

**THE ORIGINS OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY  
AND THE ROLE PLAYED BY  
SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE COMINTERN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the origins of the Chinese Communist Party, making full use of primary materials, especially newly published Comintern documents and British archives.

In making a comprehensive survey of the international background of the foundation of the CCP, the author proposes that the establishment of the CCP was a part of the Bolsheviks' global strategy of world revolution, of the Comintern's efforts to expand Communist forces into the East; it also served Soviet Russia's interests in the Far East.

The study reveals the important role that Soviet Russia and the Comintern played in the establishment of the CCP. During the period 1918-1921, Soviet Russia and the Comintern dispatched numerous emissaries to China and recruited many agents there. These people made wide-ranging contacts with Chinese in different organisations and factions regardless of their political beliefs, party affiliation or social strata. They conducted intensive agitation and propaganda by various media and means, including supplying news and publicity to the press free of charge and publishing Communist booklets and journals in Chinese. They had a hand in directing important student and worker organisations which emerged during the May Fourth Movement, and later urged people who had a little knowledge of Marxism and who belonged to anarchist organisations and the Guomindang to organise socialist and communist organisations and parties. The CCP's important founders, Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu's conversion to Bolshevism and their creation of the CCP only happened after the Bolshevik agents' persuasion and instruction.

Therefore, the thesis concludes that the establishment of the CCP was not, as official ideologists claim, the outcome of the combination of the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism and the labour movement in China, but actually the result of political direction and financial support by the Bolsheviks. In consequence, the CCP was built along Leninist lines from the very beginning. This research further analyses the internal causes allowing Bolshevism to be transplanted into China and points out that the ideology which the CCP embraced during its founding period still has far-reaching influence upon politics in China today.

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## Abbreviations

<b>CCP</b>	Chinese Communist Party
<b>CNSAC</b>	<u>Communism, Nationalism and Soviet Advisers in China</u>
<b>Comintern</b>	Communist International
<b>FO</b>	Archives of the British Foreign Office
<b>GLZDC</b>	<u>Gongchangguoji Liangongbu yu Zhongguogeming dang'anziliao congshu</u> (A Series of Archival Material on the Comintern, All-Union CP(B) and the Chinese Revolution)
<b>GMD</b>	Guomindang (The Nationalist Party)
<b>MRSANC</b>	<u>Missionaries of Revolution: Soviet Advisers and Nationalist China 1920-1927</u>
<b>NAA</b>	<u>Narodny Azii Afriki</u> (Peoples of Asia and Africa)
<b>Narkomindel</b>	People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs
<b>OFUFC</b>	<u>The Origins of the First United Front in China: The Role of Sneevliet</u>
<b>RCP(B)</b>	Russian Communist Party (B)
<b>PRC</b>	People's Republic of China
<b>SIOPK</b>	<u>Sovetskie Istoriki O Problemakh Kitaya</u> (Soviet Historians on Problem of China)
<b>SU</b>	Soviet Union
<b>SY</b>	Chinese Socialist Youth League
<b>USDS</b>	Archives of the Department of State, USA
<b>VKKD</b>	<u>VKP(b), Komintern I Kitaya, Dokumenty</u> (The All Union Communist Party(B), the Comintern and China)
<b>ZDBX</b>	<u>Zhonggong dangshi baogao xuanbian</u> (Selected Reports on the History of the CCP)
<b>ZEGS</b>	<u>Zhong-E guanxi shiliao</u> (Archival Materials on Sino-Russian Relations)
<b>ZSGGZH</b>	<u>Zhong-Su guojia guanxishi ziliao huibian</u> (Selected Materials on the History of Sino-Soviet State Relations)



# THE ORIGINS OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE ROLE PLAYED BY SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE COMINTERN

## INTRODUCTION

The foundation of the Chinese Communist Party (henceforth abbreviated as the CCP) is a significant event in Chinese history. It has had a vital and profound influence on the development and vicissitudes of modern Chinese society. Therefore, it is important to explain why and how the Chinese Communist Party emerged in the early twenties of the 20th century.

For a long time there has been considerable interest in this subject, and some of the relevant monographs have been notable scholarly achievements. Zhang Jingru's Zhongguo Gongchandang de chengli (The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei People's Press, 1981), A. Dirlik's The Origins of Chinese Communism (Oxford, 1989), K. V. Shevelyov's "On the History of the Foundation of the Communist Party of China", Far Eastern Affairs (Moscow, 1981, No. 1), Li Xin and Chen Tiejian's Weida de kaiduan (The Great Beginning) (Beijing, 1983), Sima Lu's Zhonggong de chengli yu chuqi huodong (The Founding and Initial Activities of the Communist Party of China) (Hong Kong, 1974), Shen Yunlong's Zhongguo gongchandang zhi lai yuan (The Origins of the Chinese Communist Party) (Taipei, 1959), M. Luk's The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism (Oxford and Hong Kong, 1990) and H. Van de Ven's From Friend to Comrade (Berkeley, 1991) are all worth mentioning in this respect. The issue has also been treated in works on the history of

the CCP, on Sino-Russian relations, and on relations between the Chinese revolutionary movement and the Comintern.

In tracing the origins of the CCP, many historians both in China and abroad have noticed the impact of the October Revolution and the role of the Comintern. But they hold different views on the levels of the significance of these influences, which may be roughly classified into the following categories:

1. Official books on the history of the CCP published in the People's Republic of China (PRC) assert that the CCP came into being as an outcome of the combination of the Chinese labour movement with the spread of the science of Marxism-Leninism after the October Revolution.<sup>1</sup> Though the authors of these books admit that the aid given by Soviet Russia and the Comintern promoted the foundation of the CCP, they regard it as a merely contributory factor. They resolutely deny that the creation of the CCP was the result of transplanting Communism from abroad. Recently a Western scholar, Hans van de Ven, went even further to suggest that without the efforts of the Comintern a unified Communist party would have later emerged autonomously in China.<sup>2</sup>

2. The prevailing view among students in Western countries, Taiwan and Hong Kong is that the Russian Bolsheviks initiated the CCP's organisation and nurtured the Chinese Communist movement; therefore the CCP was a product of direct Comintern intervention.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that many historians of the ex-Soviet Union held

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<sup>1</sup> Zhonggong zhongyang wenjianxuanbian (Selected documents of the Central Committee of the CCP), Beijing: the CCP's Central Academy Press, 1992, p 145. Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi, Zhongguo Gongchandang lishi (The History of the Chinese Communist Party), Beijing: People's Press, 1991, p 47.

<sup>2</sup> Hans van de Ven, From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920-1927, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, p 55.

<sup>3</sup> Chen Yongfa, Zhongguo gongchan geming qishinian (70 Years of the Chinese

similar views in spite of their different political standpoint; they declared that the Chinese Communist movement emanated from Moscow and that Soviet Russia and the Comintern played a crucial role in forming the CCP.<sup>4</sup> Nowadays this interpretation has come to be shared by several Chinese scholars in PRC.<sup>5</sup>

3. Some researchers accept the fact of involvement of Soviet Russia and the Comintern, but take internal and historical factors into greater consideration. They stress the indigenous roots of the Chinese Communist movement, pointing to China's need for social revolution, the influences of China's traditional political thought and culture, the radical historical experiences, the contemporary nationalist sentiments and the CCP founders' preoccupations and personal strains. These factors, they consider, with some ideas, such as populism, cosmopolitanism, inclined radical Chinese to believe in communism.<sup>6</sup>

4. Another line of thinking asserts that the October Revolution did not bring about the swift or wide dissemination of Marxism-Leninism. According to this interpretation, it was other varieties of non-Marxist socialism, and especially anarchism, which had a considerable influence on Chinese radical thinking during the May 4th period. It follows that not only did anarchism have a pervasive influence on radical circles at the time when Marxism-Leninism was introduced into China, but also

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Communist Revolution), Part 1, Taipei: Lianjing Publishing Company, 1998; Sima Lu's Zhonggong de chengli yu chuguo huodong (The Founding and Initial Activities of the Communist Party of China) (Hong Kong, 1974).

<sup>4</sup> K. V. Shevelyov's "On the History of the Foundation of the Communist Party of China", Far Eastern Affairs (Moscow, 1981,).No. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Gongchanguoji yu Zhongguo geming guanxi lunwenji (Essays on the Relations between the Comintern and the Chinese Revolution), Shanghai: People's Press, 1985.

<sup>6</sup> M. Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967; B. I. Schwarts, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961.

that anarchists played an important part in the early organisational activities which culminated in the founding of the CCP. This point of view is mainly held by Arif Dirlik.<sup>7</sup>

It is not easy to reach a firm conclusion as to which of these interpretations is the most accurate for a number of reasons. Different research angles and methods are important factors that need to be taken into account. Some studies failed to relate the Bolsheviks' global strategy and the broad scope of their Far Eastern policies to their policies toward China; some scholars did not pay enough attention to the application of Lenin's theory on the East to the Bolsheviks' practice in China at the early period; in some works, the activities of Soviet Russia's diplomats and the Comintern's agents in China were dealt with separately and their co-operation was ignored; moreover, there is a paucity of studies comparing the origins of the CCP with the origins of Communist Parties in countries other than Russia. In short, there have been scant researches soundly and dialectically to expound the relations between internal causes and external influences, general strategy and specific policies, theoretical principles and concrete practices, diplomatic and revolutionary activities.

Another reason for the deficiencies in the studies conducted was the shortage of original historical materials.

It is beyond doubt that the major relevant records are kept in Russia. In the past, although certain scholars of the ex-Soviet Union were given access to the Comintern archives and were permitted to quote from the sources in these files, what they revealed was far from satisfactory. This situation did not change until 1993 when a

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<sup>7</sup> A. Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

great quantity of relevant archives kept in the Russian Modern Historical Documents Storage and Research Centre was first opened to the public. Using the archives relating to the Chinese revolutionary movement, the Institute of the Far East Studies of the Russian Sciences Academy and the Society of the East Asian Studies of the Free University of Berlin have been compiling a series of monumental books VKP(b), Komintern i Kitaya, Dokumenty, 1920-1949 (The All Union Communist Party (B) , the Comintern and China, Documents, 1920-1949) and published its first volume (1920-1925) in Moscow and Berlin in 1994. This volume's several documents relate to the founding of the CCP. In the introduction, the compilers express their belief that some confidential documents were transferred to other archive systems or intentionally destroyed; while some important archives, such as those of the Commissariats of Foreign Affairs, and of National Defence and the Committee of State Security, have not so far been opened. Despite this incompleteness, this newly published book still provides valuable and reliable first-hand information for research purposes.

In China some collections of reference materials on the founding of the CCP have been published, such as Gongchanzhuyi xiaozu (The Communist Groups), Yida qianhou (The Period of the First Congress of the CCP) and Zhongguo Gongchandang diyici daibiao dahui dangan ziliao (Archival Sources for the First Congress of the CCP). But these mainly consist of some early documents of the CCP, articles by the founders of the CCP and memoirs of persons who participated in its establishment. Since the early documents and publications rarely recorded the events surrounding the formation of the CCP in detail, many historical descriptions of the process by which it emerged are based primarily on memoirs written in the 1950s and 1980s. However, important founders of the CCP, such as Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu, Li Hanjun and Zhang Tailei, died early without leaving memoirs relevant to the period of the CCP's

formation. In view of this, it is necessary to seek out and unearth other reliable historical sources. In recent years, part of the archives of the former Chinese central and local governments have been sorted out and published. Among these sources, there are the publications of the Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai Archives, and also Zhong-E guanxi shiliao (Archival Materials on Sino-Russian Relations), which were compiled by the Institute of Modern History of the Central Academy of Sciences in Taiwan from the archives of the Foreign Ministry of the Beijing Government (1910s-1920s). While useful, these materials contain only fragmentary records of the Bolsheviks' activities and the Chinese Communist movement. Under these circumstances, it is necessary to make use of other countries' archives.

From about 1840 to 1949, China had close relations with the major foreign powers, and there are therefore plenty of archives which record the events of 1918-1922 in China kept in these countries. The diplomatic and intelligence bodies of several major powers, together with the authorities of foreign settlements in China, paid considerable attention to China's internal affairs as well as to its external affairs. After the October Revolution they attached importance to collecting information on the dissemination of Bolshevism, on the activities of Russian Bolsheviks in China, and on Chinese revolutionary movements. For instance, the Records of the US Department of State relating to China's internal affairs include special files on Bolshevik Activities in China and Socialism in China. The Archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Japanese Army and Navy also contain relevant files, such as Materials relating to the Recent Communist Movement in China and Manchuria, Report on Sino-Russian Joint Propaganda Activities and some reports on the Chinese's relations with the Korean Communists. The archives of the foreign concessions in China, such as Shanghai International Settlement Municipal Council

Minute Book, Shanghai International Settlement Municipal Council Police Intelligence Summary, and Shanghai French Concession Administration Police Report, have many records on the activities of the Bolshevik agents and Chinese Communists in Shanghai. The Sneevliet Archive in Holland has a sizeable section covering the first official Comintern plenipotentiary to China, Sneevliet's activities in China. Britain was a dominant imperialist power in China and was also the leading country in the world engaged in combating Bolshevism during the period in question. So the British archives have many documents which are important for this research, such as Memorandum respecting Bolshevism in the Far East, Report respecting Bolshevism and Chinese Communism and Anarchism and Report on the Activities and Tracks of the Comintern's Representatives in China. Moreover, the Secret Abstracts from the China Command's Intelligence Diaries, the Secret Intelligence Reports on the Asian Colonies by the Indian Bureau of Information, and the political and intelligence reports from Shanghai, Tianjin, Harbin, Zhangzhou, Xiaman, Nanjing and elsewhere record many details of the activities of Chinese Communists and Russian Bolsheviks in China. Most of these British records can be seen in the files of the Foreign Office (abbreviated to FO). These documents have rarely been utilised by students of the history of the CCP, hence many important materials have been overlooked.

In addition to consulting the relevant publications, especially the Chinese translation of VKP(b), Komintern i Kitaya, Dokumenty, 1920-1949's first volume Liangong(bu) Gongchanguoji yu Zhongguo guomin geming yundong (the All-Union Communist Party (B), the Comintern and the Chinese National Revolutionary Movement, 1920-1925), which was published in Beijing in 1997 as the first volume of Gongchanguoji Liangongbu yu Zhongguo geming dang'an ziliao congshu (A Series of

Archival Material on the Comintern, the All-Union CP(B) and the Chinese Revolution), I have made a particular endeavour to use original sources which have not been published so far, especially the British archives kept in the Public Record Office in London. By careful examination and textual research, many rarely known historical facts can be sifted out and verified. I found that the relevant British documents and the newly published Russian documents can complement and corroborate each other. Moreover, my thesis adopted valuable recollections made by some participants in the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement and the founding of the CCP, which I obtained through interviews and correspondence in the early 1980s.

This study attempts to make a comprehensive survey of the origins of the Chinese Communist movement, to explore its international background and ideological roots. The intention is to observe from a broad perspective and study the various incidents as an organic whole in order to find out their connections with one another; and to penetrate the superficial appearance of things to reveal their underlying reality. Since a number of works have already given a detailed account of the formation of the CCP. I therefore have no intention of retracing a story whose facts are already well-known. However, this monograph, based on copious primary source material, will bring to light a number of historical aspects of this event that have hitherto been ignored or skated over, and will also contain many findings which have seldom or never been revealed. In addition, it provides some interpretations of a number of phenomena that have been misread by certain historians and differ from those have been widely maintained. In this way, new light may be shed on some of the following issues:

1. Shortly after the October Revolution, the Bolshevik leaders began to pay attention to China and proposed their policy towards China. As early as 1918, they



started sending emissaries to China and also recruiting agents among Russians which had already been in China. These agents were numerous and well-organised. Bolshevik centres were set up in several cities in China. The agents dispatched or recruited by Soviet Russia and the Comintern made wide-ranging contacts with Chinese in various organisations and factions. It is by no means the case, as some historians have asserted, that the Bolsheviks had no time to attend to affairs in China and they did not establish relations with Chinese revolutionaries until the reopening of the Sino-Russian border in the spring of 1920.<sup>8</sup>

2. The intensity of Soviet propaganda in China between 1919 and 1921 has been underestimated. During this period special propaganda units were set up in Russia and China to conduct agitation and propaganda directing at Chinese people. Many propagandists were sent to China to incite the Chinese to revolt, and large quantities of booklets and leaflets were printed and distributed. The Bolsheviks did not only have their own organs but also established news agencies in China to supply news and publicity to the press free of charge. In order to extend their influence and to conceal the source of such propaganda, the Comintern agents subsidised and created some radical Chinese journals and enlisted the help of various Chinese to engage in propaganda work. Soviet propaganda was perhaps an important factor in making Soviet Russia win favour with the Chinese public opinion and in making some radical intellectuals incline towards Bolshevik theory and practice around 1920-21.

3. The May 4th Movement is generally regarded as a spontaneous patriotic movement. It has hardly been noticed that, behind the scenes, Bolshevik agents played

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<sup>8</sup> Xiang Qing, Gongchanguoji yu Zhongguogeming Guanxi Lunwenji (Essays on the Relations between the Comintern and the Chinese Revolution), (Shanghai: People's Press, 1985), p 81.

a part in stimulating the anti-Japanese and anti-Beijing Government campaigns and had a hand in directing some important students' and workers' organisations which emerged in the Movement. As a result, this Movement brought about the preliminary integration of intellectuals and labourers, and fostered a batch of radicals who later became the key members of the Chinese Communist party.

4. To ally with national bourgeois revolutionaries in colonial countries and to support their national liberation movement was one of Lenin's major strategies in the East. From a very early stage, the Bolsheviks tried to draw the Chinese nationalists, led by Sun Yat-sen, into the common anti-imperialist struggle and to win them over to Soviet Russia's side. Contrary to the traditional view, the United Front policy was applied to China even before its formal adoption at the 2nd Comintern Congress and prior to the foundation of the CCP. Moreover, the Bolshevik agents persuaded several Guomindang (GMD) leaders who believed in socialism to take the lead in forming a socialist or Communist party subordinated to the Comintern.

5. In order to promote the world revolution and to fight against the opportunist leaders of the 2nd International, the Bolsheviks for a time co-operated with anarchists in countries other than Russia. In China, since numerous radical youth believed in anarchism then, the Chinese anarchists became the main target that the Comintern agents tried to make contact with. As a result of the efforts of the Bolsheviks, certain anarchists were persuaded to undertake the revolutionary propaganda work which benefited the interests of Soviet Russia and their organisational links were exploited to carry out organisational activities which related to the formation of the CCP. Furthermore, some anarchists were spurred on to the conversion to Bolshevism and to participate in a Communist party. That was why the Chinese anarchists were seen as having served as midwives for the birth of the CCP.

6. Voitinsky was not the first and only Bolshevik emissary who attempted to establish Communist organisations in China. Before his arrival, several other Soviet and Comintern agents had already engaged in organising actions in China. Around the CCP's formation, they sponsored, organised and supported a number of revolutionary organisations, such as the Truth Society, the Socialist League, the Datong Party (later evolved into Oriental Communist Party), the Zhina Communist Party and the Social Communist Party. Some of these organisations were just built for making a show of strength, or for serving as a stopgap, and some helped to lay the foundation for the establishment of the CCP.

7. Why and how Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu were suddenly converted to Bolshevism and undertook to found the CCP have been contentious issues. This research will show that Li Dazhao had been approached by Soviet agents before the autumn of 1918 when he and Chen started the first society for the study of Marxism, despite the confused state of their thinking at that time; that Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu did not start their activities to establish the CCP until Bolshevik emissaries urged them to do so; and that they organised the Communist groups totally under the Comintern's leadership. It confirms that the CCP was by no means voluntarily initiated by the Chinese.

8. Besides the Russian Bolsheviks, some internationally inclined activists belonging to the Communist parties, socialist parties and revolutionary organisations of some other countries (including Britain, America, France, Korea, Japan, Turkey, India and Indonesia) also had close relations with Chinese radicals during the period while the CCP was taking shape. Some of them even joined some revolutionary organisations set up in China and were involved in the process of founding the CCP and the CSY (the Chinese Socialist Youth League). The establishment of the Chinese

Communist Party was closely related to similar efforts being made in other Asian countries, Korea and Japan in particular. This indicates that there were co-ordinated operations in the Far East under the unified leadership of the Comintern.

The above may add something new to our knowledge of the origins of the CCP and fill various gaps in this research field.

On the basis of the evidence presented, the conclusions can be drawn as follows: The establishment of the CCP was not the outcome of the combination of the broad spread of Marxism-Leninism in China and the Chinese labour movement. From international perspective, this was one fruit of the efforts made by the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution to expand Bolshevik revolution throughout the world and was actually an integral part of the actions of the Comintern to found Communist parties in many other countries. In China in particular, the founding of the CCP was, to a large extent, the result of instigation and instruction by Bolshevik agents in China under the guidance of Lenin's theory and strategy. If Soviet Russia and the Comintern had not provided the initial dynamic for the rise of the Communist movement in China, it would have been impossible to form a Communist Party in China in the early 1920s, at a time when modern industry and a class-conscious proletariat were lacking, and when there was no adequate ideological basis for such a movement, since few Chinese intellectuals understood Marxism.

Besides researching into the origins of the CCP's establishment, this study will also analyse internal causes why Bolshevism could be transplanted into China, and why the CCP could be successfully founded, pointing out that many conditions in China were the same as, or similar to, those found in Tsarist Russia. For example, the economic backwardness, agricultural population constituted the majority, as well as the existence of a long-standing tyrannical autocracy were comparable. Seeing that

social revolution had been successful in Russia, many Chinese radicals, eager to change decadent Chinese society and to throw off the yoke of imperialist rule, were inclined to look up to Bolshevism and a Party of Bolshevik-type as a remedy for China's desperate condition. With some other internal reasons, the influence of some traditions in Chinese political thinking, such as "Datong" (universal harmony) and "Junping" (egalitarianism) and the Chinese historical tradition of violent peasants rebellions made China a fertile soil for radical revolution. Given these circumstances, we can understand the reason why "following the path of the Russians" became a conclusion of some Chinese progressives, as Mao Zedong remarked.<sup>9</sup> It is no exaggeration to say that it was these moves which decided the future direction and destiny of modern China.

There is no doubt that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century no other state had greater influence on China than Soviet Russia (the Soviet Union after 1922). Under the guidance of Lenin's theory, the CCP, as a highly centralised and disciplined organisation, led the Chinese people and in particular the peasants to seize state power through violent class struggle and armed revolution. They established a regime which they called "the people's democratic dictatorship." But it was actually controlled by the CCP, which retained power by the control of people's thinking and by the use of force and terror. China thus turned into a Russian-style "Socialist country," politically totalitarian, economically centralised and culturally monopolistic for quite some time after 1949.

Nowadays, Bolshevism (Leninism) has been cast away by most people in the country of its birth and other former Communist countries, but the CCP has still refused to abandon its political doctrinal heritage and insists on its basic tenets.

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<sup>9</sup> Mao Zedong Xuanji (Selected Works of Mao Zedong), Beijing: People's Press, 1965, Vol. 3, p 374.

While conducting vast economic reforms, the hierarchy of the CCP now in power is reluctant to carry out thorough political reform, and still uses Lenin's principles to justify its one-party rule. This clearly demonstrates that up to now, some Bolshevik concepts on politics are still believed by the CCP leaders as ideological orthodoxy. This ossified way of thinking has become a serious hindrance to China's further progress. Hence, this study, in addition to clarifying the CCP's organisational origins, may also help to find out the CCP's ideological roots from the time of its birth, an ideology that has had far-reaching and significant influence on the China of today.

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE BOLSHEVIKS AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION AFTER THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

### Section 1. Global Strategy

In March 1917, the Russian people, who had suffered long from the rule of Tsarist autocracy and the disaster of World War I, rose in a mass uprising. The Romanov Dynasty collapsed overnight. On the basis of an agreement between the Temporary Committee of the State Duma and the Petrograd Soviet, a Russian Provisional Government was formed and would rule pending the election of a constituent assembly.

The February Revolution bore the character of a spontaneous people's uprising. The principal Bolshevik leaders were far from the revolutionary centre - Petrograd. Convinced that the World War had severely crippled the capitalist system, they had summoned the world proletariat to end the imperialist war by turning it into a civil war; nevertheless the outbreak of the revolution in their fatherland still caught them by surprise. V. I. Lenin even said in a lecture which he gave in Zurich at the beginning of 1917 that a Russian revolution, once it happened, would be "the prologue to the coming European revolution", which could only be "a proletarian, socialist revolution." However, he ended his speech gloomily: "We of the old generation may not live to see the decisive battles of this coming revolution."<sup>10</sup> These words clearly implied that, in Lenin's opinion, socialist revolution, both in Russia and in Europe, would not come soon. When Lenin heard the news of the February

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<sup>10</sup> V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1960-70), Vol 23, p 253.

Revolution, he exclaimed: "It is so incredibly unexpected!"<sup>11</sup> According to L. Trotsky's memoirs, before the February Revolution most socialists held the view that "the productive forces of Russia were not sufficient for the conquest of power by the working class." K. Radek did not even concede the possibility of a proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries in the near future, given that "the productive forces of mankind, taken as a whole, are not sufficiently developed."<sup>12</sup>

The majority of the Bolshevik leaders gave their tentative support for the Provisional Government. L. B. Kamenev and J. V. Stalin, who had returned from Siberian exile, assumed in the Party's organ, Pravda, that the bourgeois stage of the revolution still had a long way to run and that the immediate tasks of the Bolsheviks lay in constructive work within the social democratic movement. Nevertheless, no sooner had Lenin returned to Russia than he advanced the famous "April Theses", which called for a new revolution to transfer power to 'the proletariat and the poorest peasants' and to start immediate transition to the stage of a proletarian socialist revolution. In these theses, he put forward a programme which called for the establishment of a republic of soviets, soviet control over all social production and distribution, the changing of the party's name to "Communist", and the rebuilding of the International.<sup>13</sup> Lenin gradually won over the majority of the Bolshevik Party's centre, but accepted that a lengthy period of agitation would be needed before the masses would be ready to follow the Bolsheviks to the next stage of the revolution. Along with promises to give "bread to the workers, land to the peasants and

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<sup>11</sup> O. Figes, A People's Tragedy, The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996), p 385.

<sup>12</sup>L. Trotsky, My Life, An Attempt at an Autobiography, (Gloucester, Mass., 1970), p 239.

<sup>13</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 24, pp 55-88.



peace to all", Lenin raised the slogan "All power to the Soviets", aimed at the conquest of state power through the Soviets.

At first most Soviets were dominated by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. After the failure of the Kornilov coup the Bolsheviks gradually won control of some principal urban and military soviets. The situation was, again, to the Bolsheviks' advantage after their abortive coup de force in July. From September Lenin, from his hiding place in Finland, wrote several letters to spur the Bolshevik Central Committee to organise an insurrection. He argued, the Bolsheviks "can and must take state power into their own hands." There were "indisputable symptoms ... that we are on the eve of a world wide revolution". To "miss such a moment and wait for the Congress of Soviets would be utter idiocy, or sheer treachery."<sup>14</sup> But other Bolshevik leaders were less willing to support Lenin's proposals. For example, Kamenev suggested that a democratic government be formed together with other socialist parties. The Central Committee even wanted to destroy those letters by Lenin. It was not till 23 October when Lenin secretly returned to Petrograd and attended a session of the Central Committee that the Bolshevik leadership finally yielded to Lenin's instructions and voted overwhelmingly for an insurrection. In order to justify their proposed armed uprising, the Bolshevik Party CC's resolution referred to "the international situation", and identified an incipient naval mutiny in Germany as "the extreme manifestation of the growth of the world-wide socialist revolution all over Europe."<sup>15</sup> According to Lenin's theory, the triumph of the Russian Revolution would be a break in the weakest link of the capitalist system or, to switch

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<sup>14</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 26, p 67, 74, 82.

<sup>15</sup> J. Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and Materials, (California: Stanford University Press, 1934), p 58.

metaphors, would be a "spark" which would cause a series of revolutions throughout the world.

The Bolsheviks set up the Military Revolutionary Centre, but most military preparations were mainly done by the Petrograd Soviet's Military Revolutionary Committee, which was in fact led by Trotsky, who had joined the Bolsheviks in August and was the chairman of the Petrograd Soviet. He advocated organising an insurrection through the Petrograd Soviet coinciding with the Soviet Congress. Yet Lenin intended to launch an insurrection before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Soviet in order to present it with a *fait accompli*.<sup>16</sup> He eagerly urged an early uprising by arguing:

It would be a disaster, or a sheer formality, to wait for the uncertain voting of October 25<sup>th</sup> [November 7<sup>th</sup>]. The people have the right and are in duty bound to decide such questions not by vote, but by force.<sup>17</sup>

On 6 November 1917, soon after Kerensky took measures to check the proposed Bolshevik insurrection, the Petrograd Soviet's Military Revolutionary Committee initiated counteracting measures. At Lenin's insistence after he arrived Smolny Palace about the midnight, the Bolshevik CC decided to give the order for an offensive operation. The military coup took place on 7 November, on the same day of the opening of the Second All-Russian Congress of the Soviets. After the assault on the Winter Palace, the Russian Provisional Government was overthrown.

The Bolsheviks seized state power and a purely Bolshevik government, the Council of People's Commissars, was formed afterwards.<sup>18</sup> In the name of the dictatorship of

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<sup>16</sup> According to Orlando Figes' analysis, if the transfer of power to the Soviet took place by a vote of the Soviet Congress, the result would certainly be a coalition government made up of all the Soviet parties, whereas Lenin was unwilling to share power with them. See *A People's Tragedy*, pp 471-2.

<sup>17</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 26, p 235.

proletariat, the Bolsheviks closed down hostile newspapers, created the Cheka and set up revolutionary tribunals. Furthermore, they dissolved the Constituent Assembly, which was the product of a free election,<sup>19</sup> and outlawed their opponents. In March 1918, the Bolsheviks changed their party's name to the Communist Party [henceforth RCP(B)] and declared their goal to be the creation of a Communist society. It was in such circumstances and by such methods that the first state to proclaim itself socialist and to be ruled by a Communist Party appeared upon the world stage.

Recovering from their shock over the Bolsheviks' seizure of power, various anti-Bolshevik forces and dissident elements began to challenge the new regime. Following the Don Cossacks' revolt in December 1917, the Civil War broke out. The German Army, after a temporary armistice, launched an offensive on the Russian front. The Soviet State was also menaced by armed intervention by the Allies. British troops, followed by French and American marines, occupied Murmansk in March 1918. The tense situation was aggravated by the clash between the Czechoslovak Corps and Soviet forces. By the summer of 1918, three-quarters of the territory of the country was in the hands of foreign forces and the White Guards. The Soviet State was surrounded by battle fronts on all sides.

"World revolution" hence ceased to be a mere prophecy and became an urgent need for the Soviet Regime's survival. First of all, they counted on a European revolution. Lenin, in his report to the Party Congress in March 1918, pointed out:

There would doubtless be no hope for the ultimate victory of our revolution if it were to remain alone, if there were no revolutionary movements in other

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<sup>18</sup> There was, however, a coalition government which included the Left Socialist Revolutionaries for a short period from the end of 1917 to the spring of 1918.

<sup>19</sup> In this election, the Socialist Revolutionary Party won 370 seats, while the Bolshevik Party had only 175 seats and their Left SR allies a further 40 seats, being in the minority.

countries. ... Our salvation from all these difficulties is an all-European revolution.<sup>20</sup>

Trotsky also pinned all hope on a European revolution, saying:

There are only two alternatives: either the Russian revolution will create a revolutionary movement in Europe, or the European powers will destroy the Russian Revolution!<sup>21</sup>

However, the desired "world revolution" did not happen of its own accord. It was therefore only natural that, in order to extricate themselves from their predicament, the Bolshevik leaders should have resolved to create a "world revolution". They endeavoured to outline a global strategy in the drive for world revolution - initially a European revolution - and this became a state policy.

The first instrument for carrying out world revolution was the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (henceforth Narkomindel), which was intended to be little more than a disseminator of the world revolution. Trotsky, the People's Commissar of Narkomindel, declared: "I will issue a few revolutionary proclamations to the peoples of the world and then shut up shop."<sup>22</sup> An appeal from Narkomindel on 19 December 1917 summoned "the toiling, oppressed, and exhausted peoples of Europe" to join "the victorious struggle against all imperialists" and close up the ranks of proletarians of all countries "under the banner of the social revolution." It also declared that the Soviet Government would "use all the means at our disposal, to help the working class in all lands to overthrow the rule of capital and to seize political power in order to reconstruct Europe and the whole world on

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<sup>20</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 26, pp 95-8.

<sup>21</sup> John Reed, Ten Days that Shook the World, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), p 142.

<sup>22</sup> Committee on Foreign Affairs of House of Representatives, United States (ed.), Soviet Diplomacy and Negotiating Behaviour: Emerging New Context for U.S. Diplomacy, (Washington, D. C., 1979), p 48.

democratic and socialist lines."<sup>23</sup> A special body, the International Propaganda Bureau, was established under Narkomindel, headed by Radek. The various people in this Bureau who spoke foreign languages were engaged in propagating the ideas of the Bolshevik revolution abroad. Soviet "diplomatic couriers" frequently left for the European capitals with trunk-loads of propaganda materials.

Every Soviet representative abroad was also entrusted with the mission to stir up revolution. Trotsky stated publicly that the Soviet authorities considered "diplomatic intercourse necessary not only with governments, but also with revolutionary socialist parties bent on the overthrow of the existing government."<sup>24</sup> On 26 December 1917, the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree, resolving "to allocate two million rubles for the needs of the revolutionary international movement and to put this sum at the disposal of the foreign representatives of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs."<sup>25</sup>

A. Joffe's embassy in Berlin was depicted by Lenin as "a burning house [which] would set all Germany alight."<sup>26</sup> Joffe admitted that his embassy was "the staff headquarters of the German revolution. ... more than ten Independent Socialist Party newspapers were directed and supported by the Soviet embassy in the German capital."<sup>27</sup> The Soviet diplomatic representative in London, M. Litvinov, often gave advice to socialists, and issued literature originating from Russia.<sup>28</sup> V. Vorovsky, who had been a

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<sup>23</sup> J. Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol 1 (1917-1924), (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p 18-21.

<sup>24</sup> E. H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923 (London: Macmillan, 1961), Vol 3, p 29.

<sup>25</sup> Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol 1, p 22.

<sup>26</sup> B. Lazitch and M. M. Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern (California: Stanford University Press, 1972), Vol 1, p 39.

<sup>27</sup> L. Fischer, The Soviets in World Affairs: A History of Relations Between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World, 1917-1929, (N.J. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), Vol 1, pp 75-6.

<sup>28</sup> Lazitch, et al., Lenin and the Comintern, pp 130-31; Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923, Vol 3, pp 19-20.

member of the Bolshevik Party's Foreign Bureau in Stockholm, represented Soviet Russia in Sweden, which became a centre for indirect liaison between Moscow and Western Europe from 1918 to 1920. Switzerland was a Bolshevik propaganda base in Europe. I. Berzin, the Soviet ambassador to Switzerland, received several instructions from Lenin during the second half of 1918. Lenin urged him:

For God's sake don't save the money for publishing purposes in German, French, Italian, English, use it fast, fast.<sup>29</sup>

Similar instructions were also given by Lenin to other Soviet representatives and agents, prodding them to spend money unsparingly on fostering revolution in European countries.

Besides the formal diplomats, the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet Government also appointed and dispatched many secret agents abroad. According to John Reed, a radical American journalist, by September 1918, Narkomindel had on its payroll 68 agents in Austria-Hungary, and more than that in Germany, as well as others in France, Switzerland, and Italy.<sup>30</sup> A. Balabanova reminisced that large sums of money were sent to Switzerland to pay those agents who were "creating Bolshevik movements and newspapers throughout the world."<sup>31</sup>

International work was also pursued amongst prisoners of war, Allied soldiers and foreign residents in Russia. Publications in German, Magyar, Romanian, Serb, Czech and Turkish were widely circulated. Bolshevik emissaries were sent out to POW camps throughout Russia and under their direction many Soldiers' Committees were set up by prisoners.<sup>32</sup> The All-Russian Congress of International Social Democratic Prisoners of War, which was held in Moscow on 14 March 1918, proceeded to consider an agenda that

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<sup>29</sup> Lazitch, et al., *ibid.*, p 199, p 41.

<sup>30</sup> W. H. Chamberlin, *The Russia Revolution*, (London: Macmillan, 1935), p 380.

<sup>31</sup> A. Balabanova, *My Life as A Rebel*, (New York, 1938), p 175.

<sup>32</sup> Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol 3, p 30.

included the organisation of an international Communist Party, and issued a manifesto appealing to homeward-bound prisoners to be the pioneers of the international proletarian social revolution and to be ready for an armed insurrection.<sup>33</sup> In May 1918, the Federation of Foreign Groups of the RCP(B) was formed, under the leadership of Bela Kun, a Hungarian Communist. Its duties were not limited to Russian territory. Some key members of this Federation, including B. Kun himself, played an important role in forming Communist Parties and building up revolutionary movements in their own homeland. The Bolsheviks even gave material support to the ex-war prisoners of France, Austria, Germany and other countries, who were sent abroad for revolutionary work. Under the Bolsheviks' direction and support, many former POWs in Russia fought for the world revolution in the van. To their activities, Lenin at the 8th Congress of the RCP(B) expressed his satisfaction: "Hundreds of thousands of war prisoners. ... upon returning to Hungary, Germany and Austria, thoroughly infected those countries with the germs of Bolshevism."<sup>34</sup>

Setting up "a strong guiding centre" to lead international revolutionary movements was indispensable for Moscow. Lenin had the idea of establishing a new International at the beginning of World War I; he believed that the majority of the leaders of the 2nd International had betrayed socialism by supporting the war efforts of their respective bourgeois governments and misleading the proletarian movement. According to Lenin's proposal in the "April Theses", the Bolshevik party resolved on 29 April 1917: "It is the task of our party, ... to take the initiative in creating a third International."<sup>35</sup> Once in power, Lenin and his colleagues were anxious to realise this scheme. At the end of 1918, Lenin

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<sup>33</sup> R. L. Tokes, Bela Kun and the Hungarian Soviet Republic, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967), p 66; Lazitch, et al., Lenin and the Comintern, p 43.

<sup>34</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 29, p 161.

<sup>35</sup> J. Degras (ed.), The Communist International, 1919-1943, Documents, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), Vol 1, p 1.

considered that the time for the creation of the 3rd International was ripe and would brook no delay. There were various reasons why he thought so: the social and economic chaos in Europe, especially in Central Europe, had increased since the Armistice; the German Communist Party had been founded; and the leaders of the 2nd International were going to convene a conference in Berne to resuscitate the old organisation. In a note to G. Chicherin, who had succeeded Trotsky as Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Lenin stressed: "We urgently need to set up an international socialist conference for the founding of the 3rd International."<sup>36</sup> Narkomindel was in charge of the preparatory work for the setting up of the new International.

On 24 January 1919, an invitation was published in Pravda and Izvestiia and broadcast on radio, inviting revolutionary parties and organisations throughout the world to send representatives to a congress which would create a new revolutionary International.

The invitation declared:

The Congress must establish a common fighting organ for the purpose of maintaining permanent co-ordination and systematic leadership of the movement, a centre of the communist international, subordinating the interests of the movement in each country to the common interest of the international revolution.<sup>37</sup>

Since communications between Russia and the outside world were very difficult, a few foreign parties and groups sent their delegates to Moscow. Without any hesitation, the Bolsheviks therefore set about creating "foreign delegates". They assembled the members of parties of some countries that were under Russia's control, such as Latvia and Lithuania; these delegates were in fact members of the RCP(B); they selected prisoners of war and

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<sup>36</sup> Lazitch, et al., Lenin and the Comintern, p 53.

<sup>37</sup> Degras, The Communist International, Vol 1, p 5.



emigrants who had been in Russia for several years and were affiliated to the Bolshevik Federation of Foreign Communist Groups of the RCP(B); and they even called in foreign radicals who had worked as employees of Narkomindel. Balabanova, the first secretary of the Comintern, revealed later: "Among the thirty-five assembly members only one had the political right to represent his country and to vote as its delegate."<sup>38</sup> This man was H. Eberlin, who was in possession of a full mandate from the German Communist Party, and had been instructed to oppose the formation of the 3rd International on the grounds that it was premature. This opinion stemmed from the views of Rosa Luxemburg, who had been murdered on 15 January 1919. However, the foundation of the new International was proclaimed with the affirmative votes of the "majority of delegates" on 4 March 1919.<sup>39</sup> Even the president of the Comintern, Zinoviev admitted later that the Communist International, founded in March 1919, was "nothing but a figment of propaganda".<sup>40</sup>

The first Congress of the Comintern issued several documents drafted by Bolshevik Leaders, in particular by Lenin, as the subsequent congresses were to do also. Those theses which were adopted by the first Congress reiterated the theories of Lenin and the standpoint of the Bolsheviks. They emphasised that capitalism was doomed, and that communism was now emerging from the ruins of capitalism. Therefore, the proletariat must take over the power of the bourgeois state and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat - "the new, proletarian democracy" to replace bourgeois democracy and the parliamentary system. On the closing day of the Congress, Lenin concluded:

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<sup>38</sup> Balabanova, Impressions of Lenin, (Ann Arbor, 1964), p 69.

<sup>39</sup> According to the Bolsheviks, the First Congress of the Comintern was held from 2 to 6 March 1919.

<sup>40</sup> Lazitch, et al., Lenin and the Comintern, p 135.

The victory of the proletarian revolution on a world scale is assured. The founding of an international soviet republic is on the way.<sup>41</sup>

The Comintern had an Executive Committee, known as the ECCI (the Executive Committee of the Comintern), whose function was to conduct the Comintern's work between the congresses and act on its behalf. The first ECCI was composed of representatives from the important European parties but was, in effect, controlled by a bureau of five Bolsheviks. Balabanova found that the ECCI meetings were nothing more than a mere formality and that real authority rested with the Bolshevik Party Politburo. In fact, according to Trotsky, "On all basic questions involving the International, Lenin called the tune."<sup>42</sup>

The initial apparatus of the Comintern derived from the Soviet Government and RCP(B). For example, the Propaganda Bureau of Narkomindel was described by an intimate of Lenin's as the "embryo" of the Comintern;<sup>43</sup> and the work of the Federation of Foreign Groups of the RCP(B) was regarded by Lenin as having laid "the real foundation" of the 3rd International.<sup>44</sup> In addition, many local leaders of the Russian Party, Government and Army were concurrently heads of the regional branches of the Comintern. Rakovsky of the Southern Bureau, Sokolnikov of the Central Asiatic Bureau and Shumiatsky of the Far Eastern Secretariat are all cases in point. It is obvious that the Comintern, which was known as "the international general staff of the proletarian revolution" was virtually an apparatus established and entirely controlled by the Bolsheviks themselves. Whether viewed in the light of its political platform, or assessed in terms of its

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<sup>41</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 28, pp 475-77.

<sup>42</sup> Lazitch, et al., Lenin and the Comintern, p 138.

<sup>43</sup> ibid., p 133.

<sup>44</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 29, p 161.

internal organisation, it was nothing but Lenin's new vehicle for transforming the Bolshevik revolution into a universal cause.

The Comintern and the Soviet Government linked arms in the service of a single authority: the Bolshevik Party. In their work aimed at foreign countries, the Comintern and Narkomindel were distinct but related channels. Basically, their interests were compatible and mutually reinforcing.

The year 1919, when the Comintern was founded, was seen as "the year of Soviet Russia's most complete isolation from the outside world."<sup>45</sup> The Allies, though from the spring of 1919 in the process of withdrawing part of their troops, did not stop the economic blockade or their support for the anti-Bolshevik Russian armies. The White forces, under the command of A. Kolchak, A. Denikin and N. N. Yudenich, advanced from every direction with Moscow as their destination. The Civil War and the economic blockade still posed a serious threat to Soviet regime. The Bolsheviks thought it necessary to take some of the pressure off Soviet Russia through a variety of actions in the West.

In order to trigger and direct the revolution in the West more effectively, more secret emissaries and agents were appointed and dispatched abroad by the Comintern and the Soviet Government. Lenin took particular interest in this work. He himself had talks with some important emissaries before their departure, and even learned some agents' names by heart.<sup>46</sup> Since many old Bolsheviks had achieved senior positions in the Party, the State and the Red Army, few of them were available and suitable for work abroad, so some former Mensheviks, Anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries were appointed by the Soviet Government and the Comintern as their agents. Many secret agents went under the cover of Soviet diplomats and representatives of Soviet trade missions, the Red Cross and news

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<sup>45</sup> Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol 3, p 109.

<sup>46</sup> Lazitch, et al., Lenin and the Comintern, p 145.

agencies. Some agents and even agencies had multiple functions. For instance, the Soviet representative in the United States, L. Martern, opened a "Russian Soviet Bureau" in April 1919, which acted as a diplomatic-cum-trade mission, news agency as well as a centre for directing the Communist movement in the U. S. A..<sup>47</sup> Some agents were delegated both by the Soviet Government and the Comintern. For instance, in 1919 M. Borodin was entrusted with a mission to Mexico and the U. S. A. by Narkomindel and the Comintern as well. He went to America not only as the first emissary of the Comintern, but also as the Soviet diplomatic representative.<sup>48</sup>

The year 1919 was also seen as a year when a revolutionary whirlwind swept over several European countries. Soviets or Workers' Councils appeared in a number of cities in Germany, France, Italy, Austria and other countries. Communist regimes were set up in Bavaria and Hungary. To some extent, this situation and movement were created and fostered by the Bolsheviks directly or indirectly. In spite of that, this "high tide" of the European revolutionary movement aroused a mood of expectancy among the Bolshevik leaders. Zinoviev expressed his optimism in the first issue of the Communist International, the organ of the ECCI, which began publishing in May 1919:

The movement is proceeding at such terrific speed that we may say with full confidence, within a year we shall already begin to forget that there was a struggle for communism in Europe, because in a year the whole of Europe will be communist.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> L. W. Levy (ed.), Revolutionary Radicalism, (New York, 1971), p 634.

<sup>48</sup> L. Holubnichy, Michael Borodin and the Chinese Revolution, 1923-1925, (Ann Arbor, 1979), p 45, p 50.

<sup>49</sup> M. T. Florinsky, World Revolution and the U.S.S.R., (New York: MacMillan, 1933), p 43.

However, in reality, both the Bavarian and Hungarian Soviet Republics were short-lived, the former collapsing in May and the latter in August 1919. The end of this episode signalled the failure of the expected European revolution. The Bolshevik leaders now knew that "the incubatory preparatory period of the revolution in the West may last for a considerable time."<sup>50</sup>

Drawing lessons from the defeat, the Bolshevik leaders considered it necessary to strengthen the leadership further, in the realms of ideas and organisation, of the European proletarian movements. As a concrete move in this direction, the Comintern established the West European Secretariat in Berlin, the West European Bureau in Amsterdam and the East European Secretariat in Vienna. The Bolshevik leaders believed that the reluctance of the European working class to follow the Bolsheviks' example of violent revolution was due to the influence of opportunists and revisionists and also due to Western Communists' lack of flexible tactics.

While severely attacking "opportunism", Lenin also criticised the Left in the international Communist movement. In his famous pamphlet Left-wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder, Lenin stressed that "to throw only the vanguard into the decisive battle" without the support and sympathy of the entire working class could not lead to victory.<sup>51</sup> He pointed out that in order to expand the revolutionary forces, Communists should work among mass organisations, such as trade unions, and should participate in bourgeois parliaments. Communists should "use all the weapons, all the means and methods, ... combining illegal form of struggle with every form of legal struggle" in their war with the

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<sup>50</sup> J. M. Meijer (ed.), The Trotsky Papers, (London: Mouton & Co. 1964), Vol 1 (1917-1919), pp 621-27.

<sup>51</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 31, pp 92-3.

enemy.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Lenin realised that the proletariat of the advanced countries could not be victorious without the aid of the oppressed people in colonial countries. According to Lenin's theory, the high monopoly profits from the exploitation of colonies and semi-colonial countries enabled the European capitalists to bribe certain sections of the workers in the imperialist countries, making revolution more difficult.<sup>53</sup> Hence one of the Comintern's pressing tasks was to raise revolution in the East to destroy one of the props of imperialist power. These important ideas led to a change of strategy and tactics at the 2nd Congress of the Comintern.

The 2nd Congress of the Comintern was held from 23 July to 7 August 1920, and was attended by 217 delegates from 41 countries. With the gradual consolidation of Soviet Russia and the extension of the Comintern's political influence, the Bolsheviks felt it was time to further confirm their leading position among the revolutionary movements of the world, and to build the Comintern as a "really centralised" leading force and a fighting organ instead of a "propaganda association".<sup>54</sup> The "Statutes of the Communist International", adopted at the Congress, defined the Communist International as "a single communist party of the entire world", and claimed "the parties working in the various countries are but its separate sections."<sup>55</sup> "The Conditions of Admission to the Comintern" drafted by Lenin stipulated that every party or organisation which intended to join or had already belonged to the Comintern must model itself on the Bolshevik Party and must accept firm control from the Comintern. Alongside these "stiff" principles and discipline, many "flexible" tactics can be seen in some of the organisation's theses.

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, Vol 31, pp 96-7.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Lenin, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, (New York, 1970).

<sup>54</sup> Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol 3, p 199.

<sup>55</sup> Degras, The Communist International, Vol 1, p 164.

The 2nd Comintern Congress also marked the introduction of the "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", which formed the theory and strategy on the revolution in the East, a subject which will be dealt with in the following section.

Not long after the close of the 2nd Congress of the Comintern, great changes occurred. The war with Poland, which was not provoked by Soviet Russia but was used by Lenin in an effort to kindle the world revolution by force, ended with the defeat of the Red Army in October 1920. The vision of imminent revolution in the West faded again. The Civil War ended with the overthrow of Wrangel in November 1920. Meanwhile, the Russian people's resentment against the Soviet regime was growing. Waves of workers' strikes and peasants' uprisings culminated in the revolt of the Kronstadt naval base in March 1921. Ironically, it was the Kronstadt sailors who had made a great contribution to the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in 1917 and now they rose up to end the rule of "a small group of Communist bureaucrats".<sup>56</sup> Their revolt and other uprisings were bloodily suppressed by the Bolsheviks.

From 1921, to restore Soviet Russia's economy and increase the productive forces became the central task for the Bolsheviks. Around this time, the capitalist world began to regain some stability and the putsches to overthrow the capitalist system in Western countries, such the March action in Germany, met with defeat. In the light of these circumstances, the Bolsheviks made strategic retreats and compromises both at home and abroad. At home War Communism was replaced by the New Economic Policy, while abroad, Soviet Russia was trying to build up trade and diplomatic relations with Western Countries, and head-on confrontation with the capitalist powers became increasingly rare.

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<sup>56</sup> P. Avrich, The Russian Anarchists, (N. J. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p 229.

