

CHINA'S

MILLIONS

ANNA LOUISE
STRONG

SELECTED WORKS I



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In Canton in 1925 and in Hankow in 1927, Anna Louise Strong witnessed the rise, followed by betrayal and temporary defeat, of the revolutionary movement of the oppressed — workers, peasants and women — in the period of the first Kuomintang-Communist united front and its break-up. Such vicissitudes occur in all revolutions on their way to victory. The author records the events as she saw them, and ringingly asserts her belief in the ultimate triumph of the resurgent people, so well borne out by the history of our own day.

ANNA LOUISE STRONG
Selected Works on China's Revolution I

CHINA'S MILLIONS

Revolution in Central China, 1927



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This book is the first of a six-volume edition comprising the bulk of Anna Louise Strong's writings on China over forty years. It deals with the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 and was written at that time. The author again visited and wrote about China on two occasions during the War of Resistance to Japan in 1938 and 1940-41. To the War of Liberation period belongs her book "The Chinese Conquer China" which records experience in Yen-an and other liberated areas in 1946-47. In this edition it incorporates her "Thought of Mao Tse-tung", first published as a pamphlet.

Later volumes belong to the post-liberation period. They include "The Rise of the Chinese People's Communes", first written in 1959 and brought up to date in 1964, and "When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet", initially published in 1960, when the author was the first American woman ever to see Lhasa. This edition concludes with a selection from Anna Louise Strong's periodical "Letter from China", more than thirty issues of which have appeared since 1962.

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Author's Preface to Selected Works
on China's Revolution

I have known in my lifetime three civilizations — the American, the Russian, the Chinese — the three that have shaped and are shaping our times. I have lived and worked in them all as social worker, exhibit expert, reporter, editor, lecturer and writer, first from my home in Seattle, then from a residence of nearly thirty years in Moscow, and now at the age of eighty from Peking.

In Seattle we fought for more perfect forms of democracy in what we considered already "God's country," the world's pioneer of democracy; we won many formal battles but saw our country change to the world's greatest, most destructive imperialism. Drawn from afar by the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, which shook the world and inspired all progressives, I went to Moscow and for nearly three decades made it the center for all the middle years of my adult working life; the majority of my more than thirty books were written about the USSR.

From Moscow I gradually became aware of a new revolution arising in the East, and began to visit China on my trips to America, beginning just half my lifetime ago in 1925 when the Kuomintang-Communist coalition was rising in Canton. In six such visits my interest in China steadily grew. Even before the victory of China's Revolution in 1949 broke the long capitalist encirclement of the USSR, changed the balance of world forces and began to stimulate anti-imperialist revolutions around the world, I decided to come to China to stay.

And now my Chinese friends are celebrating my eightieth birthday by publishing this edition of my Selected Works, taking those that concern China's Revolution. These may well have

the longest life expectancy of all that I have ever done. Not only because China, with nearly one-fourth of earth's population, is today full of eager, intelligent readers. But also, and especially, because as the great anti-imperialist revolution of our century, China's Revolution, both in its defeats and its victories, best gives the lessons that other anti-imperialist revolutions now world-wide will wish to learn.

I must therefore glance back at the road that I have travelled, in America, in the USSR and in those visits to China which drew me to Peking as my home and produced the six books now being republished.

Born in the United States of America in 1885, my personal career began well before the First World War. After taking the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Chicago in 1908, I went home to Seattle where my father had moved after my mother's death. I invented, with my father, a "Know Your City Institute," a combination of lectures, discussions and visits by which Seattle citizens — many of them newcomers from the eastern states — became acquainted with the city's life. I was invited to organize similar institutes in other western cities; their popularity led to my taking part in a great Child Welfare Exhibition in New York, after which I continued to organize Child Welfare Exhibits from city to city for several years, becoming the leading organizer in this field. Their aim was to arouse the city's consciousness to the conditions and needs of all the city's children, in schools, health, playgrounds and welfare activities, and thus to create new laws and institutions through popular demand.

As I felt the growth and explosion in each place of a city consciousness which was stimulated by correct organization of committees and exhibition techniques and which then created new institutions and local laws, I felt that I was improving our American democracy. This was part of a positive faith that America was the pioneer in democracy for the world. Long ago we had stated our stand in our Declaration of Independence; then men of all races and nations had come to our shores seeking freedom.

Our westward lands, still open to free settlers, were the "world's last frontier." Of course we were often obliged to fight "the interests," i.e. the monopoly controls that pressed on us from New York. They tried to control even my exhibitions, but I felt that I was independent still.

It was in Kansas City in my third exhibition, the first in which I was top administrator, that the exhibition's end made it necessary to fire the people who had worked in it and for whom there were few chances of jobs. It worried me. After a sleepless night spent in thought I decided that there was no way to correct this under our capitalist system and that therefore the system itself was "all wrong." The only proper system would put all jobs, and therefore all work and enterprises under public ownership. This, I knew, was called socialism, so I must be a socialist. It was years later before I saw how "class struggle" fitted in.

When the First World War broke in Europe in 1914, it found me in Dublin, Ireland, running a Child Welfare Exhibition for the Women's National Health Association, of which Lady Aberdeen, the viceroy's wife, was president; I lived in the vice-regal lodge as her guest. I came back to America in a fast ship through a blackout against German submarines to the post that already waited for me as "exhibit expert" in the newly created U.S. Children's Bureau in Washington. Just under thirty years old, I seemed fixed in a federal civil service job for life.

I quickly found that Washington was a deadly bureaucracy in which I was hardly able to breathe. So after organizing the Children's Bureau Exhibition for the San Francisco world's fair in 1915, and another exhibition on "Children's Interests" in Portland, Oregon, and writing a manual on how to organize Child Welfare Exhibits which was published by the federal government, I resigned. I went home to Seattle where the energetic life of the coast attracted me; I was quickly elected to the Seattle City School Board as the "progressive candidate," the first woman on the board for years.

Seattle was a "progressive city": in any hard-fought election, the people always beat "the interests" i.e. the monopolies that pressed on us from New York. Seattle owned its light and power system, and a municipal wharf, and finally we bought out the private street-car lines for city ownership. We saw this as a widening of democratic control and even as the beginnings of socialism. We hardly noticed that after every "victory for people's ownership," the profits of the big private enterprises increased. When "City Light" assumed the task of giving electricity to citizens' homes far-flung over many square miles of hills, this freed Seattle General Electric, the private company, to sell power at lower rates and higher profits to the downtown concentrated industries. When we bought out the street-car lines, the former stock-holders got higher, safer income on our city bonds than they might have earned by the car lines in a period when auto transport was coming in.

If we saw that these "victories of people's power" were not entirely victories, we clung to a faith in "inevitable progress" which would bring whatever the people wanted some day. This was the deepest faith in the American democracy of my youth.

Towards the end of 1916 we became aware that strong forces were pushing America into the war in Europe. This, we were convinced, was against the American's people's will. So I helped organize one peace movement after another, to keep America out of the war. We thought we succeeded when we elected Woodrow Wilson as president on the slogan: "He kept us out of war." We went on the streets and collected signatures by the hundreds of thousands — across the country the total ran into millions — showing that the people were 90 to 95 percent against going into war. We telegraphed the results to Washington almost daily to "support the hands of the President". Similar illusions have persisted down the years into Lyndon Johnson's day.

Then this America whose people wanted peace and whose capitalists wanted war, marched right into the war in Europe. Nothing in my whole life so shook the foundations of my soul.

"Our America" was lost, and forever! The militarists had raped her to their bidding. I could not delude myself, as many did, that this was a "war to make the world safe for democracy." I had seen democracy violated in the very declaration of war. Where and how to begin again I had no notion.

If the First World War broke for me, and for many American progressives, the faith in our peaceful, democratic uniqueness, we had our recompense; we also became joint heirs of the world revolution. Across the flaming battle lines of Europe, across two seas and continents, we also, in the far northwest of the U.S.A., got signals from Moscow when the thunder of the October Revolution awakened the world.

The world's journalists rushed to the battlefields, to the Versailles Peace Conference, to Moscow if they could get a visa. I admired them and arranged lectures for them in Seattle but it did not yet occur to me to go. This was a world revolution; it began in Moscow but was coming around the world and would take us in. My battle-post was Seattle. When my peace movement broke up at the declaration of war and only my pacifist father and the left wing of the trade unions still spoke out against the war, I had begun to write as a volunteer for a small new revolutionary newspaper. The Seattle Daily Call lived for nine months on debts and contributions and was then smashed by hooligans wrecking the presses. It was followed by a stronger, more "respectable" labor paper, the Seattle Union Record, the first daily in the United States to be owned by a local labor council. I became one of its editors and a delegate from its news-writers' union to the Seattle Central Labor Council, where we often sat till midnight hearing speakers who had visited Moscow or reports of other uprisings around the world. We heard of factories seized in Germany, Soviets arising in Hungary and Bavaria, a mutiny of French sailors in Odessa, Koreans who proclaimed independence in the streets in white robes without weapons.

Workers all over the world seemed rising to rule, in every kind of way. This seemed to us quite proper, part of the inevitable march of progress that would come to us too. We had not the slightest idea of the problems involved in the seizure of power. It even seemed to us that the Bolshevik Revolution, the British Labour Party which hoped to vote itself into office and the unarmed Koreans shot down in the streets were all going in much the same general direction.

Out of this confused thinking came our Seattle General Strike, which the capitalists called the "Seattle Revolution" and which books have since mentioned by that name. It was no attempt at revolution, though one disappointed newsboy said afterwards, "I thought we were going to get the industries," and others may have had similar ideas. Basically it was a strike of solidarity with our shipyard workers and a protest against Washington for clandestinely interfering in their demands for better wages. It was so effective that for three days a Strike Committee of Fifteen ran the city, "permitting" the mayor to have "City Light as protection against hooliganism," giving permits to garbage wagons to collect "wet garbage only for health reasons" and supplying citizens with meals and milk for children through hastily organized voluntary agencies. When we called it off on the fourth day we thought it a victory.

Then Washington closed our shipyards by cancelling contracts. Our workers drifted to other cities for jobs. The young, the daring, the revolutionary went; the older men with homes and mortgages could not easily go. Our powerful labor movement withered from within. Our Labor Council became a place where carpenters and plumbers fought for control of jobs. Our proud Union Record trimmed its sails to suit advertisers. "Comrades" were calling each other traitors. What had become of our "worker's power?"

That was why I went to Moscow, to find out how the Russians did it. We had failed but they had succeeded. I went first for

the American Friends' Service, on leave from the Union Record; later the Seattle Labour Council sent me a credential as observer to the Red Trade Union International Congress in 1922. Finally, I made my home in Moscow for nearly 30 years. I wrote about the Russian Revolution, both for the bourgeois press and increasingly for the workers' press that was spreading through the world. I also tried to help in other ways in the USSR. In my few months under the American Friends' Service I took the first cars of foreign relief food to the Volga famine in Samara in 1921; later I helped organize a farm colony for homeless children on the Volga. Still later in the early Thirties, when many American workers and engineers came to Russia to work in the constructions of the five-year plans, I organized the Moscow News* to serve their needs. It began as a weekly and grew to a daily. At about this time I married a Russian Communist who was also an editor and writer. He did not change the nature of my work but stimulated and assisted it. He died in the Urals in the Second World War when I was in the United States.

Every year or two I went on lecture tour in America. At these times I visited other revolutions on the way, in Germany, Mexico, Spain and China. During those years and under varied conditions of war, I traversed the USSR by almost every possible route, through Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia and direct by ship to Leningrad on the west, through the Black Sea on the south, and by the Trans-Siberian or much more spectacular routes on the east. Thus once I went by plane from Alma Ata in Soviet Central Asia to Chungking when Hitler blocked all routes westward. After Japan entered the Pacific War I flew by Lend-Lease freight plane from Fairbanks, Alaska, out over the Arctic and found that the American Vice-President Henry Wallace had personally planted selected vegetable seeds at the first stop in the Soviet Arctic on a similar trip. Earlier I had gone with Borodin and the retiring

* Not the Moscow News that exists today but an earlier paper of which I was one of the editors.

Russians from Hankow to Moscow by auto caravan 3,000 kilometers through northwest China and the deserts of Mongolia after the revolution in China collapsed in 1927 in Wuhan.

In all the years till after the Second World War Moscow remained my center, from which I wrote of the Russian revolution and of other revolutions around the world.

I first saw China in late 1925 precisely half my lifetime ago, when I was forty years old. I have made six visits in all, choosing times when some revolutionary change seemed important and also possible to see. In 1925 it was warlord China, with hints of change in the south, where a new revolutionary government had been set up by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in Canton under a coalition of the Kuomintang and the Communists. I visited this government when it was acting as host to the great Canton-Hongkong Strike. Two years later, in 1927, I went up the Yangtze River from Shanghai to see the revolutionary government in Wuhan. I remained in Wuhan until its government ceased to be revolutionary and began suppressing workers and peasants; that was when I travelled to Moscow with Michael Borodin and the returning Russian advisers by auto across China's northwest and the deserts of Mongolia. During my stay in Wuhan I also journeyed south into Hunan where the revolution had been "reddest" and had been suppressed but where the stories of it, told even by its enemies, testified to the power and nature of the new forces arising in China among workers and peasants.

These first two visits gave the material for my book "China's Millions" which deals especially with the revolution in Wuhan and in Hunan. This book has been published in different ways in several countries. In Moscow it appeared as two separate books, the first on "Mass Revolt in Central China", the second on my trip "From Hankow to Moscow". In the American and British editions, these two were combined into a single volume under the title "China's Millions". Other editions in Europe and Latin

America have used sometimes one volume, sometimes both. In these Selected Works we publish the first volume, and supplement it with "Canton Prelude" from 1925; we omit the return trip to Moscow which had little connection with China's Revolution.

After the fall of revolutionary Wuhan I did not return to China for ten years. I had little interest in Chiang Kai-shek's regime in Nanking, which seemed only a new edition of warlord China, backed by one foreign imperialism after another but increasingly by the United States. Chinese "Soviet areas" were rising in Kiangsi and in other parts of China, but were impossible for a foreigner to visit. Then the Long March of the Chinese Red Army, which began as a defeat in the southern provinces, became, by a change of leadership to Mao Tse-tung, a spectacular shift of base to the northwest, which electrified all China, and brought the Communists to the forefront of the national resistance to Japan. A new united front was formed with Chiang's government which, defeated in Shanghai and Nanking, had moved to Wuhan.

In late 1937 I again went to China by ship from Italy to Hongkong and thence by plane to Wuhan. From Hankow, under the temporary conditions, I was able to go by the special train of Yen Hsi-shan, the Shansi warlord, to the headquarters of the famous Eighth Route Army, where the Communists, under Chu Teh as Commander-in-Chief, were already working out the strategy and tactics which is today described as "people's war." At Chu Teh's headquarters in the South Shansi hills I was present during a military conference to which three division commanders came across the Japanese lines. They were Lin Piao, Ho Lung, Liu Po-cheng, still today among China's top leaders.

At that time, in January 1938, they had already restored Chinese government in thirty county towns and were getting radio reports of two or three skirmishes daily in various parts of North China. They were winning because they had the full support of the Chinese peasants. The Chinese peasants had always hated soldiers, but the Communists showed them a new kind of soldier, who never raped or looted but respected the peasants and helped

them get in their harvests and especially taught the people their own strength and the way to fight and win.

I reported Chu Teh's message: "We believe that the hope of saving China lies largely in the mobile units of North China. The old forces cannot beat Japan; we must release new forces." Already students, professors and doctors were travelling in hardship and peril to these Japanese-encircled areas where, protected by the Eighth Route Army, they taught reading and writing, hygiene, politics and defense to peasants. Some of them I met and learned to know on the special train that took me to that front. I wrote a book about this trip, "One-Fifth of Mankind."

Not long did that Indian summer of Kuomintang-Communist co-operation last. Kuomintang generals, who feared the popularity the Communists were gaining in the north by their success in organizing the peasants against Japan, began to attack the Communist forces from the rear. Many of Chiang's generals in the north went over to Japan and fought the Communists as Japan's puppets. This was leniently regarded in Chungking; they called it "beating the enemy by curved line method."

In late 1940, wishing to go from Moscow to America and finding that Hitler blocked all routes through Europe, I flew from Alma Ata to Chungking, the capital to which Chiang had retreated, and thence over the Japanese lines to Hongkong. In Chungking I interviewed Chiang for the first time. He smiled primly and said: "yes, yes," which meant nothing. I also talked with Chou En-lai whom I had first met briefly in Hankow in 1938. He was in Chungking as representative of the Eighth Route Army, still officially one of Chiang's armies. It was said that he could stay in Chungking somewhat more safely than other Communists because he had saved Chiang's life in the Sian Incident. He was not entirely safe, however, and received me late at night in an obscure part of the city.

The Communists, I learned, had already half a million men in their armies all over North and East China. Northward they had contacted the Manchurian Volunteers, cut railways around Peking

and put up posters inside the city walls; eastward they had reached the Shantung coast and held the port of Chefoo long enough to run in supplies. This "unruly expansion," even though it was at Japan's expense, annoyed Kuomintang generals who had been unable to defend their own towns. From 1939 onwards, sundry KMT generals in North and East China had been attacking Communist-led troops and even signalling their location to Japanese planes. Chou En-lai gave me a long account of these attacks which he asked me not to publish until he sent me word.

"Both sides are still silent about these clashes," he said. "We do not wish to increase friction and Chiang does not want his American backers to know that any disunity exists in China. But if the armed clashes increase, we want the information to be ready to release abroad."

I was on the steamer approaching San Francisco in January 1941 when one of Chiang's generals staged the notorious massacre of the rear guard and hospital of the New Fourth Army. In New York a message reached me: "Publish what you know." With it came an additional document, the official order by the Chinese Communists to reorganize the New Fourth under instructions to continue fighting the Japanese "while guarding against the pro-Japanese traitors of the rear." At that time, a month after the massacre, Americans still believed that the massacre had been only a disciplining of unruly troops in which the Chinese Communists concurred. This was the only version permitted by the Chungking censorship.

I released in the New York headlines the story that Chiang no longer ruled a united China nor commanded a united army. Thus it was learned by Chiang's bankers. A more detailed account appeared in *Amerasia* magazine and will be published in these Selected Works. What effect my revelations had I have no means of knowing. Probably not much. People with better connections than I had with the U.S. government — "China experts" of the U.S. State Department and General Stilwell, commanding U.S. aid to China — were informing Washington that Chiang was not a reliable ally

against Japan. But Stilwell was recalled at Chiang's request and the "China experts" were later forced out by McCarthy. By early 1945 Chiang used American equipment to fight the Chinese Communists, with the knowledge of the U.S. representatives in China, even while the war against Japan was on. For twenty years since the Japanese war, Washington, knowing that Chiang had lost China, has continued to finance Chiang.

After the defeat of Japan I made my fifth trip to China in June 1946, flying from San Francisco to Shanghai by converted U.S. Army plane without seats. It was the period known as the Marshall Truce. Chiang was openly fighting the Chinese Communists without much success. General Marshall, under the forms of making truce, was trying to edge the Communists out of the territories they had liberated from the Japanese, a type of policy Washington today attempts in Vietnam.

When Japan surrendered in September 1945, Chiang, routed by Japan's final drive through Hunan, had been isolated in southwest China and could not get to the north or to the sea without American aid. The "Liberated Areas" of the Communists reached from the Yangtze north to Harbin and from the Mongolian deserts to the sea, interrupted only by strips of railway and fortified cities held by Japanese or by former KMT generals who had traitorously become Japan's puppets. Chiang quickly restored these generals to favor and ordered them to hold out against the Communists; at the same time the U.S. forces instructed the Japanese not to surrender to any "irregular" Chinese forces but to hold their positions for Chiang or American troops. Meantime the U.S. air force air-lifted Chiang's troops and government administrations into the northern cities and sent orders to the Chinese Communist troops not to take new territory, an order which they disobeyed.

"Take the cities. Take the railways," was General Chu Teh's order radioed from Yen-an to the Liberated Areas in the north and east. The strategy of surrounding the cities by the countryside

was the basic strategy that won the Chinese revolution; it has today become an essential part of the theory of "people's war."

By mid-September the Communist-led Liberation Armies had doubled the number of county towns they held in north China and were approaching Shanghai. They could have taken that city with the welcome of its workers but refrained, to avoid a clash then with America. Washington, failing to give Chiang control of North China by its air-lift, sent General George C. Marshall to negotiate. Marshall set up in Peking a kind of super-government called "Executive Headquarters," with equal representation of Kuomintang and Communists under American chairmanship. In all the contested fortified cities, some forty in number, "Truce Teams" were set up, also consisting of KMT and Communists under U.S. officers as chairmen. The Truce Teams were connected with Executive Headquarters by U.S. army planes which carried supplies, mail and also correspondents who wished to report the war.

I pass over the fact that all this apparatus, supposed to be arranging cease-fire in various localities, actually kept throwing territory to Chiang. Nor shall I comment on the way that U.S. pilots were enabled to map all North and East China very thoroughly from the air. I note only that any accredited correspondent could for the first time travel to all the controversial spots in China's civil war and even free of charge.

I decided at once to stay as long as this situation lasted and to visit as many of the Communist Liberated Areas as possible.

According to Marshall's figures in his "Cease-fire Order" January 1946, the Liberated Areas comprised 835,000 sq. miles with 140,000,000 population, organized in eight sister areas with common policies and a common postal system but without contacts with the outer world. For nine months I travelled those Liberated Areas by plane, lived several months in Yen-an, visited also Kalgan just before Chiang took it, saw Liu Po-cheng's Four-Province area in the heart of north China, and Lin Piao's Northeast area from Harbin to Tsitsihar.

I must leave to "The Chinese Conquer China" the description of amazingly effective policies in government, economy, strategy and every field of life, which Mao Tse-tung's genius derived from his analysis of the Chinese peasants' needs: the land reform that shifted its tactics with new situations yet kept always the final goal; the army strategy that yielded county towns while eliminating Chiang's troops; the self-supporting government whose ministers raised most of their food in their spare time and other inventions.

Where else in history had there been an army of a million men that drew its replacements in men and munitions from the enemy and thus grew steadily for twenty years? "Chiang's soldiers are very good soldiers," Mao told me with a smile. "They need only some political training." Where others would have seen only the enemy, Mao saw within the enemy, the Chinese farmhand who must be made a friend. Today the South Vietnam Liberation Army understands this approach too.

I left Yen-an by one of the last American planes in early 1947. "You must leave at once or you may be cut off," warned Mao. "You cannot go where we shall go. But you have now all the material about us and will take it to the world. When we again have contact with the world, you may return." He thought this would be "in about two years."

When I left Yen-an I knew that China, under the Chinese Communists, was what I wanted for the rest of my life. For this there were many reasons, too long to give in a preface but I hope they may appear in the following books. Basically it was because in the discussions in Yen-an I felt my own mind expanding and realized that in recent years I had felt it contracting in Moscow into rigid forms. I said: Russians are concentrating now on building Great Russia, but Russia is not my country. The Chinese still think in terms of the world revolution where I belong. For the world includes and transcends my country.

I started back to China in September 1948 with the thought that this might be permanent. I took ten years on the way.

What first interrupted me was a five months' wait in Moscow for an exit permit into Manchuria, after which the Russians arrested me as a "spy" and sent me back through Poland. For six years thereafter no Communists anywhere in the world would speak to me. When Moscow exonerated me in 1955, stating that the charge had been "without grounds" I again renewed contact with China and again had invitation but meantime the U.S. State Department refused me a passport. Even to get out of the United States took me a legal fight of three years. In August 1958 I finally reached Peking for which I had started ten years earlier.

I found the type of work for which I had come; it is to write about China's Revolution for my fellow-Americans — especially those in the new, mounting struggle against the aggressive wars of U.S. imperialism which today threaten all mankind — and for anyone else around the world who may be interested; it seems the number of these has greatly grown. For I am issuing now a Letter from China, which goes out in six languages to more lands than I shall ever see, and more peoples than I have ever known. I found also the conditions of life and of travel, both material and social, which enable me even at the age of eighty to seek for material and to write. I found the same comradeship and clear thinking that had stimulated me in Yen-an.

Beyond this I found more than I had expected: a wider audience than I had ever had, some of it in lands I had barely heard of, where people in national liberation movements want to know "China's way." For Peking also is the center of a world.

When I applied to my Chinese friends to stay in Peking, I put it: "I think the Chinese know better than anyone else the way for man. I want to learn and write." I am still learning and writing and expect to keep on.

Anna Louise Strong

November 1965

CANTON PRELUDE*

Autumn 1925

IN late 1925 I visited China on my way from Moscow to Vancouver. I had become a writer on revolutionary changes, living in Moscow, commuting to the United States to lectures and stopping in other interesting lands on the way. For several years revolutionary forces had seemed to be stirring in China: the May 4th student movement in 1919 that overthrew a cabinet in Peking, a struggle in Shanghai in 1925 in which British shot down Chinese workers, and in the same year the great Canton strike and boycott against Hongkong. I went to see.

As day by day on the train I saw Siberian plains unroll to the great forests, down by the Khingan range to Harbin, Mukden, Peking, I found that my four years in Soviet Russia (where I had handled relief to the 1921 Volga famine and later helped organise a farm colony of homeless children) had equipped me to see the continent of Asia as an American seldom sees it. Instead of exotic culture of shrines and ancient palaces, strange customs, laws and religions, that make most westerners say "the inscrutable East", I saw there vast peasant populations of many nationalities — Russians, Buriats, Koreans, Chinese — all more alike each other than they were like any American farmer.

Great rural areas were shaken by famine when primitive measures failed against drought, yet remained bound in a farm and family routine for centuries unchanged. From them peasant workers migrated to newly built factories where they lived in bar-

* This chapter was not included in the original book but is compiled for this edition from articles published in 1925. It is included here as my first trip to China.

racks without family life. All these conditions came from the primitive forms of production. Now these forms were crashing across earth's mother continent. For the railroad, the factory, the industrial civilization of the west were inexorably penetrating Asia. They came in two forms between which was war irreconcilable: by naked exploitation in the south by the world's imperialisms and by the Russian revolution in the north.

In China there was no national government in the modern sense. There were warlords temporarily supreme in provinces. Peking was no actual capital; it was a diplomatic convenience for foreign powers. It was also the crown which one warlord after another set on his head. If London or Tokyo wanted a piece of China, they bribed an official in Peking for his signature. If that didn't work, they financed a new warlord to take Peking long enough to sign a treaty. That made it "legal" for the world.

As for what the Chinese thought, nobody asked them. Their proverb said: "The government decrees cannot get out of Peking's gates."

Three warlords in those days surrounded Peking and took it in turn. They were Chang and Feng and Wu. Chang Tso Lin, Japan's puppet, lived in Shenyang (Mukden) in what was called in those days "Oriental" splendor, meaning many concubines, lavish jade and silks; he received interviewers in a throne-room decorated with stuffed tigers and half a million dollars worth of jade. I didn't go.

Americans were showing interest in Feng Yu Hsiang, who held the arid lands of the northwest. American missionaries called him "the Christian general" and admired his laws against opium and the discipline of his troops. So I travelled two days northwest to Feng's camp in the Mongolian deserts, and nearly froze to death in a blizzard on an unheated train. I found a stolid man, tall and strong who recited his program with a bored but courteous air. "China's first need is to push education until everyone can read and write. The second need is to build roads and railroads." Feng kept his soldiers busy building roads and developing territory,

giving them Mongolian farms in payment. I also met Feng's wife, Li Teh Chuan who later became Minister of Health in Peking and who still occasionally reminds me when we meet that we first met in the Mongolian deserts forty years ago.

Feng's expressed program made him popular with western liberals. But "old China hands" amused themselves with anecdotes about his "treason" to allies, which was balanced by their treason to him, and his flattering messages to enemies; they called this "typically Chinese". Peking was chuckling at the moment at a telegram he had sent to Chang Tso Lin offering to lend his troops to his enemy "if you need them to run your errands". When I asked him how many provinces he would handle with his present forces he replied with felicity: "Even to manage one province properly is too much for my inexperience." He was grabbing three or four. Feng was the only one of the three warlords who helped make later history, some of which will appear in the present book.

Peking also had students; it was a city of several universities. Foreign residents were startled by the great May 4th movement in 1919 in which the students demonstrated against Japan's demands on China until Peking's traitorous government fell. This meant to foreigners that China's government was weak; they did not deduce that China's students were strong. They wrote notes home about students and then turned to more interesting business, such as shopping for jade and silks in second-hand shops outside the wall.

I personally fell in love with Peking. "If I had any real work here I would like to live here," I said even in 1925. Years later when the People's Liberation Army swept north China and my friends in America waited for them to take Nanking and set up their capital, I laughed: "Nanking is a suburb of Shanghai's commerce. Peking will be the capital." I had no inside word from Mao; I just knew Peking.

In Peking I met Fanny Borodin who I had known in Moscow until she suddenly vanished with her husband; I had not known

where they had gone. Fanny told me that Michael Borodin was adviser to the new nationalist government arising in south China; he had come on request of Sun Yat Sen. "You must visit us in Canton," she said. "Canton is modern China." Communications between Hongkong and Canton had for months been broken by a great strike; no Canton boat would meet a British steamer.

"I shall ask the Strike Committee for a permit for you," she said.

South from Peking in 1925 I interviewed Wu Pei Fu in Hankow, which I was to visit less than two years later as "Red Hankow". Wu was backed by big Chinese merchants and by any foreign power who wanted something in central China as most of them did. Some people called him "honest" because smaller warlords would trust him to split the imperialist bribes with them. Wu had more "allies" than other warlords but they were less stable; they would meet in famous temples "to discuss the classics", during which new lands would be divided. Wu quoted Confucius to me, said that foreign influence in China was "both good and bad", hoped to retire one day "to contemplative life in a temple" and wrote a poem to me on a fan.

Down river I came to Shanghai, half of it owned by the British, half by the French, with a "Chinese city" outside both settlements. Tall Sikh policemen, brought from India, beat shrinking ricksha coolies openly in the streets. Imperialism, in Peking diplomatic and evasive, was naked here. "You can't go to Canton," everyone said. "There's blockade and civil war." Hongkong students, wishing to return to their university in Canton, were travelling eight days around by Shanghai, instead of the normal four hours by rail.

Though Dr. Sun Yat Sen had died a few months earlier, his widow, Mrs. Sun Yat Sen, that quiet, gentle but determined lady of whom I was to know much more through the years under her own family name of Soong Ching Ling, told me she would help with my trip to Canton. "It would be simpler for us," she said, "if you would go by steamer from Shanghai to Canton without

going to Hongkong. But as a correspondent you should see both cities. I will write my brother in Canton to help."

I went to Hongkong first. Under the impact of the Canton strike and the blockade the strikers had maintained for six months by a line of pickets for a hundred miles along the coast, Hongkong was dying. Its banks appealed to London for help against bankruptcy; the city was losing over a million dollars a day. An American in the consulate said to me: "You know those 'ghost towns' in Nevada when a mining rush has passed. I have wondered all summer if that can happen to the third port of the British Empire, the greatest port of the East." Such was the power of the striking Chinese workers, based on Canton.

Yet the strikers broke their own rule to let me see their revolution. I took the British steamer from Hongkong to Shameen, the island off Canton which was still a British concession. In late afternoon, as the steamer dropped anchor off Shameen for which we were all assumed to be bound, a small motor boat put out from the thousands of sampans that lined the shore of Canton, flying a red flag with a blue corner in which was a round white sun. This was my first sight of the flag of the Kuomintang which was to spread through China. I saw that Fanny Borodin sat in the stern. I swiftly took my suitcase, went to the lower deck, stepped into the launch and departed amid astonished stares of sailors. It was the first time in months that a Canton boat had met the British steamer.

Just as suddenly I stepped out of ancient Asia into the modern world. All through north China I had grown confused with the warlords and the strange forms of courtesy. I also had begun to say: "An inscrutable people whom we never shall understand." But the Canton strike was hard, ruthless, definite. It was organised labor on strike in Seattle, Pittsburg, London, Hamburg, anywhere in the world. This was no alien, exotic country; this was home.

I felt it with Fanny Borodin's first words, as our launch pulled away from the British ship. "I was afraid you might have

someone with you, an interpreter or a friend. The strike committee only gave a permit for one." Then she introduced a slender Chinese girl who had come with her. "This is Cynthia Liao. You have heard no doubt of her father, Liao Chung Kai, the labor leader who was recently assassinated. We are going at once to Mrs. Liao's home where the executive committee of the Women's Section is meeting."

Cynthia Liao, a flame-like creature of twenty-one, with dark sleek hair and quick-moving eyes, put a soft hand on my shoulder and said: "My father was one who stood foremost among the common people of Canton. He had just worked out a plan to stabilize our money and finance our province. That was why they killed him, because our strike and our revolution are succeeding. But my father's ideas will live among the workers. In his memory, I also am studying silk culture in Canton Christian College because he said silk culture was a great need among the peasants of our province."

Suddenly I recalled where I had heard that name, "Liao Chung Kai". A Hongkong paper had said: "That notorious labor-leader . . . he sent his children to Canton Christian College. . . ." The paper demanded that children of such people be kept out of decent schools "lest they contaminate the students". This little Miss Liao by my side in pale blue linen, not even in mourning, was the girl who was doing the "contaminating".

On the wharf we took the dark maroon automobile of Mrs. Liao and drove through Canton streets. Cynthia called my attention to several wide streets which Sun Yat Sen had widened, and which already made Canton the most modern city in China. She pointed to a rough dirt road, still unfinished, which the strikers were building as their gift to Canton for its hospitality to connect Canton with Whampoa, its port and military base eleven miles down-river.

"The strikers are strengthening our city," she said, "to remind us of this strike forever."

Above the house of Liao floated a banner whose Chinese characters Cynthia translated: "Undying Spirit." "We have taken it

as our house motto," she said. "So many people wrote to us of my father's 'undying spirit that leads us on,' so we put it over our gate."

Inside the house of Liao the women's committee was gathering to prepare for a mass-meeting to be held the following day. Mrs. Liao, whose kind, sad face had hidden with no cosmetics the lines of strain and exhaustion her recent bereavement had brought, welcomed me with smiles and turned to busy herself with the details of preparing for her tea-party. Over delicious, elaborate dishes the discussion of many matters went on. A girl in her twenties with honest, penetrating eyes, who had spent seven months in Moscow "learning about revolutions", discussed the coming mass-meeting with an intellectual woman of forty, head of the Women's Normal School. Others spoke of a recent victory in which the Whampoa cadets had taken the walled city of Weichow and said that now was the time for the women to organise a Red Cross Society.

They also noted that a "pirate raid" presented a problem. A week before my arrival, three steamers had come up the river, painted to resemble Canton government ships. Anchoring near a missionary college they had raised a fire alarm and then kidnapped the first fifty students who appeared. Then they sent word from their hiding place in the delta that the expedition had cost them \$10,000, and they expected it back with a profit.

"This is a move from Hongkong," agreed the women, mentioning the name of the gangster in Hongkong at whose house the pirates met. Everything, they said, must come in its order. It was less than two years since the Kuomintang had been reorganised and set up a revolutionary government in Canton. "We have defeated three counter-revolutionary armies," they said, "and consolidated three-fourths of the province. Now we shall have to clean up the pirates." Later, in 1926, would come the expedition to the north.

Every step of the way had been won by struggle. Even the widening of a few streets in Canton had been bitterly opposed by

the merchants, whose shops had to be torn down or moved back. But after it was done, and the light and air came in and the shops became brighter and healthier, and could load goods into autos right at their doors, property values went up fast and the merchants all profited and asked to have a joint celebration of the widening of their streets. "So now, officially, the streets were widened by cooperation of the merchants with the city government," said one of the women, with gentle, understanding malice in her eyes.

At the strike committee next day I learned the story of the strike and its relations with the Canton government. It began as a strike in Hongkong of a hundred thousand Chinese workers who demanded "free speech and the right to open union halls; abolition of corporal punishment for workers; equality of Chinese and British before the law; representation in the Hongkong municipal government of the Chinese who formed 99 percent of the population. Homeless, penniless strikers left Hongkong and went to their native villages in Kwangtung province for shelter. Forty thousand of them thus came to Canton, which was already the center of the new nationalist government, set up by Sun Yat Sen, and Borodin was their official "adviser" invited by Sun Yat Sen because of his knowledge of revolution.

Under his advice the Kuomintang had been reorganised in January 1924, to admit Communists, whose special interest was to organise workers and peasants. The sympathy which many Canton merchants, for a generation overshadowed by their British-rival port Hongkong, felt for the Chinese strikers, was solidified into cooperation. Canton gave the strikers the empty houses left by a recent clean-up of gambling dens and the military camps left by half a dozen evicted generals. From this Canton base the strikers organised for a hundred miles along the coast the line of 1,500 pickets that strangled Hongkong.

