

# **CHINA: LIBERATION AND TRANSFORMATION 1942–1962**

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Bill Brugger

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:  
CHINA UNDER MAO



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Volume 3

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TRANSFORMATION 1942–1962

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**BILL BRUGGER**

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**Bill Brugger**



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Once again, I can only reiterate that it would be presumptuous for me to claim responsibility for a work which contains so much plagiarism. I must, however, carry the burden for the many errors which remain. Once again, I can only express adherence to the Chinese slogan 'collective initiative and individual responsibility'.

Bill Brugger

*The Flinders University of South Australia*  
December 1979



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## ABBREVIATIONS

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ACFL	All China Federation of Labour (later translated as ACFTU)
ACFTU	All China Federation of Trade Unions
BR	<i>Beijing Review</i> (formerly <i>Peking Review</i> )
CB	<i>Current Background</i>
CC	Central Committee
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CQ	<i>The China Quarterly</i>
ECMM	<i>Extracts from China Mainland Magazines</i>
FBIS	<i>Foreign Broadcast Information Service</i>
FEER	<i>Far Eastern Economic Review</i>
FLN	Front de la Libération Nationale
GAC	Government Administration Council
GMRB	<i>Guangming Ribao</i>
GNP	Gross National Product
JPRS	<i>Joint Publications Research Service</i>
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCNA	New China (Xinhua) News Agency
NEP	New Economic Policy
NPAD	National Programme for Agricultural Development
NPC	National People's Congress
PFLP	Peking Foreign Languages Press
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PR	<i>Peking Review</i>
RMRB	<i>Renmin Ribao</i>
SC	State Council
SCMM	<i>Selections from China Mainland Magazines</i>
SCMP	<i>Survey of China Mainland Press</i>
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SW	<i>Selected Works</i>
SWB	<i>Summary of World Broadcasts</i> (British Broadcasting Corporation) Pt 3 <i>The Far East</i>
UN	United Nations
URI	Union Research Institute
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics



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## PREFACE

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The first edition of *Contemporary China* was written in 1974 and revised for publication in 1975. I concluded the book by noting that it would soon be out of date. Sure enough, it was—several months before it was published. By the time the book appeared, Mao Zedong was dead, the 'Gang of Four' had been arrested and China's leaders were engaged in a total reassessment of developmental strategy. That reassessment was to lead to a rewriting of much of Chinese history since 1949. By 1979, new evidence had been produced to support the reversal of the official verdicts on a whole series of historical incidents. Statistics had been released, moreover, to show that many of the achievements of the past had not been so great as many people had supposed. Revising one's conclusions is always painful. In this case, it was extremely difficult, since some of the new official documents omitted key passages in the original versions which had become available through Red Guard sources in the Cultural Revolution. In deciding which version to choose, one could not fail to develop a heightened scepticism concerning both the old and the new evidence. Surely no one, familiar with the criticism of von Ranke, would be contented by Chinese assurances that, this time, they were writing correct factual history. Scepticism towards one's evidence, of course, is a quality which should always characterise the scholar, but, to be honest, if one carried the rules of evidence to the optimum, scarcely anything about China would have been written in the West.

The major characteristic of the new official writing on contemporary Chinese history is a complete reversal in the assessment of the roles of the major protagonists in past debates. Mao Zedong has, to some extent, been spared this treatment, though the late chairman's reputation has not remained untarnished. Many of the other 'heroes' of pre-1976 China are, however, now portrayed as villains. Such an inversion of roles has, it seems, delighted many Western commentators who have been willing to accept the current version of the 'two-line struggle'. But I, who was somewhat too willing to accept the old version of the 'two-line struggle', have now developed a more cautious approach. I have, therefore, revised many of the views about 'two-line struggle' which appeared in the first edition of this book. No longer will the reader find consistent radicals pitted against diehard conservatives and pure 'ultra-leftists'. Such,



indeed, was not my original intention in the first edition but, quite clearly, the book was sometimes read in that spirit. This is not to say, however, that I will eschew the terms 'conservative' and 'radical'. The category 'radical' will be used to signify a person who wishes to accelerate the process of social change, whilst a conservative is one who places much greater importance on maintaining the economy in a state of balance. But when I use these terms, I shall attempt to indicate on which issue a particular leader might have been radical, and on which conservative. It will be noted, therefore, that sometimes Mao and other leaders adopted a conservative position and at other times they adopted a radical position.

