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RED CHINA -- CATALYST OF WORLD REVOLUTION

by Hilde Macleod

- INTRODUCTION -

This brief documentary history of the Third Chinese Revolution is an attempt to set a much confused record straight.

When, in 1927, the Second Chinese Revolution was disastrously defeated, due in large measure to Stalin's fatal policies imposed on the young Chinese CP by the Comintern, we slapped the label "Stalinist" on the infant, unschooled CCP and, in essence, never looked back. It was Stalinist. Ipso facto it must be tainted with all the crimes of the Stalinist regime of the USSR.

We should heed Lenin's admonition:

Lenin, criticizing the Hungarian Communist, Bela Kun, said that he gives up the "most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism: the concrete analysis of concrete conditions." (Collected Works, Russian Ed. Moscow, Vol. XXXI, P. 143).

The ignoring of this "most essential thing in Marxism" caused our party to "miss the boat" in judging the greatest revolution of our generation. An honest objective comparison of the true history of the Third Chinese Revolution with reports of it in our press will show how a preconceived formula has built up a wall of error.

Our party has suffered immeasurably from this error.

Since the Cuban revolution -- an eye-opener to many -- some comrades, particularly among the youth, have been asking questions about China. What answer are they to be given? Will the party, as has been the case here in Los Angeles, continue to shove down their throats the 1955 Resolution on China? In the light of history that 1955 Resolution is an historical and political absurdity. Its tenets fly in the face of all well established historical facts.

* * *

No doubt some readers will complain: This account of the Chinese revolution is one-sided. What about the mistakes of the CCP?

That they made mistakes they have been the first to admit. "No one can rule guiltlessly and least of all those whom history compels to hurry." But for those who wish to read of CCP mistakes I recommend study of Mao Tse-tung's writings. He has expounded often on their mistakes both in theory and in practice. In fact the CCP has been so uninhibited in self-criticism that Simone de Beauvoir could write:

"These self-criticisms are so incisive, so uncompromising that, in manufacturing their indictments of the People's Republic, the

anti-Communist experts operating in Hong Kong, in America, in Paris, need simply lift out fragments from declarations published by the Chinese government. They tear them from their context and construct catastrophic prophecies on these false premises; and thus they achieve their effect." (The Long March.)

So I make no apology for not dwelling upon CCP mistakes. In fact, the deep sense of shame I feel for the record of our press in this respect, forbids it.

I -- PRELUDE TO REVOLUTION

In China, before 1917, Marxism was practically unknown. Then it came "in the wake of the messianic message and the concrete political program of Lenin." ("Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao" by Benjamin I. Schwartz, p. 27.)

The Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921. Practically without exception, the founding members were unschooled in Marxism. They had no connection with or little understanding of the working class. Only a year later, under directives of the Comintern, this inexperienced party entered the Kuomintang.

According to Mao Tse-tung: "As to the Chinese Communist Party in the period of the first united front, it was a party in its childhood and courageously led the Revolution of 1924-27; but it revealed itself as immature so far its understanding of the nature, tasks and methods of the revolution and consequently Ch'en Tu-hsiuism, which appeared in the last period of this revolution, was able to have its effects and caused the defeat of the revolution." (Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. 2, p. 30).

Chu Teh, Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army, gave to Agnes Smedley (in 1937) the story of his search for a Marxist education:

"Our study club in Luchow (1919) could not conceive of the proletariat guiding a revolution. We had no Marxist literature other than articles in magazines and we thought of the proletariat as servants, coolies, and salt workers who could not read or write. It was confusing because Communist writers who preached Marxism were themselves high professors, students and intellectuals and not workers.

" .. we talked, and talked, but got nowhere. Marxist study groups had been founded in a few places as early as 1919, but I knew nothing of them ... We didn't even have a copy of the Communist Manifesto, the first such literature to be translated into Chinese." (The Great Road).

From the first the CCP had been plunged into activity. There was little time or opportunity for a Marxist education. Compare their situation with that of the Bolshevik Party in 1917.

"Russia has attained Marxism, the only revolutionary theory, by dint of fifty years of travail and sacrifice, through the greatest revolutionary heroism, the most incredible energy and devotion in

seeking and educating through practical experience such as no other country had ...having come into existence on this granite theoretical foundation, Bolshevism went through fifteen years (1902-1917) of practical history which, in fertility of experience, had no equal anywhere else in the world." (Lenin, "Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder," p. 11.)

Yet the Bolshevik party was not immune from errors in both theory and practice.

The young Chinese CP was understandably awed and dominated by the Kremlin representatives who brought with them the great authority of the successful Bolshevik revolution. Is it surprising that they followed the Kremlin directives? But should that brand them forever with the stigma of Stalinist counter-revolution?

Even though the Kremlin directives were followed there were some who had doubts, at an early stage. For instance, Edgar Snow reports:

"In private conversations, Mao blamed Russian Comintern agents for the disaster suffered by the Communist Party during the counter-revolution in 1927. Stalin at that time headed the Comintern and Mao was in opposition to the 'line' as he was found to be several other times before 1934."

And Chu Teh as told to Agnes Smedley: "The Communist Party leaders," he declared with bitterness, "were trailing along under the leadership of the Kuomintang because the Kuomintang held power, instead of asserting its own leadership on the basic revolutionary issues." Chu declared also that Mao Tse-tung demands for a broadening and deepening of the agrarian revolution and the arming of the peasants and workers were defeated in the Fifth Congress held in Wuhan in May 1927. In fact they were refused presentation for discussion.

II -- MAO TSE TUNG'S RISE TO CCP LEADERSHIP

To this day, the line of our party in regard to the CCP leadership has been:

"The Chinese leaders were under complete Stalinist control up to 1949. The Mao leadership had been hand picked by Stalin after his expulsion of the entire leadership of the Chinese CP's Central Committee for opposition to the Kremlin directed betrayal of the revolution of 1925-27..." (The Militant, Nov. 13, 1961).

To refute this gross error, it is necessary to cover in rather laborious detail the true history of Mao Tse-tung's rise to leadership of the CCP.

Edgar Snow, whose contact over many months at different times with the CCP and the Red Army gives us much information concerning Mao's attainment of top leadership position, much of it obtained from Mao himself. In 1941 Snow wrote: "It is doubtful whether Mao Tse-tung, who was not put in his post by Moscow, could now be retired by anybody

but his Chinese comrades and the Army. As a matter of fact Mao was twice expelled from the party, [Earl Browder corroborates this. See Harpers Magazine, March 1960.] for alleged violations of the Comintern line; but the order was never carried out..." (Battle for Asia).

Again in 1944 Snow stated: "Long before it became defunct the Comintern ceased to have much direct contact with the Chinese party, though it at times exerted a directive influence on it. The relative independence of this party was established when Mao Tse-tung, today the acknowledged mentor of all Chinese Communists, broke away from the former leadership and was expelled (in 1927) for violating the party 'line.' In a subsequent struggle he won out over Ch'en Tu-hsiu and later against Li-Li-san, both at one time supported by the Comintern. Mao established the correctness of his own line through armed struggle. Moscow later vindicated him, but the subsequent decade of civil war was fought with no significant material help from Russia or from the Comintern." (People On Our Side.)

Benjamin I. Schwartz, whose study of the rise of Mao is solidly documented, [Schwartz's basic sources for this book - "Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao" - include many Chinese, Japanese and Russian materials never before used in western literature on Chinese Communism. Many excerpts translated by the author are quoted in the text.] presents much evidence of Mao's differences with the Comintern, beginning in 1926, in regard to the policy pursued on the question of land reform and attitude to the peasantry. For example:

"The 'Report on an Investigation of the Agrarian Movement in Hunan' by Mao Tse-tung, published by Guide Weekly, March 20, 1927, is a document so unique in content that it justified us in treating its author even at this time as the representative of a unique trend within the Chinese Communist movement. ... (it) is simply a blunt and passionate plea that the peasant associations be given complete freedom of action, that the revolutionary surge in the villages be allowed to develop without hindrance... The 'Report' is permeated with a Jacobin hatred of the ruling classes. Only the poor peasants can act as the revolutionary vanguard in the village."

Schwartz gives this quotation from the "Report:"

"The force of the peasantry is like that of the raging winds and the driving rain...No force can stand in its way. The peasantry will tear apart all nets which bind it and hasten along the road to liberation. They will bury beneath them all the forces of imperialism, militarism, corrupt officialdom, village bosses and evil gentry. Every revolutionary party, every revolutionary comrade will be subjected to their scrutiny and be accepted or rejected by them. Shall we stand in the vanguard and lead them or stand behind them and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to pick his answer. ... The broad masses of the peasantry have arisen to fulfill their historic destiny. ... As for the so-called excesses of the peasantry, most of them are entirely justified. ... The revolution is after all no banquet. ... We must build up the vast power of the peasantry."

"Stalin's famous letter of June 1, 1927, still spoke in terms of 'curbing excesses.' Finally, we also note that while Mao openly demands that local national government officials not be allowed to interfere with the peasant associations, Stalin's letter still insists that all reforms be carried out through the officialdom. Mao's 'Report' honestly considered, is not merely a protest against Ch'en's 'opportunism,' but is an implicit attack on the whole Comintern line."

That Mao's differences persisted, Mao himself makes clear in this report given to Edgar Snow:

"On August 1, 1927, the 20th Army under Ho Lung and Yeh T'ing, and in cooperation with Chu Teh, led the historic Nanchang Uprising, and the beginning of what was to become the Red Army was organized. A week later, on August 7, an extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee of the Party deposed Ch'en Tu-hsiu as secretary. ... A new line was adopted by the Party, and all hope of cooperation with the Kuomintang was given up.... as it had already become hopelessly the tool of imperialism. ... The long, open struggle for power had begun.

"I was sent to Changsha to organize the movement which later became known as the Autumn Crop Uprising. My programme there called for the realization of five points: (1) Complete severance of the Provincial Party from the Kuomintang, (2) organization of a peasant-worker revolutionary army, (3) confiscation of the property of small and middle as well as great, landlords, (4) setting up the power of the Communist Party in Hunan, independent of the Kuomintang, and (5) organization of Soviets. The fifth point at that time was opposed by the Comintern and not till later did it advance it as a slogan.

"Because the program of the Autumn Crop Uprising had not been sanctioned by the Central Committee, because also the First Army had suffered some severe losses; and from the angle of the cities the movement appeared doomed to failure, the Central Committee now definitely repudiated me. I was dismissed from the Politburo, and also from the Party Front Committee. The Hunan Provincial Committee also attacked us, calling us the "Rifle Movement." We nevertheless held our army together at Ching-kanshan, feeling certain that we were following the correct line, and subsequently events were to vindicate us fully..." (Red Star Over China.)

From this Schwartz concludes: "...the Central Committee had opposed his (Mao's) program even before the failure had become manifest... Mao also implies, however, that the Central Committee objected to the whole procedure of organizing a military force.

"In spite of harrowing adventures Mao managed to keep a small force intact and finally took refuge in the winter of 1927 in the remote recesses of the Chingkanshan mountains. It was to become the point of departure of a strategy which was to lead the Chinese Communist movement to ultimate success. It is thus most interesting to note that the whole development was inaugurated under a cloud of official disfavor. Without the blessing of the party leadership and most likely without the knowledge of Moscow."

At the Sixth Congress of the CCP [this was held in Moscow in 1928] and the Sixth Comintern Congress there was a shift in line to the extent of giving lip service to the importance of the Agrarian Revolution and the land problem. But it was not Mao Tse-tung, but Li Li-san who was given the leadership in the task of carrying out the Stalinist "Left Line."

In his history of the Red Army, Chou En-lai states that "the descent of the armies of Chu and Mao from Chingkanshan on the thirteenth of January 1929, marks the beginning of a spectacular historic development." In the autumn of that year the Red Army began to win striking successes, and Soviet China became a dynamic force in the Chinese Communist movement.

It seems unlikely that the success of this new dynamic movement led by Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh was due to directives from Moscow or Shanghai. This was carried on in the remote areas of a country which has little or no means of communication. It was surrounded by enemy territory. And the partisan warfare they led demanded spot decisions based on an intimate knowledge of local conditions and local terrain.

That the Kremlin had little or no knowledge of the events in Soviet China seems evident from this report by Schwartz:

"The remoteness of the Kremlin from the rising Soviet movement and its amazing lack of information is graphically illustrated by the fact that an Inprecorr bulletin of March 1930 carries a long obituary on the death of Mao Tse-tung who is alleged to have died of consumption! A similar amazing bit of ignorance is displayed in Stalin's report at the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR held in June 1930. 'It is said,' Stalin states, 'that a Soviet government had already been created there! I think if this is true, there is nothing surprising about it.' Trotsky, seizing upon this statement exclaims: 'There is nothing surprising in the fact that in China a Soviet government was created about which the Chinese Communist Party knows nothing and about whose political physiognomy the highest leader of the Chinese Revolution can give no information!' ...one hardly derives from this statement the impression that Stalin was sagaciously directing the partisan warfare in Hunan and Kiangsi."

Schwartz continues: "We can therefore assume, I think that the new power arising in Hunan and Kiangsi owed little to the direction of Shanghai. It is equally important to note that the movement was developing power bases of its own. As a result of its control of an army, the control of territorial bases, and the control of a peasant population from which it could levy revenues, ... the group were later to be known within the CP as the 'Real Power Faction.'"

