. It was comprised of five caves facing a large flat courtyard. The peasant family had to content itself with two of these caves; in the third were bodyguards and horse attendants: I made a home in the fourth and Ma in the fifth. It was fairly comfortable in the caves. They provided protection from cold in winter, heat in summer, and, to a great degree, from Japanese bombs as well. Only the sand fleas and rats gave us any trouble, but we eventually got used to them.

The Japanese continued their air attacks for years, even after the destruction of the city. They sought out targets in the near and distant vicinity of Yen-an where they believed important political and military objectives were located. They slipped over the hills, hugging the ground, or dropped their bombs in several waves of nose dives. Although not one aircraft was shot down during my presence in Yen-an, despite the installation of several anti-aircraft guns, they had little effect. Life went on. In fact, it intensified day to day.

In 1937 and 1938 two Soviet aircraft landed on the airstrip that Chang Hsüeh-liang's Northeast Army had laid out a few kilometres from Yen-an. In addition to publications and medical supplies, they brought

a serviceable radio transmitter and anti-aircraft machine guns. More important, the first aircraft, at the end of October 1 believe, conveyed the Politburo and Central Committee members who until then had been in Moscow, among them Wang Ming (Ch'en Shao-yü), Ch'en Yün (Liao Ch'eng-yün), and K'ang Sheng (Chao Yung). More than one hundred functionaries appeared at the airport to welcome them. I turned up as well, but was lost in the crowd. As far as I remember, no speeches were made.

There was a small reception in the evening, to which I was not invited. I heard that Mao Tse-tung praised Wang Ming's part in the 1 August statement, which had laid the foundation for the united front. Lo Fu especially emphasized Wang Ming's achievement in overcoming the Li Li-san line in 1931 and his years of good work in the ECCI. He also applauded Ch'en Yün for the exemplary execution of his mission after the Tsunyi conference and K'ang Sheng for his contribution to safeguarding the Central Party's offices in Shanghai. The last item was sheer sarcasm because the security department established and directed by K'ang Sheng, as everyone in the Central Committee knew, had proved a total failure — culminating in the arrest of numerous leading functionaries and the confiscation of the radio station, severing the Central Committee's contact with the outside world.

Wang Ming as spokesman for the ECCI (he belonged to its Presidium and Secretariat) reportedly extolled Mao Tse-tung's leadership of the Party, but at the same time indicated the necessity of a stronger collective leadership including Chang Kuo-t'ao and recommended a sincere and close co-operation with the KMT and Chiang Kai-shek in a national resistance struggle, while of course maintaining the autonomy and independent initiative of the CCP.

It is difficult to say, especially as one who was not there, whether these speeches, assuming they were recounted to me accurately, were only a customary exchange of pleasantries or had deeper significance. The all-round compliments suggest the former. Wang Ming's words could also be regarded as early, cautious criticism of Mao's intra-Party and national policies. At first, everything would have seemed to be in good order to the uninitiated observer. There was no way to know what was happening behind the scenes. I assumed that the ECCI line, represented by Wang Ming, would now be implemented without deviation or evasion and that the Marxist-internationalists, whom Mao Tse-tung had successfully outmanoeuvred, divided, and more or less won for himself, would once again coalesce and tip the balance in their favour.

I was therefore all the more surprised by Mao's speech given at a meeting of Party activists in mid-November, that is, directly after the fall of Shanghai. It was one of the last gatherings of this sort in which I took part. I no longer sat on a front bench. Beside me was Ma Hai-te,

both of us without interpreters. I had had one shortly before who translated for me in the K'ang-ta, but he had been killed by a bomb at the beginning of the month. We were on our way back to my cave dwelling from the K'ang-ta, which was lodged on the far side of Yen-an. As we climbed up a slope a bomber squadron roared out from behind the mountains. We raced off to the safety of the caves. As I ran, breathless, through the courtyard to the entrance, the bombs were already exploding behind me. Afterwards, we saw a gaping crater fifty metres down the slope. The bomb must have hit my interpreter directly and torn him into a thousand pieces, because we found not the slightest trace of him.

It was thus the case that I followed Mao's speech with even more difficulty than usual and the comments of Ma Hai-te, whose Chinese was somewhat better than mine at this time, were of little help. I had the details related to me after the conference. It was my general impression that Mao's old line which he had defended on previous occasions, especially at the Politburo conference in Lo-ch'uan, was reasserted, or, more precisely, maintained. Mao even intensified his attacks against the KMT, extending them to Communists who had supposedly fallen under the influence of the KMT, fallen into "intellectual imprisonment" because they took seriously co-operation with the KMT. After I read the version of Mao's speech that was published in the *Selected Works* (vol. II, pp. 347 – 60 [Chinese]), under the title "The Situation after the Fall of T'ai-yüan and Shanghai and Tasks in the Anti-Japanese War", I found this impression confirmed.

By way of introduction Mao Tse-tung did acknowledge that the "partial resistance" or "one-sided war" as conducted by the KMT was a national, and, by its nature, a revolutionary war. He then contradicted his own assertion, or at least qualified it, by saying that the loss of T'ai-yüan and Shanghai demonstrated that this form of war leadership had already led to serious crises and could not fail to end in defeat. Only a government and army willing and able to conduct a truly popular national-revolutionary war in accordance with the ten point programme could know victory. At the same time Mao reaffirmed his claim to sole leadership in the anti-Japanese war. China, he repeated, was in a transitional stage which would decide who would absorb whom: the CCP the KMT or the KMT the CCP. In this connection he painted the terrifying vision of total or partial capitulation, presenting this in a double political sense. On the one hand he spoke of "rightist capitulators" within the Party who abandoned the class standpoint by subordinating everything to the united front and allowing themselves to be assimilated into the bourgeoisie. He warned of the "rebirth of militaristic tendencies" in the 8th Route Army, under which he understood the co-operation of Communist troop commanders with KMT military units and civilian officials counter to the instructions of the Party leadership.

On the other hand he called for struggle against the “acute threat” of national capitulation, the perpetrators of which were primarily the reactionary *compradores* and big landowners, but also defeatist and faltering elements of the national bourgeoisie and certain upper levels of the petty bourgeoisie. The workers, peasants, and the masses of the urban petty bourgeoisie must be mobilized against them within the framework of the united front.

Mao Tse-tung was defining the targets of two domestic campaigns: what he labelled the right and central forces of the KMT and the Marxist wing of the CCP. He defamed the latter as a potential source and objective accomplice of national capitulation, which must be combated in all spheres of Party and Army activity. I felt it to be demagogic dissimulation that Mao Tse-tung spoke out in the same breath for an expansion and strengthening of the national united front and protested against any action that might serve to weaken or even rupture the united front between the KMT and CCP. I asked Po Ku at the next opportunity how these contradictions were to be resolved. He referred me, to the 12 August Central Committee directive which he had written and a later Central Committee resolution, of which I had not heard, on the involvement of the CCP in KMT bodies of power.

He believed that virtually nothing had changed in the KMT leadership, Central Government, or their subordinate organs since the beginning of the anti-Japanese war. Reactionaries, anti-Communist and pro-Japanese elements had not been eradicated, democratic reforms had not been realized, the broad masses had not been mobilized. The CCP could not share in the exercise of power on the upper and middle levels and should therefore keep its distance from those in authority. Otherwise it would be compromised in the sight of the masses and would unwillingly further the design of the KMT to restrict and eliminate Communist influence. The situation on the lower, that is, local and regional, levels was quite different. Here, the pressure of the masses was so strong that genuine co-operation with the KMT in keeping with local conditions seemed feasible for a limited period of time. This of course applied only to those areas controlled by the KMT or the Japanese close to the front. No one dreamed of sharing power in the Communist bases, that is, in the former soviet areas and deep in the Japanese hinterland where they were firmly in control. But in the former soviet regions the Party infiltrated the bureaucracy, organizations, and even the ranks of the KMT itself through the medium of the united front to realize its ten-point programme for the anti-Japanese war and to prepare the foundation for a future seizure of power. In order to screen their activity below, they established above, in the Central Government and in a number of important cities in central and southern China, official Party offices and communication posts for the 8th Route and New 4th Armies

whose legal existence was not to be endangered by premature or imprudent actions.

It was in this light that Mao Tse-tung's remarks were to be understood. Outward appearances were to be maintained until the war had altered the inner balance of power. Even a coalition government could not be precluded.

Po Ku's comments were most illuminating. They confirmed what I had already concluded from his speech, that Mao Tse-tung was persisting in his old line of struggle on two fronts, against Japan and against the KMT. Po Ku's mention of a coalition government struck me. I was hearing of this for the first time. It seemed to hint at a new policy, one that might appeal to Po Ku and other Marxists in the Central Committee. Was this an ECCI line advocated by Wang Ming? Was this the impetus for Mao's vigorous criticism of "rightist capitulators" within the Party, and, simultaneously, his paternalistic admonition to those whose actions disturbed the united front?

I did not have to wait long for the answer. But it was not Po Ku who supplied it to me. He merely supported what I in part already knew from other sources and in part suspected: that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the ECCI — he simply said Stalin and Dimitroff — regarded a solid and broadly based national united front as the guarantee of victory in the anti-Japanese war. The policies of the Central Committee of the CCP would have to be aligned with this. It was the task of the Marxists in the Party leadership to prevail upon Mao, without contesting his power, so that such sectarian errors as the untimely discussion of hegemony in the war and after the conquest of power in China would be avoided.

Someone in the K'ang-ta told me that Wang Ming had severely criticized Mao's speech at the Party activists' meeting. He had said that the KMT should not be disparaged for its defeats in the early stage of the war. Rather, everything possible should be done to reinforce civilian and military fighting morale. The united front should not be split into right, centre, and left forces, but should incorporate all elements with the exception of pro-Japanese traitors and Trotskyites. It was false to raise questions concerning hegemony and power at this time. Everything should be subordinated to the anti-Japanese struggle. Necessary internal and military reforms should not be extorted in ultimatums, but should be achieved through patient persuasion and our own example in the course of protracted war. We must proceed from the given conditions, that is, the existing Central Government and the National Revolutionary armed forces under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek.

This rendering is certainly inexact and incomplete, but as the Russian saying goes, I sell my wares as I bought them. By and large, however, it seems to be correct. It tallies with what Po Ku told me and what I heard

of Wang Ming's performance at the reception given in his honour. According to this, there were two different, not to say opposing, platforms in the Central Committee represented respectively by Wang Ming and Mao Tse-tung.

In December 1937 the Politburo assembled in Yen-an for a conference. Again, my information is second hand. This time, almost all the elected members and candidates of the Politburo were present, including Wang Ming, Ch'en Yün, and K'ang Sheng. Hsiang Ying came up from Kiangsi, but regrettably I did not see him. Wang Chia-hsiang was not there. He had gone to Moscow at the beginning of the year as the new CCP representative to the ECCI. As far as I know, P'eng Te-huai and Chang Hao, who had been co-opted in December 1935, were at 8th Route Army headquarters. No outsiders were permitted into the strictly guarded meeting.

What exactly happened behind closed doors remained secret. The political results on the other hand were publicized in internal Party circulars, numerous articles, and a Central Committee manifesto which appeared after the fall of Nanking. It was addressed to all patriots in the nation and called for "the strengthening of unity between the KMT and CCP and the pursuance of the resistance war to ultimate victory."

It was pronounced that, despite the unavoidable losses and defeats in the initial phase of the war, the heroic resistance under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership had displayed a unity and strength in China that had long been lacking.

The Central Committee manifesto further declared that the objectives of both parties were in general agreement and that the CCP was resolved to work more closely with the KMT, not only to achieve victory in the anti-Japanese war, but also in national reconstruction after its successful conclusion. The war, it continued, had reached a crucial turning point. The main danger was less the critical military situation than Japan's intensifying efforts "to set Chinese at odds with Chinese". Therefore enemy agents, Chinese traitors, and Trotskyites would have to be radically expunged. Then there followed an enumeration of concrete tasks: the mobilization of all forces and resources in the country, the reinforcement of the "united National Revolutionary armed forces", their deployment under a "supreme joint command" according to "joint operational plans", the establishment and expansion of a future "united national government", the conversion to a war economy, the consolidation of the hinterland, and the intensification of international propaganda and foreign political activity.

Militarily the manifesto emphasized the defence of the Yangtze River valley in order to safeguard the new capital Wu-han, and the employment of guerrilla war behind the Japanese lines as a harassing tactic until the Chinese gained the upper hand. This reflected the division of

military tasks which in practice already existed. Contrary to my original mistaken supposition, this had been initiated by Mao Tse-tung and only afterwards accepted for better or worse by Chiang Kai-shek. Other evidence of Mao's thought, for example the impending crisis and the concomitant transitional stage, also surfaced in the manifesto. But apart from this, it formed a stark contrast to his speech at the activists' meeting. Wang Ming's thesis that everything should be subordinated to the anti-Japanese war and that, therefore, all should be done for and through the national united front (which Mao branded as "rightist capitulation", at this point not yet naming names), was approved by the Politburo and its Standing Committee. Even Mao voted for it to avoid isolation.

The new policy was explained and discussed in articles which Wang Ming, Lo Fu, Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and others wrote for Party publications. Even Mao spoke out for it in interviews, although not without reservations, basing his current position on the critical military state of affairs.

The Politburo also passed a series of resolutions on future Party activity. Ch'en Yün and K'ang Sheng were elected to the Standing Committee, to which Wang Ming, Mao Tse-tung, Lo Fu, Po Ku, and Chou En-lai still belonged. Western sources add Chu Te and Chang Kuo-t'ao to this body, but I knew nothing of this.

Three Central Committee offices were accordingly set up outside Shen - Kan - Ning. Their primary task was to revive old Party organizations and to create new ones throughout the entire nation. In addition, each office had its own special assignment.

The North China Office, headed by Liu Shao-ch'i in the 8th Route Army's combat zone, was to mobilize the masses for guerrilla warfare, expand existing bases, establish new ones, carry out pressing socio-economic reforms such as the reduction of rents, and institute "democratic" governing bodies under the tutelage of the Party.

The Southeast China Office, directed by Hsiang Ying and supported by the New 4th Army, was to guide the latter and mobilize the masses in the southeastern provinces.

