

icant number of soldiers to move up the mobility ladder, and some even managed to reach the very top.

In sum, this chapter purports to show that, contrary to popular impression, the peasants who constituted the bulk of the armies were not impressed but joined voluntarily. While the growth of the armies was not caused by the peasants' demands for employment but by the militarists' needs for more power, the growth was facilitated by the existence of peasant masses in dire economic conditions. Compared with farming, the military offered not only some measure of occupational security but also some realistic hope of social and economic advancement. However, the fact that the majority of soldiers were drawn to military life by remunerative motives also created many problems in morale, discipline, and training. We shall turn to these problems in Chapter 5.

Military Capabilities: Training

From a modern point of view, we would expect that a period of training would follow the induction of recruits into an army. A comprehensive training program would include discipline, that is, a body of basic rules and regulations, and technical training, to teach the recruits how to use their weapons. In this chapter we shall examine the amount and quality of training provided to officers and soldiers in the armies of the militarists.

Disciplinary Training

In most of the armies, disciplinary training was very poor. By and large, there was a high correlation between the militarists' indifference to recruitment standards and their neglect of training. Those who recruited by any available means also tended to regard training as a long, tedious, and expensive job. In many cases, the recruits were assigned to regular combat units immediately upon arrival and were expected to acquire the necessary skills and discipline during active service.

This laxity in discipline was attributable to the commanding officers, whose indifference implicitly encouraged the soldiers to act as they pleased. More significantly, the militarists' personal life-styles were usually unprofessional and set bad examples for their men. Many of them were notorious with women, and gambling was the most popular way of socializing among the militarists.¹ Greed and corruption were pervasive; and most important militarists were able to amass a huge personal fortune after a few years in office, invariably through irregularities.² When corrupt and incompetent militarists led the armies, they could neither in-

spire confidence nor expect respect and discipline from their ranks. No greater harm was done to the armies than that caused by the widespread addiction to opium among officers, which also affected their soldiers. Frequently, a whole army became a collection of addicts. This greatly impaired both its fighting strength and its morale. The opium habit in some cases may have been deliberately encouraged by the commanding militarist, for once the soldiers had acquired this habit they had to stay in the army and fight harder for the militarist in order to pay for their opium. In some cases, opium addiction helped a militarist to tie down a large number of followers who had to rely on their commander for supply. The most notorious case of addiction was reported among Yunnan troops. Huang Shao-hung, the noted Kwangsi general who had experience working with Yunnan troops, reported that when Yunnan troops went on expeditions into other provinces, they were usually issued opium in lieu of food and wages. The addiction to opium became so demoralizing that even when the commanders realized the harm done they could not rectify it.*

Another factor that induced sagging morale and discipline was the officers' embezzlement of funds, especially the soldiers' pay. Since the primary motivation of most soldiers in joining the army was money, they naturally resented any reduction in their already meager pay. After Yüan Shih-k'ai's death, the last threads of centralized control were broken, and the soldiers' income came to depend more on the honesty of their commander than on the soundness of the system. In some units the pay scale was reduced, or the pay might not even be issued for months.†

One of the most immediate consequences of the prevalence of corruption among officers was that it became increasingly difficult for the higher command to keep track of its soldiers. Almost all commanders inflated the size of their forces, sometimes to intimi-

date enemies, but quite often simply to cheat their own superiors by drawing pay for nonexistent subordinates. Thus it was not unusual for a division or brigade to be credited by shrewd political observers of the time with only 70 percent or even 50 percent of its professed strength. When the top commander did not know exactly how many soldiers he actually possessed, he could exercise little supervision over their payment, and his command of their loyalty was impaired correspondingly. In fact, disputes over pay were one of the primary causes of the recurrent tension within the armies, which sometimes erupted into open riots or mutinies.*

Although such open acts of defiance as riot or mutiny provide us with a glimpse of the seriousness of the decline of discipline in some armies, they do not give us the whole picture. For each mutineer or rioter there were even more soldiers who became so disaffected that they simply deserted, as the high desertion rate cited earlier demonstrates. But the most telling indicators of the deterioration of discipline were the soldiers' conduct in war and their treatment of the civilians.

The lack of disciplinary training tended to reinforce the mercenary mentality that had prompted so many soldiers to join the army in the first place. Soldiers went into battle in the hope of being rewarded by their commanders or allowed to loot. To that extent, the soldiers had a stake in their military unit, whose continuity was instrumental to their personal well-being. But the army lost its instrumental value when it was placed in an unfavorable military situation. For in the final analysis, few mercenaries would accept high risks, since the first condition for making a profit was to stay alive. The implicit contractual relationship between the commander (employer) and the soldiers (employees) dictated maximizing material gains and minimizing battle losses. Such a strategy was scrupulously observed by a large number of Chinese soldiers. Consequently, some "marginal units" frequently

* When Fan Shih-sheng of the Yunnan army decided to ban opium smoking, he aroused such fierce resentment that one of his top lieutenants was assassinated. After several battles, his army simply withered away. Huang Shao-hung, 1: 98-99.

† An officer's irregularities might take many forms: he might render false accounts of expenditures and pocket the funds appropriated for his unit; he might reduce the percentage of salary paid in cash; he might pocket all surpluses; or he might simply expropriate all the money and leave his soldiers payless for months. *NCH*, Oct. 18, 1919; Ts'ai Ting-k'ai, 1: 133-39.

* According to a survey published in *Ku chün*, a journal devoted exclusively to military problems, between 1912 and 1922 there were recorded 179 mutinies, of which 38 cases involved a direct dispute over pay increases or pay in arrears. A large number of the other mutinies attributed to disbandment, insubordination, or unspecified reasons also involved an indirect dispute over pay. (Looting, for example, would often be caused by failure of prompt payment.) Ai Shih, "Minkuo i hai ping pien piao," *Ku chün*, 1, 4-5 (Jan. 1923); Shou Kang, "K'o-p'a ti ping pien," *ibid.*

changed sides during battles, through defection or surrender. The presence of these units posed enormous difficulties for the military factions in coordinating their war plans: they undermined the factions' internal control, made the outcome of each war highly unpredictable, and jeopardized the stability of the power relations among the factions.

