

PAINTERS AND POLITICS
IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF CHINA, 1949-1979

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ONE • REVOLUTIONARIES AND ACADEMICS

ART OF THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD

Shortly before the turn of the century, in the final years of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), it became apparent to Chinese intellectuals that the international community was dominated by Western nations and by Japan, countries at the forefront of modern technology. The military defeats of China by the British in 1842 and 1860, by the French in 1885, by the Japanese in 1895, and by allied powers in 1900 were the most evident signs of China's failure to maintain her rightful place in the world.¹ Debate over the correct Chinese response to this crisis monopolized intellectual activity during the first decades of the twentieth century. Some writers found Chinese culture to be so unalterably backward that China could have no hope to function in the modern world. Others aspired to modify Chinese culture and so make the nation into a viable modern force. Still others believed that China's culture had unique values that must at all costs be preserved.

This range of opinion extended to the art world, which during these years produced a dizzying array of theoretical and aesthetic innovations. Liu Haisu, who founded the first art academy in China in the first year of the new Chinese republic, 1912,² later commented that the school was established at a time when China's culture was in decline. The times demanded, he believed, a synthesis of Chinese culture and foreign art.³

Many of the theoretical issues that have guided or divided the Chinese art world since 1949, in short, were well established in the decades leading up to liberation.⁴ Many artists continued to practice traditional forms of Chinese art, working in opposition to, in indifference to, or in ignorance of Western art. Artists who studied in Europe between the two world wars, like Liu Haisu, were inspired by the European artistic ferment. Some returned to China committed to practicing and teaching Western art and debated among themselves

which schools of European art were most suitable for China. Others turned back to their native tradition because of their European experiences, though they rarely completely shed the European basis of their technique. Still others journeyed to Japan to observe its unique combination of European and Asian culture.

✓ The primary tensions that most intellectuals felt were between modernism and Chinese tradition. Artists struggled with such questions as: Should Chinese art be modernized? *How* might it be modernized? How could art be both modern and Chinese? Was the artist sacrificing his or her own heritage in seeking an international language?⁵ Answers were extremely varied.⁶ For some writers, including Cai Yuanpei, the most important art theorist of the time, emulation of the West was absolutely necessary. He wrote in 1931: "the good point of Europeanization is that everything takes science as its foundation: the improvement of life; the reform of society; even the creation of art. They all progress along with the progress of science."⁷ For others, artistic styles that synthesized native and foreign elements seemed more appropriate. Gao Qifeng and Gao Jianfu had by the 1930s developed a form of art they called "new national painting," which they claimed might preserve the best in China's own tradition while adapting to the new times. They particularly admired modern Japanese painting for synthesizing and absorbing the techniques of both Chinese and Western painting.⁸

The opinions and artistic practices of two of these many contending groups of painters, the revolutionaries and the academics, have dominated debate in the second half of the twentieth century. The reason for their doctrinal victory was simple: they assumed control of the all-powerful art bureaucracy under the Communists. A brief introduction to key figures in these two groups of artists is necessary for understanding the dynamics of art after 1949.

Jiang Feng, Revolutionary Printmaker

The printmaker Jiang Feng is a particularly interesting example of the revolutionary artist who became an influential bureaucrat under the new regime. After making contributions to leftist art as a woodcut artist and activist in the pre-1949 period, under the new regime Jiang Feng assumed the dialectical roles both of party spokesman for art and of revolutionary idealist. He dominated the art world between 1949 and 1957, the period in which the basic system of ideological control, the bureaucratic structure, and the stylistic and thematic outlines of the new art were put in place.

A brief exploration of his background is useful for understanding the policies promoted by the Communists. Jiang Feng (originally named Zhou Xi) was

born in Shanghai in 1910. Communist admirers describe him as a true proletarian: a third-generation urban worker.⁹ His father was a carpenter; his mother and two younger sisters worked in a silk factory. He became involved in leftist strike activities at the age of seventeen, at eighteen went to work as a bookkeeper for the railroad, and at nineteen began evening art study at the White Swan Western Painting Club (*Bai'e xihua hui*) in Shanghai.¹⁰

In the spring of 1931, when he was twenty-one, he became involved, through the White Swan Club, with students who had been expelled from the National Hangzhou Arts Academy (*Guoli Hangzhou yizhuan*) for left-wing activities.¹¹ Several of these students had been active at school in a club called the West Lake Eighteen Art Society (*Xihu yiba yishe*), which was founded, with the encouragement of the academy's director, in the eighteenth year of the republic, 1929.¹² The Hangzhou society soon split into two groups because of political differences.¹³ A Communist Youth League organization, established at the academy in 1930, attracted leftist members of the original group.¹⁴ The following spring Jiang joined the students and former students in launching a third group, Shanghai Eighteen Art Society Research Center (*Shanghai yiba yishe yanjiu suo*),¹⁵ which was left-wing in orientation and had more than forty members.¹⁶

Shortly thereafter, the new group was contacted by the writer and critic Feng Xuefeng on behalf of the General Alliance for Left-Wing Culture,¹⁷ a Chinese Communist party front organization. From this point on the Shanghai Eighteen Art Society became a focus for activities of the League of Left-Wing Artists. Jiang Feng helped publish a leftist journal, one of many editorial projects in which he would be engaged, and undertook to spread anti-imperialist propaganda among Shanghai's workers.¹⁸ The Eighteen Art Society also received a number of donations from the influential novelist and educator Lu Xun via his close associate Feng Xuefeng, including both cash and art books.¹⁹

The feminist writer Ding Ling met Jiang Feng briefly in 1931, when he was living in an old book warehouse that served as the publication center for an underground literary journal.²⁰ This habitation may have been arranged for him by Feng Xuefeng, who settled another writer, Lou Shiyi, into the same abode in April.²¹ In mid-August, Feng arrived with the news that Lu Xun had engaged a Japanese woodcut instructor,²² a teacher who happened to be in Shanghai on vacation. Selection of participants in the class was left to the Eighteen Art Society, who allocated six places for their own members, two for the Shanghai Arts College (*Shanghai yizhuan*), two for the Shanghai Art Academy (*Shanghai meizhuan*), and three for the White Swan Western Painting Club. The tutorial, held between August 17 and August 22, covered practical woodblock carving and printing techniques and the study of original prints ranging from *ukiyo-e* to the works of the German leftist Käthe Kollwitz. Lu Xun himself served as translator for the sessions. Although there is no in-



FIGURE 1

Jiang Feng, *Kill the Resisters*, 1931,
woodblock print, 14 cm × 17.7 cm.

dication that Jiang Feng was personally close to the older man, Jiang's subsequent writings indicate that he considered Lu Xun to be a role model. Among the thirteen students were several who subsequently became influential revolutionary artists, including Jiang Feng and Chen Tiegeng. Jiang's surviving student prints, like those of other participants, emulate European expressionist styles, and there is every reason to believe that the young artists saw themselves as part of an international leftist art community.²³

The leftists soon had an opportunity to apply their skills to the national good. Among Jiang Feng's antigovernment broadsheets is *Kill the Resisters* (fig. 1) of late 1931, which depicts demonstrators fleeing as they are gunned down by Nationalist troops. This print at once supported resistance against Japanese territorial claims in China and attacked the Nationalist government's inappropriate response to public opinion. Late in the next year, Hu Yichuan, a Communist former student at the National Hangzhou Arts Academy, carved his more technically refined call to arms, *To the Front* (fig. 2).



FIGURE 2
Hu Yichuan, *To the Front*, 1932, wood-
block print, 20 cm × 27 cm.

Hu Yichuan, one of the leftist students expelled from the academy earlier in 1932,²⁴ was clearly better trained than the autodidact Jiang Feng.

Jiang Feng joined the Chinese Communist party in March 1932 and the next month began what was to be a fifty-year career in arts administration. He was elected an executive of the League of Left-Wing Artists and a member of its CCP and Youth League branch committees.²⁵ That May, the Eighteen Art Society, which had been openly affiliated with the Communist-sponsored League of Left-Wing Artists, reorganized under a less notorious name, Spring Earth Painting Club (*Chundi huahui*). The new name was chosen by Ai Qing,²⁶ a member who had recently returned from Europe.²⁷ Ai Qing is known today as a poet rather than as a painter,²⁸ but as we shall see in chapter 3, he remained active as an administrator and art critic.