The Central China Office, based in Chiang Kai-shek's capital Wuhan, represented the CCP to the KMT and the Central Government. It also performed political and organizational work for Party construction not only in central China, but throughout the Nationalist domain. Because of its importance it was manned by three Politburo members — Wang Ming, Po Ku, and Chou En-lai — one or two of them usually on hand. They alternately travelled to the countryside for inspections and instruction, especially in the south, or to meetings and conferences in Yen-an. Chou En-lai was particularly mobile.

We called this office the "second Politburo". In fact, a certain division

of labour evolved between it and the Central Committee in Yen-an. While the Central Office implemented the united front line approved in December 1937 and affirmed by the ECCI, Mao Tse-tung pursued his own ends in Yen-an. As far as I can judge, he publicly advocated the new Party line, but made few appearances outside the K'ang-ta.

He devoted himself all the more vigorously in private to the realization of his old deviant line and to its promulgation at a Central Committee Plenum or prospective Party Congress. In his capacity as acknowledged Party leader and chairman of the Military Council (of the Central Committee's Military Commission), he wrote political and strategic instructions to the North China Office of the Central Committee and the 8th Route Army's field headquarters to fill the military vacuum behind the Japanese lines through decentralized occupation, political mobilization, and *de facto* assumption of power. He encountered no opposition to this in the 8th Route Army. Chu Te, the commander-in-chief, signed the directives. Many of the other commanders, above all division commanders Lin Piao, Ho Lung, and Liu Po-ch'eng, were already faithful adherents of Mao Tse-tung. Nor did I learn anything to the effect that Yang Shang-k'un or P'eng Te-huai, except for some early grumbling over Mao's "fatalistic war views", raised serious objections at this time. In the event of renewed policy disputes in the Central Committee, Mao could rely on the support of leading cadres in the 8th Route Army and in the new "anti-Japanese" bases.

He also took precautions in the Central Committee itself. His old friends, such as Tung Pi-wu, whom he shortly thereafter appointed to the Central China Office, remained loyal to him. And he was assured of the backing of Ch'en Yün and K'ang Sheng. Both occupied key positions in the Central Committee. Ch'en Yün took over the directorship of the operations department and, for a while, of the committee for the people's movement, which guided the activities of the labour, women's, and youth movements. K'ang Sheng moved to the head of the security service, which, under various names (department "for political protection", later "for social occasions"), extended its jurisdiction from Shen - Kan - Ning to the bases and communications posts of the 8th Route and New 4th Armies and to the Party offices in the KMT regions. Lo Fu, who had lost much of his previous influence, appeared to keep his distance from the new grouping. But I am not really certain about this.

I was similarly ill-informed of the attitude of Kao Kang and other top cadres in the Party leadership and in the regional government of Shen - Kan - Ning. Mao chiefly relied on his old Party companion Hsiao Ching-kuang, commander of the garrison troops. Chang Kuo-t'ao only nominally held his posts in the Politburo and as chairman

of the regional government. Evidently his political and personal differences with Mao Tse-tung were not to be resolved.

It was also difficult for me to gain an overview of the situation in the "second Politburo" and New 4th Army. Po Ku and Chou En-lai seemed to hedge between Mao and Wang, whereas Hsiang Ying steadfastly stood by the latter's policies in the Central Committee. It is now known that in late 1937 or early 1938, the Germans made a vain attempt to mediate between the Central Chinese government and the Japanese. Mao's followers used this to cast doubt on Chiang Kai-shek's resolve to pursue the anti-Japanese war. None the less, Chiang Kai-shek was able to dispel such fears, thereby strengthening again the fragile national united front and reinforcing his political position. Mao Tse-tung and his coterie as well as Po Ku and Chou En-lai were pressing for a new Politburo conference. This took place in March 1938 on the foundation of the December 1937 resolutions.

Disregarding this, Mao continued to work for a revision of these resolutions. He realized that this would involve a long process and that he would need a solid theoretical background to present his views properly. He therefore began an intensive study of the works of Lenin and Stalin, which were being continuously transcribed into Chinese by a small group of translators. The selection and precedence of the translations were determined by Po Ku in accordance with Mao's wishes. A very well-educated young man, who spoke Russian and English fluently, acted as chief translator. He was called Wu, I believe, and might have been Wu Liang-p'ing, Mao's secretary in Shen - Kan - Ning. I cannot say this with total certainty, even though he was among my closer circle of acquaintances in Yen-an.

By July and August 1937 Mao had produced two philosophical works: "On Practice" and "On Contradiction". They made their public debut as lectures at the K'ang-ta and Party school and later were incorporated into a book on dialectical materialism. I see no necessity to discuss these works, especially since I did not read them in their entirety until years later and then in the version published in the *Selected Works* (vols. I and II). More qualified persons than myself have already drawn attention to the crudeness of Mao's dialectical system.

Mao devoted most of the first half of 1938 to the theoretical distillation and generalization of his views on the strategy of revolutionary war. His application of civil war experiences to the anti-Japanese war was especially evident in his "Questions of Strategy in the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla War". His main theses were propounded in his lectures at the K'ang-ta. Nevertheless, I did not then know of his lecture series "On Protracted Warfare", which, according to the later official version (see *Selected Works*, vol. II, p. 402n [Chinese]), was delivered to a Society for the Study of War against Japanese Imperialism. I presume that this

was a group of higher political and military functionaries. One indication of this could be the significantly later date of the publication of "Questions of Strategy . . ." I did not read the two articles in their complete form until the 1950s, when Mao's *Selected Works* first appeared in Russian. If my supposition is correct, this semi-secret society could very well have formed the core of the — I am tempted to say — faction which Mao constructed to isolate Wang Ming and to deflect the ECCI line which he represented.

The primary purpose of Mao's theoretical studies was not to supplement his inadequate knowledge of Marxism. Rather, he sought formulations to support or, more precisely, to embellish views foreign to Marxism - Leninism. It is worth noting that even in the edited version of his conclusion to the Sixth Central Committee Plenum in November 1938, which was printed in the *Selected Works* as "The War and Questions of Strategy", he emphasized repeatedly the uniqueness of China, developed independent theses, and coined phrases which have retained supposed validity to the present day, such as "In China the main form of struggle is the war; the main form of organization is the Army" (vol. II, p. 507 [Chinese]) and "Power comes out of the barrel of a gun" (*ibid.*, p. 511). These examples can be multiplied at will. They provide unmistakable evidence that the pretence of applying Marxism-Leninism creatively to the concrete conditions of China was intended to obscure the actual promotion of Mao's own "thoughts."

One afternoon early in April 1938 I was called to Mao Tse-tung's cave dwelling. Both the time of day and the urgency of the invitation were unusual. When I entered Mao was seated at his desk. In front of it stood several comrades whom I did not know, presumably from the security department, and three to four cadres of the K'ang-ta headed by Lo Jui-ch'ing. I did not notice any Politburo members. A courier came from time to time, bringing a message, receiving an order. We stood around idly for quite a time. Finally Mao revealed to us that Chang Kuo-t'ao had fled from Yen-an to Hsi-an with a small party, turned himself over to the KMT, and with its help journeyed to Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters in Wu-han. It was suspected that he encouraged commanders of the former 4th Army to follow his example. The possibility of a mutiny could not be ignored. Security measures were undertaken. It was our duty to preserve order in the K'ang-ta. We were to say nothing of Chang Kuo-t'ao's betrayal for the time being unless asked.

We could have gone now, but Mao held us back. He appeared to be waiting for further news. Again we stood for what seemed an eternity. I almost felt he did not really trust even us. By no means did I doubt the

truth of what he told us. His face expressed all too clearly concern and uncertainty.

At last he released us. We went to the K'ang-ta. On the way, we encountered garrison troops who had been posted as sentries. In the K'ang-ta itself, however, everything was quiet. I spoke to several people in my broken Chinese. All seemed unaware of the event. I sat for a long time afterwards in Lo Jui-ch'ing's study. He was at as great a loss as I. Finally I went home. And nothing happened in the next few days. There simply was no conspiracy.

Two weeks later Chang Kuo-t'ao's expulsion from the Party was announced in the rear lines headquarters, to which I belonged. Lo Fu's wife, who was Party secretary there (I have forgotten her name) read from a hectographed leaflet the long "register of sins" committed by Chang Kuo-t'ao and described the "patient efforts" of the Central Committee and Mao Tse-tung personally to involve him in Party work before his flight and to effect his return. Then came the surprising news: that Chang Kuo-t'ao had attempted to rally his old cadres for a "strike against Wang Ming", because he disagreed with the ECCI's and CCP's line, which Wang Ming most conspicuously forwarded. This arrested my attention for I knew that the united front policy, which was of course what was meant, had recently become the focus of tension between Mao Tse-tung and Wang Ming.

At the end of August Lo Fu spoke to a meeting of Party activists. There was no more mention of the supposed strike against Wang Ming. The new version purported that Chang Kuo-t'ao claimed in Hsi-an that he could no longer work in Shen – Kan – Ning and wanted to leave the Party. The Central Committee had consequently dismissed him as a traitor who refused to submit to the Party line and maintained a dubious relationship with the KMT. It appeared — and Po Ku substantiated this for me later — that the dismissal occurred at Mao's instigation before Chang Kuo-t'ao arrived in Wu-han and that Wang Ming, Chou En-lai, and Po Ku were presented with a *fait accompli*. So was the ECCI, which did not agree with the dismissal until May, when Chang Kuo-t'ao issued his "Appeal to the Chinese People". In this he charged Mao Tse-tung and the CCP with retaining their earlier sectarian stance and pursuing self-seeking goals, rather than general and national interests. I never saw the written text of the "Appeal". I learned of it through an intra-Party circular and an article written by Lo Fu in response. As I have already mentioned elsewhere in this book, I considered Chang Kuo-t'ao a renegade whose expulsion from the Party was thoroughly justified.

My opinion was not altered when I learned the facts of the "flight" months later. Evidently Chang Kuo-t'ao, accompanied by the usual group of bodyguards, travelled to a ceremony outside the special

administration area in his official capacity as deputy head of state in Shen – Kan – Ning. He said before his departure that he did not plan to return, because there was no possibility of working with Mao Tse-tung. Instead, he would continue on to Wu-han to discuss matters with the “second Politburo” and, if necessary, procure the arbitration of the ECCI. This seemed plausible, for Chang had already stated in Sikang that he would submit only to the ECCI. And the fact that Mao could not rest until his old rival and opponent was hunted down, leads to speculations of what had preceded the flight. But ultimately Chang Kuo-t’ao brought about his own political undoing when he published his “Appeal” and defected to the KMT. He could not have rendered Mao Tse-tung a better service.

Contrary to Mao Tse-tung’s statements and Po Ku’s commentaries to them late in 1937, a closer co-operation developed between the highest levels of the CCP and the KMT during 1938. The apparent impetus for this was the “Programme of Armed Assistance and National Reconstruction” instituted by the extraordinary congress of the KMT in late March or early April. According to reports in Yen-an, this complied so closely with the CCP’s ten point programme that, although open and direct participation in the National Government was still opposed, a sharing of “democratic bodies” was regarded favourably. Under “democratic bodies” the Central Committee understood the National Political Council proposed in the KMT programme and corresponding provincial and district councils. Their members were appointed, not elected, by the Central Government and its subordinate executive organs on the basis of recommendations from political parties and groups. They were entitled to advisory but not legislative rights. Several leading Communists belonged to the National Council, which met for the first time in July in Wu-han. They were headed by Mao Tse-tung who none the less preferred to keep his distance from the conference, leaving the initiative to Wang Ming. The latter declared the CCP’s readiness to support the Nationalist Government in its implementation of the KMT programme, all the while emphasizing that it adhered to its own objective of Communist struggle.

Evidence that this declaration was discussed with Mao Tse-tung can be found in the position previously taken by the Communist faction in the National Political Council. This proves that the CCP’s Central Committee resolved that the Communists appointed by it and confirmed by the Central Government were to comply with the appeals of the Council. Their active participation in its work would directly strengthen the resistance in the present stage of the war, especially in the strategically critical defence of Wu-han. The Council’s formation

was pronounced a first stage in the genuine political democratization of the entire nation. It would provide the basis for a popular representative assembly vested with supreme authority. The Communist Party sincerely desired to undertake concrete steps in close co-operation with the KMT to annihilate the Japanese invaders and to foster the Chinese Republic's progress towards, independence, freedom, and happiness.

The principle of non-participation in the National Government and its central organs was broken, even before the acceptance of the new programme by the extraordinary congress of the KMT and before the National Political Council was established. In early February 1938 the National War Council resolved to create a political department. Ch'en Ch'eng, one of the most competent KMT generals and a close confidant of Chiang Kai-shek, was made its director and Chou En-lai his deputy. Chou not only accepted this appointment after consulting the Central Committee; he also enlisted a number of Communists to work with him. Among these was Kuo Mo-jo, who later became chairman of the committee for cultural affairs (afterwards incorporated into the political department) and in this capacity launched into a broad political agitation campaign among the Nationalist troops which soon caused the KMT leadership serious problems.

Observed from Yen-an, this was all somewhat confusing, for the slogan of a two-front war against Japanese aggression and KMT reaction still seemed operative here. Within the Party organization and cadre schools it was said that the KMT was a military failure and its reform programmes were not credible. Only a guerrilla war waged independently by the CCP and the creation of a strong people's liberation army and large revolutionary bases would ensure victory over Japan and the construction of a new China. The crux of all political and Party work must be in the Army and in the revolutionary bases. In the area dominated by the KMT, on the other hand, work must proceed as covertly as possible to avoid ruin at the hands of the class enemy, even if he temporarily acted as an ally.

This had an ultra-revolutionary ring to it, but grossly contradicted the Politburo's most recent resolutions and the line determined in Wu-han. But this is the course matters took. In late 1937 the Central Committee's cadre department began to send trained comrades to "resistance bases" for overt work and to the Nationalist areas of China for semi-legal or underground activities. This practice was not altered, even after the political line on which it was based was modified in 1938 to respond to the new situation and to iron out the contradictions in the official Party line. The division of labour between the Central Committee in Yen-an and the "second Politburo" in Wu-han, which I mentioned somewhat sarcastically above, persisted. The only difference was that Mao Tse-tung, in a feat of unsurpassed double dealing, now

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the United States from its discovery to the present time. It is divided into three periods: the first, from the discovery to the establishment of the first colonies; the second, from the establishment of the first colonies to the declaration of independence; and the third, from the declaration of independence to the present time.

