DAWN
comes up like thunder
OUT OF CHINA

An intimate account of the
Liberated Areas in China

by

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD TO THE INDIAN EDITION

As I sit here in Prague at midnight and look eastward towards the Liberated Areas of China, where the dawn has already for several hours begun, I am thinking of the words of Peng Teh-hwai, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the People's Liberation Armies, when I saw him last February in Yenan:

"If Chiang takes Yenan, it begins his downfall."

Then he added:

"If we keep on encircling and wiping out Chiang's divisions at the present rate, we shall be ready by autumn to go over to a general counter-offensive."

The autumn has come, and the People's Liberation Armies have swept beyond the Yangtze in their forward march.

Yet it is not chiefly of war that I think in recalling those days in North China—though one of the greatest civil wars of history is going on there today. It is also one of the greatest of history's revolutions, and a revolution includes much more than war. I can best express it by recalling the night of the first full moon of the year, lunar calendar, when I was in Yenan and there was a dance on "Radio Hill".....

Chief editors Liao and Chen and the staff of the newspaper and radio came out in festival, including the "little devils" who ran with copy up and down the snowy slopes. We made merry on a floor of beaten earth with amateur dramatics, warming our hands at charcoal braziers. Tea, peanuts and Yenan dates were passed around.

Afterwards in Liao's cave we sat late discussing world politics, especially Asia, with the half dozen young people who wrote the English language broadcast. They were young Chinese from Hong Kong, Singapore, Java, America who came from overseas to fight for their country against the Japanese. That was how they knew English and came eventually to run the English broadcast for the Chinese Communists.

I knew that I must soon be leaving Yenan. The Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region was under attack. The troops of Hu Tsung-nan, the bitter Sian general, had for three months been raiding its frontier. Soon he might come in force. Then the life of Yenan would withdraw to the deeper hills where I could not follow. I must leave by one of the last American planes.

So I asked :

"What is the most important thing to tell the world about you? This Yenan has been your experiment station for twelve years. You have worked out here, under the hardest possible test conditions, the pattern of life and of government that has now spread across North China and Manchuria, from the Russian border to the mouth of the Yangtze, from the Mongolian deserts to the sea. Whatever now happens to Yenan, you have close to 140,000,000 people in your 'Liberated Areas'. Nobody in his senses believes that Chiang Kai-shek can suppress them all.

"Your pattern of life will survive then. And perhaps not only in China. You have been making a pattern for Asia here. One billion people live in south-east Asia. They are half the human race. They have common problems of poverty, ignorance, oppression. Their struggles for a better life follow a common pattern in China, Indo-China, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Korea and Japan. All Asia will learn from your struggles, your failures, your successes, more than

they will learn from America, Europe or the USSR. You are the vanguard of Asia here.

"What is the most important thing about you? Your form of government? Or industry? Or the ebb and flow of your civil war?"

In the lamp-lit cave there was a time of silence. Then Chen Lung, "The Dragon" from Java, spoke.

"I think it is the life of the common people. Formerly they were like slaves—hungry, poor, in debt, manhandled by the landlords. Now they are free. They are still backward, illiterate, superstitious. They have only taken one step on the road to a good life. But the peasant is free; he has become a human being. This is because he has his own land and the feudal system is smashed."

"Stop there," I interrupted. "When you say 'manhandled' by the landlord, how much is figure of speech and how much is fact?"

All of them laughed. Then Rittenberg of South Carolina spoke.

"Maybe the word 'manhandled' sounds stretched to your northern city people. But they do it down where I live still. And you should have met that girl in Kalgan who worked for the radio. Her father was one of those big boys in the stretch between Peiping and Changteh who could travel many days without leaving his own land. Her mother used to string up peasant women by the hands and beat them, because they did not please her in some of the unpaid 'feudal duties' they had to do." He illustrated by stretching his hands taut above his head, as if fastened to a barn rafter, and added: "Things like that made the girl break with her family when she was a student. She says she hopes the peasants will 'settle accounts' very thoroughly with that old man and woman."

"The landlord was really the 'lord of the land'," explained the Dragon. "There was an aura of terror about him. He had armed retainers to enforce his will on the countryside. He had power of life and death, for he decided on what terms a farmhand or a tenant might live and eat. If the landlord goes out in the country, every peasant fears that this lord will go to his house. Then he must at once serve the best food and perhaps kill his last chicken, when his wife and kids have not tasted flesh for weeks. In all dealings with tenants the landlord keeps accounts as he wills. I once asked a peasant why he didn't look at the bills against him when the landlord wrote them down. The man stared as if I were crazy. 'Do you think I want my head knocked in?'"

Cheng Ping of Canton spoke. He was one of that famous East River Column that rescued so many Americans and British from the Japs around Hong Kong.

"The landlord is the boss, the law. In the feudal country there is no law about him."

"Isn't there a general code of laws in China?" I asked. They laughed.

"Of course. But it doesn't operate. In all the Kuomintang areas Chiang Kai-shek rules the countryside through the landlords. Chiang asks of them only three things: 'Get taxes, get soldiers, get democrats!' If they can deliver the grain quota, secure—by kidnapping or otherwise—enough conscripts for Chiang's armies, and suppress all democratic movements, Chiang's law is satisfied."

"Asiatic feudalism is a very brutal feudalism," said the youth who came from Singapore. "Now, after thousands of years of landlords' rule, a change has come. It is the change in the peasant. Somehow you foreign writers do not grasp this. All these books on China—like Ted White's and Gunther Stein's—quite good books to tell about Kuomintang officials and Communists, about warlords and Democratic League intellectuals, about this and that conference, but in all these books you never meet a peasant. In China the peasants are four-fifths of everything.

"You have to get down to Chang Number Three and Li Number Four," he concluded. Rittenberg explained: "That's Chinese for 'Tom, Dick and Harry'."

I went out of the cave and stood on the high ledge looking down three valleys. The moon rode high over the ice of Yen River and the light, crusted snow of the hills. A procession of lanterns far down, near the municipal building, was lighting the path "for the god of wealth" into the coming year. Above the New Market, where the shops of merchants and handicraftsmen are, also their dwellings, a single rocket showered gold into the night.

For me there was a pang in this beauty. I was homesick already for all of this life of Yenan that I must be leaving—this life, so primitive, so without comfort, but moving as serenely in its orbit as the moon and the planets. These young people, whose own lives would soon be in danger, whose city was in danger, whose hopes for a peaceful solution of China's civil war were even now being shattered, were stressing the importance not of the war, not of Yenan, not even of the Chinese Communists, but of the everyday life of the Chinese peasants whom nobody else had considered important for thousands of years.

The book that I had been writing was smashed at that moment. It was a book that began with the strident profiteering of Shanghai, and the glamorous capital of Peiping, whence Executive Headquarters' planes were taking home the last of the Truce Teams. Thence to the quiet of Yenan, with a brief visit to the Communists' second capital in Kalgan, to the great Manchurian empire, and south to the Four Provinces Liberated Area in the bend of the Yellow River, where government was already dispersed to the hills. A book on China, seen by a foreign journalist.

It was smashed by that conversation. Pieces of it might be reassembled but only on a new pattern. No story began with Shanghai and the least of all with my arrival. Nor did the story begin with Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang. Nor was it chiefly about American imperialists or Chinese Communists, though these have their part in it.

The story must begin, I saw, with a Chinese farmhand who became a "labor champion" and a citizen. It begins with "Star Farmer" Li.

Prague, November, 1947 **A. L. S.**

Chapter 1

WE BEGIN WITH STAR FARMER LI

LI YU-KWEI sat in my cave in Yenan, smiling his modest, ingratiating smile. He was as curious to see his first American as I was to meet a "labor hero" of Yenan.

"What makes you a labor hero?" I asked him.

Li's body moved thin and agile in his homespun whitish trousers, long since discolored to a mottled yellow-brown. Above his high, almost pointed cheek-bones, his fuzzy towel was twisted to a turban that also had taken the color of dust. His bare-brown feet were loosely held by canvas slippers, rope-soled and so impregnated with the loess soil of the region that only careful scrutiny showed that the original color was black. Li gave no thought to his clothing; it was what everybody wore. He seemed a wiry bit of life barely emerging from his native earth.

Li's swarthy skin seemed darker than the usual Chinese color, though Chinese skins may range through many shades. Perhaps it was weather-beaten from long toil in the sun, or possibly tinged by some mixture of Central Asian blood. Yenan, in the far northwest of China, was an old outpost against the Moslem raids. Li himself knew of no such blood among his forebears. He was, he said, a "son of Han."

From time to time Li thrust his hand inside his black cotton jacket, pulled out a louse, cracked it and threw it on the floor. He was not aware that he was doing it; it was a habit long acquired. "Eighty per cent of the human race is lousy", Dr. Leo Eloesser once told me. Star Farmer Li was one of the eighty per cent.

General Chu Teh had sent him to me. I had asked some time earlier for an interview with that commander-in-chief of the People's Liberation Armies but he had been out of town inspecting crops at Nanniwan, where his army, between battles, raised much of its food on reclaimed wasteland. He had returned home the previous evening to find this farmer waiting with a gift of wheat. He had phoned me that he was busy with accumulated work for the moment but could offer a substitute interview. "One of our county's labor heroes spent the night at my place. I'll send him down to you."

Li was not shy at being interviewed, even by an American who had come so far. That the interviewer was a woman seemed to give Li a sense of almost indelicate daring. Li grinned; he was in the modern world! Li was a success!

"What makes you a labor hero?" I asked him.

"My village chose me," he answered simply. "Afterwards the county congress of heroes chose me too."

There was a pause while a boy of our compound brought tea and poured it for my guest. Li sipped the hot liquid with noisy appreciation. Then he went on.

"I planted more land than anyone else in the village. There are eighteen in my family; we planted 360 mou — 60 acres. This is more than all the other ten families in the village together. I put on much manure. I cultivated much. I even planted the edges of the land to keep down field mice. Most people do not plant the edges for the land is in steep terraces more than a man's height and the oxen cannot plough the edge. The mice and the pests live there and eat. But I broke the edge with a hoe and planted it."

Li finished his cup of tea and filled it again from the teapot. He seemed to consider what else to add. "I also dig water ditches to irrigate the lower land. I store water when the rains come and later I

spill it on the soil." He relaxed in his chair, content.

"So all this makes you a hero, a champion."

"To be a hero it is not enough to get good crops for myself. I organized a labor exchange brigade in the village. We cultivated all our land better and we also planted fifty-one acres of waste land that were not planted before."

When I tried to get the details of this labor exchange brigade, the Star Farmer could not give them consecutively. He was not used to consecutive thought. Little bits came out such as: "When the meeting was called for taxes, they said: 'This Wang must pay two bushels'. Wang says he cannot pay two bushels because his crop was bad in the drought. So I paid his two bushels for him....

"I got last year one hundred sacks of potatoes. This year I gave twenty sacks for seed. I gave to refugees who came from Yulin fleeing from oppression of the Kuomintang.... Mao Chusi.... chairman Mao.... says we must help strangers who come to us, so that they may quickly produce and our Border Region be strong."

Li....so much was clear....had been chosen "labor hero" by his village because he produced well and helped the village produce. He increased the village prosperity. Then he went to a congress of village champions and was there chosen one of the "county labor heroes". Some day he might aspire to be a "Border Region Labor hero", the highest honor of all. Li was a good citizen, a patriot and a builder, working for himself, his village, his county and his Border Region.

In the days of what Li calls "the old society", Li was a farmhand. He came to Yenan County "in the sixteenth year of the Republic" — 1927 — a boy of fourteen fleeing from one of China's frequent famines and begging his food by the way. Some of that energy that later made him a champion seems to have been in the boy already, for he got a job before his older brothers. He worked for a landlord and was given the use of a small cave in the side of a cliff. Li drew the rest of his family after him: his mother, sister and four brothers. The father was dead and none of the others had a job as steady as the boy Li secured.

Eight years Li worked for the landlord. In the later years, when he was a man grown, he got $10* a year for his labor. He also got his food, millet and a vegetable twice daily, and one towel each year to protect his head from the sun. He was head of the family, its main support. His older brother, worked for the landlord at harvest time for $1.00 a month and food, but the food was only during the months in which they worked. His younger brother was shepherd for the landlord, getting food all year but no pay. Li's wage of $10 went for food for all the family during the slack seasons. Even though they ate only millet mixed with husks, and slept very much in winter to keep from eating, Li's wages could not buy them food enough. At the end of every year, Li found himself owing two or three dollars to the landlord, a third of a year's pay.

"Never mind," the landlord would say. "You'll work for me another year."

This landlord was not a big landlord. He had sixty acres of which the most fertile part was worked for himself by the labor of Li and another farmhand, while the less fertile was given out to two "hodze"— share-croppers who borrowed food and seed from the landlord and took their pay in a share of the crop. One of these "hodze" raised one hundred bushels and was allowed to keep twenty-five bushels, giving seventy-five to the landlord. The other harvested seventy-five bushels of which he was allowed a little less than twenty.

At first Li got his cave from the landlord for nothing. But when the second "hodze" came, the landlord found that he could rent the cave to the "hodze" and told Li to get out of it. After some bargaining, since Li was a good worker, the landlord said that if Li would dig another cave on the landlord's land, "I will pay for the doorframe and window and you can live there." The entrance to a cave in the loess regions

* Figure reduced to American Money.

is commonly closed by a wooden lattice covered with paper that lets some light in. This is the only expense—except labor; it distinguishes a home of man from a den of beasts.

"We dug our cave but the landlord did not give us any wood for door or windows so we could not close the front of the cave. Even so we lived there, for the cave kept rain and snow off. It was bad that winter; my mother was always ailing. By the second winter we had a door and a window. All that time I worked for the landlord, beginning at dawn and working very late."

The landlord was impressed by Li's industry and decided to bind him to him. "If you'll work for me ten years, I'll get you a wife," he offered.

Li wanted a wife for he was a man grown. But the price of ten years labor seemed too much. "Five years is enough," he said. So no agreement was reached.

The landlord then made a proposition still less acceptable to young Li. "He said I should become his son and take his name and then he would get a wife for me. I refused this. It is an evil thing to be unfilial to ancestors."

"Would you get a share in his property?" I asked, pressing for reasons that led Li to reject comparative wealth. But "property" had for Li a different meaning from that which it has in our capitalist world.

"The landlord had one son already, who was an idler and an opium-smoker. If I become son, I must work all my life for that landlord and that opium-smoker without pay. If I have sons they will be that landlord's sons and not my father's. Better that I should die together with my mother than sell my father's seed."

Li therefore continued to work for the landlord as a hired laborer until "the revolution" came in 1935.

For the farmhand Li the word "revolution" had none of the taint of disorder that it seems to hold today for most Americans. All of Li's life people had made revolutions. The Republic was a revolution. The Kuomintang government called itself a revolution. To Li, the land revolution was the first one that did him any good. It was simple and beneficient.

"In January workers came out from the town saying that there was a revolution and we should plant as much as we could and nothing would go to the landlord. So I planted as much as I could—twenty-five acres. In October they divided the land and those twenty-five acres were mine!" The various methods of taking land from landlords, which were much discussed by the higher-ups and which we shall review in a later chapter, were hardly considered by farmhand Li. The land had been the landlord's; now it was his. A gift from the revolution, from the government.

Almost as great as the gift of the land was the gift of a new family status. "I got my wife from the revolution. She costs me only $20! I could never hope to get a wife before."

How did the revolution make wives cheaper? When I asked this, Li seemed perplexed. "Her father knows that I have land and am hard-working," was his first answer. Later he added: "If a wife does not like a man now, she can leave him, so people will not pay so much." It seems that two factors made Li's marriage possible: his possession of land, which made him a desirable connection; and the new laws on woman's freedom, which made the marriage sale uncertain and so reduced the price. Anyway, there it was; Li had his wife.

Suddenly, to my surprise, Li began to talk of his wedding. The details came with a rush. "We intended to use a sedan chair but then we saw that the revolution was against this because four people must carry the chair and this is exploitation. So we used a mule instead. Some people use two mules, in front and behind, and the bride rides in a chair between. But I used only one mule and she sat on it, not all covered as in a chair, but with her head and shoulders covered with a red cloth."

Li was smiling happily now. When he first began to speak of his wife he smirked and laughed expressively as a man does at a tale that is off color. To talk of his wife and to a foreign woman at this! Li laughed because it was so daring and improper! Then, as he talked on, and I did not seem to know that it was improper, Li's laughter changed until it was a breathless laugh of pure pleasure. He was seeing her riding

on a mule, veiled in red, the girl whose coming made a whole man of him, father of a new family. He was seeing her much more truly than on that day when she first came. I knew that in star farmer Li's soul one more shackle of the "old society" was breaking. Li was admitting that he loved his wife; he was willing that a foreign friend should know!

"And how did you visit General Chu Teh?" I asked him.

Li's dark face glowed as he answered: "It was that Mao Chusi—chairman Mao—went away to Chungking on that American plane." I knew that chairman Mao Tse-tung had gone to Chungking in autumn of 1945 in Ambassador Hurley's plane to discuss an agreement between the Chinese Communists and Chiang Kai-shek. But this was a year in the past and what had it to do with my new acquaintance Li?

"We all worry very much when Mao Chusi stays so long in Chungking. Maybe that Chiang will keep him and then everything will get worse. Mao gave us land and taught us how to work and help each other. Without Mao there will be no champion farmers and no elections. Maybe even landlords will come back.

"Then my friend Yang walks two days from Yenan to my village to tell me that our chairman Mao has come home. We are all very happy and I say to the hsien—county government—'Let us plant extra land for Mao Chusi and also for General Chu Teh because they are too busy to do their production work.' The magistrate says that this is not my business. All the same I cannot rest. Then I plant extra land by myself and our labor exchange brigade plants extra land and I bring eleven bushels weat, half to chairman Mao and half to General Chu. Now I am easy at heart for this is food for a year for them both."

Li's eyes gleamed still more brightly as he added: "I stayed one night at the cave of Mao Chusi and one in the cave of General Chu. Mao Chusi gave me a present of rice ccokies and sugar from the city. General Chu gave me tomatoes that he grew in his garden. He also gave me a dinner of rice with six dishes! Never in the old society could a tiller of the soil have a banquet of rice with a general! Truly our society is new!"

Exactly how new was this new society? I wondered. I pried further into Li's life. The twenty-five acres he got from the revolution have grown to sixty now. Ten acres Li reclaimed from the wasteland, and twenty-five he bought from other farmers. Why had the others sold?

"They moved away because they said our village was unlucky. Their babies died and their crops failed."

"So you don't think the village unlucky?" I asked with assurance. But Li was plainly uneasy. "How do I know? I think their crops fail because they have no manure. I have many sheep and much manure." But when I asked Li whether he had any children, a shadow crossed his face and he answered: "I have had four. One—my son —*is alive*."

Li felt my unasked question. A stubbornness settled on his face as he answered: "Where would I ever get so much land again? I am not sure that the village is unlucky. The woman from the hospital said that it might be the water....We boil the water now." So Li was defying a curse and was still uncertain. He was just beginning to listen to the "woman from the hospital". One baby at least was alive.

In China large families cluster rapidly around the fortunate. Though Star Farmer Li has only one living son, he has a "family" of eighteen members. These include his mother, his sister, four brothers with their wives, sons and daughters. Two of the brothers are away from home, one with the army and one in the government, but they come home to help in the harvest. Their families live with Li. There are also two hired hands.

The farmhands seemed an afterthought. They surprised me. "How much do you pay them?" I asked. I learned that each farmhand got sixteen bushels of grain, a pair of shoes and a towel as annual wages, in addition to food. This was about twice what Li formerly got, I figured, but it was

not very much. "Can they marry on that?" I asked.

Li considered carefully. "It is enough to feed a wife but not enough to buy one. It takes thirty bushels to buy a wife."

I tried to joke with him. "If your farmhand got a free wife he could support her?"

Li frowned. "Such things are done in the city," he conceded, "but in the country the parents do not like this free marriage." The propaganda on this had not yet converted Li.

Then I posed the real question. "You have more land than your former landlord had. Will they not dispossess you and divide the land among your farmhands?"

Li laughed very merrily. This was really a joke. Then as I persisted: "How do you differ from the landlord?" he grew uneasy.

"It is not the same," he insisted. "I go to the hill to work." He rocked back and forth on the edge of his chair in the effort of thinking. He began to argue. "That man only exploited. I give the farmhands boiled water when they are thirsty. I give them tobacco leaves."

Drops of sweat came to his brow as he struggled. Finally he burst forth. "I am illiterate and I cannot explain this clearly. But I know it is not the same. I go to the hill to work."

Only when I agreed that it was "not the same" was Li quieted. One thing at least was not the same. Farm champion Li hated the thought of becoming a landlord. In the "old society" he would have aspired to be one. Men who lived by exploitation without labor were no longer honored. Men were honored for their work. Later I learned that employment of farmhands, while not prohibited, was lessening in favor of the cooperative labor brigades.

I met Star Farmer Li unexpectedly again the following morning when I visited the magistrate of Yenan County.

Seven miles out from town by a rough dirt road, the county building stood on a ledge over-looking the valley. Magistrate Tsao, an intelligent man in his thirties, dressed in the customary suit of blue cotton, received me in the large white-washed room that was his office. It was furnished with one big table and several benches, all unpainted; in the room beyond was a raised brick platform covered with matting, the "kang" on which this chief official of the county slept. Tsao told me he came from a local farming family and had finished a secondary school. He had held the post of magistrate three years, having been re-elected twice. Under him came all questions of local government, finance, civil affairs, education, courts, police and local self defense.

"But my chief job," said Tsao, "is the drive to increase farm production. Everyone helps in this. Chief honors go to our 'labor heroes'." He nodded affably towards a man in homespun unbleached cotton trousers, whom he introduced as "Labor Hero Yang". The name rang a familiar sound. Yes, this was the man who had made a two day hike to Star Farmer Li's village, to tell him when Chairman Mao came home. Yang, I learned, was a member of the County Council.

Two other members of the County Council then entered the office, bowing more formally as they were introduced. One was a smiling, round-headed elderly man in a black skull cap, a former landlord named Chang. The other was a stocky man in his forties named Sung, who had been chief of police in the "old society" but was now organizer of village dramatic groups. All of them discussed with me the changes in the county during the twelve years since the Communists came.

"The biggest difference in government," said Magistrate Tsao, "is that formerly all officials were appointed from the top down and now they are elected from the bottom up."

"In the old society there was no voting," added Yang, "but now everybody votes."

"The biggest difference," grinned former police chief Sung, "is that government jobs were formerly held by people who wanted to make money. I bought my job as chief of police as my father and grandfather did before me. I made my profit by taking taxes from the people. I had also the right to license gambling-houses, and keep part

of the license fees. The magistrate bought his job from still higher officials."

"Nobody now can get rich by being an official," declared Magistrate Tsao. "I get less than my brothers have on the farm."

"Don't forget your special graft of two eggs," laughed Sung. It was explained that officials were paid in rations and that Tsao, as chief official, got an extra ration of two eggs a day. This "magistrate's graft", it seemed, was an old joke between them.

"The chief difference," said ex-landlord Chang, "is that now there is order. I was a landlord with big wealth. But twice I was kidnapped by bandits and held for ransom. My life was never secure." Chang had been a big landlord with three thousand acres. "All the land of eight villages," he said. Not more than six hundred acres of it had been cultivated.

"There were so many bandits that people did not dare live on the good valley land at all. They lived high on the hills and fortified their villages. They came down by day to till the soil. Nobody would reclaim waste land because the police exploited them with taxes and illegal seizures." Chang had not been able to get enough tenants to reclaim his wasteland for him. He himself, of course, had lived in the walled city.

Both landlord Chang and policeman Sung had run away in fear of their lives when the Communists first came. Both had come back, made their peace with new regime and been offered "as much land as they wished to till." Both wanted me to understand that they were now loyal citizens, using their abilities for the new society.

"Everybody suffered under the old society," declared ex-policeman Sung. "Even I, an official of the Kuomintang who profited by it, I also suffered. I was thin and sick because I smoked two ounces of opium every day. Such was the life people led then. When the Communists came, I ran away, fearing that they would kill me. I came only after several years. The people of my village said: 'Your land is all divided but we will give some of it back to you if you want to farm'. I became at last acquainted with my neighbours. I also worked. I saw that nobody else smoked opium. So I cured myself. I took it on like a war. Now I am healthy. I can walk thirty miles any day."

"What is a man's life for but to have food and clothes and friends," said ex-landlord Chang with a courtly and rather formal bow, as he left for a moment. As soon as Chang stepped out, Magistrate Tsao told me that Chang "has plenty of money still. He had large capital in silver bars and he invested it in starting the local paper mill, which is one of the most profitable industries in the region. He's a clever money-maker but we don't mind as long as he invests in something useful."

The educated farmer Tsao, the illiterate "labor hero" Yang, the former landlord and former police chief were all working together on the County Council. What the ex-landlord and ex-policeman would do if the old society returned was of course anybody's guess. They had managed, at least, to fit themselves rather well into the new society.

They began putting food on the table, bowls of millet and greens, flavored with meat. While the table was being arranged I followed ex-landlord Chang out of doors to stretch myself in the sun. Suddenly I saw a figure that seemed familiar, a thin, agile body in earth-stained trousers, black cotton jacket and twisted fuzzy turban. Yes, it was Li Yu-kwei !

Star Farmer Li beamed all over when he saw me. He was on his way home with his donkeys and his purchases from town. When he found me here, seven miles out in the country, I was already an old friend. Magistrate Tsao, seeing this, invited Li to stay with us all for dinner. Li happily accepted and then went out to tie and feed his donkeys. He returned with a large bundle wrapped in the rough, brown paper of the **Yenan Emancipation Daily,** and opened it on the table with a hospitable sweep of his hands.

Big, red tomatoes, rice cookies and a small, precious package of sugar poured out of the bundle. They were the presents from General Chu Teh and Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Li pressed them all upon us, keeping nothing back. He was so eager in his hos-

pitality that it was I who at last reminded him: "You have eighteen in your family who will want to see these gifts."

"Yes, you must save half of the gifts to show your family," agreed Magistrate Tsao.

Star Farmer Li wrapped up half of the food in the brown paper, and continued to ply us with the rest. His dark brown face was alight with high ecstasy. This was a great moment in his life. Once he had been a farmhand who hardly ranked as human. Now, as a labor hero, returning from visits to Chairman Mao and General Chu with presents, he was acting as host to the chiefs of the county and even to a foreign guest.

Star Farmer Li, still lousy, illiterate, superstitious, is an honored citizen and builder of the new society through his industry in producing food. This honor and dignity of human labor is a new pattern in that continent where for thousands of years there has been a great gulf between the men who are honored and the men who toil.

Chapter 2

HEIR OF FORTY CENTURIES

Farmer Li is heir of forty centuries. Behind him lies the most continuous civilization the world has known. He and his kind produced it by their labor. Yet he has benefitted little from it in four thousand years.

Li calls himself a "son of Han" from the great Han Dynasty that spread the Chinese civilization two thousand years ago about the time of Christ. But the people lived here much earlier. They lived here before the uses of iron were invented, before men put oxen to the plough. These are no newcomers like the peoples of America. Ever since men stirred the soil with a pointed stick, this was their land.

When the populous Yangtze Valley was still a jungle covered swamp and no tools were known to man by which it might be cleared, some of the world's first farming began on these open lands of the north. Crude irrigation was done for the kings of Chou in what today is Shensi. Dated records appeared about one thousand years before the birth of Christ. These show a feudal society in which peasants tilled private fields for their families and public fields for their lord.

Ever since then the long generations of farmers—industrious, patient, illiterate and lousy like farmer Li, have toiled on this Chinese soil. They have built a way of life based on the fight of centuries for survival.

They learned the grim economy of food. Men hope for three meals a day during harvest labor but otherwise content themselves with two meals of millet or rice, flavored with rough vegetables. Meat is a feast-day luxury and is used in tiny slivers to extract the utmost flavor. Farmers sleep long in winter, almost like hibernating bears, that they may consume less food.

They have learned to keep warm with little fuel. Northern homes are built facing south to catch the sun. They are heated by the **Kang,** a platform of clay brick raised two feet above the floor over a large section of the room, and warmed by the exhaust of the family cooking or by fires of dried weeds. Sleeping together on the kang, people need little covering at night. Bodies are kept warm by cotton padded clothing, which is much cheaper and warmer than our wool.

Living on the land and tilling it with joint family labor, the families are held together by their land. They are patriarchal families, in which the "old man" directs the toil of his sons long after they are married. The new brides become part of the family, —the word which we translate "bride" means in Chinese "daughter-in-law", since this is the newcomer's most important relation. As parents died, they were buried in their own soil and tablets were erected to their memory by descendants who revered them as the source of life.

Such is the way of life our farmer Li inherits. Based on the labor of trillions of his fellow farmers, great civilization arose. Toiling long and living thinly, these tillers of the soil produced surplus. On this grew handicraft, trade, invention and art. Great walled cities were built for the commerce of large areas. In them lived merchants, landlords and military rulers, drawing profits, rents and taxes from the farmers. Fine silks, woven rugs, exquisite porcelain were produced by a never yet surpassed handicraft. The trade in these goods extended across Asia two thousand years ago into those lands that would some day become Europe.

Three thousand years ago China had irrigation works; constructions two thousand years old still function in Ninghsia and the Red Basin of Szechwan. Written records of water control go back twenty

centuries. There were books on medicine and the human body before the birth of which tribute grain came for centuries to Christ. The Great Wall built by their early emperors was the greatest continuous fortification ever erected. The Grand Canal, by the imperial capital, is still the world's longest artificial water-way.

The unity of the people came first not in politics but in culture. Five centuries before Christ there arose the "hundred schools of philosophy", appearing at the same time as the philosophers of ancient Greece. In both these lands, so far apart and so unknown to each other, there was a common problem. Kings were at war and philosophers sought some moral authority to unite men under one harmonious sway. It was a long time ago, but the problem still persists.

It was then that Confucious developed his system of social ethics based on the family. A firm paternalism from rulers and a filial obedience from the people were what he advocated. Stable, benevolent without a hint of democracy anywhere. His ethics are still the philosophy of conservative Chinese.

A philosopher named Mo Tsu taught, in opposition to Confucious an all embracing love of humanity reaching beyond family and State. "The man Chu'u is my brother", he wrote—in the fifth century B. C.! He denounced war in words that might have been said yesterday:

> "The murder of one person is called evil and incurs a death penalty..... The murder of a hundred persons is an hundredfold more evil....But when it comes to the great crime of attacking States, the gentlemen of the world do not know that they should condemn it. On the contrary, they applaud it, calling it righteous.....Do these gentlemen know the difference between right and wrong?"

The hundred schools of philosophy gave to the Chinese a unity of culture. But the feudal warlords fought on for another three hundred years. Political unity came first through a harsh dictator, Shih Huang-ti, first emperor of all China. He got his start in the region which is today Shensi. He smashed the feudal lords around him, and established a freer arrangement of farming whereby the use of land could be paid for by grain instead of by labor and feudal duties. He also built big irrigation works and promoted the use of the new iron implements. Thus he got a more productive agriculture, which strengthened his rule to beat his rivals. There was no benevolence about him. The common folk hated him because so many thousand of his laborers died in building the Great Wall of China. Scholars hated him because he burned all books of the past. His name as a merciless dictator is still hated by the Chinese people after twenty-one hundred years.

A common soldier started the rising that overthrew the first dictator. After seven years struggle a man of humble origin, Liu Pang sat on the throne as founder of the great Han dynasty, which built the greatest empire then konwn in the world. Liu Pang was a realist. He built his power on the rising class of merchants. Chinese silk, jade, lacquer and art products crossed all boundaries, penetrating the Roman Empire and reaching even the far shores of Britain, that cold, northern isle where our forefathers were fleeing through the woods from the Caesars. In the early decades of the Christian era, a Chinese general carried the rule of the Han across Turkestan and reached the shores of the Caspian with seventy-thousand men.

Even in those early days the evils of tenant farming became serious. A progressive emperor, Wang Mang, noting that the empire's prosperity was threatened by the misery of the people under the burden of rents, taxes and debt, opposed the landlords and decreed all land the property of the State to be divided among the tillers of the soil under State protection. The wealthy and powerful assassinated him in AD 23. Bankrupt peasants became bandits under the Han dynasty as they have done in modern times under similar pressure. The empire weakened and the northern hordes came in.

This is the sequence that has occurred in China through the centuries. Whenever new lands, new tools or a better access to the soil has increased the common people's wealth, there have arisen brilliant epochs of culture and stability, golden ages of the

arts and of scholarship. Again and again, when entrenched abuses brought internal conflict, the ruling dynasty was overthrown from without or within.

The great T'ang Dynasty (617 to 907 A.D.) made China for the second time the largest and most populous State in the world. Li Shih-min, second of the T'ang but the dynasty's real founder, ensured prosperity by dividing the farm lands, and giving allotments to the actual tillers "in perpetuity" with restrictions on purchase. He also reformed the civil service. Farm production and government efficiency increased and central treasury receipts in 746 A.D., after a century of T'ang rule, showed in a single year 125,000 pound weight of silver, over a million tons of grain, 7,400,000 bolts of silk of mixed quality, 1,800,000 bolts of finest quality, and 1,350,000 pieces of cloth. China, at peace on fertile farming lands, had reached her Golden Age.

Brilliant and cosmopolitan in those days were the streets of Chang An, capital of the T'ang Dynasty on the present site of Sian. There were four thousand poets in three centuries. Painting flourished equally. The capital was thronged with visitors: Siberian tribesmen, jungle peoples from India, Greeks, Arabs, Persians, Japanese. Japan was just beginning to develop and learned eagerly from the high culture of the T'ang. Canton was a center of seaborne trade carried on by Arabs. Few periods of world history have known so large and civilized an area that remained stable for so long a period as the Golden Age of culture in China under the T'ang. After the T'ang, another great dynasty rose, the Sung, and reigned for another three centuries.

Yet inner weaknesses grew through the centuries of these dynasties and in the end assisted their decay. Laws giving the land to the tillers were soon revoked. Emperors tried to increase land by draining lakes and dyking rivers. In a single year, 1174 A.D., a report from only forty three counties shows 24,451 water-control projects, which irrigated or reclaimed 752,000 acres. But these lands, as the poets of the time make clear, fell chiefly to corrupt officials. One conscientious poet, who was also an official, wrote of a poor woman gleaning behind the reapers with her child in her arms:

"She gleans their leavings to feed her starving belly" and expressed shame that his own salary should be "three hundred loads of wheat."

A clever progressive in the Sung Dynasty gained power and tried new experiments. Wang An-shih made government loans to farmers on the security of growing crops; it was known as the "Young Shoots Law." He fixed prices and limited profits and abolished taxes in labor, which bore hardest on the poor, substituting taxes on wealth. The Conservatives soon got into power and smashed his laws. Later, all factions were overwhelmed by the Mongol hordes, but these barbarians in their turn adopted Chinese culture.

In all those centuries there was no higher civilization in the world than China's. In the epochs of religious wars in Europe, the Emperor Li Shih-min in China welcomed to his court the teachers of all religions, Buddhist, Zorastrian, Moslem and Christian. When Marco Polo came across the desert route from Europe in the days of Kublai Khan, a Mongol Emperor, he found here a civilization surpassing his native Venice in its handicraft and its use of coal and metals. French missionaries in the eighteenth century found China under another dynasty, the Manchu, and described it as the most splendid empire in the world, whose court surpassed the magnificence of the great French kings. Not until the industrial revolution came in Europe, was there a civilization that could rival China's.

The decades that saw in the west the storm of the American and French Revolutions found Emperor Ch'ien Lung ruling in China for sixty years of unbroken tranquillity as scholar, poet and patron of art. Yet his system of supreme splendor had a foundation of supreme poverty. The hierarchy of the Chinese upper class had developed through the centuries an almost unbeatable system for keeping the common people down.

The rule of the feudal landlords in the rural districts was not only reinforced by the old Confucian ethics, but by the respect the common people paid to learning, and

by what the scholars called the common culture, which was the heritage of the upper class. The Chinese written language is impossible to master without years of study. It was the monopoly of the leisured. It was the secret language of the ruling group. Even the spoken tongue, called "mandarin" was the dialect of the court and not of the people.

The empire was not a close-knit entity, like a modern State. It was a vast collection of counties, held together by a system of tribute collected at the bottom and passed on to the top. It was held together also by the common language, which was the language of the ruling class. The "sons of Han", the common folk, spoke differently in different provinces. If some gifted son of the poor attained the difficult written language, he was by that time alienated from the people by his long years of study and by the traditions of scholar class, from which rulers were drawn.

For the common folk, the county, or hsien, was the ultimate in government. They seldom passed its limits even in thought. Somewhere beyond the county was an emperor, but he was little more a fable as the source from which came the county magistrate, whom the people must obey. The magistrate lived in a walled town, with the merchants and bigger landlords. There was no appeal beyond them, no thought of appeal.

This was the system known to farmer Li as the "old society". It hardly occurred to him that it could be changed. Only when the workers came from the cities and told him of revolution did he know that a new day had come.

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The forces that broke the old society were not created either by the Communists or by the Kuomintang. They came from the industrial west. New birth came by rape, by intercourse enforced by the imperialist lands.

China shut out the early European navigators, though she had welcomed the Arab traders for a thousand years. She considered the Europeans savage and dangerous. There was reason to think so, for from 1517, when the first Portuguese sailors sailed in Canton, the European adventurers were pirates whenever they got the chance. All of them—Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, British—plundered Chinese junks sailing to the Philippines and shot up cities on the China coast, considering the natives, heathen whose massacre was legitimate.

So when George the Third of England sent an envoy asking for trade relations—in 1792, shortly after his defeat by the American colonies—the serene poet-potentate Ch'ien Lung replied: "The Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance there is no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians". He excused King George's "ignorant presumption" because of the lonely remoteness of your island, cut off from the world by intervening wastes of sea." This doubtless seemed to the British very funny, but not any stranger than their passion for foreign trade seemed to the Chinese.

Under the influence of Canton merchants, the emperor finally assigned one port—Canton—for foreign trade. This permission built in Canton a commercial capitalism that overthrew Manchu dynasty after one hundred and twenty years. Those years were for the Chinese farmers years of increasing misery and revolt.

It began with the Opium War, in 1842, by which the British East India Company forced the opium trade on China. The surrender terms compelled China to open other ports, where foreigners might live without being subject to Chinese laws, and to cede to Great Britain the rocky island which later became Hong Kong. In the next decades all the great powers came to plunder this eastern treasure chest. England took Burma; France took Indo-China. In the treaty ports the foreigners had "concessions", islands of foreign rule supported by foreign troops. The largest was the International Settlement of Shanghai, a foreign-ruled port which controlled the trade outlet of two hundred million Chinese of the Yangtze Valley.

The T'ai Ping Rebellion (1848-65) came as a result of the Opium War. It was a revolt of farmers, whose burdens were increased by the cost of the war and by the bankrupting of village handicrafts through

forcible import of foreign goods. The revolt drew in the merchants, who also were being ruined, and the educated classes, who were deeply humiliated by the shameful peace terms. The rebellion began in south China and swept through sixteen of China's eighteen provinces. It set up a capital in Nanking, whose rule lasted seventeen years.

The rebellion was not at first anti-foreign but anti-landlord and anti-Manchu. The rebels burned landlords' title-deeds and usurers' promissory notes and announced a new land system to give land to tillers who had none. Influenced by missionary teachings, the leaders adopted a confused Christianity, calling their rule the "kingdom of peace" and their ruler "the Heavenly Prince, younger brother of Jesus Christ". They even sought help from foreigners. Great Britain assisted them at first, in order to force a treaty from the Manchu Emperor. This secured, both Britain and France gave armed help to suppress the T'ai Pings in long bloody war that cost tens of millions of lives.

Japan next took a hand in carving up China. She entered the modern world by attacking her neighbor in 1894-95. Swiftly victorious, she seized Formosa, detached Korea, and imposed an indemnity whose terms brought China under foreign financial control. Other powers got blocks of territory on long term leases. Foreigners controlled the customs as security for China's debts. Foreigners got the right to build factories and exploit cheap labor in Chinese cities, uncontrolled by Chinese law.

The Boxer Rebellion, a blind upsurge of peasant revolt, was diverted by a reactionary Empress Dowager into a general attack on foreigners. It was mercilessly put down by foreign troops of all powers. A little more than a century after the tranquil emperor disdained all foreign intercourse, the armies of most of the world powers were looting the Peiping palaces, and burning the Hanlin Library, the priceless possession of generations of scholars.

The revolt against the Manchu Dynasty began in the Wuhan cities on October 10, 1911, a day now marked as the great national holiday. It was led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen through his revolutionary party, the Tung Men Hui. This party, representing the rising Chinese businessmen, scholars who had studied abroad, and some farmers, found it easy to overthrow the weak dynasty but difficult to consolidate a united rule. Their parliament was disrupted by Yuan Shih-kai, who had ambition to be emperor, but who did not succeed.

The empire fell apart into its counties. A shadow government sat in Peking for the use of foreign dimplomats but the proverb ran that its decrees "could not get out of the city gates". Local power came into the hands of those who could take it or buy it. It was grabbed by generals or by bandits. Foreigners seized the chance to buy natural resources from these local warlords, getting China's treasures cheap. China had become to the world powers booty to be divided.

The first World War diverted the attention of the European aggressors and gave the role of aggressor-in-chief to Japan. She presented in 1915 the now notorious Twenty-one Demands. They were accepted by the corrupt Anfu clique, then in power in Peking. They gave to Japan the German possessions in China, opened Manchuria and Mongolia to Japanese penetration, installed Japanese in the army, the police and in finance and threw in railways and naval bases for good measure. The Chinese educated classes expected America to protect them in the Versailles Treaty, but that conference sided with Japan.

China's awakening began from the shock of that aggression. On May 4, 1919, a date forever after famous, fifteen thousand Peking students rushed into the streets demanding punishment for the "traitor government" that agreed to those demands. The movement spread from city to city, taking in fifty thousand students. They poured into the villages to the farmers, into the factories to the workers. They drew the merchants into an anti-Japanese boycott. By the middle of July they forced the resignation of the government.

The "May Fourth Movement" as it was afterwards called, marked a greater change than the fall of the Manchus. For the first

time, the students—by tradition the coming leaders—had declared clearly against both foreign aggression and the semi-feudal Chinese government. Their declaration had aroused all classes and the government had been overthrown.

More social and political changes were packed into the decade that followed the first World War than into many centuries of Ming and Manchu emperors.

Cheap factory goods from the west flooded the Chinese market, ruined the farmers, forced them by hordes into the cities where new industries grew up. A new working class appeared getting no wages at all at first, but only a few bowls of rice. Trade unions sprang up in Hong Kong and then in Canton and found themselves fighting, not individual employers but the whole system of foreign imperialism. Three years after the May Fourth Movement aroused all classes, a fifty day seaman's strike showed that even foreign capital could be beaten. A national labor congress was held on May 1, 1923 in Canton, and two years later an All China Federation of Labor was born.

The same years saw the rise of the first Farmers Unions. Secret societies for famers have existed for centuries under such names as "Red Spears", "Yellow Wands", "Heavenly Gates", "Big Swords". They were usually controlled by the richer farmers or even by the landlords and hence had no social program. In 1923 a young student went to a village near Canton to organize farmers against high rents. The farmers fled in terror from his first attempt to list their names. When they learned the power of collective action, Farmers Unions grew with terrific speed. Within three years they had millions of members and had taken local government power in many of the southern provinces.

Two political parties appeared in the midst of all this revolutionary agitation the Communists and the Kuomintang. For three years they worked together. Those years were afterwards called the "Great Revolution".

Dr. Sun's first revolutionary organization had split after over-throwing the Manchus. Influenced by the Russian Revolution and by Russian advisers—no other country in those days would deal with Dr Sun—he decided to strengthen his movement by including the newly awakened workers and farmers. The first nation-wide congress of his new organization, the Kuomintang, admitted the recently organized Communist Party in a body, and supported the unions of workers and farmers.

The famous "Three People's Principles" earlier originated by Dr. Sun, were given a new and clear definition at this congress. "People's Nationalism" was declared to mean both independence from foreign control and the equality of nationalities—Mongols, Moslems, Manchus — within China. "People's Democracy", which had been a vague reference to voting rights, was defined to include free speech, press, and assembly and the right to organize. "People's Livelihood" was expanded into a social program that included "Land to the tiller" and most of the other reforms now promoted by the Communists.

In three triumphant years, 1924-27, the joint forces swept to power in most of China. Progressives from all China flocked to Canton to join the new army. Its officers were trained in the Whampoa Military Academy, established with Russian advisers. In 1926 under General Chiang Kai-shek, the united nationalist armies began their northward march.

Up through the hills and valleys of South China, the devoted Farmers Unions led "our armies" by secret paths to take provincial warlords by surprise. They set up in the wake of the armies what they called the "People's Power."* In Shanghai the armed workers, led by the Communist Chou En-lai, themselves threw out the northern warlord and turned the city over to Chiang Kai-shek. In Hankow and Kiukiang the workers poured into the foreign concessions, taking them back for the people of China.

The capture of Shanghai, center both of international capital, of the biggest Chinese capitalists and of the strongest organizations of workers, brought to a head all the class frictions that smouldered under the

* See chapter on Communists.

united front of Communists and Kuomintang. Knowing that this would happen, the Russian advisers had advised the Kuomintang not to drive on Shanghai but to go straight north to Hankow, connect with the armies of Feng Yu-Hsiang from the northwest, and avoid conflict with foreign imperialism until they had a stable hinterland. Such was the strategy agreed to by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the Kuomintang Central Committee.

Chiang, as commander-in-chief, changed this plan. Shanghai was rich booty whose control would make him independent of any party. His taking it made a show down necessary between the revolutionary forces and the big capitalists of the port. Chiang chose his side, approached the capitalists for support and paid for it by a blcod purge of Communists and trade union leaders. Chou En-lai estimates the victims in Shanghai alone as five thousand killed.

The Great Revolution was broken. The game of power politics resumed. Chiang took power in Nanking with the money of Shanghai capitalists while two thirds of the Kuomintang Executive Committee still awaited him in the original rendezvous at Hankow. He reorganized the party around his personal dictatorship. Buttressed by capital and by quick foreign recognition, the new Nanking government set out to unify China in its own way. The Russian advisers were gone, but Japanese, Germans, Italians, Americans all willingly took their turn in "advising" China for what they could get. Chiang was clever in using his allies but all of them felt, in the end, betrayed.

Farmers unions were smashed all over the country by local warlords, many of whom were now in the once revolutionary Kuomintang. Chiang based power on the landlords now. "Big landlords are consolidating their position at the expense of the poor peasantry", wrote Professor Charles Hodges in 1934 in **Asia** magazine. Farmers by the millions were driven from their homes by bandits, floods and famines. He wrote, "When the Nationalists took power in 1927 a population greater than that of Holland was homeless. In 1933, the number was 65,000,000 the population of prewar Germany". Chiang himself admitted to the inner circle of his party: "They (the people) cherish the same hate towards us as formerly towards the Manchus".*

For farmer Li there was little change in the "old society" except that it seemed to grow worse. But the old society could not really be the same any longer. For tens of millions of Farmer Lis had experienced, if only for a few months, the sense of "People's Power."

*China Year Book 1931, p. 541.

Chapter 3

THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS

China's political history has revolved for more than twenty years around the relation of two parties: the Kuomintang and the Communists. When these two parties cooperated, the Chinese people went from victory to victory in the Great Revolution, sweeping aside feudal warlords and foreign enemies alike. When the revolution was smashed by the slaughter of workers and farmers, the history of the next ten years became the tale of Chiang's futile attempts to liquidate the Chinese Communists by all the forces at his command.

Who are these Communists who so persist in the rural areas of China ? Who set up regional governments, yet fly the same flag that is flown by Nanking? Who maintain their own armies and yet preach coalition government ? Who proclaim a "new democracy" and a "new capitalism" and yet call themselves "Communists"?

These questions can now be answered with fortunate clarity because the Communists themselves discussed their history and their policies for two years before their Seventh Congress in 1945. They came to clear conclusions about their achievements, their program and also about some costly mistakes that they don't intend to repeat. They will tell you about it all very frankly now, including the mistakes.

The Chinese Communist Party began in the revolutionary upheavals that swept the world at the close of the first world War. They distinguish three periods in their history: the Great Revolution, begun by united Kuomintang and Communist forces but broken by the split in 1927; the agrarian revolution and civil war, which ended with the Sian incident December 12, 1936; and the period of Anti-Japanese resistance, during which there was a national united front. This national united front was disturbed by armed clashes from 1939 onward but was not officially broken until March 1947, with the expulsion of the Communist diplomatic representatives from Nanking.

Leadership, ideas and policies changed during these periods. "The Communist Party was always heroic", said Lu Ting-yi, chief of the Information Bureau in Yenan, "but many mistakes were made by the leadership in getting experience. They were costly mistakes and have taught us to avoid such mistakes later." It is from Lu Ting-yi and other Yenan leaders, that I give the main facts of party history.

The first six years of the Chinese Communist Party were guided by Chen Tu-hsiu, a brilliant Peiping professor who was one of the two leaders of the Renaissance in literature before he left literature for politics. He was one of the party's founders.

The first congress met in 1921 in Shanghai with twelve delegates representing only a few score members. Mao Tse-tung attended from Hunan. Almost at the same time a Chinese Communist group was formed in Paris, among Chinese who had gone to France as allies in the world war. Chou En-lai was one of this group; his knowledge of languages and foreign affairs was to make him the party specialist in foreign relations. A little later a group was formed in Berlin; Chu Teh, an officer who had gone abroad to study military technique on the battlefields, was in it.

All three groups had combined by 1923, when the party held its third congress. There were also many new members from

the working-class, stirred by the great seamen's strike the year before. This congress proposed a united front to the Kuomintang. They became an integral part of the Kuomintang at its first congress in 1924.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen agreed to the combination because he had finally become convinced that his party of patriotic business men and intellectuals could not create a modern, democratic China without the help of large masses of farmers and workers. The Communists agreed to it because they also held that the first job in China was to smash feudalism and warlord rule, and that cooperation with progressive capitalists and professional men was needed.

Success was terrific as long as the combination held together. Farmers Unions and labor unions grew with incredible speed, and when the Kuomintang combined this strength with that of the upper class progressives, it became a first class fighting power. When the revolutionary armies marched north, their way was smoothed by the underground organizations set up by the Communists. In Hunan province alone, four hundred thousand members of Farmers' Unions were ready to act as spies, guides and labor for the advancing forces. Provincial warlords collapsed with little fighting. Then the membership of Farmers' Unions in Hunan jumped to two million, with ten million in their families. Together with the labor unions and merchants' associations, they set up local government known as "People's Power."

As the only foreign correspondent who visited Hunan that year I saw the effects of it. In the little town of Yungfong, for instance, twelve thousand people lived by a rapid brown river near the hills. The land around was owned by twelve rich families, who were accustomed to hold the rice until starving people rioted at the granary doors. Then they would open and sell at the highest price. Handicraftsmen got a wage of two or three dollars a month and food. Coolies fought for jobs on the river wharves, risking life and limb, while the old and weak waited dumbly for starvation.

In the year when the revolutionary armies marched north preaching the rule of the people, students came from Changsha, the provincial capital, to organize the countryside. They spoke in the name of the Kuomintang, but this included the Communists; the organizing drive was a united one. Farmers' unions were organized in all villages around Yungfong, correlated in a Central Farmers' Union in Yungfong itself. Twenty-four labor unions were organized in the town: wharf-coolies, rice huskers, cooks, iron workers and many more. A merchants' association was formed, and a local branch of Kuomintang which included peoples of all classes. A Women's Union demanded equality for women. The unions passed regulations for their members; the wharf-coolies, for instance, required that men be hired in rotation, to give the older men a chance. The unions, taken together, made up the "People's Power".

The larger landlords fled. Most of the magistrates remained but, in the words of a local missionary, "their power existed only to sign the resolutions of the 'People's Power' ". The Farmers' Union took control of surplus rice, agreeing to repay at harvest, but without interest. They set up "People's Food", selling at low cost in rationed amounts to the poor. Some of the funds were used for "People's Schools", which spread rapidly by the simple method of telling the tutors in rich families to teach also any group that wanted to learn. Peoples' Tribunals were set up and displayed a sense of justice and organization. Yungfong, for instance, gave only minor sentences, sending serious cases to the county tribunal at Siang-siang, which had power of life and death.

The organizing genius of the Chinese farmers came out clearly in this upheaval. In less than six months time these children of the feudal ages were dealing fearlessly, shrewdly and democratically with local government, food control and education. There were, of course, excesses, or acts that seemed excesses to the upper classes. Many of Chiang's officers were sons of landlords. The farmers' revolution, therefore, precipitated the split between Communists and Kuomintang. Chiang supported the bloody massacre of the farmers, and thus gained

the support of the landlords and local warlords. The Communists supported the farmers. They regret today that they did not support them enough.

"The mistake of Chen Tu-hsiu" as the Communists now see it, was his "submission to the bourgeoisie", i.e. to Chiang.

Chiang had begun to purge Communists before the Northern Expedition. In March 1926, as commander of the armed forces. he arrested the commander of a war vessel for being a Communist, and announced that all high officers and political workers in the army who were Communists must be removed from their posts. That was the time, the Communists now think, to have made their stand. They had helped so successfuly to ,organize the Kuomintang armies that three of the four armies were under their influence while they had some sympathy even in the fourth. Many Communists wished to oppose Chiang's order but Chen Tu-hsiu submitted in the interests of harmony.

"This policy left us unable to resist Chiang's counter-revolution later", said Lu Ting-yi to me. "One must know how to unite with the bourgeoisie on some points and struggle with them on others. Today we unite with capitalists against feudalism and against foreign imperialists, but we struggle against capitalists' attempts to exploit workers and against their tendency to appease feudalism....Chen Tu-hsiu only united and did not struggle. So the bourgeoisie gained its aims through us, but thwarted ours".

The Communists had a second chance in the Wuhan government, maintained through summer of 1927 by more than half of the Kuomintang in opposition to Chiang's coup d'etat at Nanking. But Chen Tu-hsiu still retreated. He allowed workers' pickets to be disarmed in the cities. When a warlord seized Changsha and one hundred thousand farmers surrounded the city, all set to take it over in the name of the "democratic government of Wuhan", the Wuhan government was terrified at the power of the people, and demanded that the Communists make the farmers go home. Chen Tu-hsiu so ordered. The bewildered farmers were broken by confusion.

"This retreat of the Communists left the workers and farmers leaderless and made possible the July counter-revolution in Wuhan", said Lu Ting-yi. "Never again will we desert the farmers and workers when they are ready to fight for 'People's Power'.".

Another mistake is now considered to have been the southward march after the Nanchang uprising. In the great split, part of the armies in Nanchang revolted under the leadership of Ho Lung, Yeh Ting and Chu Teh. They left Nanchang and started south towards Canton. "We had strong forces in Nanchang; we should have held the city or established a rural base near by", is the present judgment. "But we lacked experience and confidence and started south out of an old-home feeling for Canton as the base of the revolution. Our armies were defeated near Swatow and dispersed. Only a thousand men were left under Chu Teh when he moved into Hunan next spring."

The membership of the Communist Party had been 50,000 at the height of the "Great Revolution"; it sank to 10,000 after all the purges and suppressions. Chen Tu-hsiu was removed from leadership.

The Communists next swung to the other extreme and made mistakes due to overconfidence of new leftist" leaders. The first of these was the launching of uprisings in isolated cities in the winter of 1927-28. The first uprising, the Canton Commune, is still considered to have been justified, though it lasted only three days and was drowned in blood. One such uprising was needed, "as the rear-guard action of the Great Revolution that announced our program to the people". Other hopeless uprisings were just a bloody waste.

The program announced in the Canton Commune rallied workers and farmers in following years in many provinces under the name of "Soviet China".

In the spring of 1928 an armed force called the "Farmers' Self-Defense Corps", under Mao Tse-tung, met the remnants of Chu Teh's army at the borders of Hunan and Kiangsi. They formed there a "Soviet Border District" of seven counties with a military training school and an arsenal. They had altogether some three thousand armed men. Mao had developed the view that at a time of "revolutionary ebb" the best place to create a new regime was in the hills on the borders of two provinces where the spheres of different warlords overlapped. Here Mao diverged from the European pattern of Communism and did his own thinking, based on his knowledge of China. Borders between countries are fortified in Europe; they are no place for new regimes. In China, a warlord's strength decreases as you leave his capital.

By 1930 there were similar Soviet districts on the edges of more than ten provinces. Then the Communists made another mistake. The successes in the rural districts went to the head of some of the leaders and what was called the "Li-Li-san line" developed. These leftists mocked the rural bases as far away and unimportant. The time had come, they said, to take big cities. They took Changsha, capital of Hunan province, and were talking of taking the Wuhan cities and starting uprisings in Nanking and Shanghai. The revolution, they said, was on the upgrade. The Communists "corrected" this policy that same August, but not before they had been dislodged from Changsha by bombardment from foreign gunboats.

The Communists had advertised themselves beyond their strength. They paid for it. Foreign governments prodded Chiang Kai-shek to suppress those Communists if he wanted to be considered the ruler of all China. They gave him the weapons and the military advisers and Chiang was not averse. Within a year, from the autumn of 1930 to the autumn of 1931, he launched three "extermination campaigns" against the largest of the Communist areas, that of Kiangsi, which was under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh. Each campaign was larger than the one before; Chiang led the third in person with 350,000 men.