Mao in a statement to Edgar Snow said: "... The Li Li-san line dominated the party then outside the Soviet areas and was sufficiently influential to force acceptance, to some extent in the Red Army against the judgment of its field command.

The Li Li-san line was that of the Central Committee and here Mao admits that Li Li-san's policies prevailed only outside the Soviet

areas, and were only partially influential in the Red Army but were contrary to the judgment of the Army's field command.

This was during the "Third Period" of Stalinism. Mao rejected the third period line. The following is one interesting aspect of Mao's criticism of it:

"In particular, in order to carry their ideas thoroughly into effect, exponents of the 'Left line' of the 'third period,' invariably attached, irrespective of the circumstances, damaging labels to all comrades in the Party who found the erroneous line impracticable...waged 'relentless struggles' against them as if they were criminals and enemies. Such erroneous inner-party struggles became a regular means for a leader or follower of the 'Left' line to heighten his own prestige, fulfill his own desire and intimidate Communist cadres. Within the Party it violated the fundamental principle of democratic centralism, turned Party discipline into mechanical regulation, fostered tendencies towards blind obedience and parrotry and this jeopardized and obstructed the development of vigorous and creative Marxism." (Selected Works, Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 4, p. 206.)

Mao had been putting pressure on the Central Committee for removal of the Central Committee headquarters to the Soviet area. Finally, the failure of the line of working in the cities under the heel of the "White Terror" made the move necessary.

On November 7, 1931, the First All-China Conference of the Soviets was called in the new Soviet area capital, Juichin. This was for the purpose of establishing a "Provincial Central Government" of the Chinese Soviet Republic. In the newly elected Central Executive Committee of this new government, all the old members of the Central Committee were re-elected but also many hitherto obscure were added. From this time on the "Real Power Faction" of Mao Tse-tung gradually won out over the Kremlin supported leadership of Li Li-san, Wang Ming and Po Ku. But Mao attained the undisputed leadership only after the beginning of the Long March as reported by Ho Kan-shih in "A History of the Modern Chinese Revolution:"

"In January 1935, after the Red Army had taken Tsunyi an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party was held to save the imperiled Red Army...The Tsunyi Conference put an end to the 'Left' line in the Central Committee of the Party and ... established Comrade Mao Tse-tung's position as leader of the whole party."

The victory of the Mao leadership did not mean that the Central Committee former leadership was purged. They retained their positions in the Executive Committee of the Party. This was in entire keeping with Mao Tse-tung's tendency to absorb rather than eliminate rivals. Mao's inclination to compromise with, rather than destroy possible rivals for power has often been noted by foreign correspondents and others. The latest such evidence is given by Denis Warner in "Hurricane from China:"

"Under Mao, the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people have been spared the Stalinist blood bath both in the struggle for power and the struggle to industrialize. Many of Mao's subordinates have differed with him. ...The fact remains, however, that never in the history of revolutions have so many revolutionary leaders remained firmly united for so long as they have in China under Mao Tse-tung."

* * *

In reply to accusations that "the Communist Party or Chu and Mao, specifically," had "retreated to isolated mountains in the interior to engage in military adventurism and banditry instead of returning to the industrial cities to lead the struggle of the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie for the completion of the democratic revolution," Chu Teh declared:

"...In a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country like China, the simplest democratic rights for the people had to be fought for with guns in hand. In Shanghai, Hankow, Canton and other cities, workers and intellectuals were being beheaded in the streets for demanding the right to defend themselves in court when arrested, for demanding free speech, press, assembly and the right of organization. Anyone who used the word 'imperialist' was branded as a Communist, to be killed if captured. The eight-hour day, increased wages, and the abolition of child labor were all branded as Communist banditry, as was the idea of free trade unions.

"From the beginning, Mao Tse-tung and many others of us had understood that the Chinese people could win democratic rights only by the armed defeat of the counter-revolutionary henchmen of foreign imperialism. Many people neither understood nor wanted to understand this, but the simplest peasant existing under a landlord owner, or the simplest worker laboring under the whip of domestic and foreign reaction knew it. As for Mao and myself and the troops we commanded -- we had no intention of laying down our guns and offering our necks to the Kuomintang butchers.'" (The Great Road.)

Schwartz sums up his analysis: "On the basis of the documentation...we cannot but conclude that Mao established his leadership ... by dint of the real military, financial and mass power which had been created by his own successful strategy; that the gravitation of power into the hands of Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh was the result of circumstances and power relations existing within the Chinese Communist movement rather than of any decisions made in Moscow. ... We must therefore conclude that Moscow's recognition of Mao Tse-tung's leadership was essentially in the nature of an acquiescence to a fait accompli."

Robert Carver North agrees with Schwartz;

"Whatever the details of the various struggles for power, the Westerner cannot refrain from noting how Mao Tse-tung appears to have

risen in spite of -- rather than because of Joseph Stalin and other Communist leaders in Moscow. Once the Chinese leader had achieved control, however, the same Communist hierarchy which formerly had subjected him to discipline, lost no time in bestowing its approval." (Moscow and the Chinese Communists, Hoover Institute Studies, Stanford University.)

A late (1960) estimate is given by Tibor Mende in "China and Her Shadow":

"Discouraged perhaps by this succession of failures, Stalin's interest in Chinese revolution markedly declined after 1927. Yet in the meantime a very different kind of Communist movement was taking shape in China from that which Comintern doctrinaires still expected. Mao Tse-tung ... was developing in the borderlands of Kiangsi and Fukien provinces his own rural Soviet experiment. Difficulties of communication between his movement and Shanghai where the official Party still functioned underground, gave him a free hand. In practice there were during those years two different movements in China: the first under continued Comintern direction, operating from Shanghai; and the second, following a totally different line, in Mao's Kiangsi Soviet. While the first continued to obey Moscow's orders, the second, cut off from the outside world, was experimenting with land reform and was building up its own army and police force.

"Then came the Long March and the new beginning in Yen-an. By the time the Communists reemerged as a serious political force, their methods and their leaders were tested in action, and were, in a sense, rebels against Moscow's will."

The shift of power to the Soviet areas, we must conclude, was due to the program of the Mao Tse-tung forces and the character of this leadership. What sort of men were these, who, after the disastrous defeat of the 1927 revolution, refused to accept this defeat as definitive for the period, worked out their program of struggle, and without the blessings of Stalin, took command of the revolutionary forces?

III -- THE RED LEADERSHIP

"That Mao is a man of great leadership ability, a man of 'charismatic' personality, is a matter beyond dispute. While Mao has been the chief exponent of what we have chosen to call the 'Maoist strategy' he was by no means the only exponent." (Schwartz.)

It was a collective leadership which led the revolution. Mao was the first among equals. Bourgeois correspondents who visited Yen-an in the 1940's and saw the Red leadership in action agree on this. Edgar Snow gives us the most comprehensive picture. (Others who gave similar impressions were Gunther Stein in "The Challenge of Red China," Harrison Forman in "Report from Red China" and Theodore H. White in "Thunder Out of China." Also Robert Payne in "Red Storm Over Asia.") And since at the time Snow wrote Mao's "autobiography," Mao was living in a cave "with only two pair of cotton pants to his name." Snow's impression of him is pertinent.

"Mao Tse-tung was forty-three years old when I met him in 1936. My fleeting impression was of an intellectual face of great shrewdness, but I had no opportunity to verify this for several days. The next time I saw him, Mao was walking hatless along the street at dusk, talking with two young peasants, and gesticulating earnestly. I did not recognize him until he was pointed out to me -- moving along unconcernedly with the rest of the strollers, despite the \$250,000 which Nanking had hung over his head.

"Mao is an accomplished scholar of Classical Chinese, an omnivorous reader, a deep student of philosophy and history, a good speaker, a man with an unusual memory and extraordinary powers of concentration, an able writer, careless in his personal habits and appearance, but astonishingly meticulous about details of duty, a man of tireless energy, and a military and political strategist of considerable genius. It is an interesting fact that many Japanese regard him as the ablest Chinese strategist alive.

"...undeniably you feel a certain force of destiny in him. It is nothing quick or flashy, but a kind of solid elemental vitality. You feel that whatever there is extraordinary in this man grows out of the uncanny degree to which he synthesizes and expresses the urgent demands of millions of Chinese, and especially the peasantry. ... Mao seemed to me a very interesting and complex man. He had the simplicity and naturalness of the Chinese peasant, with a lively sense of humour and a love of rustic laughter. ...he combines curious qualities of naivete with the most incisive wit and worldly sophistication.

"Mao lived like the rank and file of the Red Army. After ten years of leadership of the Reds, after hundreds of confiscations of property of landlords, officials and tax-collectors, he owned only his blankets, a few personal belongings, including two cotton uniforms. Although he was a Red Army commander as well as chairman, he wore on his coat collar only the two red bars that are the insignia of the ordinary Red soldier. ("Red Star Over China")

"A revolutionary movement demands of a leader the ability to know a little ahead of anyone else what is going to happen; and in this respect Mao has been so successful that his followers have come to repose immense confidence in his judgment.

"Although Mao is unquestionably the outstanding personality of the Communists, he is in no sense a dictator. He is a leader only by common consent and all his decisions are the result of discussion and a collective judgment...The solidarity of the Chinese Communist Party, and the comparative absence of cliques within it, is extraordinary in the history of political movements in China and rather unlike the history of Communist parties in other countries of the world." (Snow, "Battle for Asia")

In 1958 Snow wrote: "...his utter self-belief impressed me. He had what Mark Twain called 'that calm confidence of a Christian with four aces.' In his case the aces were Asian Marxism, his knowledge of China and Chinese history, his boundless faith in the Chinese people,

and his practical experience in 'making generals out of mud.' ... As his personal history unfolded, thoughtfully told, well organized and dramatic, I began to see that it was a rich cross-section of a whole generation seen in the life of a man who had deeply analyzed and studied its meaning." (Snow, "Journey to the Beginning.")

Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh first met in May 1928, in the Ching-kanshan mountains when their two armies were consolidated. From the time of that meeting "...the lives of these two men became so interwoven that they were like the two arms of one body. For years thereafter the Kuomintang and foreign press often referred to them as 'the Red bandit chieftain, Chu-Mao' and to the Red Army as the 'Chu-Mao army.' Here began the famous Chu-Mao combination which was to make Revolutionary history in China." (Agnes Smedley, "The Great Road")

Captain Evans Fordyce Carlson of the U.S. Marines, gives his impression of Chu Teh:

"No photograph of Chu Teh does him justice, for no still picture portrays the facial animation in which is reflected something of his kindly and sympathetic personality. After a few hours in his presence I was conscious of a feeling of confidence in him which set him apart. He was so utterly selfless, so kind, so patient, and yet so profound in his judgments. He constantly invited criticism and spoke disparagingly of his own accomplishments. But his analysis of a military situation was incisive and revealing. In later weeks as I tramped the mountain trails with his men ... I was to learn that Chu Teh was loved by every man in his army. Here was the man who had led them in a thousand battles. He shared their hardships and their provender. And from him there was always a kindly word for all who approached, no matter how trying the circumstances." ("Twin Stars Of China")

Snow in "Red Star Over China": "For pure military strategy and tactical handling of a great army in retreat nothing has been seen in China to compare with Chu Teh's splendid generalship of the Long March. ...And to sheer personal magnetism of leadership, and the rare human quality which inspire in followers that unquestioning faith and devotion that gives men the courage to die in a cause -- to this must be attributed the unbroken unity with which the forces under him withstood the terrible winter of strife and hardship, eating nothing but yak meat, on the icy wind-driven plateaus of Tibet. ... No wonder Chinese legends credit him with all sorts of miraculous powers, such as creating dust clouds before an enemy, or stirring a wind against them."

Gunther Stein wrote: "General Chu Teh, the Commander-in-Chief of the Eighth Route Army, gave me several interviews. ... Chu Teh was in the badgeless blue cotton uniform of the ordinary soldier in which I had seen him on social occasions. ... He showed a military precision of thinking which surprised me. For the first time I understood why the Kuomintang armies during the civil war and the Japanese in the present war regarded the kindly, easygoing Chu Teh as a dangerous adversary and brilliant strategist." ("The Challenge of Red China")

Chiang Kai-shek's reward for the capture of Chu Teh, dead or alive, was the same as for Mao Tse-tung -- a quarter of a million silver dollars.

"\$2,000,000 in Heads" is the title of a chapter in Snow's "Red Star Over China." In it he pays tribute to the unusual caliber of many Red leaders which makes plausible Chiang's willingness to offer such sums for their capture or death. Snow wrote:

"I began to discover a peculiar quality that I was to encounter repeatedly in this strange iron brotherhood of Chinese revolutionaries. Something that makes every man's suffering and triumph the collective burden or joy of all, some force that levels out individuals, loses them, makes them really forget their own identity and yet finds it somehow in the kind of fierce freedom and rigour and hardship they share with others."

White and Jacoby in "Thunder Out of China" also noted the pronounced unity of the "iron brotherhood." "The leaders of the Communist Party were a highly interesting group. They could be studied only from the outside, for what went on in their inner councils was a tight secret. Their primary characteristic was their sense of unity. They had been fighting together for twenty years, against the Kuomintang and then against the Japanese; their families had been tortured, murdered, lost. They had been subjected to every form of police espionage and suppression. The weak had fallen; the faint of heart had surrendered. Those who were left were tough as leather, hard as iron; they trusted one another and hung together in a unity that showed no fissure or factionalism."