The 3rd Comintern Congress (June-July 1921) reflected these changes and started a new stage of international Communist movement. "Theses on Tactics" adopted by this Congress pointed out that the world revolution would "require a fairly long period of revolutionary struggle" and need careful political and organisational preparation, as well as regular propaganda and agitation. However, the Communist party must be "obliged to do everything it can to lead the workers into this attack [the offensive against capitalist society] whenever the conditions for this are at hand."<sup>57</sup> Since the Comintern had proclaimed the cause of Soviet Russia as its own and set the question of Soviet Russia as the touch stone by which all the organisations of the working class should be tested, the theses stressed again:

Unconditional support of Soviet Russia remains as before the cardinal duty of the communists of all countries. Not only must they vigorously oppose any attack on Soviet Russia, but they must fight energetically to clear away all the obstacles which the capitalist states place in the way of Soviet Russian trade on the world market and with other nations.<sup>58</sup>

"Theses on the Structure of Communist Parties and on the Methods and Content of Their Work" imposed the Bolshevik principles on the party, such as democratic centralism, iron discipline, and various tactics on foreign parties. Although Lenin remarked at the 4th Congress of the Comintern that this resolution was "too Russian" and was "permeated and imbued with a Russian spirit", and therefore it was "quite unintelligible to foreigners", he believed that it was "an excellent resolution".<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Degras (ed.), The Communist International, Vol 1, p 243; p 251.

<sup>58</sup> ibid., pp 255-56.

<sup>59</sup> ibid., p 257.



It further made the Comintern the supreme body above all communist parties by stipulating that "the decisions of the Communist International are to be carried out by affiliated parties without delay in those cases where the requisite changes in the existing statutes and party decisions can only be made subsequently."<sup>60</sup> By such means, Soviet Russia's interests were given priority, Bolshevik principles became a model for all Communist parties, and Moscow could easily control all Communist parties and direct the international revolutionary movement through the Comintern.

After Lenin died in 1924, the axiom of world socialist revolution was superseded by Stalin's doctrine of "socialism in one country". To consolidate the Communist regime within the Soviet Union became a matter of paramount importance, and to launch or support revolutionary movements in foreign countries was henceforth subordinated to that aim. The Comintern became more and more a tool to safeguard the Soviet Union's interests and to realise their own goals, and it became more inclined to adopt the tactics of undermining capitalist countries by dividing them against each other and by supporting the nationalist movements in the Third World.

## **Section 2. Fundamental Strategy in the East**

The Bolsheviks' fundamental policy towards the East derived from Lenin. As a Marxist, Lenin understood that "For the present, real communism can achieve success only in the occident."<sup>61</sup> In spite of this, he considered that the national liberation movements of the oppressed nations in the backward Eastern countries would become a struggle against

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<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p 269.

<sup>61</sup> K. Fuse, Soviet Policy in the Orient, (East Peking: Enjinsha, 1927), p 2.

the capitalist system itself and could help the proletariat of the advanced western countries to achieve power, for he believed, the maintenance of the western imperialist powers was dependent on the plunder and exploitation of their colonies and semi-colonies. The waves of the anti-imperialist struggle in Asia, which attracted Lenin's attention, made him appreciate highly the role which "the awakening of Asia" would play in the world history of the 20th century.<sup>62</sup> Lenin firmly believed that:

Social revolution can occur only in an entire epoch in which the civil war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries is joined with the whole number of revolutionary democratic and national-liberation movements in the backward and oppressed nations.<sup>63</sup>

It seems that such views of Lenin were accepted by other Bolshevik leaders. Only a few days after the Bolshevik Revolution, Pravda declared:

The army of the Russian Revolution derives its strength from countless reserves. The oppressed nations of Asia are as eager for the fall of the regime of capitalistic oppression as the oppressed proletarian masses of Europe. To fuse these forces in a world revolution against the imperialistic bourgeoisie is the historic mission of the Workers' and Peasants' Russia.<sup>64</sup>

After the Bolsheviks came to power, the Eastern issue became a live political issue instead of a purely theoretical one, related to the very survival of the Soviet regime. The Soviet State inherited from Tsarist Russia a vast Asian territory which bordered on Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, China, Korea, etc.. Some nationalities living in Russia's Asian

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<sup>62</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 19, p 86.

<sup>63</sup> Lenin, Sochineniia, XIX, p 221; Quoted from X. J. Eudin and R. C. North, Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927: A Documentary Survey, (California: Stanford University Press, 1957), p 45.

<sup>64</sup> F. L. Schuman, Russia since 1917: Four Decades of Soviet Politics, (New York: Frederick L. Schuman, 1957), p 96.

territory had close links with adjoining Asian countries. Either with the aim of achieving world revolution or consolidating the Soviet Regime, the Bolsheviks required the formulation of special policies towards the East, which included both their dealings with the Asian areas of the ex-Russian empire and Soviet Russia's relations with other Asian countries.

From the very beginning, the Soviet Government proclaimed the right of national self-determination and declared all treaties of the Tsarist Government with other governments null and void. In an appeal to the Muslims of Russia and the East on 3 December 1917, the Council of People's Commissars reiterated these principles and further appealed to the Muslims of Russia to "support this revolution and its authorised government!" and called upon the Muslims of the East to "overthrow these robbers and enslavers of your country."<sup>65</sup> It is obvious that the Soviet's early policy towards the East was concerned with the pursuit of dual goals: to defend the "Socialist fatherland" and to instigate revolution against imperialism. Bukharin later gave a frank explanation of the Bolsheviks' policies on national and colonial issues:

If we propound the solution of the right of self-determination for the colonies, ... we lose nothing by it. On the contrary, we gain; for the national gain as a whole will damage foreign imperialism ... . The most outright nationalist movement, for example, that of the Hindus, is only water for our mill.<sup>66</sup>

The Russian territories bordering onto Asian countries were regarded as bases for the spread of revolution. At the conference for the constituent congress of the Tartar-Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Republic in May 1918, Stalin, the Commissar of Nationalities Affairs, referring to his country's strategic position between imperialist Europe and oppressed Asia,

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<sup>65</sup> Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol 1, pp 16-17.

<sup>66</sup> Cited from Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol 3, pp 235-6.

pointed out that Soviet Russia would pursue the policy of fraternal support of oppressed peoples of the East in their struggle for their own liberation. ... let then this autonomous republic serve the peoples of the Muslim world, as a shining beacon which lights their way toward liberation.<sup>67</sup>

Later, when the Red Army advanced eastward and more Soviet Republics were set up in the Eastern borderlands, Stalin repeated time and again his idea of building "a citadel of Soviet power" and planting "a socialist beacon" in the East.<sup>68</sup> Turkestan with its special geographical position, was considered by Moscow to be "extremely important", and could "play the role of a revolutionary beacon for Chinese Turkestan, Tibet, Afghanistan, India, Bukhara, and Khiva"; and Red Azerbaijan was regarded as "a revolutionary beacon for Persia, Arabia and Turkey."<sup>69</sup>

Since many nationalities living within Russian-controlled central Asia were Muslims, Muslim peoples were among the primary targets of Soviet Russia's Eastern drive. In late 1917, a Muslim Commissariat was set up in the Commissariat of Nationalities with the aim of directing work among the Muslims of Russia. The Commissariat of Nationalities Affairs was also in charge of revolutionary work among citizens of Asian countries living in Russia. These Asian citizens were mainly composed of Turkish prisoners-of-war, Iranian migrant workers, Chinese war-time labourers and Korean immigrant peasants. During the period 1917-1920, there were no fewer than one million people in this category.<sup>70</sup> The Bolsheviks promoted extensive agitation among these foreign citizens, and

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<sup>67</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 47.

<sup>68</sup> J. V. Stalin, Collected Works, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), Vol 4, pp 247-8.

<sup>69</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, pp 95-6.

<sup>70</sup> M. A. Persits, 'Eastern Internationalists in Russia and some Questions of the National Liberation Movement, 1918-July 1920', R. A. Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979), p 73.

from 1918 onwards helped them to form various national revolutionary organisations and communist groups on Russian territory. Several key Asian Communists were appointed by Lenin and Stalin as the first commissars in the Commissariat of Nationalities Affairs for the various national groups. In October 1918, some Communist groups and revolutionary organisations of the Eastern peoples on Russian territory formed the Union for the Liberation of the East. Its declared aim was to achieve a united anti-imperialist front and lead a struggle which would ultimately bring about a federal United States of Asia.<sup>71</sup>

In November 1918, the First All-Russian Congress of Communist Organisations of Eastern Peoples (also known as the First Congress of the Muslim Communists) was convened in Moscow. Delegates from the Eastern domestic and foreign Communist organisations attended this congress. Stalin addressed the gathering as follows:

Our duty is to build a bridge between the people of the West and the East and, having created the united front of the revolution, to break the ring of imperialism which encircles us. However, nobody will be able to build a bridge between West and East so easily and so quickly as you, because the gates of Persia, and India, Afghanistan, and China are open for you. The liberation of the peoples of these countries from the yoke of the imperialists would ensure freedom for your own country and at the same time would undermine imperialism at its very foundation.<sup>72</sup>

At Stalin's suggestion, the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of Eastern Peoples (Muslims) was set up, headed by Stalin himself, functioning under the direct guidance of the RCP(B) Central Committee. This Bureau claimed its "sacred work" was "to spread the ideas of communism quickly in the East and draw all oppressed peoples into the world

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<sup>71</sup> Lazitch, et al., Lenin and the Comintern, p 372.

<sup>72</sup> Lazitch, et al., ibid., p 374; Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, pp 77-78.

labouring family."<sup>73</sup> The Bureau also decided to organise a Department of International Propaganda for Eastern Peoples, which was entrusted to a Turk, Mustafa Subhi. This Department soon had 12 sections: Arab, Persian, Turkish, Azeri, Bukharan, Kirghiz, Kalmuk, Caucasian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Indian. By March 1919, the Department had published 15 newspapers in different languages,<sup>74</sup> and had begun to dispatch propagandists to Asian countries.

This bustle of activities in the East, was but a sideline to the Bolsheviks' main efforts. At that time almost all the Bolshevik leaders except Stalin focused most of their attention on the proletarian revolution in the West and on internal affairs. Although Lenin was the principal maker of Soviet policy toward the East, he was then actually more interested in the effects of Eastern revolution on Western countries and had scarcely any time to spend on the concrete work directed at the East. Trotsky and Zinoviev both maintained that national liberation in the East was contingent upon a successful European socialist revolution. Only Stalin, partly due to his Georgian background, partly due to his responsibilities, had more of an Eastern orientation. He was not only a faithful executor of Lenin's Eastern policy, but also its main advocate. When he saw that "the eyes of all are naturally turned to the West, ... the remote East naturally tends to disappear from our field of vision and is even forgotten," Stalin published his famous article on 24 November 1918 "Don't Forget the East", in which he argued:

The East should not be forgotten for a single moment for the reason that it provides inexhaustible reserve and most reliable rear of world imperialism.<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, Stalin's appeal did not have much echoes.

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<sup>73</sup> Eudin and North, *ibid.*, p 78.

<sup>74</sup> Lazitch, et al., *Lenin and the Comintern*, p 375.

<sup>75</sup> Stalin, *Collected Works*, Vol 4, p 174.

The founding Congress of the Comintern paid little attention to the East. The Congress was attended by some Asian representatives, yet none of them had full votes or became members of the ECCI. This Congress's western orientation was indicated by the following sentences in the "Manifesto of the Communist International to the Proletariat of the Entire World":

The emancipation of the colonies is possible only in conjunction with the emancipation of the metropolitan working class. ... Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of proletarian dictatorship in Europe will also be the hour of your own liberation!<sup>76</sup>

In general, Soviet Russia and the Comintern did not attach more importance to the revolutionary potential of the East until the summer of 1919, when the Bolsheviks' attempts to foment the European revolution ended in miserable failure and the prospects for revolution in the West were gloomy. Around this time, large scale anti-imperialist movements were starting up in India, Korea, China, Persia, Turkey, and Afghanistan. With the victorious advance of the Red Army eastward, the possibilities of a successful revolution in the East increased. Trotsky, as the Commissar of War, had a thorough understanding of the general situation. He made a penetrating analysis on the relative strength of Soviet and enemy forces. In a letter to the Central Committee of the RCP(B) dated 5 August 1919 he wrote:

In any event the European revolution appears to have withdrawn into the background. But Asia may become the arena of the next uprising. ... The sort of army which at the moment can be of no great significance in the European scales can upset the unstable balance of Asian relationships of colonial dependence,

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<sup>76</sup> Degras (ed.), The Communist International, Vol 1, p 43.

give a direct push to an uprising on the part of the oppressed masses and assure the triumph of such a rising in Asia.

He came to the conclusion:

Our task lies in effecting the necessary switch of the centre of gravity of our international orientation at the opportune moment.<sup>77</sup>

The shift in the strategic orientation started from the summer of 1919. From July to September of 1919, Narkomindel issued in succession the "Declaration to the Chinese people and to the Governments of North and South China" (July), the "Declaration to the Mongolian people and to the Government of Autonomous Mongolia" (August), an "Appeal to the workers and peasants of Persia" (August), and an "Appeal to the workers and peasants of Turkey" (September). These demonstrated that Soviet Russia was starting to make more active gestures to Asian countries.

From the autumn of 1919, Lenin himself began taking an active part in particular initiatives relating to the East. In October, he drafted a resolution to send a special commission to Tashkent, and wrote a letter to the Communists of that region. Soon, the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, which was formed under Lenin's direction, established an agitation and propaganda sub-division and, in December 1919, it decided to set up a Council for International Propaganda. Both bodies were charged with conducting revolutionary work among the Asian peoples on Russian territory and in the neighbouring Eastern countries. Through these apparatus, the Bolsheviks gave more effective leadership to the revolutionary movement in the East.

In the Russian Far East, similar work also started. In June 1919, a responsible member of the Siberian Regional Committee of the RCP(B), F. Gapon, suggested that an

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<sup>77</sup> Meijer (ed.), The Trotsky Papers, Vol 1, pp 621-627.



Eastern Bureau with the obligatory participation of representatives of the Far Eastern peoples should be set up in order to establish close contacts with the revolutionary forces of the Far Eastern countries, including China, Korea, Japan and Mongolia. Although the Eastern Bureau was not set up at once, some proposals of Gapon's were implemented and later the Section of the Eastern Peoples was formed.<sup>78</sup> In August of the same year, V. D. Vilensky put forward a programme on carrying out Communist work among the East Asian peoples. The Politburo of the RCP(B) soon approved this programme and gave him the detailed instructions to fulfil it. The main points of the instructions were summed up by Vilensky as follows: to aggravate the conflict of interests between Japan, America and China by all possible means; to arouse the masses of Chinese, Mongolian and Korean people to conscious action aimed at breaking away from the oppression of the foreign capitalists; to support the revolutionary movement of the Eastern Asian peoples by establishing firm connections with the revolutionary organisations in Japan, China and Korea and by publishing pamphlets and leaflets to agitate there; to help the Koreans and Chinese set up guerrilla forces. In September 1919, Vilensky was dispatched to the Russian Far East as the plenipotentiary of Narkomindel there, and he did his best to implement these tasks.<sup>79</sup>

Against this background, the Second Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East was held in Moscow from 22 November to 3 December 1919, with

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<sup>78</sup> Persits, 'Eastern Internationalists in Russia and Certain Questions of the National Liberation Movement', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, pp 86-88.

<sup>79</sup> 'Vilensky's Report to the ECCI on the Work among the People in the Eastern Asia, 1 September 1920', Gongchanquoji, Liangongbu yu Zhongguogeming danganziliao congshu (A Series of Archival Material on the Comintern, All-Union Communist Party (B) and the Chinese Revolution), which is henceforth abbreviated to GLZDC, (Beijing: The Beijing Library Press, 1997), Vol 1, pp 38-9; This volume is the Chinese translation of the first volume of VKP(b), Komintern i Kitaya, Dokumenty, 1920-1949, (Moscow, 1994).

Lenin himself playing a major role. He made a long and important speech to the assembly, declaring:

The emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable. ... Here contact with the peoples of the East is particularly important. ... Our Soviet Republics must now master all the awakening peoples of the East and, together with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism.

Further explaining the nature of revolution in the East, Lenin pointed out that since the bulk of the population in the Eastern countries were peasants, the task of the revolution was not directed against capitalism in their own countries, but against "international imperialism" and "medieval survivals".<sup>80</sup> Stalin's speech at this Congress offered no further new ideas than had been expressed in his previous utterances. In accordance with Lenin's spirit, the Congress passed a resolution - "Outline for the Revolutionary Work of the Communist Party in the East" - which stated:

The revolutionary work of the Communist Party in the East must proceed in two directions: one direction is determined by the basic class revolutionary program of the party which, on its part, prompts the necessity of a gradual formation of communist parties in the countries of the East as sections of the Communist International. The second direction is determined by the present political and, naturally, historical, social, and economic position of the East, which necessitates the support in the East, for a period of time, of the national movement directed at the overthrow of the rule of Western European imperialism there - in so far as such a movement does not contradict those class

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<sup>80</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 30, p 151.

revolutionary aspirations of the international proletariat which are aimed at the overthrow of international imperialism.<sup>81</sup>

We can see that the preliminary theory and strategies for the revolution in the East were thus put in place. These tentative ideas were to be fully crystallised at the Second Congress of the Comintern. At this Comintern Congress, the tendency of the preoccupation with the West was corrected, while Eastern issues were put on the agenda. 17 representatives out of a total of 25 Eastern delegates had full votes. The ECCI began to accept Asian members. A special Commission on National and Colonial Questions was formed.

At the opening session of the Second Congress on 19 July 1920, Lenin declared: "It is one of our most important tasks to find out how we should set about organising the Soviet movement in the non-capitalist countries."<sup>82</sup> As he later explained to the Congress:

We must not only form independent cadres of fighters, of Party organisations in all colonies and backward countries, we must not only carry on propaganda in favour of organising peasant soviets and strive to adapt them to pre-capitalist conditions; the Communist International must lay down, and give the theoretical grounds for the proposition that, with the aid of the proletariat of the most advanced countries, the backward countries may pass to the Soviet system and, after passing through a definite stage of development, to Communism, without passing through the capitalist stage of development.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 164.

<sup>82</sup> Degras (ed.), The Communist International, Vol 1, p 138.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. The Second Congress of the Communist International (first published by the Publishing House of the Comintern, Moscow, 1921 and the Publishing Office of the Communist International, America, 1921); other translations also exist.

The purpose of establishing these soviets was to form a Federation - "a transitional form towards the complete union of working people of all nations" which would arise on the basis of the Soviet system and the Soviet movement.<sup>84</sup>

In Lenin's famous "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", he stated that "what is essential is to pursue a policy designed to achieve a close alliance of all national and colonial liberation movements with Soviet Russia." Communist Parties and the Comintern must therefore prepare to assist "the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement" and support peasant movements.<sup>85</sup> By contrast, M. N. Roy, an Indian, in his theses stressed the need to support the working class and develop Communist movements in colonies. Clearly, Roy did not understand what was in Lenin's mind. To support peasant movements and to collaborate with the national bourgeoisie in colonial and backward countries was a tactic to establish soviet governments in backward countries and to overthrow the rule of imperialist powers in colonial countries in order to win over the entire East to Soviet Russia's side and to serve the cause of Soviet Russia's survival and consolidation. With regard to this, the only Asian member of the ECCI, the Korean delegate Pak Chin-sen, showed that he had fully understood Lenin's intentions, and in his speech at the Congress he declared that the Congress would "speed the revolutionary ferment, the revolution, in the East." His party, the Korean Communist Party, he continued, would be "one of the main forces that turn enslaved Korea into a part of the federated World Soviet Republic."<sup>86</sup> In an article entitled "The Revolutionary East and the

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<sup>84</sup> Degras (ed.), The Communist International, Vol 1, pp 138-144.

<sup>85</sup> In the Theses on the National and Colonial Questions, adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern, Lenin's original term 'bourgeois-democratic liberation movement' was revised to 'revolutionary liberation movement'.

<sup>86</sup> Second Congress of the Communist International, Vol 1, pp 141-143.

Next Tasks of the Communist International", which Pak Chin-sen wrote during the Second Congress, he stated:

The industrial proletariat, if we exclude Japan, is too feeble in Asia to permit of our nourishing any serious hopes of an immediate Communist revolution, but the victory of an agrarian revolution is undoubted, if we are able to cope with the immediate problem of the great and bloody struggle.<sup>87</sup>

This article of Pak's complemented and supported Lenin's theses.

The Theses on the National and Colonial Questions adopted by the Congress laid a theoretical foundation for the strategy and tactics on revolution in the East where hardly any proletariat existed, consequently adding bizarre colours to the international Communist movement. Putting the theory into immediate practice, the ECCI decided to convene the Congress of the Eastern Peoples and the Congress for the Toilers of the Far East respectively. The latter was delayed until January 1922, but the Congress of the Eastern Peoples was held at Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, in September 1920, soon after the closure of the Second Congress of the Comintern.

The Baku Congress was attended by 1,891 delegates representing 37 nationalities. Most of them were Muslims from Russia's borderlands and from the countries of the Near and Middle East. There were a few delegates from the Far East, including 8 Chinese.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Pak Din Shoon, 'The Revolutionary East and the Next Tasks of the Communist International', Communist International, (Moscow, June-July 1920) Nos 11-12, pp 2315-20. This important article was also published in Pravda on 27 July 1920.

<sup>88</sup> Up to now, it is still not sure who the Chinese delegates to Baku Congress were. According to Zhang Ximan [Lishi huiyi (Historical Reminiscences), (Shanghai, Jidong Publishing House, 1949) p 20], the Chinese delegates included Ling Yue, Jiang Kang-hu and He Han-zhong. Sokolsky learned that at the Congress, China was presented by Li Dazhao. [G. Sokolsky, The Tinder Box of Asia (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1933), p 322]. J. Guillermez writes in A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-1949 (London: Methuen & Co., 1972, p 39) that Zhang Tai-lei and Liu Shao-zhou attended the Congress. H. F. MacNair's China in Revolution (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931, p 204) shows that the name of Chinese representative at the

The Comintern's principal leaders, Zinoviev, Radek and Bela Kun, were the main speakers at this Congress. Faced with such an audience, they talked bombastically about socialist revolution, building "communist organisation", establishing the "Soviet system" and creating a "new culture under the banner of communism".<sup>89</sup> Regardless of these dogmas, a Turkish delegate declared that all they wanted from Russia were arms. Answering Zinoviev's question on the identity of the Bolsheviki, the delegate replied that in the opinion of the Turks, "a Bolshevik is a man who is an enemy of England." As for Zinoviev's next question "What do they think about Bolsheviki fighting against the capitalists and the landlords?" his answer was "that is a matter in which the Turks are not interested."<sup>90</sup>

Of course, those Comintern leaders clearly knew that these Eastern national revolutionaries had nothing in common with communists. So the key tone of the Baku Congress was anti-imperialist, especially anti-British. In his speeches, Zinoviev said:

We are ready to help any revolutionary struggle against the English Government. Our task is to kindle a real holy war against the English and French capitalists.<sup>91</sup>

Another aim of the Congress was to turn the Eastern peoples towards the political strength of Moscow. As Pavlovich told his listeners:

If the Eastern peoples wish to have on their side the sympathy of the international proletariat, they must also fight for Soviet power and the principles proclaimed by Soviet Russia.<sup>92</sup>

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Congress given in the press was "Lai".

<sup>89</sup> C. Mackerass and N. Knight, Marxism in Asia, (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp 171-3, p 177.

<sup>90</sup> Flovinsky, World Revolution and the U.S.S.R., p 60.

<sup>91</sup> Degras (ed.), The Communist International, p 105.

It was clear that the Bolsheviks' purpose was to mobilise Eastern peoples to throw themselves into the battle against the Western imperialist powers in the rear and to expand Soviet Russia's sphere of influence in the East.

In order to fulfil these tasks more efficiently, a permanent auxiliary institute of the Communist International in the East, the Council of Propaganda and Action for the Peoples of the East, was established, under the direction of Pavlovich, Stasova and others. This Council in Baku served as a centre for Communist activities in the Near East. About the same time, two other similar institutions were set up: the Tashkent Bureau, which was established in October 1920 in Turkestan, was assigned to work in central Asia; and the Irkutsk Bureau, which was formed in July-August 1920, became the centre for propaganda and organisational work in the Far East. Before long the Comintern's branches in Baku and Tashkent were abolished and the Comintern opened an Eastern Section with headquarters in Moscow, whose first chief was G. Safarof. The Comintern's Irkutsk branch was later transformed into the Comintern's Far Eastern Secretariat.

The First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East, which was originally scheduled as a sequel to the Baku Congress and later proposed as a counter to the Washington Conference, was convoked by the Comintern. The preliminary conference was held in Irkutsk in November 1921, and the Congress officially opened in Moscow in January 1922. There were 148 delegates representing Communist, nationalist and anarchist parties and organisations in China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Siberia, India and Indonesia. The Chinese delegates, numbering 44, constituted the second largest group.

The main themes of the Congress were set forth by Zinoviev and Safarof in their speeches. Zinoviev in his report "On the International Situation and the Result of the

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<sup>92</sup> Mackerass and Knight, Marxism in Asia, (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p 176.

Washington Conference" attacked the Washington Conference had refused to acknowledge "the legitimate aspirations of the Asian people for independence" and described the Four-Power Treaty concluded at that Conference as an "alliance of the four bloodsuckers". He chided certain parties and elements who persisted in looking to the West, especially America, for the blessings of democracy and progress. He pointed out that only when areas like Asia were totally free of Western domination, would the world Communist movement have achieved its primary goals. Hence national liberation could not be advanced except by reliance upon Soviet Russia and the world proletariat. He further proclaimed that the entire Far East was "ripe for the soviet system." Safarof stated that the Comintern supported every nationalist movement for emancipation, because it was directed against imperialism and because it was in harmony with the interests of the international proletariat. Moreover, he stressed the leading role of the proletariat in the national revolution and the importance of peasants awakening. These Bolshevik speakers elaborated Lenin's doctrines on the revolution in national and colonial countries, which was put forward in the Second Congress of the Comintern.

Lastly, the Congress passed a manifesto, which appealed to the Far Eastern people to form an unbreakable alliance under the banner of the Comintern, to carry out anti-imperialist and anti-feudal national and democratic revolutions, to establish a fair social system and to place political power in the grasp of the workers and peasants.<sup>93</sup> This Congress successfully safeguarded Moscow's dominant position in leading the anti-imperialist and revolutionary movements in the Far East. In the history of the Far Eastern Communist movement, this Congress had a significant influence.

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East, (Petrograd, 1922); Huang Xiu-rong, Gongchanguoji yu Zhongguo geming guanxi shi (The History of the Relations between the Comintern and the Chinese Revolution), (Beijing: The CCP's Central Academy Press, 1989), Vol 1, p 109.



It is not difficult to see that the main direction of the Bolsheviks' penetration into Asia extended from Russia's borderlands to the adjacent Asian countries and from the Near East toward the Far East. Soviet Russia's main targets in the East were India and China. Provoking disturbances in some of its adjacent countries, such as Afghanistan, was treated as a step towards clearing the way for revolution "in India and China, and on to the bastions of imperialism - England, America and Japan."<sup>94</sup>

Under the supervision of the Bolsheviks, the Communist organisations of the Asian peoples transferred from Russian territory to adjacent Asian countries. The Iranian Communist Party was founded in June 1920, and the Turkish Communist Party was set up in September 1920. In other Asian countries Communist groups began to spring up.

Meanwhile the Bolsheviks did their utmost to establish diplomatic relations with neighbouring Asian countries. Moscow adopted friendly policies towards nationalist governments, such as Kemal's government in Turkey, Amanullah's government in Afghanistan and the Shah's government in Persia, regardless of these governments' capitalist or feudalistic character. Chicherin explained this policy in December 1920:

Our policy is ... a compromise between us and the national states which are struggling for their own independence against the imperialism of the West.<sup>95</sup>

In 1921, Soviet Russia signed treaties of friendship with Persia, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Mongolia. In turn, these actions of Soviet diplomacy further "pave[d] the way for the Communist International", as Safarof said.<sup>96</sup>

The spread of Bolshevik revolution to the East was not solely dependent on peaceful means, such as undertaking propaganda and agitation through the Comintern and

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<sup>94</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 77, p 92.

<sup>95</sup> Eudin and North, ibid., p 91.

<sup>96</sup> Mackerass and Knight, Marxism in Asia, p 180.

Communist Parties, or exerting political influence through diplomatic channels. Military methods were also considered as immediate and effective measures to stimulate Bolshevik revolutions in the Asian countries. When Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders talked about Eastern affairs, they always mentioned the military factor. In May 1919, an article in the organ of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities, suggested:

Creation of special battalions from among the Russian Muslims in order to render active assistance to the East in struggle against the British imperialists. ... Without active assistance from the outside by the fresh untapped forces of Russia's Muslims it can once again fall into a lethargic sleep of spineless inertness and apathy.<sup>97</sup>

Another article in this journal argued that because "there was no working-class movement and no knowledge of the findings of sociology, i.e. international socialism in the East, ... the struggle of an international proletarian detachment in the Soviet Republic has been placed on a practical footing. ... If Tsarism could plan an invasion and seizure of India via several hostile countries, then why cannot workers' and peasants' Russia do the same thing along the same lines in order to give the Indians the Bolshevik ideology?"<sup>98</sup> Accordingly, the Second Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East resolved to organise an Eastern Red Army as a part of the international Red Army in order to liberate Eastern peoples.<sup>99</sup>

Both in word and in deed, such work was, to some extent, undertaken. The Turkish and Persian Detachments and the International Korean-Chinese Regiment were formed in

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<sup>97</sup> Zhizn Natsionalnostei (The Life of Nationalities), (26 May 1919) No 19, p 2; Quoted from Ulyanovsky, The Comintern and the East, p 117, and Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 161.

<sup>98</sup> Ulyanovsky, ibid., p 118.

<sup>99</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 165.

the Red Army, whose tasks included liberating their own homelands as well as fighting for Soviet Russia.<sup>100</sup> In May 1920, Russian troops landed in the Gilan region of Persia to set up a Soviet Republic there. In the Autumn of 1920, a large number of Indian militants were organised in Turkestan for military training and they prepared to launch a joint assault with the Red Army into India through Afghanistan.<sup>101</sup> The following year, a satellite Soviet state was founded in Outer Mongolia with the "help" of the Red Army. To export revolution abroad became a pretext for using force to either interfere in or to control other countries.

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern (November 1922) specially adopted "Theses on the Eastern Question". This document further developed the ideas on the national and colonial questions which Lenin had expounded at the Second Congress. In which, the slogan of a united anti-imperialist front in the East was proclaimed and the tasks for the Communist parties of the Eastern countries were put forward as follows: to fight for the most radical possible solution of the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, and to organise the working and peasant masses for the struggle for their class interests. The theses claimed that "for backward countries the Soviet system represents the most painless transitional form from primitive conditions of existence to the advanced communist culture which is destined to replace capitalist methods of production and distribution throughout the world economy." And they further convinced Asian peoples that the backward

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. Persits, 'Eastern Internationalists in Russia and Some Questions of the National Liberation Movement', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, pp 70-137.

<sup>101</sup> M. N. Roy, M. N. Roy's Memoirs, (Bombay: Allied Publishers Privated Ltd, 1964), pp 417-421.

countries could become members of the international federation of Soviet republics through an alliance with the proletariat of the West.<sup>102</sup>

Surveying the strategy and policies of Soviet Russia and the Comintern towards the East in this early phase, we find that the Bolsheviks' Eastern policies were imbued with a spirit more of pragmatism than of idealism. Their efforts to spread Bolshevism were combined with acts aimed at triggering anti-imperialist movements, with the purpose of drawing the Eastern People into the world soviet movement and of aggrandising Soviet Russia's power and strength in the East. The Menshevik leader Y. O. Martov remarked that the Comintern was not being immune from a temptation "to regard the peoples of the East as pieces on the chessboard of the diplomatic war with the Entente."<sup>103</sup> Anyhow, the Bolsheviks' policies and activities had a rather strong influence on the events in many Asian countries.

### **Section 3. General Policies towards China**

China, being the largest country in the East and sharing a 7,000-kilometre border with Russia, was naturally Soviet Russia's most important neighbour in the East. Although China was not the initial target for revolution in Asia, it became more and more important for the Bolsheviks' world revolutionary strategy as time passed.

In the past, Tsarist Russia's expansion in the East had brought enormous territorial acquisitions at the expense of the Chinese Empire. Russia also grabbed various political and economic privileges within China. In 1898, when Japan and several European powers

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<sup>102</sup> Degras (ed.), The Communist International, Vol 1, pp 388-9.

<sup>103</sup> Quoted from Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol 3, p 268.

were scrambling for spheres of influence and concessions in China, Russia extorted the right to build the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) in Manchuria, which linked up with the Trans-Siberian Railway. In 1900, Russian troops joined the Eight Powers' Allied Expedition and entered Beijing to suppress the Boxer Rising. Taking advantage of the situation, the Russians further invaded Manchuria under the pretext of protecting their interests and later refused to vacate the territory. In 1904 the Russo-Japanese War broke out over the struggle for superiority in Manchuria, and ended with Russia's defeat in 1905. As a result, Southern Manchuria passed under the control of Japan, while Northern Manchuria remained within the sphere of influence of Russia. With other imperialist powers, Tsarist Russia also had a hold over the Qing Government through long-term loans.

The Chinese Revolution of 1911 overthrew the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China. But still China could not cast off the yoke of the imperialist powers. Sun Yatsen, the revolutionary bourgeois democratic leader, had to resign his presidency to Yuan Shikai, a former high-ranking official of the Qing Cabinet, who had the support of the imperialist powers.

During World War I, European powers were busy with the war in Europe and had little time to attend to the affairs of the Far East. Under these circumstances, Japan took advantage of the situation and sent troops to Shandong province to seize Qingdao, which had previously been occupied by Germany. In 1915, Japan put forward its infamous 21 Demands to China, with the aim of controlling the whole of China. Yielding to the pressure from Japan, Yuan Shikai accepted most of Japan's demands.

After Yuan's death in 1916, China entered a phase of tangled warfare among different warlords who were backed by various imperialist powers. In 1917, the Anfu Clique, headed by Duan Qirui, controlled the Beijing Government, while Sun Yatsen organised a rival government in Guangzhou. At Japan's instigation, the Beijing

Government declared war on Germany and joined the Allies. Using the war as a pretext, the Duan Qirui Government borrowed large amount of loans from Japan. In return, Japan grabbed more special rights and concessions from China. Complementing its pro-Japanese policy, the Beijing Government adopted a hostile attitude towards the Soviet regime from the very beginning.

Soon after the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks in Harbin, the seat of the Administration of the CER, responding to the order from Petrograd that they should "take power in the name of the proletariat and the Government",<sup>104</sup> increased their efforts to seize control of the CER Administration and oust its head, General Horvath. The Bolsheviks in Harbin even claimed that Harbin was Russian territory and the Soviet officially represented state power. In December, the Harbin Soviet which had been established there also received two orders from the Soviet Government, asking them to send personnel to Manzhouli, Suifenhe Hailar, Kuanchengzi and some other cities to take over customs and consulates there.<sup>105</sup> These actions led to disturbances in Harbin and Beijing. At the request of Allied diplomats, the Beijing Government sent troops to suppress the Bolshevik uprising in Harbin in December 1917. Moreover, in May 1918, the Beijing Government agreed to sign a Joint Military Defence Pact with Japan for the declared purpose of checking the threat from Russia. This Pact stipulated that the Japanese troops could enter Manchuria and Mongolia; the Japanese officers could command and train the Chinese troops; and the Chinese should engage the Japanese as political, financial and military advisors. The

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<sup>104</sup> Leong Sowtheng, Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917-1926, (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1976), p 21. Harbin was the junction of the three sections of the Chinese Eastern Railway and the seat of the CER Administration.

<sup>105</sup> Li Xinggeng, et al., Fengyu fuping - E guo qiaomin zai Zhongguo, 1917-1945 (Duckweed in Wind and Rain, Russian Residents in China, 1917-1945), (Beijing, Central Translation Bureau Press, 1997), pp 25-6, pp 28-9.

conclusion of this pact kindled the flames of the anti-Japanese movement among Chinese students.

Faced with the complicated situation in China, the new-born Soviet Russian regime adopted a multi-pronged policy towards China. On the one hand, it acted in a conciliatory way towards the officially-recognised Beijing Government, in order to seek "good-neighbour relations" with China and to break through the "blockade in the East and thwart the wishes of Japan and other rapacious Entente powers".<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, the Bolsheviks encouraged the Chinese people's anti-imperialist feelings and promoted a national liberation movement and even a revolutionary movement in order to overthrow the pro-Japanese Beijing Government.

No sooner had the Soviet Government declared its "honest, popular, truly democratic foreign policy"<sup>107</sup> than a new Soviet-Chinese diplomacy unfolded. The first gesture was to seek formal recognition of the Soviet regime from the Beijing Government. On 18 January 1918, Narkomindel sent a formal note to Liu Jingren, the Chinese Minister in Petrograd, informing the Chinese Legation that the Soviet Government recognised neither the ex-Tsarist and later the Russian Provisional Government's diplomatic mission in Beijing, headed by Prince Kudashev, nor the Tsarist General Horvath as head of the CER Administration. In place of these Tsarist officials, A. N. Voznesensky, chief of the East Department of the Commissariat, was appointed Soviet representative to China.<sup>108</sup> Several days later, Voznesensky and the deputy commissar of Narkomindel, Polivanof, had a talk with Li Shizhong, the second secretary of the Chinese Legation. Saying "the Soviet

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<sup>106</sup> V. Vilensky, 'China and Soviet Russia', Izvestiia (News), Moscow, 9 October, 1920.

<sup>107</sup> Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol 1, p 8.

<sup>108</sup> Voznesensky had been deputy consul in Shanghai before 1915 and thus knew China well. This experience might help to gain him the post, despite the fact that he was a member of the Left-Socialist Revolutionary Party.

Government was willing to help the Chinese people" and "China's sovereign rights should return to the Chinese", they promised that Soviet Russia would abandon extraterritoriality in China and return the Russian concessions to China. Accordingly, Voznesensky sought permission to go to China. Several discussions were held afterwards, but without result.<sup>109</sup>

Relations between Soviet Russia and China were strained, mainly because the Beijing Government, acting in concert with the Entente, refused to recognise the Soviet regime, and even withdrew its legation from Petrograd toward the end of February 1918. As a result, Voznesensky was unable to proceed to Beijing. In April 1918, Narkomindel appointed several consuls in the Chinese borderlands, such as Ili, Tacheng and Kulun, but the Chinese authorities also refused to admit them.<sup>110</sup>

Nevertheless, some semi-official and informal communications between China and Soviet Russia still remained. Through the Chinese consulates which continued to operate on Russian territory and the Chinese local institutions along the Sino-Russian border the Bolsheviks made contacts with the Chinese authorities. For example, Y. D. Yanson, a representative of Narkomindel in Irkutsk, and S. G. Lazo, head of the Bolshevik troops in Trans-Baikal, had meetings with the Chinese authorities on the Manchurian frontier in 1918.<sup>111</sup> On the border of Central Asia, similar contacts between the Tashkent Soviet on the one hand, and the Chinese local authorities and the Xinjiang Governor Yang Zengxin on the other, were underway from 1918 and Soviet trade agencies and even political

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<sup>109</sup> The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, (ed.), Zhong-E guanxi shiliao (Archival Materials on Sino-Russian Relations), [henceforth ZEGXSL], (Taipei: Jinghua Press, 1959-70), Vol 1, pp 244-45; Xue Xian-tian, et al. (eds.), Zhong-Su guojia guanxishi ziliao huibian, 1917-1924 (Selected Materials on the History of Sino-Soviet State Relations), [henceforth ZSGGSZH](Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1993), p 29.

<sup>110</sup> Xue Xiantian, et al. (eds), ZSGGZH, p 131.

<sup>111</sup> Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol 3, p 485; see also FO 228/2757.



agencies were permitted to be set up at several cities in Xinjiang.<sup>112</sup> It is not true, as Professor Xiang Qing has suggested, that there were no relations whatsoever between China and Soviet Russia before the spring of 1920.<sup>113</sup>

While trying to build good relations with the Chinese authorities, the Soviet Government began its campaign to win the Chinese people's sympathy and support for the Soviet Russia and to direct Chinese public opinion against the Beijing Government. On 22 February 1918, Narkomindel issued to various local Soviets in Siberia a set of instructions governing policy towards China and Japan. One instruction emphasised that they were "laying the first stone in the creation of completely new relations with the peoples of the East. ... If the Chinese people want to repulse the Japanese-European capitalists and to fight against tyranny and injustice, they must rally more closely with the Russian people since the Russians are the oppressed nations' best friends."<sup>114</sup> In July 1918, the newly appointed People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, in his report to the Fifth Soviet Congress formally announced Soviet policy towards China. He proclaimed that the Soviet Government intended to renounce the conquests of the Tsarist Government in Manchuria and to restore the sovereign rights of China in this territory. Chicherin expressed the Soviet Government's willingness to negotiate with the Beijing Government, and did not disguise the fact that he had greater faith in the Guangzhou Government.

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<sup>112</sup> Zhang Yongjin, China in the International System, 1918-20, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp 158-160; Guo Ting-yi, Zhonghua minguo shishi rizhi (Daily Chronicle of Events in the Republic of China), (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1979), p 501; FO 405/233, No 222.

<sup>113</sup> Xiang Qing: 'An Exploratory Study on the Comintern Relations with the Chinese Revolution', Dangshi yanjiu ziliao, 1981, No 3.

<sup>114</sup> Quoted from R. Mirovitskaya, 'The First Responses in China to the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution', Far Eastern Affairs, (Moscow, 1978), Vol 1, pp 147-9.

A few weeks after his report, Chicherin wrote a warm letter in reply to Sun Yatsen, whom he had met in London several years previously. In this letter, he appealed to "the friends, the proletariat of South China" for help against the capitalist powers' attempts to "strangle the Russian revolution", saying:

Our success is your success. Our ruin is your ruin. ... Let us close the ranks in the great fight for the common interests of the world proletariat.

Meanwhile, he condemned the Beijing Government as "the creature of foreign bankers".<sup>115</sup> In December 1918, a circular by the deputy commissar of Foreign Affairs, L. Karakhan, to all Soviet deputies cautioned that Chinese democrats should not be treated like members of the "bourgeois class", for the "Soviet government is doing everything possible to attract Asian democrats to the common struggle against imperialism."<sup>116</sup> Both Chicherin and Karakhan's statements demonstrate that the Bolsheviks regarded Sun Yatsen's Party and Government as progressive, and proposed a United Front policy to ally with them as early as 1918.

Soviet Russia's China policy was subordinated to the Bolsheviks' strategy in the Far East. From the summer of 1918 to the beginning of 1920, war in Siberia was the main threat to the Soviet regime. The foreign intervention in Siberia began with a Japanese detachment landing at Vladivostok on 5 April 1918, later joined by American, British, French and other troops. The Beijing Government also dispatched troops to join the Allied armed intervention in Siberia in August 1918. Among the various powers involved in this military intervention, Japan was unique in its ambition to conquer territory from Russia, and its troops' behaviour was brutal in the extreme. Trotsky commented:

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<sup>115</sup> Degras, Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol 1, pp 92-3.

<sup>116</sup> Quoted from B. A. Elleman, 'Soviet Diplomacy and the First United Front in China', Modern China, (1995), No 4, p 453.

I, of course, object to both armies [of Germany and Japan], but if there is no alternative, I say, better the German army than the Japanese ... if Japan sends an armed force she will not withdraw it.<sup>117</sup>

With the support of Japan, the White Cossack General, A. Semenov led his men on several incursions into Soviet territory from Manchuria and cut the Bolsheviks' communication lines. Kolchak, who had been a former Admiral in the Tsarist Navy, and was supported mainly by Britain and America, assumed the position of the "Supreme Ruler" of Russia in Omsk on 18 November 1918. Before establishing himself in Siberia, he had consulted with the foreign missions and ex-Tsarist officials in Beijing and Harbin in the spring of 1918. About this time, two anti-Bolshevik organisations - the Far Eastern Committee for the Defence of the Fatherland and the Constituent Assembly - were created on Chinese soil.<sup>118</sup> In addition, the CER was used as a vital line of transport by the Allied troops. Under these circumstances, the Bolshevik leaders did not want to see China under the domination of the Entente countries in general and Japan in particular. A change in China's situation was especially desirable to them.

The opportunity soon arose. Many Chinese initially welcomed the Entente's triumph in the Great War, but news from the Versailles Peace Conference soon indicated that the Powers had resolved to transfer all of Germany's interests in Shandong to Japan. This gave rise to furious protests. In Beijing a students' demonstration on 4 May 1919 marked the beginning of an upsurge of anti-Japanese and anti-Beijing Government movements throughout China.

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<sup>117</sup> L. Fischer, Russia's Road from Peace to War: Soviet Foreign Relations, 1917-1941, (New York, 1969), p 20.

<sup>118</sup> D. Footman, Civil War in Russia, (London, 1961), pp 214-5.

The Soviet leaders took advantage of this situation and launched a vigorous propaganda campaign towards China. In July 1919, the Soviet Government issued the "Declaration to the Chinese Nation and the Governments of Northern and Southern China", which is usually called "the First Karakhan Manifesto" since it was signed by Karakhan. It was actually a public declaration addressed to all the people of China, rather than a formal diplomatic note. It reiterated the principles which Voznesensky and Chicherin had earlier declared. In addition, some new offers were made, the most important being:

The Soviet Government returns to the Chinese people without any compensation of any kind the Chinese Eastern Railway, and all mining concessions, forestry, and gold mines ...

The main aim of renouncing the CER was given as follows:

Anticipating the return to the Chinese people of the Manchurian Railway, Japan and its allies seized it themselves, invaded Siberia, and even forced Chinese troops to help them in this criminal and unparalleled robbery.

Therefore "the return to the Chinese people of what was taken from them requires first of all putting an end to the robber invasion of Manchuria and Siberia." The clear implication here was that the main obstacle to returning the CER to China was the occupation of Siberia by Allied troops, especially the Japanese, and, moreover, the fault was imputed to lie with the Beijing Government, because it continued both to join the armed intervention and "to refuse to have any relations with the Russian Workers' and Peasants' Government." The promise to return the CER served to attract Chinese public opinion to favour Soviet Russia and stimulate anti-imperialist and anti-Beijing Government feelings.

The Karakhan Manifesto also stressed that the Red Army, which was marching across the Urals to the East, would bring "liberation" and "help" to the Chinese people, and the Soviet Government would let the people living in Manchuria and other areas which had

been conquered by Tsarist Russia "decide within the frontiers of which state they wish to dwell, and what form of government they wish to establish in their own countries."<sup>119</sup> This passage hinted that Soviet Russia expected to see the Soviet Russia's sovereignty extend to Manchuria and a change of government in China.

Vilensky-Sibiriakov, who had drafted the Karakhan Manifesto, wrote in a pamphlet published in 1919:

The creation of Soviet Russia's alliance with revolutionary China is one of our foremost tasks, for the attainment of which we should apply all the energy and resources at our disposal.<sup>120</sup>

Here the prerequisite for such an alliance was the creation of a "revolutionary China". To achieve this aim, the Bolsheviks tried to utilise every opportunity, every means and every channel.

The large numbers of Chinese labourers in Russia<sup>121</sup> were considered suitable for spreading revolution into China. In December 1918, the All-Russian Union of Chinese Workers was set up in Petrograd; simultaneously, the first Chinese branch of the RCP(B) was formed from members of the Union. At an international meeting held in Petrograd in December 1918, a representative of North China declared:

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<sup>119</sup> Quoted from Xue Xiantian, et al. (eds.), ZSGGZH, pp 58-60; A. S. Whiting, Soviet Policies in China, 1917-1924, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp 269-271.

<sup>120</sup> Vilensky, Kitai i Sovetskaia Rossia (China and Soviet Russia), (Moscow, 1919), p 14; Quoted from Leong, Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, p 133.

<sup>121</sup> During World War I, there were about 1/2 million Chinese labours working in Russia. Cf. Xue Xiantian and Li Yuzhen, 'The Communist Organisations of the Chinese in Russia and Some Issues concerning the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Jindaishi yanjiu (Studies in Modern History), (1989), No 5, p 151. I should state here that, since I have referred to many books and journals in languages other than English, I always give both their original and English names when they are cited for the first time, and then, only the original names in the phonetic alphabet. For readers' convenience, all titles of articles published in journals in other languages are translated into English from the beginning.

The Chinese workers would strive together with the Soviet Russia for a universal revolution, for Soviet power against all exploiters.<sup>122</sup>

The leaders of the Union, Liu Shaozhou, Zhang Yongkui and An Enxue, were received by Lenin and were invited to attend the first two Congresses of the Comintern. Under the auspices of the RCP(B) and the Soviet Government, the Union and Party organisations of the Chinese workers undertook extensive propaganda, educational and organisational work among Chinese labourers in Russia. Numerous Chinese workers and soldiers were trained in special schools for propaganda and military work. From 1919, many Chinese who had joined the Bolshevik Party and the Red Army in Russia were sent back along with the homeward bound Chinese labourers. Although the Japanese, British and U.S. Governments tried hard to prevent revolutionary-minded Chinese from returning to China, a large number of the Chinese labourers still managed to arrive in China by various means. Some of them were engaged in inciting anti-Japanese struggle and anti-Beijing revolt in the border areas and in the interior of China;<sup>123</sup> some even tried to set up soviets in their home towns.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Levy (ed.), Revolutionary Radicalism, Vol 1, p 445.

<sup>123</sup> Telegram from Bao Guiqing, 27 January 1919, in the Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Quoted from Peng Ming (ed.), Zhongguo xiandai shi ziliao xuanji (Selected Materials on Modern Chinese History), (Beijing: China People's University Press, 1988), Vol 1, p 613. Note from the Russian Legation to the Chinese Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, 23 January 1919, ZEGXSL, Vol 2, p 22. Persits, 'Eastern Internationalists in Russia and Some Questions of the National Liberation Movement', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 102. Directive No 571 of the Chinese Representation Bureau of the Harbin Railway, in Archives of the Heilongjiang Province's Record Bureau, Quoted from Zhongguo shixue lunwen huibian (Collection of the Theses on Chinese History), 1979, p 644.

<sup>124</sup> FO 228/3214, 1 April 1920. As early as November 1918, Stalin in an article remarked: "The oppressed colonies and semi-colonies, looking with hope at Russia [are] already organising their own soviets of deputies (India and China)!" [Quoted from Whiting, Soviet Policies in China, 1917-24, p 107]. But nobody knows which soviets Stalin referred to.

Besides these Chinese militants, many Russians, Muslims from Russian Central Asia and ex-POWs were dispatched to China as agents and agitators. I shall deal with them in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that they all shared the same objective of creating a revolutionary China.

