

NATIONALISTS AND THE NANKING INCIDENT, 1927:
SOURCES AND IMPACT ON UNITED STATES
CHINA POLICY

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PREFACE

The Nanking Incident of March 24, 1927, was only an obscure event in the long train of China's past, but in its few hours of terror, the Incident captured the essence of the forces seeking to remold China during the Nationalist Revolution. This study seeks to explore the impact of the Nanking Incident on the diplomatic and cultural aspects of Sino-American relations. At first glance, this project seems simple enough to execute since it is an examination of such a minute segment of Chinese history, but without the aid and assistance of many individuals, this thesis would not have become a reality.

Of particular assistance were the librarians of the Inter-library Loan Department of the Oklahoma State University Library, whose ready assistance and sense of humor helped clear many a research hurdle. Gratitude is also expressed to the various Protestant mission officers and librarians, especially Mrs. Elsie Lund, Librarian for the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, Miss Madeline Brown of the United Presbyterian Mission Library, and Joseph M. Smith, Executive Secretary of the United Christian Missionary Society. Through their aid several missionaries who were in Nanking during the 1927 Incident were contacted. Among the missionaries providing important personal contributions to this thesis were Dr. M. Searle Bates (Disciples of Christ), the Reverend Lyman L. Hale (Methodist), Dr. C. S. Trimmer (Methodist), Dr. Clarence H. Hamilton (Disciples of Christ), and the Reverend William F.

Hummell (Methodist). Dr. Ray Six (Disciples of Christ) provided valuable information on the Nanking missionary community in 1927.

In addition to the help received outside the academic community, the author has received much inspiration and guidance from Dr. Alfred Levin and Dr. Sidney D. Brown.

Despite the advice, consultation, and material aid provided, the final conclusions and presentation are the work of the author, and as such he takes full responsibility for any errors in fact or historical judgment that may appear in this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I. PRELUDE TO TERROR	6
II. DAY OF TERROR: MARCH 24, 1927.	14
III. NORTHERNERS, NATIONALISTS, OR COMMUNISTS?	33
IV. NANKING AND AMERICAN DIPLOMACY.	45
V. CULTURAL IMPACT: PROTESTANT MISSIONS AND LITERATURE.	61
SUMMARY.	73
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76
APPENDIX - MAP OF NANKING.	82

INTRODUCTION

In mid-1926, the Kuomintang government at Canton sent its armies north to unseat the "warlord" government at Peking, thus precipitating the Chinese Nationalist Revolution. By early 1927, Nationalist armies of the Kuomintang controlled half of China and were nearing the strategic cities of Shanghai and Nanking in the lower Yangtze valley.

The capture of Nanking took place on Thursday, March 24, 1927, amidst anti-foreign looting, pillaging, and murder. On that day of violence, soldiers, described as Nationalists, killed six foreigners and wounded several others. Not a Great Power was spared, and victims of the violence included nationals of Great Britain, the United States, France, Japan, and Italy.

How then would the Powers react to the Incident? Would they use force against the Nationalist government as they normally had in the past when Chinese attacked foreign property or persons? This "gun boat" diplomacy of decades past had progressively saddled China with an unequal treaty system that gave foreigners innumerable privileges in China. Even the idealism generated at the Washington Conference brought only limited surrender of these privileges.¹ Now terror at Nanking in 1927 propelled the Kuomintang into total confrontation with the old treaty structure created by the Powers.

¹Dorothy Borg, American Policy and the Chinese Revolution, (New York, MacMillan Co., 1947), 419.

The old conservative position had become increasingly difficult for the Powers to maintain after World War I as China developed a strong national sense. Modern Chinese nationalism, in fact, had its birth in China's diplomatic defeat at the Versailles Conference at which Japan rather than China won control of the German concessions in Shantung. When news of this defeat reached Peking on May 4, 1919, an anti-foreign backlash developed among Chinese students. Demonstrations and boycotts against foreigners occurred throughout China. The student sponsored anti-foreign movement soon spawned a nationalist movement that came to be dominated by the Kuomintang or Nationalist Party.

How should the West deal with the Kuomintang and its demands for treaty revision and diplomatic equality for China? Two schools of thought dominated. On the one hand stood the conservatives who favored the continuance of the treaty system in total opposition to the Kuomintang. On the other hand gathered those of moderate opinion who sympathized with China's desire to end foreign domination. To the moderates, the Kuomintang represented China's greatest hope for unity and strength. To the conservatives, the Nationalists were Bolsheviks who wished to turn China "red."

The chief spokesman for the conservative lobby was a British paper, the North China Herald, published at Shanghai. The Herald represented the business interests which had formed local Chambers of Commerce in China's major cities; and it spoke for those foreign businessmen who feared that the Nationalists would destroy trade through unionization of the Chinese proletariat and confiscation or destruction of foreign property. The Nationalists confirmed these foreign fears with their seizure of concessions at Hankow and Kiukiang early in 1927. Most foreign

diplomats in China also favored the system of continued privileges because they regarded China as incapable of developing a national government that could protect foreign life and property. With them, as part of the conservative cabal, stood the foreign military forces in China. Gunboats and marines provided the physical force that supported special privileges.

Against these upholders of the privileges inherited from the past were arrayed the moderates--chiefly American Protestant missionaries. The home boards were nearly unanimous in favoring the Nationalist cause and drastic revision of the treaty system, though missionary opinion in the field was less united.² Protestant missionaries generally favored the Nationalist cause, particularly those savers of souls whose denominations adhered to modern theological currents. The fundamentalists, however, often clashed with the revolutionaries, particularly when they demanded more technical training and less religion in the mission schools. These missionaries did not react kindly to pressures to put school administration into the hands of Chinese. The native clergy sought to grasp power prematurely, in the view of these China missionaries, who looked to the treaty system as a safeguard against government interference. Even so, on the balance the Protestant missionaries supported Chinese nationalism.³

Such support came into focus through the only representative body of Protestantism in China, the National Christian Council. A variety of China-based institutions and denominations such as the Peking

²Ibid., 83.

³Ibid., 84.

Missionary Society, Methodist missions, Congregationalists, Northern Baptists, and Northern Presbyterians, joined the National Christian Council in giving unanimous support to the moderate position.

Significantly, the American rather than the British newspapers upheld the moderate attitude in China. One was the Peking Leader, and another was J. B. Powell's China Weekly Review, published in Shanghai. Powell was so violent in his attacks on foreign imperialism in China that the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce expelled him a few weeks after the Nanking Incident.⁴ The principal voice for moderation in American politics was that of the redoubtable Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, William E. Borah (Republican, Idaho). Borah was virtually a lobbyist for the Kuomintang.

Fundamentally then, the controversy over what might be called the China Problem involved two groups--the Protestant missionaries and their American Boards, versus the foreign businessmen, diplomats, and military personnel in China. The latter--those advocates of the conservative view--had long dominated and theirs was the official policy of the Powers until 1928. In July, 1928, only a year after the Nanking Incident, the United States reversed its China policy and adopted a moderate stance. The Sino-American Tariff Treaty, signed at that time, was the vehicle for this basic change as it provided the basis for American recognition of the Nationalist government.

This shift in United States China policy seems surprising in its proximity to the violence at Nanking a year earlier. If the Nationalists contributed to the deaths of foreigners and the loss of foreign

⁴North China Herald, (April 30, 1927), 209.

property, one might expect a revival of the gun boat policy. Instead, the United States acted in a spirit of conciliation and recognized the authority of the new regime. Here, then, is the paradox: that the United States, while smarting under the violence of the Nanking Incident, turned its policy toward conciliation of China.

Was it plausible, as Editor J. B. Powell asserted, that the American diplomatic response to the Nanking Incident was the watershed point in the development of moderate policy toward Chinese Nationalism?⁵ This paper will examine that thesis. Moreover, it will reconstruct the event to ascertain its sources and possible causes. Finally, the paper will deal with the Incident's impact on the cultural molders of American opinion on China, the Protestant missionaries and American literary figures.

⁵China Weekly Review, (May 14, 1927), 272.

CHAPTER I

PRELUDE TO TERROR

The terror of March 24, 1927, was nothing new to Nanking; armies had marched and counter-marched through this ancient capital city since its founding in the sixth century, B.C. Twice it served Imperial dynasties as capital--the Eastern Chin in the fourth century, and the Ming in the fourteenth century. More recently the Taiping Rebels had seized the city and made it their capital for a decade.¹

It was in the Taiping era that foreigners first arrived in Nanking after the Tientsin treaties (June 26, 1858) opened the Yangtze River ports to foreign commerce. The first visitors to Nanking were merchants who settled in northern Nanking near the Yangtze port facilities. They developed a variety of foreign business establishments along or near the waterfront. After 1880, Protestant missionaries settled in the city, with the China Inland Mission in the vanguard. Members of the mission community lived among the native population, congregating in the vicinity of the Drum Tower in the center of the city.²

By the mid-1920's Nanking was a thriving commercial and mission post, but the Chinese Nationalist Revolution began to interfere with the

¹E. I. Osgood and Edwin Marx, The China Christian Mission (Indianapolis, Mission Press, 1936), 5.

²New York Times, (March 25, 1927), 2.

life of the city. River traffic and trade noticeably decreased in late 1926 after the Nationalists captured the upriver cities of Changsha and Hankow. As the Kuomintang armies approached Nanking, the native population became nervous and unstable. The people remembered the tragedy of earlier wars when Nanking had been besieged and starved, and evidence of the destruction during the Taiping Rebellion sixty years earlier, when the city was nearly destroyed, was still evident.

When nearby Kiukiang fell to the Kuomintang on November 4, 1926, the Chinese deserted Nanking en masse. The Nationalists had besieged Wuchang earlier, and that city had held out at great cost to the city's population. The Wuchang garrison capitulated on October 10, after the commander had been bought off by the Nationalists. Thus, the fears of Nanking's citizens were further heightened. Sun Ch'uan-fang, the Warlord of Kiangsu Province where Nanking was located, stabilized the combat line through the winter, and although the Chinese returned, they had lost all confidence in the Northern Warlord cause.³

The foreign community had similar fears of siege, but there was greater concern that retreating Northern troops would loot and pillage foreign property. By contrast foreigners had little distrust of the Kuomintang, for they expected the victorious army to protect its newly conquered territory. British Consul Bertram Giles particularly feared that retreating Northern troops might loot foreign property. Although he foresaw endless trouble from the Kuomintang over boycotts and agitation, he did not expect any direct attacks on foreigners. Giles

³Alice T. Hobart, Within the Walls of Nanking (New York, MacMillan Co., 1929), 104.

reflected an attitude widespread in the foreign community.⁴

Thus, uncertainty gripped Nanking as the Nationalist armies approached in early 1927. In February, 1927, General Sun's eastern front collapsed, and he sought help from the Peking government, then dominated by the Warlords Chang Tso-lin and Wu Pei-fu.⁵ Peking sent General Chang Chung-chang with 100,000 Chihli-Shantung troops and White Russian mercenaries to Nanking in mid-March, and General Chu Yu-pu took command of the city.⁶ Meanwhile Sun Ch'uan-fang secretly retreated from Nanking on March 18.⁷

Up to March 21, Nanking residents thought that Northern troops were holding a line 30 miles south of the city. However, sounds of artillery and machine-gun fire very near the city on the evening of the 21st dispelled illusions of safety.⁸ The next morning at 6:30, British and American officials with the help of missionaries and businessmen began to evacuate the foreign women and children onto gunboats in the Nanking anchorage.⁹ They placed the foreign dependents aboard the HMS. Emerald and the USS Noa already at anchor and on the USS W. B. Preston which soon arrived from Wuhu to aid in the evacuation.¹⁰ One

⁴ Papers Relating to the Nanking Incident of March 24 and 25, 1927 (London, H.M. Stationary Office, 1927), 7. Hereafter referred to as British Nanking Papers.

⁵ Hobart, Nanking, 157-159.

⁶ British Nanking Papers, 12.

⁷ China Weekly Review, (March 26, 1927), 6.

⁸ London Times, (March 28, 1927), 14.

⁹ British Nanking Papers, 6.

¹⁰ Ibid., 13.

hundred seventy-three American women and children left the city. Thirty of them travelled to Shanghai aboard the river steamer Pi Yang in the company of sixty other Western women, mostly British.¹¹ The remaining American women stayed aboard the Noa and Preston at Nanking.¹² Yet American women were notably uncooperative with the evacuation program; and many missionary wives preferred to stay with their husbands in the city. By contrast only six British women stayed behind, four at or near the British consulate, one at Ginling College, and one in Hsiakwan, Nanking's port city.¹³

For foreigners who remained in the city--men as well as women--protection was minimal. The British tried to send an armed detachment of forty men to guard the consulate, but Northern officials turned them back at the city gates. Later in the day, the Americans and British were able to bring small numbers of marines into the city armed only with side arms. Eventually eighteen soldiers arrived at the British consulate and eleven at the American consulate where they received rifles.¹⁴ For communication between these tiny forces and the gunboats the USS Noa dispatched two signalmen to Socony Hill, located in northern Nanking near the city wall. The first arrived on the 22nd, and the second accompanied a detachment of six marines from the W. B. Preston

¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹² Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1927, (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1942), Volume II, 152. This volume hereafter referred to as Foreign Relations, 1927.