Seamen chiefly led them, their oldest modern union. Su Chao Chen was president both of the seamen and of the general strike. He told me: "There are 140 unions taking part. This is not a

racial fight; it is not a Chinese-British fight. Tell the workers of the west from us: we are part of the world revolution."

The united front of the strikers with the Canton government was, however, an unstable alliance. Silk-clad officials felt uneasy at the strength of these workers, which was helping them to unify a province. Workers resented the appearance of silken officials, but used their hospitality against the British exploiters. There was friction in the very air of Canton; there was also power. Could the combination last?

"For a time," answered Borodin, when I asked him. "The merchants want a 'stable' government, by which they mean one under their own control. They want to clear out bandits, build roads, establish industry, have a stable currency and other things that are good for trade. This brings them into conflict with the British imperialists with whom the exploited workers are in irreconcilable conflict."

"But surely everyone wants stable government in China," I protested. "People have different views on how to get it and who should control. But all the capitalists in Shanghai and Hongkong want stable government; they complain that China's disorder hurts business."

"It does," said Borodin, smiling, "but it gives the foreigners control of what business there is. The more disorder reigns in China, the more Hongkong and Shanghai profit from their monopoly of security. Generals keep their military funds in foreign settlements; millionaires run there for shelter. Chinese shipping seeks foreign flags and pays tribute to foreigners. China's chaos enables foreigners to loot the country."

I was not convinced; I thought he talked in paradoxes. I was to remember these words year after year.

In Canton I went to the mass meeting of 1,500 women. They asked me to speak about Russia. Where had I seen such faces? Grim faces of struggle? I remembered a meeting of women in Kiev who had lived through many bombardments. I talked to the Canton women about the conditions out of which Russia made

her revolution, the ignorant villages, the patriarchal homesteads, the enslaved women, the factories with their barracks life. I told of Dunia, a textile worker in Moscow and how she lived before and after the revolution. I told how the women of her factory organised a hospital and a factory dining-room, and took the manager's house for a day nursery.

These women of Canton understood the details of Russia's revolution better than any American audience I ever had. It was their own life as it had been and might be, I recalled that Mrs. Liao had said: "Our Chinese women are slow to awaken for they are bound by many harsh traditions, but when they are awakened, they are very strong to endure."

After four days in Canton I left for my lecture tour in America, knowing that I should watch from afar this revolution in China and that it would bring me back to China again.

CHAPTER I STOPPING IN SHANGHAI

May 1927

EVEN far out on the Pacific Ocean on the spaciouly luxurious American liner we felt the influence of approaching China. We felt it, rather strangely, by silence. China dropped out of the news. The daily newspaper of the ship printed on board and consisting mainly of jokes and information about deck sports or bridge tournaments, contained also the radio information of floods on the Mississippi, divorce suits in Los Angeles, murders in Chicago, hopelessly hopeful conferences in Geneva. But not a word about China, or Japan, or any points to the East. Yet, when we had left San Francisco, the front pages were flaming with the split between Nanking and Hankow, the entrainment of more and more troops from England, and the departure of cruisers from the Pacific Coast of America for the scene where issues were being contested which might mean world peace or world war. Was it true, as our lack of news suggested, that everything had quieted and ceased to have "news value"?

Later, I learned the reason for this silence. One of the passengers asked our captain just before we reached Yokohama why there seemed to be no news from the East. The captain smiled.

"We get the news," he said, "but we do not publish it. We have a Chinese crew. The beggars are so excited about politics that when we publish news about China they don't work but just stand around discussing the Revolution. The news from Japan we edit out for the same reason, to create the impression that we

have no radio connection with the East. We have chiefly these excitable Cantonese on board. If they once get to fighting among themselves over this Nanking-Hankow business, . . . well, good-night." With such cheerfully callous American efficiency did our captain deal with his Chinese crew and their Revolution, in the interests of the speed of his ship and the comfort of his carefree, careless passengers.

The ship was very empty of first class passengers. The tourist trade had stopped going to China. But radio news received from the sister ships of our line bound in the opposite direction told us they were crowded almost beyond the limits of safety, with people sleeping in dining-rooms and on cots in corridors. It was the flight of the foreigners before the storm which was China. Our East-bound passengers were largely American business men going to the Philippines; there was much speculation as to whether we would even be allowed to land in Shanghai for the usual half-day's shopping and sight-seeing. When my fellow passengers learned that I contemplated not only stopping in Shanghai but, if possible, going upriver to Hankow, they regarded me as a mild lunatic—except perhaps one man, a travelling salesman from a Detroit firm manufacturing aeroplanes, who wished to make sales in China. He did not care to which factions he sold them; he was not British, with a conscious political opinion regarding China. He was American, interested in making money. He would sell to any general who had hard cash with which to buy. He even toyed hopefully with the idea of making a demonstration trip in his aeroplane to Hankow, and securing some of the Russian gold, which rumour said was plentiful there. He was naïvely disappointed when a more sophisticated passenger told him that, if the Hankow authorities saw an aeroplane approaching from the direction of Shanghai, they were likely to shoot first and inquire afterwards.

The landing at Shanghai itself was much simpler than we expected. Our Chinese passengers, it is true, had difficulties; they feared detention for careful investigation into radical tenden-

cies. We foreigners were still the elect of the gods; the customs officials did not even open our passports but merely glanced at the red leather cover which announced us Americans and waved us past to the streets of the city. There we found rickshaw men glad to get ten or fifteen cents for pulling their human freight short distances to the hotels of Shanghai. I passed by the park on the Bund, reserved only for "white folks"; I saw barricades of barbed wire and sand-bags, cutting in inconvenient directions across the traffic; the International Settlement barricading itself against the "undesirable Chinese" not only of the Chinese town but of the French town; and the French town retaliating by barricading itself against the undesirable Chinese who lived in the International Settlement. At frequent intervals I came upon groups of soldiers; and I looked back at the warm sunlit water of the harbour crowded with the war vessels of many nations, the "international junk-pile" of old iron.

On the steamer I had met one of the advocates of the modernization of China, famous for his part in introducing the colloquial in place of the classical style of writing Chinese which will make knowledge accessible to the ordinary man. In politics, however, he was not a revolutionist; a typical Chinese intellectual, he was worried by the incomprehensibly "rough" demands of Chinese farmers and workmen. He believed the rumours that communists were stirring up the peasants of Hunan, and that the peasants were "killing everyone with a university degree." His friends had advised him not to return to China, but to continue lecturing on Chinese nationalism in the safe haven of foreign lands.

"This is something I cannot understand," he said, "for most of my friends are with the Nanking group which seems to be winning. Yet they are torn with doubts and very unhappy about the future. In every part of the land there is civil conflict. Certain provinces are said to belong to Nanking and others to Wuhan, but in all of these provinces there is fighting of one group against another."

In the ten days which he had just spent in Japan, he told me that he had received a pile of calling cards five centimetres thick from Japanese coming to ask about China.

"Japanese people," he said, and seemed to believe, "are so sympathetic with the Nationalists of China that they force their government to a policy of non-intervention."

The only hopes which this Americanized Chinese professor had for China were based on the presence of three old men in the Nanking Government. Anarchist philosophers and scholars, they had the "moral weight" which he considered necessary for public confidence. When to them were added the military ability of Chiang Kai Shek, and the financial ability of T. V. Soong, whom he confidently expected to join Nanking at once, it might be possible to create a "centre of gravity" which the Chinese people would take as authoritative. He said no word of satisfying the hunger of peasants, or the demands of overdriven workers; this was not the world he knew and moved in. But he made very much of the fact that these three old men were scholars "over sixty," and consequently had prestige among Chinese intellectuals. Though in the field of letters he had fathered a revolution, his whole being clearly craved not revolutionary change but something solid, firm and respectable to which he might give allegiance. Unless such a "centre of gravity" could be created in Nanking, he said there would be chaos in China at least for a decade.

Many more Chinese intellectuals of this type I met in Shanghai. I visited the first meeting of the Women's Commission, a body of nine women summoned by Chiang Kai Shek to take charge of women's organisation, to make it respectable and to rescue it from the wild, red revolutionary fervour which had inspired the suddenly awakened girls of Central China. Of the nine members of the Women's Commission, five had studied abroad, in America, Japan, France and Germany. This fact itself marked them out as belonging to the specially privileged middle-class families, since Chinese girls who go abroad are extremely rare. One of them had a glamorous record of revolt; as a child of five she had refused to

have her feet bound and, as a girl of fourteen, she had refused the betrothed chosen for her; later she had carried bombs in Peking to kill the Manchus. But her revolt had been solely for the old families of China against the Manchus, and for her own right as a woman to do as she liked. Sincerely interested in "women's rights," she had taken forty Chinese girls abroad to study in France, where they had studied law, medicine, silk-culture, midwifery; she herself, a graduate of law, was now a prominent legal official in China. The other women of the Women's Commission were representatives of Equal Suffrage Leagues or Anti-Opium Societies. Intelligent, respectable, anxious to do something to improve the condition of Chinese women, they added a polite façade to a régime which was daily executing labour leaders. These women shut their eyes to such terrorism, calling it "restoring order"; it was easy for them to do this, for they had never experienced in their own lives the misery of the coolies and peasants of China. To them the killing of a single landlord or scholar by peasants in Hunan in a revolutionary upheaval seemed much more terrible than the strangling of twenty workers for the restoration of military discipline. On the walls of their sunlit committee room they displayed printed slogans: "Attack Illiteracy," "Protect Women's Labour," "Reform the Home" and, mixed among these, "Down with Communists."

Early on Sunday morning I heard the stirring sound of military bands passing my window and, remembering the special services for troops announced in various churches, I went forth to see the religious life of Shanghai. I dropped into the Union Church, attended by English and Americans — a combination of various Protestant sects and, like most such combinations, colourless. Clean-looking sailor boys in blue and white filled two-thirds of the pews. Youthful and naïvely ignorant of world politics, they had come from far countries to do what might be commanded them in China. The pastor spoke of God the Father, and made a long theoretical analysis of what is included in the simple word "father." He reminded the boys of home, of an all-watching Father who had

the same standards for them here in Shanghai as at home under their mother's eyes. So much he did to guard them from the whiskey and brothels of the intoxicating East. But he never mentioned that God was father of Chinese also: this might have created embarrassment in their obediently patriotic souls.

I went swiftly in a rickshaw, whose puller was glad to get eight cents for the job, to Trinity Cathedral, the orthodox church of the British Empire. Around it on sunlit grass strolled British officers in khaki. The beautiful, formal auditorium with its stiff pews was filled with equally stiff men in uniform. The most astonishing sight was the rifles; they were laid at the end of each pew, half a dozen rifles in each.

The right reverend speaker, standing in black robes in a lofty pulpit, preached not God the Father, but "God who made the British Empire and who still has a job in the world for that Empire to do." He urged his hearers amid the physical and mental strayings of an Oriental city to hold fast to two ideas:

First, he said, they themselves were "still the same," under whatever conditions or confronted by whatever new ideas — still the same as in the little towns and countrysides of England. Through his discourse breathed the firm conviction that all change was evil, that to be "still the same," still infinitely English under whatever new skies, was what God demands. So must the Occidental steel himself against the lure of the senses and the still more subtle lure of new ideas in the East.

Second, he bade them remember that the British Empire was "still the same." He was not very happy through this part of his sermon; he had to explain too much. Only by straining a bit could he apply the word "same" to the Empire. Once he said "unless those at home fail the old traditions," and I knew he was worrying about British labour. In the end he rose to a burst of oratory about "carrying the responsibility of that glorious Empire, which I believe God founded and which God calls to a job in the world." He built up a religious sanction for intervention and closed with the singing of Kipling's *Recessional*, in which God is mingled in-

extricably with "far-flung battle-line," "dominion over palm and pine," and "heathen hordes without the law."

Several other churches I saw that day in Shanghai. The Catholic Church of St. Joseph is at the edge of the French Settlement and there Chinese mingled with French, English, and Irish under the collective emotion of an all-pervading chant which called for no intellectual decisions. The Russian orthodox church stood over in the native city, empty now and with broken windows. The priest, knowing enough about revolutions to flee them, had hurriedly removed from the building the altar, holy vessels and holy pictures, and set up a new church in the French Settlement.

All Sunday afternoon I strolled through the Chinese city of Shanghai, separated from the foreign city by barbed-wire entanglements. I noted many signs of past fighting and present occupation by soldiers. Near the North Railway Station a large burned area marked the spot where fighting had been fiercest. We passed orphanages and mission churches now occupied by the troops of Chiang Kai Shek. Children's homes and schools in the foreign settlement were also occupied by foreign soldiers. British troops quartered in a large handsome orphanage hung their laundry from the windows. All buildings suitable for housing troops were diverted to that purpose. Religion, education, care of children (except in the churches used by the dominant foreigners), had given place to bayonets and rifles.

I was unable to see any of the Shanghai labour leaders. The American newspaperman, William Prohme, of the Nationalist News Agency, discouraged me from trying.

"If Chiang Kai Shek hasn't found them yet, probably you can't," he remarked grimly. Then he added: "And your search might endanger them."

It would bring no harm to me; I was an American and the Chinese authorities could not arrest me; but it might endanger the men whom I sought. Everywhere I found evidences of the extent of suppression prevailing. I asked what had happened to the Shanghai University, a school maintained by the Kuomintang.

A year and a half before I had visited this university and made an address there. Now they told me it had been forcibly closed and that I would not be able to find any of its former teachers.

From day to day the newspapers reported the arrest of "alleged communists" coming down the river from Hankow and taken from the British steamers by the Chinese military with British connivance! Friends at the Young Men's Christian Association were much disturbed over the seizing of President Wei, head of Boone University in Wuchang, a conservative Christian who had fought against the communists in his university but who had been arrested by Chiang Kai Shek as himself a communist. President Wei's influential friends saved him, but the half-dozen other students and intellectuals, arrested on the same boat, were handed over by the civil court "to the military court," after which they vanished.

The only institutions through which one could come into contact with the life of the masses and which were permitted to remain open were philanthropic organisations like the clubs of the Young Men's Christian Association. I visited their "hut" across the river in the industrial town of Pootung, a mushroom factory settlement. It was a horrible place, piling all the discomforts of city life on to those of a village. The workers were crowded here into unspeakably small and filthy hovels; there was no sewer or water system. Small sluggish canals of water green with slime emptied into the river. The Y.M.C.A. hut had achieved popularity by digging a good well; people stood in line at all hours to get the pure water, which was here given to them freely and which they carried long distances to their homes. There was one primary school and one Y.M.C.A. school in the entire settlement of one hundred thousand people. The secretary complained that it was hard to get boys to remain in school since the parents were so poor that "if they see a chance to put the boy in a factory for ten or twenty cents a day, they take him out of school at once." The Y was trying to introduce "cheap, but respectable marriages," since it was very difficult for poor people to get married in the conventional Chinese manner which is very costly. One must have a sedan chair, and

burn incense and candles, and hire musicians, and have a fortune teller to arrange everything, to tell when to start from the house, when to enter the chair, when to leave the chair, all according to special omens. The modern way, which the Y.M.C.A. tried to introduce, merely provided a man as witness that the two took each other in marriage; three couples had been married in this way in the hut in Pootung, but most girls did not wish anything so simple; they considered that their marriage would never be blessed unless they had a sedan chair.

I asked the Y.M.C.A. secretary about the trade unions in Pootung, and he told me that there were no more union activities now, since the government was searching for all "Bolsheviks." Five years ago, he said, there had been the beginning of a union in Pootung, but it had been forced to "go underground." When the Nationalists came the unions "all jumped up very rapidly." They took possession of the public school and the school of the British American Tobacco Company, and seized arms from the police and from the northern soldiers.

"The students and labourers together rushed the police stations in Shanghai," he said. "But in Pootung it was only labourers with no outside students at all. They had ten or twenty revolvers; that's all; but they seized some two hundred rifles from the frightened soldiers. They used the hospital as the seat of local government and claimed the right to govern the town. Shanghai appointed a police chief but the workers here refused to receive him, saying they had their own police chief. The unions were a very strong force and not very friendly to Chiang Kai Shek's Government. So the government disarmed them and killed here ten or fifteen people. When the labourers were in power they also shot some people — seven or eight perhaps — foremen whom they hated."

Thus in miniature was the story of Shanghai told in the hideously squalid town of Pootung. I learned also from various correspondents the brief story of the larger city's revolution. The workers had risen many days before the arrival of the Nationalist armies,

and seized the police stations and arsenal. "It was remarkably well organised and planned," said an attaché of the American Consulate, implying that the workers must have had the advice of Russian military experts. I learned that the workers had turned over power to the Nationalist army, going out in procession to meet it and that, in a short time, Chiang Kai Shek was suppressing and killing union leaders. But when I wished to know more, I was told to seek the labour leaders, not here but in Hankow. "Those who are alive have mostly fled there or gone as delegates."

CHAPTER II UP THE YANGTZE

ALMOST everyone whom I met in Shanghai advised me to go quickly to Hankow, if I wished to see the real Revolution. The American vice-consul, on seeing the card which proclaimed me a Press correspondent, told me that most correspondents were "up-river." Smiling a little, I asked him if it were not forbidden to go there, since I knew the consular offices had been "advising" Americans to flee to the coast towns. "We don't advise the trip," he said hastily, "but you correspondents make your own rules."

Von Salzman, German correspondent of the *Vossische Zeitung*, who had just returned from Hankow, grew lyrical over the Revolution he had found there. "Don't waste time on Nanking," he said. "It does not live. It will be compromised by the British and the rich Chinese merchants of Shanghai. Hankow will live; if not the men, at least the idea that is alive there. If crushed, it will live in history and return again. What is this idea? Nothing so definite as communism. Nothing I can define in detail. All the same, it is that which is behind all revolutions — sudden hope of long submerged masses."

T. V. Soong, the young finance minister of the Nationalist Government, under whose department a stable currency had been, at least temporarily, created in Canton, and who had as yet declared for neither side of the Nationalist split, also told me privately to go to Hankow. I visited him more than once in the former home of Dr. Sun Yat Sen in the French Concession. Clad in an exquisite Chinese robe of dove-blue colour, he seemed infinitely removed from the harsh squalor of war and revolution. Yet revolu-

tion had marked him; he was not the same man I had known a year and a half before in Canton. Then he had been a joyous boy, cleverly building a State's finance. Now he was a man torn by indecision and doubt. He had seen his Central Bank seized by militarists of his own party, his civilian appointees dismissed, its treasury ruined. He had suffered, too, from communists. Angry workers in Hankow had, upon one occasion, almost mobbed him.

Soong, a conservative member of a Shanghai business family, was educated in America at Harvard. He instinctively liked business people, and disliked communists and workers. His obvious destiny was to become a business man of Shanghai. He would no doubt have followed it, if he had not met Borodin, Russian Adviser to the Nationalists, and been deeply influenced by him. The Revolution gave Soong prestige, the chance of building a State finance. It was the feudal militarists who had destroyed his success and looted his treasury. So if Soong disliked communists, he also resented militarists, who were more adverse to the building of State banks than communists were. Hankow did not satisfy him, but it offered the chance of again creating a State finance, and it held aloft the banner of civil control over the military. He longed, therefore, for Hankow and the thrill of achievement it promised; and he knew that duty called him. But he did not dare to go there; he had too many personal ties with General Chiang and the merchants of Shanghai.

He said to me: "Go up the river. Go as soon as you can. There is nothing to see or hear at Nanking. Nothing but glittering words and the old inefficiency of China. In Hankow you will find interesting social experiments, the embargo on silver, the arming of peasants and workers." Again and again he told me to tell his sister, Mrs. Sun Yat Sen, and his old friend Borodin, that he would be coming to join them as soon as he could evade Chiang Kai Shek. He told me his house was watched and his person threatened if he attempted to go. Three times he had had tickets bought but had turned back at the last moment, afraid. He seemed sincere; in his eyes was a look of pain. But the last time I saw

him, the words slipped out unconsciously: "Au revoir, till we meet in Peking." I knew then that he was waiting till the path should be safe, not only for his body but also for his reputation.

When at last he came to Hankow, it was as Chiang Kai Shek's commissary, to attempt compromise with the very régime which he described to me that day in scathing terms. Perhaps he was always Chiang's agent and a conscious hypocrite. Perhaps his past made him a social coward. Perhaps he thought reunion would save Chinese Nationalism. It is clear to me, from the talks I had with him, that he knew quite well that the Revolution and the party were in Hankow, and needed him for their work; but that, wavering between two paths, he did not choose that one. He sat in his spotless dove-blue robe in the little house in the French town, which is the shrine of Dr. Sun's memory, and tried to banish the look of defeat from his eyes by busying himself with marriage with the beautiful daughter of a very reactionary family.

The only people who did not advise me to go to Hankow were Chinese officials close to, or connected with, the Nanking Government. C. C. Wu, whose famous father had left a fortune invested in the foreign concessions, and whose personal interests led him always to oppose any radical action, was Foreign Minister for Nanking. He assured me that Hankow was "finished." C. T. Wang, an able American trained intellectual, who vibrated between the Kuomintang and occasional high posts in the Peking Government, and who was said to be in Shanghai as an emissary of Marshal Feng, told me "Borodin has fled and Mrs. Sun Yat Sen is doubtless already on the way down-river. You will pass her if you go up to Hankow." When I told him that Mrs. Sun had invited me by telegram to come to Hankow, he looked disturbed, either at the news or at my lack of diplomacy in breaking it to him.

All sorts of reports about Hankow came drifting down the Yangtze. The "naked women's parade" was one of the most spectacular rumours; the news spread from somewhere that the women of Hankow, to celebrate their new freedom, were organising to march naked through the streets. Even details of the parade

were mentioned; there were supposed to be officers to inspect the candidates, accepting only those who were physically fit for display. This was a peculiarly nasty rumour; for the Chinese, whose men and boys often go half naked in hot weather, expect their women to be meticulously modest.

A discredited missionary, said to have been dismissed from nearly every mission board in China, got out carbon copies of a supposed letter from Hunan, claiming that "by a new law, all girls over sixteen must be married within one month or the government will provide husbands for them." With this letter he sent a picture of the costume said to be worn by the women propagandists with the Nationalist Army; it was a very scanty bathing suit so drawn as to look grotesquely immodest. Mingled with these wild tales were very many other stories with some foundation, such as the seizing of foreigners' property by trade unions and peasants' unions.

To oppose these various tales, some of the liberal forces of Shanghai, chiefly Americans, were circulating whatever correct information they could gain from up-river. It was thus that I first saw copies of the revolutionary placards from the walls of Wuchang, which were mimeographed by some liberal-minded secretaries of the Young Women's Christian Association, and sent not only to friends in Shanghai but in hundreds of private letters to America. They also urged me to go up-river to Hankow. "There is a new revolutionary spirit alive there which is different from anything we ever saw in China." Certainly the placards they published showed a new spirit; surely never before have the soldiers of a victorious army after any siege spread such proclamations, calling for the "get-together" of people and soldiers. Here is one:

"From the Fifteenth Army Administration to the People of Wuhan:

"We are sorry you had to suffer because it took us so long to take the city. For fifteen years you have suffered under the North. For forty days you suffered under the siege, hunger,

looting, fear. We rejoice that on October 10th you were freed under the blue sky and white sun! [Kuomintang flag.] Though we were happy to get the city open, we were unhappy to see such pitiful people. . . .

"The Revolutionary Army must get rid of the suffering of the people. We and the people are one—in our sorrows, peace and danger, in getting rid of hindrances, in getting a full life, in getting free from imperialism and militarism.

"The light of the Revolution has come to Wuchang; Chekiang is free; Fukien is taken. We can all together solve the difficulties in Hupeh. . . .

"Imperialism and militarism disappear before our faces."

Here is another from the Fourth Army to the people of Wuhan:

"Up to this time to see a soldier was like a rat seeing a cat. You were so frightened you couldn't run fast. . . . If you couldn't escape you said: 'Most exalted Sir.' . . . But this time of fear is over; now you can play under the blue sky and white sun. We soldiers of the Fourth Army are from the factories, fields, shops and schools. . . . Because we were oppressed we joined the army. We and you, though our clothes are different, have the same spirit. We are no longer 'Most exalted Sir'; we are your soldier friends. We hope you will spread the word that together we fight imperialism, militarism, bad officials, grafters, great landowners. . . . Because of the joy of this little rejoicing don't forget your enemies and past sufferings.

"Work for a National Assembly. Down with unequal treaties. Unite!"

Here is a more definite programme, also taken from the Fourth Army:

"Now that we have taken Wuchang, we must:

Protect business

Get rid of heavy taxes

Establish free speech for the people

Protect people's organisations and help them increase.
 Have a People's Assembly
 Set up good officials
 Do the will of the people.

"All unite and enter the Kuomintang. Oppose Wu. Oppose imperialism!"

Such were the placards that came down the river from Hankow, expressing the spirit and programme of the Revolution.

Three kinds of steamers went up-river from Shanghai. The British boats were running thrice weekly, travelling always slowly in convoys with gun-boat protection. But they would not take women without a special order from the British Admiral. The Japanese line had no objections to women passengers. Being Orientals, they lacked the British pose of chivalry which assumes that women's lives are more valuable than men's lives. But their ships had stopped running for lack of cargoes from Hankow. There remained the German ships, which also admitted women, not from lack of chivalry but because they knew quite impersonally that life was perfectly safe in Hankow. All the German merchants were staying there, together with their wives and children, in spite of the fact that the deadly heat of Hankow summer had already begun, for the hill resorts were inaccessible behind various fronts of battle.

The German lines had no regular river service but, from time to time, an ocean-going freighter, passing from Japan through the China ports and the Indian Sea to Hamburg, would leave Shanghai to one side, and go up-stream to Hankow directly from Woosung, the little town at the mouth of the Yangtze. Thus I got passage on the S.S. *Sachsen*. This steamer went unarmed and without any gun-boat escort. The effect was to make the usual British gun-boat escort seem a trifle ridiculous. The Germans also stopped willingly to submit to search from any local Chinese authorities who hap-

pened to have power of search in any cities along the river; for they were under Chinese law and accepted it. But the British, Japanese, and occasional American ships, insisted on their right to immunity from search, and were consequently often fired upon by generals of one side or other when they failed to stop on signal. To this fire they replied with their ship guns, preparing the way for "incidents."

The only protection our German ship had, as it went through the war zone, was afforded by four Chinese characters painted very large on both sides of the vessel, and meaning "Virtue Empire Trading Ship" — "Virtue Empire" being the Chinese characters for Germany. By reason of this sign they passed in peace up the Yangtze and, when we approached either bank of the river, peasants or soldiers, of either side, fishing from little boats, waved their hats in friendly greeting. On one occasion when desultory shooting was going on between Nanking and the port of Pukow on the other side of the river, and a German trading ship approached, the shots stopped, not to be resumed until it had passed. Such was the Chinese courtesy to noncombatants.

All but one of our twelve passengers were women, who had been unable to travel on the regular British steamers. A Russian girl at my table, was a supervisor in the Chinese Telephone Service at Hankow, which employed her as expert. She told me why she had left and why she was now returning. "Those labour unions got so awful that I, as a foreigner, simply couldn't manage the office. So I said to the boss: 'I'm going to take my vacation. Wire me when it calms down a bit.' . . . So now he wires that the unions are not so strong any more, and I'm going back to my job." This was the first clear hint I had of the change in Hankow.

My cabin mate was a German woman who had lived many years in Hankow. "Unfortunately," she added, when she told me this. I asked her why she considered life in Hankow unfortunate and she replied that it was deadly dull. The only duller place, she said, was Kiukiang (the city below Hankow where the British concession had also been seized by the Chinese). Seeing my

amusement at her statement she explained it. "There is no place to go in Hankow except the racecourse. No theatres and only two 'kinos.' There used to be a band but it left after 'the trouble'" (the phrase by which respectable foreigners in Hankow allude to the Chinese seizure of the British concession). "If you want to take a walk, there are only two places," she continued. "Either you stroll along the Bund, or you go to the racecourse. Deadly dull, nothing whatever doing. . . ."

This, then, was the Hankow to which I was going as the most exciting spot on earth's surface, the place where the dice were being shaken which might decide the question of an Anglo-Russian war, with China as battlefield, the place where the form of China's future was being forged with pain and struggle under the extreme handicaps of poverty, blockade, and clashing interests. . . . "Dull, deadly dull," she said, "only Kiukiang is duller."

Peacefully our boat-load of women steamed up the Yangtze, knowing that we were in the midst of civil war, yet seeing no signs of it. Lazily we watched the sun rise and set on the yellow waters of the mighty river. Beginning at Woosung, where its great width makes it seem like the sea and where its waves toss high from horizon to horizon, we gradually watched the banks from the north and the south draw nearer. From time to time we saw an English or American gun-boat, but even these seemed peacefully inactive in the hazy distance. At the river mouth, and again at Nanking, were small Chinese war vessels of the Nanking Government. Our last newspapers before leaving Shanghai had told of the break between Britain and the Soviets, and of a rapid Nationalist drive toward the north on both railroads. But on our boat a regular German gong called to regular German meals and, in the cool of evening, a phonograph played for dancing on the deck. For a space between Nanking and the region under Hankow the waters were bare of Chinese vessels, but presently scores of trading junks again appeared and, near the shores, the boats of fishermen. Three hours before reaching Hankow we passed a small village from whose hill-top a demonstration was

taking place, for it was May 30, the anniversary of the Shanghai massacre. A tribune was set on the summit and around it were crowds of white-clothed people. More than twenty flags waved above them, practically all of them red. We could discern one banner of red with the letters U.S.S.R. across it in Russian. Most of the flags, however, were Kuomintang emblems, bearing in the corner the "blue sky and white sun." A few hours more dragged by, during which the blazing sun of Central China grew ever hotter and hotter, warning us of the hell of heat we might expect in July. Then we passed the Standard Oil tanks and the miscellaneous fringe of foreign industry, and came in sight of the Hankow waterfront, thickly lined with foreign gun-boats. We came slowly up to the dock of the city, then widely named abroad as the capital of Bolshevism in China, but where already, as our woman telephone operator knew, the unions were losing power and the red colour was fading.

CHAPTER III

RED FORCES IN HANKOW

THE city of Hankow in May 1927, was known throughout the world as "Red Hankow," the seat of the left-wing government of Nationalists. It is one of three cities facing one another across the waters of the Yangtze, and Han rivers, which meet at this point. Across the wide Yangtze, wide enough to be turbulently dangerous in winter storms, towers the ancient walled city of Wuchang, centre of provincial government and university learning for many centuries. The Nationalists had taken Wuchang after a long and terrible siege in which many of the inhabitants had died of hunger and pestilence; they made it the centre of their new Nationalist provincial government. In Wuchang, met the first Provincial Congress of Peasants, utilising the historic provincial assembly buildings near which the Revolution of 1911 had started. Teng Yen Ta, issued at Wuchang thousands of colourful posters from the army propaganda headquarters.

To the west of Hankow, across the narrow river Han, crowded with junks and houseboats, lies the city of Hanyang, famous for its arsenal and iron works, which furnish the sinews of war for the Revolution. Hankow, a semi-foreign city, housed especially that part of the Nationalist Government which maintained contact with foreign powers: finance, foreign affairs, railway administration, the official newspaper printed in English, the offices of High Adviser Borodin. The three cities together make up the Wuhan cities, from which the Nationalist Government derived the name Wuhan Government.

Hankow's importance to the revolutionary government lay in the fact that it is the chief industrial and commercial centre of Central China. It is the outlet for wheat from the north and for rice and tea from the south, for sesamum and wood-oil and many tropical grains and other raw products, coming to it down a thousand miles of back country by three rivers which meet here. This also has given Hankow its importance for foreign nations, who have established here territorial "Concessions" which occupy the main water-front. A beautiful modern boulevard known as the Bund runs for perhaps two miles along the river, flanked on the water-side by docks of foreign shipping companies and, on the shore-side, by high modern banks, office buildings, and apartment houses. This area was formerly under the control of various foreign governments — Japanese, British, German, French, Russian — each of which had its sphere of ownership and maintained its own municipal government. The German Concession was abolished by the Allies after the World War. The Russian Concession was given up after the Russian Revolution. The British Concession was overwhelmed by mass action of organised workers in the winter 1926-27. So these sections of land were known as Ex-Concessions. Behind their strip of fine foreign buildings and spacious streets came the crowded Chinese City, which surrounded them on all sides except that of the river.

I was invited to stay with Soong Ching Ling — Mrs. Sun Yat Sen — on the top floor of the Central Bank overlooking the Bund. At the entrance to our building stood two neat little Nationalist sentinels in uniform, with the "blue sky and white sun" emblem of the Kuomintang on their armbands. They guarded Soong Ching Ling and the other treasures of the bank. At the top of the stairs, in front of our apartments, stood another soldier without rifle. He always saluted when I arrived, not because I was important but because he thought that anyone visiting Soong Ching Ling might be. Around the building were spacious gardens where the former owners of the Russo-Asiatic Bank enjoyed tennis, but

where now Soong Ching Ling gave garden parties to organise Red Cross aid for the wounded Nationalist soldiers.

The bank itself, which served as the governmental bank of the Nationalists, was not in happy condition. For many years Hankow had been shut away from its nourishing hinterland as tides of military movements went to and fro, cutting off now the north, now the south, now the great western province up the Yangtze. To the economic difficulty was added a financial catastrophe, when the silver reserves of the Central Bank were seized in Canton at the time of the split with Chiang Kai Shek. The government piled up monthly deficits. In Hankow itself there was a shortage of silver currency, which the local merchants had hoarded and the foreign banks had sent out to Shanghai, to the embarrassment of the revolutionary government. Every morning I could see, outside my window, several hundred coolies waiting in line to get the great quantities of copper money which was necessary for paying wages. No one was allowed to draw more than \$50 worth at a time, but this made a heavy sackful.

Soong Ching Ling — Mrs. Sun Yat Sen — is the most gentle and exquisite creature I know anywhere in the world. Slight, clad in spotless linen cut in Chinese style, she has a gracious dignity which seems unsuited to the rough struggles of revolution. Coming of a wealthy Shanghai family and having been educated in an American college, she has a sensitiveness which makes even a slight discourtesy torture her. Yet revolution had claimed her; she was dedicated to it, not only by her own devotion, but by the half-worship bestowed on her as Dr. Sun's widow by millions of simple Chinese. She told me smilingly how she had eloped to Japan to join Dr. Sun, breaking a betrothal to another man, which had been arranged by her family and scandalising respectable Shanghai — "since no girl of a family like mine ever broke a betrothal." Joining her fortunes to this revolutionary idealist many years her senior, she followed him from land to land in his struggles and now devotes her young widowhood to the fulfilment of his lifelong dreams. Though in manner courteous almost to softness, she has

in her a vein of iron. I saw her hold firmly to her path through every possible family and social pressure. Her friends sought vainly to induce her to desert the revolutionary government of Hankow, even placing at her disposal a Japanese ship for flight, on the theory that she was being held unwillingly. When she made it evident that she remained of her own free will, all the subtle weapons of slander were turned against her, bespattering not only her reputation but Dr. Sun's memory as well. Her best-loved brother, T. V. Soong, on whom she had hitherto relied as revolutionary counsellor, came to Hankow to negotiate a compromise and to beg her to desert the Wuhan Government.

Standing thus utterly alone, with even the most trusted member of her family become an enemy, she never wavered in her devotion to the Revolution as Dr. Sun had envisaged it. She stood by his will for co-operation with communists and for organising workers and peasants; as long as this was Wuhan's position, she would not desert them. But when the timid liberals of Wuhan swung into a militarist reaction, she refused to let the name of Dr. Sun cover such a betrayal. She then left Hankow, giving out a statement of such severe denunciation that it was suppressed throughout the district controlled by Wuhan. Thus she broke with her own party at the end, for the sake of the communists and peasants and workers. She who had seemed in body and character so gentle, proved firmer and more tenacious than any other member of the Nationalist Central Committee.

I remember the garden party which she gave to raise money for the Nationalist Red Cross. It was the first social event in revolutionary Hankow attended by the representatives of foreign governments. Mrs. Sun sensed keenly the latent social frictions.

"So many people who have never spoken to us before," she said to me, "who, even among themselves, are not friends — Germans and French, English and Russians — they suddenly see each other and stiffen." It was a most incisive description of

society in Hankow—a little group of conflicting foreigners facing a Chinese administration which they mutually distrusted. Outside, on the river, were more than a score of gun-boats, ready at a moment's notice to fire on the city. Inside the garden, the representatives of those gun-boats were eating ice-cream and drinking soda-pop with Nationalist officials on behalf of wounded soldiers whom they regarded chiefly as enemies. Over it all presided Mrs. Sun Yat Sen, aware of every social friction, yet by the charm of her personality wringing aid even from the enemies and postponing inevitable collisions, that she might gain a breathing space for the northern advance of the revolutionary armies.

