

**THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY DURING THE ERA OF THE
COMINTERN (1919-1943)**

TONY SAICH

**Daewoo Professor of International Affairs, Kennedy School of Government,
Harvard University**

**Article prepared for Juergen Rojahn, "Comintern and National Communist Parties
Project," International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam**

The rise to power of the Chinese Communist movement has shaped the history of China for most of the twentieth century. Almost from the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1920 to its seizure of state power in 1949, its struggle with the Guomindang (GMD, Nationalist Party) dominated the domestic stage of Chinese politics. The main elements of this history are well-known but the period of reform in China launched in 1978 has been accompanied by the release of an unprecedented amount of new documentation that has enabled a refinement of key components of the story. This newly available documentation shows how the CCP interpreted the revolution in which it was a key player, how its policies evolved to meet the changing circumstances, how policy was communicated both to party members and to the public at large, and how the CCP dealt with its complicated and crucial relationship with the Comintern. The message was not always the same, not even for party members. How much one was entitled to know or which particular interpretation of an event one was entitled to see depended on party rank.

The precise details of the Chinese revolution during the twentieth century are, of course, unique but there are a number of general features that will be familiar to students of revolutions elsewhere. First, the traditional system under the Imperial household and hybrid successors had ceased to "deliver the goods" for its citizens and crucially for key groups such as the urban elites and intellectuals. Disillusionment set in and the imperial system lost its monopoly over feasible alternatives, allowing disaffected intellectuals to challenge the premises of state power. Second, the communist movement was able to thrive where the bases of power of local elites had been destroyed or lost the capacity to repress alternatives to its rule. In these environments the communists could establish local military superiority. Third, for the revolutionaries, the organization and organizational ethos were crucial in terms of providing the movement with its direction and purpose. This gave the activists their frame of reference. It enabled them to channel the energies of other social forces when necessary and to overcome the resistance and apathy of the local population.

This chapter will cover three issues. First, some general problems in the relationship between the Comintern and the CCP are discussed. Second, a detailed overview of the development of the CCP and its relationship to other social forces is provided. This traces the development of the CCP from a small group of clandestine plotters to an armed force ruling over significant sovereign territory. Third, a review of some of the key sources available for the study of the CCP within its socio-economic and political contexts is provided.

The Comintern and the CCP: Some General Observations

During the fifties, the assumption in the West that the CCP was under the tutelage of Moscow led to attempts to see Comintern influence on the CCP in earlier phases of the revolution. It was not difficult to find. Indeed some western scholars saw the destruction of the first united front in China between the CCP and the GMD (1924-27) as amounting to a failure of Soviet policy or even more particularly that of Stalin himself. Interestingly, this is also the conclusion of more recent scholarship by historians in the People's

Republic of China. Soviet writings also had a vested interest in claiming a major role for the Bolshevik Party and the Comintern in the Chinese revolution and most historiography was directed towards this end. The massive defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1927 formed a key element in the struggle for power in Soviet Russia between Stalin and Trotsky. Trotsky himself offered a penetrating analysis of the failure of the CCP through its slavish adherence to Stalinist policies in the United Front, an analysis that affected the writings of his followers in the West. While perceptive in his analysis of the failings of the United Front, his exhortations for the CCP to break with the bourgeoisie and rely on the power of the working-class was as equally ill-conceived in a country where the working-class was weak and barely formed.

In terms of Western scholarship, the work of Schwartz and Schram has stood out as an exception to the idea of a revolution inspired by the Soviets. While Schwartz acknowledged the debt owed by the Chinese communists to Bolshevik theory and organization, he was aware of traditional influences and the "originality" of Mao Zedong and his supporters that was of increasing importance after 1927. The indigenous elements that had gone into Chinese communism became major objects for retrieval particularly after the Sino-Soviet rupture became apparent in the early sixties. Some researchers, such as Schram, began to explore the "sinification of Marxism" and to stress that much had happened in spite of Comintern influence rather than because of it.

Materials that have become available through the eighties and nineties show that there was a continual tension between the CCP and the Comintern resulting from China's perceived position in the world revolution and Moscow's perception of Soviet geopolitical interest. Comintern influence was of major importance in the party's founding and development but its authority was not always accepted nor decisive in all periods. Yet it was a voice that could not be ignored and up until 1938, when the Comintern could articulate its message clearly and get it through the communication network to the CCP leadership it had a reasonably decisive say. The legitimacy of the Comintern to dictate policy in China became a key point in the struggle between the pro-Soviet group in the CCP under the leadership of Wang Ming and those who under Mao Zedong who were closer to the indigenous roots of the revolution.

The historian Dirlik is the most recent scholar to argue that the role of the Comintern was crucial for forging together the party in its nascent period. His work shows the influence of the Comintern in bolstering Leninism and the party at the expense of anarchism, which was more influential initially, and other forms of Marxism. By contrast, van de Ven highlights the indigenous roots of the communist movement. He shows that not only did the localism have a strong impact on the first decade of the CCP but also there were regional groupings, such as that in Sichuan, which came into existence without reference to the Comintern and even without contact with the "founding fathers," Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. He shows just what a long, hard process it was to construct a Bolshevik organization in the Chinese cultural soil. Yeh Wen-Hsin also stresses the indigenous nature of the movement's origins and she has contributed significantly to our understanding of its initial diversity. Her study of the Hangzhou radicals who comprised many of the initial members of the Shanghai communist small group shows how disgust

of the old world rather than the revelations of the new led them to adopt radical alternatives. However, she takes issue with van de Ven's analysis of the party's evolution evolved to a Leninist form during the twenties. In her view, there was no evolution but rather the CCP was totally reconstituted at the expense of most of its earliest members. Those such as Shi Cuntong, the key figure in Yeh's work, withdrew from the party, rejecting its Bolshevization. By the end of the twenties, the party was built on a new membership, while those who remained members had been significantly radicalized by their experiences.

As noted above, for the Comintern, China was also a crucial area for the worldwide revolution and thus policy became embroiled in the polemics between Stalin and Trotsky. The CCP had a permanent mission at the Comintern and until the mid-thirties, the Comintern tried to coordinate its activities through the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai. The Comintern tried to enforce its will through the agents and representatives that it sent to implement policy in China.

Comintern agents in China enjoyed high prestige but had to find Chinese party members through whom they could transmit their orders and the Comintern's strategic and tactical visions. At the very best, they were always one step removed from the realities they were trying to influence and interpret. A stream of Comintern representatives from Maring (Sneevliet) through Borodin and Roy to Vladimirov were frustrated in their attempts to apply Comintern policy to China. Frequently, they discovered that the ideologically derived, policy positions of the Comintern were too simplistic to deal with the complex realities of the revolution on the ground in China. While Comintern agents in the field could enjoy considerable short-term freedom aided by the difficulties of communication with Moscow, over the long-term room for maneuver was limited. The ideological predilections of the Comintern set strict constraints on the extent to which policy could be moderated in the light of local conditions. Overloaded with details and information sent to Moscow from the periphery, the Comintern center in Moscow tried to catalogue information and provide policy prescriptions in terms of simple formulae based on the shifting class alignments. A good example was Maring's attempts to turn Lenin's prescriptions for revolution in the colonial countries into a viable strategy for China. Not only did it lead Maring to try to interpret reality to fit a prescriptive, ideological framework but also it caused him to push the CCP into collaboration with the GMD. Attempts by field agents to redefine their mission in the light of reality did, on occasion, bring them into conflict with Comintern leaders who interpreted such redefinitions as "ideological deviation."

Problems for Comintern agents were increased by the fact that not only were they in an alien environment but also had to interpret it through the views and experiences of others. Comintern agents did not speak Chinese and had no prior experience of working in China. As a result, they relied on the Chinese leaders for their information about the local situation. Thus, Maring depended on Liao Zhongkai for information about the GMD and the potential for cooperation with the CCP. Liao was a member of the left-wing of the GMD and a strong supporter of such cooperation perhaps leading Maring to adopt a

positive assessment while underestimating opposition within the GMD to cooperation with the communists.

Further, to get their message across, Comintern representatives had to find local "carriers" to propagate their views within the CCP. In some cases this worked well but in others it did not. For example, Pavel Mif was able to work through Wang Ming and Bo Gu in the early thirties to repudiate the policies of Li Lisan and keep the focus of official policy on revolutionary activity on the urban areas. By contrast, Maring was often frustrated in his attempts to push cooperation with the GMD and to establish a viable pro-CCP labor movement. Even Chen Duxiu, who supported Maring's view of the need for cooperation with the GMD at the CCP's Third Congress, had originally rejected Maring's ideas. In fact, it was only after Maring appealed to Comintern discipline that he was able to get Chen and other key CCP leaders on his side, albeit only briefly.

Two areas where Comintern representatives were particularly successful in instilling their ideas among CCP members were on the need for strong organization and the role that ideology played in inner-party debates. Bolshevik organization was attractive to a number of CCP leaders from an early stage. The collapse of the Confucian bureaucracy after the 1911 Revolution left an organizational vacuum that many CCP leaders felt could be filled by a modern party organized along Bolshevik lines. This kind of party was expected to provide an institutional form that transcended the personal authority of an individual leader and a rational hierarchical structure that would facilitate decision-making and policy implementation.

A number of the CCP's leaders who emerged during the twenties were attracted to the Bolshevik form of organization because they felt that it would challenge what they saw as a traditional Chinese political culture that stressed obedience to the powerful individual leader. To some extent, they simplified the analysis of the past as comprising a traditional system that culminated in an institution centered on an individual, the "Emperorship." However, previous Chinese rulers had been aware of the role played by "abstract" institutions and a relatively sophisticated bureaucracy had been developed. In their search for a suitable organizational form, these early CCP leaders overlooked the fact that while, in theory, Bolshevik organization would transcend the individual, from the outset it was inseparable from the role of Lenin. Subsequently, this tendency towards the domination of the organization by the supreme leader became more apparent under Stalin.

In addition, Bolshevik organization seemed to offer an alternative to the rule of individual warlords or the GMD, which from its reorganization in the early twenties, combined Leninist organization with leader worship. Sun Yat-sen was a supreme leader, a function subsequently taken over by Chiang Kai-shek. In the CCP, the reemergence of a leader dominate organizational system took longer and came with the assumption of supreme power by Mao Zedong in the Shaan-Gan-Ning communist base area in Northwest China in the forties.

A number of factors combined to instill the notion of the Bolshevik party among CCP members. First, there was the translation of key works and the promotion of the

Bolshevik form of organization in the party press. Secondly, there was the influence of the Comintern emissaries such as Voitinsky and Maring who already had experience of such party organization and devoted considerable time to propagating their views. Indeed Maring was appalled by the lack of discipline that he witnessed in the early CCP. Maring provided information on the idea and importance of party organization and of propaganda as a political weapon. Further, he stressed that the CCP's struggle was linked to and formed an integral part of the much wider worldwide struggle against imperialism. Within this context, according to Maring and subsequent Comintern agents, the interests and policies of the national party were subordinate to the Comintern.

Third, in the twenties there was the gradual return of influential individuals such as Cai Hesen who had studied in Europe and had become acquainted with both communist ideology and organization as well as the modern labor movement. As the twenties progressed, the idea of a Bolshevik party was strengthened through the visits or training of key CCP figures in Soviet Russia. The first group of Chinese students went to Soviet Russia for study as early as spring 1921 and some 1,000 were trained in the twenties and thirties at the Communist University of the Working People of China. While the students who returned from Soviet Russia were a very varied group they had all received a thorough training in concepts of party organization and discipline. Of particular importance for the subsequent development of the CCP were Wang Ming, Bo Gu, Zhang Wentian, Wang Jiaxiang and Chen Yun.

The Comintern was also influential in shaping the discourse of the CCP and the form of its inner-party struggle. The existing influence of the Comintern and the use of ideology as a weapon in inner-party struggle was increased by the removal of Chen Duxiu as party leader at the 7 August Emergency Conference of 1927. Chen's removal was a potentially traumatic event in CCP history. For many, Chen had been a symbol of progress not just from the May Fourth Movement (1915-19), but from his earlier struggles against the Imperial system. A number of the early leaders had been drawn into the party because of personal connections and loyalty to Chen. In terms of the Chinese tradition, to turn on a respected senior and elder was an event of major significance.

Chen's removal was legitimized not merely through criticism of his "mistakes" but also through the invocation of ideological symbols to justify the attack. Adherence to the correct ideological line came to legitimize policy, and understanding of the "line" was a necessary condition for leadership. This had the effect of strengthening Comintern control over party leadership as the Comintern was thought to possess a "higher wisdom" and vision of the revolutionary process than a mere national party. Concurrently, debate in the party became governed by the manipulation of ideological symbols with the result that genuine debate about policy disputes became even less feasible than had previously been the case. As the resolution of the Second Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee (CC) of the CCP pointed out (June 1929), there was no such thing as peace in the party. Erroneous tendencies always had to be fought against. All too often policy dispute was raised to the level of line struggle. Thus, the 7 August Emergency Conference (1927) ushered in ideological correctness as a key element in control, leadership and cohesion within the CCP. With this many of the debates within the Soviet Communist Party and

the Comintern were imported into the Chinese party. Those who opposed party policy were labeled as "Trotskyites," "Anarchists," "Right Deviationists," "Left Deviationists," etc. Once labeled their objection to policy was more easily dealt with by the Party Center. The idea of "correct line" also had consequences for the Party Center itself. It could not recognize faults in its own leadership and thus policy failure was followed by the hunt for "scapegoats" who had sabotaged the party's correct line.

The tendency toward the dominance of an organizationally derived ideological truth was inherent in the choice of a Bolshevik form of organization from the beginning. Yet in the early stages it was not so readily apparent. The CCP had been organized before there had been any serious discussion of Marxism in China, and indeed the choice of a Bolshevik organization removed the need for theoretical analysis. As a result "an organizationally defined analysis became for them [the original founders] a substitute for theoretical analysis." Naturally, it was presumed that those from Soviet Russia or their emissaries had a greater understanding of this problem and the relevant policy needs.

One last general question that deserves our attention is the relationship between the Comintern and the rise to power of Mao Zedong. Some previous analyses viewed Mao Zedong's rise to power within the CCP as occurring in spite of the Comintern, but more recently available materials suggest that the Comintern was at least willing to acquiesce in Mao's rise and his victories over rivals within the party such as Zhang Guotao and Wang Ming (Moscow's own trainee). In the conflicts with Zhang and Wang, the actions and words of the Comintern tended to favor Mao over his opponents. Whether the Comintern perceived so clearly what was at stake is another matter. Further, on a number of occasions the Comintern called for the CCP not to ape Soviet experience, but to develop its own policy, and the Comintern's Seventh Congress (1935) accepted that individual parties should have more freedom. Whether the Comintern approved of what was finally developed is a different question. In September 1938, the Comintern informed the CCP that it approved of the united front policy during the previous year, a year during which the party had been under the control of Mao Zedong and during which he had been in competition for dominance with Wang Ming. Further Dimitrov, the person responsible for Chinese affairs at the time, let it be known that Mao Zedong should be the party's senior leader in preference to Wang Ming (the man thought of as Moscow's closest ally). Thus, the Comintern was not anti-Mao nor was Mao inevitably opposed to the Comintern.