Though I have modified considerably the 'two-line struggle' conception of Chinese politics in my treatment of the period up to 1962, the approach is still based on a depiction of conflict. The model of administration, worked out by the Communist Party in the revolutionary base areas, centred on Yan'an, was profoundly different from that copied from the Soviet Union in the 1950s and, at times, there was conflict between adherents to these two approaches. Once the Soviet model was abandoned, in the mid-1950s, there was conflict also between an approach which developed into the Great Leap Forward and one which resembled more the economic reforms practised in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But with one or two notable exceptions, this conflict did not result in an irreconcilable split within the senior leadership of the Party.

But this book is not only about the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. At lower levels, throughout the period covered, there was much conflict and much antagonism, not all of which might be seen according to the view of class struggle put forward by the Communist Party. Indeed, by 1958, just to criticise the Great Leap Forward was enough for one to be branded a 'rightist'. To be sure, the Party considered such behaviour to be a manifestation of class position, but classes themselves were often seen purely in behavioural terms. Such, I will suggest, was to lead to dissatisfaction, and one major theme of this volume will be Mao Zedong's attempt to reconceptualise the nature of class formation and class struggle in socialist society. By 1962, Mao had reached a new position. Thus, that date is a convenient cut off point for the first volume. I will, therefore, take quite seriously the way the Chinese Communist Party, as a Marxist organisation, saw the nature of socialist transition—how it moved from what I shall call the Stalinist positive model of socialism, through what was known as 'uninterrupted revolution' (*buduan geming*) to what was eventually described as Mao's theory of 'continuous revolution' (*jixu geming*). Such a transition was, however, not to be made without much theoretical confusion.

Nevertheless, this book is not a work of political theory. It is an introductory textbook with quite modest aims. It offers no fundamentally new

insight into the dynamics of Chinese politics, nor any new information based on a study of primary sources. Primary sources have, of course, been used but the bulk of the material is drawn from secondary sources. But that is what a textbook should do. Because it is a textbook, I do not anticipate that it will make good bedside reading. Its primary purpose is to provide a source of reference for an introductory course in politics or history. It is, thus, not meant to be a gripping story to be devoured at one sitting. But the material it uses is profoundly exciting and the book's aim will be achieved if it persuades students to turn to some of the secondary sources on which it is based. Since the appearance of the first edition, a huge amount of secondary literature on China has been produced. This, as much as the release of primary material, has caused me to modify my position.

In the new edition I have not only revised my views on 'two-line struggle' but have also chosen to play down the cycles of radicalisation and consolidation which loomed large in the original text. In the first edition, each chapter constituted a discrete cycle. This made for very large and indigestible chapters and experience of using the book for teaching purposes over three years has led me to the view that smaller chapters are preferable. What appeared as the first five cycles in that edition, now appears as the ten chapters of this volume. When I say I have played down the notion of cycles, however, it does not mean that I have abandoned them and I have attempted a defence of this categorisation in the conclusion. The point is, however, that the depiction of cycles raised more theoretical questions than it was proper for an introductory textbook to explore. Secondly, as one of my perceptive reviewers pointed out, the notion of cycles made a lot of sense in the period up to 1962 but not much sense thereafter.<sup>1</sup> Once I accepted that criticism, it seemed pointless to organise the first volume in cycles and not the second.

The utility of this textbook to the undergraduate student will depend upon the academic tradition and intellectual milieu in which he finds himself. I anticipate that those who will be most at home with my approach will be political scientists or sociologists. A student brought up in the world of classical sinology will probably find it alien, for the stress is on change rather than continuity. Those who seek modern *gurus* will perhaps be affronted by my suggestion that Mao did not foresee the whole course of Chinese history. Those whose *guru* is Leon Trotsky will be annoyed that, in my view, Mao was not in the least like Stalin. Those who adhere consistently to the current Chinese line will be annoyed that I have one or two good things to say about the Great Leap Forward and one or two bad things to say about 'market socialism'.

