

Pathfinder

December 14, 1949

Volume 56

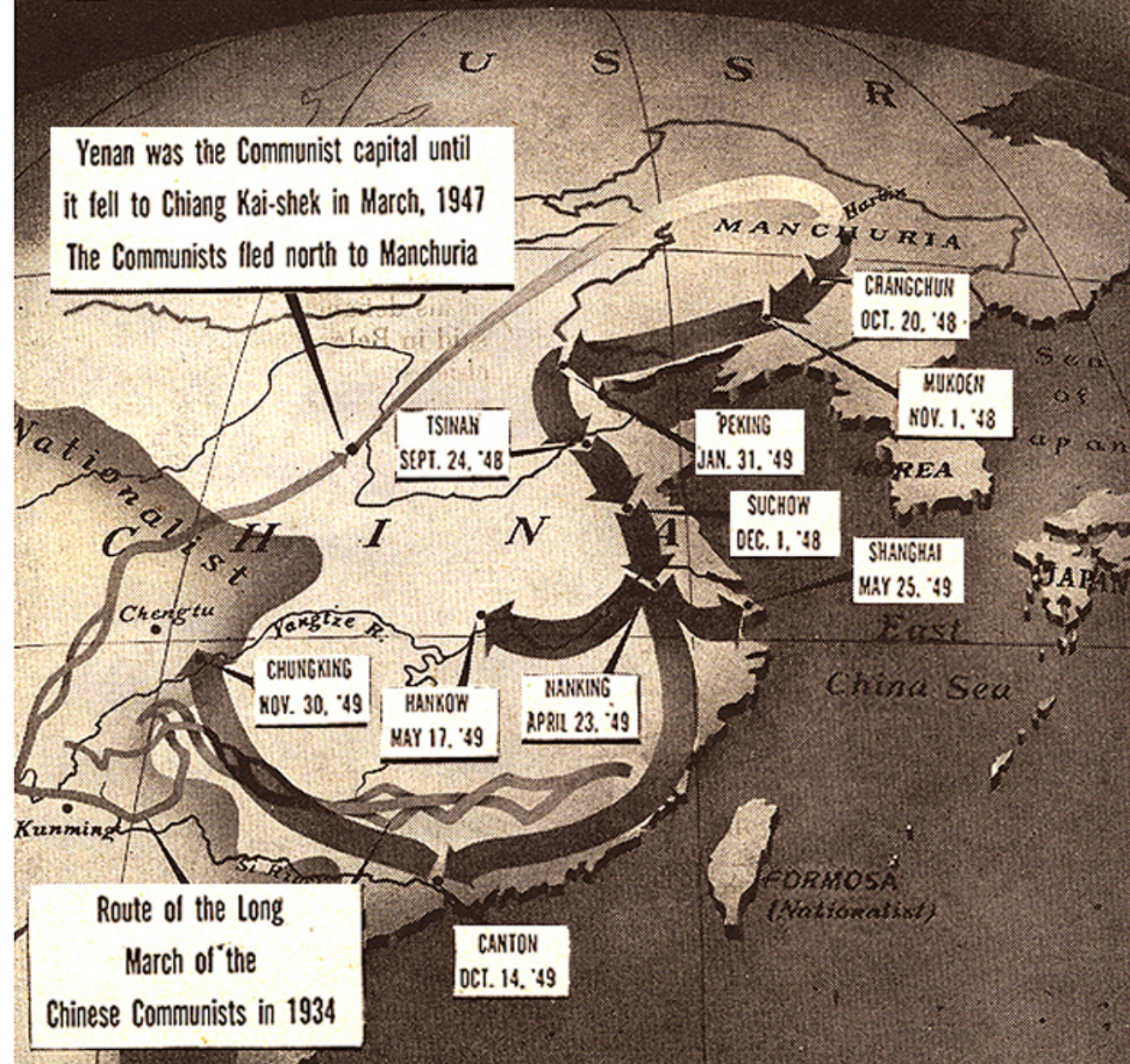
NEWS MAGAZINE

Number 25

p. 24

The Great Reversal

THE ROAD BACK



Chiang Kai-shek's war with the Communists began at Nanking in 1927, when he took over Dr. Sun Yat-sen's National People's party, the Kuomintang. It was all but finished last week when the Communists, with hardly any effort, captured Chungking, third Nationalist capital to fall to them since they started their offensive in Manchuria 14 months ago.

