

The Yen-an Experience and Foreign Observation

The Yen-an period of wartime resistance (1937-45) provided Mao and the CCP with the much needed time to restructure the party and the army, organize the masses, and develop new social, political, and economic institutions. Mao was at the peak of his creativity, ingeniously reconciling the universalist Marxist-Leninist principles with the particularist demand of Chinese conditions and the Chinese revolutionary experience. Hence, the Yen-an experience was of seminal importance to the development of Chinese Communism; in it was planted the seed of Mao's ultimate success.

The heart of the Yen-an Way was the perfection of the mass line and the sharpening of revolutionary nationalism in the countryside, which became the twin pillars of Maoism.¹⁴ To be sure, these ideas were first developed during the Kiangsi period,¹⁵ but they were precluded from full expression by repeated Nationalist attacks from without and by incessant party squabbles from within. The Moscow-trained Chinese Communists such as Li Li-san, Wang Ming, and Po Ku opposed Mao's policies and advocated the urban-oriented Soviet model of proletarian revolution. Now, at Yen-an, freed from external attack and internal dissension, Mao was able to carry out his own strategy and develop his own work style that was to become the benchmark of Chinese Communism.

In accordance with his mass line approach, Mao vigorously addressed himself to the needs of the peasants, carried out land reform and rent reduction programs, and brought the peasants into full participation in the political, economic, and military organizations in the base areas. Indeed, the poverty of Shensi and the border areas stimulated rather than impeded the birth of "peasant radicalism,"¹⁶ and the Japanese war gave new impetus to revolutionary nationalism. The Yen-an period was therefore one of growth and preparation for the ultimate seizure of power.

To activate the inexperienced peasantry, Mao created the poor-peasant corps and the farm labor-union under the *hsiang* level and encouraged them to participate actively in land confiscation and redistribution move-

14. James P. Harrison, *The Long March to Power* (New York, 1972), 514.

15. Ilpyong J. Kim, *The Politics of Chinese Communism: Kiangsi under the Soviets* (Berkeley, 1973); "Mass Mobilization Policies and Techniques Developed in the Period of the Chinese Soviet Republic," in A. Doak Barnett (ed.), *Chinese Communist Politics in Action* (New York, 1969), 78-98.

16. Mark Selden, *The Yen-an Way in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), 28, 90, 100.

ments. The direct involvement of the peasantry in the process of mass sociopolitical mobilization against the endemic problems of rural poverty and oppression not only sharpened their class consciousness but also forced them to shed their traditional timidity. Moreover, during 1937-41 all peasants who were sixteen or older were drawn into the mainstream of political activities in the border areas through the institution of universal, direct, and equal suffrage by secret ballot. Mao believed that "all men could transcend the limitations of class, experience, and ideology to act creatively in building a new China."¹⁷ He also formulated the "Three-thirds system" (*San-san chih*), which limited party-member participation in government and councils of the base areas to one-third, leaving the other two-thirds to progressive leftists and independents. On the surface at least, these United Front policies gave the border areas a democratic overtone.

CAMPAIGNS TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY. On the basis of cooperative and participatory principles, six major campaigns were launched during the Yen-an period; in them we find the central features of many of Mao's later policies:

1. Adoption of the principle of "crack troops and simple administration" (*ching-ping chien-cheng*) to reduce army and government bureaucracy.
2. Introduction of the "To the Village" (*Hsia-hsiang*) campaign to mingle intellectuals and party cadres with workers and peasants.
3. Reduction of rent and interest in areas where there was no land reform by 25 to 40 percent so that they would not exceed one-third of the total yield of the land.
4. Introduction of the mutual-aid cooperative movement to reorganize the village economy.
5. Introduction of an "organizational economy" to make every organization and cadre participate in managerial as well as manual work.
6. A new education movement for social, economic, and cultural transformation of the rural society.¹⁸

Thus, the mass line approach to politics, economics, war, and revolution forged a close link between the leaders and the people, and formed the core of the Yen-an experience.

During the Yen-an period, Mao devoted much of his time to thinking,

17. *Ibid.*, 210.