At the beginning of 1920, the triumph of the Red Army over Kolchak's forces turned the balance in favour of the Bolsheviks in Siberia. But, in view of the strength of the Japanese occupation troops, who were reinforced after the other Allied powers withdrew their troops from Siberia, Soviet Russia could not move regular Red Army detachments beyond Lake Baikal. In February 1920, the Central Committee of the RCP(B) decided that a clash with Japan should be avoided.<sup>125</sup>

A. M. Krasnoshchekov, a prominent Bolshevik leader in Siberia, proposed a plan to create a buffer state in Siberia and this was approved by Lenin and Trotsky. In April 1920, the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia was founded at Verkhne Udinsk. Later its capital was moved to Chita. The resulting Government was ruled by a coalition of Bolsheviks and non-Bolsheviks and purported to be a bourgeois-democratic state. Ostensibly the Far Eastern Republic existed as a separate entity from the Soviet Russian Republic, but in fact it was dominated by the government of Soviet Russia and directed by the Central Committee of the RCP(B). Soviet Russia not only made use of the Far Eastern Republic as a buffer to avoid a direct military confrontation with Japan, but also used it as an intermediary to make contact with the Chinese Government and the Chinese people.

In June 1920, the Republic dispatched a delegation to China, headed by M. I. Yurin. M. Kasanin, the secretary to Yurin, later revealed the Yurin Mission's tasks as follows:

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<sup>125</sup> 'Vilensky's Report to the ECCI on the Work among the People in the Eastern Asia, 1 September 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 39.

Our initial purpose was to establish relations with China, secure recognition and conclude an agreement. But this was not all: we had been entrusted with the task of entering into contact with all the forces that could prove efficacious in averting war with Japan.<sup>126</sup>

Owing mainly to the efforts of the Yurin mission, the Beijing Government issued a mandate on 28 September 1920 to cancel the recognition of all Tsarist representatives in China. The way to Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations was thus opened. A semi-official Chinese delegation, headed by General Zhang Si-lin, arrived in Moscow in September and was given a warm welcome by Lenin and other Soviet leaders. The Zhang mission brought back to Beijing a Narkomindel note to the Chinese Foreign Ministry which was issued by Karakhan on 27 September 1920. Since its content was similar to Soviet Russia's first declaration, it was therefore called the Second Karakhan Manifesto.

Later, other Soviet representatives arrived in China, including Joffe, who had been described by Lenin as "one of our first and best diplomats"<sup>127</sup>, and Karakhan, who was vice-Commissar of Narkomindel in charge of eastern affairs. In their negotiations with the Beijing Government, these Soviet diplomats, following Moscow's orders, not only broke their early promise to return the CER to China,<sup>128</sup> but also refused to withdraw the Red Army from Outer Mongolia. On these issues, Soviet Russia virtually continued the

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<sup>126</sup> Marc Kasanin, China in the Twenties, translated to English by Hilda Kasanina, (Moscow, Central Department of Oriental Literature, 1973), p 57.

<sup>127</sup> L. Fischer, The Life of Lenin, (London, 1965), p 532.

<sup>128</sup> Following to the decision of the RCP(B) Politburo's meeting on 31 August 1922, Stalin sent a telegram to Joffe, to the effect that the Party's Central Committee maintained that, in negotiations with China, it could not be permitted to draw instructions directly from the 1919 and 1920's Manifestos; On the issue of the CER, some terms must be stipulated to guarantee our privileges. (GLZDC, Vol 1, p 115); So on 5 November 1922, Joffe announced that Russia was no longer bound by its previous, generous, declarations of 1919 and 1920. [Tony Saich, The Origins of the First United Front in China, The Role of Sneevliet, (henceforth abbreviated to OFUFC), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991, Vol 1, p 128]



imperialist policy of territorial expansion and interference with China's sovereign rights, which it had inherited from Tsarist Russia. During 1922-25, some Chinese intellectuals came to believe that Soviet Russia had become "Red Imperialist" because of its reckless pursuit of self-interest at the expense of a helpless China, and because of its harmful Communist propaganda.<sup>129</sup> Even Joffe and the Comintern representative Sneevliet advised the Soviet Government not to "do anything ourselves that can appear as a disguised imperialist policy" and to "give the slightest impression of similarity with the policy of the imperialist states".<sup>130</sup>

While dealing with the Beijing government, Soviet Russia's representatives were simultaneously engaged in revolutionary work to undermine the same government. Guided by the Bolsheviks' policy and strategy towards China, these Soviet diplomats joined hands with covert Comintern agents and made strenuous efforts to bring China into the orbit of Soviet Russia by both legal and illegal methods.

In view of the fact that China was a backward agricultural country and that it was impossible to start a proletarian revolution straightaway, the Bolsheviks' immediate tasks were to promote a national liberation movement and to foster any forces which might lead to the formation of a pro-Soviet government. Besides pursuing an alliance with Sun Yatsen's nationalists, the Bolshevik agents also tried to get in touch with prominent people who had political influence or military strength in China.

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<sup>129</sup> See Zhang Jin (comp.), Lian E yu chou E wenti taolunji (The Debate of Friendship or Enmity towards Russia), Beijing, 1927. Quoted from Leong Sow-theng, Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, pp 296-98.

<sup>130</sup> 'Concerning Our Work in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries in General and in China in Particular', Theses of Joffe and Maring, (end 1922), Sneevliet Archive, No 294, cited from Saich, OFUFC, p 370; H. R. Isaacs, 'Talks with H. Sneevliet, 19 August 1935', China Quarterly, (1971), No 45.

Of course, the Bolsheviks' final goal was the eventual establishment of a Communist China which would become a member of the world-wide Union of Soviet Republics. Therefore, it was absolutely necessary for them to initiate and foster a Communist party in China as a main tool to achieve this object. The Chinese Communists in turn could also serve Soviet Russia's interests by increasing Soviet Russia's influence and promoting Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations.<sup>131</sup>

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The establishment of the CCP was not an accidental event which could be isolated from this international background. As this chapter has made clear, after the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks developed a global strategy and spared no effort to create the world socialist revolution. In order to exert a unified international leadership of the Communist movement, the Communist International was founded under the control of the Bolsheviks. The Comintern first focused its attention on establishing Communist parties in Western countries and directing the proletariat movement there. However, the world revolution did not come as the Bolsheviks had expected.

To unleash an anti-imperialist struggle in the East became more vital to the Bolsheviks after the failure of revolution in Europe. Soviet Russia and the Comintern

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<sup>131</sup> For example, after the first Karakhan Manifesto was sent to Beijing, a campaign urging the restoration of diplomatic relations with Russia was launched in China, and lasted several years. It has been said that "Li Dazhao was one of the initiators and most active participants in that campaign." [Xu Wanmin, 'Li Dazhao on Sino-Soviet Relations', Far Eastern Affairs, (1990), No 1, p 109]; During the Sino-Soviet negotiations in 1923, Li Dazhao persuaded Gu Weijun, the Chinese Foreign Minister, to approve the draft agreement with Karakhan by saying that "the draft agreement was the best one in China's diplomatic history"; in regard to the Outer Mongolia issue, which was a major obstacle to agreement, Li argued that "even if Outer Mongolia were dominated and ruled by Soviet Russia, the people there could live a better life." [Gu Weijun huiyilu, (Gu Weijun's Reminiscences), (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1985), Vol 1, p 340.

began to pay more attention to supporting national liberation movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and to establishing close ties with Eastern peoples, trying to cripple imperialist powers in their backyard and to expand their own force and influence. In line with this shift in orientation, they started to establish Communist parties in Eastern countries. Establishing a Communist party in China was only one of the Comintern's efforts to expand Communist forces into the East.

In addition to this, some particular circumstances, such as geopolitical factors should also be taken into account. As China held a special strategic position, Soviet Russia adopted rather complex policies towards China. Their aims were to resume diplomatic relations with the Beijing Government as a way extricating themselves from the isolation and encirclement by imperialist powers; to form an alliance with the Chinese Nationalists headed by Sun Yatsen for the common struggle against imperialism; and to establish the Communist party in order to kindle the Communist movement in this neighbouring country.

With the lapse of time, China became more and more important in the eyes of the Bolsheviks. In a telegram to Stalin dated 30 August 1922, Joffe pointed out:

This place [China] will be to our advantage, ... China, beyond doubt, is a focus of international conflicts and the place where international imperialism is weakest. I believe that, when imperialism is undergoing a crisis in Europe and a revolution is coming there, to strike blows against imperialism in the place where it is weakest will be of significance.<sup>132</sup>

In their endeavours to export revolution abroad, Soviet Russia and the Comintern's intervention in China was on a larger scale than it had been in any other colonial or semi-

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<sup>132</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 112.

colonial country. The greatest success they won in Asia was the appearance of a Communist China.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE COMINTERN'S AGENTS IN CHINA, 1918-20

It is widely acknowledged that the Bolshevik Revolution had a significant influence on the Chinese Communist movement. But it is more problematic to discover when it was that Soviet Russia and the Comintern began to exert direct influence by sending their agents into China.

The prevailing view amongst historians is that there were no direct relations or regular contacts between the Bolsheviks and the Chinese revolutionaries until the spring of 1920. Xiang Qing, an authoritative Chinese scholar of Sino-Soviet relations, asserts:

After the Russian October Revolution, the transport connections between China and Russia were cut entirely. Meanwhile the relationship of the two countries was disrupted, making it impossible for revolutionaries of the two countries to communicate.

He insists that "the spring of 1920 when G. Voitinsky visited China was the starting point for the relationship between the Comintern and the Chinese revolution".<sup>1</sup> This viewpoint is shared by many experts on the history of the Chinese Communist Party, both in China and abroad. A. Dirlik concurs with Xiang's assessment of early Sino-Soviet relations:

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> Xiang Qing, Gongchanquoji yu Zhongguogeming Guanxi Lunwenji, p 81.

As long as the Russo-Chinese border remained closed, neither the October Revolution nor the Comintern had any appreciable influence on Chinese radicals. This situation changed drastically with Voitinsky's arrival.<sup>2</sup>

J. Guillermaz goes so far as to state that "1920 saw the appearance of the first Soviet envoys or Comintern agents in China."<sup>3</sup> Many other works on the CCP and the Comintern regard Voitinsky as the first Bolshevik emissary to China.

It seems that there is a missing link in the history of Sino-Soviet relations from the time of the October Revolution to the Spring of 1920. I have already made a general survey of Soviet Russia's and the Comintern's global strategy and policies towards the East, and outlined the Bolsheviks' activities in many countries, both in the West and the East, during that time. It is hard to believe that the Bolsheviks should have made an exception of China and left it alone. It is true that the Sino-Russian border was partly blockaded between 1918 and 1920, as a result of foreign armed intervention, the White Guards' revolt and the operations of Chinese troops, but such a long border could not have been blockaded entirely and continuously, and thus communications between China and Soviet Russia could not have been completely severed.

### **Section 1. Emissaries Dispatched during 1918-1919**

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<sup>2</sup> A. Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 192.

<sup>3</sup> J. Guillermaz, A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-1949, (London: Methuen & Company, 1972), p 39.

In January 1918, the Chinese Government issued a circular to the officials on the frontier with Russia, warning them that the Bolsheviks were dispatching agents to China, and asking them to take precautions.<sup>4</sup> This circular might be interpreted as reflecting nothing more than Beijing's imaginary worries, since it offered no evidence. But from the following month, there were signs indicating that Soviet Russia was indeed dispatching agents to China. In a telegram dated 16 February 1918 to the British Minister in Beijing, the Military Attaché of the British Consulate in Harbin, Captain Denny, reported that, according to General Semenov's information, three representatives from the Soviet Government, who were travelling to Tokyo and Beijing, had been caught at Manzhouli Station.<sup>5</sup> In March, a Bolshevik delegation consisting of seven men headed by S. Lazo, arrived in Manzhouli to negotiate with the Chinese authorities. Lazo was the military chief of the Harbin Soviet, which was established after the October Revolution, and he was later appointed to command Bolshevik troops in the Transbaikal and Maritime areas.<sup>6</sup>

In April, other reports recorded that a Bolshevik emissary named Verestchak had been arrested by the Russian authorities at Harbin. This man was believed to be associated with Makaroff, who was said to have been sent by the Soviet Government to China on investigation and propaganda assignments.<sup>7</sup> Makaroff arrived in Shanghai on 5 May 1918 and carried with him a letter written by the head of the Eastern Department of the Narkomindel, Voznesensky, to the head of the Soviet at Vladivostok, Sukhjamov. Although Makaroff was not a Bolshevik, he was sent to

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<sup>4</sup> ZEGXSL, 22 January 1918, No 35.

<sup>5</sup> FO 228/2755, Telegram No 43.

<sup>6</sup> 'Disorder in Harbin and the CER', Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Jindaishi Yanjiusuo Jikan (Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica), Taipei, No 9; FO 228/2757, 10 March 1918; Who Was Who in the USSR, (New Jersey, 1972), p 340.

<sup>7</sup> FO 228/3214, No 206, 25 April 1918; FO 405/228, No 157.

China as an emissary because he had lived in China at an earlier period. It seems, however, that Makaroff only intended to resume his work at the Shanghai branch of the Russo-Asiatic Bank where he had been employed before World War I, and that he was evidently reluctant to fulfil the task assigned to him by the Bolsheviks. Instead of delivering Voznesensky's letter to Sukhjamov, he handed it over to the Russian Consul-General in Shanghai. The content of this letter revealed that, since Voznesensky himself could not proceed to China, Popov and Podvoisky were to be sent to discover what was happening in Shanghai and Beijing.<sup>8</sup>

Among the first batch of Bolshevik agents, M. Popov was conspicuously active and successful. Accounts of Popov have appeared in some early books on the Chinese revolution. For example, H. O. Chapman, in his book The Chinese Revolution wrote:

In 1919 M. Popov arrived in Shanghai, having been sent out from Russia for the definite purpose of exploring the situation and its possibilities, and reporting to headquarters. After a few months' investigation he returned, and in 1920 agents from Russia thoroughly organised the Communist Party of China.<sup>9</sup>

This book considered that Popov's activities had a certain bearing on the forming of the CCP. Afterwards similar accounts were given in books published in the 1930s.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> FO 228/3214, 16 May 1918. Popov's name is sometimes written as "Popoff". Since many of the Russian names referred to in this thesis were found in non-Russian sources, it has not been possible to convert all Russian names according to one of the standard systems of transliteration.

<sup>9</sup> H. Owen Chapman, The Chinese Revolution, 1926-1927 (London: Constable and Co., 1928), p 45. W. Levi mentioned in his work Modern China's Foreign Policy (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1953, p 174) that the first prominent Soviet agent to China was Pavlov, but, unfortunately, he did not give any further details.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, H. F. MacNair, China in Revolution, An Analysis of Politics and



However, without further corroborative evidence, the story was told less and less with the passing of the time. The most recent works on the CCP hardly mention Popov at all. By way of exception, C. M. Wilbur and J. Y. How in their monograph on the missionaries of Soviet Russia in China make passing reference to Popov, but only in a footnote.<sup>11</sup> In another book, Wilbur cites Sokolsky's "Reminiscences" that Popov came to Shanghai in May or June 1919, at the time of the student strike, under an assumed name.<sup>12</sup>

In the archives kept in the British Public Record Office, there are plenty of detailed records on Popov. According to these dossiers, Michael Popov had studied Japanese and Chinese in Petrograd before he became a colonel attached to the General Staff of Soviet Russia,<sup>13</sup> and later he was appointed inspector of Bolshevik propaganda in the Far East. Popov's first visit to China was reportedly made in May 1918, when he stayed in Shanghai for several days and then left for Harbin.<sup>14</sup> One cannot be sure whether Podvoisky came to China with Popov, but later a Russian named Pudhorosky or Podgursky appeared in Shanghai and was engaged in Bolshevik activities.<sup>15</sup>

In August 1918, another Bolshevik agent, Joseph Malkin, who was said to have worked on a newspaper in Petrograd, reached Shanghai by the S.S. Simbirsk. As this man was suspected of being engaged in espionage, the local police requested the

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Militarism under the Republic; Fang Fu£an, Chinese Labour, (Shanghai, 1931); Lowe Chuan£hua, Facing Labour Issues in China, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1934).

<sup>11</sup> C. M. Wilbur and J. Y. How, Missionaries of Revolution: Soviet Advisers and Nationalist China, 1920-1927, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1989), p 64, note 16.

<sup>12</sup> USDS 761, 93/142, quoted from C. M. Wilbur, Sun Yatsen: Frustrated Patriot, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p 326.

<sup>13</sup> The All-Russia Supreme Staff was founded in May 1918; The General Staff was not named until 1935; cf., J. Erickson, Soviet High Command, (London, 1962), p 34.

<sup>14</sup> FO 228/3214, 30 May 1918; FO 228/3211, April 1921; FO 405/233, September 1921.

<sup>15</sup> FO 228/3214, September 1920; FO 405/233, September 1921.

Russian Consulate to take him into custody on the arrival of the steamer, and then send him back to Vladivostok by the same vessel.<sup>16</sup>

According to the information originated in Vladivostok, British Intelligence reported that following the downfall of the Soviets in Siberia in the summer of 1918 numerous Bolshevik commissars fled to China with large funds, "agitating for a Bolshevik rising and the boycotting of Japanese goods."<sup>17</sup> Around this time, many Bolsheviks came to China as refugees, continuing their work for the Soviet cause.

Generally speaking, it was rather difficult for the Russian Bolsheviks to reach China, but many foreigners who had been prisoners-of-war in Russia and later began to serve Soviet Russia were dispatched to China. On 15 April 1918, an official of the Chinese Consulate at Irkutsk, Wu Mingrui reported to the Chinese Foreign Ministry:

According to reliable information, some Bolsheviks and German and Austrian prisoners disguising themselves as Poles, sneaked into South Manchuria, Korea and other bordering areas and agitated on the sly in order to cause chaos.<sup>18</sup>

From January 1918, the British Intelligence Department in Bombay and Shanghai began to receive the following information:

Russian passports were being freely issued to Germans, many of them had arrived at Shanghai via Vladivostok intending to disembark and, if possible, to carry on political work.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> FO 228/3211, Series of September 1918; FO 228/3214, No 375, 29 August 1918.

<sup>17</sup> ZEGXSL, 3 July 1918, No 480; FO 228/3211, August 1919.

<sup>18</sup> ZEGXSL, Vol 1, No 371, pp. 373-74.

<sup>19</sup> FO 228/3211, April 1918, No 93. According to this report, the commandant in Irkutsk was Ruetin, whose chief-of-staff was a German POW, Colonel Stremburg. This Ruetin was in fact E. M. Riutin who had assumed the Chairmanship of the Harbin Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in 1917 and had been expelled by the

There was some substance to these rumours. Some time before March 1918, an ex-prisoner carrying the rank of Captain had been to Shanghai and then moved to Tianjin holding a Russian passport in the name of Aromovitch. Another former POW, Janes de Mezey, who had been a lieutenant in a Hungarian regiment, went to China from Irkutsk in early 1918. After travelling around Harbin, Changchun, Tianjin, Shanghai and Hong Kong, he gave himself up to the British authorities in Hong Kong and confessed that "the prisoners at Irkutsk had a soldiers' committee, ... they drew lots of men to go to China to agitate. I was one of these. Others were to organise troops to help the Bolsheviks against Japan."<sup>20</sup> This man's confession is supported by the famous British journalist Thomas F. Millard, the editor of Millard's Review. Millard also noticed that numerous released German, Austrian, Hungarian and Czech-Slovak prisoners in Siberia, who had intended to escape repatriation and further military service, joined the Bolsheviks and became their agents in Manchuria.<sup>21</sup>

Early in 1919 a Hungarian Communist, A. A. Müller, who could speak Chinese and English, was sent by the Harbin Committee of the RCP(B) to Qiqihar, where he conducted revolutionary agitation and education work in a Chinese guerrilla force. Later he arrived in Tianjin.<sup>22</sup> That winter, a Turk named Fakiruddin arrived in China from Omsk where he had been held as a POW. He was very familiar with a

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Chinese troop from Harbin. cf. Sow£theng Leong, Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917-1926, p 18. In October 1921, Ruettin was dispatched to China by the Far Eastern Secretariat of the ECCI. GLZDC, Vol 1, p 82.

<sup>20</sup> FO 228/3214, No 313, 4 July 1918.

<sup>21</sup> T. F. Millard, Democracy and the Eastern Question (London, 1919), p 302; Millard also remarked that there were also many agents of the Central Powers in Manchuria, who worked for their own governments to sow dissension among the Allies, and especially to play upon China's fear of Japan and Japan's jealousy of America.

<sup>22</sup> Xue Xiantian and Li Yuzhen, 'The Communist Organisations of the Chinese in Russia and Some Issues on the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Jindaishi yanjiu, (1989), No 5, p 170; A. A. Müller, Plameni Revoliotssi, 1917-1920 (In the Flames of the Revolution, 1917-1920), (Irkutsk, 1957); Quoted from Far Eastern Affairs, (Moscow, 1988), No 5, p 105.

conference held a short time previously in a place near Ufa which had been attended by representatives of most of the Asiatic races.<sup>23</sup> Fakiruddin visited a group of Turks who were staying in Shanghai from 1919 to 1920. These Turks aroused the suspicion of the local police because they advocated Pan-Islamic and anti-British movement and had connections with Turks co-operating with Bolsheviks in Central Asia. Many papers in Chinese were found in their rooms.<sup>24</sup> In December 1919, a report from Tashkent indicated that eight Germans who had intimate knowledge of oriental affairs and knew different oriental languages had recently been dispatched from Moscow to China. They travelled incognito as pilgrims or tramps.<sup>25</sup> It was also reported that in early 1920 the civil governor of Sichuan tried to use some German engineers as intermediaries with the Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia.<sup>26</sup>

Those former European POWs might have been dispatched by the Federation of Foreign Groups of the RCP(B), and the Turkish POWs were probably sent by the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of Eastern Peoples of the RCP(B).

The foundation of the Comintern in March 1919 served to accelerate the pace at which agents were dispatched to various countries including China. It was reported that the Lenin Government in Moscow sent some important figures to Shanghai in that year.<sup>27</sup> Later in March, the Second Siberian Conference of the RCP(B) was secretly held in Omsk. It decided to organise a bureau of information and propaganda with the aim of contacting the communists of Asia and America to exchange information with

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<sup>23</sup> The conference he attended might have been the 2nd Congress of the Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East.

<sup>24</sup> FO 228/3214, 19 June 1919, 4 March 1920; FO 228/3211, Series of December 1919, Series of February 1920.

<sup>25</sup> FO 228/3211, Series of December 1919.

<sup>26</sup> FO 405/228, No 157.

<sup>27</sup> Yang Zengxin's Telegram to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, ZEGXSL, Xinjiang Frontier Defence, p 300.

them and to conduct all kinds of agitation.<sup>28</sup> Afterwards, the foreign diplomatic missions in Beijing obtained information that a Bolshevik conference was to be convened in Shanghai at the end of March, and one of the subjects for discussion would be to incite revolutionary movements in China, Japan and America. They also heard that the Bolshevik delegates to this conference were on their way, travelling in groups of four.<sup>29</sup> Whether this conference was held in Shanghai or not is still uncertain. However, according to a reliable report, a group of four Russians - Tolstof, Semesheko, Khodorov, and Klassing arrived in Shanghai from Siberia in April 1919,<sup>30</sup> and each of them bore a special responsibility in China: Colonel Tolstoff was said to be Soviet Russia's military representative in Shanghai and to live with Wilde, the Comintern's liaison man in Shanghai; in 1923 he was consulted by Joffe and received a large sum of money from him;<sup>31</sup> Klassing was an ardent Bolshevik engaged in educational work in Shanghai, and this person might be identified with a representative of the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia to Beijing in 1921, whose name was transcribed as Clossing;<sup>32</sup> Semesheko and Khodorov were prominent propagandists in China, both of whom will be discussed later.

When the outbreak of the May 4th Movement was brought to the Bolsheviks' attention, the Harbin Committee of the RCP(B) sent N. Burtman to Tianjin to find out

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<sup>28</sup> M. A. Persits, 'Eastern Internationalists in Russia and Some Questions of the National Liberation Movement, 1918-July 1920', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 86.

<sup>29</sup> The Dispatch to Shanghai Hujunshi and Tepaiyuan, 21 March 1919, and Telegraph from Shanghai Hujunshi, 1 April 1919, ZEGXSL, 1917-1919, No 190, 234; FO 228/3214, 27 April 1919.

<sup>30</sup> FO 228/3214, 22 April 1920.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. The daily reports of 24 and 25 January 1923 of Shanghai Public Settlement Municipal Council Police Report, which kept in the Shanghai Archives; Quoted from Dangshi yanjiu ziliao (Materials for the Study of the Party History), (Beijing), Vol 5.

<sup>32</sup> The Conversation between the Chinese Foreign Minister Yan and Cblossing [Clossing] and Gorodetycki, 20 December 1920, ZEGXSL, 1921, No 810.

what was happening in the Movement and to make contact with the Chinese. Burtman was also described as a Russian refugee who had escaped from Vladivostok when it was occupied by Kolchak's troops.<sup>33</sup> In any event, the two versions are not contradictory. Perhaps Burtman was dispatched to Tianjin after he had escaped to Harbin. Even if Burtman came to China as an émigré, one cannot rule out the possibility that he was assigned certain duties in China. Information from Russia indicated that the Red Army sent many partisans to infiltrate the eastward flow of Russian refugees.<sup>34</sup> Having grown up in Harbin, Burtman was familiar with Chinese, and was therefore a suitable person for the task in hand. It was this man who later became the Chairman of the Presidium of the Section of the Eastern Peoples under the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee, and the Executive manager of the Council of Ministers of the Far Eastern Republic after his return to Siberia in early 1920.<sup>35</sup>

In September 1919, a Russian named D. E. Komaroff reached Shanghai by the S.S. Dilwars. He himself claimed that he had been a military clerk of the Russian forces in Mesopotamia. When the authorities discovered that he was connected with the Bolsheviks, Komaroff was sent back to Vladivostok. He can probably be identified with Kumaroff, a Bolshevik commissar in charge of propaganda work in Afghanistan and India.<sup>36</sup> Two other Russian Bolsheviks who later took charge of the

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<sup>33</sup> P. Korovyakovsky and N. Rusanov, 'Zhang Tailei, A Trail-Blazer of the Chinese Revolution', Far Eastern Affairs, (1988), No 5, p 105; Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 15.

<sup>34</sup> The official letter from the Division of Frontier Defence Affairs, dated 22 August 1919, ZEGXSL, Vol 2, No 287, p 467.

<sup>35</sup> K. V. Shevelyov, 'On the history of the Formation of the Communist Party of China', The Far Eastern Affairs, (1981), No 1, p 128; Kasanin, China in the Twenties, pp 14-15;

<sup>36</sup> FO 228/3214, 25 September 1919; Levy (ed.), Revolutionary Radicalism, p 244.

Comintern's Eastern affairs also came to China in 1919. One was K. N. Sokelov-Strolakhov, who did underground work in China during 1919-21, and then assumed the post of secretary of the Far Eastern Department of the ECCI.<sup>37</sup> Another was V. L. Hoholovkin, who came to China as an emissary in the fall of 1919. He visited China again in autumn 1920 as secretary of the Chinese Office of the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B).<sup>38</sup>

In autumn 1919, an important figure from the Comintern arrived in China, a Korean named Pak Chinsen. Pak had settled in Russia prior to World War 1 and had studied at Moscow University. Soon after the Bolshevik Revolution, he rallied to the Bolshevik cause and was appointed by the Soviet leaders to be Korean Commissar at the People's Commissariat of Nationalities. Under the direction of the Bolshevik Krepkov, Pak Chinsen helped Yi Tunghui found the Korean Socialist Party in Khabarovsk in June 1918. After the Party's first congress, which was held in Vladivostok in April 1919, Pak, as general secretary, went to Moscow to register his party with the Comintern and participated in the work of the ECCI. Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders received Pak and other Korean representatives, and reached an agreement that the Korean revolutionaries should use funds from the Comintern for the liberation of Korea and the espousal of the communist cause.<sup>39</sup> In August 1919, Pak Chin-sun left Moscow for the Far East with a large amount of money, arriving in China in November.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 64.

<sup>38</sup> Peng Shuzhi xuanji (Selected Works of Peng Shuzhi), (Hong Kong: The October Press, 1983), Vol 1, p 43; GLZDC, Vol 1, p 54.

<sup>39</sup> B. Lazitch and M. M. Drachkovitch (ed.), Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern, (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1973) p 350; R. A. Scalapino and C. S. Lee, Communism in Korea, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp 7-10.

<sup>40</sup> Suh Dae-sook, The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948, (Princeton, N. J.:

The Western border of China was also a gateway for Bolshevik agents. From January 1919, there were some reports that the Bolsheviks sent their agents to Xinjiang (Chinese Turkestan) and the agents even set up local organisations in some towns to start a revolutionary movement there. Later, several Bolsheviks were arrested by the Chinese authorities.<sup>41</sup> In February, the Chinese authorities found that Turkish Bolsheviks were sent to Xinjiang to preach revolution among the Muslim peoples there.<sup>42</sup> In June, the Omsk Government also informed the Chinese Government that the Bolsheviks in Turkestan were using Xinjiang and Tibet as a route to establish communications with adjacent Asian countries.<sup>43</sup> Before December 1919, a Russian Jew had stayed in Gansu for several months and had established close relations with the local Muslim leader.<sup>44</sup> Most agents coming from Russian Central Asia were probably sent by the Central Bureau of the Muslim Organisations of the RCP(B).

Some Bolsheviks did not come direct from Russian territory. For one reason or another, they reached China via other foreign countries. Many of them came from Japan for they could not stay in Japan any longer. In July 1918, a Russian Pole named Fuchs arrived in Shanghai from Japan, where he had been detained for his Bolshevik activities.<sup>45</sup> It is not certain if this man was the Comintern agent who worked under the name of Fuchs in Henan and Hebei provinces between 1921 and 1922.<sup>46</sup> One

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Princeton University Press, 1967), p 11; Kim Chun-yop and Kim Ch'angsun, Hanguk Kongsan Chuui Undonsa (The History of Korean Communist Movement), (Seoul, 1986), p 169.

<sup>41</sup> ZEGXSL, 21 January 1919; FO 228/2986, 26 April 1920; FO 228/3216, 15 November 1920.

<sup>42</sup> Shen bao (Shanghai Paper), 8 May 1919.

<sup>43</sup> The note from the Foreign Ministry of Omsk Government to the Chinese General Consulate in Omsk, 18 June 1919; ZEGXSL, 1917-1919, No 525.

<sup>44</sup> FO 228/2986, 26 April 1920.

<sup>45</sup> FO 228/3214, 11 July 1918.

<sup>46</sup> FO 228/3140, p 118.



month later, J. E. Tobinon and his wife reached China having been expelled from Yokohama for "spreading Bolshevik ideas". The Japanese Home Office stated that Tobinon was the younger brother of one of the Bolshevik leaders.<sup>47</sup> This suggests that his elder brother might have been the famous Bolshevik leader in Siberia A. M. Krasnoschekov, who sometimes used the assumed name Stroller Tobinon in America and Siberia.<sup>48</sup> Immediately on arrival in Shanghai J. E. Tobinon contacted Klassing, a friend of Semesheko, Khodorov and Tolstoff. For this reason, the British Intelligence in Shanghai considered that Tobinon was probably one of that group.<sup>49</sup> It could also be conjectured that this group of Russians had connections with the Bolshevik leaders in Siberia, including Krasnoschekov himself. There was a prominent figure from Japan - A. S. Potapov. This man was an ex-Major General in the Tsarist Army who, while serving his term of military service, went to several Far Eastern countries. During the first days of the Bolshevik Revolution, he openly defected to the Soviet side and became the first high-ranking military officer to raise the red flag among the Guard Regiments. His past career made it dangerous for him to remain in Russia, and he therefore went abroad to work for the Bolshevik Regime as an important agent. At the end of 1919, he was urged by the Japanese Authorities to leave Tokyo and went on to live in the French Concession of Shanghai.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> FO 228/3214, 21 August 1919.

<sup>48</sup> Erickson, The Soviet High Command, pp 218- 222.

<sup>49</sup> FO 228/3214, 21 August 1919.

<sup>50</sup> Li Yuzhen, Sun Zhongshan yu Gongchanquoji (Sun Yatsen and the Comintern), Taipei: the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1996, p 56; FO 228/3211, Series of May 1920; FO 228/3214, 18 March 1920; 8 April 1920; FO 405/228, p 232. It is still not sure if this Potapov can be identified with N. M. Potapov, who was also a former general, and after the February Revolution, who became the President of the Military Commission of the Temporary Committee of the State Duma, and who later worked for Soviet Russia as a agent abroad. Cf. A. Wildman, The End of the Russian Imperial Army, (Princeton, 1980), p 233; R. P. Browder and A. F. Kerensky (ed.), The Russian Provisional Government, 1917, (Stanford, 1961), p 848; D. V. Lehovich, White

Some other Russians arrived in China after they had been involved in revolutionary movements in America, Australia, India, Indonesia, Vietnam and so on. For example, Samuel Ran, a Russian Jew who had been naturalised in America, reached China from Saigon on 10 January 1919. He spent much time on the dissemination of Bolshevik propaganda and the expression of violent anti-British views. He held that the principles of Bolshevism would ultimately conquer the world.<sup>51</sup>

China, reduced to semi-colonial status by various foreign powers, had many free ports and foreign concessions in her territory. In addition, foreigners living on Chinese soil enjoyed extraterritorial rights, so the Chinese authorities had very little control over them. This made it very easy for foreigners to enter and settle in the country, especially in port cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin, Harbin, Hankou, Qingdao and Guangzhou. That is why many Russian Bolsheviks who had been deported from other countries could remain in China.

News on the Bolsheviks' dispatches and activities in China by the year of 1919 can be seen in many contemporary newspapers and periodicals, both within China and abroad. For example, an editorial of the Japanese Daily News (Nichi Nichi Shimbun) wrote that Russian Bolsheviks were sending partisans to China who were propagating their doctrines within her borders, and so "China will become a breeding ground of Bolshevism."<sup>52</sup> Even Tan Pingshan, who joined the Communist movement the following year, expressed his fear of the arrival of the Bolsheviks in China in an article

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against Red (New York, 1973), p 429.

<sup>51</sup> FO 228/3211, Series of March 1919.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from Chen bao (Beijing Morning Post), (Beijing), 17 June 1919.

published in Xin Chao (New Tide).<sup>53</sup> A Reuters' correspondent reported an interview with a Chinese official, who admitted:

It is true that the Bolsheviks have sent agents to China, Korea and Japan. ... They are endeavouring to create a vast oriental movement which would throw many countries into flames.<sup>54</sup>

These warnings were not merely rumours. According to a Japanese police report in January 1920, by the beginning of the 1920, in Shanghai alone, there were at least ten Bolsheviks.<sup>55</sup> The evidence shows that Soviet Russia and the Comintern never gave up sending agents to China even during the crisis period of between the spring of 1918 and the end of 1919, and nothing could hinder them from attempting to spread revolution into China, contrary to the suggestion of many historians.

## **Section 2. Agents Recruited in China during 1918-20**

During the years immediately following the October Revolution, there was not enough time for Bolsheviks to train agents who were familiar with China and the Chinese language, therefore some left-wing Russian residents in China were entrusted with the tasks of finding out about the situation in China and making contacts with progressive Chinese elements.

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<sup>53</sup> Tan Mingqian, 'Discussion on Democracy', Xin chao (The Renaissance), (Beijing, 1 May 1919), Vol 1, No 5.

<sup>54</sup> The Peking and Tientsin Times, (Tianjin), 14 January 1920.

<sup>55</sup> The Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Korea (ed.), Hanguk Doknib Undonsa (The History of the Korean Independence Movement), (Seoul, 1970), Vol 3, p 400.

Russian residents in China included both Russians who had lived in China before the October Revolution and those who came to China as refugees or émigrés during the turmoil of revolution and the ensuing civil war. These groups were of diverse social status and held various political beliefs. Amongst them were some Bolsheviks, who, of course, had a strong desire to work for the Bolshevik cause. Moreover, there were some Russian democratic socialists, anarchists and even ex-Tsarist officials, who, despite their political convictions, were willing to help their fatherland to vanquish the foreign armed intervention. These Russians were also easily recruited by Soviet Russia and the Comintern though they might have had different motives: some were attracted by the ideal of social progress or patriotism and some were just out to earn money as a means of livelihood.

According to the Section of the Eastern Peoples of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee's report to the ECCI, before Voitinsky's team arrived in China, certain work had been done by several Russian residents, including Polevoy, Ivanov, Khodorov and Agarief.<sup>56</sup>

A. A. Ivanov was an anarchist. In his younger days, he had been arrested for revolutionary activities before contriving to emigrate to Paris, where he learned Chinese at the Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes (School of Oriental languages) and became associated with the famous anarchist P. A. Kropotkin. When the February Revolution of 1917 broke out, he returned to Russia and obtained a diplomatic appointment from the Russian Provisional Government as a student interpreter in the

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<sup>56</sup> GLZDC Vol 1, p 50; A. I. Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China, 1920-1922,' Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka (Problems of the Far East), (Moscow, 1973), No 1; Quoted from its Chinese translation by Ma Guifan in Gongchanguoji yu Zhongguo geming - Sulian xuezhe lunwen xuanyi (The Comintern and the Chinese Revolution - Selected Translations of the Treatises by Soviet Scholars), (Chengdu: Sichuan People's Press, 1987), p 50.

Russian Legation in Beijing. On 5 December 1917, Narkomindel issued a circular telegram to all Russian diplomatic missions abroad, demanding that they immediately answer whether they would like to carry out Soviet foreign policies; and ordering that whoever did not intend to work for the Soviet regime should leave their posts and transfer diplomatic business to the persons who now agreed to serve the new government regardless of their position.<sup>57</sup> Ivanov was the only person at the Russian Legation in Beijing who declared his desire to serve the Soviet regime. Thereupon, as he told Kasanin, "He found himself promoted suddenly from the lowest place to the highest, as the sole representative of the new revolutionary government."<sup>58</sup> However, Ivanov could not hold his post long, since ex-Tsarist diplomats threatened him with arrest. He left the Legation and afterwards became a contributing editor to a French magazine Journal de Peking. From September 1919, Ivanov was employed as a lecturer at Beijing University. All the time, he continued working for Soviet Russia and later joined the RCP(B) and became an advisor to the Yurin Mission.<sup>59</sup>

One of Ivanov's Russian colleagues at Beijing University, S. A. Polevoy, also served Soviet Russia. Polevoy had been a sinologist of the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok and one of his research subjects was Chinese periodicals published after

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<sup>57</sup> Xue Xiantian, et al. (eds.), ZSGGZH, p 130.

<sup>58</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, pp 44-5. A similar case can also be seen in Persia where a former Tsarist diplomat, Karl Bravin, was appointed in January 1918 to act as an unofficial Soviet representative in Teheran until an ardent Bolshevik was selected for this role; cf. Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, pp 93-4.

<sup>59</sup> These accounts on Ivanov's early experiences are mainly based on V. N. Nikiforov, Sovetskie Istoriki O Problemakh Kitaya (Soviet Historians on the Problem of China), henceforth abbreviated to SIOPK (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), and Kasanin, China in the Twenties. Kasanin was the interpreter and assistant representative of the Yurin mission, and he was also a close friend of Ivanov. The other references are the following: Ernestine Evans, 'Looking East from Moscow', Asia, (America, December 1922), Vol 22, No 12, p 1012; 'The Table of the Foreign Employees at Beijing University' in the official note to the Chinese Education Ministry from Beijing University, dated 22 September 1924.

1911.<sup>60</sup> According to Zhang Ximan, Polevoy claimed to be a sinologist researching the ancient Chinese text, Shijing (The Book of Songs), and he came to China for further study of the Chinese language; later, he became a Comintern agent in charge of the work to liaise with Chinese cultural circles.<sup>61</sup> Zhang Ximan had a close relationship with Polevoy: they both graduated from the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok and became lecturers at the Beijing Russian Language Institute and the Russian Department of Beijing University, therefore Zhang's information about Polevoy is very valuable. Nevertheless, most historians in mainland China have ignored Zhang's first-hand account and denied that Polevoy was an agent of the Comintern; they would rather believe the recollection of Bao Huiseng, who saw Polevoy only once, and who described Polevoy as a "White Russian" who "sympathised" with the Russian Revolution and Soviet Russia.<sup>62</sup> In fact, "White Russian" refers to Russians who were against the October Revolution and the Bolsheviks, and afterward escaped from Soviet Russia. Polevoy was born into a poor family and left Russia before the October Revolution.<sup>63</sup> He was probably sent to China by the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok, since as a usual practice, the Institute used to send students to relevant oriental countries for further language study.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Nikiforov, SLOPK, pp 37-8.

<sup>61</sup> Zhang Ximan, Lishi huiyi (Historical Reminiscences), (Shanghai: Jidong Press, 1949), p 4; Here I should thank Zhang Xiaoman, the daughter of Zhang Ximan, who provided me with some material about her father. It is quite possible that Polevoy came to China for further study as Zhang said.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Qiwu Laoren (Bao Huiseng), 'Before and After the Formation of the CCP', Xin guancha (New Look), (Beijing, 1 July 1957).

<sup>63</sup> Probably relying on Wu Nanru's recollection, Hua Yang in his article 'The Early Activities of Qu Qiubai and Zhang Tailei' [Zhonggong yanjiu (The Studies of the CCP), (Taipei, July 1977), Vol 10, No 7] wrote that Polevoy came to China in July 1917.

<sup>64</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 135; Kasanin himself was a graduate of this Institute. M. Sladkovsky in 'The First Centre of Sinology in the Far East and Its Graduates in the 1920s' [Far Eastern Affairs, (1980) No 1] mentions that at the 25th anniversary of the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok, some old graduates recalled their

Moreover, he sympathised with the October Revolution. So in any sense, Polevoy was definitely not a "White Russian". Perhaps Polevoy was a citizen of White Russia (Belorussia) or he intentionally told others that he was a "White Russian" in order to conceal his true identity. Nevertheless, a Beijing Government detective Guan Qian and some of Polevoy's other acquaintances, such as Cao Jinghua and Mao Yiheng claimed that Polevoy was employed by the Soviet Government.<sup>65</sup> According to newly published Comintern archives, Polevoy had been a member of the RCP(B) and worked for Soviet Russia before the arrival of Voitinsky in spring 1920.<sup>66</sup>

Another well-known Russian émigré in Beijing was B. Turgashev, a former Menshevik. Turgashev had studied in Paris and had then been an engineer with a responsible position at the Russo-Asiatic bank in Harbin. He was subsequently elected first chairman of the Harbin Soviet of Workers' Deputies after the February Revolution. Shortly after, he retired from politics and moved to Beijing. Later he was involved in working for Soviet Russia and became the Commercial Attaché of the Yurin Mission.<sup>67</sup>

There were many Russians living in South China, especially in Shanghai. Shanghai had a large Russian community, numbering approximately 5,000 by 1920.<sup>68</sup>

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early study trips to China, Manchuria, Korea and Japan. (p 133) After the conclusion of the Russo-Chinese Treaty in 1896, the graduates of the Oriental Department of St. Petersburg University were even sent to China for three years to perfect their knowledge of China and the Chinese language. (p 130)

<sup>65</sup> The secret reports by Guan Qian are kept at the Second Chinese History Archives in Nanjing. See Zhongguo wuzhengfu zhuyi he Zhongguo shehui dang (Chinese Anarchism and the Chinese Socialist Party), (Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Press, 1981), p 86; Guan Shanfu, 'Some Matters on Polevoy and Ivanov', Dangshi tongxun (The Bulletin on the History of the CCP), (Beijing, 1984), No 3, p 59.

<sup>66</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 50.

<sup>67</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 64; FO 228/3291.

<sup>68</sup> FO 228/3563, September 1920; Note from Official for Foreign Affairs of Jiangsu Province to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 October 1921, ZEGXSL, 1921, p 580.

It is difficult to distinguish between those Russians who were dispatched from Russia and those who were recruited in China.

As early as September 1918, some radical Russian residents' activities also attracted the attention of the local authorities in Shanghai. It was reported that some young Russians in Shanghai had subscribed to Bolshevik principles and were convinced that Bolshevism would save Russia, and then China and India from the "yoke of British imperialism". These men intended to establish a "Socialistic Society" in order to keep in touch with the Bolsheviks in Russia.<sup>69</sup> It is not certain whether the Socialistic Society was founded or not, but there is no doubt about the existence of certain Russians in Shanghai who put themselves at the service of Soviet Russia. Not later than 1920, a revolutionary Russian émigrés' organisation - "The Bureau of the Russian émigrés" was formed in Shanghai, and its secretary was a Bolshevik, Kaufman.<sup>70</sup>

J. Lizerovitch was an important left-wing Russian resident in Shanghai. Before 1917 Lizerovitch had previously made himself conspicuous by his radical views and his connections with socialists and anarchists in England and afterwards he came to Shanghai, where he was employed by Jardine Matheson, a British firm. As the following evidence suggests, he became a Bolshevik agent in Shanghai not later than spring 1919. Around that time a Korean, Yo Un-hong,<sup>71</sup> was sent from Shanghai to Siberia to seek Bolshevik assistance for the Korean independence movement and met a Bolshevik representative there. On his return to Shanghai, Yo and other

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<sup>69</sup> FO 228/3214, No 412, 20 September 1918.

<sup>70</sup> VKNDK, Vol 1, Index.

<sup>71</sup> Yo Un-hong was Yo Un-hyong's brother, who had been graduated from Leicester University in England. See Japanese Foreign Office (ed.) Gendai Chosen Jinmei Dai Jiten (A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Korean).



Koreans reportedly "established contacts with John Ruzaruichi, a Russian Bolshevik in Shanghai."<sup>72</sup> This Ruzaruichi is obviously a homophonic name of Lizerovitch, since many East Asians make no distinction between the pronunciation of 'R' and 'L'. His identity was later confirmed by Voitinsky, who once remarked that Lizerovitch as a "comrade" and had been receiving special instructions from Soviet Russia. Later an official of the Bolshevik Propaganda Bureau at Chita praised Lizerovitch as a "noble worker" for the Soviet cause.<sup>73</sup> Despite this, Lizerovitch has never been mentioned in any works on the CCP before.

From 8 February 1920, there were several meetings in Shanghai attended by Russian residents who were sympathetic to the Bolshevik regime. The main topic for discussion at these meetings was to form a committee to take control of the Russian Consulates and the branches of the Russo-Asiatic Bank in China.<sup>74</sup> Prominent speakers at these gatherings were Poliak, Smolensky and Lunden. At one of the meetings Sokolsky was mentioned. V. E. Poliak (or Polejack and Polialk) was a Bolshevik agitator, and his overt occupation in Shanghai was a tailor. Poliak's careers is worth noting: he joined the RCP(B) in 1918 and graduated from the Oriental Department of the Military Academy of the Red Army; in 1923 he became a member of the Joffe Mission, and later worked under M. Borodin and held the post of chief advisor to Huangpu Military Academy.<sup>75</sup> A. M. Smolensky was also reported to be a Bolshevik. D. A. Lunden was a Russian Jew, a graduate of King's College, London. Following

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<sup>72</sup> Ku Dae-yeol, Korea under Colonialism, (Seoul, 1985), p 233.

<sup>73</sup> FO 228/3214, September 1920; FO 228/3216, No 37, 6 November 1920; FO 228/3140, p 78.

<sup>74</sup> FO 228/3214, 19 February 1920, 13 March 1920, FO 405/233, No. 107.

<sup>75</sup> Huang Xiurong, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming quanxi shi, p 332; Wang Yijun, Zhong Su waijiao de xumu (The Prelude of the Sino-Soviet Diplomacy), (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1963), p 338; Holubnychy, Michael Borodin and the Chinese Revolution, 1923-1925, p 256, p 259.

the Revolution in 1917, he went to Petrograd where he met most of the leading politicians. Subsequently he reached Vladivostok, where he acted as a representative of the Times, and then proceeded to China. In July 1919, he expressed his neutral political attitude, supporting the Russian democratic socialists against both the White Guards and the Bolsheviks. But later he became a close friend of Lizerovitch and went over to the Bolshevik cause. In May 1920 he embarked on a mission to Moscow via the U.S.A. and England.<sup>76</sup>

G. Sokolsky, an American of Russian extraction, was a mysterious person. As the editor of the English language Russian Daily News in Petrograd, Sokolsky witnessed the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 and became acquainted with Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin. In his reminiscences written in his old age in America, Sokolsky claimed that he had been evicted from Russia in March 1918 and then arrived in China. But in a conversation with a Dane on a steamer from Hankou to Shanghai in April 1919, Sokolsky told the latter that he was a Bolshevik and was keen to disseminate Bolshevik ideas in China. He also boasted that he had been in close contact with Lenin and Trotsky. The American Consulate was soon informed of these claims. Sokolsky was reported to be working on behalf of Soviet Russia and had close relations with Bolshevik agents. But if that was the case, it was rather surprising that Sokolsky reported the activities of the Bolsheviks to the American consulate in Shanghai from the spring of 1920. Perhaps he was a double agent or simply changed his political stand.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> FO 228/4313, 19 February 1920, 18 March 1920, May 1920; FO 405/228, No 157; FO 405/233, No 107.

<sup>77</sup> Sokolsky, 'Reminiscences', USDS, 761, 93/142, quoted from Wilbur, Sun Yat-sen: Frustrated Patriot; FO 228/3214, 1 May 1919; FO 405/228, No 157. Hu Shi recorded in his diary that Sokolsky was very concerned himself with Chinese politics in 1921, [Hu

There were several Russians residing in other cities who offered to help the Soviet Regime. For example, Pankratoff, who had graduated from the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok and knew Chinese very well, was an associate professor in Hankou and, started to work for the Bolsheviks on Polevoy's recommendation.<sup>78</sup> F. W. Thompson, who had been a naturalised American citizen, changed his name to G. I. Mikulin and reverted back to Russian nationality in 1918. Later he became a Bolshevik worker while working as an Examiner on the staff of the Customs in Shantou.<sup>79</sup>

By virtue of their familiarity with the Chinese and English languages and social environment, those Russians who were recruited by Soviet agents in China used to act as intermediaries between the Russian Bolsheviks and potential Chinese revolutionaries, and hence sometimes accomplished more than the agents sent from the Soviet Russia, as we will see in the following chapters.

### **Section 3. Arrival of the Voitinsky Group and Other Emissaries in 1920**

1920 was a turning point in the history of Soviet Russia as well as in Sino-Soviet relations. The Bolshevik regime had survived the Civil War and foreign armed intervention. Regular traffic between Soviet Russia and China gradually resumed from the beginning of 1920.

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Shi de riji (The Diary of Hu Shi), (Beijing, 1985) p 198, p 203]. In his The Tinder Box of Asia, which was published in 1933, Sokolsky showed his sympathy for the Chinese revolution.

<sup>78</sup> Pankratoff later became a famous Sinologist and Tibetanologist. GLZDC, Vol 1, p 28; Hu Shi de riji, 4 July 1921.