After Chiang's faction seized the Kuomintang in 1927, the Communists rallied under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, who had helped form the Chinese Communist party at Shanghai in 1921 and leads it today. Chiang promptly branded Mao "Red Bandit No. 1" and put a price of \$250,000 on his shaggy, black head. Mao fled with troops and followers into South China.

For seven years, Nationalist armies kept the Communists holed up, slowly closed in. Finally, Nationalist pressure forced Mao to gamble all in a desperate attempt to break through Chiang's lines. On the night of Oct. 16, 1934, Mao launched an attack, got by the Nationalists, started the famous Long March, or Ch'ang Cheng, as the Chinese Communists call it.

Mighty March. It was a meandering, 6,000-mile journey (see map) to join forces with Communists in North China. In 368 days the Communists traveled the equivalent of the distance from New York to Los Angeles and back. En route, despite having to fight several battles, they averaged 24 miles a day. They crossed 24 rivers, 18 mountain ranges, 12 provinces and finally reached the city of Yen-an, where they set up a new Red capital.

During World War II, the Reds fought the Japanese. After it was over they went back to fighting the Nationalists. When Chiang's troops took Yen-an in 1947, Mao fled to Manchuria. There, with Russian help, he built up his armies to travel The Road Back. He struck in October 1948, took Changchun, kept rolling.

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The Great Reversal

Last week with Nationalist resistance at its lowest ebb, his troops swept into Chungking, a feat the Japanese were unable to accomplish in 14 years of campaigning in China.

Just before the Red vanguard reached Chungking, Chiang flew off to temporary haven at Chengtu, 175 miles to the northwest. His stay there is certain to be of short duration, since Chengtu is the capital of Szechwan province, a must objective of the Communists. Szechwan, China's richest farm province, produced a bumper crop of rice this year.

Grab or Die. The Communists desperately need food for starving areas of North China and the Yangtze valley, where drought and floods ruined 1949's crops.

Last week the Nationalists lost a capital; this week they lost, for the time being, at least, their Acting President. In Hong Kong, Gen. Li Tsung-jen, Chiang's successor as President (the Gissimo now calls himself head of the National Emergency Council), bought a one-way plane ticket for a trip to the U.S. Li said his American visit was for "personal reasons" (treatment of a stomach ailment). But Chiang had his suspicions. Reports out of Hong Kong said Li and his old friend, Gen. Pai Chung-hsi, commander of the strongest Nationalist army left on the mainland (250,000 men), were scheming to set up with U.S. aid, if available, an anti-Chiang, anti-Mao government. This project was to get under way on Hainan island, which is only 12 miles off the mainland.

Chiang, meanwhile, shows no signs of giving up the fight. He made that clear once again on Sunday. Said he: "As a Chinese patriot and leader of the Chinese revolution, it [leadership of the fight against Mao] is my responsibility—and I shall not shirk it." When the going gets too hot on the mainland, he is expected to take haven on Formosa, 85 miles at sea between Japan and the Philippines.

America's role. The strategic importance of Formosa was recognized by Sen. H. Alexander Smith (R.-N.J.), who recently returned from a six-week tour of the Far East. He said that since Formosa is technically still part of Japan, the U.S. should occupy it now.

In Tokyo, Sen. William F. Knowland (R.-Cal.) demanded a policy of "showing the American flag in this part of the world." He called for the appointment of Gen. Douglas MacArthur as "High Commissioner of U.S. Far Eastern Affairs."