¹³ British Nanking Papers, 6.

¹⁴ Ibid., 7.

the next day.¹⁵ Altogether, these troops formed a very thin screen around the remaining foreign populace.

The Chinese also joined the ranks of the foreign refugees and began evacuating the city even while the Northern troops streamed through the city in the opposite direction to the front. Indeed, the exodus began while the Northern government seemed firmly in control of Nanking. In a show of strength on the 22nd, its forces carried out a raid against Kuomintang sympathizers. Shantung troops arrested twenty students from three universities, and summarily executed them by decapitation, placing the bodies on display as a warning to Nationalist supporters.¹⁶

Meantime, the firing heard late Monday and early Tuesday gradually diminished, but suddenly at about 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 23, the Northern army retreated from the front en masse. At the South Gate of Nanking observers witnessed the odd spectacle of orderly troops marching to battle and being passed by frenzied troops in full retreat.¹⁷

A minor Northern defeat several miles south of Nanking at Ta Ming-fu precipitated the rout.¹⁸ White Russian mercenaries, only a few hundred in number, had entered the battle quite aggressively, only to be cut off from the main body of Northern defenders. The Kuomintang then destroyed the outnumbered Russians, and on seeing this, the Shantung troops broke from battle. The Russians had provided moral courage for the Chinese in battle, and with their destruction, Chinese morale

¹⁵ Foreign Relations, 1927, 152.

¹⁶ China Weekly Review, (March 28, 1927), 6.

¹⁷ British Nanking Papers, 13.

¹⁸ London Times, (March 28, 1927), 14.

collapsed.

The victor at Ta Ming-fu was General Ch'eng Ch'ien whose Nationalist force was composed of units of the Sixth Nationalist Army.¹⁹ The soldiers of these units were mostly from Kiangsi and Hunan, but a handful came from Kwangtung province. General Chang Hui-chan commanded the Fourth Division which led the assault and spearheaded the entry into Nanking.²⁰

The Kuomintang Army had surprised the Northerners on Monday evening by stealthily bringing an artillery battery to within a few miles of Nanking. The opening salvos of this battery, heard in the city, had launched the battle and caused the early panic in Nanking.²¹ The Nationalists had been unable to hold this early position, but by Wednesday afternoon, the 23rd, a Nationalist victory was certain. By 5:00 p.m. Northern observers spotted the advancing Kuomintang troops three or four miles from Nanking.²²

The retreating Northerners, many fresh and untouched by battle, reached Nanking about 4:00 p.m. and poured through the city's southern gates until about 9:00 when the gates were closed. Approximately 20,000 Northern troops entered Nanking during this time. There were so many that, according to British Consul Giles, they were "packed like sardines for over a mile back of the North Gate."²³

¹⁹ T'ang Leang-li, The Inner History of the Chinese Revolution (New York, Dutton and Co., 1930), 249-253.

²⁰ British Nanking Papers, 18.

²¹ London Times, (March 28, 1927), 14.

²² British Nanking Papers, 13.

²³ Ibid., 7.

After the city gates closed, the troops circled the city to reach transportation across the Yangtze. The Northerners reached the bund and filled the area by 6:00 p.m. Because of the lack of transportation facilities, the force soon became a riot-prone mob. Northern officers used bombs and machine gun fire to control the unruly troops, but they could not contain the disorders and fires which flared throughout Hsia-kwan, Nanking's port city. Only when they commandeered China Merchant Steamship Company vessels for more rapid removal of the Northern troops did rioting cease.²⁴ By midnight nearly 60,000 Northern soldiers had crossed the river, and sixteen trainloads of troops had left Pukow, on the north bank of the Yangtze.²⁵

Generally, the Northern troops did little looting in Nanking. They pillaged only two deserted foreign homes and forced two Britons to give up their wallets on Wednesday evening. For the most part foreigners had remained near their consulates or gunboats for protection, but six foreigners who were trapped in the route of the retreat were unharmed. By one report the Nanking Chamber of Commerce paid a \$500,000 bribe to the Northern commander to prevent looting.²⁶ If so, the maneuver succeeded; for by 11:30 p.m., the night of March 23rd, all firing had ceased, and the city remained intact. Few Northerners were seen on Nanking's streets.²⁷

Thus, Nanking was troubled neither by Northern rioting nor by

²⁴ Ibid., 13-14.

²⁵ London Times, (March 28, 1927), 14.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ British Nanking Papers, 7.

Kuomintang seige, and the first newspaper accounts of the Kuomintang occupation reported that Nanking was captured without disturbance.²⁸ Later events did not support this optimistic view of the occupation.

²⁸Washington Post, (March 24, 1927), 4.

CHAPTER II

THE DAY OF TERROR: MARCH 24, 1927

The Nationalist Army entered Nanking by three southern gates at dawn, March 24, 1927. Many American missionaries sympathetic with the Nationalist cause had waited anxiously for this moment. Among the more enthusiastic was Dr. John E. Williams (Presbyterian), Vice President of Nanking University, who had many friends among the Kuomintang leaders.¹ Williams knew that many changes would take place with the arrival of the Nationalists, and yet he felt that the transition from the old to new order could be eased with the counsel and work of older men like himself. As Dr. Williams dressed that morning, he remarked to his wife, "I have a strange feeling as though we have been left here to do some special work for such a time as this; I feel as though I can do something for China now."²

Shortly before 8:00 a.m., Dr. Williams arrived at the university to conduct chapel exercises, but before services started, a Chinese teacher, Lawrence Lew, told him that a missionary's house was being looted. When Dr. Williams and several other university officials went to investigate, Nationalist soldiers captured them. The soldiers were

¹Nanking University was jointly operated by several mission groups including the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Disciples.

²W. R. Wheeler, John E. Williams of Nanking (New York, F. H. Revell Company, 1931), 173.

in an ugly mood, and their leader was heard to say, "Tah tao wai kwoh ren! Tah tao ti kwoh chu i!" (Down with foreigners! Down with imperialism!)

The soldiers searched the prisoners for weapons and took their valuables. In an effort to save his watch, Dr. Williams remarked in a friendly, half-joking way in Chinese, "You don't want to take that do you? The watch isn't worth much, but my mother gave it to me, and I would like to keep it." The leader of the soldiers immediately turned, and firing from the hip, shot Dr. Williams through the temple. The soldier then seized the watch from the dead man.³ The day of terror had begun, and Kuomintang troops systematically looted mission property and robbed missionary personnel.

Protestant Missions

At about the same time as the murder of Dr. Williams, Kuomintang troops entered the Presbyterian Girls School and adjoining staff houses located in the Drum Tower region. At one of these houses a soldier robbed three missionaries of more than \$1100. He became enraged when the missionaries could give him no more money and began to shoot wildly, wounding one of the missionaries, Miss Anna Moffett, in the knee and abdomen. Fortunately the other two missionaries escaped injury and fled to hiding places.⁴

Miss Moffett eventually escaped and hid in straw in a workers' shed at the Presbyterian school. She did not receive medical aid until about

³Ibid., 13-27.

⁴Personal papers of L. Lyman Hale, Paper VII, 3-7. Hereafter referred to as Hale Collection.

10:00 p.m. when Chinese friends found her and moved her to Bailie Hall on the Nanking University campus.⁵

No other Protestant missionaries were wounded, but many had narrow escapes. Dr. Edwin Marx of the Disciples of Christ heard about Dr. Williams' death after breakfast and hid his wife at a Girls Middle School shortly before soldiers broke into his house. The soldiers demanded money, and an accompanying mob looted everything of value, even taking the window frames.⁶

After he had satisfied the first group, Dr. Marx faced other bands of raiding soldiers who demanded money; their slogan being, "Your money or your life!" A few were friendly and joked with Dr. Marx, but most were menacing. None offered an adequate reason for the attack, alluding only to vague propaganda slogans.

The soldiers became more belligerent after Dr. Marx ran out of money, but before harm befell Marx, two Chinese friends intervened and ransomed him. They arrived none too soon as Marx was about to be executed.⁷ The friendly Chinese took Dr. Marx to the Girls Middle School where his wife and four missionaries were hidden in a fuel house behind several cords of wood.

From there they heard foreign gunboats in Nanking anchorage begin the shelling of the city about 3:30 p.m. One shell exploded very near the Girls School; but the main target was Socony Hill, some distance north of the school. The bombardment lasted about an hour, and when it

⁵ R. M. Chester and L. Thurston, Ginling College (New York, United Board for Christian Colleges in China, 1955), 61.

⁶ World Call, XXIV (May, 1927), 26.

⁷ Ibid., 27.

ended, the Marx party heard bugles, and the rioting immediately ceased.

Chinese friends soon came and gave Marx and the others Chinese garments for disguise and escorted them to Bailie Hall where the Protestant missionaries had gathered for safety. Burning buildings, fired by Nationalist troops, lit the sky as the Marx party made its way to safety by night.⁸

Other missionaries had harrowing experiences. Soldiers captured Dr. Frank Price (Methodist), Professor of Theology at Nanking University, at his home and demanded money. He willingly gave them money from his safe, but he did not satisfy them sufficiently to ward off their looting the house, breaking up furniture, and stealing his hat and overcoat from his person. They threatened Price repeatedly and struck him with rifle butts and the flats of their swords. Three times they demanded that Price kneel down to be executed, but each time he refused, and the soldiers did not press the matter. Finally the soldiers decided to kill Price, and they began to drag him towards a nearby seminary.⁹

Chinese servants grappled with the soldiers to save him, and several were wounded. In the end, the soldiers agreed to release Price, but they obtained the privilege of looting the servants' homes in exchange for his life.¹⁰

A distinct pattern is evident in the behavior of the Nationalist troops in all of these incidents. First, a band of soldiers arrived at a foreign home, demanding money and threatening lives. These soldiers

⁸ Ibid. The other four missionaries included Mrs. Edna Gish, Miss Emma A. Lyon, Mr. C. H. Plopper, and Mr. E. C. Whipple.

⁹ Hale Collection, VII, 2.

¹⁰ North China Herald, (April 2, 1927), 29.

were dressed in Kuomintang uniforms and spoke in Southern Chinese dialects, primarily Hunanese and Cantonese.

Accompanying the soldiers were civilians, described as "rabble" or "riff-raff", who looted the foreign property. Dr. Marx felt that the rabble consisted of camp followers and the lower elements of Nanking's population,¹¹ and Dr. Williams' wife described them as peasants from Nanking's outskirts on the verge of starvation because of famine in the previous winter.¹² Whatever their origin they thoroughly stripped the missionary houses.

The danger to the missionary lives appeared to increase when their money ran out, but at this point Chinese friends usually intervened and saved the missionaries' lives. The Chinese then took the ransomed missionaries to a hiding place or to Bailie Hall on the Nanking University campus.

A number of missionaries found hiding places and escaped contact with the Nationalists until after the barrage. Some hid in Chinese huts, in attics, in cellars, and two men spent nine hours concealed in a cistern.¹³

The naval barrage halted Nationalist terrorist activities, and when it ended, missionaries heard bugles, and Nationalist officers actively intervened to stop further destruction. Because of this sudden reversal of Nationalist actions and policy, and because some civilians, probably party cadres, aided the troops in finding foreigners,

¹¹World Call, (May, 1927), 27.

¹²Wheeler, Williams, 176.

¹³World Call, (May, 1927), 27.

missionary opinion usually concluded that the attack was preconceived.

By noon, March 25, all missionaries had arrived at Bailie Hall-- over 120 men, women, and children gathered there. After the barrage Kuomintang officials had stationed a guard around Bailie Hall, and Chinese friends comforted the refugees, bringing food and bedding. On the afternoon of Friday, March 25, the Red Swastika Society, a Buddhist relief organization, provided carriages and a guard and took the missionaries to the waiting gunboats.¹⁴

Damage to mission property was extensive. The Nationalists burned nine foreign buildings and four Chinese Christian houses,¹⁵ and only Ginling College escaped damage. The college's good fortune came about through some unusual circumstances. A Hunanese officer had a sister there, and he came early Thursday morning and forced a group of would-be looters to form a guard around the college. The officer then escorted fourteen foreign teachers and two missionaries, who had sought shelter at the college, to Bailie Hall.¹⁶ This is the only instance of a Kuomintang officer intervening to protect foreign lives and property before the barrage.¹⁷

The events at Nanking were tragic, but there were some elements of humor. A doctor at the university covered himself with a blood-red

¹⁴Wheeler, Williams, 179-182.

¹⁵Washington Post, (March 28, 1927). The buildings included the Hillcrest School, the old dormitory of the Bible Women's Training School, and the residences of the Reverend L. H. Lancaster, the Reverend W. F. Dieterick, the Reverend W. F. Wilson, Dr. A. C. Hutcheson, Mrs. M. P. Keen, and Mr. S. J. Mills.

¹⁶Hale Collection, III, 2.

