The Military in the Republic

Hans van de Ven

In England in the late 1920s, authors like Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves and Edmund Blunden began to write about their experiences at the front of the Great War. They did not settle simply for a pacifist condemnation, but said goodbye to an old world of faith in progress and optimism about the future. A general questioning of the nature of the individual, the possibility of the good and the value of civilization followed in literature and elsewhere. A new sensibility especially of the individual but also of modernity and the nation was then formulated.[1] Part of the new understanding was that an army could only serve to overcome the forces of militaristic and perverted societies. Military conflict was at best a temporarily inevitable aberration.

In China the perspective on war has been strikingly different. Following the First World War pacifist voices speaking of harmonious Eastern cultures could be heard, but they did not last nor were they dominant. As in the West before the First World War, many saw the military as a symbol of modern values, advanced organizational practices and a patriotism that in society at large remained largely latent. The war itself and the rise of the warlords did counter the naive militarism of this period, but Nationalists and Communists alike believed not only in the inevitability of war but also in its positive potential. Armies were not merely the necessary instruments to overcome opposition and secure the new order, though even as such their armies, because of their size, needs in terms of human and material resources, and warfare, had very important implications for Chinese society, state structures and politics. But part of the revolutionary perception was also the belief in a violent catharsis as a positive process in which old, backward and inequitable practices would be eradicated. For both the Nationalists and the Communists their armies and military ways of operating served as models for imitation and sources of values and practices. During the War of Resistance against Japan warfare was easily embraced as simply a duty to China as a nation and civilization. Patriotic themes, heroism and sacrifice for the nation were the dominant themes in popular culture, drama and literature.[2]

In 20th-century Chinese literature the depiction of war is not simplistically positive. In Mao Dun's *Midnight*, Lu Xun's short stories and Ba Jin's *Family*, warfare and soldiers are pictured as products of the old

1. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

2. Hung Chang-tai, *War and Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) and "The politics of songs," in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (1996), pp. 901–930. There were of course significant dissenting voices, such as those of Zhou Zuoren in literature.

Chinese culture and society. The implicit message is that in the future war and the military will not be necessary. The incidence of warfare is treated as an indication of the barbarity and backwardness of contemporary society. In these works, and especially so in the writings of Lao She and Qian Zhongshu, warfare is an alienating agent, severing a natural intimacy between the protagonists and their world, and implicitly between the author, who knows of a better future, and his society.[3] Thus the purpose of this article is certainly not to argue that China was militaristic in the same way as Prussian or Nazi Germany.[4] Foreign pressures forced a militarization upon China which in the case of Germany resulted from expansionist tendencies. And the worst features of Chinese militarism were unleashed within China in periods of civil war, rather than elsewhere outside China. But in the late Qing and again after the rise of the Nationalists and Communists, dominant perceptions of how to construct a state or conduct revolution did view the military as the midwife of a modern and cohesive China.

Besides drawing attention to this faith in the military as an instrument and model, this article also seeks to indicate the significance of the military in shaping the Republic institutionally, economically and politically. It drove state-building, altered modes of political organization and action, affected school curricula, moulded managerial habits, and propelled economic development. The impact of both militarism – respect for martial values and attitudes promoted in the military – and the militarization of Chinese society – the spread of organizational techniques, routines and attitudes characteristic of the military to other realms – have been profound. The command economy, work units, commune cafeterias and production campaigns illustrate the influence of military models during the 1950s. In the 1960s many genuinely wanted to imitate Lei Feng, and the Cultural Revolution relied heavily on the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) past for its models. It was also during the Cultural Revolution that the PLA stepped in and actually ran most of the major work units in Chinese cities, thus stopping the slide into destructive chaos. Fashions too derived from the military. Even if the PLA is now less genuinely popular, the rhetoric of many newspapers, the continued supply of rationed commodities through the work unit, the organization of production and the military past of such a company as Panda Electronics, which previously built communications equipment for the army,

3. On Lao She, see David Der Wei Wang, *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-Century China: Mao Dun, Lau She, Shen Congwen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). I am indebted to Susan Daruvala for pointing out this work and for help with this paragraph.

4. The term militarism is difficult to define. In European history and in political science, where of course Prussian and Nazi militarism have been the focus of attention, it is often used to refer to the domination of the political by the military. A good discussion of the term and of German militarism can be found in Volker Berghahn, *Militarism* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982). Militarism has also been interpreted as the political domination of the military. Here I use militarism more broadly, to refer to the appreciation of qualities normally associated with the military. By militarization I mean the imitation of organizational and attitudinal principles outside the military. For classic study of the influence of managerial habits of the modern military in other spheres of life, see William McNeil, *The Pursuit of Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

continue to inscribe a recent past heavily shaped by the military in the daily life of China today.

The Modern Military

During and after the Taiping Rebellion of 1852–64 the first efforts were undertaken to create modern army units and a modern navy. Western models of training were adopted by some units, the Jiangnan and Fuzhou arsenals produced Western-type armaments, and defensive installations along the coast and along the Chang River (easily navigable by the ever more powerful foreign navies) were updated. But it was only after the modern navy that Li Hungzhang had carefully built up was sunk and its forces on land defeated during the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 that military modernization and expansion became accepted as an absolute urgency.[5] The cessation of Taiwan as well as the loss of effective control over Korea and important parts of Manchuria meant that China had lost control of the Yellow Sea and that Beijing could be easily attacked by a naval expeditionary force. The Allied occupation of Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion illustrated the point. The scramble for concessions that followed the first Sino-Japanese War illustrated not only that the capital was far from safe but that fiscally and strategically important areas along the coast and along China's rivers too could not be defended. The disorder and rebellion of the Boxer Uprising also made clear that the Qing was in danger once more of losing control of local society, this time close to the capital. This context justified the adoption, finally, of radically new approaches, not just in the military but in other areas as well. The New Policies envisaged profound changes to China's constitution, including the creation of a national military, constitutional government and a new, Western-style educational system. By the time of the 1911 Revolution, the fate of the revolution was decided by the new military men in Beijing and in the provinces.[6]

The build-up of the modern military after 1895 is usually described from the perspective of the rise of the warlords.[7] As Arthur Waldron and

5. On the war, see Allen Fung, "Testing the self-strengthening: the Chinese Army in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95," in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (1996), pp. 1007–32.

6. Ralph Powell, *The Rise of Chinese Military Power, 1895–1912* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955); Stephen McKinnon, *Power and Politics in Late Imperial China: Yuan Shih-k'ai in Beijing and Tienjin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Edmund Fung, *The Military Dimension of the Chinese Revolution* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1980); Republican History Section, Modern History Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, *Zhonghua minguo shi ziliao conggao, zhuanti ziliao xuanji, qingmo xinjun bianlian yange (A Draft Collection of Sources for the History of the Chinese Republic: Collections of Sources on Specialized Topics: History of the Establishment and Training of the New Army during the Late Qing and Early Republic)* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978). See also the works mentioned in n. 7.

7. Wen Gongzhi, "Zuijin sanshinian Zhongguo junshi shi" ("The history of the Chinese military in the previous 30 years"), republished in Zhong Bofeng and Li Zongyi (eds.), *Beiyang junfa* (Wuhan: Wuhan Press, 1989), Vol. 1, pp. 1–18; Jerome Chen, *The Military–Gentry Coalition* (Toronto: University of Toronto and York University, 1979); Jiang Kefu, *Minguo junshishi luegao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987); Lai Xinxia, *Beiyang junfa*

Edward McCord have pointed out, the term was always political.[8] In the 1920s the Nationalists and the Communists applied the derogatory label "warlord" (*junfa*) to the power-holders of the time. The label suggested that they were in power only because they controlled military force, that their rule was corrupt and exploitative, and that they did nothing to foster progress or protect the nation from outside threats. From this perspective, armies recruited to fight the warlords were easily justified as combating warlord brutality and fighting for national rejuvenation, modernity and justice. The new armies were of course not seen in the same way in the late Qing and early Republic itself.