All of these campaigns failed ingloriously. The Communists were already rooted in the loyalty of the farmers to whom they had given land, democratic government and means of defense. They had few arms, but their propaganda was more effective than bullets. Most of Chiang's soldiers sent to suppress them were also poor peasants. They were very susceptible to the slogans shouted at them during the night or in the lulls of battle: "Brothers, why do you fight for the landlords? We are poor farmers and soldiers! Pay no rent, no debts, no taxes! Brothers, come over to us; bring your arms and fight for the revolution!"*

The Communist armies grew to 300,000 men. Seven hundred deputies from many provinces attended their "Second Congress of Soviets" in January 1934. They were mostly poor farmers elected by their fellow farmers, with smaller numbers of artisans and farmhands, and sprinkling of professional people and industrial workers. A peasant democracy had been created. Local governments had committees on irrigation, schools, sanitation, land division. "The hunger of women for education surpasses anything in our history", said one report. Another report noted 1423 cooperative warehouses.

These hopeful little regimes were succeeding. But the Communists weakened themselves by certain mistakes. From January 1931 onward, a group now known as the dogmatists gained intermittent control of high party policy. Many of them had studied abroad, especially in Moscow; they could quote Marxist theory in overpowering detail. Their ignorance of China's practical conditions was catastrophic. Under their leadership the Communists finally lost their Kiangsi base.

"The leadership of the dogmatists cost us heavily," said Lu Ting-yi, giving the present Communist view. "When we were in Kiangsi, we were offered an alliance with the Fukien general Ts'ai Ting-kai, the hero of Shanghai's 1932 resistance to Japan. He opposed Chiang's appeasement of Japan and was willing to cooperate with us. Our dogmatists were too orthodox to have a united front with 'that bourgeois' and thus we lost the chance of victory."

* Agnes Smedley in "Mercury", Oct. 1943.

Chiang destroyed the Fukien General and turned to encircle the Communists. In October 1933 he launched his fifth and greatest "extermination campaign," by a new strategy devised by his German military advisors. He mobilized nearly one million men against all the Communist districts, and sent four hundred thousand against the chief district, Kiangsi. They made an encircling blockade, and slowly tightened it, clearing the hills and building blockhouses as they went. The campaign lasted a year. Kuomintang sources later stated that a million people had been killed or starved to death in that campaign.

Finally the Communist main armies, to the number of ninety thousand, broke the encirclement by a daring manouver and began the famous Long March.

Eight thousand miles they marched over some of the world's roughest country, zigzagging south and west and then swinging far around to the north across eighteen mountain chains and twenty-four rivers. They marched for more than a year with almost daily skirmishes and many critical battles. Besides defeating or eluding various forces of Central Government troops that pursued them, they broke through the armies of ten provincial warlords and took in passing sixty-two cities. They crossed six districts of aboriginal tribesmen, some of which had not been penetrated by any Chinese force for a generation. They passed through great uninhabited grasslands in the far west. They performed incredible feats of valor such as the crossing of the Tatu river, where thirty volunteers went over, swinging hand over hand on suspension chains in the face of machine gun fire, stormed the machine guns and replaced the bridge for the army.

In the end they reached North Shensi on the edge of the Mongolian deserts and established the Border Region whose capital was Yenan. It was to be their base and experiment center for the next twelve years.

No Communist now is willing to say that the Long March was the result of a mistake. Its causes were too complex and it has become too heroic a tradition for anyone to disavow. But they will tell you that "it might have been avoided by correct tactics in Kiangsi. Under the leadership of the dogmatists, we indulged in too much positional warfare. With our present experience, using Mao Tse-tung's technique of 'disposal', we could have filtered past the blockhouses through the hills". The Long March itself, says Lu Ting-yi might have ended in catastrophe, had the Communists not changed leadership after the first three months of the march, in the Tsen-yi conference held in January 1935 in Kweichow. The leadership of the dogmatists gave place to that of Mao Tse-tung.

"Mao Tse-tung's leadership made of the Long March a victory, a military miracle, and brought us to Yenan", Lu stated.

All those mistakes in Kiangsi cost heavy losses. The membership of the Communist Party and the size of their army, had been 300,000 at its height in the Kiangsi period. Both had dropped to some 40,000 when they re-assembled in Yenan.

Yenan as a base has both advantages and disadvantages. From Yenan the Communists spread to most of North China and Manchuria, by fighting the Japanese during eight years of war. The Yenan Border Region itself, however, is an arid, economically backward region, which handicaps every effort from the start. Could more have been done from a widened base in Kiangsi, with Sea Port at Foochow? This is a futile conjecture in which the Communists do not today indulge.

Since the leadership of Mao-Tse-tung developed, the Chinese Communists do not think they have made any major mistakes. "We have good leadership and good policies", any of them will say. They show a unity combined with a freedom of comment that would be remarkable in any political party anywhere.

The "line of Mao Tse-tung" developed slowly. He was a leader of that Hunan farmers movement that was dissolved in 1927 by Chen Tu-hsiu. He was a builder of those slowly growing farmer guerrillas that were in 1930 "too trivial" for Li Li-san. He was the chairman of that flourishing government in Kiangsi that was sacrificed to the orthodoxy and the positional war-

fare of the "dogmatists". He was raised to party leadership by the bitter test of the Long March.

The famous "Sian incident" occurred a year after the Communists had established themselves in Yenan Border Region. Chiang Kai-shek, going to Sian to force his generals into another war with the Communists, at a time when all China was aflame with desire to unite against Japan, was forcibly detained by the officers of two of his own armies. He was only set free after considerable negotiation in which people of many persuasions took part. The most important factor in freeing Chiang was the fact that the Communists themselves sent Chou En-lai—who had once given Shanghai to Chiang and on whose head Chiang had afterwards put a price—to urge the Generalissimo's release.

"Don't you ever feel that you made a mistake in setting Chiang free in Sian"? I asked in Yenan, when the second civil war was in full swing.

"No," said Lu Ting-yi. "It was the only way in which China could have been united against Japan".

During the eight years of war with Japan, Mao Tse-tung's stature steadily grew. His book on "Protracted War", July 1938, was his first work that influenced thinking outside the Communist Party. It was a political and military analysis of high quality; the most important book of its kind to appear in China during the war. When it was written, most Chinese despaired of final victory, while a few talked of swift victory, to be won by a desperate gamble, and a tremendous counter-offensive. Chiang Kai-shek clearly awaited the entrance of America, Britain and the USSR into the war. Mao Tse-tung declared that the Chinese people, if sufficiently united, could drive out the invader. The war would be in three stages: 1) Japanese penetration, during which the regular Chinese armies would retreat but guerrilla warfare could be carried on in the enemy's rear; 2) a long stage of "stalemate", whose length would depend on the extent of unity among Chinese forces, but in which the Chinese people would eventually wear out Japan; 3) a victorious counter-offensive. The book charted the war so accurately that today it reads less like prediction than history.

"The New Stage", published in October 1938, continued the analysis of the war with special reference to the "stalemate stage." Its aim was to make detailed proposals to the Kuomintang for methods of cooperation against Japan. Mao Tse-tung suggested three alternatives: that the Communists might join the Kuomintang; that if this was not permitted, there might be joint committees; failing this, that there might be frequent conferences. These proposals came to nothing for the Kuomintang grew steadily more reactionary and outlawed all other parties.

Pessimism grew in China in 1939. The Kuomintang, now centered in Chungking, had ceased fighting Japan. Some of its leaders turned traitors. In parts of North China, Kuomintang generals either openly became Japanese puppets or synchronized their attacks on the Communists with those of the Japs. That was the year when Kuomintang armies attacked Yenan at the moment when the Japanese were attacking it from the north. Was China then a lost nation?

Mao wrote his "New Democracy" to give the answer. It was a clarion call. China was not lost, he said. Even if the Kuomintang turned reactionary, even if it turned traitor, there were reserves of strength in the Chinese people and they would eventually win the victory, both in their war against Japan and in their revolution. Mao then analyzed the road to victory, the methods by which victory might be hastened and the kind of government that could best lead the Chinese people to victory and to prosperity after the war. Not the Kuomintang dictatorship, not a socialist government by Communists, not the forms of democracy borrowed from the west, but a "new democracy", a "coalition government of all revolutionary classes", i.e. workers, farmers, petty-bourgeois and even such capitalists as oppose feudalism and foreign imperialism.

The "New Democracy" marked a turning-point in China's revolutionary thinking and influenced the revolutionary thought of the world. For the Chinese Communists it became the basis of all policies, from

1940 until now. After five years of testing, both in party work and in the coalition governments of the Liberated Areas—which the Communists set up as a type for the future government of China—the thesis of "New Democracy" was expanded in Mao Tse-tung's report to the Seventh Party Congress in April 1945, published under the title "On Coalition Government".

It was at this congress that Mao Tse-tung was first formally elected chairman though he had been acknowledged leader for many years. Under his leadership the party had developed methods of voting that enabled the illiterate farmhand to express his choice; methods of self-supply that made government partly self-supporting and hence less of a burden on the people; methods of farm labor that increased production in a barren land; methods of education that carried the schools to the people; methods of literature and of party work that brought writers and party workers close to the people; methods of strategy that all over North China were beating back the Japanese.

In preparation for that congress there had been two years discussion in all the far-flung Communist organizations. They had digested their history and learned from their mistakes. "There was a great sense of achievement," said Lu Ting-yi, "that more than a million comrades, separated by many lines of battle, could think their way through to a joint estimate of their past experiences and their future path".

At this Congress—it was called the "Congress of Unity and Victory", though the formal surrender of Japan had not yet come—Mao Tse-tung felt able to state with confidence: "In the entire period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in a period of several dozens of years, our general program of new democracy will remain unchanged". The Chinese form of Marxism was established: it has its theoretical base, its practical experience its program for the years to come.

At the risk of over-simplification I shall try to give the creed of the Chinese Communists—as I learned it from their leading theoreticians in Yenan—in a few words:

1) China is today a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country whose people struggle to achieve the "democratic revolution" which was long ago achieved in the major western lands. China's present goal is not the socialist revolution and will not be for a long time to come. Its goal is to secure national independence from foreign imperialist control, to root out feudalism, establish a more industrialized economy, with the forms of capitalism and democracy that go with this. However, since China's democratic revolution comes late in world history, when socialism is already established in the USSR and is being approached by other countries in Europe, the democracy and capitalism in China will not copy the forms of the west but will be a "new democracy" and a "new capitalism."

2) The democratic revolution will not be led by capitalists, as it was in the western lands. Nor will it take the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat as in the USSR. The democratic revolution will be led by the working-class with the farmers as the main force, and with the participation of progressive people of all classes, the middle class of the small towns, the liberal capitalists and even "enlightened landlords". There must be correct approach to all these classes to bring about the democratic revolution with the least cost and pain.

3) "Land to the tiller" is the basic economic policy. No economic progress can begin until the tiller of the soil is freed from the heavy burden of rents, taxes and feudal duties. Feudalism on the land must be smashed.

4) A "new capitalism" must be sought to develop industrial production rapidly. Every form of productive enterprise, private, cooperative and public should be encouraged. There should be cooperation between labor and capital to make profit for private enterprise and to raise the living standards of the workers. Private monopoly capital should not be allowed. Be-

cause of the general decay of world capitalism, and the weakness of Chinese capitalists especially, there is no fear that this "new capitalism" will develop beyond the power of the Chinese people to control.

5) Democracy must be based on arousing the initiative of the people. Voting methods must be adapted to the voters, even if they cannot read. Income of government officials should not be above that of the average self-supporting farmer.

6) *Schools should go to the people,* and help them in practical problems of farming and health and should also arouse their political consciousness and make them citizens of the world. Sex oppression in the "feudal family" should be attacked not by "sex war" and "womens' rights" movements, but by education and by increasing the economic weight of the woman. Free marriage and equality of the sexes is the crown of the revolution and not its beginning.

7) Since China is very large, and under pressure of different warlords and different foreign powers, her economic and political development is very uneven. Therefore, the growth of her democratic revolution will be uneven, and victory on a nation-wide scale will follow a zigzag path. It is possible to establish and defend democratic areas in part of the country from which the democratic revolution will spread.

8) These areas will be attacked by all the feudal forces of the country assisted by foreign powers who wish to exploit China. They can, however, be successfully defended. For this an army of a new type is needed, so integrated with the people and so supported by them that it can overcome the superior weapons of warlords and of foreign powers. A strategy of a new type is also needed, relying fully on the people and utilizing their assistance, and disintegrating the enemy forces partly by arms and partly by winning over the common soldiers to the democratic revolution, which they also really want.

9) The Communist Party is the vanguard of the working-class and champion of the poor farmers. Other classes than these share in creating the new democracy. Hence the Communists should restrict themselves to not more than one third of the government posts, while the other posts should be filled by representatives of other progressive classes. In such a coalition the Communists must rely for leadership not on superior force and not even on superior voting power, but on correctly analyzing the people's needs and securing general agreement. For this their weapon is their command of Marxist analysis. "From the people and to the people" must be the basic method of politics. This does not mean that the party echoes the people. It analyzes what the people want and how to get it.

Such is the basic creed to which the Chinese Communists have come, after long struggles and many losses. By early 1947 this was the creed of 2,200,000 party members, and many tens of millions of non-party supporters throughout North China and Manchuria.

Chapter 4

THE YENAN BASE

Yenan, for twelve years the Number One Capital of the Chinese Communists, lies in the barren hills of northwest China on the edge of the Central Asian deserts. As one flies west from Peiping the mountains below grow steeper and the valleys narrower until the naked slopes seem like the mountains of the moon. Almost no settlements are visible. The people live in caves in the side of cliffs.

For generations Yenan was a garrison town against the desert. A walled town was built at the junction of three valleys, marked from afar by a tall pagoda on a hill. Landowners and small traders settled there against bandits. The tillers of the soil had no shelter but their poverty and the scattered inaccessibility of their dwellings where nothing of value was to be found. They wrung bitter living from a niggardly soil and an arid climate. They were as far behind the farmers of more fertile southern areas—the farmers of Kiangsi, for instance, whence the Communists came to Yenan—as the hill-billies of Arkansas are behind Ohio or Connecticut farmers. Every three years there was a "small famine"; every five or seven years a "big famine", in which families died out and daughters were sold as slaves.

In such a territory the Chinese Communists tried out their theories for twelve years under the hardest possible test conditions. By the time they were driven from Yenan, they had developed social, economic and political forms that spread swiftly into areas twenty times as large and a hundred times as populous, holding most of North China and Manchuria from the deserts to the sea.

The Communists made Yenan Border Region blossom. By land reform, production drives and other methods that we shall consider, they doubled the cultivated area and doubled the crop. They developed small industries and cooperatives. They increased primary schools seventeenfold. They established the first secondary schools, the first university, the first free hospitals. They devised here the system of voting by which even illiterate farmhands may express their will.

It was done in endless war with the desert. It was done against the age-old apathy of peasants who had repeatedly failed. It was done against a blockade maintained by the Chinese government and under occasional armed attack by both Chiang Kai-shek and Japan. Under such conditions was the new pattern of life and government made.

The Communists did a good job on Yenan. But they never idealized the place. Once when I complimented Mao Tse-tung on the fine climate of the place they had picked —I like dry climates—he replied: with a slightly acid tone: "We didn't pick it". Until then I had fallen for the idea that the Communists came to Yenan in a sort of triumphal march, arousing the Chinese people against Japan. Of course they did as much of that as they could on the way. But behind it was the brutal fact that they were chased out of the good lands, and could stay in Yenan because there was so little here to tempt a warlord to use his strength against courageous folk.

The lesser Communists to whom I spoke of enjoying Yenan told me rather brutally that it was all right for me, because I could ride around in a jeep, but if I had to walk five miles to get anywhere, and wade that Yenan river a dozen times a day, I'd want warmer water to wade. No, they had no illusions about the locality.

Only once at the end, when they were evacuating Yenan, did I hear anyone express sentiment about the place. Lu Ting-yi, head of the Information Bureau, was

being prodded by a rather prying correspondent and he burst out: "What was this Yenan? Hunger, opium, prostitutes, syphilis, bandits! We have made a place where no one steals and no one starves! And now we must leave it. Three thousand babies go out into the winter night this week. Many of them will die by catching little colds. And they can't travel in the sunlight for fear of the planes".... That was the only time I heard anyone get passionate about Yenan. He was excusable. His own wife and small child had left the night before.

The main body of Communists came to this area in October 1935, at the end of the Long March. Though their armies, once 300,000, had dwindled to 40,000, they couldn't feed even that many in these barren hills. They sent them foraging over the river next year into Shansi. The year after that, they were right in the Japanese war, and the troops all went to the front anyway. By the time the Japs got through bombing Yenan, there was no walled city left.

So the people left the heaps of rubble inside the broken walls and scattered over ten square miles of rugged hills. They were sunk in the scenery. The mouths of their caves looked out from tawny bluffs, slopes and ravines. Smoke curled from stovepipes stuck in the mountains. People crawled up and down steep trails. They clustered around different institutions: the bank, the government buildings, the university, the military headquarters, the newspaper. Most of them lived in the place where they worked because transport was scanty and it was difficult to get about.

The same flag flew over Yenan that flew over Chiang Kai-shek in Nanking, the white sun on a blue sky. I noticed it once when I came down hill from an air raid shelter after Chiang's planes had been bombing and strafing a bit. There the flag was flying high; people had evidently forgotten to take it down.

Yenan never aspired to be a federal capital. As a city it had three functions. It was a small market town where merchants in little shops supplied farmers with pins, needles, thread, cotton goods and other minor city wares, and where blacksmiths' forges outfitted caravans. It was also the capital of the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region, the smallest of all the Communist areas, given its name from Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia, at whose borders it stood. It was really a capital, but only of a province of some 1,600,000 people.

Yenan was also—and this in 1947 was its significance—the residence of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and of the general staff of the People's Liberation Armies, whose total fighting strength in a dozen provinces, was a million and a half. Yenan was party and military center for 140,000,000 people, who lived in various "Liberated Areas" all over north China and Manchuria. Its radio gave the "party line" as far north as Harbin, as far south as the mouth of the Yangtze near Shanghai. But Yenan was not the seat of government for all these places. It had never tried to be.

The cave I first occupied in Yenan was a big one in the American compound twenty feet deep by twelve wide, arched like a Quonset hut. Its clay inner walls were whitewashed; it was floored by a rough home-made brick. Its front wall, facing the world, consisted of wooden lattice work, held together by wooden pegs. The lattice openings were closed by paper in winter and mosquito net in summer, letting in considerable light. The door was a wooden frame covered with paper, and hung on wooden hinges. There was not a piece of metal in the dwelling, not even a nail or a tack.

The advantage of a cave is its cheapness. Metal is very scarce in rural China, and the blockade kept it out of Yenan. When bombs fell, people gathered the scrap metal. Timber is also scarce in northern China; the eroded hills are long since denuded of forests. So it is an advantage to have a dwelling where one needs only a few two-by-fours to make a frame work for one wall, the wall itself being mostly filled in with paper. A Yenan cave costs hardly ten dollars for materials, plus the owner's labor. I saw a farmer's two-cave home that he bought for five bushels of

grain. Even the elaborate caves, faced with sandstone, cost only a trifle more. There were a few Class A caves that had heating system under the floor. These ran to money and took a lot of coal. The doctors and the Friends Ambulance had them; Mao Tse-tung did not.

Some caves were especially adapted to bomb-shelters; they had tunnels that went right through the hill. In winter a painful draft crept through these. So when Mao Tse-tung, discussing certain "wayward tendencies in the party", said:

> "These are no longer dominant with us, like the winter wind that fills all space, but are more like the little draft from the air-raid shelters,"

it was understood in Yenan, if nowhere else.

Yenan's caves were in clusters up some two score different valleys. South of the old walled city which—because of the debris left by Jap bombings—was no longer a center but a barrier, one came to New Market, the Border Region government, its bank and guest-house, Yenda University and, several miles beyond, the experimental farm.

North of the ruined city lay the American compound, built for the military liaison group during the Japanese war, with "radio hill" and the military headquarters facing it across the river. Further north, several rough roads led up different valleys to the party school, to Yang Family Village, where the Central Committee had headquarters, and further on to the International Peace Hospital, the Los Angeles Nursery and various residential clusters where leading Communists lived.

It was at least ten miles from Chu Teh's group of caves in the north at Date Garden to the experimental farm in the south. Some of the leaders and the people of the American compound could get around by jeep. People like doctors and some officials went on horseback. Farmers came to town in springless carts or trudging behind laden donkeys. Most citizens went on foot. There was no water or sewage system. The only electricity was that supplied by a generator in the American compound that lighted a few houses, and that given by another generator to the radio by which Yenan spoke to the world

In this primitive life a typical inconvenience was the Yen River. It divided Yenan in two. In winter its smooth ice surface provided the best highway up the valley for the jeeps. Spring had arrived when the first jeep broke through. In summer the river was a moody creature, rising with any rain. Normally its muddy depth was measured by inches; jeeps, horses and humans splashed easily through. A shower in the upper valleys would send a five foot torrent down, strong enough to carry away a truck. This would subside in a few hours. When you looked at that suddenly impassable current, you could imagine the uncontrollable fury of the great Yellow River, which carries the flood from hundreds of Yen Rivers.

None of this seemed to bother the Communists. If they could not meet today, they could tomorrow. There was no sense of emergency in Yenan. There was a sense of the ages, of time and space. There was a sense of the earth and of the slow rythm of the seasons. Even in the midst of the winter battles, when Hu Tsung-nan's troops were raiding the frontier, everyone spoke about the thick fall of snow that would be "so good for the crops".

So Yenan, despite the war, remain in my mind as a haven of incredible peace. My health was better and I expect to live longer because of the restful months I spent there. When Communists came from Nanking, Shanghai or Peiping, they also felt this sense of rest. It was renewal of strength such as the fabled giant felt at the touch of his mother, the earth. I recall how Chou En-lai, arriving from Nanking at the break-down of negotiations, left a breathless bunch of correspondents at the airport and fell asleep in a cave for three hours in the middle of the day. I remember Hwang Hwa, reaching Yenan from the strain of a year's fruitless diplomatic battles in Peiping, and saying a week later: "It is a miracle how well I feel. I eat so much and sleep so well." Lu Ting-yi, who spent five months in Chungking and Nanking as delegate to the People's Consultative Council, told me later in Yenan: "One ages

more in five months in Kuomintang China than in five years here."

Mao Tse-tung, commenting on the restful, slow life of Yenan, told me to contrast Chiang Kai-shek and Chu Teh. "Both have just celebrated their sixtieth birthdays. Chiang's hair is all white but Chu Teh has only a few grey hair."

"Yet Chu Teh has led a hard life in the field," I supplemented "while Chiang sits comfortably in Nanking."

"I do not think he sits so comfortably," laughed Mao, with twinkling eyes.

A few modern facilities had been brought by the Communists into even this primitive region. A half dozen jeeps and trucks, a field telephone that jumped the river to the most important places, a printing press and a radio to connect with the world's life.

The life on Radio Hill was an odd blending of the primitive with the modern. In a deep cave at the foot of the hill a printing press turned out the **Yenan Emancipation Daily**, printed on paper made by handicraft from local grass. Five hundred feet up the cliff, by paths that were very steep and slippery in wet weather, the newspaper and radio workers lived on several successive ledges, with their aerial wires waving in the sky high above. Their caves were small, about six by twelve feet in size, heated poorly by charcoal braziers, and lit at night only by tiny kerosene lamps that gave hardly more light than a candle. In these dim caves, well educated young people, knowing many languages monitored the news of the world. Here sat a youth with ear-phons, taking down Associated Press by the faint light. Beside him another was taking down United Press. Central News of Nanking was monitored twenty-four hours a day. I could get a greater variety of news in Yenan than I got in Peiping. As compensation for the lack of comfort, the staff had a gorgeous view down three valleys. It was breath-taking on a winter night at full moon.

Interviews in Yenan had a spacious quality. Because of difficulties of transportation and lack of clocks, appointments were made not for a definite time but "for the morning" or "for the afternoon." They usually included a hospitable meal which went beyond the usual millet and greens. One really got acquainted with people in Yenan interviews.

People came to Yenan from all the Liberated Areas of North China and even from Manchuria for consultation or to make report. I met there people from Shantung, North Kiangsu and Honan as well as from the nearer provinces of Hopei, Chahar and Shansi. It was for them no half-day's jaunt, as when one goes from New York to Washington or from Shanghai to Nanking. It took them weeks, perhaps months, to make the journey, as it once took Americans to go on horseback from Maine to Washington. So when they came, it was for no half-hour interview but for discussions lasting many days.

Social life in Yenan was friendly and informal. There were all the common recreations—dinners, card games, dances, theater—but they had their own quality. Dinners commonly included fifty or sixty people at several round tables in one of the mess halls. A virulent liquor named "beigar" was served, but only thimble fuls. Jokes were many and laughter hearty. In cards some played bridge but more indulged in a game called "one hundred". It used two jokers, was more peppy than bridge and very popular in the army.

The theater was good in Yenan. There were first-class dramatists and critics. The actors were expert and the costumes as gorgeous as any Peiping could show. Dramas were of three kinds: the classic Peiping opera, the short vaudeville propaganda skits known as "Yang-kes" and a regular modern drama in several acts. All three kinds made much use of music from the traditional Chinese orchestra behind the scenes.

Nobody dressed up for any of these occasions. Nobody had a change of clothes. A suit of strong blue cotton of government issue was the universal wear for soldiers, civil service and party members. It faded to various tones of gray-blue according to length of wear and exposure to weather, for Yenan had no good dyes. In winter it

was replaced by a cotton-padded suit of the same kind of material.

Chief social event of the week was the Saturday night dance. This might be held in any one of three places: Yang Family Hill, centrally located among Yenan's settlements, Date Garden at the north or the Guest House at the south. This change of place enabled people in all parts of Yenan to reach a dance on foot once or twice a month. The party leaders came by auto truck. Many of them—Chu Teh, Chou En-lai, Liu Shao-chi—were enthusiasts and came regularly. Mao Tse-tung attended about twice a month. Music was furnished by a choice of several orchestras, all of which mixed western instruments with Chinese. The dances similarly included waltzes, two-steps, one-step and an energetic four-step to Chinese Yang-ke music like a fox-trot but with more swing. The evening ended about ten-thirty with a free-for-all Yang-ke, a circular folk dance that went faster and faster until the final bang!

There was more real fun in those Yenan dances than in any swell ball I have ever attended. Nearly everybody danced better than the average partner one draws at a dance in the outside world. This was because they were unembarrassed. They expressed themselves with easy freedom. People who wanted to stamp, stamped: People who wanted to glide, glided. Some remarkable professional dancers from the Yang-ke troupes brought the agility of an acrobat to the floor. Among the leaders of the party and government, the "little devils" who served as orderlies—what the rest of China would call "coolies"—also whirled gaily. There were no class lines: the dance displayed the "new democracy".

Meet then, three of the leading Communists as they expressed themselves in the Yenan dances. Chou En-lai, the chief negotiator, danced with the grace of a diplomat. His black velvet slippers, brought from Nanking, made a hit among the universal padded cotton slippers. He was perfection in the waltz. Sometimes an almost conventional perfection: after a dance with him, one might be glad to take on one of the Yang-ke acrobats, or the Russian doctor Orloff, who liked to stamp in Cossack-style. But Chou En-lai was Number One dancer. He seemed to have learned to dance in Paris but he said that he learned in Yenan. One imagined him using this agile grace in discussions in Nanking.

Liu Shao-chi, who next to Mao himself is the leading Marxist theoretician, danced with the neat precision of a mathematician. But about once in three dances, when one was convinced that he was always arithmetically exact, he would suddenly indulge in the higher mathematics with exciting swings. This is exactly like his writing, which is terse, exact prose punctured by an occasional sharp metaphor.

Chu Teh, commander-in-chief of the armies, danced as if doing the Long March. He kept a steady one-step whatever the orchestra played. If you were with Chu Teh when the band gave an enticing waltz, you might glance longingly at that perfect dancer Chou En-lai stepping it with that equally perfect dancer Mrs. Mao Tse-tung. But at the end of the evening, when you were too tired to stand or walk, you could still dance with Chu Teh. The rythm of his dance had an endless quality, that was almost more restful than sitting still.

The dance was said to have been frowned on by some of the more Puritan Chinese when it first came to Yenan. It has long since proved of value, far beyond the fun. Since the leading Communists cannot be always accessible to everyone in working hours—limitations of transportation and time prevent—the dance gives opportunity for anyone to exchange a few words with Mao Tse-tung or the other leaders. The Japanese Communists are said to have borrowed the Saturday night dance from Yenan for the informal contact it gives. Sometimes in Yenan I laughed to imagine Chiang Kai-shek dancing among the common soldiers of his armies.

Party officials worked long hours in Yenan. They worked on meager food: in winter meals went down to two daily, chiefly of millet and greens. They worked in cold caves, sitting on stools or wooden benches. They worked late at night by tiny

lamps that gave only dim light. But they seemed to work without strain, even under approach of invasion. In part this was due to the quiet simplicity of an environment close to nature: in part to the comradely social life. It was due above all to the fact that they worked with a supreme faith in the Chinese people and in the march of history.

One word was heard more often than any other in Yenan. It was "the people", "the people". The Chinese people, the people of the world were always the ultimate reference. The two qualities above all others that characterized those leaders whom I was meeting daily were their love for the people and their faith in the people. To know that was to feel warmed and caressed by their kindliness and strengthened by their belief in man.

General Chu Teh was a military man, talking of the civil war, as he sat in his faded gray blue cotton uniform on the terrace of my Yenan cave. Yet he based his prediction not on armies but on the power of the people. "Chiang Kai-shek cannot win", he said. "For there are 450,000,000 people in China. They keep rising up till they get democracy. You can't suppress all of them".

"We Chinese people are like the sea", he said later, "and the Kuomintang is like a ship. When the ship comes, it turns the water and troubles them, but the ship passes and the waters come together as before. We Communists are like fish in the sea. We live in it".

The theme was repeated hours later at his own four cave home up the river, where his affable wife served us an excellent meal and then sat besides us on the terrace in her dark blue trousers and soft black hair. The moon rode peacefully over the Yenan hills as Chu Teh stated: "For thousands of years the Chinese people have been ruled by despots. But now they have tasted democracy all over North China. Now the despots can never win".

Chapter 5

MAO TSE-TUNG

In a cave on a Yenan hillside looking down a dusty valley which infinite human labor turns at some seasons partly green, lived Mao Tse-tung, one of Asia's most notable leaders and thinkers. He is chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and for twenty years has lived blockaded, shut off from the world by battle-fronts of foreign and civil war. From this seeming isolation the thought of Mao Tse-tung has shaped the Chinese Revolution, taking form in a Communist Party of 2,200,000 members, in local and regional governments of 140,000,000 people, giving land to 60,000,000 farming folk even under the gunfire of Chiang Kai-shek.

Mao Tse-tung is a legend all over China, far beyond the Liberated Areas, among illiterate peasants who combine his name with Chu Teh's, speaking of "Chu-Mao". On the famous Mount Omei, where Chiang himself went for summer rest from Chungking, farmers revealed their rifles to an American friend whom they trusted, saying: "When the time comes, we are ready. Life is better under Chu-Mao". There were no Communists among them. Wherever peasants feel unbearably oppressed by landlords, bureaucrats and warlords, the hopeful legend runs of Mao Tse-tung.

From his distant cave Mao Tse-tung has become a world figure. His thesis on "Protracted War" became an accepted formula among American and other foreign experts; captured documents show that the Japanese General Staff, after reading it, considered Mao the greatest Far Eastern strategist. His theories on "new democracy" probably influenced government forms in postwar Eastern Europe. His analysis of China's path to national independence, democracy and a good livelihood is studied by leftist parties in all of southeast Asia. Indian Communists have told me that, for the problems of Asia, a study of Marx, Lenin and Stalin are important, but equally important is the study of Mao Tse-tung.

In almost every field of activity, the Chinese Communists considered Mao as Number One. Chu Teh was commander-in-Chief of the armies, but it was Mao who long ago worked out the theoretical basis of the strategy that enabled Chu Teh's armies to grow from three thousand guerrillas to a regular army of a million and a half. Chou En-lai was chief negotiator and specialist in foreign relations, but when territorial arrangements were signed with Chiang, it was Mao who went to Chungking. Liu Shao-chi is considered the second ablest Marxist theoretician, but Liu pays tribute to Mao as the first.

"Mao Tse-tung has created a Chinese or Asiatic form of Marxism", said Liu to me. "His great accomplishment has been to change Marxism from its European to its Asiatic form. He is the first who has succeeded in doing so."

My first interview with Mao Tse-tung was postponed by the rising of Yen River because of a morning shower. Mao's home was not more than a mile away but it was an impossible mile to traverse. The next afternoon I went by auto-truck, slithering down one steep mud bank, bumping over boulders in the river-bed, climbing the other bank at a dangerous angle and finally passing the gate of Yang Family Village, which was the headquarters of the Central Committee at the time. We dismounted a short distance up the ravine, climbed a steep, winding path that led through cornstalks and tomato vines of the collective garden and came to one of the ledges from which a score or more of caves opened.

Four of these caves, set close among the neighbors, were Chairman Mao's.

Mao Tse-tung is a large man, loose-limbed, with the slow, massive but easy movements of a western farmer. His round, rather flattish face has a reserved, placid look that lights into vivid humor when he smiles. Under his shock of thick, black hair, a powerful forehead and large, searching eyes indicate an active, penetrating mind that little escapes. There is an elemental vitality about him directed by a deep but mobile intellectuality. He wore the usual suit of dark blue cotton; it was fresher and less faded than usual because he worked so much indoors. There was no haste or restlessness in his manner but a poised friendliness.

We sat on the flay clay terrace under an apple tree while the late afternoon wore on and sunset glorified the arid hills. Mao's small daughter, in a dress of bright figured cotton, played around her father's knee, climbed into his lap, received his caresses and came over to give her hand to the visitor, her shyness overcome by curiosity. In the early part of our conversation I was distracted by a movement in the grass higher up the hill, some fifty feet directly above the top of Mao's caves.

"Who is up there"? I asked, thinking how easily a stone, or a bomb, could be dropped down on us and wondering whether there were guards above protecting the chairman's home.

"Just another family", replied Mao. "Their children are interested in the visit of my foreign guest".

Seldom have I met a man so happily and sociably set in his environment. Living like a peasant, he did not even demand the privacy that most intellectuals think necessary for their work. What privacy he needed was given by the respect in which his neighbors held him. The children above peeped down but made no noise, except the rustling of the grasses. Even Mao's little daughter had a disciplined sense of what she might do during his interviews. She clung or played about him quietly—but undemanding while he gave his mind to our talk.

Mao's fascinating dark haired wife sat beside us for a time and then went in to arrange a meal. It was a delicious meal, much of it from the ripe tomatoes, onions, beans and peppers that grew in the garden. Mao, a Hunanese, loves hot pepper in his food. For desert there was "eight treasures" rice, which by tradition is rice sweetened by eight delicacies. In this case there were four: peanuts, walnuts and plums from Mao's garden and dates from the community "Date Garden" upriver.

"The rice is not grown in Yenan County but we grow it in this Border Region over by the Yellow River", commented the chairman. "We southerners found the millet diet of this northern region difficult when we came here twelve years ago. We longed for our native rice. Finally we found a place in one of our lower, warmer valleys where it can be successfully grown".

Mao Tse-tung was born in 1893 in a village in Hunan, the province that is the heart of southern China. His father was a poor peasant who served many years as a soldier but who, in Mao's childhood, had been able to buy two and a half acres of land. Later he prospered and was able to give his son an education. The family was conservative and religious.

At a New Year's dinner in Yenan I overheard Judge Chen Ching-kun say to Mao that it was odd that a man of his conservative traditions should be cooperating with Communists.

"That's nothing", retorted Mao. "I was worse than you when I started. I was brought up a Buddhist".

Hunan has been for generations a cauldron of peasant misery and revolt. The young Mao as a school boy saw a revolt of starving people in Changsha, the provincial capital. It was suppressed and the leaders publicly beheaded; the school boy thought that the starving people had been right. Later there was an armed conflict in Mao's home county between the landlords and the farmers' secret society; the landlords were supported by the courts and the farmers were brutally put down. Still later the boy saw an uprising of starving farmers who seized rice from the landlords. All this turmoil of the people affected the young Mao as he grew.

In his early student days he had the snobbishness of the intellectual, and nowhere are scholars more "superior" than in China. Mao later told the writers' congress in Yenan how embarrassed he used to feel when he carried his luggage on a bamboo pole in front of other students "who could not bear the weight of anything on their shoulders and who could not carry anything in their hands". He felt himself half-peasant, half-student and it irked him.

"I felt that the cleanest people in the world were the intellectuals", he confessed to the writers. "Workers, peasants, and soldiers—these were dirty people. I was willing to borrow the clothing of intellectuals but not of workers." Later, when Mao had lived and worked among farmers, soldiers and workers, he experienced an inner revolution and came to feel that "the cleanest people in the world are the workers and peasants....Even though their hands might be black and their legs plastered with cow-dung, they were still cleaner than the bourgeoisie". Mao Tse-tung today will entertain lice-ridden peasants overnight in his home and not give it a thought. It is an attitude he recommends to writers who wish to serve the people.

Mao was a man of twenty-seven, active in the Peking students' movement—that famous May Fourth Movement that overthrew a traitor government—when he decided that he was a Marxist. The young intellectuals of China in those days—it was 1920—were enthusiasts for the recent Russian revolution. They also felt the power of their own uprising against Japan, which had drawn in the workers, merchants and farmers. Students were no longer aloof; they were a ferment among all the social classes. Under the impact of these forces was formed the mind of Mao Tse-tung. He was especially influenced by Chen Tu-hsiu, the brilliant professor of literature who was one of the founders of the Communist Party and whose policies Mao was later to oppose.

In that same year, 1920, Mao married. He was one of those first students who, after what must have been great inner turmoil, broke with the wife secured for him by his parents and to whom the tradition of centuries bound him and chose his own bride, Yang K'ai-hui, a fellow student. Their marriage and the ten years of their married life were celebrated as the "ideal romance" by the young radicals in Hunan. She was murdered in 1930, together with Mao's sister, by a Hunan warlord who gave a distant allegiance to Chiang Kai-shek.

For seven years after Mao Tse-tung's conversion to Marxism, he went from succes to success, not only in the ranks of the Communist Party, but in the Kuomintang, of which the Communists were a part. He attended the first national congress of the Communist Party in 1921, and was also a delegate to the first national congress of the Kuomintang in 1924. He became a member of the Kuomintang's Executive Bureau in Shanghai—in its underground days—and later the editor of the Kuomintang's official political weekly. Then he was chief of their department of propaganda, in charge of training all the organizers for the party which—after the split—put a price of a quarter of a million silver dollars on his head.

In January, 1927, the year that was later marked by the great split, Mao Tse-tung was sent to his home province, Hunan, to report on the farmers movement that was seizing power. He inspected five counties and wrote a short report that was printed in two obscure bulletins that never reached the world. Chen Tu-hsiu, then chief of the Communist Party, disapproved of the report, and pulled Mao out of the work in Hunan. The Farmers' Unions, however, at once elected Mao president of the All China Farmers' Union, a short-lived, loosely-knit organization of tremendous numbers. The report Mao made is to today a Communist classic. Those thirty-two days of his visit to the Hunan farmers may have in the end a more permanent effect on the history of China than even Chiang's taking of power in Nanking.

It was there that Mao Tse-tung had a vision of the revolutionary possibilities of the Chinese farmer. "In four months an unprecedented revolution was staged", he wrote.* "The centuries old privilege of the feudal landlords was shattered and the

*See chapter on **Communists.**

Farmers' Unions became the sole power.... What Dr. Sun Yat-sen tried but failed to accomplish in forty years of revolutionary struggle is done by the farmers in a few months". Mao brushed aside the criticism that the farmers went too far, though this was concurred in by Chen Tu-hsiu, leader of his own party. "Revolution is not an invitation to a banquet,....a drawing of a picture or the making of a piece of embroidery which can be undertaken at leisure. It is a revolt", Mao wrote—Mao saw "the democratic forces in the rural districts overthrowing the feudal power". He never forgot it. It became the base of his future thought and work.

Mao Tse-tung has a wide and catholic education. He is an accomplished scholar in the Chinese classics and a discriminating lover of the Chinese opera that deals with bygone dynasties. He quotes readily from them in speaking and writing, and he quotes just as readily from the great storehouse of Chinese farmers' proverbs. He also moves easily among the philosophers of the west, from the early Greeks down through Spinoza, Kant, Hegel to the thinkers of the present day.

He is constantly absorbing new knowledge on a wide variety of subjects. He talks intimately with farmers on farm problems; it was from such discussions that he worked out the methods of the "production drive" that saved Yenan Border Region from starving under the blockade. From me he wanted to know everything that I could tell him about America: politics, economics, labor movement, details of daily life. When correspondents came from France or Great Britain, he at once invited them to talk about their respective countries.

It is from such infrequent visitors, from occasional books that pass the blockade and from the tiny receivers in the radio caves that monitor the news, that this isolated philosopher gets data on the world. The knowledge he thus amasses is amazing, especially when one realizes that for ten years there has not even been a postal service from Yenan to the outer world. When I asked what I could do for him, he at once replied: "Can you send in books and recent periodicals"? The few months in which Executive Headquarters functioned in Peiping, with a weekly plane to Yenan for the Americans there, was avidly used by the Communists to bring in every kind of periodical and book. Mao discussed with me recent American books and pamphlets, some of which I myself, travelling to many places, had not yet seen. They had been translated to him directly, either as a whole or in digests. I felt that I disappointed him because, on many American matters, he was better informed than I.

In our conversation I was impressed, not only by his quick absorption of facts but by the rapid way he checked them, setting them off against other facts he already knew, and by the way his mind swept over the world, fitting facts into patterns. I was also struck by the wide grasp and calm clarity of his thought and the inclusion of many lands and epochs in his world view.

Mao Tse-tung seems able to make all of his wide knowledge available to ordinary people in simple language. In his well known speech at the inauguration of the Party School, he tossed off a short explanation of the sources and kinds of human knowledge—that most abstruse subject of philosophy—in words that even an illiterate peasant could have understood. "Mao has not only applied Marxism successfully to Chinese problems", said Liu Shao-chi, "but he has made Marxism available to 140,000,000 people as a weapon for solving their own needs".

Mao answers questions very directly and frankly. I have never known to evade a question, and seldom has his answer been a stereotyped one.

"How shall I explain to Americans what the Communists are fighting for?" I asked, expecting some statement of ideology.

"Because Chiang's armies come to kill peaceful people and these people defend themselves in order to live. Even Americans should understand that".

"How long can the Communists keep on fighting?"

"Of our own desire we would not fight even a day. But if we have to fight, we can fight as long as there is fighting to be done. It is not we who decide this".

Mao's talk was full of sharp metaphors and antitheses. In speaking of the quanti-

ties of American weapons captured by the Communists from Chiang's troops, he called them "A blood transfusion....from America to Chiang, from Chiang to us."

"It is very strange, this war", he added. "We have no arsenals to make modern weapons. So we depend on booty from the enemy. And thus we keep on for twenty years! This is a work of education."

In speaking of capitalism he said: "The golden period of capitalism was in the 18th and 19th centuries. Today's monopoly capitalism is stronger but also weaker.... American imperialism is stronger than past imperialisms but also weaker....So many of its friends are dead or ill....Even penicillin will do nothing for them".

Mao's direct speech, poetic imagery and wide knowledge make his conversation the most stimulating I have ever known. After hearing his talk, one is not surprised to learn that he is a poet. He has little time to indulge in this talent but on his airplane trip to Chungking in 1945 he composed a poem on China that astonished the literati by its beauty and power. Even his theoretical discussions are brightened by vivid metaphor and unexpected turns of phrasing. It is unfortunate that so little of his work has been translated into English. His phrases are widely quoted among Chinese Communists.

In one speech to the Party school, for instance, he compared Marxist theory to an arrow which must be shot at the target of the Chinese Revolution:

> "We must shoot the arrow with an aim....Some comrades shoot the arrow without an aim and they do the revolution a great deal of harm....Other people take the arrow and admire it but refrain from shooting, and these are curio-admirers who have practically no connection with the Revolution....
>
> "We study Marxism-Leninism not because of its good looks, nor because there is a magic in it, as if it were a kind of charm to arrest devils....It has neither good looks nor magic; it is only very useful".

In the same discussion Mao told his student audience:

> "Books have no legs; they can be opened or shut at will. To read books is the easiest job in the world. It is much easier than cooking a meal or slaughtering a pig. For when you want to catch hold of the pig, he will run, when you slaughter him, he will squeal, while the book on the table can neither run nor squeal but lets you handle it as you like....So I wish those who have only book knowledge and no practical experience would be more humble".

Another pungent bit comes from "On Coalition Government",

> "A room should be constantly dusted or it will be covered with dust. Our face should be regularly washed or it will be dirty. This also is true of the ideology of our comrades and the work of our party, which should be constantly cleaned. 'A running stream does not smell and a door-hinge will not be moth eaten' means that germs and worms are dispersed by continuous movement".

Mao Tse-tung appeared very informally at Yenan dances, dinners and dramas. There was one occasion on which he became very formal, according to Editor Yu Kwang-sheng who was official interpreter, when the American Patrick Hurley came to Yenan. Hurley's mission concerned peace and a coalition government, a subject which to every Communist was more important than life or death. Wishing to create an informal atmosphere in Rotary club style, Hurley got out his wife's picture and passed it around—"a colored photograph in a gold frame" telling his hosts how lonely his wife was "with me way off here in Yenan." Nothing could have been a greater violation of Chinese manners or a greater insult to the seriousness of his hosts.

"And Mao, who is so informal that he will hunt lice with a peasant visitor, got stiffer with every word", said Yu.

All the stock questions asked of Communists have been asked many times of Mao Tse-tung. Usually he makes a fresh answer. Editor Yu told me of the American who came all the way to Yenan to convince Mao that Communism is a religion. He had argued the point with Chou En-lai and other Communists and been told: "No, it

is a science". Unsatisfied, he sought the fountain-head.

As they jolted over Yen River, this seeker bragged to Yu: "You'll see how I'll convince your chairman".

The "convincing" of Mao took only fifteen minutes. The visitor explained his views and paused for breath. Mao replied: "You can call it a religion if you like: the religion of serving the people". The pilgrim went home delighted with a brand new slogan. Mao is one of the few Communists who would have made such a remark. His study of many philosophies and perhaps the poet in him gives him a sense of the many human meanings there may be in the same word. He also knows when it is useful to argue over definitions and when it is not.

The metaphor of the "paper tiger" which Mao later used in a widely quoted article, originated, I flatter myself, in the first interview he gave to me. I had mentioned the atom bomb and Mao said: "It is a paper tiger. Terrible to look at but not so omnipotent as it seems."

He took pains to see that I got the exact flavor. Lu Ting-yi who was translating, gave the word as "scare-crow". Mao stopped him and asked exactly what a scare-crow was. A paper tiger, Mao said, scares not crows but children. It is made to look not like a man but like a dangerous beast. It is really only pressed paper. A good rain will wash it away.

During the next part of our talk, Mao kept repeating "paper tiger" in English, with a fascinating accent, laughing as if amused by the foreign sounds, and as if suddenly realizing to how many things the metaphor might be applied. All reactionary rulers, he said, were paper tigers. Before the February revolution in Russia, the Tsar seemed strong and terrible. But a February storm washed him way. He proved to be only a paper tiger. Hitler also seemed powerful for a time. So did Mussolini. So did the Japanese imperialists. History proved them paper tigers all.

"Chiang Kai-shek—paper tiger", said Mao in English, laughing. "Wait a moment", I laughed back. "I am a reporter. Do I report that Mao Tse-tung calls Chiang a paper tiger?"

"Not just in those words", said Mao still laughing. Then he added, mimicking a child who has decided to be proper: "You may say that if Chiang supports the people's interests, he is an iron tiger. If he deserts the people and launches war against them—and this is what he is doing now—he is a paper tiger. Then the rains will melt him away".

Even the powerful American imperialists would not last, Mao stated. The Chinese reactionaries use their supposed power to frighten the Chinese people. But like all reactionaries in history, they will prove paper tigers. "In the long view, the power is with the people".

Again and again and again I have heard Mao Tse-tung refer to the power of the people. The Chinese people, the American people, the people of the world. I seldom heard him predict that the Communists would win. It was always: "The Chinese people will win". Once when I put the direct question, he replied: "We will win if we are able to solve the agrarian problem". This was said when Chiang's armies were closing in on Yenan. At such a moment he based the outcome of the struggle not on the size of the Communist Party with more than two million members, not on the regimes it had built from the desert to the sea, nor on the size of Chiang's armies and their American weapons. The Communists would win if they could solve the people's problems and only thus.

The people he believes to be unconquerable and eternal. Organisations will last as long as they serve the people. He is content that his own work and his own party shall be thus judged.

After the paper-tiger discussion we talked on over fresh tea-cups till the night grew late and Mrs. Mao had long since put the small daughter to bed in one of the caves. Then the chairman and his wife accompanied me down the hillside with a kerosene lantern to show the uneven path. We came to the rough narrow road where the auto truck waited. Goodbyes were said. They stood on the hill watching as my truck jolted downward and splashed into the bed of Yen River. Bright, very bright were the stars over the wild, dark Yenan hills.

Chapter 6

YENAN FIGHTS TO THE SEA

The Japanese war gave the Chinese Communists the chance to take North China and Manchuria. This was historic irony, for the Japanese said that they came to save China from the Communists. But the Communist areas grew by fighting Japs.

This of course was not what Chiang Kai-shek expected. He had little belief that any Chinese forces could beat the Japs. He appeased Japan from 1927-37, and fought the Chinese Communists instead. He declared war against Japan in 1937 only under terrific popular pressure, when the Japanese troops had crashed some distance into China. Then the national unity Chiang had tried to get by conquest came at once, as leaders all over the country offered him their help against the invader. The Communist armies, reorganized as the Eighth Route Army of the national government, moved to the front in north Shansi.

"We are proud to be the Generalissimo's most obedient armies", Chu Teh told me in his Shansi headquarters in early 1938. That held as long as they were ordered to fight Japs.

Chiang gave the Communist forces the job of penetrating the enemy rear and fighting Japs in territory from which the regular Kuomintang armies had fled in rout. He expected the Communists to be annihilated. From his view it was their proper fate. They had challenged his authority for ten years. Let them now die for the country that Chiang later would unify. There was irony in that too, for the Communists not only survived but grew, while Chiang himself, through lack of fighting, declined to a warlord of Szechwan.

When the Japanese war began the Communists controlled only a barren territory in the northwest, some 33,000 square miles in size with a million and a half people. When it ended they had between seven and eight hundred thousand square miles of territory and one hundred and forty million people, in some of the most productive lands of China. Their lands had grown twentyfold and their population nearly one hundred fold. They got it by organizing the people's resistance to Japan.

Japan's first defeat in China was suffered at the hands of the Eighth Route Army, at Pinghsing Pass in north Shansi.* It was this battle—though Chiang never gave it credit—that saved Nanking from an early encirclement and preserved a line of retreat for the national government to Hankow. Japanese strategy in the first days was to drive south by all three north-south railways into the Yangtze Valley and at the same time attack Shanghai, thus catching Nanking in a sack. As the careless invaders truck through the Shansi highlands, the fast-hitting troops of Lin Piao swept down on them from the cliffs of Pinghsing Pass. The Japanese debacle here and their delay in Sinkow which followed, compelled them to divert troops from the Peiping-Hankow route to save their Shansi armies. Thus Hankow was saved for the time, long enough to serve the government when Nanking fell.

The commanders of the Eighth Route Army were generals as good as any in China. All of the division commanders—Chu Teh was permitted three divisions—had been officers in that northern expedition that established Chiang's government in 1927. Chu Teh won fame even earlier, he led a battlion in the 1911 revolution that overthrew the Manchus. Peng Teh-hwai, the deputy commander-in-chief, had commanded a regiment in that northern expedition. Ho Lung at that time commanded twenty thousand men. Liu Po-cheng

* See chapter on Army.

was already a well-known Szechwan general when he joined the Kuomintang forces in 1927. Lin Piao in those days had been a recent graduate of the Whampoa Military Academy and marched north at the head of a company. All of these officers had had ten years experience of active combat since those days.

I met them all at a military conference in Chu Teh's headquarters in a Shansi village in the seventh month of the war. They were already fighting in four provinces. Stocky black-bearded Ho Lung, with one division, had an anti-Japanese base in northwest Shansi, from which he later spread into Suiyuan, and set up the Chin-Sui Liberated Area. Liu Po-cheng, a scholarly gentleman in spectacles, had a base in southeast Shansi that was later to expand into the Four Province Area. Lin Piao, the youngster of the lot, with the mien of a shy student, had a base two weeks away in the mountains of northeast Shansi, surrounded on all sides by Japanese-held railways. He later expanded to the far north and took Manchuria.

At that time, in January 1938, they were getting radio reports of two or three skirmishes a day from various parts of the territory over which they operated. Detachment W— meets one hundred Jap autos going south from Point A—, destroys sixteen, captures fifteen and gets prisoners, rifles, ammunition. On the same day, a second detachment takes a coal mine while a third destroys a railway bridge. The next day two hundred Japs are ambushed in a fourth place and thirty of them are killed.... All of these were pinpricks but they were preventing the Japanese from cashing in on their conquest. The Eighth Route kept most of the railways interrupted and had restored Chinese government in thirty county towns.

"We believe that the hope of saving China lies largely in the mobile units of North China", Chu Teh told me. "These will keep Japan from consolidating her gains and from using North China as her base against the rest of the country".

The people's boycott of the Japs was as important as the armed skirmishes. Political workers aroused people to boycott Japanese goods and prevent the formation of puppet governments. "Only if the people take part against Japan can we win", they told me. "The old forces cannot beat Japan. We must release new forces".

Li Ching-yu, for instance, was sent by Liu Po-cheng into south Hopei to organize the resistance of an area with seven million population. He went as a political commissar with eight hundred men. In a year this force had grown to twenty thousand men.* The Jap-appointed magistrates had been driven from thirty counties and a local government installed by delegates from Farmers' Unions, from Eighth Route troops and from a few county officials who had not run away.

How did Commissar Li get all this support?

"It was not enough to urge people to resist Japan." Li told me long afterwards in Yenan. "Farmhands and poor peasants were so near starvation that they only thought how to survive. We had to give them something to fight for. We set out to improve their livelihood."

Li's organizers went into the stables where farmhands slept and learned their troubles. For working all day in the fields and guarding their master's property at night these farmhands got a wage of two or three hundred pounds of grain per year. It barely kept the man alive and gave nothing for a family. Li began to organize farmhands' unions, protected by the army. Soon the farmhands were getting eight hundred to a thousand pounds of grain, which could feed a wife and buy some clothes. They also got time off to visit village fairs and were given "wine to comfort them" when they dug out the human offal from the toilets for fertilizer.

Li next looked into the woes of tenant farmers. Landlords were taking fifty to sixty per cent of the crop for the use of land, or seventy to ninety per cent if they also supplied seed, fertilizer and draught animals. This was illegal by law of the central government, but the law had never been enforced. After the tenants organized, rents were cut to thirty or forty per cent of the crop for bare land, and fifty to

* See chapter on Army.

sixty per cent if the landlord furnished equipment.

Such were the activities that gave the people something to fight for, to protect these new "people's governments" against the invaders. Li's solidly organized thirty counties were only one anti-Japanese base among many set up by the Communists.

These islands of Chinese resistance soon had to fight not only the Japanese but the troops of Kuomintang generals. In Commissar Li's district of South Hopei, a general named Lu Tsung-lin was sent by Chiang Kai-shek to take over the areas that the Communists had organized. He arrived on September 15, 1938.

"We took him as an ally at first and accepted his decrees", said Li, "but we soon found that he came to fight us and not to fight the Japs. We remained passive under his attacks for more than a year but when he had dissolved the fighting guerrillas in several counties, we launched an 'anti-traitors' campaign and drove him out of the area."

This kind of three-cornered campaign went on all over North China. In some places—usually in the hills or far from railroads—the new regimes established themselves firmly and permanently. In Shantung not forty miles in an airline from the big naval port of Tsingtao, then held by Japs, there is a place in the hills that the Japs never got. Other places changed hands often and at brutal cost. All over North China one learns of poor or tenant farmers whose wives and children were buried alive by landlords in some interim of Japanese or Kuomintang power, in revenge for some minor concession the farmer secured under Eighth Route protection.

While the Eighth Route Army expanded across North China, another army under Communist leadership was formed along the lower Yangtze in Central China from guerrillas who had remained unbeaten in the Kiangsi hills since the earlier civil war. They were commissioned by Chiang Kai-shek under the name of "New Fourth Army". Their assignment was especially difficult for they operated among some of the heaviest Japanese concentrations in China. For three years their units raided the Shanghai-Nanking railway. In autumn of 1938 they hoisted the Chinese flag over the Japanese airfield in sight of Shanghai.

