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Dear Mr. Rogers:

On the morning of December 17 I left Nanking aboard a C-47 bound for Peiping. None of the thirteen persons aboard the plane knew whether or not we would be able to land at our destination. Four days previously the Communist Army had opened an attack on Peiping. The city's west airfield was known to be out of commission. The south field was reported to be under fire from Communist artillery, and Red troops were said to be closing in everywhere around the city. We crossed our fingers and hoped it would be possible to land, and fortunately it was.

We landed on a deserted concrete strip of no-man's-land. The Nationalists had already evacuated South Field, leaving it littered with old equipment, abandoned personal possessions and relics of the Chinese airforce, but the Communists had not yet moved in to take over the shambles. The soft thud of exploding mortar shells sounded nearby as we stepped out of the plane, so we hastily climbed into the vehicles sent out from the city to meet us and wound our way through retreating troops and defense barricades into the surrounded city of Peiping.

In the month and a half since I landed on South Field many changes have taken place in Peiping. Yesterday the first troops of the Chinese Red Army marched into the city, and Peiping changed from Nationalist to Communist hands. This letter is a report of some of the things which have happened to Peiping and its population during this eventful period. It is a report of a siege, a surrender and a political turnover as they have affected one of China's most important cities during a critical period in the Chinese Civil War.

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The siege of Peiping began on December 13 and lasted forty days.

At the start there was intense fighting on the perimeter of the city, particularly in the west where the Communists concentrated their initial attack. Both the Communists and Nationalists used mortars and artillery, and the sound of heavy gunfire made the two million inhabitants of Peiping realize that the civil war was finally closing in on them.

For about a year before the Communist attack began Peiping had been a Nationalist island in North China, but it had maintained fairly continuous connections with other islands such as Tientsin and Kalgan and normal life in the city had continued without interruption. Now all the railway lifelines out of the city were rapidly and completely blocked by Red troops. Suburban towns within sight of the city walls

were occupied by the Communists, and audible sounds of fighting made the war real to people in Peiping for the first time.

In a military sense, however, the warfare around Peiping was never completely real. By the second day of Communist attack the Nationalist defenders of the city began retreating from their outlying positions and hurried to the inner sanctum behind the city walls. The area around Yenching and Tsinghua universities six miles west of Peiping was in a vacuum by December 14 and was peacefully occupied by Communist soldiers on December 16. The West Field nearby was taken over about the same time. Shihchingshan power plant, 15 miles southwest of Peiping, which supplies the city power and light, was captured by the Communists on the 15th. South Field, five miles from the city wall, was deserted on the 17th and in Communist hands the next day.

Everywhere Nationalist troops faded away after the first brief flurry of fighting and moved orderly but rapidly through the massive gates leading into the heart of China's most beautiful city, while the Communists closed in behind them outside the city walls. The Nationalists literally crawled into their shell. Within a week the fighting had turned into a sitting war, and for many days only occasional shell explosions or machine gun bursts disturbed the strange silence.

The so-called front lines stabilized about a mile outside Peiping's walls. Within the defense cordon adjacent to the walls the Nationalists dug in. Beyond the front lines was a fluid no-man's-land which varied from a few hundred yards to several miles in width. Beyond that was Communist "liberated territory".

Neither the Nationalists nor the Communists attempted any large-scale attacks once the front lines were drawn. The "battle for Peiping" thereafter consisted of local sorties sent out by both sides. A few men were killed, a larger number were injured, and thousands stood their watches cursing the bitterly cold wind which swept down from the north, but once the battle turned into a siege the most important fighting was carried on with political weapons.

The Nationalist commander at Peiping was General Fu Tso-yi, head of the North China Bandit Suppression Headquarters, who was charged with the defense of all North China against the Communists. General Fu was one of the best military commanders on the Nationalists' side. Starting as a protege of Shansi warlord Yen Hsi-shan, he later acquired a first-class reputation for his local regime in Suiyuan Province as well as for his military resistance against the Japanese and for his victory over the Communists at Kalgan after the Sino-Japanese War. Politically, Fu was considered progressive, at least by comparison with other local military leaders, and many of his policies in Suiyuan were similar to those of the Chinese Reds. Militarily, he enjoyed an outstanding reputation for his tactics of attack and mobility and for his long record of success. Fu's troops were once among the best in China, and even Communist officers are reported to have said, "we know we could beat Fu in battle, but we'd rather not have to try."

By December 13, however, General Fu had already lost the war in North China, and his military position was hopeless. His minimum requirements for any success against the Communists were adequate military supplies and effective employment of "his own" loyal, well-trained Suiyuan troops. For several months prior to December, however, adequate supplies had not been forthcoming from the Central Government, which acted as if it had already abandoned North China, and at the beginning of December Fu received a fatal blow. The Communists in a decisive battle at the top of the Nankow Pass cut Fu off from his crack troops in Inner Mongolia. Militarily everything which happened to Fu after that defeat was simply a coup de grace. It was then that he began to withdraw to a militarily hopeless but politically advantageous position around Peiping.

From early December on General Fu was only hypothetically in command of the situation even in the territory nominally under his control. The bulk of his own troops were in isolated pockets around Kalgan and Kweisui in the Inner Mongolian provinces of Chahar and Suiyuan and could not come to his assistance. The troops under his command in Tientsin were largely Central Government soldiers from the South and were commanded by generals whose loyalty to Fu was doubtful. These forces in Tientsin, furthermore, were also cut off from Fu when the Peiping-Tientsin railway line was severed at the start of fighting around Peiping. Thereafter, Fu was left with a motley collection of units, totalling about 150,000 regular troops, around Peiping.