The spokesman to foreigners on behalf of the Wuhan Government was Eugene Chen, Foreign Minister and one of the left-wing leaders. Born, not in China but under British rule in Trinidad, he had received an excellent Anglo-Saxon education, and was far more at home in the English language than the Chinese. He played therefore little part in the shaping of political policies, but was extremely able in announcing them to foreign governments. For this, indeed, he possessed a keenly incisive command of English and a knowledge of English law and literature beyond that of his diplomatic opponents. He also believed in co-operation with communists, and in organising peasants and workers; having come to that belief neither through any Marxist theory nor any personal relation to the toiling masses, but through the intellectual conviction that China's workers and peasants must be satisfied through fundamental changes before a stable government can be possible in the land.

This was, in fact, at the moment, the official programme of the Kuomintang, accepted even by those who later turned against it. Eugene Chen expressed it to me most clearly, in frequent interviews in the Foreign Office.

"China is still mediaeval," he said, "both in organisation and mentality. But this mediaeval structure is breaking up, and there is no longer any stability. The problem is to find new

supports for a new organisation of society so that life may again be stable. These supports must be, first of all, the peasants and the workers. A society based on the satisfaction of these two groups is well-bottomed, since the peasants are the givers of food which even primitive society needs, while the industrial workers sustain all that organised life we call civilisation. These two groups must therefore be secure in their basic needs; and they are not so to-day. Wages in Hankow have not increased for nine years; though the cost of living has doubled or tripled. Yet our methods of production are so mediaeval that to satisfy the just demands of workers would bankrupt much of industry. This is our problem. The workers have seen it: they made demands and the factories closed. The peasants have seen it: they attacked the gentry and the gentry refused them loans for spring planting. Now they starve. The peasants and workers have not the means to finance themselves; they must make alliance with the small bourgeoisie. All must unite and work together against the common enemies, which are feudal militarists and foreign imperialism."

This mild pronouncement, which expressed the official point of view in May 1927 in Hankow, had by no means sufficed the revolutionary fervour of the earlier days of Nationalist victories. A few months previously, when the fire of the mass movements, spreading northward in the wake of victorious armies, was at its height, it had so infected the intellectuals in the Kuomintang that they had outdone peasants and workers in the fierceness of their demands. In those days Sun Fo, the son of Dr. Sun by his first wife and a typical business man of the conservative sort, had shouted: "Kill the gentry." Hsu Chien, elderly Minister of Justice with anarchist tendencies, made flaming speeches before great mass meetings in Hankow more extreme in their demands than those of the communists. Men of this type, however, had already begun to waver and to seek for a path of retreat from their former respectable positions.

They were faced by serious internal problems. Not only had Chiang Kai Shek seceded* and established a government at Nanking, but many minor generals in the heart of the Wuhan territories had declared for Chiang and had begun scattered attacks in various places. While these were in process of being suppressed, a definite military counter-revolution started in the province of Hunan, led by the subordinates of General Tang Sheng Chi. Yet Tang Sheng Chi was the chief general who was still considered loyal to Wuhan. During his absence at the northern front, his subordinate generals, mostly sons of landed gentry, grew impatient over seizures of rice and the setting up of tribunals by peasants, and seized power by force, suppressing peasants' organisations and killing their leaders. These military dictators still declared allegiance to General Tang, who in turn was the leading general of the Wuhan Government. Could Wuhan accept such a tainted allegiance? Would his government abandon its generals or its peasants? Caught between these two forces, it swayed back and forth, and ended a few weeks later in complete reaction. Yet the slogans of the past still survived and were expressed by many who were soon to abandon them. Sun Fo, for instance, outlined to me at this time a definitely socialist programme and told me, with approval, how "of our eight ministries we give two to the communists, the ministries of agriculture and labour, which are their special interests." A moment later he alluded to "this Fall when we reach Peking." At this period in Hankow it still seemed possible to a business man like Sun Fo to satisfy workers and peasants through two ministries, to placate soldiers by some other form of loot, and to advance with a united front to the glorious taking of Peking.

* Though General Chiang had the superior military position, it is correct to speak of his government as a secession since, according to Sun Fo, of the thirty-six members of the Kuomintang Executive Committee, elected at the last Party Congress, twenty-four were actively working with Wuhan, and only six with Chiang Kai Shek, while six were dead or inactive.

Across the street from the Foreign Office was a stone building whose lower floor housed *The People's Tribune*; above were the apartments of Michael Borodin, for four years Russian Adviser to the Nationalist Government. Two young American journalists, William and Rayna Prohme, ran *The People's Tribune* and the allied Nationalist News Agency, their task being to carry on propaganda in the English language on behalf of the Nationalists. More than any other individuals, they are responsible for the despatches to America on which was based the liberal opposition in the United States which prevented armed intervention. They had followed the fortunes of the Nationalists from Peking to Canton and thence to Hankow through four years of labour. Neither of them were Communists, yet both remained with the left wing of Nationalism even after the collapse in Hankow. They kept a left-wing Press alive even after the left wing itself had ceased to function. Then Rayna Prohme went to Moscow and died there, after services to the Chinese Revolution which are well worthy of comparison with those which another American, John Reed, gave to the Russian Revolution.

Michael Borodin, invited four years before by Dr. Sun Yat Sen to come as Adviser to the Kuomintang Party and the Nationalist Government, lived and worked on the floor above *The People's Tribune*. At the side entrance which led to the door of his apartments, were always standing from one to half a dozen automobiles, belonging to officials of the government who had come to consult him. Inside his various rooms, at all hours, day and night, meetings of the Kuomintang or the Communist Party were going on.

To the English-speaking foreign community in Hankow, Borodin was a force almost superhuman, but he was regarded rather as a devil than an angel. "Have you really seen him? What does he look like?" they would whisper. And when they knew that I had met him several times and expected to meet him again, they hardly knew whether to regard me with unusual respect or unusual suspicion. They looked on him as the sole author of

every new decree or document, whether Eugene Chen's notes to foreign governments, or Madame Sun Yat Sen's statement of her reasons for leaving Wuhan. Every move he made was the subject of excited comment. If he even chanced to sleep normally at night, and the light which often burned in his office till three in the morning was darkened, men passing the house after midnight and seeing it in darkness, would spread the word through Hankow that Borodin had "escaped last night in his private aeroplane," which meant of course that the fall of Wuhan was a matter only of hours. Totally unused to expecting any ability in government from the Chinese, and misled by the legend of the "strong man" under which Anglo-Saxon peoples have always envisaged the government of "backward nations," they were unable to see any governmental force anywhere except in Borodin. In this, as far as the actual members of the Wuhan Government were concerned, they were not so far wrong. All of these members were constantly coming to him, not only for the advice which his long experience in many revolutions enabled him to give them, but even more for the strength of revolutionary purpose which he had and which most of them lacked. Among them all, as they swayed and compromised between the power of the mass movements and the power of the militarists, he alone seemed able to mark out a clear path and give reasons for it. His reasons were so sound and based on such broad experience that, for a long time, they held even those members of the Kuo-mintang whose natural interests were against the movement of workers and peasants.

Borodin's importance in the Chinese Revolution lay in his constant, intelligent study of economic forces and social groups in China, interpreted by the light of many past revolutions. I have heard many otherwise well-informed liberals in China assert that the communist purpose, as illustrated in Borodin, was to "plunge China into chaos in the hope that perhaps communism might emerge." I have never heard such a suggestion from any communist and certainly not from Borodin. He considered that

China was already in chaos, torn by civil strife between scores of mediaeval chieftains, all of whom were robbing the masses and reducing the nation's power to withstand foreign intervention. He believed that it was the desire of the "imperialist nations" to see such chaos continue, since it gave them excuse for continued depredations and increased the control which they exercised in the strategic ports. He himself asked always one question: "What social groups in China have courage, coherence and discipline enough to organise a stable government and create a modern nation?" He held that these qualities were to be found in the rapidly organising peasants and workers of China, and that the proper revolutionary tactics was therefore to organise and educate these elements, to the end that they might eventually take power and form a government. At this time it was his view, and the general orthodox communist view, that the existing revolution in China was a "bourgeois-democratic Revolution," i.e., a Revolution to clear China of foreign imperialism and the remnants of feudalism; but that such a Revolution could only be successful through an agrarian Revolution led by workers and including the seizing of land for landless peasants. "Only the inclusion of wide masses of toilers in the struggle," read the resolution passed in May, 1927, by the Communist International, "can create a strength which can overcome the sub-division of China by the imperialists and smash the remnants of feudal relations."

Foreign correspondents coming up-river for a week in "Red Hankow" always asked first for an interview with Borodin and usually received it. They came expecting who knows what sort of bloodthirsty extremist: most of them left with such admiration that their newspapers would hardly publish their reports. The Russian Adviser impressed them by the definiteness of his statements, rare among China's officials; by his broad grasp of the forces that made China; and by the clearness with which he chose a path among them. He impressed them also by the more personal qualities of fearlessness and revolutionary devotion, and

by an intuition which seemed to sense at once the mind of his interviewer and devise some easy approach to it.

Borodin was more or less ill most of the weeks I was in Hankow, with an old fever acquired during his four years in the Chinese tropics, complicated by a broken arm. He would rise from intermittent attacks of fever to take part in meetings or receive interviewers, only to be confined to his bed during some of the most critical periods. He said to me once: "You thought, did you not, that we did a big thing in October, when we made the Revolution in Russia? Well, this Revolution is many times bigger. It is one fourth of all earth's people. It is the biggest thing in the world. It will take long. It will kill more than one Borodin before it is through."

On another occasion Chen Tu Hsiu, secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, was in the room with us, and I had just remarked that, since I came to Russia too late for the Revolution, I had come to China earlier, in order to be on the scene in time. Borodin said with a smile: "Miss Strong is unfortunate in her dates. She came too late to Russia, and now she has come very much too early for China." I did not at the time quite understand. For, in common with the rest of the world and with all except the Kuomintang inner committees, I still thought of Wuhan as revolutionary, not knowing how far the swing towards the right had already carried it.

Later when I already knew something of the struggle that had begun between the feudal militarists and the more modern forces demanding civilian control, I remarked to Borodin that if the civil power stood firm, the military would have to yield. He laughed.

"Did you ever see a rabbit before an anaconda," he said, "trembling, knowing it is going to be devoured, yet fascinated? That's the civil power before the military in Wuhan, staring at the military and trembling." . . . So he had few illusions regarding the courage of the Chinese intellectuals with whom he was working, and who made up the Wuhan Government. But he

was their chief source of steadfastness and revolutionary purpose to the end. One wonders how much the mere fact of his illness shortened the revolutionary period of Wuhan and whether, if he had been able to go to the Chengchow conference for the meeting with Feng Yu Hsiang, he might not have gained a longer breathing spell for the organisation of peasants and workers; might even have changed the type of Feng's alliance for a time long enough to have taken Peking. To reconcile permanently the conflicting forces that made up the Nationalist movement was beyond his power or that of any man; nor was it his desire. For his ultimate allegiance was to the peasants' and workers' Revolution, and only temporarily to the Nationalist united front of China.

Behind all these figures which made up the façade of "Red Hankow," the organised workers and peasants formed the actual "red forces." These organisations, detailed consideration of which will form a large share of this book, spread with terrific rapidity wherever the Nationalist armies passed. Organised illegally, in advance of the armies, they aided the Nationalist advance by strikes and secretly conveyed information. The Shanghai trade unions themselves seized the city from the northern soldiers and delivered it later to the Nationalists. In Central China the peasant unions often led the Nationalist armies by devious routes to fall upon their enemy in the rear and defeat him by surprise. After the victory of the Nationalists in any region, it became the "proper thing" for every worker to join a union; if he failed to do so, he was open to suspicion as a counter-revolutionary, a most unsafe and undesirable status.

Swept thus into the great net of the labour unions were nearly three million workers of all types. There was the most backward unskilled labour drifting in from the villages. There was also highly specialised, highly self-conscious labour which already discussed problems of participation in government. Strike after strike, called in the Hankow district, made demands on employers which were hailed with derisive shouts by foreigners. "Im-

possible," "crazy" were the mildest adjectives used regarding these demands of the workers. The demands in fact, usually comprised the entire labour code of the Soviet Union, including vacations with pay, social insurance, eight-hour day, wage increases, hospital care, workers' clubs. In every case which came to my notice, however, the workers who made these demands were willing to keep on working if they received a wage increase of a dollar or two per month, and recognition of their union. The demands were propaganda; an effective way of acquainting the workers with the ultimate programme which lay before them.

Extremely backward were many of these workers, and very crude was the unionism devised to meet them. I recall, for instance, the workers on the dyke near Hankow, where the walking delegate, representing the trade union, seemed more interested in achieving production than in meeting the workers' desires. He boasted in my presence of his purpose to prevent a certain holiday and used, among his arguments, all inducements from appeals to revolutionary loyalty to threats of flogging. Crude, tyrannical, yet the system he replaced had been cruder and more tyrannical still. The union, at least, had more than doubled the pay of the workers and was educating them nightly for a more democratic use of their rights. The walking delegate himself, who boasted of his power to arrest any man on the dyke, became most humble when approached by any "labour committee," since it was his chief joy and function to form and incite such committees and thus prepare the way for the submergence of his own autocratic power.

Far more advanced than these primitive dyke-workers were the metal workers in the Hanyang arsenal. I attended a reception which they gave to visiting labour delegates from Russia. They wished to ask the Russians certain perplexing questions which they said were the subject of much debate among them.

"During your Revolution," they asked, "what attitude did you take towards sabotage in government industries? Did you encourage it, or punish it, or tolerate it?" . . . "During your

Revolution, when did the metal workers begin to get any benefit? Did they benefit as soon as the exploiters were overthrown, or did they have to suffer long and make many sacrifices before the Revolution was finally established and could give them benefits?" Such were the fundamental questions they were discussing in Hanyang—the workers themselves taking a conscious part in developing a government.

Many were the sacrifices they were already making for their revolutionary government. They gave up their demand for an eight-hour day to work thirteen to seventeen hours in the arsenal "because our revolutionary government is menaced." They postponed the demand for a child labour law; I myself saw children of seven and eight working ten hours in Wuchang cotton mills and was told by union organisers, "Wuhan is blockaded; we must not attack production and especially foreign-owned production." They had reason to sacrifice for Wuhan, for elsewhere their situation was far more serious. In Shanghai, Canton, and Hunan workers were being executed. In Wuhan, they still had the chance to raise their heads and argue a little. They were grateful for this meagre privilege.

Meantime the forces were gathering which would take even this advantage from them. They were gathering even from the success of Wuhan's armies, which, in their northern drive, were beating back their enemies and effecting a junction with other Nationalist forces, the People's Armies of Marshal Feng in the north-west. A conference between these two groups was called to effect military and political union. The Military and Political Councils of Wuhan were to go north by special train to consolidate their victories. The result of that conference was to be the defeat of the Revolution and the betrayal of the hopes of the workers and peasants who had given to Wuhan the victory.

CHAPTER IV INTO THE WAR ZONE

CANNED asparagus, iced soda-pop, Sunkist oranges from California, Cailler's chocolates from France—such were the evidences of our "hardships" on the military train going north from Hankow. Yet we were in the depths of Central China crossing a war-torn region. Behind us in Hankow lay fourteen thousand wounded, flooding the hospitals and overflowing into cafés and warehouses hastily commandeered by the Red Cross Committee under Mrs. Sun Yat Sen. I had seen them lying on bare boards and bare earth—Canton boys, and boys from Hunan and Hupeh who, at the battle of Lingying, went up against the flower of Chang Tso Lin's regiments—boys who, though beaten by superior artillery, conquered in the end because they did not know that they were beaten. Thousands more of these boys from the Iron Army of Kwangtung were lying now, we knew, somewhere in the great plains on either side of our train. Yet over the rice fields and wheat lands, bought, scarcely a week before, at such cost, the government military train from Hankow was already passing, equipped with every comfort for the traveller.

It was an historic trip. After a year of advances towards each other, the southern and northern Nationalists were to meet. With the taking of Chengchow, a junction point where the Peking-Hankow railroad is crossed by a line running east and west, the north-west armies of Marshal Feng and the Cantonese armies from the south had been united. Separated by thousands of miles, these two forces, acting according to a common military

plan, moving towards each other from the utmost extremes of China, had met at last after battles and victories unknown before in Chinese history.

The great trek of Feng Yu Hsiang through the north-west provinces, after his defeat near Peking, might itself take rank among the famous forced marches of history. Retreating from Nankow Pass far into the deserts of Mongolia, his army used up their food and wore out their uniforms and shoes. They even lacked water, for the scanty desert wells, which barely suffice for the sparse population of natives, were exhausted by the passing of thousands of men. Hungry, cold, thirsty, they gathered themselves into Kansu in the far north-west of China, and there reorganised and began anew. Sweeping south into Shensi, they lifted the siege of historic Sian-Fu, where the people were dying of starvation. After many months, with numbers increased by tens of thousands of local troops, and with splendid Mohammedan cavalry from Kansu and Mongolia, they arrived near the western end of the railroad which runs through Chengchow, and there waited until the coming of the Cantonese should open the way for them.

Meantime for a year the troops of Canton swept northward. Having first consolidated their own province, Kwangtung, they passed over the mountain passes into Honan. There they received the addition of a hundred thousand Hunanese soldiers—fiery fighters but none too well disciplined—under General Tang Sheng Chi. Inspired by Nationalist propaganda, these troops displayed qualities never before seen in Chinese warfare. The Fourth Cantonese Army, especially, became known as the Iron Army, and such was its reputation that, although it lost heavily in battle, its numbers were constantly augmented by the peasants and workers and students who joined it; until, at last, it was large enough to divide into two armies, the Fourth and Eleventh. It was said of these men that "even when their officers are killed, the men will fight on," which could be said of no other troops in China. They had beaten back the troops of Wu Pei Fu,

leaving thousands of their dead on the field, but without making any overtures to or receiving any from them. In this again they departed from the usual customs of Chinese warfare, where the lesser armed force either deserts to the larger, or attempts to strengthen itself by buying the other troops. They had taken southern China to the Yangtze and had still advanced northward up the Hankow-Peking railway, towards its junction with the Lung Hai line, which led west to Feng and east towards the sea. To reach that junction they had yet to reckon with the best troops of Chang Tso Lin, who advanced against them with British tanks and French aeroplanes, neither of which, however, did he know how to use. Accustomed only to the hills and rice paddies of the south and unaccustomed to fighting in open country such as the wheat fields of Honan, the wiry soldiers from Canton beat back the tall well-armed fighters from the north by sheer daring, unexpected night attacks, and reckless advances against artillery. Thus they opened the way into Loyang and Chengchow for the waiting armies of Feng, who joined them there at the railway junction.

But the union of ideas had not yet taken place. Conference across these great open spaces had been impossible. It was yet uncertain how far Feng agreed with Hankow on problems which were growing steadily more acute, problems of peasants against landlords, of workers against merchants, of military power against civil power. Therefore, as soon as the armies had cleared the railways, the Military and Political Councils of Hankow moved on to Chengchow for conference with Feng to settle questions of military and political tactics.

It was in this special train that I received permission to go to the war zone, to see the Nationalist armies on their march to Peking. Rayna Prohme, correspondent of the Nationalist News Agency, and myself were the only foreigners on board. We shared a four-berth compartment over which was written in Chinese "Western Women's Bedroom." All other compartments were occupied by high dignitaries and their secretaries. We took

with us, according to Chinese custom, Rayna's house servant Li, to serve as "travel-boy" in charge of our baggage. He slept happily on our suitcases in the aisles, made our beds, brought us tea and hot water; and grinned from ear to ear at the excitement of seeing the big generals of whom previously he had only heard.

On the station platform of Hankow a great crowd gathered to bid us farewell, dressed in a medley of Chinese and European costume. Most beautifully arrayed of all was Foreign Minister Eugene Chen, in a Chinese robe of classic style made of heavy dull cream silk. "I have brought you a few things you might not think to get," he said pleasantly, and bestowed upon us a large electric flash-light, a fan, a well-filled canteen with cups, and a bag of copper coins for small purchases. He was right; we suddenly recognised these things as forgotten necessities. . . . Some day, perhaps, in a more happily organised world, all foreign ministers will be expected to exhibit such constant kindness to foreigners instead of standing aloof to represent the dignity of their nations.

Sun Fo, the son of Dr. Sun Yat Sen by his first wife, and as Minister of Communications the chief of our transport, was a smiling, rotund man, in European business dress, with an armband of black in token of mourning for his father. Hsu Chien, Minister of Justice, who, according to words but not deeds, was the wildest radical of all, was a tired-looking elderly man in a crumpled grey uniform, wearing eye-glasses. Mrs. Wang Ching Wei, in a lilac Chinese gown, short and self-satisfied of countenance, the reactionary daughter of a comprador family, was at the station to see off her husband, who, as president of the Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, was perhaps the most important civilian on the train. He himself, in grey business suit with white shirt open at the throat, looked like a university athlete rather than a forty-two year old politician. General Galen, the Russian Military Adviser, took the compartment next to ours; he travelled in plain khaki without armbands or any special decorations — a "hobo summer suit," said an American at the station.

Suddenly the bugles blew a military fanfare. General Tan Yen Kai, son of a viceroy and now one of the heads of the Military Council, dressed in a shapeless Chinese robe, marched across the platform to the train. It was for him that our train had been long waiting, for now a bustle of sounds and movements betokened quick departure. Mrs. Sun Yat Sen had already given us a box of chocolates. Mrs. Sun Fo presented us with canned peaches and tea biscuits. We pulled out of the station amid the courtesies of a farewell celebration which hardly indicated the sternness of a military and political mission bound for battlefield and decisive conference.

Yet three hundred soldiers from the Eighth Army of Hunan occupied the cars before and behind us as protection against any stray bands of the broken enemy who might have turned bandit and fled to the hills. Three hundred were considered more than ample, so utterly destroyed was the enemy. Certainly more would have been taken if there had been the slightest danger, for on our train were nearly all the leaders of the Hankow Government. There were left behind only Mrs. Sun—since it was felt that a woman's presence was not desirable at a military conference in conservative Honan, and Russian Adviser Borodin, who lay ill with a broken arm and fever—the only two, as we learned afterwards, who would have spoken for the rights of the masses against the will of the generals and might have forced the conference to a different conclusion.

All the evening we jogged a slow way over hastily repaired tracks through peasant lands and villages. The pale, yellow-green of rice terraces gleamed in the setting sun, as if there had never been a war. Peasants, in blue denim trousers, with bare, browned skin from the waist up, lounged at evening in the doorways of huts or carried balanced waterbuckets along the roads. During occasional long stops we mingled in the jostling marketplace near the stations, stared at because of our foreign costumes and white skins, but not molested. Only in the night was I reminded that all was not peace in the land. Once when I walked

through the aisles of the car I saw that at half the windows stood soldiers, leaning on the open window sills, asleep on their feet, their gleaming bayonets swaying gently with the motion of the train. By accident I was jostled against one of these statues; he grunted a bit resentfully and woke, moved to let me pass, and sank at once to slumber again. In his half-drugged awaking he was again the peaceful peasant lad of the Hunan plains, accepting life's discomforts with a fatalism not easily resentful.

Next morning at five o'clock reveillé sounded for the three hundred soldiers of our bodyguard and, by midday, we began to meet other soldiers and signs of war. We drew into a station in the wake of a terrific clatter that seemed to my inexperience to betoken machine-guns. Welcoming firecrackers, thousands of them, were being exploded in our honour from the ends of long bamboo poles. Our high officials went into the station for a conference with the local commanding officer. We learned that these soldiers were recent "deserters" who had come over to the Nationalists with their division commander. The polite reason given by their officer for his conversion was that he saw with what friendliness the populace received the southern soldiers and knew he could not stand against such heroes, "whom even the women welcome with tea in the market-place." He was "sacrificing everything," he said, to join the Nationalists. "Everything" turned out to be his wife and family, held as hostages by his overlord, Chang Tso Lin, against just such desertion, and likely to be executed now in Mukden. But at least he was saving his own skin by his new allegiance. Two of his fellow commanders, who had fled north defeated, had been promptly executed for their cowardice. He wished to escape that fate, even at the price of losing his family—such, it was rumoured, was the real reason for his desertion.

Such new additions were the constant problem of the Nationalists, for they added to the ranks many undesirable elements.

But to refuse these deserters was not easy. Our train passed, for instance, the walled town of Siping, where several thousand enemy troops were still besieged, negotiating for surrender. The Nationalists wanted the enemy to give up their arms and go home — terms which would have seemed merciful to any European army. But the besieged Chinese cried out against such cruelty. To give up their arms was to lose their tools of trade, to become masterless men without the possibility of living. They demanded to be taken over intact into the victorious army. Soldiers by trade, they were ready to fight for anyone, but preferably for the victors.

Could men like this be drilled by a few weeks propaganda into conscious Nationalists, reliable for the Revolution? Yet if the Nationalists refused them, what alternative was there? Either to support them as prisoners, which was clearly impossible, or to kill them all, or turn them loose as bandits. One Nationalist general, after such a victory, gave each enemy soldier two dollars and told him to use it to take him home. But usually they were taken in to swell and subtly corrupt the ranks of the victors.

Suddenly we drew up beside a train-load of soldiers different from any I had seen, cheerful, lively, with keen, intelligent faces. Swarming over the roofs and floors of box-cars or lying in the blazing sun on the flat cars, they aroused and began to talk with us. Two of them aired some words of English. "Where you go? You go Chengchow?" they said with pride. A boy in a white, soiled blouse with a gallant smile which hardly disguised marks of much suffering, leaned over the edge of a car and displayed an old wrist-watch on his hand. Among soldiers who had hardly sufficient shoes, this drew my attention at once.

"Student-Changsha" he repeated proudly in English. "Student-Changsha." He had joined the army in its march northwards from Changsha, university town and capital of "Red Hunan," where the Revolution had been hottest. He told off for us the provinces of the other soldiers: "Hunan, Hupeh, Kwangtung, Kwangtung, Kwangtung." They smiled and chattered at us in words we could not understand. But we saw on the few armbands

which had survived the stress of many battles the figures 11A. Then we knew that this was part of the famous Eleventh Army, grown out of the Fourth Army and forming with it the spear-head of the drive north. Eleven months ago they had left their homes in Canton, well drilled in military tactics and political loyalty. For eleven months they had marched north, fighting their way and filling their broken ranks with new recruits from the provinces they passed. They had been diluted many times, but much of the old spirit still remained. Half the wounded men brought back to Hankow after the recent battles had been men of the Fourth and Eleventh Armies.

After a second night in the train we came to a broken bridge, blown up by the northerners in their retreat. Our bodyguard of three hundred Hunanese poured jauntily out of the train and ran down the railway embankment, moving swiftly along the dusty footpaths to the river. Our travel-boy, Li, began bargaining with three carrying coolies to cart our suitcases, camp-beds, and typewriters over the three or four miles we had to walk to the next train. Then he set off proudly in charge of three newly acquired employees, for the first time in his life a master.

A long steep trail down the hillside to the river was thronged with soldiers and carrying coolies. At the foot was a temporary wooden bridge swaying over two shallow creeks. It was impossible to keep together in the crowds; and so, as individuals, we slipped, slid, and dodged under coolie loads and between bayonets. Soon I was lost completely in the midst of moving soldiers, not one of whom could understand a word I might say.

This was that part of Central China from which all English and Americans had fled on consuls' orders. These were those very soldiers who were reputedly anti-foreign. Yet, lost in the midst of them, quite alone, I was aware of no fear. The railroad embankment was visible under the overhanging dust-cloud; I had only to keep moving forward. The soldiers went past oblivious of me, or with chatter and grins about the unexpected apparition of a foreign woman. Occasionally an officer passed, riding his

horse through the dust. Each one saluted, knowing that I must be connected with the newly arrived military train from Hankow. After an hour I came upon our travel-boy, Li. His gang of three coolies had struck, declaring that they would not walk the forty miles to Chengchow, and he was soothing them with purchases of cucumbers to refresh their dusty throats and with promises of a speedy train.

A station at last, set in a dusty field! And around it, dozens of utterly naked little boys peddling tea and hot water from great tin pots. Soon others of our party arrived. Some had been more fortunate than I. Hsu Chien, the elderly Minister of Justice, had rented a small donkey and rode up with his long legs almost reaching the ground. Sun Fo, Minister of Communications, appeared on a hand car. We drew up for tea under such shade as we could find, sitting on our baggage, while the Political Commissar for the Thirty-sixth Army gave us the news of the front.

Hsia was his name. As a Peking student he had taken part in the patriotic demonstration against the Japanese "twenty-one demands," and had thus helped to overthrow a cabinet. Later he went to Germany "to study political economy," not in any school but by working in German factories and trade unions. He spoke of Willi Münzenberg and others whom I had known in Berlin. This led me to ask if he himself were a Communist, and I shall not soon forget the low but firm tone in which he answered in German: "Ja wohl." At that period, most of the best political instructors in the army were members not only of the Kuomintang but of the Communist Party. But already such membership was not mentioned in public.

He told us of political work in the army. "In peace time," he said, "we hold classes for reading and civics among the soldiers. I have under me one hundred political workers in the Thirty-sixth Army, one for every hundred soldiers. During the actual fighting, we also fight at the front, and strengthen the soldiers' morale. On the northward march we work not only among the soldiers but among the masses of people, persuading them to bring tea and hot

water, and to care for our wounded. We organise peasant meetings and explain the programme of the Kuomintang. We leave behind us, if possible, peasants' and workers' organisations under their own civilian leadership."

After an hour's conference, the new train arrived which was to take us to Chengchow. It was much cruder than our splendidly comfortable special train from Hankow. There was no more ice for our soda-pop. Soldiers were riding on roofs and clinging to the locomotives. The terraced rice fields of Hupeh had long since given place to the great wheat field of Honan, the central plain of China. Already, in early June, they were reaping the wheat harvest which would at once be followed by a planting of beans. Two harvests a year is the Chinese rule, so warm is their climate. But in spite of this double work and double harvest, the peasant starves under the requisitions of soldiers. The wheat harvest we saw was remarkably good and quite unaffected by the storm of battle which had just passed over the country. Only in one place, for a few miles along the railroad, we saw a track some fifty feet wide of trodden grain where fleeing Fengtien troops had beaten down the wheat. Otherwise the patient peasant life went on as before, troubled by armies but speedily readjusting itself. Still the same blue denim figures of men bending in the field, naked from the waist up, and of little boys, often entirely naked, working in the furrows. Girls also we saw and women, but these were always fully clothed, even down to the tiny bound feet which mark the women of this region. But whereas in the rice fields we had seen no beasts of burden, now we saw an occasional donkey or ox, drawing a primitive cart with solid wooden wheels.

Presently a general from Feng Yu Hsiang came down the railroad to meet us, first sign of co-operation between the People's Armies of the north-west and south. As we drew into Chengchow, a deafening roar of firecrackers blended with the welcome of many bugles. Yard after yard of the station was lined with soldiers drawn up in salute. Evidently by design, a battalion of southerners alternated with a battalion of "our northerners": not the

northern armies of Fengtien which were in retreat towards Peking, but the newly arrived People's Armies of the north-west under Marshal Feng. Already the common folks were speaking of north and south as meeting, and hoping from this for a unified China and a cessation of civil strife. We poured out of the station between soldiers of the north and south together, all saluting, all smiling, all allies who, after a year's campaigning towards each other, had met at last as agreed on the central plain of Honan.

CHAPTER V THE GENERALS MEET IN CHENGCHOW

CHENGCHOW was a typical Chinese city under the shadow of civil war, a condition which was also typical. No one knew whether it had one hundred or two hundred thousand inhabitants, for no accurate census had ever been taken. Everyone said the population was now increased by eighty thousand troops, but I doubt if these had been properly counted either. Statistics are not China's strong point, either in armies or cities.

As in the country districts the ancient peasant life of China still persisted, troubled by the passing of armies but readjusting itself with infinite patience, so here in Chengchow the ancient mercantile life of the Chinese city persisted, troubled but patiently adjusting itself. Rickshaw coolies shouted for trade when we emerged from the buildings where we were quartered. In old markets, at early morning, the mats on the ground were covered with fresh green produce. Men and naked boys lounged, chattered, and performed all the functions of life in the streets, while women walked modestly with the bound feet, blue trousers, and long blue tunics of Central China.

War affected Chengchow chiefly in two ways — the commandeering of houses and the floods of paper money. To the civilian inhabitants these two ways possibly reduced to one — the exhausting of economic resources by the presence of eighty thousand good-natured but hungry and penniless males in their midst. The soldiers were obviously obedient unaggressive peasant boys. Except under excitement, and we ourselves saw no such occasions, they indulged in comparatively few deeds of violence. They were

endlessly marching out of or into some headquarters or other, or standing patiently at attention for hours along the street at posts of duty, uncomfortably rigid, with rifle firmly gripped and bayonet pointing upward. If, in the press of the crowds, I chanced to stumble against one of them, he moved politely and apologetically out of the way.

But even the least aggressive soldiers require a roof for shelter when they are quartered in cities. Sleeping humbly in long rows as coolies are accustomed to do, they nevertheless filled with their eighty thousand the primary schools, district schools, halls and courts of temples, churches, banks, warehouses, foreign missionary premises, and any empty building of any kind whatever. And wherever they were quartered, the furniture was ruined.

Such was the chief trouble of the Catholic Fathers, in whose mission Rayna and I were quartered for our first night in Chengchow. We were sent to our temporary home with the cheering information that "these are very good missionaries, so sympathetic with the Nationalists that they invited our general to lodge with them." The mission proved to be a beautiful stone structure built around a spacious green court, an unusual breathing space in the crowded city. On the stone pavements of the court were piles of soldiers' baggage, and a few dozen soldiers were passing in and out. The black-robed Fathers, strolling slowly along the arched corridors which flanked the court, looked anything but happy, and I asked them, speaking French since they came from the Latin countries of Europe, if it was true that they had invited the general to stay there.

"Look you," they said, "it is war. It is terrible; what will you? See, in war it is better to have one big general in your house than to have half a dozen little officers fighting for place in your courts. Our general arranges for us all the permits we need in a war zone." They were canny realists; they adapted themselves to life as it existed. They told me also, gratefully, that the soldiers were "good boys," not rough nor unseemly. "But our lamp chimneys are all broken, and our walls full of nails, and our pans all black-

ened, and there is candle grease on all our furniture." The reverend fathers, because they endured these discomforts without protest, had won a reputation all over Chengchow for friendliness.

Far more serious to the local merchants than the housing crisis produced by the soldiers was the financial crisis produced by the new paper money. Besides all the various forms of fluctuating coinage which have always cursed China, three sorts of new paper money had been current in Chengchow to the ruin of the local shopkeepers. There came first the feng-piao, forced upon them by the northern troops of Chang Tso Lin, issued by the engraving plants of Mukden without backing, and almost worthless even inside Chang's own territory. It was rumoured, indeed, that serious friction had developed between Japan and Chang Tso Lin because he had ruined countless Japanese merchants in Manchuria with his feng-piao. Peking shops had also been flooded with it for a year, the merchants in the native city having been compelled by force of arms to accept it until they hid their better class wares or closed down completely. After Chang Tso Lin was driven from Chengchow, his paper money lost even the slight fictitious value there that it had once possessed.

Two other forms of paper money now came to annoy the merchants: the printed notes of Feng Yu Hsiang — not lithographed but merely turned out by a printing press and not even looking like money — and the Central Bank notes of the Hankow Government. Feng's money had at first no guarantee whatever but the word of Feng, but it began to acquire some value when it was taken as payment of taxes levied by Feng, and still more when the railway passed into Feng's hands and his money was accepted for tickets whenever civilian travelling was permitted. The Central Bank notes had a certain amount of silver behind them, possibly more silver than other bank notes in China which were better known and accepted; but how was any Chengchow merchant to know or believe it? It was all paper to him and utterly undesired.

Nevertheless the shops of Chengchow accepted this paper money. They had to! They were so cowed by long experience of

the dominant military that they accepted it even when our humble travel-boy, Li, presented it. But they never gave "good money" in change. They gave their goods, putting the prices up very far in the hopeful gamble that perhaps after all this money might be exchangeable for something, and they gave change in similar paper money. But not in silver or copper; for this they demanded silver first. This silver went somewhere back in the shop to be safely hidden. And no doubt the most valuable part of their goods was also hidden. They would, however, give Feng's printed notes in exchange for notes from Hankow, or vice versa; thus on the financial field also was the new alliance recognised.