IV -- THE HUMAN MATERIAL OF THE REVOLUTION

In the semi-colonial state of China, there was no economic foundation for social reform such as that existing in Western Europe, so that the whole working class was predisposed to seek a solution of their semi-slave condition by revolutionary means. But the revolutionary spirit of the Chinese workers could not make up for some of its gravest weaknesses. There were only between three and four million industrial workers in a total population of around five hundred million. The Chinese proletariat was very young and inexperienced when compared to that of Western countries. In addition they were poorly educated, weakened by disease, under-nourishment and terror; further weakened by a preponderance of slave-child and female labour, indescribably exploited by both native and foreign capital.

"Nearly half of all the industrial workers of China huddled in Shanghai, under the gunboats of half a dozen of the world's great powers. In Tientsin, Tsingtao, Shanghai, Hankow, Hong Kong, Kowloon, and other spheres of imperialism, were probably three-quarters of all the industrial workers of China. Shanghai provided the classic prototype of them all. Here you could see British, American, French, Japanese, Italian and Chinese soldiers, sailors and police, all the forces of world imperialism combined with native gangsterism and the comprador bourgeoisie, the most degenerate elements in Chinese society, cooperating in wielding the truncheon over the heads of the hundreds of thousands of unarmed workers." (Snow, "Red Star Over China")

Therefore, the Chinese proletariat had to contend not only with one enemy, but with two: his own nascent bourgeoisie and the entrenched interests of the Western powers.

An authoritative account of the conditions of the Chinese working class is given by Rewi Alley, health inspector in Shanghai during the nineteen thirties:

"My chief concern was the number of workers who fell down chutes of the self-feeding boiler apparatus and went into the furnaces with the coal. ...the American manager would chew his cigar meditatively while I explained how we needed a light chain and belt which must be worn by workers who had to work naked on top of the stack of coal dust. Then when the coal caved in under them they would not go down with it. 'Christ!' shouted this representative of a Christian nation, 'If the silly bastards don't take more care, what can I do about it?' A mention of the American court brought forth a smile.

"One day I went into a place where one of the apprentices had been beaten to death by the manager. 'Very bad boy!' This gentleman shouted. The police arrested him, but when I passed the place a few months later he was back there again.

"But there were many other ways of doing away with people. In the hot summertime, in badly ventilated workrooms, they died of fatigue or stumbled against unguarded machines and were caught by the old-fashioned clothing they wore. The dead body would be pulled away at night and tossed on the rubbish heaps at the back of Yangtsepo for the dogs to eat, or taken out on the river and dropped in.

"The silk filatures of Shanghai had been amongst the more nightmarish of the places I had been inspecting, with their long lines of children, many not more than eight or nine years old, standing for 12 hours over boiling vats of cocoons, with swollen red fingers, eyes inflamed, eye muscles sagging, many crying from the beating of the foreman, who would walk up and down behind them with a piece of No. 8 gauge wire as a whip; with tiny arms often scalded in punishment if they passed a threat incorrectly; in rooms so full of steam that in the Shanghai heat just standing in them for a few minutes was unbearable for me."

Many of these factory child slaves had been bought by procurers from starving peasants. Factory managers made them work for four years without wages; they fed the children on spoiled foods, literal garbage, and had them sleep in guarded dormitories to prevent them from escaping; practically speaking they were slaves.

Industry in China was largely owned by foreign industrialists. These foreigners had shot their way into China and welfare of Chinese workers meant nothing to them. Manpower resources being inexhaustible, human life counted for nothing. Rather than a classical industrial town Shanghai resembled a colossal forced-labor camp where foreigners ruled like gods. (See the chapter on Industry, "The Long March," Simone de Beauvoir).

In 1937 Chu Teh described to Agnes Smedley the working class Shanghai he knew in the 1920's: "It was not uncommon for both foreign and Chinese factory foremen to walk around in their factories with whips in their hands, hitting anyone who worked too slowly or who fell asleep from exhaustion at his machine. Before 1927 the killing of workers was not at all unusual. The work day ranged from twelve to fourteen hours, wages were barely enough to keep workers alive for a few years, and the workers' quarters were dark, unsanitary tenements that resembled rabbit warrens where sickness and disease lurked.

"No one has ever estimated the cost in human lives of the vast foreign and Chinese fortunes wrung from the workers of Shanghai alone. To the present day death wagons go about Shanghai each day to pick up dead bodies from the streets. Thirty to fifty thousands of such bodies are picked up and buried in paupers graves each year in Shanghai. ... The city was a hell of limitless luxury and corruption for the few, and limitless work and suffering for the many." ("The Great Road")

"In China, formal feudalism had disappeared almost entirely by the time of Christ, nearly half a millennium before it arose in Europe. But all these medieval remnants, slave girls, corvee labor, seigneurial rights, brutal requisitions of labor and property lingered on for the next two thousand years.

"Certain learned professors, both Chinese and foreign, insist that feudalism does not exist in China because there is no serfdom; that is, men can sell their labor freely. It is true that the penetration of the West destroyed the self-sufficient natural economy of the centralized feudal society and placed much of Chinese life under the demands of a money economy though with but few progressive results. This view is academic and takes no cognizance of the feudal remnants that exercise such an important role in the lives, thoughts, customs, habits and emotions of the people. In abolishing serfdom the Chinese did not entirely do away with the power of the landlord to conscript labor, to jail debtors and to control the life and even death of his tenants; it did not completely abolish child slavery, the custom of buying and selling girls nor the system of concubinage or forced marriage. All of these conditions are irrevocably bound up with the rule of the landlords and the gentry." (Belden, "China Shakes the World")

"The beating, whipping, torture and humiliation of the villagers by officials and gendarmes is part of the substance of government authority. These people live by the sweat of their brow; they live on what they can scratch out of exhausted soils by the most primitive methods with the most savage investment of their sinews and strength. When the weather turns against them, nothing can save them from death by hunger." (White & Jacoby, "Thunder Out of China") (For an account of the unmitigated horror of a Chinese peasant famine, see the chapter "Death & Taxes" in Snow's "Red Star Over China." This includes an account of the brilliant report by Dr. A. Stamper of the League of Nations. Also the description of the 1943 Honan Famine in "Thunder Out of China," White & Jacoby.

PEASANT UPRISING

As told to Agnes Smedley by Chu Teh: "In January 1928 the peasant revolt was already shaking Hunan, known as the domain of the most savage 'tiger landlords' of China. ... It was a merciless, savage struggle with no quarter given on either side, ragged peasants attacking and fighting and dying with curses on their lips.

"In these regions the peasants lived in small villages surrounded by crumbling walls in which there was only one gate. Inside these walls were the rows of squalid thatch-roofed mud hovels bordering a street which became a quagmire in the rainy season. In dry weather the open gutters on either side of the street were filled with decaying refuse.

"The dark hovels had one door and no windows. Inside the beds consisted either of pallets of rice straw on the earthen floor or of boards stretched across trestles and heaped with rice straw which served both as mattress and covers. ... The people slept in the only clothing they owned -- loose trousers and jackets of many generations of patches. The stove, made of mud, was fed through a vent beneath the iron vat above, which was the only cooking vessel and fuel was dried grass and twigs gathered from the hillsides by the children.

"No ray of culture ever penetrated these villages, which were breeding places of sickness and disease, and often of terrible crimes. Rent, as high as seventy percent or more of the crops, usury, crop failures, requisitions by provincial and local armies kept the death rate high and the peasant families small. At least seventy percent of the population consisted of poor peasants -- tenants -- and land laborers, and almost all were illiterate. Schools existed in the market cities and towns, but only those able to pay tuition and provide decent school clothing for their children could afford such luxuries. (Both Chu Teh (to Agnes Smedley) and Mao Tse-tung (to Edgar Snow) told of the severe sacrifices their peasant families made to send them to school).

"The 'hundred-headed landlords' as the peasants called them, lived in the large towns and cities, safely enthroned behind stone walls. Here they acted as officials, judges, juries and executioners. Commanders of the 'Min Tuan' (their private mercenary army) they used local garrison troupes to supervise the reaping of the harvests, lest the peasants bury some of the grain which the landlords claimed as their own.

"The dark peasant pessimism, or rather indifference to the torment called life, began to break like ice under the spring breezes when rumours fled 'from east and west' that a peasant named 'Chu-Mao' was leading a poor man's army against the nobles. This man, it was said, possessed magical powers by which he was able to command a whirlwind or summon the clouds to shield his army against its enemies.

"The lean, brown men dressed like peasants who went in advance of the army to tell the peasants of its coming spoke in concrete rather than magical terms. At their words, the peasants, lifted their heads, and often without waiting for the army's approach, fought with their primitive weapons until they were crushed by the Min Tuan from the cities. The heads

of peasant leaders were mounted on poles before offending villages and at night women crouched at the base of the poles in desolation.

"Without food and shelter and carrying their wounded, the peasant rebels would enter a sleeping village at night, knock on a barred door, and say in a low voice:

"'Brothers, open! We are Peasant Self-Defense Corps.' (Silence and not a ray of light showing...)

"Again the peasant guerrillas knocked, and in an urgent voice: 'Brothers! We have been fighting the Min Tuan. We have wounded.'

(After an endless silence...) 'They speak the truth!'

"As if in a dream all the village doors swung open and men poured out, took straw from the stacks beyond and carried it indoors to make pallets on the earthen floors..."

* * *

"Many were the peasants who escaped death, and, exhausted, with bloodshot eyes, made their way to Chu Teh. Some wept in bitter desolation at the death of a son or brother, some said with hate-filled voice: 'Let me fight!' Chu Teh, his eyes narrowed to small, hard points, listened to their stories and said to young commanders about him: 'Give them guns and train them on the march!'

"Scenes such as this, repeated all over south China in succeeding years, caused General Chu to remark time and time again that 'the peasants of China are the most revolutionary people on earth and that all they needed was good leadership, a sound program, and arms. And it was into this small world in south Hunan Province that General Chu in that black winter of 1927-28 led his troops and established the pattern of agrarian revolution that characterized the army which he and Mao Tse-tung led for the next 22 years."

* * *

This was the human material of the revolution about which Nym Wales wrote in 1938:

"The laboring classes of China have no peer. They ask less of life and give more than the people of any other race. They are so intelligent, of hand and brain, so capable of cheerful endurance, that to know them is to admire them without question and to wish to see them rise to the stature to which sheer natural superiority entitles them. And these constitute nearly 90 percent of the population of China.

"What does he lack -- the incomparable Chinese farmer, the proverbial Chinese 'coolie,' the boy apprentice whose handicraft art has amazed the world throughout centuries? Not brain. Not physical strength and tenacity. Not potential fighting spirit and the will to survive. After seeing for myself what the mass leaders of China, the Communists, have already created out of the superb human material at their command, I have decided that he lacks only one thing -- information. ... Give him

a fighting idea and he will struggle for it through a thousand deaths. The gallant Soviet youth who built a brave new world in China, had no guns. They could not read and write. They captured their guns, built their own schools, burned the slogans of revolution into the consciousness of the people in the smoking blood of ceaseless sacrifice. Nothing was given them. All was created out of their own potentialities. Out of the shadows of defeat in 1927 they marched and within five years built a Soviet Republic nine million strong. This new world was lost, but out of the depths of another defeat they rose again. The more he was crushed to earth, the more strength of the body of this Antaeus derived.

"...To have lived in China during this historical moment is to have felt the forward movement of one of the mightiest forces of human freedom. ... I spent four months in the Red citadel, Yen-an, gathering historical material and talking nearly every day with one or another of the extraordinary Communist leaders. ...It was a journey of discovery for me -- of a new mind and a new people, creating a new world in this heart of the oldest and most changeless civilization on earth." (Inside Red China, page 9.)

V -- ORGANIZING THE SOVIETS

Snow tells us: "It is one of the amazing facts of our age that during the entire history of the Soviets in South China not a single 'outside' foreign observer entered Red Territory -- the only Communist-ruled nation in the world besides the USSR. Everything that has been written about the southern Soviets by foreigners is therefore secondary material. But a few salient points are now confirmable from accounts both friendly and inimical, and these clearly indicate the basis of the Red Army's support. Land was redistributed and taxes were lightened. Collective enterprise was established on a wide scale; by 1933 there were more than 1,000 Soviet co-operatives in Kiangsi alone. Unemployment, opium, prostitution, child slavery, and compulsory marriage were eliminated, and the living conditions of the workers and poor peasants in the peaceful areas were greatly improved. Mass education made much progress in the stabilized Soviets. In some counties the Reds attained a higher degree of literacy among the populace in three or four years than had been achieved anywhere else in rural China after centuries. In Hsing Kuo, the Communists model hsien, there was a populace nearly 80 percent literate.

"That much at least now has been established by a wealth of independent testimony." (Red Star Over China)

Snow's above account was written in 1936. In 1937 Chu Teh told Agnes Smedley the following:

"Following the usual establishment of the Councils of People's Delegates (the Soviets) in the various cities; towns and villages, all old taxes were abolished. A single progressive tax on the grain crop was introduced instead. Since the army supplied itself by capture from the enemy, the tax revenue was devoted entirely to reconstruction...mortgages and papers of debt returned, primary schools and co-operatives of various kinds formed, and the first small Peasant Bank established.