The morale of the forces directly under General Fu in the Peiping area was dangerously low. The units included elements of at least seven Nationalist armies together with the equivalent of three cavalry divisions and one tank regiment. There were deep-rooted rivalries between unit commanders, and some of the units were little more than shattered remnants of outfits recently mauled by the Communists. Most important of all, only a small percentage of the troops - estimated from twenty to thirty percent - were "Fu's own". The rest were southern troops with divided allegiance. Their officers felt no particular loyalty to General Fu, and he was never certain that his orders would be obeyed. Some of his orders, in fact, were not obeyed. In short the 150,000 Nationalist troops crowded into Peiping were a disorganized, ineffective mass of soldiery, not a strong fighting force.

With this material Fu Tso-yi knew he couldn't defeat the Communists. The Communists had grown stronger rather than weaker in recent months. not only were Nieh Jung-chen's forces in the Northwest intact, but Lin Piao's Northeast Liberation Army was already pouring south through the Shanhaikuan corridor onto the North China plain after their victories in Manchuria. They brought with them first-class American equipment captured at Mukden and Chinchow. They moved fast and spread like a red flood over North China.

In an age when military technology is characterized by rockets and atom bombs it may be difficult to realize the defense value of a mud and brick city wall even when, like the Peiping wall, it is 40 feet high and broader than Fifth Avenue. In China, however, a city wall is still a formidable defense against infantry attack, and retiring behind the Peiping wall gave Fu and his troops temporary sanctuary.

In adopting snail tactics, moreover, General Fu had more than a mere wall protecting him. He made the whole city of Peiping his hostage. As one Chinese observer expressed it, "General Fu Tso-yi holds a beautifully delicate and priceless vase in his fingers. If anyone tries to take it, it will be destroyed." It was generally believed that the Communists not only respected the popular sentiment attached to Peiping but had an even more practical reason for wanting to capture the city intact. Political observers predicted that the Communists would establish their national capital in Peiping.

With a knowledge of these facts and a confidence that no one would dare desecrate their city the people in Peiping settled down for a long siege after the first noises of battle had died away. They shrugged their shoulders and went back to the normal business of buying, selling, eating, procreating and dying. "Peiping has seen many conquerors over the centuries and doesn't pay a great deal of attention to most of them", one philosophical citizen said to me. "People try to carry on as usual."

During the siege, people in Peiping did carry on as usual to the best of their ability. At times they showed emotions of nervousness (no one has ever shelled Peiping before!), annoyance (we can't even buy pork for New Year!), or disgust (why tear down the archway of Eternal Peace Avenue; they'll never finish building the airfield there anyway!), but there was never any mass fear or hysteria even during the most tense moments. The prevailing attitude was resignation, even though conditions of siege and martial law temporarily destroyed much of the city's usual charming placidity and saddled ordinary people with a heavy economic burden.

Food and soldiers were the two major problems which complicated and disorganized life in Peiping. There was a shortage of the former and a plethora of the latter.

The economic blockade of Peiping was never one hundred percent complete even though the city was completely surrounded. There were gaps in the line, and a constant trickle of persons and goods slipped in and out the city gates. Persons visiting the front lines or crossing no-man's-land for the first time were inevitably amazed to see farmers and merchants wandering casually through fields and country lanes or Nationalist soldiers gathering cabbages to cart into the city. These peculiarities sometimes gave the siege a phoney, comic-opera atmosphere. In actual fact, however, the supplies which slipped through

the lines were infinitesimal in terms of the needs of the two million inhabitants of the city, and the blockade was effective in forcing Peiping to rely upon its own reserves.

The military authorities held stocks of basic grains (wheat, millet, sorghum, etc.) to last out a long siege but civilian supplies, even including stocks in homes as well as in shops and public warehouses, were definitely limited. Poor people were the ones who suffered. Food experts estimated that perhaps seventy percent of the population was quite well off with about two months supply of flour or grain in their homes. Most of the poorest thirty percent, however, had only two to four days personal reserve. They felt the squeeze. As commercial and public stocks decreased prices jumped with alarming regularity every day. The price inflation of meat, eggs, vegetables and all other food-stuffs other than basic grains was even worse and affected everyone. For a while meat and eggs almost disappeared from the market. The civil authorities were concerned about their ever-diminishing supplies of food, and after repeated requests were able to arrange a few air drop flights to transport food from Tsingtao, but the attempted airlift was completely unsuccessful. Most of the flour bags dropped were destroyed when they hit terra firma, and ironically one of them struck and killed a casual bystander. If the siege had continued for several months Peiping would have been starved out - or at least many people would have starved. Fortunately the war ended and trade was resumed before the starvation stage was reached, but the economic blockade caused considerable suffering and hardship before it was over.

Certain groups in the city were particularly hard hit. Thousands of refugees, many of them homeless, received only the barest subsistence, while an increasing number of civil servants failed to get paid because of a shortage of paper money in the hands of government organizations.

The burden of supporting 150,000 soldiers was added to the effects of the blockade to make things worse.

Peiping does not normally have billets for a large number of troops, and when the soldiers started moving in they had to be absorbed by non-military establishments. The billeting process was not well organized or systematic. It was a sort of human osmosis.

At first the troops took over unessential public buildings such as schools and occupied every major temple, palace and historic site in the city, including the Forbidden City and Temple of Heaven. The men jammed into these places lacked such essentials as construction materials and fuel, and many of Peiping's beautiful buildings began to wear down by a process of slow attrition.

