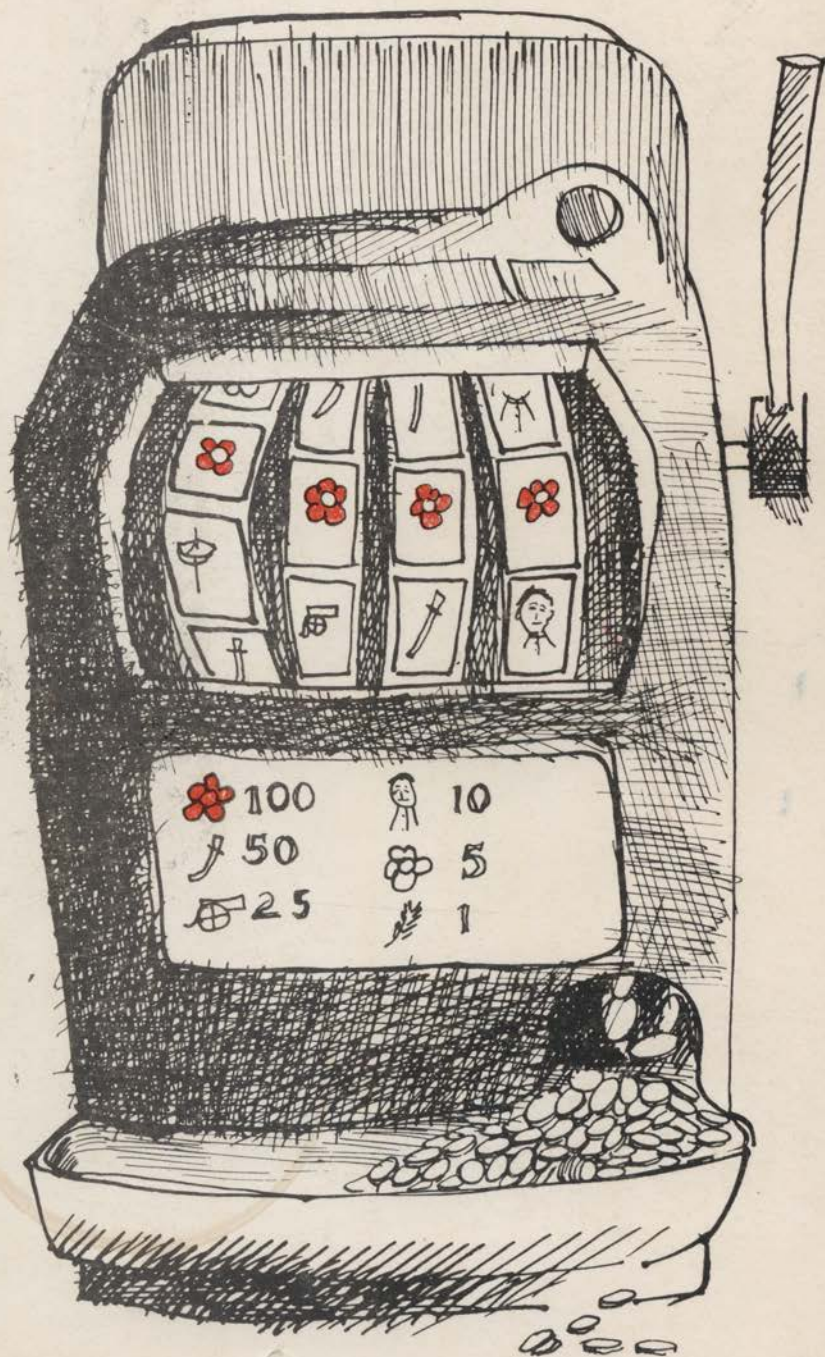
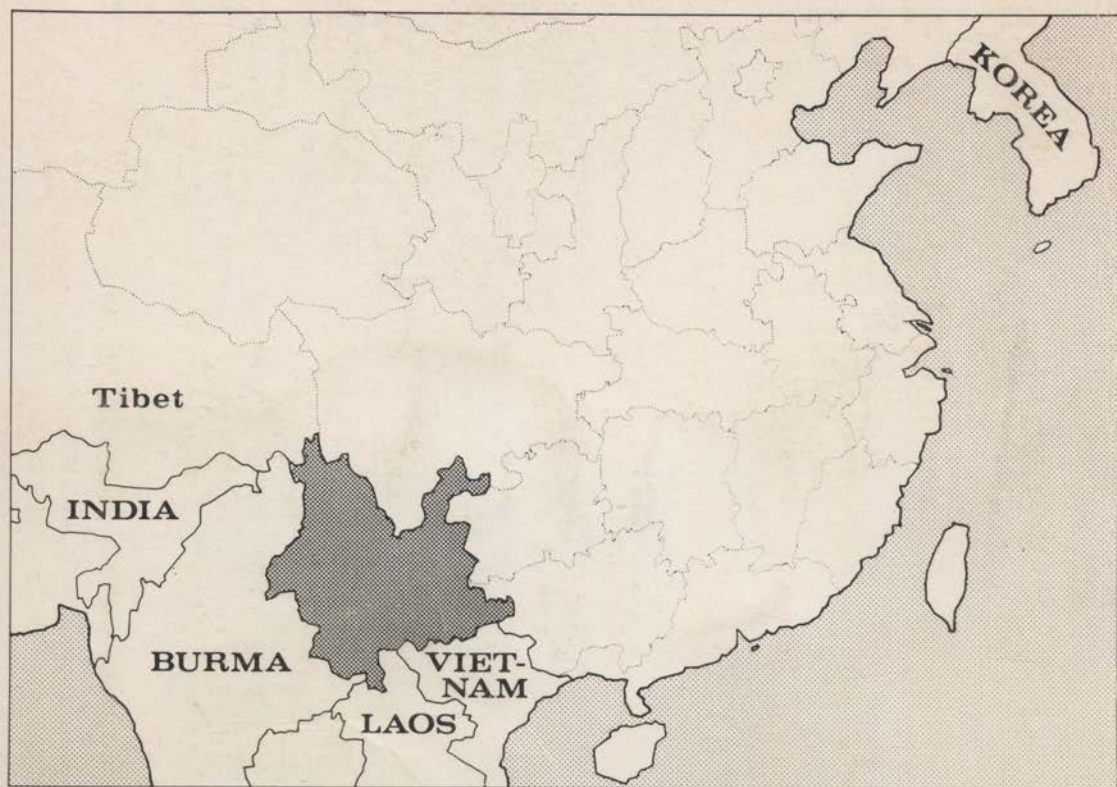


J.C.S. Hall The Yunnan
Provincial Faction
1927 1937



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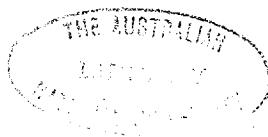


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The Yunnan
Provincial Faction
1927 1937



Monographs on Far Eastern History 6

The Yunnan Provincial Faction 1927 1937

Department of Far Eastern History
The Australian National University 1976

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Introduction

This book traces the rise to power of a group of military officers and civil officials in the province of Yunnan¹ at the time of the Northern Expedition and gives some account of their rule up to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. The generals and politicians who governed the province during the ten or so years of nominal political unity under the Central Government constituted a "provincial faction." The formation, organization and evolution of this provincial faction in its relationship with the political and economic foundations of its rule will be described below.

The political and economic fragmentation of China during the Republic was only marginally affected by the rise of Chiang Kai-shek and the political and military scaffolding that he erected over China during this period. China was ruled by regional not national groups: political and economic decisions were taken at a provincial or sub-provincial level by coalitions of military and civil bureaucracies whose dominant aim was independence from national authority. Hence the investigation of such a provincial faction in Yunnan, and of certain aspects of its relationship to the political and economic history of the province does not stand in simple isolation from the history of the rest of China. The most important factors in the politics, economics and finances of the province were common to many regions, notably the peripheral provinces of the southwest and northwest: Sichuan, Guizhou, Shānxi, Gansu. The relationship of the military to the civil bureaucracy and resistance to national authority;

¹The romanization used here is the *pinyin* system. The only exceptions are common personal and place names where the case seems hopeless, e.g. Chiang Kai-shek, Nanking etc.

the role of opium in the rural economy and investment in industrial enterprises; the financial basis of the provincial faction: these are the problems at the heart of the modern history of Yunnan, and China.

The term "provincial faction" needs some further explanation which may best be supplied by considering briefly the historiography of regionalism in modern China. The major focus of modern historical research has been upon the rise of personal armies under military commanders commonly referred to as "warlords," and in the decade after 1927, as "new warlords."¹ That these terms were originally pejorative is not open to question.² For this reason, recent authors have rejected it in favour of concepts such as "regional military separatism"³ or "subnational militarism."⁴ Yet these alternatives, while useful, only deal with part of the problem. The concept of warlord, a military commander of an army personally loyal through which he ruled territory and exercised government,⁵ has led to an undue emphasis upon the emotions and supposed irrationality of the individual as explanations for political and economic acts.⁶ In the case of Yunnan, the decisions of the provincial chairman, Long Yun, are

¹The term "new warlord" came into use after the split between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party in 1927. The "new warlords" had "participated in the revolution and at one time fought under the revolutionary banner against the old warlords, and consequently . . . had some influence among the masses . . . [and had] a central organization in the form of a political party as well as various subsidiary organizations to use as tools of counter-revolution." See Ch'en Po-ta, *On the Ten-Year Civil War, 1927-1937* (Peking, 1966), pp.4-5.

²The unqualified use of words such as militarist or militarism for warlord and warlordism seems little improvement since both can be made to bear unpalatable connotations, it being simply a matter of degree. Chinese works of the early 1930s regularly translated *jūnfā*, which is normally rendered as warlord, by the term "militarist."

³Wilbur, C. Martin, "Military Separatism and the Process of Reunification under the Nationalist Regime, 1922-1937," in Ho Ping-ti, Tsou Tang, eds., *China in Crisis*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1968, 1969), I, 203.

⁴Kapp, Robert A., *Szechwan and the Chinese Republic: Provincial Militarism and Central Power, 1911-1938* (New Haven, London, 1973), p.2.

⁵Sheridan, James E., *Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yü-hsiang* (Stanford, 1966), p.18.

⁶See Gillin, Donald M., *Warlord: Yen Hsi-shan in Shansi Province* (Princeton, 1967), *passim*.

quite amenable to rational explanation when considered in the light of the provincial faction's goals.

The concept warlord abstracts the individual military commander from the society in which he ruled: he manoeuvres against his political and military opponents and capriciously champions first this and then that political doctrine. His will alone and his personality bind together his supporters. The difficulties faced by the historian who wishes to decide who was and who was not a warlord, have led to an attempt to define "warlord acts" and to classify individuals (although which individuals is no longer clear), according to their support for supra-personal principles.¹ Thus the concept of warlordism seems to lead to a psychological reductionism which undervalues rational explanations of political and economic acts.

"Warlordism" has now outlived its usefulness because it has led to an over-narrow concentration on individuals and hence on personal motives. A further objection is that it places too much emphasis on the military nature of regionalism and neglects the role of the civil bureaucracy and ultimately the relationship of the army to landlord society. In Yunnan the success of a personal army depended upon the support of civil bureaucrats and the dominant classes — landlords and merchants.

Thus the term provincial faction is an attempt to give greater prominence to the provincial politicians who worked with the personal armies. Within the provincial faction there were three fairly distinct and homogeneous groups: firstly, military officers; secondly, central landlord bureaucrats; and thirdly, a small number of men who may reasonably be described as provincial modernizers. These three groups were united under the leadership of a general who ruled the province for some eighteen years after 1927, Long Yun.² The members of the provincial faction for the most part held office in the provincial administration and government, and many were linked to Long Yun by marriage ties or like him were members of the *Yi* ("Lolo") minority (Long's father was *Yi* but his mother was Han Chinese).

Yunnan's independence and the preservation of their power were the foremost goals of the provincial faction. From 1927 to 1937 there

¹Ch'en, Jerome, "Defining Chinese Warlords and their Factions," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31.3 (1968). 579.

²See below, pp.56-70.

was a marked shift from the predominance of the military officers and the landlord bureaucrats to that of the provincial modernizers. The decline of military officers and landlord bureaucrats and the rise of provincial modernizers was due to changes in the political and economic organization of society during this period. Briefly, these changes were the result of the growth of Chiang Kai-shek's political and military power in central and southern China after 1932 and the consequent decline of the opium trade in these regions. The military officers lost prominence because they challenged the hard-won stability which Long's army had brought to Yunnan by the early 1930s and because resistance to national authority was more a matter of economics and politics. The landlord bureaucracy declined because Chiang Kai-shek's growing control of the opium trade in central and southern China reduced the provincial government's income, in which the taxes on opium cultivation and exports had been the most conspicuous portion. The provincial modernizers under Miao Jiaming had two aims: firstly, to make good the financial deficiency by quickly exploiting the province's industrial resources; and secondly, to provide an alternative source of political authority by replacing the entrenched but moribund landlord bureaucracy.

This process will be described below in three sections. During the first period, from 1927 to 1931, Long Yun's generals dominated the Yunnan provincial faction, until an abortive coup. This period begins in 1927 with the collapse of the authority of Tang Jiyao, the ruler (with one interruption) of Yunnan since 1913. After a complicated political struggle in the provincial capital, Kunming, three competing armies rose from the ruins of the Yunnan Army, which had been in decline for a number of years. The civil war which followed Tang's death in May 1927 was then engulfed in a wider conflict between Yunnan and neighbouring Guizhou province as a minor part of the conflict between Nanking and Guangxi. In this first period, Long Yun's officer corps was put together. Military endeavour was paramount and Long's generals assumed important positions on the Provincial Government Committee, the leading executive organ.

The first two chapters of this book therefore describe the events which led to the overthrow of Tang Jiyao and the rise of his successor, Long Yun, from 1927 to 1929. The history of Yunnan during these

few years is complicated by the fragmentary nature of the source materials. The narrative of events is more central in this period than in later chapters. Although historians ought not to complain of the tortuous nature of the sources, readers may be forewarned that this narrative may be hard to follow.

In 1931 his four generals tried to overthrow Long Yun and evict many officials of the landlord bureaucracy. Up to that point, the military officers had shared power with these landlord officials in the provincial administration. These latter extracted the surplus from the land for the provincial faction and were the means by which Long Yun obtained the support of the landlord class of Yunnan. After 1931 the landlord bureaucracy was unchallenged, for Long Yun drastically reduced the power of his generals. The military officers lost both the authority which had been theirs during the civil war, and their influence upon policy.

During this second period the landlord bureaucracy was faced with two problems: how to shore up the provincial currency and how to finance the army and administration. The conflict between the landlord bureaucracy and the military officers over finance was resolved decisively in 1931 with the defeat of the latter.¹ The trade in opium remained the pillar of the provincial faction's finances up to 1935, and as long as this was the case, the landlord bureaucracy was of great moment. But the decline of opium in central and southern China under the assaults of Chiang Kai-shek and his politico-military machine in Hankou sharply diminished the importance of the landlord bureaucracy. Chiang Kai-shek's monopoly in central China was designed to gain control of the economies of those southwestern provinces whose rulers depended upon the export of opium to maintain their government. Thus the continued export of opium became a danger to provincial autonomy, much as countries with a single agricultural export are dominated by industrialized powers.

The landlord bureaucracy could not provide an alternative source of revenue to opium, and had to give way to the entrepreneurial skills of Miao Jiaming and the provincial modernizers during the third and concluding period of this narrative. Miao rapidly became, after 1934, the most powerful man in the government and possibly the most

¹Only one of Long Yun's senior officers, Lu Han, retained his political position, while provincial ministers had their authority strengthened by their successful handling of the currency question.

important man in the provincial faction. He had built up a small but significant industrial and financial complex based on his successful improvement of the tin smelting methods employed in Gejiu. Thus he was able to offer Long Yun not simply an alternative source of revenue to compensate for the loss of opium but also a new vision of what was held to be an industrialized and modern society.

Income from the enterprises of the Yunnan Economic Commission (*Yunnan jingji weiyuanhui*), the creation of Miao Jiaming, rose to levels previously reached only by opium taxes. Successful adaptation by the provincial faction to the rapid decline of the opium trade was a major reason why Yunnan was able to preserve its independence from central authority while neighbouring provinces such as Guizhou and Guangxi were going under in the mid-1930s. The slow incursion of central authority only began at the very end of the third period when the Central Government shifted to Chongqing. Before the war with Japan, the provincial faction in Yunnan had defended its independence with remarkable success considering the limitations of its resources. The story of this resolute and flexible resistance to national authority now follows.

1 The Fall of Tang Jiyao

The province of Yunnan is a frontier land, a "patch-quilt . . . of high mountains, deep gorges and canyons, plains and basin lands."¹ West of the city of Dali large rivers cut deeply into the eastern slope of the Tibetan massif forming parallel chains of sparsely inhabited mountain ranges. The high plateau land of the eastern regions runs from the central lakes to the borders of Sichuan and Guizhou provinces in the north and east. Less than half of an estimated population of nearly twelve millions in the 1930s were Han Chinese.² The majority of the Chinese lived in the northeastern triangle and cultivated the river basins: agriculture was "intensive, concentrated, associated with irrigation, and dependent on a high expenditure of manhours per acre."³ The other inhabitants of Yunnan formed "national minorities," peoples ethnically distinct from the Han Chinese belonging to the Mon-Khmer, Tibeto-Burman, Tai or Miao-Yao ethnolinguistic groups. While some of these national minorities had largely been assimilated by the successive waves of Han Chinese migrants,⁴ many still practised slash-burn agricultural methods.⁵

Differences in language and agriculture were paralleled by striking

¹Wiens, Herold J., *Han Chinese Expansion in South China* (Shoestring Press, 1967), p.20.

²*Ibid*, p.294.

³Lattimore, Owen, "Yunnan, Pivot of Southeast Asia," *Foreign Affairs* 21.3 (April 1943). 486.

⁴For a description of one such minority people see Fitzgerald, C.P., *The Tower of the Five Glories: A Study of the Min Chia of Ta Li, Yunnan* (London, 1941), p.23.

⁵Rock, Joseph, *The Ancient Na-Khi Kingdom of Southwest China* 2 vols. (Harvard, 1947), II, 421.

contrasts in social organization and culture. The *Yi*, for example, maintained an agricultural system dominated by slave labour taken from the Han Chinese population whom they despised. Many of them lived by banditry, raiding their neighbours.¹ In the west of the province, along the Burma border, headhunting was still found in the mid-1950s. The tribal chiefs of Yongning salted and preserved large numbers of "lute pigs" for distribution as largesse at Lamaist festivals and solved the storage problem by using them as mattresses.² These few examples give an idea of the diversity of Yunnan. It was a province where Han Chinese political authority and agriculture had not fully penetrated.

Since 1913 this remote and inaccessible province had been ruled by Tang Jiyao. Under his leadership Yunnan began a period of military expansionism starting in 1915 when a national protection army (*huguojun*) was raised to attack Yuan Shikai's monarchy. In spite of the lack of manpower and the limited economic resources of the province armies from Yunnan intervened in Sichuan and Guizhou, and then Guangxi provinces. The Yunnan army was then one of the most effective armies in China by the standards of the day, and for this reason the influence of Yunnan on national politics was out of all proportion to its economic capacity.³

By 1922 however, the Yunnan army no longer functioned as a coherent political force. In Yunnan itself Tang Jiyao, who returned from a brief exile in that year, could no longer dominate an army composed of "Yunnanese of miscellaneous training (some of them risen from the ranks)"⁴ The breakdown of central authority, which dates from this time, left garrison commanders, called "defence commissioners" (*zhenshoushi*) in largely independent control of the regions. The period of instability in Yunnan from 1921 to 1929

¹Rock, II, 454.

²*Ibid*, 413.

³This paragraph and the following one are both based upon the admirable account of the Yunnan army given by Sutton, Donald, S., *The Rise and Decline of the Yunnan Army, 1909-1925*, unpublished Ph.d. dissertation, (Cambridge, 1970). pp.201ff.

⁴Sutton, p.238.

was the result of this devolution of the Yunnan army into economically and politically independent units nominally subordinate to the central authority of Tang Jiyao in Kunming.

The account that follows centres on the process by which Tang's authority in Yunnan was overthrown by Long Yun, Hu Royu and Zhang Ruji, the three defence commissioners of Kunming, Mengzi and Zhaotong respectively (see map page 10). The first half deals with Yunnan's relations with the Guomintang before 1926; Chiang Kai-shek's negotiations with Tang during October and November 1926; the activities of a secret Guomintang organization, the Provisional Military Committee, in fostering opposition to Tang during the winter of 1926-1927; and the course of the *coup d'état* of 6 February 1927 which led to Tang's defeat. The second half considers the organization of government during February and March 1927; the creation of three separate Guomintang branches in Kunming; and the rising of Jiang Yingshu and the Provisional Military Committee in April 1927.

There are two themes to this narrative: firstly, the relentless rise of the three defence commissioners, Long, Hu and Zhang; secondly, the involvement of Yunnan in national politics. The British consul remarked that the *coup d'état* itself was provoked by "flagrant nepotism," that it was a matter solely of dispute between Tang and his military subordinates.¹ However, although Tang and the three defence commissioners may have been mutually suspicious,² the decisive factor which moved the defence commissioners to revolt against him seems, on the balance of the evidence, to have been the question of Yunnan's position vis-à-vis the Guomintang.³

YUNNAN AND THE GUOMINDANG

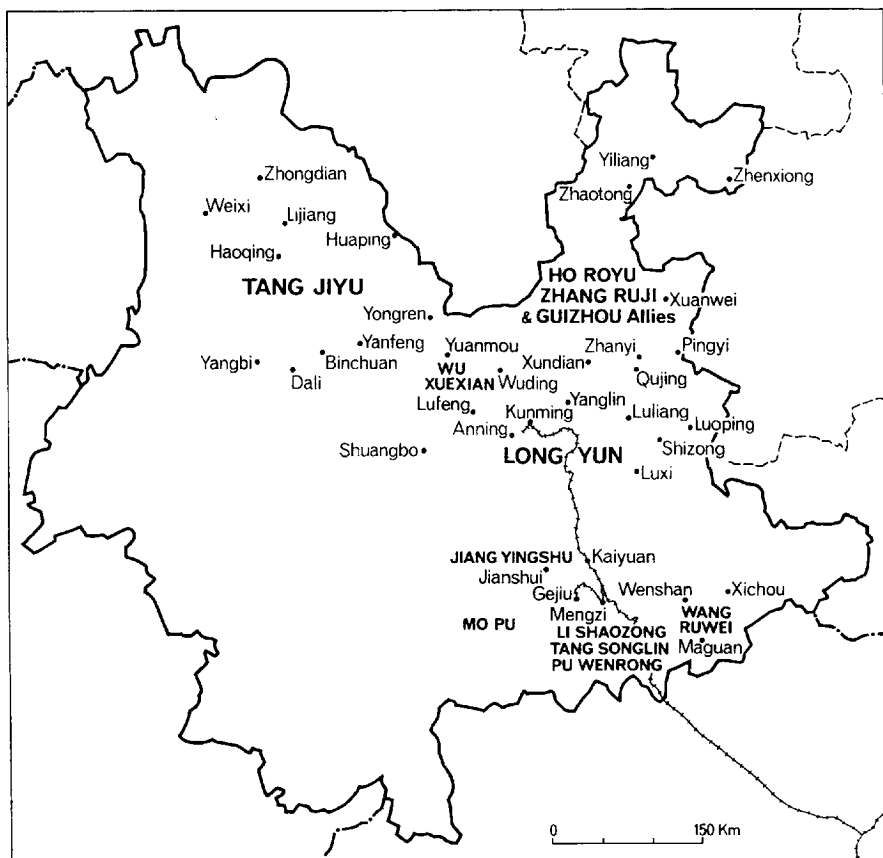
Writing in September 1925 one of the Soviet advisers to the Guomintang in Canton was uncertain and undecided about the likely

¹Public Records Office, London. FO 371/1356/2, 10 February 1927.

²See below, p.18.

³It is, of course, true that only one direct statement of political views by one of the three (see letter from Hu Royu to Chiang Kai-shek given below, (pp. 19-20) has survived. Speeches by both Long and Hu are recorded in the *Yunnan gongbao* but all date from well after the coup of 6 February. Consequently analysis of their motives must depend upon probability rather than direct evidence.

THE FALL OF TANG JIYAO



Distribution of Military Forces, c. August, 1927

attitude of Yunnan towards the Guomindang. But he did believe that Yunnan would “hardly be able to interfere with the implementation of the Northern Campaign.”¹ The aim of the Northern Expedition was to destroy the military forces hostile to political and social revolution in the north of China. Yunnan was geographically remote from the intended battle grounds, and consequently the only threat that Yunnan posed to the Guomindang was the possibility of an attack on Guangxi. During summer 1926 Tang issued denials that he intended to invade that province, which in the terms of contemporary

¹Solecki, Jan, Wilbur, C. Martin, “Blücher’s ‘Grand Plan’ of 1926,” *China Quarterly* 35 (July-September 1968). 31.

politics suggested that he was actively considering such action.¹ His reasons for this must be understood in the context of his previous relations with Sun Yat-sen and the Guomindang.

Before the reorganization of the Guomindang in 1924 Sun Yat-sen's policy of cooperation with regional military commanders had included Tang Jiyao, who had made his national reputation at the time of the national protection army and who still commanded an army whose decline was not yet generally visible. But neither side ever gained much concrete support from each other. Tang refused to jeopardize his territorial base by sending out his troops to support Sun. A lesser motive was Tang's personal dignity which would not permit him to accept a political role subordinate to Sun Yat-sen.² During the 1920s, after his return from exile, Tang made propaganda for his "federalist" political ideas³ while he claimed to be concentrating on the improvement of provincial government in Yunnan rather than wasting his substance on external adventures.⁴

In September 1924 Sun decided that he needed Tang's support, or at least his neutrality, in launching a campaign against the "northern warlords." So he offered Tang the office of vice marshal (*fuyuanshuai*), he himself being grand marshal. Tang refused this offer, but accepted Sun's next proposal that he adopt the style of Commander-in-Chief of the United Armies of Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou.⁵ Yet by February 1925 Tang's armies were invading Guangxi with a view to seizing Guangdong,⁶ and on Sun Yat-sen's death in March he remembered that he had been appointed vice marshal. With characteristic lack of finesse he announced in a circular telegram on 19 March, seven days after Sun's death in Peking, that he had assumed that office,

¹Hatano Kenichi, *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 19 August 1926, pp.265-266.

²Li Zonghuang, *Li Zonghuang huiyilu* 4 vols. (Taipei, 1972), II, 313.

³On federalism see Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China, 1840-1928* (Princeton, 1956), pp.401-405.

⁴Dongnan bianyi she, *Tang Jiyao (Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congshu ed.)*, p.118

⁵Sun Zhongshan, *Guofu quanji* 6 vols. (Taipei, 1957), IV, 441-442; *Beiyang junfa*, VII, 149-150.

⁶Li Zonghuang, II, 86.

and the next day he expatiated in a second telegram on the virtues of federalism.¹ The invasion was the result of several causes: firstly, there was a need to find some means of financing Yunnan's armies without continuing the strain on provincial finances; secondly, Tang still believed that he was, in the words of the British consul writing in 1927, "marked out as a future President of China."² Naturally enough the Guomindang denounced Tang for his opportunism in two telegrams despatched on 20 and 27 March.³

Tang's invasion had been an extremely serious threat to the Guomindang regime in Guangdong. Tang was supposedly in cahoots with a Guangxi general, Liu Zhenhuan,⁴ and had also reached an understanding with Chen Jiongming, who had been defeated in 1925.⁵ The Guomindang commented: "It was fortunate that when Tang Jiyao led his troops into Guangxi Chen Jiongming had already been smashed to pieces in Dongjiang, otherwise what might have happened to the revolutionary base is really unthinkable."⁶ Tang had clearly proved a serious military danger, while his political pretensions were insulting to the Guomindang.

The Yunnan expedition to Guangxi, which was said to have numbered 60,000 men, was defeated mainly as a result of the failure of Tang's generals, Long Yun and Hu Royu, at Nanning.⁷ Their successful opponent was a Yunnanese general named Fan Shisheng who had fled the province in 1922 on Tang's return. He had settled in Guangdong, but following the reorganization of the Guomindang his position became difficult and for years after the battle at Nanning he remained on the borders of Yunnan, obsessed with the notion of conquering the province, as no doubt were his officers. He enlisted bandits, issued telegrams and negotiated with the generals in Kunming, but he lacked sufficient strength to press his claims. Chiang Kai-shek

¹Sun Yao, *Zhonghua minguo shiliao* (*Jindai Zhongguo shilliao congshu* ed.), p.631.

²PRO FO 371/12402 F1933/2/10, 19 February 1927.

³Li Yunhan, *Cong ronggong dao qingdang* 2 vols. (Taipei, 1966), I, 368.

⁴Luo Jialun ed., *Geming wenxian* 60 vols. cont. (Taipei, 1954-), XI, 1715.

⁵Li Yunhan, I, 368.

⁶*Geming wenxian*, XI, 1715.

⁷Li Zonghuang, III, 88-89.

simply used him to restrain the Yunnanese.

Thus in 1925 Tang had suffered a serious military defeat, and his political ambitions were confounded. The possibilities of invading Guangxi and Guangdong in 1926 were much less than in 1925. There were no armies in Guangdong that would help him now. On the contrary, Guangdong and Guangxi were under the firm control of armies whose political security was impressive in comparison with that of their predecessors, even if the political domination of the Guomindang was not as complete as it could have wished. Furthermore, Tang's military efforts had beggared the province, and the local currency was inflating severely. For the first time in many years there was also the actual threat of an invasion — from Fan Shisheng. But during the summer of 1926 Tang Jiyao's ascendancy in the province seemed unchecked.

By July 1926 Liu Zhenhuan, with whom Tang had allied himself in 1925, had arrived in Kunming from Shanghai.¹ Liu proposed that Tang should try another invasion of Guangxi with the idea of taking Guangdong, as had been planned in 1925. One, or possibly two conferences were held that summer to discuss matters, and the result was a decisive check to Tang's will. His generals kept silent except to suggest that better planning than in 1925 would be desirable. They had no wish to waste their strength setting up Liu Zhenhuan as ruler of Guangxi.² The civilians at these conferences argued that there was no money and that the northern regional commanders were spent forces. During August Tang once more disclaimed any intention of invading Guangxi.³

Tang now had to abandon his hopes of defeating the Guomindang. Liu Zhenhuan disappeared, to reappear during the 1930s as an emissary from the Guangxi faction. Had his generals been willing to fight, there is no doubt that Tang would have happily printed the necessary banknotes.

¹*Minguo ribao*, 7 July 1926.

²Liu was probably acting on his own initiative, not for Wu Peifu. However, Tang was undoubtedly in contact with Sun Chuanfang who ruled Shanghai and the adjacent provinces and he may have seen Liu's proposal as a means of coordinating with his northern allies.

³*Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 19 August 1926, pp.265-266.

This was the decisive point and Tang's authority had been further weakened. Since he now had no further hope of using military force to defeat the Guomindang he entered into negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHIANG KAI-SHEK

Chiang had a very simple goal in Yunnan: to prevent an invasion of Guangxi that might hinder the progress of the Northern Expedition which got under way in the summer of 1926. Earlier, in April 1926, Chiang calculated that "France, fearful of the renewed expansion of the power of Soviet Russia in China, will accordingly take steps quickly to form a united front with England and Japan. She will give help to Tang in Yunnan in order to hamper the Northern Expedition in Guangdong."¹ As a counter-measure Chiang proposed "to send officials to link up with Sichuan and Guizhou in order to restrain the armies of both Yunnan and Hubei."² However, Tang made no move during the summer and by 18 October Chiang no longer felt anxious; in a telegram to Li Jishen, the commander of the Fourth Army in Canton, he wired:

Because Wuchang has already been taken, the rumour that Tang in Yunnan would invade Guangxi may be discounted. If by any chance he should invade, we need have no worries with our present military forces in Guangdong and Guangxi.³

The negotiations which followed, of which we can only get glimpses of the substantive points, seem to have centred on Tang's personal position. On 25 October Chiang noted in his diary: "He Yingqin ordered by telegram to send Wang Shengzu to link up with Tang in Yunnan."⁴

¹Mao Sicheng, *Minguo shiwu nian yiqian zhi Jiang Jieshi xiansheng* (Hongkong, 1965 ed.), pp.636-637 (hereafter *Jiang Jieshi*).

²*Ibid.*, p.637.

³*Ibid.*, p.845.

⁴*Ibid.*, p.866. Wang was a native of Guizhou, and was one of Yunnan's representatives to the Guomindang in April 1927. There is a certain ambiguity in the wording of the source, but it seems nearly certain that Wang was Tang Jiyao's representative and not an emissary from the Guomindang.

Everything seemed to go smoothly. On 5 November Chiang reported to Canton:

I have received Commander He's telegram of the thirtieth which states: "... With regard to the status of Tang in Yunnan, the Political Council has decided to confer upon him the position of Commissioner (*weiyuan*), and Mr. Wang also approves. But it is hoped that it will be further possible to confer some vainglorious title such as 'General Controller' (*zongzhi*) in order to express our esteem ...".¹

During November it seemed that an accomodation would be reached between the two parties. There is no other information concerning these conversations, but obviously the issue was in doubt for some weeks. In a circular telegram to "the people of every province," on November 15, Chiang noted that "Sichuan and Guizhou in the southwest have also entered the National Revolution and will obey the Three Principles of the People."² The omission of Yunnan from this list is clear evidence that Tang had still not yet subordinated himself to the Guomindang. Indeed, if he would not accept Sun Yat-sen, he was unlikely to accept Chiang Kai-shek. As late as 22 November, Chiang had high hopes of reaching an agreement with Tang.

With regard to Yunnan, a representative has already been sent to express obedience to our National Government. If he is really capable of accepting the orders of the National Government, the southwest will no longer be any great problem. If only we suffer no loss, if only Party matters can proceed, then we can work things out. We shall not necessarily use armed force, but simply our political strength. Then we may unify the southwest, unify the southeast.³

There is no further mention of negotiations in any source. The reasons for their failure are unclear and open to speculation. On the one hand Tang may have simply been manoeuvring with the Guomindang in order to gain time for yet another invasion of Guangxi. Perhaps he could not swallow his pride. Yet Tang must have

¹ *Ibid.*, p.887.

² *Ibid.*, p.902.

³ *Ibid.*, p.920.

considered that as soon as he compromised with the Guomindang his position with his officers would be weakened.

The failure of the negotiations changed little, but was probably responsible for Fan Shisheng's appointment as commander of the Sixteenth Army on 28 November.¹ He was not strong enough to attack Tang Jiyao by himself, and he could get no help from Canton.² Chiang Kai-shek simply fobbed him off. Tang Jiyao was not reliable, he argued in a telegram of 17 December, but the expansion of the Northern Expedition towards Shanghai was more important than an attack on Yunnan. He advised Fan to be "patient and circumspect for the moment," lest their differences lead them into conflict.³ Chiang also strengthened himself by asking Yuan Zuming, the main military commander in Guizhou, to send troops against Yunnan to prevent an invasion of Guangxi.⁴

Thus Tang had rejected overtures from the Guomindang, while his military position had declined. During the period of the abortive negotiations a movement to overthrow Tang and accept the authority of the Guomindang was fermenting in the army inspired by a small band of conspirators in touch with Canton.

THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY COMMITTEE

Even before Tang Jiyao began negotiating with the Guomindang a small band of conspirators comprising veterans of the Alliance Society and young radicals made contact with the Third Army of the Guomindang which was under the command of a Yunnanese, Zhu Peide. The authorities in Canton despatched two graduates from the fourth class of the Whampoa Academy to Kunming, and at a secret meeting in the provincial capital a Yunnan Provisional Military Government Committee of the Chinese Guomindang (*Zhongguo Guomindang Yunnan linshi junzheng weiyuanhui*) was created to direct a revolt against Tang.⁵ At first this Provisional Military Committee had expected Canton to send

¹*Ibid*, p.933.

²*Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 3 March 1927, pp.49-50.

³*Jiang Jieshi*, p.963.

⁴*Ibid*, p.955.

⁵Zhang Rogu, Li Biaodong, "1926 nian 'dao Tang' huiyilu," *Jindai shi ziliao*, 3 (1958). 94-95 (hereafter "1926 huiyilu").

in troops when it would "start uprisings everywhere."¹ Approaches were made to bandit leaders prominent in the south of the province such as Li Shaozong, Tang Songlin and Pu Wenrong, but nothing came of them. But in December the Provisional Military Committee was informed that they could not expect Canton to provide troops.² Since finance was the responsibility of those who had first made contact with Canton it was clear that the Provisional Military Committee was not taken very seriously.

The Provisional Military Committee was itself an amalgam of two small groups. On the one hand there were a number of propertied gentlemen in the city of Gejiu whose dissatisfaction with Tang Jiyao sprang largely from his opposition to the Guomindang and the increasing disorder of the province. In 1925 a bandit commander named Mo Pu, who was nominally part of Tang's ramshackle military organization, had attacked the city, and thus demonstrated Tang's fatal inability to police the province. The Provisional Military Committee made Gejiu its headquarters but the majority of the commissioners, five out of six, came from Kunming. Most were members of the provincial assembly and had led a challenge to a tax measure that Tang had been obliged to put before that body. The concrete program of the Provisional Military Committee was "to join forces with the relatively enlightened military leaders of the province, dividing Tang Jiyao's military strength," and also "to join forces with progressive men everywhere and the leaders of the popular armies, increasing the anti-Tang forces."³

The destructive energies of the Provisional Military Committee were focused on Tang alone: their political vision was conservative not revolutionary. Since they did not seek an alternative political structure Tang's generals accepted their tentative approaches. They had little choice since they had failed to gain support from any of the southern bandit commanders while Canton had blocked the path for Fan Shisheng.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p.94.

² *Ibid.*, p.95.

³ *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁴ Fan Shisheng publicly announced that he was disseminating propaganda on the borders of Yunnan and on 6 January 1927 an announcement appeared in the *Minguo ribao* (published in Canton) that he had been appointed to lead an invasion of Yunnan. But although he won support from Yunnanese residents in Canton he never received financial support from the Guomindang and he was doomed to hover around the borders waiting for the chance that never came.

So towards the close of 1926 the Provisional Committee made contact with the "relatively enlightened military leaders." In effect this meant four out of the five¹ defence commissioners or garrison commanders of Yunnan: Long Yun, Hu Royu, Zhang Ruji and Li Xuanting. Overtures had been made to Long Yun's camp immediately after the creation of the Provisional Committee, but serious negotiations only began after the news arrived that Canton would not send troops. Although one of Li Xuanting's officers was contacted as was Hu Royu's brother, "the main effort was made with Long Yun."²

What reason had the Provisional Military Committee for supposing that the defence commissioners would listen favourably?

Three of the defence commissioners, Long Yun, Hu Royu and Zhang Ruji, were known to be dissatisfied with Tang Jiyao. Tang was, it appears, suspicious of them and had rapidly increased the strength of his personal bodyguard under the command of his brother, Tang Jiyu. Long and Hu blamed him for incompetence and worse in his conduct of the Guangxi campaign of 1925 and were angered by the degree to which Tang Jiyao had increased his power and authority. In November, for example, a consignment of 5,000 rifles out of a total delivery of 7,000 arrived in Kunming from Indo-China. Tang Jiyu received the lion's share: 2,800 to him while Long and Hu each got 900 and Zhang a mere 400.³

The disaffection of the defence commissioners was taken as a sign of political conflict. The notion that some military leaders were "relatively enlightened" was a political fiction which the Provisional Military Committee had to accept. The first direct contact with Long Yun shattered their hopes and revealed their political impotence. Long's strategic importance as the garrison commander of the provincial capital was obvious. A *coup d'état* would be unthinkable without Long's military support. The other armies were far away: Hu Royu in Mengzi, Zhang Ruji in Zhaotong and Li Xuanting in Dali. One of the Whampoa graduates finally had an interview with Long and put three questions to him: firstly, would he support a coup against Tang?

¹ The fifth was Chen Weigeng in Tengchong.

² "1926 huiyilu," p.95.

³ PRO FO 371/12403 F2580/2/10, 8 February 1927.

secondly, would he support the National Government? thirdly, would he accept the legality of the Guomindang? Long agreed with all three points, but he would not turn out Tang Jiyao; Tang would have to stay as a figure-head.¹

From the very beginning the Provisional Committee had compromised on the most vital point of its political program, the removal of Tang Jiyao. From Long's point of view, contacts with Canton and an assurance of benevolent interest in the removal of Tang were welcome. But his refusal to humiliate Tang, his protector and maker, seems to have sprung from a shrewd realization that with Tang in nominal control he would have a better chance of dealing with his own rivals. It must also be acknowledged that Long had a real regard for Tang Jiyao, as his later actions revealed,² and was prepared to demonstrate this publicly.

In the meantime Hu Royu was making contact with the Guomindang. He had been alarmed at the absence of news, and to make good his status with Canton he had sent a letter and photograph of himself to Li Jishen.³ At the same time, in January 1927, he sent a representative to Chiang Kai-shek with a letter of loyalty, which has fortunately been preserved. It is clear evidence that Hu did not want, so to speak, to be left at the starting post. Hu had the reputation of being more radical than any of the other generals, and in this letter there is some evidence that he understood the political situation much better than they. He wrote: "I believe that you, Sir, are the leader of the National Revolution, the inheritor of Sun Yat-senism. (*Zhongshan zhuyi*)."⁴

¹"1926 huiyilu," p.95.

²See below, pp.

³"1926 huiyilu," p.96.