Periodization

A) 1920-1927: From Intellectual Groups to Organized Party

The early years of the CCP is period is marked its development from a set of disparate small intellectual groups to a more rigorously organized Leninist party. This process did not go uncontested and resulted in the departure of most of the original members and their replacement by those tempered in the urban struggles of the twenties. The question of collaboration with the GMD proved contentious. However, following Comintern promptings, there were increasingly desperate attempts to justify the continued

collaboration through providing class-based analyses of the internal forces within the GMD.

The CCP was a direct product of the intellectual ferment that accompanied the anti-imperialist demonstrations commonly referred to as the May Fourth Movement (1919). Its longer term origins lay in the collapse of the imperial system and the social and political vacuum that followed its fall. The seemingly innocuous Wuchang Uprising brought down the Qing dynasty and despite attempts at restoration, the imperial system was finished. The question for intellectuals interested in the nation's future was now what sort of system should govern China and bring into the "modern world?" This has been the key question underlying the upheavals and events of twentieth century history in China. With the collapse of the dynasty and with no obvious successor, the logic of the situation demanded a Republic. However, initial attempts under Yuan Shikai failed to establish a predictable and effective system of parliamentary rule. At the same time, the authority of the center fragmented and warlordism increased. The nominal government in Beijing continued to rule and was accorded the respect of the foreign governments but it was influenced by the shifting fortunes of a number of powerful political cliques. At the time of the May Fourth Movement, Beijing politics was dominated by Duan Qirui and the Anhui Clique. Duan and his supporters enjoyed the full support of the Japanese, a fact that further undermined Duan's credibility during the nationalist May Fourth Movement that marked a high point of anti-Japanese sentiment. This movement broke out with protests against the Versailles agreement ceding the German concession of Shandong to Japan. The indignation that this aroused led to a 3,000 strong demonstration on the streets of Beijing on 4 May 1919. The demonstration began peacefully but ended with the arrest of 32 demonstrators. Duan's embarrassment was increased when it was revealed that the Versailles decision was based partly on agreements signed between his government and the Japanese. Concern about Duan's growing power also caused his enemies in the Fengtian and Zhili cliques to combine forces to act against him and ouster him. Thereafter power in Beijing was generally shared between these two cliques.

During this same period, Soviet Russia stepped up its interest in China. However, from summer 1918 to early 1920, Siberia was the main theater of war against its remaining opposition and this hampered attempts at contacts. In fact, it was not until early 1920 that Russia sent its first representative to China to conduct investigations and make contacts. The 1919 Karakhan Declaration, which appeared to renounce the former czarist privileges in China, was particularly influential in China. It was easy for the Russians to make such sweeping generous gestures as, given the situation in the east of the country, they were in no position to carry out any of their promises. However, the propaganda gain was evident as Soviet Russia distanced itself from the old imperialist powers that were still intent of dismembering China.

For a number of Chinese intellectuals, such gestures and the intellectual attraction of Marxism led to a desire to understand more about the October Revolution. For such people, the Bolshevik revolution demonstrated the possibilities for radical change in the context of underdevelopment. Within this essentially favorable predisposition towards

Soviet Russia, the Comintern began to press its interests in China and to promote the idea of the development of a revolutionary party to guide and control future actions.

The Comintern laid down the framework of a policy relevant to China at its Second Congress (July-August 1920) with its discussion of how the national struggles in colonial countries could be integrated with the strategy for world revolution. Lenin recognized the importance of national movements in the east but was not willing to accept the views of Roy that appeared to shift the responsibility for overthrowing capitalism from the "advanced" west to the "backward" east. In Lenin's view movements to overthrow imperialism were an integral part of the broader struggle of the proletariat. The national struggle could only succeed by destroying the colonial system and this was an integral part of the broader struggle of the proletariat. To carry out these movements, Lenin felt that in the colonial countries it would be necessary to enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy while remaining distinct, and maintaining the independence of the proletarian movement. It was clear that for a time at least the bourgeoisie would be in control of the revolutionary movement. This was the strategic framework that Comintern representatives had to apply to the concrete realities of China.

In April 1920, Voitinsky visited China as the head of a group sent by V.D. Vilensky-Sibiryakov, one of the leaders of Vladivostok Branch of the Bolshevik's Far Eastern Bureau. This was decided upon with the agreement of the leadership of the Comintern. Beyond familiarization and establishing contacts, the Mission had the task to study the possibility of setting up an East Asian Bureau of the Comintern in Shanghai. He and his fellow visitors found fertile soil in which to plant the seeds of a Bolshevik organization. According to Dirlik, the timing was fortuitous as the radical movement in China had reached a point of crisis because the previous ideological and organizational premises appeared to have run into a dead end. Voitinsky's group established contacts with radical intellectuals such as Li Dazhao in Beijing and Chen Duxiu in Shanghai. Out of their discussions emerged the idea of founding a Communist Party in China. Later, a meeting of Soviet communists working in China was held in Beijing from 5 to 7 July 1920. The meeting was presided over by V.D. Vilensky-Sibiryakov and it highlighted the possibility of establishing a communist in China.

As has been noted, the early communist organizations in China did not just emerge out of the blue nor were they summoned up by Voitinsky's visit but evolved from the study societies set up during the May Fourth period. Many of China's later communist leaders were schooled in groups such as the "New People's Study Society," the "Awakening Society," and the "Social Welfare Society." They were products of the radicalization that had accompanied the collapse of the Qing dynasty and some of the early members were among the most radical thinkers during the May Fourth Movement. While interest in socialism pre-dated the May Fourth Movement, it is fair to state that during and after the Movement it increased in popularity and it became a fashionable topic in intellectual circles.

The May Fourth Movement represented the culmination of the attack on traditional Chinese culture developed in the previous century. Marxism was not the only mode of

thought to influence China's intellectuals during the movement, indeed it was not even the most important. However, a number of key intellectuals were sympathetic to its ideas. The best known are the two founding fathers of the CCP Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, but there were others such as Li Da, who played a key role in promoting the study of Marxism. The prestige these intellectuals enjoyed among the young people of China, especially those at the universities, meant that marxism was able to gain a sympathetic hearing earlier than would have been the case otherwise. One point worth emphasizing is that most of these intellectuals were primarily nationalists, and ironic as it may seem in the internationalist credo of marxism, and its subsequent Leninist variant, they saw the possibility of China's national salvation. This is important for understanding subsequent developments and the ultimate form that Marxism-Leninism took in China.

The key magazine in the May Fourth Movement was New Youth (Xin qingnian), which later became the organ of the CCP. It was set up in 1915 and edited by Chen Duxiu and contained regular contributions not only from those who were moving closer to marxism such as Chen himself and Li Dazhao but also from liberals such as Hu Shi. All writers shared a desire to replace the principles of Confucianism with political and social practices to bring China into line with the modern world. The crux of the difference between the liberals and the marxists was the question of political power. Response to the October Revolution drove a deeper wedge between them. Hu Shi and the liberals rejected its value for China but Chen and Li were sympathetic and wished to know more. As Meisner has shown the fundamental difference revolved around whether China's problems should be resolved by political revolution or by slow, evolutionary change.

A growing interest in labor also helped promote sympathy towards Marxism. During the May Fourth Movement, a more politically conscious urban proletariat began its emergence onto the political stage. Although the workforce remained small, its members were increasing dramatically, primarily as a result of the First World War. China's tardy industrialization had been propelled forward as many foreign imports disappeared as a result of the war. A number of radical students such as Zhang Guotao and Luo Zhanglong became interested in the workers' movement and its further development. Both began organization work among the railway workers around Beijing and were among the earliest members of the CCP. The power of labor in Shanghai during the May Fourth Movement greatly impressed later CCP leader and labor activist Li Lisan. Chesneau and a number of writers have interpreted the development of the labor movement in terms of its fit with the interests of the CCP and viewed the movement as having followed the CCP's lead. However, especially in Shanghai the labor movement did not begin with the arrival of communist organizers and the CCP had to struggle to adapt to this reality. As Perry has noted, Shanghai labor was the heir "to a tradition of collective action that did not always fit easily with plans of outside organizers." Her detailed study shows how workers' reactions to CCP and GMD overtures and response to their policies varied "along lines that long predated" the two parties and their respective political regimes.

The pre-cursors to the communist oriented organizations were the marxist study societies that were established in a number of urban centers during the May Fourth movement. The group in Shanghai was the first communist organization to be set up, most probably in

August 1920 and, very loosely it functioned as the provisional Party Center until the First Congress was convened the following year. The Shanghai group was instrumental in the establishment of groups in Wuhan (September 1920), Jinan (November/December 1920), and Guangzhou (Canton, January 1921). In addition, there were groups that called themselves communist in Beijing (October 1920), Changsha (end 1920/early 1921), Tianjin (before May 1921), Hong Kong (before May 1921), and Chongqing (March 1920). While they called themselves communist, this did not mean that they operated with communist organizational principles or even that the majority viewpoint within them was communist. For example, the group in Guangzhou before Chen Duxiu's arrival had nine members of whom seven were under the influence of anarchism. The only two who were not anarchists were the two members of the Rosta News Agency, Stoyanovich and Perlin. In January 1921 when Chen arrived in Guangzhou his first task was to reorganize the group and challenge the influence of the anarchists. Similar problems were confronted in Beijing where the communist group also had very strong anarchist tendencies about which early communists Li Dazhao and Zhang Guotao complained bitterly.

Although the precise structure and names varied from place to place, by the time of the First Party Congress the communist organizations functioned in a three-fold structure. Operating illegally at the core were the communist small groups; then there were units of the Socialist Youth Corps operating semi-openly and providing a recruitment pool for the party; and finally the marxist study societies presented a public face, trying to reach the widest possible audience.

Before the First Party Congress, the work of the groups varied from place to place as did its intensity. However, in general, with varying degrees of success, the nascent groups involved themselves in the labor movement and propaganda work. For example, to facilitate this work, the Shanghai organization was divided into two sections: one for propaganda and one for labor work. Work was patchy at best, and even in Shanghai during the first half of 1921 work began to fold. This was a result of the lack of funding, the lack of personnel to carry out the workload, as well as emerging disagreements over how activist the nascent party should be. This environment formed the back-drop to the First Congress that opened in Shanghai on 23 July 1921. It was attended by 13 Chinese delegates representing 53 members and by Maring on behalf of the Comintern, and Nikolsky representing the Irkutsk Bureau of the Comintern.

Despite the policy of the Comintern and the presence of its representatives, the First Party Congress adopted a sectarian, pro-proletarian line and was extremely hostile to any notion of cooperation with the bourgeoisie. The views of those who felt that the proletariat was too immature and that the party should concentrate on education and study alternatives such as social democracy was rejected. The "Program" passed by the Congress called for the "revolutionary army of the proletariat to overthrow the capitalistic classes" and for the adoption of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The "Program" and the "Resolution" are uncompromising in their hostility to collaboration with other parties, groups or the "yellow intellectual class." The workers' movement was confirmed as the core of party work with the chief aim being the creation of industrial unions.

The party itself was to adopt a secretive, hierarchical structure based on local Soviets. Supreme power was vested in a Central Executive Committee (CEC) that still had to be set up, thus rejecting pleas for a more decentralized organization. It would have the right to supervise and direct the finances, publications and policies of any local Soviet. The final session of the Congress elected the central leadership. As party membership was still small, it was decided to set up a Provisional Central Executive Bureau to maintain liaison etc. with the various branches. Chen Duxiu, Zhang Guotao and Li Da were elected members with Chen as secretary. Zhang and Li were in charge of organization and propaganda respectively. In Chen Duxiu's continued absence, Zhou Fuhai was to deputize for him.

Despite the high sounding phrases adopted by the Congress, party work was slow in getting off the ground because of continued differences of opinion, financial difficulties, and the fact that the newly elected party Secretary, Chen Duxiu, did not return to Shanghai until late August-mid September. By November 1921, however, a preliminary work plan was agreed upon and circulated to the localities. It tried to formalize party structure by calling on the five major districts to set up district executive committees, each recruiting some 30 members. This would allow a "formal CEC" to be set up in accordance with the party program. Labor work was stressed and each district was instructed to have at least one labor union under its control. The focus was on organizing railway workers with the objective of creating a national railway union.

The exclusive focus on the working-class and hostility towards the bourgeoisie ran counter to the policy line that was evolving in the Comintern and the subsequent period was dominated by attempts to force on the CCP a policy of cooperation with the bourgeoisie in the nationalist revolutionary movement. It fell to the Comintern representative Maring, to attempt to persuade the CCP

The pressure on the CCP to collaborate with other class forces was increased by Maring's generally negative assessment of the party and his positive response to the GMD that was based in the South of China. This led Maring to propose that CCP members join the GMD to form a bloc within. The ideological complication of the proletariat joining a bourgeois party was swept aside with the assertion that the GMD was not a bourgeois party at all but a combination of four groups, the intelligentsia, the Chinese patriots overseas, the soldiers and the workers.

Initially, the idea was totally unacceptable to the CCP leaders as Chen Duxiu's letter of 6 April 1922 to Voitinsky clearly shows. Yet by June 1922 signs of a shift in attitude were apparent. Presumably the influence of both Maring and the Youth International representative, Dalin, was beginning to take effect. CCP propaganda began to refer to the GMD as "revolutionary" and the CCP's Second Congress (16-23 July 1922) confirmed the party's decision to join the democratic revolutionary movement in a temporary alliance. It is important to note that this decision referred to "all the nation's revolutionary parties" not just the GMD. However, since the "democratic elements" did not represent the interests of the proletariat, the CCP was to promote an independent class movement. Work in the labor movement was still seen as the CCP's main focus. Congress

documents called for labor unions to represent all workers regardless of belief but to educate them to accept socialist and communist principles. The party, though, was seen as embodying the class-conscious elements of the proletariat who understood that the objective was to overthrow capitalism. The Congress also called for organization to be tightened to overcome anarchist tendencies and the CEC was enshrined as the party's most powerful body entrusted to enforce party decisions. Reality was very much different and the small band of communists continued to be deeply divided over key issues of strategy and tactics, especially the question of collaboration with the GMD.

The Congress favored a horizontal alignment alongside the GMD rather than a "bloc within" as had been proposed by Maring. On his return to China (from his consultations in Moscow) in the summer of 1922, Maring found major opposition to his policy. Four of the five members of the party's CEC belonged to a "small group" under Zhang Guotao. This "small group" was based on the Labor Secretariat and was hostile to the idea of cooperation with the GMD.