¹⁷Chester and Thurston, Ginling, 59-60.

mixture and pretended to be mad. The Chinese are superstitious about the insane, and the looters were frightened away.¹⁸ In another incident, the Reverend C. S. Smith, a Presbyterian missionary, offered to write a check to meet the demands of a group of soldiers. While he was filling out the draft, the nervous soldiers grabbed the blank checks and began fighting over them.¹⁹

Perhaps the most amusing event took place at the home of Dr. W. E. Macklin, a Disciples of Christ missionary. As Nationalist soldiers finished ransacking the house, they noticed several large white boxes in the backyard. Thinking the boxes of value, they rushed out and opened them. Instantly, swarms of bees attacked the soldiers. The white boxes were beehives!²⁰

Roman Catholic Missions

American attention centered on the attacks against Protestants, but the xenophobia of March 24, knew no favorites. Catholics of European extraction also suffered from the Kuomintang attacks. The Roman Catholic community in Nanking was small, consisting of several hundred Chinese converts. The center of the congregation was Ricci College, a small secondary school operated by the Society of Jesus and staffed by four priests.²¹

On the day of terror soldiers arrived at the school after morning mass and created a disturbance in the school courtyard. Breakfasting

¹⁸ World Call, (May 1927), 28.

¹⁹ Hale Collection, V, 4-5.

²⁰ North China Herald, (April 2, 1927), 9.

²¹ M. Searle Bates to author, February 16, 1927.

priests received word of this through a Chinese servant. When Father Henry DuGont, a Frenchman, and Father P. Vanara, an Italian, went to investigate, both were shot as they stepped from the school door.²²

The Nationalists murdered the priests without provocation, and an officer appears to have fired the pistol that felled one of the priests.²³

The other two priests, Father J. Verdier and Father Bureau, escaped to a French gunboat, the Alerte.²⁴

Japanese Consulate

Meantime, the Nationalists fanned out to attack the foreign consulates. The first skirmish of the day, in fact, took place at the Japanese consulate, located near Nanking University, where thirty soldiers arrived at 7:15 a.m. No damage resulted from this initial confrontation, but shortly thereafter, another group stormed the consulate, led by armed women shouting, "Down with imperialism!" They sacked the Japanese property and left only the picture of Emperor Hirohito and a cipher code book intact.²⁵

Soldiers wounded the Japanese consul, Major Nemoto, as he lay sick in bed. Nemoto's wife saved his life by shielding him with her body.²⁶ There were several other Japanese casualties. The Chinese troops bayoneted the Japanese chief-of-police, Mori, and shot two Japanese

²²North China Herald, (April 2, 1927), 9.

²³Foreign Relations, 1927, 153.

²⁴London Times, (May 28, 1927), 16.

²⁵North China Herald, (April 2, 1927), 1.

²⁶Ibid., 14.

marines.²⁷ Further, the Nationalists directed fire at a Japanese destroyer, and killed a stoker aboard this vessel.²⁸

Despite these insults, the Japanese avoided a confrontation with the Chinese in order to safeguard the lives of the Japanese merchants in Nanking. The Japanese consul even ordered the removal of a sandbag defense circling the consulate so that Chinese looters could remove their booty more easily.

This order so affronted Lieutenant K. Araki, the officer in charge of the duty, that he committed suicide four days later. His suicide note demonstrated the Japanese dilemma:

In order to ensure the safety of the Japanese residents I endured what we could not tolerate. The lives of the Japanese refugees could be saved, but I am ashamed that the honor of the Japanese Navy was disgraced by the Southern soldiers.²⁹

The attack on the Japanese consulate did not end until one of the Southern soldiers--a Nationalist Army Political Bureau chief--stopped the looting and stationed a guard at the consulate. He told the Japanese that the Nanking branch of the Chinese Communist Party instigated the incident in protest against an alleged rapprochement between Chiang Kai-shek, the moderate Kuomintang commander, and Japan. The Communists wished to embarrass Chiang with the foreign powers to strengthen the Kuomintang left wing.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid., 5.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 14.

³⁰ Foreign Relations, 1927, 165.

British Consulate

The missionary establishments and the Japanese consulate were located near one another in the southern part of Nanking, and the Kuomintang soldiers and looters reached these buildings early in the morning. The British and American consulates and the foreign business establishments were in a section of the city further north, and they were not attacked until mid-morning.

The Kuomintang stormed the British diplomatic compound and looted the consulate house at about 9:30. They surprised Consul Bertram Giles, his wife, and four British subjects in the consulate office, a separate building.³¹ When Giles and Captain Spear of the Indian Army went to investigate, two soldiers stopped them and attacked, crying, "Tah! Tah!" (Kill! Kill!) They wounded Giles and Spear and then turned their fire on Dr. L. Satchwell Smith who had run out of the consulate house to avoid looters. Smith's murder temporarily distracted the soldiers, and Giles and Spear retreated to the consulate office.³²

The consulate party then hid in the office strong room where the pursuing soldiers did not find them. More soldiers soon followed, bringing two hostages, a marine and an employee of a British firm. Both had been captured at the consulate house. Mrs. T. Roberts, one of the women in the strong room, saw the two men through a crack and cried out, "Marines!", thinking they were a rescue party. The soldiers, alerted to the party's hiding place, forced them from the strong room and robbed

³¹British Nanking Papers, 3. The party included Mr. J. L. Bowker of the Asiatic Petroleum Co., Miss Ethel Blake, Mrs. T. Roberts, and Capt. Spear of the Indian Army.

³²Ibid., 8.

them. The soldiers brutally handled the women and ripped their clothes. When the soldiers finally left, two local Chinese police arrived to assist the British.³³

As the police appeared, a commotion erupted outside the office. It was the harbormaster, Mr. F. Huber, fighting two soldiers. Among the British citizens residing in Nanking, Huber was the only one who put attention to duty ahead of self-protection and stayed at his job. When he finally tried to reach the safety of the consulate, the two soldiers accosted him, and in the ensuing struggle, shot him in the head. There he died, before the very eyes of the helpless consulate party.³⁴

After this incident, the police took the British to the consulate gatehouse, but this new hiding place was soon discovered as the looting and attacks continued. From the gatehouse the British could see local Chinese walking freely on the street. As foreigners who were the object of Nationalist wrath, the British might well have envied the unconcern of the Chinese, particularly when passing Kuomintang officers ignored their pleas for help.³⁵

Finally, about noon, the isolated British received reinforcements as five British marines joined them after failing to reach the gunboats. These marines were weaponless, a remnant of the detachment assigned to the consulate on the previous day and now dispersed through the city. Some had escaped to the gunboats, and some had hidden at the Standard Oil House on Socony Hill.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., 4-5.

³⁵Ibid., 4, 6, and 9.

These weaponless reinforcements did not deter further attacks and the Nationalists became more aggressive in the afternoon. Once a soldier attempted to execute Giles with a broadsword, but stopped short, frightened away by the gunboat barrage. Thereafter, Chinese friends brought food, and treated Giles' and Spear's wounds. The next afternoon the Red Swastika Society, a Buddhist charitable body, transported the British party down to the bund where a motor launch carried them to the HMS Emerald.³⁶

United States Consulate

Meantime, the United States consulate received its detachment of unwelcome guests. Consul John K. Davis reported seeing Kuomintang troops in the vicinity of the American consulate at 8:00 a.m. rounding up Northern soldiers. They paid little heed to the Americans, but later a Kuomintang petty officer, "his face twisted with violent hate", accosted the American consul, saying, "You are all alike. The British and Italians are killing our men in Shanghai, and you Americans have drunk our blood for years and have become rich. We are busy now killing Fengtien (Northern) soldiers, but we will soon begin killing all foreigners in Nanking, regardless of what country they are from."³⁷ These remarks surprised Davis since he did not expect trouble from the Nationalists, but shortly thereafter, confirming that this was not idle braggadocio, he received news of Dr. Williams' death and the attacks on missionaries. Moreover, a number of Seventh Day Adventists sought

³⁶ Ibid., 10-11.

³⁷ Foreign Relations, 1927, 153.

shelter in the consulate after being robbed.³⁸

Local police urged Davis to seek refuge after hearing about the assault on the British. Davis called the Standard Oil House on Socony Hill and talked with Earle T. Hobart, the Standard Oil Manager, who suggested that the Americans move to Socony Hill since it was a naturally defensible area, near the city wall, and in touch with the gunboats.³⁹ Davis concurred with Hobart's idea, and the American party of twenty-four left the consulate at 11:00 a.m.⁴⁰ After the first 100 yards they were under constant fire even though the party clearly identified itself by carrying an American flag. Davis estimated that over 300 shots were fired at the group,⁴¹ but the Nationalists were amazingly poor shots, and only a marine named Plumely was wounded.⁴²

The Americans reached Socony Hill at 11:30, and Davis immediately called the Chinese staff at the consulate. He learned that soldiers had entered the consulate five minutes after he left, and that they had looted the building, chasing away most of the Chinese office staff with threats and gunfire.⁴³

³⁸ Ibid., 154.

³⁹ Alice T. Hobart, "What Happened at Nanking," Harper's Monthly Magazine, CXL, (July, 1927), 143.

⁴⁰ The American Consulate party included seven missionaries, an officer and eleven marines, Consul and Mrs. Davis, their two children, and Mr. J. F. McDonald of Liggett and Myer Company.

⁴¹ Foreign Relations, 1927, 155.

⁴² North China Herald, (April 2, 1927), 3.

⁴³ Foreign Relations, 1927, 156. The call was made to S. S. Li, head of the consulate office staff.

Socony Hill

The arrival of the Americans brought the total number of refugees at Standard Oil House to fifty-one.⁴⁴ These refugees were mostly merchants, who had flocked there at the first sign of trouble. News of the raid on the British consulate caused panic among the early arrivals at Socony Hill, and they tried to reach the gunboats by going over the wall. Nationalist soldiers foiled this attempt and confiscated the only rope the group had.

The first group of Nationalists had arrived around noon. They were Hunanese, and Hobart befriended them easily since he had lived in Hunan several years. After receiving rice and tea, they left,⁴⁵ but soldiers began to arrive at regular intervals thereafter. They were menacing, but were also bought off with a little money. Around 2:00 p.m., six soldiers, more aggressive and demanding than previous visitors, came to Socony. They tried to enter the house, but Hobart and Davis barred their way and bargained with the soldiers to leave.⁴⁶

Safety seemed assured when American Vice-Consul Hall Paxton arrived from Hsiakwan, Nanking's port city, where he had been trapped the night

⁴⁴ Ibid., 155. Those at the Standard Oil House included Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Hobart, W. R. Sims, and E. M. Green of Standard Oil Company; L. T. Barnard, F. Boulton, and F. C. Jordan of the British-American Tobacco Company; N. M. Draper, Texas Company; Mr. Ware, Liggett and Myer; eight marines; Captain Heathcoate and Lt. Oliver Bellais, British Army; a Russian chauffeur from the British Consulate; Y. T. Vylegmanin and W. E. McKenney, Customs; A. Tangarass and Reverend Aarflot, Norwegian Mission; and three British citizens, Mr. George Jack, Mr. F. F. Laughland, and Mr. Bowker.

⁴⁵ Alice T. Hobart, "What Happened at Nanking," Harper's Monthly Magazine, CXL, (July, 1927), 144-147.

⁴⁶ Hobart, Nanking, 194-205.

before. He came with several civilians, described as members of a local self-styled Kuomintang political club. They brought written orders from a Nationalist commander for the safety of the Socony party. At first the soldiers listened to the cadres, but they soon grew hostile, robbed the cadres, and drove them off.

The soldiers then forced their way into the house, but the marines inside had positioned themselves around the door, and the Nationalists found the guns of the marines squarely trained on them. They turned and fled, and on reaching cover, began firing at the Standard Oil House. The marines returned fire, at first aiming over the Nationalists' heads, but then shooting to kill.⁴⁷

Other Nationalist soldiers soon joined the fusillade, and a full-scale battle developed. The situation became critical for the foreign party as the Kuomintang prepared to rush the house. Two signalmen, who had been stationed at Socony, flashed a signal to the HMS Emerald and the USS Noa, asking for a barrage, but Davis rescinded this request in a moment of indecision. The hopelessness of the situation soon prompted Davis to reconsider, and within a few minutes the first shells burst around the house. The signalmen semaphored one more signal, "We are leaving; shoot a little more to the left", and the party scrambled out of the house to the city wall.⁴⁸

Before the arrival of soldiers, the foreigners had constructed three ropes of clothing and sheets. They threw the ropes over the wall and descended. One improvised rope broke, and Hobart fell and fractured

⁴⁷Foreign Relations, 1927, 157-159.

⁴⁸Washington Post, (March 28, 1927), 4.

his ankle. He was the only casualty during the two hour flight to the gunboats.