18. *Ibid.*, 210-11, 212-74; Jerome Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (London, 1965), 204.

theorizing, and writing on the problems confronting the party and the country and on the strategy of laying the foundation for ultimate victory. Extremely resourceful in his forties, he worked 13 or 14 hours a day, frequently into the small hours of the morning. It was a most productive period in his life. Once in 1938 he worked almost without interruption for nine days and nights to complete an essay, *On the Protracted War*, and at the end of his work was physically exhausted. Many other important works came from his pen during this period: *Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War* (December 1936), *Urgent Tasks of the Chinese Revolution since the Formation of the KMT-CCP United Front* (September 1937), *Interview with James Bertram* (October 1937), *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War against Japan* (May 1938), *On Protracted War* (May 1938), and *Problems of War and Strategy* (November 1938). In about two years he had written 200 pages on strategy, 165 pages on politics, and 55 pages on philosophy.¹⁹ He also authored many other famous works including: *On the New Democracy* (January 1940), *Rectifying the Party's Style of Work* (February 1942), *Opposed Stereotyped Party Writing* (February 1942), *On Coalition Government* (April 1945), and *On the Chungking Negotiations* (October 1945). In July 1949 he wrote another major work: *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship*.

The existence of "another China" with its own territory, government, disciplined party and army, and prominent leadership attracted the curiosity of foreigners who wanted to see for themselves how different this separate political entity was from the KMT region. As a result a number of foreign visitors entered the Communist areas and wrote reports about their discoveries.

FOREIGN OBSERVERS. In July 1936 Edgar Snow broke the KMT news blockade and entered the Communist area. He had previously described Chinese Communism as a form of "Agrarian Communism," but after visiting Yen-an and talking with Mao he promoted the Chinese Communists to the status of dynamic Marxist revolutionaries. Snow contested the idea that the CCP was simply a subservient puppet of Moscow and

19. Jerome Ch'en, 209, 216-17. Ch'en's calculation of the volume of Mao's writings during this period is underestimated, for he did not include Mao's many other works such as: *The Tasks of the Chinese Communist Party in the Period of Resistance to Japan* (May 1937); *On Practice: On the Relations between Knowledge and Practice, between Knowing and Doing* (July 1937); *On Contradiction* (August 1937); *The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War* (October 1938); *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party* (December 1939), and a host of miscellaneous writings. See Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works* (Peking, 1967), Vols. I and II.

The CCP prior to the Yanan Era (before 1935)

- ◇ The CCP won lower class support: By 1927 there were 58,000 CCP members, many of them recruited from the factory workers of China's eastern cities, like Shanghai. Mao was in charge of the Peasant Institute in Guangdong; by 1927, 2 million peasants had joined the Peasant Associations set up by the CCP in Guangdong and Hunan.
- ◇ The White Terror of 1927 was a huge blow to the CCP but the survivors established the Jiangxi Soviet and built support through land reform. Until 1931, land reform was moderate, with only the richest or most exploitative landlords having their land confiscated. However, from 1931 a more extreme policy meant that even richer peasants had land confiscated.
- ◇ The CCP leadership showed great resilience in surviving the White Terror, the various GMD extermination campaigns against the Jiangxi Soviet and the Long March (1934-5). The Long March, an epic journey of nearly 7000 miles, provided the CCP with an inspiring legend to draw on (particularly the crossing of the Luding Bridge) and use for propaganda purposes. After 1927, and again after 1935, the CCP had to rebuild its membership.
- ◇ By 1935 the CCP had begun to acquire strong leadership in the person of Mao Zedong, although his control over the party was far from complete at this stage. Prior to 1935, there had been bitter divisions over strategy and personal rivalries too. Mao had favoured more moderate land reform, in which landlords were permitted to retain some land, an emphasis on building peasant support and a more defensive response to GMD attacks on Jiangxi. Other CCP leaders, notably the 28 Bolsheviks, who had returned from training in the USSR, argued for more extreme land reform, an emphasis on winning urban working class support and a more aggressive strategy to deal with GMD attacks on the Jiangxi Soviet. Wang Ming and Li Lisan were two of Mao's main rivals for the leadership. Mao was ruthless in dealing with rivals, as he demonstrated in the Futian Incident (December 1930-January 1931), when thousands of CCP members were tortured or executed, allegedly because they were GMD agents but in fact because they supported Mao's rivals. Mao was eventually chosen as CCP Chairman in January 1935 at the Zunyi conference during the Long March.