⁴For the text of the letter, which is undated, see Dai Weiqing, *Guomin zhengfu xin gongwen faling huibian* (Shang-hai, 1928) *gonghan*, 24. It is impossible to say for sure that this is the letter sent to Canton. In the letter a certain Dou Zijin is described as the bearer. Zhang and Li p.96 say that a Dou Zijun took a "private letter" to Canton, and that it was in the possession of Li Jishen. The similarity of the names admits the possibility that Dou Zijin and Dou Zijun are one and the same person. The content of the letter suggests that it was written before the *coup d'état*. Tu woulda naturally have gone first to Canton where Li Jishen was in power after the removal of the National Government to Wuhan.

Where, at that time, could one have found a clearer or shrewder appreciation of Chiang's own claim to supremacy in the Guomindang? Hu also played upon the fact that he had met Sun in Guilin with Tang Jiyao when the latter was in exile from Yunnan in 1921.¹ Hu Royu, like his colleagues in Yunnan, was unable to represent himself convincingly as a devoted follower and ardent nationalist. He had been one of those generals who chose to follow Tang back to Yunnan rather than join Sun Yat-sen.² His conception of the coming coup was somewhat negative and provincial. "Henceforth it is the general hope that all arrangements will not be a hindrance to the progress of the nation or an obstacle to the tranquility of the region."³ Hardly a clarion call.

THE COUP D'ETAT OF 6 FEBURARY

By January it is clear that it was simply a matter of time before Tang was overthrown. But the precise point at which Long Yun and the other generals put their heads together is unknown. In Canton a leisurely view was taken of events, and it was not until the middle of February that firm decisions were taken. Long Yun and Hu Royu were appointed to the commands of the Thirty-Eight and Thirty-Ninth Armies and Zhang Ruji given the command of an "independent division." A Provincial Government Committee (*Sheng zhengfu weiyuanhui*) was drawn up on paper: the four defence commissioners together with Tao Hongtao (Long Yun's secretary)⁴, Li Baidong, a veteran member of the Alliance Society and one of the initiators of the anti-Tang movement in Gejiu, and Wang Fusheng, a Yunnanese communist. Li Biaodong, another man from Gejiu, was appointed Special Pacification Officer for the Popular Armies of Yunnan (*Yunnan minjun xuanfu zhuanyuan*). All seals of office and documents were prepared in Canton, and a

¹Hu Royu was probably in Guilin during January 1922 when Sun Yat-sen delivered a speech to Yunnanese officers on the danger to their province from British and French imperialism in Burma and Indo-China. See *Guofo quanji*, VI, 115.

²*Tang Jiyao*, 113; Ding Wenjiang, "Guangdong junshi ji," *Jindai shi ziliao* 3 (1958). 67.

³Dai Weiqing, *gonghan*, p.24.

⁴"1926 huiyilu," p.96.

telegram was allegedly issued from Wuhan announcing these arrangements.

Canton made the mistake of believing that the generals would fall in with these plans. Wang Fusheng set out for Yunnan with these appointments and orders, but found that the revolution had started without him. At the close of 1926 Tang Jiyao had launched a political drive to consolidate his claim to national authority. On 26 December, the anniversary of the national protection army, he inaugurated a Democratic Party (*Minzhi dang*) at a rally of some 3,000 students under the leadership of his son, Xiaoming.¹ In addition there was a Democratic Academy which stressed political and economic studies as well as Tang's brand of federalism,² and a newspaper to publicize his policies.³ The manifesto of the Democratic Party was clearly an attempt to steal the thunder of the Guomindang with a preamble that dwells upon the injustices suffered by China at the hands of foreigners who had "robbed us of our dependencies, smashed our doors, invaded our land and injured our sovereignty."⁴

This last attempt by Tang to stem the political tide of the Guomindang was one more cogent reason why the defence commissioners needed to act quickly in order to forestall a possible invasion from Guangxi. On 5 February a telegram was issued under the signature of four of the defence commissioners — Long Yun, Hu Royu, Zhang Ruji and Li Xuanting.⁵ There is some disagreement about who

¹PRO. FO 371/12402 F1933/2/10, 19 January 1927.

²*Yunnan gongbao*, 1262, 5 January 1927, p.8.

³"1926 huiyilu," p.93.

⁴*Yunnan gongbao*, 1272, 17 January 1927, p.6.

⁵Although Li's signature was appended to this telegram he seems to have played little part in the coup beyond sending some troops to Kunming from Dali. As late as 10 March 1927 he had not arrived in Kunming and the defence commissioners and their colleagues in the provincial government had been obliged to send him a telegram asking him to go to Kunming or at least appoint a deputy in his stead. Furthermore there is no mention of him after June, and he played no independent role in the civil war which followed. Possibly he threw in his lot with Tan Jiyu (see below, p.41). See *Yunnan gongbao*, 8, 25 March 1927, p.1.

initiated the coup.¹ However, it is hard to believe that Long was uninvolved. He had already agreed to the conditions put to him by the Provisional Military Committee and the immediate pretext for Long's actions in Kunming was rioting there by his troops who had not been paid over the lunar new year. Nevertheless, there was little unity of purpose between the two major figures – Long Yun and Hu Royu. An eyewitness noted in his autobiography that after the coup had taken place “Long was simply in favour of ‘ridding his master of those around him’ (*qing jun ce*) while Hu favoured a thorough reform. The difference in opinion nearly led to a split and officers in both armies mediated between the two . . .”² It seems clear from this account that there was little if any prior debate over aims amongst those who signed the telegram.

The exact strength of the four armies in the coup is uncertain; Long and Hu each had four regiments while the other two generals had only two each.³ Tang had his bodyguard army under Tang Jiyu, and other generals such as Meng Youwen and Wang Jiexiu, together with the remote forces of Chen Weigeng, the defence commissioner of Tengchong near the Burmese border. What the real distribution of strength was is a matter for guesswork. One estimate was 23,000 rifles,⁴ but this seems somewhat exaggerated. But in the long run, Tang's military position was hopeless, and all he could hope to do was hole up in the governor's palace on the *Wuhuashan* in Kunming, while waiting for internal disputes to give him a chance. At one point in the following weeks he is alleged to have remarked: “I might retire at any time; but because there is a balance of power between the four generals, Long, Hu, Zhang and Li, after I go ‘a host of dragons without a head’ might arise, and so there is no way to get rid of me”.⁵

¹It has been suggested that Long was not privy to the plan for a coup and that Hu and Zhang concocted it between them leaving Long no alternative but to go ahead with them since Tang no longer trusted him. See Li Peitian, “Long Yun Lu Han enchouji”, *Xinwen tiandi*, 781 (January-March 1963), pp.17-18.

²Duan Kechang, *Duan Kechang Xiaofeng xiansheng bashi nian lu* (n.p., n.d.), p.22.

³“1926 huiyilu,” p.93 notes 2, 3.

⁴PRO. FO 371/12403 F2580/2/10, 8 February 1927.

⁵*Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 51.

During the days following the coup Long's troops took over the city, and were posted outside all public buildings, in particular the railway station. Tang could still make a show of force by positioning artillery so that it menaced Long's troops.¹ But by 9 February, the vanguards of the armies of Long, Hu, Zhang and Li had reached Anning, Yiliang, Yanglin and Lufeng respectively, all some way outside the provincial capital.²

In short, the defence commissioners' coup was a determined attempt to upstage the Guomindang. For no matter how anxious they might be to avoid a conflict with Canton, they were equally determined to keep power in the province. In spite of their negotiations with the Provisional Military Committee, their telegram of 5 February, issued before action was taken early the following day, emphasises domestic politics. The only reference to national politics was the demand (one of twelve) that "communications are to be broken off with the northern representatives and relations stopped; the orders of the National Government must be obeyed."³

This was a nervous glance over the shoulder rather than a firm and positive commitment to the Guomindang, which is not mentioned in the text of the telegram. Demands for reforms in finance, industry and education, that "the resolutions of the provincial assembly and the will of the people be obeyed," were mingled with others closer to the defence commissioners' hearts. For example, it was suggested that "the salaries of military officials for the last two years must be paid, and henceforth must be paid every month and not fall into arrears."⁴ The chief object of their dislike was a group of some ten men whom they wished to expel. Tang Jiyu and Chen Weigeng, the senior generals closest to Tang, were the first mentioned on this list, and on 11 February these two men were put on the train to Indo-China with a small sum of money for expenses. The other officials named were Zhang Weiham, the mayor of Kunming, Xu Zhichen, who was in charge

¹"1926 huiyilu," p.97.

²*Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 51.

³*Minguo ribao*, 2 March 1927. An echo perhaps of the three conditions put to Long by the Gejiu-Kunming group.

⁴*Minguo ribao*, 2 March 1927.

of foreign affairs and finance, Wu Kun, the manager of the official Yunnan Tin Company, together with those who had been in charge of opium prohibition, *likin*, the alcohol and tobacco monopoly, education, and a few other provincial officials. It is interesting to note that the first three named were all later employed by Long Yun; Zhang Weihan for example taking charge of foreign affairs for several years. When in 1931 Long's generals in their turn revolted against him, one of their accusations was that he had employed Tang Jiyao's men. Dissident generals always attacked the officials who constituted the landlord bureaucracy. They were the men who administered the finances of the provincial government, and if the military officers had grievances over money such officials were obvious targets. Once in power, however, the general-cum-politician could not do without them. Long learned this lesson more quickly than his colleagues.

POLITICAL ORGANISATION

Tang Jiyao's new political organizations of the previous December collapsed. On 10 February the provincial assembly approved the generals' actions and for the first time the idea that Tang should be allotted the role of "Comptroller-General" (*Zongcai*) was mentioned.¹ Tang still refused to accept his defeat,² and during the last half of February the defence commissioners held a conference at Yiliang, a town on the Indo-China-Yunnan Railway some thirty-five miles from Kunming.³ Apart from Tang's representatives and the "*quarteron de généraux*," one quarter of the twenty-seven participants were "comrades who had taken part in the anti-Tang movement and the work of the Communist Party in Yunnan."⁴ Most of them were members of the provincial assembly. However, Wang Fusheng, the Yunnanese

¹ *Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 51.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 11 March 1927, pp.157-158.

³ The precise date of this conference is not known. Hu Royu arrived in Yiliang on 16 February (*Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 52), and on 24 February the British consul was informed that Tang Jiyao had accepted the demands of the generals (PRO. FO371/12404 F1878/2/10, 24 February 1927).

⁴ "1926 huiyilu", p.97.

communist who was sent to Kunming from Canton in that month, was not allowed to participate in the conference. The defence commissioners also ignored the commissions and orders which Wang had brought with him from the Guomindang. They were quite unwilling to permit a member of the Guomindang to exert any influence on their decisions. But Wang managed to keep in touch with the Provisional Military Committee members in the conference.

The Yiliang Conference produced an Organizational Outline of the Yunnan Provincial Government, drafted by Zhang Rogu, a provincial assembly member and one of the founders of the anti-Tang movement.¹ It was drafted by 22 February, and published on 10 March.² Tang Jiyao was elected Comptroller-General, as the provincial assembly had recommended; but his election was by the armies of the defence commissioners and not by any civil power. However, civilians did have a role to play. An electoral college composed of twenty-eight representatives from the provincial assembly, the Chamber of Commerce, the Educational Association, the Agricultural Guild and the Bar met on 5 March. They chose nine men to serve on a Provincial Affairs Committee (*Shengwu weiyuanhui*), four defence commissioners and five civilians; this organization was the supreme instrument of government and Tang was its figure-head.³

While the adoption of the committee system was in line with the practice of the Guomindang, the very name betrays the unwillingness of the defence commissioners to subordinate themselves to outside influence. The Organic Law of Provincial Government of the Guomindang provided for a Provincial Government Committee. The Provincial Affairs Committee was constituted by provincial authority, and the legitimacy of this "supreme decision-making body in the province" derived from a provincial and not a national source.

This Organizational Outline was submitted to Tang Jiyao, but he held out until 24 February. He had been King Stork and naturally did not wish to become King Log; finally on 1 March the troops of

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Yunnan gongbao*, 1309, 10 March 1927, pp.1-4.

³ PRO. FO371/12404 F3868/2/10, 12 March 1927.

Hu Royu and Zhang Ruji also entered the city to join those of Long Yun.¹

Having assured their military and political victory, the defence commissioners issued a statement, *urbi et orbi*, "fearing sincerely that current rumours might distort reality . . ."² In this statement the generals were most courteous in their attitude to Tang, who is referred to as Marshal Ming (*Mingshuai*):³ he had been deceived by "one or two despicable rumour mongers," but fortunately was "intelligent and liberal." Clearly, no reference could be made to the coup; at the same time the generals continued to give an impression of solidarity. The other theme of the telegram was the generals' understanding of the national political situation, and its relevance to recent events in Yunnan. "Initially, as far as the south was concerned, there was no divergence of views," they declared. "We . . . give the fullest support to Sichuan, Guangdong and Guangxi. These territories are contiguous and mutually reliant."⁴ This curious passage was not simply the expression of a crude and unreflecting provincialism. The generals appreciated the political significance of the Northern Expedition and the Guomindang. Long's discussion with the Canton representative and Hu Royu's letter to Chiang Kai-shek are evidence of that. Perhaps the vague terms, "the south" for example, were designed to conceal a difference of opinion over acceptance of the Guomindang between Long and Hu. Just after the coup when the generals were still uncertain of their power and mutually suspicious, the need to present an appearance of unity and to gloss over possible political differences was paramount. During the next few weeks compromise and doubt dominated the political life of the provincial capital. On 5 March elections were held for the Provincial Affairs Committee, in accordance with the Organizational Outline drawn up at the Yiliang conference.

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 24 March 1927, pp.313-314.

³ Tang Jiyao's courtesy name was Minggeng, whence Marshal Ming. This was a common mode of addressing important military commanders. See Chen, p.573.

⁴ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 24 March 1927, pp.313-314.

The four defence commissioners so enjoyed the confidence of the twenty-eight electors that each received the maximum number of votes. The others elected were Ma Cong, Wang Jiuling, Zhou Zhongyu, Wang Renwen and Zhang Yaozeng.¹ But although there was a majority of civilians in the committee, the last two named were absent in Peking and refused the invitation extended to them. Ma Cong and Wang Jiuling had been Tang Jiyao's principal negotiators at the Yiliang conference, while Zhou Zhongyu was one of Tang's most important officials. He had held the post of civil governor for a time until Tang himself had assumed that role.

On 8 March, this committee took office to the sound of a twenty gun salute. A banner bearing the slogan "Long Live the Chinese Republic!" was displayed conspicuously and the flag raised was that of the Republic, not that of the Guomindang. The ceremonies were even more marred by the absence of Long Yun on the pretext of illness; he allegedly feared a plot against his life by Tang.² Clearly, not the slightest concession to the Guomindang had been made, and the political complexion of the committee was not at all what the Guomindang in Canton had anticipated. To secure the province against invasion, one of the first acts of the generals was to try and buy off Fan Shisheng. They offered him the title of Superintendent of Yunnan-Guangxi Border Defence and half his expenses, but he refused. Still, he was not a pressing threat since he lacked adequate support.

THE GUOMINDANG IN YUNNAN

The political atmosphere in Kunming was quite changed by the coup.

¹PRO. FO 371/12404 F3868/2/10, 12 March 1927. A different list omits the latter three and adds Xiong Tingquan, Ding Zhaoguan, You Yunlong, Hu Yunshan and Chen Jun [Heting] who were all prominent political figures. Orders issued by the Provincial Affairs Committee were countersigned by the list of members given above. The discrepancy is puzzling, and the only point of detail in Zhang and Li's account that does not tally with the other evidence. See "1926 huiyilu", p.97.

²*Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 11 March 1927, pp.157-158. Fan himself claimed that he had interceded for Long and Hu in Canton and nobly suggested that his command be transferred to Hu Royu (*Minguo ribao*, 5 March 1927). Long claimed that he had sent out three representatives: one each to the National Government, the Guomindang and Fan Shisheng (*Minguo ribao*, 5 March 1927).

The students, who had been docilely herded into Tang's "Democratic Party" in December and January, demonstrated in Kunming. Marching through the streets of the provincial capital with a portrait of Sun Yat-sen they came face to face with Tang who was riding in a sedan chair.¹ The young girls who "danced the tango to the strains of the harmonium and mandolin," on 26 December to commemorate the national protection army of 1915,² held a meeting on International Women's Day, 8 March, which was broken up by toughs (allegedly sent by Tang Jiyao).³

The surge of support for the National Revolution was stimulated by the establishment of no less than three Guomindang branches in Kunming. At first a semi-secret Guomindang group was set up in the College of Law and Politics. It was "supported by comrades from the Communist Party,"⁴ chiefly Wang Fusheng. It was undoubtedly this group to which the British consul was referring when he accused "trained agitators" of stirring up the population of the provincial capital.⁵ The main activity of this group was recruiting students to the communist cause and preparing to publish the *Minguo ribao* (Daily Republic).⁶ The propaganda which was put about in Kunming was directed against the despatch of British troops to Shanghai, foot-binding, concubinage, official corruption and excessive taxation.⁷ Nothing very radical was proposed. But for British and French observers, the many demonstrations were merely the result of xenophobia; but paradoxically they "left the mass of the people absolutely unmoved."⁸

During February 1927 the College of Law and Politics group was the only Guomindang organization in Yunnan. This was a coalition of

¹ Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris, *Bulletin de la Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris* (1926-1937), 65 (May 1927), 316-317 (Hereafter *Bulletin*).

² *Ibid.*, 62 (February 1927), p.115.

³ "1926 huiyilu," p.98.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ PRO. FO 371/12407 F5818/2/10, 19 May 1927.

⁶ "1926 huiyilu," pp.98-99.

⁷ PRO. FO 371/12404 F3868/2/10, 12 March 1927.

⁸ Lécorché, Maurice, *Vingt-cinq ans d'Indochine et du Yunnan: Souvenirs 1919-1943* (Toulouse, 1950), p.199.

the original Kunming and Gejiu groups which had formed the Provisional Committee under the direction of communists sent from Canton. But the Gejiu men were dissatisfied with the policies put forward by Wang Fusheng and his colleagues. Matters came to a head when they failed to secure adequate representation on the executive committee, and they seceded *en bloc* to form a separate Guomindang group with offices in the provincial assembly building. The original College of Law and Politics group continued under Wang Fusheng. It apparently played down direct military action as a means of furthering the political revolution. Wang and his colleagues believed that they should work for the acceptance of their group by the defence commissioners so that they could organize openly. They hoped to "have an influence upon politics and military affairs by means of the Party's policies and strength."¹

The Gejiu group, by contrast, were more concerned that "Tang Jiyao's armed forces had not yet been disbanded; moreover, time had passed and nothing was being done about it."² They believed that the defence commissioners would not give full support to the National Revolution until Tang Jiyao had been completely destroyed as a military and political force. This eventually led them to join forces with a minor military figure in the south of Yunnan with disastrous results.³

The two most prominent men in the Provincial Affairs Committee were Hu Royu and Long Yun, and their attitudes towards the College of Law and Politics group differed. Hu kept on terms, but Long "did not have direct contact, and news was passed to him indirectly by his brothers-in-law."⁴ A contemporary memoir states that Long favoured the College of Law and Politics;⁵ but this contradicts what is known of his political actions during 1927. The grounds for believing that Hu was in some sense more radical in his political attitudes than any of the other generals seem slender. The British consul described Long as a

¹ "1926 huiyilu," p.98.

² *Ibid.*

³ See below, pp.32-35.

⁴ "1926 huiyilu", p.98.

⁵ Li Zonghuang, IV, 46.

"nationalist" and Hu as a "bolshevik."¹ At this time, of course, Chiang Kai-shek still appeared a dangerous radical in the eyes of most foreigners. Hu was, perhaps, just a little less ready to squash any manifestation of disorder than Long. Long thus refused in March to allow a student demonstration to pass through the neighbourhood where foreigners lived,² and it was actions like this which earned him a reputation for "moderation."

As for Hu Royu, he "was an extremely intelligent man, and quick-witted by nature. Although well aware that the morale and discipline of his army was unsatisfactory, nevertheless he was unable to restore them."³ Hu was not a convert to radical or revolutionary politics. Rather, he was alive to the potential strength of political nationalism and the advantages of keeping on good terms with the Guomindang inside and outside the province.

Neither man was willing to give official recognition to the competing Guomindang groups in Kunming. Therefore they sent representatives to Canton on 6 April in an attempt to bypass politicians who were of little national importance. But when these representatives had reached Canton, Chiang Kai-shek had already seized control of Shanghai and precipitated a split in the Guomindang between those who would support him and stop the Revolution there, and the communists and their supporters in Wuhan who wished to press on with the social revolution. The leader of the Yunnanese delegation was a relative of Long Yun, and after contact with Chiang an official Guomindang branch came into being in Yunnan with offices on the *Yuantongsijie* in Kunming.⁴

This third branch of the Guomindang was under the control of men related to Long Yun, but its membership was small.⁵ It later occupied

¹PRO. FO 371/12422 F8917/28/10, 14 October 1927.

²*Bulletin*, 65 (May 1927), pp.316-317.

³"Long Yun Lu Han," 781, p.17.

⁴"1926 huiyilu", p.100, note 1.

⁵Li Zonghuang, IV, 44.

the provincial assembly buildings,¹ and competed with the College of Law and Politics group. The conflict between the two major Guomindang groups was a reflection of the rivalry between Long and Hu. Hu was chairman of the Provincial Affairs Committee but significantly Long was appointed head of the Military Academy soon afterwards.² It is said that "political decisions were mostly taken by Hu,"³ yet Long had clearly gained the upper hand in the covert political conflict. The split between Nanking and Wuhan demanded a response from the defence commissioners in Yunnan. But until 7 May there was no response from the Provincial Affairs Committee. On that day a proclamation was issued in Kunming giving support to the Guomindang, the Three Principles of the People, Chiang Kai-shek, the establishment of the national capital at Nanking and opposition to communism.⁴ But while the situation was clear enough on the surface, in practice it was rather obscure.

Demonstrations against the Japanese occupation of Qingdao took place on 4 and 9 May, and on 11 May fighting broke out in Kunming between two regiments, for unknown reasons.⁵ Next day some students and teachers were arrested, and when their comrades sent a deputation to ask why, Long Yun is alleged to have replied that they had been arrested "on an order from Canton . . . and he added that if they had not done so within a quarter of an hour, they would be dispersed by machine-guns."⁶ Long Yun, champion of order, the man who came to power, in the words of the British consul, "with the support of all moderate elements,"⁷ was emerging.

This first assault on radicals in Kunming was followed on 15 May by a call for all "communists" to surrender themselves.⁸ It had been

¹ *Yunnan gongbao*, 59, 25 May 1927, p.10.

² *Ibid.*, 28, 19 April 1927, p.1.

³ "1926 huiyilu", p.98.

⁴ PRO. FO 371/12407 F5818/2/10, 19 May 1927.

⁵ *Bulletin*, 67 (July 1927), p.441.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ PRO. FO 371/12408 F6941/2/10, 17 August 1927.

⁸ PRO. FO 371/12406 F4746/2/10, 17 May 1927.

nearly a full month since Chiang Kai-shek had called upon the armies to "eliminate the false National Government manipulated by the Hankou communists." The political struggle continued in Kunming for several months thereafter, but the outcome was never in doubt. Wang Fusheng fled in May, but was captured. However certain problems remained, for on 30 May a mass meeting organized by the official Guomindang branch under Zhang Banghan, one of Long Yun's political hacks, resolved that "at the present the Party is not yet on a firm footing, and while men's sympathies are in the balance, a purge of the Party is a really urgent matter." The meeting passed resolutions giving support to Chiang Kai-shek, anti-communism, the Nanking government and the Party's industrial and agricultural policies. They accused the College of Law and Politics group of "supporting the Wuhan government, opposing the Nanking Conference, carrying out the Three Great Policies and so on."¹

What is more surprising is that they accuse the communists of inducing "the peasantry to resist the payment of rents and taxes." But there is little evidence that this activity was more than a fiction of the Guomindang. One later visitor to Yunnan ascribed the prevalence of free choice in marriage to the influence of "Red elements."² But whatever half-hearted attempts may have been made to win over the peasants they left no mark on Yunnan's history.

JIANG YINGSHU'S UPRISING

In the provincial capital political radicalism among students was quelled, although political conflicts between the Left and the Right continued in Kunming even after war broke out between Long and Hu in June.³ But in the chaotic south of the province another attempt was made to impose political control on the defence commissioners in Kunming. The provincial assembly group, comprising the Gejiu

¹ *Dangguo mingren zhongyao shudu* (n.p., n.d.), p.89.

² Burton, Wilbur, *The French Stranglehold on Yunnan - A Firsthand Survey* (Shanghai, 1933), p.29.

³ *Bulletin*, 73 (January 1928), p.48.

politicians of the Provisional Military Committee who had rejected the College of Law and Politics group and its urban politics, now sought some way of making their influence felt. Sometime during April they were informed that a certain Jiang Yingshu was trying to build himself up as an independent military force in Jianshui, 150 kilometres south of Kunming.¹ He had assumed the style of Commander of the Thirty-Fourth Army of the National Revolutionary Army without authority from the National Government, and was recruiting bandits.² In conversation with one of the Gejiu group he had expressed the view that the coup against Tang had not been "thorough," and said that he intended to start an uprising.

Jiang Yingshu was a relative by marriage of Long Yun and had been a member of the deputation sent by the Provincial Affairs Committee to the Guomindang in Canton.³ But he had decided that he could do better by forming his own army. It seemed to the Gejiu group that Jiang was just the man to realize their ambitions. They explained their aims to him and an alliance was formed.

The aim was to continue the general line of the circular telegram⁴ of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang of the previous year "to suppress Tang," to proclaim his crimes and to punish him. To inform the people of the whole province where justice lay and to respond to the Revolution, using it (the telegram) to urge the power-holders to make their attitude clear and increase their adherence to the National Government . . .⁵

The actual strength of Jiang's command was some 3,000 bandits, fourteen politicians from the Gejiu group, and "ten or more armed workers from Gejiu and twenty or more armed peasants from

¹"1926 huiyilu," p.99.

²PRO. FO 371/12407 F5818/2/10, 19 May 1927.

³To be precise, Jiang Yingshu's daughter was married to the son of Li Peiyan who was Long Yun's brother-in-law. See "1926 huiyilu," p.100, note 1.

⁴Not identified.

⁵*Ibid.*, p.99.

Shipping.”¹ Clearly, this was not in any sense a guerrilla army.

A meeting between the two sides adopted a six-point program for cooperation. Jiang was given a position in the Provisional Military Committee and charged with issuing a manifesto to make public their intention of “suppressing Tang”. A “minimum program” for governing Yunnan was formulated. The Provisional Military Committee was to occupy Jianshui city and “undertake governmental responsibility.” Jiang was confirmed as commander of these 3,000 bandits.² These four points were consistent, and might possibly have provided a basis for action. However, the other two points ran counter to the ideas of the Gejiu group and exposed the weakness not only of its military position but also of its political understanding.

Thus Jiang Yingshu took responsibility for winning over Long Yun, while another member of the Gejiu group undertook to make contact with Hu Royu’s younger brother. The Gejiu politicians had become obsessed with Tang Jiyao. They still believed that Tang’s evil influence prevented Long Yun and Hu Royu from throwing their weight behind the National Revolution. The contradiction is plain. They had supposed that the four defence commissioners were “relatively enlightened,” therefore amenable to political control. They had been disappointed, but still they retained their faith in “relatively enlightened military leaders.” Jiang Yingshu was now held to be such a man, the one who would lift the curse from Long and Hu.

The actual course of the uprising under Jiang displayed to the full the hopeless nature of this programme. By previous arrangement, Li Shaozong, a bandit leader whom the Gejiu group had previously contacted, attacked a section of the Railway into Indo-China on 16 April. He was repulsed by troops of Long and Hu.³ Jiang borrowed 2,000 dollars that day and said that he would advance towards Hu’s garrison in order to encourage him to negotiate. But while the Provisional Military Committee received a letter from Hu’s brother agreeing to talks, Jiang had made a half-hearted attack on Hu and then

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p.100.

³ *Bulletin*, 66 (June 1927), p.377.

fled ignominiously. "At that point, every comrade realized that Jiang had other ambitions."¹

Jiang managed to reach an accommodation with Long Yun, and in the following year he attended the Internal Reform Conference organized by the provincial government.² But the other members of the Provisional Military Committee and their supporters had no such connections and were less fortunate. They fled south to Indo-China, but some were captured and executed. The last echo of this unhappy affair was a petition from one of the participants in the uprising to the National Government in 1928, asking to be compensated for property lost in 1927.³

By June 1927, only Tang Jiyu in Dali had the will and the military capacity to challenge the three defence commissioners who held power. Small pockets of resistance remained in Kunming, such as the remnants of the College of Law and Politics group; but the provincial assembly group was quietly persuaded to amalgamate with the *Yuantongsijie* official Guomindang. The student opposition in Kunming led by the communists sent from Canton remained urban, and was easily crushed when the generals finally moved against them in May. The only rural movement, that of the Provisional Military Committee, had been a wretched affair lacking any wholesale popular participation. Political conflict was a matter for generals, students and bandits, not for workers or peasants.

The Provincial Affairs Committee was unable to exercise the functions of government during spring and summer of 1927. Each of the defence commissioners harboured justifiable suspicions of the others. The committee was a means for postponing the inevitable clash, not an instrument of government. As the political struggle in Kunming came to its climax with defeat for political radicalism on all sides, the question was who would strike first.

¹ "1926 huiyilu," p.100.

² Yunnan sheng zhengfu, *Yunnan sheng zhengfu zhengli neizheng huiyi baogao shu* (Kunming?, 1928) p.3. (Hereafter *Neizheng huiyi*).

³ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 31 (30 November 1928), p.1.

2 Civil War, 1927-1929

On 23 May 1927 Tang Jiyao died in Kunming. Although he had been powerless for several months his nominal authority had enabled the defence commissioners to postpone the difficult problem of the succession. But within three weeks of his death the fragile coalition had split and a civil war began, which in turn involved Yunnan in a desultory war with the neighbouring province of Guizhou. During this period Long concentrated on military problems and his senior officers gathered considerable military and even political power about themselves, paving the way for the ultimate clash between Long and his four divisional commanders in the spring of 1931.

HU ROYU'S REGIME

On the night of 13 June, Hu Royu sent a regiment to surround Long Yun's personal residence, and disarmed some 250 of his men. Although wounded in the eye (which left him considerably indisposed for the rest of the year) Long held out with a mere fifteen men until the French consul mediated and arranged a cease-fire.¹ It was agreed that Long would follow the well-worn path of defeated generals and take the train to Indo-China. But Hu discovered that Long had troops stationed further down the Railway ready to free him; so not unnaturally Hu refused to keep his side of the bargain. He imprisoned Long in an iron cage, while Long's wife, Li Peilian, and his family were given refuge in the French consulate, where they remained until his eventual release in July.²

¹ *Bulletin*, 68 (August 1927), pp.509-510.

² "Lung Yun Lu Han," 782, p.20

Hu issued two proclamations explaining the reason for his attack on Long Yun.

Long Yun monopolized the provincial government,
Therefore there has not yet been a thorough reform.
A secret telegram was recently received from the

National Government

And the unit in question has already been dealt with.¹

Unluckily for Hu, Chiang Kai-shek chose this very day, 14 June, to appoint Long and Hu to the commands of the Thirty-Eighth and Thirty-Ninth Armies of the National Revolutionary Army respectively.² Matters of precedence were of great importance to Chiang Kai-shek, and the fact that Long was made commander of the Thirty-Eighth army indicated Chiang's preference.

During the five weeks or so that Hu was in command in Kunming he made a number of speeches which throw light on his political stance at that critical moment. At first Hu criticized Long Yun for lack of revolutionary vigour: "the reason why the last reform in this province lacked all thoroughness was in fact because Long Yun alone stood in the way."³ But he quickly dropped this charge and substituted another: communism. Dark hints about "reactionary elements depending upon communism and trying out its inflammatory tricks," were reinforced by denunciations of "heterodox theories."⁴ But some political developments did take place under his regime. A minor one was the appearance of an engraving of Sun Yat-sen's picture and last testament in the *Yunnan Gazette* from 13 July. More importantly, Hu directed a ceremony in which the national flag of the Guomindang was raised for the first time now that "political obstacles had been swept away."⁵

In a speech that he made at this ceremony Hu stressed its political significance. He committed himself to the Three Principles of the

¹ *Yunnan gongbao*, 80 (24 June 1927), p.3.

² *Li Zonghuang*, IV, 41.

³ *Yunnan gongbao*, 80 (24 June 1927), p.3.

⁴ *Ibid*, 94 (13 July 1927), p.3.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.1.

People and affirmed that Yunnan would never again suffer "a black dictatorship" which "ran counter to the interests of the people."¹ In other speeches during his period of brief authority Hu showed that he was keenly aware of the difference between the usual provincial personal army and that of the Guomindang. To military cadets he stressed the importance of thought (*sixiang*), morality (*daode*) and belief in principles (*xinyang zhuyi*).² Then again:

The spirit of the Three Principles of the People leaves a deep impression on the mind of a soldier. Now, when an army with principles meets an army without principles, the army with principles is victorious. When an army which practices principles suited to national conditions meets one [which practices principles] not suited, the one [which practices principles] suited to national conditions is victorious.³

But no amount of perception could shore up his doubtful position in Kunming. Hu and Zhang Ruji had captured Long but they had failed to capture any of his commanders. Lu Han and Meng Youwen, a commander in Tang's bodyguard, had escaped in disguise from the city and headed west. They regained command of part of their forces and beat off attacks from Zhang Ruji. During July the combined armies of Lu Han and Meng Youwen on the one hand and the Tang family on the other inflicted defeats upon Zhang Ruji. There were major battles: one on the Xiangyun Mountain, east of Dali, and another in the vicinity of Lufeng county. Both sides suffered heavy casualties, but Zhang suffered more, and the position of Hu Royu in the provincial capital had become extremely difficult.⁴

Hu prepared to defend himself in Kunming against the inevitable siege; but this simply provoked a strike in the city, in protest against the danger this threatened.⁵ Faced by the deteriorating military situation and the determination of the local merchants and officials not

¹*Ibid.*

²*Ibid.*, 95 (14 July 1927), p.1.

³*Ibid.*, 96 (15 July 1927), pp.1-2.

⁴*Ibid.*, 109 (30 July 1927), pp.1-2.

⁵*Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 200.

to put up with more than was necessary, Hu Royu finally left Kunming on 24 July, leaving his chief-of-staff in charge of the city.¹

This was one of the keys to the situation. Hu Royu had failed to gain the support of the landlord bureaucracy. Had he won over the officials who later worked for Long Yun he could have ignored the military reverses in the west, but the powerful men of Kunming had chosen the man they knew and trusted. And so Long was taken along with Hu Royu, imprisoned in the iron cage.

It is clear that the time to kill Long, if it had ever been, had passed. During his captivity he had been able to direct his generals through his wife,² who proved an invaluable help to him in his difficulties.³ The hopelessness of his own position finally persuaded Hu that he must release Long.

Many have provided explanations of Long's curious return to power in Kunming. Yet none can have the authority of Long's own account. At the village of Banqiao, on the road to the northeast, Hu released him. Long says that Hu had only a thousand men with him, did not know the whereabouts of his best troops, and was angered that Wang Jiexiu had double-crossed him.⁴ According to Long, the agreement reached at Banqiao provided that he would return to Kunming and take over while Hu would go off to join the Northern Expedition; Long would also find out where Hu's crack brigade was, and guarantee the safety of his property in the province.⁵

Another source suggests that Long agreed to provide money and arms for Hu and Zhang's expedition,⁶ and it does not seem unlikely that this was part of the deal. There is an oral tradition that Long was released by bandits who wished to repay a favour he had done them.

¹*Ibid.*, *Yunnan gongbao*, 110 (1 August 1927), p.5.

²"Long Yun Lu Han" 783, p.17.

³*Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.545.

⁴*Yunnan gongbao*, 245 (16 January 1928, pp.4-5. The latter had been a commander in Tang Jiyao's bodyguard, and other sources (e.g. *Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 200) suggest that Wang had secretly reached an agreement with Tang Jiyu.

⁵*Yunnan gongbao*, 245 (16 January 1928), pp.4-5.

⁶Duan Kechang, p.24.

But this sort of legend is more a reflection of the compulsion to romanticize the lives of such men.

The motives of those involved in this agreement are clear: each sought to outwit, outguess and eliminate the other. Long could not expect Hu or Zhang to leave the province, nor could they really believe that Long would finance them. Most probably, Hu counted on a split between the forces of Long and Tang Jiyu who were in temporary alliance. The three generals were alert at all times to the possibility of mutual deception. Consequently each tried to head off the expected ruses of their opponents by stratagems of their own.

In the civil war that now followed the province was split into fragments. Meanwhile in the transient flicker of coalitions, betrayals and treaties, the dominant factor was self-interest. The sources for this period are conflicting, particularly concerning the timing of events, partly because of faulty recollection and partly because of the difficulty of getting exact information in a situation of great confusion. Few, if any, can have had a clear understanding of the intricacies of the various political manoeuvres. However, the general situation is clear enough.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF MILITARY FORCE

There were three major armies: the forces of Long Yun; those of the Tang family; and those of Hu Royu and Zhang Ruji. What happened to Li Xuanting is not known. He is not mentioned after 14 June, and apparently played no part in the civil war.¹

Long Yun had an army of some 5,000 men. Originally he had two brigades under Lu Han and Wang Wenren. The fate of the latter is uncertain; he was listed as an active soldier in a telegram sent out in April,² but he is not mentioned after 14 June. Of the four regiments three of the colonels may be positively identified: they were Zhang Fengchun, Zhang Chong and Zhu Xu. These men had all been under Long's command before 1927 but he had also been joined by Meng Youwen and his brigade. During the summer months of 1927 after

¹ See above p.21.

² *Yunnan gongbao*, 28 (19 April 1927), p.6.

Long's return to Kunming, these five men were given the rank of divisional commanders in Long's army.¹ Two of Long's four regiments, those stationed at Lufeng and Kaiyuan, issued a demand for his release on 21 July.² After his return to Kunming, Long's troops were stationed near or in this city. He also controlled a few counties in the vicinity of Kunming and those around the Railway south to Kaiyuan.

Tang Jiyu, who had been permitted to return to Kunming for his brother's funeral, had made his way to Dali and taken command of Tang Jilin's troops. From this shattered city (devastated by an earthquake in 1925) he first joined forces with Lu Han. He evidently hoped to inherit his late brother's position in the province, and in a futile gesture even went so far as to proclaim Dali the capital of the province, and himself "Commander-in-Chief of the Rearguard of the Northern Expedition."³ It seems that by November 1927 he had appointed magistrates in some thirteen counties around Dali.⁴ He made an alliance with Wu Xuexian, a bandit leader,⁵ who had accepted the post of Officer Commanding the Border Defence Army of Yuanmou and Wuding from the Provincial Government.⁶ (The longer and more magnificent the title conferred, the smaller the degree of integration into the army.) His main source of income came from the salt revenues of Haoqing county.

After releasing Long in July, Hu Royu marched north towards Zhaotong in the extreme northeast of the province. According to the local gazetteer: Hu "telegrammed separately to the Sichuan and Guizhou armies whilst *en route* for Zhao[tong] after concluding an agreement at Banqiao."⁷ Summoning Guizhou troops was a double-edged weapon. While it gave Hu an undoubted military advantage, it alienated him from nearly all the local inhabitants. The British consul

¹ Duan Kechang, p.25.

² PRO. FO 371/12447 F8549/144/10, 25 September 1927.

³ *Bulletin*, 71 (November 1927), p.693.

⁴ *Yunnan gongbao*, 193 (10 November 1927), p.1.

⁵ *Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 200.

⁶ *Yunnan gongbao*, 39 (2 May 1927), p.1.

⁷ *Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.56.

reported: "The feeling of the ordinary citizen is strongly against the invaders and their friends the 'traitor generals'!"¹ Nothing made it easier for Long to stand forward as the champion of provincial independence and resistance to invasion. The provincialist feelings of the population were probably all the more acute because Yunnan had never been successfully invaded except by fellow Yunnanese, such as Gu Pinzhen in 1921 and Tang Jiyao in 1922. The main difficulty for an outsider was the difficulty of the terrain. The Sichuan general Yang Sen had once contemplated invading Yunnan when in difficulties in his own province, but later recalled that "looking at Yunnan with its lofty mountains, deep rivers, and manifold difficulties and dangers, I had to admit that if I were to fight this campaign, my chances of victory would not be very good."²

In response to Hu's invitation Guizhou regiments had occupied Xuanwei county as early as 18 August and installed a Sichuanese as the local magistrate, while other regiments had entered Pingyi and Shizong by September.³ Hu also persuaded Liu Wenhui, a Sichuan general, to send him some troops. Liu sent troops who lacked arms and ammunition.⁴ This force was allegedly purchased for "1,000 chests of opium";⁵ it occupied Xundian nearer Kunming. By December Hu and Zhang had appointed at least ten magistrates in the region that they and their allies controlled.⁶

Such then was the location of the three major forces. It is extremely unlikely that they controlled all the territory which they nominally occupied. Marching across the countryside, they suddenly appeared before city walls and levied "taxes" as they saw fit. Apart from these major forces there were other armed units about whom little is known. One example is that of Wang Ruwei. Wang had proclaimed himself "divisional commander" in the county of Maguan,

¹PRO. FO 371/13164 F34/7/10, 19 November 1927.

²Yang Sen, "Ye tan Zhou Xicheng," *Zhuanji wenxue* 9.6 (June 1968), 37.

³*Xuanwei xianzhi* (*Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* ed.), p.106.

⁴"Long Yun Lu Han," 783, p.18.

⁵*Bulletin*, 70 (October 1927), pp.631-632.

