Szechwan was the peaceful interior, the war far away again, and my first night back behind the range I spent in a Buddhist temple fragrant with incense. It was surrounded by bamboo thickets; a pool in its courtyard reflected the full moon and in the moonlight paddled several ducks. The priests chanted and it was exactly like the China I had read of in Boylston Hall's books. All dynasties running back for centuries had preserved such ancient places of grace. But after what I had seen in North China, I questioned how long such graces would stay the course of history.

I had learned the first real lesson of politics, government and history: governments are instituted among men in the first instance, and accepted by men gratefully, to protect them from random violence and killing. I had begun to observe that when the central government replaced the local government of Chungking after the bombings. But I had now seen what government meant in the hills of Shansi, where the Communists, not yet calling themselves government, were becoming government. They offered protection.

Many other lessons in politics and government were to follow over the years, but none more important than that.

Thus, wending my way back to Chungking, I could no longer see Chiang K'ai-shek or his Americanized administration as a real government. They had no control of events, and I had an immense desire to separate from them.

CHAPTER THREE

REPORTER IN ASIA: EPISODE AND PERSONALITY

I did not know that I had become a recognized reporter until two weeks after my return to Chungking.

Time had cabled its pleasure with my reporting from the front—but then the magazine itself arrived. I had received a full page and a half for my dispatch, with a by-line!—the first by-line *Time* had ever given anyone it called its own "special correspondent." It illustrated the story with a map that showed in a red line the meanderings of that correspondent through the hills of Southeast Shansi. John Hersey had edited my prose to a high polish. A telegram arrived from a New York publisher, Random House, inviting me to write a book about the war in China. There could be no doubt that I had made a score.

It was December of 1939; I was only a year and a half out of Harvard, but *Time* was willing to raise my monthly guarantee, and the Chinese Ministry of Information willing to accept my resignation. With as much friendship as relief at my departure, my comrades in the ministry gave me a banquet to celebrate the fact that I would now be a recognized foreign correspondent, on the receiving not the disbursing end of their attentions.

For those men who, sooner or later, are lucky enough to break away from the pack, the most intoxicating moment comes when they cease being bodies at other men's command and find that they control their own time, when they learn their own voice and authority. For most, this moment of breakthrough comes in the wonderful years of the thirties, when life floods men with peak vigor, and vigor is tempered by experience. For some it comes later, in their forties. But for those of us who came of age in the war years, the war, terrifying as it was, gave us the opportunity to break out of the management chains and the lockup of training programs at a very early age. If one was

lucky enough to be where the action was, and if one could find a way to insert himself in the action, the breakout might come in one's twenties. Luck had brought me to China. Luck had carried me to a war action exciting enough to be published. War incubated opportunity: the number of American foreign or war correspondents was to go from perhaps two hundred when I left Harvard in 1938 to a guess-timated three thousand by 1945. War was a growth industry; I rode with that wave and was swept up by it.

It was clear to me that I was never going back to Boston to be a professor of history; that dream had vanished sometime between the bombings of Chungking in May and the action in Shansi. I was no longer a student sightseer. And yet, since no one had ever told me what a reporter does, or how he does it, or what a foreign correspondent is supposed to do, I remained, as I can see now, still a sightseer but of a different kind—a collector of impressions of whatever could be typed or pasted into a dispatch. I collected sights, sounds, personalities, famous names, episodes. *Time* was then a far less responsible magazine than it is today, and delighted in quips, curiosities, anecdotes and quotes, whether true or not. If there was a history that framed it all, then the editors back in New York decided what the history meant, and reporters simply supplied raw material. As a purveyor of such raw material, their collector of anecdotes, personalities, episodes, names, in the Far East, I thrived—and left the history to New York.

Many good things followed on my new status.

Invitations came to *Time*'s China correspondent, particularly from the diplomatic colony, where the exiled envoys to this half-forgotten Asian war spent their evenings entertaining each other and picking each other's brains for shreds of information. With the diplomatic invitations came, by chance, my introduction to sex. I was invited to the Belgian legation for a formal dinner one evening, but the Japanese air force arrived to raid. We scuttled for the legation's dugout, and in the dark I began conversation with the lady accepted as the "mistress" of one of the Belgian attachés. She was Chinese; he spoke very little Chinese; snugged in the dugout, waiting for the bombs to thud, she and I began to talk in Chinese, which none of the other foreigners could understand. And so, two days later, I met her in a Chinese hotel, took a suite, and she introduced me to what had so long fascinated me. The meal we ate was good; but the experience was disappointing. The windows of the bomb-racked hotel had been replaced by greased paper; Chinese waiters poked their fingers through the paper to peek in; we went to bed; I fumbled at her; my

inexperience was obvious; and she wailed, in Chinese, "You're nothing but a little boy." What I needed of sex during the early years of the war thereafter usually came casually; love came much later. Yet I had been initiated, and a good deal of fantasizing could be discarded.

Far more important than my dugout encounter on the diplomatic circuit, however, was my acquaintance with my first man of importance—or "representative character," as he would appear in a history book. This was a particularly wise man who, by good fortune, had been made British Ambassador to China—Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, later Lord Inverchapel and Ambassador to Washington. Old men take pleasure, I now know, in talking to bright young men, thinking aloud to them, instructing them. Clark-Kerr, after our first few meetings, let me call him "Sir Archie"; and then he would ramble on to me, at lazy times, about history, the British Empire, and diplomacy as it had been and should be practiced. It was good education, for it ran from the last century into the new. He had been recruited, as had all young British diplomats at the turn of the century, by the permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, a pederast who scrutinized all young candidates for posting to their unpaid secretaryships around the world. Archie had, at one time, as a very junior diplomat been apprenticed to the great Lord Bryce in Washington, and to hear someone talk of Lord Bryce, who had written the classic *The American Commonwealth*, was like hearing of Plato when he was writing *The Republic*. Archie had left the diplomatic service to fight with his Scots regiment in the trench warfare of 1914–1918, then returned to the service, and his assignments had given him a world view that no other Western diplomat in Chungking could rival.

For me, most importantly, Sir Archie was a teacher of politics. I was pasting interviews into my notes like stamps in a postage album. Clark-Kerr would rescue names from my conversation and pin them into politics and history. I would come back from the field or the war fronts and report raw observations. He would listen; then sort out for me what I had seen. And always he would come back to the Communists; he was convinced that the Communists would ultimately win in China, but did not grieve about it; that was the way history went, he said. Clark-Kerr was probably the best senior diplomatic reporter out of Chungking in the war years.

"Names" are to young reporters the same as money in the bank; they are credit references; they lead to other contacts, other sources; their invitations translate into circles of acquaintances, thus stories. For years, until 1963, my search for stories would be a search for names

and personalities. Starting with Archibald Clark-Kerr, in the spring and summer of 1940, my circle of names widened, my stories cast a wider net, and Time Incorporated came up with the irresistible idea that I tour Southeast Asia for their morgue—meaning I would fill their background files with features, personalities and the kind of tourist observation I was good at. The war in Europe had flamed, the Netherlands, Belgium and France had fallen, combat was sure to spread to Asia, and *Time* wanted enough background material in their files to color up events when they happened. They would pay all my expenses for three or four months of travel, which meant that I might live for the first time as I had always believed I should live—at the best hotels, eating at the best restaurants, without hassling over bills, rickshaw fares or add-ons.

Of the three or four months I spent on my tour of Southeast Asia, only two impressions are worth reproducing. I was chiefly seeking names, quotations and color—but what I was observing was one of the great thrusts of the twentieth century. Without recognizing it, I was also stumbling into the first chapter of the Vietnamese story, and into a major personality, Douglas MacArthur, whom all then disdained.

The thrust, of course, was the thrust of the Japanese. All through the 1930s, the Japanese thrust in Asia, like that of the Nazis in Europe, magnetized all politics and all events on the continent about them. The Japanese were on the threshold of their industrial expansion and their appetite for industry and modernization was translated into the most naked lust for overseas sources of oil, rubber, tin, coal, rice; they meant to have it all. France had fallen, Holland was occupied, the British were beleaguered—and the bits and pieces of those old empires seemed open for the looting. I was to pass along the rim of this Japanese thrust in the South Seas—France's Indo-China, Britain's Malaya, Holland's Indonesia, America's Philippines—trying to document the nature and range of Japanese pressures.

I bristle still at the Japanese. I recognize this as prejudice. But I was first introduced to violence by Japanese action in Chungking and in North China; and confirmed in my antipathies by this long voyage of examination of Japanese purpose in Southeast Asia in 1940. I found them repulsive in the openness of their ambition and the coarseness of their manners. They brandished their planes and their armies with none of the normal niceties of diplomacy. They might wear Western business suits and be coldly technical, as they were in Indonesia, delivering ultimata to the Dutch colonials for delivery of oil. Or they

might sit around the rococo old Hotel Metropole in Hanoi in brown undershirts, and grunt and spit on the floor, courteous to no one, as they demanded of the French colonials that three air bases in northern Indo-China be given to their air force for bombing South China. Wherever one met the Japanese on the thrust, they were brutal.

My first stop was in Hanoi, where the Japanese were coercing the French colonial administration to submission. I envied the correspondents who were filing daily bulletins; both the French colonials and the Japanese bullies were so obviously contemptible that they made good copy. But I had to content myself with mailers, and so I concentrated on politics, and on what I called, in my dispatches, the "Annamites" or "natives." I watched them crouching in the streets and reported that they would "sit on their haunches, chew betel nuts, and do nothing," whether the French remained or the Japanese marched in. They had, I reported, a certain "native" exotic flavor; I was particularly taken with the beauty of their women, who walked so marvelously erect, and I attributed that, in my anthropological mood, to the training of Vietnamese girls to carry baskets on their heads, balancing them as they walked. Further, anthropologically, I ascribed their beauty to the mingling of the Malaysian and Chinese strains of their heredity, giving them the robust body, hips and bosoms of the Malays, and the delicate facial features of the Chinese. About their men, whom I accepted as "natives" and of whom I learned only from Frenchmen, I was more harsh. Trying to estimate for an American magazine what local resistance might be offered to the Japanese if it came to a showdown at arms, I offered the observation that the "natives" would support neither the French nor the Japanese. And speaking of what later would become the nation of Vietnam, which humiliated our own country in battle, I finished one dispatch by dismissing Vietnamese as "a whining, cringing, gutless mass of coolies, part mule, part goat, part rabbit."

It was, perhaps, inevitable that traveling and dining with white men in French Indo-China, I should come to such a conclusion. But nothing could obscure the prime political fact that all politics in this white man's colony revolved around hate. The French Army was an army of oppression—seven thousand Frenchmen, three thousand Foreign Legionnaires and scores of thousands of black African colonial troops, Moroccans with their fezzes, Algerians in distinctive uniforms. The French made money out of Indo-China, and they despised the people who lived there. In Hanoi, for the first time, I saw a white man slap a native—a Frenchman slapping a rickshaw driver who had

protested the fare paid. Sometimes there was provincial Ku Klux Klan mischief in provocation of natives—as, for example, the "tableau." A group of Frenchmen would get into rickshaws to go to a bordello, exhort their pullers to high speed in a race; then they would pick out the sweating, exhausted winner, take him upstairs and urge him to make love to one of the prostitutes as they watched. They enjoyed observing his desire as he was pulled exhausted from servitude between the rickshaw shafts and even more when he showed inability to achieve erection with the girl they had paid to please him. I could relate such sights easily to the politics of race hate, but had no idea that those politics would reach across some thirty years to wreck American politics, too. I contented myself with observing that none of the Vietnamese would die for white man's rule; they distrusted Chinese; the Japanese were simply a new set of conquerors; they seemed to be enjoying the humiliation of the French and would wait for years to make their country their own.

In Hanoi learned French scholars, from the École Française de l'Extrême Orient, provided most of the learning the West still has on the arts, the culture, the traditions of Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam. French colonials provided wine, good food, good manners, good coastal roads to the natives—but also opium. The colonial government imported opium, licensed opium dens, poisoned people with the drug on which the government revenues thrived—and in a sublime act of hypocrisy erected in Hanoi a tiny replica of New York harbor's great Statue of Liberty. There was no contact, however, between Frenchmen and the people they ruled, no contact except hate. And there is no greater irony today than that the French, who debased, defiled and degraded the Vietnamese people, should act on the world stage as public friends of Vietnam, and we, Americans, should be accused as the ravagers of a civilization we tried to save. The exercise cost Americans fifty thousand lives, and the Vietnamese more than a million.

But all that was in the future. As I passed through in 1940, I found only that the Vietnamese women were beautiful, the men sullen, the French colonials stupid or cruel, and I felt that Americans should not engage themselves in this matter. On Vietnam I was then an isolationist, and I should have remained so forever.

I went from Vietnam to Thailand, to Malaya. Then, on through the East Indies to see the Japanese squeeze that Dutch colony for oil, and from there to the Philippines, where I met Douglas MacArthur.

Douglas MacArthur is, probably, historically far more relevant to

the history of Asia than to American politics. He remade Japan. But I should like to pause over him as an American, nonetheless. Outcast as he was in 1940 from power or influence, he was a genuinely "representative man," who stood for something. In the fluctuating market of historic values, MacArthur stands presently at low discount. He was outrageous in his rhetoric; and any sophisticated scholar can make him look like a fool simply by quoting him in his moments of transport, when, indeed, he was a fool. But underneath it all, he was an extraordinarily able man, a good general, sparing of his men's lives in combat, a technician who won larger victories with less bloodshed than any other American general of record. It was only in politics that MacArthur was slightly mad, and then he was daft only in the politics of America, not in the politics of the Orient.

When I met him, on this trip, I was very young, and still more sightseer than reporter. He was then, by my youthful judgment, a very old man—over sixty! I went to see him in the Philippines only because in my military survey of Southeast Asia I had been so disappointed by the U.S. Army in the Philippines—commanded by dull men, with an even duller spokesman in Manila, who had contempt for the "aging" and retired one-time Chief of Staff of their army, Douglas MacArthur. They called him "the Napoleon of Luzon," and the press spokesman, a stout U.S. Army major, told me in 1940 that he "cut no more ice in this U.S. Army than a corporal." MacArthur was just an adviser to the Philippine Army, he said, not worth seeing. So I went to see this relic of history, this great soldier, now a field marshal in the Philippine Army.

MacArthur at sixty, on the eve of his great war command, was, I found, still a spectacle. His hands trembled; his voice sometimes squeaked; but he could not talk sitting down. He paced, and roared, and pointed, and pounded, and stabbed with his cigar, and spoke with an intelligence and a magniloquence and a force that overwhelmed. He was holding himself, he said, in readiness to command the American expeditionary force in Asia when the war broke out. This was a year before Pearl Harbor, but he insisted war was coming. He spoke of the Japanese Navy—and he thought it was first class. Beware of the Japanese Navy, he said, and continuing, he said that Japanese carrier-based aviation was superb. He believed, however, that the Japanese Army was not even second class, that it was shot through with venality. He, himself, was building the new Philippine Army for Manuel Quezon, and if he had enough time, he could make it into a fighting force. MacArthur had a real respect for Asians as fighters and,

generally, liked the Asians, much as William McKinley had liked the "little brown brother." From this, on to tonnages, distances, mileages, fire powers, and he was altogether impressive as he lectured to me.

I wrote my dispatch on the defenses of Asia for *Time* and then, provocatively, sent it upstairs from my room at the Manila Hotel to his penthouse suite to see if I had violated his confidence. I had written that after three months of seeing all the generals—American, French, Dutch, English—in Southeast Asia, by far the best in every respect was General Douglas MacArthur, U.S. Army, retired. With this judgment MacArthur totally agreed, and I was immediately summoned up to his penthouse to be told what a grand dispatch I had written.

It was late in the afternoon, and he was dressed in an old West Point bathrobe of blue and gray wool which displayed the Army "A" on its back; his skinny shanks protruded as he paced, and occasionally he puffed on a corncob pipe. We rejoiced together that we alone understood the Japanese peril to America, the Japanese thrust; in this sympathetic mood, he began to reminisce. He had been a young first lieutenant when he came here with his commission after graduation from West Point in 1903; he had fought the little Philippine brown brothers in the Aguinaldo insurrection. He had commanded a U.S. division in combat in World War I and in the occupation of the Rhine that followed; had been Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army under Hoover, had retired. But he felt that our fate and Asia's were intertwined. His father, Arthur MacArthur, had been a Civil War general. Arthur MacArthur had done his duty; he, Douglas MacArthur, would do his duty. It was a memorable conversation, and at one point, as the sun was setting over Manila Bay, he turned to me from the balcony and said, "It was destiny that brought us here, White, destiny! By God, it is destiny that brings me here now."

MacArthur was to be in Asia from 1935 to 1951 without ever coming home, conquering the Pacific islands, occupying and restoring the Japanese islands, commanding in Korea until Harry Truman fired him. Harry Truman fired him for good cause, of course, but there was in their clash a quintessence of the century-old clash in American history between military and civilians, a clash I was to report more closely in the Stilwell episode: How much of war is politics? And if so, whose politics? MacArthur understood the politics of Asia, and not only in his legacy to Japan but in his parting admonition to his successors ("Anybody who commits the land power of the United States on the continent of Asia ought to have his head examined") demonstrated this understanding. What he could not understand were

the politics of America, and above all, the politics of the Presidency. He was convinced that the military and the political executives were co-proprietors of American history, equal partners in the great adventures of war.

I was to see MacArthur several more times over the next six years, but it did not occur to me that he was flawed politically until two years later. By that time, we, too, were at war with the Japanese. He had just escaped from Corregidor, was again an American general, not a Philippine field marshal, had been named commander of all U.S. forces in the Southwest Pacific—but with no visible support in troops, ships or supplies from the homeland. He was indignant. I visited him, as a war correspondent, in his headquarters at Melbourne, Australia. In our conversation he managed to denounce all at once, and with equal gusto and abandon, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President; George Catlett Marshall, the regnant chief of staff; Harry Luce, the publisher of my magazine; and the U.S. Navy. He felt that the U.S. Navy was a poor navy. ("White," he said, "the best navy in the world is the Japanese Navy. A first-class navy. Then comes the British Navy. The U.S. Navy is a fourth-class navy, not even as good as the Italian Navy.") He was completely wrong in this in the spring of 1942, for the U.S. Navy was about to prove it was the finest navy that ever cut water; and Franklin D. Roosevelt and George C. Marshall were men greater than he.

In December of 1940, however, I had nothing but admiration for Douglas MacArthur, and an affection that still remains, however much I later separated from his politics. MacArthur had helped me on the way; he was the most vivid of the paste-up characters I was trying to file to the *Time* morgue, and *Time* liked what I wrote. While I was in Manila, *Time* decided to hire me as a staff correspondent, on full salary. Not only that; I was cabled a bonus of one thousand dollars, and all expenses for my Asian tour. When I reached Hong Kong, en route back to China, there was also an invitation to join the staff in New York, whenever I wanted. My instructions were only to return to Chungking, to stay at least through the spring of 1941, until Harry Luce, the distant owner of *Time*, could come to visit China, his birthplace—and I, as *Time*'s correspondent, might serve as his escort.

I did not know what was happening in China that first week of my return in January 1941. I doubt that anyone ever will. It was an episode called the New Fourth Army Incident, and since I was collecting episodes as well as personalities in those days, I thought I

could interest *Time* in it. I have still a mound of documents—government papers, secret instructions, and unpublished notes and interviews—which testify more to my diligence than to my understanding. *Time* was profoundly uninterested in the episode of the New Fourth Army. Perhaps I might have won the editors' attention if I had been able to connect the episode to the flow of history, but I could not, for I had not yet learned how. Though I pursued the story of the massacre of the New Fourth Army as diligently as any in all my life, no more than a paragraph or two appeared in print. But now that that massacre takes its place in the tragedy of modern Chinese history as one of the four or five great turning points at which the choice was made for blood rather than conciliation, I would like, briefly, to tell it as I came across it.

The story begins with a point on the map—a village named Mouling on the south bank of the Yangtze valley, in which on January 13–14, 1941, some ten thousand Chinese Communist partisans were wiped out by Chinese Nationalists. The precise point on the map is inconsequential, for the larger movements, snagged at that point on the map, reached all the way from Manchuria in the north to the tropics of South China. On this map, ever since 1927, three great forces had been contending—the Japanese, the Chinese Nationalists and the Chinese Communists.

For ten years, starting in Manchuria in 1931, the Japanese had been pressing down from the north on split and quarreling China south of the Great Wall. And when, in 1937, the Japanese had made a formal war of it, all the Chinese factions—Communists, warlords and provincials—had joined to support the recognized Nationalist government against the invader. Despite this union, by the end of 1938 the Japanese had seized the three great river valleys of China, occupied all the coastal cities, controlled ninety percent of its railroad net and confronted Chinese armies of all kinds dug into hills and mountains, as I had found them in Shansi.

But as the Japanese had spread, and the map had become splotched with swelling patches marked "Occupied," the Communists had followed. Wherever the Japanese staked out garrisons in the countryside, the Communists felt entitled to organize the countryside against them. At the war's beginning, the central government of Chiang K'ai-shek had seen this Communist response as one of a dozen regional or warlord responses, all bracketed together in war zones commanded by loyal Nationalist generals, all more or less irregularly supplied by the central government. But the Communists lived by the

doctrine of the offensive—and their guerrilla forces spread behind the Japanese lines of "occupation" with a zest, a speed, a wild imagination and a strategic brilliance that defied all rules of conventional warfare. They spread eastward first, across the Yellow River from Yenan through Shansi province, crowding the provincial government of Yen Hsi-shan until, in the summer of 1940, despite the common war against the Japanese, Yen Hsi-shan turned to fight them. The Communists spread north to the deserts, crowding the Muslim generals. They spread farther east, crowding out or absorbing all other Chinese resistance until, by the summer of 1940, they shared the "occupation" with the Japanese right down to the hills of Peking and beyond to the Pacific shores of the province of Shantung, Confucius's birthplace. Then they turned south.

When they turned south, control of their armies by a single army command became too much for their rudimentary communications and primitive logistics. Thus they spun off a new army—the New Fourth Army, vaguely recognized by the central government as an anti-Japanese force under Communist leaders. Down from the province of Shantung this new army had moved, in symbiosis with the Japanese armies of occupation—down, down, down south into the province of Kiangsu, which includes Shanghai, down into the province of Anhui, down across the Yangtze valley, down toward the province of Chekiang, Chiang K'ai-shek's birthplace, which was over one thousand miles from their headquarters in Yenan.

It was a stupendous feat of arms—bewildering to the Japanese, but terrifying to Chiang's central government armies.

The Communists on the move proclaimed themselves to be a patriot Chinese army, so they demanded arms, bullets, money, rice, supplies from the national government. But the numbers of the New Fourth Army, in their growth, had passed 100,000 men, totally unauthorized by the national government. True, the Communists were resisting Japanese—but in a new way. If they could get no support from Chiang K'ai-shek, they must get rice, clothing, help, hospital service, from the peasants. The Communists needed to create an entire new civilian base—in short, a form of government. They also needed guns. So they took guns in battle as they could grab them—from the Japanese, or from Chinese mercenaries of the Japanese; from warlord units in the grand alliance if they had to; occasionally from central government units, too.

Over and over again, Communist units as they spread clashed with other Chinese divisions and units in sputtering, sniping, bloody

little actions. Society had dissolved in occupied areas; loosely disciplined troops might be warlord troops one month and free-booting banditti the next. The savagery of the Japanese, the feral resistance of Chinese of all kinds, had divorced the war from all civilized custom. Only the Communists had the doctrine, the ideas, the political techniques, to make people jell again into groups with a cause; they were different from other regional and warlord groups because, though they could be as violent as any other, they could mesh the violence to a purpose and strategy.

By October of 1940, clashes of Chinese Nationalists, warlords and Communists had become so commonplace that Chungking ordered the entire New Fourth Army back north of the Yangtze River immediately, within a month. Then matters grew worse. In November, the commanding general of the Nationalist 53rd Army, Li Shou-wei, was killed in an obscure clash with the New Fourth Army in Kiangsu. Since the logic of war demanded some intelligent Chinese response to the Japanese, both Chinese parties despite their mutual hates sat down in Chungking to work out a more reasonable timetable for separation of war zones. On paper they agreed there would be an expansion of the recognized area of Communist activity: the entire sweep of Japanese occupation in North China from the Yellow River to the coast would become a Communist theater of operation, a vast extension of their "legitimate" authority. In tough reality, however, the agreement meant the Communists must withdraw the New Fourth Army from south of the Yangtze, from the provinces of Anhui, Hupeh, Chekiang and Kiangsu, by January 1 of 1941, then withdraw even farther north to the Yellow River.

This would have to be an intricate operation. Japanese garrisons pocked the route of Communist withdrawal. Where Japanese garrisons did not bar the way, vengeful Nationalist government troops and generals manned other positions. Negotiations of zones, timetables, routes of withdrawal, continued through December of 1940, the Communist army in the field responding reluctantly to the agreement made between their high command and Chiang's high command. For the Communists in the field to withdraw meant that scores of thousands of local peasant recruits must say good-bye to wives and families, leaving villages behind defenseless against the Japanese, dependent for protection on Nationalist troops with no love for Communists. Communist headquarters in Chungking clung to the agreement, but their messages, transmitted by makeshift radio, couriers and bamboo signals, lacked the crisp edge of command. In the

field, central government armies were pressing on the withdrawing Communists, urgent to move into the zones the Communists were leaving—and eager to revenge the November killing of Li Shou-wei.