Even under these handicaps trade went on in Chengchow as it went on in the Middle Ages of Europe under similar unpredictable extortions, or in the Europe of the World War under more modern depreciation. I stepped into shops of textiles, shoes, and food and found the shelves not entirely empty, though prices were very high. The Chinese merchant of these little inland cities must live somehow and, to live, he must function; like the peasant he had adapted himself to many such periods and somewhat painfully survived. But we realised what almost incredible relief would follow so simple a matter as a stable coinage, or the opening of the channels of trade so that wheat might pass out to the Yangtze and goods return in payment. Such a reopening was what the merchants of Chengchow hoped from our conference. To them any alliance such as that between Feng and Hankow was a blessing, since it promised that some time, when the railways were repaired and cleared of soldiers, the passage of goods might again begin. Any other alliance, whether with Chiang Kai Shek or with Chang Tso Lin, would have been equally welcome, if only it expanded the territory over which fighting and banditry ceased and trade became possible.

The most noticeable persons in Chengchow on this occasion were not, however, the merchants, or any civilian authorities, but the generals. There were scores of these, and always new ones were arriving to be present at the great conference. There were the

generals of Feng, important personages in themselves, and semi-independent potentates, since any of them might desert Feng's leadership. They were held together, not by any permanently recognised government, but by a new, thin cement of Nationalism which, to most of them, was merely a polite name for an alliance which they found mutually profitable. There was Chang Fa Kwei, general of the Iron Armies from Canton, and believed at this time to be more politically conscious than any other general, since he was young enough to have been influenced by the political training of the Kuomintang rather than by the feudal traditions of his elders.

There was also General Tang Sheng Chi, our own militarist from Hunan, who had at this time quite a reputation as a radical. It was said on good authority that he had applied for membership in the Communist Party, so impressed had he been by the great power latent in the organisations of workers and peasants, through which he had thought to find his own pathway to greatness. But now his subordinate generals in Hunan, his chief province, had made a military *coup d'état* and were killing workers and peasants, while he was at the front moving towards Peking. It was not yet certain how much he could control those generals in far-away Hunan, nor was it even certain how much he wished to control them. This would depend on where he saw his chief advantage. He was commander over Chang Fa Kwei and yet, on account of the feudal tradition of independent generalship, not entirely able to command him. He was presumably the servant of the Wuhan Government, but actually he was rapidly becoming the master of that government.

Feng himself arrived in Chengchow after we did, perhaps by chance, or perhaps from some consideration of proper prestige difficult for foreigners to understand. Thus he was met at the station by all the dignitaries of the conference, who had themselves been met only by Feng's subordinate. He alighted with ostentatious simplicity from a freight car, which his publicity representative told me he had taken "since my brother soldiers also travel in

freight cars. . . ." A long time afterwards I heard that Feng had entered the freight car at the last station before Chengchow, having travelled thus far in a comfortable private car on the same train. Yet Feng's simplicity, while a conscious pose, was more than a mere pose; it was a useful military tactic. He enforced a rule in Chengchow that no banquets should be given, costing more than a Chinese dollar a plate, thus eliminating the waste of time and money usually spent by official Chinese in feasting. This saving of money could be more politely covered by a reputation for simplicity than by penuriousness.

Feng himself prized power and organisation more than the luxuries of cities. He knew well that his soldiers bore hardships with less grumbling, if their officers also endured hardships. His discipline was better than that of the southerners; there was a touch of Prussianism about it; his men stood straight and saluted snappily. But though they endured incredible hardships with stoicism, they lacked the fire of the southerners which had swept across eight provinces. They took no risks for a desperate chance of victory. This was not in Feng's eyes a handicap, for he had so trained them. In his eyes a soldier was not a revolutionist, whose job was to risk life for the Revolution, but rather a personal retainer, a road builder, a tree planter. The more of these soldiers he had, the greater he was, for he could build more roads, plant more trees, control more territory. Thus he prized the lives of his soldiers almost more than victory. Certainly he would not risk them except for sure and substantial gains in territory, which meant new soldiers and new lives at his disposal. Meantime he was shrewd in his alliances, and especially in letting his allies bear the brunt of his victories. He had gained Chengchow at the cost of the Cantonese and, if he found their strength exhausted, he hoped to gain Peking by battles in which the losses would fall chiefly on Chiang Kai Shek or Governor Yen of Shansi. Through such tactics he had earned a wide reputation for untrustworthiness as an ally, but no one denied that his troops were well disciplined and his territories reasonably well controlled. He was feudal in

outlook, and saw no harm in absorbing as many allies as possible: Christians, Bolsheviks, peasants and generals. He announced for peasants a benevolent paternalism, but had no intention of letting them dictate to him. He had, moreover, a desire for modern technique in battle and hence a keen appreciation of Russian military advisers. Among all these conflicting elements he bargained shrewdly.

I met and talked with several of Feng's generals. Among others was Chang Chih Chang, whom I had met a year before as commander in Kalgan. He still remained one of the few Fundamentalist Christians in Feng's armies, attributing to the direct will of God the wonderful harvests of Shensi "sent to help our revolutionary armies." He related as a providential miracle Feng's accidental meeting in the wilds of Mongolia with a delegation which had gone to seek him, "when both took the wrong way and by God's will were brought together in an unexpected place." He declared that "Christianity is the true revolution, of which Marx and Lenin give us only the economic part. God says in the Bible that he will raise up the lowly and bring down the high; is not that revolution?"

General Chang discussed with me at length the troubles which Christianity had encountered in Feng's army, and the discussions which had raged among Feng's generals about Christianity and imperialism. "The British police who shoot Chinese in Shanghai and who invade our country — are they Christians? Or maybe they are not Christians themselves but wish us to be Christians, so that we will love our enemies and turn the other cheek when they strike us. Christianity is a 'dope' to make us stupefied and humble while they rob us."

Such was the intellectual content of the discussions through which most of Feng's generals recanted their former Christianity. Their actual reasons were probably simpler; they adopted Christianity in order to stand well with Feng, and dropped it later for the same reason. Feng himself doubtless once saw in Christianity, and especially in the club organisation of the Y.M.C.A., a means

of encouraging simple, moral living and physical training among his soldiers, while giving them at the same time entertainment, discipline, and that morale which comes from common clubs and sports. Later, he found in the Kuomintang propaganda the same useful tool with certain advantages over Christianity, and adopted it as a more modern method until he found it stirred up too much initiative among the peasants. But both Feng's former Christian chaplains and his later Kuomintang propagandists, were chosen by Feng and organised under his orders; they served the army, the army did not serve the propaganda. Now, having found both these forms of propaganda incompletely obedient, he was starting a school for training his own propagandists.

There was also the general — his name we never inquired — who arrived on the second day of our stay in Chengchow and turned Rayna and me out of our room in the Catholic Mission, requisitioning it for some part of his own force. Thereupon we were moved to the China Bank with all the Hankow dignitaries; a move which suited us very well, since our little room off the court, though airless and hot and less comfortable than the Catholic Mission, was, after all, in the very midst of the discussions. These went on about us day and night — sometimes a session of the Military Council, sometimes of the Political Council, both comprising almost the same people. They were discussing the government of the various provinces under Feng, the reorganisation of armies, the plan of march towards Peking. From time to time we were admitted to the lunch table at which gathered all the notables, Feng sitting at the head of the table as host, with Tang Sheng Chi and Tang Yen Kai beside him, and we ourselves not far away between Sun Fo and Hsu Chien. At such luncheons we noticed that the traditions of Chinese luncheons differ from American; they avoid all business discussion. Feng and the other generals chatted cheerfully about the number of flies between Mongolia and Kansu, rather than about any of the important questions on which China and the world awaited their decision.

Behind the scenes, however, went on discussion and intrigues of various interests, carefully hidden from us and learned only much later. On one point all were secretly agreed; they had decided that the workers and peasants and communists must be suppressed. Even the Wuhan Government had decided this. Feng had decided to "control" the peasants' organisations in the interest of his army, and they wished to throw on Feng the blame for the change. They would lose much "face," if they themselves openly and immediately went against the workers and peasants who had given them the power in Central China.

Except for this agreement, their plans were different, and each of them wished to use the other. Feng wished to take Peking, as the leader of the united armies of the Nationalists. He wanted to combine both Chiang Kai Shek of Nanking, and General Tang of Wuhan under his all-embracing banner. He did not feel himself strong enough to take the North without them. He hoped to use both Wuhan and Nanking, without submitting essentially to either.

General Tang, however, and others of the Wuhan Government, were anxious to conquer Nanking and consolidate their power south of the Yangtze, before moving on Peking. General Tang wished this on account of his personal hate for and rivalry with Chiang Kai Shek. Wang Ching Wei and some of the other politicians of Wuhan wished it because Chiang Kai Shek had defied their authority for more than a year and, more especially, because Chiang had expelled Wang Ching Wei from Canton the year before. They wished to use the forces of Feng Yu Hsiang in a united drive against Nanking.

Wuhan indeed was in a difficult case. Their party government was rapidly becoming powerless, and did not wish to admit it. Their troops had been left in the control of local generals, who were beginning in various districts to disobey party orders. Their most revolutionary soldiers, the Cantonese, had suffered terrible losses in the fighting. They felt embarrassed by the revolutionary demands of these masses from whom, formerly, they had drawn

their strength. Nor had they any financial power, for there was a financial crisis in Hankow.

It was in such condition that the Wuhan Government came to the Conference of Chengchow. It had one weapon only—the moral and political prestige of the Kuomintang and of its past revolutionary achievements. But it threw away that weapon. A courageous leader might have made use of it. Borodin said later to me in Hankow: "Had the party leaders come to Chengchow with courage, glorying in the strength of the massed workers and peasants behind them, demanding the submission of General Feng to party control, and threatening him with the hatred of the mass movement if he did not submit, it is perhaps possible that they might have prevailed, for Feng was hemmed in between Wuhan and Russia. But they came with apologies and complaints against the mass movements, and with pleas for assistance. Feng saw that they were of no use to him, either as friends or enemies. He was only confirmed in his intention to seek alliance with Chiang Kai Shek."

General Tang Sheng Chi, meantime, became aware that he could expect no hope from Feng in a war on Nanking. He saw that his troops in far-away Hunan, on whom his power was based, would belong not to him but to his subordinate generals unless he made a quick move to the right in politics. He saw that even the Kuomintang politicians no longer supported the workers' and peasants' movements. He had no interest whatever in fighting to take Peking for Feng Yu Hsiang. So he said no word at the conference, but quietly began moving his armies again, without even waiting till the conference should close.

Such were the conflicting groups in the Chengchow conference, united only on one thing—rejection of workers' and peasants' movements. But their mutual disagreements were covered by words of politeness, as is the Chinese custom. None of us who were onlookers, and none of the workers and peasants and students who waited in Hankow, knew that Wuhan was failing—

that their chosen delegates were betraying them and getting not even a military alliance in return.

One evening during the conference three of us went for a stroll through the walled city of Chengchow, an ancient town long since outgrown by the comparatively new city along the railway. Unforgettably lovely moonlight shone on the great wall towering above us, on the formidable ancient gates of the city, and on the dusty chaos of streets and dwellings within them. Here and there in a belated shop, whose open front made it almost part of the roadway, a merchant sat invitingly, smoking a long pipe. But most of the shutters were shut—ancient shutters with many cracks through which shone the candlelight of the life behind them.

We were seeking one of the scores of generals lodged somewhere in the city. Our only method of search was to stop at every house in front of which we saw soldiers standing at attention—and these included all pretentious halls and buildings—and make inquiries. Since no soldier knew the whereabouts of any but his own general, this was time-consuming. We found soldiers of the Thirty-Fifth and Thirty-Sixth Armies of General Tang, soldiers of the many armies of Feng, generals without number, but not the general we were looking for. We found, however, great, wonderful trees springing raggedly out of the midst of the streets and houseyards; picturesque temples, shadowed pagodas. Under them all we found people—people and yet more people. Curled against the houses, chattering, sleeping, resting, building little fires under the shadow of walls to cook something or merely for idle amusement—everywhere, as always, the life in the dust went on.

Lost many times, we came at last to a city gate, to find it closed for the night. The word of our interpreter induced the sentry to open it. In panic at being shut in, we emerged rapidly without looking, and found ourselves on the other side of the walled city in a great torn plain. We dropped swiftly down past the evil-smelling dregs of what was once a moat, and discovered our-

selves utterly alone beneath the brilliant moon, under a vast wall sweeping along the hill-tops against the stars. It seemed in the night unnaturally high—it might have been the Great Wall of China—and around it the wilds of the north-west, with rough roads, many gullies, and a landscape fit for bandits. It was open, torn land, in the midst of war, and yet it seemed changelessly at peace.

We made our way slowly around the walled city till we came to belated rickshaws and the teeming life of the town. Withdrawing to our little room on the Court of the China Bank, we found it still uncomfortably hot. Outside, on the flagstones and between the potted plants of the courtyard, lay the inert forms of a dozen soldiers, bodyguards of some of our dignitaries, who had left their rooms to sleep in the coolness. Rayna and I, deprived by our sex of the right to sleep in courtyards, nevertheless left both door and window open, while Li, our travel-boy, spread his mat on the pavement outside our door.

We were afraid of the heat, but we had grown used to armies. So with only an open door between us and the soldiers, we went to sleep contentedly under the gorgeous moon in the war-encompassed city of Chengchow.

Suddenly the next morning, just forty-two hours after Feng's train had pulled into the station to a roar of firecrackers, bugles and shouted slogans, we were told: "Pack up. The conference is over. The train leaves this afternoon."

We were stunned. It had been so quickly done that we at once feared failure. But we were told that they had reached complete agreement, had approved a plan for the reorganisation of Feng's army, and had decided to send the Cantonese and Hunanese south to "consolidate the southern provinces and clear out bandits." On the political side they had formed three provincial governments for Honan, Shensi and Kansu, organised a Sub-Political Council to handle party questions for these three provinces, and

appointed a Railway Commission to reopen traffic. It seemed a miracle of success as it was related to us. As Feng left the last session, his foreign representative handed to me Feng's answers to questions I had written. He declared his complete allegiance to the Wuhan Government and the Central Committee of the Kuomintang at Wuhan, and announced the reorganisation of his armies as an organised section of the Kuomintang armies.

It sounded like complete agreement, complete uniting of all forces, more complete than anyone had hoped. No one could know at this time that, within a week, Feng would be making the same polite agreement with the rival forces of Chiang Kai Shek in Hsuechow.

Feng had decided that Wuhan had nothing to give him, except what political prestige was still left in the Kuomintang. This he had received from them, as much as he had asked for. He had reorganised his armies and received their endorsement of the reorganisation; he had himself appointed the government of three provinces and received their ratification. They had even promised him money and munitions. In return for this he gave them a "recognition" which cost him nothing, and which was cancelled a week later by a similar "recognition" of Chiang Kai Shek.

Yet so polite had been the farewells and the promises that, as our train pulled out of the station, bound south for Hankow, the delegates from Wuhan did not seem to know that they were beaten. They were temporarily depressed at the last lunch in Chengchow but, a few hours later, their spirits revived and they were chatting merrily. General Tang Sheng Chi was exchanging anecdotes with General Yu Yu Jen of Shensi, who was supposed to be coming south as Feng's representative, but who was actually being expelled from Feng's territory because he was too favourable to the peasants.

So, under the polite fiction of success, the train moved southward. Those of us who were onlookers thought that union had been achieved. The delegates also were not unhappy. They had achieved "recognition" by Feng and this, in their minds,

meant something of that prestige so dear to the Chinese intellectual. They were now able to cast on Feng the blame for their intended abandonment of the cause of the workers. This would not be done too openly; it would take place gradually, under many veils of words. They had not obtained support for their war against Chiang Kai Shek, but they felt assured of Feng's neutrality and, long before they reached the broken bridge on the journey back, their minds were adjusting themselves comfortably to their new task. No longer the eloquent wording of the hopes and needs of revolutionary workers and peasants, in the expression of which all had been loud enough before, and in which Wang Ching Wei with his beautiful language had been especially successful; but the voicing of whatever slogans of "law and order" and "control of communists" might placate the rising militarists of Hunan.

Passing out of the great Central Plain of Honan, where the peasants had finished in these few days the harvest of wheat and were loading it now on their primitive carts for transport, we entered the high mountain pass that leads to the rice fields of Hupeh. In the dimness of a waning moon, General Gallen pointed out to me some half distinguishable shapes under the trees and in the little ravines; these, he said, were the bodies of Cantonese who had died advancing by this pass and railway. It was for this that they had died; it was for this that fourteen thousand wounded lay in the hospitals of Hankow, boys of Kwangtung and Hunan who had marched forth for a hope that most of them were only beginning to understand. It was for this only that—after the revolutionary Iron Armies had been broken by the cost of the victory, their allies who survived might establish a military dictatorship, based on the joint suppression of workers and peasants.

Presently we came again to the rice fields, exquisitely terraced in their little valleys, beautiful with their gleams of water and hazily green under the morning mist, but demanding such back-breaking labour. We drew into the station of Hankow to a din

of firecrackers and cheers and a waving of banners which dwarfed any reception that had preceded it. The delegates of labour organisations were there to greet us—the delegates of revolutionary women, the delegates of students, the turbaned Hindu delegates of the Anti-Imperialist League representing many nations. They had come to welcome and receive back the emissaries whom they had sent to create a new China. And into that cheering crowd of workers and students and women the traitorous government of Hankow walked like victors.

A few days later these workers were calling a general strike, in protest at the betrayal of the Chengchow conference.

CHAPTER VI

THE WORKERS MEET IN HANKOW

THE fourth annual Congress of the All China Federation of Labour met in a vast hall crowded to the gallery roof with 381 delegates and some two thousand visitors admitted by ticket through the labour unions of the three Wuhan cities. The on-lookers had been holding their seats for two hours; they sat for another five hours of the opening meeting. Thousands more wanted to come but could not. Such was the interest taken in China's labour movement meeting in the midst of a national Revolution.

The great hall looked like a Christmas tree, strung from wall to wall with red banners and many-coloured tissue paper festoons. The "blue sky and white sun" emblem of the Kuomintang was everywhere in evidence, often alternating with the sickle and hammer of the Soviet Union, adopted not merely in honour of Russia but as symbol of all toilers. The edge of the balcony was rimmed with red streamers bearing slogans in gold or black lettering. On the wall behind the platform was the portrait of Dr. Sun Yat Sen and many more red banners. The crowd, which packed the hall to the far corners of the gallery, was bright with the blue and white of the Chinese workers' costumes. Some forty great wooden fans whirled from the ceiling, stirring the air above the sweltering delegates. Nevertheless, where we sat quite still on the platform we could feel great drops of sweat gather and roll down our backs from the unbroken heat of a Hankow summer

which, however, seemed to make no difference in the fervour of the delegates.

Children Pioneers to the number of fifty or more formed a guard of honour at the gate for the speakers to march through. In tan suits and red neckerchiefs, with long batons, they were drawn up in military order. Their representative, a small boy of thirteen years with firm salute and clear voice, was much cheered when he stood on the platform to give greetings to the labour congress, telling how the Pioneers were watching and following the leadership of labour.

Some sixteen or more organisations sent greetings for the first meeting; the delivery of them consumed five hours and gave one a realisation of the complex social life that is forming in revolutionary China. There were representatives from the All China Students Federation, from the All China Peasants, from the Nationalist Government, from the Kuomintang Party (Central, Provincial and City), from the Communist Party of China. Three foreign delegates also brought greetings—Lozovski from the Red Trade Union International, Roy, of India, from the Communist International, and two Javanese from the labour unions of Java.

At the presiding table sat Su Chao Chen, seaman, now president of the All China Labour Federation and also Minister of Labour in the Nationalist Government, and Li Li San, a former student and later secretary of the Federation, and now one of the best known members of the presidium. Beneath them was a sea of upturned faces, vital, intent faces which fairly shouted their intense interest in living. There were serious faces and smiling faces—good-natured faces and faces stern with tragedy; faces aglow with youth's optimism, and faces that had experienced life's worst and were stubbornly struggling on. All kinds of faces were there, but in them all was one common element, a glowing, relentless determination. Directly below the platform on which I sat were three girl delegates, not over twenty years of age. One of them especially I remember; by reason of her bobbed hair and boyish energy, I was not sure at first if she were a girl or a lovely

glowing youth. I remember how her arm shot into the air when she rose on tiptoe to shout a slogan, with eyes uplifted in ecstatic loyalty, and the sudden embarrassed grin with which she sank back into her seat when once she made a mistake and shouted a slogan all alone.

The meeting began with a ceremony which I was later to see in other meetings but which I here experienced for the first time. All rose and turned to face the portrait of Sun Yat Sen and the chart of his last will. Bowing three times, they repeated the will solemnly. After this came a silence of several minutes "in memory of our revolutionary dead." Then began the five hours of greetings, punctuated often by cheers and shouted slogans and by the singing of the International to a Chinese tune. To our western ears it sounded hideously discordant, an enthusiastic rhythmic shouting in many keys at once. But the Chinese method of shouting slogans, thrusting one arm high in the air with fist clenched, was very effective.

A fraternal delegate, struck the key note of the meeting when he declared: "The three former congresses of labour had the tasks of organisation and propaganda, this congress has the task of leading the workers of China in the actual work of revolution. This congress will decide not only how to secure the immediate interests of the workers represented, but how they may lead the Nationalist Revolution, in which you have played in the past an important rôle, but are now called upon to play a decisive rôle. The outcome of the Chinese Revolution will decide the fate of the World Revolution in the present epoch of history."

The Chinese Federation of Labour, which was thus meeting in the midst of revolution, is of very recent origin, but of spectacularly rapid growth. The more slowly developing labour movements of western lands hardly realise its existence. Chinese workers told me that two years ago they wrote to the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions asking that an Advisory Delegation

be sent to confer with their Executive Committee and were answered, "There being no labour movement in China, we see no need of sending such a delegation." After which it is not surprising that China affiliated with the Red Trade Union International of Moscow.

In spite of all I had learned about Chinese labour, I confess that I did not at first believe their tale of three million workers, half of whom had been organised in the past year. Nor did I expect to see at this Congress in war-encompassed Hankow many actual delegates properly selected by distant provinces. I expected to find so-called representatives hand-picked from workers who had succeeded in passing the blockade. But the Congress itself convinced me. The tone of the speeches was authentic and expressed problems from fourteen of China's eighteen provinces. I questioned many delegates and found that they had all been duly elected by local meetings of delegates from many unions. Most of them were actual workers from factory, mine, or transport; only a few were paid officials of labour. Only three unions—the Seamen, Railway Workers and Postal Workers—were organised on a national scale and sent delegates through their national office. The other delegates had been elected from district unions, somewhat resembling a Central Labour Council in America, and representing several trades. This form of organisation is frankly transitional: national unions have not had time to grow out of the tens of thousands of local unions that sprang up in the wake of the Nationalist advance. The typical form of labour organisation at this time was the local union in shop and factory, combined into city or district federations, and beginning to combine nationally on an industrial basis.

President Su Chao Chen outlined, in a long report, the history and conditions of Chinese labour. Until quite recently its only form was handicraft, which still remains the chief form in the back country. Workers serve for years, living in the shops of their masters, and receiving no wages but paying money instead for the privilege of becoming an apprentice, so that they may

learn the trade and eventually become master craftsmen. Such workers have been for centuries organised in guilds to which both master and employees belong, the masters being the more important members. Naturally, such guilds serve the purpose of guarding guild standards, but give little protection to workers against demands of their masters. They are sharply opposed by the new labour unions.

Modern factory industry came into China recently, chiefly through foreign capitalists. On the basis of industrious cheap labour these investments increased in number and value, and soon the Chinese bourgeoisie also began to own factories.

Especially during the World War, the industries of China expanded. Competition began between hand labour and machine labour, driving down steadily the income of the small handicraft masters, who tried to maintain themselves by driving down the wages of their workers. Factories were influenced by working conditions which had prevailed for centuries among handicraftsmen. They took advantage of the system of apprenticeship to secure factory labour also for many months without wages; they took advantage of the unlimited hours of desultory work prevailing where the workman lived with his master to secure almost equally unlimited hours of work at the factory bench. The phenomena which have everywhere accompanied the change to modern factory machinery were aggravated in China by the vast numbers of cheap, industrious workers, and the fact that capital had grown international and very powerful.

In China there are many workers who receive no money wages but only a few bowls of rice a day. Such are the apprentices in shops and factories and the miners in the three Eastern Provinces. Child labourers in Hankow factories received for many years only 30 cents a month, and trained apprentices in Shanghai cotton mills received only \$1.50. The monthly wages of labourers on railways ranged from \$5 to \$10 monthly for unskilled, and from \$10 to \$25 for skilled mechanics, and this was the best paid of the industries. Skilled miners got from \$8 to \$20 monthly, and unskilled

mine workers from \$5 to \$9, while wages in textile mills were still lower.

In return for these wages, very long hours are worked. Many shop employees are on duty from dawn till midnight. In factories the twelve-hour day is considered good; many factories run sixteen hours. The weekly rest day is not usual in China; handicraft workers have no rest days at any time in the year, while factory workers think themselves lucky if they get two rest days a month. The mine workers of the city of Hupeh Ying work, eat, and sleep in the mine cave continuously for twenty days. Only in modern industries such as transport and metal-working is the day sometimes shortened to eight or ten hours. In Shanghai factories weekly rest days are more usual, but by no means universal, while hours range from eleven a day to sixteen or eighteen.

Since large scale industry is largely in the hands of foreign capital, it was natural that the first labour organisations found themselves at war not only with individual employers, but with the whole system of foreign imperialism in China. Almost from its beginning, the Chinese labour movement became strongly political, inspired by patriotic opposition to foreign exploitation. The chief periods of growth in the trade unions have coincided with political crises.

The first trade unions began in Hongkong, spreading rapidly to Canton, until there were two or three score such organisations. But the nation-wide rise of a labour movement began in the 1919 demonstrations against the Japanese "twenty-one demands." Begun by Peking students as a nation-wide boycott, this movement rapidly spread into the ranks of labour. At this time also the influence of the Russian revolution reached China, and many revolutionary youths from the student classes began to join with the workers.

There followed the Seamen's Strike of 1922, started in Hongkong as a demand for better labour conditions, but rapidly becoming political through the British threat of suppression by arms. This strike lasted fifty days and ended in success for the workers, for

the first time giving Chinese labourers the belief that the power of the white man's capital was not entirely invulnerable.

Shortly after this the North China Railway Workers, who had already organised a committee for strike relief of the Seamen, struck on their own account and organised sixteen branch unions. Unrest began in Hankow in the form of a strike of rickshaw pullers and a strike in the Hanyang Iron Works. So when, on May 1, 1922, the first National Labour Conference was held in Canton, there were over fifty delegates representing 230,000 workers. This conference decided that labour organisations should follow the industrial form, and should fight primarily for the right to organise, better wages, shorter hours, and freedom from cruel treatment. In spite of the purely economic nature of these aims, the workers had already come into conflict with militarists, notably Wu Pei Fu, who killed a number of striking workers in Hankow and suppressed their strike by force of arms, driving their organisation underground for the entire period of his power in Hankow.

The second national conference of Chinese labour was called by the now well organised Seamen's Union, Railway Workers' Union, Miners' Union of Hunan and Kiangsi, and the Cantonese workers. It took place two years after the first, on May 1, 1925, in Canton. It was a stormy period. A strike in a Japanese cotton mill in Shanghai had led to the killing of a Chinese worker by a Japanese foreman, and the demonstrations were beginning which were to culminate before the end of the month in the famous May 30 incident in Shanghai, when British police shot into a crowd of demonstrating workers and students and aroused all China. The May 1 conference in Canton was attended by 230 delegates from 570,000 organised workers, more than double the number of two years before. It unanimously decided to unite fraternally with the peasants and to participate in the national Revolution against imperialism and militarism. It decided to form an All China Labour Federation and to unite with the Red Trade Union International of Moscow.

Great as had been the growth of the first two years of Chinese labour conferences, it was as nothing compared to the number which swept into the unions in the stirring days after May 30. From end to end of the land students, workers, peasants, and even merchants, took part in anti-imperialist demonstrations. It is estimated that a million workers participated and ten million of the peasants and intellectual masses. These demonstrations led directly to the great Hongkong-Canton strike which began on June 19, 1925, and lasted a year and ten months, costing the great port of Hongkong, at some periods of the strike, as high as two million dollars a day. During this period the organised workers began to be recognised as the strongest fighting arm of the national Revolution, and to be drawn into ever closer contact with the plans of the Nationalist Government.

When the Third All China Labour Congress was called in Canton, May 1, 1926, by the newly formed All China Labour Federation, they faced the military plans of a Northern Expedition. Delegates to the number of 514, representing 1,264,000 workers, attended the Congress, and all their resolutions now had a political character. Even the economic resolutions were demands addressed to the Nationalist Government with whom they had thrown in their lot; they asked laws establishing the eight-hour day and a minimum rate of wages; they urged the Northern Expedition to expand the territory of the Nationalist Government and eventually unite all China under its banners. During that expedition, the trade union membership developed marvellously. Organising everywhere behind the army, they brought not only industrial workers but carrying coolies and handicraft workers by hundreds of thousands into their movement. By the masses, it became considered counter-revolutionary not to join the union. In Hunan their membership increased from eighty thousand to three hundred and fifty thousand and, in Hupeh, from twenty thousand to four hundred thousand. When the split came between Nanking and Wuhan, there were, according to Su Chao Chen, three million members in the trade unions of China; a great, chaotic mass of

many trades and callings, most of them uneducated in the ways of unionism, but rapidly being trained by the events of the Revolution. The unions of Shanghai, at least, possessed enough knowledge of organisation to continue their work underground after Chiang Kai Shek suppressed them; it was thus that they chose their delegates to the Fourth All China Labour Congress in Hankow.

Never before had Chinese labour faced, on a nation-wide scale, such serious problems. They themselves knew that they confronted a struggle which meant life or death to the Nationalist Revolution and even to their own right of organisation. In the manifesto which they adopted towards the end of the Congress they said in part: "The Fourth All China Labour Conference opens at a time when the situation is critical, both internally and externally. The imperialists have sent their troops to Shanghai, Shantung, and Peking. Their warships are gathered at Wuhan in an attempt to intimidate the Wuhan Government. . . . They show clearly that they are ready to adopt a policy of armed intervention in the Chinese revolutionary movement. . . . At the same time the imperialist powers have presented a joint threat against Soviet Russia — China's only friend, the centre of world revolution." (An allusion to the Peking-London raids on the Soviet embassies.)

Internally, they stated, "counter-revolution is gaining daily strength." They mentioned the names of Chiang Kai Shek in Shanghai, Li Chi Shen in Canton, and Hsu Keh Hsiang in Hunan, as representing the continued feudal influence of reactionary militarists, in massacring labourers, peasants, and all revolutionary elements. "In the territory of the Nationalist Government," they said significantly, "the labour movement can be conducted openly only in Wuhan. . . . It is possible for the reactionaries to dominate Wuhan some day. We must struggle to maintain the existence of the unions. We are now in a reign of white terror." The manifesto continued with the plan for uniting with peasants and petty bourgeois to fight the feudal militarists and the impe-

rialists. Its concluding slogan was, "Long live the Nationalist Government!"

Two items in this manifesto are worthy of special comment. For the first time the Chinese labour movement identified its struggle with that of Russia. It is a natural identification, not only because the Russian workers had recently experienced similar struggles, but because Russia is the only land which has offered aid to the Chinese labour movement. Russian workers sent contributions to the great strike after May 30, and long continued their aid of the Hongkong-Canton strikers. And here, in this great Fourth Labour Congress, meeting in the midst of war and facing such desperate problems, which of all the labour organisations of earth sent any help or greetings? Was there any cable of congratulations from the American Federation of Labour over the speed with which they had attained three million members? Was there any cable of condolence from Europe for the lives that were daily being sacrificed to the white terror in Shanghai and Hunan? Chinese labour was left alone in its hour of deepest struggle, except for the Russians, and the minority radical labour movements in various lands allied with Russian labour.

The Russians sent an impressive and carefully selected fraternal delegation. Not only Lozovski, president of the Red Trade Union International, but important leaders of metal workers, railway workers, educational workers, and unions of the Far East — men who could supplement the theories of Lozovski by concrete information of how the Russian Revolution had affected particular crafts and industries, and what particular groups of workers had done about it. These men went not only to the Congress; they spent weeks visiting the industries and labour groups of Hankow and vicinity, seeking to understand the problems of Chinese labour, and ready at any time to answer questions about the Russian Revolution.

The Chinese listened eagerly to the most technical discussions of tactics, for the Russians had the prestige of a successful revolution and a dictatorship in which they felt themselves dictators;

and they offered both comradeship and knowledge. It was an unbeatable approach; it was creating an unbreakable relation between the workers across Asia, who already in this Congress felt hardly any boundary line between the Soviet Union and China.

One daring sentence in the manifesto was that which called by name the feudal militarists suppressing labour, and included Hsu Keh Hsiang, the Hunan general. Further on the manifesto stated explicitly that white terror was reigning in Hunan. Yet Hunan was supposedly still loyal to the Wuhan Government, to which also the unions were loyal, hailing it with their last words: "Long live the Nationalist Government." The same Nationalist Government which sent special emissaries with words of greeting to the opening session of the Labour Congress, and whose chief figure, Wang Ching Wei, addressed them in a long and very revolutionary speech, was tolerating the wholesale suppression and slaughter of labour leaders in one of its provinces. Obviously such a situation was impossible; it must change in one direction or other. The Fourth All China Labour Congress threw down the challenge to Wuhan.

On the last morning of the Congress, when the sessions were over and there remained only committee meetings and a final get-together celebration between the workers and the soldiers, some troops of Tang Sheng Chi, as if in answer to the challenge, took sudden possession of the buildings of all the All China Labour Federation and began looting. This was done without warning in early morning when the officials were absent; a faithful servant who protested was struck over the head for his loyalty. The word spread rapidly through Hankow that the army was suppressing labour unions in this city also, as everywhere else in China. I heard the news as I waited in Borodin's outer office for an interview; I saw Li Li San hurry past, wan-faced, without recognising me. Later Wang Ching Wei arrived and others, and a conference was in session. I carried the news to *The People's Tribune* and we went to the headquarters of the Labour Federa-

tion only to be turned back by soldiers. Was this to be the end of labour in Hankow?

No! It was not yet the end. At one o'clock in the afternoon I went to the labour headquarters, and found the soldiers gone. The tired form of Su Chao Chen was entering the building to take possession and clean up the rubbish. He apologised for breaking his engagement with me that morning, though it was not he who had broken it, but the soldiers who had seized our place of meeting.

Many "face-saving" explanations were given concerning the episode. It was all a mistake, we were told, a want of discipline by some local soldiers, who, misunderstanding an accepted plan to disarm labour pickets, had seen in the unguarded labour hall a chance for looting. As soon as the Nationalist Government learned of it, they spoke to the garrison commander of Hankow, who ordered the soldiers to vacate the building. The Wuhan Government was not quite ready to see the labour unions of all China suppressed on their very door-step, immediately after they had met them with speeches of welcome.

Whether or not it was all a mistake of a handful of soldiers (and the Hunanese were so undisciplined that it might have been) it was nevertheless an alarming symptom. Step by step the soldiers were forcing the hand of the government. When I asked Su Chao Chen if the soldiers would be punished for their lawlessness, or if he expected to get back the looted baggage of delegates, he smiled wearily. He was glad enough to get the building. "We have it to work in to-day," he said briefly. "Who knows what will happen to-morrow?"

That evening the grand get-together celebration planned between workers and soldiers, with the unions acting as hosts, went on as scheduled, with concerts, dancing, dramas, speeches. The forces of labour were still trying to educate the soldiers from whom they had received such cavalier treatment in the morning. They still announced loyalty to the "revolutionary government of Wuhan," knowing in their souls that it was but half revolutionary,

and was rapidly becoming less than half. They struggled still to utilise the brief breathing spell granted them, knowing that sooner or later they would have to take their organisations underground. Wuhan gave them a little time to meet and organise; and, as late as the end of June 1927, they were still passing resolutions in favour of "revolutionary Wuhan." Less than a month later they were in flight and hiding from the same government composed of the same people.

CHAPTER VII LEADERS OF CHINESE LABOUR

THE delegates at the All China Labour Congress had come from many provinces and had had a great variety of experiences. In their lives one could read the story of the Chinese labour movement, which is still recent enough to be compassed by the memory of a very young man. I spent many days talking with these workers from all parts of China, gaining a picture of the many-sided problems of the labour movement.

Su Chao Chen, president of the Federation, was a peasant lad of Kwangtung who went to sea in his youth, driven from home by the overcrowding on the land. "I never had any schooling," he said to me. "I bought books and learned by myself. I could always agitate very well but my mind is simple." From others I learned that Su had organised branches of the revolutionary Kuomintang from port to port of the world, fighting for life against Chinese monarchists, but escaping to help organise the famous Seamen's Strike of 1922, when Chinese workers first learned that the great white employers of the earth could be beaten. That was the real beginning of the Chinese labour movement; Su, who helped organise it, rose with it to become its president. He led also the long strike and boycott of Canton against Hong-kong, which in 1925-27 shook the prosperity of the British citadel in South China.