⁶*Yunnan gongbao*, 221 (14 December 1927), p.3.

deep in southeast Yunnan. Before February 1927 he had been chief-of-staff in the local Reconstruction Commissioner's Office. According to the local gazetteer, the hostile but sole extant source, Wang recruited groups of bandits and made their leaders regimental commanders. Thus he gained control not only of Maguan, but the neighbouring counties of Wenshan and Xichou as well.¹ Unable to control his bandit allies, Wang asked his brother for help. Wang Bingjun decided to rename the force and place himself at the head of a "Self-Defence Army." But Ruwei stopped this by murdering his brother, explaining his disappearance by saying that he had gone to Canton as a representative. The local magistrate was arrested but the new committee system Wang set up lasted only a short while and soon a magistrate was again in power.

In the meantime Wang was offered commissions in the armies of Long Yun, Zhang Ruji, and also Fan Shisheng. He resolved this difficult choice by accepting all three offers, but in a short time, after March 1928, he had fled, driven out by a false telephone call announcing the imminent arrival of Long Yun's forces.²

The line between soldier and bandit was frequently blurred. When an alliance was made between "soldiers" and "bandits," the former simply used the latter as a source of power whilst the latter sought security and legitimacy as members of an army. During periods of civil war the more important military leaders, such as Long and Hu, courted them assiduously, not only for their fighting power, but also to avoid losing them to a rival. Such liaisons were purely temporary, for "when the hare is dead, the dogs are boiled." But the distinction between soldiers and bandits was a real one. Dim and inglorious as he was, Wang had heard of Canton, and evidently realized something of its political significance. Wang announced that the brother whom he had murdered had gone to Canton while he himself had organized a committee of government. "Bandits" did not send out representatives, or feel able to form regiments by themselves. They accepted the superior legitimacy of generals and the paraphernalia of military organization. Perhaps a more typical example of the relations between bandits and soldiers is that of Zhang Jieba ("Stutterer").

¹ *Maguan xianzhi* (*Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* ed.), pp.540-541. I am indebted to Professor Donald Sutton for advice on this point and on many others.

² *Ibid.*, p.544; *Yunnan gongbao*, 295 (23 March 1928), p.8.

In 1928 he had . . . made his submission to the Yün-nan government. More exactly: holding a Belgian missionary as hostage whom he threatened to kill should the governor of Yün-nan send further troops against him, he brought the governor to accept his own terms. Thus he was established as military ruler of the entire district. He sat with 1,000 of his bandits in the poor village which he had all but burnt to the ground, and the impoverished peasants had to feed the brutes who had ruined their homes.¹

When Long returned to Kunming at the end of July he faced political as well as military problems. He first established his authority in Kunming by accepting control of the government and then assumed the style of Commander-in-Chief of the Thirty-Eighth Army. In the city itself "the populace applauded the discomfiture [of Hu Royu] and were delighted with the return of Long Yun."² He attacked the other defence commissioner with gusto. "Hu Royu has an inferior character, prone to disorder which has formed in him a usurping and greedy nature. . . ."³ Lest anyone should still be in doubt Long explained that he had "the thinking of a feudal, annexing, warlord dictator."⁴ Furthermore Hu had "sent representatives secretly to make illicit contact with Wuhan, betraying his Party and the Nation."⁵ But Hu and Zhang, men "without principles" as the Provincial Affairs Committee described them,⁶ were not to be exploited. True to his word, Long ordered that their property was not to be expropriated.⁷

Long's political position within Kunming still depended on the support of the landlord bureaucracy. He stressed the virtuous nature of his own conduct during the time when he was in Hu Royu's hands,⁸

¹ Rock, I, 36-37.

² *Bulletin*, 69 (September 1927), p.567.

³ *Yunnan gongbao*, 119 (11 August 1927), pp.1-2.

⁴ Wang Yinfu, *Guomin zhengfu xianxing gongwen chengshi xiangjie* (n.p., 1929), *dianwen*, pp.17-18.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Yunnan gongbao*, 115 (8 August 1927), pp.1-2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 120 (12 August 1927), p.1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 119 (11 August 1927), pp.1-2.

emphasizing his humanity and fitness for leadership. He also made political concessions to win support. For example, he ordered that the chairmanship of the Provincial Affairs Committee be a rotating one.¹ To please the conservatives he also ordered that sacrifices be made to Confucius at the end of August.² Furthermore the administration issued a lengthy exhortation to farmers to cease being lazy, to give up gambling and abstain from litigation.³

While Long was obliged to meet the landlords more than halfway, even his closest friends were not immune from attack. Tao Hongtao, his secretary, was given charge of the Yunnan Tin Company; but on several occasions attacks on his incompetence and slackness were made public.⁴ Political instability made everyone nervous, none more so than the manager of the Fudian Bank who unsuccessfully requested permission "to go to Hongkong, Shanghai and other places to investigate currency conditions."⁵

THE "GUEST ARMY" FROM GUIZHOU 1927

After August the civil war in Yunnan became dominated by the invasion from Guizhou. The struggle between Long Yun on the one hand and Hu and Zhang on the other became an intra-provincial war, and this transformation of the nature of the conflict was of great importance in deciding its outcome.

Long was outnumbered by Hu and Zhang as well as Tang Jiyu. But he had two advantages which helped to compensate for this. Firstly, he had access to Indo-China via the Railway through which he could import urgently needed arms. Of course, his chief problem was money to pay for them; but towards the end of the year he solved this.⁶

¹*Ibid.*, 130 (23 August 1928), pp.1-2.

²*Ibid.*, 138 (7 September 1927), p.3.

³*Ibid.*, 120 (12 August 1927), pp.9-11.

⁴*Ibid.*, 147 (14 September 1927), p.3.

⁵*Ibid.*, 152 (20 September 1927), p.9.

⁶See below, p.111.

At the same time, he came to terms with the numerous local bandit leaders who controlled the territory around the Railway south of Kaiyuan, thus securing his economic lifeline. Secondly, he managed to present himself as the champion of Yunnan against the invading Guizhou armies. In a letter of 6 October, he wrote:

It is the Yunnanese who retreat at every step while the Guizhou armies advance at every juncture. If this is not a premeditated invasion what is it? The Yunnanese are bitterly outraged and determined not to allow others to defile our sacred places (*jinbi tashan*) without cause. We shall make ready and gather together the able-bodied of the three ridings (*san yi*) in justified self-defence. If they are still not of a mind to withdraw we shall act of our own accord together. The Government is responsible for protecting land and people and is bound to obey the will of all the people of Yunnan. . . .¹

It would be wrong to suppose that these sentiments, designed for home consumption, were confined to a small élite. But it is still true that the support of this élite was crucial to Long's chances.

After initial clashes, Long Yun's army besieged Zhang Ruji at Qijing in east Yunnan. Forty days or so later, in the first half of October, when Hu Royu had arrived to help Zhang, an agreement was reached between the two sides.² The siege was to be lifted and Zhang allowed to depart on condition that the Guizhou troops were told to return to their home province.³

But soon Hu and Zhang were back with their Guizhou allies, in spite of hostages given and taken.⁴ It seems that these two generals

¹ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 2 (October 1927), pp.54-55.

² Duan Kechang, 25.

³ Hu and Zhang issued a telegram repenting of their actions on 14 June, and promising that if Long lifted "the siege of Qijing in the morning," they would "naturally withdraw the guest army in the evening." See *Yunnan gongbao*, 221 (14 December 1927), pp.4-5.

⁴ *Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 201.

then cooperated with Tang Jiyu, for the latter attacked Kunming unsuccessfully on 21 and 23 September.¹ After withdrawing from Qujing and setting out for Luliang and Luoping, Hu and Zhang then turned around and recaptured it. Before this Hu tried to cajole the magistrate into surrendering the city by an offer of employment. But he had been appointed by Long Yun and refused to be cajoled. His reply to Hu's agent is worth quoting as an expression of provincial loyalty.

Mr Hu has joined forces with the Guizhou army to invade the territory of Yunnan. He has already forfeited his status as chairman. I am morally justified in rejecting him. Where principle is at stake I shall ignore him even at the cost of my life. How then can [an offer of] position be enough to overcome my feelings! Please take this reply to Mr Hu, that he may attack with all his might and I shall defend with all my might . . .²

When the city subsequently fell the magistrate was lucky to escape with his life. The unwillingness of such men to support Hu was crucial to Long's success. Zhou Xicheng who succeeded Yuan Zuming as the chief military force in Guizhou is supposed to have intended not simply to plunder Yunnan but to conquer it.³ Guizhou had often been invaded by Yunnanese armies in the preceding years, and Zhou was seizing a good opportunity to gain revenge. In Guizhou the invasion of Yunnan was seen differently, and a biography of Zhou claimed that he invaded Yunnan (and Hunan and Sichuan) "out of sympathy for his neighbours."⁴

October and November 1927 were critical months for Long Yun, and he even proposed that he should "retire" together with Zhang and Hu.⁵ But finally, on 9 December, Long broke out of Kunming and

¹ *Bulletin*, 71 (November 1927), p.693.

² Duan Kechang, p.25.

³ *Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.56.

⁴ *Tongzi xianzhi* (*Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* ed.), p.426.

⁵ *Yunnan gongbao*, 191 (8 November 1927), p.1.

drove off Zhang Ruji's final attack on the provincial capital. Both Zhang and Hu were broken by this counter-attack and fled to Guizhou and Sichuan respectively. Their allies from these provinces also departed.¹ Meanwhile Tang Jiyu managed to survive in Dali until 19 March 1928, when he issued a long telegram renouncing his commands, and retired to Hongkong.² Tang Jilin threw in his lot with Long and was given command of the seventh division, but he did not retain any real power for long, and was finally obliged to flee the province in March 1931.

On the first of this month the Provincial Government sent a telegram to Nanking, declaring: "After the guest armies³ were driven across the borders and the remaining units of Hu and Zhang had been completely crushed, the three ridings of the province of Yunnan have been cleansed and the four classes go about their business in peace."⁴

The National Government had had little say during the civil war, and it is noticeable that neither Hu nor Zhang were dismissed from their posts until after their defeat.⁵ Yunnan was, after all, very far away. Neither side seemed likely to support Chiang Kai-shek enthusiastically, and consequently he preferred to wait upon events. It was quite reasonable for him to recognize Long's authority once it had been secured. Similarly the conflict between Yunnan and Guizhou did not interest the National Government. In January 1928 it sent a telegram to both Long and Zhou, full of flattery and remembrance of Yunnan and Guizhou's past merits. Both were urged to live peacefully with one another, to accept the political principles of the National Government and to remember its constant concern for even the remotest ends of China.⁶

¹ United States Consulate, report 71, 6 January 1928; *Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 202.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 21 March 1928, p.283.

³ The common term for an army stationed in or invading another province.

⁴ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 41 (March 1928), p.21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 60 (8 January 1928), p.1; 26 (January 1928), p.2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.14.

WAR WITH GUIZHOU

By the spring of 1928 Long was the sole military leader left in Yunnan who claimed political authority over the province. Long had seen that the National Government was uninterested in the ambitions of Yunnan or Guizhou generals. In such circumstances it is not surprising that he took the first opportunity to embarrass Zhou, who was still giving protection to Zhang Ruji. Long later obtained the support of the National Government for his invasion of Guizhou because Zhou had imprudently allied himself to the Guangxi faction at war with Chiang in the summer of 1929. This transformed a purely local struggle into a small scene of the national conflict.

Long Yun had allied himself with a Guizhou general named Li Shen. This Li had been appointed to the Guizhou Provincial Government with Zhou Xicheng, but left the province on the understanding that Zhou would contribute to his expenses. Zhou had defaulted and by 5 November 1928 Li was returning to Guizhou from Hubei and Sichuan.¹ Long himself had stationed troops on the Guizhou borders to keep Zhang Ruji in check.² The two Guizhou armies began to fight in the extreme southeast corner of Sichuan after negotiations had failed.³ Nanking sent telegrams to both sides ordering a cease-fire, on the grounds that "it would be more fitting to hold each other in mutual esteem and to resolve differences amicably." Furthermore, Zhou was urged, but not ordered, to provide Li with money and rations since "the army of Li has been without food and in straitened circumstances for some time."⁴ But from disinterested benevolence the National Government quickly turned to support for Zhou Xicheng. On 11 December it decided that Li was after all the villain of the piece; he had been "acting on his own authority in undertaking military action contrary to military discipline."⁵ Two days later Zhou defeated Li in battle forcing him to make his way into Yunnan,

¹ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 26 November 1928, p.327.

² PRO. FO371/13173 F6174/7/10, 5 November 1928.

³ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 26 November 1928, p.327.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 24 November 1928, p.326.

⁵ *Dongfang zazhi*, 26, 3 (1929). 136.

where he joined forces with Long.¹

In 1927 and the early part of 1928, Nanking had not intervened in the conflict between Yunnan and Guizhou because it had no resources to spare for a minor brawl. But in late 1928 the fighting between Zhou and Li was dangerous since defeat for Zhou would allow Long to expand. While castigating Li, the National Government had therefore also warned off Long. Furthermore, Long must have noted that in early November Hu Royu had been appointed to the Disarmament Commission of Sichuan and Xikang, along with the more powerful Sichuan generals.² Any move by Long into Guizhou could now be countered by the menace of Hu.

Nanking's power in southwest China was weak, and yet, through a combination of telegrams and appointments, the *status quo* in that region was maintained during the winter of 1928-1929. Nanking was clearly uninterested in the ideological pretensions of Zhou and Li whose representatives excoriated each other as "counter-revolutionary" and "reactionary." These epithets were merely tokens of the adaptiveness of minor generals. But the situation was unstable, even though the balance lasted for that winter. The balance was irretrievably upset in the spring of 1929 when the dispute between the two generals and their clients became absorbed into the more important struggle between the National Government and the Guangxi faction.

The Guangxi faction was much more powerful than those in Yunnan or Guizhou, and in 1929, as in 1930, these latter provinces acted as auxiliaries of the major powers. Zhou Xicheng and Zhang Ruji had joined the leaders of the Guangxi faction (Li Zongren, Bai Chongxi and Huang Shaoxiong) in issuing a circular telegram denouncing Chiang Kai-shek for "usurping supreme authority within the Party and making it his individual instrument."³

In this situation Chiang Kai-shek naturally summoned up Long Yun to counter Zhou. On 12 April 1929 Long Yun sent a telegram to Chiang giving his support.

If the slightest leniency is shown then the future of the nation will be imperilled, and we shall once again tread

¹ *Ibid.*, 26, 4 (1929), p134.

² *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 13 (8 November 1928), p.7.

³ Wang Jingwei *et al.*, *Hudang jiuguo ji* (n.p., 1930?), p.310.

the old path of the last ten or more years. Your Excellency has resorted to arms with reluctance [even though] the fate of the nation now hangs in the balance. In spite of its poverty Yunnan has never lagged behind in matters of principle.¹

In a further telegram Long announced: "I avail myself of this opportunity to support our [i.e. the National Government's] rear and be prompt to attack those who give support to the rebels."² Li, too, was welcomed back to the fold, and was ordered by Chiang to attack Guiyang, the provincial capital of Guizhou.³ Li Shen did so well that in late June 1929 the original order for his arrest was rescinded and his rank restored.⁴ The campaign itself was a triumph for Long and Li. On 22 May Long announced victories over Zhou,⁵ who was mortally wounded on 24 May by a sniper in Li's army. A monument was erected to him. "The Whole People of the Province of Kweichow to the Late Governor of Kweichow who fortunately only left his uniform here."⁶ Nanking was unaware of Zhou's death for some months and issued an order for his arrest later in the summer.

The defeat of Zhou and the Guangxi faction coincided, and the combined forces of Long and Li crushed the remains of Zhou's army. The management of politics in Guizhou proved more difficult than Long had expected, and in early June 1928 Long and Li jointly requested the National Government to take over the province,⁷ Long faced an invasion of Yunnan by Hu Royu and Zhang Ruji, and Li Shen was not strong enough to prevent the regrouping of Zhou Xicheng's subordinates. On 7 June the National Government ordered Long to

¹ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 136 (10 April 1929), p.13.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 15 May 1929, p.205.

³ *Shibao*, 1 May 1929.

⁴ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 199 (24 June 1929), p.1.

⁵ *Dongfang zazhi*, 26.14 (1929), p.138.

⁶ Fischer, Emil S., *Travels in China, 1894-1940 (Tientsin, 1941)*, pp.246-249.

⁷ *Shibao*, 5 June 1929.

continue his attack on the "rebels," but to accept the submission of any of Zhou's former lieutenants who would accept the authority of Nanking.¹ Long was then given charge of all military and civil power in Guizhou in his capacity as Commander of the Thirteenth Route Army.² But his position was crumbling even while these telegrams crossed China. When Long withdrew, Li Shen's authority almost instantly vanished and Mao Guangxiang, a former subordinate of Zhou Xicheng, became chairman of the Guizhou provincial government. Li Shen was given a nominal position in Nanking as a member of the Military Advisory Council (*Junshi canyiyuan*), the political graveyard of defeated generals.³

THE INVASION OF YUNNAN 1929

The last attempt by Hu Royu and Zhang Ruji to seize Yunnan was a desperate affair. The first warning that something was up came in March 1929 when Meng Youwen, a former general in Tang Jiyao's bodyguard who had gone over to Long Yun in June 1927, defected to Hu.⁴ In April 1929 Zhang attacked and captured Zhaotong. By late May the combined forces of Hu, Zhang and Meng reportedly numbered some 20,000 men.⁵ After fighting around Zhaotong, the combined armies marched on Kunming.

In Kunming itself the situation was now critical. On 11 July, while transporting arms and ammunition from the arsenal outside the city walls into the city itself, some dynamite exploded and a large part of the city was devastated. On 14 July the combined army appeared before the city, but four days later Long's reinforcements arrived and put them to flight.⁶ Meng was drowned, Zhang captured and executed, and Hu barely escaped with his life.⁷

¹ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 8 June 1929, pp.103-104.

² *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 199 (24 June 1929), p.1.

³ *Ibid.*, 307 (30 October 1929), p.8.

⁴ *Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.58.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.61.

⁶ United States Consulate, report 93, 7 August 1929.

⁷ Wan Xiangcheng, *Yunnan duiwai maoyi gaiguan* (Kunming, 1946), p.124 (hereafter *Yunnan maoyi*).

Long's internal problems were now over, for there now remained no hostile forces to oust him. Hu remained a possible threat, although he had no army. But by May 1930 this man, denounced as a supporter of communism in 1927, was reduced to sending a telegram to the defeated and discredited Wu Peifu, denigrating the Guomindang in the vain hope of being able to start again.¹ He subsequently died fighting the Japanese during the War of Resistance.

As the invasion of Guangxi at the behest of Nanking in 1930 showed, Long Yun had not finished with military adventures.² But the invasion of Guizhou was the last time that Yunnan attempted to press its authority outside the provincial borders *à la* Tang Jiyao. The expedition against Guangxi was more of a raiding party, arising from Yunnanese dissatisfaction with the state of the opium trade between those provinces.³

The Yunnan provincial faction must surely have drawn the moral from the intra-provincial wars of 1927 and 1929: the National Government would happily transfer its support from one general to another if circumstances dictated, and safety lay only in ostensible obedience. Long never permitted himself the luxury of disobedience, even though effective retribution was difficult for Nanking. More particularly, he never publicly supported any of the actions of the Guangxi faction. Yunnan had no interest in the defeat of Guangxi by the National Government, but neither was it anxious to see it victorious.

Before 1927 Long was an obscure provincial general. By 1929 he had directly participated in national affairs, achieving national recognition and consolidating his military control over the province.

In conclusion, why did Long Yun rather than Tang Jiyu or Hu Royu win the civil war? The most fundamental cause was his success in gaining the support of the landlord bureaucracy. Long had been stationed in Kunming, the political and economic heart of Yunnan, for

¹ *Shibao*, 30 May 1930.

² See below, p.125.

³ PRO. FO371/14692 F3680/93/10, 22 May 1930; *Shibao*, 31 July 1930; Snow, Edgar, *Journey to the Beginning* (New York, 1958), p.49.

a number of years during which time he had had the opportunity to forge links with powerful officials and absentee landlords and merchants. His reputation for discipline won him support, since the role of the army in rural society was to provide order for the landlords. The other armies, notably those of Hu and Zhang, were notoriously ill-disciplined. Secondly, Long had considerable popular support for his resistance to the Guizhou troops. The use of outside troops by Hu and Zhang was a desperate gamble which had to succeed quickly or not at all. Once the first attack failed the whole campaign was useless. Thirdly, Long's control of Kunming was absolutely vital. From the provincial capital he controlled the economic lifeline of Yunnan, the Railway into Indo-China down which opium could be sent and arms received. By comparison the revenues of western Yunnan available to Tang Jiyu from Dali were insignificant. More intangibly, Kunming was the seat of prestige and authority which guaranteed valuable contacts with the Western consular community.

3 Provincial Government, 1928-1931

On 17 January 1928 the National Government in Nanking formally recognised Long Yun as chairman of the Provincial Government Committee, and four days later created him Commander-in-chief of the Thirteenth Route Army.¹ The Provincial Affairs Committee which had been put together after the coup of 6 February passed away and the source of Long's political and military legitimacy shifted formally from a provincial to a national basis for the first time. His chief rival, Hu Royu, whom he had defeated a few days before becoming chairman, was removed from his command of the Thirty-Ninth Army. A few weeks later Hu lost his seat on the Military Commission (*Junshi weiyuanhui*), which was given to Long.²

Long Yun was firmly in power while his rivals were defeated and discredited.³ The guts of the provincial faction had been put together during 1927, and during the next three years the coalition of military officers and landlord bureaucracy worked out a pattern of provincial government and administration. The provincialism and conservatism of the resulting regime was made clear in its efforts to ward off Nanking's attempts to extend its political authority into the structure

¹ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 25 (January 1928), p.4; 26 (January 1928), p.1.

² *Ibid.*, 33 (February 1928), p.12.

³ However, while it was easy for a general to lose his army and lose power, it was a good deal more difficult to lose public office. By November 1928 Hu was a junior member of the Sichuan-Xikang Disarmament Commission. His place on this commission served to remind Long, who was then dabbling in Guizhou politics, that no one was indispensable. Generally speaking the Nanking government always found a place for the defeated and discredited no matter how obscure.

of provincial government. The formal structure of the administration was underpinned by the provincial faction. The solidarity of the provincial faction sprang not only from common goals but also from the multitude of informal ties amongst them.

Within the provincial faction the military officers and the landlord bureaucracy were not always in harmony during this early period. On the one hand, the military officers increased their power rapidly in the provincial government. It was they who fought and won the crucial battles of 1929 in Guizhou and Yunnan. At the same time the landlord bureaucracy was attempting to solve the province's financial problems with little success. The inherent conflict between the two groups over the distribution of income was resolved in favour of the military in 1929. However their arrogant assumption of formal power in the Provincial Government Committee weakened the personal position of Long Yun. In the personal armies which ruled China at this time there was little to check the ambition of subordinate officers. The conflict between the military and the landlord bureaucracy came to a head in 1931 in the shape of an attack on certain officials in the landlord bureaucracy and an attempted revolt against Long Yun. It failed because the generals did not realize that the support of the landlord bureaucracy, which extracted revenue from the countryside, was essential in the faction. Furthermore the landlord bureaucracy had no reason whatsoever to exchange Long Yun, who knew their importance to his regime, for Lu Han, the adventurer who had led back a beaten army from Guangxi. The resolution of the conflict between the two camps marked the end of a dangerous instability in the political life of Yunnan and shaped the way for the rise to power of the provincial modernizers under Miao Jiaming.

LONG YUN AND HIS FAMILY

Although Long Yun himself is not the main subject of this study, his importance in the history of Yunnan is unquestionable. His political skill and understanding were crucial to the permanence of the provincial faction. He stood at the heart of things: from him sprang a seemingly endless proliferation of ethnic and regional ties that bound the provincial faction to him. Reconstructing this complex web is difficult; the evidence must be gathered from many different sources and the picture that emerges is bound to be incomplete.

Long Yun was born in Zhaotong, a county in the northeast of Yunnan where the poppy grew in abundance. His family had been landlords in a modest way. Although his mother was Han Chinese, his father, Long Qingquan, was not: he was an *Yi*, a member of the minority that the Chinese called, sometimes disparagingly, the "Lolo." The heartland of this people was further north in the Liangshan on the borders of Yunnan, Sichuan and Xikang. In Yunnan they had largely assimilated with the dominant culture through intermarriage.¹ Long's origins were always with him. He was vulnerable to racist attacks by his political enemies, as in 1928 when they accused him of supporting "the increase in depraved Lolo customs."² But Long Yun's authority and government in Yunnan owed nothing to tribalism: some of his closest military and political associates were themselves *Yi*, but they were politically Chinese. However, this led inevitably to the charge that "Lolo barbarians hold all important offices but disguise their treachery by a professed reliance upon the Three Principles of the People."³ Such charges reverberated, and a perceptive traveller noted that "there were those among the aristocratic Chinese who said unkindly that he was no Chinese at all, but a tribesman of Lolo ancestry."⁴ An earlier judgment declared that he was "well-thought-of by the population, although he is an aborigine (lolo)."⁵

The date of his birth is uncertain: 1887 is generally accepted.⁶ He was the eldest of three children: a younger brother died in infancy,⁷ while his younger sister, Long Dengfeng, died in 1935 aged forty-six.⁸ There seems to be a discrepancy which is worth comment here. Long wrote in his preface to the *Zhaotong xianzhi* that he returned to

¹ Lin Yüeh-hua, *The Lolo of Liang Shan* (New Haven, 1961), pp.1-2.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku* 24 November 1928, p.329.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Smith, Nicol, *Burma Road* (London, 1940), p.202.

⁵ Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris, *Compte Rendu des Travaux*, 61(1927) 34.

⁶ e.g. Boorman, Howard L. ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* 4 vols. (New York, 1967-1971), II, 457.

⁷ "Long Yun Lu Han," 777, p.12.

⁸ United States Consulate, report 103, 3 October 1935.

conduct his mother's funeral in the winter of 1922-23.¹ And it is recorded elsewhere in this same work that she had remained a widow (*shoujie*) for thirty-six years, in which case his father died in 1886 or 1887, and he himself was born just prior to his father's death or posthumously.² However his mother also gave birth to a further son and daughter. Of the son nothing is known, but the younger sister, Dengfeng, could not have been born earlier than 1889 (assuming that her age was calculated in the western fashion, otherwise her year of birth may have been 1890 or 1891). In this case who fathered her? Perhaps the text is in error when it suggests that Long's mother was a widow for thirty-six years. But the possibility that she remarried must be seriously considered, which leads to the intriguing problem of Lu Han. Lu is frequently described as Long's half-brother in biographical dictionaries. Yet there is no information about him in the *Zhaotong xianzhi gao* of 1935. He was an important and powerful figure, yet there is not a word of him in this source. He had displeased Long by his participation in the abortive coup in 1931, yet it seems hard to believe that this would have made him a non-person. A solution which suggests itself was that Lu Han was in fact Long's half-brother, that his mother did remarry, and that Long went to inordinate lengths to disguise this from the public.

Long's mother was the sister of Long Deyuan, a military licentiate (*wusheng*) of the Qing dynasty.³ Nothing else in his background marked Long out for a military career. The family of Long Deyuan was close to Long Yun. Deyuan's fourth son, Long Yucang, rose under his cousin's patronage in his personal bodyguard army to become brigade commander.⁴ Another son, Long Zehui, graduated from the Central Military Academy in Nanking in 1934, but only became powerful after Long Yun had been ousted from power.⁵ His daughter, Long Zeqing, married Lu Han who was one of Long's earliest friends and associates.⁶

¹ *Zhaotong xianzhi* (*Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* ed.), p.5.

² *Ibid.*, p.645.

³ *Zhaotong xianzhi*, 27, p.645.

⁴ *Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.479; "Long Yun Lu Han," 779, p.22.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

Long's first three sons, Shengwu, Shengzu and Shengqi, were all sent to a French military academy along with other young sprigs of the province. They were employed by their father, although they never rose to high rank.¹ With the exception of Lu Han, whose long relationship with Long ensured him a political career, none of Long Yun's blood relations held office under him except as military officers.

Long married several times: his second wife, Li Peilian, died young in 1932. Like the women in Long's own family she was strong and resourceful. She advised him on military and political matters, and "during the 14 June *coup d'état* she exerted herself to devise plans to free her husband from danger."² Long's sister, Dengfeng, was "a woman of determined character, who has many admirers and is reported to be able to raise 3-4,000 men by raising her hand."³

Through his marriage to Li Peilian Long formed other connections. She had two brothers, Li Peitian and Li Peiyan. Peitian was a county magistrate,⁴ but more importantly he was Long's personal representative in Nanking during the 1930s, while officially a member of the Mongolian-Tibetan Commission.⁵ Peiyan was a political frontman in Kunming: in 1927 he organized a Guomindang branch for Long. His most important job was as manager of the New Fudian Bank. He was not a success as a banker, but later held other minor posts. Through these two men Long also had links with various lesser figures who if all else failed could ask Long for a job.

LONG YUN'S CHARACTER

Long Yun had little formal education. He supported educational projects in his native county,⁶ and took an interest in education in

¹Chen Xiaowei, *Rodinglu suibi* 3 vols. (Hongkong, 1939), III, 19.

²*Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.545.

³PRO, FO371/12407 F6482/2/10, 15 June 1927.

⁴*Yunnan gongbao*, 164 (6 October 1927), p.7.

⁵*Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 365 (10 January 1930), p.2.

⁶*Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.246.

general.¹ The skill that he did acquire when young was Chinese boxing. He entered the Yunnan Military Academy from which he graduated in 1912.² It was while he was a student there that Long first came to the attention of Tang Jiyao. It appears that he distinguished himself by defeating a Frenchman in the boxing ring. Tang Jiyao saw him and took him under his wing.³

He first joined Tang Jiyao's bodyguard army, the *Ci Fei jun*, "impressive" and "beautiful" in their red capes and yellow uniforms.⁴ By 1924 he had left Tang's bodyguard army and taken an independent command as Defence Commissioner of Kunming. A rare picture of him shows him groomed and bemedalled, much like any other general of the period.⁵ Long Yun's ascent was not particularly rapid or startling and owed much to Tang. In a letter that he sent to Tang shortly after the *coup d'état* of 1927 he wrote a letter to Tang excusing his rebellion and justifying his conduct in Confucian terms: he would not "countenance evil in the master" (*feng jun zhi e*).⁶ Tang still had a hold on Long, even after death. In the 1930s Long made improvements to the public gardens in Kunming.

At one end of the garden stands the practically completed tomb of the former Governor of Yunnan, General T'ang Chi-yao, the self-styled 'Lord of the Eastern Continent'. The tomb itself is of huge and obviously expensive construction combining not too successfully Greek, Venetian Gothic, and Chinese styles of architecture, and bearing a somewhat incongruous Latin inscription.⁷

On 10 July 1937 Long Yun next unveiled a statue of Tang commissioned from Italy, before a crowd of 3,000: eulogies from

¹"Long Yun Lu Han," 775, p.13.

²Boorman, II, 457.

³*Beiyang junfa*, VI, p.23 note 1.

⁴Liu Jianqun, "Wo yu Long Yun," *Zhuanji wenxue* 1.6,7 (June, July 1962), pp.6, 16.

⁵He was the holder of the Order of Merit, Third Class, the Order of the Bountiful Crop, Third Class, and the Civil Tiger, Second Class. See *Zhaotong xianzhi*, p.4.

⁶*Beiyang junfa*, VIII, 50.

⁷United States Consulate, *Annual Report on the Development of Commerce and Industries in the Yunnanfu Consular District*, 1935.

Chiang Kai-shek and other national leaders were then read out.¹ Long thus paid tribute to his political father.

Long was physically small: the impression that he made on foreigners gives little insight into his character. One found him "colourless but charming – like Calvin Coolidge."² Stilwell had his inimitable phrase: "comical little duck."³ The reserve which is hinted at in some observations suggests aloofness towards his officials. During the attempted coup of 1931 he kept Miao Jiaming, a most senior official, waiting outside the main door of his official residence like a suppliant.⁴

A visitor to Kunming in the 1930s tried several times to obtain an audience, but was refused. So he "peeped through a crack in the window and saw the Chairman, dignified and august, awe-inspiring and stern, swiftly in a sedan chair; entering the official residence during this unusual period the aides did not dare make their reports immediately."⁵

Such was the character of the man who had won the civil war in 1927.

LONG YUN'S GENERALS

The most prominent member of the provincial faction at this time, apart from Long Yun, was his half-brother Lu Han who succeeded to his power in 1945. Soldiers in Yunnan were hard, self-interested men. Lu Han, who was Long's senior general, was brutal even by the standards of his time and profession. In 1929 he executed four magistrates for alleged cooperation with the enemy.⁶ He was notorious for his avarice. His troops entered Vietnam in 1945. "His

¹ *China Weekly Review*, 81.7 (17 July 1937). 10.

² Smith, p.203.

³ Stilwell, Joseph W., *The Stilwell Papers* (London, 1949), p.96.

⁴ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 30 March 1931, p.389.

⁵ Xiang Shang, *Xinan lüxing zazie* (Shanghai, 1937), p.200.

⁶ United States Consulate, report 103, 5 October 1929.

principal accomplishment before he withdrew was to loot the area of almost everything movable."¹ A journalist has left this description:

He received me in an immense, imposing drawing room, hung with portraits of naked women. He had pale green eyes in a too-smooth face with strangely receding lines, as though it had been carved by some craftsman out of a jungle wood that was too hard for him. He had the highly cultivated impassivity of the real warlord, the one who can do anything, give any order, without ever showing the slightest emotion. His voice was colorless and weary, expressionless.²

Of the rest of Long's generals little can be said. Of Zhang Fengchun and Zhu Xu, two of his most important subordinates up to 1931, nothing is known. Zhang Chong, the other, was of Yi ancestry like his commander. He was born in Luxi county in Yunnan, and he had been a bandit.³

Even less is known about those generals who became prominent after 1931. Long Yucang, Long's cousin, rose under him until he reached the rank of brigadier, the highest then possible in the Yunnan army and remained prominent until his death in 1935.⁴ In June 1932 another relative, An Dehua, was also appointed brigadier (although his precise relationship to Long is unclear).⁵

LONG YUN AND THE YI

The large number of men of Yi ancestry in the provincial faction was one of the most distinctive features of politics in Yunnan. Many of these men were blood relatives of Long and their loyalty to him stemmed not only from ethnic but also familial ties. From 1927 to 1931

¹Melby, John F., *The Mandate of Heaven: China, 1945-49* (London, 1968), p.141.

²Bodard, Lucien, *The Quicksand War: Prelude to Vietnam* (Boston, Toronto, 1947), p.162.

³Zhoumobao she, *Xin Zhongguo renwu zhi* 2 vols. (Hongkong, 1950), II, 160-161.

⁴*Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.479.

⁵United States Consulate, report 1, 4 August 1932.

the army was commanded by four divisional generals: two of them, Lu Han and Zhang Chong were Yi.¹ After 1931 six brigadiers replaced these four generals: three of them, Zhang Chong, Long Yucang and An Dehua were Yi. Zhang Chong alone was not a blood relative. The origins of the other commanders, whether of the period before or after 1931, are unknown.

But within the landlord bureaucracy only one man, Lu Chongren, an "extremely reserved and taciturn"² man, was of Yi nationality and a "cousin" of Long.³ He accumulated considerable power within the landlord bureaucracy as provincial minister of finance, in which capacity he served Long for the duration of the period.

It is clear that Long's blood relatives staffed the army. They were the men whom he trusted with the basis of his power. His family gave Long the security which other institutions could not provide.

LONG YUN AND THE LANDLORD BUREAUCRACY

If Long's most fundamental confidence was given to those of Yi nationality, he nevertheless forged links with the officials who operated the landlord bureaucracy. With the sole exception of Lu Chongren, all of the officials in the landlord bureaucracy were Han Chinese. This group may be divided into two: those who were related to Long by marriage and those who were not. The former constituted a minority. The provincial minister for reconstruction, Zhang Banghan, was alleged to be related to him,⁴ although the evidence is suspect since it comes from a source hostile to Long. His two brothers-in-law both served in the landlord bureaucracy, one as manager of the state bank and the other as his representative in Nanking.⁵ Jiang Yingshu, who was distantly connected by marriage to Long, managed to attend the Internal Reform Conference of 1928 although he had raised an army against him the previous year.⁶

¹ Zhoumobao she, II, 160-161.

² Chen Bulei, p.81.

³ Communist Part of China, *Biographies of Kuomintang Leaders*, 3 vols. (Harvard, 1948), II, 135.

⁴ *Biographies of Kuomintang Leaders*, I, 49.

⁵ See above, p.59.

⁶ See above, pp.32-35.

The landlord bureaucrats who were not related to Long were in the majority, and many of them had been Tang's officials. For example, Zhou Zhongyu, Zhang Weihuan and Ding Zhaoguan, all prominent members of the provincial administration in Tang's time, continued in office during the 1930s. Outside the landlord bureaucracy stood an interesting number of "elder statesmen." These men had prestige but no substantive power; yet they had the capacity to embarrass Long in the early stages of his rule. In 1928 they boycotted the Internal Reform Conference that he convened. Zhou Zhongyu was one; Xiong Tingquan and Wang Jiuling, both former members of the Provincial Affairs Committee of 1927, Yin Chenghuan, Zhang Kairu and You Yunlong, all well-known for their participation in the national protection army, were others.¹

The reasons for their refusal at that time to support Long are unknown: presumably they disapproved of Long's administration. He had, for example, appointed his private secretary, Tao Hongtao, manager of the state tin company in Gejiu during 1927 in which capacity he had been publicly attacked for neglect of his duties.² Before his appointment he had been the head of the senior normal school in Zhaotong.³ However, he had a degree in mining engineering from an American university,⁴ and thus was not unqualified for the position to which Long appointed him. Yet his close relationship with Long did not bring him a senior post during the 1930s.

In short, Long Yun's relations by marriage and his friends might expect office from him, but if they did not perform to his satisfaction they were removed to lesser posts. Thus the landlord bureaucracy was staffed by officials of long experience whose links with Long were political rather than ethnic or familial. His success was in blending an *Yi* dominated army with a Han bureaucracy, in keeping a balance between nepotism and experience.

¹The failure of this group to attend the Conference is revealed by a scrutiny of the lists of those in attendance at each session published in the *Neizheng huiyi*.

²See above, p.45.

³*Zhaotong xianzhi*, p.27.

⁴*Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.267.

THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The Provincial Government Committee, which was the supreme organ of government within the province according to the Organic Law of Provincial Government of June 1927, was a reliable indication, in Yunnan at any rate, of the relative strength or influence of the military and civil members of Long Yun's faction. The initial composition of the Committee reveals both the desire of Nanking to gain as much influence as possible over Yunnan, and Long's equal determination to be firm but conciliatory. The only general in Long's army to gain a place was Hu Ying, a man later described as "devoid of political opinions,"¹ and at that time not in command of troops. The other two generals on the Committee, Fan Shisheng and Jin Handing, were both Yunnanese driven from the province in 1922 when Tang Jiyao returned. They had been members of the units which had originally expelled Tang, and had gone into exile in Guangdong.² Their connections with Chiang Kai-shek were poor, and they had no connection with Long or his subordinates. Long had no use for them and never permitted them to enter the province and take up their posts. For Jin Handing this was no hardship as he found other positions, but for Fan it was a heavy blow and his career never revived.

Apart from these soldiers there were five civil officials, namely Ma Cong, Ding Zhaoguan, Chen Jun, Zhang Banghan and Zhang Weihai. All were natives of Yunnan, a fact of abiding importance in the political life of the province during Long's reign. Long was an uncompromising provincialist. Ma Cong had held a military command in Tang's time, but by 1928 he had long given up his military command. The remaining four Committee members were merchants or bureaucrats.

Chen Jun was a native of Shiping county, some 100 miles south of Kunming, who had gained the degree of *jinshi* in 1903 at one of the last Imperial examinations. He was the managing director of the Gejiu-Bisezhai Railway Company and also of a tin mining company.³

¹ *Biographies of Kuomintang Leaders*, II, 27.

² Ding Wenjiang, pp.55-58.

³ Fan Yinnan, *Dangdai Zhongguo mingren lu* (Shanghai 1931), p.287; *Yunnan gongshangye gaikuang* (Kunming?, 1924), n.c.p.

He was undoubtedly a link between the ruling faction in Kunming and the mine owners of Gejiu, whose wealth and influence had greatly increased in the past two decades of the twentieth century, when the opening of the Railway permitted the easier export of tin to Hongkong.

Ding Zhaoguan apparently had no such links with Gejiu or any other group of merchants. After, receiving the degree of *juren*, he served in Imperial and provincial bureaucracies before and after 1911. He had also studied in Japan at Waseda University. Chen Bulei, who visited Yunnan with Chiang Kai-shek as his secretary, met Ding and noted that he was a man of "rather antiquated thought."¹

Zhang Weihan was one of the many students who had studied in Japan during the last years of the Qing dynasty, graduating from Meiji University. Most of his career had been spent in the employ of Tang Jiyao. Among other posts, he was mayor of Kunming from 1921 to 1927. He was evidently trusted by Tang since he was his intermediary in dealings with the "Northern Warlords" in his last stand from 1926 to 1927.²

While mayor of Kunming he would have become known to Long when stationed in the provincial capital as defence commissioner. Zhang was one of those officials whose expulsion had been demanded by the four generals after the February coup, and his return to high office was a clear indication of Long's regard for him.

Zhang Banghan was undoubtedly the most interesting of the five. As a young man he had studied in Indo-China and Belgium. He had acted in some capacity for Sun Yat-sen before the 1911 Revolution, either as his secretary or as a newspaper editor in Hongkong. His degree from Belgium was in engineering, but although this later got him the job of provincial minister reconstruction, his main function in the province was political.³ His greatest assets as a politician were

¹ Yang Jialuo, *Minguo mingren tujian*, 4 vols. (n.p., 1936), I, iv, 11; Chen Bulei, *Chen Bulei huiyilu* (Hongkong, 1962), p.81.