Q. What strengths did the CCP display during the Yanan Era (1935-46)?

The factors outlined below laid the foundations for CCP success in the Civil War of 1946-49; the CCP were to emerge from the Japanese War more united, with an enlarged army, wider support and control over a much greater area than previously.

- ◇ The CCP united under Mao. It was at Yanan that Mao asserted his dominance over the CCP, by a combination of intellectual brilliance and ruthlessness. The Rectification of Conduct Campaign of 1942 established Mao's ideas as official CCP ideology. 'Rectification' became a regular feature within the CCP; party members had to scrutinise their behaviour and engage in self-criticism and criticism of each other, in order to ensure they remained faithful to the ideals of the party. Mao also used rectification to maintain his own ascendancy over the party. A

leadership cult began to develop from 1943; CCP ideology was referred to as 'Mao Zedong Thought'.

- ◇ Under Mao, the CCP adapted Marxism to Chinese conditions, *simplifying* it, e.g. it departed from orthodox Marxism in that the CCP came to see the peasantry as the main revolutionary class. This view had been developed by Mao from the late 1920s and had been opposed by many of the CCP's leaders, particularly the so-called 28 Bolsheviks, during the period prior to its relocation to Yanan.
- ◇ The CCP broadened its support base by appealing beyond the peasantry to other classes. At the Wayaobu Conference (December 1935), the Party approved Mao's policy of allowing even bourgeoisie and gentry into the CCP. In 1940 Mao wrote *On New Democracy* (1940), in which he appealed for an alliance of four revolutionary classes (national bourgeoisie, petite bourgeoisie, peasants, industrial workers) to defeat the Japanese and landlordism. During this period the CCP pursued a moderate land policy, insisting on rent reductions but only expropriating landlords who had collaborated with the Japanese.

Year	CCP membership
1937	40,000
1945	1.2 million

- ◇ The CCP won peasant support, through land and educational reforms; also the CCP helped the peasants organise their own associations. Mao advocated the *Mass Line*: CCP officials were to live among the peasants and learn from them. From 1940 the CCP followed the '*three-thirds policy*', which meant CCP members only occupied a maximum of one third of local posts; in 1941 only 25% of government officials in the Yanan area were CCP members.
- ◇ The CCP had the opportunity to expand massively the area under its control because the Japanese drove the GMD southwards but were too thinly spread out to prevent the CCP controlling much of the countryside in northern China. By the end of the Japanese War, the CCP controlled an area occupied by about 90 million Chinese.
- ◇ The Red Army based at Shaanxi, led by Zhu De and Peng Dehuai, was much better disciplined than the GMD forces. Mao's *Eight Rules of Conduct* laid the basis for good relations with the peasants. As well as combating the Japanese, the Red Army had important non-fighting roles in distributing propaganda and helping to organise Peasant Associations.

Year	Red Army membership
1936	22,000
1945	900,00

- ◇ The CCP established stronger nationalist credentials than the GMD. The CCP's decision in December 1936 to allow Chiang's release (during

How did Mao Zedong become the leader of the Chinese Communist Party?

Mao's rise to party leadership came in two stages. The success of his revolutionary strategy underpinned and secured the growth of his political power. The victory of the CCP in the civil war 1946-9 gave the final confirmation of the correctness of Mao's strategies.

Stage 1 : ZUNYI : January 1935

Predominance in Military Strategy

The Politburo debated the military strategy that the Red Army had used in the light of the failures that had led to the Long March. The outcome was that Mao's military strategy was approved over that of Otto Braun, Bo Gu and Zhou Enlai. The blame for the failures of the past was placed on the shoulders of Braun and Bo Gu. Zhou Enlai manoeuvred himself alongside Mao, after making admissions of error. However in the months that followed Zunyi Mao's supporters, such as Zhang Wentian & Zhu De were promoted to key positions of political and military leadership, which greatly reduced Zhou Enlai's operational control.

