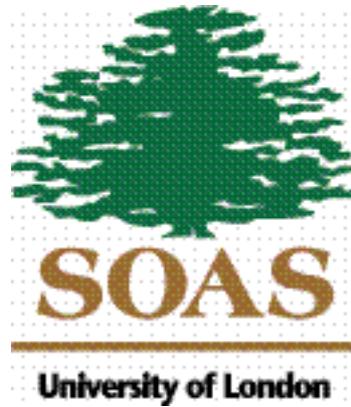


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Resolutions of the Tsunyi Conference

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Source: *The China Quarterly*, Oct. - Dec., 1969, No. 40 (Oct. - Dec., 1969), pp. 1-38

Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the School of Oriental and African Studies

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/651978>

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# *Resolutions of the Tsunyi Conference*

Translated with a Commentary by J E R O M E C H ' E N

SUMMING UP THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE ENEMY'S 5TH "ENCIRCLEMENT" \*

*Resolutions of the Centre of the CCP Adopted by the Conference of the Politburo, Tsunyi, 8 January 1935*

HAVING listened to Comrade X X's survey of the 5th "Encirclement" and Comrade X X X's supplementary report, the enlarged conference of the Politburo regards Comrade X X's survey as fundamentally incorrect.

(1) The resolutions of the Party Centre concerning the enemy's 5th "Encirclement" (adopted on 20 July 1933) clearly pointed out that the 5th "Encirclement" was an extraordinarily cruel attack launched by the imperialists and the reactionaries of the KMT [Kuomintang] on the soviet revolutionary movement. They also pointed out that in this fierce, decisive class war, the internal weaknesses of the KMT and the new intensification of the revolutionary situation had altered the comparative strengths of the classes in this country in our favour, [and therefore the resolutions] arrived at the correct conclusion: "During the 5th 'Encirclement' we are having even better conditions to achieve a decisive victory." However, Comrade X X in his report overestimates the objective difficulties, explaining that the 5th "Encirclement" could not be smashed in the central soviet because of the strength of the imperialists and KMT reactionaries, and at the same time underestimates the revolutionary situation at the present. Inevitably, he comes to the opportunist conclusion that to defeat the 5th "Encirclement" was an objective impossibility.

(2) The Party Centre, based on its own correct assessment, laid down specific tasks to deal with the enemy's 5th "Encirclement." The bitter struggle against the "Encirclement" in the past year and a half has proved beyond doubt the correctness of the political line of the Party Centre. The Party of the central soviet, in particular, under the direct leadership of the Centre, has achieved unprecedented successes in mobilizing the broad masses of workers and peasants to take part in the revolutionary war. The Red Army Expansion Movement aroused great enthusiasm among the masses. More than 100,000 activists of the workers and peasants were mobilized, armed and sent to the front, thus

\* The Chinese is *wei-chiao* which means a "punitive encirclement campaign"; hence the use of quotation marks.

greatly enlarging the Red Army. The Model Red Youth Corps began to serve as the reserves of the Red Army while the armed mass organizations of the Red Youth Corps had made great progress. Under the slogan, "Everything for victory at the front," the Party met the financial, food and other material needs of the Red Army in the battlefield. The intensification of the class struggle in the soviet area, the soviet economic construction, the thorough-going improvement in the relationship between the soviet government and the masses greatly aroused the enthusiasm and activism of the masses in the revolutionary war. All this constituted favourable conditions for crushing the 5th "Encirclement." But Comrade XX in his report obviously underestimated them. Consequently, he comes to the inevitable conclusion that we were unable to crush the "Encirclement" *by our own effort (chu-kuan shang)*.\*

(3) It must be pointed out that our work still suffers from serious defects. The Party's leadership in the daily struggle of the broad masses of workers and peasants against the imperialists and KMT had not made any noticeable progress; the expansion of guerrilla activities and the work of disorganizing the white armies remained unsatisfactory; the co-ordination of the Red Armies of all the soviets fell short of a unified strategic purpose (*i-chih*). These defects undoubtedly affected operations against the 5th "Encirclement" and were mainly responsible for their failure. But their existence must not be misunderstood as the *essential*\* reason for our failure to crush the 5th "Encirclement." Comrade XX has exaggerated the defects in these areas of our work and refused to see or admit the misjudgement on the part of the military leadership and in their basic strategy and tactics. Therefore, we cannot understand why the main forces of our Red Army had to leave the central soviet and the main reasons why we could not crush the "Encirclement"; we have concealed the bad effects of the erroneous line in our military leadership and strategy and tactics. Since our military leadership could not adopt correct strategy and tactics, we were unable to score decisive victory in war in spite of the bravery and skill of the Red Army, the high standard of the work in the rear, and the support of the broad masses. This was precisely the *essential* \* reason why the 5th "Encirclement" could not be defeated in the central soviet.

(4) After the failure of the 4th "Encirclement," the KMT, Chiang Kai-shek, and his imperialist military advisers knew the disadvantages of fighting with us in the soviet by using the strategy and tactics of "deep penetration." Therefore, in the 5th "Encirclement," [they] adopted the strategy and tactics of a protracted war and the principle of block-houses.

\* Original emphases.

Their attempt was to wear out our human and material resources, to reduce the size of our soviet and finally to destroy us by engaging our main forces.

Under these circumstances, our strategic line should have been decisive battles for defence (an offensive type of defence)—concentrating superior forces, selecting the enemy's weaknesses, using mobile warfare to destroy a part, or a great part, of enemy strength [when we had] the confidence [to do so]. But in the campaign against the 5th "Encirclement," [we] adopted a pure defence line (or defence of positions only), rather than decisive battles for defence, coupled with the so-called tactic of "short, swift thrusts." This enabled the enemy's strategy and tactics of a protracted war and the principle of block-houses to achieve their aims and to inflict partial losses on the main forces of the Red Army, forcing [us] to leave the central soviet. It must be pointed out that this line runs counter to the basic principles of the strategy and tactics which have helped the Red Army to victory.

(5) At the present stage of the Chinese civil war, when we do not yet have the support of urban proletarian uprisings and mutinies of the white army units; when our Red Army is still very small; when our soviets constitute only a tiny portion of China; when we do not yet have aeroplanes, artillery and other sophisticated weapons; when we are still fighting on interior lines; and when the enemy are still attacking and surrounding us; our strategic line has to be [one of] decisive battles for defence—not pure defence, but defence by seeking decisive engagements in order to turn them into a counter-offensive [type] of defence. Pure defence can weaken the enemy to a degree and preserve our territory for a period of time, but it offers no prospect of victory. Only by developing from defence to counter-offensive (both in campaigns and strategically) and then to offence, by winning decisive engagements and by whittling down the enemy's strength, can we pulverize the enemy, defend our soviets and develop the soviet revolutionary movement.

In accordance with this strategic line, we must not engage the enemy in a decisive battle in which we have no confidence to win because we have neither discovered nor created the enemy's weakness. We should use our secondary forces (*e.g.*, guerrilla units, armed masses, independent battalions and regiments, and a part of the main forces of the Red Army) to confuse or bait the enemy. [We] must check the enemy with mobile warfare while our main forces should retreat to a suitable distance or transfer themselves to the enemy's flank or rear. [They should] be secretly assembled, awaiting a favourable opportunity to strike at the enemy. Fighting on interior lines, the Red Army's retreat and hiding can tire the enemy out and cause him to feel conceited and relaxed, thereby inducing him to make mistakes and expose his weaknesses. This

is to pave the way to a transformation into counter-offensive and decisive victories. [We] must most carefully analyse and assess the conditions of the enemy so that [we] can appropriately plan for a battle. [We] must not mobilize our strength unnecessarily and throw it into a battle merely tiring ourselves out and missing opportunities of decisive victories at other places, simply because the enemy has provoked us or feigned an attack. For victory, we need not try to halt the enemy when he is advancing according to plan, [even] when we are in a position to strike at him. We should wait until he has advanced to a suitable distance before surrounding and annihilating him (this is to lure the enemy to penetrate deeply [into our territory]). For victory, we must not refuse to give up some parts of the soviet territory and even to withdraw temporarily our main forces out of the soviet. We know that if we can destroy the enemy and crush his "Encirclement," we shall not only recover the abandoned territory but also enlarge the soviet. All this is to enable the Red Army, always holding the initiative and always in a favourable position, to beat back the enemy's attack and "Encirclement" and to avoid a loss of initiative or an unfavourable position.

However, in the 5th campaign, *all*\* these principles were *violated*.\* The telegram of the Communist International in February 1934 correctly pointed out:

Our impression is this. In the present period of time it seems that almost all the plans and steps adopted by the military command have been the result of the enemy's constant pressure. His provocation has often forced us to redeploy our strength unnecessarily. Because of these continuous changes, we have not been able to use fully our strength in combat. We think it may be necessary to defeat the enemy where victories have been won before, instead of attempting to defeat him simultaneously along the entire front line.

The leadership of the pure defence line simply could not understand this instruction of the International. Consequently, the same situation which had existed before February last year persisted until the withdrawal of the main forces of the Red Army from the soviet. The pure defence line which voluntarily put [our]selves in a passive position did not and could not in one blow defeat the enemy along the entire front; it endeavoured to halt the enemy there. Comrade X X had in the past issued the slogan: "Attack along the entire front." This was changed to "Defend the entire front." Strategically, both were wrong. "Not an inch of soviet territory to be lost" was politically a correct slogan. To apply it mechanically to military operations and strategy was a total mistake; it merely covered up the policy of pure defence.

(6) For decisive victory it is absolutely necessary to concentrate

\* Original emphases.

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superior forces and to fight decisive battles. Under the present circumstances when the enemy's strength is far superior to ours, he often attacks us with a force several, even ten, times greater than ours. This is not to be feared, because he fights the exterior lines adopting the policy of encircling and advancing by separate routes, and attacking in unison. This creates an opportunity for us to defeat the routes one by one. Under conditions of a war along a strategic interior line, we have the advantages of fighting along the enemy's exterior lines (or a section of them) in each battle—*i.e.*, to use a part of our armed forces to check one or more than one route of the enemy, and then to concentrate our greatest strength to destroy a route. By this method [we] destroy the enemy units one by one, so as to break his "Encirclement." Fighting along the interior line, [we] can only concentrate superior strength in search of battles on the exterior line and victory, thus remaining constantly in possession of the initiative while forcing the enemy into a passive position, and eventually destroying [his] whole plan.

But in the past, the leaders of the pure defence policy almost always dispersed our forces (particularly the 1st and 3rd Army Corps) in order to resist the advancing enemies in all directions. The result of this dispersal was constant passivity on our part. Our strength was weak at every point and this enabled the enemy to destroy our units one by one. Many battles of the 5th campaign (for instance, the Hsünk'ou, T'uants'un, Chienning and Wenfang battles) were lost because we did not concentrate our strength. The leaders of the pure defence policy assigned to the Red Army the central tasks of halting the enemy's advance and destroying parts of the enemy forces by "short, swift thrusts." [Their] tasks were not to struggle for the initiative and victories of decisive battles, with the result that [we] annihilated very few enemy soldiers and the soviet was trampled under the enemy's feet.

(7) The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army is specially skilled at destroying the enemy in mobile warfare. The Communist International pointed out to us (in its telegram of October 1933) at the beginning of the 5th "Encirclement": "Our operations should adopt the form of mobile warfare, instead of positional warfare, on both flanks of the enemy." It repeated this point in its telegram of February [1934]: "Obviously, according to the experience in the past, our army units have achieved great victories in mobile warfare, but they have not been able to win in the attacks on the areas where enemy's block-houses are built." These instructions of the International are perfectly correct. Although there were less opportunities to wage large-scale mobile warfare in the 5th "Encirclement" when the enemy erected block-houses than in the previous "Encirclements" when he had "penetrated deeply [into the soviet]," the opportunity still existed. This was proved several times

(e.g., the battles at Hsünk'ou, T'uants'un, Chiangchüntien, Chienning, Hufang and Wenfang, and especially at the time of the mutiny of the 19th Route Army \*). But in the 5th campaign, because the policy of pure defence resulted from a fear of the block-houses and the theory of "short, swift thrusts" put forward by Comrade Hua Fu, we switched from mobile to positional warfare, only for the benefit of the enemy and to the grave detriment of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

Forceful attack on the enemy's block-houses, under the present technological conditions, should be rejected. They are to be attacked only when they are flimsily built or isolated, to inflict losses on either the enemy's reinforcements or his units on the move. In the 5th campaign there were many light-hearted attempts on block-houses without any success. This is hardly surprising, for the war was treated like a game.