Then, because public places accommodated only a small percentage of the troops, the rest moved into already crowded private homes. Soldiers roamed the streets knocking on doors. "How many rooms and how

many people do you have?" they would ask, and if they then said "we're moving in" there was no appeal to higher authority. Military commanders made only few efforts to care for their troops, so the men had to fend for themselves, and both civilian and military morale suffered as a result.

The Nationalist troops never got out of hand, and generally speaking they were well-behaved considering the lack of care given them, but discipline and morale were low and many small unpleasant incidents occurred between civilians and soldiers. "Hungry soldiers shot my children's pet dog today," a professor said bitterly to me one day. That relatively unimportant fact seemed to symbolize for him the unpleasantness of military occupation.

Every minor need of the troops in the last analysis had to be supplied by the civilian population because there were no regular sources of supply, and requisitioning of all sorts of supplies took place. In addition, civilian manpower was mobilized. The military draft was intensified and a system of forced labor put into effect which drew thousands of men from their normal work to labor under military direction on defense works. Civilians received no monetary or other remuneration for either their goods or their labor, and the heaviest load fell on the poorest who could not bluff or buy their way out.

The normal administrative system in the city - the pao-chia system - was converted into a quasi-military organization to requisition supplies and mobilize labor. The main city districts were given new titles as Military and Civilian Cooperation Stations, and requests, or rather orders, went from the military authorities to chia chiefs to be passed on down the line to chia chiefs who had the unpleasant task of being intermediaries between the army and the civilian population.

One chia district of about sixty households was affected as follows during a single two weeks period of the siege. In five of the households soldiers moved in to stay. Three men in the chia were called up in the draft but all three managed to buy their way out by hiring substitutes at the prevailing price. Every day the chia had to provide a number of able-bodied men for work in civilian labor gangs. The lowest daily quota during the period was five; the highest was about twenty. During the two weeks the following things were requisitioned from every household: hay for fodder, lumber, rope, gunny sacks for sandbags, and money. The money levies varied roughly with ability to pay, but the other orders were arbitrary and any household lacking the specific things requested had to buy them. In addition, certain things such as carpentry tools and extra furniture were "borrowed" by soldiers from households which possessed them. In short, there was no sanctity of either home or pocketbook, and what happened in this one chia was duplicated in the rest of approximately seven thousand chia in Feiping.

The psychological strain on ordinary people was almost as great as the economic, even though most people maintained a calm exterior. Martial law was complete. A strict curfew was imposed, starting first at ten, then at nine and finally at eight. The streets were ink-black and dead after curfew, and even those with special passes avoided going out after dark if they could. Those who had business after dark which could not be postponed until morning walked through the black streets slowly and listened carefully for clicking rifle bolts and the bellowed cries of halt which always came unexpectedly from the unseen nervous sentries.

A special Discipline Supervisory Corps was established to combat speculation, rumor-mongering and anything else which might create social disorder. Truck-mounted teams of gendarmes, policemen and soldiers carrying submachine guns and huge broad swords careened through the streets and were ever-present reminders of military rule. These teams had the power of on-the-spot trial and execution. The total number of people actually executed was relatively small, but the appearance of these trucks and their hatchet men was always rather terrifying. Arrests were more numerous than executions, and people had to be careful of what they said and whom they said it to. Spreading rumors was an offense punishable by death, and even facts were considered rumors until they were officially revealed. During the last stages of the siege "peace-mongering" was also a criminal offense, but those punished were always small fry.

Control of the press, radio and other media of public opinion was complete. Few facts of either military or political significance were reported until they were outdated or had become general knowledge via the rumor markets which could never be effectively controlled. News sent abroad was not controlled until January 1, but on that date strict censorship was imposed on foreign cables also. Peiping became the only place in China with complete overall censorship of everything.

Under this sort of martial law and military control, civil government took a back seat. It still functioned and carried on ordinary responsibilities, but the military authorities made all important decisions. Civilian leaders were inconspicuous even though Peiping was overcrowded with them, for there were not only the normal municipal officials in the city but refugee officials from seven North China provinces and municipalities as well.

In addition to the heavy economic and psychological strain endured by the people there were innumerable minor inconveniences which were extremely irritating. The electric supply was cut off (at first completely and later partially) and people had to relearn ways of groping through darkness or reading by kerosene lamps. The city water supply, dependent upon electric pumps, also failed periodically. People gave up baths for a while and cued up at the seven thousand private wells in the city to obtain drinking water. Sewage piled up

until a working arrangement was made at the front lines for the "honey cart" drivers to move their pungent manure loads out of the city to the farmers in the countryside.

Although in many respects it was the civilian population which was most affected by the siege of Peiping, the troops were not entirely inactive even though fighting was limited to local skirmishes. Soldiers, together with civilian labor gangs working for them, made feverish defense preparations both inside the city and within the defense perimeter around the walls. The military value of the preparations made was questionable, but there was a certain symbolic importance attached to this military activity. The preparations made it clear that Fu Tso-yi was making it even harder to take his delicate priceless vase and increased the bargaining power of the defenders vis a vis the attackers - or at least that must have been the theory. The practical effect of the defense preparations, however, was to increase the hardships and burden imposed on ordinary people and to permanently mar some of the beauty of Peiping.