Spring Earth held an exhibition at the YMCA in late June in conjunction with a display of Lu Xun's personal print collection. Lu Xun reportedly purchased ten Spring Earth prints, including one by Jiang.²⁹ On July 13, as the Spring Earth Club conducted its Esperanto class, Nationalist and foreign police burst in and arrested eleven members, including Jiang Feng, Ai Qing, and the

instructor.³⁰ Jiang Feng and the others served two years in prison, during which time they continued their studies of art and literature. A letter sent by Jiang Feng and Ai Qing to Lu Xun late in 1932 reported that they had transformed the prison into a school, every day following a set schedule for reading, painting, writing poetry, and discussion.³¹ They also practiced their organizational skills by mounting three hunger strikes over food, bathing, and medical care.³²

Jiang Feng was rearrested in 1933, only two months after his July release from jail, and served two more years. Lu Xun continued to give his protégé psychological support, sending him a copy of his privately published album of prints by Käthe Kollwitz. By the end of this second prison term the artist had lost his association with the CCP.³³ His biographers do not give a reason, but communication with the organization was undoubtedly difficult, if not impossible, for party members who were incarcerated.

Moreover, Jiang emerged from prison into an atmosphere of growing antagonism between Lu Xun's two confidants, Feng Xuefeng and Hu Feng, and Zhou Yang, a leading party theorist in the League of Left-Wing Writers. Differences in literary approach were the chief issues openly debated, but a struggle for leadership of leftist literary circles was an important foundation for the dispute.³⁴ In the summer of 1935, shortly before Jiang Feng's release from prison, Zhou Yang, unable to defeat the Lu Xun faction in reasoned debate, accused Hu Feng of collaboration with the Guomindang. This apparently unfounded charge led to a bitter split between Zhou Yang and Lu Xun that was publicly played out in left-wing literary journals. Jiang Feng's chief contact in the CCP, Feng Xuefeng, withdrew from the party in 1936, and Hu Feng left Shanghai the following year. Lu Xun died in late 1936.³⁵

Regardless of events in the CCP and literary world, Jiang Feng remained very active in leftist art between his October 1935 release from jail and his September 1937 departure from Japanese-occupied Shanghai.³⁶ Among other things, Jiang was involved with a pictorial called *Iron Horse Prints* (*Tiema banhua*), in which he, as an artist, ventured for the first time into a slightly avant-garde, if grim, style (fig. 3).³⁷ Soviet constructivist prints reproduced in Lu Xun's 1930 publication *Xin'e huaxuan* (Selected Pictures from New Russia) are a likely source for Jiang's experiments.³⁸

During the period of Jiang Feng's radical activities in the city of Shanghai, eight soviets had been established by the Red Army in rural China. Under pressure of extermination campaigns by Nationalist troops, the Communist army in the south began a retreat to northwestern China in the fall of 1934, a journey now known as the Long March. Slightly more than a year later, after an arduous trek over six thousand miles of dangerous territory, the surviving members of the Red Army regrouped in northern Shaanxi. After the Japanese attacked Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai in the summer of 1937, many leftists

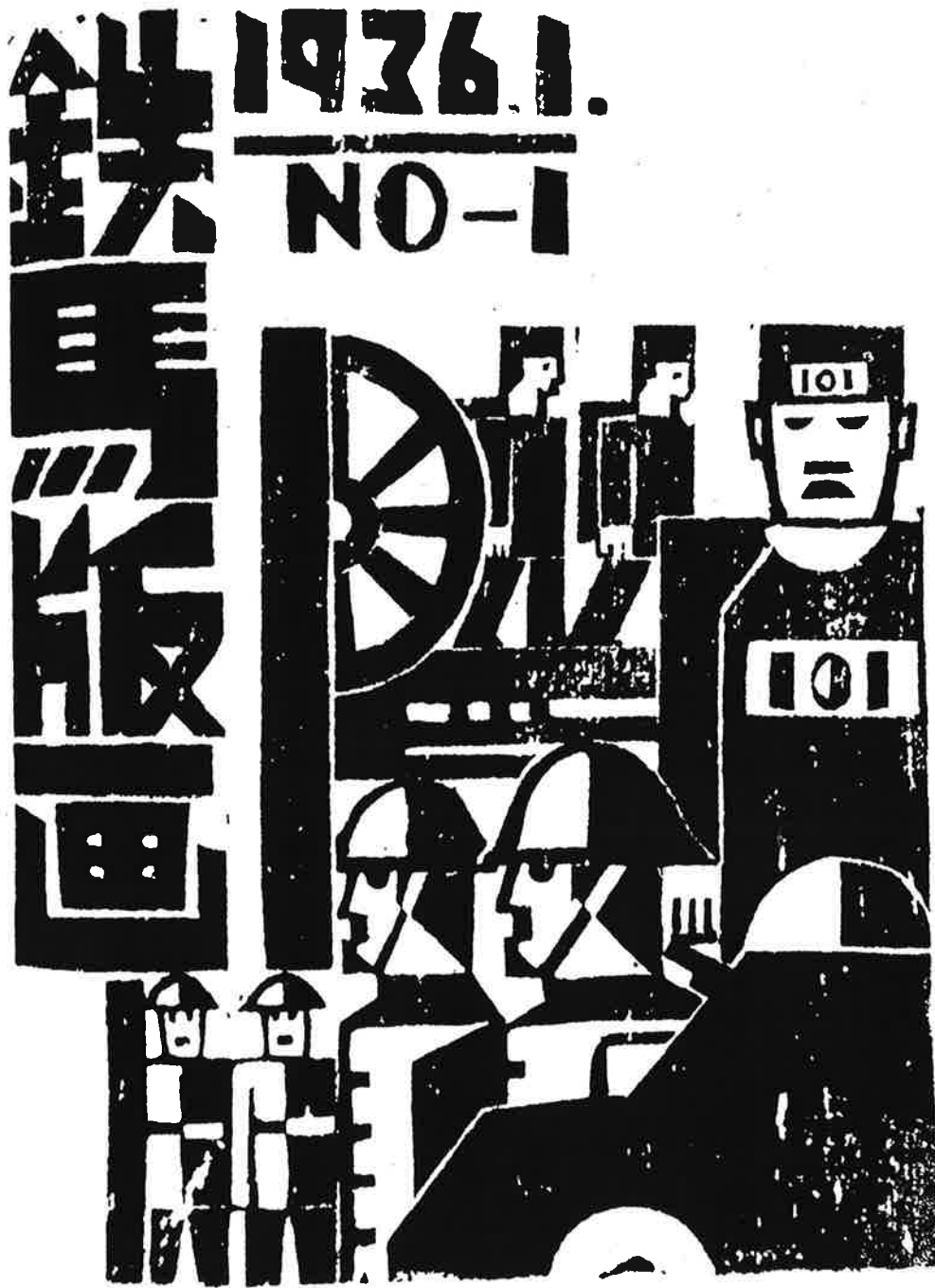


FIGURE 3
Jiang Feng, cover design for *Iron Horse*
Prints, 1936, no. 1, woodblock print.

fled Japanese-occupied coastal territory for the new Communist base at Yan'an, Shaanxi.³⁹

Jiang Feng, traveling via Hankou and Xi'an, reached Yan'an by February 1938. His party membership was restored in the spring and he was assigned to publish a propaganda pictorial for the Eighth Route Army. In February 1939, he was transferred to the newly founded Lu Xun Academy of Literature and Arts as an instructor in the art department, thus beginning his formal career as an art educator.⁴⁰

He published one of his earliest surviving art historical/theoretical articles in Hu Feng's journal *July* (*Qiyue*) in the same year, a piece in which he described Lu Xun's support of the revolutionary woodcut movement and argued that Lu Xun advocated selective use of old artistic forms to create new forms.⁴¹ Whatever Jiang's intentions, the piece bridges, for art, a gap that existed in literary theory between the position held by Mao Zedong and Zhou Yang, who thought that Chinese writers should use indigenous forms, and that of Lu Xun's disciples Feng Xuefeng and Hu Feng, who believed that much of China's old literature was feudal and completely lacking in democratic or revolutionary elements.⁴²

One goal of the Lu Xun Academy was to train recruits in the techniques and ideological principles of cultural propaganda so that they could gain the cooperation of local people in the Communist military campaigns against the Japanese. A crucial problem was how to produce images that would be understood and accepted by the largely illiterate rural population.⁴³ The European-style woodcuts of the early thirties were aimed at a cosmopolitan audience and were not necessarily appropriate to the new situation. Because many of the artists who passed through the Lu Xun Academy were urban art students, they were urged, as part of the ideological and technical training they underwent before being sent to do anti-Japanese propaganda work, to develop more effective ways of communicating with the peasants.