No doubt this book will also soon be out of date. But what will continue to be relevant are the lessons learned in China about issues at the core of the Marxist project—about 'base' and 'superstructure', 'relations

of production' and 'forces of production'; or, if one doesn't like Marxist terminology, about that Marxian contradiction which is understandable from any perspective—the contradiction between freedom and necessity.

## NOTES

1. Addis, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 April 1977, p. 407.

## INTRODUCTION

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There was a time when most writing on contemporary China began with the statement that China had enjoyed a degree of social and political continuity for two millennia and that such continuity was unparalleled. We now know enough about the process of development to beware of using the residual category of 'traditional society' and indulging in the ahistorical assumption that basic features of a society had not been subject to radical change. In the two millennia that precede our century, China had experienced many changes in the system of land tenure, had at times been politically unified and at others fragmented, had for periods experienced a level of scientific and technological sophistication far in advance of the West and had been the object of both the praise and vilification of foreign observers.

### *Feudal Society*

Change within China during the last three decades has been away from a society which the Chinese Communist Party describes as 'feudal' (*fengjian de*). Those Western historians who see feudalism essentially as a phenomenon that either precedes or follows a bureaucratic empire and in which land ownership is based upon a tradition of military service would disagree with the use of this term. They would assert that the real 'feudal' period in Chinese history occurred before the second century BC when a number of military states vied with each other for power, in much the same way as in medieval Europe. These states were to be replaced by the empire of Qin, from which the English name 'China' is derived. Nowadays, however, when Chinese historians used the word 'feudal', all they mean is a social system based upon the primacy of landownership, which applies to the warring states, the Qin empire and, for that matter, the following two millennia.

Whether properly classified as 'feudal' or not, early-twentieth-century China was governed by a disintegrating traditional bureaucracy. In its heyday, the Chinese bureaucracy had constituted an élite of educated amateurs dedicated not to expertise but to virtuous models of the past. They had been recruited by an elaborate examination system<sup>1</sup> consisting of four degrees, for which some candidates might study for the greater

part of their lives. The system had been abolished at the beginning of the twentieth century but the values which it enshrined were remarkably persistent and, in many places, local Confucian 'mandarins' remained in power until the 1940s.

Confucian philosophy meant different things to different social groups and had been subject to repeated change since the time of the Sage (sixth century BC). In its ideological form, however (that is in the form which legitimised the rule of a landed élite), Confucianism was a highly static value system. It reduced human behaviour to moral determinants. Social turmoil or prosperity was seen as due to the moral qualities of individuals and groups rather than material conditions. Indeed, in its extreme form, natural calamities such as flood or drought were seen as due to human wickedness. The *moral* was considered more important not only than the material but also than the *intellectual*. In short, it was better to be 'good' than 'knowledgeable'. Wisdom was not the knowledge of necessity nor the overcoming of necessity but the knowledge of what was prescribed by the Confucian classics which harked back to a 'golden age'.

The normative model was one of 'Great Harmony' (*Datong*) rather than struggle. In contemporary social science jargon, what was aimed at was not a mode of conflict resolution nor conflict stimulation but of *conflict avoidance*. Since the laws which governed Nature were essentially the same as the laws which governed men, men should be in harmony not only with themselves but with Nature.

Within the Confucian scheme, great stress was placed on education and the creation of 'superior men' (*jünzi*) who labour with their minds rather than their hands. This did not mean that the system was geared to the creation of individualistic supermen, for the 'superior man' was one who realised the continuity of the Confucian tradition and subordinated himself to his peers. Freedom consisted in the subordination of the self to the community of good men and to Nature. Indeed, when the word 'liberty' was translated into Chinese, it was associated with licence, for the Western negative concept of liberty was freedom *from* rather than freedom *to*. In theory, the Chinese positive conception of freedom applied to all men, though in practice it applied to those 'superior men' who, through education, had reached élite status.

One's adherence to the moral precepts of Confucianism was evaluated according to outward behaviour. In terms made popular by Riesman,<sup>2</sup> one measured an individual's moral commitment and moral rectitude not in terms of his *inner direction* (to what extent he had internalised the prescriptions of the classics) nor in terms of *other direction* (to what extent his public image corresponded to current values) but in terms of *tradition direction* (to what extent his conduct measured up to his worthy ancestors). In this kind of situation, we can talk of society being essentially a *shame* culture (where people did what they ought out of fear of

being shamed) rather than a *guilt* culture (where people did what they ought because they would feel guilty for not doing so). One result of this tradition direction was a considerable respect for age (made practicable by the scarcity of old men) and a gerontocratic organisation of society. Another result was an essentially patriarchal form of organisation which gave women inferior status.