Probably the underestimate [of the role] of mobile warfare in the 5th campaign was the reason for putting the 5th "Encirclement" into a category different from previous "Encirclements." In consequence, past experience of mobile warfare was disregarded, the method of luring the enemy to come in and destroying him was discarded, and inevitably the correct instruction of the Communist International was in fact rejected. To the leaders of the policy of pure defence and short, swift thrusts, all this was perfectly natural and logical.

(8) Because of overestimation of the role of the enemy's block-houses theory and underestimation of the role of mobile warfare, the view that victories began from tactics was formed. Only tactical victories could be transformed into victories in campaigns which in turn would induce [the enemy's] strategical changes in our favour. (See Comrade Hua Fua's article and Comrades X X and X X's letter to Comrade Lin Piao and Comrade P'eng Teh-huai.) "Under [conditions with] block-houses, there can be only many minor victories, not exhilarating [major] victories." (See Comrade X X's statement at a Politburo meeting and Comrade X X's article in the *Hung-hsing* [*Red Star*].) Therefore resistance by dividing our fighting forces and short, swift thrusts are the only answer to the block-houses. All the theories and practices of these opportunist strategies and tactics went completely bankrupt in the revolutionary wars.

We cannot deny that block-houses created fresh difficulties in defeating the enemy's 5th "Encirclement." (However, they [the leaders of the pure defence policy] had at first treated the theory of block-houses with disdain. See Comrade X X's article in the *Hung-hsing*.) [We] do not deny the need for the Red Army to have the technical equipment

\* This is referred to in the commentary as the Fukien Crisis.

(e.g., aeroplanes and artillery) and ought to prepare for the mutinies of the [white] soldiers [who come from] workers' or peasants' [families] in order to overcome the enemy's future, stronger block-houses. Even under the present conditions, the principle of block-houses can be invalidated. [The block-houses] make the enemy's units tired, disperse his strength, and nurse his reliance on them—a loss of confidence in victory once he leaves them. He must come out of them when he advances towards us; he cannot build them all over the country in order to restrict our operations. All these are in our favour to defeat the principle of block-houses. And our method of defeating it is still mobile warfare—by relying on the development of guerrilla wars around the block-houses to give support to the operations of the Red Army and relying on the penetration of [our] agitators working among the white armies. What is described as defeating the block-house principle by mobile warfare is [something like this]: within the ring of block-houses, destroy large numbers of the enemy when they are advancing; beyond it, make the enemy abandon their block-houses and wage mobile warfare in a creative, imaginative \* and unexpected manner. This, together with the correct use of tactics, would enable [us] to defeat the block-house principle and crush the “Encirclement.” Pure defence and “short, swift thrusts”—i.e., reliance on tactics rather than on the correct leadership in strategic campaigns for victory—is in fact a surrender to the principle of block-houses, not an attempt to invalidate it.

(9) The leaders of the pure defence policy misunderstood the problems of a protracted war and *blitzkrieg*. It must be realized that the civil war in China is not a short, but a long, protracted war. The soviet revolution has been developed and consolidated by continuously defeating the enemy “Encirclements.” Therefore, under favourable conditions, we absolutely must shift from defence to counter-attack or offence so as to destroy the enemy and his “Encirclement” (e.g., the first four campaigns and the 5th campaign before the battle of Kuangch'ang). Under unfavourable conditions, we may temporarily retreat in order to preserve our strength. When favourable conditions present themselves again, [we] should transfer to counter-attack or offence (e.g., the 5th campaign after the battle of Kuangch'ang). This is the first basic principle. At the same time we must get to grips with another principle. For a protracted war, [we] must do our utmost for a quick settlement to each “Encirclement” or each campaign. Under the present disparity between the enemy's military strength and ours, the principle of procrastination in each “Encirclement” or each campaign is exceedingly harmful to us. When the enemy is dealing with us according to the principle of procrastination

\* *I-shu-ti* (artistic).

(for instance, the 5th "Encirclement"), we must adopt a correct strategy to upset his plan, to crush his "Encirclement" within the period when we can support our war effort. To wrestle with the KMT at the expense of our personnel and materiel, including our ability to replenish our munitions (*i.e.*, the so-called war of attrition: see Comrade X X's article in the *Hung-hsing*), is to misconstrue the nature of a protracted war. At present we are at a disadvantage in all these respects. Numerical comparison [in these respects] can lead only to the contrary conclusion—a protracted war will deny us victory in the future. Because we want to carry on a protracted civil war we need a quick settlement to each "Encirclement" or each campaign, and we must carefully formulate our strategic and campaign plans. The pure defence strategy in the 5th campaign was fundamentally wrong; under its guidance, the "dare-to-die" battles (*e.g.*, the battles of Maosanting, Sanhsifang, P'ingliao and Kuangch'ang) were equally wrong. The Red Army should have avoided all these battles in which [it] had no confidence of victory. Even if the decision to retreat was correct, we should have refused to engage the enemy when circumstances did not favour us. It is a great sin to treat an uprising as a game; it would be more so to treat a war as a game.

For [fighting] a protracted war and swift battles, we must give the Red Army the necessary period of rest and training. This is necessary for the victory of the war. It was said that in the 5th campaign we had no time for rest and training—an inevitable conclusion drawn by the advocates of pure defence and short, swift thrusts. [These people] thought that to activize the Red Army was to make it fight all the time while neglecting its rest and training. This was wrong. No unit can fight well without its needed rest and training. The organization of the Red Army must be appropriate to the present civil war conditions. It was wrong to form [so] many new divisions before its main forces had been brought up to full strength. The correct procedure should have been to organize new units after having brought up the strength of the main forces. It was also wrong to order the new divisions, untrained and inexperienced, to fight independently. There should have been veterans in those divisions to form their backbone, who would guide [the new soldiers] and impart battle experiences to [them]. Wrong again were the clumsy and topsy-turvy organization and equipment. [The soldiers] should have been lightly equipped, and the leadership below the division level ought to have been strengthened.

Precisely because of the protracted war and swiftly decided battles, [we] must oppose the view which regarded the preservation of our fighting strength and that of the soviet as mutually exclusive. For triumphant combats, the Red Army must make necessary heroic sacrifices. This is the characteristic of the armed forces of [our] class; this is the basis of

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our revolutionary military victories. If the *quid pro quo* for the sacrifices is victory, they are worthwhile. But this does not apply to the worthless, "dare-to-die" type of fighting. We must know that only by preserving our personnel can we preserve our soviet. The soviet could not exist without a strong Red Army. With a strong Red Army, the soviet territories temporarily lost can be recovered in the end. Furthermore, new soviet territories can be acquired only by relying on the Red Army.

According to the principle of protracted war, we must combat two possible erroneous tendencies after our counter-attack has smashed the enemy's "Encirclement." First, conservatism that springs from fatigue and an overestimate of the enemy's strength. It induces us to relax and to make no further move, and prevents our counter-attacks from developing into a general offensive to eliminate even more enemies, to expand soviet territories even further and to enhance the strength of the Red Army. It hinders us from laying the foundation for the destruction of the enemy's next "Encirclement" before it is launched. Second, adventurism that comes from overestimating our own chances of victory and underestimating the enemy's strength. It lures us to launch attacks without any hope of victory (*e.g.*, hopeless and unnecessary attacks on big cities). It may even lead to the loss of victories already won in the counter-attacks. It also leads to excessive losses of Red Army personnel and to neglecting the tasks of Red Army expansion, soviet territorial expansion and the development and consolidation of strategic areas. Like [conservatism], it also hinders us from laying the foundation for the destruction of the enemy's next "Encirclement." Therefore, it is the most serious duty of the Party to oppose these two tendencies on the question of strategic offensive between the enemy's two "Encirclements."

According to the principle of swift battles, [we] must refuse to engage the enemy in a panic, [we] must not wage the initial battles of a strategic [plan] without proper preparations, [we] must not give up because our surprise attack on the enemy did not work, [we] must not, under the pretext of fighting short engagements, relax our preparedness. In other words, [we must oppose] all the *opportunist tendencies* \* which prevented us from making the necessary preparations to sustain our efforts against the enemy's "Encirclement" as long as possible. Quick settlement [of a battle] requires all the conditions (superior strategy, correct leadership in a battle, mobile warfare, seizure of opportunities, concentration of strength, etc.) necessary for the annihilation of enemy units. Only by annihilating enemies can a battle be quickly decided and can their attacks or "Encirclements" be defeated.

\* Original emphasis.

(10) One of our important strategies for the defeat of the enemy's "Encirclement" should have been the exploitation of every conflict among the reactionaries, actively widening the cleavages among them, so that it would have been easier for us to develop [our] counter-attacks and offensive. The crux to our defeating the enemy's 5th "Encirclement" was the mutiny of the 19th Route Army in Fukien. The Party Centre then adopted the correct political line to exploit this internal contradiction of the KMT by concluding a truce with the 19th Route Army and thereby urging it to oppose Japanese imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek. However, Comrade X X and others took a contrary strategic stand, justifying this with empty leftist words. They failed completely to understand that the utilization of the 19th Route Army Mutiny was politically and militarily one of the keys to breaking the 5th "Encirclement." [They] thought the Red Army's continued operations on the eastern front against the flanks and rear of Chiang Kai-shek's troops which were attacking the 19th Route Army were tantamount to giving aid to the latter. Therefore [they] transferred the main forces of the Red Army to the west, to attack the block-houses in Yungfeng without any result. Thus [we] lost this golden opportunity, [because they] did not appreciate that the existence of the People's Government of the 19th Route Army was valuable to us. To strike at Chiang Kai-shek's flanks and rear in direct co-ordination with the 19th Route Army was [to fight] for our own interests, for the defeat of the 5th "Encirclement." This was not to say that the 19th Route Army was a revolutionary army. No, it was merely a clique of the reactionaries. It attempted to preserve the regime of landlords and capitalists by using the worst kind of deception and arbitrary propaganda; even making use of such terms as socialism. Only if we could by our own action demonstrate to the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers under the spell of the 19th Route Army that we would help any faction in its anti-Japanese and anti-Chiang struggles, could we have exposed with greater ease the deception of the warlords of the 19th Route Army and win the masses over to our joint effort against both Japan and Chiang. Only if we had co-ordinated militarily with the 19th Route Army could we have seized the golden opportunity to destroy Chiang Kai-shek's main forces. In none of the previous campaigns had these favourable conditions existed. That we did not make use of them militarily was no surprise from the leaders of the policy of pure defence. Their target was never more than halting the enemy's advance. In their view, it would have been adventurous for us to exploit the enemy's internal contradictions in order to switch to the counter-attack and offensive.

(11) Fundamental mistakes were made in changing our strategy and in breaking through the siege. It must be pointed out first of all that

when the continued fight on interior lines in the central soviet had only a slender hope and eventually no hope of victory (from May to July 1934—*i.e.*, after the battle of Kuangch'ang), we should unhesitatingly have changed our strategy to that of a strategic retreat. In this way we might have preserved the strength of the Red Army so as to seek new opportunities in areas free from block-houses, to turn to the counter-attack, to break the "Encirclement," and to create new soviets for the protection of the old soviet. Thus the telegram of the International on 25 June pointed out:

Mobilize new armed forces. These not yet exhausted in central areas. Resistance of Red Army units and conditions in the rear do not justify panic. As to withdrawing Red Army main forces from soviet, this can be [done] for preservation of personnel only, in order to dodge possible blows from enemy. When discussing resolutions of 13th Congress and 5th Plenum of International in relation to prospects of struggle, present international situation, and Red Army's flexible strategy, foremost [considerations] are preservation of strength and our own consolidation and expansion while waiting for opportunity for large-scale offensive against imperialism and KMT.

