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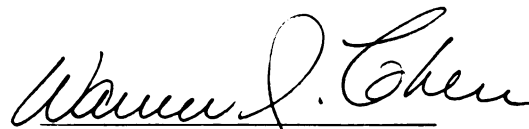


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THE THIRD FORCE  
AND AMERICA'S MEDIATION OF THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR, 1946

By  
Yan Lu

A THESIS

Submitted to  
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## ABSTRACT

### THE THIRD FORCE AND AMERICA'S MEDIATION OF THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR, 1946

By

Yan Lu

From the perspective of Chinese history, this study tries to explain the causes of the failure of America's mediation, conducted by General George C. Marshall in 1946, of the Chinese civil war. The thesis focuses on the political efforts of the Third Force -- an amalgamation of several minor parties and groups -- in its cooperation with Marshall to bring about peace and a democratic government in China. It finds that the possibility of achieving peace and democracy did exist for a brief period but it soon diminished largely because of America's partiality in the mediation and the Third Force's political weakness and, therefore, inability to hold the balance of power between the two contending parties.

The major sources used in this study include documents and publications of the Third Force, the documents of the U.S. State Department, and contemporary Chinese newspapers and magazines.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the history of Sino-American relations, the decade of the 1940s stood as a unique period. Never before had the two nations experienced such a close relationship as allies, bound together by common interest, and supported each other in fighting the same enemy. Nor had they expected the dramatic change at the end of the decade that would suddenly turned them into enemies, remaining hostile in the global conflict of the cold war for many years to come. In western academic circles, the drastic change of Sino-American relations in the 1940s has been extensively explored from the American perspective since the early 1960s, when the era of the 1940s was succinctly described by Professor Tang Tsou as "America's Failure in China." As the rapprochement arrived in the 1970s, however, it became increasingly enticing for historians to reexamine the history of estrangement between the United States and China to see if the possibility of pursuing another course of Sino-American relations existed in that period.

This study is an attempt to explore the possibilities which once existed in the past. I have chosen to focus on the year 1946 and on the role of the Third Force in the Marshall Mission for the following reasons. It was well-recognized by historians that the failure of the Marshall

Mission in bringing about "a united and democratic China" marked a turning point in American China policy, from an all-out support to a hand-off attitude towards the Nationalist Government. Historians have indicated that Marshall's failure to stop the civil war in China was basically due to America's inability to commit more in that region, as China was assigned a very low priority in the U.S. global strategic concern. As the China problem could not be solved by a limited commitment, the Marshall mission was bound to fail.<sup>1</sup>

While this argument has explained a decisive factor in Truman Administration's China policy, it nevertheless oversimplifies the reality in China. In retrospect, the solution to the China problem through peaceful means was initially not so unlikely. During the early period of Marshall's mission, from December 1945 to the late April 1946, there was indeed some room for American mediators to initiate positive changes in China. The possibility of achieving a political settlement existed not only because both the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Guomindang (GMD) were forced to sit down at the negotiation table under internal and external pressure but also because of the existence of a Third Force--an amalgamation of minor parties gathering within the China Democratic League. The Third Force emerged at that time as a balancing power between the two parties and offered a promising prospect of reconstructing China's political system. For a time during

the Marshall Mission, democratic government appeared attainable.

In addition to the role of being a balancing power in the formation of a coalition government, the Third Force attained importance in Chinese politics and therefore affected the American mediation in two other ways. First of all, the Third Force leaders continued their efforts, which had begun since 1939, to mediate the CCP-GMD conflict in 1946, though their role as mediator became secondary and supplementary to Marshall's. Secondly, the Third Force leaders, most of whom were prominent civic leaders and intellectuals, constituted an influential front of public opinion and became themselves a part of the public pressure for peace, which did constitute a favorable condition for Marshall's mediation. In Chinese political history, 1946 was the year during which minor parties reached the summit of their career. Obviously, the rise of the Third Force was an immediate response of Chinese to Marshall's mediation. His presence strongly suggested support of the U.S. government for the Chinese people's demand for peace, unity and democracy. As the spokesmen for these demands, the Third Force leaders were pushed to the political forefront to move China's politics towards their ideal of public voting and representative democratic government, a political system which also would satisfy U.S. strategic interests in the area.

Despite the active role played by the Third Force in

the Marshall mediation, however, the Third Force has been by and large a neglected topic in the study of Sino-American relations. While I have no intention to exaggerate the possibility of pursuing another course in Sino-American relations -- a harmonious course that maintained the friendly relationship between the two nations through the work of a coalition government -- , I find that analysis of the activities of the Third Force worth exploring because it tells the story from the Chinese side. Examination of the Third Force reveals why the confrontation between the two parties in China and between China and the United States became unavoidable. The following pages will discuss the intention of Marshall's mediation briefly, and shift immediately to the Chinese scene, focusing on the work of the Third Force in establishing a coalition government and in preventing the resumption of civil war. It is hoped that from the perspective of Chinese history, the following words from Marshall, given at the end of his fruitless mission, will be understood in their true meanings:

The salvation of the situation, as I see it, would be the assumption of leadership by the liberals in the Government and in the minority parties, a splendid group of men. ...[S]uccessful action on their part under the leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek would...lead to unity through good government.<sup>2</sup>

## I. The Aim Of Marshall's Mediation

To keep China in the war against the Japanese had been one of the basic aims of U.S. policy towards China since the early forties. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States government supported the Chinese war effort with more military and financial aid, hoping the Japanese could be bemired in the China morass and leave the United States to concentrate on defeating Germany in Europe first. Yet the Nationalist government under Jiang Jieshi chose to annihilate its political rival, the Chinese Communist Party, rather than fighting with the Japanese first, and used most of the U.S. munitions for that purpose. As the result of the civil conflicts, government corruption and collapse of morale, the government troops suffered disastrous defeat in the Japanese-launched Central China Offensive in early 1944. Deeply worried about the future of the Chinese theatre in the war, Roosevelt sent Henry Wallace and then Patrick Hurley as his representatives to China, trying to mediate the relations between the Guomindang and the CCP. Both missions, however, failed to ease the tension between the two parties. As World War II approached its end, the civil war in China became imminent as the government troops frequently clashed with the CCP troops in North China.

While the Chinese problem generally remained the same, the central theme of American policy towards China changed

soon as the war ended. As U.S.-Soviet relations grew tense over the issue of reconstructing social order in Eastern Europe, the presence of Soviet troops in Manchuria, as stipulated by the Yalta agreement, began to be perceived by the Truman Administration as a grave threat to American interest in the area. Now the Soviet Union had replaced Germany and Japan and emerged as the greatest menace to the world peace and order envisioned by the Americans. To make China a stronghold against Soviet expansion, therefore, became the key of American postwar China policy.

In Chinese reality, however, conflict between the two major parties became the largest obstacle to the realization of the American strategic aim in the area. To prevent the then sporadic fighting from developing into an all-out civil war, General George C. Marshall was dispatched to China by President Harry Truman as his special representative to mediate the CCP-GMD dispute.

In forming the basic policy of mediation, the Truman Administration found it impossible to treat the two contending parties equally. Within the context of U.S.-Soviet tension, first of all, the CCP appeared to be ideologically untrustworthy. In addition, the quick movement of CCP troops into Manchuria after the Soviets' occupation of the region further added suspicion about CCP-Soviet relations. By the time of Marshall's departure to China, a high-level consensus was reached within the Truman Administration that the American government should back any



non-communist regime in China against Communist opponents. Marshall was specifically instructed that, in the event that he was unable to secure reasonable concessions from the GMD, "it would still be necessary for the U.S. government...to continue to back the National Government of the Republic of China."<sup>3</sup> Even if Jiang Jieshi's refusal to compromise resulted in the breakdown of mediation, Marshall was instructed that, he should continue to move Nationalist troops into Northeast China in order to prevent a probable Russian resumption of power in Manchuria.<sup>4</sup>

While the U.S. strategic interest was satisfied by this partial approach in the mediation, it still remained doubtful whether the National Government was competent to be a reliable ally. For years in the 1940s, reports from the China specialists within the State Department indicated that the Jiang regime became increasingly corrupt during the war and was losing political prestige rapidly.<sup>5</sup>

How to prevent Jiang's regime from decline, therefore, became the fundamental issue for the success of American mediation. The problem, in fact, had already been probed by the State Department years ago. In evaluating the Chinese political situation in 1944, John Service, one of the State Department specialists on China, argued that the only way to prevent the collapse of the Nationalist Government was to encourage and to accelerate democratic political reform. He also believed that democracy should be brought about by and depend on the forces within China.

Thus he and John Davies, another Chinese specialist, strongly advocated a coalition government, an approach which they thought might strengthen the GMD's rule rather than weaken it.<sup>6</sup> This approach was accepted and elaborated in Byrnes' memorandum for the War Department, which became part of the instruction for Marshall's mediation:

We believe, as we have long believed and consistently demonstrated, that the government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek affords the most satisfactory base for a developing democracy. But we also believe that it must be broadened to include the representatives of those large and well organized groups who are now without any voice in the government of China.<sup>7</sup>

Again, on the eve of Marshall's departure to China, Truman made a statement on U.S. policy toward China, which confirmed that the objective of the mission was to bring about "a strong, united and democratic China" through "peaceful, democratic methods ... as soon as possible."<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Truman emphasized that "the detailed steps necessary to the achievement of political unity in China must be worked out by the Chinese themselves."<sup>9</sup> Thus he set limits on Marshall's activities: he would not enter Chinese politics directly but only focus on the military settlement.

Despite the open advocacy of political reform in China, the two decisions, that Marshall should help the movement of Nationalist troops to occupy Manchuria and that he should refrain from taking a more active role than just

persuasion and sometimes threat of withdrawal of American aid, revealed the true objective of the Marshall mediation. The primary concern of the mediation was the confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union rather than that between the Guomindang and the CCP. Yet in order to keep China a friendly nation and a reliable ally, the Guomindang rule should be reserved and strengthened rather than be changed or weakened. However, throughout the Marshall's mission in China, these concerns, especially the decision about Manchuria, remained top secrets even to American diplomats in China.<sup>10</sup>

## II. The Emergence Of The Third Force

Marshall came to China on the eve of a proposed political reform, which had been demanded by the parties not in office for years and had only been scheduled for its first step by a bipartisan agreement between the GMD and the CCP a few months earlier. Under strong public pressure for peace and reform, Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong, the top leaders of the GMD and the CCP, held a meeting from late August to early October in 1945. On October 10, they reached a preliminary agreement on a postwar political settlement, the "Summary of A Conversation between the Government and the Representatives of the CCP," or as it was usually called, "Double Ten Minutes." Both sides agreed that a political consultative conference,

participated in by different parties and prominent civic leaders, should be held in the near future in order to discuss all the problems related to ending the period of political tutelage and starting the period of constitutional rule. This was regarded by the Truman Administration as "a convenient opportunity" to start Marshall's mission. And Marshall was urged to use this opportunity to discuss with various political leaders and, especially, "to persuade the Chinese government to call a national conference of representatives of the major political elements to bring about the unification of China."<sup>11</sup>

As both the "Double Ten Minutes" and Truman's instruction clearly indicated, the minor parties were regarded as an important, or even indispensable, element in the coming reform and future Chinese politics. Although the minor parties had existed for decades, this was really the first time that they achieved such political prominence. What kind of role would they play in the proposed reform? In order to discuss the minor parties' participation in the reform and mediation, the two goals of Marshall's mediation, it is necessary to review their history to see how much strength they had gained in the past.