Since these armies surrendered or defected only in order to avert disaster on the battlefield or in exchange for better treatment, they would resist any faction's attempt to impose tight control over them. If too much discipline was demanded, they might defect again. Consequently, there was little mutual trust between the faction and these units, or between the unit commander and his soldiers. The units remained unreliable no matter which faction they joined.

While the soldiers acted cowardly on the battlefield, they acted arrogantly toward the civilians. In the absence of a lofty cause to inspire the soldiers to risk their lives, the only substitute was the vision of personal enrichment. Under such conditions, the people were victimized. Looting, burning, raping, and killing were regular features of the conduct of most Chinese soldiers. When a town was taken, the commander of the victorious army would sometimes deliberately stay out until the soldiers had had a chance to loot systematically. Or he might simply declare a three-day period when the soldiers were allowed to act freely. If the townsfolk wanted to be spared random violence, then they had to pay a protection fee.

Although provincial troops sometimes committed acts of violence against their own people, the most flagrant cases usually occurred when an army operated in another province. During the northern troops' expedition into Hunan in 1918-19, the soldiers of the 7th Division, under the command of Chang Ching-yao, rampaged through the Hunan countryside, seizing or destroying everything in sight.³ In Kwangtung during 1919-20, Kwangsi troops also behaved very badly.⁴ And in Fukien in 1918, the northern troops adopted many of the ordinary practices of bandits, carrying off young women, holding young men for ransom, and looting. The people were forced to hide in the hills until they passed.⁵ Even the Yunnan forces, which once had been known for their high professional standards, deteriorated into a band of unruly thugs during their stay in Szechwan. Between 1917 and 1920,

the Szechwan and Yunnan forces were constantly at loggerheads. In 1920, when a fierce battle took place between them over the control of Chengtu, the Yunnan forces wantonly destroyed and burned several thousand houses, systematically looted the residential and commercial areas, and killed innocent civilians in large numbers.⁶

Needless to say, such lack of discipline was bound to be highly counterproductive for any army. It posed enormous problems of control. To exploit the soldiers' eagerness for profit might give the commander a temporary advantage in luring them into battle, but it was eventually self-defeating, because when duty and profit clashed, they would not hesitate to choose profit. More seriously, the atrocities perpetrated by the soldiers with their commanders' implicit encouragement eventually turned even the most docile civilians to fierce hatred and resistance. If these atrocities were committed by an outside army, as they most often were, they helped the local militarists to mobilize latent regional sentiments and to weld an otherwise apathetic population into a strong force. In the cases cited above—Szechwan, Hunan, Kwangtung, and Fukien—the lack of discipline proved the undoing of the armies. In each case, a smaller local force, with inferior weapons and fewer resources but enjoying mass support, finally drove the undisciplined troops out of their territories.

Although the lack of discipline we have described was true of most armies, there were some militarists who were alive to the need for training. In general, these were the militarists who also paid more attention to the recruitment process. For instance, Wu P'ei-fu was known to be a strict disciplinarian. Of all the northern troops operating in Hunan, only his 3rd Division behaved properly and won the respect of his enemies.⁷ Yen Hsi-shan and Feng Yu-hsiang also exhibited great enthusiasm for intensive disciplinary training and ideological indoctrination.

In Shansi, Yen Hsi-shan's soldiers were organized into various kinds of special groups such as "heart-washing societies" (*hsie-hin-sho*), "introspection halls" (*tzu-sheng tang*), "lecture meetings" (*chhang-yen-hui*), and other instructional or research classes, small study groups, and discussion groups to inculcate a "spirit of enthusiasm, loyalty, obedience, and self-sacrifice."⁸ Officers were expected to know their soldiers. Instructors were installed in all battalions and companies to improve the soldiers' physical condi-

tion and to prevent idleness and other bad habits from taking root. Furthermore, soldiers were subject to a rather intense program of political indoctrination which in the early years was based predominantly on orthodox Confucianism. Lectures, posters, songs, discussions, and other methods were used to transform the mentality of the half-literate soldiers and to establish a harmonious relationship between the military and the civilian population. After 1927, Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles were added to the teaching material to provide an explicit political orientation for the Shansi army.

Feng Yü-hsiang also believed in a vigorous program of disciplinary training. He laid down several simple rules for his men: they could not smoke tobacco or opium, they could not drink or gamble, and they could not use obscene language or visit brothels. Even high-ranking officers had to live and dress like the common soldiers and to participate in the same daily drills and exercises and other forms of manual labor. Consequently, there was little status consciousness or resentment in the ranks. Strict discipline was enforced, and even senior officers were publicly punished for wrongdoing. Although Feng's army was strewn with primary and secondary associations on the lower levels, nepotism was scrupulously avoided; only achievement counted. But Feng was also a compassionate and understanding leader and he expected his officers to be the same. The rapport he was thereby able to achieve with his officers and men constituted a firm ground for the development of discipline and loyalty within his army.*

The content of Feng's political indoctrination program was more varied than Yen's; in addition to orthodox Confucianism and later Sun Yat-sen's political theories, Feng also used some parts of fundamental Christianity and Lenin's theory of revolution. Like Yen, Feng made profuse use of booklets, songs, slogans, sermons,

* Feng took pains to familiarize himself with as many soldiers as possible. When he was a regiment commander in 1913, he knew the names of about 1,400 of the 1,600 men under his command. Officers were required to know most of their men by name and to be familiar with their family background as well as personal characteristics. They were expected to look after the welfare of the soldiers and treat them as members of the same family. Unlike other militarists, Feng tried to avoid using corporal punishment as much as possible, and even went so far as to list the circumstances under which corporal punishment was not to be used. Sheridan, pp. 83-87.