At this crucial juncture, our strategic principles were obviously wrong. The question [of retreat] was not mentioned at all in the strategic plan of May–July. Although [this question] was raised and preparations for the retreat were begun in the strategic plan of August–October, the basic principles of this new plan were diametrically opposed to the strategic principles which ought to have been adopted. Article 2 of Part I of the new plan stated: "[We] shall do our utmost to continue to defend the soviet, in order to score significant victories." "[We] shall develop guerrilla wars and strengthen supplementary operations in order to effect a change in the strategic situation." It completely overlooked the problem of the preservation of strength. [This omission] was precisely the basis of the strategic principles of the retreat from the soviet. The wrong timing in giving battle and the emphasis on positional warfare resulted in great losses being inflicted upon the Red Army. The contradiction of preparing for the retreat on the one hand and defending the central areas with all our might on the other made manifest at a critical point the inevitable panic on the part of the leaders of the line of pure defence.

What is more important is that, in Comrade Hua Fu's mind, our breakthrough of the siege was essentially a flight in panic, a sort of house-removal operation, not a resolute fighting operation. Because of this, [we] not only flouted the International's instructions regarding this momentous change in explaining it to the cadres and Red commanding officers, but even omitted discussing the instructions at the Politburo's meetings. Thus the purpose of the political action of several million

people was regarded as unimportant. The main forces of the Red Army were not given a chance to rest, reorganize and train before they were transferred to white areas, from fields of positional warfare to those of mobile warfare. They were hurriedly ordered to march. Why did they have to evacuate the central soviet? What were their immediate tasks? Where were they going? These basic problems of tasks and methods were kept secret. Militarily, and especially politically, it was impossible to arouse the enthusiasm and activism of the Red fighters. This cannot be anything but a grave mistake. There were [also] the elephantine columns of the Military Commission and the rear organizations of each army corps to add to the logistic and operational difficulties and to turn all combat units into covering units. [They] moved slowly on and thus lost the initiative of reaching their original destination. [We] forgot that the Red Army's strategic move would meet with the enemy's stubborn opposition and that in a long-distance movement the Red Army would have to fight hard against intercepting and pursuing enemy forces before arriving at its destination. All these military, political and organizational mistakes, especially a strategy contrary to the principle of decisive battles against the enemy under necessary and favourable conditions, put us almost always in a passive position, constantly under the enemy's attack while quite unable to deal telling blows at the enemy. In consequence the battles for three months to break through the siege were everywhere rear operations, never active, unrestricted attacks [on the enemy]. In consequence the hackneyed phrase "*pei-chan*" (prepare for battle) on everyone's lips actually meant rear operations or "*pi-chan*" (avoid battles).\* The Red Army became demoralized and tired because it had no rest. Personnel reduction [desertion] reached an unprecedented rate. The correct slogan, "Counter-attack," was turned into a camouflage for Comrade XX's principle of avoiding battle; there were no preparations for a real counter-attack and victory under necessary and favourable conditions. A change in strategy for the Red Army would have forced the enemy to change their entire plan for advancing into the central soviet, with the result that the central soviet could have been preserved, the 5th "Encirclement" could have been broken, a base area in Hunan could have been established and the strength of the Red Army could have been largely preserved—all basic tasks which were unfulfilled due to the basic strategic principle of avoiding battles. The principle of avoiding battles sprang from a misconception—*i.e.*, that the Red Army must first reach its destination (West Hunan) and lay down its rucksacks before launching a counter-attack to destroy the enemy; it was incapable of doing otherwise. It dared not challenge the

\* It is permissible to pronounce *pei* (to prepare) as *pi*, thus driving home this ironic pun.

pursuing enemies (*e.g.*, the columns commanded by Chou and Hsüeh)\* even when they were separated and tired. This mistaken view was due to a lack of understanding of current circumstances which would not permit us to act in such a simple, easy and straightforward manner. It was also due to an overestimate of the strength of the pursuing enemies. The simple, easy and straightforward method might have worked under less grave conditions in which a small contingent was moving across a short distance. It could not possibly work under the conditions of the 5th "Encirclement" in which the huge main forces of the Red Army were moving across a distance of several thousand *li*. [We] should have avoided unnecessary battles and battles against undefeatable enemies, but should not have avoided necessary ones and the ones against defeatable enemies. We failed to fulfil our tasks in this breakthrough operation precisely because of this [our avoiding battles indiscriminately]. This mistake in principle persisted right to the last phase of the breakthrough operations. When the Red Army reached the border of Hunan and Kweichow, it was mechanically ordered to advance towards the areas [under the control] of the 2nd and 6th Army Corps. There was no understanding that our action and principles had to be adapted to changed circumstances. When the Red Army arrived at the Wu River, there was no thought of transferring it into a counter-attack against Chiang Kai-shek's pursuing troops on the Szechwan-Kweichow border in accordance with the new situation. The only task in view was to destroy small groups of the Kweichow Army and the so-called bandits. Although the last two mistakes were corrected under the protest of the majority of the Politburo, they showed clearly the consistent opportunist tendency of Comrade Hua Fu and the others.

There are only two prospects for the policy of pure defence: "dare-to-die" at all costs or take flight. There can be no other.

(12) The enlarged conference of the Politburo agrees that on the strength of all available evidence, our failure to defeat the enemy's 5th "Encirclement" was mainly due to the military line of pure defence. All efforts to use the Party's correct line to defend the mistaken line of the military leadership (*e.g.*, Comrade XX's report and Comrade Hua Fu's statement) are in vain.

The enlarged conference of the Politburo regards the military line of pure defence as a concrete manifestation of right opportunism. It has its origin in an underestimate of the enemy's strength, the overestimation of objective difficulties, especially those of the protracted war and block-houses, an underestimate of our own strength, particularly that of the soviet and Red Army, and a lack of understanding of the characteristics

\* Generals Chou Hun-yüan and Hsüeh Yüeh.

of China's revolutionary war. Therefore the enlarged conference of the Politburo regards the struggle against the military line of pure defence as a struggle against specific right opportunism of the Party. This struggle should be deepened and all attempts to transform it into unprincipled personal disputes should be severely checked.

(13) Moreover, the enlarged conference of the Politburo regards the leadership method of Comrade XX, especially that of Comrade Hua Fu, as extremely bad. Comrade Hua Fu monopolized all the work of the Military Commission, and thus completely abolished the collective leadership of the Commission. Punishment was used freely in place of self-criticism. All different views on military matters were not only unheeded but also suppressed by all available means. The autonomy and creativeness of lower-ranking commanding officers were stifled. Under the pretext of changes in strategy and tactics, many of the valuable experiences of the revolutionary wars in the past were labelled "guerrillism" and discarded. The majority of the Military Commission more than once put forward their correct views and on many occasions argued forcefully [for them], but they failed to make any impression on Comrades Hua Fu and XX. All this led to the abnormal state of affairs in the Military Commission.

The Politburo also regards its own and the Secretariat's leadership over the Military Commission as exceedingly weak. Their focus of attention was on the expansion of the Red Army and the supply of material for it. Although there were great achievements in these respects, they paid only scanty attention to strategy and tactics which were left to a handful of comrades only, first of all Comrades XX and Hua Fu. We did not clearly understand that to command a battle was to determine its outcome. A mistake in command could cancel all the good work in the rear. The Politburo admits its errors in this area, but most of the blame should be apportioned to all the comrades in the Secretariat, because some important decisions and strategic plans had been approved by the Secretariat.

But the enlarged conference of the Politburo specially names Comrade XX for his serious mistakes in this respect, for he, as the representative of the Centre, led the Military Commission. He did not correct Comrade Hua Fu's mistaken way of conducting the war; nor did he rectify the abnormalities in the Military Commission in good time. On the contrary he actively encouraged the development of these mistakes. The enlarged conference of the Politburo agrees that Comrade XX is chiefly responsible for them. However, in his introductory statement Comrade XX has not accepted the criticisms of the overwhelming majority [of the enlarged conference]; nor has he admitted his mistakes. It must be pointed out that Comrade XX's errors did not amount to a whole mis-

taken political line; they were serious, individual political mistakes. If they persist and develop further, [Comrade X X] will inevitably stray into an entirely erroneous political line.

The enlarged conference of the Politburo deems it necessary to rectify the mistakes of the military leadership in the past and reform the method of the Military Commission's leadership so as to defeat the enemy's "Encirclement" and to create new soviets.

(14) Finally, the enlarged conference of the Politburo resolves: although our mistakes in military leadership in the past were responsible for our failure to crush the 5th "Encirclement" in the central soviet and for the partial losses suffered by the Red Army which was compelled to evacuate the soviet, the main force of our heroic Red Army still remains, we still have our excellent relationship with the masses, we are still correctly led by the Party and we are occupying a topographically and materially better territory with the support of the broad masses of the whole nation and the help of the 4th Front Army and the 2nd and 6th Red Army Corps. Together with a correct line of command, we believe that these mistakes can be overcome by the effort of all our comrades and Red commanding officers. The enemy's difficulties have, however, greatly increased. The area of our activities is now farther away from the counter-revolutionary base in Nanking; Chiang Kai-shek has lost his reliance on the block-house areas which took him years to build. The internal contradictions and disunity among the warlords have become worse. In the 5th "Encirclement" our foremost enemy, Chiang Kai-shek's main force, was weakened. In particular, the imperialists' policy of dismembering China, the KMT's policy of selling out our country, and the unprecedented bankruptcy of the national economy has made it doubly clear to the masses of the whole country that the soviet is the only way to national salvation. Therefore the people are more sympathetic with, give support to, and struggle directly for the soviet movement and soviet power. These are the conditions favourable for our defeating the enemy's new "Encirclements," creating a new soviet and developing a national soviet movement. It must be pointed out that the situation now presents serious tasks to the Party and Red Army. Because the imperialists and the counter-revolutionary KMT warlords will never give us a respite, we are threatened with a new "Encirclement" by the enemy. The central Red Army is now in Yunnan and Kweichow where there is no soviet and we must create a new one. Our successes can be achieved only through hard struggles. A new soviet cannot be established without a bloody battle. Our chief problem now is how to defeat the enemy troops from Szechwan, Yunnan, Kweichow, as well as Chiang's. To defeat them, the Red Army must become highly mobile. The basic principles of the revolutionary war are laid down; the fulfil-

ment of the combat tasks depends on their creative application. The skill of the Red Army in mobile warfare had been somewhat blunted by the long periods of positional warfare in the 5th campaign. But at present the commanding officers of all grades in the Red Army are required to grasp the tactics of mobile warfare. Therefore a resolute and quick switch from the techniques of positional warfare (short, swift thrusts) to those of mobile warfare is an urgent task. Fighters, especially new fighters, must be given adequate technical training. The political work must be channelled to the needs of our movement at the present stage in order to safeguard the fulfilment of each combat assignment. The Red Army also needs rest and reorganization. It must be greatly enlarged and take its own discipline seriously. It must make its relationship with the broad masses of workers and peasants even closer; it must accelerate its work among the inhabitants of a locality. It should be the agitators and organizers for the soviet. The present situation demands the Party and Red Army to do their utmost to solve these fundamental problems in concrete and definite ways.

The Party's work in the white areas should be arranged and strengthened. There must be a fundamental change in the method of leading the masses in white areas to wage struggles. The work to disorganize white army units ought to be started in earnest. One of the Party's most central tasks is to develop guerrilla warfare. In the Central, Hunan-Kiangsi, Hunan-Hupei-Kiangsi and Fukien-Chekiang-Kiangsi soviets, the Party must establish its firm leadership in guerrilla warfare. The old style of work should be changed to suit the new situation. Finally, in order to unify the action and co-ordination of the Red Armies of the whole country, [we] must establish closer contact with the 2nd and 6th Army Corps and the 4th Front Army and strengthen our leadership in them.

The enlarged conference of the Politburo believes that we can accomplish these heavy tasks now in front of us. Their fulfilment is a guarantee of future victories of the revolutionary war, which will enable us to found a new soviet in the vast territories of Yunnan, Kweichow and Szechwan, to recover our lost soviets, to join the Red Armies and soviets at various places in the country into one entity and to turn the struggles of the workers and peasants of the country into a triumphant great revolution.

The enlarged conference of the Politburo believes that the Chinese soviet revolution, because of its deep historical roots, cannot be defeated or destroyed. The transformation of the Central, Hunan-Kiangsi, and Fukien-Chekiang-Kiangsi soviets into guerilla areas is merely a setback in the soviet revolutionary movement as a whole, which will not in the least shake our faith in the progress of the Chinese soviet revolution.

