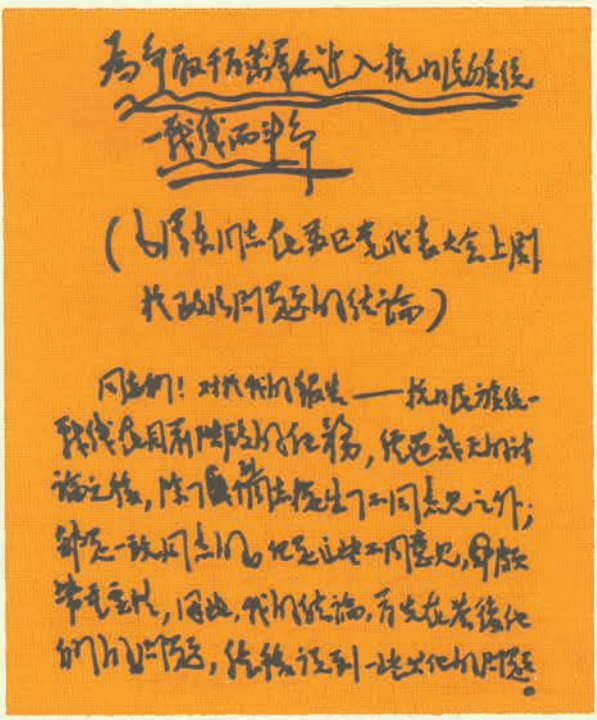
Volume V
Toward the Second United Front
January 1935 – July 1937

MAO'S ROAD TO POWER

Revolutionary Writings 1912·1949



Stuart R. Schram, Editor

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the John King Fairbank Center for East Asian Research,
Harvard University

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The Cover

The calligraphy on the cover is the first page of Mao's own contemporary manuscript of his concluding remarks at the Party Congress of the Soviet Areas, on May 7, 1937. It corresponds to the first paragraph of this text, as translated below on page 651.

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Contents

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Translations of the materials included in this volume have been drafted by many different hands. Our team of translators has included, in alphabetical order, Hsuan Delorme, Gu Weiqun, Li Jin, Li Yuwei, Li Zhuqing, Lin Chun, Pei Minxin, Shen Tong, Su Weizhou, Tian Dongdong, Wang Xisu, Wang Zhi, Bill Wycoff, Ye Yang, Zhang Aiping, and Zheng Shiping.

Nancy Hodes, Research Assistant since mid-1991, and associate editor of the series, has been involved in all aspects of the work on the present volume. She has played a major role in the revision and annotation of the translations, and in checking final versions against the Chinese originals. She has also drafted some translations, as has Stuart Schram. In particular, she has prepared the initial drafts of all Mao's poems, which were then revised in collaboration with Stuart Schram. Final responsibility for the accuracy and literary quality of the work as a whole rests with him as editor.

With this volume, covering the years 1935 and 1936, and the first seven months of 1937, we move into the period when, for the first time, Western journalists were able to meet and interview Mao Zedong. The first and most celebrated of these interlocutors was Edgar Snow, who conducted a number of lengthy interviews with Mao between July and September 1936. Although substantial portions of these documents have long been available, the complete texts

of all five of them are published here for the first time, on the basis of Snow's own manuscripts, preserved in the Edgar Snow Papers in the University Archives of the University of Missouri, Kansas City. We are extremely grateful to Mrs. Lois Wheeler Snow for authorizing us to reproduce these materials, and we wish to express our thanks also to David Boutros and his colleagues at the Archives for their assistance to us in making use of them. In the spring and summer of 1937, Snow's first wife, Helen Foster Snow (Nym Wales) also succeeded in visiting the Communist capital, which by then had been moved from Bao'an to Yan'an, and interviewed Mao on several occasions. Her papers are held partly at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, and partly in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, which now holds the copyright. We are grateful to Helen Snow's niece, Mrs. Sheril Foster Bischoff, and to Harvard Heath, the archivist in charge of this collection, for allowing us to make use of Nym Wales' interview of July 4, 1937, with Mao.

This project was launched by Roderick MacFarquhar, Director of the Fairbank Center until June 30, 1992. Without his organizing ability and forceful advocacy, it would never have come into being, and his continuing active participation has been vital to its success. His successor, Professor James L. Watson, likewise took an interest in our work, and Professor Ezra Vogel, director of the center from July 1995 to June 1999, has consistently manifested sympathy and support for the project.

The editor, Stuart Schram, wishes to acknowledge his very great indebtedness to Benjamin Schwartz, a pioneer in the study of Mao Zedong's thought. Professor Schwartz carefully read the manuscripts of earlier volumes of this series, and made stimulating and thoughtful criticisms of the introductions. More recently, he has continued to offer insightful comments on the themes raised by the materials translated. For any remaining errors and inadequacies, the fault lies once again with the editor.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Mao Zedong and the Chinese Revolution, 1912–1949

Mao Zedong stands out as one of the dominant figures of the twentieth century. Guerrilla leader, strategist, conqueror, ruler, poet, and philosopher, he placed his imprint on China, and on the world. This edition of Mao's writings provides abundant documentation in his own words regarding both his life and his thought. Because of the central role of Mao's ideas and actions in the turbulent course of the Chinese revolution, it thus offers a rich body of historical data about China in the first half of the twentieth century.

The process of change and upheaval in China which Mao sought to master had been going on for roughly a century by the time he was born in 1893. Its origins lay in the incapacity of the old order to cope with the population explosion at the end of the eighteenth century, and with other economic and social problems, as well as in the shock administered by the Opium War of 1840 and further European aggression and expansion thereafter.

Mao's native Hunan Province was crucially involved both in the struggles of the Qing dynasty to maintain its authority, and in the radical ferment which led to successive challenges to the imperial system. Thus on the one hand, the Hunan Army of the great conservative viceroy Zeng Guofan was the main instrument for putting down the Taiping Rebellion and saving the dynasty in the middle of the nineteenth century. But on the other hand, the most radical of the late nineteenth-century reformers, and the only one to lay down his life in 1898, Tan Sitong, was also a Hunanese, as was Huang Xing, whose contribution to the revolution of 1911 was arguably as great as that of Sun Yatsen.[1] In his youth, Mao profoundly admired all three of these men, though they stood for very different things: Zeng for the empire and the Confucian values which sustained it, Tan for defying tradition and seeking inspiration in the West, Huang for Western-style constitutional democracy.

Apart from Mao's strong Hunanese patriotism, which inclined him to admire

1. Abundant references to all three of these figures are to be found in Mao's writings, especially those of the early period contained in Volume I of this series. See, regarding Zeng, pp. 10, 72, and 131. On Tan, see "Zhang Kundi's Record of Two Talks with Mao Zedong," September 1917, p. 139. On Huang, see "Letter to Miyazaki Tōten," March 1917, pp. 111–12.

eminent figures from his own province, he undoubtedly saw these three as forceful and effective leaders who, each in his own way, fought to assure the future of China. Any sense that they were contradictory symbols would have been diminished by the fact that from an early age Mao never advocated exclusive reliance on either Chinese or Western values, but repeatedly sought a synthesis of the two. In August 1917, Mao Zedong expressed the view that despite the "antiquated" and otherwise undesirable traits of the Chinese mentality, "Western thought is not necessarily all correct either; very many parts of it should be transformed at the same time as Oriental thought."[2] In a sense, this sentence sums up the problem he sought to resolve throughout his whole career: How could China develop an advanced civilization, and become rich and powerful, while remaining Chinese?

As shown by the texts contained in Volume I, Mao's early exposure to "Westernizing" influences was not limited to Marxism. Other currents of European thought played a significant role in his development. Whether he was dealing with liberalism or Leninism, however, Mao tenaciously sought to adapt and transform these ideologies, even as he espoused them and learned from them.

Mao Zedong played an active and significant role in the movement for political and intellectual renewal which developed in the aftermath of the patriotic student demonstrations of May 4, 1919, against the transfer of German concessions in China to Japan. This "new thought tide," which had begun to manifest itself at least as early as 1915, dominated the scene from 1919 onward, and prepared the ground for the triumph of radicalism and the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. But though Mao enthusiastically supported the call of Chen Duxiu, who later became the Party's first leader, for the Western values incarnated by "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy," he never wholly endorsed the total negation of Chinese culture advocated by many people during the May Fourth period. His condemnations of the old thought as backward and slavish are nearly always balanced by a call to learn from both Eastern and Western thought and to develop something new out of these twin sources.

In 1919 and 1920, Mao leaned toward anarchism rather than socialism. Only in January 1921 did he at last draw the explicit conclusion that anarchism would not work, and that Russia's proletarian dictatorship represented the model which must be followed.[3] Half the remaining fifty-five years of his life were devoted to creating such a dictatorship, and the other half to deciding what to do with it, and how to overcome the defects which he perceived in it. From beginning to end of this process, Mao drew upon Chinese experience and Chinese civilization in revising and reforming this Western import.

To the extent that, from the 1920s onward, Mao was a committed Leninist, his understanding of the doctrine shaped his vision of the world. But to the extent

2. Letter of August 1917 to Li Jinxi, Volume I, p. 132.
3. See his letter of January 21, 1921, to Cai Hesen, Volume II, pp. 35–36.

that, although he was a Communist revolutionary, he always "planted his backside on the body of China,"[4] ideology alone did not exhaustively determine his outlook. One of Mao Zedong's most remarkable attributes was the extent to which he linked theory and practice. He was in some respects not a very good Marxist, but few men have ever applied so well Marx's dictum that the vocation of the philosopher is not merely to understand the world, but to change it.

It is reliably reported that Mao's close collaborators tried in vain, during the Yan'an period, to interest him in writings by Marx such as *The 18 Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. To such detailed historical analyses based on economic and social facts, he preferred *The Communist Manifesto*, of which he saw the message as "*Jieji douzheng, jieji douzheng, jieji douzheng*!" (Class struggle, class struggle, class struggle!) In other words, for Mao the essence of Marxism resided in the fundamental idea of the struggle between oppressor and oppressed as the motive force of history.

Such a perspective offered many advantages. It opened the door to the immediate pursuit of revolutionary goals, since even though China did not have a very large urban proletariat, there was no lack of oppressed people to be found there. It thus eliminated the need for the Chinese to feel inferior, or to await salvation from without, just because their country was still stuck in some precapitalist stage of development (whether "Asiatic" or "feudal"). And, by placing the polarity "oppressor/oppressed" at the heart of the revolutionary ideology itself, this approach pointed toward a conception in which landlord oppression, and the oppression of China by the imperialists, were perceived as the two key targets of the struggle.

Mao displayed, in any case, a remarkably acute perception of the realities of Chinese society, and consistently adapted his ideas to those realities, at least during the struggle for power. In the early years after its foundation in 1921, the Chinese Communist Party sought support primarily from the working class in the cities and adopted a strategy based on a "united front" or alliance with Sun Yatsen's Guomindang. Mao threw himself into this enterprise with enthusiasm, serving first as a labor union organizer in Hunan in 1922–1923, and then as a high official within the Guomindang organization in 1923–1926. Soon, however, he moved away from this perspective, and even before urban-based revolution was put down in blood by Chiang Kaishek in 1927, he asserted that the real center of gravity of Chinese society was to be found in the countryside. From this fact, he drew the conclusion that the decisive blows against the existing reactionary order must be struck in the countryside by the peasants.

By August 1927, Mao had concluded that mobilizing the peasant masses was not enough. A red army was also necessary to serve as the spearhead of revolu-

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4. Mao Zedong, "Ruhe yanjiu Zhonggong dangshi," (How to study the history of the Chinese Communist Party), talk of March 30, 1942, to a Central Committee study group, in *Mao Zedong wenji*, vol. 2, pp. 399–408.

tion, and so he put forward the slogan: "Political power comes out of the barrel of a gun."[5] In the mountain fastness of the Jinggangshan base area in Jiangxi Province, to which he retreated at the end of 1927 with the remnants of his forces, he began to elaborate a comprehensive strategy for rural revolution, combining land reform with the tactics of guerrilla warfare. In this he was aided by Zhu De, a professional soldier who had joined the Chinese Communist Party, and soon became known as the "commander-in-chief." This pattern of revolution rapidly achieved a considerable measure of success. The "Chinese Soviet Republic," established in 1931 in a larger and more populous area of Jiangxi, survived for several years, though when Chiang Kaishek finally devised the right strategy and mobilized his crack troops against it, the Communists were defeated and forced to embark in 1934 on the Long March.

There were periods during the years 1931–1934 when Mao Zedong was reduced virtually to the position of a figurehead by the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, dominated in large part by the Moscow-trained members of the so-called "Internationalist" faction. At other times, he was able to maintain a substantial measure of control over the military tactics of the Red Army, and to develop his skills both as a theorist and as a practitioner of the art of war. Even when he was effectively barred from that domain, he continued to pursue the investigations of rural conditions which had long been one of his trademarks.[6] Such enquiries into the conditions in a particular area served as the foundation for an approach to revolution stressing the need to adapt the Party's tactics to the concrete realities of the society in which it was operating.

The defeat of 1934 weakened the position of Mao's rivals for the leadership. In meetings of the Politburo held in December 1934, in the course of the Long March, Mao was supported for the first time in over two years by a majority of the participants.[7] At the conference held at Zunyi in January 1935, Mao began his comeback in earnest. Soon he once again played a dominant role in decisions regarding military operations, though his rise to unquestioned dominance in the Party was a long process which reached its culmination only in 1945.

In the course of the northward march from Zunyi to Shaanxi, Mao was driven at times by the continuing threat from Chiang Kaishek's campaigns of "Encirclement and Suppression" to advocate that the Red Army should fight its way to the borders of the Soviet Union, in order to obtain Soviet aid and protection.[8] Once

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5. See the relevant passages of the texts of August 7 and August 18, 1927, in Volume III, pp. 31 and 36.

6. See, in particular, in Volume III, the Xunwu and Xingguo investigations, pp. 296–418 and 594–655, and in Volume IV, the circular of April 2, 1931, on investigating the situation regarding land and population, pp. 54–55, and the texts of 1933 on the "Land Investigation Movement," pp. 408–526 *passim*.

7. See Volume IV, pp. xciii-xciv.

8. See below, the Introduction to this volume, and also the "Resolution on Problems of Military Strategy" of December 23, 1935.

the survivors of the Red Army had established themselves in Shaanxi Province in 1936, Mao's perspective began to change, and a vision of the Chinese people as a whole as the victim of oppression came progressively into play. For a time, Mao's line called for overthrowing the traitorous running dog Chiang Kaishek in order to fight Japan, but soon the growing threat of Japanese aggression and strong Soviet pressure in favor of collaboration with the Guomindang led to a fundamental change in the Party's policy. The Xi'an Incident of December 1936, in which Chiang Kaishek was kidnapped in order to force him to oppose the invader, was the catalyst which finally produced a second "united front." Without it, Mao Zedong and the forces he led might well have remained a side current in the remote and backward region of Northwest China, or even been exterminated altogether. As it was, the collaboration of 1937–1945, however perfunctory and opportunistic on both sides, gave Mao the occasion to establish himself as a patriotic national leader. Above all, the resulting context of guerrilla warfare behind the Japanese lines allowed the Communists to build a foundation of political and military power throughout wide areas of Northern and Central China.

During the years in Yan'an, from 1937 to 1946, Mao Zedong also finally consolidated his own dominant position in the Chinese Communist Party, and in particular his role as the ideological mentor of the Party. Beginning in November 1936, he seized the opportunity to read a number of writings by Chinese Marxists, and Soviet works in Chinese translation, which had been published while he was struggling for survival a few years earlier. These provided the stimulus for the elaboration of his own interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, and in particular for his theory of contradictions. As noted above, another of the main features of his thought, the emphasis on practice as the source of knowledge, had long been in evidence and had found expression in the sociological surveys in the countryside which he himself carried out beginning as early as 1926.

In 1938, Mao called for the "Sinification of Marxism," that is, the modification not only of its language but of its substance in order to adapt it to Chinese culture and Chinese realities. By 1941, he had begun to suggest that he himself had carried out this enterprise, and to attack those in the Party who, in his view, preferred to translate ready-made formulas from the Soviet Union. The "Rectification Campaign" of 1942–43 was designed in large measure to change the thinking of such "Internationalists," or to eliminate them from positions of influence.

When Mao was elected chairman of the Politburo and of the Secretariat in March 1943, the terms of his appointment to this second post contained a curious provision: Mao alone, as chairman, could out-vote the other two members of the Secretariat in case of disagreement. This was the first step toward setting Mao above and apart from all other Party members and thereby opening the way to the subsequent cult. At the Seventh Party Congress in April 1945 came apotheosis: Mao Zedong's thought was written into the Party statutes as the guide to all work, and Mao was hailed as the greatest theoretical genius in China's history for his achievement in creating such a remarkable doctrine.

In 1939–1940, Mao had put forward the slogan of "New Democracy" and defined it as a régime in which proletariat (read Communist Party) and bourgeoisie (read Guomindang) would jointly exercise dictatorship over reactionary and pro-Japanese elements in Chinese society. Moreover, as late as 1945, when the Communists were still in a weaker position than the Guomindang, Mao indicated that this form of rule would be based on free elections with universal suffrage. Later, when the Communist Party had military victory within its grasp and was in a position to do things entirely in its own way, Mao would state forthrightly, in "On People's Democratic Dictatorship," that such a dictatorship could in fact just as well be called a "People's Democratic Autocracy." In other words, it was to be democratic only in the sense that it served the people's interests; in form, it was to exercise its authority through a "powerful state apparatus."

In 1946, when the failure of General George Marshall's attempts at mediation led to renewed civil war, Mao and his comrades revived the policies of land reform which had been suspended during the alliance with the Guomindang, and thereby recreated a climate of agrarian revolution. Thus national and social revolution were interwoven in the strategy which ultimately brought final victory in 1949.

In March 1949, Mao declared that though the Chinese revolution had previously taken the path of surrounding the cities from the countryside, henceforth the building of socialism would take place in the orthodox way, with leadership and enlightenment radiating outward from the cities to the countryside. Looking at the twenty-seven years under Mao's leadership after 1949, however, the two most striking developments—the chiliastic hopes of instant plenty which characterized the Great Leap Forward of the late 1950s, and the anxiety about the corrupting effects of material progress, coupled with a nostalgia for "military communism," which underlay the Cultural Revolution—both bore the mark of rural utopianism. Thus Mao's road to power, though it led to total victory over the Nationalists, also cultivated in Mao himself, and in the Party, attitudes which would subsequently engender great problems.

