

IV - 69 - 32. "What Happened at Sian?" The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury - December 24, 1936.

Hopes For Peace Not Abandoned At Sian As Negotiations Proceed For Release Of Generalissimo

Major Offensive Still Delayed; Government Troops Advance West

Big Clash Occurs East Of Weinan As Rebels
Retreat; Bridge Dynamited To Stop Shensi
Forces; Rumors Of Ransom Circulated

Way Said Open For Chang To Leave

(Post Special Service)

NANKING, Dec. 24.—Negotiations are still going on in Sian and hopes for a peaceful settlement of the political crisis have not been abandoned, Mr. T. V. Soong, brother-in-law of General Chiang Kai-shek and friend of General Chang Hsueh-liang, reported in a telegram sent here last night, it was revealed today.

As result of the reassuring information, the Nanking authorities are delaying the major offensive on Sian although the air force continues to be active to prevent the mobilization of the rebel troops and the march of the communist units who were last reported to be four or five days' journey from Sian.

Huang In Taiyuan

General Huang Shao-hsiung, the newly appointed chairman of the Hupoh provincial government, is still in Taiyuan, it was ascertained today. He is conferring with General Yen Hsi-shan on the tangible measures for a settlement of the political crisis.

General Chiang Kai-shek today entered the 13th day of detention in rebel hands in Sian. Word had been received from Sian and Madame Chiang has obtained permission to see him.

Nanking Forces Advance

Nanking forces engaged in the Punitive Expedition against General Chang Hsueh-liang, leader of the Sian coup, have continued to advance westward along the Lunghai line although no major offensive has yet been ordered by General Ho Ying-ching, commander-in-chief and the minister of war. The first major clash took place at Shaoyi, 12 li east of Weinan, yesterday morning when 200 rebels were killed and the Chang forces driven back.

The Lunghai line, interrupted by military movements, has not been extended to Weinan Station as result of the government victory.

Troops In Sienyang

Government troops also are reported to have arrived in Sienyang, 70 li west of Sian. Under the command of General Wan Yao-wong, the troops advanced from Western Shensi and arrived in Sienyang yesterday. General Chang has dynamited the railway bridge there to check any further advance of the loyalist troops.

A section of Nanking leaders is advocating the launching of a major offensive on Sian at the earliest moment, believing that General Chang would have been no courage to cause bodily harm to the generalissimo. Another section, however, advocates the cessation of hostilities and settlement of the political crisis through peaceful means. Until a final decision, the "peace negotiations" and the military operations are continuing simultaneously with a view to effecting General Chiang's early release.

"Ransom" Payment Rumored

Wild rumors that General Chang Hsueh-liang has demanded a "ransom" of \$80,000,000 again were in circulation in Nanking yesterday. According to these rumors, Mr. T. V. Soong has already brought to Sian \$40,000,000. General Chang demands that another \$40,000,000 be remitted to London. Then General Chiang will be released but Madame Chiang should be kept hostage until General Chang has safely sailed for abroad, the rumors added.

Reports from Japanese sources, however, declared that the negotiations now going on in Sian are based on the following terms:

1. That General Chang Hsueh-liang goes into retirement abroad.
2. That a sum of \$5,000,000 be paid as his travelling expenses.
3. That General Chang's forces be allowed to remain in their present garrison areas.
4. That the highest command of the Northeastern troops be transferred from General Chang to General Yen Hsi-shan, pacification commissioner of Shansi and Suiyuan.

None of these reports, however, could be confirmed locally.

Thanks Bankers

(Reuter's Agency)

NANKING, Dec. 23.—Dr. H. H. Kung, Minister of Finance and Acting President of the Executive Yuan, today thanked the bankers for their cooperation in the financial crisis.

(Please Turn to Page 8)

Big Mass Meet Hails Nanking

Rebel Chang Assailed In Gigantic Local Get-Together

Representatives of various schools, government offices, Kuomintang organs and various public bodies were meeting at the auditorium of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, North Soochow Road, at 2 o'clock this afternoon to voice their support of the National Government and their scathing denunciation of General Chang Hsueh-liang, leader of the Sian coup.

The meeting was sponsored by the City Kuomintang and was to be presided over by a presidium composing of Mayor Wu Te-chen, General Yang Hu, Mr. Pan Kung-chen, Mr. Tu Yueh-sen, Mr. Chang Shou-yung, General Tsai Ching-chung, Mr. Pang Kung-pleh, Mr. Yu Tseng-hui and Mr. Huang Chao-hsiung.

Opening the meeting with Kuomintang rites, the assembly was to pay silent homage of three minutes for the officers and men killed in the Sian coup. The chairman will then give a report on the Sian coup and various speakers will take the platform. The meeting will be concluded with shouting of slogans which are directed against Chang Hsueh-liang.