Many other seamen from South China I met, who first of all China's millions were forced into contact with the West and learned its ways. There was Chen, son of a poor boatman, born on a boat and living on a boat, as tens of thousands live on the

river around Canton. His father went to Java on contract labour, sending home three or four dollars a month from his scanty wages; a few years of this alien labour killed him. This also is typical of the surplus labour in South China. Chen worked first as a cow-herd, receiving as yearly wages one hundred and twenty-five pounds of rice, one bamboo hat and one garment. Thus he lived till the age of thirteen when he became a sailor.

Different from all of these was Li Li San, who had seven years of schooling as the son of a rural teacher in Hunan. He went to France in the World War, where he worked in iron factories, and learned that the French workers were organised and thus got better conditions. He came back home to organise the Chinese workers likewise, beginning with the miners in his home province. Four times he has changed his name to escape arrest or execution; he smiled as he told me of the paid assassins in Shanghai who secretly tipped him off whenever they planned to attack him, and thus made their well-paid job of assassin last longer. His view of the Chinese labour movement passed the boundaries of his country.

"Only when we have strong unions in China," he told me, "will unions be able to flourish in Java, India, Indo-China, and the Philippines."

But even more than his world-wide view I remember the human weakness he showed when I took his picture. Hurrying me away from the great court full of labour guards and placards, he led me to a small and rather wilted Chinese garden, and posed with trees and a rivulet in the background. Thus he sought to fix himself in my record not amidst the turmoil of triumph but surrounded by placid beauty. His life, however, was to lead through most un placid upheavals, illegal organising, party "deviations" and again through recantation and study to renewed work in the revolutionary ranks.

There were three of the minor labour leaders who will perhaps never be famous — they may be dead by now in some unreported clash or capture — yet whose lives portray for me the many-sided

struggles and aspirations of Chinese labour: Yü, the young agitator from Shanghai; Ma, the persevering trade-union organiser of Canton; and Tang, the simple miner of Hunan, out of a job. All of them are part of China's restless upheaval, one of them with conscious fiery energy; one, with tireless patience; one, hardly knowing what he is seeking, except that he wants the chance to a decent life in the world.

Yü Mo Hwai was the agitator from Shanghai. His long, oval face, high forehead and frank clear eyes were alert with intelligence. He was most talkative of all the Shanghai delegation, expressing himself with vehemence. His glowingly youthful face bore no mark of the many struggles he had experienced, and hardly indicated his twenty-six years. He was more like a joyously hopeful boy than an agitator just escaped from the secret police of Chiang Kai Shek. Nevertheless he was thoroughly an agitator, having no interest other than to change from job to job in order to organise workers. What group he organised did not especially matter; as a mechanic he passed easily from railroad to power plant or textile factory, organising everywhere, not so much to build up any particular union as to build in all directions the might of the workers as a base for revolution. Thus he had helped organise those workers of Shanghai who took power in the native city and turned it over to the Nationalist army which later suppressed them.

"I was born in Anking on the river," he told me, "and my father was some sort of handicraft worker, but he died when I was three years old. My six brothers gave me a year of schooling till I was eleven years old; then I went to work as waiter on a river steamer. At sixteen, I became signalman, and I picked up a knowledge of mechanics. At eighteen, I went ashore as line mechanic in a public service company. Ever since then I have been interested in unions. My early days on the river are very

useful to me now, for I have many escapes to make and for this I know all the ports of the Yangtze very well."

Yü's account of his life is interspersed with such incidents as these: "About that time my life began to be wanted by the Fengtien troops. Nevertheless, for several months more, Li Li San and I went organising workers on the railway, protected by the loyalty of the workers." . . . Or again: "When I came back from the Labour Congress in Canton, the troops had grown too strong for me to escape them in the province, so I decided to go to the city of Shanghai and organise municipal workers. I gave a bribe of \$50 to the foreman of the Power Works in French town, and for this he gave me a job in the power plant. It was a very good job, for from this point of vantage I organised four unions of city employees—the street-car men, the street cleaners, the power plant and the waterworks. I had them ready in a few months for the advance of the Nationalists, and it was we who took over power in the city."

Young Yü's point of view is typical especially of the workers of Shanghai, in that he sees his task not in the slow building of a single labour union, but in the united clash of all the workers against the united exploiters of the world. Shanghai and Hongkong are the places where this clash is most open and obvious, since the newly organising workers face not the single Chinese employer, but the entrenched might of world capital. In many other ways, Yü's life is typical. He joined the union after May 4, 1919, when the protest against the Japanese "twenty-one demands" swept the land in the form of strikes and boycotts. China's revolutionary life counts by dates of such protests, and most of her present leaders of labour entered the field at that time. Yü took part also in the May 30 demonstration in 1925 in Shanghai, which led to the well-known shooting on Nanking Road. He was arrested and released on one hundred dollars bail. In the tremendous wave of labour sentiment which followed the shooting, Yü was one of four organisers who brought the total of Shanghai

unions within three months time to three hundred thousand members.

"All of this task," he said, "was carried on by four of us, helped by the revolutionary feeling. By the end of August, the military closed our Shanghai Labour Federation, and we went underground again as before May 30."

He organised the workers on the Nanking railway and got their wages raised from 20 to 25 cents (gold) per day with a rest day every two weeks. Later they got a rest day every Sunday. Such are the small triumphs which count among the Chinese workers, the most industrious and poorly paid in the world. He organised the Ningpo railway and got the same terms there. He organised municipal labourers in Shanghai and their wages rose from \$7.50 (gold) a month for an eleven-hour day to \$8.60 a month.

"All this success," he told me, "influenced other municipal workers, so we were soon able to organise a Federation of Municipal Employees, including telephone, telegraph, electric works, waterworks, and postal. Thus we were ready for the General Strike by which we took power in the native city.

"The labour pickets," he said, relating that stirring event, "seized the police headquarters by surprise and captured eight hundred rifles. With these and with clubs and railway implements we gathered thousands of workers and disarmed the Fengtien guards at the arsenal. It took two and a half days hard fighting, till we captured the arsenal for the Nationalists. All power was now in the hands of the labour unions. Before the army came, we chose a temporary municipal government, a Committee of Nineteen, of which five were chosen by the unions. Five district groups of labour pickets kept order. We sent a telegram of allegiance to the Wuhan Government and were accepted by them."

Yü told of the war between the unions and the "red and green gangs" of gunmen, who he claims were armed by Chiang Kai Shek to stir up trouble and give an excuse for suppressing both groups. He told of machine-guns turned upon workers, massed

to await the result of a parley between their leaders and the army headquarters. "That was the worst suppression that ever happened in Shanghai," he cried. He told of his own escape, with his wife arrested, his family scattered, his comrades executed, while Yü left the house of a friend, "dressed in swell clothes and carrying the baby" as if he were the young son of the landlord. Thus he passed the surrounding detectives and made his way to the river where passage had already been bought for him on a boat to Hankow.

"But I dared not go aboard as passenger since detectives watched the river boats. So I remembered my old job as waiter, dressed in waiter's clothes and went on board carrying a bundle of brooms as if I had just been shopping for the boat."

Yü asked me to tell his story to the workers of the world "so that they may know what we workers endure, and that we are not violent mobs but civilised folk, who only revolt against great oppression." I am not certain whether the story of Yü proves this. But it makes understandable the incredibly rapid growth of the Chinese unions, which the Western world as yet hardly believes. They grew through the revolutionary spirit inflamed by "incident" after "incident" and through the driving relentless will of many organising comrades such as Yü.

If in Shanghai and Hongkong the newly organising workers of China face in conflict the assembled might of modern world capital and flame under its pressure into hot revolt, in Canton their antagonist is more venerable and insidious, the thousand-year-old merchant guild system of China. The conflict also is more complex, marked by many failures and betrayals. Before modern industrialism began, these guilds of China flourished; when Canton became the first open port of China for intercourse with the Western world, her merchants added to their ancient cunning the new knowledge and resources of the West, adapting, utilising, entrenching their control of the intimate ramifications of social life.

Ma Chou Fan, a twenty-six-year old printer of Canton, has seen in the brief nine years of his working life the birth of Canton's new unionism and its struggle with the ancient guilds. He took part in that struggle, patiently organising, studying, fighting, failing and learning from failure, till the day when he fled before the forces of Li Chi Shen as delegate to the Labour Congress in Hankow, unable to return to Canton for fear of the strangling squad. Not at all disheartened, he was helping to call the first meeting of printers' delegates from eight provinces, to launch in the midst of civil war an All China Printers' Union. An unromantic aim, it sounds, but it had been for years the goal of Ma's patient, tireless labour.

Ma Chou Fan is short and stocky. Instead of the flaming youth of Comrade Yü, he has a dogged persistence. As befits a worker in an intelligent craft like printing, he had far more education than the usual Chinese worker. His father owned a handicraft shop not far from Canton, and was able to give his son five years in the Chinese classics before his livelihood collapsed under the competition of modern machine industry. Then Ma abandoned learning and got a job in a rice shop, carrying hundred pound loads from dawn till midnight. He received as pay only the tips of customers; his master gave him rice and a place to sleep in the shop.

Under the strain of this labour young Ma's health was breaking, so a year later, by his own and his father's savings he paid \$15 (gold) to enter a printing shop as apprentice. He worked without wages; but the foreman guaranteed him the wonderful wage of \$10 a month when his term of learning should be accomplished. Here Ma first experienced the deceitful ways of the world; for he soon became a full-fledged printer and began to receive not \$10, but \$1 a month in addition to rice.

"This was due to the contracting system," said Ma to me. "Ever since that day I have fought that system. The foreman was paid for the work of all the workers and gave to the workers themselves only what he was compelled to give, keeping the rest.

We had no organisation and no strength to compel a fairer division."

Before long Ma himself was foreman, "but without the contract system," in a newspaper plant opened by one of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's partisans not far from Canton. There was enjoyed, for two brief years, a happy time of study, in which the entire working crew of the shop took part. Choosing only skilled men, and not exploiting them, Ma's gang finished its task in six hours daily, earning for each man the respectable sum of \$9 (gold) monthly, while Ma himself got \$10. Their magnificent leisure they spent reading books on socialism, trade unionism, and Marxism, and gained much knowledge. Then the press was closed by a quarrel between Dr. Sun and the newspaper owner, and Ma went back to Canton as ordinary printer, working again his twelve to thirteen hours for \$4.50 monthly and "rice".

But from this time on, Ma began to organise printers, "since I saw that organisation was necessary for freedom and a better life. We first agitated for better wages in our shop, but our efforts were blocked by the contracting foremen who sat in our guilds and controlled them from inside. So I saw that we needed an organisation of workers only without these contracting foremen. I left my job where everything was now too strong for me, and started the Chinese Typesetters' Promotion Association in another shop. We soon had one hundred members but then all the foremen began to organise against us and notify all shops against employing our members. Three shops stood firm for us, but these were not enough to employ us all."

Jobless again, Ma found at last that his reputation as an honest foreman "without the contract system" had won him laurels in Hongkong. He was asked to take charge of a shop of discontented workmen, whose previous foreman had fled after stealing their wages. He spent much time organising printers in Hongkong, and returned to Canton when the great strike came in 1925. Already he had learned from his new experience.

"I now saw," said Ma, "that the only road to success was to form in one union all workers in the shop, the printers, typesetters and setters of foreign type, who before were organised separately. We united the groups this time, and we won. Some of our new strength came from the better organisation, and some from the Nationalist movement gathering power. We forced an agreement by which we got \$15 (gold) a month without the contract system; and, if we do not like the rice the employer gives us, we may demand another \$4 a month instead of rice. Instead of sleeping in shops on tables or floors, we now get lodging-houses from the employer, with not more than two or three men in a room. These results of our union can never be entirely taken from us, not even by the military dictatorship now ruling in Canton."

The fight which Ma had waged in the printers' union, to replace by a bona-fide workers' organisation the old-time guilds of the masters, was agitating all Canton on a wider scale. Disillusions and conflicts were many. Various central labour councils arose, each fighting the other. A Mutual Association was formed, "but Chia, its organiser, was a self-seeker, who fled stealing all the treasury." At last arose the Canton Delegates Associations, and Ma was one of its delegates, representing the printers. By the second year of its existence it numbered 220,000 workers; but bloody strife took place between it and other organisations of labour. Gunmen, boxers, prizefighters added to the fury of the conflict. "Slaughters took place," said Ma, "with sticks, iron rods and sometimes guns." Nowhere in the world is the fight for existence more bitter than in South China, and the right to a job controlled by the union is the actual right to life. Rumours spread that two rival organisations had offered \$1,000 for the body of Ma Chou Fan!

"I do not believe that rumour," smiled Ma to me in Hankow. "I do not think they would have paid all that money. They spread the rumour merely to make me uneasy. All the same it was well that I had left Canton before the military dictatorship

of Li Chi Shen. The military 'reorganised' the unions; they put employers' relatives in control of my old Printers' Union and the Canton Delegates. They threw out the leaders of the Hongkong-Canton Strike Committee and replaced them with smugglers. . . . If I went back now, they would kill me, even without the \$1,000! . . . But the ranks of the workers will recognise the work they sent me to do in Hankow. We are starting here the first All China Printers' Union. Only eight provinces have delegates because of the civil war. With these we make a beginning, adding others as we are able. . . ." Ma Chou Fan had no doubt of ultimate victory and no breath to waste in regrets or flamboyant predictions. He had grown used, in nine years' patient labour, to making each new failure the foundation for the next success.

The picture of Chinese labour is incomplete without the story of a miner I met from Hunan, a man who has worked over twenty of his forty years in one gigantic mine. Tang Shou I has neither the youthful flame of Yü, nor the knowledge of organisation acquired by Ma. From a backward peasant family, illiterate, working long years underground, he reckons time still in terms of the Ching Dynasty. Ideas of socialism or syndicalism seem not to have entered his head. Nevertheless, he also was part of the Chinese Revolution. He and his fellow workers, moved by hunger, had taken control of the empty mine and opened it under their own management, even while they were begging the capitalists to return!

"The mine where I work," said Tang, "is very old and famous, operated since the twenty-first year of the Emperor Kuang Hsu of the Ching Dynasty." He called it a modern mine, with Japanese capital; he alluded to electric cars and special wages for car-men. He said there were seven thousand workers in one mine and thirteen thousand in two mines of the same company.

"I was a peasant till the age of eighteen," said Tang. "Then the land was not enough to feed my father's family, so I went to work in the mine for 120 cash ($2\frac{1}{2}$ cents gold) a day. I

got also rice and lodging from the foreman, and the use of a bathhouse from the company. The rice and lodging were very bad. Forty men slept in one shack without heat in winter; in summer it was hot, with bugs and mosquitoes. There was no sanitation. We had no regular meals but when we were hungry we helped ourselves to rice flavoured with vegetables. They brought the vegetables wholesale and they grew rotten in the shack. The foreman did not furnish either working clothes or sandals.

"When I first began working, there was an eight-hour day with three shifts of men. But at the end of the Emperor Kuang Hsu of the Ching Dynasty, they changed to two shifts of twelve hours each. The workers made a big strike but we lost. They raised my wages to 160 ($3\frac{1}{2}$ cents) a day for the extra four hours, but I ate the same rice so they made money by the change. After I became a skilled miner I made 300 and then 360 cash; then came a shortage of workers and we got 400 cash (eight cents) per day. This was fourteen years ago; after this there was no change till we organised the union.

"It was Li Li San who came into Hunan to organise our union," continued Tang. "First he started a school for miners after work; he ran it through the summer months till some of the most industrious had learned to read. These he made organisers for his union, but secretly. They made forty-four sections in the mine, and an organiser for each section. The organiser chose other unionists to help, one for each hundred men. These in turn organised and chose ten helpers, one for each ten miners. Thus we organised very quickly thirteen thousand workers. We did not call it a union but a miners' club. All the same the owners tried to destroy it. But we made no demands against the owners; our demands were against the foremen."

The system of contracting foremen, already reckoned an abuse in the smaller shops of Canton, becomes an intolerably greater abuse in a great modern mine where a foreman may hire and control fifty to a hundred men, feeding them poorly, giving them four or five cents daily, and himself extracting from the company

two or three hundred dollars (gold) per month. The union attacked this abuse, demanding that the company should pay the same rate per car as before, but that the foreman should get only 15% of this rate and that the rest should go to the men. After this the qualified miners began to receive as high as fifteen to twenty cents gold daily. This was in 1922 but, a year or so later, the mines closed down completely because of disturbed military conditions, "the heavy taxes and confiscations of the military," says Tang Shou I. He himself went south with many others to join the revolutionary army of Canton, returning with them the following spring to free his home province from the militarists.

"When I marched back into Hunan," said Tang Shou I, "the feeling was at first very good between our revolutionary army and the people. They helped each other; the miners formed groups to break the transportation of the northern militarists. They sent presents of food and carrying coolies to the Cantonese. But when Chiang Kai Shek became powerful and conquered Kiangsi, he turned and began to oppress the workers, though it was they who helped him conquer. And now there is a worse oppression than ever in Hunan."

He told of the brief period under the Nationalists when the mines were opened again by the will of the workers. All the local inhabitants, both the miners and the owners of the land, wanted to open the mines. But the great operating company refused to risk more capital in a war-torn region. Tang Shou I did not reproach them for their hesitation; he understood it.

"They lost maybe a million," he said, "in confiscations of the militarists. So they would risk no more for working capital or wages, but they sent a thousand dollars for repairs. Then we workers were brave enough to open the mines and wait for our wages. For there were many unemployed. We dug coal and sold it to Hankow. For many months we did this. Always we were three months' wages behind, since it took time to sell the coal. But a month ago, when at last we expected to pay wages to date, another militarist came in and closed the mine again.

This last week we got it going once more, but I do not know for how long."

I asked Tang Shou I whether the miners had seized the mine for the State or for themselves. He looked shocked. "Oh, no," he said, "the mine belongs to the company. Only they do not work it, for they are afraid of the soldiers. So we ourselves work it since we are unemployed. We hope the Nationalist Government will make an end of these disorderly militarists and restore order so that the company will come back and open all the mine with much capital. For we ourselves are not strong enough to run more than a little part."

So mild and unrevolutionary were the demands of Tang Shou I, who had spent all his life in the mines from the days of the Emperor Kuang Hsu, and into whose mind ideas of socialism or syndicalism had hardly entered. An honest miner in a backward land, all that he asked of life was peace and steady employment at a very modest wage, and the right to organise a union. Yet under the conditions existing in China, those modest demands made him part of the Revolution, together with the more conscious agitators and organisers of Canton and Shanghai. In pursuit of his desire for food he and his fellow miners had taken control of the mines and opened them. They had dug coal and sold it to Hankow. They had armed themselves and fought as soldiers. They had made Hunan known throughout the world as the "reddest" province of China.

CHAPTER VIII

FIGHTERS FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

NOWHERE on earth to-day is the social clash more picturesque and startling than in the fight for women's rights in China. In this ancient land, with its primitive peasantry, where parents to get food still sell their daughters, and where respectable women remain indoors in retirement, there has arisen a generation of "bobbed hair girls" who declare that both sexes are equal citizens. They marched behind the Nationalist armies as propagandists in uniform; they aroused the countryside; they formed women's unions. Many of them to-day are martyrs because of their activities. From time to time news despatches from China describe the execution of a dozen or a score of women, who are condemned as revolutionists on the evidence of their bobbed hair alone.

The first group of women revolutionists whom I met were the trade union delegates in Hankow. Some twenty of them sat in the All China Labour Congress, chiefly textile workers from Shanghai and Wuchang. Notably among them I remember Wang Yeh Kin, the child-faced orator who led the Shanghai women's delegation. She was a textile worker toiling twelve hours a day in the spinning mills. Slight, with soft round face and soft bobbed hair, she seemed like a fourteen-year-old child in a grammar school as she bent smiling over her seat in the Congress. But she held two thousand workers spellbound by her fiery denunciation of Chiang Kai Shek.

Later, when I gave a luncheon to the twenty women delegates, and asked Miss Wang to take the head of the table, I saw her

as a most gracious and efficient chairman. Her gentle nod hushed all private talk at the end of the table and held my guests silent while each in turn answered my many questions. She rose at the end, with the gracious dignity of her twenty years, and gave me formal thanks for the luncheon, begging me to tell the workers and women of America that "we also, the backward workers of China, are part of the World Revolution." I forbore to tell her how little the workers and women of America felt themselves part of this World Revolution which stirred her ardour.

Yet Wang Yeh Kin, like most of the textile workers, had only recently learned to read a little, and could not write at all. She had gone to work in the mills at the age of eight, "when my parents could no longer feed me." At first she got no wage at all, as apprentice; after six months she got six cents (gold) a day. Now as a skilled worker she was making twenty-one cents for her twelve hours labour. "When I was young and made mistakes," she said, "the foreman beat me. When I grew up, he did not beat but fined me. But lately the union has protected us from both fines and beatings."

"Before the union came," she continued, "we could none of us read at all. But the union sent teachers to the factory at lunch hour. These teachers said: 'Hurry your food and have a lesson.' So we learned to read a little at lunch time, but we did not learn to write. For there are no desks and paper, and we have no time. Now again the reading lessons also are closed since the union was suppressed."

I asked Miss Wang to tell me more of the union. "Before the Nationalists came to Shanghai," she said, "there was not a union in every factory. But afterwards we had them everywhere. Our meetings were public until Chiang Kai Shek began his suppressions but now we have them in secret. However, the unions still exist in all the factories. The union has an agreement about wages; those beginning as apprentice now get 8 cents a day (gold); after six months they get a 5 cent increase. But the British factories do not live up to this agreement since Chiang has come. . . . We

got no change in working hours. The British factory where I work is modern; it has two shifts of twelve hours each. But in old style Chinese factories women work sixteen hours a day from four in the morning till eight in the evening. There is also one British factory where the weavers work seventeen hours, till nine o'clock in the evening."

She told me the method of union organisation. "We elect committees in our mass meeting. If anyone really can fight for the benefit of others, we elect that person. The officials of the union are elected by delegates whom we send from the factory. Our union dues are ten cents a month. The union has also abolished shameful punishments. Formerly when a girl made a bad mistake, the foreman could shut her all night in a wooden cage; it is a very small cage; you cannot lie down there." Young Wang's gestures as she described the narrowness of the cage were as graceful as those of a dancer; her voice was as softly melodious as that of a singer, strangely contrasting with the facts she was describing.

Two of the delegation were described as "students." Young Sze, who worked in the office of the Central Textile Union, had studied four and a half years in a government school where she learned ancient Chinese literature, arithmetic, natural science, gymnastics and a little English. She had learned nothing whatever of modern China, till she came last year to visit a relative in the Shanghai labour movement. Through him she got a job in the labour movement. . . . Young King, who worked in the union office of Chapei district, had studied a year in a special school of the Kuomintang, learning the "women's movement, labour movement, modern Chinese language and natural science."

In spite of the small amount of education among the Shanghai delegates, they knew quite well what they expected of the union and the Nationalist Government. Four or five of them contributed parts of the answers when I questioned them on this subject. "From the Nationalist Government we get the union," they said, "for without it the union is always suppressed and the leaders shot. . . . The union is all of us, so it fights for what we need. . . .

We expect an eight-hour day and better wages. . . . This is especially needed for women, who are most oppressed of all living beings. Not only must the woman work twelve or sixteen hours in the factory, but she must wash and sweep and cook at home, and also comb her hair and look after herself. . . . How can she manage herself with such long hours? . . . We expect the Nationalist Government to make the factories have schools for us to learn in. And also a special room to feed babies in. And hospital care when we are sick, because we are all too poor to pay for a doctor. And also vacation with pay before and after babies are born. Also to abolish all cruel and shameful punishments." They had learned very well the revolutionary labour programme, largely modelled on the conditions already obtained by the workers of Russia.

All of these girls faced capture and possible death if they should return to Shanghai under Chiang Kai Shek. They smiled when they spoke of their chances; they were too full of life and of the sense of being part of a great world movement to take the thought of death very seriously. Yet girls as young as these have already gone bravely to death at the hands of the counter-revolution in Shanghai and Canton.

A dark little girl from Canton was among the delegates, dressed in the long blue trousers and blue tunic which mark the country districts of China, very different from the modern skirts and white blouses of the Shanghai textile workers. She told me that conditions in Canton were much the same as Shanghai.

"But the match factories in Canton are even worse. And the sack factory makes small children carry sacks which are much too heavy for them; so they suffer much from this."

She begged me to tell the workers of the world to support the Chinese Revolution, "since it is part of the World Revolution." The most difficult question in China, she said, is the woman's problem. And so far, she added, "we have got nothing yet from this Nationalist Government." It was the first word of discontent

I had heard. Coming from Canton she had had a longer time to expect revolutionary changes and to be disillusioned by betrayals.

A girl whose glowing face I had noticed below the platform proved to be a textile worker of Wuchang, named Kiang Win Hsia. She had begun work at the age of thirteen for five cents (gold) a day. When the union came in October of 1926, she had joined immediately.

"The suffering in past times was very great," she said. "No need to speak of it now. The factory used to take women workers because they are cheaper than men. The young and beautiful girls got better treatment for a time, because the foremen and managers liked them; the ugly ones got worse treatment. Not only the foremen and managers betrayed the girls, but also the former Tupan and his officers and soldiers. So women are always worse treated than men.

"Our union was started by the workers in the factory itself without any organisers. Six men began it, but it was secret in those days. They reported it to the Hupeh Federation of Labour and it was accepted by them. Then the Nationalists came and it began to be open. The union got some benefits for us. Those who had only five cents a day got another five cents; while those who had twenty cents a day got only two cents more. The union did most for the poorest. But the union is not strong yet. The working hours are still twelve both before and now. We demand eight hours but have not yet secured it. However, the treatment from foremen has changed very much."

Other delegates from Hupeh told the same story. There were older women among them, with long hair drawn tightly back over their heads, who had had many children and had seen all their children die from the hard, unsanitary conditions of their lives. Some of them remembered the day when "you had to pay five thousand cash" (the vast sum of one dollar gold, but meaning much to a Chinese worker) to get a job as apprentice. Later, as the traditions of handicraft days become more remote, one could become an apprentice without paying. And now, through the might of

the unions, even apprentices were to get money for their labour from the very beginning!

Three textile workers of Wuchang joined to tell me the wrongs of women — an earnest-faced weaver in a blue blouse with a sickle-and-hammer pin fastening her collar; an old woman in a black sleeveless jacket with greying hair, who had lost all her children; and happy, glowing young Kiang, full of the excitement of being part of a union. They added statement to statement, re-echoing each other like a chant.

"By the old custom, women were not permitted to walk out of the house. Her feet were bound very small, otherwise she could not get a husband. They were forced into marriage, so the marriage relation became embittered. When they worked in a factory, they were oppressed by foremen. They also have housework to do after factory work. To-day if they join the union, their husbands oppress them. They are oppressed also by their own ignorance and illiteracy. They are oppressed by the sisters and brothers of their husbands. Formerly the only way to get free from family oppression was to cut one's hair and become a nun. But this meant only a new oppression. . . . There was no liberty at all for women until the Nationalist armies taught them to organise."

After reciting this list of oppressions they began telling some of the changes. The weaver with the sickle-and-hammer pin grew especially earnest.

"Small feet," she said, "are already abolished among most of the workers, though they still remain in the country districts and among the old families. Even the husband treats his wife better since the Nationalists came. But there is no true freedom till there is economic freedom. The Chinese woman is the most oppressed creature in the world. We have no education and no time to study. We must demand shorter working hours so that we may study. Tell your comrades in America and in other lands to walk in the revolutionary path and get true freedom. Tell them that we

also are part of the World Revolution. Tell them that if Chinese women are not free, then the whole world is not free either."

Besides the labour organisations, into which women entered with men, there were in the Nationalist territory three organisations fighting especially for women. These were the Women's Sections of the Kuomintang, under Mrs. Liao Chung Kai, the widow of a famous martyr of Canton's labour movement; the women propagandists with the army, under Teng Yen Ta's department; and the women's unions, local and provincial, into which women were drawn as mass organisations to fight for women's rights.

I visited Mrs. Liao in her little apartment opposite the Kuomintang Headquarters. Two years before I had seen her in Canton, shortly after her husband's death. She had explained to me then the might of Chinese tradition, and the Chinese view of womanhood.

"In our Chinese school books there is a story of a pure young girl whose hand was touched by a man; she cut off her hand to free herself from the profanation. One also reads tales of girls whose betrothed died before the marriage; nevertheless they go to the home of their betrothed's family and live there all their lives in mourning, eating only vegetables, with always the wooden image of the betrothed beside them. These are only tales in books, but such is the faithfulness that Chinese girls are taught to aspire to. Custom is three thousand years strong, and hard to break. In Canton city there is no question now that a girl may choose her own husband. But in the villages if you mention that a girl should even see her husband before marriage she would be very much afraid of the idea."

Mrs. Liao herself, for all her understanding of the might of old custom, had violated tradition more than most of the younger women. After her husband's assassination, instead of withdrawing to an upper room to mourn for him the two years of Chinese cus-

tom, she went to mass meetings to stir up the people with the tale. Under the strain her health had almost broken.

I saw her now after two years of Nationalist triumph, when the women's movement had swept the countryside of many provinces. She sat in the midst of younger women, girls in army uniform just back from the front of Honan, girls in civilian dresses who were secretaries of women's organisations in Hankow. She was not well, but she was still the same kindly gracious mother, speaking in Cantonese which had to be twice translated before it reached me, once into Mandarin and again into English. She told me that now not only the women in cities but even on farms were beginning to awake. Nearly a million and a half women in over ten provinces, she said, were in some kind of organisation under the leadership of the Kuomintang. The purpose of her department, the Women's Section of the party, was to draw women into active participation in the Revolution, and to obtain from the Nationalist Government the rights of women. Especially were they interested in marriage and divorce laws. Always a man could divorce his wife by sending her home to her parents; but until the coming of the Nationalists no woman could thus divorce her husband. Now there was free divorce according to the party resolution; but the law was not yet applied in many places. In some places the old laws were still enforced; in others there was revolutionary conflict. The women do not even know that the new laws exist; we must have propaganda to tell them. . . . The question of divorce," she concluded, "is the most difficult and complicated question in China."

It was clear that the effort of talking through two interpreters was tiring Mrs. Liao, and I had not the heart to press her further. I invited the three young girls in uniform who were just back from the armies in Honan to come and see me and we sat for some hours talking on my balcony. They wore neat knickers and military jackets of blue grey with military belts and caps, but had neither arms nor ammunition. Their weapons were the more deadly ones of propaganda. Two of them spoke with great earnestness; the

third, a small, dark, round creature from Canton, was in a constant state of joyous giggles over her attempts to utter a few English words. Yet when she interrupted the others to add to their explanations, her equally intelligent command of Nationalist principles was evident. They had been organising women's unions in the country districts of Honan which had recently been captured by the Nationalists. In the last two months there had been enrolled 2,000 members, a small number which they explained by the fact that the coming of the Nationalists was very recent, and also that the province of Honan was one of the most backward.

"We travel behind the army," they said, "but we take no part in fighting. Nor do we work much among the soldiers; they have men propagandists for such work. Of course when we see wounded men, we do all we can to help them for they are our brothers. We give them a fan or a towel; we urge peasants to carry them to hospitals; sometimes we go to the local hospitals, if there are any, to get places for them. But this is not our real work. We are attached to the Political Department of the army, which organises the first provisional civil government in the new territory. Our work is to organise the women. For this we go into the homes and markets, wherever women are to be found, and talk with them. When we have talked enough, we organise a local women's union and leave it to handle affairs in that district. Then we move to another district."

"What do you tell these peasant women?" I asked.

"We explain first the difference between the northern troops and our revolutionary forces. We tell them we come to save them from oppression and to bring a new way of thinking. We explain that men and women are now equal. Even though you are a woman you are still a person. We say they have a duty to society and not only to husbands. It is a good thing to ask advice of parents about your marriage, but not to let the parents decide everything concerning it. We explain the new doctrine of free choice in marriage, that young folks have the right to select their own life partners. We also explain that, by the new law, women

may inherit property, and we say that the feet of young girls must not be bound."

"What do the peasant women answer? Do they get rude and throw you out of the door? Do their husbands ill-treat you?"

"Oh, no," cried the girls in surprise. "They give us tea and say, 'Yes, yes!'"

It is, however, the Chinese custom to say "yes, yes" for politeness, whatever one's real idea or intention; certainly that peasant woman would be a hardy creature who would venture to contradict a visitor wearing the uniform of an army. From other sources than these girls I learned that the propaganda trains on which they travelled were not always so easily successful. In Honan, in fact, the girl propagandists were withdrawn, because of the scandalous comment their appearance aroused in this very backward province.

The three or four hundred girl propagandists with the army were, however, only the shock troops of the women's movement. The movement itself was much vaster. As soon as the army propagandists secured a few score members, they formed a local women's union, and left the task of further organisation to civilian secretaries and committees, who in dress and appearance were much less striking, but whose constituents were much more numerous. In Hankow, as the centre of the Nationalist movement, I was able to see a women's union which had been for some time in action. I visited its headquarters and was received by two charming girls of about twenty-five years, dressed in thoroughly feminine costumes of pink and white summer materials. They were secretaries of the Hankow women's union. They told me there were ten such secretaries, all unpaid except one "recording secretary" who got \$5 (gold) a month and her board and room for being constantly on duty.

There were seven district women's unions in Hankow, with a total membership of more than three thousand. All these women were supposed to pay membership dues, but very few actually did so. They had a budget of \$150 (gold) a month from which to pay rent, servants, handbills, and food for the secretaries. They had

six departments of work: Administration, Social, Recreation, Propaganda, Organisation, Treasury. Special campaigns, like the anti-foot-binding campaign, were organised by many departments together.

"We started our work against foot-binding in the cotton mills," they told me. "These women stand all day on their feet; they realise that they did wrong to bind them. For many of them it is too late to change, but they are willing to save their daughters. Formerly a daughter was more profitable if she had 'golden lilies,' for they could get a better marriage price for her. But now she is more profitable for work in cotton mills if she has normal feet. Economic pressure is against foot-binding. Nevertheless it took the sudden blast of Revolution to destroy established custom. Once the drive starts against foot-binding, thousands of women join. There was such enthusiasm against foot-binding in one cotton mill in the British Concession that the streets were littered with bandages which the women tore off. Those who were convinced tore off first their own bandages and then compelled the others to do likewise. But the women's union does not urge such sudden action for it is very painful. It is better to make the bandages shorter each day and at last remove them altogether without too sudden pain. Also it is no use to unbind the feet of older women, for they can never be normal."

The women's union constituted itself the protector of women in all kinds of difficulties; it even at times claimed the right to issue divorces. It gave legal aid of many kinds. One startling case was that of a young prostitute sold into slavery by her parents. In the house where she was confined she met an honest, decent man whom she loved and who wanted to marry her. Her attempts to secure freedom were blocked by the matron of the house. Under old Chinese custom such a girl, fleeing, would be returned by the police to her owner. Under the modern Nationalist law she fled to the women's union, who took the case into court and secured her legal release, enabling her to marry the man of her choice.

Several other stories the secretaries of the women's union told me. "There was a girl of Hankow of good education whose father gave her years ago to a country fellow. Her husband suffered from tuberculosis and at last died. By country custom the parents-in-law may sell a daughter-in-law if they prefer to have money instead of her labour. The girl learned that such was their intention. So she ran away to the women's union. We put her for a time in the Women's Training School, and now she is one of the propaganda officers with the army." . . . Still another girl, the graduate of a mission middle school, was sold by her father in marriage to a village carpenter for \$50. On the sixth day before the wedding she ran away from home and came to the women's union, which gave her the chance to study to become a woman propagandist. Many of the other propagandists had similar histories.

The outer insignia of all these women was their bobbed hair. This has become in China a flag for which women die. Already the women's union has had its martyrs, able and energetic girls killed in backward villages during some militarist reaction. But out of this torment, a womanhood which has slumbered for centuries untouched by the gentler influences of education, is awakening suddenly, painfully, to its wrongs and its need for freedom.

CHAPTER IX

PROBLEMS OF CHINA'S NEW WOMEN

I WAS visiting the provincial women's union of Hupeh when a little slave girl fled to them for shelter. The secretaries were away at various conferences, when the child came into the room bare-foot and breathless. I asked if I might question her and learn directly one of the problems confronting the women's movements of China. So the little girl of twelve years came and stood before me, sullen with fear, and gave me a typical story of many girl slaves of China.

"I will not go back to my mistress," she declared with a catch in her voice. "Even if she comes here to get me, I will not go back." She rolled up her sleeve and exhibited black and blue bruises from wrist to shoulder. She pointed, a bit defiantly, to black spots on her neck. Then she spoke with a self-control and organisation of facts which might have done credit to a woman twice her age: she had grown old before her time from many beatings.