It is worthwhile to note that the Third Force at this time only referred to three parties, the Young China Party, the National Socialist Party, and the Third Party, and

three groups, the National Salvation Association, the Rural Reconstruction Group and the Vocational Education Group, which organized the United National Construction League(UNCL) in October 1939, with the aim of mediating the newly resumed military conflict between the GMD and the CCP. A year later, the UNCL reorganized itself and transformed into the "Federation of China Democratic Parties and Groups." Again in September 1944, the Federation changed its name into "the China Democratic League" after adopting a new organizational rule which allowed membership without party affiliation.<sup>12</sup> By taking a "distinct third party position and viewpoint," the CDL was widely regarded as a "Third Force" between the two major parties. Yet a close look into each of these parties within the Third Force revealed the League's heterogeneous nature.

Within the Third Force, the Young China Party(YCP) was the only party which had been formed outside of China. In 1924, a year after its establishment, the YCP moved its center of activities from Paris back to China and began to publish the Awakening Lion weekly in Shanghai. By advocating extreme-nationalism, the party attracted some university students and professors.

Politically, the YCP took a strong anti-communist position. But it also had reservations about the GMD, since it considered the GMD was too radical because of its cooperation with the CCP during the Northern Expedition.

In the years between 1927-1937, the YCP went partially underground and, by resorting to a warlord's protection, remained influential only within Sichuan Province, the home province of most of the YCP leaders.<sup>13</sup>

The National Socialist Party under the leadership of Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang) was a smaller elite party, with its member consisting mainly of Zhang's friends and his former students. In 1931, after Zhang Junmai came back from exile in Germany, he initiated the "Zaisheng She" (the "Renaissance Society") with Luo Longji and Liang Shiqiu. The society published a journal called the Zaisheng (the Renaissance), which advocated the national socialism. Two years later, the Renaissance Society transformed itself into a formal party, the National Socialist Party (NSP).

As the party declared, the national socialism which the NSP advocated was totally different from Hitler's totalitarian national socialism in its stress on political democracy and economic socialism. Zhang Junmai and his followers had been endeavoring to publicize the idea of constitutionalism, and therefore were suppressed by the GMD as political dissidents during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>14</sup>

To some extent, the Third Party was a by-product of the CCP-GMD split in the late twenties. Disagreeing with Jiang Jieshi's renunciation of Sun Yat-sen's united front policy, some prominent leaders of the GMD, including Mme. Sun Yat-sen, Deng Yanda, and Chen Youren (Eugene Chen), published "A Declaration to the Revolutionary People In

China and the World" in 1927, in the name of the Provisional Action Committee of the GMD, announcing that the Committee would use revolutionary methods to stop the Nanjing regime, to continue the "Three Great Policies" of Sun Yat-sen, and to establish worker-peasant power for the common people.<sup>15</sup> From 1927 to 1935, the Provisional Action Committee changed its name several times and finally adopted the name the Chinese Peoples' Liberation Action Committee. The name the "Third Party" was never its own, but was given to it by a right-wing Guomindang veteran Wu Zhihui. Since the group alleged that its approach was different from both the GMD and the CCP, and that it shared the responsibility of Chinese revolution, it accepted and used the name the "Third Party" more often than its formal names.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike the YCP and the NSP, the Third Party sought support from below. It was involved in mobilizing factory workers through union and was especially influential in the army. In the early 1930s, after Deng Yanda returned from exile in Europe, the Committee became very active in instigating an anti-Jiang movement within the Nationalist Army. Because of these activities, Deng was arrested and killed by the GMD at the end of 1931.<sup>17</sup>

Among minor parties and groups, the National Salvation Association was perhaps the most responsible for the rising public demand for national unification and resistance against Japanese aggression. Beginning at the end of 1935,

civic leaders in Shanghai mobilized a salvation movement, which embraced a broad urban population of women, students, university professors, clerks, and journalists. In mid-1936, the Federation of National Salvation Associations was established in Shanghai. It later adopted the formal name the "National Salvation Association." In November 1936, seven salvationist leaders were arrested by the Nationalist Government in Shanghai, in the so-called "Seven Gentlemen's Case." The incident, contrary to GMD's expectation, aroused great sympathy both in and outside of China. It further popularized the salvation movement and attracted more adherents to the Association. In the late 1930s, the Association became in fact the third most powerful national political organization, next to the Guomindang and the CCP.

Salvationists strongly advocated a general mobilization, especially in the rural areas. During the war, they went to the battle fronts to boost morale and work in the rear areas for refugees' education. Some Communists who lost touch with the Party also join the Association's activities in Beiping and Shanghai. Since the Salvationists appeared to be similar in their demands and activity to the CCP, the Association was labeled by the authorities as a "peripheral organization" of the CCP, and was persecuted more than any other political groups.<sup>18</sup>

The Rural Reconstruction Group was originally a non-political organization. This group saw the reconstruction of the village--the basic unit of the Chinese society--as



the beginning step of national reform, and devoted itself to the reform of educational, administrative, and productive reconstruction in rural areas. The rural reconstruction movement was started in the mid-1920s, with James Yen and Liang Shuming as its leaders. The experiment of rural reconstruction was concentrated in two provinces, Hebei and Shandong. The reconstruction projects tried to remold rural life in two aspects: one, to improve peasants' administrative ability through education and to organize local self-defense forces; two, to revitalize agricultural production by providing financial credit, introducing scientific techniques, and organizing cooperatives. Both experimental projects under Yen and Liang were able to attract financial aid from Chinese banks which were interested in rural financing and from international welfare organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>19</sup>

The Vocational Education Group referred to the personnel of a large network of vocational schools in Jiangsu Province under the leadership of Huang Yanpei. In 1917, Huang Yanpei founded the China Vocational Education Association in response to the demand for skilled workers created by the rapidly modernizing economy in the area.

Although Huang defined the Vocational Education Association as a non-political group, the Association had been keeping an amicable relationship with the authority in power. The need for financial and political support tied the Association up with reactionary forces, such as those

of warlord Sun Chuanfang, against the Nationalist Revolution during 1917-1927. The educational activities of the Association, however, continued to expand without suppression after the GMD attained national power. When the Japanese started to expand into North China during the mid-30s, the Association began to involve itself more in political activities. It advocated an earlier war of resistance, thus lined itself up with the national salvation movement.<sup>20</sup>

Although diversified in ideology and political attitude, these minor parties and groups were driven together by several forces during the 1930s and 1940s. The first cause for them to modify political attitude was the national crisis under Japanese invasion in the mid-1930s. Despite their early experience of being suppressed by the authorities as political dissidents, the minor parties and groups, together with the CCP, urged the Nationalist Government to begin resistance and pledged support to Jiang as the national leader. Under strong political pressure, the National Government established the People's Political Council (PPC) in 1938 to allow the minor parties to participate in making policies.

The modified GMD policy encouraged the democrats to expect political reform. As Luo indicated, those who gave their support to the Nationalist Government also believed that "the initiation of Anti-Japanese War should be the beginning of democracy."<sup>21</sup> Yet the political alliance

between the party in power and the minor parties turned out to be a fragile one. Beginning in early 1939, following the Fifth Session of the Fifth Central Committee of the GMD, the National Government resolutely returned to its one-party-rule policy. The number of minor party representatives in the People's Political Council was drastically cut down from about 30 in the First PPC to less than 20.<sup>22</sup> In addition, those who most ardently advocated anti-Japanese resistance and promoted democracy became the targets of persecution. Zou Taofen, a famous salvationist and a representative to the PPC, was intimidated to stop his democratic activities, to close most of the bookstores he owned, and take exile in Hongkong. Zhang Junmai was detained in Chongqing for two years from 1943 to 1945, being charged for agitating student protest and demonstration.<sup>23</sup>

The minor parties' discontent towards the authorities grew as the GMD devoted more energy to exterminating its political opponent, the CCP, instead of fighting the Japanese. From 1939 on, as indicated above, they adopted collective action in order to put stronger pressure in the two contending parties to stop fighting each other. Unfortunately, their mediation bore little result. In 1944, the morale of the government troops became so low that it collapsed in the Japanese-launched Central China Offensive. Stunned by this humiliating and disastrous defeat, the minor parties realized that the only way to

ensure the nation's survival was to work along both lines of resistance and reform. In 1944, they for the first time outspokenly demanded the authorities "to stop one-party rule immediately, to establish a united all-party administration, and to implement democratic politics."<sup>24</sup>

Discontented yet incompetent to move the authorities single-handedly to surrender its one-party-rule, the minor parties began to look for allies and found affinity and sympathy in the CCP in their common struggle against GMD rule. At the end of 1939, after the minor parties and groups established the UNCL, the CCP Central Committee defined its principal task of United Front work as helping and uniting with the middle-of-the-road forces and the progressive elements within the GMD.<sup>25</sup> After the announcement of the establishment of the Federation of China Democratic Parties and Groups in 1940, the CCP organ Liberation Daily immediately published an editorial comment which praised the existence of the Federation as "a new push to the democratic movement in our country during the war."<sup>26</sup> During the fourth session of the First PPC in late 1939, both the CCP and the minor parties representatives advanced several proposals demanding that the government guarantee the legal rights of all the parties, and that the GMD stop its one-party rule and enforce political reform to achieve constitutionalism. These actions, together with the declaration of the CDL cited above, indicated that the Third Force was moving closer to the CCP during the last

few years of the war and it was becoming opposed to the one party rule.

### III. The Middle-Of-The-Road Approach Of The Third Force

Observing the change of Chinese politics closely, John K. Fairbank, the Director of the U.S. Information Service in China, believed that the liberals' "final desertion of the Generalissimo" was the most striking change in the last two years of the war. Yet, as the Third Force leaders contended, the cooperation of the Third Force with the CCP was not a permanent commitment to one side in the CCP-GMD contention for power. Rather, it was a tactic to strengthen themselves in the "struggle for freedom and democracy in China." In an article published in 1946, Zeng Shaolun, a professor and one of the leaders of the CDL, found an analogy between their cooperation with the CCP with that between the U.S. and the Soviet Russia:<sup>27</sup>

The Chinese Democratic League does not and will not believe in Marxism. It has little or no use for extreme measures as a means of bringing about political reforms in China. It advocates the very same things for which the Anglo-Saxon world stands--the four freedoms, tolerance, universal suffrage, right, right of individual, free competition. ...Communism, with all the possible criticism that might be piled on it, is at least very much better than fascism. It is fundamentally different in quality. Without the cooperation of Russia, the Allies would not have been able to defeat Nazi Germany. For similar reasons, without the cooperation of the Chinese Communist party, it would impossible to emancipate the Chinese people from the yokes of the Gestapo service and to give them the minimum amount of

freedom so essential for the establishment of a democratic state.