<sup>79</sup> FO 228/3211, November 1920 and April 1921; FO 405/233, September 1921.

With regard to this situation, A. Kushnaryov and M. Sakhyanova, the leaders of the underground Far Eastern Regional Committee of the RCP(B) in Vladivostok, wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the RCP(B) in January 1920, explaining that they were planning to establish permanent relations with Chinese revolutionaries.<sup>80</sup> The following month, Vilensky, came to Vladivostok, assuming the leading position of the Vladivostok Committee of the Far Eastern Bureau (the Dal'buro) there and taking the responsibility for directing the RCP(B) and the Comintern's local organisations to undertake revolutionary work in China. At Vilensky's suggestion, the Bureau set up a Foreign Section at the beginning of 1920.<sup>81</sup> From then on, more agents were sent to China and many of them were dispatched directly from Siberia.

According to a secret telegram from the Chinese Cabinet to the Governors of Shanghai and Jiangsu province, Lenin's government had dispatched emissaries to Shanghai and a number of Bolsheviks had come to Jiangsu at the beginning of 1920. British intelligence agents later discovered that these Bolsheviks had established themselves in Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu province, in the early spring of 1920.<sup>82</sup> In February, a Bolshevik agent called Puglebesky reached Shanghai from Vladivostok with a large sum of money and five Chinese assistants.<sup>83</sup> The following month, a Russian Bolshevik representative reportedly came to Shanghai with one Chinese and two Koreans. The identity of the Russian is not known, but it is clear that he later made contact with General Potapov. The

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<sup>80</sup> Shevelyov, 'On the History of the Formation of the Communist Party of China', Far Eastern Affairs, (1981), No 1, p 129.

<sup>81</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 38, p 50.

<sup>82</sup> FO 228/2986, p 357.

<sup>83</sup> FO 405/233, No 107.

three Asians had been participants in the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of Peoples of the East in November 1919. The Chinese was Xia Qifeng, a journalist, who had gathered news at the Paris Peace Conference before he returned to China via Russia, where he attended the Congress as a Chinese labour representative.<sup>84</sup> In April, the Chinese Ministry of Internal Affairs informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that a Bolshevik named Di-Er-Na-Fu had brought a huge sum of money into China and was trying to stir up revolt among the Chinese troops. Possibly he was the same man as a certain N. E. Doienin who turned up in a British intelligence report.<sup>85</sup>

The arrival of Voitinsky's group in China is a well known affair. Many historians have already recognised the important role played by Voitinsky in the Chinese Communist movement. G. N. Voitinsky (alias Zarkhin) was born in 1893. As an emigrant, he had lived in the U.S.A. and Canada and had been a member of the American Socialist Party before he returned home. He joined the RCP(B) in Siberia in 1918 and was arrested and sentenced to hard labour in Sakhalin in the following year. After an uprising by the prisoners there, he went to Vladivostok, where he worked at the Foreign Section of the Vladivostok Committee of the Dal'buro. In April 1920, Voitinsky with two other members of the Section, Titov, a graduate from the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok, and Selebryakov, actually a Korean Communist named Kim, were sent by Vilensky to China; this mission had been previously approved by the leadership of the Comintern.<sup>86</sup> Kasanin reminisced

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<sup>84</sup> Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, p 14; Jean Chesneaux, Chinese Labour Movement, 1919-1927, (California: Stanford University Press, 1968), p 160.

<sup>85</sup> ZEGXSL, 1920, No 164; FO 405/233, No 107.

<sup>86</sup> GLZDC, p 48; Shevelyov, 'On the History of the Communist Party of China', The

that he had heard an interesting story about Voitinsky during his stay in Beijing in the early 1920s, namely that when Voitinsky was on a train approaching Harbin, the Chinese police, acting on the advice of an informer, boarded the train to seize the "Russian agent". Since it was too late to burn the documents and ciphers which he was carrying, Voitinsky locked himself in his compartment and swallowed all the papers. The Chinese police detained him as a suspect, but later had to release him because no evidence was found.<sup>87</sup> If this story is true, it means that Voitinsky had probably already tried and failed to reach China before his arrival in spring 1920.

Besides his assistants Titov and Selebryakov, Voitinsky came to China with his wife M. Kuznetsova and a Chinese interpreter Yang Mingzhai. Yang Mingzhai (original name Yang Haode) was born in Shandong province and moved to Siberia before World War I. After the Bolshevik Revolution he joined the RCP(B) and became the head of the Union of Chinese Residents in Vladivostok.

Some other agents who were dispatched to China during the spring and summer of 1920 also joined Voitinsky's team. One of these was K. A. Stoyanovich (alias Minor), who had worked for the Cheka before coming to China and could speak French. He left Harbin for Tianjin in the spring of 1920.<sup>88</sup> Sakhyanova, one of the leading members of the Far Eastern Regional Committee of the RCP(B) in

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Far Eastern Affairs, (1981), No 1, p 12.

<sup>87</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 224.

<sup>88</sup> VKNDK, Vol 1, Index. Stoyanovich subsequently became one of Borodin's co-workers. Holubnychy wrongly holds that Stoianovich is Eugene Pick, who became a defector in 1927. cf. Holubnychy, Michael Borodin and the Chinese Revolution, p 252; In fact, Eugene Pick in his book China in the Grip of the Reds, (Shanghai: North-China Daily News & Herald Ltd., 1927) did not mention this and only wrote that, "Five years ago, the USSR sent Stoianovich to Canton for the express purpose of persuading Dr. Sun Yat-sen to accept Borodin as adviser." See also in Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 142.

Vladivostok, also came to Beijing to work alongside Voitinsky for a short term.<sup>89</sup> Another member of the Foreign Section, I. K. Mamayev, who could speak Chinese, later participated in the work of Voitinsky's team.<sup>90</sup> L. A. Perlin also worked under Voitinsky's direction. According to Liang Bing-xuan, Perlin was a young American Communist.<sup>91</sup>

At the end of June 1920, Vilensky, the instigator of Voitinsky's mission, crossed the Sino-Russian border. Vilensky was born in Siberia in 1888. He began to engage in revolutionary activities in 1903 and became a Menshevik in 1912. After the February Revolution he was elected Chairman of the Yakutsk Central Executive Committee of Soviets. He soon joined the Bolsheviks and became a Commissar in the Siberian Council of People's Commissars. With the downfall of the Soviet Government in Siberia, he escaped to Moscow in April 1918, where he worked in the Soviet Government on Siberian and Far Eastern affairs and wrote for Izvestiia and became the commissar of the Military Academy of the Headquarters of General Staff of the Red Army. After taking part in the defeat of Kolchak, he headed the Soviet Government Mission for Foreign Affairs in Siberia.<sup>92</sup> Within the leading circle of Bolsheviks, Vilensky was apparently an important policy maker on Chinese affairs and it was he who drafted the Karakhan Manifesto to China in the

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<sup>89</sup> Huang Xiurong, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming guanxi shi p 58.

<sup>90</sup> Although Mamayev did not join Voitinsky's team from the beginning, he later worked with them. See 'Bao Huiseng's Recollection', Yida qianhou (The Period of the First Congress of the CCP), (Beijing: People's Press, 1981). In 1921, Mamayev became the head of the Chinese Section of the Comintern's Far Eastern Secretariat in Irkutsk.

<sup>91</sup> M. A. Persits, 'From the History of the Making of the Communist Party of China', Narody Azii Afriki (Peoples of Asia and Africa), [Henceforth NAA], (Moscow, 1971), No 4, p 49; Haiyu guke (Liang Bingxuan's penname), Jiefang bielu 'An Alternative Record of the Liberation', Ziyou ren (Free People), Hong Kong, 1951.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Whiting, Soviet Policies in China, p 290.

summer of 1919. Therefore, Vilensky's visit to China was undoubtedly an event of significance, although he asked the Chinese authorities' permission only to "investigate industrial and commercial conditions in China in a private capacity".<sup>93</sup> Until now, most Chinese historians have not paid sufficient attention either to Vilensky's visit to China or to the man himself. M. M. Abramson, the head of the Foreign Section of the Dal'buro, accompanied Vilensky as his Chinese interpreter.<sup>94</sup> When Vilensky, under the assumed name of Gusev, with Abramson tried to enter Kiakta, a town located on the Russian and Mongolian border, they were detained by the Chinese frontier guards. On their release, they joined Yurin's party, but managed to arrive in Beijing before the Yurin mission.<sup>95</sup>

Besides Voitinsky's and Vilensky's teams, other Bolshevik emissaries continued to be dispatched to China. Amongst others, the following examples were recorded in British archives.

In May 1920 a Bolshevik mission, comprising eight persons headed by Levitas, who was from Moscow, came to Kulja to negotiate a trade agreement with the Chinese authorities of Xinjiang. It was agreed that Soviet Russia could establish a political agency as well as a trade agency there. Before long, Limeref, Borchark and Kolikof, who were Soviet political agents, came to Kulja one after another.<sup>96</sup> In August 1920 a Bolshevik team was on its way to Xinjiang. The party consisted of

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<sup>93</sup> Telegram from Shao Hengrui, the Chinese Consul at Vladivostok, to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, 17 June 1920, ZEGXSL, 1920, p 50.

<sup>94</sup> Abramson (alias Mazurin) joined the RCP(B) in 1918. He became the head of the Chinese Department of the Section of the Eastern People under the Siberian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) and a secretary at the Foreign Ministry of the Far Eastern Republic from 1921. Cf. Holubnychy, Michael Borodin and the Chinese Revolution, p 134.

<sup>95</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 28.

<sup>96</sup> FO 405/233, 25 October 1921. Kolikof had been a consul in Afghanistan before he came to Xinjiang.



one Russian Bolshevik, two Tartarised Jews, a Cossack and an Indian with an escort of 20 men. With the party were three Muslim agitators, all of whom had been serving in the Comintern's Propaganda Department in Tashkent.<sup>97</sup> Later, a Bolshevik agent named Yusuf, who had been deported by the Indian Government, arrived in Kashgar.<sup>98</sup> Also, in September 1920, a Bolshevik agent named Karinof or Kernoff arrived in China. He could speak Mandarin and was in possession of a large quantity of funds. He travelled between Shanghai and Tianjin, and on his second visit to Shanghai was accompanied by delegates from the Chinese Communists in Russia.<sup>99</sup>

The above are only some of the numerous Soviet and the Comintern agents who arrived in China during 1920. According to a report of the Section of Eastern People of Siberian Bureau dated 21 December 1920, there were over ten Russian Bolsheviks who had had responsible positions working in China.<sup>100</sup> By the end of 1920, the Bolsheviks had scattered throughout many cities and regions, including Harbin, Manzhouli, Fengtian, Heihe, Mohe, Ili, Ining, Kashgar, Beijing, Qingdao, Yantai, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Wuhan, Zhangzhou, Shantou and Guangzhou.<sup>101</sup> Owing to limitations of space, it is impossible to give details on all of them, but several further cases will be introduced later in the course of this study.

#### **Section 4. Bolshevik Organisations and Centres in China**

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<sup>97</sup> FO 228/3216, Nos 27-28, (August 1920).

<sup>98</sup> FO 228/3216, No 38, 11 November 1920.

<sup>99</sup> FO 228/3211, November 1920; FO 228/3214, September 1920; FO 228/ 3216, No 40, 27 November 1920; FO 405/233, September 1921.

<sup>100</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 53.

<sup>101</sup> See source materials in ZEGXSL and FO archives.

There is much evidence to show that, from 1919 to the beginning of 1921, many Russian Bolshevik groups and organisations were set up and operating in China. In February 1919, a secret report received by the Beijing Government recorded that "the Russian Bolsheviks had established an organisation in Tianjin and were operating surreptitiously."<sup>102</sup> Another report claimed that around the summer of 1920 there was a central society of Russian Bolsheviks in Shanghai with branches in Beijing, Ningbo, Hankou, Shantou, etc.<sup>103</sup>

Alert to the existence of Bolshevik organisations, the Chinese military authorities issued an order on 19 February 1921 banning the organisations set up by Russian Bolsheviks and outlawing Bolshevik activities in China.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, these organisations could never be successfully prohibited, since most of them had gone underground.

Among the Bolshevik organisations in China there were some important bodies which served as the leading centres of the activities of the agents of Soviet Russia and the Comintern.

In order to direct the work in the East Asian countries more efficiently, the East Asian Secretariat of the Comintern was set up in Shanghai in May 1920 at Vilensky's suggestion. In some books on the Communist movements in the Far East, the Secretariat used to be denominated as the "Shanghai Bureau".<sup>105</sup> This

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<sup>102</sup> `Beijing Government to the Governor of Zhili, Cao Rui', February 1919; the document kept in the China Second Historical Archives in Nanjing; quoted from Lai Xinxia (ed.), Tianjin jindai shi (The Modern History of Tianjin), (Tianjin: Nankai University Press, 1987), p 278.

<sup>103</sup> ZEGXSL, 26 September 1920, p 241; FO 228/3216, No 27, 21 August 1920.

<sup>104</sup> Wang Yijun, Zhong Su Waijiao de Xumu, p 174.

<sup>105</sup> G. M. Beckmann and Okubo Genji, The Japanese Communist Party, 1922-1945,

Comintern provisional central institution was run by Voitinsky and was directed by a Bureau of three Russian Bolsheviks, including Vilensky.<sup>106</sup> After the establishment of the Section of the Eastern People under the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) in Irkutsk in August 1920, which later became the Far Eastern Secretariat of the ECCI in early 1921, the Shanghai Bureau became a subordinate body of it.

No later than 17 August 1920, the East Asian Secretariat's subsidiary sections - the Chinese Revolutionary Bureau and the Korean Revolutionary Bureau - were established. In making preparations for setting up the Japanese section, the Secretariat dispatched a Korean, Yi Ch'un-suk, in June 1920 to Tokyo to contact Japanese socialists and anarchists.<sup>107</sup> Besides the Russians, the Secretariat's staff included Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, an Indian and even an Englishman.<sup>108</sup>

The responsibility of the Secretariat was to conduct and finance the Chinese revolutionary movement and the equivalent Korean and Japanese movements, and

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(California: Stanford University Press, 1969), p 31; R. A. Scalapino, The Japanese Communist Movement, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p 17, p 72; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, p 13.

<sup>106</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 36.

<sup>107</sup> 'Voitinsky's Letter to the Eastern Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B), 17 August 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 31-33; Kim Chun-yop and Kim Ch'ang-sun, Hanguk Kongsan Chuui Undonsa, p 231; Beckmann and Genji, The Japanese Communist Party, p 30.

<sup>108</sup> John Pavlovich Clark was born in Moscow. In 1908 he went to Europe with his parents and in 1914 he became an British citizen. After the Russian Revolution he returned to Russia and joined the Bolshevik Party. He first served at the American Red Cross in Vladivostok, and lived on the false passport as Boris Gray. After the downfall of Kolchak, he became the secretary to the Far Eastern Committee of the RCP(B) and the Home Minister of the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia. Later he was invited to Moscow and soon was sent to Shanghai as the chief of the Military Revolutionary Council of Kamchatka. In 1921 the East Asian Secretariat dispatched him to Japan, where he was detained and then deported. Cf. 'The Immigration Section of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Foreign Minister, 2 December 1922', and 'The Japanese Consulate to the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs, 20 January 1922', in The Archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

to establish Communist parties in those Far Eastern countries. Being a major port-city in East Asia, Shanghai was the ideal centre for such operations.

Firstly, Shanghai was a city where the Chinese working class and radical intellectuals were concentrated, and the Chinese authorities' control over the place was relatively loose. Secondly, after the 1 March Uprising in Korea in 1919, several thousands of Korean nationalists took refuge in Shanghai and established a Korean Provisional Government there.<sup>109</sup> The Korean Socialist Party's headquarters also moved to Shanghai from Siberia and its chairman Yi Tunghui became the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government. So it was easy for the Secretariat to keep in close contact with the Korean Socialist Party as well as the Korean Provisional Government.<sup>110</sup> Thirdly, it was also convenient for the Secretariat to send agents to Japan and other Asian countries, for various shipping lines ran from Shanghai to different ports of these countries regularly. According to Maring's report to the ECCI in 1922, the time needed to travel from Shanghai to Japan was under 5 days; to the Philippines, 6-7 days; to Singapore, 10 days, and to Indonesia, 14 days.<sup>111</sup>

From Shanghai, the Secretariat also supported the revolutionary movements in some other Asian countries. Voitinsky and his assistants enlisted some Indians to the anti-British cause, asking them to provide news from India and criticisms of British rule in India, which the Russians sent on to Moscow.<sup>112</sup> A Russian

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. Nym Wales and Kim San, Song of Ariran, A Korean Communist in the Chinese Revolution, (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1941), p 112; Ku Daeyeol, Korea under Colonialism, p 95.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Suh Dae-sook, The Korea Communist Movement, 1918-1948; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea.

<sup>111</sup> GLZDZC, Vol 2, p 224.

<sup>112</sup> FO 405/228, No 160 (August 1920).

Bolshevik Kernoff declared at a meeting of Chinese Socialists that the Bolsheviks had sent two million rupees to the Indian revolutionaries and that he himself had met an Indian Communist in Bokhara. After a short stay in Shanghai, Kernoff left for Java to meet some prominent figures there. Other agents in Shanghai also contributed to the promotion of the revolution in India. One tried to start publication of a newspaper in Shanghai for Indians.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, Shanghai was regarded by the Comintern as the "centre of the Revolutionary work in the Far East".<sup>114</sup>

Before May 1920, the Bolsheviks' most important outlet in Shanghai was Shanghai Life, a Russian newspaper published for the Russian community. Its founder, G. Semesheko, was an ex-priest, who was later dismissed from a Russian newspaper for drunkenness. He then became a reporter for a socialist newspaper and was arrested by the Tsarist Government on a charge of sedition. Coming to China, Semesheko founded Shanghai Life in 1917, which, at first, was a small-scale paper with no Bolshevik connections. Sometime later he went back to Russia, returning to China in April 1919 with Khodorov, Klassing and Tolstoff, all of whom served Soviet Russia.<sup>115</sup> It was reported that Semesheko consulted Vilensky in Vladivostok in February 1920 and that the latter purchased Shanghai Life for \$ 5,000 and appointed Semesheko as editor-in-chief. From then on, Shanghai Life became a completely Bolshevik newspaper.<sup>116</sup> Even after Shanghai Life's Russian

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<sup>113</sup> FO 228/ 3214, September 1920; FO 228/3216, No 40.

<sup>114</sup> 'Riutin's Report to the Far Eastern Secretariat of ECCI to China, 6 April 1922', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 83.

<sup>115</sup> FO 405/233, No 107; FO 228/3214, 22 April 1920.

<sup>116</sup> The Shanghai Municipality once even consulted with the Russian Consul and attempted to expel Semesheko from China. Cf. Official Note from the Chinese Ministry of the Internal Affairs to the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, 28 April 1920; FO 228/3211,

financial support was withdrawn in October 1922 and used to set up an English language journal the New Russia, A Political and Economic Weekly, it continued publishing independently for a while and was still a pro-Soviet paper.<sup>117</sup>

There were about thirty staff on Shanghai Life between 1920 and 1921. Most of them were pro-Soviet Russian émigrés and some were sent from Soviet Russia directly. M. I. Baranovsky (Bernofsky) was a leading writer and editor, who began to write for Shanghai Life before the spring of 1920 and had close relations with the Bolshevik emissaries.<sup>118</sup> From 1922 Baranovsky became a secretary at the Publication Department of Narkomindel and between 1923 and 1928 he worked as an interpreter at the East Department of the ECCI.<sup>119</sup> N. K. Novitsky was also an important contributor, who was entrusted by Joffe in 1922 with the task of starting publication of the English paper, New Russia.<sup>120</sup> For a short period of time, Voitinsky was an editor and a correspondent for the newspaper.<sup>121</sup> Around August 1920, Shanghai Life was temporarily edited by Kaufman, who was the secretary of

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April 1921; ZEGXSL, 30 April 1920, No 164. According to an agent of the Red Army Intelligence Service in China in 1920s, one of the editors of Shanghai Life during the Great Chinese Revolution was Veprentseff, who had worked for the Soviet Government and came to China as a Comintern agent. See Pick, China in the Grip of the Reds, p 16.

<sup>117</sup> In Sneevliet Archive No 312, there are two receipts from Wilde, who received from Sneevliet, dated 5 December 1922: one of \$ 2,206-74 (Mexican dollars and cents) for the liquidating commission of Shanghai Life and one of \$ 1,500 for the journal "New Russia". Saich, OFUFC, Vol 1, p 348.

<sup>118</sup> FO 405/228, No 157.

<sup>119</sup> See Index of VKNDK, Vol 1. In the USSR Baranovsky published several articles about China, including: 'China's struggle to Annul Unequal Treaties', Morovoe Khoziaistvo i Mirovaia Politika, No 12, 1926, quoted from R. C. North, Moscow and Chinese Communists, (California: Stanford University Press, 1963), p 422; 'The Anglo-American Capitalists - Stranglers of the Taiping Rebellion', Voprosy Istorii, (1952), No 1, quoted from K. F. Shteppa, Russian Historians and the Soviet State, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1962).

<sup>120</sup> FO 405/233, September 1921; GLZDC, Vol 1, p 131.

<sup>121</sup> 'A Letter from Comrade Lingshuang', Gongyu (After Work), (Paris, April 1923), No 16.

the paper's office.<sup>122</sup> Popov was also taken onto the editorial staff of Shanghai Life during Kaufman's absence in Beijing.<sup>123</sup> One of the active workers on Shanghai Life and its financial controller was Goorman or Gurman, who later became a member of both the Joffe and Borodin missions.<sup>124</sup> The head of the Printing Department, Fiapkin or Tiapkin, was previously the controller of the Soviet Printing Press in Petrograd.<sup>125</sup> Other Soviet agents who worked on Shanghai Life were Lizerovitch, Khodorov, Agariev, Stopany, Orjeschko, Sinolinkof, Podhorsky, Doienin and Angarrosky.

The offices of Shanghai Life were located at No. 716, Xia Fei Road in the French Concession and Edward Road in the British Concession.<sup>126</sup> The staff of Shanghai Life were reported to hold frequent meetings. For example, on 28 September 1920, a secret meeting of about thirty Russians was held in the office of Shanghai Life, passing a resolution that the Chinese Government be petitioned to allow the Government of the Far Eastern Republic to appoint consuls in place of the

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<sup>122</sup> Between 1920 and 1921, Kaufman was a member of the delegation of the Far Eastern Republic to China. Between March 1921 and 1924, he first worked at the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern and afterwards at the Eastern Department of the ECCI. Cf. FO 228/3211, March 1920; FO 228/3216, No 27, 21 August 1920; VKNDK, Vol 1, Index. Kaufman published an article entitled 'Japanese Imperialism and Korea' in Novyi Vostok (New Orient), (Moscow, 1924), Vol 5.

<sup>123</sup> FO 228/3214, October 1920.

<sup>124</sup> FO 405/233, No 107; Wang Yijun, Zhong Su waijiao de xumu, p 338; Holubnychy, Michael Borodin and the Chinese Revolution, p 259. In Sneevliet Archives No 543. Goorman is described as an editor of Shanghai Life, and in March 1922 Sneevliet lived in his house in Shanghai. (Saich, OFUFC), p 248) In September 1922, when Geker (Joffe Mission's military Attache) and Sneevliet talked with Sun Yat-sen, Goorman was their interpreter. GLZDC, Vol 1, p 135.

<sup>125</sup> FO 405/233, No 107.

<sup>126</sup> 'Yuan Zhenying's Recollections', Ge Maochun, Jiang Jun and Li Xingzhi (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan (Selected Materials on Anarchist Thought), (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1984), p 976; From 1923, the Office of Shanghai Life located at No 1119 North District; cf. 'Shanghai Municipal Council Police Report', 19 January 1923', kept in the Shanghai Archives.

Tsarist representatives.<sup>127</sup> Sometimes the office sent emissaries to Vladivostok and Harbin and it was also frequently visited by Bolshevik agents from Vladivostok, Chita, Beijing, Tianjin and Guangzhou.<sup>128</sup> Many Bolshevik activities in southern China were related to Shanghai Life.

After the East Asian Secretariat was established, Shanghai Life engaged in propaganda under its direction and was sometimes used as a front to hide its activities. For example, when Voitinsky's team came to China, they all pretended to be journalists of Shanghai Life and Voitinsky's overt profession was editor of the paper.<sup>129</sup> An agent in Zhangzhou, Mikulin, did his work under instructions coming from Shanghai Life.<sup>130</sup>

Two other peripheral institutions around the East Asian Secretariat with specific functions were the Shanghai branches of the Centrosoyus (the Russian Central Union of Co-operative Stores) and of the Zakoubsbit (the Russian Co-operative Union).

They had close relations with each other and had different duties. The Centrosoyus mainly acted as a medium for financial transactions.<sup>131</sup> The Centrosoyus was the Soviet Government's Economic Bureau, and its agencies and representatives in Shanghai and later in Hankou were constantly in receipt of large sums of money from the Comintern, which they used to finance Soviet agents and

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<sup>127</sup> FO 228/3214, series of September 1920.

<sup>128</sup> FO 405/233, No 107, September 1921.

<sup>129</sup> Ye Yonglie, Zhonggong zhi Chu (The beginning of the CCP), (Hong Kong: Cosmos Book, 1991), p 119; 'A Letter from Comrade Lingshuang', Gongyu, (April, 1923), No 16.

<sup>130</sup> FO 228/3211, April 1921.

<sup>131</sup> FO 228/3214, April 1921.



the Communist movement in China.<sup>132</sup> The Zakoubsbit was often used by the Bolsheviks as a contact point. The above bodies were actually parts of the same organisation and were all Bolshevik institutions.<sup>133</sup>

The first manager of the Centrosoyus was I. P. Tarasoff, who was designated to receive funds from Moscow. In 1921 Tarasoff was relieved of his post and succeeded by M. A. Kossolapoff. Both of them were closely connected with the offices of Shanghai Life.<sup>134</sup> The police reports of Shanghai Public Settlement Municipal Council and Shanghai French Concession Municipal Council recorded that in January 1923, when Joffe arrived in Shanghai, he met several times with Kossolapoff, who was considered a "leading figure of the Bolshevik movement in Shanghai", and, on his suggestion, Joffe allocated large sums of money to Semesheko of Shanghai Life and other Soviet agents.<sup>135</sup> Gorigoriyev of the Centrosoyus undertook responsibility for transferring publications received from Moscow and Siberia to Voitinsky.<sup>136</sup> B. A. Vykhristof, the chief accountant of the Centrosoyus and assistant to Tarasoff, was concurrently president of the Russian Democratic Club, which was an open meeting place for Russian residents in Shanghai.<sup>137</sup> S. L. Wilde, who became the chief accountant of the Centrosoyus later, acted as a Comintern liaison man between Shanghai and Russia.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Pick, China in the Grip of the Red, p 25.

<sup>133</sup> FO 405/233, September 1921.

<sup>134</sup> 'Voitinsky's letter to the Section of the Eastern Peoples of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B), 17 August 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 35; In Index of VKNDK, Vol 1, Tarasoff is mistakenly identified as Voitinsky. FO 228/3214, April 1921; FO 405/233, No 107. Up to 1927, Tarasoff ran a boarding house in Shanghai to provide temporary accommodation for Soviet agents. Pick, China in the Grip of the Reds, p 11.

<sup>135</sup> These security reports are kept in the Shanghai Archives.

<sup>136</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 35.

<sup>137</sup> FO 405/233, September 1921.

<sup>138</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 83, p 361.

Besides Shanghai, Bolshevik liaison stations were set up in Tianjin,<sup>139</sup> Beijing and other cities too, and sometimes Soviet diplomatic bodies were also used for liaison.<sup>140</sup>

The Rosta and Dalta News Agencies were important Soviet institutions in China. "Rosta" is the abbreviation of Rossiiskoe Telegrafnoe Agentstvo (The Russian Telegraph Agency), and it was set up in September 1918 as the central information organ of the Soviet Government.<sup>141</sup> After the Far Eastern Republic was founded, it was considered more convenient to call it "Dalta" (The Far Eastern News Agency). The Rosta and Dalta News Agencies in China were actually one and the same, and their recognised Chinese names were Hua-E Tongxun She (the Sino-Russian News Agency) and Yuandong Tongxun She (the Far East News Agency).

Wang Ruofei, an early leader of the CCP, said in a report meeting in Yanan in 1943: "The Comintern sent its agents to China as early as 1919, and the first one was director of the Soviet Sino-Russian News Agency."<sup>142</sup> With regard to this, Professor Xiang Qing has firmly denied that there was a possibility that a Soviet News Agency existed in China prior to the Beijing Government's withdrawal of recognition for Kudashev's Legation as the official diplomatic mission of Russia on 23 September 1920, and also considered it as sheer nonsense that a head of such a news agency could be sent to China before 1920.<sup>143</sup> In contrast, some other Chinese

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<sup>139</sup> The Tianjin contact point's address was: Mr Leoff c/o Gershevitch, No 10b Woodrow Wilson Street, Tianjin. GLZDC, Vol 1, p 35;

<sup>140</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 84, p 361.

<sup>141</sup> Great Soviet Encyclopedia, Vol 22, p 294.

<sup>142</sup> Wang Ruofei, 'On the Chinese Communist Party during the Chinese Great Revolution', Jindaishi yanjiu, (1981), No 1.

<sup>143</sup> Xiang Qing, 'An Exploratory Study on the Issue of When the Comintern Started

historians attach importance to Wang's account, but they have been unable to substantiate it or to establish the identity of the person Wang referred to. In fact, in 1966, a Russian scholar V. N. Nikiforov ascertained that a Russian named A. E. Khodorov was in Beijing from 1919 and became director of Rosta's Beijing branch in that year.<sup>144</sup>

Khodorov had participated in the anti-Tsarist revolutionary movement while he was a student in the Law Faculty of Odessa University. After graduation he became a qualified barrister. Khodorov joined the Menshevik during the early months of the Russian Revolution, but soon converted to the Bolshevik cause. In 1917, he went to the front, and later moved on to Vladivostok where he edited a newspaper called Dalekaya Okraina (The Far Frontier).<sup>145</sup> Khodorov arrived in Shanghai in April 1919 and began working with Shanghai Life. Then he moved to Tianjin, where he was known as a correspondent of the "Comintern's News Agency".<sup>146</sup> It is possible that during his stay in Tianjin, Khodorov managed to set up the Rosta News Agency with headquarters in Beijing.

The establishment of the Rosta and Dalta News Agencies in Beijing was made known to the public by 7 June 1920, when The Beijing Daily News, the English-language newspaper of the Beijing Government, reported that "Mr. Khodorov, representative and correspondent of Rosta and Dalta News Agencies in

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Establishing Relations with the Chinese Revolution', Dangshi yanjiu ziliao (Sources on the Study of Party History), (Chengdu: Sichuan People's Press, 1981), No 3, p 127.

<sup>144</sup> V. N. Nikiforov, 'A. E. Khodorov' NAA, (1966), No 5, p 219; and in his later work SLOPK (pp 91-92), Nikiforov wrote definitely that "during 1919-1922, he [Khodorov] was the head of the branch of Rosta in Beijing."

<sup>145</sup> Nikiforov, 'A. E. Khodorov' NAA, (1966), No 5, p 219; Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 45.

<sup>146</sup> Li Lisan, 'Report on the History of the CCP', 1 February 1930, Zhonggong dangshi baogao xuanbian (Selected Reports on the History of the CCP), Henceforth abbreviated to ZDBX, (Beijing: the CCP's Central Academy Press, 1982), p 211.

China, has now established himself at 21 Chin Kiang Hutung, Peking." When the Yurin Mission came to Beijing, the Agency moved to Dehua Hutong.<sup>147</sup> The Rosta News Agency's Beijing branch was its Chinese headquarters and Khodorov was actually head of the Rosta-Dalta in China. The second head of Rosta's Beijing branch was Slepak, who had worked for the Comintern as Voitinsky's assistant.<sup>148</sup>

The news agency's equipment was installed in the legation quarter; it included a radio transmitter-receiver, which could relay news and secret messages to and from Moscow via Kiakhta and Chita.<sup>149</sup> Since Beijing was the political centre of China and the seat of diplomatic envoys to China, it was an ideal place for quick access to important information and news; in addition, the legation quarter was beyond the Chinese authorities' control, so that the location made it easier to conceal the Agencies' activities.

Rosta's staff in Beijing included Russians and Chinese. Two Russians named Kharnsky and Ilyashenko did compilation work. According to Kasanin, they were ex-Russian army officers, but "had thoroughly revised their views and wholeheartedly devoted themselves to revolutionary Russia and her destiny."<sup>150</sup> Prominent among the Chinese assistants were Huang Ping and Xue Hanyue. Huang had graduated from a secondary school attached to the YMCA and could speak

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<sup>147</sup> A newspaper cutting kept in FO 228/2987; secret reports in ZEGXSL, 1921.

<sup>148</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China, 1920-22', Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka, (1973), No 1; GLZDC, Vol 2, p 440, note 2.

<sup>149</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 46; FO 228/3216, No 22, 17 July 1920; Ernestine Evans's 'Looking East from Moscow' wrote that during her stay in Moscow, she saw a copy of the official wireless in the room reserved for foreign correspondents at Narkomindel. The directions for broadcasting, at the head of the message, read: '... Chita, Dalta, relay Khodorov, Peking'; Asia, (New York, December 1922) Vol 22, No 12, p 1020. It may be worth noting that the Chinese Foreign Ministry on 20 March 1920 protested against the wanton installation of radio station(s) in China by foreigners; see Guo Tingyi, Zhonghua minguo shishi rizhi, p 488.

<sup>150</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 85.

fluent English. He had worked for the Beijing Daily News and the Beijing Leader, two English-language newspapers before becoming a translator for the Rosta.<sup>151</sup> Xue Hanyue was an anarchist, who was very active during the May 4th Movement when he was a student at Nankai School in Tianjin. As an interpreter, Xue often accompanied Khodorov on visits to VIPs, and on Khodorov's recommendation, Xue became an advisor on foreign affairs to Wu Peifu in 1922.<sup>152</sup> After Xue's departure, some other Chinese joined the staff of the Rosta-Dalta, including Liu Renjing, Liang Naixian, Ruan Yongzhao and a person named Li.<sup>153</sup> The main tasks of the employees of the Rosta-Dalta were to translate items received from Soviet Russia or the Far Eastern Republic, and to prepare materials obtained from the Chinese and foreign press for transmission. Wu Nanru's recollections indicate that Polevoy's office in Tianjin also employed several Chinese youths, including Wu himself, to translate materials from Chinese newspapers and magazines into English.<sup>154</sup> It

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<sup>151</sup> In 1924 Huang joined the CCP and then went to study in Moscow. After returning to China, he worked for Borodin as a translator and in 1927 he became the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs of the Guangzhou Soviet. Later he went to Moscow as one of the representatives of the CCP to the Comintern in 1930. At the 5th and 6th Congresses of the CCP, he was selected as an alternate member of the Central Committee. In 1933 he was arrested and soon recanted. cf. Huang Ping, Wangshi huiyi (Recollections of Past Events) (Beijing: People's Press, 1981), p 3; and Zhongguo jinxindai renming dacidian (A Biographical Dictionary of Modern China), (Beijing: China International Broadcast Press, 1989), p 606.

<sup>152</sup> Wusi aiguo yundong dang'an ziliao (Archival Materials on the May 4th Patriotic Movement), (Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1979), p 655-7; Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 107; Huang Ping, Wangshi huiyi, p 3; Bai Jianwu riji (The Diary of Bai Jianwu), (compiled by Du Chunhe and Geng Laijin, published by Jiangsu Ancient Books Press), the Diary of 27 June 1922; GLZDC, Vol 1, p 196.

<sup>153</sup> Huang Ping, Wangshi huiyi, pp 3-4; Liu Renjing was a student of Beijing University and a member of the Society for the Study of Marxism there. In 1921, he attended the founding Congress of the CCP. According to Shi Cuntong, Run Yongzhao was also a member of the CCP, and at the end of 1922, he and Liu Renjing became members of the Central Committee of the Chinese Socialist Youth League. [Yida qianhou, Vol 2, 72]. Li was put to death by hanging with Li Dazhao in 1927.

<sup>154</sup> Hua Yang, 'The Deeds of Qu Qiubai and Zhang Tailei in Early Times - Wu Nanru's Reminiscences', Zhonggong yanjiu, July 1976, Vol 10, No 7; Wu Nanru was Zhang

seems that there was a Rosta branch located in Tianjin. Around this time another branch was set up in Harbin.

Before long, Rosta-Dalta extended into South China. Khodorov went to Shanghai again in April 1920, at the same time as Voitinsky's team also went there.<sup>155</sup> In the summer of 1920, a branch of Rosta, called "Hua-E tongxun she" (the China-Russia News Agency) was established in Shanghai and was nominally headed by Yang Mingzhai. Its main tasks were to collect and dispatch news about Chinese revolutionary movements to Soviet Russia and the Comintern.<sup>156</sup> In autumn of the same year, Stoyanovich (Minor) and Perlin, set up a branch of the Rosta News Agency in Guangzhou.<sup>157</sup>

According to an order of the Republic of the Far East, all correspondents of Rosta-Dalta in China could exercise the functions and duties of consuls, and perhaps this was the reason why Khodorov was sometimes regarded as a "semi-official delegate of the Russian Soviet Government".<sup>158</sup>

The Yurin mission, which arrived in Beijing in August 1920, was the first Bolshevik diplomatic delegation to China. This mission at first operated ostensibly as a trade delegation of the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia. In fact, as its secretary Kasanin admitted, it was virtually "the pioneer of Soviet diplomacy in China" and

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Tailei's classmate at Beiyang University in Tianjin and later became a member of the Socialist Youth League which was organized by Zhang.

<sup>155</sup> FO 228/3214, 22 April 1920.

<sup>156</sup> Li Xin and Chen Tiejian, Weida de kaiduan (The Great Beginning), (Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1983), p 33.

<sup>157</sup> The Recollections by Liu Shixin and Tan Zuyin in Yida qianhou, (Beijing, 1980), Vol 3.

<sup>158</sup> Shi Keqiang (Shevelyov's Chinese name), 'Sun Yat-sen and the Dalta News Agency', Sun Zhongshan he ta de shidai (Sun Yat-sen and His Era), (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1985), Vol 1, p 562; FO 228/3214, 22 April 1920.

"all that had been successful in the legation's work stemmed from that well-thought-out plan dictated by Chita, itself inspired by Moscow."<sup>159</sup>

Yurin's real name was G. Dzevaltovsky. He was a high-ranking officer of the Red Army after the October Revolution and then became the vice-Minister of the Defence Ministry of the Far Eastern Republic.<sup>160</sup> The delegation had a cipher-clerk named Mishar Guyanov, who came from the Defence Ministry. His duty was to communicate with Verkhneudinsk and later Chita for receiving instructions and reporting their work. Yurin's counsellor, Gromov, was a veteran Bolshevik, whom Yurin had to consult before making any decision. Together with P. Khretin and Kasanin, the secretaries and interpreters to Yurin, he frequently went to the Rosta News Agency to conduct publicity work. Once when Gromov came to Beijing from Fengtian (in Manchuria), he brought with him many documents and propaganda materials which were found and seized by the Chinese police.<sup>161</sup> Another old Bolshevik named E. Ozarnin was a member of the Legation but did not hold any definite post. He was later appointed Special Representative of the Far Eastern Republic in Manchuria and Consul-General in Harbin, where he was charged with directing and financing the Chinese revolutionary movement. Alexis F. Agariev, an envoy sent from the Temporary Government of the Maritime Province, later joined the Yurin legation as deputy representative and assumed Yurin's duties in his absence. By April 1920, Agariev was already in Shanghai and engaged in the work

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<sup>159</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 144. After the government of the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia moved out of Verkhne Udinsk, Chita became the new capital of the Republic.

<sup>160</sup> H. Norton, The Far Eastern Republic of Siberia, (London, 1923).

<sup>161</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 64, p 115; Wang Yijun, Zhong Su waijiao de xumu, p 319; GEGXSL, 1921, Nos 124-179, No 559.

of Shanghai Life and Rosta as well.<sup>162</sup> According to some accounts, Agarief, ex-mayor of Vladivostok, was a leading member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party in Siberia, but Soviet historians maintain that Agarief was a member of the RCP(B) when he was sent to China.<sup>163</sup> The delegate from the Amur River Region was an experienced Party worker, Yakovlev. The representative of the Russians in the CER area was Gorchakovsky. The Commercial Attache to the Yurin Legation, Tugashev, subsequently went to Shanghai. Another worker under Yurin, Apistain, was also deputed to Shanghai for propaganda work and connected with Shanghai Life.<sup>164</sup>

To conclude an agreement with the Beijing Government was not the sole purpose of the Yurin legation. It also shouldered the tasks of guiding the activities of the Bolshevik agents and promoting revolutionary movements in China. In July, Vilensky operated in Beijing under the cover of secretary to the Yurin Mission and convened a meeting of the Russian Bolsheviks in China.<sup>165</sup> Not long after the Yurin mission had settled in Beijing, they interfered in the work of the East Asian Secretariat and cut off its links with the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B), which brought complaints from the latter.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Norton, The Far Eastern Republic of Siberia, p 148; FO 228/2773, 14 December 1920; FO 405/233, p 438.

<sup>163</sup> Agarief was an old revolutionary. While a student, he had taught in revolutionary workers' circles. Later he lived in Australia as a political emigre until 1917 when he returned to Vladivostok. After he left China in 1921, he became one of the principal organisers of the Propaganda Bureau in Chita, and an advisor to the Foreign Ministry of the Far Eastern Republic. FO 228/3214, 22 April 1920; FO 228/3216, No 27; M. S. Kapitsa, 'Soviet-Chinese Relations during 1920-1921', translated by Huang Jilian in Jindaishi ziliao (Historical Materials on Modern History), (Beijing, February 1991), No 78; Wang Yijun, Zhong Su waijiao de xumu, p 184, p 209; FO 228/3140, p 76.

<sup>164</sup> FO 405/233, No 107; FO 228/3211, April 1921.

<sup>165</sup> 'Vilensky's Report to the ECCI, 1 September 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 41.

<sup>166</sup> 'The Report to the ECCI on the Issues of the Organisation and Work of the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of RCP(B), 21 December 1920',



Many important Soviet agents in China co-operated with the Yurin legation. Khodorov and Ivanov became Yurin's "right hand men" and "unofficial advisers".<sup>167</sup> In October 1920, Voitinsky, Kaufman and Lizerovitch were summoned to Beijing and held discussions with Yurin.<sup>168</sup> Bolshevik activities and agents from Moscow or Siberia also visited Yurin. For example, in September 1920, one of the important Bolshevik leaders in Siberia, D. Shilov, who was Commander of the Eastern Trans Baikal partisan force in 1920, with seven other Bolsheviks, came to stay at the Yurin legation and held several secret meetings with Yurin.<sup>169</sup> When the member of the ECCI of the Comintern, Pak Chinsen, returned to China at the end of 1920, he with Kim Rip, the vice-leader of the Korean Communist Party, visited Yurin in Beijing.<sup>170</sup>

The Yurin mission's activities were so conspicuous that the Beijing Government suspected that they were engaged in conspiracies with ulterior political motives.<sup>171</sup> A French missionary, who came to Beijing in September 1920 and met some of the staff of the Yurin legation, wrote: "the Bolsheviks are sparing no efforts. Their emissaries are well supplied with money and are working hard at their cause in every large town."<sup>172</sup> He might have exaggerated the case; however,

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GLZDC, Vol 1, p 54.

<sup>167</sup> FO 405/233, No 107; Kasanin, China in the Twenties.

<sup>168</sup> FO 228/3214, September 1920; FO 405/233, No 107.

<sup>169</sup> Erickson, The Soviet High Command, p 221; Zhang Zuolin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 September 1920, ZEGXSL, 1920, No 144; Kasanin, China in the Twenties, pp 91-92.

<sup>170</sup> Pak arrived in Beijing with his Russian wife in the end of 1920. Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, p 21; 'Note of the Police Chief of the Japanese Viceroy's Office in Korea to the Vice-Minister of the Japanese Foreign Office, 1922 - On the State of the Korean Communist Party in Shanghai', in Japanese Achieves.

<sup>171</sup> Wang Yijun, Zhong Su waijiao de xumu, p 197.

<sup>172</sup> Abel Bonnard, In China, 1920-1921, (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1926), pp 125-126.

his account can still give us a rough idea about the situation after the advent of the Yurin mission.

Although Soviet Russia's diplomatic legations were forbidden by the Bolshevik leaders to engage in revolutionary work publicly after the fall of 1921, Soviet Russia's diplomatic missions and legations in China still engaged in secret work to incite revolutionary movements. During the Great Chinese Revolution of 1924-27, the Soviet embassy became one of the headquarters directing the Revolution.

The Bolsheviks also established their intelligence services in China. As early as 1918, the Soviet Government planned to set up an intelligence bureau in China. Voznesensky declared in his letter that the Soviet Government "would send Popov and Podvoisky to found a secret intelligence bureau to learn what was doing [happening] in Shanghai and Peking."<sup>173</sup> In order to investigate and report on the situation and the possibilities for revolution in the Far East, Popov, who was also in charge of intelligence work, made frequent trips to China, Japan and Siberia. He visited China at least three times between 1918 and 1920, staying mainly in Shanghai, where he collected his correspondence at the office of Shanghai Life. Popov was a man of considerable resourcefulness and when in danger he took precautions to throw his pursuers off the scent.<sup>174</sup> He had some special co-workers, including Harowits and Fortunatoff.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> FO 228/3214, 16 May 1918.

<sup>174</sup> FO 228/3214, August, September, 1920.

<sup>175</sup> FO 405/233, 26 September 1921; Fortunatoff's main task was to collect information about the anti-communist activities of the White Russians and other foreigners in China. He once received funds from Joffe ('Police Report of the Municipality of the Public Settlement in Shanghai', 25 January 1923; kept in the Shanghai Archives); In 1925 Fortunatoff became the doctor of the Soviet Embassy in

General Potapov was an important Soviet secret agent abroad.<sup>176</sup> According to Kartzoff, a Lieutenant-General under Kolchak, Potapov had established agencies in Yokohama, Shanghai and Manila by the spring of 1920.<sup>177</sup> During his stay in the French Concession in Shanghai, Potapov was under surveillance by the French police and therefore rarely went out. But he received visitors almost every day and kept in contact with Moscow. In March 1920, when a Russian Bolshevik representative came to Shanghai with some Koreans and a Chinese, they got in touch with Potapov directly.<sup>178</sup>

The Rosta-Delta News Agencies also served as an intelligence agency, for one of their tasks was to collect and translate various items of information and news relating to China and some other countries from newspapers published in China and then transmit it to Moscow.<sup>179</sup> Sometimes, they also collected oral information. For example, Khodorov managed to approach Chinese officials, bankers, journalists and several important foreigners, including an advisor to the Beijing Government for

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Beijing. (VKNDK, Vol 1, Index)

<sup>176</sup> Liang Bingxuan once heard that General "V" (Potapov) had been a Tsarist general before the Revolution and therefore incurred the hatred of some revolutionaries in Russia. So Lenin, as his good friend, asked him to work abroad. [Haiyu guke, Jiefang bielu. Between 1922 and 27, under the arrangement of the Foreign Department of the GPU, he accompanied A. A. Iakushev (Soviet agent) to travel abroad as the emissaries of Trust (the ostensibly monarchist organisation, which was dreamed up by Dzerzhinsky) to establish liaisons with the overseas monarchist émigré underground organisations and "to deceive his old acquaintances and colleagues in exile." [V. Lehovich, White against Red, (New York, 1973), p 429] But according to VKNDK, Vol 1's Index, Potapov started to be engaged in teaching work from the end of 1920.

<sup>177</sup> FO 228/3211, May 1920.

<sup>178</sup> FO 228/3214, 18 March 1920; 8 April 1920; USDS, 893. 00/3376; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, p 14.

<sup>179</sup> Zhongguo Gongchandang dacidian (Dictionary of the CCP), (Beijing: China Broadcast and TV Press, 1991), p 561; Zhonggong yanjiu, Vol 10, No 7.

potential information.<sup>180</sup> Stoyanovitch on 29 September 1920 reported that the Rosta agency in Guangzhou branch was sending information to Russia.<sup>181</sup>

The intelligence personnel used to be planted at Soviet diplomatic legations and consulates. For example, Maring found that there were some agents of the Cheka working with Soviet diplomats in Beijing in 1921. E. Pick was appointed to the Shanghai Consulate as a secret agent for the GPU in 1924.<sup>182</sup> In a report to the Eastern Department of the ECCI dated 20 May 1922, Riutin suggested that agents who were engaged in liaison work should also collect intelligence.<sup>183</sup>

The Bolsheviks' intelligence services in China provided the Soviet Government and the Comintern with much useful information and helped them to make relevant decisions with regard to China.<sup>184</sup>

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Contrary to the prevailing view that hardly any Soviet agents were sent to China and hence "the Russian and Chinese revolutions were at the state of complete

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<sup>180</sup> Shi Keqiang, 'Sun Yat-sen and the Delta News Agency', Sun Zhongshan he ta de shidai, Vol 1, p 562; Kasanin, China in the Twenties p 61.

<sup>181</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 42-3. In 1923, Maring was appointed the head of the Rosta agency in Guangzhou. Although he did not accept the appointment, he saw the value in the agency's role in gathering information and asked Zhang Tailei to take over the work. Saich, OFUFC, Vol 1, P 167.

<sup>182</sup> H. R. Isaacs, 'Talks with Sneevliet', GLZDC, Vol 2, p 252; Pick, China in the Grip of the Reds, p 3. The Cheka was replaced by the GPU (OGPU) in 1922, which existed till 1926. Cf. S. Wolin & R. M. Slusser (eds.), The Soviet Secret Police, (London: Methuen & Co., 1957). In the above statements, Maring said that he saw the agents of the State Security Committee in 1921, and Pick claimed that he worked for the Cheka in 1924.

<sup>183</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 85.

<sup>184</sup> For example, Chapman believes it was the result of Popov's investigation that Soviet agents were sent from Russia in 1920 and organised the CCP. See his The Chinese Revolution p 45. Li Da recalled the dispatch of Voitinsky's team by the Comintern was based on information from Vladivostok. Yida qianhou Vol 2, p 6.

segregation" due to the blockage of the Sino-Russian border until spring 1920,<sup>185</sup> the foregoing delineation has clearly shown that no matter what obstacles and difficulties the Bolsheviks faced, nothing could prevent them from sending agents to China nor hinder them from trying to spread revolution to China. The Bolsheviks started to send their agents to China in the early months of 1918. From then on, a considerable number of agents arrived in China via different border areas and ports.