Major Evans F. Carlson (Later brigadier general of the U.S. Army and famed for his raiders during the Pacific War) praised the battle-spirit of the New Fourth and its close connection with the people, when he visited it in 1940. The people of Chekiang called the army "the soldiers of God" and "world army number one". They had a saying: "As in lettuce you eat the heart, so if you join an army, join the Fourth". We are detaining fifty thousand Japs in this area", General Yeh Ting told Carlson.

By the end of 1940 the Communists had half a million armed men. The Eighth Route had reached the Shantung coast and held the port, Chefoo, long enough to collect customs and run in shipments of war supplies. It disrupted railways around Peiping and put up anti-Japanese posters inside the city walls. Northward it had contacted the Manchurian Volunteers. Southward it had reached the New Fourth Army, which also had expanded up the sea coast into Shantung and up the Yangtze almost to Hankow.

This "unruly expansion", even though it was at the expense of the Japanese, greatly annoyed the Kuomintang. There were strong pro-Japanese elements in the Chungking government that had never been purged. Some of them fled to Nanking and set up a Japanese puppet government there. Others remained in Chungking to advocate capitulation. Deadly phrases were whispered: "Japanese are only lice on the body of China, but Communism is a disease of the heart". Many of the Kuomintang generals near the front—it was later stated that there were fifty-two—joined the Japanese openly and fought the Communists with Japanese money and arms. They were encouraged from Chungking; it was called "beating the enemy by curved line method". Other Kuomintang generals did not join Japan, but fought the Communists in coordination with Japanese.

Armed clashes between Kuomintang and Communist forces grew from 1939 onward. That was the year when General Hu Tsung-nan attacked Yenan and detached five southern counties while the Communists

were busy beating back a Japanese attack from the north. By 1940 the Kuomintang had established an armed blockade around all territory where the Eighth Route and New Fourth armies operated. An estimated one fifth of Chiang's forces were thus diverted to blockading the Communists. Meanwhile equipment given by America for use against Japan was hoarded for the future civil war.

The most notorious attack on Communist armies during the Japanese war was the massacre of the New Fourth's headquarters and rear guard in January 1941. This was prepared for by an accusation that General Yeh Ting of the New Fourth was "plotting to control the China sea-coast from Chekiang to Shantung". The charge betrays the mentality of those who made it. Why should it be called "plotting" for a regularly commissioned Chinese general to try to recover territory from the Japanese?

Chiang Kai-shek ordered the New Fourth Army to leave the Yangtze Valley and move north of the Yellow River. Protesting this order, which would abandon Central China to the Japanese, the new Fourth nevertheless began to comply. After their main forces had moved north of the Yangtze, the rear guard of four thousand armed men protecting six thousand unarmed people—officers' families, political workers and the hospital—was surrounded by eighty thousand Kuomintang troops and massacred. The Chungking military council then issued an order disbanding the New Fourth entirely. The Communists' military committee in Yenan issued a counter-order reorganising the New Fourth under command of Chen Yi and ordering it to keep on fighting Japs and also to "guard against pro-Japanese traitors of the rear".

This was the first open divergence of military orders. It was not the last. In 1943 Chiang ordered the Communist Party disbanded; in 1944 he ordered their armed forced reduced to one tenth their existing size. The Communists did not comply.

"Fortunately we have not obeyed those orders", said Mao Tse-tung at the Seventh Party Congress in 1945, "and so we have retained some free territory and a gallant anti-Japanese army for the Chinese people. Should not the Chinese people rejoice over this disobedience? Is it not enough that the Kuomintang by its defeatist tactics has presented the Japanese with vast territory from the Amur to Kweichow? If there were no Liberated Areas and their armies, where would the people's anti-Japanese war be? Where would the nation's future be?"

The figures on which Mao based his claim were striking enough. "Of 721 counties abandoned by the Kuomintang to the Japanese, we have established Chinese county governments in eighty-two per cent", reported Chou En-lai in late 1944. "We have 591 county governments and twelve elected regional governments. Of the total 453,000 square miles of territory occupied by the Japanese we have recovered 301,000 square miles, or two-thirds. Of the total population we have liberated nearly half. Meanwhile the Kuomintang lost forty four cities in the Honan campaign in forty-four days."

"Before that Honan campaign in March 1944", Chou En-lai continued, "our forces engaged 64.6 per cent of the 560,000 Japanese troops in China and ninety-five per cent of the 780,000 puppet troops. Of forty-five large cities held by the enemy, thirty-eight are under frequent attack by us. Of 6000 miles of railway held by the enemy, 5960 are frequently disrupted by us. We have full control of 500 miles of sea-coast and our activities cover 3,900 miles of coast".

The American military authorities were impressed by the record of the Communist forces. General Joseph P. Stillwell, head of the American armed aid to China, urged that the blockade against the Liberated Areas be lifted, that arms be sent them and air bases set up in the Liberated Areas and that all Chinese forces be unified under a War Council representing all parties. Stillwell attacked Chiang's policy of hoarding American arms for later use against the Communists. Chiang demanded Stillwell's recall and got it. Stillwell's fight had, however, pried open the blockade long enough for American correspondents and military intelligence units to visit the Liberated Areas. They brought back confirmation of the Communists' claims. Raymond P. Ludden, after a seven months' trip

made for the U. S. State Department, reported that the Communists had 600,000 highly trained troops incessantly fighting the Japanese, and that these were well regarded by the Chinese people. Under Stillwell, an American military liaison group was set up in Yenan.

American policy suffered a rapid change when Ambassador Patric J. Hurley was sent to China. His first moves seemed in line with the Roosevelt-Stillwell policy. He flew to Yenan and proposed a better agreement than the Communists asked. They were demanding two points: a unified command and a coalition government. Hurley assented to these at once and threw in three other points for good measures: civil liberties, equal legal status of all political parties and equal distribution of American war supplies. The Yenan Communists looked with incredulous surprise on this Santa Claus who remarked breezily: "But this is only good Jeffersonian democracy. No reason why you shouldn't have that."

The Communists have saved for some future museum the document that Hurley dictated and signed at the top, with Mao Tse-tung's signature at the bottom, and a space between them for Chiang's signature which Hurley was to secure. They have waved that pledge of "Jeffersonian democracy" ever since as a token of all they have been asking. But when Hurley got back to Chungking, Chiang refused the agreement and soon convinced Hurley that the "red menace" was the threat of Asia and that the Communists must give up their armies before anything else was done.

By spring of 1945 Chiang used American-given equipment to attack Liberated Area forces—with the knowledge of Ambassador Hurley and General Wedemeyer—even while the Japanese war was on.

The Japanese surrender caught everyone unawares. Chiang, after utter rout by the Japanese southward drive through Hunan, was penned up in southwest China with so many hostile Chinese between him and the sea-coast that he had become, except for American support, little more than an inland warlord. The Liberated Areas, on the contrary, were all over North and Central China and were spreading rapidly into Manchuria. They reached from Yenan to the sea, interrupted only by strips of territory along the railways, held by the Japanese.

"Take the cities! Take the railways! Disarm the Japs"! was the call Chu Teh issued from Yenan to the people's armies. Chiang ordered the Communist-led armies to stand still, but with this order they did not comply.

The armies of the Liberated Areas drove on the Jap-held and puppet-held cities with the vigor inspired by Japan's surrender. Every day the Yenan radio reported the taking of new towns. In the last ten days of August, 1945, eighty-five county towns, five Shantung ports and one provincial capital were taken from the Japanese. They were taken in battle, for the Japanese fought back; in North China they had not surrendered.

By September the armies of the Liberated Areas had doubled the number of county towns they held in North China. The gain in territory was not large for they held the rural districts already, but the gain in number of cities held was immense. In Shantung, of 118 county towns, they held 30 before the Japanese surrender and took 44 more in August, giving them three fourths of the county seats. In Hopei, of 112 county towns, 27 were held before the Japanese surrender and 30 taken in August. In Kiangsu the New Fourth held two-thirds of the county towns north of the Yangtze, and a wide belt of counties between Nanking and Hangchow. The workers of Shanghai awaited them, and there is little doubt that they could have taken that city. They refrained, fearing trouble with America.

"We hold all the area from Kalgan to the mouth of the Yangtze, and from Shensi through Shantung to the sea, except for the largest cities and fortified points on railways", was announced at the September fourth "Victory Celebration" in Yenan. "But why are the Japanese still fighting in our areas? Everywhere else they stopped on August 15". The meeting requested the central government to map out the areas where the Eighth Route and New Fourth

Armies might receive the surrender of the Japanese.

Chiang's policy, and that of America, was to stop these victories in the Liberated Areas at once. Chiang quickly contacted the Kuomintang generals who had been fighting as Japanese puppets—and who were, therefore, well inside the disputed areas—and made them his representatives to hold the territory against the Communists. On August 23 he gave two supplementary terms to the Japanese. 1) Japanese troops must continue to garrison all occupied places until relieved by Central Government troops. 2) If such places are taken by "illegal armies", the Japanese must take them back and hold them for Chiang Kai-shek.

Japanese attacks on the Chinese in North China, therefore, increased during September. Everywhere the Japanese declared that they were acting under orders of Chiang Kai-shek. This was confirmed by actions of Chiang's known appointees. The newly appointed governor of Shantung, speaking in his capital Tsinan on October 1st, expressed "joy and gratitude" that the Japanese army "still maintains order in Tsinan". Nine-tenths of Shantung province was held by the Communists.

America meanwhile put her ships and planes at Chiang's disposal to rush his regular forces to North China and Manchuria. It has since been called "the greatest airlift in history". It cost the American people $300,000,000. It convinced the Chinese that Chiang was an American puppet who could not take control of China without American aid. It also convinced them that America was not neutral in China's internal affairs.

"Chiang and the puppets, the Americans and the Japanese all cooperated to keep us from expanding in North China", said editor Yu Kwang-sheng to me in Yenan.

American naval forces landed at the Tsing-tao naval base on September 14. In the following month they took over most of the China ports for Chiang Kai-shek. Some they took from the Japanese by the surrender terms; others they took from the Chinese Communists by force and argument. In some ports the Communists pulled out to avoid clash with the Americans. But when the Japanese announced that the Americans had ordered them to take Chefoo and Weihaiwei from the Communists and turn them over to the Americans, the attitude of the Chinese in these ports stiffened.

I owe to the mayor of Chefoo the following tale of what happened when the Americans tried to take this port. American naval vessels entered the harbor in the first week of October and asked the local authorities to surrender the city. The latter refused, saying that the Chinese had driven out the Japs, that perfect order prevailed and that it was "unseemly for an allied power to take a Chinese port from a Chinese army". Discussion lasted several days, growing more acrimonious until the mayor finally said: "It would be a pity if the third world war should start in Chefoo". The American negotiators withdrew to their ships, asking the Chinese to come on board next morning for a "very important conference" with the Admiral.

At midnight two hundred motor boats arrived from Tientsin filled with puppet troops and seized an uninhabited island facing Chefoo, two miles out. Shore sentries reported this and at four in the morning the Chefoo troops went to the island in junks caught the invaders sleeping and wiped out the expedition. A few hours later the American naval vessels steamed away without sending anyone on shore and without waiting for that "very important conference". Chefoo people naturally concluded that the Americans planned that puppet attack in order to take over the port themselves as "mediators".

While all these conflicts were going on, Mao Tse-tung was conferring with Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking. "When they could not subdue us by force they tried to subdue us by negotiation", said editor Yu, explaining later why Ambassador Hurley flew to Yenan and took Mao Tse-tung to the conference. It was a cynical interpretation but the cynicism seems justified by facts.

Under an American guarantee of his personal safety—it was the first time in

eighteen years that Mao had left the shelter of the Communist areas—Mao Tse-tung negotiated with Chiang. After six weeks talk, an agreement was signed on October 10, which is the national holiday. It is known as the Double Tenth Agreement.

Both sides agreed to cessation of civil war, a democratic rule, civil liberties, equality and legality of political parties and reorganization of the national army. In return for this, the Communists agreed to evacuate some 41,000 square miles with 16,901,000 population which they held south of the Yangtze, chiefly around the ports of Shanghai and Canton.

Two important points were unsettled. Chiang refused to fix the ratio at which the two armies should unite into a unified national army. He also refused any recognition to the local governments in the Communist areas. Communists first proposed that these governments be recognised as elected. When this was refused, they suggested a return to the old provincial units, with the Communists appointing either the governor or vice-governor in the provinces they controlled. Failing to get Chiang's consent to this, Mao Tse-tung then suggested that new elections be held under an inter-party control. This also was refused by Chiang. The Communists' final suggestion was that all governments remained in status quo until a new freely elected national assembly should adopt a national constitution. This also not being agreed to, the Communists reserved the right to defend their areas until an agreed national coalition government should be formed.

Despite unsettled points, the Communists considered that an agreement of value was reached. "It was a good agreement", said Lu Ting-yi to me in Yenan, "but the war got worse than before."

On October 6, four days before the signing of the treaty, a large scale offensive was launched against the Communists in Central China. On October 12, two days after the signing, Chiang's instructions to his generals contained a newly printed set of instructions on "fighting Communist bandits". Even those Communist forces south of the Yangtze that were evacuating by the terms of the treaty, were attacked as they withdrew. In November Chiang sent three armies into Honan, bypassing many big cities still held by the Japanese, to clear the Communists from the Peiping-Hankow railway. Chiang's forces were defeated in decisive battle, two armies being encircled and disarmed while the third withdrew from the civil war.

It was clear that Chiang did not have enough forces in North or Central China to subdue the Communists. A new approach was in order. It was a new approach by Chiang and by the Americans alike.

Ambassador Hurley and General Wedemeyer were withdrawn; their names were linked in the Chinese people's mind with the civil war policy. General George C. Marshall came as the special envoy of the President of the United States. It was announced that he came to mediate and bring peace. Great throngs of Shanghai students put on a demonstration in his honor and were beaten up by Chiang's political police.

A "Cease Fire Order" was signed on January 10, 1946 and Marshall added his signature to Chiang's, pledging that military positions should remain as of January 13. The Political Consultative Conference met, representing all parties in China. They came to unanimous agreement. It was the highest tide of hope in China for nearly twenty years.

The military positions fixed on that agreement are the ones the Communists still claim. They remain historic despite later vicissitudes of war. By those positions, the Liberated Areas include 445,000 square miles and 113,000,000 people in North China. By the March 27 "Cease Fire for Manchuria", they claim in Manchuria 390,000 square miles and 26,000,000 people. This gives a total of 835,000 square miles and close to one hundred and forty million people. They are equal in area to the United States east of the Mississippi, and equal in population to the whole United States.

These areas stretch from the mouth of the Yangtze to the Amur River, from the Mongolian deserts to the sea. The territory is continuous except where broken by the penetration of war. Nowhere in a year of war, was Chiang able to maintain a through

railway across. The places he took in these areas must be reached from Nanking by air or by sea. The people of the Liberated Areas can travel freely from Shensi to Harbin, to North Kiangsu, to the Shantung sea coast, though by primitive transport. A postal service operates all over the areas, but without connections to the outer world.

There are eight sister Liberated Areas. Their borders touch and they have common policies. The following chapters will be given to their way of life.

Chapter 7

LAND TO THE TILLER

When I once asked Mao Tse-tung whether he had any doubt of final victory, he did not discuss the army but replied: "That will depend on how well we put through the land reform. Chiang Kai-shek will fail because he goes against the needs of the farmers. If we Communists can solve the land problem, we shall win."

From the days of Wang Mang, the progressive emperor in 21 A.D., down to the modern days of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, progressive political leaders have tried in various ways to get the land into the hands of the man who tilled it. The Kuomintang wrote "land to the tiller" into the program of its first National Congress in 1924 and gained thereby the tremendous farmer support that carried it to victory. Though Chiang then suppressed farmers' organizations and made the landlords his rural agents, he never dared officially renounce the "land to the tiller" policy. He merely failed to practise it.

The Communists saw the "land to the tiller" program as the base for everything else desired: for economic progress, democratic government, military strength and even for the flowering of schools. If they succeed where emperors for two thousand years failed, it will be because they do not content themselves with laws and handouts. They arouse the farmers to take the land and to make the system work.

"Don't make the mistake of giving land to the farmers," every organizer is told. "The Communists are few and have no power to transfer land. Only if all the farmers do it, will it be done. If one farmer asks the landlord for land or lower interest, he will not get it; if two or a dozen ask, they will not get it. But when the whole village asks, and knows why they are asking, they'll get it."

There are no statistics on the extent of landlordism in China. During the land reform every village gathered statistics but these are not yet combined. In the villages I visited, from half to two thirds of the land had been owned by landlords before the reform. Rents, paid in kind, had been from fifty to sixty per cent of the crop for bare land, and seventy per cent or more if the landlord also furnished equipment and seed. Even in the great open spaces of Manchuria, settled within the past century, it was found during the land reform that fifty to seventy per cent of the tillers of the soil did not own it.

For millions of the soil-tillers the question was a matter of life or death. They made a revolution not to live better but to live at all. From three to six million people died in the 1929-30 famine in North Shensi and Kansu. In one county 62 per cent of the people died, in another 75 per cent.* Deaths could have been prevented if the farmers had owned their crops or if the grain hoarders had been compelled to disgorge. Profiteering landlords made fortunes in the midst of the dead and dying, buying twenty acres from a starving man for three days food.

When families are dying out and daughters being sold into slavery, the property rights that compel this lose their sacredness in people's eyes. Landlords maintained power by hiring armed retainers to protect them against outraged citizens. A mission school girl told me in 1927 of a landlord in her Honan county who had two hundred acres of land and seventy-five armed bullies. When the farmers organized a union, his armed men broke it up killing thirty people. In later years, as Chiang's government extended itself, the landlords depended on the county police and courts. Still later, in the break-up after the Japa-

* Dr. A. Stamper, Report on Northwest Areas, Nanking 1933.

nese war in Manchuria, they organized armed bands, but got them commissioned as "recovering armies" of the Kuomintang.*

Landlordism got worse during the Japanese war. In the occupied areas the biggest landlords commonly became the Japanese agents, collecting grain taxes, organizing the levy of forced labor, distributing rationed goods and profiteering on all these transactions. They were considered by the villagers worse than the Japs. Sometimes they betrayed patriotic neighbors to death and thus secured their lands. Ting Ling, the well-known woman writer, told me that during the land reform in Shantung she discovered one landlord who had not only enriched himself by thousands of acres during the Japanese occupation but who had even instituted the mediaeval right of the first night with any tenant's bride who pleased him.

Not all landlords were villains. There were "enlightened landlords" as the Communists themselves recognized. There were even landlords in the Communist Party. But the system of landlordism with its high rents, feudal duties and corrupt dictatorial power sapped the prosperity of the county, made a mockery of all talk of democracy, progress and education and condemned millions to a slow hunger-death.

The Communists have tried three different methods of getting land into the hands of the tiller in the past twenty years.

They practised direct land confiscation in the first civil war before the war with Japan. They gave this up during the anti-Japanese war in the interest of a united front with the Kuomintang, and substituted a "rent reduction" program to enforce laws long since passed by the Central Government but not enforced by it. To enforce rent reduction is not easy. Laws do not enforce themselves. Where landlords have ruled for centuries, the farmers were often afraid to complain. When a good Farmers' Union was organized, the enforcement went better. In such cases, the lower rents, combined with a graduated tax on income from rented lands, often made landlordism so unprofitable that the landlords were willing to sell land to the tiller on reasonable terms. The Farmers' Union then helped the farmer buy it with cooperative credits, and the "land to the tiller" plan was advanced. If the Communists had secured a coalition government with the Kuomintang after the anti-Japanese war, they intended to continue this method.

New methods of land reform were forced by the civil strife, and also by actions taken by Farmers' Unions on their own initiative when Japanese-occupied strongholds fell into the people's hands.

Big landlords were captured. They had acted as Japanese agents on a big scale. They were tried before "People's Tribunals"* and lands acquired through treason were confiscated at once. The Farmers' Unions in areas that had been earlier liberated also grew more confident with the defeat of the Japs and began campaigns to "settle up" with landlords who had broken the rent reduction laws. A land donation movement also began to induce landlords by social pressure to donate land or sell on reasonable terms.

The decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party to push land reform by new methods was taken in May 1946.

Farmers in Honan and Shantung told me proudly: "We had the land reform half done before the Communists decided to do it." Party secretary Li Ching-yu of South Hopei confirmed them, saying: "Chairman Mao was preparing his report on the land problem when he saw what the farmers in some areas were already doing. So the Central Committee decided that the time had come to solve the land problem thoroughly and break feudalism entirely."

Once adopted, the Communists put land reform at the top of their program. In the midst of civil war, people gave more attention to the land reform than to the battles General Lin Piao in Manchuria released 12,000 of his best army officers and political workers to help organize the land reform, considering it more important than

* See chapter **Manchuria.**

*See chapter on **Justice.**

army routine since "there was at the moment no very active front." Leading writers from Kalgan hiked all over North China for the same purpose.

The aim of the land reform was not to bring about any imagined Utopia. It was to "break feudalism" and make possible expansion of production under the forms of the "new capitalism". Absolute equality of land holdings was not sought and could not in any case be permanent under a capitalist economy. Renting land was not in itself made illegal nor was hiring of farmhands illegal. The land reform aimed to bring about sufficient readjustment of landownership so that the great mass of farming people could live from their own soil. It aimed to move as many poor farmers as possible into the category of "middle farmers".

What is a middle peasant, a poor peasant, a rich peasant ? These categories were defined for me by Liao Lu-yen of the Research Section in Yenan. A "middle peasant" is one who has enough land to feed his family: sometimes he has a small marketable surplus. A "poor peasant" is one who has no land of his own or so little that he cannot live without borrowing and renting additional land. A "rich peasant" is one who hires several laborers and has considerable marketable surplus.

The land reform aimed to get enough land into the hands of the tillers so that most of the farmers would be "middle farmers", free from constant fear of hunger and serfdom. Such a free farming population could then begin steps towards prosperity.

There were at least a dozen methods by which the Communists set out to get land into the hands of the tillers. Liao Lu-yen listed the following for me:

1. Confiscation of land of Japanese and puppets.
2. Confiscation of land illegally taken from farmers by "bad gentry".
3. Confiscation of "black land", which landlords did not report to escape taxation.
4. Confiscation of special lands such as those of former emperors.
5. Distribution of public lands. (The Manchukuo Government, for instance, had very large holdings previously taken from farmers.)
6. Taking back lands seized by loan sharks to cover illegal interest or bought by landlords under famine pressures. These to be returned at original cost, or at interest reduced.
7. "Settling accounts" with landlords who cheated on rent.
8. "Settling accounts" for unpaid labor or other injuries.
9. Land donation movement, persuading landlords to donate land.
10. Land purchase: the Farmers' Union lends money to the farmer to buy land which the landlord is willing to sell at a reasonable price because renting is no longer profitable.
11. Land purchase by government bonds, with resale to farmers.

The active agent in the land reform was not the government but the Farmers' Unions. These were voluntary organizations open to all farmers living by their own toil. They might be stimulated and helped by organizers of various kinds, from the Party, the army or educational groups. But after such organizers had explained the possible methods and laws, the decision as to what lands might be acquired and by what methods and to whom they should be distributed was strictly up to the local farmers. They canvassed the possibility of donations or of "settling accounts" with specific landlords. Any actual change of title and any issuance of bonds for land purchase had to be done through respective organs of government.

A certain amount of land changed hands through the "land donation" movement. Thus the head of the Supreme Court of Chahar province, a landlord who was also a Communist, opened the drive for land donations by declaring in a mass meeting on August 23 that he was giving all his land free to the landless, reserving only as much as his family could till. This sort of thing was expected of Communists. Others made less spectacular donations. According to an organizer in Manchuria most of the "voluntary donations" were "not so very voluntary but the landlords thought that if they showed their friendliness they would be allowed to keep more land than if they

had to go through a 'settling accounts'. In this they were correct."

Old An Wen-chin, in the Yenan area, must be accounted one of the truly philanthropic landlords. Such people exist in all countries. He was a tall, venerable man from one of the great families. He had a magnificent home in Suiteh, a stone mansion on a hill with a fine view. It was furnished with old ivories, beautiful bronzes and fine old paintings of bygone dynasties. Although he had already lost considerable land in various stages of land reform in the Yenan Border Region, old An took the lead in the "land donation" and decided that he could give away another hundred and fifty acres and still have as much as his sons could farm.

"When the Communists came to this area I was against them," he said. "I even belonged to an anti-Communist committee. I'm not a Communist now and never will be. But I agree with their land reform. The rich have lands from north to south, from east to west. The poor haven't enough land to stick a trowel in. In this way our country cannot be strong and prosperous. When I lived by collecting rents, I had much money but I could not sleep peacefully at night because there were so many bandits. Now I see my former tenants leading prosperous lives and I am glad to know that I am helping to make a strong, prosperous China." Old An's fellow citizens, including the Communists, had recognized his quality by making him vice-chairman of the Border Region government.

In contrast to Old An one might note landlord Li Hsi-keng of the same area, who, after losing some land through a "settling accounts" meeting, fled to Kuomintang territory and sent back word: "When we fight our way back we will slaughter those tenants and I myself will open a restaurant with human meat." He was a real "feudal gent."

I visited a "settling accounts" meeting in Hou T'un Tzu, or "Back Village" outside Kalgan. It was held at night after field work. We found it by the shouts that echoed down the dark, uneven village lane. In an open yard between clay walls of houses some five or six hundred people sat in grayish-blue peasant clothing on the cold ground. Clusters of bound-foot women hung round the edge of the gathering. A score of youths in the front rows wore red armbands. They were Young Vanguards and often led in shouting.

The Farmers' Union representative who went with me from Kalgan told me that there had been no union in "Back Village" until the past few days. A fortnight earlier a dozen farmers had discussed in the field the land reform that had come to some nearby villages and had opined that "we have some tough guys that ought to be reckoned with." They talked it over rather secretly with some twenty more and then sent to the Farmers' Union in Kalgan for technical advice. The result was the meeting I saw. The representative from Kalgan took no direct part in the meeting but sat in the audience and explained things to me. The function of chairman was taken informally by local farmers in turn.

Half a dozen men stood facing the farmers with lamp light flickering on their faces. One was Mei Chiao-pu, who under the Japs was head of the "Chu", a township of eighteen villages. He was a typical township "boss", hard-faced and domineering. A lean middle-aged farmer was challenging him.

"And wasn't it you who took the common lands along the railroad?" This, I learn, is a strip thirty feet wide and a mile long.

"I took it for the Chu," declares Mei.

Ironic laughter rises. "Who was the Chu? You were! You made us work the land for nothing and you got the harvest."

"You got it," sing out the red armbanded youths with glee.

"There were expenses of the Chu," declares the former chief.

"Expenses? Graft for your platoon chiefs who rounded up forced labor for the Japs."

Several former platoon chiefs, standing alongside Mei, began to assert that he gave them very little. Mei "got it all". The crowd grew delighted as the grafters wrangled with and blamed each other.

"We're getting the low down now," a farmer called.

A bearded man strode from the crowd and thrust his face close to the former chief. "When the Japs demanded forced labor, one from every house, didn't you spare your family and take two sons from mine?" There is a pause and Mei admits: "I did."

"Then pay me for the wages of the son who did your work."

This is the first definite request for "account-settling". The crowd sinks its teeth into it. "Pay him for doing your work," the Vanguards shout.

The former chief asks "forgiveness". He hopes "my good friends will not be hard on me."

"Come clean! Make amends!" shouts a man at the rear.

"No forgiveness until you pay up," shouts another.

A hunched-up farmer with a pipe a foot long suggests that the people "help his memory" with specific charges.

A young farmer rises: "When the Japs came to take me last year and my old mother begged them to leave her only son to work the land, you kicked her viciously twice."

"Settle for two kicks," shouts the crowd.

An old woman on bound feet makes her way painfully forward and addresses the former chief. She is trembling with her own daring for who ever heard of facing up to a "boss" before? But the meeting has given her courage. "Remember," she quavers, "the eighteen dollars you squeezed on a false charge from my old man in the days when eighteen dollars was a year's food?"

"I remember", admit Mei grudgingly.

"Give me five bushels of grain to settle accounts," she pleads.

Her timidity moves the crowd more than a firmer demand. "Five bushels isn't enough. Make it ten, shouts a voice from the crowd.

"Ten bushels," repeat the youngmen's shouts.

Another woman totters forward. "You sent my son to forced labor and then my husband too. He resisted, for two from a family weren't required. So he came late and the Japs set dogs on him and he died. What pay will you give for a life?" There is a moment of tragic hush.

For half an hour they pile up the accounts of the former puppet. He is shown to have been a grafter, a tyrant, who enclosed common lands for himself and exacted unpaid labor for his own benefit. He admits most of the acts and asks "forgiveness" but offers no amends.

"Make amends!" shouts the crowd. "Come clean if you want to belong to the people." It is a striking formulation.

Finally the chairman of the moment tells him to think it over until tomorrow night when the village will "struggle with him" again. Meanwhile the "committee on settling accounts", eleven men elected by the newly formed Farmers' Union, will list all the bills presented tonight and receive any other claims. The meeting spent fifteen minutes on two of the former platoon chiefs and then adjourned about eight o'clock. Farmers go early to bed.

"This is only the first meeting," explained one of the local chairmen to me. "We are sorry not to show you results tonight. But we will have to struggle with that Mei for several meetings. He is tough."

"What will happen if he keeps refusing?" I asked.

"He will yield in the end in order to live comfortably with his neighbors. He is not a big guy who can go to the city to live on his gains."

In the nearby village "Peaceful Wall", the land reform was completed. The biggest landlord there, a man named Yang, had had one hundred and twenty acres, by American standards hardly more than a fair-sized family farm. In this part of China Yang had more than thirty tenants over whom he exercised "feudal rights." Every year before the Dragon Boat Festival the tenants had to clean and repair Yang's house without payment. One woman stated, in the "settling accounts", that she had washed the clothes for the nine people of Yang's family for eight years without wages. Another woman had served as wet nurse for Yang's baby son for a year without pay, though pay in land had been promised her. Each of these women was given one acre of land.

Yang proved soft metal in the meeting. Almost at once he declared that all his land was "not enough to meet the just claims" against him. He "offered it all to his fellow villagers". They "let him keep" twelve acres which made him still the richest farmer in "Peaceful Wall".

"Peaceful Wall" had a population of 2,500 people in 625 families. Before the land reform there were 26 landlords owning 1,000 acres, and 164 self-supporting farmers owning 766 acres, a little over four acres per family. The remaining families owned no land; 233 families were share-cropping tenants while 200 were landless laborers. In this area a farmer with a half acre per member of his family rates as a "middle peasant" while with one acre per capita he is a "rich peasant". After the land reform there were 65 "rich peasants"—these included now the former landlords—and all the rest of the people were "middle peasants". There were no more share-croppers or poor peasants in "Peaceful Wall."

Not all of the land was taken through struggle. Some of it was bought. In a typical village in South Hopei, of 166 acres transferred from landlords to farmers, 14 were donated, 73 were bought and 79 were taken by "settling accounts". If all these measures failed to transfer enough land, one final method remained. A regional government might issue "land bonds" and required landlords to sell all land above a certain quota to the government which then resold to the farmer.

This method of "compulsory" sale was used in Yenan Border Region where, because of long Communist rule, there was no "traitors' land" to be confiscated and few abuses to be remedied by "settling accounts". By a law passed in December 1946, landlords might retain fifty per cent more land per member of the family than the average "middle peasant" had, or twice the amount of a "middle peasant" if they qualified by past services as "patriotic landlords". All land above this must be sold at the current price, determined by a committee of three, representing the township government, the Farmers' Union and the landlords. The price was paid by the government and the land was then resold to farmers at half the price the government paid. All prices were calculated in milled grain, not in fluctuating currency, and all transactions were spread over ten years in equal annual instalments.

The land reform—1946-47 model—was, therefore, not land confiscation pure and simple. It was a campaign to get land into the hands of the tiller by purchase, by gift, by confiscation, by government bonds, by fines, by social pressure, by every possible means that the local Communists would support. The support of local public opinion —more than that, of local public action— was needed if the reform was to stick. Reforms of past centuries had failed for lack of a conscious and self-ruling farming community. The arousing of social consciousness and of the sense of people's power in the land reform was seen by the Communists as the best and surest foundation for the "new democracy" they hoped to achieve. The economic security of the farmers through the land reform was also seen as the foundation for the "new capitalism" that should finally smash feudalism.

The landlords were encouraged to put any capital they might possess or acquire through the sale of lands into local industries on which they might profit with little or no taxation, thus making the transition from feudal landlords to small capitalists and producing something that the country needed. They were recognized as having the right to exist on a fairly comfortable basis with land holdings from one and a half to three times those of the "middle farmer", according to local conditions. To many of the landlords their fate seemed grim enough but if they cared to check their plight against that of landlords in similar revolutions from the French Revolution down, they could console themselves that in most cases neither their persons nor their homes were attacked and not even all of their land.

Chinese are given to reasonable compromise. Even the Chinese Communists prided themselves not on the turmoil of the land reform but on its comparative smoothness. "There were no armed revolts of landlords," boasted an organizer in Hopei, checking this

revolution against its counterparts in history. "Most of our landlords didn't even leave the area but remained in their village homes. Some of them even cooperated with us, especially the younger members of landlord families who fought together with us against the Japs."

Early in 1947 the radiograms poured into Yenan reporting the land reform from various areas. Twenty million people in the Four Province Area had received from half an acre to an acre each, fifteen million people in crowded Shantung had received one third of an acre per capita. In sparsely settled Manchuria they were getting from one to two acres per person. The amounts were not much by standards of western countries but they made to Chinese farmers the difference between perpetual hunger and self-subsistence, between serfdom and freedom, between an old despair and a new hope. Putting all the figures together, more than sixty million farming people had received land in less than a year. It was one of the greatest land revolutions of history.

Radiograms from the army—all combined now under the name of People's Liberation Arimes — said that the enthusiasm of the new volunteers for defending their land against Chiang Kai-shek was greater than it had been against Japan. "I used to have to explain to them the reasons for fighting but now it is they who do the explaining" said a political commissar. "They now have land to defend."

From a village near Kaomi in Shantung they radioed that the land reform was completed "within sound of Chiang's guns". A landlord named Tsao had threatened reprisals "when the Kuomintang comes." So the villagers sent all old folks and children to other villages further in the rear and then "settled accounts further" in another meeting, taking three more acres of land and seventeen bushels of grain. They sent all the food to the rear with the transport animals while the younger men finished the planting of the twenty-eight acres of wheat land for everyone.

"So now every family has land, sprouting wheat and lovable green onions," they concluded with triumph.

This type of land reform, it seems, can persist in battle. Fifteen million farming folk in North Kiangsu got land during the year when Chiang was presumably conquering their provinces. Theirs was the area where Chiang penetrated farthest and most thoroughly, taking all the county towns and fortifying all the highways with frequent blockhouses. Yet in villages within sight of the blockhouses the land distribution went on under the protection of local guerrillas who called themselves "Free Farmers Volunteers". Chiang's troops held the central citadels of Jukao, Nantung, and Chingkiang, but in their suburbs the land reform was completed in three days by the Farmers' Unions. In some townships the farmers even parcelled out the land on which Chiang's blockhouses were built. The farmer who got it may wait a season before he can plough it, but the parcelling was a thumbing of the nose at the armed might of the Kuomintang.

One village in North Kiangsu was holding its celebration at the completion of the land reform when some of Chiang's soldiers opened fire on them from a blockhouse across a river.

"Ha!" said the villagers, as they doubtless ducked for shelter. "They are setting off fire-crackers to honor our land reform!"

Chapter 8

THE NEW FARMER

As a result of the land reform many young men were able to get married, according to a radio from Mulberry Gardens township in Shantung on Chinese New Year 1947. "No girls would look at us farmhands before," young Chang was quoted as saying. "But now as a free man I hope for the honor of marriage." He had received in the land reform two-thirds of an acre.

Parents with daughters said—I quote the Chinese radio—"We will no longer marry them to old men of wealth for living on rents is not reliable. Better marry them to young, hard-working tillers of the soil and join them into the ever-renewing river of farming people."

The wife of a brave young soldier named Sun died while her man was away at the front. How could a penniless hero get another? He got five-sixths of an acre of land "and so he got a new wife at once", said this quaintly practical success tale of Shantung.

To former farmhands and tenants the land reform marks the beginning of a new life. For young farmhands it means the chance of marriage, for older folk it means more food for the family. A New Year's letter to Mao Tse-tung from the farmers of Chuning village in south Shansi thus express the change for which they thank him.

Dear Chairman Mao,

First of all we will tell you that we have all turned over a new life. We have settled accounts with eleven families of landlords and despond and have got back all that good earth that our ancestors cultivated into field land, like that good flat land by the river—and it has become our own land again. We have also reckoned up for and got back the silver dollars that the landlords got from our sweat and blood. We have even bought cows and donkeys and are living in warm caves....All of us have pillows on our kangs.

On the last day of the lunar year practically every family had folks going in town to market to buy mutton for meat dumplings, red paper for New Year's scrolls and cloth doo-dads for the children—and every family bought a picture of you! When we think of former New Years in the old hard times, burrowing into holes and creeping through tunnels to escape the loan sharks and then look at these light-hearted times when we can pass the New Year eating meat dumplings, we are truly happy in our hearts. After New Year we will get up production with one mind and heart, working according to your way of getting organized.

We heard that traitor Chiang Kai-shek was going to attack Yenan where you live. But it is of no use for him to figure, for even if our heads parted from our shoulders they would still bounce up at him two or three times.

Both young and old of our village send you greetings and look forward to a long, long youthful life for you!"

It is difficult to realize from the light-hearted tone of this letter that there was a war going on in China and that county towns right there in southeast Shansi were changing hands back and forth many times. Wars have gone on a long time: to Chinese farmers they are an old grief. But the land reform is new! To young Sun, young Chang and the writers of that letter the chance of getting a wife and of feeding their families was more exciting than war.

When once the burden of high rents and taxes is removed, a new farmer quickly ap-

pears. His first characteristic is the expansive sense of freedom expressed in the above letter. This is followed almost at once by an enthusiasm for production from which —since the land is his own—there is now hope of a better livelihood. New relations with the community develop; the tiller of the soil ceases to be a serf and becomes—in a small way—a businessman, the foundation of the "new capitalism". He also ceases to be a peasant, passive under the march of looting armies, and becomes a fighting citizen, willing to defend his gains. He unites with other farmers to fight locusts, floods and famines. He discusses national and world politics.

Everywhere in the Democratic Areas the land reform is followed by the "production drive". This aims first of all to produce enough food so that the farmer and his family may eat throughout the year and next to produce clothing through the labor of the women without depleting the supply of food.

The feeling behind the production drive was vividly expressed by the hospitable farmer whom Sidney Rittenberg met in north Shansi. His family had all been tenants as far back as they could remember. Now, "thanks to the land reform, we are free."

Just what was the difference, asked Rittenberg, "You plough the same land anyway."

The farmer looked at his questioner as if he thought him feeble-minded. Then he replied that there were no more high rents. However, it was not merely a matter of rents. "Your own land is your treasure, your darling. You plan for your darling, how to give more water and more fertilizer. You strain your back and make your son strain his back to terrace the land better. Our chairman Mao calls on the people to improve their livelihood by raising in two years enough grain to feed them for three years. Thus there will be no famines. All this can be done on your land."

The first production drive was made in Yenan Border Region to meet the emergency caused by the Kuomintang blockade, which stiffened from 1939 onward. This so increased the natural difficulties of this arid region that everybody, including the army and the civil service* turned out to produce food. Farmers were urged to produce a reserve against the probable year of drought.

Forms of more productive labor were sought. The most important of these was the "labor-exchange brigade". It was based on forms of farm labor that existed for centuries but that were not widely used until Mao Tse-tung analyzed their significance and found ways to promote them.

"It took us some time to discover the method," said Hwei Tsung-chuan, chief of reconstruction in Yenan Border Region. "At first we tried something called 'mutual help brigade', to help families of soldiers. The county sent an organizer to form a "brigade" of which he became the head. The farmers did not take to it: both the name and method were foreign to them.

"Mao Tse-tung gave much thought to the problem and made an intensive study of methods of labor among the farmers themselves. He found an old custom by which relatives and neighbors exchanged labor. If you help on my land today I help on yours tomorrow. The custom had its own standards: one day of a mule or a draught-cow was equal to two days of a man. The farmers were accustomed to the method and to the name "labor exchange", but did not use the method very steadily because minor quarrels and differences of opinion were constantly breaking up the groups.

"At this point the Communists stepped in with a propaganda campaign saying: 'Let us work to stop famines'. If your labor exchange is dissolved by a quarrel, let us mediate. Let all forget quarrels and produce." With this extra pressure plus wide publicity for good 'labour exchange' the method grew."

Another form of joint labor is known as the "T'ang Chang Pantze",—squads of the T'ang Dynasty Generals—and goes back to the Golden Age of China twelve hundred years ago. An emperor of that time sent troops to cultivate land near Sian and these

*See Chapter 11.

troops, with a squad as unit and a corporal as leader, could till more land per man than the individual farmer. The name survived to designate a group of farm labor working by a certain tradition. The squads consist of village artisans and small farmers whose land does not occupy all their time. They specialize in seasonal work and are popular because they do so much in a short time. They share alike the income except that the go-between who arranges the contract gets one share for this and a second share if he also works in the field. In return he must feed the squad on rainy days when nobody hires them and advance food before the group is paid.

Both these methods of joint labor proved more productive than individual labor under the primitive conditions in China. If the peasant Ma has six acres and the peasant Wu has five, and each of them has one ox, neither can plough all his land. But by yoking the two oxen, all the land can be ploughed. In cultivating, haying and harvesting, group labor of three to ten persons is especially productive, partly because of collective competition and partly because one man can bring the meals for all while if each man goes home to eat—many hours are lost from the day.

Nearly twenty-seven per cent of all farmers in Yenan Border Region took part in labor exchange brigades in 1943, after the campaign began. Waste land to the amount of 127,000 acres was reclaimed, adding six per cent to the total acreage. In 1944, some 46 per cent of all farmers took part in joint labor, and 176,000 additional acres were reclaimed. Thus in two years the land under cultivation was increased by one fifth.

This joint labor proved not only more productive but improved village life in other ways, according to Hwei. It made it easier for children to go to school. The farmer used his small son to look after the sheep, but it is possible for one man to look after the sheep of several families, thus releasing five or six boys to go to school. The labor exchange groups became units for reading newspapers and for learning to read and write. The best brigades got glory in the newspapers and were invited by the magistrate to a swell feed. Their leaders became "labor heroes" and appeared in public congresses, and were eventually elected to county councils and to People's Congresses that form the government.

"This is one of the ways in which the real leaders of the people are picked out," said Hwei.

Wang Lin, for instance, was a young enthusiast who set out to organize a labor exchange in "Third Village". The account of his troubles would fill many painful pages. Two members were old and could do little work, another was young and resented doing more for others than they did for him. A fourth was forty years old and felt himself a failure because he had not succeeded in getting a wife. All these homely difficulties were met by Wang Lin with the lofty statement: "There are no difficulties that cannot be solved if we are one in our minds. Have not the Communists with their empty hands in ten years shaped a world ?"

Fortunately Wang Lin brought to his task not only a good slogan but infinite attention to detail. He finally got together fourteen families with twenty-eight able bodied men, sixteen animals and 107 acres of land. As soon as the spring ploughing was over, the animals were organized as a transport cooperative, using the labor of four men. Two men brought water for all of the families and took food to the field for the field workers. Three boys collected firewood for everyone. The others worked in the field.

Every man presented a special problem. The inexperienced Wang Chun cut off wheat stalks along with grass. The others jumped on him and he was much upset. Organizer Wang had him work side by side with the best farmer and by autumn he did so well that he became head of a squad. Seventeen year old Chen Yun was discontented because his day of work counted only as half a day. Organiser Wang promised: "You'll get full pay when you do full work." His energy picked up and soon the group voted that he was worth a man's pay. Li Hung worked well but had a short temper and quarrelled with the others. When Li's father died in a village ten miles away,

Organizer Wang arranged for the brigade to bring the body back and put on a swell funeral. Li became much more friendly to everyone.

Soon the labor exchange was "working as a family". In its first year it cultivated not only the 107 acres but reclaimed fifty-one acres of waste land. The county gave them a banner as a "Number One Brigade". Wang Lin was elected a "labor hero". He was one of the new farmers of whom new leaders are built.

A thousand miles away from Wang Lin lived another labor hero, Chang Fu-kwei of Shantung. He was an orphan who became a farmhand at the age of fourteen. In eight years as a laborer he never ate properly, but fed in spring on grain husks mixed with wild grasses. In 1939, the Eighth Route Army arrived, reducing rents, interest and taxes. So the price of land went down and young Chang bought a third of an acre. He began to follow the Communists.

Now Seaview Village, where young Chang saw the light, was a poverty-stricken hole. All the good land had been lost bit by bit to absentee landlords whose fields pressed close to the village edge. Of seventy families, forty were "beggar-sticks", going out every morning to beg for food. Every evening, the hungry women and children went to the edge of the plateau to watch for the beggars return.

Young Chang made a revolution in Seaview. He heard about the labor exchange and had faith in Mao Tse-tung. Nobody else in Seaview thought much of the idea. Chang got six families together. At first it seemed he did most of the work. He weeded fields and repaired roofs for men who were too lazy to care. Bit by bit he shamed the idlers until the exchange succeeded and other families copied the idea.

When the Communists proposed to dig holes to hide grain from the Japs, the shiftless villagers said: "No use, you'll just get water." Chang's bunch hid and saved their grain. Later when Mao Tse-tung suggested irrigation, most of Seaview's farmers said: "No use, you can't get water." Chang dug a well near the lands of his brigade. That summer the rain failed and ten families saved their crops from Chang's well. Within two years, Seaview Village dug twenty-two wells.

Today this village of beggars has no more beggars. Lands lost to absentees have been in part regained. Under Chang's leadership the village makes a "production plan". Teams of small boys specialize in killing locusts and harmful birds on all the village lands. Groups of "young heroes" weed crops and carry water for the village teacher and the families of absent soldiers. Women's groups compete in spinning and weaving. All the families have new clothes produced by the women folk.

Chang himself has three acres and a cow. He has a wife and a son who is six years old and who learns of Mao Tse-tung much as American small boys learn of Santa Claus, as the distant saint who gave him his "mantoo", his bun of good white bread! It was in 1942 that Chang and his family began to eat bread made of real grain all year through. Since then Chang has even learned to read and write. He writes short articles in the Seaview Wall Newspaper, in large, clumsy characters on the village blackboard.

Chang has organized Farmers' Unions in more than two hundred villages. He is known throughout the Kiaotung Peninsula. He is one of the new leaders in the new way of life.

When the question of food is settled the question of clothing comes next. In a way they are part of the same campaign. For if the women can clothe their families by their own labor, without selling crops for cotton goods, this adds to the food supply.

Here we come to the technique of the industrial cooperative known as "Indusco", and introduced into China by the Australian, Rewi Alley. Many years and much money have been spent starting Indusco groups in all parts of Kuomintang China, where they are persecuted by local officials in many complex ways. But once in 1939 Rewi Alley got to Yenan and opened a depot with ten branches and a total capital of $500. He could never get back again. But the idea of Indusco clicked so well with

the policies of the area that by 1945 there were 882 cooperatives with 265,777 members. They had as many members as there were families in the Border Region and they had become the major factor in the region's industry.

These cooperatives are of many kinds: there are consumers' cooperatives, transport cooperatives, credit cooperatives and many more. The most successful ones, that really made a dent on the entire economy of the area, are those whose aim is not profit but to supply the members' needs. The South Yenan Spinning Cooperative, for instance, has more than 2,500 members, thus including two-thirds of the families of the neighborhood.

This spinning cooperative gives each member two pounds of raw cotton and requires her to return one pound of yarn. No money changes hands. The spinner is paid by keeping the extra yarn, which will be nine to eleven ounces according to her skill. She can exchange this in the cooperative for five to eight feet of cotton goods from the weaving cooperative, part of whose work is done in the homes and part in a small factory. The women spinners, by spinning at home in their spare time, can thus earn in a month enough cotton goods for a suit of clothes. In a half year, the woman has clothed her family in summer wear and begins to earn the padded cotton clothes for winter. While doing this, she has had no worries about currency inflation and has not sold a pound of grain from the family harvest to buy materials.

Naturally this pleases the man of the family and makes him appreciate a good wife. It is what the Communists call "raising the woman's economic status as the first step towards sex equality."

Spinning and weaving became by far the largest industry in Yenan Border Region next after farming itself. It was promoted in dramas, novels and songs. The spinning-wheels are much cruder than the kind we see in exhibitions of American colonial life. They are made at home but they serve. In areas near the Yellow River, almost every family has a wheel and every two or three families a loom.

Getting raw cotton was a problem for the area is dry and cold. The Experimental Farm found that prunning the tops and the branches made the flowers open earlier, before they were killed by cold. Cotton planting was encouraged by propaganda and tax exemption, and in three years time the acreage sown to cotton grew sevenfold. There were 49,170 cotton acres in 1944, producing 3,330,000 pounds of cotton. By the three year economic plan they hoped to reach 4,950,000 pounds a year which would make the region self-sufficient in cotton.

What will happen to this home industry when the blockade relaxes and the area is flooded with machine-made goods? Nobody worries about that. Most people thought the home industries would last a long time because they fill up the empty hours of the farming year. Besides, machine-made goods are not as strong as what you make yourself. But if people want factory goods, the cooperative already have a few factories. The cooperative leaders believe that their form of organization will furnish an easy and painless transition to whatever the area needs in the way of factories.

Of course the cooperatives are not the only form of industry. Under the "new capitalism", any farmer or any merchant could go to the bank and get a loan for implements or for starting a workshop. Many people did like that. The most profitable enterprise in Yenan was the paper mill, privately owned by a group of "enlightened landlords" who disposed of their land early and put the capital into producing paper for the **Yenan Emancipation Daily.** The head of the bank told me that the previous year's profit at the paper mill had been twenty per cent reckoned in silver, or forty per cent reckoned in the general prices of goods, while, if you reckoned in paper currency, one million invested had become ten million by the end of the year.

But this takes us into the "new capitalism" which we shall consider later when we visit the city of Kalgan.

As the spring moves north from the fertile silt of the Yellow River Valley to the mountains of Shansi and the high tableland of northwest China and beyond to the

rolling Manchurian plains, tens of millions of farmers go out to the sowing. Men with new lands but little equipment, pool their draught-animals and tools in the labor brigades. People of the small towns organize volunteer groups to assist the spring sowing. In areas invaded by enemy troops, whole villagers hide in the hills by day and return to sow the village lands by night, under protection of armed farmers' bands.

"One hand on the gun, one hand on the land", is the slogan in Shantung, a hard-bitten province that produces villagers like Chang Chu-yuan, who is a crack shot, a maker of five kinds of home-made weapons and a skilled organizer of farm labor teams.

The labor exchange brigades are only the first step towards a wider organization of the village, the county and the area, in what the writer Shen Chien-tu calls "team work without boundaries". A spectacular example of this—the labor exchange at a high level of development—was the "Kill Locusts Campaign" in South Hopei and East Shansi in autumn of 1944. Formerly when locusts came, the farmers burned joss sticks to the idols or went to the temple with offerings. At best they drove the locusts from field to field, from village to village. But when a plague of locusts attacked the Four Province Liberated Area, following on two years of drought and floods, it was in all citizens' affair.

"Kill Locust Teams" were formed in every village. Every county had its correlating committee and a Regional Headquarters was set up to which counties sent reports. In the three most seriously affected counties 130,000 people were mobilized in "Kill Locust Detachments" which went from place to place, surrounding infected regions, burning, beating, putting locusts into bags. They used the language of battle. • One county reported to another that in such a place the locusts were "in strong force". At once "punitive detachments" of "allies" went to help the adjacent county.

Floods and drought are fought in the same manner. South Chahar had a drought in the Spring of 1946 that destroyed a million acres of young shoots. By rapid organization of labor brigades much of the land was resown. Meanwhile 252 new irrigation ditches were dug, 608 old ones repaired, 470 artesian wells dug and 30,000 acres of irrigated rice fields added to the previous cultivated area.

Four million people faced famine in North Kiangsu in 1946 as a result of past drought, floods and locusts. UNRRA investigators reported it and tried to send aid, for this area was ravaged by Japan and eligible for UNRRA relief. All UNRRA help was delayed for months by the Kuomintang military. Meanwhile the local government took concerted measures. Famine victims were organized into labor brigades for spinning, weaving fishing, oil-pressing, transportation. Two hundred thousand men were employed to dredge the Grand Canal, two hundred thousand more earned their living in silt transport. Seed loans and food loans were made both by the government and by private persons, under government guarantee of repayment. (Not Chiang Kai-shek's government but the elected government of the Liberated Areas which was under attack by Chiang.) When UNRRA finally arrived with quite inadequate aid, they found that the area had suffered much less than their experts had predicted. This was entirely due to the mutual help.

A County Congress of Labor Heroes that I saw in Wu An County was the regular organization for boosting county progress. It was a semi-secret meeting because a gathering of a thousand people might attract attention from the air or from secret agents and so lead to a bombing. I told the county magistrate that I would like to attend so I was driven several miles out of town until two men stopped us by hailing from the road. We took a foot trail for a mile past two villages and come to a third village where the gaily colored banners showed that the congress was being held.

After a bugle call and a flag raising in the open field—the same national flag that flies over Nanking—we entered a place called by courtesy the "hall". It was a bit of ground protected against wind by strips of matting nailed to poles and protected against sun by similar strips of matting on a framework overhead. The entrance and stage were bright with colored paper decorations and a big portrait of Mao Tse-tung. Benches for a thousand people faced the stage on which sat an elected presidium

of some fifteen or twenty "village heroes". These included—as they moved to the platform—old farmers in patched clothes, young men in blue cotton, bound-foot women walking with a tottering sway but proudly.

Here was Sun Erh-tze, one of the "rising-up" heroes, i.e. a hero of land reform who had taken the initiative in putting through a satisfactory land division in his village. Here was "war hero" Li, who, working underground in an occupied village had personally killed twelve Japs. Here were many heroes who had organized successful brigades in field production, and "cooperative heroes", whose cooperative store made exceptional profit. Here also was a sixty-year old bound-foot woman, Wang Chih-tze heroine of spinning and weaving who could spin ten ounces of cotton a day—the average of others being five ounces—and weave sixteen feet in a day—the average of others being eleven feet—and who is teaching the younger women of her village.

What are they doing here? All of them have been chosen by their village as "village hero." It is not a government post, it is a position of honor and prestige. It carried, however, some responsibility. "You heroes represent the new society, you are those who overthrow feudalism and improve the people's livelihood" the chairman says, in opening the meeting. "The first step was the land reform, the second is production. We must open a big production drive."

Then they got down to business. The Congress— held in the lull after harvest—lasted eight days. A day of "welcome to the heroes" was followed by two days of group discussions, in which "heroes" of each speciality, whether land reform, wheat growing, cotton growing, spinning or cooperative, met to exchange experiences and develop their own technique. Then in two days of "big meetings", each group reported to the general assembly. In the two final days they elected the "best of the best" as "county heroes", and adopted, under their leadership a "production plan" for improving the county in the coming year.

The county production drive was thus a unique campaign, copied neither from the campaigns of American Commercial Clubs nor yet from the state-planning of the USSR. It contained elements of both. The "plan" was drafted by technical experts of the county government, which stood ready to help with credits, seeds and raw materials. But final decision on what the county could achieve and how, was in the hands of these volunteers who had been selected first by their own energy in improving their village, then by their village as its "labor hero" and finally by the other labor heroes of the county as "best of the best."

Their task was to smash feudalism and build the "new capitalism" on the basis of free enterprise with profit.*

This gathering asked me what American organizations "stood for democracy" and for "good relations with the Chinese people". After I had described several organizations the meeting decided to send a resolution of greetings to the Congress of Industrial Organizations and ask them to "take the American troops out of China" and to "give us back our naval port Tsingtao". Details were added from the floor and included "take away those little spy planes that fly over our areas" i.e. small planes of the Strategic Service.

Resolutions like this blossom in any gathering in the Liberated Areas where an American appears. The same demands are made by individuals—by farmers, women, school children. In the prewar China, farmers in many places did not know that they were at war with Japan until many months after the fighting started. Today, in the Liberated Areas, they know when the United Nations Assembly opens and the contents of a Wallace speech.

One may quarrel with the viewpoint of such farmers. One may think their knowledge incomplete. But such men are no longer negligible in international politics. They have become citizens of the world.

* See Chapter 17.

Chapter 9

PILGRIMAGE TO PEOPLE

"Make up your mind to it now. You're going to get lice. You're going into the villages and you're not going to stay with landlords or rich peasants. You're going to stay with tenants and farmhands. And you aren't going to be snooty towards your hosts; you're going to get close to them. So you're going to get lice."

Liu Shao-chi, one of the top Communists of China, was telling one hundred and twenty young people what to expect. Many of them were intellectuals with a high standard of cleanliness. They said they wanted to serve the Chinese people; they were going out to assist in the land reform. This was the first instruction their teacher gave.

"And don't get the idea that you're going to the peasants with a big stick from Yenan to tell the people what to do," Liu continued. "Your job is to learn what the people want and help them get it. You must awaken the people's own will and then help organize it. 'From the people and to the people' must be your policy."

These two instructions throw light on a basic problem of China, of Asia and of the world, and on two different ways in which people approach it.