Revolution in its Leninist guise has loomed large in the world for most of the twentieth century, and the Chinese revolution has been, with the Russian revolution, one of its two most important manifestations. The Bolshevik revolution set a pattern long regarded as the only standard of communist orthodoxy, but the revolutionary process in China was in some respects even more remarkable. Although communism now appears bankrupt throughout much of the world, the impact of Mao is still a living reality in China more than two decades after his death. Particularly since the Tiananmen events of June 1989, the continuing relevance of Mao's political and ideological heritage has been stressed ever more heavily by the Chinese leadership. Interest in Mao Zedong has been rekindled in some sectors of the population, and elements of a new Mao cult have even emerged.

Though the ultimate impact of these recent trends remains uncertain, the problem of how to come to terms with the modern world, while retaining

China's own identity, still represents one of the greatest challenges facing the Chinese. Mao did not solve it, but he boldly grappled with the political and intellectual challenge of the West as no Chinese ruler before him had done. If Lenin has suffered the ultimate insult of being replaced by Peter the Great as the symbol of Russian national identity, it could be argued that Mao cannot, like Lenin, be supplanted by a figure analogous to Peter because he himself played the role of China's first modernizing and Westernizing autocrat. However misguided many of Mao's ideas, and however flawed his performance, his efforts in this direction will remain a benchmark to a people still struggling to define their place in the community of nations.

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INTRODUCTION

The Writings of Mao Zedong, 1935–1937

The introductions to the first three volumes of this edition were, in large measure, commentaries on the story as told in Mao's own words. Because the essential aim of this series is to make available a collection of source materials, without imposing on the reader an interpretation laid down by the editors, that is the pattern we prefer to follow. In the Introduction to Volume IV, it was necessary to depart from this model to some extent, because limitations on Mao's role during the years 1931–1934, and the fact that he was in many cases not the author of the texts to which he was obliged to put his name as chairman of the Chinese Soviet Republic, made it impossible to take Mao's own writings as the leading thread.

For rather different reasons, the first year covered by the present volume falls into the same category as Volume IV. On the whole, the problem is not that texts signed by Mao cannot be confidently attributed to him but, rather, that the available firsthand documentation for 1935, including writings both by Mao and by others, is exceedingly scanty. There are at least three explanations for this fact. First, the Red Army was constantly on the march, in difficult conditions hardly conducive to the making and preservation of written records. Second, the period of the Long March remains an extremely sensitive one for historical writing in China because many of the leading actors are, or were until very recently, still alive, and they (and their families) are concerned about the possible impact on their reputations of the limited documentation which does exist regarding their role in various crucial decisions. Finally, some of those statements by Mao Zedong which are available reveal, or suggest, that he occasionally expressed views scarcely compatible with the account of his position in the orthodox Chinese historiography, even today. As a result, the record of Mao's utterances at many important meetings in 1935–which may well include even more heterodox statements by him than those which appear in this volume—is locked away in the archives in Beijing, and we are obliged to summarize his views on the basis of the excerpts contained in the official chronology of his life,[1] and a variety of other sources, to provide a setting for those Mao texts which are available.

Beginning with the Wayaobao Conference of December 1935, on the other hand, the documentary record in Mao's own words is much more extensive,

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1. *Mao Zedong nianpu 1893–1949* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong, 1893–1949), ed. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiu shi (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1993), Vol. 1. Since Mao is the central figure in this edition, our short title for this work is simply *Nianpu*; in the case of other such chronologies, the name of the subject is included in the short title.

though by no means complete. From this point onward, therefore, the character of this Introduction becomes more like what it was in the first three volumes. That does not mean, of course, that our view of events is based exclusively or primarily on Mao's own perspective, without recourse to other sources, but the presentation and analysis of Mao's writings is central to our discourse.

I. The Long March: Mao and His Rivals during the Struggle for Survival[2]

The Introduction to Volume IV ends with a brief account of the meetings on December 12, 1934, in Tongdao, and on December 18, 1934, in Liping, at which the future direction of the Long March was discussed, and the question of responsibilities for the collapse of the Central Soviet Area began to be raised. At these conferences, for the first time in two years, Mao's views regarding military strategy were supported by a majority of the participants. It was decided to move westward toward Zunyi in Guizhou Province, and not to turn north into Hunan, to join up with other Red forces believed to be located there, as advocated by the Comintern military adviser, Otto Braun (Li De), and the dominant figure in the Party leadership, Bo Gu (Qin Bangxian).[3]

2. The sources regarding the events of the Long March, which provide the context for Mao's views and Mao's role as discussed here, are many and various, both in Chinese and in Western languages. The first published account, Mao's own narrative to Edgar Snow as reproduced in *Red Star over China*, though not altogether accurate or objective, is an important historical document. Other autobiographical accounts of participants include that of Zhang Guotao, cited below, and Otto Braun, *Chinesische Aufzeichnungen (1932–1939)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1973), translated as *A Comintern Agent in China, 1932–1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982) (hereafter Braun, *Comintern Agent*). This latter work can usefully be read in conjunction with Freddy Litten's monograph, *Otto Brauns frühes Wirken in China (1932–1935)* (Otto Braun's Early Activities in China, 1932–1935) (Munich: Osteuropa-Institut München, Working Papers no. 124, 1988) (hereafter Litten, *Early Activities*). Dick Wilson's book, *The Long March 1935* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), based primarily on often out-of-date English-language sources, is today of little interest. Harrison Salisbury's vivid account, *The Long March: The Untold Story* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985) (hereafter Salisbury, *Long March*), though sometimes careless about details and strongly influenced by the orthodox Chinese view of Mao, contains much valuable information, thanks to the extraordinary access from which he benefited. With the support of Yang Shangkun, he was able to retrace the entire route of the march and to interview many survivors.

3. Regarding political developments during the Long March, and the political and ideological positions adopted by Mao Zedong on various occasions, a useful scholarly study based on Chinese sources is Benjamin Yang, *From Revolution to Politics: Chinese Communists on the Long March* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990) (hereafter Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*). Michael Sheng's more recent work, *Battling Western Imperialism. Mao, Stalin, and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) (Hereafter Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism*) offers a new perspective on the events of 1935 and early 1936, as well as on later periods, drawing on a number of previously neglected or unavailable sources. Shum Kui-kwong, *The Chinese Communists' Road to*

On January 1, 1935, while halted at Houchang, a locality some 30 miles south of the Wu River, the Politburo held a meeting and adopted a resolution reiterating the view Mao had expressed at Liping to the effect that the Party should expand into southern Sichuan.[4] Two days later, after building a floating bridge on the Wu River, Red Army units began to cross, and by January 7, the walled city of Zunyi had been taken.[5] The leaders, including Mao Zedong, arrived on January 9 and remained in Zunyi until the 19th. During this period, the enlarged session of the Politburo commonly known as the Zunyi Conference met from January 15 to 17.

It has long been known that this gathering was of major importance, but until the early 1980s so little reliable documentation was available that there was great confusion about what actually took place, and even about the dates of the meeting. Some writers, including the editor of this series, asserted that at Zunyi Mao had become, either in name or in fact, chairman of the Politburo.[6] While Mao did not achieve dominance in the Party until 1938, and was not given the title of chairman until 1943, the improvement in his fortunes which had begun in December 1934 was nonetheless carried forward significantly. He did not become the unchallenged leader overnight, but the prospect of such preeminence began to open before him.

Until a little over a decade ago, the only document available regarding the proceedings at Zunyi was a Politburo resolution entitled "Summing up the Campaign against the Enemy's Fifth 'Encirclement and Suppression'," believed to have been adopted at Zunyi.[7] While this contains much useful information, the names of key participants in the conference were represented in it by blanks, and earlier speculations as to their identity have frequently turned out to be wrong.

Power: The Anti-Japanese National United Front, 1935–1945 (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1988) (hereafter Shum, *United Front*), also deals at some length with events in 1935. A comprehensive account by a Chinese author with full access to all the relevant documentation can be found in Jin Chongji, *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1893–1949* (Biography of Mao Zedong, 1893–1949) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1996) (hereafter Jin, *Mao*). (It has been announced that an English translation will be published shortly.) Other Chinese materials, consisting of memoirs, and of articles and documents published in specialized periodicals dealing with Party history, will be cited below as the occasion arises.

4. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 442; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, p. 107, citing the text of the resolution; and Thomas Kampen, *Die Führung der KP Chinas und der Aufstieg Mao Zedongs (1931–1945)* (The Leadership of the CCP and the Rise of Mao Zedong [1931–1945]) (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1998) (hereafter Kampen, *Rise of Mao*), p. 68.

5. Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 115–17.

6. Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 167.

7. This document was translated by Jerome Chen from one of the rare Chinese-language sources then available in his article "Resolutions of the Tsunyi Conference," *China Quarterly*, no. 40 (October-December 1969), pp. 1–38. The Chinese text was reproduced in 1971 in *Mao Zedong ji*, Vol. 4, pp. 379–97. Regarding the date of this resolution and the circumstances of its adoption, see also Kampen, *Rise of Mao*, p. 70.

Our knowledge of what happened was greatly expanded by the publication in China in January 1985, on the fiftieth anniversary of these events, of important documentary materials. The most widely distributed collection was a slim volume including, in addition to the resolution just mentioned, a brief telegraphic account sent to Zhang Guotao's Fourth Front Army on February 28, 1935, and an outline of the decisions taken at Zunyi prepared by Chen Yun in late February or early March for circulation to Red Army units, which does name some previously unmentionable names.[8] Like the resolution adopted at Zunyi, these two items are not by Mao, so they do not appear below in the body of this volume, but English translations are conveniently available.[9]

On the basis of these and other newly available materials, the course of the proceedings has become clear in broad outline, though there are divergences among those who have recently written about Zunyi regarding some important points.[10] Bo Gu, who had effectively controlled the Central Committee since September 1931, spoke first. As might have been expected, he argued in his political report that the strategic line followed in resisting the Guomindang's Fifth "Encirclement and Suppression," for which he and Otto Braun bore primary responsibility, was correct. The defeat which had led to the Long March was, he argued, the result of "objective factors" such as the strength of the Guomindang, supported by the imperialists, and the lack of coordination between revolutionary movements in the White area and the operations of the Red Army.[11]

Zhou Enlai, who had been in overall charge of military operations since he supplanted Mao in this capacity at the Ningdu Conference of October 1932,[12] next presented the military report. Understandably, he defended the strategic line for which he, together with Bo Gu and Otto Braun, was responsible, but he

8. See *Zunyi huiyi wenxian* (Documents Regarding the Zunyi Conference) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1985). An ampler collection of documents was published in Guizhou, under the title *Zunyi huiyi ziliao xuanbian* (Selected Materials on the Zunyi Conference) (Guiyang, 1985). Both these volumes also contain an "Investigation Report" regarding the circumstances of the Zunyi conference, which had been checked and approved by the six surviving participants: Chen Yun, Deng Xiaoping, Nie Rongzhen, Yang Shangkun, Wu Xiuquan, and Li Zhuoran.

9. These two texts are appended to Benjamin Yang's article "The Zunyi Conference as One Step in Mao's Rise to Power: A Survey of Historical Studies of the Chinese Communist Party," *China Quarterly*, no. 106 (June 1986), pp. 235–71 (hereafter, Yang, "The Zunyi Conference").

10. In addition to Yang's article, cited in the previous note, and Kampen, *Rise of Mao*, pp. 68–74, see Kampen's comment, "The Zunyi Conference and Further Steps in Mao's Road to Power," *China Quarterly*, no. 117 (March 1989), pp. 119–34, as well as Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 107–24; Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 119–26; and Litten, *Early Activities*, pp. 73–82.

11. See Chen Yun's summary, as translated in Yang, "The Zunyi Conference," pp. 265–66.

12. See the Introduction to Volume IV, pp. lvi-lx.

showed much greater flexibility than Bo, acknowledging errors in its application, such as fighting the Guomindang's blockhouses with blockhouses.

Then came the counterattack. Many sources state that it began with a speech by Mao, but a recent authoritative account indicates that before Mao spoke, Zhang Wentian (Luo Fu) made a statement presenting the views agreed upon by Zhang himself, Mao, and Wang Jiaxiang, and this version is undoubtedly correct.[13] Mao followed with a systematic criticism of the military leadership during the previous period, arguing that the main cause of defeat lay in tactical errors such as the adoption of a purely passive defense and fighting on fronts and blockhouses rather than mobile warfare. Otto Braun's tactics of "short, sharp thrusts" had cost the Red Army dearly. All these methods, Mao emphasized, ran directly counter to the principles which had previously brought victory to the Communist forces.[14] Whether Zhang or Wang took the lead in supporting Mao's attack on Bo Gu is a disputed issue.[15] There is no doubt, in any case, that these two "Returned Students" played a decisive role in the removal of their fellow member of the "International Faction" from the top position in the Party.

On the basis of interviews with participants in the Long March, as well as published memoirs, Salisbury argues that on the road from Jiangxi to Zunyi, Mao had held extensive conversations with both men and drawn them closer to his position.[16] Apart from Mao's own persuasive powers, his rapprochement with Zhang Wentian and Wang Jiaxiang resulted also from the fact that Wang Ming had informed the Central Commitee in November 1934 that the International viewed Mao favorably as an experienced leader.[17] The outcome of the Zunyi Conference was in harmony with that assumption. At the Politburo meeting itself, Mao was made a member of the Standing Committee. Bo Gu and Otto Braun were removed from the military leadership, which was placed in the hands of Zhou Enlai and Zhu De. On February 5, Zhang Wentian replaced Bo Gu as the "person with overall responsibility" for the leadership of the Party. On March 4, the Frontline Headquarters was reestablished, with Zhu De as commander-in-chief and Mao as political commissar, and began exercising its functions immediately.[18]

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13. Jin, *Mao*, p. 341. See also Kampen, *Rise of Mao*, p. 72. Litten, *Early Activities*, pp. 88–89, makes the same point, citing an article published in China which quotes Deng Xiaoping, who was present at Zunyi, to this effect.

14. See the summary of Mao's speech in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 443.

15. See Yang, "The Zunyi Conference," and Kampen's comment in reply, cited above.

16. Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 70–71 and 123.

17. See Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism*, pp. 20–21, quoting an article by Yang Kuisong. Sheng argues that this message from the Comintern also encouraged Zhou Enlai and Zhu De to throw their support to Mao.

18. See below, the two orders signed by Zhu De and Mao Zedong dated March 5, 1935.

On March 10, Mao was outvoted at a meeting of the leadership, which decided to launch an assault on a point which in Mao's view was too strongly defended. At further discussions on the next day, however, the majority was persuaded to reverse this decision. From these events Mao drew the conclusion that decisions in the midst of a battle should not be taken by a large number of people. He therefore proposed on March 22 that, to ensure unified command, a new three-man group responsible for military leadership be established. This group, set up shortly afterward, consisted of Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong, and Wang Jiaxiang.[19] Wang had been severely wounded shortly before the start of the Long March, and Zhou's authority had been weakened by the defeat in the Fifth "Encirclement and Suppression." As a result, although Zhou was formally in charge, Mao soon emerged as the effective "number one" in the military domain.

To be sure, the future of the Chinese Communist Party would involve political as well as military decisions, and in early 1935 Mao did not yet have the preponderant voice in political matters. But to the extent that fighting would be the most important single task between departure from Zunyi and arrival in Shaanxi at the end of 1935, Mao's primacy in the military domain offered the opportunity to establish himself as the man who could lead the Party to victory.

The two months, from mid-January to mid-March, during which the leadership changes noted above were made, saw a great deal of fighting, but did not begin auspiciously. As indicated in the telegram of January 22, 1935, to Zhang Guotao translated below, the original intention was to cross the Yangzi to the north in the vicinity of Luzhou and to proceed northward in order to join forces with Zhang's Fourth Front Army, which was then occupying a base area in Sichuan. But, on the way there, the forces of Mao and his comrades were defeated at Tucheng on the Chishui (Red River), which marked the boundary between Guizhou and Sichuan. The First Front Army then crossed the Chishui to the west on January 29, crossed back again on February 18–19 to return to northern Guizhou, and successfully took Loushan Pass on February 28, 1935 (an exploit commemorated in the poem thus titled, translated below).

On March 16–17, Mao's forces crossed once more to the west and entered Sichuan, but then crossed back on March 21–22 and drove south into Guizhou and thence to eastern Yunnan. The First Front Army proceeded to advance in a wide arc through Yunnan, crossed the River of the Golden Sands into Sichuan in early May, and reached Huili, where an important meeting was held on May 12, 1935.

These backward and forward movements were intended to deceive Chiang Kaishek, who had personally come to preside over the final destruction of the "Communist bandits," and in Mao's view they had achieved their end, but some commanders, including Peng Dehuai and Lin Biao, felt that they were exhausting the Red Army's own forces in the process. Lin Biao actually put forward a

19. On the events of March 10–22, 1935, see *Nianpu*, pp. 451–52, and Jin, *Mao*, p. 349.

written proposal in Huili that Mao be relieved of his direct responsibility for field operations. "You are a mere child," Mao responded bluntly. "What do you understand?" Mao suspected that Peng Dehuai was the instigator of Lin Biao's initiative and in later years he would hold this against Peng. Defending himself at the Huili meeting, Mao declared that this proposal went against the spirit of the Zunyi Conference. Zhu De and Zhou Enlai spoke in support of Mao, praising his skill in evading the enemy and successfully crossing the River of Golden Sands, thereby breaking the Guomindang's encirclement. The meeting endorsed the strategy of proceeding northward in order to combine forces with Zhang Guotao's Fourth Front Army.[20]

After a difficult passage through the territory occupied by the Yi minority, the legendary crossing of the Dadu River, and the long climb over the Jiajin Mountains,[21] the First Front Army made contact with the Fourth Front Army on June 12, 1935. The two armies celebrated their union on June 17,[22] but Mao Zedong and Zhang Guotao did not meet until June 25. Meanwhile, on June 16, a telegram signed by Zhu De, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Zhang Wentian was sent to Zhang Guotao and his fellow leaders of the Fourth Front Army, proposing that in the future the two armies should occupy the three provinces of Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Gansu, establish soviet régimes there, and send a force to occupy Xinjiang at an appropriate time.[23] When the two leading groups found themselves face to face at Lianghekou on June 25, Mao and Zhang embraced, the armies cheered one another, and there was great outward cordiality at the banquet that evening, but it soon became apparent that there was little substantive agreement on the direction of march or on any other issue.

Zhang Guotao and Mao were, of course, both founding members of the Chinese Communist Party, who had participated in the First Congress of 1921.[24] During the period of the First United Front, Zhang and Mao had on occasion supported each other,[25] but Zhang harbored resentment against Mao because of

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20. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 455; Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 178–95; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 127–28. A primary source used by the latter two authors is Nie Rongzhen, *Nie Rongzhen huiyilu* (Memoirs of Nie Rongzhen) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1983), pp. 258–61 (hereafter Nie, *Memoirs*).