² Xiao Xiao, Hu Zili, *Dangdai Zhongguo mingren zhi* (Shanghai, 1937), p.330.

³ *Ibid.*

his relationship by marriage to Long Yun (he was allegedly his cousin by marriage), and his long term connections with the Guomindang.¹

Such then were the men who were charged with the government of the province. Basically conservative, they were not, however, ignorant of the world beyond the province or outside China. But they had all settled for provincial rather than national careers. Their collective experience, therefore, was derived from the political world of Yunnan. Hostile to any attempt by the National Government to insinuate its authority or influence, they also had no brief for those fellow provincials who tried to return to Yunnan after a lifetime in national politics. For example, in April 1928 Lü Zhiyi was appointed to the Government Committee and made provincial minister for education.² But within three months he had been dismissed and left Yunnan.³ An innocuous minor politician who had served in the Provisional Nanking Government immediately after the 1911 Revolution, Lü had never been active in Yunnan. Thus the National Government's most gentle and tentative attempts to introduce itself into Yunnan were firmly resisted.

This rejection of national authority was not merely an expression of the military's hostility towards any measures to curb its control, but also of the suspicious feelings of an élite that felt isolated and defensive. The telegrams sent by the National Government to the province from 1928 constantly stress the remoteness of the province and its location on the distant southwestern frontiers. The Yunnanese themselves could scarcely write a paragraph without mentioning their isolation from the political and cultural centre of China. Zhang Weihan had expressed the Yunnanese dissatisfaction in words which perhaps moderate the bitterness that was felt. "Even today, because Han and barbarian (yì) live together in Yunnan, where civilization is comparatively recent, men have therefore considered it a region of wild savages."⁴

¹*Biographies of Kuomintang Leaders*, I, 49.

²*Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 47 (April 1928), pp.7-8.

³*Ibid.*, 74 (July 1928), p.3.

⁴Zhang Weihan's preface to Zhang Fengqi, *Yunnan waijiao wenti* (Shanghai, 1937).

It is worth noting that Zhang used a derogatory term such as *yi*, to describe the national minorities when many of his former colleagues, the military, the bureaucrats, the political advisers and the relatives of Long Yun, were not Han Chinese. It is true that Zhang had been driven from the province by the revolt in 1931, and this may have stimulated his prejudices. But in many ways, economically and culturally, the relations that existed between Nanking and Kunming were like those which exist between a great metropolitan culture and a colony.

Long Yun's brother-in-law and personal representative in Nanking, in a later memoir declared that "each time the Yunnan provincial government . . . had a request concerning a large or small matter it was always easy to find a solution. And Long too was always able to comply with and act upon the various orders of the Central [Government]."¹ This does not mean that Yunnan voluntarily subordinated itself to the authority of the National Government. It is certainly true that the requests which the provincial government made to Nanking, for the relief of counties hit by disaster and for awards for meritorious service to the landlords, were met without hesitation. The pages of the *National Government Gazette* are full of such announcements. Equally Yunnan acknowledged the National Government's right to decide upon changes in county names and the formal appointment of senior government officials. But this was a very superficial kind of control and a very tenuous relationship. The first public telegrams from the National Government to the provincial government capture the essence of public relations between the two: distant, polite and platitudinous.

The National Government could do little except try to extend its influence bit by bit. But the Provincial Government Committee evidently remained in the hands of Long's provincial faction. In April, the National Government made further appointments to the provincial government when Lü Zhiyi, Sun Guangting, Zhou Zhongyu and Lu Xirong were added to the Government Committee. Lü Zhiyi has been mentioned above; Lu Xirong was another Yunnanese whose career had taken him into national affairs as an educator. A graduate of Columbia University, he remained in the province for a few months

¹"Long Yun Lu Han," 783, p.19.

from autumn 1928 to May next year, although not formally removed from office until the general turn-over of officials in November 1929.¹ Thus another outsider was demolished. Sun Guangting is more difficult to categorize; it is known only that he was a member of the Senate (*Canyiyuan*), and it seems probable that his connections with provincial politicians were weak. He also was removed from office in November 1929. Zhou Zhongyu was one of the leading members of the official class in Kunming. He had held office not only under Tang Jiyao but also under Cai E, provincial governor from 1911 to 1913. Of the four officials he was the only one who remained constantly involved in provincial politics until 1937.

The major change in the composition of the Government Committee took place in November 1929. In September the previous year one of Long's generals, Lu Han, had been appointed; now military representation was drastically increased. General Fan Shisheng lost his place along with five civilians — Chen Jun, Ma Cong, Ding Zhaoguan, Sun Guangting and Lu Xirong. Two new civilians replaced them, Miao Jiaming, who already had been a provincial minister for half a year, and Gong Zizhi. Miao later became one of the most important members of the government, in charge of banking, mining and other enterprises for the government. Gong had been a journalist; while editor of the *Yunnan ribao* had been beaten on Tang Jiyao's orders for publishing critical comments.² In addition to these two, four other soldiers were appointed, Sun Du, a staff officer of whom little is known, and three divisional commanders, Zhu Xu, Zhang Fengchun and Tang Jilin. Thus out of the twelve members of the committee actually in the province eight were army officers.

This swing towards military predominance was a reflection of the army's success in defeating Hu Royu, Zhang Ruji and Meng Youwen during the invasion of summer 1929. The conservative officials who had failed to solve the financial problems of the province during 1928 and 1929 were discarded in order to placate Long's generals. But in the main the military officers were not given ministerial positions. There were exceptions, such as Lu Han, who had a brief spell as

¹ United States Consulate, report 36, 12 November 1928; report 83, 18 June 1929.

² *Biographies of Kuomintang Leaders*, II, 61.

provincial minister of finance during late 1929 and early 1930. The post of salt commissioner was for military officers only, and certain committee posts and directorships of companies were also accorded them. But nevertheless Long seems to have reserved for civilian officials posts in which a certain familiarity with bureaucratic techniques and a capacity to initiate policy were held to be useful. The rule which Long exercised in Yunnan was by no means purely military. It depended heavily upon a bureaucracy.

The provincial faction did not monopolize the Provincial Government Committee or appointments to ministerial offices. These included local politicians; generals and politicians, who had left the province; and also military figures who were tolerated only briefly. Tang Jilin is a good example of this kind of man. Nominally the commander of the Seventh Independent Division, he had little independence and held his place on the Committee solely through Long Yun's favour, a gesture to his previous association with Tang Jiyao. In short, the faction had the lion's share of public positions, but did not enjoy a monopoly.

THE INTERNAL REFORM CONFERENCE

When Long took office in 1928 he was faced by severe economic and political problems. To seek solutions for these and to consolidate his regime, an Internal Reform Conference was convened modelled on a previous conference called by Tang Jiyao in 1925. The Reform Conference did not begin auspiciously, with the determined absence of the elder statesmen, whose favour meant much to Long in terms of political legitimacy. The Reform Conference had been due to start on 25 April, but was postponed because of lack of support. The meetings then held until 28 April were called a "preparatory" conference.¹ Much important business was dealt with by this conference. The Reform Conference itself, held between 21 and 31 May, ratified the decisions of the preparatory sessions. In his preface to the official report of the Conference, Long pointed out that its proposals were in no way different from those made at the 1925 conference. The difference between the two was that in 1928 "every problem was

¹ *Zhongyang ribao*, 29 May 1928.

fully discussed and many open ballots were taken." This contrasted with the 1925 Conference which had been "like a dictatorship."¹

Long Yun realised that his powerful subordinates could not be dominated. Military discipline could not be imposed upon soldiers whose political advice was sought. The monopoly of power that Tang Jiyao had sustained could not be maintained. Long had to allow his subordinates in the army to take decisions of importance (notably in matters of army finance). Thus the political system which emerged during the 1928 Conference much resembled the old system which Tang had introduced in 1922 in which regional commanders enjoyed financial and military power with little central control.

The Internal Reform Conference opened with a telegram from the Provincial Government Committee announcing the major topics for consideration. This telegram was considerably different from that issued in March 1927 by the four defence commissioners who had overthrown Tang. In the latter there is no reference to the Guomindang, no hint of any precise political commitment. The generals of 1927 gave "the fullest support to Sichuan, Guizhou, Guangdong and Guangxi." By contrast the Government Committee of 1928 stressed the importance of Sun Yat-sen's *Outline of Principles for the Establishment of the Nation*, and noted that the provincial government had been "reorganized on the basis of the law promulgated by the Central [Government]," and had been "formally established."²

The tenor of the proposals made at the Reform Conference was conservative and the liquidation of the Communist Party was held to be one of the four "preconditions for reconstruction," the others being financial reform, fiscal control and the elimination of bandits.³ There can be no doubt of the sincerity of the provincial government's enthusiasm for liquidation and 400 people were executed by Long Yun by the end of 1928.⁴ This was a continuation of the purges first begun a

¹ *Neizheng huiyi*, p.1.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 23 April 1928, p.314.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Inspectorate General of Customs, *Decennial Report, 1922-1931*, p.355.

years earlier and although Yunnan was late in killing communists it was zealous. The vivid anti-communism of the landlord bureaucracy was perhaps a symptom of the uneasiness which the landlords felt. Thus, in summer 1928 Zhang Wei-han, then the commissioner for foreign affairs, sent a protest to the British Consul. According to the translation a young man, aged about twenty, announcing himself as the "Ta Fo Yeh" (i.e. Great Buddha) of Kengtung," in company with some Burmese priests, but all disguised as Chinese, tried to propagate "the advantages of communism" judiciously distributing "some hundreds of British dollars." This happy state of affairs did not endure however and the Great Buddha confessed to the local headman that he had been put up to it by "certain Cantonese who had been defeated and driven out of the country." Zhang Wei-han hoped that "the matter may be investigated and the trouble nipped in the bud." He concluded with a magnificent piece of hyperbole:

It is well known that the communists, whose nature is as that of ravening beasts, have for their object the destruction of morality and civilization, to attain which they will employ every violent and murderous means. They are an enemy of the human race and are rejected by all nations.¹

In accord with such anti-communist feelings the provincial government was determined to restore 'order' and one of its main targets was the student community in Kunming. Long later acquired some reputation for 'liberal' attitudes, thanks to his distaste for Chiang Kai-shek's secret police, but in 1928 his government pledged itself to "the satisfactory arrangement of regulations for the management of schools [with a view to] the rectification of the confused conduct of the young."² One set of proposals made at the 1928 Reform Conference envisaged the prohibition of student societies, student unions, student organization of parties, student participation in school administration, and the prohibition of opium-smoking, gambling and prostitution amongst students.³ This linking of undesirable political conduct with sexual licence and depravity was a neat method of gaining support for its general conservative policies. Furthermore,

¹PRO. FO371/13222 F5328/589/10, 24 August 1928.

²*Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 23 April 1928, p.314.

³*Neizheng huiyi*, pp.161-162.

a plea was made for an end to co-educational schooling in middle schools.¹ How far these proposals were implemented is unclear, but the role of the students as makers of political power, such as it had been, was quite ended. The students who had protested even during Long's most crucial struggle with Hu and Zhang were now quite silenced.

Part of the social contract between the faction that had come to power and the landlords was that the provincial government should keep order in the countryside. During the civil war all the generals had enlisted bandits into their armies: Long, for example, had appointed Li Shaozong Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Right Wing of the Thirty-Eighth Army,² while Mo Pu, whose band had attacked Gejiu in 1926, actually managed to retire in 1928 as "counsellor of the first rank."³ A telegram sent to Nanking in May 1928 noted that Long's armies had "suddenly increased to over 80,000 men; through selection and elimination they have been reorganised, which still leaves 30,000 picked troops."⁴ At the Reform Conference a proposal was made that unwanted troops should be packed off to the Northern Expedition "which would not be particularly useful to the Party or Nation but would benefit Yunnan."⁵ This indeed was the suggestion that Long put to Nanking: "20,000 crack troops for the Northern Expedition."⁶ No doubt it came as a shock when the central government saw through this peasant slyness: participation in the Northern Expedition was "already unnecessary."⁷

Long's régime naturally did its best to get rid of bandits, many of whom were, of course, former army officers. In 1928 Long executed by firing squad "la petite pomme rouge", the favourite wife of

¹ *Ibid.*, p.41.

² *Yunnan gongbao*, 65 (June 1928), pp.56-7.

³ *Ibid.*, p.350 (25 May 1928), p.10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 342 (16 May 1928), p.9.

⁵ *Neizheng huiyi*, p.51.

⁶ *Yunnan gongbao*, 342 (16 May 1928), p.9.

⁷ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 65 (June 1928), pp.56-57.

Wu Xuexian,¹ whose own head was on public display in 1931.² Li Shaozong was still active in 1930 when Long tried to persuade him to go to Guangxi with Lu Han.³ But after this year most of the bandits had disappeared.

From 1928 to 1929, in which year Long finally defeated the combination of Hu, Zhang and Meng Youwen, it seems probable that the operation of the government was fragmentary and always subordinate to pressing military need. The current instability was marked by an increase in the rate of inflation and in the quantity of money the government printed to meet its short-term requirements. But after 1929 greater fiscal stability began to appear.

THE ABORTIVE COUP OF 1931

But in 1931 the regime's stability was endangered by an attempted coup of Long's four divisional generals. This was one of the few political events in Yunnan during the 1930's to engage the attention of the outside world and is consequently fairly well-documented. The balance of power within the faction shifted sharply away from Long's subordinate generals. Thereafter, while Long's individual power and prestige was enhanced among "public opinion," the most notable aspect of politics after 1931 was the smooth and rapid rise to great authority of Miao Jiaming.

On the return of the defeated Yunnan troops from Guangxi, Long Yun issued a statement on November 7:

The Tenth Route Army being appointed by the Central Government, it has become the National Army and does not belong to any private person. The present expedition was made under orders from the Central Government and it was not made for the interest of Yunnan nor for any private persons.⁴

¹ *Bulletin*, 84 (December 1928), p.751.

² Lécorché, p.223 and photograph on p.233.

³ PRO. FO271/13164 F34/7/10, 19 November 1927. *Bulletin*, 104 (September 1930), p.573.

⁴ United States Consulate, report 12, 5 December 1930.

No doubt this was partly designed to counter embarrassing rumours that the needs of the opium trade had played an important part in getting the campaign going. But it also hints at potential disagreements between Long and his senior generals. Their power had been waxing since 1929 and in spring 1931 they disagreed over the redistribution of troops after Zhu Xu's attempted resignation (doubtless to forestall the impending clash). From 5-10 March 1931 a conference was held of "important military and political men" to reach an understanding, but it failed.¹ The role of "political men" during this crisis in the structure of the faction is of great interest. The military clearly could not simply propose and dispose as they thought fit. The dispute between Long and his generals was ultimately decided by the officials, landlords and merchants of Kunming, the "public opinion" of the day.

The failure of the negotiations provoked a coup which veered between melodrama and farce. The lack of effective institutions for resolving the dispute was evident: ultimately the military assumed the right to determine their own interests and structure, but found that they needed the politicians too much.

On 10 March the generals left for Yiliang, but not before calling on four men prominent in the government, Zhou Zhongyu, Miao Zhiaming, Gong Zizhi and Yang Wenqing. The generals wanted to use these men as intermediaries, but they also needed to gain their support. In Kunming slogans were posted up urging the army to give its undivided loyalty to Long and support the central government, and "eliminate the heirs (*nie*) of Tang."² This was the stated grievance of the generals who sent Long a letter from Yiliang in which they reproached him for employing men in public office in an improper fashion and for "not employing those of merit."³ To emphasize this point they took with them to Yiliang Sun Du, Long's chief-of-staff, and Ma Weilin, head of the Opium Prohibition Bureau, who was an especial object of their wrath. Meanwhile a proclamation had been issued in Kunming

¹ United States Consulate, report 29, 1 April 1931.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 30 March 1931, pp.390-392.

³ "Long Yun Lu Han," 783, p.19.

giving Zhang Fengchun's deputy charge of the city which was placed under martial law. In this proclamation Zhang Fengchun announced that he and his three colleagues had gone to Yiliang "to discuss ways and means" (*huishang banfa*). He threatened that "if anyone fabricates rumours or disturbs public order, he will, on discovery, be dealt with summarily by martial law and no mercy will be shown."¹ Long meanwhile was making preparations to leave Kunming, the city was panic-stricken and prices rose rapidly. A hastily convened meeting of some eighty leading officials and prominent men sent a deputation to Long's residence where they found Miao Jiaming, Gong Zizhi and Yang Wenqing unable to gain an audience. An emissary confirmed Long's determination to leave Kunming. Three men from this deputation and five from the local branch of the Guomindang sent a telegram to the generals.

The Chairman prepared this evening to return to Zhao [tong] alone. His mind is quite made up. All sections of the community tried to detain him but without success. Furthermore, he refuses to see anyone. Now people are panicking and public order is in imminent danger. In view of the serious situation we hope for a prompt reply from you by telegram.²

The next evening the eight delegates set off for Yiliang while the generals sent a telegram asking that Long should be dissuaded from leaving. That evening they reiterated their support for Long to the eight-man delegation. But Long left Kunming on 12 March issuing a brief statement that he was returning to Zhaotong to visit the family graves. The parallel with the defence commissioners' coup of February 1927 was very close. Protestations of loyalty were worth nothing to Long. He saw that if he remained in Kunming he would become, like Tang, the puppet of his generals. But unlike Tang, Long had seen how much the officials and 'prominent men' of Kunming wanted him to stay. Unless the generals were willing physically to remove him, Long could not be dominated unless he wished. The lion had opened its mouth and invited the keeper to put his head in, but the keeper had

¹ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 30 March 1931, pp.390-392.

² *Ibid.*

declined. Realising that the game was up the generals issued a long and interesting telegram on 13 March which itemized their complaints.¹

The telegram is an attack on what might be called the Tang clique. Recounting their loyalty in the various civil wars they complain at the advancement of officials who had served Tang in his administration.

Tang Jilin, Zhang Weiham and Sun Du are still Tang's men . . . Tang Jilin is plotting to train troops and seize military power . . . Zhang Weiham is using Tang's disreputable men as his agents . . . Sun Du is stirring up the armed forces and sowing disharmony among the ranks. Ma Weilin . . . monopolizes opium prohibition and is engaged in corruption. The rest — Guo Yuluan (in charge of the Military Affairs Office), Yuan Changrong (in charge of the Bureau of Armaments Supply), Tu Kaizong (Chief Justice of the Supreme Court) and Zhang Zuyin (Mayor of Kunming) — are all in positions of importance and are secretly plotting a restoration [of Tang Jiyu].²

After 10 March all those named had disappeared, and at a meeting on 1 April, after the generals had recalled Long to Kunming, the "resignations" of all except Xu Zhichen and Yuan Changrong were accepted. Thus it is clear that the dispute over the distribution of troops was closely connected with rivalry between the landlord bureaucracy and the military. On the one hand the abortive coup was a struggle between the military officers and the landlord bureaucracy in which the latter won. But on the other hand it was a struggle between an army commander who had also assumed a political role and his subordinates who had not fully grasped the implications of this.

Significantly, the generals failed to win the support of Chiang Kai-shek. Before leaving Kunming Long sent telegrams to Nanking requesting leave. Chiang held a conference with Li Peitian, then Long's

¹ "The generals at Yiliang discussed the selection of someone to succeed Long. Lu Han suggested that he whose merits were outstanding should take the responsibility. Zhang Fengchun suggested that he who had the most troops should take the responsibility; Zhu Xu and Zhang Chong gave no indications. Seeing that this was the case, Lu changed his attitude and suggested that they keep Long." See Duan Kechang, p.31.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 30 March 1931, pp.390-392.

representative to Nanking, and ordered Long by telegram to return to Kunming. He also issued a telegram to the generals ordering them to accept the redistribution of the army. Long's supremacy was thus confirmed.¹

Faced by this situation the generals returned to the capital on 13 March and decided to recall Long. Getting into an aeroplane, probably for the first time in their lives, all, except Zhang Fengchun, flew out to overtake Long and his family who were travelling to Zhaotong by motorcar. Long finally consented to return to Kunming after a little play-acting and received an enthusiastic welcome on 17 March. It appeared that the generals had at least achieved the dismissal of their opponents, even if they had failed to take Long captive. Long sent a telegram to Li Peitian a few days later in which he dismissed it as just a matter of some generals "not being very clear about politics and carelessly issuing statements of opinion . . . not giving rise to any problem."² In a telegram to Chiang Kai-shek a little later, Long refuted the allegations which the generals had made in their telegram and promised an investigation into their conduct and the officials denounced by them.³ He could not very well admit to any weakness in his position lest Nanking try to exploit it. By the end of April 1931 Zhang Fengchun's troops, who had controlled the city, with sentries posted outside public buildings, had all been withdrawn and Long had resumed office.⁴

But if the generals had any illusions about their fate, they were soon disabused of them. On 10 April Long sent the following telegram to Nanking.

The four divisional commanders arrested a provincial deputy on their own authority and issued telegrams of their own accord. This was indeed a severe infringement of military discipline. On the seventh, with a view to

¹"Long Yun Lu Han," 783, p.19; *Dagong bao*, 23 March 1931.

²*Shenbao*, 21 March 1931.

³*Dagong bao*, 27 March 1931.

⁴United States Consulate, report 29, 1 April 1931; report 31, 7 May 1931.

effecting a thorough reorganization of the army, I arrested and cashiered Zhang Mingchun (i.e. Fengchun), dismissed Lu Han, Zhu Fang (i.e. Zhu Xu) and Zhang Chong from their posts as divisional commanders, and demoted Zhang Chong to commander of the Ninth Brigade. Each divisional unit was disbanded on the same day and re-formed into brigades. The general situation has already been stabilized. Internal unity has been increased and the whole province is peaceful and normal.¹

Lu Han was allowed to keep his position on the Government Committee, but he no longer held military power.² Zhang Fengchun was imprisoned and not released until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War when he died after celebrating his release with a large banquet. Zhu Xu died not long after, entrusted with minor tasks by the government. Zhang Chong had lost many men in the Guangxi campaign the previous year, and probably for this reason, and because he was the youngest of the four, he was allowed to retain his command. But this crisis was a watershed in the development of the faction. Long broke the independent power of his military subordinates and then created a military structure which he felt would prevent the rise of a comparable group of generals able and willing to question his authority.

Lu Han touched on the heart of the matter in his *apologia*, a telegram issued after his dismissal. "I have today resigned my commission. I have also informed each unit of my command that *henceforth all military affairs will be handled by the Commander.*"³ (author's italics).

Thereafter the brigades which replaced the divisions were commanded by men less powerful than Lu Han and his colleagues had

¹ *Zhongyang ribao*, 13 April 1931.

² Lu Han also continued to be given equal shares with Long Yun in the arms deals conducted through two firms, namely Descours et Cabaud and Rondon et Cie who were agents for the Groupe de Chine. On one order worth two million francs the total commission was thirty-five percent: ten percent each for Long Yun, Lu Han and the agent of the Groupe de Chine in Kunming, and five percent for other intermediaries. See United States Consulate, confidential report 178, 26 May 1936.

³ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 12 May 1931, pp.150-151.

been. These new commanders were a younger generation that had been promoted by Long Yun. They could not feel, as the rebellious generals had, that Long owed them something for their services; they could not assume that their past loyalty to him justified their political ambitions. None of these commanding officers ever held a political post, at least in the period under consideration. They were powerful men, to be sure, even though the forces they commanded were considerably smaller than ever their predecessors' had been. At the same time, like Tang Jiyao in 1925 who had felt his generals' loyalty ebbing, Long began to train fresh regiments in order to construct a truly personal army.

The destruction of the old military system, in which Long's generals participated formally in the government and exercised power in their own right, gave way to one in which Long's supremacy was unchallenged and in which the landlord bureaucrats predominated. The limited financial and economic reforms of the 1930's could scarcely have been initiated by Miao Jiaming if the generals had succeeded in their attempted coup. The "military" phase of the provincial faction had now ended.

4 Financial Policies and Administration, 1928-1934

The first years of Long Yun's rule in Yunnan were given over to consolidating his position, and consequently the financial problems of the régime came second to pressing military and political needs. The National Government had recognized his authority in the province when it appointed him Chairman of the Provincial Government. But for the first two years his military position was insecure. After a year of tension, the civil war that began in 1927 was renewed in 1929. The armies that Long had expelled from Yunnan took advantage of the absence of his troops in Guizhou to invade. In defeating them Long finally made his military authority supreme. He owed much to his divisional generals for his victory; from the summer of 1929 their authority increased, and most of them were appointed to the Provincial Government Committee and other posts. In 1930 Lu Han, an incompetent general, led a disorderly army into Guangxi where he was soundly beaten. Next year he failed in an attempt to overthrow his half-brother. This ended the generals' dominance, and finally provided Long with the political authority he desired.

The need for military security before 1929 and the consequent ascendancy of the generals until 1931 inevitably ensured that most of the government's income was allotted to the army. Committees and conferences considered the financial problems of the government without success until 1930 when the first steps towards improvement were taken. The fall of the generals in the following year confirmed this trend. The most serious problems at this time were the inflation of the local paper currency, and the inadequacy of the government's income. But depreciation of the provincial dollar¹ was now markedly

¹ This provincial dollar was the Yunnan paper dollar (the old dollar) issued by the provincial government's Fudian Bank and worth about ten cents in national currency in 1930. In 1932 a new dollar worth five old dollars was issued by

reduced, if not eliminated, and tax revenues sharply increased.

After 1931 the government's efforts to centralize the collection of revenue in the provincial ministry of finance were partly successful. A new government bank rose from the ashes of the old. One of its most important tasks was to introduce foreign exchange controls. It ensured that the provincial government got at least half of the foreign exchange that was earned by the export of tin and opium. Foreign exchange had previously to be sought from the Banque de l'Indochine, and the authorities in Kunming were jubilant at their liberation from foreign dependence.

These advances made by the provincial government in financial and fiscal control provided a basis for industrial investment after 1934. This investment, in turn, was vital to a government faced by the loss of the lucrative taxes on opium it had come to rely on, as cultivation was progressively restricted.

INCOME AND INFLATION

During the first three months of 1928 the income of the government was allegedly some 1,200,000 dollars, excluding what were termed bank and fiscal loans. These "loans" were simply a euphemism for printing money. Half of the 1,200,000 dollars came from two sources: firstly, from profit made on the fluctuation in the rate of exchange between silver dollars and the nickel currency that circulated in the western and northeastern regions of the province; secondly, from profits made by the mint. During this same period, civil expenses amounted to 540,000 dollars and military to 3 million dollars, leaving a deficit of 2,340,000 dollars.¹ In these figures, which were given to the delegates attending the Internal Reform Conference of 1928, the basic financial problems of the provincial government are laid bare. Revenue from taxation was insufficient to meet the demands of the armies, and so recourse was had to the printing press and other forms of financial legerdemain.

Printing money to keep the army in the state to which it had become accustomed did not begin with Long. Yunnan was a poor province,

Fn continued from page 81.
the New Fudian Bank. Unless otherwise specified all values are given in terms of the old paper dollar.

¹*Neizheng huiyi*, p.242.

and the income of the provincial administration during the Qing dynasty was supplemented regularly by the richer provinces of Sichuan and Hubei. After the 1911 Revolution, these supplements ceased; at the same time more money was needed for the army. Tang Jiyao was disarmingly frank about his policy:

The fiscal crisis has without doubt arisen because too much paper money has been issued. The excessive issue of paper money is the result of too much government borrowing from the [Fudian] Bank. The government was obliged to borrow from the bank because military activity could not be reduced.¹

From March 1922 to May 1926, the income of the provincial government had been 28 million dollars, civil expenditure had been 10 million dollars and military expenditure 47 million dollars.² Such figures, like most statistics, are but imperfect reflections of reality; but there is no doubting the inflation which followed the excessive issue of paper money. The price of all varieties of rice and wheat in the province had risen many times over from 1916 to 1926.³ A visitor to Yunnan in the autumn of 1923 noted: "The price of rice in Kunming is high, almost double that of Shanghai."⁴ A bitter attack on Long and his horrid crew in 1928 went one better. "The silver reserves are exhausted and there is a surfeit of paper money. The cost of living in Kunming is several times higher than in Tianjin."⁵

In terms of other currencies the Yunnan paper dollar lost value alarmingly. In the early 1920s the currency exchanged at something like par with the Shanghai and Hongkong dollars, but "by autumn 1929 the exchange rate with the Shanghai dollar had fallen to nine to one."⁶ The

¹ Zhang Xiaomei, *Yunnan jingji* (Chongqing, 1942), T5.

² *Ibid.*

³ Cordier, Georges, *Le Province du Yunnan* (Hanoi, 1928), pp.169-170.

⁴ Xie Xiaozhong, *Yunnan youji* (*Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan* edn.), p.95.

⁵ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 24 November 1928, pp.329-330.

⁶ Yu Zongze, ed., *Yunnan xingzheng jishi*, 24 vols. (Kunming, 1943), XVII, *jinnong: minguo shiba nian yiqian zhi jinrong zhuangkuang*, 3a (hereafter *Jishi*).

provincial government continued to print large quantities of money, while also importing banknotes from the United States. By spring 1931, the Fudian Bank had issued unsecured notes to the value of 92,950,000 dollars, while other private banks, such as the Border Colonial Bank and the Gejiu-Bisezhai Bank, had issued 10,800,000 dollars.¹ In principle these notes were backed by silver reserves, but the silver coins minted in Yunnan were considerably debased. What silver coins remained tended to be removed from circulation by the non-Han minorities of the western regions who sold their opium only for silver.²

Apart from the silver coins and paper dollars issued by the government's Fudian Bank, other private banks also issued notes. Indo-Chinese piastres were common in the regions around the Railway, and forged banknotes from Guangdong also made their appearance.³ In addition nickel currency circulated in the west of the province, around Dali, and in the northeast in Zhaotong and neighbouring counties.⁴ Five and ten cent coins were first minted in 1923, and initially exchanged at par. But they soon depreciated in terms of the silver dollar; by the 1930s it took three nickel dollars to make one silver.⁵ The currency of the National Government did not circulate in the province until 1935 when the troops of Nanking entered in the wake of the Long March.

When the Internal Reform Conference met in spring 1928, the provincial government was spending sums of money on the army far in excess of its income, in a currency which was rapidly becoming worthless. Ma Cong, who had represented Tang Jiyao at the negotiations following the coup of 6 February, made a statement to the Conference in his capacity as provincial minister of finance. He noted that in 1926, the last year of Tang's rule, the income of the government had been over 10,900,000 dollars while civil and military expenditure together had accounted for 14,760,000 dollars. Most of this had been spent on

¹*Ibid.*, *Fudian yinhang zhi yewu*, 3ab.

²United States Consulate, *Annual Report on Commerce and Industries*, 1927, 21 January 1928.

³United States Consulate, *Annual Report on Commerce and Industries*, 1928, 31 March 1929; *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 1 December 1929, p.67.

⁴*Yunnan maoyi*, p.152.

⁵Fitzgerald, p.32.

the army, and he proposed that in future military expenditure should not exceed 700,000 dollars out of an expected income of one million dollars per month, reducing by stages to 500,000 dollars.¹ A spokesman for the military, well represented at the Conference, generously announced that military expenditure should not normally exceed twenty or thirty percent of the government's income. However, for the moment, it should not exceed seventy percent of the proposed one million dollars per month.² In the end, the Conference decided upon an expenditure of 800,000 dollars per month. The army's spirit of self-denial, however, was a frail thing. For the Reform Conference further resolved to increase the strength of the army from twelve to twenty regiments.³ There was to be no check on military expenditure and any attempt to slow down the rate of inflation was useless in the face of the army's intention to run the presses till they broke.

Having decided that an income of a million dollars per month would be adequate, the Conference had to consider how this sum would be raised. During the first three months of 1928, regular taxation had yielded a mere 200,000 dollars per month. The major sources of revenue apart from the press and financial manipulation were the alcohol and tobacco monopoly and opium prohibition fines, as the provincial minister of finance admitted.⁴ But it was precisely these items of revenue that the finance ministry did not control. Each source of income was levied by an organization which delivered its cash receipts to the chairman of the provincial government.

Important posts . . . the Mint, the Opium Prohibition Bureau, the Bureau of Seals, and the Alcohol and Tobacco Monopoly, were formerly used as rewards. Also, their income was collected independently and distributed to high military officials for special use. The provincial ministry of finance had no right to interfere.⁵

The officials who had charge of these lucrative agencies transferred their receipts, or as much as they thought fit, directly to Tang

¹ *Neizheng huiyi*, pp.222-223, 241-242, 244.

² *Ibid.*, pp.221, 223.

³ *Ibid.*, p.51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.242.

⁵ *Jishi*, V, *caizheng: tiyao*, 3a.

Jiyao.¹ Ma Cong wanted to end all this, and bring all revenue collection under the wing of the provincial ministry of finance. All sources of income, the *likin*, salt gabelle, opium prohibition fines, the alcohol and tobacco monopoly and also the mint should be under the supervision of the ministry in order to decide upon policy and institute needed reforms.² But this proposal pleased neither the entrenched interests in these honey pots, nor the generals who profited from the existing system. Sensing their hostility, Ma Cong promised desperately that "in one or two years, when each item has been regularized and does not require supervision, we can perhaps revert to the old system."³ But no one was convinced, and Ma Cong's proposal was sent to a committee where "high officials in the army and government thoroughly acquainted with the conditions [were] appointed to hold discussions of a specialist nature in order to facilitate its implementation."⁴

During 1928 and 1929 a number of government bodies were created to deal with financial problems. But no policy was consistently applied, and this indecision was reflected in the number of times that a new minister of finance was appointed. From January 1928 to September 1930 no less than six ministers were appointed.⁵ The chief obstacles to a satisfactory solution of the problems of government income and inflation were war and army dominance.

During the Internal Reform Conference taxes on opium cultivation and export had been raised⁶ drastically to swell government income. Inflation had been largely caused by the huge budgetary deficit, so the best cure for inflation and the government's financial sickness seemed to be expanding its income. In the Internal Reform Conference,

¹*Ibid.*, VI, *caizheng: tiaozheng jikou*, 1a.

²*Neizheng huiyi*, p.245.

³*Ibid.*, p.245.

⁴*Ibid.*, p.54.

⁵Provincial ministers of finance from January 1928 to September 1930 were: Chen Jun (January-April 1928), Ma Cong (April-July 1928), Lu Chongren (July 1928-September 1929), Zhu Jingxuan (September-December 1929), Lu Han (December 1929-May 1930), Chen Weigeng (May-September 1930), Lu Chongren (September 1930-).

⁶See below, p.114.

Ma Cong had advocated a committee to consider economic problems. The Committee for the Regulation of Finance and Currency was the first of several such creations. It first met in August 1928, and its members were described as men "of our province with a rich knowledge of finance and the currency."¹

When the decision was taken to raise the rate of taxation on opium cultivation and export, it became clear that there would be no reduction in the amount of money required by the army. The committee adhered to the general policy of halting inflation by reducing the budgetary deficit. But because expenditure could not be reduced there had to be an increase in income.

The committee proposed to raise a public loan of 20 million dollars in paper currency which would be burned to reduce note circulation. The loan was to be backed by receipts from the salt gabelle, taxes on tin and the opium prohibition fines. From 1 January 1929, all taxes levied by the government were to be collected in silver dollars at the rate of three paper dollars to one silver dollar. Thus taxation was effectively tripled. One third of all revenues collected at this new rate would also be burned.² The public loan met with a poor response. The provincial government was so precarious that no one cared to invest in its future. Furthermore, the government continued to import banknotes from the United States throughout 1928, preserving the budgetary deficit.³ The committee expected to raise a total of 30 million dollars from taxation during 1929, of which two-thirds would be used for expenditure.

However, by spring 1929 it had become clear that the committee's measures had failed. It was dissolved, and in March the provincial government organized a Provincial Currency Conference which in turn concocted a Committee for the Regulation of the Currency.⁴ This committee carried out its business in an atmosphere of nervous apprehension: the Guangxi faction was at war with Nanking, and it was only a matter of time before Yunnan invaded Guizhou. The

¹ *Jishi*, XVII, *jinrong: minguo shiba nian yiqian zhi zhuangkuang*, 1b-2a.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, *Fudian xin yinhang zhi yewu*, 3b.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *minguo shiba nian yiqian zhi jinrong zhuangkuang*, 2b.

generals who had been expelled from the province at the end of 1927 were still awaiting the moment to return, and they had been joined by the general whom Long Yun had given the important post of Defence Commissioner of Zhaotong. Perhaps a vivid sense of impermanence drove the committee into a mood of feverish optimism. Anyway, it is hard to believe that it took itself very seriously.

It first abolished the measures of its predecessor, the Committee for the Regulation of Finance and Currency, retaining only the threefold increase in taxes. The 20 million dollar loan was reduced to 10 million dollars guaranteed by provincial government property. However, the chief recommendation was that supplementary levies should be raised on salt, tin and opium from June 1929. The committee sanguinely calculated that an extra thirty dollars per catty on salt would bring in 42 million dollars over two years, 250 dollars per *zhang*¹ of tin would raise 2,500,000 dollars over the same period, while twenty-five dollars more on every 100 taels of opium would yield 3,750,000 per year.² The civil war of mid-1929 made these proposals pointless.

THE NEW FUDIAN BANK

In November 1929, scarcely eight months after the previous financial conference, a further Conference for the Regulation of Finance and Currency was convened. The provincial government now publicly acknowledged that if it did not "swiftly devise a means of solving [its financial problems], then not only will the government have no means of maintaining itself in existence, but it is to be feared that the masses might be driven to bankruptcy,"³ exhibiting a nice sense of priority. It was in November that a new Provincial Government Committee was set up, including for the first time three of the divisional generals who had secured Long's power in Yunnan.⁴ Lu Han, who had joined the provincial government in the previous year, was made minister of finance in December. From this time onwards the

¹ A measure of tin weighing approximately 1.5 long tons.

² *Jishi*, V, *caizheng*: *tiyao*, 1b; 17, *jīnróng*: *mínguo shiba nian yiqian zhi jīnróng zhuangkuang*, 2b.

³ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 6 January 1930, p.23.

⁴ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 326 (22 November 1929), p.1.

financial situation of the government improved. However, it would be wrong to suppose that the day was saved by the financial acumen of Lu Han and his fellow generals. These effective steps were made possible because the provincial faction had finally imposed its military authority on the province and defeated its remaining rivals.

The conference produced yet another committee, the Committee for the Regulation of Finance. Its remedies were simple. Abolishing all previous loans and levies, taxes were to be paid in silver dollars at an increased rate of five paper dollars to each silver dollar from 1 January 1930. In addition, extra levies were imposed upon certain items of luxury goods imported into the province.¹ Doubtless the prospects for a genuine improvement in the finances and currency of the provincial government were enhanced when the generals promised, but not for the first time, to stop borrowing money from the Fudian Bank, that is, to stop printing their requirements.²

By July 1930 these measures were in effect, and finally a Committee for the Regulation of the Currency, the fourth and last of its line, was given the job of accumulating a silver reserve as a preparation for a new state bank to replace the old, and for a new currency issue.³ This succession of conferences and committees reveals the government's helplessness and also its attempt to spread responsibility for its financial difficulties. In Guomindang China, the committee was not simply an institution for deliberating on problems and proposing solutions. For rulers like Long it was a political device which allowed them to blur the line of responsibility. Moreover, it often offered an attractive alternative to concrete action.

The provincial government decided to reduce inflation by replacing the old bank with a new one that would issue fresh currency. It realized that the new issue would only be viable if it enjoyed the confidence of merchants. The provincial government's first thought was to bring in merchant capital and establish a "bank operated jointly by officials and merchants."⁴ But, this came to nothing; presumably the

¹ *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 6 January 1930, p.24.

² *Jishi*, XVII, *jīnróng*: *Fudian yinhang zhi shoushu ji Fudian xin yinhang zhi chengli*, 1a.

³ *Ibid.*, *tiyao*, 2b; 5, *caizheng*: *tiyao*, 2a.

⁴ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 604 (23 October 1930), p.2.

merchants had little faith in such a venture. To secure the confidence of the general public the provincial government needed to back the new issue with a silver reserve. When the New Fudian Bank (*Fudian xin yinhang*) opened in July 1932, its assets were stated to be 16 million dollars, of which 12 million may have been actual silver, the rest being the value of the bank's buildings.¹

This silver was raised from the proceeds of the opium taxes, the "opium prohibition fines."² Opium was an integral part of the provincial economy, and an important export. It is not too much to say that fluctuation in the currency closely reflected the state of the opium trade. The urgency with which attempts were made to find means of exporting opium during 1927 and 1928 is witness of its importance.³

When the New Fudian Bank opened in the summer of 1932 it issued a new paper dollar which was the equivalent of five old dollars. The rate of depreciation of both this new dollar and the old slowed considerably over the next five years, in comparison with the previous five. Inflation ceased to be a serious problem, and the officials turned their attention mostly to the control of foreign exchange. It was an institution of greater power and influence than its predecessor, although its personnel remained largely unchanged. It became the only bank authorized to issue currency, and the small private banks which had previously issued their own notes were no longer allowed to do so. Although it was a provincial bank its interests extended beyond the province. In Yunnan itself it had branches in Gejiu, Xiaguan and Zhaotong. It had a branch in Shanghai and offices in Guangxi; presumably these were concerned with the opium trade. In addition it had offices in Hongkong and agents in Singapore, New York and London to handle remittances from the export of tin.⁴

¹ *Jishi*, XVII, *jirong*: *Fudian yinhang zhi shoushu ji Fudian xin yinhang zhi chengli*, 2ab.