Those agents dispatched from Russia or recruited in China belonged to various central and local organisations, such as the RCP(B)'s Central and various local committees and its Federation of Foreign Communist Groups; the Comintern's Executive Committee, its subordinate bureaus in Irkutsk, Tashkent and Baku, and its auxiliary organisations including the Red Trade International and the Young Communist International; Soviet Government apparatuses, such as the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, the Commissariat of Nationalities Affairs and their relevant institutes in the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia; the Red Army, the Cheka and their local units. At an early stage, especially during the period of the Civil War, there used to be no unified planning for work in China among those organisations, and therefore their activities lacked co-ordination. Different organisations each sent their own agents for carrying out their respective tasks.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Xiang Qing, 'An Exploratory Study on the Issue That When the Comintern Started Establishing Relations with the Chinese Revolution', Dangshi yanjiu ziliao, (1981), No 3, pp 122-23.

<sup>186</sup> For example in a report to the ECCI (dated 21 December 1920), the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) complained that the Comintern had dispatched Pak Chinsen and Liu Shaozhou to China and that Narkomindel had allocated money and valuables to the Korean Socialist Party, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and Tibet without consulting with them. GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 56-7. Similarly, the Comintern agent Minor did not know that General Potapov had been in China as a Soviet representative. Haiyu guke, Jiefang bielü.

In spite of the fact that those agents came from different channels and different organisational systems which may not have been accountable each other, or even from organisations which were in conflict,<sup>187</sup> once in China, most of them joined hands together, trying to achieve a common objective.

Some agents worked for several organisations and held different posts concurrently. For instance, Voitinsky worked for the East Asian Secretariat of the Comintern, Rosta and Shanghai Life; Khodorov worked for the Rosta, Shanghai Life and the Yurin Legation. Many agents concealed their true identities with the overt professions of journalists, teachers, businessmen and tailors.

It seems inconceivable that some agents were not pure Bolsheviks. In fact, since there were not enough Bolsheviks who could speak Chinese or English and who could be sent to China, Soviet Russia and the Comintern did not stick to one pattern when choosing agents to send to China or recruiting agents in China. Among these agents, Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, anarchists, ex-POWs, radical Muslims, the former diplomats of the Provisional Government, clerks of the Russo-Asiatic Bank and the Chinese Customs, even ex-Tsar army officers were enlisted, whatever their beliefs and status, so long as they were willing to serve Soviet Russia or their motherland. Some scholars are inclined to infer that an "ex-tsarist officer" or a "white Russian" could not become a "Soviet representative" or a "Comintern agent".<sup>188</sup> They seem not to have considered the complexities of human nature and specific historical terms: the fluidity of political allegiances which is

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<sup>187</sup> For instance, the Dal'buro of the RCP(B) headed by Krasnoschekov in Chita and the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern headed by Shumiasky in Irkutsk were in conflict. Cf. 'Maring's Report to the ECCI', 11 July 1922', GLZDC, Vol 2, p 229.

<sup>188</sup> See Xiao Lin's article 'The Motive and Effects of Lenin's Letter to Chen Jiongming', Fujian dangshi yuekan (The History of the CCP in Fujian, Monthly), (1990), No 12] and Ye Yonglie's book Zhonggong zhi Chu, p 121.

perhaps especially great at a turning point of changing regimes. A metaphysical mode of thinking has blinded these scholars to the historical facts that were not at all "either this or that" or "either red or white".

Those agents who arrived in China or who were recruited before 1920 were active in China at a remarkably early stage and their endeavours paved the way for the operations of the Voitinsky team. Certainly the Voitinsky team strengthened the influence of Bolshevism and hence advanced the cause of revolution in China. But it is beyond doubt that Voitinsky's arrival was not the starting point of the activities of Soviet Russia and the Comintern in China. Clearly such activities were well underway before that.

As has been already indicated, the Soviet and Comintern agents in China were well-organised and there were several institutions around a few leading centres. Although these organisations belonged to different networks, each with its own particular duty, nearly all of them were linked together and co-ordinated their activities and sometimes even shared a common pool of staff.

The circumstances of Bolshevik agents in China at this early stage which I have described above may appear unimaginable, but are nevertheless based on factual records and accounts. These agents played a significant role in the rise of the Communist movement in China.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH THE CHINESE

Making contact with the Chinese was one of the tasks of many of Soviet Russia's and Comintern agents who came into China during the period in question. The actual contact usually happened immediately after these agents' arrival. In the summer of 1919, the Politburo of the RCP(B) gave instructions that the Bolsheviks should establish firm ties with revolutionary organisations in the Far Eastern countries.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, making contact with Chinese, Japanese and Koreans became a pressing matter for the Bolsheviks in the Far East, and more agents were dispatched to China for this purpose. Without question such contacts took place at an early stage, and it was not the case that "the progressive elements in China were not able to make contact with the Russian Revolution and the Comintern until Soviet Russia smashed the Allied armed intervention in 1920."<sup>2</sup> The main questions which merit further research here are what kinds of people the agents got in touch with and for what purposes.

In the past, many Chinese historians focused their attention on the contacts with Chinese Marxists. In fact, there was hardly any one who could be called a Marxist in China when the initial contacts were made. What we can see in a large number of original records is that the scope of the contacts was wide-ranging. It was not limited only to the so-called progressive elements, who later became the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Vilensky's Report to the ECCI, 1 September 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 39.

<sup>2</sup> Xue Xiantian and Li Yuzhen, 'The Communist Organizations of the Chinese Residents in Russia and Some Issues concerning the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Jiandaishi Yanjiu, (1989), No 5, p 152.



Chinese Communist leaders, but also included persons belonging to other parties and organisations, which held different political stands, and various circles. As Zhou Enlai remarked in his report on “the Comintern and the Chinese Communist Party”:

No sooner had the Comintern been founded in March 1919 than it began to send its delegates to various countries to visit prominent personages and to do work. In China they did not only meet Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, but also Jiang Kanghu, Huang Jiemin and Dai Jitao. In the North they visited Wu Peifu and in the South they visited Sun Yatsen.<sup>3</sup>

The Chinese Zhou referred to above can be classified as radical democrats, socialists, anarchists and nationalists by their beliefs and teachers, journalists, politicians and warlords by their professions. Such contacts reflected the Bolsheviks’ deliberate tactics. Since China was dominated by several imperialist powers, the Bolsheviks tried firstly to attract as many forces as possible who might be willing to join hands with Soviet Russia against the other foreign powers regardless of their social position or political beliefs. As Japan was Soviet Russia’s main threat in the Far East, the Bolshevik agents were entrusted with the task of entering into contact with all the forces that could help the Bolsheviks in their struggle against Japan. The Comintern leader Radek even declared that “In China, whoever is against Japanese imperialism is fighting for the Chinese revolutionary development.”<sup>4</sup> This meant that in China whoever was against the Japanese and

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<sup>3</sup> Zhou Enlai xuanji (Selected Works of Zhou Enlai), (Beijing: People’s Press, 1980), Vol 2, p 303.

<sup>4</sup> Gongchan guoji youguan Zhongguo geming de wenxian ziliao (Documentary Sources of the Comintern on the Chinese Revolution), (Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1981), p 63.

other imperialist powers could be counted among Soviet Russia's friends for that period of time. In addition, the Bolsheviks tried to seek some individuals who could become their faithful followers to conduct Communist revolution and to serve Soviet Russia's interests.

### **Section 1. Contact with Radical Intellectuals**

In the first place, the objects of examination will be some of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party. It may be interesting to see how they were approached by Soviet and Comintern agents and how they became Communist leaders.

Li Dazhao is known as the first person in China to have advocated Bolshevism and Marxism. However, Li's original political stance was not radical. Li Dazhao opposed any revolution which aimed to overthrow existing governments. What he appreciated was evolutionism, nationalism, reformism and compromise. Towards the end of 1912, he joined Jiang Kanghu's "Chinese Socialist Party",<sup>5</sup> which stood for moderate social reform. From 1913 to 1916 Li studied law in Japan where he was influenced by the Western ideas of liberal democracy and where he edited a magazine Minyi (National Spirit). After returning to China Li Dazhao became a close friend of Tang Hualong and Sun Hongyi, the leaders of the Chinese Progressive Party, a party which mainly consisted of the persons who had advocated constitutional monarchy during the last years of the Qing dynasty. Later, Li also

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lü Mingzhuo, Li Dazhao sixiang yanjiu (The Studies of Li Dazhao's Thoughts), (Shijiazhuang: Hebei People's Press, 1983), pp 96-115; Liu Minshan, 'Li Dazhao and Tianjin', Tianjin wenshi ziliao xuanji (Cultural and Historical Material on Tianjin), No 40.

attended the founding meeting of the Society for Constitutional Research, which was organised by several leaders of the Progressive Party, and was widely known as “the Research Clique”. While he edited the magazine Jiayun (Tiger), Chenzhong (Morning Bell) and Xin Qingnian (New Youth), Li’s articles written before the fall of 1918 showed no sign of interest in Marxism.<sup>6</sup> In January 1918, Li assumed the post of director of the Library of Beijing University and afterwards his views changed.

In the autumn of 1918, Li Dazhao published “The Victory of the Common People” and “The Victory of Bolshevism” in which he eulogised the Russian October Revolution with immense zeal. This has puzzled many of the historians who have engaged in research on Li Dazhao and the CCP. They have suggested various explanations. B. Schwartz believes that Li Dazhao’s vision of a “global rebirth” and his interest in a “universal solution” induced him to accept the messianic message of Lenin.<sup>7</sup> M. Meisner thinks that Li’s “historical image of century-long revolution waves was a prominent feature of his response to the Bolshevik Revolution.”<sup>8</sup> And Dirlik asserts that “a prior exposure to anarchism may have contributed to Li’s response to the Russian Revolution in 1918.”<sup>9</sup> Perhaps these scholars have neglected some important source material. Li Dazhao’s

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<sup>6</sup> In the past Li Dazhao was said to have learned Marxism from Kawakami Hajime in Japan. But actually Kawakami was in Europe while Li was studying in Japan. And Kawakami was not even a Marxist then. (Yang Kuisong: ‘Li Dazhao and Kawakami Hajim’, Dangshi yanjiu (Studies of the CCP’s History), (Beijing, 1985), No 2. Li Dazhao told a Japanese teacher in 1918 that he had met the Japanese socialist Abe Iso in Tokyo and had been influenced by his ideas. Abe was even farther away from Marxism. (Jin Anping, ‘The Chinese Student in Japan in Modern Times and the Early Communist Movement in China’ Jindaishi yanjiu), 1990, No 2.

<sup>7</sup> B. I. Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp 12-15, 18-19, 21-22.

<sup>8</sup> M. Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p 61.

<sup>9</sup> A. Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 26.

intimate friend, Gao Yihan,<sup>10</sup> gave the reason for Li Dazhao's sudden change in ideas as follows:

1918 was a year of crucial importance in the course of Shou Chang's (Li Dazhao's original first name) conversion to Marxism. ... News about the Russian October Revolution of 1917 had continually spread into China, and Shou Chang got to know a Russian diplomat. ... This deepened Shou Chang's understanding of Marxism and the October Revolution. It was in November of this year that he wrote the article to laud the victory of the Bolsheviks.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to Gao's memoir, even though it provides us with the very important information that Li Dazhao was acquainted with a Russian diplomat not long after the October Revolution. The question then arises: who was this Russian diplomat Li was in contact with?

As we have seen, before August 1920 there existed only the old Russian diplomatic legation headed by Prince Kudashev. So the Russian diplomat whom Li Dazhao met in 1918 or thereabouts must have belonged to the Kudashev Mission. In Chapter 1 I mentioned a Russian called A. A. Ivanov, the only one at the Legation who identified with the Soviet regime and who afterwards became the sole Soviet representative there. Even after being expelled from the Legation, he still continued working for the Soviet Government. Ivanov was probably the person who contacted Li Dazhao in 1918, because Ivanov's dwelling place was rather near to the Library of Beijing University, and Li had showed an interest in Russian

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<sup>10</sup> Gao Yihan got to know Li Dazhao in Japan where they edited a magazine. After returning to China they still edited several magazines together. Later, both became professors at Beijing University. Therefore, Gao was very familiar with Li's career.

<sup>11</sup> Gao Yihan, 'Memories of Li Dazhao during the May 4th Period', Wusi yundong huiyilu (Memories of May Forth Movement), (Beijing, 1959) pp 339-342.

affairs.<sup>12</sup> As an anarcho-syndicalist, Ivanov might also have conveyed his anarchist beliefs to Li during their talks. Perhaps this was the reason why in his famous article “The Victory of Bolshevism” Li Dazhao displayed anarchist tendencies: Bolshevism is the ideology of the Russian Bolsheviks. What kind of ideology is it? ... There will be no congress, no parliament, no president, no prime minister, no cabinet, no legislature and no ruler. There will be only the joint soviets of labourers, which will decide all matters. All enterprises will belong to those who work therein.<sup>13</sup>

Later, even after he had declared himself a Marxist, Li Dazhao still advocated Kropotkin’s theory of “mutual aid”, syndicalist “direct action”, the Russian populists’ “going among the people” and Tolstoy’s Pan-labourism, which might have been influenced by certain Russians including Ivanov.

In addition, we have further evidence from an old member of the CCP, Lin Boqu, which confirms that Li Dazhao disseminated ideas and booklets from Soviet Russia: “Around March or April 1918 I received several letters from Li Dazhao one after another. He introduced the Russian October Revolution to me and enclosed some pamphlets and documents.”<sup>14</sup> These publicity materials could not come from anyone but Soviet Russian agents.

In summer 1919, Ivanov became a lecturer at Beijing University, the most famous University in China. This provided ample opportunities for him to contact

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<sup>12</sup> The Library of the Beijing University was located at Shatan, Dongsi, near Ivanov's home in Yanyue hutong, Dongsi; both were in the East District of Beijing. Li Dazhao had already written articles to introduce the Russian February Revolution.

<sup>13</sup> Xin qingnian, Beijing, November 1918, Vol 5, No 5.

<sup>14</sup> Lin Boqu's talk with Wang Laidi in October 1956, quoted by Wang Laidi in her article ‘Some Questions on the Early Organization of the CCP’, Zhejiang xuekan (The Academic Journal of Zhejiang University), (Hangzhou, 1981) No 3.

Chinese intellectuals. In the following years, Ivanov was reported to be “in touch with some of the Chinese interested in Bolshevism.”<sup>15</sup>

Ivanov’s friend Polevoy, a liaison man for the Comintern, also had close relations with Li Dazhao. Polevoy was a lecturer at the Beijing Russian Language Institute in 1918 and later he took up a post teaching Russian at Beijing University on the recommendation of Li Dazhao. At first he only taught several hours each week at the University, but from January 1921 he became a formal lecturer there.<sup>16</sup> Zhang Guotao, a student at Beijing University then recalled that Polevoy “had frequent contacts with Mr. Li Dazhao”.<sup>17</sup>

The historian Jin Yufu, in his article “Li Dazhao and the May 4th Movement”, writes:

Soon after Li Dazhao became the Director of the Library of Beijing University, he began to have dealings with Soviet Russia’s personnel in Beijing. After the Russian October Revolution, Soviet Russia often sent working personnel to Beijing to make contact with progressive Chinese people. At first there were two Russians who frequently met with Mr. [Li] Dazhao. [They] often visited the Library of Beijing University.<sup>18</sup>

Unsure as to who the two Russians were, Jin Yufu believes that they might have been Voitinsky and Polevoy. Jin was an old professor at Beijing University and before writing the article in question in 1950 he made inquiries

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<sup>15</sup> FO 228/3216, No 41, 4 December 1920.

<sup>16</sup> Huang Xiurong, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming guanxi shi, p 58; ‘The List of the Foreign Employees of the Beijing University’, Dangshi tongxun (The Bulletin of the History of the CCP), (Beijing, 1983), No 19.

<sup>17</sup> Zhang Guotao, ‘My Recollections’, Yida qianhou, Vol 2, pp 128-29.

<sup>18</sup> Wusi yundong huiyilu (Collected Reminiscences of the May 4th Movement), (Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1979), Vol 1, pp 349-360.

among several members of Beijing University's staff who had had close relations with Li Dazhao, such as Zhang Shizhao, Zhang Shenfu, Zhu Shangrui and Wang Xiying. It is possible that one or more of Jin's informants had seen two Russians entering Li's office but did not know who they were. Nevertheless, in the light of our present knowledge it is likely that the two Russians were Ivanov and Polevoy, since both were in Beijing in 1918 and later taught at Beijing University, therefore they could have frequently entered the University Library without arousing suspicion, while Voitinsky could not have appeared at the library until 1920. Most people only knew that Li had relations with Polevoy and did not mention Ivanov. The reason may be that Polevoy used the cover of being a "White Russian," whereas Ivanov's political status had already been exposed. Therefore, Polevoy was in a better position than Ivanov to engage in open activities in Beijing and to get in touch with Chinese people. In spring 1920, when Voitinsky's team arrived in Beijing, Ivanov and Polevoy immediately introduced them to Li Dazhao and his followers.<sup>19</sup> This confirms that both Ivanov and Polevoy already had close connections with Li Dazhao and also knew his political stance very well.

Soon after Burtman and other Bolsheviks came to Tianjin on commission from the Harbin Committee of the RCP(B) in the early summer of 1919, they started making contact with Chinese intellectuals, including Li Dazhao. Several months later, when Müller came to assist Burtman, he found that "Burtman, even before my arrival, had fairly wide ties with progressive Chinese students from the

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<sup>19</sup> Dalin, Zhongguo huiyilu, 1921-1927 (China Memories, 1921-1927), (Beijing, 1981).

higher educational institutions and colleges in Tianjin and Beijing, and personally with Professor Li Ta-chao, whom Burtman spoke of as an excellent Marxist ...”<sup>20</sup>

There are also some other records about Li Dazhao’s connection with the Bolsheviks. One of the early leaders of the CCP, Peng Shuzhi, in his old age reminisced about what Li Dazhao had told him during their stay in Moscow in 1924:

At the end of 1919, a Russian named Hohonovky, who was a member of the RCP(B), on the recommendation of Polevoy, came to Beijing University to visit me. At our first meeting he said: ‘How do you do, Comrade Li Dazhao.’ Before the guest told me the purpose of his visit, I declared: ‘I am still not qualified to be called your comrade.’ But the guest answered quickly: ‘We know that you are a Marxist, since you have written a lot of articles to introduce Marxism and to praise Bolshevism, so you have already become our comrade.’

About Hohonovky, Peng Shuzhi added the following note: “Hohonovky was born in Harbin and could speak Chinese fluently. He understood the situation after the May 4th Movement, and was therefore sent by the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern to China. Later this man became a professor in the Chinese class of the Communist University for the Toilers of the East. When Li Dazhao attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Comintern in Moscow in 1924, he met the man again by chance.”<sup>21</sup> This man, according to Qin Baopu, who studied at the Communist University for the Toilers of the East in 1921-1922, was dean of the Far East Department of the University.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Müller, Plameni Revoliutsii, 1917-1920; quoted from Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, p 105.

<sup>21</sup> Peng Shuzhi, ‘How the First Communist Group Take Form?’ Peng Shuzhi xuanji, Vol 1, pp 48-9.

<sup>22</sup> Qin Baopu called this man “Hoholofukin”. See Qin’s ‘Travels in Red Russia’, Chen



Zhang Zhi's recollections reveal that, together with some other Chinese, Li Dazhao visited a Soviet Russian representative at the No.1 special district of Tianjin on the occasion when Li escorted Chen Duxiu to Shanghai via Tianjin. The meeting lasted over one hour.<sup>23</sup> Some Chinese historians assert that the Russian whom Li Dazhao met was Burtman. But according to Kasanin, Burtman left for Siberia in January 1920,<sup>24</sup> while Chen went to Shanghai the following month. However, it seems more likely that this man could have been Khodorov, who was living in Tianjin during that time and was widely regarded as a "semi-official delegate of the Russian Soviet Government".<sup>25</sup> Hence it is quite possible that the "Soviet Russian representative" whom Li and others met in Tianjin was Khodorov.

In the light of this albeit sketchy information, we can see that at least five Soviet or Comintern agents had dealings with Li Dazhao prior to Voitinsky's arrival. Their contacts with Li Dazhao should not be seen simply as chance affairs or personal initiatives, and they were probably approved by Moscow. There can be no doubt that these contacts exerted influence on Li's thinking and on his subsequent actions, particularly with regard to his activity in organising the CCP.

Before becoming the first top leader of the CCP, Chen Duxiu had been an active revolutionary for a long time. During his studies in Japan Chen joined such revolutionary organisations as Qingnian hui (the Youth Society) and Yue wang hui (the Warrior Yue Society). He also organised a number of societies in China after his return in 1903. He took part in the Revolution of 1911 and afterwards became

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bao (Morning Post), 27 August 1924.

<sup>23</sup> Zhang Jingru, Zhongguo gongchandang de chuangli (The Founding of the CCP), (Shijiazhuang: Hebei People's Press, 1981) p 121.

<sup>24</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties.

<sup>25</sup> FO 228/3214, 22 April 1920.

the head of the Anhui Provincial Secretariat.<sup>26</sup> Later he felt that the new Republic existed only in name and insisted that if political changes stood any chance of success, Chinese traditional thought, culture and customs should be rejected. Therefore Chen started publication of a journal Qingnian zazhi (Youth Magazine) in 1915, whose name was changed to Xin qingnian (New Youth) with the French title “La Jeunesse” one year later. In 1917 Chen was invited by Cai Yuanpei, Chancellor of Beijing University, to become dean of the Faculty of Literature at the University. The editorial office of the magazine moved with him to Beijing.

As an iconoclast, Chen Duxiu severely attacked almost all Chinese national heritage, especially Confucianism. He claimed in his famous article published in September 1915 “Call to Youth”: “Now our country still has not awakened from its long dream, and isolates itself by going down the old rut. ... All our traditional ethics, law, scholarship, rites and custom are survivals of feudalism.” These “poisonous germs” were destroying China. While attacking the “old and rotten” Chinese traditions, Chen introduced the “fresh and vital” Western ideas of “Democracy and Science” to the Chinese people.<sup>27</sup> In Chen’s opinion, the most powerful weapon in the arsenal of change was the cultural weapon. In this way a New Cultural Movement was launched in China, with Xin qingnian as its main focus and Chen Duxiu as its initiator and standard-bearer.

Since Chen Duxiu was seen as a trail-blazer among the progressive intellectuals, it was natural that he would attract the attention of Soviet agents. Although the relevant historical records are scarce, one can still unearth evidence of

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<sup>26</sup> Wang Guangyuan, Chen Duxiu nianbiao (A Chronicle of Chen Duxiu's Life), (Chongqing: Chongqing Press, 1987).

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from the English translation in Vera Simone, China in Revolution, (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1968), pp 128-34.

this. In April 1927, the warlord Zhang Zuolin's troops seized many documents from the Soviet Union's embassy in Beijing and among them there was A Brief History of the CCP. This booklet was written by a Russian, but a Japanese historian Otsuka Reizo believed that Li Dazhao was credited with drafting the preliminary text as a report to the Comintern.<sup>28</sup> Anyway the Brief History is actually a most reliable and valuable first-hand historical source on the early history of the CCP. In this book we read that "in 1918 Chen was the only person who was engaged in Communist work."<sup>29</sup> At first glance, this account of Chen's activity seems patently wrong because he was not even a believer in Communism at the time. Hence, in a strict sense, it is not possible that Chen was engaged in Communist work in 1918. However, what the writer of the above had in mind was probably something different. It is likely that Chen was involved in some work assigned by Soviet agents such as Ivanov and Polevoy, either in person or through his intimate friend and colleague Li Dazhao. At first Chen might not even have been aware of what he was doing, whereas Li was fully conscious of what he was engaged in.

Chen Duxiu not only joined the Marxist Research Society organised by Li Dazhao but also became one of the editors of Meizhou pinglun from the fall of 1918. In June 1919 Chen was arrested for distributing leaflets with Gao Yihan and Deng Chu in Beijing. Some sources say that the real reason for his arrest was that

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<sup>28</sup> This book is normally credited to the Russians Kisselev or Frunse. According to the research of V. Nikiforov, the book was written by Navmov, a Russian advisor in Huangpu Military Academy during 1926-27, based entirely on the source materials offered by the Chinese Communists. See his 'The Chinese Labour Movement and the Birth of the CCP', Problemy Sovet Istoriya, (1982), No 1, translated into Chinese by Lin Yincheng, in Gongchanguoji yu Zhongguo geming - Sulian xuezhe lunwen xuanyi, p 293. Otsuka Reizo, Shina Kyosanto Shi (The History of the Communist Party in China), (Tokyo, 1940), Part 1, p 8.

<sup>29</sup> 'A Brief History of the CCP', in Wilbur and How (eds.), DCNSAC, p 48.

he was involved in the production of Bolshevik literature.<sup>30</sup> This is not entirely far-fetched because the “Declaration to Beijing Citizens” he was distributing went beyond the most radical demands made by students during the May 4th Movement and some of its expressions were similar to those used by the Bolsheviks. For example, in the “Declaration” the following two demands were made among others: “3. To abolish the Headquarters of the Army and Headquarters of the Police in Beijing; 4. The defence force in Beijing to be replaced by organisation of the citizens;”<sup>31</sup> which is quite similar to some slogans in Lenin’s April Theses: “Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy. ... The standing army to be replaced by the arming of the whole people.”<sup>32</sup> Of course, these are also Marxist principles, but at that time Chen knew nothing about Marxism. Where he obtained these ideas is questionable. As further background to Chen’s arrest, at the same time as he was circulating the “Declaration”, the Beijing Police Department found another “extremist” (Bolshevik) leaflet entitled “The Declaration of the Representative Organisation in the East”.<sup>33</sup>

According to Hu Shi, a Soviet representative came to Beijing and invited Hu Shi to discuss matters relating to the establishment of a Communist party in China. Since Hu had something else to do and could not go to meet this representative on the appointed day, Chen Duxiu had a chance to talk with him and later became the leader of the CCP.<sup>34</sup> It is not clear if this was Chen’s first contact with the

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<sup>30</sup> FO 228/3214, 17 July 1919.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Materials on Chen Duxiu’s Arrest’, Beijing dang’an shiliao (Archival Materials on Beijing’s History), (Beijing, 1986) No 1.

<sup>32</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 24, p 23.

<sup>33</sup> Note from the Office of the Beijing Police Department, 1919, No 39; Shi bao (Shanghai Times), 1 July 1919.

<sup>34</sup> Luo Ergang, ‘Some Facts about Hu Shi’, Yan Zhenwu (ed.), Hu Shi yanjiu conglu

Bolshevik agents, however, it probably happened between the fall of 1919 and the beginning of 1920. In early 1920 Chen met a correspondent of the Comintern's News Agency in Tianjin when Chen went there to give a lecture to students.<sup>35</sup> These two contacts must have taken place before Chen's departure to Shanghai.

On his arrival in Shanghai in February 1920 Chen Duxiu at once got in touch with some Chinese who had relations with the Bolsheviks there, such as Li Hanjun, Zhang Mochi and Huang Jiemin. On 2 March Chen delivered a speech at a meeting of the Ship and Godown Workers' Union, with which a Soviet agent Stopany had already established firm relations.<sup>36</sup> After Voitinsky's team came to Shanghai, they approached Chen immediately. Afterwards Chen kept in close contact with the Bolshevik agents in Shanghai. The British Intelligence Reports showed that, Chen Duxiu had "a number of doubtful Russian friends and among others the staff of Shanghai Life"; and he was in "close touch with the Bolshevik agents and particularly with Lizerovitch."<sup>37</sup> Many scholars considered that the period from the spring to the summer of 1920 marked a decisive turning point in Chen's political life - an important stage in Chen's conversion to Marxism. What is beyond doubt is that this conversion occurred under the influence of the Bolsheviks.

Another important figure who had connections with Bolshevik agents at an early stage was Li Hanjun, who was one of the main founders of the CCP. Li had studied in Japan for fourteen years. While at Tokyo Imperial University he studied some Marxist books. On his return to China Li participated in the New Culture

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(Collected Articles on Hu Shi Studies), p 13.

<sup>35</sup> Li Lisan, 'Report on the History of the CCP', (Moscow, 1 February 1930), Yida qianhou, Vol 3.

<sup>36</sup> FO 228/3214, 4 March 1920.

<sup>37</sup> FO 405/233, No 107.

Movement. Since his elder brother was a founding member of Tongmeng hui, Li had close relations with some nationalist leaders, and could therefore join the editorial office of Xingqi pinglun (Sunday Review), a paper of GMD (the National Party). By October 1919 the British Intelligence Bureau was informed that there were two Chinese Bolsheviks living in the French Concession in Shanghai and their names were given as Ho Hyau Lieu and Lee Jen Jehy.<sup>38</sup> Nothing more is known about Ho Hyau Lieu, but we can be confident that Lee Jen Jehy was Li Hanjun, for his original name was Li Renjie and the intelligence report also pointed out that Lee had been a student in Japan. Yang Zhihua's memoirs provide additional evidence about Li's relations with radicals from Russia and other countries:

In the vacation of 1919, I went to the office of Xinqi pinglun in Shanghai. ... Li Hanjun was the leading spirit of the office in the area of ideas. ... [He] had connections with the Communists of Japan and Korea then. ... My aim in joining the office of Xingqi pinglun was to go to Soviet Russia to study, and Li Hanjun gave me a lot of help in this. He took me to the home of some Japanese and Korean progressive friends and also introduced me to a Russian friend to learn Russian.<sup>39</sup>

Yang's memoirs indicate that Li Hanjun was well acquainted with certain progressive Russians, although she was not specific about whether they were Bolsheviks or not. From the British archives it is clear that Li at least knew the Russians Lizerovitch and Lundon at the time. Lizerovitch was a Soviet agent and Lundon was Lizerovitch's intimate friend and also served Soviet Russia. Later Li

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<sup>38</sup> FO 405/228, 7 April 1920.

<sup>39</sup> 'Yang Zhihua's Recollections', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, pp 25-6. Yang later became Qu Qiubai's wife.

attended several meetings held by Voitinsky. Perhaps due to his close connections with these Bolshevik agents, he was chosen to be the first chairman of the Red Trade Union of the Far East, which was based in Chita.<sup>40</sup>

Zhang Tailei was a unique figure in the process of establishing the CCP. He acted as a faithful assistant and interpreter for the Bolshevik representatives in China. In spring 1921 he went to Irkutsk and assumed the post of head of the Chinese Section of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern. He often carried out special tasks in the Far East as a representative of the Comintern and was thus the first delegate of the CCP to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Comintern Congress. It is interesting to know the reason why Zhang could inspire such trust from the Russian Bolsheviks. In autumn 1918, when Zhang was still a poor student at the Law Faculty of Beiyang University in Tianjin, he met Polevoy and kept in touch with him afterwards.<sup>41</sup> About this time Polevoy was enrolled as an agent of Soviet Russia and later became the Comintern's liaison man in Tianjin. Zhang helped Polevoy with his work in various ways, including translating, for he had learned English at a Christian school. Zhang Tailei probably also met Burtman in 1919. According to Müller, Burtman "had direct links with the students' demonstration in Tianjin within the framework of the May 4th Movement ... Circles of students attended political gatherings in his flat one after another."<sup>42</sup> Regrettably Müller did not record the names of the students who visited Burtman's flat. In their article on Zhang Tailei, the Soviet scholars P. Korovyakovsky and N. Rusanov assumed

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<sup>40</sup> Li Danyang and Liu Jianyi (eds.), Li Hanjun yanjiu ziliao (Research Materials on Li Hanjun), compiled in 1981, unpublished.

<sup>41</sup> Ding Zeqin and Wang Shudi, 'Zhang Tailei's Chronicle', Zhang Tailei wenji (Collected Works of Zhang Tailei), (Beijing, 1981).

<sup>42</sup> Quoted from Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, p 115.

Zhang to be one of them, on the grounds that he later worked at the Far Eastern Secretariat, which was initiated by Burtman himself.<sup>43</sup> This seems a reasonable assumption. Moreover, Zhang set up a student organisation - the Society for Social Reconstruction in February 1919, and was one of the student leaders in Tianjin during the May 4<sup>th</sup> movement. Given this background, it is not difficult to understand why, when Voitinsky's team arrived in Beijing, Zhang was summoned there to act as their interpreter.

Besides Zhang Tailei there must have been some other Chinese students in Tianjin who had relations with Burtman and other Bolsheviks. According to Zhu Molin, there was a 'New Poetry Society' in the British Concession of Tianjin during 1919-1920 and its members are reported to have included Zhou Enlai, Zhang Wentian, Han Linfu, Deng Yingchao and some Russians.<sup>44</sup>

Qu Qiubai's rise to the leading position within the CCP after August 1927 was supported by the Comintern. Why Moscow chose him as key leader of the CCP in place of Chen Duxiu can be explained by his early career. In 1917 Qu began to learn Russian at the Beijing Russian Language Institute, where one of his lecturers was Polevoy, with whom he maintained close relations.<sup>45</sup> Maybe it was through Qu that Polevoy got to know Zhang Tailei, because Qu and Zhang were classmates and close friends at Changzhou Secondary School and they kept in touch

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<sup>43</sup> Korovyakovsky and Rusanov, 'Zhang Tai Lei, A Trail-Blazer of the Chinese Revolution', Far Eastern Affairs, (1988) No 5, p 105.

<sup>44</sup> Wang Jianmin, Zhongguo Gongchandang shigao (A Draft History of the Chinese Communist Party), Taipei, 1965; In 1991 I asked Deng Yingchao, through her secretary, for confirmation of this. She denied it.

<sup>45</sup> Guan Shanfu, 'Some Facts on Polevoy and Ivanov', Dangshi tungxun, (1984), No 3. pp 58-9.



even after they enrolled at different institutions of higher education.<sup>46</sup> With their special connections with Soviet agents, both Qu and Zhang joined Li Dazhao's Marxist Research Society in 1920 and became the only members who did not belong to Beijing University.<sup>47</sup>

In the early summer of 1920, Qu was chosen to visit Soviet Russia as a correspondent of Chen bao (the Morning Post).<sup>48</sup> When he stopped over in Harbin, Qu attended the celebration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the October Revolution, at which he told some Russian friends that there were several societies for studying socialism and Marxism in China.<sup>49</sup> After he arrived in Chita Qu wrote a report to the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern, which was published under the pen-name Strakhov in the first issue of the Bulletin of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern in February 1921. In this report he wrote that with Voitinsky's help, the first branch of the CCP had been founded in Shanghai and that in North China Voitinsky had been engaged in organising Communist circles with the help of Professor S. A. Polevoy's group.<sup>50</sup> These indicate that Qu was very familiar with the process of the formation of the CCP's early organisations and with the activities of the Soviet agents.<sup>51</sup> Yet many Chinese historians have not paid attention to this

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<sup>46</sup> Chen Tiejian, Qu Qiubai zhuan (The Biography of Qu Qiubai), (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1986).

<sup>47</sup> Liu Nongchao, 'The Chief Commander in Leading the May Fourth Movement - Comrade Li Dazhao', Wusi yundong lunwenji (Collected Theses on the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement), (Wuhan, 1959).

<sup>48</sup> As early as June 1920, the news that the Chinese journalists would visit Soviet Russia appeared in Moscow. However, Qu and other journalists left for Soviet Russia in October 1920.

<sup>49</sup> Qu Qiubai wenji (Writings of Qu Qiubai), (Literature), (Beijing: The People's Literature Press, 1985), Vol 1, p 62.

<sup>50</sup> Lazitch and Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern, pp 415-6; V. I. Glunin, 'The Comintern and the Rise of the Communist Movement in China', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 283.

<sup>51</sup> Dov Bing believes that Qu wrote this letter in Beijing while Voitinsky was still there;

report by Qu and thus believe that Qu became involved in the Communist movement only after he reached Soviet Russia or after he joined the CCP.<sup>52</sup> In fact, Qu Qiubai had been committed to the Russian way before his departure to Russia. During his trip to Moscow, Qu wrote “E xiang jicheng” (Journey to the Land of Hunger), in which he described his journey as a trip towards the “gate of freedom” and his mission as “shouldering the responsibility of developing ideas for China during its rebirth”, and extolled Moscow as the “lighthouse” in his heart.<sup>53</sup> On arrival in Moscow, Qu and some other Chinese journalists claimed that they were “the disciples of Karl Marx”.<sup>54</sup> During his stay in Moscow, Qu got acquainted with some Soviet and Comintern officials, and made a good impression on them.

Qu Qiubai and Zhang Tailei were the individuals within the CCP who enjoyed the trust of the Bolsheviks most and were regarded as “long-tested, faithful, reliable and exemplary Chinese Communists”.<sup>55</sup> This position much helped their future careers within the CCP.

So far, I have made a brief survey of the early connections which existed between Bolshevik agents and some key founders of the CCP. Besides these the agents also contacted other Chinese radicals. The advent of Voitinsky’s team in China rendered the range of contacts wider and more open. As a result of these efforts, more Chinese were drawn into the Communist movement. Voitinsky was

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Dov Bing, ‘Voitinsky and the Foundation of the CCP’, Feiqing yuebao (Taipei, November 1976) Vol 19, No 5.

<sup>52</sup> There are arguments on the time Qu Qiubai joined the CCP: Some say that it was summer 1921; others say spring 1922; cf. Lu Yuan, ‘On the Time When Qu Qiubai Joined the CCP’, Dangshi yanjiu ziliao (Collected Materials on the CCP's History), (Shanghai, 1980), No 4.

<sup>53</sup> Qu Qiubai wenji (Writings of Qu Qiubai), (Literature), Vol 1.

<sup>54</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 89.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Vilensky to Radek, 6 April 1922’, GLZDC, Vol 1, p 80.

so satisfied with it that he once stated that the list of educated young Chinese in Shanghai who had pledged themselves in writing to the support of the Russian Soviet and Communist principles was growing everyday.<sup>56</sup> The Bolsheviks' endeavours to convert the Chinese to Communism were the main driving force which gave the impetus to radical Chinese as they moved towards Bolshevism.

## **Section 2. Contact with Sun Yat-sen and His Party**

Soviet Russia's contact with Sun Yat-sen and his followers is an interesting subject for many scholars both in China and abroad, and much has been written on this topic. But since the relevant materials have not been searched sufficiently, the accounts are incomplete. In particular, there has been insufficient analysis of the purpose which lay behind the contacts and its links with the establishment of the CCP.

Sun Yat-sen was a great nationalist democratic revolutionary. He organised Xingzhong hui (The Society for Reviving China) in 1894 and formed Tongmeng hui (the Revolutionary Alliance) in 1905. His early political programme can be summed up in his slogan: "Drive out the Manchus; Restore the Chinese Nation; Establish a Republic and Equalize Land Ownership." Sun called himself a socialist and read socialist literature widely. In May 1905 he even visited the Executive Bureau of the Second International in Brussels with the purpose of gaining

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<sup>56</sup> FO 228/3214, September 1920.

membership for his party.<sup>57</sup> Sun's ideas and his career endowed him with considerable prestige, so Sun was elected the first Provisional President of the Republic of China in January 1912. Before long Sun's Tongmeng hui changed its name to Guomin Dang (the Nationalist Party, abbreviated to GMD). After moving to oppose Yuan Shikai in the so-called "Second Revolution", Sun reorganised his party in Japan in 1914 calling it Zhonghua Geming Dang (the Chinese Revolutionary Party). In October 1919, the Party resumed its former name - Guomin Dang.

The victory of the Chinese Revolution of 1911 drew the attention of Lenin and the Bolshevik party to Sun Yat-sen and his party. In 1912, the Russian Socialist Democratic Labour Party at its 6<sup>th</sup> conference hailed "the revolutionary republicans of China" and recognised "the world-wide importance of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people."<sup>58</sup> In the same year, after reading an article written by Sun Yat-sen in Brussels' socialist newspaper, Le Peuple, Lenin commented on it in his article "Democracy and Narodism in China", in which he praised Sun as "a revolutionary democrat, endowed with the nobility and heroism of a class that is rising" in addition to criticising Sun's economic programme aimed at forestalling capitalism in China and thus similar to that entertained by the Russian populists.<sup>59</sup> In November 1912 Lenin again wrote a piece on the political parties of China and expressed himself favourably towards the GMD: "The Nationalist Party is predominantly a party of the more industrially-developed and progressive southern

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<sup>57</sup> Hu Sheng, 'On Sun Zhongshan's Socialist Thoughts', Sun Zhongshan he ta de shidai (Sun Yat-sen and His Era), Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1985, Vol 1, p 45.

<sup>58</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 17, p 485.

<sup>59</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 18, pp 163-169.

part of the country. ... Its leaders are intellectuals who have been educated abroad.”<sup>60</sup> After the October Revolution the Bolsheviks believed that Sun Yat-sen and his followers might become their allies in China. In one of the early instructions issued by Soviet Russia’s Council of People’s Commissars to guide the local soviets in Siberia on the policy toward the Far East, Sun’s Guangdong Government was portrayed as progressive.<sup>61</sup>

For his part, Sun Yat-sen followed with interest the development of the Russian Revolution and, while he was in exile kept in touch with such Russian revolutionaries as E. Volkholvsky, N. K. Sudzilovskii and G. Chicherin.<sup>62</sup> After becoming the provisional president of the Republic of China, Sun received the Vice-Consul of the Russian Consulate General in Shanghai, Voznesensky, who was a Socialist Revolutionary at that time and later the head of the Eastern division of Narkomindel. Sun said to him: “The necessary condition for achieving the complete success of social revolution is that Russians, Indians and Chinese must participate in the revolution together.”<sup>63</sup> When he heard news of the outbreak of the February Revolution in Russia, Sun Yat-sen sent a congratulatory telegram to Petrograd but received no reply.<sup>64</sup> On 25 October Sun despatched Wang Shuwen, one of his staff, to Siberia in order to investigate the situation in Russia and report back.<sup>65</sup> In a speech at a dinner party on 28 January 1918 Sun Yat-sen expressed his

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<sup>60</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 18, p 401.

<sup>61</sup> Leong Sow-theng, Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relation, p 33.

<sup>62</sup> Wu Xiangxiang, ‘Soviet Scholarly Works on the Father of the State’, Zhuanji wenxue (Biographical Literature), (Taipei), Vol 23, No 3.

<sup>63</sup> S. L. Tikhvinskii, ‘Sun Yat-sen and Soviet Russia’, Sun Zhongshan he ta de shidai, Vol 1, p 532.

<sup>64</sup> Li Yunhan, Cong ronggong dao qingdang (From the Admission of the Chinese Communists to the Purification of the GMD), (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1966) p 110.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Sun Yat-sen Sent a Person to Russia for Investigation of the Situation of the

hopes for the Russian Revolution along the lines that “If the revolutionary regime in Russia can be consolidated, our revolution can be expected to develop rapidly in China.”<sup>66</sup> In the summer of that year,<sup>67</sup> at a time when Soviet Russia was isolated, Sun Yat-sen sent a telegram in the name of the parliament of South China and the Chinese Revolutionary Party, which expressed congratulations on the victory of the Russian Revolution and stated: “Because of the Russian Revolution, mankind of the world has found great hope. ... The revolutionary parties of China and Russia should unite for a common struggle.”<sup>68</sup>

Upon receiving it, Lenin was said to have been deeply moved and to have regarded the message as “the light from the East”.<sup>69</sup> On 1 August, Chicherin, Commissar of Narkomindel and an old friend of Sun Yat-sen, replied to Sun in an open letter. Here Sun Yat-sen was described as the Chinese revolutionary leader and an honoured teacher. Chicherin also wrote that “The Russian working classes turn to their Chinese brothers and call them on to the common fight.”<sup>70</sup>

It was these common concerns and mutual sympathy and understanding which both sides demonstrated that became the basis of the early contacts between Russian Bolsheviks and Sun Yat-sen’s party. Actual contact was initiated by Lenin

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October Revolution’, Tuanjie bao (Unity Paper), (Beijing, March 30, 1985).

<sup>66</sup> Shao Yuanhong, ‘Daily Record of the Constitution Defending Movement in Guangdong’, Jianquo yuekan (State Construction Monthly), (Nanjing, June 1935), Vol 12, No 6.

<sup>67</sup> According to a news report in the Minguo ribao of 13 May 1918, Sun dispatched a telegram to the Soviet Government from Shanghai that May. But many scholars have thought that the telegram was sent in summer 1918.

<sup>68</sup> Sun Zhongshan quanji (Collected Works of Sun Yat-sen), (Beijing: People’s Press, 1985), Vol 4, p 500; Song Qingling Xuanji (Selected Works of Song Qing-ling), (Beijing: People’s Press, 1992), Vol 2, p 52.

<sup>69</sup> Zou Lu, Zhongguo Guomin dang shigao (Draft History of the GMD), (Chongqing, 1944), p 304; Quoted from Leng Shao-chuan and N. D. Palmer, Sun Yat-sen and Communism, (London, Thames & Hudson, 1961), p 48.

<sup>70</sup> Degras (ed.) Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, Vol 1, p 93.

in 1918 when he enquired whether it would be possible “to find among the Chinese workers [in Russia] some brave men who could establish contact with Sun Yat-sen”. According to Voznesensky, “a reliable man” was sent to Guangzhou to deliver Chicherin’s letter at the end of 1918.<sup>71</sup> Since Sun had already left Guangzhou for Shanghai by then, his later claim not to have received the letter might well have been true.

The Bolsheviks never gave up their efforts to get in touch with Sun Yat-sen and his party. In June 1919, a Japanese newspaper reported that “Lenin’s Government sent a secret emissary to meet Sun Hongyi and there are signs that Sun Hongyi also dispatched a secret emissary to Lenin’s Government.”<sup>72</sup> Sun Hongyi had been Sun Yat-sen’s plenipotentiary in Shanghai since November 1917 and kept close relations with Sun Yat-sen. Therefore, the contact with Sun Hongyi could be considered as a means of establishing contact with Sun Yat-sen. Several months later, an intelligence report showed that five Chinese, one Japanese and one Korean, all of whom were Bolshevik emissaries, had recently arrived in Shanghai to call on Sun Yat-sen. The report added: “recently a Soviet emissary sent Sun Yat-sen a letter urging a Soviet revolution in China.”<sup>73</sup> In the same month Reuters reported similarly and further noted that Mr. Zhongshan (Sun’s alias) had denied that he had any contact with Bolshevik agents.<sup>74</sup> Despite Sun’s denial, the British Intelligence Bureau offered detailed information to the effect that “Sun Yat-sen has been in

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<sup>71</sup> Holubnychy, Michael Borodin and the Chinese Revolution, 1923-1925, pp 137-138. Perhaps the “reliable man” was Zhu Zhaisheng, who was born in Russia and acted as a liaison between Moscow and Sun Yat-sen. See Wu Yingguang, ‘The Alliance of Sun Yat-sun and Wu Peifu and the Soviet Policy in China during 1920-23’, Sun Zhongshan yanjiu (Studies of Sun Yat-sen), p 109.

<sup>72</sup> Minguo ribao (The Republic Daily), 20 June 1919.

<sup>73</sup> FO 228/3211, 2 November 1919.

<sup>74</sup> Minguo ribao, 26, 27, November 1919.

communication with the Bolshevik headquarters in Siberia through the medium of his secretary.”<sup>75</sup>

At the end of 1919, a Russian named N. Matveev Bodryi, head of the Labour Society, which was organised by Russian émigrés in Shanghai, visited Sun. Later, Bodryi went back to Russia and reported on his interview with Sun. On returning to Shanghai he called on Sun again and talked with him about the Russian and Chinese Revolutions.<sup>76</sup>

Sun Yat-sen yearned to learn from the Bolsheviks’ revolutionary experience and even arranged for several important cadres of his Party, such as Liao Zhongkai, Zhu Zhixin, Li Zhangda and Li Langru, to learn Russian in 1919, in order to send them to Soviet Russia for this purpose. Since Russia was in serious crisis, they failed to go there.<sup>77</sup> As news from Russia gradually filtered through to China, Sun became aware of Bolsheviks’ conduct of War Communism, rule by terror and so forth. Such a turn of events did not accord with Sun’s ideas of moderate social reform. Sun came to consider that the Bolshevik regime arose from “acutely abnormal” circumstances and thus Bolshevism was a kind of “unsound” doctrine.<sup>78</sup> Sun did not believe that communism could be successfully achieved in Russia in this way.<sup>79</sup> However, the Bolshevik’s military victory in the Civil War was

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<sup>75</sup> FO 228/3211, 2 November 1919.

<sup>76</sup> Matveev Bodryi, ‘Two Meetings with Sun Yat-sen’, Quoted from Zhou Gu, ‘The Early Relations between Sun Yat-sen and Russian Revolutionaries’, Zhuanji wenxue (March, 1991) Vol 85, No 3.

<sup>77</sup> He Xiangning, ‘Some Recollections of Dr. Sun Yat-sen’, Weida de Sun Zhongshan (The Great Sun Yat-sen), (Hong Kong, 1957), p 39.

<sup>78</sup> Sun Yat-sen also talked about the dangers of the spread of Bolshevism in China. Dai Jitao, ‘Mr. Sun’s Talks during My Visits’, Xinqi pinglun (Sunday Review), (Shanghai), 22 June 1919.

<sup>79</sup> Sun expressed this opinion repeatedly during his talks with Potapov. See ‘Potapov’s Report to Chicherin, 12 December 1920’, GLZDC, Vol 1, p 48.



undoubtedly inspiring to Sun and his followers, who had suffered one defeat after another since 1912. So Sun was still willing to follow the Russian situation and Bolshevik experience.

In March 1920 Sun Yat-sen had a long conversation with Lundon, a Russian émigré, on the subject of Bolshevism. In the same month Sun admitted that he was indirectly in touch with the Bolsheviks from Russia.<sup>80</sup> Some accounts indicate that it was in March 1920 that “two Bolshevik agents came to Shanghai from Vladivostok and visited Sun Yat-sen.”<sup>81</sup> Although they are not specific on the identity of the two men, according to Sokolsky, early in 1920 Colonel Popov, “who came with credentials from the Commander of Bolshevik troops of the Amur district”, visited Sun with General Potapov, “who had been posing as a Bolshevik, but had no credentials”. Popov and Potapov discussed with Sun the plan for co-operation between the GMD and the Bolsheviks.<sup>82</sup> They also tried to persuade Sun to approve the Karakhan Manifesto but failed as Potapov wrote later that Sun was too timid to respond to the Manifesto publicly, fearing that it would harm the revolutionary work he was doing and make trouble for his stay in the foreign settlement if his contacts with Moscow would thereby be revealed.<sup>83</sup> During the meetings with Sun Yat-sen, Potapov expressed his desire to visit Chen Jiongming, a military leader of the GMD in Zhangzhou.

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<sup>80</sup> FO 228/3214, 18 March 1920.

<sup>81</sup> FO 228/3214, 25 March 1920.

<sup>82</sup> ‘The Reminiscences of George Sokolsky’, Manuscript, dated 1956 and 1963, Oral History Collection, Columbia University, Quoted from Wilbur, Sun Yat-sen: Frustrated Patriot, p 115; Potapov had met Sun before this visit in March 1920. Luo Gang (ed.), Zhonghua minguo guofu shilu (The Factual Account of Sun Yat-sen), 6 Vols., Taipei: Zhengzhong Publishing House, 1988, Vol 5, p 3544.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Potapov’s Report to Chicherin, 12 December 1920’, GLZDC, Vol 1, p 48.