Uncertainty as to how to transform the sophisticated black-and-white woodcuts into something rural people might appreciate was resolved during the winter of 1939 and 1940. In December 1939, the Communist artists learned that the Japanese had made very effective use of Chinese folk print conventions in their own propaganda.⁴⁴ One print, based on Chinese images of the kings of hell and called *Divine Retribution*, made them particularly indignant. The Chinese artists therefore decided to design their own propaganda pictures in the style of rustic new year's prints (*nianhua*). Because none of the Communist artists were trained in the multiple-block printing technique required for the brightly colored folk prints, two skilled peasants were enlisted to teach them how to carve and produce their new pictures. Among those who made folk pictures in this first group were Jiang Feng, his colleagues from the Shanghai leftist movement Wo Zha, Hu Yichuan, and Chen Tiegeng, and two

students from the National Hangzhou Arts Academy, Luo Gongliu and Yan Han.⁴⁵ By June 1940, Jiang Feng had been promoted to directorship of the art section of the Lu Xun Academy, which administered both the art department and the art factory.⁴⁶ As director of the art factory, Jiang Feng was charged with assembling and supervising more artists to make the new, revolutionary *nianhua* (fig. 4).⁴⁷

While Jiang's group worked in Yan'an, the academy's woodcut team, headed by Hu Yichuan, worked in the field.⁴⁸ Most of Hu's team, which included Yan Han, Luo Gongliu, and Hua Shan, were academically trained artists like himself. As an administrator, Jiang Feng institutionalized the successful innovations of his better-trained colleagues. One of his own few surviving contributions to the new *nianhua* movement was the 1942 print *Studying Is Good* (fig. 5), in which plump children clutch writing brush and abacus. Traditional new year's prints often depict auspicious subjects such as fat baby boys, and the positive aspects of the theme are usually reinforced by decorative objects or attributes laden with symbolic value. In this case, Jiang Feng substituted the tools of education for fruits or fish, the customary symbols of fertility, abundance, or good luck, and added a little girl to the traditional male child. The iconographic changes are explained by slogans: "Studying is good. After you study, you can do accounts and write letters."⁴⁹

A series of ideological meetings held for writers and artists in the spring of 1942 culminated on May 2 and May 23 with important speeches by Mao Zedong.⁵⁰ His remarks, often referred to as the Yan'an Talks, became the core of Communist cultural policy. Mao opened by saying that the purpose of the meeting was to ensure that literature and art became a component of the whole revolutionary machinery. To achieve this goal, artists and writers needed to be more aware of their roles in the revolution. They needed to identify with the masses and with the CCP; they needed to be clear that their audience was the workers, peasants, and soldiers; they needed to be familiar with and sympathetic to the workers, peasants, and soldiers; and they must understand Marxist-Leninist writings. Although literature might also serve the petty bourgeoisie, who were allies in the revolution, it was essential that writers and artists give the workers, peasants, and soldiers priority. Hence, efforts should be made to reach a wider audience and to raise artistic standards.

Mao acknowledged that the experience of foreign countries could guide China in achieving this goal, but he rejected crude imitation of foreign material as useless. While literature and art of a higher level was necessary for better-educated cadres, he said, satisfying this need was not central to the Communist mission. Professional writers and artists should devote their attention to speaking for the masses.

Beyond merely articulating his revolutionary cultural theory, Mao successfully described a new creative discipline to be enforced among Communist



FIGURE 4
Anonymous, *Protect the Border District*,
ca. 1940, polychromatic woodblock
print, Bo Songnian collection.



FIGURE 5
Jiang Feng, *Studying Is Good*, 1942,
woodblock print.

writers and artists. He denied that art for art's sake could exist, for in his view all culture belonged to a definite class and party. He further rejected various nonpolitical foundations for art and literature, including humanism, love of mankind, idealism, liberalism, and individualism.

Following the Yan'an Talks, in 1942 and 1943, the CCP conducted a rectification campaign and cadre investigation. The thought remolding process, intended to tighten party discipline, normally took several months. For reasons that have not been revealed, Jiang Feng was vehemently attacked, relieved of his duties, and kept in isolation for almost a year.⁵¹ Among the factors behind his prolonged investigation may have been the following: his lapse in party membership before 1938; his association with Feng Xuefeng, who had challenged Mao's views on literature and remained in the Nationalist capital of Chongqing; his friendship with Ai Qing, who was reluctant to accept party discipline in his literary activities; jealousies among contenders for key administrative posts; and a stubbornness for which Jiang Feng became notorious. Most damaging would have been suspicion of collaboration with Nationalist authorities, a charge that clouded the reputation of any Communist who survived his or her jail term.⁵²

Over the next five years, Jiang seems to have recovered from any damage to his position caused by the 1942–1943 campaigns. In 1944 he resumed his work promoting new *nianhua*,⁵³ and in 1945 organized a symposium on the subject.⁵⁴ After the Japanese surrender in September 1945, propaganda activity concentrated on the War of Liberation, as the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists was later known. Artists began leaving Yan'an and the Lu Xun Academy to consolidate Communist control in other areas. One group, which included a number of future administrators, including Jiang's Shanghai friend Wo Zha, his student Gu Yuan, and the Manchurian natives Zhang Ding, Yang Jiao, and Zhang Xiaofei, was sent in October to China's northeast, about eight hundred miles away—a dangerous journey across Nationalist territory that took thirty-six days by foot and boat.⁵⁵ The Northeast Lu Xun Academy of Literature and Arts (*Dongbei Lu Xun wenyi xueyuan*) was established in Shenyang three years later, in October 1948.⁵⁶

Another large group of Communist cultural workers was organized as the North China Literature and Arts Work Team (*Huabei wenyi gongzuotuan*), with the poet Ai Qing and Jiang Feng as leaders. Between mid-September and November 1945 the group walked from Yan'an to Zhangjiakou, in northern Hebei, a distance of some 420 miles. In their new location, about one hundred miles northwest of Beijing, they founded a Literature and Arts College at the Jin-Cha-Ji (Shanxi, Chahar, Hebei) North China United Revolutionary University (*Huabei lianda*). Jiang Feng became art department head and vice-secretary of the party committee in the new college, which opened in January 1946. He served under the supervision of his old friend Ai Qing, who was vice-

director of the college. Artists from the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border District Literature and Arts Union joined the Yan'an group. Some who worked with Jiang Feng in the new college, including Wang Zhaowen, Hu Yichuan, Mo Pu, and Yan Han, became important figures in the post-1949 art bureaucracy.

In February 1946, Jiang Feng published an article entitled "The Problem of Using Old Forms in Painting" that outlined his fundamental views on pictorial art.⁵⁷ Although the civil war delayed widespread implementation of his ideas, and he was later forced to modify parts of his program, his subsequent administrative record provides evidence of an uncompromising idealism in his approach to art. His basic assumption was that Western realism was scientific and, therefore, the only appropriate means of reflecting the life and ideals of modern people. His essay contrasts "new forms," which appear to be the conventions of late-nineteenth-century Western oil painting, with "old forms," which are those of traditional Chinese painting and new year's pictures.

Jiang cites two frequently argued justifications for a progressive Chinese artist to paint in old ways: the first was that traditional forms were easier for the common folk to accept, thus rendering propaganda more effective; the second was that patriotic artists sought by their very convictions to create "national forms" of painting. After analyzing both arguments, Jiang concluded that neither was adequate to justify the continuation of traditional art practices.

The utilitarian approach, he charged, did not hold up to scrutiny because the common people *would* accept Western conventions of chiaroscuro and perspective if the subject matter of the painting related to their own lives. Moreover, often the traditional mode was simply inappropriate for the task at hand. People might enjoy depictions of guerrilla warfare rendered against traditional landscape backgrounds, or images of soldiers outlined in the strokes previously used for painting delicate female beauties, but such representations failed to convey the proper atmosphere and thus were unsuitable as propaganda.