Indeed, the ideological gap between the Third Force and the CCP was too wide to allow them to merge completely. Theoretically, the Third Force leaders strongly disagreed with the theory of class struggle. As the YCP and the NSP contended, they believed that China had not yet entered the stage of capitalism so that the working class dictatorship could not be adopted in the Chinese context, and that nationalism had a stronger power of coherence than the idea of class affiliation. In reality, they were horrified by the CCP's armed revolution. Tan Pingshan and Zhang Bojun, the two leaders of the Third Party, had been kicked out of the CCP because they had disagreed on the issue of armed revolt. Liang Shuming challenged the notion of class struggle and armed revolution with his rural reconstruction theory and experiments, by which he tried to prove that the best way of transforming China into a better society was to begin with the basic units, the villages, and to improve the peasants' administrative ability through education and class cooperation. Invariably, the conservatives, the moderates and radicals within the Third Force, as Zeng Shaolun indicated, were strongly opposed to using "extreme measures" to achieve political reform.

To support their middle-of-the-road approach, the Third Force leaders found strong evidence in history that a non-violent reform would bring long-term benefit to the nation. In an article "Where lies the Path to Chinese

Unity?", which appeared in a local newspaper at Guiyang at the end of 1945, Liang Shuming analyzed two kinds of unity that China had experienced in the past forty years. Before 1937 the Chinese were able to unite several times in the 1911 revolution, the anti-Yuan movement in 1916, and the Northern Expedition in 1926. Yet the unity reached on those occasions was short-lived and always followed by political chaos and civil wars. A fundamental reason for this was that the unity achieved through destruction of the old order by violent means was passive in nature, in the sense of that it failed to bring a better social order to the country. In 1937, again, the Chinese united in an anti-Japanese war. Different from the former occasions, the unity achieved this time was based on the sounder ground of popular demand and a consensus among political parties and groups. More importantly, the unity was directed towards reconstruction of China after the war, so that the incentive of unity was constructive rather than destructive. From a historical perspective, Liang felt, the unity reached during the Anti-Japanese War was destined to be a long-lived one.<sup>28</sup>

If Liang's article discussed the minor parties' concern of China's future in somewhat abstract terms, a political report to the CDL First National Conference on October 10, 1945 was more specific on the approach that minor parties should take on the postwar construction. In the report, three problems were singled out as the most

urgent ones to be dealt with: (1) the inauguration of a Political Conference, in which different parties would participate and "lay the foundation for China's peace, unity and conformation;" (2) the formation of a coalition government, which "the CDL still firmly believe...is the only way to reach peace, unity and conformation in China;" (3) the convening of the National Assembly, which the CDL perceived as "a necessary procedure to draw up a constitution and, therefore, to end the party rule."<sup>29</sup> Practically, the three problems were in fact three stages taken in a political reform process.

In reality, the Third Force leaders found that their middle-of-the-road approach was supported by the public demand for peace after an exhausting war. They not only became outspoken advocates of reform but also believed that they would be chosen by the people to play a more important role in China's politics. When addressing a party held by Shanghai industrialists in late February 1946, Zhang Junmai contended that "it is no longer the time to talk with a gun. Everything has to be determined by voting of the people. The majority of the people will determine which party should be in power. This is real people's opinion."<sup>30</sup> Also, they found support from the CCP, which at the time was willing to relinquish armed struggle against the GMD and participate in the coalition government.<sup>31</sup>

At the bottom of the Third Force's advocacy of a non-



violent reform was the fear of drastic change of social order. By their occupations as university professors, lawyers, column writers, and social activists, the leaders of the Third Force were a part of the urban middle class and in fact its spokesmen as they achieved prominence. Their demand for a multi-party system, indeed, was not directed at overthrowing the existing government but rather at preserving it. This demand appeared to be in accordance with the objective of Marshall's mission. Yet, as the mediation and the reform went on, they found that the middle-of-the-road approach, even with external support, became increasingly hopeless.

#### IV. PCC: A United Front Against The One-Party Rule

Despite the agreement in the "Double Ten Minutes" by the CCP and the GMD that the Political Consultative Conference should be held in the near future, the date of the inauguration of the conference remained unsettled and was obviously postponed by some changes in political and military arenas.

During the last four months of 1945, the CDL experienced an internal split. On the surface, the split, according to the YCP, resulted from personal rivalry between some leaders, namely, Luo Longji and Zou Shunsheng.<sup>32</sup> Yet the fundamental cause could be found in the existence of an ideological gap between the YCP and the

rest of the League members. During the late years of the war, the League expanded rapidly by recruiting non-partisan members in Chongqing and Kunming. These new members, especially the ones in Kunming, were by and large younger writers, teachers, and students, who tended to be idealistic, radical and anti-government. Controlling the routine and the financial affairs of the League, the YCP strongly opposed the recruitment of these radical elements. By late 1944, however, the league's membership of people with non-partisan affiliation surpassed that of those with partisan affiliation. Demands came from the Kunming branch that the National Congress be convened and, as required by the rules, its Central Committee be reelected. At the provisional National Representative Conference in October 1945, the YCP's attitude towards non-partisan members was criticized. In December the YCP formally withdrew from the CDL. In return, it gained 5 seats in the PCC independent of the CDL.<sup>33</sup>

The inauguration of the PCC was first delayed by the bargaining among the participating parties for seats. According to the agreement between the GMD and the CCP in October 1945, representation in the PCC would include members of the GMD, the CCP, the CDL, and social leaders of non-partisan affiliation. In order to increase its influence within the PCC, the GMD tried to separate the conservative wing, the NSP and the YCP, from the CDL. The effort was of no avail with the NSP, but an internal split

provided a timely chance for the GMD to alienate the YCP.

While the parties bargained over the seats in the PCC, regional conflicts between government troops and CCP troops had developed into a new stage. According to one set of statistics, the GMD committed about one million troops to fighting the CCP during the period from early September to the end of October.<sup>34</sup> In mid-September, while Mao Zedong was still in Chongqing, the Central Committee of the CCP made the decision that the main task for the party and the army currently was to achieve complete control of two provinces of Rehe and Chahaer, and to develop the CCP's strength in the Northeast. The over-all strategy would be "expansion in the north and defense in the south."<sup>35</sup> With the fighting going on here and there, political talk became a meaningless disguise for military preparation. Towards the end of the year, the ever-spreading regional fighting made the outbreak of a nation-wide civil war imminent.

Fortunately, the arrival of Marshall changed the whole course of the disastrous development toward an all-out war. Within three weeks after his arrival in China, a Committee of Three under the Chairmanship of Marshall was formed and a cessation of hostilities order was issued, partly as a result of Marshall's personal influence over Jiang Jieshi, who was persuaded in the last evening before the PCC to stop attacking Chifeng and Dulun, two important cities in North China occupied by the CCP.<sup>36</sup> On January 10, 1946, the Political Consultative Conference after several

postponements was finally inaugurated in Chongqing, the wartime capital of China.

The beginning of the mediation and the opening of the PCC, as seen by most of the Chinese, were to usher China into a new period of democracy.<sup>37</sup> For the Third Force in particular, the PCC was not only a renewed chance of achieving democracy but also a turning point in the nation's political life, in which the minor parties' role would be greatly enhanced. Through three weeks' discussion and debate, indeed, five agreements were reached that were to bring about significant changes in the existing government structure:

First of all, with regard to the reorganization of the government, the head of the government was no longer given the sole decision-making authority in time of emergency. In addition, the State Council, in which the GMD and the other parties would hold 20 seats respectively, was to be reformed into the highest administrative organ of the nation.<sup>38</sup>

Secondly, the CCP-CDL bloc and the GMD reached a compromise over the long-disputed issue of formerly-elected representatives of the National Assembly. The agreement was reached that the formerly-elected representatives of the Assembly were to retain their status on the condition that an additional 70 seats should be allotted to the representatives from the minor parties and prominent civic leaders.

Thirdly, as regard to the draft constitution of May 5, 1936, the revision was made to change the legal status of the National Assembly. Theoretically, according to the May Fifth Constitution Draft, the National Assembly was empowered with the rights of election, initiative, referendum, and recall. As there was no institution such as a legislative assembly to enforce the power, this stipulation in effect left the government responsible to nobody and thus opened the door for personal dictatorship. By the motions of Zhang Junmai and Luo Longji, the two experts on Western politics, the visible National Assembly was transformed into an invisible National Assembly and the power of the Legislative Yuan was to be enhanced by making the Executive Yuan responsible to it.<sup>39</sup>

By and large, success in making these changes in government structure and in redistributing power between the party in office and those not in office was achieved through the close cooperation between the minor parties within the CDL and the CCP. During the days of the PCC, meetings were held by the representatives of the CCP and the CDL outside the conference every night to coordinate their moves in the formal discussion at the conference. Luo Longji and Zhang Junmai made frequent contacts with the CCP representatives. The harmonious cooperation even made Luo Longji and Wang Ruofei, an energetic aide to Zhou Enlai in the year-long negotiation with the GMD, become close friends.<sup>40</sup>

On certain issues, like that of regional autonomy, the YCP also lined up with the CCP-CDL bloc. The issue, as seen by the YCP, not only referred to the question of whether the Liberated Areas under the CCP control should continue to exist, but also had the implication of whether the YCP could continue to maintain its special influence in Sichuan Province. Insisting on centralized state power, the GMD attempted to avoid discussion on the issue. Yet both the CDL and the YCP gave their full support to the CCP's position by arguing that the regional government in the Liberated Area was a fact that needed to be recognized.<sup>41</sup>

Over military matters, however, the CDL maintained an independent position. In the PCC, both the YCP and the CDL, being the parties without armed forces, strongly advocated that armed forces should be separated from the parties and be put under the command of a coalition government. However, the YCP insisted that the nationalization of armed forces was the prerequisite for the democratization of politics. In other words, only after the CCP gave up its troops to the National Government would it be allowed to have a say in the government. This stand was in fact the same as the GMD's. The CDL, on the other hand, insisted that the demobilization should be enforced on all armed forces, and that it should not be enforced only on one party while the other kept its forces under the disguise of national troops. Thus the CDL had

made clear its position that, as long as the GMD kept dominant military power to support its rule, the reform should start with the party in power.<sup>42</sup> The democratization of politics should be the first step towards the nationalization of armed force, but not vice versa.

Apparently, the military question was a problem beyond the ability of the PCC to solve. Since the GMD, the CCP, and the minor parties, including the pro-GMD YCP, took three different positions on the issue, no single group was able to prevail. So the PCC only adopted a resolution on general principles of military reorganization but left the practical methods to the Committee of Three to decide. On February 25, the committee reached an agreement entitled "Basis for Military Reorganization and for the Integration of the Communist Forces into the National Army," which set the ratio of Nationalist troops to Communist troops at 5:1, and decided that nation-wide demobilization and military reorganization were to be completed in 18 months.<sup>43</sup>

In reality, the resolutions of the PCC, in addition to the Military Subcommittee agreement of February 25, on the whole favored the GMD. They recognized the preponderant strength of the GMD position in the government. The GMD was allocated half of the seats in the State Council, and allowed to maintain a superior military strength. The minor parties and the public, on the other hand, were nevertheless satisfied with the resolutions which made politics open to the non-GMD parties. They were sure

that, however this openness was limited, the minor parties would share power with the GMD and make Chinese politics democratized. For this reason, the minor parties acted collectively with the CCP and, undoubtedly, would continue to do so until the GMD one-party rule changed.