The establishment of an educational hierarchy based on Confucian ideology led to a view of this world and the next (when Confucians bothered to think about such problems) as essentially organised according to the same kind of traditional bureaucracy which characterised Imperial China. As far as most peasants were concerned, however, the ideology of Confucianism took on more overtly religious forms such as ancestor worship mixed with animism (the vesting of spiritual qualities in inanimate objects). At different levels of society, Confucianism mixed also with Buddhism and Daoism (the fusion of the self with the indefinable 'way' and the total integration of the self with Nature). At times, these religions served to legitimise revolt, as did Islam amongst national minorities. On occasions, heterodox Christianity even took on a Confucian hue. It would be inappropriate to go into all these transmutations here. Suffice it to say that a society based on land developed a static ideology that stressed not challenging the status quo but was sufficiently elastic to accommodate a right of rebellion justified only by success.

Just as the values of the traditional bureaucracy changed little during the early twentieth century, rural social and political structure was also relatively static. The formal apparatus of Imperial government did not extend much below the level of the two thousand odd *xian* (or counties) into which China was divided. There existed, however, in places, the remains of a system of mutual responsibility known as *baojia*, in which each group of families was organised into a unit collectively responsible for the conduct of its members. There was also a level of local government lower than the *xian*, known as the *xiang*, at which most local dignitaries or 'gentry' (*shenshi* or *shidafu jieji*) operated. Here the 'gentry', who consisted of official aspirants or their landowning relatives, undertook the task of local administration and the settlement of disputes according to customary law.

It is probable that most *xiang* were coterminous with what anthropologist G.W. Skinner has referred to as 'standard marketing areas'.<sup>3</sup> Applying a version of the central place theory of Cristaller and Lösch to the Chinese situation, Skinner divided the whole country into a number of these standard marketing areas, each of which consisted of a group of villages (divisible usually by six) arranged around a market. By 1949, he calculated that there were some 58,000 standard marketing areas which themselves were grouped into intermediate marketing areas and which, in turn, were grouped into central marketing areas at *xian* level. There

has been much discussion as to the applicability of Skinner's theory and whether or not the marketing areas correspond to administrative divisions. It does seem reasonable to me, however, that the horizon of a peasant's existence would be bounded by the area in which he could sell his produce rather than simply by the natural village in which he lived.

Within the villages, grouped together as *xiang* or standard marketing areas, there existed a number of organisations which cut across class lines. An example of such an organisation would be the lineage (or clan—*zu*) based on real or imagined family ties and usually dominated by those of its members who had larger holdings of land. One should note here that the popular myth of a traditional Chinese society characterised by huge extended families living under one roof is largely untrue. Such families did, of course, exist, particularly among the wealthy, but in general the most common form of family organisation was the *famille souche* (or stem family) which consisted of husband and wife, their children and one or two grandparents,<sup>4</sup> forming a unit that would fit very neatly into clan or lineage.

Though the family was quite small (consisting on average of between four and six persons),<sup>5</sup> the clan or lineage was a significant organisation (particularly in South China), occasionally providing a primitive system of social security and a forum for the settlement of disputes.

Another organisation which cut across class lines, though this time characterised by *simulated* rather than real kinship, was the secret society which fed upon a long tradition of anti-bureaucratic dissent. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many secret societies were organised around resistance to the alien Qing (Manchu) dynasty and had as their professed aim the restoration of the last great Han dynasty—the Ming (overthrown in 1644). Whatever the original political aim, however, many of these societies became religious organisations in their own right, probably because a religious organisation is better able to survive periods of repression than a clearly political organisation. Like their Western counterparts, these quasi-religious bodies, based upon patterns of simulated kinship, easily turned to crime.