"A widow is my owner," she said. "My father died and my mother had five daughters. There was no food. The widow was an acquaintance. My mother sold us one by one to get food for the others. My work is to cook, scrub, wash spittoons and bring tea. Over a year I have been in Wuchang. My mistress treats me badly, beating me every day. To-day she said: 'Why have you gone about telling people I ill-treat you?' But I didn't tell anyone. Nevertheless she tied me up and beat me all over my body. I said: 'I will go for help to the women's union.' . . . My mistress said: 'If you shame me before the women's union, I will get you

back and cut you in little pieces.' But you will not let her take me back. Say you will not let her." . . . So far the novelty of complaining to a foreigner had sustained her. But now she turned to the arms of another girl who waited to receive her. Suddenly she relaxed; her sustaining pride left her, and she was only a sobbing, frightened child.

I talked with six other slave girls who had fled to this women's union. Each case presented its own problem. There was Yü Whei, for instance, a stocky little creature of ten years, whose former name had been, ironically, "Hung Yun" meaning "Great Fortune." She had been given a new name, as they all were, by the women's union. She does not remember her parents; they sold her when she was four years old to the mayor of a small town in Kiangsu province, "for a large sum of money," she bragged. "The mayor beat me two or three times a day with iron tongs," she said. "Once my head went dizzy after the blow and I knew nothing. Once or twice my head shed blood after the blows." . . . She had arrived at the union, they told me, with wounds on her body. Now she was learning to read. She said she was happy.

A totally different case was Ling Fang, a beautiful girl of fourteen years. "I remember my parents well," she said. "They were very kind. They sold me when I was seven years old. They cried very much when they sold me but they were poor and must eat. They were a peasant family in Kiangsu. My mistress was a kind woman, a Christian school-teacher; she treated me like a daughter and brought me to Hankow to study. But then she turned to be a Buddhist nun and wished me also to be a nun with her. This I refused, so she abandoned me here in the city, sending no more money to the school to care for me. Thus I came to the women's union for shelter."

The case of Ling Fang was exceptional. Most of the girls were younger, with a history of many beatings. Little Yü Ming, slave girl in the family of a contractor who worked on dykes, told me that she did cooking, washing, and cleaning. I asked her what she could cook; she was a ten-year-old child. Gruel, rice, cabbage,

tomatoes and such things, she told me; but "costly things like pork, beef, mutton are cooked by the master himself so that I should not eat them." A policeman learned that she was badly treated and reported her case to the women's union. They sent an investigator. The master hid Yü Ming in the room of a neighbour, but the neighbour advised the girl to come out and show herself. She was afraid to talk at first though the investigator spoke privately to her. But now she is glad she did so for they took her away to the union, and there she is learning to read.

The saddest-looking of all was little Lü Tsen, a baby of seven years who fussed all the time with her dirty shirt-tails. "My father sold me," she said. "Otherwise they all die of hunger. No food. No food." Beyond this she could explain nothing about her family. "My master beat me all over my body," she added. "He forbid me to cry; when I cry he beat harder. I serve tea, dust chairs, clean spittoons. A policeman took me away from him; I do not know how the policeman knew that I was a slave girl." So much she disclosed, little by little. Just the faintest beginning of a friendly grin appeared on one side of her face when she finished, a crooked, wavering grin as if she were beginning to trust us, in spite of the little reason she had found to trust anyone in the world.

The rescue of slave girls was only one part of the work of the women's unions. At the Women's Training School established by Mrs. Sun Yat Sen for the teaching of propagandists, the Dean of the school told me three of her most serious problems. She mentioned first the slave girls. "What can we do with them?" she asked. "They run to us and we give them shelter and wish to educate them. But we haven't the money. If word goes out among the slave girls that they can get a home with education at the women's union, we will be overwhelmed with them. It will become lucky to be a runaway slave girl, luckier than being an ordinary working-class child who goes to work in factories. We say that every Chinese child should have an education, but practically we know that tens of thousands are working from the

age of seven and eight in the factories. Have we the right to tax poverty-stricken workers whose own children work in cotton mills in order to have schools for slave girls?

"So we consider these slave girls not as citizens with the right of education, but as workers who deserve protection from cruelty and the same chance that other workers have. According to the law adopted by the Nationalist Government, all slave girls are hereafter to be known as 'adopted daughters' with definite rights to education in two or three hours of leisure each day. But many of the masters do not obey the law and we are not able to enforce it. Whenever we can secure good conditions for the girls, and prevent cruel beatings, we think it best to send them back to the master. China is not rich enough to support these little ones without their own labour and they cannot at once change from feudal domestic labour to factory labour. There are many cases, however, where the child refuses to go back and the master refuses to accept any supervision over his absolute ownership. Then it is hard to know what to do with the children. We thought of starting a workshop and school combined, where they might work half time and study half time. But the government seems to need all its money for the army."

The second problem presented by the Dean of the Women's School was the question of forcibly bobbing hair. Complaints poured in from the country districts that the young adherents of the Union, in their enthusiasm for the symbol of their new freedom, were going into the streets and cutting the hair of women, willing or unwilling.

"We have sent word again and again," complained the Dean, "to all the local women's unions, that the question of cutting hair is purely a personal matter and that no one has the right to cut another's hair by force. We have explained that the work of preventing foot-binding is far more important, and that this must really be enforced by fines against women who bind their daughters' feet. But it is so much easier to cut hair than to do the patient thorough work of preventing foot-binding. So we still have many

cases of compulsory hair-cutting, which cause great resentment against the women's movement. How," she ended, "are we to get better discipline within our organisation?"

The most serious problems of the women's union were naturally in the realm of marriage. The complex and tragic web of women's fate in China was illustrated by many cases.

There was young Tong I Kwen, betrothed as a little girl to a man of powerful family. When her father died, he left money for his daughter's education, but it was placed in the care of her betrothed's family, since Chinese girls may not inherit. Before the day of marriage came she learned that the young man had formed dissolute habits; it was rumoured that he was diseased. I cannot tell just how these rumours reached the ears of the sheltered young Tong, or how much she ever really knew, but she came to dread her marriage with a great terror. In the spring of 1927, after the Nationalist armies came, the family of her betrothed made preparations for the marriage; she was afraid they would invite her to visit them and detain her by force. A friend said to her: "Don't set foot in that home. . . ." "No, I know," she answered trembling. When the women's union was formed, she went to it for help, but before they could act in her case they were dissolved by the reaction. There was no one to help her; her future husband's father was a proud and powerful man, sure to revenge himself on any one who interfered with the betrothal. Her own family, deprived of her father, was not strong to protect her; her mother wept and begged her to accept her fate lest all her relatives be injured. That was all I know of Tong I Kwen — a glimpse caught in passing of a girl entrapped.

There was charming Tsu who lay in the hospital and did not wish to leave it. She was so excited when the men doctors spoke to her; she smiled and grew rosy. She was an educated girl betrothed in youth to a weakly little boy of a degenerate rich family. One day she came home and found all the preparations made for her wedding. They had not warned her; she had begged for more years of study and hoped that these had been granted.

But when she came home on Saturday night from school expecting only to spend Sunday, she saw the heaps of presents and the red decorations, the beautiful dresses and jewellery prepared for a wedding. She grew angry and wept; but her mother chided her, and she knew that she was helpless. It appeared that the young man's grandmother was sick and afraid of death and insisted that her grandson be married immediately that she might receive his bride. This was important enough to overrule the desires of the young people. With no more words, for Chinese girls are trained from babyhood to silent obedience, young Tsu sat down at table and served food to her young cousins while the tears ran down her sad little face. When she went to the home of her husband, there was feasting for three days. She had never spoken to any man before, except her boy cousins when she was a small child. The man to whom she went was weak and degenerate; there was no more education, and no interesting life in the household of his parents. Only once after many years she had a brief interval of happiness, when she lay in the hospital and the men doctors passed by and sometimes spoke to her. She grew rosy with excitement; she did not want to get well and go home to her dull, empty life.

There was also young Chu, who "finished" at a very fine school in Shanghai and was then married to a man of old-fashioned family. The husband had tuberculosis, but the young wife was not allowed to bring a foreign doctor to see him. She had a baby which fell sick; but she was not allowed to try any foreign methods of medical treatment. Her mother-in-law bound the baby's body very tightly, in old Chinese fashion, and young Chu's protests availed nothing. She was not allowed to bath it, or to give it tinned milk during its second and third year. Once when the baby was sick she invited a Cantonese woman doctor, trained in modern ways, to visit her and see the baby; she sought to disguise these visits as the calls of an old friend. But the mother-in-law discovered it, and threw out the medicine. Both her first and her second child died and, after the birth of the second, she herself

was very ill. Her old friend was then allowed to attend her, since she herself was not so important as the two baby sons had been. She told her friend she had no desire to live. "I have no freedom," she said, "even to care for my own children."

There was also the young girl Wu, of high temper, engaged to a young Christian evangelist. Once she lost her temper with him and he broke the engagement, not angrily, but in cold blood, considering that such a girl was not fit to be an evangelist's wife. So she was disgraced and every one looked down on her. She went to a go-between and begged him to arrange a marriage for her. There was a rich man at this time near Yochow whose first two wives were dead and whose concubines were illiterate. He wanted to dignify his house with a new wife who had learning. He had previously asked for a student girl of sixteen years, but her mother had refused him because he was so old. So now a marriage was arranged between him and the girl Wu by the go-between. Young Wu was happy, for her bridegroom — whom she had never seen — sent many silks and satins and a sedan chair with bearers and a soldier as bodyguard, so that she might never come in contact with the people in the street. Her name went up again in the eyes of neighbours, until the mother of the student girl who had refused this old, rich bridegroom grew envious, and began to carry tales to the man about his betrothed's temper and her previous rejection, even claiming that she was not a chaste woman.

Then suddenly young Wu heard a horrible thing. The old man did not want her; the young student girl's family, impressed by the beautiful presents he had sent, had decided to take him for their daughter. Wu was terribly frightened. If she should again be rejected there would be nothing left but suicide. She went to the old man, and bowed to the floor before him, crying: "I'll let you take as many concubines as you like, only marry me. Otherwise my 'face' is gone entirely." He married her, but disliked her, and his family despised her. She was like a prisoner in his house. When the women's union was organised she appealed to them to help her, and they talked to the family, which thereafter treated

her somewhat better. Then the peasants' union put her husband in jail as a member of the "greedy gentry" and when she went every day to visit him in prison, her husband's relatives began to respect her, saying: "She is educated; she is not even afraid to go to the prison to show her loyalty to her husband." After this her husband was killed and the peasants looted her home. She said: "It was wrong of me to marry the man. I have got my punishment." Nevertheless, she was not entirely unhappy, because now, at last her husband's family, with whom she lived, respected her.

"Most of the cases appealing to us for protection," said the Dean, "are from women who want divorces. During the period of transition until law and courts get properly established, the women's unions have taken a certain power in such matters. If we do not grant the appeals of the women, they lose faith in the union and in the women's freedom we are teaching. But if we grant the divorces, then we have trouble with the peasants' union, since it is very hard for a peasant to get a wife, and he has often paid much for his present unwilling one."

Then she told me an astonishing case of sex war. "There was in one district a peasant woman who begged for divorce from her husband and got it. Thereupon all the members of the local peasants' union, in number about a thousand, said: 'If even a woman can put away her husband, how much more can we men.' They all began sending their wives home to the parents as a strike against the women's union. This caused such a scandal in the neighbourhood that at last the women's union went to the first woman and begged her to go back to her husband in the interests of the peace of the neighbourhood."

The function of the women's union in deciding questions of divorce is not as much of an assumption of governmental powers as it would be in a Western land. Marriage in China has never been a matter of civil or religious registration but of family and social ceremony; the wedding feast, the obeisance to ancestors, the

open transfer of the bride to the home of her husband's parents, constitute the legality of marriage. Divorce has been achieved not by any civil process but by sending the wife home and obtaining her parents' consent to receive her; the council of relatives and sometimes even of neighbours, played an important part in such transactions. The women's union had merely assumed the place of neighbours, making divorces more or less recognised by its own recognition. It also at times assumed the right to punish husbands or mothers-in-law for cruelty to wives; such punishments took the form of a shameful procession through the streets in a dunce-cap, while the guilty one was compelled to shout slogans on behalf of women's freedom.

Divorces, however, were sometimes obtained in the Wuhan cities without the formality of a decree from the women's union. When the doctrine was proclaimed that young folks might marry without family sanction, or break marriages forced upon them against their will, there was no criterion by which to determine the legality of the new relation. The Nationalist Government had no code defining legal marriage. The old marriage had been rendered socially respected by the fact of its having been accepted by friends and families. The new marriage sometimes took the form of an open announcement in the public press. Such advertisements were used both for marriage and divorce.

A typical divorce notice is as follows: "Announcement of Divorce. . . . Tang Yen Sen married to first-born daughter of Yang Sze Ching, being compelled by old-fashioned family ties. . . . We have mutually negotiated an agreement of divorce, discussing it for a long time. As a result we hereby announce divorce in accordance with the principle that people are free in marriage and divorce. Both are free hereafter."

A more formal announcement is this from a woman. "Tang Yü Fung. . . . Under the pressure of family autocracy I married Lo Shung Ting, to whom I never bowed my head. Happily the Nationalist armies have come and raised women's rights so I hereby announce that I have secured judgment from the courts

for a permanent divorce. I announce this in order to stop any interference with my liberty by the relatives of my husband. . . ." It was not apparently the husband she was afraid of, but the relatives, who constitute in every Chinese household a power and a disturbing element.

The Chinese courts of this period, as far as they came under Nationalist influence, recognised as legal any published divorce about which there was no quarrel. But the habit of accepting newspaper notices as constituting divorce, led sometimes to serious abuses. A young girl of my acquaintance, studying in the Women's Training School, became engaged to an officer in the Nationalist army. He did not at first tell her that he had a wife at home in his village, living with his parents; when at last he was forced to make this revelation, he carefully concealed the fact that he had two children. He represented his wife as an ignorant peasant girl forced upon him by his parents, and intimated that she also was unhappy and would be glad of a divorce. He published his divorce in the papers, and showed it to the girl in order to get her consent to marriage. Meantime the wife at home never saw the Hankow newspapers, and knew nothing of the supposed divorce. Living contentedly with her husband's parents and expecting his return, she was disturbed to learn of his new sweetheart, but supposed she was to be a second wife or concubine only. The old mother of the man travelled to Hankow to beg her son not to bring home a concubine, and found him claiming to be divorced and preparing for marriage. The girl, on learning the true situation, and especially that her lover had two children, refused to have anything more to do with a man who had so deceived both women.

Many young women had come to the Women's Training School from country districts whence they had fled for their lives from the militarist reaction. Four such girls came to see me one afternoon, charming, serious girls dressed modestly with long heavy trousers

under long skirts, as was evident when they curled up on the divan in my room. But for all their feminine appearance they had had most unfeminine adventures. Two of them had been forced to parade the streets between jeering soldiers, expecting every moment to be torn in pieces. They had hidden for weeks in friends' houses, and had been smuggled out of town with wigs over their bobbed hair.

"The nearest guard at the gate looked at us suspiciously," they said, "and touched his hand to his hair and smiled. But he was a good fellow and did not tell his officers. . . ."

They had lain concealed for many weeks under the deck of a Chinese junk, as it slowly made its way down-river to Hankow. The junks could only travel in large companies, for fear of bandits or soldiers. In one place they waited for eight days to get enough boats to travel. The girls did not dare go out, lest their large feet and wigs be noticed and bring suspicion. When they reached Hankow they could not at first walk on account of the long time they had lain inactive in the junk.

But it was not these adventures they wished to discuss with me. I was an American, and they had been brought up in a mission school taught by Americans. They intended to question me as thoroughly as I questioned them. They were not docilely submitting to my interview, in the style of the old-fashioned Chinese woman. They wanted to know my opinion on the Chinese revolution, the women's movement, whether I approved of their work in organising peasant women. (I gathered that their former mission school teachers did not approve.) Was I a member of any women's organisation in America? How did American women fight for freedom? Or did they have freedom, perfect freedom, not only before the law but socially also? They had been told that American women were free, but was perfect freedom possible for women till a new society was established? Was I a Christian? Was I a member of any political party in America? If so, what were its principles? What did I think of the American form of

government? Did I think its form would fit China? Or did I think the capitalists controlled it too much?

Not for many years have I had such a thorough questioning regarding my ultimate philosophy of individual and social living as I experienced at the hands of these Chinese girls. Yet it was clear that they meant no impoliteness. These were burning questions. They were forming views for which they might die to-morrow. They wanted also to know how much they might accept me as a comrade, or whether I intended to weep over their activities and pray about their patriotic excesses, as I found some of their mission teachers had done. In the latter case, they were going to be very careful how much they told me. They were very tired of being prayed over, even by kindly teachers whom they loved for the past years of schooling but avoided for the present.

"We were brought up to be Christians," they told me. "We still think the principles of Jesus are very good. But we think he lived a long time ago and did not teach everything that is needed for modern China. We think it is not enough to be good by ourselves, for this makes you only submissive under great injustice. This injustice cannot be overcome by goodness and submission but only by fighting. We think you must first overthrow the old economic system and make a new society where people can be good. It is not possible for women to be equal with men just because the law says so; but if the new society is organised, then all people get true liberty and women also can be equal. So also it is not possible to be good just because religion says so, but if the new society is organised then people can easily be good."

"What kind of new society do you intend?" I asked them.

"All productive means should be owned by the public, managed by the public and enjoyed by the public," answered one of them. "Our Revolution is not for China only; it must be in accord with the Revolution of all nations and all workers. We ourselves work in the peasants' union, because we think women must be closely related to the peasants. For if the peasant cannot find peace and welfare, the women by no means can find it." They explained that

there was much difference of opinion regarding the organisation of women in the country districts, whether there should be separate women's unions or only women's sections of peasants' unions. They believed in the second method in rural districts, saying that the first problem was the economic welfare of the entire peasant family.

They assured me several times that they had no feeling against foreigners; they wished me to feel at home. "We don't think about nationalities," they said. "You in America have some big capitalists, Rockefeller, Morgan, Ford, who control oil and many other materials. These things belong to all the world but these men use them according to their own will. Such is the inequality prevailing in the world..." I asked them for what reason they had entered the women's movement. "For liberation of ourselves and of those who come after," answered Lang Shu Ling, the oldest of the group, who had been secretary of the women's department in the peasants' union of Shanyang.

I learned the fascinating story of Lang Shu Ling not only from her own lips but also from an American teacher who had known her intimately for years. Her father had been a Manchu magistrate. But even as a child, Shu Ling suffered on account of the woes of the people, especially the prisoners whom she saw in her father's courtyard. Often at midnight she would slip down and loosen the great wooden collar from the neck of some old man with grey hair, so that he might rest. Shu Ling's father was an opium-smoker, and her sister had been married to another opium-smoker, who later died in the gutter, and whose wife died of disease. Such was the heritage from which Shu Ling escaped in her youth, when the Chinese Revolution of 1911 overthrew the Manchus, and the whole Lang family fled through the back door of the yamen and gave their little girl of ten to the care of the American teacher.

For more than sixteen years Shu Ling lived with the teacher as daughter, receiving education and becoming at last a teacher herself in the kindergarten. She was a very responsible girl. "Even when she was organising and making speeches for the peasants'

union," said her American teacher, "she never missed a single hour of class-work until we left and the school closed down..." The teacher tells of a time when Shu Ling came to her weeping: "They have made me head of the membership committee, and I, who am only a girl, must decide whether women old enough to be my mother are fit to be members. This responsibility is too great for me. What shall I do?"

But Lang Shu Ling did not shirk the responsibility they gave her. Soon there were added other responsibilities still graver. She was elected to represent the women's organisations on the people's justice committee, composed of representatives from the peasants, workers, women, students and merchants and charged with maintaining revolutionary order in Shanyang. They judged especially in cases of "bad gentry." Crude and informal as were these courts they were an attempt to get justice direct from the people, since Chinese courts are notoriously bought by the richer members of society, and it was exactly those rich people whom the people's justice committee proposed to try. Thus Lang Shu Ling, who as a child had crept at night to free the prisoners of her father, became in her turn a judge in the new revolutionary tribunals.

I asked Lang Shu Ling what kind of cases were condemned to death. "We had only two death sentences," she answered. "There was a man named Shung, a small official in the town slaughterhouse, who usurped authority and tried to tax not only animals but lands. One day he saw a woman with a little piece of land on which she raised peanuts. He forced her to pay him a tax, but she had no money and could not. He had no right to this tax, but he was a powerful man and an official. He forced the woman so hard that she took a cord and strangled herself, unable to endure the torment of his persecutions. He arrested everyone he could and hung men up by one hand and one foot tied together, and beat them till they gave him whatever he asked for. As a result of his actions, forty-five men came to complain against him to the peasants' union, asking for justice. He was

taken before the court and condemned to die. But the coming of the reaction saved his life. . . .

"There was also a man named Chang Hua Tang, a big man over six feet tall, a very bad and powerful noble." (She explained that by "noble" she meant a man who was both a high official and rich and therefore exercised arbitrary authority.) "When he saw the peasants' union gathering, he tried by every means to oppose it. He sent his armed dogs (riflemen) to a peaceful peasants' parade and killed thirty people. He had over a thousand mu of land and seventy-five rifles against the law. When a peasant on his land was unable to pay rent, he threw him into jail. Even if the people suffer flood and famine still he demands his dues first before they eat. Everybody hated him but did not dare arrest him because of his rifles. So they invited him to a big feast and arrested him there. We condemned him to death in the people's justice committee but we did not dare kill him at once for fear of the revenge of his sons and his rifle-dogs. We wanted first to get hold of his rifles. But the reaction came and set him free."

The reaction, she explained, killed many members of the peasants' union. She told of an educated man who was arrested by the soldiers because he had bought bullets for the peasants' militia.

"He was sentenced to death by the soldiers. On his way to the execution field he shouted all the time: 'Down with imperialism. Down with militarism. Down with reactionaries. Down with all oppressors!' His death was caused by five shots. Even when he knelt to receive the shots he shouted till he died. He was an enlightened man and we hope to have memorial services for him when the Kuomintang activities are restored." For her, as for many others, the Kuomintang remained a revolutionary symbol, long after its soldiers were killing revolutionists. She told me next of the growth of the peasants' union, beginning a year ago in the town of Shanyang.

"At the end of the first month there were ten thousand members," she said; "at the end of the second month there were 120,000."

The figures seemed incredible even for a large district but all the girls insisted that they were correct. They explained that almost everyone who was allowed to join made haste to do so. 'Each must fill a card and have two guarantors; he must give the economic condition of his family and state why he wishes to join. . . . Do we ever refuse members? But certainly. We did not admit those with more than one hundred mu of land, nor those who were hangers-on of these exploiters. We did not admit bandits or criminals or opium-smokers.

"Our peasants' union did some rent-decreasing. We used to pay more than half the harvest to the landlord. Besides this, the peasant had to give on feast days chickens, geese, and small livestock as presents to the landlord or officials, otherwise they would persecute him and drive him off his land. We decreed that twenty-five per cent of the harvest is enough to pay for rent, and that everybody may refuse to give presents of chickens except to friends for kindness. This is why we do not let big landowners be members of our union; if they are members we cannot pass such measures."

All the girls explained that there were some very big landowners near Shanyang, "with as much as ten thousand mu" (5,000 acres), and that they sublet this in lots of two and three hundred mu to middlemen who in turn sublet to pitifully poor peasants in very tiny pieces. Many of the big landowners had their own armed guards "for protection of their property against bandits," but also for suppression of peasant organisations. These private gunmen were prohibited by law. The peasants' union sought to arrest such landlords and confiscated part of their property to use for educational work.

The four girls gave me examples of the kinds of problems that came to the women's union. "There was a girl we know, a graduate of the normal school of Shanyang. She fell in love with a student and married him. Then she found he had deceived her. He had a wife already. He took her as concubine to the house where his

first wife was, and both began to be very cruel to her. Shan ran away to Shanyang and complained to the women's organisation. We got a divorce for her and made her husband pay more than a thousand dollars to help her get on her feet and start making a living. But the case was not yet finished when the reaction came and closed everything. We escaped with our lives but we do not know what happened after. This was just like hundreds of cases."

Then they turned to me with a question: "Tell me, do you think it is right for us, as forerunners of the women's movement, to give special emphasis to women of the very lowest classes, since they are most oppressed?" They mentioned prostitutes rescued from houses into which they had been sold as slave girls, and daughters-in-law sold by parents-in-law, who escaped to the women's union and were protected. "Our parents and teachers all say," they continued, "that it is wrong for us to walk alone in the streets like men, and to talk with such people and fight for them. They say we also are 'lost women' because we do these things. Tell us, do you think it is wrong? Yet they need help more than anyone."

Such were the problems the new women of China faced in their youth and inexperience. Lang Shu Ling had cried out that the responsibility was too great for her; yet she had not shirked it. She had taken her father's place in the court-room, had looked into the eyes of grave injustice and had dared condemn two men to death. The mothers of these girls had spent their lives inside four walls, "protected" even from the gaze of the crowds in the food-shops: the daughters, after having been dragged through the street by jeering soldiers, had escaped alone across many miles of country, and were preparing themselves in the school of Wuchang to organise the women's movement. I asked if the "reactionary soldiers" they had mentioned so often were former soldiers of Wu Pei Fu who had joined the Nationalists a year ago, flopped again to Wu two months ago, and were now again in the ranks of the Nationalists, with the rapid change so characteristic of China's feudal armies.

"Yes," answered one of the girls, "they call them Nationalist soldiers, but you cannot depend on them. We revolutionists cannot depend on anything but ourselves and our own organisations. . . ." Such was the lesson life had taught her, the one thing to which she held fast in the midst of her seething problems.

CHAPTER X

STUDENTS AND PEASANTS OF HUPEH

IT is not without reason that my account of the peasants of China begins with the students' union. It was the students who first aroused and organised the peasants. Later, the awakened peasants began to assume control of their own organisations. But until the last day of my stay in Hankow, and till the suppression of the peasants' union, half of its executive staff still consisted of students.

I visited on the same day the All China Students' Union and the peasants' union of Hupeh. They were located not far apart in the historic city of Wuchang. So swift is the river that for an hour and a half our launch toiled across and up the Yangtze, though the reverse trip from Wuchang to Hankow takes but half an hour. I landed at steep stone steps under high towers. Great piles of broken brick indicated the attempt to tear down the wall of Wuchang, in accordance with the announced desire of the Nationalists to remove all symbols of the Middle Ages. Like other Nationalist intentions, this also had languished; no workmen were any longer visible attacking the ancient wall. Only the chaotic piles of broken bricks left a single great breach, but this, perhaps, was sufficient to prevent any future siege or defence of the city. A job begun and abandoned, yet sufficient in its destructiveness; like other jobs of the Nationalists.

There had been rain that morning in Wuchang. Narrow stone streets were still flooded to the depth of several inches: Wuchang, the beautiful, historic seat of government and learning, has no adequate sewer system to carry off water! Our rickshaw boys

shouted, pushed, waded. The upper classes of Wuchang were also riding in rickshaws, while the poorer were splashing barefoot through the puddles. Passing rapidly between wide store fronts, whose open shelves were piled high with goods, we came to a stone building hung with posters, the headquarters of the All China Students' Union.

Ling Lee Fu, member of the standing committee, looked weary, both from the terrific heat of a Central China summer and from the baffling strain of work and conflict. Son of a fairly prosperous editor in Fukien, he had been graduated from Amoy University and Fukien Foreign Language School. The students' union, he told me, was organised on a basis of individual schools united in a City Federation. The city is the unit from which arise both the provincial and the national students' unions. The student movement has been in existence for nine years. Formerly it consisted only of students in universities and upper middle schools (aged sixteen to twenty), but since the eighth Congress they have admitted students from the Junior Middle Schools (ages twelve to sixteen). These latter schools have a special Boys Corps, under guidance of older students.

To what extent, I asked him, were the students concerned with politics rather than with their own education.

"No student union has ever taken actual part in government," he answered, "except temporarily in connection with mass movements. In Shanghai, the students' union co-operated with the labour pickets in seizing the town for the Nationalists; in mass movements of Central China, we have had representatives on people's tribunals. For the past five or six years we have helped the Nationalists in every way. Nevertheless, we consider that our final function is not with government but with education. It is not true, as our critics claim, that we destroy education by taking the students out of the schools into public movements. It is not the true education that we are destroying. We are seeking for ourselves and for other young men an education suited to China in the twentieth century. So far there is no such educa-

tion; we do not even know what its form will be. We have in China two kinds of education to-day. There is the old classical education, which gives knowledge of the Chinese classics but no knowledge of science or Western mechanical civilisation. Then there is the education of the mission schools and a few other schools on foreign models: these give us Western ideas, but undigested and without relation to China. Our student movement is seeking to take what we need from both these forms, and develop the new education which we should have to enable us to take part in building modern China. In our political fights also, we have this aim. Besides this we struggle for better science equipment, better health and physical culture, and all the aspects of education which suffer badly under the militarists. Even under Wuhan we must still fight the militarist influence and try to re-organise the educational system."

Young Ling considered that young Chinese need most to know in this present decade (1) science, (2) good systems of government, (3) revolutionary theories. The mission schools, he said, had done some good in bringing the first Western knowledge to China; but nevertheless they were part of the cultural invasion of imperialism, in that they gave special attention to the history, geography and language of foreign lands, and taught very little about China. "We know more about America than about our own country," he complained. "Also they compel us to attend chapel and spend time in Bible study whether we are Christians or not. These are the things we especially object to."

Ling Lee Fu outlined briefly the history of the students' movement in China, beginning with the "Renaissance Movement" which inaugurated a simpler style of writing. This movement sprang into political prominence with the demonstrations following May 4, 1919, against the Peking warlord government's traitorous surrender to the Japanese of the Chinese province of Shantung (previously dominated by Germany) under the Treaty of Versailles then being framed by the victorious Allies following Germany's defeat in the World War of 1914-18. "Many traitors

were beaten by the students," he said. "After this, all sorts of students' organisations were started, which led in all kinds of patriotic movements, strikes, boycotts, fighting the old officialdom. The third step was when the students' unions began to support Dr. Sun Yat Sen. When Dr. Sun called a People's Conference in Peking, the students' unions held preliminary conferences in the provinces. After the death of Dr. Sun, the students became one of the pillars of the Kuomintang. So when in May 1925, a Japanese foreman killed a worker in Shanghai, the students left the schools to demonstrate and this led to the May 30 shooting.

"The May demonstrations were chiefly in the hands of students until after the shooting. Then they passed into the hands of the rising labour movement in Shanghai. The students' union declared its intention to take part in the fight of the workers and peasants when they call strikes or protest taxes. From early 1926, the students' union gave special attention to Feng Yu Hsiang, and carried on propaganda whereby Feng was helped to gain for a time control of the northern provinces. When the foreign powers intervened by their note of protest over the Taku forts, the students again made demonstrations, and Tuan Chi Jui, head of the Peking government, killed thirty-six students and wounded hundreds in front of his house. This was the incident of March 18, 1926.

"The students now saw that talk and agitation were empty, and that they must learn warfare. Over a thousand went south to the Whampoa Academy. The union began to see that hope really lay with the Canton government, so we held our eighth Conference in Canton, July 1926. In the Northern Expedition many students took part, not only with the armies but before the armies came, by agitating among the workers and peasants of Central China."

The students' union has contributed many martyrs to the Chinese revolution. Besides those dying at the front, Ling said that several hundred were killed by Marshal Wu and General Sun Chuang Fang. In Shanghai the students took part in the armed

attack whereby the workers and students seized the city government and held it for the Nationalists. Ling claimed that four hundred students had been killed by Chiang Kai Shek, "as being communists though in fact they were not." The Shanghai University had been sealed shut by soldiers. So now the student union was supporting Wuhan — "not completely, but as closer to the masses than Chiang is, although Wuhan also has many imperialist elements." "We are trying to build," he said, "a united front between the petty bourgeoisie, the workers and the peasants and even the soldiers. The soldiers behave very wildly, but after all they come from the peasants and have done service for the revolution. The students work among all these groups, carrying on propaganda."

It was the students who poured into the villages in the autumn and winter of 1926, organising peasants' unions everywhere and giving to them all a certain form, fixed by the propaganda department of the Nationalists.

By the end of the year, however, the work of the students was accomplished, and the peasants' unions began to function independently, and to expand under their own leaders. The importance of the students' union — which will go down in history as the first carrier of propaganda to the masses, helping to arouse first the workers and then the peasants — sank then in relation to these greater mass organisations.

The peasants' union of Hupeh was located in Wuchang in an ancient, rambling building of exquisite architecture, court after court of green plants and sloping roofs and latticed walls. At the entrance several armed "peasant pickets" stood as a guard of honour, reminding me that although the labour pickets had given up their arms a short time previously, the peasants' unions had still the right to a number of peasant militia, distinguished from soldiers by dark blue cotton suits instead of pale blue-grey. Passing these guards, and crossing a court of uneven stones to another

imposing gateway, I came to a stone-floored pavilion facing a green garden. Here I waited for the representatives of the peasants' union. The walls were hung with large red banners bearing inscriptions, and posters showing the ghastly torments of peasant martyrs who had already suffered death in some district reached by the militarist reaction.

A slight thin youth clad in a shapeless suit of faded blue cotton at last came to us, explaining that all the members of the executive committee were down in the province, investigating the reports of military excesses, and reorganising and strengthening the local unions, but that he, Ten Ya Sheng, as chief secretary of the union, would give us any information we desired. He had a pale intellectual face, sincere, devoted, and very weary. Throughout his talk there were always from six to twenty peasants, standing about in the open pavilion, listening to his explanations and occasionally adding a comment.

Peasants all over the world are said to be hard to organise. In this the peasants of China form a startling exception. By hundreds of thousands, even by millions, they poured into the peasants' unions in the Nationalist controlled provinces. They set up peasants' tribunals, took control of lands, and passed death sentences. They had, however, been suppressed with wide slaughter and indescribable tortures by reactionary soldiers. At the time of my visit to the Peasant Union of Hupeh, the Wuhan Government had passed resolutions for "better control and sane development" of the peasants' movement, resolutions whose effect would depend largely on the method of enforcement.

Most docile and industrious perhaps of all earth's creatures is the peasant of the Chinese plains. Toiling to feed a family from two or three acres of earth, with methods most primitive, his life is a constant war with nature in which defeat means death, while victory means only the chance to renew the struggle another year. Even in good years his harvest hardly suffices to feed him till the next harvest; he dozes through the cold months on insufficient diet and feeds himself up in the spring to start work. In periods

of flood or drought he has no reserves to call on; in all great famines, Chinese peasants have perished by millions. Of late years has come a pest worse even than flood and famine, the hordes of semi-bandit soldiers, who tax the peasant unmercifully, seize his food and carry off his sons for the army. One would have to go back to the Middle Ages in Europe to find anything remotely approaching the torments and insecurities of peasant life to-day in China.

For decades there has been a prevalent view of the Chinese peasant, that he was a small landholder and therefore averse to change. Apparently, conditions of land ownership vary greatly from province to province. The northern provinces are not so greatly crowded, and seem (though no reliable statistics exist) to consist largely of small, independent farmers, extremely poor, but none the less landowners. In these provinces one hears much complaint of the soldier, but not so much of the landlord. In the southern provinces, however, one finds a landlordism which recalls the worst excesses of the feudal system, with rents as high as 50 per cent to 70 per cent of the harvest, with interest rates reckoned in rice as high as 100 per cent for a few months' food; and with exactions of special gifts of chickens, geese, livestock. Here hungry peasants sell daughters into slavery to get food for the rest of the family.

In the north, therefore, the peasants tend to unite by villages for the purpose of self-protection against bandits and soldiers, but without desire for serious social changes. Three peasant youths, for instance, returned to their village in Honan after a night's absence and found the house burned and the inhabitants massacred to a man by the irregular troops of Wu Pei Fu; they promptly went to the nearest headquarters of "Red Spears" in their neighbourhood and offered themselves as fighters ready for death. This type of bitter conflict between peasant and soldier, without social programme, is typical of the northern provinces. In the south, however, the peasants tend to demand a governmental unity large enough to curb great landlords; hence their demands take the form

of social revolution. It is not without economic reason therefore that, in three successive revolutions of the past century, South China has flamed into a hot, if temporary unity, which has broken itself against the scattered individualist groupings north of the Yangtze. However, in the north there begin to be new militarist landlords, as successful generals, or sons of high officials, invest their fortunes in the soil. Chang Tso Lin himself is one of the greatest landlords of China. With this changing social condition demand for social adjustment is beginning, even in parts of the north.