At first the military authorities concentrated their attention on the job of building airfields within the city wall. This was done with amazing speed. Hordes of forced laborers converted the former glacis and polo field east of Legation Quarter into an airstrip in three to four days, and on December 18 the first transport plane landed there. Within a few days a second field was completed next to the Temple of Heaven and a third (which was never completed) begun on the glacis north of Legation Quarter. The first plane took off from Peiping, reestablishing connection with the outside world, on December 21, and even after the Communists started lobbing mortar shells onto the fields on January 12 some air traffic continued until the day the Communists marched into Peiping. The new airfields never assumed much military importance, however, even though some planes of the Chinese Air Force (which paid almost no attention to Fu's orders and had evacuated from Peiping in utter confusion) started returning. The fields were not important economically either, because the arriving planes brought in almost no supplies (some medicine being a notable exception). The main use to which the fields were put was the evacuation of Very Important Personages and the two-way exchange of political envoys and some mail between Peiping and Central China. Although some people had evacuated Peiping before the siege began most had stayed on, and a small-scale evacuation of VIP's resumed after the new airfields were opened.

After the first two airfields were completed the effort to construct military installations was diverted into new channels. Within the city foxholes and blockhouses were prepared against the improbable eventuality of street fighting. Outside the walls the countryside was stripped and denuded, and the brown, dusty North China plain was made browner and dustier. A wierd honeycomb of ditches was dug, and the pillboxes of all shapes and sizes which were constructed made a crazyquilt pattern. Everywhere valuable trees were chopped down to make roadblocks

and fence-like traps. In human terms, the most distressing thing was the needless levelling of thousands of poor people's homes around the city walls, ostensibly to provide a good field of fire for the defending troops. Many thousands were made homeless in the process. Some received nominal compensation, but only a few were allowed to enter the city. Cynics in Peiping watching the military vandalism of the defense work characterized the whole process as one in which "the troops, when in doubt, chop down the trees, demolish everything in sight and then dig in."

The net effect of all that happened in Peiping during the siege was slow but definite social disintegration. No effort was made by the authorities to explain to either soldiers or civilians what was being done and why. On top of all the past accumulated dissatisfaction with the ineffective Nationalist regime, the deterioration caused by the siege resulted in the complete undermining of whatever popular support the Nationalist regime had previously enjoyed. A will to resist did not exist among the rank and file of either soldiers or civilians. With few exceptions people wanted one thing: peace at any price. They hoped that the Communists would take the city soon and finish the siege. Only a small minority looked forward to Communist rule with enthusiasm, but the majority, although skeptical of what Communist rule might mean, no longer had any reservations about accepting Communist rule as an alternative superior to existing conditions.

Everyone began talking about peace. Those who did anything about it, however, were few.

In a theoretical sense conditions in Peiping reached the point where the city was ripe for revolution, that is for some sort of mass action springing from the universal dissatisfaction among soldiers and civilians and directed against the authorities. It is a significant fact that not only did no revolution occur, but there was not even any move to exert any mass pressure or influence on the government or army. A few individuals and small groups exerted pressure on the authorities, but actually the decisions which finally turned the city over to the Communists were made by a handful of men. Ordinary people knew almost nothing of what was going on, and there were no indications that if the top leaders had decided upon a different course (as, for example, a suicidal defense resulting in widespread destruction and loss of life) the masses of people would have done anything but accept their fate. Political apathy and inertia were stronger even than the universal dissatisfaction. The Chinese Communist revolution finally engulfed Peiping, but it was born full-grown and did not grow gradually within the city itself. The revolution arrived in the form of a powerful peasant army camped around the city walls which, after being handed the keys to the city by the Nationalists, marched in with the political workers following close behind to take over. This did not happen, however, until a few key individuals had completed the devious maneuvers and negotiations which finally resulted in a face-saving peace settlement.

Despite the lack of mass participation in the decisions which settled the future of Peiping, there were a few people who spoke out in favor of peace. These men, who acted on their own initiative and for a variety of motives, reflected the prevailing public mood but could not claim to represent the public.

One of the first spokesmen for peace was a man named Liang Ch'u-ming. Liang, an old scholar and politician whose career dates back to the early days of the Chinese Republic, has been a leader of the anti-Kuomintang branch of the Democratic Socialist Party. In an attempt to develop a peace movement he advocated making Peiping an open city and founded the Peiping Society for the Protection of Public Monuments. Liang was one of the few who could openly speak in favor of peace during the early days of the siege, before General Fu had decided his future course, because his age and reputation as a scholar guaranteed him protection. A number of other persons worked more quietly, without fanfare, trying to influence people in high places. The most important of these was a Yenching University professor of philosophy named Chang Tung-sun. Chang had previously been Peiping head of the outlawed Democratic League.

As time went on an increasing number of peace advocates came into the open, but this was more an indication of the swing in the attitudes of Fu and other top officials than a sign of increasing intrepidity on the part of the peace advocates themselves. Members of the Peiping City Council and Chamber of Commerce, representatives in Peiping of the Legislative Yuan, Control Yuan and National Assembly and the Chairman of seven North China Provincial and Municipal Councils all joined the chorus and added their voices to the general clamor for peace which became increasingly loud not only in Peiping but all over the country after Chiang K'ai-shek's New Years messages.

Student and faculty groups, comprising one of the most anti-Government sections of the population, became more active as the end approached. So did the actual Communist underground. From the first week of January on, mimeographed propaganda sheets appeared in folded newspapers, were received by prominent citizens through the mails and popped up unexpectedly on shop windows and walls. Actually, however, ~~even the~~ Communist underground played almost no role in preparing the way for a Communist takeover, although it did make preparations to assist in the takeover process once it began.