After Zunyi the CCP followed Mao's political & military strategies. However Mao had not established a secure political leadership over the CCP. His rivals maintained their positions in the party, and continued to influence policies, especially in relation to the formation and operation of the Second United Front.

<p>Stage 2 : The YANAN RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN 1941-1945</p> <p>Philip Short in his book "Mao; A Life" published in 1999 argues that it was this process that secured Mao's leadership of the CCP. He argues that it put Mao "beyond institutional control". By 1945 Mao was the Chairman of the CCP and had "achieved the fusion of power, ideology, and charisma he had been seeking since Zunyi." He was "no longer the first amongst equals [but] the man who decided all."</p>	<p>Ideological & Political Predominance</p> <p>The other two were Maoists - Liu Shaoqi and Ren Bishi. Mao was given ultimate executive power on the Secretariate in the event of a lack of consensus. Short argues that Mao had thus "achieved a status in his own party that no Communist Leader had ever had before."</p> <p>These changes placed Mao in complete control of party policy. Other views were excluded from the new central executive secretariate.</p> <p>3) A Cult of Personality 1937 to 1945 : Increasingly Mao was represented as the centre of a cult of personality in Yanan. His picture became ubiquitous, some times presented in imagery that echoed the portrayal of Emperors. The way he was described in official statements became increasingly sychophantic, and phrases appeared that also reflected the old Imperial style. Mao Zedong Thought became institutionalised as the party's orthodoxy with the publication and universal distribution of his Selected Works. The East is Red became the anthem of the revolution which described Mao as "the Peoples' Great Saviour".</p> <p>4) Party History 1945 : Mao achieved domination over the interpretation of the Party's past in his Official Party History. This portrayed Mao's struggle against his rivals as a single struggle of right against wrong. It laid the foundation of the myth of Maoist infallibility.</p> <p>5) Political Consolidation April 1945 : Mao was appointed Chairman of the Party - with all the other top jobs held by Maoists, with the exception of Zhou Enlai. Old enemies - Wang Ming and Bo Gu - were not removed from the Central Committee</p>
<p>Ideological & Political Predominance</p>	<p>Ideological & Political Predominance</p> <p>1) Party Purges Sept 1941 - Dec 1943 : The Politburo accepted Mao's attack on the central ideological pillars of the orthodox communist faction leaders. Mao's declared aim was to "rectify mistaken ideas, not the people who held them". Mao rejected their dogmatism, and put in its place his own more pragmatic approach to the class war. He rejected their intellectualism and bookishness; and in its place he put the capacity to solve practical problems. Finally he rejected the reliance on foreign models in place of basing all policies on China's needs.</p> <p>The other leaders all made self criticisms and lined up behind Mao (except Wang Ming and Bo Gu). No action was taken against these senior figures. They accepted the launching of ideological self-criticism down through the rank and file of the party. This lasted to the end of 1943. Short argues that " the intellectual centre of gravity shifted [from] Moscow [to] Yanan."</p> <p>The self criticisms in the rank and file led to significant levels of purging. Kang Sheng was in charge of the process, which lasted until the end of 1943. There were show trials (the key one was of writer Wang Shiwei) and many jail sentences. The purge developed a momentum of its own, and accusations were made against many about anti-party activities. Short argues that there were many suicides, and that 40,000 party members were expelled from the party. He also argues that CCP internal enquiries at the end of 1943 suggested that 90% of the victims had been innocent of all charges against them. However the purge had secured Mao's position through terror and the destruction of the support systems of his rivals, even though the rivals themselves remained in positions of influence.</p> <p>2) Political Organization Restructuring March 1943 : Mao was appointed Chairman of the Politburo, and a secretariate of three was set up to be the main permanent executive body of the party.</p>

For most of the period from 1942 to 1976, the official ideology of the CCP was defined in terms of 'Mao Zedong Thought'. Prior to 1942, there were bitter and sometimes violent ideological struggles within the CCP; Mao's opponents, particularly the 'Twenty-Eight Bolsheviks', wanted to prepare for a revolution of the industrial proletariat and they dominated the Party until the early 1930s. It was during the early 1940s that Mao established ideological leadership of the Party.