catechisms, posters, and wall papers to convey his messages to the poorly educated soldiers. Hence, in their waking hours, the soldiers either attended religious sermons, recited catechisms on the need to serve the people, or watched plays depicting exemplary lives. Ultimately, the goal was to establish a rationalization and a sublimated sense of mission for his soldiers and to teach them how to relate their existence and their behavior to the prevailing political problems. After Feng's return from the Soviet Union in 1927, he organized a political department with branch offices in each army, division, and brigade; political officers were sent all the way down to the platoons, who in turn organized their own political cells. The addition of this new political arm apparently further consolidated the development of discipline in his army.⁹ They certainly recognized that a lasting affective bond among their men could be cemented not by severe corporal punishment or lust for money, but by comradely ties and understanding, and that discipline could best be maintained if they inspired their men with lofty ideals instead of purely acquisitive and exploitative instincts. Yen and Feng's hard work was certainly not in vain. The longevity and stability of Yen's regime in Shansi bore eloquent testimony to the discipline of his army. During the 1916-28 period, there was not a single case of internal unrest or open revolt against Yen's authority. Even when he later suffered several setbacks in fighting external enemies, his soldiers never forsook him.

Feng's army maintained its reputation for good discipline throughout the whole period. When Feng's 16th Mixed Brigade was stationed in Wuhsüeh (Hupeh) in 1918, his soldiers were well received by the local peasants; even their Hunanese enemies unreservedly voiced their respect and said that they would not attack Feng's forces. They were honest in their dealings with the people, did not commit thievery, and settled all debts before they left. In fact, communities either were sorry to see them leave, or invited them to take over their administration.¹⁰ The supreme test of the army's discipline and loyalty came in 1926, after it was defeated at Nankow. Despite repeated harassment during its retreat, the overwhelming majority of the army traveled hundreds of miles to the Northwestern Territory and regrouped under Feng's leadership. By September 1926, when Feng declared his determination to launch another series of campaigns against his enemies, he had

effectively established a new force out of the badly beaten remnants of the Kuominchünn. Not only was there no reported case of a power struggle, but some of his subordinates, like Han Fu-chü and Shih Yu-san, who had been obliged to find refuge under Yen Hsi-shan, were persuaded to return to Feng's fold. Thus within a few months, the army was again ready to go to war with undiminished vigor.¹¹

Probably no militarist organization succeeded more thoroughly in its training program than the KMT. From the very beginning, the Whampoa project was given the utmost priority in the KMT's rebuilding program. A major characteristic of the disciplinary training in Whampoa was its intensive ideological indoctrination and heavy emphasis on strict discipline, implemented through the political educational program established in October 1923.* Whampoa offered the best political educational curriculum of its time. It included courses on political economics, the theory of imperialism, the history of China, and the history of the revolutionary movement in the West.¹² But it is obvious that the ideological indoctrination revolved primarily around the theses espoused in Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles. These principles tried to blend certain salient aspects of the traditional Confucian political creed, the four bonds and eight virtues (*ssu-wei, pa-te*), with elements of Western democratic theory; they embodied a sweeping attack on foreign imperialism, a bellicose assertion of national independence, and finally an earnest advocacy of a constructive program for the salvation and rejuvenation of China. Sun's theory provided the KMT military personnel with a set of conceptual tools to explain the contemporary social and political evils that were everywhere readily visible.

In addition to heavy dosages of political instruction, the cadets were also subject to constant political supervision. The KMT, borrowing the organizational techniques of the Red Army, instilled

* This training was placed in the hands of some of the best political minds at the party's disposal. Liao Chung-k'ai was the resident representative of the party. Tai Ch'u-an-hsien was the head of the Political Department, Teng Yen-ta the acting head of the Training Department. Other party luminaries who frequently lectured the cadets included Wang Ching-wei, Hu Han-min, and Shao Yuan-ch'ung. Chen Hsün-cheng (Ch'en Pu-lei), *Kuo-min ko-ming chün chan shih ch'u kao*, 1: 90.

the political commissar system in November 1924, when the training regiments (*chia-o-tao-o-t'u'an*) were created.¹³ The system was later introduced into all units under the KMT's effective control.

The "Regulations of Political Departments in the National Revolutionary Army" drafted in December 1925 created a political hierarchy of commissars parallel to the military hierarchy, in order to "promote political education, instill a national revolutionary spirit, raise fighting capacity, solidify discipline, and realize Sun Yat-senism in the Army."¹⁴ The commissar was equal in status to the military commander of the unit to which he was assigned. Theoretically, they had separate fields of responsibility;¹⁵ actually, the political commissar was there to check the commander. The political commissar was given power not only to act for the military commander in his absence but to control promotions, recommendations, and punishment of all military personnel. Under extraordinary circumstances, commissars were empowered to veto a commander's orders or forbid subordinates to obey them if they thought the orders were unwise or illegal.¹⁶ They not only helped train the recruits; they also served in combat units. Commissars existed in platoons, companies, battalions, regiments, divisions, army groups, army headquarters, commanders' offices, the various organs of the National Revolutionary Army, Naval Headquarters, the General Staff, and the arsenal. The commissars, in turn, were assisted by political workers in their units, organized into party cells.*

The existence of such an extensive network of political control and supervision enabled the KMT to accept the nominal allegiance of militarists of questionable loyalty. Often the only condition the KMT imposed was that they allow the KMT-appointed party representative with his own team of commissars to be assigned to their units. These commissars would then lay the groundwork for organizing the soldiers into party cells, educating them politically, teaching them to read and write, and acting as their guardians and spokesmen. Once the commissars had won the sympathy and confidence of the common soldiers, they would then

* In an army corps, for example, each commissar had about one hundred such political workers to help him, so that there was approximately one political soldier to every one hundred fighting men in the combat units. F. F. Liu, *A Military History of Modern China*, p. 18.

