

# Relocation Of Hubei-Henan-Anhui Borderline Soviet

by Ah Xiang

*[Excerpts from "Campaigns: 1927-1937"]*

After Japanese provocation in Shanghai on Jan 28th 1932, Hu Zongnan's 1st Division was dispatched to Anhui Prov for countering Zhang Guotao & Xu Xiangqian's Red Army which defeated Anhui Prov chair Chen Diaoyuan and sacked Liuan & Huoshan area. After taking over the two counties, Hu Zongnan ordered that Dai Tao consolidate countryside by organizing peasants against the Red Army guerrilla attacks for 6 months. In May-June 1932, Chiang Kai-shek personally assumed the post of commander-in-chief for campaigning against Hubei-Henan-Anhui borderline "communist banditry", while Li Jisheng was conferred the deputy post. When the siege first started, Zhang Guotao strictly followed CCP Central instructions in crossing Railroad Ping-Han [Peking-Wuhan] to the west for a possible attack at Huangpi[2] & Wuhan [the provincial city of Hubei]. CCP Central instructions also included a dispatch of Red Army 25th Corps to northwestern Anhui Prov. In late June, Zhang Guotao's Red Army defeated a KMT regiment at Jigongshan.

While retreating back to the base for preparing against Chiang Kai-shek's 4th siege, Zhang Guotao, at Xiadian, ordered a southward campaign against Macheng. Zhang Guotao & Shen Zemin wanted to pose threat against Wuhan while Chen Changhao & Xu Xiangqian stated that Chiang Kai-shek's Central KMT army was not deployed against them yet. Zhang Yinxiang of KMT 31st Corps deployed 30th division at Macheng, 31st division at Huangpi[2], and 54th division at Luotian. On July 7th & 8th, 5 Red Army divisions destroyed 93rd brigade of 31st division of Zhang Yinxiang's KMT 31st Corps and captured 2300 rifles, 40+ machineguns, and 40+ mortars at Hongshiyuan & Qiliqiao, to the west of Macheng city, and went on to lay siege of Macheng. In Huoqiucheng of northwestern Anhui Prov, portion of the Red Army 25th Corps, under corps chief Kuang Jixun, lost his army of 1000 soldiers after fierce fightings for 5 days and 5 nights. On July 18th, taking advantage of KMT 31st division's relief to Macheng, Red Army 12th Division attacked a salt warehouse town near Huangpi[2] and Hankou. Chiang Kai-shek sent Wuhan's 89th division and Luotian's 54th division against the Red Army. Red Army, while retreating, encountered KMT 30th & 31st divisions and destroyed a whole KMT regiment. Red Army then continued the siege of Macheng, and in early Aug, destroyed a KMT regiment at Doupishan.

Xu Xiangqian stated that Chiang Kai-shek orchestrated three prongs against two communist bases of Hubei-Henan-Anhui Borderline Soviet and western Hunan-Hubei Borderline Soviet, with two prongs against Hubei-Henan-Anhui Borderline Soviet, consisting of 26 divisions and 5 brigades, about 300000 soldiers. Other than Chen Cheng, Chiang Kai-shek dispatched the rest of his disciples against Hubei-Henan-Anhui Borderline Soviet, including Hu Zongnan's 1st Div, Huang Jie's 2nd Div, Li Yuetang's

3rd Div, Xu Tingyao's 4th Div, Jiang Dingwen's 9th Div, Li Moan's 10th Div, Li Sisu's 80th Div, Jiang Fusheng's 83rd Div, Yu Jishi's 88th Division and Tang Enbo's 89th Div. Xu Xiangqian claimed that Zhang Guotao did not realize the KMT forceful attack till Chiang Kai-shek launched general strike on Aug 9th. Xu Xiangqian, in his memoirs, accused Zhang Guotao of following Wang Ming's ultra-leftist path, i.e., physically destroying landlords and KMT officers, closing doors to "progressive" KMT elements such as General Ji Hongchang, over-implicating in purging reactionary movement, and discriminating against and destroying intellectuals.

While Red Army was still laying siege of Macheng in the south, KMT echelons, under Wei Lihuang, Chen Jicheng, Ma Hongkui, Xu Tingyao, Zhang Fang, Zhang Yinxiang and Shangguan Yunxiang, attacked from three directions of east, north and west. Zhang Guotao withdrew from Macheng for a relocation to Huang'an in the west. After one and a half day marching, Chen Geng's Red Army 12th Division encountered Li Moan's 10th Division [under Wei Lihuang's KMT echelon] in Fengshouer area. With the help of Red Army 11th Division and a detached regiment, Red Army destroyed KMT's Wang Jingxiu brigade, but paired with KMT 10th & 83rd divisions. Meanwhile, Zeng Zhongsheng's Red Army Huang'an Detached Division fought with Tang Enbo's KMT 89th Division at Gaoqiaohe. When Chen Jicheng's KMT echelon came to the relief, Red Army abandoned Huang'an area for Qiliping, i.e., the center of old communist enclave. [Qiliping is on the Hubei side of the Hubei-Henan border line.]