General Chen Jiongming's troops in South China were Sun Yat-sen's only important military force at that time. The siege of southern Fujian by the troops of General Chen in August 1918 was seen by some in Moscow as the beginning of a Soviet revolution in South China.<sup>84</sup> Before long, Chen's troops occupied an area in Southern Fujian with Zhangzhou as its centre, which was regarded by Sun Yat-sen as an important base area of revolution. Chen Jiongming was interested in socialism. He carried out a programme of propaganda and the encouragement of "new culture" and "new social customs" in Southern Fujian and this area was therefore called "the Russia of Southern Fujian".<sup>85</sup> In Shantou, Zhangzhou's neighbouring city, there was a Soviet agent who reported on Zhangzhou's situation to the Soviet Government and disseminated news about Soviet Russia in the area.<sup>86</sup> Soviet leaders attached much importance to Chen, for they considered that Chen held real power and had military strength and believed that to establish relations with Chen would be very useful for them.

In spring 1920, the Bolsheviks in Shanghai established relations with Chen Jiongming via Lu Shikai, an assistant of Stopany.<sup>87</sup> Nearly at the same time that Potapov asked Sun Yat-sen to help him meet Chen Jiongming, the Comintern agent

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<sup>84</sup> Leong Sow-theng, Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, p 132.

<sup>85</sup> Ru Shan, 'What I Saw and Heard during My Visit to Zhangzhou', Beijing daxue xuesheng zhouban (Beijing University Students' Weekly), (May 1st 1920) No 14.

<sup>86</sup> Fujian dangshi yuekan, (1990) No 12. According to the above article all these were done by the Russian consulate in Shantou. In fact, there was definitely no Soviet consulate at that time; instead, a Russian, Mikulin, who worked at the Chinese Maritime Customs in Shantou, was serving Soviet Russia; see FO 228/3211, November 1920.

<sup>87</sup> 'Report from K. J. McEuen, the Commissioner of Police in Shanghai', in American State Archives, Class 800, 1920; quoted from Lü Fang-shang, Geming zhi zaiqi, (Resurgence of the Revolution), (Taipei, The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1989), p 93.

Polevoy informed General Chen, through a Chinese named Jiang who was working in Zhangzhou, that a Soviet representative would visit Zhangzhou.<sup>88</sup>

On 29 April 1920, General Potapov with his team, including a Swedish lady named Mrs Michemach and a Korean named Yo Unphyong, arrived in Zhangzhou via Shantou. They met Chen Jiongming and other prominent GMD members, such as Zhu Zhixin and Liao Zhongkai, who were assisting Chen in Zhangzhou at the time. Potapov presented Chen with a letter from Lenin in which Lenin expressed his concern for the Chinese revolution and his admiration for Chen. Potapov proposed that Soviet Russia could provide Chen's troops with ordnance if Chen needed such supplies. The two sides signed a memorandum on their talks. When Potapov left Zhangzhou he took Chen Jiongming's reply to Lenin.<sup>89</sup> In this letter Chen congratulated Lenin on the achievements of the Russian Revolution, approved the Karakhan Manifesto and declared: "I firmly believe that Bolshevism will bring happiness to human beings. I will do my best to spread the principles of Bolshevism over the world and to fulfil this system in the world. Our task is to reform China and the whole of Eastern Asia." This letter was later published in Vestnik Narkomindel (Bulletin of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs) in March 1921. Chen was therefore praised by Russian Bolsheviks as a "convinced communist", "not only a revolutionary general ... but a brilliant organiser, receiving

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<sup>88</sup> Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielu.

<sup>89</sup> Liang Bingxuan writes in Jiefang bielu that he forgot the envoy's name and only remembered that the name began with a letter V; Chen Qiyou, Chen Jiongming's chief of staff, writes in 'Soviet Russia Dispatched A Delegation to Zhangzhou in 1919' (Wenshi ziliao xuanji, (Beijing, 1980, No 24) that the Russian general who visited Zhangzhou was named "Lu Bo". Both "V" and "Lu Bo" were actually Potapov, as many historians have demonstrated.

the sympathies of the masses,” etc.<sup>90</sup> This indicates that the Bolshevik leaders were in favour of Chen Jiongming and their relations with Chen seemed quite warm. Later, Vilensky, Voitinsky, Stoyanovichy, Maring and some other Soviet agents also approached and talked with Chen Jiongming, believing he had socialist inclinations.

Around this time, Voitinsky and other Soviet agents made contacts with many of Sun Yat-sen’s followers, such as Dai Jitao, Li liejun, Cao Yabo, Zhu Zhuowen, Shen Xuanlu, Xu Qian, Wu Shan, Shao Lizi and Lin Boqu.<sup>91</sup> They tried to urge some of these persons to form a Communist Party in China. However, most of them were loyal adherents of Sun Yat-sen and therefore refused to go along with the plan because they did not want to betray their leader.

Over a long period, some leading cadres of Sun’s Party, such as Zhu Zhixin, Liao Zhongkai, Hu Hanmin, Dai Jitao, Feng Ziyou and Lin Yungai conducted research into socialism and Marxism. Their knowledge of socialism and Marxism was even greater than Li Dazhao’s and Chen Duxiu’s before 1920. And these people also appreciated the Bolsheviks’ spirit of hard work and their well-organised Party and Army; they believed that Soviet Russia’s foreign policy, which claimed to abandon the Romanov dynasty’s policy of aggression against China and to abrogate all secret treaties, was “of benefit to China”,<sup>92</sup> and welcomed the fact that “the new Russian Government’s focus is to abolish the monopoly of the capitalists and the brutality of the officials”, and declared that “China should learn from it.”<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, they believed that Sun’s People’s Livelihood Principle, which

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<sup>90</sup> Vestnik Narkomindel, (Moscow, 1922), Nos 1, 2.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Geming renwu zhi (Biographies of Revolutionaries), (Taibei, 1969).

<sup>92</sup> Xingqi pinglun, 30 November 1919.

<sup>93</sup> Minguo ribao (National Daily), 27 May 1919.

included two essential policies of “the equalisation of land ownership” and “the restriction of capital”, was the best form of socialism. In line with this, Sun and his party never adopted an attitude of either total and uncritical acceptance or total repudiation of Soviet Russia’s experience.

Encouragement to advance the cause of socialism in China also came from Britain. In June 1920 Sylvia Pankhurst, a British Communist leader and a participant in the Comintern, wrote a letter to Lizerovitch with whom she had close links. She desired him to get in touch with Sun Yat-sen and urged him to do his utmost for socialism in China. After Pankhurst’s message was delivered to him, Sun in his reply, which was passed on by Lizerovitch, too, stated in effect that though his sympathies were with Soviet Russia, he was not at present able to proclaim his feelings openly, as owing to the political situation he was temporarily dependent on the capitalists; but as soon as he could dispense with their assistance he would again work for the socialist cause in China.<sup>94</sup>

In the same month, Sun Yat-sen was invited to visit Soviet Russia by a telegram, which was drafted by Chicherin, from Liu Zerong [Shaozhou], Chairman of the All Russian Union of Chinese Workers.<sup>95</sup> Another telegram which came from Lenin himself also urged Sun to see how they had done in Russia.<sup>96</sup> Both these invitations were sent to China on the eve of the Second Congress of the Comintern and the obvious hope behind them was that Sun would attend the Congress. However, Sun turned the invitations down. Sun’s attitude towards Soviet Russia was circumspect not only because he felt dissatisfaction with Russia’s

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<sup>94</sup> FO 228/3214, June 1920; FO 228/3216, No 29, 4 September 1920.

<sup>95</sup> Huang Xiurong, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming guanxi shi, p 72.

<sup>96</sup> Wilbur, Sun Yat-sen: Frustrated Patriot, p 117.

Communism but also because of he was afraid that his close relations with Soviet Russia would complicate his attempts to gain support from other Western countries.

Regardless of Sun Yat-sen's absence in the 2nd Congress of the Comintern, Moscow still considered him a very important person with whom they could co-operate. In addition, they sought to influence Sun ideologically. The Communist International of August 1920 carried an article which said: "Sun Yat-sen is especially valuable to us," for he was "the leader of the Chinese youth, which is growing more and more left wing;" and it continued that Soviet Russia and the Comintern must help him "by teaching him simple, clear, proletarian tactics in the internal theoretical-political struggle; so that he can break all connections, not only with the old past of his own country, but with the entire bourgeois world, and undeviatingly adopt the point of view of the Communist International."<sup>97</sup> This article reflected the Comintern's hope: to push the GMD to become a socialist party affiliated to the Comintern.

The Chinese Communist organisation in Russia which was under the direction of the RCP(B) also considered Sun Yat-sen and his party as their "comrades". In Summer 1920 the Central Organisational Bureau of Chinese Communists in Russia drafted a plan for an armed drive on Beijing from three directions: Xinjiang, Manchuria and South China. At the beginning of September 1920, Liu Qian (Russian alias Fedorov), a member of the Bureau, reached Shanghai to talk with Sun Yat-sen on two or three occasions and tried to reach an agreement on a co-operative military operation of the forces of Soviet Central Asian, the Far Eastern Republic, and South China with a city in the Russian Far East as the leading

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<sup>97</sup> R. 'The Situation in Eastern Asia', The Communist International, (Moscow, August 1920), No 13.

centre in order to overthrow the Beijing Government.<sup>98</sup> On Sun's recommendation, he met various important members of the GMD in Shanghai and other places. Liu Qian also brought a message from the Chinese Communists in Russia to the Chinese youth stating that Lenin had promised to help China if the Chinese helped themselves by understanding the new world tendencies and joining the socialists, and give up their dependence on foreigners.<sup>99</sup> The last remark was obviously directed to the GMD, since the latter always looked to other foreign countries for aid. Although Sun Yat-sen and the GMD did not "join the socialists" as Moscow hoped, they certainly intended to join hands with Russia in military operations and Sun sent Li Zhangda as his representative in the Russian Far East to fulfil this plan.<sup>100</sup>

In November 1920, Voitinsky visited Sun Yat-sen and the topic of their talk focused on how to combine the struggle in South China with the struggle in remote Russia. In order to implement this goal, they also discussed the possibilities of establishing a radio link between Soviet Russia and Guangzhou.<sup>101</sup> Shortly after this meeting, Sun Yat-sen moved to Guangzhou and established his second Southern Government there. From then on Soviet Russia's relations with Sun accordingly entered a new phase. Around this time, a Soviet representative, I. I.

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<sup>98</sup> Persits, 'Eastern Internationalists of Russia and Some Questions of the National-Liberation movement, 1918-July 1920', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 114; 'Liu Qian's Report to the RCP(B)'s Amur Committee', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 44. Luo Gang (ed.), Zhonghua minguo quofu shilu, Vol 5, p 3544.

<sup>99</sup> FO 228/3214, September 1920.

<sup>100</sup> Yang Kuisong in his 'Sun Zhongshan's Plan for A Military Operation in the North-West and Its Failure' [Lishi yanjiu (Historical Studies), (Beijing, 1996), No 3] does not mention that the military plan was also proposed by the Chinese Communists in Russia.

<sup>101</sup> S. L. Tikhvinskii, Sun Yat-sen: His Views on Foreign Policy and His Practice, (Moscow, 1964), p 535.

Stelahov, entered to China and met some GMD leaders in Beijing and Shanghai. In a report he wrote later, Stelahov suggested that Soviet Russia should “establish a relationship with the Guangzhou Government as soon as possible.” According to him, the purpose for that was “to find some elements in the Guangzhou Government who can arouse the people of the whole country to rise up against the capitalist [powers’] oppression in the Far East”, and to use the Government “as a tool to carry out national revolutions in the East.”<sup>102</sup>

Not long after the GMD’s troops led by Chen Jiongming regained Guangdong in the fall of 1920, Soviet Russia and the Comintern sent several representatives there in order to establish a closer relationship with the United Provincial Government in Guangzhou. A Japanese journalist, K. Fuse, wrote: “When Sun Yat-sen was proceeding to Canton from Shanghai, he met a Soviet representative and discussed with him a certain action to be taken in concert with Soviet Russia. ... Soon, the Military Government sent its representative to Moscow, and Moscow specially detailed a Communist member in the person of Alexieff.”<sup>103</sup> Some historians, while citing Fuse’s work, only mention Alexieff and neglect the Soviet representative Sun met before Alexieff.<sup>104</sup> It is clear that they have misread Fuse’s above phrase. However, the British archives offer detailed information about Soviet representatives in Guangzhou around that time. Some reports

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<sup>102</sup> ‘S. Stelahov’s Report on Guangzhou Government’, GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 63-64.

<sup>103</sup> Fuse, Soviet Policy in the Orient, p 224-5.

<sup>104</sup> Wilbur in Sun Yat-sen: Frustrated Patriot and Cui Shuqin in Sun Zhongshan yu Gongchan Zhuyi (Sun Yat-sen and Communism), (Hong Kong: the Asia Press, 1954) say so. They also state that Alexieff opened a branch of the Rosta in Guangdong. In fact, as early as the autumn of 1920, a branch of the Rosta-Dalta was established in Guangzhou by Stoyanovitch and Perlin. cf. ‘Report of the Canton Communist Group, 1921’, Zhongguo Gongchan dang diyici daibiao dahui dangan ziliao (Archival Sources for the First Congress of the CCP), (Beijing, 1984); ‘Tan Zuyin’s Memoirs’, Yida qianhou, Vol 3.



indicated that a Bolshevik delegate named Remankauff had arrived in Guangzhou by January 1921 and he later altered his name to Stark. This Russian had a good speaking knowledge of Mandarin and Hakka and was living in a monastery not far from Guangzhou, where he was very often in consultation with Sun Yat-sen at Sun's Yamen (office building).<sup>105</sup> Probably as one of the results of the talks between Remankauff and Sun, the mutual exchange of resident representatives took place. According to the British archives, Sun issued a mandate to appoint the representative of the United Provincial Government, Hsien Chen Feng, to go to Russia in March.<sup>106</sup> Alexieff reached Guangzhou at about the same time. Perhaps Alexieff was the famous Russian Sinologist of the same name, for during that time there was only a limited number of Russians who had knowledge of China and Chinese languages and they thus tended to be enlisted in the Bolshevik cause in China. It is worth noticing that Professor V. M. Alexieff's research topic between 1920 and 1922 was "the Republic of China",<sup>107</sup> and he was also said to be in close touch with the Comintern.<sup>108</sup>

Fuse wrote further that Alexieff concluded an agreement with Sun Yat-sen in March 1921 and he even provided the text of the agreement which had been preserved in the form of a memorandum. Cui Shuqin, the author of Sun Yat-sen and Communism, denies there was any such agreement. Wilbur and How also write in their book Missionaries of Revolution: Soviet Advisers and Nationalist China that "for this we have no substantial evidence". But in the British Archives, a document of April 1921 enclosed a "Moscow-Canton Agreement", which originally

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<sup>105</sup> FO 228/3211, January and February 1921.

<sup>106</sup> FO 228/3211, March 1921.

<sup>107</sup> Nikiforov, SLOPK, p 84, p 371.

<sup>108</sup> FO 228/3211, October, 1921.

came from the vernacular press.<sup>109</sup> The content of this agreement is basically the same as the one given by Fuse. The following are the terms which sum up the two texts: the Soviet Government of Russia and the United Provincial Government of the Republic of China (U.P.) agreed: (1) to recognise each other's sovereignty; (2) to resume their commercial relations at once; (3) to permit the diffusion of Communism in the territory under the U. P. Government's control; (4) to ensure that the Soviet Government would give financial assistance whenever the U. P. Government required it; (5) to ensure that the people of the respective countries would be treated according to the most favoured nation provision.<sup>110</sup> If the report of the Chinese newspaper is true, this would have been the first agreement between Moscow and the GMD or a draft of it. Soon the Far Eastern Republic started to give the Guangzhou Government "material support".<sup>111</sup>

On the occasion of Sun Yat-sen's inauguration as President of the U. P. Government in April 1921, the correspondents of Rosta-Dalta, Khodorov and Stoyanovich interviewed Sun.<sup>112</sup> They talked about the situation in Soviet Russia and the Far Eastern Republic and also Russia's revolutionary experiences. In June 1921 Sun Yat-sen received another letter from Chicherin, which was written the previous October, and urged China to "enter resolutely the path of good friendship with us [Soviet Russia]" and proposed to set up trade relations between the two sides at once. The Far East Republic's "material support" and Soviet Russia's "financial assistance" were what Sun Yat-sen needed urgently to make up for what

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<sup>109</sup> FO 228/3211, April 1921.

<sup>110</sup> Fuse, Soviet Policy in the Orient, p 225-6; FO 228/3211 April 1921.

<sup>111</sup> M. A. Persits, Sun Yat-sen, 1866-1966, (Moscow, 1966).

<sup>112</sup> Khodorov also visited Sun twice in 1920. Shi Keqiang (Sheveliaov), 'Sun Yat-sen and the Dalta Agency', Sun Zhongshan he ta de shidai, Vol 1, pp 562-563.

he was unable to obtain from the Western powers. Although Sun was willing to obtain substantive aid from Soviet Russia, he did not want to see Soviet diplomats dealing with the Beijing Government.

On 7 November 1921, in a reply to a letter from Chicherin concerning Soviet Russia's relationship with Sun Yat-sen, Lenin directed: "[We] should treat Sun Yat-sen as warmly as possible and write to him frequently but all this must be kept secret. Our representative should be sent to Guangzhou."<sup>113</sup>

The first formal Comintern delegate Sun Yat-sen met was a Dutch Communist named Sneevliet (alias Maring), who had had considerable revolutionary experience in Indonesia. After participating in the founding congress of the CCP in July 1921, Maring remained in Shanghai for several months and got in touch with the GMD headquarters there. After talks with Zhang Ji and several other prominent members of the GMD, he formed a very good impression of their party. Then Maring travelled to Guilin, where Sun Yat-sen's military headquarters for the Northern Expedition campaign had been set up. In January 1922, with Zhang Tailei as his interpreter, Maring had talks with Sun Yat-sen on several occasions and lectured Sun and his cadres on the Russia Revolution and Lenin's recent New Economic Policy. They discussed the possibilities of co-operation between Soviet Russia and the GMD.<sup>114</sup> After his visit to Guilin and Guangzhou, Maring believed that most GMD leaders were inclined towards socialism, that some of them were even willing to propagate communism within the Party, and that the GMD supported the labour movement. Therefore Maring suggested that only the

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<sup>113</sup> 'Lenin to Chicherin', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 67.

<sup>114</sup> H. Sneevliet, 'My Association with Sun Yat-sen, Some Personal Memoirs', The China Quarterly, No 48.

GMD was qualified to lead the national liberation revolution at that stage and that the CCP should work with them.<sup>115</sup> In August 1922, the ECCI approved Maring's suggestion that the Chinese Communists organised Communist groups within the GMD in order to form a United Front.<sup>116</sup> Dov Bing attributes the policies of co-operation between the CCP and the GMD to Sneevliet, calling it the "Sneevlietian Strategy".<sup>117</sup> In fact, that Communists should support the national liberation movement and form an alliance with the national bourgeoisie in colonial and backward countries was the pre-existing policy and strategy formulated by Lenin, and Maring's own contribution was merely to put them into practice in China using his own method of instructing the Communists to join the GMD as individuals.

Soviet Russia's and the Comintern's purposes for their numerous contacts with Sun Yat-sen and his Party varied at different stages: to draw the Chinese nationalists into common anti-imperialist struggle led by Moscow; to urge the Southern Government to support Soviet diplomacy in order to use it as a bargaining counter in negotiations with the Beijing Government; to enlist the GMD as a socialist party under the control of the Comintern; and to persuade Sun Yat-sen himself and some of his followers to form a Communist party.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Maring, 'My Visits to the Revolutionaries in South China', 30 July 1922, Dangshi Yanjiu Ziliao, (1981), Nos 6-7; 'Report of Comrade Maring for the ECCI, 11 July 1922', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 239.

<sup>116</sup> 'Instructions for the ECCI Representative in South China, August 1922, Sneevliet Archive, No 224, quoted from Saich, OFUFC, Vol 1, pp 328-9.

<sup>117</sup> Dov Bing, 'Revolution in China: Sneevlietian Strategy', (MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1968).

<sup>118</sup> Sun Yat-sen once said to Han Linfu, a Communist who then was a member of the GMD's Central Committee, that Lenin had originally intended to ask Sun himself to become the founder of the CCP. [Cited from Yang Kuisong, Zhonggong yu Mosike de guanxi (The CCP's Relations with Moscow, 1920-60), Taipei: Dongda Publishing House, 1997, p 53.].

Sun Yat-sen and his party were finally brought into an alliance with Soviet Russia and the Chinese Communist Party in 1923. But they did not give up their own political programme and doctrines. Sun believed that the pressing matter of the moment was to overthrow the reactionary Beijing Government and to unify the whole China by military force; to develop China's industry and to carry out social reform with moderate means. With the adoption of the New Economic Policy, Sun believed that Soviet Russia had discarded unrealistic "Communism" and had embarked on a policy in line with his own Principle of the People's Livelihood and his Plan of Industrial Development.<sup>119</sup> This shift in Soviet policy made the alliance possible.

In 1923, Sun Yat-sen and Joffe, the Soviet Plenipotentiary, issued an Joint Statement. Its first clause read:

Dr. Sun Yat-sen holds that the Communistic order or even the Soviet system cannot actually be introduced into China, because there do not exist here the conditions for the successful establishment of either Communism or Sovietism.<sup>120</sup>

This statement clearly showed Sun's attitude towards Communism and Soviet system. All of Sun's and other GMD leaders' responses to Soviet Russia and the Comintern demonstrated that they did not intend to co-operate with Soviet Russia unconditionally, did not accept the Bolsheviks' entire proposals unreservedly, and never had any intention to become uncritically obedient to the Bolsheviks.

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<sup>119</sup> Sun expressed this view to Liao Zhongkai. See Li Yunhan, Cong ronggong dao qingdang, p 116.

<sup>120</sup> Cited from Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 141.

Although Soviet Russia and the Comintern did succeed in forging a United Front of the Communists and the Nationalists, they failed to make the GMD fully obey orders from Moscow.

### **Section 3. Contact with Anarchist Groups**

As one school of socialist thought, anarchism had a significant influence upon the Chinese radicals during the first two decades of the century. Recently some foreign scholars have focused their attention on this aspect of Chinese radicalism. They correctly point to the fact that Chinese anarchists not only helped to introduce socialism to China but also played an important part in the radical organisations during the May 4<sup>th</sup> period and that many anarchists even joined in the early Communist groups.<sup>121</sup> Since the anarchist movement in China had such close connections with the origins of the CCP, it is necessary to review briefly its history up to 1920.

Anarchism as a trend of modern thought was introduced into China at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1903, a number of books and booklets on anarchism from Japan were published in Chinese translation. Afterwards, many young intellectuals, especially those who were abroad, inclined to anarchism, and some of them took steps to form anarchist societies. The first Chinese anarchist group, consisting of Li Shi-zeng, Wu Zhi-hui, Chu Min-yi and Zhang Jing-jiang,

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<sup>121</sup> A. Dirlik, Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); R. A. Scalapino and G. T. Yu, The Chinese Anarchist Movement, (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1961).

appeared in Paris in 1906 and published in Paris an anarchist weekly magazine in Chinese entitled Xin Shiji (the New Century). The following year, some Chinese students studying in Japan, such as Zhang Ji, Liu Shi-pei and Jing Mei-jiu, formed a Society for the Study of Socialism in Tokyo. The purpose of this Society was actually the study of anarchism. Japanese anarchist pioneers such as Kotoku Shusui and Osugi Sakae often gave lectures at the meetings of the Society.<sup>122</sup> The Chinese anarchists in Tokyo published Tianyibao (Natural Justice) and Hengbao (Balance). Through these anarchist publications, and thanks to students returned from abroad, the seeds of anarchism were sown in China.

Liu Si-fu, better known as Shi Fu, was an important promoter of the anarchist movement in China. Liu converted to anarchism in 1905, at nearly the same time that he joined Sun Yat-sen's Tongmeng Hui. Shi Fu returned to China in 1906 and organised the Chinese Assassination Corps in 1908, whose aim was to kill high-ranking officials of the Qing dynasty. When the Republic of China was founded, Shi Fu organised Huiming Xueshe (the Society of Crowing in the Dark), which started to publish Huiming Lu (the Record of the Society of Crowing in the Dark) in 1913, and after a few issues changed its title to Min Sheng (People's Voice), thus the Society was later called Minsheng She ( People's Voice Society). In 1914, Shi Fu founded the Anarchist Comrades' Association which soon had branches in several cities. When Shi Fu died in 1915 the Chinese anarchist movement lost a dynamic figure, but efforts to spread anarchism continued. More anarchist societies were established. Among them the most famous were Shi She (Real Society), Qun She (Mass Society) and Ping She (Peace Society). These three

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<sup>122</sup> Gao Jun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfuzhuyi zai Zhongguo (Anarchism in China), (Changsha: Hunan People's Press, 1984), Vol 1, p 22.

societies merged with the People's Voice Society into Jinhua She (Evolution Society) in 1919, and around the same time Zhen She (Truth Society) and Fendou She (Struggle Society) were set up. Each society published a magazine and various booklets and therefore, a prolific anarchist literature was widely distributed in China.

The teachings of various anarchist thinkers - Proudhon, Stirner, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Tolstoy - were introduced to China, but most Chinese anarchists' favourite theory was Kropotkin's anarchist communism. As an ideology imported from abroad, anarchism could take root in China rapidly not only because it was in harmony with Chinese traditional Taoist thought, but also because the anarchist teachings of opposition to authority and oppression had a strong appeal for radical Chinese youth, who felt these ideas were simple and direct. For a period of time, anarchism became the mainstream of Chinese radical thinking.

The GMD theorist Dai Jitao made a penetrating analysis on why anarchism became an ideological trend among Chinese youths:

After a set of significant reforms ... over the previous 20 years and more, China's politics were still not clear; the system was not improved yet; the state could not be unified; social life was still rather poor; and education and culture could not be popularised. However, oppression from the surrounding world was increasing day by day. People were anxious about whether the nation would disintegrate, and the disaster of national subjugation and racial extermination would come soon. As they felt quite helpless, nobody could find a way to struggle. Therefore, the youth's thinking naturally tended to a mentality which cast aside politics, despised law, hated the army . ... The



ideological trend of anarchism from 1914 to 1917/1918 demonstrates a situation where the Chinese people had come to the end of their tether.<sup>123</sup>

After World War 1, many progressive Chinese intellectuals lost faith in the democracy of a Western-style Republic and turned to socialism. Anarchism then became the most popular and pervasive of all forms of socialism in China. Therefore many radical individuals and organisations were affected by anarchism to a greater or lesser extent. At first when the Bolshevik agents came to China they could not find Marxists or Communists in China. The most radical revolutionaries they could find were anarchists or persons influenced by anarchism and hence the latter naturally became the target and allies of the Bolsheviks.

The Chinese anarchist who became the first to co-operate with the Russian Bolsheviks was perhaps Zhang Mochi. Zhang Mochi (alias Zhang Minquan and Sheng Guocheng), was an editor of Minsheng's Esperanto edition from 1914.<sup>124</sup> Before 1917, Zhang was sent abroad as a representative of the Chinese anarchists to attend some anarchist conferences in Europe. He happened to be in Moscow at the time of the October Revolution. Soon he began to work on behalf of Soviet Russia and returned to China in late spring or early summer of 1918 when the student movement against the Sino-Japanese Joint Military Defence Pact reached its climax. About 3,000 students who had been studying in Japan returned to China in protest at the military pact and a number of them organised the Returned Students' National Salvation League. Zhang joined the League in Shanghai and became the leader of a sub-organisation, the Slide-Show and Lecture Team.

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<sup>123</sup> Dai Jitao, Qingnian zhi lu (The Road of Youth), (Guangzhou, 1942), pp 6-7.

<sup>124</sup> 'The Recollection of Zheng Peigang', (February-May, 1964), Gao Jun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi zai Zhongguo, Vol 1, p 515.

Zhang Mochi admitted later that “he was a friend of Colonel Popov”,<sup>125</sup> but did not indicate when he had come to know Popov. However, Popov’s first visit to Shanghai almost coincided with Zhang’s return and they both then concentrated on the same target - the Japanese imperialists. Zhang was also a member of the Chinese Socialist Party, to which Li Dazhao also belonged. In the Spring of 1919, Zhang presented several books and pamphlets on socialism to Bai Jian-wu, one of Li Dazhao’s close friends.<sup>126</sup>

Another Chinese whom Popov visited was someone called Chin, who was reported to be an “anarchist working on a Chinese paper of Shanghai.”<sup>127</sup> Since the British Intelligence report only gives the surname of this man, it is difficult to identify “Chin”. It is worth noticing that, when Joffe arrived in Shanghai in 1923 he wrote a letter to a Chinese of the “New Russia Society” in Shanghai, whose surname was “Ch’in”.<sup>128</sup> In the Wade alphabetic transcription, “Chin” and “Ch’in” can be rendered “Jin” or “Qin”. There were certain Chinese anarchists with such surnames. For example, Jin Jiafeng and Qin Baopu, both of whom joined the Socialist Youth League organised by Soviet agents in 1920. Besides them, another possibility is that the “Chin” in question was Jing Meijiu, an old anarchist and an old member of the GMD, who was a member of parliament and the editor in chief of several anarchist papers. From time to time Jing translated several works from Esperanto into Chinese with Zhang Mochi as co-translator. One can surmise as much since, in another report of the British Intelligence Bureau in Shanghai, a Chinese named Chin Mei-cheu in 1921 was living with a Korean Communist leader

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<sup>125</sup> FO 228/3140, p 76.

<sup>126</sup> Bai Jianwu riji, the diary of 3 April 1919.

<sup>127</sup> FO 405/233, No 107.

<sup>128</sup> ‘Shanghai Municipal Council Police Report’, 24 January 1923.

Pak Chin-sun.<sup>129</sup> Pak was then in China as a representative of the Comintern. No matter who this “Chin” or “Ch’in” was, it indicated that the agents of Soviet Russia and the Comintern were successful in gaining the co-operation of some important Chinese anarchists.

Since Esperanto was a language many Chinese anarchists knew, and was used in some Chinese anarchist periodicals, the Soviet agents tried to have a hand in Esperanto teaching in Shanghai and Beijing. In February 1920, a Soviet agent V. A. Stopany, who had formerly been a bookkeeper with the Russian Publishing and Printing Company and was working on the Shanghai Life, started a free night school for teaching Esperanto in Shanghai with Lu Shikai, an old Chinese anarchist scholar of Esperanto and one of Zhang Mochi’s close friends. The night school was held at the New China School (Xinhua Xuexiao), which was a peripheral organisation of the Anarchist Comrades’ Association.<sup>130</sup> All the teachers at the Night School were anarchists. It was said that there were at most one hundred students attending the classes. Stopany often expounded his Communist ideas to his students, and encouraged “the study of Esperanto as a knowledge of that language would enable them to promote internationalism and Communism.”<sup>131</sup> Soon the Esperanto Night School and the activities of its staff aroused the suspicion of the authorities in Shanghai. In a secret interview, Lu Shikai admitted that he and his Russian confrere were working in the interests of the Bolsheviks.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> FO 228/3140, p 71.

<sup>130</sup> ‘Report from the Commissioner of Police in Shanghai’, Reports of the American Consul General in Shanghai, Class 800, 1920; Ge Maochun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, p 961.

<sup>131</sup> FO 228/3214, 4 march 1920; FO 405/233, No 107.

<sup>132</sup> FO 228/3214, 19 February 1920.

In North China, the Bolshevik agents also got in touch with the Chinese anarchists, and especially with the members of the Evolution Society and Huzhu Tuan (Mutual Aid Corps), which mainly consisted of anarchists at Beijing University and Beijing Normal University. Polevoy, as a liaison man for the Comintern, had very close relations with Huang Ling-shuang and was on intimate terms with Chen De-rong, who even lived with Polevoy in the same compound in Beijing for a period of time.<sup>133</sup> In Tianjin, some Bolshevik agents who were living in that city made contacts with anarchists, especially the members of Zhen She (Truth Society) there. Jiang Banruo and Zhang Zhi are cases in point. They used to talk together about how to do revolutionary work.

Polevoy and other agents ardently desired to expand their contacts with anarchists and other radicals throughout China. In a letter to Zheng Peigang, an important member of the People's Voice Society in South China, Polevoy claimed that he was a Bolshevik and was willing to liaise with the Chinese anarchists in order to make joint efforts for social revolution; and that he hoped the Chinese anarchists would join hands with the Russian Bolsheviks.<sup>134</sup> For this purpose, the Bolshevik agents used to make use of certain anarchists as intermediaries. For example, Huang Lingshuang accompanied Soviet agents to South China as an interpreter on several occasions; Chen Derong was sent to Jiangsu to make contact with a group of youths there; and Jiang Banruo went to Zhangzhou as a liaison man between Soviet agents and Chen Jiongming.

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<sup>133</sup> 'Guan Qian's Report, 28 February 1921', in [Beiyang Military Archives (24) 199], Jindaishi ziliao, (Beijing, 1957) No 5.

<sup>134</sup> Zheng Peigang, 'Some facts on Anarchism in China', Ge Maochun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, p 956; From Zheng Peigang's whole account, we can see that Polevoy's letter was posted not later than the beginning of 1920; Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielü.

Chen Jiongming was a believer in anarchism and had been a member of the China Assassination Corps led by Liu Sifu many years before. Towards the end of 1919, Chen invited anarchists such as Liang Bingxuan, Liu Shixin, Yu Keshui and Xu Zhenfeng to Zhangzhou to promote "social revolution". They edited Min xing (Fujian Star) in order to propagate new ideas. By the spring of 1920 Zhang Mochi also went to Zhangzhou from Shanghai to take up a position as Chen Jiongming's advisor on education.<sup>135</sup> From the end of April to the beginning of May 1920, General Potapov's team visited Zhangzhou and they held several talks with the anarchists as well as with General Chen. In a talk, Potapov said:

If you understand socialism and admit the necessity of social revolution, no matter which way you go and what action you take, you are our Russian Bolsheviks' comrades. Therefore, we should work together and help each other. The Soviet Government wish to have friendship with all revolutionaries in the world, especially in Asian countries.<sup>136</sup>

Some members of Voitinsky's team also plunged into work among the Chinese anarchists. Some anarchists recalled that a Bolshevik "Stromisky" organised a set of discussion meetings attended mainly by anarchists such as Yuan Zhenying, Yu Keshui, Zheng Peigang, Jin Jiafeng, Ye Tiandi and Shen Zhongjiu.<sup>137</sup> In Autumn 1920, Voitinsky sent Stoyanovich and Perlin to Guangzhou to work among anarchists including Liang Bingxuan, Liu Shixin and so on.

From around the summer of 1920, Lizerovitch began to devote his main energy to getting in touch with young Chinese anarchists. In September 1920

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<sup>135</sup> FO 228/3214, 12 April 1920; FO 228/2987, 26 April 1920.

<sup>136</sup> Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielu.

<sup>137</sup> Ge Maochun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 2.

Lizerovich and other Bolshevik agents attended a conference of anarchists from Shanghai, Hangzhou and Suzhou. During the sessions they worked assiduously with the help of some Chinese to convert those attending to Bolshevism.<sup>138</sup> In April 1921, Lizerovich with his friend Maher, a Portuguese, went to Wuhan, where they were joined by two Chinese anarchists Huang Lingshuang and Yuan Zhenying. Their purpose was to contact Yun Daiying and his friends, most of whom were believing in anarchism then.<sup>139</sup> Prior to this, Voitinsky's assistants Mamayev and Polevoy had also undertaken similar work in Wuhan.<sup>140</sup>

The Soviet agents also made contact with anarchists in some other cities, but it is not necessary to go into the same detail in each case. Suffice it to say that their goals were to enlist the help of the Chinese anarchists for their revolutionary propaganda campaign; to use their organisational network for the establishment of the Socialists' League (see Chapter 6) and early Communist groups and to persuade some of the anarchists to change their beliefs and to become Communists. Those activities, again, are outside the range of my discussion at this point, and will be dealt with in later chapters.

Why was it that the largest groups of Chinese radicals whom the Soviet agents got in touch with at first were anarchists? To answer this we must take into account the special historical background and Soviet Russia's policies towards anarchists at that time. By doing so we will see then that what the Bolsheviks did among the Chinese was by no means accidental.

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<sup>138</sup> FO 228/3216, No 37; No 41.

<sup>139</sup> 'Yuan Zhenying's Recollections', Ge Maochun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan; FO 228/3211, May 1921.

<sup>140</sup> Bao Huiseng, Bao Huiseng huiyilu, (Collected Memoirs of Bao Huiseng), (Beijing: People's Press, 1981).

Firstly, as has been shown, anarchism was a type of radical socialist thought which had long been disseminated and therefore had widespread influence in China. Anarchists were the only formation in China at that time to advocate a social revolution from below. In all, there were more than fifty anarchist societies in China during the May 4th period. Moreover, all anarchists are internationalists. Without exception, the Chinese anarchist movement kept close links with the international anarchist movement. With this tradition, the Chinese anarchists were attuned to accepting aid from foreign countries and, conversely, offering help to their foreign comrades.

Secondly, anarchist and Marxist ideologies have certain points in common. Both advocate social revolution to overthrow capitalist rule and eliminate the system of exploitation. Their ultimate aim is to realise an ideal society without classes or states. Anarcho-communism's principle of production and distribution in a future communist society, namely "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", is identical with that of Marxism. Originally anarchism and Marxism were different schools within the same working class movement; as Min sheng correctly pointed out, Marxists and anarchists belonged to "the same category but to different schools".<sup>141</sup>

Thirdly, many anarchists sympathised with and supported the Bolshevik Revolution from the very beginning. Since the events of the October Revolution followed in some ways the pattern anticipated by the anarchist theorists, for instance, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, seizure of the means of production and establishment of workers' control and abolition of class distinctions and civil

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<sup>141</sup> Min sheng (People's Voice), 1921, Vol 31.

ranks, some anarchists regarded them as having met "certain fundamental principles and methods of Anarchist Communism."<sup>142</sup> The Chinese anarchists also hailed Russia's social revolution. A Chinese anarchist periodical Laodong (Labour Monthly) wrote: "Now China's neighbour Russia has waged a just and honourable social revolution to make equal the rich and the poor."<sup>143</sup> Another article in this periodical even described the Russian Bolsheviks as espousing anarcho-communism and thus regarded them as their "Russian brothers".<sup>144</sup> Zhu Qianzhi, an anarchist student at Beijing University, expressed the opinion of many Chinese anarchists when he wrote that: "at that time the ordinary youths in China who advocated revolution, admired Russia's success and tried to use violent force to achieve the goals [of anarchism]."<sup>145</sup>

Fourthly, the Bolsheviks made efforts to draw support from anarchists internationally. Since most anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists glorified revolution and advocated "direct action" by the masses to destroy capitalist rule, Lenin counted on them to play an important role in the "World Revolution". The Bolsheviks adopted quite different tactics towards anarchists in Russia and their co-thinkers in other countries. Not long after the October Revolution the Bolsheviks began their suppression of the Russian anarchist movement because the anarchists were denouncing the Bolsheviks' dictatorship. On the other hand, in their activities abroad the Bolsheviks were inclined to treat foreign anarchists in a friendly fashion. Lenin believed that proletarian elements were driven to anarchism by a natural

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<sup>142</sup> Alexander Berkman, The Russian Tragedy, (Orkney, 1976), p 37.

<sup>143</sup> Chi Ping, 'Biographical Sketch of Lenin - the Pioneer of Russian Social Revolution', Laodong (Labour Monthly), (Shanghai, 20 April 1918), No 2.

<sup>144</sup> Yi Chun, 'Policies and Tactics of Russian Bolsheviks', Laodong (20 April 1918), No 2.

<sup>145</sup> Min duo (People's Bell), (1923), Vol 4, No 4.



hatred of the opportunism and reformism of the Second International and he therefore thought that, once their misunderstanding of Marxism was cleared up, they would become sincere supporters of Soviet power. Some workers' organisations with anarcho-syndicalist leanings, such as the I. W. W. of America, Britain and Australia and the organisations within the French syndicalist movement, were invited to join the Comintern and the Bolsheviks also sent emissaries to establish close relations with them. In a letter to the British Communist Sylvia Pankhurst in August 1919 Lenin pointed out that many anarchist workers had proved to be "our best comrades and friends, the best of revolutionaries".<sup>146</sup> In September 1919, the ECCI issued a "Circular Letter on Parliament and Soviets", which read:

In France, America, England, Germany, as the class struggle grows more acute, all revolutionary elements are joining the communist movement by merging or co-ordinating their activities under the slogan of Soviet power. The anarcho-syndicalist groups, and the groups which just call themselves anarchist, are joining in the general trend. The ECCI welcomes them most cordially.<sup>147</sup>

It is clear that the Bolsheviks made use of anarchists abroad to serve their own purposes: to overthrow the capitalist governments in their respective countries; to check the armed intervention and economic blockade of Soviet Russia by the main imperialist powers; to cripple the 'revisionist' forces of the Second International; and to expand the Communist forces of the Third International led by the Russian Bolsheviks.

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<sup>146</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 29, p 562.

<sup>147</sup> Degras, The Communist International, 1919-1943, Vol 1, pp 66-67.

Finally, some Soviet agents were themselves anarchists or had had strong relations with anarchists before. For example, Ivanov was a disciple of Kropotkin and was also said to be an anarcho-syndicalist;<sup>148</sup> while Lizerovitch was reported to have been on good terms with British anarchists before he came to China in 1917.<sup>149</sup>

Stopany made known his belief in an article published in Min sheng in 1921:

I am in extreme favour of anarchism, I believe that only by the realisation of anarchism can real happiness and freedom be attained. ... Non-government state is our goal, but if we wish to realise the goal, we have to be engaged in various movements. ... I am a Bolshevik and Bolshevism is merely a way to reach the first stage of achieving our goal. So we cannot criticise the Russian Revolution.<sup>150</sup>

Like Stopany, many Russian anarchists rendered their help to the Bolsheviks at certain periods. In the October Revolution numerous Russian anarchists, alongside workers and sailors, many imbued with a strong spirit of anarchism, joined the insurrection to overthrow Kerensky's regime. During the Civil War many anarchists helped the Bolsheviks defend the Revolution against the White Guards and the foreign interventionists in spite of their difference of views with the Bolsheviks and their suffering under the Bolshevik dictatorship. Some of them even joined the RCP(B) and were called "Anarcho-Bolsheviks". In August 1919 Lenin was moved to remark that many anarchists were "becoming the most

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<sup>148</sup> Kropotkin's theory is anarcho-communism, whereas anarcho-syndicalism is the doctrine of Bakunin. Perhaps Ivanov believed in both schools of anarchism.

<sup>149</sup> This might be a reason why Lizerovitch sometimes was not trusted by other Bolsheviks. One report said that Lizerovitch 'is now only indulging the same passions without being in the confidence of the Bolshevik Government.' (FO 405/228, No 160).

<sup>150</sup> Min sheng, No 31, p 406.

dedicated supporters of Soviet power.”<sup>151</sup> But once the Civil War was over and in particular after the Soviet Government had suppressed the Kronstadt Rebellion and began to adopt the NEP, the Russian anarchists met merciless suppression. The famous anarchist Alexander Berkman expressed the feeling of most anarchists: “it is socialist ideals and the fate of the Revolution which are being destroyed.”<sup>152</sup> In March 1921 Stopany committed suicide and nobody knew the reason. It is more than likely that he had heard about these developments and the anarchists’ fate in Russia and felt that his hopes had been shattered.<sup>153</sup>

As has been explained, many Soviet agents in China had connections with the Bolshevik headquarters in Siberia and some of them were sent from there. Initially the highest Bolshevik leader in Siberia was A. M. Krasnoschekov, who became the President of the Far Eastern Council of People’s Commissars in February 1918 and later became General Secretary of the Dal’buro of the RCP(B) holding a concurrent post as President of the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia. This man had joined the I. W. W. when he was in exile in America and this was one reason why he was sometimes attacked by his opponents within the RCP(B) for “having a smack of anarcho-syndicalism”.<sup>154</sup> He even summoned to Siberia the famous anarchist Bill Shatov, who had been a member of the Military-Revolutionary Committee at the time of the October insurrection, and appointed him Minister of Transport in the Far Eastern Republic.<sup>155</sup> With such leaders as

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<sup>151</sup> Avrich, The Russian Anarchists, pp 196-199.

<sup>152</sup> Berkman, The Russian Tragedy, p 66.

<sup>153</sup> His article in Min sheng continued: “Once an elite holds the state power, in the meantime controlling all enterprises and property, it will be liable to emerge as new capitalists again.” (No 31, p 406).

<sup>154</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties.

<sup>155</sup> Avrich, The Russian Anarchists, p 197.

Krasnoschekov, it is not surprising that the Bolshevik headquarters in Siberia should have recruited anarchists as their agents in China. Logically, such agents would be likely to seek out Chinese with anarchist inclinations, too.

The above factors may help to explain why Soviet agents came into contact with large numbers of Chinese anarchists, and why the Chinese anarchists were willing to co-operate with the Bolsheviks. Some scholars have noticed the Bolsheviks' "intimate contact with the anarchists in China"<sup>156</sup> and the "important part" played by the Chinese anarchists in "the early organisational activities" of the CCP,<sup>157</sup> but they have failed to point out the reasons for this phenomenon and to indicate that this was one of the results of applying Lenin's tactics of allying with the anarchists abroad.<sup>158</sup>

#### **Section 4. Contact with People of Other Political Forces and of Various Circles**

As early as June 1920, Voitinsky proudly claimed that since his team had come to China, their work to enhance the connections had "made headway", and they had "already made contact with all leaders of the Chinese revolutionary movement."<sup>159</sup> As I have pointed out, their contacts were not confined to revolutionary organisations and elements. Besides the GMD, anarchist groups and some radical intellectuals who later became the founders of the CCP, the Soviet

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<sup>156</sup> Scalapino and Yu, The Chinese Anarchist Movement, p 44.

<sup>157</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 4.

<sup>158</sup> The same situation can be seen in Japan. The first persons the Comintern contacted in Japan were anarchists, among them Osugi Sakae.

<sup>159</sup> 'Voitinsky's Letter, June 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 28.

agents also established relations with other political parties and factions in China. These included the Chinese Socialist Party, led by Jiang Kanghu;<sup>160</sup> the Research Clique, headed by Liang Qichao; the Communication Clique, headed by Liang Shiyi; and some warlords such as Wu Peifu<sup>161</sup> and Zhang Zuolin<sup>162</sup> among the Beiyang military forces. In addition, Soviet agents had good relations with some liberalistic intellectuals, such as, Cai Yuanpei, Hu Shi and Tao Mehe. Since such contacts were fairly limited and had no bearing on the origins of the CCP, I need not recount them here in any detail. Arranging those Chinese with whom the Bolshevik agents made contact by occupation, we find that they belonged to various circles: educational, journalistic, business, industrial, military, political and so on. It should be noted that some people had relations with different political forces and belonged to more than one category. For examples, Li Dazhao had close relations with radical intellectuals, the Chinese Socialist Party, the Research Clique and the Zhili Faction; while Huang Jiemin, a GMD member and an anarchist, was active among students and also in educational, journalist, industrial and political circles. Such people naturally attracted the attention of the Bolsheviks and were used by the

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<sup>160</sup> One of leaders of the Central Organisational Bureau of the Chinese Communists in Russia once called Jiang Kang-hu as "intimate comrade" in 1920.(Li Yuzhen, Sun Zhongshan yu Gongchanguoji, p 85). The Comintern invited Jiang to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Comintern in 1921.

<sup>161</sup> Wu Peifu was a general of the Zhili faction of warlords, who not only directed his anti-foreign feeling against the Japanese, but also accused the Beijing government of being subservient to all foreigners. After Wu brought down Duan Qirui's Beijing government with the use of military force in July 1920, he intended to adopt a pro-Russia policy in order to curb the Japanese and therefore was once regarded by Russians as an ally. Subsequently, Soviet agents Voitinsky, Vilensky, Polevoy and Khodorov visited Wu and his officers. Cf. GLZDC and Bai Jianwu riji.

<sup>162</sup> Zhang Zuolin was the head of the Mukden faction of warlords, whose troops were mainly stationed in Manchuria. Soviet leaders believed that Zhang was a "running dog" of the Japanese, but they still sent several representatives to negotiate with him.

Bolsheviks as intermediaries in their dealings with various political forces and professional circles within Chinese society.

In addition to the wide range of contacts they established, the Bolsheviks adopted flexible tactics when forging links with the Chinese. They sometimes showed little discrimination with regard to the class status, political standing and religious beliefs of those whom they approached. Nevertheless, it can be found from the above that the group they most frequently contacted were intellectuals. As Borodin told Song Meiling, the Comintern had worked out various plans for working in different countries, but the first common measure was to recruit intellectuals to serve the Comintern and Soviet Russia; the best way to attract them was to make them believe that they were working for the poor and the oppressed and to stimulate their enthusiasm to struggle for an ideal society of Communism rather than use material benefits or bribes; and another method was to work among the religious groups which inclined to the left, because they were usually naive and less suspicious, and might possibly be won over to Communism.<sup>163</sup> Incredible as it may appear, there are several cases which illustrate the Bolsheviks' work with some Chinese with religious beliefs. For example, Zhang Tailei, Xu Qian and Huang Ping were Christians when they were first met by the Russian agents, and Chen Duxiu praised Christianity on the eve of becoming a disciple of Marx. Although Xu Qian did not become a Communist, he did a great deal of work for Soviet Russia and was later entrusted by Borodin, the chief Soviet advisor, with the highest post in the Wuhan Government. P. Mif, chief Comintern representative in China in the

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. Jiang-Song Meiling, Yu Bao Luoting tanhua de huiyi (Recollections of Talks with Borodin).

1930s, pointed out that during the early stage, the CCP contained several Christian-Socialists.<sup>164</sup>

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The Soviet agents contacted different sorts of Chinese at different periods for various purposes. For instance: they made use of the GMD mainly in their struggle against imperialism and the Beijing Government; they co-operated with the anarchists mainly for revolutionary propaganda and actions in order to destroy the old social order; Wu Peifu, Zhang Zuolin and Chen Jiongming were useful to them when they were establishing a foothold in China; and Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu were treated as their instruments for founding a Communist Party in China.

Soviet Russia's and the Comintern's relations with different forces in China varied according to changes in the political and military situation in the Far East and in Russia. When they felt that some people or organisations were no longer of use, relations with them would soon break down, as can be seen the way they treated anarchist organisations and many nationalists. In turn, once certain organisations or individuals realised they had become mere tools of Soviet Russia, they usually turned against both Russia and its creation, the CCP. This explains why some people, such as Zhang Ji, Zhu Zhuowen, Huang Lingshuang and Qin Baopu for example, who had been friends of Soviet agents at an early stage, later became resolute opponents of both the Communists and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, many Chinese people were convinced by Soviet Russia's "friendly" gestures, and to that extent China was opened wide to Bolshevik penetration.