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why they threw their main forces against the KMT front. . . . The resistance bases under the leadership of the CCP, on the other hand, were ignored because they believed there was only a little heap of Communists there waging a guerrilla war" (*Selected Works*, vol. III, p. 965 [Chinese]). Indeed, the Japanese concentrated all their forces in the main strategic directions. They never attacked Shen – Kan – Ning and did not attack the 8th Route Army's bases until the early 1940s. All of these were in rural regions which were separated from each other by the cities, railways, and roads controlled by the Japanese troops and which had been forsaken by a relatively small proportion of the population. Still they were much larger and richer in resources than all the former bases taken together. The Nationalist officials and troops left behind Japanese lines were either "absorbed" or, if they collaborated with the Japanese, were driven off and their property, together with that of big landowners and merchants who had fled, expropriated. Members of other groups, the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, bourgeoisie, and feudal clans, were undisturbed so long as they pledged themselves to resistance against Japan and loyalty to the new Communist authorities. They were even permitted one-half to two-thirds of the seats in the local and regional councils, although on no account were they admitted to the executive bodies. The largest part of the poorer classes were won over by the abrogation of rents and similar economic measures in practice from the outset of the anti-Japanese war in Shen – Kan – Ning.

These "liberated areas", generally called "revolutionary bases" in Yen-an (an illuminating expression, which is why I too use it) provided an extraordinary increase in the 8th Route Army's strength. Statistics of this are very much at variance. According to the figures of the rear-lines staff, which were fresh in my memory when I reported to Moscow in late 1939, the 8th Route Army had grown to comprise at least 60,000 men by 1938, that is, the effective strength of the regular troops had doubled. In 1939 it increased to between 120,000 and 150,000 men. Subsequent Chinese sources set the effective strength for 1938 between 150,000 and 180,000 men. At the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee, Mao Tse-tung even spoke of more than 200,000, if one can trust the edition of his concluding remarks in the *Selected Works* (vol. II, p. 504 [Chinese]). I consider these figures exaggerated, even if the New 4th Army, the Shen – Kan – Ning garrison troops, and the independent guerrilla units are included.

Be that as it may, there can be no doubting the rapid growth of the 8th Route Army. Chiang Kai-shek certainly had to take this into account when he complied with our request in autumn 1938 to reorganize the 8th Route Army as an independent armed force, subordinate only to the National Military Council. And even that had meaning only on paper. Chiang Kai-shek could exert no real influence on combat

proceedings in the Japanese hinterland and Mao Tse-tung did not intend to obey his instructions.

The new formal designation for the 8th Route Army, the "18th Army Group", never did win common acceptance. I shall therefore continue to refer to the 8th Route Army.

Owing to lack of information I cannot speak of the New 4th Army or the guerrilla units operating in eastern and southern China. The 8th Route Army, for its part, increasingly devoted its energies to the steady expansion and consolidation of the revolutionary bases and the mobilization of their inhabitants for the struggle on two fronts — against the occupying Japanese and their collaborators. This was the origin of the local militias, similar to those of the former soviet areas. As detachments of the "Peace Corps" or peasant self-defence organizations, they secured the new order in the bases and waged a guerrilla war against Japanese troops engaging in "punitive expeditions". By the end of 1938 their number was already estimated at about a million, and, according to unconfirmed reports, was supposed to have risen to two million in 1939 – 40.

More and more the regular units of the 8th Route Army also avoided larger battles. Instead they concentrated on delaying tactics, ambushes and skirmishes, which, because of their frequency, culminated in heavy losses in men and arms for the enemy and forced him to commit even more men to his rear lines. By the end of 1938 he increasingly employed Chinese puppet troops mobilized by turn-coat generals and politicians. All the same, I venture to question what I later read, that 60 per cent of all puppet troops were committed against the revolutionary bases in the early 1940s. But that is neither here nor there. What is absolutely certain is that towards 1939 the 8th Route Army, with its bases and local militias, had become a significant factor influencing the war situation and contributing to the emergence of a definite balance of power in the Sino-Japanese war. To a less degree, the same might have been said of the New 4th Army and independent guerrilla detachments in other bases.

By any standards, however, the decisive element in 1938 – 9 was still the Nationalist armed forces of the National Revolutionary Army of China. In the first stage of the war they had to endure extraordinary losses in men and matériel and surrender huge areas in northern and eastern China with the most important cities and industrial centres. Nevertheless, Chiang Kai-shek and the National Military Council did succeed in reorganizing, arming, and training the defeated armies, albeit not without foreign, especially Soviet aid. Of course in Yenan we did not hear very much about this. As usual it was the negative side that was stressed — defeats, retreats, conscription, capitulations, and treason. To be sure, much of this was true. But it was only half the truth.

In talks with well-informed comrades, among whom were some involved in the interception and analysis of radio messages and broadcasts, I learned not only of the creation of a strong reserve but also of a shift in the conduct of the war — demonstrated after the fall of Nanking in a move from a fundamentally passive defensive strategy in positional warfare to a more flexible mobile war.

These reforms bore their first fruits in spring 1938 when the Japanese launched a new large-scale offensive. Their objective was to bring the strategically important railway lines from Kiangsu to Shensi (the east-west Lung-hai railway) and from T'ien-chin to Nanking completely under their control. They advanced southward from Chi-nan and northward from Nanking to converge at Hsü-chou. Somewhere south of this city the KMT armies engaged them in a one-week battle, in which several Japanese divisions were badly beaten, if not completely destroyed. Hsü-chou was not evacuated until one and a half months later. From this point the Japanese pushed along the Lung-hai railway via K'ai-feng to Cheng-chou, the junction with the north-south railway connecting Peking and Wu-han. The city fell at the beginning of June. But the advance was brought to a standstill. The Japanese were never able to cross the Shensi border. Perhaps they did not intend this, fearing their strength might be dissipated in a peripheral direction.

For the sake of justice let me make it clear that the victory at Hsü-chou was noted and appreciated in Yen-an. However, it was soon overshadowed by new events, which gave rise to critiques and discussions. During the summer strong Japanese forces moved up the Yangtze, apparently to capture Wu-han. The KMT troops did not offer a determined defence of the Yangtze valley. Events had proved them hopelessly inferior, technically and tactically, to the Japanese. Instead, they employed delaying tactics in order to spare their forces. As Chiang Kai-shek publicly proclaimed as his new slogan, they "sacrificed territory to gain time." As a result, within two months the Japanese had covered an additional 400 km and in late July took Chiu-chiang. This was of itself an insignificant city, but took on critical importance, situated as it was just before Wu-han. It raised the question if and how Wu-han, an economic as well as political centre, was to be defended.

There were two opinions voiced in the Central Committee. I cannot for the life of me say whether Mao Tse-tung's and Wang Ming's views diverged from the start, as was subsequently claimed, or whether the entire Central Committee experienced a change of mind, which I regard as more plausible. I only know that at first Mao condemned the "mobile defence" of the Yangtze valley as a "precipitate retreat" (not inaccurately, when one considers the swiftness of the Japanese advance) and asserted the possibility of a long-term defence of Wu-han provided certain specifications were met. These were the immediate and

thorough reform of the economic, social, and political situation in Nationalist China in order to mobilize millions for the resistance struggle and to strengthen the troops' fighting morale; the construction of an advance defence line co-ordinated with fighting on the aggressor's flanks and rear; and the replacement of inept and unreliable KMT generals with Communist or other tested commanders according to the principle: competence, not friendship! Wang Ming, Po Ku, and, above all, Chou En-lai expressed themselves along similar lines. Chou went so far as to call a successful defence of Wu-han strategically important and the conditions for it favourable. It could, he felt, prove to be the turning point of the war. It would gain time to continue the war with renewed strength and to prepare for the decisive battles of the final stage.

The approaches to Wu-han were embattled for three months, from July to October. When the Japanese troops began to enclose the city the Central Committee retracted its earlier standpoint. Chou En-lai was the most prominent spokesman of the new position. Proceeding from the concept of protracted warfare, which Mao Tse-tung had derived from Chiang Kai-shek, he wrote that the fate of Wu-han was not crucial. On the contrary, an all-out attempt to defend the city at any price would be detrimental to achieving ascendancy over the Japanese.

This placed him in unusual agreement with Chiang Kai-shek, who declared at this time that the key to victory was not in the defence of individual cities and regions. One must avoid battles dictated by the enemy, and force him to fight in the mountains and swamps. Over the long run, circumstances of time and territory would work to his disadvantage. It was almost as if Chiang Kai-shek was assuming the strategic and tactical principles of Mao Tse-tung.

Wu-han was evacuated in October. The Central Government with all its institutions retreated deep into the interior of the country, to Chungking. The "second Politburo" moved with it. At the end of October the Japanese marched into Wu-han. At about the same time they conquered Canton, the last major port in southern China.

The regular front was then marked by relative tranquillity. The Japanese militarists had attained their main strategic goals. They blockaded the entire Chinese coast, subjugated the large cities, where almost all industry was concentrated, and controlled the roads and railways in the occupied areas. It was hardly in their interest to penetrate more deeply into the interior. It would not have brought them further gain and would certainly have overtaxed their strength. Their present efforts were therefore channelled into reorganizing troops, which had been weakened in the one and a half years of steady offensives, and consolidating their possessions, especially in their hinterland. Mao was correct when he announced that the first phase of the war had come to

an end and that a new phase had dawned: that of a strategic balance in which guerrilla warfare would achieve the ascendancy.

This was the military state of affairs when the Central Committee convened its Sixth Plenum. It conferred in strict privacy and little of what was discussed leaked to the outside. From the fragmentary details I gathered from short newspaper reports and occasional conversations, there seemed to have been serious discord. I was told that Mao Tse-tung, who delivered the Politburo report for the period following the Fifth Plenum in January 1934, strongly underlined China's uniqueness and generally struck a marked nationalistic note. Wang Ming, on the other hand, indicated that the national liberation war of the Chinese people was inseparably linked to the worldwide struggle of all progressive forces against war and fascism. The anti-Japanese war could not be regarded as an isolated conflict; it must be co-ordinated with the larger struggle. This was in perfect harmony with the principles of proletarian internationalism. The Soviet Union acted in this spirit when it granted assistance to all groups in China fighting the Japanese invaders.

Disregarding Mao's excursions into CCP history, which occupied great space in his presentation and merely served the purpose of representing his policies and strategy as the sole correct ones, the issue of the national united front and the role of the CCP within it was the focus of his talks. Mao's duplicity was especially evident here. On the one hand he praised the "glorious history" and the "brilliant future" of the KMT, acknowledged it as the senior partner in the united front, and ceremoniously promised to lend Chiang Kai-shek his unconditional support. On the other hand he denounced the slogan "Everything for the united front!", stressed the "vanguard role of the Communists in the national revolutionary war", and defended the presentation of *faits accomplis* to the KMT ally with the dramatic device: "Act first, report later", as the 8th Route Army had done from the very beginning in northern China. Incidentally, this can be read in Mao Tse-tung's *Selected Works* (see vol. II, p. 504 [Chinese]) in which his speeches at the Plenum are otherwise greatly abridged and diluted. He termed it "self-reliance and autonomy in the united front, that is, unity and at the same time independence" (*ibid.*).

Po Ku admitted that this was supposed to revise previous Politburo resolutions. He did not say towards whom Mao was directing his polemics, but there was only one possibility: Wang Ming. Mao's proclamation that the "fulcrum of Party activity" must lie "in the front zones and in the enemy's hinterland" (*ibid.*, p. 509) was directed against him and possibly Liu Shao-ch'i, Hsiang Ying, and others who had committed themselves to more intensive political activity among urban

workers. He reaffirmed his old position that only Party work in the revolutionary bases, especially in Yen-an and in the Army, was of decisive importance. In this regard he declared that “the problems of China could not be solved without armed struggle” (ibid.). This was not unprecedented either. A couple of sentences earlier he explained what he understood to be the “problems of China”. He characterized the chief task of the Party as armed struggle for national and social liberation against both external and internal armed counter-revolution and he criticized those who had not yet comprehended this even after the lessons of 1927 and subsequent years and who were still trying to focus on political activity in the White areas. These remarks revealed again Mao Tse-tung’s biased orientation towards the peasantry and the Army and ultimately towards a new civil war.

It was difficult to reconcile this with what he said on long-term co-operation between the CCP and KMT after victory over Japan. He spoke of a democratic republic founded on the three principles of Sun Yat-sen, a republic that would be neither soviet nor socialistic. Perhaps he was already developing thoughts that were to inform his 1940 work “On New Democracy”. But it would be digressing too far to examine that here.

Mao’s words culminated in the exposition of what he felt to be the best organizational structure for long term co-operation while preserving the autonomy of the two partners. He suggested the open admission of Communists to the KMT while retaining their membership in the CCP and offered to submit to KMT officials a list of all CCP members in the KMT. This was simply too incredible. It surpassed even Ch’en Tu-hsiu’s right opportunism, for Ch’en had flatly rejected a similar demand by the KMT in the mid-1920s.

Why did Mao make such a proposition? As he said himself, he wanted to dispel mistrust on the part of the KMT, which naturally was perfectly aware of Communist infiltration, and to improve relations between the two parties in order to foster long-lasting co-operation. In reality — and it was no secret to anyone in Yen-an — after the Plenum hundreds and eventually thousands of graduates from the cadre schools were sent to the Nationalist areas to conduct Party work and to infiltrate the KMT, its bureaucracy and armed forces, and the Youth Corps of the Three People’s Principles of Sun Yat-sen. And behind closed doors the proposed name list was the subject of much jesting. Interestingly, this item, as well as many others, was omitted from the *Selected Works*. We find only the promise not “to form cells in the KMT, its governmental bodies and armed forces” (vol. II, p. 501 [Chinese]).

I must confess that at first I could make no sense of these apparently contradictory remarks of Mao Tse-tung. On one hand, he seemed to be “overtaking on the right” the Marxist – Leninists led by Wang Ming,

whom he denounced anonymously in 1937 and in 1945 by name. On the other hand, especially in the final words of his own report, he held the door open for a return to his old sectarian policies. For a long time I believed his line to have triumphed. But that proved to be an erroneous assumption on my part. It would be more accurate to say that, at least superficially, a united programme was hammered out, which even the ECCI should have approved.