In certain respects, Mao was an orthodox Marxist in that he believed in class struggle, collective ownership of the means of production, and the dictatorship of the proletariat (working class). However, Mao was also highly influenced by Chinese history and culture and adapted Marx's ideas to Chinese conditions. Mao "sinified" Marxism; in other words he produced a Chinese version.

Some key components of Mao Zedong Thought

<p>The peasants as a revolutionary class</p>	<p>Marx had written off the peasantry as incapable of revolutionary consciousness and the Russian Communist Party affirmed Marx's emphasis on the industrial proletariat as the principal revolutionary class. In the first half of the 20th century China had undergone only limited industrialisation and Mao, from the late 1920s, began to argue that the peasant masses could be used to overthrow feudalism and capitalism and then go on to create a socialist society.</p>
<p>Belief in a two stage revolution</p>	<p>In 1940 Mao published <i>On New Democracy</i> in which he argued that socialism in China would be created as the result of a two-stage revolution; the first revolution would be bourgeois-democratic and the second socialist. In the "New Democratic" phase, the revolution would begin to be led, not by the bourgeoisie alone (as in Marx's writings), but by a "joint revolutionary-democratic dictatorship" of four revolutionary classes: the proletariat, the peasants, the "national" bourgeoisie (those capitalists who had not collaborated with the Japanese, nor been too exploitative of the poor) and the petite bourgeoisie (shopkeepers, intellectuals). During the National Democratic Revolution, private property would be retained. Later a second, socialist revolution would see property and economic resources collectivised or nationalised. In practice, Mao began to implement this second stage during the early-mid 1950s.</p>
<p>The Mass Line</p>	<p>Mao developed the idea that the Party's role vis-à-vis the masses was to identify what the masses' true</p>

interests were, interpret them in the light of Marxist principles, and, then communicate them back to the masses in a way they could understand. The idea of the 'Mass Line' involved developing close relations between the Communist Party and the people. During the Yanan period, CCP cadres were expected to live among the peasants so that they could learn about rural life and be in a better position to educate the peasants about Marxism.

After 1949, the Mass Line remained a central Maoist idea. This is illustrated by the regular recourse made by the CCP to mass mobilisation campaigns such as the Three and Five Antis (1951-52); Mao sought to involve the masses in campaigns to build socialism rather than simply sending out officials to impose socialist change on the masses. The way in which to a considerable extent the communes of the Great Leap Forward developed out of initiatives by local officials and peasant experimentation in 1958 reflects Mao's views on the interaction between the Party and the masses.

Mao believed that the in addition to the revolutions required to put the CCP into power and to establish a socialist economy, revolution should be a permanent or continuous feature of communist rule. He meant that the Party and people would need to have their outlooks and thought remoulded, corrected and inspected regularly in order to create and maintain a selfless, socialist culture. He developed the concept of "rectification" whilst at Yanan; it involved CCP officials engaging in self-criticism and criticism in order to ensure that they served the people selflessly and remained true to Marxist ideology. Mao also used his first "Rectification Campaign" (1942) and later ones in order to assert and maintain his own authority over the CCP as all cadres were required to study Mao's writings.

Mao in the 1950s and 1960s remained convinced that "rectification campaigns" were an essential device for ensuring that the CCP, and especially its officials, remained in touch with the masses and did not develop into a self-seeking elite, as had happened in the USSR. Both the Socialist Education Movement (1962) and the Cultural Revolution (1966) were forms of rectification designed to eliminate corruption and ensure the CCP remained faithful to their socialist ideals.

Worldwide Revolution

Up until 1971-72, Mao was committed to Trotsky's idea of worldwide communist revolution. Mao intervened in the Korean War in 1950 and provided aid to communist guerrilla movements in the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaya, Burma and Indonesia. However, in 1971 Mao departed from this principle by pursuing diplomatic relations with the USA.

between democratic means and Communist ends, and failed to see that the United Front policy was but a deferral, not the abandonment, of the fundamental principle of seizure of power and world revolution.²⁹

Chiang Kai-shek, as expected, denounced these reports as "unfair . . . biased."³⁰ Mao also rejected the notion that the Chinese Communists were not genuine Marxists. He made it clear to foreign interviewers that the CCP "was, is, and will ever be, faithful to Marxism-Leninism," and that the Chinese Communists were internationalists favoring the world Communist movement. Snow therefore reported that the CCP's reformist orientation was "only a very provisional affair" while its ultimate goal remained "a true and complete Socialist State of the Marxist-Leninist conception."³¹ Despite Mao's protestations and Snow's reporting, the image of Chinese Communists as "agrarian reformers" could not be removed from American minds.