"The cultural department of the Soviets turned temples into free primary schools for poor children. At night, when the children moved out, adult illiterates came in. Temples were also used for the training of mass organizers, or as headquarters for mass organizers of the army. The Red Army captured Changsha in Hunan in July of (1930) and the City of Kian in Kiangsi in October. Kuomintang printing presses were confiscated and moved to the countryside.

"Thus began what General Chu called 'the greatest study movement in Chinese history,' a movement reflected in slogans painted on walls, cliffs, and even the trunks of trees: 'Learn, Learn, and Learn again! Study till the light fails! Study as you plow! ... Study by the reflected light of the snow!'

"Memories of that first hungry search of the 'oppressed and injured' for knowledge filled General Chu with both pride and melancholy. In those days, he recalled, the army had to do almost everything. Every man in its ranks able to impart knowledge spent any leisure he might have in teaching the peasants what he knew of common and political knowledge.

"Women's work, poor till then, made rapid progress under the guidance of the special department for Women and Youth affairs which each local Soviet established." (The Great Road)

Jack Belden remarked about the Communists' work among the women: "In the women of China, the Communists possessed, almost ready made, one of the greatest masses of disinherited human beings the world has ever seen. And because they found the key to the heart of these women, they also found one of the keys to victory over Chiang Kai-shek." (China Shakes the World)

* * *

Snow relates: "Mao Tse-tung has told briefly of the organic development of the Soviets and of the birth of the Red Army. He has told how the Communists built up, from a few hundred ragged and half-starved but young and determined revolutionaries, an army of several tens of thousands of workers and peasants, until by 1930 they had become such serious contenders for power that Nanking had to hurl its first large-scale offensive against them. The initial 'annihilation drive' and then a second and a third and a fourth, were net failures. In each of these campaigns the Reds destroyed many brigades and whole divisions of Kuomintang troops, replenished their supplies of arms and ammunition, enlisted new warriors, and expanded their territory." (Red Star Over China)

In the fifth "Extermination Campaign" Chiang Kai-shek mobilized about 900,000 troops, modern mechanized weapons, and a modern air force of nearly 400 war planes. Against this the Reds had less than 100,000 rifles, no heavy artillery, and a very limited supply of grenades, shells and ammunition, all of which were now being made in the Red Arsenal at Juichin.

This Fifth Campaign was planned by General Von Falkenhausen, and other of Chiang Kai-shek's German advisers. The preparations were thorough, elaborate and costly. Nevertheless, the resistance of the Reds was astonishing -- a whole year of merciless fighting.

The Kuomintang admitted that about one million people were killed or starved to death in the process of recovering Soviet Kiangsi. The Red losses were also large.

But says Snow: "...the Fifth Campaign proved inconclusive. It failed in its objective which was to destroy the living forces of the Red Army. A Red military conference was called at Juichin, and it was decided to withdraw, transferring the main Red Strength to a new base. The plans for this great expedition, which was to last a whole year, were complete and efficient... The retreat from Kiangsi evidently was so swiftly and secretly managed that the main forces of the Red troops, estimated at about 90,000 men, had already been marching for several days before the enemy headquarters became aware of what was taking place.

Thus The Long March began. This six thousand mile march of an army, fighting their way across some of the world's highest mountains, crossing gorges of mighty rivers, constantly pursued and harassed by Chiang Kai-shek's forces is one of epic proportions, of which it has been said, "Compared to it, Hannibal's march across the Alps fades into 'the small theatre of the antique.'"

This is Edgar Snow's estimate of it: "The Long March is unique in military history. An Odyssey unequalled in modern times. Adventure, exploration, discovery, human courage and cowardice, ecstasy and triumph, suffering, sacrifice, and loyalty, and then through it all like a flame, this undimmed ardour and undying hope and amazing revolutionary optimism of those thousands of youths who would not admit defeat either by man or nature. (For an account of a participant in The Long March, see Chu Teh's story in Agnes Smedley's The Great Road.)

"After the main forces of the Red Army evacuated Kiangsi, it was still many weeks before Nanking troops succeeded in occupying the chief Red cities. Thousands of peasant guards and partisans, held together and led by a few Red regulars, put up a stiff resistance to the end. The heroism of many of these Red leaders, who volunteered to stay behind for self-immolation is memorialized in many ways by the Reds today. They provided the rearguard action which enabled the main forces to get well under way before Nanking could mobilize sufficient forces to surround and annihilate them on the march.

"History has since shown that they were right in emphasizing what was undoubtedly the second fundamental reason for their migration: an advance to the Northwest, a region which they correctly foresaw was to play a determining role in the immediate destinies of China, Japan and Soviet Russia. This skillful propaganda maneuver must be noted as a piece of brilliant political strategy.

"In one sense this mass migration was the biggest armed propaganda tour in history. The Reds passed through provinces populated by more than 200,000,000 people. Between battles and skirmishes (there

was an average of almost a skirmish a day, somewhere on the line, while altogether fifteen whole days were devoted to major pitched battles) in every town occupied, they called great mass meetings, gave theatrical performances, heavily 'taxed' the rich, freed many slaves (some of whom joined the Red Army), preached 'liberty, equality, democracy', confiscated the property of 'traitors' (officials), big landlords, and tax-collectors, and distributed their goods among the poor. Millions of peasants had now seen the Red Army and heard it speak, and were no longer afraid of it. The Reds explained the aims of the agrarian revolution and their anti-Japanese policy. They armed thousands of peasants, and left cadres behind to train the Red partisans.

"On October 20, 1935, a year after its departure from Kiangsi, the Vanguard of the First Front Army connected with the 25th, 26th, and 27th, Red Armies which had already established a small base of Soviet Power in Shensi in 1933." (Red Star Over China)

VI

In the Anti-Japanese War --

THE RED ARMY --

HOW AND WHY IT GREW

"We are nothing but the fist of the people beating their oppressors." So said Red Army Commander, P'eng Teh-huai to Edgar Snow.

He continued: "Partisan warfare has succeeded and partisan detachments have developed their invincibility because of the identity of the masses with the fighting forces. The partisans are not only warriors; they are at the same time political propagandists and organizers. Wherever they go they carry the message of the revolution, patiently explain to the mass of the peasantry the real missions of the Red Army, and make them understand that only through revolution can their needs be realized, and why the Communist Party is the only party which can lead them.

"The Red Army is a people's army, and has grown because the people helped us. Tactics are important, but we could not exist if the majority of the people did not support us."

Edgar Snow spent four months with the Red Army. This he said was a "highly exhilarating experience. The people I met in it seemed to feel the freest and happiest Chinese I had known. I was never afterwards to feel so strongly the impact of youthful hope, enthusiasm and human invincibility in men dedicated to what they conceived to be a wholly righteous cause.

"Had I not gone to the front, I would have left Pao An still wondering how the Reds had won their reputation for invincibility. I would have left still unconvinced of the youth, the spirit, the training, the discipline, the excellent equipment and especially the high political morale of the regular Red Army.

"The Red Army was quite apart from any other military organization I had seen: the incorruptibility of its officers, the equality of pay and rations among men and officers, the great emphasis placed on political

training, and the army's role in the organization of revolutionary committees among the poor in every village. In brief, the Reds sought to make every man, woman and child active in some organization.

"One of the most attractive things about the Red Army was the hundreds of children who accompanied it -- runaway slaves, orphans, apprentices, or the sons of soldiers, whom you would in other places see as little beggars. Here they served as messboys, waterboys, actors, agitators, buglers, scouts, spies and even nurses. They were very well treated; I never saw one struck. I had no difficulty understanding why they called the Army Fu-mu (father and mother) and loved the life. Many officers and party functionaries had already emerged from the ranks of these child camp followers who were affectionately called 'little devils'.

"The incentive to promotion was certainly not monetary compensation Rather it lay in the desire to distinguish one's self in the common cause of a fellowship which, to such an unusual degree this army provided.

"The high political elan was very necessary, for several practical reasons. First, the army was made up entirely of volunteers; the troops were the most poorly paid in the country. When men die for nothing a month they must be convinced of a very great mission and have implicit faith and confidence in their leaders." (From Snow's "Journey to the Beginning" and "Battle for Asia.")

General Joe Stilwell to Edgar Snow: "Those Reds may be bandits, as Chiang says they are. But bandits or not, they're masters of guerrilla warfare. I don't know what they are preaching but to me it looks like they've got the kind of leaders who win. I mean officers who don't say, 'Go on, boys!' but 'Come on, boys!' If that's the case and they had enough of them, they could keep the Japs busy here till kingdom come."

From the "Secret Diary of Harold Ickes:" "As usual when the President is present, the conversation covered a wide range. He talks freely when he is with a group of intimates. The subject of China came up and the President told me of a letter he had received from an American observer who is with the Eighth Route Army, which is one of the Communist armies. This man is a Captain of Marines.* The letter had to be gotten out of China by means of a missionary. The letter said that this army showed the best training and the highest morale of any army that the writer had ever seen. The Red armies pay for their food, do not rape the women; they carry school teachers with their troops and a troupe of actors to keep them entertained. Breaking up into small units of from two to five hundred men, these Chinese troops will slip through a break in the Japanese lines at night, get well behind that line, lay over for a day hidden in some Chinese village, and then the next night fall upon some detachment of Japanese, blow up a bridge or smash a transport train. They will then slip away into the darkness and again make their way back to their own lines the next night."

*Captain Evans Fordyce Carlson

* * *

From the Report of White and Jacoby in "Thunder Out of China": "In the fall of 1937, starting from their small base in the barren sandlands of

northern Shensi, the former Red Troops, now restyled the Eighth Route Army of the Central Government, began in the fall of 1937 one of the most amazing adventures in arms of all times. It was to lift Communist military strength from 85,000 men in 1937 to over a million by the end of the war; Communist political control from 1,500,000 to an estimated 90,000,000. In the early months of resistance Communist expansion raced over the hills. Their divisional and frontal units dissolved into regiments, the regiments into battalions and companies; they tricked off through the Japanese lines into the countryside. Within four months after the outbreak of the war Communist troops were standing on the shores of the ocean, 700 miles from their starting point, and organizing a new war behind the enemy lines.

"The regular army of the Communists was difficult to describe.... Only one quality made it great -- its fighting spirit. It was a partisan army, and it fought with the aid of the people. ...Almost all able-bodied peasants belong to the Min ping, self-governing local defense groups whose members tilled the soil and fought for it at the same time. The Communists claimed that some 2,000,000 peasant soldiers scattered over the land cooperated with the troops of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. The Communists indoctrinated and trained these troops in all the simple elementary tactics of warfare, and then went on to elaborate a unique system of earthy defense.

"The tremendous energy behind the Communist drive was coordinated from Yenan. A radio and courier network linked all Communist centers from Hainan in the south to the outskirts of Manchuria. The radios were an amateur patchwork of broken Japanese sets, second-hand tubes, and makeshift materials. But the codes, which were excellent, baffled both the Kuomintang and the Japanese, and these communications bound together with iron cords of discipline the eighteen local governments in a coalition that seemed at times a shadow government and at times the most effective fighting instrument of the Chinese people.

"No one could deny they had wrought a miracle in arms. In six years the Communists had thrown out from the barren hills a chain of bases that swept in an arc from Manchuria to the Yangtse valley. Rarely in the history of modern war or politics has there been any political adventure to match this in imagination or epic grandeur. They reached down into the darkness of each village and summoned from it with their will and their slogans such resources of power as neither the Kuomintang or Japan imagined could exist. The job was done by men who worked with history as if it were a tool and the peasants as if they were raw material. The power came from the people -- from the unleashing of the internal tensions that had so long paralyzed the countryside, from the intelligence of masses of men, from the dauntless, enduring courage of the peasant.

"The Kuomintang could explain its defeats in convincing terms of poverty and weakness. ...But it could not explain why another Chinese army, that of the Communists, was moving from success to success in North China." (Theodore H. White was chief of Time's Chungking Bureau at the time this was written from personal observation.)

THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST JAPAN

There has been so much misunderstanding and therefore condemnation in our ranks, of the united front of the CCP with the KMT against the Japanese, -- calling it a "betrayal" and a "sellout" etc. -- that it is necessary to examine this question thoroughly.

The CCP began in 1932 to urge a united nation to fight against Japanese imperialism. Their overtures were always repulsed until after the "kidnaping" of Chiang Kai-shek in Sian in December 1936.*

*See Snow's Red Star Over China, Part 12, and his Random Notes on Red China, Chapter 1, for a complete account of this dramatic comic opera episode. In the latter Snow reports: "...the telegram from Stalin to Mao stated that unless the Chinese Communists used their influence to release Chiang, they would be denounced by Moscow as 'bandits' and repudiated before the world."

The terms demanded by Marshall Chang Hsueh-liang, the mutinous Kuomintang leader, who did the kidnaping, were the following famous eight points:

1. Reorganize the Nanking Government and admit all parties to share the joint responsibility for national salvation.
2. End all civil war immediately and adopt the policy of armed resistance against Japan.
3. Release the (seven) leaders of the patriotic movement in Shanghai.
4. Pardon all political prisoners.
5. Guarantee the people liberty of assembly.
6. Safeguard the people's rights of patriotic organizations and political liberty.
7. Put into effect the will of Sun Yat-sen.
8. Immediately convene a National Salvation conference.