This programme was terminated by the resolution "On the New Stage in the War of National Self-defence and of the National Anti-Japanese United Front", which was issued in November 1938 and then discussed in all Party organizations. With the exception of what at this time was a fully justified denunciation of Chiang Kai-shek attacks against right or left opportunism, on which Mao Tse-tung expended so many words in his speeches, were missing. The political line and accomplishments of the Politburo between the Fifth and Sixth Plenums were approved without qualification, and attention was directed towards the historical turning point brought about by the transition from civil war to united front.

Neither Mao's hegemonial thesis on the vanguard role of the Communists in the national war nor his one-sided orientation towards the peasantry and Army — nor even his prediction of armed struggle against "internal counter-revolution" — was mentioned.

The resolution concentrated on a sober analysis of the situation and a concrete assignment of tasks. It found that, as a result of the joint efforts of the KMT and the CCP under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese people had entered into a heroic struggle and in spite of extraordinary sacrifices were progressing towards national liberation and a democratic rebirth. The final victory, it continued, would be achieved in a protracted war in which the enemy would take the first offensive, be brought to a standstill, and finally be forced to retreat. For China this process meant defence: balance of forces: counter-offensive. The protracted war would require protracted co-operation between the KMT and CCP as the chief political forces in China as well as among all other anti-Japanese parties and groups. At the time the war was in a transitional stage between the first and second phases. Under these circumstances the enemy was intensively courting traitors for the formation of a puppet government to split the Chinese people. Against this, support for Chiang Kai-shek must be sustained, co-operation between the KMT and the CCP strengthened, and the struggle against traitors, collaborators, and Trotskyites even more intensified. This was followed by an enumeration of urgent tasks for the entire Chinese nation. The transformation from weakness to strength and from defeat to victory was contingent on their fulfilment.

Several formulations employed by Mao Tse-tung in his speeches were

echoed in the sections of the resolution on long-term co-operation between the KMT and CCP, which was seen as the only assurance of success in the armed resistance, national reconstruction, and the struggle for a new Chinese republic based on the three principles of Sun Yat-sen and on the role of the CCP in the national war. The Plenum solemnly declared once again that the Chinese Communists recognized the three principles and would sincerely support Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Government. Then came the passage about admission of Communists to the KMT and the Three Principles Youth Corps as the best organizational framework for long-term co-operation and the offer to provide the KMT with a name list. It was further stressed that at the present point in history, neither the dictatorship of one party nor a state of soviet or socialist character would be acceptable. In conclusion, the Plenum exhorted all Communists to maintain the political and organizational independence of the Party, to guard against leftist and rightist deviations, and to abide by the principles of democratic centralism.

At the Party meeting concerning the Sixth Plenum, which I attended, doubts were expressed as to whether or not it would be wise to hand over name lists of Communists to the KMT. The Party secretary responded with a wink. She did not feel this was to be taken literally. Others wanted to know what should be understood by leftist and rightist deviations in the national revolutionary liberation war. They were informed that "leftist" was revolutionary impatience, through which premature action might destroy the national united front, an arrangement currently advantageous to the Party. "Rightist", on the other hand, was renunciation of the self-reliance of the Party, which would make the proletariat into an appendage of the bourgeoisie. There was no comprehensive discussion of the resolution. It was noted with approval. The Sixth Plenum dealt with additional resolutions, chiefly of an organizational or agitational nature. Some of these were published in their entirety or in excerpts. Unfortunately I remember only one, which called for a Seventh Party Congress in the near future. As is well known, it did not take place until 1945, that is, seven years later when, after the dissolution of the Comintern, Mao Tse-tung considered the time ripe to settle his accounts with the Marxist – Leninists. Evidently he was still held in check by them at the 1938 Plenum. But even then, he already occupied a position of power in the Party and Army which allowed him to assert his own line without regard to whatever resolutions were passed.

I can add little that is new on subsequent political and military developments in the anti-Japanese war from my own experience. Most is from

relevant documents, to which I did not have access at the time, or from books which have appeared in the meantime. What I saw and heard in Yen-an imperfectly reflects events in the countryside and opinions in the Politburo, but did provide me with a general picture. Two trends became more clearly delineated in 1939. They were closely associated and both jeopardized the unity of the KMT and the nation as a whole. One was the attempt by Japan to attain its military objectives in China through a political solution. The other was the exacerbation of tensions between the CCP and KMT.

In December 1938 the Japanese Prime Minister issued a statement of principles which purported that his government's policy was to normalize Sino-Japanese relations and to create a new order in the Far East through the co-equal efforts of Japan, Manchukuo, and China. In reality, this was nothing more than a new packaging for the old programme of "a Pan-Asian commonwealth" under Japanese rule and with a marked anti-Communist cast.

Chiang Kai-shek answered Konoye's "peace offer" by proclaiming that Japan's true intention was the total annexation and enslavement of China under the mantle of Sino-Japanese co-operation. Resistance would be maintained to the end. Regardless of what motives backed this position, it was firm and clear at this time.

Nevertheless, there were those in the KMT who, because of anti-Communist sentiments or personal reasons, were prepared to seize on Konoye's proposal. Wang Ching-wei, Chiang Kai-shek's deputy in the KMT leadership and in the National Council, surreptitiously left Chungking in December 1938, flew to Indochina, and telegraphed a circular from Hanoi demanding peace with Japan. An extraordinary meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT was convened at once to remove him from all functions and dismiss him from the Party.

I learned all of this second hand, but found the story confirmed in an article in the Yen-an newspaper several days later. It harshly criticized Wang Ching-wei, but gave Chiang Kai-shek's position its full support. Then, one afternoon in mid-January 1939, there was an open-air mass assembly at which Wang Ming spoke. He characterized Wang Ching-wei's compliance with Konoye's proposal as a new variation of an old conspiracy. There had been a recent increase in anti-Communist activity in many places, which sometimes went as far as armed confrontation. This was a subversion of the national united front, for he who attacked Communists in effect supported the Japanese occupiers and Chinese traitors of Wang Ching-wei's ilk. If Chiang Kai-shek truly desired resistance to the end, then he would have to take vigorous steps not only against open traitors but also against the anti-Communist capitulators and reactionaries.

This was certainly correct. Only, I said to myself, the anti-Communism of influential KMT politicians had its counter-point in Mao Tse-tung's unmitigated striving for hegemony. KMT leaders, including Chiang Kai-shek, felt themselves threatened by this and struck back, which naturally encouraged the anti-Communist and capitulationist reactionary elements. Of course, Wang Ming could not enter into this side of the matter in public. But what happened in the Central Committee, in the Politburo and its Standing Committee, and in the Military Commission? Was the Sixth Plenum's resolution faithfully implemented there? This did not seem to be the case. At any rate, I heard that organizational steps were taken to tighten the communications network of the 8th Route Army, New 4th Army, and Politburo throughout the KMT area and that in the spring of 1939 Chou En-lai made a long inspection journey to the southeastern provinces in order to convey personally instructions to this effect. At the same time the Japanese militarists again seized the initiative and sent strong troop units from the Yangtze valley to the south. It was the last offensive which they perpetrated against the Nationalist forces for quite a time. In my opinion they were pursuing two goals. First, they wanted to inject Konoye's political solution with military persuasion. Second, after the capture of Wu-han and Canton, they needed to gain control of the main communication lines between these two cities — the railway via Ch'ang-sha and the road via Nan-ch'ang. This would have severed the southern and eastern Chinese provinces from the inner western and southwestern provinces. The first goal was not achieved at all; the second only in part. Still, in March and April, they captured Nan-ch'ang and Ch'ang-sha, the weakly defended provincial capitals of Kiangsi and Hunan.

Taking the new situation into account, Chou En-lai then directed Hsiang Ying, whom he met on his inspection, to expand guerrilla warfare with units of the New 4th Army in the mountainous Kiangsi – Hunan – Hupeh border zone and to create a revolutionary base in the south that could be supported by the old soviet area. Topographical and political conditions favoured this, because revolutionary struggles had occurred here in the first soviet period and the sympathies of the poorer classes could be assumed from the outset. The only drawback was that KMT forces were already stationed in the triangle between Wu-han, Nan-ch'ang, and Ch'ang-sha and their senior commanders, to put it mildly, were not exactly amiably disposed towards the Communists.

Hsiang Ying transferred the New 4th Army's rear-lines staff (and perhaps the Party's provincial committee in Kiangsi as well, although I am not sure) to the district city of Chi-an, which was hotly contested in the civil war about 1930, and set up a new communications post in the

district city of P'ing-chiang, a good hundred kilometres northeast of Ch'ang-sha. There, at the beginning of June, there was an incident of the type which had broken out between Communist and Nationalist soldiers since the beginning of the anti-Japanese war and multiplied after 1938. Under the flimsy pretext of searching for deserters, KMT soldiers forcibly entered the communications post and killed all present. Some were shot on the spot; the others were taken prisoner and buried alive. This is what was related in Yen-an (see also Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, vol. II, p. 544, n. 1 [Chinese]) and I believe it, because I know that this agonizingly slow form of execution had been employed since antiquity by Chinese feudal lords and militarists and I once witnessed an incidence of this with my own eyes.

Unlike previous provocations, the P'ing-chiang incident brought far-reaching consequences in its wake. It led to a bitter controversy between the CCP and KMT, especially between Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek, in which serious charges were levelled on both sides. It resulted in replacement of the former Communist slogan "unity and independence" with "unity and struggle". The interconnection between anti-communism and capitulation, which Wang Ming had highlighted in his January speech, played a significant role in this.

The tension had actually begun to mount much earlier, when Chiang Kai-shek, appealing for "war to the end" at the fifth regular meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT in January 1939, simply noted a return to the situation of July 1937 and reportedly called the "insubordinate" Communists to order, that is, to pledge allegiance to the Central Government and ensure domestic peace. It could be that Wang Ming's speech was specifically directed against these and similar statements by Chiang Kai-shek, but I cannot be certain about this, for I knew nothing of the KMT meeting apart from what was published in Yen-an. I read only the message telegraphed to the KMT meeting by the Central Committee of the CCP which contained a new avowal to strengthen the national united front and to support Chiang Kai-shek.

After the P'ing-chiang provocation a tug of war broke out in Chungking as to how punishments would be dealt out not only to the direct perpetrators, but to the men behind the scenes and their abettors. The highest-ranking KMT generals, including the commander-in-chief of the 27th Army Group in southern China and the chief of staff of the National Revolutionary Army, Ho Ying-ch'ing, both renowned as rabid anti-communists, were suspected among the last. Chou En-lai did not even succeed in having the actual murderers prosecuted. On the contrary, Chiang Kai-shek charged the CCP with conspiring against the KMT, its bureaucracy, and armed forces, with taking unilateral actions, and with giving false information. They were now invited to declare

themselves once and for all for or against the political system he represented.

Chou En-lai hurried back to Yen-an to confer with the Politburo. On the trip from Hsi-an to Yen-an, which he made in a truck sitting next to the driver, bandits, probably former Min-t'uan, suddenly opened fire on them. The bodyguards, who sat in the back, were fortunately able to repulse them, but the driver was so badly wounded in the shooting that his legs had to be amputated a few days later for gangrene. It was recounted in Yen-an that Chou En-lai was wounded in the arm on this occasion. He did break his arm at this time, but whether this indeed occurred during the ambush or less gloriously in a fall from a horse as I was later told I shall leave unlaboured.

In the midst of all this, the second year of war came to a close. Both sides, the KMT and CCP made use of the opportunity to air their positions. Chiang Kai-shek released a "Message to the Nation", the complete text of which I did not see. From excerpts I concluded that he judged the changing balance of power between China and Japan favourably, rejected the "peace movement" instigated by the Japanese aggressors and Chinese traitors as well as any "interim solution", and called for the pursuance of the war until the victorious (or bitter?) end.

In Yen-an a "Manifesto of the Central Committee of the CCP on the Second Anniversary of the War of Resistance" appeared, supplemented by a veritable flood of articles by almost all members of the Politburo. I noticed that Teng Fa was among the authors. After quite a long absence, he must have returned to Yen-an. Next to the Manifesto, a prominent contribution because of its programmatic significance was Mao Tse-tung's article "The Primary Danger in the Present Situation". In revised form it can be found in his *Selected Works* (vol. II, pp. 535 – 9 [Chinese]).

Superficially, the contents of these two documents coincide with the above-mentioned three points in Chiang Kai-shek's message. This impression was buttressed by the opening, which spoke of "high respect for Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek", and by the conclusion with its "support for Chiang Kai-shek and the National Government" and for "the support of the three principles and joint activity of the KMT and CCP in the spirit of true unity" (see Warren Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party*, vol. III, Taiwan 1970, p. 551 — in English). Unfortunately, I must refer to this reactionary anti-Communist book, since there is no other work available to me which deals with the Manifesto. But I do not question its version of the Manifesto, because I myself remember it thus and it is identical with Mao Tse-tung's article in its important points. But appearances were deceiving. The loyalty pledge barely concealed criticism of all tendencies to place the struggle against Communism before the war

against Japan. The Manifesto stressed that the two-year war had furthered unity and progress in China, had militarily and logistically weakened the enemy in protracted warfare along the broad front, and had brought victory closer. This is why Japan had sought to achieve China's submission through the political strategem of a supposed peaceful settlement, as in Konoye's declaration. His insidious plot was abetted in China and abroad. The foreign imperialist powers France, Britain, and the United States advocated an "International Pacific Conference", the outcome of which could only be a "Far Eastern Munich" for China. Within China a handful of traitors, such as Wang Ching-wei, openly strove for an alliance with Japan against the Communists. Reactionary forces subverted anti-Japanese resistance and the national united front by slandering the CCP and instigating provocations against Shen – Kan – Ning, the 8th Route Army, and the New 4th Army. Then there were the perfidious elements who aided and abetted traitors, capitulators, and reactionaries. The alliance of the Japanese aggressors, the foreign imperialists, and Chinese anti-Communists was the primary threat to unity and victory for the Chinese people.

Therefore the CCP decisively rejected "peace talks" with Japan, a "Far Eastern Munich", any sort of capitulation deal even as a partial or interim solution, and all attempts to disrupt the national united front under the banner of anti-Communism. It also spoke out for total victory, which would be achieved when the Japanese troops were pushed beyond the Ya-lu River, and for a new democratic China based on the three principles of Sun Yat-sen.