It is worth nothing that the image of a Qing China always vulnerable to foreign attack and a West inevitably victorious against any Chinese army needs to be re-examined on the basis of precise analyses of the causes of China's defeats. Clearly, by the end of the 19th century, industrialization, increased managerial efficiency, strengthened state capacity and developments in medicine to protect soldiers against disease did make European armies superior to many non-Western ones and able to invade other countries at will.[9] But China was capable even in the post-Taiping period of defending its interests in Xinjiang. If China's coastal vulnerability to the attack by a modern navy was demonstrated during the Opium War, this was possible only because of the very recent invention of the steam-driven gun-boat,[10] and this threat was confined to areas with navigable rivers. If not insignificant, only the first Sino-Japanese War made clear to both Chinese and foreigners that the occupation of substantial parts of China was possible.

Li Hungzhang's combination of naval development, strengthening of coastal fortifications and limited adoption of Western infantry training methods may well have been adequate to the actual threat and the nature of war in the 1870s and 1880s. It was also politically and fiscally feasible. The Qing court was afraid of the devolution of military power. Because of the constraints of central fiscal resources, the only way that China could build up its forces was to rely on regional financial resources. Demobilization of the existing Green Standard and Banner forces to finance military modernization was difficult. Although their ineffectiveness was widely recognized, it also was clear that their dispersal would merely swell the ranks of bandit gangs. The strategy did fail dramatically during the 1894–95 Sino-Japanese War. Why is not yet entirely clear.

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shigao (*Draft History of the Northern Warlords*) (Beijing, 1983); Li Xin, "Beiyang junfa de xingwang" ("The rise and fall of the northern warlords)", in Li Xin and Li Zongyi (eds.), *Zhonghua minguoshi dierbian: beiyang zhengfu tongzhi shiqi* (*The History of the Republic of China, Part 2: The Period of the Regime of the Northern Government*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), Vol. 1, pp. 1–18.

8. Arthur Waldron, "The warlord: twentieth century Chinese understandings of violence, militarism, and imperialism," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 96 (October 1991), pp. 1073–1100; and Edward McCord, "Warlords against warlords," in van de Ven, *Modern Asian Studies*, special issue on war in modern China.

9. Daniel Headrick, *Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

10. *Ibid.*; McNeil, *Pursuit of Power*, pp. 223–261.

Failure to keep its navy technologically up-to-date was very important to China's defeat in 1895, especially because naval capabilities advanced dramatically in the decade preceding the war. Problems in the training of naval officers, cowardice and difficulties in co-ordinating different naval forces and China's forces on land may have played a role as well.[11] In any case, a re-evaluation of the military strategy and policies pursued by the self-strengtheners in the context of the real nature of the threats that China faced seems necessary.

One consequence of the defeat and the Boxer Uprising was the rise of a group of modernizing officials including Yuan Shikai, Xu Shichang, Xiong Xiling and many others. These were the men who took charge of remoulding the institutions of the empire in the hope of securing it once more on firm if drastically altered foundations. Military academies were established, the military re-organized along Western lines, and Western training manuals translated and distributed.[12] Arms were purchased abroad or manufactured in China.[13] As mentioned, the traditional examination system was abolished and efforts made to broaden education and introduce a Western curriculum. Financial reform aimed at increasing central revenue and reducing corruption. Elites were drawn into the political system. They were permitted to tax local society and manage it, partly because Western countries and Japan suggested that this increased national strength.[14] It also was a way to reduce the financial burdens on the central state and shift them to provincial ones.[15]

A recent M.Phil. dissertation by Fang Kuo'an showed that in the last decade of the Qing the reappraisal of martial values became a preoccupation of leading intellectuals. Reformist thinkers such as the influential Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, as well as Zhang Zhidong, one of the most powerful officials at the time, all believed that for China to become strong, it was necessary for the martial element of Chinese culture to be reinvigorated. Zhang wrote an influential essay making this point and took in hand the creation of a modern army with a supporting industry in central China. Schools established at this time included classes for physical and military exercises. Live ammunition was used in some. New textbooks promoted such martial qualities as discipline, aggression, sacrifice and daring. Japanese militarism impressed Chinese students studying in Japan, and they organized a student army at the time of the

11. Fung, "Testing the self-strengthening"; Qi Qizhang, *Jiawu zhanzheng shi* (Beijing, 1990).

12. Military manuals of the late Qing are reproduced in *Zhongguo bingshu jicheng* (*Collection of Chinese Military Writings*) (Beijing: PLA Press, 1991 and after), Vol. 50.

13. Udo Ratenhof, *Die Chinapolitik des Deutschen Reiches, 1887–1945* (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1987)

14. Douglas Reynoulds, *China, 1898–1912; The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Philip Kuhn, "Local self-government under the Republic," in Frederic Wakeman and Carolyn Grant (eds.), *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 257–298; Chang P'eng-yuan, *Lixianpai yu xinhai geming* (*The Constitutionalists and the 1911 Revolution*) (Taipei: Foundation for the Promotion of Chinese Scholarship, 1969).

15. Hans van de Ven, "Public finance and the rise of warlordism," *Minguo yanjiu*, Vol. 1 (1994), pp. 89–137 and Vol. 4 (forthcoming).

Russo-Japanese War fought in Manchuria. Student journals and even national and provincial publications frequently sounded militarist themes. Phrases such as national militarism (*minguojun zhuyi*) and nationalist military education (*junguomin jiaoyu*) became common.[16]

The linkage of respect for martial qualities with reform and revolution was an important characteristic of the new thinking. In *The Renewal of the People* Liang Qichao treated modern education, the fostering of a spirit of nationalism, political reform and the revival of martial attitudes as part of the same package.[17] Cai E was a disciple of Liang who led the powerful Yunnan Army in rebellion against Yuan Shikai and helped bring about his downfall in 1916. Writing in Liang's journal in 1902, Cai argued that militarist education would nurture the forces of revolution: "to train a good soldier is actually to train a good citizen."[18] To many, the military was a model for a modern, cohesive and orderly China.

Self-strengtheners like Li Hongzhang believed that a modern, industrial and prosperous China would come about in a process of gradual construction. This view continued to shape the minds of late Qing and early Republican leaders like Kang Youwei and Yuan Shikai. But at the same time, Benjamin Schwartz has pointed out, as repeated defeats lent a sense of urgency to the strengthening of China, strengthened by the social-Darwinism of this time with its notions of the survival of the fittest, a militarist view of how to achieve a modern and strong China emerged.[19] The future became imagined as one in which military conflict and armies played an important role. Like Lenin in Russia, revolutionaries like Sun Yat-sen, members of the Tongmenghui and others became convinced that an oppressive political order prevented the realization in China of the forces of progress. Only a violent uprising by a secretive but cohesive force could remove the blockage. Assassinations of high officials followed and revolutionary parties were established.[20]

The Warlords

The naive faith in the military as a positive institution was brought into disrepute by the First World War and by warlordism. While some would argue that the warlord era began properly only in 1916 following the death of Yuan Shikai, it is clear that military leaders increased their

16. Fang Guo'an, "Qingmo minchu Zhongguo junguomin jiaoyu zhi yanjiu" ("An investigation of the Chinese militarist education in the Late Qing and Early Republic"), M.Phil. dissertation, Chinese Culture College, 1976.

17. Liang Qichao, "Shangwulun" ("On appreciating martial qualities") in *Yingbingshi congshu* (*Collected Works from the Ice-Cream Parlour*) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1916), Vol. 1.

18. Tien Chen-ya, *Chinese Military Theory: Ancient and Modern* (Stevenage: SPA Books, 1992), p. 132.

19. Benjamin Schwartz, "Themes in intellectual history: May Fourth and after," in John Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 408–418.