To this program the Chinese Red Army, the Soviet Government and the Communist Party of China, immediately offered their support.

Chiang's agreement to these terms met with strong opposition from elements within the Kuomintang. It took many months to conclude the negotiations at Nanking. The CCP meanwhile kept up pressure for its consummation. Mao Tse-tung wrote in 1937 in "Tasks of the Chinese Communist Party": *

*A study of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung is obligatory for an understanding of the Third Chinese Revolution. As Mao himself once remarked: "No investigation, no right to speak."

"For the sake of peace, democracy and armed resistance, and for the sake of establishing an Anti-Japanese National United Front, the Chinese Communist Party, in a telegram to the Third Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, has pledged to them the following four things:

1. The government in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia revolutionary base area, that is under the leadership of the Communist Party shall be renamed as the Government of the Special Region of the Republic of China and the Red Army be designated as part of the National Revolutionary Army, and they will accept the direction of the Central Government in Nanking and its Military Council respectively:

2. A thoroughly democratic system shall be introduced in areas under the Government of the Special Region:

3. The policy of overthrowing the Kuomintang by armed force shall be discontinued; and

4. The confiscation of the land of the landlords shall be discontinued. These pledges are necessary as well as permissible. Only thus can we, in line with the changes in terms of political specific gravity in China's internal and external contradictions, change the situation of antagonism between the two regimes at home and achieve solidarity against the enemy. These are principled and conditional concessions, made with the aim of obtaining in return what is necessary for the whole nation -- peace, democracy and armed resistance. But there are limits to the concessions. To preserve the Communist Party's independence and freedom of criticism in its relations with the Kuomintang -- such are the limits of the concessions beyond which it is impermissible to go. Concessions are to be made by both parties. The Kuomintang abandons the policy of civil war, dictatorship and non-resistance to the foreign foe, and the Communist Party abandons the policy of maintaining a rival regime. We exchange the latter for the former and resume our cooperation with the Kuomintang to fight for national salvation. To describe this as the capitulation of the Communist Party would be...malicious slander.

"Who should compose the new democratic republic? They should be the proletariat, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie and all persons in the country who agree to undertake a national and democratic revolution, and the republic should be an alliance of these classes for the national and democratic revolution. The salient feature here is the inclusion of the bourgeoisie; this is due to the fact that under the present circumstances the bourgeoisie can participate once more in the resistance to Japan, and the party of the proletariat should not reject it but bring it into line and ally with it again for the common struggle, so as to facilitate the progress of the Chinese revolution. In order to end armed conflict at home the Communist Party is willing to discontinue the policy of confiscating the land of the landlords by force and is prepared to solve the agrarian problem by legislative and other appropriate means in the course of establishing the new democratic republic. Whether China's land should belong to the Japanese or to the Chinese -- that is a problem which has to be solved first and foremost."

"Note that those terms still leave the Reds in possession of their little autonomous State, their own Army, their organizations, their Party,

and their 'maximum program for the future.' (Snow, "Red Star Over China")

Mao Tse-tung also explained to Edgar Snow the United Front tactic:

The victory of the Chinese national liberation movement, will be part of the victory of world Communism, because to defeat imperialism in China means the destruction of one of its most powerful bases. If China wins its independence, the world revolution will progress very rapidly. If our country is subjugated by the enemy, we shall lose everything. For a people being deprived of its national freedom, the revolutionary task is not immediate socialism but the struggle for independence. We cannot even discuss Communism if we are robbed of a country in which to practice it."

Snow also discussed the united front with Chou En-lai:

"Chou drew me a rough map of the territory then held by the Communists and described their military and political plans for the immediate future. These aimed chiefly at bringing an end to the civil war and forming a 'united front' with other armies to resist Japan.

"'Then you are giving up revolution?' I asked"?

"'Not at all, we are advancing revolution, not giving it up. The revolution will probably come to power by way of anti-Japanese war.' As for Chiang Kai-shek, 'The first day of the anti-Japanese war,' he prophesied, 'will mean the beginning of the end for Chiang Kai-shek.'"

Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank in their "Documentary History of Chinese Communism," states:

"From Mao's own statements, one can thus see that: (1) The united front with the bourgeoisie, though desirable and necessary, is only transitional. The final goal remains socialism, and Communism. ...With these points in mind, one can understand more easily the CCP's insistence after 1937 on retaining control of its own territorial bases, maintaining its own armed forces, emphasizing the anti-Japanese national united front, and adopting a moderate war-time policy towards all rural classes including the landlords, as well as the eventual open conflict with the KMT after 1946. It is evident that Mao and the CCP leadership had learned from their experience during and after the first united front of 1925-27."

In his introduction to Nym Wales' "Red Dust" Robert Carver North wrote:

"...in September (1937) the Chinese Communist Central Committee issued a manifesto stating that an agreement with the Kuomintang has been reached and proposing a set of 'general objectives' for the common struggle of the entire people."

"These and subsequent Communist proposals for a united front against Japan proved particularly effective in neutralizing National and anti-Communist campaigns in northwest China.

"The Communists emphasized in their own councils that their actions were strategic moves for meeting requirements of the 'current stage' and did not nullify their belief in class warfare nor their adherence to Bolshevik doctrine. The politburo warned Communist membership against both an ultra-leftist

opposition to united front tactics and -- equally serious -- 'The Rightest' opportunist tendency toward too close an association with the Kuomintang."

In "The China Tangle" Herbert Feis also stressed the conditions the CCP demanded in the united front tactic:

"The Communists did not tire of saying over and over that all they wanted was a democratic party arrangement. But they continued to insist on major conditions before assenting to the terms offered by the government. They asked that the Communist troops should be kept together in eighteen divisions within the government army, and that these be equipped and cared for by the government in the same way as other Chinese forces. They demanded that the government recognize the 'popularly elected' governments in the areas which they controlled, and that the government should end its blockade of these areas. They wanted the government to release at once all political prisoners."

The United States Department of State "White Paper" recognized the tactical advantage to the CCP of their united front proposal:

"Such policies as the abandonment of land confiscation are useful temporary expedients to help them carry on the war and to win unified popular support in the areas of their operations. It also has strong propaganda appeal in other areas. Their espousal of democracy appeals to the great majority of the people in China and is a good club for beating the Kuomintang. They realize that popular support must be their principal weapon against the superior arms of the Kuomintang in any contest of strength."

Agnes Smedley gives Chu Teh's version of the united front:

"...the Kuomintang tried to use the situation to destroy the Red Army, insisting that four of its seven divisions be disbanded and the other three reorganized into a new army staffed by Kuomintang officers. The Communists argued against the disbandment of any of their troops and suggested a brotherly exchange of officers between the Red and Kuomintang armies -- a suggestion which caused the Kuomintang to drop the subject like a hot potato. Talking with me about these Kuomintang maneuvers, General Chu declared:

"Our army would be destroyed and there would be no resistance to the Japanese at all if we accepted the Kuomintang proposals. Chiang and his clique do not really want to fight the Japanese, yet Chiang realizes if he does not, he will be swept from the stage of history by our own and the Japanese armies, and by the Chinese people. Our army may have to accept subsidies and ammunition for only three of our divisions, but we will not disband the other four because war with Japan will certainly start soon and all manpower and national resources of the country will be mobilized for victory. The Kuomintang has refused us new guns of any caliber, and we will get no clothing, blankets or medicine; at best we will get ammunition and money for three divisions.

"After the war begins, all our troops will go to the front, we will root ourselves in the people as we have always done, and mobilize, train, arm and educate them. We will survive and fight."

In 1944 Mao Tse-tung explained the united front to Gunther Stein:

"A national war makes it possible to persuade the masses not to confiscate the land of the landlords because the masses realize that, while the landlords are also willing to resist the enemy, a policy of land confiscation might drive them into the Japanese-held cities and make them return to their villages together with Japanese troops in order to recover their land.

"In this way, the peasants understood soon after the beginning of the war with Japan that our new policy of reducing land rents instead of continuing confiscation of land had the twofold advantage of improving the peasants' livelihood and of inducement to the landlords to stay in the villages and join in the fight against Japan. The general reduction of land rents in favor of the tenants and the guarantee we gave the landlords, for the actual payment of the reduced rents resulted in improved relations between tenants and landlords; so that the Japanese found practically nobody to cooperate within our areas." ("The Challenge of Red China")

White and Jacoby, from their observation of how the land policy of the CCP was working, wrote: (in 1944)

"By their agreement with the KMT in 1937, the Communists gave up their policy of expropriation and sovietation of the land. They adhered scrupulously to this agreement, and by 1941 their new tactic had succeeded beyond all expectations. Mao's book "The New Democracy" is a formal statement of a policy that had been in successful operation for some years. The main goal is still socialism; eventually the old system must go. But between the 'now' in China, with the feudal, semi-colonial misery of the present, and the future world of classless, strifeless socialism the era of 'New Democracy' intervenes. How long or how short this period may be Mao does not define. He merely says that China is not ready for socialism at this time; therefore the peasants and workers must seek allies in their struggle against the old feudalism.

"(Concerning relations with the KMT) A backlog of distrust, treachery, torture and extermination had been piling up since the first split in 1927. Chiang Kai-shek might swear by all the oaths of holiness that if the Communists gave up their arms, he would not wipe them out. But the Communists knew that if they gave up their army, everywhere in China Chiang's secret police would operate; Communist troops would be broken up and then butchered like their New Fourth Army. They remembered the slaughter in Shanghai and refused to trust Chiang's word. "We will offer him one hand in friendship," a Communist general said, 'but our other hand we will hold on our gun.'

"In any case Mao Tse-tung found it impossible to trust the Kuomintang. The party had been responsible for the murder of his first wife; his younger brother had been strangled to death in 1942 in Sinkiang. The relatives of dozens of other Communist dignitaries had also been killed. The Communists saw their army as their sole guarantee of safety." ("Thunder Out of China")

That Trotsky supported the CCP united front he made clear in this declaration in 1937:

"We know Chiang well enough as the hangman of the workers. But this same Chiang is now obliged to lead a war which is our war. In this war our comrades should be the best fighters. Politically, they should criticize Chiang not for making war, but for making it in an ineffective manner, without high taxation of the bourgeois class, without sufficient arming of the workers and peasants, etc.

"I have also heard arguments such as this: 'By supporting this war under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek against Japanese imperialism, we render service to British and American imperialism and can become their tools.' Ultra-radicalism again becomes a handicap for revolutionary action.

"...Chiang Kai-shek cannot assure the liberation of China it is clear; but he is trying to stop further enslavement of China, and that is a small step to further liberation. With all our energy we take part in this small step.

"In the last analysis, it is not correct that we 'help' British imperialism. A people that is capable of defending itself arms in hand, against one robber will be capable tomorrow of repulsing the other. A revolutionary party which understands this and which takes consciously and courageously its place at the head of a people defending the remains of independence -- only such a party is capable of mobilizing the workers during the war and after the war to conquer power from the bourgeoisie." (Quoted from "The Newsletter," London, May 6, 1961)

VIII -- MAO'S NEW DEMOCRACY -- 1940

This essay has been damned as evidence of another CCP rotten compromise with the bourgeoisie and as a basis for the contention that Mao had no idea of establishing socialism in China. These few excerpts give an idea of his theoretical analysis for the necessity of China's revolution going through the stage of New Democracy.

"In the historical course of the Chinese revolution two steps must be taken: first the democratic revolution, and secondly the socialist revolution; these two revolutionary processes are different in character. The democracy in question no longer belongs to the old category -- it is not old democracy; it belongs to the new category -- it is New Democracy.

"This is the historical feature of the Chinese revolution at the present time. Any party or individual engaged in the Chinese revolution that fails to understand this historical feature will not be able to direct the revolution and lead it to victory, and will be forsaken by the people and become something pitifully whining in the corner.

"But do not confuse this with the bourgeois-democratic revolution in capitalist countries. Although the objective of the first stage of our revolution is the destruction of feudalism and imperialism and the development of capitalism, it is certainly not the establishment of a capitalist society dictated by the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, our objective is to establish a New Democracy based on an alliance of several revolutionary classes, but led wholly or partially by the proletariat. After the accomplishment of this first stage, the revolution will be developed into the second stage -- the establishment of a socialist society.

"In order that private capital may not manipulate the livelihood of the people, all native-owned or foreign-owned enterprises either monopolist, or of a dimension too large for private efforts to manage such as banks, railroads, airlines, etc., will be managed and controlled by the state. This is the essence of the restriction of capital. ..At the same time, however, the state will not confiscate other capitalist private property and will not forbid the development of capitalist production that cannot manipulate the people's livelihood. This is because the Chinese economy is still in a very backward state.

"Only such a course for the Chinese economy can lead to the transition from the New Democracy to socialism. Otherwise if private economic affairs are allowed to develop freely without guidance and control, then the transition of the Chinese economy will not be along the line of the New Democracy but along lines of capitalism, it will not be along lines of socialism, but back to the economy of dependence and imperialist-colonial status...