Aboard the Gunboats

The gunboats received the first request for a barrage at 3:22 p.m., with a second signal following at 3:37 p.m. The HMS Emerald responded with two director shells, and seventy-six explosive shells followed in a seventy minute period. The American gunboats, the USS Noa and USS W. B. Preston, joined in the bombardment. All gun crew fired with a high degree of accuracy, dropping but a single shell outside the target area.⁴⁹

The Emerald and the two American vessels then sent marines to the city wall to escort the Socony party. The marines arrived too late to help the party, but they did rescue two British postal employees trapped at the Yangtze Hotel in Hsiakwan.⁵⁰

Throughout the day the gunboats had served as the foreign force in reserve. As early as 7:30 a.m. on the fateful day of March 24, the first Nationalist troops had reached the waterfront and made contact with the foreign fleet.⁵¹ By 9:00 a.m. they began to fire at the shore positions staked out by two platoons of British marines in the International Export compound; and at 1:15 the Nationalists observed with satisfaction the flight of the shore-based troops to the gunboats. Meantime, intermittent, random firing forced the British off two merchant hulks which served as wharves and brought death to Able Seaman

⁴⁹ British Nanking Papers, 18.

⁵⁰ Washington Post, (March 28, 1927), 4.

⁵¹ British Nanking Papers, 15.

John Knox, aboard the Emerald.⁵²

Captain H. T. England of the Emerald could not disregard the Nationalist rifle fire, but it was more of a nuisance than a threat to his force afloat. Primarily, he was concerned about the safety of the 150 foreigners not accounted for inside Nanking. Through the early morning he had kept in touch with the city by radio from the British consulate, but his two signalmen fled the consulate at 10:14 a.m. with a final ominous message: "House looted."⁵³ Thereafter, he relied on the two signalmen who semaphored messages from Socony Hill, but they fled in the mid-afternoon, and England's communications with the city were completely severed.⁵⁴ As he conferred with Consul Davis, just arrived aboard ship, about the problem of the unprotected foreign community, an opening appeared. At this juncture a delegation from the Red Swastika Society boarded the Emerald to express regrets over the day's incident at the behest of Sixth Nationalist Army commander, General Ch'eng Ch'ien, who had just arrived at Nanking.

The American and British officials took this opportunity to make certain demands on the Kuomintang commander. They required the protection and evacuation of foreigners, the protection of foreign property, and the appearance of the Fourth Division commander to make arrangements for these demands. If the Chinese failed to comply with these demands, the naval captains threatened further military action.

General Ch'eng sent a written statement of regrets about the

⁵²Ibid., Jardine-Matheson and Butterfield-Swire owned the two hulks.

⁵³Ibid., 16-17.

⁵⁴Washington Post, (March 28, 1927), 4.

incident that evening, but he did not answer the British and American demands until late the next morning on March 25. He then refused to enter into local negotiations and evasively referred any discussion to normal diplomatic channels.

The Kuomintang reply was not satisfactory, and when two staff officers arrived in the afternoon to arrange an evacuation, the American and British officials issued a near ultimatum, demanding that all foreigners be evacuated by 6:00 p.m., or the Kuomintang would "have to take the consequences." What the consequences were, was not made clear, but they vividly reminded the Chinese of the recent bombardment.⁵⁵

Shortly before the deadline, the British consulate party came out of the city, followed by the missionaries from Nanking University. The Japanese filed out last, and when the city gates closed for the night of March 25, 1927, not one international representative remained in Nanking.

The Nanking refugees sailed down to the China coast and the security of Shanghai. They hardly enjoyed their cruise. Sixty-five of their number were victims of ptomaine poisoning from the food of the USS Noa. All underwent Nationalist shelling of the gunboats at several points along the river. At Chinkiang the firing was especially heavy, and a shell pierced the fire control station of the USS Preston.⁵⁶

Members of the escaping foreign community left six dead comrades behind at Nanking, and Consul Giles, Captain Spear, Anna Moffett, three Japanese, and an American marine had been wounded. The property loss

⁵⁵ Foreign Relations, 1927, 160-161.

⁵⁶ Washington Post, (March 28, 1927), 14.

from burning and looting was substantial. No accurate estimate is possible, but the size of the loss might be indicated by the cost to the International Export Company which lost more than ~~£~~ 120,000 in commercial goods to looters.⁵⁷

The refugees were acutely aware of the cost of the anti-foreign riots at Nanking in lives and property. They were certain that the "fiends" who had perpetrated the "planned" attacks were Nationalists. In short, they knew what had happened at Nanking, and who had attacked them, but they did not know who ordered the attack, nor did they understand clearly the purpose of the violence. Why then, had the foreign community been attacked?

⁵⁷London Times, (April 1, 1927), 14.

CHAPTER III

NORTHERNERS, NATIONALISTS, OR COMMUNISTS?

The Nationalist News Agency, Kuomin, at Hankow had a ready explanation for the anti-foreign riots at Nanking. It blamed Northern troops. A news dispatch, released on March 20, 1927, read:

The military authorities at Nanking report that the disorders on March 24 were caused by remnants of the defeated Northerners and White Russian mercenaries in Marshal Chan Chung-chang's army who instigated the attacks on foreign consulates in order to involve the Nationalist forces with the Powers.¹

Doubtless this was part of Hankow's war of nerves with Chiang Kai-shek who established a rival government at Nanking three weeks later. Hankow, hoping to dodge the charge of responsibility for the Nanking Incident from Chiang, singled out the Northern troops as a convenient scapegoat.²

Only one writer, G. A. Kennedy of the Shanghai American School, has given any credence to Hankow's assertion of Northern responsibility. After visiting Nanking in early April, 1927, he concluded that the Nationalists were not responsible since they had not attacked foreigners in other cities. He pointed out that in a planned attack there would have been more casualties. The Nationalists captured over 27,000 prisoners-of-war at Nanking, and according to Kennedy, many were

¹North China Herald, (April 9, 1927), 50.

²Hollington K. Tong, Chiang Kai-shek (London, Hurst and Blackett, 1938), Volume I, 133.

present during the riots and capable of looting. Gear left by looters belonged to Northern troops, so he concluded that the rioters were warlord troops.³

Kennedy later reversed his position, and in an interview with the China Weekly Review, he stated that before writing his article, he had not talked with the Nanking refugees. Since then, he had heard the full story and believed that Nationalist troops committed the "outrages."⁴

The new Nanking government did not officially identify the anti-foreign rioters, but Chiang Kai-shek accepted full responsibility for the event. He promised to investigate the incident and punish any Nationalist soldiers involved.

Nanking avoided official comment for political reasons. Hankow's policy, based on anti-foreignism, was popular with the masses, and repudiation of this principle was not politically expedient. Unofficially, Nanking indicated that Communists had incited the riots.⁵

In his memoirs Chiang Kai-shek recalls that the riot at Nanking was a "Communist engineered incident", designed to "provoke a direct clash between the foreign powers and our Revolutionary Army."⁶ Chiang's official biographer, Hollington K. Tong, states that the head of the Sixth Army Political Department, a leftist named Lin Tsu-han, "took his orders from Borodin (Comintern agent and Soviet Advisor to the Kuomintang) and the Communists at Hankow." Lin organized the incident with

³ China Weekly Review, (May 14, 1927), 290.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Chinese Recorder, XLII, (August, 1927), 550.

⁶ Chiang Kai-shek, Soviet Russia in China (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1957), 49.

the help of a sympathetic brigade commander who carried out the "terrorist activities."⁷

The Communist purpose, states Tong, was to discredit Chiang Kai-shek with foreigners and to prevent his successful entry into Nanking, "the probable Capital of New China." Chiang, enroute from Kiukiang to join his armies, heard of the plot and sailed on to Shanghai.⁸

Nanking's missionary refugees also concluded that the rioters were Communists. The Reverend Stanley Smith (Methodist) referred to the "insidious influence of Russian Communism" at work at Nanking.⁹ Another missionary called the event "Communist and Russian inspired."

Nanking's missionary refugees described their attackers as "a group with Communist beliefs, impatient with Chiang Kai-shek for not leaning left, and who sought to discredit him." Dr. M. S. Bates, a Disciples Missionary, records that Lin Tsu-han ordered the attack to embroil Chiang with foreign gunboats.¹⁰ Bates had first felt that "there was no organized program to kill, or not one (foreigner) could have escaped."¹¹ According to one missionary, more foreigners were not killed because the "detachment of hard-core Communist troops," who spread the order to kill all foreigners, met with indifferent success among Nationalist troops.¹²

The Communists resorted to propaganda to avoid responsibility for

⁷ Tong, Chiang, 134.

⁸ Ibid., 135.

⁹ Hale Collection, V, 12.

¹⁰ M. Searle Bates to author, February 16, 1968.

¹¹ M. Searle Bates, "The Ordeal of Nanking," World Call, (May, 1927), special supplement, 2.

¹² M. Searle Bates to author, February 16, 1968.

the riots. Through the Soviet news agency, Tass, and the Hankow government, they circulated a story that over 2000 Chinese were massacred in the gunboat barrage at Nanking. This subterfuge was printed throughout South China and parts of North China, creating widespread anti-foreignism, reminiscent of Boxer Rebellion days.¹³

The Communist death claim was an exaggeration. The official death count, released inconspicuously much later, was three Chinese dead, and Searle Bates reports that "one of my alert and mobile Chinese friends had inquired widely and had been able to hear of only one (death)."¹⁴ Another account, issued by Chiang Kai-shek, disclosed that six Chinese soldiers were killed and a dozen wounded.¹⁵ These lower figures seem more reasonable since the bombarded area was uninhabited, except for a few scattered foreign homes.

Only one Communist writer, M. N. Roy, discusses the Nanking Incident without referring to this propaganda claim. Roy, an Indian and Comintern agent to China in 1927, mentioned that General Ch'eng Ch'ien, the Nationalist commander at Nanking, was loyal to the Hankow government, but he showed little sympathy with the foreign community. "In view of the standing provocation through the presence of foreign military and naval units in the heart of China," he declared, "it is a matter of surprise that in the course of revolutionary war, many more lives and property of foreigners were not destroyed."¹⁶

¹³ North China Herald, (April 9, 1927), 50.

¹⁴ M. Searle Bates to author, February 16, 1968.

¹⁵ Washington Post, (April 1, 1927), 1.

¹⁶ M. N. Roy, Revolution and Counter-revolution in China (Calcutta, Renaissance Publishers, 1946), 501-506.

The evidence indicates a Communist plot at Nanking, but such an hypothesis overlooks the complicated Chinese political puzzle. The Kuomintang-Communist alliance, formed in 1923, was about to split because of internal dissension in both parties. This compact brought Soviet technical, political, and military aid to the Kuomintang government at Canton and broadened the political appeal of the Communists. Thus, the alliance was meant to strengthen both parties, but instead it created internal divisions within the Communist and Nationalist Parties.¹⁷ These frictions created the Nanking Incident.

According to Borodin, the issue of Communist entry into the Kuomintang divided the Chinese Communists seriously when the Third Party Congress met in 1923. Even Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Communist Party Chairman, opposed the decision, but Maring, a Comintern agent, indicated that the Soviet government supported the alliance, and invoked Comintern discipline over his opponents.¹⁸

After the Communists had joined the Kuomintang, however reluctantly, an opposition force--a right wing--developed within the Kuomintang in opposition to their presence. Hu Han-min led the right wing which, after Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925, coalesced into the "Sun Yat-senist Society."¹⁹ Hu fell from power in 1925 when he was implicated in the slaying of Liao Chung-kai, a prominent member of the left Kuomintang. Thereafter, the right wing was in eclipse, and Wang Ch'ing-wei and

¹⁷ H. R. Isaacs, The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1951), 62.

¹⁸ C. M. Wilbur and J. L. How, Documents of Communism, Nationalism, and Soviet Advisors to China (New York, Columbia University Press, 1956), 511.

¹⁹ Isaacs, Tragedy, 76.

Chiang Kai-shek guided the Kuomintang.²⁰

Wang favored the left, and Chiang, known as the "Red General" in treaty-port press, represented the party army. Since Chiang had studied military organization under the direction of Leon Trotsky in Moscow and had established Whampoa Military Academy and the Kuomintang Army after the Soviet model he had seen in Soviet Russia, it appeared that the left controlled the Kuomintang.²¹

This was not the case. On March 20, 1926, Chiang instigated a coup ousting Wang Ch'ing-wei. He removed all Communists from the Canton government, disarmed Communist pickets, confined the Soviet advisors to quarters, and arrested political commissars assigned to the army, most of them Communists.

Chiang knew he still needed Soviet aid and support so he minimized the coup's implications. He reinstated the Russian advisors and curbed the power of the Kuomintang right wing. These concessions he made under pressure from Borodin, but Chiang received a counter-commitment from the Russian that Communist activities within the Kuomintang would be circumscribed. Chiang thus eliminated opposition within the party and placed himself and the military in firm control.²² In effect the Kuomintang became a militarily-controlled movement, much like its opponent, the warlord government in North China.

One week before Chiang Kai-shek's coup, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECGI) had reaffirmed the policy of a single

²⁰ Isaacs, Tragedy, 76.

²¹ Conrad Brandt, Stalin's Failure in China (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1958), 71.