The first peasants' union was organised in 1923, in Haifong, in the province of Kwangtung. The accounts of its organisation show acutely the suspicion and fear which the peasantry feel of all outsiders. For months a young student laboured among them, trying to get a hearing. They deferred to him with trembling until they learned that he came neither to collect rents nor taxes; after this they had no time to waste on him, being busy all their waking hours in the fields. He could not venture to carry his propaganda into the village itself, since only the women remained there in the daytime, "to talk with whom was improper for me, a stranger." Finding that his city clothes seemed a barrier, he adopted peasant clothes and habits. When he had convinced half a dozen peasants of the need of organisation, he found that the attempt to list their names caused them to flee in terror. Such, even four years ago, was the attitude of the suppressed peasantry of China.

But the Haifong peasants' union, once started, spread with terrific speed. Peasants discovered the power of the boycott, which they enforced with desperation, knowing that defeat meant both collective and individual destruction. They compelled town merchants to lessen high charges for market privileges by collectively transferring their market to vacant land elsewhere. In the popular anger after the May 30 shooting in 1925, and again when the Nationalist armies swept north in 1926, the students who poured into the villages began to find great interest in organisation. In

the single province of Hupeh, the peasants' union claimed three million members in fifty-eight county organisations. They presented lists of four thousand peasants killed with horrible tortures by reactionary soldiers.

Secretary Ten himself was the son of a fairly well-to-do peasant, in the village of Huang Ming. There being no school in his village he was taught in his home, and later became a rural teacher. Six years ago when Dr. Sun organised the Kuomintang, young Ten joined the revolutionary party through the introduction of a city friend. He was the only person from his village who joined, and it never occurred to him at that time to think of a peasants' movement, for such was not yet the programme of the Kuomintang. Nevertheless he began to persuade his friends among the richer peasants to join the Kuomintang; then he began to organise a school to teach young boys the "Three Principles" and to tell the peasants that, when the Revolution came, it would lighten their heavy burdens. Little by little he came closer to the problems of the poorer peasants and, in January 1927, when the first Hupeh Provincial Peasants' Conference was held, he went as delegate from his village, made many reports and suggestions and was finally appointed chief secretary of the Provincial Federation. He was clearly a man whose social past connected him with the upper classes of peasantry, but opposed to landlords and militarists.

The peasants' union of Hupeh, he told me, began after the May 30 shooting had aroused all China to a flame of Nationalism. Students came into the province, agitating, organising. Later peasants began to take posts of leadership. The present executive committee consisted of thirteen peasants and thirteen intellectuals, most of the latter with village background, like young Ten himself.

"Our movement falls into two periods," he said. "The first period was secret organisation under Wu Pei Fu. From May 30, 1925, till the end of 1925, we grew to 7,000 members. Then serious suppression started and, until October 1926, our organisations were sought out and punished, but nevertheless continued to grow. From October 1926, when the Nationalist armies came, our movement

was open and spread with great speed to every district, so that our first Provincial Congress, in January 1927, reported two million members. We estimate now three million. Each member joining must fill a questionnaire, giving name, family, age, past record, and how much land he has. He must be recommended by two members, and must pay dues of 'one big copper' a month (one-third of an American cent). Three classes of people are not admitted to membership, opium-smokers, those guilty of violent crimes such as banditry, and those owning more than a hundred acres of land."

Secretary Ten told me also of the peasant courts and the peasant militia. All former courts, he said, were monopolised by landlords, town rowdies, loafers, and corrupt grafters. The Nationalist Government had as yet sent no new judges, since there were not enough men for such work. So the peasants organised themselves to punish crimes.

"If it is a small crime, we decree a small punishment through the peasants' executive committee. But if it is a big crime, perhaps meriting death, then we call a mass meeting of peasants and have the accusers state their case before the meeting. If the meeting votes for death, we shoot the criminal at once and bury him. . . . The Nationalist Government has now sent orders that punishment of crimes must be in the hands of the government only, and the peasants are glad to give to the government this task of judging, but the government has no legal officers in all these districts. Our greatest demand is that the Wuhan Government should quickly establish our local governments, dealing justly between man and man. Such a government we peasants will still defend with our lives, if the government will grant us arms."

The question of arms led naturally to the peasant militia. By the regulations of the provincial peasants' union, each district union was permitted fifty armed militia, supported by the local peasants' union, the local Kuomintang, and the local government jointly. Altogether they had had three thousand revolvers in

Hupei province, but the reactionary generals, incited by Chiang Kai Shek, had taken many of these, and now they had only seven hundred. They had hardly any rifles except a few in the hands of the bodyguard serving at the union headquarters in Wuchang. There ought to be more of these peasants' troops, he said, and they should be given the right to defend the peasants against reactionaries instead of against bandits only.

"In the Huang An district, for instance," said Secretary Ten, "reactionaries killed twenty-one of the most responsible peasant leaders. The union has begged the government to send troops to protect them. But the government says the troops are busy at the front. The union then asks for the right to use its own arms; but this also the government forbids, allowing it only against recognised bandits who attack villages, but not for civil conflict within the village. What can we do? The reactionaries recognise no law; they kill as they wish. But we must recognise law, for we are a responsible union. Yet the law cannot help us and only forbids us to help ourselves."

Thus Secretary Ten began the list of the difficulties confronting the peasants' union of Hupei. He went on to others as serious. "Our second trouble," he said, "is that we won the confidence of the peasants by promising relief from bad conditions and the many miscellaneous taxes. This is not carried out. Responsible leaders see how difficult it is, and how poor the government is under the burden of the northern expedition. But the ordinary peasant only cries: 'Liars! You did nothing for us. Now we won't listen to your empty words.'

"A third difficulty is the economic blockade of the gentry. We are trying to break down feudalism. But feudalism is based on the present economic structure of the village. The gentry have all the money. The poor must borrow every spring for seeds, fertilisers, even for their own food. Now the gentry refuse to lend any more because they hate the peasants' union. Two-thirds of the peasants can get no money for seeds. They begin

to blame the union. We promised to organise co-operatives, but for this also we have no money.

"A fourth difficulty is the presence of bad characters who sell themselves to the gentry to be assassins. The peasants' union suppressed opium and gambling and the men who formerly lived by these things are out of work and are desperate. Many of them might become honest peasants if we could give them land, but the law forbids us to take land from the gentry till the new land policy is settled and the courts decide. So these unemployed loafers, getting nothing from us, turn to serve the gentry, who employ them to assassinate peasant leaders. For protection from these assassins we must wait for the law, since the government forbids us to judge them ourselves. But the law does not come to aid us. These loafers also use their time spreading bad tales about the peasants in the ears of the Nationalist Government itself, so that many of them do not understand what we are doing. They also spread rumours among the peasants that the Nationalist Government is falling, and thus cause despair and lawlessness."

Against this terrific list of difficulties, which bowed the shoulders of Secretary Ten and made his face weary and wan as he recited them, he told me that the peasants' union made only two simple demands, immediate establishment of local governments with enough militia to support them against bandits and lawless reactionaries; and immediate establishment of co-operative stores and government credits to peasants, since "otherwise we will all starve to death." Such elementary and necessary demands but — under the military and financial and political situation of Wuhan — such Utopian dreams!

A more cheerful light came into the secretary's face as he told the achievements of the peasants' union of Hupei in the few months of its existence. He mentioned first 20,000 schools established. When I protested that this seemed quite impossible under the prevailing condition of civil war, he smiled and said the schools were very simple.

"Every union starts them at once; we use the union hall or a peasant's house for headquarters; the local union provides a table and a few chairs. If more chairs are needed, each family sending a son sends also a chair. The family provides a pencil and paper; the peasants' union hires a school teacher for five dollars (gold) a month. It is not hard to start this sort of school when the peasants are all hungry for learning."

His insistence that there had been 20,000 such schools almost convinced me. Certainly the Chinese educational revival, when it once begins, is likely to surpass in speed any educational revival the world has known.

Besides the establishment of new schools, he told me the peasants' unions had suppressed gambling and opium-smoking over a wide area. They had protected their villages against raids by organised bandits since in such cases they were permitted to use arms. They had delivered besieged cities into the hands of the Nationalist armies by the strategy of their peasant knowledge. They had offered themselves as transport and as soldiers. They had harassed the advance and retreat of the militarists. They had poured into the ranks of the Iron Armies, to fight and die for the Revolution. But what had the Revolution given them through the Nationalist Government of Wuhan? It had given the organised peasants what it had given the organised workers — only a brief breathing spell in which to raise their heads and argue a little before they were crushed underground by the march of the feudal soldiers.

It was a small gift; yet in a way it was much. For in those months they had formulated a technique of organisation. They had spread far and wide a programme for land reforms. It was not a very radical programme; it demanded no confiscation; but it fixed the rental for land at no more than 25 per cent of the crop, gave exemption from rent in time of famine, and proclaimed a uniform system of land taxation "which shall not be collected in advance." It proposed farmers' banks, lending at 5 per cent interest, and provided that no person should lend money for higher

than 20 per cent a year. It prohibited the tenant contract system, by which large landowners leased land to middlemen who in turn sublet at great profit to poorer peasants. The peasants' unions in Hupeh were making no greater demands than these. Their resolutions declared against "any movement for equal partition of land," and said that "property confiscation shall be limited to rowdies, bad gentry and counter-revolutionaries" — in other words, the criminal classes. In addition to the land reforms they demanded the establishment of responsible government in the villages and the right to arm themselves and defend it; and also the right to organise schools and co-operatives.

On the basis of these simple demands began the peasants' social revolution in the most backward and suppressed districts of Central China, where feudalism was most strongly entrenched. It was not communism they asked for and died for; it was only the first step of escape out of the bondage of feudal system.

CHAPTER XI

"RED" HUNAN IN REACTION

THE little Japanese steamer on which we sailed poked its way south from Hankow up the Siang River into the heart of Hunan, famous at that time as the spot where the peasants' revolution had been "reddest" and where now the reaction was bloodiest. As in Shanghai no one had known what was happening in Hankow, so in Hankow no one knew what was happening in Hunan. Yet Hunan was ostensibly under the Wuhan Government. Actually Hunan was governed by certain generals, who professed loyalty to General Tang Sheng Chi, who in turn professed loyalty to Wuhan. But no civilian authority from Wuhan had been permitted to enter Hunan since the night of May 21, when the local military had driven out the peasants' and workers' unions and had begun killing their leaders. Civilian investigating commissions from Wuhan had been turned back by bayonets. A military investigating commission under General Tang himself was permitted to enter, but Tang, under local pressure, had returned a "whitewashing" report to Wuhan. He had to; otherwise his army would have quickly deserted him.

It was under such conditions that I left Hankow in mid-July for Changsha, the capital of Hunan. Where the recognised government itself could not investigate, I, as a foreigner with an American passport, could go with ease. It was a two days' journey in a Japanese trading steamer, which also found no difficulty in crossing battle-fronts. With me on the boat were two American missionaries, the first to return after the general exodus under consul's orders; a German agent of a mining company in the

mountains of Southern Hunan; and a representative of the Foreign Office of Wuhan who had been permitted to take charge of the Foreign Office in Changsha, because he was a known conservative with prominent relatives.

Many tales of past adventure in Hunan were exchanged on the boat. The two missionaries represented buildings in Eastern Hunan worth a quarter of a million. The Nationalist armies had used a few vacant buildings the preceding summer, but the total damage had been chiefly the cost of whitewash. The real trouble came, they said, when the unions were organised. Their servants had made "outrageous demands," but had accepted an increase of \$1.50 (gold) per month without going on strike. Their teachers also had made demands for salary increases but, as these exceeded the mission budget, "we simply closed the school at the end of the term with no more discussion, and this astonished them so, that they probably haven't caught their breath yet." The local Chinese were so regretful over the closing of the school that, first the alumni, and then the local government, asked permission to open and run it. The mission refused but, after their departure, the local government occupied the buildings to house the pupils of a government high school which had been burned. The unions also had asked to use the chapel buildings for meetings "every week from January to April." This also was refused, but after the missionaries left, the unions had used the buildings. The missionaries admitted, however, that the unions had not been as destructive as some soldiers of the Sixth Army, who had occupied an empty dormitory and had torn up floors and desks for firewood, refusing to accept orders from any authority in Hunan, "because our general is in Nanking and we recognise no general in this place."

The German mining agent "never had trouble with the unions." He said that in January, when he had taken a new ore-washing machine to his mines, he had had trouble with the "likin" stations — the internal customs levied arbitrarily by every district. "But when I explained that I was a German, everyone helped me, in-

cluding the unions. My mine closed in January because of trouble with our Chinese stockholders." He explained that the mining company was formed by foreign capital, with a few Chinese stockholders to make its incorporation legal. "But after the Nationalists came, all Chinese got to thinking so much of themselves that our stockholders demanded larger sums for the use of their names. So the mine closed down and I stayed as caretaker, going out every two weeks for mail to Chengchow, the nearest city.

"Once, early in June, I was stopped at the place where they change sedan chairs and asked for ten dollars (gold) for something the unions wanted. I told them I would give them one dollar and they accepted it. But I was afraid they would stop me for money at every station, so I went back to the mine. When they took my dollar it was not robbery; they put my name in a book and told me what the money was for, I have forgotten what, maybe a bridge or a school or something. All these new governments collect for something; but they never build the things they collect for—they do not stay in power long enough. . . . Two weeks later, when I came out from the mountains, the unions were all destroyed. I said to the man at the station who had taken my dollar: 'What will you do if I report you in Chengchow?' He was terrified; he offered to give back the dollar, or very much more if necessary. I could have made a good business of blackmail! Of course I promised I would never complain, but he was so frightened that he followed me all the way to Chengchow. . . ." Such was the picture the young German gave of the white terror in the southern hills of Hunan.

A member of the Chinese gentry, acquainted with the two missionaries, was returning to Hunan on our boat. He was a prosperous looking man with shifty, suspicious eyes. He would not talk with me, for I was a stranger. But he talked with the missionaries, and they told me his experiences, in the town of Yu-hsien about 120 miles south of Changsha. None of the gentry, he said, had been killed in his region; but most had fled to escape the heavy taxes imposed by the unions. Now, with the

destruction of the unions, many men and two girls had been killed. The girls had been active in the women's union and had tried to get control of the Orphans' Land Fund for the union to administer.

As the Japanese steamer drew near to the shores of Changsha, we saw the dock crowded to the very edge with a mob of shouting, gesticulating coolies, ready to leap upon our ship. When we were yet several feet away they jumped madly across the dangerous gap and ran through the decks in search of passengers whose luggage they might carry for a few coppers. In such a contest only the young and strong were successful. On the dock waited a great crowd of disappointed coolies, older men, unable to compete in the struggle, forlornly hoping that some chance crumb of work might come to their share. Never in any part of the world have I seen such naked ghastliness in the struggle for bread.

The narrow streets of Changsha were solidly paved with stone. High in the air from the roofs of two and three storey buildings, white and blue awnings were stretched against the deadly sun. They created an arcade in the space beneath them, lined on both sides by cavernous shops, forge-fires, carpentry benches or tailors' wares. Among men and women, crowding, pushing, among dogs asleep on the pavement and babies asleep on bamboo beds or nursing quietly at the breasts of blue-trousered mothers, we came at last to the exquisite green lawns of a foreign mission. Our rickshaw coolies attempted to overcharge us, and my interpreter demanded of them: "Is that the price fixed by your union?" "Give us what you like and don't talk about unions," they cried in terror. They had interpreted his innocent question as a threat to denounce them as union members. Such was our introduction to the terror existing in Hunan.

Day after day in Changsha I met this terror. I talked with a young secretary from the Foreign Commissioner's Office, but he

was too frightened to tell me anything that had happened. Pale and almost trembling, he sipped his tea and evaded my questions. Later I learned that young Dr. Hsiao, who had come with me on the boat from Hankow as the new Foreign Commissioner, was discharging several of the former secretaries as supposed communists. In all Changsha no worker would admit in the presence of a foreigner his past membership in a union or speak about their activities. The only people who dared talk freely were the foreigners, chiefly missionaries, and the upper military and reactionaries, who were quite glad to be interviewed by an American. Yet from the conscious and unconscious admissions of these people, enemies of the former unions, I gathered an impression of a mighty mass movement which in discipline, fervour and power astonished me. Even its broken fragments, interpreted through the mouths of enemies, bore witness to its greatness.

I asked the chief of staff of the Military Governor how widely he had yet "restored order." For nearly two months, he told me, they had been expelling and executing "communists and rioters," and "people who persisted in organising and agitating." All the large towns, he assured me, were already quite "safe," since there were plenty of soldiers in them to suppress the unions. But he did not advise me to go into the hills or the more distant villages. The soldiers were going from village to village, and house to house, inquiring if there were any "bad characters or communists" and, when the household answered no, as they always did, the soldiers required "two guarantors from among the well-known families of the locality," in other words, from the richer gentry. In spite of this very thorough cleaning, he regretted to say that sometimes after the soldiers left a village, the peasants' unions sprang up under a new name. But now that the troops were returning from the northern front, he believed they could station enough soldiers through the rural districts to "completely handle the difficulty." Such was the thoroughness of the military reaction in Hunan.

In all the province of Hunan there were at this time no civilian organisations legally existing, no peasants' unions, workers' unions,

students' union, no Kuomintang Party, no Communist Party, no Nationalist Government, except the Commission for the Reorganisation of the Kuomintang, whose head was Y. Y. Lee, a shrewd reactionary. I talked both to him and to one of his under-secretaries. The Commission, they told me, had been appointed by the Wuhan Government on telegraphed recommendation from General Tang Sheng Chi. This sufficiently characterises its membership. It had dissolved all Kuomintang organisations and demanded new registration of members with new guarantors from old tried members of the Kuomintang. They frankly told me that the purpose was to eliminate communists, who "are not allowed any public demonstrations or any meetings if we can find them, but it is hard to discover them sometimes." In order to prevent communists attending meetings, all meetings of any kind were required to have police permit, and "if we learn that any such meeting is really called by communists, we stop the meeting and arrest the leaders. . . ." Even the tea-party given at the Swedish Mission to the young girl graduates of the mission school, was twice visited in my presence by members of the police force, since the mission had neglected to obtain permission for the gathering. All schools from the middle schools up were ordered closed for at least six months to give time for the cleaning out of communists and radicals among the students.

I asked Y. Y. Lee how they managed to discover communists among the Kuomintang membership and whether it had been hard to suppress the unions. He replied that new members applying for the Kuomintang must not only have proper guarantors, but were given a period of probationary work in the village, "to see whether they behave like communists or Kuomintang in their work among the peasants." He agreed that it was hard to put down the unions, and that several hundred people had been executed in the process. "Not all communists need be killed," he said. "They must be investigated. Most of those who were leaders in peasants' or workers' unions are to be killed. . . . As for soldiers, no communists must do any political work in the army. The former

political workers in the army who are communists must report at once or when they are discovered they will be killed. These political workers are now no longer under the orders of a political department in Wuhan, but under the orders of their local commander in all things, and under army law and treatment like any soldier."

They told me that the peasants' union had had ten million members in the province of Hunan. I asked what evil they had done that made it necessary to suppress them. I was told that they had blackmailed the rich for money, had gone to the homes of the rich and eaten up everything, camping in large numbers in the grounds till the rice was exhausted. They said the peasants had prevented the free export of rice in order to drive the price down, and when I said it seemed very strange that peasants who grow rice should want a low price for it, they answered that these were poor peasants whose rice was finished by April or May and who had to buy rice on credit in order to live until harvest. They also told me that the peasants had "cut all women's hair and killed all the chickens and cut down all trees and generally behaved like crazy folk." Since I had already seen many women with long hair and many trees still growing, I asked where I should go to observe that the trees were gone, and they told me on Yolo San Mountain I might see it, where the poor of Changsha city had cut the trees for fuel. They told me, especially, that they had discovered a plot organised by the communists, which was that, on May 30 — Memory Day — all shop-clerks should kill their employers, all workers should kill their bosses, and all young people in general should kill the old people over thirty. This tale I was to hear again and again in Hunan. It was based on an alleged confession made by the president of the labour unions of Siangtan, during the tortures that preceded his death. The long list of plots which were said to constitute this confession, was in no way open to the public, but extracts from it appeared from time to time in the statements of the reactionaries, as justification for their own activities.

I talked to German merchants and other foreigners in the city of Changsha. All of them considered Tang Sheng Chi a "regular communist general" who had been "put in his place" by his own subordinates. "General Tang came down here to Hunan and made a speech defending the unions. But his subordinate generals threatened him, and he had to leave Changsha and go to a house across the river. There the generals called on him with a document to sign and he signed it. He saw that it was no more use to side with communists; if he did, he couldn't keep his army. . . ." These German merchants expected that some day the peasant movement would come again in another form. They had been much impressed by its strength. One of the biggest German exporters informed me that during the "People's Power," as the time of union control was called, the peasants' union had accepted the paper money of the Wuhan Government instead of silver. "It is the first time the peasants ever took paper willingly," he laughed. "But they actually stabilised that currency for some weeks by accepting it for rice through the new co-operatives. We made a lot of money from it. We could get Hankow paper for much less than silver, and use it among the Hunan peasants at full value. That was when they still had unions loyal to Wuhan. Now . . . oh, now of course, you need silver again in the country as always."

The difficulty of learning facts in the province of Hunan was much increased by the wild tales that were spread about every occurrence. Citizens of modern lands who denounce the rumours that find voice in newspapers have no conception of the far wilder rumours in illiterate lands where stories are conveyed by word of mouth. The difficulty of collecting evidence may be illustrated by the single story of a girl executed in Siangtan when the military reaction came into the town.

"She was a terrible girl," said my first informant. "She is said to have beaten her own mother. She had her mother arrested

and paraded in disgrace through the streets and put in jail for many days. She was so bad that, when the soldiers came, her own brother, out of filial piety, gave her up for judgment. They say that her mother clapped her hands at the execution." The relater of this dramatic tale confessed that she got the story third-hand and referred me to her informant, the Chinese head of a foreign mission organisation. He, however, told quite a different story.

"I know this girl very well," he said. "Her name was Li An Lin. Her mother was keeper of a shoemaking shop and wished to marry the girl for much money to a man the girl did not like. The mother put the girl by force in the "red chair" of marriage and sent her to the husband. Later the girl escaped from her husband's house and went back home, but the mother refused to take her in. So she went for protection to the women's union, and it was the union and not the girl that arrested and paraded her mother. Later it is said that the girl asked her mother for \$250 (gold), but whether this was to buy herself free from the marriage or for some other purpose, I do not know. The mother was very angry and when the soldiers came, it was she and not the brother who denounced the daughter. She did not intend to have her daughter killed; she merely wished a little punishment.

"They asked the girl in court: 'Why did you oppress your mother?' She answered: 'My mother first oppressed me.' They asked her then: 'Are you a communist?' And she answered proudly: 'Yes, I am a communist. Though you kill me now, the principles of communism will triumph.' So, of course, they killed her. But how could the mother know that the girl would be so foolish as to say before the soldiers that she was a communist?"

This tale seemed exact and I believed it till I heard an entirely different story from a prominent Chinese merchant. "Yes," he said, "there was one girl executed in Siangtan. Her name was Li An Lin; I know the family. But she never had any trouble at all with her mother. She was head of propaganda work of the

women's union. She bobbed her hair and made speeches in the street. She was making a speech shouting: 'Down with Hsu Keh Hsiang' when the soldiers took her. Naturally they executed her, since Hsu was their leader. I was present in the square where she was executed, in front of the Middle School. They tied her hands to a post and she shouted: 'Long live women's freedom. Long live communism!' On this they shot her."

All that is clear from these three tales is that Li An Lin is dead, though perhaps, if I had stayed longer, I would have found someone to contradict this also. It seems also clear that she died a communist and that it was her courageous expression of her views that killed her. All other details are conflicting.

Similar difficulties attend the reports of executions in Hunan, both those under the unions and those under the military reactions. Always the stories relate that in the next city, or in a more distant county, there were thousands. But in their own city they always stated much smaller numbers. Two or three "greedy gentry" in the smaller towns, or five or six in the district tribunals, were given as important indications of the "red terror" during the rule of the unions. The executions of the union leaders under the soldiers were usually greater. No one could give any figures for the province that were reliable. The Committee for Reorganising the Kuomintang admitted that at least two hundred union leaders had been killed in suppressing the workers' and peasants' unions. The most intelligent Chinese I met in Hunan, a student of political economy and well informed generally, estimated "perhaps two hundred executed by the unions and twice or thrice that number by the military."

A woman teacher in a foreign mission school which had been closed by the Revolution, told me a typical story of how the revolutionary movement came in her town, but she exacted my promise never to mention her name or the name of the city. To mention unions at all, even in the calm way she did it, was dangerous. It was a few days before Christmas, she said, when "the peasant movement and the communists penetrated a Chinese classical school

near our school and called for strikes and parades. There was as yet no peasants' union but the demand was that these students leave school and organise the peasants. The three missionary schools of the town refused to join the strike and the students of the government schools paraded against them and issued handbills threatening to close them. Every day they came shouting: 'Down with Christianity! Down with mission schools!' Our school therefore was closed at Christmas and the foreigners left."

I asked what kind of people joined the unions and if she knew personally any of the leaders. "Most of the local peasants joined," she answered, "but the leader was usually some man who could read and write, sometimes a man who helped peasants prepare statements for the law courts and who had influence with them. I knew the leaders in the union near our family. Its chairman was Chen, a butcher, a very good man indeed, connected with our church. The vice-chairman was a postman, also connected with the church. Yes, they had to flee later or they would have been killed. But I do not know if they were communists or not.

"There were four unions: peasants', workers', merchants' and women's. The labour unions selected in each trade the most trustworthy as leaders. First they demanded increase in wages; later they talked about controlling the factory themselves. They took charge of accounting in shops and decided how much the employer might keep for his family. I do not know if they did this in many shops, but they talked about it. The peasants' union decided what rate the landlord should get for his land. They also decided to whom he should rent it, and would not allow him to rent to the man who could pay most, but to the man who had a big family and needed land. Formerly the competition for land drove the rental price so high that the poor could get no land. The peasants' union proposed fixing the rent, but it was never settled. They waited for the government to pass rent laws, and meantime they fell. But during their power they arrested and shot a few of the gentry. These were the most wicked and hated men of the county, officials who stole much and squeezed

much from the peasants and demanded rent in famine time. I do not know how many were killed in our district; maybe ten. But they arrested many. When the landlord was presented before the people's justice committee, they had an accuser; the committee investigated, and asked the landlord if he would give back the money he had squeezed from the people. If he gave in to them, all right; if not, maybe he was killed.

"After the schools closed in our town, more than a quarter of our girls joined the women's union which was started by the girls in the Chinese professional school. These girls laughed at our girls and called them running-dogs of the imperialists; later they said that persons not members of unions would have no citizenship in the future government. So many of our girls joined also.

"The women's union first went from house to house to enrol members. Then they tried to open a trade school, for sewing, weaving, cooking, and making stockings, but this did not go well for want of money. Later they sent girls into the streets to get other women to cut their hair off. At one time the peasants' union also had pickets at the city gates and cut off the hair of all women who entered. This was in April, but the magistrate ordered against it, and word also came that it was not the Revolution to do this; so they stopped. The women's union also talked about freedom of marriage and divorce. In the peasants' union it was decided that people married by their parents might get a divorce after six months if they found they could not like each other. But this did not actually happen. However there were several cases where girls chose their own husbands without their parents' advice.

"When the troops came to our city to fight the unions, the peasants concentrated in a school belonging to our mission. There were three or four thousand, each with a stick or spear and a few with revolvers. They marched to the edge of the town to meet the soldiers and launched a fight. At first the peasants won and the soldiers retreated, but then the soldiers came in larger numbers and took the town. For a whole month the soldiers were in

the town, but the peasants were in the villages and every little while there would be a clash when the soldiers went out to the villages. Only in the past two weeks did they begin to realise that the peasants' union cannot exist any more. So now they work secretly because they have not enough strength to be open.

"Yes, the soldiers executed many peasants. In the village of T— the soldiers sought for the president and vice-president, but they could not be found. So they burned their houses and the houses of their relatives. People are very excited and frightened, moving from place to place, afraid they will be known as peasant union members. It is more upset now than before. . . . From what the peasants did in the past and now, I think they will come again when the soldiers are gone. They tell us that the purpose of the soldiers is only to get rid of the 'bad leaders.' Perhaps when they have done this, they will allow the union to be re-established." Such was the hope that was held before the simple people by continued announcements from the Wuhan Government regarding "immature actions of the peasants" and need of "sane control of unions and proper training of leaders." Not all at once did the faith of the masses in Wuhan perish. But the soldiers of Hunan had no such illusions.

The story of this one town is typical of what had happened with astonishing speed over the whole province. Beginning in the late fall and early winter of 1926, under direction from Changsha, a student movement swept from town to town. The schools were closed by strikes and parades and the students poured out to organise peasants. Everywhere this movement was opposed by the foreign-owned schools, and everywhere the resulting conflict closed those schools by January. By mid-winter the peasants' unions were everywhere developing their own leaders. Meantime a school for leaders had been established in Changsha, and in a few weeks time, this corps of half-trained organisers followed the students into the villages, and began to combine the hundreds of local unions into district and regional organisations. Week by week the power of the unions grew until at last, in the words of

a German in Southern Hunan, "the power of the magistrates existed no longer, except to sign the resolutions issued by the People's Power."

This "People's Power" was unarmed, except for small groups of peasant militia numbering two or three hundred to a district. They had been taught to accept the Nationalist army as their armed force. But this army now included all the reactionary militarist elements absorbed in its expedition northwards. Its petty officers were sons of landed gentry, whose fathers were being arrested, fined, and executed by the unions. The orders that came from vacillating Wuhan were at one time to "control" the mass movement, at another time to "encourage it," and then again to "control it." Whenever these orders reached the local peasants, they obeyed; but the orders did not always reach them. The disciplined heroism they showed, the realism and simplicity of their demands, their readiness to support with their lives any government that offered stability and hope, were worthy of more heroic, clearer-thinking leaders.

"They attacked too many enemies at once," said an intelligent Chinese to me in Changsha. "They attacked the landlords; but even my servant is a landlord who owns a tiny piece of ground and gets a few dollars a year from it. They attacked the families of soldiers; they attacked the middle classes. They attacked religion. They attacked imperialists. They attacked the desire of old women for long hair. They had certainly not the strength to cope with these enemies at once.

"Nevertheless, they did four things that were very great. The peasant of China has slept for many thousand years, submitting to all evil without believing he could accomplish anything; now he has become conscious of his collective power. Second, the peasant has taken no interest in government, seeing no relation between politics and his daily needs. Now he is very much interested in government. Third, the widespread fight against illiteracy has not only taught many thousands to read, but has awakened in the hearts of the entire peasantry the belief that to

learn to read is the right even of the poorest. And lastly, the women are now awake. My own wife, who last year would not go out on the street except in a closed chair, now organises a Women's Co-operative Exchange with forty women to sell handicraft products of the members. . . . All of these seeds have been sown and will come up again. How soon I do not know, maybe two years, maybe twenty. Even now, in my native town, when the soldiers leave, the union starts once more."

The northward sweep of the Cantonese armies with the propagandists in their train, submerged though they were in the end under the feudal armies they acquired but could not absorb, accomplished this awakening of Central and Southern China—the only victory that cannot be taken from them.

CHAPTER XII

THE REVOLUTION IN YUNGFONG

IT was not enough, I felt, to visit the city of Changsha, if I wished to learn what the Revolution had accomplished and what the reaction was doing in the countryside of Hunan. A hundred miles to the south was the little town of Yungfong, and its county capital Siangsiang—spots where all foreigners assured me the Revolution had been "reddest." Elsewhere in the province the peasants had killed occasional Chinese, or occupied the vacant houses of foreigners who had fled. But in Yungfong and Siangsiang the peasants' and workers' unions had actually driven out foreigners and taken possession of their premises as union headquarters. These foreigners—German missionaries of the China Inland Mission—were back at their stations now; it was possible to visit them and learn what had happened, I therefore decided to make a trip south to Yungfong, into the heart of the rural districts of what had once been "Red" Hunan.

At this point in the province of Hunan, an American road runs for a hundred miles through the Middle Ages. It is the only road practicable for either automobiles or horses of the entire province of many million people. Built chiefly by the International Famine Relief, it runs from Changsha south to Yungfong, along a wide, brown river and through deep, green valleys where the exquisite curves of rice terraces lead up to rough hills of bare grass fit only for pasture, and end far beyond in grey-blue mountains. When we came to this road through a cloud-burst which almost washed our rickshaws down the narrow channel of the Changsha streets, we found an autotruck waiting on a splendid roadbed of gravel

quite unaffected by the downpour. Such an advantage, even in the matter of independence of weather, has modern life over the Middle Ages. With a loud snort and a bucking movement, such as Chinese drivers seem to think necessary to emphasise the power of the modern contrivance under their hands, we started on our journey.

Here and there a woman in blue trousers and long coat stood staring passively at our autotruck, or little youngsters giggled and pointed at the two foreign ladies in its front seat, or an impassive boy with vast umbrella-hat still dripping from the recent rain crossed our roadway to some tiny sidepath, leading home at twilight a sluggish water-buffalo. Occasional villages we passed, clusters of low houses, grey and tan, of sun-dried bricks. At night we came to the city of Siangtan and, since our automobile would go no further that evening, we went an hour's journey by rickshaw through the narrow dark streets where ghostly banners waved and rosy paper lanterns glowed in the vaulted night above us. Once the flames of a forge into which I looked inadvertently as we passed a shop-front, darkened all the world thereafter for many minutes; once the fires in front of the Temple of Kwanyin, where the gifts of the faithful went up in flames to the goddess of mercy, brightened our pathway for a hundred yards.

Beyond and behind all these dim and glowing shops, all these green, rice terraces, all these tumultuous cities and sun-baked villages, we came after a day and a half to the town of Yungfong which runs in a single street along a rapid, brown river, fresh from the grey-blue hills. It was the end of the auto road and the end of our journey. We picked our way from rock to rock between a row of houses and the rising river, crossed on an arched stone bridge to the other side of the water, passed by the usual shop-fronts and an occasional temple, and came to the small and ancient house where dwelt Pastor Schindewulf and his wife and daughters.

The house had been for twelve years a shrine of German Protestantism in this far country, so utterly different from the orderly countryside of Germany. It had been for a few brief weeks the

centre of the Yungfong labour unions; now it was again the shrine of the German religion, breathing a worship of law and private property and old-established manners which seemed utterly unaffected by the storm of revolution that had passed over it. The floors were warped with age but washed with German thoroughness; the sheets and towels were crisp and clean. Even the texts on the walls: "Ja, Vater," and "Sage es Jesu," hung again in their old accustomed places, undented by the great upheaval in this "reddest" spot of all the "red" Revolution. Pastor Schindewulf himself was a thorough evangelical, tracing the direct hand of the Lord in all things, except where he traced the handiwork of the devil. The Lord, he told me, had used the peasant Revolution to chastise the rich for their sins of greed and graft; now he was using the soldiers to punish the peasants for their unruly excesses. It was a convenient doctrine; he could be happy whatever happened. It did not, however, spoil his German thoroughness in observing facts and remembering them.

"Yungfong," said Pastor Schindewulf after dinner, while we restlessly fought mosquitoes that came through the unscreened windows, "is a town of perhaps ten or twelve thousand people on 'the Street'; it serves as *entrepôt* for many villages back in the hills. The lands around are owned chiefly by ten or twelve rich families, who lease them to peasants in return for half the crop. Thus their granaries are full to bursting with half the rice of the district, which they hoard till the fifth or sixth month of the year when the poorest peasants have eaten their harvest and the price of rice goes up. At times in the past the rich have hoarded the rice till the poor were rioting with hunger at their granary door — so secure did they feel in the ancient submission of the Chinese peasant. Then they opened the granaries and sold for high prices; to those who could not pay they made loans of rice, exacting two and three-fold return at harvest.

"This year, however, there was a peasants' union. In Yungfong was the central union for twenty miles around. Every ten li or so (about three miles) there was a local peasants' union, but they

all came to Yungfong as a centre for parades or meetings or to bring rich gentry for taxation. The heads of the peasants' union were Long and Li, tenant peasants of good reputation. But some of the small local unions had less reputable leaders. Twenty li away from here was a very bad union leader who killed a member of the gentry. Not with his own hands of course; he sent him with an accusation to Siangsiang, the big district union which was higher than Yungfong and assumed powers of life and death in this district. Siangsiang tried this man of the gentry before their committee and executed him. I spoke to the union leader about his action and told him he had committed a sin. But he had no repentance in his heart for the man's death. He said: 'He was a very rich man who did only evil and no good all the days of his life.'

"And was it true that the rich man was wicked?" I asked.