mobilize the soldiers to put pressures upon their commanders.* As F. F. Liu, the military historian of the Nationalist Army, notes, the political commissar system enabled the KMT to fill its ranks with heterogeneous groups of men, and it also contributed to rectifying such defects in the armies as irregularities in spending, favoritism, and nepotism. Their work not only helped improve the army's public relations during peacetime, but also contributed directly to the party's military success by using organization and propaganda to arouse popular support behind enemy lines.¹⁷

In addition to ideological indoctrination, the KMT military leaders also stressed conventional martial virtues. The Whampoa cadets were exhorted to achieve four martial qualities—bravery (*yung*), daring (*meng*), authority (*wei*), and austerity (*yen*). In his lectures to the cadets, Chiang constantly reiterated several other themes: he admonished them to learn to persevere regardless of hardship, to be uncompromising on matters of principle ("rather be a crushed gem than a whole piece of tile"), and to be ready to sacrifice and die for the revolutionary cause.¹⁸

To further enforce discipline, the KMT put into effect in January 1925 the so-called *lien-tso-fa* (military law of collective responsibility), which was to apply to the commanders and soldiers of all military units. Under this law, if a regiment retreated without orders, then the commander in chief would execute the regiment commander. Or if a regiment's commander was killed in action, then any of his battalion commanders who had retreated without orders would be executed to pay for his life. Therefore, the commanders would not dare to retreat. This type of collective responsibility was carried down to the individual members of the smallest military unit. Thus, if a squad leader did not retreat but his entire squad retreated without orders, thus causing the death of the squad leader, then all the privates of the squad would be executed.¹⁹

* A good case in point was the KMT's absorption of Lai Shih-huang's force, which was composed mainly of natives of Kiangsi province. When Lai's force became the 14th Division of the National Revolutionary Army, the KMT appointed Hsiung Shih-hui, a native of Kiangsi, its political representative in the division, in which capacity he organized political work in the division and worked his way into the command structure. When Lai was later executed by the party, Hsiung was appointed commander of the 14th Division. The transition was smooth.

Shortly after the *lien-tso-fa* went into effect, the Whampoa cadets were incorporated into the KMT forces for the army's first major expedition, the so-called Eastern Expedition. This campaign merits our attention because it set a pattern that was to be followed in the KMT's future campaigns. In the first place, collective responsibility was strictly enforced. During this very first campaign, a company commander was executed for having violated the *lien-tso-fa*. A regimental political commissar and a deputy company commander received severe punishment for the same offense.²⁰

Second, the leadership showed great concern for the welfare of the soldiers, in sharp contrast to the callous attitudes of many militarists toward their men. The dead were buried and their families notified; Chiang Kai-shek personally led a memorial service in their honor. The wounded were given extra cash. Third, a thorough investigation of battlefield performance was conducted, and reports were made with recommendations for promotions, demotions, honors, rewards, and punishments.²¹ This may be routine for a modern army, but in the context of the 1920's and in comparison with other military units, the KMT's policies were very unusual and made the soldiers feel that their efforts were appreciated. Fourth, the Whampoa cadets and their followers showed extraordinary enthusiasm for fighting and performed heroic deeds beyond the call of duty. It was in this campaign that they first employed the dare-to-die groups (*kan-ssu-tui*) to scale city walls, with very simple instruments and practically no cover. Finally, strict control was exercised over the soldiers' behavior toward the civilian population. The soldiers were forbidden to enter or board in civilian houses or take their property without appropriate compensation. Violators were severely punished.²²

The KMT force won a resounding victory. In subsequent years the Whampoa-trained officers and soldiers went on to face larger and better equipped enemies, and they continued to score one victory after another. Their bravery won them a reputation for being invincible, and their good conduct also won them the enthusiastic support of the people wherever they went.

Thus, the meticulous inculcation of martial virtues accompanied by the enforcement of iron discipline in the ranks of the Whampoa cadets and the revolutionary forces under their leadership made

TABLE I
*Educational Background of Division Commanders,
1916 and 1924*

School	1916	1924
Peiyang Military Academy	9	7
Shihfan Gakkō	10	4
Paotung	1	6
Other schools	4	8
No information	8	10
Total number of commanders	32	35

SOURCE: "Chih yüan piao," *Tung fang tsai chih*, 14, 1 (Jan. 1917); *China Year Book*, 1924, pp. 927-49.

go three years of advanced training to become high-echelon line officers or staff officers.²⁴ According to regulations, seven years of academic training were required to produce an officer, or ten years for top commanders and staff positions.

Concerning the quality of military leadership in the early Republican period, there seem to be two different views. Powell, on the basis of his examination of the late Ch'ing army program, suggests that many military leaders were fairly well educated.²⁵ Others argue that most leading military figures were ignorant. Jerome Ch'en, for example, studied the biographical sketches of 1,300 men who held the rank of brigadier or higher between 1912 and 1928 and concluded that "the number of 'educated' war lords is unlikely to have exceeded 30 percent of the total and the rest were mostly illiterate or semi-literate people from extremely modest origins."²⁶

My own studies indicate that many of the militarists on the higher levels had some form of education. Table 1 shows that more than 70 percent of the division commanders in 1916 and 1924 (the years for which we have a complete national listing) had attended some military school. Moreover, the other 30 percent includes men whose educational background could not be ascertained; the actual number of men without any formal education might be even smaller. Thus, although the illiteracy of such militarists as Chang Tsung-ch'ang and Han Fu-ch'u was well publicized, often in comical terms, such men were rare among the top leaders. It is true that no first-rate scholars were to be found among the militarists, but many of them were quite educated. Feng Kuo-

the KMT army into a formidable force. The political indoctrination gave them some definite principles to fight for, and the *lien-tso-fa* ensured the observance of strict responsibility between superiors and subordinates and necessitated close coordination among commanders, both vertically and horizontally.