² *Ibid.*, V, *caizheng tiyao*, 2a.

³ The rate at which the paper dollar depreciated against the national currency seems to correspond to a decline in opium exports. The amount of opium exported from Yunnan gradually increased until it reached a record of some 50 million taels in 1932. In terms of the national currency, the Yunnan paper dollar rose a little up to 1931 and then depreciated.

⁴ *Jishi*, XVII, *jirong*: *Fudian yinhang zhi shoushu ji Fudian xin yinhang zhi chengli*, 2ab.

The mission of the bank was "to unify the currency system; to establish a firm silver reserve so that the paper currency may obtain the fullest confidence of the masses."¹ In this respect the measures taken by the provincial government through the new bank succeeded. But after 1931 the price of silver rose, draining it out of China. In October 1934 a duty on the export of silver was imposed, and finally in November 1935 payments in silver were banned and a managed currency was introduced.² The reaction of the New Fudian Bank was extremely interesting: it pegged the Yunnan paper dollar to the pound sterling, at a rate of eight pence to the dollar.³ It must be admitted that the National Government later compelled the provincial authorities to rescind this measure. Yet it was an act of remarkable independence. No other province did this, and the only other example seems to be Manchukuo.⁴ But whether linked to silver or sterling, the paper dollars were still viable during the 1930s in spite of a gradual depreciation relative to the national currency.

The control of foreign exchange was beneficial to the provincial government and exporters. Nor was control solely for economic motives.

The Yunnanese foreign exchange market was monopolized by outside merchants (*waishang*). Although goods exported were the produce of the province, nevertheless the foreign exchange received in return fell into the hands of a foreign bank and Hongkong tin merchants: All users [of foreign exchange], no matter whether merchants or the government, had to go cap in hand (*yang qi bixi*); and all, public as well as private, chafed at the restriction.⁵

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¹ *Ibid.*, *tiyao*, 1ab.

² Young, Arthur N., *China's Nation-Building Effort, 1927-1937* (Stanford, 1971), pp.215-216.

³ *Jishi*, XVII, *jirong*: *tiyao*, 4b.

⁴ Its currency, which was based on silver and related to Shanghai, was linked with the Japanese *yen* after October 1934 when the National Government imposed an export duty on silver. See Young, p.254.

⁵ *Jishi*, XVII, *jirong*: *tiyao*, 4b.

The "foreign bank" in question was the Banque de l'Indochine, a French bank with extensive interests in the Far East and a branch in Kunming. In this field, where financial and political advantage happily combined, the objectives of the new bank were clear:

Outside the province and nation: to supplement and develop international trade; to control foreign exchange and thereby stimulate an increase in export goods, obtaining a large source of foreign exchange; to be able to regulate the market through concentrated control of foreign exchange and its supply in order to stabilize the price of exchange and prevent manipulation by foreign merchants; to hold a large surplus of foreign currency to provide for the establishment of new industries and the purchase of arms and material for national defence.¹

At first there were considerable difficulties, largely caused by the incompetence and inexperience of the bank's staff. The first manager of the New Fudian Bank was Li Peiyan, the brother of Li Peilian, Long's wife until her death in 1932. The new bank was largely a reincarnation of the old, and when "the new bank succeeded the old Fudian Bank there was a deep fear that the organization was slipshod and that long-standing practices of the past were being adhered to."² One of these "long-standing practices" was a lack of financial competence. "The control of foreign exchange, the control of silver and foreign exchange were not matters in which the officials of the old bank had formerly been adept."³ The first results were disastrous.

The new bank introduced exchange controls: it sold foreign exchange to importers and bought it from exporters. Li Peiyan wished to keep the price of foreign exchange down in order to stabilize the provincial currency. So he mistakenly sold a large amount of

¹*Ibid.*, 1ab.

²*Ibid.*, *Fudian yinhang zhi shoushu ji Fudian xin yinhang zhi chengli*, 31.

³*Ibid.*

exchange at once. The price fell and while importers naturally made large profits, exporters were badly hit and many went bankrupt. The new bank had exhausted its supplies of foreign exchange and so the price of exchange shot up and "the market was again thrown into confusion."¹

The two main exports of the province were tin and opium, and foreign exchange control was tantamount to control over earnings from these two exports. On 17 July 1933 the New Fudian Bank issued two sets of regulations: the Regulations for Mortgaging Tin (*Daxi yahui zhangcheng*) and the Regulations for the Advance Purchase of Special Goods' Remittances (*Yumai tehuo huikuan zhangcheng*). These were revised on 16 July and 19 August 1934 respectively, and it is in the revised form that they have been preserved.² The nature of control before these dates is unclear. But it appears that a more general form of control had been imposed whereby the bank tried to control all exchange.³ The regulations governing "special goods," a common euphemism for opium, are considered elsewhere. Suffice it to say that opium was sold for national currency, and the term "foreign exchange" denoted all currencies outside Yunnan.

Both sets of regulations required exporters to accept a loan from the bank of fifty percent; the only exception was opium merchants normally resident outside the province, (because they might default).

In the case of "all tin produced annually in Gejiu," exporters were required to accept loans of fifty percent of the current market value. But "prosperous, reliable and eminently trustworthy" merchants could be granted the privilege of loans of seventy percent.⁴ The tin was sold to foreign companies, the majority of which were based in Hongkong. The smelting techniques of Gejiu could not produce tin of sufficient purity to be sold directly on the London and New York markets. So it was exported to Hongkong where it was re-refined and

¹ *Ibid.*, *tiyao*, 3ab.

² *Yunnan jingji*, V84-86

³ When Miao became manager of the New Fudian Bank he emphasized "selective control" rather than "general control." See *Jishi*, XVII, *jinnrong tiyao*, 3b.

⁴ *Yunnan jingji*, V84.

then sold as "Chinese tin" on the world market.¹ Thus the foreign exchange earned was chiefly Hongkong dollars.

In March 1934 Miao Jiaming replaced Li Peiyan as manager of the new bank. He was responsible for nearly all the provincial government's financial and investment policies, and a man of great power in the administration. In 1939 he noted that with the creation of the New Fudian Bank "an organization has been established for operating foreign exchange, thus eliminating foreign banks with their profit-making."² Political nationalism was evidently a force which influenced his financial and also his economic policies in the province.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

At the Internal Reform Conference in 1928 the provincial minister of finance, Ma Cong, had put forward proposals to bring all bodies responsible for tax collection under the central control of the ministry. But his ideas were not implemented because powerful and influential generals and bureaucrats opposed them.³ Revenues from opium, salt and other sources were collected by independent organizations answerable only to the army, and not to the provincial ministry of finance. As Long Yun sought to increase his personal power during the 1930s, he attempted to implement the ideas of Ma Cong on the centralization of power in the finance ministry, and he tried to eliminate corruption. In the finance ministry itself all was darkness.

The division of responsibility within the [ministry] was a constant source of much confusion. Revenue collection was originally handled by one [department], but then land tax and *likin* became two separate departments. A special department had been created with sole responsibility for expenditure. But cash transfers of land tax and *likin* made by distant counties were audited by the land tax or *likin* departments. On the one hand the [department]

¹Guo Yuan, *Yunnan sheng zhi ziran fuyuan* (Kunming, 1940), pp.126-127.

²Institute of Economic and Social Research of Yunnan University, *Toward an Economic Handbook of Yunnan* (Kunming, 1941), p.5 (hereafter *Handbook*).

³See above

of revenue collection was almost unnecessary, while on the other hand the [department] of expenditure was unavoidably below standard.¹

Cliques proliferated within the administration. Senior officials gave posts to their friends and relations whose careers then followed "the rise and fall of the respective senior officials in charge" of the various departments; such senior officials appointed "their own men in a conspiracy to defraud . . ."² In 1928 charges of peculation had been made against one provincial minister (accusing him of diverting 20,000 dollars from public funds to build a private house).³ Ma Weilin, who controlled the Opium Prohibition Bureau, was arrested on charges of corruption in 1931 in the aftermath of the abortive coup.⁴ But this was the only example of determined action by Long Yun.

It was naturally in the interest of the provincial government to reform financial administration and prevent peculation. The need to replace the system of loose personal ties with a more rational bureaucratic organization was clear, and to some extent this was the course followed. But the specific policies of the provincial government were never entirely successful, either in centralizing financial control, or in supplanting personal ties by organizational responsibility.

In 1929 revenue collection was divided between three bodies. Apart from the unreformed system of the finance ministry and the independent bodies responsible for specific items of revenue such as opium, separate financial organizations for education and highways were established. The general purpose seems to have been to eliminate corruption, as demanded at the Internal Reform Conference. Neither the education or highways organizations ever collected much revenue, and so they were, in one sense, unimportant. But they shed useful light on the provincial administration.

On 1 March 1929, three separate bodies were set up to handle education: the Educational Expenditure Control Office, the Commission for Educational Expenditure, and the Educational Expenditure Control

¹*Jishi*, VI, *caizheng: tiaozheng jikou*, 1a.

²*Ibid.*, V, *caizheng: lixing kuaiji zhidu*, 1b-2a.

³*Neizheng huiyi*, p.345.

⁴See above, pp.75, 77.

Commission.¹ The sources do not describe the functions of these bodies. The Office and the Commissions were probably part of an elaborate device to superintend expenditure through checks and balances. But mutual surveillance was an inadequate response to speculation and official malpractice.

But in spite of the special system for control over educational revenues, expenditure on study abroad, on the Dalu University and other educational items was the responsibility of the finance ministry.² The seemingly haphazard division of responsibility was partly the result of personal considerations; partly it was because piecemeal reform encouraged anomalies. But, imperfect though they were, the new system reveals a persistent attempt to graft rational bureaucratic methods onto a loose network of individual cliques.

The other system of revenue collection was for highways. The evidence seems to indicate that the division of revenue collection did not prevent simple muddle or corruption as had been hoped. In 1929 the General Highway Bureau was established, only to be swallowed up by the provincial ministry for reconstruction the following year. However, it was replaced by a Highways Expenditure Commission; this too fell victim to the reconstruction ministry only to suffer a third incarnation as another General Highway Bureau.³ The income of this system amounted to some 7,500,000 dollars per year, derived from levies on salt, tin and opium.⁴

One investigator reported as follows.

Owing to frequent changes in the controlling organizations, there are no consistent reports which might serve as a guide to receipts and disbursements for highway expenditure. Before the creation of the present General Highway Bureau all depended even more than now on the coming and going of the senior officials in charge. Only reports of income and expenditure for respective periods of office are available. There are no yearly reports of income and expenditure. Although the records for previous years may

¹ *Jishi*, VII, *jiayou: jiayou jingfei*, 2a.

² Yan Rengeng, *Yunnan zhi caizheng* (Kunming? 1939), pp.11ab.

³ *Jishi*, XVII, *gonglu: tiyao*, 2a.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *jingfei*, 1a.

be examined to correct [the available figures], nevertheless under present circumstances and conditions, I have not been able to do so to my satisfaction.¹

In September 1930 there were important changes in the provincial ministry of finance. Lu Chongren, a relative of Long, was appointed minister for the second time. A few months earlier an "accounting system" (*kuaiji zhidu*) was instituted to improve the control of the provincial ministry over revenue. All "accountants" were under the direct control of the ministry, and not responsible to any other organization. The majority of them worked in the Opium Prohibition Bureau and the Alcohol and Tobacco Monopoly. The purpose of the system in the first stages was "to extirpate long-standing corrupt practices in the collection of revenue." Apart from their function as inspectors of accounts, they had "responsibility for the indictment of senior officials and functionaries at all levels for bribery and corruption and other illegal practices." In addition, officials could only make appointments or dismissals with their consent. Results, it is said, "gradually became apparent."²

But the struggle of the provincial government with the toils of financial administration was hard. For the officials at the head of the revenue collecting organs allegedly exploited the fact that accountants were required to consent to promotions and dismissals to "shirk and evade their responsibilities to the accountants on any matter involving personnel." As a result the accountants were given the right, from 1935 on, to "supervise in secret."³ What precisely this meant is hard to say. It seems to suggest that accountants had powers to spy upon provincial administration. This system could hardly have been effective for very long. However, the system of accountants began to decay too. The provincial ministry was obliged to operate "investigators" (*jiheyuan*) whose duty it was to "impeach and prosecute [officials]; included in their sphere of investigation was whether or not accountants had been neglectful in their entries, and whether or not they were able to carry out their responsibilities."⁴ It was a case of *quis custodiet*.

¹ Yan Rengeng, 31b-32a.

² *Jishi*, V, *caizheng: lixing kuaiji zhidu*, 1b-2a.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

This was a political regime where the office of county magistrate was for sale,¹ where the magistrate sought candidly to make his fortune,² something not unknown in China. In many societies "corruption" has not impeded government overmuch. Nepotism, speculation and the sale of public office were not the causes of inefficiency and waste in public administration, they were symptoms of bureaucratic decay. The financial ministry had been obliged to raise money for military need for some twenty years. But things still worked; revenue was collected and the army and civil administration were adequately maintained.

¹ Fei Hsiao-tung, Chang Tse-i, *China's Gentry* (Chicago, 1953), pp.167-168.

² Duan Kechang, p.22.

5 The Opium Trade in Yunnan, 1927-1934

From about 1917 onwards opium began once more to dominate the rural economy of Yunnan, and its cultivation reached a peak in the early years of Long Yun's rule. As in the nineteenth century, opium was considered the major source of cash income for the peasants, having displaced cotton. As Miao Jiaming remarked, "in the time of the former Qing the best income of the peasantry in Yunnan derived from the production of opium."¹ By the late 1860s the majority of the *likin* revenues were coming from the tax on the export of opium,² and by the 1890s cultivation was booming. A Qing official noted that:

In the province of Yunnan, from 1891-1892 there were successive years of disasters, and foodstuffs rose in price. The people cultivated wheat and beans in quantity, but little opium. But in 1896 there was a bumper crop of opium and the *likin* raised on it was approximately thirty-four thousand and some hundreds of taels, the greatest amount that had ever been collected.³

During the twentieth century opium had at least regained the importance it had held during the nineteenth century before the Imperial suppression. It was exported in huge amounts by railway and pack-animals to the distant markets of central and southern China; in value it was second only to tin from Gejiu. The largest and most

¹ *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji*: *fangzhi*, 1a.

² Cen Yuying, *Cen Xiangjin gong yiji* 4 vols. (*Qingmo minchu shiliao congshu* edn.), 2.24a.

³ *Xu Yunnan tongzhi gao* (*Zhongguo bianjiang congshu* edn.), 54.17a.

prosperous firms in the provincial capital were the opium trading firms in which individual military officers and bureaucrats invested. Public loans were backed by receipts from opium taxation, and the provincial bank sought to accumulate Shanghai exchange through the system of compulsory loans to opium export merchants. The very currency of Yunnan was stabilized by the purchase of silver with opium. The sporadic and unsuccessful attempts to modernize communications with the interior of China by using aircraft were prompted by plans to export opium and morphia. The new enterprises of 1934 onwards, such as the setting up of cotton mills, were the result of the need to make good the deficit caused by opium prohibition after 1935. In short the opium trade was a regular and integral part of the provincial economy and its influence was all pervasive. Although never quite respectable, it was the field of investment par excellence, and fortunes were made rapidly. It was a pillar of the regime's finances. A local gazeteer, speaking of the nineteenth century, roundly declared that "the fame of Yunnanese opium was known throughout the land."¹ The same might well have been said of the twentieth century.

No description of opium in Yunnan can ignore its role in the neighbouring provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou and Guangxi. Sichuan in particular was without question the most prolific producer of opium in China. Conditions in this province, and to a similar extent in Guizhou, matched those of Yunnan. Opium there was part of a general regional trade involving these provinces. Examples from these neighbouring provinces shed light on certain aspects of opium which might otherwise go unnoticed.

Opium was a most sensitive subject and roused the strongest feelings. In Yunnan the local branch of the Chinese National Anti-Narcotics Association bitterly attacked Long's policies in 1928 which "all concentrated on increasing income." It accused the British and French of using opium to keep their colonial subjects under control. "How," it continued, "can the province of Yunnan bear to drug the people with opium and make them follow the sad and miserable path of Burma and Indo-China?"² Prominent intellectuals, such as Ma Yinchu, also attacked the opium policies of the Nanking Government. He declared that "although it says in high and exalted

¹ *Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.187.

² *Neizheng huiyi*, p.282.

terms that . . . [it has] a scientific method of prohibiting opium, in truth there is no difference between this and a public opium monopoly. If the morals of the Party and Nation have fallen so low how can one speak of restoring them!"¹ Such fierce and uncompromising opposition led opponents of opium to make wild statements about opium that were expressions of distaste rather than statements of fact. One such source said that "in every Shānxi county as much as ninety percent and at least thirty percent of the land is used to cultivate opium."² In general opium statistics were usually well-informed guesses at the best, but used with care they can provide a guide to the overall picture.

Yunnan was often held to be the homeland of opium cultivation in China,³ and its reputation as a producer of a quality product was widespread. Chinese or native opium was generally held to be weaker than that of India or Persia. Doubtless the practice of adulterating opium with a host of imaginative substances such as "glue, beancurd, eggs, sesamum-seed cake, boiled apples, burnt sugar,"⁴ and so on was one reason for its poor quality.

In the closing years of the nineteenth century Yunnanese opium was "the most highly regarded opium in China . . . [and] could, in the opinion of the mass of consumers, if not connoisseurs, almost vie with Indian opium."⁵ This reputation lasted well into the twentieth century.

In Yunnan the best quality opium was grown in the western regions and kept for local consumption while that of the central and eastern districts was more for export.⁶ The reason for the difference in quality is not clear, yet the common theory that altitude has an effect on the morphia content of opium seems groundless.⁷ One

¹ Ma Yinchu, *Ma Yinchu jingji lunwen ji* (Shanghai, 1932), p.712.

² Li Wenzhi, Zhang Youyi, *Zhongguo jindai nongye shi ziliao* 3 vols. (Peking, 1957), III, 49.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 456.

⁴ International Opium Commission, *Report of the International Opium Commission* 2 vols. (Shanghai, 1909) I, 55.

⁵ Chambre de Commerce de Lyon, *La Mission Lyonnaise d'Exploration Commerciale en Chine, 1895-1897* 2 vols. in one (Lyon, 1898), II, 131.

⁶ United States Consulate, report 3, 7 April 1928.

⁷ Addens, T.J., *The Distribution of Opium Cultivation and the Trade in Opium* (Haarlem, 1939), p.6.

might tentatively suggest that the cultivation of opium spread from a relatively small area in the south and west of the province around the borders with Burma and Laos. An experienced observer of Burma noted that:

Opium is not grown for sale west of the Salween, except on the mountain mass of Loinaw and Loiling in South Hsenwi, and a few other circles, but east of the river in Kokang, where there are many Chinamen, a good deal is grown, and enormous stretches of poppy can be seen in the sheltered slopes of the Wa states and among the northern Lahu.¹

In the late 1930s, when after prohibition only a few areas were officially permitted to continue cultivating opium, it was precisely in the south and west, where according to the provincial government "the quality of the opium produced [should be] good," that cultivation was sanctioned.

THE OPIUM ACREAGE

The provincial government itself acknowledged that the whole province cultivated over 900,000 *mou* of poppy in the season 1934-1935.² It was hardly likely to have exaggerated the amount of land used for opium in the prevailing climate of hostility to it. Long also paid lip service to the principle that opium was undesirable, and in November 1928 at the National Opium Prohibition Conference held in Nanking his representative blandly remarked that "opium prohibition is an extremely important and urgent item of internal government."³ Therefore the figure of 900,000 *mou* was probably a minimum. Other reports tell a different story. The United States consulate in Kunming wrote that in 1932 the registered area was 1,400,000 *mou*, while the unregistered area, that is the area which evaded taxation, amounted to some sixty percent of this giving a grand total of 2,240,000 *mou*.⁴

¹ Scott, J.G., *Burma and Beyond* (London, 1932), p.221.

² Yunnan sheng zhengfu, *Yunnan quansheng shixing jinzhong yapian zhangcheng* (Kunming, 1935), n.c.p.

³ Jinyan weiyuanhui xuanchuanke, *Quanguo jinyan huiyi huibian* (Nanking, 1929, *ti an huicun*, 33.

⁴ United States Consulate, confidential report 60, 22 May 1933.

The system of registration set an upper limit to the number of *mou* that any county might cultivate. Accounts differ as to the actual amounts: the United States consulate suggests 15,000 *mou*,¹ a slightly earlier and less reliable source opts for 8,000 *mou*.² A local gazeteer states that in 1932 a "standard" (*biaojhun*) of 15,000 *mou* was cultivated and that this was followed in the next two seasons.³ If this was the case then with 122 counties and administrative regions (*shezhiju*), the whole province might have cultivated about 1,800,000 *mou*.

It is possible to probe a little more deeply by looking at production at a county level. Figures from a few gazeteers and rural surveys suggest that 15,000 *mou* was a rough average. In Zhaotong, a county which "happened to be a great market for opium," cultivation reached a peak of 19,701 *mou* in 1929.⁴ In Xuanwei, another county in the northeast of the province, an average of 22,800 *mou* is given.⁵ A report made by a team from the Nanking Government gives the opium acreage of Kunming county as 29,750 *mou*, echoing an earlier figure of 30,000 *mcu*.⁷ From the data collected by this survey it seems that in Lufeng opium was twenty percent of the spring crop, an average of 12,600 *mou*,⁸ and in Yuqi it was seventeen percent, 34,500 *mou*.⁹ The only exception is Xinning where the total reported was a mere 4,500 *mou*.¹⁰ Travellers also reported opium in many regions. In Yiliang, another county in the central and eastern region, there was "an immensity of . . . finely cultivated land, most of which was opium poppy in bloom." The same source also describes opium in

¹ *Ibid.*, confidential report 149, 13 March 1934.

² Xingzhengyuan nongcun fuxing weiyuanhui, *Yunnan sheng nongcun diaocha* (Shanghai, 1935), p.30

³ *Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.190.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.188, 189.

⁵ *Xuanwei xianzhi*, p.427.

⁶ *Yunnan sheng nongcun diaocha*, p.75.

⁷ Yu Ende, *Zhongguo jinyan faling bianqian shi* (Shanghai, 1934), p.178.

⁸ *Yunnan sheng nongcun diaocha*, p.126.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.180.

¹⁰ *Xinping xianzhi* (*Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* edn), pp.59-60.

the regions around the Railway from Kaiyuan to Kunming and from Qujing to Pingyi.¹ Edgar Snow remarked that "on the plains between Yunnanfu and Dali about half the acreage was planted for opium."² Such accounts confirm the prevalence of opium.

The average yield of one *mou* of opium was widely held to be fifty taels. A writer in the nineteenth century explained that in one district of China "from each *mou* of land at least seventy to eighty taels of juice may be got, which dried in the sun may produce at least fifty taels."³ This distinction must always be remembered when reading the literature concerning opium yields. The yield could vary widely according to the soil, and differences in local measurements further complicate the matter.⁴ However fifty taels seems about right.

There are two estimates of the amount of opium produced in Yunnan during the closing years of the Qing dynasty, immediately before the Imperial suppression campaign, which give 30,000 piculs and 78,000 piculs.⁵ Assuming a yield of fifty taels per *mou*, these figures suggest acreages of 960,000 *mou* and 2,496,000 *mou*. These figures are strikingly close to those for the early 1930s. In Yunnan during the 1930s the amount of land devoted to the poppy was roughly the same as some thirty years previously, before the great suppression. At its peak, opium cultivation probably accounted for more nearly 2 million *mou* than 1 million *mou*.

How do these figures compare with neighbouring provinces? In Guizhou, at Basai, "before opium prohibition most merchants were engaged in the opium trade."⁶ In Kaiyang "most of the local trade, was in opium. Every year about 2,000 *tiao* were exported."⁷ A *tiao* was

¹ Fischer, p.203.

² Snow, p.58.

³ *Zhongguo jindai nongye shi ziliao*, I, 459.

⁴ The only two estimates of the yield taken by Buck in Yunnan (for Yiliang and Chuxiong counties) vary widely. Converting from quintals per hectare, these yields were 113 and 17 taels per *mou* respectively. See Buck, J.L., *Land Utilization in China: Statistics* (Nanking, 1937), pp.225-226.

⁵ Morse, H.B., *The Trade and Administration of China* (London, 1921), p.382; International Opium Commission, I, 57.

⁶ *Basai xianzhi gao* (*Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* edn), p.362.

⁷ *Kaiyang xianzhi gao* (*Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* edn), p.390.

a measure of 1,000 taels, and if a Guizhou county could produce 2 million taels it is not surprising if Yunnan counties reckoned their opium land in the tens of thousands of *mou*. But Sichuan was the incomparable opium land.

How much opium land there is in Sichuan province cannot be proved because there are no reliable sources. According to the report of the Chongqing Tax Office to the Maritime Customs in 1906 the annual production of opium in Sichuan was 238,000 piculs. Recently Sichuan opium production certainly cannot have declined in comparison with 1906. From my own examination, at the lowest calculation, every year it is over 400 million taels. On a basis of fifty taels per *mou*, the opium land of Sichuan province is about 8 million *mou*.¹

MOTIVES FOR CULTIVATION

The total cultivated acreage of Yunnan in the period 1928 to 1937 was about 36 million *mou*, and so opium was perhaps five percent of the whole. It was a winter crop and generally replaced wheat and beans in Yunnan, as it did in most provinces. In Anhui in the early 1920s opium was "planted with alternate rows of other crops, such as wheat or beans, so that if the law against opium growing should be enforced the farmer could pull up the opium and have another good crop remaining."² It was the supreme cash crop; in neighbouring Guizhou the farmer could get a return some four to six times greater than for wheat.³ The same was probably true in Yunnan. As in the Qing dynasty it was the economic incentive which spread opium. But in the twentieth century another element made its appearance, that of forced cultivation under the aegis of the "warlords," although cultivation was not always forced, and anyway this term covered a multitude of sins. When opium began after 1916 to regain the ground it had lost in the rural landscape after the Imperial suppression, there were no reports of force being applied. The method was "persuasion"

¹ *Zhongguo jindai nongye shi ziliao*, II, 50.

² *China Yearbook*, 1926-7, p.623.

³ Zhang Xiaomei, *Guizhou jingji* (Shanghai, 1939), G44.

whereby the farmer might be provided with seeds and loans. But by 1923 horrified missionaries were frequently declaring that opium cultivation in, for example, Hunan was "under military orders."¹ Compulsion might range from levying a high tax on land registered for opium so that a food crop could not pay the tax, to taxing all land indiscriminately at high levels. Compulsion even included threats of murder.²

There were reports of compulsion in Yunnan, but how widespread it was is not clear. One aspect of compulsion arose from the essentially risky nature of the trade. If there was a natural disaster and the crop failed, famine could easily result because opium had supplanted food crops. This happened in Guizhou in the 1920s, and the result was often a temporary slackening in the opium trade. In central Guizhou there was a "falling off in this district of 70% in opium cultivation due not to moral incentives but the high price of rice and wheat. Last year everyone planted opium and left it to the other fellow to grow cereals and starvation was the result."³ Therefore it must be noted that a refusal to grow opium was often for economic and not moral reasons. These economic reasons often affected provincial commanders as well. Thus in Hunan, the province which in 1923 was enforcing cultivation, by 1924 to 1925, the "authorities have ceased to be concerned with the planting of poppy. It is easier to import from neighbouring provinces."⁴ The arduous business of land registration could be replaced by a tax on its transit.

OPIUM PRODUCTION AND OPIUM COMPANIES

The actual quantity of opium produced in Yunnan may have reached about 100 million taels, and it seems that the bulk of this opium was consumed locally. According to reports made by the United States consulate the largest annual export was 50 million taels in 1932, while in the two following years there was a drastic decline to 25 million

¹ *China Yearbook*, 1924-5, p.536.

² *Ibid.*, 1928, p.534.

³ *Ibid.*, 1926-7, p.636.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1926-7, p.630.

and 15 million taels respectively.¹ To calculate how many opium smokers there were in the province is a hideously complex undertaking. In China there was a common distinction between the smoker who was addicted and the man who smoked occasionally. Ideas of how much a man consumed in a day vary tremendously. The population of Yunnan was about twelve million in the 1930s and it was suggested that twenty percent were smokers, or over 2 million,² a figure which is probably as good a guess as any other.

So effective was the Imperial suppression that opium cultivation in the province had been almost completely eliminated, except perhaps in the western borders near the Shan states where the authority of the Chinese was weak.³ During the early years of the Republic individuals smuggled opium in from Burma and sold it not only in Yunnan but also in Sichuan where the demand was equally great. By 1917 opium was still being smuggled, but by then smuggling was no longer an individual affair. Combines were formed to carry out the trade on an obviously increasing scale.⁴

There is regrettably little information about the trade at the most basic level. The Kunyang county, south of Kunming, the most important opium merchant, who "had a high regard for morality and thought that success or failure of a person depended wholly on his virtue," set his son-in-law up as an opium merchant. The latter "collected opium from producers in the country and transported it to Kunming to be sold. On each trip he transported more than a million *liang* or ounces." We are also told that he could get a very good price from the villagers because they did not know the current market prices in Kunming.⁵

The revival of opium cultivation in the twentieth century may be traced back to the years following the national protection army campaigns of 1915 and 1916. By 1919 Zhaotong county in northeast

¹United States Consulate, confidential reports 60, 22 May 1933; 38, 22 March 1935; report 149, 13 March 1934. It should be noted that opium treated for export lost weight, and consequently those amounts represent larger amounts of "raw" opium.

²*Neizheng huiyi*, p.127.

³Cen Yuying, 28.10a.

⁴Fei Hsiao-tung, Chang Tse-i, *Earthbound China: A Study of Rural Economy in Yunnan* (Chicago, 1945), p.288.

⁵Chow Yung-teh, *Social Mobility in China: Status Careers among the Gentry in a Chinese Community* (New Yor, 1966), pp.198-199.

Yunnan had started cultivation and it was widespread by 1920. However, the first mention of an opium trading company comes in the *Kunming shizhi* of 1924 which lists the *Guangyun* company as a commercial enterprise trading in the provincial capital. It had been founded in November 1922 "solely for the consignment and sale of native goods."¹ This company employed over forty people, and its share capital was given as 1,200,000 dollars. Over half of this sum, 700,000 dollars, had been provided by the government, the rest by merchants. Few Kunming companies could boast so much capital at that time. This is the first time that an opium trading company partly financed by the government is mentioned in the Chinese sources concerning Yunnan during the Republic. The name of the company suggest that it primarily catered for the Guangdong market.

By the 1930s a considerable expansion in opium production had taken place and the government no longer invested openly in opium trading companies. Some twenty-five companies operated from Kunming of which only three were able to conduct the actual export of the drug to other provinces. The others were restricted to collecting opium within Yunnan and consigning it to Kunming. For the export of their opium they had to entrust their cargo to the major firms who charged handling and protection fees. The large number of opium trading companies was the result of the rapid growth in cultivation during the 1920s. At the same time the provincial government from 1927 onwards had levied a lower export tax on opium at Kunming than anywhere else in the province in order to facilitate central control.² While the provincial government appears to have abandoned direct investment in opium companies, individual members of the provincial faction are reported to have invested in and organized such companies. For example, the *Tianbaoli* and the *Jishengxiang*, two of the twenty-five companies, were organised in 1932 by Lu Chongren, the provincial minister of finance, and Zhang Banghan, provincial minister for reconstruction, respectively. The three largest firms were the *Nansheng*, the *Shenyigong* and the *Yiji*, all founded in 1932. Only the *Shenyigong* was entirely controlled by Yunnanese, the *Nansheng*

¹ *Kunming shizhi* (*Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* edn) pp.118-119.

² *Yunnan gongbao*, 12 (30 March 1927), p.6.

being a joint enterprise of Cantonese and Yunnanese merchants while the *Yiji* was run by Sichuanese. The Yunnanese firm had a capital of 2 million dollars while the other two each had 1 million dollars Mexican.¹

Opium was chiefly exported for the province by mule-train. Shipments of 900,000 taels of opium are recorded during the 1930s in United States consular records, and the number of animals and porters needed to deliver such amounts was quite considerable. Above all, such convoys needed protection. The necessary guards were provided by Long Yun. In 1928 a proposal was made at the Internal Reform Conference that a regiment of transport troops be placed permanently at the disposal of the Opium Prohibition Bureau for this purpose. The reason why there were only three firms capable of transporting opium from the province seems clear. Firstly, only merchants well-acquainted with outside markets could hope to stay in a business where Cantonese or Sichuanese had an advantage. Such merchants would also have a greater knowledge of local politics and be able to handle relations with the local authorities with greater finesse. Secondly, only large companies could transport opium in the huge amounts necessary to make the trade profitable. Thirdly, opium exports needed protection from the army if they were not to be seized by bandits. The bandits would, it seems, ransom the opium rather than try to sell it themselves, and they proved alarmingly adept at persuading a merchant to ransom his colleagues and opium. Good connections with the provincial faction, were thus essential.

SPECULATION IN OPIUM

The opium trade was risky. Poppy cultivation was a long and hard business and rain or moisture in the air at the time of harvest could easily ruin the crop. Peasants went on cultivating opium in spite of the difficulties.

After 1892-1893 there were successive years of drought; at first the poppy fields were extremely good, but when it came to harvest time, if they were not withered then

¹United States Consulate, confidential reports 60, 22 May 1933. 219, 8 September 1934.

²*Neizheng huiyi*, p.223.

there was rain. But the peasants still continued to cultivate it widely because its price was high and they enjoyed consuming it themselves.¹

Risk was not confined to peasants, and in 1932 and 1934 opium trading companies failed.² There were several reasons for these collapses. In 1932 the price of opium had fallen dramatically from an all time high, while in 1934 the level of taxation upon the transit of opium between Chongqing and Hankou had been raised to levels which made the trade unprofitable. Furthermore, Yunnanese opium was discriminated against, being obliged to pay the full rate of taxation whilst Sichuan and Guizhou opium enjoyed a discount of thirty percent.³ But the speculative character of the opium trade was one reason why it became so popular. Large profits were to be had very quickly, but bankruptcies were common. Money that might otherwise have been invested in more wholesome agricultural products or mercantile activity was swallowed up by opium.

OPIUM TRANSPORT

The difficulties involved in transporting opium overland to the central markets of China over very bad lines of communication prompted the provincial government and other interested parties to try and find other export routes. Smuggling into Burma and Indo-China was common, although much lower amounts than legally exported through China. The Railway into Indo-China carried opium, but in general the opium was only taken as far as a small village just north of the border with the colony; from there it would be sent by mule-train and taken to the coast where it would be loaded onto vessels bound for the Guangdong coast.⁴

But Long Yun's real desire was to ship opium legally to Haiphong. This would have solved all Yunnan's problems. There would have been an assured and cheaper route for the opium not subject to attack from

¹ *Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.187.

² National Archives Washington, *The Opium Traffic in China* (Edmund Clubb), 24 April 1934, 893.114 Narcotics/738, 76.

³ *Zhaotong xianzhi gao*, p.187.

⁴ United States Consulate, confidential report 60, 22 May 1933.

bandits or other hostile forces. In autumn 1927 Long, who was at that time besieged in the provincial capital by Hu Royu and Zhang Ruji, tried to persuade the French colonial authorities in Indo-China to sanction the passage of 500 tons of opium to Jiangsu. It would be, he wrote in a letter to the Governor-General, "a deal jointly contracted by two governments equally subject to the orders of the Central Government of Nanking."¹ But the French refused on legal grounds since the Geneva Convention of 1925 forbade the transit of raw opium outside the territory of origin to another unless the government of the importing territory furnished certificates guaranteeing that it would not be used for illicit purposes. Long was then in desperate straits. He pleaded that "the revenue from the sale of opium is most urgently needed for the Treasury to allow the provincial government to resolve in a satisfactory manner all the difficult problems which confront it at the present time." Finally, in December 1927, the Jiangsu authorities made a similar application; but in spite of discreetly referring to the opium itself as "anti-opium medicine" they were no more successful than Long. The solution was to smuggle the consignment through Tonkin, but this was obviously not a satisfactory longterm arrangement.²

The provincial faction had no great spur to develop good roads out of the province. For, from a military point of view, they would lay the province open to invasion, which would always be a remote contingency whilst the roads to Kunming were so bad. Besides, the existence of opium as a major export did not encourage the development of roads. It was certainly true that an easier way of transporting opium would be preferable from an economic and political point of view, but not if this provided outsiders with easy military access. The solution which the Yunnanese hit upon was air transport. At the Internal Reform Conference of 1928 one delegate had stoutly declared, in a clear reference to opium:

In my opinion the prime cause of the fiscal crisis lies in the excess of imports over exports. If an airline can link

¹League of Nations, Commission of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East, *Report to the Council 4 vols.* (Geneva, 1930-1931), IV, 291-297.

²*Ibid.*

Yunnan with the outside would then it should be possible to transport 300,000 catties of provincial goods produced by local industrial and commercial enterprises. The annual revenue would be . . . above 10 million dollars.¹

In late 1928 the Chinese press reported that Fan Shisheng was trying to recoup his fortunes with an aviation company at Shantou (Swatow) in order to fly Yunnanese opium to Guangxi and Guangdong.² A document captured by the British in Hongkong in 1928 supports the suggestion that the Yunnanese were interested in the air transport of opium. The document seems genuine (it is a translation), and it provides some interesting information about transport and opium.

Great difficulty is felt in transporting [opium] overland.

It is proposed to use aeroplanes for conveyance so as to ensure speed. It is suggested to apply to the two provinces, Kuangtung and Kuangsi, for the loan of the aerodromes at Canton and Wuchow, or to have an aerodrome erected at Yim Chow for the rising and alighting of aeroplanes. It is suggested also to start ordinary air services so as to enable more speedy circulation of news between the three provinces [Yunnan, Guangdong and Guangxi], and will serve as a first step towards (air) communications.³

This account reveals how the opium trade spurred the establishment of regular air transport for other purposes. The real problem with air transport was the unreliability of the aircraft and the difficulties of flying over the relatively great distances and difficult terrains. But a second problem, and perhaps a more crucial one, was that the Guangxi faction, which relied upon the taxation of opium in transit, would not allow aircraft to overfly lest they lose their source of income.

The last recorded attempt to use aircraft was in 1934 when the provincial government tried to export morphia manufactured from local opium. Pressure, mainly from the United States consul,

¹ *Neizheng huiyi*, p.94.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 1 May 1929, pp.75-76.

³ PRO. FO371/13256, F3363/244/87, 26 June 1928.

squashed the plan, although the aircraft used did take off at least once in the presence of Zhang Banghan, a leading light in the project, and the French consul-general who declared that there was nothing of a contraband nature on the plane in spite of the fact that the pilot did not have a customs clearance.¹

The failure of these intermittent attempts to free Yunnan from its geographical chains was a most important factor in leading the provincial faction to introduce prohibition in 1934. For the province was now forced to go on using the land routes which exposed the provincial faction to pressure from Guangxi or from Chiang Kai-shek in Hankou.

OPIUM TAXES

The provincial faction's opium taxes will now be described. The decision to "prohibit through taxation," (the customary term), was made in Yunnan in the autumn of 1920 when the Summary Provisional Regulations for Opium Prohibition (*Jinyan zhanxing jianzhang*) were published.² Two sorts of fines were levied on opium. The first was imposed upon all land cultivating opium and was known as the acreage fine (*moufa*). The second was a fine on the export of opium and this bore the less coy title of export levy. After 1930 opium smoking was taxed³ but it was never very important and the provincial government concentrated rather on taxing cultivation and export. The precedent for the Opium Prohibition Bureau that supervised these matters was the Guizhou General Army Revenue Board (*Chouxiang zongju*) set up in 1918 in order to "initiate a military levy on special goods transported and sold by merchants."⁴ Apparently this body did not levy a land tax nor did its writ run to the whole of Guizhou. In Kaiyang county, for example, the tax on the export of opium (*yanjuan*) was only levied after the season 1924-1925, while the land

¹ United States Consulate, confidential report 3, 17 December 1934.

² *Neizheng huiyi*, pp.452-458.

³ United States Consulate, confidential report 60, 22 May 1933.

⁴ *Zhang Xiaomei, Guizhou jingji*, N63.

tax (*jinyan fajin*) was started a year later in 1926.¹

The rate of taxation was initially two dollars per *mou* and six dollars per 100 taels of opium. This remained so to 1926 when the opium land tax was dropped, but when it was restored in 1928 the rate was raised to five dollars per *mou* and sixteen dollars per 100 taels. In January 1929 all taxes were to be collected in silver, thus effectively tripling taxation since there was virtually no silver then in the province. A year later the rate of exchange between paper and silver dollars had widened to five to one thus in effect raising the level of taxation to twenty-five dollars per *mou* and eighty dollars per 100 taels, a level so high that it is difficult to see how opium could have been profitable for the peasants except by evading taxation. In June 1932 the tax was lowered to three dollars per *mou* or fifteen paper dollars. The export levy finally rose to 100 dollars a few months earlier; but with additional subsidiary taxes it rose even higher.²

The revenue from these taxes increased steadily under Long until it became the largest single item in the budget. In 1924 and 1925 the income of Tang Jiyao's government from opium was about 900,000 dollars and 3 million dollars respectively. This provided sixteen and thirty-one percent of the government's annual income.³ At first the opium export tax yielded not more than "a few hundred thousand dollars," but "when those leaving through the Guangxi and Indo-China routes without internal transportation certificates were obliged to make supplementary payments . . . then revenues increased, reaching over one million dollars a year."⁴ Yet sources conflict: a traveller in Yunnan reported that in 1923 the local Opium Prohibition Bureau contributed a monthly sum of 500,000 dollars towards army expenditure.⁵ Discrepancies are to be expected in a subject like opium; yet its importance to the provincial government is beyond doubt. In autumn 1926 the acreage fine was abolished, "to aid the peasant

¹ *Kaiyang xianzhi gao*, pp.291-294.