The question of Russian connections with the Chinese Communists naturally interested foreign observers, but they found only one *Tass* correspondent in Shansi during 1937-38 and three Russians in Yen-an in the summer of 1944: two *Tass* correspondents and one surgeon, all there with the permission of the Nationalist government. Western visitors were satisfied that there was little evidence of Soviet aid to the Chinese Communists. Indeed, Mao told the CCP Seventh Congress in April 1945 that the Chinese system must be created in the light of Chinese history, just as the Russian system was created by Russian history.³²

THE DIXIE MISSION. The first American officer to enter the Communist area with the permission of Chiang Kai-shek was U.S. Marine Corps Captain Evans F. Carlson, a former intelligence officer in China during 1927-28 and 1933-35. He was sent shortly after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in July 1937 to observe Communist military operations. Sympathetically comparing Communist forces to the minutemen of the American Revolutionary War, he praised their "ethical indoctrination" which to him meant high political consciousness, moral conduct, and democratic camaraderie between officers and soldiers. Equally enthusiastic was his report of the close bond and "organic connection" between the army and the people: "the Eighth Route Army is like the fish and the people like the water."³³

29. *Ibid.*, 215-16, 227.

30. Jerome Ch'en, 242.

31. Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York, 1961), 188; Shewmaker, 249, 251, 255-56.

32. *Ibid.*, 231-32, 238.

33. *Ibid.*, 105, 194-95, 197.

In early 1943 John P. Davies, a political adviser to General Joseph Stilwell (next section), recommended the dispatch of an American Military Observers Mission to the Communist area, but this suggestion was not acted upon by Stilwell. Davies resubmitted his proposal on June 24, 1943, and on January 15, 1944, to Stilwell as well as to the Department of State; he pointed out that the CCP army was the most cohesive, disciplined, and aggressive anti-Japanese force in North China, and that it was there that the future Soviet entry into the war would most likely take place. An American mission to Yen-an could collect military intelligence, determine Soviet intentions, and perhaps neutralize Russian influence on the Chinese Communists.³⁴ Though attracted to this proposal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, due to Chiang's opposition, let the matter drop. Another initiative was made by Foreign Service Officer John S. Service who reported that the CCP was the most dynamic force in China under the impact of World War II and suggested that Washington use it as a lever against Soviet influence in China and East Asia. Finally, on June 23, 1944, Roosevelt secured the consent of Chiang to send a military observer mission to Yen-an.³⁵

The first American contingent arrived in the Communist capital on July 22 and the second on August 7. This group was known as the Dixie Mission, and it consisted of 18 members under the command of Colonel David D. Barrett, who had been a Chinese language officer and a military attaché in Peking. The main objectives of the mission were to become "informed about the people," "to determine their future war potential" if equipped by American arms, and to evaluate the "potential contribution of [the] Communists to the war effort."³⁶

Barrett found that the "training methods [of the Chinese Communists] were largely formalized and by our standards of little value." He concluded that "they were excellent guerrilla fighters, but as far as large-scale operations were concerned . . . they were never able to stand toe-to-toe and slug it out with a strong Japanese force." However, with American training and equipment they could engage in regular operations against the Japanese.³⁷

The Communist leaders received the Dixie Mission cordially, and by the end of August 1944 Service had his famous and long-suppressed interview with Chairman Mao. Mao stated that he wished to avoid civil war,

34. David D. Barrett, *Dixie Mission: The United States Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944* (Berkeley, 1970), 22-23.

35. *Ibid.*, 26-27.

36. *Ibid.*, 13, 27-28.