## V. Escalating Repression Towards The Democratic Movement

During the exciting three weeks of the PCC, Jiang Jieshi appeared in the public with an unprecedentedly enlightened attitude towards reform. At the opening address to the PCC, he gave four promises to make changes in domestic politics: first, to guarantee people's freedom of religion, speech, publishing and rally, and to abolish or to revise those laws in contradiction to the said principle; second, to recognize every party's legal position; third, to hold a general election and to enforce regional autonomy; fourth, to release political prisoners.<sup>44</sup> Again, at the end of the conference, Jiang pledged that he would "faithfully and resolutely observe all the resolutions of this conference."<sup>45</sup>

Yet, the glitter of Jiang's high-sounding words was immediately overshadowed by several incidents that were caused by some "unidentified persons." The first of these occurred at the Changbai Memorial Hall, Chongqing, where representatives of the PCC were invited by 23 democratic groups to report the progress made in the Conference every



evening. From mid-January on, the lectures were repeatedly disturbed by ruffians, who shouted slogans and threw stones at the lecturers. Secret policemen also intimidated the audience by beating some people up after the lectures. According to one report of the Da Gong Bao, a neutral and conservative newspaper, the policemen did not dare to interfere though they were guarding the meetings.<sup>46</sup>

The disturbance at Changbai Hall was followed by the search of the residences of Huang Yanpei, Zhang Shenfu and Shi Liang, two leaders of the Salvation Association, and the offices of the CDL and the Communist delegation. Although the government representatives to the PCC apologized in response to the CDL's protest, the promised investigation on the incidents ended up with nothing definite.

After the PCC, more serious violence broke out in a mass meeting at Jiaochangkou, Chongqing, celebrating the successful conclusion of the PCC. A mob of more than 600 ruffians, armed with iron rods and accompanied by a military band, broke up the meeting and wounded about 60 persons. Among them were the famous writer Guo Moruo, economist Ma Yinchu and CDL leaders Li Gongpu, Zhang Naiqi, and Shi Fuliang. It was reported that "the highest authorities ... were infuriated and issued orders to have the case thoroughly investigated."<sup>47</sup> The day after the incident, the head of the ruffians, Liu Yejiao, issued an announcement accusing those wounded of interrupting the

meeting. Taking this as evidence, the Chongqing Branch of the GMD made a report which concluded that it was Li Gongpu and others who caused the riot.<sup>48</sup>

The Jiaochangkou Incident, more than the former two incidents during the session of the PCC, indicated the emergence of a tendency toward organized reaction against the PCC. Nevertheless, the minor parties and the democratic groups showed a conciliatory attitude in response. Commenting on the Jiaochangkou Incident, the Min Zhu Bao (the Democracy Daily), the organ of the CDL, expressed the hope that the incident had been stimulated only by a reactionary few within the GMD, and that they could still count upon Jiang Jieshi and many progressive Guomintang leaders for political reform:

Disinterestedly speaking, yesterday's scandal is not a totally unexpected event. The achievements of the recent PCC, though they are the results of mutual understanding and mutual concessions among the participant parties, are mainly attributable to the statesmanship of President Jiang and many progressive Guomintang leaders. Momentous political changes, such as the one resulted from the recent PCC, are, naturally, beyond the prompt comprehension of a few who are selfish and narrow-minded. ...The present certainly is the time for those selfish fellows to make their last struggle and to stage their fiercest revolt.<sup>49</sup>

Unfortunately, the events following the three incidents confirmed the apprehensions that what had happened during and after the PCC session had not been the last struggle of a reactionary few within the GMD but rather the prelude to an escalating repressive movement against the reform.

In reality, signs of GMD opposition to the PCC had already come at the end of 1945. In its series of editorials published in December 1945, the Shijie Ribao, an organ of the CC clique of the GMD, attacked the idea of the coalition government as being without any legal basis which would only bring about a spoils system rather than cooperation among the parties. It also demanded that the nationalization of armed forces should be enforced before the democratization of politics.<sup>50</sup> The Heping Ribao, the organ of the army, joined with the CC clique in the same tone. In an editorial of February 1, 1946, it insisted that the realization of democracy should only come after the integration of all armed forces under National Government command. During the session of the PCC, the organ of the GMD, the Zhongyang Ribao, repeatedly criticized the idea of regional autonomy as tantamount to the demand for a separatist regime.<sup>51</sup> After the conclusion of the PCC, it was reported that, during the National Army Demobilization Conference in Nanking, 14 high ranking army officers had stated their opinions before President Jiang Jieshi, opposing the decision reached at the PCC session on reduction of armed forces.<sup>52</sup>

While the inner circle opposition mounted, violence in public again occurred on an enlarged scale. From February 22 to March 1, students demonstrated in Chongqing, Chengdu and Xian, demanding the evacuation of Soviet troops from Manchuria. The demonstration in Chengdu openly used the

slogans "Down with the China Democratic League;" "Down with Zhengxue Clique[the political science clique]; "We give all our support to Chen Li-fu." Without exception, these demonstrations ended up with the raids on offices of the Xinhua Ribao, an CCP organ, the Min Zhu Bao, the Qingfeng Ribao and the Gongshang Ribao, the CDL organs. The press revealed that, before the demonstration, threats had come from the Xian municipal authorities that those who refused to participate in the demonstration would be punished, and that the secret policemen and the members of the San Min Zhu Yi Youth Corp played an active role in the raids. Before the demonstration and the raids, the Shijie Ribao, the Heping Ribao and the Zhongyang Ribao were full of articles commenting on the Manchuria problem, which helped to create an anti-Soviet and anti-Communist feeling.<sup>53</sup>

The active role played by the CC clique and conservative officers in the army in this mass violence was in fact an open secret.<sup>54</sup> From the limited materials now available, Jiang's intention at the time is not yet made clear. Nevertheless, clues to Jiang's intention could still be detected by examining the GMD's attitude towards the CCP, as both the reform and Marshall mission were aimed at mediating the relations between the GMD and the CCP. The key issue by this time could be put in this way: was the GMD, of which Jiang Jieshi was the Chairperson(Zong-cai), prepared to reach a compromise with the CCP after the war?

Undoubtedly, the answer was a definite "no." Although the turning point of the GMD's departure from the short-lived united front policy could be traced back to the Fifth Plenary Session of the GMD Central Committee in 1939, the debate on political policy which took place in the Sixth National Representative Conference of GMD during mid-May 1946 clearly indicated that Jiang and his party would not abandon the anti-Communist line. In the conference, the proposal for a political settlement with the CCP by Wang Shijie, one of the Political Science Clique, was strongly opposed by the CC Clique. In addition, Jiang repeatedly emphasized that "the central task [of the GMD] now is to destroy the CCP."<sup>55</sup> Six months later when the news came from the U.S. that Marshall would be sent by the American government to mediate the GMD-CCP relations, Chen Lifu immediately responded with strong objections.<sup>56</sup> According to Jiang's memoir, he had never seen any possibility of compromise with the CCP through Marshall's mediation. The mediation, according to both Jiang and Chen's words, would only win time for the CCP.<sup>57</sup> The Goumindang, in other words, would simply not accept any compromise.

In the first half of March, the GMD held its Second Session of the Sixth Central Executive Committee. As it turned out, the meeting was dominated by the CC clique, which furiously attacked both the GMD leftists and the members of the Political Science Clique who participated in the PCC. Proposals by the irreconcilable elements were

passed, advocating a complete overthrow of the PCC resolution. In response, Jiang Jieshi made the suggestion that the PCC resolutions be passed but the principles regarding the rectification of the Constitution be slightly modified. As a result, the C.E.C passed the PCC resolutions with the following revision: (1) the constitution should be based fundamentally on the Program of National Reconstruction, which was proposed by the GMD; (2) the National Assembly should be physically visible organ; (3) the Executive Yuan should not be responsible to the Legislative Yuan; (4) the Control Yuan should not have the power of consent; (5) provincial laws should be abolished.<sup>58</sup> These revisions virtually denied the PCC resolution and constituted a serious blow to the minor parties' dream of a democratic representative government.

Jiang Jieshi himself began to publicize his intention in a speech to the session of the Fourth People's Political Council on April 1, 1946. With regard to the issues of the PCC, he confirmed the stand adopted by the CC Clique and the army and stressed that "[t]he PCC is not a constituent convention and its Government Organization Agreements cannot take the place of the provisional constitution. Only the convocation of the National Assembly can bring about the completion of the period of political tutelage." Turning to the GMD-CCP conflicts in the Northeast, Jiang contended that "there can be no internal problem before the complete restoration of China sovereignty."<sup>59</sup> In other

words, he would not consider compromise with his political opponents before he took control of the Northeast.

As the GMD had determined to subjugate its political opponent, the CCP, any attempt at reform became equally intolerable. During March and April, repression of the democratic movement developed on a new scale. The first target was the organs for democratic reform. In Xian, the office of the combined edition of the Qingfeng Ribao and the Gongshang Ribao, was wrecked by ruffians, and its staff was beaten by plainclothes servicemen. A lawyer and also a CDL member named Wang Ren who accepted the case was soon arrested and sentenced to death in a few days. The newspaper was finally forced to suspend publication in May. After the Ching Feng Incident, Li Furen, a renowned educator in Xian and a CDL member, was kidnapped and shot to death by secret servicemen.<sup>60</sup> In Shanghai, the city authorities began to reinforce the Press Law in the middle of 1946. The bookstores which sold democratic publications were subject to severe surveillance. Beginning early June, there was a widespread prohibition of publication of democratic magazines. In four months, at least 196 newspapers and magazines were either banned permanently or suspended temporarily in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou and Chongqing. Among these were the Wen Hui Bao, a liberal newspaper, and several other wide-circulated democratic magazines, such as the Min Zhu (the Democracy), the Wen Cui (the Article Digest), and the Zhou Bao (the Weekly) and the

Qun Zhong (the Masses), a communist magazine.<sup>61</sup>

Repressive action in the latter half of the year was further directed towards persons who were active and influential in the democratic movement. In mid-July, stunning news came from Kunming that Li Gongpu and Wen Yiduo, two renowned professors in the Lianda (the Southwest United University), had been assassinated successively within five days.