In Chungking, negotiations dawdled on between Chiang K'ai-shek and the chief of the Communist emissaries, Chou En-lai. Both were passionate men; both had tempers; but they had been friends and enemies for so long by then—some fifteen years—that they felt they might work out some agreement to avoid the bloody and profitless clash that impended. On Christmas Day of 1940, Chiang K'ai-shek, Methodist, had invited Chou En-lai, Communist, to have dinner with him. They had finally settled on the terms and details of the withdrawal of the New Fourth Army from south of the Yangtze and then pushed on, according to Chou's account (which is the only account I heard), to talk about the long-range relations between Communists and Nationalists in China. Chou described the Communist complaint to Chiang K'ai-shek: that Chiang treated them like a warlord army, not like a political force; he said there must be a recognition of the politics as well as the logistics of war; and he told Chiang to his face that his Nationalist government was undemocratic. Then, recounting the tale, Chou said, in that chuckling way of his: "Do you know what he answered? He said, 'You mean you call *me* undemocratic?' " Neither one understood what a democracy is, but both recognized that the test of ideas is their ability to move men to use, or accept, force. And in that situation, Chiang had the force.

I arrived back in Chungking the week that the Chinese were moving to kill each other eight hundred miles downriver. I could sniff the trouble, I could sense it as I tried to make contact again. But it was like being once more in the mists and mountains of Shansi, with fragments of detail surfacing above clouds. I could catch echoes of the killings, but only muffled echoes. Nothing appeared in print in the controlled press of Chungking, the capital. I had to reconstruct the episode from men who lied not only to me but to each other; and by the time I had put together a reasonable outline of what had happened day by day, the news story had disappeared, and I had nothing to tell except for history.

What happened, as best I can reconstruct it now, is that most of the New Fourth Army had moved across the Yangtze to the north by the end of December. South of the river there remained in that first week of January only the New Fourth Army headquarters—which meant their command staff, their hospitals and their political school, which was as essential to a functioning Communist army at that time

as the thyroid gland is to the human body. But the regional Nationalist command (Third War Area) had directed the withdrawal of this critical Communist command echelon northward over a route that would carry them across the Yangtze directly into the guns of a Japanese river garrison posted to cut them down. The Communist commander of the New Fourth Army, Yeh T'ing, in the second week of January thus decided to repudiate the designated route. He would take his headquarters command—in all, ten thousand troops, officer and cadres—and move east downriver, to cross the Yangtze at a point where he felt the Japanese would be less on guard. He distinctly diverged from the agreement made by his principals in distant Chungking; to have accepted the route set by the local Nationalists would have been suicide. As he moved thus, the Nationalist generals caught and encircled him, and in three days' fighting, while the Japanese stood by, presumably enjoying it all, the Communists were massacred. Their chief, Yeh T'ing, was thrown into prison. Other Communist leaders were shot outright. Some five thousand or six thousand of the ordinary troops were killed or massacred. Those who lived were disbanded, and assigned to patriotic service in other government armies against the Japanese.

We, in Chungking, did not know of the massacre of January 14, 1941, until days later, and then by word of mouth or underground leaflet.

From distant Yenan, Mao Tse-tung cabled his office in Chungking to issue a Communist statement of defiance. The prose is blunt enough to be his own.

> . . . those who play with fire ought to be careful. We formally warn them. Fire is not a very good game. Be careful about your skull. . . . Our retreat has come to an end. We have been struck with a hatchet and our first wound is a serious one. If you care for the future, you ought to come to offer medical treatment. It is not too late. We have to give this warning for the last time. If things continue to develop this way, the whole people of the whole country will throw you into the gutter. And then if you feel sorry, it will be too late.

A week after Mao's statement and two weeks after the episode, Chiang, on January 27, 1941, spoke secretly to his National Military Council. The council was the decorative proscenium of his grand coalition, which included restive central government generals, regional army commanders, and aging warlords who had turned over their troops to the alliance. The massacre had probably most disturbed the

old warlords; Chiang might someday treat them similarly. Chiang tried to calm them, in the magisterial language of the mandarins. Said he, in a cold, straightforward speech whose text I managed to abstract: "The affair was unambiguous; the issue was uninvolved; the incident not abnormal. Disobedience and insubordination among army men naturally bring down punishment upon them. Acts of revolt, attacks on comrades in arms . . . demand the disembodiment of the troops. . . ." Chiang went on, recalling other generals who had disobeyed his orders. His remarks illuminate the command of China at war: "Han Fu-chu, Li Fu-ying and Shih Yu-san . . . disobeyed orders. . . . The first of them was executed because he failed to obey the government's order to hold his ground in eastern Shantung and instead wanted to withdraw westward. . . . Li Fu-ying was shot for his persisting in retreat when retreat had been forbidden him. Shih Yu-san . . ." etc. Finally, Chiang said: "I am resolved to demonstrate to the nation the essential qualities of sound discipline. . . . I have often compared the army to a family wherein I look upon the soldiers under me as a father regards his children. If his children behave well, the father feels they reflect honor upon him; if badly, they disgrace him. . . . My solicitude failed, however, to move them [the New Fourth Army]; they interpreted it as weakness and even timidity. . . . Now the New Fourth Army has been abolished; the question has been settled and no other question remains. . . ."

Yet there *were* other questions, which I pursued for months because it occurred to me that these killings were more significant than the larger combat killings I had reported in Shansi. Why did the Chinese have to kill each other? I asked that as I jounced on rice bags going to the central front, or dozing in the sun with young Nationalist officers, or drinking tea with generals at their headquarters. They were disturbed, all of them. But I caught their sense of satisfaction, or retribution exacted for the killing of General Li Shou-wei of the 53rd Army. Revenge was sweet to them. I tried to put together chronologies and causes at military headquarters in Chungking; but each Chungking general started the chronology of reactions with a different date; none was sure how it all came about. In June of 1941 I finally managed to see the Generalissimo himself in a stiff interview. His view of the war had changed since 1937; now he summarized the episode with an epigram: "The Japanese are a disease of the skin, the Communists are a disease of the heart."

I got the story best, I think, from Chou En-lai, with whom, by then, I had become friends. Two weeks after the massacre, on

February 1, when his rage had cooled, he spent several hours with me, and he was in his best analytical mood. Chou En-lai had an amazing mind, for detail as well as for synthesis, a memory that could with ease recollect dates, quotations, episodes, incidents. He went through the story of the breakup of the alliance of all Chinese against the Japanese, date by date, from 1937 to 1940, then moved, with amazing facility, to the dates and hours of the climactic ten days in early January of 1941. He explained, as he went, the nature of the Chinese government, the Chinese Army, the telephone communication system, the dangle of forces that Chiang must balance and manipulate. He was cool enough by then to separate his rage at the massacre from his clinical measurement of Chiang K'ai-shek. He said he was sure that Chiang did not command and specifically order the massacre—but Chiang must have led the field commanders at the front to believe he would not mind if they liquidated Communists in their own fashion. Chiang had personally promised him, Chou, at Christmas in Chungking, safe passage for the New Fourth Army. Chiang had not known of the killings until they were well under way, when Chou himself, who had been reached in his Chungking headquarters by Communist radio from Yenan (which in turn had been contacted by sputtering radio from the killing ground), had reported to the Generalissimo what was happening. The Generalissimo had replied it was impossible, it could *not* be happening. But it was.

Was Chiang lying to you? I asked. "No," said Chou. "Someone was lying to the Generalissimo. But the Generalissimo lies to a certain extent, too. The Generalissimo lies because he wants to strengthen his position among the factions. His success is in utilizing all the contradictions in the country to his own ends. The greater the contradictions in the country, the greater his power. If this tendency continues, he will be a failure."

As for the future, Chou was again clinical, and even more cold. All agreements with the central government he now considered over. The remaining ninety thousand men of the New Fourth Army would withdraw no farther; they would stay on the coast, around Nanking, around Shanghai. They would fight their own war against the Japanese. "It will be difficult to exist without supplies from the government," said Chou, "but we will do it. We will turn to the people for support." As he went on, I began to absorb the departure in his thinking, Communist thinking: There were now, in 1941, two independent governments in China fighting Japan—one the coalition government of Chiang, the other the Communist government. After

the war, they would settle their differences. The gears were engaged. Matters would move to their own appointed climax.

By this time, I had long since come to know Chou En-lai. He had become a full man to me, not one of the personality cutouts with which I filled my journalistic album of famous names made live.

Now, older and wiser, and having been tugged too often by friendship and affection for men I have reported, I am as wary of friendship with the great as a reformed drunkard of the taste of alcohol. But Chou En-lai was, along with Joseph Stilwell and John F. Kennedy, one of the three great men I met and knew in whose presence I had near total suspension of disbelief or questioning judgment. In all three cases I would now behave otherwise, but most of all in the case of Chou En-lai. I can see Chou En-lai now for what he was: a man as brilliant and ruthless as any the Communist movement has thrown up in this century. He could act with absolute daring, with the delicacy of a cat pouncing on a mouse, with the decision of a man who has thought his way through to his only course of action—and yet he was capable of warm kindness, irrepressible humanity and silken courtesy. The Chinese revolution is singularly tongue-tied when it comes to words of tenderness; but even the jargon of Peking refers to Chou En-lai, and Chou En-lai alone, as "our beloved leader." He had a way of entrancing people, of offering affection, of inviting and seeming to share confidences. And I cannot deny that he won my affection completely.

Perhaps the best way of getting at the twinkling character of the man and his charm is to describe the ripening of our relationship into friendship and laughter in 1940, which climaxes at what I remember as the dinner of the pig.

I had begun to cultivate Chou even before I became *Time*'s correspondent, when I was still attached to the Chinese Ministry of Information, trying to free-lance my reporting. As a young reporter, I asked the questions that provoke the quick quotable answers we now see in television interviewing, as, for example: Q: "What did you feel at the moment?" A: "Uh . . . very upset." In the case of Chou, I began by asking: "Sir, you are a Chinese Communist. Are you more Chinese or more Communist?" Chou: "I am more Chinese than Communist." White: "Sir, Russian Communism has abolished religion; if the Chinese Communists come to power, will they abolish religion, too?" Chou: "Chinese Communists respect all religions; all forms of worship will be permitted."

But Chou had the knack that few public men have when confronted by such canned questioning—he would throw a decoy into his answer, an odd teaser of new fact. And if the questioner pursued the decoy, Chou might lead him on and on in conversation in the direction he wanted the conversation to go, to deliver his point.

In my case, Chou was amused by my preoccupation with the folklore of Chinese warlord politics; and he enjoyed himself, sometimes for hours, by his tale-telling and his instruction of this novice. Chou had much time then, for the six- or seven-man staff of the Chinese Communist headquarters in Chungking was a lonesome group; and the visit of a malleable young American reporter gave them an opportunity, as they saw it, of influencing *Time* magazine.

However it was, after a year of growing friendship, Chou En-lai invited me to a banquet in my honor. His headquarters had, presumably, a budget for reaching American opinion; and they would use *Time*'s correspondent as a pretext to eat a meal grander than the noodles, rice, vegetables, occasional chunky meat stews they normally ate at their own mess. So we went to the finest restaurant in Chungking, the Kuan Sun Yuan, to dine—Chou, the Communist headquarters staff and myself, the only Westerner.

The reader must remember now how far I had come from home. I had learned to drink. I had had my first experience in bed with a woman and that was behind me. I knew I had been for months eating nonkosher food, but always tried to delude myself that the meats I ate were lamb, beef or chicken. This habit was my last link to family practice. I was still so pinned to Jewish tradition that to eat pig outright seemed a profanation. Chou En-lai's banquet, however, was extraordinary—first the Chinese hors d'oeuvres, both hot and cold; then the bamboo shoots and chicken; then the duck livers. And then the main course—unmistakably pig, a golden-brown, crackle-skinned roast suckling pig.

"*Ch'ing, ch'ing,*" said Chou En-lai, the host—"Please, please," gesturing with his chopsticks at the pig, inviting the guest to break the crackle first. I flinched, not knowing what to do, but for a moment I held on to my past. I put my chopsticks down and explained as best I could in Chinese that I was Jewish and that Jews were not allowed to eat any kind of pig meat. The group, all friends of mine by then, sat downcast and silent, for I was their guest, and they had done wrong.

Then Chou himself took over. He lifted his chopsticks once more, repeated, "*ch'ing, ch'ing,*" pointed the chopsticks at the suckling pig and, grinning, explained: "Teddy," he said (as I recall it now, for I

made no notes that evening), "this is China. Look again. See. Look. It looks to you like pig. But in China, this is not a pig—this is a duck." I burst out laughing, for I could not help it; he laughed, the table laughed, I plunged my chopsticks in, broke the crackle, ate my first mouthful of certified pig, and have eaten of pig ever since, for which I hope my ancestors will forgive me.

But Chou was that kind of man—he could make one believe that pig was duck, because one wanted to believe him, and because he understood the customs of other men and societies and respected them.

At that time, Chou En-lai was only forty-three years old, and though he was isolated in Chungking, whether he knew it or not, he was at mid passage in his career. His job, as scout in the tower for Mao Tse-tung, was to keep contact with the outside world, at all costs. Later, that assignment would make him Foreign Minister, then Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, its liaison with the entire globe. But at the moment, in Chungking, the assignment was to buffer the Communist Party and its armies from the wrath of Chiang K'ai-shek, and wheedle what aid he could from the central government for the Communist war against Japan.

He conducted this mission from a ramshackle old compound called simply No. 50, Tseng Chia Ai—the fiftieth house on the alley of the Tseng family. It was a shabby place; when it rained, the alley was ankle deep in mud, which was tracked inside all over the reception room. In the reception room were several armchairs and one sofa, spring-broken, lumpy, uncomfortable, all covered with the same coarse blue cloth worn by Chinese peasants and workers. I was to meet in the next five years in that reception room a revolving cast of characters, many of them already famous, others to become even more famous. There I met Tung Pi-wu, a pink-eyed old man, one of the legendary twelve founding fathers of Chinese Communism, who, along with Mao Tse-tung, had gathered for the party's first meeting in Shanghai in July of 1921; no one could have seemed milder, frailer, kindlier than Tung Pi-wu. There I met Yeh Chien-ying, a gay, frolicking man, already a hero for his leadership of the Canton insurrection of 1927, who was to go on to become Chief of Staff of the Red Army and then Minister of Defense; and Lin Piao, a dour man, strategist of the Red Armies that destroyed Chiang K'ai-shek in the civil wars of 1946–1949, Mao's choice for succession until 1971, when Lin struck for the mantle prematurely and was erased. The Communists did not seem to want to confide their Chungking liaison post with

the government to just one man. There were always two. And always, the senior character in the Communist mission in Chungking was Chou En-lai.

The young Communists of Chou's personal staff also went on to fame. His personal favorite, and mine by far, was the most beautiful Chinese woman I ever encountered, Kung P'eng, the Christian-educated daughter of an opium-smoking warlord. She spoke not just flawless but eloquent English, and before being assigned to Chungking had been a fighting guerrilla against the Japanese in North China, a true pistol-packing heroine. Her first husband died in the guerrilla mountains of the north; in Chungking she met and fell in love with a fiery revolutionary journalist named Ch'iao Kuan-hua, who became Foreign Minister of China. I casually employed for a while, as a stringer on Communist affairs, another youngster at Chou's headquarters, called Ch'en Chia-k'ang. He, after the revolution succeeded, went on to become Ambassador to Cairo, Peking's first diplomatic mission in the Middle East, and helped forge the Third World alliance against Israel. There were several others; and those who belonged to Chou, like those who later belonged to Kennedy, were almost a family of politics—a family that came to dominate, and still tenuously monopolizes, China's relations with the outside world.

Chou had credentials rare for a Communist Chinese leader. He was, of course, to begin with, a genuine warrior, like all the other Communist leaders. He had been the insurrectionary leader of the Shanghai uprising of 1927, and barely escaped execution; then been a field commander in the civil wars from 1928 to 1934, and been wounded in battle; then marched the Long March, and skirmished in all its frays in 1934-1935—and had been carried from his horse, sick almost to death, when the Communists at the end of that march had found refuge in the hills of the northwest. There was no question of his physical courage, or his command ability, or his wounds. He did not show his hurts while I knew him, but later, as he aged, he carried his wounded left arm cocked ever more rigidly and stiffly until the day he died. But many other Communist braves could boast similar heroism and bodily punishment.

What set him apart from the others was that he was, by education, a larger man; and by temperament, an elastic man. He had come of a well-to-do mandarin family; been educated not only in an American missionary school in Tientsin, but also in Japan and in Europe; had joined the Communist Party in Europe; had come home and joined the revolution and, at the age of twenty-seven, had, though

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an avowed Communist, become an ally of Chiang K'ai-shek and acting political director of the Nationalists' revolutionary Whampoa Military Academy. The two had broken in the civil wars of the thirties—but it was Chou, supple enough to forget Chiang's massacres, who had arranged the release of Chiang K'ai-shek by his warlord kidnappers in the Sian incident of 1936. He could fight ruthlessly—but when the time came, Chou could give up hatred, which made him unique among Communists. He had, for example, in 1945, pleaded with friends at the American Embassy to be allowed to fly to the United States to visit Franklin Roosevelt and explain the revolution to him; he had been turned down. He had sought to have Communists included with Nationalists in the Chinese delegation to the United Nations in 1945—and been turned down by the Americans again. He had helped design the Geneva conference of 1954, which temporarily halted the Vietnam War. But at Geneva, when he extended his hand in friendship to shake that of American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Dulles humiliated him in public, refusing to shake the proffered hand. It was probably the most expensive display of rudeness of any diplomat anywhere, ever. Chou became a dedicated enemy of American diplomacy for many years; yet still, at the end, he broke with his Long March comrade Lin Piao, who wished to cement China's alliance with Russia. It was Chou who swung Mao's mind to accepting once more the bridge to America that he and Nixon built together. If that bridge endures in peace, it will be Chou's greatest contribution to both peoples.

This world eminence was far in the future when I first knew him. Early in our acquaintance, he would insist on speaking to me only in his choppy English. Later, he grew more relaxed; instead of appearing in his customary neatness, he would wander out to greet me, late for appointments, in baggy rumpled clothes, unshaven. He had a dark, almost Mediterranean face and coloring, and when he unwound, the face became animated with a thousand expressions as he acted out all the parts of a remembered conversation. As my Chinese continued to improve, he began to talk to me in Chinese, with Kung P'eng occasionally attending to translate the more subtle passages in my continuing course in Chinese politics.

Chou had a novelist's art of characterization, and would have made a superlative dramatist. He liked to tell stories. It is very rare that a young reporter meets a great man who has nothing at all to do except play watchman at a political outpost, and who has the human need to gossip about what he learns. Chou, if triggered properly, or if

caught on the proper rainy afternoon, could spin a tale of questions and answers almost Arabic in its dialogue and casual acceptance of cruelties. Example: Several years after the New Fourth Army incident, I was trying to find out what had happened in the court murders in faraway Chinese Turkestan. The local warlord, Sheng Shih-tsai, had murdered Mao Tse-tung's younger brother (in retaliation, so Sheng Shih-tsai said, for the Communists' murder of *his* younger brother). The web of intrigue in faraway Turkestan had proved too much for me to understand even after a two-month trip to that Inner Asia desert of oases, melons, flowers and dancers, so I came to talk to Chou, as a friend. Chou relished a good political problem, and as I remember, his final analysis (with gestures) ran like this: "Why do they tell you that we [the Communists] killed his [Sheng's] brother first? We liked his brother better than we liked him. We could have killed either one, and if we had done the killing we would have killed him, not his brother. They know this and they slander us when they say we killed his brother."

The Communists' information net reached all through Chiang's government and occasionally Chou would tell me of stupidities he found particularly amusing. As, for example, Chiang's projected national mobilization bill of 1943. Chou relished that story: Ho Ying-chin, the Nationalist Minister of War, and H. H. Kung, the Nationalist Minister of Finance, had tried to collaborate in drafting a new mobilization bill that would solve the problems of each. Inflation was raging, the army was short of troops. They agreed, so said Chou, that conscription must now apply to all classes, upper, lower, middle alike. Every young man must go to war—except those who could afford 5,500 dollars in Chinese money (then worth only 250 American dollars) to buy a year's exemption. Since there were no less than *forty million* Chinese of draft age, the two cabinet ministers figured that at least thirty million would buy exemption, thus giving the finance minister billions and billions of dollars a year for his budget; and the war minister would have left a pool of ten million men to draw on. Chou acted all the parts of the dialogue, then burst out: "This is stupid, utterly stupid—but not only stupid, considering they have been in the cabinet for ten years; it shows lack of experience."

There were many such conversations. I do not know whether he was trying to persuade me, as an American correspondent, and through me, *Time* magazine, that Chiang's government was a useless one and the Communists were the wave of the future; or whether he was simply enjoying educating me. I learned much from him and

finally he actually accepted his rôle of teacher. One day he was explaining a particularly intricate point of Chinese subterranean politics and I interrupted to finish his sentence with the answer, which was rude. But he laughed and said that now I was no longer a freshman in China, I was a sophomore and on the threshold of beginning to understand the country. I was flattered by the accolade; I do not know how many times Chou said this to foreigners, but I am told that his ultimate flattery to Secretary of State Kissinger was to tell him that he, too, was finally beginning to understand China.

I retain an irrepressible affection for Chou En-lai still, even though I know he, as any Chinese Communist, would have sacrificed me for his cause, or for the greater glory of Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese people, at any moment when persuasion failed to bring me over. Our personal relationship ended when he returned in 1943 to Communist headquarters in Yenan, the seat of the power he sought to make.

I saw him, of course, again and again in the years 1944 and 1945, but those were severe occasions which I forget, except journalistically. I would rather remember Chou the last two times I saw him, on the occasion of Richard Nixon's visit to China, many years later, in 1972.

The first glimpse of Chou on that visit was in Peking's Great Hall of the People, at a banquet of fine food and elaborate ornamentation, while the orchestra was grinding out such American favorites as "Home on the Range" to honor the American President. The main table, where sat Chou En-lai and Richard Nixon, was surrounded by a ring of lesser tables, where sat other dignitaries; and the rows of tables descended in importance the farther removed they were from the Chou-Nixon table, until they came to the tables where the American journalists, whom Nixon had invited, sat, at the far rear of the hall, which reputedly seats ten thousand. When President Nixon rose to circle the innermost ring of tables of the mighty, I thought I might sneak through the ring of American and Chinese security men at the big table where Chou En-lai sat next to Mrs. Nixon. Nixon's seat was momentarily unoccupied.

I wove my way through the tables and was abruptly stopped by agents of our American Secret Service as well as by Chinese security. I was too determined, in 1972, to accept such a rebuff cheerfully; but as it happened, Chou En-lai and Mrs. Nixon, next to him, saw my predicament simultaneously. Perhaps they were bored with their conversation, for I do not think that Patricia Nixon and Chou En-lai had much in common to discuss. Simultaneously both waved to their

agents to let me through, and each, as I came forward, tried to explain to the other why they had beckoned to me. Chou En-lai, his English by now rusted away, could only say that I was "old friend, old friend," pointing at me. And she, believing that I had approached to talk with her, was saying the same thing. I was amazed that Chou recognized me after twenty-five years, but then I fell into my role as interpreter, trying to interpret Mrs. Nixon to Chou En-lai, and Chou En-lai to the President's wife. I must have hung there awkwardly for two or three minutes, hovering over the President's empty seat, but when Nixon returned, I fled. The conversation between Chou En-lai and Mrs. Nixon is not noteworthy.

I saw Chou for the last time seven days later, after he flew with Nixon down to Hangchow, one of the beauty spots of China, as San Francisco was in America, or Carcassonne still is in France. It was a grisly afternoon, all organized for television crews and cameras, for symbolism and manipulation, with posts and positions roped off, stakeouts set, each journalist assigned his two square feet of observation space. My position was at the end of one of the several moon bridges over the lake, with the CBS and the NBC crews. Nixon and Chou strolled over the bridge, with affected nonchalance, as if it were a chance meeting of old friends who go walking together in the countryside. Nixon, who noticed me first, pointed me out to Chou, and I could not catch what he said. But Chou tried out his English at that point, and said, "But that is Teddy White. He has not come back to China since the liberation." I was angry with the entire manipulative voyage; I had tried without success for twenty years to reach Chou En-lai and ask him if I might have a visa to revisit China, so I shot back: "It's not my fault I haven't been able to come back." At which Chou En-lai, who understood but no longer could speak English easily, shot back a jest in Chinese. My command of Chinese had by then also rusted away, so I relied on the official interpreter, who said that Chou En-lai had responded, "Maybe it's both our faults."

I would like to think the interpreter's translation of his riposte was authentic; it sounded like the Chou En-lai I had once known, who was amused by Westerners' efforts to understand China, yet appreciated the effort. He was willing to admit error in the old days, privately. And his public doctrine—that we Westerners could not understand China and therefore must not meddle in her affairs—was sound. He might have accepted the Kipling paraphrase of that thought: "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." But I like the way he said it better: "Maybe it's both our faults."

I was never to see Chou En-lai again after 1972, but more than thirty years before he had overlapped in my education—in timespan, influence, friendship and bitterness—with another man, who was to make that early year, 1941, memorable not only for its historic dramas but as a turning in my life.