To get his ideas accepted, Maring convened the Hangzhou Plenum (28-30 August 1922), the first Plenum ever held by the CCP. To overcome the opposition of the majority, Maring was able to cite the "Instructions for the ECCI Representative in South China." This document, drafted by Radek on the basis of Maring's statements, was an endorsement of the latter's views. This imposition of Comintern discipline was intended to move the CCP away from its idealism and exclusionist positions to embrace the bourgeoisie in a tactical alliance. Moreover, Maring used the document to argue that CCP members accept his view that they join the GMD to form a "bloc within." The Plenum called for individuals to join the GMD while retaining their CCP membership. The CCP was to give directions for work within the GMD and was to lead the work of organizing trade unions. As far as Maring was concerned the necessary freedom for the communists existed and the Guide Weekly was to criticize the GMD and to try to prompt it toward stronger anti-imperialist actions. The Third Party Congress did eventually pass resolutions in favor of cooperation with the GMD on the lines suggested by Maring but substantial opposition remained within the party. It was left to Borodin, who was sent as Maring's replacement to implement the policy.

The party was in bad shape by the time it convened its Third Congress (12-20 June 1923) in Guangzhou. Not only was it divided on the issue of cooperation with the GMD but also the brutal crushing of the February 1923 Zhengzhou railway workers' strike had shattered the party's high hopes for the workers' movement. The destruction of the railway union, the best communist organization, and the ensuing crackdown on labor in general, made many party members realize that the strength of the proletariat alone was too weak. Chen Duxiu's work report to the Party Congress reflected the depressed atmosphere within the party as did Maring's reporting to the Comintern.

Membership of the CEC was increased to nine but, at its first session, it was to elect a five person Central Bureau to exercise power on its behalf. The Bureau was to meet every week while the CEC was only to meet every four months. Thus, effective power was to remain centralized in a few hands. The CEC also elected a chair to preside over both

organs, a secretary to handle party correspondence and documentation, and a party accountant.

Despite the passing of resolutions for cooperation with the GMD, the policy was not smoothly implemented immediately afterwards, indeed it was hardly implemented at all. The Central Bureau of the party decided to move back to Shanghai as it felt that not much could be achieved with Sun Yat-sen. In addition, it wanted to create new organizations in the north either to bring about a radical change in the dominant opinions within the GMD, or to create a new nationalist party. This was quite contrary to Maring's intentions although even he was moved to muse about a GMD without Sun at its head.

The disillusionment with Sun stemmed from his obsession with a military solution to China's problems and his resistance to the reorganization of the GMD. This was fueled by what the communists saw as his inactivity concerning the situation in Beijing. In June 1923, through the intrigues of Cao Kun, Li Yuanhong was dismissed as President of the Republic. The CCP saw the resultant power vacuum as providing Sun with the perfect chance to place himself at the head of the national movement by going to Shanghai and convening there a National Assembly. However, Sun rejected these overtures, claiming that the Assembly was an impossibility and that when the merchants understood this they would rally to him.

Mistrust persisted in the relationship with the GMD with Guangdong being the main exception. Borodin's arrival in Canton had put life back into the process of expanding cooperation between the CCP and the GMD. This was helped by promises of even greater Soviet financial support and the reorganization of the GMD that finally took place in January 1924. Borodin worked within the general framework sketched out in the Comintern's decisions on the China question of January and May 1923. According to the Comintern, the main targets of the revolution were imperialism and its Chinese supporters. While fighting these enemies, the CCP was to strengthen its position within the GMD and more broadly within the nationalist movement through CCP control of the peasant and labor movements. To use Stalin's metaphor, the GMD-right would be squeezed like a lemon and flung aside. All acknowledged that a time would come when the interests of the bourgeoisie at the head of the nationalist movement would clash with those of the proletariat. At this point, the representatives of the proletariat were to cease the temporary cooperation and take over leadership. Deciding when this time had come proved difficult and it was Chiang Kai-shek who acted first putting down the CCP-led workers' movement in Shanghai in April 1927.

Initially, the united front had proved very successful for the small group of communists. Between January 1924 and May 1926, communist influence in the GMD grew steadily and CCP membership grew from just under 1,000 in January 1925 to almost 58,000 by April 1927. Communist influence in the urban areas received a boost from the nationalist demonstrations of the May 30th Movement (1925). The protection of the nationalist armies in the south helped the CCP to develop its influence among the peasantry. Of special importance in this latter respect was the Hai-Lu-Feng Soviet set up by Peng Pai.

The CCP's success was one major reason for its undoing. Some GMD leaders came to see it as a real threat to their leadership of the revolution. The increasing revolutionary activity in the countryside unsettled those GMD leaders who did not favor a complete break-up of the traditional power structure. In fact, the CCP was caught between the consequences of conflicting objectives. On the one hand, it was trying to promote the national revolution in cooperation with the GMD while also pursuing a social revolution that brought it into conflict with powerful elements within the GMD. As the CCP tried to restructure the GMD in order to attain its own goals, opposition within the GMD to CCP membership strengthened. This conflict with the CCP and a reassessment of cooperation were accompanied by a growing rift between the left and right wings of the GMD and the concentration of military power in the hands of the emerging leader of the GMD-right--Chiang Kai-shek.

The CCP also remained divided on the policy of cooperation with the GMD as documents from a succession of party meetings show. However, attitudes to cooperation varied depending the specific environment under which CCP members were working. The situation looked quite different to Chen Duxiu, Voitinsky and the Party Center working illegally among the proletariat in Shanghai than it did to Borodin and the communists working openly in Canton under GMD protection and developing the peasant movement. Borodin spoke of this conflict in Moscow in 1930 during his self-defense against accusations of counter-revolutionary behavior. He remarked that here had been "two lines in the Chinese Revolution," one in Shanghai and one in Guangzhou. Friction between these two rival centers undermined the party's capacity to act coherently when threatened by opponents in the GMD. While Chen Duxiu, on a number of occasions, called for the withdrawal of CCP members from the GMD and the creation of an open GMD-CCP alliance, the Guangzhou party organization called for the takeover of the GMD leadership. The situation was complicated by the Comintern's repeated insistence that the CCP remain within the GMD while, at the same time, strengthening its independent position among the mass movements.

Communist influence within the GMD was helped by the aid Soviet Russia was willing to donate and by the reorganization of the GMD into a Leninist-style party. Borodin had been sent to monitor this work. Unlike Maring, he was not merely a Comintern representative but was sent by the Soviet Government and also represented the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). Arriving in Canton early in October 1923, Borodin immediately set to work. His first task was to bring about the reorganization of the GMD and in this endeavor he found Sun Yat-sen's willing support. Borodin acted as adviser to the Provisional CEC of the GMD set up in late-October by Sun Yat-sen to draw up plans for party reorganization and to prepare for the national GMD congress. It was Borodin who provided the draft of the GMD Constitution.

In the latter part of 1924, a major power shift in Beijing appeared to offer a favorable opportunity for the nationalist movement in general and for Sun Yat-sen in particular to exert influence on the national stage. In October 1924, a subordinate of Wu Peifu, Feng Yuxiang, disobeyed orders to march against Zhang Zuolin, the head of the Fengtian clique. Instead Feng formed an alliance with Zhang and together they seized power in

Beijing. This resulted in the fall of Wu and the collapse of the Zhili clique in north China. Sun Yat-sen was invited to the capital to participate in discussions about China's reunification. Sun's intention was to establish a National Assembly composed of delegates from mass organizations, chambers of commerce, and armies opposed to Wu Peifu, something that the CCP had tried, to no avail, to impress on Sun in June 1923. However, the negotiations did not go well. On 24 November 1924, Duan Qirui had taken over the government replacing Cao Kun. Instead of the National Assembly, Duan favored convening a "National Rehabilitation Conference." This was opposed by Sun because it would exclude representatives from the mass organizations and would favor the militarists. On 1 February 1925, the Conference was convened and led to a break between Duan and the GMD.

Sun's trip to Beijing created divisions in the CCP. Chen Duxiu and the Party Center opposed the trip feeling that Sun should remain in Guangzhou to consolidate the achievements of the revolution. Borodin and the Guangzhou communists thought that by going to Beijing, Sun would expand the movement's influence. Borodin's view prevailed and the CCP began publicly to support the calls for a National Assembly.

These tensions notwithstanding the tone of the Fourth Party Congress (11-22 January 1925) that convened in Shanghai was much more optimistic than that of its predecessor and delegates seemed to anticipate a rising revolutionary tide. In particular, the Congress sought to clarify the relationship of the CCP to the national revolutionary movement, to define more clearly labor and peasant policies and to adjust the party's organizational structure.

The Congress reviewed the national revolutionary movement to date and tried to outline the correct policy for the CCP with respect to the GMD. Many CCP members were finding it difficult to strike a balance between developing the GMD in the nationalist movement while not ignoring the CCP's own agenda. This tension persisted until the two parties split in 1927. The resolution reflects Chen Duxiu's caution about CCP involvement with the GMD. While "leftist" mistakes included continuing to promote the proletarian revolution and opposing entry into the GMD and the nationalist revolution for fear that the CCP would become a "yellow" party, "rightist" mistakes were defined as being more dangerous. The tendency among members to think that concentration on the nationalist movement and the GMD meant ignoring the CCP's own work was criticized as was the belief that a policy of compromise between capital and labor should be pursued.

In contrast to the CCP's earlier May 1924 division of the GMD into a left and a right, a center was now discovered. The left comprised the workers, peasants and radical intellectuals, the right was composed of the military, bureaucrats, politicians and capitalists, and the center consisted of the revolutionary elements in the "petty bourgeois intellectual class." This center was deemed important because although numerically weak, its members occupied leading positions in the GMD. The CCP's task was to expand the GMD-left. However, this was not to lead to the neglect of opposition to imperialism and the economic struggles of the peasantry and working-class.

The Congress decided that CCP strength still lay with the labor movement, a movement said to be entering a new phase that would offer opportunities for expansion. Although the labor movement was seen as the key component in the nationalist revolution, the resolution adopted made it clear that preservation of its independence was most important. In fact, the Guangzhou communists were criticized for allowing the labor movement to lose its independence, a problem that was claimed to have been corrected at the May 1924 enlarged CEC meeting.

The creation of a strong, independent labor organization would ensure CCP dominance of the nationalist movement as it was, by self-definition, "the leader of the working-class." Thus, the CCP's primary task was to organize labor unions and promote class-based propaganda. The use of party branches at the work place was stressed. They were to ensure that party policy was carried out and to guide work in the labor unions and the small groups in the factories. In future, all factories etc. would be able to form a party branch where there were three or more members.

The development of the peasant movement in areas under GMD control in south China caused the Congress to adopt the party's most extensive resolution on the peasantry to date. However, it still did not provide a concrete plan of action. The special place of the peasantry in the Chinese revolutionary movement was acknowledged and its participation was seen as vital for success. While expressing support for GMD policy in the south, the resolution criticized the GMD for using the peasantry for its own ends. It claimed that the GMD organized peasant associations in areas where it needed their support but did not force landlords to give way to the peasantry nor did the GMD sufficiently protect the economic and political rights of the peasantry. The resolution provides a good example of the ambiguity concerning work within the united front. At one moment it is calling for the use of the GMD's organization, the next it is chiding the GMD and then calls for independent action. It is not surprising that some comrades were confused about the exact relationship of their work to that of the GMD. The resolution also criticized the policy of the Guangzhou communists. It claimed that their stress on the role of the GMD had caused the peasantry to doubt its own strength and to fail to understand its own class position. This had caused the peasantry to become disappointed in the CCP.

The CCP continued to take organization seriously and stated that this was the most important question concerning the party's "survival and development." Party leadership hoped that improvements in organization would enable the party to break out from being merely a collection of "small propaganda groups." In particular, the "Resolution on Organization" stressed the role of the branches as the basic units of party organization. To recruit more workers and peasants, membership procedures were to be relaxed. In future, it would not be necessary for prospective members to pass through the SYL and "class conscious elements" would be able to join the party directly. The party was to be enlarged at the local level by changing the requirement that five members were necessary to form a cell (xiaozu) to only three being needed to form a branch (zhibu). This emphasis on the branch marked an attempt to change the party from being area based to being occupation based. To control party activities in other organizations such as the GMD, the formation of party fractions (dangtuan) was confirmed.

The Congress provided a set of resolutions and organizational changes that it hoped would help the party cope with the expected upsurge in the revolutionary movement. Despite the collapse of the talks in Beijing and Sun Yat-sen's death (12 March 1925), events took an even more radical turn than expected. The May 30th Movement (1925) witnessed a massive upsurge in nationalist sentiment and provided the party with a chance for rapid expansion, particularly in urban Shanghai. However, the movement brought with it new headaches as the Party Center tried to grapple with the new situation and the influx of members. The period from 1925 to April 1927 marked a high point in the development of influence in the labor movement and with the development of communist-influenced organizations in Shanghai. Crucial in pushing CCP influence in the labor movement was Shanghai University that had been established in October 1922. Under the subsequent protection of the united front, key figures such as Deng Zhongxia and Qu Qiubai were able to train cadre for the labor movement. Shanghai University was also important for the mobilization of women's organizations during the May 30th Movement.

The May 30th Movement had its origins in a February 1925 strike against the Japanese-owned textile mills in Shanghai. After simmering for a few months, it exploded on 15 May when a factory guard killed one of the strikers and wounded others. Incidents spread as did injuries and arrests and on 28 May, the CCP together with other organizations called for coordinated demonstrations to take place on 30 May. International Settlement police opened fire on the demonstration killing ten and wounding and arresting many others. In an attempt to gain control of the movement, the CCP set up the Shanghai General Labor Union. It was established on 1 June and was chaired by Li Lisan. The Movement in Shanghai continued until July when it began to wind down and by mid-September the General Labor Union had been forcibly closed down and the CCP leadership had gone underground. The movement spread to other cities and caused the Hong Kong-Guangzhou strike that lasted from June 1925 until October 1926. Communist influence spread as a result of the Movement and party membership increased from 994 at the time of the Congress to some 3,000 in October 1925.

The CCP responded by trying to expand its role and to transform itself from a "small group" into a "central mass political party." A CEC meeting in October 1925 decided to relax membership procedures even further. Knowledge of marxism was no longer required while anyone who was a factory worker was considered a natural member. However, collaboration with the GMD was to be continued but it was stated that now the GMD contained only a left and a right wing and that the right wing was becoming increasingly reactionary. The meeting also addressed the question of the peasantry at some length. The proclamation for the peasantry stated that the fundamental solution to the problems they faced was land confiscation. However, only the land of big landlords, warlords, bureaucrats and the churches was to be taken. An eight-point program for the peasantry's minimum demands was outlined. It was based on experience in the south, and developed the ideas put forward earlier by Chen Duxiu in November 1922. It called for recognition of peasant associations and the establishment of elected self-governing bodies in the countryside, the setting of maximum rents and minimal grain prices by the associations and self-governing bodies, the provision of interest-free loans to the

peasantry, special funding for river control and the creation of armed peasant self-defense corps. The importance of the peasantry was recognized by splitting the former worker and peasant committee into two. Despite this stress on the peasantry, the main revolutionary force was still the working-class. The proclamation for the peasantry made it clear that to achieve its aims it must ally with the working-class.

