

1936 – The Eve of Japanese Invasion

by Ah Xiang

Excerpts from "Resistance Wars: 1931-1945" at <http://www.republicanchina.org/war.html> For updates and related articles, check <http://www.republicanchina.org/RepublicanChina-pdf.htm>

1936

In early 1936, Red Army mounted a so-called "Eastern Expedition" by crossing the Yellow River to Shanxi Prov. Chen Yongfa pointed out that Mao Tse-tung directed the eastern campaign for solving financial crisis. Before being driven out of Shanxi, Red Army confiscated huge amount of currency and recruited tens of thousands of soldiers. When "red priest" Dong Jianwu visited Wayaobao on Feb 27th 1936, he did not get to meet Mao Tse-tung, Zhang Wentian, and Peng Dehuai etc who was at Shilou of Shanxi Prov. Dong Jianwu, an emissary of Song Ziwen & Mme Sun Yat-sen, delivered the KMT letter to Bo-gu, met with Lin Boqu, Zhang Yunyi and Yuan Guoping, declined the invitation to go to Shanxi Prov, met with Zhou Enlai & Liu Zhidan at Zhejiaping, and departed Wayaobao on March 5th.

On May 5th 1936, KMT Government announced the draft of the ROC Constitution, with eight chapters and 146 clauses. This would be a step towards Sun Yat-sen's "constitutional government" from the stages of "military government" and "KMT-supervised administration". KMT 3rd Plenary of 5th Congress stipulated Nov 12th 1937 as the date for National Congregation.

In Nanking, in early 1936, actress Hu Die's films were widely welcome, and people lined up for watching the show. 1936 was the year before the full outbreak of the Japanese invasion war. Nobody expected a massacre of the city numbering 300,000 victims would fall upon them in the following year. People still enjoyed life without worry of a pending crisis. On May 31st of 1936, athletes wore newly made suits to show respect to Sun Yat-sen's monument before departing for the Olympics in Berlin as representatives of the Republic of China. Similarly, the colonialists also enjoyed their last heyday days of luxury and arrogance. On July 14th of 1936, arrogant French soldiers, with possibly Indochinese henchmen included, paraded through the streets of French extraterritories in Shanghai, marching with askew heads and noses slanted towards the sky.

On June 14th 1936, Zhang Taiyan passed away in Suzhou where he had established "Zhang Taiyan Guoxue [state classics] Jiangxi-hui [teaching school]" on Sept 16th 1935, in the spirits of late Ming scholar Gu Yanwu. About 10 days earlier, Zhang had authored a reply to Chiang Kai-shek, with a suggestion that communist forces be given a province of either Chahar or Suiyuan so that Japanese might not take over both even though the communists would have linked up with Russians in Outer Mongolia. (Tang Guoli made five colored knots for her husband Zhang

Taiyan's funeral, which was symbolic of the first national flag of the Republic of China.)

On June 1st, 1936, a meeting of "Southwestern Political Affairs Committee" was convened in Canton. A public wire was sent to Nanking calling for opposition to Japanese invasion. This would be so-called "[June 1st Movement](#)". After Chiang Kai-shek settled the June 1st Movement, Hu Zongnan's 1st Division was sent back to northern China, i.e., Xianyang and Fengxiang of Shenxi Prov, where it was expanded into 1st Corps, to be in charge of 1st Division & 78th Div.

War was brewing all through 1936. In 1936, Japanese tried to open up a consulate in Chengdu [i.e., Chengtu] the provincial capital of Sichuan province, but rioting Chinese killed two Japanese. On September 3 1936, an ethnic-Japanese [drugstore owner](#), long suspected to be a spy, was deliberately murdered in Guangdong Province though the guy had converted to quasi Chinese citizen already by marrying with two Chinese women and bearing 8 children. Around Peking, scuffles between Japanese and Chinese soldiers were often. In Shanghai, Japanese navy and consulate threatened Shanghai mayor with military action in the attempt of having Chinese government arrest "seven gentlemen [& gentlewomen]", i.e., Shen Junru, Zou Daofen, Li Gongpu, Sha Qianli, Shi Liang, Zhang Naiqi and Wang Zaoshi on Nov 23rd 1936. The so-called seven gentlemen organized "jiu guo hui" [society for rescuing China]. On Nov 24th 1936, Fu Zuoyi's Suiyuan Province army sacked Bailingmiao from "Inner Mongolia puppet army". The arrest of "seven gentlemen" would lead to nationwide protests against Chiang Kai-shek government as well as Zhang Xueliang's release petition which contributed to the Xi'an Incident on Dec 12th 1936.



KMT-CCP contacts remained secretive after Xi'an Incident per ZLA so as not to arouse Japan's suspicion and indignation. KMT commissar Zhang Chong took over the job as a liaison officer between the two parties. CCP, in Feb 1937, raised five demands and requested for four guarantees with KMT 5th Congress 3rd Plenary.

CCP records claimed that from Feb 12th to March 15th 1937, Zhou Enlai & Ye Jianying held peace talks with Gu Zhutong, Heh Zonghan and Zhang Chong in Xi'an. Zhou Enlai was instructed to pressure KMT into halting the [Ma Family Cavalry Attack at the Red Army Western Route](#). In late April, Zhang Chong flew to Yan'an for continuous talks with the communist leaders, and laid the groundwork for the **2nd KMT-CCP Collaboration** that was announced on Sept 13th 1936 by the Central News Agency after the eruption of July 7th 1937 Sino-Japanese War.

Also in 1936, KMT government established ROC Aviation Committee, with Mme Chiang Kai-shek invited to be chairman at the flattery of Airforce General Zhou Zhirou. Zhou Zhirou,

however, privately obtained the approval from Mme Chiang Kai-shek in depositing airforce funds in HK banks instead of purchasing airplanes on the pretext that China could be wasting money in buying outdated planes from different countries as well as incurring unnecessary maintenance costs on different plane models. By the time Chiang Kai-shek convened his generals on Mt Lushan in the aftermath of 1937 Japanese invasion, Zhou Zhirou pushed out Mme Chiang Kai-shek for his failure in building China's airforce which, incidentally, possessed 300 fighter airplanes, 179 destroyer airplanes, 148 reconnaissance planes, 99 bombers and 600 miscellaneous planes, only.