Though the bulk of the Chinese population still lived in the countryside in the early twentieth century, some 10 per cent did, in fact, live in towns. The development of the urban population in China had been markedly different from that in the West. There has been much discussion as to why China, which in the seventeenth century was technologically more advanced than the West, did not produce an indigenous urban bourgeoisie. One reason is quite clearly that Confucian ideology accorded the merchant a low status though this, I believe, is only a partial explanation. A more fruitful line of enquiry is to be found in the pattern of social mobility.

It has been suggested that the development of a bourgeoisie in the West and a quasi-bourgeoisie in Japan depended upon the fact that class structure was relatively closed. There were few mechanisms in England, for example, whereby merchant classes might be absorbed into the land-owning aristocracy and this led to the development of a bourgeoisie in independent towns with a consciousness of itself as a class for itself. Similarly in Japan, the Meiji Restoration of the 1870s depended upon the association of merchants and *samurai* which constituted two unassimilated middle-class groupings in a closed-class situation and which could do nothing but assert their independence. In both Britain and Japan, the absence of a violent revolution might be explained by the subsequent blending of aristocratic elements into the new bourgeoisie whereas, in France, non-assimilation resulted in violent upheaval.<sup>6</sup> In China, on the other hand, the class structure was more 'open'. By 'open', I do not mean that there was much upward peasant mobility, merely that the land-owning class could co-opt merchants. It was not until the impact of Western imperialism that anything like a bourgeoisie developed and such a bourgeoisie as existed in the twentieth century was shaped by that imperialism.

### *The Impact of Imperialism*

In the 80 or so years after the First Opium War in the 1840s, China was repeatedly humiliated by the Western powers. Over 90 'treaty ports' were established in which foreigners were immune from Chinese law. Spheres of influence were created which at one time looked like being turned into actual colonies, and Japan manifested direct colonial ambitions. A Maritime Customs Service under foreign control ensured the payment of foreign debts and the infamous indemnities wrung out of China at bayonet point. The Chinese tariff was fixed by treaty at a low 5 per cent, favourable to foreign business. Missionaries reached over half of the two thousand-odd *xian* and, regardless of individual goodwill and intentions, were often the instruments of foreign powers. Overall, a plethora of limitations on Chinese sovereignty caused resentment which was frequently explosive.

Though food production may have kept pace with population increase during the nineteenth century,<sup>7</sup> the various risings that took place at that time, which cannot be dissociated from foreign impact, produced areas of intense privation exacerbated by monetary inflation. By the early twentieth century, there had been a sharp increase in the numbers of poor peasants forced to mortgage their land to pay, to warlord régimes, taxes demanded often a decade in advance. The exactions of these warlords drove many peasants into the arms of bandits who found it fairly easy to



operate in the fragmented political structure. Though one cannot directly assign the phenomenon of warlordism to the foreigner, some warlord régimes were backed by foreign powers who were not sympathetic to the forces that sought national reunification.

As far as traditional handicraft industries were concerned, it is probably true that foreign-manufactured equivalents of Chinese handicraft goods did not seriously dent the domestic market overall but the effect of foreign competition on certain industries was dramatic. Between 1870 and 1910, for example, the handicraft spinning of cotton yarn declined by over 50 per cent and, although weaving held its own, it could only absorb one-tenth of the labour released from spinning. Though, by the early 1920s, some 78 per cent of factory output in China south of the Great Wall came from Chinese-owned factories, the bulk of the extractive and transport industries was under foreign control—a characteristic of early imperialist penetration. Foreign mines produced 99 per cent of the pig iron and 76 per cent of the coal mined by modern methods. In 1920, 83 per cent of the steamer tonnage cleared through Maritime Customs and 78 per cent of that on China's main waterway—the Chang-jiang (Yangtze)—was in foreign ships. Railway control was brought about through foreign loans and, according to one estimate, foreign capital controlled 93 per cent of China's railways in 1911.<sup>8</sup>