20. For the rise of China's revolutionary tradition, see Michael Gasster, "The Republican revolutionary movement," in John Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 463–534.)

authority significantly during the 1911 Revolution in many provinces.[21] If following Yuan's death there were more wars, men with military backgrounds dominated from the 1911 Revolution until Chiang Kai-shek's military unification of China in 1926–28. The period continues to be thought of in starkly negative terms. Many Chinese histories write about the warlord period as the time when the worst aspects of China were brought out: lack of concern for the nation, lawlessness, social disorder, corruption, factionalism and lack of any moral concerns. Images of gross brutality, arbitrariness, intrigue and assassination continue to come to mind.[22] Recent scholarship has begun to explain the origins of warlordism in other terms than moral perversity, sees connections with earlier and later periods, and assesses its impact more evenly. While there are good reasons to avoid the term warlord, this article continues to use it, as it has become a household term and no alternative has yet been established.

An important new trend in warlord scholarship, exemplified by the Nanjing historian Cai Shaoqing and Philip Billingsley, is the study of its links with banditry.[23] The last decade of the Qing and the early Republic saw the rapid expansion of banditry and social disorder. The broad causes were population growth, governmental breakdown, tax increases and perhaps changes in trading patterns, but the build-up of modern infantry armies, warfare and revolution also contributed. Soldiers turned deserter before battle and had to make a living as bandits. Even those who did remain with their units often ended up as bandits because demobilization was rarely managed well. If war fed banditry, banditry fuelled militarization because local elites with the support of government resorted to the old practice of setting up militias to protect local society. The strong point of this approach is that while the warlord period continues to be portrayed as morally bankrupt, the causes of chaos are not reduced simplistically to the moral failings of warlords.

Two issues that will repay further study are the financial background to warlordism and regional politics. In explaining the breakdown of the

21. For a review of the debate on the significance of the 1911 Revolution in the rise of warlordism, see Lai Xinxia, *Beiyang junfa shigao*, pp. 3–14.

22. See n. 7 for the most influential writings on warlordism in Chinese. See also the biographies of individual warlords, for instance in the series edited by Zhang Xianwen and Huang Meizhen, *Zhonghua minguoshi congshu* (*Collection of Writings on the History of the Republic of China*), such as Jiang Shunxing *et al.*, *Shanxi wang Yan Xishan* (*Yan Xishan: the King of Shanxi*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Press, 1990); Lu Weijun and Wang Degang, *Feng Guozhang he Zhixi junfa* (*Feng Gouzhang and Zhixi Warlords*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Press, 1993). The best works in English are Donald Gillin, *Warlord: Yen Hsi-shan in Shansi Province, 1991–1949* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Gavan McCormack, *Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China, 1911–1928* (Folkestone: Dawson and Sons, 1977); James Sheridan, *Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yu-hsiang* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966); Donald Sutton, *Provincial Militarism and the Chinese Republic: The Yunnan Army* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980); Odoric Y. K. Wou, *Militarism in Modern China: The Career of Wu P'ei-fu* (Folkestone: Dawson and Sons, 1978); Diana Lary, *Region and Nation: the Kwangsi Clique in Chinese Politics, 1925–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Ch'i Hsi-sheng, *Warlord Politics in China, 1916–28* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

23. Cai Shaoqing, *Minguo shiqi de tufei* (*Local Bandits during the Republican Period*) (Beijing: The People's University of China Press, 1993); Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), esp. pp. 15–40 and 193–226.

central government after the 1911 Revolution, too little attention has been paid to the enormous fiscal crisis that Beijing faced at the time. China had virtually no foreign debt before the Sino-Japanese War, but afterwards it escalated as a result of the imposition of indemnities (the Boxer indemnities were especially heavy) and borrowing during the crisis of the 1911 Revolution. One consequence was that provincial governments, which controlled large financial resources themselves because of the devolved nature of China's traditional taxation system, became involved in the build-up of new forces. Late Qing and early Republican budgets reveal that the central government controlled only one-third of all military finances. Large portions of China's modern army were financed by and therefore closely associated with regional powerholders. A further consequence was that severe financial shortages forced the late Qing authorities and the Yuan Shikai government to seek radical changes in taxation. Yuan even attempted a cadastral survey with the aim of eradicating local profiteering from the land tax and increasing land tax revenues. No government had even contemplated so difficult an action since a similar attempt had to be abandoned in the early Qing.[24] Such efforts placed the relation between the centre and the provinces under great stress. These relations had already become strained because of Yuan Shikai's attempt to remove the military figures that had collaborated with revolutionary and constitutionalist groups during the 1911 Revolution from their provincial posts and his closure of provincial and local assemblies.

In contrast to the national and local level, good studies of the provincial level of Chinese politics are rare.[25] The question of why militarists came to dominate at this level is important especially because historians of, for instance, South America have suggested that nationalism developed first at that level and not at the local or central one.[26] That in China this was a possibility is suggested by the emergence at this time of provincial assemblies and provincial hierarchies that administered education, promoted provincial economies and sought to ensure local order through the modern police and the militia. Newspapers and periodicals too were often regional in focus. The fiscal crisis and the competition for revenue between regions and the centre possibly stimulated regional cohesion. The New Policies also had the effect of strengthening provinces, as they assigned important administrative tasks to the provincial administrative hierarchies, including in such areas as local security, education and taxation. The relation of the military with provincial centres of political and economic power remains to be studied, but it is possible that in some places the provincial military helped protect regional and local interests against the escalating demands of the centre. An

24. Hans van de Ven, "Public finance," *Minguo yanjiu*, Vol. 1 (1994), pp. 116–128.

25. But see John Fincher, *Chinese Democracy: The Self-Government Movement in Local, Provincial, and National Politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1981) and Roger Thompson, *China's Local Councils in the Age of Constitutional Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

26. David Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

important question is why this may have been the case to a greater degree in places like Manchuria, Yunnan, Sichuan, Shanxi, Guangdong and Guangxi, and not for instance in Jiangsu.

Exciting new trends in warlord studies are the examination of the actual wars and their effects on China economically and ideologically. In a groundbreaking study of warfare in 1924 between two warlord factions, the Fengtian and Zhili factions of Zhang Zuolin and Wu Peifu, Arthur Waldron argued that the arms race between warlords contributed to industrialization. Modern industries were first established in China after the Taiping Rebellion, but in the 1920s an arms race developed in China as armies expanded and new weapons were introduced. In the early 1920s, warlord wars began to involve increasing numbers of soldiers. The Zhili and Fengtian factions both mobilized several hundred thousand soldiers. They used machine guns, mortars, rifles, trains, armoured trucks and aeroplanes. They were supplied in part by arms imported from abroad – Western arms manufactureres found China an attractive area for arms sales and breaking the embargo was easy – but also by large arsenals in Shenyang, Wuhan and Shanghai, and minor ones in other places. Iron and coal mining flourished as their products were consumed in large quantities by these arsenals. Because primary resources had to be transported over large areas, warlordism might in fact have contributed to China's commercialization.[27] More research will need to be done before there can be a reasonable estimate of the contribution to China's GNP of arms industries in the 1920s. But as elsewhere the needs of the modern army helped drive China's industrialization.[28]

According to Waldron, the increased size and destructiveness of warfare in the 1920s, when Chinese wars began to follow the First World War patterns, helped create an environment in which especially China's urbanites rejected the power-holders of the day and condemned them as warlords. Thus the May Thirtieth movement of 1925 brought students, professionals, entrepreneurs and workers together in massive strikes aimed against foreigners and warlords. The language of those that spoke of warlords now began to make sense to many. The Nationalist government would not have been established without this decisive change in public mood, or at least not have been founded so quickly. Nor could the Communists have begun to build a mass following.[29] Other factors were important, such as the lack of a clear legitimating device for the authorities of the time, a history of mutual conflict and economic downturn. The growth of the press, the spread of modern schools and the establishment of universities provided an infrastructure for the fashioning of "public opinion" and made it politically relevant. But Waldron surely is right that increasingly destructive war caused widespread dissatisfaction and made many willing to consider radical alternatives.