21. The most detailed and vivid account of these episodes is that of Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 195–241. On the bridge over the Dadu, see also Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), pp. 194–200 (hereafter Snow, *Red Star*).

22. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 459.

23. See below, the telegram of June 16, 1935, and also Braun, *Comintern Agent*, p. 121.

24. Zhang Guotao (1897–1979), *zi* Teli, was a native of Jiangxi. As a student at Beijing University, he played a leading role in the May Fourth demonstrations. At the First Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in July 1921, he was elected a member of the Central Committee, and, from that time forward, he was a major figure in the Party.

25. For example, at the Second Congress of the Guomindang in 1926 Mao endorsed Zhang's argument in favor of the need to keep membership in the Communist Party secret in areas suffering from Right-wing repression. See Volume II, pp. 351–52.

an incident at the Third Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1923. On this occasion, Mao, according to Zhang, had initially supported him on the need to keep control of the labor unions firmly in Communist hands, but had in the end changed his position and voted in favor of the more conciliatory policy of the Comintern representative. Zhang suggests in his memoirs that Mao was influenced by opportunist motives.[26] In the aftermath, Mao was indeed elected a member of the Central Bureau, and secretary of the Central Executive Committee, while Zhang was dropped from such high positions.

While this ancient grievance may have affected the relations between the two men, the crucial source of conflict between them was that both sought power for themselves. Zhang Guotao had been a highly successful leader of the Fourth Front Army in the Henan-Hubei-Anhui (E-Yu-Wan) border area, and then, when forced to relocate after the Fourth "Encirclement and Suppression," in Sichuan. In his report of January 1934 to the Second Soviet Congress, Mao had praised the achievements of the Fourth Front Army in these campaigns.[27] Mao, for his part, though deprived of real power in the final period of the Jiangxi Soviet Republic, had continued to occupy the ceremonial post of chairman and was, as noted above, now in the process of asserting himself once more in a leading role.

An obvious source of conflict was the fact that while Mao and the other leaders of the First Front Army enjoyed legitimacy, because their occupancy of the top Party posts had been endorsed by Moscow, the Fourth Front Army possessed far greater military power. According to recent accounts, Zhang Guotao's forces numbered 70,000 or 80,000, while only 7,000 to 10,000 remained of the First Front Army after the losses caused by enemy action and the many perils of the journey from Jiangxi to Sichuan.[28]

On June 26, 1935, the Politburo met in Lianghekou. Zhou Enlai presided and gave the opening report, calling for a unified command structure of the two armies, which would lead them north to establish a base in Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Gansu. Mao expressed his agreement with Zhou's report and made five points: (1) The Red Army should exert every effort to go to a new area and establish a base there. In a Sichuan-Shaanxi-Gansu base, it would be possible to create a more solid foundation for the soviet movement. Things should be explained to comrades of the Fourth Front Army, so that they would agree to this plan rather than heading for Chengdu. (2) The nature of the war should be neither decisive defensive engagements, nor flight, but attack. (3) We should see which are the localities where Chiang Kaishek can threaten our vital interests and smash them

26. See Zhang Guotao, *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party 1921–1927: Volume One of the Autobiography of Chang Kuo-t'ao* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1971), pp. 299–312.

27. See Volume IV, pp. 662–63.

28. See Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 243–44; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, p. 147; Frederick C. Teiwes, "Mao and His Lieutenants," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 19/20 (1988), pp. 35–36.

first. (4) We should concentrate our forces to attack in the main direction. (5) The problem of unified leadership should be handled by the Standing Committee [of the Politburo] and the Military Affairs Commission.[29]

Zhang Guotao agreed that there were arguments in favor of a Sichuan-Shaanxi-Gansu base, but suggested as alternatives a new base in the Sichuan-Gansu-Xikang border area, or a move westward toward Xinjiang in order to establish contact with the Soviet Union. Zhang indicates in his memoirs that the Politburo meeting only lasted three hours in the morning of June 26 and that Zhou Enlai came to him that same afternoon with a telegram calling for both armies to move northward, which he accepted because he was reluctant to set himself against all the other members of the Politburo. According to the recent official biography of Mao Zedong, the discussion of this issue nevertheless continued for three days, and the final decision to endorse Mao's plan to go north was made only on June 28. The Politburo meeting continued on June 29, when Zhang Guotao was elected deputy chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, and his principal military subordinates, Xu Xiangqian and Chen Changhao, were made members of the commission.[30]

Although the contents of the June 28 decision corresponded broadly to Mao's views, it had been shaped in the course of collective discussions, and there is no indication in the sources that it was drafted by Mao, so it does not appear in the body of this volume. The opening passage sums up the message:

> 1. After the rendezvous between the First and Fourth Front Armies, our general strategic policy is to concentrate our main force to attack toward the north and destroy large numbers of enemy forces in the course of mobile warfare. We shall first seize the southern part of Gansu to establish the Sichuan-Shaanxi-Gansu Soviet Base Area, so that the Chinese soviet movement can be placed on a more solid and broader foundation and we can seek victory in the northwestern provinces of China and ultimately throughout China.
>
> 2. In order to carry out this general strategic policy, we must first, in our campaigns, concentrate our main forces to destroy and smash Hu Zongnan's forces, take Songpan, and control the areas north of Songpan in order to enable the main forces to advance victoriously toward southern Gansu.[31]

The plans for the action against Hu Zongnan were drawn up by Zhou Enlai,

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29. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 460–61.

30. Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 249–51; Zhang Guotao, *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party 1928–1938: Volume Two of the Autobiography of Chang Kuo-t'ao* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1972), pp. 383–89 (hereafter Zhang, *Autobiography*); Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 144–45; Jin, *Mao*, pp. 355–56.

31. *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* (Selected Documents of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party), Vol. 10 (1934–1935) (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1991), pp. 516–17 (hereafter, *Central Committee Documents*).

but Zhang Guotao, whose Fourth Front Army was in the best position to carry out the attack, was entrusted with their application. In the view of Chinese historians, reflected in Harrison Salisbury's account, Zhang carried out this operation in a dilatory fashion which amounted to deliberate sabotage, because he really wanted to go west rather than north.[32] The First Front Army pressed forward, but Mao did not want to attack Songpan on his own. On July 10, he sent Zhang Guotao a telegram urging that the Fourth Front Army hasten northward,[33] but Zhang showed no inclination to do so. Mao was therefore obliged to compromise. At a Politburo meeting held in Luhua on July 18, 1935, Mao and the other leaders of the First Front Army reluctantly agreed that Zhou Enlai, who was seriously ill, should resign as general political commissar of the Red Army and be replaced by Zhang Guotao. As a corollary of this decision, Mao was obliged to abandon his own formal authority over military strategy, but he still had considerable influence in this domain because of his personal prestige. He accepted this compromise in preference to Zhang Wentian's suggestion that Zhang Guotao should take over as secretary general. As Teiwes has put it, Zhang, thinking Party power was empty, was happy to accept the offer of military leadership, but in the long run Mao's role on the Central Committee would stand him in good stead when the two armies finally split.[34]

At the request of Zhang Guotao and the Fourth Front Army, another Politburo conference was held on August 4–6 in Shawo, near Mao'ergai, to discuss general political issues and the composition of the leadership. Zhang Wentian, who chaired the conference, read out a resolution which had been drafted in advance, criticizing Zhang Guotao for abandoning the northern Sichuan base and for his reluctance to carry out the proposed northern expedition. Zhang counterattacked by arguing that the Central leadership, having lost the entire Central Soviet Area in Jiangxi and most of the Red Army, was in no position to claim that its line was correct. In the end, a new compromise resolution was drafted, stressing the need for "class love" between the two forces.

In a speech on this occasion, Mao declared that the Northwest was characterized by the fact that it was the place where both the ruling classes and the imperialist forces were weakest. Moreover, because it was close to the Soviet Union, Soviet political and material assistance could be obtained there. In a victory for Mao, the northward march was once again proclaimed.[35]

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32. Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 256–57; *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 462; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 148–49.

33. See below, "The Fourth Front Army Should Hasten Northward," July 10, 1935.

34. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 463; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 148–50; Teiwes, "Mao and His Lieutenants," pp. 35–36.

35. Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 151–53; *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 464–67; Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism*, p. 24; and Yang Kuisong, "Sulian daguimo yuanzhu Zhongguo hongjun de yici changshi" (A Soviet Attempt to Deliver Massive Aid to the Chinese Red Army) (hereafter Yang, "Massive Soviet Aid"), *Jindaishi yanjiu*, 1995, no. 1, p. 260.

In fact, the possibility of Soviet assistance, and of offering the Chinese Red Army temporary refuge in the Soviet Union, had been evoked earlier in Moscow. In September 1934, the Soviet authorities had considered building a secret cadre school for the Chinese Communists in Central Asia, and providing military aid including airplanes and heavy artillery.[36]

On August 20, yet another conference was held in Mao'ergai. In the absence of Zhang Guotao and Zhu De, who had left for the south, this Politburo meeting adopted a resolution, drafted by Mao, elaborating on the line laid down in the document of June 28, quoted above. It called for exploiting the contradictions among the various warlords and for encouraging the non-Han peoples, numerous in that area, to establish their own "people's republics." It reiterated Mao's view that it would be "extremely disadvantageous" for the main forces to cross the Yellow River to the west and penetrate into the remote areas of Qinghai, Ningxia, and Xinjiang, as Zhang Guotao had suggested. The document ended with an appeal to "summon up Bolshevik determination and heroism" and to "turn Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Gansu Red."[37]

At the end of August, after a terrible journey through the desolate marsh country known as the Grasslands, the First Front Army arrived at the town of Baxi.[38] At a meeting of the Politburo on September 2, Mao declared that the First Front Army needed a period of rest and reorganization. The strategic orientation, he said, had already been firmly established; they must go eastward, toward regions well settled by the Han, where it would be easier to obtain provisions. (The areas traversed during the previous month or two had been sparsely populated, mainly by Tibetans and other national minorities.) After arriving in Gansu, conditions would be favorable for expanding the Red Army. The key issues were strengthening the leadership, and applying the Three Rules and the Eight Points for Attention.[39]

On September 3, Mao and his comrades received a telegram from Zhang Guotao stating that floods would not permit his troops to advance farther toward the north or to join forces with the First Front Army and proposing that the entire Red Army withdraw to the South. The Fourth Front Army had, indeed, encountered serious floods and other difficulties, but it had long been obvious that Zhang Guotao did not accept the decision to march northward and welcomed any excuse for setting it aside. Now he made this intention absolutely clear.[40]

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36. Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism*, p. 23, citing a document from the Russian archives obtained from the Chinese historian Yang Kuisong. See also Yang, "Massive Soviet Aid," pp. 254–55.

37. See below, the translation of this decision.

38. The most graphic account of this ordeal is given in Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 266–71.

39. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 469–70. Regarding the "Three Rules and Eight Points for Attention," see Volume III, p. 283, n.2.

40. Zhang Guotao's telegram is translated in Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, p. 157. A summary can also be found in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 470.

This message caused particularly great anxiety because it had recently become known that the Guomindang armies of Hu Zongnan and other commanders were approaching, and the First Front Army was thus exposed to the danger of facing them alone. Mao therefore sent an urgent telegram to Zhang Guotao on September 8 declaring that if his forces moved southward, their future would be "in great jeopardy," and urging him to change his course and move northward.[41] The following day, Zhang Guotao responded with another telegram to those commanders from the Fourth Front Army who were then also in the vicinity of Baxi, and to the Central Committee, asserting: "the left and right columns (i.e., the Fourth and First Front Armies) can absolutely not operate separately."[42] According to several accounts, Zhang Guotao also sent a secret telegram to his own subordinates, Chen Changhao and Xu Xiangqian, then traveling with the First Front Army, urging them to "launch a thorough inner-Party struggle." The telegram was handed to Ye Jianying, who showed it to Mao.[43]

Mao convened an emergency meeting of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, which agreed to adhere to the original course, and then hastened to the nearby locality where Zhou Enlai and Wang Jiaxiang were being cared for. Yang Shangkun and Ye Jianying joined them there at dawn. The First Front Army troops were already on the march. After making a last attempt to persuade those units of the Fourth Front Army present in Baxi to accompany the First Front Army northward, and sending a peremptory telegram to Zhang Guotao reiterating the previous orders, Mao and his comrades slipped away. For his part, Zhang Guotao began to move south.[44]

Pausing for two or three days, on September 12–14, in Ejie, a locality a relatively short distance north of Baxi, Mao convened a conference of the Politburo and of all those members of the Central Committee still traveling with the First Front Army. The previous denunciations of Zhang Guotao were reiterated, this time with enthusiastic support from everyone, including the Returned Students and even Otto Braun.[45] The telegram to Zhang Guotao was, however,

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41. See below "The Army of the Left Wing Should Change Its Route and March Northward," September 8, 1935. (Since the junction of the two armies in June, the forces accompanying Zhang Guotao, which were on a route to the west of that followed by those of Mao and the Party leadership, had been known as the "Left Wing," and those with Mao as the "Right Wing.")

42. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 471.

43. Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 158–59, and Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 274–76. Li Xiannian, in an interview with Salisbury, recalled that the phrase used by Zhang Guotao was *chedi kaizhan dangnei douzheng*, which we have translated "launch a thorough inner-Party struggle." Jin, *Mao*, p. 362, also refers to a separate telegram to Chen and Xu, which "sought to split and harm the Central Committee."

44. Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 277–281; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 159–60.

45. For the text of the resolution on this point, see Tony Saich (ed.), *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party: Documents and Analysis, 1920–1949* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), pp. 685–86 (hereafter Saich, *Rise to Power*).

couched in relatively mild terms, and Mao, mindful of the fact that Zhang controlled the greater part of the Red Army, did not ask that he be deprived of his Party membership. In line with a proposal by Peng Dehuai, the remnant forces still accompanying Mao, after the loss not only of the Fourth Front Army but of First Front Army units which had been traveling with it, were reorganized into two columns, baptized the Shaanxi-Gansu Detachment of the Anti-Japanese Vanguard Force of the Red Army, with Peng as commander, Lin Biao as deputy commander, and Mao as political commissar. As to what these much diminished forces could or should do, Mao adopted in his report to this conference a stance which savored of desperation:

> The Party Center insists on the previous orientation, that is, the basic policy of continuing to go north. The "Supplementary Resolution" says that we should go to the east of the Yellow River. But this orientation should be somewhat altered. Now we should employ guerrilla warfare to fight our way to the border of the Soviet Union. This orientation is the basic orientation at present. In the past the Party Center opposed such a policy and advocated that, after the union of the First and Fourth Front Armies, we should create a soviet in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Sichuan border area. But things are different now. At present, we have only the main forces of the First and Third Army Groups of the First Front Army. Therefore, we must raise this issue clearly, make use of guerrilla warfare, break through and establish contact with the International, obtain guidance and assistance from the International, rest and reorganize our troops, and then expand them. . . . We are not an independent communist party. It is wrong to refuse absolutely to ask for help. We are in any case one branch of the International. We can first establish a base area on the border near the Soviet Union, and then develop toward the east. Otherwise, we will have to fight a guerrilla war endlessly. We must not turn ourselves into a turtle inside an urn. The Central Committee must go to a place from which it can direct the revolution in the whole country.

In his concluding remarks at the end of this conference, Mao declared:

> Our strategic orientation at present has been changed from the Sichuan-Shaanxi-Gansu plan. The reasons are, first, that the Fourth Army is already divided, and Zhang Guotao has gone south, thus causing rather heavy losses to the Chinese revolution. Nevertheless, we are definitely not going to be downhearted, but are moving forward in a big way . . . .Northern Shaanxi and northeastern Gansu are the places where we should go.[46]

As noted above, Mao Zedong had already expressed an interest in obtaining

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46. These quotations from Mao's speeches at Ejie are taken from several sources, including Wang Zhixin, "Zailun hongjun changzheng luojiaodian" (Once again on the Destination of the Long March), *Dangshi tongxun* (December 1984), p. 39 (hereafter Wang Zhixin, "Destination"); Yang, *From Revolution to Politics,* p. 165; Yang Kuisong, *Makesizhuyi zhongguohua de lishi jincheng* (The Historical Process of the Sinification of Marxism) (Zhengzhou: Henan Renmin chubanshe, 1994), pp. 38–39 (hereafter Yang, *Sinification*); and Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism*, p. 25.

Soviet aid, but this is one of the very few recorded instances when Mao, as a Chinese patriot, looked to Moscow not merely for support but for the salvation of the Chinese revolution. The extremely dangerous situation in which he believed the First Front Army found itself suffices to explain this reaction. Ten days later, in Hadapu, which had been reached after a victorious battle to take Lazikou Pass,[47] Mao adopted a somewhat different line:

> We want to go north; Zhang Guotao wants to go south. Zhang Guotao says we are opportunists, but in the last analysis, which of us is opportunist? At present, Japanese imperialism is invading China, so we want to go north to resist Japan. First we want to go to northern Shaanxi, where there is Liu Zhidan's Red Army. Our line is correct. It is true that our Northern Vanguard Brigade is a bit small now. But that also means that we constitute a smaller target. We need not boast and brag, but we should not be pessimistic either. Our numbers remain greater now than they were in early 1929, when the Fourth Red Army came down from the Jinggangshan. We have now changed our name to the Shaanxi-Gansu Brigade, with Comrade Peng Dehuai as commander-in-chief, and myself as political commissar.[48]

One reason for the change in tone was that, as noted by Mao, he and his comrades had discovered the existence of other Red Army units in the northern provinces. From Guomindang newspapers found at the Hadapu post office, Mao had learned that the Twenty-fifth Red Army, led by Xu Haidong, and the Twenty-sixth Red Army, led by Liu Zhidan, had established a base area in Shaanxi.[49] At a Standing Committee meeting in Bangluozhen on September 27, the decision to establish a base area on the border of the Soviet Union was modified, and it was decided to head for northern Shaanxi and expand the soviet area there. This change in direction did not, however, imply the abandonment of the goal of breaking through to the Soviet Union and receiving support from it, as will be seen below.

The following day, at a meeting of army commanders, Mao addressed five topics: (1) the seriousness of Japan's invasion of the north; (2) the state of affairs of the base area and the Red Army in northern Shaanxi; (3) economic and political conditions for turning the north into a new anti-Japanese front; (4) avoiding battle with the Guomindang and rapidly going to concentrate forces in northern Shaanxi; and (5) forcefully rectifying discipline, paying ample attention to mass work, carrying out propaganda about the Red Army's intention of resisting Japan, and recruiting new fighters. He called on the whole Vanguard Brigade

47. An account of this battle can be found in Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 282–84. See also below, the order to Peng Dehuai, "Dispositions for Destroying the Enemy at Lazikou," dated September 16, 1935.