The issue of "national forms," the second commonly cited justification for promoting indigenous art, requires some explanation. The concept, developed by literary theorists in the 1930s, was strongly supported by Mao Zedong and appealed to many patriots because of its anti-imperialist flavor. Zhou Yang, who served for much of his career as Mao Zedong's spokesman on culture, was the foremost proponent of national forms in literature—"indigenous, semiliterary folk styles . . . enjoyed by ordinary Chinese for hundreds of years," in the words of Merle Goldman.⁵⁸ In art, as Jiang defined the problem, national forms were associated with traditional ink painting and folk new year's prints.

Significantly for later cultural developments, Zhou Yang's theories met, in the 1930s and 1940s, with heated opposition from Lu Xun's literary disciples,

Feng Xuefeng and Hu Feng. They urged as an alternative the adoption of Western-oriented realist forms of writing and the internationalization of Chinese culture.⁵⁹ Jiang Feng's article revealed his strong personal sympathy for the internationalist view, while nevertheless adhering to the party-approved language of Zhou Yang's policies.

Because the manner in which Jiang Feng articulated the debate remained important in subsequent decades, it is worth looking at his arguments in some detail. Jiang defined the question of national forms in art in terms of the tension between old and new. While he acknowledged the immediate efficacy of adopting old forms for propaganda in wartime, Jiang rejected the idea as a long-term program for the new art. People, he maintained, accept art that they are accustomed to seeing, and, he argued, such customs can be changed. As evidence he cited the popularity in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, the areas closest to Shanghai, of *yuefengpai* images of beautiful girls. The heavily shaded, Western-influenced *yuefengpai* mode of drawing was introduced by tobacco companies to decorate calendars.⁶⁰ Jiang pointed out that it soon became common in the region to commission ancestor portraits in a similar rubbed-charcoal style, thus making the traditional painted figure, which relied primarily on outline, obsolete. If tobacco company advertisements could change folk taste in such a conservative domain of representation, he implied, Communist artists should be able to do the same.

While Jiang conceded that the ink tones and brushwork of literati painting and the outlines and colors of folk painting each had their own merit, neither form alone, he argued, was entirely suitable for rendering the complexities of modern life. Rather than bringing realistic elements into traditional painting, therefore, Jiang advocated basing all art on Western techniques. Absorption of traditional elements should be a secondary concern. He particularly attacked "reformed Chinese painting," which synthesized Chinese and Western methods, as serving no function but to extend the life of old forms.

In a small leap of logic, Jiang concluded that because realistic techniques were most appropriate for reflecting the lives and ideals of the nation, realistic forms were best for creating a national form in art. The incongruity of adopting Western conventions of painting as the basis for Chinese "national forms" of art is successfully obfuscated by Jiang's impassioned defense of realism.

Jiang's promotion of national forms was not, as the term might seem to imply, a rejection of Western art forms. On the contrary, in his view the promotion of national forms required further development of new—that is to say, Western—styles and genres. Not *all* new forms were suitable to this end, however. Presumably influenced by Stalinist doctrines, Jiang wrote that it was necessary to cleanse new forms of the poisons of European modernism. Jiang's opposition to most schools of modern Western art (which presumably de-



FIGURE 6
Wang Shikuo, *Reform the Hooligans*,
1947, polychromatic woodblock print,
16.5 cm × 25.4 cm, Chinese National Art
Gallery.

veloped only after his own youthful experiments in modernist graphic design were concluded), indeed, was to have profound influence on the development of Chinese art in the 1950s. Nevertheless, at this early stage, his equation of new forms with Western techniques set China's art world on an internationalist course.

As Jiang Feng defined them, national forms of painting would be realistic and would employ Western academic principles of perspective, anatomy, composition, and color. They would not be based on traditional literati painting or on traditional folk styles, though they might be enriched by extracting apt elements from old art. This new realism would eradicate the gap between the people and "high-class art."

Jiang's intense opposition to both traditional painting and modernist Western styles set him at odds with many painters in the Nationalist-controlled territories. Self-employed professional artists often worked in traditional styles, and the ranks of China's art professors included both traditionalists and those who worked in modernist European styles. His criticism did not even spare



FIGURE 7
Hong Bo, *Joining the Army*, 1947,
polychromatic woodblock print,
21 cm × 17.5 cm.

progressive professors of painting who promoted new styles that would bring Western concepts into traditional Chinese painting, for he required that Western forms provide the very foundations of art.

Although Jiang Feng's internationalist ideas differed from the vision of Mao Zedong and Zhou Yang, he was nevertheless charged with reforming the Chinese art world under the new Communist government. In this role, he would have a profound effect on the development of art in China.

In 1948, the propaganda school moved south to Zhengding in central Hebei, where it merged with and took the name of North China University, previously based in Xingtai. The artists Luo Gongliu, Wang Shikuo, and Jin Lang joined Jiang Feng's team;⁶¹ thereafter the art department was referred to as the third section of the North China University.⁶² Academic activity during the years in Hebei included research on local *nianhua* conventions⁶³ and training of art propaganda workers.⁶⁴ Propaganda pictures made at North China University, including Wang Shikuo's woodcut *Reform the Hooligans* (fig. 6) and Hong Bo's *nianhua* *Joining the Army* (fig. 7),⁶⁵ set the artistic standard for the early years of the new People's Republic of China. Jiang Feng and his fellow veterans of the civil war became key figures in the Chinese art world after the Communist victory.

National Art Academies Before 1949: Lin Fengmian and Xu Beihong

Professors at China's pre-1949 art academies were a second important force in the postliberation period. Two private schools, the Suzhou Art Academy (*Suzhou meizhuan*) and the Shanghai Art Academy (*Shanghai meizhuan*), trained many important artists, but they left a meager institutional legacy after they were disbanded in 1952.⁶⁶ Instead two public academies, transformed by an infusion of Maoist and Stalinist art policies, provided the foundation for the Communist art academy system.

The most prestigious art institute in China from 1928, when the school was founded, until the Communist victory in 1949 was the National Hangzhou Arts Academy, established with the sponsorship of Cai Yuanpei. Cai, a central figure in early-twentieth-century efforts to modernize the Chinese educational system, was a strong advocate of the arts as a necessary component of a sound education. During his brief tenure as minister of education in 1912, only a year after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty, he had prepared a proposal for a five-part modern curriculum. The new humanistic program consisted of universal military education, utilitarian education, moral education, world-outlook education, and aesthetic education (*meiyu*). The first two were oriented, respectively, to physical and intellectual development. The last two

aimed at expanding Chinese education to incorporate a concern for the transcendental as well as the material, and thus raised art to an extremely high position. Although Cai resigned from the government when internationalist and egalitarian parts of his program were rejected, his proposals had a profound effect on the development of Chinese education.⁶⁷

Five years later, while serving as chancellor of Peking University, he delivered an important speech entitled "On Replacing Religion with Aesthetic Education," in which he explicated his belief that aesthetic education was more suitable for purposes of cultivating the human spirit than any form of organized religion might be.⁶⁸ Possibly in response to Cai's ideas, an art academy was established in Beiping (as Beijing was then known) in 1918, but political circumstances of the period prevented immediate realization of his idealistic art education program.