²² Isaacs, Tragedy, 89-110.

national revolutionary front of workers, peasants, and bourgeoisie in China; in short, the continuation of the Kuomintang-Communist entente.²³ In light of the altered political situation within the Kuomintang, the Comintern should have reassessed its policy, but it could not. Stalin, whose hand guided Comintern policy, was locked in a power struggle with Trotsky, who challenged Comintern policy in China. Trotsky pointed out that the Kuomintang-Communist alliance was fiction. The Communists were subordinate to the Kuomintang and lacked the independence to operate successfully. In essence, Trotsky believed, "the Chinese proletariat was prohibited by policies of the leadership of the Communist International from fulfilling the role imposed upon it by history."²⁴ Those leaders were Stalin and Bukharin, Trotsky's arch-enemies.

Stalin and his allies could not admit that the Kuomintang had become a "reactionary" party, so the Comintern adopted a conciliatory attitude concerning the coup and encouraged the strengthening of the left Kuomintang, hoping eventually to overturn Chiang Kai-shek or, at best, to wean him from the right. The Soviet advisors continued to cooperate with Chiang on the theory that he should be used, even if he was deceiving them about his intentions.²⁵

Instead, Chiang used the Communists. By the time Stalin's faction gained full control of the Soviet Communist Party and ousted Trotsky in

²³Wilbur and How, Documents, 225.

²⁴Leon Trotsky, Problems of the Chinese Revolution (New York, Pioneer Publishers, 1932), 10.

²⁵Wilbur and How, Documents, 225.

December, 1927, any change in Chinese policy was too late.²⁶ Chiang had already dissolved the Kuomintang-Communist alliance and ejected the Soviet advisors after squeezing them of full value.

Chiang's intentions were transparent to the Chinese Communists, and at the Second Enlarged Plenum of the Chinese Communist Central Committee in July, 1926, two deviationist elements attacked Comintern policy. One faction, led by Ch'u Ch'iu-pai, demanded immediate withdrawal from the Kuomintang, stating that support of the left Kuomintang was impossible since Chiang's coup had eliminated the left. One Soviet advisor, Nilov of the Nationalist Fourth Army, supported this view. To him the left had neither masses nor leaders.²⁷

The other deviationist element wanted to seize the Kuomintang leadership, fill the party with the masses, and create a truly revolutionary party. Certain members of the Communist Kwangtung Regional Committee supported this policy.²⁸

The Central Committee declared both deviations erroneous, but this did not quiet discontent.²⁹ In December, 1926, at a Special Conference of the Central Committee held at Hankow, the Kwangtung Regional Committee again asserted the need for direct struggle with Chiang Kai-shek's faction for control of the Kuomintang. T'ang Ping-shan, Chinese Communist delegate to the 7th Plenum of the ECCI which also met in December 1926, also attacked Comintern policy. T'ang foresaw Chiang's design to

²⁶F. L. Schuman, Russia Since 1917 (New York, A. A. Knopf, 1957), 137-143.

²⁷Wilbur and How, Documents, 225.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 254-255.

establish a military dictatorship and stated that to continue to promote Chiang Kai-shek, was to sacrifice the interests of the left--the peasants and workers.³⁰

Nevertheless, the Comintern continued to encourage an alliance with the left Kuomintang, and when the Nationalist government moved from Canton to Hankow in December, 1926, the left seemed to gain the upper hand as Chiang Kai-shek remained aloof in a rival camp at Nanchang. Chiang did not break with Hankow and espoused party unity, and the Comintern believed that the new Hankow government was truly revolutionary.

This was wishful thinking on the Comintern's part. According to M. N. Roy, Hankow was a duplicate of Nanchang, dominated by the reactionary forces of left militarism, the petit bourgeois, and exploiting classes.³¹ The party commissioners, who established the government, had been chosen for their right wing bias, but on reaching Hankow they took advantage of the political climate to gain personal power.³² These were the "reactionary" leaders such as Ho Chien, Sun Fo, and Tang Yen-kai. Hankow's military strong-man was Tang Sheng-chin, whose personal rivalry with Chiang Kai-shek soon accelerated the Kuomintang split.³³

Hankow's policies were not "revolutionary." The government did not enforce directives calling for wage increases and land reforms, and the working classes were heavily taxed. When workers' unions and

³⁰Trotsky, Problems, 31.

³¹Roy, Revolution, 423-424.

³²Ibid., 426.

³³Ibid., 430.

peasant organizations began to stir discontent, Hankow suppressed them, and on May 21, 1927, the Changsha garrison in Hunan's capital eliminated the proletariat organizations of that city.³⁴ The scene at Changsha was reminiscent of the "blood-bath" conducted a month earlier by Chang Kai-shek against Shanghai's Communist union-pickets.

The Chinese Communist Central Committee ordered party members not to join this government, but the Comintern Executive Committee reversed this decision, thus forcing the Communists to support policies opposed to proletarian interests.³⁵ Since Hankow continued the fiction of party solidarity, backing Chiang Kai-shek, the Communists also followed this line.

In light of Comintern policy, one historian has felt that the Chinese Communists were not responsible for the Nanking Incident.³⁶ This theory would be correct if there had been strict party discipline, but there was not. As previously pointed out, two Chinese Communist factions opposed Comintern policy, and Lin Tsu-han, who arranged the Nanking Incident, was a Communist. Lin was a member of the Central Committee in 1928, and after 1952 served as Secretary-General of the Central China Peoples Government. His action at Nanking was a violation of Comintern discipline, and a few months later he again broke discipline and instigated a Communist uprising against the Kuomintang at Nanchang with the help of several disgruntled Communist officers.

Only in the riots at Nanking and Nanchang did the Chinese Communists

³⁴ Brandt, Failure, 129.

³⁵ Ibid., 94-96.

³⁶ Isaacs, Tragedy, 144.

openly flout Comintern discipline, and on both occasions Lin Tsu-han was present.³⁷ Chinese Communist disapproval of Comintern policy and Lin's actions demonstrate the possibility of independent Communist action. Thus, the genesis of the Nanking Incident lay in dissatisfaction of certain Chinese Communists with both Chiang Kai-shek and the Communist International.

Personal relationships also aided the Communists at Nanking. Lin Tsu-han was related by marriage to Sixth Army Commander, Ch'eng Ch'ien and exerted tremendous influence over him. In 1949, Lin induced Ch'eng to join the Communist cause when Ch'eng held strategic Hunan province, which protected the Kuomintang government at Canton. When Ch'eng switched allegiances, the Nationalist base on Mainland China collapsed.³⁸

Ch'eng connived with Lin at Nanking for still another reason--out of personal rivalry. When Sun Yat-sen was alive, Ch'eng had held high rank in the Kuomintang equal to that of Chiang Kai-shek.³⁹ After Sun's death Ch'eng fell to a subordinate position beneath the dominant Chiang. The jealous Ch'eng joined the opposition at Hankow in consequence and after the Nanking Incident he reported to the Kuomintang Headquarters and government at the Wuhan cities.⁴⁰ There he became a member of the standing committee of Hankow's military council and later served as one of Wuhan's delegates to a special committee promoting party unity when

³⁷Max Perleberg, Who's Who in Modern China (Hong Kong, Ye Olde Printerie, Ltd., 1954), 135.

³⁸H. L. Boorman, editor, Biographical Dictionary of Republican China (New York, Columbia University Press, 1967), I, 282.

³⁹T'ang, Inner History, 251.

⁴⁰Abbreviation for Wuchang, Hankow, and Hanyang.

Hankow and Nanking reunited in September, 1927. Ch'eng eventually suffered for his disloyalty, and from 1928 to 1932, he underwent house arrest for "illegal activities."⁴¹

Thus, the execution of Lin's plans at Nanking was apparently facilitated by sharp personal rivalry at the highest military level in the Kuomintang. But, if this was a conspiracy, why were there so many willing conspirators? Why did so many Kuomintang troops play their assigned roles so willingly and so fiercely? Social psychology yields an answer. Here was a classic case of the frustration-aggression syndrome. In the words of John B. Powell:

Foreign dealings with Orientals has been signalized by one word FORCE, and in all too many instances it has been signalized by outright brutalities. So long as we continue to enforce our so-called rights in this part of the world by resorting to primitive force, we have no possible grounds for being offended when the Chinese retaliate in kind. The Chinese who perpetrated the Nanking brutalities had in them all of the age-long stored-up animosities of Chinese or Orientals toward the white race.⁴²

As one of Nanking's missionaries observed, "The ultimate cause of the Nanking Incident must be traced to 100 years of European aggression in China."

The Chinese political puzzle is difficult to assess in historical perspective, and it must have been equally perplexing for United States officials and citizens to judge in 1927. What then was the reaction of the United States policy-makers, and what were the forces that shaped the United States reaction to the Nanking Incident?

⁴¹Boorman, Dictionary, I, 283.

⁴²China Weekly Review, (May 14, 1927), 273-274.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AND THE NANKING INCIDENT

The Nanking Incident aroused the complex public and private foreign interests in China, and it created a demand for an effective diplomatic response from the United States. Two responses were possible: a policy of demands and threats supported by military reprisal or a policy of conciliation based on an understanding of the aspirations of Chinese Nationalism. Whichever choice the United States made, it could and did alter the fundamental United States China policy.

American Diplomatic Response

Word of the Nanking "outrages" created an aura of uneasiness in the Shanghai International Settlement and in other foreign communities in China. The Shanghai Japanese Club unanimously petitioned its government to take all measures insuring Japan's dignity and the safety of Japanese business interests in China.¹ The Peking foreign community warned the Powers that any delay in action would lead to more violence, and when the United States government seemed to be temporizing, the Shanghai American community telegraphed the same warning to the United States Secretary of State, Frank B. Kellogg.²

The foreign diplomats at Peking joined the chorus of those

¹North China Herald, (April 2, 1927), 34.

²North China Herald, (April 9, 1927), 51.

demanding a strong and swift response from the Powers. The ministers of the five Powers involved at Nanking--the United States, Great Britain, France, Japan, and Italy--met on March 29, 1927, and proposed that their governments present identic notes to Chiang Kai-shek. They sought:

1. Punishment of the commanders of the troops and other implicated persons responsible for the "murders, personal injuries, indignities, and material damage" done at Nanking,
2. A written apology by the Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army, and
3. Complete reparation for material damages and personal injuries.

If Chiang Kai-shek failed to respond, the ministers suggested the Powers set a time limit for compliance.³

The foreign ministers expected united and immediate response from their governments, but this was not forthcoming. Japan hesitated about adding a time limit to the note.⁴ For expediency, the ministers modified this provision, and by April 1, 1927, all the Powers except the United States agreed to send identic notes.

Secretary of State Kellogg doubted the advisability of any ultimatum since failure to negotiate a settlement would lead to hostilities, but he did feel that a formal demand of some sort was necessary.⁵ American Minister to China, J. V. A. MacMurry, exasperated by Kellogg's delay, cabled that the proposed note was mild and was not an ultimatum implying intervention.⁶

³ Foreign Relations, 1927, 166.

⁴ Ibid., 171.

⁵ Ibid., 170.

⁶ Ibid., 173.

The British government, headed by the Conservative or "Tory" Party, also urged American participation in the presentation of identic notes. The Tory's China policy supported foreign privilege, backed by the threat of sanctions or reprisals which in the past had meant a military expedition of some sort. Sir Austen Chamberlain, the British Foreign Secretary, reported the events of Nanking immediately after the Incident to the House of Commons. He had hoped to over-awe Parliament with the tragic events to gain support for the Conservative policy, but Liberal and Labour Members of Parliament openly questioned the value of military measures in China.⁷

When Chamberlain indicated that the British cabinet was preparing for "strong action" in China, the Labourites, under the leadership of Ramsay MacDonald, assailed the Conservative position and demanded debate on the China question. The debate took place on April 6, 1927, and Labour M.P.'s lambasted the veracity of the government's statements on the Nanking Incident and proposed that Great Britain invite the League of Nations to settle the diplomatic problems of the Incident.⁸

The Labour attack served no useful purpose, and the only policy concession made by the British government was the omission of the time limit to appease Japan and to gain unanimity among the Powers. Great Britain still planned sanctions if the Nationalists failed to comply with foreign demands, and the British Ambassador to the United States, Sir Esme Howard, so informed the United States Department of State.⁹

⁷ London Times, (March 29, 1927), 8.

⁸ Parliamentary Debates, (London, H. M. Stationary Office, 1927), Volume 204, 2109-2127.

⁹ Foreign Relations, 1927, 179.

Sanctions received the support of the foreign military in China and won endorsement from the United States Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Charles S. Williams. Admiral Williams and the British, French, and Japanese fleet commanders in the Far East proposed a series of military reprisals designed to injure Nationalist prestige if diplomatic action failed. The proposed sanctions included the capture or destruction of certain Nationalist military bases, or forts, and withholding the Shanghai surtax from the Nationalist government. The admirals also considered blockading the portion of China's coast held by the Kuomintang.

Williams and the other admirals felt that the proposed note was an ultimatum, and a rejection of the Powers' terms would demand drastic action. They advised allied action if force became the only alternative in the crisis.¹⁰

Secretary of State Kellogg had yielded to the pressure of the conservatives--the diplomats, American businessmen in China, the British government--and had agreed on April 2, 1927, to the presentation of identic notes, but the demand for sanctions shocked Kellogg. The American government supported moderation and conciliation in solving the Nanking Incident, not force, and Kellogg reiterated this position in notes to Great Britain and American Minister, MacMurray, on April 5, 1927.