Mao Tse-tung, from whose article I derived my summary of the Manifesto's main points, went much further in some of his formulations. Whereas previously he had made distinctions between rightists, centrists, and leftists now he simply drew the line between the exponents of a capitulationist peace on the one hand and of a resistance war on the other. To the first category he relegated all "big and small Wang Ching-weis", who operated behind the backs of the obvious traitors, a half-veiled reference to Chiang Kai-shek, as is substantiated in notes 4 and 5 of Mao Tse-tung's *Selected Works* (vol. II, p. 539 [Chinese]). It was these "secret Wang Ching-weis", as he called them at other points (*ibid.*, p. 537), whom he accused of creating an atmosphere inimical to the Communists and even of contemplating a new civil war between the CCP and KMT. They would destroy the united front, foster capitulation, and betray the nation. In this manner Mao warded off the reproach that the CCP was damaging the anti-Japanese war through its anti-Kuomintang activities. In contrast to the Manifesto, his articles ended with an appeal, not for support of Chiang Kai-shek and the National Government, but merely

for a struggle against capitulators and trouble-makers.

In a speech he gave a few weeks later at a memorial assembly for those murdered in P'ing-chiang, Mao struck an even harsher note. He claimed that the perpetrators had acted on the orders of the reactionaries. In note 1 to his speech in the *Selected Works* (ibid., p. 544), it is expressly revealed that this referred to "Chiang Kai-shek and his accomplices". Why, he asked, had the guilty not been punished? Because there was no unity in China, no unity in the war against Japan, no unity in the internal alliance, and no unity in the progressive movement. The "open and secret Wang Ching-wei's", he reiterated, undermined this unity. It was their intention to force the greater part of China into capitulation, to sow domestic discord, and to provoke a civil war.

I cannot deny that Mao's words impressed me. The KMT Central Executive Committee's measures "to limit the activities of alien parties", which Mao interpreted in his speech as aimed at the CCP and other progressive forces, were indeed alarming. Even greater concern was evoked by the intra-Kuomintang circular promulgating in areas of especially intensive Communist activity a "law of collective responsibility and liability". This was to be implemented by a network of secret informants and reactionary organizations. The murders at P'ing-chiang could have been among the first products of the new policy. Mao's reaction and that of the entire Politburo ran: "When the prevailing law is inoperable and unity is destroyed, we must mobilize the people so that a new law can be created to bring provocateurs, reactionaries, and capitulators under control." And further: "Strike where we are strong; go underground where the KMT is dominant." All this indicated the beginnings of a disintegration of the national united front which, as is known, came to serious armed clashes by the early 1940s. I am convinced that this was the inevitable result of the double-dealing policy pursued by both Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek.

This latent conflict could not fail to affect the military situation. It was rumoured in Yenan that Chiang Kai-shek, assisted by interested imperialist powers, was conducting secret negotiations with the Japanese militarists on a cease-fire. In other words, he was yielding to the so-called peace group of traitors. I do not know if this was true. In any case, the ominous "International Pacific Conference" did not take place. Wang Ching-wei's formation in January 1940 of a Nanking puppet government officially organized by Japan and in opposition to Chiang Kai-shek did not lend much support to this view.

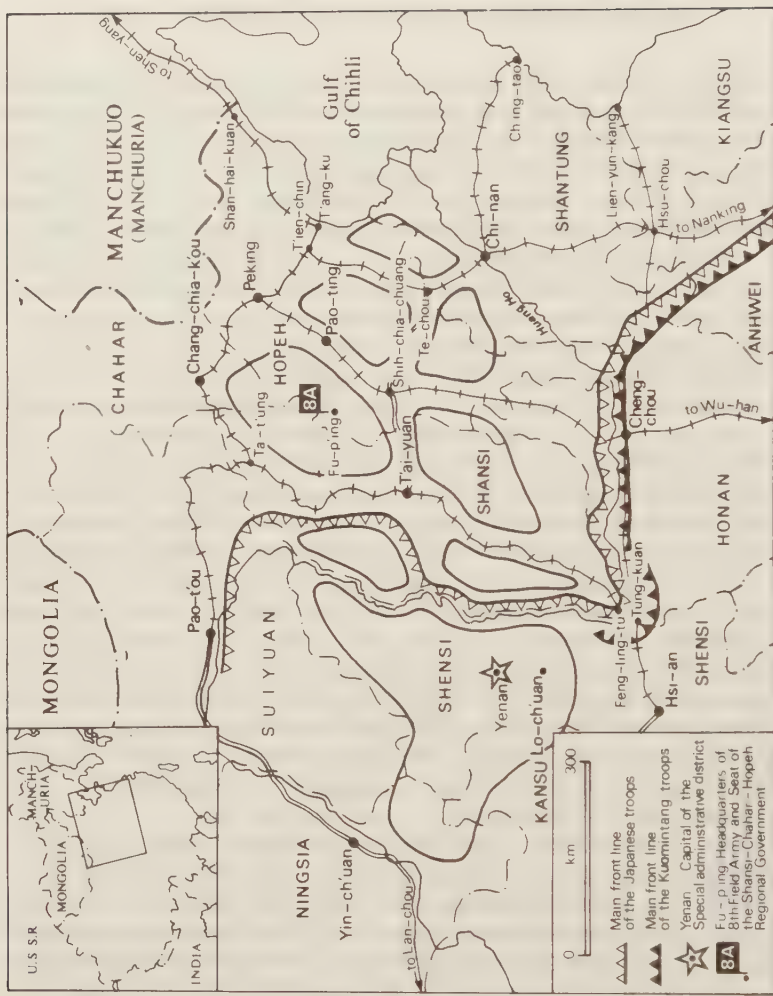
On the other hand the situation on the regular fronts devolved into a stalemate between the Japanese invaders and the KMT troops — a more or less passive confrontation. As I mentioned above, I believe that this relative lull in the fighting was largely effected by a new equilibrium

in forces. Another contributing factor was that both the KMT and the Japanese at this point gave high priority to "cleaning up" their own hinterlands. The KMT intensified its activity against the New 4th Army and the Japanese stepped up the employment of their forces and their Chinese puppet troops against the 8th Route Army. Mao Tse-tung accused Chiang Kai-shek of evading battles with the Japanese. Indeed he was doing just this, but only in that he was following the old guerrilla tactic of retreat to the mountains when the enemy attacked, and was otherwise satisfied with a questionable co-existence, even tolerating a lively commerce in smuggled goods.

And so it was throughout 1939 — as Po Ku remarked in one of his last talks with me if not the last — that a triangular relationship evolved in which each was pitted against the others: the Japanese with the Chinese traitors and puppets against the Communists and the KMT (or more precisely against its hard core and leader, as Chiang Kai-shek was still considered, for the split in the KMT predicted by Mao Tse-tung had not come about); the KMT against the Japanese and the Communists; the Communists against the Japanese and the KMT. This triangle totally altered the nature of the balance of power — which Mao had theorized would usher in the third phase of Chinese counter-offensive — and characterized the general situation until 1945. The Japanese were militarily checked and could not attain their objectives through a political solution. Nor could the Chinese armed forces, in view of the sharpening contradictions between the CCP and KMT, achieve the superiority of forces necessary to drive the Japanese from Chinese soil.

Both partners in the united front devoted their energies to strengthening their own positions in expectation of the future political struggle. To accomplish this, the KMT needed but to wage a mock war with Japan and to turn its entire attention against the CCP. The Communist armed forces in northern China, for their part, were increasingly forced to contend with the Japanese and Chinese puppet troops, who applied a blockhouse tactic similar to that used by Chiang Kai-shek in the 5th Campaign. Now it was called the "silkworm tactic" because the individual revolutionary bases were, in a sense, enveloped. It might be noted that, in active confrontations forced by the enemy, the 8th Route Army resorted to the same short raids which Mao Tse-tung had condemned at Tsunyi as a "childish game of war". In early 1940 he was pressured by the Army leadership into the "offensive of the one hundred regiments" [against the Japanese invading forces], but this had as little effect on the outcome of the war as did later operations. The "revolutionary bases" in the Japanese hinterland began to dwindle with time.

The turning point was prompted from without after Japan launched



Revolutionary bases of the 8th Field Army, 1938 - 9, in the hinterland of the Japanese occupying forces

its Pacific war adventure against the United States, Britain, and France. The victory of the anti-fascist coalition over the Axis powers and, above all, the intervention of Soviet and Mongolian troops in Manchuria forced the Kwantung Army and Japanese government to capitulate. But that is already a chapter of history which extends beyond the scope of the present work.

At this point, permit me to insert a few remarks on my own situation in Yen-an. They should also shed some light on Mao Tse-tung's personal behaviour and his relationship with other cadres, a subject on which I have been asked many questions in recent years.

I have already indicated that, after the 1st Red Front Army returned from its East Campaign, I was increasingly barred from military meetings and discussions. My information on political developments also diminished. What I knew was garnered chiefly from my participation in activist and mass assemblies and in private talks, particularly with Po Ku. He regularly visited me in Pao-an or Yen-an up to the time of my departure. In addition, I was present at meetings of the rear-lines headquarters Party cell, first as a guest, then as a member. I continued to teach at the Military Academy, the later K'ang-ta. But even here, from 1938 on when I lacked a regular interpreter, difficulties multiplied, at least in so far as lecturing to the many young students from Nationalist China was concerned. It therefore ensued that I was mainly giving tactical instruction to former Red Army men, veterans of the Long March, who were being trained for posts as middle and senior commanders. Together we conducted seminars, war games, and sandbox exercises. I was assisted in this by my former second interpreter, who, in the meanwhile, had been promoted to Director of the Instruction and Methods Department in the K'ang-ta.

Since the restoration of radio communication in 1936 I had gone to Lo Fu a good half dozen times asking that he arrange my recall to the Soviet Union. Under the given circumstances, I considered this the proper thing to do. After all, in 1932 I had been assigned by the ECCI as military adviser to the Comintern Office and the Central committee of the CCP. I never found out if Lo Fu honoured my request. At any rate he always avoided answering my questions.

In winter 1937 – 8 I directed the same petition to Wang Ming. Unlike Chang Hao and the other Central Committee members from Moscow, he spoke to me without constraint on the one or two occasions we met. Shortly before our conversation Wang Ming had been named rector of the women's academy, a strange office in my view for a member of the Presidium of the ECCI and of the Politburo of the CCP. He could hardly perform the expected duties because he spent most of his time in

Wu-han or Chungking. He did not appear happy with the appointment. It was my general impression that he was troubled and could see why. On the one hand he was supposed to execute the ECCI line; on the other he was not to challenge Mao Tse-tung's position, even though Mao was pursuing quite different policies. A thoroughly impossible task!

Wang Ming urgently advised me against insisting on a recall. In his own words, nothing good awaited me in the Soviet Union; I could expect to be deported or even shot. This did not really surprise me for I had frequently seen references in *Pravda* to "people's enemies" whom I knew personally or by name for whose unyielding loyalty to the Party I would have put my hand in the fire. I did not understand the reasons for this, but told myself, "Whatever happens, I shall present and defend my case in Moscow."

Because nothing happened I resigned myself to a prolonged period, if not the rest of my life, in China. Some time in 1938 I went to Ch'en Yün, who, as Secretary of the Central Committee, directed the organizational department, and requested that I be admitted to the CCP so that I could actively participate in Party affairs. I also asked permission to marry Li Li-lien, a singer who came to Yen-an in 1937 from Shanghai with actress Chiang Ch'ing, Mao's present wife. He accorded me both. Li Li-lien and I entered our names at the Yen-an registrar's office.

I had long before begun a systematic study of Chinese. By 1938 my mastery of the colloquial language allowed me to converse fluently on virtually everything. It proved inadequate only for lectures, for which specific political and military terms were required. Now I applied every free moment to learning reading and writing. For the most part, I used the primers for adults printed in Yen-an. These were well illustrated and each character was accompanied by a corresponding romanization. A well-educated and English-speaking young man from among the K'ang-ta students became my tutor, with the tacit consent of Lo Jui-ch'ing. Eventually I made such progress that I could read important articles and reports in the Yen-an press and other printed matter, albeit with some effort and occasional help, and could follow lectures, talks, and discussions fairly well.

Before my formal admission to the CCP a certain Hsiao Ching-kuang sought me out to tell me that Mao Tse-tung had suggested that I act as adviser to the rear lines staff. I regarded this as an order and went there more often. Usually the only person I met there was Chu Te, who despite his otherwise inexhaustible good humour seemed very displeased at this time. There was no work for me on the staff and I soon discovered that my assistance was undesired. Like all others, I had to be administratively incorporated somewhere for logistical reasons. Because the K'ang-ta was several kilometres from my cave dwelling, the nearby

rear lines headquarters served in its stead. Also, the man who was translating my article on tactics into Chinese was working there. Ma Hai-te, then attached to the health department of the National Government, the bodyguards, horse attendants, and myself, in short, everyone living in our courtyard formed an independent logistical entity of the staff.

The rigid discipline and markedly puritanical way of life which characterized the Red Army slackened over time in Yen-an. There developed, although within very narrow bounds, what might almost be called a social life. This was promoted by the stream of thousands upon thousands of Chinese patriots, mostly young intellectuals from the big cities, as well as longer or shorter stays by foreign visitors.

At weekends, for example, our courtyard was host to artists of all genres, which was only natural after Li Li-lien and I befriended each other, and young people brought in by the very congenial Ma Hai-te. We discussed everything, particularly art and politics, played ping pong and sometimes even danced, which until then had been despised as a foreign impropriety. Chiang Ch'ing was among our guests at first, but she soon stayed away. She had sound reasons for this. A scandal was threatening which touched on Mao Tse-tung's intimate life and caused quite a stir among the top cadres in the Party. Because I was almost drawn into it and was still hearing references to the affair in the early 1960s I feel obliged to give a brief account of what happened, although it is most distasteful and, of itself, insignificant.

In the summer or autumn of 1937 Agnes Smedley and Edgar Snow's wife (not he himself, as I read somewhere) came to Yen-an. Agnes Smedley was collecting material for her book on Chu Te *The Great Road*. Because she barely spoke Chinese she was assigned a certain Lily Wu as interpreter. Mao visited the two Americans quite frequently — several times while I was there — and thereby became acquainted with Lily Wu. Agnes Smedley arranged for them to meet secretly in Ma Hai-te's cave dwelling. I knew nothing of this because the rendezvous were timed so that I — and presumably Ma Hai-te as well — was always absent on such occasions. Mao's wife, Ho Tzu-chen, a partisan fighter who had been wounded by a bomb splinter and had made the Long March, somehow learned of this and really put the heat on him. I myself was witness to a violent altercation in winter 1937 – 8 in Mao's house, not his cave dwelling.