"It is the common knowledge of every primary schoolboy that 80% of the Chinese population consists of peasants. The percentage is even higher since the occupation of our large cities by the Japanese. Therefore, the peasant question becomes the fundamental question of the Chinese revolution, and the force of the peasantry is the main force of the Chinese revolution. Besides the peasantry, the second largest section of the Chinese population consists of workers. China has several millions of industrial workers. .. it is they who are the producers in the industrial economy. Without the workers the revolution would not be able to succeed for it is they who are the leaders of the revolution and have the highest revolutionary spirit.

"Such a revolution deals unrelenting blows to imperialism, and hence is disapproved and opposed by imperialism. ... Therefore such a revolution cannot but become part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution.

"The world today is in a new era of revolution and wars.. the Communist Party has its present program and its future program, or its minimum program and its maximum program. For the present New Democracy; and for the future, socialism -- these are two parts of an organic whole, guided by one and the same Communist ideology."

Our Responsibility of Leadership

"It is a law proved in China's history, that, because of its economic and political flabbiness, the Chinese bourgeoisie which can take part in fighting imperialism and feudalism in certain circumstances will vacillate and turn traitor in others. History has therefore decided that China's anti-imperialist and anti-feudal bourgeois-democratic revolution can be completed not under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, but only under the leadership of the proletariat. Furthermore, it is only by calling forth fully the perseverance and thoroughness of the proletariat in the democratic revolution that the inherent vacillation and lack of thoroughness of the bourgeoisie can be overcome and that the revolution will not become abortive. ...This question of the responsibility of leadership in the Chinese revolution is the pivot upon which the success of the revolution depends. The experience of 1924-27 shows how the revolution forged ahead when the bourgeoisie followed the political leadership of the proletariat and how it suffered defeat as soon as the proletariat became politically the tail of the bourgeoisie (for which the Communist Party was responsible.) History should not be repeated.

"Many comrades have raised questions concerning the nature and prospect of the democratic revolution. Our answer is: as to its class nature, it is an alliance of all revolutionary classes, and as to its prospect, it may head toward socialism. Our democratic republic is to be established under the leadership of the proletariat: And it is to be established in the new international circumstances. ... Thus, regarding perspectives, although it may face toward capitalism, at the same time it may turn toward socialism, and the party of the Chinese proletariat should strive hard for the latter prospect.

"We advocate the theory of the continuous development of a democratic revolution into a socialist revolution. The democratic revolution will undergo several stages of development, all under the slogan of a democratic republic. It is a long process of struggle from the hegemony of the bourgeoisie to the hegemony of the proletariat, a process of winning leadership, which depends on the condition that the Communist Party raises the level of consciousness and organization of the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

"The staunch ally of the proletariat is the peasantry, and next to it the urban petty bourgeois. It is the bourgeoisie that will dispute with us for hegemony.

"It depends on the strength of the masses and on our correct policies to overcome the vacillation and the lack of thoroughness of the bourgeoisie; otherwise the bourgeoisie will turn round to overcome the proletariat.

"A transition involving no shedding of blood is what we hope for and what we must fight strenuously for; the result will depend on the strength of the masses. We advocate the theory of the continuous development of revolution, but not the Trotskyite theory of a permanent revolution. We stand for the attainment of socialism through all the necessary stages of the democratic republic. We are opposed to tail-ism but we are also opposed to adventurism and ultra-revolutionism.

"This is a Trotskyite approach, with which we cannot agree, to reject the participation of the bourgeoisie in the revolution because it can only be temporary and to describe the alliance with the anti-Japanese section of the bourgeoisie (in a semi-colonial country) as capitulationism. Such an alliance today is precisely a bridge that has to be crossed on our way to socialism.

"...(The Chinese) people have no legislative body to make use of, nor the legal right to organize the workers to strike. Basically the task of the Communist Party here is not to go through a long period of legal struggles before launching an insurrection or war, not to seize the big cities first and then occupy the countryside, but to take the other way around."

* * *

Excerpts from an article by Trotsky, Class Relations in the Chinese Revolution, written in 1927, but not printed until 1938 in The New International, March and April issues.

"To believe that without the victory of the proletariat in the most advanced countries, and prior to this victory, China is capable with her own forces of 'skipping over the capitalist stage of development' is to trample under foot the ABC of Marxism.

"In the course of the transitional period, the Chinese revolution will have a genuinely democratic, worker-and-peasant character. In its economic life, commodity-capitalist relations will inevitably predominate. The political regime will be primarily directed to secure the masses as great a share as possible of the fruits of the development of the productive forces and, at the same time, in the political and cultural utilization of the resources of the state. The further development of this perspective -- the possibility of the democratic revolution growing over into the socialist revolution -- depends completely on the course of the world revolution, and on the economic and political successes of the Soviet Union, as an integral part of the world revolution.

"That is why it is of the utmost importance today not to permit any muddling in the determination of the stage through which the Chinese revolution is passing. It is a question not of the socialist but of a bourgeois democratic revolution. And within this latter, it is a question of the struggle between two methods: bourgeois conciliationist as against worker-peasant. It is possible today only to speculate as to the manner and conditions in which the national democratic revolution can rise to the socialist revolution, whether it will occur with or without interruption and whether this interruption will be long or brief. The further march of events will bring the necessary clarification. But to smear over the question of the bourgeois character of the present revolution with general considerations of a non-capitalist development is to befuddle the Communist party and to disarm the proletariat."

IX -- YENAN - LABORATORY OF THE REVOLUTION

"Yenan is unimportant as a town now (1955) but a visit to it is important as without it no one can understand fully what is happening in China. It was the laboratory in which the political and economic experiments of new China were tried out on a large scale. It is the 'blockade economy' which the Communists developed in Yenan that gives them the confidence in their struggle against the embargo which the U.S. is enforcing against China. It is the austerity that the leaders and the cadres developed in these barren regions, where they had to make the soil yield the utmost, develop an industry out of primitive conditions, create by human labor what everywhere is done with the help of machines, that provides the basic experience, strength, and discipline of the present Chinese government."
(Memoirs of a Diplomat, K. M. Pannikar, Indian Ambassador to China.)

The first foreigner to describe this laboratory of the revolution to the outside world was Edgar Snow:

"To understand the peasant support for the Communist movement, it is necessary to keep in mind its economic base. I have already described the burden borne by the peasantry in the Northwest under the former regime. Now, wherever the Reds went there is no doubt they radically changed the situation for the tenant farmer, the poor farmer, the middle farmer, and all the 'have-not' elements. All forms of taxation were abolished in the new

districts for the first year to give the farmers a breathing-space, and in the old districts only a progressive single tax on land was collected, and a small single tax (from 5 to 10 percent) on business. Secondly, they gave land to the land-hungry peasants and began the reclamation of great areas of 'wasteland' -- mostly the land of absentee or fleeing landlords. Thirdly they took land and livestock from the wealthy classes and redistributed it among the poor.

"In this area, formerly one of the poorest and most backward on earth, the Yen-an government built up an intelligent and prosperous community life by a few years of energetic and honest administration. Free compulsory primary education was introduced and middle schools, technical schools and colleges, including a college for women. There was a public health service and several hospitals. There were many industrial co-operatives. ...Peasants in this 'Shen-Kan-Ning' region opened up over 600,000 acres of new land and with government help tens of thousands of refugees from occupied China were settled here. Opium was extirpated. In the areas I saw prostitution and child-slavery were effectively prohibited, and there were no beggars. Every village had its elected council and every county likewise. The regional government was elected by delegates for the first time in Chinese history.

"I must admit that most of the peasants to whom I talked seemed to support the Soviets and the Red Army. Many of them were very free in their criticisms and complaints, but, when asked whether they preferred it to the old days, the answer was nearly always an emphatic yes. I noticed also that most of them talked about the Soviets as Womentu Chengfu -- 'our government' -- and this struck me as something new in rural China.

"The co-operative movement was being vigorously pushed. These activities extended beyond production and distribution cooperatives, branching out to include co-operation in such (for China) novel forms as the collective use of farm animals and implements -- especially in tilling public lands and Red Army lands -- and in the organization of labour Mutual-Aid societies. By the latter device great areas could be quickly planted and harvested collectively, and a period of idleness by individual farmers eliminated.

"...Every organization and every Soviet official were mobilized to work at least one day a week at farming tasks. Even Mao Tse-tung took part in this work.

"Here the Reds were introducing the germs of the drastically revolutionary idea of collective effort -- and doing primary education work for some future period when collectivization might become practicable. At the same time, into the dark recesses of peasant mentality there was slowly penetrating the concept of a broader reality of social life.

"It is simply a Chinese miracle when one remembers that partisans have been fighting back and forth across this territory for five years, that the economy maintains itself at all, that there is no famine and that the peasants on the whole seem to accept Soviet currency with faith in it. In fact this cannot be explained in terms of finance alone, but is only understandable on a social and political basis.

"A few days northwest of Pao-an I stopped to visit a Soviet 'industrial center' of Shensi. For hundreds of miles around there is only semi-pastoral country; the people live in cave-houses exactly as did their ancestors millenniums ago. Many of the farmers still wear queues braided around their heads, and the horse, the ass and the camel are the last thing in communications. ...

"In this medieval world it was astonishing to come upon Soviet factories, and find machines turning, and a colony of workers busily producing the goods and tools of Red China.

"The aim of the then 'industrial programme' according to Mao Tse-tung, Commissioner of People's Economy, was to make Red China 'economically self-sufficient' -- strong enough to survive despite the Kuomintang blockade -- if Nanking refused to accept the Communists' offer for a 'United Front' and a cessation of civil war.

"While I was in the Soviet districts any contact with a Russian source of arms was physically impossible, for the Reds were encompassed by various enemy troops totalling nearly 400,000 men and the enemy controlled every road to Outer Mongolia.

"How much solidarity with the USSR meant to the Chinese Soviets, which in truth most of the time were completely isolated geographically, economically and politically, is hard to understand for any Westerner who has never known a Chinese Communist.

"But I saw it, and heard it, and felt it. This idea of having behind them such a great ally -- even though it has been less and less valued by any demonstrations of positive support from the Soviet Union -- is of primary importance to the morale of the Chinese Reds. It has imparted to their struggle the universality of a religious cause and they deeply cherish it. ...When they shout, 'Proletarians of all lands, Unite!' and 'Long Live the World Revolution!' it is an idea that permeates all their teaching and faith, and in it they reaffirm their allegiance to the dream of a socialist world brotherhood.

"There is no more powerful weapon of propaganda in the Communist movement than the Red's dramatic groups, and none more subtly manipulated. By constant shifts of program, by almost daily changes of the 'living newspaper' scenes, new military, political, economic and social problems become the material of drama, and doubts and questionings are answered in a humorous, understandable way, for the sceptical peasantry. When the Reds occupy a new area, too, it is the Red Theatre which calms the fears of the people, gives them rudimentary ideas of the Red program, dispenses great quantities of revolutionary ideas, and counter-propaganda to win the people's confidence.

"The work of all these organizations and their various committees was coordinated by the Central Soviet Government, the Communist Party and the Red Army. ...they were all skilfully interwoven, and each directly under the guidance of some Communist although decisions of organization, membership, and work, seemed to be carried out in a democratic way by the peasants themselves.

"Rather typical of the intensity of Soviet efforts were the methods used to increase production and use great areas of wasteland. I have copies of many orders, quite astonishing in their scope, and commonsense practicality, issued by the land commission to its various branches to guide them in organizing the peasants in the tasks of cultivation." ("Red Star Over China")

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After Chiang Kai-shek was successfully pressured into negotiations and the United Front agreed upon, the blockade of Yen-an was lifted.

"Then," writes Snow, "trade relations were established between the Red districts and the outside world. More important, communications between the two areas were quietly restored. ...Needed technical materials of all sorts began to pour in. Most precious to the Communists were books. ...Communists throughout the country sent in tons of new literature. Hundreds of young Chinese Communists migrated from the great cities to Yen-an. By May over 2,000 students had been accepted for enrollment in the Red Academy, and some 500 were in the Communist Party school. Among them were Mongols, Moslems, Tibetans, Formosans, and Miao and Lolo tribesmen. Scores were also studying in a number of technical and training institutes.

"Enthusiastic young radicals as well as veteran Party workers rolled in from all parts of China, some walking over great distances. By July, despite the rigours of student life, there were so many applicants that no more could be accommodated. Scores were turned back, to wait for another term, when the Reds prepared to receive 5,000. Many trained technicians also arrived, and were given work as teachers, or in the 'construction plan' which was now begun. In this, perhaps, lay the biggest immediate benefit of peace; a base in which freely to train, equip and discipline new cadres for the ranks of the revolution and the anti-Japanese movement.

"They were still coming in when I returned to Sianfu (in 1941). A state university for women in this remote corner was surprising; to find it with women from nearly all provinces of China in the midst of war, was astonishing. I wondered how they got there, and upon inquiry discovered that most of the women from the occupied areas had come by dangerous guerrilla trail from hundreds of miles behind the Japanese lines. Here was a real hunger for education. How many American girls would hike 500 miles through war zones to enter a college of caves where they had to grow their own patch of vegetables?" ("Battle for Asia")

* * *

The negotiated United Front proved to be no more than an uneasy truce. As Chu Teh told it to Agnes Smedley:

"After one year of war, during which the Chinese government had released political prisoners and allowed some degree of liberty to the people in the territory it controlled, there were signs that the reactionaries were again coming to the top.