The time, the spot, and the targets were well-chosen. Since 1938, Kunming had been the base of the democratic movement as many professors, students and writers had moved in from the Japanese occupied areas. The Kunming branch of the CDL consisted mainly of these idealistic elements, who were intensely anti-GMD. Both Li and Wen, as two influential leaders of the Kunming branch, represented the radical wing of the CDL. Their voices, along with the others, always exposed the darkness of GMD rule and embarrassed the government. By the time of the assassination, however, Kunming was on the point of returning to the peaceful life of a remote inland city, as most of the teachers and students had left or were prepared to leave Kunming for North China. Also, President Jiang Jieshi was in Guling, a summer resort far from the capital. It was hard to link an incident in a remote inland city to the highest authorities. As the U.S. diplomats indicated, the assassinations in Kunming were less harmful politically than in Nanjing.<sup>62</sup>



Liang Shuming, the Secretary-General, and Zhou Xinming, another leader of the CDL, were sent by the League to investigate the case in Kunming. With the help of teachers and students as well as the American consul in Kunming, Liang and Zhou were able to collect ample evidence to conclude that the General Headquarters of the Yunnan Garrison had been primarily responsible for the killings. But the actions of the central government in shielding the Yunnan Headquarters when dealing with the case gave strong indication of the government's complicity.<sup>63</sup> From the information collected, the U.S. consul in Kunming also concluded that the assassination had been carefully planned and in fact directed from Nanjing.<sup>64</sup>

The case, as seen by many contemporaries, was apparently a political murder. It also, as Liang pointed out in his report, began a frontal attack on the CDL. Fearing further assassination, leading members of the CDL Kunming branch, most of whom were professors at Kunming universities, asked for protection in the American consulate.<sup>65</sup> The widely-rumored blacklist put the whole society under terror. On hearing of the Li-Wen assassination, Liang Shuming responded with agony by declaring that it was unnecessary to file any protest with the competent authorities since that was bound to be fruitless, and that what should be done was to appeal to the public and tell them that law no longer ruled this country.<sup>66</sup> On July 18, the CDL published a statement

severely denouncing the murder. Part of the statement read as follows:

The incidents, cruel and mean, have themselves explained the background and the intention behind the assassinations and pointed out to the world the crucial situation China is facing. The China Democratic League frankly admits that it has neither strength nor plan to resist such kind of assault by force of the ruffians. ...However, the China Democratic League, in struggling for the realization of peace and democracy in China, will never shrink from danger and will never be awed by such atrocious incidents. With greater courage and resolution, we shall forge ahead to win peace and democracy in China, and this is the only thing we can do to console the brave souls of our two martyrs.<sup>67</sup>

After six months of intense struggle to maintain the PCC resolutions, the assassination of Li Gongpu and Wen Yiduo destroyed the dim hope aroused by Jiang's speech at the PCC in January, that peace and democracy could be achieved through the improvement of the existing government.

#### VI. The April Mediation: An Attempt To Maintain Unity

Facing the GMD's violent rejection to reform, what could the Third Force do? The courses of action for an unarmed political force to choose were indeed limited. In most cases, the Third Force leaders used their readily available means: verbal or written protest to the authorities, publicizing the truth through press conferences, open statements and so on. These actions, as it turned out, could hardly bring about substantial results in changing the reality immediately. Yet, in a short

period from the conclusion of the PPC to early April, the Third Force leaders seemingly had achieved some positive results.

By the agreement reached in the PCC, reorganization of the government was to be carried out by the formation of a new State Council and the reorganization of the Executive Yuan by incorporating non-GMD party members as ministers of state with or without portfolios. As the prerequisites of convening the National Assembly, these two tasks were to be completed by May 5, 1946.<sup>88</sup>

Immediately, the same problem of power distribution that happened before the PPC as discussed above, reappeared in organizing a New State Council. Presumably, the GMD could easily command a majority vote, as it had already been assigned 20 seats in the State Council. The only way for an opposition party to block any undesirable change in administrative policy, therefore, was to control no less than 14 seats in order to command the veto power. For this reason, the CDL promptly rejected GMD proposal of distributing 20 seats among the CCP, the CDL, the YCP and non-partisan social leaders by a ratio of 8:4:4:4, which suggested the CCP and the CDL together hold only 12 seats and have no power to veto any undesirable policy change.<sup>89</sup>

While the date of convening the National Assembly drew nearer, negotiation over the issue of seat distribution in the State Council remained at an impasse. At the same time, the attack on the reform by the irreconcilables

within the GMD became increasingly severe. To avoid an overall retrogression to the situation before the PCC, the CCP suggested another alliance to break the impasse.

As Luo Longji recalled, Zhou Enlai went to the headquarters of the CDL one day, proposing that the CDL and the CCP together demand 14 seats in order to gain veto power and, at the same time, to avoid endless quibbling over the equal share of seats between the YCP and the CDL. Zhou further suggested that the share of 14 seats between the CCP and the CDL would only be "an inner circle question" of the two parties, and that the ratio could either be 6:8, or 7:7, or 8:6, as long as it met CDL's need of maintaining its internal unity. Zhang Lan, the Chairman of the CDL, agreed with the proposal promptly without reservation.<sup>70</sup> By telephoning Wang Shijie, who happened to be in Jiang's place, the CCP-CDL proposal for 14 seats was immediately consented to by Jiang Jieshi.

When the thorniest problem left by the PCC finally resolved, the next step toward the government reorganization was to submit the list of State Councilors by each party to the government. The CDL decided that its list should be submitted simultaneously with the CCP's. Also, it would participate in the government only on the condition that the Executive Yuan be reorganized along with the State Council. Within the CDL, seven leaders were nominated as the future State Councilors: Zhang Lan, Huang Yanpei, Zhang Junmai, Shen Junru, Zhang Dongsun, Liang

Shuming, and Zhang Bojun. As prearranged between the GMD and the minor parties, the CDL could take two positions in the Executive Yuan. The CDL then decided to nominate Luo Longji as the minister with portfolio and Du Bincheng, the leader of the Northwest branch of the CDL, as the minister without portfolio.<sup>71</sup>

Having the dispute over the distribution of seats settled, the future of the CDL did seem brighter than ever. If the new government was organized as arranged, the CDL would become a real balancing force, since its attitude toward any contention between the GMD and the CCP within the government would be decisive for either the GMD obtaining a majority vote or the CCP forming an effective opposition bloc. Unfortunately, the undercurrent opposing the reorganization of the existing political system had not only emerged by this time but also began to spread from political areas to the military fields.

In the Cessation of Hostilities Order of January 10, 1946, the areas south of the Yangtze River and Manchuria were not subject to the stipulation of that military movement would cease. Although the order restricted the movement of forces to military reorganization in the area south of Yangtze River and restoring Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria, it left a loophole for both sides to move their troops into certain strategic spots. After the Cessation of Hostilities Order was issued, there had been frequent movement of troops not only in the two areas mentioned but

also in North Jiangsu, Anhui, Hebei, Shandong, Henan, and Shanxi. Regional conflicts broke out sporadically. The most serious confrontation between the CCP and the GMD troops took place in Manchuria.<sup>72</sup>

Unlike the situation in most areas of China, in Manchuria the Nationalist troops were weaker than the Communists. Early in August 1945, the Communists began to move into the area via Inner Mongolia, North China, and the Shandong Peninsula. By the end of the year, troops under Communist command, including the local Anti-Japanese United Army, had reached 300,000 in number. In contrast, the government only began to transport its troops at the end of October 1945. With the help of U.S. Marines, the National Government was able to get 137,000 troops into the region by mid-March 1946. Feeling better prepared for Manchuria, Jiang Jieshi made formal request to the Soviet Union to evacuate its troops from the area. Accordingly, the latter agreed to complete withdrawal in the period between April 6 to April 29.<sup>73</sup>

With the evacuation of the Soviet troops from Manchuria, the situation in the area became grimmer. Fighting for occupation of Mukden broke out the day following the Soviet withdrawal on March 12, resulting in Nationalist occupation of the city.<sup>74</sup> On March 26, the Nationalist Government was informed by a high Soviet commander that the Soviet troops stationed north of Changchun could not wait for the arrival of Chinese

government troops before withdrawal and that the responsibility would be transferred to the existing military forces in the region.<sup>75</sup> This announcement, obviously, intensified the fear of the National Government that it would lose control of the entire area north of Changchun to the Communists.

While Marshall was away in the U.S., the whole nation was extremely frightened to see the two contending forces moving from south and north toward Changchun and pushing the country to the brink of another civil war. Yet unexpectedly, the government representatives to the PCC suddenly picked up the issue of government reorganization and constitution revision, which had never been mentioned by them since Jiang Jieshi gave consent to the CCP-CDL proposal on the distribution of State Councillor seats. On April 9, they called a meeting of the Steering Committee of the PCC for discussion of revising the Draft Constitution. Feeling extremely angry at the GMD's obvious intention of using government reorganization as a smoke screen for military action, the representatives of the CDL refused to discuss the issue as scheduled. Instead, they proposed that the meeting should discuss the cessation of hostilities in Manchuria first. The CDL representatives then invited both the GMD and the CCP representatives to have a formal talk over the issue the following day.<sup>76</sup>

In the meeting on April 10, Chen Cheng, the Minister of War, was invited to join the representatives of the

government, the CDL and the CCP. On behalf of the government, Chen insisted that the movement of Nationalist troops toward Changchun and Haerbin was for restoration of sovereignty in the area and that any obstruction on the way could be moved aside through military means. On the contrary, Zhou Enlai put forward the CCP's opinion that the military conflict should be stopped first and then the restoration of sovereignty could be implemented through peaceful consultation.

Taking a neutral stand, Zhang Lan presented a proposal of three points: (1) the CCP troops withdraw from the railroad from Mukden to Changchun in order to make way for the Nationalist troops to approach Changchun without obstruction; (2) the Nationalist troops delay their advance for 5 days so that the CCP troops could have enough time to retreat and military conflicts be avoided; (3) political negotiation should be followed after the Nationalist troops took over Changchun; the political and military problems in the Northeast should be solved completely according to the Demobilization Plan and the resolutions of the PCC. The CCP responded immediately with approval. But it was flatly rejected by the government representatives.<sup>77</sup>

On April 18, the day when the CCP troops captured Changchun after four days of fighting, Marshall came back from the United States. The center of gravity of the mediation, naturally, shifted back to the special envoy. In the last ten days of April, however, Marshall asked the



assistance of the CDL to work out a proposal for the settlement of the Manchuria problem. The proposal presented by the CDL on April 29 added a new item to the April 10 proposal, which suggested that the Northeast Political and Economic Councils, established by the government after the Japanese surrender, be reorganized. Again, the proposal was rejected by the government. Zhou Enlai replied to the CDL that he had to forward the proposal to Yanan for final decision but, as he informed Marshall on April 29, he was inclined to accept only the idea of a joint commission. Predicting that the proposal could hardly move either side of the contending parties, Marshall gave up the idea of using the Third Force to help the mediation. He left Chongqing for Nanjing without informing the CDL leaders, who were still busy revising their already obsolete proposal.<sup>78</sup>

By this time, the first mediation attempt by the CDL virtually came to an end. Frightened at seeing the fighting spread throughout Manchuria and the whole country drifting towards an all-out war, the CDL leaders made another appeal to Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong, calling for the peaceful settlement of the Manchurian conflict. The YCP also tried to aid the CDL's appeal by initiating a discussion between the government and the CDL. Mao replied that he fully approved the proposal in principle. Jiang, having his troops take over Sipingjie on May 19 and encircle Changchun, flew to the fighting spot on the same

day, and simply left the CDL proposal without an answer.<sup>79</sup>

Within two months, a sharp turn took place in China's politics which finally made the Third Force's apprehensions over using military force to achieve unity become a reality. Having failed to bring compromise in the April mediation, the Third Force leaders found that the course of events was moving back to the situation before the PCC. Not only did reform become an obsolete word, but also the Third Force was driven out of the center of the political stage.

## VII. Changing Climate Of Public Opinion Towards America

Fully aware of the importance of American support to China's reform and democracy, the Third Force leaders always assigned great hope to Marshall's mediation, viewing it as the strongest guarantee for the final achievement of peace and unity in a war-worn China. Once commenting on Marshall and his work, Luo Longji said to an American diplomat:

There is nothing so exciting as working with him. He has a mind like a clasp-knife. ...on the subject of peace I have never met a more persuasive advocate. What is certain is that if he fails, no one else will ever succeed. ...General Marshall should at least be able to teach the Chinese militarists that their personalities have no weight against the suffering the civil war produces.<sup>80</sup>

Unexpectedly, Marshall in the April mediation, unlike his success in early January, not only failed to stop Jiang Jieshi but also appeared, from the Third Force's point of

view, unresponsive to their painstaking effort at mediation. The experience of failure, both in reform and in mediation, made the Third Force reexamine the attitude of the government and the causes of its irreconcilability. And attention was naturally drawn to the relationship between the GMD Government and the Americans, who were supposed to help the reform and to stop the war but had in fact brought about the opposite result.