In order to counter Ho Tzu-chen's charges, Mao took refuge in a little intrigue. One day, Lily Wu appeared at my place, for the first and last time. While I was still wondering how I could get rid of her, Hsiao Ching-kuang showed up, supposedly to discuss something with me. Then the two disappeared, I no longer know who first. That was all. Apparently Hsiao was to testify that Lily Wu was visiting me, not Mao. But Ho Tzu-chen was not fooled by this. It went so far that Mao

instructed Ch'en Yün to form a Central Committee commission to deal with the matter. It granted a divorce, although by this time Lily Wu was no longer a central figure.

Chiang Ch'ing had entered Mao's horizon. In the first period after their arrival she and Li Li-lien sang and acted in the Yen-an theatre, sometimes in the classical Peking Opera, sometimes in modern realistic plays. Mao Tse-tung attended her theatrical performances with conspicuous frequency. Their relationship developed outside Yen-an, at the Lu Hsün Art Academy. After the divorce was pronounced, Mao solved his problem in the following fashion. He sent Ho Tzu-chen to the Soviet Union "for medical treatment" and Lily Wu to her native Szechwan. As for Chiang Ch'ing, she moved in with Mao in autumn 1938, nominally as his secretary, later as his wife.

I heard remarkable stories both regarding this marriage and Chiang Ch'ing herself.

Po Ku spoke of her "colourful past", by which he meant what is today called the "*dolce vita*", of her shady connection to higher KMT circles, and her ambiguous relationship to the Party. She was indeed unlike other party members who came from Nationalist China. She did not go to the Party school and generally passed as apolitical. There was a story which later gained currency that K'ang Sheng had admitted her to the Party in 1932 or 1933, but that she had remained politically passive (or active in the underground according to an even later version). In Yen-an as well she failed to participate in political matters, at least during my time there. She also withdrew from the theatre. Her arrogant manner of riding a horse attended by four bodyguards jarred with the simplicity of Yen-an life and won her little sympathy among its residents. But enough of this. Let me conclude by adding that even Edgar Snow, for all his glorification of Mao Tse-tung, could not pass over this unpleasant episode in silence. (See the biographical notes in *Red Star Over China*, London 1968, pp. 459–60 and 467–8.)

The image of autocracy which emanated from Mao's behaviour — I already thought that his position as Party leader was impregnable — was further enhanced by a new habit. Mao, who was a poor rider and preferred to cover shorter distances on foot, from 1938 onwards drove outside Yen-an in a donated ambulance. With the exception of trucks which occasionally travelled between Yen-an and Hsi-an, this was the only motor vehicle in Yen-an. No one was allowed to use it but him. Whenever it appeared people spoke of the "car of Chairman Mao".

I encountered Mao Tse-tung quite often in 1938 and 1939, either during visits he made to foreigners, which seemed to have a special appeal for him, or at unusual occurrences such as the flight of Chang Kuo-t'ao. We usually met, however, at the K'ang-ta, where I listened to his lectures. Once, for some reason, a group photograph was taken of

all leading cadres of the K'ang-ta, in which I sat next to him. Unfortunately, I lost my copy in Moscow in 1941. It was my general impression that, after my admission to the CCP and my assimilation into the Chinese milieu, Mao regarded me as harmless and suffered me with aloof benevolence. In his eyes I had become a *quantité négligeable*, a nonentity.

It was all the more to my surprise, therefore, that in early summer 1939, Mao Tse-tung unexpectedly entered my cave dwelling with Lo Fu and Po Ku. For a good two hours they conversed with me casually on the political and military situation, generally within the framework of developments as I have presented them in the last section of these memoirs but, of course, from Mao Tse-tung's point of view. I no longer remember the details. The conversation was in Chinese; Po Ku helped me only when I did not immediately catch one or another of Mao's expressions because of his Hunan dialect. All three left as abruptly as they had come. I could not make rhyme or reason of this visit. Not even Po Ku would explain it to me. In fact he was rather reticent in subsequent calls on me whenever political topics were broached. He usually came with the earlier mentioned Wu to play bridge. Not until much later did it dawn on me that the peculiar visit possibly concerned an inquiry from Moscow and my recall.

With the restoration of the national united front and after the beginning of the anti-Japanese war, the borders of Shen – Kan – Ning opened not only for countless Chinese but for many foreigners as well. They all came as friends — whether true or false was difficult to ascertain. It was evident that even then certain American and Trotskyite influences were making themselves felt. Mao Tse-tung made shrewd use of these people either to introduce his political views or objectives or to conceal them and portray himself in the most favourable light for Western nations. I know little of them, especially the journalists, for I intentionally avoided them. I have already mentioned some of the foreigners in other contexts. Now I would like to communicate briefly an overall, if incomplete, picture of my experiences in this regard.

The first guests arrived in early summer 1936: Edgar Snow and Dr George Hatem (Ma Hai-te). I have recently read that they were sent by the United States Secret Service. I do not know what the foundation for this assertion is. My own observations neither dispute nor confirm it. Some of the circumstances of their clandestine journey seem to support the claim. I had already become acquainted with Edgar Snow in Peking in 1933 (see page 24 above). He described how his trip came about only in the most general terms. A Chinese friend had given him an invitation from the CCP, thereby offering him the sought-after opportunity to

relay the truth about the Chinese Red Army and soviet areas to the outside world. In the last, revised English edition of his principal work *Red Star over China* in 1968, he gave further particulars. According to this, he received the invitation from a man who, unbeknown to him, was with the North China office of the Central Committee, at this time headed by Liu Shao-ch'i, and with it a letter of introduction to Mao Tse-tung written in invisible ink and a meeting place and time in Hsi-an. There, the same Chaplain Wang who had slipped me through the KMT blockade put him in contact with Teng Fa. Teng conducted him from Yen-an, still occupied by the Northeast Army, to Shen – Kan – Ning and Chou En-lai. Chou was more than willing to open all other doors for him. This is credible, for otherwise Snow could not have entered the soviet area nor won Mao Tse-tung's trust, not to mention friendship.

For unfathomable reasons, Snow did not reveal until the 1960s that his journey was with Ma Hai-te, not alone, and that to begin with they went to 1st Army headquarters, where Ma remained until the end of the year, whereas Snow was in Pao-an by July. For almost half a year he assiduously collected information on the history of the Chinese Red Army from its earliest stages to what was then the present. He interviewed everyone he met (no difficult task for him, since his Chinese was very good) and obtained all the desired information, because it became well known that he stood high in Mao's favour. Mao selected him as his biographer and propagandist and this Snow remained until his recent death.

At first he plied me as well with questions concerning the Red Army and the CCP. But I rebuffed his inquiries, as I did those of all other foreign and Chinese interviewers. Our contacts therefore were limited to social encounters, such as tennis and card games. We were joined in these by Po Ku, Lo Fu sometimes, my former interpreter Wu Hsiu-ch'üan, a one-armed regimental commissar named Ts'ai Shu-fan who was active in the Army's political administration, and several other acquaintances whose names I have forgotten.

If Snow was indeed a secret agent for the United States, then he provided his employers with invaluable information. A politically versed China specialist, he was the first foreigner to compile a wealth of precise facts, dates, and figures, supported by photographs, on most of the leading personalities, which would have supplied the United States government with an exact picture of the Chinese Red Army.

But Snow was first and foremost a journalist and a writer. As such — and this must be granted to him — his revelations contributed much to break down the mountain of lies that had grown up in the western world concerning the Red Army and the soviet areas. He impressively portrayed the heroism, the popular solidarity, and the high political consciousness of the revolutionary fighters. He was also one of the first to perceive the intra-Party conflict between the Marxist-

internationalists and the petty-bourgeois nationalists. As was only to be expected, however, as Mao's mouthpiece he was biased towards the latter, extolling them as the only true Communists in China.

Snow left in September, shortly before the Hsi-an incident. I never saw him again, for he did not return until after my recall. When in 1964 my first article on the China question appeared in the Socialist Unity Party's central organ *Neues Deutschland* he wrote to me from Geneva, where he was residing, to confirm my identity as Li Te.

I first met Ma Hai-te early in 1937, when he was quartered with me in Yen-an. An American of Syrian extraction, he had studied medicine in France and Switzerland and had come to China as a very young doctor, as he put it, to place himself at the disposal of the Chinese Red Army. Somehow he encountered Agnes Smedley, who recommended him to the Shanghai branch of the Communist Party with which she had been associated for quite a time, and put him in touch with Edgar Snow, whom he then accompanied to Shen – Kan – Ning. This is what Agnes Smedley told me.

Ma Hai-te, then in his mid-twenties, did not speak Chinese at his arrival, had no practical experience as a physician, described himself as a Communist by intention, but was disorganized and astonishingly naïve politically. Only over time was I able to impart to him the rudiments of Marxism. Yet he possessed qualities which stood him in good stead in every situation: rapid comprehension, great adaptability, and youthful nonchalance. He learned to speak, but not to read or write, Chinese very quickly, joined the Party, established himself as a general practitioner for the people, and in time qualified as a specialist for the control of epidemics — which plagued northern China. He got along well with everyone, was never in anyone's way, and made himself useful where he could. Thus he occasionally worked in the Yen-an intelligence and press agency, intercepted French and English radio broadcasts, and so on. When a reconnaissance post was to be established in Hong Kong he was seriously considered for the job, but a Chinese was sent in his stead.

Still, if he were a spy, Ma Hai-te could hardly have reported anything remarkable, at least nothing that would have compared with Snow's data. It was well known and a matter of non-concern that he acted as an informant for Edgar Snow and Agnes Smedley. I last heard of him in the early 1960s. He was living in Peking, had a Chinese wife and children, and, as ever, enjoyed all-round popularity. He certainly had no political influence, but maintained the best of relations with Mao's faction, whose policies he ardently supported. Knowing him as I did, I am sure he survived the "Cultural Revolution" unscathed.

As already mentioned, in the summer or autumn of 1937 Agnes Smedley and Edgar Snow's wife Helen appeared in Yen-an with a couple of crates of books and other weighty baggage including a gramophone

and records. It looked as if they were planning to establish themselves in Shen – Kan – Ning permanently. Because Snow had anticipated her with Mao's biography, Smedley turned to Chu Te. But he stubbornly refused to speak of revolutionary battles or intra-Party strife so that she was forced to pass over these critical turning points in her book *The Great Road* and to conjure up a great deal from other, sometimes dubious sources. After about a year, she left Yen-an. The books, records, and other items remained behind as welcome gifts. Snow's wife, who chiefly devoted herself to socio-economic studies, had already departed after several months.

Mao visited the two women frequently, a few times in my presence. As far as I know, he conducted no serious political talks with them. Other Party leaders such as Lo Fu, Po Ku, Chou En-lai, and Wang Ming, to the extent that they were in Yen-an at all, apparently kept their distance. I never saw them in their company.

Both Agnes Smedley's and Helen Snow's remarks betrayed unmistakable Trotskyite tendencies. They idolized Mao, regarded the national united front with scepticism, and considered the civil war as the primary vehicle and the military life style of Yen-an as the primary organizational framework for social progress in China. It did not disturb them that Mao practically ignored the working class and viewed the peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie as the most important driving forces and bases of the social and national revolutions. It was only out of their hearing therefore that I referred to this as "perverted Trotskyism".

In winter 1937 – 8 the Canadian surgeon Doctor Norman Bethune, who has been called "the doctor of three continents", arrived in Yen-an with a nurse and quite extensive medical equipment. He bothered himself very little with politics, but insisted on permission to travel to the front as soon as possible in order to set up a serviceable medical installation, to establish an urgently needed field hospital, and to introduce modern methods such as blood transfusions, antiseptic measures, and so on. This was the main topic of several discussions he had with Mao Tse-tung. I witnessed one of these in his assigned cave dwelling. After a month or two he went to the Shansi – Hopeh – Chahar border region to the 8th Route Army, incidentally, without the nurse. She left Yen-an in the opposite direction because she found it impossible to cope with our harsh living and working conditions. Doctor Bethune performed exemplary service along the front, more precisely in the new revolutionary bases, until his death by blood poisoning in November 1939. This was incurred while he was performing an operation under enemy fire. He thoroughly deserved the honours posthumously bestowed upon him.

At almost the same time as Doctor Bethune was with us, a KMT Army Medical Corps comprised of ten women and girls came to Yen-an. They

disappeared after a few months. I no longer know whether they went to join Doctor Bethune or returned to Nationalist China. For good or for bad, they were hardly evident in Yen-an.

During 1938 there was also a visit by a hygiene commission of the League of Nations. It built a bathing facility with a delousing station — perfectly useful installations but of no practical significance under the extremely primitive circumstances of Shen – Kan – Ning. The commission members, exclusively Europeans, seemed to consider themselves as something more than tourists. Perhaps one or more of them were carrying out a reconnaissance assignment on the side. Their obsession with photographing everything certainly permitted both interpretations.

A group of four or five Indian doctors formed quite a contrast. They were experienced and included the surgeon Doctor Kotnis. After a while he and a second doctor went to the 8th Route Army to work in the new field hospital. The others set up an auxiliary polyclinic not far from Yen-an which treated both soldiers and civilians. They invited me to this place several times and I became acquainted not with Communists, but certainly with progressive and dedicated people. I noticed that Mao Tse-tung paid little or no attention to them. They were almost totally left to themselves and their own resources. I do not know what later became of them.

I have largely forgotten other “helpers”. I only recall a red-haired New Zealander who devoted himself to the organization of production co-operatives. He had already dealt with this matter in Nationalist China and spoke fluent Chinese. He became closely acquainted with Ma Hai-te and banged away furiously on a travel typewriter in Ma’s cave dwelling. After the victory of the People’s Liberation Army he too remained in China. He might have been Rewi Alley, whose book *The People Have Strength* (Peking, 1954) I later read. But I cannot say this with certainty.

Apart from the two pilots of the two aircraft which landed at Yen-an, the only visitor from the Soviet Union before my departure was the famed documentary film maker Roman Karmen. He came up from the south in spring 1939 and completed a film about China in Shen – Kan – Ning. We met several times. Although our conversations were always amicable, he tactfully avoided answering political questions. After all, he did not know what I represented.