That man was the exact contemporary in age of Chou En-lai. But just as passionately as Chou En-lai believed that the Chinese revolution was irrevocable and irrefutable, and insisted that the Chinese "government" had failed because it could not protect its people, the other passionately believed that it was the duty of the American government not only to protect its own but to reach out and protect the whole civilized world. For the next five years I would walk hand in hand with that second man in the belief that the reach of American power was limitless and the American Century upon us—for that man was my maximum boss, founder and editor of Time-Life-and-Fortune, Henry R. Luce of Chefoo, Shantung and New York, New York. I had, at that point, never met Henry Luce, but he owned my immediate future.

When Harry Luce arrived in Chungking, in May of 1941, he was only forty-three years old, but an authentic press lord, and he knew it. Not only that. He was, in the eyes of the Chinese government, a natural resource—almost as much a resource as the Yangtze gorges from which the government hoped to draw hydropower once they were dammed after the war. Luce was China's single most powerful friend in America, a man who had already spoken out boldly and forcefully for America's entry into the war. Luce believed, and meant to persuade America, that England's fate and China's were her own; that Fascism menaced our civilization as well as theirs. No restraint bound him in using his magazines to spread the message of his conscience.

No visitor I had seen previously in China, no eminent journalist, no diplomat, no Asian eminence, not even Jawaharlal Nehru, was received with the deference given to Luce and his wife, Clare Boothe Luce. Whisked from the airport immediately by a limousine, guest in the mansion of H. H. Kung, banqueted endlessly, sensing his own importance, Luce enjoyed all of it. He was in Chungking for the bombing that followed the day of his arrival—and delighted in it. He wanted to see more, and asked the Generalissimo for permission to visit the war fronts. He was given access almost immediately; a special plane was laid on to take him to Sian, a special train set up, with

spotless seats and dinnerware, to take him to the Yellow River bend that had taken me, two years earlier, five days to reach; and he was treated to a Chinese shelling of the other side of the Japanese-held river.

Yet he was no captive of the government. His curiosity gobbled up fact after fact, and wanted more, more. Conversation with Luce, someone remarked, was like conversation with a vacuum cleaner: He could strip almost everyone clean of all they knew in a first conversation, leaving them exhausted; and the next morning he would have more questions; and more questions at the end of the day.

Luce delighted in his return to China. Only now can I imagine what it must have meant to him: a missionary lad shipped off from China to boarding school in cold New England; returning now as the most powerful opinion-maker and publisher in America, with this beauty as his wife; courted by the Christian government his father had hoped might come about in China.

One morning he commanded my presence and ordered me to get him away from the smothering government escort—and as we mounted rickshaws and sneaked off, it turned out he wanted only to practice his Chinese. He had not spoken Chinese since he was a boy growing up in a Shantung mission compound, but the tongue came back to him, and with glee at rediscovery, he commanded the rickshaw man this way and that, poked in and out of shops, examined prices and stocks, bargained in Chinese with ever-growing gusto. Another evening he canceled a banquet of state and ordered me to assemble whatever graduates of Yenching University I could find, for he wanted to dine with them. His father, Henry Winters Luce, one of the great missionary figures of the century, had helped found that university in Peking as a Christian enterprise and Luce wanted to find out what had happened to Yenching and its graduates since the Japanese occupation. He questioned the Yenching refugees about the Christian condition in China, lectured them on the joint mission of China and America in the modern world, and the evening closed with the note of chapel.

In Luce's mind, the purpose of Christ and the purpose of America joined in a most simple, uncomplicated fashion, and the purpose of both embraced the Chinese people. This emotional skew to his thinking colored all his politics and later, in the fifties and sixties, would make him one of the most vocal, and certainly the most eloquent, of the cold warriors of his time. His Americanism, his patriotism, his unquestioning loyalties, were twenty years later to

become unfashionable; but along with Douglas MacArthur, he was the most vehement and instantaneous flag-waver I have ever known. He and MacArthur, though they disagreed, spoke for the dominant thought mood of their time. Luce's Christianity was simple; he reminded me of the famous Bishop Odo of Bayeux, who insisted on going forth to do battle with the Duke of Normandy's enemies and bounded across the battlefield, wielding a mace (because his scruples forbade him to use a sword), bashing in the skulls of the duke's enemies with a right good will, for the greater glory of Christ. Luce was never in doubt about right or wrong; yet he could occasionally be persuaded of the truth of new ideas when the facts were mobilized. But what ideas he held, his staff was supposed to hold. I, of course, was one of those whose skull was later bashed by Harry Luce, but on first meeting him I was as captivated as by Chou En-lai.

He conquered all Chungking in that ten-day visit. At the height of his powers, burly, magnificently muscled, bursting with energy, his overset brows frowning from under a Panama hat, he struck Chungking like a storm. And in that storm I was swept up. Two days before his departure he turned to me and, in that peremptory half-stammering speech of his, asked me if I could be packed and ready to leave in forty-eight hours. I asked why and he coughed out that I was going home with him to New York. He did not ask me whether it was convenient to leave China at that time or what my plans were. He had decided that I was to be Far Eastern editor of *Time*. Now. So thus, three years after graduating Harvard, I would be returning home to my family in triumph.

We paused in Hong Kong, then stopped for two days in Manila, where I was finally released from the fortnight of endless questioning and interrogation as his China expert. Then came five days of lazy flight across the Pacific by the old Pan American Clipper, stopping each night on the old stepping stones: Guam, Wake, Midway, Hawaii. Each evening, at dusk when the plane landed, he would send me out in a car to examine the island's defenses and find out how well prepared it might be for the war which he, and I, were sure was coming. Then, in the morning, the interrogation again.

Of the trip home, I remember several conversations; one was a short history of *Time* magazine, climaxing with Luce's philosophy that *people* are important, names make news. *Time* had been founded with a picture of a man, "Uncle Joe" Cannon, on the cover. Even the tired businessman who reads *Fortune*, said Luce, wanted to read about people.

The last conversation instructed me in office deportment. We had by the end of the voyage home become friends; I had been instructed to call him "Harry," as he called me "Teddy." Then, as we were coming in to San Francisco, he harrumphed me over, stammered again, and said, "Teddy, you've read all this stuff in business magazines about how the boss's door is always open to everyone?" I said I had, and he continued, "Well, that's not the way I run my magazines. Everybody's door is open to me. But my door is open to people only when I want to see them."

I remember coming in over San Francisco, after almost three years in Asia, and marveling at the sight. There were the automobiles on the Golden Gate Bridge as we slipped low for the landing—shiny little things seen from the air, yellow, red, black, and endless in procession. What a strange, rich country it was, and so far from Asia, and still thinking itself at peace.

I was off from San Francisco directly for Boston to see my family again, arriving in tropical sharkskins and a pith helmet. My family laughed at my costume; and I was annoyed. But I loved them and told them of my promotion and they rejoiced.

But Boston was no longer home, the old ghetto no longer my place. My place was Asia, if anywhere; or New York, if I could not be in Asia; and so I went on to New York, to begin work, within five days of my return to America, in the magic circle of mid Manhattan. There the news system of America is commanded, though the ideas that move it are brought by strangers and wanderers like myself from all across the world. Years later, New York would become my home, and I would live there in another ghetto, the ghetto of men who merchandise news, names, stories and the history of the day, and love it.

It was in the brief summer and fall of 1941 that I first began to learn the main ways and alleys of this new ghetto—in the chambers of *Time* magazine, in the machinery that had grown up around Harry Luce's ideas. There was, on that twenty-ninth editorial floor of *Time*, more of the personality of the editor than in conversation with him. All great editors are men able to see how stories, episodes and personalities flow and merge one into the other to reproduce the pattern of a world that only their own inner eye perceives. Luce insisted that the world, his reporters and his magazine all conform to the pattern his perception traced over random events. What he chose to display of his reporters' reporting was his own personal art. He made instant history of the mosaic fragments of his choice; and his

choice in turn influenced events in that oscillation between fact and report that was later to fascinate me so much.

Luce was never less than warm personally—except when he chose to be absolute autocrat and executioner. His wife Clare would invite me to weekends with the famous at their country home in Greenwich, where I might meet the head of British Intelligence in the United States, famous writers like John Gunther and Walter Duranty, Broadway personalities, various Rockefellers. Luce would drily instruct me as to who was whom and who did what, enjoying both my goggle-eyed wonder and his wife's pleasure in her great parties. But he was, fundamentally, a very serious man. The day after Pearl Harbor I was writing one of *Time* magazine's stories on the episode when he stalked into my cubicle. His father, the missionary, had just died. I was sad for him. He was dry-eyed. He said to me, "He lived long enough to know that now China and America are both on the same side."

It was that particular episode, Pearl Harbor, which released me from the lockup of the desk and the organization and the formal processing of news into story.

That Sunday afternoon I was writing a rehash of the tensions in Asia, shaped by my conviction that, no matter what the Japanese were saying in Washington, we would have to fight them, when the telephone rang. One of my office mates, James Aldridge, who later quit journalism to write novels, lifted the phone, let it drop, and yelled, "Jeezus Christ! The Japs are bombing Pearl Harbor; it's on the radio." We rushed to the news ticker, and it was hammering out a bulletin: *Flash . . . White House Says Japs Attack Pearl Harbor.*

We went back to our office and we looked out the windows from our tower in Rockefeller Center. Down below was the jostle of a Sunday afternoon in mid Manhattan, the streets crowded with automobiles of parents showing their children the Christmas trees and holiday sights of the great city. We made paper airplanes and sent messages sailing through the air to the streets below, saying: "We are at war," or "We are at war with Japan," or "The Japanese are bombing America."

We were gleeful; I most of all. In that first hour none of us knew how badly the American fleet had been damaged at Pearl Harbor. But it was the right war, a good war, and it had to be fought and won. This is the only conviction of mine that has lasted unchanged for thirty-five years: it was better for America to have fought that war and won, than to have let the world be taken by those who killed and had no shame

in killing. Or even worse, to have fought that war and lost.

For myself, I knew it meant release from the desk. I would be back in Asia, where I belonged. But now I would no longer be a sightseer. We, ourselves, were involved. That would change my view.

CHAPTER FOUR

STILWELL: JOCKEY TO A DYING HORSE

I was a full year away from Asia—from the summer of 1941 to the summer of 1942—and returned not as a sightseer but as a war correspondent in uniform.

Somewhere along the way the uniform itself would drag me to a commitment. But I associate the tug with the man who wore the most important uniform in Asia—Lieutenant General Joseph Warren Stilwell, Commanding General of the U.S. Forces in the China-Burma-India theater. Stilwell could not be reported as I had reported other men. He was a military craftsman and patriot, thrust unprepared into an arena of politics where no one had defined the problems and all decisions rested on unpredictables. His anguish, his tragedy were too large for my young experience then to grasp. But, as I slowly came to learn from this good man, I could see that he stood at the very junction of politics and war. That lesson took more than two years to sink in.

I had left New York after Pearl Harbor, assigned to Singapore; but Singapore and the Indies had fallen so swiftly that my ship was diverted to Australia. From Australia, after revisiting MacArthur, I was directed to India, the apparent crisis point in Asia. Rommel was closing with his Afrika Korps on Alexandria in the Middle East; the Japanese had just occupied Burma in the Far East—and the Indians, seeing the Empire caught between these two geopolitical pincers, recognized this as the moment to overthrow the British Raj.

I was in India in the summer of 1942 for two months of violence and uprisings, watching almost all men, even the largest, borne along by events they could do little to control. I visited Jawaharlal Nehru—eloquent, melancholy, fatalistic—moving along to lead the uprising he did not want, yet knew he could not halt. I visited with Field Marshal Sir Archibald Percival Wavell, his adversary, a man already exhausted

at fifty-nine, in command of India, listlessly mouthing clichés about colonials and empire, and moving to crush a revolt he could not understand.

The most poignant of my personal memories of events overbearing purpose or desire came on a sweltering August day—the morning after the Indian Congress Party had voted revolt. I found myself riding in a column of British Bren gun carriers through Chāndni-Chawk, the crowded main way of Old Delhi. Our column was manned by Scotsmen, tough young soldiers from the Glasgow slums, Labor Party all, foul-mouthed good fellows at any level of brotherhood. They hated their effing English officers and the effing Wogs alike, but this morning they had no choice. The street was full of rioters, and bloody, beaten students were waving the green-and-gold Indian Congress banners and screaming, "*Inquulab Zindabad*" ("Freedom Forever"); from the rooftops they were heaving rocks down on us. My heart was with the rioters, but I knew, and the young Scottish soldiers knew, that if, at this moment, British rule was smashed and the Japanese seized India, the war might go on forever—and, moreover, if the protesters overwhelmed us that morning, they would tear us apart with their fingernails. But the Indian students had no guns; and the young Scottish Socialists of the Bren gun carriers began methodically to shoot Indians down from the rooftops, their bodies plopping into the street. In a few minutes the column had "pacified" Chāndni-Chawk, and though it was a bad day's work well done, I approved of it. For me, China was what mattered; my assignment was to get back there and report it; if India fell to revolutionaries, mutineers or the Japanese, there would be no way for America to get aid to China; and so whatever had to be done to keep the link with China had to be done.

Inevitably, thus, on my way back to China I would meet "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, charged with the defense of the Chinese Republic.

Until this time, I had approached the famous men I reported as sightseer, trying to wheedle out of them the choice phrase, anecdote, insight or fact that would illuminate the scenery they dominated. But Stilwell was to be different. He was to be the first American shaper of events I was to observe closely—the leader as the man who must make things happen in the lives of other men. Stilwell was to be trapped in a drama he loathed; he performed superbly in this drama—but as a soldier. No one explained to him that this was a drama of politics and revolution, nor did anyone realize until too late that he had been

miscast. He was the first to recognize this, and as I watched him over the next two years, the excitement lay in that recognition—that it was up to him, by his own leadership, to set policy in which command of troops was the lesser part of his responsibility.

I called to see him first in Delhi. He had flown down to India from China to see whether the August uprising would wipe out his strategic CBI rear base. When, in a few days, it was evident that the British Army could quench the mutiny, he found time to see me.

I was ushered into his office, an enormous suite at the Imperial Hotel; he was smoking a cigarette, and he scowled at me. Stilwell was then fifty-nine—wiry, ugly in the most attractive fashion, his face wrinkled and gnarled, yet full of vitality; to a stranger, a forbidding personality. I flustered my questions: I was en route back to China; he was theater commander; I needed to write about the war. Could he give me a quick overview of the situation I would be writing about or what he planned to do? He assessed me quickly as I wriggled, put down his cigarette, decided he *would* speak to me and said:

"The trouble in China is simple: We are allied to an ignorant, illiterate, superstitious, peasant son of a bitch."

I gulped. I had never heard Chiang K'ai-shek described that way before, not even by Chou En-lai. And then Stilwell went on, bitterness exploding from him.

I did not know him then, or his honor, kindness and candor, as I came to know them later, but his bitterness, as I now reflect on it, was far more than the bitterness of just that month; it was the bitterness of his life. History had cursed him with China. Stilwell was an outstanding command soldier, an infantry tactician, a star in the U.S. Army's exercises of 1940 and 1941, George Marshall's favorite officer. But in the drowsy years before the second war, when the U.S. Army offered little challenge to a restless mind, Stilwell had become the Army's China specialist—had studied its language until he could speak and read it, traveled with warlord armies, become American military attaché in Peking during the first years of China's war with Japan.

That intellectual curiosity had now earned him this present cursed command. Two weeks after Pearl Harbor, Stilwell had been chosen to command America's first blow against Germany: he would head up Operation Gymnast, the planned landings in North Africa, preliminary to the ultimate strike at Europe. Had Stilwell held on to that assignment, his name would have been inscribed at West Point along with those of Eisenhower, MacArthur, Bradley and Patton as one of the great American soldiers of World War II. But Chiang K'ai-

shek in China was, at that moment, petulant, querulous, demanding American aid, indignant as the early weeks of war revealed to him how low his China ranked in America's strategic priorities. Thus, in one of those casual Washington political decisions that so fatally shape other men's lives, it had been decided to placate Chiang K'ai-shek. A distinguished American soldier was promised to assist him—and who else but Stilwell, the Army's China expert? The North African landings were still almost a year away, while Burma was under attack and China desperate; thus Stilwell was trapped by his own past, by the expertise he had made his specialty in time of peace.

He had arrived in Asia just as Burma was falling, British and Chinese troops retreating before the Japanese assault. With no American troops of his own, Stilwell was placed in command of the Chinese divisions, whose morale was already gone. He, an American, would have authority over Chinese troops—authority even to execute officers up to the rank of major. Stilwell discovered quite soon how limited that authority was. The Chinese chief of supply on the Burma front was a General Yu Fei-p'eng, who, in the disaster, tried to use the few trucks of the Chinese Army not to evacuate retreating troops, but to evacuate all the merchandise he could grab for sale in blockaded China. Stilwell wanted Yu Fei-p'eng shot immediately but was told that was impossible; he was the Generalissimo's cousin. When, finally, the front broke totally, Stilwell had walked out on foot, a thirteen-day, 140-mile trek through jungle and mountain, and when he arrived at civilization in India, he had told his first press conference: "I claim we got a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back, and retake it."

He had been finding out why ever since, and when I first met Stilwell in August of 1942, he was just beginning to understand his horrid fate. His overall responsibility had been to modernize and retrain China's armies into a real fighting force; then, specifically, his strategic duty would be to use this modernized army to break the blockade of China by cutting his way back through the Japanese occupying army of Burma; and, ultimately, to create within China a much larger force that would join the Pacific Allies in the grand assault on Japan. It was a soldier's job. But it is better to see Stilwell as the last in the long parade of missionaries, advisers, teachers, Westerners, all of whom, for a century, had been trying to remold the Middle Kingdom and succeeded only in disturbing it. What Stilwell was beginning to learn then, when I first met him, was that all war at its

supreme level is dominated by politics and that no fighting army could be created in China without changing the politics of China.

The root of Stilwell's trouble lay in the accepted political concept of his command: that China was a great power, like England, Russia and America; and that China's "government" was entitled to the same dignities, respect and support as that of the other major Allies. This concept of the Grand Alliance soothed and misled Chinese and American public opinion alike. But Franklin Roosevelt was the President, responsible for realities. Sick and ailing as he was, Roosevelt knew that a President must set priorities, and with all the pressures of a clamorous world on him, as well as war strategies, domestic politics, Congress, Churchill, de Gaulle, Stalin and Tito, Roosevelt set China at a very low priority in his thinking. It was a military matter, to be handed over to military men—with no one reaching beyond combat considerations to the problems of politics and policy. Thirty years later, a succession of generals would all leave for Vietnam, again with no political or policy briefings on the Asian war they must fight—and thus became blind, unlucky failures all. Stilwell, however, was the first of American military theater commanders to be handed an assignment of policy and politics disguised as a combat assignment. It was impossible to make war without politics, as Stilwell soon learned.

The formal definition of Stilwell's assignment was meaningless, because the two principals in the agreement read it differently. Stilwell, the American, was to be "chief of staff" to Chiang K'ai-shek, the Chinese "commander in chief" of this theater of Allied war. What that meant, in Chiang's mind, was that he would tell Stilwell what he needed; and Stilwell would order it up. Stilwell would be like a cashier at a bank. Chiang wanted guns, planes, gasoline, arms, supplies. His American chief of staff would indent for these supplies in Washington, and presto, they would materialize. Over and over again in the past thirty years I have reported on frustrated allies of America, convinced of both American generosity and their own virtue, all of them feeling they knew far better than Americans how America's resources should be disposed of. But there were to be none as demanding as Chiang K'ai-shek—nor as convinced that the American "no-sayer" whom he faced directly, in this case Stilwell, was, individually and maliciously, denying him what the American people, the American press, the American government, rightfully sought to provide.

For Stilwell personally, the clash was exacerbated by Madame Chiang K'ai-shek—a beautiful, tart and brittle woman, more American than Chinese, and mistress of every level of the American

language from the verses of the hymnal to the most sophisticated bitchery. Madame Chiang, always stunning in her silk gowns, could be as coy and kittenish as a college coed, or as commanding and petty as a dormitory house mother. She swished briskly into any room like a queen, and could bustle even sitting down. She was interpreter on many occasions for her husband and Stilwell, and when matters snarled, would take them into her own hands. A typical conference on supplies, which Stilwell recorded in his diary, had taken place just before he came to Delhi, when I first met him. Madame Chiang had dressed Stilwell down over the telephone that afternoon for "sabotaging" a Chinese demand for four-engine bombers and hundreds of transports; then briskly, on her own authority, she called a conference of the two top generals of the Chinese air force, Generals Chou Chih-jou and Mao Pang-chu, and two of Stilwell's own subordinate American generals, Chennault and Bissell. Then, in Stilwell's presence, she went through her shopping list. In Stilwell's words in his diary:

"How many planes do you want, Mao?" she asked. "Two hundred, with twenty percent monthly replacements." "How many do you want, Chennault?" "Three hundred, with twenty percent ditto." "All right," said Madame Chiang, "now we'll tell Washington, and T.V. [Soong] will put on pressure, and General Stilwell can get busy and tell them, too." When Stilwell brought up the limit on stocks of bombs, ammunition and gas, her reply was, "We won't talk about that. That's your job to get it in." Then, when the others had left, like the house mother promising a prize to a good boy if he really was a good boy, she added, "And we're going to see that you are made a *full general!*" To which comment Stilwell added in his diary: "The hell they are."

Stilwell's concept of his mission was, in the beginning, entirely different and rigidly military. His concept was framed by George Marshall, not Franklin Roosevelt. The superlative mind of Marshall saw the grand war in steps. Europe and the relief of England and Russia was first priority. Then came the Pacific, where the Navy and MacArthur's troops would slowly close on Japan and isolate her. Then, third, when the Navy had cleared the ocean, the Americans would land in China and, in combination with a reorganized and retrained Chinese Army, close on Japan, both on the mainland and at home. China was the greatest potential pool of Allied manpower, but that manpower had first to be trained, then re-equipped, then committed to grand action. Stilwell's job was to shape the Chinese armies for combat—to shape them as the continental anvil on which the Ameri-

can Army, as the hammer, could smash Japan to pieces.

It was a simple mission, although enormously intricate, and was, apparently, devoid of politics. But devoid of politics it was not—and the story of how Stilwell was led into those politics was the story of his disaster. If Chinese soldiers could not fight, he would ask why. "Why" was simple: generals stole soldiers' pay; soldiers were not fed; they were sick; they were undernourished. To make them combat ready again meant finding out: Who stole their pay? Why could not incompetent generals be relieved? Or shot? Why could the Chinese government not use Communist troops in a crisis? After all, both were fighting Japanese. Why did Chiang K'ai-shek deploy 200,000 of his best fighting troops not against the Japanese but in blockade of the Chinese Communists? Why? Wherever Stilwell turned for two and a half years there was the same why, the same mystery. And in the end, it always came down to a question of government. An army is an expression of a society and its beliefs; each army reflects the government that sends it out to do battle. Slowly, over the years, it became apparent to Stilwell that China had a government, recognized by America, which did not govern; and as an American, Stilwell came to the awful conclusion that the government of China had to be changed if it was to be made useful to America—even if its chief of state must be shoved aside.

But that is for later.

When I flew back to China, following Stilwell, in the fall of 1942, I found that Stilwell was embroiled in yet another feud. This feud was with my old friend and messmate, the one-time Colonel Chennault of the Methodist dinner mess, now Brigadier General Claire Chennault of the Flying Tigers, commander of the U.S. China Air Task Force.

This was a thoroughly American feud, one whose shadows would reach longer and longer over the years and fashion American military doctrine—for it was a feud over instruments and purposes in war.

Brigadier General Claire Chennault was a man as rich in texture as Stilwell and probably more complicated. Stilwell was pure Yankee; strait-laced; crisp in diction. His sense of duty bound him; whatever George Marshall and the United States needed of him, he would do. Chennault was a Southerner, Texas born and bred, of French descent, as his name indicated; he was dark, almost swarthy, his face seamed with straight-up-and-down lines. Chennault talked with the normal Southern accent, but when he relaxed, as at the poker games to which I was occasionally invited, he fell back into a thick delta dialect which,

to my Boston-trained ear, was almost incomprehensible.

Perhaps the only thing Chennault and Stilwell had in common, beyond their uniform, was their bitterness. Where Stilwell snarled, Chennault smoldered, and both men had been embittered by what befell able and ambitious men in the peacetime U.S. Army. That army, which counted no more than 174,000 men as late as 1939, had been regarded strategically as an American self-defense corps. But that lean and muscular United States Army of the 1920s and 1930s bred military geniuses by the dozen. Their famous names were later to run almost as long as Napoleon's roll call of marshals. In the pinchpenny military of those days, all officers, army or air corps, had to be skilled craftsmen, sparing of manpower and matériel. For some—Eisenhower, Bradley, Stilwell, Clay, Gavin—service of flag and country was primary. Others—like Patton and Chennault—served chiefly for love of the craft, possessed by their fascination with instruments. Chennault's craft was airpower, and his bitterness, like that of Billy Mitchell, his superior, rose from his long and losing struggle to break through budget and bureaucracy to prove what air power could deliver in war. Retired in 1936, he took his skills to China as a mercenary to build Chiang's air force. His master stroke was to organize the American Volunteer Group, the snouts of whose P-40s were painted with the Flying Tiger insignia and who dazzled the world with their performance in the Burma campaign. When Stilwell took command in the early spring of 1942, Chennault was already a figure of world fame.