The entrance to the Chamber of Commerce compound was appropriately decorated with scrolls and posters. The scrolls read: "Support Savior of Race Chairman (of Military Affairs Commission) Chiang; down with Enemy of the Race Rebel Chang Hsueh-liang."

Italy King Recovers From His Operation

(*Reuter's Agency*)
ROME, Dec. 24.—King Victor Emmanuel underwent an operation a few days ago for rupture, it is learned today.

His Majesty, who is 67 years of age, is now said to be making satisfactory progress.

Dead Foreigners Found Following Spanish Retreat

Russian Brigade Flag Left Among 125 Bodies

HOSTAGE SWITCH TALKS DEADLOCK

Thousands Of Families Disappointed On Eve Of Christmas

(*Reuter's Agency*)

PARIS, Dec. 24.—The Government forces left 125 dead foreigners on the battlefield when they retreated from the village of Eoadilla del Monte, a key position on the western Madrid front, according to a Nationalist broadcast from Seville.

The flag captured by the insurgents, it was added, bore the inscription, "Third International Brigade," in Russian.

Non-Intervention Committee (*Reuter's Agency*)

LONDON, Dec. 23.—A detailed plan for the supervision of imports of war material into Spain by land and sea was unanimously approved by the non-intervention committee at a two-hour meeting at the Foreign Office today.

January 1 has been fixed as the time-limit for replies from the governments concerned. If acceptance can be obtained by then, the scheme will be forwarded to both parties in Spain for approval within a limit of 10 days.

The meeting also agreed to request the governments concerned to notify the committee in writing, not later than January 4, whether they were prepared to contribute towards the cost of the plan in the proportions which had already been suggested to them.

Negotiations Break Down (*Reuter's Agency*)

ST. JEAN DE LUZ, Franco-Spanish Border, Dec. 23.—Hopes for an exchange of some 4000 hostages before Christmas between the Spanish Government and the insurgents were dashed by a breakdown in the negotiations today.

Complete deadlock has now been reached in the discussions between the delegates of the two parties. The main difficulty concerns men of military age.

There were scenes of disappointment on the quay here this afternoon when a British warship arrived from Bilbao with only a few refugees instead of the hostages it was expected to bring.

English Trade Union Aids Spanish Cause

(*Transocean-Kuo Min*)

LONDON, Dec. 23.—The sum of 1000 Pounds was donated to the Spanish Welfare Committee by the English Trades Unions today, this sum to be used for furnishing clothing for needy women and children.

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What Happened At Sian?

(In Two Parts—Part Two)

EXISTING tension was increased by the events of the next day, December 9, in Sian. This was the anniversary of the new student movement that began last year, in resistance to the Japanese so-called Autonomous Movement in the north. Thousands of students marched through the streets of Sian in silent massed formation, with slogans demanding that armies be sent to the defense of Suiyuan and Shantung.

General Chiang ordered Hsiao Li-tze, civil governor of Shensi and controller of the police force, to break up the demonstration and not allow the students to march out to Lintung to his residence. And so, as the procession marched towards Lintung, the police fired, seriously wounding two schoolboys of twelve and thirteen years of age. The incident at once brought Marshal Chang and other leaders to Lintung in angry protest.

Another immediate issue was the question of the seven National Salvation Association leaders, six of whom were being held in prison in Shanghai. Chang Hsueh-liang and the Sian people demanded their release, in common with other student demonstrations all over the country. Chiang refused pointblank to consider their release; and stated finally, in the most definite terms, that he was entirely opposed to a People's Front. Here was another impasse.

By December 11 a very serious and critical situation had developed in Sian. The crisis was precipitated by further activities on the part of the secret groups, who had been quietly armed, and were preparing for a violent coup. Chiang Kai-shek was rumored to have approved a blacklist for immediate arrest, and counter-measures of some sort were bound to be provoked.

National Salvation, urging and outlining establishment of People's United Front. On December 14 a United Chinese Anti-Japanese Military Affairs Council was organized, including all military leaders on a collective basis. It was made clear that General Chang wanted no personal leadership or control, and it was stated that the "Anti-Japanese Red Armies" will be represented on the Council together with any and all armies "willing to fight the Japanese."

General Chang has been making daily radio broadcasts from Sian, outlining the new program; on December 15 he gave a long story of his efforts to induce General Chiang to fight the Japanese, and one sympathizer declares: "These broadcasts, if they could only reach the whole nation, would make clear enough to all the struggle that has been going on for at least a year between the two leaders. The essential point is, of course, that General Chang continually obeyed the orders of the Generalissimo until he was threatened by the united action of his entire army. This is the mass basis of a movement that has been so widely described as the wanton action of a discontented individual."

Finally it is declared by this same source: "Peace or war rests with Nanking. The Northwest will not fire the first shot against a Chinese army."

Deliberate suppression of the facts is charged by some northern quarters and it is strongly asserted that Sian represents "a popular movement that can only be compared with similar movements in Western countries for a united front against Fascist aggression."