48. Extract from Mao's report to a meeting of cadres in Hadapu on September 22, 1935, as given in Nie, *Memoirs*, p. 290.

49. Salisbury, *Long March*, p. 286.

to break through the last remaining obstacle on the Long March and go forward to meet with the comrades in northern Shaanxi.[50]

On October 14 or 15, emissaries from the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Armies, which had combined to form the Fifteenth Army Group, turned up to welcome Mao and his comrades to Shaanxi. After a series of battles, culminating in Peng Dehuai's victory over two Guomindang cavalry units on October 21, 1935,[51] Mao and his comrades arrived in Wuqizhen on October 22, 1935. This marked the effective end of the Long March.

Summing up the changing perspectives during the final weeks of the march, Mao declared that same day at a Politburo meeting in Wuqizhen:

> At the Ejie Conference, we broke with Zhang Guotao. Our slogan at that time was to fight our way into northern Shaanxi and to make contact with the Soviet Union by means of guerrilla warfare. The Bangluozhen Conference (participated in by the members of the Standing Committee) changed the decision of the Ejie Conference. Because we obtained new information, and came to know that there was such a big soviet area and such a big Red Army in northern Shaanxi, we changed our decision, and decided to maintain and expand the soviet area in northern Shaanxi. At the Ejie Conference, we thought that after the junction [with the Red Army in northern Shaanxi], we would go to a location near the Soviet Union. At that time, we had no thought of maintaining and expanding the northern Shaanxi soviet area. Now we must approve the changes made at the Bangluozhen Conference, and direct the revolution in the whole country from the northern Shaanxi soviet area.[52]

Mao further declared that, having marched 2,000 *li* since leaving Ejie, the Shaanxi-Gansu Detachment had completed the task of coming to this area. Now, he said, since the headquarters of the revolution was located there, it would be the target of attacks by the counterrevolution. The task now was therefore to preserve and expand the northern Shaanxi soviet area, so that it could effectively lead the revolution in the whole country. The three provinces of Shaanxi, Gansu, and Shanxi were, he said, the most important areas for developing the revolution, and Wuqizhen was the center. During the first period it was necessary to go west, then south; when the Yellow River was frozen, they could go east. Great attention should be paid to relations with comrades to the west and north, who should be met with a happy and joyful attitude. At present, the world revolution had advanced to a new stage, and everywhere there were clashes with imperialism. Japanese imperialism had taken control of the whole of North China, there was a high tide of the counterrevolutionary movement, the anti-imperialist

50. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 477.

51. See below, the orders dated October 13, 16, 17, and 19, and Mao's poem in praise of Peng Dehuai, written on October 21, 1935.

52. Wang Zhixin, "Destination," p. 43. A somewhat shorter version of this extract from Mao's report appears in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 477, note 1.

movement was brewing in the whole country, the masses in northern Shaanxi urgently desired revolution, and this was a favorable condition for smashing the enemy's "Encirclement and Suppression." Good leadership was also essential to achieve this goal. At the end of the meeting, Mao's report was unanimously approved, and the conclusion of the Long March was formally proclaimed.[53]

At a further meeting of the Standing Committee on October 27, 1935, it was decided to introduce a division of labor: henceforth, Mao Zedong would be responsible for military work, Bo Gu would be in charge of soviet work, and Zhou Enlai would be responsible for the Organization Department and for military work in the rear.[54] In a talk of November 5, 1935, Mao declared:

> Starting from Ruijin in Jiangxi, we have been marching for over a year. Each of us, on his own two feet, has travelled 25,000 *li*. This is truly a Long March such as has never been seen in the past. The number of our troops is somewhat smaller than in the past, but those who remain are the flower of the Chinese revolution. All of you have gone through severe tempering and testing. Those who remain must be not simply as one against ten, but one against a hundred, or against a thousand. From this day forward, we must unite as one with the North Shaanxi Red Army and the people of northern Shaanxi. We must be models of unity, and together we must carry through the great task of the Chinese revolution, and open a new horizon for the Chinese revolution.[55]

II. Facing Three Challenges

Although the Long March was over, and the Central Red Army no longer faced the threat of annihilation that had dogged it for a year after the departure from Jiangxi, three major political problems confronted Mao. First, the conflict with Zhang Guotao, far from having become less acute as the two armies moved farther apart, had grown sharper. On October 5, Zhang had named a new Central Committee, Central Government, and Central Military Commission, and proclaimed the exclusion from the Party of Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Qin Bangxian, and Zhang Wentian.[56] This development, while it was obviously offensive to Mao and posed acute problems to those leaders such as Zhu De who were under Zhang Guotao's control, did not require an immediate response, since the First and Fourth Front Armies were separated by hundreds of miles, and there was no prospect of contact between them in the near future. It did, however, represent a potential threat to Mao's power.

Second, there remained the possibility, indeed the probability, that Chiang Kaishek would launch yet another "Encirclement and Suppression" against his now

53. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 481–82.
54. Ibid., p. 483.
55. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 485.
56. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 478; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 191–93; Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 311–15; Zhang, *Autobiography*, Vol. 2, pp. 427–28.

much weakened Communist adversaries as soon as the necessary forces could be assembled, and the political and logistic problems involved could be solved. Finally, there was the problem of continuing Japanese aggression against China, which had served as the justification for the northward movement of the Red Army. This threat was constantly growing in magnitude and was now much closer at hand.

Mao and his comrades had been calling for resistance to Japan since the earliest days of the Jiangxi Soviet Republic, but the line taken had always been that put forward in the "Declaration of War on Japan" of April 15, 1932: The only way to fight Japanese imperialism was through "national revolutionary war," and because of the Guomindang government's shameless capitulation to Japan, the overthrow of Guomindang rule was a precondition for such a national revolutionary war.[57] The very same line persisted in the summer of 1935. A text opposing Japan's annexation of North China issued on June 15 denounced "Traitor Chiang Kaishek" as "the most diligent trailblazer for Japan in swallowing up China," and declared that the government of the Chinese Soviet Republic had sentenced "the treasonous Japanese running dog" Chiang Kaishek to death.[58]

In other words, in the summer of 1935, Mao still proposed to struggle simultaneously against the Japanese and against Chiang Kaishek. It was formerly believed that a declaration issued from Mao'ergai on August 1, 1935, during the Long March marked the first change in this position of categorical opposition to Chiang Kaishek and the Guomindang. While still bracketing the "Japanese bandits" and "traitor Chiang" together, this text called for a union of all Chinese patriots, including those in the Guomindang imbued with "national consciousness," to form a "government of national defense."[59] It is now well established, however, that this declaration was drafted by Wang Ming in Moscow, in the context of the Seventh Comintern Congress, which stressed the importance of a united front against fascism, and its contents were not even known at the time to either Mao or Zhang Guotao. As late as mid-November, Mao and his comrades issued a manifesto again denouncing Chiang as "the biggest traitor and collaborator in China's history" and declaring that the Japanese imperialist invasion could not be stopped without overthrowing "Chiang Kaishek and the Guomindang."[60] Later in November, an interview by Mao was published reiterating this position.[61]

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57. See Volume IV, pp. 206–14, and many other texts in the same volume.

58. See below, the "Declaration Opposing Japan's Annexation of North China and Chiang Kaishek's Treason" dated June 15, 1935.

59. For the text, see *Central Committee Documents*, Vol. 10, pp. 518–25.

60. See below, "Manifesto of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on the Annexation of North China by Japanese Imperialism, and Chiang Kaishek's Sellout of North China and of the Whole Country," dated November 13, 1935.

61. See below, "Rebuttal of Chiang Kaishek's Absurd and Shameless Defense of His Treason," interview with a correspondent of *Red China*, November 25, 1935.

Meanwhile, a representative of the Chinese delegation to the Communist International, Lin Yuying, arrived in Wayaobao and informed Mao and the others of the contents of the "August 1 Declaration" and of the new Comintern line in general.[62] Almost immediately, the Central Committee aligned itself with the Comintern by issuing a new manifesto, offering to unite with all those willing to resist Japan and oppose Chiang Kaishek, even to the extent of forming a "united anti-Japanese army and a government of national defense." There was no explicit reference, as in Wang Ming's declaration of August 1, to Guomindang members endowed with "national consciousness," but the proclaimed willingness to sign operational agreements "with any political group, armed force, social group, or person whatsoever" left open the possibility of coming to an agreement with right-minded members of the Guomindang.[63]

Another consequence of Lin Yuying's report on the line of the Seventh Comintern Congress was a change in the policy of the Central Committee toward the intermediate classes in Chinese society, and in particular toward the rich peasants. Mao agreed that when the land was redistributed, the rich peasants might receive land of the same kind as the poor and middle peasants, instead of bad land, as had been the previous practice. He added, however, that when the poor and middle peasants demanded the equal distribution of the rich peasants' land, this measure must be carried out.[64] Circumstances, and continued prodding by the International, would lead him to modify this position further.

Lin Yuying also brought news of Stalin's willingness to provide material support to the Chinese revolution. As noted above, Moscow had envisaged in September 1934 aiding the Chinese Red Army by supplying them with airplanes

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62. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 489; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, p. 182; Salisbury, *Long March*, p. 261; Shum, *United Front*, pp. 51, 53. Various dates for Lin's arrival, ranging from mid-November 1935 to early 1936, are given in these sources. The editors of the *Nianpu* opt simply for "the middle ten days" (*zhong xun*) of November. Yang Kuisong, who has made extensive use of the Chinese and Soviet archives, writes that Lin arrived "about November 18," and this is probably as good a guess as any. Lin Yuying (1897–1942), also known as Zhang Hao, was born in Huanggang *xian*, Hubei, which was also the birthplace of his younger cousin, Lin Biao. He joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1922 and studied in Moscow in 1924–1925. He was elected an alternate member of the Central Committee at the Third Plenum in 1930. Shortly thereafter, he went back to Moscow as a delegate of the Party to the International and remained there until he was sent to China, via Inner Mongolia, to convey the line of the International to Mao and his comrades.

63. See below, the "Manifesto on Resisting Japan and Saving China," dated November 28, 1935.

64. See below, Mao's "Letter to Zhang Wentian on Changing the Policy Toward Rich Peasants and other Questions," December 1, 1935, commenting on a resolution adopted by the Central Committee on December 6, 1935 (text in *Central Committee Documents*, Vol 10, pp. 583–88), and also the Order of the Central Executive Committee of the Chinese Soviet Republic, dated December 15, 1935, which provided that the portion of rich peasants' land rented out at high rates should be confiscated in its entirety.

and heavy artillery. In August 1935, on the eve of Lin Yuying's departure for China, Stalin told him explicitly that he was in favor of expansion by the main forces of the Chinese Red Army toward the northwest and the north, thus moving closer to the Soviet Union.[65]

Lin Yuying also informed Mao and his comrades, as well as Zhang Guotao, that the situation was too critical to permit any division within the Chinese Communist Party, and that Mao and Zhang must be reconciled. Telegraphic contact had continued, in spite of everything, between Mao and Zhang, and through this medium Lin conveyed to Zhang Guotao that two Central Committees could not be tolerated. Reacting to a rather brutal exchange of messages between Zhang and the Party Center, Lin stated unequivocally in a telegram of January 24, 1936, to Zhang Guotao and Zhu De that the International agreed with the political line of the Central Committee, and that the Chinese Communist Party ranked first among all the members of Comintern apart from the Soviet Union. Zhang, he stipulated, should change the name of his leading organ to the "Southwest Bureau." This organ would be directly subordinated to the Chinese delegation to the International; any disputes with the Central Committee about matters of principle would be resolved by the International.[66] For the time being, Zhang refused to dissolve the organs he had established. It was only half a year later that he finally dropped his claim to legitimacy in exchange for a promise from Lin that a Party congress would eventually resolve all organizational issues.[67] In the end, the Seventh Party Congress was not convened until 1945, and when Mao and Zhang once again met face to face in 1936, their positions in terms of relative military strength had been reversed as compared to what they had been in the autumn of 1935.

Almost at the moment when Lin Yuying arrived in the Shaanxi soviet area, Mao had left on November 20, 1935, in the company of Peng Dehuai, Lin Biao, and Nie Rongzhen, to carry out a campaign in the vicinity of Zhiluozhen against the Guomindang forces in the area, with the aim of consolidating the new base and establishing the prestige of the Red Army.[68] Having achieved victory, Mao

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65. Yang, "Massive Soviet Aid," p. 260.

66. For the exchange between Zhang and the Party Center, see Zhang's telegram of December 5, 1935, and the Central Committee decision of January 22, 1936, of which the substance was communicated to Zhang, in Saich, *Road to Power*, pp. 740–41. In a telegram of January 1, 1936, to Zhu De, who was then serving under Zhang, Mao declared that, under the leadership of the International, the Chinese Communist Party had been completely Bolshevized and that Zhu and his comrades must report all policy decisions to the Center and obtain approval for them. (See *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 502; Lin's telegram of January 24 is summarized in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 508.)

67. See Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 317–18 and Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 209–11, 215.

68. See below, the battlefield telegrams dated November 20, 22 (2), 23 (3), 24, and 26. For an account of the Zhiluozhen campaign, see Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 181–82.

wrote on November 26 to the principal victim of this campaign, Dong Yingbin, the commander of the Fifty-seventh Division of the Northeastern Army, stating in part:

> The Northeastern Army, like the Red Army, is assuredly made up of people from within China's borders, so why should there be ill will or enmity between them? Today we promise you, honorable commander: (1) If the Northeastern Army does not attack the Red Army, the Red Army will not attack the Northeastern Army. (2) If your honorable army, or any other unit of the Northeastern Army, is willing to resist Japan and oppose Chiang, then regardless of whether or not they have fought the Red Army in the past, the Red Army is willing to conclude an agreement to fight Japan and Chiang Kaishek together. (3) The Red Army treats the officers and soldiers of the Northeastern Army well; not only does it make it a rule not to kill them, but it gives them employment or lets them go back to their units.[69]

In a report of November 30 to high-level cadres, Mao declared that the primary goal of this policy of treating captured enemy officers well was to disrupt the enemy armies. He noted once again the emergence of a conflict within the Guomindang between the Chiang and anti-Chiang factions, but placed the emphasis rather on the need to overthrow "the traitorous Guomindang" as such, as well as the "head traitor, Chiang Kaishek." In the same report, he returned to the theme of obtaining support from the Soviet Union and called for expanding the soviet area into the five provinces of Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Suiyuan, and Ningxia, "thus completing the task of becoming one with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Mongolia."[70]

On the following day, Mao referred explicitly to his letter to Dong Yingbin, noted that it had been "widely publicized," and presented it once again as part of "an extensive campaign of disrupting the White armies."[71] The new situation created by relentless Japanese aggression would progressively compel both the Communists and the Guomindang to reconsider and modify their positions, but there were still few signs of such a trend in the decisions taken at the Politburo meeting held at Wayaobao in late December 1935, which laid down the Party's overall policies for 1936.

The first document adopted on this occasion was the "Resolution on Problems of Military Strategy" of December 23, 1935.[72] This resolution shows un-

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69. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 490. This letter does not appear below because we do not have access to the complete text.

70. See below, "The Zhiluozhen Campaign, and the Present Situation and Tasks," November 30, 1935.

71. See below, the letter to Zhang Wentian dated Decamber 1, 1935.

72. See, below, the translation of this document. As indicated in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 497–98, it was drafted by Mao for the Central Committee, on the basis of the report which he had presented to the meeting.

ambiguously that, although he had been informed of the Comintern's new united front line, Mao's heart was still in the policy of "combining civil war with national war," and overthrowing "the head traitor who is helping Japan destroy China—Chiang Kaishek." In this perspective, he continued to see the task of "fighting a way through to the Soviet Union" as the central strategic task of the Red Army. At the same time, he called for efforts to attract "soldiers from the White armies and young students who are caught up in the anti-Japanese tide."

One route for making contact with the Soviet Union was through Mongolia; another led through Xinjiang. It was therefore natural that this resolution should stress the importance of supporting the struggles of the Mongolian and Muslim nationalities. This concern found expression also in an appeal to the people of Inner Mongolia, calling on them to "preserve the glory of the epoch of Genghis Khan" by struggling for independence together with the Red Army.[73]

The "Resolution on the Current Political Situation and the Party's Tasks" adopted on December 25, 1935, was not drafted by Mao, and therefore does not appear below, but a slightly abridged translation is conveniently available.[74] According to this resolution, the attempt of the Japanese imperialists to turn China into a colony had brought about a fundamental change in the political situation, and the whole world was on the eve of war and revolution. The Soviet Union, which was preparing to strike back at Japanese imperialism and overthrow it, was the most powerful ally of the Chinese revolution. The broadest possible united front, both from below and from above, was indispensable, though the "chief traitor and collaborator, Chiang Kaishek" could not be part of it. Members of all classes should be drawn into the united front; "no single patriotic Chinese should be left out." A government of national defense and a united anti-Japanese army must be established. Among all the Communist parties of the world, apart from the Soviet Party, China's was the most advanced.

Not entirely without justification, Otto Braun sees in this resolution, which he claims was drawn up largely by Mao, a recrudescence of the apocalyptic position which Mao had espoused in 1930, when he hailed the imminent advent of a revolutionary high tide in the whole world, supported by the Soviet Union.[75] If this was in fact Mao's strategic perspective, Stalin had no intention whatsoever of falling in with it.

The third major policy statement at the Wayaobao conference was Mao's report to Party activists on December 27, 1935, translated below. The only available text of this is the one published in the *Selected Works*, which has undergone the editorial changes made in all of Mao's writings published there,

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73. See below, the "Proclamation of the Central Soviet Government to the People of Inner Mongolia," dated December 10, 1935.