Such a situation, so different from Japan, is all the more remarkable in that China had embarked upon its own version of the Meiji Restoration at the same time as its eastern neighbour.<sup>9</sup> The modern industries of the 1860s were set up with little capital. Most of them were initiated by governors-general (in charge of one or several provinces) with funds milked from any available source (such as the local defence budget). Government officials placed in charge of them were expected to be major shareholders in their own right and to sell shares in the treaty ports to raise more capital.<sup>10</sup> It was thus impossible to separate the state from the private sector of the economy, especially when those industrial concerns established tenuous links with individual manufacturers organised along traditional lines. There was pressure throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century (especially from Beijing) to increase the size of private investment in state-run factories and this frequently led to a situation where foreigners became majority shareholders. Perhaps the paradigm case here was the Hanyeping Coal and Iron Company which commenced operation before the first Japanese iron and steel works (Yawata) and which, within half a century, had become completely a Japanese subsidiary.<sup>11</sup>

The government officials who were also major capitalists became known in the twentieth century as 'bureaucratic capitalists' (*guanliao zibenjia*) and depended for funds on a new class grouping which began to develop in the treaty ports—the comprador capitalists (*maiban zibenjia*),

oriented towards the economy of the overseas imperial countries. By the early twentieth century, however, there also began to develop a third group of domestic or 'national capitalists' (*minzu zibenjia*) whose links with foreign countries were much weaker.

The expansion of foreign-controlled industry contributed much to the growth of an industrial working class. Half a century after the establishment of state-run factories, there existed a small number of workers who had few ties with the countryside. But since the bulk of industrial expansion took place during the First World War boom, the majority of workers had arrived recently from the rural areas. They had been recruited by the notorious 'gang-boss system' (*batouzhi*).<sup>12</sup> Gang-bosses were not merely labour contractors but also remained as supervisors of their contractees after they had been signed on. They took a sizeable cut from workers' wages<sup>13</sup> and developed personal relationships with members of their gangs, expressed in terms of 'family' with all the obligations which that word implied in contemporary Chinese society. As one might expect, the labour gangs established links with the larger and more powerful organisations characterised by the same patterns of simulated kinship—the secret societies. In fact, some secret societies such as the 'Green Gang' (*Qingbang*) specialised in the field of labour control and provided major obstacles to the development of labour unions.

### *The Early Years of the Chinese Communist Party*<sup>14</sup>

The China in which the Communist Party was founded in 1921 was politically, economically, socially and ideologically fragmented. Warlord régimes vied for power. Modern capitalism coexisted with a 'feudal' agrarian economy. The wealth and social position of rural classes was subject to sudden and extreme variations as intermittent civil war took its toll. The working class was divided by complex patterns of simulated kinship and different types of capitalist continually swallowed each other up. Traditional Confucians mixed with Western and Japanese trained intellectuals. Buddhists and Daoists rubbed shoulders with Marxists and anarchists.

In such a confusing situation, there is little wonder that the ideological coherence of the young Party depended on the Comintern (Communist International) in Moscow whose advisers had helped set it up. By the early 1920s, the Comintern was convinced that the struggle in colonial and semi-colonial countries should be directed against imperialism and that Communist parties should unite with the 'national bourgeoisie'. It had some difficulty, however, in deciding who exactly in China represented the 'national bourgeoisie'. By 1923, the Guomindang (Nationalist

Party) of Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) seemed to fill the bill but the Soviet-Guomindang alliance and the United Front between Communist Party and Nationalists was to be short-lived.

Following the death of Sun Zhongshan in 1925, the Nationalists embarked upon a series of military campaigns against the warlords. These were to give China some kind of unity. During the course of the campaigns, the Communist Party switched from its earlier concentration on mobilising the industrial workers to developing a peasant movement and a radical programme of land reform. This, amongst other things, alienated the right wing of the Guomindang and resulted in the massacre of Communist Party members, first by the Nationalist commander, Jiang Jieshi (Chiang K'ai-shek) in Shanghai and then by the official Guomindang government in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

During the resulting Civil War (1927–37), the Communist Party went from crisis to crisis. In 1971, Mao Zedong referred to ten major crises in the fifty-year history of the Party.<sup>15</sup> Six of them occurred in this first Civil War. The first crisis (1927) was the direct outcome of Comintern advice to the Chinese Party to maintain an alliance with the Guomindang at all costs.<sup>16</sup> It resulted in the inauguration of a series of military engagements in the countryside in anticipation of decisive risings of the urban proletariat.<sup>17</sup> When the risings failed to develop, a second crisis occurred (1927) which produced a new leadership but continued much the same strategy.