Technical Training

The military educational system that existed in the early Republican years was inherited from the Ch'ing dynasty. The imperial edict promulgated by Emperor Kuang-hsü in 1905 established a three-level system for military schools. On the lowest level, each province was to have a three-year primary school at its capital for the training of officers. On the next level, there were to be four military middle schools for the entire country, located at Peking, Sian, Wuch'ang, and Nanking. Students must be graduates of the provincial primary schools and would spend two years in the middle schools. On the highest level, there was a Military Officers' Academy at Paotungfu. Graduates of the military middle schools must first complete one year's service in the army before enrolling in Paotungfu's two-year course.²⁸ According to the edict, an entrance examination was to be held once a year to select candidates for the primary school, with the proviso that each *hsien* would be guaranteed one student in the school. Although this process of selection seemed fair and objective, the qualifications were actually set by provincial authorities, which led to considerable differences. By the time of the 1911 revolution, only four classes had graduated from the primary schools, and one from the middle schools.

Therefore, the total number of graduates from the new military schools was quite small. In the confusion caused by the revolution, some of the provincial primary schools were either closed or were so poorly supported that they existed in name only. In addition, the qualifications, requirements, and timetables had undergone some minor changes.

By and large, however, the Republicans kept the Ch'ing military educational system essentially intact. Their only structural change was the creation of a Military College as the highest institution for military education. Theoretically, only Paotung graduates who had served in the army for more than two years were eligible to take the entrance examination. Once admitted, they would under-

TABLE 2
*Educational Background of Highest Provincial
Military Authorities, 1916-1928*

School	Number of militarists
Peiyang Military Academy	18
Shikan Gakko	19
Paoting	12
Other schools	22
No information	36
TOTAL	107

NOTE: Sintiang has been omitted, since it was remote and never figured importantly in the military politics of the period.

chang and Wu P'ei-fu were *hsiu-t's'ai* (successful candidates of civil service exams). Tuan Ch'i-ju was quite immersed in the exposition of Buddhist theology, and Hsü Shu-cheng had a very solid training in classics and was the author of *Chien kuo ch'u'an cheng*, a treatise on a new political system.

Of course, it may be argued that the division commanders, a relatively small group, were not necessarily representative of the other high-ranking militarists. To try to meet this objection, I have analyzed the educational backgrounds of those militarists who occupied the highest military positions in the provinces during the 1916-28 period; see Table 2. In this group, too, the educated militarists outnumbered the uneducated ones, by 71 to 36 (or 66 to 34 percent), even if we treat all those for whom we have no information as uneducated.

Unfortunately, existing information does not allow us to carry this type of aggregate national statistical analysis all the way down to the lower ranks. However, we are able to conduct such an analysis on a regional basis. For the three provinces in Manchuria, we possess fairly reliable and complete information on the educational background of all the important militarists of the Fengtien faction in 1924. As Table 3 shows, two-thirds of the division and brigade commanders, three-fourths of the regiment commanders, and almost all (93 percent) of the other officers above lieutenant colonel had had some education.

The consistency of all these findings compels us to reject the view that the leading militarists of the 1916-28 period were generally uneducated men. We must not confuse humble origins with lack

TABLE 3
Educational Background of Fengtien Militarists, 1924

School	Division commanders	Brigade commanders	Regiment commanders	Others above lt. colonel
Shikan Gakko and Japan War College	1	3	3	12
Paoting and National Military College	1	3	11	
Manchurian Military Academy	1	7	20	7
Other	5	12	9	
No information	1	8	16	2
TOTAL	3	24	62	30

SOURCE: *Tosan-sho Kanshin roku*, ed. by Tanabe Shujiro, pp. 1-77. The Manchurian Military Academy included the Tung-san-sheng chiang wu t'ang and Feng-tien chiang wu t'ang.

of formal education. Many military schools, because they were publicly funded, did not discriminate against the poor. In addition, frequently talented soldiers would be sent to military school for a period of formal training. Quite a few officers in Manchuria went to school only after they had risen through the ranks to become company or battalion commanders.

Thus, literacy is too simple a measure of the quality of military leadership. We must look at the kind of education that prepared men to be military leaders. By and large, the education reform initiated in the late Ch'ing and carried on in the 1916-28 period did not produce the desired improvement in the quality of military education. Ting Wen-chiang, a distinguished geologist who was also intensely interested in the military affairs of his time, categorically declared that military education was the most backward branch of Chinese education, lagging behind civilian higher education by at least twenty years. He further claimed that the officers being produced by the schools not only lacked modern knowledge and training; they could not even read military maps.²⁷

Although the system looked good on paper, the government lacked the administrative machinery and technical expertise to carry it out fully. In the first place, the quality of students enrolled at the military schools was difficult to control; there were no uniform standards. Even an advanced military school like Pao-

tting suffered from an unevenness in the quality of its students, since it had to accept any serving officer.²⁸ Second, political instability during the 1916-28 period often forced many schools either to suspend operations or to shorten the duration of training.

More serious shortcomings were the backwardness of the instructional material and the inefficiency with which the schools were administered. In the military primary schools, the amount of military knowledge and skills imparted to the students was usually small and superficial.²⁹ The courses taught at the military middle schools were apparently more advanced, but the quality of instruction was probably not very good.³⁰ During the Republican period, a graduate of a middle school served in an army unit for six months before going to Paoting, but the educational value of this in-service training was nil.³¹ The Paoting Military Academy, which was supposed to be the highest training ground for line commanders, presented a similarly dismal picture. Because the cadets came from diverse geographical backgrounds, and some of them had even participated in the 1911 revolution, the academy was given a low priority by Tuan Ch'i-ju and the other Peiyang militarists who were in control of the central government.* In addition, there was a general refusal to take the educational process seriously. Instructors and cadets alike believed that the characteristics of a good military leader were contempt for death and the judicious application of simple strategy and tactics. Science and technology were neglected; there was no attempt to integrate and synthesize military science with other related disciplines. This invariably led to a very narrow perspective. For instance, students showed little interest in studying weaponry, because it was considered a field only for specialists.³² There was also a pervasive cynicism about the purpose of the whole educational process. Both instructors and students regarded the schooling period as a formality, not a time to really learn something. Thus, so long as a student fulfilled his minimum academic requirements, he would be graduated.