"Until March 1939, the Communists tried to smooth over all incidents threatening renewal of civil war. In late March, however, in the dead of night, Kuomintang troops fell on a transport station of the New Fourth Army in Hunan Province and buried every man in it alive.

"Abandoning their former reserve, Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh wired Chungking, and released their wire to the press, disclosing full details of the atrocity. They demanded the immediate punishment of the men responsible for the crime.

"The Kuomintang attacks became so undisguised that the international press reported them. "

(In December the Kuomintang committed another atrocity against the New Fourth Army, begun in treachery and ending in the slaughter of even the sick and wounded and the nurses caring for them.)

"From this time on (January 1941) the Eighth Route and the New Fourth Armies were dependent upon what they themselves and the people collectively produced. The Communists revived the Revolutionary Military Council of civil war days, and established the Yen-an government whose directives guided all the liberated areas. Chen Yi was appointed commander in chief of the New Fourth Army. He was ordered to regroup his troops for continued warfare on the Japanese and puppets in the lower Yangtse and to defend himself if attacked by Kuomintang.

"The two Communist-commanded armies and the people of north and central China had to take care of their stomachs and began what was recognized a few years later as a gigantic enterprise which amazed all who saw its results. After months of grisly suffering, the New Fourth Army developed guerrilla bases.

"In the first six months of 1941 the Communists prepared for the attacks from the rear and battles at the front. Immediately after the establishment of the Kuomintang blockade, Mao Tse-tung officially announced the 'Production Movement for Self-Sufficiency.' This with time transformed the face of North China and made sustained military resistance possible. Of this movement, Mao said: 'Our policy is of resurgence through our own efforts. The reduction of rent and interest has raised the enthusiasm for mutual aid and raised the productive power of the peasants. Our experience shows that through mutual aid the productive capacity of one individual becomes fourfold.'

"The Production Movement began with planning conferences of every group of the population, including the armed forces, across the thousands of miles of the liberated areas. Tens of millions of people began working in Mutual Aid teams, Labor Exchange Groups, in industrial consumer and transportation cooperatives, or in new small factories or other institutions. No one was exempt." ("The Great Road")

* * *

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, French, Dutch, British and American refugees fled from the coastal cities into the western hills where Eighth Route Army guerrillas escorted them for weeks, many of them to safety in Yen-an. Here for years they aided the Communists, chiefly as teachers. Of these the French Lieutenant, George Uhlman, later wrote of the Eighth Army:

"Poor and deprived of everything, like the first armies of our Revolution, without any help from the outside, the Eighth Route Army achieved the double task of driving back the invader and teaching liberty to the people."

Another refugee, G. Martell Hall, former manager of the National City Bank of Peking said to Edgar Snow: that there was simply no other way he could explain the success of the partisan leaders with the peasants 'except through their own incorruptibility and honesty, their energetic

patriotism, their devotion to practical democracy, their faith in the common people and the continuous effort they made to arouse them to action and responsibility.'

A third, Professor Michael Lindsay, of Yenching University, whose report was published in Amerasia Magazine in 1944, declared that the partisan governments were elected from candidates nominated directly by the people and their organizations. The Chinese partisans aimed to establish a united front of all groups and hence the Communist Party limited its own members to one-third of the total of any elected body. This peculiar policy was vigorously enforced, according to Lindsay. ...above all to develop political leaders among the poor peasants and workers. It was "education in democracy by practising democracy," according to the partisan leaders.

"The Communists invited anybody, correspondents, Allied diplomats, and military observers, to come to Yen-an and find out for themselves. But the Kuomintang government allowed nobody to go." (Gunther Stein in "Challenge of Red China." Stein then relates how a number of foreign correspondents, by way of a ruse, succeeded in wringing reluctant consent from Chiang Kai-shek himself.)

"We left Chungking on May 17, 1944. ...Only six of the foreign correspondents who had applied for the journey were able to take a trip that would last over three months.

"I crossed many frontiers in my twenty years as a foreign correspondent, but none ever seemed to be so forbidding as the lifeless, closely guarded border between the two halves of China.

"(In Yen-an) My days and a good part of the nights were soon crowded with work. I worked harder than I had ever done in my journalistic life.

"I had to clear up many doubts and get at the truth behind all of my stirring and surprising impressions of a life that seemed entirely new to Asia. For hours and hours I interviewed individually Communist and non-Communist leaders and responsible officials.

"Mao Tse-tung evaded none of my questions. His conviction impressed me as honest. The logic of his arguments stood out forcefully against the background of the social and political life I watched every day during my five months in the Border Region.

"I visited government offices, army organizations, factories, model farms, colleges, schools, hospitals, the court and the jail and dropped in on meetings of self-government bodies.

"The picturesque background of Yen-an's political scene is the big popular meetings, theatrical shows, and folk dances which are alive with a rustic communal spirit.

"Inconspicuous men in the badgeless blue cotton uniforms of common soldiers, chatting with people, were introduced to us as famous military commanders. Others, dressed in the same cotton pants and tunics as the crowd of clerks, students, and simple labor heroes with whom they joked or carried on serious conversations, turned out to be outstanding party functionaries, high government officials, or eminent professors. Famous women revolutionaries

and novelists, educators, or actresses were part of gay groups of peasant women, factory girls, secretaries, students, and schoolteachers in the same simple garb.

"This is what I wrote in my diary at the time:

"First, there is no war weariness here, but the steady fighting enthusiasm of a primitive pioneer community. ...people seem surprisingly young here, whatever their age, and full of refreshing optimism and confidence. ...They seem to feel, whether we believe it or not, that the future is theirs.

"...their defects are accompanied by a veritable passion for self-criticism and a genuine readiness to correct mistakes as far as possible, if necessary by scrapping policies that had for some time been cherished as final answers.

"Don'ts at present propagandized are along these lines: Don't be dogmatic, subjective, formalistic, bureaucratic, cliquish (addressed to party members); Don't write for yourself, write for the masses (to writers); don't separate from the masses but rely upon them and adopt a thoroughly democratic style of work (to all cadres).

"Learn from the masses and their experiences is Mao Tse-tung's favorite phrase, based on the belief that the commonsense judgment and knowledge and the accumulated experiences of the ordinary people on all matters must be taken into account by intellectuals and professionals.

"Raise all problems to a theoretical level, is Marxist slang for another standing order of the Chinese Communist Party to all responsible workers, that is, to study any given problem thoroughly from a factual, scientific viewpoint before making decisions by wishful thinking.

"Use your hands and Produce Yourself What You Need, originally Mao Tse-tung's instruction to all Communist Party members during a critical economic situation in 1940, has become the standing order of all the armies governments, and educational institutions to their members. Everybody, from the highest to the lowest ranking, must do agricultural or other production work outside of duty hours, with the aim of increasing production and keeping the tax burden of the people as low as possible.

"Village meetings, in which every adult has an equal vote, elect the village head and control his activities, and discuss measures for the increase of production and other improvements. They are the basis of China's first effort at self-government.

"What the Communists did was to launch vast awakening campaigns and virtually press on the people the use of their new democratic rights. Self-government is now so implanted in the thinking and habits of the common people...that the Communists could no longer stop the steady growth of its inherent strength even if they chose to do so at the cost of their own mass support.

"It seemed to me that the Communists owed their success largely to the manner in which they approached the fundamental Chinese problem of

creating an administration cheap enough for the people to finance without difficulty, and large and enthusiastic enough to take on much greater responsibilities than in the past -- an administration rising out of the people themselves and responsible to them through democratically elected governments. The methods of recruiting and training administrative workers are characteristic of Communist policies. To draw upon 'talent among the masses' is the unwritten law.

(Concerning the Communist Party school) "Life on the campus impressed me as being stimulating and vivid, free and pleasant. Individual reading and group discussion of practical problems take up a good part of the day. But there seems to be plenty of time for quiet thinking and physical exercise, for amateur theatricals, music and personal contacts. Nothing could be more original and practical, freer of regimentation and dogmatism, than this peculiar staff college of the Communist Party.

"The Border Region's non-handicraft industry includes machine spinning and weaving, iron and coal mining, and engineering; the production of ceramics and glass, salt, oil, soap, matches, and of a number of chemicals; the manufacture of paper, cigarettes, vegetable dyes; and tanning and printing. ...its development in recent years, against the almost incredible odds of the lack of machinery, mechanical power, and technical skill under the twofold Japanese and Kuomintang blockade is no small achievement and testifies to the organizing ability of the Communists which may one day be applied to much greater tasks.

"George 'Mao Hai-teh,' the American doctor at the Peace Hospital in Yen-an, told me, 'Until some time ago we saw terrible numbers of undernourished people in our hospitals and outpatient departments. But there has been no such cases during the last two years or so. Resistance to disease is now perfectly normal. Not by the low Chinese peacetime standards, but by American standards.'

"The truth of George's statement was evident... Day after day I was amazed at the way the Communists had succeeded in this poorest part of China to make all the people so well fed, while Chungking's crowds looked pathetically undernourished against the background of all the natural and commercial wealth of Szechuan, one of China's richest provinces."

"At a teaparty given us by writers, artists and other cultural workers in Yen-an shortly after our arrival, a nationally known publicist got up to make 'a few remarks on a personal matter.'

"'I am Wu Pei-hsio! he said, 'and I protest against the announcement in Chungking and Sian newspapers that I was killed by the Communists. I protest against the so-called "memorial meeting" held for me and twenty three other "cultural leaders with Kuomintang sympathies" by the Kuomintang authorities in Sian on March 29, 1944.'

"There was an embarrassed silence among our Kuomintang colleagues [A number of Kuomintang newsmen had accompanied the foreign correspondents on this Yen-an trip.] as Wu turned to them one by one.

"'You know me, don't you? And you know me -- and you know me...As you see, I am alive and well. And I may add that I am happy here, living

with my wife and children, writing what I like without being restricted by censorship.

"The Kuomintang slanders our Border Region in many ways. The allegation that I and many of my twenty-three colleagues were killed by the Communists is one of their slanders."

"A few days later we met another of the 'Living Corpses' as we came to call them, the former Trotskyite, Wang Shi-wei, who came to the Guest House at our request. This was Wang's account;

"I joined the Communist Party in 1936 without admitting my former Trotskyite affiliations and came to Yen-an the year after. I expressed dissatisfaction with conditions in Yen-an during the difficult period in 1941 when the Kuomintang blockade became so strict that we had a very difficult time. I published a series of articles in the Communist Liberation Daily here in Yen-an early that year in which I accused the Communist Party of deterioration. After many discussion meetings I convinced myself that I had once more been under the influence of Trotskyist ideas.

"But my problems have all been solved. I was never detained or tried. The progress of the Border Region since that difficult period has proved to me even more strikingly than any theoretical arguments did before that I was wrong and defeatist during our most critical period. However, the party treated me with its new Policy of Magnanimity and I was again accepted in its ranks soon after my resignation.

"You see that I am very much alive in spite of the "memorial meeting" that was held in Sian for me and all those others who are equally alive. I have also talked to your Kuomintang colleagues who know me personally."

"The ghost of this man later crossed my path in the United States. One of the most widely read American magazines was led to believe and print a badly distorted story about Wang, projecting his past political opposition into the present and alleging his mysterious disappearance.

"I met in Yen-an more and more of the 'Living Corpses,' and brought pictures of them back to Chungking." (my emphasis, HM)

Harrison Forman, another of the six foreign correspondents who visited Yen-an on this trip corroborates the findings of Stein and others concerning the political and economic democracy in the Red stronghold. His description of the social life is particularly vivid:

"The Communists take their culture seriously. Artists, writers, musicians, educators, dramatists, and newspapermen meet regularly, to discuss their problems frankly and criticize each other and their work. There were about forty present at the meeting I attended. Most of them came from Shanghai which, before the war, was the cultural center of China. But the Westernized, highly sophisticated art and literature of Shanghai were as far from the peasant folk lore of hinterland China as James Joyce is from Confucius. Under war conditions, away from Shanghai, the literati resembled fish out of water. It was almost impossible for them not to look down upon the ignorant peasants, the workers and soldiers, who retorted by rejecting them. Without a public, they wrote, painted, and made music for themselves, ignoring the common folk

below their cultural and intellectual level. If the peasant failed to appreciate good literature and art, that was his misfortune. Art could not debase itself by talking down to the masses.

"Far-seeing Mao Tse-tung observed this and decided that it was no good. Calling a meeting of all cultural workers, he flayed them for their high and mighty airs, warned them of retrogression and decay if they persisted. They must adjust themselves to new conditions, a new society -- a society unlike the feudal Shanghai aristocracy of intellectuals, students, and wealthy patrons, but a new democratic society created by and for the peasant, the worker, and the soldier.

"'For this you must go to the people, must strive to understand them before you can ever hope to have them understand you,' he continued. 'You must study their sentiments, their local customs and habits for content. You must learn to love them for what they are, not for what you think they should be.'

"This was wartime, he pointed out, and it was the duty of the cultural worker to contribute his talents to the war effort. For this he must not try to introduce new and bewildering forms of expression but must work with the familiar forms accepted by the people themselves. The people's traditional music, art, literature, and drama must serve as basic models for new wartime content. New forms must be rooted in these and evolve from them.