The United States position broke the united front of the Powers, and when Japan joined the United States in favoring moderation, diplomatic action on the identic notes stalled. On April 6, 1927, the

¹⁰ Ibid., 178.

Japanese government delayed the presentation of notes while its consul in Shanghai prodded Chiang Kai-shek to initiate diplomatic action. Japan had had previous contact with Chiang and felt that he was favorably inclined toward a rapprochement with the Powers.¹¹

Japan supported moderation in China and refused to send troops to China after the Nanking Incident. The Japanese Foreign Minister, Baron Shidehara Kijuro, felt that reprisals were useless since none of the different Chinese governments, Kuomintang or otherwise, had effective political or military control. To discipline one of the Chinese factions would not guarantee the safety of foreign interests in other areas of China. Since Japan had a large economic stake in China and over 100,000 citizens there, Shidehara and the Japanese cabinet did not wish to jeopardize Japanese lives and property in a fruitless military expedition.

Shidehara expected Chiang Kai-shek to break with the Hankow government, and the Japanese Foreign minister did not wish to lessen Chiang's opportunities for victory in the power struggle. Any ultimatum would place Chiang in a dilemma. If he accepted the terms of the Powers, he would be a coward in the eyes of the Chinese. On the other hand, if Chiang rejected an ultimatum, the Powers would be forced to attack the Nationalists, and the Kuomintang moderate wing, represented by Chiang, would lose power.¹²

The Japanese press echoed the Shidehara policy of conciliation and deemphasized the spectacular aspects of the Nanking Incident. The Tokyo Asahi suggested that American and British accounts of Nanking were

¹¹ Ibid., 182.

¹² Shidehara Kijuro, Gaikō gojūnen (Fifty Years of Diplomacy) (Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbusha, 1951), 109-112.

exaggerated.¹³ The Tokyo Hochi Shimbun opposed any military measures, feeling that in a civil war, one must expect violence. In general, the Japanese press supported Chiang Kai-shek and hoped he would overthrow the Hankow radicals.¹⁴

Without the support of Japan and the United States, Great Britain stood alone among the Great Powers supporting a policy of sanctions. Even France avoided a commitment and remained neutral in the diplomatic fray. M. Briand, the French Foreign Minister, called for peace in the Orient, and the French press rallied to this stand. L'Oeuvre supported Chiang Kai-shek,¹⁵ and Le Peuple editorialized against French intervention in China and called for the recognition of the Kuomintang government.¹⁶ The French government followed an individualistic policy and sent notes to the Chinese outside of the joint program recommended by the diplomats at Peking. Briand instructed the French minister at Peking to seek reparations from the recognized "Warlord" government and the French consul at Shanghai to issue the same protest to Chiang Kai-shek.¹⁷

Because of the division among the Powers, Great Britain waived its insistence on sanctions on April 9, 1927,¹⁸ and the Powers were able to reach agreement on the identic notes. Two days later, on March 11,

¹³ North China Herald, (April 2, 1927), 34.

¹⁴ London Times, (March 30, 1927), 16.

¹⁵ L'Oeuvre, (March 27, 1927), 3.

¹⁶ Le Peuple, (April 1, 1927), 1.

¹⁷ L'Oeuvre, (April 2, 1927), 1.

¹⁸ Foreign Relations, 1927, 185.

1927, Nationalist Foreign Minister, Eugene Ch'en, at Hankow and Chiang Kai-shek's representative, General Pai Tsung-hsi, at Shanghai received the modified notes.¹⁹

The American public reacted with mixed emotions on hearing news of the issuance of identic notes, and a sampling of press opinion indicated general discontent with the action. The New York World deplored United States involvement in united action, and the Baltimore Sun mirrored this opinion but stated that it was fortunate that the note was not an ultimatum. The Philadelphia Public Ledger approved of the notes only because there was no time limit,²⁰ and in a political cartoon, the Washington Post emphasized the different purposes the various Powers had in presenting the notes. Post depicted "Uncle Sam" as seeking reasonable damages and future assurances of protection for American life and property, while the other Powers were pictured as "bullies", demanding "heavy damages and punitive sanctions."²¹

Post was the precursor of United States China policy throughout the crisis period following the Nanking Incident, and in editorials on March 27 and 28, 1927, it advocated American support for Chiang Kai-shek and non-interference in China's internal problems. According to the Post, a nation must expect excesses in a civil war and can only seek to protect its citizens' lives.²²

After surveying the American press, Kellogg concluded that any

¹⁹ Ibid., 189.

²⁰ Ibid., 194.

²¹ Washington Post, (April 12, 1927), 6.

²² Washington Post, (March 27, 1927), 5, and (March 28, 1927), 6.

drastic action by the government would create a hostile reaction, and he so informed American Minister MacMurray. This commitment to moderation, however, came under fire on April 15, 1927, when Eugene Ch'en answered the identic notes. There were five separate answers, and according to MacMurray, Ch'en's replies were "designed to produce delay or disunion among the five interested Powers."²³

Ch'en promised the United States reparations for damages to the United States consulate, but any further payments, apologies, or punishments would only be forthcoming on proof of the guilt of the Nationalist government either through government inquiry or an international commission. He emphasized the willingness of the Nationalists to protect foreign lives and property in the future but pointed out that the "best guarantee for the effective protection of American lives and property in China is the removal of the fundamental cause of troubled relations" between China and the Powers--the unequal treaties.²⁴

The answers to the other Powers differed subtly. The note to Japan hinted at a desire for a diplomatic settlement and closed with a hope that Japan would not intervene in the Chinese Revolution. The reply to France suggested a broader scope of diplomatic discussion to include the Shameen Incident of 1925. Ch'en's answer to Great Britain was similar to the French note and called for an international investigation of the Shameen and Shanghai Incidents of 1925 and the Wan Hsien Incident of 1926.²⁵

²³Foreign Relations, 1927, 196.

²⁴Ibid., 192.

²⁵Ibid., 195-197.

China's foreign business community reacted unfavorably to Ch'en's "evasive, unresponsive, and unsatisfactory" replies. At Peking the foreign ministers immediately sought a second set of identic notes designed to spell out foreign disapproval of Ch'en's replies and to state in no uncertain terms that the first identic notes were demands, not proposals for discussion. By April 20, 1927, all the governments of the Powers except the United States had instructed their foreign ministers to proceed with the second notes.²⁶

The demand for the second notes clearly challenged Kellogg's policy of moderation. In Washington, the debate over the notes fomented a minor crisis, and the capital press rumored a possible cabinet shakeup. The Washington Post reported that President Coolidge was considering replacing Secretary of State Kellogg with Commerce Secretary, Herbert Hoover, an "old China Hand", who was in tune with American business interests in China.²⁷

This did not occur, for events in China vindicated Kellogg when Chiang Kai-shek openly split with the Hankow government and established a rival capital at Nanking.²⁸ On April 20, 1927, Kellogg informed Great Britain of the United States decision to delay overt action in China until it was possible to ascertain the direction Chinese Nationalism was to follow.²⁹

In a speech in New York City on April 25, 1927, at a banquet

²⁶ Ibid., 203.

²⁷ Washington Post, (April 16, 1927), 1.

²⁸ Foreign Relations, 1927, 203.

²⁹ Ibid., 207.

honoring the United Press International, President Coolidge outlined America's commitment in China. He described China as a country "undergoing revolutionary convulsions" and because of these disruptions, United States warships were in China protecting American citizens and commerce. He added that the United States government was pleased with the conciliatory tone of the Nationalist reply to the identic notes, and Coolidge closed his speech on a friendly note.

The friendship of America for China has become proverbial. We feel for her the deepest sympathy in these times of her distress. We have no disposition to do otherwise than to assist and encourage every legitimate aspiration for freedom, for unity, for the cultivation of a national spirit, and the realization of a republican form of government.³⁰

The American policy brought a reassessment of the diplomatic situation in the capitals of the other Powers. On May 1, 1927, Foreign Minister Briand informed the French National Assembly that France would not enter into any further joint declarations on the Nanking Incident,³¹ and on May 3, 1927, British Ambassador Howard informed the United States Department of State that Great Britain would not apply sanctions in light of the division of opinion among the Powers.³²

Thus, despite heavy pressure, the United States checked intervention by the Powers. It deviated, ever so slightly, from the standard policy of supporting the Chinese government which represented the status quo, and assumed a conciliatory stance toward the main force of emerging Chinese nationalism.

³⁰Washington Post, (April 26, 1927), 2.

³¹China Weekly Review, (May 7, 1927), 247.

³²Foreign Relations, 1927, 216.

Impact - United States Diplomacy

From the viewpoint of China's relations with the United States, the Nanking Incident was the critical point of the Chinese Revolution. The American decision after the Incident for either intervention or conciliation obscured questions of treaty revision which had been the important factor in Sino-American relations and forced the United States to decide whether or not to treat China as a diplomatic equal. As we have seen, this represented a clash between the conservative attitude that had created the unequal treaties and the moderate attitude which sought an equal role for China in the world community.

Earlier at the Washington Conference of 1921-1922, the United States had altered in part its basic China policy. The Nine Power Treaty, signed by the United States at the Conference, achieved a policy of "cooperative denial" among the nations with interests in China. This meant an end to the individualistic policies of the Powers and to the extension of foreign privilege in China. It further implied that China was to be given the "fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity" to create a stable and unified government.

This policy did not mean the Powers would grant China "administrative integrity" by abolishing the unequal treaties which had taken China's tariff autonomy and had given the Powers extra-territorial rights--the privilege of trying foreign criminals in China by consular or special courts outside of Chinese jurisdiction. All diplomatic discussions concerning the unequal treaties, thereafter, languished in fruitless discussion.³³

³³ Borg, American Policy, 11-12.

Thus, the Powers continued to compromise China's equality, but there were indications that the United States would alter this policy. In a rare statement on United States foreign policy issued on January 27, 1927, Secretary of State Kellogg offered China liberal terms in resolving the outstanding questions of treaty revision. He expressed a readiness to negotiate with any government representative of the Chinese people, irrespective of the actions of the other Powers.³⁴

On January 4, 1927, while the Kellogg statement was being formulated, the Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Relations, Congressman G. Porter, introduced a resolution encouraging the President to enter into negotiations with China so that,

henceforth the treaty relations between the two countries shall be upon an equal and reciprocal basis and will be such as will in no way offend the sovereign dignity of either of the parties, or place obstacles in the way of realization, either of them or their several national aspirations or of maintenance by them of their several legitimate domestic policies.³⁵

This resolution probably had the support of the Secretary of State and was designed to test Congressional opinion.³⁶

After a series of open hearings, the resolution reached the floor of the House of Representatives in late February, 1927. The debate that followed was vigorous, the general tenor being in favor of the resolution. Congressman D. J. O'Connell (Democrat, Texas) set the tone of the affirmative argument, declaring that the "deplorable conditions" existing in China were the result of the "unfair and unequal" treaties

³⁴ Ibid., 228.

³⁵ Congressional Record, (Washington, United States Printing Office, 1927), Volume 68, 4386.

³⁶ Borg, American Policy, 243.

through which the Powers, including the United States, had oppressed China. After describing the extra-territorial system and the tariff controls exercised by the Powers, O'Connell pointed out that the system was "the essence of serfdom" and had "no parallel in American annals. The restrictions on sovereignty should be removed, and China should be permitted to work out her own destiny in her own way."³⁷

Those who opposed the resolution did so for procedural reasons, charging that Congress should not request the President to negotiate a treaty and "set out the terms upon which the House believes he should negotiate such a treaty." Despite these attacks the resolution carried by a wide margin, 262 in favor to 43 opposed. Thus, the House went on record as favoring an alteration of United States China policy.³⁸

Shortly thereafter, the Nanking Incident occurred, and as noted, the United States acted with moderation and conciliation. This proved to be a turning point in American policy. A new harmony prevailed between the United States and the Nationalists, and when the Kuomintang united China in June, 1928, the United States recognized the new government and immediately began revising the unequal treaties.

The Nanking Incident was resolved in this spirit on March 30, 1928, several months before the United States recognized the Nationalist regime. The two governments concluded the settlement with the exchange of three notes between General Huang Fu, the new Nationalist Foreign Minister, and American Minister to China, J. V. A. MacMurray. General Huang had become the Nationalist Foreign Minister when the Hankow and

³⁷ Congressional Record, Volume 68, 4388.

³⁸ Ibid., 4390.

Nanking governments were reunited in late 1927, and Eugene Ch'en fled to Soviet Russia.

In the first note the Nationalist government expressed "profound regret at the insults to the American flag and officials," and for the personal injuries and damages to American residents at Nanking. The government accepted full responsibility for the event even though the Incident "was entirely instigated by the Communists prior to the establishment of the Nationalist government at Nanking." The Nationalists further promised compensation for personal damages and injuries as verified by a Sino-American commission.