By 1930, a guerrilla base area had been built up by Mao Zedong in Jiangxi province, defended by a Workers and Peasants Red Army. An attempt, however, to use this army to capture major cities resulted in military defeat, another change in leadership (the third crisis),<sup>18</sup> a break-away movement of what was left of the urban Party (the fourth crisis) and eventually the consolidation of a Chinese Soviet Republic in Jiangxi. In the early years of the Jiangxi Soviet, Mao Zedong evolved a distinctive approach to fighting the Civil War. Three Guomindang campaigns of 'encirclement and suppression' were beaten off by a strategy expressed as 'the enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue'. Large bodies of Red Army troops were concentrated to attack enemy units one by one and war along fixed fronts was avoided. By the fourth encirclement campaign in 1933, however, the Party switched to a 'forward and offensive line' on the grounds that Mao's strategy invited enemy reprisals. The result was disastrous.

The 'forward and offensive line' together with a new Guomindang strategy, led to the defeat of the Red Army in the fifth encirclement campaign of 1934. During the course of the ensuing Long March<sup>19</sup> the fifth and sixth of the major crises occurred. The fifth crisis centred on the unsuccessful policies of the Wang Ming leadership whose influence was

drastically reduced at a Politburo meeting in Zunyi in January 1935. The Zunyi meeting elected Mao as Politburo chairman, though arguments over strategy still continued and the sixth crisis occurred soon after the meeting when Zhang Guotao, the former vice-chairman of the Jiangxi Soviet, broke with Mao over the destination of the march. It was, therefore, only part of the Red Army which reached an isolated soviet in north Shaanxi in the autumn of 1935 though, before long, Mao's main force was joined by troops who had made a detour through Sichuan.

Most of the crises outlined above concerned military strategy and several crucial lessons had been learned. Mao's principles of people's war had been vindicated and any future strategy would rely on flexible guerrilla tactics to build up a network of rural bases with which to surround the cities. There were to be no premature assaults on the cities and what was left of the urban movement would subordinate its activities to those of the rural base areas. Secondly, several of the crises had been, in no small measure, the result of faulty advice from the Comintern in Moscow. Though the Comintern could not have prevented the massacres of 1927, its advice to maintain the United Front at all costs had made the debacle much worse than it need have been. At least one of the abortive risings of 1927 had been the direct inspiration of Stalin<sup>20</sup> who seemed to have little appreciation of the actual Chinese situation. The attempt to capture major cities in 1930 and an extravagant faith in the Chinese proletariat's willingness to rise in revolt was due in some measure to the Comintern's mystical faith that a global 'high tide' was in the offing. Finally, the inexperienced Wang Ming leadership which dominated the Party in the early 1930s had actually been sent to China from Moscow together with its Soviet mentor, Pavel Mif. By 1935, Mao had developed a contempt for Soviet-trained intellectuals who attempted to import into China prepacked models of revolution.

### ***The Second United Front***

Although, by 1935, Mao was wary of Comintern advice, there was one policy which the Comintern adopted in that year which was very welcome—the call for a broadly-based United Front against imperialism. In 1931, the Japanese had turned north-east China into the puppet state of Manchukuo and, since that time, Jiang Jieshi had been under pressure to make peace with the Communist Party in order to resist Japan. As early as 1933, the Communist Party had called for a United Front though it had been wary of uniting with Jiang Jieshi. In December 1935, a series of demonstrations in Beijing<sup>21</sup> protested against Japanese attempts to establish a puppet régime in north China and, in 1936, Nationalist forces in north-west China refused to fight the Red Army. When Jiang Jieshi

flew to Xi'an to investigate the situation, he was captured by Nationalist generals and forced to enter into negotiations with the Communist Party.<sup>22</sup> An agreement was finally concluded in September 1937 after the inauguration of total war with Japan. The Soviet régime in north Shaanxi was reorganised as a 'special region' of the Republic of China. The Red Army was incorporated into the national forces (at least in theory) under the new name 'Eighth Route Army' and land reform ceased.