In 1938 the North Americans began their initial systematic, though still unofficial probings into Yen-an. A group of bourgeois journalists including some sinologists financed by the Ford Foundation were the first on the scene. They travelled freely throughout the special administrative area, accompanied of course by attendants and interpreters. I avoided them. Presumably they were surveying the terrain for the military attaché who arrived about six months later with a small staff. He

remained in Yen-an for weeks conducting secret discussions. I have never discovered the object of his negotiations. I gathered from conversations that he was to explore the military capability of the 8th Route Army and the political possibility of an ultimate reconciliation between the CCP and KMT as well as co-operation between the CCP and the United States. Success in his mission would have strengthened the American position in East Asia *vis-à-vis* Japan but simultaneously weakened the influence of the Soviet Union.

The military attaché left, apparently unsatisfied. Afterwards relations froze between Mao Tse-tung and his American interlocutors. The United States set all it had on Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT. Mao was left with no alternative but to orient himself more closely towards the Soviet Union. This none the less did not prevent him in 1941 from betraying a planned joint military action with the Soviet Union in the case of a Japanese attack on the Soviet Far East or from resuming contacts, this time officially, with representatives of the United States.

These early flirtations with the Americans were characteristic of the unprincipled, pragmatic, pendulum politics which Mao employed between the imperialist United States and the socialist Soviet Union, proceeding from his old thesis that China was the centre of world contradictions.

I recently read that the first encounter between the Maoist leadership and representatives of the United States government, or rather the Pentagon, did not take place until 1944. Nevertheless, I am certain, even though it is not mentioned in either Soviet or western literature, that this happened as early as 1938 – 9. I would not like to commit myself to a definite date. The fact that it was a secret mission, an unofficial contact, might explain why this is passed over in silence on both the Chinese and American side.

Although I have already discussed the development of the special administrative area Shen – Kan – Ning and of the 8th Route Army's (18th Army Group's) revolutionary bases in the anti-Japanese war, I believe it imperative to conclude, even at the risk of repeating myself, by highlighting certain aspects which in my opinion are still of contemporary significance. Recently, voices were heard in Peking advocating a return to the so-called Yen-an work style. I see in this a striving to establish a certain continuity between the work and leadership methods necessitated by a past situation and the present dictatorship of the Maoist clique, its military-bureaucratic régime, and its big-power, chauvinistic, anti-Soviet foreign policy to lend it a revolutionary vaneer. There is in fact a continuity but it is of a subjective, not an objective,

nature, even though it was shaped by the peculiarities of the class struggle. This created the circumstances which allowed Mao to establish his one-man rule in Party and State and to carry out his reactionary and utopian policies.

The important characteristics of the Yen-an work style, already perceptible in its incipient form during my sojourn in China, can be distilled into four catchwords: self-reliance, militarization, mass line, nationalism.

Local and regional self-reliance grew out of the force of circumstance. Northwestern China having been renowned since antiquity as a region of famine, the meagre population could hardly feed itself. The supplying of the Red Army had created difficulties, only temporarily alleviated by food and other goods looted in the East Campaign and other incursions. The 8th Route Army, however, was far removed from Shen – Kan – Ning and could contribute less in the way of supplies, for it had its own logistical problems. At the same time, tens of thousands of people were streaming out of cities occupied or threatened by Japanese units and out of the Nationalist domain into Yen-an. In addition, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Shen – Kan – Ning was blockaded by KMT units and the new revolutionary bases by the Japanese aggressors and their Chinese puppet troops. By resolution of the Party and Government, all, literally all — big and small, Party and Government groups, troop units and cadre school, and other institutions and organizations — were compelled to plant grain and vegetables for their own needs. And this was usually on previously untilled land which yielded but a modest harvest. None the less, this method did secure our survival.

Although the objective conditions have fundamentally changed, the Maoist leadership has resorted to this recipe since the 1960s in agriculture and, in a somewhat different way, in consumer goods production. This is not to meet an actual emergency, but in order to maximize state investment in the raw materials and weapons industry, that is, in the military-industrial complex, a sector in which the best scientific-technical cadres are employed.

The militarization of life is rooted in certain traditions of the civil war, especially the Long March. With the exception of clandestine Party organizations in Nationalist China which for a long time the Central Committee could not directly supervise or control, all Party activity after the relinquishment of the older soviet areas took place exclusively within the Army. There was no possibility of internal Party democracy or a democratic social structure under the given conditions.

In Shen – Kan – Ning and the new revolutionary bases, on the other hand, there was at least a small possibility of a return to Leninist forms of Party life and a reintroduction of democratic leadership methods.

But this did not happen. The military work style was maintained and the military discipline of the Army was extended to the Party and the entire scope of public life. Only the resident population was unaffected by this, as long as they were not associated with military or civilian installations. Members of Party and administrative bodies were not elected. In the last years of my stay in China I was closely involved in one of the fundamental Party organizations but never once did I experience an election. Civil officials, educational facilities, and institutions were all subject to strict military regimentation. Functionaries, teachers, students, even the artists, were actually quartered in barracks. They lived, worked, and studied — usually in loess caves which they had dug themselves — according to a rigidly prescribed work schedule. They ate and slept there also. There was weekend leave for married couples, which popularly became known as the “*li-pai liu*” or Saturday evening.

Army commanders and political workers dominated the leading bodies of the Party and Government, more in middle and lower levels than in the very top or Central Committee. Executive authority for day-to-day practical work was primarily in their hands. This had its advantages in a state of war, which is why we did not regard this system as excessively undemocratic or anti-Party. It curtailed and simplified the path between resolution and implementation; the swift and proper execution of tasks was assured. On the other hand, Mao Tse-tung could rely heavily on the Army cadres to strengthen his own position of power and to realize his own political course.

As is well known, the Army continued to play a paramount role not only in the anti-Japanese war and the people’s liberation war, but even after the victory, in the first years of the People’s Republic of China. Its influence was restrained in the 1950s, as far as I can judge, but since the 1960s it has taken hold of all areas of life — from the economy to culture — as a tool of the Maoist clique and the mainstay of its dictatorial régime.

Naturally, military force could replace neither intra-Party nor general democracy in the long run. Another medium entered in its stead in the late 1930s, the so-called mass line. With its aid, Mao supposedly formulated his ideas out of the profundities of the masses. In reality it was a technique borrowed from the military, namely the usual activity of the Army’s political departments. Decisions made above, whether on the Party or administrative level, just like orders in the Army, were passed on below as directives and enforced with disciplinary administrative measures. As had always been customary in the Army in relation to soldiers, the “mass line” basically consisted of an explanation to Party members and the people of instructions derived from Mao’s decisions and their implementation. Agitation and propaganda was essentially limited to drumming into the mostly illiterate populace simple and

catchy slogans and to make them comprehensible through theatre, song, and dance performances.

Since the 1960s, the "mass line" has been intensified and developed into new forms. Praised as the highest form of democracy, it served and still serves to eradicate the last traces of democratic centralism in the Party and to check any opposition to the domestic and foreign policies of the Maoist clique. The "mass line" is superbly suited to this. It allows no criticism from below and therefore there is no criterion by which to judge whether the policy dictated from above conforms to the interests of the class in whose name Mao claims to speak. This has permitted him with Machiavellian ruthlessness to play different individuals, social classes, and groups against one another, to support himself on one or another, and eventually to rid himself of all genuine or supposed opponents including his own former battle comrades.

To the extent that Mao, supported by the Army, has made his way from one class to another, his régime has assumed Bonapartian traits. This was not yet the case in the 1930s, but tendencies in this direction became evident in the 1940s. It seems to me that through all this his social basis has remained the most economically backward petty bourgeois-peasant groups, whereas he has always regarded the industrial workers simply as producers, never the class historically called to power.

This petty-bourgeois element — later augmented and reinforced by those national bourgeois and even those feudal lords and militarists who had decided to support the anti-imperialist war against Japan and who took their places in the foundations of the People's Republic after the victory of the People's Liberation Army over the KMT régime — provided the feeding ground for the nationalism which Mao Tse-tung considered a definite expression of class struggle in China in the 1930s and 1940s and developed into big power chauvinism.

It should not be forgotten that the inhabitants of the revolutionary bases were overwhelmingly peasants and, to a smaller extent, merchants, artisans, and other petty bourgeois. The bourgeoisie and the feudal and working classes were represented by only a few individuals. The 8th Route Army showed a similar social composition. Yen-an itself was somewhat different. It received tens of thousands of the young urban intelligents — teachers, students, officials, white collar workers, artists, writers, and members of the so-called mental professions, but scarcely any workers or peasants. They had one thing in common: a burning patriotic zeal to liberate their homeland from the Japanese aggressor.

The intellectuals who came to Yen-an were hurriedly trained — an intensive three to six months' course in the various colleges and academies — to meet the increasing need for cadres. Yen-an became an

unparalleled centre for learning; the K'ang-ta its most important training institute. Its enrolment rose by leaps and bounds from several hundred in 1936 to several thousand in 1939.

This offered the ideal opportunity to introduce the flower of Chinese youth to scientific socialism, to teach them the fundamentals of Marxism – Leninism. But it was hardly utilized. Instead, Mao presented in his lectures his own political and military strategy and revolutionary war tactics in which, incidentally, he did not differentiate between the domestic and foreign enemies. His views in this respect are generally to be found in his remarks at the Sixth Central Committee Plenum of late 1938 and in the articles mentioned above from his *Selected Works*.

When I studied these articles during the writing of my memoirs I could not escape the feeling that they had been purged of some of the more original touches Mao had added to the lectures. I remember them quite well, because I discussed them with Chinese friends who were uncertain how to reconcile his words with official Central Committee statements. First, he charged the KMT and Chiang Kai-shek with the betrayal of national interests and stressed that victory over Japan could only be achieved in the two-sided struggle against these "reactionary enemies of the people". Second, he repeated over and over again that China's foreign and domestic problems could only be solved by armed force and that the military should be considered the decisive factor in the successful execution of policy. Third, he bolstered this thesis with the example of imperial China, which had risen to its one-time greatness through war. In this context he cited the sayings of statesmen and generals of antiquity, whom, as he himself admitted, he sought to emulate. He thereby distorted the honest patriotism and justifiable pride of his listeners into chauvinistic emotions.

Also speeches outside the K'ang-ta, Mao often and freely drew parallels from the history of the feudal Chinese emperors and the role that "great men" had played in it. He acknowledged his admiration for Ch'in Shih Huang-ti, the first emperor of the Ch'in dynasty, who more than 2,000 years ago established his rule over the whole of China in a bloody, twenty-four year long war, built the Great Wall at the cost of millions of human lives, and, in order to obliterate all memory of events before his reign, ordered what was probably the largest book burning of all time.

Genghis Khan, who constructed an empire from the Yellow Sea to Europe in the early middle ages, was the object of equal praise. This went so far that in 1938, when KMT officials were transporting the supposed sepulchre of Genghis Khan from Inner Mongolia to northwestern China to save it from Japanese seizure, people living along its route of passage were called upon to pay their respects to the weapons and armour of the Mongolian conqueror. Out of curiosity I mixed with the

crowd to see the strange sight for myself and observed how the people bowed at a given signal.

Mao's chief idol, however, appeared to be Liu Pang, a peasant's son who rose to become a military leader, and, after the rapid collapse of the Ch'in dynasty, founded the Han, from which the Chinese derive their present name. Recalling that the "Central Kingdom" had attained the peak of its glory and territory under the Han emperors, he stated half jokingly, half in earnest (one could never be sure which to trust when he failed to complete his thoughts aloud), that what the peasant's son had not accomplished in times of old should come more easily to peasants of the twentieth century. I have since read that Mao had already voiced his enthusiasm for Liu Pang in his early youth and dreamed of imitating him. Without exaggerating this biographical episode I could imagine that he harboured this desire his entire life. How Mao Tse-tung envisioned the establishment of a Greater China remained his secret. It was not until decades later that I read in *Red Star Over China* (London, 1968, p. 110) that he had answered to a query from Edgar Snow that it was China's urgent task not only to protect its sovereignty on this side of the Great Wall but also to recover all lost territory. I learned from the same source that he listed Indochina (that is, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) and the Mongolian People's Republic as member states of a future "Chinese federation". And in 1964 he publicly levelled claims to the Soviet Far East. Thus we can trace back to the 1930s the evolution of Mao's petty-bourgeois nationalism and its development into his present big-power chauvinism.

Mao's teachings fell on fertile ground with the young intelligentsia of the K'ang-ta and other institutions, alienated as they were from the proletariat class. His words obscured the little that was taught of Marxist-Leninist principles, especially since these underwent sinicization and were modified according to Mao's purposes, under the pretext of a creative application to Chinese conditions.

The military style of leadership along with self-reliance and the "mass line" became second nature to this group. They formed a pool for many leading cadres who later assumed high positions in the Party and Army, in the administration and economy. It was no wonder that Mao could rely on them in his struggle against the Marxist-internationalists. Admittedly it was questionable whether this support would be certain and sustained. Struggle and work practices of the 1940s and 1950s, influenced in part by the international Communist movement and assisted by the socialist nations, above all the Soviet Union, stirred in many minds doubts as to the theoretical concepts and practical policies of Mao Tse-tung. He therefore resorted to the infamous purges of the 1940s and 1950s which eventually culminated in the "Cultural Revolution", engulfing Yen-an cadres and old revolutionaries alike.

EPILOGUE

ON a Sunday morning in the late summer of 1939, shortly before dawn, a messenger from the Central Committee came to my cave dwelling. He handed me a note from Lo Fu, which read: "Come to the airport immediately. You are flying to Moscow." Nothing more. One can imagine how I felt. After six years of isolation from the outside world and without any link to the Comintern, suddenly, this communication! I dressed feverishly, hastily took leave of Li Li-lien, who had come for a weekend visit from the Art Academy, and from my neighbours in the courtyard, swung on to my Chahar pony and galloped to the airport.

There were about a hundred persons assembled there, among them many top functionaries. Mao Tse-tung was present as well. They said good-bye to Chou En-lai, who was also leaving for Moscow with his wife and adopted daughter. Chiang Kai-shek had sent his private airplane for him, an American Douglas. The plane was ready to start but the departure was delayed. Old acquaintances approached me to say farewell when they heard that I was leaving China. Even Mao Tse-tung wished me a good journey. He did so with measured politeness and not a word of gratitude or recognition. In the meantime, Li Li-lien came to the airport. She wanted to accompany me. I asked Mao for his consent. He referred me to Lo Fu, who simply said that there was no entry permit to the Soviet Union for her. Chou En-lai broke in and promised to take our part in Moscow so that she might follow. I do not know whether he kept his promise. At any rate, I never saw Li Li-lien again.