Here are a billion human beings in southeast Asia. They are illiterate; they are lousy; they are backward in farm methods; they are dying from hunger, from disease, from ignorance, from superstition, from oppression. Can they become equal heirs to what is best in civilization? Can they become equal rulers in this "century of the common man"? If so, how set about it?

The problem is especially sharp in southeast Asia because of the deep gulf that has existed for centuries between the illiterate tillers of the soil and the upper classes, who held aloof from manual toil. But it is a world problem too, penetrating all countries. How does one get this thing they call democracy?

The typical American postwar method just now is to promote "democracy" in every foreign land by sending American soldiers, American dollars, American education and American-styled ballots. If one can only give them an election supervised by American observers then presto! they will have democracy. But perhaps nine-tenths of the people can't read those ballots and don't think in those terms anyway. In that case, of course, they must be given "education", a good long dose of it—say fifty years as in the Philippines, or more than a century as in India—to make them "fit for self-rule". The education is picked out by alien teachers; it is what outsiders think the people ought to know.

This method of approach is not peculiar to Americans. It's a common technique among educated people everywhere. It is so much simpler to think out solutions "for the people" than it is to ask the people what they want. What the people want is buried deep and only partly conscious. How can the "people's will" be brought out?

The Chinese Communists insist on a different method. There must be close mingling, they say, between the ablest minds from the cities and the most backward tillers of the toil. City-educated minds are not fit to think out solutions for the peasants. Nor can the peasants alone think them out for themselves. The brainiest intellectuals and political thinkers must be mixed among the people. The best brains must be mingled with the grass roots. Only from this deep intercourse can democracy be born.

> "Only by becoming a pupil of the people can you educate them", said Mao Tse-tung in discussing literature. He urges intellectuals to "go enthusiastically to the rural villages, exchange students clothes for the garb of peasants, do even the most trivial work, try to understand the peasants' demands, help

to arouse the peasants and organize them" and thus fight for "the completion of the democratic revolution in the villages.*

A passion to "go to the people" has seized tens of thousands of Chinese young people of the upper classes. Many of them come to the Liberated Areas to offer their services. The Communists welcome them but they are tough with them. How implacable they are in this matter is shown by what happened to one of the girl graduates of the Yenan Teacher-Training school. She came off a rich Kiangsu family; her father is a factory owner. She left home to join the Communists and prepared to become a teacher. They sent her to organize a "winter school" in a village that had had no education whatever. After one night with the cave-dwelling peasants she came back to her teacher in tears.

"Everything is so filthy and I am full of lice," she protested. "They don't want a school anyway."

Her teacher comforted her but also warned her. "Why did you leave your father's home in Kiangsu? You said you came to 'serve the people'. If you give up now, you are finished."

"But they won't even let me clean the room. The old mother got angry when I tried."

"Who are you to go into an older woman's house and put it to rights," the teacher reproved. "You are the youngest, the least. Also you are the guest. Behave like a guest and win the respect of your hosts."

The abashed girl went back to the dark cave-dwelling. They admitted her without enthusiasm. She slept on the family "kang" with the grandmother and two dirty children. Next morning she had lice in her hair. When she bit into her "steamed bread" at meal time—North China peasants make bread by steaming, not by baking—she even found lice in the bread. Her hosts were looking at her and courtesy forbade her to throw the bread aside. She ate it, lice and all, lest they think her fussy.

That was the beginning. Soon the bedraggled wife permitted the newcomer to carry the filthy baby. The girl cleaned the lice from the baby's hair. Soothed by the touch and by the cessation of itching, the child stopped fretting. The mother let the "city girl" look after it oftener.

Slowly they began to accept her. She was still the youngest, the least. She saw babies grow ill from conditions that kill six out of every ten Shensi babies in their first few months on earth. The women disregarded her, because she was unmarried.

One day, when she was desperate at the casual way they were killing their babies, she spoke of "her baby" at home. It was her sister's baby, but she had helped bring it up. She let the women think that she had a husband away with the army, and that she was working to support a child. After that they swapped baby tales easily. Did she know, they asked, about the newfangled hospital the Communists had in Yenan, that claimed to save nearly all of its babies alive? And without any witch doctor or silver amulets either, to ward off the evil? It seems she did.

Soon she was showing them Chinese characters for simple objects and telling them tales about the world. About the rice-growing in the south and the ships on the Yangtze—to people who had never seen rice-growing or ships. Her stories sounded like fairy-tales but they liked to hear.

The head of the township government was willing enough to sponsor her. He wanted the prestige of a good winter class. When he saw that the women accepted the teacher, he got her the loan of a large room. The men came also, at first for the stories and then for the pride of "learning characters."

So she succeeded. When March sowing put an end to the winter classes the peasants all tried to give gifts to their teacher, whose food had been her only pay. She refused most of the gifts but in the end took four pair of slippers, made by the women from bits of cloth. This was her winter salary. More than these she prized four letters that came to her later when she was nursing at the front. Four babies had been born and the mothers thanked her for the new ideas she had given. For the first time in many births their babies had remained alive.

*From "On Coalition Government".

More than a thousand educated people went from Yenan every winter to teach similar classes in dark villages, most of which had never had a school before. Not only green girl graduates, but leading writers, painters, musicians took part in this work.

"Never in Chinese history have intellectuals had such close relations with the Chinese people", said Miss Cheng Hsueh-chao, a forty-year old writer who lived in one of the caves of the "Cultural Association" up a steep, slippery path near the top of a cliff. "Never has there been such a penetration of people with culture down to the very bottom of the illiterate countryside."

Miss Cheng, who spent ten years in France before she came to Yenan, thinks that this mingling with the peasants is very good for her as a writer. "Writers, more than most people, need spiritual food" she said. "When we go to the villages it is a double benefit. We help the schools, impart some knowledge of sanitation and some general enlightenment. We ourselves gain a more intimate understanding of our country's life. This is especially needful for me, because I spent so many years abroad. But nearly all our writers, whether they are of the Kuomintang or the Communists, come from the upper class and do not know the Chinese village."

Years ago in what now seems to her another epoch, Miss Cheng was the daughter of a silk merchant in Chekiang. "Chiang Kai-shek's own district," she said. As a girl student she took part in the Women's Rights movement during the Great Revolution of 1925-27. When the revolution was broken and her friends were being slaughtered, she fled abroad, a heart-broken young woman. After nine years in France as a correspondent for a Chinese paper, she returned to her country in 1935, hoping to take part in the patriotic fight against Japan's encroachments. She was shocked by what she found.

"If you even said that you wanted to fight Japan, Chiang's police arrested you. I had supposed that the terror of 1927 was over, but it was worse. Kuomintang China had solidified into a system more brutal than fascism in Italy. Do you know this 'lien pao' system? I may be living here and you in another town and they can arrest you for what I did. A word of mine might bring disaster on my family and friends. I could not endure this, after the comparatively free life in France. So I left Shanghai and went to Nanchang and then to Chungking, but found no freedom anywhere. Finally I came to Yenan under another name."

She is not a Communist herself, Miss Cheng told me. "But I think Mao Tse-tung's views on literature are very sound. In the past we writers copied the Chinese classics. Then we became acquainted with the west and tried to ape Shakespeare and Moliere. Mao Tse-tung calls on us to know the people of our country. We go among them, try to make a true portrayal of their life. Our musicians collect folk songs and give them new content. Our artists paint the landscapes and people of the country. A writer's life is very satisfying here."

I looked around at the shallow cave in which, this well-poised woman of forty lived. Above a floor of hard uneven earth, the white-washed walls arched to a ceiling ten feet high. A bed of boards on trestles stood at the back of the cave. On it a bag of straw had been neatly shaped into a mattress under high-puffed pillows and meticulously folded quilts. A small dressing-table of unpainted boards held a tin wash basin. A table for writing stood near the entrance under the paper window. Two or three stools completed the furniture. Miss Cheng kept her clothing in a suit-case under the bed, and her books and papers were stacked on the earthen window ledge. From a pile of charcoal under the bed, she fed the brazier near the door.

This was the room of a cheerful and successful writer—Yenan style. Miss Cheng pointed out that the cave had been "dug to fit the needs of a writer". It had a much bigger window than a peasant's cave. "People of our education go in for light and fresh air", she said. "But this makes more charcoal necessary. The peasants do not afford charcoal. They burn weeds. They heat the house by their cooking, and hold the heat by having few windows. Our writers' standard of living is still a bit higher than theirs."

Miss Cheng had just come back from three months in a village where she had

taught a winter school. "Not every peasant has lice," she assured me. As a teacher, she was not required to stay with farmhands and tenants, as do the organizers of land reform. She could stay with peasants who were fairly well off. "The peasants don't like lice any more than you do", she said. "They get rid of lice as soon as they are able to afford soap and a change of clothing."

"The peasants are very glad to see us", she said, explaining the routine approach to a peasant home. "We bring them a little excitement and a little knowledge and we do not add to the work. We take our own millet with us and we help the peasant housewife cook it. We also help our hostess with her other work, sweeping the ground, feeding the animals, grinding the millet."

"But I thought that the donkey grinds the millet", I said, thinking of the photographs I had taken of blind-folded donkeys pulling the heavy grinding-stone around and around.

"That is in wealthy families", Miss Cheng laughed with superior knowledge. "In most families the peasant or his wife pulls the grinding-stone, specially the wife. It is a hard job and makes you very dizzy." When Miss Cheng writes about a peasant family, she will be able to describe the grinding of millet and how it feels.

This energetic Miss Cheng had become a specialist on village life in many provinces. She visited villages in Szechwan under the Kuomintang. "Hungry, half naked people, exhausted by the taxes collected seventy years ahead, and with nothing left for food or seed. Long lines of recruits, roped together, and taken off to the army. Plenty of lice there"! Miss Cheng also went on foot from Yenan all the way to Harbin and Tsitsihar and back again—a year's march from autumn of 1945 to autumn of 1946, getting material for a book on the way. She found the peasants of these Liberated Areas "very active-minded full of enthusiasm for production and learning, very different from peasants under the Kuomintang."

Yes, Miss Cheng has been thoroughly mingled with the people of the Chinese country. She has found a rich, satisfying life.

Every Chinese of the upper classes who "goes over to the people" faces his own special problem. They are individuals, with a standing and a stake in the "old society", even though they have found it too oppressive to endure. Some of them flee to the Liberated Areas under an alias, lest their families suffer. A doctor who worked in an UNRRA-equipped hospital in Shantung learned that his aged parents in Shanghai had been killed by Kuomintang agents "to teach folks not to work for the Communists."

Still people keep coming by the thousands. During the Japanese war they came via Sian, chancing the concentration camp that was maintained there for unwary democrats. In the first postwar year they slipped more easily from Peiping to Kalgan, feigning a summer's hike in the Western Hills. From Shanghai they make it to North Kiangsu or a Shantung port. All of these were dangerous but much used ways.

One of the famous arrivals by the Western Hills route was Judge Chen Chin-kun. He is one of the most celebrated jurists in China. He was at the time professor of law in Chaoyang University, and had been a judge of the Supreme Court. He had written more codes of law than anyone in the country. When Chiang Kai-shek came to Peiping after the take-over—here I have only the word of Fifth Sister Chen who is given to exaggeration—he called on the judge to ask his "advice on government." "And my father told him just how corrupt that old Kuomintang is and Chiang listened and promised to consider", says Fifth Sister. Anyway, the judge was one of the higher-ups.

If you met him in anyone's home you wouldn't think he had it in him. He is a dignified old gentleman who bows himself into and out of conversations. It must have taken an inner revolution before he decided to join hands with the Communists. He flew to Yenan in the summer of 1946 for a talk with Mao Tse-tung; it caused a mild scandal at Executive Headquarters for he went in one of their planes. After that talk he made his decision. Towards the end of summer he disappeared from Peiping, taking the route on foot over the Western Hills.

Before his absence was noticed, his family followed.

I was staying at the time in the Kalgan guest house, that charming cluster of buildings where General Nieh dispensed both Chinese and foreign hospitality with the aid of a French-trained chef. I was awakened one morning by what sounded like a football rally in my dreams. It proved to be the Chen family greeting each other in the new life of liberation in the room next to mine. Two weeks before Kalgan fell they set out for Yenan.

It is to Sydney Rittenberg that I owe the picture of Fifth Sister Chen, that vivacious girl creature of sixteen who joined his party at the university in the hills. She was small and slight with mobile face and that "too, perfect Peiping speech that rings like shrill bells." She announced that she was number five daughter of the famous jurist, that she had stayed behind her family to visit the university, and would join Rittenberg's party until she caught up with her folks. This lively junior miss of Peiping who had never met a peasant but had now "gone over to the people" was to prove a riot on the road.

They walked all day by a road that wound uphill through a mountain pass with little carved shrines and temples in the cliffs. At the top of the pass they came to a tiny village perched high on the mountain-side. An Eighth Route Army soldier riding past in a camel told them the name of the village was "Little Pagoda". They climbed to "Little Pagoda" and asked a peasant woman to boil some water. Here for the first time they met the Shansi dialect, which is rough, nasal and choppy.

Soon they were all drinking boiled water in a tidy courtyard while the hospitable old woman looked on with curiosity. Then Fifth Sister asked her, pointing at Rittenberg: "Who do you think that guy is?" The woman replied that she did not know.

"Is he Chinese?" persisted Fifth Sister.

"Of course."

"No, he's a foreigner," declared Fifth Sister.

"I didn't know. I never saw one," said the woman.

"But can't you tell by the way he talks?"

"You all talk funny," remarked the old woman.

Fifth Sister complacently announced: "His talk is strange and the others' talk is strange but my talk isn't strange." She boasted the pure Mandarin while the two Chinese with the party came from the south.

"Your talk is the funniest of all," said the woman to Fifth Sister.

Fifth Sister went right up in the air. "My talk is the true national language," she declared.

The old woman laughed: "I never heard about my national language but folk don't talk that way around here."

Fifth Sister changed the subject by pointing to a pile of corn in the yard and asking politely how much it sold for.

"I don't know," replied the woman. "We never bought any and we never sold any. We eat our own."

Fifth Sister grew desperate to prove that she was really "one of the gang". She began telling how the students at the university—it was the place where she stopped a few days in the hills—had gone to help the farmers with the harvest. "Kuomintang students never help the people," she said, "but we, Liberated Area students are not any longer intellectuals separate from the people." She had been in the Liberated Areas nearly a month! She finished: "We really enjoyed working."

The old woman looked at her and laughed.

That was the night when they walked till three in the morning. Fifth Sister might have had a lift on the baggage cart. But the old woman's laughter had stung her: she wanted to show how tough she was, how "remade". So she walked all the way with the others. Next morning she could not take a step: her legs were just tied in knots.

They caught up with old Judge Chen and the rest of the family at the "Guest House". It had been evacuated from Kalgan to the hills. The French chef was still there and the fine blue rugs and silken coverlets. It had been turned into a kind of glorified "Old Folks Rest" for "guests of the people". These were mostly old men who had spent a lifetime in high posts

under various warlords, pre-Kuomintang or Kuomintang, but who had now, "gone over to the people." What could the people do with them? Most of them knew only how to run government of a kind that was no longer desired. Their names and loyalty meant something. So they were brought to a nice place and given better food than the generals or governors got in the Liberated Areas. It was probably the best racket in Communist China.

The judge was in a different category. If the Communists should need a code of laws or a constitution that would pass in the highest legal circles, he was there with the goods. Meanwhile he could make speeches. And he did. He made speeches almost every night along the road. Everyone else would be exhausted by a long day on foot or in a springless cart but old Judge Chen could still make a speech. In villages, in county towns, in army camps, to everyone.

His best theme was "Chiang and American Imperialism, Last Flicker of a Dying Flame", proving that imperialism was on its way out in this century of the common man. He had another theme that capitalized his own past in high-flown style. "Wherefore have I come to take part in the work of the Communists"? He would say: "I am a person of some standing in legal circles". He listed the degrees he had taken, the courts he had sat in, the constitutions and codes of laws he had written and the millions of money he was still making when he decided to abandon the Kuomintang. Then he would add: "I tell you this to show that in the crisis China faces now, that dictatorial, civil-war, sell-the-country regime of Chiang is too much for even a respectable propertied man like me to stomach".

As a village agitator Judge Chen has his limits. His speech was highly erudite and literary, not easily understood by common folk. The peasants strained to follow. His spirit was understood and made a big impression. After the speech he made in Kuohsien, an old farmer got up and declared: "When folks like Judge Chen come to help the people, this is really the turning over of earth and heaven".

I last saw the judge at the New Years' dinner party given by Mao Tse-tung. He sat at the big round table with Mao, and Chou En-lai and several other top Communists. Everyone was laughing as Judge Chen laid down the law. "Legally speaking," his voice boomed out, "Chiang Kai-shek and his general staff must be rated war-criminals". He seemed very happily at home.

He told me that Fifth Sister was in the hospital with some disorder. I wondered if she had found Yenan life too hard. It isn't so easy, even for young enthusiasts, to "go over to the people."

Chapter 10

THE BEAN IN THE BOWL

When Yeng Pu-hao, illiterate labor hero and member of Yenan County Council, discussed the changes brought by the new society, he said: "The biggest change is that there was no voting in the old society but now everybody votes."

"How did you vote?" I asked, for I knew that Yang could not read well enough to mark a ballot.

"I dropped my bean in the bowl," he replied. "They gave me the bean outside the cave and I went into the cave where the bowls were, one bowl for each candidate. Afterwards we all watched while they counted the beans."

"Is the voting secret or can people see you?"

At first Yang insisted that the voting was secret, since "the committee and the other voters stay outside and I go into the cave alone." When asked how he could tell the bowls apart, he replied that they were marked with the candidates names and that there was a man in the cave to tell him which was which. I suggested that this man destroyed the secrecy of voting. Yang hotly insisted that the man was merely a needed convenience who did not interfere with his choice. We chose him for this work in our meeting because he can read and is just. He tells me which is Wang's bowl and which is Chia's, but he does not tell me whom to choose. I chose Wang instead of Chia because Wang is more energetic and also very honest."

"So there were two candidates," I commented. "This time there were two. Last year there were four. Two years ago there were eight or nine."

"You have then voted three times?"

"I have voted three times for the village chairman. I have also voted for the County Congress and for the Border Region Congress. I also voted before all this by raising hands in a meeting. The bean in the bowl is better."

Labor hero Yang was clearly an expert on voting. The bean in the bowl may not be the last word in voting technique. But it was good enough for Yang. He displayed the same civic pride that we used to show in my home town, Seattle, when we declared that our recall, initiative and referendum was better than those backward ways back east. Yang's manner left no doubt that he didn't want any alien intruder like me telling him how one should vote.

The bean in the bowl is the method used in all the Liberated Areas for people who cannot read and write. Tens of millions of people have indicated political choice by this method who under our American or European systems could never have voted at all. The literacy test for voting, such as westerners take for granted, would deprive four-fifths of Asia of the vote. More than that, it would confine voting to the landlords and the upper classes. So our western method would seem to the Chinese farmer highly unjust and undemocratic.

Educated Communists know of course that there are more advanced techniques in voting. Printed ballots are already used in the Liberated Areas among voters who can read and write. They have been used in Yenan city, in Harbin, in Tsitsihar, and many other towns. An educational campaign in connection with the elections urges people to learn to read at least the candidates' names. Meanwhile the ways of voting are accommodated to the voters.

Magistrate Tsao of Yenan County, confirmed Yang from his own official angle. "The biggest difference in government is that formerly officials were appointed from the top down and now they are elected from the bottom up." The governor of the province, he explained, formerly appointed

the county magistrates and these in turn appointed lower officials. Every official tried to make a profit on his job. Government had two functions: to control the people and to collect money from them to support the army and the officials. The work of tax-collecting, for instance, was farmed out from the top down, each man in the collecting apparatus keeping part of the money.

"To control the people under the Kuomintang we had the Pao-Chia system," explained ex-policemen Sung. "This also went from the top down. Under the county magistrate came the lien-pao, then the pao, then the chia, then the chung. This last unit contained only a few families. All members of the unit, and especially its head, were held responsible for the acts of any member. If one man committed a crime—being a Communist or even a democrat was a crime—all members of his 'chia' might be arrested. The most aggressive landlords usually got the job of head of the lien-pao. This gave them double power over their tenants and farmhands for any man excluded by them from the lien-pao was at once outside the law.

This brutally effective Pao-Chia system was first introduced by the Mongol conquerors to control the Chinese; it was later used by Manchu and Japanese overlords. It fell into disuse under the Republic but was strengthened by Chiang Kai-shek. After the war with Japan, some cities in the Kuomintaing-ruled part of China held municipal elections but nobody claimed to find them satisfactory. An American missionary in Chengtu told me that the police collected the registration cards of the mission servants and voted them in a bunch. Elsewhere the Pao chiefs voted for the members or herded them down in a group to vote. Most of my Chinese acquaintances didn't bother to vote, saying that it "makes no difference anyway".

The earliest attempts to introduce popular control and choice of officials were made by the Communists. They have practised elections of various kinds in their areas for nearly twenty years. They go on the theory that it is not enough to hand the vote to the people, that the people must be awakened to a sense of their own power. Only if the people believe that they can accomplish something they really want through government, will they take interest in the vote.

So when the Communists come into an area they first of all arouse the people. In a Japanese-occupied region the slogan may be: "Down with Japs and traitors", in an area of the rear: "Down with oppressive rents". Then they organize Farmers' Unions, Labor Unions, Women's Associations. They promote the idea that the people have the right and the power to reduce rent, to overthrow corrupt magistrates, to punish war criminals. If a previous government exists, they try to cooperate with it and democratize it. If the government has run away—as often happened under Japanese occupation—they set up a temporary government from representatives of the various "mass organizations", and prepare for an election.

The first elections in the Yenan area were by show of hands in open meeting. All over eighteen, both men and women, were entitled to vote. According to the members of Yenan County Council, at least two-thirds of the men came to these meeting and a smaller proportion of women. There was considerable discussion: candidates and their supporters told what they proposed to do. If there were many candidates—there might be a dozen, since anyone could nominate or be nominated—the meeting voted twice, first to reduce the number and then for final vote. Such were the village elections.

Similar but separate elections were held to choose delegates to a County Congress, which then met in the county seat and selected part of its number as a standing committee, or county council: the congress also elected the magistrate. Magistrate Tsao and the county council of thirteen members had been elected by a County Congress of forty-nine representatives, who were directly elected by the people for the purpose of setting up the county government.

County administration, said Tsao, had been reorganized for the farmers' convenience. Formerly the county was divided into four "chu", or wards, all branching

out from Yenan city to the four points of the compass and all administered from offices in the walled town.

There were now nine "chu", each with a large village as its central office, easily accessible to all its inhabitants. Even the county government was no longer in the city but seven miles out where farmers' vehicles could assemble without meeting city crowds. Yenan, with its special problems of handicraft and commerce, was a separate municipality, directly under the Border Region government. Thus the city problems were settled by the merchants and handicraftsmen who lived in the town while county problems, which were farm problems, were settled by the farmers' representatives without city people mixing in.

The Border Region government was similarly elected. A People's Congress was elected by direct vote, the elections being held separately from the village and county elections. This Congress did not sit continuously but chose from its members a permanent standing committee which had continuous supervisory functions. The Congress also chose a government administration, i.e. a cabinet of various heads of departments. The Congress also chose the head of the Supreme Court.

The People's Congress—in plenary session or through its standing committee—is thus the supreme power of the area from which it is elected, whether a county or a Border Region of many counties. The system is not that of checks and balances, but a concentration of legislative, executive and judicial power in one congress, directly elected by the people. It thus resembles rather the parliamentary forms of England and Europe than that of the United States. While all three powers of government are concentrated in the Peoples Congress of the Border Region, the judiciary is relatively independent at the county level. County courts consist of a locally elected magistrate plus a judge appointed by the Supreme Court.

"The two biggest achievements of our Border Region in the past twelve years," said Lin Tsu-han to me over a delicious lunch of curdled chicken and rice, "are the formation of democratic government and the development of production." Those are big words but Lin Tsu-han should know.

White-haired, professorial Lin Tsu-han was chairman of the Border Region government at the time of my visit. The post was equivalent to that of governor of a fair-sized State. Lin Tsu-han was fully qualified to hold it. He has seen quite a bit of government in his sixty-one years. He is an old-timer in China's progressive movements, a personal friend of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and a member of the original Tungmenhui that preceded the Kuomintang. He was a top man in that first "National Government" formed in Canton; the same crowd that made Chiang Kai-shek commander of their armies made Lin Tsu-han minister of finance. In the great split, Lin went with the Communists. His dignity, knowledge and mellow personality make him not only an able administrator but one of their best negotiators. It was he who impressed General Joseph Stillwell with the Communists' case and who later brought Ambassador Patrick Hurley to Yenan.

"We have had three general elections from the bottom up to the Border Region Congress," Governor Lin continued. "It was after the second congress that we introduced the Three-Three system, now followed in all the Liberated Areas."

The Three-Three system means that the Communists, in regions where they might easily take complete control of the government, voluntarily restrict themselves to one-third of the government posts. The reason for this was to break away definitely from the one-party dictatorship that the Kuomintang maintained in the rest of China and to prevent over-energetic local Communists from unduly dominating the less politically minded people in the community who, with their long experience of dictatorships, might fear to run against the Communists. The Communist analysis of the present stage in China—the stage of "new democracy" and "new capitalism"—holds that the new society must be created by participation of progressive people of all

social classes....To drop the Marxist phrasing, they think no one group has a monopoly of all the good ideas.

"The best ideas come from discussion among democratic people of many kinds," said Governor Lin to me. "We have found many good ideas even among landlords."

Yes, believe it or not, the vice-chairman of the Border Region government, equivalent to Lieutenant-Governor of one of our States, was that philanthropic landlord An Wen-chin whom we last saw in his beautiful home in Suiteh, giving away one hundred and fifty acres to his tenants.

As the Communist armies took one region after another from Yenan to the sea, this was the form of government set up: direct election of village councils, of county and regional congresses, usually by the bean-in-the-bowl method. There were of course many local variations in the speed of organization, in procedure and technique.

In Left Wood Village near Harbin the ten candidates for village chairman sat in a row on the platform with their hats behind them and the voters went behind the candidates to cast their beans. The man thus elected met with the chairmen of eleven nearby villages to form the council of the larger unit, the "chu," which chose its own chairman. When I asked this chairman, Wang Sun, whether he had ever taken part in government before, he laughed, "I was a farmhand. I couldn't even eat before the land reform. How could I take part in government?" He was an energetic chu head for all that.

In the Harbin municipal elections, only one fourth of the representatives were Communists. The Three-Three rule is not applied in reverse. The Harbin city council included nine workers, seven farmers, four soldiers, ten members of the gentry, ten teachers, and educational workers, three officials, ten Moslems, two Mongols, a doctor and a lawyer and four women. It would seem to comply with the ideal of getting all classes to take part in building the new society. But only one lawyer! What would an American politician think of that?

In the elections in northwest Shansi in 1946, eighty-four per cent of the adult population of thirty-two counties came out to vote. The county councils thus elected included Communists and Kuomintang members, Christians, Buddhists and Moslems. In the eight counties whose returns were first reported to the territorial capital of Hsinghsien the representatives to the county congresses included forty-seven landlords, enghty-six rich farmers, two hundred and eight "middle farmers," one hundred and thirty-two poor farmers, two farm-hands, six merchants and ten workers. Again it seems as if all classes are taking part.

The first election ever held in a village of the Central Plains Area was described to me by Sidney Rittenberg who saw the whole sequence of nomination, campaign and election. A general meeting was first held for nominations. Four hundred villagers came and four candidates were proposed from the floor. There followed a week of wide discussion. Then a final meeting was called to elect. The four candidates sat on the platform with a deep bowl in front of each of them. They made their final speeches but since nobody had ever heard an election speech, it was hard for them to know what to say.

Most of them spoke about as follows: "I don't see why anyone should vote for me. I'm just old Wong, rather stupid and clumsy. But if you elect me I'll try to fix this irrigation business so that everyone gets his share and I'll fight for a democratic tax program." (This meant a progressive tax on the higher crop incomes: it is the task of the village council to distribute taxes within the villages.)

One candidate was the primary school teacher. He spoke as if he felt the challenge of history. "This is the first time in two thousand years that the people of this village have had the chance to say what they want in government and what they don't want"!

Then the people marched single file out of the building, passing a table where the election committee gave each voter one white pebble and three black pebbles—this being a region where beans are not grown —and returned to the hall by another door

to drop their pebbles into the four bowls. They were told to put their closed fist into each bowl in turn, in the interest of the secrecy of voting, and to drop the white pebble for the candidate they chose. Everyone followed correct procedure with the black pebbles but when they came to their chosen candidate, they held the white marble high and looked around the room, showing off to everyone their choice!

"This final moment seemed to take everyone by storm," said Rittenberg. "During the nominations and the week of discussion, people looked rather skeptically at the idea of elections but when they found themselves actually voting they got very excited."

The school teacher was elected. He at-once reconvened the meeting to criticize the election procedure. "Our people never had the chance to vote," he said, "so when they got the chance they couldn't resist showing off. Next time we must overcome this and have a truly secret ballot." Everybody agreed.

In this area disputes over irrigation water form the life and death business of local government. This is where the powerful landowner squeezes the little guy the most. In former times the disputants appeared before the county magistrate who consistently favoured the most powerful. As a result of the democratic elections new methods of water control also developed. The village chairman—or the county magistrate, if the area concerned was larger than a village—called a meeting of all persons whose lands would be affected by the water supply in question. They worked out a plan by which nobody would be ruined. Then they voted on the plan.

"That is what democratic government is," said a farmer in the South Field Village conference to Rittenberg.

Farmers in all parts of the Liberated Areas are proud of their elections. A typical conversation took place when I visited Broken Cliffs, a village of caves on a hillside not far from Yenan. As we came up the ravine, the villagers emerged from holes in the earth at different levels high above us and stood looking down at us, sharply outlined against the blue sky. They seemed like prehistoric cave-men infinitely removed from the present day. On a flat bit of beaten ground a donkey was threshing grain, pulling a heavy stone roller around and around.

I asked the nearest villagers for the chairman and they indicated a fifty-year old man with a shrewd kindly face who sat on a mound of earth, spinning white wool in the sun.

"How did he get to be chairman?" I inquired.

"We elected him last year," several told me. Then one man volunteered with a challenging glance: "And we can recall him any time we like. We've democratic government now."

It was uncanny hearing these people who otherwise lived almost in the stone age, growing hemp to make their own shoe-soles, using hemp-oil for light, having neither kerosene nor candles—boast about their right to recall their mayor as we used to boast in Seatte in our most energetically democratic days.

"Did you ever have elections before the Communists came?"

"No," they replied, "election and the production drive came with the Communists."

Then they turned the tables and began questioning me. What was my nationality? American? "Well," they consoled, "there are good Americans and bad Americans just as there are good and bad Chinese. But what the American government does in helping Chiang is bad."

The literature of the Liberated Areas is full of criticism of badly run elections. A delightful novelette "Little Second Blackie Gets Married" has a penetrating description of the way in which two village gangsters remained in power under the new regime. Chin Wang and Shing Wang were two brothers who had grown rich through their tie-ups with bandits, helping them kidnap and then negotiating the ransom. Even after the Eighth Route Army cleaned up the bandits, the brothers kept village power.

"People in the hills were not very brave to begin with. After several

months of great chaos in which many people died, it got so that nobody was willing to stick his neck out....Other big villages had already elected village governments, had already all the 'Save the Nation Societies' — the Farmers,' the Women's, the Young Folks' — and military committees. But in Liu Family Pass, except for an agent sent by the county, nobody was willing to be active in politics.

"After a time the county government sent somebody to work there and hold election of various functionaries. Chin Wang and Shing Wang saw in this another chance to grab authority and folks weren't going to stop anyone who was willing to take part in politics, so they elected Shing Wang political head and Chin Wang chairman of self defence. Then Chin Wang's wife was chosen as chairman of the Women's Save the Nation Society.....For the rest of the functionaries, they whipped up several old folks to fill in.

"From this time on Chin Wang and Shing Wang were more terrible than before.....They seemed to endure like the rivers and hills. Everyone hated them in the marrow of their bones but nobody dared speak half a word against them. Everyone feared that if they couldn't shove them out of power, those who criticized would suffer."

So the two gangsters continued to use village militia as their private servants, to exact money and grain and take such women as they wanted. As the plot developped, they jailed the young hero and heroine on ridiculous charges and were exposed in the resulting struggle. In the meeting then held, people at last dared speak out. New elections and a shake-up of village government followed.

Eternal vigilance was thus shown to be the price of liberty, in China as in the rest of the world.

Chapter 11

THE SELF-SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT

"Why don't you build a bridge over the Yen River?" I asked a bit rudely of Fan Tse-wen, the neat little chief of finance who came to my Yenan cave to tell me about the budget. "Why do you fight so fiercely to cut the taxes? In America we would let those taxes stay at twelve point three, and use them to improve the region, to have some good roads and a bridge."

Mr. Fan nodded politely. "Roads and bridges are very good," he conceded, "but the people would rather eat."

This brought me back with a jolt to the Border Region's harsh economy. I had been thinking in western terms. My interview with the good Mr. Fan had been postponed for a day by the sudden rising of Yen River which he could not cross for want of a bridge. And right in the Communists' Number One capital! So when Mr. Fan began bragging about cutting taxes, telling how they had been as high as forty-five per cent of the crop in former days under the Kuomintang, how they had been cut to 14.7 and then to 12.3 and now, this year, they would average only 8.1 per cent of the farmers' income, his passion for tax-cutting made me impatient. Excessive economy seemed keeping the region backward. A peasant miserliness!

I began now to reconsider. "How much food do you have?" I asked.

Mr. Fan drew figures from his sheaf of statistics. The total cultivated land, he said, had been 1,400,000 acres in 1936 and had risen to 2,450,000 acres in 1944. Figures for 1946 were not yet in but were known to be double the acreage of ten years ago. This year's grain crop was 11,200,000 bushels. The population was just below 1,600,000 and was increasing by some 60,000 refugees per year from Kuomintang areas.

Three important facts were at once clear from these statistics. First that the grain yield was very low. Dividing the crop by the acreage—and granting some acres to other crops than grain—they couldn't be getting much more than five bushels of grain per acre! This checked with what I heard from farmers and from Chief of Reconstruction Hwei, who gave the average yield per acre as five bushels of millet or six and a half of wheat. The first move to a better livelihood must be to increase the yield, if you could do it on these marginal lands. Meanwhile you must economize.

The second vital fact was that the average food per person was about one pound of grain per day. Any grain fed to livestock or sold outside the area for cotton imports would reduce that ration. They could stand a little reduction for children needn't eat a pound. But if the people were to avoid hunger, the livestock must live mostly on grass, the chickens on scraps and clothes must be much patched. Any extravagance in government, such as diverting farm labor to road building, might starve the people. I recalled that spectacular famine of 1929-30 in this area before the Communists came.

The third clear fact was that Yenan Border Region, backward and poorely fed as it was, attracted refugees from worse areas round about. It was not easy to come here past the military blockade: you had to leave everything but the rags on your back and come at a run. Still people kept coming because there was more food here!

"We are well-fed", they said in Yenan. "Nobody starves any more".

So that is what well-fed means in China. Not in the Shanghai restaurants or the banquets of Nanking officials but among the producers of food. It means a pound of grain for every day in the year. A little less, in fact, for you have to wear clothes

and you want a few chickens. So you don't eat quite a pound. Yet doctors in Yenan hospitals said the resistance to disease was higher than in more fertile southern regions that were poorly governed. This because the people of Yenan Border Region were regularly fed.

Any government that wants to serve such people must clearly cut expenses to the bone. It must find ways of getting clothing, schools and government administration without paying too much for it in food. Mr. Fan's pride in those tax details was then no blind worship of economy. He wanted the people to eat!

Farmers all over China, I recalled, were not very fond of good roads. I began to believe that they might have a case. Their land was taken for the roads, and usually without payment. Their labor was demanded to build the roads, and this also was unpaid. The road, once built, was useful to city merchants and officials and soldiers who came to the farms for grain. It was not so useful to the farmers who wanted to keep their grain and eat it. And even if they wanted to use the road they couldn't. Old fashioned farmers' carts were not allowed on good roads because their sharp iron wheels cut the surface. At the approach to every good highway or bridge there were deep holes made in such a manner that auto-trucks could pass but a horse dragging a cart would be crippled. Yes, the good roads were made for the governing class and not for the governed. My American devotion to good roads was checked for a moment. I had to admit it: eating might come first.

I also recalled the expressive Chinese word for taxes. They call them "the people's burden". No nonsense there about public funds for the public good. Just the extra burden put on the bent backs of the people for the support of officials. That's how the people of Asia have thought of taxes for the last four thousand years!

Previous governments in this area never much cared whether the people ate or not. Taxes were fixed by the needs of the warlords and not by the needs of the people. Dr. A. Stamper, The League of Nations' expert who investigated the northwest provinces for the Nanking government in 1933 reported that farmers had been paying 45 per cent of their crops in "regular taxes", while irregular taxes, imposed by officials on farmers not in their good graces, might add 20 per cent more. The biggest landlords, he said, were freed from taxes "as a mark of honor".

Some of the many kinds of farmer taxes were listed for me by ex-policeman Sung. There was a tax for the army and a separate tax for army uniforms and a third tax for an army expedition. A man was taxed for owning an animal and taxed again when he drove it through the country. There were thirty or forty more kinds of taxes. The opium-planting tax was a curiosity. Opium-planting was against the law but opium was valuable and officials needed the revenue they got from it in taxes and fines. So if the farmer didn't plant opium, he was taxed for it anyway. This made it necessary to plant opium for no other crop was valuable enough to pay the "opium tax".

"Taxes might be more than all a man had", said Sung. He told of a friend who had been taxed three hundred silver dollars in a year when grain prices were so low that his entire crop brought only forty dollars. He sold his sheep, to pay the tax—he had had one hundred sheep—and finally sold his land. You can get examples like that all over Kuomintang China. There are frequent suicides of farmers who have lost everything through taxes.

On rare occasions there is even a suicide of a conscientious official. Cheng Mouying, rice collector in Kiangsi, got orders to collect a certain amount of rice for Chiang's army within one month in the summer of 1946. The government wouldn't take money for this tax, for the army needed food. Many farmers didn't have rice: they were selling cattle and land to buy rice at black market prices to give to the government for taxes. So farmers were committing suicide. One old woman hung herself in the home she had lost through the tax. Honest Cheng himself jumped into Tongting Lake, made famous by the suicide of a poet fifteen hundred years ago. He left a statement that he could no longer be faithful both to the government and the people and the only way out was death.

People all over China were collecting money to help his family in summer of 1946.

The Communists don't go in for suicide. They cut the cost of government instead. Long before they came to Yenan Border Region they cut out high priced officials and the system of squeeze and graft. They put the army and the civil service on a system of "military communism." This meant that they got no salary but only bare rations of food and clothes. This lessened the cost of government considerably. One might have thought they had cut it sufficiently. Then a crisis came that demanded still more drastic measures. The rations weren't enough. Food was so scarce that if the government and army ate, this would starve the people.

This crisis was caused by the blockade imposed on Yenan Border Region by General Hu Tsung-nan.

Yenan Border Region had never been able to feed many soldiers. The Communists got out of that difficulty by sending their army out of the area: it went to the front against Japan. But in 1939 the Japanese attacked Yenan, and Hu Tsung-nan seized the moment to drive up from the south and annex five counties. So the Communists had to bring some troops back to defend their area. After bringing them back they had to feed them right here at home. It was harder than ever to do it for the Border Region was smaller than before.

How the Communists met this crisis is told in a remarkable report that Mao Tse-tung made "On Financial and Economic Problems of the Border Region", in December 1942. It is a Communist classic now.

"The Kuomintang stopped all supplies and blockaded us in the hope of starving us out", said Mao. "We nearly reached the point of having no clothes to wear, no oil to cook with, no paper and no vegetables. The soldiers had no shoes and the government workers had no blankets in winter....The Kuomintang believed that our difficulties were insurmountable and they daily expected our collapse".

Some of the Communists proposed still greater economies by dispensing with part of the government and the army. If we do that, argued Mao, we shall go backward until we cease to exist at all. Some wanted to ignore the war and have a "magnanimous government" that would go easy on the people. This was incorrect, said Mao, for if the war is not fought to a victorious conclusion, this so called "magnanimous government will be only a part of Japanese imperialism". Other Communists proposed to take what the government and army needed, regardless of the people. This, said Mao, "is the Kuomintang policy which we absolutely must not copy".

Then Mao gave an analysis of the relation of a government to its people in wartime which might well be thoughtfully considered by any government anywhere:

> "Our financial problem is to supply the living and working expenses of tens of thousands of soldiers and government workers and the costs of the war of resistance.....During war the government must demand help from the people and the people understand this. In extreme public difficulty it is necessary to ask the people to carry a still heavier burden and this also they understand....But if we demand help from the people we must also see that their economy has what is necessary for growth and replacement. Proper steps must be taken to help the development of the people's farming, animal husbandry, handicraft, salt production and commerce. Only if the people are able to replace what they have to give up is it possible to carry on the long term war of resistance".

The solution proposed by Mao was a double production drive, an increase of production "both public and private." Farmers were urged to reclaim waste land and taxes were adjusted to encourage this. Refugees who reclaimed land, and farmers who relieved the clothes shortage by planting cotton got tax exemption for three years. Labor exchange brigades and labor heroes were encouraged in ways already described in a previous chapter.

Together with this went a drive for production by the army and the government workers. It became known as the campaign for "self-supply." Every army detachment and every department of government was asked to produce as much as possible of

its own necessaries of life. People who had been working for rations were asked to keep on working and to produce part of the rations in their spare time! This method was to become epoch-making in the Communists' success.

"In 1941 and 1942," Mao Tse-tung reported at the end of the latter year, "the supplies obtained by the army, the organization and the schools through their own efforts were actually the larger part of their total requirements. This is a miracle never before achieved in Chinese history and forms our unshakable material foundation".

How does this work out in individual cases? Let us return to our friend Mr. Fan who sits in my cave discussing taxes in a blue cotton suit that looks newer and cleaner than most people's, with a fountain-pen stuck in his pocket and with gray socks and velveteen slippers that give him an almost citified air. How does he live and whence does he get these relatively decent clothes?

"What do they pay you for being finance minister?" I asked.

Mr. Fan replied that he got "from the people's burden", i.e. from taxes, seventeen ounces of grain daily, and a monthly ration of four and a quarter pounds of meat, one pound of cooking oil, one pound of salt. He also got a cotton suit and a set of underwear every summer and a padded suit of winter clothes every two years. That's all! So Mr. Fan's services as finance chief cost the people somewhat less than five American dollars a month! Little enough to pay for that high intellectual forehead and the secondary school training of his!

But this is impossible! How then does Mr. Fan live? The answer is that he belongs to a producing cooperative composed of all the employees in the department of finance. Every member contributes some labor and the cooperative has also few full time employees who keep the continuity of their enterprises. They reclaimed land for a vegetable farm in one valley and land for a pig ranch in another. They also run a flour mill and three commercial shops. These are run on that flexible combination of cooperation and capitalism that constitutes the "new capitalism." They produce for themselves and they also sell, produce and make profits. From these activities Mr. Fan gets two additional pounds of meat per month, a pound of vegetable and a pound of char-coal fuel every day, some home-grown tobacco for cigarettes and such extras as a toothbrush, soap, shoes, socks. These snappy velveteen shoes were secured in this manner from extra labor outside his duties as chief of finance.

Every government department similarly produces food and clothing in its off moments. If you call on a government leader or a university professor you may find him planting tomatoes in the garden or turning a spinning wheel in front of the house in the sun. The paths up the hill to Mao-Tse-tung's and Chu Teh's caves were lined with corn stalks and tomato vines. The Cultural Association had a farm on reclaimed land out in the country where a few people lived all the year but where well known writers, sculptors, musicians helped out at harvest. The interpreters in the American compound worked in their off hours on a plot of ground a mile away in the hills.

Not everybody liked it. I met a disconsolate youth in Kalgan who was deeply disappointed in Yenan. He had gone there to study and he felt he had done "hardly anything but plant potatoes"! Yes, it was a hard life. But the cost to the people of having a government certainly grew cheaper. "In the old society I had one hundred and fifty policemen under me in this county, all collecting money from the people", said the breezy ex-policeman Sung. "Now the county has just forty policemen and they raise most of their own food!" Magistrate Tsao added that of the seventeen thousand acres of new land reclaimed in the county during his tenure of office, ten thousand had been cultivated in the farmer's production drive, and seven thousand by army and government workers in their campaign of self-supply.

The most spectacular success was the self-supporting army, which fed itself by reclaiming waste land at Nanniwan. An

army cannot feed itself while fighting, but armies have times in training and on reserve. When the blockade created that crisis, and an army was needed to defend the area, ten thousand men under Wang Chen moved to Nanniwan, assigned to home defense. There were no houses or caves, no food, no tools and no farmers at Nanniwan, nothing but land gone to waste. The army brought a small supply of grain with it, enough for famine rations. They dug a few caves, planted vegetables for a quick food supply, logged trees and sold them to the nearest settlements for grain. They found a big iron bell in an abandoned temple and tools were made from this by the army blacksmiths. These details show how the place had gone back to wilderness in the past combination of drought and bad government.

Within a few years there was a thirty-five thousand acre farm at Nanniwan cultivated by the army. In its period of training and at all times except when actually fighting, the army of the Border Region supported itself. More than that, Nanniwan produced a surplus that was used for wounded and disabled soldiers.

The effect of all this was that government actually grew cheaper even while its activities—in schools and hospitals and in some small road improvements—grew. The taxes on those sheets kept by Mr. Fan, kept going down. They were moreover graduated in a way to lessen the burden on the poorest people. For whereas in the old society, landlords got tax-exemption as an honor, that honor was now reserved for the poorest farmers. These were tax exempt while those farmers just above the poorest paid two per cent of their crop in taxes, "middle farmers" paid 8.1 per cent, the rich farmers 13.6 per cent and the landlords averaged 22.6 per cent of their harvest.

The livelihood of the individual farmer improved in many homely details. I visited a farmer named Wong, in a two-cave home in a valley a few miles from Yenan. The rooms were so full of food products—it was autumn—that I wondered where he put the family. He told me they lived in his "other home", a suite of five caves four miles away in the hills. Formerly he came down to the valley to work his land and went back every night because there were so many bandits that it was not safe to spend the night in the valley. Two years ago he bought this valley home—it was a crude one and cost him only five bushels of grain—to be near his land in summer and work it more efficiently. His wife and small son stay with him, but his father, mother and sister stay in the hillside home to pasture the animals: they have two oxen, a donkey and one hundred sheep.

All of this bountiful life Wong attributes to the Communists. "In the old society" he said, "all my crops were not enough to pay my taxes. My taxes were one hundred silver dollars in the last years of the old society, but the price of grain was so low that I had to sell 250 bushels to get this money. My entire crop was 165 bushels. So I borrowed money to pay the taxes and then sold three or four sheep every month to pay interest on the debt. When the Communists came my sheep were nearly gone and I still owed for a year's taxes. I feared I would have to sell my land. But the Communists cancelled all the old taxes and the new taxes were not so high and were paid in grain. "So instead of selling sheep I got more sheep every year and sold wool. This year I will sell some sheep for there are now so many sheep in this valley that there is not enough grass for all. So the villages are meeting to divide the pastures and everyone must sell a few sheep for meat."

Wong cheerfully gave me all the details of his income. His crop that year was 165 bushels, his taxes 16.5 bushels, he needed 55 bushels for his family's food and clothing and he had lent 18 bushels to some refugees. "Chairman Mao told us to raise three years' in two years, but I have done better," he boasted. "I have raised two years food in one"!

"You talk very frankly about your income", I commented, surprised that any farmer anywhere should be so frank. "Would you talk thus under the Kuomintang"?

"Of course not," laughed Wong. "I would be afraid to tell".

"Why are you not afraid now"?

"The Communists have been here twelve years. There is new spirit. One gets out of the way of being afraid for a few rash words."

The system of partial self-supply for government and army spread to other Liberated Areas. These at first had greater difficulties than Yenan Border region, because they began as fighting anti-Japanese bases, carrying on battles almost every day. As the enemy was driven out these areas went ahead faster than the Yenan area, because they were more fertile. The system varies according to local conditions but is everywhere used.

In Shantung, for instance, the government of the area reported at the end of 1946 that they had raised forty per cent of their own expences, while the troops—which had been engaged in big battles—had raised thirty per cent. In doing this the personnel of army and government had opened many small industries such as oil pressing plants, soap, tobacco and textile factories, iron foundries and print shops. These were run for profit in the usual capitalist manner but their income was used to cut the cost of government.

"This supply system of ours," said Liu Shao-chi to me in Yenan, "makes it possible for our Liberated Areas to maintain an army and civil service totalling two to three million people without greatly burdening the people's livelihood. This enables us to carry on a wide war of defence, indefinitely, without debt till victory."

It seems that for the first time in the long history of Asia a government has been devised whose standard of living is proportioned to that of the people and whose taxes are proportioned to what the people can bear. The low standard of living for officials need not endure for ever. Their livelihood will rise as that of the people rises.

Chapter 12

JUSTICE IS ELEMENTAL

When old Judge Chen Ching-kun, ex-member of the Supreme Court of China, fled from the dangerous luxury of Peiping to the safer primitive life of Yenan, he stopped at a county town named Kuohsien to study the new "democratic" courts. He expressed himself in three meaty Chinese words far more decorative than their English equivalents: "Their justice is elemental, uncomplicated, heaven-sent." One may dismiss "heaven-sent" as the enthusiasm of a new convert. But that justice is uncomplicated and elemental in the Democratic Areas nobody could deny.

For thousands of years the law in China belonged to the landlords and the officials; now it belongs to the people. That is the basic change. It is seen in the greater simplicity of procedure, in the use of mediation to avoid court costs, in leniency toward women who murder husbands, in land and debt decisions, in the People's Tribunals for war criminals.

What the law was formerly may be seen from various cases that came to light during the land reform.

In Shantung a landlord's hog ate a farmer's chickens and the latter, not knowing whom the hog belonged to, killed the animal. The landlord took the man's half-acre as a fine, leaving him landless. In Shansi a landlord, named Li, bought two acres from a farmer as payment for a debt which through high interest had mounted beyond the man's ability to pay. Since the farmer was illiterate and the boundaries not well marked, the landlord had his servants plough the farmer's entire four acres, taking it all. The magistrate supported the landlord.

Landlord Chi in Shantung bought the eleven-year-old daughter of a farmer as a household slave. When she was fifteen Chi raped her. At the age of seventeen she was driven from the house because she was pregnant. When her father took it to court, Chi induced the magistrate to frame the man on a charge of selling opium, which is punishable by death. The father was executed and the daughter hanged herself from despair. The same theme repeats itself in many places. In North Kiangsu a landlord exacted unpaid labor from a tenants' daughter, raped her, after which his wife threw the girl out. When the tenant threatened court action, the landlord declared that the man had "connections with bandits", got him driven from the area and took his land.

Even an entire village was sometimes helpless to get justice. There is a well of sweet water in a Shantung village over which a struggle went on for twenty-five years. It was a community well in the middle of the village street. A landlord, coveting it, bought the land on both sides of the street and then enclosed the well, guarding it with armed men. Three times in twenty-five years under different provincial administrations the villagers impoverished themselves to pay for a law suit, and each time the landlord bought the law. Even in the first two years of the Communist regime, the higher authorities, busy with war against the Japs, paid no attention to the villagers' complaint. Only when the land reform came in 1946 were the villagers able to take back their well and with it half of the landlord's land as payment for his illegal twenty-five-year monopoly of their water.

"There is not much difference in the new law between the Kuomintang areas and the Democratic Areas," said Ma Hsi-wu, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Yenan. "The difference is in control and procedure and especially in spirit. We seek to make the law close and convenient to

the people, expressing their views of justice."

Judge Ma Hsi-wu was to outward appearance the shabbiest official that ever came to my Yenan cave. He wore the usual blue cotton uniform but in his case the material had been badly dyed and had faded unevenly to a streaked, dingy gray. A cap of darker gray was stuck on his head, a bit askew above big horn spectacles. A touch of comfort was given to his costume by warm, white woolly socks, a concession to his age. For all his sixty years he was an energetic man, not only climbing the steep seven hundred feet to the Supreme Court daily, but travelling much to villages. He was a legendary figure in minstrel's songs and popular dramas for his decisions on marriages. Seldom have I seen a face that so combined intelligence, kindly humor and authority as the countenance of old Judge Ma.

Justice in the Border Region, he told me, was administered by twenty-nine county courts and a Supreme Court with four district branches. There was also a circuit court directly under the Supreme Court that travelled to meet the peoples' Convenience. The head of the Supreme Court is elected by the peoples' Congress. The county courts consist of a locally elected magistrate and a judge appointed by the Supreme Court.

"Our magistrates and chief justice are elected, while in Kuomintang areas they are appointed. Court procedure is expensive and complicated under the Kuomintang and very simple with us. We seek ways to make justice inexpensive.

The most novel way of making justice inexpensive and close to the people is the use of arbitration as a substitute for going to court. Arbitration has been practised in the past by farmers, but it was never recognized by the courts. Judge Ma developed it and integrated it within the entire system of social adjustment.

"Mediation applies only to civil disputes," said the Judge. "Criminal cases cannot be mediated. Local fights, land disputes, marriage questions—in these mediations may be more effective than the courts. Mediation is based on three principles: It must be voluntary on both sides; decision must accord both with local custom and government regulations: if either party disagrees, he can still go to court."

Mediators are commonly township officials or presidents of farmers' unions. Successful mediators develop a reputation and are sought out. Mediation may also be by village meeting: a group of villagers know more facts than the county court. Judge Ma himself has done a good deal of mediation. He considers that it educates the people in the law and also helps educate local officials.

Many of the cases seem rather trivial, but doubtless worried the parties concerned. In a village near Suiteh, for instance, a dispute arose over a family grave. A nephew, quarreling with his uncle, declared that the uncle had placed his son's grave in a location where "it destroys the luck on my land." He demanded that the grave be removed. The uncle appealed to a well-known mediator, named Kuo. The latter talked it over with the older men of the village and became convinced that the nephew was seeking a pretext to insult the uncle. Kuo brought the parties together, explained that grave locations cannot affect "luck" and induced the nephew to withdraw the demand. Community opinion was the convincing factor but the formality of mediation allowed the nephew to yield with good grace instead of intensifying his stubbornness.

Another of Kuo's cases concerned a lazy wife who "neglected her husband's parents and relatives". Since the pair lived as usual with the parents and brothers, the wife's unwillingness to do her share of chores caused friction among them all. One day the husband carried water for his brother, the wife scolded him for it and the brother thereupon beat her. The wife complained all over the village, demanding a meeting "to struggle with the brutal brother." Kuo was called in, discussed the situation with everyone and held a meeting. Under his guidance the villagers decided that both parties needed a bit of mild punishment. The brother was told to repair a bit of village road while the wife was helped work out a "production plan", in which she agreed to spin five pounds of wool before March.

Cases of land boundaries are more serious. They are usually very complicated, involving long histories without exact surveys. When such cases are brought to court, the county judge often refers them to the village on the theory that land troubles are more easily and fairly settled when both sides can go to the land with a mediator and fix the exact boundary.

The system of village mediation has proved very popular. In Yenan county 1,900 cases were settled by mediation in 1945; in Fuhsien 1,100 were similarly settled. The method has spread to other Democratic Areas. It is regarded as rousing the initiative of the farmers, educating them in the law and in justice. It is part of the bridging the age-old gulf between the rulers and the ruled.

More serious cases, of course, reach the county courts. Civil cases, according to Judge Ma, are chiefly concerned with land, debt and divorce.

The marriage law is modern: the marriage practice is not. By law marriage can be only contracted between men of nineteen years or over and women of seventeen or over; forced marriage or sales of brides are prohibited. Both marriage and divorce depend on the consent of the pair without regard to their parents' choice. The law is observed by Communists and by city people generally, but in rural areas marriage by purchase and at times by capture is still the common form.

"We do not interfere with such marriages," said Judge Ma, unless one party brings complaint. "The moment anyone complains, then we ask the wishes of both parties and dissolve any purchase to which the girl objects. Unless somebody complains, it would be hard for a court to distinguish between a purchase and an exchange of wedding presents which is legal in all lands."

The kind of case that reaches the court was that of a man who sold his daughter at the age of seven as the future daughter-in-law of a farmer named Ma. (The Chinese word for "bride" is actually "daughter-in-law," since this by tradition is the important relation.) Eight silver dollars and one hundred pounds of millet changed hands. The girl did not go to Ma's family at the time and a year later her father moved across the Yellow River into Yen Hsi-shan's territory, taking his girl child along. In this new home, the man's wife died and he had no funds to buy another. Finding a widow with a grown up son, he resorted to an old custom and took the widow for himself, giving his daughter to her son as a fair exchange. The girl was eleven year old at the time of this second "marriage". Before she lived in actual wedlock, her young husband went to Yenan Border Region, joined the Eighth Route Army, and sent word to his father-in-law to return "because life is better here."

As the father returned with his family, he passed through the village where Ma lived.

"That daughter-in-law of mine is grown," said Ma, "I am ready for her."

"No," replied the father, "she is married already."