Along Daoshuihe River, Red Army deployed 11th & 12th divisions, 10th & 73rd divisions, and detached 1st Division & "Junior International Regiment" as three resistance points. On Aug 15th, KMT 2nd Division mounted cross-campaign attacks at communist positions. After a half day fighting, Xu Xiangqian ordered that five communist divisions prey upon the enemy who crossed the river at the middle point and destroyed two regiments of the 5th brigade of Huang Jie's 2nd Div. KMT 3rd Division came to the relief of 2nd Div. Xu Xiangqian stated that bayonet fighting made KMT airplanes and cannons unable to play their roles. By dusk, Red Army defeated the KMT force and crossed the river to the west at the middle point, finishing off 8th regiment of 4th brigade and 11th regiment of 6th brigade. Red Army penetrated 4 more kilometers to take over the command center of KMT 2nd Div. Wei Lihuang was said to have stopped Chen Jicheng from backing down. Xu Xiangqian stated that Red Army, with all five divisions committed, was unable to push on further and retreated back across the river. At this battle, KMT 2nd Division lost 6 regiment chiefs, while Red Army incurred a casualty of 2000 men and Zeng Zhongsheng [div chief of Red Army Detached 1st Div] was wounded in the knee. 2-3 days later, in face of increasing KMT forces from Wei Lihuang's echelon, Red Army retreated to the north to fight the Battle of Hushanzhai. After 3 days of fighting, Red Army inflicted a casualty of 2000 onto KMT 3rd & 80th divisions after three days' fighting. Chen Geng, i.e., Red Army 12th Division chief, was wounded in this battle. In face of Wei Lihuang echelon and Zhang Fang echelon, Red Army relocated to western Anhui Prov from southeastern Henan Prov by abandoning Xinji & Shangcheng. Xu Xiangqian claimed that they destroyed altogether 8000 KMT forces in the preceding three battles.

At Jinjiazhai of western Anhui Prov, Xu Xiangqian converged with Red Army 25th

Corps. (Jinzhai [Jinjiazhai ?] is on the Anhui side of the Henan-Anhui border line. Xu Zhen claimed that Hu Zongnan's 1st Division was relocated to Hubei Prov after KMT 10th Division sacked Jinjiazai the communist den. Xu Zhen further stated that Xu Xiangqian's Red Army, together with Kuang Jixun's Red Army, fled to the west after losing Jinjiazai.)

Red Army was unable to defeat KMT's Xu Tingyao echelon in western Anhui when Wei Lihuang and Chen Jicheng caught up with the Red Army. Red Army, after Yanzihe Meeting, next planned to relocate to Yingshan to the south while leaving Xu Haidong's detached 4th Division as guerrilla forces in southwestern Anhui Prov. [Yingshan is on the Hubei side of the Hubei-Anhui border line.] In late Sept, Red Army encountered trench resistance from Shangguan Yunxiang's KMT echelon near Yingshan and had to go west, i.e., the direction of Wuhan city. At Shiqiaopu, Red Army separated into two columns and converged again at Xinzhou where they made a northwestern move towards Gaoqiao & Hekou instead of southwestern move towards Wuhan. At Hekou town, KMT forces encircled the Red Army. Political commissar Gan Jishi of Red Army 11th Division died, and 25th Red Army Corps chief Cai Shenxi was wounded and died the second day. (Xu Zhen claimed that Cai Shenxi, a Whampoa 1st session cadet who was once a battalion chief under Hu Zongnan in 1927, had been missing after Hu Zongnan's Ding Derong brigade defeated Xu Xiangqian's Red Army 4th [?] Corps at Fenghuangzui [phoenix mouth] inside of Qin-ling Range of Shenxi Prov.) Red Army retreated to Huangcaifan where they engaged with Chen Jicheng's KMT 2nd Div. Red Army 73rd Division destroyed over 1000 KMT soldiers as well as injured KMT deputy Division chief Bai Tianmin. Once again surrounded, between Hekou and Huajiahe River, Red Army held another meeting on Oct 10th 1932 and decided to abandon the enclave by crossing Ping-Han Railway to the west for a conversion with Red Army 3rd Corps in the areas of Mt Dahongshan & Mt Tongbaishan. (Red Army did not know that Heh Long's Red Army 3rd Corps already vacated the area.)