74. See Saich, *Rise to Power*, pp. 709–23.

75. Braun, *Comintern Agent*, pp. 154–56. For Mao's statements in 1930, see the Introduction to Volume III, p. lx.

but still no doubt conveys much of the substance of what he said at the time.[76] Like the Political Resolution, which states that "even among the ranks of landlords and compradors, there is no total unity,"[77] the report as we now have it notes that "the upper petty bourgeoisie, and the rich peasants and small landlords" support Cai Tingkai and the Nineteenth Route Army, which is now playing a relatively progressive role, and concludes that "those in our Party who hold the view that the entire landlord and bourgeois camp is united and . . . cannot be changed by any circumstances are wrong." Splits in these classes, and in the national bourgeoisie, can, Mao argues, lead to a split in the Guomindang. Thus, while Chiang Kaishek, the chieftain of the "camp of traitors," is irredeemable, a portion of the Guomindang can join the revolution.[78]

Otto Braun is right, however, in stating that, at this time, Mao saw the united front strictly as a force created and led by the Chinese Communist Party, to be used for defeating "the domestic . . . counterrevolutionary forces" (i.e., the Guomindang) as well as the Japanese, and not as an alliance among equals. In an often-quoted formulation, Mao declared that the Long March was "a manifesto, a propaganda team, a seeding machine," which had "announced to some 200 million people in eleven provinces that the road of the Red Army is their only road to liberation." Thus, while denouncing "closed-doorism" and calling for collaboration with classes other than the workers and peasants, Mao showed no disposition to deal with other independent political forces on a basis of equality. And in the conclusion of his report, Mao hailed a rising tide of just wars in China and the world, which would, he said, provide "a necessary condition for China's victory in the war against Japan and in the Chinese revolution."[79]

This vision of an imminent worldwide revolutionary explosion was exhilarating, but hardly realistic. Mao's overall strategic view at this time was, in large measure, the mirror image of that held by Chiang Kaishek. Mao argued that victory over Japan was impossible without overthrowing Chiang's gang of traitors. Chiang, for his part, had long held that China could resist Japan only when the internal Communist enemy had been extirpated. Nevertheless, despite these utterly irreconcilable public positions, some tentative steps had already been taken on both sides to explore the possibility of collaboration in the face of the Japanese threat.

Early in 1935, the Chinese military attaché in Moscow, Deng Wenyi, had reported to Chiang Kaishek that the Soviet Union was seriously interested in

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76. Otto Braun claims (Braun, *Comintern Agent*, p. 153) that the changes are so extensive that the *Selected Works* version "cannot be considered an authentic document." This is certainly an exaggeration, for in many respects the position taken in the report is not far removed from that of the Political Resolution, of which we do have a contemporary text.

77. Saich, *Road to Power*, p. 712.

78. See the first section of the report, as translated below.

79. See below, the final section of Mao's report, entitled "International Support."

supporting China's resistance to Japan, and Chiang had immediately sent Deng back to Moscow to promote improved relations with the Soviet Union. In addition to a number of Russian generals, Deng had met with Wang Ming, then the leader of the Chinese delegation to the International, and proposed to him bilateral negotiations between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party. Wang replied that such discussions should take place in China. In November 1935, Lu Zhenyu, a university professor in Beiping closely linked to the Beiping Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, went to Nanjing with a mandate from Liu Shaoqi, then in charge of work in the White areas. Pan Hannian, who was later to play a major role in negotiations between the two parties, also met with Deng Wenyi in Moscow.[80]

These initial negotiations came to nothing because the Guomindang demanded the effective dismantlement of the Red Army, but the first contacts had been made. If 1935 had been the year during which the Chinese Communist Party, after barely saving itself from destruction, established a new base in the Northwest, 1936 would be the year when Communists and Nationalists, despite hostility and reluctance on both sides, began moving toward a rapprochement.

The impetus in this direction was reinforced by the events which had taken place in Beiping in December 1935. Japanese pressure on five North China provinces to declare independence from the Nanjing government, and Nanjing's apparent willingness to accept these Japanese demands, led to large-scale demonstrations by university and middle school students in Beiping on December 9 and 16. Although these actions were initially spontaneous, Communists (many of them under cover) played a leading role. In a speech on the fourth anniversary of what had become known as the December Ninth Movement, Mao declared that this action of the students was as important as the May Fourth Movement. Just as May Fourth had opened the way to the Northern Expedition and to the "First Great Revolution" of 1924–1927, December Ninth had prepared the way for the War of Resistance against Japan. "How happy we were," he declared, "to learn the news of the December Ninth Movement in Beiping on December 10th in the midst of our celebration of the victories [of the Red Army at Fuxian in November 1935]."[81] As early as January 1936, Mao had declared that China's students had "always played a glorious role in the history of the national salvation movement," and that the "current great national salvation movement" was "particularly praiseworthy." These young people, he added, were "the hope of the Chinese nation," and the Chinese Soviet Government was determined to give them all possible support. With the passage of time, he came to attach even

80. Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 237–38; Shum, *United Front*, pp. 67–68; Li Haiwen, "Xi'an shibianqian guogong liangdang jiechu he tanpande lishi guocheng" (The historical course of contacts and negotiations between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party before the Xi'an Incident), *Wenxian he yanjiu*, 1984 annual volume, pp. 350–52 (hereafter Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident").

81. See, in Volume VII of our edition, the talk of December 9, 1939, entitled "The Great Significance of the December Ninth Movement."

greater importance to them. By May 1937, he had concluded that the December Ninth Movement had inaugurated "a new period in the Chinese revolution."[82]

A letter of January 25, 1936, signed by Mao and a number of his comrades and addressed to the officers and men of the Northeastern Army, called once more for the overthrow of the "head traitor, Chiang Kaishek," but hailed the Northeastern Army's "glorious history of resisting Japan" and invited it to join in organizing a government of national defense and a united anti-Japanese army. Zhang Xueliang and his troops, Mao argued, should join "us descendants of the Yellow Emperor" in fighting to the end for the independence and liberation of China.[83]

In an interview published a few days later, Mao adopted a somewhat more flexible stance toward Chiang Kaishek. While denouncing Chiang's continued refusal to confront Japan, Mao declared that if Chiang were ever to show himself truly ready to resist Japan, the Chinese Soviet Government could "naturally join hands with him on the battlefront." Proof of the Communists' willingness to do this was, he said, provided by "the fact that although in the past the Nineteenth Route Army had also made war on the people and the Red Army, as soon as that army started to resist Japan the Red Army immediately began to cooperate with it." The Chinese Soviet Government, he added, "definitely has no reservations about and makes no exceptions to the principle of uniting people to resist Japan regardless of party affiliation or previous relationships," but the burden of proof was on Chiang to demonstrate that he really wanted to cooperate and to fight Japan.[84]

At a Politburo meeting on January 17, a division of labor somewhat different from that adopted in October 1935 had been introduced: Peng Dehuai and Lin Yuying were to work in the Politburo; Mao Zedong, Zhang Wentian, Peng Dehuai, Lin Yuying, and He Kaifeng were to work in the Red Army; and Zhou Enlai, Qin Bangxian, and Deng Fa were to constitute the Central Bureau, with Zhou as secretary.[85] In accordance with this decision, Mao accompanied the Red Army when it set out in February on the so-called Eastern Expedition, of which the ostensible aim was to proceed through Shanxi Province to Hebei to fight the Japanese.[86] It was during this campaign

82. See below, Mao's talk of January 1936 with a correspondent of Red China Press, and his speeches of May 3 and 7, 1937, to a Party congress of the soviet regions.

83. See below, "Letter from the Red Army to All Officers and Men of the Northeast Army Concerning Its Willingness to Join with the Northeast Army in Resisting Japan," January 25, 1936.

84. See below, "Talk with a Correspondent of Red China Press," first published on January 29, 1936.

85. See the record of this meeting in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 506.

86. This enterprise had been discussed at a Politburo meeting on January 10, where Mao had outlined the strengths and weaknesses of Yan Xishan's position, and stressed the advantages to be obtained from an incursion into Shanxi in terms both of expanding the soviet areas, and of capturing materiel and food supplies. (See *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 504–5.)

that, on seeing the Great Snowy Mountains for the first time, Mao wrote perhaps his most famous poem, "Snow," translated below.

The Communist forces enjoyed mixed fortunes in their battles with Yan Xishan, the warlord long dominant in Shanxi, and with the forces Chiang Kaishek sent into the province to join in the attack, and, in the end, the Red Army retired to Shaanxi in April. The expedition did, however, permit the capture of large quantities of money, grain, and munitions, as Mao had earlier foreseen.[87] It also yielded more intangible benefits by convincing Zhang Xueliang that the Communists were serious about fighting Japan, thereby contributing to the establishment of a united front.

In January 1936, Pastor Dong Jianwu (known to Edgar Snow as the "Pastor Wang" who helped him get to Bao'an)[88] had set out from Shanghai for Wayaobao, carrying a letter from Song Qingling to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai indicating that the Guomindang was prepared to enter into negotiations. He traveled together with Zhang Zihua, who had been sent to Nanjing in December 1935 by the Shanghai Party organization to make contact with Zeng Yangfu, a member of the Guomindang Central Executive Committee. Zeng had also indicated his party's willingness to hold talks, and Zhang was carrying documents confirming this. On February 19, 1936, Zhang Xueliang arranged to fly the two men to Bao'an and sent them onward with a cavalry escort to Wayaobao, where they arrived on February 27. Because Mao was absent on the Eastern Expedition, they met with Bo Gu (Qin Bangxian) and other members of the leadership. From them, Bo Gu learned that Chiang Kaishek was willing to consider the possibility of cooperating with the Communists to fight Japan.[89]

Bo sent a telegram to Mao in the field, who had in fact already heard of the meeting between Dong and Zeng and Zhang Xueliang the day after it occurred.[90] Mao replied on March 4 with two telegrams, translated below. The first laid down three basic conditions for negotiations: "(1) Cease all attacks on the Red Army and allow the Red Army's main forces to assemble in Hebei, first of all to

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The order for this campaign had been issued on January 19, 1936, over the signatures of Mao, Zhou Enlai, and Peng Dehuai, but it was kept secret from all except high-level cadres until the Red Army had reached the Yellow River and was poised to cross into Shanxi. It was made known to the troops only on February 12. (See *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 507.) The full text of the original order is not available; the order of February 12 prescribing that it should be presented and discussed on February 13 and 14 is translated below. On the progress of the campaign, see below, a large number of orders dated February and March 1936.

87. Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 187–89.

88. See Snow, *Red Star*, pp. 30–38.

89. Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," pp. 353–54.

90. See the summary of a telegram from Mao and Peng Dehuai to Li Kenong dated February 28, 1936, in which he mentioned the meeting on February 27 in Wayaobao and stated that, according to reports, Chiang Kaishek and Chen Guofu were now advocating union with the Reds to resist Japan, rather than uniting with Japan to fight the Reds. (*Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 516.)

check the advance of Japanese imperialism; (2) Political freedom; and (3) Release the political prisoners." In the second, addressed to Dong Jianwu, Mao welcomed "the awakening . . . on the part of the Nanjing authorities," declared that he wished "to start concrete and practical negotiations with the Nanjing authorities," and urged Dong to return immediately to Nanjing to discuss "these matters of vital importance."[91]

Later in March, Dong Jianwu met with Zhang Xueliang in Xi'an and showed him this document. He then returned to Shanghai and reported to Song Qingling on his mission. Zhang Zihua, for his part, crossed the Yellow River and reported to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. Thereafter, he made a number of round trips between Nanjing, Xi'an, and North Shaanxi, during which he informed Zhang Xueliang of the contacts between the Nanjing authorities and the Communists. Zhang Xueliang's comment was: "If the [Guomindang] Central Committee can have contacts with the Communist Party, so can we."[92]

Meanwhile, Liu Shaoqi, as head of the Northern Bureau, had been building on the momentum of the December 9th Movement to regain a foothold in the cities, and extend the Communist Party's influence among intellectuals, students, and cultural figures. As a result, by the spring of 1936 the Party was playing a key, if largely covert, role in the whole National Salvation Association.

At a Politburo meeting on March 27, 1936, Mao gave a report in which he stated that, under pressure from the masses, divisions had begun to appear within the "ruling clique" of the Guomindang. The Communist Party should strive to conclude a firm alliance with the national reformists and the national revolutionaries. "The peculiarity of the Northeastern Army," he declared, "is that it has lost its territory; consequently, its sentiments in favor of resisting Japan are very intense, and it is willing to cooperate with us." A plenipotentiary negotiator should therefore be sent to meet with Zhang Xueliang. The Politburo approved this proposal, and decided to entrust this mission to Zhou Enlai.[93]

On March 1, only a few days before hearing of the reports brought from Shanghai and Nanjing by Dong Jianwu and Zhang Zihua, Mao had put his name to yet another manifesto denouncing Chiang Kaishek as a subservient lackey who fawned on foreign powers.[94] A month later, he used even stronger language, castigating Chiang as a "vicious traitor chieftain" who was supporting the Shanxi warlord Yan Xishan in "obstructing the Red Army's resistance to Japan."[95]

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91. See below, "On the Three Basic Conditions for Talks About Joint Resistance to Japan," addressed to Bo Gu and Zhou Enlai, and "Views Regarding Negotiations with the Nanjing Authorities," which was to be transmitted to Dong Jianwu by Bo Gu.

92. Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," p. 354.

93. Jin, *Mao*, p. 404; *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 527–28.

94. See below, "Proclamation of the Anti-Japanese Vanguard Army of the Chinese People's Red Army," March 1, 1936.

95. See below, "Manifesto Protesting Against the Action of the Traitors Chiang Kaishek and Yan Xishan in Obstructing the Movement of the Vanguard Army of the Chinese

Nevertheless, the changes adumbrated on March 27 would soon begin to manifest themselves, though Mao's position remained extremely ambiguous.

On April 6, Mao sent a telegram to Zhang Xueliang informing him that Zhou Enlai, accompanied by Li Kenong, would arrive in Yan'an (then called Fushi) on April 8.[96] Zhou arrived on schedule and met on April 9 with Zhang Xueliang. Only four persons participated in these talks: Zhou Enlai and Li Kenong on the one side, Zhang Xueliang and Wang Yizhe[97] on the other. Zhang declared at the outset, "Resisting Japan and suppressing the Communists are incompatible" and accepted all the conditions put forward by Mao on March 4. He argued, however, that since Chiang Kaishek represented the greatest force in China, an anti-Japanese united front without him would not be viable. He therefore proposed that the Communists give up the slogan of overthrowing both Chiang and Japanese imperialism, in favor of a policy of forcing Chiang to resist Japan. Zhang wanted, he said, to resist Japan without opposing the Communists and unite with the Communists without opposing Chiang. Zhou replied that these were difficult questions, and he would have to consult the Central Committee.[98]

On April 14, Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai, who were with the Eastern Expedition in Shanxi, sent a telegram to Zhou Enlai giving him exclusive responsibility for negotiations with Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng, and another to Wang Yizhe confirming that Zhou would play this role.[99] Meanwhile, on April 9, Mao and Peng had sent a telegram to Luo Fu arguing that the most advantageous strategy was "to carry out an expedition against Chiang under the banner of a call to resistance against Japan." Although it would "eventually be possible and desirable for a national defense government to order an expedition against Chiang," the propaganda slogan for achieving such a government was that of "stopping the civil war."[100]

On April 25, a Central Committee manifesto in favor of forming an anti-Japanese national united front listed the Guomindang first among all those numerous

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People's Red Army to the East to Fight the Japanese and in Disrupting the Anti-Japanese Rear Areas," April 5, 1936.

96. See below, "Telegram from Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai to Wang Yizhe and Zhang Xueliang," April 6, 1936.

97. Wang Yizhe (1896–1937), a native of Jilin, was at this time the commander of the Sixty-seventh Army under Zhang Xueliang. He was shot to death during the "second Xi'an Incident" undertaken by radical young officers on February 2, 1937 (see below).

98. On this meeting, see Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," p. 355; Shum, *United Front*, p. 68; Zhang Kuitang, "Zhou Enlai yu Zhang Xueliang de jiaowang he youyi" (The Contacts and Friendship Between Zhou Enlai and Zhang Xueliang), *Dangde wenxian*, no. 3 (1991), pp. 51–52 (hereafter Zhang Kuitang, "Zhou Enlai and Zhang Xueliang"); Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, p. 221; and *Zhou Enlai nianpu 1898–1949* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1990), pp. 305–6 (hereafter *Zhou Enlai nianpu*).

99. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 535. For brief biographies of Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng, see below, the relevant notes to the directive of November 30, 1935, on the Zhiluozhen campaign.

100. See below, the telegram of April 9, 1936, "At Present We Should Unite to Resist Japan, and Not Issue an Order Calling for an Expedition Against Chiang."

ese national united front listed the Guomindang first among all those numerous parties and organizations to which it was addressed.[101] And on May 5, after returning from the Eastern Expedition, Mao Zedong and Zhu De addressed a telegram to the "National Government in Nanjing" and its Military Affairs Commission, as well as to all military forces, newspapers, parties, and organizations, complaining once again that "Mr. Chiang Kaishek" had sent more than ten divisions into Shanxi to block the Red Army's advance against the Japanese, but concluding that "given the present national crisis, a decisive battle between the two sides . . . would only damage China's strength for national defense, and bring joy to Japanese imperialism." Therefore, it was stated, the People's Anti-Japanese Vanguard Army had been withdrawn to the western shore of the Yellow river, in the hope of hastening "the final awakening of Mr. Chiang Kaishek and the patriotic military men under him." The telegram ended with a call for a ceasefire within one month and the rapid beginning of peace negotiations.[102]

Likewise in May, Chen Lifu, whom Chiang had already entrusted with the responsibility for negotiations with the Soviet Union,[103] informed Zeng Yangfu and Chen Xiaocen orally of four conditions for talks with the Communists: (1) The Communist armed forces were welcome to join in the war against Japan; (2) During such warfare the Communist forces would receive the same treatment as the Central Army; (3) If the Communists had any political views, they could be put forward through the organs for the expression of popular opinion already established; and (4) The Communists could choose an area for trying out their political and economic ideals. These points were passed on to Lu Zhenyu and Zhang Zihua.[104]

III. Toward the Xi'an Incident

The counterpoint between blunt attacks on Chiang Kaishek's behavior and attempts to initiate negotiations with him continued into the summer of 1936.

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101. Although Mao is said to have been informed that this document, dated April 25, was about to be issued, it cannot be attributed to him and is therefore not translated below. The Chinese text can be found in *Dierci guogong hezuode xingcheng* (How the Second Guomindang-Communist Cooperation Took Shape) (Beijing: Zhongyang dangshi ziliao chubanshe, 1989), pp. 95–96.

102. See below, "Circular Telegram on the Cessation of Hostilities, Peace Negotiations, and Joint Resistance Against Japan," May 5, 1936.

103. Chen Lifu (1900–), a native of Zhejiang, was as this time the director of the Guomindang's Bureau of Investigation, and head of the Organization Department. He had been one of the promoters of the New Life Movement and was a close and trusted supporter of Chiang Kaishek, on whose behalf he had negotiated with the Soviet ambassador, Bogomolov, with a view to the conclusion of a non-aggression pact.

104. Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," p. 356. For Chiang's own account of contacts between the Guomindang and the Communists at this time, see Chiang Kaishek, *Soviet Russia in China* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Cudahy, 1958), pp. 77–78 (hereafter Chiang, *Soviet Russia in China*).