The success of the CCP and its more aggressive attempts to organize and expand brought concern within the ranks of the GMD and as the right began to gain control of the movement, clashes became inevitable.

The tensions were particularly highlighted after the "Zhongshan Incident" of March 20, 1926. Chiang Kai-shek ordered martial law claiming that a gunboat under communist command, the Zhongshan, was planning to kidnap him. Whether the plot was real or not it provided Chiang with the chance to clip the wings of the communists. He placed some 50 together with the soviet advisers under house arrest. Borodin was able to negotiate their release but at a price. This included restricting CCP activity within the GMD, providing a name list of all its members in the GMD, and abandoning its separate organizations in the GMD. Further, CCP members could no longer serve as bureau head in nationalist organizations. This last point meant that the communist, Tan Pingshan, had to give up the powerful post of head of the organization department to Chiang Kai-shek. Borodin was also forced to support the Northern Expedition to which he had previously been opposed in return for Chiang's promises to curb the GMD-right. Chiang was still, of course, dependent on Soviet arms and aid for the Northern Expedition and made it clear that his original actions had not been against the alliance with Soviet Russia as such. The Northern Expedition was officially launched at the beginning of July 1926 even though some units had gone north earlier.

These events caused the communists further confusion. Publicly, they accepted the new regulations passed by the GMD CEC in May but privately there were conflicts about the way forward. It appears that the Guangzhou area proposed an immediate counter-attack against Chiang and the take over of the GMD from within while Chen Duxiu proposed withdrawal. In June, a compromise was suggested, cooperation would continue but as a bloc without rather than a bloc within. However, this alternative was blocked by the Comintern.

Withdrawal from the alliance with the GMD or some elements of it was consistently rejected by the Comintern even after the massacre of the communists by Chiang Kai-shek in April 1927. The tenure of Comintern policy was set in the "Theses on the Chinese Question" adopted at the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI (November-December 1926). This called for continued CCP cooperation with the GMD-left to bring about the success of the nationalist revolution. The GMD-right was not to be allowed to turn the GMD into a bourgeois party. At the same time, the "Theses" called for the CCP to take control of the social revolution. The agrarian revolution was defined as the central component in the revolutionary struggle and the communists were to gain "real power" in the rural areas through the peasant associations. According to the "Theses," the fear that intensification of class struggle in the village would weaken the united anti-imperialist front was

unfounded. The approach may have seemed feasible for those situated in Moscow but the CCP was unable to act on these conflicting demands. The CCP alienated the radical peasant leaders by trying to check the "excesses" but at the same time it still aroused the hostility and suspicion of the GMD-left.

The CCP tried to grapple with the repression and slaughter of the communists at its Fifth Congress (27 April - 9 May 1927) held in Hankou. Far from ordering a break with the GMD, delegates argued about how to push ahead with the peasant movement without upsetting cooperation. Chiang's "betrayal" was met head on and was treated as a positive sign for the revolution. In a long and interesting review of party work since the Fourth Congress, Chen Duxiu said that Chiang's betrayal had brought the Chinese revolution to a new stage. According to Chen, the bourgeoisie had now deserted the revolutionary front reducing its numbers but improving its quality. The four-class bloc had been reduced to a "united front of workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie." Thus, the future task was to strengthen these three classes and CCP work in the military. The small number of bourgeois elements who remained could be expelled if they displayed "counter-revolutionary tendencies."

Future party policy was to concentrate on creating a "revolutionary democratic regime" in the areas held by the GMD, although it was acknowledged that this objective was still far away. According to Chen, the party was to discuss preparations for seizing power and he described it as "no longer an opposition party" but one that was really going to lead the revolution.

However, despite such bold words, the CCP was still going to have to work through its cooperation with the GMD. This meant that its policy towards the peasantry still erred to the side of caution and ideas of confiscation of all land were rejected. Chen commented that while policy towards the peasant movement had been "too rightist" in the past, it would be wrong to adopt now radical proposals to confiscate the land of all landlords.

The re-definition of the revolutionary forces and the moderate land policy did not help pull the party out of its dilemma. Despite the restrictions placed on the peasant movement, "excesses" continued to occur. The CCP finished up pleasing no-one, the GMD government in Wuhan blamed the communists for the excesses and the peasant leaders blamed it for not supporting their radical actions and leaving them prey to the military force of warlords and GMD troops. Suppression of the communists continued and the events of summer 1927 seemed to make a mockery of the CCP leadership's decision to continue the alliance with the GMD. The communists suffered blow after blow as one group after another of nationalist generals and politicians "betrayed the revolution."

The possibility of breaking with the GMD-left was reduced further by the messages coming from Moscow. Given his struggles with Trotsky, it was impossible for Stalin to acknowledge the folly of continued cooperation with the GMD. In May 1927, the ECCI also interpreted the break with Chiang Kai-shek in a positive light. It re-emphasized the

need to place the rural revolution at the center of the stage but only within the context of the continued alliance with GMD.

The high-point in CCP compromise came with the adoption by an enlarged CC meeting on 30 June of an 11-point resolution on relations between the two parties. The resolution acknowledged that the GMD was the leader of the national revolution. Communists in government functions were to work only as GMD members. To minimize conflicts, communists holding government positions would give up their posts. Further, mass organizations were instructed to submit to the leadership and control of the GMD authorities. At a late stage, the party was stumbling towards the formation of a "bloc without" rather than a "bloc within," something that had been suggested by Chen Duxiu on a number of occasions.

Submissive gestures did not resolve the conflicts with the GMD-left in Wuhan. Wang Jingwei's suspicions of the communists had been aroused further in early-June when the Comintern delegate, M. N. Roy, had shown him the contents of a telegram from Stalin. It called for the communists to reorganize the left and expel "reactionary leaders" and to prepare concrete steps for a revolutionary army, albeit still under nationalist leadership.

An uneasy truce prevailed until mid-July and then events moved rapidly. Under pressure from the Comintern, Chen Duxiu resigned his position as General Secretary. On 12 July, a new five-person temporary standing committee of the Politburo was chosen and the following day it issued an open statement critical of the Wuhan government. On 15 July, the Wuhan GMD Political Affairs Committee announced the end of cooperation; on 1 August, the CCP's Nanchang Uprising was launched; and on 5 August, Wang Jingwei began a large-scale purge of communist activists. Cooperation was ending in tragedy and it was clear that a new strategy had to be found by the CCP.

During the early part of the twenties, CCP capacity to develop the labor movement and move out of isolation was hampered by a lack of finances and personnel. Work in Shanghai was made even more difficult by the foreign presence. In addition, CCP organizers had to compete with other organizations that had already established a presence among the working class in Shanghai. Communist access was frequently blocked by the Green and Red gangs and even by the YMCA, while in Guangzhou the GMD and the anarchists enjoyed greater popularity and influence. In May 1924, the Shanghai party committee summed up results to date in labor organization as "nil."

The May 30th Movement and the launch of the Northern Expedition had provided the CCP the chance to break out of this isolation. However, problems persisted. The party remained short of skilled personnel to organize on the ground and to develop extensive grass-roots support. Many of the recruits, because of relaxed membership requirements, did not understand CCP principles. As a result of its lack of labor power at the grass roots, the party attempted to gain control of the movement generated by nationalist sentiment from the top down. Thus, the CCP set up the Shanghai General Labor Union at the start of the May 30th Movement but this had to be closed down in mid-September 1925 partly because of lack of revolutionary momentum and partly because of attacks on

it by various groups in Shanghai. Indeed, Chen Duxiu was later to admit that despite the rhetoric, the movement in Shanghai had been really coordinated by the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce and genuine communist influence seems to have been slight. This opportunism was combined with attempts to take over leading positions in existing organizations rather than building up solid grass roots support.

The apparent initial success of this strategy lulled party leaders, particularly those in Shanghai, into a false sense of security. A CCP-led revolution on the back of a swelling nationalist, anti-imperialist revolution seemed to be a possibility. Thus, in May 1926, Chen Duxiu was moved to claim that 1.25 million workers were under CCP leadership. This claim was based on a head count of members in organizations whose representatives had attended the Third Labor Congress. However, the CCP had constructed no colossus but rather a Buddha that turned out to have feet of clay. As the strength of the movement ebbed, familiar problems resurfaced with labor work in Shanghai: the persistence of the guild tradition and the influence of the Green and Red Gangs.

In the twenties, the CCP did not develop the necessary support base in urban China nor was it able to build up solid support in the southern countryside. During this period, the CCP did not develop a coherent policy for the rural areas and moved from indifference through a radical plan for land confiscation to retreat once this alienated the GMD right. Mao Zedong, however, remained impressed with the power of the peasantry and would later combine rural organization with military power. Unlike the Party Center, Mao saw "excesses" in the peasant movement as necessary in order to overcome the counterrevolutionaries and the power of the local gentry. Mao provided a critique of revolutionary strategy as a whole. He does not explicitly renounce proletarian leadership but his report concentrates on the role and the strength of the poor peasantry.

The main developments in the peasant movement were all in the south in Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong and Jiangxi. As the Northern Expedition moved out from the GMD strongholds in the south, large rural areas came under joint GMD-CCP control. Here peasant associations were established, often under the leadership of professionally trained peasant organizers. CCP supporters ran many of the associations and the party leadership saw this as a way to gain control over the peasant movement. However, as in urban China, the CCP lacked sufficient local cadres. A July 1926 report on the peasant movement in Guangdong outlined the problem. While some 800,000 peasants were members of peasant associations in 60 counties, there were only 600 party members working in 20 counties. Thus, the party had weak links to many local communities. The CCP adopted the same head-counting, top-down approach to controlling the peasantry as they had used with respect to the working-class in urban China. Thus, at the CCP's Fifth Congress, Chen Duxiu spoke of almost 10 million peasants being organized in the countryside via the peasant associations and seemed to count this as being synonymous with CCP control.

Yet, the communist presence was kept in place only by GMD military power. Once attacked by the GMD, CCP members had very little alternative other than to retreat into more inhospitable rural areas. Given the short history of the CCP and its small size, it was

most unlikely that a sufficient base of support could have been developed. Building up an independent armed force was also out of the question, not only because of the lack of numbers and financial resources, but also because it would have inevitably speeded up the clash with the GMD, especially the powerful GMD right.

The failure of the "First Revolution" was not caused directly by either rigid implementation of a misguided Comintern policy or the "capitulationism" and "opportunism" of Chen Duxiu vis-à-vis the GMD. It was more closely related to the CCP's inability to develop genuine support in urban and rural China and to develop a military force with which to defend itself. The CCP tended to follow behind events in China, interpreting positive signs as the next revolutionary wave that would cause history to flow in the right direction. When the waves came, the party was unable to channel the flow to its own benefit.

B) 1927 – 1937: From Urban Revolution to the Construction of Rural Bases

This period is marked by two diverging tendencies. The first is the failure of continued attempts at urban-based revolution. In these attempts, the Comintern was able to exert a tighter grip over the central party apparatus in Shanghai. The second is the increasing autonomy of the CCP leaders in the base areas that were set up in the late-twenties and early thirties in parts of central and south China. Comintern control of the Party Center was a two-edged sword. On the one hand it enabled the organization to appoint leaders sympathetic to its policies while on the other hand it had to extricate itself from the blame each time policy failed. This resulted in a stream of missives from the Comintern blaming individual CCP leaders for incorrectly applying or even betraying its correct policy line. Life in the base areas offered a learning experience independent of Comintern agendas. The lessons from these experiences informed the policies of Mao Zedong and the other survivors after they arrived in Northwest China after the Long March.

Remarkably, initial policy after Chen Duxiu's dismissal was a radicalization of policy towards the peasantry. In July 1927, the CCP announced that the revolution had entered another new phase and that, despite all evidence to the contrary, the revolutionary tide was rising. This tendency to ignore reality and to see the revolutionary tide as turning in the CCP's favor was a constant refrain throughout the remainder of the twenties.

The 7 August Emergency Conference of 1927 resulted in a tightening of the Comintern's grip over the CCP's central leadership. It convened in Hankou to evaluate past policy, devise a new strategy, and elect a new party leadership. The Conference marked the formal transition from a strategy of cooperation with the GMD to one of opposition. Mistakes were blamed on the previous leadership of the CCP. This is clearly to be seen in "The Circular Letter" sent to party members after the meeting and in the comments of Lominadze to the Conference itself. The letter denounced the "opportunist" mistakes made in attitude towards to GMD and the mass movement, particularly stressing the failure to support fully the rural revolution. It had little to say about future strategy, emphasizing the sole leadership of the CCP yet still calling for collaboration with GMD leftists. It is worth pointing out that this appeal for continued cooperation derived not

only from Stalin's need to show infallibility in his political struggles with Trotsky but also from the situation within China. Significant members of the GMD still supported the CCP and it was hoped that they could be rallied to the communist cause. In the GMD central leadership there was Song Qingling (Sun Yat-sen's widow) and Deng Yanda, in the military He Long and Ye Ting. A number of grassroots GMD branches and troops also favoured the communists. The Comintern's need to place the blame on the CCP leadership is apparent in Lominadze's speech to Conference. According to Lominadze, far from having given had advice, the fault lay in the failure of the CCP to carry out Comintern instructions among the masses.

In terms of organization, the party prepared itself for a life underground and instructed members to "forge strong, secret" organizations. Priority was still given to the conservation of party cells within labor unions. A new nine-person temporary Politburo was elected pending the convocation of a Congress and it in turn elected a three-person Standing Committee of Qu Qiubai, Li Weihan, and Su Zhaozheng.

The new Conference strategy of rebellions, inciting army mutinies and initiating peasant uprisings was not successful leading to a further depletion of the communist forces. However, failure did not dampen the CCP's enthusiasm (particularly that of Qu Qiubai). In November 1927 policy for the rural and urban areas was radicalized. Landlords, big and small, were to be shown no leniency and workers were to take power in the factories into their own hands. This decision led to the disaster of the Guangzhou Commune uprising in December 1927.

The defeat of the Guangzhou Commune coming so swiftly after the defeats of the communists in the Nanchang and Autumn Harvest Uprisings, made it clear that a shift in tactics was necessary. It was impossible for the Party Center under Qu Qiubai to continue with its "putschism." The party had lost contact with the working-class in major centers such as Shanghai, Wuhan and Guangzhou. The insurrectionary policy even where the peasantry had been mobilized had been intended to restore the initiative to the proletariat under the CCP's leadership by seizing major urban centers. The failure of this approach signalled the effective end of the proletariat as the main force of the revolution. Over time this would also lead to a drastic reduction in Comintern influence over real policy implementation in the CCP.