Immediately after the reorganisation, the Eighth Route Army crossed the Huanghe (Yellow River) and joined battle with the Japanese. Limited in strength to 45,000, it fought in small units of one thousand behind the Japanese lines and helped create guerrilla units. In the south, a New Fourth Army was also formed in September 1937 out of people left behind in the old Jiangxi Soviet. As anti-Japanese sentiment swelled, a solid base of recruitment was established amongst intellectuals in the towns as well as among peasants in the countryside and an Anti-Japanese University (*Kangda*) was set up to train them. Meanwhile the Guomindang resistance crumbled and, after a holding operation at Taierzhuang, the Nationalist government pulled back to remote Chongqing.

By 1940, the United Front had begun to fall to pieces. The Communist Party suspected that Jiang Jieshi was about to do a deal with the puppet government which the Japanese had set up in Nanjing<sup>23</sup> and the Guomindang government looked with alarm upon the rapid growth of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, well beyond the limit imposed by the 1937 agreement. In early 1941, tension gave way to open hostilities as Guomindang troops attacked the headquarters of the New Fourth Army after it had proved slow in obeying an order from Chongqing to withdraw north of the Changjiang.

The United Front was effectively at an end and an already existing embargo on goods transported to the Communist border regions from areas under Guomindang control was strengthened. At the same time, a fierce campaign of suppression known as the 'three all' (*san guang*—burn all, kill all, loot all) was launched by the Japanese. The result was dramatic. The population of Communist-controlled areas in north China fell from 44 million to 25 million and, in the country as a whole, from 100 million to 50 million.<sup>24</sup>

The situation in the border regions was critical. The tightening of the Guomindang blockade, together with the Japanese policy of ringing individual areas with blockhouses, resulted in a shortage of goods. Now that the Communist government in Yan'an (the capital of the major border region of Shaan Gan Ning) received no subsidies from Chongqing, a crushing burden of taxation was imposed upon the residents. In 1941 alone, taxes were doubled and such a situation could surely not be tolerated if the government were to retain the support of the peasants and continue to call itself revolutionary. Secondly, the political situation

deteriorated considerably. The rapid expansion of the border regions during the early part of the war had led to large numbers of people moving to places such as Yan'an out of purely patriotic motives. They consequently did not have much understanding of Marxism-Leninism or Communist Party policy. A top-heavy bureaucratic structure had been created which was staffed by unreliable personnel without much contact with ordinary people. The bureaucrats had imposed a formal education system based on current practice in the coastal cities without much regard for the special needs of the border regions and a peasantry which had to be convinced that education was not a waste of time. Thirdly, with the abandonment of land reform in 1937, the former rural élite strove to regain not only its political influence but also its property and vied with the cadres from the cities in a struggle which left the peasants untouched.<sup>25</sup> New policies were called for and, in 1942, a process was instituted which resulted in a new and very different model of political administration and economic management—a model which went a long way towards guaranteeing success in the war and which has been the starting point for the policies of the radical leadership of the Communist Party ever since. The adoption of the Yan'an model, which marked the maturity of the Communist Party, is the starting point of this book.

## NOTES

1. See Ho, 1962.
2. Riesman, 1953.
3. Skinner, 1964.
4. See Levy, 1949.
5. Buck, 1964, p. 368.
6. Moore, 1967.
7. This is the view of Myers, 1970, p. 124, who held that such was the case until 1937.
8. Based on Esherick, 1972.
9. For a discussion of the Chinese Tongzhi Restoration, see Wright, 1957.
10. See Feuerwerker, 1958.
11. See Feuerwerker, 1964.
12. Discussed in Brugger, 1976, pp. 42–5.
13. Fong, 1937, pp. 40–1.
14. A number of standard introductory histories exist for the period 1921–42. On the career of Mao Zedong, see Schram, 1966, Ch'en, 1965, Schwartz, 1966, Snow, 1961. On the career of Zhu De, see Smedley, 1972. On the early years of the Party, see Meisner, 1967, Schwartz, 1966. On the early labour movement, see Chesneaux, 1968. On the student movement, see Israel, 1966. On the events of 1927, see Isaacs, 1961. On the Jiangxi Soviet, see Rue, 1966, Swarup, 1966, Waller, 1973. For an interesting collection of excerpts from various writings, see Schurmann and Schell, Vol. II, 1968.
15. Mao Zedong, August–September 1971, Schram, 1974, p. 290.