During this period of uncertainty as to the intentions of the Nanjing authorities, and as to the position which should be adopted toward them, Mao repeatedly stressed the advantages of dealing with the Northeastern Army. Returning to this theme at a Politburo meeting of May 28, 1936, he declared, "The work with the Northeastern Army consists first of all in uniting with it politically."[105]

Even as the first steps were taken toward a dialogue with the Guomindang authorities, Mao also continued to stress the importance of establishing direct links with the Soviet Union. In late April, he had sent Deng Fa to Moscow to request Soviet aid, including a plan for bilateral military coordination against the Japanese, and immediate Soviet supplies of rifles, ammunition, machine guns, antiaircraft guns, canons, and bridging equipment to cross the Yellow River.[106] A telegram signed jointly by Mao with Zhang Wentian, Lin Yuying, and others, sent on May 20, 1936, after the Eastern Expedition had given place to the Western Expedition, called for close cooperation between the Red Army and the Northeastern Army, in order to establish a northwestern government of national defense, fight through to the Soviet Union, and conclude an anti-Japanese treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia.[107] On May 25, Mao wrote, "Outer Mongolia and the Soviet Union have signed a treaty of mutual military assistance. The International is hoping that the Red Army will get closer to Outer Mongolia and Xinjiang."[108] On the same day, he issued a declaration to the people of the Muslim nationalities in Gansu and elsewhere, calling on them to "unite with Turkey, Outer Mongolia, the Soviet Union, and other nationalities and countries that sympathize with the complete liberation of all the various Chinese nationalities" and offering to arm a "Muslim Anti-Japanese Army."[109]

Mao returned to these themes again and again. A telegram of June 29 declared that the task of opening up a route to the Soviet Union "must be completed this year."[110] And an order of July 1 emphasized that many new recruits would be required to make use of the substantial quantities of arms which Moscow had promised.[111]

Radio communications between the Chinese Communists and Moscow had been broken ever since the Guomindang secret service destroyed the underground radio station in Shanghai in August 1934. From the time of the Zunyi Conference, Mao took the lead in efforts to restore this link, and in June 1936, the necessary equipment was finally obtained. The first telegram from the Chi-

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105. See Jin, *Mao*, p. 405.

106. See Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism*, p. 26.

107. See below, the text dated May 20, 1936.

108. See below, "The Current Situation and Our Strategic Orientation," May 25, 1936.

109. See below, "Declaration to the People of the Muslim Nationalities by the Central Soviet Government," May 25, 1936.

110. See below, "The Question of the Red Army's Route and Timing in Approaching the Soviet Union," June 29, 1936.

111. See below, "Strategic Guidelines and Tasks for the Future," July 1, 1936.

nese Party to Moscow was sent on June 16, 1936, and the first one from Moscow was received on July 2. In his telegram of July 22, 1936, translated below, Mao gave July 6 as the date on which radio communication had been restored.[112]

In the summer of 1936, Mao also made further efforts to broaden the appeal of the soviet movement to various classes and categories in Chinese society. On the one hand, he addressed an appeal to the Gelaohui, or Elder Brother Society, a secret society strong in his native Hunan, to which he had attributed in 1919 an important role in the Revolution of 1911.[113] In his appeal of July 1936 to the Gelaohui, he repeated this praise. The Gelaohui, like other secret societies, drew much of its membership from marginal groups or those in rebellion against the existing society. As Mao wrote, "Its members have been considered as 'people of inferior status' or calumnied as 'bandits'," and he went on to draw a parallel between the Gelaohui and the Communist Party:

> In the past, you supported the restoration of the Han and the extermination of the Manchus; today, we support resistance to Japan and saving the country. You support striking at the rich and helping the poor; we support striking at the local bullies and dividing up the land. You despise wealth and defend justice, and you gather together all the heroes and brave fellows in the world; we do not spare ourselves to save China and the world, we unite the oppressed and exploited peoples and social strata of the whole world. Our respective views and positions are therefore not very different, and there is even more complete correspondence as regards our enemies and the road towards salvation.

During Mao's years on the Jinggangshan, the greater part of his army had been composed of such marginal or floating elements (*youmin*). Despite their defects, they were, he had argued, "particularly good fighters."[114] Now he was addressing himself to them once again.[115] At about the same time, Mao participated in the drafting of a directive, following on from that of December 15, 1935, on the rich peasants, which laid down a gentler policy toward "small landlords," whose land should not be confiscated, and even toward landlords as such, who would be subject to confiscation, but who would receive a reasonable allocation of land, not necessarily poor land.[116]

Meanwhile, in a proclamation of June 1, Mao had once again castigated

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112. See Michael Sheng, "Mao, Stalin, and the Formation of the Anti-Japanese United Front, 1935–1937," *China Quarterly*, no. 129, March 1992, pp. 151–52.

113. In his article of August 4, 1919, "The Great Union of the Popular Masses," Volume I, p. 385.

114. See his "Report of the Jinggangshan Front Committee," Volume III, p. 94.

115. See below, "Appeal of the Central Soviet Government to the Gelaohui," July 15, 1936.

116. See below, "Directive on Land Policies," July 22, 1936. For Mao's speech at the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Politburo which adopted this directive, see *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 560.

Chiang Kaishek as a "traitor chieftain" who was "utterly devoid of conscience" and had "entered into an alliance with Japan to destroy China."[117] In an interview on June 8, Mao hailed the rebellion of the military rulers of Guangdong and Guangxi—who had sent their troops northward on the previous day, ostensibly to fight Japan, but in fact for the purpose of challenging and if possible supplanting Chiang Kaishek—as "objectively revolutionary and progressive." On June 12, discussing the "Southwest Affair" at a Politburo meeting in Wayaobao, Mao asserted, "Chiang Kaishek's policy is a policy of selling out the country." A proclamation issued the same day, over the signatures of Mao Zedong and Zhu De, declared, "We express our respect and support for the patriotic soldiers and compatriots of Guangdong and Guangxi, and above all our desire to join with the Guangdong-Guangxi authorities in forming an anti-Japanese alliance and fighting together." Chiang Kaishek, on the other hand, was stigmatized as "an accomplice to Japanese imperialism's evil deeds," and the forthcoming Second Plenum of the Guomindang Central Committee was denounced as a plot to "capitulate to Japan and sell out the nation."[118]

When the Second Plenum actually met, however, Chiang Kaishek took a rather different line from that which Mao had predicted. In a speech of July 13, 1936, he declared that if Japan tried to force China to recognize the puppet states, it would be impossible to agree, and "the moment of final sacrifice" would have arrived.[119] Mao's response to this prudent but firm language was positive, and from this time on his position regarding collaboration with the Guomindang began to change.

The arrival of Edgar Snow in Bao'an on the very same day of July 13[120] gave

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117. See below, "Proclamation by the Central Government of the Chinese Soviet People's Republic and the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Red Army," June 1, 1936.

118. On the Guangdong-Guangxi rebellion, launched on June 7, 1936, see Shum, *United Front*, pp. 70–73; and, for a detailed and precise account of events, Jürgen Domes, *Vertagte Revolution: Die Politik der Kuomintang in China, 1923–1927* (The Revolution Postponed: The Policy of the Guomindang in China, 1923–1937) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), pp. 527–30 (hereafter Domes, *The Revolution Postponed*). Mao's interview of June 8 appears below under the title, "Talk on the Southwest Incident." His remarks at the Politburo meeting of June 12 are summarized in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 551. For the proclamation, see below, "Proclamation Regarding the Guangdong-Guangxi Northern March Against Japan," June 12, 1936.

119. On this turning point in the Guomindang's policy, see Domes, *The Revolution Postponed*, pp. 641–44. Apart from Chiang's own speech on this occasion, Domes also quotes extensively from a secret memorandum of August 4, 1936, which urges caution and patience in dealings with Japan so long as the Chinese army has not been further strengthened, but concludes with the categorical statement: "If Japan or 'Manchukuo' carries out further attacks on Beijing, Tianjin, Suiyuan, Shanshi, Shandong, or Shanghai, or anywhere else in China, armed resistance must be undertaken, regardless of the consequences which may ensue." See also Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," p. 356.

120. See *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 557.

Mao an exceptional opportunity to place his latest ideas before the public. In a series of long interviews conducted on July 15, July 16, July 18 and 19, and July 23, Mao expounded in considerable detail his views on China's relations with the capitalist countries, the problem of Japanese imperialism, China's internal affairs, relations with the Soviet Union, and other topics. Of these four interviews, only that of July 16 on Japanese imperialism has hitherto been published in more or less complete form. The other three are reproduced below from Edgar Snow's own revised typescript.[121]

On July 15, in response to Snow's opening question about the Chinese Soviet government's policy toward capitalist countries, Mao declared:

> In discussing questions of policy, I must ask you to bear in mind always that the fundamental issue before the Chinese people today is the struggle against Japanese imperialism. Our Soviet foreign policy is decisively conditioned by this struggle . . . .Japanese aggression is menacing not only China, but also world peace, especially the peace of the Pacific . . . .Thus, the problem of Japanese aggression is not only a Chinese problem but one which should be solved by all nations fronting the Pacific.

America and Britain in particular, said Mao, might offer assistance to China in her anti-Japanese struggle, and if they did, "the strongest bonds of sympathy and friendship would be established" between China and these countries, and they would be offered advantages in trade and other respects after the war was victorious. The isolationism advocated by some people in the United States would, he was persuaded, be abandoned, "and America will awaken to her real responsibility in the Pacific in combating the direct menace to American ideals and interests by Japanese imperialism."

In conclusion, Mao declared:

> A question before all foreign powers is whether China is to become completely colonized, or to resist the invader and become a sovereign country. In the latter case the opportunities for foreign cooperation in China would become very great, for China would be free, and the Chinese an independent people, with an independent economy, culture, and political organization. Such a China could be a great force for good in the world, and an ally on the side of justice and the development of world culture . . . ."[122]

In his interview of July 16 about the struggle against Japanese imperialism, Mao declared that the "central necessity" for defeating Japan was the achieve-

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121. The July 16 interview appeared in the *China Weekly Review* of November 14, 1936. For details regarding Snow's manuscript, which has been made available to us by the archives of the University of Missouri at Kansas City, with the kind permission of Lois Wheeler Snow, see below, the source note to the interview of July 15, 1936.

122. See below, the interview of July 15, 1936.

ment of a national united front of the Chinese people themselves, though foreign aid from Britain, America, France, and the Soviet Union would be important. If such a front were established, Mao assured Snow, the Red Army would be prepared to submit to the decisions of a joint "supreme war council," provided it really resisted Japan. The people, he added, "*must* be given the right to organize and to arm themselves, . . . a freedom which Chiang Kaishek has in the past denied them." The strategy in the anti-Japanese war should be that of a large-scale war of maneuver, rather than a positional war. In the end, "the great reservoirs of human material in the Chinese people" would break the morale of the Japanese forces.[123]

In the long interview of July 18 and 19 on internal affairs, Mao began with the statement, "Under present conditions, when people of the whole of China face the imminent danger of becoming Japanese slaves, our policies in many respects have been modified in order to unite all patriotic elements into a national Anti-Japanese Front." Intellectuals and professional people, he added, had always been welcomed from the beginning of the Soviet movement, and the petty bourgeoisie was also given political rights. Even the land of the rich peasants was no longer being confiscated, but the landlords' land must be redistributed, in order to win the support of the peasants, and "lay a broad mass basis for a successful struggle for national liberation." Landlords who did not engage in counterrevolution could, however, live without oppression in the soviet districts.

Much of this interview was devoted to a rather idyllic account of how kind and humane the soviet government was, except when obliged to take stern measures against counterrevolutionaries, and how effectively it managed the economy and stamped out evils such as opium and prostitution. At the end of this interview, when Edgar Snow asked for his opinion of the foreign policy of Nanjing, Mao responded forthrightly:

> As everybody knows very well, the policy of Nanjing under the leadership of Chiang Kaishek has been a policy of compromise with imperialism and retreat before the foreign invader. The dissatisfaction of the people with the Nanjing government has therefore been widespread . . . .If Chiang Kaishek continues in this way his crisis of personal power is certain to sharpen, and out of it may develop a great internal crisis in China. . . . There must be a day of decision, a day when he must either oppose Japan or be overthrown by his own subordinates, who are not all ready to become the slaves of Japan.. ..This increasing pressure from his own generals and from the anti-Japanese mass movement may yet compel Chiang to realize his mistakes and grant the demands of the people. If he stops civil war, begins to fight Japan, reestablishes the union of the Guomindang and the Communist Party, we will welcome this change and cooperate wholeheartedly. But only Chiang Kaishek can determine for himself. The decision cannot be much longer delayed.[124]

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123. See below, the interview of July 16, 1936.
124. See below, "Interview with Edgar Snow on Internal Affairs," July 18–19, 1936.

Finally, in an interview of July 23, devoted mainly to relations with the Soviet Union and China's potential influence on revolution in the colonies, Mao declared that, after ten years of imperialist aggression, Nanjing was finally beginning to realize that the Soviet Union was a true friend and that "the Guomindang can resist imperialism only by reuniting with the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist Party," as in 1925–1927. Asked by Snow whether, if the Chinese revolution were victorious, there would be "some kind of actual merger of governments" between Soviet China and the Soviet Union, Mao repeated his earlier statements that the Communists were "not now seeking the hegemony of power, but a united China against Japanese imperialism." Moreover, he said, the Third International was not an administrative organization, and could not be seen as a "dictator" in countries where there were Communist parties. Soviet China, he said, was in no sense "ruled by Moscow or by the Comintern." And he added, "We are certainly not fighting for an emancipated China in order to turn the country over to Moscow!"

Though this statement was set in the context of an argument against the view that the Soviet Union sought to subvert and dominate other countries, it stands as an early expression of Mao's disinclination to accept Soviet tutelage. While he had to accept the fact that, for the time being, China was a junior partner in the world revolution, and must take orders from Moscow, this did not, in his view, signify blind obedience. Moreover, China herself could play the role of a vanguard. At the end of the interview, asked by Snow whether the victory of a Red movement in China would rapidly lead to revolution in other Asiatic colonial or semi-colonial countries, and whether China was thus the "key" to world revolution, Mao responded in the affirmative. "The Chinese revolution," he said, "is a key factor in the world situation, and its victory is heartily anticipated by the people of every country, and especially by the toiling masses of the colonial countries. When the Chinese revolution comes into full power the masses of many colonial countries will follow the example of China and win a similar victory of their own." But, he repeated once again, the "seizure of power" was not the aim of the Chinese Communists; they wanted to "stop civil war, create a people's democratic government with the Guomindang and other parties, and fight for . . . independence against Japan."[125]

At a Politburo meeting on July 27, Mao declared that, while the three previously defined aims of establishing a base in the west, waging guerrilla warfare in the east, and establishing an anti-Japanese united front remained in force, the third of these should now take first place.[126] On August 10, at a crucial session of the Politburo, Mao delivered a report on the relations between the Communist Party and the Guomindang and on the united front. Chiang Kaishek's basic strategy toward Japan had not changed, according to Mao, but there was a

125. See below, the interview of July 23, 1936.

126. See *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 562–63, and Jin, *Mao*, p. 407.

substantial change in his tactics, to include limited war with Japan, and in future this might also influence his vacillating strategic outlook.

Recalling the five conditions put forward by the Communists in March, and the four points made in reply by Chen Lifu in his conversation of May with Zeng Yangfu and Chen Xiaocen, Mao noted the rather differently worded four points put forward by the Guomindang in the aftermath of the Second Plenum: (1) Abide by the Three People's Principles; (2) Obey the orders of Chairman Chiang; (3) Abolish the Red Army and integrate it into the National Army; and (4) Abolish the soviets, and turn them into local governments. In the interests of unity, Mao indicated, the Communist Party was willing to enter into discussions on this basis. Chiang's overall orientation had changed, he said, and therefore it was possible to negotiate with Nanjing:

> In the past, there were no contacts between us. Now there has been some change. Now he, too, is talking about a united front, and perhaps he will turn [the National Government] into a government of national defense. But he must . . . cause the masses to change their attitude toward him and make Japan retreat. If he wants to make use of this national movement, we do not want to adopt a hostile attitude.

We must recognize, he said, that Nanjing is a powerful force in the national movement. If we really want to attain the goal of resistance to Japan, we must follow such a middle course, and we can hold discussions with him. "Our sole demand is that he truly resist Japan." In his concluding remarks to the Politburo meeting, Mao noted that Chiang Kaishek always spoke of first uniting the country and then resisting Japan; we want him first to accord anti-Japanese democracy. The slogan "In order to resist Japan, we must first oppose Chiang" was, he said, no longer appropriate; the program now was "Oppose the traitors selling out their country in the context of the united front." At the same time, he called for vigilance and for asserting the principle of maintaining independence and keeping the initiative.[127]

Almost immediately, however, Mao and his comrades found themselves confronted by new telegraphic instructions from Moscow which required them to go very much further in conciliating Chiang. As noted above, regular contacts between the International and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party had been reestablished in July 1936, and in late July the Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International discussed the tactics which should be applied in China. At a meeting on July 23, 1936, Georgi Dimitrov declared that the Chinese Communists had been fighting very coura-

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127. Jin, *Mao,* pp. 409–10, and *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 567–68. Mao's report, as summarized by Jin, states that the new four points were contained in "a letter from the Second Plenum (*erzhong quanhui laixin*)." No information about the sending of such a letter has been found in other sources.

geously against much larger Guomindang forces, but were not "sufficiently mature politically" to deal with the complex situation which had arisen in China. In the face of a threat to the very existence of the Chinese nation from Japanese imperialism, the Chinese Communist Party's line of hostility to Chiang Kaishek was "at least two or three years behind the times" and must be changed. The slogan of a "Soviet People's Republic" should be replaced by that of an "All-China Democratic Republic," and stronger efforts should be made to induce Chiang to join the anti-Japanese front.[128]

These and other points were conveyed to Mao and his comrades in a telegram of August 15, 1936. In this missive, Moscow criticized the Chinese Communist Party's failure to give proper weight to class factors in trenchant terms:

> What makes us particularly uneasy is your decision to admit to the Party all those who want to join it, regardless of their social origins . . . , and your communication regarding your intention of accepting even Zhang Xueliang in the Party . . . .
>
> We think it is wrong to place Chiang Kaishek on the same plane as the Japanese invaders. Such an orientation is politically incorrect, for the principal enemy of the Chinese people is Japanese imperialism, to the struggle against which everything else must be subordinated at the present stage. Moreover, it is impossible to carry out simultaneously a successful battle against the Japanese invaders and against Chiang Kaishek . . . .For serious armed resistance against Japan the participation of Chiang Kaishek's army, or of the greater part of it, is essential.
>
> From all this it follows that you must set a course toward the suspension of hostilities between the Red Army and the army of Chiang Kaishek, and toward an agreement with the latter regarding a struggle with the Japanese aggressors . . . .
>
> You must maintain contacts with Zhang Xueliang, and use these contacts to develop our work within his army . . . , and to conduct extensive propaganda among the mass of the soldiers, and the officers, regarding the anti-Japanese national front. You cannot regard Zhang Xueliang himself as a reliable friend. Especially since the failure in the southwest, Zhang Xueliang may very well waver once again, or even sell us out . . . .