A National Congress was needed to reassess the past and sanction a shift in policy direction. Thus, preparations began for the Sixth Congress and for reasons of security it was held in Moscow (18 June to 11 July 1928). The Congress had two points of departure. First, that while the policy of military confrontation with the GMD was now inevitable, second, the reckless "putchism" pursued under Qu Qiubai's leadership had not shown any tangible success. Not surprisingly, Comintern influence was dominant. The "Political Decision" described the revolution as being in a trough between two waves. The first revolutionary wave had receded because of "repeated failures" and the new wave had not yet arrived. This notion allowed the "putchism" of Qu Qiubai to be attacked while supporting future insurrections. Judging the waves was a difficult business and it is

not surprising that the new Chinese leadership would seize upon any sign of heightened activity as the arrival of a new crest.

The notion of the movement developing in waves was not an innovation of the Congress but had been put forward by the ECCI in February 1928. While criticizing the previous "excesses", in particular the Guangzhou Commune, the ECCI maintained that a further revolutionary upsurge was possible. However, such upsurges would be irregular and thus the party must take care not to allow the movement to run out of control. Instead the mass organizations were to be built up to ensure coordination.

A major contribution of the Congress was its designation of the soviet as the governmental system to be established in the wake of the armed uprisings to replace the old political system. While the Congress saw this as the form of government throughout the entire country, in practice it meant the soviet would rule the rural base areas. While the Congress retained the intention of recapturing the CCP's urban base, social reality led to a greater emphasis being placed on the revolutionary role of the peasantry. The party was to form a united front with as many of the peasantry as possible, including middle peasants. Rich peasants were to be "neutralized" and the poor peasants were to be placed in charge of the peasant associations. The Congress stressed the importance of guerrilla warfare carried out by the peasantry. It was hoped that this would lead to a steady expansion of rural reform and the worker-peasant revolutionary Red Army. However, it was clearly stated that the peasantry would remain under the hegemony of the proletariat.

The Congress also installed a new leadership with a new CC of 23 members and 13 alternates and a Central Control Commission with three members and two alternates. The new Politburo elected by the CC had seven full members: Su Zhaozheng (22 votes), Xiang Ying (22), Xiang Zhongfa (21), Zhou Enlai (21), Qu Qiubai (16), Cai Hesen (16), and Zhang Guotao (10). There were seven alternates, one of whom was Li Lisan. The Standing Committee comprised Xiang Zhongfa, Zhou Enlai, Su Zhaozheng, Xiang Ying, and Cai Hesen with Li Lisan, Xu Xigen, and Yang Yin as alternates. Xiang Zhongfa was elected Chair of the Politburo and the CC. Despite the claim that party congresses would be held every year, a congress would not be held again until 1945.

On the surface, the Sixth Congress appeared to have produced an appropriate long-term program. In reality, it presented the CCP with an intractable problem. The central issue of the revolution was to be the agrarian question while it was of paramount importance that the CCP recapture its proletarian base in the urban areas. The chance of fulfilling these objectives was further complicated by the more radical turn of events both in China and the Soviet Union shortly after the Congress.

In China, the situation was improving somewhat for the CCP. In the urban areas, the CCP was slowly recovering from the GMD suppression and failed uprisings, while in the rural areas from 1928 on there was a steady growth of the Red Army and the soviet areas. The latter were beginning to emerge as dynamic new forces in the communist movement. However, the socio-economic conditions varied from soviet to soviet resulting in different policies and compromises with local groups to ensure survival.

Of immediate direct influence on the new party leadership was the factional struggle between Stalin and Bukharin. Although rumors of differences had circulated at the Sixth Party Congress, Bukharin supervised the Congress on behalf of the Comintern. Indeed, the "Political Resolution" was based on the nine hour (sic!) speech that he delivered to the Congress and the new Politburo was put together on his instructions. By the end of 1928, Bukharin had become the main target of Stalin's attacks for his "rightist" or "rich peasant line."

This caused the CCP to adopt an increasingly "left" policy that culminated in what the Comintern was itself to denounce as the Li Lisan line. On 8 February 1929 the ECCI issued a letter to the CC of the CCP claiming that signs of a new revolutionary wave were clearly detectable in China. As a result the ECCI warned that at the present time, the "rightist trend" was particularly dangerous. Shortly after the letter arrived, the Politburo drafted a formal resolution on how the party should apply the Comintern line in its practical work. Indeed, the period until April 1930 marks a distinct phase in the shift of party policy.

The anti-rightist drive in Moscow continued to affect the Party Center in Shanghai. On 26 October 1929 the ECCI sent another letter to the CCP CC, this time announcing "the beginning of the revolutionary wave." The party was to take over the leadership of this new revolutionary wave by overcoming its "petty bourgeois waverings." Once again the Comintern reinforced the view that at the present time, "rightism" was the most dangerous trend in the party. The Politburo responded to this letter by adopting resolutions on 20 December 1929 and 11 January 1930 that fully accepted the Comintern's position and that heralded a louder criticism of "rightism."

One of the first victims of the attack on "rightism" had been Chen Duxiu who was expelled from the party in 1929. His expulsion and that of many others were carried in the pages of the party's theoretical journal Red Flag. He was denounced viciously for what were decreed to be his "Trotskyite" and liquidationist" tendencies. While Chen was in power before July 1927, he had no particular association with Trotsky and had adhered to the position of accommodation with the GMD as approved by Stalin but opposed by Trotsky. After the left-wing of the GMD also turned on the CCP, his analysis of the revolution did move closer to a Trotskyite position. His conversion, given his enormous prestige in the party, created a crisis in the party and the major purge was launched. The Trotskyites who were expelled formed their own organization called the "Left Opposition." The organization was, however, bitterly divided into four main factions and it took a Unification Conference in May 1931 to bring agreement to form only one group, the "Chinese Oppositionists." Despite this, it remained a very fractious group and its impact was very limited. The Trotskyites as a whole, despite the assessment of their main chronicler Gregor Benton that they were the first and weightiest movement of radical democratic dissent within China, enjoyed little sustained influence within the party or among the Chinese working-class. In addition to the ideological differences, the movement was beset by intense personal friction. The "Chinese Oppositionists" became the targets of not only the GMD but also the CCP and indeed suffered worst at the hands of the latter than the former. A number of those who did not escape to Hong Kong, such

as Liu Renjing, spent most of the subsequent period in GMD jails followed by re-arrest after the CCP came to power in 1949.

Unfortunately the revolutionary tide that the Comintern thought it spotted did not exist, at least in the urban areas. The Comintern's insistence on political strikes and preparation for armed insurrection served to alienate the proletariat rather than to rally it to the communist cause. The CCP leadership decided to use the rising soviet movement in the countryside as means of recapturing its influence in the cities. This policy reached its fruition under Li Lisan's direction and was spelled out in the Politburo decision of 11 June 1930. The current stage was seen as one of revolutionary upsurge and it proposed that Wuhan be seized as a part of the take over of one or more provinces. The resolution sought to implement the Comintern's wishes in China but the failure of the strategy caused it to become the focus of critical attention in the Soviet Union some months later.

The resolution was sent to the Comintern for approval but the Comintern delayed making a formal reply, possibly because of the link made by Li Lisan between the Chinese and world revolutions. Later the Comintern was to criticize the efforts made in the resolution to show the interdependence of the Chinese Revolution and the world revolution. The 11 June resolution claimed that because China was the weakest link in the ruling chain of world imperialism, the Chinese revolution could occur first setting off the world revolution and the final class war. While such an analysis could be justified in terms of the Comintern's view that the stability of world capitalism would soon erode, though at an uneven pace depending on place, the Comintern may not have been happy to have Li Lisan lecturing them on the world revolution. The resolution also hinted at the need for Soviet aid, something that Li Lisan would soon openly ask for. This was ignored by the Comintern. It was not in a position to call on the Soviet Union to support the Chinese Revolution. This appeal was later denounced as an error of "semi-Trotskyism." The prediction that a successful bourgeois-democratic revolution would soon be transformed into a socialist one was also cited later as proof of Li's Trotskyite tendencies. However, this too had been a prediction in line with Comintern analysis at the time.

On 16 July, the Party Center sent another letter to the Presidium of the ECCI calling for approval of the strategy outlined in the resolution of 11 June. Two days later, the National Conference of CCP Organizations opened in Shanghai. The Conference announced that the general task of the party was to organize armed uprisings to seize political power and that the party was one preparing to take power. Further it called for action committees to be established at the central and local levels. In the "red areas," workers' and peasants' revolutionary committees were to be established. These would be the sole leading organs.

Eventually the Comintern replied in a letter dated 23 July 1930 to the CCP CC. The letter has produced different interpretations. The letter contained no substantial disagreement with Li Lisan either in the general policy or even with respect to practical strategy. What was indicated between the lines, however, was worry over Li Lisan's operations and shirking of responsibility, which fully accorded with the position of the Comintern leaders in the early thirties. The Comintern leaders were not so foolhardy as Li to claim

world revolution was imminent nor did they dare to exclude the possibility of a successful revolution in China. The letter did not oppose the idea of taking over Wuhan and one or more provinces but it seemed to oppose Li's notion of an "immediate nationwide revolution."

It is a moot point as to when Li Lisan and the Party Center knew of the Comintern's views. Letters could take up to one or two months to arrive and the full text probably did not arrive until early September. However, CCP leaders were already informed of its contents by late-July from telegraphic messages received by the ECCI Far East Bureau in Shanghai.

While it is uncertain just how much Li knew and when, he certainly rejected Comintern concern. On 6 August, Li Lisan chaired the first meeting of the Central Action Committee calling the whole party to mobilize for immediate revolution. By this time, the Comintern was more clearly of the opinion that Li had gone too far. Qu Qiubai and Zhou Enlai were sent back to China to moderate Li's excesses but not yet to repudiate his policy wholesale. This is not surprising given that it would be difficult to extricate the Comintern from sharing the blame.

While the Comintern refrained from criticism of Li Lisan while the strategy was in operation, as soon as it failed harsh condemnation followed. Between the Third and Fourth Plenums (September 1930 – January 1931), factional conflicts and power struggles within the CCP increased. Li Lisan's strongest opponents were Wang Ming and the "returned students" group. They had as their principal supporter Pavel Mif, the Comintern representative in China. Yet, opposition had little to do with current or future policy and was not based on opposition to a "leftist" line. Wang Ming, in an article published four days after the 11 June resolution, only differed from Li in his assessment that the Chinese Revolution could occur immediately without depending on world revolution as its precondition.

Also, the Comintern began to toughen its stance as Pavel Mif and his supporters in the Comintern became dissatisfied with the decisions of the Third Plenum. In October 1930, the ECCI sent members of the CC a letter stating that Li Lisan's mistakes were ones of line. It labelled Li Lisan "anti-Comintern" and a "semi-Trotskyite." Mif himself arrived in China in mid-December 1930 and proposed that the Fourth Plenum be convened as soon as possible. The Plenum was held in Shanghai on 7 January and was dominated by Mif and his protégé, Wang Ming.

The resolution of the Fourth Plenum drafted under Mif's guidance was harsh in its condemnation of Li Lisan. Li was accused of betraying the correct instructions of the Comintern and bringing havoc to the party. Li's "line" was summed up as being contradictory to that of the Comintern and comprising "a policy of opportunism under the camouflage of 'leftist phrases,' and an opportunistic passivism in regard to the task of organizing the masses in a practical and revolutionary way." Betraying the Comintern line was true to the extent that the Comintern itself had abandoned the idea of using the Red Army to seize the urban areas.

For its new leadership in China, the Comintern did not turn to the Soviet areas but to Wang Ming and the "returned students." There were substantial changes in the Politburo with Wang Ming, who had not even been a CC member before the Plenum becoming a full member. While Xiang Zhongfa remained General Secretary, real power lay with Wang Ming. Several months after the Plenum, the strength of the "returned students" was increased with the promotion of Bo Gu and Zhang Wentian. Excluded from the new leadership was the group gathered around the workers' activists He Mengxiong and Luo Zhanglong. They felt that the policies were destroying the labor movement that they had been intimately involved in developing. They set up an opposition organ and demanded that an emergency congress be convened and Mif recalled. In still unexplained circumstances, the group was betrayed and arrested by the British police. The police turned them over to the GMD and they were executed. Wang Ming denied involvement in the betrayal but it was certainly convenient as it removed the group within the CCP that had the best links with labor.

However, the failure of the Li Lisan strategy fatally wounded the strength of the CCP in the urban areas and many key figures in the communist movement were rounded up and almost all of the underground branches were rolled up. The story of the CCP in these years in Shanghai reads like an adventure story with spies, Chinese and foreign police, safe houses, and deals with gangsters. The problem is that it was reality and it was often CCP members who lost out. After the communist-directed insurrection in Shanghai had handed power to Chiang Kai-shek, party history was one of almost continual repression after Chiang turned on the communists on 12 April 1927. While party membership in Shanghai had been around 8,000 in April 1927, it had fallen to a mere 300 in 1934. The damage to the communist dominated labor movement was equally severe. In 1930, communist sponsored organizations had 2,000 workers, a number that declined to 500 in 1932, and a mere handful in 1934.

The most devastating blow came when Gu Shunzhang, the head of the CC's special services unit was caught in April 1931 and turned by the GMD. His information led to the break-up of CCP organizations in Hankou, Nanjing, Tianjin, Beijing, and Shanghai. There ensued the start of what is referred to as the "white terror." Although Zhou Enlai was tipped off and escaped from Shanghai, others were not so lucky. Xiang Zhongfa was caught in June and some 40 other high-ranking CCP members were caught along with 800 others at the local level. In June, the crack-down also led to the arrest of Noulens who was actually Chief of the Department for International Liaison (the communications and intelligence organ) of the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau. He worked under the cover of his formal position as secretary general of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union. Noulens and his wife were arrested by the Shanghai Municipal Police and this seriously hampered the work of the Comintern in China, even if it did not cause it to stop completely.

However, as Stranahan has shown, while badly wounded the party did continue to function to the best of its ability in Shanghai. The onset of Japanese aggression and GMD repression gave it a chance to survive and develop very limited support and it began to network with a number of multiclass organizations that it was able to infiltrate. These were the "Red Mass Leagues," organizations such as the Chinese Association to Relieve

Distress, the Self-Defense Committee and the Cultural Committee. Infiltration of these organizations provided the first concentrated attempt to adapt the Shanghai party's goals to the socio-political environment of the city. While capacity was limited, this work enabled the party to gain experience and develop contacts that would stand it in good stead when the National Salvation Movement developed following the Beijing anti-Japanese demonstrations of 1935. This meant that when the united front with the GMD was reactivated in 1937 there was the remnants of an organization for Liu Xiao to work with on his appointment to run the Shanghai apparatus.