The farmer Ma considered that the girl belonged to him and stole her by force, giving her to his son. The girl's father brought the matter to court. On the girl's testimony that she had gone with Ma unwillingly and did not wish to remain in his household, Ma was given a jail sentence for enforcing marriage.

Criminal cases are first handled in the county courts, but serious cases are apt to reach the Supreme Court eventually. Yenan county had twenty short term prisoners in a few "detention rooms," which were not called a "jail." All of them engaged in labour, usually going out under a guard to till the land or repair roads.

Judge Ma said that crime was diminishing. The only real "jail" in the Border Region was located in Yenan, next to the Supreme Court. It had 124 inmates at the time of my visit. Among them were eighteen murderers, twenty-nine bandits who committed robbery by force, twenty-five thieves, fifteen assault cases, ten "marriage-breakers"—i.e. kidnappers of wives. There were eleven women in the jail, of whom seven had committed adultery and killed their hasbands. They had been given a prison

term instead of death because they were "much oppressed."

The prisoners lived in caves not very different from those of the free population but located in a valley so hemmed by steep cliffs that its entrance could be blocked by a gate. All spent two hours daily in classes, and the rest of the day in productive labor. A small textile mill had been built in the same ravine. I saw several of the women spinning in the sun outside their caves.

Throughout the Democratic Areas efforts are made to use jails for the purpose of education and reclaiming of prisoners. The jail in Kalgan was a large compound just outside the city. People were playing pingpong in the court as I entered. I later learned that these were both guards and prisoners. wearing the same kind of clothes. Warden Huang was a former teacher. I asked for a certain prisoner and learned that he "had gone out to buy tools." Later he returned and I met him. It was odd to call on a prisoner and find him" not at home."

There were several workshops in the compound. Their atmosphere was that of a well-lighted and not very strenuous factory. They made clothing and shoes. Education was given in jail. The prisoners, two-thirds of whom were illiterate on arrival, learned four characters a day, which is a good rate. They had technical education in production and a class in current events. They also had "individual education" in which the prisoner studied his own crime.

A "prisoners' Construction Corps" took part in the reconstruction of Kalgan, repairing buildings. To join it was an honor: it was open only to prisoners who confessed their past and made a good labor record inside the jail. This corps of sixty men worked all over the city with only one armed guard in charge, assisted by a remarkable prisoner known as "Little Shantung."

"Little Shantung" had been a pickpocket from the age of twelve. For ten years he stole all over North China in the big cities. Caught stealing in Kalgan, he was given a year's sentence. After four months in jail, he joined the "be candid" movement, and said he wanted to "make confession."

"Years ago," he said, "I sometimes wished to be a good citizen but I found it impossible in the old society. If I did coolie work I did not get enough to eat and was despised and insulted. I did not have enough education to do anything else. So I became a criminal. I have been in many prisons where guilty men are treated as guilty. But here I get educated. If I produce I am rewarded. I am treated better here in jail than in the old society outside jail. If I don't become a good citizen now I shall be everlastingly disgraced."

"Little Shantung" became a model worker and was soon allowed to take prisoners outside the compound to work. They did better under him than under the guard. He became an assistant to the warden.

All death sentences, according to Judge Ma, must pass through three stages. They must be recommended by a county court, determined by the Supreme Court and then approved by the chairman of the Border Region government i.e., the governor. Six death sentences had been given in Yenan Border Region the preceding year. Three were for murder with robbery, two for murder with adultery and one was a Kuomintang secret agent who killed several people before he was caught. The death sentence is not given for a murder committed in anger or in taking revenge for oppression, but only for deliberate murder combined with another crime.

Even "murder with adultery" does not always bring a death sentence. Among the prisoners in Yenan jail was the woman Wei, who took a Yenan merchant as lover and, together with him, poisoned her husband to death. The two were given eight years in jail. The reason given by Judge Ma for this leniency was that "the husband oppressed her much and she tried several times to get a divorce but the husband prevented her by force."

If Liberated Area courts are more lenient in judging husband murder, they are much more severe against war criminals and traitors than are the Kuomintang courts. In Kuomintang China one can hardly speak of punishment in connection with war criminals, many traitors and puppets having

been promptly reinstated in high posts the moment the Japanese war ended. In the Liberated Areas, big war criminals are roughly handled. The one exception to the rule that a death sentence requires concurrence of county court, Supreme Court and governor, occurred in their case. They may be tried by a "People's Tribunal," a mass meeting under the chairmanship of a "presidium" of local officials and specially elected persons. They may be executed on the spot. Such action is confined to notorious and flagrant cases.

When the Eighth Route Army took the walled city of Hsi Hsien, headquarters of the West Shansi military district, thousands of women poured into the town demanding that the magistrate be "turned over to the people." This man was especially hated because he had buried many men alive for such offences as evading recruiting, failing to deliver the grain tax or giving help to the Eighth Route Army. The method of burial alive is peculiarly brutal for the victim is commonly buried up to his neck with his head protruding and left to the mercy of rats, ants and casual soldiery. Consciousness may linger for days.

When a mass meeting was held to try this magistrate, six bodies of men who had recently been buried alive by his orders were dug up and put on the stage beside him. Then the people made their accusations. The meeting was described to me by Colonel Chang of the Eighth Route Army who was present. One old woman tottered up on the stage on her bound feet and cried: "You buried alive my two sons, one because he could not pay you grain and one because he acted as guard for the Eighth Route. Give me back my sons. If you can't pay, then pay with your life!" She took off her tiny shoes and beat the magistrate in the face with them. Many others in the crowd brought similar accusation. Finally the people pulled the magistrate off the platform and beat him to death.

In a county town of Hopei, a magistrate who as puppet for Japanese had delivered more than three thousand local people to death was brought before a People's Tribunal. Thousands of people came from all the surrounding villages to bear witness against him. At the end of the day when the chairman asked: "What should be done with this man?" the farmers pulled out long knives which they had brought hoping to cut the man into small pieces. Communists immediately sprang upon the platform and told the people that such a form of execution was not permitted "since this is an orderly, civilized country." They suggested "death by shooting" as an alternative and the sentence was executed on the spot. Three women in the gathering had brought knives on behalf of a mother whose two sons had been tortured to death by this man. The mother being too sick to attend the meeting had asked her three friends to "bring me a piece of that devil."

To the outsider in quiet, law-abiding lands such "People's Tribunals" may seem mob action. To people who have suffered long under the terror of a lawless dictatorship they may bring the first belief in justice. The Chinese Communists regard them as a means both of securing swift justice and of awakening large numbers of people who have suffered mortal injustice to a sense of the people's power.

I asked Judge Ma whether anyone ever tried to bribe him or anyone that he knew. He considered a moment and then shook his head.

"It has not happened to me but there was one case of attempted bribery here. A prisoner escaped and ten days later met a man who recognized him. He offered the man seventy thousand in national currency (about 35 U.S. dollars at the time) not to give him up. The man pretended to agree, since he could not arrest the prisoner by himself. They met in a restaurant and the prisoner brought the bribe money. Then the man shouted to the people to arrest the prisoner. They took him back to jail."

This was the only case of near-bribery that Judge Ma knew of. It was impossible to watch his open countenance as he tried to think of a case, without believing that he was telling the truth. When one recalls for how many thousands of years the law has been bought and sold in China, it is surprising how rapidly a new ethic takes root.

Chapter 13

THE WOMEN TAKE PART

One of the most fascinating young women I ever met anywhere was a thin flame-like creature in Manchuria who had personally "liquidated" a bandit chief called "Northern Tyrant." She was travelling by train out of Harbin with the young man to whom she had just been married. She looked less than twenty but said that she was twenty-five. She was in the blue winter uniform of the Joint Democratic Army and her energy wore her thin even under those thick padded clothes. There was a bright purity in her face that made one want to shield her from an evil world. Her name was Li Pai-chung and she was an "agitator" in Chiaotung county.

When Li spoke of her work her eyes shone with a high patriotism that began years ago when Manchuria was invaded and she was in the primary school. "There was nothing I could do then," she said, "but when the war spread to China I had just graduated from the secondary school. I gave all my time to patriotic work for two years —I lived then in Koumintang territory—but at the end of 1939 the Kuomintang showed that it did not want to fight and began arresting people for patriotic agitation. I was arrested but escaped and went to the Liberated Areas for I had already many friends among the Communists."

Thus Li became a political worker in a big sprawling Manchurian county where there were 300,000 people and 450,000 acres of cultivated land, half of which belonged to the landlords. And thus this slight girl came up against "Northern Tyrant," boss of a big village of 20,000 people for the Japanese.

Northern Tyrant—whose real name was Kan—lived in the northern half of the county, a long way from the railroad, so the girl Li, who organized in the south, knew nothing of him at first. In his fourteen years of running the village for the Japanese he had grown rich. His hundred and fifty acres had grown to nine hundred, his ten horses had multiplied to eighty and his eleven "rooms" had increased to seventy, all rented out at a good rate.

The ways Kan got his wealth were typical. When the Japs demanded forty laborers, Kan said that they asked for eighty. Then he took money from forty for "releasing" them. When the Japs required forced labor to build dykes and paid ten Yen a day, Kan kept the money and made the men work forty days without pay. When the Japs gave out rations of food and cotton goods in return for the village grain, Kan gave only the worst shoddy to the people and kept the good cloth for his friends. "He kept all the products even including the matches," explained the girl Li.

On his own land "Northern Tyrant" managed his laborers so that he owed them nothing at the end of the year. He would get them up when the stars were still in the sky—which is before three in the morning in those northern plains—work them to exhaustion and then subtract fivefold penalties for sickness. Two-thirds of his workers would quit before the end of the year and Kan would owe them nothing because they had broken their contracts. Even if a man managed to stick till harvest he would find that he owed Kan money for the food he had eaten. Kan kept the accounts and farmhands had no redress.

"Often you saw in his court a row of kneeling men whom he was beating because they did not work hard enough or had failed in their rent. When a man once ran away from a forced labor gang of the Japs, Kan made the man's wife kneel in his court, and beat her with fists and feet." So Li explained.

After the defeat of Japan, Kan kept on ruling as before. He organized a band of one hundred armed men who had served

in the puppet army or who had been bandits, got a paper from Chiang Kai-shek's military representative in Changchun making him "commander of the third division" and kept on raiding the countryside. Twice his band had a skirmish with a detachment of the "Joint Democratic Army" but Kan's connection with them was not discovered. Then one of Kan's farmhands heard of the land reform in the southern part of the county and grew bold enough to ask his boss, not indeed for land but for more pay.

Kan said: "So you've turned Communist, I'll tell the Kuomintang."

The farmhand retorted: "I'll report you to the Farmers' Union."

Kan drew his Mauser and the worker ran. But he ran south to the railroad to report "Northern Tyrant" to the county bureau where worked our young agitator Li.

"So I asked the Union to let me go and organize that place and arrest Kan first," explained Li as if this were a routine thing.

How does a thin girl that you could knock down with a sweep of an arm arrest the chief of one hundred armed men? Li told me.

"I went secretly with ten men dressed as farmers. We investigated three days. I found that Kan had only ten real bandits and the other ninety were just farmhands whom he bossed. We arrested those ten before dawn by surprise. At once we called a meeting to 'settle with Kan.' Two thousand people came. The people accused Kan and he admitted. The people demanded to shoot him and his worst accomplice Wu. We did this. Then in two weeks I organized the farmers there. They divided Kan's land, leaving seventy-five acres to his family. Kan's family fled during the meeting but it was announced that they were not guilty. So they came back. They are outwardly friendly to the farmers who are also very polite to them. The farmers now have their own armed self-defence."

Few women in any period of history have made a greater break with the past than girls like Li. For centuries Chinese women have been taught to find their only fulfilment in the family. Here they had "three obediences": to father, to husband and later to son. They were sold in marriage; their feet were bound as a means of keeping them from active life. The higher the woman's status, the more cruelly were her feet bound in childhood. "Pepper feet"—the size of a pepper—could only be produced by bending the toes so far under the foot that the bones broke. This made a bride more desirable; her tottering sway on such inadequate support was likened to that of a lily.

The first steps towards a wider life for women came, as in other countries, with the coming of factory production. This freed women from confinement to the home but brought a new slavery. A group of twenty-year-old textile workers in Shanghai described to me in 1927 the many forms of women's oppression, voice echoing voice like a chant. "By the old custom, women were not permitted to walk out of the house. ..... Their feet were bound very small, otherwise they could not get husbands.... They were forced into marriage; so the marriage relation was embittered....when they worked in factories they were oppressed by foremen, and also had housework to do after the twelve-hour day...."

An explosive "freeing of women" came in 1925-27 in the Great Revolution. "Bobbed haired girls" marched north with the Nationalist armies, propagandists in uniform preaching the equality of women and the right to "free marriage," which had nothing in common with "free love" as understood in western lands, but meant merely the right to choose their own husbands instead of being sold in marriage at their parents' choice. They aroused the country, formed women's unions and took divorces by announcing them in the newspapers. Later when the farmers' and workers' unions were suppressed, thousands of women were killed as "dangerous elements" on the evidence of their bobbed hair alone.

In the twenty years that followed, women of the upper classes and the cities, as well as factory women, took increasing part in public life. They joined women's societies and trade unions; in such organizations one met women who in manner and viewpoint differed very little from women in similar

organizations in Europe or America. During the anti-Japanese war, Chinese women took part in the usual kinds of war work, made bandages, shirts and shoes for soldiers, sold bonds and carried on similar patriotic activities. The central government insisted from the beginning on controlling these organizations and as the war went on, and the Kuomintang grew more reactionary, many of the women's activities were suppressed.

In the rural districts the awakening of women went much more slowly. Farming families were very little affected by all this talk of women's rights. Girls were still sold in marriage and often were little better than slaves in their husbands' family. They might be beaten by father-in-law, mother-in-law or husband. The husband's earnings belonged to his parents and unless the parents favoured the young wife, she might even have to hunt for the means to buy her baby's clothes. If there were several sons' wives, one would be favoured while others would be worked beyond their strength. A daughter-in-law had no right to complain. She could only wait until perhaps someday as the mother of a son she became with advancing years a mother-in-law.

The Chinese Communists have always recognized the equality of women and their right to free choice in marriage. From their earliest days they encouraged women to carry on any work for which they had the capacity, even the leading of armed forces. Mrs. Chu Teh, whose personal name is Kang Ke-ch'ing, was a former kitchen slave and cow herder who ran away from her master in 1927 and organized the women vanguards of her district. She led more than 3,000 women armed with everything from kitchen knives to rifles. When Mao and Chu appeared in their district in 1928, the women joined them. On the Long March two battalions of these women defeated and disarmed a whole brigade of Szechwan troops. Mrs. Chu Teh, who could not read a single character when she joined the army, later became a college teacher and an organizer of nursery schools.

When the Communists came to Yenan, they found one of the most backward regions in China. Not only was this countryside untouched by the slightest suspicion of women's equality, but it was very superstitious. In particular there were superstitions about child-birth. Women would not tell their husbands when they expected to give birth, lest he "scare the child back." They hid themselves at such times and cut the cord with their teeth or a bit of procelain because metal was "unlucky." There were two thousand witch doctors in the area who beat women and jabbed them with sharp instruments, often killing them in the process of "letting out the evil spirits." All this led to high infant mortality.

The marriage law passed by the Communists in the Border Region sought "the realization of free marriage and the equality of men and women." It provided that "Union between a man and woman should be voluntary", that "forced marriage and marriage by purchase are forbidden." It also granted divorce by mutual consent or —for specified grounds—at the request of one party. But even after twelve years of Communist rule, the selling of girls in marriage remained the common form among the farming folk. The stubborn resistance of the farmers to the new ideas had, in fact, forced the Communists to make a new approach.

"Our slogans in the rural districts are no longer 'free marriage' and 'women's equality' but 'save the babies' and 'for a prosperous family'." said Mrs. Tsai Ch'ang, Chairman of the women's movement.

"We made a mistake," she admitted, "when we emphasized women's rights to such an extent that it antagonized the farmers. This happened in the early days of the anti-Japanese war. It brought about conflict between men and women and thus weakened the united struggle against the enemy and against the landlord for land reform. Besides, freedom of marriage and sex equality cannot be secured in this manner."

Under the slogan of "prosperous family", women are urged to learn to spin and weave and produce the family clothing. Some 160,000 women in Yenan Border Region alone joined this movement, or one-third of all the adult women in the area. Their economic contribution raises their status in the home. Under the slogan "save the babies" women are given education in hy-

giene and child care; thus the importance of their work is emphasized. At the same time public opinion is aroused against wife beating, as a form of "oppression." If the "women's association" cannot persuade the husband to act humanely, there may be a "struggle meeting" in which the entire village is informed of his oppressive acts. You will find notices put up on the village blackboard: "Wang beats his wife, let him stop or we'll see to it," signed by the women's association of the village.

A new type of family is beginning to develop in the Liberated Areas. Sidney Rittenberg tells of a peasant family named Shao with whom he spent the first night in Yenan Border Region after crossing the Yellow River: "It was a pleasure to be with them. I saw here what the Communists mean when they speak of an 'harmonious family'.

"The man was in his middle twenties; with him lived his old mother and his young wife. They were farmers, former tenants, who got land in the land reform. The mother and daugther-in-law were both very active spinners, weavers and knitters; they had a lot of primitive contraptions around for doing this work. The house was made of stone, cave-like in style, with a big arch for each room. Under the arched ceiling the old mother sat with her daughter-in-law, talking, laughing, knitting. Everyone in the family had a very fine sweater, done in black lamb's wool with little designs in white.

" 'Look at them,' said Pien, who had just come from a Kuomintang area. 'In our old feudal society the mothers-in-law are dominating bosses, who treat their son's wife like a personal servant. But see what mutual respect and affection are here. This is the real revolution!'

"Next morning Shao and his wife were up, bright and early, both working. They were a handsome pair. He was collecting millet stalks from the threshing-floor in front of the house, tying them into great bundles and taking them away. As soon as he had a bundle tied, he would call to his wife to help put it on his back. She would come dancing out of the house in her black, woolly sweater, and toil with the bundle, both laughing often and pleasantly at the awkward task. When Shao came back he would go into the house and help her arrange her yarn for knitting.

"I do not know how to convey the atmosphere of that home. But if I could have managed it, I would have married on the spot and started to acquire a black sweater. It seemed such a symbol of prosperity and peace. We complimented them on their happy home. They agreed that it was happy. Once they had been very poor and hungry, but now, with the land reform and the hard work and production movement they have everything they need.

"They gave us delicious millet for breakfast. We thanked the old lady sincerely, but she said: 'Oh, for even this little thing you have to thank us? When comrades are passing through to Yenan, and especially a foreign comrade, this is what we ought to do.' And I thought: 'When an old bound-foot woman like that calls people 'comrades,' and knows even about 'foreign comrades,' there is truly revolution here."

Shao and his wife had a relatively simple problem. They were only a small family of three. To secure harmony in a large family consisting of parents, several sons with their wives and many grand-children, is more difficult. Such families — in the Western sense they are not families but groups of relatives—are common in China. Nor is it always possible or desirable for them to split up into the smaller family units of the West. They are held together by the land.

Such large families, however, may become "democratic families," using the principle so much in vogue. They then have family meetings, elect a "head," and set quotas of work for each member. Any output of work above the "quota" is divided, four-fifths going to the producer and one-fifth to the common fund of the family. These "democratic families" even have three-year plans in terms of increased crops, livestock, houses and shares in cooperatives.

There was the family of Chen Teh-fa, for instance. It consisted of two parents, three grown up sons and their wives, and many small children. The father—he was now the grandfather—was often absent, so the "old woman" ran the home. She treated the wives unequally and all of them hated

each other. So Teh-fa, the oldest son, at last called a family meeting, and said: "Our production is low and we remain poor because of our many quarrels." They decided to make Teh-fa the head of the family. First he apportioned equally all the necessary household labor. Feeding the animals is considered easy work while grinding grain is very hard work. When this work was justly apportioned all the wives had equal time for such outside activities as spinning and weaving. Each woman was allowed to keep four-fifths of the income secured by such outside work. They vied with each other in spinning and weaving. The family became prosperous and most of the quarrels stopped. Even the old grandmother who at first resented her loss of prestige, became reconciled and at last pleased with the new prosperity.

In most of the Liberated Areas women are more advanced than in Yenan Border Region. This is partly because the other areas were always more advanced economically and partly because their struggle against the Japanese occupation brought men and women into common actions against the enemy. Later, women took part in the land reform, thus entering active public life. Old Mother Li in Tachang county of Central Hopei, for instance, organized thirty-eight women and seventy poor men in a single day to "settle accounts" with local tyrants.

Women's associations are formed very widely and bring the women's point of view into village and then into county life. Nine counties in Central Hopei—where Mother Li did her organizing—reported that in a very short time 37,000 women, one half of the total number in 388 villages, joined the local women's associations. Women take part in the production drive in their villages and are often chosen as "heroines" of labor.

I met two such "heroines" at the Congress of Labor Heroes in Wu An County.

Here was Mrs. Kuo, not long since household drudge and boundfoot woman. As she moved, swaying on feet that will never again be normal, to take her place in the elected presidium of the meeting, I was given the chronicle of her past year's exploits. The previous spring she organized 173 women of Cedar Forest into a spinning and weaving cooperative. With 2,762 pounds of their own cotton and 1,200 pounds that they got on government loan, they made all the clothing for their families. They also earned money so that one woman bought an acre of land, another half an acre and a third bought a sheep. After thus organizing Cedar Forest women, Mrs. Kuo organized East Cedar, West Cedar and Front Cedar hamlets and High Peak village so that in all of them the women produced the family clothing and also made a profit. Later she organized 160 women to help in the wheat harvest. For all this contribution to village prosperity Mrs. Kuo had been elected "heroine."

Another local heroine Li San-niu had eight good deeds listed to her credit. She organized 180 women, who spun and wove more than twelve pounds of cotton each. She organized a small transport cooperative that also made a profit. On tree planting day she organized the planting of 800 fruit trees, 2,300 willows and alders and grafted 2,000 date trees. She organized the cooperative purchase of seventy-two sheep and the digging of wild herbs for marketable drugs and the reclamation of fourteen acres of land. After all these meritorious deeds it is not superfluous to add that this heroine "reclaimed four idlers." For these feats she sat on the platform among the "labor heroes" of Wu An.

Women come out in increasing numbers to vote in village, county and general elections. Eighty per cent of the women voted in the Yenan municipal election, and sixty per cent in the rural elections of the Border Region. In Jehol, in the first election after its liberation, forty per cent of the women turned out to vote. In older areas the percentage runs much higher. Ninety per cent of the women voted in Tang County of the Chin-Cha Chi Liberated Areas; they elected a woman magistrate.

There are many women mayors, magistrates and members of People's Congresses. Even in Yenan Border Region seven of the two hundred members of the People's Congress are women. It's not as large as in

some other areas but it compares favorably with the proportion of women in the Congress of the United States. There are a few women who are secretaries of Area Governments, a high post for which no equivalent in other governments exists. The type of woman who reaches such positions is shown in Liu Yia-shung, head of the government for the Southeast Shansi Sub-Area, a woman in her forties. She was one of the early graduates from Peiping Normal College, took part in the Great Revolution in 1925-27 and, in the Japanese war organized a "Dare to Die" corps of women guerrillas, of which she was political director.

Some women even take active part in warfare. The mother of a guerrilla commander near Peiping during the anti-Japanese war was the famous "Madame Chao"—a simple old lady in a blue cloak who engaged in gun-running through the enemy lines. There was another unnamed "Chinese mother" described by Li Po who, despite her bound feet and her sixty-three years, travelled about with the guerrillas, mending their clothes and doing their laundry. When unable to follow them she concealed anti-Japanese posters in her laundry and pasted them up with starch in prominent places, while apparently quietly washing clothes in a village stream.

When Chiang's troops invaded North Kiangsu in the summer of 1946, over two thousand women joined the people's militia there, insisting on defending their newly acquired land. One of the best known of these was Kao Fang-ying, a twenty-three year old woman in Twin Forts village, whose husband was a coolie laborer in Shanghai. Since he did not earn enough to send her any money, she lived hungrily with her mother-in-law until the land reform gave her an acre of fertile soil. On this she raised two crops annually—this is possible in North Kiangsu climate—which gave her enough food.

When Kao heard that Chiang's troops were invading, she ran to the village chairman and insisted on becoming a soldier. "After many bitter years I have a good life. I will die rather than go back to the old ways." They accepted her, partly because she had big natural feet and could walk "like a man". Soon she led a small group of militia. She began by ambushing small detachments of the enemy that came for grain. As a result of one such ambush, she got a fine new carbine. When her village was occupied she did intelligence work from a neighboring village.

In the Kiaotung Peninsula of Shantung, not far from the naval base of Tsintao, is a place known as "Valley of the Five Tigers" from five local heroes who made reputations in the anti-Japanese war. Two of these "tigers" were girls in their teens, named "Precious Jade" and "Sweet Jasmine."

Precious Jade—her full name is Sun Yu-min—won the title "heroine of the rifle" because she shot eighteen Japs in one day in less than an hour. She is a tall, rather angular, girl with a shy, child-like smile. She comes from a poor family that had an acre of land and no livestock. She was eighteen years old when she got those Japs. She is twenty now but doesn't look over fifteen.

Precious Jade's first adventure into patriotic work was at the age of fourteen when she applied for membership in one of the "girl teams" that Sweet Jasmine organized. She was too young to attend the meetings but they gave her "secret work" to do. She had learned to write and she wrote letters to puppet soldiers who had gone from her village to serve the Japs. This was one of the tasks given by the army to the people to undermine the puppet army's morale. As a result of such letters, telling the men how the "home folk" regarded the army they had entered, many puppet soldiers came over to the Eighth Route Army bringing their arms.

There was a time when Precious Jade was afraid to touch a rifle. She thought it might "shoot the wrong way". "I was lucky," she says, "in my first practice. I was watching the boys on the militia ground. They weren't doing very well and they asked me in joke to try a shot. I hit the bull's eyes and the joke was on them. 'Can't you boys hit that great big thing?' I asked. The boys got mad and dared me to try again."

The girl took up the rifle and shot three bullets. All of them hit the target. "I don't know how they did it," she says. The

militia applauded and after that Precious Jade was always "practising". Even when she carried her hoe to the field, she carried it "like a rifle." She tried to join the militia but was refused. Then her brother was killed by the Japs and Precious Jade "knew that she had to take his place". In the morning they buried the brother and in the afternoon she went to target practice. This time they let her stay. She had only a home-made "fire-stick", that shoots one shot and is then loaded through the barrel. But once when she acted as lookout for a mine-laying team, two Japs appeared and she got both of them at one hundred and thirty yards. As a reward, she was given a captured cavalry rifle.

She got those eighteen Japs in the summer of 1945, not long before Japan surrendered. Seventeen mine-laying guerrilla teams were laying mines and five hundred sharpshooters acted as lookouts. Precious Jade was one, hiding on a hill-slope behind a tree.

"There was a road at the bottom of the hill and a brook running beside it," is how she tells it. "A Jap truck came along the road. It stopped by the brook and they all jumped out to take a bath. They must have been green recruits for they left their rifles in the truck. That gave me a head start and I had my cavalry rifle that shoots without reloading. So I got eighteen. They got behind the truck and were shooting at me. There were three of them left when I ran out of bullets. So I had to run away from there."

The "Sweet Jasmine Girls' Team" in which Precious Jade got her start was organized by a slightly older girl in the same valley, Chen Kwei-shan, or Sweet Jasmine Chen. She also is one of the "five tigers". She joined the women's association of her village in 1941. But their tasks—to sew and spin for the Eighth Route Army—seemed to her "too simple." So the following year she organized a special group of girls for more active duties.

It was one of those simple ideas that have a touch of genius. Whenever anything happened—a Japanese invasion, a harvest failure, or the death of one of the village boys in battle—the girls' team would meet and discuss: "What is our duty in this?"

The enemy grew active in the vicinity and the people's militia went to fight. "Our duty," decided the girls' team," is to help the families of the absent militia." So they carried water, cut firewood, washed clothes and tried to supply the labor of the absent men. They also had study-groups to learn reading and writing. Then they began to learn to shoot. On this the older women opposed them.

"I felt ashamed when people said that when the enemy comes, the women must all run away," says Sweet Jasmine. "I persuaded five friends to join me in hand grenade practice. We did this secretly, because we were ashamed to go to the training grounds with the men. Soon we had twenty girls who knew grenade throwing, mine-laying and other military skills. My older brother was captured by the enemy. All the family wept, but I said: 'Weeping is useless; we must take revenge.'"

The opposition of the older women grew bitter. "They split away and wouldn't speak to us," Sweet Jasmine says. So the girls' team held a "self-criticism meeting" and decided that it was "our duty" to mend the breach. They decided that a girl who went in for military activities must forestall criticism by working in her own home much harder than before. "In the morning we worked very hard to finish the house work. In the afternoon we studied. In the evening we did guard duty on the roads." It was a strenuous program.

The diligence of the girls in house work somewhat disarmed criticism. But the real success came when they formed the "letter writing group". As soon as they learned to write, they offered their services to write letters for families to their absent soldiers. "The older women were very much pleased with this service," says Sweet Jasmine. "After this nobody opposed us any more."

Sweet Jasmine married at the age of twenty. The following year her young husband was killed by the Japs. After that, the relation between the girls' team and the women's association grew even better.

Through her marriage and her widowhood, Sweet Jasmine was recognised as one of the older group.

She is not yet twenty-three and she is still the leader of the girls' team. Similar girls' teams have sprung up all over the Kiaotung Peninsula, with a similar plan of asking themselves: "What is our duty?" They are known as "Sweet Jasmine Girls' Teams". They seem to think that girls have a "duty" about everything, which very few people in China ever thought before.

Chapter 14

THE SCHOOLS GO TO THE PEOPLE

"The farmers had no use for schools when we first came to the Border Regicn," said Superintendent Kao. "We had to prove that schools could help their daily living. It was an uphill job".

Kao Yung-ping, chief of secondary schools in Yenan Border Regicn, was unlike any other school superintendent I ever met. His bare brown feet were thrust into canvas slippers. His stiff black hair stuck straight up above dark skin drawn smooth over high cheek-bones. His jacket and trousers didn't match, for the trousers were dark blue of civilian issue while the light blue cotton jacket dated from his years in the army, as was shown from the insignia he still wore. But that he was a learned man was clear from the pencil stuck in his pocket, and from the eager intellectuality of his young face.

"When we gct here from the Long March", he said, "we found a population that was ninety-nine per cent illiterate. There were only eighty lower primary schools—of three or four grades—and one higher six-year primary schocl in the entire area of 1,500,000 people. There were no secondary schools or higher institutions. In the autumn of 1937 we opened a normal schocl to train teachers. We had twenty students, mostly from families that had made the Long March."

The superintendent sighed at the dreams those young teachers had of bringing swift education to this backward area, which seemed to them much as the Oklahoma Dust Bowl would seem to teachers from New York. Compulscry education was decreed but the law remained a dead letter. Hopes of educational enthusiasts were shattered on the hard rock of peasant indifference and even hostility to book-learning. Those difficult Chinese characters seemed just a waste of time for farm children on the edge of starvation. Farm boys had to cut firewood and tend sheep. It was immoral for girls to think of schocling at all.

The people's first need was higher production. The teachers themselves admitted it. They must prove that schools could help in this. The task was undertaken through two kinds of schocls: regular primary schools for children and special "winter schools" for adults.

The story of Teacher Tao whom the people chose as "heroine of education" shows what was expected of a primary school teacher. It has been illustrated by wocd-cuts and circulated throughout the Liberated Areas as an example of how a teacher must behave.

Teacher Tao "lived with the people". When a little girl was lazy, and got up too late to do her household tasks before school, Teacher Tao challenged her to a competition and herself got up at five in the mcrning laughingly. When a small boy named Wen proved a perfect pest at hôme and at school, declaiming from tabletops with a painted face like an actor, and taking off his trousers to run around the schocl yard, Teacher Tao, though told by the father "Be strict, punish him", would hug the boy, wash his face and catch the lice in his coat. Thus she won his trust so that he "talked to her about everything."

Visiting Wen's home, Teacher Tao observed his idleness and asked why he didn't help in the family tasks.

"I only drink two bcwls of water. Why must I carry two buckets," said young Wen.

The teacher looked at Wen's sister cooking the meal and asked: "How many bowls does your sister eat?"

"Two" said Wen.

"Who cooks **your** food"? asked Tao.

The youngster got the point and whispered: "I'll have to improve."

This was only the beginning. Through a painfully long series of episodes, Teacher Tao displayed endless affection and inge-

nuity until Wen finally behaved well both in school and in the family. He carried the water, fed the pigs, swept and cleaned the ground. His father said: "That Tao is really a teacher. She has changed my son into a good boy".

Similar successes with other children of the village at last convinced the people that a teacher was of use. They gave thirty bushels of grain for the pupils' meals and two acres of land—cultivated by a labor exchange brigade—for the school's support. As for Teacher Tao, they not only elected her "heroine of education" but "voluntarily gave her soap, a handkerchief, shoes and eggs"! Her school increased "until she had forty pupils"!

Forty children! To western readers it will seem that Teacher Tao made heroic efforts for a very small success. Teachers in backward villages of Asia may better estimate her worth. The Congress of Culture in Yenan voted her school a model. Mao Tse-tung recommended her "style of work" for study by all teachers. Hers was the type of patient, unlimited devotion that built the primary schools of the Border Region.

Superintendent Kao made no claim to full success. In ten years, he said, the original eighty primary schools had grown to 1,302, while that single higher primary had blossomed into sixty-six. There were seven secondary schools now, and a university with five faculties. Only fifteen per cent of the children were yet in school but this was fifteen times as many as ten years ago. The cost of primary schools was met by the county, with some contributions from the people of the village served. In Mitze county, for instance, all fines imposed by the court and the tax on selling animals were used for school purposes, and a thousand acres of confiscated land was set aside for school income. The seven secondary schools were supported by the grain levy of the Border Region government, and also, like all institutions, raised part of their needed food by their own labor.

Wherever there is a primary school, the teacher is expected to organize at least one "winter class" for older children and adults. These are not only to teach reading and writing, or as the Chinese put it, "learning characters." There are classes for farmers on simple plant diseases and selection of seeds. There are other classes for women on care of babies and household hygiene. There are classes on voting methods and the government and its laws. These subjects may be taught even to people who cannot yet read. Winter classes are often started in places where not even primary schools have over existed. About one thousand "cultural workers" from the city of Yenan—writers, musicians, sculptors, nurses—volunteered every winter for three months to open such winter classes.*

A youth of twenty, Kao told me, finished the Lu Hsun Art School and went to the edge of the Mongolian desert to teach a winter class. He had very few pupils, for homes were scattered and the weather was cold. One evening after class it was found to be snowing. A boy, living three miles away, was afraid to go home for fear of wolves. So the young teacher accompanied him. On the way back he lost the road and fell into a deep drift in a ditch, injuring himself so that he lay for a time unable to proceed. Finally he succeeded in crawling back to the school.

"When this story spread, he got many pupils", said Kao, giving the hallmark of success. The Young man's ability to "take it" seems to have convinced those stubborn peasants that learning was worth while. When sowing time brought the end of the winter class, they refused to let the teacher go back to Yenan."

"I must obey the instructions of my superior", he told them.

"But your superior must obey the people. The people, that's us!" Not for nothing had those peasants heard the propaganda of "democracy". The young man, touched, arranged to stay and open a regular school.

Ledge after ledge high up the cliff rose the caves of Yenda, or Yenan University. Before the Japanese surrender it had twelve hundred students. It played a big role in the anti-Japanese war and in the

* See Chapter 9 for several such cases.

establishment of the Liberated Areas, sending out more than three thousand graduates to organize the people's resistance and the forms of the new democracy. As Yenan fought its way to the sea, the students left Yenda for other areas, either to become a nucleus of new universities or to organise governments, industries and schools. The Medical School and the Art School also left for a more central location.

So Yenda, at the time when I visited it, had become a local university, serving the Border Region, with some 350 students, in five faculties: education, law, accounting, government administration and the higher secondary school. Many of its most famous professors had gone to start universities elsewhere. Its students no longer came from all parts of China, but almost entirely from Yenan Border Region. Most of them came from poor or "middle" farmer families, and had done some previous work either in government or in education. They had faced practical problems and now wished to combine theory with their previous practice. They were preparing to become magistrates, military commanders, lawyers and judges, teachers of secondary schools and newspaper correspondents.

To this end, each department of the university had close relations with that branch of government for which they were training the future personnel. The law students not only attended courts but were admitted to the committees of the legislative branch of government, where they often took part in the discussions of new laws. Besides the permanent professors at Yenda, there were many special lecturers from the government departments. The text-books were written by the professors themselves from the collected experience of the Border Region and were then mimeographed at the university.

It was a high and hazardous climb by irregular clay steps to the upper ledges of the university, where I met with several professors and students. The aim of education, they told me, was to make the student "think actively". Before holding a class, the professor writes out the questions he intends to cover and recommends reference books. Each class is divided into study groups with a leader. Before the class meets the professor consults all the leaders of the study groups to know what questions are being most raised. An entire day is then given to the meeting of this single class. The professor begins with a lecture after which the students ask questions and discuss. After three or four hours, they adjourn for lunch and then meet again to discuss the books the students have read on the subject. Discussion often lasts late into the night.

The concentration of a day on a subject is to give time to "think about it in all its aspects." The students have five such subjects during the week but the professor has only two such classes, since he spends the intervening time compiling the text-book for study. In examinations the students are not asked to repeat what they have learned but are given practical problems to solve on the basis of their newly acquired knowledge.

All university facilities including food and clothing for the students are supplied by the Border Region government. Such extra comforts as towels and tooth-brushes as well as extra vegetables come from the students' own cooperative production. All student affairs are handled through student self-government. Many practical problems of their personal lives are discussed in their student meetings. The problem of marriage is perhaps the most burning of these. Most of the students had marriages arranged by their parents and were very much dissatisfied with this. After long discussion, the general view was that if the marriage had not been consummated and the couple did not like each other, they should break it off, but that if marriage had been consummated they should "try to get along". All agreed that while in the university they should give their time to study and not to love-making.

When the Liberated Areas spread from Yenan to the sea-coast, the promotion of education was found to be much easier in areas that were not so backward economically. In the Four Province Area a million and a half children—half the children in the area—were quickly enrolled in schools. The same was true in Shantung where

another million and a half were enrolled. Even the secondary schools in these areas number their pupils by tens of thousands. Universities opened in these areas with two thousand students in each, studying such subjects as forestry, engineering, textiles, railway management. Reading circles and evening classes sprang up rapidly in practically every village.

When Rittenberg crossed North Shansi on foot* he noticed "some kind of school in every large village". He was especially impressed by the wide-awake attitude of the children on political questions. Everywhere they gathered around him, not to ask for candy or chewing-gum, as in Shanghai, but to ask about America.

In one small village called "Cross-roads", one day short of the Yellow River, fifteen or twenty youngsters crowded into his room. One of them asked: "What is it like in America"?

Then a fourteen-year-old, anxious to show off, told the others that in thirty cities in America meetings had been held by "Win the Peace" committees, protesting against the keeping of American troops in China. That boy knew everything that had been in the district newspapers about America for weeks.

Asking the older ones to keep silent, Rittenberg questioned the smaller ones. "Who is the best man in China"?

An eleven-year-old youngster inquired: "In all China or just around here"?

"In all China", said Rittenberg.

"Our Chairman Mao Tse-tung", the boy at once replied.

When asked what was good about Chairman Mao, he answered: "He helps us get more grain so that we have more to eat. Besides, we elect our own government".

Children talking like this can be found from Honan to Manchuria. I met plenty of them as far away as Tsitsihar—wide-awake, demanding that I come to their schools and talk about America, and themselves readily discussing world politics. Whether one finds their thought hopeful or dangerous, it is clear that the schools in the Liberated Areas are reaching the children, and infecting them with new ideas. Their success is due to the fact that they learned to relate themselves to the life of the people in that very backward area of the northwest.

The regular schools are only part of the campaign for educating the people. In every kind of organization and institution, study groups of various kinds are formed. When I visited the little rug factory in Yenan, or the soap factory in Kalgan or the flour mill in Harbin, I found that all the workers attended classes, usually in the first morning hour, when they were fresh before work. Every detachment of the army similarly organized classes. In the jails of Yenan and Kalgan the prisoners, having more leisure, gave two hours to "learning characters".

It is a hard task to learn to read in Chinese. If you attend school faithfully for three years you may know a thousand or fifteen hundred characters, enough to read a "simplified newspaper" but not a regular newspaper or book. Chinese characters are so many and so difficult that in past centuries only the well-to-do had leisure to learn to read. This was one reason for the gap that existed between the common people and the educated. But today, in the Liberated Areas, "learning characters" takes the nature of a national sport.

A famous drive for learning characters was started by Jen Huang-hua, a farmer in a village on the bank of the Yellow River. Ten years ago Jen was filled with the urge to educate his neighborhood. He visited surrounding villages and induced one man from each village to attend a class in Jen's home. Every ten days these men came to Jen's house for the evening and he taught them five new characters. Then they went back and taught these five characters to groups in their villages. This system of chain-teaching has gone on for ten years. Jen's pupils now number ten thousand, and the most advanced of them can read five to six thousand characters. The ramification of his class cover an entire county and reach parts of other counties.

Despite the barrier imposed by the difficult Chinese characters, knowledge and new ideas spread rapidly through the

* See Chapter 18.

Chinese countryside. They are circulated by newspaper reading circles, by village "newspapers", by the "vocal broadcast", by blind minstrels, by that combination of song, dance and drama known as "Yang-ke." This is done so successfully that plenty of people who cannot read know the news about the United Nations, and have heard the names of Truman and Attlee.

Besides the regular newspapers printed for the educated, there are "simplified newspapers" for those who are just beginning to read. There are also "village newspapers", usually written on a blackboard in the public square. These contain a small amount of national and international news but most of the space is taken by local news, names of villagers who make good in production or who must be "struggled with" for some fault. These items will be read aloud by those who can read.

The "vocal broadcast" is an ingenious adaptation of the old town crier to the spreading of news. I came upon it by chance in a town of North Honan. I heard a loud voice shouting from a roof-top a block away. It continued a quarter of an hour while people stopped in the streets to listen. When I asked what was being said, I was told that the man had just shouted: "Today a foreign woman arrived in our city to visit our army and government". Naturally I took this for a joke, but they assured me that such an announcement had just been made. My arrival was "news" on the "vocal broadcast".

These broadcasts began from local initiative. The villagers choose a man to do the shouting. The regular newspapers and the government departments supply him with material. His shouting can obviously only give the "highlights" but he always includes an invitation to a "news-reading" immediately after the broadcast. Those who wish can then go to hear more details.

A new use for the "blind minstrels" of the countryside had also been devised by the educational enthusiasts. It has been a custom for blind men to earn their living by telling stories to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Some use three instruments at once: a long stringed instrument, a clapper of two pieces of bamboo struck by lifting the knee and a bell that is hit by a stick. Minstrels travel from village to village, led by a small boy, and are hired to entertain guests at feasts.

There were two hundred such minstrels in Yenan Border Region. They used to tell old stories about warlords or demons. They were invited to Yenan and given some education. After this, they began telling new stories all over the Border Region. Good minstrels are always welcome. One of the best known is Han Chi-shiang. He makes up his own stories but they are often based on facts.

One of his most successful stories is Liu Shao-erh's petition, a tale of buying and selling in marriage. Liu, the only daughter of a farmer, is betrothed at birth to a poor farmer's son. As she grows towards womanhood, she shows signs of beauty. Her father thinks that he can get more money for her now. So he tells Liu that her betrothed is an ugly hunchback and wins her consent to a divorce. Then he tells the bridegroom's father: "My daughter eats a lot, likes beautiful clothes and is lazy." Thus he gains consent to break the contract and is all set to sell the girl again.

The second buyer is an opium-smoking landlord, "an old man, over forty years", whom the father represents to Liu as "a strong man, just turned twenty-five." The betrothal is agreed and the money paid. Liu walks in the fields and meets an "old, thin, ugly man" who tries to take liberties with her, saying: "Don't shrink from me, I am your husband." Liu goes home and weeps. A few days later she carries water to a labor exchange brigade in the field and is attracted by the young brigade leader. A friend tells her: "That's the betrothed you threw away."

The young couple elope. The angry father and the landlord take the matter to the county court. The magistrate rules: "A bargain is a bargain. The girl belongs to the landlord." Liu, however, is energetic and modern. She carries the case to the Supreme Court where Judge Ma Si-wu—he is the judge who actually decided this case —overrules the county magistrate and allows the young pair to marry.

The line between fact and fiction hardly exists in these minstrel stories. When Han reaches the climax of this marriage story, he makes full use of the situation to plead eloquently against "bought and paid for marriage." The village women usually weep and greatly enjoy the tale. The audience always breaks up in discussions about marriage, the "marriage by purchase" and the "free marriage." This, of course, is what the minstrel intends.

The most famous method of popular education is a combination of dance, song and drama known as "Yang-ke." It has a long past in the type of folk songs and dances performed when farmers were in the fields. During the war Yang-ke was developed as an instrument of anti-Japanese propaganda. The traditional clown, who amused the audience by awkwardly taking a beating, was replaced by a Japanese or a puppet. After Mao Tse-tung, in the Writers Congress of 1942, urged writers to study folk-ways of expression, it was realized that Yang-ke had literary possibilities as a form of drama. By 1946 there were six hundred Yang-ke troupes, amateur and professional, in Yenan Border Region alone. One person in every twelve of the population knew how to "do a Yang-ke."

The Yang-ke spread rapidly throughout the Liberated Areas. It is a very flexible form. It always includes music, usually in a catchy rythm something like a fox-trot. It also includes singing, and dancing, and sometimes drama. It may be performed in the open air or indoors. It combines easily with every kind of program.

Yang-kes at first were short, but they have now also acquired a complex form. There are some that are full length dramas, like the "White-Haired Woman," whose time of action covers several years and whose presentation takes four hours. Such Yang-kes are given in theaters and are very popular. The usual form, however, of even the sophisticated Yang-ke, is the one-act play, of which three will be given in an evening.

Three such short dramas that I saw in an evening in a Yenan theater, included a short propaganda skit on spinning, a spy play and a rather breath-taking melodrama about the Japanese war. The materials were crude but the acting was marvellous, while the constant use of music behind the scenes to heighten emotion was very effective.

Land reform is the subject of many Yang-ke dramas, many of them full length plays. In one of these, which lasted more than three hours in a Yenan theater, the author had collected all the typical evil acts done by landlords, and concentrated them in a single man. He robs a poor farmer of land, throws him in jail and orders him killed there and then, steals the man's wife for his concubine. The unhappy woman is so ill-treated by Wife Number One that she miscarries, losing the child that was her one reminder of her "dead" husband. It all ends happily, however, for the Eighth Route Army takes the village and farmers "settle accounts" and even the supposedly dead husband returns with the army to which he fled after being saved from the jail.... This crude melodrama was so well put together, so excellently acted, and so well expressed the mood of the audience that the entire theater rose to its feet applauding when the landlord was led off to trial and probable death.

The Yang-ke dramas, the minstrels' songs, the village newspapers, the winter classes, the campaign for "learning characters" are only the forms through which new thought flows. Expressed in these forms is the boiling life of an awakening people.

Three million young folks of high school and college age have organized young people's groups, that seek education and self-expression in singing circles, Yang-ke circles, groups for newspaper-reading and current events. Another three million youngsters under the age of fifteen are in junior youth organisations and "pioneers."

These, as well as the older ones who are "learning characters" in winter classes and factory groups, are the people who are seizing education—not receiving it passively, but seizing it—to the end that their new life shall be different from the old.

Chapter 15

THE PEOPLE'S ARMED FORCES

Three types of the people's armed forces are found in the Liberated Areas: the people's militia, or **"Min Ping"**, who are farmers defending their village under civilian control; the local troops, or guerrillas who are under army orders but normally confined to defense of a county; and the regular army, which may manouver as a field army anywhere in the Liberated Areas. The people's militia are the armed farmers who liquidate bandits and make a whole area "tough" in all its parts against an invader; the regular army supplies the over-all strategy for area-wide defense. All these forces cooperate with each other.

Kee Chan-sung—"Ever Victorious Kee"—is a Shantung militia-man. He is a boy with frank innocent eyes, a felt hat won in a skirmish and a mauser on a shoulder-belt. He is twenty-two now, and commander of twenty-five hundred militia-men: he is one of the "tigers" of the Five Tiger Valley. He was given the name "Ever Victorious" at the big militia-men's rally. He was seventeen when he joined.

"My father was the leader when we organized in our village," explains Ever Victorious. "We suffered much from the Japs. There was a Jap stronghold just ten miles away, and some armed forces next to it that called themselves Kuomintang, while on the other side of us was Chao Pao-yen and his puppet troops. There were also ordinary bandits. All of them looted our village. So twenty of us organized in 1941 under my father with some home-made shot-guns called "fire-sticks" that had been in the village for years. The first time the bandits came and the farmers saw we were going to resist them, fifty more men joined in to help. We caught those bandits on both sides; not one of them got away."

Somewhere in a nearby county the Eighth Route Army was offering training to volunteer militia-men. The farmers were at first afraid to go. "They feared the Eighth Route would conscript them as other armies did," says Kee, "so we went at it cautiously. We sent a few men first for six days—that was the training period then—and figured that if they came back, then more would go. Well, they came back all right; so we kept sending more and the training period grew to a fortnight, and then to a month. The Eighth Route gave us some hand grenades and the people began to trust them. We captured more rifles in skirmishes. Our militia grew fast and in 1942 we organized a county association and the farmers planted special land to buy arms."

"Where did you buy arms"?

"From the puppet soldiers. They fought for the Japs but they would always sell Jap arms."

The militia grew so strong that the enemy thought it was the regular Eighth Route in the valley. "Actually we were just **Min Ping** —people's soldiers—farmers defending our own Haiyang county", says Even Victorious Kee. "The regular army was quite far away. For two years we could only defend villages but in spring of 1943 our best mine-laying teams began to infiltrate enemy strongholds and lay mines inside their gates. The fear of the puppets grew and they stopped attacking our villages. They shut themselves up, defending their fortified towns. They had to buy food from us and we made them pay with arms. Their towns became hungry and the families of the puppets began coming back to the villages. Their young folks began to join our **Min Ping** and were very useful showing us the way into their strongholds and identifying special agents that the puppets sent in our midst.

"That summer we began to use the new Shantung slogan: 'One hand on the gun, one hand on the land.' We went right on farming but we had a signal system everywhere to tell when the enemy approached."

Next winter—on New Year's eve of 1944—the Shantung farmers began taking puppet strongholds. "We took Wenti, Chao's own stronghold", says Ever Victorious, "but the Japs sent reinforcements and took it back."

Wenti then changed hands often and so did other strongholds until the happy day of Japan's surrender when "we all went delirious with joy". But fighting in Shantung wasn't over. Chao, the puppet who had fought for the Japs in Manchuria even before there was war in China, now went to Tsingtao—which was under American naval protection—and met Chiang Kai-shek's Minister of War, Ho Ying-chin. He got a commission from Ho to hold the area.

The Shantung farmers learned of it when they took Chao's diary from his dead body in Tsimo, which they had taken in battle from the Japs. It contained the entry: "The Generalissimo asks me to hold Tsingtao and Tsimo for him. I have contacted the Japs to cooperate. Death to the Communists!" Even so the farmers might not have believed that entry, but Chiang Kai-shek spoke in memorial service for Chao, calling him a "hero who died fighting bandits". So the Shantung farmers knew just where they stood with Chiang!

Chao's diary can be seen today in Chefoo. Some day they may remember to put it in a museum. Just now it is in the hands of a reporter on the local newspaper who uses its many blank pages as a note book. Chefoo is short of paper.

The **Min Ping** of Haiyang county helped send the Jap prisoners off to points where the Americans collected them. Then they offered their services to the civil government to repair roads and bridges. "We thought there would be peace", says Ever Victorious Kee. "But in July Chiang Kai-shek attacked in force, so two thousand men in our county volunteered for the Eighth Route Army. I myself volunteered but they refused me. They said I was more useful in the militia".

Ever Victorious Kee, aged twenty-two, commands twenty-five hundred militia men of Haiyang County. The county has six thousand militia-men. They are well-armed too. Vic Schneierson of the China Press made a bicycle trip through there in spring of 1947 with a motion picture operator who was showing films from Chefoo. The halls were jammed with **Min Ping** and they all had rifles, while grenades and land mines were rolling around on the floor".

"Not that they expected any trouble", said Vic. "They were just proud of their citizen's right to bear arms. The Eighth Route had given them a lot of this Jap stuff because the army was now equipped with much better American weapons, taken in battle from Chiang Kai-shek".

Those northerners of Shantung are purposeful and hard. They fought the Jap invader in many bitter ways: with home-made rifles and shot-guns, with potato-masher grenades, with land mines that they called "iron melons." The Japs struck back cruelly. Thirty thousand Shantung patriots who died in battles have their names engraved in a great national monument that today covers a square mile in the Shantung hills south of Chefoo.

Yu Hwa-hoo, the "King of the Iron Melon", is another Shantung militia-man. He is a middle-sized farmer in his thirties with a battered felt hat and a small puckered mouth; it was stitched together not too expertly that time when the bullets went through. Yu speaks in a passive voice. without excitement. He also got his title from the big militia rally.

"I guess they gave it to me because besides laying mines I did a lot of teaching all over North Shantung. I can't tell how many thousand people I have taught. But I invented nineteen ways to lay mines. There are forty-one ways altogether that we use".

When Farmer Yu heard in 1941 that the Eighth Route Army was killing Japs with the "iron melon", he began experimenting on mouse traps and discovered a way of setting them off. But he had no "iron melons" to set off. So he joined the **Min Ping** and they gave him five "iron melons".

That was the beginning of a famous mine-laying career.

The important part of the technique is to put them in the right places where they will get the enemy. Farmer Yu was clever and daring in this.

His first spectacular job was in the big 1943 battle with Puppet Chao. "I went right up to the outer houses of the enemy stronghold and laid nine mines", he explains. "I crept past the sentries at night and laid a mine wrapped in red cloth on the table in a puppet barracks. When they woke in the morning, they wondered what that red thing was and began to untie it. Twelve of them were blown into the next world".

They sent Farmer Yu on a "long travel team" to the Po Hai to teach the farmers there to lay mines. The Japs organized a team of forty "Kamikazes"—a suicide corps of ground raiders. Farmer Yu laid eighteen mines in one night and got all forty Japs. Fifteen were killed by a "connected-action mine" he invented, which was really seven mines with underground connections. Two men were killed by the first explosion and when the Japs came to get the corpses, another mine went off. "There were seven explosions in that combination," explains Farmer Yu.

"We also had nail mines. These were attached to a nail-studded stick just under the dust of the road. The nails caught in tires and the movement of the truck would set off the mine".

Farmer Yu had a dangerous habit of playing around Jap strongholds. "When the Japs re-took Tsimo", he says, "I laid four mines at the west gate. They blew up the first two Jap tanks that came in. I hid in town with four of my men and laid two mines that night on the meat bridge at the south gate and two on the river bank where the Japs would bathe next morning. The Japs saw us as we left and sent a sortie after us. One mine blew up as they crossed the bridge. I thought I was safe then but a mortar shell exploded next to me and knocked me cut. When I came to, I was in the water on the other side of the river hanging to the city wall. My four friends rescued me and took me to the army hospital".

After recovery Farmer Yu was given strict orders to take no more part in actual fighting, because he was a valuable instructor. "But I had three mines left and I persuaded them to let me go out one more night". That was his bad luck, for the Japs were waiting for him. That was the time his teeth were knocked cut, one leg broken, the other injured and he went to hospital for nearly three months. This time the order to stop fighting was unconditional. They stitched up his mouth and his fellow villagers bought him a set of bright gold teeth!

Farmer Yu, however, fights in other ways. He caught a Kuomintang agent who came to kill him. He kept the man in his house and talked to him three nights until the man confessed that he had been sent to kill many local leaders beginning with Farmer Yu. The villagers demanded his death. But Farmer Yu wouldn't let them kill him.

"I had reformed him in these three nights' talk", he explains. "He's been admitted to the Farmers' Union now".

Militia-men like Farmer Yu and Ever Victorious Kee form the base of the armed forces. But they are only part of the self-defense organization of the farmers that toughens the village against attack. In any well organized village all men between eighteen and forty-five belong to what is known as the Self-Defense Corps. They elect a "People's Defense Committee" of three to seven men, which has power to mobilize all the unarmed strength of the village for rear service. They patrol roads, investigate strangers, act as couriers for the army, help care for the wounded. If an invading army approaches, they bury the grain and evacuate women and children to safer areas.

In Broken Cliffs village outside Yenan I saw how the people prepared as invasion drew near. The women were busy making winter shoes for the army, using their home-grown hemp for soles. The men buried their grain after sending off the total annual grain tax earlier than usual

"because the army needs it and to get the job out of the way". When I asked where they had buried the grain they all looked at each other for a moment without speaking and then explained that each family buried its grain separately at night in various places in the hills "so that if anyone is caught and tortured he can't tell much". One old man agreed to show me one hiding-place that was not far away. Even after he pointed it out I could not have found it again.

This village had experience in grain hiding. Twelve years earlier, before Mao Tse-tung came with the regular Communist-led army, they had been attacked by the Kuomintang. "We hid our grain and fled to the woods", they said. "Some babies died in the cold but they did not find our grain, so we planted again and lived."