The final decision on whether or not Peiping should make peace - or less euphemistically, surrender - rested with Fu Tso-yi. For a long time after he had pulled in his horns militarily Fu sat in his Winter Palace headquarters trying to decide what he should do. A man close to Fu says that he changed his mind at least nine times. He knew he couldn't fight, and yet he felt he couldn't give up. In spite of the stepchild treatment he had been given by the Central Government he felt a soldier's loyalty to Chiang. He also knew that the loyalty of some of his subordinates was attached more strongly to Nanking than to himself. Furthermore, if he was going to make peace on his own

some formula had to be found by which he could save face. He kept hoping that Nanking would give up soon, for then he could reach some sort of local settlement with no qualms of conscience. He kept waiting, but in the meantime he sent out the first quiet peace feelers. From the time the first feelers were sent to the Communists secret negotiations continued until the final settlement was announced. Fu never made a single public statement of his plans and intentions, however, and public preparations for war continued until the peace agreement was finally revealed.

One of the factors which gradually forced Fu to the course which he ultimately chose was the fact that as Peiping sat out its siege the remaining Nationalist outposts under Fu's command in North China fell to the Communists one by one. The first to go was Kalgan, capital of Chahar Province. The Communists captured Kalgan on December 24 after decimating the last important units of Fu's own troops in that area. The Nationalist announcement of Kalgan's loss significantly pointed out that all the industry in the city had been left intact. "Since these properties belong to the country and the people", the statement said, "government troops have appointed definite persons to protect them with clear handover lists on hand." This statement sounded as if someone was trying to butter up the Communists and perhaps prepare the way for dealing with them later on.

On January 15 Tientsin, the largest industrial and commercial metropolis in North China, was captured by the Communists. Even before the 15th Fu's secret peace negotiators had tentatively agreed to a settlement with the Communists, but the local commanders at Tientsin weren't peacefully inclined, and the Communists fought their way into Tientsin before any definite agreement came into effect. The capture of Tientsin finished off all high-priority Communist objectives in North China with the exception of Peiping and left the Red Army free to concentrate all its attention there.

The Communists really started putting the pressure on Fu with political as well as military weapons as early as December 25. On that day, Fu was branded a "major war criminal", along with most other leading Nationalists, but the Communists offered him a pardon if he agreed to give up. Simultaneously, Lin Piao, Commander of the Peiping Tientsin Front People's Liberation Army, and Lo Jung-huan, his political commissar, broadcast an eight point program outlining promises "to the people" under Fu. These eight points, which formed the basis of much subsequent Communist propaganda in Fu's area, were as follows: (1) People's lives and property will be protected. Keep order and don't listen to rumors. Looting and killing are strictly forbidden. (2) Chinese individual commercial and industrial property will be protected. Private factories, banks, godowns etc. will not be touched and can continue operating. (3) Bureaucratic capital including factories, shops, banks, godowns, railways, post offices, telephone and telegraph installations, power plants etc. will be taken over by

the Liberation Army although private shares will be respected. Those working in these organizations should work peacefully and wait for the takeover. Rewards will be given to those who protect property and documents, and those who strike or who destroy will be punished. Those wishing to continue serving will be employed. (4) Schools, hospitals and public institutions will be protected. Students, teachers and all workers should continue to study and work as usual. (5) Except for a few major war criminals and notorious reactionaries, all Kuomintang officials, police and pao-chia workers of the provincial, municipal and hsien governments will be pardoned if they do not offer armed resistance. They should protect their records. Anyone with ability to work will be employed. (6) As soon as a city is liberated, displaced soldiers should report immediately to the new garrison headquarters, the police bureau or army authorities. Anyone surrendering his weapons will not be questioned. Those who hide will be punished. (7) The lives and property of all foreigners will be protected. They must obey the laws of the Liberation Army and Democratic Government. No espionage or illegal actions will be allowed. No war criminals should be sheltered. They will be subject to military or civilian trial for violations. (8) People in general should protect all public property and keep order. These eight points formed the basis of the "city policy" which Lin Piao promised to follow during the takeover period.

On January 5 the North Shensi radio fired another shot at Peiping from the Communists' political arsenal. Lin Piao and Lo Jung-huan issued an "open letter to the Kuomintang officers" of Peiping and Tientsin. In effect, it was an ultimatum which said surrender or else. "With Peiping Tientsin and Tangku completely surrounded your way of retreat has been completely cut off. Although a few may escape by air or sea the majority have no hope of escape. Chiang K'ai-shek is powerless to look after himself, and the U.S. cannot help you either. There is no outside help. If you intend to break through think of the lessons of Kalgan and Hsuehchow. There is only one course for you: follow the example of Cheng Tung-kuo in Changchun, that is, surrender en bloc. If you do not kill POW's or murder people and hand over all your weapons, materials, godowns and local industrial and communications installations intact we will treat you generously as we did General Cheng Tung-kuo. The lives of you and your families will be completely protected. As for Fu Tso-yi, although he's been listed as a war criminal we will give him another chance to repent. If he leads all of you to surrender en masse we promise protection of his life and property. If you agree, send negotiators to see us. General officers of any rank will be welcomed. Our offensive will soon be launched, so you must make a decision immediately - otherwise don't say we didn't warn you".

While the Communists' propaganda weapons were laying down this barrage on Peiping, Communists in the city's suburbs were making both military and political preparations. Political workers, including some high ranking persons, began moving in soon after the troops. The

people in the suburbs were treated deferentially with kid gloves. Yenching and Tsinghua universities were encouraged to continue normal activities. The Mentoukou coal mines, Shihchingshan power plant and other industrial installations resumed operations under new management. Every effort was made to minimize resistance to a Communist takeover and to obtain local support. These efforts payed dividends, because reports favorable to the Communists were carried across the lines into Peiping. In addition, however, the Communists began to construct long scaling ladders to be used in scaling Peiping's walls if it became necessary.