Hu Zongnan's 1st Div, after going to the relief of Heh Yingqin at Nanchang of Jiangxi Prov, had returned to Hubei Prov. On Sept 26th, Hu Zongnan's 1st Division chased Xu Xiangqian to Suixian county in northern Hubei Prov. Xu Zhen claimed that Kuang Jixun's Red Army had been destroyed mostly, but Xu Xiangqian's Red Army broke northward into Xinye & Dengxian of southern Henan Prov. Xu Zhen claimed that in Xinye & Dengxian area, nine houses out of ten had emptied out after Red Army passed through. Under command of Heh Chengjun's Wuhan mobile office, Liu Maoen, Hu Zongnan & Xiao Zhichu chased the Red Army with three columns.

For the next two months, Red Army Fourth Front fought the Battles of Zaoyang-Xinji to break through blockades at Hubei-Henan border, pierced through Manchuanguan Pass to reach Shenxi Prov, crossed Qinling Range twice to pose threat to Xi'an, and crossed Han-shui River and climbed Mt Dabashan to establish Sichuan-Shenxi enclave. (Xu Shiyong led the charge through Manchuanguan Pass that was thought to be impregnable with machineguns cross-firing in the path. Hu Zongnan was said to have contacted Heh Chengjun for a liaison with Yang Hucheng for defending Manshanguan Pass. Xu Zhen claimed that Red Army took over the pass, pretended to be Yang Hucheng's Northwestern Army, and fought a battle with Hu Zongnan's Luo Lirong regiment.) Hu Zongnan's Ding

Derong brigade defeated Xu Xiangqian's Red Army 4th [?] Corps at Fenghuangzui [phoenix mouth] inside of Qin-ling Range of Shenxi Prov. Xu Zhen claimed that a communist captive disclosed that Cai Shenxi, a Whampoa 1st session cadet who was once a battalion chief under Hu Zongnan in 1927, had been killed. Hu Zongnan wired to Yang Hucheng for defending Tangyu & Dayuxia valley mouths. 1st Division & 58th Division exited the valley from two mouths and pressed against Xu Xiangqian's army; however, Yang Hucheng's northwestern army stopped at about 15 kilometers away from the two mouths, deliberately allowing Red Army to flee westward at south bank of Wei-he River. Hu Zongnan's detached brigade chased the Red Army to Chen-ping-tomb & Ludan-cun villages in Zhouzhi county and fought a battle at dusk. Red Army broke out at night, went southward into Luogukou valley in southern Zhouzhi county, passed Foping, and attacked Nanzheng. Hu Zongnan went to the relief of Nanzheng by marching along Xiegu valley. Red Army, after failing to attack Nanzheng, burnt Dongguan Pass and fled into Dabashan Mountain. Hu Zongnan's 1st brigade chased to Nanjiang of Sichuan Prov, detached brigade took over the ridge of Dabashan, and 2nd brigade reached Tianchizi. Sichuan Prov generals, like Deng Xihou & Tian Songyao, wired to Chiang Kai-shek for preventing KMT Central Army from going inside Sichuan Prov.

Xu Xiangqian claimed that by that time, the Red Army still retained about 14000 soldiers, about three fourths of the original breakout force. Xu Zhen claimed that Red Army had only 3000 soldiers left when they entered Dabashan Mountain. Red Army Fourth Front's "long march" would be further covered in 4th\_front.htm

74th & 75th divisions under Wang Pingzhang's Red Army 25th Corps as well as Red Army detached columns, about 30000 people, were retained at the enclave for Shen Zemin to wage guerrilla warfare. (Xu Zhen claimed that Shen Zemin, i.e., the brother of Shen Yanbing [aka Mao Dun], had died in the battle with Hu Zongnan's 1st Division at Liang-he-kou of Huangpi county before August.) Red Army 25th Corps, after the death of Shen Zemin, was headed by Wu Huanxian, Wang Pingzhang, Guo Shushen and Xu Haidong consecutively till Xu Haidong vacated the enclave in Nov 1934 for a long march towards Henan-Shenxi border. From Nov 1934 to 1937, guerrilla forces organized into Red Army 28th Corps under Gao Jingting, to be re-organized into 4th echelon under communist-controlled New Fourth Army after the eruption of Sino-Japanese War in 1937.

By Oct 1932, Chiang Kai-shek successfully routed two communist bases of Hubei-Henan-Anhui Borderline Soviet, and western Hunan-Hubei Borderline Soviet, causing the Red Armies into a relocation, respectively. Inside of CCP, a so-called Ningdu Meeting was held in Oct 1932 for criticizing Mao Tse-tung's "letting in enemies" strategy. Prof Chen Yongfa pointed out that CCP 'International Faction' [i.e., Moscow returnees] deprived Mao Tse-tung of his remaining leadership over the Red Army after Mao Tse-tung refused to conduct self-criticisms. Chen Yongfa cited Huang Kecheng's self-account in stating that Zhou Enlai was said to have reservation at the meeting.