These developments increased the relative importance of the party organizations in the base areas that had been set up. The Party Center in Shanghai was reduced to little more than a liaison organization relaying instructions from the Comintern to the soviets. Indeed, it appears that in early 1931 the Comintern made the suggestion that the Party Center consider a move to the rural Soviets. The departure of the CC for the Jiangxi Soviet in 1933 had left the Shanghai party without effective leadership. It is also debatable to what extent and how often the rump in Shanghai was in contact with the CC.

While the Party Center became more involved in the work of the soviets, transferring key personnel, it was not until early 1933 that Bo Gu and the Party Center arrived at the Central Soviet. The conditions under which the Party Center began its move to the soviets meant that in reality legitimate leadership of the revolutionary movement had passed to the soviets. However, the process inevitably produced conflicts and frictions. Yet this is not to say that Mao and his supporters were an immediate conscious target of the "returned students" who dominated the Party Center when it began its transfer to the Jiangxi Soviet.

Despite the repression in the urban areas, 1931 saw the CCP in a much better position. At one point in 1927, membership had dipped as low as 10,000. By the end of 1930, membership had grown tenfold but the momentum had shifted from the urban to the rural soviets. The way forward now for the CCP was to rely on the steady expansion of the soviet bases and the Red Army. In addition to the Jiangxi Soviet under Mao, important bases had been developed in west Hunan-Hubei (Xiang-Exi) under He Long, and in Hubei-Henan-Anhui (E-Yu-Wan) under Xu Xiangqian. The soviets had been provided a breathing space to develop by Chiang Kai-shek's conflict with Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan. However, the respite did not last long as Chiang was victorious in November 1930 and in October he had already launched the first of five "suppression" campaigns to annihilate the communists. Despite the failure to take over a major city or win a victory in one or more provinces, the military capacity of the Red Army had generally increased.

In November 1931, the First All-China Soviet Congress was convened in Ruijin, Jiangxi and it founded the Chinese Soviet Republic as a national regime and established separate state and military structures to operate at the national level. While direct control over the military was taken away from Mao Zedong, he was appointed to the new post of Chair of the Soviet government. Xiang Ying and Zhang Guotao were appointed as his deputies. Zhu De was appointed chair of the newly established Central Revolutionary Military Commission, with Peng Dehuai and Wang Jiaxiang as his deputies. The Congress also

adopted a Constitution for the Republic that designated it as a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." However, there was no pretence that the Soviet was anything other than a communist one-party dictatorship. In the remote rural area there were no industrial workers, the proletariat consisted almost entirely of village artisans, handicraftsmen, and farm laborers. This notwithstanding, the Constitution acknowledged that "only the proletariat can lead the broad masses to socialism," and thus they were to have extra representation in the Soviet.

The most important piece of legislation passed was the Land Law. This moderated previous policy but radical swings in policy towards peasants alienated many and provides a good example of how policy driven by ideology could undermine support for the CCP in specific contexts. On arriving in Jiangxi, the party had adopted a radical policy that had alienated groups such as the middle and rich peasants who were crucial to CCP survival. The CCP had decided that land redistribution was crucial to ensuring peasant support in their resistance to the GMD, but changes in land ownership based on strict class definitions caused unforeseen economic and social problems that in turn led to further readjustment. Thus, the Soviet Land Law contained prescriptions more liberal than previous policy and did not mention land nationalization and collectivization. It represented a deliberate attempt to woo back the alienated "middle classes." However, later, between June and September 1933, many "middle peasants" were reclassified as "landlords" with serious consequences for them. This was between the fourth and fifth suppression campaigns launched by Chiang Kai-shek. This re-radicalization of policy began with the Land Investigation Movement that was again intended to ensure peasant support in the conflict with the GMD. The CCP sought to use the Movement to create a favorable revolutionary atmosphere that would serve their political and military purposes. However, constant changes in land ownership caused social and economic problems within the base area, and excesses would often occur. This required periodic retrenchment and the adoption of a mild or "antileftist" policy. Thus, between October and December, the new "landlords" were demoted to the ranks of "middle peasants." Finally, in early 1934, policy was radicalized once again with attacks on the "rich peasants." This merry-go-round was only halted with the expulsion of the communist forces from their base area.

The Fourth Suppression Campaign reached the Jiangxi Soviet in January 1933 just as the remainder of the Party Center headed by Bo Gu was moving in. The E-Yu-Wan Soviet had been lost in September 1932 and the Xiang-Exi Soviet in October 1932. Although, the Jiangxi Soviet held out, a better organized fifth campaign began in October 1933. This came at a bad time for the CCP as it was not only engaged in the Land Investigation Movement but also a major inner party struggle usually referred to as the anti-Luo Ming line. The attacks on Luo and his supporters were intended to strengthen the resolve of party cadres in face of the GMD attacks. Luo had been acting secretary of the Fujian CCP Committee since March 1932 and had claimed that the GMD attacks had caused panic and fatigue in west Fujian. He blamed the party leadership for its mechanistic approach to resisting the GMD, applying the same tactics in all areas, and called for flexible military tactics to be adopted that were tailored to suit the varying conditions. While Luo was clearly referring to the local situation, it served the Party Center's interests to interpret his

view as an attack on party policy as a whole. In February 1933, Bo Gu and the Party Center attacked what it called the Luo Ming line and their success in resisting the Fourth Suppression temporarily strengthened their position and allowed them to use the situation to attack their enemies. In the Jiangxi Soviet, Mao's brother, Mao Zetan, was criticized as was Deng Xiaoping.

With the Fifth Campaign slowly encircling the soviet, from 15 to 18 January 1934, the party convened the Fifth Plenum of the Sixth CC in Ruijin. It was attended by full and alternate CC members and some delegates from provincial party committees. Given the context, Bo Gu's political report was a stunning example of being divorced from reality. For Bo Gu, the revolutionary situation at home and abroad was excellent, and he deemed the policies of the Comintern and the CCP infallible. Amazingly, there was no formal report on military affairs to the Plenum and all Bo had to say was that the major task was simply to continue the fight against the "right opportunists" who refused to see the excellence of the situation. Work in the GMD areas was not forgotten about and party organizations were requested to strengthen work in key industrial centers and to make the greatest efforts to "prepare, organize, and lead the working-class in strikes." The party's entire strength was to be concentrated on "strikes in factories and trade unions." In addition the Plenum listened to a report by Chen Yun on the workers' economic struggle and trade unions in GMD-held areas and a resolution was adopted on this question. The Plenum elected a new Politburo that included Mao Zedong, contrary to what most studies have suggested.

Immediately following the Plenum, the Second All-China Soviet Congress was held and it provided a chance for the leadership to boost morale. A giant auditorium was constructed, and the ceremonies included a military parade and gunshot salute. No effort was spared to portray the Soviet as a formal, national state rather than as a shaky local rebellious base area. This aspiration to statehood was reflected in the election once again of a full complement of people's commissariats, including one for foreign affairs. Further, the Congress proposed that all the soviet bases be designated as provinces, no matter that their size nor the fact that they were small islands in a large sea of GMD-controlled waters meant that they hardly deserved the appellation. The Congress did at least refer to the war and called for the Red Army to adopt positional defense as its central task and basic strategy.

The meetings did little to address the crucial problem facing the CCP, namely the GMD Suppression. Effective military control of the Soviet was under Otto Braun, who had arrived in Ruijin in October 1933. After initial attempts to defend the base areas from within, Braun pursued a strategy referred to as "Short, Swift Thrusts" that also engaged the GMD through attacks in the "white areas." The hope was to pull troops away from the encirclement of the Soviet. However, this tactic also failed and a plan for the evacuation of the Soviet in late-summer of 1934 was drawn up by Bo Gu, Zhou Enlai and Braun. The plan was drawn up in great secrecy and leaders were only informed gradually and on a need to know basis. The idea of withdrawal was made public through the splendidly titled article "All for the Defense of the Soviet" written by Zhang Wentian and published in Red China on 29 September 1934. The article put forward the notion of retreating from

and surrendering a soviet in a particular place in order to gain victory for the soviet movement throughout the country as a whole. In October, the CCP began to move out on what it called the "strategic transfer" or what later became known as the Long March. They left behind a party organization under the leadership of Xiang Ying who was also in control of military affairs. In addition, the Office of the Central Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic was established under Chen Yi's leadership. This Office was to direct the struggle of the guerrilla armies left behind in the former base areas of South China. Initially, the withdrawal did not go well. The CCP had no idea where it was going and by late-November military engagements had caused its personnel to be reduced from the 86,000 who set out to around 30,000.

In January 1935, the Red Army reached northern Guizhou and found some time for a break. Vitally, during these days from 15 to 18 January the most important meeting of the Long March was held at Zunyi and it marked the start of Mao Zedong's rise to preeminent power in the CCP. While the meeting was probably called to discuss the current situation and where the Red Army should go, it turned into a major review of past policy and heralded a shift in the party leadership. While Bo Gu and Zhou Enlai started off the meeting, the most decisive event was Mao's speech that criticized military policy. On the basis of subsequent debates and very much in line with Mao's speech, Zhang Wentian drafted the meeting documents. The Resolution criticizes Bo Gu and Braun for their previous errors but adopts a compromise. Braun firmly rejected all criticism of himself and Bo Gu was only willing to admit to partial errors in judgment. While it approved the political line of the party, the military failures were ascribed to the erroneous military line of "pure positional defense" promoted by Bo and Braun.

Mao was promoted to the five-person secretariat and joined Zhang Wentian (general secretary), Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun, and Bo Gu. Along with Zhou and Wang Jiaxiang, Mao was to serve on the CCP Central Military Leadership Group. While Zhou was to be the chief decision-maker, Mao was to be chief assistant. This broke Braun's control over military affairs. Mao did not become chair of the Military Council or the Politburo as some historians have suggested, but he did become one of the top five leaders of the party and had the right to be involved in all party and army decisions.

During the Long March, Mao was a major challenge from Zhang Guotao for leadership of the party. Zhang did not accept the decisions taken at Zunyi as binding and had not attended the meeting. At the time he commanded a far larger military force than those soldiers with Mao, some 80,000 to Mao's 20,000 at best. Yet Zhang was thoroughly outmaneuvered and came under severe criticism in Yan'an in early 1937 and in March a party resolution was passed criticizing his past mistakes. With renewed collaboration between the GMD and the CCP, Zhang decided to flee the communists new home in Yan'an and joined the GMD in April 1938.

While the Red Army was on the Long March the last decision taken by the Comintern to impact on the CCP was beginning to take effect. This led to a second period of alliance with the GMD in 1937. The Comintern's Seventh Congress (July-August 1935) adopted a new policy that called for a united front of all elements, classes and nations in the fight

against fascism. This policy shift came primarily as a result of Soviet Russia's awareness of the increasing threat to its security posed by Germany and Japan.

This new policy line was applied to China by Wang Ming, the head of the CCP Mission to the Comintern in Moscow. However, it should be pointed out that Wang Ming's own ideas had been evolving from the notion of a united front from below to a united front above. Indeed, the Japanese occupation of Northeast China had caused the CC to suggest a shift in policy in the Manchuria region in January 1933. This letter from the CC to the local party organization indicated that it would be possible to cooperate with the national bourgeoisie if a solid united front from below had been assured. This, according to the letter, would ensure proletarian leadership in the united front.

The "August First Declaration" (1935) issued in Moscow in the name of the CCP and the Chinese Soviet Republic, was a clear signal that the CCP was to make the strategic shift from civil war to a new united front. The declaration claimed that it was the "sacred duty of everyone to resist Japan and save the nation." It then criticized the actions of "scum" and "traitors" such as Chiang Kai-shek, Yan Xishan and Zhang Xueliang who had not adopted a policy of resistance to Japan. If the GMD would stop its attacks, the CCP and the Soviet Government pledged that it would cooperate closely with them to defend the country against the Japanese no matter what their other differences might be. The CCP declared its willingness to cooperate with all those prepared to join a government of national defense that would pursue a ten-point programme to expel the Japanese. The suggestion was clearly for a united front from above.

It is not entirely clear when this news reached the Party Center as communications with Moscow had been severed during the Long March. Certainly communications were restored in November 1935 when Zhang Hao, an envoy of the CCP Mission to the Comintern, arrived in north Shaanxi but evidence suggests that its contents were known earlier. A CC secret directive in October 1935 reflected the thrust of the declaration.

In December 1935, an enlarged Politburo meeting was convened at Wayaobao to discuss the implications of the united front strategy. The meeting decided to adopt the widest political front possible to oppose Japanese imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek. This front would include workers, peasants and the petty bourgeoisie and even members of the national bourgeoisie, rich peasants and small landlords. The party was to strive for leadership of this coalition. The highest manifestation of this new united front would be the government of national defense and the united anti-Japanese army that would be united on the basis of the ten-point program. This conciliatory approach was reflected in the change of name of the Worker and Peasant Soviet Republic into the People's Soviet Republic and in policy shifts. Policy was moderated, rich peasants were to enjoy the same rights as others and not have their property confiscated while industrial and commercial entrepreneurs would be welcomed to invest in the area. In line with this new approach, the meeting also adopted a resolution on military affairs that called for combining the civil war with the national war against Japan. The main task for 1936 was to gather strength to fight against Japan. The base areas were to be expanded and to link up with the Soviet Union as would the two armies link to fight the Japanese. Widespread guerrilla

warfare was to be used in a shift from the emphasis on regular warfare. In addition, criteria for party membership were relaxed and "left closed-doorism" was cited as a greater danger than "right opportunism." The need to respond flexibly to changing circumstances was stressed, probably in a veiled criticism of Bo Gu, Wang Ming and their supporters.

Despite this new approach, it would take another two years before the CCP accepted Chiang Kai-shek as a partner in a new united front and then only after his arrest by his own officers in what is commonly referred to as the Xi'an Incident. The CCP reached a secret agreement with the Northeast Army under the command of Zhang Xueliang that was threatening them in the Northwest base area that was now home to Mao and his supporters. With this cooperation secured, the CCP toned down its criticism of Chiang Kai-shek and on 17 September 1936, the Politburo passed a resolution that suggested an agreement be reached with him. This was clearly a delicate business and the resolution was carefully framed. Criticism of the GMD was not to be stopped nor was the ultimate goal of socialism to be abandoned but it noted that the rising tide of anti-Japanese sentiment would force the GMD to join the struggle. The CCP proposed the formation of a democratic republic, a form of government that would have a more universal form of democracy than that practised in the soviets and more progressive than that under the GMD.

For Zhang Xueliang such conciliation must have contrasted strongly with Chiang Kai-shek's insistence on dealing with the communists first. Thus, in December 1936 while Chiang was on a visit to pursue the campaign to eradicate the communists, he was kidnapped by Zhang and held for one week before being released. It is worth pointing out that it seems that the Comintern applied what pressure it could to persuade that the incident be resolved peacefully and that Chiang be released to head the national resistance to Japan.