The International therefore considered Mao's statement in support of the "anti-Chiang actions of the Southwest Clique" as erroneous.[129] The importance of establishing an anti-Japanese national united front, including the Communist Party, the Guomindang, and other organizations, all subordinate to a unified command, was strongly emphasized. The concrete measures recommended were as follows:

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128. *Georgi Dimitrov, an Outstanding Militant of the Comintern* (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1972), pp. 204–6 (hereafter *Georgi Dimitrov*). For the full text of Dimitrov's remarks, see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional i Kitaiskaya Revolyutsiya* (The Communist International and the Chinese Revolution) (hereafter *The Comintern and China*), Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1986, pp. 263–66.

129. See below, the translation of Mao's "Talk on the Southwest Incident," dated June 8, 1936.

> The best thing would be for the Chinese Communist Party to issue a declaration advocating the establishment of a unified Chinese Democratic Republic in the whole country, the convening of an all-China national assembly, and the establishment of a government of national defense for all China. This is the best method under the present circumstances for uniting all the democratic forces of the Chinese people to defend their native land and resist the Japanese bandits. The Chinese Communist Party could proclaim that whenever an all-China democratic republic is set up, the Soviet areas would become part of it, and would participate in the Chinese National Assembly, as well as applying on their own territory the democratic system established for the whole country.

It was also explicitly recommended that the Chinese Communist Party and the Red Army should send to the Guomindang a proposal for initiating collaboration:

> We consider that the Chinese Communist Party and the headquarters of the Red Army should make a formal proposal to the Guomindang and to Chiang Kaishek for the immediate cessation of military actions, and the signature of a concrete agreement for negotiations regarding joint resistance to Japan. The Chinese Communist Party and the headquarters of the Red Army should proclaim that they are prepared to send a delegation immediately, or to receive a delegation from the Guomindang and Chiang Kaishek in the soviet areas.

The Comintern telegram ended with a blunt sentence: "We await your delegate, so that we can form a proper judgement of the entire course you have adopted regarding these questions, and give you a detailed answer.[130]

Ten days later, on August 25, Mao drafted for the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party a letter to the Guomindang basically in harmony with these instructions from Moscow. While criticizing Chiang for his failure to stop the civil war immediately, Mao nonetheless declared, "the nation's rise or fall depends entirely upon your honorable party" and proposed "realistic negotiations" at any time.[131] The next day, Mao wrote to Pan Hannian declaring that "the heart of our policy is to work with Chiang to resist Japan" and urging that Zhang Xueliang maintain unity with Nanjing.[132]

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130. For the text of this telegram see *The Comintern and China*, pp. 266–69; Chinese in *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* (Research on the History of the Chinese Communist Party), no. 2, 1988, pp. 86–87; extracts in Yang Kuisong, *Xi'an shibian xintan. Zhang Xueliang yu zhonggong guanxizhi yanjiu* (A new enquiry into the Xi'an Incident. A study of the relations between Zhang Xueliang and the Chinese Communist Party) (Taibei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1995), pp. 165–67 (hereafter Yang, *Xi'an Incident*). This is the most recent and most authoritative study of the Xi'an affair.

131. See below, "A Letter from the Chinese Communist Party to the Chinese Guomindang," August 25, 1936. The fact that Mao drafted this document is confirmed in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 572–73. In *Georgi Dimitrov*, p. 206, it is characterized as reflecting the recommendations of the International.

132. See below, the letter to Pan Hannian dated August 26, 1936.

On September 1, the slogan of "forcing Chiang to resist Japan," proposed to the Communists by Zhang Xueliang in his April meeting with Zhou Enlai, was finally adopted.[133] On the same day, Zhou Enlai wrote to Chen Guofu and Chen Lifu, expressing the hope that the two Chen brothers would speak again to Chiang Kaishek about the cessation of attacks on the Red Army and uniting with the Soviet Union and the Communists to resist Japan.[134] On September 8, in a telegraphic order to Zhu De, Zhang Guotao, and Ren Bishi, Mao and the other top leaders made plain that "Resist Japan" and "Oppose Chiang" were incompatible: "You should not raise any slogans about overthrowing the Central army or any Chinese armed forces. On the contrary, you must raise slogans about joining together to resist Japan."[135]

On September 15 and 16, at an enlarged meeting of the Politburo, Mao spoke several times, with particular emphasis on the class basis of the united front. During the First Great Revolution of 1925–1927, he noted, the national bourgeoisie had participated, but in 1927 it betrayed the revolution. Now, because of the worsening economic crisis, and Japanese oppression, the national bourgeoisie might once again go over to the side of the revolution. Our alliance with the bourgeoisie in 1925–1927 was the first time such a thing had happened in the world, he said. At that time, the united forces were in fact led by the Communist Party, and today it is even more indispensable that we should lead. The democratic republic which the International has ordered us to establish is of a bourgeois-democratic character, but it is not a Western-style democratic state like that which the Guomindang talks about. Instead, it is a state of the workers and peasants, with the participation of the bourgeoisie.[136] In the months and years to come, Mao found himself obliged to adopt a much less assertive approach, but after the victory of 1949, the state form which he defined in "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" was remarkably like that described here.

On September 23, Mao met once more with Edgar Snow for a fifth interview, and made use of this opportunity to explain the factors which had led the Chinese Communist Party to adopt the new attitude toward the Guomindang government expressed in the August 25 letter. The first of these, he said, was the seriousness of the constantly intensifying Japanese aggression, which could be countered only by a united effort of all Chinese forces, of which the Guomindang was the strongest. The second was the response by the Chinese people, "as well as many patriotic officials," to the Communists' call for union against Japan. The third was the fact that "many patriotic elements, even in the

133. See below, the "Directive on the Problem of Forcing Chiang Kaishek to Resist Japan" of September 1, 1936.

134. See Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," p. 357.

135. See below, the order of September 8, entitled " 'Resist Japan' and 'Oppose Chiang' cannot be raised simultaneously."

136. See *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 580–81, and Jin, *Mao*, pp. 411–12.

Guomindang," now favored renewed collaboration with the Communist Party, "because of the peril to our national existence."

The instrument of such a union Mao characterized, once again, as a democratic government of national defense, based on universal suffrage, and a war council on which the Communists would be represented. Mao declared that he was "not opposed to the development of capitalism now in China," but argued that the interests of the workers and peasants would have to be safeguarded. In response to Snow's question as to whether the establishment of a united front on this basis would in effect mean an immediate declaration of war on Japan, Mao responded: "Yes, quite possibly if the reunion [of Communists and Guomindang] were proclaimed today, war might begin tomorrow."[137]

In a concluding section of this interview, not included in the published version, Snow asked Mao whether Chiang could accept the proposals for a United Front only if he really intended to go to war against Japan. Mao replied, "Yes, that is the fundamental proposition . . . , and that is why Chiang Kaishek wavers and delays and may try to avoid an agreement altogether." Snow then enquired what events of the last two or three months had brought about this new Communist policy, "which must certainly be regarded as the most important decision in your party's history for a decade," given that the conditions Mao had cited to justify it had existed for several years. To this Mao replied:

> The immediate cause is the great acceleration in Japanese aggression, the severe new demands of Japan, capitulation to which must enormously handicap any attempts at resistance in the future, and the popular response to this deepening Japanese invasion in the form of a great people's patriotic movement. These conditions have in turn produced a change in attitude among certain elements in Nanjing. Under such circumstances it is now possible to hope for the realization of such a policy as we propose, whereas had it been offered in this form a year ago or earlier neither the country nor the Guomindang would have been prepared for it.
>
> At present negotiations are being conducted, and while the Communist Party has no great positive hopes of persuading Nanjing to resist Japan it is nevertheless possible. As long as it is, the Communist Party will be ready to cooperate in all necessary measures. If Chiang Kaishek prefers to continue the civil war the Red Army will also be ready to receive him.

Thus, even as he endorsed and put forward the new line advocated by Moscow, Mao did not hide his skepticism regarding it.

A few days before this interview, Mao had written to Song Qingling, expressing his "boundless respect and admiration" for her and lamenting the fact that, although the appeal to stop the civil war and resist Japan prevailed in the whole

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137. See below, "Interview with Edgar Snow on the United Front," September 23, 1936. Regarding the impact of Snow's interviews on events, see also Shum, *United Front*, pp. 75–82.

country, "Mr. Chiang, the man who commands the huge army, and the Central Committee of the Guomindang still have no intention of repenting thoroughly of what they have done." To rectify this situation, Mao declared, "We depend on someone like you, who, with her position and influence as a member of the Central Committee of the Guomindang, can really do something concrete and practical about it." Mao therefore announced that he was sending Pan Hannian to discuss with her the organization of the united front and asked Song Qingling to arrange for Pan to meet with key figures in the Guomindang with whom she had "a fairly close relationship" such as Song Ziwen, Li Shizeng, Cai Yuanpei, and others.[138] He had, in fact, written since August, and would continue to write, to a wide range of friends and acquaintances from the period of the First United Front and even from his student days in Changsha.[139] In his letter of September 22 to Cai Yuanpei, he asked Cai to convey his regards to more than eighty leading figures in intellectual and political circles, including such diverse individuals as Liu Yazi, Shao Lizi, Wang Jingwei, Chen Gongbo, Dai Jitao, Chen Guofu, Song Ziwen, Guo Moruo, Hu Shi, and Zhou Gucheng.

Meanwhile, Mao had continued his efforts to obtain material assistance from the Soviet Union. On August 25, the same date on which the formal letter to the Guomindang calling for a united front was dispatched, Mao cabled Moscow regarding his plan for an offensive in Ningxia, and asked for assurance that the Soviet Union would provide military aid via Outer Mongolia. Moscow replied in mid-September that the aid would be forthcoming once the Chinese Red Army had occupied Ningxia. In mid-September, Mao reported, "The International has sent us a telegram agreeing to the occupation of Ningxia and the western part of Gansu. After our troops have occupied the region of Ningxia, they can give us assistance."[140] A few days later, he added that the key point was Ningxia, not western Gansu.[141] Spelling out what was meant by "assistance" in the telegram of the International, he indicated that Moscow had been informed of the need for help from "Soviet aircraft and artillery" in taking the cities, and the reply had indicated that such support would be forthcoming. "We will be able to obtain the weapons for taking the cities, and we will then take them," he concluded.[142]

On October 2, the Central Committee sent another cable spelling out the aid which the Chinese expected from the Soviet Union, including airplanes and heavy artillery. By this time, however, Stalin had realized that overt assistance to

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138. See below, the letter to Song Qingling dated September 18, 1936.

139. See below, the letters to Song Zheyuan, Fu Zuoyi, Yi Lirong, Cai Yuanpei, Zhang Naiqi, Li Jishen, Yu Xuezhong, and others.

140. See below, "Deployments for the Occupation of Ningxia," September 14, 1936.

141. It should be noted that the province of Ningxia under the Republic was substantially larger than the Ningxia Hui (Muslim) Autonomous Region today and had a much longer frontier with Mongolia.

142. See below, "The Key Point of Expansion Is in Ningxia and Not in Western Gansu," September 19, 1936.

the Chinese Communists in the Northwest might encourage the Guomindang to seek peace with Japan. Moscow therefore replied on October 18 that the aid would be purchased and delivered not directly, but through a "foreign company." It would amount to some 600 tons of materiel, but airplanes and heavy artillery would not be included. These materials could not be sent more than 100 kilometers beyond the borders of Outer Mongolia. This must have been a blow to Mao and his comrades, but they undertook the Ningxia campaign nonetheless. By the end of October, Mao was obliged to report that his forces had been defeated. The Executive Committee of the International replied that the campaign should in any case be called off; one of the reasons given was, that if the Japanese learned of the Soviet action, a severe confrontation between Japan and the Soviet Union might arise. Nevertheless, in response to Mao's desperate plea, the Soviets agreed to send U.S.$550,000 in cash, of which $150,000 was sent via Song Qingling in Shanghai and reached the Chinese Communists early in December.[143]

In October, the remnants of Zhang Guotao's Fourth Army finally made contact with the forces of the Party Center, and on December 2, Zhang Guotao and Mao Zedong met face to face in the provisional Red capital of Bao'an. The vicissitudes which had reduced Zhang's army to only some ten thousand men represent a controversial topic which cannot be taken up seriously here.[144] In any case, whether the Western route forces had been decimated because Mao planned it that way in order to strengthen his position vis-à-vis Zhang, or whether Zhang's misfortunes resulted from his own mistakes, the various components of the Red Army were once again united.

By the autumn of 1936, Mao and his comrades had thus already established tentative but significant contacts both with officials of Chiang Kaishek's government, and with the two military leaders in the Northwest, Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng. Between September and December, efforts were made to pursue these negotiations, but increasing difficulties were encountered in dealing with the Guomindang.

On September 24, Pan Hannian left for Shanghai, carrying, in addition to the August 25 "Letter to the Guomindang" and a letter from Zhou Enlai to Chen Guofu and Chen Lifu, an eight-point draft agreement on resisting Japan and saving the nation which had been drawn up by Mao.[145] At about this time, Zeng

143. Sheng, *Battling Foreign Imperialism*, pp. 28–29, citing archival materials from Yang, "Massive Soviet Aid," pp. 265–68.

144. For a detailed account and analysis based on the documentary sources, see Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 190–218. Salisbury, *Long March*, pp. 311–23, tells the story more or less in accordance with the official Chinese historiography, but his narrative is enlivened by firsthand reminiscences from a number of participants, including Li Xiannian and George Hatem.

145. According to *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 589–90, Mao had drafted the agreement on cooperation against Japan in September. Jin, *Mao*, p. 412, says Mao prepared it around September 20, in the aftermath of the Politburo meeting of mid-September

Yangfu once again invited Zhou Enlai to come to Guangzhou for negotiations, and, in a telegram to Zhu De and others dated September 27, Mao noted that Zhou Enlai was "preparing to leave in response to Nanjing's request."[146] In a secret telegram of October 8, he informed Zhu De, Zhang Guotao, and other leading comrades that Zhou Enlai would fly to Guangzhou on condition that his security could be guaranteed.[147]

In another telegram to Zhu De and others, dated October 1, 1936, Mao declared that it was "difficult for the Red Army commanders to engage in the work to establish a united front with the White army" because "it is not very easy for ordinary comrades to understand the complex situation of needing to fight and, at the same time, needing to maintain peace."[148] This complex and contradictory situation was indeed difficult for both sides to understand and to deal with. Moreover, it soon became apparent that Chiang Kaishek, his hand strengthened by the defeat of the rebels in Guangdong and Guangxi, was little inclined to permit meaningful discussions.

A number of documents in this volume chronicle the increasing frustration of the Communist leadership in seeking an agreement with Chiang Kaishek during the last three months of 1936. In a telegram of October 17, 1936, to Zhu De and Zhang Guotao, Mao and others stated tersely, "The negotiations with Nanjing have taken a critical downward turn."[149] Apart from the developments in Guangdong and Guangxi, an important factor inciting Chiang to turn away from an agreement with the Communists was his discovery, during a first visit to Xi'an in late October 1936, that Zhang Xueliang had met with Zhou Enlai and favored an anti-Japanese united front including the Communists. In a speech to officers in Xi'an, Chiang declared, "Resistance against Japan requires the

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referred to above. It appears below under the date of October 11, when it was incorporated into a telegram to Zhu De, Zhang Guotao, and others soliciting their opinions. See also Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," pp. 357–58.

146. See below, "Strongly Raise in the Talks with Nanjing Guomindang-Communist Cooperation and a Halt to the Civil War." According to Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," p. 358, the decision of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee that Zhou should go was taken on October 8, but countermanded on October 14.

147. See below, "Strive to Begin Negotiations Quickly with Major Nanjing Representatives," October 8, 1936.

148. See below, "We Must Actively Establish an Anti-Japanese United Front with the Guomindang Forces," October 1, 1936. A Communist Party directive of June 20, 1936, had called for such a two-track policy in dealing with the Northeastern Army. The method was to rely mainly on "patient political persuasion," but "necessary military actions" were to be taken against those sections of the Northeastern Army lacking in political consciousness, in order to teach them a lesson and smooth the way for later political work. See Saich, *Rise to Power*, p. 743.

149. See below, "Conditions for Negotiations Proposed by the Guomindang," October 17, 1936, and also "The Current Situation as Regards the United Front," dated October 18, 1936.

suppression of the Communists first; those who do not suppress the Communists are the same as those who do not fight the Japanese; and the Communists are great traitors."[150]

On November 9, Mao telegraphed Zhang Zihua (who, as noted above, had been involved in dealings with the Guomindang since December 1935) asking him to inform Chen Lifu that a new Japanese attack was imminent. The Nanjing authorities must honor Chiang Kaishek's promise at the Second Plenum not to make further concessions to Japan, and send representatives to hold talks with the Communists.[151] But when Pan Hannian presented the Party's eight-point program for negotiations to Chen Lifu on the following day, Chen, on the basis of instructions from Chiang, replied that the Communists could retain a maximum of 3,000 men in the Red Army and that all officers above the rank of division commander would have to go abroad. On November 12, Mao declared in a telegram to Pan Hannian, "Mr. Chiang's fierce attacks lately cannot but cause suspicion among Red Army commanders." If Nanjing refused to accept the existence of the Red Army, there was "no point in having Enlai go there."[152]

In a telegram of November 22, Mao stated that the aim of Chiang's current massive attack against the soviet areas was "to destroy the Red Army and the people of the soviet areas altogether." In another telegram of the same date, Mao laid it down that only an organized movement to push for an end to the attacks on the Red Army would be capable of "forcing Chiang to end his extermination of the Communists. This is the key to the current anti-Japanese united front."[153] On December 1, 1936, Mao and a number of the other leaders addressed themselves directly to "the honorable Mr. Kaishek," complaining that, while "the people of the whole country have demonstrated their utmost fury toward the Japanese bandits, . . . you, sir, devote all your energies to a civil war of mutual slaughter." All that was required, they wrote, was "a change of mind and a change of heart" by Chiang Kaishek, and he would become "a glorious hero in the resistance against Japan, respected by all and honored forever by history."[154]

In the face of these difficulties encountered in dealing with Chiang Kaishek, Mao had written on October 5, 1936, to Zhang Xueliang, deploring the continuing Guomindang attacks on the Red Army and announcing that the Communists

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150. Quoted in Wu Tien-wei, *The Sian Incident: A Pivotal Point in Modern Chinese History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1976) (hereafter Wu, *The Sian Incident*), p. 58.