## RESOLUTIONS OF THE TSUNYI CONFERENCE

In fact, it is impossible for the imperialists and KMT to arrest even temporarily the development of the Chinese soviet revolutionary movement. The successes of the 2nd and 6th Army Corps and of the 4th Front Army, the activities of the central Red Army in Yunnan, Kweichow and Szechwan, and the revolutionary struggles of the masses of workers and peasants in the whole country prove that the Chinese soviet revolutionary movement is advancing forward.

The enlarged conference of the Politburo points out that the mistakes in the Party's military leadership in the past were only a partial mistake in the general line of the Party, which was not enough to cause pessimism and despair. The Party has bravely exposed its own mistakes. It has educated itself through them and learnt how to lead the revolutionary war more efficiently towards victory. After the exposure of mistakes, the Party, instead of being weakened, actually becomes stronger.

### COMMENTARY

#### 1. The Conference

Unlike the Maoerkai Conference in August 1935 which was reported contemporaneously in the non-Communist press, the Tsunyi Conference, in spite of its importance, was unknown to the outside world at the time of its convocation. Like many other conferences of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) it is also poorly documented.<sup>1</sup>

The circumstances in which this Conference took place have been described in several books.<sup>2</sup> Here we need to add only two points which have hitherto been neglected. Tsunyi was defended by the complacent and foolish Kweichow warlord, Hou Chih-tan, who seems to have had more faith in the rapids of the Wu River (250 metres wide and travelling at 1.8 metres per second<sup>3</sup>) than the martial spirit of his troops. Because of this attitude, the Communists had for the first time since the beginning of the Long March a real respite. Trophies fell into their hands like ripe apples and with them the military initiative.<sup>4</sup> This change of fortune was not, as later claimed, solely due to the change of leadership at Tsunyi. In addition the capture of Tsunyi and T'ungtzu gave the Communists a third base—however temporarily held, along the borders

<sup>1</sup> Hsü Meng-ch'iu, the "official historian of the Long March," told Nym Wales that nearly all the documents of the March had been lost. Helen Snow, *Red Dust* (Stanford, Calif., 1952), p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Ho Kan-chih, *A History of the Modern Chinese Revolution* (Peking, 1960), Ch. VI, Sec. 6; S. R. Schram, *Mao Tse-tung* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 181; and J. Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (Oxford University Press Paperback, 1967), p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> Liu Po-ch'eng *et al.*, *Hsing-huo-liao-yüan* (*A Single Spark Can Light a Prairie Fire*) (Hong Kong, 1960), p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Hou Chih-tan was cashiered because of the losses. Hsüeh Yüeh, *Chiao-fei chih-shih* (*A true account of bandit suppression*) (1937; Taipei 1962 ed.), Pt. 3, p. 9.

of Szechwan—the other two being Chang Kuo-t'ao's soviet in north Szechwan and Ho Lung's to the south-east of the province. Szechwan was suddenly threatened with being encircled by the Red Armies, which for a short while and for the first time in many years were actually fighting on exterior lines with all the initiative apparently in their hands. Hence they could make a comparatively long stay at Tsunyi for the Conference and regrouping.

Wang Chi-ch'eng, a participant of the Long March, recalls that the First Front Army took Tsunyi on 5 January 1935,<sup>5</sup> but General Hsüeh Yüeh gives a different date, 7 January.<sup>6</sup> Hsüeh was the commander of the KMT's pursuing army and was writing, not like Wang according to memory but according to his own diary, and is therefore to be relied upon. He agrees with Liu Po-ch'eng, the Chief-of-Staff of the Red Army, that the First Front Army had stayed in Tsunyi for 12 days in the first instance.<sup>7</sup> With the military situation as fluid as it was, the Conference was hurriedly prepared and convened.

Who attended it? According to the Red Guard newspaper, *Peking Hung-wei-ping*,<sup>8</sup> there were 18 at the Conference from 1–3 January 1936. This obviously wrong date tends to throw doubt on the reliability of the rest of the information in the article. However, let us accept the number 18 and try to name the participants. The newspaper says that they included the full and alternate members of the Politburo, commanders and political commissars of the 1st and 3rd Army Corps, the political commissar of the 5th Army Corps (whose commander, Tung Chen-t'ang, was presumably too junior as a member of the Party to attend), the General Political Director, and the Chief-of-Staff. Hatano Kenichi<sup>9</sup> seems the only chronicler who has given a list of the Politburo in 1934–35. It is as follows:<sup>10</sup>

Chang Wen-t'ien  
 Ch'en Shao-yü (in Moscow)  
 Ch'in Pang-hsien (Po Ku, Secretary-General of the Party)  
 Chou En-lai (General Political Director of the Red Army)  
 Chu Teh (Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army)  
 Hsiang Ying (in Kiangsi)  
 Liang Po-t'ai

<sup>5</sup> *Hsing-huo liao-yüan*, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> *Chiao-fei chih-shih*, Pt. 3, pp. 3 and 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 7 and 9 and Liu's memoirs in *Hsing-huo liao-yüan*, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Prepared by the Cheng-fa Commune of the College of Politics and Law, No. 2, 1967 and translated in *Survey of China Mainland Magazines* (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General), No. 590.

<sup>9</sup> *Chugoku kyosanto-shih* (Tokyo, 1961), Vol. IV, pp. 260–261.

<sup>10</sup> See also Wang Chien-min, *Chung-kuo kung-ch'an-tang shih-kao* (*A Draft history of the CCP*) (Taipei, 1965), Vol. II, p. 520 and R. North, *Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Elites* (Stanford, 1952), p. 112.

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Liu Shao-ch'i (in the "white" area)  
 Mao Tse-tung (said to be the Chairman of the Politburo)  
 Wang Chia-ch'iang (or -hsiang)  
 Wu Liang-p'ing.

Excluding the three absentees, there were eight members of the Politburo at the Conference. These were joined by the military participants:<sup>11</sup>

<i>Chief-of-Staff</i>	<i>Commanders</i>	<i>Political Commissars</i>
Liu Po-ch'eng		
1st Army Corps	Lin Piao	Nieh Jung-chen
3rd Army Corps	P'eng Teh-huai	Yang Shang-k'un
5th Army Corps	(Tung Chen-t'ang)	Chu Shu (?)

This makes a total of 14. The rest might include Teng Hsiao-p'ing—member of the Central Committee and editor of the Red Army organ, *Hung-hsing (Red Star)*,<sup>12</sup> Teng Fa—chief of political security,<sup>13</sup> and T'eng Tai-yüan—sometime political commissar of the 3rd Army Corps.<sup>14</sup>

In the Politburo itself, Chang Wen-t'ien, Ch'en Shao-yü, Ch'in Pang-hsien, Hsiang Ying, Liang Po-t'ai Wang Chia-hsiang and Wu Liang-p'ing belonged to the International faction which had probably been supported in different degrees by Chou En-lai, Chu Teh and Liu Shao-ch'i. Mao was therefore isolated. Now with Ch'en Shao-yü, Hsiang Ying and Liu

<sup>11</sup> Hatano. *Chugoko kyosanto-shih*, Vol. IV, pp. 271–276. According to Kuo Hua-lun in an article "Tsunyi hui-i" ("The Tsunyi Conference") which appeared in issue X, No. 7 of *Fei-ch'ing yüeh-pao (Communist Affairs Monthly)* (Taipei, 31 August 1967), the participants in the Conference were as follows: *Full and alternate members of the Politburo*: Ch'in Pang-hsien, Chang Wen-t'ien, Chou En lai, Ch'en Yun, Chu Teh, Ho K'e-ch'uan (K'ai Feng, then political commissar of the 8th Army Corps) and Wang Chia-hsiang (who may have been absent owing to a serious abdominal injury). *Members of the Central Committee*: Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-ch'i, Lo Mai (Li Wei-han) and P'eng Teh-huai. *Alternate members of the C.C.*: Li Fu-ch'un, Yang Shang-K'un, Wang Shou-tao, Liu Po-ch'eng, Lin Piao, Nieh Jung-chen, Teng Fa and the German Otto Braun. This list is agreed by Wei k'e-wei in his article "Tsunyi hui-i chih li-shih chen-hsiang" ("The True History of the Tsunyi Conference") in the same journal issue XI, No. 8 of 8 September 1968.

Neither Kuo nor Wei cite any documentary evidence, but Kuo mentions the name of his informant, Ch'en Jan, who, under the name of Kuo Ch'ien, served as a director of regional work teams in P'eng Teh-huai's 3rd Army Corps. Ch'en took part in the Long March but not the Conference.

I have strong reservations about this list. The International faction would appear to be so weakly represented that it would have been foolish to agree to the Conference; Liu Shao-ch'i by all accounts did not take part in the Long March; if Mao was only an ordinary C.C. member, it is odd that he should have drafted the Resolutions and be elevated to Politburo rank coupled with the directorship of the Military Commission; and, finally, the possibility of Otto Braun, a foreigner, attending a Politburo meeting seems questionable.

<sup>12</sup> Wang Chien-min, *Chung-kuo kung-ch'an-tang shih-kao*, Vol. II, p. 267. This is one of the points disputed in the Red Guard paper quoted above. See also H. L. Boorman's profile of Teng in *The China Quarterly*, No. 21, p. 114.

<sup>13</sup> Wang Chi-Ch'eng, *Hsing-huo liao-yüan*, p. 48.

<sup>14</sup> Kung Ch'u, *Wo yü hung-chün (The Red Army and I)* (Hong Kong, 1954), pp. 270–271.

Shao-ch'i absent and with the addition of the commanders, the fractional alignment might look like this:

<i>International faction</i>	<i>Mao's supporters</i>	<i>Ambivalent</i>
Chang Wen-t'ien	Lin Piao	Chou En-lai
Ch'in Pang-hsien	Liu Po-ch'eng	Chu Shu (?)
Liang Po-t'ai	Mao Tse-tung	Chu Teh
Wang Chia-hsiang	Nieh Jung-chen	
Wu Liang-p'ing	P'eng Teh-huai	
Yang Shang-k'un <sup>15</sup>		

At Tsunyi Mao might have had a majority, thanks to military support, but not a big one. This observation is important because it helps to dispel the impression that he won the overwhelming support of the Party and to invalidate the assertion that ever since "the International faction has become Mao's puppet."<sup>16</sup> Even Mao himself admitted in 1966 that the faction "was indispensable" then.<sup>17</sup> It was defeated at Tsunyi, but it still commanded considerable strength in the Party and the backing of the International itself. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain why the political line adopted since the 4th Plenum of January 1931 was not criticized, why there was the need to attack the faction again in the rectification of 1942-44, and why, in 1935, it was Chang Wen-t'ien who, in no sense a supporter of Mao, replaced Ch'in Pang-hsien as the Secretary-General of the Party.<sup>18</sup> The International itself was still treated as infallible with regard to both its political and military instructions to the CCP. The criticism advanced at Tsunyi thus still conformed to the pattern of criticism set up following the bankruptcy of the Li Li-san line in 1931, in spite of its being inspired by a faction which had no special connexion with the International.

According to Hsiao San,<sup>19</sup> the first to speak at the Conference was Mao who exposed the political and military mistakes committed by the Party centre. This was followed by Chu Teh's attack on Li T'e (Otto Braun)<sup>20</sup> and the Party centre. Ch'in Pang-hsien then surveyed the revolutionary movement since the Mukden Incident of 1931, pointing out the Party's failure to appreciate the significance of an anti-imperialist, united front. This was a veiled criticism of the narrowness of Mao's

<sup>15</sup> Yang was one of the 28 Bolsheviks (*erh-shih-pa hsiü*).

<sup>16</sup> Ku Kuan-chiao, *San-shih-nien lai ti Chung-kung (30 Years of the CCP)* (Hong Kong, 1955), p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> Mao's statement at a general report conference, 24 October 1966. See Jerome Ch'en, *Mao* (Prentice-Hall, Great Lives Observed series: New York, 1969), p. 96.

<sup>18</sup> In the same statement as quoted in the previous note, Mao says: "He [Chang Wen-t'ien] played a useful part (*hao tso-yung*) at Tsunyi." See *ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>19</sup> Hsiao San, *Ch'ang-cheng (The Long March)*, quoted in Nashimoto Yuhei, *Shu Onrai (Chou En-lai)* (Keisoshobo: Tokyo, 1967), pp. 148-151.