Stilwell and Chennault despised each other, but their feud was not merely personal. They fought over a conceptual difference about war, a conceptual difference which to this day splits all American defense and war plans. It was the concept of ground war as against the concept of air war.

I backed into the feud inadvertently. *Time* magazine had directed me in early 1943 to write a field study of Chennault, out of which they would carve the story that would run with his portrait on the cover as an authentic hero of America's war. By then the Stilwell-Chennault feud could not be ignored.

I began by asking Chennault, off the record, as an old friend from Chungking days, where and how his great feud with Stilwell had begun. "That whorehouse of mine," he said obliquely, "that's worrying me" (so my notes recorded him as saying). "The boys have got to get it, and they might as well get it clean as get it dirty." From that to the story of his first breach with Stilwell—over a whorehouse! Chen-

nault's early strategy in 1942—how puny and minuscule it now seems in afterlook!—rested on a strike force of less than eighty planes. But sometimes as many as half his planes might be grounded by accidents of casual copulation—ground and air crews both being hospitalized for infections acquired in Kunming's famous Slit Alley. Venereal disease reduced Chennault's combat effectiveness as if his planes had been bombed on the ground. Intolerable. Thus, since he could not pen up his young Americans in stockades, he must recognize their appetites, yet protect their health to keep his planes flying. Therefore Chennault had sent a U.S. Air Corps plane, with a medical crew aboard, over the "Hump" (the spurs of the Himalayas) to India, where twelve nondiseased Indian prostitutes had been inspected, medically cleared and recruited for the service of the China Air Task Force; and had flown them back in an American plane to our forward strike base, where the air and ground crews might dally with them and not be infected. I had never heard of the episode. What was more important, Stilwell had not authorized it, and exploded when he heard of it. Stilwell was the theater commander; he was a puritan. Stilwell knew that the Japanese had whorehouses for their troops; the Prussians had whorehouses for their troops; the French had whorehouses for their troops. But not the U.S. Army, goddamn it; the U.S. Army would not fly whores across the Hump in Air Corps planes; it established no brothels for its men. Chennault wanted only to keep his planes flying and would do anything necessary to keep them in the air, to deliver his message with bombs. Stilwell had the morality of Oliver Cromwell—he was pure, absolutely pure, of graft, adultery, lying, thieving, or any transgression of the Ten Commandments. Such men served the United States Army in those days. Both were necessary—but Chennault had to close down his whorehouse.

The episode was both amusing and trivial; but it served to set off the difference in the two characters, both of them American absolutists. And the two characters colored a far greater and infinitely more important difference: a difference in the concept of war and power, a difference that has run through American geopolitical strategy for all the years since.

Chennault was an absolutist of air power. He believed, and in this he was proven correct, that air power could destroy Japan. Though he was never to participate in the great holocaust over Japan's burning cities, he knew Japan was uniquely vulnerable from the air. And he knew that he, with his few planes, was uniquely situated on the plateau of Southwest China to hit Japan's naked and exposed rear. In 1942 and 1943 he was the only American commander—except the

U.S. submarine commanders—who could reach Japan's interior sea lanes. For Chennault, China was simply a platform, speckled with the bases from which his planes could take off to rowel Japan. His was a surgical concept of war, China a table for his instruments.

No one could have been more pleased by Chennault's concept of war than Chiang K'ai-shek. Chennault's message to the Chinese was simple: Get Washington to give me enough planes, and I will destroy Japan as you rest from your exertions. Chennault and the Chinese in Washington thus became palace allies at the White House, to overturn the strategy of Chennault's nominal superior, theater commander Stilwell.

Where Stilwell broke with Chennault, intellectually, was in his practical assessment of where Chennault's air strategy might lead. Stilwell was convinced that if Chennault's air strikes punished the Japanese as severely as promised, the Japanese would have to react. If Chennault ripped out Japan's interior sea lanes, the Japanese would have to protect their entrails by striking at the American air bases in East China—and the Chinese armies defending those bases simply could not hold. Stilwell was as absolute as Chennault in his insistence on the need for battleworthy, motivated Chinese ground forces. Thus, then, it appeared imperative to Stilwell that he first build such Chinese armies, equipping and training them to fight Japanese. To Chennault this strategy appeared not only of insufficient daring, but also stupid: he, Chennault, had the opportunity no other Allied general then possessed to gut-punch the Japanese where they were most vulnerable; the opportunity must be used.

The argument between the two generals, like the argument between the British (Montgomery) and the Americans (Bradley, Patton) in the fall of 1944, hinged on supplies. The quarrels of warriors usually begin with the accounting of supplies, and only later escalate to matters of spirit and politics, but the accounting of supplies in China was particularly grotesque.

From the spring of 1942 on to the spring of 1945, all the supplies for beleaguered China, and all its forces, both American and Chinese, came in over the Hump. When one flew the Hump, it was high romance—sorties of blockade runners, little C-47s and later C-46s, ducking Japanese planes by darting into mountain-stuffed clouds, a handful of American boys, itching, scratching, sick, malarial, sometimes cracking under the strain they said made men "hump-happy." ("Yonder lies Tibet," they would say, pointing out snow-topped landmarks.)

But on the ledgers of war they were simply cargo carriers of the

Air Transport Command, and their cargo was the substance of a bookkeeper's quarrel. Hump flights had started in April of 1942, after the Japanese seized Burma and blocked the land route. From eighty tons a month the lift figure rose to three hundred tons a month by fall; then jumped with increasing manpower and planes to three thousand tons a month by early 1943. Two or three thousand tons a month, however, at the time of the great Chennault-Stilwell quarrel, was nothing. China had 500 million people; an army of at least four million and possibly twice that number, for no one knew; a war industry with endless needs; and an inflation which alone demanded an airlift of hundreds of tons of paper currency, printed in America. Thus Chiang K'ai-shek needed all the tonnage for himself. But Chennault also needed all the tonnage or more just to keep his strike command flying. And Stilwell, too, needed all of it or more to retrain and re-equip the Chinese armies for George Marshall's strategy. "Trying to manure a ten-acre field with sparrow shit" is what Stilwell called his nominal responsibility for dividing the cargo among all claimants. When, in February of 1943, the old cargo carriers had threaded the Himalayan corridors with 3500 tons of supplies, Chennault had been promised 850 tons for his air force; he had received only 330 tons. "I lie awake at night, dreaming gasoline," he said to me. "My stomach is getting nervous. I used 40,000 gallons this past ten days, and I got only 17,000 gallons in." There was no way of satisfying Chennault's appetite; nor Chiang's; nor Stilwell's.

By May of 1943, Franklin D. Roosevelt had to intervene in the three-way dispute. Both Stilwell and Chennault were summoned to Washington, where the supreme American warlord made the grand decision. The quarrel between Stilwell and Chennault, with Chiang K'ai-shek backing Chennault, seemed simple—a matter of tonnages. A technical solution to a political problem is always seductive, and the British, the Chinese and the palace strategists of Roosevelt all agreed that Chennault's way was easiest. Roosevelt thus decided that 10,000 tons a month must immediately be shipped over the Hump; told that it was impossible, he decreed 7,000 tons a month must be airlifted in July, rising to 10,000 by year end. Chennault promised that with enough tonnage he could sink 500,000 tons of Japanese merchant shipping by Christmas, ten percent of all Japan possessed; and in return was promised 4,500 tons of Hump supplies for his air force alone, with Chiang and Stilwell left to squabble over the remainder. At the game of palace politics Stilwell was hopelessly outsmarted. "My point [to Roosevelt]," wrote Stilwell in his diary after the May conference, "was that China was on the verge of collapse economical-

ly. . . . That the first essential step was to get a ground force capable of seizing and holding air bases, and opening communications to China from the outside world. . . . They [Chennault's planes] will do the Japs some damage, but at the same time will so weaken the ground effort that it may fail. Then what the hell use is it to knock down a few Jap planes?"

But Chennault had his way, and, by the end of the war, claimed to have sent to the bottom two million tons of Japanese shipping. His was, without doubt, one of the spectacular feats of the Pacific war, yet there remains in my mind, still, the thought that if Stilwell had had his way, the Communists might not have won China—or if they had, would have won as our allies or at least not regarded us as enemies.

Looking back now, I can see in the Chennault strategy—as in the strategy of Curtis LeMay and H. H. ("Hap") Arnold—one of the roots of America's formidable, yet musclebound, strength. Airpower was so tempting a concept: swoop and strike; let economists set the strike targets. To fight from the air is so clean and so logical—as neat a form of combat as football, where the goal posts and markers are clearly defined on the gridiron. The concept of American air power as the most American form of superiority continued for decades, until the final disaster in Vietnam.

I was among those early seduced by airpower in World War II, and not simply out of my friendship with Claire Chennault. True, he had befriended me years earlier, when I was lonely in Chungking and he self-exiled. True, he favored me and let me fly on any mission liable to make a good story whenever I asked to join the bombers. But he was an extraordinarily persuasive man in his mumbling way. If total victory was sought, total annihilation of the enemy's cities and production lanes was necessary. The plane was the instrument, in Japan as in Germany. What other purpose was there in a war, Chennault would ask, except to get the enemy? Chennault loved the instruments.

I would not say that it was Stilwell who persuaded me otherwise—nor can I say when it was that I went over to Stilwell's side of their argument. Perhaps my shift began with the questions that grew in my mind. What if the purpose of war is not just to "get the enemy," but to defend what one sets out to defend as well? What if the preservation of a plateau of resistance depends as much on politics as on armies? What if those politics are more important than immediate combat opportunities? What if you lose what you began to defend by the manner of winning?

These were quite unshaped questions in my mind in the spring of

1943, although they had begun to nag. I was no longer a sightseer nor yet a Harvard historian. I was in uniform, my own brothers (one in the Pacific, one in Europe) were actually in the fight, pawns in the game I wrote about. Even as a correspondent, I was being forced to take a position, as most correspondents knowingly or unknowingly do. Without any pressure at all from Stilwell, I now know I was coming down on his side against Chennault. I was beginning to believe that the Chinese government was totally incapable of governing. China was not just a platform, from which we exercised our instruments; China was There. In and of itself it was enormous, mystifying, cruel—and it was as much our purpose to befriend what was decent in these changing people as to use their territory as a platform to destroy Japan. In the long shaft of afterlight, I now see what Stilwell was trying to do. He was trying to find a responsible government to deal with—a task that should not be forced on generals in uniform.

It was the Honan famine that transferred me from agreement with Chennault to commitment to Stilwell. It should have taught me, even then, how hopeless Stilwell's task was, and how he would come to his end. Yet what the famine taught me immediately was more than that: it taught me of anarchy and order, of life and death. Of all marks on my thinking, the Honan famine remains most indelible.

It happened in the winter of 1943.

The scene, Honan, was a province about the size of Missouri, but inhabited by thirty-two million peasants, who grew wheat, corn, millet, soybeans and cotton. Honan was not a backward province like mountainous Shansi or a Westernized province like coastal Kiangsu. It was a fine, flat plain, resembling Iowa in its rolling sweep, except that the soil was not the rich black loam of the Iowa prairie, but powdered yellow loess which, when wet with rain, oozed with fertility. And which, when the rains did not come, grew nothing; then the peasants died. The rains had not come in 1942, and by 1943, Honan peasants, we heard in Chungking, were dying.

Famines come and go in China's history. They are like earthquakes or hurricanes or the changes of dynasty. Men dated family histories by famines. But what a famine was, I did not know—nor did I know that the Honan famine of 1943 was one of the worst in modern history. But it sounded as if it would make a story.

So, then, at the end of February 1943, I flew to North China again (with my friend Harrison Forman of the London *Times*), and won permission to travel the Lunghai railway from Paochi through

Sian to the gap. The gap was the pass through which the Yellow River flowed and the railway ran. Here, the Japanese artillery on the north bank of the Yellow River would sporadically shell the rail line on the southern bank and deny exit through the pass, which was the main entry to Honan.

The station at the gap, where we spent the evening, stank of urine, stank of shit, stank of bodies—and all around us were acres of huddled peasants. The peasants were bundles of flesh lying in the cold on the ground, waiting for the next train to take them east, to the rear area and food. Some were swathed in blankets, some in padding. Many wrapped their heads in towels against the cold or, occasionally, wore a fur hat, earmuffs down. They had fled in their best clothes, and the old bridal costumes of middle-aged women, red and green, smeared with filth, flecked the huddle with color. They had fled carrying of their best only what they could—black kettles, bedrolls, now and then a grandfather clock. What they could sell, they were exchanging for paper money, or bargaining away at the food stalls, which cooked rice or meat over charcoal fires, spitting blue flame when the box bellows were pumped. Babies cried; but no one paid any attention, even if a baby was crying in the arms of a lifeless woman lying on the ground. Soldiers patrolled the mob as if they were cattle—else they would have stampeded for the food or to board the trains which rolled at night.

In the morning a handlebar car was ready for us. The Japanese shelled only real trains; three refugee trains a night made it across the gap, but a pumpcar, with two soldiers at each handle, was too small a target for the Japanese to shoot at by daylight. And thus, bundled in a soldier's padded robe, seated in the cold wind on an open pumpcar, I traveled thirty miles that day as if I were in a box at the opera, or a general reviewing his troops. But I was reviewing a famine.

There was, of course, much blood. But blood is not what marks a famine. The blood was from the debris of the refugee trains, the people who had fallen off the flatcars, or fallen from the rooftops of boxcars because their fingers froze on the night run and the numbed fingers could not hold their grip. First a man, lying by the rail line, still alive, crying, with his leg severed at the shin and the shinbone sticking out like a white cornstalk. He must have fallen under the wheels of the train. Then another man, still alive, his hip mangled and bloody. I forced the pumping soldiers to stop the car this time; but I did not know what to do, and so gave the man sulfanilamide, water, money, and promised to find a doctor to send to him.

The blood, as I say, was not my chief distress; it was my inability

to make any sense of what I was seeing. In a famine, where no one kills but nature, there are no marks on the body when people die; nature itself is the enemy—and only government can save from nature. I could not understand this at the beginning.

All day, along the railway tracks, as far as I could see, trailed an endless procession—solitaries, beads of families, or groups. They walked in the cold, and where they dropped of hunger or cold or exhaustion, there they lay. There were the wheelbarrows, piled high with family goods, father pushing, mother pulling, children walking. Sometimes between the shafts of the wheelbarrow hung a babypouch, with the baby peering black-eyed up into the cold; sometimes fathers hung their babies from pouches around their necks, papoose fashion; old ladies hobbled with bound feet; sometimes young men carried their mothers piggyback on their shoulders. No one stopped in the trudging procession on either side of the tracks. If children cried over the body of a father or a mother, they were passed, soundlessly. Some young men rode bicycles, others carried all their possessions slung over their shoulders on sticks like Huck Finn. I was seeing people in full flight where no armed man pursued.

I was glazed with the sight when I arrived in Loyang, the provincial capital of Honan; and there at the station, in the dark, they were packing refugees into boxcars like lumber, stacking them together so they could not move, cursing them aboard the car roofs, with fathers hauling children up by the hand, dangling like packages, as they swung aloft for the night run over the gap. And again, the stink of urine and bodies; then through the deserted streets to the Catholic mission.

Its master was Bishop Thomas Megan, of Eldora, Iowa, a stocky, cheerful, healthy man, devoutly Catholic and American. I learned in the next two weeks that he was not only a good man but an effective one, for he was my thread to the Christian missionaries, and the Christian missions were the only connection to reason as I understood it. The Christian missionaries had come to spread the gospel—in rivalry. But buried in the gospel is a message of kindness. Now, in this theater of death, the missionaries were partners in charity, Americans joining with Europeans, Catholics with Protestants. Megan was Irish-American Catholic; two Italian Catholics, Father Fraternelli and Dr. Danielli were his liaison in Chengchow; and though Americans and Italians were killing each other in Europe, here in Honan they were united in charity. In Chengchow, the Italian Catholics were joined by Mr. Ashforth, an American fundamentalist, in their hopeless struggle

against desolation. What outside relief came in, came through the missionaries; and where we located them on our travels they were beleaguered, with crowds around mission compounds, children and women sitting at their gates, babies dumped each morning at their threshold to be gathered into makeshift orphanages. Missionaries left their compounds only when necessary, for a white man walking in the street was the only agent of hope, and was assailed by wasted men, frail women, children, people head-knocking on the ground, groveling, kneeling, begging for food, wailing, "*K'o lien, k'o lien*" ("Mercy, mercy"), but pleading really only for food. The handful of missionaries who staked out the Christian underground in the area of famine were the only thread of sense—the sense that life is precious.

Of their nobility there was no doubt; also of their futility. Ever since Caesar and Christ delivered their messages to Western civilization, government has rested on order and mercy. The Christians wished to deliver mercy; but what they tried to do was futile because government provided no order.

With Megan, we set out on horseback through the winds of February and March, because he felt we should see the people dying. As he rode ahead, he chanted—and he taught me to say the Pater Noster in Latin each morning. In one abandoned Catholic chapel in a deserted village, overborne by tragedy, I kneeled for mass and felt no profanation of my own heritage. On the road, to keep my spirits up, Megan taught me to sing the Requiem for the dead: "*Requiem aeternam,*" he would sing out, and when I got it right, he would teach the next phrase: "*dona eis, Domine*"; and so on. Then we would sing together, in responsive verses, he from his leading horse, I from the following horse, mourning over what we saw.

What we saw, I now no longer believe—except that my scribbled notes insist I saw what I saw. There were the bodies: the first, no more than an hour out of Loyang, lying in the snow, a day or two dead, her face shriveled about her skull; she must have been young; and the snow fell on her eyes; and she would lie unburied until the birds or the dogs cleaned her bones. The dogs were also there along the road, slipping back to their wolf kinship, and they were sleek, well fed. We stopped to take a picture of dogs digging bodies from sand piles; some were half-eaten, but the dogs had already picked clean one visible skull. Half the villages were deserted; some simply abandoned, others already looted; spring compost rested in heaps, untended. To hear a sound or see a person in such a village was startling: an old man tottering through the street all by himself; or, in another village, two

women shrieking at each other with no one else in sight, where normally there would be a crowd to watch them scold—and what were they arguing about in death? One saw, as one traveled, people chipping bark from trees, with knives, scythes and meat cleavers. They were stripping bark from all the elms that warlord Wu P'ei-fu, the tree-lover, had planted, because you could grind the bark and eat it.* The trees would then die and be chopped down for firewood; perhaps all China had been deforested that way.

The orphanage of central government General Tang En-po stains memory with its smell. Tang En-po was an able general; he had fought well in his first two years of war, 1937-1939, hated Japanese, was loyal to the cause. The perimeter of the war area to which he had now been promoted ran along the line between the belt of famine and the belt of Japanese occupation. Tang was, I think, a good person. He forced all his officers to accept one famine orphan each in their quarters; all his soldiers' rations were cut one pound a month to give the extra pound to the starving. Also, he had ordained this orphanage, which I was invited to visit. It stank worse than anything else I have ever smelled. Even the escorting officer could not stand the odor and, holding his handkerchief to his nose, asked to be excused. These were abandoned babies. They were inserted four to a crib. Those who could not fit in cribs were simply laid on the straw. I forget what they were fed. But they smelled of baby vomit and baby shit, and when they were dead, they were cleared out.

So I saw these things, but the worst was what I heard, which was about cannibalism. I never saw any man kill another person for meat, and never tasted human flesh. But it seemed irrefutably true that people were eating people meat. The usual defense was that the people meat was taken from the dead. Case after case which we tried to report presented this defense. In one village a mother was discovered boiling her two-year-old to eat its meat. In another case a father was charged with strangling his two boys to eat them; his defense was that they were already dead. A serious case in one village: the army had insisted that the peasants take in destitute children and an eight-

*In a famine, almost anything becomes edible and can be ground, consumed and converted to energy by the human body. But it requires the terror of death to provoke the imagination to eat what, hitherto, is unedible. Ground elm bark, apparently, was edible, as were ground straw and chaff, roots and scum algae, if dried. What the peasants did was to dry out anything that seemed to be alive, then grind it, and bake it in hotcakes. The doctor of the Italian Catholic mission in Chengchow gave me a nauseating clinical description of the obstructions, illnesses and absorption processes of the human body as he saw inoperable peasants carried to his clinic. Cottonseed cake, of all the inedibles, was, apparently, the most nutritious food; but it created intestinal obstructions and reactions difficult to comprehend.

year-old boy had been imposed on a peasant family. Then he disappeared. And on investigation, his bones were discovered by the peasant's shack, in a big crock. The question was only whether the boy had been eaten after he died or had been killed to be eaten later. In two hours in the village, we could not determine the justice of the matter; anyone might have been lying; so we rode on.

What appalls me most, as I read back into my past and the notes of my trip, written each evening, is my increasing callousness. At first I was frightened; and of course, the matter was too large for grief. But then I became increasingly hard. Riding a horse through a cluster of beggars lying in wait for you in a village street was a serious matter, dangerous. If you stopped, they might tear the horse down and eat it, and then you yourself would be left on foot with the starving. So I learned to flog my horse to a gallop through any cluster of people, sometimes whipping hands off, sometimes throwing out handfuls of peanuts or dried persimmons to make a safe getaway, and sometimes casting Chinese dollars into the wind to decoy them with paper. My notes became less colorful, more analytical, more statistical, as I tried to find out what happened.

Chengchow was the epicenter of the famine and also the seat of the Italian Catholic mission. The snow was falling as we came into Chengchow, a powder snow, and it was falling on the hunger-stricken who slept in the courtyard of the mission. The snow continued next day as we continued our inspection on a walk through the city. There had been 120,000 people in Chengchow before the war; now its population was down to something over 30,000. Each day, the count of the dead ran between 150 and 180 corpses. And those who remained fluttered through the streets in rags, like scarecrows, whining and crying, or stumbling in silence. Nor was it always easy to tell the quick from the dead. One saw a wheelbarrow trundled through the snow, and the body on it was jiggling as it bumped; but then one realized that the flopping of the hands and legs was mechanical, and it was a dead body being carried off for dumping. We found a man in the gutter and Father Fraternelli shook him to see whether he was alive; the man stirred under the snow and murmured. We pressed paper dollars into his hands; his fingers curled on the bills, and then uncurled. We got him to his feet, and he staggered, so we were stuck with him. A woman with a crying baby came by and we conscripted her with money to help us—to help the man to the mission compound, where he could lie in the courtyard and might be fed. She tried to help him, but her baby fell; then she lifted the baby again, and supported

the leaning man, and they wandered off to the mission station, while we went on to the relief station, where the missionaries had organized food. Food was sacks of flaked bran, and with the proper tickets the supplicants would get enough bran to give them six ounces a day till the next handout. But since it was obvious that there was not enough bran for all those in line, we left before the expected riot broke out.

From then on, I tried to work my mind, rather than my emotions, to understand what had happened.

What had happened became slowly clear; and anywhere on the chain of linking causes one could become morally indignant. The war was the first cause. If the Japanese had not made war, then the Chinese would not have had to cut the dikes of the Yellow River to stop them by switching the river's course. Then, perhaps, the ecology of North China would not have changed. Or, perhaps, food might have been packed in from food-surplus areas. But in addition to the war had been the drought. That was nature's guilt. Rains had not come in 1942, and so the fields had not produced their normal wheat and millet. At this point, men had become guilty—either for what they did or for what they failed to do. And here, then, I found my indignation point—at what purported to be the government of China; or at the anarchy that masqueraded as government. For though the famine had come from the heavens, in the worst drought since the reign of Emperor Kuang-hsu in 1893, death might have been avoided had government acted. But this death was man-made.

Night after night, I wrote up my notes after talking to local officials, as a political pollster writes up his notes in America today. And the only verdict was that the Chinese "government" had let these people die, or ignorantly starved them to death. The government was fighting a war against Japan; it was relentless in collecting taxes for the war. But since it did not trust its own paper money, its armies in the field were instructed to collect taxes in grain and kind for their own support. ("If the people die," said an officer to me, "the land will still be Chinese. But if the soldiers starve, the Japanese will take the land.") What the army had done in Honan was to collect more in grain taxes than the land had raised in grain. They had emptied the countryside of food; they had shipped in no grain from grain-surplus areas; they had ignored the need of the people to eat.

Technically, I began to compile statistics *in minimo*, noting the yield of wheat per *mu* wherever I could find a peasant willing to talk. A *mu* is one sixth of an acre and I would ask how many pounds per *mu* the peasant had raised. Eight pounds? Twelve pounds? Twenty

pounds? The army's tax, I found, was usually equivalent to the full crop, but in some cases it was higher—and where the grain tax was higher than the yield, peasants were sometimes forced to sell animals, tools, furniture, for cash to make up the difference. Moreover, the peasants were required to feed the army's animals when they marched; and though I was told that peasants generally cheated and lied to officials, nonetheless, said one civilian official of his peasants, "It's very hard to make them give grain to army horses when I know they're eating straw themselves." And then came the tax for the civilian government officials. Each civilian official was allotted four and a half pounds of grain a day to feed his family, however large; and in army units soldiers were supposed to get two pounds a day. Where units were under strength, army storehouses bulged with surplus grain—which officers sold for their own profit, and which missionaries and good officials bought from the black market to feed the starving.