151. See below, "On the Problem of Suspending Attacks and Holding Negotiations," November 9, 1936.

152. See below, "The Principles of the Agreement to Negotiate with Nanjing," November 12, 1936.

153. See below, "Telegram to the Soldiers of the Red Army and the People of the Soviet Area," and "Forcing Chiang to End His Annihilation of the Communists Is the Key at the Moment," addressed to Pan Hannian, both dated November 22, 1936.

154. See below, the letter to Chiang Kaishek dated December 1, 1936.

would initiate a cessation of attacks on the Guomindang armies as a demonstration of good faith. Only when attacked by Guomindang troops would they return fire in self-defense. In this context, he urged Zhang not only to put an immediate stop to attacks on the Red Army by the Northwest Armies but to "convey our views to Mr. Chiang Kaishek for a speedy policy decision for both sides to send formal representatives to negotiate the concrete conditions for stopping the war and resisting Japan."[155] During Chiang Kaishek's visit to Xi'an in November, Zhang did, as already noted, speak out in favor of cooperating with the Communists. Not only were his arguments dismissed out of hand, but on November 23, 1936, Chiang took the deliberately provocative action of ordering the arrest of the leaders of the National Salvation Movement, as a gesture of goodwill toward Japan.[156]

Zhang Xueliang persevered nonetheless, writing a letter to Chiang Kaishek on November 27, 1936, which constituted a passionate appeal for the mobilization of his Northeastern Army to join the fight against Japanese imperialism then going on in Suiyuan Province.[157] Mao, for his part, put his name to a letter of December 1, 1936, to Chiang Kaishek conveying a very similar message. The Red Army, said the letter, shared "the emotions of the officers and soldiers of your forces in the Northwest"—in other words, of the armies of Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng; these armies, Mao wrote, were "unwilling to see Chinese kill Chinese" and would "rather surrender their guns to the Red Army."[158] Collusion of Zhang and Yang with the Communists was exactly what Chiang Kaishek was afraid of. In any case, his response, when he returned to Xi'an on December 4, 1936, was a peremptory demand that Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng participate wholeheartedly in the suppression of Communism.

During the autumn of 1936, Mao had devoted such time as he could spare from other activities to writing his first book-length study of military tactics, entitled "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War." This work, which is translated below, is too long and complex to be analyzed in detail here. A substantial portion of the text is devoted to a review of the experience of the five "Encirclement and Suppression" campaigns of 1930–1934, naturally with a view to demonstrating the correctness of Mao's own strategy. These matters, which are abundantly documented in Volume IV and discussed in the Introduction to that volume, will not be taken up further here.

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155. See below, the letter to Zhang Xueliang dated October 5, 1935.

156. Wu, *The Sian Incident*, pp. 60–61.

157. See Wu, *The Sian Incident*, pp. 51–76; Domes, *The Revolution Postponed*, pp. 646–57.

158. See below, the "Letter to Chiang Kaishek" of December 1, 1936, signed by Mao and a number of other military and political leaders, including Zhu De, Zhang Guotao, Zhou Enlai, Peng Dehuai, and Lin Biao.

Two points in Chapter 1, "How to Study War," are of particular interest. Discussing the lessons which should be learned from the experience of revolutionary war in the Soviet Union and in China, Mao wrote in 1936 that while Soviet experience merited "somewhat greater respect" than "other foreign things," particular respect should be accorded to China's *own* experience of revolutionary war. Revising this text in 1950, he inverted this judgment: China's experience deserved respect, but Soviet experience must be accorded particular respect. Another theme, to which Mao would return frequently, makes its appearance in this work. The present great worldwide revolutionary war, declared Mao, would be the final war, ushering in an era of perpetual peace throughout the world.

It is of interest to note that, in discussing the importance of a strategic retreat when confronted by a superior force (Chapter 5, section 3), Mao cites examples not only from the traditional novel *Water Margin*, and from the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, but from the military history of the First World War, which he still remembered no doubt from his student days in Changsha twenty years earlier. Finally, the work ends (Chapter 5, section 9) with a discussion of "wars of annihilation" as an aspect of the strategy of an inferior force:

> A game of "comparing treasures" not between two dragon kings, but between a beggar and a dragon king, would be rather ludicrous. For the Red Army, . . . the basic policy orientation is a war of annihilation. Only by annihilating the enemy's vital forces can the "Encirclement and Annihilation" campaigns be broken and the soviet areas expanded. Inflicting casualties is a means that we adopt to annihilate the enemy . . . .Against a powerful enemy, a battle in which he is routed is not basically a decisive thing . . . .Such conditions as popular support, favorable terrain, a vulnerable enemy force, and surprise are all indispensable for achieving annihilation.[159]

On December 10, Zhang Xueliang received a telegram from Mao Zedong regarding the current state of negotiations with Nanjing. In the most recent talks between Pan Hannian and Chen Lifu, Mao indicated, Chen had agreed that the permitted size of the Red Army could be increased from 3,000 to 30,000, but demanded concessions in return. Emphasizing that the Communists could not accept Chiang's capitulationist foreign policy, Mao declared

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159. See below, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," December 1936. In addition to the five chapters in the existing version, Mao had the intention of writing on other topics, but was prevented from doing so by the political situation which arose in the aftermath of the Xi'an Incident. He therefore decided to publish the text as it stood in early December 1936, which appeared in mimeographed form for internal use in May 1937 and in a printed edition in 1941.

that he would not reduce the Red Army by a single soldier and would accept its subordination only to an anti-Japanese supreme command. "We want to seek peace through war," he said in conclusion. "We will absolutely not make unprincipled compromises."[160]

IV. The Xi'an Coup and Its Aftermath

It was in this context that Zhang Xueliang, after much soul-searching, finally took the decision to arrest Chiang Kaishek and hold him until he could be persuaded to change his mind. What happened in Xi'an on December 12, 1936, and during the ensuing days and weeks has long been known in broad outline, and the picture has become much clearer in the light of a variety of sources published in recent years, though important points remain obscure. This is obviously not the place to review the whole complicated story in detail, but some key issues must be addressed in order to place in their proper context the writings by Mao Zedong included in the present volume.[161]

The action on December 12 to take Chiang and those accompanying him into custody was neither so quick and easy, nor so bloodless, as has often been suggested, but it was carried out successfully.[162] The Communists had not been

160. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 619–20. See also Li Haiwen, "Before the Xi'an Incident," pp. 358–60; Shum, *United Front*, pp. 84–86; Yang, *From Revolution to Politics*, pp. 220–24.

161. As noted above, Yang, *Xi'an Incident*, is the most recent and authoritative study of the Xi'an coup and the events leading up to it. A comprehensive overview of all aspects of the affair can be found in Wu, *The Sian Incident*, which was subsequently updated by the author's review article, "New Materials on the Xi'an Incident," *Modern China*, 10, no. 1 (January 1984), pp. 115–41 (hereafter Wu, "New Materials on Xi'an"). An important documentary collection is *Xi'an shibian dang'an shiliao xuanbian* (Selected Historical Materials from the Archives Regarding the Xi'an Incident) (Beijing: Dang'an chubanshe, 1986). Many relevant materials, including Mao's statements during Party meetings, are summarized and quoted in part in *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 620–50, and Jin, *Mao*, pp. 415–25. See also Shum, *United Front*, pp. 84–94. Among the numerous earlier studies dealing with the Xi'an Incident, several remain of interest. Lyman Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends: The United Front in Chinese Communist History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967) (hereafter Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends*), contains a concise but thoughtful and well-documented account of the whole affair (Chapter 5, pp. 75–91). John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China 1927–1937* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1966), includes a useful survey of the impact of these events on the student movement (pp. 169–78). Charles McLane, *Soviet Policy and the Chinese Communists, 1931–1946* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958) (hereafter McLane, *Soviet Policy and the Chinese Communists*), though out of date in many respects, contains considerable information about the Soviet reaction to the events in Xi'an (pp. 79–91). Domes, *The Revolution Postponed*, gives an account of the incident based in part on Guomindang archival sources and on interviews with participants (pp. 656–74).

162. See Wu, *The Sian Incident*, pp. 75–81.

informed in advance of this undertaking, but Zhang Xueliang immediately sent a telegram to Mao and Zhou declaring that the purpose was to compel Chiang to "free the patriots" and create a "coalition government" and asking them for guidance.[163]

Understandably, the initial reaction of Mao and his comrades was one of joyful enthusiasm at the humiliation thus inflicted on the man who, during the previous decade, had killed so many of their comrades and had sought to destroy their Party. Exactly what form this enthusiasm took has been the subject of some controversy. In a 1957 publication, Edgar Snow cited a postcard sent from Xi'an describing a mass meeting addressed by Mao and others on the evening after Chiang's arrest, at which a resolution was passed demanding a "mass trial" of Chiang Kaishek.[164] A longer and more lurid account along similar lines can be found in the standard Guomindang history of this period.[165] For his part, Zhang Guotao recalls a conversation in which Mao said he wanted Chiang to be executed, "but the word 'kill' must not come from our lips"—Zhang Xueliang must be encouraged to take responsibility.[166]

In the past, it was not easy to determine how much credence should be given to these fragmentary and in some cases partisan sources, and the picture is still far from clear. Several texts bearing Mao's own signature from the days immediately after December 12 have, however, become available and are translated below. Together with the quotations and summaries contained in other recent publications, they provide a more substantial basis for discussing Mao's position in the immediate aftermath of the Xi'an Incident.

At the Politburo meeting called on December 13 to discuss the events in Xi'an, Mao spoke first and began by stating, "This incident has revolutionary significance; it is directed against Japan and the traitors who are selling out their country . . . .The action, and the program accompanying it, have positive significance . . . .We must support it." Although Chiang Kaishek had lately been adopting a centrist position, Mao continued, his insistence on "suppressing Communism" in fact made him pro-Japanese. "We must," said Mao, "make Xi'an the center of the whole country, control Nanjing, and with the Northwest as the front

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163. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 620.

164. Edgar Snow, *Random Notes on Red China 1936–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University East Asian Research Center, 1957) (hereafter Snow, *Random Notes*), p. 1. According to Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends*, p. 77, the unnamed author of the postcard was Dr. George Hatem. Snow's account is also cited by K.V. Kukushkin, "The Comintern and the United National Anti-Japanese Front in China (1935–1943)," in R.A. Ulyanovsky (ed.), *The Comintern and the East* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979), p. 408.

165. See Warren Kuo [Guo], *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party*, Vol. 3 (Taibei: Institute of International Relations, 1970) (hereafter Kuo, *Analytical History*), pp. 228–29.

166. Zhang, *Autobiography*, Vol. 2, pp. 481–83.

line, influence the whole country, and become the heart of the anti-Japanese front." It was also important to cultivate British and American public opinion. According to this record, Zhang Guotao declared that the significance of the Xi'an Incident was, first of all, to oppose Japan and second to oppose Chiang. Internal chaos could not be avoided, though it could be minimized, and it was necessary to discuss how to overthrow the Nanjing government and set up an anti-Japanese government. In his concluding remarks, Mao replied that this was a truly decisive moment, when the Communists must not speak rashly. They should not oppose Chiang openly, but should point out his errors, reveal his crimes to the people, and "raise a conciliatory anti-Japanese flag."[167]

A telegram from Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai to Zhang Xueliang, sent immediately after this meeting, began with the statement: "The fact that the prime culprit has been arrested makes for happiness shared far and wide." Mao and Zhou went on to call for "basing all actions on the popular masses" and for proclaiming to "all officers and soldiers Mr. Chiang's crimes in selling out the country and harming the people."[168] Another telegram to Zhang and Yang sent the following day hailed once again the arrest of the "prime culprit," called for the establishment of a unified "Northwest Anti-Japanese Joint Army" with Zhang Xueliang as commander-in-chief and Yang Hucheng and Zhu De as his deputies, and demanded a purge of the "pro-Chiang elements" among the troops.[169] On December 15, Mao declared in a secret telegram to Peng Dehuai that, while the Red Army was reacting to a civil war launched by the enemy rather than taking the initiative, "when the enemy's main force is advancing toward Xi'an, our forces should adopt a grand strategy ... and strike at the enemy's head, the Nanjing government."[170]

Another telegram, addressed on December 15 to the Guomindang and the National Government in Nanjing, declared that Mr. Chiang's detention was the result of his "three grossly erroneous policies" of "capitulation in foreign affairs, use of military force in domestic affairs, and oppressing the people." "How can it be said," the telegram continued, "that those persons within the Guomindang who are patriotic and brave are still subject to Mr. Chiang's orders?" Those who wanted to dissociate themselves from Chiang and the pro-Japanese clique should "stop the civil war, remove Mr. Chiang from office, and hand him over to the judgment of the citizens."[171] The "judgment [*caipan*] of the citizens [*guomin*]"

167. Jin, *Mao*, pp. 415–16; *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 621–22.

168. See below, "Letter from Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai to Zhang Xueliang," December 13, 1936.

169. "Telegram from Mao Zedong and Others to Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng," December 14, 1936.

170. See below, "A Grand Strategy Must Be Adopted to Strike at the Enemy's Key Positions," December 15, 1936.

171. "Telegram from the Red Army command to the Guomindang and to the National Government on the Xi'an Incident," December 15, 1936, signed by Mao and by the other main Party and Red Army leaders.

sounds somewhat milder than a "mass trial," and in the four telegrams just cited there is no explicit reference to the execution of Chiang Kaishek, but in political terms the message is essentially the same: "Yes, we want a united front, including the Guomindang, but not under Chiang's leadership."

While it was entirely understandable that many Communist leaders, perhaps including Mao, should wish to take advantage of the events in Xi'an to exact revenge from the man who had so long sought their ruin, to do so was not a viable political option. In China itself, Chiang's arrest immediately provided the pretext for the organization of a punitive expedition by He Yingqin and other pro-Japanese elements in the Guomindang, not in the hope of saving Chiang but, rather, with the aim of replacing him by a figure more acceptable to Japan if he did not survive. Evoking this perspective, the telegram of December 15 to the Guomindang argued that, while no one could predict how fate would allocate victory or defeat, the resulting conflict might lead to the destruction of the whole country. Thus to risk all on a single desperate gamble was almost certainly not something which, after a few days' reflection, Mao would have wished to do. In any case, the Soviet reaction to events in Xi'an soon made any such policy untenable.

A day or two after the Xi'an Incident, Mao had sent a telegram to Moscow asking for guidance. On December 14, editorials in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* denounced the action of Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng as a Japanese plot. The Nanjing government, the Soviet press argued, had increasingly shown "its readiness and ability" to lead China's defense against Japan.[172] Despite the existence of regular communications with Moscow, these authoritative statements appear to have reached Bao'an only after a week's delay, at about the time when instructions from the International were finally received.

A telegram from Mao to Zhang Xueliang dated December 17, 1936, stated, "We have already made several reports to a distant place [i.e., Moscow], but have not yet received any reply." Mao reckoned that if Moscow saw the Xi'an Incident not simply as a military action, but as "linked to the popular masses," the Soviet authorities would "express their sympathy." He warned, however, that "the government in a distant place, in response to the demands of foreign relations, may not be able to support us openly as yet."[173]

In order to establish a high-level channel of communication with Zhang Xueliang, a delegation headed by Zhou Enlai had left on horseback on December 15 for Yan'an. There they were met on December 17 by an emissary from Zhang Xueliang and transported to Xi'an in Zhang's personal airplane.[174] As early as

172. See McLane, *Soviet Policy and the Chinese Communists*, pp. 82–84.

173. See below, "Telegram from Mao Zedong to Zhang Xueliang," December 17, 1936.

174. Jin Chongji, *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1898–1949* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1989), pp. 326–27 (hereafter Jin, *Zhou Enlai*).

December 16, Mao had declared in a telegram to Yan Xishan, "There must be a peaceful resolution to the current situation; on no account should there be renewed civil war, inviting our own destruction."[175] On December 18, in a telegram from Xi'an, Zhou Enlai stated clearly, "The goal of the pro-Japanese faction is to bring about civil war, not to save Chiang."[176] In the light of this and two other telegrams from Zhou, Mao discussed the situation with Zhang Wentian and Bo Gu, and it was agreed that they should support the freeing of Chiang Kaishek under certain conditions and bring about a peaceful solution of the Xi'an Incident.[177]

At a Politburo meeting called by Zhang Wentian on December 19, Mao gave a report of which the main theme was that hitherto all the attention in Nanjing had been focused on Chiang. In fact, said Mao, "The main problem at present is the problem of resisting Japan, not the problem of the individual Chiang Kaishek." He called for opposing the expansion of the civil war and for a peaceful resolution of the Xi'an Incident. Referring to the Soviet editorials characterizing the Xi'an Incident as a Japanese plot, Mao said that Japanese claims that it was manufactured by the Soviet Union and Soviet claims that it was manufactured by the Japanese were both absurd. Under these circumstances, the Chinese Communists should say that they had not yet received instructions from the International. In his concluding remarks, Mao noted that the Xi'an Incident had been greatly influenced by the Red Army. Only if the civil war was halted would it be possible to fight Japan. To achieve this end, "we must win over Nanjing, and above all win over Xi'an."[178]

At this meeting, the Politburo adopted a directive, translated below, which took a position regarding the Xi'an Incident markedly more critical of Zhang and Yang than during the previous week:

> Because of the fact . . . .that this action was carried out in many respects in the style of a more or less military secret plot, and detained Nanjing's highest responsible person and principal commander, Chiang Kaishek, it put Nanjing in the position of being an enemy of Xi'an and thus created the possibility of a new large-scale civil war, which would be extremely dangerous for the Chinese nation. Thus, this action has also impeded the joining together of the nationwide anti-Japanese forces.

Two possible future developments were noted: civil war, which would cause many Nanjing moderates to become pro-Japanese and thus favor the aggressors; and an end to "Communist suppression," accompanied by united resistance against Japan. To bring about the second outcome rather than the first, the Party

175. *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, pp. 623–24.
176. Jin, *Mao*, p. 417; *Nianpu*, Vol. 1, p. 624.
177. Jin, *Mao*, p. 417–18.
178. Ibid., pp. 418–19.