The Communists, with political astuteness, also played a game of "power politics" with electricity. Peiping had been literally in the dark since the capture of its power plant on December 15 and the cutting of the Tientsin power lines five days thereafter. The Communists over their radio made a public offer to supply Peiping with electricity across the front lines, stating that they didn't want to inconvenience the people. The Nationalist authorities finally accepted the offer in part and allowed a certain amount of electric current for essential needs to flow into the city, but there was never any official revelation of where the electricity was coming from. People in Peping soon knew, however, that it was coming from the Communists.

On January 1 the Communists established a Military Control Commission for the takeover of Peiping. The commission set up shop in the village of Lianghsiang southwest of Peiping and began making preparations to move into the city. It set up its organizations and gathered together personnel. It also started to work in the suburbs of the municipality. An educational cadre established sub-headquarters in the village of Ch'inglungch'iao and began discussing future plans and policies with both students and faculty at Tsinghua and Yenching. Indoctrination courses and entertainment programs were arranged for the workers at Shihchingshan and elsewhere. Investigations of rural conditions were started. Before the Communists came into Peiping they had made considerable preparations for taking over the city.

The chairman of the Military Control Commission from the start was Yeh Chien-ying, 45 year-old, high ranking Communist military and political veteran. Born in Kwangtung and educated in a Yunnan military school, Yeh joined Sun Yat-sen in 1923, taught in the Kuomintang's Whampoa Military Academy and fought on the Northern Expedition. He broke with the Kuomintang in 1927 and returned to China after study in France and Germany to become Chief-of-Staff of the Chinese Red Army in Kiangsi, a participant on the Long March and finally, in 1945, a member of the Communist Central Committee. His experience as one of the negotiators during the 1936 Sian incident and as Communist representative in the Peiping Executive Headquarters during Marshal's mediation in 1946 had established him as a top Communist political as well as military leader.

Yeh Chien-ying, in addition to being head of the Military Control Commission, was slated to be Mayor of Peiping once a Peoples' Government was set up there. The choice for Vice-Mayor was Hsu Ping, 50 year-old, German-trained Communist leader who originally came from one of the wealthiest families in Peiping, a family named Hsing.

The complicated developments at Peiping had an even more complicated backdrop: the national scene. Conclusion of a separate peace in Peiping was delayed because Fu Tso-yi kept hoping that Nanking would make some decision which would solve all his problems, or at least leave him in a position to solve his own problems with a clear conscience. The whole country was excited and agitated by a flood of peace rumors. Innumerable conferences, discussions and meetings took place between important political leaders. Through the haze of confused and confusing rumors, however, it gradually became clear that the "peace movement" was not accomplishing very much and that the road to national peace might be a rocky and perhaps long one. The Communists, on the crest of a winning military tide, were in no mood to make important concessions, while the Central Government, crumbling in front of everyone's eyes, hung on and refused to give up or collapse completely.

Concrete steps toward national peace progressed no farther than a number of public peace statements by both sides. Nationalist Premier Sun Fo talked about an "honorable peace" while Chiang in his New Years speeches expressed his readiness to negotiate "if the Communists are sincerely desirous of peace", but warned that if they "are not sincerely desirous of peace the Government, with no other alternative, will fight to the finish". Chiang added that "the Shanghai-Nanking area, as the political nerve center of the country, will be defended at all costs"; he did not mention North China or Peiping.

The Communists were suspicious of these somewhat ambiguous Nationalist peace feelers, suspecting that all Nanking wanted was a breathing period in the war, and on January 14 Mao Tse-tung set forth eight terms on the basis of which he would be willing to negotiate: " (1) Severe punishment of war criminals. (2) Repeal of the bogus constitution. (3) Abolition of the bogus government structure. (4) reorganization of all reactionary armies in accordance with democratic principles. (5) Confiscation of bureaucratic capital. (6) Implementation of agrarian reforms. (7) Abrogation of all treaties of national betrayal. (8) Convocation of a Political Consultative Conference without participation by reactionary elements in order to form a Democratic Coalition Government to take over the authority of the reactionary Kuomintang Government in Nanking and of its affiliated organizations in the provinces." These were not the sort of terms Nanking would jump to accept, and overall national peace began to look remote again.

On January 12 the Communists began lobbing random artillery and mortar shells into Peiping, just to show that they could make things pretty nasty if they wanted to. Although almost every shell killed one or

two people the overall damage was not great, but the shells had their desired psychological effect on Peiping, as did the bombardment of Tientsin which started immediately thereafter.

All of these military and political factors influenced General Fu and forced him gradually to the conclusion that he would probably have to give up by making a separate peace with the Communists. It is uncertain when Fu actually made up his mind, but he sent out his first secret negotiators on January 6. It is possible that Fu did not finally make up his mind until Chiang decided to leave Nanking on January 21, but the negotiations initiated on the 6th paved the way for the final peace agreement.

The man sent out by Fu to see the Communists on January 6 was Chang Tung-sun, the Yenching professor and Democratic Leaguer. He went to Chihhsien, about sixty miles north of Peiping, accompanied by Chou Pei-feng. Chou, a former advisor of Fu's in Suiyuan, had been captured by the Communists in 1947 and later released. In Peiping he was head of Fu's land reform bureau. Both Chang and Chou had friends on the Communist side. They met with General Lin Piao and spent three days discussing peace terms, finally reaching a sort of tentative agreement. These first steps failed to crystallize into anything definite, however, one reason being that some of Fu's most powerful subordinate generals in Peiping, including Cheng Ting-feng, Shih Chueh and Teng Wen-chao, opposed independent peace moves.