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<sup>164</sup> P. Mif, Fifteen-years of Heroic Struggle, (Moscow, 1934, in Russian). Similar cases can also be found in the early Korean and Japanese Communist movements.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROPAGANDA AND AGITATION IN CHINA

People normally consider that the October Revolution had a great influence upon radical Chinese ideology, and Bolshevik propaganda played an important role in the rise of the Communist movement in China. An authoritative Chinese historian, He Ganzhi, points out: "The October Revolution brought Marxism-Leninism to the Chinese people, and showed them the way to their own liberation."<sup>1</sup> This statement is similar to Mao Zedong's and remains the orthodox point of view in mainland China. But until now, scant evidence has been given to back this sweeping statement. Therefore it has recently been challenged by some historians. For example, Xiang Qing rejects any significant Leninist influence on China before the spring of 1920 and argues:

It was not the case that the Russian revolutionaries came to China after the October Revolution and placed the works of Marx and Lenin into the hands of Chinese progressive elements. ... Instead, the Chinese progressive elements obtained news of the victory of the Russian Revolution from the news agencies of the bourgeoisie. Under the condition of the blockade of Sino-Russian communication, such a history of disseminating Marxism-Leninism continued until March 1920 when Sino-Soviet communication was resumed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ho Kan£chih, A History of the Modern Chinese Revolution, (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1959), pp 21-2.

<sup>2</sup> Xiang Qing, 'The Comintern and the Chinese Revolution in the Period of the Foundation of the CCP', Jindaishi yanjiu (1980), No 4.



M. Luk develops the argument:

There was little doctrinal influence from Russia before the summer of 1920. ... The early influence of the October Revolution was therefore a product of the self-generated interest of the Chinese themselves in that revolution, which was seen and analysed through their own spectacles. Soviet propaganda and Leninist ideas were definitely unimportant at this stage.<sup>3</sup>

Regardless of the different dates they give for the beginning of Soviet propaganda, both Xiang and Luk consider that there was no direct Soviet propaganda in China, or that Soviet propaganda was unimportant at this early stage and stress the initiative of Chinese radicals in accepting Marxism-Leninism and in following the way opened up by the October Revolution. Moreover, Luk confuses influence with propaganda. Influence is intangible and cannot be measured, and Soviet influence could have appeared before Soviet propaganda or might have been the result of the latter. The main reason why Xiang and Luk cannot see the early Soviet propaganda or even influence (aside from lack of evidence) is that they hold a narrow view of propaganda.

Propaganda is a systematic, deliberate effort to disseminate ideas, information or rumours with the intention of persuading numbers of other people to do or think as the propagandist wishes in order either to further or to damage a cause. Sometimes it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between propaganda and agitation. To Lenin, agitation denoted the activity of inciting the masses to action by playing on their instincts and passions, whereas propaganda referred to the educational activity of spreading Communist doctrines and methods. Since the Bolsheviks always

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<sup>3</sup> M. Luk, The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism, (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp 33-4.

emphasised the practical effects of propaganda, the content of their propaganda was not confined to doctrinal matters. In the early stages of Bolshevik activity, little dissemination of Marxism and Lenin's theory was conducted. Hence, if one limits oneself to a discussion of the dissemination of Communist ideology or Bolshevik doctrines, one will indeed find no propaganda. However, if one applies a broader definition of propaganda, different results emerge. In this chapter, I sometimes may use the term "propaganda" widely so that it encompasses agitation and, indeed, so that it covers both the ideological aspect and manipulative aspect of Soviet political communication.

Before discussing the subject, I have to point out that the introduction of Marxism into China did not start with the October Revolution. As early as 1899, Karl Marx's name and his doctrines were briefly mentioned in Wanguo gongbao (The Globe Magazine), which was published in Shanghai by English and American Christian missionaries. From 1901, translations from Japanese books were the main channel for the introduction of socialist ideas, including Marxism. From 1907 several Marxist works were translated into Chinese. However, those Chinese who introduced Marxism in this period merely regarded Marxism as one school of socialism, and nobody completely accepted or believed in it. It is true that the October Revolution helped arouse greater interest in Marxism among radical Chinese, because the Bolsheviks claimed to be adherents of orthodox Marxism and their achievement was regarded as the victory of Marxism. But in fact, the doctrines the Bolsheviks tried to inculcate into China were mainly Leninism, a synonym for Bolshevism.

The main issues I am going to investigate in this chapter are: the Bolsheviks' early propaganda in China and its main content; the intensive propaganda during the

CCP's founding period of 1920-21; and the tactics, means and effects of such propaganda.

The Bolsheviks always attached great importance to propaganda. In their struggle for World Revolution, the spoken and written word played a more continuous and vital role than did bullets or roubles. An observer remarked that the whole of early Soviet foreign policy and diplomacy could be summed up by one word - propaganda.<sup>4</sup> The Comintern in its first year, as Zinoviev declared, "was nothing but a propagandist society".<sup>5</sup> Although the initial focal point of Bolsheviks' propaganda was the West, they did not neglect the East for they believed that the East was the backyard of imperialist countries. In November 1919, at the Second Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Eastern Peoples, Lenin pointed out that the immense task confronting the Eastern Revolutionaries was "to continue to ensure that Communist propaganda is carried on in every country in a language the people understand."<sup>6</sup> Bukharin also declared that, "We must pursue the tactics of universal support of the international revolution, ... by propagating revolts and insurrection in the colonies ...".<sup>7</sup> Some Bolsheviks even believed, "In comparison with the already corrupted West, the virgin land of the East is readily receptive to Communist ideas,"<sup>8</sup> and they therefore considered the East was a better area to propagate Communism.

From 1918 several special institutions were established by the Bolsheviks to run propaganda work in the East, such as the Department of International Propaganda

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<sup>4</sup> J. B. Whitton and A. Larson, Propaganda, Towards Disarmament in the War of Words, (New York, 1964), p 27.

<sup>5</sup> Degras, The Communist International, Vol 1, p 166.

<sup>6</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 30, p 162.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from Whitton and Larson, Propaganda, towards Disarmament in the War of the Words, p 26.

<sup>8</sup> Zhizn Natsionalnostej, 7 December 1919.

under the Central Bureau of Muslim Organisations of the RCP(B), the Information and Agitation Bureau under the Siberian Regional Committee of the RCP(B), the Council for International Propaganda under the Turkestan Commission of the Central Executive Committee of the RCP(B) and the Council for Propaganda and Action of the Peoples of the East under the ECCI. All of them were charged with spreading propaganda in China as well as in other Eastern countries and some of them even had Chinese sections. Many schools for training propagandists and agitators selected the Chinese in Russia to undergo a course in the principles and practice of Bolshevism and taught Chinese language to the people of other races.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the schools, a number of propaganda trains were formed, fitted with cinema apparatus and equipped with literature to meet the requirements of the various races. Once a train which was "composed of ten cars laden with literature intended for Korea, China, Mongolia and India" was reported to have left Moscow for the borderlands.<sup>10</sup> In August 1920, Radek spoke before the Congress of Eastern Peoples at Baku: "We have already called attention to the intense activity of the Bolshevik propaganda throughout the different countries of the East, extending as far as China and Japan, ...."<sup>11</sup> From the propaganda bases in Soviet Russia's borderlands and from Moscow, the apostles of Bolshevik principles spread to and penetrated nearly every Asian country.<sup>12</sup> China was certainly one of their destinations.

In fact, Communism was not the major subject of Bolshevik propaganda during the period when Soviet Russia was suffering from foreign armed intervention

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<sup>9</sup> In Turkestan alone, there were 54 such schools which opened before 1920. FO 228/3211, Series of February 1920.

<sup>10</sup> Chapman, The Chinese Revolution, p 60; China Advertiser, (Tianjin), 21 February 1920.

<sup>11</sup> Levy (ed.), Revolutionary Radicalism, p 1613.

<sup>12</sup> Chapman, The Chinese Revolution, p 60.

and economic blockade. In the early stages, their propaganda in China mainly played a supporting role in the Soviet Government's Far Eastern strategy and was conducted in accordance with Soviet policies towards China. The main menace to the Bolsheviks in Siberia and the Far East at that time was Japan's invasion. The Bolsheviks also worried that Japan would collude with the Chinese Government, based on the Sino-Japanese "mutual defence" pact, to use China's territory and troops for attacking Russia. So, their propagandists' first task was to incite the Chinese people to fight against imperialist Japan as well as other Western powers and to overthrow the pro-Japanese Chinese Government; the other task was to gain the friendship of the Chinese people and to establish diplomatic relations in order to help overcome the Bolshevik regime's isolation in the world. In the light of this, the gist of Narkomindel's instructions in February 1918 to local Soviets in Siberia was to employ "every opportunity in the press, at meetings, and in leaflets" to exhort the Eastern people to look to Socialist Russia as their "salvation" from the dangers of invasion, violence and lawlessness of the Japanese-European capitalists and aggressors.<sup>13</sup> In August 1919, when Vilensky was dispatched to the Russian Far East, the Politburo of the RCP(B) instructed him to arouse the masses of China, Mongolia and Korea to break away from the oppression of foreign capitalists; to strengthen agitation work in the East Asia by publishing books, pamphlets and leaflets.<sup>14</sup>

Under such instructions, early Soviet propaganda was centred on the theme of anti-imperialism, especially against the Japanese. For example, when Popov, who acted as an inspector of propaganda in the Far East, first came to China in May 1918,

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<sup>13</sup> R. Mirovitskaya, 'The First Responses in China to the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution', The Far Eastern Affair, (1978), Vol 1, p 147.

<sup>14</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 38-9.

he published an "Appeal from a Russian Proletarian" in a paper in Shanghai, attacking Japan and the White leaders of the Russian colony in Shanghai.<sup>15</sup> After the downfall of the Soviets in Siberia and the Russian Far East in summer 1918, many Russian Bolsheviks went to China with proclamations translated into Chinese to agitate for the boycotting of Japanese goods.<sup>16</sup> In August 1919, a leaflet was found entitled "Appeal to Chinese Workmen", which was mainly circulated among Chinese workers along the CER in the North East of China. It pointed out that the Paris Peace Conference had passed a resolution to put Shandong province under Japan's control, so Chinese land was going to be annexed by expansionist Japan and warned that 'we Chinese' would become the slaves of Japan. However, "our compatriots must not be disappointed by our isolated position, since Soviet Russia's workers and peasants who are fighting against the Russian capitalists and the White Army have shown sympathy for the Chinese; ... The Russians ... are not only fighting for themselves, but also fighting for the freedom of all oppressed races of the world." It went on to appeal to Chinese workers to co-operate with their Russian comrades in strikes and to unite as one to combat the aggressor Japan.<sup>17</sup>

As for general Soviet propaganda on Chinese territory, it began at nearly the same time as the advent of the first Bolsheviks. Nearly all agents who were dispatched from Soviet Russia to China in 1918, such as Verestchak, Makaroff, Popov, Aromovitch and Janes de Mezey, were entrusted with the task of propaganda and agitation.

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<sup>15</sup> FO 228/3214, 30 May 1918; FO 228/3211, April 1921.

<sup>16</sup> FO 228/3211, Series of September 1919.

<sup>17</sup> FO 228/2020, No 37, 12 August 1919.

In 1919, Bolshevik propaganda in China had advanced noticeably. In March 1919 the Chinese Government was alerted to a Bolshevik conference in Shanghai for the purpose of spreading Bolshevik propaganda in China.<sup>18</sup> In the same month the Russian Minister to Beijing, Kudashev, informed the Chinese authorities that several Bolsheviks were agitating in Beijing and Tianjin.<sup>19</sup> Although the Chinese Government ordered local authorities to ban Bolshevik propaganda, it seems that they were unable to halt it. According to a report in the Japanese newspaper Nichi Nichi Shinbun (Daily News) of 11 April 1919, a Russian propagandist travelled up the Yangtze River from Shanghai. In the meantime five or six sorts of secret Bolshevik literature were circulating in Shanghai. The editorial of the paper expressed the fear that "China will become a breeding ground of Bolshevism."<sup>20</sup> On 16 June another Japanese paper Osaka Mainichi Shinbun (Osaka Daily News) reported that "the Russian Bolsheviks have sent many partisans to the interior of China to preach Bolshevism."<sup>21</sup> Bolshevik agents were also said to be spreading propaganda among the Muslim population in Xinjiang.<sup>22</sup> Although these warnings obviously exaggerated the facts, not all of the reports were merely rumours.

Some Soviet agents who could speak Chinese, English or Esperanto began their propaganda activity among Chinese intellectuals. Polevoy introduced the October Revolution and Soviet publications to certain Chinese intellectuals, such as Li Dazhao and Zhang Tailei, from 1918.<sup>23</sup> Ivanov, who started teaching Russian at

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<sup>18</sup> ZEGXSL, 21 March 1919; FO 228/3214, 27 March 1919.

<sup>19</sup> ZEGXSL, 26 March 1919.

<sup>20</sup> Chen bao, 17 Jun 1919.

<sup>21</sup> Xinwen bao (Shanghai Newspaper), June 19, 1919.

<sup>22</sup> ZEGXSL, 18 June 1919; FO 228/2767, 5 June 1919.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the relevant paragraphs in Section 1 of Chapter 3.

Beijing University in September 1919, sometimes expounded Lenin's theory of imperialism.<sup>24</sup>

Contrary to Xiang Qing's assertion, the Russian Bolsheviks did really put the works of Marx and Lenin into the hands of the Chinese before the spring of 1920. The first of such works brought into China might have been Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism. Müller's memoirs tell that, in 1919 Burtman and Müller himself "acquainted the Chinese students [in Tianjin and Beijing] with Lenin's work Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, often touching on problems relating to China."<sup>25</sup> Certain Chinese familiarised themselves with Lenin's main points on imperialism from this work. Luk mentions that from early 1919, many Chinese intellectuals were aware of the connections between capitalism and imperialism, but he unconvincingly asserts that "their understanding of the subject was not derived from Lenin but from Hobson" before the summer of 1920, simply on the grounds that Hobson's work was published in a Chinese paper in 1919.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, there were not many Russians or ex-POWs available to participate in propaganda work in China because of the language barrier. Moreover, their Western features made it hard for them to approach ordinary Chinese. Therefore, these propagandists' activities were limited in scope and effect. There was hence an urgent need to use the Chinese who were in Russia to do agitation and propaganda work.

In January 1919 Lenin issued a decree placing Chinese labourers in Russia under the particular protection of the Soviet Republic and organised a special

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<sup>24</sup> Nikiforov, SLOPK, p 146.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, p 115.

<sup>26</sup> Luk, The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism, p 27; p 57.



department for Bolshevik propaganda in China under a Chinese named Shun Yun-sun.<sup>27</sup> Several Chinese papers, such as Hua gong (The Chinese Labourers), Datong bao (Great Harmony), Zhendong bao (Shaking the East) and Gongchanzhuyi zhi xing (Communist Star), which were edited by the Chinese in Russia and subsidised by the Soviet Government, were published. These papers were mainly for the Chinese Red soldiers and workers in Russia, and some of them were also distributed along the Sino-Russian border or carried into China. According to the first Chairman of the All Russian Union of Chinese Workers, Liu Shaozhou, as soon as the Union's organ Datong bao (which sometimes carried poems praising Lenin and published the First Karakhan Manifesto to China) was off the press, Soviet military units transported large numbers of the paper for circulation along the Sino-Russian border.<sup>28</sup> Soon the Chinese press reported that the Soviet Government was distributing tens of thousands of copies of the Manifesto in Chinese.<sup>29</sup> Many other leaflets were also printed for propaganda purposes in China. In October 1919 the French Minister to Beijing informed the Chinese Foreign Ministry that "the Bolshevik Government has distributed many leaflets all over China which urge the Chinese people to oppose Britain, France and America."<sup>30</sup> Around this time, numerous Bolshevik leaflets directed at ordinary Chinese were circulated in several places in China.

Literature distribution was closely combined with oral agitation. From the beginning of 1919, many Chinese labourers who had been trained at propaganda schools or had joined the Red Army were sent to China to engage in propaganda

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<sup>27</sup> Levy (ed.), Revolutionary Radicalism, p 244.

<sup>28</sup> Liu Shaozhou, 'My Experiences in Soviet Russia before and after the October Revolution', Wenshi ziliao xuanji (Selected Materials on Chinese History and Culture), (Beijing, March 1971), No 60, pp 217-8.

<sup>29</sup> Shi bao, 20 September 1919.

<sup>30</sup> ZEGXSL, 17 October 1919.

activities with the help of the Soviet authorities.<sup>31</sup> It was reported that many militants among the homeward bound Chinese labourers carried large amounts of money and propaganda materials, which were hidden in double-bottomed suitcases, thermos flasks, clothes and hats.<sup>32</sup> As early as January 1919, the Chinese authorities in Manchuria found that "many Chinese labourers who had worked in Russia and supported the Bolsheviks agitated for Socialism on their return."<sup>33</sup> The agitation was first carried on in the border regions, and later, it was brought right into the interior as these labourers returned to their home towns. Soon reports reached Beijing about these Chinese "carrying out Bolshevik propaganda activity" among the workers on railways, in factories, down coal mines and even among soldiers.<sup>34</sup> The Beijing Government was worried in particular about trouble in the 5th Division of the Army, whose soldiers reacted favourably to Bolshevism when it was recommended by some Shandong men who had been in Russia.<sup>35</sup> This division's soldiers also issued some agitation leaflets which circulated among other military units.<sup>36</sup>

Zhong Yong-song, who was in charge of propaganda, dispatched many agitators to distribute copies of Lenin's photograph and to make speeches among the Chinese people in the border regions; in their speeches, Lenin was described as a reborn Genghis Khan, who would rule Asia and conquer Europe again.<sup>37</sup> There was

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<sup>31</sup> 'Rosta wireless dispatch of 8 January 1919', as quoted by Whiting, Soviet Policies in China, 1917-1924, p 36.

<sup>32</sup> Telegram of Bao Guiqing to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Beijing Government, 27 January 1919; Zhongguo xiandaishi ziliao xuanji, Vol 1, p 613.

<sup>33</sup> Archives of the Frontier Defense Section of the Chinese Government, 29 January 1919.

<sup>34</sup> Archives of the Ministry of the Army of the Chinese Government, 29 January 1919.

<sup>35</sup> FO 228/3214, 1 April 1920.

<sup>36</sup> Shi bao of 29 May 1919 reported that the troops in Hubei Province received radical leaflets issued by the soldiers of the 5th Division.

<sup>37</sup> ZEGXSL, 5 April 1919.

also evidence that several Chinese Muslims in Russian Central Asia slipped into Xinjiang in June 1919 with leaflets and funds to preach the principles of Bolshevism among Chinese Muslims, and to incite them to rebel.<sup>38</sup>

According to one report, a Chinese delegation consisting of five representatives headed by Li Houg, who had lived in Kashgar, was received by the Soviet Government in Moscow in December 1919. After this interview, the Oriental Department of Narkomindel decided to give more funds for the edition and publication of brochures, pamphlets, etc. in Chinese and for the establishment of propagandist groups. A special commission composed of Lokhov, Vladimiroff and Evdokimoff was put in charge of propaganda for China. Afterwards Soviet propaganda was said to be concentrated in Kashgar in Xinjiang, Yarkend and Aksou in Manchuria and to be intense in some internal areas of China.<sup>39</sup>

In spring 1920, several hundred Chinese from Moscow (most of them had joined the Red Army) established a "Council" (Soviet) in Tashkent and Osh and drew many Chinese from Kashgar into the Council. These Chinese made public speeches among the Chinese in border areas. Yang Zengxin, the Governor of Xinjiang, in his telegram to the Central government expressed his concern: "Those extremists advocate equality and freedom, agitate for the abolition of class distinctions between officials and common people, and of barriers between different countries and races. ... I am afraid that extremism [Bolshevism], with which the frontier area is going to be contaminated, will also penetrate the interior and finally spread all over China."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Yang Zengxin, Buguo zhai wendu (Papers of the Buguo Study), Vol 4, p 32.

<sup>39</sup> FO 228/2987, Political Report from Geneva, 23 February 1920.

<sup>40</sup> Telegraph of Yang Zengxin to the President of Republic of China, 28 March 1920, 8 June 1920; Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Chinese Government.

Although there were advantages in having Chinese undertake agitation, most Chinese labourers were illiterate and could not carry out protracted propaganda work without instructions and financial aid from the Russian Bolsheviks. Gradually, most of them gave up the work under the pressure of circumstances or because of the need to make a living.

In order to conduct propaganda more effectively on a large scale, the Bolsheviks left no means untried. The press was a useful and convenient medium for them to carry out propaganda.

Several Soviet agents contributed articles individually to foreign papers which were published in China or foreign language papers edited by Chinese and tried to make use of these journals for their own purposes. Journal de Pékin was a French magazine published in Beijing and was owned and edited by A. Nachbour, who had formerly been secretary to Albert Thomas, a noted French socialist and member of the cabinet during the War. Having been expelled from the Russian Legation in 1918, Ivanov started working on Journal de Pékin and publishing articles under the pen name Ivin. Nachbour depended on Ivanov for Russian news, which Ivanov received from Soviet Russia or obtained by interviewing Siberian émigrés.<sup>41</sup> As a Russian historian remarked, Journal de Pékin "held high the banner of supporting the Soviet Far Eastern Policy" from autumn 1918 and was once the only outlet in the Far East to publish "correct information about Soviet Russia"; and through this journal, "Ivin told the

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<sup>41</sup> Evans, 'Looking East from Moscow', Asia, (December 1922), Vol 22, No 12, p 1012. In his Letter to the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau, dated 17 August 1920, Voitinsky mentioned: "Your telegraph to Journal de Pékin has been received." GLZDC, Vol 1, p 31. Later, this journal was suspended by the French legation because it had released telegraph news from Moscow. ZEGXSL, 16 October 1920.

Chinese people and the whole world the truth about Soviet Russia."<sup>42</sup> Millard's Review was an influential English paper in the Far East which was published in Shanghai. In May 1918, Popov anonymously contributed an article to this paper entitled "Appeal from A Russian Proletarian".<sup>43</sup> China Press was an American daily newspaper published in Shanghai. In Spring 1920, Agarief wrote several articles on Russian affairs for it.<sup>44</sup> Voitinsky also provided this paper with Bolsheviks' articles including "Appeal to the Revolutionary People of the World" which was published in June 1920.<sup>45</sup> Sokolsky, who once admitted that he was disseminating Bolshevik ideas in China, worked on North China Star in Tianjin and Shanghai Gazette during 1918-20. On the latter paper (the GMD's English-language paper), he reported information from Soviet Russia on the Russian section he edited and expressed his radical and pro-Bolshevik views therein.<sup>46</sup>

Soviet propagandists also published articles in the Chinese papers. For example, in September 1919, Sokolsky wrote an article for Xin Zhongguo (New China).<sup>47</sup> Lizerovitch contributed an article entitled "May Day" to Xingqi pinglun of 25 April 1920, which reads:

The ruling class gradually realise that their fate will not be long in coming, ... the working class will dominate everything in the end. ... At present, the whole world is sick ... There is no peace in the world. ... Poland, compelled by imperialistic France, is making an attack upon Soviet Russia. ... Shandong province of China was taken over by another country.

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<sup>42</sup> Nikiforov, SLOPK, p 145.

<sup>43</sup> FO 228/3214, 30 May 1918.

<sup>44</sup> FO 405/233 No 107.

<sup>45</sup> 'Voitinsky's Letter, June 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 29.

<sup>46</sup> FO 228/3285, September 1919; FO 405/228, No 157, 7 April 1920.

<sup>47</sup> Xin Zhongguo, Vol 1, No 1.

... The working class declares: 'We can change this status and we will change this situation!'<sup>48</sup>

Articles by Voitinsky, Stopany and other Bolshevick agents can also be found in Chinese magazines.

The organ of the Bolsheviks was an important tool for their propaganda. Lenin regarded the newspaper of the Party as "not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator - it is also a collective organiser."<sup>49</sup> It was also vital to the Bolsheviks to have their own media in China. In February 1920, Vilensky bought Shanghai Life, a progressive Russian paper in Shanghai and turned it into an entirely "Bolshevik organ which was propagating Bolshevism".<sup>50</sup> Shanghai Life carried news from Soviet Russia and many articles by Bolshevick propagandists. Most articles were directed at Russian residents in China, but some were obviously aimed at the Chinese. For example, an article published in March 1920 claimed:

Foreign influence is so strong in China that it keeps people fighting among themselves. Not long ago the position of Russia was similar, but conditions there are now improving. The country has been freed from foreign intervention, and the date is not far distant when Russia will appear in the world as a strong and united nation. Can China hope for such an ending to her present troubles?<sup>51</sup>

"The Karakhan Manifesto" was actually a propaganda document aimed at winning the Chinese people's good opinion of Soviet Russia. On 31 March 1920 Shanghai Life published the whole text of the Manifesto soon after it was formally wired to Beijing.

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<sup>48</sup> Xingqi pinglun, No 47.

<sup>49</sup> Lenin, What Is to Be Done?

<sup>50</sup> ZEGXSL, No 164, 30 April 1920.

<sup>51</sup> FO 228/3214, 25 March 1920.

Its last paragraph states: "If the Chinese people want to escape from a position which will bring them down to the level of Korea and India, the only people from whom they can expect assistance are the Russian workers and the Red Army."<sup>52</sup> This Russian version and its Chinese translation were published by the Chinese journal Zhengheng (La Critique de la Politique) on the following day.

In his report to the ECCI dated 1 September 1920, Vilensky said that Shanghai Life was owned by the East Asian Secretariat.<sup>53</sup> The Office of Shanghai Life was not only a Bolshevik organ, but also an organisation for conducting propaganda in China. Sinolinkoff, a reporter on Shanghai Life, sometimes travelled in the interior of China spreading Bolshevism.<sup>54</sup> Mikulin, who could speak Chinese, carried out propaganda in Fujian on the instructions of the staff of Shanghai Life.<sup>55</sup> Khodorov, Ivanov and Agarief in Beijing all kept close connections with the Office of Shanghai Life for propaganda purposes. Shanghai Life also had two correspondents in Western countries, both of whom had formerly worked on the paper in China. One was A. Rosenberg in New York, who was "a constant correspondent on Bolshevik affairs" and sent "Red literature" from America. Another was Gerkovitch in Paris, who wrote regularly to Shanghai about the Bolshevik work that was being undertaken in France.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to Shanghai Life, there were some other Bolshevik or pro-Bolshevik Russian papers in other cities. For example, Advance in Harbin, Red Flag and Peasants' Truth in Vladivostok, from where it was easy to smuggle the

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<sup>52</sup> FO 228/3214, 1 April 1920.

<sup>53</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 41.

<sup>54</sup> FO 228/3211, April 1921.

<sup>55</sup> FO 405/233, (16 September, 1921).

<sup>56</sup> FO 228/3211, April 1921; FO 405/233, No 107, 16 September 1921.

publications into China.<sup>57</sup> Since Russian language paper naturally limited its impact in China, from 1921, the Bolsheviks attempted to establish a daily paper in English in Shanghai. For this, Khodorov and Turgarshief first tried to enlist an American woman Mrs Bena to help, but failed.<sup>58</sup> In the fall of 1922, the Comintern allocated funds to publish a weekly journal in English entitled New Russia to replace Shanghai Life. Joffe entrusted Maring, Leonidov and Novitsky (a leading writer on Shanghai Life) with this task. It was said that this journal was under the editorship of Bourrier.<sup>59</sup>

In order to extend Soviet Russia's political influence, the Bolshevik propagandists endeavoured to make use of some Chinese papers as their medium. Luo Jialun 's memoirs reveal the Soviet agents' early connections with certain Chinese journals. He recalled: "At first, the Comintern sent somebody to China to organise a Communist Party in China. Having no way of doing this, he decided to whip up public opinion and then turned to dealing with press circles. Yet there was still no result. At last this person found a journal called Jiefang yu gaizao (Emancipation and Reconstruction) when he arrived in Shanghai. He felt that the title of the journal suited their persuasion, and hence made contact with that journal."<sup>60</sup> Luo specifically mentioned that the person in question arrived in China earlier than Voitinsky.

Jiefang yu gaizao started publication in September 1919 under the Beijing New Society, which belonged to the Research Clique. Its editors Zhang Dongxun and Zhang Junmai were inclined to Guild socialism. In spite of this, the journal introduced various schools of socialism, including Marxism. It carried numerous articles about

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<sup>57</sup> Wang Yijun, Zhong-E waijiao de xumu, p 173.

<sup>58</sup> FO 405/233, September 1921.

<sup>59</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 131; 'Shanghai Municipal Council Police Report', 19 January 1923.

<sup>60</sup> Taibei lianhe bao (United Daily News), (Taibei), 3 July 1957.



Soviet Russia, in which the authors expressed admiration for the October Revolution and "Lenin's noble doctrines and his courageous actions" and called Lenin the "forerunner of social revolution".<sup>61</sup> Jiefang yu gaizao was among the first Chinese journals to report the foundation of the Comintern and to publish Lenin's works. It carried translations of Lenin's Political Parties in Russia and the Task of the Proletariat, The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government and ran articles such as "Lenin, Trotsky and Their Doctrines". The journal also published the Soviet Constitution, as well as laws on land, on the organisation of production, on the 8-hour working-day and on marriage. It also reported nearly every aspect of the circumstances of Soviet Russia. Zhang Dongxun, who later resolutely opposed Bolshevik-style Socialism, admitted at the end of 1920 that he had previously held the view that "China should form an alliance with Russia to establish a Workers' and Peasants' Country and overthrow world capitalism by the power of the two nations."<sup>62</sup>

Besides Jiefang yu gaizao, other papers of the Research Clique all showed an inclination towards the left between 1919 and 1920. Shishi xinbao (Current News Daily) and its literary supplement Xue deng (Learning Light) carried many articles which advocated socialism, introduced Soviet Russia and reported news of the world revolutionary movement. Xue deng published "The Leader of the Bolshevik Party - Lenin", "Trotsky's Autobiography" and Trotsky's "The Bolsheviks and World Peace" in 1919. In October 1920 Xue deng carried portraits of Lenin, Trotsky, Sverdlov, Kalinin and Lunacharsky, and pictures of the flag of Soviet Russia and the insignia of the Red Army. The general manager of Guomin gongbao (The Citizens' Gazette), Lan Gongwu, was a professor at Beijing University and was on good terms with Chen

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<sup>61</sup> Jiefang yu gaizao, (November 1919), Vol 1, No 6.

<sup>62</sup> Xin qingnian, (1 December 1920), Vol 8, No 4.

Duxiu and Li Dazhao.<sup>63</sup> Among the letters they took from Chen Duxiu's house in June 1919, the police found a letter written by Lan to ask Chen Duxiu to seek some students at Beijing University who would write articles for Guomin gongbao and Shishi xinbao.<sup>64</sup> In October 1919, Guomin gongbao was closed down by the Beijing police and its editor Sun Jiyi was arrested because it carried some radical articles such as "Communist Hungary" and "The History of the Russian Revolution" and expressed sharply anti-Japanese views.<sup>65</sup> From spring 1919 Chen bao (Beijing Morning Post) and its supplement showed an extraordinary pro-Bolshevik stand. In April 1919, an article pointed out that since Bolshevism "grew out of Marxism, if anybody wants to understand Bolshevism, he must study Marxism seriously". The following month, a special column - "Marxism Studies" - was established in the supplement. Furthermore, Lenin's "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" and biographies of Lenin, Trotsky, F. A. Bebel, K. Liebknecht and R. Luxemburg also appeared in this paper. It is worth noting that from 27 March 1919, Chen bao began to report news about the First Congress of the Comintern, and in August it carried "The Manifesto of the Third International". A review of current affairs, published in Chen bao on 13 April, gave food for thought:

At present, all newspapers, magazines, news agencies, as well as the state apparatus, are in the hands of the bourgeoisie, so the dominant information about Russia circulated over the world is opposed to Lenin's Government.

... Some Chinese who have never studied Bolshevism have just heard that

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<sup>63</sup> After 1949, Lan Gongwu became vice-chief of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the P R China. After his death, Lan was posthumously admitted as a member of the CCP.

<sup>64</sup> Beijing dang'an shiliao (Archival Materials on the History of Beijing), (1987), No 1; Lan Gongwu later became the editor-in-chief of Shishi xinbao.

<sup>65</sup> ibid., (1987), No 4.

the British and Americans do not like Bolshevism and then followed them blindly.

Another article in Chen bao on 1 March 1919, entitled "Studies of Russia", pointed out that the Chinese press always obtained news of foreign countries from Reuters, the Japanese newspapers, the English papers and several news agencies in Shanghai, which tended to distort the facts. Thus if the Bolsheviks' doctrines and deeds were judged from these news sources, it would lead to misunderstanding. The author further suggested that a news agency should be set up by various journals' offices jointly to subscribe to Russian newspapers, so that editors could learn and report the current situation in Russia correctly.

The above passages suggest that the author(s) seemed to be familiar with Bolshevik views on the press: the press is in the hands of the bourgeoisie so long as they remain in power; they also hint that this author(s) at least, exceptionally, had found other channels to gain access to news about Soviet Russia and Bolshevik publications.

Since the number of articles on Soviet Russia, its leaders and socialist theories carried by the Research Clique's journals in 1919 surpassed those found in Xin qingnian and other progressive journals in China, their radical tendency made people look at them with new eyes. The historian, Li Yunhan, was surprised to see that "these conservative papers suddenly took an interest in the new ideas of socialism."<sup>66</sup> This odd phenomenon is hard to explain and it suggests that certain Soviet propagandists might have dealt with the journals of the Research Clique, and either supplied them with materials directly or via Li Dazhao, who participated in editing Chen bao's

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<sup>66</sup> Li Yunhan, Cong ronggong dao qingdang, p 82.

supplement after February 1919, or Zhang Zhi, who was a correspondent with Shishi xinbao and Chen bao, and some other radical journalists. It also helps to explain why the first delegates of the Chinese Journalists' Association who were selected to visit Soviet Russia were all from the journals belonging to the Research Clique. One was Qu Qiubai, who went as a correspondent for Chen bao, and others were Yu Songhua and Li Zongwu, who represented Jiefang yu gaizao and Shishi xinbao respectively. Though they set off for Russia in October 1920, their plan to visit the country had been made known to Moscow sometime before 24 June, when Izvestiia reported this news. On arrival in Moscow, these Chinese journalists declared that they were "disciples of Karl Marx".<sup>67</sup>

Turning our attention to the progressive journals, such as Meizhou pinglun (Weekly Critic) in Beijing, Xingqi pinglun (Sunday Review) in Shanghai, Xiangjiang pinglun (Xiang River Review) in Changsha and Xingqiri (Sunday) in Chengdu, which were all weekly review journals, related to each other and with same edition formats, we find that these papers, in the main, defended and argued in favour of the Bolsheviks and their doctrines. For example, in an article in Meizhou pinglun in March 1919, Li Dazhao satirised those who were afraid of Bolshevism. "How did they know what Bolshevism is?" he asked and went on: "in order to open these gentlemen's minds, we have to translate several Bolshevik works to let them read them."<sup>68</sup> Li Dazhao was not alone. In Xiangjiang pinglun, Li's former assistant Mao Zedong, reproved the bureaucrats and politicians who were against Bolshevism, asking: "What is the Bolshevik Party? What are their doctrines and who are their leaders? Can those who

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<sup>67</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 89.

<sup>68</sup> Meizhou pinglun, (March 1919), No 11.

threaten that the Bolsheviks have come to China answer?"<sup>69</sup> The editors of Xingqiri (Sunday) wrote in the foreword to a translation of "The Bolsheviks' Education Programme" that "there are rather few books which have been translated directly from Russian, so we are not able to know the real facts regarding Bolshevism. Therefore, we cannot blindly follow others and join in the chorus of slander of Bolshevism."<sup>70</sup> If we examine these journals more carefully, we can see that they reported similar news about Soviet Russia, foreign affairs and international movements, for example, the Communist regimes in Germany and Hungary, the uprising in Afghanistan and the situation in Siberia. Even Mao Zedong, who did not know any foreign languages, reported on this type of news from abroad positively. It is not easy to explain how they can have obtained such news.

It can now be confirmed that Xingqi pinglun, at least, received publicity materials from Soviet agents. Before April 1920, Potapov handed Trotsky's article(s) and a pamphlet in English which contained documents such as the Soviet Constitution and Law on land to Xingqi pinglun.<sup>71</sup> And Lizerovitch, who received revolutionary literature from foreign countries and Vladivostok, passed some of them on to Xingqi pinglun and several other papers in Shanghai.<sup>72</sup> On 22 April 1920, Xingqi pinglun

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<sup>69</sup> Xiangjiang pinglun, (21 July 1919), No 2; on No 1 of the journal there was an article entitled "To Study the Bolshevik Party".

<sup>70</sup> Xingqiri, No 21, 30 November 1919.

<sup>71</sup> 'Potapov to Chicherin, 12 December 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 48.

<sup>72</sup> FO 405/228, No 157, 7 April 1920; FO 228/3211, April 1921; Those papers included Xinhan qingnian and Zhentan, the journals in Chinese edited by activists of the Korean independent movement, which contained a good deal on Bolshevik matters and demonstrated that they were in favour of socialism and opposed to Japanese and British imperialism and to the Chinese Warlords. Wusi shiqi qikan jieshao (Introduction to the Periodicals of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement) Beijing: People's Press, 1958-59, Vol 2, pp 179-185.

carried an article about Bernard Shaw's utterances in favour of Bolshevism, which was a translation from a British Socialist paper supplied by Lizerovitch.

Using newspapers and periodicals which were published other than in Russia for propaganda purposes seemed more effective and less likely to arouse suspicion. What Lizerovitch obtained from abroad included Workers' Dreadnought<sup>73</sup>, The Call<sup>74</sup>, Daily Herald<sup>75</sup> and New York Call<sup>76</sup>. The first three British leftist papers used to be

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<sup>73</sup> Workers' Dreadnought's editor was Sylvia Pankhurst, the leader of the Workers' Socialist Federation, which was extremely active in rallying support for the October Revolution and Soviet Russia. In June 1919 the WSF decided to rename itself the Communist Party. The Workers' Dreadnought carried some articles and speeches by Bolshevik leaders and the news on revolutionary movements over the world, including news from China and India. From January 1920 the emblem of the hammer and sickle appeared on the paper's masthead and from June 1920 the paper became an organ of the British Communist Party.

<sup>74</sup> The Call was the British Socialist Party's weekly journal, edited by F. Willis, one of the Party leaders. From Spring 1919 the BSP together with some other leftist parties in Britain began to discuss the formation of a single united Communist Party. With the foundation of the Communist Party of Great Britain in August 1920, the paper was replaced by The Communist, the official organ of the CPGB. (J. Klugmann, History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, (London, 1986), Vol 1, p 214). Before that The Call was regarded as "a Communist organ". (L. J. Macfarlane, The British Communist Party, its Origin and Development until 1929, Britain: Macgibbon & Lee, 1966, p 256)

<sup>75</sup> The Daily Herald was a journal of the Independent Labour Party in Britain. Russian affairs were then of major interest to the paper. One article of 20 October 1919 praised Soviet Russia as "the great hope of the world; ... the definite proof that a Socialist state can be successfully organised and administered." In January 1920, its editor-in-chief G. Lansbury visited Soviet Russia and later wrote What I saw in Russia, in which he wrote that Lenin was a man of "devotion to the cause of humanity" and that "real democracy" was being fashioned in Russia. The Daily Herald was once financed by the Comintern. (S. R. Graubard, British Labour and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1924, p 170, footnote 23). In 1920, part of the staff of the Daily Herald were drawn into the preparation of the Communist Party. (J. Klugmann, History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Vol 1, p 24)

<sup>76</sup> The New York Call was first published by the Working Men's Cooperative Publishing Association and later became the organ of the American Socialist Party. After the October Revolution, the Call in its editorials urged support for the Bolsheviks, "from a sincere conviction that the Soviet government championed the cause of the working class in Russia and elsewhere" (14 September 1918). It was therefore attacked for "favoring the Soviets". (T. Draper, The Roots of American Communism, New York: The Viking Press, 1963, p 112). It carried Lenin's "Appeal to the World's Workers" (August 20 1919) and other Bolshevik pamphlets. In the issue for 1 January 1919, M. Hillquit wished a happy new year to "the proletarians of Russia - the pioneer warriors of human rights and human dignity, for liberty and bread". Although Hillquit was considered by the Comintern as a "notorious opportunist", ironically, he helped

provided with Lenin's works such as The Collapse of the Second International, State and Revolution, Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky and numerous other articles and news by the People's Russian Information Bureau in London and the Socialist Information and Research Bureau in Scotland - the two information centres established by Soviet Russia.<sup>77</sup> The New York Call was the organ of the American Socialist Party (and later the Communist Party), which had relations with the Russian Soviet Information Bureau in the USA and the Comintern representatives there.<sup>78</sup> By the spring of 1920, these journals were being circulated among young Chinese intellectuals in Shanghai and some articles within them were translated into Chinese.<sup>79</sup> In addition to these progressive papers, some articles which had been published in some Western countries' "bourgeois" papers, such as the Manchester Guardian, National Weekly and New Republic were also issued to the Chinese press by the Bolsheviks for propaganda purposes.<sup>80</sup> As far as I know, around 1919-20, several Chinese papers published reports on the Russian situation by Westerners who had visited Soviet Russia, these included, the head of the Intelligence Bureau of the American Army, W. C. Bullitt, the Manchester Guardian's correspondent, A. Ransome, and an American, W. K. Humphrie. For the Bolsheviks, these reports on

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Soviet Russia and the Comintern's first representative in America, Martens, to set up the Russian Soviet Information Bureau and Hillquit himself became the head of the legal department of the Bureau. (Levy (ed.), Revolutionary Radicalism, p 634, pp 643-34).

<sup>77</sup> J. Klugmann, History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968, Vol 1, p 53.

<sup>78</sup> Levy (ed.), Revolutionary Radicalism, pp 634-644; Draper, The Roots of American Communism, p 427.

<sup>79</sup> FO 405/228, No 157, April 7 1920.

<sup>80</sup> Voitinsky's Letter to the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B), 17 August 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 32.

Soviet Russia by foreigners, who had no apparent bias, would be more likely to influence Chinese people.

From the evidence above, we can see that it is by no means true that the Chinese were obliged to rely only on the bourgeois news agencies and press abroad to obtain information about Soviet Russia before the spring or summer of 1920, as some scholars have asserted.<sup>81</sup> As to the Bolshevik leaders' articles, it was impossible that their publication in China was due solely to bourgeois channels. Rather, news and articles on Soviet Russia and Bolshevism were provided by Soviet agents directly or indirectly via the journals of the Communist or Socialist parties of Western countries. The Bolshevik propagandists sometimes also intentionally took passages favourable to Soviet Russia from the bourgeois press.

From May 1920, when the East Asian Secretariat was established, the Bolsheviks' propaganda work in China entered a new phase. Under the Secretariat's leadership, the Propaganda and Information Section and Publication Section were set up within the Shanghai Revolutionary Bureau.<sup>82</sup>

One important task for them was to supply news regularly to the press in China. According to a report by Vilensky in September 1920, the East Asian Secretariat made use of some legal news agencies and set up several media services in Shanghai, Beijing, Harbin and Vladivostok.<sup>83</sup> It is not clear what can be counted as a "legal news agency". So far as I know, in addition to the formal Soviet news agency

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<sup>81</sup> Those scholars include Dirlik, Mirovitskaya and Xiang Qing. In his article 'On the Channels for Introducing Marxism into China' Zuo Yuhe said that the first article propagating the October Revolution which was translated from Russian directly was one published in Xin qingnian in December 1920. [Mao Zedong sixiang yanjiu (Studies of Mao Zedong Thought), (Chengdu, 1991), No 1, p 135].

<sup>82</sup> 'Voitinsky's Letter to the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B), 17 August 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 31.

<sup>83</sup> 'Vilensky's Report to ECCI', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 41.



in China, some local media services, such as "the China Bureau of Public Information" (Zhonghua Gongtong Tongxun She) founded by Sokolsky and Tang Jiezhi in Shanghai in August 1919, and "News Edition and Translation Service" (Xinwen Bianyi She) created by Shao Piaoping<sup>84</sup> in Beijing often reported news from Soviet Russia in positive terms.

In June 1920, Rosta and Dalta News Agencies formally opened a branch in Beijing, headed by Khodorov. The Beijing branch, as the headquarters of the Agencies in China, received news items from Moscow and Chita via Kiakhta through the wireless, translated them into Chinese and English, and then supplied them to the Chinese, English and American press in the Far East.<sup>85</sup>

From the limited information available, we can see that Rosta's Beijing branch had extensive contacts with the Chinese Press, which were not only confined to the progressive papers. After Yurin's delegation arrived in Beijing, Khodorov's Rosta-Dalta periodically arranged for Yurin to hold press conferences and large receptions for Chinese and foreign journalists. According to a report, at one such conference the Chinese journalists who were invited were from Chen bao, Yishi bao, Weiyi bao, Jing bao, Shanghai xinbao, Zhonghua xinbao, Dalu bao, Zhongxin bao, Jingshi bao, Minfu bao and the Beijing News Agency.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Shao was a key member of Beijing University's Press Studies Society. After his paper Jing bao was closed down by the Beijing Government in 1919, Shao escaped to Japan, where he wrote "New Russia Studies" and "Soviet Government and China". In 1926, he was executed by Zhang Zuolin on a charge of "colluding with Red Russia and propagating Bolshevism." Cf. Zeng Xubai, Zhongguo xinwen shi (The Chinese Press History), (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1966), Vol 1, p 328; Zhuanji wenxue, Vol 44, No 4.

<sup>85</sup> Evans, 'Looking East from Moscow', Asia, (1922), Vol 22, No 12; FO 228/3216, 21 August 1920, No 27.

<sup>86</sup> Chen bao, 18 September 1920; 'Detective's Report', ZEGXSL, 27 February 1921.

As for the foreign press which received news and documents from Rosta-Dalta, Kasanin recalled that Khodorov had built up extensive contacts with the editors of several English-language journals, such as W. S. Ridge of the Beijing Daily News, G. Clark of the Beijing Leader, C. J. Fox of the North China Star, T. C. Millard of Millard's Review, W. H. Donald of the Far Eastern Review and the correspondents of The Times and Reuters. These journalists are said to have liked publishing news and communiqués provided by Rosta-Dalta because they were "paid well".<sup>87</sup> Such papers were read not only by foreigners in the Far East, but also by Chinese who knew English; and some news and articles from them were translated and reprinted by the Chinese papers.

After meeting Khodorov in Beijing in August 1920, Lizerovitch spoke highly of the former saying that he "is doing really good work to enlighten the Chinese on the truth about Soviet Russia; the propaganda is being conducted very carefully and successfully in Beijing." He added that the Soviet agents had enlisted the co-operation of a few well-educated Chinese, who were spreading the gospel of labour and revolution in the interior.<sup>88</sup> This suggests that the Beijing branch of Rosta-Dalta's propaganda work was conducted effectively.

In the Summer of 1920, the East Asian Secretariat established Hua-E Tongxunshe (the China-Russia News Agency), which could be identified with Rosta.<sup>89</sup> As an affiliated institute of the

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<sup>87</sup> Kasanin, China in the Twenties, p 11, p 102.

<sup>88</sup> FO 228/3214, August 1920.

<sup>89</sup> 'Voitinsky's Letter to the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B), 17 August 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 31-2. Rosta's Beijing branch was sometimes also called Hua-E Tongxunshe publicly by the Chinese. See ZEGXSL's several reports in 1921. One of the staff of the Comintern, Slepark, who succeeded Khodorov as director of Rosta Beijing branch in 1922, was also seen as director of Hua-

Section of Propaganda and Information of the Revolutionary Bureau, the China-Russia News Agency, under Yang Mingzhai's direct leadership and Voitinsky's instructions, conducted propaganda with a more overtly Communist ideology. The East Asian Secretariat demanded that the Soviet Russia Telegraph Agency - Rosta - in Moscow supply not less than 1,000 words' news to them every day.<sup>90</sup> The China-Russia News Agency organised several radical Chinese to translate news from Moscow and articles from The Communist International, Soviet Russia and the journals of Communist Parties in Western countries, and then provided at least thirty one Chinese papers with translated materials that included "The History of the Bolshevik Party", "The Biography of Lenin" and "Lenin's Reply to an English Journalist".<sup>91</sup> According to incomplete figures, from July 1920 to July 1921, over 140 pieces of news and articles about Soviet Russia and the international Communist movement issued by the China-Russia News Agency were published in the Chinese press.<sup>92</sup> Voitinsky once even boasted that they could employ nearly all the newspapers and periodicals in China for propaganda.<sup>93</sup> Rosta-Dalta's branches in Guangzhou and Harbin also supplied news and other publicity to local papers.

The Russian Press Review, which was described as "a weekly journal to provide information regarding Soviet Russia for the free use of editors and journalists", and which was published in English under the direction of the Soviet Government, was

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E Tongxunshes Beijing branch. Cf. Huang Ping, Wangshi huiyi, p 4; GLZDC, Vol 2, p 440.

<sup>90</sup> 'Vilensky's Letter to the ECCI, 1 September 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 37.

<sup>91</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China', Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka, (1973), No 1; Ye Yonglie, Zhonggong zhi chu, p 175.

<sup>92</sup> Wang Dong (ed.), Zhongguo Gongchandang dacidian (The Dictionary of the Communist Party of China), (Beijing: The Press of the Chinese Broadcast & TV, 1991), p 561.

<sup>93</sup> 'Voitinsky's Letter, June 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 29.

circulated throughout the world and copies of it were also found in Asia around that time. It is difficult to know which Chinese journals received materials from Rosta-Dalta and the Russian Press Review, for not much evidence can be found. Nevertheless, the British Intelligence Bureau found that Rosta-Dalta supplied news-sheets regularly to some journals in Guangzhou and Shanghai, especially Qun bao (Masses Paper), Laodong yu funü (Labour and Women) and Minguo ribao during 1921. Those papers' news columns often reported the situation in Soviet Russia, strikes and labour organisations, women's emancipation in China and abroad, and their articles advocated socialism and communism.<sup>94</sup>

Not content with supplying news to the press, the Bolsheviks even turned certain Chinese journals into their own propaganda organs. According to Vilensky's report to the ECCI dated 1 September 1920, the East Asian Secretariat owned a weekly journal, a socialist daily, and Xin qingnian in Shanghai and Xin Zhongguo (New China) in Beijing. Vilensky also counted Xin chao (The Renaissance) and Beijing daxue xuesheng zhongkan (Beijing University Students' Weekly), both of which had been published by the students in Beijing, as publications controlled by the Secretariat.<sup>95</sup> Bolshevik agents were more likely to use these Chinese papers to publicise Soviet Russia's achievements and to spread the Bolsheviks' stand and views.