"How long were you hiding out?" I asked.

"A year and a half. This time it will not be so long. We have a regular army now".

All these non-fighting activities were in the hands of the older men. Younger men who wish to join in actual fighting apply for membership in the **Min Ping.** They must be accepted by the Farmers' Union or by the village government as soon as one is elected. If accepted, they cease to be on call for rear service but they spend a month every winter in military training and carry out various unpaid police duties during the year. If their village comes under attack, they become almost full-time fighters, cooperating with the regular army.

The **Min Ping** gets arms in any way it can, from the county government, from army surplus or by capture from the enemy. In Broken Cliffs they were very poorly armed; they had only spears. With these they expected to finish off enemy sentries or isolated groups in the dark, and to capture better weapons during the expected invasion of Yenan.

In all areas where there has been fighting, the **Min Ping** has better weapons. The four thousand **Min Ping** that I saw in review in Wu An county had rifles of various kinds taken from various enemies. In Shantung, the militia not only had rifles, grenades and land mines but these were becoming standardized with reserve ammunition because there had been so much fighting with the Japanese and with Chiang Kai-shek.

The **Min Ping** are adequate to defend their villages against bandits and to protect the elected local governments against any attempts of landlords to employ armed retainers as they used to do. They are strong enough to serve as the first line of defense even against an armed invasion.

"Our villagers can defend themselves against attacks by anything up to two hundred armed men", said Governor Lin Tsu-han of Yenan Border Region. "They have held the border for several weeks against the probing raids of Hu Tsung-nan. When attack comes in force, they must ask for help from the regular army".

The task of the regular army is to furnish the strategy, the military knowledge and the trained back-bone of the people's resistance to invaders. In a farming population, thoroughly sick of wars and of armies, the People's Army wins support by teaching the people how to fight.

A ploughman near Pinghsing Pass, who had taken part in the famous battle there, told Rittenberg how he himself had learned "that you can beat the Japs if you fight correctly".

"When the Japs came into our area my chum and I talked it over and decided we'd have to resist. But how? Without rifles or any weapons? We met an Eighth Route soldier and went into the woods for a talk. Then we saw a Jap officer with seven soldiers coming towards us across a meadow, searching everywhere. My friend and I began to shake all over".

The hitherto stolid ploughman began at this point to act as in a drama—knees shaking, hands fluttering, head wobbling from side to side. Then he grew still and continued: "The Eighth Route soldier said: 'Take it easy! Take it easy! If you run they're sure to see you; Wait and see what they will do.'

"We waited and the Japs came straight towards us. The soldier said: 'Let's go into that cabin.' There was an empty hut

in a clearing just behind us. We went inside and the soldier sat quiet in the room while we looked through the broken paper in the window. My chum whispered: 'Old gentlemen in heaven, they are coming right here. We are all lost eggs. Maybe we can run out of the back door and some of us might get away.'

"'Take it easy!' said the soldier. 'Keep still.'

"He took a grenade out of his belt and pulled the pin but kept his thumb on the safety catch. That takes some nerve! We thought he's going to blow us all up, so we won't be tortured by the Japs. We trembled and expected death.

"'Don't get excited,' said the soldier. 'Keep quiet and see how the Eighth Route fights.'

"Then suddenly that Jap officer was right in the door with the seven soldiers behind him. The Eighth Route soldier tossed the grenade out through the door right under their feet. And boom! We had seven new rifles!

"With those rifles my chum and I, with five more villagers went with the Eighth Route into the battle of Pinghsing Pass!"

The Communist-led armies have never had any trouble getting as many men as they wanted. Men joined for their own defense, as did those farmers at Pinghsing Pass. Chu Teh told me in 1937 that there were always twice as many men asking to join as he could take. Arms were then the limiting factor. Men for whom there were no arms were told to join the village militia and get training, so that they might later enter the regular army.

The army has grown in twenty years of almost constant fighting. It has changed its designation several times. There were only three thousand men who gathered in 1927 in South Hunan under the leadership of Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung. This force, known as the Chinese Red Army, grew to 300,000 at the height of Communist power in Kiangsi and sank to 40,000 at the end of the Long March.

When the Communists entered the national army to fight Japan, the Generalissimo authorised Chu Teh to lead 45,000 men in a force that was known as the Eighth Route Army. Later another Communist army was allowed in Yangtze valley, called the New Fourth. These forces grew until the Communist regular armies totalled 1,120,000 men by the end of the Japanese war, not counting Manchuria where the army was in process of organization. In late 1946, the Communist-led armies were combined under the name "People's Liberation Armies", with a million and a half in the regular army, besides several million village militia.

The armies grew in part through new recruits and in part by taking over and reorganizing all kinds of armed bands. They grew not quietly in orderly country but in war-torn provinces ravaged by bandits. Into such areas the Communists came with a small, disciplined force and a political program and quickly multiplied to many times their original size.

Li Ching-yu, who went as commissar with a force of eight hundred men into South Hopei in the early days of the Japanese war, told me how he found there five kinds of armed forces fighting each other. There were defeated Kuomintang troops, newly organized puppets, some Japs, some bandits and also farmers' bands who organized for self-defense in various ways. Li's small force set out to create a people's army in this chaos. They sent delegations to all armed bands except those serving the Japs.

"If they received our slogans, we gave them training and they became our troops. Some rejected our slogans and went over to the puppets. Them we fought and disarmed." In this rough and ready fashion, under pressure of war, Commissar Li's forces grew in a single year to twenty thousand men with fifteen thousand rifles.

It need not be supposed that discipline was at first exemplary in a force composed of ex-bandits, ex-puppets and ex-defeated Kuomintang soldiers, together with local farmers. Political training at once began. It was based on the principle: "The army must serve the people". This was the touchstone. This was the new idea.

"A people's army differs from a feudal army in two main principles", explained Lu Ting-yi, head of the Communists' Information Department, to me. "First of all it must serve the people. The feudal army serves a warlord and dictates to the people. Chiang's provinces are ruled by generals, ours by elected civilian governors. A people's army never fights for a warlord or a clique but only for the people's interest in all its aspects. It is the people's armed might.

"The second principle is that the officers serve the soldiers and not the soldiers the officers. In the feudal army, the soldiers are servants, disciplined by beating and cursing. This is not allowed with us. Of course the soldier must obey in battle. The officer says: 'Die here', and you die here. But if the officer has such power at the moment of battle, he must be all the more subject to democratic control when there is no battle. At such times soldiers' errors must be corrected not by officers' orders, but by advice and discussion among their fellow soldiers. Such discussions may also criticize officers' mistakes".

Recruiting methods are totally different from those used in Kuomintang territory. In Kuomintang China there is notorious traffic in enlistments. If a rich man's son is drafted, the father pays the recruiting officer to buy a substitute. The price in Peiping in 1946 was around seventy dollars gold. The money is supposed to go to pay some poor man's family. Actually, the recruiting officer often pockets it and then kidnaps a poor man. So one sees long lines of conscripts tied with ropes, led off to the army like so many slaves.*

Every soldier in the Peoples' Liberation Armies will tell you proudly that he is a volunteer. In point of fact there may have been pressure applied but it was social pressure. Meetings are held in which speakers say: "Now is the time to enlist to defend your land". Leading Communists and officials send their own sons. People raise their hands and say they wish to enter the army. Many militia-men volunteer, considering the regular army a promotion. Sometimes the assembled villagers will decide that a volunteer should not be accepted because he is the support of a family. Men who have no reason to refuse may feel that their neighbors expect them to go.

When the lists are made up the village holds a celebration for the new recruits. They are given horses to ride, paper flowers and rosettes to wear. Presents are given to their families. There are puppet shows and Yang-ke dances. Everything is done to make them feel that their community cheers them on.

General Liang Chun, chief of operations in the Four Province Area, told me that in the enlistment campaign every county exceeded its plan.

"We asked for 1500 from Wu An county and got 2,500; we asked 1,500 from Kaoping county and got 3,500. We planned on 15,000 from the whole Taihan area and got 25,000. The recruits so far exceeded the plan that we stopped the drive in places where it was just beginning. We could not send back men who had come to us from a village celebration. They would lose all 'face' in their village".

Part of the new recruits come from captured soldiers of enemy armies. The system by which they volunteer will be discussed in the chapter on strategy. They are offered the choice of going home or staying. The decision of many to stay is a tribute to the democratic spirit they find in the People's Liberation Armies. "They are like men who suddenly awaken in a new world", said an officer who had to do with this type of recruits.

One of the first things new soldiers are taught is to "serve the people" in all their habits. The feudal armies of China are accustomed to take what they want without paying. They take the farmers' doors for firewood—these are the only valuable part of an otherwise clay dwelling—and beat up farmers who object. If a soldier of the People's Army as much as breaks a bowl, he is expected to pay for it and to apologize. Many details of conduct are memorized in army slogans: "Clean up before leaving... Return anything you borrow....Repay anything you destroy....Be courteous.... Don't dirty the streets, use the toilets".

* See chapter on strategy, for examples.

The theme "The people is our mother" is constantly repeated until it takes effect.

A soldier in the Liberated Areas will stop and show his road pass when halted by a child sentry in a village; this never fails to amaze new arrivals from Kuomintang China. A representative of the Democratic League told how moved he was when he saw two soldiers break ranks in Chefoo to help an old woman carry a heavy basket up a steep hill. Passersby remarked: "That is our model army". Farmers in the Liberated Areas will speak of their army as the "Sons-Brothers Army"; it is a term they apply to no other.

The army's help to the people is not confined to these individual acts of courtesy. In the great fight against drought in 1943-44 in Hopei, the army helped dig nearly ten thousand wells. The army took active part in building dykes against floods, part of the army keeping off the Japanese while the rest helped in construction work. Twenty-seven miles of dykes were thus built along the Wei and Chiang rivers. In the spring sowing drive of 1944, every soldier cultivated five-sixths of an acre for his own food and one-third of an acre for famine relief. They ploughed, hoed, manured and harvested and gave it to the famine relief fund. When the Japanese tried to disturb this work, a company would plough while a platoon kept guard.

In order to lessen the people's burden, the army raises much of its own food. On many occasions, it has voted to cut its food supply when the people's food was scanty. Such a case was seen by Rittenberg in the Central Plains Area which had not recovered from the Japanese devastation. The troops here went on a diet of two meals daily, each meal consisting of a single bowl of "hsifan" or thin rice gruel. To supplement it, each soldier was urged to plant a garden and collect edible weeds. General Li Hsien-nien, the commander-in-chief, had one of the biggest gardens and collections of wild weeds. Prizes were given to those who discovered new edible weeds.

This system was introduced company by company by taking a vote after discussion. The discussion was on a high level. "If we defend the people we need strength to defend them", argued some. Others replied: "Spring ploughing is beginning and many farmers are so weak that they can hardly plough. We must not increase their burden by even one extra bowl of rice." After five hours' discussion in one company, during which they adjourned for one last full meal, they voted unanimously for the curtailed diet.

Shortly afterward, the correspondent Robert Martin of the **New York Evening Post** questioned some of these soldiers, who were repairing a road to bring in UNRRA relief. They were swinging great sledge-hammers in groups of four. It was an amazing feat on that thin diet of "hsifan". They explained to Mr. Martin that the road was for UNRRA food.

"So that you can have more than two bowls of gruel".

"No, no, not food for us but for the people", they protested.

"Why work so hard if you get nothing out of it? Kuomintang soldiers never do".

The boys were outraged; then they decided that this ignorant foreigner just didn't know. They patiently explained, as if to a child, that "the New Fourth Army is a people's army. If the people are healthy, we are healthy too."

The Communists have always advocated the merging of their armies into a truly national army under a representative democratic government. Such a national army, jointly composed of Kuomintang and Communist leadership, easily overthrew warlords in the Great Revolution of 1925-27 in the name of a united, democratic China.

After the split, the warlords grew strong again, both inside and outside the Kuomintang. Between January and July 1946, the Communists demobilized four hundred thousand of their soldiers to prepare for incorporation in the army reorganization plan, proposed in the Marshall truce. They expanded their armies again to meet the demands of the civil war. Until all armies can be merged under a democratic, coalition government, the Communists hold

that Chiang's armies are no more "national" than theirs, but only Kuomintang Party armies.

"It is a very difficult revolution to transform an army", said Lu Ting-yi to me. "Not very much of the old army can be included in the new. But only such a democratic people's army can get rid of militarism and feudalism. Only such an army can use our new strategy. Such an army can never be vanquished even by superior might".

Chapter 16

THE "MARSHALL PLAN" IN CHINA

Hope rode high in all China in January 1946. America had withdrawn Ambassador Hurley and General Wedemeyer, whose names the Chinese people linked with the policy of civil war. General George C. Marshall had arrived as the President's special envoy, announced as the bringer of mediation and peace. Under his influence Chiang Kai-shek had signed the famous "Cease Fire Order", pledging that military positions as found on January 13th should remain unchanged pending the setting up of a truly democratic coalition government.

The Political Consultative Conference, representing all parties, met on January 10th with Chiang in the chair. Its task was to work out the details and procedure for the coming democracy. They met under the joint blessing of the recently adjourned Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, and of a speech by President Truman, both advocating a democratic coalition government for China, to be formed by mutual consent.

To the cheers of the delegates Chiang handed them the "Cease Fire Order". In his opening speech he pledged the four freedoms that Chinese progressives had demanded for years: freedom of person, speech, press, assembly; equal legality of political parties; local self-government and popular elections; release of political prisoners. Then the delegates got down to three weeks' business and produced five resolutions, on all of which they agreed unanimously. They agreed on a coalition government in definite proportions for the transition period. They agreed on the methods of peaceful reconstruction of the state. They agreed on the way to call the National Assembly and on the form of Constitution the assembly should consider. They agreed also on the reorganization of the army, by combining all armies into one national army, belonging to no party.

Everything in these resolutions was passed unanimously by a rising vote under the chairmanship of Chiang Kai-shek.

People all over China were happy. Only the secret police services were unhappy because they would lose their power and graft. Many high generals were unhappy because they would lose control of government. "If I fight the Communists I might lose half my men," said a war zone commander, "but in this peace I will lose them all." The loot of a war zone, through the power to appoint all civil and military officials, was a graft not lightly to be given up.

So even as the PCC reached its unanimous conclusions, the people's meetings that were held to applaud them were beaten up by the political police. In February the reactionaries fought the PCC decisions by instigating riots. In March, the Kuomintang Executive Committee denounced its own PCC delegates and decided on unilateral changes to legalize the dictatorship. On April 1st, Chiang Kai-shek declared that the form of Constitution proposed by the PCC was not acceptable, and that the government must "take over Manchuria". He did not mention the "Cease Fire" on Manchuria signed four days before.

From that time on, the civil war widened, first in Manchuria and then south of the Great Wall.

The first of the Liberated Areas to suffer a large-scale assault in the period of the Marshall truce was the Central Plains Area, with capital in the Hupeh Hills north of Hankow. It had grown in war with Japan until it included 45,000,000 people, spread over five provinces. By August 1946 it existed no longer, having been cut to pieces by Chiang's troops. Few foreigners ever saw it but Chinese remember it as the

first great test of peace by negotiation through George C. Marshall's truce teams —a test that failed.

I had the fortune* to live and travel in this area from early April till June of 1946, when the forms of its life still flourished though under attack. As representative for UNRRA I went alone and unheralded into its villages, studying their life and needs. Later I was loaned as interpreter to Truce Team Thirty-two which negotiated aspects of the growing civil war. I left just before the final Kuomintang offensive liquidated the area.

Few parts of China have had a longer and more bitter history of revolution. On any mountainside or prominent hill you see remnants of castle walls—stone walls, often with a moat around them, not like the mud walls of north China—and you will be told: "Those were built by the landlords during the T'aiping Rebellion. A hot center of revolt was here." The farmers began to stir again in 1925-27 during the Great Revolution. When this was suppressed, they formed here the Hupeh-Anhui soviet. When the soviet was broken, its troops went on the Long March under Wang Chen.

Peasant revolts grow naturally in North Hupeh. This is a rice-growing country where a man with two acres is already a solid farmer. The prevalent type is the poor peasant with less than an acre, and the share-croppers, tilling fields of local landlords who possess from forty acres up. Struggle for food is bitter; class war centers around control of irrigation water.

Ruthless slaughter has marked the suppression of every revolutionary wave, the T'aiping Rebellion, the Great Revolution and especially Chiang's suppression of the Chinese Soviets. This was the region where the order was given to execute everyone in the county with the surname "Hsu", thus eliminating sixty-six relatives of the Communist general Hsu Hai-tung. Parts of North Hupeh are still depopulated of army-age males from those massacres ten years ago.

In other parts, especially in the hills, bands of armed farmers have held for twenty years. The "free villages" of Hsinyang, source of a famous greenish-yellow tea, never gave up their freedom. They were not easily reached, and they secured a truce with the county government, which agreed to send no troops and collect no taxes, if the "free villages" did not extend their power.

In those days Li Hsien-nien was a carpenter in Hankow. Even now, when he has become a famed commander of armies, he looks like a carpenter turned scholar, an honest, homely man, whom, if you met him in the street, you might ask to come home to make a table for you. He is very lean, of medium height and with large eyes, that are grave and humorous at once. He talks with an East Hupeh dialect that you could cut with a knife. His talk is racy and vigorous, full of old saws and axioms and peasant stories. Men of the New Fourth Army say that you can tell "miles away" when Commander Li is talking because you can hear the laughter of his audience.

In 1938 when the Japanese were driving into Wuhan cities and the Kuomintang armies were falling back on Chungking, Li, who had been some years in Yenan, came walking over the border from Honan into Hupeh with thirty-seven men. Everyone tells you this, but when one person says, it, another jumps up to say that there weren't thirty-seven but twenty-six and "I know, for I was there." However, the general opinion says thirty-seven. Li's task was to unite the peasants of Central China into a firm anti-Japanese base.

Bang! That Hsinyang group of villages produced one regiment at once. The Pi-an region north of Hankow also turned out troops. Soon Li commanded a fifth division of the New Fourth Army, with first ten thousand and then twenty thousand men. His anti-Jap base expanded until it covered all Hupeh, both north and south of the Yangtze, except for the Wuhan cities. It reached north into Honan and east to the gates of Kiukiang. It grew in constant battle with the Japs.

One of the good stories told of General Li is of the time when the Japanese surrounded his headquarters by surprise. He had to break out at once by night. "Lighten your load," he ordered. "Throw away all books. Throw away Marx, throw away

* Sidney Rittenberg speaking from this point on.

Lenin and Stalin, throw away Mao Tse-tung. Bury the books and get them later."

Some soldiers murmured: "We must take our Marxism with us".

"Comrades," said Li, "what does Marxism mean this minute? Marxism means that when you are running down the road, you must run just a little bit faster....." Anyway, they got out and survived.

In early 1944 Wang Chen came back to the area. He was garrison commander in Yenan, six weeks' journey away in the northwest. But the Japs in Central China were cutting down through Changsha like a knife through butter while half a million government troops were collapsing along the line. So the Communists sent Wang Chen a thousand miles with three thousand men to organize resistance in the wake of the Japs and prevent their establishing the Hankow-Canton railway line.

Wang's force included not only armed troops but political workers, students, organizers, entertainers, even the little girls that act in Yang-ke plays. A full set-up for arousing the people against the Japs. When he came to the Yellow River, it froze for his troops to cross, so the farmers all knew that Wang was Big Magic, for the Yellow River almost never freezes solid. When he came to the Yangtze, the Japs held all the ports. Wang talked two days with an aged fisherman and a fleet of small boats came to a lonely shore and took the army over in the night. The last boats were hailed by a Jap motor patrol, but it was nearly morning and the fishermen's voices sounded lazy, and the Japs were too sleepy to come and search.

Thus Wang crossed line after line of the Japs by craft and evasion till he came to South Hupeh where he planned to fight. Here he aroused farmers and smashed Jap blockhouses and established a guerrilla base. He then pressed on into Hunan and organized the area around the Tungting Lake. It was the first chance these farmers had to take a crack at Japs and they joined in with a will.

Thus the area became the Central Plains Area. For starting from the hills of Hupeh, it spread into the two great central plains of China, the northern plain of Honan and the southern plain of Hunan. It also spread eastward into Kiangsi and Anhui, taking in forty-five million people in five provinces, loosely organized.

Wang drove on south to contact the East River Column near Canton. He was attacked by Japs and Kuomintang in combination. His many letters to "brother Kuomintang commanders" proposing joint action against "our common enemy" did not avail.

While he was on this march the Japanese surrendered, somewhere in the world outside, but this only increased the energy with which both Japs and Kuomintang fought Wang Chen. So he doubled back and forth, passing down into Kwangsi and back into Kuomintang till he contacted the East River Column near Hong Kong. Learning that Mao Tse-tung had signed the Double Tenth Agreement* providing that Communist troops should withdraw north of the Yangtze, Wang Chen turned around and fought his way back again. He crossed the Yangtze into North Hupeh and joined forces with Li Hsien-nien, becoming chief of staff and deputy commander.

One could write a book about Wang Chen without exhausting him. I first met him in Hankow in March 1946. He came as Communist representative to meet the Truce Team there. He returned at midnight from an OWI American movie and found me waiting to see him. He almost broke my hand with his grip. He kept me up till four in the morning, asking about American life. He has formed the habit of speaking close to your ear in low, enthusiastic tones; bell boys in a Hankow hotel are of course loaded with secret police.

Later I saw a lot of him in north Hupeh. He is a stocky man with close-cropped roundish head and protruding teeth that give the appearance of a perpetual grin. When you eat with him you are burned right down to your feet because he so loves pepper in his food. That's the Hunanese in him. He has also the passionate Hunanese temper. He began his revolutionary life as a locomotive fireman in Hunan.

It is amusing now to recall that when Wang first applied to join the Young Communists as a boy of thirteen, they refused

* See end of chapter **Yenan Fights to the sea.**

him because he was "too anti-foreign". Personal experience had aroused his hate. Working as a houseboy at the age of twelve for a British consulting engineer, he was struck by his mistress and turned and crused her hotly as a Hunan boy can curse. They beat him and kicked him out. As he walked down the railroad track he saw "that big, fat British boss"—I quote Wang's words—leading a beautiful small dog, tied with ribbons and with every hair smoothed. Wang looked from the dog to his own rags and the dog became to him a symbol of all inequality. He heaved a brick at it. "And so I had to run away from there."

Wang had to study and "remake his thinking" before they let him join the Young Communists. Today he has a passionate affection for anything connected with the American workers' movement. Though he was chief-of-staff in the last month of the defense of the Central Plains Area, he found time to come to my place or send for me almost every night. He pried into every detail of my life in America, trying to get at the essence of American life and understand why a democratic America supplied weapons to suppress democracy in China.

"Big Sister Chen" was another vivid personality of the Area. I heard of her even in Hunan, where I did famine relief work for UNRRA before going to Hupeh. They told me such mythical tales of her that I didn't believe she existed. Then I met her, a strong, wise woman with close-cropped black hair, in whose eyes still lurks the mischievous girl, liking to stir up devils.

Big Sister organized women to help the guerrillas. They made clothes for the army, did nursing and intelligence work. Most important of all, they wouldn't talk under Jap torture. People said that Big Sister led men into battle. She told me that she didn't, but she looked fully capable of it. Yet once at a wedding she amazed me by singing old Shansi ballads—she's from Shansi originally—in a beautiful voice full of charm. Her speaking voice is rather gruff.

At the time when I reached North Hupeh the Central Plains Area had shrunk to a small part of its original size. All territory south of the Yangtze had been evacuated in accordance with the Double Tenth Treaty, while the area north of the Yangtze had been cut into many separate islands by attacks from the central government troops. The largest "island" lay east of the Peiping-Hankow railway with the town Hsuan Huatien as headquarters and capital. Here were concentrated the area's 90,000 regular troops. An almost equally large island west of the railway was defended only by local militia. Smaller islands were scattered in all directions. The central government troops pressed along all the islands, nibbling away in small skirmishes against villages.

The Cease Fire Order of January 10th made not the slightest difference in this area. So the newly organized Executive Headquarters in Peiping sent a special team to Loshan in south Honan, where a special agreement was signed at the end of January. This provided that both sides should cease fighting, that all blockhouses and fortifications should be destroyed and that various districts should remain with whatever side had them on the day the Loshan agreement was signed.

The Communist troops together with the village people celebrated the Loshan agreement by festive processions and dances along the borders of their area. "Peace is precious" read the banners. They brought baskets of fruit to present to the Kuomintang troops. The Kuomintang officers, however, kept their troops away from all contact with the celebrating peasants. In some places their attacks on the area did not halt even for a day.

The situation within the area therefore changed rapidly for the worse. The Communists destroyed their blockhouses—this was later proved by the truce team investigations—but the Kuomintang kept theirs and built new ones, conscripting peasant labor and even tearing down peasant buildings to get material for them. General Li was so determined on peace that he ordered his men not to fight even when attacked but to retreat in order to avoid fighting. His men gave ground in one

place after another, feeling very unhappy.

General Li even began the partial demobilization which was expected in preparation for Marshall's "army reorganization" plan. Some 15,000 of his men were told to go home. Four men that I know started off for their homes in southern Honan with passports signed by General Li, in the form prescribed by the truce team, stating that they were demobilized soldiers going home. The first patrol they met in Kuomintang territory consisted of soldiers without officers. These warned the men to go back, saying: "We have orders to arrest you, passport or no passport. If you go further you will meet officers and be out of luck."

The four returned to General Wang Chen and reported: "We tried to be demobilized but the Kuomintang won't let us and we wish to state that we consider it bureaucratic to order men to be demobilized when it can't be done." Wang Chen laughed and let them stay in the army. Later it was discovered that many of those 15,000 had been killed on their way home. Some were just beaten to death and left on the road.

The devotion of the people to the New Fourth Army was shown by many incidents. I was walking on the road with the secretary of the Area government when a small boy trudged up. He looked ten but was really fourteen. He was burning with fever and gritting his teeth to keep going. He saluted and said: "Paokao"....."Report!" Then he reported that he had been working as a "boy" in the hospital west of the railroad when Kuomintang troops captured it a few weeks earlier. They killed some of the patients, arrested and tortured others. "But I was so small that they just put me in jail." In the jail he nearly died of hunger but some civilians brought food to him and to other prisoners and helped him escape. He hid out in the home of a rich farmer, who had no sons but only daughters, and who offered to adopt the boy. "But as soon as I grew strong from food I ran away and came to report here."

"Why didn't you stay with a man who would feed you and look after you?" the secretary asked.

The boy looked dazed from exhaustion and illness but replied that he had to "report". He added: "I couldn't live in a Kuomintang area. I want to be with the New Fourth." They sent him to a hospital and put him to bed. A week later I saw him, utterly happy, in a new uniform.

The spirit of the area affected even some of the Kuomintang soldiers and officers. I met some troops who had been captured by farmers' militia while raiding grain in the Pi-An district. Such people were usually disarmed, given travel money and sent home. First, however, they were given some propaganda teaching, which in this case consisted in reading Mao Tse-tung's "On Coalition Government". Some of the officers wept, saying: "If we had known what Mao stood for, we would never have fought this war." Then they began confessing their "sins against the Chinese people" and saying that all their lives they could not make amends for the evil they had done.

Most of them went home and only the future will show whether they were sincere. Some, however, asked to remain. I met one Kuomintang colonel who had been captured and who was now told that he might go. He discussed his plans with me quite frankly, with no Communists around. He said that he did not want to go home but had asked permission to rest and read for a month and then work in the Liberated Areas, preferably at some task of reconstruction.

Meanwhile the truce team in its Hankow office got so many complaints that they decided to visit the area and travel from county to county. As they went from place to place the fighting stopped. They returned to Hankow and flew to Nanking to report....At the Nanking airport they were met by the news that, as soon as they had left, the government troops had attacked all along the line. The American representative threw up his hands and said what was the use? He was soon removed and replaced.

Throughout April the nibbling attacks continued. It was understood that an all-out offensive was in the offing but that Chiang did not consider the 200,000 Kuomintang troops in the region enough. During this time the Communist armies offered to surrender the area. They asked that the population be allowed to keep their

elected local governments and that the troops be given free passage to one of the recognised Communist areas further north. This Chiang would not permit, for he believed that he could wipe them out entirely.

In the first week of May despatches fell into the hands of the Communists that proved that an "annihilation offensive" was to be launched by the central government within ten days. The despatches were revealed by Kuomintang officers, some for bribes and some because they disliked the war. They had been issued by Chiang's Hankow headquarters.

The news was a distinct shock to the Communists. Appeals were made at high levels. Chou En-lai, the Communist representative in Nanking, announced that such an attack would release nationwide civil war. He demanded action from General Marshall, who had just returned from America.

For a moment Hsuan Huatien was a focus of history. Three top-notchers—General Henry C. Byroade for the Americans, General Chou En-lai for the Communists and one of the vice-ministers of war for the central government—converged on that little town. That "Cease Fire Order" arranged by Marshall had been put on the spot by the revelation. Something had to be done.

The Big Team flew by plane to Hankow. Then they plunged into the slow, primitive roads by which one comes to most of China. They came to a swollen river. The jeeps had to be carried over on poles and the people had to wade. Chou En-lai removed his shoes, rolled up his trousers and waded over. General Byroade did the same. The Kuomintang representative visibly struggled between desire to copy the American and a sense of what was due to a general's "face". Then he rode over on the shoulders of soldiers.

The hall at Hsuan Huatien was packed that evening—a thousand or more inside and people hanging outside the windows. General Byroade gave a peculiarly uninteresting account of the way a truce team is supposed to function. It was amazing that the means by which everyone hoped for salvation could be made to seem so dull. The people took a quiet nap and awoke to applaud his conclusion: "We have reached an agreement which should take care of the situation."

The representative of the central government arose, a tall, thin bald-headed man with a face like a sheep, milder and more inoffensive than a human being could possibly be. He talked as if telling a tale to children, making it simple for their undeveloped minds. "The government has no plans for an attack on this area.... The Communist-led armies are our brother armies....we are all one family....in such a large family there are sometimes little conflicts. The government is the wise father who settles them.....I have full authority to guarantee that there will never be an attack on this area"....Everyone listened intently, knowing that this man was a top man in that Hankow headquarters, whose orders for an offensive had been revealed.

Chou En-lai's words became a district slogan in the days that followed. "Guests and hosts....for I am here both as guest and host. A guest because I have never been in this area....A host because it is one of our areas....You have heard the personal guarantee of the government representative that there will never be an attack upon your area. What is there left for me to do but to call upon you to remember that promise, so that in future you may all be assured that the deputy chief-of-staff of the Generalissimo's Hankow headquarters has personally guaranteed you against attack." He sat down amid cheers, having turned a routine bit of insincerity into a solemn pledge that even the Americans recalled uncomfortably in days that followed.

The "big team" left next morning and a "little team" took over the fulfilling of their pledge. It was known as Team Thirty-two. The American chairman was an old style staff officer and an old line Republican who just naturally distrusted Communists. The Kuomintang member was a secret police officer who avoided field trips as much as possible. Nonetheless the team had some results. It had to, after the publicity it had had. The Communists were allowed to send one thousand severely wounded

men to a stable Communist area in the north, and the wounded men actually arrived. Moreover, the big exposure postponed the offensive for nearly a month.

Chiang Kai-shek himself flew to Hankow, to Sian and other points on the area's periphery, during that memorable week when the three top-flight representatives spoke their pieces in Hsuan Huatien. He took with him Chen Cheng, Pai Chung-hsi and his other big war chiefs. Judging by what followed, he was rearranging that offensive, postponing it and at the same time greatly enlarging it, deploying more troops around the area, so that when the time came he might liquidate it overwhelmingly, almost without publicized battle.

The big offensive came at the end of June. By this time there were only some 60,000 Communist-led troops in an area one hundred miles across. Three hundred thousand central government troops drove in on them from several directions but especially from the south. As the Communists turned northwest to escape encirclement, two hundred thousand more of Hu Tsung-nan's troops crashed in from that direction. By the mathematics of war the Communists were finished.

Yet a strange incident occurred at the very beginning of that offensive. One Kuomintang regiment, spear-heading the attack, marched right over and joined the Communists. It might have been understood if the odds had been equal. But to jump right into that deadly circle made one wonder. Was the circle so final after all? Or did Chiang's own troops doubt his ultimate victory?*

The Communists broke into many small columns. They seemed to evaporate into the countryside. The truce team lost sight of them. The enemy lost sight of them. Even their friends lost sight of them. Airplanes couldn't find them. For two or three weeks nobody knew if they were alive or dead.

Then far to the northeast a column appeared in the Kiangsu Anhui area. A week or so later General Li's main forces reassembled far to the west in the South Shensi hills on the edge of Szechwan and another "Liberated Area" came to life. Two months later Wang Chen turned up in his old garrison town Yenan, having swung with his troops far out into Kansu and doubled back to the north. And all the Communist armies in China were chuckling that the "boys had all got home."

The Generalissimo got the area, which had been offered him without battle. He lost some face because he had set his aim on annihilating those 60,000 men, and failed. But the real casualty in that conflict was the dream of peace through Marshall's mediation. All over China people awoke to the knowledge that the Marshall mediation was not delivering peace.

With the taking of the Central Plains Area, the civil war spread rapidly as Chiang's armies drove into north Kiangsu and south Shansi. This civil war became one of the greatest in world history, fought over an area as large as the United States east of the Mississippi, involving three to four million armed men in the regular armies and other millions of local militia.

> Tentatively at first, and then in firmer tones, the Chinese press, even in Kuomintang territory, began to analyze the Marshall tactic. "When the Kuomintang fares well, the Americans let the fighting proceed," commented the independent Shanghai newspaper **Chou Pao**, "but when things turn out badly for the Kuomintang, the Americans at once begin to mediate.... When Hsuan Huatien was encircled by Kuomintang troops, Marshall did nothing. But when General Li broke out of the encirclement and came to the edge of Szechwan, a truce team rushed at once to stop him. When Marshall returned from America he merely looked at the fighting in Manchuria, which was at its height. He became energetic only when the 184th Division of the Kuomintang revolted and the Kuomintang was stopped in its march to Harbin."

Soon it became clear that the Marshall truce had produced far bigger, bloodier battles than had the Hurley "war policy". Then all over China people began discussing the question of Marshall's "sincerity". *It*

* Here ends Rittenberg's account.

was the favorite dinner subject. Marshall, people said, must have known what he was doing. He was not stupid, as Hurley was. Was his perhaps the clever way of putting over what had been American policy throughout ?

Chiang had been able to mobilize only one million men against the Liberated Areas under the Hurley "war policy"; under the Marshall "truce", he attacked with two million men. He had only twenty American-equipped divisions when the Japanese war ended, but under the Marshall "Cease Fire" policy, he attained fifty-nine American-equipped divisions, a navy and an airforce. In the Hurley "war period", Chiang could only attack the fringes of the Liberated Areas, using chiefly Japs and puppets with little result. Under the Marshall "truce", he penetrated deeply, using American-equipped divisions, taking one quarter of all the county towns. Under chaperonage of truce teams, who pulled out of cities just before the assault, Chiang took one Communist capital after another: Hsuan Huatien, Hwaiyin, Changteh, Kalgan.

The full potency of the "Cease Fire" policy became clear in August with the announcement that America gave Chiang two billion dollars worth of war surplus supplies. "This is the success of Marshall," said a leading Yenan Communist to me at once. "This is the significance of the 'special envoy'." Marshall's "Cease Fire" had dazzled the American people, so that they stopped protesting the giving of large sums to Chiang.

When I asked Peng Teh-hwai what he thought of Marshall, he shrugged his shoulders and replied: "I do not deal in psychology. I am a military man. As such I note that Marshall equipped Chiang's troops, trained them and transported them to the positions from which they could most easily attack.

"He did it under the 'Cease Fire' Order more efficiently than he could have done it in any other way".

Chapter 17

KALGAN, THE CITY OF NEW CAPITALISM

"Tell Henry Wallace that this is the only place where free enterprise still has meaning," said dapper Finance Minister H. C. Nan. "Here capitalism is young, fighting its way out of feudalism. Here industry is not taxed and prices are not controlled."

Finance Minister Nan in his Kalgan office could meet any western business man on equal terms and talk his language. He wore a business suit of grey wool trousers and blue wool jacket and well-shaped low-heeled slippers, quite unlike the shapeless clothes of Yenan. And unlike Yenan offices, where people seemed always in a temporary camp, Mr. Nan's room was arranged as if by a meticulous housewife, with desk and well-stocked bookcase close to the window, the bed by the opposite wall under the spotless, orderly loops of a mosquito net, and these two parts of his life separated by a red flowering plant on a central table, some comfortable chairs for callers and a picture of Mt. Fuji, inherited from the vanquished Japs.

Nan was no tyro in government. Before he came to the Liberated Areas he had held many high posts under the Kuomintang. Then he fought Japs for several years but was shoved into finance in 1941, apparently because of administrative ability combined with a genius for finance.

His first casual remark revealed a miracle. "Our government ran on a balanced budget throughout the years of the Japanese war." Before I had fully grasped this astounding fact, he went on to another that was almost more surprising. "We shall have a deficit this year because we are administering government for 31,000,000 people on taxes received from 18,000,000. It is a difficulty created by sudden growth. Even so we might have managed but for the constant warfare with Kuomintang troops. They are nibbling all around our area like silkworms at a mulberry leaf. This gives us an unfortunate amount of military expenditure."

"How will you meet the deficit? By printing currency?"

"Oh, no, we don't believe in that. For the last two months of the year we shall borrow the surplus of our state bank that has accumulated in past years, repaying it as new taxes come in. So for a short time we shall have no funds to lend to private enterprises, but this isn't too serious, for our big loans to farmers do not come till spring."

I stared at this placid financier who talked such incredible common sense and thought of the trillions of dollars they have to print in Nanking and the billions in loans they have to get from America to keep a regime going that has twenty times the resources of this Liberated Areas of Chin-Cha-Chi. Then I asked him about the taxes. Was it really true that industry was not taxed?

"Theoretically we intend to tax industry," he answered, "but at present we give exemptions for a varying length of years, depending on how much we need the given industry. Liquor and cigarettes have no exemption; we tax them now. The longest exemption—from two to five years—goes to textiles, glass, farm implements, iron and steel, machine-building, electric appliances and the making of such raw materials as alcohol, dyes, oil, carbon. If anyone will start such industries, we not only give tax exemption, but loans from our state bank at low interest, help with his transportation

and relief in any unexpected calamity."

A dry little smile curved Mr. Nan's lips as he added: "Unexpected calamity—that means insurance against Chiang's bombing. Transportation assistance means the help of army transport to take the plant to a safer location in case of a Kuomintang invasion".

For the cool Mr. Nan the tremendous upheaval of battle was just one more thing to calculate!

Kalgan was the prime example of the Communists' "new capitalism". Its policies were no different from those of Yenan. But the best will in the world can't create much capitalism in a cave-dwelling community on marginal lands. To come from Yenan to Kalgan was like coming from a valiant Dust-Bowl to one of those "Queen Cities" of the booming American West.

Our Executive Headquarters plane bumped to a stop on an airfield made from a cow pasture. We were led to the porch of a new reception office and refreshed with free water-melons and tea. On our way into town in a captured Jap auto we passed through markets bursting with produce: luscious grapes, pears, apples at one quarter the prices of Peiping. Streets were full of the cheerful bustle of shoppers. Repairers were tearing up a road. Down a wide thoroughfare came a group of children dancing in colorful costumes, doing a Yangke dance to the joy of the populace. Yes, we might have been in Helena or Spokane.

We dropped the UNRRA bunch at the downtown hostel. They were a disillusioned lot. Half the relief ear-marked for eleven million people of Chahar province had been diverted by the central government relief organization CNRRA to a "hospital" at Nankow, where a kind of government-in-exile was staying just outside the province, appointed by Chiang Kai-shek to rule Chahar but unable to enter it.

"And when we finally got to Nankow", the UNRRA people told me, "There wasn't even a hospital and never had been. The supplies were just going to the families of Chiang's officers, waiting there to invade Kalgan".

Leaving these conscientious creatures to the upsets of their daily routine, Jules Joelson of **Agence France Presse** and I were driven to the guest house of the Foreign Affairs Section. It was a four-acre garden with small, new houses built not so long since for the Japanese military staff. I drew a room with resplendent blue rug and silken coverlets and was offered "first dip" in the deep hot Japanese bath, almost big enough for a swim. Our dining-room offered a French-style luncheon and Chinese-style dinner, prepared by an excellent Chinese chef who had learned cooking in France.

Gentle-mannered General Tsai, chief of the political department of the army, came to arrange our interviews. Was there anyone we wanted to see? Any villages, institutions, enterprises we wished to visit? All was at our disposal, efficiently arranged. People were easy to reach, ready to talk and informal. Meanwhile General Nieh and Governor Sung would be coming to dinner that evening to discuss anything we chose. Thus casually were we offered contact with the military and political chiefs of a territory of 170,000 square miles and 31,000,000 people, larger than all of the states of the Atlantic seaboard from Maine through Virginia taken together, including the state and city of New York.

The Chin-Cha-Chi Liberated Area, of which Kalgan at the time was the capital, began as a small anti-Japanese Base in the Wutai Mountains of northern Shansi and grew in constant battle. When it included parts of three provinces, it took its name from the old Chinese symbols for Shansi-Chahar-Hopei. At the time of my visit it extended over parts of five provinces but kept the old name.

It was a famous area from the beginning. General Nieh's original two thousand guerrillas had an authorization from Chiang Kai-shek. Patriotic intellectuals from Peiping found their way thither, for it was their nearest anti-Japanese base. So there were able people here from the start. It became internationally known as the birthplace of the First International Peace Hospital, organized in 1937 by Dr. Norman Bethune of Canada under the sponsorship

of Madame Sun Yat-sen. Dr. Bethune lies under a great memorial monument in the Shansi hills, victim of the Kuomintang blockade of medical supplies. But the institution he founded had given birth by 1946 to eight great International Peace Hospitals in as many areas, with forty-two branches, pioneer institutions in bringing modern medicine to the people of China, spread by Madame Sun's China Welfare Fund in Dr. Bethune's name.

For eight years the government of this area grew up in a rather mobile capital in the hills. When the Communists took Kalgan from the Japanese in hard fighting *in August of 1945, they moved the capital* there. It was a city of more than two hundred thousand on a railroad, with a wheat-growing hinterland, a fur and sheepskin trade with Mongolia and some small industries. The Japs had left it rather battered The Communists made it their leading experiment in organizing a city.

Kalgan became for a year not only the political capital of Chin-Cha-Chi but an intellectual capital for all the Liberated Areas of North China. The Art School Medical School and North China University moved here, finding a sound material base. Large stocks of captured Japanese paper were used to build a publishing center for novels, poetry, history, textbooks, political works. The displays in the New China Publishing House—well printed and colorful—included many magazines such as **Modern Woman, Modern Youth, Education Front, Northern Culture, The Great Wall** (devoted to fiction and verse) and the **Chin-Cha-Chi Pictorial.**

There were also three newspapers: The solid **Chin-Cha-Chi Daily**, the lighter **New Kalgan** devoted to local news, and a trade-union paper in simplified characters, printed every five days. The world spoke of Kalgan as "the Communists' second capital".

Governor Sung, a benevolent, professorial man with a round good-humored face punctuated by black-rimmed spectacles, confirmed what the finance minister had said about the area's financial solidity. He offered for immediate export six million bushels of surplus grain, two million pounds of surplus wool "and as much more wool as you like the moment we can tell our shepherds that export is possible". He was quite explicit about the Communists' intent to create a capitalist system. "We aim to remove the obstacles that feudalism places in the way of capitalism so that capitalism may thrive and grow".

"What is the matter with your American businessmen"? he asked me. "I quite understand that your warlords and monopoly capitalists prefer to do business with the Kuomintang. They buy the ownership of China's natural resources, ports and skies and pay for them with billions of the American people's money for our civil war. But *haven't you any of those free-enterprise* capitalists who want to do honest business? Our Liberated Areas are the market for them. Farmers on their own soil produce surplus and are eager for goods."

He listed the wealth of Chin-Cha-Chi and the means taken to develop it. Some 20,700,000 acres of cultivated land, two-thirds of an acre per capita. In the year since Japan's defeat, 1,700,000 acres of land that had gone to waste had been reclaimed. An additional 370,000 acres of dry land had been irrigated, the yield rising from fourteen bushels to thirty-two bushels per acre by this alone.

"Crop increase on those newly irrigated acres alone is six million bushels. There's our grain export! There's our base for increased industry and trade"!

Factory production was in general higher than before the war, though in some branches it had fallen off because of the Kuomintang blockade. There were thirty-five factories in Kalgan and the neighboring city of Hsuanhua. Some of them—a soap factory, an alcohol factory, a factory making batteries and one making woollen goods —were new. Production of farm tools was booming. Eight million small tools had been made in one iron center in Ping Ting County during the year.

"That's from the land reform", he said. "Farmers are buying four and five implements per family".

The area was self-supporting not only in food but in raw cotton and could easily be so in textiles if there were more machines. "That's our chief need just now. If any American will start a spinning mill, any

size up to 40,000 spindles, we will pay him well.".

"In what would you pay"? I asked.

"In wheat, furs, wool, national currency or local currency. His trouble would be getting his profit past those Kuomintang generals between us and the sea."

"If I could bring you in a microscope, could I be paid for it"? I asked, for this was an item I had heard was needed.

Sung laughed. "On small things like that we could pay in gold, in silver, in American dollars or in fur coats."

"The blockade hurts us but it hurts Peiping still more", he concluded. "We have the necessities of life and Peiping has not. Chin-Cha-Chi can feed itself and Peiping also, if they would let us. But now our surplus is a danger to us. Chiang's generals will invade us for the loot".

The president of the Chamber of Commerce, a portly merchant in a long silk gown, served fragrant jasmine tea in exquisite porcelain as he gave me some business facts. In the year of the Democratic Government, industrial and commercial enterprises had grown from 1,980 to 3,150 in number, while market booths had increased from a couple of a thousand to thirteen thousand.

"The net profit of most enterprises in the past three months has been between twenty and thirty per cent of their capital", he stated. Two million bolts of cloth had been sold in the city in the year: this, of course, included the nearby farmers' trade. Recent purchases of fruit, cakes, wines, meats and luxury foods for the Harvest Moon Festival had totalled half a million gold dollars worth in Kalgan city alone. This was unprecedented prosperity.

There were fifty-one branches of commerce and industry, he said, each having its own guild. Furs and skins from the Mongolian steppe, cotton and silk from Hopei, flour and cereals from Chahar were the most important. There were large, solid and very old private firms and also new enterprises, many of them organized with the help of government funds. All enterprises were members of the Chamber of Commerce. Its affairs were handled democratically, by an Executive Committee of twenty-one, elected by the members on the principle of one vote per enterprise, regardless of size. They followed the general principle that one-third of the Executive Committee should be drawn from the big enterprises, one-third from the medium ones, and one-third from the peddlars.

While the local market was very good, large-scale trade was badly handicapped by the blockade. "Some prices are too low". He gave examples. Flour was plentiful at seven cents a pound in Kalgan; it was scarce in Peiping at twenty-one cents. Coal was $10.00 a ton in Kalgan and $50.00 in Peiping. Yet Peiping was only a few hours away by rail. Some industries had been more fortunate than others. Chiang's generals had allowed a lot of furs and skins to enter Peiping, because he wanted them for his army. This branch of trade had profited more than most.

The governor and the merchant had spoken as such men might in any young expanding capitalism, though it was a bit rare, in this stage of the world's life, to find a capitalism so ardent, for which nobody apologized. But what of the labor unions? No picture of the new capitalism could be complete without them. It was their strength, I found, that made the capitalism really "new".

In a rather ramshackle building, turned into a Labor Temple, I met three labor leaders. There were, I learned, 410,000 organized workers in Chin-Cha-Chi. All earlier capitalisms have suppressed trade unions, which fought their way slowly into life. But here they were as strong, or stronger, than the capitalists. They had no fear at all that this capitalism would run away with them. So they were cooperating with the capitalists, urging them on to make profits, from which they also would take the benefits. They had collective bargaining everywhere, with access to the books of the enterprise. They shared in making the production plans.

Meet H. C. Ma, pale, intellectual, in a black cotton suit with a fountainpen in his pocket, who is chairman of the Chin-Cha-Chi Federation of Labor. Meet the grizzled, middle-aged Hsiao Ming in blue denim, chairman of Kalgan city labor council. Meet Hsu Ping, spruce-looking in khaki wool, president of those aristocrats, the Peiping-Suiyuan Railway Workers. Aristocrats? Mostly on unemployment benefits just now, because Chiang's planes are strafing the railroad and it operates for only a short distance and at night.

Nonetheless it is a proud union, the Railway Workers of the Peiping-Suiyuan. All three of these labor leaders originally came from that organization. It is the mother of all the other unions. For it dates from 1921, and was one of the first labor unions ever organized in China. It has existed ever since, sometimes legally, more often illegally, but without a break.

It was born legally in the great successful strike of 1921. It was bloodily repressed after the broken strike of 1923. It gained new strength from the distant surge of the Great Revolution of 1925-27, which sent its waves a thousand miles across all China.

Then when Chiang slaughtered Shanghai workers, the unions in far-away Kalgan also were forced underground again. They were penetrated by Kuomintang secret agents. Dark days, in which many trade unionists paid for their labor activity with their lives! There was a brief upsurge of civil liberties under Feng Yu-hsiang in 1933, but they ebbed again when the Kuomintang-Japanese collaboration was consummated in the notorious Tang-pu Truce. From that time on no trade unions were legal until the Communist-led armies liberated Kalgan from the Japanese in August 1945.

Twenty-four years of struggle and most of it underground! "Was there any difference between the way the Kuomintang and the Japs treated you"? I asked.

"Difference? What difference? We were oppressed by the same people all the time! When the Japanese took Kalgan in 1937, the Kuomintang secret police embraced them and continued as their agents and blood-brothers, oppressing us as before, but with the better weapons of the Japs!"

As soon as the Eighth Route Army liberated any area, they told me, trade unions sprang up at once. "Even if there had never been a union in that particular factory, there would be some workers who had been in a union somewhere before. They would start it." They organised all over Chin-Cha-Chi until there were 410,000 members. They affiliated into local federations, and then began to combine into central trade unions. The latter process was not entirely accomplished, due to difficulties of communications and of war.

"The greatest achievement", said H. C. Ma, "is the raising of the workers' status. This includes the right to organize, to take part in collective bargaining, to take part in production plans, to take part in government". Of ninety-one members of the Kalgan city council, twenty-eight were workers and trade-unionists.

Wages had been doubled by decree of the new government, even before the unions were fully organized. "Under the Japs the workers were starving. They got neither wheat, nor rice nor millet, but flour from rice husks and "kaoliang", which is cattle-food. They slept on floors or benches in factories. They went barefoot in winter snows. So the government doubled wages the first month, and raised them again thirty per cent in the second month. By the third month the trade unions were operating and had completed our investigation into rational and irrational wage-scales. We decided to base wages on the cost of millet, adjusted every month." Just like that! A wage based on the cost of food, attained in the third month.

Wages, they said, ranged from 250 pounds of millet for apprentices, 300 for an unskilled worker, 500 for a skilled worker and up to 900 for a skilled technician, reckoned in grain but paid in cash. "Under the Japs a worker could not even feed himself", they said. "But now, even a semi-skilled worker can feed and clothe a wife and child."

I figured a bit. Ten pounds of grain a day for an unskilled work. It wouldn't seem much in America. How would it seem in Shanghai where workers were rioting for rice? It was many times what the heads of government got in Yenan. Reckoned in food, it was the highest wage in China.

Where else in China, or in Southeast Asia, could an unskilled worker earn grain that could keep ten people alive?

Clothing, they added, was bought at low prices through workers' cooperatives, assisted by credits through government or industry. Housing needs were being met by repairing broken buildings or by taking over buildings left by the Japs. Every trade union, they said, maintained schools for its members.

That, they said, was what the trade unions had accomplished, on the basis of the "new capitalism", in its first year!

I didn't believe it! So I went to see for myself in some of the factories.

The "Desert Soap Factory" was a small establishment on the edge of the city, employing only thirty-six workers. It belonged to the "Prosperous China Syndicate", a corporation organized after the liberation of Kalgan to make various kinds of consumer goods. The manager was brought from Peiping. He was a graduate of a technical college and knew soap-making. This factory produced forty gross of soap bars daily in three kinds: laundry, toilet and carbolic. It was excellent soap, hard-milled, lasting and with good lather. I used it for the next several months.

I met the manager and three members of the shop committee in the main office. They were about equally well dressed. The manager was in patched blue overalls, the shop committee chairman, who worked in glycerine extraction, was in greasy khaki with an apron. Best-dressed was a rank-and-file worker who had just bought a new blue denim suit through the cooperative. Everyone was friendly and informal. The manager, after answering questions on the business, turned to other affairs and left me with the workers.

The most important benefit, they all told me, was that "formerly you had to keep your mouth shut, while now you can speak freely and not be afraid. No matter what problem comes up—wages, clothes, housing—you can discuss it and change it."

Wages, they said, ranged from 242 pounds of millet for the apprentices to 880 pounds for the manager, whose rating of "technical specialist" was among the highest in Kalgan. Nobody wanted that much millet, so the wage was paid in currency, based each month on the cost of millet. Skilled workers got 500 pounds of millet, which would feed a family—on the usual diet of millet and vegetables—and leave something over for clothes.

What were wages under the Japs? Well, how could you reckon them with money always inflating and prices rising? It might perhaps be reduced to sixty pounds of millet for a skilled man. "Whatever the wage in money, you never had enough to eat".

Housing? "Under the Japs we had no homes. We slept outdoors in summer and in the boiler room in winter. Now we have repaired several buildings for housing; every family has a room."

The factory was too small to have a paid shop committee man. Its committee of five members all worked in production, attending to union duties after factory hours. They had been elected by secret ballot at a meeting of all the workers. "There were ten candidates and five to be chosen," they said. "The workers wrote their choice on paper slips. Most of them now write well enough to copy names from a blackboard where the candidates' names were posted. There was a 'Fair Election Committee' to help the few who could not write". The shop committee divided its work: one man for chairman, one for organizer, one for grievances and two for education.

"Every worker", they said, "attends some educational class".

I saw the large well-lighted classrooms, used for study in the morning and for recreation in the evening. Educational classes met at seven in the morning for an hour before work. They were in two groups, the more advanced having a paid teacher sent by the Kalgan city labor council, the less advanced being taught by workers in the plant. They studied Chinese characters on Monday, industrial technique on Tuesday, general knowledge (facts of geography, science and hygiene) on Wednesday, singing on Thursday, mathematics on Friday. A group of the most advanced met in the manager's office for a class in cur-

rent events and gave the information to their fellow workers later through conversation.

"Do you have any problems to discuss with the boss?" I asked.

"Many problems," they replied. "Clothing, for instance."

When I inquired what the boss had to do with their clothing, I learned that everyone needed new clothing and it was cheaper to buy it wholesale all at once. Since the workers did not have enough money for this, they asked the manager to use the factory credit for the workers' cooperative. This was done and they paid it back in three months. Food staples were similarly bought in large quantities after harvest when they were cheapest.

"Do you have any wage disputes?"

These were infrequent, they said, since wages were several times as high as they had been a year ago. "Some workers wanted even more but the shop committee examined the manager's books and explained to a general meeting of the workers that if we took any more the factory would go bankrupt. So everybody agreed."

These workers clearly believed in cooperating with the capitalists. They had reason to. But the capitalists also believed—though perhaps less enthusiastically—in cooperating with their workers. They were making good profits in spite of that blockade. They were making them from the exploitation of productive energy and the widening of the farmers' market that came with the smashing of feudalism in the land reform.

In the midst of all these easy visits a bombshell broke. A small town named Chining, a hundred miles to the west, was taken by Fu Tso-yi's troops, provincials under Chiang. General Tsai told me with surprising frankness: "We fought badly in the west. We lost Chining. This has encouraged Chiang to launch his all-out offensive on Kalgan. You must return by plane for we have begun to disperse."

Then began that peculiar form of defense known as "dispersal", the protection of the institutions of a people who have no anti-aircraft against the modern war-planes of the enemy. Trucks and carts filled with people, provisions, baggage, equipment began moving steadily out of the city. The North China University had gone a month earlier; its autumn term opened many days journey away in the hills. The hospitals now moved and four of the UNRRA workers went with them, to the cheers of the Chinese populace.

Just before they left an American woman spread a little panic at the downtown hostel, saying that Chiang's troops were coming by the railroad and "would be here any hour".

"Yeah!" drawled Sidney Rittenberg who had come to Kalgan for the China Welfare Fund and who now was going overland to Yenan. "I can just see those Ping-Sui railway workers bringing up Chiang's troops". Everybody laughed and the little panic collapsed.

It was all in such quiet order, as if part of the routine of business. I had ordered some letterheads from the print-shop. "We can make them if necessary", said the manager. "But our best fonts of English type are packed for moving". I had ordered a fur-lined coat at one-third the Peiping price. General Tsai came to tell me: "Tailors are being evacuated. If your plane fails and we have to take you overland, we will bring back a tailor for you. Otherwise get your coat in Peiping".