27. Arthur Waldron, *China's Turning Point* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), ch. 3.

28. For the British case, see McNeil, *The Pursuit of Power*.

29. Waldron, *China's Turning Point*, pp. 241–280. On the use by the Chinese Communists of the movement, see Hans van de Ven, *From Friend to Comrade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), ch. 4.

Anti-warlordism, as Edward McCord pointed out, became an important ingredient of the ideologies of both the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the 1920s. One of the lasting consequences of warlord warfare was that the innocent militarism of the reformers and revolutionaries of the late Qing and early Republic was rejected. Militarist values remained important, but a purely militarist solution to China's problems became impossible. The overcoming of the warlord period remains an important idea in the commonly asserted conceptualizations of China.

The Militarization of Revolution

It was on 7 August 1927 that Mao Zedong famously declared that "power comes out of the barrel of the gun."[30] He made this statement at an emergency CCP meeting following the KMT's decision to end the united front and attempt the CCP's extermination. Until 1927 the strategy of the Chinese Communists had anticipated that they would seize power in the same way as the Bolsheviks in Russia in a moment of mass unrest in urban centres. Mao's statement illustrated the growing awareness in the CCP that in China by that time mass movements alone could not deliver power. Only a party in control of its own armies, as the KMT was, could succeed. This realization was just as important as the discovery of the peasantry as a base for the making of revolution.

If 1927 was important as the year in which the CCP began to construct its own armed forces, as it did during the 1 August uprising at Nanchang in Jiangxi province, it would be wrong to believe that the year marked the beginning of the CCP's militarization. As mentioned, already in the late Qing revolutionaries had begun to conceive of the transition towards a new future in violent terms. Furthermore, when Chinese Communists began to organize their party – and the same is true for the KMT – they set up an institution that was modelled after the modern military. When Lenin wrote *What is to be Done?* in 1902, the party that he depicted borrowed heavily from the model of the Prussian army. The party was to have a clear chain of command. Discipline was crucial and was to be maintained rigorously. A small group of seasoned Communists – later institutionalized as the Politburo – was to oversee the current historical situation much as a general staff might assess the strengths and weaknesses of its side and the enemy, and then lay down a strategy to be implemented by all party units. The party was to relate to society in the same way as the modern army. It was to be an institution separate from society with its own culture and rules; yet for its success it depended on mobilizing society. Party members were to be like soldiers: the proud

30. "Mao Zedong guanyu gongchan guoji daibiao baogao de fayan" ("Mao Zedong's remarks concerning the report of the representative of the Communist International"), in Committee for the Compilation of Sources for Party History, CCP Central Committee (eds.), *Baqi huiyi* (*The August Seven Conference*) (Beijing: Sources for Party History Press, 1986), p. 58.

representatives of a modern, rational and energetic new world, and at the same time faceless cogs-in-the-wheel in the party machinery. Conceptualizations of violence too were militaristic, as mentioned. Revolution became an act of violence and struggle in which the new would conquer the old because it was more vigorous, aggressive, fair and suited to the modern, while the old was decadent, cowardly and exploitative. For revolutionaries the violence of revolution was an opportunity for self-realization and self-validation.

Initial CCP strategy aimed at recreating the model of the October Revolution. That is, it was to achieve political power in a wave of urban uproar, and then establish a military to consolidate its regime. The idea that the CCP was to have its own army was promoted partly by the Comintern itself. In August 1925 it sent instructions to the CCP to take the organization of its own military force in hand.[31] Students at Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow, who received military instruction, probably strengthened the tendency as well. The example of Sun Yat-sen and the KMT may also have been on the minds of Chinese Communists, especially those who worked in Guangdong in the 1925–27 period. Sun Yat-sen had learned from the KMT's failure to capture power during the 1911 Revolution that it needed its own military force. While first seeking to turn a warlord army into a KMT army, with Russian help he began to train his own army in Guangdong in the 1920s. The Whampoa Academy was to provide the officer corps.

The context of the late 1920s and 1930s was crucial to the entrenchment of militarized notions of revolution and of giving these a base in reality. The following paragraphs focus on a broad outline of the 1927 to 1935 period when there was a build-up of bases in central and south China.[32] This will make clear that the much better-known social and economic policies of the Yan'an period,[33] CCP policies and practices in

31. "Gongchan guoji zhixing weiyuanhui dongfangbu guanyu Zhongguo gongchandang junshi gongzuo de zhishi caoan" ("Draft instruction of the eastern department of the Executive Committee of the Comintern regarding the military work of the Chinese Communist Party"). I am grateful to Li Yuzhen, the Chinese translator of this instruction, which will shortly be published together with other Comintern sources, for making this text available.

32. Important new sources for the study of the Central Soviet include Central Committee Archives (eds.), *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* (*Selected CCP Central Committee Documents*) (Beijing: Central Party School Press, 18 vols, 1989–92), Vols.4–10 (*ZZWX*). A good introduction to the history of the PLA is Mo Yang *et al.* (eds.), *Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun zhanshi* (*The Battle History of the PLA*) (Beijing: Military Sciences Press, 3 vols, foreword 1987); Jiangxi Provincial Archives (eds.), *Zhongyang geming genjudi shiliao xuanbian* (Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Press, 1986, 3 vols.); History Department of Xiamen University and Fujian Provincial Archives (eds.), *Zhongguo suweiai gongheguo fahui wenjian xuanbian* (Nanhang: Jiangxi People's Press, 1984); and Women's Association of Jiangxi (eds.), *Jiangxi suqu funü yundong shiliao xuanbian* (*Selected Historical Sources for the Women's Movement in Jiangxi Soviets*) (Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Press, 1982).

33. For Yan'an, see Mark Selden, *The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); David Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Ch'en Yung-fa, *Yan'an de yinxiang* (*Yan'an's Shadows*) (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1990): Joseph Esherick, "Deconstructing the construction of the party state," *The China Quarterly*, No. 140 (December 1994), pp. 1025–52. For a general overview of the period, see Lyman Van Slyke, "The Chinese Communist Movement during the Sino-Japanese

the early decades of the PRC, and the Cultural Revolution have a long history of militarization behind them. The excesses of the "southern phase" of the Communist revolution did constitute a lesson and policies were changed. But nevertheless some basic patterns proved enduring.

After 1927 the KMT haunted Chinese Communists out of the cities. Small and scattered Communist forces fought for survival in central China. They had to withstand attacks not only by the KMT and provincial military units, but also by local militia and bandit gangs. Nationalist attacks became ever larger and involved new ways of waging war, including the use of propaganda and economic blockade.

The proper role of the military in the making of revolution nevertheless remained a topic of debate at first. Some, like He Mengxiong, argued that revolution could only be based on the urban proletariat. Mao Zedong's famous 1930 letter to Lin Biao, usually referred to as "A Single Spark Can Light a Prairie Fire" upbraided Lin, a brilliant Communist military commander, for pessimism. Lin believed that a Communist army could not emerge before revolution had begun. To build up bases, construct armies and fight in relatively large units seemed to Lin and his supporters unwise.[34] But for Mao the creation of a strong military was an immediate necessity. The issue was at the heart of the famous Gutian Conference of the Fourth Red Army where Mao won the debate and where the Red Army was defined as "the revolutionary army of the workers and peasants," "an army of the soldiers themselves," and the "armed collective for the implementation of the political tasks of its class."[35]

Initially the Red Army, as the PLA was called at the time, consisted of remnants of forces that had participated in the Nanchang Uprising, including former KMT units that had sided with the CCP, as well as peasant militia from Hunan and bandit forces that found it opportune to make common cause with the Communists. Some of the institutional means by which discipline was imposed on these heterogeneous, not necessarily very revolutionary forces are clear. Political education, the inculcation of easily memorized codes of conduct such as The Three Great Disciplines (*San Da Jilü*), and the fostering of a spirit of commit-

footnote continued

War, 1937–45," in John Fairbank, *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 609–722. An important new collection of primary sources is Shaanxi Provincial Archives and Shaanxi Academy of Social Sciences (eds.), *Shaan-Gan-Ning Bianqu zhengfu wenjian xuanbian* (*Selected Documents of the Government of the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region*) (Beijing: Archives Press, 13 vols, 1986–1990).