The worst problem facing higher military education, however,

* When Chiang Fang-cheng was commandant of Paoting, he became so frustrated by the central government's unwillingness to improve the school that he attempted to commit suicide in protest. The situation remained poor after Chiang's departure. Ts'ao Chü-jen, pp. 7-8; T'ao Chüyin, *Chiang Pai-ji hsien sheng chuan*, pp. 36-42, 48.

was the inadequacy of the instructors. Most of the Chinese instructors had themselves been inadequately educated at the same poor schools in which they were teaching; a few had been educated in Japan. And when foreign instructors (mostly Japanese) were employed, new psychological strains and instructional problems were created.* In addition, most ambitious and educated officers shunned desk jobs, and an academic position was the worst of the desk jobs. The military school was a place for premature retirement, and only the hopeless ones would accept such an assignment. Even the militarists who appreciated the importance of military education were reluctant to send their able lieutenants to teach in military schools. A militarist, regardless of his intellectual and leadership potential, wanted a combat assignment, since this was the surest way to rapid promotion and greater power. The best indication of the contempt for teaching is the appallingly small number of instructors employed by the military schools. In June 1916, there were only about 350 instructors known to be employed by all the military schools above the provincial primary school level in the entire country.³³

The basic cause of the neglect of military education during the Republican years was not financial, for the country certainly could afford to finance a few good schools. Nor was it the lack of talent, although talent was not in abundant supply. The basic cause was to be found in the concept of what constituted a good military leader and in the constraints imposed by the nature of the political game. It seems that the image of a military man was still shaped in traditional terms. The militarists tended to define themselves in terms of the traditional Chinese hero (such as Han Kao-isu or Ming Hung-wu), who elevated himself from humble background to fame and power by sheer personal valor and political acumen. This was particularly true in a time of chaos, when there was no orderly system of promotion but much chance to fight. The opportunities were abundant if only one could command some troops.

So far we have been analyzing the quality of military education, but we can also approach our problem from a different angle. The

* The students regarded foreign instructors as spies and treated them with hostility. Moreover, interpreters had to be used, which made the instructional process very cumbersome and unproductive. Ch'in Te-shun, pp. 128-29; Hu Shih, *Ting Wen-chiang ti chuan chi*, pp. 61-62.

distribution of the educated militarists among the different echelons also had an important bearing on the functioning of the military system. Instead of quality, here we are primarily concerned with quantity—the number of graduates from the various military schools, where they went, and how their number might have affected the character of military operations.

Throughout the 1916–28 period, the theoretical ratio between officers and men stipulated in the organizational charts remained relatively stable, never exceeding 1:20.³⁴ If we apply this ratio to the rough estimates of the total size of the army given in Chapter 4 (p. 78), then we arrive at the following estimates of the number of officers needed to lead China's armies in various years: 1916, over 25,000 officers; 1918, over 50,000; 1924, over 75,000; and 1928, over 100,000. These figures represent only the officers needed to serve in combat and various combat-support activities. They do not include such military personnel as the military police or the staffs of the Ministry of War, the Chief of the General Staff, the defense commissioners of military districts in all parts of the country, and the arsenals and other supply depots. Thus our estimates represent the bare minimum number of officers required according to the prevailing theory of military organization.

Our next task, then, is to find out whether the military educational system was capable of meeting this rising demand for officers. A comprehensive survey of China's military educational institutions shows that, for the four-year period 1912–16, the total of all military school graduates above the primary-school level came to a figure of less than 10,000, or less than 2,500 annually.³⁵ Since the number of combat officers required in 1916 was over 25,000, even if all of the 10,000 graduates produced in the previous four years were given combat assignments, they could only fill the top positions within each combat unit, leaving the middle and lower levels to men with no formal military training.

The situation deteriorated after the beginning of the 1920's. Several northern provinces either closed their primary schools or supported them so poorly that they served no useful purpose.*

* In some provinces, a new form of military education arose, known as the "lecture halls," or *chiang-wu-t'ang*. Generally, these took the place of the provincial primary schools or even the middle schools, when regular facilities for training officers were unavailable. *CYB*, 1921–22, p. 513. But, as a whole, this

One middle school, at Ch'ingho, was closed, and even the Paoting Military Academy was closed after producing nine graduating classes. Both the quality and quantity of military school graduates remained stagnant or declined during most of the 1920's.

At the same time, the number of troops was increasing rapidly, and the demand for qualified officers became more pressing. During the 1920's, the frequency of wars increased, and more troops were fighting than ever before. Consequently, the depletion of officers caused by battlefield casualties must have increased significantly as well. Under these conditions, the number of officers with some form of formal military training must have constituted an even smaller percentage of the entire officer corps.

There is little doubt that this lack of competent officers eventually made the task of training the soldiers extremely difficult, if not impossible. The greatest obstacle presented by the Chinese soldiers was their widespread illiteracy.* The more illiterate soldiers there were in any unit, the greater was the need for face-to-face communication, detailed oral instruction, personal demonstration, and supervision. This, in turn, required a greater officer-to-soldier ratio.

Furthermore, as the sophistication of the weapons increased, the need for trained officers to instruct the soldiers increased correspondingly. In this respect, the supply of competent officers was even more inadequate. Almost half of the military schools were general-purpose schools of various levels. There were two military police schools, one logistics school, one medical school, one veterinary school, one aviation school. Although there were nine or ten army survey schools, there was no artillery school, no signal, engineering, quartermaster, or ordnance school. Thus almost no officers received specialized training in the more important branches of military science. The Chinese armies fought with constantly improving weapons, but the military organization was tailored

new institution failed to improve the quality of military education or to increase the output of graduates.