We finally took off. In Lan-chou Chou En-lai went to the soviet base with his family. Wu Hsiu-ch'üan, my former interpreter and now director of the CCP communications post in Kansu, took me to the Party guest house. The next day a Soviet car brought Chou's adopted daughter to the guest house and took me to the base. The commandant told me that he insisted on this since he considered me a member of the Soviet Army. His base, he continued, was not a private inn. A few days later we flew in a Soviet aircraft, also of the Douglas type, via Ha-mi to Urumchi. Here, at dinner immediately after our arrival, there was another dispute over me between the commandant of the soviet base and Chou En-lai. This time Chou had his way and all four of us moved into the CCP guest house.

The remainder of the flight to Moscow via Alma Ata and Tashkent proceeded without incident. The trip lasted about three weeks because the variable autumn weather forced us almost everywhere to prolong or curtail our stops.

After my arrival in Moscow I answered questions, wrote reports and

then more reports for weeks. I was rather uneasy, but at first considered the whole procedure as no more than a burdensome but routine affair; after all, I had been away seven and a half years and had to answer for my activity during that time. Before long, however, I realized that there was more behind it. In December I was invited to day-long sessions with representatives of the CCP. One of these was Mao Tse-tung's younger brother, Mao Tse-min. Several leading members of the ECCI also took part in the meetings. Mao Tse-min advanced the most absurd incriminations against me, although these made little impression on those present. Chou En-lai stepped forward as chief prosecutor. Now I finally understood why, in Lan-chou and Urumchi, he had been so adamant about keeping me in "Chinese custody". He highlighted my conduct during the 19th KMT Army revolt in early 1934 and my advocacy of short, swift attack tactics during Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Campaign. As for the Fukien Incident, he had to relent somewhat when I related the true course of events. He levied more cautiously the charge of "passive defence" because he knew only too well that he himself had promoted an attrition strategy within protracted warfare. I, on the other hand, had always spoken out for a mobile tactic, although admittedly not to Mao's taste. Not one syllable was said on my differences with Mao over his strategic plan, which ended with the East Campaign, although I had delivered a report on this.

I later learned from various sources that Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-min had orders from Mao Tse-tung to have me expelled from the Party in Moscow as an "enemy of the people" and, if possible, to have me liquidated. The most important piece of evidence for the ECCI was the Tsunyi "resolution", which it evidently did not know in its entirety. Nevertheless, Mao's plan to dispose of me, morally and physically, failed.

I did have to give up the military profession and for many years could not deal with Chinese matters. It was also suggested that I remain silent regarding my experience and observations in China: a request I strictly observed. I hoped that the Marxist-internationalist line would ultimately prevail in Chinese politics. And up to the second meeting of the Seventh Party Congress of the CCP in 1958 this wish was well founded. Not until 1964, when the anti-socialist and anti-Soviet policy of the Maoist leadership was visible to the whole world, did I publish my article "In whose Name does Mao Tse-tung Speak?", which appeared in the central Socialist Unity Party organ *Neues Deutschland*.

But at no time in the Soviet Union was I subject to any restrictions on my personal freedom or reprisals of any sort. On the contrary, I lived and worked unmolested in Moscow and was assigned responsible political work during the Great War of the Fatherland. Still, a smear campaign instigated by Mao Tse-tung, and its aftermath, had a profound

and unfavourable effect upon the rest of my life.

I also learned that, as in the platitude “One strikes the sack, but means to hit the donkey”, the proceedings against me were merely intended as the preliminaries for a massive political action against those most prominent members in the leadership of the CCP who had assumed power in 1931. Mao Tse-min, Lin Piao and other companions of Mao Tse-tung were intriguing behind the scenes in Moscow at this time against Wang Ming, Po Ku, and Chou En-lai, albeit without success.

All things considered, this is no longer of great significance. Mao Tse-tung had long since unveiled himself as the enemy of the working class, of the world Communist movement, and of the Soviet state. I therefore do not need to repeat what I wrote years ago (*Horizont*, no. 38, 1969) reviewing the sources and directions of Maoism.

Just one more remark: all my life I have considered the touchstone of every Communist, regardless of nationality or situation, to be his posture towards the Soviet Union. I let myself be guided by this in China and always championed the interests of the Soviet people (which are embodied in the policies of the Soviet government) as well as I comprehended them and was capable of so doing in total isolation and under trying circumstances. I believe I can say with satisfaction that I have withstood this test.

With this I conclude the memoirs of my sojourn in China. I have recorded my experiences and observations in all spheres of life — the personal as well as the political and military — to the best of my ability, and hope to have provided a small contribution to the better understanding of a crucial period in the history of the Chinese revolution and of the CCP.

The memoirs augment, clarify, and in part correct what I wrote in a series of articles entitled “From Shanghai to Yen-an”, which appeared in *Horizont*, nos. 23 – 8, 1969.

At that time I had little access to reference materials and was therefore forced to rely exclusively on memory. Considering the fact that I had not dealt with the China question for more than a quarter of a century, it is understandable that some details were incompletely or inaccurately rendered. None the less, I believe I correctly portrayed the basic events and issues.

For the present memoirs relevant documents and literature were available to me and I could verify and fill out my account. Still, despite all my efforts to achieve thoroughness and accuracy down to the smallest, least significant detail, there are still inexactitudes and gaps that I cannot eliminate.

I mention for example on p. 70 above an article that I wrote on the tactics of short, swift strikes. In issue no. 43, 1970, of the London periodical *The China Quarterly* there was an article entitled "Hua Fu, the Fifth Encirclement Campaign, and the Tsunyi Conference", in which the author, a certain Chi-hsi Hu (Hu Chi-hsi) concluded that eight articles, published under the name Hua Fu in the military journal *Revolution and War*, were written by me. I am not aware of this myself and cannot accept that my memory has forsaken me to this extent. A possible explanation is to be found in footnote 4 of *The China Quarterly* article, which states that there were two editions of the magazine *Revolution and War*. One was issued by the chief political administration of the Chinese Red Army. Two numbers of this which appeared at the time of the Ning-tu conference in August 1932 are still extant; the other edition was released by the Revolutionary Military Council of the Chinese Soviet Government from November 1933 to September 1934. The eight Hua Fu articles appeared in this second edition. I was actually preparing analyses and proposals at that time for the Military Council on a regular basis. These were possibly published in their entirety or in excerpts in this second edition (probably intended for a smaller circle of military leaders) without my knowledge. It is thoroughly credible that my Chinese name Li Te, which can be translated as "Li the German", was replaced with Hua Fu, or "China man".

Incidentally, the author of this article, who refers to original documents — the authenticity of which I cannot question since I have in the meanwhile come into the possession of photocopies and translations of some of the Hua Fu articles — makes an astute analysis of Chou En-lai's attrition strategy, which had been attributed to me. He points out that Chu Te and P'eng Te-huai belatedly but decisively advocated the tactic of short, swift strikes (see footnotes 27 and 28, p. 38, of the above-mentioned issue of *The China Quarterly*). This is one more demonstration of how Mao set things on their head at Tsunyi when he blamed me for "passive defence" and the "monopolization of military leadership".

This example alone, with which I shall content myself, indicates that there are still questions which warrant further exploration. The historian has the last word. My memoirs can only convey the personal impressions of an eye witness of historical events.

For precisely that reason they should give historians, who are more or less dependent on official documents and institutions, new impetus and points of reference for their research. I regard these memoirs as a weapon in the political struggle against Maoism which ought to help unmask the Maoist distortion of history. It is in this sense that I should like them to be understood.

APPENDIX

THE first of the Hua Fu articles mentioned at the end of the memoirs appeared at the beginning of April 1934, and, to judge by its contents, presents an introduction to the second edition of the periodical *Revolution and War*. Here is the text of the article, originally written in Russian, translated from Chinese into German, and checked against another translation back into Russian.

ACUTE PROBLEMS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

The Red Army of the Central Soviet Area had waged successful battles against the Kuomintang troops and achieved many great victories. These victories were attained by the skilful combination of the encirclement of enemy columns with guerrilla attacks at his rear. This clearly demonstrates the main advantage of revolutionary forces: high mobility, resolute action, and bold surprise attacks.

The enemy has suffered more than a few bitter lessons in the past. His present fifth "punitive expedition" varies fundamentally from the previous campaigns. In terms of strategy, the enemy has completely rejected his earlier goal: rapidly to bring about a decisive battle. Now he is trying to exhaust little by little our human and matériel resources. To reach this goal he pursues his own special tactic. The main characteristic of this tactic consists of the "blockhouse war" plan, which is intended eventually to close up the blockade round our soviet area in order to prevent us from conducting a mobile war and to cut off our guerrilla divisions, which fight in its rear, from the main armed forces of the Red Army. As a result, a tight net of fortifications has been spun about the soviet area and therewith the Red Army. The enemy employs modern war technology (machine-guns, mortars, artillery), concentrates powerful guns on the battlefield, supports and reinforces his weak infantry with an air force.

It is evident that, in view of this enemy tactic, the simple methods of guerrilla warfare applied by us in the past are not sufficient. In order to achieve a decisive victory despite the new tactic employed by the enemy, the Red Army must master and apply the principles of modern military warfare. It is valid to preserve the earlier basic advantages of our Army and simultaneously enrich them with new battle methods. Under present conditions the new tactic should essentially proceed from the following three principles.

1. In order to carry out guerrilla actions, several combat groups are sent out, whose task it is to contact, weaken, and disperse the enemy forces. Their actions are co-ordinated with those of local units, which operate in

the rear or on the flanks of the enemy, move amongst him, but also confront him head on. They will be able to fulfil this important task only with the support of the populace and only then when in all their combat operations they exhibit the utmost independence and initiative, mobility and determination. During guerrilla actions these combat groups will also be given such tasks as the destruction of roads, enemy constructions, and fortifications as well as the separation of his troops from the latter in open terrain.

2. In the enemy's main assault directions, a defence system is created that serves the direct protection of the soviet area. It fulfils its purpose only when it succeeds in restraining a maximum of enemy forces with a minimum of men and weapons (including ammunition). In order to achieve this, individual bunkers or fortifications are installed at strategically important points, which are then able to withstand enemy air bombardments and artillery fire. In mountainous terrain mobile defence fighting is adequate.

Whatever the situation one must always keep in mind the specific qualities of our troops, the characteristic ability of our Red Army soldiers to fight heroically. In every defensive operation, therefore, an active defence must be organized. The bunker positions are held with a limited number of men and weapons, whereas the main forces disperse and destroy the enemy in short swift strikes and raids out of the hinterlands, so long as he is in the foreground of our fortified installations. Passive defence can only lead to defeat.

3. This concentrates the main forces so that they can deal the enemy resolute blows outside the fortified region and destroy his forces. Although guerrilla activity and defensive tactics are indispensable in revolutionary warfare, they represent merely auxilliary forms of combat. The main forces' manoeuvres and surprise strikes gain decisive importance. Only in this fashion can the Red Army achieve victory in the fifth "punitive expedition" and in successive enemy campaigns, after which it will be possible for it to return to the strategic offensive.

Still, tactical combat measures are also subject to alteration. As a rule, the enemy does not move more than ten to twenty *li* [one *li* is equivalent to about half a kilometre — *O.B.*] from his blockhouses. To lure him deep into our territory is probably no longer possible. Therefore, if we are to lay hold of him, we must wait in ambush to deal him a devastating blow as soon as he advances. Flank attacks on the enemy's rearguards are the most promising, but his vanguards can also be attacked. However, in doing this his communications with his own lines must be severed in order to ensure the destruction of his essential forces and the seizure of his weapons. In entering battle, all forces and means must be committed in order to force a decision as soon as possible.

All commanders should master the above three tactical principles and

be versed in the security measures necessary in each form of combat. In the case of blockhouse warfare, in which there are almost constant skirmishes with an enemy employing modern techniques, the success of tactical manoeuvres depends on these measures. They include reconnaissance by civilian spies and scouting patrols, informers, flank and rear security during marches, combat outposts around bunker positions, and passive and active anti-aircraft measures. Unfortunately, we have not yet mastered these techniques. The enemy takes advantage of our shortcomings in this regard with night and air raids.

Political activity among our own and the enemy's troops is frequently performed as if it were peacetime. What we need are more flexible methods of political work, especially on the lower levels.

As for armaments, it is necessary to use the means at our disposal sparingly. Ammunition, in particular, should not be expended prematurely. Firearms, and other weapons also, should be treated with extreme care. We still have much to do in this area.

The new conditions of warfare demand that our Red commanders act more resolutely and make bolder decisions than ever. They must be able to judge a situation quickly and accurately, to assess the numerical strength of their own and the enemy's troops, to take account of the terrain, and to heed the time factor. Only then are they capable of making courageous decisions and of executing them without faltering or hesitation. It is none the less essential that our commanders rely not on personal daring and audacity, but rather unite decisiveness and resolve with tactical skill.

If they fail to do this, they can no longer direct combat by their troops in the face of modern warfare, for they can then achieve no sound and flexible manoeuvres on the battlefield.

The political workers must equally be able to judge quickly the ever-changing situation and to appreciate the arduous conditions under which the struggle proceeds. They should also be versed in the principles of military tactics so that they can help achieve victory on the battlefield, instead of, isolated from practical combat operations, becoming lost in the clouds.

The periodical *Revolution and War* is devoted to the further education and training of our Red commanders and political workers so that they might better master modern tactics and correct methods of political work and thereby become highly qualified Red Army cadres.

Most of our commanders and political workers are former Red Army soldiers. They never had the opportunity to receive systematic training and have been forced to fall back on their own actual combat experience.

The periodical *Revolution and War* should arm them with knowledge derived from the compilation and generalization not only of the

valuable and diverse experience of our own Red Army, but from the experience of all other revolutionary wars, especially that of the civil war in the Soviet Union, as well.

Our commanders are invited to co-operate actively, so that the periodical might better perform this function. Only when the principles of military and political work in our Red Army are joined with its daily experience shall we be able to develop new and better training methods for our cadres.

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