34. "Mao Zedong gei Lin Biao de xin," ("Letter from Mao Zedong to Lin Biao"), *ZZWX*, Vol. 6, pp. 553–563. Dated 5 January 1930.

35. Relevant documents can be found in Party History Institute of the Party School, Fujian Provincial CCP Committee (eds.) *Hongsijun rumin he gutian huiyi wenxian ziliao* (*Documents of and Sources for the Entrance of the Fourth Red Army into Fujian Province and the Gutian Conference*) (Fujian: People's Press, 1979). The first two quotations are from "Zhongguo hongjun disijun (Zhu Mao jun) gao Guomindang jundui shibing shu" ("Letter from the Fourth Red Army (The Zhu [De] and Mao [Zedong] Army) to the officers and soldiers of the KMT armies"), pp. 213–14, dated January 1930. The third quotation is from "Resolutions of the Ninth Party Congress of the Fourth Red Army," *ZZWX*, Vol. 5, pp. 800–835.

ment through drill and joint study formed one element. The construction of a commissar system that required all military orders to be countersigned by a representative of the party also ensured CCP control. This system went down to the company level. Campaigns to weed out "class enemies" from the army were conducted and recruitment orders insisted that new recruits be vetted on their class background. The available data suggest that the efforts to create a class army subservient to political leadership were very serious indeed. This allowed Chinese Communists to think of their army not simply as a mercenary warlord force but as a mass army fighting for a just cause. To underline the difference between the warlord armies and the Red Army, corporal punishment was considered inappropriate and abolished.[36]

Once the initial hesitation was overcome and a vision of a proper Communist army was formulated, the military became regarded as a model. Calls were made for the militarization of the party. Militarization was seen as something progressive and modern which would extinguish laziness, undisciplined behaviour and parochial attachments.[37] Perhaps swept up by the mood of the times but nevertheless not extraordinary was a document of a year later that demanded that all party members undergo military training and that "the party should become a military camp."[38] The ideal Communist was recreated in the image of the soldier. Communists were no longer the thinking, writing intellectuals of the 1920s who organized labour unions and urban strikes, or the rural activist like Peng Pai, but dedicated, optimistic, energetic and orderly soldiers. And those who did not behave in such a way might well be punished by the Red Army's internal police, as documents issued at the eve of the Long March warned.[39]

It was not only the party that was militarized. Both the positive view of militarization and the concrete needs of the Red Army made the militarization of the areas under Communist control nearly inevitable. The CCP quickly drew much of the population into its military machinery. In the early 1930s military service became a legal obligation for all males between the ages of 18 and 45 who were not class enemies.[40] Three

36. A detailed discussion of the early Red Army that is frank about problems of discipline is Chen Yi's 1929 "Guanyu Zhu Mao hongjun de dangwu gaikuang baogao," ("Report on Party affairs in the Red Army of Zhu [De] and Mao [Zedong]"), *ZZWX*, Vol. 5, pp. 749–790. The report was in two parts and dated 1 September 1929. The documents of the Gutian Conference are also useful. For the abolition of corporal punishment, see "Resolutions of the Ninth Party Congress of the Fourth Red Army," *ZZWX*, Vol. 5, pp. 828–831.

37. "Central Committee Announcement Number 29," *ZZWX*, Vol. 5, p. 40. Dated 7 February 1929.

38. "The current political situation and the organizational tasks of the Party," *ZZWX*, Vol. 6, p. 206. Dated 22 July 1930

39. "Political order by the General Political Department regarding preparations for the Long March and struggles," *ZZWX* , Vol. 10, pp. 399; "Instruction regarding political work by the General Political Department for the current attack," ZZWX, Vol. 10, pp. 402–08. Dated 11 October 1934. Signed by Li Fuchun.

40. "The Central Politburo's plan for current work in soviet areas," *ZZWX*, Vol. 6, p. 457. Dated 24 October 1930. On the legal obligation, see "General principles of the Constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic," *ZZWX*, Vol. 7, p. 774. Dated 7 November 1931. The obligation was expressed as a right.

levels existed: the Red Army was a standing force; at the local level, peasants were organized in militias and were responsible for local security and assistance with transport and reconnaissance when necessary; and between these levels were guerrilla detachments which might leave their home territories and campaign for some time at a distance. If it is unlikely that before 1933 the system's coverage was complete, it no doubt soon became so, as the Fourth Encirclement campaign brought the CCP's bases under such pressure that at least in the Jiangxi Soviet monthly recruitment drives were conducted to supply the front. Numerical targets were set and local party officers were criticized if they did not meet their quota.

Military considerations shaped CCP policies in many areas, including an issue clearly at the heart of the revolution, that of land redistribution. The redistribution of land and the confiscation of landlord property was regarded as a potent way of motivating Red Army soldiers. By securing victory for the CCP they were also securing economic security for themselves and their families. In November 1933, as KMT attacks strengthened, the CCP intensified land confiscation and the extermination of landlords as a way of increasing the population's commitment to the party. In Western scholarship a radical land policy is held partly responsible for the defeat of the Communists in the 1930s. The CCP itself believed that the intensification of revolution would strengthen them.[41] The seizure of landlord property and its redistribution, as well as the assignment of confiscated land to Red Army families, gave soldiers very concrete reasons to see the army as the protector of its own interests.

War was a major reason for a higher level of government control over the economy. No attempt was made to eliminate markets and experiments with the idea were criticized as more damaging than helpful to the Communist economy. But in 1933 Zhang Wentian (Luo Fu), officially the highest ranking CCP member in China, wrote an article that justified bureaucratic management of the economy. Only a few industries, such as the arsenals, a mint and printing plants, were to be owned and managed by the soviet government directly. But the Communist economy would be steered by the CCP. Consumer co-operatives would ensure that surplus production in one area would be transported to deficit areas. Communist administrative organs would provide peasants with seeds, fertilizer, draught animals and tools when necessary. The work of handicraft workers would be directed so as to be of benefit to the front. Ploughing and harvesting campaigns were to be organized at the appropriate time of the year. A Trade Bureau was to take control of trade with non-Communist areas and Grain Adjustment Bureaus would ration grain fairly.[42]

41. See for instance "Letter of instruction by the CCP Central Bureau to all party branches in the soviet areas about the consolidation and development of new areas and border areas," *ZZWX*, Vol. 9, pp. 373–75. Dated 13 November 1933. "Resolution of the Central Bureau of the soviet areas regarding the campaign to investigate land-holding," *ZZWX*, Vol. 9, pp. 206–210. Dated 2 June 1933.