During March and April, the CDL leaders repeatedly expressed their opinion about U.S. aid to China to alert the U.S. government to the need to be cautious about the effect of the aid to China. On March 23, the CDL held a press conference on the \$500,000,000 American loan to China, which was then under negotiation. The CDL held that the loan should be made after the establishment of a coalition government, but not before that, so that every party and group could have a part in supervising its use.<sup>81</sup> Again, on April 27, when the attempted mediation appeared to be almost useless, the CDL made another appeal to the U.S. Congress " that the U.S. will not extend its loan to China before the proposed coalition government is formally set up".<sup>82</sup> The message was clear that the CDL was not against all help from the U.S., and that the CDL still felt that the U.S. could be brought over to side with the reformers in China.

At this time, the voice of the Third Force began to receive a widespread response in press circles, as the

minor parties moved their headquarters from inland cities to Shanghai, the cultural center of China, in early May. It started to play a leading role in the liberal press and thus become influential in shaping public opinion.

Parallel to a positive perception about America's intention in giving aid to China, there was still great expectation of Marshall. Many Chinese during April and early May anxiously expected Marshall to use his tremendous personal influence to reverse the course towards an all-out war. On April 1 the Wen Hui Bao published an article which typically expressed this feeling: "All the Chinese people hope that Marshall will come back to this country as soon as possible. It is only he who can fully understand the feelings of the Chinese people."<sup>83</sup> Later in May, twenty well-known university professors sent an open letter to Marshall, urging him to stop American supply of munitions to the GMD troops and to hold back American loans of any type to the GMD government. They held that this was a good opportunity to improve Sino-American friendship and that Marshall, as a person symbolizing American help to the Chinese, just as Marquis de La Fayette was to Americans, would definitely not lose this opportunity.<sup>84</sup>

Beneath the positive expectation, however, a sense of uneasiness and suspicion gradually emerged. In early May, Luo Longji indicated that "the desire of the government to reform itself is merely to secure a loan from the United States."<sup>85</sup> On May 15, the Wen Hui Bao echoed Luo's

criticism in its editorial comment which held that Marshall was being pulled by some people in China into "the infamous quagmire." Moreover, the newspaper asked Marshall to step aside. It warned that, if "our American friends still insist on standing between the two sides without fear of arousing suspicions, then they will doubtlessly make the Chinese people suspect that our American friends are interested in the civil war in China".<sup>86</sup> On July 22, Mme. Sun Yat-sen broke her year-long silence and made a statement which supported the opinion of the CDL and the liberals. She demanded the immediate formation of a coalition government and a stoppage of American aid to the GMD government and of American munitions to GMD troops.<sup>87</sup> The open letter by Mme. Sun Yat-sen indicated a significant shift of liberal opinion toward Sino-American relations was taking place during the three months from May to July. Obviously the pendulum was swinging to the negative side.

While the liberals were making every effort to estrange the U.S. government from Jiang Jieshi, the Communists began to publicize their attitude towards Nationalist-American relations. On May 4, they made a formal request to Marshall that the U.S. government stop transporting troops and munitions to Manchuria for the national government.<sup>88</sup> On June 22, as the negotiation during the temporary truce seemed to achieve nothing significant, Mao Zedong in Yanan made a public statement declaring that "the so-called military aid by the U.S. was

in fact armed intervention in Chinese internal affairs." He complained that U.S. aid resulted in "pulling China into civil war, split, chaos, terror and poverty." Again, Mao demanded that the U.S. government withdraw its military aid and military force from China.<sup>89</sup>

The attitude of the liberals became so similar to the CCP's that it made a distinct target for attacks from the opposite side. In early June, an anonymous observer of the Heping Ribao alleged that the CDL was being dominated by a pro-communist faction, led by Luo Longji and Zhang Bojun, while the true neutrals like Zhang Junmai were in fact out of power. At the same time, the Central News Agency of the government also contended that the recent shift in public opinion was actually the result of implementation of the CCP's March decision to launch a general political offensive. In the opinion of these GMD organs, "the Communist Party that has failed to forcibly prevent the National Forces from taking over the Northeast, is now using the pro-Communist group of the Democratic League to speak on their behalf."<sup>90</sup> Obviously, Marshall was strongly influenced by this argument. In explaining his failure to achieve the goal of the mission, the "Communist directed" propaganda was considered as one of the major causes.<sup>91</sup>

However, the change of liberal opinion cited above had shown that their negative perception of the U.S. originated from a rapidly shattering hope for a political reform and a coalition government. Rather than blurring the U.S. image,

they tried to separate the Americans from the GMD and to prevent the former from becoming a dishonorable accomplice in the latter's war effort. Nevertheless, they were greatly disappointed by Marshall's reluctance to use his "two trump cards" --the proposed \$500,000,000 loan and the transportation of Nationalist troops to the Northeast -- to halt Jiang Jieshi.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, a close examination of the liberal publications from late 1945 to mid-1946 showed that there was quite a consistency in liberal perception of the United States.

During the first several months after the war ended, liberals immediately sensed the tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. Consequently, they became apprehensive about the United States' intention in China. Some of them outspokenly expressed the fear that China might be used by the U.S. government as the battlefield in its confrontation with the Soviet Union. The liberals held that they would not oppose the U.S. but rather should admit that "it was an obvious fact that Chinese politics today cannot get rid of American influence." Also, they predicted that in the postwar years the U.S. would have trouble both in sustaining domestic prosperity and in maintaining a good relationship with the Soviet Union. The best approach for achieving these two goals lay in international cooperation, which would insure an extensive market as well as a peaceful relationship with the Soviet Union. It was also necessary for the Chinese, therefore,

to participate in this peaceful cooperation, since their supportive action would definitely improve the situation for international cooperation. However, the Chinese should also be aware of the potential danger that the U.S. might use force to build up a wall around China. And this line of American policy, as seen by liberals, was totally counter to the interests of the Chinese, since "the wall around China will become the target of bullets as soon as it is erected." There was enough reason to predict that "the destruction of mankind will start with this country." Using force to solve internal disputes, again, was seen by them as playing with a fire that might bring endless disaster.<sup>93</sup>

The universal fear among the Chinese of interference from an outside force and of a protracted war was too strong to need more instigation through propaganda. In fact, there was no single political force that could do anything decisive either to eliminate or to enlarge it. In the circumstances where political conflicts persisted, the fear was so pervasive that it had almost become instinctive.

As the chance of peaceful cooperation between the two contending parties was engulfed in the fire in Manchuria, the reaction of press circles, as indicated above, was a total reversal of the optimistic mood that had dominated late 1945. During June and July, the hope that Marshall could use his mighty influence to create another miracle



with the PCC rapidly evaporated. Replacing it was the anger of being cheated. A prevailing opinion in the press was that the U.S. had been utilizing a "double-faced policy", which, while mediating the civil war in China on the one hand, consistently increased its supply of munitions and transported GMD troops to help them resume war in the Northeast on the other. As regards Marshall's role, some observers even furiously accused him of "participating in this political fraud."<sup>94</sup> A more fair-minded opinion held that "General Marshall has done all he could to serve as a mediator, but his government has been pursuing a policy whose outward appearance does not agree with its real nature." In either a sympathetic or sarcastic tone, the editor added: "[t]he result is that, not only that the civil war in China has been extended, but General Marshall has lost much sleep and appetite." To reject the criticism from the American press that China was ungrateful for American help, the Wen Hui Bao made a short comment on July 2 which contended that "the Americans must do some real self-examining" for the cause of those very undesirable results generated by their policy.<sup>95</sup>

Again the most active element in the revived negative image of American China policy was fear rather than anger. Even the Shen Bao, a conservative and pro-government newspaper in Shanghai, began to voice its opinion that China should rely neither on the U.S. nor the Soviet Union. It warned that in the event of another world war, China

would be the first to suffer "in as much as she will become the battlefield."<sup>96</sup> The following paragraph from the Wen Hui Bao was very representative of the prevailing assessment of Sino-American relations. After a succinct report of the recent movement of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and the proposal by Truman and Byrnes for extending the Lend-Lease Act, the observer asked:

What does all this seem to indicate to us? First the U.S. seems to have taken off its outer coat of neutrality and exposed its real intention of intervening in a military way in China's civil war. Secondly, the U.S. no longer considers China as an independent, sovereign state; They regard China as a nation not much different from the Philippines. Thirdly, the U.S. seems to have given up the sacred principle of "assisting China to become a strong, democratic nation," and to be planning to convert China into an anti-Soviet military base.<sup>97</sup>

Two incidents, the Communist ambush of U.S. Marines in Anping and the resignation of Wallace, further disturbed public feeling on the Sino-American relations. On July 29, U.S. Marines clashed with Communist troops at Anping in the high-way between Beiping and Tianjin, resulting in three Marines dead and twelve others wounded. The incident immediately provoked a heated debate in the press. On the conservative side, the Shen Bao contended that it was a development of CCP's anti-American offensive from one of propaganda to one of action. It also indicated that, said the YCP organ Zhonghua Shibao, the objective of the CCP action was to bring about the withdrawal of the American troops. On the liberal and the radical side, the Wen Hui Bao, while mourning for the American soldiers who died in an

allied country for an inglorious reason, pointed out that the American troops in China had surrendered their neutrality in the Chinese civil war, and backed one side against another. The Lianhe Ribao's evening edition even saw the Aping incident as a most unfortunate historical parallel to the Lugouqiao incident which started the Sino-Japanese war. In the center, the Da Gong Bao and the Xin Wen Bao agreed with the Shen Bao that the incident was a deliberate action trying to "incite American public opinion to demand the withdrawal of American force in China." The Da Gong Bao, however, echoed liberal opinion that U.S. Marines should restrict their activities to repatriating the Japanese but not meddle in China's internal conflicts.<sup>98</sup> As the incident added an international dimension to the civil war, a confluence of opinion from different sides with regard to the role of U.S. troops in China emerged.