<sup>20</sup> Schram, *Mao Tse-tung*, p. 166.

peasant movement. Chou En-lai, however, made a clean breast of the strategic errors of both the Party centre and himself. Mao, in his view, should be given the leadership of the Red Army while he himself was to retire from the Military Commission. Ch'in Pang-hsien, Chang Wen-t'ien and the others had no option but to accept Chou's proposal.

Hsiao San, schoolmate of Mao in the first years of the Republic of China and champion of the Mao cult at the beginning of the rectification campaign in 1942-44, was not a participant of the Tsunyi Conference. However, because his source of information might be Mao or other leaders of the Party, his account should be taken seriously. His references to the political line which are at variance with the Resolutions themselves can simply mean his acceptance of the views prevalent in Yen-an where he wrote. His information on the order of the speakers is interesting. Even more interesting is the stance of Chu Teh and Chou En-lai at the Conference. Their *volte-face* and Chang Wen-t'ien's "useful part" contributed to Mao's victory.

## 2. The Pure Defence Line

The Resolutions concentrate on criticizing what Mao called "the pure defence line," which was primarily designed to preserve the territory of the soviet. According to this strategy the fighting forces of the central soviet were dispersed to man the entire defence line, with the result that it was impossible for the Red Army to score victories in decisive battles, not to speak of turning decisive battles for defence into counter-attacks and a general offensive. The best it could visualize was merely "short, swift thrusts" to harass or to repulse enemy attacks. By fighting this way, the Resolutions allege, the military leadership hoped to "halt the enemy outside the gate of the country."

The Resolutions point out that the military leadership was aware of the protracted nature of the revolutionary war in China, but it failed to see that the procrastination of the war demanded that the Communists should wage not long and costly battles like the battle of Kuangch'ang, which lasted from 11 to 28 April 1934 and consisted of no less than 20 engagements,<sup>21</sup> but short ones which could come to a swift settlement at a relatively light cost. The comparatively poor human and material resources at the disposal of the Communists made it necessary that battles should be fought in this way. The Resolutions also point out that the military leadership at first treated the enemy's block-houses with disdain and then after the failure of the forceful attacks on them, with despairing resignation.

The critics of this line put forward an alternative strategy by stressing

<sup>21</sup> Wang Chien-min, *Chung-kuo kung-ch'an-tang shih-kao*, Vol. II, p. 617.

the importance of preserving the strength of the Red Army, by concentrating strength in decisive battles for defence and by adopting mobile warfare. In this way, they hoped, the choice of battle and the superiority of strength would be with the Red Army, and hence also the initiative. The Red Army would be fighting on sectors of the enemy's exterior line, although the campaign as a whole was fought on its own interior lines. The Red Army would not be tied down by the enemy's strategy and block-houses; it could use guerrilla forces to harass the block-houses or simply move to fight in open places where there were no block-houses. In this way, the Red Army could avoid meaningless sacrifices so as to sustain a long-drawn-out war; it could also gain a respite between battles for rest and reorganization. The corollary to this strategy was that the Red Army should not be niggardly in temporarily abandoning parts of the soviet territory.

The Resolutions allege that the reason why the military leadership failed to see this alternative and why it fought the way it did was due to its "right opportunism," with its root in "an underestimate of the enemy's strength, the overestimation of objective difficulties, especially those of the protracted war and block-houses, an underestimate of our own strength, particularly that of the soviet and Red Army, and a lack of understanding of the characteristics of China's revolutionary war" (Point 12).

How true was this sharply contrasting picture of the two lines of strategy? How justifiable were the criticisms? Students of Chinese communist documents of this period know full well the paucity of source materials, making a detailed comparison of these charges about facts and views extremely difficult. They are also familiar with the verbose style of writing common to all the Russian-trained leaders, their documents usually beginning with an analysis of the current situation of world and Chinese class struggles: how desperate were the imperialist powers and how strong was Russia; how chaotic was Chiang Kai-shek's regime and how triumphant were the soviets in China. This is precisely the kind of "party formalism" Mao attacked relentlessly in the early 1940s, and "The Resolutions of the Party Centre on the Imperialist-KMT Fifth 'Encirclement' and the Tasks of Our Party"<sup>22</sup> fell into this category of writing. In the introduction to these resolutions, as in many other introductions of this period, one gets the impression that the strength of the KMT was grossly underestimated, while that of the Red Army grossly overestimated. Whether the leader, probably Po Ku, who drafted them

<sup>22</sup> See *Tou-cheng (Struggle)*, No. 21 (12 August 1932) or Hsiao Tso-liang, *Power Relations within the Chinese Communist Movement, 1930-1934* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961), pp. 217-218. Summaries of most of the documents quoted in this commentary can be found in Hsiao.

and their introduction, sincerely believed in this description of the international and national situation, or whether he merely wrote them for public consumption, it is hard to say. However, his analysis of the state of the war unavoidably led him and his close colleagues to this conclusion on the strategic aim of the 5th campaign :

In the 5th "Encirclement" we have even more favourable conditions for gaining the decisive victory which will be enlarged further to link up all the soviets in an endeavour to achieve initial victories in one or several provinces.<sup>23</sup>

The first phase of the 5th campaign before the Fukien Crisis was highlighted by the Communist triumph at Hsünk'ou.<sup>24</sup> Elated by what appeared to them as a sharpening of the KMT's internal struggle, the Fukien Crisis, and the communist victory, the 5th Plenum of the Central Committee sat to adopt "the Resolutions on the Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party,"<sup>25</sup> which, though refraining from saying anything on the strategy of the 5th campaign, pointed out that the struggle between the soviet and the KMT was the decisive one between the soviet and colonial roads in China.<sup>26</sup> The leadership of the CCP did not, however, misconstrue the gravity of the campaign; Po Ku, for example, appreciated it fully.<sup>27</sup> But he summed up the first phase this way: (a) attrition—the KMT bent on wearing out the Communists in fact wore itself out ("Our class warriors, with class and national interests in their minds, do not remember what fatigue is."<sup>28</sup>); (b) the "tortoise" (block-house) policy went bankrupt ("The facts of three months' fighting prove beyond a shadow of doubt that we have been victorious . . ."<sup>29</sup>); and (c) even the decisive battles involving heavy concentrations of troops on both sides ended in the defeat of the enemy.<sup>30</sup> Chou En-lai, Deputy Chairman of the Military Commission and General Political Director (*tsung cheng-chih-pu chu-jen*), agreed with this appraisal—"Goodness knows how many times greater are the losses suffered by the enemy, compared with ours. Ours have been made good and we are receiving further reinforcement."<sup>31</sup>

The Red Army, as conceived by Chou En-lai at the National Political Work Conference, was already a regular army capable of both offensive

<sup>23</sup> *Tou-cheng*, No. 21, pp. 4-5.

<sup>24</sup> *Hung-hsing*, No. 15 (12 November 1933), pp. 3-4.

<sup>25</sup> Adopted on 18 January 1934 and published in *Tou-cheng*, No. 47 (16 February 1934).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 61 and also the editorial of the same paper, No. 48 (5 May 1934), p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> See the editorial of *Hung-hsing*, No. 25 (21 January 1934). From the Tsunyi Resolutions, this editorial can now be attributed to Po Ku.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> "Our Victories in the 5th Campaign—on the Protracted War," Part I, *Hung-hsing*, No. 33 (18 March 1934), p. 2.

and defensive operations,<sup>32</sup> and Ho Ch'ang of the Political Department of the Red Army echoed this view.<sup>33</sup>

Based on these unrealistic estimates, the Party leadership issued the following slogans at the beginning of the 5th campaign: "Defend and enlarge the soviets!" and "Don't let the enemy ravage an inch of soviet territory!"<sup>34</sup> But these estimates did not induce the leadership to adopt the strategy of positional warfare. In Chou En-lai's report at the National Political Work Conference,<sup>35</sup> the concept of pure defence was firmly rejected. In its stead, offensive defence or mobile warfare was chosen as the guiding strategy of the Red Army. But Chou also admitted the beginning of block-house operations, positional engagements and night battles, and went on to say:

There are practical needs which cause us to fight this way. Naturally, we must in the main fight mobile operations. However, we often witness nowadays that rencontres and mobile operations rapidly develop into positional engagements.<sup>36</sup>

If positional warfare was the order of the day, it was a matter of necessity rather than choice for the Red Army. Take the block-houses for instance. The nickname "tortoises" certainly conveys a sense of disdain, but, because of lack of heavy arms to deal with them, the communists were forced to delimit and strengthen defence lines<sup>37</sup> so as to avoid the danger of being hemmed into an ever-diminishing area, like the proverbial turtle in a vat. As a counter-measure, they were forced to build their own block-houses<sup>38</sup> which were nonetheless ineffectual *vis-à-vis* the mortars and heavy artillery of the KMT.<sup>39</sup> Even more seriously, they were led to lose faith in guerrilla operations against block-houses, due probably to the guerrillas' lack of training in this type of warfare. Chu Teh, for example, described "guerrilla-ism" as a quagmire no one should sink into, for "it is useless in block-house operations."<sup>40</sup> Therefore what Chou En-lai called the "practical needs" which forced the Red Army into positional warfare might be interpreted as a loss of initiative, a passivity, imposed upon the Red Army by the KMT's block-house principle.

<sup>32</sup> "Report at the National Political Work Conference," *Hung-hsing* (18 February 1934), p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Tou-cheng*, No. 46 (9 February 1934).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* No. 21 (12 August 1933), p. 5 and Chou En-lai's article, *ibid.* No. 24 (29 August 1933).

<sup>35</sup> *Hung-hsing*, No. 29 (18 February 1934), p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Chou En-lai's article in *Tou-cheng*, No. 24 (29 August 1933), p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> Chou's report at the National Political Work Conference, *Hung-hsing*, No. 29 (18 February 1934), p. 4 and Hsüeh, *Chiao-fei chih shih*, Pt. 1, pp. 8 and 9.

<sup>39</sup> Wang Chien-min, *Chung-kuo kung ch'an-tang shih-kao*, Vol. II, p. 623.

<sup>40</sup> Speech at the National Political Work Conference, *Hung-hsing*, No. 28 (18 February 1934), p. 80.

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There were other practical difficulties. The fact is, that the KMT, despite being described as hopelessly weakened by the previous defeats at the hands of the Communists, was still strong enough to mount the 5th campaign which either unnerved or cast doubt in the minds of some Communists. Chang Ju-hsin, a lecturer at the Party school who was to become one of the early champions of the personality cult of Mao, doubted the propaganda line that the KMT had had its entire strength crushed by the Red Army in the 4th campaign.<sup>41</sup> In an attempt to defend the Party's assessment of the situation, Wang Chia-hsiang, one of the 28 Bolsheviks and a deputy chairman of the Military Commission, had to twist facts and words in order to present a picture of the 5th campaign being the last, desperate struggle of Chiang. In the same essay, Wang related that some comrades of the 3rd Army Corps, commanded by P'eng Teh-huai with Yang Shang-k'un (another of the 28 Bolsheviks) as its political commissar, were alarmed by the news of the 5th campaign and showed worries over the future, the 6th, 7th and 8th campaigns. "When will there be an end to all this?" they asked; and Wang's reply was: "These ideas show a lack of understanding of our and the enemy's strengths. They exaggerate the enemy's power . . . and lead to a widespread defeatist feeling. They weaken the fighting capabilities of the Red Army and directly aid the enemy."<sup>42</sup>

On the basis of these over- and underestimates and the practical difficulties, the policy of defending the whole line was adopted—"Defending and enlarging the soviet territory and refusing to let the enemy ravage an inch of the soviet territory have become our central task!" This was Chou En-lai's call on the eve of the battle of Kuangch'ang.<sup>43</sup>

Did this strategy necessitate a dispersal of the main forces of the Red Army—the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th Army Corps? <sup>44</sup> During the Fukien Crisis in December 1933, the Red Army was fighting along the northern defence line of Chianglo, Ihuang and Yungfeng.<sup>45</sup> In February 1934, soon after the crisis, the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 9th Army Corps were concentrated between Lich'uan and Nanfeng.<sup>46</sup> Their movements towards the end of February and at the beginning of March were first southward from Nanfeng, and then eastward to engage Chiang Ting-wen's troops attacking the soviet from the east.<sup>47</sup> There they stayed during April for

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Wang Chia-hsiang's article in *Tou-cheng*, No. 28 (30 September 1933), p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> "For land, for freedom, for the soviet regime, fight to the end!" *Hung-hsing*, No. 39 (29 April 1934), p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Main forces of the Red Army are given in Hatano, *Chugoko kyosanto-shih*, Vol. IV, pp. 217-218 and 444.