On January 13 Fu sent a second negotiator, General Teng Pao-shan. Teng, an old-time Kuomintang commander, had at one time, while he was at Yulin in North Shensi during the Sino-Japanese War, concluded a local truce with the Communists, and he too had Communist friends. Chou Pei-feng again went along. These two men talked with Lin Piao, Lo Jung-huan and Nieh Jung-chen near Tungchow, east of Peiping. Peace terms were once again discussed and a tentative settlement agreed upon. There are two different accounts of when this tentative agreement was reached. According to one story the agreement was made on the 16th, the day following the Communists' capture of Tientsin. According to another account, however, it was made on the 14th and had a proviso that both Peiping and Tientsin would be included if the latter was not captured by the Communists within twelve hours. The fall of Tientsin on the 15th limited the problem to Peiping in any case, and on the 17th Teng and Chou returned to Peiping with a Communist named T'ao, who was Lin Piao's Chief-of-Staff, to work out the final details.

The general public in Peiping knew nothing of the progress of these negotiations, or even of their existence, for they were shrouded in complete secrecy. Communist shells continued to fall into the city and made all peace rumors sound rather absurd. The public's hope for peace and its undivided attention was focused upon the activities of a newly-formed organization called the North China People's Peace

Promotion Committee, under ex-Mayor Ho Sze-yuan. This self-appointed group of prominent citizens, who claimed to represent the "people's organizations" in Peiping and did in regard to their views about peace, obtained clearance from General Fu to make a trip across the lines as a peace mission. Their trip was delayed when two freak shells landed on Ho's home, killing a daughter and wounding most of the family, but they finally started out in a rattling bus on the 18th. In the western suburbs they talked with a Communist political officer named Mu Wen-hua and returned the following day, "hopeful" about peace prospects but without anything definite to tell the public.

The window dressing which the Peace Promotion Committee's mission provided prepared the public only partially for the imminent peace, and the end came suddenly and somewhat unexpectedly.

On January 21 Chiang Kai-shek announced his temporary "retirement" from the Nanking Government. This act released both Fu Tso-yi himself and his Central Government subordinate generals from loyalty to Chiang's government. Things happened rapidly after that. Everyone agreed to a separate peace.

Cease fire went into effect at ten o'clock on the morning of January 22, and that night Fu Tso-yi's headquarters announced to the public that a peace agreement had been signed. Forty days after it began the siege was formally ended. The city breathed a tremendous sigh of relief.

The thirteen point peace agreement concluded between General Fu and the Communists was basically nothing more than a surrender, but it was in the classic tradition of Chinese compromise and saved face for everyone involved.

The preamble of the agreement stated that both sides had agreed upon the necessity of peace because of the "public desire for peace" and asserted that the agreement aimed to "bring forth the early realization of a nationwide and thorough peace."

The agreement provided for the establishment, for "the transitional period", of a Joint Administrative Office with representatives of both sides to handle "all military and political problems"

All Nationalist troops within Peiping belonging to army groups (i.e. combat troops) were to be moved out of the city, starting on the 22nd, with their original unit designations (a face saving proposition which Fu had insisted upon) to be "reorganized about a month after arrival at designated areas" (i.e. incorporated into the Red Army). Construction of military fortifications was to be stopped immediately. A few troops were to remain in the city to help maintain order.

According to the agreement all public organizations and government bodies were to maintain their status quo and carry on pending "overall settlement by the Joint Administrative Office." The personnel of these organizations was guaranteed safety.

The agreement also stated that Gold Yuan currency would circulate until further notice, that newspapers could carry on as usual until reregistration and examination later on and that postal and telegraphic connections with outside places would be maintained. It specifically promised protection of foreigners' lives and property. Furthermore, it guaranteed freedom of religion and protection of cultural monuments and relics. Finally it exhorted all the people to "carry on life as usual".

The turnover, in short, was to be made painlessly, and the surrender was made to look like the establishment of a coalition - for "the transitional period". The Nationalists remaining in Peiping lost a minimum of face, and the Communists obtained peaceful entry into the city and the promise that everyone would cooperate in turning over power to them.

Peiping became the first major city in the Chinese Civil War to come under Communist control by peaceful agreement between Communist and Nationalist leaders rather than by capture or outright military surrender. The local agreement for Peiping established a new pattern, at a critical juncture in the Chinese Civil War, which might be copied elsewhere by local Nationalist commanders in a militarily hopeless position. Peiping also became one of the most logical places in China for an overall national peace to be negotiated. Before the Communists moved into the city, two unofficial representatives flew up from the south, apparently with the intention of being in Peiping when the Communists took over. These men were unofficial representatives of Li Tsung-jen, Acting President of the National Government, and Pai Chung-hsi, Nationalist commander in Central China and a close associate of Li's. It began to look as Peiping might be the stage for national peace negotiations - as well as for the Communist-sponsored Political Consultative Conference and the establishment of a Communist government for the whole country.

The peace agreement for Peiping went into effect on January 22, but the first Communist troops did not enter the city until January 31 (yesterday). During the interim eight day period Peiping was in a strange vacuum.

Throughout the whole eight day period airplanes continued arriving from Nationalist territory, and departing for Nationalist territory with last-minute evacuees. Fu Tso-yi had insisted that those who wanted to leave should be allowed to go. The last stragglers of the Kuomintang secret service and the last of Fu's recalcitrant subordinate generals boarded C-47's and left Peiping - although the city was theoretically in Communist hands.