In 1927, Cai was appointed chancellor of the national university system, and once again he brought up the idea of establishing a national art college. His goal was to make aesthetic education the spiritual backbone of modern education: the institutional cultivation of the creation, appreciation, and knowledge of beauty would, he hoped, popularize aesthetic ideals throughout society and thereby eliminate greed and selfishness. The next year, at last, he witnessed the founding in Hangzhou of the new state-sponsored art college, the National Hangzhou Arts Academy, sometimes called the West Lake Academy of Arts (*Xihu yizhuan*). The director was Lin Fengmian, a young modernist oil painter who had studied in France and who wished to help young artists work together to realize the ideal of making society artistic.⁶⁹ The goals of the school program were to: introduce Western art, reorganize Chinese art, synthesize Chinese and Western art, and create an art for the present epoch.⁷⁰

Lin Fengmian had become extremely interested in the modernist painting of the Fauves during his study in Europe. (He is said by former students to have believed that modernism began with Cézanne and to have encouraged students to begin their studies by analyzing his work.) Throughout his tenure as director, which ended soon after the 1937 Japanese invasion,⁷¹ he steered the academy to be both modern and Chinese, exposing students to up-to-date Western concepts and traditional Chinese painting alike, a task that was taken up again by him and his colleagues after the war. Many of the best Communist artists, including Yan Han, Hu Yichuan, and Luo Gongliu, received their training at the prewar academy in Hangzhou, though political circumstances prevented most from graduating. Following the 1949 liberation, Lin Fengmian, whose views of art do not appear to have changed, was largely excluded from participation in the Chinese art world.⁷²

After 1949, when the capital was moved from Nanjing to Beijing, the academy in Hangzhou, like its former director, lost much of its national im-

portance. The institution that replaced it under the Communists was the National Beiping Arts College (*Guoli Beiping yishu zhuanke xuexiao*), directed from 1946 to 1953 by the European-trained painter Xu Beihong. Xu's legacy in Chinese art education was indeed great:⁷³ as Chu-ting Li has observed, Chinese socialist realism may be seen largely as a continuation of Xu Beihong's ideas and theories.⁷⁴

Xu studied in Europe between 1919 and 1927 with the support of a government scholarship. During his stay in France and Germany, Xu rejected the modernism that then flourished all over Europe. Instead he concentrated on mastering the ideals and techniques of nineteenth-century romanticism and academicism. Upon his return to China, Xu assumed teaching and administrative posts in the newly founded art department at National Central University in the capital of Nanjing. Xu's unwavering support for his own students yielded a mutual loyalty that progressively increased his effectiveness as an arts administrator. He worked hard to obtain fellowships for his favorite students to study in Europe and helped them obtain employment after their arrival back home.⁷⁵

Xu spent the years from 1938 to 1941 in India, then returned to China, where he lived mainly in Chongqing. At the conclusion of the war, he was appointed director of the National Beiping Arts College. Although the assignment kept him away from Shanghai and Nanjing, the cultural and political centers of postwar China, he attacked the job with great vigor, assembling a teaching staff that could train students according to his artistic view. For in his staffing decisions, while political and personal loyalties clearly played a part, artistic criteria were primary. In 1929, Xu Beihong had published an article in which he attacked Renoir, Cézanne, and Matisse, instead advocating realism as true art.⁷⁶ At the college, therefore, he promoted a classical, academic form of art education that involved rigorous training in charcoal drawing. His strong preference for realistic Western art over more modern styles became an important educational principle and distinguished his teaching program from that of Lin Fengmian at Hangzhou.

Xu's own painting emphasized a synthesis between Chinese tradition and classical Western art. Drawings he made during his stay in Europe reveal great technical facility and a penchant for highly detailed realistic rendering (fig. 8). And his oil portraits from that time, characterized by mysterious wooded backgrounds, softly illuminated faces, and homely details such as rustic flutes, are heavily imbued with nineteenth-century romanticism (fig. 9).

When Xu arrived back in China from Europe, he was inspired—apparently by those European academic artists of the late 1800s who rendered themes from Greek and Roman mythology and ancient history—to paint allegorical themes from Chinese history in a monumental, Western format. One such work that survives from this period is *Tian Heng and His Five Hundred*



FIGURE 8
 Xu Beihong, *Drawing of a Woman*,
 1924, charcoal and white chalk on paper,
 50 cm × 39 cm, Xu Beihong Memorial
 Museum.

Retainers (fig. 10), painted between 1928 and 1930, of an uncompromising local leader of the Western Han period.⁷⁷ A further step in his synthesis of Eastern and Western art was to render monumental history paintings in the Chinese style, as in *The Old Man Who Moved the Mountain* of 1940 (fig. 11). Although Xu himself was better suited to romantic portraits of people he could see than to ambitious compositions drawn from his imagination, the conceptual importance of such works, which attempt to combine Chinese and Western moralistic ideas, was great, far outweighing their aesthetic value.⁷⁸

During the war Xu, like many intellectuals, became critical of right-wing Nationalist administrative policies and of the social problems he saw around



FIGURE 9

Xu Beihong, *The Sound of the Flute*,
1926, oil on canvas, 80 cm × 39 cm,
Xu Beihong Memorial Museum.

him. Although he was not a Communist, he was close to Tian Han, an important Communist art administrator,⁷⁹ and knew Zhou Enlai. In letters probably written in 1946, he stated that he intended to operate the newly reopened National Beiping Arts College as a leftist school.⁸⁰ Faculty member Jiang Zhaohe, who had made his name with a monumental ink-and-color painting called *Refugees* (fig. 12), was indeed an outspoken critic of contemporary society.⁸¹ Other new faculty, including academic dean Wu Zuoren, were trusted former students.⁸² Xu's final split with the Nationalists probably came in 1947, when he was attacked by the Nationalist authorities for the academy's alleged inadequacies in teaching Chinese painting.⁸³



FIGURE 10 (top)
 Xu Beihong, *Tian Heng and His Five Hundred Retainers*, 1928–1930, oil on canvas, 198 cm × 355 cm, Xu Beihong Memorial Museum.



FIGURE 11 (bottom)
 Xu Beihong, *The Old Man Who Moved the Mountain*, 1940, ink and color on paper, Xu Beihong Memorial Museum.



FIGURE 12
Jiang Zhaohe, *Refugees*, 1943, ink and
color on paper, Central Academy of Fine
Arts Exhibition Hall.

By 1948, as the Nationalist government prepared its retreat to Taiwan, Tian Han transmitted a message to Xu Beihong from Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong urging him to remain in Beiping.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, underground party members Hou Yimin and Li Tianxiang organized their classmates to mount strikes protesting the civil war.⁸⁵ When the government order came to evacuate the campus, Xu ignored it and assured others that they would be safe under Communist rule. Although all the members of the music department fled, most artists remained behind. On October 1, 1949, when the new people's government was formally founded, Xu stood on the rostrum with Mao Zedong and other leaders, and on December 16 he was reappointed director of the academy by the Government Administrative Council (*Zhengwu yuan*), which ran the new government.⁸⁶ His widow believes that Zhou Enlai personally mandated the appointment.⁸⁷ Whatever the truth, it is clear that Xu Beihong's views were highly valued by the Communists as they began to reform art in a united China.

Notes

Introduction

1. Exceptions to this generalization exist, of course. The most prominent was probably Wu Guanzhong, who had studied in Paris between 1947 and 1950. After a thirty-year career in which his opinions were largely ignored, he emerged as an influential artist in the 1980s. See the catalogue of his solo exhibitions, *Wu Guanzhong: A Contemporary Chinese Artist*, ed. Lucy Lim (San Francisco: Chinese Culture Foundation, 1989); and Anne Farrer, *Wu Guanzhong: A Twentieth-Century Chinese Painter* (London: British Museum, 1992).

2. One study of Western art in China is Mayching Kao's dissertation, "China's Response to the West in Art, 1898-1937" (Stanford University, 1972).

3. Franz Schurmann described this phenomenon in *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), esp. pp. 109-110.

4. Introduction to Perry Link, ed., *Roses and Thorns: The Second Blooming of the Hundred Flowers in Chinese Fiction, 1979-1980*, pp. 1-41. Link's "Introduction: On the Mechanics of the Control of Literature in China," in *Stubborn Weeds: Popular and Controversial Chinese Literature After the Cultural Revolution*, ed. Perry Link (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 1-30, is a superb introduction to this question.

5. I have seen issues of *Renmin meishu* from 1950. *Meishu* has been published from 1954 to the present, with a ten-year hiatus between 1966 and 1976. In the 1980s, CAA members also received an "internal circulation" publication, *Meishujia tongxun* (Artists' circular), which printed particularly important articles as guides to official art policy.

1. Revolutionaries and Academics

1. For an account of these losses, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Fall of Imperial China* (New York: Free Press, 1975), pp. 131-224.

2. Cai Yuanpei, one of Liu's supporters, believed that Liu's academy was the first; see his "Sanshiwu nian lai zhongguo zhi xinwenhua" (China's New Culture over Thirty-five Years), reprinted from *Zuijin sanshiwu nian zhi zhongguo jiaoyu* (Chinese education over the past thirty-five years) (N.p.: Commercial Press, 1931), in *Cai Yuanpei yuyan ji wenxue lunzhu* (Cai Yuanpei's writings on linguistics and literature), ed. Gao Pingshu (Shijiazhuang: Hebei People's Art Press, 1985), p. 257. Kao, "China's Response," p. 63, and Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 174, write that Western art was taught as a department of the Jiangsu-Jiangxi Normal School in Nanjing as early as 1906.