* James Yen's investigation of Fengtien troops during the 1920's showed that only 25 out of every 150 soldiers (16.6 percent) were literate; T'ao Meng-ho's investigation of a northern brigade showed that only 13 percent of the soldiers were literate. Worse conditions probably existed in other troops. For instance, Feng Yü-hsiang declared that during 1919–20, over 95 percent of the officers and men in his army were illiterate or semiliterate. F. F. Liu, p. 142; Feng Yü-hsiang, *Wo ti sheng ho*, 2: 107.

to a more primitive mode of warfare and was very slow to change. The deficiency in the number of qualified specialized officers made the technical training of the soldiers almost impossible.

Under these conditions, it is not at all surprising that some militarists simply omitted technical training altogether, especially when they considered training to be of little value anyway. To these militarists, the best way to use a recruit was to give him a rifle and to throw him into action as soon as possible. If he got killed, there were always more men than rifles.

The backwardness of the Chinese armies, I submit, was due less to any lack of education among the top militarists and more to the high rate of illiteracy and the insufficient technical training of the lower-echelon officers and the overwhelming majority of the soldiers. For the inadequacy of top leaders could sometimes be ameliorated by outside assistance, such as personal secretaries or foreign military advisers; the services of soldiers of fortune or foreign career officers acting with the implicit encouragement of their governments could be enlisted with relative ease.* Thus, high-level planning posed no serious problem if the militarists were willing to employ outside talents. At the middle and lower echelons, however, foreign advisers were unavailable and the lack of well-trained indigenous staff members had its full impact. Each battle had to be improvised. The commanders themselves, because of their misconception of the requirements of a military leader, were not in a position to assume the role of staff officers. Sometimes, they were simply incapable of commanding a large force.†

The strategic and tactical mistakes committed by the officers showed that they were woefully deficient in the basic requirements imposed by the contemporary technology. Under such leadership, it was unrealistic to expect the soldiers to behave any more effi-

* For instance, Feng Yü-hsiang "had at least one German, one Italian, and one Japanese officer in his army besides his Russian advisers." Japanese military experts served in the armies of Tuan Ch'i-jui, Chang Tsö-lin, and Wu P'ei-fu. Sheridan, p. 29.

† Commenting on the reasons for the dismal failure of the Second Kuomin-chün under the leadership of Hu Chin-i, Feng Yü-hsiang said, "Many of Hu's subordinates were . . . hardworking men and displayed extraordinary bravery at the front. But many of them also had no understanding of military strategies and tactics. Therefore, whenever the force exceeded one thousand men, they simply did not know how to command it." Feng Yü-hsiang, *Wo ti sheng ho*, 2: 25-26.

ciently. Whenever technical training was not given appropriate emphasis, the majority of the soldiers were unfit to fight. They did not know how to handle their weapons properly, or how to use the terrain, or how to coordinate with their fellow soldiers. They often fought individually, rather than as parts of a formation. They used their weapons for the wrong purpose or in the wrong way, causing rapid depletion of ammunition and destruction of weapons. What otherwise would have been a mere reverse in fortune on the battlefield could become a major defeat, and a major defeat an annihilation.

It must not be assumed, of course, that all armies were alike. There were militarists who were alive to the need for technical training at a very early time; by and large these were the same men who were exceptions in recruitment and discipline. Wu P'ei-fu was known as a thorough trainer. Right after the 1920 victory over Anhwei, he established a serious training program at Loyang that by 1923 included an officers' school, schools for the men, and a cadet school for several hundred small boys. He also had specialized training in such areas as armored cars, bombs, and aviation.³⁶ Yen Hsi-shan was equally enthusiastic about technical training. His junior officers were required to complete two years of middle school education. Before being given senior assignments, officers had either to attend the Paotung Military Academy or to enlist in Yen's own Military Instruction Corps. One significant feature of the training in Shansi was the use of live ammunition for target practice, which was extremely rare among northern armies and which earned for Shansi soldiers the reputation for the best marksmanship.³⁷

Feng Yü-hsiang also had a vigorous technical training program. Nearly all his low-ranking officers had risen from the ranks, and the majority of the middle- and high-ranking officers were not graduates of military schools.³⁸ He first organized intensive training classes for commanders in 1913; soldiers were instructed through booklets, songs, daily pep talks, and periodic examinations. Later Feng established a Military Training Corps, which offered courses for both officers and noncommissioned officers on military tactics, troop leadership, topography, weaponry, military history, fortifications, and regulations. In 1925 Feng added a "Qualifications Examining Group" to check the knowledge and

performance of his officers, and its reports usually had great influence over the promotion and demotion of officers.³⁹ In the same year, Feng's training program received a boost from Soviet military advisers, who inspected and evaluated Feng's army in terms of military knowledge and efficiency and made suggestions for improvement. They also organized and served as instructors in the artillery, advanced infantry, engineering, cavalry, and intelligence schools.⁴⁰

Of all the armies, however, the KMT gave the most serious attention to military technical training. As early as August 1923 the party dispatched a delegation headed by Chiang Kai-shek to visit the Soviet Union, and one of its important missions was to study the Soviet military system as a possible model for the establishment of the KMT party army. Soon after his return, Chiang was appointed by Sun to supervise the preparations for the creation of an officers' training school, the Whampoa Academy.