In the second and third notes, General Huang sought an expression of regret from the United States concerning the bombardment of Socony Hill by the USS Noa and USS Preston, and he suggested that further steps "be taken for the revision of existing treaties and readjustment of outstanding questions on the basis of equality and mutual respect for territorial sovereignty."³⁹

Prior to the preparation of these three notes, the Nationalist government on March 16, 1928, issued two mandates stating that it had executed nineteen soldiers implicated in Nanking disorders in addition to thirty-two other "local desperadoes" and had ordered the arrest of Lin Tsu-han, the instigator of the Incident. These actions fulfilled the demands of the Powers for "adequate punishment" of those responsible for the Nanking Incident.⁴⁰

³⁹Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1928, (Washington, United States Printing Office, 1942), Volume 2, 331-333. This volume hereafter referred to as Foreign Relations, 1928.

⁴⁰R. T. Pollard, China's Foreign Relations (New York, MacMillan Company, 1933), 339.

MacMurray accepted the notes and acknowledged their receipt on the same day. In reply he sent three notes stating that the United States agreed to the Chinese-sponsored provisions, but he avoided apology for the gunboat barrage by stating that the American government deplored "that circumstances beyond its control, should have necessitated the adoption of such measures for the protection of the lives of its citizens at Nanking." MacMurray further signified United States interest in treaty revision when China had "an administration...representative of the Chinese people...and exercising real authority, as to be capable of assuring the actual fulfillment in good faith of any obligations such as China would of necessity have for its part to undertake incidentally to the desired readjustment of treaty relations."⁴¹

Such a government soon existed when Nationalist troops entered Peking in June, 1928, and drove out the last of warlord Chang Tso-lin's troops. True to his government's word, Secretary of State Kellogg instructed MacMurray to commence conversations with the Nationalist authorities "with the view to revision of tariff provisions of our treaties." The United States was willing to accede to the annulment of all provisions of treaties "relating to rates of duty upon the importation and exportation of merchandise, drawback and tonnage dues in China." In turn China was to agree to abolish "likin" or internal taxes on American goods transported in China's interior.⁴²

MacMurray opened negotiations on July 11, 1928, with the Nationalist Minister for Finance, T. V. Soong, and on July 21, 1928, they

⁴¹Foreign Relations, 1928, 331-333.

⁴²Ibid., 449-451.

reached agreement on a proposed text of a treaty. They did not work out satisfactory terms concerning the abolishment of likin, but on the whole the treaty terms met the specifications of the Department of State, and on July 25, the treaty was signed.⁴³

The trend toward moderation continued, and the United States officially recognized the Nationalist government in September, 1928,⁴⁴ after which informal discussions concerning the abolition of extra-territoriality opened in November, 1928.⁴⁵ The United States was the first nation granting recognition and voluntary revision in its treaties with Nationalist China. The Nanking Incident was not the origin of these changes, but it had forced American decision-makers to act when attitudes were changing, and thus, it became a turning point for United States' China policy.

This new policy repudiated the militaristic and interventionist aspects of foreign imperialism, but the United States had not ordinarily used force in China. Protestant missionaries, often labeled the "cultural arm of Western Imperialism,"⁴⁶ had expanded American influence through a variety of educational and charitable institutions, and they had been the chief beneficiaries of the traditional foreign policy in China. At Nanking in 1927, the missionaries bore the brunt of the attack. How then did they respond to the Incident?

⁴³ Ibid., 455-477.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 198-199.

⁴⁵ Borg, American Policy, 412.

⁴⁶ C. Cary-Elwes, China and the Cross (New York, Kennedy and Sons, 1956), 252.

CHAPTER V

CULTURAL IMPACT: PROTESTANT MISSIONS AND LITERATURE

Theological issues divided the Protestant missionary movement in China, and this fact tempered the impact of the Nanking Incident. After World War I, two missionary factions developed in China: the fundamentalists and the liberals. The fundamentalists were convinced that liberalism or "modernism" threatened the Church in China, and in 1920, they organized under the name of the Bible Union. In the Union's statement of faith, they expressed unqualified adherence to belief in the deity of Christ, his Virgin birth, atonement for sin, and bodily resurrection. They accepted without qualification the miracles of the Old and New Testament, and they believed the Bible was "the inspired Word of God and the ultimate authority for Christian faith and practice." The Union "declared war" on all those that differed with its views and sought to influence home mission boards to support financially and to send only those who ascribed to its particular articles of faith.¹

Generally, the fundamentalists were apolitical and devoted their energies to evangelism and the salvation of Chinese souls. Economic and social problems of peasants and workers were not their concern.

On the other hand, Christian humanism influenced the liberals or

¹ China Year Book, (1923), 95-101.

"modernists", who placed greater emphasis on the social aspects of Christian teaching. To this end the liberals dominated the educational sector of missionary enterprise, sought improvement of working conditions in treaty port factories, and encouraged rural development through cooperatives and extension work.²

They were also the first to notice the injustices of the unequal treaties and the wrongs of foreign domination of the Church in China. Seeking to cure these ills, the liberals organized the National Christian Council in 1924. Liberal missionary leaders such as Frank Rawlinson, editor of the Chinese Recorder, argued for an indigenous church, and by 1926, NCC membership was 75 per cent Chinese.³ The native episcopacy was more in tune with Chinese Nationalism, and it shaped the increasingly moderate pronouncements of the NCC.

The more conservative mission groups such as the China Inland Mission began to withdraw from the NCC in light of its swelling liberalism, and by 1927, the fundamentalists had awakened to the strength of the influence of their liberal brethren in diplomatic, political, and mission affairs. The events of March and April, 1927, provided a perfect moment for conservative missionaries to counter-attack and present their viewpoints.

The many Protestant missionaries, sympathetic with the Nationalist cause, had suffered heavy financial losses in the anti-foreign attack at Nanking, and in the wave of anti-foreignism before and after Nanking, many other missionaries stationed in the interior had similar tragic

²Paul A. Varg, Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1958), 215-217.

³Ibid., 204-205.

tales to tell. Of the 8000 foreign missionaries stationed in China in January, 1927, 5000 fled China during the hectic days of March and April, 1927. Of the 3000 remaining behind, more than 2500 crowded into Shanghai and the other treaty ports for protection.⁴ They were a disillusioned people. The Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board summed up their attitude:

The year 1927 will be remembered as an outstanding one in the history of Christian Missions in China. The words tragedy, disillusionment, disappointment, discouragement, doubt, uncertainty, perplexity have been heard constantly in speaking of the events of the year.⁵

In light of the frustration of the moderates, thirty-two conservative missionaries took the opportunity to attack the National Christian Council for taking the lead in treaty revision and as the spokesman for the majority of Protestant groups in China. These men, major leaders of Protestantism in China, charged that the National Christian Council was departing from its constitutionally assigned functions and engaging in politics.⁶

China's foreign business community was gleeful over the division among the missionaries. This "interventionist oriented" group realized that the Protestant missionaries strongly influenced the Powers, particularly the United States, against their cause. Therefore, the treaty port press, notably the British-owned North China Herald, exaggerated the denunciation of the NCC, hoping to villify it in the eyes of the

⁴A. H. Gregg, China and Educational Autonomy (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1946), 146.

⁵Borg, American Policy, 363.

⁶North China Herald, (April 16, 1927), 120.

American public.⁷ The Herald had long maintained that the NCC was not a representative body of missionary opinion, and the attack by a distinguished group of Protestant leaders provided proof of this contention.⁸

A few missionary groups rallied to the Nationalist cause, but these were the exception, not the rule. The North China Mission in Peking cabled home in April, 1927, that it opposed American military intervention in China and continued to agitate for treaty revision. It further advocated that missionaries on furlough in the United States work to counteract the sensational news coming from China and "encourage optimism regarding Chinese Nationalism."

In May, 1927, the National Council of Congregational Churches expressed approval of the United States response to the Nanking Incident and confidence in the American policy of "independent action, non-intervention, and constructive friendliness." Similarly, the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society resolved in early April, 1927, to "re-emphasize its stand for the unity and sovereignty of the Chinese people and against foreign aggression in China."⁹

Thus, the declaration against the NCC in April, 1927, brought the fundamentalist-modernist split to public view. For the next few years, Protestant leaders in the United States and China continued to bicker,

⁷ Ibid., 105.

⁸ China Weekly Review, (April 30, 1927), 219. Editor J. B. Powell sarcastically noted that the thirty-two missionaries denouncing the National Christian Council for political activity had cabled the American government demanding intervention after the Nanking Incident.

⁹ Borg, American Policy, 365.

but their debate was futile. The open division within Protestantism weakened the diplomatic influence of the missionary in the United States, and in China, the rise of nationalism changed the structure and the message of the Church.

The active Chinese clergy gained the leadership of the Protestant Church in China, and these new leaders were not in sympathy with the dogmatic approach of the foreign missionary. Further, Christian schools lost most of their religious content as new government regulations altered curricula and introduced native administrators.

The transfer of the Church leadership from foreign missionary to native clergy, referred to as devolution, was a nominal goal of the missionary and had been discussed for many years. But foreign concern for this matter was actually indifferent. More devolution took place in a few weeks of 1927, than in any previous decade.¹⁰ When the missionary returned to his post in China after the anti-foreign scare subsided, he found the native clergy firmly in power with the support of the Nationalist government. The new regime specified that all administrators in foreign institutions must be Chinese and that half the members of any board of trustees must be natives.¹¹

Sinification of the Protestant movement created training problems since the new Chinese administrators were not well versed in dogma and were not adequately prepared to assume their new responsibilities. The new Chinese clergy had less training and were not well grounded in theology. They were less dogmatic than their foreign peers and had

¹⁰ Gregg, Autonomy, 155.

¹¹ Varg, Missionaries, 210.

evangelical tendencies, emphasizing increased social work or modernism, and in many cases they developed sympathy with Communism.¹²

The decline of theological seminaries demonstrates the decreased interest in theology. In 1922, there had been fifty such institutions, but by 1932, five seminaries had become secular colleges, and only nineteen theological schools remained, the rest having closed their doors.¹³

In other areas of activity, the mission school system underwent change. Nationalism, generated in the Chinese Revolution, spurred Chinese students to form Student Unions. Through these new organizations, students demanded a share in school administration and new curricula, devoid of required religious instruction and emphasizing the social and natural sciences.

As an example, students at Yale College of Changsha demanded the abolition of chapel, complete freedom on Sundays, and elimination of religious ceremonies in daily assemblies. No students were to be dismissed without the assent of a Student Union which was to be subsidized by the school. Students were to have the right to dismiss instructors through a student vote. Although the school received 80 per cent of its funds from the United States and only 20 per cent from fees, the Student Union demanded lower tuition rates and the building of a gymnasium.¹⁴ When the college failed to meet these demands in full, the students went on strike. The school eventually closed because of what were considered unreasonable demands, noting:

¹²Cary-Elwes, Cross, 256.

¹³Ibid., 258.

¹⁴China Year Book, (1928), 500.

that they were furnishing something which many of the students could get in no other way, a fairly decent education, at no cost to student or government. If the students did not care to attend their institutions they were at perfect liberty to go elsewhere, if they could.¹⁵

The Nationalist Ministry of Education followed student leadership and created a school registration system which implemented student demands.¹⁶ The government made military training a part of mission school curricula and replaced chapel services with Sun Yat-sen services.¹⁷ Although Protestant mission schools such as Yale College at Changsha had at first balked at the new regulations and registration system, by 1932, the government specified curricula was in general use, and accepted by the missionaries, and the student unions helped in school administration, often producing school news papers.¹⁸

Compliance with the new government regulations meant an end to the effective use of the mission school in proselytizing. As an example, in 1934, only 2000 of the 6700 students in mission colleges claimed to be Christians, and only 1200 were from Christian homes.¹⁹ The large percentage of non-Christians could not be reached since religious programs were voluntary. A study of seventeen mission schools in 1929 demonstrated the failure of such voluntary programs. In boys schools, 29.8 per cent attended chapel services and 18.8 per cent Sunday services. Girls school figures were higher with 72.7 per cent attending chapel

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ C. H. Peake, Nationalism and Education in Modern China (New York, Columbia University Press, 1932), 152.

¹⁷ Ibid., 136, 153.

¹⁸ China Year Book, (1933), 281.

¹⁹ China Year Book, (1936), 356.

and 54.9 per cent attending Sunday services. Courses in religion had similar low attendance figures with 36.6 per cent of the boys electing courses and 64.5 per cent of the girls.²⁰

Thus, change--the change in the quality of the Protestant message in China--is the most apparent aspect of the impact of the Nanking Incident on the "cultural arm" of imperialism. Inspiration as well as change also stemmed from the tragedy and touched another cultural force, American literature.

Impact - American Literature

Two of America's foremost novelists on China, Pearl S. Buck and Alice T. Hobart, were among those trapped at Nanking, and both authors have incorporated some elements of the tragedy into their writing. Mrs. Buck, the 1938 Nobel Prize winner for Literature, was a Presbyterian missionary and a teacher at Nanking University in 1927. On the day of the Incident, she and her family heard of the Nationalist attack and death of Dr. J. E. Williams, and they escaped to the home of a Chinese friend before the arrival of troops and looters.²¹ The rabble thoroughly wrecked her home and destroyed a just-completed manuscript of her first novel. This story, a tale about the life of an American man and woman in China, was never rewritten.