² *Jishi*, XIX, *jinyan: jinyun*, 1a; *Neizheng huiyi*, pp.452-458; United States Consulate, confidential report 60, 22 May 1933.

³ *Yunnan jingji*, U28-29.

⁴ *Jishi*, XIX, *jinyan: jinyun*, 1a.

⁵ Xie Xiaozhong, p.95.

economy," but the results were disastrous. In its place a stamp tax was substituted of ten cents per tael on all opium sold in the province. Not surprisingly income dropped to an alleged 450,000 dollars during 1926-1927.¹ So serious was the situation that at the Internal Reform Conference Xu Zhichen, formerly adviser to Tang Jiyao, declared that:

Because of the changes in the regulations last year and the effect of military events, receipts from opium prohibition fines declined sharply. A swift decision must now be made . . . whether to continue to implement the stamp tax or not, or return to the previous method of prohibiting cultivation and transportation and enforce this with all seriousness. We must regain the income levels of 1925 and 1926.²

Apart from these estimates and figures there are also others for the years 1931 and 1932 when the trade was at its apogee. Of several estimates of the provincial government's income, only one takes opium revenue into account. Yan Rengeng bases his figures on "a small number of reports of cash receipts and expenditures" mainly taken from the "Statistical Tables of the Income and Expenditure of the Provincial Government" printed as a supplement to the *Administrative Reports of the Yunnan Provincial Government*.³ While these figures are tentative, informed guesses rather than statements of truth — they are certainly the best available. The income of the provincial government in 1931 and 1932 from opium taxation was just under 21 million dollars and just over 37 million dollars respectively,⁴ between thirty-three and thirty-eight per cent of the respective totals. Revenues from opium were by far the single largest item: the special consumption tax was about 11 million dollars, some eighteen percent of the 1931 total. From another source the figures for 1931 receive

¹ *Yunnan jingji*, U28-29.

² *Neizheng huiyi*, p.258.

³ Yan Rengeng, p.6b.

⁴ Yan Rengeng, pp.9ab, 22a-23b, 28b.

some confirmation. During the first six months of that year income from opium amounted to some 7,200,000 dollars out of 25,100,000, and it was concluded that during the whole year revenue from opium should have been about 20,300,000 dollars.¹ The same source concluded that:

If in future opium were prohibited receipts would fall by half immediately. At a time when communications are inconvenient and industry and commerce undeveloped, it is quite impossible to increase annual income by fifty percent. If thorough opium prohibition becomes necessary there would be nothing for it but to have supplements from the Central [Government] and simultaneously reform agriculture and stimulate industry.²

A casual reference to opium prohibition income in the official record notes that income from opium was the equivalent of between 25 and 30 million dollars.³ In the last season before prohibition the provincial government taxed over 900,000 *mou* of opium land at the rate of fifteen dollars per *mou*. In the previous year 1934, the amount of opium exported was about 15 million taels, each 100 taels being taxed at the rate of 100 dollars, (not including various supplementary levies that were imposed from time to time). This would have provided an income of 28,500,000 dollars. It is difficult to see how income from opium taxation could have been less than this during the period 1927-1934.

OPIUM AND PROVINCIAL CURRENCY

Opium's role in provincial finances shows its great importance for the provincial faction. Apart from taxing opium cultivation and exports, the provincial government used opium revenues to supply the New Fudian Bank with Shanghai exchange. The inflation of the local paper currency had finally provoked the provincial faction to take action, and it did so by purchasing silver to provide a basis for a new paper issue. The means of purchasing this silver was opium.⁴

¹ *Yunnan sheng nongcun diaocha*, pp.25-26.

² *Ibid.*, p.27.

³ *Jishi*, XIX, *jinyan: jinyun*, 2a.

⁴ *Jishi*, V, *caizheng: tiyao*, 2a.

As early as 1928 the Fudian Bank had advised the provincial government that the best means of combatting inflation would be to "issue some paper currency as capital for transporting special goods . . . as a first step towards buying foreign exchange or silver bars to bring back for minting coins."¹

As has been seen in chapter four, the provincial government also took steps during the 1930s to ensure that it controlled foreign exchange.

Locally produced goods from Yunnan were still transported from the province and sold by various routes to Dongxing, Nanning, Hankou, Xufu and Chongqing in exchange for Shanghai national currency. Many of those who held this foreign exchange were merchants from the west riding (they were also merchants who used rather a lot of the silver dollars coined in Yunnan). Cantonese also transported to Dongxing and Nanning.²

Control of foreign exchange earned by Yunnan opium was achieved by the Regulations for the Pre-purchase of Special Goods Remittances which were first issued by the New Fudian Bank on 17 July, 1933.³ The aim of these regulations was that the Bank should engross at least fifty percent of all the Shanghai exchange gained by the sale of local opium. A merchant who proposed to export opium had to accept what was virtually a forced loan of fifty percent of the current market price of the goods at the time of consignment. The repayment of the loan, which naturally bore interest, might be repaid within three months "determined by the special [i.e. opium] merchant according to the distance of the place [to which the opium was] transported and the slackness or briskness of the market."

In summary, opium occupied a most important role in the rural economy before 1935, as well as being the single largest item of revenue in the provincial government's budget. Cultivation increased under Long while in the years just before 1935 overproduction led to a fall in price and a consequent fall in opium exports. One result was that there were bankruptcies amongst opium firms, and general

¹ *Yunnan maoyi*, p.181.

² *Jishi*, XVII, *jinrong: Fudian xin yinhang zhi yewu*, 7b-8a.

³ *Yunnan jingji*, V86.

commercial instability. In general the risky and speculative nature of the opium trade, from producer to consumer, went hand in hand with of instability of military rule. There was no security for long-term investment and so opium, with its promise of quick returns, became nearly the only worthwhile field for investment. But at the same time there were signs that opium was on the wane, particularly in central China where Chiang Kai-shek's policies were making opium trading more difficult for Yunnan, economically and politically. This led during the early 1930s to an interest in industrialization, with a view to replacing opium.

6 The Prohibition of Opium, 1934-1937

In November 1934 the provincial government resolved to prohibit opium. Over the next three years the poppy fields were gradually rolled back, and wheat and beans grown instead. The rural economy was severely shaken as land prices fell and the peasants were left to discover the consequences of prohibition. Similarly revenues from "opium prohibition fines" declined sharply, and were no longer pre-eminent in the provincial budget. The provincial government had discussed the problems of opium prohibition in a series of ten meetings over a period of six months before reaching the final, reluctant conclusion.¹ Opium was the pillar of the state, and so great was its economic and financial importance that only an immense pressure could have induced the provincial government to implement prohibition seriously. The source of this pressure was partly economic: over-production had led to falling prices which could only revive with a sharp reduction in the opium acreage. But the impetus to prohibition was largely provided by the actions of the Central Government. Opium prohibition was the result of the clash between provincial and central power.

The opium trade had reached vast proportions in China by 1930. Many provinces, particularly those of the southwest, produced enormous quantities for export to the great markets of central and eastern China. The importance of opium to the provincial economies of southwest China, and hence to those in power in those regions, was evident to all. But it was only in late 1932 that the Central Government began to take vigorous steps to control and suppress opium. Cultivation in the provinces under the effective control of Nanking was considerably reduced, while a monopoly was created to buy opium from the

¹ *Jishi*, XIX, *jinyan*: *tiyao*, 1b.

southwestern provinces which were the main producers, Guizhou, Sichuan and Yunnan. The campaign against opium during the 1930s was not designed simply to eliminate opium from China. Prohibition was also intended to undermine the economies of these recalcitrant provincial fiefs. For without the revenues from taxes levied on the cultivation and export of opium, the various provincial authorities would be obliged to fall back on subsidies from the Central Government.

The prohibition of opium in Yunnan after 1934 was not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a national pattern. Opium declined in all parts of China. Nor did the authorities in Yunnan yield to the moral suasion of Chiang Kai-shek. In principle opium was castigated by all as the social evil that "ruins the nation and destroys the race" (*wangguo miezhong*). The moral condemnation of the trade by nationalist public opinion in the major cities of the east, by national organizations and prominent intellectuals, had a certain effect on the Central Government. But in practice opium was power, and the prohibition movement can best be understood as an attempt by the Central Government to penetrate by economic means those areas it did not control.

The process of prohibition in Yunnan cannot be understood without considering the overall pattern of the opium trade in China or the general opium policies of the Guomindang since coming to power in 1927. Although opium is the father of imprecision, some account of the state of the opium trade, in terms of the volume of production, marketing areas and trading routes, for the 1930s is a necessity. The account that follows is a mere out line and must be unsatisfactory in some respects; however, it is offered in place of anything better.¹

CHINESE OPIUM PRODUCTION

The best point of departure is a comparison between the volume of production in the last years of the Qing dynasty, that is before the last years of the Qing dynasty, that is before the Imperial suppression

¹For a stimulating attempt to get to grips with the economic and social effects of opium see Lattimore, Owen, *Manchuria; Cradle of Conflict* (New York 1932), pp.187-197. Adshead, S.A.M., "The Opium Trade in Szechwan, 1881-1911," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 7.2 (September, 1966). 93-99 gives a brief account of conditions in the late Qing but relies solely on English sources.

campaign, and in the early 1930s. For the former period there are two estimates worth consideration. The first is by Morse and suggests that production in 1906 for the eighteen provinces of China and Manchuria was 376,000 piculs or 22,381 tons.¹ A Chinese estimate purportedly for this same year and area (omitting a figure of 500 piculs for Xinjiang) puts production considerably higher at 584,000 piculs or 34,762 tons.² Morse qualified his statistics further.

It cannot be asserted that this figure is measurably correct; but it may be safely asserted that the production of opium in China today is, at the lowest, six-fold, and is more probably eight-fold, the quantity of the present import of foreign opium.³

The import of foreign opium at that time was over 50,000 piculs per annum, excluding smuggling.⁴ Consequently Morse suggests a figure of between 18,000 and 24,000 tons per annum. Assuming an average yield of fifty taels per *mou*, the poppy fields of the late Qing would have covered between 9,600,000 and 12,800,000 *mou*, or less than one percent of the total cultivated area at that time.⁵ Production was greatest in an arc of six provinces extending from the southwest to the northwest: Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu, Shānxi and Shānxi. This poppy belt accounted for over eighty percent of Chinese production.⁶ But the proportion of opium land to all cultivated land was clearly greater in the three southwestern than in the three northwestern provinces. (See Table One). In the southwestern provinces opium land was eight percent of the whole, while in the northwestern it was merely a little over two percent. It would be indulgent to assume that these figures and percentages are exact; yet

¹ Morse, pp.373-379.

² International Opium Commission, I, 57.

³ Morse, pp.378-379.

⁴ *China Yearbook*, 1919-1920, p.686.

⁵ The cultivated area of China (the eighteen provinces) in 1913 was 1,292 million *mou*. See Perkins, Dwight H., *Agricultural Development in China, 1368-1968* (Chicago, 1969), p.236.

⁶ It was opium from these provinces which opened up the markets of central China to the trade in the nineteenth century rather than foreign imports. See Owen, D.E., *The British Opium Policy in China and India* (Hamden, 1968 edn), pp.237-238.

Table One

Opium Production and Acreage as a Percentage of Total Cultivated Area in Six Provinces, C.1906.

Province	Opium Production(1906)*		B. Total Cultivated Area (1913)**	Percentage
	(1,000 piculs)	A. Opium Acreage (1,000 mou)		
Guizhou	48	1,536	21,000	7.3
Yunnan	78	2,496	15,000	16.7
Sichuan	238	7,616	110,000	6.9
Gansu	34	1,088	50,000	2.2
Shānxi	50	1,600	56,000	2.9
Shānxi	30	960	56,000	1.7

* Morse, *The Trade and Administration of China*, pp.373-379.

** Perkins, *Agricultural Development in China, 1368-1968*, p.236.

the general pattern seems true enough. Most opium was grown in southwestern China, above all in Sichuan, and the greatest proportion of land devoted to its cultivation.

There are no such detailed estimates for the provinces in the 1930s, and despite some statistics, comparisons between the early years of the twentieth century and the early 1930s must remain unsubstantiated until further research is made. A missionary in Guizhou, cited in the *China Yearbook* for 1926, caustically criticized the efforts of outsiders to decide how much opium there was in China.

When we read in the estimates of supposed authorities on opium production in China that the annual amount is 7,000 tons we wonder what they are dreaming about. In . . . Kiensi [i.e. Qianxi], alone there are a number of families who normally gather 100 or more loads of 1,000 ounces each. This is nearly four tons for one family. One consignment from the province to Hunan filled 100 boats, with 3,000 lbs each.¹

¹ *China Yearbook*, 1926, pp.581-582.

Accounts of opium production suggest that it was at least as great in China during the early 1930s as it had been during the closing years of the Qing dynasty, a generation earlier. In the three southwestern provinces opium fields were as extensive as before, and the trade flourished. In Sichuan it was reported that five counties along the Yangzi poured forth 96,000 piculs annually, a staggering quantity. In 1906 this would have accounted for perhaps forty percent of Sichuan's opium production. The same source suggests that "production and consumption of opium were apparently greater than in 1907."¹ Even if this is an exaggeration, it is hard to see how Sichuan's production could have been lower than in the Qing dynasty. Another report on Fouling, one of the five counties mentioned, gives a vivid impression of opium in 1934.

Because of the cultivation of opium, the peasants have scarcely any spring crops. During the three months of spring one does not see the butterfly-shaped flowers of beans, the yellow flowers of vegetables; all through the farmers' fields one can see only the beautiful flowers of the poppy, dotting the spring brilliance like beautiful women.²

Guizhou was a "vast opium province."³ In 1936 more than 100 counties still grew opium,⁴ but not even the most simple estimates of the quantity produced were made.

The major change in the northwest was that Shānxi had ceased to be an opium-producing province. But in Shānxi and Gansu cultivation had reached the old levels.

A general total of 84 million taels (52,500 piculs)⁵ was recorded for Gansu during the 1930s, in contrast to an estimate of 34,000 piculs for 1906. For Shānxi province there are no such figures. Yet all sources agree on the importance of this region for opium production.⁶

¹ *Opium Traffic*, p.38.

² Chen Wanggu, "Jianzhu zai yapian di Fouling nongcun," *Zhongguo nongcun* 1.6 (March 1935). 84.

³ *China Yearbook*, 1924-5, p.561.

⁴ Jiang Shangqing, *Zhenghai miwen* (Hongkong, 1966), p.13.

⁵ Mei Gongren, *Wangguo miezhong di yapianyan huo* (Peking, 1935), p.270.

⁶ Cf. Xingzhengyuan nongcun fuxing weiyuanhui, *Shānxi sheng nongcun diaocha* (Shanghai, 1935), pp.152-153; Yu Ende, p.178.

The most interesting case is that of the northeastern provinces, Manchuria. In 1906 production was 15,000 piculs. But estimates made before and particularly after the Japanese conquest of the region in 1931 suggest that it had become one of the chief centres of opium production. The trouble with these figures is, however, that hostile Chinese public opinion during the 1930s was much more anxious to focus on Japanese cultivation in Manchuria than on Chinese production in the southwest. In 1929 the opium acreage in Liaoning was reported to be 2 million *mou*, equivalent to a total of 62,500 piculs or the whole of Yunnanese production.¹ In 1934 a further estimate of the acreage in Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces respectively put the total at 5,800,000 *mou*, perhaps 181,500 piculs of opium.²

Another region where cultivation seems to have increased was the east coast of China. Fujian, Jiangsu and Zhejiang were all provinces in which production rose quickly. As for Fujian, in 1926-27 the "whole province [was] virtually under military compulsory cultivation."³ One county in Jiangsu alone had poppy fields running to 400,000 *mou*.⁴ In Yongjia, Zhejiang, there were 2,000 *mou* under opium in 1927; in 1931 "the opium acreage had already increased to more than 100,000 *mou*."⁵

OPIUM TRADE ROUTES

Opium grown in Yunnan was mostly exported to central and southern China through Guangxi province and the Yangzi. Some opium was smuggled into Southeast Asia, and made its way into French Indo-China, British Burma and Thailand. But the quantities exported in this fashion during the Republic were never very important. The greatest markets for Yunnanese opium were in China.

Guangxi, unlike the other provinces of the southwest which to a greater or lesser extent relied upon revenue from opium, did not tax

¹ *Zhongguo jindai nongye shi ziliao*, II, 625.

² *China Weekly Review*, 65.7 (15 July 1933). 278-280.

³ *China Yearbook*, 1924-5, p.554.

⁴ *Zhongguo jindai nongye shi ziliao*, III, 49.

⁵ *Zhongguo jindai nongye shi ziliao*, III, 48.

opium cultivation. This was partly because conditions were not suited to the growth of opium. But the most important reason was that neighbouring provinces exported so much opium that it was more profitable to impose taxes on its transit. This had several advantages for the Guangxi provincial faction. The production of grains would not be affected, thus increasing the stability of their rule.¹ Expensive and cumbersome systems of land registration were not necessary, and corruption was probably reduced. The sale of opium in Guangxi was very small, as only a little opium passing through Guangxi was sold there.

Huang Shaoxiong, one of the triumvirate who ruled the province during the 1920s and 1930s, thus described the importance of opium to Guangxi during the 1920s.

At that time the greatest source of finances for Guangxi must have been the revenue from opium prohibition. So-called opium prohibition was still the method of prohibition through taxation of the warlord era. The source of opium was not the territory of Guangxi, because the soil and climate of Guangxi were not suited to cultivating opium. In the southwest, the opium-producing regions were all in the three provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou. As for its outlets, one was along the Yangzi for sale in the provinces down river. Another route passed through Guangxi for sale in the Pearl River estuary, and as far as Hongkong, Macao and Southeast Asia . . . [Opium] passing through every route during a year was about 20 million taels altogether.²

Relations between Guangxi and Yunnan were never entirely harmonious, because of conflict over the rate of taxation levied on the transit of opium. It was widely believed that the Yunnan invasion of Guangxi in 1930, nominally on the side of Nanking, was rather the result of a dispute over opium taxes.³ Certainly, the Guangxi faction had to ensure that the opium trade flourished. "The rise and fall of the special goods business was sufficient to determine the prosperity or

¹ Qian Jiaju, Han Dezhang, Wu Bannong, *Guangxi sheng jingji gaikuang* (Shanghai, 1936), p.19.

² Huang Shaoxiong, *Wushi huiyi*, (Shanghai, 1945), p.157.

³ PRO. FO 371/14692 F3680/93/10, 22 May 1930.

depression of the commercial markets of the whole province.”¹ Two banks in Guangxi dominated the commercial life of the province with capital drawn from the opium trade.² As for the income of the provincial government, figures given in an agricultural survey state that opium taxes contributed 18,031,000 dollars to a total revenue of 32,950,944 dollars.³

A most important and difficult question to answer is origin of the opium which passed through Guangxi. It is certain that most came from Yunnan and Guizhou. But at times even opium produced in Sichuan would forsake the traditional Yangzi route and go through Guizhou and Guangxi.⁴ Huang Shaoxiong seems to imply that Yunnan was the major source. Yet other sources present a different picture. For example, it is said that in 1931, the year in which Yunnanese opium exports were at their peak, some 37 million taels of opium passed through Guangxi from Guizhou and Yunnan. Of this amount seventy percent came from Guizhou.⁵ How typical 1931 was of the general pattern of the trade cannot be known. Opium would take the path of least resistance, and much would have depended upon the taxation rates in operation at the time. But in default of other evidence, the Guangxi route was probably at least as important for Yunnan as the second major trading route, the Yangzi.

In the twenty or so years after the reappearance of cultivation, the Yangzi became a river of opium. In 1925 an American banker in Chongqing calculated that the monthly export of opium down the River, in “Chinese ships, running under Swedish, French or Italian flags” was 500 tons.⁶ Opium was taxed in the ports of Sichuan, but the great centre for opium was Hankou. An estimate of the amount of opium taxed at Hankou over a period of five years from 1929 to 1933 shows that at its peak in 1930 nearly 7,000 tons of opium were being

¹ *Guangxi sheng jingji gaikuang*, p.18.

² *Ibid.*, p.19.

³ Xingzhengyuan nongcun fuxing weiyuanhui, *Guangxi sheng nongcun diaocha* (Shanghai, 1935), pp.259-260.

⁴ *Opium Traffic*, p.81.

⁵ *Guangxi sheng jingji gaikuang*, p.19.

⁶ King, G., “The Poppy Blooms Again,” *Asia* 26 (October 1926). 860, 862.

shipped down the River.¹ The vast majority of this opium was produced in Sichuan. But Yunnan opium was also shipped. In the conurbation of Wuhan there were 15,000 (sic) smoking shops. The number of trading companies fluctuated with the state of the market; in 1931, there were ninety. Opium was stored in public warehouses (*gongzhan*).² The whole system was controlled by an organization generally referred to as the Special Tax Board (*Teshuichu*) or Special Tax Control Board (*Teshui qinglichu*).

In short, there was a large and flourishing opium trade in central and southern China supplied by the three southwestern provinces. The major routes for the export of opium led through Guangxi and Hubei. The strategic importance of these areas for the opium provinces of the southwest is evident. If the Central Government could not exert military or political pressure upon these provinces, economic pressure through action against the opium trade remained a tempting possibility. It should be noted that the opium trade in north China was not linked with that south of the Yangzi. Opium grown in the northern provinces sold in the northern markets. In northern China particularly opium derivatives such as morphia and heroin were more widely consumed than opium itself. A mass market for heroin was created in the late 1920s when, in response to a sharp rise in the price of European supplies, dealers started the manufacture of the drug in China from local opium. The fall in the price of opium in southern China may have been linked with the rise of heroin as an item of mass consumption, but the evidence is not conclusive.³

THE GUOMINDANG AND OPIUM PROHIBITION

The Guomindang was committed to opium prohibition, and opposition to the trade was conventional amongst the intellectuals of the eastern cities.⁴ In 1912 Sun Yat-sen had addressed a letter to the English press in which he condemned opium. "Opium does the greatest harm

¹ *Opium Traffic*, p.75.

² *Ibid.*, p.77.

³ Merrill, F.T., *Japan and the Opium Menace* (New York, 1942), pp.40-41; Burton, Wilbur, "China's New Old Road to Ruin," *Asia* 34 (1934). 679-680.

⁴ Cf. Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict*, p.188.

to China, and in its slaughter of our citizens is a disaster greater than war, pestilence or famine."¹ But he also recognized that the problem could not be solved simply by prohibiting imports of Indian and Persian opium. "I realize that today the most important thing is to prohibit the cultivation of the poppy in China."² In November 1928 at the National Opium Prohibition Conference, Chiang Kai-shek confirmed in emotional terms the opposition of Nanking to opium. "Henceforth the National Government will not raise one cash from opium. If this Conference [feels compelled to] expresses suspicions of this nature, we shall have to admit that this government is [morally] bankrupt: . . ."³

The Opium Prohibition Conference itself, and these remarks by Chiang were a response to public opinion and the determined struggles of the Chinese National Anti-Narcotics Association (*Zhonghua guomin judu hui*). This organization was the focal point of nationalist protest against the drug. It was founded in 1924 and replaced the Anti-Narcotics Committee (*Judu weiyuanhui*) that the Chinese Christian Council had formed the previous year.⁴ Earlier organized opposition had had little, if any, effect on the trade. But the shift from an organization based on missionaries and Christian ethics to one fueled by radical nationalism marked the first step towards greater influence. Also it was precisely at this time that a political force — the Guomindang — came to power fully committed to the principle of complete prohibition.

Practice was something else. For example, in the period from October 1925 to September 1926 the Guomindang in Guangdong received 3,450,000 dollars from opium prohibition out of a total income of some eighty millions.⁵ This was quite a small sum, but a clear indication of the Guomindang's willingness to compromise on the opium issue. In July 1927 revenue from opium prohibition was formally marked off as part of national income rather than local.⁶ Two months

¹ *Guofu quanji*, V, 162.

² *Ibid.*, p.163.

³ *Quanguo jinyan huiyi huibian*, *yanjiang*, 40.

⁴ Yu Ende, pp.184-187.

⁵ *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 51 (November 1926), p.83.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 (1 August 1927), p.1.

later the Ministry of Finance published the Provisional Regulations for Opium Prohibition, a rather unconvincing document. Opium was to be eliminated within three years and all poppy cultivated within the regions subordinate to the National Government was to be uprooted immediately. Inevitably, the regulations allowed certain categories of addicts to continue smoking under a system of "opium abstinence permits and guarantees." Merchants dealing in opium had to register with the Ministry; a swingeing tax on "anti-opium medicine" was envisaged.¹

A protest issued by the Anti-Narcotics Association illustrates the new spirit of nationalism and anti-imperialism which now characterized the movement.

Opium is the tool of imperialist aggression, the lifeblood of warlords and bureaucrats; it is truly the unyielding enemy of the Three Principles of the People, the source of the plague that ruins the nation and destroys the race. But the current plans for opium prohibition, not only run quite counter to the policy of opium prohibition within three years, but are totally incompatible with the instructions bequeathed by the Director-General [Sun Yat-sen]

This attack, and similar expressions of distaste, led Nanking to revise the Regulations in November 1927. But the revised regulations, considerably longer and more imposing, were in essence no different from those of two months earlier.³ Further protests resulted, and a delegation from the Anti-Narcotics Association met Zheng Hongnian, a vice-minister in the Ministry of Finance, who told them candidly.

Present opium prohibition plans are designed simply to raise funds. If steps were taken to prohibit opium . . . all control would certainly be lost over the poison. This kind of temporising policy is certainly not what the people want, and besides, such a thing should not happen under the National Government. The Ministry has frequently considered revisions and improvements, but because of the demands of military expenditure there has been insufficient

¹ Yu Ende, pp.284-285.

² *Ibid.*, pp.191-192.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.285-286.

time to make adequate arrangements. Fortunately, since the application of these opium prohibition regulations, the Chinese National Anti-Narcotics Association and the masses generally have often made constructive criticism; as a result the government has fully made up its mind to improve opium prohibition.¹

A year later, in November 1928, the National Government formally removed opium prohibition fines from the schedule of regular taxes.² Numerous laws and revised regulations were issued. June the third was declared Opium Prohibition Memorial Day in honour of Lin Zexu's burning of opium in Canton in 1839.³ An Opium Prohibition Law was proclaimed in 1929 which remained in force for many years. However, for many reasons these measures failed. The greatest poppy fields were not under National Government control; presumably it was unwilling to pass up such a lucrative source of revenue still open to its opponents. Whether the opium money went formally to Nanking or discreetly to army commanders and politicians in the provinces, it was still a source of income. The apologia of one leading official concerned with opium prohibition in 1935 is more than usually unconvincing.

Since its foundation the National Government has firmly maintained the principle of extirpating the evil with all thoroughness, by adopting a policy of complete prohibition. . . . But in every region, for all kinds of reasons, such as bandits and natural disasters, it has been impossible to implement the opium prohibition laws consistently.⁴

CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S MONOPOLY

The evident failure of the Guomintang's opium policies and the continuing attacks of prominent intellectuals paved the way for a new approach to the problem by Chiang Kai-shek. From the end of 1932 he created what was in all but name a monopoly organization to control the opium trade of south China from the great market of

¹*Ibid.*, p.193.

²*Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, 26 (24 November 1928), p.7

³*Ibid.*, 176 (28 May 1929), p.2.

⁴*Guomintang zhongyang xuanchuan weiyuanhui, Jinyan zhi lilun yu shishi* (Nanking, 1935), p.52.

Hankou. The ineffectual Opium Prohibition Committee in remote Nanking continued its work languidly, and in 1935 was abolished along with the Opium Prohibition Law.¹ The power behind the new monopoly was clearly the military.

Rumours of an impending monopoly had first appeared in the Chinese press in 1931, giving rise to a debate between supporters of such a proposal and its enemies.² Early in December 1932 Chiang Kai-shek's new plan was first made public. Its first step was the publication of the Method for Despatching Officials to Prohibit Opium Cultivation in Ten Provinces (*Paiyuan chajin shisheng zhongyan banfa*).³ In a speech Chiang announced that opium cultivation in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Fujian, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Henan, Shānxi and Gansu would be prohibited. He noted that "in provinces which did not previously cultivate opium, such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui and Henan, there is much of it in area after area. . ."⁴ This was one aspect of the problem: in the provinces which Chiang controlled grain was being displaced by opium. He confessed that "when I came up the River to supervise bandit extermination I was profoundly aroused and pained by what I saw and heard."⁵ Chiang had taken charge of the campaign against the Henan-Hubei-Anhui Soviet on 21 May, 1932, and by June had set up his headquarters in Hankou.⁶ It is clear that Chiang's activism was stimulated by his transfer to what was probably the world's largest opium market.

In December 1932 three other opium laws were issued under the aegis of the Bandit Extermination Headquarters; they dealt with the prohibition of cultivation and used by government officials, army officers and students.⁷ Next January the Hankou Headquarters announced that "for the purpose of unifying national opium prohibition a national Opium Prohibition Inspectorate (*Jinyan duchachu*) has

¹ *Geming wenxian*, XXIX, 6360. It was later revived.

² *Gendai Shina no kiroku*, 7 February 1931, pp.86-88, 88-92; 9 February 1931, pp.120-125.

³ *Zhongyang ribao*, 4 December 1932.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Guofangbu shizheng ju, *Jiaofei zhanshi* 6 vols. (Taipei, 1967), IV, 518-519.

⁷ Lifayuan bianyi chu, *Zhonghua minguo fagui huibian* 9 vols. (Nanking, 1934) III, 966-971, 985.

been established to control and devise methods of opium prohibition.”¹ In April 1933 the most important law of this whole series was published: the Regulations for the Strict Prohibition of Opium Cultivation in the Inner Provinces and for the Abolition of the Purchase of Opium Produced in the Border Provinces (*Yanjin fudi shengfen zhongyan qudi caiban biansheng chantu zhangcheng*).²

These Regulations were essentially simple. The ten provinces listed in the first set of regulations issued in December 1932 together with Hebei, Shandong and Shānxi, thirteen in all, were to cease cultivation (article two). Of the eighteen provinces of China proper, Guangxi and Guangdong were not important producers of opium and were, in any case, not amenable to central control. This left the provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan. In these regions new poppy fields were forbidden and areas which had “long since been accustomed to cultivation” were to be reduced progressively. (article two). In the so-called inner provinces, prohibition was to be enforced by inspectors who were either directly responsible to the Hankou Bandit Extermination Headquarters or who had the authority to command local military units. (article three). An independent observer wrote:

In the course of that year (i.e. 1933) there was evidently effected a considerable reduction of the acreage devoted to poppy cultivation in central China, but the record of the last half of the year as regards the effecting of the restriction of consumption by means of control exercised by an honest and socially-minded organisation was no more impressive than in the first six months.³

Clearly, the southwestern provinces would find an even better market for their export in central China if the addicted population was not reduced. The organization responsible for supplying smokers was the Hubei Special Tax Board (article five). It was also charged with purchasing and transporting the required opium from the “regions of production.” But practice was another matter.

No private individual or organization whatsoever may

¹ *Zhongyang ribao*, 12 January 1933.

² *Zhonghua minguo fagui huibian*, III, 979, 982. References to this law are taken from here.

³ *Opium Traffic*, p.68.

undertake trading of their own accord; when the occasion arises, those merchants who have special permission from the Special Tax Board to take out Purchasing Licenses (*caibanzheng*) on its behalf are exempt from this regulation. (article five).

The remaining articles cover in great detail the methods by which the Special Tax Board would control the opium merchants, through special permits and licences, fixed trading routes and compulsory opium warehouses. In short, the whole system was designed to bring the trading companies under the control of the military machine in central China and increase tax revenue. On 1 April 1934 the Opium Prohibition Inspectorate was put under the control of the Nanchang Headquarters from where Chiang Kai-shek was directing the fifth encirclement campaign against the Central Soviet Area.¹ Finally, on 29 May 1935, Chiang Kai-shek assumed the title of Inspector-General of Opium Prohibition.²

The funds needed to run the Special Tax Board seem to have been provided by the Farmers Bank of China and its predecessors. Originally this bank was the Rural Fiscal Relief Board of the Headquarters (*Zongbu nongcun jinrong jiujiu*).³ In January 1933, when the Opium Prohibition Inspectorate was set up, this bank was given independent status as the Farmers Bank of the Four Provinces of Henan, Hubei, Anhui and Jiangxi. It became the Farmers Bank of China in June 1935.⁴ Several sources state quite openly that this bank's major purpose was to finance the opium trade in central China, partly in order to find money to fight the soviets.⁵ Even Mei Gongren, a writer whose eulogies of Chiang Kai-shek are quite fulsome (although tame by current standards), confidently declared that the "Farmers Bank of the Four Provinces . . . has forgotten its task of relieving the farmers and providing capital . . . it makes opium mortgages (*yapian yakuan*) injurious to the farmer."⁶

¹ *Ibid.*, p.79.

² *Geming wenxian*, XXIX, 6360.

³ Tan Yuzuo, *Zhongguo zhongyao yinhang fazhan shi* (Taipei, 1961), p.281.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.282.

⁵ e.g. Mei Gongren, pp.302-303; Jiang Shangqing, p.16.

⁶ Mei Gongren, p.257.

The link between the Hankou Headquarters and the Farmers Bank is dear. At the end of 1934 the capital of the Farmers Bank was 3 million dollars, and the Headquarters provided over forty percent of it.¹ It is interesting that Li Hongji, who had had a long connection with the Guomindang's opium policies, and whom Chiang Kai-shek had appointed head of the Special Tax Board in March 1934,² was an official of the bank.³ All this evidence is circumstantial; but it points one way. In Hankou Chiang Kai-shek had created a monopoly from military and financial sources with which he controlled the richest opium centre in China.

He did not, of course, immediately gain complete control over opium in central and southern China. For Yunnan and Guizhou could export their goods through Guangxi. But Sichuan was obliged to reach an agreement with Chiang. For example, on 30 December, 1936 Liu Xiang held a conference in Chongqing with his senior officials, including the head of the local opium prohibition bureau and the provincial minister of finance. "Opium prohibition" was discussed. Among the decisions reached was one that "the agreement reached between the Sichuan Opium Prohibition Bureau and the Hubei Special Tax Board to transport 800 piculs of opium each month to Hubei shall still continue in force."⁴ But the majority of the opium produced in Liu Xiang's region was still for sale locally. At this conference it was decided to try and sell some 2,700 piculs per month.⁵ In February 1936 Chiang Kai-shek claimed that in Sichuan "the regions now permitted to cultivate opium have been reduced from forty-eight to ten counties."⁶ However these ten counties were amongst the most prolific producers of opium as the figures presented above show. It has been suggested, on the basis of rather slight evidence, that the prohibition movement in Sichuan at this time was

¹ Tan Yuzuo, p.283.

² *Opium Traffic*, p.79.

³ Tan Yuzuo, p.282.

⁴ Zhang Xiaomei, *Sichuan jingji cankao ziliao* (Shanghai, 1939), C137.

⁵ *Ibid.*, C138.

⁶ Chiang Kai-shek, *Xin Zhongguo di zhengzhi* (Shanghai, 1937), p.106.

nothing more than an economic manoeuvre designed to reduce supply and raise the price.¹ And this may well have been the case. Opium cultivation might have declined temporarily due to market forces without pressure from the Central Government.

In the case of Sichuan, the Special Tax Board had come to an agreement concerning the amount of opium that Liu Xiang would export to Hankou. But there is no evidence that it was able to reach a similar agreement with Yunnan which had the option of sending its produce through Guangxi, and did so. Yet the pressure was great enough to persuade the provincial government to institute prohibition, particularly after the bankruptcies of 1934.² The regulations which were issued from Hankou in late 1932 and 1933 seem to have made an impression on the provincial government.

In 1929 the provincial government . . . frequently discussed changes in opium prohibition. But because internal disorder had only just been overcome, the distress of the masses had not yet been alleviated, and cultivation continued in neighbouring states and provinces, time and circumstances did not permit it, and things remained as they were. In 1933 the competent authorities for opium prohibition urged the disadvantages of prohibition through taxation and the need to formulate general principles for implementing prohibition.³

These authorities made a public display of their distaste for the trade:

Financially and economically speaking, it was certainly profitable in the short term. But taking a long-term view, the complete devastation worked by the poison will be limitless. Consider its most outstanding effects: the destruction of the moral fibre of the young, the ruin of civilization⁴

¹ *Zhongguo jindai nongye shi ziliao*, III, 47.

² See above, p.110

³ *Jishi*, XIX, *jinyan*: *tiyao*, 3a.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4a.

However, during 1934 strenuous efforts were made to set up a factory to manufacture morphia from local opium and then fly it out of the province to Guangdong or possibly Indo-China.¹ This project was undertaken by a consortium of Chinese – mainly senior officials in the provincial government such as Zhang Banghan – and foreigners such as Malortigue, the local go-between in arms deals. It only collapsed in December 1934 after the consular body had put pressure on the French pilot engaged to fly the drugs out.² It was clearly the last attempt to save something from the wreck of the trade, and its failure left the provincial government with little alternative but to proceed with prohibition.

In 1934 several important opium trading firms went bankrupt, as had been the case in 1932, and the price of opium was still depressed.³ The effects of Chiang Kai-shek's pressure from Hankou were being felt. On 1 January 1934 new rates of taxation were imposed on opium from Guizhou, Sichuan and Yunnan: 120 dollars per picul at Chongqing, 360 dollars at Wanxian, 400 dollars at Yichang and 320 dollars at Hankou. But Yunnan opium alone paid the full rate while opium from the other two southwestern provinces was allowed a discount of thirty percent *ad valorem*.⁴ These high taxes discouraged the provincial government from using the Yangzi route, and in spite of the pressure from Chiang Kai-shek Yunnan continued to export opium through Guangxi. In 1935 the Central Government seized power in a weak and divided Guizhou. Henceforth it could control Guizhou opium exports, and discriminate against consignments passing through Guangxi. Faced by this continuous economic and political pressure from the Central Government, the provincial government sought to squeeze the last drops from the trade before discarding it.

THE PROHIBITION OF CULTIVATION

The original program for "prohibition" was set out in three sets of regulations submitted for Chiang Kai-shek's inspection and approval

¹ United States Consulate, confidential reports 190, 26 June 1934; 200, 30 July 1934; 207, 13 August 1934.

² *Ibid.*, confidential report 3, 17 December 1934.

³ *Ibid.*, confidential reports 60, 22 May 1933; 219, 8 September 1934.

⁴ *Opium Traffic*, p.76.

in April 1935.¹ Essentially these regulations were in accord with the principles laid down in Hankou in April 1933. The poppy fields of Yunnan were to be reduced region by region and year by year: in the first year, commencing in autumn 1935, when the new crop was sown, a group of thirty-eight counties in central Yunnan was to stop cultivation; in the second year, commencing in 1936, a second group of counties ringing the first was also to cease; in the third and final year, from the autumn of 1937, the final group on the borders of the province was to have its quietus.² However special "extended cultivation regions" (*zhanzhongqu*), where "the quality of the opium [was] good," might continue to grow it.³ In the revisions made to these bowdlerized regulations the phrase "extended cultivation districts" is replaced by "special permission districts," a term which is left unexplained.

The actual course of prohibition was relatively uneventful. The provincial government surprisingly encountered little resistance. (It had feared a severe reaction from the peasantry, remembering the armed resistance which had occurred during the period of the Imperial suppression).⁵ In western Yunnan the effectiveness of the program was noted, together with the drastic fall in land prices which it caused.⁶ How much success the program had in those areas where non-Han minorities prevailed is an open question. There seems no doubt, however, that production was significantly reduced during the three-year period. No doubt some cultivation still continued; but the back of the trade was broken, and thereafter it was given no chance to re-establish itself.

¹*Jishi*, 19, *jinyan*: *tiyao*, 3b. The first three regulations, governing the prohibition of smoking, cultivation and transportation were amended by Chiang Kai-shek, and new versions of all three were issued, taking effect from 1 October 1936. See United States Consulate, report 268, 9 March 1937.

²*Yunnan quansheng shixing jinzhong yapian zhangcheng* n.c.p.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Jishi*, XIX, *jinyan*: *jinzhong*, 2a.

⁶Fitzgerald, p.26.

THE YUNNAN MONOPOLY

The importance of opium lay in its export value. Therefore the greatest care was taken to ensure that the provincial government would reap the benefit of the rise in prices, and presumably prevent the flight of capital. The provincial government created a Special Goods Monopoly Transportation Board (*Tehuo tongyunchu*) which came into being on 1 May 1935.¹ This organization which was "of the nature of a limited share company," had a capital of 50 million dollars of which seventy percent was provided by the government and the rest by the opium traders.² It thus had a capital some ten times that of the Yunnan Tin Refinery. The opium traders, not surprisingly, "had some doubts" about investing in this official organization.³ But there was no opposition, and the board became responsible for the collection, transport and sale of opium for a stipulated three-year period, with branches established inside and outside the province.⁴ The officials of this organization were all important men close to Long; Lu Chongren, the provincial minister of finance, was the Director; Miao Jiaming and Yu Zongze, the head of the Opium Prohibition Bureau, were the other leading lights.⁵

The main function of the board was to export opium. It seems to have adopted the practice of contracting with private firms. A report from the United States consulate in September 1935 gives details of one transaction. In June and July of that year, after the spring harvest, the board had accumulated a stock of 16 million taels of opium which it was considering exporting via the Yangzi to Hankou where the market was once more favourable.⁶ A certain "Yung Mao-kung" applied to act as agent of the board which the US consulate report reproduces.

¹*Jishi*, VI, *caizheng: kuochong guanyingye*, 33b.