<sup>45</sup> *Hung-hsing*, No. 19 (9 December 1933).

<sup>46</sup> Hsüeh, *Chiao-fei chih-shih*, Pt. 1, pp. 7 and 10.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 10 and 13.

the battle of Kuangch'ang. These movements were dictated by the KMT's military pressure—chiefly from the north and then from the east after the Fukien Crisis. Thus before the battle of Kuangch'ang in April, the main Communist forces were busily fighting on both the north and east fronts, including such fierce engagements as the battles of Hsünk'ou and T'uants'un,<sup>48</sup> and were quite unable to take a rest for reorganization.<sup>49</sup> Their morale became low and desertion was a serious problem.<sup>50</sup> Although desertion was curbed in January, the military situation did not improve from the Red Army's point of view. Under these circumstances, it was quite likely that the army was in a position to launch only "short, swift thrusts," which were described by its enemy as "being of no great importance in spite of some minor advantages [to the Communists]."<sup>51</sup>

The battle of Kuangch'ang was correctly assessed by Chou En-lai as the turning-point in the campaign.<sup>52</sup> It lasted from 11 to 28 April. The defeat forced the Red Army to modify its strategy to suit the new, precarious situation. The gateway to the Communist capital, Juichin, was now open and the main force of the Red Army was seriously crippled. There was a gradual shift to guerrilla warfare.

It is untrue to say that the Party and military leadership had hitherto completely ignored guerilla warfare; the resolutions of the Party centre at the beginning of the 5th campaign<sup>53</sup> clearly instructed the soviet and Red Army to strengthen this type of technique. But it was assigned a role supplementary to the operations of the main forces. The view of Chu Teh, Chairman of the Military Commission and Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army, quoted above, on the impotence of guerrilla warfare in block-house operations, can be regarded as a faithful reflexion of the majority view of the Party centre; and this is confirmed by the fact that, unlike the other military leaders, Chu was singularly reticent in public discussions on military matters in this period, thus managing to give an impression that he was carrying out strategic decisions as a specialist. After the battle of Kuangch'ang, Chou En-lai was the first to advocate an extension of guerrilla activities,<sup>54</sup> and he was followed by Ch'en Yi, commander of the Kiangsi military zone, who wanted to carry guerrilla operations deep into areas behind enemy lines.<sup>55</sup> As Ch'en was in

<sup>48</sup> *Hung-hsing*, No. 15 (12 November 1933), Liu Po-ch'eng's memoirs in the *Hsing-huo liao-yüan*, p. 3; and Wang Chien-min, *Chung-kuo kung ch'an-tang shih-kao*, Vol. II, p. 611.

<sup>49</sup> Chou En-lai's report at the National Political Work Conference, *Hung-hsing*, No. 29 (18 February 1934), p. 4, and also No. 43 (20 May 1934), p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Hung-hsing*, Nos. 21 (23 December 1933) and 22 (31 December 1933).

<sup>51</sup> Wang Chien-min, *Chung-kuo kung ch'an-tang shih-kao*, Vol. II, p. 623.

<sup>52</sup> "Fight for the defence of Kuangch'ang!" *Hung-hsing*, No. 38 (24 April 1934), p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Tou-cheng*, No. 21 (12 August 1933), p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> "Although Kuangch'ang has fallen, we must still crush the enemy!" *Hung-hsing*, No. 40 (5 May 1934).

<sup>55</sup> "Survey of the Guerrilla Struggles along the North-western Front," *Hung-hsing*, No. 48 (15 June 1934), pp. 5-8.

command, not of any of the main forces, but of mobile and guerrilla activities, his bias was only to be expected. What Ch'en wanted was not easily done, as "some comrades are afraid of fighting guerrilla wars behind enemy lines."<sup>56</sup> Therefore the Party centre felt the need to raise the task of developing guerrilla warfare "to the top political priority." Even so, it was still regarded as merely supplementary to the operations of the main forces.<sup>57</sup> The defection in July 1934 of K'ung Ho-ch'ung,<sup>58</sup> who was operating behind enemy lines, revived the Party centre's distrust in the efficacy of guerrilla warfare. "Unless they are under firm proletarian leadership, guerrilla activities are inevitably unco-ordinated and disorganized . . . and lead to the tendency to kill and burn indiscriminately," commented Po Ku.<sup>59</sup>

But if the central soviet was to be saved, it became evident that the CCP had to extend diversionary activities behind the KMT army concentrations. Fang Chih-min's anti-Japanese vanguard was therefore ordered to move from north-east Kiangsi to Chekiang and Anhwei and Hsiao K'e's 6th Army Corps to join forces with Ho Lung in north-west Hunan.<sup>60</sup> Although these moves synchronized with a sudden outburst of anti-Japanese propaganda in the communist press,<sup>61</sup> which culminated in Chou En-lai's Six Point Programme (*liu ta kang-ling*) for a cessation of the civil war and a joint effort with the KMT against Japan, they were none the less diversionary tactics aiming at the creation of guerrilla bases, as Chou himself admitted.<sup>62</sup> Chou also admitted that, in the 5th campaign, the Communists' guerrilla activities behind the enemy defence lines were the weakest link of the whole operation.

The fall of Kuangch'ang was a severe blow to the morale of the Red Army—desertion reached such a scale that it was, in the words of the *Hung-hsing*, "an enemy even more fearful than Chiang Kai-shek."<sup>63</sup> In an attempt to curb it and to tighten the discipline of the soldiers and civilians alike, a reign of red terror (*hung-se k'ung-pu*), as it was called by the Communists themselves, was initiated to repress what was regarded as reaction,<sup>64</sup> and the General Political Department issued a

<sup>56</sup> Editorial of *Hung-hsing*, No. 55 (25 July 1934), pp. 5-8.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Red China*, No. 288 (30 August 1934).

<sup>59</sup> *Hung-hsing*, No. 62 (30 August 1934), p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Liu Heng-yun, "Recall the Struggles of the 10th Red Army," *Chung-kuo kung-ch'ang-tang tsai Chiang-hsi ti-ch'ü ling-tao ke-ming tou-cheng ti li-shih tzu-liao* (*Historical Material of the Revolutionary Struggles in Kiangsi led by the CCP*) (Kiangsi, 1958), Vol. I, pp. 256-261; Wang Chien-min, *Chung-kuo kung-ch'ang-tang shih-kao*, Vol. II, pp. 255-259; *Red Dust*, pp. 101 and 139; Miu Ch'u-huang, "A Brief Account of the Long March of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Armies," *Li-shih yen-chiu* (*Historical Research*) (Peking), No. 2 (1954), pp. 92-93.

<sup>61</sup> See *Hung-hsing*, No. 52 (10 July 1934), p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* No. 54 (20 July 1934), p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* No. 47 (10 June 1934), p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* No. 49 (20 June 1934), p. 2.

new edict on prosecution.<sup>65</sup> Under the conditions of emergency, punishment tended to supersede persuasion (*i.e.*, criticism and self-criticism), as the central soviet was rapidly reduced to a handful of panic-stricken counties.<sup>66</sup>

Now we come to the question of the Fukien Crisis and the Party's handling of it. Relevant statements by Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai, the military power behind the Fukien regime which declared independence from and opposition to Nanking on 20 November 1933,<sup>67</sup> were laconic. He admitted no more than that he and the CCP had been negotiating for a truce for several months prior to the Crisis, but said that he resented the Red Army's attacks on his troops.<sup>68</sup> The implication seems to be that they did not reach an agreement of any sort. After the collapse of the regime in January 1934, Ts'ai relates that the CCP tried to take over the remnants of his 19th Route Army and incorporate them into the Red Army—an endeavour Ts'ai refused "on the ground of its previous perfidy."<sup>69</sup>

The CCP centre was openly hostile to the Fukien regime, condemning it as a reactionary group of people who tried to find a third alternative to the KMT and CCP. The attitude was unambiguously stated in its manifestos.<sup>70</sup> The *China Yearbook* of 1934,<sup>71</sup> however, reports that at the end of 1933 P'eng Teh-huai was sent to Foochow to make contact with the Fukien authorities, and to conclude an agreement by which the Red Army would be placed under the command of the Fukien regime. Ch'en Chün, a Communist writer, says that P'eng and Hsün Huai-chou, commanders of the 3rd and 7th Army Corps respectively, gave aid to the 19th Route Army;<sup>72</sup> and Ho K'ai-feng, writing in the *Tou-cheng*,<sup>73</sup> confirms that the soviet government and Red Army reached an agreement with the Fukien government on 26 November 1933 on an armistice and the resumption of trade between the two sides.<sup>74</sup> These Communist moves could not be taken without the approval of the Party centre which, being a party, had to deal with the Fukien government and the 19th Route Army through the proper agencies of the soviet government and the Red Army.

The Resolutions at Tsunyi do not fault the Party's general line

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* No. 49 (16 June 1934).

<sup>66</sup> For a map of the soviet at this time, see *ibid.* No. 54 (20 July 1934), p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> *China Yearbook* (Shanghai, 1934), p. 345.

<sup>68</sup> *Ts'ai T'ing-k'ai tzu-chuan* (Ts'ai's autobiography) (n.p., 1946), Vol. I, p. 378.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 385.

<sup>70</sup> For instance, *Tou-cheng*, Nos. 38 (12 December 1933) and 45 (2 February 1934).

<sup>71</sup> P. 371.

<sup>72</sup> *Hsin-ssu-chün man-chi* (*Jottings on the New Fourth Army*) (Shanghai, 1939 ed.), p. 185.

<sup>73</sup> No. 48 (23 February 1934), p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> Wang Chien-min, *Chung-kuo kung-ch'an-tang shih-kao*, Vol. II, pp. 601–602. See also W. F. Dorrill, "The Fukien Rebellion and the CCP: A case of Maoist Revisionism," *The China Quarterly*, No. 37 (January–March 1969), p. 35 and n. 3.

towards Fukien at that time; rather they blame the Party and military leadership for having lost a golden opportunity to break through the KMT encirclement by attacking Chiang's flank and rear in direct co-ordination with the 19th Route Army (Point 10). It must be remembered that the principal demand of the Fukien government was a cessation of the civil war and the formulation of a tough policy towards Japan; but at the time of the Crisis a united front against Japan was not yet a policy pursued with any enthusiasm by the CCP. Chiang was not yet regarded by the Party as a potential ally in such a united front, and the Red Army was still confident enough to engage Chiang in a decisive struggle to determine the future of China before attending to Japan.<sup>75</sup>

Before leaving this section, we must examine Point 11 of the Resolutions, which confirms the reports of Liu Po-ch'eng, Li T'ien-yu and Miu Ch'u-huang<sup>76</sup> on the Communists' intention to join forces with Ho Lung in north-west Hunan. It shows that the CCP had no interest at this stage of the Long March in marching northward to engage the Japanese; its aim was to create a new soviet, probably to enlarge Ho Lung's soviet, in an attempt to recover the central soviet. When the attempt to join Ho Lung failed, the Red Army turned to Lip'ing and invaded Kweichow. The Resolutions do not indicate whether the Communists wanted to set up a soviet in Kweichow, but their attack on Kweiyang before crossing the Wu River for the first time suggests that they had such a possibility in mind. The failure to capture Kweiyang forced them once again to change their strategy—hence the crossing of the Wu and the entry into Tsunyi.

The questions to be asked here are: Was the retreat ill prepared? Was the Red Army in the first stage of the Long March as passively chased and beaten by its enemy as charged in the Resolutions? KMT publications on this subject give the impression of a Communist flight in panic under the KMT's relentless military pressure, whereas CCP publications have mostly appeared after the establishment of Mao's authority in the Party. It is therefore exceedingly difficult to verify the charges against the Party leadership concerning the mistakes in the first stage of the March up to Tsunyi. Both Hsü Meng-ch'iu, in his conversation with Nym Wales,<sup>77</sup> and Lo Wei-tao, in his recollections,<sup>78</sup> say that the evacuation of Kiangsi was hurriedly done with very little preparation.