The incident did provide the link between the phases of Civil War and the National War of Resistance. The Marco Polo Bridge Incident in Beijing on 7 July 1937 and the Hongqiao Airport Incident in Shanghai on 9 August clearly revealed Japan's aggressive intentions towards China. The subsequent invasion and communist concessions finally pushed Chiang to collaboration and in August 1937, the GMD accepted communist troops as part of the nationalist army. The Red Army was renamed the Eighth Route Army of the National Revolutionary Army. In November, the remaining guerrilla forces in central China were renamed the New Fourth Army.

C) 1937-1943: The Politics of Collaboration and the Reinforcement of the Base Areas.

The formation of the second united front brought a much needed respite to the communist troops scattered across a number of base areas. It enabled them to operate openly, develop administrative structures, and most importantly receive revenues from the GMD. However, tensions within this new alliance arose very quickly as the mistrust on both sides was too difficult to wish away.

Once collaboration with the GMD was decided upon, Mao's main concern was how to use communist troops in the War of Resistance. While the CCP was prepared to make declarations about the democratization of the GMD regime, Mao's concern was how to preserve military strength, avoiding needless sacrifice. Some were concerned, however, that too passive a response would undermine sympathy for the CCP. Ultimately a policy of self-preservation and expansion was accepted.

The adoption of the united front did bring the simmering conflict between Mao and Wang Ming to a head and this was the last major inner-party struggle before Mao exerted power over the party as a whole. Mao working within China felt that the GMD was incapable of leading the War of Resistance and that the CCP must retain its independence and initiative. By contrast, Wang Ming was much more amenable to the policy of collaboration and was denounced for promoting the policy of "All Through the United Front." On 29 November 1937, Wang Ming and seven other members of the CCP Mission to the Comintern, including Kang Sheng and Chen Yun, arrived in the CCP headquarters at Yan'an. Wang was given a warm welcome. Mao meeting him for the first time, purportedly said Wang was "a blessing from the sky." But Wang also immediately challenged Mao as the dominant ideological force in the party. When Wang reported on what kind of position ought to be taken vis-à-vis the united front, Mao is supposed to have voted to accept the report in part since it appeared to reflect Stalin's views. But Mao had quite other ideas about how the united front ought to be conducted.

Mao had to defeat Wang Ming politically and then present an approach to theory that would not only appropriate the united front as his but also undermine Wang Ming's credibility. This latter objective was difficult to achieve because "Stalin had instructed Wang Ming to overcome the 'leftist deviation' in the Party without directly contesting Mao's authority."

To deal with the situation created by these new arrivals, the Politburo held a Conference from 9 to 14 December, at which Wang Ming won the support of the majority and established his influence, although his power base remained weak. Wang delivered the keynote speech to the conference while Mao remained silent. Wang's 27 December article called for improving the unification of all work in what became to be known as the policy of "everything through the united front." This contrasted with Mao's calls for "independence and initiative." Wang clearly felt that his was the best way to develop CCP activities outside of the Border Region. While Wang acknowledged that problems still existed with the GMD, he felt that the foundations had been laid for a solid anti-Japanese national united front. This cooperation would be long-term, continuing after the war during a period of national reconstruction. He also called for the united front to be extended beyond the two parties to mobilize effectively other groups for resistance. Although Wang accepted that CCP members could join the GMD government, he maintained that the Eighth Route Army must retain its independence.

The conference's resolution congratulating the CCP Mission to the Comintern for its work in formulating the new policies for the anti-Japanese united front appeared to boost Wang's pre-eminent position. In fact, organizational changes strengthened Mao's

position. The conference adopted a resolution to convene the Seventh Party Congress as soon as possible. A twenty-five person committee was set up to prepare the congress to which Mao was appointed Chair, with Wang Ming as Secretary. This reflected the power relations at the time as Wang, despite his prestige, must have realized that he could not take over from Mao. Further, on the Comintern's instructions, it was decided to abolish the post of General Secretary to encourage collective leadership. Thus, Zhang Wentian lost his position and a Secretariat was formed consisting of Zhang Wentian, Mao Zedong, Chen Yun and Kang Sheng. Mao retained his influential position as Chair of the Military Council.

After the conference Wang Ming, accompanied by Zhou Enlai and Bo Gu, left Yan'an for Wuhan to take up his position as Secretary of the party's Yangtze Bureau. This removed him from the Party Center, leaving Mao to run it together with the Army Headquarters. In Wuhan, Wang Ming began to develop an approach to the united front that was seriously at odds with Mao's. Initially dictated by the vastly different conditions in Wuhan, Wang's policy of cooperation and taking advantage of opportunities to work legally and to expand communist influence paid off.

The conflict between Mao and Wang reached a high point at the Politburo meeting held in Yan'an in early March 1938. The key issues discussed were the role of the CCP in the Sino-Japanese War and the relationship between the CCP and the GMD. As in December, Wang Ming delivered the key-note address while Mao made no formal speech. However, Mao's opposition meant that no formal resolution was adopted, although a written version of Wang's report was published and circulated widely.

Wang's report stated that the united front was to be consolidated in the form of a "national revolutionary alliance" that would resemble the first united front or would be a confederation within which all parties would have political and organizational independence. He stressed the need for a "united army, united assignment, united command, united combat." He also stressed the need for the GMD to formalize the legal activities of other groups. He proposed establishing a national assembly so that other parties could be consulted and that the government legalize and encourage the development of mass organizations. Finally, Wang stated that the correct military strategy was to use mobile warfare as the main form of combat coordinated with positional warfare. Guerrilla warfare was relegated to a support function.

The downgrading of guerrilla warfare was at odds with Mao's approach and the question of military strategy took on increased importance in the following months especially after the fall of Xuzhou to Japanese forces in late May led to Wuhan being threatened. Throughout April, Mao called for the development of guerrilla bases in north China and in May, Mao stressed that the main task of the Eighth Route Army was to engage in guerrilla warfare and only to engage in mobile warfare where the conditions were favorable.

This clash of approaches became crucial as Wang Ming began to participate in the defense of Wuhan. On 14 May, the Party Center sent out instructions to the New Fourth

Army and the Party's Yangtze Bureau instructing them to shift their work to the rural areas where they were to set up guerrilla forces. This was followed on 22 May 1938, by instructions to the Hebei, Hunan and Wuhan party branches that, after the fall of Xuzhou, they should focus their work on guerrilla warfare in the countryside and the creation of bases there. To this end, the majority of students, workers and revolutionary elements were to return to their home villages to help with this process. The instructions peripheralized party work in Wuhan.

In stark contrast, Wang Ming in his public statement of 15 June, while acknowledging that Wuhan might fall, mooted Madrid as an example of heroic defense. Wang favored a massive mobilization under the GMD's leadership to engage the Japanese in mobile warfare before they could reach Wuhan. The Eighth Route Army, operating in the enemy's rear was to be used to destroy supply lines.

These proposals backfired. As always, the GMD was suspicious of CCP calls for mass mobilization and, on 5 August placed restrictions on the activities of the local mass organizations. A number were closed down and the activities of the CCP came under close scrutiny by the GMD secret police. Wang Ming's attempt to expand communist influence through legal means ended in failure. His prestige in party circles received another major blow when Wuhan fell to the Japanese on 25 October 1938.

Mao then used the Sixth Plenum of the Sixth CC held from 29 September to 6 November 1938 to press home his advantage. His dominance was enhanced by news brought from Moscow by Wang Jiaxiang. Wang relayed information contained in a September Comintern directive and Dimitrov's ideas. The directive approved of the political line of the CCP during the past year in its united front work while Dimitrov fully endorsed Mao's leading position in the party. This stripped any claim that Wang Ming could have made to be the "Comintern's man." Indeed, many believe that it was only after receiving this news that Mao decided to convene the Plenum. The loss of Wuhan during the Plenum shifted things further in Mao's favor. By the end of the meeting, Mao made his differences with Wang clear. The sharpness of Mao's tone in his concluding speeches was aided by the fact that Wang had left the meeting early to attend the National Political Consultative Assembly apparently believing that he and Mao had reached a compromise. Wang obviously had not made a very good study of Mao as a political strategist.

Mao had no intention of wrecking the united front and he realized that it was vital to the CCP's interests. Thus his opening speech praised both the GMD and Chiang Kai-shek personally. Mao even stated that the GMD played the dominant role in the united front. Class struggle was not to detract from the task of national resistance. Mao still proposed that the "new democratic republic" would be based on Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People," rather than on those of socialism. These were all sentiments that Wang could wholeheartedly endorse and he even praised indirectly the pivotal role which Mao played in the CCP.

However, with Wang gone and Wuhan fallen, Mao told a different story. Mao blamed the GMD for not allowing the united front to assume a proper organizational form and

harshly criticized Wang Ming's slogan of "everything through the united front." Mao went on to criticize Wang Ming's idea of using legal channels to develop the communist movement and Wang's strategy of moving from the cities to the countryside, a mistake, Mao clearly implied, that derived from the influence of the Soviet revolution on Wang Ming. Mao made it clear that China's revolution would move from the countryside to the cities.

The political resolution did not include harsh condemnations of Wang Ming's approach. It was not yet necessary to risk upsetting the situation by informing the rank and file. It was enough that Mao had told the party's inner-circle. Having dealt Wang a serious blow at the Plenum, immediately afterwards, the party's regional bureau system was reorganized resulting in an undermining of Wang Ming's organizational position. On 9 November, Wang's Yangtze Bureau was abolished and its former area of jurisdiction was placed under two new bureaux, the Southern Bureau headed by Zhou Enlai and the Central Plain's Bureau headed by Liu Shaoqi. Both were loyal to Mao.

With the Party Center reunited in Yan'an, it was decided to bring order to the ad hoc decision-making that had taken place during the years of dislocation. In addition, it was important to outline rules for how the party organizations should function in the different environments they inhabited. As a result, three resolutions were adopted on concrete organizational questions. The united front meant that the CCP could come out of its secret existence and engage in a wide range of activities. Such activities were to be used to expand party influence, independence was to be retained and "capitulationism" resisted. A resolution on work rules and discipline sought to regularize the channels through which decisions were made and information was circulated. Thus, individuals were forbidden from speaking on behalf of the party or distributing documents in its name unless entrusted to do so by the CC or other leading organs.

The Resolution reconfirmed that the CC was the highest organ of the party when the National Congress was not in session but then went on to outline where real power lay. When the CC was not in session, the Politburo elected by it would guide work. The Politburo was to meet at least once every three months. The section on the Secretariat indicates the growing power of this organization in party affairs. The Secretariat was to convene Politburo meetings and prepare the issues to be discussed. It was to meet at least once a week. This placed it in an extremely powerful position by allowing it to control the flow of information and effectively control the agenda. Most importantly, between Politburo meetings, if a new emergency arose and the Politburo could not be convened immediately, the Secretariat could make new decisions and issue them in the name of the CC. Only afterwards would the Secretariat have to seek the approval of the Politburo. The Plenum placed Mao Zedong in control of the daily work of the Secretariat.

The renewed cooperation between the CCP and the GMD also allowed work in the urban areas of China to pick up once again. As shown above, despite a devastated organization, the few remaining communists in Shanghai had kept alive some activities through a number of front organizations and through the infiltration of other groups engaged in patriotic resistance to Japanese aggression. Liu Shaoqi, who had been placed in charge of

work in the "white areas," used the new situation to launch a devastating critique of earlier CCP policy. While his views were strongly refuted at the time, they anticipated Mao's later assessment of the "leftist" trend in the party under Wang Ming and Bo Gu's control.

CCP historians view the moderately successful strike in Shanghai at Japanese-run cotton mills in October 1936 as vindicating Liu's new policy of shifting from class actions to those of national resistance. The strike was led by the National Salvation Association that had been set up some time earlier as a part of the process of the formation of a number of specific Salvation Associations drawn from different sectors of the population. In fact, the CCP had a minimal role in the Association but the actions fitted with its new strategy and the Association was to be the focus of CCP rebuilding activities during the war years. This approach was given a boost by the December 1936 anti-Japanese demonstrations that began in Beijing and soon spread to Shanghai. However, the Japanese invasion of the city meant that progress was slow and it was very difficult for the party to act in a concerted way. However, important links were laid for the later struggle against the GMD once the civil war erupted in 1945. Party membership grew from 130 in November 1937 to over 2,000 by the time of the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

It was not long before the new relationship began to sour. As the CCP began to spread its influence, it came into conflict with local GMD troops culminating in what CCP historians refer to as the "first and second anticommunist upsurges" (December 1939-March 1940 and January 1941). While these clashes did not end the united front they did reinforce Mao's view that not all CCP resources should be channelled via the GMD. For Mao, the united front was more than an alliance with just Chiang Kai-shek. CCP policy turned towards isolating Chiang while trying to win over to its side significant sections of the anti-Japanese alliance.

This combined with the removal of GMD financial support affected policy within the CCP-held base areas. Policies were adopted for power-sharing and to moderate economic policies to win over other groups in the united front. For the party faithful, Mao stated that the "three magic weapons" that would bring victory were the united front, armed struggle, and party-building. For the broader public, Mao put forward his ideas on New Democracy. However, this document stated publicly the CCP's claim to lead the revolution. According to Mao, the bourgeoisie had both revolutionary characteristics and a tendency toward compromise. As a result, the proletariat would have to assume leadership in China's struggle against imperialism and feudalism by default. During this first stage there would be a "revolutionary democratic dictatorship" of several classes. In the second stage, the non proletarian classes would be transformed gradually and the new democratic revolution would progress into its socialist stage. Although Mao said that the first phase would last for a long time, he was vague about when the change of stages would come about and criticized as "leftist" those who thought that socialism could be implemented before the new democratic revolution was completed. However, the article did return the attainment to the CCP's political agenda.

In line with the view that it would be a long time before socialist construction was on the agenda, Mao outlined a moderate economic policy that would appeal to non-CCP elements. Private capitalist production would be allowed so long as it did not dominate the "livelihood of the people on a national scale." In the countryside, a rich peasant economy was proposed, with only "big landlords" having their land confiscated and redistributed. This economic program was depicted as being in line with Sun Yat-sen's ideas.

This more open and conciliatory external policy was accompanied by an extensive set of internal party campaigns that were intended to weed out opponents to current policy, tighten party discipline, and crush dissent while building adherence to Mao and his supporters' analysis of the past and visions for the future. The disciplining of the party that began in earnest in 1941 carried on through until 1945.

During this period, Comintern direct influence on the CCP was slight and, as argued above, was not necessarily detrimental to Mao's ascendance to power within the party as many authors have suggested previously. The decline in the influence of the Comintern is clearly seen in the manner of interpretation by the CCP of key Comintern decisions during this period. As noted above, it was on receiving news from Moscow of the Comintern's tacit support that Mao decided to convene the Sixth Plenum of the Sixth CC at which he defeated Wang Ming politically.