²*Yunnan tehuo tongyun zhangcheng* in *Yunnan ribao*, 8 May 1935, supplement to United States Consulate, confidential report 66, 28 May 1935.

³*Jishi*, VI, *caizheng: kuochong guanyingye*, 34a.

⁴*Ibid.*, XIX, *jinyan: jinyun*, 4b.

⁵*Ibid.*, VI, *caizheng: kuochong guanyingye*, 34a.

⁶United States Consulate, confidential report 115, 27 September 1935. All references are to this source.

1. The agent shall guarantee to sell from 1,500,000 to 2 million ounces of raw opium yearly.
2. The term of the agency shall be temporarily fixed at one year.
3. The agent shall pay a desposit of Yunnan Paper \$200,000 . . . as security.
4. Each shipment shall contain at least 200,000 ounces.
5. The agent shall pay into the office at Yunnanfu the total amount of the value of the opium plus the stipulated export and other taxes.
6. The Monopoly Office shall then concern itself with the shipment of the opium to the Szechwan border where it will be handed over to the representative of the agent . . .
7. The agent shall be given complete authority to deal with the opium within Szechwan territory.

The price of opium per 100 taels in Hankou at that time was reported to have been the equivalent of 2,200 dollars. The agent was to pay the Monopoly Board 400 dollars as the cost of buying the opium, 100 dollars as profit for the board, and 115 dollars in export and other taxes. If we assume that the rate of taxation through Sichuan to Hankou was that of January 1934, the equivalent of 1,200 dollars per 100 taels,¹ then the gross profit on 100 taels of opium would have been 385 dollars. Out of this the agent would have had to pay transportation and other costs, together with the required lubricatory bribes.

Apart from its intrinsic interest, this report shows that Chiang Kai-shek's monopoly had discouraged the export Yunnanese opium to Hankou. While opium still passed through Guangxi from both Yunnan and Guizhou, the revenues of the former were safe. But in 1935 the Guizhou leaders were swept aside by Chiang Kai-shek as he entered the province in pursuit of the Long March. The measures which he took there seem to have drastically reduced the quantity of opium going through Guangxi from Guizhou. For example, there are the Regulations for Levying the Provincial Tax on Special Goods of the Guizhou General Opium Prohibition Bureau (*Guizhou sheng jinyan zongju zhengshou tehuo shengshui zhangcheng*), published on 30 June 1936. Articles 3 and 10 are especially interesting.

¹ See above, p.136.

Article 3: The rate of taxation of the Provincial Tax on Special Goods shall be fixed at a rate of NC\$160 per 1,000 taels of goods net; this may be adjusted up or down when necessary. Article 10: Apart from levying the Provincial Tax on Special Goods on the special goods transported to Guangxi, an export fee of 100 dollars per 1,000 taels at a discount of fifteen percent shall be levied; moreover, a progressive tax shall be levied according to the regulations and transferred each month to the Opium Prohibition Inspectorate.¹

THE DECLINE OF YUNNANESE OPIUM EXPORTS

This is clear evidence that Chiang Kai-shek was using his economic power in the province to undermine the Guangxi faction by cutting away their most important source of revenue. At the same time exports from Yunnan were in decline; over the three years 1935 to 1937 the amount of opium handled by the Monopoly Board fell by over fifty percent. In 1935 it dealt with just over 10,250,000 taels, in 1936 the sum was 7,660,000 taels, and in 1937 it was 5,558,000 taels.² During this period it has been estimated that the income of the provincial government from opium taxes of all kinds fell from the equivalent of 26 million dollars to 15,685,000 dollars.³ Opium was clearly a declining item in the provincial budget. In estimates of provincial income for the years 1936 and 1937 receipts from opium fell from just over eighteen to eight percent. While in 1936 opium receipts were still the largest single item, closely followed by the special consumption tax (eighteen percent), in 1937 local business income (over thirty-five percent) and the special consumption tax (just under eleven percent) had surpassed it. Furthermore many other taxes were of nearly equal importance. Opium had finally lost its preeminence.

¹ Zhang Xiaomei, *Guizhou jingji*, Q30.

² *Jishi*, VI, *caizheng: kuochong guanyingye*, 34b.

³ Yan Rengeng, 10a-10b.

OPIUM CONSUMPTION IN YUNNAN

The other way in which the provincial government tried to make a last, quick profit was in the monopoly sale of opium to the local population. Two different mixtures were sold. Firstly, there was "public opium" (*gonggao*), which was "a kind of opium . . . mixed with morphia."¹ Only registered users over forty years of age could buy this mixture from the Office for the Manufacture of Medicine and Opium (*Yaogao zhizaoso*). This office started manufacture in December 1935 and initially sold its produce in three grades. The price of the best grade in January 1936 was nine dollars per tael, but by January 1937 this had risen to twenty-four dollars.² Secondly, there was "anti-opium medicine" (*jiyanyao*) which was reserved for those under forty. This particular mixture was supposedly based on a formula for "anti-opium medicine" devised by Lin Zexu.³

One problem was that the number of registered addicts was extremely small. In the first district to come under prohibition a mere 54,585 people registered, for whom some 2 million taels of opium were made available.⁴ Yet in 1927 it was thought that "at least twenty percent" of the population were addicted — perhaps 2,400,000 people.⁵ Another guess was that the smoking population was two million, half of them "addicts" and half "who smoke occasionally."⁶ The unregistered users simply bought their opium from bootleggers, whose prices were always lower than those of the official organizations. Descriptions of the system in operation are fragmentary, but give examples of low cunning and high farce, such as the young man who

¹Chow Yung-teh, p.200.

²*Yaogao zhizaoso zuzhi zhangcheng* in *Xin Dian bao*, 5 July 1935, supplement to United States Consulate, report 96, 7 August 1935; confidential report 266, 25 February 1937.

³*Jishi*, XIX, *jinyan*: *jinxi*, 4a.

⁴*Ibid.*, 7a.

⁵*Neizheng huiyi*, p.127.

⁶United States Consulate, report 149, 13 March 1934.

sold "public opium" and fined his own father-in-law who had set him up as an opium dealer for smoking his own bootleg opium instead.¹

But although cultivation and smoking continued after 1937, there is little doubt that opium was no longer the great commerce of the province. Chiang Kai-shek was certainly happy with the situation in Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan in May 1936.

I feel that in the three provinces the most outstanding political advance was in opium prohibition. In both cultivation and consumption, it has been possible to take rapid prohibition measures, and well within the previous limit. Many people have given up smoking of their own accord . . . As far as the prohibition of cultivation is concerned, the chairmen of the three provinces have worked together. As a result of changing over to the cultivation of grains, there has been an increase in the production of foodstuffs in comparison with the recent past.²

Chiang said this while his troops were penetrating southwest China. The pressure that he exerted on the rural economies of this region was reintoned from late 1934 by the threat of a physical invasion as he pursued the Long March through Guizhou, Yunnan and Sichuan. This next problem was to exploit the success of these economic measures in order to extend central power.

¹Chow Yung-teh, pp.200-201.

²*Zhongyang ribao*, 6 May 1936.

7 Industrial policies, 1931-1937

Yunnan was an agricultural province in which the majority of the inhabitants lived and worked in the countryside producing grains. The provincial government traditionally supported itself through levying taxes on the rural sector of the economy, and during the earlier 1930s the most conspicuous form of taxation had been the "opium prohibition fines." Apart from opium, the other major export of Yunnan was tin, which was mined in the southern county of Gejiu. Before 1931 Long's provincial government paid little attention to industry. The four generals who had rebelled against Tang Jiyao in 1927 had included a call for industrial development amongst their initial demands,¹ but no steps were taken to implement it. However, by 1931 the political and economic situation in the province was more stable than at any time in the previous ten years. The provincial government had consolidated its military position and Long easily defeated the attempted coup of this year, strengthening his personal authority at the expense of the army. The first step towards controlling local currency inflation had been taken during the previous year. Furthermore, a concerted effort to centralize the system of revenue collection under the control of the provincial ministry of finance had begun. It was at this time of confidence and energetic reorganization that the provincial government decided to authorize a limited investment in modernizing the tin trade in Gejiu.

This project, for introducing western methods of smelting into the production process, was promoted by Miao Jiaming, the provincial minister of agriculture and mining. So successful was he in this venture that within a very few years he rose to a position of unprecedented

¹ *Menguo ribao*, 2 March 1927.

authority in Long Yun's regime. He drew his power from outside the traditional landlord bureaucracy. Apart from his post as provincial minister and membership of the Provincial Government Committee, his earliest positions of authority were as manager of the government's tin mining and smelting companies. In 1934 he was appointed manager of the New Fudian Bank, and in that *annus mirabilis* he devised the Yunnan Economic Commission which spawned a multitude of companies of which he became director.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of Miao Jiaming in the history of Yunnan. His managerial talents and financial acumen played a large part in fostering the provincial government's investment in industrial and other entrepreneurial ventures. When the 1934 crisis in the opium trade obliged the provincial government to reconsider its dependence on opium taxes, Miao's program of industrial investment assumed even greater importance. The success of western methods of smelting helped to compensate for the loss of income when opium was prohibited. The post-1934 program of industrial development was a direct response to the decline of the opium trade.

The six years or so before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War marked a swing away from the army and the landlord bureaucracy. The latter were composed of officials whose closest links were with the landlords. They were best equipped to extract the surplus from the rural economy of which the opium trade was the *nec plus ultra*. But they were not capable of adapting themselves to the new situation when opium had to be abandoned. It was the members of the old bureaucracies who sought relief through the manufacture of morphia. Miao Jiaming participated in one of the organizations that dealt in opium, but it was never very important to his career. Power and wealth from industry far outweighed what could be got from opium. In this sense industry rose from the ashes of opium.

MIAO JIAMING

Miao Jiaming was born in Kunming, probably in 1890. The Miao family was prominent in Yunnan during the Republic: Miao Anchen and Miao Jiashou both served Tang Jiyao, the latter as provincial minister of finance.¹ Miao himself was educated in America as a

¹Tahara Tennen, *Shinmatsu minsho Chugoku kanshin jinmei roku* (Tokyo, 1970), p.75.

mining engineer.¹ He was no mere parvenu when he was appointed manager of the Yunnan Tin Company (*Yunnan xiwu gongsi*) in November 1920.² He did not hold this post for long, since it was a political appointment. He was an impressive man. Chen Bulei, who accompanied Chiang Kai-shek on a visit to Yunnan as his secretary in 1935, described him as "far exceeding men in his words and concepts."³ He alone of the officials in the provincial government who served Lung had been educated in the United States. Precisely how he came to the attention of Long is unclear. However, in May 1929 he became provincial minister, and in November of that year he was one of the new officials brought into the Provincial Government Committee.

MIAO'S FINANCIAL POLICIES

The military and political situation in Yunnan was difficult in 1929. The civil war renewed itself during the summer while the currency was losing value alarmingly. In December 1930 Miao put his energies into creating the Industrial Bank (*Quanye yinhang*) with a capital of one million dollars opening branches in Shanghai and Hongkong.⁴ Miao controlled this bank as provincial minister. It was backed by a group of mine owners, and its chief functions were advancing credit and acting as a remittance exchange for Hongkong dollars earned by tin exports.⁵ It was a common practice for mine owners to raise loans of a short-term nature to finance operations, and these loans were often provided by the foreign companies that eventually purchased the tin ore.⁶ Significantly, it was through this particular bank that the provincial government took its first tentative steps towards gaining control over foreign exchange.⁷ The Fudian Bank was in no position

¹ *Minguo mingren tujian*, II, ix, 58.

² *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji*: *xiye*, 12a.

³ Chen Bulei, p.81.

⁴ Guo Yuan, *Yunnan sheng jingji wenti* (Kunming, 1940), pp.177-179.

⁵ *Jishi*, VI, *caizheng*: *kuochong guanyingye*, 31a.

⁶ Guo Yuan, *Yunnan sheng zhi ziran fuyuan*, p.126.

⁷ *Ibid.*, *Yunnan sheng jingji wenti*, pp.177-178.

to deal with this work, and if the French reaction was too strong, the bank's actions could always be disavowed.

Certainly his time with the Industrial Bank prepared Miao for the managership of the New Fudian Bank, and while he was in charge he showed his financial ability and judgment.

In 1931 Yunnanese merchants were enticed by cunning outside merchants, with the promise of huge profits, into trading speculatively, and when it came to paying up large numbers of them became insolvent. The bank ordinarily adopted a policy of moderation, considering its duty to be assistance to agriculture and commerce and the development of mining. Not only was it not in the least affected, but it was of no small assistance to fellow bankers.¹

The one Yunnanese trade above all others which was speculative was the opium trade; the above passage seems to confirm the impression that Miao kept clear of dealings in opium. In any event, Miao's career was founded upon his early success with the Industrial Bank.

The rapid development of a large bureaucratic apparatus to control and direct economic development was shaped by the ideas that Miao held concerning the role of the state in entrepreneurial activities. He was impressed by the growth of state control outside China, no matter what the ideological justification.

In modern, industrially advanced nations, enterprise has mostly been privately owned, and government organizations have merely controlled and supervised . . . But because of the evolution of the social economy since the First World War, public enterprise has made a gradual and continuous advance. Within the last decade or so important and special industries concerned with national defence have gradually gravitated towards public control in all countries. This too is in line with the trend of events and is a necessary fact of economic reform. Therefore in every country entrepreneurial structures under public control have gradually been established, particularly in Germany and the Soviet Union.

¹ *Jishi*, VI, *caizheng*: *kuochong guanyingye*, 31b.

² *Ibid.*, *tiyao*, 2b-3a.

This passage clearly reveals an important feature of Miao's views on industrialization. In common with the bureaucrats who organized the industrial programs of the Nanking government, he believed that economic and industrial development was best fostered by imitating the most recent developments in western industrialized nations. The more recent the development the better it should be. Rather than how suitable an organizational technique or item of machinery might be in a given situation Miao asked how new it was, how "modern." He travelled widely in China and Southeast Asia, and frequently visited Shanghai. It was there in 1935 that he purchased machinery for a proposed cotton mill in Yunnan; it was "at that time the most modern in the whole country."¹ Such an identification of the most technologically advanced with the most suitable, if any conditions, was not peculiar to Miao, and many men committed to making China a strong, industrial nation had similar views.

Miao believed that only the state could undertake industrialization, particularly in the remoter provinces of the southwest. He contrasted eastern China with Yunnan.

China has a large territory and an enormous population. But in productivity it lags far behind the countries of Europe and America. Businesses under foreign management developed in the coast provinces and the [local] people were able to observe and imitate them. Moreover, conditions with respect to capital, technology and communications are all exceptional. Therefore there is no lack of new privately-controlled enterprises. . . In those provinces such as this one, situated far away on the border, the creation of new industry is even more difficult. If the government does not accept responsibility for showing the people the way, private business will be even more retarded.²

Miao justified state participation in economic development on the grounds that it was in harmony with world trends and was necessary for development to take place at all. In unfavourable circumstances it was vital to concentrate resources.

¹*Ibid.*, *fangzhi*, 5b.

²*Ibid.*, *tiyao*, 2b-31.

In the border provinces production is backward, capital is insufficient, and technology is lacking; added to which is the peculiar inconvenience of communications in this province. While our strength is limited and difficulties prevail, a lack of unity in our efforts to improve the social economy will lead to a further debilitation while unification may still leave room for action. . . This province deliberately established an entrepreneurial structure such as the Yunnan Economic Commission in order to concentrate limited human and financial assets and technological resources so as to achieve economic reconstruction.¹

Miao was also well aware of his own abilities. He realized that the bureaucracy that he wished to establish would complete with the traditional landlord bureaucracy, in particular men like Zhang Banghan and Lu Chongren, respectively provincial ministers for reconstruction and finance. Therefore Miao argued in favour of overall planning.

In modern times all nations have attempted to set up planned economies . . . In Yunnan each provincial ministry has engaged in productive enterprises separately . . . However, if manpower and financial resources are not concentrated under a single directing organization responsible for planning and its implementation, then there is bound to be not only faulty planning in parts, but also an accumulation of contradictions in putting into effect even well-rounded planning due to lop-sided thinking . . .²

The new bureaucratic apparatus that Miao wished to create was undoubtedly attractive to Long as a new source of power distinct from the traditional landlord bureaucracy and the army. These latter had proved unreliable or difficult to subdue: each had goals incompatible with Long's supremacy. The landlord bureaucracy was only slowly yielding to Long's efforts to centralize it and increase its "administrative efficiency," the cliché of provincial government. Long's power was checked by this stronghold of the landlords who had no interest in advancing the power of the provincial centre. The army had also proved to be a dangerous source of power; after 1931 his generals were

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

given much less power than before and consequently no challenge to his authority appeared. The concept of economic development that Miao presented to Long Yun must have had tremendous appeal for Long who would have become the head of a region that had adopted up-to-date economic policies "in line with the trend of events," and no longer a mere provincial general.

But Miao understood that he could not hope to succeed if he did not supply Long with the funds that he needed to run the state. The need for quick returns on capital invested was paramount. Political life was insecure; long-term investment was not a practical possibility. When Miao first proposed to improve the smelting of tin he made this point clear. "Although I feel that the profit would be enormous, supposing that it could not be undertaken without an expenditure of several millions of dollars in local currency, it seems suitable to plan for *a comparatively large profit and comparatively quick results* by making a start with tin refining."¹ (author's italics)

Miao was not merely a paper bureaucrat, so to speak; he had personal qualities which enabled him to put his ideas into practice. Two examples are worth giving. Miao hired an engineer to report on tin mining in Gejiu, and when the engineer in question, a certain Archdeacon, was travelling around the mines Miao "did not shrink from the onerous task of accompanying him in the belief that it was a matter of great consequence to reach a careful and accurate conclusion."² When the first trials of the new smelting plant were made Miao:

Remained at the furnace for two nights without sleep, firstly because profound interest makes man forgetful of his discomfort, and secondly because with accurate research I shall be prepared after Archdeacon has completed his contract and returned home to conduct the smelting myself in the prescribed manner.³

It is hard to imagine Miao's colleagues in the provincial government displaying such energy and attention to practical affairs.

THE GEJU TIN TRADE

The foundation of Miao Jiaming's program of economic development

¹*Ibid.*, xiye, 6a.

²*Ibid.*, 5a.

³*Ibid.*, 7b.

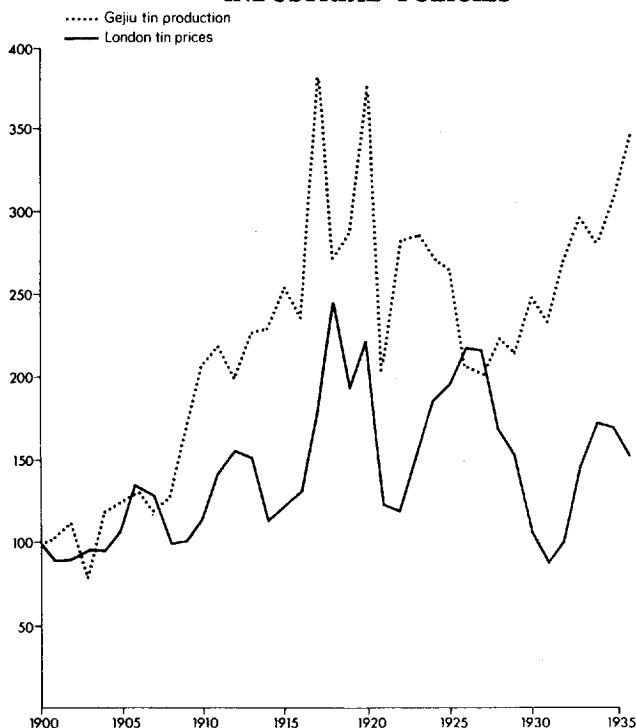


Figure 1 Indices of London tin prices and Gejiu tin production, 1900-1936 (1900=100)

was the tin trade. Tin mining in Yunnan during the twentieth century was one of the mainstays of the economy. Tin was by far the most important export of the province. In value it accounted for an average of eighty-six percent of all goods exported through the Mengzi Customs between 1929 and 1937. There were three customs posts in the province and Mengzi was by far the most important. Tin constituted a fairly constant proportion of all exports, ranging from eighty percent in 1924 to ninety-three percent in 1936. In value tin exports varied sharply, rising from NC\$14 million in 1927 to NC\$29 million in 1937.¹

The crucial event in the history of tin in Yunnan was the opening of the Railway into Indo-China. In 1908 the Railway reached Mengzi, and two years later the production of tin rose sharply. The Railway quickly replaced the pack-animals which had previously transported the tin. Production rose steadily thereafter. Table One gives figures for the production of tin in Gejiu over a period of thirty-seven years. During the first three decades (1900-1909, 1910-1919, 1920-1929) annual

¹ Guo Yuan, *Yunnan sheng zhi ziran fuyuan*, pp.136-137.

average production rose from 3,246 tons, to 7,290 tons and then 7,338 tons respectively. During the seven years from 1930 to 1936 annual average production rose yet again to 8,189 tons.

Apart from the improvement in communications following the opening of the Railway into Indo-China, the First World War brought about a boom in tin. Yunnan tin production reached a peak of over 11,000 tons in 1917. The world price level for tin, as represented by the London price, was closely matched by rising production in Yunnan over a period of some twenty years up to 1921. (See Figure One) But tin prices slumped from £291 per ton in 1926 to £118 in 1931, while production in Gejiu was severely affected during the late 1920s when bandits and civil war brought the level of production down to under 6,000 tons per annum in 1926 and 1927. During the 1930s there was a general rise in the level of production, but this was not matched by a corresponding rise in the world price of tin. In spite of a modest recovery, the price of tin in London was only £230 per ton in 1934 and even declined again.²

Mining was carried on in Gejiu in the traditional way: insufficient capital, scant attention to safety and gruesome labour conditions. Gejiu was a closed society dominated by the powerful mine owners, and outsiders were not encouraged to investigate. Consequently, although the structure of the industry is fairly clear, there are many areas in which the sources disagree over important details. A few major companies headed a greater number of minor companies which generally leased mines from them. According to an American engineer who was employed by the provincial government in the 1920s, there were some fifteen large-scale concerns and about 120 smaller companies.³ However, a Chinese source gives the total number of companies as five to six thousand, employing "several hundreds" of workers at the most and "three to five" at the least.⁴ The smaller

¹ Guo Yuan, *Yunnan sheng zhi ziran fuyuan*, pp.136-137.

² The figures for the annual average price of tin on the London market are taken from *Metal Bulletin Handbook* (1972), p.189.

³ Draper, p.490.

⁴ Guo Yuan, *Yunnan sheng zhi ziran fuyuan*, p.125.

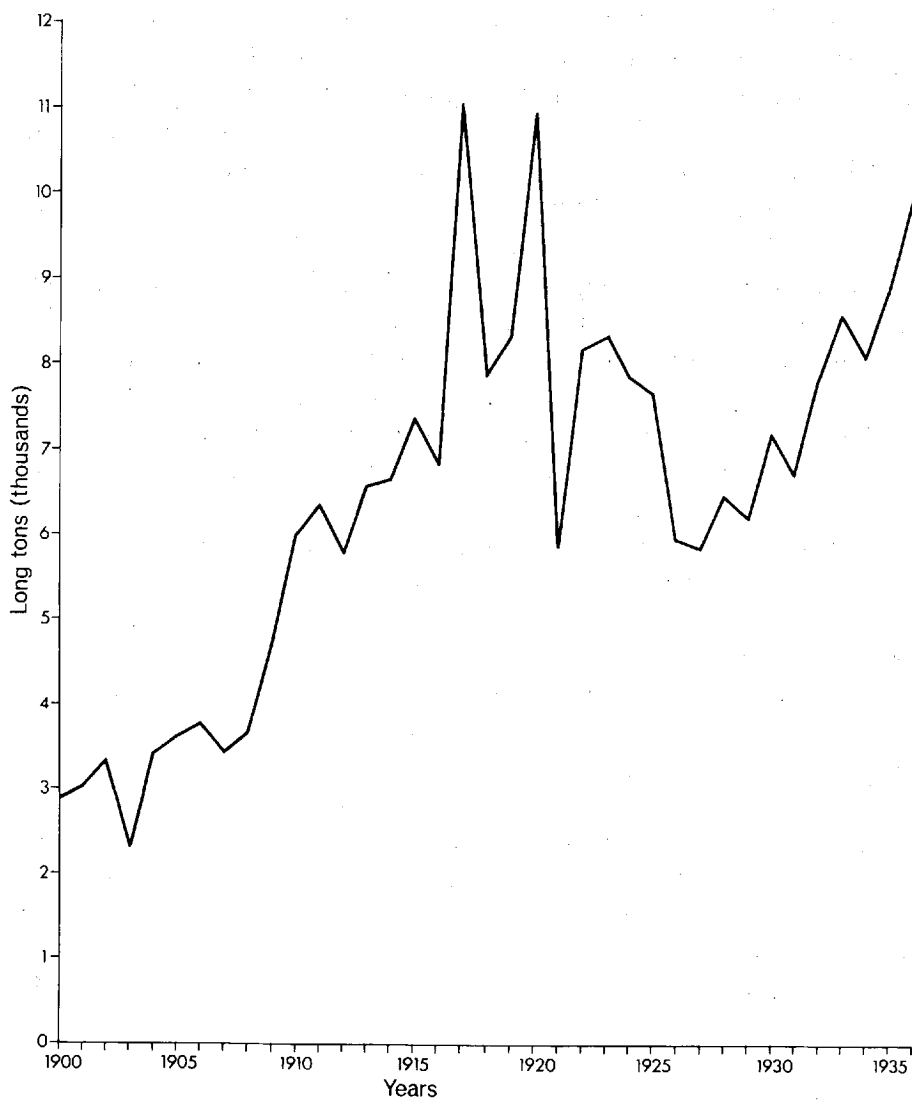


Figure 2 Tin Production in Gejiu, 1900-1936 (long tons)

Table Two

Tin Production in Gejiu, 1900-1936 (unit: long tons)

1900	2900	1910	6000	1920	10900	1930	7198
1901	3020	1911	6347	1921	5880	1931	6728
1902	3320	1912	5802	1922	8196	1932	7807
1903	2317	1913	6580	1923	8328	1933	8599
1904	3413	1914	6660	1924	7878	1934	8106
1905	3627	1915	7360	1925	7659	1935	8887
1906	3790	1916	6850	1926	5985	1936	9996
1907	3450	1917	11070	1927	5869		
1908	3675	1918	7900	1928	6466		
1909	4743	1919	8330	1929	6214		

Note: The two main sources for tin production in Yunnan are *Zhongguo jindai gongyeshi ziliao*, III, 618 and *Yunnan zhi ziran fuyuan*, pp.119-120. The former source gives figures for the period 1890-1930 while the latter has figures for the period 1922-1937. For periods where a comparison is possible, i.e. 1922-1930, the latter source gives figures uniformly lower than the former. Therefore the latter source has been preferred for the period 1922-1936 (the figure for 1937 is unfortunately illegible). Differences between the sources may be attributed largely to the fact that production was measured in *zhang*, a unit of measure which is variously described as the equivalent of 2,500 or 3,000 *jin*. I have assumed that one *zhang* equals 1.5 long tons.

companies were very vulnerable to market changes, and liable to go bankrupt. When they did their workers were left unpaid and many of them became bandits.¹ This was why Gejiu was such a source of social disorder. There were some forty smelters, and apparently over 1,000 ore-washers.²

During the 1920s there were some 16,000 mine workers; some 60,000 people in Gejiu depended upon the tin trade for their living. When tin was in demand this number might rise to 100,000. The

¹ Draper, p.490.

² Guo Yuan, *Yunnan sheng zhi ziran fuyuan*, p.125.

majority of the workers were boys indentured by their families. Guards were stationed at strategic points to prevent them running away. Fatal accidents were common because of the softness of the ore,¹ and the callousness of the employers matched the miserable conditions in which the boys laboured.² The provincial government delicately observed that "the treatment of the mine workers by the owners was previously very harsh. Those who visited the area and inspected working conditions were somewhat disturbed. . . ."³ This is at best an understatement.

The largest mining company in Gejiu was the provincial government's Yunnan Tin Company. Official involvement in tin mining dated from 1883, but the Tin Company, jointly financed by official and merchant capital, was first set up in 1906.⁴ From 1921 to 1935 the Tin Company was responsible for about ten percent of the total production in Gejiu, with an annual average of 691 tons. (See Table Three) It employed roughly 2,700 workers,⁵ or about seventeen percent of the total labour force in the mines.

The production process was primitive. Ore brought to the surface was first pounded with clubs and then crushed between stone wheels powered by water buffalo. The resulting concentrate was then washed, a process which depended upon rainfall: drought could seriously hamper production, and most smelting took place during the rainy season from May to September.⁶ The concentrate was then smelted, but the resulting tin bars were not of uniform purity. More important, the ore was not refined sufficiently well for the tin to be sold on the world market.

¹ Draper, p.487.

² Even by the standards of the time the horror and cruelty of the Gejiu tin mines was outstanding: children sold into virtual slavery, a death rate of thirty percent, arsenical poisoning, trachoma, addiction to opium. . . . See Smith, 152-162 for a too harrowing description.

³ *Jishi*, XI, *jianshe: kuangye*, 10b.

⁴ Chen Zhen, Yao Luo comp, *Zhongguo jindai gongye shi ziliao*, 4 vols. (Peking, 1957-1961), III, 617.

⁵ See table following *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji: xiye*, 13b.

⁶ Draper, pp.483, 487.

Table Three

Tin Production of the Yunnan Tin Company, 1921-1935 (unit: long tons)

Year	Production	Percentage of Total Production
1921	927	15.8
1922	799	9.7
1923	717	8.6
1924	741	9.4
1925	598	7.8
1926	553	9.2
1927	490	8.3
1928	524	8.1
1929	512	8.2
1930	519	7.2
1931	940	14.0
1932	809	10.3
1933	855	9.9
1934	633	7.8
1935	749	8.4

Figures taken from *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji*: *xiye*, 13ab; percentages calculated from Table Two.

Machinery had been purchased by the Tin Company, but for various reasons had lain idle. In 1913 the company installed German machinery for washing and smelting the ore together with a cable-way. The cost of the machinery, of transporting and installing it, exhausted the company's capital. But the problems of the company did not stop there. It had no mines of its own, and expected to process the ore produced by the private companies. But the other mine owners were "suspicious" of the new methods; besides, their mines were far removed from the ore-washing plant and there were no means of transporting the ore to the plant. (The cable-way, which had been purchased for this purpose, was badly sited and remained unused.) The power plant used coal, but coal supplies were prohibitively expensive and irregular. The smelting furnaces ran on coal gas; but local supplies proved unsuitable.¹

¹ *Zhongguo jindai gongye shi ziliao*, III, 619-620.

MIAO JIAMING AND TIN REFINING

When Miao Jiaming became manager of the tin company for a brief period in 1920, he improved the situation, resiting the cable-way and thus providing the washing and smelting plants with ore.¹ But it was only in February 1931 that the provincial government finally came up with the necessary funds for a report on tin mining in Gejiu by an engineer engaged by Miao from Singapore. His fee was NC\$70,000 or approximately 630,000 dollars, a sum which Miao raised only with difficulty.² By December the report was complete and Miao used the findings of Archdeacon to propose the creation of a Yunnan Tin Refinery (*Yunnan lianxi gongsi*). In his proposal Miao listed a number of areas where savings might be made through the introduction of western techniques and machinery.

Firstly, "it was discovered that the methods used in the past at Gejiu to wash the ore are only capable of extracting half of the tin-bearing matter from the ore. There is no way of dealing with the other half, so that extremely valuable tin-bearing matter is abandoned everywhere. . . ." The introduction of machinery would increase production by 2,000 *zhang* (3,000 tons). Secondly, "ore with a comparatively low tin-content suitable for refining is everywhere insufficiently exploited. Miao urged that this ore should also be exploited; "mining operations could take place everywhere and the mine owners need not fear a loss." It was clearly important not to antagonise the mine owners. Thirdly, local methods of smelting were too expensive and the use of machinery would reduce costs. In the refining process too much tin was lost in the slag; by reducing the tin content of the slag from ten to two percent some 400 *zhang* (600 tons) could be reclaimed. Fourthly, "the touch of the tin that is refined is variable and not uniform, and can only be sold in Hongkong. It has to go through Cantonese merchants for a final refining before it can pass muster on the foreign market."³

Miao argued that tin was important as a national as well as a provincial product and stressed its economic importance to Yunnan.

¹ *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji*: *xiye*, 12a.

² *Ibid.*, 3b-4a.

³ *Ibid.*, 4b-5b.

He strongly criticized the "Gejiu mine owners [who] blindly follow established practice, pursuing local methods of mining, ore-washing and refining in every case without thought for technological advance."¹

If it is possible to make a determined effort for technological advance, so that new methods are adopted in mining, ore-washing and smelting, and if, from the sales aspect, we exert ourselves to break into the European and American markets, cutting out all interference in the middle, then production must increase year by year and costs must gradually be reduced.²

Realizing that the provincial government would not, and probably could not, make available large amounts of capital for long-term investment without immediate profits, Miao argued that a start should be made with refining. "If existing technology such as the engineer [recommends] were applied, it would be possible to extract the non-uniform ore and refine an upper-grade tin at a uniform touch of ninety-nine percent and above."³

This plan of reform, referring to a refinery with an annual capacity of 2,000 tons (if it was built from scratch) would require approximately NC\$200,000. If it were reconstructed from the refinery of the Tin Company it would require at the most NC\$150,000 together with a floating capital of NC\$300,000, which would be ample.⁴

The provincial government adopted this plan, and the Yunnan Tin Refinery was set up in March 1932 with Miao as managing director and Lu Han, Zhang Banghan and Wu Kun as directors.⁵ The listed capital of the Refinery was NC\$500,000; and was provided by the Industrial Bank (NC\$10,000), the Educational Expenditure Control Bureau (NC\$10,000), the New Fudian Bank (NC\$100,000), the Yunnan Tin Company (NC\$100,000), merchant sources (NC\$130,000) and the provincial government (NC\$150,000).⁶

¹*Ibid.*, 4b.

²*Ibid.*, 4b.

³*Ibid.*, 5a.

⁴*Ibid.*, 6a.

⁵*Ibid.*, 11b.

⁶*Ibid.*, 8b-9a.

Improved refining techniques promised to increase production and lower the cost of refining. But the most important psychological benefit of the improvement was that the Yunnanese were at last able to sell their tin directly on the world market. The crux of the matter was the level of purity of the refined tin. In the early 1930s three grades of tin slabs were produced in Gejiu, a first grade of 98.4 percent purity, a second grade of 94.8 percent and a third of 93.7 percent.¹ Tin could not be sold directly on the London and New York markets unless it reached a minimum standard of 99.3 percent, the lowest of three grades; the other two grades required purities of 99.5 percent and 99.75 percent.² Therefore the Gejiu tin was purchased by some eight companies, four of them Cantonese registered in Hongkong, two French represented by Chinese agents, and two registered in London and Shanghai. From Gejiu these firms shipped the tin to Hongkong where it was re-refined. But this product, known as "Chinese tin" (*yangtiao*) was still insufficiently pure to command prevailing world prices.³ For example, in 1936 the price of one ton of tin refined to international standards was £207; the price of "Chinese tin" was £199, and the price of Yunnan tin was about £181.⁴ Shipping and insurance costs were around £5 per ton. Consequently the loss due to the lack of purity was quite substantial.

However, what most annoyed the Yunnanese was the fact that the tin sold did not earn either sterling or United States dollars. In 1933 the New Fudian Bank set out to gain control over foreign exchange by a system of compulsory loans to tin exporters which had to be repaid in foreign exchange. But it was only when the Tin Refinery succeeded in producing tin to international standards of purity that Yunnanese tin began to earn foreign exchange other than Hongkong dollars.

The Tin Refinery began smelting in 1933, and soon succeeded in producing tin of the required purity. At first it refined about ten percent of the total production in Gejiu. But by 1936 and 1937 it was refining seventeen and eighteen percent. (See Table Four) The full capacity of the refinery was 2,000 tons, but this was never fully used,

¹ *Ibid.*, 2a.

² *Ibid.*, 2b.

³ *Yunnan sheng zhi ziran fuyuan*, pp.126-127.

⁴ *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji*: *xiye*, 2a.

Table Four

The Production of the Yunnan Tin Refinery, 1933-1937 (unit: long tons)

Period	Production	Percentage of Total Production
April 1933-June 1934	936	(9)
July-December 1934	423	(10)
1935	1,154	13
1936	1,794	18
1937	1,774	(17)

Figures taken from *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji*: *xiye*, 10b.

Percentages have been calculated on the basis of the figures in Table One. For April 1933-June 1934 and July-December 1934, the percentages have been calculated for fourteen and six months respectively. The 1937 percentage is based on an average estimate for annual production for the years following 1936 in *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji*: *xiye*, 1b.

reaching a maximum of 1,794 tons in 1936. The first company to have its ore smelted by the refinery was the Yunnan Tin Company. But it is clear from the figures that by 1935 the majority of the tin smelted was supplied by the other mine owners. This was a clear success for Miao. Nevertheless, more of the tin produced at Gejiu was still smelted in the traditional manner, so the success of his plan was limited. But it was still thought great victory. Indeed, considering the difficulties that Miao encountered his efforts were remarkable.

THE YUNNAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Having proved his ability "economic development", Miao was in a sound position to expand his activities. In November 1934 the provincial government decided, after a long series of discussions, to reduce its dependence upon opium drastically.¹ The provincial government had sanctioned the creation of the Yunnan Economic

¹*Ibid.*, XIX, *jinyan*: *tiyao*, 3a-3b.

Commission earlier that year, and in December it was formally established.¹ These two events were linked. The stated purpose of the Commission was "to promote the economic reconstruction of this province, ameliorate the livelihood of the masses, and guard against economic depression."² In other words, the task of the commission was to alleviate the effects of opium prohibition through a systematic program of industrialization. The initial capital of the commission was NC\$670,000, and in the following years the Provincial Government diverted NC\$2,890,000 from the salt gabelle.³

In the beginning the Yunnan Economic Commission was set up to promote five undertakings: cotton spinning and weaving, cement manufacture, hydro-electric power, and light engineering.⁴ At the same time Miao naturally gathered under his wing the Yunnan Tin Company and Tin Refinery. Miao made plain the connection between the new program of industrialization and opium prohibition:

Since the opening of the Indo-China Railway, the import of foreign goods has increased daily, particularly cotton yarn and cloth, whose annual import value is over ten million dollars in national currency. Apart from Gejiu tin exports. What was previously relied upon to regulate the balance of exports and imports, and what was never entered in the regular trading records, was opium, of which the bulk was exported. Since 1929, when Your Excellency assumed office, the cultivation of opium has been strictly prohibited. This has been of the greatest benefit to the future and the health of the nation; but it has not been without a certain influence on the rural economy of Yunnan. I, [Miao] Jiaming, received Your Excellency's personal instruction to devise with all speed means of replacing [opium] to avoid rural poverty affecting the whole of society. I had already established the Tin Refinery, after my report had been approved, to refine standard pure tin for direct sale to Europe and America, thus increasing income from foreign exchange

¹ *Ibid.*, XIII, jingji: *Yunnan quansheng jingji weiyuanhui*, 2b.

² *Ibid.*, 1b.

³ *Ibid.*, 9a.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2b.

and so improving matters. Apart from this, I have reconsidered the tin trade, whose profit is restricted to a few counties in the south riding, while cotton yarn and cloth penetrates deeply into the rural economy of the whole province. Before opium prohibition the peasants exchanged the opium that they could grow anywhere for the cloth needed by all. . . .¹

COTTON MANUFACTURE

Opium was regularly grown in fields that would otherwise have produced wheat or beans. But neither of these crops could produce a return half as good as that of opium. The alternatives were crops such as cotton, tea or silk. But cotton was the obvious choice.

Before opium prohibition the chief subsidiary industry of rural Yunnan was opium. After opium prohibition there were many ways of making good the losses to the rural economy; cotton, silk and tea were of comparatively general importance. But while Yunnan was beginning economic reconstruction, when both capital and human resources were limited, it was impossible to undertake a number of enterprises simultaneously. The annual import of cotton goods is over ten million dollars in national currency, the effect of which on the provincial economy is extremely great, far greater than silk or tea. Therefore, the cotton spinning and weaving industries were given priority in Yunnan. . . .²

But unless there were factories to process the cotton produced in place of opium the peasants would have no market for it. As Miao put it:

Although the climate and soil of Yunnan are also suited to the cultivation of cotton, they are even better suited to the cultivation of opium. The profit from opium is greater than that from cotton. A cotton industry depends upon machinery to spin and weave. It is a combination of agriculture and industry. But the poppy is a purely

¹*Ibid.*, 1a-1b.

²*Ibid.*, XV, *jingji: sicha*, 1a.

agricultural product. Being a society with a rural economy and scarcely any industrial basis Yunnan had to abandon cotton to grow poppy. Since now they cannot grow poppy in exchange for foreign cotton, they can only grow cotton to supply themselves. In this critical period the government should quickly build spinning and weaving mills so that industry can help agriculture, and so that the cotton grown by the peasants can be immediately turned into an industrial product.¹

But until these mills were in operation the peasants, who were "short of capital and anxious for a quick profit,"² would not produce cotton, and presumably return to opium or go under. Therefore the construction of the mills would have to precede the widespread introduction of cotton. The logical consequence of this was that the mills would still at first be dependent upon cotton imports. Thus when the prohibition of opium started in 1935 the peasants had no crop to substitute for it apart from wheat and beans. The problem of opium was extremely difficult for the provincial government. The local cotton handicraft industry of Yunnan had been largely destroyed in the nineteenth century as cheaper, factory cotton became available. The peasants had turned to opium as a substitute. But reversing the process was a much more difficult task. Certainly up to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, only imported cotton was processed at the mills.