<sup>75</sup> See L. P. van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends, the United Front in Chinese Communist History* (Stanford, 1967), pp. 43–45, and Dorrill, "The Fukien Rebellion and the CCP," *loc. cit.*

<sup>76</sup> Liu and Li, see *Hsing-huo liao-yüan*, pp. 4 and 19 respectively and Miu's paper in the *Li-shih yen-chiu*, No. 2 (1954), p. 88.

<sup>77</sup> *Red Dust*, p. 65.

<sup>78</sup> "Fan wu-tz'u wei-chiao san-chi," ("Snippets on the Campaign Against the 5th Encirclement"), in *Chung-kuo kung-ch'ang-tang tsai Chiang-hsi ti-ch'ü ling-tao ke-ming tou-cheng ti li-shih tzu-liao*, Vol. I, p. 169.

Lo belonged to the 5th Regiment of the Red Army which lost contact with the 1st Front Army and had to return to Kiangsi soon after the March had begun. He says that the Regiment knew nothing about the final destination of the March—"We only heard about joining forces with the Red 17th and 18th Divisions. . . . We knew that these two divisions were in South Hunan, the only place where we could survive."<sup>79</sup> Liu Po-ch'eng's *Memoirs* present a similar picture of panic and disorder. Liu goes further and relates: "Mules, horses and luggage . . . crowded the narrow paths. Consequently, we could cover only one valley a night and we were very tired. Since the enemy used highways and marched at a great speed, [we] could not shake him off."<sup>80</sup>

Miu Ch'u-huang, in the only serious study of the Long March by a Chinese Communist historian,<sup>81</sup> draws a rather different picture. In no uncertain terms, he interprets the diversionary movements of the 7th and 10th Army Corps, from July 1934 to January 1935, of the 6th Army Corps, from July to October 1934, and of the 25th Army, from September 1934 to July 1935, as a part of the preparation for the March.

[They] upset the plan of the KMT bandits who hurriedly despatched their troops hither and thither in an attempt to destroy the expeditionary Red Armies. In the meantime, the 1st Front Army had by and large completed its preparation for the Long March.<sup>82</sup>

The preparation might have been carried out in strict secrecy; under conditions of siege, this would be quite understandable. The leaders in charge of planning for the retreat might have been faced with the nasty choice of either explaining their decision to the cadres through political education or of keeping the secret from them, as well as from the enemy. They seem to have chosen the latter course and to have overdone it—" [They] even omitted discussing the instructions at the Politburo's meetings " (Point 11).

It is not clear whether the KMT armies had any knowledge of the Communists' intentions prior to the retreat. Hsüeh Yüeh's chronicles<sup>83</sup> give the details of the movements of the Red Army from 4 to 14 October, but there is no way of ascertaining whether this information was obtained contemporaneously. In the first week of the trek the Communists had marched only at night, and in the second they encountered the Kwangtung troops.<sup>84</sup> Therefore Liu Po-ch'eng says that the 1st Front Army could not shake off its pursuing enemy. The enemy might have

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Liu, *loc. cit.* pp. 3-4.

<sup>81</sup> Miu's paper in the *Li-shih yen-chiu*, No. 2 (1954), pp. 85-87.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 87-88.

<sup>83</sup> *Chiao-fei chih-shih*, Map II, p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> *Red Dust*, p. 65.

been there or nearby all the time. Even the four KMT defence lines<sup>85</sup> may have been routine, precautionary ones to be strengthened in November 1934.

According to Hsüeh Yüeh,<sup>86</sup> the Red Army ran into a *rencontre* on the 1st defence line, in which it suffered heavy losses, before turning towards Juch'eng on the 2nd defence line. At Juch'eng its way was blocked by the KMT forces which compelled it to disperse and avoid battle.<sup>87</sup> In this way it could march on faster while circumventing the KMT defence arrangements. This must be what Hsü Meng-ch'iu refers to as a change in the schedule of the March, from all night marches and all day rests to four-hour marches and four-hour rests on a 24-hour basis.<sup>88</sup> Hsüeh Yüeh picks up his story: "[The Communists] feigned an attack on Ch'üanchow [or Ch'üanhsien in Kwangsi] to deceive the Hunan Army while the main forces of the 1st Front Army *stealthily* crossed the Hsiang."<sup>89</sup>

Hsüeh tactfully refrains from saying anything on the attitude of the south-west leaders towards the itinerant Communists. An article in the periodical *Ch'un-ch'iu* (*Spring and Autumn*),<sup>90</sup> suggests that Chiang deliberately channelled the 1st Front Army into Kwangtung and Kwangsi in an attempt to solve the question of the autonomy of these provinces, symbolized by the existence of the South-west Political Council.<sup>91</sup> Aware of this stratagem, the military leaders of the south-west let the Communists pass through the north-western corner of their domains. Chang Kuo-p'ing's biography of General Pai Ch'ung-hsi<sup>92</sup> subscribes to this view. The *Ch'un-ch'iu* article also speaks of the "scorched earth policy" adopted by Pai and Li Tsung-jen with the object of forcing the Communists out of their province. It was under these circumstances that the Communists could traverse Kuanyang, Hsingan and Tzuyüan

<sup>85</sup> The defence lines were: (1) along the Anyüan, Hsinfeng and Kanchow highways in Kiangsi; (2) from Jenhua in Kwangtung to Juch'eng in south-east Hunan; (3) from Chuchow to Ch'üchiang along the Hankow-Canton Railway; and (4) along the highways parallel to the Hsiang. Miu's paper in the *Li-shih yen-chiu*, No. 2 (1954), p. 88 and Chin Fan, *Tsai hun-chün ch'ang-cheng ti tao-lu shang* (*On the Route of the Red Army's Long March*) (Peking, 1957), p. 45.

<sup>86</sup> Hsüeh, *Chiao-fei chih-shih*, Pt. 2, p. 3.

<sup>87</sup> A. Garavente ("The Long March," *The China Quarterly*, No. 22, p. 104) says: "Somewhere around Hsinfeng the Communists divided their force into two sections. . . ."

<sup>88</sup> Nym Wales, *Red Dust*, p. 65.

<sup>89</sup> Hsüeh, *Chiao-fei chih-shih*, Pt. 2, p. 3. My italics.

<sup>90</sup> No. 99, p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> H. G. W. Woodhead, *China Yearbook* (Shanghai, 1935), p. 99 *et seq.* There is no satisfactory source of information concerning this. Garavente's reference to Lien Ch'en (*Ts'ung tung-nan tao hsi-pei*, 1938, p. 5; see "The Long March," *The China Quarterly*, No. 22, p. 105) is no improvement.

<sup>92</sup> *Loc. cit.* pp. 62-64.

by forced march without much fighting, and consequently without doing much harm to the local inhabitants.

Garavente says :

The Kwangsi leaders, however, made no attempt to co-operate with Chiang, withdrawing their troops southwards from Hsingan; hence the trap he so carefully devised was closed from only one side, enabling the Reds to cross the Hsiang River in Kwangsi.<sup>93</sup>

Miu Ch'u-huang supports this by saying :

But Pai Ch'ung-hsi was afraid that the Red Army would penetrate southward from there [Hsingan and Kuanyang] into Kwangsi and so abandoned the Hsingan-Kuanyang defence line by shifting his troops to Fuch'uan, Hohsien and Kungch'eng.<sup>94</sup>

Thus the passage from Juch'eng across south Hunan, north Kwangtung, and west Kwangsi to the Hsiang River was a relatively smooth one for the 1st Front Army. It lasted approximately from 3 to 29 November. If battles were avoided (as is charged in the Tsunyi Resolutions), it may have been during this part of the trek when the 1st Front Army was anxious to join forces with Ho Lung as quickly as possible. They were avoided, among other means, by exploiting the disharmony between Chiang and his south-western colleagues.

But Miu Ch'u-huang's picture is again different. The Red Army in its heroic actions broke through all four defence lines—the fourth being the Hsiang River where the battle is described thus :

Therefore, the Red Army successfully reached the east bank of the Hsiang River towards the end of November. Subsequently, it defeated the armies of Pai Ch'ung-hsi, Ho Chien, and Hsüeh Yüeh to its front and rear in a fierce engagement, and crossed the Hsiang River.<sup>95</sup>

How did the 1st Front Army cross the Hsiang? Hsüeh Yüeh says "stealthily" (*t'ou*) and this may be the implication of Garavente. Liu Po-ch'eng, on the other hand, describes it as a battle lasting nearly a week at the cost of over half of the army's strength.<sup>96</sup> Hsü Meng-ch'iu also states that the Communists occupied six counties in south Hunan (according to the geographic and chronological order of his narrative, this must have been on the east bank of the Hsiang between Kwangsi and Hunan), where the Red Army was besieged by the KMT and Kwangsi troops and had to fight five days before it could break through and march into Kweichow.<sup>97</sup> This is probably what Miu's term "fierce battle" (*chi-lieh ti chan-tou*) implies.

<sup>93</sup> Garavente, "The Long March," *The China Quarterly*, No. 22, p. 105.

<sup>94</sup> Miu's paper in the *Liu-shih yen-chih*, No. 2 (1954), p. 88.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Liu, *Memoirs*, p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> *Red Dust*, p. 65.

## RESOLUTIONS OF THE TSUNYI CONFERENCE

In spite of what Miu says, Hsüeh Yüeh did not take part in the battle of the Hsiang River; at least Hsüeh's own account gives no support to Miu. The only eye-witnesses quoted here are Liu and Hsü. Nonetheless, Hsüeh's omission of this battle is intriguing. Does he not think the annihilation of over half of the 1st Front Army as alleged by Liu worthy of a reference in his book? The Tsunyi Resolutions do not refer to it either. Did their author not regard it as strong enough evidence to discredit the military leadership of the International faction? Is it possible that Liu Po-ch'eng and others<sup>98</sup> have grossly exaggerated the bloodiness of this battle, or simply lied? If they have, how else can one account for the abandonment of the original plan to join forces with Ho Lung? Since the passages from Juch'eng to the Hsiang and then from Lip'ing to Tsunyi were comparatively easy according to Hsü Meng-ch'iu and Hsüeh Yüeh, where did the army lose two-thirds of its original strength of 100,000?

In addition to the above discussions and implied criticisms of the Resolutions, four other points should be raised here. Firstly, the Resolutions understandably praise the economic work of the central soviet under the guidance of Mao. It seems arbitrary that they should have made no reference at all to the economic hardships experienced by the people in the soviet during the siege; and these hardships, widely reported in other writings, undoubtedly affected the morale of both the people and the army. Second, the Resolutions speak of the Fukien Crisis as having provided unprecedentedly favourable conditions for the Communists to defeat Chiang. Historically, this is a gross exaggeration, in view of the Mukden Incident of 1931 and the resultant political crisis in Nanking, which led to Chiang Kai-shek's resignation and the winding up of the 3rd "Encirclement." There was simply no comparison between these two crises. Besides, Chiang was sufficiently strong and astute in 1934 to have dealt with the Fukien opposition with great efficiency. Third, it was one thing to criticize the failure of the strategy adopted by the military leadership of the International faction; it was another to put forward cogently an alternative way of handling the situation which would in all probability lead to success. The Resolutions put forward what may safely be regarded as the Maoist strategy. Curiously enough, in doing so the Maoists made the un-Marxist assumption that even if the Communists had fought differently, Chiang would have adopted the same strategy and tactics as he did. Fourth, the development of guerrilla warfare far behind Chiang's defence lines might not have produced the kind of diversionary effects as the Resolutions envisage. The expeditions of the 7th and 10th Army Corps are a case in point.

<sup>98</sup> For example, Sheng Yu-li, *Chung-kuo jen-min chieh-fang-ch'ün san-shih-nien shih-hua* (30 Years' History of the Chinese PLA) (Tientsin, 1959), p. 23.

They did not succeed in saving the soviet; they merely brought the two units of the Red Army to their doom.