42. Luo Fu (Zhang Wentian), "Lun suweiai jingji fazhan de qiantu" ("On the future development of the soviet economy"), *ZZWX*, Vol. 9, pp. 483–87. Dated 22 April 1933. On a looming economic disaster, problems in feeding the Red Army, and the decision to use campaigns to extract more resources, see "Resolution by the Presidium of the Second Soviet Congress and the CCP Central Committee regarding the assault campaign to secure the

In the areas under CCP control in the early 1930s, bureaucratic networks multiplied, bureaucratic jurisdictions were carefully defined and the compiling of reports according to regular standards was enforced. Routine and regularity were carefully institutionalized. A wonderful example is the Communist officialese of a long document that sets out standards for the classification of the peasantry into classes. Sample cases for the instruction of local party officials were included. The recruitment, training, discipline, equipment and co-ordination of the 100,000 soldiers that set out on the Long March is testimony to the bureaucratic capabilities that the CCP had built up over the preceding years. The adoption of the marriage law, labour laws, setting of rents and so on illustrate how the CCP attempted to create a disciplined population. It is suggested that this bureaucratization of revolution was not necessarily seen as undermining the energy, individuality and independence of revolutionaries. Rather, discipline and order may well have been considered to provide an antidote to a scramble for individual advantage, disorder and corruption that dominated the times. They provided the tough structures, the skeletons, that made it possible for individuals to bring their best into play.

States tend to develop covert institutions and intelligence-gathering networks. These are not peculiar to Communist parties, nor can they be seen as the product of the modern military. At the same time, the violent conception of historical change and the belief in the existence of two antagonistic forces which will deploy any means at their disposal have led Leninist parties to concentrate a great deal of energy on the creation of secret institutions. The violent context of the early 1930s, in which enemies indeed were everywhere, only served to strengthen this tendency. In the 1920s the CCP had already developed secret communications, and violations of party discipline were regarded as extremely serious matters. In the 1930s, as the CCP faced KMT attacks externally and had to guard against many local enemies, the creation of secret party and state organizations came naturally. A secret shadow party existed so that in case of defeat it could continue to work. CCP Protection Bureaus were set up with the power of arrest and interrogation. These units made up an independent internal spy network to be used to combat "counter-revolutionaries."[43] By 1934 Kang Sheng was in charge of a network of Investigation Committees made up of the most reliable CCP members. It reported on all local activities and was responsible for ferreting out internal traitors. These secret services, it must be emphasized, were not in the hands of the military, but of the CCP. A remarkable aspect of the soviet areas of the early 1930s was an intense paranoia that led to witch-hunts. Most famously, several hundred local CCP members during

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provision of the Red Army by completing the sale of public bonds, collecting the land tax, and collection of cereals," *ZZWX*, Vol. 10, pp. 82–86. Dated 23 January 1934.

43. See e.g. "Central Politburo's plan for current work in soviet areas," *ZZWX*, Vol. 6, pp. 440–43. Dated 24 October 1930; "Resolution by the Central Bureau in the soviet area regarding emergency work prior to the decisive battle to smash the fourth encirclement campaign," *ZZWX*, Vol. 9, pp. 64–69. Dated 8 February 1933.

the Futian Incident were murdered. CCP documents insisted again and again that one had to guard against "counter-revolutionaries" in soviet organizations and the CCP itself. A fear of KMT infiltrators, treason by local elites or bandit forces, and mutiny naturally fuelled the CCP's paranoia.[44]

The 1930s provided important lessons. The inability of the Jiangxi hill country, with at most two to three million residents, to support a large army capable of fighting positional warfare made sure that in future army construction the economic capacity of an area was taken into account. Land policies too were moderated, and attempts were made to dampen factional conflict and to limit the killing in dealing with internal problems. Important weight was also given to securing the base of the PLA in local society. But many basic patterns continued and were even intensified.

When the Communists faced a crisis of survival in the north because of Japanese attack and KMT blockade, all of society was drawn into one structure of authority; propaganda, criticism and self-criticism, and drama were used to establish a uniform set of values and norms. The economy was steered centrally so as to maximize the productivity of the area and make it contribute to the war effort. Kang Sheng again oversaw a covert system designed to deal with "counter-revolutionaries." After the CCP's conquest of power in 1949, the techniques that had produced victory were employed in the hope of establishing a revolutionary order in China. The creation of work units, production brigades, production campaigns, and purges of counter-revolutionaries all illustrate the continuing influence of war socialism after 1949. The individual, the private and the market were distrusted, while discipline, the state and the collective were promoted. During periods of crises, the CCP has tended to intensify revolution, as it did during the 1950s when of course it faced real threats, domestically, in Korea and from Taiwan. Only since the death of Mao, the easing of international tensions and especially the wreckage of the Cultural Revolution has the situation changed.

The Military and Nationalist China

In mainland China a more inclusive view of the War of Resistance against Japan has emerged. Rituals commemorate famous generals of the Nationalist army killed in action,[45] source compilations and studies are published about various aspects of the war, and at the same time that the stock of Chiang Kai-shek has declined in Taiwan, it has risen considerably in China itself.[46] The War of Resistance is portrayed as the moment

44. Liu Bingrong, *Zuoqing tongshi* (*The Painful History of Leftist Deviation*) (Shijiazhuang: Huashan Literature and Art Press, 1993, 2 vols.) uses the "narrative literature" genre to portray the various campaigns to eliminate counter-revolutionaries in the Central Soviet.

45. Arthur Waldron, "Zhang Zizhong," in Van de Ven, *Modern Asian Studies*, special issue on war in modern China.

46. The study of the war of resistance has been a major focus of recent Chinese scholarship. Only a few examples can be mentioned here: the Number Two Archives of China (ed.), *KangRi kangzhan zhengmian zhanchang* (*Frontal Battlefields of the War of Resistance*) (Jiangsu guji Press, 1987). This is an important collection of primary sources. The Modern

when China finally pulled itself together after a period of internal feuding, selfishness and wilful destruction; China then earned its right to survive as a nation and a culture. It is now possible to begin to acknowledge the contributions made by all quarters. This reappraisal, the opening of important archives such as the Number Two Archives in Nanjing and the publication of memoirs have led to a revival of war studies in China and the Republican period generally.

That the history of Chiang Kai-shek's Republic was bound up with the military is of course generally recognized. In the West, Lloyd Eastman has made clear that Chiang Kai-shek depended on his control over the Nationalist military. Believing that the Republic could only have prospered if some sort of land redistribution had taken place and proper civil rule established, Eastman faults Chiang for militarizing the government and the party.[47] Ch'i Hsi-sheng showed how Chiang built up large modern forces only to see them destroyed in Shanghai in 1937 and in 1944. The result was, according to Ch'i, a demoralized government that could not combat corruption and was unable to take positive and firm action.

If the importance of the military is no news, the centrality of affairs to the Nationalist government still needs to be studied in detail and analysed in terms of its corrosive effects not just on the KMT or politics generally but also on culture, taxation, commerce, industry, communications, mentalities and so on. The importance of the army is suggested by its sheer