3. Liu Haisu, "Shanghai meishu zhuanke xuexiao ershiwu zhounian bianyan" (Preface for Shanghai Art Academy's twenty-fifth anniversary), reprinted from *Shishi xinbao* (Current affairs), Nov. 23, 1936, in *Liu Haisu yishu wenxuan* (Liu Haisu's collected writings on art), ed. Zhu Jinlou and Yuan Zhihuang (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Art Press, 1987), p. 172.

4. In mainland China, the convenient but value-laden term "liberation" is used to describe the Communist assumption of power in 1949. I have adopted the term in conformity with that usage.

5. Michael Sullivan has asked similar questions in his article "Art and Reality in Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting," in *Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting*, ed. Mayching M. Kao (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 1-20.

6. The struggle between modernism and tradition in Chinese art of the first half of the twentieth century, while beyond the scope of this book, had a strong influence on the post-1949 period. Excellent studies of the art of the Republican period include Ralph Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: The Lingnan (Cantonese) School of Painting, 1906-1951* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Kao, "China's Response"; Sullivan, *Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, pp. 174-185; idem, *Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959); and Chu-tsing Li, *Trends in Modern Chinese Painting (The C. A. Drenowatz Collection)*, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 36 (Ascona, Switz.: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1979), pp. 11-55.

7. Cai Yuanpei, "Sanshiwu nian lai zhongguo zhi xinwenhua," p. 261.

8. Croizier, *Art and Revolution*, p. 109.

9. Interview with A.

10. "Jiang Feng nianbiao" (A chronology of Jiang Feng) [hereafter JFNB], in *Jiang Feng meishu lunji*, ed. Hong Bo et al. (Beijing: People's Art Press, 1983) [hereafter JFMSLJ], p. 315. Note that, while it is desirable to avoid cluttering the text with Chinese terms, romanized names are supplied for organizations that will be unfamiliar to most readers and for terms that have more than one possible translation.

11. JFNB, p. 315. Jiang Feng, writing in 1979, dates his meeting with expelled students to 1930; see "Lu Xun xiansheng yu 'yiba yishe'" (Lu Xun and the Eighteen Art Society), reprinted from *Meishu* [hereafter MS], 1979, nos. 1 and 2, in JFMSLJ, p. 129 (also reprinted in Li Hua, Li Shusheng, and Ma Ke, eds., *Zhongguo xinxing banhua yundong wushi nian* [Fifty years of the new Chinese print movement] [Shenyang: Liaoning meishu chubanshe, 1981], pp. 187-198). The same source, p. 128, refers to the Hangzhou academy as "Hangzhou guoli xihu yishu yuan." Hu Yichuan recalls that expulsions for political reasons occurred in 1929 and again in 1932; see "Huiyi Lu Xun yu 'yiba yishe'" (Recalling Lu Xun and the Eighteen Society), reprinted from *Meishu xuebao* (Guangzhou Institute of Arts), 1980, no. 1, in *Yiba yishe jinian ji* (Col-

lection to commemorate the Eighteen Society), ed. Wu Bunai and Wang Guanquan (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981), pp. 23, 25 (also reprinted in Li, Li, and Ma [eds.], *Zhongguo xinxing banhua yundong wushi nian*, pp. 171-181).

12. The name of the society refers to the year of its founding, the eighteenth year of the republic, and, according to one interview source, to its original eighteen members.

13. Interview with B. The Eighteen Art Society was a leftist splinter of the school-sponsored group; see Hu Yichuan, "Huiyi Lu Xun yu 'yiba yishe,'" in Wu and Wang (eds.), *Yiba yishe jinian ji*, p. 21.

14. Hu Yichuan, "Huiyi Lu Xun yu 'yiba yishe,'" in Wu and Wang (eds.), *Yiba yishe jinian ji*, p. 23.

15. JFNB, p. 316; Hu Yichuan, "Huiyi Lu Xun yu 'yiba yishe,'" in Wu and Wang (eds.), *Yiba yishe jinian ji*, p. 23.

16. Interview with B.

17. The Chinese term in JFNB, p. 316, is *wenzong*, an abbreviation for *Zhongguo zuoyi wenhua zong tongmeng*. See Jiang Feng, "Lu Xun xiansheng yu 'yiba yishe,'" in *JFMSLJ*, p. 130.

18. JFNB, p. 316; Lou Shiyi, "Songbie Jiang Feng" (Saying farewell to Jiang Feng), reprinted from *Wenhuibao*, Oct. 20, 1982, in *JFMSLJ*, pp. 342-343.

19. JFNB, p. 316; Jiang Feng, "Lu Xun xiansheng yu 'yiba yishe,'" in *JFMSLJ*, pp. 130-135. For the relationship between Feng and Lu Xun, see Merle Goldman, *Literary Dissent in Communist China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. xi, 9-11.

20. Ding Ling, "Dao Jiang Feng" (Mourning Jiang Feng), reprinted from *Renmin ribao* (People's daily) [hereafter *RMRB*], Dec. 27, 1982, in *JFMSLJ*, p. 364.

21. Lou Shiyi, "Songbie Jiang Feng," p. 342.

22. Jiang Feng, "Lu Xun xiansheng yu 'yiba yishe,'" in *JFMSLJ*, pp. 131-134.

23. JFNB, p. 316. The prints, entitled *Portrait* and *Labor*, are reproduced in *JFMSLJ*, pls. 1-2.

24. Hu Yichuan, "Huiyi Lu Xun yu 'yiba yishe,'" in Wu and Wang (eds.), *Yiba yishe jinian ji*, p. 25. Also, interview with B; and "Hu Yichuan meishu huodong nianbiao" (Chronology of Hu Yichuan's art activities), in *Hu Yichuan youhua fengjingxuan* (Selected landscapes in oils by Hu Yichuan) (Guangzhou: Lingnan meishu chubanshe, 1983).

25. JFNB, p. 317.

26. Jiang Feng, "Lu Xun xiansheng yu 'yiba yishe,'" as corrected in Li, Li, and Ma (eds.), *Zhongguo xinxing banhua yundong wushi nian*, p. 194. Sun Lung-kee translates it as the Spring Field Painting Club; see "Out of the Wilderness: Chinese Intellectual Odysseys from the 'May Fourth' to the 'Thirties'" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1985), p. 295. Jiang Feng's original text (MS 1979, no. 2, p. 38) and the version reprinted in *JFMSLJ*, p. 135, refer to it as *Chundi meishu yanjiu suo* (Spring Earth Art Research Center), as well as by the shorter name.

27. According to an autobiographical sketch, Ai Qing enrolled at the National Hangzhou Art Academy for a term when he was eighteen; the academy's director, Lin Fengmian, urged him to go abroad to study. See "'Wulao' yi Lin Fengmian xiansheng" ("Five elders" remember Lin Fengmian), *Zhongguo meishubao*, 1989, no. 48, p. 1.

28. Translations of some poetry and theory by Ai Qing may be found in Hualing Nieh, ed., *Literature of the Hundred Flowers*, vol. 2: *Poetry and Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 57-75.

29. Jiang Feng, "Lu Xun xiansheng yu 'yiba yishe,'" in *JFMSLJ*, p. 136; JFNB, pp. 317-318. According to Jiang Feng, Communist monetary contributions had been promised the club by the party organizer Tian Han, but when they failed to arrive Lu Xun began supporting the group.

30. One student turned out to be a spy. Others arrested were Yu Hai, Li Xiushi, Li Yang, and Huang Shanding. See Jiang Feng, "Lu Xun xiansheng yu 'yiba yishe,'" in *JFMSLJ*, p. 136.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137. Jiang notes that Lu Xun's diary for December 31, 1932, records receipt of a letter from "Jie Fu, Jia, et al." Jie Fu and Jia were pseudonyms for Jiang Feng and Ai Qing, respectively.

32. Huang Shanding, "Yipian zhongcheng—chentong daonian laozhanyou Jiang Feng" (A life of loyalty—mourning my old comrade-in-arms Jiang Feng), in *JFMSLJ*, p. 401.