"Yenan's literati took Mao Tse-tung's words to heart with amazingly good results. The evolution of the Yang Ko is a good case in point. The Yang Ko -- literally 'Planting Song' -- is indigenous to North China....Its origins date back to the Sung Dynasty, a thousand years ago. ...Artists, musicians, and dramatists prepared little skits, musical numbers, and decorative art work, which, to their surprise, the people readily incorporated into their Yang Kos.

"I have seen dozens of these Yang Ko dramas and they never failed to fascinate me. They were so utterly different from anything to be found anywhere else in China. ...It required effort to accustom myself to the versification and the singing delivery of the lines, but the dramatic skill of the performances very soon captured me." ("Report from Red China, pps. 88, 89")

* * *

White and Jacoby give us their impressions of Yenan in Thunder Out of China:

"The Kuomintang claimed that Yenan's unity was totalitarian, that Yenan operated with secret police, with concentration camps, with all the other apparatus that the Kuomintang possessed itself but denied possessing. I could find no evidence of any such machinery of oppression in Yenan; I was there for only a few brief weeks, but other Americans who were there for months were equally unaware of any such Communist apparatus of dictatorship as Chungking had mastered -- no foreign correspondent's dispatch from Yenan had ever been censored.

"The Chinese Communists flatly denied the assumption of many American friends that they are merely agrarian reformers, not Communists at all. They insist that they are Communists in the full sense of the word, and they are proud of it.

"...Though the leaders were recognized and accepted as an elite, they prided themselves on their democracy, and they hewed out for themselves a code of manners to match their profession. Party policy had decreed a production drive after the Kuomintang blockade in 1941 to make the Yen-an area self-sufficient. ...This drive had been superlatively successful, and the party and its functionaries lived not on taxes but on the sweat of their own brows. Mao Tse-tung tended a tobacco patch...and raised enough for party headquarters. Chu Teh grew cabbages.

"Most of the senior leaders prided themselves on their approachability. At the regular Saturday night dances at Communist army headquarters, Chu Teh sedately waltzed about with little office girls and the burly chief of staff, Yeh Chin-ying, gayly accepted invitations to two-step from any maiden who had enough pluck to ask him.

"The Political Bureau made the critical decisions governing economic policy, attitudes toward the Central Government, and foreign policy; and the smoothly coordinated organs of the party and the army unquestioningly executed these decisions. Yen-an was a huge laboratory to which students and enthusiasts brought their best ideas; in the hill caves the party hammered these ideas into national policy, molded the talents into organizing ability, and pumped both ideas and personnel back into the field. It was estimated that the Communists at Yen-an had trained some 40,000 young men and women by 1944.

"Yen-an insisted that it was a functioning democracy. Administratively, freedom of criticism and discussion was practically unlimited. Anyone could attack the improper carrying out of an accepted directive, the blunders of civilian or military officials. In the field this freedom of administrative criticism created the most democratic system of government the villages had ever known. Local councils could answer their complaints and wants, and for the first time they were full citizens in a community.

"CCP headquarters in Yen-an were a clearing house of ideas and techniques; each successful practice established in any region was reported back to Yen-an, lifted from the operation to that of principle, and then spread over all the rest of Red China by the party. Cooperative associations taught peasants how to work together in primitive industrial units.

"The Communists had reached a new maturity of decision by the summer of 1944. Between 1941, when the New Fourth Army had been massacred, and 1944, when the great campaign in the east exposed the weakness of the Central Government, their attitude toward the Chiang Kai-shek administration changed from fear to contempt.

"Negotiations between the Central Government and the Communists began anew in the spring of 1944. The Communists appeared in Chungking this time not as beggars but as proud ambassadors of a powerful armed movement. That arrogance shocked the government negotiators, who had expected that the years of blockade would have worn them down. The government had expected chastened, respectful men, grateful for what few crumbs could be spared from

Chungking's lean tables. The Kuomintang negotiators were astounded by what the Communists presented as a fitting basis for negotiations. 'They seem to forget' one government spokesman said plaintively, 'that after all we are the government.'

"The Communist demands were far-reaching. Among them was (5) The government should recognize the legitimacy of all the liberated regions as popularly elected governments.

"The Communist controlled liberated regions spread all over the Yellow River basin and the entire Yangtse from Shanghai through Nanking to Canton. To recognize these governments would reduce the Kuomintang to a secondary power in the land; it would mean that when peace came, the Communist would be in control of the richest, most highly developed areas of the coast, while the Kuomintang would still be locked in the hinterlands."

Of course this made their "coalition government" demand unacceptable; added to the others it amounted to asking the KMT to abdicate their power and privileges.

* * *

Were they Agrarian Reformers?

In "Journey to the Beginning," Snow reports:

"Mao Tse-tung had ridiculed to me, in what was to prove his last interview with the foreign press for many years, any suggestion at all that he and other Communists had abandoned Marxism or revolution:

"We are always revolutionaries,!" said Mao, 'and we are never reformists. There are two main objectives in the Chinese revolution. The first consists in realizing the tasks of a national democratic revolution, (i.e., anti-imperialist and anti-feudal). The other is a social revolution. The latter must be achieved and completely achieved. ...The national revolution after a certain stage will be transformed into a social revolution.'"
(Authors emphasis)

Herbert Feis in his study, "The China Tangle," stated:

"The Communist leader was...in messages and statements to his party conferences restating that the whole party and its leadership were convinced and faithful believers in the Marxist-Leninist doctrines, and devoted to the ultimate achievements of the Communist program. Recognition of Chiang Kai-shek's leadership was only a temporary expedient, and it is safe to conclude, known by his Communist colleagues to be such."

According to Feis it was Stalin who fostered the idea that the CCP was not genuinely Communist. He relates that in an interview with Harriman, Stalin, with a laugh, said, "The Chinese Communists are not real Communists. They are margarine Communists." Later Molotov repeated this same idea to Hurley.

Feis concludes: "It would require a separate study, and almost a separate book, to examine and state in detail the many reports which the

correspondents who went to Yen-an in 1944 published during the following months in newspapers and magazines and books. A brief illustration of the prevailing character of what they wrote may be borrowed from the telegram sent on July 19, 1944 by the State Department to Ambassador Gauss in order to inform him of the stories being sent in by these correspondents.

"The correspondents in dispatches to New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, and Christian Science Monitor, praised Communists' industrial and agricultural achievements, and applauded fighting spirit and military achievements of Communist troops. N.Y. Times correspondent on July 1, reported seeing how formerly barren country has been transformed into areas of intense cultivation and stock breeding, and handicraft industry. Harrison Forman in Herald Tribune on June 23 described Yen-an as 'magnificent symbol of tenacity and determination of people of the border region of China.' Gunther Stein in Christian Science Monitor on June 27 declared that any allied Commander 'would be proud to command these tough, well-fed hardened troops whose exercises show both skill and spirit.'"

Finally we have the following report from the U.S. Department of State "White Paper." (reports by Service and Davies, 1944)

"The Chinese Communists have become the most dynamic force in China and are challenging the Kuomintang for control of the country.

"Reports of two American officers, several correspondents and twenty-odd foreign travelers regarding conditions in the areas of North China under Communist control are in striking agreement. This unanimity, based on actual observation, is significant. It forces us to accept certain facts, and to draw from these facts an important conclusion.

"The Japanese are being actively opposed...This opposition is possible and successful because it is total guerrilla warfare aggressively waged by a totally mobilized population. In this total mobilization the regular forces of the Communists, though leaders and organizers, have been subordinate to the vastly more numerous forces of the people themselves. They exist because the people permit, support and wholeheartedly fight with them. There is complete solidarity of Army and people.

"This total mobilization is based upon and has been made possible by what amounts to an economic, political and social revolution. This revolution has been moderate and democratic. It has improved the economic conditions of the peasants by rent and interest reduction, tax reform and good government. It has given them democratic self-government, political consciousness and a sense of their rights. It has freed them from feudalistic bonds and given them self-respect, self-reliance and a strong feeling of cooperative group interests. The common people, for the first time, have been given something to fight for. (author's emphasis)"

"The Communists have survived ten years of civil war and seven years of Japanese offensive. They have survived not only more sustained enemy pressure than the Chinese Central Government forces have been subjected to but also a severe blockade imposed by Chiang.

"They have survived and they have grown.

"The reason for this phenomenal vitality and strength is simple and fundamental. It is mass support, mass participation. The Communist government and armies are the first...in modern Chinese history to have positive and widespread popular support. They have this support because the government and armies are genuinely of the people."

* * *

In view of all this evidence given by reporters with no axe of their own to grind, and even by the U.S. State Department, we should ask: how does this check with our SWP position on China?

The answer is partially given in the following excerpt from our 1955 Resolution: "The Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath":

"After the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution, they (the CCP) withdrew from the cities and established an armed peasant base. For a span of 20 years, they used this armed power to rule over the backward and scattered peasant masses. In this manner the uncontrolled, cynical, self-willed bureaucracy consolidated. They applied to the revolution the methods of deceit and ultimatum in order at every stage to safeguard their interests, their power, their privileges. Each success rendered them more contemptuous and fearful of the masses, more convinced they could cheat the class struggle with impunity.

"The CCP leaders are declassed petty bourgeois. Their cadres were trained in the course of the long history of CCP struggles against the permanent revolution, coupled with the systematic annihilation of Trotskyists. Schooled in Stalinism, they started taking shape as a bureaucracy in the course of this struggle."

In view of the evidence herein presented, some sad and serious mistakes have been made by the SWP on this all-important question, the greatest revolution of our generation.

Lenin taught us: "The attitude of a political party toward its own mistakes, is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it in practice fulfils its obligations towards its class and the toiling masses. Frankly admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, to analyze the conditions which gave rise to it, to study attentively the means of correcting it -- these are the signs of a serious party; this means the performance of its duties, this means educating and training the class, and, subsequently the masses." ("Left Wing Communism -- An Infantile Disorder," p. 40)

END OF SECTION 1

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2. Coalition Government According to Mao Tse-tung
3. How the Kuomintang as Defeated
4. Democratic Dictatorship into Socialism

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COMMENTS ON CHOU SZE'S ARTICLE,
"CHANGES IN COMMUNE SYSTEM"

Letter by Dan Roberts

New York, N.Y.
April 1, 1962

Dear Farrell:

I have read Chou Sze's article, "Changes in the Commune System," published in International Information Bulletin, 1962 -- and I wish to make a few preliminary comments about it.

Chou Sze's judgment that the commune system and the "great leap forward" debilitated Chinese agriculture is borne out by letters received by Chinese friends in this vicinity from relatives in China. These letters come from the Canton, Shanghai and Peking areas. They speak of hunger rations -- about half a pound of rice per day per person, a few pieces of fish per month, virtually no meat, few vegetables and little cooking oil.

Even more revealing is that in the Canton area, CP cadres are seeking to spur the farmers to greater efforts under the slogan of equaling the 1956 harvest. At about 200 million tons of grain, this was the record crop of the pre-commune period. But the 1956 total was supposedly left far behind by the "great leap forward" which began in 1958.

Today, bourgeois analysts estimate that China's grain production stands at a level of about 180 million to 200 million tons. One of our Chinese friends told me that the CCP officially conceded that the 1960 crop was 185 million tons -- the same as the 1957 harvest, which was lower than the 1956 crop. (I did not see this announcement myself.) These figures, of course, disprove certain bourgeois-inspired lies to the effect that agricultural production is worse today than before the revolution. But they do reveal that during the last four years the gains scored in agriculture from 1952 through 1957 were seriously cut into. The Mao regime estimated that during those years farm output showed an average yearly growth of 4.5 per cent. Bourgeois analysts, hostile to the regime, computed the yearly growth of farm output during the 1952-1957 period at about 3 per cent, which they conceded was greater than the annual growth rate of the Chinese population. I might add that the overall

growth rate of national production -- industrial and agricultural -- during the same span of years has been variously estimated at between 7 and 11 per cent.

At best, the current estimates of farm output indicate stagnation of the growth rate in agriculture during the last four years. But even stagnation means a lower productivity of labor because the potential farm labor force increased during the last four years. Furthermore, if exports of foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials rose during this period to pay for imports of industrial equipment, then the amount of food available for the population fell. Under these conditions even a stagnation in total farm output, let alone a decrease, spelled disaster for the Chinese people.

Apparently, the "great leap forward" has now been junked. The new course seems to de-emphasize heavy industry and proclaims the need for a balanced growth of heavy industry, light industry and agriculture. The bankruptcy of the commune program and of the "great leap forward" as analyzed by Chou Sze may be only one reason for the change in economic policy. A weightier cause might be the deepening Sino-Soviet conflict, though it is still a matter of conjecture as to what effect the dispute has had and will have on domestic policy. It certainly is hard to envisage the CCP's being able to hold up its end of the conflict without introducing some internal reforms designed to bind the Chinese masses more closely to the regime. We know that the Yugoslavs were obliged to make significant reforms at home after the 1948 break with the Kremlin, and it is likely that the Chinese will have to do the same in order to defeat the machinations of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Chou Sze doesn't examine this side of the question, but his article doesn't lose its importance for that reason. The task the author set himself is to analyze the results of the commune program and his conclusions are indispensable for assessing whatever new course the CCP bureaucracy might now adopt as well as for understanding the bureaucratic character of the Mao regime in general.

Comradely,

Dan Roberts