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History Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has compiled collections of source materials on most of the major campaigns that include numerous Japanese documents. For an example see Editorial Group for "Selected Sources for the Taierzhuang Campaign" and the Number Two Archives of China (eds.), *Taierzhuang zhanyi ziliao* (Beijing: Zhuanghua shuju, 1989). The series is part of the Institute's *Zhonghua minguo shi ziliao congshu* (*A Collection of Sources for the History of the Chinese Republic*); an example of a narrative account is Zhang Xianwen *et al.*, *KangRi zhanzheng de zhengmian zhanchang* (*The Frontal Battlefields of the War of Resistance Against Japan*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Press, 1987); Department for Military History Research, Academy of Military Science, *Zhongguo KangRi zhanzheng shi* (*The History of China's War of Resistance Against Japan*) (Beijing: PLA Press, 1991); The Society of the Historical Study of the War of Resistance Against Japan and the Museum for the Chinese People's Resistance of the War of Resistance Against Japan (ed.), *Kangzhan shiqi de wenhua jiaoyu* (*Cultural Education during the War of Resistance*) (Beijing: Peking Press, 1995). Geng Chengkuan, *KangRi zhanzheng shiqi de qin Hua ri jun* (*The Japanese Army of Invasion during the War of Resistance Against Japan*) (Beijing: Chunqiu Press, 1987). For an example from Taiwan, see Jiang Yongjin, *Kangzhanshi lun* (*On the War of Resistance*) (Taipei: Datong Dushu Co., 1995). Attention has also been paid to the "puppet" governments. See for instance Huang Meizhen, *Wang Jingwei hanjian zhengquan de xingwang* (*The Rise and Fall of the Regime of the Traitor Wang Jingwei*) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1987). For recent mainland biographies of Chiang Kai-shek, see Number Two Historical Archives of China and Archives Press, *Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao* (*First Draft of a Chronological Biography of Chiang Kai-shek*) (Beijing: Archives Press, 1992); Song Ping, *Jiang Jieshi zhuan* (*A Biography of Chiang Kai-shek*) (Changchun: Jilin People's Press, 1987); Yang Shubiao, *Jiang Jieshi zhuan* (*A Biography of Chiang Kai-shek*) (Beijing: Unity Press, 1989), and Zhang Xianwen and Fang Qingqiu, *Jiang Jieshi quanzhuan* (*A Complete Biography of Chiang Kai-shek*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Press, 1996). *KangRi zhanzheng yanjiu* (*Research on the War of Resistance against Japan*) is an important journal edited at the Modern History Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

47. Lloyd Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974) and *Seeds of Destruction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984).

size. In 1928, Chiang Kai-shek commanded an army of 240,000 men, out of a total of two million men under arms in China at this time. Just before war began with Japan, Chiang's forces had reached 450,000. By the end of the war China had some 3.5 million men under arms. This figure included regional armies, many of which continued to be coloured by warlordism. The Central Army itself had 650,000 troops in 1945.[48] Perhaps even more telling is the fact that in 1928, the revenues of the central government were well short of covering army expenditures that year. During the next ten years, 85 per cent of all revenue went to the army. While the financial background of the War of Resistance has not been studied, that the government was bankrupt will be clear from the fact that the loss of Shanghai meant that Chiang lost 85 per cent of his revenues.

Even before the Japanese invasion of China proper, war was nearly constant. Nanjing went to war in 1929 with the Guangxi Clique of Pai Chongxi and Li Zongren who commanded 230,000 troops. Fighting lasted for two months. Two months later Chiang defeated Feng Yu-xiang's army of 220,000 troops, in part by securing the defection of nearly half of them. In 1930, war raged for four months between Chiang and a Northern Coalition that had established an alternative government in Beijing. If the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in September 1931 brought about at least a cessation of hostilities between Nanjing and regional forces, the Communists had by this time secured bases in several provinces in central and south China. It took Chiang five campaigns and much hard fighting before in 1934 a force of many hundreds of thousands of troops finally succeeded in closing down most of the bases and forcing the Communists to leave for the north in what has since become known as the Long March. The Japanese invaded China south of the Great Wall only two years later.

What the effects of all this warfare has been remains largely open to question. Even if Prasenjit Duara's work has alerted us to the possibility that more bureaucracy is not necessarily stronger bureaucracy,[49] a perusal of the catalogues of the Number Two Archives suggests that state-building actually did happen during the Nationalist period. The bureaucracy added new areas and new issues to its jurisdiction and range of concerns as Nanjing extended its reach and brought regional oppositions to heel. State expansion possibly happened "in waves," with each wave of warfare and mobilization precipitating bureaucratization and penetration of new regions. Of course war also meant that the regime had to shift its base: until 1937 it was the lower Changjiang area, then the Free China that had its capital in Chongqing in the inland province of Sichuan, and finally back again. The peripatetic nature of the Nationalist government may

48. Eastman, "Nationalist China during the Nanjing decade," in Fairbank, *et al.*, *Cambridge History*, Vol. 13, p. 125 and Eastman, "Nationalist China during the Sino-Japanese War," in *ibid.* p. 552. See also F. F. Liu, *A Military History of Modern China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956).

49. Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900–1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

help to explain why it was not able to consolidate its bureaucratic structures.

War not only had bureaucratic and geographic implications. In the period between the beginning of the Northern Expedition in June 1926, leading to the creation of a new Nationalist government in Nanjing in 1928, and 1933, Chiang Kai-shek fought wars of national unification. It is not likely that this was simply because of his militarist orientation. He continued a trend that had already become entrenched.[50] If Chiang was to conquer the resources to build a strong China, he had to establish his dominance over China's provinces as much of China's fiscal resources were in their control.[51] Chiang was largely successful in that he did emerge from the period as China's strongest military figure. But the expansion of CCP bases in central China, internal KMT dissatisfaction, famine and economic crises all made clear that the defeat of the warlords would not automatically produce a vigorous and modern nation.[52] The Japanese seizure of Manchuria and its attack on Shanghai also pushed Chiang to attempt to develop a more truly nationalistic government.

Chiang Kai-shek's response was multi-faceted and partly modelled on the German example. Hans von Seeckt, who had rebuilt Germany's military after the First World War, visited China in 1934 and presented Chiang with a wide-ranging plan for military reconstruction. Seeckt's plan called for the recruitment of a new elite force of 100,000 men. This army was to be armed by Germany with supplies paid for by the export to Germany of raw materials such as tungsten. China would be helped with the creation of an industrial base, including an iron-and-steel complex, ore-processing facilities, and arsenals for the supply of the army, air-force and navy.[53] Chiang was also a great admirer of Zeng Guofan, the Confucian-minded general who had led the famous Hunan Braves to defeat the Taiping rebels in the middle of the 19th century. Chiang's advocacy of *li*, *yi*, *lian*, *chi* (propriety, justness, honesty and shame) as a core set of Confucian values to guide one's behaviour, the reintroduction of the traditional mutual policing and responsibility system called the *baojia*, and his belief that the spiritual strength and determination of a population unified in ambition and commitment were just as crucial as a well-equipped army, illustrated that background.

The New Life Movement had elements of both the German and Chinese approaches. Its aim was the creation of a population that was disciplined, patriotic and vigorous. The movement hoped first to foster a sense of common destiny and joint purpose between the population and its government and leader. It was to give the regime the mass base that

50. Both Eastman, "Nationalist China during the Nanjing Decade" and Ch'i Hsi-sheng, *Nationalist China at War*, pp. 5–39 stress Chiang's militarizing instincts.

51. See Waldron, *China's Turning Point*, pp. 119–140. Real fiscal shortages probably forced Chiang to demand donations and extort money from the Shanghai bourgeoisie. For Chiang's treatment of the Shanghai bourgeoisie, see Parks Coble, *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

52. William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), pp. 85–90, 148–166, 176–185.

53. *Ibid.* pp. 122–25.

it lacked, and it was no coincidence that it was inaugurated in the city of Nanchang in Jiangxi province where the CCP had its strongest base. As noted before, the rhetoric of the movement was highly militaristic. Chiang himself declared once that "in the home, the factory, and the government office, everyone's activities must be the same as in the army ... there must be obedience, sacrifice, strictness, cleanliness, accuracy, diligence, secrecy."[54] The disciplining of local society itself was fostered by bureaucratizing local government. Local self-government in which local elites had again involved themselves became a branch of the local government and brought under its control. The sub-county ward (*qu*) became a public security unit that was to maintain order partly through the *baojia*.[55] The Confucian values mentioned above were also promoted. The intrusion of the bureaucracy and the attempt to regulate society occurred in other areas as well. In Shanghai and elsewhere, prostitution was licensed. Universities were brought under state supervision, national universities were established in various provinces, and regulations were issued for curricula. Student political activity was proscribed.[56]