Mrs. Hobart, wife of the Standard Oil Company manager at Nanking, was one of two women trapped at the Standard Oil house on Socony Hill. As previously mentioned, she and fifty-one other foreigners escaped

²⁰Varg, Missionaries, 211.

²¹Pearl S. Buck, My Several Worlds (New York, John Day, Co., 1954), 204-210.

over Nanking's wall when the foreign gunboats shelled Nationalist troops who were attacking Socony Hill.

These two women's experiences at Nanking has provided material for their various books and short stories. Their outlooks differed, however. Pearl Buck doubts that the Nanking Incident affected her writing,²² but it has served as a vehicle to express her strong identification with China's peasantry. "The Revolutionist," a short story published in 1928 in which she depicted the motivating force creating the looters at Nanking, is a case in point.

The story's protagonist is a destitute Chinese farmer, named Wang Lung. He often went to Nanking to sell farm produce and on one such occasion heard the speeches of young revolutionists. Wang could not understand their high-minded ideas, but the slogan--"The poor shall become rich!"--stirred his imagination. Poverty-stricken and destitute, Wang desired the comforts of wealth, so he shaved his head in the revolutionary style in hopes of obtaining the promised wealth. As revolutionary troops approached Nanking, fifth columnists aroused Wang's greed with tales of foreign wealth, and when Nanking fell, he participated in anti-foreign looting. He collected only a little money and some incidentals and came to realize that revolutionary slogans do not cure poverty.²³

Pearl Buck's sympathy for China's poor is double-edged, and the real victim of the Nanking Incident becomes the revolutionists, who lost the common touch and could not aid the peasantry. Buck's appreciation

²²Pearl S. Buck to author, April 23, 1968.

²³Pearl S. Buck, "The Revolutionist," Asia, XXIII, (September, 1928), 685-689, 752-756.

of the lot and life of China's poor farmers dominates her China novels, but the Nanking Incident is the focal point of her expression of sympathy in these stories and appears incidentally in two of her novels.

In The Good Earth, Buck recreates Wang Lung in the role of a North China farmer who flees to Nanking to avoid famine. Again, he hears revolutionary propaganda and joins a mob of looters, but the message of "The Revolutionist" is lost. Wang and his wife, O-lan, use their booty to return to North China and become wealthy landholders.²⁴

The Nanking Incident reappears in A House Divided, the third book of the so-called House of Earth trilogy. The central figure is Wang Lung's grandson, a sensitive figure caught in the maelstrom of changing China. Yuan, as he is named, goes to America to study, where in his loneliness, he forgets China's troubles and poverty and remembers only the fine qualities of his homeland. The disorders of the Chinese Revolution and the anti-foreign riots at Nanking destroy Yuan's idealized world, and he returns to face the challenges of changing China.²⁵

Thus, the Nanking Incident becomes a literary device, a "deus ex machina," facilitating the flow of Pearl Buck's narrative tales of Chinese society's lowest common denominator. Here is the contrast between Pearl Buck and Alice Hobart, for the Nanking Incident had a far reaching impact on Mrs. Hobart.

Her husband, Earle T. Hobart, had been a hero at Nanking, but his fall from the city wall permanently crippled him, and he was demoted by

²⁴P. A. Doyle, Pearl S. Buck (New York, Twayne Publishers, 1965), 37-38.

²⁵Pearl S. Buck, A House Divided (New York, Grossett and Dunlop, 1935), 210-211.

Standard Oil in the wake of a major company reorganization. Hobart's demotion meant a return to an interior station, instead of a Shanghai office position that he was to receive before the Nanking Incident occurred. He resigned rather than face the menace of anti-foreignism in the interior, and the family returned to the United States shortly thereafter.²⁶

The tragic effects of the Nanking Incident deeply impressed Alice Hobart and touched her writing. She was writing her first novel, River Supreme, when the Incident occurred, and the arrival of the two signalmen from the USS Noa interrupted her writing in the middle of a statement by the story's hero, Eben Hawley. When she finally resumed writing her novel several months later, she reread her half-written statement, "I'll tell ye right now, me and my sons are going to stick it out even if a whole string of generals...", and realized that,

I was not the same person who had written those words. This could no longer be the romantic story of adventure I originally intended it to be. I saw Eben Hawley held tragic meaning for both East and West.²⁷

From that point Alice Hobart wrote of the conflict between East and West, and this is the theme in her three principal novels on China, River Supreme, Oil for the Lamps of China, and Yang and Yin. In River Supreme, Eben Hawley's steamers, operating through the Yangtze Gorges, jeopardized the livelihood of the traditional junkmen. Oilman Stephen Chase in Oil for the Lamps of China brought to China impersonal ideas of Western organized business which clashed with the principles of human

²⁶ Alice T. Hobart, Gusty's Child (New York, Longmans Co., 1959), 235-243.

²⁷ Ibid., 246.

relations embodied in Confucian philosophy.²⁸ In Yang and Yin, a young missionary doctor, Peter Frazier, found that Oriental fatalism closed the minds of his students to the speculative thinking of Western science.²⁹

Besides affecting her attitude about China and the West, the Nanking Incident provided Alice Hobart with subject matter for a book and an article. Within the Walls of Nanking is Mrs. Hobart's personal account of the events leading up to the Incident and what occurred on Socony Hill during the riots. Hobart also edited letters sent home to relatives during the crisis period, and these letters were published in Harper's under the title, "What Happened at Nanking."³⁰

Thus, the Nanking Incident had a diversified impact, providing not only change, but also stimulation. To the literary genius of two of America's novelists, it provided inspiration, and the background for expression.

²⁸ Ibid., 275.

²⁹ Ibid., 289-290.

³⁰ Alice T. Hobart, "What Happened at Nanking," Harper's Monthly Magazine, CXL, July, 1927, 143-148.

SUMMARY

The Chinese Revolution of 1926-1928, stirred the powerful nationalist forces seeking to remold China. The Nanking Incident of March 24, 1927, occurring at the chronological and geographic midpoint of the Kuomintang Northern Expedition, was a catalyst, releasing these latent forces and exposing three basic conflicts:

1. It brought to a crisis the conflict between the forces within the Chinese Nationalist Movement over its leadership and goals.

The two parties of the Chinese Revolution, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communists, had split internally. Within the Kuomintang personal rivalries fractured the party, and questions of strategy and ideology divided the Chinese Communists.

The Chinese Revolution also divided the social classes over whether the Revolution was to bring a political or social change to China. Chiang Kai-shek soon demonstrated that the settlement was primarily political, and power transferred from one military faction, the warlords, to the military dictatorship of the Kuomintang. This settlement did not satisfy China's "exploited classes," the peasants and laborers. As long as the "exploiters" of Chinese society, the military, landlords, and compradors, continued to hold the keys to power, the Revolution in China was not complete as Mao Tse-tung proved in 1949.

2. The Nanking Incident exposed the conflict within the

Protestant missionary movement over the structure and message of Protestantism in China.

There were two factions in the Protestant foreign missionary movement, the fundamentalists and modernists. They disagreed on the content of the Christian message, the role of the native clergy, and the future of the Chinese nation.

Although in the past, the foreign missionary had played the major role in Protestant China, neither faction controlled the destiny of Protestantism in China after the Nanking Incident of 1927. Nationalism and anti-foreignism transferred control of the movement to the native clergy. They in turn loosened theological ties, and the message of Protestantism absorbed the less dogmatic concepts of social Christianity and evangelism.

3. The Nanking Incident heightened the conflict among the Powers and their constituents over the role of China in the international community.

Questions about China's role in the world divided the various foreign interests in China into two groups, the conservatives and the moderates. The Nanking Incident forced the Powers to commit themselves to either a conservative or moderate position.

The United States had wavered between these two postures since the Washington Conference of 1922, but finally, adopted the moderate course, the untested path of diplomacy. There were no guarantees that the Nationalists and Chiang Kai-shek could be trusted or that a Kuomintang government would protect foreign lives and property in China. Nevertheless, the United States supported moderation and swung the other Powers behind this stance for the moment.

That the United States should repudiate the traditional path of diplomacy when China was in chaos, was only common sense in the eyes of many Americans. The words of Oklahoma's favorite son, Will Rogers, exemplify this attitude.

China! Those poor people! They have lived within their own boundaries, never invaded anyone else's domains, worked hard, got little pay for it, had no pleasures in life, learned us about two-thirds of the useful things we do, and now they want to have a Civil War. Now we had one and nobody butted in and told us we couldn't have it. China did not send gunboats up our Mississippi River to protect their laundries at Memphis or St. Louis or New Orleans. They let us go ahead and fight. If a package of shirts got pierced by a bullet, and it made holes in the wrong place the poor China man had to make it good himself. His country did not send warships to protect his washboard. If they rendered up his flat irons into cannon balls and heaved them at each other, China did not demand restitution.¹

Will, in his own homespun way, argued for moderation and echoed Secretary of State Kellogg's attitude on China.

¹China Weekly Review, (April 23, 1927), 201.

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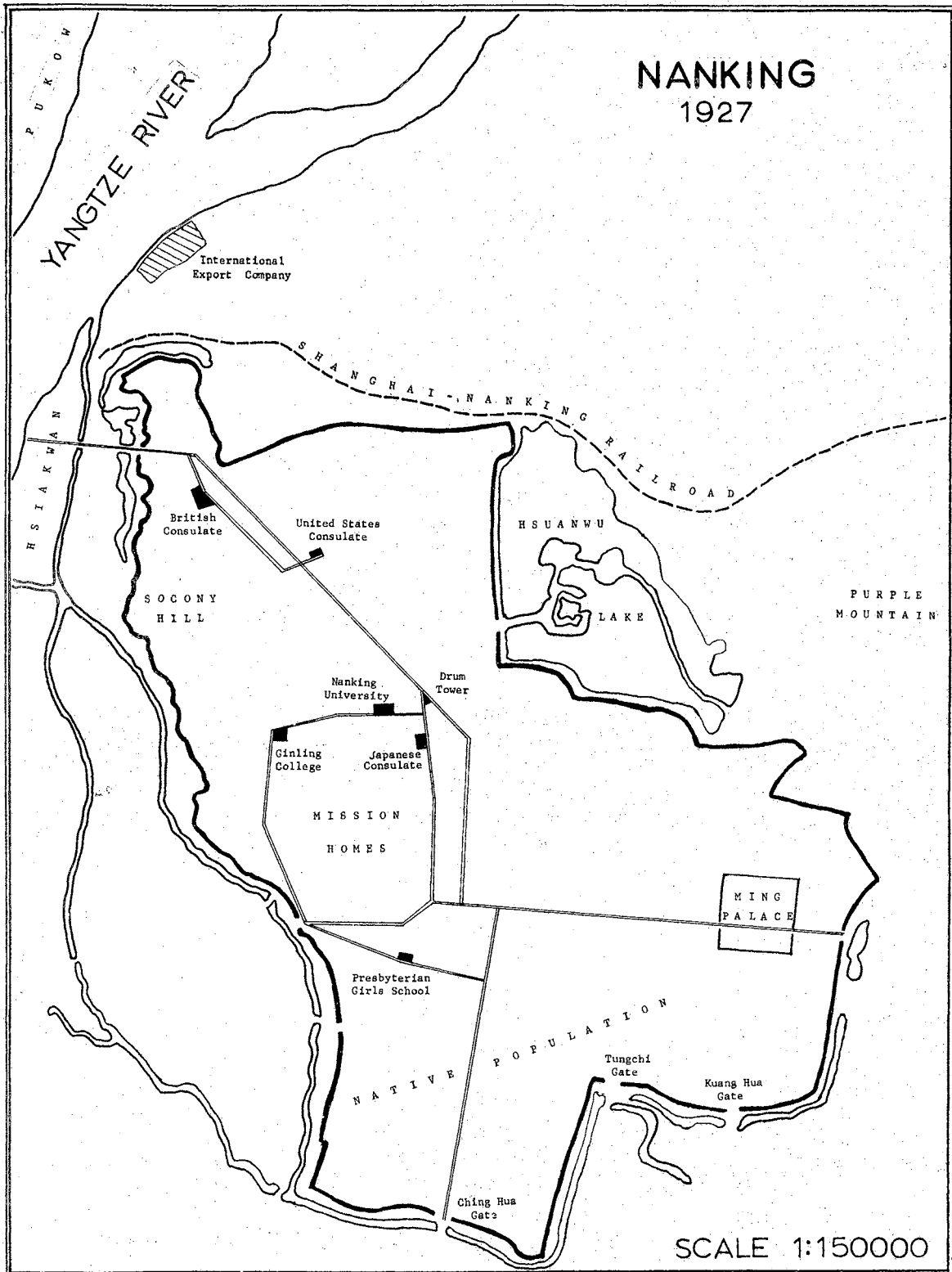
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APPENDIX
MAP OF NANKING



Map showing principal points of confrontation between Nationalist troops and foreigners on March 24, 1927

VITA

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