At the guest house I saw them roll up the beautiful blue rugs and pack them on trucks with the silken coverlets and sacks of provisions. Many writers left in that party. As the trucks pulled out they smiled and waved good-bye, then burst into an Eighth Route Army song. They left behind the manager, the best interpreter, one house boy and that excellent French chef to look after us. General Tsai told them: "When you have seen our foreign guests to their plane, come to me at once for your transportation".

In the midst of that dispersal the trade unions gave us a farewell party. It began with a banquet at the Railway Workers Club. There were many toasts to our hopes of meeting again. Then there was a program of dances, short plays and juggling by

enthusiastic amateurs in the big hall—that was to be bombed out of existence within a week. Chairman H. C. Ma proposed that the presence of two correspondents from America and France should be used to send a message to the world's trade unions and especially to the C.I.O. in the United States. It was adopted with cheers. They had several times sent cables to the C.I.O. but had never had an answer.

"Perhaps Chiang interferes with our cables or perhaps our brother workers in America do not even believe that we exist".

So they drew it up by committee during the last numbers of the program:

> "We, organized workers, meeting in bomb-threatened Kalgan greet you on behalf of 410,000 organized workers of Chin-Cha-Chi Liberated Area, on behalf of the 31,000,000 population of this Area, and on behalf of the 1,500,000 organized workers in the Liberated Areas of North China and Manchuria".
>
> They listed their gains through the strength of their organization: stable wages, the eight-hour day, most important of all, the right to speak freely and to bargain collectively for the means of life.
>
> "All these gains are menaced by the bombs, planes and machine-guns that you American workers produce", they stated. For this they blamed the "joint conspiracy of Chinese warlords and American imperialists" but warned that if the American workers allowed it "then be assured that you yourselves will not escape....For the war that America is sending us threatens the whole world". They ended with an appeal for world-wide peace and democracy.

It was cheered and the meeting broke up swiftly. Many carts and trucks waited outside. Many were leaving that night and would travel till daybreak. They had waited to say goodbye.

On the long dusty road to the airport next morning we passed more than a hundred carts loaded with great rolls of newsprint. They were taking "half the Chin-Cha-Chi daily paper" to the hills. A reduced edition still appeared in Kalgan. "But when they bomb us here, our paper will appear without interruption from our new base".

The guards removed the "obstacles" they had placed on the airfield and admitted the lone American plane. General Tsai took my hand warmly in farewell.

"Our lively, prosperous Kalgan lives now in your memory. Our dispersal is nearly completed. Kalgan will be a battleground".

Chapter 18

CROSS-COUNTRY *

In that very month of October in which Kalgan, the Communists' second most famous capital, fell to the armies of Chiang Kai-shek, I travelled cross-country from Kalgan to Yenan at the very height of that war. I thus had a unique opportunity, as *the only foreigner who made this journey*, to see how little the taking of a city, even a city as important as Kalgan, affected the life and government of the rural areas.

It was a thirty-day trip, mostly on foot with pack mules, stopping in county towns and in hillside villages, talking freely with farmers, townsmen, soldiers, officials. I travelled without money and I needed none.

I had a letter of introduction given me by the authorities in Kalgan, stating that I was a friend of the Chinese people, en-route to Yenan, and asking all county governments to help me on my way. That paper was honored all the way. It bought things that no money could buy. Food, shelter, guides, transport animals, shoes when mine wore out, even American canned goods that were booty of war, and local currency when needed, were all advanced to me by county authorities on that paper from Kalgan, from a city that had fallen, signed by authorities that the outside world thought had ceased to exist.

For the thirty million people of Chin-Cha-Chi Liberated Area, and the other areas beyond, the paper was as good as ever. Their government had merely moved from Kalgan into the hills where it had been born and nourished in the war of resistance to Japan. It could not even be called a government-in-exile, for it had moved not into exile but into the homes of its farmers. Kalgan money, not Chiang Kai-shek's money, circulated still in towns and villages. Kalgan stamps still carried letters through the country. County governments still arrested culprits, registered land or marriages and village militia patrolled the approach to villages, still in the name of the Liberated Area of Chin-Cha-Chi. In all those thirty days I was among *peaceful, orderly, energetic, hospitable people*. Only on the first day was I within sight of war.

In the week before I left Kalgan, tens of thousands of citizens left for the hills. Hospitals, schools, government departments and many small factories sent people ahead to prepare places and then moved to new locations. Besides this organized dispersal, some fifty thousand ordinary civilians took off spontaneously to stay with some relative in the country or to take chances elsewhere; rather than remain under the coming Kuomintang rule.

My tailor moved before I did. I thought he was too forehanded, but he knew through some channel that the Eighth Route reserves were posted some distance to the south.

"The Eighth Route is moving", he said. "I'll move when it does. I'll come back when it comes back." His guess proved good.

I pulled out by night, for Chiang's "American planes", as all Chinese call them, were strafing and bombing by day. I got a place on an ancient truck—captured from the Japs and worn out by war—that was evacuating machinery. Thirty incidental passengers besides myself piled on top with their luggage. Among them was Chou Yang, the well-known Chinese author who had been invited by the U.S. State Department to visit America but whose passport had been refused by Chiang Kai-shek. He amused us on the way with his Hunanese jokes.

A patrol of **"Min Ping"** — village volunteers—stopped us about midnight and told us that "political bandits of the Kuomin-

* This chapter as told by Rittenberg, written by Anna Louise Strong.

tang," had infiltrated the area and had held up and destroyed five trucks earlier in the evening, a little further on the road. Which was worse? To go by night and meet bandits or to go by day and be strafed by planes? We all discussed it and decided to "split the difference," to rest a few hours and start about four in the morning, when we hoped the bandits would have quit for the night and the planes would not yet be up. I personally assured them that any "American-trained" pilots would have breakfast and a good smoke before taking off.

That was a nervous day. We reached the longest, flattest, most shelterless stretch at ten in the morning, the hour when Chiang's planes had been strafing most. But the Lord looked after us, sending low clouds and a light rain, and no planes came. We saw people carrying off bodies that had been strafed the day before.

Our driver stopped to yell: "Are those sacrificed soldiers"?

"No, they are local people killed late yesterday. Their fellow-villagers have come for them." Then I saw that the bodies were not men, but bound-foot women and children, who could not run fast enough to hide from the planes.

We came that night to the county town of Weihsien. Here we left the truck and most of its thirty passengers who were going in different directions to join branches of government or detachments of the army. Four of us kept on to Yenan. Our guide was a farm boy from Central Hopei. I had known him in Kalgan and recalled especially the time when his wife came to visit him and we "struggled with her" three days in vain to get her to use the telephone. She said "that speaking thing" made her nervous and she would never see one again anyway. So why?

From Weihsien our road led into the hills; there could be no truck. The county authorities, to whom we presented our paper, told us that all riding animals were in use for the front, but that they could give us a horse-drawn cart for our luggage. We ourselves must walk. We set off into the regions beyond, where the rural areas had been "liberated" for years, though the Japs had held strong points and garrison cities. All the county governments we met from this time on had been elected over and over again, holding undisputed sway for a long period, though they had functioned outside the county towns and taken the latter only in 1945 at the time of the Jap collapse. They were a stable set-up with recognized funds and facilities.

Our first stop was at the North China Associated University, a thousand or more students evacuted from Kalgan two months earlier and now spread around in half a dozen villages. They had been in classes all morning and were spending the afternoon helping the farmers get in the harvest, as a gesture of goodwill to their hosts. The president of the university, Cheng Fang-wu, a famous literary figure, "put the latch on us" and summoned the students to a meeting to welcome the guests and ask questions about America. The questions were very pointed about those "American planes." Late into the night I sat talking with the president—who invited me to stay and teach English—with a Chinese Christian missionary, who had studied in Paris and Brussels, and with Ai Ching, who is perhaps the most famous poet in China and writes in a Whitmanesque style.

Ai Ching was full of emotion over a statement by Admiral Cook that he had just read, that the American navy was in China to establish "peace and order." He asked me whether I had seen the bodies of women and children "killed by American bullets from American guns on American planes." I replied that I had. Ai Ching said softly: "You see, some Chinese women and children have already found Admiral Cook's 'peace and order'." A sudden bite of irony took the softness out of those last words.

That same evening the vivacious Fifth Sister Chen joined us, and declared her intention of travelling with us till we caught up with her family, who had gone ahead while she stopped to visit the university.* We came upon Judge Chen and the rest of his family at the Guest House, transplanted to the hills from Kalgan. We continued with them several days, but parted company for a time at a village called "South of East River" where they took a longer wagon-road

* See Chapter 3.

while our group of men climbed over Pinghsing Pass. At this point we were given an armed guard to take us as far as the Chin-Cha-Chi border, for there had been "trouble" with "political bandits" who infiltrated the countryside from Tatung. We were only fifty miles from that stronghold.

Tatung was being featured at the time in the Nanking press as a heroic city beleaguered by the Communists and forced to receive its scanty food from the air. Our guide, who had led a group of village volunteers to help besieged Tatung, gave a different picture. The farmers looked on Tatung as a huge bandit-stronghold, from which the puppet troops of Yen Hsi-shan, including a number of Japanese mercenaries, raided the countryside, raping women, siezing young men for their army, stealing grain. The farmers' idea on Tatung was that it should be "cleaned up."

"We were much surprised that after the Jap surrender, we who had fought the Japs for eight years were not allowed to occupy Tatung," said the guide, "but Chiang Kai-shek allowed the Japs to give it to Yen and to stay there on Yen's payroll—at an advance in rank and salary—to hold the town against the Chinese people. However, we decided not to make trouble for Tatung if it didn't make trouble for us. We even decided to trade with the city and send them food. But Yen Hsi-shan thought our grain would be 'Communist influence' on the Tatung people. He forbade any grain trade between city and country on pain of death and then put up a yell to America and UNRRA for grain to be dropped by planes. Grain was dropped and Yen's army got it and profiteered on it while the common people of Tatung starved."

Trying to make a short cut across the mountains we lost our way and a local farmer, whom we asked to tell us, casually walked with us twelve miles to show us the Pass. We expressed our thanks and surprise that he should come so far, for in Kuomintang areas people do not offer this easy hospitality to strangers. They are afraid of courting trouble if they step out of their accustomed groove. In the Liberated Areas the people are not afraid of this, and their natural hospitality finds expression. This man told us that it was no more than his duty to help strangers who came to the area. He said that his family, as far back as they could remember, had always been tenants, but now through the land reform they were "free."

"Free? How is that?" I asked. "You plough the same land anyway."

He looked at me as if I were feeble minded. He replied that there were no more high rents. However, it was not merely a matter of rents. "Your own land is your treasure, your darling. You plan for your darling, how to give more water and fertilizer. You strain your back and make your son strain his back to terrace the land better. Our Chairman Mao calls on the people to improve their livelihood by raising in two years enough grain to feed them for three years. Thus there will be no famines. All this can be done on your own land."

He left us within sight of the Pass, after pointing out the "Kwan," or "gate" in the Great Wall. Just under the Pass we came on a man ploughing who said that he had taken part in the great battle of Pinghsing Pass as a member of the village volunteers. We stopped to talk with him about the battle, which was the first defeat of the Japanese in China and the first emergence of the Eighth Route in battle.* He told us that the village volunteers of the entire countryside had armed themselves with thousands of rifles taken from dead Japs in Pinghsing Pass.

"This ravine was a trap for the Japs. That other ravine over there was piled with their dead." To him the significance of that battle was not that it had saved Nanking from encirclement—though it had—but that "the Eighth Route taught us here that you could beat the Japs if you fought correctly. We never believed that before."

We listened long to his story. The night drew on cold and the wind blew harsh beyond the Pass. We hastened down the valley.

We slept that night on our first "warm kang." We needed the warmth for we were high in the hills. Heated "kangs" feel strange when you aren't used to them. As the night grows chillier your bed grows

* See Chapters: **Yenan Fights To The Sea,** and **People's Armed Forces.**

warmer. You wake up feeling baked, with a dry throat. But heating a "kang" is the cheapest way to keep warm at night. You lie on warm bricks and it saves clothes and quilts. It is a cheap heat too, for you can burn dried weeds in a "kang." When people are very poor they sleep almost naked on the "kang," covering themselves with rushes and saving the wear on their clothes. In the morning you sit on the "kang" to eat and it keeps your feet warm.

Even my Chinese companions were surprised by the beauty of Taihsien, the county town to which we came after a thirty-five mile walk down hill. It stands in a valley between two ranges of mountains, surrounded by high, thick walls with impressive pagodas on top. Looking down the main street you see a succession of huge arches of carved, enamelled wood, colorful and ancient. The biggest pagoda of all stands in the center of he city, burnished red and inscribed in golden characters: "Majestic City of the Three Gates." The reference is to the three mountain passes whose outlets meet in Taihsien. It was the "cross-roads of the world" idea, written by whatever passed for Rotary in the Middle Ages.

Taihsien had been taken from Yen's troops only three months earlier but there were already physical signs of the new regime. The gates to the county building were freshly painted, and bore in bright blue letters: "Chin-Cha-Chi Liberated Area. Taihsien County Government." Above the gate was a portrait of Mao Tse-tung, while highest of all and biggest of all was a golden inscription: "For the service of the people." Across the street were two newly opened bookshops while further down a new middle school, a normal school and a school for civil service officials announced themselves with new paint.

Beyond Taihsien a long brown valley led between ranges of mountains. We passed a farmer's house whose clay walls were painted all over with inscriptions in amateurish big black letters, evidently done by the farmer himself. Under a cartoon of a Kuomintang official, whose resemblance to the person addressed was not very exact, were the words: "Chiang Kai-shek, how come we fight the Japs eight years and you send us not one grain of wheat and not one bullet but now that we have beaten the Japs you send us many troops?"

We came upon Judge Chen again at Kuohsien, a prosperous county town with tremendous walls. He had been visiting the local courts and inspecting the judicial machinery. He expressed himself in three meaty Chinese words, that need more English words to translate them: "Their justice is elemental, uncomplicated and heaven-sent." He was preparing to make a speech to the county officials.

At Kuohsien we found that we had passed into a new Liberated Area, that of Shansi-Suiyuan, known as Chin-Sui. There had been no visible boundary, no guards or customs officials. But the money was different: our guide went to the county administration and got some. We were still in the Liberated Areas but under a new provincial administration, defended by a different general, the famous Ho Lung.

The Chin-Sui Area is perhaps the poorest of all the Liberated Areas. It consists of mountains and rocky, arid valleys whose harvests are blighted by dry winds from the Gobi Desert. The area was very roughly handled by the Japanese invaders. Many villages were burned and most of the county towns were bombed and burned flat inside their walls. For all that, or perhaps because of that, it is one of the proudest of the freedom-loving areas. Parts of it, in the wilder hills, were never conquered, but were a fighting anti-Jap base for eight years. Most of the area, including northern Shansi and reaching far up into Suiyuan, expelled the Japs in battle before the general Japanese surrender.

The people think of themselves as "Ho Lung's people." Ho Lung is not the governor, for the Liberated Areas are not governed by generals, as the Kuomintang areas usually are. Chin-Sui has its elected "People's Congress" and its chairman, or governor, in the provincial capital Hsinghsien. But Ho Lung organized the anti-Japanese forces and commanded them from 1938 onward. He was appointed by General Chu

Teh with the approval of Chiang-Kai-shek in those dear, dead days of the "united front." Chiang's approval did not last: his troops, of many varieties, were attacking Ho Lung as I passed through. Ho Lung, meanwhile, had won the support of the people. He was the defender who led them all to victory over the Japs!

Ho Lung's personality was everywhere in evidence. There were Ho Lung grammer schools, in the new expansion of education. The money of the area is called Lung-pi, which means "Farmers' Notes," but many people think it means Ho Lung's notes, and speak of it as "Holung-pi." It was worth more than Central Government notes.

Shansi was listed in Nanking as belonging to General Yen Hsi-shan. Its representative for any Central Government purpose was H. H. Kung, the well-known billionaire. It was odd to recall this as I walked through Shansi. Neither Yen's currency, his stamps nor his appointees circulated in the north Shansi countryside. To the people there, Yen was "the enemy," whose troops plunder villages and unguarded cities. They hate Yen more intimately than hate Chiang Kai-shek for Yen is the local man who has his hooks into them. There's an old Chinese saying: "You'll never convince the mouse that the lion is fiercer than the cat."

At the county town of Yuanping the tall, pleasant young mayor told me: "We'll be pulling out of the city soon for Yen's troops are coming to attack us and we have no troops of our own near by."

"How will you manage?" I asked.

He was not unduly concerned. "Just as we did with the Japs," he said. "The county government will stay for a short time in the villages. Then our troops will come and take Yuanping again." He proved an accurate prophet. Three weeks later, when I reached Yenan, I heard that Yuanping and Kuohsien had been taken by the Kuomintang and retaken by Ho Lung's troops.

Further down the valley I came to Yang Family Village which was a signal example of wanton destruction by the Japs. It lies in the hills and its crops have always been scanty. Its chief wealth was a flock of some three hundred sheep. When the Japs were forced from the area, they made the villagers round up the sheep and then they destroyed them with explosives. It was their "going away gift."

Yet Yang Family Village was not starving. When I asked one of the villagers how they survived, he said: "Everyone turned out and expanded production on the hillsides. The government sent us seed and relief money." The "government" of which he spoke was of course the Liberated Area government.

All through this region we found the villages patrolled by small boys perched on rocks by the roadside. They would demand: "Where is your road slip?" If you hadn't one, they would call a village guard.

"Why do you guard so carefully?" I asked one youngster.

"The Kuomintang sends people to poison the village wells," he told me. "Over in B— village, they poisoned a well. (I myself knew that, when I was in the Central Plains Area, secret agents of the Kuomintang poisoned a well in Hsuanhuatien.)

In spite of our good credentials it took us more than a day to find Ho Lung's field headquarters. It was so well concealed that villagers a mile away did not know that it was there. Or perhaps they only said they didn't. We finally spent the night with the county magistrate and he sent us next morning to field headquarters with a special guide. We found that we had three times passed within a mile of it the previous day. We could have passed five feet from the door without knowing that anything unusual was there.

In bounced Ho Ping-yuan, commander of the field headquarters, known as the "One-Armed General," having lost an arm in battle. When he spoke I detected the Hunan accent. He told me he was from the Central Plains Area, only recently come north.

"Why the devil did you stay with the county government instead of coming here?" he asked pleasantly. We explained and he was very apologetic about our trouble in finding the way. Then he offered us dozens of cans of American canned milk and other canned goods that had reached him by devious route. Tens of thousands of cans, once the property of the U.S. Army, had been given to UNRRA, which gave it to the Chinese government's relief organi-

zation CNRRA, which sent it to Yen Hsi-shan, who gave it to his army officers. Ho Lung s men captured it from Yen's troops when they came to invade villages.

"So now it's come back to the Americans," laughed the field commander jovially, offering me as much as I could use.

He also outfitted three of our party who had left Kalgan without winter clothing and who found nights cold in the Shansi hills. Two of these had joined us enroute, a political worker named Li and his wife, who was pregnant, and going to Yenan to have her baby in the hospital there. They were supplied with padded cotton uniforms, of which there were a great stack at headquarters, enroute donkey-back to the front. Field headquarters seemed in apple-pie order, efficient and full of supplies.

"What's Upton Sinclair writing," was Ho's next surprising question. Or rather, it would have been surpring but I had grown accustomed to being asked by Chinese Communists about Upton Sinclair, Theodore Dreiser, John Steinbeck and other American writers. I wish I had a dollar for every time I was asked about American writers in those thirty days from Kalgan to Yenan.

We were two weeks crossing Chin-Sui to the Yellow River. There are few roads. Thousands of donkeys—of the small kind that we call burros—carried loads along the mountain paths. Many of them were owned by transport cooperatives, in which farmers pooled their animals to carry goods during the lull in field work. There seemed to be a good business in salt transport and in coal for the towns.

I saw telephone wires running scores of miles over wild mountains. All Ho Lung's units are connected by telephone and telegraph: the equipment was taken from the Japs. I recalled how the U.S. Army telephone wires near Kunming were cut every two or three nights by unknown Chinese because the people so hated the Kuomintang Fifth Army there that they slashed wires in spite. So, when I saw wires running within two feet of the trail I asked our mule driver whether the people never cut these "Ho Lung" wires. He shook his head and laughed.

Ho Lung's soldiers on the road were often singing. They sang the regular army songs and folk songs that everyone knew and another kind of song that they made up as they went. Soon after I left field headquarters I stopped to rest at the top of a mountain, and a long line of soldiers heading for field headquarters came towards me up the hill in a slow, swinging climb. They were singing. As they drew near I heard the platoon leader chant something and the men answered.

"Who raised more chickens than anyone else?" sang the leader.

"Liu Wang-yi raised more chickens".

Then everyone joined in: "Liu Wang-yi raised more chickens. All study Liu Wang-yi." Liu was one of the marching bunch, and this recognition of his prowess would doubtless keep him raising more chickens!

"Who used to be a loafer and now advances in study?" continued the chanting, followed by another name, as they wound over the summit and down the hill. This was a way of encouraging merit by public recognition. There were also joking songs about each other, made up as they went along.

Village life in Chin-Sui seemed very well organized. Every village had an elected head who could be recalled by popular vote. When we came to a village around eating-time or night-fall, we would ask the first comer for the "chairman," and he would shout: "Go call Old Li," or "Old Wang," as the case might be. Then Old Li or Old Wang would come, looking like any other villager with a white towel wrapped around his head—a clean towel, as we especially noticed, for our clothing was dusty from the road—and he would ask in a business-like manner: "How many in the party? What kind of food? Would you stay for the night"?

We would say that we needed two rooms, one for the four men of our party and one for Li and his pregnant wife. Then representatives of the different families would decide how best to put us. Once we stopped at a tiny hillside village with only four families. They held a conference and arranged for one family to move in with the

neighbor, giving us the vacated house. All this was done on our letter of introduction from Kalgan. We had no credentials from Ho Lung, whom we met only towards the end of our trip.

Life was peaceful and well ordered except in those few places near Yen's strongholds where attacks might be expected. At one village we wanted to go further but it was dusk and the next stopping place was fourteen miles away. I asked the village chairman if it was safe to travel at night without escort. In Kuomintang areas, near Shanghai or Kunming, you do not venture far on lonely roads at night without armed guard. This village chairman was insulted. "It is safe not only for men but even for children. This is an **old** base." Our guide had to explain that I was an ignorant foreigner from Kuomintang China, not knowing the traditions of the Liberated Areas.

The vivid interest of the farmers in politics was perhaps my strongest impression. Economically they are still in the Middle Ages, without any modern transportation, without electric light, or even kerosene or candles, using hemp oil with a home-made wick, too poor to use coal or wood for fuel, and therefore burning dried weeds. But politically they were very much in the modern world. Even the smallest village had its "newspaper" written on a blackboard in the public square. Most of the space was given to local news, villagers who made good in production or who must be "struggled with" for some fault. But there would also be brief national news about civil war and even international news about the United Nations Assembly, just then meeting in New York.

Every large village seemed to have a school who would gather around me, not to ask for candy and chewing-gum, as they do in Shanghai, but to ask questions about America. Every county town and even the smaller market towns had its current events discussions, usually preceded by a group of children dancing a Yang-ke in the marketplace.

The county towns in Chin-Sui were all walled towns. Many of them had been bombed and burned by the Japanese so that little life remained inside the walls. In many of them high pagodas had been built as memorials to the heroes of the Anti-Japanese Resistance War. Most of the towns showed signs of reviving prosperity. New shops and dwellings had sprung up outside the walls and were noisy with trade. Oil-presses were being reopened and the old vegetable-oil business, in which the Chinese excel, was reviving from the discouragement it suffered under the Japanese. They made many kinds of oil, some for cooking, some for flavor, some for light. Bean oil, hemp oil, cotton seed oil, mustard oil, peanut oil, sesame oil are some I recall. People here are specialists in vegetable oils: they like to take one kind of food, cook it in different ways with different oils and thus make a banquet of many flavors.

As you enter Hsinghsien, the Chin-Sui capital, you see sheets of paper, cut tabloid-size, hung over the houses and on cloths on the hillsides to dry. They belong to the new paper mill that makes a kind of paper from local grasses for the Chin-Sui newspaper. It is one of the industries introduced by Ho Lung to enable a blockaded area to have newspapers and books. Cotton-raising is another new development. Cotton does not grow easily here, but areas where it might grow are sought assiduously to make up for the shortage in cotton goods.

I stayed three days with Ho Lung at his headquarters. It was a comfortable compound of many caves and gardens. Ho Lung is a large, vital, powerful man with a big frame and a big face set in plentiful black hair and a bushy mustache faintly touched with gray. They call him "Hutze", which means "Beard," for this is his distinguishing feature, since Chinese as a rule have little hair on their faces. Ho Lung is jovial, full of laughter and of soldier's jokes. His standing as an officer goes back long before the Great Revolution: in the Northern Expedition in 1927 he led 20,000 men. He was one of the organizers of the Nanchang Uprising in 1927.

I found him very busy with the civil war that foamed around the edges of his area,

but he was not at all under tension. When I reached Yenan later and saw a Nanking despatch saying that sixteen brigades of Ho Lung's had been smashed and his soldiers were "low in morale" I had to laugh. Ho Lung never had as many as sixteen brigades. His was always a small, but cocky army. Not a single battalion, let alone a brigade, had been smashed. I never saw men with more battle-spirit. They also raise much of their own food and some of their cotton and tobacco. Hundreds of acres have been planted near headquarters by the officers and men, to "lighten the burden of the people."

At headquarters I met Colonel Hsu Peng, formerly staff member for operations on Fu Tso-yi's staff—it was Fu Tso-yi who took Kalgan. Colonel Hsu had recently come over with a lot of his men to join the Communists. It seemed unusual for an officer to quit an army that was winning victories, so I asked him his reasons.

"I'm a military man and never paid attention to politics," he said. "But last winter we got orders from Chiang to start demonstrations demanding that the Russians get out of Manchuria. That seemed all right. I thought: 'Let all foreign troops clear out, Russians and Americans too. When I said this at headquarters, Chiang's special agents blew up. 'You talk like a blankety-blank Communist, asking our American allies to leave.' That made me think. Why should Russians leave and not Americans? Especially when those Americans in Tientsin act as if they owned the country. And then this civil war came. Taking American arms to slaughter our own countrymen, and especially using those American peaked hats to do it in! I ask you, does anything look more atrocious than Chinese soldiers in those rape-your-mother sell-the-country hats? This thing I could not eat, so I came over. There'll be more like me."

"How comes that you, staff member for operations, were only a colonel?"

Colonel Hsu banged his fist on the table. "You see, if you collaborated with the Japs to kill the Communists, like that Sun Liang-ching, Chiang makes you a top general. But if you only fought like the devil against the Japs, you remain a colonel."

On my last evening in Hsinghsien I went to a Chinese drama with Ho Lung. The plays were ancient classics about bygone dynasties. Ho Lung sat in the front row and kept the audience in convulsions by making pointed comparisons, in his booming voice, between ancient warlords and those of the present day. In a play dealing with the period of the "Three Kingdoms," the weakest king sought an alliance with the "middle king" against the biggest one. The "middle king," however, thought that by swallowing the little fellow he could become strong enough to challenge the big king by himself.

"The little guy wants 'united front,' so that they can both win," said Ho Lung. "With the middle king's greedy swallowing they will both lose. Let war-mongers in China take note."

Later in the evening we discussed the civil war. "It will be long," said Ho Lung, "because America supplies Chiang with weapons against the Chinese people. But when our Eighth Route Army came to this region in 1938 it was a land of naked, starving peasants under Jap rule. We have carved a base where nobody starves or goes naked. The injuries the Kuomintang now inflicts upon us are pin-pricks to what we have suffered in the past."

We left Chin-Sui by ferry over the Yellow River. We reached the shore in the afternoon at a place called Chikou. They told us there were no boats and there would be no crossing that day. Then a boat arrived from the other shore, with a student and his aged mother. At once people materialized from everywhere, wanting to cross. Soon there were thirty people and five horses, passengers for Yenan.

"What is the news from Yenan?" I asked the student.

"Wang Chen is back. They are putting up banners to welcome him in the streets."

Wang Chen! My friend whom I had last seen in the Central Plains Area, halfway across China, surrounded by half a million Koumintang soldiers, doomed by an "annihilation drive." He had broken the encircle-

ment and fought his way back to Yenan. In two years he had fought his way against the Japs all the way to Hong Kong, and against the Kuomintang all the way back. A double "Long March"! I had only a river to cross and a few days hike through mountains to meet Wang Chen, my friend of the Central Plains. I recalled a song that a girl had sung in dancing a Yang-ke:

"Shan-Kan-Ning, Shan-Kan-Ning,
Home of the Chinese People."

Yes, just there over the river, where the setting sun made a pattern of flame on the waters and turned the hills of the far shore to copper-red, we would set foot on the soil of the first of the Liberated Areas, the mother of all the others, whose capital was Yenan.

I asked the student casually where he was going. He replied: "Harbin."

Harbin! Four months on foot into ever-deepening winter! With an aged bound-foot mother who had to be carried in litters! With a civil war between! This student and his mother planned to travel as far to the north of Yenan as Wang Chen had gone to the south.

"Kalgan is gone and Changteh was taken some time ago," I reminded him, recalling Chiang's boast that by taking these cities he had cut Yenan off from Manchuria.

"That makes it a little harder," admitted the student. "But I have work to do in Harbin and we can still go all the way without leaving our Liberated Areas."

The boatman called and I turned towards the swiftly flowing river and the flaming skies of the west. The student set forth calmly on a journey four times as long as mine had been, into the wintry spaces of the north.

Chapter 19

MANCHURIAN EMPIRE

The Communists acquired an empire in Manchuria. One of the world's great food-producing regions, with railroads, cities and vast natural riches fell into their hands with the defeat of Japan. They got it because they knew how to organize Manchurians. Chiang Kai-shek apparently didn't.

Chiang Kai-shek might have had Manchuria. The Russians drove out the Japs for him, installed his appointees in the Manchurian cities and protected them there for several months to give them a chance to organize a government. The Americans brought in five armies for him, which should be enough to police your own land. At first the Manchurians wanted him. After the long Jap oppression, they yearned almost romantically for union with Nanking.

A woman in Tsitsihar said to me in rough farmer language: "In fourteen years of slavery to the Japs we forgot how that —Chiang sold us down the river when the Japs attacked in 1931. We forgot the rotten corruption of his Kuomintang government. We only knew that we were all together at last, resisting and beating the Japs. We longed for that Central Government to come. Then they sent people to boss our cities and made common cause with Jap puppets and they stole more cattle than the Japs. And now if I could get my hands on the—of a Chiang, I'd bite his throat in two with my own teeth". Chiang would not be safe with those Manchurians who once had prayed for him to come.

Only a southern segment of Manchuria —the ports, the coastal railway as far as Changchun—was still, in late 1946 at the time of my visit, in the hands of Chiang's troops, assisted a bit by the U.S. Marines. The northern and western part of the country called itself the "Democratic Liberated Area of the North-Eastern Provinces"; that was the Communist part.

American officers in Changchun told me that the Communists held nine-tenths of Manchuria; a forced landing anywhere would bring you into a Communist village, they said. The people of Liberated Areas made no such extravagant claim. They counted only continuous territory from which taxes could be collected and from which representatives came to their congresses. On that basis they claimed two-third of the area and a bit more than half the people—some 300,000 square miles and 17,000,000 people. Figures varied with the fortunes of war.

Few foreigners have seen the Communists' empire in Manchuria. There was in the autumn of 1946 a thin and temporary connection between it and the outer world. Two truce teams of the Executive Headquarters operated there and a weekly plane flew to them from Changchun, the headquarters' "advance post". There was also an American military mission in Harbin, supervising the repatriation of Japs.

Harbin was a shopping paradise for American officers. They flew up from Changchun to buy their liquor. They came in the morning and returned in the afternoon, an hour's flight over a war-torn region through which Chinese civilians plodded dangerously a month on foot. On the day when I flew in, several officers made the round trip and bought scores of bottles of prewar wines and vodka, costing, they bragged, only forty cents a bottle. One colonel got enough mink skins to make a coat for his wife.

Harbin was glutted with food at bargain prices. Good creamy butter cost twenty-five cents a pound in the busy market.

Great carcasses of meat, firm and fresh in cold weather, were offered at eight cents a pound. Big fresh eggs were twenty-one cents a dozen.

The hospitality of the Guest House of the "Democratic Joint Army Headquarters" —the Communist-led troops of General Lin Piao—was a thing to write home about. They gave you letterhead stationery of good quality on which to write it, too. For the first time since reaching China I saw pale yellow curls of good butter heaped high, large hams cut into thick, pink slices, white slabs of chicken browned in butter and washed down with good local wine.

The stock joke about Harbin was the tale of the American army pilot who asked the Chinese guard at the airport: "Are you going to shoot down my plane"?

"No! No! I am here to guard it", cried the horrified Chinese.

"Too bad," replied the American. "If you shot my plane I might get a week in Harbin".

Harbin was no paradise for its inhabitants. Nobody starved, but Manchurian farmers froze naked among mountains of grain and beans. It took a ton of grain to buy six yards of cotton goods. It took ten tons of soya beans to buy one forty-yard bolt. Manchuria, food producer for the world, could not get its crops to market. Manchuria was blockaded on three sides by the Russian closed frontier, on the fourth by Chiang's battlefront.

Merchants of this northern Manchuria, helped by the Liberated Area government, sent trains of carts to smuggle food into Kuomintang territory and smuggle cotton goods back. It was a costly, dangerous trip, paying bribes all the way. It took them a month to make the shopping trip that American officers made in an hour. Further west there was a land route into the Libertated Areas of North China. Once the Four Province Area sent a cotton caravan as a gift to Lin Piao's army. But that was a six months' round trip.

How did the Communists get to Manchuria? How did they take possession and organise government there?

There were already Communists among the city workers when the Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931. These went into the rural districts and organized "Manchurian Volunteers" to fight the Japs. Governor Feng Chang-yung of Sungkiang Province, in which Harbin is located, gave me harsh details of his fighting days.

"We fought in snow and slept in snow. The snow would be over our knees and we would stamp it down, build a fire and sleep. And this went on night after night and year after year. We ate grass; I myself know fifty kinds of wild grass that one can eat".

"But hasn't Manchuria grain"? I asked.

"Manchuria had Japs", he replied. "Our movement was a big flame in 1935; we grew to fifty or sixty thousand armed partisans. So the Japs burned the farmers out of their villages, to destroy our economic base. The farmers lived for a time in dugouts and our partisans still flourished. Then the Japs gathered the farmers into big villages, like concentration camps surrounded by barbed wire and guarded. Still our bands hid in the woods and the farmers left food in the fields for us to find. But the Japs controlled the grain through the landlords and any farmer suspected of feeding an 'outlaw' was shot. Our bands could survive only in small numbers."

When the Russian Red Army drove out the Japs in a lightning drive in August 1945, the Manchurian Volunteers reappeared and grew swiftly. They mopped up the Japs in the rural areas, while the Russians took the railways and big cities. Simultaneously, detachments of the Eighth Route Army already in southwest Manchuria, and the New Fourth Army in Shantung, fought their way north, disarming the Japanese as they went, until they met their partisan allies. General Lin Piao, under instructions from Yenan, welded all these elements into the Joint Democratic Army of the Northeast.

By the end of 1945, Lin Piao's troops were the effective armed force in rural Manchuria, while the Russians held the railways and main cities. Lin Piao told me at the end of 1946, that his army had grown to some three hundred thousand, of whom half had come from China and the other half were Manchurians, new recruits under

the officers of the old Manchurian Volunteers.

What help did Lin Piao's army get from the Russians? Every kind of tale was spread in China and in America about this: that the Russians gave arms, advisers, troops. According to Lin Piao and all the other people I saw in Manchuria, the Russians gave him nothing.

"No troops, no weapon, no advisers, nothing!" said Lin Piao categorically. "Whatever men and arms came with the Red Army into Manchuria went back when Red army went. Whatever store of arms the Russians took from the Japs in Manchuria, they either took with them to their own country as war booty or else destroyed on the spot."

I got similar answers from many others in Manchuria who were in a position to know. The Communists were the first to admit that, fighting alongside their Russian allies in Manchuria, they were able to take much more booty than they could have taken alone. They got sizable depots of Japanese arms in the smaller towns, where they themselves disarmed the Japs. Even in larger cities, such as Mukden, in the active stage of the war, the Russians seem to have made no great efforts to keep Jap arms from falling into the hands of the Chinese. But no stores of arms of any kind were directly turned over by the Russians to the Chinese Communists, as far as I could learn.

I had a long conversation with a group of officers whom I met on the train to Tsitsihar. They were very much disturbed by the help that the American army was giving to Chiang and could not understand why. I explained to them that people in America widely believed that the Chinese Communists got help from the Russians. These men found it hard to imagine that anyone sincerely credited such a tale.

"I have fought eight years with the Eighth Route Army in all parts of China", said one of them. "I never saw a Russian officer with our army. I never saw a Russian weapon except a few that the Russians gave Chiang Kai-shek at the beginning of the war to use against Japan. He used them against us and we captured them. Those are the only Russian weapons I ever saw. I have seen many American weapons; we captured a lot of those at Szepingkai. We also took arms from Japs. There are many American and Jap weapons in this war, but never any Russian".

Surprisingly enough, most Manchurians took it for granted that the Russians had helped not the Communists, but Chiang Kai-shek. They installed Chiang's appointees in all the cities and protected them there for several months. The Manchurians distinguished four different regimes in a single year: The Japs, then the Russians, then the Kuomintang with Red Army protection, then the period when "our democratic army and government came".

"Do you blame the Russians for helping Chiang?" I asked a worker in a Harbin flour mill, who had listed the four regimes.

"No", he replied. "We were all allies against Japan and Chiang's was the recognized government. The Russians got out when he started civil war".

The Russians got out rather awkwardly. Chiang's government officially asked them to stay till he could bring in enough troops to control the country. Chiang's secret service, however, instigated demonstrations all over China denouncing the Russians for staying so long in Manchuria and demanding that they get out. The American press echoed this attack on "red imperialism" and demanded how long they planned to stay. Meanwhile the American armed forces were pressing further into South Manchuria.

Nor did Chiang's functionaries in Manchuria make the situation easier. Their method of organizing the country was to contact landlords who had been for fourteen years acting as Jap agents, and authorize them to form armed bands to fight the Communists. They did this from Russian-protected cities. A prominent Harbin citizen, who had been a mayor during the brief period of Russian Red Army control, was assassinated by gangsters under the Kuomintang regime, which was also under Russian protection. Russian diplomatic officials and citizens were murdered in Changchun in riots stirred up by the arriving Kuomintang troops for whom the Russians had been holding the city. After that the Russians got out of the cities fur-

ther north without waiting for Chiang's soldiers.

When the Russians withdrew, in spring of 1946, they took with them Chiang's northern Manchurian administrators and sent them home all the way around by Vladivostok to Shanghai, at Chiang's request. They saved them from the Manchurian people whom they had been sent to rule. Chiang Kai-shek's government thus admitted that it could not control Manchuria without foreign military help.

When the Russians pulled out they closed the border. They badly needed that Manchurian food for their own Far East and their zone in Korea, both of which are deficient in food. Yet they maintained a tightly closed frontier on the theory that if they should let a bolt of cotton goods or a bottle of medicine cross it, they would be intervening in China's civil war.

"They would say we helped the Communists", explained the Soviet Consul to me in Harbin.

"They say it anyway", I argued hotly. "Every American officer in China says you are arming the Communists. You might at least engage in mutually needed trade".

"Of course they lie about us", he admitted, "but they know they lie and their lie can be disproved. If a car of cotton goods ever crossed the border, who could prove that it contained no arms?"

We argued and got nowhere. That border was closed. "You can't even smuggle across it", complained Manchurian merchants. "It is tighter than Chiang's battlefront".

The Soviet Consul, who had been in Harbin all through the Japanese occupation, even gave up his diplomatic status when the Communists came in, because Moscow did not recognize their regime. "I act here now", he explained, "not as representing my government, but as representing some fifty thousand Russians who have always lived in Manchuria". It was a fine point, but he thought it important.

No government had any official relations with the Communist regime at the date of my visit except the United States of America, which had a military mission negotiating with the Communists the evacuation of the Japs. Captain Wilson enjoyed chaffing the Soviet Consul—he did it at a tea party that I attended—about his very poor connections with the USSR. Once a month the Russians sent a courier with his mail to the frontier, three days' journey by mixed freight and passenger train.

"A plane came all the way from Peiping just to bring me a letter from my wife", bragged the American captain. The Soviet Consul seemed a bit annoyed at this reminder of the effective American penetration into a city the Russians built.

The Liberated Area of Manchuria was thus strictly on its own—seventeen million hardy and energetic people in a spacious land but with practically no connections with the world. How did the Communists operate here? What problems had they? What methods? What success?

Let us take what happened in two villages.

Leftwood Village, not far from Harbin, was a small place of fifty-four families, thirty of which owned no land but worked, either as farmhands or as share-croppers, on the lands of a landlord named Su. Under the Japanese, Su became their agent to buy and sell grain, to handle rationed goods, to collect forced labor, and to distribute "rewards for good citizens." He profited handsomely and dishonestly on all these transactions and was hated by everyone. "Su was worse than the Japs", the farmers said.

After the Japanese left, the new Kuomintang administration, installed in Harbin by the Russians, made Su their agent and authorised him to collect an armed force against the Communists. Su got together ninety armed men and bossed the township more arrogantly than before. Not until June 1946, two months after the Russians left and the Communists took power in Harbin, did the villagers gain confidence that they might get rid of Su. They appealed to the new city administration and to the army to help suppress "Su's bandits", who had been living by loot. Su fled. A village election followed. Su's excess lands were divided. Once given land, most

of Su's bandits were glad to settle to farming.

Wang Family Village was a settlement of a thousand people just outside Tsitsihar, founded two hundred years ago by three Wang brothers, who were pioneers. There were no big landlords here, for the Japanese had taken all the land and the people had worked for them as serfs. "We got neither wheat nor millet to eat but a flour made from acorns", they told me. "Many people died of this; they passed blood".

After the Japanese were beaten, a "recovering army" of the Kuomintang came and took the horses. Then representatives of Chiang's government came from Tsitsihar and told the villagers that the land now belonged to the authorities and they would auction off the right to plant it for a year. Only twenty-six families had enough money to rent land directly; the other two hundred families had to become their share-croppers. Before it was time to sow, the "Joint Democratic Army" arrived, and declared that all land taken from the people should go back to them and that the villagers themselves should meet and divide it without paying anyone. The villagers thereupon distributed land on the basis of one acre per capita. The harvest that followed gave everyone enough to eat wheat bread and even to buy some cotton for cloth.

There was plenty of poverty still in Wang Family Village. I saw boys of thirteen darting mother-naked between cottages on a day so cold that I shivered in a fur coat. But the villagers, with good grain in their stomachs that no longer poisoned their intestines, felt themselves on the up-grade.

The reasons why Chiang Kai-shek failed and the Communists succeeded in Manchuria begin to appear in these examples. All over Manchuria Chiang's administrators, in their brief term of power, authorized local landlords and former puppet officers to collect armed bands under the name of "recovering armies". These armies supported themselves by stealing farmers' livestock on a wholesale scale. Governor Yu Yi-fu of Nunchiang Province, in which Tsitsihar is located, told me that the "recovering armies" siezed 7,357 horses and cattle in Nunchiang County, 10,500 in Chinghsing County, 14,300 in Kannan County, 18,825 in Lunchiang County, and so on.

The farmers were not slow to call these "recovering armies" "Kuomintang bandits." They began to resist them under the leadership of the Communists.

The Communists encouraged the people to organize. They stimulated local initiative. In industry they released the free enterprise of merchants; the government shared the risk by making loans to those cart caravans that traded across the battle-front, but the merchants made the profits. In government, the Communists urged the farmers to throw out Jap puppets and elect their own chiefs. To form an army, they urged farmers to organize their own militia against bandits, whether these were ordinary thieves or the "recovering armies" of the Kuomintang. It should not be necessary to mention these rather homely and obvious methods, were it not that most postwar organizers of governments—whether Chiang in China, the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in Indo-China, the Americans in Korea and the Philippines—do precisely the reverse.

The result of this encouragement was an explosion of energetic life that grew more confident day by day.

The land reform began on a large scale in May 1946. The army and government released twelve thousand of their ablest organizers to promote it. Their task was to inform farmers that they had the right to take back lands unjustly taken under the Japanese. Decision as to what land should be taken was made by the farmers' meetings. Several officials told me: "We do not bother landlords owning less than seventy five acres. Those who have more than that were practically all agents of the Japs."

The cities also awoke. In Harbin the poorest slum-dwellers organised a cooperative known as the "Poor Folks Housing Society". They applied to the city government for the houses from which the Japs were being repatriated, to use them in a slum-clearance scheme. I saw the horrible holes in which they had recently been living; water flooded the yards and seeped through cracks in the sagging walls. I saw

also the neat apartments—one room to a family—that cost almost nothing in rent. Down in Changchun, the Kuomintang capital, Jap houses stood empty while bureaucrats fought over who had the right to the property.

The manager of a large flour mill in Harbin told me that he was now able to buy and sell freely for the first time in fourteen years. Years ago the mill bought grain and sold flour, making the double profit of milling and trading. Under the Japanese and under the brief Kuomintang regime that followed, the government had a monopoly of grain and the mill was hired only for milling. "Now that we have free trade again, we can make good profit as we used to do before the Japs," said the manager. The flour mill workers told me they were getting double wages and a share in profits.

The Tung Faho Department Store, a famous enterprise for twenty years in Harbin, went bankrupt under the Japanese. It remained closed under the Red Army and under the Kuomintang. Under the stimulus of the present regime, its clerks, who lived in a building in the courtyard, decided to revive the business, even though the owner lived beyond the battlefront in Shantung. They came to an agreement with the owner's agent. The workers, on their own suggestion, took no money wages at first but only food. Monthly wages on an agreed scale were credited to them to be paid from future earnings when the business made good. They also expected a share of the profits. When I asked why they did not organize a cooperative instead of recognizing an absent owner who was bankrupt and in debt, they replied: "It is on the name he built for twenty years that we can get credit now".

Not everything went easily. Changes in the currency hit many people hard, especially the city people in Harbin. They had had four kinds of money in one year. The Japanese **yen** vanished overnight. The Red Army money, printed by agreement with Chiang Kai-shek, was later repudiated by Chiang. There followed Central Government Manchurian money that lasted three months. Then came the currency of the "democratic government", which was backed, Lin Piao told me, "by the fact that we take it for taxes, for railway freight and tickets, and for stores of confiscated Japanese goods." That was more backing than the other currencies had had!

These changes bore hard on people who lived by money. Many Harbin Russians were penniless, and were selling their clothes. Most Manchurians, however, lived not by money but by grain. This was always true of the farmers; it was now applied to city workers. People who had jobs got very little money wages—the mayor of Harbin got $10 a month, while railway workers got $5 a month—but this was supplemented by grain allowance of a hundred pounds monthly on which a family could survive.

The people's initiative that was restoring economic life also created government.

Villages were urged to hold elections. While this was going on, provisional governments of provinces were set up by delegates from farmers' unions, merchants associations, trade unions and army units. Thus the first provincial government of Nunchiang Province was set up in November 1945 in the rural districts, while Chiang's appointees still held the main city of Tsitsihar. Within seven months, organization advanced so that a regular peoples' congress of the province was called in July 1946, with representatives elected from the counties, though not yet by a uniform system.

By August 1946, a joint congress was held of all the Manchurian provinces. It adopted a program and set up a joint administrative committee to carry it out. The statement of policy granted each province the right to frame its own constitution, along the following general principles:

1) General elections to be held rapidly everywhere.
2) Land of Japanese and traitors to be given to farmers.
3) Help to industry with reasonable profit for capital.
4) Education in democracy for the armed forces.

5) General education to be improved.
6) Equality of nationalities: Chinese, Moslems, Mongols, Koreans.
7) Civil liberties were guaranteed in a very inclusive statement covering "freedom of body, of thought, of speech, of press, of assembly, of organization, of religion, of election, of travel and of choice of profession."

The top bunch of people elected at this congress as a **de facto** administration for all the democratic Manchuria—under the name of "Joint Administrative Committee for the Northeastern Provinces"—was no Communist list but a roster of the most famous "native sons" of Manchuria who for twenty years or more had fought for their country's freedom and progress. The Communists did not make the mistake of setting up a one-party government. They called on "all democratic, progressive people" to come out and help organize their land. They included former Kuomintang leaders, Democratic Leaguers, and Manchurian patriots whose standing dated back to the old warlord days of Chang Tso-lin.

Lin Feng, chairman of the Joint Administrative Committee, i.e. governor, is a native of Heilungkang, active in the "National Salvation Movement" and kindred organizations since 1925. First vice-chairman was Chang Hsueh-shih, son of the famous warlord and brother of the "Young Marshal", who was still interned by Chiang Kai-shek for the "Sian incident". Other members, taken at random, were: Kao Chung-min, who has lived fifty-five years in Manchuria, holding high posts under Chang Tso-lin and then joining Sun Yat-sen in 1911, and being one of his first Manchurian adherents; Ming Wu, aged sixty-one, one of the earliest Kuomintang members in Manchuria and personal representative there of Dr. Sun; General Lu Chung-tsao, native of Liaoning, almost the only officer of Chang Tso-lin who ever did well in battle against the Japs; Miss Han Yu-tung, native of Kirin, editor, professor, women's rights' champion since 1925, and member of the Democratic League.

Governor Lin Feng told me that the main tasks before the Joint Administrative Committee were: land reform, creation of a unified system of finance and taxation, improvement of schools, reform of the local governments left by the Japanese.

"The land reform comes first", he said, "for we are finding that slightly more than half of our farming population had no land of its own. We shall complete this by spring sowing, and then it becomes possible to have a unified system of taxation—at about one-tenth of the crop. These two measures then make school improvement possible—children of hungry farmhands can't go to school....And all these together will give us real elections. There have been elections of some kind almost everywhere, but the real ones can come only when the land reform has aroused interest in politics".

"For the first year our government lived on confiscated Jap property but now we are beginning to collect taxes", said General Lin Piao. "Our strength is ten times what it was six months ago".

While Chiang Kai-shek sent armies to Manchuria that came from south China and couldn't speak the same language, while he appointed a mayor for Changchun who—during my visit—was absent for weeks in Nanking getting instructions, while he authorized former puppets to set up armies, the Communists called on all patriotic Manchurians, native sons and daughters, to liberate and organize their country. They secured a government of people who could win respect in any land, and who could win devotion in their own land.

Which method would win the Manchurians anyone could have guessed.

Chapter 20

A GOVERNMENT GOES UNDERGROUND

The Four Province Area had a hidden government. It was hidden from the enemy but not from its own people. The political and military brains for an area of fifty-five thousand square miles and thirty million people functioned in half a dozen obscure villages where, after ten months, the enemy had not been able to locate them for bombing and where even an atom bomb could hit only a few people at one blow.

It is a technique by which a government disappears among its people, protected by their loyalty. In Kalgan I had seen a government in the act of "dispersal". In the Four Province Area I saw a similar government after its essential elements were set up in several villages. I went to the area to see what such a government was like.

The Four Province Area is a large chunk of land in the center of North China, just north of the Lunghai railway and astraddle the Peiping-Hankow line. Its eastern, northern and western borders swing in a great semi-circle protected by the sister Liberated Areas of Shantung, Chin-Cha-Chi and Chin-Sui. Its four hundred miles long southern border is the straight line of the Lunghai railway and the Yellow River, exposed to Chiang Kai-shek's attacks. It contains parts of four provinces—East Shansi, South Hopei, West Shantung and North Honan—whence it gets its official name Chin-Chi-Lu-Yu, which is such an impossible name for foreigners that I speak of it as the Four Province Area.

Hantan, a capital of some fifty thousand on the long since inoperative Peiping-Hankow railway, had been the capital of the area from the time it was taken from the Japs until August 1946. Then General Liu Po-cheng, who commanded the armies there, observing the zeal with which Chiang Kai-shek was attacking the Liberated Area capitals, decided not to await the attack on Hantan but to move the capital beforehand to a hideout in the country. General Liu still maintained contacts with an Executive Headquarters Truce Team in Hantan. Neither the American nor the Kuomintang member knew the general's present location but the Communist member could reach him at will.

It was therefore in Hantan that I must seek connection with this government of thirty million people that had vanished into the hills. No foreigners so far had visited its new capital. No planes had discovered where it was. I sent a message through Executive Headquarters in Peiping that I was coming, flew to Hantan and trusted luck.

Half a dozen trucks and jeeps met the plane at its arrival. Colonel Alexander, the tall American chairman of the truce team, had come for his weekly mail and to welcome a new member of the team. A tiny Chinese woman in a black dress, filthy with caked dust, proved to be Dr. Chu of the health department of the Area, who had come to the airfield for sixteen cases of expected Red Cross supplies. Her observing eyes quietly appraised me and I wondered if she had come for me. Colonel Alexander invited me to stay with the truce team and I was uncertain whether or not to accept when an unobtrusive man, gray with dust, who had been standing unobserved at my elbow, said quietly: "Perhaps you had better stay with us".

"And who are you"? I asked, somewhat startled at the way he seemed to have materialized from nowhere.

"The Communists", he replied.

I turned to his very ancient auto and took my seat in the sifted dust on its cushions, tossing the remark to Colonel Alexander that I might drop in that evening for dinner. I was wrong; I dropped out

of sight then and there and didn't see him for a week.

"What are all these people coming to see the airplane for"? I asked my new companion as we drove through a crowd of people in worn, dusty clothing who pressed around the edges of the field.

"They have seen few planes except those that strafe and bomb them. This Executive Headquarters' plane is their last touch with the hope of peace". His words made me look at him more attentively.

Li Ti-hwa was his name. He said that he worked in the department of public relations and had come to take me to "headquarters" if I wanted to go. Only after a week in which he acted for me as guide, interpreter and tour agent, did I learn—from the way Colonel Alexander addressed him on our return to Hantan—that he was a colonel who had been yanked from other work so that his knowledge of English could serve my needs. The rural areas of the Four Provinces were not well supplied with people who knew English. So they sacrificed a colonel out of courtesy to a guest.

He took me to a hotel room but told me not to unpack since "after lunch we would go somewhere else." At lunch the mayor of Hantan and the chairman of the city labor council joined us. So did the thin, energetic Dr. Chu—she had collected her Red Cross stuff—and two other government officials who would travel with us.

"You are in the midst of the cotton-growing area", said the mayor. "The Japanese made Hantan their collection point for cotton from South Hopei and forbade home spinning and weaving under heavy penalties in order to control the crop." Dr. Chu told, in her quiet, methodical manner, how a farmer had been tied to a tree and tortured to death in the sight of the village for buying a pound of cotton for his wife to spin. Women over thirty, she said, were apt to have eye trouble because they had spun and woven secretly at night with almost no light and under great nervous strain. The people resisted the Japs by growing grain instead of cotton. In the end the Japs were so desperate for cotton that they even took the cotton padding from people's winter clothes.

The road north from Hantan seemed to be made of big, round boulders embedded in bottomless dust. The springs of our auto were dead or dying. One of the front doors was off its hinges and held to the car by a rope. When it jolted off, the driver tied it on again. Dust collected in drifts all over us. When we reached Wu An County town I was caked with it inside and out. They brought us hot water and hot towels and we dug our hands and faces out of the dust with them. But I was too tired to eat.

We slept that night in a string of bare offices on the second floor of the county building. Beds of planks were set in the rooms. The solicitous Dr. Chu somehow found for me an ancient cot with woven-wire springs, a bit sagging. It was probably the only "western style" bed in the county. We took it with us the next day to make a "western style guest room" at headquarters in the hills.

That first day had been luxury travel. The second day was worse. We went by a springless cart on a road that our battered auto could not travel. My hosts, still seeking for me the utmost comfort, delayed some hours to get carts that were furnished with rubber-tired wheels. We passed many people bringing cotton to town in carts or on donkey backs, or in great bundles balanced from a pole on a man's shoulder. There were carts carrying furniture in the direction we were going—part of the exodus of government departments from town.

We came at last—just where and how must be unrecorded—to a village of several hundred families where there were many stone houses built of the native rock. These crowded on each other, following the contours of the land, and broken only by rough cobble-stoned paths. They took me into a room in this stony rabbit-warren. From its polished tables and well-built **kang** it seemed to have belonged to a wealthy family. We set up the cot and our "western style guest room" was complete.

When I opened the door next morning to get the warmth of the sun, there were a dozen young people just outside in the court eating big bowls of yellow millet

flavored with a vegetable. They stared at me wih interest but when I got out my camera they scattered like shy dear. Finally they came back and explained: "We are the book store. We are passing through to the publishing center. It is in a village seven miles away".

The house, I learned, had been "borrowed" from a big landlord—he was not around but his daughter-in-law was—and was used as a hostel in which thirty or forty people often spent the night. One evening a party arrived with laden donkeys and I recognized several people I had known in Yenan, leaders of women's work and specialists in land reform. They had come a month on foot, holding conferences on the way. They planned to confer with people of the Four Province Area and then to go on to Shantung and Manchuria. I envied their physical endurance for I was exhausted by my relatively short trip.