Governmental control over the economy too was strengthened. The army construction programme that was begun with German help in 1934 led in 1935 to the creation of a National Resources Commission. It drafted a five-year plan which focused on the creation of heavy industry especially in inland provinces. Steel, heavy equipment, electricity and mining were emphasized, and a number of important private enterprises were taken over.[57] During and also after the Sino-Japanese War, the National Resources Commission expanded enormously in size until by 1944 it controlled directly 103 manufacturing, mining and electrical enterprises. State production accounted for 35 per cent of all heavy industrial production. War led to the creation of a military-industrial complex and direct state management of important elements of the economy, setting patterns that have continued to mould the economies of mainland China and Taiwan.[58]

As in Communist areas, the secret state too advanced tremendously in the 1930s and subsequently. In the case of the KMT the influence of the military was probably greater in these than in the CCP's case. The Blue Shirts were a secretive organization of young military officers. They controlled political training in the army, but were also involved in the police, schools and the Boy Scouts. The Bureau of Investigation and Statistics, headed by Dai Li, was a secret police dominated by the Blue Shirts. Blue Shirts members believed that the bureaucracy, the KMT and society at large were threatened by internal traitors and weakened by selfish and corrupt people. It was their duty to save China by enforcing

54. Eastman, "Nationalist China during the Nanjing Decade," p. 146.
55. Philip Kuhn, "The development of local government," in Fairbank *et al.*, *Cambridge History*, Vol. 13, pp. 348–350.
56. E-tu Zen Sun, "The growth of the academic community, 1912–49," in *ibid.* pp. 388–396.
57. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, pp. 206–223.
58. Kirby, "The Chinese war economy," in James Hsiung and Steven Levine, *China's Bitter Victory* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), pp. 192–98.

discipline, patriotism and frugality, even if this required assassination.[59] Despite the radical measures that they frequently took, they never succeeded.

Without a close study of the military conflict of the Civil War period,[60] no conclusions can be drawn about the causes of the demise of the Nationalist government. It is possible that bad strategy or tactics, logistical breakdown, ineffective command, or lack of co-ordination meant the difference between victory and defeat at some crucial moment. This should be a warning to judge what went before in the light of what happened after. At the same time, there are some good long-term factors that suggest that the KMT's defeat was not the result of a mere accident of history. Mainland historians suggest that whereas the CCP and the PLA had a true mass base, the KMT was never able to secure enduring popular support. The CCP's effective propaganda too was, it is suggested, important, as was the fact that the PLA under Mao Zedong was effectively organized and cohesive, especially during the Civil War period, whereas the Nationalist armies remained heterogeneous.

The KMT furthermore had to face the problems of having to fight a long war against a modern army, whereas the CCP did not bear the brunt of the fighting against the Japanese. The Japanese invasion meant that the Nationalist regime lost control over the area that had been its major source of revenue. The sale of bonds and foreign exchange reserves helped the government for some time, but by 1940 the Nationalist government was desperate for new sources of revenue. The income tax was extended, a new transit tax was implemented, and monopolies were established on salt, sugar, matches and tobacco. Nevertheless central revenue covered only 11 per cent of wartime cash expenditures. How desperate the government truly was is suggested by the fact that in July 1941 it took over control of land tax collection and reverted to payment of this tax in kind. At least this ensured the supply of food to the army and the bureaucracy. As in the past, the collection became an immediate source of exploitation, social strife and corruption. The cost of war also led to severe inflation. After 1940 the financial resources of the state declined, money was printed, and the purchasing power for instance of government officials rapidly declined. Shortages fed corruption and factionalism. Inflation reduced the income derived from the overseas sale ofmorale, bureaucratic capacity and governmental prestige. With victory against Japan only in part attributable to the Nationalists,[61] with large

59. Frederic Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai, 1927–37* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, pp. 158–162.

60. An important beginning is made in Stephen Levine, *Anvil of Victory* (New York: Columbia University Press).

61. The issue is whether the KMT could have defeated the Japanese even if the USA had not dropped a nuclear bomb. In mainland China, the discussion has taken the form of a debate about whether the KMT had begun a serious and effective counter-offensive after the Japanese Ichigo offensive. Some argue for its existence, while others believe that the armies of the Nationalists were doing no more than advancing where the Japanese withdrew. That withdrawal was not the result of Nationalist pressure, according to them, but of the Japanese decision to narrow its defensive perimeter. See for instance Ma Zhendu, *Cansheng* (*Bitter Victory*) (Guilin: Guanxi Normal University Press, 1993) pp. 2–8.

Communist forces fighting in north China and Manchuria, and with a demoralized army and bureaucracy, it was unsurprising that the first major defeats in Manchuria precipitated a rapid and total collapse of the Nationalist government in the rest of China.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to suggest that the drive for military efficiency begun in the late Qing profoundly affected the Republic and that its effects continue to be felt today. The first Sino-Japanese War, the warlord wars of the 1920s and the War of Resistance against Japan all had long-lasting effects. Political change was often a product of war. The regimes that ruled China during the Republican period were also shaped profoundly by military necessity and ambition. But more than that, leading conceptions about China's future and how to reach that future were influenced by the military and military ways of thinking. Organizational characteristics of the military were influential in many other areas as well. The use of bureaucratic means to redistribute resources, plan for growth and manage large economic entities would be influential beyond 1949 in Taiwan and on the mainland.

One of the challenges is to avoid an easy condemnation of the military and militarization. This article has suggested that militaristic conceptions of society and change led to paranoia and murderous purges in the case of both the CCP and the KMT. But that should not lead one to ignore the profound effects that militarization has had in all kinds of areas. To the extent that the CCP did bring greater equity to China, it could not have done so without building up its military forces. National resistance too would not have succeeded without it. Militarization stimulated industrialization and social discipline, both necessary for the creation of a modern society. The military's effect cannot be reduced to a merely destructive one on true revolutionary purpose or the expression of conflict between regional military interests.

This article has pointed to some of the obvious themes for analysis once one includes the military as a factor in the making of modern China. However there are many areas about which little is known. Popular perceptions of and attitudes towards the military are important examples. In local society, perhaps especially in areas with a considerable degree of social dislocation, the military may have been seen as an escape from routine, oppressive social control, or as offering a path toward the fulfilment of ambition or adventure. At the same time, the CCP for instance was well aware of the dangers of incorporating bandit forces andmade sure to subordinate them to its will by the strict maintenance of a system of political control.

Further issues are the impact of China's own military traditions and elite perceptions of the military. Differences in terrain, culture, technical ability, social practices and education meant that war in modern China did have its own characteristics, even if foreign models, material and practices were also influential. One example is that political and military

leadership have been combined in one person in this century. The strict separation of the military and the civilian did not apply. Yuan Shikai, Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek each became leaders of China to a considerable degree because they constructed an army and were acknowledged as its leader. Yet they also remained concerned to strive toward civilian rule. It is striking that most of the PRC's ten Great Marshals had lost much of their power by the time of the Cultural Revolution.

Another example is that the PLA was an army of peasants with low educational levels even at the time of the Korean War, let alone before. This meant that a command system based on the written word or class-room instruction with written materials were not possible. Mao Zedong could rely on radio communications to direct the movements of large army units during the Civil War period, but communications were nevertheless backward. Soldiers had to carry their own food and ammunition, or "borrow" from local areas. Except when transport by rail was possible, logistics probably continued to use the practices of the past. The effect on the CCP leadership of what was considered a victory of a peasant army against a modernized one in the Korean War can only be guessed. The great number of casualties may have caused Peng Dehuai to seek to step up the pace of modernization. It also may have strengthened Mao Zedong's faith in mass energy and voluntarism.

These examples are raised merely to suggest that how China's armies worked, or how armies and warfare figured in the Chinese world, have only just begun to be explored. Much basic work will need to be done before the effects of the military in this century can be properly assessed. Yet, I hope that it is nevertheless clear that China has become what it is today, a proud country with a successful economy, and one that remains deeply divided in itself, in the context of war and militarization.