37. *Ibid.*, 34, 41, 91.

but that only the Americans could intervene to compel Chiang to accept a compromise. Such intervention was critical because without American aid the KMT could not suppress the CCP forcibly. Civil war was "inevitable but not quite certain," but ultimately for the Americans to decide. In any event, Mao added, the Americans alone would have to liberate China from Japan, and at that point the aid of his armies would be crucial. The impact of the war would limit Soviet help, both militarily and in the postwar period.³⁸ Washington read and ignored Service's accounts. It continued to sustain Chiang as the head of the legal government of China while hoping that he would reform his regime in order to outflank the Communists. However, if possible, the United States wished to incorporate Communist forces into the war against Japan.

Davies and Service were convinced that Chiang was not going to wipe out the Communists and that quite possibly the reverse might happen unless the KMT undertook drastic reforms. At the beginning of November 1944 Davies, who had replaced Service in Yen-an, came to the conclusion that "the Communists are in China to stay. And China's destiny is not Chiang's but theirs."³⁹ Davies and Service now believed that the Communists' aid was much more significant than that of the Nationalists. They considered every option, including separating the Communists from the Russians as much as possible on the basis of their Chinese nationalism. However, in the end, they knew that Chiang would not reform his regime, and they were afraid that the Americans might cut him off. Davies advised Washington that "we should not now abandon Chiang Kai-shek. To do so at this juncture would be to lose more than we could gain."⁴⁰

In this ambiguous context the Americans in China considered covert relations with the Communists, despite Chiang's well-known opposition. The Army Mission in Yen-an called the Communists' area "a different country," and Yen-an "the most modern place in China." The Americans repeatedly noted Communist nationalism and pragmatism, and during the fall of 1944 predicted the very real possibility of their ultimate triumph. Even Roosevelt's special emissary to China, Patrick Hurley, known for his pro-Nationalist stand, remarked after a visit to Yen-an in November 1944 that the Communists were "the only real democrats in China" and that they were "not in fact Communists; they are striving for

38. John S. Service, *The Amerasia Papers: Some Problems in the History of U.S.-China Relations* (Berkeley, 1971), 172-73.

39. *Ibid.*, 162.

40. *United States Relations with China: With Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949* (Washington, D.C., 1949), 574.

democratic principles." Ambassador Clarence Gauss also believed that it was likely that they would eventually win, and favored "pulling the plug and allowing the show [the Nationalist Government] to go down the drain."⁴¹

It was in this setting that some of General Albert C. Wedemeyer's staff, in conjunction with the O.S.S., decided to propose to the Communists a plan to arm 25,000 guerrillas and many more militia. Special American units would train and lead attacks on special points to be selected by Wedemeyer, and the entire Communist army would cooperate with him. However, the United States Naval Intelligence, the most conservative of American intelligence groups in China and affiliated with the Nationalist secret police, broke the news to Chiang. Both Wedemeyer and Hurley claimed ignorance of the exploration, placing the blame on Barrett, who was subsequently denied promotion to brigadier general and forced to suffer many other humiliations.⁴²

The Yen-an experience was vitally important in the history of Chinese Communism. Internally, it instituted a new social and political system based on the mass line, while Mao creatively laid the theoretical foundation of his revolutionary movement. Externally, it attracted the presence of an American military mission, Foreign Service officers, the visit of the American presidential emissary, and a flow of foreign reporters. For all intents and purposes, it had achieved a status of quasi-international recognition. By 1945 Yen-an was in control of 18 base areas, with a total of one million square kilometers of land and nearly 100 million people. It had almost a million party members, and an equal number of armed forces. Mao had in fact created another China in competition with the Nationalist government for the supreme power of the Chinese state. In the view of a noted historian, no policy of Mao's was more responsible for his ultimate success than "that of the second United Front in the context of the Resistance War."⁴³

Wartime Diplomacy and U.S. Involvement in China

From the outbreak of war in July 1937 to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, China fought alone. While it received sym-

41. Herbert Feis, *The China Tangle* (Princeton, 1953), 222; U.S. Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, *Morgenthau Diary: China* (89th Congress First Session) (Washington, D.C., 1965), 1380, 1381, 1247-48, 1304-08, 1318-21.

42. Charles Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Time Runs Out in CBI* (Washington, D.C., 1959), 73-76, 250-54; Barrett, 91-92.

43. Jerome Ch'en, 213, 255.