Miao purchased British and American machinery after visiting Shanghai where he engaged technicians to go to Yunnan and supervise the construction of the mills and the training of workers.³ In August 1937 the mills, which were in Kunming, began production.⁴ The initial capital investment made by the Yunnan Economic Commission was NC\$889,000, while working capital was provided in the form of loans from the New Fudian Bank to the tune of NC\$12,600,000.⁵

¹ *Ibid.*, XIII, *jingji: fangzhi*, 2b.

² *Ibid.*, 2a.

³ *Ibid.*, 6a.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6a.

⁵ *Ibid.*, *tiyao*, 17a.

The original plan of setting up mills to process local cotton in order to provide the peasants with an alternative to opium seems to have been quickly abandoned. The official account leaves no room for doubt.

Because Yunnanese production was limited and unable to meet demand, the Shanghai branch of the New Fudian Bank was entrusted with the task of conferring with the Yongan Textile Company to purchase Shanghai cotton on its behalf for transportation to Yunnan via Hongkong. . . .¹

After the Sino-Japanese War began other sources of supply were sought in Burma, Hunan and Shānxi; anywhere but Yunnan.² The provincial government most probably found it possible to make a profit from processing imported cotton while the rural areas that previously depended upon opium were not in a state of revolt, despite the severe economic effects of prohibition.

OTHER INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES

The original plan which the provincial government adopted in 1934 called for the construction of a hydro-electric power station and a cement factory. The former was designed to provide power for the industrialization program, and the latter to manufacture the cement needed to construct the power station. Yunnan was the first province in China to establish a hydro-electric power station when the Yaolong Electric Light Company (*Yaolong diandeng gongsi*) was set up in 1908.³ But this concern could only provide enough power to light Kunming, and its out-put was irregular and unreliable. Therefore it was decided to build a 40,000 kilowatt hydroelectric plant in Fumin county. The cement for the dam was to come from a new factory rather than from Indo-China, the traditional supplier. But it was soon realized that there was no need for such a large supply of power, and moreover the construction of the plant would use up all the provincial government's resources.⁴ Therefore both the hydroelectric plant

¹*Ibid.*, *fangzhi*, 12a.

²*Ibid.*, 12a.

³*Ibid.*, XIV, *jingji: dianli*, 1b.

⁴*Ibid.*, XIII, *jingji: fangzhi*, 3b.

and the associated cement factory were abandoned before they were begun. Instead a steam plant with the much more limited capacity of 1,250 kilowatts was constructed beside the spinning and weaving mills to provide power. This Kunming Power Plant (*Kunming dianli chang*) began operations in July 1937.¹

The fifth project was light engineering. Again, the fundamental aim was to cut down on imports. The provincial government planned to amalgamate the Mint, the Arsenal and the Model Technology Factory to form the Yunnan Hardware Manufacturing Factory (*Yunnan wujin qiju zhizao chang*). But entrenched interests in the Mint and Arsenal prevented this and in the end the Model Technology Factory was simply renamed and furnished with new machines.²

In the early stages of this program of industrial development capital was provided either by the Yunnan Economic Commission itself or by the New Fudian Bank, often in the form of loans. Miao acknowledged that "much of the development of all types of enterprise in Yunnan was the result of cooperation between the New Fudian Bank and the Economic Commission."³ Miao was, of course, the manager of the New Fudian Bank, and the success of his bureaucratic empire was largely based on this important access to capital. The actual sums invested in the first projects, either as fixed capital, working capital or loans, were comparatively small. The fixed capital of the Yunnan Textile Mills was NC\$889,000; over a period of perhaps seven or eight years it was provided with NC\$12,600,000 as working capital.⁴ The Metal Tool Company was given just under NC\$80,000, while the Kunming Power Plant had a capital of NC\$414,000. (See Table Five) These figures show the pre-eminent role of the cotton industry. Apart from these factories, the only other project of an industrial nature that the Economic Commission launched before the beginning of the war with Japan was the Yunnan Electrical Copper Smelting Plant (*Yunnan dianqi zhitong chang*). The purpose of this factory was to process locally mined copper after the Yunnan Mint ceased production in 1936.⁵

¹*Ibid.*, XIV, *jingli*: *dianli*, 2a.

²*Ibid.*, *jixie gongye*, 1a.

³*Ibid.*, XIII, *jingji*: *tiyao*, 3b.

⁴*Ibid.*, *fangzhi*, 6b.

⁵*Ibid.*, XIV, *jingji*: *jixie gongye*, 6a.

Table Five

Distribution of Investment in Thirty-seven Enterprises under the Control of the Yunnan Economic Commission, 1934-1941 (unit: NCS1,000)

Enterprise	Source of Investment *	
	Provincial	Central
Yunnan Tin Refinery	500	—
Yunnan Tin Company	2,000	—
Yunnan Textile Factory	13,489	—
Kaimeng Land Reclamation Bureau	20,967	—
Kunming Regional Agricultural Water Conservancy Engineering Board	88	—
Binchuan Water Conservancy Engineering Board	524	—
Binxiang Water Conservancy Supervisory Office	5,150	—
Milu Water Conservancy Supervisory Office	11,738	—
Yaolong Electricity Company	5,184	—
Tengchong Water Conservancy Electric Plant	5,000	—
Yunnan Hardware Manufacturing Factory	414	—
Yunnan Electrical Copper Smelting Plant	7,132	—
Lidian Chemical Industrial Company	5,600	—
Yunnan Economic Commission Printing Works	1,500	—
Haiyuan Printing Works	1,900	—
Yunnan Silk Company	6,000	—
Cooperative Enterprises Commission	1,000	—

Yunnan Provincial Cooperative Treasury	50,000	—
Cooperative Products Supply Board	2,000	—
Shifo Railway Engineering Preparatory Commission	2,443	—
Public Grain Conservation and Supply Board	10,000	—
Kunming Trading Company	1,570	—
Kunming Construction Office	20	—
Fohai Services	250	—
Yunnan Tin Corporation	45,000	30,000
Yudian Textile Company	14,000	10,000
Kunming Cement Company	1,200	1,800
Yunnan Distillery	1,200	3,600
Yudian Phosphorite Factory	450	900
Chinese Electrical Copper Smelting Company	2,000	300
Yunnan Iron and Steel Works	14,800	27,800
Yunfeng Paper Manufacturing Company	2,800	1,000
Yunnan New Village Silk Company	15,000	10,500
Yunnan Silk Promotion Commission	2,000	300
China Tea Trading Company	5,480	700
China Transportation Company	1,560	5,740

This table has been adapted from the table following *Jishi*, XIII, *jingji*: *tiyao*, 17a.

*Investment here refers to fixed and working capital, and loans.

WATER CONSERVANCY

Another major field of investment was water conservancy and irrigation. The Economic Commission invested about NC\$38 million in four separate projects, approximately ten percent of its total investment program. One project, the Kunming Regional Agricultural Water Conservancy Engineering Board (*Shengyuan fujin nongchang shuili gongchengchu*), was designed to increase the grain supply of the provincial capital. Between 1935 and 1939 some 17,000 *mou* of land were irrigated.¹ Two other Water Conservancy Supervisory Offices (*shuili jianrushu*), those of Binxiang and Milu, together irrigated an area of some 173,000 *mou*.² In both cases the officials in charge of the offices were very close to Long Yun: one was a brigadier-general, and the other his brother-in-law. These three projects were evidently controlled by the traditional bureaucracies of the administration and army, and not Miao.

Miao was more involved in the fourth project, the Kaimeng Land Reclamation Bureau (*Kaimeng kenzhiju*), which absorbed the greatest amount of capital, nearly NC\$21 million. Its object was to improve the grain supply to the mining district of Gejiu,³ thus lessening dependence on rice imports from Indo-China in years of bad harvest. Three separate areas in the counties of Kaiyuan and Mengzi were chosen for development: they needed either irrigation or flood control. Previously only miscellaneous grains could be grown, but the region was considered suitable for rice. The total area of the development was some 375,000 *mou*.⁴ But there is reason to believe that the only district that was successfully developed was Caoba in Mengzi, an area of 80,000 *mou*.⁵ Moreover, at least 20,000 *mou* of this land was leased to the Yunnan New Village Silk Company (*Yunnan canye xincun gongsi*) when it was discovered in 1939 to be suitable for sericulture.⁶ As was the case with the cotton mills, the original purpose of the

¹ *Ibid.*, *kenzhi yu shuili*, 14b.

² *Ibid.*, 18a, 20a.

³ *Ibid.*, 2b.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9a.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10b ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, XV, *jingji*: *sicha*, 2b.

project was neglected; large and expensive projects were never completed or were adapted for purposes other than which had been intended.

All together, the various water conservancy projects supposedly made fertile some 280,000 *mou* of land, less than one percent of the total cultivated area of the province. Considering the large amount of capital invested, these projects cannot be considered successful.

These various undertakings of the Yunnan Economic Commission described above were initiated mostly before the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, and they were entirely financed by provincial funds, whether from the commission, the New Fudian Bank or some other government agency. However, after 1937, when the Central Government and related agencies removed to southwest China bringing with them industrial capital, the situation changed. The central banks opened branches in Yunnan and began to invest in the Economic Commission's enterprises. The Central Bank opened at Kunming in December 1937, the Farmers Bank in the summer of 1938, the Bank of China in October 1938, and the Bank of Communications in spring 1939.¹

Figures for capital investment and loans to a total of thirty-seven projects, including industrial enterprises, land reclamation, and co-operatives, show the general distribution of provincial and central investment. (See Table Five) Of a total of over NC\$351 millions, provincial sources, (such as the Economic Commission itself, the New Fudian Bank and other provincial government agencies) contributed about NC\$248 millions or seventy percent. Apart from a small amount of private capital, the rest was invested by central government agencies, notably the National Resources Commission (*Ziyuan weiyuanhui*) which invested just over thirteen percent, and the Bank of China which invested about eight percent. The Central Government's heaviest investments were in tin, iron and steel, silk, cotton and alcohol. For example, in 1939 the Tin Company and the Tin Refinery were amalgamated to form the Yunnan Tin Corporation (*Yunnan xiye gongsi*) with a capital of NC\$75 millions. Of this sum the National Resources Commission and the Bank of China provided NC\$30 millions, or forty percent. Even allowing for wartime inflation, it is clear that the level of investment rose considerably after the

¹ *Yunnan sheng jingji wenti*, pp.168-170.

outbreak of war and the influx of central capital.

The Economic Commission's economic redevelopment plans had a considerable impact upon the provincial budget. The diligent Yan Rengeng sheds light on the subject. His estimate of the income of the provincial government for the years 1936 and 1937 shows that income from a source described as "local business income" which had provided a mere three percent of the total budget in 1936 jumped to thirty-five percent in 1937.¹ In short, income from industry had swiftly replaced revenues from opium taxes. The financial basis of the provincial faction had been transformed. Furthermore the power of the provincial faction was now clearly in the hands of Miao Jiaming and the provincial modernizers. The old landlord bureaucracy, which Miao had effectively by-passed, remained in a weakened condition while the generals were now under Long Yun's firm control.

The effect of the Economic Commission on the rural economy was negligible. The plan to replace opium by cotton was abandoned, and the peasants were left to cope as best they could with the consequences of prohibition. How seriously the claims made for the various land reclamation and water conservancy projects can be taken as an open question. In short, the main purpose of the Yunnan Economic Commission was to cushion the provincial government from the effects of opium prohibition. The drive to develop industry in the province was not an attempt to change the economic and social fabric. It was rather a quick, opportunistic attempt to make money to keep the government going.

8 Province and Centre, 1935-1937

The economic pressure that the Central Government sought to apply to the southwestern provinces was matched by a political and military effort to bring their resistance to national authority to an end. In autumn 1934 the Central Soviet Area was collapsing in the face of the fifth encirclement campaign, and the Red Army retreated from the débâcle, pursued by the divisions of Nanking. This Long March from Jiangxi province passed through the three provinces of southwest China whose autonomy had previously gone by default. Central Government troops entered these regions for the first time, with immediate consequences. In Guizhou, the weakest and poorest province of the three, the local generals, weak and divided, were swept away without resistance. In Sichuan, the conflict between the provincial and central authorities did not have such drastic results, although the struggle was severe enough.¹ But this was not the case with Yunnan. The province certainly felt the weight of central power, but no generals were removed, no institutional changes were recommended; if anything, the influence of Long Yun was somewhat increased in the southwest.

The immunity of Yunnan, the preservation of the existing political system, was guaranteed by the strength of the regime. A visitor in 1935 remarked that the "unity of purpose of all the members of the provincial government was not something that Sichuan could match."² Long Yun naturally took great pains to convince Chiang Kai-shek of his loyalty to the Central Government and his acceptance of the Three Principles of the People. Perhaps equally important was

¹ Kapp, p.105.

² Chen Bulei, p.81.

the sharp contrast between the industrial and entrepreneurial policies of Yunnan and those of other poppy provinces. Nothing like the Yunnan Economic Commission existed in Guizhou or Sichuan. Long and Miao could point to the Yunnan Tin Refinery as an example of their success. Chiang Kai-shek was impressed, indeed quite enraptured with the prospect of Yunnan as a great industrial base. Here after all was a provincial government that was turning towards the future, a bureaucratic complex something like Nanking that appreciated the necessity of being "modern." There were also strategic considerations. The autonomy of Yunnan was only a minor annoyance, and significant only because the transit of opium from Yunnan across Guangxi helped maintain the independence of the latter.

YUNNAN AND THE LONG MARCH

The provincial government understood the need for unity after the cautionary example of Guizhou. Long had interested himself in the politics of that province since his rise to power. He had given support to You Guocai, a general who had incidentally invaded Yunnan in 1927 at the orders of Zhou Xicheng. In March 1933 You had visited Kunming with a request for help in his civil war with Wang Jialie, then chairman of the Guizhou provincial government.¹ In summer 1934 You had not received the armed intervention that he had hoped for; yet with Long Yun's support he had reached an agreement with Wang that gave him control of a few counties in southwest Guizhou along the Yunnan border.² In this fashion Long provided himself with a client buffer-state, preserving the disunity of Guizhou and preventing the growth of Guangxi's influence in the province.

When the Long March approached Guizhou, Long Yun reconsidered the situation. He sent a telegram to Wang and You in which he outlined the possibility that the armies of He Long and Xiao Ke, together with those retreating from Jiangxi, would fall upon Guizhou. He urged them to put aside their differences. "If this rumour is true the scourge of communism will fall upon the whole of the southwest and not on one or two provinces only . . . It is trusted that you will take the

¹ United States Consulate, report 79, 3 October 1933.

² *Ibid.*, report 148, 27 May 1934.

occasion to cooperate honestly so that I may assist you in every possible way in communism suppression."¹ This was a public telegram (the text is a translation made by the United States consulate); therefore Long was guarded in his words. Yet his keen awareness of regional interests is apparent.

However, Long's last-minute urgings were useless. The Guizhou armies proved incompetent to a degree, and their generals were whisked away by Chiang Kai-shek. Hou Zhidan was taken off to Chongqing in January 1935 for fighting with insufficient vigour.² On 7 April, Wang Jialie requested permission to resign his office as chairman of the provincial government and on 3rd May he was flown out of Guiyang to Hankou in Zhang Xueliang's private aircraft.³ And before he left, Chiang dismissed the provincial government on 25 April, and installed a new one which was considerably less provincial in its membership.⁴

The implications for Yunnan were clear and did not need to be spelled out. But this crushing demonstration of the power of the Central Government was not a bolt from the blue. In autumn 1934 Chiang Kai-shek had begun a series of journeys to the northwestern and southwestern provinces that was quite unique. For the first time these regions and their rulers were physically confronted with central authority in the flesh. On 8 November 1934 he visited Taiyuan, the capital of Shānxi, where he made "a slashing attack on the opium and other drug evils, which he condemned as the greatest curse of China. . ."⁵ In Guiyang in early 1935 he "flayed the curse of opium and told them they would have to wipe it out and do something to develop the province. . ."⁶

¹*Ibid.*, report 209, 3 October 1934.

²*Jiaofei zhanshi*, V, 877.

³*Zhongyang ribao*, 10 April, 5 May 1935.

⁴*Ibid.*, 24, 25 April 1935.

⁵Tong, Hollington, K., *Chiang Kai-shek: Soldier and Statesman* 2 vols. (London, 1938), II, 357.

⁶*Ibid.*, p.360.

In such an atmosphere the Central Government tried to coordinate the southwestern provinces into a "united front." In late 1934 Chiang Kai-shek sent telegrams to various provincial leaders in Guangxi and Guizhou as well as to Long. He supposed that the plan of the Communists was to unite their armies, and therefore he intended to pick them off one by one before they could do so.¹ On 2 February 1935 he appointed Long Commander-in-Chief of the Second Route Bandit Extermination Army with the Nanking general, "tough guy"² Xue Yue, his deputy.³ In fact it was Xue who directed the campaign against the Long March in Guizhou while Long remained in Kunming. Long had sent three brigades to the region of Weixin and Zhenxiong in the extreme northeast of Yunnan, and on 1 February 1935 one of these brigades clashed with some of the Long Marchers.⁴

However, it was only on 24 April that the Long March entered Yunnan; it passed through rapidly and with little opposition, crossing the Jinsha River on 9 May.⁵ The Government sent in nine divisions: the eight divisions of the first and second columns of the Second Route Army and one division from the seventh column of the First Route Army.⁶ There were two other columns: the third was entirely Yunnanese under the command of Sun Du, and the fourth was composed of Wang Jialie's former troops who were ordered to remain in northeastern Guizhou.⁷ The third column made little contact with the Long March and spent its time guarding against a surprise attack on Kunming.⁸ The troops of the Central Government did not remain in Yunnan.

In 1936 the forces of He Long and Xiao Ke again passed through Yunnan, and again Central Government troops were ordered into Yunnan. During May 1936 a total of thirty-six regiments was

¹ *Jiaofei zhanshi*, V, 867-868.

² The phrase is Stilwell's.

³ *Jiaofei zhanshi*, V, 879.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Zhongyang ribao*, 11 May 1935.

⁶ *Jiaofei jishi*, V, 879.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.895.

⁸ United States Consulate, report 26, 27 February 1935.

mostly in the north and west of the province: Yang Sen, the Sichuan general, was reported to have 20,000 men in Zhaotong, while Liu Jianxu commanded regiments in the Yongren-Huaping district by the Jinsha River, in Dali and in Yanfeng, midway between the two former regions.¹ No Central Government troops were stationed near the provincial capital, and by June 45,000 out of the 55,000 troops sent to Yunnan were withdrawn.²

In both these campaigns the Red Army passed through the province without a serious battle, while the Central Government troops did not outstay their welcome. In Guizhou there had been a number of armies with generals more or less independent. The province was fragmented, and the supremacy of a provincial government was illusory. But in Yunnan fragmentation of power had ended with Long's victory and consolidation in the late 1920s. All military power was under a single, centralized administration. It was impossible for Chiang Kai-shek to remove a general from command as he had done in Guizhou and even Sichuan,³ for none of the armies in Yunnan were independent of the provincial centre.

CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S VISIT TO YUNNAN

Chiang Kai-shek arrived in Kunming on 10 May 1935. The previous day Long had sent him a telegram announcing, no doubt with much relief, that there were no more "bandits" in his province. The preparations for Chiang's visit were meticulous; indeed, they had been under way for two months.⁴ In the city of Kunming the regulations governing opium prohibition were conspicuously displayed, and the sign over the Opium Prohibition Bureau was absent.⁵ Fortunately Madame Chiang recorded her impressions of their arrival in Kunming on that day.

¹ *Ibid.*, reports 164, 21 April 1936; 170, 4 May 1936; 173, 9 May 1936; 192, 7 July 1936.

² *Ibid.*, report 192, 7 July 1936.

³ Kapp, p.104.

⁴ *Zhongyang ribao*, 11 May 1935.

⁵ Lécorché, p.244.

Chairman and Madame Long, accompanied by boy and girl students and fellow countrymen from all walks of life, came to greet us. We entered the city by car, and on both sides of the road there were rows and rows of students wearing white uniforms, and among them were some wearing blue. We entered the city where we were greeted by a sea of faces; the people blocked the road entirely. From the door of every house flew the National Flag; all the neighbourhoods were festooned with coloured lanterns. This warm demonstration made a great impression on us.¹

Other aspects of Kunming also impressed the Chiangs. And the further remarks of Madame Chiang make clear the extraordinary veneration which she had for the modern and for the orderly, a feeling shared by her husband and many of his supporters. Firstly, the "roads; in the city of Kunming were very clean and orderly; all the buildings were of one colour, and in comparison with the higgledy-piggledy, disorderly buildings we had seen elsewhere, were much more pleasant."² Long had in fact taken some pains to "modernize" the city. The streets had been widened, and concrete facings had been put on the shops.² The Chiangs believed that China could not become "modern" until its inhabitants had rid themselves of a distressing lack of discipline. Madame Chiang noted with approval that the "travellers on the street divided into right and left, and they moved up and down in a most orderly way."³

The next few days saw a round of banquets, celebrations and speeches. Long noted that Chiang's visit to Kunming was unprecedented, since for the first time in Chinese history a national leader had come in person, rather than simply "condescend to make enquiries from records."⁴

This phrase was not simply a polite formula; the Yunnanese élite genuinely wished to be at once independent and yet esteemed by the nation. On 12 May Chiang declared that he had "already brought

¹ Song Meiling, *Jiang furen yanlun huibian*, 4 vols (Taipei, 1956), IV, 24-25.

² Fischer, p.205.

³ Song Meiling, IV, 24-25.

⁴ *Zhongyang ribao*, 14 May 1935.

the spirit of the centre to Yunnan," and added that he would now take the spirit of Yunnan back to the centre.¹ Furthermore, he declared that he hoped to make a tour of inspection every year, a prospect which probably evoked mixed feelings in the audience.

Chiang took care to flatter Long, and Long made protestations of loyalty. Chiang affirmed that Yunnan was "an important revolutionary base and had a most glorious revolutionary history . . . It may be said that Chairman Long and I simultaneously and jointly undertook the revolutionary responsibility as bequeathed to us by the Director-General."² A most polite fiction. Praise of Long was repeated in 1936. A *Dagong bao* editorial of April of that year extolled Long's military accomplishments and noted that for this reason he had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of Bandit Extermination in Yunnan and Guizhou.³

In his turn Long stressed his loyalty. He said:

I earnestly request the Chairman to give us the fullest instructions and revise all previous programs. [We] of Yunnan have worked long and hard for the Nation and for Justice (*zhengyi*); [we] hold firm to the aims of the Chairman and are obedient to his every order.⁴

Chen Bulei, Chiang Kai-shek's secretary, records:

Mr Chiang also praised Chairman Long highly, saying that he was straightforward and a man of principle. Therefore, after arriving in Kunming he confined himself to discussing with him how to revive culture and industry so as to establish a base for national defence in the southwest. But in other political matters, although Mr Long frequently asked for guidance, Mr Chiang in each instance simply gave a broad outline and left him with absolute responsibility. . . .⁵

¹ *Dagong bao*, 15 May 1935.

² *Ibid.*, 14 May 1935.

³ *Ibid.*, 28 April 1936.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 14 May 1935.

⁵ Chen Bulei, p.81.

Clearly Chiang was careful not to offend in any way. One important example of this delicacy was the question of opium. During his visit he made a speech in which he pointed out the harm that the continued existence of the opium trade was doing to China's international standing.¹ But in the reports of Chiang's speeches published in the *Zhongyang Ribao* there is only the briefest of references to the on 21 May. Economic pressure on Yunnan to try and ensure loyalty to the Central Government was one thing, openly criticism of a potential ally was quite another.

Chiang also subtly hinted at the extent of his power, as the following passage from Chen Bulei's autobiography shows.

Very many of the bandit remnants (i.e. the Long March) had fled to hide in Huili and Xichang. One day Mr Chiang invited Chairman Long to accompany him in his aircraft to inspect the bandit situation, indicating the strategy of the encirclement operations. Chairman Long himself remarked that it was his first time in an aircraft. While looking at Mr Chiang indicating the geography and expounding on strategy, he sighed even more over the extensiveness of war, and he repeated this to us many times.²

What seems to have created the most profound impression on Chiang was the program of industrialization that Yunnan had embarked upon under Miao Jiaming. He expressed the hope that "our Yunnanese compatriots will arise and establish a truly industrialized Yunnan to serve as a vital base for the regeneration of the nation."³ This theme was repeated on the following day with further embellishments. China must "advance from being an agricultural to an industrial nation." Yunnan was suitable because the "mineral deposits are very rich," and also because "the climate of the whole province is beautiful." He concluded: "If we want to establish industry, we must start from Yunnan."⁴ Indeed, he expected the establishment of industry in Yunnan within three years, whatever that meant.⁵

¹ Mei Gongren, p.304.

² Chen Bulei, pp.80-81.

³ *Dagong bao*, 15 May 1935.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 May 1935.

Within a few days of his arrival Chiang had been convinced of Yunnan's industrial potential. One might suppose that such an idea was simply flattery. For the industrial potential of Yunnan was in fact extremely limited. There were good deposits of tin and other non-ferrous metals, but in other respects the prospects were gloomy. Capital was in short supply, communications were very bad, and there was no trained labour force. These deficiencies were well understood by Miao Jiaming. In 1939 he observed: "The conditions for economic reconstruction are not complete, making it genuinely and basically difficult to push economic schemes."¹ But if it was flattery, it nevertheless became a common belief that Yunnan was well on the road to industrialization. In the *Dagong bao* it was described as "a great treasury of raw materials," and, in a somewhat curious phrase, as "one of the provinces which has comparatively the brightest future."¹ It seems more likely that Chiang believed that he had made an important discovery.

On his tour of inspection, whether in Taiyuan, Chongqing or Guiyang, he had encountered provincial governments that still looked almost entirely to the land for their revenue. By contrast Kunming gleamed with the light of modernity and industry. In the other border provinces the landlord and military bureaucracies were in control; but in Yunnan the state capitalism of Miao Jiaming seemed to be gaining the upper hand. And Long Yun no doubt paraded the successes of his government before Chiang, representing Yunnan as a province that was following in Nanking's footsteps, that had followed Chiang's example.

The events of 1935 — Chiang Kai-shek's visit and the passage of the Long March — had confirmed Long Yun's authority, not weakened it. Where other provincial generals had fallen victim to the expansion of central power or had been obliged to give ground, he had retained full control. The only price that he paid was to acknowledge unequivocally the legitimate supremacy of Chiang Kai-shek as national ruler. In the few years that were left before the outbreak of war, Long never failed to express his loyalty to the Central Government, although on occasion it was somewhat muted. The most important example of this support came during the Guangxi attack on the Central Government in June 1936.

¹ Towards an Economic Handbook of Yunnan (n.c.p.).

² *Dagong bao*, 9 June 1937.

YUNNAN AND GUANGXI

The precise nature of the relationship between Long and the Guangxi leaders, Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi, is open to speculation. In 1929 and 1930 Yunnan had fought against Guangxi on behalf of the Central Government. Furthermore Yunnan had refused to give any support to the political ambitions of Guangxi. In June 1936 Long said: "Although Yunnan shares a common border with Guangxi province, in politics we have consistently refused to combine."¹ However, Long and Li became sworn brothers at some point during the early 1930s, although what the occasion of this event was is unknown.²

Two issues determined relations between Yunnan and Guangxi. On the one hand, it was in Yunnan's interest that the balance of power between Nanking and Guangxi be maintained; the defeat of either would have been a severe threat to its independence. At the same time it was in Guangxi's interest to keep Yunnan at least neutral. This is revealed in a *Dagong bao* editorial of 28 April 1936 stating that Li Zongren had repeatedly sent telegrams to Chiang Kai-shek urging him to give Long Yun responsibility for "pacification" in Guizhou. Li must have hoped that Yunnan's influence in Guizhou would counterbalance that of the Central Government. In the end he was frustrated, but it is clear how mutual interest kept each province on terms with each other, even if it precluded friendly collaboration.

The second issue was economic tie between the two provinces through the opium trade. Exports of opium from Guizhou and Yunnan passed through Guangxi; the tax on the transit of the goods was a valuable source of revenue for the Guangxi leaders. But the rate of taxation was a constant source of dispute between the provinces. A quarrel over the rate of taxation was probably the reason for

¹ *Ibid.*, 2 July 1936.

² Liang Shengjun, *Jiang Li douzheng neimu* (Hongkong 1954), 185. Professor T.K. Tong (letter to me, 28 April 1970) writes: "Li and Lung were sworn brothers . . . I am positively sure that this happened between 1933 and 1935. I remember Li told me that Lung, without previous arrangement, suddenly sent a messenger to Kwangsi with a copy of 盟帖. Li said he did not like the 'feudalistic idea' of making sworn brotherhood with Lung. Obviously Li did not reject Lung's gesture of friendship either, so they became sworn brothers by proxy."

Lu Han's expedition to western Guangxi in 1930, rather than support for Nanking.

When the Guangxi units marched north against the Central Government in 1936, ostensibly against the Japanese, telegrams of support from military leaders reached Nanking and were published in the press. However, the only mention of Long Yun is one of a speech he made to students at Kunming on 25 June. The students were enthusiastic, according to the pro-Chiang account, in their acclaim for Nanking, and Long agreed with them. "All students are already aware that this movement by the two Guangs (i.e. Guangxi and Guangdong) is hypocritical."¹ This is apparently all that he said, although it may be that other more positive statements have now been lost. His speech was a bare minimum.

¹*Dagong bao*, 2 July 1936.

Conclusion

The political and military pressure which the Central Government exerted on the provincial government, from the time of the Long March up to the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, was limited. The political and military machine which Long Yun had created was neither affected by the presence of troops from outside the province whether central or provincial nor shaken by the visits of Chiang Kai-shek.

Yet the structure of Long Yun's regime had changed. In the early years of his rule, his government was composed of powerful army officers, who ultimately challenged his authority, and a landlord bureaucracy of declining efficiency. The regime financed itself from traditional resources, mostly agricultural; in particular it tapped the opium trade and encouraged its expansion. In comparison with Guizhou and Sichuan the provincial government was secure; in the latter provinces no single faction had succeeded in uniting the province. In the late 1930s there had been little change on the surface: the army and landlord bureaucracies remained. But the army officers of this period were completely subordinate to Long Yun whose authority had grown immeasurably. The individual units that they commanded were smaller and less powerful. The officials who ran the provincial administration no longer held a monopoly of power, for the opium trade was withering. In the wake of this decline the new program of "economic reconstruction," which gathered speed after 1934, brought into being a bureaucratic apparatus to control investment in industry and enterprise. The revenue generated by the Economic Commission and its works replaced those lost when opium was abandoned.

The economic pressure applied to Yunnan through the attack by the Central Government on the opium trade in central and southern China

was the catalyst of the changes which took place in the nature of the regime. Yet this form of pressure did not, in the end, lead to a closer relationship between central and local authority. Even during the war, when the Central Government removed to Chongqing, and when the financial institutions of the centre poured capital into the province, the authority of Long Yun was not shaken.¹

The survival of Long Yun's authority in Yunnan and the continued autonomy of the province were ensured by the metamorphosis of the regime. The simple exploitation of the rural economy by traditional means had become insufficient to maintain a government such as Long Yun's in power. The arrival of central power in the southwest of China, at first in the form of monopoly control of the most valuable export of this region and later as military force and political influence, produced different responses from different regimes. In Yunnan the presence of large tin mines in the south of the province and the introduction of the concept of state control in industry married to provide a new source of economic power. The new state in Yunnan, however flimsy and superficial, was enough to preserve the power of Long Yun and resist outside infiltration.

¹ Melby, p.142.



Yunnan Province

Glossary

- An Dehua 安德化
 Anning 安寧
 Bai Chongxi 白崇禧
 Banqiao 板橋
 Basai 八塞
biaozhun 標準
 Binchuan 賓川
 Binxiang 賓祥
 Bisezhai 碧色寨
caibanzheng 裁辦證
Canyiyuan 參議院
 Caoba 草壩
 Chen Bulei 陳布雷
 Chen Jiongming 陳炯明
 Chen Jun 陳鈞 (Heting)
 和亭
 Chen Weigeng 陳維庚
 Chongqing 重慶
Chouxiang zongju 籌餉總局
 Chuxiong 楚雄
Ci fei jun 炊飛軍
 Dali 大理
daode 道德
Daxi yahui zhangcheng 大錫押滙
 章程
 Ding Zhaoguan 丁兆冠
Dong dalu zhuren 東大陸主人
 Dongjiang 東江
 Dongxing 東興
 Dou Zijin 寶子進
 Dou Zijun 寶子駿
 Fan Shisheng 范石生
feng jun zhi e 逢君之惡
 Fohai 佛海
 Fouling 涪陵
Fudian xin yinhang 富滇新銀行
 Fumin 富民
fuyuanshuai 副元師
 Gejiu 箇舊
 Gong Zizhi 龔自治
gonggao 公膏
gongzhan 公棧
 Gu Pinzhen 顧品鎮
Guangyun 廣雲
 Guilin 桂林
 Guiyang 貴陽

¹ This glossary does not include the names of provinces or other familiar names.

Guizhou sheng jinyan zongju

zhengshou tehuo shengshui

zhangcheng 貴州省禁烟總局

征收特貨省稅章程

Guo Yuluan 郭玉鑾

Haiyuan 海源

Hankou 漢口

He Jian 何健

He Long 賀龍

He Yingchin 何應欽

Hou Zhidan 侯之担

Hu Royu 胡若愚

Hu Ying 胡瑛

Hu Yunshan 胡蘊山

Huang Shaoxiong 黃紹雄

huguojun 護國軍

Huili 會理

huishang banfa 會商辦法

Jianshui 建水

Jiang Yingshu 江映樞

jieryanyao 戒煙藥

jiheyuan 稽核員

Jin Handing 金漢鼎

jinbi tashan 金碧沓山

Jinsha 金沙

jinshi 進士

Jinyan duchachu 禁烟督查處

jinyan fajin 禁烟罰金

Jinyan zhanxing jianzhang 禁烟
暫行簡章

Jishengxiang 集盛祥

junfa 軍閥

Junshi canyiyuan 軍事參議院

Junshi weiyuanhui 軍事委員會

juren 舉人

Kaimeng kenzhiju 開蒙墾殖局

Kaiyang 開陽

Kaiyuan 開遠

kuaiji zhidu 會計制度

Kunming 昆明

Kunming dianli chang 昆明電力廠

Kunyang 昆陽

Li Baidong 李白東

Li Biaodong 李表東

Li Jihong 李基鴻

Li Jishen 李濟深

Li Peilian 李培蓮

Li Peitian 李培天

Li Peiyan 李培炎

Li Shaozong 李紹宗

Li Shen 李燦

Li Xuanting 李選廷

Li Zongren 李宗仁

Liangshan 涼山

Lidian 利滇

Lin Zexu 林則徐

Liu Jianxu 劉健徐

Liu Wenhui 劉文輝

Liu Xiang 劉湘

Liu Zhenhuan 劉震寰

Long Dengfeng 龍登鳳

Long Deyuan 龍德源

Long Qingquan 龍清泉

Long Shengqi 龍繩箕

Long Shengwu 龍繩武

Long Yucang 龍雨蒼

- Long Yun 龍雲
 Long Zehui 龍澤淮
 Long Zeqing 龍澤清
 Lu Chongren 陸崇仁
 Lu Han 盧漢
 Lu Xirong 盧錫榮
 Lufeng 祿豐
 Luliang 陸良
 Luxi 瀘西
 Lü Zhiyi 呂志伊
 Luoping 羅平
 Ma Cong 馬驄
 Ma Weilin 馬爲麟
 Ma Yinchu 馬寅初
 Maguan 馬關
 Mao Guangxiang 毛光翔
 Meng Youwen 孟友聞
 Mengzi 蒙自
 Miao Anchen 繆安臣
 Miao Jiaming 繆嘉銘
 Miao Jiashou 繆嘉壽
 Mingshuai 蔘帥
 minjun 民軍
 Minzhidang 民治黨
 Mo Pu 莫璞
 mou 畝
 moufa 畝罰
 Nanning 南寧
 Nansheng 南生
 nie 孽
 Paiyuan chajin shisheng zhong-
 yan banfa 派員查禁十省種
 烟辦法
 Pingyi 平彝
 Pu Wenrong 樸文榮
 Qianxi 黔西
 qing jun ce 清君側
 Qingdao 清島
 Qujing 曲靖
 Quanye yinhang 勸業銀行
 san yi 三迤
 Shantou 汕頭
 Sheng zhengfu weiyuanhui 省政府
 委員會
 Shengwu weiyuanhui 省務委員會
 Shengyuan fujin nongchang shuili
 gongchengju 省垣附近農場水利
 工程處
 Shenyigong 慎義公
 shezhiju 說治局
 Shifo 石佛
 Shiping 石屏
 Shizong 師宗
 shoujie 守節
 shuili jianshushu 水利監督署
 sixiang 思想
 Sun Chuanfang 孫傳芳
 Sun Du 孫渡
 Sun Guangting 孫光庭
 Taiyuan 太原
 Tang Jilin 唐繼麟
 Tang Jiyao 唐繼堯 (Ming-
 geng) 蔘康
 Tang Jiyu 唐繼虞
 Tang Songlin 唐松林

- Tang Xiaoming 唐筱 棠
 Tao Hongtao 陶鴻燾
 Tehuo tongyunchu 特貨統運處
 Tengchong 騰衝
 Teshuichu 特稅處
 Teshui qinglichu 特稅清理處
 Tianbaoli 天寶利
 tiao 挑
 Tongmenghui 同盟會
 Tu Kaizong 屠開宗
 waishang 外商
 Wang Bingjun 王秉鈞
 Wang Fusheng 王復生
 Wang Jialie 王家烈
 Wang Jiexiu 王淩修
 Wang Jiuling 王九齡
 Wang Renwen 王人文
 Wang Ruwei 王汝爲
 Wang Shengzu 王繩祖
 Wang Wenren 王文人
 wangguo miezhong 亡國滅種
 Wanxian 萬縣
 Weixin 威信
 weiyuan 委員
 Wenshan 文山
 Wu Kun 吳琨
 Wu Peifu 吳佩孚
 Wu Xuexian 吳學顯
 Wuchang 武昌
 Wuding 武定
 Wuhan 武漢
 wusheng 武生
 Xiaguan 下關
 Xiangyun 祥雲
 Xiao Ke 肅克
 Xichou 西疇
 Xinning 新寧
 xinyang zhuyi 信仰主義
 Xiong Tingquan 熊延權
 Xu Zhichen 徐之琛
 Xuanwei 宣威
 Xue Yue 薛岳
 Xufu 敘府
 Xudian 尋甸
 Yanfeng 鹽豐
 Yanjin fudi shengfen zhongyan
 qudi caiban biansheng chantu
 zhangcheng 嚴禁服地省份種煙
 取締裁辦邊省產土章程
 yajuan 煙捐
 yang qi bixi 仰其鼻息
 Yang Sen 楊森
 Yang Wenqing 楊文清
 Yanglin 楊林
 yangtiao 洋條
 Yaogao zhizaoso 藥膏製造所
 Yaolong diandeng gongsi 翟
 電燈公司
 yapian yakuan 鴉片押款
 Yi 彝
 yi 夷
 Yichang 宜昌
 Yiji 義記
 Yiliang 宜良
 Yin Chenghuan 殷成寰
 Yongjia 永嘉

- You Guocai 猶國材
 You Yunlong 由雲龍
 Yu Zongze 喻宗澤
 Yuan Changrong 袁昌榮
 Yuan Shikai 袁世凱
 Yuan Zuming 袁祖銘
 Yuanmou 元謀
 Yuantongsijie 袁通寺街
 Yudian 裕滇
 Yumai tehuo huikuan zhangcheng
 預買特貨滙款章程
 Yunfeng 雲豐
 Yunnan canye xincun gongsi 雲南
 蠶業新村公司
 Yunnan dianqi zhitong chang
 雲南電氣製銅廠
 Yunnan jingji weiyuanhui 雲南
 經濟委員會
 Yunnan lianxi gongsi 雲南鍊錫
 公司
 Yunnan minjun xuanfu zhuan-
 yuan 雲南民軍宣撫專員
 Yunnan wujin qiju zhizao chang
 雲南五金器具製造廠
 Yunnan xiwu gongsi 雲南錫務
 公司
 Yunnan xiye gongsi 雲南錫業
 公司
 Yuqi 玉溪
 zhang 張
 Zhang Banghan 張邦翰
 Zhang Chong 張冲
 Zhang Fengchun 張鳳春
 Zhang Jieba 張結疤
 Zhang Kairu 張開儒
 Zhang Rogu 張若谷
 Zhang Ruji 張汝驥
 Zhang Weihuan 張維翰
 Zhang Xueliang 張雪良
 Zhang Yaozeng 張耀曾
 Zhang Zuyin 張祖蔭
 zhanzhongqu 展種區
 Zhaotong 昭通
 Zheng Hongnian 鄭洪年
 zhengyi 正義
 zhenshoushi 鎮守使
 Zhenxiong 鎮雄
 Zhongguo Guomindang Yunnan
 linshi junzheng weiyuanhui 中國
 國民黨雲南臨時軍政委員會
 Zhonghua guomin judu hui 中華
 國民拒毒會
 Zhongshan zhuyi 中山主義
 Zhou Xicheng 周西成
 Zhou Zhongyu 周鍾嶽
 Zhu Jingxuan 朱精宣
 Zhu Peide 朱培德
 Zhu Xu 朱旭
 Ziyuan weiyuanhui 資源委員會
 Zongbu nongcun jinrong jiuji chu
 總部農村金融救濟處
 zongcai 總裁
 zongzhi 總制

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