

~~Historian~~ "The Nationalist Government
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"The Nationalist Government
faced three major problems;
foreignness, challengers and famine,"
writes historian Roger Childs. This
statement aptly ~~describes~~ encom-
passes the difficulties faced by the
Guomindang (GMD) ~~from 1927-1937~~
in the "Nationalist Decade" of
1927-1937. The GMD had inherited
a disunified country ravaged by
warlordism and corrupt leadership
under the Manchu dynasty ^(deposed in 1911) and the
dictatorial rule of Yuan Shikai, which
ended in 1916. Dr. Sun Yat-sen's three
stages of revolution - military take-
overs, political tutelage and demo-
cracy - ^{were} never followed through

due to the problems Childs outlines.

Immanuel C. Y. Hsu writes "the Nationalist government hardly enjoyed a day's peace" from its instatement. Challengess, he writes "cept up ~~for~~ⁱⁿ all aspects of government, ". ~~least of all~~ Following the tripartite formula for a successful unification of China, as set out by Sun Yat-sen, though, Chiang Kai Shek began to address the issue of warlordism through "military takeover".

The Northern Expedition was thus launched in 1926, after entering an United Front with the growing Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Though Chiang was the by far

The underdog, leading 100 000 troops against 250 000 warlord troops in the first encounter, ~~the~~ he nonetheless was able to "achieve a great victory, a victory which in 1923 would have been thought impossible"; as writes Terry Ruggie in "The Long Revolution". This ~~was~~ success is attributed to Chiang's methods of infiltration and disruption of the warlords' fiefs ~~and the~~ by historian Mark Seldon. Diane McDonald, on the other hand, upholds that the superior training of the GMD troops at the newly formed Whangpa academy cannot be understated. Further, the USSR's advisory team, ~~played~~ led by Galin, played a great role.

Despite this, ~~the~~ Chiang's tactic to implement the ~~the~~ untrained, dishevelled soldiers of the ~~the~~ captured warlords' armies led to a significant deterioration in the GMD's army's standards. Further, these soldiers were ~~loyal~~ ^{under} first to their warlord's command, ~~then~~ and ^{were} often required to cooperate with soldiers of enemy warlords, thus creating great rifts and disunity within the army.

Nonetheless, ~~a~~ nine out of the eighteen provinces of China were united in 1928, ~~and~~ ~~with~~ some warlords surrendering without a fight. Therefore, Chiang had pacified his first group of challengers, at least in the

surface, and was thus able to conduct a national unification of sorts. [Despite the GMD's later failures, we should not forget ~~the~~ their earlier achievements," writes historian I. C. Y. Hsu. Once this first stage of military take over was completed, the GMD was able to implement reforms such as a centralised currency and language, a banking system, and a reformed educational system. Further, land reforms were tentatively undertaken, though the growing corruption of the GMD, which ~~was~~ hampered greatly ~~the~~ China's political stability, meant that most of the ^{land} tax reductions (taxes could no longer exceed 37%) were either ignored or by-passed; ~~the~~

Lack of funds, due to foreigners' holdings in the treaty ports, also hampered initiatives such as ~~the~~ the installment of irrigation, research into new seed varieties, herbicides and pesticides.

Possibly the most important failing ~~top~~ of the GMD at this time, though, was the ignorance of one of Sun Yat-sen's three principles, the people's livelihood. As the Nationalist government tried to appease the tiny minority of the landlords and upper class urban dwellers, they ignored the 90% of people who lived off the land as peasants. ~~and the~~ ~~These~~ These ineffective reforms led to the emergence of Chiang Kai-shek's biggest challengers, the Chinese

Communist Party. In effect, Chiang was responsible for "driving the peasants into the arms of the communists," as historian L. Van Slyke suggests, and was hard-pressed to deal with this challenge, creating political instability.

The eradication of the CCP became almost an obsession with Chiang, who ~~also~~ refused to acknowledge the Japanese invasion of China, even after the humiliating ~~and~~ Japanese take-over of Manchuria in 1931. He claimed "the Japanese are a disease of the skin, the communists are a disease of the heart".

This attitude fuelled resentment throughout the Chinese population and contributed greatly to ~~the~~ ^{China's} political instability. ~~caused by the~~
The Shanghai massacre of 1927 created great ~~in~~ political rifts between the GMD and the CCP, and the ensuing Nanchang Uprising of August, the Autumn Harvest Uprising of September and the Canton uprising of December greatly threatened the national unification ~~which~~ which Chiang aimed in his Northern Expedition.
~~Chiang's~~ Ill-feeling towards this obsession with the White Terror culminated in 1937 with the ~~Young Marshall~~ kidnapping of Chiang Kai-Shek by the Young Marshall Zang Xueliang, who

after losing Lu's Manchurian province to the Japanese, was ~~forced~~ stationed to fight the communists. This kidnapping, known as the Xian incident, led to the formation of the Second United Front between the CCP and the GMD and thus, ~~for~~ until 1945, Chiang was able to appease these challenges as well.

~~Foreignness~~ Foreignness constituted Chiang's third major group of challengers. Foreignness owned China's most prosperous treaty ports and thus crippled her economy. ~~Chiang~~ Chiang was able, by 1937, to ~~drive~~ ^{reclaim} ~~out~~ most foreign concessions ~~and~~ and extra-territorial

rights, though the major powers of Britain, Russia, ^{the} ~~and~~ the US and France still claimed theirs. Despite making headway in this issue, therefore, Chiang was criticised for not fully expelling foreigners from China, and this led to dissatisfaction and political instability.

To make matters worse, ~~the~~ China was experiencing one of the most severe famines of its history. It is recorded that one million people died, and historians Richards and Hoddinott claim that "the GMD ~~was~~ lacked ~~of~~ effective famine relief" ~~which~~ ~~was~~ which ~~was~~ caused the ~~process~~ Chinese

to resent the GMD and seek the help of the CCP, who, in their soviet, were providing more effective relief.

The Nationalist Decade of 1927 to 1937 began in a very promising light, with the unification of China. This unification was "more apparent than real," according to Diane Mac Donald, ~~was soon~~ ~~to~~ and it soon became evident that the GMD was "strong on the outside but weak on the inside," as Hsu suggests. This was exemplified in the Nationalist Government's slack implementation of reforms and inadequate

expulsion of corruption. The challenges, foreignness and famine problems faced by the GMD were addressed ~~only~~ superficially and therefore the GMD paved the way for political instability and the eventual Communist victory against the GMD, in 1949.