After the Anping incident, the Chinese became increasingly fearful that the next world war would start in China. The press watched closely every move in American political circles and tried to surmise the future direction of American foreign policy. When the news of Wallace's resignation as the result of his dissent from the government over foreign policy reached China, almost all newspapers responded with total disappointment. The Shen Bao, while deeply regretful, believed that the door to U.S.-Soviet cooperation was closed with the resignation of Wallace. The Dongnan Ribao, a liberal newspaper in Shanghai,

maintained that the incident indicated that U.S.-Soviet relations would continue to develop "in a devious and tense manner." The Xinmin Wanbao, another widely circulated newspaper in Shanghai, cried: "We feel in advance that China's internal strife is developing more and more into an international problem, and that the two opposing international blocs' relationship with the two opposing parties in China are also becoming closer and closer. ... China has become an object of international struggle."<sup>99</sup>

The longing for peace and the fear of another world war became so intense during August and September that it made an unfavorable American image in the public unavoidable. Commenting on the change of American image in China, an American observer indicated in October that "America is losing moral prestige in this country." He also found that America was under attack from all political strata, including the adherents of the GMD, the middle-class people, non-communist liberals and the left, for failing either to crush the communists or to reform the National Government. He further contended that it was "for the first time America begins to occupy a new role in Chinese thought, and it is a role that denotes a loss of moral prestige. It ranges from disillusionment to open anti-Americanism. And it should not be ignored or underestimated."<sup>100</sup>

### VIII. Marshall And The Third Force's Last Attempt

If political pressure had been the main force to deter the GMD and the CCP from open warfare during the early months of 1946, the situation in the middle of the year seemed to be just the opposite. From June 4 to June 30, Jiang Jieshi, under pressure from Marshall, made a temporary truce after national troops occupied Changchun. Large scale military action, however, resumed in mid-July. In the following months, the national government put 1,740,000 troops into an offensive against the CCP troops. Fighting was concentrated in four areas: North Jiangsu, the Henan-Shandong area, the Hebei-Rehe-Chahaer-Shanxi area and the Northeast. The GMD's military posture was aimed at eliminating the CCP's occupation of strategic points in these areas and eventually annihilating the CCP in North China, where Jiang put his crack troops under the command of General Zheng Dongguo, Fu Zuoyi and Sun Lianzhong.<sup>101</sup> Military actions became the catalyst of the changes in the political situation, which deteriorated through the latter half of the year.

Also in mid-1946, a decisive shift in the CCP's perspective about political development in China took place. Although in late April the CCP began to charge the Americans with helping the GMD and launching the civil war, Mao still maintained that conciliation between the U.S., Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union was not absolutely impossible. However, this perception began to change in

late June, as indicated above, when Mao made an open statement criticizing the U.S. for interfering in Chinese domestic affairs. A month later Mao gave an inner-party instruction indicating that Jiang Jieshi had begun to launch a large-scale offensive, and that the whole party should be spiritually, materially and politically ready for war. He also formulated tactics for the coming war which emphasized mobile warfare and required temporary retreat from certain cities and areas.<sup>102</sup>

While both sides were preparing for a total war, the negotiation under the supervision of Marshall in Nanjing came up with a stalemate during the truce period. In discussing the revision of the Basic Plan for Military Reorganization of February 25, the CCP representatives rejected additional demands by the government for withdrawal from the provinces of Rehe, Chahaer, Shandong, and certain cities to the north and east of Changchun, indicating that the government intention behind them was to drive the CCP troops into the areas least threatening in order to wipe them out at its leisure. Zhou Enlai also indicated that the CCP was willing to make concessions on military matters but these should be balanced by settlement on political issues, such as the separation of army units from civil administration.<sup>103</sup> As Jiang refused to change his proposal, the negotiation in June and early July achieved nothing substantial.

Being an experienced soldier, Marshall fully understood

why the CCP was so fearful about the government proposal. He tried to persuade Jiang to change some of the demands, but in vain. Marshall began to realize, after Jiang made a trip to Manchuria at the end of May, that he was being manipulated. Although he had never been optimistic about his mission of mediation, the months from late May to June were nevertheless the most frustrating time for him. His aide saw him appear to be extremely angry in private.<sup>104</sup> Obviously, he felt that the chance to prevent a final split of the two parties had diminished. And he believed that the government, which had imposed harsh conditions on the CCP, was more responsible for the breakdown of the negotiation. Sensing that the CCP was more willing to reach an agreement for the cessation of hostilities, and that the political issue was inseparable from a satisfactory settlement of military matters, Marshall tried to bring someone who was knowledgeable in China and respected by the leaders of both parties into the mediation. In early June, the Senate confirmed Marshall's recommendation and John Leighton Stuart was appointed the American Ambassador to China on July 11.

Marshall's effort to solve the problem of local government along with the military issues met with a cold response from the GMD. On July 4, without consulting the Steering Committee of the PPC, the National Government announced that the National Assembly would meet on November 12, 1946. On July 14, Jiang went to his summer resort at Guling and remained there until the end of September.

Undoubtedly, the negotiation during Jiang's absence would be greatly handicapped.<sup>105</sup> In Guling during August Jiang set forth "five conditions," demanding that Communist forces withdraw within one month or six weeks from more areas than those discussed during the July negotiation.<sup>106</sup> Three days after the announcement of Jiang's five conditions, the GMD organ, Zhongyang Ribao, published an editorial comment which urged using force to achieve unity.<sup>107</sup> Again on August 14, the first anniversary of the Japanese surrender, Jiang issued a public statement which blamed the communists for the breakdown of the negotiation and the economic stress in the country. He also announced that "we must put down rebellions." The successive moves of Jiang Jieshi were tantamount to declaring that the government would have its own way no matter what the mediator's opinion was. According to reports in the American press in late July, diplomatic and other sources had conceded privately that the prolonged American efforts to bring peace to China had resulted in failure.<sup>108</sup>

Being aware that Jiang's belligerence was the major obstacle to the negotiation and that Zhou was willing to reach a settlement on the issue of the State Council, Marshall adopted a two-pronged approach the following month. On the one hand, he asked the U.S. government to implement an arms embargo to the Nationalist government, which in fact lasted for ten months from the end of July 1946 to the end of May in the following year. He also adopted Stuart's



suggestion that a new five-man committee should be formed to discuss the reorganization of the State Council.<sup>109</sup> With the focus shifted to the issue of reorganization of the government, minor party leaders again became a force carrying some weight in the mediation.

Marshall never saw the participation of the third force leaders in the mediation as important during the first half of the year. When he arrived in China, Marshall made contact with a prominent civic leader of the Northeast, Zhou Qingwen, who suggested that the best solution for the Manchurian problem was the establishment of a regional coalition government. The proposal was immediately rejected by Marshall as being unrealistic.<sup>110</sup> During late April, as discussed above, Marshall did show interest in the possibility of using the Third Force leaders as mediators between the GMD and CCP. When he realized that the GMD's decisions could hardly be changed by the Third Force's suggestion, he immediately dropped the proposal.

The Third Force leaders, however, had always placed great hope on Marshall. Although there was rising anti-American feeling in which the Third Force leaders were playing the role of opinion-makers, the criticism always blamed the American government for being responsible for the outbreak of the civil war and, in most cases, showed understanding, even sympathy, for Marshall's dilemma. Being an unarmed political force, they had every reason to seek peaceful settlement through mediation, symbolized by

Marshall, as the most desirable approach to stop the fighting.

As the civil war expanded, nevertheless, it became more and more difficult for the middle-of-the-roaders to maintain their neutral position. In mid-1946, a heated debate broke out among the Third Force leaders on their attitude towards this expanding national strife. During June, Luo Longji made several public speeches in which he expressed the opinion that no Chinese could remain neutral regarding the issues of civil war, democracy and freedom. Luo argued that what every Chinese should do in this national strife was to distinguish right from wrong. His views immediately invited rebuke from the YCP, which criticized his position as tantamount to saying that the Guomindang had never been right and that the Communists had never been wrong. More than a month later, Zhang Lan in Chengdu made a statement which emphasized that the CDL must always remain neutral and suggested that Luo had made "a slight mistake in his point." Zhang Lan stressed that the CDL had the same demand for both the GMD and the CCP to stop the war, and that its cooperation with the CCP on the reorganization of the government was derived from the need of changing the GMD one-party rule and personal dictatorship.<sup>111</sup> Interestingly enough, the two responses from the YCP and from Zhang Lan, as they tried to define their neutrality, achieved just the opposite result.

Throughout July and August, the CDL was under the

pressure of threat and lure from the government. While the terror caused by the assassination in Kunming still reigned over the League, the rumor began to spread that some members of the CDL would accept posts in the future government. The targets of the government's enticement, in fact, were the moderates within the CDL. Zhang Junmai and Huang Yanpei were offered positions in the government. The proposals, however, were rejected by a collective decision of the CDL leaders and by a personal statement of Huang Yanpei that the CDL would not participate in the government unless the PCC decisions were enforced and the government was reorganized.<sup>112</sup> The debate over neutrality and the decision on CDL's attitude towards government reorganization signaled clearly that an internal crisis within the CDL, the stronghold of the Third Force, was lurking behind the scene.

Around the negotiation table, the talk over the reorganization of government deadlocked as soon as it started. A week before the Five Man Committee started formal meetings, government troops had already cleared the Communists from the Jinan-Qingdao Railway. These were the areas demanded by the government's "Five Conditions."<sup>113</sup> While continuing the offensive in north Jiangsu, the government troops captured Chengde, the capital of Rehe province. After the two conditions, an overall truce and their veto power in the reorganized government, had been repeatedly rejected by the government representatives, Zhou Enlai departed for Shanghai on September 16. Facing an

actual breakdown of the negotiation, the last thing which Marshall could do, an action he had refrained from taking several times since late June, was to withdraw from the mediation.

The desperate action of Marshall put Jiang Jieshi in a dilemma: he could neither afford losing American aid nor retreat from military victory. The only approach to secure both, before he insured total control of the country, was to tie the Communists to the negotiation table. In early October, Sun Fo, a "moderate" member of the GMD and the government representative to the PCC, went to Shanghai with the mission of mobilizing the Third Force leaders to pull Zhou Enlai back to Nanjing.<sup>114</sup> Again on October 9 Marshall himself made a secret trip to Shanghai to persuade Zhou to continue the negotiation.<sup>115</sup>

Under the urging of the Third Force and Marshall, Zhou agreed to return to Nanjing with the Third Force leaders in a few days. However, the capture of Kalgan by the government troops on October 11 suddenly and finally sealed the door to any meaningful negotiation and made Zhou change his mind. Liang Shuming, who was on the way back from Shanghai to Nanking with the promising news that Zhou was to return to the negotiation soon, was stunned at hearing the news when he stepped off the train in Nanjing. His immediate response was: "Waking up after one night's sleep, the peace has already died!"<sup>116</sup>

On October 16, a successful Jiang Jieshi made a public

statement, which advanced eight conditions for the truce. The most important points were: (1) the cease fire order was to be effective for the troops in North and Central China but not for those in Manchuria; (2) the troops of both sides in North and Central China would continue in occupation of localities under their current control until agreement on redistribution, reorganization and demobilization of the troops was reached by the Committee of Three. On the following day, Wu Tiecheng, Sun Fo, and Lei Zhen, deputy secretary-general of the PPC (the People's Political Council) arrived in Shanghai, and began informal discussion with the CDL, the YCP, and the CCP. As a result, Zhou Enlai agreed to return to Nanjing with the Third Party Group, which included the CDL, the YCP, and several non-partisan representatives to the PCC. Also, the Third Party Group promised that it would stand with the Communists against naming their delegates to the National Assembly until the government reorganized in strict accordance with the PCC resolutions.<sup>117</sup>

Waiting for the Third Party Group and Zhou Enlai was the discouraging news that Jiang Jieshi had decided to go to Taiwan the same afternoon. Although Jiang had assured Marshall that he would return within a few days or upon four hours notice from the latter, Marshall was informed by Chen Cheng, newly-appointed government member of the Committee of Three, that Jiang would not return from Taiwan until October 31. During Jiang's absence, the government troops launched

the offensive in Chefoo, Henan and Hebei along the Jinan-Qingdao and the Beiping-Hankou Railways. The most dangerous action taken by the government was its drive on Andong which indicated that a large-scale conflict might resume in Manchuria.<sup>118</sup> While the situation deteriorated, Communist Party personnel began to evacuate Nanjing, Beiping, Shanghai and Chongqing to Yanan.<sup>119</sup>

At the conference room of the Bank of Communication in Nanjing, the Third Party Group began its last attempt to divert the course of history. The leaders had already known that Yanan responded to Jiang's demand with the condition that troops of both sides return to the military position of January 13, the day the cessation of hostilities order was issued. Since the military situation had greatly changed in the favor of the GMD, the Communist response was tantamount to rejection of Jiang's eight-point program. After one week of tiresome discussion, the Third Party Group finally came up with a three-point proposal, drafted by Liang Shuming, as follows:<sup>120</sup>

- (1) All troops throughout the country were to remain in their present positions and the cessation of hostilities was to be effective immediately.
- (2) The question of local governments throughout China, including Manchuria, would be decided by the State Council.
- (3) The five PPC resolutions would be carried out in accordance with the PPC procedures specified.