Even more curious is the acceptance of the Resolutions by the International faction under attack at Tsunyi; the leaders of that faction must have been shrewd enough to have noticed the points listed above and probably many more. They might have put forward these points in their reports mentioned in the Resolutions, which were never published, so far as we know. In the light of this possibility, these leaders might have accepted the Resolutions under the majority rule, but remained unconvinced of their mistake.

### 3. *Dramatis Personae*

Who were the people involved? It is interesting to note that three years after the adoption of the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party" (20 April 1945) and two years after the death of Po Ku, the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü branch office of the CCP Centre, in publishing the 1948 edition of Mao's *Selected Works* which contained the Tsunyi Resolutions, still decided to play the guessing game of hiding the identities of the censured leaders behind crosses and pseudonyms. There might be a good reason for this concealment. Was the reason to save the reputation of a few leaders? Or was it a timid attempt to whitewash their names?

One of the names frequently mentioned is Hua Fu. It is worth asking if this could be a pseudonym for Chou En-lai.<sup>99</sup> Kai-yu Hsu, Chou's biographer, says: "During his stay in Juichin, Chou En-lai made three major contributions to the CCP: he built up the Red Army, taught it, and maintained political discipline in it."<sup>100</sup> One may say that this is an overestimation, but it does convey a correct impression of Chou's predominant role in the Red Army in the 5th campaign.<sup>101</sup> Neither Hsü nor anyone else explains why a man who had made such important contributions to the Red Army should suddenly have relinquished his active duties in it.<sup>102</sup> The reason seems absurdly simple—since Chou was chiefly responsible for the strategic decisions of the war, he also had to take the lion's share of the blame for the defeat. The punishment he received at Tsunyi was the deprivation of his military power.

Hua Fu, to be sure, is not a name to be discovered in any of the

<sup>99</sup> Chou has also been known as Wu Hao and Shao-shan, but never as Hua Fu. See his biography in H. L. Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (Columbia, 1967), Vol. I.

<sup>100</sup> *Chou En-lai, China's Gray Eminence* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 112.

<sup>101</sup> See H. L. Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*.

<sup>102</sup> Chou remained on the Military Commission as its Deputy Chairman, but under Mao this seems to have become a titular post. See E. Snow, *Red Star Over China* (London: Gollancz, 1937), p. 413.

communist official organs, or any other communist documents of this period which are easily available. Incomplete though they are, these official organs available in the Ch'en Ch'eng collection carry a large number of signed articles by Chou on military matters, most of which have been referred to in Section 2 of this postscript. In sharp contrast, he has written remarkably little since Tsunyi, except for official statements on matters other than military.

The Resolutions ascribe the authorship of the "short, swift thrust" tactic to Hua Fu (Point 7) instead of to Lin Piao, as does Edgar Snow<sup>103</sup>; they refer to an article by Hua Fu on tactical victories (Point 8); they also mention Hua Fu's statement at the Conference itself (Point 12). None of these references can be verified. But the remarks on Hua Fu in Point 13 of the Resolutions—extremely bad leadership, monopolizing the work of the Military Commission and excessive use of punishment—make it almost certain that Hua Fu was an alias for Chou En-lai. It could not belong to Otto Braun who did not publish anything in Chinese as far as is known; nor could it belong to either Wang Chia-hsiang or Chu Teh who published very little on military, especially strategic, matters.

Chou, in the capacity of the Deputy Chairman of the Military Commission and the General Political Director, appeared to be busily conducting all aspects of the war, especially in taking political and strategic decisions. The excessive use of punishment may refer to the Political Department's decision on prosecution reported in the *Hung-hsing*, No. 49, on 16 June 1934, and Chou, as head of the Department, was responsible for it.

Comrade X X is slightly easier to identify. He was the representative of the Party centre who led the Military Commission, and hence the first to make a general report on the 5th campaign at the Tsunyi Conference. Although the report is not available, his views on the war of attrition (Point 9) can be found in *Hung-hsing*, No. 25 (21 January 1934), and his "empty leftist words" (Point 10) can be found in *Tou-cheng*, No. 38 (12 December 1933). The former is an editorial published soon after the 5th Plenum of the 6th Central Committee, and the latter, the Statement of the CCP Central Committee to the People of the Whole Nation with Respect to the Fukien Incident. His other signed articles on military affairs, again based on incomplete collections of Communist official organs, are to be found in *Tou-cheng*, Nos. 21, 47 and 58 and in the *Hung-hsing*, Nos. 42, 43 and 62. This man must be Po Ku, the Secretary-General of the CCP. He might also be the man who wrote to Lin Piao and P'eng Teh-huai as referred to in Point 8 of the Resolutions; the other "Comrade X X" who wrote to them at the same time

<sup>103</sup> Snow, *Red Star over China*, p. 110.

cannot be identified. Probably he was Chu Teh.<sup>104</sup> The “Comrade XXX” who made the supplementary report at Tsunyi cannot be identified either; he might be Wang Chia-hsiang, a deputy chairman of the Military Commission. Like Chou En-lai, Wang also gave up military work after the Tsunyi Conference.

#### 4. The Resolutions

Writing on the Tsunyi Conference, Ho Kan-chih says:

The Tsunyi Conference put an end to the rule of the “Left” line in the Central Committee of the Party and, in particular, to the military mistakes of “Left” opportunism, and established Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s position as leader of the whole Party.<sup>105</sup>

This, as all students of the history of the CCP know, is the official interpretation of the significance of the Conference. If what the official version claims is true, then there must have been other documents, such as the proceedings of the Conference, which recorded the organizational changes (the election of Mao to the chairmanship of the Politburo and that of Chang Wen-t’ien to be Secretary-General). As a document of this extremely important event, the Resolutions for the first time systematically explained Mao’s military strategy, antedating his historic interview with Edgar Snow by almost a year and a half. In addition, they furnish scholars with reasons and evidence of the decline of the so-called International faction—the downfall of Po Ku and the departure of Chou En-lai and Wang Chia-hsiang from military duties. The Resolutions also throw some light on the differences between Mao and Chang Kuo-t’ao<sup>106</sup> over the re-establishment of a soviet in China.

What the Resolutions do not criticize, and yet all later Communist documents do, is the general political line of the Party, which was identical with the instructions of the Third International. It is interesting to note that the mistaken military line is said to have originated from “right opportunism.” Conceivably, the political line was a delicate issue, so delicate and uncertain that it might still have been under debate when Agnes Smedley interviewed Chu Teh in 1937. That is probably

<sup>104</sup> *Chan-pao (Battle)*, a Red Guard newspaper of 24 February 1967, accuses Chu Teh of supporting Wang Ming’s dogmatism and opposing Mao’s correct line. “[He] adopted the principle of passive defence with the result that 90 per cent. of the strength of the Red Army was lost and that the Red Army was forced to take the Long March of 6,000 miles. At the Tsunyi Conference, Chu Teh persisted [with his defence] of the reactionary bourgeois military line.” See the *Ming-pao Monthly*, No. 18 (June 1967), p. 32.

<sup>105</sup> Ho, *A History of the Modern Chinese Revolution*.

<sup>106</sup> See R. North’s interview with Chang Kuo-t’ao on 3 November 1950 which is to be found in North’s introduction to Nym Wales, *Red Dust*, p. 14. Liu Ning, *I-ko* (1938), p. 12, also refers to Chang’s view on setting up a soviet. No doubt Chang himself will say a good deal more as the instalments of his autobiography are drawing nearer to this subject.

why Chu in this interview avoided any reference to the whole period from 1931 to 1934.<sup>107</sup>

However, after the rectification campaign of 1942–44, Mao Tse-tung's line was asserted, and ever since many Communist writings on the 5th campaign and the Long March have been under the influence of the Tsunyi Resolutions and the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party." Ho Kan-chih's version quoted above and Hu Ch'iao-mu's official history are the typical examples. Ho's is particularly interesting because of the discrepancies between its Chinese and English versions. The Chinese version contains a lengthy summary of the Resolutions (pp. 173–175), listing seven mistakes committed by, not the "right", but the "left" opportunistic leadership; this is completely omitted in the English version (p. 269). The summary does not, however, distort the spirit and contents of the Resolutions and serves to authenticate the text translated above.

Miu Ch'u-huang's narrative in the article quoted above remains fascinating, for it is very different from the official interpretation. It reads almost like a "reversal of the verdict" on the so-called "left opportunistic leadership." It was published after the death of Stalin and the division into two lines of the Chinese Party leadership,<sup>108</sup> and subsequently translated into Russian.

What differences are there between the Resolutions and the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party"?<sup>109</sup> On comparing them, one is immediately struck by frequent reference to Mao Tse-tung and Mao Tse-tung's theory and practice in the Resolution on History whereas in the Tsunyi Resolutions Mao's name simply does not appear, to say nothing of Mao's theory and practice. At Tsunyi, the mistakes were said to come from "right opportunism," whereas in the Resolution on History they are attributed to "left opportunism." At Tsunyi, there was no reference to a mistaken political line, only to individual serious mistakes, no reference to organizational errors, no reference to "urban viewpoint," no reference to "left closed-doorism" and no reference to the inauguration of Mao's leadership—whereas in the Resolution on History all these are hammered home.

Finally, there is the question of the manner in which this important document was published or omitted. As pointed out elsewhere,<sup>110</sup> none of the editions of Mao's *Selected Works* before 1948 was published in the Shen-Kan-Ning Border Region—a fact which suggests that Mao had

<sup>107</sup> A. Smedley, *The Great Road* (London: John Calder, 1958), pp. xi and 3.

<sup>108</sup> Ch'en, Mao, pp. 93 and 96. This division into two lines occurred in either 1950 or 1954.

<sup>109</sup> Mao, *Selected Works* (Peking, 1956), Vol. III, pp. 177–220, especially pp. 186–194.

<sup>110</sup> Ch'en, *Mao*, p. 22.

stronger support in areas where there was a military predominance than in Shen-Kan-Ning where the Party was preponderant. The Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü Anti-Japanese Base Area was under P'eng Teh-huai, Liu Po-ch'eng, Teng Hsiao-p'ing and Po I-po, and in 1948 it was amalgamated with the Chin-Ch'a-Chi Base Area.<sup>111</sup> The edition of Mao's *Selected Works* brought out by the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü must have been issued before the amalgamation under the auspices of Po I-po, and, so far as is known, is the only edition which contains the document translated above. The version used here is to be found in the *Chung-kuo ke-ming-shih ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* (*Reference Material on the History of the Chinese Revolution*), compiled by the Seminar Room (*chiao-yen shih*) of the Chinese People's University (Peking, 1957), Volume III. It is in manuscript form. Strangely enough, 1957 was also the year when Ho Kan-chih's *History of the Modern Chinese Revolution* was published in Chinese.

The first edition of Mao's *Selected Works* came out in 1944 (the *Chin-Ch'a-Chi Daily* edition) and did not include this document; in 1948, it made its first appearance; it is not carried in the post-revolution editions of the *Selected Works*; in 1957 it reappeared in full in the *Reference Material* and in a summary in Ho Kan-chih's book; but in 1960, when Ho's book was published in English, it disappeared again. Why has it led such an elusive existence?

A great deal of rethinking on the International faction had been done during the rectification campaign years, and this tended to make the Tsunyi Resolutions out of date. Since the faction was finally adjudged to have committed "left opportunism," it would be inappropriate to publish a document which labelled it "right" and at the same time upheld the righteousness of the general line of the politics of the faction. If this was the reason for withholding its publication in 1944, then its 1948 appearance was perhaps an aberration, a deviation. That the International faction could be publicly denounced was partly due to Russia's preoccupation with the German War, when Mao was in no danger of Russian interference in his Party affairs. In any case, the Third International was soon to be dissolved. But in 1957 Russian influence in China was again very strong and there was a thaw in the form of the Hundred Flowers Campaign. This perhaps was the reason for the brief reappearance of this document.

<sup>111</sup> This is based on Ting Wang's article on Yang Ch'eng-wu in the *Ming-pao Monthly*, No. 32 (August 1968), pp. 10 and 15. C. A. Johnson says that the leaders of the Chin-Chi-Lu-Yü were Yang Hsiu-feng and Hsü Hsiang-ch'ien. See *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power* (Stanford, Calif., 1963), p. 108.