The war with Japan did not exist in isolation and the CCP leadership in Yan'an could not afford to ignore the Comintern totally. Just as publicly Mao and the CCP gave full support to the Soviet-Nazi Non-Aggression Pact of 23 August 1939, so they supported the neutrality pact the Soviet Union concluded with Japan on 13 April 1941. However, both events allowed the CCP to pursue its own course independent of Moscow's aims. Thus, for example, the CCP's comments on the neutrality pact stated that it marked another triumph of the Soviet Union's peace policy. It was claimed that this pact had in no way compromised Soviet support for China's war effort, a view quite different to that of Chiang Kai-shek. However, the CCP used the pact as a chance to put forward the view that it was up to China itself to recover all the Chinese territories south of the Yalu River by itself. Despite this, the CCP was being forced into defending a position that was clearly not going to push forward its nationalist claims. From the CCP's point of view, the German invasion of the Soviet Union that began on 22 June 1941 came as a fortunate relief. Overnight the Soviet peace policy in the midst of a capitalist war was changed into a position of the Soviet Union as the leader of the fight against fascism.

Now, the "capitalist powers" such as Great Britain and the US who had been "conspiring" to encourage a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union to preempt a Japanese push southward had to be courted as a part of the international united front against fascism. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the US into the war and enabled the CCP to call for international involvement in the war to push forward the united front. The CCP had moved swiftly from the view of recovering all its territories on its own.

The CCP's 9 December 1941 declaration called for the formation of an anti-Japanese and anti-fascist front in the Pacific that would include all the governments and peoples who were opposing Japan. Now the USA and Great Britain were seen as having an important role to play in defeating Japan and bringing about unity in China. "Left" deviation was to be avoided and all party members were to cooperate with the British and Americans.

The dissolution of the Comintern (15 May 1943) freed the CCP from any need to bow in its direction and re-affirmed what was already a reality for Mao and his supporters that the CCP should get on with creating its own revolution on its own terms. Also, it undercut any last possible support base for Wang Ming and his followers. Combined with other internal factors, it contributed to the build up of a cult around Mao Zedong.

On 26 May, after the CCP had received the information, the Politburo met to discuss the issue and in the name of the CC issued a decision on the matter. Not surprisingly, the decision wholly agreed with the Comintern's abolition pointing out that this would strengthen the local communist parties by making them "even more nationalized." Such a leading center was no longer considered necessary and, interestingly, the decision points out that the Comintern had not interfered in CCP affairs since 1935. The need to assert the continued and strengthened role the CCP would play without the Comintern was further necessitated by the calls by some CCP domestic critics that it could now disband.

Sources

There is an abundance of sources for the study of the CCP during the years from 1919 until 1943 but still many areas of the relationship remain murky. Some of the outstanding questions may be resolved by the opening of the archives in Moscow and research that is now in progress.

a) Archives

Extensive collections of materials concerning the Chinese revolution are held in Moscow, especially in the Comintern Archives at the Russian Center for the Storing and Study of Documents of Contemporary History (formerly the Central Party Archives).

1) The Central Archives (Zhongyang dang'an), Wen Quan Village, Beijing. These archives comprise the main holdings of the CCP. Among other material, it contains archives and related documents since the founding of the CCP from the CC and its affiliated organizations, their agencies, as well as from revolutionary groups and front organizations from different periods. There are 202 complete files with approximately 8 million pieces. Among the materials is the archive of the CCP delegation to the Comintern. This contains important documents of the Comintern, and resolutions, decisions, announcements on China by the ECCI, the Far East Bureau, and the Eastern Department, as well as by the Youth Communist International and the Workers' International. Alas, entrance is highly restricted even for Chinese researchers and virtually impossible for foreigners. It is important to note that there are relevant archives held at all administrative levels in China that are relevant to the history of the CCP.

2) The Sneevliet Archives, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. One section of this archive covers the period of time that Sneevliet (Maring) spent working for the Comintern in Moscow and in China. The most important materials are Sneevliet's reports to the Comintern on the situation in China, the relationship between the CCP and the GMD, and the state of affairs within the party. In addition, there are interesting notes on key events either made by Sneevliet himself or for Sneevliet by his interpreters. Of particular interest in this respect are the notes concerning the Third Party Congress. The archives are entirely open. The most important materials concerning Sneevliet's period in China are published in Tony Saich, The Origins of the First United Front in China. The Role of Sneevliet (Alias Maring).

3) The Archives of the Bureau of Investigation, Taipei, Taiwan. These archives contain materials captured by the GMD and taken to Taiwan after 1949. There is a wealth of documentation concerning CCP activities underground during the late-twenties and early-thirties and also on the base areas. These sets of documents were captured by the invading GMD armies. Finally, there are complete sets of party newspapers and periodicals that contain articles about the CCP, the Comintern or that transmit its decisions. The archives are now completely open for researchers.

b) Contemporary CCP Newspapers and Magazines

Below the most important CCP journals and newspapers are listed for the period covered in this essay.

Balujun junzheng zazhi (Military and Political Journal of the Eighth Route Army). Began publication on 15 January 1939 and ceased publication on 25 March 1942. It was the organ of the General Political Office of the Eighth Route Army.

Buersheweike (The Bolshevik). Began publication in Shanghai on 24 October 1927 as the organ of the CCP CC. Originally, it was a weekly but changed to a bi-monthly and finally a monthly. It was a secret journal, and it ceased publishing in July 1932.

Dangbao (The Party Paper). The CCP's first internal party paper. It began publication on 30 November 1923 with an unspecified publication regularity. It is unclear when it ceased publication, but one issue appeared on 1 June 1924.

Douzheng (Struggle). A weekly that began publication in February 1933 as the organ of the Central Bureau, it was widely disseminated among the base areas. Issue 73 was published on 30 September 1934.

Gongchandang (The Communist). The publication of the first party cell in Shanghai. It began publication on 7 November 1920 as a monthly. Issue six was published on 7 July 1921.

Gonchandangren (The Communist). Began publication in Yan'an on 20 October 1939 as an internal CCP paper. It was published nineteen times, ending publication in August 1941.

Hongqi ribao (Red Flag Daily). An organ of the CCP CC that began publication on 20 August 1930 in Shanghai. Starting on 9 March 1931, its name was changed to *Hongqi zhoubao* (Red Flag Weekly).

Hongqi zhoubao (Red Flag Weekly). The successor publication to *Hongqi ribao* (Red Flag Daily), it began publication on 9 March 1931. In August 1933, it became a bi-monthly. It ceased publication on 1 March 1934 with issue no. 64. Because it was a secret publication, it often had a fake cover.

Hongse Zhonghua (Red China). Began publication on 11 December 1931 at Ruijin as the organ of the Central Soviet government. After the evacuation of the base area its publication effectively stopped (October 1934), to be revived in the Shaan-Gan-Ning base area. From 29 January 1937 its name was changed to *Xin Zhonghua bao* (New China).

Jiefang (Liberation). Began as a weekly of the CCP CC that was later changed to a bi-monthly. It began publication in Yan'an on 24 April 1937 and ended in May 1941. In all, 134 issues were published.

Jiefang ribao (Liberation Daily). Set up as a publication of the CCP CC on 16 May 1941. It was the major paper for the base areas, and many other publications were halted to allow concentration of news reporting. It ended publication on 27 March 1947.

Laodongzhe (The Laborer). Began publication on 3 October 1920 and continued publication until 2 January 1921.

Liening shenghuo (Lenin Life). Was the theoretical organ of the Party Center in Shanghai under Bo Gu and ran from 1932 until 1934.

Litou (The Plow). Began publication in Canton on 25 January 1926 as the organ of the Guangdong Peasant Association. Initially, it was published every ten days but subsequently was changed to a weekly. The last issue (no. 23) was published on 7 January 1927. It was generally pro-CCP.

Qianfeng (The Vanguard). First published on 15 July 1923. Not a success, only three issues were published before it ceased publication in early 1924.

Qunzhong (The Masses). An open weekly CCP publication for the GMD-ruled areas and Hong Kong. It began publication on 11 December 1937 in Hankou and later was moved to Chongqing. In June 1946, it began

publication in Shanghai but was forced to stop by the GMD in March 1947. In Hong Kong it was published as a weekly from January 1947 until it voluntarily ceased publication on 20 October 1949.

Shihua (True Words). The organ of the CC, it was set up in Shanghai in October 1930. It was superseded by *Hongqi ribao* (Red Flag Daily).

Xiangdao zhoubao (The Guide Weekly). Began publication in September 1922 in Shanghai. In all, 201 editions were published, with publication ending on 18 July 1927.

Xiaoqu (The Pioneer). The fortnightly journal of the SYL, it began publication on 15 January 1922 and ceased publication on 15 August 1923.

Xin qingnian (New Youth). Launched in September 1915 in Shanghai, it had a major impact on progressive thinkers during the May Fourth Movement. Originally called *Qingnian zazhi* (Youth Magazine), its name was changed in September 1916. From September 1920 it was operated as a publication of the Shanghai communist small group and was an organ of the CCP after its foundation. In July 1922 it temporarily stopped publication, reappearing in June 1923 as the party's theoretical organ. It finally ceased publication in July 1926.

Xin Zhonghuabao (New China News). A publication of the Central Soviet government published in Yan'an as a successor to *Hongse Zhonghua* (Red China), it began publication on 29 January 1937. In January 1939, it became the publication of the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region Government. It published a total of 230 issues, ending publication on 15 May 1941.

Zhongguo nongmin (The Chinese Peasant). Published by the Central Peasant Department of the GMD, it began publication as a monthly on 1 January 1926. The general editor was Mao Zedong. In December 1926, it temporarily ceased publication but revived briefly in Hankou in July 1927.

Zhongguo wenhua (Chinese Culture). A theoretical journal published in Yan'an, it began publication as a monthly on 15 February 1940 but only ran until 20 August 1941.

c) Publications of Documents

An indispensable collection of CCP documents is to be found in the two volumes Liuda yilai – dangnei mimi wenjian (Since the Sixth Party Congress – Secret Inner-Party Documents) and Liuda yiqian (Before the Sixth Party Congress) (Beijing, 1952 and 1981). These two volumes were originally compiled and distributed by the Secretariat

of the CCP CC between December 1941 and October 1942. They were produced as study materials for high-ranking cadres in preparation for the Rectification Movement (1941-44). The collections were re-issued after 1980 in connection with the writing of the new Resolution on Party History (1981). The main drawback of this reissue is that pieces by Mao Zedong were withdrawn and readers are referred to the official works. These official works contain heavily edited versions of Mao's speeches.

Based on these two publications and their own holdings, the Central Archives published their 14 volume selection of central party documents intended for internal use only – Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji (Selected Documents of the CCP CC) (Beijing, 1982-1987). This collection provides a massive amount of previously unavailable material. More recently, an open (gongkai) version of the collection has been published. A total of 18 volumes have been published (1989-92), covering the period 1921 until 1949. In terms of information about original publication details etc., this latter series is more useful than the neibu series. However, not all materials are included. The most important set of original documentation on Comintern-CCP relations is the three volume series Gongchanguoji youguan Zhongguo geming de wenxian ziliao (Materials of the Comintern Concerning the Chinese Revolution), Vol. 1 1919-28, Vol. 2 1929-36, and Vol. 1936-43 (Beijing, 1980, 1982 and 1989). It is edited by the Institute of Modern History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

In recent years, the CCP has been releasing complete collections of Mao's writings before 1949. Important have been the five volume series Mao Zedong wenji (Collected Writings of Mao Zedong) (Beijing, 1993) covering the period from 1921 to 1949. In addition, there is the monumental 20 volume collection edited by Takeuchi Minoru, Mao Zedong ji (Collected Writings of Mao Zedong) (Tokyo, 1983), 10 volumes and Mao Zedong ji. Bujuan (Supplement to the Collected Writings of Mao Zedong) (Tokyo, 1983-86). In English there is the huge undertaking by Stuart Schram and his collaborators at the Fairbank Center, Harvard University to publish all Mao's pre-1949 writings. Four volumes have been published covering the period from 1912 to 1934 by M.E. Sharpe. The general title of the series is Mao's Road to Power. Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949.

In English, the most extensive collection of documents of the CCP during this period Tony Saich, The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party: Documents and Analysis (Armonk, NY, 1996).

In Chinese there are collected documentary series for virtually all the major events discussed in the essay above. Most, but not all, are edited by the Committee for the Collection of Materials on CCP History and the Central Archives and published in Beijing by the Party Materials Publishing House of the CC.

d) Memoirs, biographies, and handbooks

Unfortunately, most of the important Chinese participants died before the recent fad for memoir writing got off the ground in China. However, there are a number of sources that are useful.

M.N. Roy's memoirs are interesting to read (My Experience in China, Calcutta, 1945) while those of Otto Braun are far less so A Comintern Agent in China, 1932-39 (Stanford, 1982). Wang Ming's quasi memoirs are worth a dip into although the reader is advised to read carefully, Mao's Betrayal (Moscow, 1979).

The memoirs of Zhang Guotao are the most extensive available but also have to be treated with care. Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party, 2 Volumes (Lawrence, Kansas, 1971-72). Others of interest are Li Weihang, Huiyi yu yanjiu (Reminiscences and Research) (Beijing, 1986). This work is particularly interesting for party development and high-level politics such as were played out at the 7 August Emergency Conference. The memoirs of Wu Xiuquan, which provide valuable information on how the influence of the pro-Soviet group in the party was broken up, are important. Wu had been an interpreter for the CCP in many of its dealings with Comintern representatives in the thirties. There are numerous short reminiscences of key events or individuals that are either published in special collections or in the various journals on party history.

For CCP and related Comintern personnel, the most extensive new guide is the series that was launched by Professor Hu Hua before his death Zhonggong dangshi renwuzhuan (Biographies of Historical Personages of the CCP) (Xi'an, 1980-present). Originally a projected series of 50 volumes, to date 55 have been published. In general the quality of the biographies improves as the series progresses but it is uneven. This series can be used in conjunction with Chen Yutang's Zhonggong dangshi renwu bieminglu, ziming, biming, huaming (Pseudonyms of CCP Personalities in the History of the CCP, Original Names, Pen Names, Aliases) (Beijing, 1985). The dictionary contains 192 entries on key figures in the Communist movement. Each entry provides brief biographical details and a list of aliases etc. and where and when they were used. Most useful is the index of aliases. For a good one volume source on people there is the 900-page Zhongguo gongchandang renming cidian (Dictionary of CCP Personages 1921-1991) (Beijing, 1991), which contains brief biographical sketches for some 10,000 luminaries.

For party organizations several indispensable books have been published. There is Wang Jianying, Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao huibian: lingdao jigou yange he chengyuan minglu (zengdingben cong yidai dao shisida) (Compilation of Materials on the Organizational History of the CCP--The Evolution of Leading Organs and Name-Lists of Personnel (Revised Edition from the First to the Fourteenth Party Congress) (Beijing, 1982). This reference book should be used in conjunction with Zhao Shenghui's, Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi gangyao (Outline History of CCP Organization) (Hefei, 1987).

NOTES