One night, I sat at an army headquarters, the safest place to be, and several peasant officials asked entrance to see the foreigners. The room was heated by charcoal pans and lit by candles. The local officials held papers in their hands which they asked us to deliver to Chiang K'ai-shek in Chungking—an accounting of what their district had grown and what it had paid in taxes. Of their county of 150,000 people, 110,000 had absolutely nothing to eat; about 700 a day, they guessed, were dying. We asked one of them whether he owned land. Yes. How much? Twenty *mu*. His harvest last fall? Fifteen pounds per *mu*. His tax? Thirteen pounds per *mu*. The commander became furious and yelled at the local official, who then handed him a copy of the plea he had written for us. The officer pocketed it. Then he demanded that we yield him our copy. I said no. He said yes. It was very ugly for a minute; then I gave him the papers, because we had nowhere else to go if he threw us out into the night; and if we refused, his anger would be vented on the peasants when we passed on.

Statistically, putting it together, county after county, village after village, it appeared to us that in the forty worst-hit counties still lived eight million people. And then there were fringe counties, where others were dying. Extrapolating from sights we had seen and the figures of death that local officials had given us, we could guess two or three million people had fled on the refugee trail; and another two million had died. We calculated that since we stood there in March, and the new crops, if they came through normally, would not come through until May and June, another two or three million would die. I concentrated my last week in the famine area on estimating figures.

My best estimate was five million dead or dying—which may have been twenty percent off the mark, one way or the other. But figures that large become statistics, thus forgettable. My sharpest memory is not of the figures I assembled, nor even of our own callousness in the probing of the disaster, but a glimpse, at evening as we were riding, of two people lying in a field sobbing. They were a man and his woman, and they were holding each other in the field where they lay, intertwined to give warmth to each other. I knew they would die and I could not stop; but it seemed to me that it was a loving if tragic way to end a hopeless life, curled with one's wife against the cold and the indifferent world, on hard soil, in snow, still committed to each other.

What I saw was anarchy. Anarchy is a condition where no order prevails. The government in faraway Chungking had decided in October that it would remit the Honan grain tax. This was either ignorance or hypocrisy, for the locals had already collected the grain tax of the fall harvest of 1942 and, thus, the central government was remitting the tax on next year's crop, not yet even in sight. The government in Chungking had appropriated two hundred million paper Chinese "dollars" for famine relief in Honan but had shipped in only some eighty million, and that in hundred-dollar bills, to the famine area. The government banks, however, would discount their own currency; for a one-hundred-dollar bill, they would give back only eighty-three dollars in small bills—singles, fives and tens.

Some army commanders sold the surplus food of their troops to refugees, and made fortunes. But some unit commanders put their troops on half rations or, like Tang En-po, set up army orphanages for young children. Some civilian officials deducted taxes due before giving peasants their handout. Other officials wept with shame. There was no administrative control to enforce what the nominal government said should be done to help the peasants.

Fundamentally, there was no idea that could embrace what was happening—no idea, even a Chinese idea, that could hold human beings together. Compassion, kinship, customs, morals, were swept away. Families sold their children; nine-year-old boys brought four hundred Chinese dollars, four-year-old boys two hundred dollars. Adolescents husky enough fled from home to join the army, where they could be fed; brothelkeepers came from the outside to buy girls.

Food was the only idea, hunger the only command. Food was currency, and the greedy used it like a club. Speculators now came in early spring with their own sacks of food and paper money to buy up land. Land that yielded up to twenty or thirty pounds of wheat per

mu could be bought, and was being bought, for the equivalent of sixteen to eighteen pounds of wheat in outright spot payment.

One could hold on to reason only by identifying, here or there, the individual officers or officials or leaders who were senselessly trying to do good. In Chengchow an official gave refugee families a red-ink chop on a patch of cloth, which entitled them to free passage on the railway to the east—if they could get to the railhead. But he had no food to give them with the passage patch. Even at their best, people were cruel. On the fringe of the famine area was a military academy for young officer trainees, and several were so carried away by the general barbarism that they had looted an abandoned village. This infuriated their commander, Hu Tsung-nan, and he ordered that three of the young looters be buried alive in sand. Which was done.

It is easy to recreate from my notes an animal theater. But these were not animals. These were people descended from one of the great cultures of the world; even the most illiterate had grown up celebrating the festivals and rituals of a culture that set order above all else. If they could not find order from their own kind, they would accept order from whoever offered it. Had I been a Honan peasant I would have acted as they did when, a year later, they went over to the Japanese and helped the Japanese defeat their own Chinese troops. And I would have, as they did in 1948, gone over to the conquering Communists. I know how cruel Chinese Communists can be; but no cruelty was greater than the Honan famine, and if the Communist idea promised government of any kind, then the ideas of mercy and liberty with which I had grown up were irrelevant.

I chose to return from the north by an old green postal bus, tracing again my 1939 route over the mountains—and there again was the spectacle of the peaceful interior in springtime, the white of apple blossoms, the pink of the cherry trees, the deep rose of the peaches. In Szechwan, the barley was already ripe for harvesting, the wheat dark green and coming to head, the lowland paddies pooled with water just before the rice planting. Honan and the dead were beyond the range, only a few hundred miles away; but here men were insulated from the horror and no one knew.

In Chungking, literally no one had any sense of dimension about what was happening in Honan. By the time layer upon layer of officials in Honan had covered their tracks, and layer upon layer of reports had been softened on their way up to Chungking, not even Chiang K'ai-shek knew there was anything more than a food shortage

for which he had appropriated two hundred million dollars in paper money.

I was uncontrollably indignant as I tried to reach Chiang K'ai-shek with the story: I ran about screaming, in almost insane fashion, "People are dying, people are dying." And I probably would have screamed bootlessly had not the general anarchy up there in Honan let the American press be accidentally mobilized. So impatient had I been to get the story out from the famine area that I had filed it raw from Honan, from the first telegraph station en route home—Loyang. By regulation, like any press dispatch, it should have been sent back via Chungking to be censored by my old companions in the ministry, who would certainly have stopped it. This telegram, however, was flashed from Loyang to New York, via the commercial radio system in Chengtu. Either the system had broken down, or some unknown telegraph key-tapper at the Loyang telegraph office had been pushed by conscience to scoff at regulations and route the dispatch to New York, direct and uncensored. Thus, when the story broke, it broke in *Time* magazine, of all places—the magazine most committed to the Chinese cause in all America. Madame Chiang K'ai-shek was then in the United States, and the story infuriated her; she asked my publisher, Harry Luce, to fire me; but he refused, for which I honor him. Our own quarrel would come later.

In Chungking I became controversial overnight; I was denounced by some officials for avoiding censorship, and accused by others of having plotted with Communists in the telegraph administration to slip my story out. I reported to Stilwell through army intelligence. I reported to the American Embassy. I reported to the Chinese defense minister (who told me, baldly, that either I was lying or others had lied to me). I besought help from the head of China's powerless legislature, who said that only Chiang K'ai-shek could act; I was told the same by the governor of Szechwan, a kindly man. It took five days to get through to Chiang K'ai-shek, and then only with the help of his sister-in-law, the sainted widow of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. She had family rank, being one of Madame Chiang K'ai-shek's older sisters, and it was she who insisted the dictator receive me. Madame Sun Yat-sen was physically a dainty woman, but her spirit was hardened by the revolutions she had lived through. She stiffened me for the meeting with a last note, in which she set up the appointment. ". . . I was told," she wrote me, "that he [Chiang] was very weary after his long tedious inspection tour and needed a few days rest. But I insisted that the matter involved the lives of many millions. . . . May I suggest that you

report conditions as frankly and fearlessly as you did to me. If heads must come off, don't be squeamish about it . . . otherwise there would be no change in the situation."

Chiang received me in his dark office, standing erect and slim, taut, holding out a stiff hand of greeting, then he sat in his high-backed chair, listening to me with visible distaste because his meddling sister-in-law insisted he had to. I talked of the dying; then of the taxes; then of the extortions. He denied that the peasants were being taxed: he had ordered that taxes be remitted in distress areas. I quoted peasants, and he said to one of his aides, "*K'an wai-kuo jen, shuo le*" ("They see a foreigner and tell him anything"). It was obvious he did not know what was going on. I tried to break through by telling him about the cannibalism. He said that cannibalism in China was impossible. I said that I had seen dogs eating people on the roads. He said that was impossible. But there I had him. I had sensed I would need corroborative evidence and so I had asked Harrison Forman to accompany me, for he had photographs of famine conditions. Forman fumed in the anteroom as I spoke to the Generalissimo, but when the Generalissimo denied that I had seen dogs eating people, Forman was summoned. His pictures clearly showed dogs standing over dug-out corpses. The Generalissimo's knee began to jiggle slightly, in a nervous tic, as he asked where this picture had been taken. We told him. He took out his little pad and brush pen and began to make notes. He asked for names of officials; he wanted more names; he wanted us to make a full report to him, leaving out no names. In a flat manner, as if restating a fact to himself, he said that he had *told* the army to share its grain with the people. Then he thanked us; told me that I was a better investigator than "any of the investigators I have sent on my own." And I was ushered out twenty minutes after entering.

Heads, I know, did roll, starting, I assume, with those at the hapless telegraph office of Loyang, which had let slip to America the embarrassment of death in Honan. But lives were saved—and saved by the power of the American press. Months later, by slow post, I received a letter from Father Megan. I excerpt it here to show that power:

> After you got back and started the wires buzzing [wrote Father Megan], the grain came rushing in from Shensi by trainloads. They just could not unload it fast enough here at Loyang. That was score No. 1, a four-bagger to say the least. The provincial government got busy and opened up soup kitchens all over the country. They really went to work and got something done. The military shelled out SOME of their MUCH surplus grain and that

helped a lot. The whole country really got busy putting cash together for the famine-stricken and money poured into Honan.

All four of the above points were bullseyes as I see and confirmed my former opinion that the famine was entirely man-made and was at all times within the power of the authorities to control had they had the inclination and desire to do so. Your visit and your jacking them up did the trick, jerked them out of their stupor, and put them on the job, and then things did GET DONE. In a word, more power to Time & Life, and to Fortune Long Life. Peace! It's wonderful! . . . You will be long remembered in Honan. Some remember you in a very pleasant way, but there are others who grit their teeth and they've got reason to do so.

I was not to see Chiang K'ai-shek again, except at receptions, until after the war; but I left convinced he was not only useless to us—as Stilwell had said—but useless to his own people, which was more important.

History has now cast Chiang K'ai-shek off. But for twenty years, from 1927 to 1947, we Americans made him a crossroads character in the history of Asia—and I should like to pause over him for a few pages as a specimen in the politics of an Asia we never understood. For some Americans he was a Methodist deacon in arms, an Oriental Miles Standish, a selfless national hero; for others he was a merciless Fascist, leading a gang of looting warlords. He was none of these things, of course; simply a man ripped out of the old world too soon, plunged into a new world he could not understand.

During all the years I wrote about Chiang K'ai-shek, and all the times I met and spoke with him, I never once thought I even approached understanding him. He was Chinese, true Chinese, and in the days I was reporting China, the ethic of the time forbade one from reporting the world in terms of race. Today we still speak of world brotherhood, but we recognize that the difference of culture, behavior and perception between the West and the Orient is real. To ignore this difference is perilous; and to ignore the perception of China by the Chinese themselves is to walk blind into their world. Despite the erasure of surface dignity by pestilence, famine, invasion and brutalities; despite the smothering of the ancient culture by revolutionary new ideas, there still lies underneath Chinese manners an extravagant pride in descent and race which nothing can wipe out.

Chiang embodied this stiff-necked Chinese pride.

This was the first quality that came to mind when one reflected on Chiang—his pride. A slim man, rigid in posture whether erect or

seated, always immaculate whether in black cloak or khaki uniform, thin-lipped for a Chinese, his skull clean-shaven, he behaved with ice-stiff self-discipline—except for the moments when he flew into a tantrum, yelled, threw teacups or plates about, tore up papers and raged out of control.

Chiang's pride was more than a nationalist pride. It was racial (not racist), and in his teachings (for he, like Mao Tse-tung, considered himself as much a national teacher as a national leader), he habitually used the phrase *min tsu* ("race") to identify his Chinese people, not the word *min kuo,* which means "nation."

With his people he shared, and shared personally, a century of humiliation that had cut him so sharply it edged every facet of his personality. "My father died when I was nine years old," he once wrote, "... the miserable condition of my family at that time is beyond description. My family, solitary and without influence, became at once the target of much insult and maltreatment." He had been born in 1887, to a farmer's family in Chekiang province, and had thus seen in his adolescence the dissolution of the old Manchu imperial regime; must have heard of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 and its bloody suppression by foreign troops; then seen all order come apart. He had become a soldier; an officer cadet; studied military tactics in Japan, a nation he learned to hate; had later been sent by the Nationalist revolutionaries to study Soviet institutions, especially the army, in Lenin's Russia, which he hated even more. He suspected and mistrusted all foreigners. The independence and unity of Chinese were his only politics; and his political base was his personal will—inflexible, unswerving, dedicated.

Yet he knew that foreigners knew things that Chinese did not. Chiang saw the outer world as Chinese tradition taught it—as a world of barbarians. Yet the barbarians had tricks, and he wanted to learn those tricks. Thus he had about him constantly a court of foreign advisers, starting with Mikhail Borodin, his Russian adviser in 1926; through the Prussians who, under Generals von Falkenhausen and von Seeckt, reorganized his army; through the Australian, W. H. Donald, who instructed him in diplomacy; to the sequence of American advisers that came to instruct his government in agrarian reform, potato raising, artificial insemination of cows, infant care, truck maintenance, artillery and combat aviation. Of all his American advisers, Claire Chennault was his favorite—master of all the tricks of the air. If he bore affection for any other foreigners, it was for American missionaries—for he had become, under the influence of his

second wife, Mei-ling, the youngest of the famed Soong sisters, an American Methodist; perhaps the Methodists knew best the way to God.

What Chiang probably wanted most in his own confused mind was to refurbish Chinese tradition with Western manners and Western precision. One of his younger ministers of cabinet came to him one day dressed in the traditional long gown of the Chinese bureaucrat. Chiang was infuriated and tongue-lashed him: the minister was too young a man, said Chiang, to be wearing a long gown; he must wear pants, necktie, jacket and shirt, as modern China must. He insisted, in the old tradition, on punctilious ceremony; only in modern dress. I once went to visit a graduation ceremony at a Chinese staff college at which he would speak. The graduates were dressed in uniform, with orange silk sashes around their waists; they were piped up, inspected physically; the middle-aged officers would tremble, click heels à la Prussian, salute, retreat, pace, be dismissed. Then Chiang held them all at attention while a half-hour essay was read from the works of Sun Yat-sen; which the dictator explained textually, as teacher, paragraph by paragraph. He was leading them, through war, to China's new glory and the modern world.

Stilwell caught the flavor of one such ceremony far better than I ever could. In Stilwell's diary I later found a notation that should be reproduced in full. "Graduation exercises at [Chinese] Military Academy," Stilwell wrote. "As Peanut [Stilwell's diary code for Chiang] mounted rostrum band leader counted 1-2-3, but unfortunately band sounded off at 2. Peanut was furious, stopped band, bawled out leader: 'Either start playing on 1 or start on 3. Don't start on 2.' Then a speaker pulled his notes out of his pants pocket. This infuriated Peanut. He bawled him out and told him that *tsai wai kuo* [in foreign countries] you could put a handkerchief in your pants pockets but not papers. Papers go in lower coat pockets, and, if secret, in upper coat pockets. Then someone stumbled on procedure and Peanut went wild, screaming that he ought to be shot . . . *Ch'iang pi'* [Shoot him], and repeating it at the top of his voice." Stilwell could barely conceal his exasperation and amusement with Chiang; but he called him "Peanut" only in private.

Chiang was fascinated by everything Western. Once, being flown in an American plane over the Hump, he became interested in the parachute and survival kit provided for each passenger on VIP planes. An American officer watched, horrified, as Chiang, out of curiosity, undid the parachute pack, unfolded its flaps, untied the survival kit

and examined its contents. He was trying to understand; but if the plane had gone down, it would have been one parachute short, and some GI of the flight crew would have to go down with the plane, for Chiang was too precious to lose.

But he was sincere, sincere in his love of China, truly dedicated to his country—and to Methodist morality. In the summer of 1944, when all East China was falling to the last great Japanese offensive, Chiang summoned to his garden for an off-the-record conference and tea party a number of foreign correspondents as well as a group of his high inner circle. I still have the *official* transcript of his remarks, which we correspondents were forbidden by censorship to send out. "... Of late," said Chiang, "rumors about my private life have been in circulation in Chungking ... you have heard of these serious calumnies ... without telling me. ... What are the rumors? One says that I had secretly kept a woman last year. Another says that there has been an illicit relationship between myself and a nurse and the latter had given birth to a child. ..." He went on. He denied the rumors. He went through his daily calendar; he declared "the future of our revolution is jeopardized" by such rumors, for he considered it his moral duty to set an example to others. And then Madame Chiang K'ai-shek, who was also present, rose to say daintily that "I wish to state that never for a moment did I stoop or demean myself to entertain doubts of his uprightness."

I have no doubt that he was telling the truth. But this rigid morality was locked in one compartment of Chiang's mind; while other compartments concealed animal treachery, warlord cruelty and an ineffable ignorance of what a modern state requires.

Of his personal treachery there could be no doubt. I had come to China believing him a national hero. Then, incident by incident, as I accumulated notes, the hero became to me first an unlovely character, then an evil one. He had been kidnapped, I knew, in late 1936 by the Manchurian Chinese of young Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang's army; Chou En-lai had extricated him; Chiang had promised forgiveness to the young Marshal. But later, bringing the trusting Chang Hsueh-liang back to Nanking, the dictator had thrown him into prison for a life term. And carried him, besotted with opium and weakened by concubines, in captivity to ultimate exile in Formosa. Explainable. Chiang had, I learned later, executed scores of officers for dereliction of duty. Excusable. But then there was the Kwangsi general, Li Chi-sen, who had come to see Chiang before the Japanese invasion to offer national cooperation against the enemy. When they disagreed, Chiang

had thrown him in jail after dinner. He had entertained another general—Chang Fa-kuei—and granted the general's request that a derelict subordinate not be executed. But when Chang Fa-kuei returned from Chungking to his headquarters, he discovered that the subordinate had been executed as soon as he left Chungking. I talked with a Yale-educated professor of economics, Ma Yin-ch'u. Before the war, Ma had been invited by Chiang to his residence to give the dictator private instruction in economics—much as he invited missionaries to instruct him in theology or Prussians to instruct him in infantry tactics. Ma thought he was close to Chiang. But during the war, lecturing to his university classes, Ma began to denounce the government's inflationary policies. Chiang then invited Ma once more to dinner to talk economics. After dinner, as Ma was being driven home in the dictator's limousine, the two gunmen in the front seat told him he was under arrest—and he was not to see his home again for two years.

Chiang's anger came in spasms, and went from casual beatings to killing. He knew there was something wrong with the conscription system that his government imposed; one day, walking the road on his afternoon stroll, he saw a file of peasants roped together, being led off to the army, a sight familiar to all of us in China. He was angered by the stories the conscripts told him when he halted them. So, with his walking stick, he began to beat the recruiting officer over the head and shoulders mercilessly for such cruelty.

Chiang tried to do good. He tried to do good in Honan when that story was brought to his attention; he tried to do good about the conscription system when Americans protested its cruelty. As late as the spring of 1945, he was still astonished at excesses in the system he commanded, and ordained the summary execution of the chief of the national draft system because it was so corrupt. He was probably the last of the long chain of tyrants who believed a problem could be solved by shrieking: "Off with his head!" or *"Ch'iang pi!"*

I can see Chiang now as a pathetic man. He loved his two sons, his wife and his country—his country most. But he did not know how to be a good ruler or a good father: the pathos came in his trying to do good and failing. At times, in his fumbling and fury, he reminded me of the stories and legends of Charlemagne—of the nights that old king would spend in bed, holding a scroll in the candlelight, turning it this way and that, up and down, trying to decipher the words which the priests were teaching him to read. And not succeeding at the clerical tricks, and growing furious! Chiang fumbled and fumbled at his tasks;

he had achieved his greatness in the 1920s by clearing the Yangtze basin of old warlords and setting up the Nationalist government there; he had reached heroic stature in the first two years of the war against Japan, organizing the coalition of resistance, drenching his cities in blood rather than yield them to the Japanese; after that, the fronts stabilized and the war froze him. Then, sometime after America entered the war, or possibly because America entered the war, his Mandate of Heaven ran out. By Chinese tradition, dynasties rule only so long as they keep the Mandate of Heaven; when, mysteriously, the Mandate is withdrawn, the dynasty crumbles. It came as a personal mystery to Chiang when slowly he began to realize his Mandate of Heaven had vanished, and that he was powerless outside his palace. Thus the spasms of fury. And as his inner bitterness grew, so did his bitterness at America, which he held duty bound to save him from the Japanese and Communism—which it would not.

It must have been sometime in early 1944 when the crumbling of the Mandate became visible. In a pocket anthology of verse I carried with me through the war, I had read T. S. Eliot's "Rhapsody on a Windy Night." Three lines in it began to haunt me as a precise description of what I was seeing, "A broken spring in a factory yard,/Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left/Hard and curled and ready to snap."

Wherever one reported, wherever one poked in Chungking or outside—at government bureaus, offices, hospitals, army headquarters, universities, provincial administrations—structures proved hollow at a probe; or snapped.

The snapping was soundless, but you could touch and feel it simply by pulling out of your pocket the paper money of China and looking at the inflation. The Chinese had, of course, invented paper—as they had invented gunpowder, the compass, block printing. But when emperors were persuaded to combine paper with printing to yield money, they produced the world's first currency. The Chinese had experimented with every form of money before they came to paper: copper, stones, shells, leather wads, silk sheets. When finally, however, the Sung dynasty (960–1126) issued paper notes that passed as money, they were off on a course no one could control. The Sung dynasty collapsed in inflationary implosion; the Mongol dynasty which succeeded it also toyed with paper currency; and Marco Polo marveled at least as much at this wonder as at any of the other wonders of Kublai Khan's Cathay; but that dynasty, too, died in a blizzard of

useless paper money. Since then, almost always, whenever a government has perished it has done so in a paroxysm of inflation. From the Sung dynasty to the French Revolution, from the Confederacy of the United States to the Weimar Republic, inflation has accompanied the death rattle. This is because paper currency is nothing; its value comes only from the faith and the strength of the government that issues it, and the price index in Chiang's China traced the collapse of his government.

I cannot recall when I first began to sense inflation as a threat. At the beginning it was all so amusing to watch. It was amusing to see an American soldier pulling out a Chinese dollar bill, lighting his cigar with it and saying, "I always dreamed of doing this"; amusing to see a little Chinese girl cutting up blue twenty-cent notes into paper dolls. It was also convenient at first to carry paper change and not a pocketful of heavy copper coins, as I had in 1939 when I first arrived.

But then one realized that there was no more copper in anyone's pockets. Then came the time when Chungking's writers split off from Chungking's playwrights. Playwriters were paid percentages of the theater's weekly take, as they are here; so their income rose with the price of tickets, and playwrights rode with the inflation. Writers, however, might wait months to be paid for publication; so they insisted on being paid in rice: seventeen pounds of rice per thousand words was their demand. Finally, inflation was publicly accepted. Our black-market moneychanger no longer sneaked into the Press Hostel. By 1944 he marched in openly, his bearer behind him carrying a basket, and in the basket—bundles and bundles of wadded Chinese banknotes to trade for American greenbacks.

One could trace a quickening collapse statistically. The war had begun in 1937 with the Chinese currency stable at three Chinese dollars to the American dollar. The exchange rose, officially, to six to one, by 1939; prices stayed in line, doubling. By the spring of 1940, however, prices had doubled again; and again by late fall of that year. By June of 1941, when Luce took me home from China, prices were sixteen times higher than prices at the war's outbreak; when I returned in the fall of 1942, they were thirty-two times higher; and then, by winter 1942, they doubled to sixty-four times the prewar mark.

The trouble with China, said one American adviser at this point, is not that the Generalissimo doesn't understand economics, but that his Minister of Finance doesn't either. Chiang's finance minister was a flabby, pudgy man, claiming lineal descent from Confucius. But H. H. Kung was not only seventy-fifth in lineal descent from Confucius; he

was also married to Ai-ling Soong, sister of Mei-ling Soong, who had become Madame Chiang K'ai-shek. Kung's understanding of economics remained, however, at the level of the silver-and-copper moneychangers on the Bund of Shanghai. I interviewed him several times and remember one memorable statement about inflation. "Inflation," exclaimed Dr. Kung, "inflation! You American reporters talk about our inflation all the time. There is no inflation in China! If people want to pay twenty thousand dollars for a fountain pen [a favorite item of hoarding at the time], that's their business, it's not inflation. They're crazy, that's all. They shouldn't pay it." His advice to his government was similarly perceptive. I remember an American-trained Chinese engineer in China's War Production Ministry who reported to me, boggle-eyed, of a conference with the finance minister. The arsenals had now found it impossible to buy either raw copper or raw iron on the domestic Chinese market; steel production in the country had dwindled to ten thousand tons a year—and that steel was priced beyond reason. Kung had offered the sage thought that if the arsenals began to make cigarette-rolling machinery, they could sell them at a spectacular price because cigarettes were in such demand—and then, with the profit from making cigarette machinery, they could afford to buy raw material for the arsenals!