From the beginning the quality of the Whampoa cadets was high. Of the 3,000 men who applied for admission to the first class, fewer than 500 were accepted. Only a small fraction of the students were selected from among the officers of the KMT armies (Hunan, Honan, Yunnan, Kwangsi, and Kwangtung) in Kwangtung; the majority were recruited on the basis of their performance in entrance examinations held clandestinely in other provinces.⁴¹ This fact marked the Whampoa force as the first significant case of breaking away from the narrow geographical pattern of recruitment set by other provincial forces in the south, and the policy undoubtedly had a beneficial effect on the quality of recruits. For Whampoa's applicants were superior to those of all the military schools in the nation, and in some cases they were even superior to the graduates of other military schools.*

The Whampoa faculty also showed marked superiority to most

* In a telegram to Chiang Kai-shek dated March 13, 1924, Liao Chung-kai reported that one-third of the 1,200 applicants in Kwangtung had already graduated from either a regular high school or a specialized school. Even after the examination officials had added trigonometry, geometry, and algebra to the examination in order to be more selective, many were still able to answer all questions, and Liao complained about the difficulty of choosing from among so many qualified applicants. If in Kwangtung alone there were some 400 applicants with high school education, it would not be wise of the mark to speculate that almost all of the 500 cadets selected from the 3,000 applicants had had a high school education or better.

other military schools. The instructor-student ratio was higher at Whampoa than at other schools. And, unlike other militarists, the KMT put its best military talents into educational training.⁴² The quality of Whampoa's technical training was enhanced by the presence of heavy foreign influences. Many top-level faculty members came from the Japanese school, Shikan Gakko, and many of the instructional materials were obtained from the Japanese.⁴³ Most important, however, was the role played by the Soviet Union, which sent some of its best military commanders to establish a foothold in the KMT military structure.⁴⁴ The Soviet advisers were actively concerned with all major aspects of the training program. Although they could not personally conduct any classes, the senior advisers in fact developed all the academic courses, while the junior advisers worked with drills, weapons firing, and tactical preparations. In sum, the Soviet advisers exerted a very strong influence in shaping the training program at Whampoa.⁴⁵

There is little doubt that the extensive support given by the KMT to Whampoa, the high quality of its Chinese faculty, the high standards of its cadets, and the able advisers and advanced teaching material provided by the Soviet Union together made Whampoa into the best military school of the 1920's. It was also the largest.

By January 1926, the first four classes of Whampoa had graduated some 5,540 cadets.⁴⁶ The expansion of the school had been phenomenal, from a first class of fewer than 500 cadets to a fourth class with over 3,500 cadets.⁴⁷ Even the Paotong Military Academy never had more than 1,500 cadets in a single class.⁴⁸ By June 1926, Chiang claimed that some 6,400 cadets had been trained by Whampoa.⁴⁹ Thus, in less than two years, the KMT had trained approximately the same number of officers produced by all the military schools (above the primary school level) in the nation in any three of the years between 1912 and 1916, and had trained them better as well.

During this period, the activities of the school went much beyond the classroom and the training field. In October 1924 the cadets were used to suppress the rebellion of the Canton Chamber of Commerce. With the seized weapons, the Whampoa Academy proceeded to organize training regiments in November and December 1924, using the cadets as officers, and recruiting soldiers in

Shanghai as well as in Kwangtung. By the spring of 1925, two training regiments, totaling about 4,000 men, had become fully established. These training regiments, with Whampoa graduates serving as junior officers, became the nucleus of the new KMT army which was organized in August 1925.⁵⁰

Conclusion

Our inquiry into the disciplinary and technical training of the Chinese armies shows that wide discrepancies existed among them. The majority of them, the mercenary armies, were poorly trained. The armies that were better trained were guided by some form of ideological commitment, ranging from a strict personal code of proper conduct to a comprehensive body of political doctrines. The fact that *some*, but not all, armies had a mercenary character had a dysfunctional effect on the stability of the Chinese political system.

Since only some armies had a strongly mercenary character, they could not effectively impose on the entire system a set of rules for conducting warfare that would be most conducive to their own major interest, which was self-preservation. When there were ideological armies that aimed at the destruction of enemies, wars could not be fought in accordance with a "conservatism" policy. Unable to change the terms of warfare and unwilling to fight hard, the Chinese mercenaries resorted to plots, counterplots, defections, and surrenders to preserve themselves in the system.

Precisely because of the commercial orientation of many of these units, they were used but seldom trusted. Their resistance to strict military control often created internal stresses and strains in the military organizations to which they belonged. The presence of "unreliable" mercenary armies made military calculations extremely difficult. Highly integrated and better trained units seldom changed sides; mercenary units did. When the latter happened, the militarist to which these units belonged faced the threat of annihilation. Hence we find that the demise of the Anhwei faction was brought about in 1920 not because its troops were defeated in the battlefield, but because many units lost the will to fight soon after hostilities began and went over to Chihli and Fengtien factions. Even as late as 1926–27, the KMT's task of fighting Sun Ch'uan-fang was made easier when many southern militarists in

Fukien, Kiangsi, and Chekiang were bought off and defected at opportune moments. In this sense, the existence of mercenary elements made the Chinese system inherently unstable.

Toward the last three or four years, armies like that of the Shansi faction, the KMT, and the Kuomintchün came to acquire a rather pronounced ideological character. As a result, the hard core of these armies displayed a high degree of group solidarity. Faced with this solidarity, even the northern militarists were driven to become somewhat ideological, in the broad sense of the term. They developed a distinct tendency to view their war against the KMT as a regional struggle between north and south. Northern leaders like Chang Ts'o-lin and Wu P'ei-fu began to refer to the KMT as "reds" and warned their followers that the forthright and honest northern soldiers could never expect to receive a fair deal from those cunning and treacherous southerners.

It is interesting to note that the northern troops, which had never been known for good discipline or high morale, put up fierce resistance against the KMT offensive throughout the duration of the Northern Expedition. The overwhelming majority of militarists who surrendered to the KMT were provincials of Kiangsu, Chekiang, Kiangsi, Hunan, Hupei, and Fukien. Few high-ranking northern militarists defected or surrendered to the KMT without a serious fight. Compromise was considered impossible because there existed a wide gap in political style, ideological outlook, and educational background, as well as in personal relationships, between these two groups, the Peiyang militarists and the KMT.