As regard to the first stipulation, several members of the Third Party Group feared that it was too close to Jiang's demand which might not be acceptable to the CCP. At

the suggestion of Muo Dehui, a leading non-partisan representative from the Northeast Provinces, the proposal was made more detailed and stipulated that (1) the Communist troops were to be stationed at Qiqihaer, Beian, and Jiamusi, while the government troops controlled Changchun and 25 other districts along the railway; and (2) the government would send administrators and police to take over the administration of the towns along the railway line under the CCP's control. As the first stipulation provided actual Communist control of North Manchuria, the area adjacent to the Soviet Union, Muo thought it would satisfy both sides.<sup>121</sup>

To the Third Party Group's dismay, Zhou Enlai rejected the proposal immediately. As a matter of fact, Zhou Enlai had already told Marshall on October 26 that Jiang's eight-point proposal could not be accepted by the CCP. Zhou predicted that, if the proposal was accepted, the government would put the Communists in three points: Yanji, Qiqihaer and Hailaer, and in the region of the 2 1/2 provinces in Manchuria. This would not be acceptable to the Communists either.<sup>122</sup> Unfortunately, the proposal by the Third Party Group was almost the same.

The breakdown of their mediation immediately brought up a pressing issue to the Third Force leaders. Since the Third Party Group had agreed with the CCP in Shanghai that they would name their delegates to the National Assembly only after the government reorganized itself along the PCC

lines, whether to attend the coming National Assembly or not became the real test for their neutrality. Failing to persuade the other parties to go along with it, the YCP stepped into the Conference on November 16 without much hesitation.<sup>123</sup> After consultation with Zhang Lan, the CDL leaders formally announced on November 12 that they would not attend the Assembly.<sup>124</sup> The Democratic Socialist Party of Zhang Junmai, however, hesitated and finally decided, after a lengthy inner-party discussion and a negotiation with the government, that it would send 40 delegates to the National Assembly, while Zhang Junmai himself remained outside the Assembly and the reorganized government.<sup>125</sup> This difficult decision further led to the split between the Democratic Socialist Party and the CDL. The Beiping branch of the DSP opposed the decision and Zhang Dongsun, leader of the Party in the north, withdrew from the party in the end of the year.<sup>126</sup> On December 24, the CDL expelled the DSP from the League.

To some extent, the failure of the Third Force's mediation and the split of the Third Party Group over the issue of the National Assembly were not surprising. Certainly the October mediation by the Third Party Group was carried out in a totally hopeless circumstance. Not only was Jiang Jieshi impatient to see this game of negotiation performed before he took further military action, but also the Communists could hardly fold their hands and await destruction. Marshall was exhausted after ten months'



fruitless efforts. He refused the minor party leader's request for help in the mediation time and again and stepped aside, adopting an attitude of "drifting with the tide." In retrospect, the Third Party Group only played a role of substitute for Marshall at the time when he had made every effort but failed to achieve the goal of stopping the fighting between the two contending parties.

### CONCLUSION

In retrospect, Marshall's failure to achieve a peaceful solution to the CCP-GMD conflict through political reform was not absolutely inevitable. At the beginning of his mission, several conditions existed in China that favored a successful mediation. First, the public demand for peace put strong pressure on the two contending parties and established a favorable atmosphere for compromise. Secondly, the emergence of the Third Force, which began to achieve certain prominence and to serve as a balancing force between the two major parties, had made the peaceful approach to achieve unity China through a coalition government a viable one. Finally, the Nationalist Government was forced to accept compromise because its superior military strength was largely offset by the slow movement of troops into strategic areas and spots that made an immediate large-scale confrontation with the CCP impossible.

During the first three months in 1946, China's

situation appeared very promising. The conclusion of the PCC became not only a landmark in China's political history but also a turning point in the Third Force's political career. As the country headed towards a constitutional rule and a multi-party system, the Third Force's influence began to ascend. With the Third Force serving as a balancing power, the CCP also showed willingness to participate in the coalition government and to recognize GMD preponderance in the government. Although Marshall did not participate in the PCC directly, his presence, which symbolized America's advocacy of peace and democracy in China, was of tremendous importance to encourage the reform and to affect a general compromise between the two contending parties.

However, the resumed CCP-GMD military conflict in April 1946 during Marshall's absence from China indicated that the conditions mentioned above were not sufficient to ensure a lasting peace. As public demand for peace at the time had to materialize through the work of certain political agents, a close look at the political situation revealed that neither the Third Force nor the government was able to fulfil the task.

On the part of the Third Force, the problem was that it had a strong will but little strength to enforce peace and reform independently. In order to make desired change in politics, the Third Force had to rely heavily on collective action and thus incorporate several parties and groups with diversified ideology into a loosely knitted amalgamation.

While endorsing peace and reform as their collective goal, these parties and groups retained their own political positions. At times when small group interest conflicted with the collective goal, such as on the occasions of the PCC and the National Assembly, the loosely organized Third Force found that it could hardly maintain solidarity.

In addition to this organizational weakness, the Third Force's political influence was limited by its lack of means to transform ideas into action. Moral persuasion and exhortation through public statement, petition and protest were their strongest weapons. Yet these measures were insufficient to effect immediate changes in the political arena. To bring about desirable changes in reform, the Third Force had to seek allies. At the time of the 1946 reform, the help that the Third Force could seek had two sources: the CCP and the Americans. By allying with the CCP, the Third Force was able to achieve some positive changes in the existing political system. Yet this tactic also had invited an increasingly stronger pressure from the authorities. Except for a short period of reform, the Third Force's collective action among the minor parties and with the CCP was basically defensive in nature.

It was in fact the Guomindang, not the Third Force, that held power. To a great extent, the political compromise reached between the CCP and the GMD in early 1946 was the result of the military predicament of the GMD. In other words, the reform started by the PCC which allowed the

Third Force to play a balancing role was actually based on a precarious military balance. Basically, it was this balance that helped the initial accomplishment of Marshall's mediation and brought about a unique opportunity for the liberals to reconstruct China's political system. If this balance had been maintained until real political balance was achieved in a coalition government, the outcome of the Marshall mediation and the fate of the Third Force might have been totally different.

Unfortunately, this critical condition for a peaceful solution to China's problem was undermined by the decision made by the Truman Administration for Marshall's mediation that the U.S. mediator should under any circumstance help the Nationalist troops occupy Manchuria. Given the fact that the irreconcilable within the GMD were strongly against reform, the military balance between the CCP and the GMD really needed to be cautiously maintained. Yet the American help to transport GMD troops into Manchuria not only toppled the temporary military balance between the two contending parties but, more seriously, encouraged the GMD irreconcilables to use military means to achieve unity and thus made an all-out civil war inevitable.

The failure of Marshall to achieve a political settlement of the China problem, moreover, indicated the inconsistency of the policy with China's reality. Openly, the U.S. government had strongly advocated democracy and reform in China and supported the liberals' demand for

changing the GMD rule. Yet in reality, it was unwilling to relinquish Jiang's regime as a trustworthy ally in its confrontation with the Soviet Union, and thus unable to recognize the reality in China that all the political problems derived from the overexpansion of the GMD's power. While the minor parties, together with the CCP, endeavored to limit the GMD's power through reform, the U.S. expected that the GMD's leadership would be strengthened in a coalition government. During the U.S. mediation, the activeness of U.S. help in transporting Nationalist troops into Manchuria and the passiveness of U.S. mediator in response to the Third Force's appeal for help in putting strong pressure on the GMD formed a sharp contrast. Ironically, the American partial treatment of the different political forces in China had not only failed to save the Jiang regime but also driven the Third Force, the most desirable element for the implementation of an American-expected reform, to the communist side.

In the perspective of China history, the most important legacy left by the failure of Marshall mission to bring peace and to enforce a political reform in China was perhaps a negative image of the Americans among the Chinese, especially among the urban middle and lower classes. More frequently exposed to western influence through various cultural contacts, this section of the population had been most positive towards the Anglo-American type of democracy. They were indeed a valuable asset of American relations with

China. Yet with the failure of the Third Force, the political representative of the middle class, skepticism about and disillusionment with the American role in China emerged. Frustrated by many futile appeals to the U.S. for aiding their efforts on establishing a coalition government and in stopping the expanding civil war, the Third Force leaders began to raise the public awareness of American's partial support to the GMD. Although they were unable to relinquish the hope that the U.S. might change its policy and continued to appeal for American pressure on Jiang Jieshi, the Third Force leaders nevertheless became instrumental in starting an anti-American feeling among a wide range of population and thus prepared the psychological background for the coming of the age of estrangement between the two nations.

## Notes

The following abbreviations are used in the notes:

CPR U.S. Consulate-General, Chongqing, Kunmin, and Shanghai, Chinese Press Review.

FR U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States.

WP U.S. Department of State, The China White Paper, originally issued as United States Relations with China, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967).

1. For a brief but thoughtful analysis of Truman's China policy, see Ernest R. May, The Truman Administration and China, 1945-1949, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975).

2. WP, 688.

3. FR, 1945, vol. VII, 770.

4. Ibid, 768.

5. One representative report by John King Fairbank, the director of the U.S. Information Service in China, described the hopeless situation of the GMD administration in this way: "the most striking change since two years ago in the minds of the Chinese intellectuals appears to be their final desertion of the Generalissimo. Liberals say they see no hope in his regime: it will continue to seek political control without achieving economic and social reform." FR, 1946, vol. IX, 131.

6. WP, 573.

7. Ibid, 606.

8. Ibid, 605, 608.

9. Ibid, 609.

10. John F. Melby, The Mandate of Heaven, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 84.

11. WP, 605.

12. "Democracy vs. One-Party Rule in Kuomintang China," Amerasia, 7.3 (April 25, 1943), 97-120; Minxian yuekanshe ed.; Heping minzhu tongyi jianguo zhilu [The road to peace,

democracy, unity, and national reconstruction] (Hongkong: Minxian yuekanshe, 1945).

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25. Zhongyang tongzhanbu et al., comp., Zhonggong zhongyang mingzhu tongyi zhangxian wenjian xuanbian [Selected materials on the Anti-Japanese United Front of the Central Bureau of the CCP] (Beijing: Dangan chubanshe, 1986), vol.2, 332-333.

26. Zhu Jianhua, 462.

27. Tseng Chao-lun, "The Chinese Democratic League," Current History, 11.55 (July 1946), 35.



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