33. JFNB, pp. 318-320.

34. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, pp. 9-17.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

36. JFNB, p. 319.

37. Reproduced in *JFMSLJ*, *shang*, pls. 11-12. Such designs were popular in books of the 1930s. See Scott Minick and Jiao Ping, *Chinese Graphic Design in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990), pp. 54-65.

38. Reproduced in *Lu Xun bianyin huaji jicun* (Art albums edited and published by Lu Xun), vol. 3 (Shanghai: People's Art Press, 1981), figs. 107, 105, 125.

39. These events are described in Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), pp. 403-410.

40. JFNB, p. 320.

41. Jiang Feng, "Lu Xun xiansheng yu Zhongguo de xinxing muke yundong" (Lu Xun and China's revolutionary woodcut movement), reprinted from *Qiyue* [July], 1939, no. 2, in *JFMSLJ*, p. 1.

42. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, pp. 15-16.

43. Yan Han, "Yi Taihangshan kangri genjudi de nianhua he muke huodong" (Recollections of the new year's pictures and woodcut movement in the Taihangshan anti-Japanese base), reprinted from *MS* 1957, no. 3, in Li, Li, and Ma (eds.), *Zhongguo xinxing banhua yundong wushi nian*, pp. 308-309; and Hu Yichuan, "Huiyi Luyi muke gongzuotuan zai dihou" (Recollections of the Lu Xun Academy's woodcut work team behind enemy lines), in *ibid.*, pp. 296-297. Yan's article is summarized in Ellen Johnston Laing, *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 14.

44. Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, *Art Under a Dictatorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), has described the ways in which religious iconography, such as that of Christmas, was similarly manipulated for political purposes by the Nazis and the Soviets.

45. Bo Songnian, *Zhongguo nianhua shi* (A history of Chinese new year's pictures) (Shenyang: Liaoning Art Press, 1986), p. 177, dates the first such prints to the lunar new year (late winter) of 1939 and attributes them to Jiang Feng and Wo Zha. Yan Han, "Yi Taihangshan," pp. 308-309, describes events leading up to the lunar new year of 1940.

Wo Zha (1905-1974; né Cheng Zhenxing) entered Shanghai New China Arts School (*Shanghai xinhua yishu zhuanke xuexiao*) in 1926 but graduated from the Shanghai Art Academy (*Shanghai meishu zhuanke xuexiao*) in 1935. He was a member of

various left-wing groups, including the Eighteen Art Society, the *Taokong huahui* (Taokong Painting Club), and the *Tiema banhuahui* (Iron Horse Print Club). He went to Yan'an in October 1937 and served for a time as art department head at the Lu Xun Academy. See *Zhongguo meishu cidian* (Dictionary of Chinese fine arts) (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1987), p. 234.

Chen Tiegeng (1908-1969; also named Kebo and Yaotang) entered the National Hangzhou Arts Academy in 1927 but went to Shanghai in 1930 to work as a propagandist and printmaker. He participated in Lu Xun's printmaking class and belonged to the Eighteen Art Society and the League of Left-Wing Artists. He went to Yan'an in 1938 and was charged with establishing a branch campus of the Lu Xun Academy in the Taihang Mountain Communist base area. See *Zhongguo meishu cidian*, p. 234.

Luo Gongliu (b. 1916) enrolled in the Zhongshan University Middle School in Guangzhou in 1931. He was admitted as a scholarship student to the National Hangzhou Arts College in 1936 but went to Yan'an in 1938. See Yang Mingsheng, ed., *Zhongguo xiandai huajia zhuan* (Biographies of modern Chinese painters) (Zhengzhou: Henan Art Press, 1983), *xia*, pp. 592-600; and *Zhongguo yishujia cidian, xiandai* (Dictionary of Chinese artists, modern) (Changsha: Hunan People's Art Press, 1981), 2:520-521.

Yan Han (b. 1916; né Liu Yanhan) entered the National Hangzhou Arts Academy in 1935. He joined the Communist party in Yan'an in 1938. See *Zhongguo yishujia cidian* 1:508-510.

46. JFNB, p. 320.

47. JFNB, pp. 320-321.

48. Hu Yichuan, "Huiyi Luyi muke gongzuotuan zai dihou," pp. 296-297; Yan Han, "Yi Taihangshan," pp. 308-309.

49. Unlike some other Yan'an artists, Jiang Feng apparently saved very few of his prints. The judgment that he made fewer prints after he became an administrator in Yan'an is based on prints collected in *JFMSLJ*. Prints not included in that collection have been brought to my attention by Jiang Wen, his son, and it is possible that searches of preliberation newspapers and other publications might lead to another view of his Yan'an activity.

50. For a translation and discussion of Mao's text, see Bonnie S. McDougall, *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, no. 39 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1980).

51. Gu Yuan, "Bumie de huoyan—mianhuai Jiang Feng tongzhi" (An unextinguishable flame—cherish the memory of Comrade Jiang Feng), reprinted from *RMRB*, Oct. 25, 1982, in *JFMSLJ, shang*, p. 349; and Luo Gongliu, "Renmin yishu jiaoyu jia Jiang Feng tongzhi yongsheng" (May the people's art educator Comrade Jiang Feng live forever), reprinted from *Gongren ribao*, Oct. 8, 1982, in *ibid.*, p. 340.

52. Kang Sheng is reputed to have been particularly ruthless in attacking former convicts (conversations with Joseph Escherick and Xin Han).

53. Yan Han, "Jiang Feng tongzhi de banxue chengjiu" (Jiang Feng's achievements in educational administration), reprinted from *Meishu yanjiu*, 1983, no. 1, in *JFMSLJ, shang*, p. 375.

54. JFNB, p. 321.

55. Interviews with C and D. See Spence, *Search for Modern China*, pp. 484-498, for background on this stage of the civil war. Over one hundred thousand soldiers from the Eighth Route Army made the arduous journey.

56. Li Song, ed., *Xu Beihong nianpu, 1895-1953* (A chronology of Xu Beihong) (Beijing: People's Art Press, 1985), p. 105; interview with BL. Zhang Xiaofei directed the new academy's art section.

57. Jiang Feng, "Huihua shang liyong jiu xingshi wenti" (The problem of using old forms in painting), reprinted from *Jin-Cha-Ji ribao* (Jin-Cha-Ji daily), Feb. 6, 1946, in *JFMSLJ*, pp. 8-11.

58. Goldman, *Literary Dissent*, p. 15.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

60. A slightly atypical picture of the *yuefenpai* type is reproduced in Minick and Jiao, *Chinese Graphic Design*, p. 84.

61. Interview with D.

62. "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianyuan sanshiwunian jishi" (Record of the thirty-five years since establishment of the Central Academy of Fine Arts), *Meishu yanjiu* (Art research), 1985, no. 1, p. 4. Additional information is taken from an anonymous mimeographed manuscript, "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi" (A brief history of the Central Academy of Fine Arts), reportedly compiled by the art historian Li Shusheng under the direction of school authorities.

63. *JFNB*, p. 322.

64. Hong Bo, "Huainian geming meishu shiye de kaituozhe Jiang Feng tongzhi" (Remembering a pioneer of revolutionary art, Comrade Jiang Feng), in *JFMSLJ*, p. 428.

65. "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianshi," p. 5. Other works considered important at the time included Feng Zhen's anti-American gouache painting *Children's Game* of 1948; reproduced in Bo Songnian, *Zhongguo nianhua shi*, p. 20.

66. In 1952, the Suzhou Art Academy, Shanghai Art Academy, and the Shandong University art department were combined into a new institution called the East China Arts Academy (see chapter 2). Based in Wuxi, the new school was directed by Liu Haisu. Yan Wenliang was transferred to the East China branch of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, where he served as a vice-director. See Qian Bochong, "Yan Wenliang xiansheng nianpu [Chronology of Yan Wenliang]," in *Yan Wenliang*, ed. Lin Wenxia (Shanghai: Xuelin Press, 1982), pp. 179-180.