Americans who dealt with Chinese slowly developed a mean and surly suspicion of every Chinese official. The official rate of exchange had been raised to 20 Chinese dollars to 1 U.S. dollar by the time America entered the war. But as the Chinese currency shriveled in value, the true rate of exchange became 100 to 1; then 200 to 1 by early 1944; prices outstripped even those true rates, and the gouging of American needs by the fictitious official rate became intolerable. To pay 200,000 Chinese dollars at 20 to 1 for a latrine at an air base cost Americans officially $10,000 in American dollars, while at home such an outhouse could still be built for $500. By 1944, the friction between Americans and Chinese over the dollar rate of exchange, or, fundamentally, over how the American Army could pay to operate in the inflationary climate of a decaying government, was critical to the breach between Americans and Chinese that was approaching.

Nor could one be reasonable about it. One was told by responsible Chinese that one must understand that in China at war there were two budgets: the paper-money budget and the grain budget. Entirely separate. The paper-money budget projected on graphs like an abnormal case of hysterical finance; but at least it was understandable. Then there was the grain budget, which I had seen at work in Honan; the

army collected the grain tax for army needs in each war area.

But beyond the two recognized budgets was the third budget—the Generalissimo's personal budget, uncountable and huge. The Generalissimo could write a personal check on any government bank: $100 million for a favorite general whose troops were in short supply, $60 million for a provincial governor faced with a local crisis, a score of millions here and a hundred million there. No one, even the Ministry of Finance or the cabinet, where several score bewildered but sensible Chinese officials labored to keep matters under control, knew how large an injection of paper currency would be needed to honor the Generalissimo's personal government checks. They knew, finally, only that paper currency was as much an ingredient of war as bullets and fought for their share of tonnage over the Hump to ship in bales of paper currency.

Inflation is the haunting pestilence of the middle classes; it is the hidden threat that disorganized government always holds over those who try to plan, to save, to be prudent. To be honest in one's day-to-day dealings in a runaway inflation does not make sense. To pay a debt on time is folly. To borrow and spend as fast as possible is prudence. Every man suspects everyone else. I remember trying to supply my Chinese friends with whatever medicines I could cadge from U.S. Army supplies—sulfa drugs, quinine, paregoric, Atabrine—and then discovering that some of those who pleaded illness were not truly ill but were selling the drugs for the wild paper prices they brought on the open market. So I distrusted everyone who asked for an American medicine, an American tool, an American artifact.

In 1943, I took notice of prices in the large provincial capital of Chengtu. The local price index had risen by 174 times since the outbreak of the war, workingmen's wages had risen by 104 times—but the salaries of professors at its distinguished university had risen by only 19 times! Inflation meant such scholars must starve or beg. For government officials of the same social background, there was a third alternative—to steal or solicit bribes. No official could remain honest for long unless his rice, cloth and oil ration were fattened by his superior's favor, and supplemented with handouts. It was easier to steal. Chiang's response was, as usual, shoot the profiteers, shoot corrupt officials, stop the prices. In 1944, the *Ta Kung Pao,* the most courageous newspaper in the capital, reported such executions with satisfaction: "Recently there has been a joyful aspect of politics," its editorial began; but then it went on, mournfully, to warn that "government should pay attention to one prerequisite—salaries of

officials should be sufficient to keep them honest . . . if suffering of government employees is unbearable and if salaries are so low they cannot sustain life, occurrence of cases of corruption is worthy of sympathy."

What the West calls *le trahison des clercs,* the desertion of the intellectuals, is considered by most historians to be a forerunner of revolution. Unless a regime can find learned men to serve it, it cannot serve the people. In China, inflation made it impossible for learned men, honest men, decent men, to serve their national government except at unbearable personal cost—or self-corruption that revolted them. They sought any alternative—and the only alternative was the Communists. Inflation made life unreasonable.

I remember fragments of breakdown more vivid than statistics or price indexes.

For example: the first tax revolt in 1943, in isolated Kansu province. There the farmers took pitchforks and guns to oppose collectors of the grain tax; then they were strafed by government planes. Another revolt followed in the province of Ningsia; yet another was reported in Yunnan.

For example again: arsenals were closing down. The Minister of Economics told me that only twenty percent of Chinese steel-making capacity was being used because the government arsenals' budget could not meet the prices set by government-controlled steel mills! On the other hand, the large coal mine fifty miles upriver from Chungking was also closing down—because it could not operate within the government-fixed price for coal!

For example yet again: the familiar two-hundred-dollar Chinese bill, which I had thought of for a year as being equal to an American dollar bill, was replaced by a fresh green five-hundred-dollar bill at the beginning of 1944; and the inflationary fever swept everyone, myself included. I began to hoard incense pots, silks, satins, embroideries. By 1945 I became accustomed to carrying my money on shopping trips in a knapsack; I would hold the knapsack between my knees on the rickshaw. When I got to a shop, I would hand over wads of money, bundled in rectangles as big as a man's fist—and shopkeepers would not unbundle the wads to count bills individually, but would count the wads as money. Though I was paid in American dollars back in New York, insulated by the distance of my bank account from China, I caught the sense of panic. I learned to fear inflation as much as the cruelty of joblessness and depression in which I had grown up. What the famine had done to the peasants of Honan, the inflation was doing

to the middle class of the cities and universities: wiping out all loyalties, denying all effort except to survive.

The irreversible crumbling could be concealed from none of the outside parties of interest in the Chungking government—from the Communists, the Japanese, or the American Army.

The Communists broke off any serious attempt to negotiate with Chiang's crumbling government in the summer of 1943. Chou En-lai had been joined in Chungking by General Lin Piao, who was later to become the Generalissimo of Communism; perhaps Mao thought Lin Piao would be tougher than Chou in putting pressure on Chiang K'ai-shek. But there was little left to be tough against. And so, in the summer of 1943, having wheedled several trucks from Chiang to return to Yenan for consultation, Chou and Lin heaped their personal files, baggage, bedrolls and belongings on top of the trucks and jounced out of the old house on Tseng Chia Ai. They had a safe-conduct from Chiang; but their headquarters could not relax until word was relayed that they had passed Sian safely en route back to Yenan. The next time I saw either of them was a year later, in Yenan, where they were earnestly preparing to erase the government for which they had such contempt.

The crumbling tempted Japanese action as much as it earned Communist contempt. In early spring 1944, the Japanese launched their convulsive ICHIGO offensive. The Japanese knew the war was lost by then. But they might, by this final action, put themselves in a negotiating position—or, like Oriental Samsons, bring down the pillars of China with them in their defeat. They struck across the Yellow River into Honan, knowing what the famine had done to loyalties; and as I have said, the peasants came to their side. Then they moved south through East China against the American air bases which Chennault had installed there. As Stilwell predicted, Chennault had punished the Japanese too much; and Chiang could not provide ground cover for Chennault's bases.

The crumbling, it seemed to me, could no longer be concealed from the American government, either. All that summer I had followed the disaster in East China from the combat zone, both from our own air bases and on foot with Chinese infantry. I had come over to Stilwell's view completely by early fall of 1944: American policy must act to refashion the Chinese government and its army if it was to fight; or must abandon them completely. Since we could not afford to abandon China, we should act. What I did not know, there in the field, was that Stilwell had already persuaded the American government

that his position was correct; and now, too late, American policy had changed.

American policy in Asia used to combine missionary purpose and merchant's greed. In China, however, missionary purpose had come to outweigh, by far, mercantile greed, and in defense of China's nationhood we had invited Japanese attack.

When that attack came, in 1941, Washington policy-makers looked on Chiang K'ai-shek as a precious ally, master of a great Asian reservoir of manpower, lord over an endless airstrip from which the ultimate air war against Japan would be launched and sustained. The defense of China's government had been, for us, as the defense of Poland's sovereignty had been for the British in 1939—the immediate cause of a war which may or may not have been inevitable.

Three years later, in 1944, the official American attitude to China had totally changed.

The map of war told one part of the story:

By the summer of 1944 that map was a joy for American leadership to examine: there were the blue slashes of American armored divisions racing across France toward Germany, MacArthur moving on the Philippines, the U.S. Navy raiding in Japan's coastal waters, B-29 bombers beginning to strike Japan's wood-and-paper cities. Only in China did the map dismay: there, the Japanese had crossed the Yellow River, plunged south from the Yangtze, seized Hengyang, were moving relentlessly to wipe out the American air bases in East China, which had cost hundreds of millions and so much effort to build. The airlift that Chiang had demanded for the Hump and for Chennault had absorbed so much American air-freight capacity that now there was not enough in Europe to settle the dispute between Patton and Montgomery; had there been enough air-supply capacity to supply both, then either might have finished off the war against Germany in the fall of 1944. The American exertion in support of Chiang had been enormous; yet incessantly Chiang insisted he was being cheated, that the fall of East China was due not to his incompetence but to America's niggardliness and Stilwell's machinations.

The other part of the story was told in the classified dispatches of American military personnel, reporting regiment by regiment, position by position, Chinese incompetence, decay and graft. It was not simply Stilwell, all alone, reporting such matters; the story came from every level of the growing American combat and advisory corps, all of

whose reports could be summarized as Germany's Ludendorff had summarized his visit to the Austrian Army in World War I: "We are allied to a corpse." Early in the war Stilwell had been admonished by Marshall, at Roosevelt's specific request, to stop treating Chiang K'ai-shek "like a tribal chieftain." Now Roosevelt's good will, too, was strained. By summer of 1944 he knew he must act.

If Chiang could not mobilize China effectively for the war against Japan, then someone else must. Roosevelt could not, of course, order Chiang to step down as chief of state of China. But he would ask him to step aside—and on July 6, 1944, by cable, Roosevelt urged Chiang to turn over command of all Chinese armies to the American Chiang most loathed—Joseph Stilwell. It was a ticklish matter; Chiang stalled; a month later Roosevelt cabled Chiang that he was sending two eminent Americans, Donald Nelson, former chairman of the War Production Board, and Patrick J. Hurley, former Secretary of War, to speed negotiations on the proposition that would reduce Chiang to an impotent figurehead.

Historically, the documents show events quickening in pace. As the Japanese tore through East China, panic gripped Chungking. By September 12, 1944, Chiang had agreed in principle to the appointment of Stilwell as Commander in Chief of all Chinese ground forces. On September 13, Stilwell received two Communist emissaries at his headquarters in Chungking. On September 14, Stilwell flew down to the threatened American air bases in East China, to confer with General Chennault and Chinese General Chang Fa-kuei.

Stilwell returned from the front to Chungking on September 15. He had the previous day given orders to blow up the great American air base at Kweilin lest it fall into Japanese hands. So much for the Chennault-Chiang strategy of a year earlier. He now reported to Chiang K'ai-shek on the confusion in the Chinese East China command, and on another Japanese offensive in North Burma. Chiang and Stilwell differed in weighing the strategic threats. Chiang insisted that Stilwell halt the combined American-British-Chinese offensive hacking its way through Burma, and fly those troops to the threatened East China front. Stilwell wanted Chiang to use his personal anti-Communist reserve of 200,000 troops in the north to save the threatened front. They clashed. Stilwell radioed Chief of Staff George Marshall in the Pentagon that the East China situation was "hopeless," that Kweilin was about to become a "rat-trap," that the Generalissimo would not "listen to reason, merely repeating a lot of cock-eyed conceptions of his own invention."

General Marshall was not, however, in Washington to receive Stilwell's message. He was in Quebec, with Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill at the OCTAGON conference on the prosecution of the war. There Stilwell's combat report and his vignette of Chiang's reaction reached Marshall, thus Roosevelt.

Poor Franklin Roosevelt—directing a global war in the middle of a Presidential campaign; trying to solve all the problems of Asia six weeks before voting day! The British, with their contempt for the Chinese, had, all through the war, considered Chiang K'ai-shek a tribal chieftain. So, too, had Stilwell; so, too, did the soldier Roosevelt most relied on, George Marshall, who supported Stilwell. And Chiang and China's friends in Washington had both overpromised and nagged away at the White House enough to try any President's patience.

So Franklin Roosevelt, on September 18, 1944, responded: directly to Chiang K'ai-shek, with the full approval of Churchill, the British, the Americans and the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

Roosevelt must have been tired. His message to Chiang was probably as blunt as any that an American chief of state has sent to a friendly or allied chief of state—laced with a touch of that marvelous Hudson River valley snobbery, the tone of the squirearchy to stablemen, housemaids and errant children. It was a six-hundred-word telegram ordering Chiang to put Stilwell in charge forthwith, but its rhythm ran thus:

> After reading the last reports on the situation in China, my Chiefs of Staff and I are convinced that you are faced in the near future with the disaster I have feared . . . if you do not provide manpower for your divisions in north Burma and, if you fail to send reinforcements to the Salween forces and withdraw these armies, we will lose all chance of opening land communications with China. . . . For this you must yourself be prepared to accept the consequences and assume the personal responsibility. I have urged time and again in recent months that you take drastic action to resist the disaster which has been moving closer to China and to you. Now, when you have not yet placed General Stilwell in command of all forces in China, we are faced with the loss of a critical area in east China with possible catastrophic consequences. . . . In this message I have expressed my thoughts with complete frankness because it appears plainly evident to all of us here that all your and our efforts to save China are to be lost by further delays. [Signed] Roosevelt.

It was now Roosevelt himself who was treating Chiang K'ai-shek as a tribal chieftain. Moreover, he instructed that this message be sent to Chiang *not* via the State Department, which dealt with the Chinese Foreign Office, which, in turn, habitually softened the words of the

American President to their own maximum dictator. It was to be delivered, ordered Roosevelt, via Stilwell—with instructions to deliver the message personally.

No more enthusiastic messenger could have been chosen than the four-star American general who had suffered so long from the duplicity and false courtesies of Chiang K'ai-shek. By five-thirty on September 19, Stilwell had arrived at the Generalissimo's country residence, Huang Shan, where the Generalissimo was meeting with his chief military counselors and American emissary Patrick J. Hurley, charged with negotiating the details of transfer of command to Stilwell.

Stilwell paused on the veranda to tell Hurley what was in the Presidential message. Hurley was appalled; he believed that that afternoon, in a few minutes more, he might have the Generalissimo's chop, or great seal, on the transfer of command. But Stilwell had the President's orders to deliver this message personally. The group drank tea together for a few minutes. Then Stilwell announced that there was a personal message for the Generalissimo from the President. Until now Chiang's control of American support and recognition had been his greatest strength with his courtiers and subordinate warlords. Now, in the presence of his staff, he was to be humiliated. He read through the Chinese translation quickly; then said, "I understand"; and closed the meeting.

Stilwell's diary notes that evening went: "I handed this bundle of paprika to the Peanut and then sank back with a sigh. The harpoon hit the little bugger right in the solar plexus, and went right through him. It was a clean hit, but beyond turning green and losing the power of speech, he did not bat an eye. He just said to me 'I understand.' And sat in silence, jiggling one foot. We are now a long way from the 'tribal chieftain' bawling out. . . . I came home. Pretty sight crossing the river: lights all on in Chungking."

Stilwell was a master of punctilio and courtesies as taught to West Point cadets and American generals. In all public ceremonies with Chinese, he honored the rituals. But there was a private boyish streak, a Mark Twain Connecticut Yankee bubble in him, which he shared only with his wife. Three days later he wrote a letter to Mrs. Stilwell, with a bit of doggerel that expressed his sense of triumph:

I've waited long for vengeance—
At last I've had my chance.
I've looked the Peanut in the eye
And kicked him in the pants.

The old harpoon was ready
With aim and timing true,
I sank it to the handle
And stung him through and through.
The little bastard shivered,
And lost the power of speech.
His face turned green and quivered
As he struggled not to screech.

The poem went on for several more verses, but it is not worth anthologizing.

Stilwell was, apparently, totally unaware of the turbulence he had set up in the court of the Generalissimo, though he should have anticipated it. He had for so long seen Chiang ignore the dignity of other men, known how casually this dictator could kill, that he, too, had become emotionally callous—and forgotten how important the personal dignity of Chiang K'ai-shek was, as it is to any leader in an unstable society, where the most precious attribute of success is dignity.

Thus, unaware of the mood he had left behind, Stilwell was astounded when he learned a week later of the message Roosevelt had received from Chiang on September 25, in which, finally, the Chinese Generalissimo took the stand he could not help but take: either he or Stilwell could direct affairs in China, said Chiang to Roosevelt, but not both. And since he, Chiang, was chief of China, it was Stilwell, the American, who must go. ". . . it was made manifest to me," wrote Chiang to Roosevelt, "that General Stilwell had no intention of cooperating with me, but believed that he was in fact being appointed to command me. If you will place yourself in my position, I believe you will understand how in the future I can never direct General Stilwell, or in all seriousness depend on General Stilwell to conform to my direction. If ignoring reason and experience, I were to appoint General Stilwell as Field Commander, I would knowingly court inevitable disaster."

Indeed, Chiang would have. This personal disaster for Chiang K'ai-shek might have been good for China—but one cannot expect any political leader to accept castration, however necessary for the good of his country. Chiang did not feel it necessary, and resisted. For almost a month—from September 24 to October 18 of 1944—this deadlock between Chiang and Roosevelt persisted, and then, finally, politics dictated the inevitable outcome.

Almost all the story of the previous few pages, as I tell it, was unknown to me at the time. I have written it from the documents, archives, letters and memoirs that professional historians have uncovered in the thirty-five years since. And few sequences illustrate better the usefulness of history than the understanding it has brought to the chain of events I reported episodically in the summer of 1944. The connection between events and decisions is the domain of the historian. But the true connection becomes clear only years after the events tumble over the participants. Thus I am grateful to the historians who have come since and clarified what to me was a summer of absolute bewilderment.

I was following the reporter's trade in 1944, and a young reporter in a war is best advised to get as close to the sound of guns as possible; the closer he gets to combat and the in-tight view of battle conditions, the more useful his dispatches. If he stays at headquarters and writes of grand strategy, then he must accept the prospect that historians in years to come will write it better than he.

My view in the summer of 1944 was an in-tight view of events. I marched up to the front, walking through July heat to the hills above Hengyang, to watch the Chinese 62nd Army make its counterattack. For the "grand counterattack" it marshaled its batteries of old 75-mm guns; each gun had 20 shells; I watched them fire; when they had fired their 20 shells to no purpose, the counterattack was over. Only later did I discover that down the rail line, the only remaining East China rail line in Chiang's hands, was Chiang's stockpile of 40,000 tons of munitions at Tushan; but Chiang was saving that stockpile for an "emergency"; and Americans later blew up the dump lest it fall into the hands of Japanese.

The U.S. Air Force provided air cover for the East China rail line. Thus I watched appalled when under our air cover a troop train stopped in broad daylight and the engineer dismounted to smoke his opium pipe. The American officers on the train insisted that since I spoke Chinese, I do something about it. I did; I strode forward, berated the engineer, kicked him up into his booth, and the train went on. But I did not know then that we Americans were not supposed to be helping this particular front with ground supplies; and that when we did help this collapsing front of warlord Hsueh Yueh, Chiang protested our aid! I *did* know that Chiang favored American air support, à la Chennault, over ground support, à la Stilwell. But I did *not* know that summer that Chiang sought air aid with such extravagant unreality that he demanded operations control over our B-29 force, the strategic

air force that later burned Japan to the ground! This demand, I later learned, Roosevelt had flatly refused, though he countered with the offer to raise Chiang's title from Allied Commander of the China Theater of War, to Allied Supreme Commander of the China Theater of War. I knew there was no coordination between ground and air in the defense of East China. But I knew so only because I lay paralyzed, sweating, screaming, in a drainage ditch with a battalion of Chinese troops one hot afternoon when American P-40s swept down on us, shooting, strafing, swinging back and forth—and I knew the pilots in the squadron were not *trying* to kill me, but were ignorant of where the front was and who held what. I knew that Chiang was suffering a bout of execution fever; he had executed the general in command of the artillery at Changsha, then executed the commander of the Chinese 93rd Army; but I did not know then how deeply he suspected Stilwell of conspiring against him; I thought simply that Chiang had come unbuttoned again.

Nothing made sense in the field. I sat outside the room when Chennault and Stilwell conferred at Kweilin with General Chang Fa-kuei; and had no idea until years later that Chang Fa-kuei had offered right then to break with Chiang K'ai-shek, and accept his orders only from the American, Stilwell. I knew only that Stilwell had given orders which Chennault obeyed, to blow up the airfields at Kweilin. What followed that night was a wild and wonderful thunder-popping, flame-streaked, explosion-rocked orgy of destruction that is the most scarlet-and-brilliant night of my memory.

Then I was out of the story, and was hospitalized in Kunming. The story of the East China retreat could not compete for space in *Time* magazine with the great victories in Europe, the liberation of Paris, the advance on the Rhine. So I lingered in the hospital awaiting the arrival in China of a war correspondent who would join me in the Chungking bureau of *Time*—Annalee Jacoby, widow of my old friend Melville Jacoby, with whom I had fallen in love within days of meeting her. With her, I flew from Kunming to Chungking, where I felt I might use the time I had earned at the front for a bit of rest and pursuit of romance.

But that was not at all the way it was to be. Annalee and I, flying to Chungking, were flying into the eye of a hurricane. I was *Time*'s bureau chief, their senior war correspondent on the mainland of Asia. She was to report politics in Chungking and China. But it was impossible, by then, in the last week in September, the first weeks in October, to separate politics from war—or Chiang's ambition from the

Communist counterthrust, or Hurley's diplomacy from Stilwell's purpose. We were in the midst of the Stilwell crisis in Chungking, and however wisely and clearly historians see it now, none of us, not even Stilwell, knew what it meant while it was happening.

I checked into the secret story in Chungking the last weekend of September, at the height of the deadlock between Roosevelt, Chiang and Stilwell.

It took me days to realize that the obscure story here rose above gossip into history. Returning to Chungking from the front was always to return to rumors, for Chungking rippled with them. The rumors these first few days in October were choice. The rumor that Chiang K'ai-shek was sleeping with a nurse had been spiked by his manly denial. But: Had Chiang really beaten his chief of conscription, Chin Tso-jen, over the head with a stick and then locked him up in a recruit-training camp because conditions in such camps were so bad? That, I was ruefully told by a cabinet minister, *was* true, "but," he added, "it's the first time in twenty years the Generalissimo has actually beaten a *high* official." Was it true that China was now down to its last ten thousand rolling and usable trucks? No, said the Minister of Communications to me: China had six thousand trucks operable—three thousand in the army, three thousand for all the rest of the nation. Was General Hsueh Yueh conspiring with the Japanese, as some said? Was the Generalissimo himself dealing with the Japanese occupying command to counter American pressure, as others said? Bubonic plague had broken out in Fukien: Was it spreading inland? Could it be stopped? Yen Hsi-shan and the Communists were fighting each other in Shansi again: could anything be done to stop the fighting, short of giving American aid to both sides?

It was a hot and sultry autumn in Chungking, itchy and wet; rumors flourished, begat and multiplied as they can do only in a community with no open communications system, where anxieties and heat incubate rumor to fever. Yet after ten days back in Chungking, out of all the blur of rumors, I could begin to range in on some very large shapes that were indisputably real: We Americans were being forced to a choice. The choice was being forced on us by the Japanese. They meant to wipe out our continental base on the mainland, and we were apparently compelled to choose between Chinese Communists and Chinese Nationalists to hold that continental base.

The first rumor I heard, the first week back in Chungking, was that Stilwell himself was in Yenan visiting the Communists! Not true at

all, I learned instantly. The facts were: Henry Wallace, the U.S. Vice President, had passed through Chungking, and had backed Stilwell in the demand that the U.S. Army be allowed to maintain an observer's mission in the Communist capital of Yenan, in North China. That mission of contact, called Dixie Mission, was already in operation by the end of September. (Only later did I learn from the historians that Wallace, while supporting Stilwell against Chiang to make contact with the Communists, was also supporting Chiang against Stilwell, and urging Roosevelt to replace Stilwell in China.) But Stilwell himself had indeed made contact with the Communists in Chungking.

U.S. Army headquarters was not entirely forthcoming about what was going on. But gradually, there emerged from friends at headquarters the outline of the Allied command that Stilwell believed was already his. Stilwell planned to carve out of the mass of plodding, road-bound Chinese foot soldiery a thirty-division American-directed army, which he would modernize, equip and deploy personally. Then, only then, would he distribute the rest of American aid to Chiang K'ai-shek—and to all other Chinese armies fighting Japanese. In short, Stilwell planned to cancel Chiang's exclusive franchise of American aid—and meant also, with no effort at all at concealment, to share some of that aid with the detested Communists. Moreover, Stilwell proposed to fly directly to Yenan to bring the Communists under his personal command. For Stilwell, anyone who fought Japanese was a friend of the American cause.

Chiang's intelligence service must have told him of Stilwell's contact with the Chinese Communists; it must also have reported to him the efforts of independents, like Chang Fa-kuei, to make direct alliances with the Americans. For Chiang, the perspectives were clear. Japan was already being destroyed by the Americans. The future of China, therefore, was being decided now in the struggle between himself and Mao. No Americans must interfere in that struggle except to help him—so Stilwell must go.