"Yes, it was doubtless true," admitted the pastor. "The gentry killed by the peasants' union were chiefly the worst gentry, greedy grafters, the men who paid worst wages or grew rich from stolen famine funds, or took the last grains of rice in famine years from hungry peasants. But these are not crimes for death penalties," he added with conviction, transferring his fixed, priestly scruples to the elemental upheaval. "Moreover there is no doubt that the rice belonged to the rich and the peasants who took it were stealing."

Thus we came to the tale of the "People's Food," the most revolutionary action accomplished by the peasants of Yungfong, and done by them in the third month of their existence. In Yungfong, I learned, the peasants' union did not consider that it had power to pass death sentences; these were referred to the district union in Siangsiang. Such definite discipline existed in even the first months of the peasants' organisation. But Yungfong took the power of arresting rich men and making them pay "contributions." They knew how much these people had and taxed them accordingly. The owner of the house where the pastor lived paid

\$500 (gold) and 80 piculs* of rice. They took from him chiefly money, since his lands were tealands. From those who had more rice, they took as high as 300 piculs of rice. They promised to repay the rice after harvest, but only pound for pound without interest, not two and three-fold as they had been forced to pay before. The rice was stored in a warehouse next to the mission, and Pastor Schindewulf testifies that every day they drew out three or four thousand pounds of this rice and sold it for low prices in the temple to the poor.

This was the "People's Food." Three miles away they had another station, so that no one need walk too far. Not everyone could buy this rice; one must be on a list. Pastor Schindewulf was able to write his two servants on the list by going to the peasants' union and registering their names, wages and the number in their families. After this they could buy every day a half Chinese pound (about three-fourths of an English pound) for every member of the family. They could not buy for the missionary's family. When Pastor Schindewulf protested that this was unequal treatment, the union replied that they had calculated carefully and had only enough rice to feed all the poor till harvest. Those who had enough money must buy from private traders at higher prices.

Some of the funds from the sale of rice were used by the peasants' union to start schools for poor children in all the nearby villages. They proclaimed that every child, however poor, had a right to learn to read. There were many such schools just starting, but they had all been closed by the military reaction. The peasants had talked much about a Co-operative, to be started from the rice sale and used to finance future rice purchases and perhaps the purchase of seed. This hope also died in the militarist reaction. But the "People's Food" remained for a time even under the white terror. The new merchants' union, which was the old reactionary merchants' guild under a new name, did not dare provoke public unrest by stopping the rice sale. Only

* A picul is 125 English pounds.

thereafter they gave the money to the original owners. And slowly the prices began to go up. Thus ended in Yungfong the peasants' attempt at food control and schools for the poor.

Besides the peasants' union, there were many other unions in the town of Yungfong under the "People's Power." With German thoroughness Pastor Schindewulf could give me a list of twenty-four unions; wharf-coolies, servants, cooks, bamboo-workers, shop-clerks, iron-workers, brass-workers, rice-huskers, tailors and many more. Even the four telegraphers had a union. There was a tenants' union to which Pastor Schindewulf himself belonged since he was a tenant in his house. The tea-packers were not yet organised since the season for tea-packing had not come. The cotton-pickers were organised in the peasants' union, not under the labour unions. All this detailed thoroughness of organisation was achieved in three months from December to March, 1927.

The German exactitude which enabled Pastor Schindewulf to give the number of unions, gave also the current local wages. "We pay our cook \$3.50 (gold) a month and our serving woman \$2.00; they get their own food from their wages. Shop-clerks get \$1.50 to \$4.00 a month and rice in addition, according to their experience and skill. A woman shop-clerk gets perhaps ten cents a month and her food. Clothes? Oh, if she works for a rich man, she gets the cast-off clothes of the family. . . ." Such were the workers of Yungfong who dared take the "People's Power" and organise revolution.

The wharf-coolies and the carrying-coolies who bring loads of goods from the mountain villages to the little port of Yungfong, introduced new regulations regarding labour. They ruled that wharf-coolies must be hired in rotation, and that the strong active ones who jump on the boats in mid-stream must not be taken first. If there were disagreements, the parties must go to the union headquarters to settle them. Pastor Schindewulf was greatly annoyed by all these regulations; he said that he often got slow, lazy coolies, or men too old to work properly, and that the agile young men who worked very fast and used to get work every day, now

worked only half the time. Peasants from the surrounding country, hoping for a job from the wharf-coolies' union, had poured into the town of Yungfong till it became a serious problem for the union whether to accept all these new members and all starve together, or refuse them and be accused of fighting their brothers of the Revolution. . . . These were problems that have daunted more experienced unionists than the wharf-coolies of Yungfong, and for which with China's overcrowding and present economic system there is no good solution. But remembering the heart-breaking scene on the dock in Changsha, when the strong, young men risked their lives to leap upon our ship for the chance of a few coppers, while the old and less agile waited dumbly for starvation, I felt that the great competition for a livelihood in China, which is her most enduring problem, had been gallantly faced by the wharf-coolies of Yungfong.

There were other regulations of the wharf-coolies' union which had been enforced on the German pastor. When he returned from his involuntary exile, he sent his house servant to unload his boat-load of baggage and household furnishings. To the first load the coolies on the dock made no objection but, when the house servant returned and they saw it was his intention to make a complete job of unloading the boat by himself, they beat him away from the docks and sent him home. They followed him to the mission and informed the pastor that his servant was a house servant and a bamboo-worker, and that only regular wharf-coolies from the union would be permitted to unload the boat. The pastor complied and went to the union, to request that they would not punish his servant for orders which he himself had given in ignorance. For the rest of the day the wharf-coolies unloaded the boat and fraternised with the servant; in the evening they invited him to go to a union meeting "and bow before the picture of Sun Wen" (Sun Yat Sen). At this point the pastor intervened in protest. "He is my servant," he said, "and a Christian. I will protect him. He shall not bow before the picture of Sun Wen."

Such was the conflict which arose constantly between foreign missionaries and the new nationalism that flamed through China.

The first attack on religion made by the unions was not against Pastor Schindewulf but against the Buddhist idols. Members of the students' union and the young men's corps broke and burned the idols in the two chief Buddhist temples of Yungfong. But when they began to denounce household gods and proclaim the intention to destroy them, the women intervened. The wife of the chief idol-smasher is reported to have cried: "I will kill my husband if he touches my gods." So the campaign against idols languished, because the chief idol-smasher could not clean up his own house. Among the peasants also the attack on religion was not very successful. When the soldiers of the reaction came, one of the peasant leaders of a local union went to the temple idol to ask his fortune. He received an answer that his life would be spared, and thereafter went confidently through the village till the soldiers killed him. This man, who believed the oracle of the idols, was nevertheless a leader in the Revolution.

The account of Pastor Schindewulf's expulsion from Yungfong and his return indicated a remarkably disciplined organisation on the part of the unions. It was in the wave of anti-foreign feeling after the bombardment of Nanking that his mission was closed by the unions. He himself claims that the orders came from Changsha, from agitating students and young communists, who came first to Siangsiang as regional centre, stirred up the party headquarters and unions and seized the foreign mission buildings in that city, and descended at last upon Yungfong with the aid of the magistrate's soldiers. For three days, he learned afterwards, the various unions in Yungfong debated, the peasants' and merchants' unions opposing the taking of his building, while the labour unions wished it because of their need of a headquarters and meeting-hall, which purpose the mission chapel would admirably serve.

"Early Wednesday morning gentry came and warned us. Even while we talked the crowd arrived; girl and boy students blowing

horns and bugles, workmen with spears, regular soldiers from the magistrate with rifles." Such was the wave of Revolution as it broke over the house of Pastor Schindewulf.

The pastor asked for the leaders, and there stepped forth the chief telegrapher, the principal of the middle school, and the officer of the soldiers who was a Christian. The pastor asked them to come into his study and tell what they wanted. "Excuse us," they answered, "as you are a German, we should not bother you. But now the Kuomintang is against religion. Therefore we tell you to leave Yungfong. . . ." The pastor seized the moment to argue about the value of the Christian religion for China! . . . "Now we have People's Power," they answered, "and we need no religion, but we need your chapel for our labour union." The pastor asked for their legal warrant and was told, "we have no time to wait for warrants, and besides we need none, since Changsha itself now takes orders from the People's Power." He asked four weeks' delay to arrange matters with the Chinese evangelists, but this was refused. He then asked four days' grace to pack his belongings and this was granted. "You may take all your personal things," they said, "but not the property of the mission. For the mission was given to the people of China and is now taken over by the People's Power. . . ." "And so," says Pastor Schindewulf, "I demanded a receipt for all my things and told them I would return and expect them again. They gave me the receipt and when I returned I got everything back in order."

Several incongruous incidents followed, in which revolutionary determination blended oddly with the old Chinese politeness, and formal court sentences were modified for most informal reasons. Through them all one gets the flavour of the Chinese countryside. There was a forced parade of the mission servants and church employees in disgrace through the streets as "eaters of foreign religion." There was a debate in the yamen as to their sentence in which a few voices called for death; but the majority decided to "cut the hair of the women and let them go, but imprison the men." Yet the same evening Pastor Schindewulf went to the yamen and

explained that he needed his cook to help him pack — this was considered sufficient reason for letting the man out of jail!

On the second day, when the packing was almost completed, a minor war occurred between Yungfong and a nearby village over the question which had the right to tax a certain rich man, the village where he lived or the town where he sold his produce. Local battles of this kind occurred in many parts of Hunan. A man of Yungfong was wounded in the skirmish and brought to Pastor Schindewolf for treatment. After treating him, the pastor felt emboldened to demand and get the release of his other Chinese employees and evangelists from the jail! There began again a debate about his going. The peasants' and merchants' union formally begged him to "reconsider and stay in Yungfong." But the labour union sat silently waiting, while the local party headquarters refused to allow him to continue preaching, so he went on with his packing. All of the unions, including the labour union, accompanied him to the boat with farewell speeches and firecrackers, thanking him for his work in the past and for "giving his mission building to the People's Power." Such is the Chinese method of saving "face" which persists even in revolutions.

Pastor Schindewolf came back a few weeks later, armed with papers which he had secured in Changsha and Siangsiang, not only from the government but from the regional labour union, ordering the unions of Yungfong to return the building. Armed with this order, he walked into the chapel filled with spears and banners, presented his documents and got his building back in four hours' time. He presented his receipts and recovered all his furniture, even that which had been removed to other union headquarters.

There is one thing above all that shocked the pastor far more than any seizing of buildings or commandeering of rice. The taking of property by one side or the other is, after all, a commonplace in the feudal wars of China. But during the time when the unions occupied the mission building, ten girls of the women's

union lived in it together with men unionists and labour soldiers. To the minds of the orthodox Chinese, all of these are "ruined women," who must certainly have been living in utter promiscuity. These girls, I learned, wore uniforms like men; they went tirelessly from house to house urging the unbinding of feet, and the cutting of hair, and the right of young people to marry without their parents' consent. From all of these facts it appears that it was the more potent emotion of Revolution rather than of sex which stirred them. But to the older inhabitants of Yungfong, the wearing of men's clothes was only an additional horror.

One girl especially was picked out later for punishment. When the soldiers overthrew the unions, the reorganised merchants' union removed the girl's clothes to her waist and exposed her for two days and nights in the temple at the centre of the main street under the guard of soldiers, "so that every man in town may see she is really a woman." Then she was sent home to her husband's house, for girls of nineteen in China have nearly always husbands, and she lies there to-day in Yungfong disgraced and hidden.

"It is worse now in Yungfong than before," said Pastor Schindewolf. "When the soldiers came, they killed five men: one who had accused and thus killed a man sixty li away; one who had accused and thus killed a rich man thirty li away; one who was head of the young men, who were supposed to have said that old men should be killed; and one who lived in the Union House along with the girls. What the fifth did I do not know. The soldiers arrested two women and wished to kill them for having forcibly cut many women's hair; but they were found to be pregnant and sent home to their husbands. . . . But the rich have learned nothing. They are more bitter than before and oppress worse than ever. If a rich man even says a word against a peasant, the peasant is taken off at once to jail. So the discontent increases; there will come another explosion. Worse, I think it will be, than this one."

Three or four pictures close the tale of Yungfong: A narrow path of stone blocks winding across rice-fields and streams to a village, with a procession of coolies for ever traversing it—shouting, swearing, edging each other out of the way of their heavy burdens—as they bring the products of the countryside into Yungfong in a district where horse-power is crowded out by cheaper man-power. . . . The little tea village at the end of this pathway, where girls and women crowd together in tiny shacks for the work of tea-packing, and where the chief merchant of the village looks worried if you mention his son, the black sheep of the family who was a leading member of the local Kuomintang committee. The son is at home, and the father hopes he can bribe the soldiers to spare him. . . . The ancient Buddhist Temple at the centre of the street, which has seen many historic moments in the past few months: where the idols were first broken, where the “People’s Food” was sold, where communal dinners were held on festival days by the Unions, and where later the half-naked girl was exposed to the gaze of the passers-by, by order of the merchants’ association which now has headquarters in this same temple. . . . The leading merchant of Yungfong, sitting in the temple, proudly caressing his baby son who still wears the ancient top-knot and silver circlet as guard against devils, then lifting his hand from the child’s head to make a gleeful gesture of a beheading axe when I asked what would happen to the union leaders if caught. . . . Last of all, a group of peasants, edging away from me when I took out my note-book while the pastor warned me: “You frighten them. They have heard that there are four hundred gun-boats in Changsha and that the American aeroplanes will bomb the villages in revenge for the expulsion of the foreign missionaries. They think you are collecting evidence.”

So ended the Revolution in Yungfong, with soldiers restoring order by killing union leaders, with merchants again displaying household gods and silver amulets, with peasants afraid of foreign aeroplanes. But Pastor Schindewolf, and everyone else I met in Hunan, knew quite well that under the deceptively quiet surface,

much thinking and planning and hoping went on. They who had slept for a thousand years in dumb submission had awakened to the intoxication of power. This experience they took with them into the dark night of suppression and terror, weighing their failures and successes, and piling up for the future the knowledge of who were friends and who were enemies. Those who in four brief months swept to the organisation of “People’s Food” and schools for the poor and peasant unions across the countryside “from every ten li to ten li” and found through these simple, necessary things new hope for life, did not give up their hope at the bidding of soldiers. Always behind the soldiers, as even their commander had told me, the union revived under a new name. And in the grey-blue hills of South Hunan and Kiangsi, that ancient mountain refuge of fugitives and oppressed, the leaders who survived reassembled shattered forces, planned, organised for the future.

Out of those shattered peasant unions of South China, out of the hopes and experiences of those millions of peasants, Soviet China was to grow in the next half decade.

CHAPTER XIII

FRAGMENTS OF REVOLUTION

THROUGH the countryside of Hunan I saw many other fragments of the peasant Revolution. I stopped in Siangsiang, which had been the head of a regional union with powers of life and death. The German missionaries, who had been expelled from their mission here also, told a tale of disciplined organisation on the part of the unions superior even to that in Yungfong. They were ruthless, but they accomplished their aim with little waste motion and no atrocities.

"We were sitting at dinner on Easter Monday, April 17," said the missionaries, "when our amah told us that hundreds of labour militia were in the street. We continued quietly eating for there had been no agitation against us, and we thought if they wanted us they would come in. Soon the head of a leader appeared at our dining-room window; he blew a signal and the militia poured in. Some took positions at the doors of the room; but they did not touch us. As soon as we saw their leader, we were not afraid; he was Mr. Nieh, principal in the government high school, and an old acquaintance. He was now leader of all the unions of Siangsiang, but except for his Bolshevism, he was always a responsible man.

"He said: 'The Kuomintang has decided that we do not need this foreign religion. We have People's Power now, neither president nor magistrate.' He asked us to leave in three days' time, since the peasants' and workers' unions needed our building as headquarters.

"We cried: 'Are you serious?' . . . 'Yes,' he replied, 'very serious.' He told us that since we were Germans and had done no harm in the town, if we wished to remain as business men we might rent any other house in the street but not this house which was a public structure built for the people of China, and which the People's Power wished now for a union headquarters and not for a mission. We might take with us all our personal belongings, but must leave the equipment and furniture of the mission. He also told us that since we were a poor mission and might not have money for our sudden departure, the unions had voted to give us \$200 for travelling expenses to Shanghai!

"While this amazingly business-like conversation went on in the dining-room under guard of soldiers, a group of workmen removed with a stone chisel the carved name of the mission above the outer door, replacing it by a sign which announced the central union headquarters of Siangsiang. Another group, under the lead of two bookkeepers with large books, went from room to room and listed all the contents, including even the number of doors and the glass panes in the windows. All rooms which contained no personal possessions but only mission equipment, were at once sealed shut by pasting two strips of paper across the doors."

"In two hours' time, from six to eight o'clock on that Monday evening," said the missionaries, "the whole thing was over. We had agreed to leave the following Wednesday and they thanked us politely and withdrew, leaving behind ten regular soldiers from the magistrate, with instructions to guard both the missionaries and the new union property. As long as the labour guards were here, there was no looting. They would have killed even their own members if they had broken discipline. But the regular soldiers left as guards were another matter. Next morning when we were packing, loafers came in from the streets and began to steal things before our eyes. The magistrate's soldiers did not protect us, but joined in the looting. They did not dare enter the rooms sealed by the unions, but they came where we were packing and pulled

things even out of our trunks. We decided not to wait till Wednesday but to leave the same evening."

Shortly before six o'clock two women and one man of the mission started to the boat they had secured. Crowds of children began jeering, then others shouted "Down with foreigners." At last a great mob was crying: "Kill, kill." The missionaries reached the boat in much fear. But by nine o'clock that evening when the last man of the mission left, after finishing the packing, the unions had heard of the situation and sent their labour guards to escort him to the boat. He reached it without disturbance. Early next morning the boat left, but when they had gone ten kilometres Mr. Nieh overtook them, explaining that they had left so quickly that he had not been able to secure the \$200, so he had come after them to bring it. An official from the magistrate came also and ordered the boatmen to treat the foreigners well, since their expulsion from Siangsiang did not mean that any private persons might loot from them; any persons who behaved lawlessly towards them would be punished by the law and the unions. Thus they came without further incident two days down river to Changsha.

In Changsha, the Germans besieged the Foreign Commissioner's Office for a paper ordering the restoration of their building. "But the Foreign Office had no power against the People's Power," they told me. "The Siangsiang union recognised only the provincial union of Changsha. After four weeks, during which we knew the Foreign Office was consulting the labour unions, we got a permit to go back to Siangsiang on a visit. . . ."

The day after the Germans left Changsha, the counter-revolution began in that city. The soldiers made a night attack on the headquarters of the peasants' union and the labour unions, driving out the inmates after a bloody battle. But in the villages the unions still reigned supreme. It was under such conditions that the missionaries were caught between the lines of battle, and saw the preparations made by the peasants. For the last forty-five kilometres of the road to Siangsiang, there were sentinels posted at

every turn of the road and on every hill. These stopped and searched all passers-by, turning most of them back. They allowed the Germans to pass but searched their baggage for arms. In Siangsiang itself the missionaries found the unions in their former house making ready for battle, and the attitude of the masses was such that they did not feel safe in remaining. They wished to return to Changsha but were not permitted "since that is enemy land now"; they were told they might go to Yungfong to join the other German missionary, "since we control all that territory and he has his house back and can take care of you."

After waiting five days in Yungfong, the Germans from Siangsiang learned that the unions were fleeing before the soldiers, and they returned in haste "to get our house before the soldiers got it." In this they were unlucky. When the unions left, the magistrate of Siangsiang, returning to his ancient duties, put a seal on the house to preserve it for the foreign owners. The soldiers disregarded the seal, broke the doors and entered, making their headquarters here for two weeks while they "cleaned" the district. After some debate, their officer allowed the missionaries to occupy two rooms on the upper floor, but the soldiers took all the beds and used the kitchen. Two weeks later the soldiers left, pursuing their conquests from district to district.

"When they moved out, they stole everything they could lay hands on," said the missionaries. "They took stoves, coal, doors, windows, tables. We stood in the door and prevented them as much as possible; we would order the soldiers to put down their loot and they would do so. But then they would take more loot through the back door and the windows. The unions never took any property out of the building; they brought instead some chairs and tables from another mission in order to furnish their offices. But the soldiers stole as individuals whatever they could put hands on."

From their vantage point inside the soldiers' headquarters the Germans saw much that occurred during the counter-revolution in Siangsiang. They learned also, though only by hearsay, what the

unions had done. "The unions had their jail in the back of our house," they said. "This was the centre for a very large district and all local unions who had complaints against what they called 'greedy gentry' brought them here for trial. I do not know how many were executed, perhaps as many as twenty. A few cases I know, a man who had been a regiment commander and retired rich from graft, and another who sold rice higher than the price fixed by the unions. I knew another man, named Lo, from a nearby village, who fled from his house because they asked from him more money than he possessed. They took his house for a school for poor children, and he himself was hiding in Siangsiang. Then the unions of Siangsiang began to register all the people in the houses and he fled again. But the peasants' union of his village took pity on him and sent word that he might return and live in his house as care-taker for the school. He went back to live in his house, weaving straw sandals in his spare time for a living. Now, of course, he has all his house again and all his land."

Schools for the poor had been started in Siangsiang and surrounding villages. As early as December the unions borrowed some desks and tables from a school that the mission had formerly operated, but which they had closed two years before from lack of funds. This union school ran six months, continuing even after the military reaction, since the primary teacher in charge of it had no connection with politics and had been paid for the whole time. In June he closed it and returned all the desks to the Germans. "It will not open again," they said, "for the money to run it was taken by the peasants from the rich."

"The People's Power grew month by month," they told me. "At first they did not know how much they could do. They prepared the people by schools so that they will hear what is said. By and by the yamens have no power except to sign orders made by the People's Power. The unions and the communists have all the power. When they see that the power of the people is in their hands, then they put forth their plans. . . . It took only half a

year from the first small beginnings in October. Soon the whole province was responsive to the plans from the centre. At Christmas time there were orders to attack religion. So by January the peasants' union near Siangsiang had seized four of our out-stations for union headquarters. Then in February, orders came from Wuhan to respect the property of foreigners; and at once the peasants gave our stations back. In April again there were students from Changsha whose agitation led to taking over our buildings but again, by the middle of May, the orders were for moderation and were beginning to be obeyed when the military reaction came. When orders came from Wuhan, it took them two or three weeks to reach the villages, and sometimes the yamens did not tell the peasants of these orders. But wherever they learned of the orders they began to obey. . . ."

I asked of the extent of the white terror since the reaction. "All union leaders are beheaded if caught," they told me. "They are investigated first at the yamen but this is very short, only to know if they were active in the union. Some fifty li (seventeen miles) from here there was a battle between unions and soldiers, and the soldiers captured fourteen men and killed them all at once. In another direction, ninety li, the soldiers caught fifteen fleeing unionists from different parts of this district and killed them all the same day. Almost every day for two weeks the procession of condemned in Siangsiang passed our house to the North Gate. About thirty were executed in those two weeks at the North Gate by the soldiers, of whom one-third were women. Others were executed at the East Gate, but we do not know how many, as they did not pass our house. Lately there are not so many, but to-morrow there is to be a woman executed." Thus was the Revolution suppressed in Siangsiang.

We left the town in the late afternoon on the autotruck. Near me sat a fine-looking officer of the Nationalist army from Kwangtung. He had studied four years in the Whampoa Academy, and was now in Hunan recruiting for the Eleventh Army — one of the "Iron Armies" of Canton. We learned later that many of the

active men of the peasants' and workers' movement were trying to escape from Hunan by joining these armies. The rumours ran through the countryside that the peasants would thus get arms and training, "and when they come back, they will not be so easily beaten again." However, the Hunanese generals complained to General Tang Sheng Chi and when I reached Changsha I found that orders had been issued forbidding the sending of recruits from Hunan to the "Iron Armies."

The city of Siangtan, revisited on my way back to Changsha, gave other glimpses of the revolutionary conflict. A German woman who had lived next door to the district peasants' union, remembers three fights there. The first occasion was a conflict over the death sentence passed on two men by the union; the families and friends of these men attacked the union headquarters and were beaten back. The second fight grew out of hair-cutting performed by the women's union of Siangtan city. Their agitators visited a nearby village and cut off the hair of many women, one of whom afterwards tried to drown herself. Armed men of this village came down in wrath against the city, stating: "If we want our women's hair cut, we can do it ourselves." It is not known how this struggle ended but it appeared to reach a compromise. The last fight was when the soldiers came from Changsha to suppress the peasants, who resisted at first but finally fled. After this fight the German woman found a dead peasant outside her gate. She told me there were many executions.

A leading merchant of Siangtan said that conditions under the soldiers were worse for the merchants than they had been under the unions. "The unions and employers had agreed on a wage scale in practically all the shops. Only three or four shops fought the union and closed rather than pay the wage scale. The union opened these shops itself and ran them. Since the reaction, there is much more trouble. The wounded soldiers take things from the shops without payment. When Hankow paper dollars were worth only 180 coppers, the soldiers made us give 360 for them. So the shops lost very much.

"Before May 21, the Kuomintang Party was powerful and speculation in money was forbidden. The peasants accepted Hankow paper money for rice through their new co-operatives, so this paper money remained good and merchants were not afraid of it. But now the party and the unions are gone, the speculators monopolise the market, and Hankow paper dollars drop to half their former value. Yet the soldiers force this paper on us, though the tax-collector refuses to accept it. The former gentry, the military and the magistrate join to squeeze the merchants. They had last night a banquet and asked us to give them at once \$6,000. How can we keep on making such contributions?"

There had been no direct confiscation of rice in Siangtan: the unions here managed with more sophistication. They received several thousand dollars from the Wuhan Government for rice purchases for the army. They therefore decided to prohibit individual selling, since the rich men were boosting the price and demanding silver. The unions collected rice through a co-operative and sold for Hankow paper money to the Nationalist army. Later, when the rice of the poor was exhausted, and the rich were hoarding rice in the warehouses, the unions demanded that they open and sell at a fixed price. The rich refused, pretending that there was no guarantee of purchase and that they feared seizure and looting. The unions and the magistrates thereupon organised a committee for upkeeping food in Siangtan, and collected a guarantee fund from every shop in the city. They said to the rice-owners: "Here is your guarantee; now open and sell for the fixed price." The rich did not dare refuse, so rice was sold cheaply in Siangtan; the guarantee fund was later returned to its donors.

My informant was a progressive merchant, a veteran member of the Kuomintang. He said: "Our chief desire is for the party to return and control all labour unions and merchants' associations, so that no merchant can speculate with the coinage and no magistrate can demand arbitrary sums. We desire next a provincial bank to issue paper money with good security so that people will have confidence as in the time of the unions."

From this merchant I learned the origin of the tale that had been spread over Hunan, regarding the alleged plot of the unions to kill all employers, all bosses, all landlords and all men over thirty years of age. This amazing tale was widely believed; it was based on an alleged confession made before death by Yang, the union leader of Siangtan. Yang, said my merchant informant, was a scholar, who had done secret organising for the Kuomintang for eight years. He had been the merchant's own teacher. Yang had been frightfully tortured and was alleged to have signed a confession, but no one had been shown the signature. "They beheaded Yang in the market-place and soldiers kicked his head about like a football. The relatives of a pharmacist whose shop had been confiscated by Yang's union, disembowelled the corpse, cut it in four pieces, gave it to a dog to eat and burned what was left." The Chinese regard such treatment of a corpse as a greater punishment than torture of the living.

My informant made me promise that I would give his name to no one. Even merchants and members of the gentry were being persecuted, he said, if they had been tolerant towards the unions. An old scholar named Wo Sung was thus punished, together with all the family who lived with him — his four married brothers and their fifty servants, living in true patriarchal style. Highly respected for justice and honesty, and a secret organiser of the Kuomintang for six years, his crime was that he permitted his servants to enrol in the labour militia. The soldiers expelled him with all his relatives from their home and sealed the dwelling. The wife of a brother was bearing a child at the time, but people were afraid to give her shelter, so she bore her child in the streets. "The shamefullest thing," said the merchant, "that ever was seen in Hunan."

The feudal military who were thus persecuting veteran members of the Kuomintang and killing workers and peasants, still used the flag of the Kuomintang, the "blue sky and white sun" which a few months before had been posted on the walls of Wuchang as a symbol that soldiers and workmen were brothers. The army

propaganda department had invited the peasants and workers to forget their fears and to rejoice and play under "the blue sky and the white sun." Now under that same blue sky and white sun, the workers and peasants were being put to death.

When I came back to Hankow after a week in Hunan, I found that the reaction had made swift strides in the capital also. Most of the union buildings in Hankow and Wuchang were occupied by soldiers. It was claimed that this was temporary, due to the concentration of armed forces in Wuhan for the expedition against Nanking, and the need of quarters for the armies. But the labour unions were expressing no hopes for the future. The Communist Party was completely underground; the interviews I had been promised with its leaders were never secured. The labour and peasant leaders were going underground also. Madame Sun had abandoned Hankow and fled to Shanghai, stating that the name of Dr. Sun could no longer be used to sanction a programme which suppressed workers, peasants and communists. Russian Adviser Borodin was preparing to leave in a few days for Moscow, for the same reason. Foreign Minister Eugene Chen was still at his post, attempting to the end to protect Chinese rights against foreign aggression, but he told me he would probably depart soon. All the other intellectuals and officials of the Wuhan Government were taking orders from Tang Sheng Chi, who was still swaying, still expressing high sentiments on behalf of the workers and peasants, but sliding faster and faster into complete reaction. It was no longer the Hunan generals who were loyal to the Kuomintang and to Wuhan; it was the Wuhan Government and what was left of the Kuomintang that was loyal to the Hunan generals.

Just as the People's Power had grown in Hunan, steadily and at first hardly conscious of its strength, until in the end the "yamen" had no power except to sign resolutions of the peasants," so now the military power had grown. Surprised and almost awed into inaction for a time by the great movement sweeping

from the south, they had for some months shown submission to the new power of the Kuomintang which they did not understand. But step by step they had begun to express themselves, and had found at each step no serious opposition. Until now, there was no power in Wuhan except to sign the orders issued by the military.

The military itself was not united. The "Iron Armies" of Canton which had carried the Revolution north to the Yellow River, though shattered by many battles and diluted with alien elements, still retained enough revolutionary feeling to resent the open counter-revolution of the Hunanese. As they started down the Yangtze against Chiang Kai Shek, they were asking themselves why they should die against Chiang for the sake of Tang. The long-expected war between Wuhan and Nanking had degenerated into a personal war between two rival generals. In this personal war, General Tang was following the old Chinese custom of placing at the front for slaughter the revolutionary armies of Cantonese, in order to get rid, not only of the enemy, but also of his own revolutionary soldiers. The "Iron Armies" were aware of this intention, and murmurs were beginning which led a few days later to a sudden revolt when part of the Cantonese started south again.

Here once more the vacillating cowardice of the civilian members of Wuhan Government betrayed the Revolution to its last bitterest defeat. When it became clear that the military leaders were turning against the workers and peasants, and that General Tang was sacrificing his few revolutionary soldiers for his personal victory over Chiang, Mrs. Sun suggested that the civilian government of Wuhan lead the revolutionary forces south to Canton to entrench themselves in the historic base of revolution. Had this step been taken with firmness, the Wuhan leaders might have carried enough armed forces and political prestige to regain their ancient citadel. But they wavered, halted and submitted to Tang Sheng Chi. So the soldiers who started south were only a small fraction led by communists, and commanded by men as yet unknown — Yeh Ting, Ho Lung, Chu Teh. They swept into

brief fame in the taking of Swatow and were then swallowed up in the great hinterland of China. They were to emerge again as the nucleus of the Chinese Red Army, and Chu Teh was to appear in history as first chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Chinese Soviet Republic.

The Wuhan leaders, however, had already decided to break with the communists. Under their apparent wavering, this purpose was strengthening and becoming clear. What was later said to have crystallized it was a message that reached them that the communists might be preparing to arm the peasants and workers in defense of "People's Power."

What then happened was that Wang Ching Wei and the Kuomintang "progressives" who had cheered so loudly for revolution, who had shouted "Kill the gentry," and made speeches more radical than the peasants' simple demand for People's Food, People's Schools, People's Justice, knew suddenly that no humiliation at the hands of soldiers was so horrible to them as the arming of their own followers! Better to make peace with the feudal-minded warlords of Central China, and "restore order" over the bodies of the masses. Better even make peace with Chiang Kai Shek and the Shanghai financiers. Or even with foreign imperialists. After all, Mrs. Wang Ching Wei had her fortune in Sumatra rubber; there was something to be said for foreign powers. If reconciliation with Nanking proved difficult, one could live in Paris (to which Wang Ching Wei actually fled for a few years until Chiang received him), but not with rough, armed masses whom one had called comrade! That was to the Wuhan "progressives" the ultimate horror!

Thus ended the alliance of the last section of the Kuomintang with the communists. Thus was broken that united front of workers, peasants, intellectuals, and patriotic merchants which had carried the Nationalist Revolution so gloriously to the Yangtze, uniting a nation in its advance. Its northern enemies were fleeing before it; the foreign nations were yielding to it and preparing to recognise it; but the feudal militarists within it rose to dominate

it, and the would-be democrats and liberal intellectuals, wavering for a time, at last followed their lead.

With the passing of the Wuhan Government into a reactionary dictatorship, under the Hunan military clique, there remained no spot in all China where workers and peasants were free to organise or even to assemble. Such was the situation at the end of July 1927 when I returned from Hunan to Hankow, and found that the military dictatorship was in control of the last citadel of the Revolution.

Borodin, with most of the Russians, left on July 27th. Had he remained even a few days longer there is little doubt that he would have been shot. For the Cantonese "Iron Armies" sent down river by General Tang as shock troops to be sacrificed in an attack on Chiang Kai Shek revolted on August 1st and started south. Borodin would have been the scapegoat had he remained. The day he left, however, courtesy reigned. The heads of the Nationalist Government came down to the train for a formal farewell. Up to the final moment they tried to interest him in their proposal for war against Chiang Kai Shek. Every action of his made answer: "Since you have decided to break up the workers' and peasants' organisations, I cannot work with you."

Later one incident trickled out from his breakfast with Marshal Feng Yu Hsiang in Chengchow. Feng has asked Borodin what was the difference between Nanking and Hankow. Both claimed to be Nationalist Governments, yet they were preparing to fight each others. Feng had tried to unite them under his own banner for war on Peking. He had been told that Borodin and the Communists were to blame for his failure. Would Borodin define the points of view of the two antagonists?

Borodin surprised him. "There is no difference," he said. "Once there was but now there is none."

"Then what are they fighting for?" asked Feng.

"Chow," answered Borodin, "only chow," alluding to the revenues of Shanghai.

To-day over the greater part of China lies a fiercer chaos than there has ever been before. Step by step the Kuomintang which arose as a defiance to foreign imperialism has become the tool of that imperialism. Cut off by its own act from the masses, it found in the foreign overlords its support. The price of that support was subservience to Japan and civil war against the Chinese people.

But in the heart of Hunan, among the broken fragments of revolution, I felt a hope for the future of China which I had not felt in listening to her able orators and clever intellectuals. The episodes I gathered, told by the enemies of the Revolution, showed a realism, a directness and orderly courage which had been painfully lacking at the upper end of the Chinese social structure. In less than six months these peasants, ignorant, superstitious, still children of the feudal ages, were dealing shrewdly, fearlessly and democratically with food control, local government, justice and education.

So I felt no incredulity when I heard, in the half-decade that followed, of the orderly achievements begun in these same regions by these peasants and workers organised under the rising Chinese Soviets. It will be such peasants and workers — and not the northern or southern generals, or the wealthy but subservient bourgeoisie of Shanghai, or the timid politicians and officials — who will have the courage to carry their country out of the Middle Ages into the modern world.

千千万万中国人民
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Born 80 years ago in Friend, Nebraska, U.S.A. the writer became a prominent worker in the field of social reform. Later, World War I and the October Revolution of 1917 brought her to revolution and socialism. She helped edit the newspaper of the Seattle General Strike, one of America's greatest working-class struggles, in 1919. Then she went to the Soviet Union, in Lenin's lifetime. In subsequent years, she gained worldwide renown as an indefatigable reporter of revolutionary developments in the Soviet Union, China, Spain, Poland and other countries, in books and in the American press. Six journeys over four decades to China, where she now lives, form the background of the present series.

Anna Louise Strong has a record of always standing with the working people, the makers of history and masters of mankind's future. At present she is prominent in the internationalist solidarity movement with the people of Vietnam in their valiant fight against U.S. imperialism, to which she has also devoted many writings and much effort. This places her in the mainstream of the militant progressive movement of the American people today.

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Since her return to China in 1958, she has written vivid and penetrating books on the rise of the People's Communes and the liberation of the serfs in Tibet, and a long series of reports and comments on many internal and international events concerning China.

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