67. This summary is based on William J. Duiker, *Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei: Educator of Modern China* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), pp. 44-52; and Xiao Feng, "Guanghui de yeji shanlan de weilai—wei xiaoqing liushi zhounian erzuo" (Brilliant achievements, a glittering future—written for the school's sixtieth anniversary), *Xinmeishu*, vol. 31 [sic], 1988, no. 1, pp. 4-5. Duiker refers to Cai's article of February 1912, "Duiyu jiaoyu fangzhen zhi yijian" (My views on the aims of education), in *Jiaoyu zazhi*, as his source on the five-part curriculum. One of many reprinted versions of this article may be found in *Cai Yuanpei meixue wenxuan* (Selected texts by Cai Yuanpei on aesthetics), ed. Wenyi meixue congshu Editorial Committee (Beijing: Beijing University, 1983), pp. 1-7, where the source is given as *Lingshi zhengfu gongbao* (Occasional government papers), no. 13 (Feb. 11, 1912). Duiker notes that when the program was adopted by the government, aesthetic education was retained but the internationalist world-outlook education omitted, which presumably left only four parts to the curriculum. Xiao Feng, whose documentation is incomplete, discusses Cai's proposal as consisting of only four parts—moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic—and cites an unidentified article in *Xin qingnian* (New youth), 1917, as his source.

The most thorough studies of pre-1937 Chinese art education are those by May-ching Kao, including "China's Response" and "The Beginning of the Western-Style Painting Movement in Relationship to Reforms in Education in Early Twentieth-

Century China," *New Asia Academic Bulletin* (*Xinya xueshu jikan*, University of Hong Kong) 4 (1983): 373-397. Basing her discussion on Cai's "Duiyu jiaoyu fangzhen de yijian," she, like Duiker, discusses Cai's educational aims as being fivefold.

68. "Yi meiyu dai zongjiao" (The theory of replacing religion by aesthetic education), a speech Cai gave to the Shenzhou Scholarly Society in Beijing, April 8, 1917, reprinted in *Cai Yuanpei xiansheng yiwen leichao* (An anthology of essays by Cai Yuanpei) (Taipei: Fuxing shuju, 1961), pp. 229-233; and in *Cai Yuanpei meiyu lunji* (Cai Yuanpei's collected essays on aesthetic education) (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1987), pp. 43-47. The latter cites *Xin qingnian*, vol. 3, no. 6 (Aug. 1917), as its source.

69. Xiao, "Guanghui de yeji shanlan de weilai," p. 5.

70. Kao, "China's Response," p. 118.

71. Kao (ibid.) states that Lin concluded his tenure in 1939. Wang Gong, Zhao Xi, and Zhao Youci, "Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu" (A short history of the Central Academy of Fine Arts), *Meishu yanjiu*, 1988, no. 4, p. 96, are not specific as to the date; they attribute his demotion to the 1938 decision by the Nationalist Ministry of Education to abolish the post of director when the exiled Hangzhou and Beiping academies were merged.

72. Ellen J. Laing credits Lin Fengmian with a "staunch refusal to bend to the art demands [of the Communist government, which] branded him as a maverick and left him after 1952 without official support," in "Zhongguo de yuegui yishu yu fandui yishu" ("Deviant" and "dissident" art in the People's Republic of China), *Jiuzhou yuekan* (Chinese culture quarterly) 2, no. 2 (Jan. 1988): 142; p. 6 in unpublished English version.

73. Kao mentioned biographical details about Xu; see "China's Response," pp. 81, 102-104, 155-156. Chinese-language literature on Xu Beihong is voluminous. Much of that available before 1975 was examined by Chu-tsing Li, *Trends*, pp. 91-98, in his evaluation of the artist. Among the more recent publications are Li Song (ed.), *Xu Beihong nianpu*; Ai Zhongxin, *Xu Beihong yanjiu* (Research on Xu Beihong) (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Art Press, 1984); a biography by his wife, Liao Jingwen, *Xu Beihong yisheng* (Beijing: China Youth Press, 1982) (also published in English translation as *Xu Beihong: Life of a Master Painter* [Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1987]); an exhibition catalogue, *Xu Beihong de yishu* (The art of Xu Beihong) (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1988); and Wang Zhen, *Xu Beihong yanjiu* (Research on Xu Beihong) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Art Press, 1991).

74. Chu-tsing Li, *Trends*, p. 98.

75. Li Keran, who was close to both Lin Fengmian and Xu Beihong, characterized the latter as the art world's Bo Le, in reference to an ancient story about a man who could recognize a horse's potential even when it was not obvious to ordinary observers. See "'Wulao' yi Lin Fengmian xiansheng," p. 1.

76. Liao, *Xu Beihong* (1982), p. 95/(1987), p. 86; Kao, "China's Response," p. 134.

77. Liao, *Xu Beihong* (1982), pp. 81-82/(1987), pp. 74-76.

78. Michael Sullivan notes, "This curious work was much admired by Mao Zedong" (*Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, p. 176).

79. Tian is mentioned in a letter by Xu Beihong recorded in Li Song (ed.), *Xu Beihong nianpu*, p. 71.

80. Liao, *Xu Beihong* (1982), p. 328/(1987), p. 281. The letters were addressed to his student Wu Zuoren, whom he invited to serve as dean, and the underground communist oil painter Feng Fasi, whom he invited to serve as oil painting professor.

81. Jiang's moving pacifistic statement was, according to several slightly younger

colleagues, commissioned by a Japanese administrator as a piece of antiresistance propaganda. According to this account, a now-lost section of the picture included American bombers as one source of the terror. This alleged collaboration marred his reputation in the early years after the war, but has been ignored by his recent biographers. The painting, whatever its inception, describes the suffering of the Chinese people in a war they did not initiate.

82. Other new faculty members were Li Hua, Ye Qianyu, Li Ruinian, Ai Zhongxin, Li Keran, Li Kuchan, Li Hu, Zhou Lingzhao, Dong Xiwen, Wang Linyi, Hua Tianyou, Dai Ze, Wei Qimei, and Liang Yulong. Qi Baishi and Huang Binhong held largely honorary appointments. See Liao, *Xu Beihong* (1982), pp. 328–329/(1987), p. 283.

83. Liao describes the affair as an “anti-Xu Beihong scheme” provoked by his progressive political activities; *ibid.* (1982), pp. 334–337/(1987), pp. 287–289.

84. Liao recalls that Tian Han visited Xu in 1948 to tell him that Mao and Zhou hoped he would not leave Beijing but would work for the party; *ibid.* (1982), p. 357/(1987), p. 306.

85. Interview with E.

86. Li Song (ed.), *Xu Beihong nianpu*, p. 107. According to a chart of the new government published in *RMRB*, Sept. 30, 1949, p. 2, the Government Administration Council was one of four high-level bureaucratic structures. Most important for our purposes, it was the one that administered art and education.

87. Liao, *Xu Beihong* (1982), p. 380/(1987), pp. 324–325. Ai Zhongxin records a meeting between Xu Beihong and Zhou Enlai in 1946; see “Xu Beihong de xueyuan jiaoyang he youhua yishu” (Xu Beihong’s academic training and the art of oil painting), in *Zhongguo youhua* (Chinese oil painting), ser. no. 46 (1992, no. 1): 3.

2. *The Reform of Chinese Art*

1. Spence, *Search for Modern China*, p. 508.

2. The following information is from Wang, Zhao, and Zhao, “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan lishi, fulu,” pp. 98–99, unless otherwise noted.

3. *Ibid.*; Liao, *Xu Beihong* (1987), pp. 324–325.

4. For the text of Mao’s note to Xu, dated November 29, 1949, see Li Song (ed.), *Xu Beihong nianpu*, p. 106; and the Red Guard broadside *Meishu fenglei* (Art storm), no. 3 (Aug. 1967), reproduced in *Red Guard Publications* (*Hongweibing ziliao*) (Washington, D.C.: Center for Chinese Research Materials, Association of Research Libraries, n.d.), 15:4862. Mao’s calligraphy is reproduced in *Meishu fenglei* and in “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianyuan sanshiwunian jishi,” p. 5. Mao’s calligraphy remains part of the school’s logo today.

5. The school adopted an official English name, Central Institute of Fine Arts, in the early 1980s, but most English writers still refer to it as the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Although perfect consistency is impossible, I prefer to use the term “academy” to refer to teaching institutions and the term “institute” to refer to organizations that focus primarily on research or creative activity.

6. Guo Moruo, Zhou Yang, Shen Yanbing, Qian Junrui, Tian Han, and Ouyang Yuqian were speakers; see “Zhongyang meishu xueyuan jianyuan sanshiwunian jishi,” p. 4.