Pictures of Chiang K'ai-shek disappeared from the walls, but no substitute faces replaced them. Occasionally an artillery shell burst inside the city, although no one was supposed to be fighting. A few of the shells came from the guns of obstinate Nationalist units, particularly those belonging to the 13th Army, who didn't want to surrender even after they were ordered to. Others may have been fired by isolated Communist gunners who weren't sure of what was going on. Prices zoomed. There were reports that one to two thousand gendarmes had disbanded without giving up their weapons. This worried the public which feared there might be incidents when the Communists marched in. People didn't know how much Nationalist money would be worth when the Communists issued their own. General nervousness plus the fact that Peiping's prices were gradually rising to equate with those in other cities under Communist control increased inflationary pressures even though the gates of Peiping were opened and trade began to resume.

The public didn't know what was going on. Neither did many people whose business it was to try to know. The whole corps of foreign and Chinese newspaper correspondents could not locate a single representative, either military or political, of the city's new Communist rulers. The few who were in the city, and had been there for several days, were elusive; in fact they were invisible.

Nationalist troops, many still armed, wandered freely through the streets. Their numbers thinned out as the evacuation proceeded, but the process was very gradual. Everyone in Peiping, however, including government employees, ordinary civilians and the soldiers who stayed, continued about their normal business, slightly mystified but patiently waiting for something to happen.

A few things did happen gradually. Communist propaganda in larger quantities appeared on walls throughout the city, and anti-Communist slogans were blotched out. Political prisoners were rapidly released from the jails. Chiang K'ai-shek's residence and other places were prepared by the Nationalists for expected Communist leaders. Student groups and others worked hard to print propaganda, plan parades, learn songs and dances and generally prepare for the Communists' entrance. The Communist underground began slowly to emerge from the shadows, and some of its representatives made unofficial visits to heads of many organizations and institutions. These representatives often popped out of unexpected places. In one hospital, for example, a humble dresser began having serious talks with the director. At a higher level, General Fu and other officials held endless conferences and tried to carry out the peace agreement as smoothly as possible.

The main delay in the turnover was caused by the slowness of evacuating Nationalist troops. Some of the troops caused trouble, but it took time to evacuate even those which left without arguing.

Finally, however, the vanguard of Communist troops, together with a few propaganda trucks, began entering the west gates of the city on the 31st. They marched in solemnly to billets previously arranged for them, and they looked a little tense and worried. Their arrival caused no particular stir among the general population. There were no huge crowds to greet the first troops, and the ordinary civilians watching them from the curbs along their route seemed to express no emotion more intense than curiosity. This was true even of the scattered Nationalist troops who also stood on the curbs and watched silently.

The lack of any sort of excitement when the first troops marched in was striking. "The Communists have arrived", one man said. "And prices have gone up", said his companion. The word was passed around that a big parade would be held soon. A pedicab driver was unimpressed. "Anyone can put on a parade", he remarked. "Even the Japanese did." A philosophical cook observed that, "the Chinese people are like blades of grass. They lean the way the wind is blowing." The people of Peiping leaned toward the Communists, but the first reception given to the entering troops indicated that the Communists would be working in an environment characterized by skeptical pragmatism. People would wait and see what happened before they got emotional - if, indeed, they ever did.

Communist political workers with their decorated trucks, lively folk dances, songs and propaganda toured the streets and put on a good show. They attracted interested crowds wherever they went, and children would follow a propaganda truck as if it were a Pied Piper.

On the 1st of February (today), ten days after the cease fire, the Communists made their first moves toward actually taking over the city. They began with organizations whose business is influencing public opinion. The Kuomintang Central News Agency and North China Daily News were converted into the New China News Agency and the People's Daily respectively and the radio station was also taken over. Other organizations awaited their turn.

The first session of the Joint Administrative Office also took place on the first, in the Summer Palace outside Peiping. This Office, functioning under Lin Piao's Peiping-Tientsin Front Command, had the responsibility of turning the city over as rapidly as possible to the Communist Military Control Commission for Peiping to be turned over ultimately to the Communists' Peiping People's Government and Garrison Command. The Chairman of the Administrative Office, as well as of the Control Commission and the People's Government, was Yeh Chien-ying. Altogether there were seven members of the Joint Administrative Office, four Communist and three Kuomintang. The six other than Yeh were placed in three committees, each of which had one Communist and one Kuomintang member. On the military committee were T'aa Chu and Kuo Tsung-fen, the former a ranking Communist general and the latter one of Fu Tso-yi's Vice-Commanders who is closely associated with Yen Hsi-shan.

On the political and cultural committee were Hsu Ping and Chiao Shih-tsai, the latter of whom was Fu's Secretary-General and a former university professor in the Peiping Normal College. The economic and financial committee was composed of Jung Tse-ho, finance chief of the Communists' North China People's Government, and Chou Pei-Feng.

Fu Tso-yi slipped into temporary oblivion and was alternately reported to be in Suiyuan or the western suburbs of Peiping.

The Communists had come to stay.

* * * * *

The political "turnover" of Peiping was completed today in a formal sense. The political "takeover", however, has just begun. A big victory parade scheduled for day after tomorrow will probably mark the beginning of a lot of changes. So far the question marks concerning what the Communists are like and what they will do remain question marks. Two million people in Peiping, including myself, are waiting for answers. How will they take over a city? Are they qualified for the tasks facing them? How will the population react to changes as they are made? What sort of major policies, both economic and political, will they adopt? What sort of national government will they try to set up and who will be included? What sort of international orientation will they have - and locally how will foreigners be treated? These and a thousand other questions are in everyone's mind. Some of the answers may emerge in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely yours,

A. Doak Barnett

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