I had been at the front, in the kind of combat isolation now unimaginable to American soldiers, reporters or officers, who read of their national politics as a matter of course wherever they are posted. Coming back to Chungking, I was in a political world and nothing was more startling than to tap in again on the negotiations between Communists and Nationalists that had resumed under American pressure. The Communists were now as intransigent as the Nationalists; they wanted recognition not only of their entire political independence, but also of their area control, which was now widening behind

the spreading conquest of the Japanese. Most pathetic was the statement of the chief Nationalist negotiator, Wang Shih-chieh. Wang asserted there could be no compromise for the reason that the national government was too *weak* to compromise. It would take a year to overhaul the national government enough to give the people efficient government, which was the only way to compete with the Communists, and so—shrug of shoulders!

Where the truth lay in all this sputter of word-of-mouth news, I did not know for two weeks after I returned to Chungking. Was Stilwell in command? Was Chiang in command? Where did Roosevelt stand? Were the Americans planning to accept a Communist alliance? Was Chiang threatening to go over to the Japanese?

Then on Monday morning, October 16, I was summoned with Brooks Atkinson of *The New York Times* to visit Stilwell.

How great a breach this invitation was with Stilwell's tradition of discipline I can only now understand. He sat there behind his desk in his austere headquarters, a flat-topped villa with a sweeping view of the Chialing River, and suddenly he seemed frail. Brooding, vituperative, bitter, he spoke. I remember him scratching at his arms, infected with the jungle itch he had contracted in Burma, glaring, not in anger at us but to make sure we understood his points. Someone, he said, must know the truth; for the time being we were not to print a word of what he said; but for the next few days, we could come and go at his headquarters, read the "eyes alone" cables the commander of the theater received from Washington. When all was over, one or the other of us must tell the story to the American people so they should understand. It was my first sense of the American press as the supreme court of political appeals—that this man should violate his military oath of secrecy, his personal loyalty to George Marshall, to carry his story to the court of future opinion. He wanted us to know, in the historian's phrase, "the way it really was."

He was going to be relieved of command in the next few days, Stilwell began. And suddenly I could see him as an old soldier stripped of authority, shriveled overnight. He wore the four stars of a full general, which was a rare honor in those days, and his mandate still ran from the Yellow River, across China, through the jungle of Burma, over the sprawl of American troops in India as far as Karachi, a continental expanse larger than the United States itself. For a few more days he might, if he wished, command sorties, retreat, killing. But now, already, the personality was broken.

He wanted us to know that from the day of Pearl Harbor on, "this

ignorant son of a bitch has never wanted to fight Japan." He went on supporting the large facts with combat details. "Every major blunder of this war is directly traceable to Chiang K'ai-shek." Orders given by Stilwell, countermanded by Chiang; telephonic orders from Chiang to frontal troops decreeing assault or withdrawal over distances and terrain Chiang K'ai-shek simply did not know. Lying. Thieving. Hoarding. Hoarding of all supplies for the few politically reliable troops needed to fight the future civil war against the Communists. And with that, Stilwell's paradoxical love of China and Chinese: how wonderful these troops and these people were when fed, trained, and led by honest people. All he had wanted was to help these people. Then, in stunning simplicity, he told us what he had demanded: the authority to move, shift, deploy, command any unit in China; the right "to reward and punish, to promote and demote." Then the push of his duty: We had hoped the war in Europe would be over by this fall, 1944. But the Germans had held, not broken. It might be six months, another year, before we could get at Japan; meanwhile, we could not let the Japanese transfer their main base of resistance to China, from their homeland to the continent, as the resistance front in East China collapsed. Chinese had to learn to resist, to organize and command armies, to push Japanese back—for the common purpose of China and America. Stilwell could not wait. "We can't expect to be *told* about the future," he had once written in his diary. "If we want to find out, we must march toward it." As an actor in history, he had undertaken that march too late; and then marched too fast.

It was the end of the long missionary road. The man, whom I then adored, I can now see as a political innocent: a man with the old West Point code of honor, seeking to get things done, as the purpose of America wished them to be done, in a world that does things otherwise; a man too proud and too old-fashioned to dissemble. Stilwell had found it necessary to change things, but then found that to change China he must act far beyond the historic experience of any American. What he had come to seek, step by step, was the replacement of an Asian leader useless to our war purpose, and the installation of a leadership that would be effective in the American way. Yet politics did not permit that, even then, at the height of American power. America would have to deal with what Asia chose as leadership—or stay away from such leaders.

I was there at Stilwell's headquarters again, usually with Brooks Atkinson, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of that same week—installed in the basement, reading cables we should not have read,

watching the distant Roosevelt, another of my political gods, slowly accepting the superior reality of politics over Stilwell's reality of combat. On Thursday, officially, without public announcement, Roosevelt relieved Stilwell of command and ordered his departure for home immediately. On Friday, a minor Chinese functionary arrived at the headquarters where Stilwell was packing, to offer him, in the name of the Generalissimo, China's highest decoration for a foreigner, the Special Grand Cordon of the Blue Sky and White Sun. Stilwell told his aide to tell the Generalissimo's aide to shove it. Later that afternoon, he had tea with the Generalissimo. And the next day he was off.

He left early on Saturday afternoon. Only a few of his inner staff knew what was happening. They packed his bags and his briefcase; and Stilwell carried his own trophy, a Japanese Samurai sword, much too long for his short stature. At the airfield, he was given farewell by T. V. Soong, about to become China's Prime Minister; Soong would be the chief temporary beneficiary of Stilwell's insistence that the government of China be reorganized. A touring car splashed through the mud of the overcast and drizzling day to disgorge China's Minister of War, Ho Ying-chin, who, with exquisite relish and equal courtesy, had come to see the departure of the American who had demanded his dismissal from office. Stilwell took their greetings, turned to his personal aide and said, "What the hell are we waiting for?" then climbed aboard. Atkinson climbed in with him, determined, as all *New York Times* men traditionally are, to tell the story first where it counted most. I gave Atkinson my dispatch to sneak through censorship to *Time* magazine. And I was the only one left to wave Stilwell off as his plane rose from the runway and he left China.

It was years before I could see Stilwell correctly. He came of a tradition which has now all but vanished—the tradition of Americans who felt so strongly we were the good people that wherever they went they were convinced they, as Americans, brought virtue. Nor could Stilwell conceive that what was good for America could possibly be bad, or wrong, for other peoples. In the years since, American ambassadors, generals and agents, like the emissaries of other, much crueler people, have continued to try to change governments, replace governments, have helped to sustain or tried to eliminate foreign chiefs of state. It was a diplomatic technique to which we came late and at which we are not very adept. But Stilwell was the first American to insist that our interests required political elimination of a major foreign chief of state. This policy perplexes me with its

arrogance. But paradoxically I know, in Stilwell's case, that he was absolutely right. It would have been better for China, for America and for the world had Chiang been removed from China's leadership in time. There might then have been some hope of a Chinese leadership more humane, less hostile, just as effective yet more tolerant than the one that succeeded Chiang.

Several years later, in 1946, visiting my home in New York, Stilwell summed up what lay ahead on the day of his departure. "Chiang," he said, "was a man trying to fight an idea with force. He didn't understand the idea, and he didn't know how to use force."

He could not have said it that well on that Saturday afternoon in the drizzle at the Chungking airfield. Nor could I have formulated it, either. What was at issue in the Stilwell crisis was what kind of China there was going to be after the war was won. What had most alarmed Chiang K'ai-shek, I knew even at that time, was not the Japanese victories of 1944, nor even Stilwell's command temper. What had most alarmed Chiang was Stilwell's effort to establish contact with the Chinese revolutionaries of the north—the men of Yenan, Mao's Communists.

And so, before Chiang could cut the tendrils of contact between Americans and the Chinese revolution, I felt I ought to go north. I knew, as did all field correspondents, that the men in Yenan were not the simple agrarian reformers described by distant American liberals. They were, instead, a swelling, pressing force, banging at the American command for a decision, one way or another. They could cause men to die, could set back the Japanese, could govern. They had much to offer and much to teach.

CHAPTER FIVE

YENAN: TAKEOFF FOR THE REVOLUTION

I had waved Stilwell off the mud-slick runway of Chungking late Saturday afternoon, October 21, 1944.

And now I knew I must hurry.

With Stilwell gone, it would be only a week or ten days before a new American commander in China would be arriving. The American Embassy was in disarray, with no authority. The Chinese, shocked by their own temerity in forcing Stilwell out, would not move overnight to penalize me, or halt my movements—but soon they certainly would. Stilwell's staff, however, still controlled American military headquarters that night. An American courier plane, I knew, would be leaving the next day for the Communist capital in Yenan; my friends could still airlift me there if they cut my orders that evening. Which they would; and did; and the next afternoon, the rain still drizzling, I was Yenan bound.

We were over the loess uplands and in the sun in two hours—first the Szechwan hills fleeting away below to the south, then the walled rectangle of Sian passing beneath our wings; then the tawny hills, the mesas with their tops sliced off, and the brown and yellow fields in their sere fall colors draped over the hills; then a solitary yellow pagoda pricking into the blue sky, the crenelated sentinel which was the landmark of Yenan. Three arroyos below slashed the sandy hills, then ran together in a gully which broadened into a riverbed, and our plane as it twisted its way on wing end through the gullies displayed to us the slope sides—cut with hundreds of oval cave entrances, a panoramic honeycomb that might have been a bandit's lair. Then we were bouncing over the airstrip in the valley, flanked by green vegetable patches, and I was in Yenan.

Time, by its miracle, gives a clarity to all great events the further they fade into the past, burning off detail to reveal the track of history and decision. I had come to Yenan as a war correspondent, to write a story of politics and pressures. But what was happening in those three weeks I lingered in Yenan was far more important: a revolution was groping for its shape; the People's Republic of China was preparing to declare its sovereignty as Communist leaders filtered through from the vast all-China underground to Yenan to prepare for the first national congress of their party since 1928. Not only that; in those weeks, in the immediate aftermath of Chiang K'ai-shek's repudiation of Stilwell and Roosevelt's repudiation of Chiang, the Chinese Communists were preparing to offer a full, perhaps permanent, alliance to the United States—military, economic, political—which they hoped, and some of us also hoped, would endure into the future. Had that mood in Yenan continued, there might have been no Korean War, no Vietnam War.

Those were the honeymoon weeks between America's war purpose and the Chinese revolution, and the agent of the honeymoon, the matchmaker, was a young American diplomat, John Paton Davies, Jr., then thirty-six years old, China-born to missionary parents, fluent in Chinese; a lithe, handsome, witty rising star of the Foreign Service, who had taken it on himself to explore history on his own. I hope I do my old and dear friend John Davies no disservice in saying that brilliant as he was, he was as innocent of American politics as I was at that moment; and he was to suffer humiliation and degradation far greater than mine for those lyric fall days in Yenan.

Davies and I had flown to Yenan together that Sunday afternoon, in the same plane. I was journeying to get a story. What his purpose was, he did not say; close as we were in friendship, diplomats like Davies in those years kept their secrets from friends in the press like me; and I would not intrude. We parted at the Yenan airport, he to lodge with the American military observers' section, Dixie Mission, and I to lodge at the civilian guesthouse of the Communists, a mile away. We saw each other again and again in the two weeks of his stay, with affection and frolic, as we pursued our differing ways in that hill city which is now legend; but not until years later, when all documents were published and he wrote his own superb memoirs, *Dragon by the Tail,* did I know what he was doing, or fully understand what was happening.

The Chinese have a saying for such moments: "The heavens are high, and the Emperor is far away." That week the heavens were,

indeed, high; and there was no emperor. There was no superior to John Davies, for no one either in Washington or in Chungking presided over American relations with the Chinese revolution. Technically, Davies was a State Department political officer, detached to give political advice to the military commander, Stilwell. But that weekend, there was no Stilwell, no American military command. So Davies pursued an exploration of his own: Could the Chinese Communists be useful to America's war against Japan? What was their value to us?

Davies had begun on the evening of his arrival with a late-night session with Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai and Chu Teh, Commander in Chief of the Red Army. If our forces were to land on the China coast, would the Communists be able to develop support, cut rails, mobilize peasants? It was a legitimate inquiry. But it came at a moment of confusion. The Communists were fully informed of Chiang's break with America over Stilwell; even better informed of the decay and collapse of the Nationalist armies; and preparing for the shaping of an independent government. All their great military leaders were back, or were trickling back on foot, from the underground and guerrilla resistance areas, for the Seventh Party Congress—the first in more than sixteen years! Chu Teh, Chou En-lai, Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-ch'i, were all in residence, but Lin Piao, P'eng Te-huai, Ch'en I, Nieh Jung-chen, had also just arrived—the name marshals of the future conquest of China, the men who would seize control of a civilization. And here was Davies, exploring the possibility of military cooperation, an alliance! Davies could not have been there at a better time. Nor could I.

We were seeing a revolution hardening from embryo to form; I was the only newsman there, and since I was sheltered by old friendship with Chou En-lai and acquaintance with Yeh Chien-ying, and clothed with spurious importance by the accident of my arrival with John Davies, I was accepted as part of the great purpose of exploring the alliance between America and the Chinese Communists.

Those weeks in Yenan were a time of laughter and gaiety. Those of us who have been so criticized for romanticizing the Chinese Communists can claim forgiveness for those weeks in October and November; Chinese Communists were different then; we were not duped. The wine of friendship flowed; Chu Teh and Chou En-lai would wander around on foot unannounced to visit the outpost of Americans as friends, chatting and whiling away the hours. Their own comrades, the men of the underground, the battle-scarred veterans of combat, the commanders of sprawling, invisible, yet violently success-

ful guerrilla armies, were arriving for the great congress. It was a time of good will—with men open, warm, trusting. Later, twenty years later, they would purge each other, kill each other. Later they would command armies to kill Americans. But their trust in each other and their yearning to make friends with us was real. What it must have been like at the Smolny in St. Petersburg when the Russian Communists struck for power, I cannot imagine. Certainly Americans, with rare exceptions like John Reed, were not welcome. But Yenan, at the transition moment, embraced us as allies and friends.

In my cave quarters each morning at the guesthouse, I would be awakened by the sound of bugles, silver-bell tones shivering off the hills. Breakfast was brown wheat buns—sliced, toasted and served with eggs. I would go out to the ledge looking down over the valley and see tufted camels coming in from the northern desert, bells tinkling from their throats. And mules, and horsemen, and teamsters cracking their whips, and people gathering at the marketplace. The people were healthy, dressed in shaggy tan woolens or thick blue cotton paddings. The Communists, in those days, believed that soldiers, officials, students, should all be fed—fed enough so they could work and stride with the vigorous step that differentiated them from the sluggish officials and feeble soldiers of the Nationalists.

All were healthy; but I noted that complete equality fell short in luxuries: milk, for example, went to the sick or wounded in the hospitals. But after that, the milk went to the families and children of the high officials. I pressed that question: Whose children got the milk?

It embarrassed them. So I did not press further, for they were my hosts.

I could wander anywhere unescorted: to the leather market, which stank as tanneries do; to the fruit and vegetable stalls; up and down roads. And thus, as I wandered about, the encampment slowly clarified for me into two rough visible centers of power. I could see these centers, and visit them at will because I was considered a friend. Party headquarters and army headquarters were nuclei of unseen, yet interacting, systems. Party headquarters was three miles from my quarters—two gray brick buildings, one for the offices of functionaries, one housing an auditorium for meetings. There I did most of my political interviewing. Army headquarters was another gray brick building, surrounded by lesser buildings of yellow adobe and enclosed in a garden called the Pear Orchard by the Americans of Dixie Mission though, to me, it seemed to hold more fig trees than pear trees. I

understood the military talks better than the political talks because my Chinese could absorb the plain, technical language of war, while the nuances of their politics were so new and revolutionary that Western languages had not yet invented terms to translate them. Yet the language of this hill town would someday become the clichés of revolutionaries all around the world and stir even American change-makers in the streets of the 1960s.

All seemed to chuckle with a joviality that, even now, I cannot conceive as feigned. There was Chu Teh, for example, a pug-nosed, burly man of fifty-eight, Commander in Chief and father of the Red armies, dropping in to visit Americans, sample their Western food, drink tea, chatting away as if time did not exist. One day after a two-hour talk at his headquarters, he insisted I stay for lunch. As we sat down, we were joined by his Chief of Staff, Yeh Chien-ying, who had just finished a talk with John Davies; and then, as casually as if we were at a house party, we went out into the sunny garden and joked in a word game. We tried to see which of us could use the phrase "*so-wei*" (which means "so-called") most often in a sentence—as, for example, "The so-called government in Chungking under its so-called President Chiang is trying to extricate the so-called Nationalist armies from the so-called front." We laughed and laughed and ate ice-cold pears and drank tea unhurriedly.

These two Chinese commanded armies that ran from bases on the tropical island of Hainan to the deserts of the Gobi in the cold north. But nowhere in all my travels have I met men who seemed more at ease in authority or enjoyed it more than in Yenan those weeks. I look now at the somber faces of present Chinese leadership, photographed as they stand on the rostrum at Tien-An Men, stiff and stern, and I wonder if they themselves can recall the days when they were young and made puns and danced. Perhaps power changed them before they knew they were changing, when they learned that power meant they could afford the harsh luxury of purging and killing each other.

In those days, however, they were comrades—with a natural, easy quality of friendship and equality that the power of state has since erased. After lunch, Chou En-lai might invite his young interpreter, Ch'en Chia-k'ang, to play Ping-Pong with him in the big mess hall, which they would sometimes do even in the presence of foreign guests. Chu Teh, P'eng Te-huai, Lin Piao, would roar with laughter at each other's jokes. They had been together for so long, hungered and suffered and trod the Long March together, that they were brothers. It was only ten years from that epic; they had dismissed Chiang, and

outfought the Japanese. Back now from the various fields of command against the invader, they were enjoying this wartime reunion, and a bubble of mirth, the swagger of confidence, attended their rendezvous. They were the first team of command; they had transformed their guerrilla ragamuffins into an organized army of 600,000, with a militia support of over a million. Lin Piao would go on to conquer Manchuria and North China; P'eng Te-huai would go on to command Chinese forces against MacArthur in Korea. Then both would be purged and Lin Piao would be killed.

The best moment to savor this comradeship was at the Saturday-night dances in the party headquarters auditorium. A few Chinese string instruments would saw away, drums would beat, harmonicas and paper-covered combs would carry a melody, and the high command of party and army would sashay around the floor. The dance I attended while I was there seemed to me reminiscent of the old-fashioned Jewish weddings I had known as a boy, while to John Davies it seemed more like the church sociables he had known when he was young. Chu Teh did not dance, but sat at a table drinking tea and cracking melon seeds; but Madame Chu Teh was like the grandmother who wants to dance with the youngsters. Yeh Chien-ying brought his three-year-old daughter, Niu Niu, who darted in and out among the chairs with other children, while Yeh, himself the Chief of Staff, danced with abandon. Yeh, a man of almost Mexican cast of countenance, sporting a pencil-thin mustache, swung his partner about the floor, no matter what the music, in a combination of free-flowing tango and waltz. Lin Piao preferred the fox trot. American enlisted men, forlorn at their observers' outpost in the hills, were also invited. But these were dances of innocence; one American once made a pass at a Chinese lass and the incident was followed by a formal visit of protest from Chou En-lai himself to the commander of the American outpost, Colonel David D. Barrett. Chou explained that the matter was inadmissible, unless the American enlisted man did, indeed, love the Chinese girl with his whole heart.

I recall the music now because today it seems like a melodic midpassage in a minor cultural stream. Five years before, in the hills of Shansi, I had heard Communist soldiers marching as they sang Chinese words to "Onward, Christian Soldiers." Now, in Yenan, in 1944, their leaders danced to strains from "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "Marching Through Georgia." And twenty-eight years later, in 1972, when I attended the reception for Richard Nixon in the Great Hall of the People in Peking, the accomplished first orchestra of the

triumphant revolution played in his honor "America the Beautiful." But the folk music of America sounded most authentic in China in 1944 as the drums went thump, thump, thump at the Saturday-night dance, while men and women in thick padded woolens wore their caps as they danced on the beaten mud floor—and all of us swung in a rhythm of brotherhood into the night.

Historic documents present events in mannered prose. For example: in the bible of Chinese Communism, *The Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung,* is embedded the "great" speech he made on October 30, 1944, in Yenan, entitled, forbiddingly, "The United Front in Cultural Work." As it reads now, manicured into a state document, it gives no feel of the man Mao Tse-tung who spoke that day. The Chairman entered the hall that afternoon, walked about among the local officials and invitees like an American politician meeting the medical and public health workers in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He shook hands as he walked; he was dressed in a drab brown woolen suit, buttoned at the neck, and shortly mounted the platform to begin his speech. He rambled a bit before he found his theme, then fished out a few notes from his pockets, began by interpellation, the questioning of the listeners, the seeking of answers to set questions, involving the audience of local health officials in his discourse, before he began the serious part of his lecture. He was the teacher, his theme the necessity of using witch doctors, herb doctors, acupuncture specialists, all the resources of native Chinese medicine, to help the people and the army since the people and the army were deprived of Western medical science.

I remember two things of the lecture. The first was the marvelous folksy, histrionic quality of his platform presence; only Hubert Humphrey among the American stump speakers I have since heard was as good as Mao. Mao would mimic, gesture, pace back and forth, hold on to his haunches to make a point, squeak, screech, drop to sotto voce. I could not understand half of what he said—but as a performer, in his prime, he was gripping. And I remember also Chou En-lai sitting in the front row with the other leaders at this medical exhortation. Chou had a pad and a pencil with him; perhaps he was showing his loyalty to Mao, perhaps he was setting a good example to others to pay attention. But he held his little pad very high in the air, sitting there in the front row before Mao, and with a tiny extra bit of flourish, conspicuously wrote notes on the great lecture for the Chairman and all others to see his respect of the Master Teacher.

The time frame as well as the catalytic presence of John Davies set the mood.

The time frame was the Communist perception of the events of 1944. They knew, better than any others, the extent of the battle disasters of Chiang K'ai-shek in East China. Nationalist armies were dissolving; Japanese were gobbling up entire provinces; the Communists were following the Japanese advances and organizing counter-resistance. Whatever fell to the Japanese, the Communists felt was theirs to undermine and organize—and organization was moving even faster than the Communists had hoped. Chiang had lost a quarter of a million Nationalist troops in six months; but their own Communist recruits were multiplying each week. They had now organized no less than sixteen political-military regional bases in the rear of the Japanese, each called a "liberated area." In some of these areas, they now controlled patches of one hundred by two hundred miles in which neither Japanese nor Nationalists dared enter, patches where the only government was their government. The prime political matter under their consideration was how to knit all these "liberated areas" into one "people's government," a real government that controlled the ninety million people they protected. So far as they were concerned, the so-called government of Chiang K'ai-shek had evaporated with its troops in East China; it now existed in West China only as the proprietor of the American franchise. And lo, at this point, here were the Americans, Davies and Barrett, exploring Communist willingness to share this American franchise. Thus, as the leaders of these local governments gathered, and more importantly, the military commanders gathered with them, to consider the calling of their first national congress in sixteen years, and the possibility of making a Communist government, the accident of Stilwell's removal teased them to consider also whether this new government a-borning would cast its lot with America or not.

A reporter could not have found himself in a happier situation. There were apparently thirteen members of the Communist Politburo in Yenan, each a vivid character, each anxious to accept the American embrace, each open and forthcoming. I interviewed no less than eleven of the thirteen, and, perhaps, should have tried for the full house. But interviews with Communist leaders in those days ran two, or three, sometimes four hours, in unhurried, leisurely sessions. I did a rough survey, which may prove inaccurate in the light of later research, on who and what these founding Communist fathers were and where they came from. The names, in Western transliteration, are

a roll call of monosyllables. But the persons were, overwhelmingly, intellectuals. Eight had gone directly from college or school into the revolution twenty years earlier. That included Mao and Chou and Liu Shao-ch'i (the party boss, later purged). Only four had come from the peasant or working class—Chu Teh himself, P'eng Te-huai, Ch'en Yun and Teng Fa. Po Ku had been both a college student and a worker, a man of humor who could speak in both idioms. After the new congress, this Politburo would change to include more military commanders—but these new marshals were also, overwhelmingly, men of intellectual background who had begun as scholars.

This was one of the things I learned firsthand in Yenan as I searched for history: revolutions are made by intellectuals. Not all intellectuals are revolutionaries. But if intellectuals can weave their ideas about what bothers ordinary people, they can ensnare and mesh them together. If they are shrewd enough to describe conditions to workers and families so that simple people recognize what is cramping them or destroying them—then they can mobilize these people to change things, to kill, to hunt, to die, to be cruel, with the moral absolution that intellectuals can always give simple killers and terrorists.

All of the high command in the Politburo were willing to talk with me. And all—except Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung—were convinced, apparently, that I was a semi-official and friendly reportorial arm of the American government.

The generals in the Politburo admitted they knew nothing of the use of modern artillery; that they knew nothing of aviation; that their own staff work was primitive; that their communications net was rudimentary, dependent on wires snipped from Japanese lines or radios they put together from parts smuggled out of the Japanese-occupied cities. But their intelligence service was spectacular: they knew precisely the order of battle of Japanese divisions; enemy lines of communication; the spectrum of occupation zones. Their intelligence reached into studies of personalities of various Japanese field commanders and classified Chiang's generals by ability, background, meanness, cooperation. The net message in each military conversation was: We can help you. Chiang K'ai-shek cannot.