Here, again, we come to a divergence of view which stretches in more than two directions. It is not easy to represent such events in sharp black and white, the powers of evil against those of good (with the respective roles assigned in accordance with one's own ideas).

To assign to Nanking nothing but the purest of acts and motives would obviously be an incredibly naive attitude, for Nanking has its full quota of politicians and politicians are—politicians—the world over. But we must confess to a feeling that anyone who tries to assign to the Tungpei a similar purity of act and motive proves himself at least equally naive if not more so, for certainly our information (and some of it comes very direct) is that those about General Chang number their full proportion of hypocrites and self-seekers, willing to capitalize a "fight the Japanese" slogan or any other slogan to prevent Nanking and its Generalissimo from gaining complete domination.

On the night of the 11th there was held a conference of all the commanders of the Tungpei army, and of Yang Hu-cheng. The decision taken then is declared in some quarters to have been only on anticipation of action their men would have taken, perhaps, without them.

The coup was swiftly planned, and as swiftly executed. At 6 a.m. next morning, December 12, Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters at Lintung was surrounded. The first man captured was General Chiang's nephew, Chiang Hsiao-hsien, leader of the Blue Shirt gendarmerie. When the soldiers learned who he was, they stood him up and shot him dead on the spot.

Chiang Kai-shek escaped in his night-shirt, accompanied by one member of his bodyguard. But the guard went only a short distance, and on second thought turned back and told the Tungpei men where Chiang was. The Generalissimo was captured with his entire staff.

In Sianfu, the Sian Guest-house was occupied by Yang Hu-cheng's troops, and none of Chiang's men escaped. Hsiao Li-tze, who had ordered the firing on the students, was captured with most of his officials. The Bureaus of Public Safety under his control were all occupied and their chiefs taken prisoner.

The secret groups centers were rapidly invested, and captured with their staffs and many documents. One of Chiang's airplanes, landing to investigate, was captured immediately, and added to the main squadron of Government bombers that had already changed hands.

At the same time, similar action was taking place in Kansu. The Tungpei troops attacked Hu Chung-nan, capturing an entire brigade outright in Lanchow. With the Chinese Anti-Japanese Red Army (Communists) there was open fraternisation on the part of the Tungpei troops. Martial law was proclaimed in Sianfu for one day only; after which shops were opened and life went on as before.

A new administration was set up in Sianfu. It issued an eight-point program as follows:

1. Reorganization of the Nanking Government to include all anti-Japanese representatives from all parties, groups and organizations throughout the country.
2. Stop all civil war.
3. Immediate release of National Salvation Association leaders in Shanghai.
4. Release of all political prisoners throughout the whole country.
5. Remove all laws and restrictions upon the patriotic movement.
6. Protection of civil rights of the people—free speech, press and assembly. Full political freedom.
7. The immediate realization of the last will and testament of Sun Yat-sen, which calls for an alliance between China and all countries that believe in its freedom and independence.
8. The immediate convocation of a National Salvation Congress.

With this proclamation appeared many other manifestoes guaranteeing all civil rights to the people. Mass demonstrations were held in the streets.

The "provisional government" also issued a long project of the People's Anti-Japanese

And Nanking has on its side, as has been quite clearly shown by the widespread rallying behind the National Government, a basis of accomplishment which no rebel group can have in the very nature of things. Again and again we have heard Chinese and foreigners alike express themselves as convinced, against their earlier judgment, by the things the National Government has been able to do in the way of unification, reconstruction, establishment of peace and order, and general conduct of a modern government as opposed to the warlordism of old.

Perhaps Sian does not stand for warlordism; perhaps the words of the Sian "provisional government" are to be taken at full face value; but we doubt if there is any national majority taking such a view. While the country has been increasingly pressing for a stronger and stronger attitude against Japan, it is our judgment that Nanking's handling of events both at home and with reference to Japan has met with general support even though there has been plenty of criticism in detail. The important thing to us has been that Nanking seemed to be constantly doing better—strengthening its policy, abandoning some of the misguided tactics (including terrorism against its enemies) which smirched its earlier record. And the country seems to feel this; which may well turn the issue in this crisis.

But we regard some of the wild talk which has drifted down from Nanking as harmful and mischievous. This is not a situation to be handled with violence and abandon. Firmness must be unflinchingly the course—but not hysteria. Above all, it seems to us necessary if in any way possible to prevent the outbreak of civil warfare which might well be disastrous to every national cause at this juncture.

Madam Chiang's trip has afforded a breathing-spell. It would be idle optimism to say that the situation gives grounds for optimism. But at least it gives time for an all-around cooling-down. Nanking must understand such grievances as Sian may put forward, but Sian for its part must realize that it cannot be permitted to strike in outlaw style at the National Government either direct or through its leaders. Sian is quite right in pointing to the nation's crisis; it is now for Sian to see that it is accentuating that crisis, not in any way leading toward solution.