For two days Colonel Li arranged interviews in my room. The chiefs of the militia, of the trade unions, of the farmers' unions, dropped in. All seemed to live in this village or in others not far away. On the third day I recovered enough energy to want to see for myself the locality and the physical set-up of army headquarters and civil government that had moved to this primitive place.

"Three types of organization are needed to carry on the collective life of a large area," said General Po I-po, a large, efficient-looking man who was political commissar of the army. "These are the civil government, the army headquarters and the various voluntary associations, such as the farmers' union, the trade unions, the women's and young folks' associations, the cooperatives, the Communist Party. There are about six hundred people in the top leadership of all these necessary organizations. They are all located in villages not more than two miles away.

"The village where you are staying houses the army headquarters. A little less than two miles away is the 'people's council', and the various government departments. In a third village, which makes with these two a rough triangle, are the headquarters of the voluntary organizations. In other villages scattered about are special organizations like our newspaper, book department, the radio with which we can speak to most of China.

"We have here all the organizations that need to be near each other for effective work. When there is any general problem, such as the land reform or the all-out defense of the area, we hold a meeting of all top-flight leaders of army, government and voluntary organizations. Every system assumes its share of the work and carries it out all over the area. In defending the area, for instance, the army headquarters can only give orders to the regular troops. The civil government sends instructions at the same time to the people's militia and also arranges for the transport of supplies. The Communist Party, the farmers' union, the women's and youth organizations, all have their part to play. The same happens if the question is that of land reform. All these forces—government, army and voluntary organizations—can be brought into action at once from here."

That was the set-up. As I went among these villages, I saw that there was little to distinguish them, either from the earth or the air, from thousands of other villages. If the air reconnaissance of the enemy had swooped low, what was there to be seen? There were no troops; there were only the few village guards. There was no transport except the peasant carts and laden donkeys, an occasional messenger on bicycle who could have hidden at first sight of the plane, and, once in a long while, an ancient truck.

If a stranger had approached one of these villages by any one of a dozen paths, he would have found a small boy playing by the roadside or perhaps sitting on a rock. The boy would have sprung to block his approach, demanding: "Your road-pass, please". If the stranger had no pass, he would be stopped.

"How would you stop us"? I asked one small village sentry—he could not have been over eleven years old—who demanded identification papers from three men accompanying me. "We are four grown-up

people. If we walk right past you, what could you do"?

"I could yell, couldn't I? Then the militia would come running", replied the boy.

The village militia were equipped to handle any ordinary intruders. And if, by remote chance, a strong force of enemy troops should break past the regular army defending the frontier, or enemy planes should learn of the location and come to bomb, then the entire government and army headquarters, with the chiefs of the Communist Party, the farmers' union, the cooperatives and the other top chiefs of affairs of the area, could be on the move in a couple of hours to some other cluster of villages, where they could function equally well. They could move thus, anywhere in the area, recognized and hidden by the people.

A few doors down my street was army headquarters. Even after visiting it twice it was hard for me to find it again without a guide. The cobble-stoned streets and the walls and the entrances looked alike. Just inside one entrance there was a sentry standing, but you didn't see him till you had passed the outer door. Then he stopped you; he had a bayonetted rifle. Passing him, you came to a court from which many rooms opened. You entered one of the rooms.

Six men in rather dusty uniforms sat around a long table in a 12 x 20 ft. room as I entered. Behind them the wall was covered with maps from floor to ceiling. Four small desks stood in the four corners of the room and at each sat a secretary.

"This", said Commissar Po I-po, "is our general staff".

I had asked him to show me the technique of the army's staff work. "Here is our chief-of-staff", he introduced the man at the head of the table. "Here is our secretary-general", I recognized General Tao who had travelled with me from Hantan. "Here are the heads of G1, G2, G4, and I am the commissar. The head of G3 is absent on business. Otherwise we are all here except our commander-in-chief General Liu Po-cheng, who has gone to one of the fronts. He can reach us any time by phone".

Po I-po pointed to a telephone on one of the desks. It was the only modern instrument in the room. "That phone connects with ten thousand miles of line and one thousand phones", he stated. "We connect with all our fronts, with our rear services, with all important cities and with the government departments. We captured the equipment bit by bit from the Japs. Now we are capturing American telephone equipment. It is better than that of the Japs. You can use on it either voice or morse".

They showed me captured American weapons—a "Remington Rand pistol", and an "Underwood carbine". "These are samples brought for study. Most of the captured weapons remain at the front for use. We have also captured heavy artillery, tanks and bazookas."

They pointed to the maps on the wall; they were detail maps of the area. "We took them from the Japs. The Japs make good maps. We have mounted them on sheets of cotton so that they can be quickly hung or taken down."

At a word of command, an orderly brought in sample cases from the secret archives. These were neatly filed in tin boxes or in leather knapsacks. "Everything in our headquarters," said Po I-po, "can be taken down and packed in half an hour. It can all be transported on two mules and the backs of a few men. It can be set up in one hour in any place to which we go."

"We have about two hundred men at headquarters, not counting orderlies and sentries. We include in this village our operations, intelligence, departments of discipline and education, military administration and personnel and our signal corps. We do not include here our rear services, i.e., supplies and transport, medical department, weapons and ammunition. These departments need not even be in the same county. They are placed according to convenience and we connect with them by messengers, telephone or radio.

"The city of Hantan was, of course, a convenient place to work in. It had electric lights and better accommodation. But there

are also some advantages in working in a village. There are fewer distractions. In a city one has social affairs and becomes inclined to bureaucracy. Here everything is quiet and we can better concentrate on our work."

The daily program of work, they said, was as follows. The members of the general staff rise at six, and give the first two hours to individual study. "I personally," said Po I-po, "am studying recent instructions from Chairman Mao on land reform, and also the reports that come from our villages. For theoretical study I am giving some time to Lenin's "Two Ways", written in 1906. Each of us has his individual program. At eight we breakfast together on rice and two vegetables. Then we assemble for about three hours' joint work. After this, the various heads of departments, of G1, G2 and so on, go to their own offices and direct the work of their subordinates. At four we have our second and last meal, which consists of wheat bread, two vegetables and tea. At five we take an hour's walk for recreation. Evenings are for miscellaneous work."

By a rough stone path that wound through rolling country I came to the village that housed the people's council and the departments of government. I passed on the way many donkeys carrying cotton to market, shoes for the army, big bundles of newspapers going from an obscure printing plant to various distribution centers. The village itself was just under the brow of a hill.

The atmosphere was gentler, more civilian, less snappy than at army headquarters. The secretary-general of the government was a mild-mannered woman named sun Wen-hsu. She had an office in a stone-flagged room some 10 x 12 ft. in size with paper windows giving adequate light. She had, she said, 13 offices for different sections of her work. She told me that some ten per cent of the civil service consisted of women.

Two hundred top leaders of government lived in this village, in rooms assigned by the village authorities among the farmers' families. Together with sleeping quarters and offices, they occupied one hundred and fifty rooms. "We crowd the villagers somewhat," admitted Miss Sun, "but they consider it an advantage to have the government here because we bring in many educated people, such as doctors, nurses and social workers and this improves the schools and hospitals here."

The Four Province Area, said Miss Sun, had grown from the anti-Japanese base established in 1937 in Southwest Shansi by General Liu Po-cheng under orders of Chu Teh. It had spread until it now included 193 counties, some of which had had elected governments established for several years while others had been liberated in the final overthrow of the Japanese. General elections to the people's congress of the area were held every two years in March. Such a general election was held in March 1925 over the greater part of the area, and was then supplemented in March 1946 by elections from newly liberated places.

The congress thus elected contained 750 members, and had chosen a standing committee of forty-four, with a chairman, a vice-chairman and a secretary-general. Chairman Jung Wu-shung—the governor—had first been elected as a deputy from his county where he was so popular that, with fifteen candidates and four to be chosen, he polled 142,000 of a possible 150,000 votes. He had won his reputation as a leader in the famous "Dare-to-Die" local guerrillas. This was not a Communist army at first but joined them later.

Governor Jung, to whom Miss Sun introduced me, told me that the government had been able to balance its budget from 1942 to 1944, on a taxation rate that ran from ten to thirteen per cent of the farmers' crops. "This year we shall have a deficit", he said, "because we drew up the budget in January and did not expect the war. Besides, we are administering a larger area than before.

"Ours is a strong and self-sufficient area", he concluded. "We can feed ourselves and have a surplus. We can also clothe ourselves and have a surplus. We have grain, cotton, fruits, nuts, pepper, tobacco. We have also coal and iron. We have everything—we need but peace.

"Last summer we expected peace but now we know that we may have to defend ourselves indefinitely, for perhaps five, ten, fifteen or twenty years. We have therefore fixed our army at a size that can be maintained for a long period." Governor Jung added that they had fixed on three to four hundred thousand as the size that could defend the area, "not perfectly but adequately and eventually even take back lost cities", but that was not too much for the people to support year after year. Their enlistment campaign therefore took place in only a few counties, "because the war may be long and we do not wish to bother the same counties again soon."

It was the only country I ever saw that budgetted its army in wartime to a size that could be indefinitely kept up.

I went sight-seeing through the village with Miss Sun to see the headquarters of some of the departments. The finance chief had a 10 x 12 ft. office with files of records neatly clipped to tapes running along the wall. The chief of the archives had a dirt floor but a high ceiling and considerable storage space. There was a mimeograph in one corner, probably the first that the village had seen. Records were in tin boxes easily transportable.

We dropped into the government's mailing bureau, a room with dirt floors and walls, with two large wooden tables near the door for sorting mail and a plank bed for the postal clerk at the rear of the room. Long sheets of heavy cotton were fastened to the walls to which were stiched pockets marked with names: "People's Council", "Public Security", "Department of Agriculture", "Railway and Highway Administration", "Hantan Municipality". Piles of books on the floor were waiting to be wrapped.

"The pockets on one wall are for incoming mail and the other for outgoing mail," explained Miss Sun. "Our post office can be rolled up and put on the back of a donkey in half an hour."

We passed the village cooperative, an unpretentious room where farmers were bringing surplus cotton and buying salt, kerosene, paper and cigarettes. The manager said that there were two hundred members in the village and that I would find similar cooperatives in all the villages of the Four Province Area.

The four o'clock dinner with Governor Jung and a dozen department chiefs had been prepared in Miss Sun's office. They were a group of highly educated people; almost everyone had a university degree. Chia Chien, the judge, was a graduate in law from Chaoyang University in Peiping. Fan Jung-yi, chief of reconstruction, had graduated in economics from Tokyo University. Yuan Chi-ho, chief of civil affairs, was a graduate of engineering from Shansi University. Others came from other institutions of higher learning in China and abroad.

These highly educated people were living and working in high spirits on a standard of living of a not very prosperous peasant. When I asked about their salaries they laughed and said that until recently they had been getting thirty **"gitsao"**—the local currency—as a monthly cash salary in addition to their rations, but they had just decided to give it up "to help save the budget in the new emergency of the self-defense war".

"And to save our own time in drawing it," laughed one of them, "because thirty **gitsao** will now buy just one box of matches."

The rations—which were the real salary—consisted of two meals daily of rice or wheat with soup and two vegetables. They got two suits of summer clothes annually, for the area is a warm one, but only one-third of a winter suit a year.

"Do you want to know what one-third of a suit is?" laughed the judge of the Supreme Court, taking off his coat, and showing it to me. "See these three patches inside. These are this year's goods. Part of the padding is also new." Everyone guffawed at this.

They offered to show me the government treasury. We went through a court in which a peasant woman was cooking her husband's meal and came to a small unguarded room in which stood a wooden chest, the size of a steamer trunk. "That contains the government money," they laughed.

"Your gold reserve?" I asked.

"Oh, no! The gold, silver and valuables on which the people's currency is based are much more serious. They are well secured in another village with the state bank that makes the loans to farmers. This box is just the cash we need to run the government for thirty million people."

I joined in the laughter and then told them of an American friend who said that you cannot blame the Kuomintang officials for grafting. "They have to, he says, because of their small salaries. What do you folk think of that argument?"

I got a different answer from the one I expected. Everyone grinned and Chairman Jung replied: "That's not the reason. Kuomintang officials have to graft because if one of them should work hard and refuse to steal the people's money, Chiang Kai-shek would call him a Communist!" Everybody laughed some more at that.

Was it really possible that this group of merry people, living so informally and so isolated under such harsh conditions, had government power in their hands in an area of thirty million people? I thought of the impcsing buildings and well-staffed offices commonly connected with government and wondered whether real power could be so informally expressed. But in the following days when I visited the county congress of Labour Heroes and the review of county militia in Wu An County, I realized that the group I had met in the hills was the government that the people recognized. They had elected it, they carried out its instructions and they knew how to reach it in time of need.

It also became clear that this hidden government could carry on because much of the government business was carried on by the people. That congress of Labor Heroes was impressive as it planned the all-round development of its county.* The people themselves were governing in village and county. The business of the government of the Four Province Area was to correlate the people's activities and not to dictate the details. It operated on that old American maxim: "That government is best that governs least." It came from a period when America too had a decentralized farm economy.

That the people were ready to defend it was clear in that review of four thousand militia-men. They were an upstanding bunch, without full uniforms but all wearing some insignia that distinguished them from the crowd. Some villagers wore bright green putties, others had tan ones, others wore special belts or caps. All had rifles and many of these were decorated for the occasion with bright colored paper rosettes. They went through simple manouvers with snap and vigor. They sat cross-legged on the ground and listened to several short speeches. Dozens of the militia-men themselves asked for the floor and got it. They spoke well.

My presence seemed to interest them especially. They gave a cheer for "the friendship of the American and Chinese people," and then at once asked me to "take my warships out of Tsingtao." They discussed at some length the proper authorities to be approached to get that American navy out. Then one man asked if the "correspondent from America" had any way of getting a letter to the United Nations. I replied that I was flying to Peiping in the morning and could easily send a message through.

They applauded at that and drew up their resolution. It was a hot one and very effectively phrased. "To the United Nations, from 330,000 people of Wu An County in the Liberated Areas of China," it began. They expressed their "respect to all the countries that work for the peace of the world". They mentioned their own "eight long years of resistance" to the Japanese aggressors. Then they asked for "effective stoppage of the American military intervention in China's internal affairs", demanded that the United States "fulfil its duty as a member of the United Nations", and that the United Nations set up a committee "for justly dealing with the United States for its illegal acts in China".

It was passed with uplifted fists and most of those fists held rifles with bayonets in

* See Chapter: New Farmer.

the air. They were a tough lot of self-respecting citizens, those militia-men. It was clear from their resolution that they had a sense of government, not only of a county and an area but of the whole world. There were a million such militia-men in the Four Province Area, defending that hidden government in the hills.

It was nearly dark when the review ended. The sun had left the grove and the level wheat fields while the distant hills were purple against gold. It would be late before we could reach Hantan as we must that night. They asked me, however, to wait in the reviewing stand and let the militia-men leave first. I understood why when I reached the road. I found four thousand armed men lined up at attention in two long lines that stretched far down toward Hantan in the dusk. I said goodbye to the county officials, took my seat by the driver and drove jolting along the dusty road between a guard of honor with rifles and bayonets.

At our late supper Colonel Alexander was too discreet to ask directly just where and how I had gone. He tried to approach it by many courteous questions about what I had seen on my trip. It was no secret to anyone that I had been to Wu An. But beyond Wu An, I knew from his questions, he was guessing the wrong road.

Chapter 21

STRATEGY AGAINST SUPERIOR ARMS

"I have traded seventeen empty cities for sixty thousand of Chiang's troops," said General Liu Po-cheng of the Four Province Area in late 1946. "It is said that Chiang likes the bargain and intends to keep on. That's okay with me."

General Liu then quoted a little Chinese verse, for he is a scholarly man:

"If you keep men and lose land,
The land can be taken again;
If you keep land and lose men
You lose both land and men."

These remarks high-light two different strategies, so different that it is surprising that they could meet even in battle. Chiang Kai-shek concentrated on taking the Communist cities. The Communists concentrated on taking Chiang's troops. Both for a time claimed spectacular victories, each in his own sphere.

Chiang's victories made good headlines. He occupied nearly all the capitals of the Liberated Areas: Hwaiyin, Changteh, Kalgan and finally Linyi and Yenan. At one time or another he took more than two hundred cities in those areas. You could look at a map and see how much territory he got. Yet after a year of war, raging over an area equal to that of the United States east of the Mississippi, Chiang had not opened a single railway across North China throughout its length. The Communist guerrillas looked down on Peiping from the Western Hills, and Tientsin, that modern metropolis, appropriated eight million dollars in gold for a medieval moat and fortifications against the Communists.

The Communists seldom defended cities. They evacuated all their capitals as the enemy approached. It made Chiang's precautions look almost silly when his troops after carefully inching their way for week towards Linyi, mopping up a wide belt to avoid ambush, found an undefended city that had been empty five days. The Communists did not defend even Yenan. They left it swept quite clean when Hu Tsung-nan's troops arrived. Were they then so easily vanquished? Or had they a new baffling strategy?

"By orthodox military strategy we should deploy our best troops to defend our capital and consider how long we could hold it," said General Chen Yi of Shantung, discussing the evacuation of Yenan. "We are not doing any of this. We are considering how many of Chiang's troops we can annihilate in their sorties, how long before his casualty rate will force his withdrawal and how to diminish his armies still further during their retreat. We should never make the mistake that Chiang made in 1937 when he used up all his best troops defending Shanghai and Nanking. When they were defeated, his armies were crushed."

The Communists concentrated on annihilating Chiang's forces. Even the small boys in Yenan knew that. They kept count on "annihilated brigades" as American boys do on the Worlds' Series. The Communists aim was not so much to kill as to capture, though in battle of course they did both. They specialized in encirclements and tried to take as many men as possible intact. They counted on getting their own replacements in men and munitions by capturing Chiang's men and converting them in a few days after capture.

The aim of the Communist strategy is that their armed force should grow and the enemy force diminish. They have followed this aim with considerable success for twenty years.

The Communist strategy is a very conscious strategy. It was worked out by able

men. Their generals have military records as good as or better than any in China and that rank high among military records of the world. All the leading Communist generals were officers in the Northern Expedition that in 1927 established the Nanking government of Chiang Kai-shek. Years earlier than that, Chu Teh led a battalion in the revolution that overthrew the Manchus and established the Chinese Republic. Later he studied the strategy of the first world war on the battlefields of Europe. Peng Teh-hwai commanded a regiment in that Northern Expedition; Ho Lung at that time commanded twenty thousand men. Liu Po-cheng was a well-known Szechwan general when he joined the Kuomintang forces in 1927. Lin Piao in those days was a recent graduate from the Whampoa Military Academy and marched north at the head of a company.

All of these generals have had twenty years' experience of active combat since those days. They have had famous victories, few of which got past the Kuomintang censorship to the world. * All of these generals, however, give first credit to Mao Tse-tung. He worked out the long-range strategy by which the Communist armies have grown for twenty years. Like all long-range strategy it is both military and political. It is likely to be used in other colonial or semi-colonial lands whose people defend themselves against enemies armed with modern weapons of war. It was made to fit such people.

The strategy is based on a cold-blooded estimate of all the resources—military, political, economic—of the opposing sides. The enemy has superiority in military strength and especially in weapons. Against this the Communists have their own superiorities in territory where the people support them. They have their connection with the people, their knowledge of the terrain, their knowledge of the enemy's movements which the people report. They have the local militia, the **"Min Ping,"** who will fight hard to defend their homes.

"There must be full reliance on the power of the people for our survival, success and development," is the first basic principle of strategy, as given me by Lu Ting-yi in Yenan. The Communists, in other words, must stake their existence on their ability to gain the people's active help and on the faith that the population of a large area, if well organized and well led, can resist a technically superior enemy.

Several things follow from this "full reliance on the power of the people." The Communists must not engage in any war which the people consider aggressive, and will therefore not support. Such a war is doomed at the start for men with inferior arms. Moreover, in all routine measures, such as conscription, the Communists must keep the people's support. They cannot indulge in long lines of conscripts roped together, such as one sees in Kuomintang areas. When one hears, as one does in Kuomintang areas, tales of Communist high-handedness or atrocities, there is one clear answer. Such things may happen, but if they do, the Communists will probably lose that place. If they violate the local conscience of the people, even the Communist leaders don't think they can win.

It also follows that they must give the people something to fight for. The harder the fight, the more incentive must be given. That was the strategic reason for hastening the land reform in 1946. It aroused, even among war-weary folk, new enthusiasm to defend their land. When Chiang attacked cities or railroads, the Communists evacuated the cities, carried the rails to the hills and turned attention to getting land for the farmers. Thereupon Chiang's strategic cities proved lonely garrisons, drowned in a hostile countryside.

One more thing follows, and this is a grim sequel, that it is advantageous to let enemy penetrate some distance into a Communist area so that battles can take place where the invader is surrounded by a hostile population and where the People's Liberation Armies can make full use of the **"Min Ping"** and all their local support.

Commander-in-chief Chu Teh told me: "We let them penetrate to the heart of our area. They establish themselves in cities. When they send out detachments for grain, we chop them off. When we

* See Chapter: **Yenan Fights To The Sea.**

have chopped them enough, we take back the cities." Put that way, it didn't sound likely. But it worked.

The Communist generals frankly admit the enemy's initial superiority. "When the enemy comes, he is stronger than we," was said to me by many people in Yenan. "He has good arms, arsenals and foreign support and we haven't. It is under these conditions that the means of defeating him must be sought. So when the enemy comes, let him come. If he wants this or that city, let him have it. Our army should retire where the enemy cannot find us. We get news from the people and know when to strike. We watch for the enemy's mistakes and help create them. By a surprise attack at the right place and moment we change the enemy's strategical superiority into our superiority in a single battle. When we have enough such battles, we win."

Mao Tse-tung once put it more bluntly. "Fight only when victory is certain. Run away when it is impossible....Every military man admits that you must sometimes run. Only they do not run as much as we do....We march much more than we fight ....but every march is for the sake of the fight."

The Communists are not even interested in driving the enemy back. "He will only return with fresh weapons," they told me, "while we have used up our ammunition and cannot easily get more. We can only call it a victory when we gain in both men and munitions." This is the iron law of an army forced to husband its resources.

So they postpone battle until they can take the enemy by a surprise encirclement. They even pick the best enemy divisions, to get the better munitions. A former Kuomintang officer who saw service against the Communists in Shantung said that the Communists encircled and captured two nearby American-equipped divisions but sent a New Years' greeting to his division saying: "Do not worry! You are not our objective, for you have no American arms." Liu Po-cheng's men started a competition between detachments as to which could capture the most American-made arms. The Communist troops don't like to fight General Yen Hsi-shan's troops because they are so badly equipped that there is no profit in it.

I found it a bit irritating at first to hear the Communists talking of "victories" while Chiang was steadily taking their county towns. General Liang Chun, chief of operations in the Four Province Area, explained to me how even the loss of those towns meant strategic gain. "Chiang sends four or five hundred thousand men against us, while we have only three hundred thousand in our regular army, and these are poorly armed. But as Chiang takes cities, he must tie up men to garrison them. We never need to use our regular army for garrison duty, for this is done by our **'Min Ping.'** At the moment we have given up twenty-five cities, and these have tied up more than two hundred thousand of Chiang's troops, so already we have more men in the field than Chiang has. We are therefore ready to counter-attack." Sure enough, they did counter-attack and got not only troops but the towns back.

The Communists expect such a war to be protracted since it involves wearing down a superior enemy. The strategy varies with the stage of the war. "When our armed forces are very small and the enemy superiority very evident," said Lu Ting-yi, "we must carry on guerrilla warfare. When our regular forces are established, they must be coordinated with widespread fighting by local forces and village militia. When the living force of the enemy is worn down, then we go into counter-attack—but still very carefully—to take back cities and territory."

This strategy is so different from the traditional warfare that many foreign military writers speak of it as guerrilla war. The Communists themselves distinguish sharply between guerrilla actions, which are carried on by their local forces, and the warfare of their regular armies, which is mobile warfare often on a very large scale and of a very high order.

In North Kiangsu, for instance, the Communists were forced into what they call guerrilla tactics. This area, directly across the river from Nanking and Shanghai, is

very accessible to attack. Chiang sent very large forces into it and heavy fighting continued for six months. There is much open plain and many railways and highways, which make defense difficult against superior weapons. The Communists' regular army under General Su Yu manouvered for some time in the area, fought many engagements and claimed to have "annihilated" more than 135,000 of Chiang's troops. Eventually, however, it withdrew to the northern edge of the area, still undefeated and some fifty per cent larger than before by the capture and conversion of large numbers of Chiang's men.

Meanwhile the struggle within the area was carried on by the local forces and the **"Min Ping."** Chiang's troops fortified the towns and set up blockhouses along the highways but did not venture far from these shelters except in force. The land reform went on within sight of the blockhouses.* Small town merchants carried on "guerrilla marketing," hiding their wares in the remoter villages at the approach of Chiang's troops and bringing them out again for market-days, which were held in towns not at the moment under attack. The elected government of the area—the governor was the poet Li I-man and the deputy governor was Professor Wei Chueh, a returned student from America and former secretary to Dr. Sun Yat-sen—kept on collecting taxes and making loans to farmers. It claimed to control the area economically from its village hide-out, with a system of free trade in rural areas and a permit system for trade with "enemy-held towns."

Such is what the Communists call a "guerrilla area."

Very different are the big areas further north such as Shantung, Chin-Cha-Chi or the Four Province Area. These areas, even when defending themselves, are able to maintain a stable, peaceful productive life in the greater part of their rural districts. Land reform, production drives and even tree-planting drives go on. This orderly life of a large rear enables the regular army to defend the area in a protracted war.

In any part of an area that is invaded, the regular army calls on the village militia and the local forces for active guerrilla action correlated with the regular army's campaign.

A typical example of the encirclement and annihilation of a Kuomintang division occurrred in South Shansi in autumn of 1946, and was achieved by excellent coordination between the regular army and the local guerrillas in several localities. Details were given me by Colonel Chang Tse-chang, chief-of-staff for General Chen Keng, whose strategy won the victory.

In the spring of 1946, General Hu Tsung-nan, whose forces were among Chiang's best, moved into South Shansi "to help General Yen open the railroad". The Communists retired from most of the railway towns without fighting, and by late summer General Hu held quite a long stretch of line. He couldn't operate it, for the Communists had taken the rails. Then the Communists allowed word to reach General Hu that their main forces were at An Tze, about seventy miles from his headquarters city Linfen. Hu sent two divisions and part of a third converging on An Tze, "to finish the Communists once and for all". Fifteen miles out of his own headquarters General Hu lost his famous first division, by a surprise encirclement.

The Communists, who had been much nearer than An Tze, had been informed of every move Hu made. When the first division halted on its first night out, the Communists' main forces swept down on both sides of it, cutting it off from Linfen and from all other possible rescuers. The division commander, General Huang, radioed for help, but local guerrillas near Linfen were keeping the troops of that city busy, while other local guerrillas harassed and detained the other Kuomintang forces that might have come to the first division's aid. The first division, a crack American-equipped division, fought hard for twenty-four hours and lost sixteen hundred in killed and wounded. The remaining 5,700 surrundered, together with their commander-in-chief.

More than five thousand men marched northward, prisoners of the Eighth Route Army. They wore American uniforms and American garrison hats. "Look at the 'Made in America' hats", jeered the pea-

* See Chapter: **Land To The Tiller.**

sants as they passed them. "Look at the 'Made in America' soldiers. Came to kill Chinese people!" By the end of the day five thousand garrison hats littered the dusty roadside. They were useless in combat or for protection against weather and they had been made ridiculous by the Shansi peasants. The once proud wearers had thrown them away. After a few days' mutual discussions, most of these soldiers joined the Eighth Route Army. With them had been captured large quantities of modern American weapons which they knew very well how to use.

"Hasn't the Kuomintang ever encircled you?" I asked Colonel Chang.

"Never", he replied. Then he remembered and qualified. "A platoon of ours was encircled once near Wenhsi, and lost twenty of its thirty men. We, on the other hand, encircle whole divisions. We can do this because they fight on our territory and the people help surround them. The invaders cannot encircle us because we move easily in our own hills among our own people".

The largest encirclements took place in Shantung. Chiang's total losses there seem to have been fabulous. One such encirclement cost him over 50,000 men, while a series of three, that occurred within two months, took a toll of 100,000. The exact numbers may be disputed by the statistician. But the American correspondent Betty Graham, who reached the scene a few hours after one of those battles, saw the great heaps of American-made equipment, the "cocky young village militia" who had come from scores of distant villages to assist General Chen Yi's army in the surprise encirclement, and the long lines of tens of thousands of prisoners filing to the rear. The chief captured general, Li Sien-chow, who had been commander-in-chief of the seven encircled divisions and deputy commander-in-chief of the entire Shantung offensive, later gave an interview to a Shantung correspondent in which he blamed his superior officer Chen Cheng for his defeat.

"Chen Cheng wanted the sole glory of taking Linyi and left me in a trap when I radioed for help", he declared.

Chiang staked heavily on that Shantung offensive. He threw into it over three hundred thousand men. He himself visited the front. Among the commanders directly participating were his ablest army organizer Pai Chung-hsi, Minister of National Defense, Chen Cheng, the chief-of-staff and Chou Chu-ju, commander-in-chief of the airforce. Never in the entire history of the Japanese war or any other war in China have so many top-flight military leaders taken charge at the front. There was an equally heavy concentration of the American Army instructors, according to the correspondent of **Agence France Presse,** who visited the Hsuchow headquarters at the time.

With all these commanders and advisers, Chiang's divisions moved from several directions against Linyi, the capital of the Shantung Liberated Area. The main columns advancing from the south and east met little resistance, but feared ambush and therefore went very slowly, clearing the hills as they went. After sixteen days they entered Linyi and found a deserted city. The Communist troops had moved rapidly northward, after mobilizing the village militia. They fell upon Chiang's northern column of seven divisions and trapped it in a valley five miles long with high cliffs. They opened attack on the evening of February 21st; after sixty-five hours of fierce fighting, all that were left of some 57,000 men surrendered. These included the three divisions of the American-equipped 73rd Army, the three divisons of the 46th Army, and the New 36th Division of the Twelfth Army.

General Li Sien-chow, the commander-in-chief who surrendered with his armies, stated that he had foreseen this possible predicament and had radioed for help or a change of orders, but that his superior officer Chen Cheng had replied: "I am commander-in-chief." He believed that Chen Cheng had risked and eventually sacrificed those 57,000 men so that he himself might be first to reach Linyi. Whether or not he was correct in his charge, there could not be a better example of the con-

trast between the two strategies than this campaign. Chiang gained a prestige victory— for Linyi made headlines—but lost thereby not only 57,000 men in a single encirclement, but also therewith the control of the strategic Tsinan-Tsingtao railway, by whose use he had hoped to pry open the great north-south Tientsin-Nanking line.

General Li Tao of the Communist general staff, discussing with me the Shantung battles, noted a previous encirclement in which the Peoples' Liberation Armies had destroyed one of Chiang's "blitz column." *(He had only three, and the Communists* later claimed that they got the others.) This column included a brigade and two regiments of infantry, an artillery regiment, a tank battalion, a reconnoitering battalion in automobiles and small tanks, an engineers' battalion ad a motor-car battalion. The official list of captured trophies included forty-eight motor-drawn howitzers, 380 motor cars, twenty armored cars and twenty-three tanks "that can be used at once" besides many disabled vehicles and "ammunition in great heaps."

"This is not guerrilla warfare," concluded Li Tao. "It is a war of manouver by regular troops of very high quality." He added that the captured equipment was quickly used in an attack on the city of Tsao Chwan. "Here our style changed because we had better weapons."

It mave be expected that the Communist strategy will change in many ways as they get more and better weapons.

"We study whatever weapons we have to use them to the best advantage," said General Chen Yi in an interview to Betty Graham after his Shantung victory. "Since we have rifles, we make exhaustive study of the ways to use rifles. Now that we have some American bazookas, tanks and howitzers, we study the best use of these. But if we had only knives, we would learn how to use these most skilfully. Naturally we would not use them on a battlefield against modern equipment. But eventually the enemy would come in small groups to our villages and then we would use knives."

A large proportion of Chen Yi's troops are now American-equipped with captured weapons. They had American stuff even to the belt buckles but they threw away the American combat boots. "They are too heavy," they say. "We can make forty miles in a march in our light sandals."

Chen Keng in South Shansi also changed his strategy after he had annihilated five brigades and taken their weapons. He then stormed five walled cities, breaching the walls with artillery fire so fierce that the Kuomintang officers holding them radioed to Nanking: "The Communists have the atom bomb"!

The strongest of these cities was Hsihsien, headquarters of Chiang's West Shansi military district, protected by two massive walls. "We first took the hills on both sides and set up our new artillery to blast a gap in the walls," related Colonel Chang, the Communist chief-of-staff. "Then we went over on scaling ladders, for even the gap was fifty feet high." He added that Chen Keng was a specialist in taking walled cities, having taken several from the Japs.

The Communist strategy paid out by spring of 1947. They began to take back cities. Whereas Chiang had taken one hundred and sixty county towns of the Liberated Areas in the first six months of civil war in 1946—one quarter of all their county towns—the Peoples' Liberation Armies recovered one hundred and one from February to April 1947, while Chiang took sixty-seven. Many, of course, were taken back and forth.

Taking of towns was not to the Communists the chief sign of victory. They claimed to have wiped out seventy-nine of Chiang's brigades (formerly divisions) in units of battalion size and more. They claimed to have killed fourteen of Chiang's generals in battle and to have captured one hunderd and thirty-six. They gave the names. They claimed, moreover, to have "annihilated" more than nine hundred thousand of Chiang's forces, including regulars and recommissioned puppets. If the figure seems incredible the Communists reply that 543,829 of that number passed through their hands as prisoners, of whom 294,304 were from Chiang's regular troops

and 149,525 were from his recommissioned puppets.

Between three and four hundred thousand of those half million prisoners are doubtless now fighting in the Peoples' Liberation Armies. An essential part of the Communist strategy is a technique for converting captured men. General Liang Chun told me how they did it and I have heard the same from many others, including ex-prisoners.

Immediately after capture the officers are separated from the soldiers and sent to an officers' school in the rear. Some of them eventually change sides but they are not much wanted. "It is very hard to change the thinking of a feudal officer," the Communists say. "It was hard even for our own generals to learn to behave democratically among their troops." The Communists think that the captured officers will eventually "just go home."

Rank-and-file soldiers, disarmed, are approached by political workers and reminded of their past sufferings: how the landlords oppressed them, how the army grabbed them, how senselessly they fought for the landlord's rule under officers who beat them. "Bitterness-Revealing meetings" are held in which soldiers are invited to tell their troubles. They often weep in telling, and this moves the others. In a week or two they are asked to decide either to go home or to stay with the Peoples' Liberation Armies. Prisoners whose homes are near often choose to go and are then given "travel money." The one thing they most dread is that they may again be caught by Chiang's army. Disabled men or "vagabond elements" are not allowed to stay.

"Seventy to eighty per cent of them stay with us," said General Liang. "They are attracted by our democracy and by the fact that they can talk freely with the officers. Most of them are from poor farming families and are stirred by our land reform. We mix them among other soldiers and ask our more experienced men to make them feel at home quickly by especially friendly treatment."

I talked with two ex-prisoners who were working at army headquarters in the Four Province Area. Their stories showed why they chose to stay.

Li Jung-chin, a homely-looking man of forty-six, had been a small town merchant in Szechwan. In 1940 he went to a city forty miles away to collect a debt. "The recruiters grabbed me on the way. I never even had a chance to send word to my old mother."

"Couldn't you run away? Did they tie you?"

Li replied that they had bound many others but he escaped this indignity by giving his word of honor not to run away. "I told them I was an honest merchant and my word was good."

Li was beaten many times in the army. "In the Kuomintang army," he said, "an officer may beat a soldier at will." On the night of September 9th he had been in the 45th Division of Chiang's armies when it was ambushed by the Communists. "It was a dark night. We were attacked from all sides and fell into confusion. One thousand of us were surrounded and captured. My mind was full of the thought that the Communists would kill us as our officers said."

Li said he was "given a rest" for several days and then asked whether he wanted to go home or join the Peoples' Liberation Armies. He replied: "I am too old to fight. Give me a job in the rear." He was sent to headquarters as a cook.

"Why didn't you go home"? I asked.

"It is very far to Szechwan. The Kuomintang would grab me again on the way. I will go home when peace comes."

Young Li Teh, the second ex-prisoner, was seventeen and small for his age. Three years ago, as a printer's apprentice in Szechwan, he was sent outside the wall to draw water. The recruiters "grabbed" him there, began to tie him with rope but desisted when the boy promised not to run. He became an orderly in Chiang's 30th Army.

"My officer did not beat me often," he old me. "Only sometimes very hard with a bamboo stick on the hand. He cursed me very much. I wanted him to write to my mother and brothers where I was but he wouldn't. I cannot write, and anyway I had no stamp."

Young Li's detachment was surrounded on the Pinghan line and captured after two days' fighting. "I was badly wounded in the hand and the Eighth Route sent me for a month to hospital." This impressed Li.

The officers in the hospital told him: "If you like to go home we will give you money for the road."

"No," replied Li. "I will stay here and follow Mao Tse-tung."

When I asked him why, he replied: "The Kuomintang would catch me. Officers here are good. Why should I be cursed and beaten again?"

He had been sent to the rear as too young to fight. He told nobody that he was qualified as a printer. He didn't want to be a printer. "I like better being a headquarters guard," he said with pride.

Generals of the Peoples' Liberation Armies of different areas have told me that from one sixth to one half of their present forces are recent prisoners of war. All said that these new recruits improved the quality of the army. "They have experience in modern weapons. They are very loyal. For they have felt the oppression of feudalism on their own bodies even more than the peasants in our areas have." General Liang Chun told me that a former prisoner, after less than two months in his army, showed him five rifles that he had captured and bragged: "I never captured a rifle for Chiang but I have captured five for you."

"Chiang's men are very good soldiers," said Mao Tse-tung to me. "They need only a little political training."

"Where else in world history", said Peng Teh-hwai, "will you find an army of a million and a half that gets its replacements in men and munitions from the enemy and thus grows steadily for twenty years?"

"The Kuomintang goes bankrupt but we can fight forever," stated Lu Ting-yi. "Our areas support themselves by the production movement, based on the land reform. Our army produces more than half of its food and clothes. For ammunition we depend on the enemy. Our transport problem is small for we keep our armies where the food is, except for occasional forced marches for attack. What is necessary is to give the people something to fight for and organize them. Then we can always win."

Chapter 22

THEIR LINE HAS GONE FORTH

"If the Chinese Communists did not call themselves Communists, thus raising the Russian bugaboo, they would not be so misunderstood in America," a New York correspondent argued with Mao Tse-tung. "If Americans realized that you support democracy, they would be for you. Why handicap yourself with that name"?

Mao Tse-tung replied that the trouble was not in the name. "For more than a hundred years and without reference to Russians or Bolsheviks, the western powers have always supported anti-democratic rulers in China."

In the T'aiping Rebellion, he instanced, the western powers gave armed assistance to the Manchua Emperor to crush the Chinese farmers in a slaughter that cost tens of millions of lives. Again from 1900 to 1917, when no "Russian bugaboo" existed, the western powers gave money and arms to help reactionary warlords against Dr. Sun Yat-sen's fight for a democratic Chinese Republic. Again in 1925-27, when the Northern Expedition of the Kuomintang was overthrowing reactionary warlords in South China, the western powers opposed the Kuomintang until Chiang Kai-shek suppressed all democratic organizations and slaughtered workers and farmers, after which they gave him financial and military support.

"In the hundred years since the Opium War, how many movements of liberation have been liquidated by the imperialists!

"Today the right wing of American monopoly capital seeks to rule the world. These reactionaries fight democracy everywhere, whether on the borders of the USSR or in the Philippines and Indonesia, whether in China or in the United States. The nature of the struggle remains the same. The fight is between democracy and anti-democracy, not between Soviet and anti-Soviet. The USSR is only used as a pretext. But there is a difference in the struggle since the smashing of Hitler and the Japanese militarists. The difference is that the peoples of the world, and even of America, have become more conscious. That is why the imperialists cannot start a third world war at once."

The constant talk about war between America and the Soviet Union, Mao Tse-tung told me on another occasion, is stirred up by reactionaries "as a smokescreen to hide the more immediate conflicts." These are between American reactionaries and the American people, and between American imperialism and the rest of the capitalist world."

"The American imperialists use anti-Russian fear as a pretext," said Mao, "to bring the rest of the capitalist countries under American control. It is a trick very like that of Hitler's. He raised the 'Russian bugaboo' and used it to take all the other countries of Europe first. The Japanese militarists used the same trick to cover their attacks on the Chinese people.

"I do not say that the American reactionaries do not want to fight the Soviet Union. They wish to do so. They dream of wiping out that socialist country which blocks them in their bid for world domination. But one cannot but suspect their purpose when just now, with World War II barely ended, they lay so much stress on war and create such a war atmosphere. Everyone knows that if America wants to fight Russia, she must do this through other countries, and especially through China, Great Britain and France."

It was after dinner in Mao's home, so he laughingly made his point by placing tea-cups and little wine-cups in a diagram on the table.

"See, here are the American reactionaries," he set a big tea-cup at one end of the table. "And around them are first the American people." A ring of tiny white wine-cups was placed. "Now here is the USSR"—tea-cup at the other end of the table.

"Between America and the USSR lie all the other capitalist countries." Mao marked these by a long zigzag line of cups of all sizes, eked out with match-boxes and cigarettes.

"Now, how can the American reactionaries fight the Soviet Union? First, they must attack the American people. They are already attacking the American people —using anti-Soviet fear, among other weapons, to suppress the workers and democratic elements both politically and economically. But to instigate war, they will have to attack the American people very much harder. The American reactionaries are preparing to introduce fascism in America, for without this they cannot make war. The American people should resist this, and I believe that they will.

"Now suppose the American reactionaries get past the American people. Next come the other capitalist countries of the world. Here in the Pacific the United States already controls more than all the former British sphere of influence. She controls Japan, China, half Korea and the South Pacific. She has long dominated Latin America. She thinks of controlling the British Empire and Western Europe. She uses finance capital to subjugate England and other capitalist countries. She uses commerce to bring pressure on the economic fabric of all the capitalist countries. She stirs up anti-Russian fear to the same end: to make these other countries her dependents."

I mentioned the air and naval bases that America has set up in a great circle around the USSR. These are not just anti-Russian fear, I said, but direct preparation for war.

"Certainly they can be used against the USSR," replied Mao. "But at present they are not on the territory of the USSR. They are on the territory of other capitalist nations. So the first people oppressed by them are not the Russians but the people of the various capitalist lands.

"Will the people of all these lands wait to be subjugated? Certainly not! They will rise and resist. Before long the British people will consider who is really oppressing them. Is it the USSR or is it America? Bevin's policy to unite with America against the Soviet Union will meet with opposition from the British people. The American reactionaries will find themselves one day opposed by the peoples of the entire world.

"I believe that, under the oppression of the American reactionaries, the American people should unite with the peoples of all the capitalist countries against the attacks of American imperialism in these countries. Only the victory of such a struggle can avert World War III....The victory of the democratic forces will come through the cooperation of the peoples; neither the Chinese nor the Americans alone can accomplish it.....In the coming year the worldwide front of the peoples of all countries including China — the front against the aggressive policy of America—will develop rapidly."

These words of Mao Tse-tung will startle and even anger many Americans. It is, however, a fact that the hostility to America grew rapidly in China in 1946, the year of the Marshall "mediation."

"A year ago students in Shanghai were beaten up by Chiang's political police because of the great demonstration they made to welcome Marshall", said Lu Ting-yi, speaking in Yenan on January 13, 1947, the anniversary of the "Cease Fire Order". "Today three hundred thousand students all over China are beaten up for the opposite kind of demonstration. They demonstrate demanding that America stop interfering in China's affairs." He added that this change was due to American foreign policy, which equipped a greater and bloodier civil war under cover of the Marshall truce than the "war policy" of Hurley.

During the anti-Japanese war, the Chinese of the Liberated Areas often risked their lives to save American airmen, who were shot down over their areas. What is the reason for the change of attitude now? Is it due to the Communist propa-

ganda? Or is it due to the "American" bombs and bullets that have been killing people all over North China: invalids in hospitals, women and children in market places, farmers at the plough?

The reason for the change may be judged from a story told me by an American colonel in Tsingtao, the great naval base of North China that was once held by Germany and then by Japan, and now—without any apparent treaty—by America. They were giving a supper dance to welcome the navy from Guam and it was a very gala affair. Four admirals in the receiving line, plenty of drinks going, and people becoming talkative as the night wore on. And there, between cocktails and dances, a colonel of the American intelligence entertained me with tales of Shantung.

"I'll give you an example of honesty that you couldn't match in the world", he began it. Then he told me how an American naval plane, flying over Shantung with the Christmas mail in 1945, had to throw out twenty-two sacks of mail over a distance of twenty-two miles in order to save the plane. Later this colonel flew to Linyi, the capital of the Shantung Liberated Area, and asked for help to find the jettisoned mail.

"That Communist government called on the farmers to hunt our mail. Guess how many bags they found".

"Are you going to say they found all twenty-two"?

"They found twenty-four", he triumphed. "Two sacks broke open and had other sacks inside. Some bags had been dug out of swamps; you could tell by the mud. Some were torn by falling in treees. But I don't think a single letter or package was lost".

"I hope you paid them well", I said.

"They said that it wasn't necessary. They said we were allies. The next time I flew to Linyi I took some cartons of cigarettes".

An hour later the colonel sat down at my table again, remarking: "You know, they're not so friendly in Linyi now. The last time I flew down they didn't receive me well. They had been strafed the day before by some of those planes we gave to Chiang. They had four dead and eight dying and a lot of buildings smashed. They took me around and showed me the spent ammunition they collected. It was American stuff. They said: 'That's not the way for America to help China'. They were really a bit grim".

I told him that I had wanted to visit Linyi but had heard one could not land there in a plane. He replied that the transports of Executive Headquarters could not land but the little planes of the Strategic Services could. He could send me down, he said. I thought about it for an hour. When he came around again it was midnight and he had had more cocktails.

"If I fix you a Linyi trip, what is there in it for me"? he began.

"What do you want"? I asked, taken aback.

"Information....Military dispositions... They'd let you see things that they won't let me see any more".

We left it at that. I never saw Linyi. Shantung was the strategic pivot of the civil war and this colonel wanted facts that might betray to extermination those honest folk who saved his Christmas mail.

It was from Tsingtao that the little planes of the American Strategic Services took off to fly low over Shantung, observing, mapping and photographing at will. It was from Tsingtao that other planes—they were called Chiang's now, but the instructors were still American—took off on four separate occasions to bomb and strafe the UNRRA ships as they tried to unload civilian relief at Shihchiuso. Those strafing planes from Tsingtao had made it necessary for Shantung farmers to dig air-raid shelters in the hillsides big enough to drive an ox-team into. Thousands of acres of Shantung's flattest, most fertile soil could not be ploughed because they had no shelter from those flights from Tsingtao.

The Shantung farmers made plenty of caustic comments about the terrific surplus of ammunition America must have, if Chiang's pilots could waste it on individual ox-teams, as they did. The one good thing the Shantung farmers said about the American training at Tsingtao was that "the Americans kept such regular mealtimes" that the farmers could count on ploughing without danger before nine in the morning, after five in the evening and from twelve to two at noon.

All over North China America has ceased to be the beloved ally and has become the source of the planes that bomb and strafe. Let diplomats and merchants of death explain that by the alchemy of a bit of paper, that plane is now Chinese, belonging to the lawful government of China! Chinese children and farmers, who know that China never made planes, will not cease to call it "the American", when it comes to terrorize and kill from the air.

"America" has become a name that frightens children. When Dr. Magdalen Robitzer, the staid and kindly UNRRA dentist, went into a Yenan kindergarten to prepare the children's teeth before their evacuation into the wilder hills, her appearance started panic.

"The American! The American!" wailed the youngsters, clinging to their teacher or rushing into the cold outdoors. The teacher calmed them by explaining that Dr. Robitzer was a friend who came to fix their teeth and that she was not an American but a Czech. The children had never heard of Czechs but the word quieted them. At least the Americans had not arrived.

What do these children under six-year old in the far northwest of China know of America?

They knew that every day for a week they had run to the air-raid shelter to hide from the "American planes". They knew that last night, in the caves that to them meant security and home, their fathers said goodbye to their mothers and gave them the last, long hug. They knew that they were setting forth, women and children first, into the unknown winter of the hills. They knew that they must travel at night, to hide from those "American planes". All these last goodbyes, all their terror and loss, were tied in their childhood minds to the word "American".

The UNRRA workers can give you other examples. One of the first occasions was the strafing of the International Peace Hospital, given by Madame Sun Yat-sen's China Welfare Fund to the people of North Kiangsu, who had suffered most grievously under the Japanese. The hospital was taken to its destination by UNRRA, and UNRRA officially notified Chiang's military headquarters of its exact location, so that they might respect it as civilian relief. When Chiang's planes almost at once came over, checked the location and then for two days in succesion came to give a "careful, deliberate, methodical strafing" of half an hour, the UNRRA doctor in charge was thunderstruck. The hospital of course was moved and concealed at once.

Later the UNRRA doctors and nurses took air attacks for granted in North Kiangsu and Shantung. I have held their reports in my hands: "Twenty-six women and children killed yesterday by strafing in the market"...."Unloading by night at Shihchiuso because all barges trying to unload by day are strafed"...."Trucks unloading UNRRA supplies at Chefoo thoroughly strafed." The most serious was the strafing directed for months against two or three hundred thousand Shantung farmers who, with belated and insufficient UNRRA supplies, tried desperately to repair dykes and prevent a flood that threatened eight million people when—as an UNRRA project—the terrible Yellow River was turned down its former, but long unused, channel.

It is the propaganda of the American weapons and especially the American planes, that has aroused hostility among the Chinese people. If the hostility is not yet often directed against individual Americans, this is perhaps due to the Communist propaganda which tries to teach the Chinese to distinguish between "American imperialists", who send planes, and the "American people", who may be friends. The distinction is fairly well accepted in the Liberated Areas. Sometimes incidents occur; a man who had lost an eye by an American plane tried to assault an American UNRRA worker in the hospital, and was restrained by the Chinese Communist doctor. But it is more common to meet tolerant peasants who tell you that America, like China, has both good and bad people, but that the reactionary American government, like Chiang's Chinese government, is bad.

These people of interior China have a surprising fund of information. In a Shantung military hospital, where the patients were discussing the "American weapons" from which they got their wounds, Betty Graham overheard the remark: "The trou-

ble is not with the American people but with Tu-lu-man (Truman) and his reactionary government. If Lu-so-fu (Roosevelt) were alive it might be better. It is too bad that Wha-la-se (Wallace) was not elected president, for everyone knows that he is a good friend of the Chinese people".

During the year of the Marshall mediation I think the Chinese of North China became convinced that if Chiang Kai-shek should be able to slaughter ten or twenty million Chinese, President Truman and General Marshall would do nothing to prevent, but might even keep right on supplying the weapons. There was good precedent in the Taiping Rebellion when the western powers gave means to slaughter tens of millions of Chinese.

I think I know the day when the Yenan leaders became convinced of this. It was that day in August when word came—in the midst of a rapidly widening civil war—that America had given two billion dollars worth of war supplies to Chiang Kai-shek. Later the U.S. State Department hedged and said that the stuff was worth only eight hundred million and that it was non-military stuff anyway. That didn't make much impression for how can such stuff be valued? In Shanghai prices—with war swinging into high gear—it might have been worth not two billion but four. While if the American army brought it, it was somehow useful for war.

I saw Mao Tse-tung that day. He had suffered a shock. "The imperialists have made their decision", he said. "Now the Chinese people must make their decision".

After that one heard them say all over the Liberated Areas, that "the illusion of peace" was over, and that they must prepare for an armed struggle that might last five to fifteen years. Not that Chiang can last so long. He is a weak and almost useless puppet. But beyond Chiang and after Chiang, the Chinese people in their struggle for democracy and independence now knew that all the way they might have to fight the weapons and wealth of America.

Yet I found more hope in these Yenan hills than I found in Shanghai or even in New York. Those villages in the arid lands where the children moved by night to escape the "American planes", where the farmers' militia had only red-tasselled spears against the American-mechanized invading troops of Hu Tsung-nan, had a supreme confidence that the reactionaries of America—even with their atom bomb—would in the end be smashed. It was a confidence not entirely shared in New York.

On the night before I left Yenan I had a final talk with Mao Tse-tung. It was not in his home, for he was already living ten miles outside the town in preparation for evacuation into still deeper hills. A bus load of Central Committee members came back for the evening to Yang Family Village, the regular headquarters of the Central Committee but already deserted, to attend a new play about the land reform. Afterwards we went into one of the caves—for one was as good as another—and orderlies brought in charcoal braziers for heat, candles for light, and tea, melon-seeds and candied peanuts for a farewell feast.

My hosts had warned me to leave on one of the last Executive Headquarters planes. "Otherwise it might be a year or more before you could easily get out to the world", they said. They were confident that in the end they would win, not only in Yenan Border Region, but in all China, in all the world. But strategy might dictate the evacuation of Yenan—as it did.

Thus Yenan was no longer the sole base of their activity; it was not even their most important base. Their line had gone forth through all North China and Manchuria. Their thought had gone forth into all China, and influenced people even in India and Indonesia. Their struggle had merged in a worldwide struggle. Nothing vital depended any longer on this primitive cluster of caves in China's northwest.

The people of Yenan had for some time discussed the evacuation and since the Chinese Communists are not in the least totalitarian—whatever that word means—one heard many different views. The village militia discussed the good American rifles they would capture to replace their red-tasselled spears. The young men in the offices said: "It's time we got into the war. This place is too much of a university. Our other areas grew strong in battle against the Japs".

Peng Teh-hwai, the strategist, said: "If Chiang takes Yenan, it begins his downfall. He wastes men and munitions on a place that yields him nothing, neither food, nor wealth, nor communications, nor strategic value but only prestige. If he wastes real values for prestige, he is finished".

So I asked Mao Tse-tung about the loss of Yenan, for his would be the responsible final word. "If you ask whether it is better to keep the city or to lose it, of course it is better to keep it", he said. "But if we lose it, we are still all right. A peasant war for livelihood and independence is not decided by taking or losing a city but by finding a solution to the agrarian problem".

"After you are shut off from Yenan", he said a little later, "you will hear terrible stories about us. Our enemies will spread lies when no correspondents can come for themselves to see. These lies will grow as our victories grow. Remember then what you have seen in all of our areas. Our people are orderly and our armies are among the most disciplined in the world".

I showed Mao Tse-tung a letter that had come by previous plane from a friend in New York. It breathed high tension. "We are in for a hard and bitter era. Our progressives make no dent in American foreign policy. They must fight to save even their own skins. I hope the Chinese Communists have no illusions about what the American government may do".

Mao Tse-tung smiled. No, he had no illusions. But he thought the American progressives were a bit too panicky. His words I must quote from quick notes and memory, uncorrected. But Mao's words have a way of compelling memory. The American progressives over-estimate the strength of the American reactionaries, he thought. It is a psychological weakness among the American progressives and also to some extent among the progressives of Great Britain. It is true that American imperialism is strong but also it is weak. One must analyse the nature of its strength.

"American imperialism is the strongest imperialism in history", he said, "but also the weakest in history. The sky-scraper is higher but the foundation is shakier. American capitalism seems strong not because of its own inner strength but because of the weakness of capitalism in all the other countries. It is a phenomenon of decay, not of blooming.

"Why do the imperialists help Chiang so enthusiastically? Not because he is strong but because he is weak. It is the same in Japan, in Greece, in Italy. Everywhere the reactionaries are in danger. That is why the imperialists rush to help....It is only now that so many reactionaries of the world are in mortal illness.

"The American reactionary has a heavy burden", Mao continued smiling. "He must sustain the reactionaries of the whole world. And if he cannot sustain them, the house will fall down. It is a house with one pillar".

He resumed the theme later, saying: "What is the strength of the imperialists? It lies only in the lack of consciousness among the people.....The democratic forces can beat them....Like all reactionaries in history, the American reactionaries will prove to be only paper tigers. It is the American people who are strong, who have lasting power".

After a moment he added: "Communist parties in various lands have real power also, because they arouse the people's consciousness. Here in China we Communists have only millet and rifle. We and the Chinese people will have many difficulties and long suffering. But in the end our millet and rifle will prove stronger than Chiang's airplane and cannon."

"There is also the atom bomb", I said, "and it is held by the American military".

Mao replied that he did not think the atom bomb would again be used in warfare. "Its great bursting over Hiroshima destroyed it. For, the people of the whole world turned against it....The birth of the atom bomb was the beginning of the end of the American imperialists. For they began to rely on the bomb and not on the people.

"The basic question is the consciousness of the people. It is not explosives or oilfields or atom bombs but the man who handles them. He is still to be educated. But in the end the bomb will not annihilate the people. The people will annihilate the bomb.

"In the postwar world and in China a very great people's movement has been developing for peace and democratic liberties. This movement must of necessity move towards victory. There is no power that can bring it to a halt."

At midnight the friendly orderlies brought fresh tea and new candles to the cave which for Mao Tse-tung was already only a temporary halt on the march. The light shone on the white arch of the ceiling, the dark flags of the floor, the rough stools and table and on Mao's face, relaxed and confident, as he discussed the future of the world.