The conversations ran with remarkable similarity, with no contradictions, no matter which general one spoke with; and their frankness, in wartime, on their dispositions, plans, movements, was to me astounding. One conversation must do to cover all military conversations—with P'eng Te-huai. He was a small man, balding, of crumpled

face, his eyes set in a perpetual squint. He had been fighting since 1926 and had now risen to Deputy Commander in Chief of the 18th Group Army; with no reluctance at all, he lectured me for three hours on war. He began as if I were a man from Mars, explaining first the doctrine of partisan warfare; from that to the military tactics that partisan warfare implied—total cooperation with the people so that the army could fade and disperse into the countryside, melt away into the people, then regather; then a description of his own forces and their levels of competence—from the evanescent and diaphanous guerrilla command outside Canton; to the semi-organized, more sophisticated base in Japanese-occupied Hainan island; to the full-force regulars of the New Fourth Army in central China; to the established governments of the "liberated areas" in the north, where he could collect and maneuver units up to twelve thousand men in strength. Twelve thousand was his limit as a force of maneuver simply because, as he explained, they could not feed more than twelve thousand men in one concentration for any length of time. From that to staff structure, training commands, the function of the combined chiefs of staff here in Yenan.

P'eng went back twenty years in his history of the Red Army; knew the caches of buried rifles and weapons left behind in Nationalist-occupied areas; spoke matter-of-factly of different tactics of battle used against Japan and Nationalist armies. He mentioned casually how "we destroyed two regiments of the 61st Army [a Chiang K'ai-shek army] this summer with few casualties." Then he brought the conversation up to the contemporary history of October 1944. The Eighth Route Army alone, he said, had 400,000 regular troops within operational distance of the North China coast; these could call on a further 1,000,000 armed militia bound by family to their villages and towns. "With these forces," said P'eng, "we can aid any American landing in North China." Thus to his techniques of disruption; he could tear apart any railway north of the Yellow River, for as long as we wanted. In 1940, said he, in the Hundred Regiments offensive, Communist troops had ripped up all Japanese rail communication in North China so thoroughly that it was from three to six months before the Japanese could rebuild. Now, in 1944, they could do even better. If we, the Americans, landed anywhere between Shanghai and the Shantung peninsula, with enough advance notice, said P'eng, "we can guarantee you one million regular troops on the spot plus our people's militia." Every Communist commander was making the same guarantee, and to Davies and Barrett in even more specific terms. I for my part, as an

American reporter, was willing to accept the alliance.

These military conversations were happening in late October 1944 and, to me, seemed critical. But I was parochially bound to a China vision of war. In the Pacific, war was taking on a happier coloration. October 20 was "Assault Day," as the battle of Leyte Gulf began; in the next four days followed the greatest sea battles of all time, with Americans spectacularly victorious; by November 1, MacArthur had 101,365 men ashore in the Philippines—and the Japanese grand battle fleet had been wiped out, erased from history. As seen from Washington, clearly, by mid-November there was no need of Chinese support to destroy Japan; China could safely be demoted to a tertiary theater of war; no American in Washington need be faced with the messy problem of deciding that month whether to support Communists or Nationalists in China or ignore both. On that unrecognized political decision hung the future of Asia, and America's relations with Asia—which was tragedy.

In Yenan, however, politics were supreme. Yenan was, above all other things, an idea factory. Perhaps never before in history, except perhaps for the Christian revolution in Rome or the French and American revolutions of the eighteenth century, have ideas been so important—or been so consciously perceived as forces in themselves, as the manipulators of action.

Again, I must cast away notes of hours and hours of conversation, skip from interview to interview, bowdlerize and distort in order to make the idea of ideas manifest.

I should start at the bottom with the two minor functionaries, Kao and Nan, who directed the local government of the Yenan base area. "Base area" meant to me a logistical base—a secure area from which arms, supplies, food and support were shipped to a war front. I thought of a base area in terms of what Americans called in those days the "ZI," or Zone of Interior, meaning Detroit, Pittsburgh, New York, the manufactories and training camps of our power. In Yenan, not so. Kao Tzu-li and Nan Han-ch'en told me flatly that the Yenan base area shipped *nothing* to the front. All war areas were self-supporting. What Yenan shipped out was people—"cadres" who could spread ideas. Yenan, of course, had problems, but basically they were experimental problems—as, for example, finance and currency. The breach with Chiang K'ai-shek in 1941 over the New Fourth Army incident had forced the Communists to enter finance; the week after Mao's statement that January (see page 115) denouncing Chiang, Yenan had

decided to print its own paper money. Currency control is an essential attribute of sovereignty. Without knowing it, the Communists had thus accepted one of the prime problems of states: finance, currency, reserves. Now, in 1944, they were training cadres to ship out to the liberated zones to manage finance and the economy.

Yenan was a continuing experiment in "do-it-yourself" government, with people learning, as they do not learn in Poli-Sci I in any American university, how you go about choosing the proper men to govern other men—or improvising all the multitude of technologies needed to govern. How does one make paper to print books, leaflets or money in a hill country? They were learning by themselves. What do you do after you dip buckets of oil from traditional oil pits and try to make kerosene out of it for lamps, and the badly refined oil sputters in the homemade lamps? How do you refine oil? How do you melt iron and make guns? How do you care for sick and wounded? How, after all, do you make a revolution and a new government without ideas? That was Yenan's main function; to cycle and recycle individuals through the base area and teach them to think in new ways. Forty thousand people lived in the Yenan area. Twelve thousand of them were locals, peasants, merchants. The rest were party people—functionaries, leaders, officials and, overwhelmingly, students. Students ranged from eighteen to forty-five, from adolescents just arrived after fleeing their schools in the occupied cities or Nationalist areas, to grizzled middle-aged guerrilla commanders undergoing courses in remedial reading, learning how to put staff orders in writing.

Yenan was a community of schools—for doctors, for nurses, for commanders, for political commissars, for party functionaries. The Politburo members were charged, each one, with some area of idea training.

There was Liu Shao-ch'i, chief of what the Russians would have called the Orgburo. He controlled party training and organization. Later, in 1959, he would become the Chairman of the People's Republic of China, under Mao's superior party chairmanship, and would be ruthlessly purged in 1966. I could understand the later purging, for in talking to Liu Shao-ch'i one found that he had the mind of a great administrator—or a mechanic. The world of his life was the interior of the party and, dryly, he lectured me on party cell organization from village branch, to railway branch, to county branch, to all-area branch; and how the hierarchy operated. Liu Shao-ch'i had a neat mind, but there was no poetry in it.

Teng Fa was not an intellectual, but certainly a memorable interviewee. He was one of the few authentic proletarians in the

Politburo, a waterfront organizer in his youth, a riverboat cook on a British vessel, a dedicated revolutionary. Like most untutored people, particularly seamen who read in solitude, he had come upon ideas as a virgin illiterate. Ideas had struck him as virulently as venereal disease had struck the Hawaiian Islanders after Captain Cook had passed through. Teng Fa was in charge of mass organizations and his specialty was slogans. He loved slogans, explained why one slogan worked and another did not, how critical they were. For the masses an idea had to be clear, simple, easy to understand—and correct. "*Yu chien kei chien, yu li kei li*" was, he thought, a good example of clarity and simplicity; it meant: "Have money, give money; have strength, give strength." That was a great resistance slogan; translated, it meant that poor peasants had to give their strength, their lives, their guts to the revolutionary resistance; and the rich landlords, who had money, had to deliver money, or face the consequences. Communists were cruel in extorting money from landlords and the rich, moving to excesses of brutality. But I note with wry amusement that their feeling then was that the maximum income tax on a rich man should not be more than 35 percent. When Teng Fa spoke, with professional enthusiasm, of how you get ideas to women, to peasants, to workers, to masses, through slogans, I felt he might have made a great Madison Avenue ad man. But he wanted to overturn two thousand years of history with his slogans; words were weapons.

Then there was P'eng Chen. P'eng Chen was an intellectual; he had gone directly from school into the Communist underground; been imprisoned by his local warlord for six years, until released in 1935; thus may have been the only Politburo member who had not made the Long March; but had seen combat action against the Japanese for four years, from 1937 to 1941. He had returned from the field to K'ang-Ta ("Fight Japan") University at Yenan in 1942 and now headed that most elite of Communist academies—a combination of West Point, MIT, Leavenworth Staff College and Harvard. P'eng Chen fascinated me.

P'eng Chen believed quite simply that history was an ingredient of the revolution—not something handed down by tradition, but something you mixed, compounded, rearranged and packaged just as you packaged gunpowder by formulas for land mines. He had a reverence for history. Each of the succeeding dynasties of China had edited the official history of its predecessor and thus the twenty-four dynastic histories, where they were not simple chronologies, were probably entirely misleading. P'eng Chen felt the party also needed its

own new Chinese history; unless you had theory, you could not trace social roots. But no one knew any Chinese history, he said; there were no Chinese histories. No one knew anything about Chinese economics, either. When Karl Marx wrote *Das Kapital*, P'eng Chen said, he had used the reading room of the British Museum; but in China there was no such thing. The party, he continued, did not even have a history of its own revolution—only a handful of documents for students to study, plus *The Party History of the Soviet Union*.

P'eng Chen made no effort to conceal his contempt for such classics of Marxist hagiography, as well as Lenin's *Two Tactics* and *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Engels's *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, and others. He dismissed *Das Kapital* as being too hard to understand. The result was that his students—tested party and army functionaries being groomed for higher-level responsibility—were writing their own textbooks in history and economics. They met in groups as large as fifty, sometimes as small as twelve. They studied from documents, news reports, articles, but mostly they exchanged their experiences in the field. From what they knew and had observed, they devised their own theories of economics and development and when they came to questions they could not solve, classes appealed to the Central Committee, or even to Mao himself, for the applicable theory or instruction.

P'eng Chen grieved that the three thousand students of his new university could be spared to study for only two years before being recycled to higher duties. He explained his fundamental problem in a phrase: "brain remolding." The men who came in from the field, he said, whether semiliterate battalion commanders or college-trained intellectuals, had to have their minds washed out, had to be remolded in ideology. At first he thought this could be done in only three months; he had now learned that a full year was necessary to "remold the brain," before they could go on to study military matters, or economics, or health, or administration. His interpreter and I searched for a word better than "brain remolding" and finally the interpreter came up with the phrase "raising their level of consciousness." This was the first time I heard that phrase, which, over the years, moved out of China and into the streets and fashions of America in the 1960s.

P'eng Chen took his history very seriously—theoretically as a scholar, militarily as a man of action, politically as a party man. He left leadership of the university in 1945 to join Lin Piao for the campaign and victories in Manchuria; became the mayor of Peking after victory in 1951; and then was purged in the Great Cultural

Revolution of 1966. At last account, he had been sent back to his native Shansi and been spared indignity because he, like all others in Yenan, early acknowledged the godhood of Mao Tse-tung. If he were writing his memoirs on his own search for history, they might best explain the revolution to which he consecrated his life yet finally could not explain to Mao's satisfaction.

The godhood of Mao Tse-tung was already recognized in Yenan, though it was not called that. He was simply "The Chairman," but like Jesus, he preached, and others listened as he taught. The reverence given him had been earned over the years: earned in battle, where he had swum rivers, crossed mountains, led riflemen; earned by his sorrows, which had embittered him—his first wife and his sister executed by the Nationalists, both brothers killed, the younger one strangled to death in 1943, the year before I met him, by the governor of Sinkiang; earned by his example—he hoed his own tobacco patch, for he was a chain smoker. But above all, the reverence rose from his authority as the teacher. He was the man who had been right when all others had been wrong; he had first split with the Russian Communists in 1927, then welcomed back and forgiven people like Chou En-lai, who had briefly flirted with the ideas of Stalin on proletarian urban insurrections. It was as if Mao held before him the book of history, written in cabalistic symbols only he could decipher, and from this book he lectured the comrades and their leaders, telling them where China was going, how he would take them there, what they must do when they arrived. No one disagreed with Mao Tse-tung; his power of mind was theological. He had been a librarian once and his reading was immense though disorganized; but his will, his personal will, his insistence on seeing that will executed, was probably, with the exception of Lenin's, the most formidable personal will of the twentieth century.

I was awakened one morning at seven and told that if I wanted to see the Chairman, I should prepare to breakfast with him at once. He received me not in an office, but in his personal cave—an immaculate cave, the mud floors swept clean, the table dust-free. He had been a sloven in his youth, his dormitory room at the Hunan First Normal School thirty years before filthy, cluttered and appalling to classmates, who later told stories of him. But he had arrived at a fetishistic neatness of habit that, later, would be imposed as dogma on all the spick-and-span lanes and streets of the China he created.

What struck me about the man was not his appearance but the

command of his presence. Husky, with a receding hairline, the faintest trace of mustache hair on his upper lip, a tiny mole on his chin, he was in no way handsome. When he spoke, it was in a flat, soft voice, unlike his platform manner, and with no intent of persuading. He was telling me exactly how it was. What he said was perceived reality. He was the sage, instructing. When he walked, it was with a shuffling, rolling amble, a bearlike gait. But mostly he sat still, his mind speaking out of the slouching body.

I began with the standard set questions of an interview with a chief of state. Since American purpose was to unify the factions of China so that all could fight together with us against the Japanese, I asked whether there was any hope of reform in the Kuomintang, of "untying the knot." The answer came flat: "There is no way of untying the knot." Would negotiations do any good? There was only the faintest hope, he said. Negotiations were a means the Nationalists were using to deceive the Americans: ". . . the Nationalists hope that the United States will defeat Japan, and they can turn their own forces to wipe out the Communist Party of China." And on and on. He would not attack the government of Chiang K'ai-shek now, but if attacked, he would resist. Chiang, said Mao, accused Communists of being "running dogs of Red Russia," of seeking communization of land, communization of women. There had been three great campaigns by Chiang against his party in the last four years. The party had survived them all. And so long as Chiang kept his part of the front against the Japanese, "We will not raise the slogan of overthrowing his government." Yes, they were now considering linking all the guerrilla base areas and liberated areas in a new "People's Political Council"; the pressure came from his leaders in the field, but "no decision has yet been made." And as for America, he did not object to America's limited supply to Chiang's armies, but if we equipped ten or twenty divisions of Chiang's armies with modern arms, Chiang would turn them against him. It would be better for the United States to supply neither side; or if they were to do so, then his demand was that the United States distribute supplies to both sides proportionate to their effectiveness in fighting against Japanese.

So much for the formal interview, which lasted about an hour. I promised to submit it to him for clearance, since he was making a pronouncement of state. But when it was returned to me, it was so edited as to be useless for publication.

Then he went on, as we chatted informally. What scored on my mind most was his composure; there was no knee-jiggling as with

Chiang K'ai-shek, when Chiang betrayed the tension of a question not in his mind but in his body movement. No one entered with telephone messages, or interrupted with notes as he talked, as in Chiang's chambers, or in the Oval Office of the White House. This was the thinking place of Communist China. He, Mao, was obviously neither executive nor administrator, but the sage, and he must not be interrupted as he thought. And he was thinking aloud to me as he rambled. There was no dialogue; I was a student; he was instructing me. The personality was majestic, permitting of no contradiction or dispute. And frightening. I asked, after the formal questions were over, about policy in the big cities once they had won. Big cities were so different from the villages he had organized into resistance; in big cities there were newspapers and magazines. Would he let rival newspapers publish what they would, even if hostile? Certainly, Mao replied. In the new Communist China there would be freedom of speech, freedom of rights, freedom of press. In his China of tomorrow, anyone would be able to publish in any newspaper whatever he wanted—except "enemies of the people." I did not think then to ask him who would define what an enemy of the people was.

His knowledge, too, seemed askew. His conversation was that of an autodidact, who had read as whim and taste took him. He could discuss, with the precision of a Marxist, landholding and feudalism in Western Europe and the bourgeois leap in France when the Revolution gave peasants their own land. But then, instructing me, he went on to a comparison between his China as seen from Yenan and the American Revolution as a foreign reporter might have seen George Washington at Valley Forge. Foreigners might now see the primitive conditions in Yenan, he said, as they might have seen Washington's headquarters, without realizing that Washington's ideas would make him the winner. Did George Washington have machinery? he asked. Did George Washington have electricity? No. The British had all those things and Washington did not, but Washington won because he had the people with him. I realized that in his reading of Marxian texts he had not placed the era of industry and the era of electrification in their proper centuries. But it made no difference: this man knew his country. This man knew that ideas made people bear guns; power was what came out of the muzzle of the gun. He had invented the modern doctrine of partisan warfare, war in which uniforms are meaningless, where there are no neutrals, where men, women, children, must all, willing or not, be involved in struggle and revolt. His was the doctrine

of the ceaseless revolution—and he knew his people better than any leader I have talked with.

In the simplest historic terms, he was not campaigning against Chiang K'ai-shek; he was campaigning against Confucius and two thousand years of ideas he meant to root out and replace with his own.

I had come for breakfast and thought the interview would soon be over. But he seemed to enjoy the off-the-record conversation of instruction and I had been well recommended to him, so he went on. I was startled when he said it was time for lunch and asked whether I could stay. I could. His wife Chiang Ch'ing (his third) came into the room to serve us. She had been a movie actress in Shanghai before she joined the revolution, and her figure, even smothered by the thick brown wool pants she wore that day, was stunning. She served and joined us for the simple lunch and was charming. She was then thirty-two, almost twenty years younger than Mao, and I relished the sight of her as he must have. Later, much later, as she aged, she became herself a member of the Politburo and one of the architects of the bloody Cultural Revolution; an actor or actress in politics is very dangerous because politics exaggerate the native dramatic instinct with the intoxication of substantive command. Chiang Ch'ing became, and probably remains, a dangerous woman. But she seemed quite harmless there in the cave serving the great thinker—smiling, pleasant, compliant, not at all the Dragon Lady of later Western reporting.

I saw Mao several times in those weeks, and a year later in Chungking. Those were formal meetings. The indelible impression was the first—a man of the mind who could use guns, whose mind could compel history to move to his ideas.

All too often the dialogue of great historic forces is skewed by the spin of the initial conversation—and the dialogue of the American Democracy and Chinese Communism was thus skewed by their first official contact. The spokesman of China was Mao Tse-tung; the spokesman of America was Major General Patrick Hurley. Mao was a genius, Hurley was an ignoramus, and Hurley's arrival in Yenan during that first week in November 1944, to begin American negotiations with Chinese Communists, is a classic instance of the derailment of history by accident.

I can see Hurley now in split image—both as he appeared on the airstrip in Yenan, and as he must have appeared in the corridors of American politics I later reported. Both are relevant. He was, I know

now, a hustler in domestic politics, of the type I later came to recognize in Washington. He had made his mark as a politician in the Republican convention of 1928 in Kansas City, where he was one of the floor managers corralling delegates for Herbert Hoover. When Hoover won the nomination, Pat Hurley, an Oklahoma corporation lawyer, got his piece of the traditional share-out of office after a Presidential victory, being named Secretary of War in 1928. That post brings the eminence so many American cabinet members seek, which leads to the world of big deals and big captaincies in private industry. Hurley, returning to his law practice in 1932, had negotiated an agreement between the Mexican government and five American oil companies; the Mexicans had expropriated American oil holdings, but Hurley came away with a multimillion-dollar, happy settlement. Thus his reputation as a man good at the negotiation of foreign affairs. War came, and Franklin Roosevelt, making the war a bipartisan effort, not only adorned his cabinet with such stately and patrician Republicans as Stimson, Knox, Lovett and Forrestal, but also sandwiched in other decorative Republicans of lesser quality for minor, symbolically ceremonial tasks. Since China was low on Roosevelt's priorities, he had sent Patrick J. Hurley, now accoutered as a major general of the United States, to negotiate with Chiang K'ai-shek for both the creation of a coalition government between Communists and Nationalists, and the supersession of Chiang K'ai-shek by Stilwell as Commander in Chief of the Chinese land forces.

Hurley had already failed to make peace between Stilwell and Chiang when he decided to take off for Yenan in November of 1944. But the making of peace between Communists and Nationalists seemed to him to be less difficult. What he knew of revolutionaries he must have learned in his Mexican adventures, for he regarded the Chinese Communists as kindred to Pancho Villa. Hurley was talkative, with the Southwestern garrulousness that marked Lyndon Johnson—his concept being that, if he held a conversation together by his own chatter long enough, he might find out what he himself was talking about while creating a mood of good will which might trigger other conferees to compromise. Hurley always talked a lot and his style was caught best by a young congressman, a one-time college instructor in Far Eastern history, sent by Roosevelt to China in November of 1944. The freshman congressman was Mike Mansfield, later to be the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, and Mansfield reported pithily to Roosevelt: "I saw Major General Pat Hurley and we had a very long talk. He talked for two hours and forty-seven minutes, and I

talked for thirteen minutes, which was about right."

To say that Hurley was colorful is an understatement, and the flourish of his arrival in Yenan on November 7, 1944, creased the minds of all who by chance were at the airfield the day of his unannounced visit.*

Hurley loved dramatics—and what could be more dramatic than the personal representative of the President of the United States dropping in, from the air, for the first summit conference of the American state and the Chinese revolution, unannounced, unheralded, accompanied only by a sergeant stenographer who would write up the notes of one of the great rendezvous of history.

Because it was a dull afternoon, Davies, Barrett and I had gone to the airstrip to see one of our rare weather-service planes arrive, we hoped with mail for us. But there was a second plane in the air, which we recognized as the one used until a few weeks before as Stilwell's personal command plane. A little knot of curious Chinese had gathered, as they always did, to see a plane land—but out of this plane descended a six-foot-three-inch character in American uniform and overcoat, the pants pressed knife-sharp, a silver-haired, bushy-mustached major general, whose chest was covered with ribbons from shoulder to rib cage. It was Hurley, whom we all recognized. Barrett, as senior American military officer, approached, and dressed as he was in a Chinese cotton-padded blue overcoat, he must have seemed to the martinet emissary as distinctly out of uniform. Barrett, an irrepressible wit, compounded the error instantly by looking the general up and down, from head to toe, and offering the observation, "General, it looks as if you have a medal there for every campaign except Shays' Rebellion." This caused the general to frown, for he had no sense of humor. Barrett was to suffer for this, as were I and Davies, and all who tried to instruct Hurley on China.

The reaction time of the Communists in action always amazed me. There must have been an instantaneous telephone call from the airstrip to headquarters. No more than five minutes could have elapsed before a ragged group of soldiers raced down from the hill to line up in an honor guard. And almost instantly thereafter, apprised of the arrival of Franklin D. Roosevelt's personal representative, ap-

*There were three of us at the airfield to see Hurley arrive, and the mark of that visit appears in all our writings. Both John Davies, in *Dragon by the Tail* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), and Colonel David Barrett, in his magnificent memoir *Dixie Mission* (Berkeley, Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, 1970), tell of that day. Although our accounts vary, probably all are correct. My memory of the day is written from notes made at the airfield and retyped that evening.

peared the Communist high command: Mao Tse-tung himself, in a baggy unpressed cotton-padded blue cloak; Chu Teh, the Commander in Chief, in the orange-tan thick woolen uniform of a common soldier; Yeh Chien-ying, the Chief of Staff, in the smart khaki-colored wool uniform of an officer; and Chou En-lai, in a dingy brown leather coat. There were only four automobiles in Yenan then, and when Mao required one, his vehicle was a converted ambulance. Out of this ambulance they now rushed, trotting pell-mell to greet Franklin Roosevelt's emissary. Hurley, all six foot three of him, immaculate and glistening, towered above the stocky Chinese like Captain John Smith surrounded by Powhatan's tribal braves.

Hurley advanced on the honor guard of disheveled soldiers, stood for a moment, and then let out a loud screech—"Yahoo!"—giving the Choctaw yell of his native Oklahoma. We gaped; but this was President Roosevelt's choice. We got into the ambulance—the four leaders of the Chinese high command, Hurley, Davies, Barrett and I. We jounced over the ruts toward Dixie Mission; a mule on the road swerved; the mule driver, paralyzed by the sight of an automobile, clubbed the mule. Hurley bellowed, "Hit him again; hit him on the other side." He then offered the observation to Mao Tse-tung that he had been a cowboy in his youth and knew about animals. Mao responded that he had been a shepherd in his youth. Barrett was translating and his command of Chinese was exquisite, in tone, nuance, slang and decorum. As the ambulance jounced through the ford of the dry Yen River bed, Mao explained how this gully rose and fell with the rains, now a torrent, now again a parched gulch. Hurley recalled Oklahoma and its dry creeks. In summer, he said, you could tell when a school of fish was swimming upriver by the cloud of dust they raised. Barrett translated and the Communist leaders laughed; here was a real man of the people. We went on to Dixie Mission, and all of us sat down to tea and happy conversation. It is a reporter's dream to insert himself unobserved into the presence of great men as they talk history; my notes, alas, ran out at that point because I was enjoying myself too much in the company of the great. And that evening, since the Communists had already prepared a banquet in honor of the November 7 anniversary of the great Russian Revolution, we were all invited. Of that banquet I remember little, except that when Hurley was called on to speak, he rose, paused, and then yelled again at the top of his lungs, "Yahoo!"

Of more consequence to me was my conversation with Hurley between our tea and the banquet. I had spoken to Mao Tse-tung,