When Xin qingnian became an organ of the early Chinese Communist organisation in September 1920, it was aided financially by the Comintern.<sup>96</sup> It had a special column - "New Russia Studies", which reprinted many articles about Soviet Russia which had been published in Soviet Russia, Pravda and other Communist

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<sup>94</sup> FO 228/3211, Series of September, 1921, No 530; Wusi shiqi qikan jieshao.

<sup>95</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 40-1.

<sup>96</sup> 'Sokolov-Strolakhov's Report, 21 April 1921', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 58.

journals, such as La Vie Ouvriere and Le Revue Communiste, etc.. Since most of these articles came from Soviet Russia, Hu Shi, one of the former editors of Xin qingnian, satirised the periodical saying that "today's Xin qingnian has virtually become a Chinese edition of Soviet Russia."<sup>97</sup> Soviet Russia was actually "an official organ of Soviet Russia's Information Bureau" in New York, which was "devoted to spreading the truth about Russia."<sup>98</sup> Xin qingnian alone, between September 1920 and April 1921, published 137 articles about the October Revolution, the Bolshevik party and Soviet Russia.<sup>99</sup>

The "weekly journal" Vilensky referred to in his report of September 1920 was probably Xingqi pinglun (Sunday Review). In his speech at the 2nd Congress of the Comintern, the Chinese delegate Liu Shaozhou mentioned that a weekly newspaper in Shanghai "uninterruptedly propagates socialist ideas". He gave an example: "In its issue of the first of May we can find the slogans 'Those who do not work should not eat', and 'The whole world should belong to the proletariat'."<sup>100</sup> These slogans were precisely the ones Xingqi pinglun carried in its special issue on Labour Day in 1920. Xingqi pinglun was a paper of the GMD and had close relations with Lizerovitch and Voitinsky. Besides advocating the doctrines of the GMD, this paper published many articles on Marxism, socialism, Soviet Russia and the labour movement. Its New Year issue of 1920 published a poem entitled "A Red New Year", which reads:

Suddenly a red light is passing through the dark.

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<sup>97</sup> Zhang Jinglu (ed.), Zhongguo xiandai chuban shiliao, (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1954), Vol 1, p 10.

<sup>98</sup> The Communist International, Nos 16-7, p 134; Levy (ed.), Revolutionary Radicalism, p 641; T. Draper American Communism and Soviet Russia, (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), p 175.

<sup>99</sup> Mirovitskaya, 'The First Responses in China to the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution', Far Eastern Affairs, (1978), No 1, p 156.

<sup>100</sup> Second Congress of the Communist International, Vol 1, p 139.

What is it?

That is a new tide which came from the remote North,  
Sweeping past the Near East and then reaching the Far East.

Above the waves there are many hammers and hoes,  
Which will remove the unfair and unjust in the World.

Greeting the light of the rising sun,

The whole land will turn into red in a moment.

The hammer and sickle was a symbol of Soviet power. In spite of the author's misuse of hoe instead of sickle for his imagery, this poem conjured up the image of a Bolshevik tide spreading towards the East which would soon reach China. It expressed well the political tendency of Xingqi pinglun.

Xin Zhongguo, which started publication in May 1919, claimed to be a paper without any party affiliation. The contributors to this paper included several famous journalists, such as Shao Piaoping, He Haiming, Hu Lin, Zhang Junmai, Sun Jiyi and Bao Tianxiao, and some professors, such as Hu Shi, Gao Yihan, Chen Qixiu and Zhang Houzai. The first issue of Xin Zhongguo carried Sokolsky's "The First Days of the Bolsheviks in Power" and He Haiming's "The Chinese Labourers and the Bolsheviks". This journal carried articles from Russian magazines, such as Sun, and Russian novels, which were translated by Geng Jizhi, Qu Qiubai and Zheng Zhenduo.

Beijing daxue xuesheng zhoukan, which started publication in January 1920, was a magazine run by the Student Union of Beijing University. Its editors and regular contributors were almost all anarchist students belonging to the Beijing University Students' Mutual Aid League, such as Huang Lingshuang and Chen Youqin, who were on good terms with Polevoy. A periodical review points out that this journal's distinguishing feature was "exposing and attacking publicly the evils of

the Chinese warlord government, and openly advocating revolution."<sup>101</sup> The journal called on people to "rise in revolt against the warlord government" (No 6) for the editors believed that "the present government in China is actually a Japanese Government and no longer the government of the Republic of China." (No 7). The journal advocated Bolshevik doctrines. In the special issue for May Day in 1920, one article remarked: "Since Lenin and Trotsky waged the class struggle, labourers have become aware as if awakening from a dream that social revolution cannot be avoided and that class struggle is a convenient way to emancipate the proletariat." Another article in Issue 10 affirmed that the Soviet Government's motives were "to reform the political system and to strive for the well-being of the great majority of the people. So their action cannot be described as violence."<sup>102</sup> Since the content of Beijing daxue xuesheng zhoukan was quite radical, the journal was considered by the Chinese authorities and British Intelligence as "one of the publications of a Bolshevik nature" and an "extreme" one.<sup>103</sup>

Having started publication under the help of Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi in January 1919, Xin chao carried several articles which advocated the Bolshevik Revolution. For example, in its first issue, the paper's editor Luo Jialun in "Today's New Tide in the World" wrote:

At the present, there is a vast and mighty wave coming from Eastern Europe. ... The new starting point for this new tide is the Russian Revolution, the Austro-Hungarian Revolution and the German Revolution.

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<sup>101</sup> Wusi shiqi qikan jieshao (Introduction to the Periodicals of the May 4th Period), (Beijing: People's Press, 1958-59), Vol 2, p 243.

<sup>102</sup> ibid., Vol 2, pp 245-252.

<sup>103</sup> Tianjin Police Bureau's Report to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, April 1920; Quoted from Zhang Jinglu, Zhongguo xiandai chuban shiliao, Vol 1, p 48; FO 405/225, No 160, 12 August 1920.

... The French-style revolution was a political revolution, the Russian-style revolution afterwards is a social revolution.

Another editor, Fu Sinian, also said: "From then on, the French-style revolution - political revolution - partly became an event of past; and the Russian-style revolution - social revolution - will spread everywhere."<sup>104</sup> It seems that they accepted Li Dazhao's view of the Bolshevik Revolution. Li repeatedly expressed the view that "The French Revolution of 1789 heralded the world revolution in the 19th century, and the Russian Revolution of 1917 heralded the world revolution in the 20th century."<sup>105</sup> We can see that the wording used for commenting on the October Revolution was quite similar to what the Bolsheviks themselves were propagating at this time. Luk has also noticed this, but he believes that this vision showed "that Chinese intellectuals had been predisposed to look at the October Revolution in such a perspective", because "there is no evidence to suggest that the Chinese had been influenced by the propaganda of the Russians."<sup>106</sup> This conclusion of Luk's is a bit too assertive, for we should not rule out the possibility that Xin chao and some other journals' editors were influenced by Soviet agents' propaganda either directly or via some Chinese such as Li Dazhao whether orally or in writing.

In addition to making use of the existing Chinese press, Soviet propagandists tried to create some new papers. In May 1920, the Foreign Section of the Dal'buro in Vladivostok discussed the possibility of starting up new newspapers to enhance Bolshevik influence in China with Yao Zuobin, a representative of the China National

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<sup>104</sup> Xin chao, (January 1919), Vol 1, No 1.

<sup>105</sup> 'The Victory of the Common People', Xin qingnian, (1918), Vol 5, No 5.

<sup>106</sup> M. Luk, The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism, p 20.



Student Union.<sup>107</sup> Between 1919 and 1920, many new journals started publication.

Luo Jialun remarked in May 1920:

Since May 4th of last year new journals in China have suddenly increased to more than 400. But most of them are not mature. Mrs Dewey once asked me: 'In America it is not easy to start a periodical, it may need several years' preparation; why is it so easy to increase the number of journals to several hundred within several months in China?'<sup>108</sup>

Luo could not answer this question and maybe nobody can answer it. Although most journals were started by the Chinese themselves, there is no hiding the fact that some were started at the suggestion of Soviet agents, or were sponsored by them. One case can be confirmed by an intelligence report: in February 1920 at a meeting which was held at the restaurant of the Yong An Hotel in Shanghai, Zhu Zhuowen told the participants that some of the "true well-wishers of China" had suggested that "a magazine should be started for the propagation of Bolshevism and for the purpose of giving news of Soviet Russia." The proposal was adopted, the new magazine was named "The Worker" and it was planned to publish 3,000 copies in Chinese.<sup>109</sup> It can be inferred that the "true well-wishers of China" were foreigners, probably Soviet agents, for Lizerovitch attended the meeting. "The Worker" was not published in the end, but the plan was significant. In August 1920, Laodong jie (Labour Circle) started publication and was edited by Li Hanjun, one of those present at the above meeting. From then on, numerous magazines were launched with similar titles, such as Laodong

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<sup>107</sup> 'The Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B)'s Report to the ECCI, 21 December 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 50.

<sup>108</sup> Luo Jialun, 'Our Student Movement's Success and Failure in the Past Year and Our Guiding Principles in the Future', Xin chao, May 1920.

<sup>109</sup> FO 405/228, No 157 (April 7 1920).

zhe ("the Labourer", started in Guangzhou in October 1920), Lai bao ("Labour Paper", started in Tianjin in October 1920) and Laodong yin ("Labour Voice", started in Beijing in November 1920). The following year similar magazines commenced publication in Changsha, Wuhan and Jinan. To the best of our knowledge, at least Laodong jie, Laodong yin and Laodong zhe were sponsored and subsidised by the Comintern agents.<sup>110</sup> All of these journals were weekly magazines with similar edition formats, and they all reported news of Soviet Russia and the international labour movements. These magazines for labourers were edited by the Communist groups as their mouthpiece to propagate among the Chinese workers.

The Bolsheviks in China had their publication transfer system. At first, some propaganda materials and publications were brought into China by the Bolsheviks themselves. For example, Luo Zhanglong recalled that at their first meeting with the Chinese radicals at Beijing University, Voitinsky "brought them some journals, such as The Communist International, which were available in English and German editions as well as Russian edition, in order to enable people who did not know Russian to read them; he also brought several books, one of which was Ten Days That Shook the World written by an English [American] journalist."<sup>111</sup> However, it was impossible for such publications to be brought into China regularly in this way. Luo Zhanglong remembered that before Voitinsky's departure from Beijing, he jotted down the

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<sup>110</sup> Laodong jie was a paper published by the Publication Section of the Revolutionary Bureau of the East Asian Secretariat. GLZDC, Vol 1, p 32; the other papers were also financed by the Comintern agents. See Liu Shixin, 'Recollections of the Anarchists' Activities in China', Ge Maochun, et al., Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 2, p 936.

<sup>111</sup> Luo Zhanglong, 'Recollections of the Society for Studying Marxism in Beijing University', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 198.

addresses of Luo and others, and later they received publications in foreign languages from abroad continuously.<sup>112</sup>

Before long, the East Asian Secretariat set up channels to receive publications regularly from Moscow via Irkutsk to China or from Vladivostok to China. These publications included newspapers and periodicals which were issued by the Russian Newspapers and Periodicals Distribution Office and books which were published in Moscow. The publications were posted to Voitinsky c/o Grigoriyev of the Centrosoyus in Shanghai.<sup>113</sup> In North China, it was said that Polevoy obtained revolutionary pamphlets and Russian journals through his mother in Moscow and he could therefore often supply the Chinese radicals with pamphlets published in Moscow; once he gave the Library of Beijing University an English-language edition of ABC of Communism by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky.<sup>114</sup> Publications were also sent to Stoyanovitchy in Guangzhou through Harbin.<sup>115</sup> Around this time, International Press Correspondence published by the Comintern for international propaganda was also available among radical Chinese both in Shanghai and Beijing.<sup>116</sup> As to other countries' Communist or progressive publications, possible channels were through the overseas correspondents of Shanghai Life and Lizerovitch, who received revolutionary literature from London, New York and Copenhagen, where a centre was set up by the Comintern to collect political literature from Western countries.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> 'Luo Zhanglong's Memoirs on Voitinsky', GLZDC, Vol 2, p 110.

<sup>113</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 35-7.

<sup>114</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 93; Guan Shanfu, 'Some Facts on Polevoy and Ivanov', Dangshi tongxun, (1984), No 3. More likely, Polevoy pretended that he received the publications from his mother.

<sup>115</sup> 'Stoyanovitchy's Letter, 29 September 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 43.

<sup>116</sup> 'Liu Renjing's Recollection', April 1957, Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 117.

<sup>117</sup> FO 405/228, 7 April 1920; FO 228/3214, June 1920; FO 228/3211, July 1920; Cf. Lazich and Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern, p 145.

Nevertheless, it was obviously difficult either to mail or bring large quantities of Communist publications into China. In view of the inconvenience of smuggling large amounts of literature, the Bolsheviks decided to establish their own printing plants or to make use of some Chinese printing plants. Vilensky's report to the ECCI, dated 1 September 1920, said that the East Asian Secretariat attached great importance to publishing Chinese, Korean and Japanese editions of the books published in Moscow and had set up several publishing and printing centres in Shanghai, Beijing, Harbin and Vladivostok by then. According to him, Harbin was a basis for publishing English, Chinese and Japanese propaganda literature, and had published about 20 sorts of such materials;<sup>118</sup> about 50 Moscow-published pamphlets were reprinted in Vladivostok; while Shanghai was the main centre for the Chinese Communist publishing cause.<sup>119</sup> Voitinsky's report of 17 August 1920 revealed that the publishing department of the Revolutionary Bureau in Shanghai had its own printing plant and nearly all literature posted from Vladivostok had been translated and printed there. The Communist Manifesto, What Kind of People Are the Communists?, On the Communist Youth Movement in Russia were already off the press and fifteen other pamphlets and leaflets were waiting to be printed.<sup>120</sup> Besides the press of Shanghai Life, which could only print books and pamphlets in Russian,<sup>121</sup> a Chinese printing plant in Shanghai named "Youxin" was sponsored by a Comintern agent, Stromisky,

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<sup>118</sup> Perhaps, there were several printing houses working for the Bolsheviks. According to a British intelligence report of 1922, the Bolsheviks got into an agreement for a large reward with a Chinese press named Fei-tschan at Mongolskaya street in Harbin in order to print the propaganda literature from Moscow. FO 228/3140, 'Agents' Information', 16 May 1922, p 59.

<sup>119</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, pp 40-1.

<sup>120</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 31.

<sup>121</sup> The publications which were printed by the press of Shanghai Life included Khodorov's World Imperialism in China, which was read by Lenin. See Nikiforov, SLOPK, p 92.

who transmitted 2,000 Yuan to Zheng Peigang via Chen Duxiu as starting funds. The first task the plant undertook was to print the Chinese translation of The Communist Manifesto.<sup>122</sup> Besides Communist pamphlets, journals such as Gongchan dang (The Communist Monthly)<sup>123</sup> and Laodong jie, some other revolutionary periodicals and leaflets were also printed by this plant. Kartunova listed several pamphlets published in China during that time, which included The Programme of the Russian Communist Party, The Biography of Lenin, ABC of Communism, The Constitution of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia, On Trade Unions, What the People Gained from the October Revolution and Russia's Education.<sup>124</sup> Some other pamphlets in Chinese without date or place of publication were found by British Intelligence, and included Methods of Communist Teaching in Russia, China and the Russian October Revolution and The Manifesto of the American Communist Party.<sup>125</sup>

In Beijing, the Revolution Bureau made use of the Beijing University Press thanks to the help of some professors.<sup>126</sup> Those professors perhaps included the Bureau's members Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, and the director of Beijing University Press, Li Xinbai.<sup>127</sup> It is still not clear how Beijing University Press was used for

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<sup>122</sup> Zheng Peigang, 'Some Facts on Anarchism in China', Ge Mao-chun, et al., (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 2, pp 958-59.

<sup>123</sup> "Gongchan dang" means "the Communist Party", but on the front cover of this magazine, the English title was "Communism". One of the early members of the CCP, Shan Yanbing noticed that and pointed out the fault to Li Da, the editor of the Gongchan dang, but Li did not correct it. 'Shan Yanbing's Talk', recorded by Li Danyang in August 1980 (unpublished).

<sup>124</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China', Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka, (1971), No 1.

<sup>125</sup> FO 228/3211, September 1921.

<sup>126</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China'.

<sup>127</sup> Li Xinbai kept good terms with Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu and Polevoy, and he participated in several revolutionary activities together with them. See Xiao Chaoran, 'The CCP's Foundation and Beijing University', Beijing daxue zhexue shehui kexue youxiu lunwen xuan (Selected Highly Rated Theses on Philosophy and Social Sciences of Beijing University), Vol 2, p 48.

publishing Communist publications. However, from some journals which were printed by the Press, we can see traces of Bolshevik propaganda. In addition to Xin chao, Xin Zhongguo and Beijing daxue xuesheng zhoukan which I have mentioned above, Xin shenghuo (New Life), edited by Li Xinbai, was a journal which agitated for anti-Japanese causes and against Chinese warlords. On National Day 1919 Xin shenghuo printed tens of thousands of extra copies of the journal and many more leaflets, hoping readers could help to distribute them to "every province, every county and every village".<sup>128</sup> Some other periodicals, such as Guomin (The Citizens), Xin shehui (New Society) and Shuguang (Dawn Light) also showed a radical tendency and were edited by people who had close relations with Polevoy and Li Dazhao, and who later became Communists, such as Deng Zhongxia, Qu Qiubai and Song Jie.

A part of propaganda literature in Chinese language from Moscow was also printed in District C of Tianjin.<sup>129</sup> Copies of Soviet documents and propaganda literature were often carried from Tianjin by Polevoy in person or via Zhang Tailei to Beijing. Around 1920, nearly every time Zhang Tailei arrived in Beijing from Tianjin, he "carried two suitcases which contained revolutionary leaflets and pamphlets. No sooner had Zhang reached Beijing University's 'Dong Zhai' (the Eastern Dormitory) than he put the two cases under the bed of one of his friends."<sup>130</sup> In 1921, Zhang also frequently carried propaganda literature with him from Tianjin to Changxindian.<sup>131</sup>

On 2 February 1920, the State Council of the Chinese Government issued a public notice warning that over 83 Bolshevik publications had been found in China.

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<sup>128</sup> Wusi shiqi qikan jieshao, Vol 1, p 300.

<sup>129</sup> FO 228/3140, 'Agents' Information' (16, 5, 1922) p 59.

<sup>130</sup> Lin Hongnuan, Zhang Tailei zhuan (A Biography of Zhang Tailei), Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Press, 1981, p 18.

<sup>131</sup> Ding Zeqin and Wang Shudi, 'Zhang Tailei's Chronicle', Zhang Tailei wenji.

Among them were Lenin's The State and Revolution, Marx's Capital, The Biographical Sketch of Lenin and The Autobiography of Trotsky in Chinese.<sup>132</sup> Since nobody in China had openly published a translation of The State and Revolution before then, the fact that such books were circulating raised doubts. It indicated that the publishing work of the Bolsheviks might have started before the foundation of the East Asian Secretariat.

Soviet agents endeavoured to enlist the help of radical Chinese intellectuals in translating propaganda materials. From the autumn of 1918 Polevoy asked Zhang Tailei to translate "socialist documents".<sup>133</sup> Lizerovitch tried to engage the services of Cao Yabo (western name Abel Tsao) and some other Chinese in translating Bolshevik literature in 1920.<sup>134</sup> Potapov handed some pamphlets and articles in English to a Chinese named Li, who translated them into Chinese.<sup>135</sup> Some other Chinese intellectuals such as Huang Lingshuang, Shen Yanbing, Yuan Zhenying, Luo Zhanglong, Geng Jizhi and Zheng Zhenduo also offered to help translate Communist literature from English, German and Russian into Chinese.

With regard to the translation of The Communist Manifesto, there are some facts many historians have neglected. Chen Wangdao began to translate the work towards the end of 1919 at the suggestion of the Office of Xingqi pinglun, which had close relations with Lizerovitch. Around this time a Korean, Yo Un-hyong, who was also on good terms with Xingqi pinglun and Lizerovitch, started to translate the same

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<sup>132</sup> Most of the pamphlets in the list were anarchist publications. Wusi aiguo yundong dang'an ziliao, pp 633-35.

<sup>133</sup> Ding Zeqin and Wang Shudi, 'Zhang Tailei's Chronicle', Zhang Tailei wenji, p 327.

<sup>134</sup> Cao did not undertake this work for he was busy. FO 405/228, April 7 1920, No 157.

<sup>135</sup> 'Potapov's Report to Chicherin, 12 December 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 49. The footnote writes that this "Li" perhaps was Li Zhenying. It was probably wrong. This "Li" was more likely to be Li Hanjun.

work, too. Chen Wangdao's translation was first published by "the Society for Studying Socialism" in April 1920. Little is known for certain about this Shanghai-based Society around that time. However, in spring 1920 a Korean, Kim Man-gyom, who had come to Shanghai from Vladivostok as a Comintern propaganda agent and brought 40,000 yuan for sponsoring various Communist activities and publications, together with An Pyong-chan, another Korean who carried 300,000 roubles from Soviet Russia, established a "Society for Studying Socialism" in Shanghai. At nearly the same time as Chen Wangdao's translation of The Communist Manifesto was completed, the Korean translation by Yo Un-hyong, who then became the head of the Translation Service of the Koryo Communist Group, was also published in Shanghai in May 1920.<sup>136</sup>

The Communist and revolutionary pamphlets and leaflets which were printed by the presses I mentioned above were read by numerous Chinese, especially young students. Mao Zedong remembered that he first read the Chinese translation of The Communist Manifesto and some other books on Communism and Soviet Russia in 1920.<sup>137</sup> Certain pamphlets were sometimes presented to young intellectuals free of charge;<sup>138</sup> and leaflets were mainly for circulating among ordinary people. It was recorded that students and workers in Beijing and Tianjin started in spring 1920 to distribute leaflets in which they publicised the successes of Soviet Russia.<sup>139</sup> On 10

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<sup>136</sup> Kim Chun-yop and Kim Chang-sun, Hanguk Kongsan Chuui Undonsa, p 175; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, pp 16-17; Nym Wales and Kim San, Song of Ariran, p 117. The Society for Studying Socialism also started publication of a periodical entitled The Communist in Korean.

<sup>137</sup> Edgar Snow, Red Star over China (London: Vicar Gollancz, 1937).

<sup>138</sup> Wang Jueyuan, 'What I Knew about Chen Duxiu', Zhuanji wenxue, Vol 30, No 5, p 42.

<sup>139</sup> Friendship with The Soviet Union Is the Basis of Freedom and Independence of the People's Democracy, (in Chinese, Beijing, 1950), p 30; Quoted from Far Eastern



October 1920, the National Day of the Republic of China, large quantities of Bolshevik and anarchist leaflets were distributed in Shanghai. One leaflet claimed: "When the fuse is lighted the governments and capitalists of the whole world will all be removed." And it asked people: "Do you want real happiness? Rise quickly! Revolt to do away with the government!" One young Chinese, Hu Jiating, was arrested for the distribution of those leaflets. Fifty thousand pieces of propaganda literature and a number of Bolshevik books were found in his room. Hu was a teacher at the Esperanto school run by Stopany, so this propaganda campaign was believed to have links with the Bolsheviks.<sup>140</sup> At the Far Eastern Games which was held in Shanghai in autumn 1920, tens of thousands of leaflets in Chinese, English and Japanese were distributed. According to Wang Weizhou, the Koryo Communist Party sponsored and participated in this activity.<sup>141</sup> On October 9<sup>th</sup> of this year, several members of the Beijing University Students' Mutual Aid League distributed leaflets, whose content is for anti-warlord Government in Beijing, and two of them were arrested.<sup>142</sup>

The Bolsheviks always devoted much attention to conducting agitation and propaganda among workers and soldiers as well as students. There were a few cases of oral propaganda conducted directly by the Bolsheviks among Chinese labourers. Stopany once made a speech before an audience of some forty employees on ships and godowns on 29 February 1920, saying:

Shanghai is a great industrial centre where the working classes are exploited to an appalling extent. The majority of the labourers here have

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*Affairs*, (1978), No 1, p 156.

<sup>140</sup> FO 228/2989, 15 October 1920; FO 228/3216, No 42.

<sup>141</sup> Wang Weizhou, 'My Memoirs', *Zhonggong dangshi ziliao*, (1982), No 1, p 83.

<sup>142</sup> Hu Qingyun, 'What Is the Socialists' League', *Dangshi yanjiu ziliao*, 1993, No 10.

to toil 14 hours per day and the wages they receive are not a tenth part of the value of their work. The capitalists enrich themselves by sweating the workers, and lavish their ill-gotten money on motor cars, carriages and other luxuries. This state of affairs has already existed too long.

Stopany pointed out that the introduction of Communism was the only way to end it and explained the meaning of Communism; then he gave a brief account of its success as applied in Russia. Finally, he expressed the view that he saw no reason why the workers in Shanghai should not improve their status in the same way, provided they were united and prepared to make sacrifices.<sup>143</sup> A more efficient method was to use the media to propagate among workers. As we have seen, the Bolsheviks created and subsidised several weekly magazines produced specially for Chinese workers. On the third anniversary of the October Revolution, Voitinsky, using the assumed Chinese name of Wu Tingkang, wrote an article entitled "Chinese Labourers and Soviet Russia" for Laodong jie and stated that three years before, Russian workers and peasants had overthrown the capitalists and warlords, and established a Soviet Republic. Now, there were no capitalists and landlords in Russia. Workers and peasants all over the world had shown their sympathy for it and supported it. He went on to appeal:

Our Chinese workers and peasants! If we intend to break away from the oppression of the capitalists both in China and abroad, and to relieve ourselves from our sufferings under the rule of the warlords, ... we, workers and peasants, must unite and then ally ourselves with our counterparts in other countries and must do what the Russian workers and

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<sup>143</sup> FO 228/3214, 4 March 1920.

peasants have done. ... The brave and awakened Russian workers and peasants! Hurry to help your Chinese fellows who are still living in an abyss of misery.<sup>144</sup>

Since young intellectuals were more susceptible to such propaganda, the East Asian Secretariat was busy imbuing radical students with Communist and Soviet ideas first and training some of them to do propaganda work among workers and soldiers.<sup>145</sup>

"The Conditions of Admission to the Communist International" specially demanded "systematic and energetic propaganda in the army."<sup>146</sup> In China Bolshevik propaganda in the army was not empty talk. As we have seen, Chinese labourers from Russia carried out agitation in the army from 1919. From May 1920, when the Chinese Section of the East Asian Secretariat was set up, it was instructed to conduct Communist propaganda in the Chinese Army.<sup>147</sup>

The Secretariat-funded Youxin Printing plant printed numerous leaflets, one of them calling on soldiers in the army to defy orders, kill officers and go over to the people's side. According to Voitinsky, one of such leaflets entitled "Bingshi xuzhi" (What Soldiers Should Know) was written by a Chinese revolutionary.<sup>148</sup> In fact, the leaflet "Bingshi xuzhi" was first printed by Zhenli She (the Truth Society) in April 1919. Later, "Yige bing de tanhua" (Words of A Soldier) and "Mubing xuzhi" (What Soldiers Should Know) were printed by Sanwu Xueshe (Three Nihilists Society) in

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<sup>144</sup> Laodong jie, (7 November 1920), No 13.

<sup>145</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 29, p 32, p 40.

<sup>146</sup> Degras, The Communist International, Vol 1, p 169.

<sup>147</sup> 'Vilensky's Report to the ECCI, 1 September 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 39.

<sup>148</sup> Zheng Peigang, 'Some Facts on Anarchism in China', Ge Maochun, et al. (ed.) Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 2, p 959; 'Voitinsky's Letter to the the Eastern Peoples Section of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B), 17 August 1920', GLDZC, Vol 1, p 31.

Shanghai between 1920-21 and their content was the same as "Bingshi xuzhi".<sup>149</sup> The author, in the guise of a soldier named Li Desheng, wrote:

One of my fellow villagers came from Harbin and told me that Guoji Dang (the Bolshevik Party) in Russia is an organisation consisting of peasants, workers and soldiers. They rose in revolt against the officials and landlords. It was a revolution of common people. It is called a Russian-style revolution. ... Recently the common people of Germany and Austria have also risen in revolt. ... It is the will of Heaven that our Chinese labourers in Europe have got in touch with them. If a revolution of common people is initiated by our soldiers, and we can justify it, I believe that nobody in this land would dare to fight us, for all lives and weapons are in our hands.

It also contrasted the Russian Revolution with the French Revolution, saying the latter was a bourgeois revolution, while the former was a working-class revolution.<sup>150</sup>

Around this time similar articles and leaflets such as "Gao junren" (Appeal to Army Men) published in Beijing daxue xuesheng zhoukan in February 1920, "Ku junren" (The Miserable Army Men) and "To Our Brothers among the Armed Forces"<sup>151</sup> were also distributing among troops.

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<sup>149</sup> Fang Qingqiu, 'Some Issues on Mutinies under the Rule of the Beiyang Warlords', Lishi dangan (Historical Archival Materials), (Beijing 1982), No 1, pp 104-9.

<sup>150</sup> Ge Maochun, et al. (ed.), ibid., Vol 1, pp 392-6.

<sup>151</sup> Eugene E. Barnett, an American missionary in Hangzhou and Shanghai, recalled that he received one day in 1920 a batch of tracts issued by Chinese Communists, among others, such as "To Our Dear Fellow-Students" and "To Our Comrades and Blood-Brothers of Labor", there was a tract entitled "To Our Brothers in the Armed Forces". Eugene E. Barnett, My Life in China, 1910-1936, East Lansing: Michigan State University, P 188.

Certainly, no one could deny that these leaflets showed an anarchist inclination and were circulated by anarchist groups, yet it is not known that Zhenli She, San Wu Xueshe and the editorial staff of Beijing daxue xuesheng zhoukan were all anarchist groups which had close ties with the Bolsheviks. For example, the head of Sanwu Xueshe, Fei Zhewen, had been in Vladivostok before he organised the Society with Chen Jianai at the instigation of a Bolshevik called "Gorkov". This Society aimed for a revolution by the common people and tried to recruit soldiers into the Society.<sup>152</sup> I will discuss Zhenli She in the next chapter. Li Huang pointed out that the Chinese anarchists, who did not know what the Bolsheviks' Communism was, "offered a lot of help to the Russian Communist Party's propaganda in China."<sup>153</sup> In such cases, Bolshevik ideas were unavoidably mingled with anarchism.

Further evidence shows that the Bolsheviks actually participated in the agitation in the Chinese army. In spring 1920, a detective found that a Bolshevik named Diernav and several Chinese radicals were holding a meeting at the Hongyun Restaurant in Shanghai, and discussing how to disseminate Bolshevism among the Chinese troops and incite soldiers to rise in rebellion. It was reported that Diernav had brought in large sums from Russia and would provide funds for these kind of activities.<sup>154</sup> Later, anarchists Zhang Mochi, Suo Fei and so on, engaged in revolutionary activities among the troops in Baoding, Handan and other places.<sup>155</sup> In

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<sup>152</sup> Zhongguo wuzhengfu zhuyi he Zhongguo Shehuidang, pp 82-84.

<sup>153</sup> Li Huang, Xuedun shi huiyi Lu (Memoirs of the Xuedun Study), (Hong Kong: Mingbao Press, 1979), p 110.

<sup>154</sup> 'Note from Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 April 1920', ZEGXSL, No 164.

<sup>155</sup> Lu Zhe, Zhongguo wuzhengfuzhuyi shigao (A Draft History of Anarchism in China), Fuzhou: Fujian People's Press, 1990, p 253.

1921, a lecturer who was teaching Russian language at Beijing University wrote a report to the Bolsheviks in Russia, which reads:

The university students in China are all youngsters, who are very keen and sensitive. At present, most of them favour radical action. However, it is a pity that there are no such persons in the army, and therefore, armed struggle cannot start or spread for a short while. ... If soldiers are told the ideas of Communism and egalitarianism, they are sure to be glad to follow us.

He went on, "If we did so, our cause would certainly succeed within a hundred days."<sup>156</sup> This report was intercepted by the Chinese authorities and hence offers an absolute proof of the Bolsheviks' desire to instigate armed uprisings in China.

The propaganda and agitation in the army exerted a certain influence upon soldiers. For example, the troops at Gaoyang in Hebei ran riot and issued and distributed the "Mutiny Song", in which they appealed to soldiers of other Chinese troops "to fight against the Government; ... Four hundred millions of compatriots will have the same happy life as in Russia."<sup>157</sup> By the spring of 1920, the soldiers of the 5th Division in Shandong, of the Longhua and Shanghai Garrisons in Jiangsu and the troops in Manchuria had secretly formed popular societies.<sup>158</sup> The Chinese troops stationed at the lower reaches of the Amur river showed sympathy for the Bolsheviks, as a result of which they regularly received Bolshevik publications.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> 'Fu Baishan's Report to the Head of the Infantry Headquarters, Shen Zhenlin, 12 April 1921', Quote from Fang Qingqiu, 'Some Issues concerning Mutinies under the Rule of the Beiyang Warlords', Lishi dang'an, (1982), No 1.

<sup>157</sup> Quoted from Wusi aiguo yundong dang'an ziliao, p 643.

<sup>158</sup> FO 228/3214, 1 April 1920.

<sup>159</sup> 'Fedorov's Report to the Amur Committee of the RCP(B), 5 October 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 46. Fedorov was the Russian name of Liu Jiang, who was a leader of

In 1921, the Bolsheviks' propaganda activities increased in intensity. A propaganda bureau under the Dal'buro of RCP(B) was established in Chita, conducting propaganda in China and other Far Eastern countries. The head of the Bureau was Vorvosky, who had had a successful Communist career in Europe.<sup>160</sup> In a report to the Comintern dated 11 April 1921, the head of the Dal'buro, Krasnochokov (Tobelson) claimed:

We have achieved in no way a looser [lesser] success in the results of the work of our propaganda section. The significance of which is obvious. ... Our section has lately considerably increased its activities in Shanghai, Tianjin ... .<sup>161</sup>

It was the eve of the foundation of the CCP. Beyond doubt, their propaganda activities had a significant bearing on Chinese radicals' fervour for Bolshevism and therefore prepared the way for the birth of the CCP.

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To summarise Soviet Russia and the Comintern's propaganda and agitation in China, which started in 1918 and was intensified during 1920-21, its guiding principles, contents, tactics and effects should be dealt with briefly.

## **1. Contents and Principles**

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the Chinese Communists in Russia.

<sup>160</sup> FO 228/3211, July 1921. Some Bolsheviks who had worked in China, such as Agarief, joined this Bureau; and some Chinese, such as Zhang Minquan, also worked for it. FO 405/233, p 438; FO 228/3140, p 75.

<sup>161</sup> FO 228/2774, No 244.

Soviet propaganda could be roughly divided into two aspects: an ideological aspect and a manipulative aspect. The Bolsheviks laid emphasis on different aspects at different times.

Generally speaking, the manipulative aspect of Soviet propaganda was used to associate the goals and policies of Soviet Russia with non-Communist symbols in order to secure for Soviet policies the maximum possible support from non-Communists.<sup>162</sup> Since the function of the Eastern people's in a world socialist revolution was first defined by the Bolshevik leaders to aid in the general assault upon the capitalist-imperialist powers, the most important aspect of their early propaganda in China was to stimulate the Chinese people to throw themselves into the anti-imperialist, especially anti-Japanese movement.

As to the ideological aspect of the propaganda, it was initially considered unwise to attempt to spread Communist ideology in China, for Lenin did not believe that Chinese coolies could wage a socialist revolution in a backward country like China.<sup>163</sup> So in the early stages, only a little Communist ideology was contained in Soviet propaganda. Hence, one cannot consider that there was no Bolshevik propaganda merely because no dissemination of Communism was visible. The doctrines with which the Bolsheviks first tried to make the Chinese familiar were Lenin's theory of imperialism and the Soviet Government's policy towards national self-determination. In April 1920 British intelligence observed that Bolshevism was spreading, and "it is made peculiarly acceptable to the oriental by its advocacy of race equality and self-determination."<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Cf. F. C. Barghoorn, Soviet Foreign Propaganda, (Princeton, 1964), p 17.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Lazitch and Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern, p 544.

<sup>164</sup> FO 405/228, 7 April 1920.



Once Soviet Russia and the Comintern began to switch their global strategic centre of gravity from the West to the East, they not only encouraged people in colonial and backward countries to form national liberation movements against imperialism, but also attempted to "apply communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions" and to establish soviets and to build socialist societies in backward countries.<sup>165</sup> Thereafter, ideological elements, such as socialist and communist theories became an important part of Soviet propaganda. The Bolsheviks began to supply the Chinese with more works by Lenin and other Soviet leaders, Comintern documents and Soviet materials containing glowing accounts of the Soviet system and the new way of life in Russia, which sought to offer an appealing and convincing ideology, theory and model for the Chinese.

## 2. Means and Tactics

In order to ensure the widest possible dispersion of Soviet propaganda, the Bolsheviks resorted to every conceivable means: speeches, leaflets, pamphlets, the press and so on. One of the Comintern theses on the methods and content of the Communists' work pointed out that the principal forms of Communist propaganda and agitation were regular verbal personal persuasion and agitation combined with literature distribution.<sup>166</sup> As we have seen, Bolshevik propagandists sometimes made speeches before Chinese audiences or tried to convert people personally and handed out pamphlets to the Chinese. However, verbal agitation and literature distribution were mainly carried out by Chinese propagandists from Russia and Chinese anarchists

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<sup>165</sup> Lenin, 'The Second Congress of the Communist International', Collected Works, Vol 31, p 242.

<sup>166</sup> Degras, The Communist International, Vol 1, pp 261-2.

who were made use of by Soviet agents. Among various means, perhaps the most successful one was to employ the press in China, since the press, whose existence was based on a public demand for news and information, afforded an ideal channel.

Soviet propaganda could also be divided into direct and indirect ways. Direct propaganda could easily be seen, while it was hardly possible to identify indirect propaganda. Concealing its source was a customary tactic of Bolshevik propaganda. Sometimes Bolshevik propagandists contributed articles under assumed names as if they had been written by Chinese or non-Communist authors; sometimes they bribed newspapers and periodicals to publish their news or articles;<sup>167</sup> what is more, they created and subsidised journals, which appeared to be pure Chinese journals and which would not be perceived as Bolshevik publications. For example, in 1921, the representative of the Red Trade Unions International in China had a plan to start publication of a weekly journal with "an unnoticeable title".<sup>168</sup> It was just what Lenin had demanded "to overcome all obstacles, to found legal press organs ... under the most varied names, and when necessary to change the name frequently."<sup>169</sup> In these ways, the Bolsheviks extended their influence and moulded "public opinion", while most of those influenced were unaware of the motives or even the identity of the propagandists.

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<sup>167</sup> For example, in 1922-23 the Joffe Mission bribed several newspapers in China with money under the pretence of offering travel subsidies. [Wang Yijun, Zhong E waijiao de xumu, pp 341-42]; In 1927 Voitinsky once used large funds to reverse the trend towards anti-Communism in the Chinese press. [Pick, China in the Grip of the Reds, p 10].

<sup>168</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China', Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka, (1973), No 1; This weekly journal was Laodong zhoukan (Labour Weekly), the organ of the Chinese Labour Organisations' Secretariat of the CCP.

<sup>169</sup> Degras, The Communist International, Vol 1, pp 123-4.

The Bolshevik propagandists aimed at a wide range of target audiences belonging to different classes, different political cliques, different circles and different educational levels. For the ordinary masses, normally oral agitation or popular literature were provided, for they could not be expected to master abstruse theories and could only be expected to be aroused to action. On the other hand, since the radical intelligentsia were capable of studying and accepting Marxism and Bolshevism, they were therefore considered capable of being trained as future Communist leaders in China. Journalists in particular found favour in the Soviet propagandists' eyes, since they were in a position to influence others once they responded favourably to Soviet propaganda. That was why Soviet propagandists first built up close relationship with many Chinese journalists and why the main founders of the CCP, such as Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Li Hanjun, Qu Qiubai and Zhang Tailei, had all been editors or journalists.

In What is to be Done? Lenin wrote that the revolutionary propagandists should "speak literally different languages." The Bolsheviks were quite flexible in their choice of language for propaganda, adapting to various circumstances, to diverse targets and for different purposes. For example, when addressing labourers, their main topic was to expose capitalist exploitation and the evils of the capitalist system; to the nationalists, they warned of the dangers of Japanese encroachment and aroused their anti-imperialist sentiment; and to the anarchists, they preached social revolution and described the magnificent prospects of communism. After the Versailles Conference resolved to transfer Shandong to Japan, the Bolsheviks took the opportunity this presented, issuing the Karakhan Manifesto and other publicity to convince the Chinese people that only Soviet Russia was an unselfish friend of China and the liberator of the Eastern peoples. In these ways, the Bolsheviks won over many Chinese in favour of Soviet Russia.

By speaking the "language the people understand"<sup>170</sup>, the Bolsheviks resourcefully adapted their propaganda message to the conditions in China, to the particular historical juncture, and to the needs, desires and sentiments of the Chinese people. What they said seemed to be in the interests of the Chinese people and the tone of their writings seemed Chinese in style and viewpoint, therefore most Chinese people at the time were not aware of the existence of Soviet propaganda, and even many present-day historians have failed to notice its significance in the early stages.

### **3. Effects and Influences**

To judge the effects and influences of Soviet propaganda in China, one must examine whether the purposes of the propaganda were achieved and analyse whether the propagandists' language and mode of thinking were adopted.

We can see that Soviet Russia's summons to fight against Japanese and European imperialists brought forth a favourable response from the Chinese people. As a British intelligence report indicated, "the Bolshevik creed of anti-imperialism with its cry for the liberation of Asia from European domination strikes a sympathetic note in China."<sup>171</sup> Lenin's theory on imperialism and the Comintern's call to fight against imperialist powers were accepted by more and more Chinese people, and the Bolsheviks' anti-imperialist slogan was conducive to forming and pushing forward the Chinese national liberation movements.

The Bolsheviks' messages that Soviet Russia was the sole country which would not commit aggression against other states and would emancipate all people in oppressed and colonial circumstances attracted many Chinese, and convinced them

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<sup>170</sup> Lenin's Collected Works, Vol 30, p 162.

<sup>171</sup> FO 405/228, 1920, No 82.

that Soviet Russia stood for "justice and humanity", and that the Bolsheviks were fighting for the "freedom, equality and well-being" of all people.<sup>172</sup> Soviet Russia therefore enjoyed a considerable reputation for several years, and as Mirovitskaya pointed out, "the prestige and popularity of the land of Soviets increased and grew stronger in China between 1919 and 1921."<sup>173</sup> Many Chinese believed that to form an alliance with Soviet Russia would be of benefit to China.

In 1920 a high tide in the propagation of socialism emerged in China. On his return from abroad, Pan Gongzhan found, to his astonishment, that "socialism seems to have become a pet phrase these days; newspapers and magazines spare no efforts to advocate socialism. Recently, even some people who know nothing about socialism parade themselves as socialists, too".<sup>174</sup> Feng Ziyou believed that this was "the great effect of various propaganda activities".<sup>175</sup> Between 1919 and 1921, large quantities of books, pamphlets and journals propagating socialism including Marxism, and providing information about Soviet Russia, appeared in China. Pan Gongzhan thus remarked:

This year (1920) the trend of socialist thought in China is like the rising wind and scudding clouds. Articles expounding Marxism and discussing Bolshevism have been published in newspapers and magazines everywhere.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Zhongguo xiandai shi ziliao huibian (Collected Source Materials of Modern Chinese History), (Hong Kong: Cultural Material Supply Service, 1978), p 40-41.

<sup>173</sup> 'The First Responses in China to the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution', Far Eastern Affairs, 1978, Vol 1, pp 153-154.

<sup>174</sup> Pan Gongzhan, 'Random Thoughts on Return to the Mother-Land', Taiping yang (The Pacific), (Shanghai, August 1920), Vol 3, No 6.

<sup>175</sup> Feng Ziyou, Shehuizhuyi yu Zhongguo (Socialism and China), (Hong Kong, April 1920); quoted from Lü Fangshang, Geming zhi zaiqi, p 320.

<sup>176</sup> Dongfang zazhi (The Oriental Miscellaneous), Shanghai, 25 February 1921, Vol

This showed that among various brands of socialism the dissemination of Marxism and Bolshevism was rather conspicuous. According to incomplete statistics, between 1919 and 1920 out of around 400 Chinese journals there were over 200 journals which had socialist tendencies in varying degrees;<sup>177</sup> and from 1919 to 1921, over 300 Marxist works, and works by Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders came off the press or were published in periodicals of various political inclinations.<sup>178</sup> The articles about Soviet Russia were too many to be counted. These publications "were widely circulated in all parts of the country and produced immense repercussions."<sup>179</sup>

The socialist publicity drive has been regarded as an important sign in the spread of Marxism-Leninism in China caused by the upsurge in socialist ideas after World War I and the October Revolution. This is true, yet the evidence provided above demonstrates that this string of such publications cannot be considered as a totally spontaneous tendency of the Chinese towards Marxism and Bolshevism or their "self-generated interest" in the Bolshevik Revolution without the factor of Soviet propaganda.

Beyond doubt, the dissemination of information and doctrines of the Bolsheviks exerted a widespread influence on Chinese people. Chen Boxi wrote in an article published in 1920:

Since the May 4th Movement last year, ... tens of publications on new thoughts have been published. The Chinese people then began to know about various deeds of the Lenin Government and the Bolsheviks in

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18, No 4.

<sup>177</sup> Zhu Hanguo, et al., Zhongguo gongchandang jianshe shi (History of the Establishment of the CCP), (Chengdu: Sichuan People's Press, 1991), p 5.

<sup>178</sup> Mirovitskaya, 'The First Responses in China to the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution', Far Eastern Affairs, (1978), No 1, p 155.

<sup>179</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 128.

Russia. Many of them therefore would welcome the advent of the Bolsheviks in China at once in order to put Bolshevism into practice.<sup>180</sup>

His statement was not a distortion of the facts. Even foreigners in China noticed the phenomenon. A Christian missionary H. T. Hotking found that Bolshevism was widespread among Chinese youth;<sup>181</sup> some others also observed that Bolshevism had taken "a firm hold of the mind of thousands of young would-be reformers in China."<sup>182</sup>

Soviet propaganda served to influence people's ideology and it converted many radical intellectuals to Bolshevism as well as preparing the ground for the establishment of the CCP. To a certain extent, the Bolsheviks achieved the goals of their propaganda in China.

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<sup>180</sup> Da quang bao (Bright Light Paper), (Hong Kong, 1920), quoted from Lü Fangshang, Geming zhi zaiqi.

<sup>181</sup> A. Ivin, China and Russia, (Moscow, 1924), p 19.

<sup>182</sup> FO 228/3211, 31 March 1920.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### WORKING TOWARDS UNITY AND ORGANISATION

Organisation was the Bolsheviks' main weapon, as Lenin pointed out: "Our fighting method is organisation. We must organise everything, take everything into our own hands."<sup>1</sup> For the Bolsheviks, organisation was also an important task in China and other parts of the East. In November 1919, Lenin told the Eastern revolutionaries that the task confronting them was "to arouse the working masses to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached."<sup>2</sup> As a first step, Lenin and the Comintern considered that in their work among the masses of the Eastern people, the Communists had to set up national revolutionary mass organisations of working people, which would be "non-party organisations".<sup>3</sup> Since the Chinese proletariat as a whole was rather weak at the time, the work of organisation was conducted firstly among radical intellectuals and then among the working class.

In the following sections I will discuss some typical organisations which were formed around 1918 to 1920 and were related to the Bolsheviks or the foundation of the CCP.

#### Section 1. Societies for the Study of Marxism and Socialism

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 23, p 133.

<sup>2</sup> ibid., Vol 30, p 162.

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Reznikov, 'The Strategy and Tactics of the Communist International in the National and Colonial Question', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 153.



## I. The Marxist Research Society

Initial organisational activity relating to the birth of the CCP can be traced back to 1918. According to "A Brief History of the Chinese Communist Party", Chen Duxiu engaged in "Communist Work" by "grouping around himself the best revolutionaries" as early as 1918.<sup>4</sup> One may well object that the author emphasised only Chen Duxiu's role and did not mention Li Dazhao at all. The best explanation for this omission is that Li, as the person who drafted the "Brief History" deliberately chose not to push himself forward. With regard to organisational activities, the "Brief History" further indicates that "prominent individuals step forward, organise themselves into groups, and attract the best elements of society ..." In fact this was just what Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu did. It is certain that from 1918 Li and Chen began to rally many radicals around them and organised various groups. It was from among these groups that the CCP emerged. In this loose sense Li and Chen can be said to have been engaged in Communist work since 1918.

The first group to emerge from these activities was the Marxist Research Society, organised by Li Dazhao at Beijing University some time around the end of 1918. Some historians, both in China and elsewhere, have accepted the emergence of this Society at this time as a historical fact. In the main, they have based their assertions on a Japanese book Shina Kyosan Undo (The Chinese Communist Movement) published in 1933, which claimed that "in 1918, Li Dazhao, a Professor at Beijing University ... organised the Marxist Research Society. This was the precursor

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Wilbur and How, CNSAC, p 48.

of the Communist groups in China."<sup>5</sup> More recently, however, some authoritative books on the history of the CCP published in China have denied or ignored this society's existence in 1918. For example, Zhongguo Gongchandang de Qishi Nian, which was written under the direction of the Central Committee of the CCP, asserts that "the first group in China to study and research Marxism" was the Marxist Research Society organised by Li Dazhao and Deng Zhongxia in March 1920.<sup>6</sup> Dirlik provided the following explanation for this: "None of the later Communist recruits who were students at Beida [Beijing University] and participated in the indisputable Society for the Study of Marxist Theory established in 1920 can recall the existence of such a society in 1918."<sup>7</sup> He cited Zhang Guotao and Liu Renjing's memoirs as examples to confirm his views. But Dirlik and some other historians have neglected the recollections of Zhu Wushan, another Communist student at Beijing University during that time and a member of the Marxist Research Society in 1920. Zhu Wushan wrote in his "Recollections of the Marxism Research Society" that he remembered that Li Dazhao, together with another Beijing University professor Gao Yihan, had organised a society for researching Marxism in 1918. Initially, this society did not carry out much work and hence did not draw many revolutionary youths into its organisation.<sup>8</sup> Zhu's account is credible because he maintained a personal friendship

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Sima Lu, Zhongguo Gongchandang de chengli yu chuqi huodong (The Founding and Initial Activities of the CCP), (Hong Kong: Zilian Press, 1974), p 252.

<sup>6</sup> The CCP History Research Institute, Zhongguo Gongchandang de qishi nian (Seventy Years of the CCP), (Beijing: The CCP History Press, 1991), p 19. Some other authorized works published recently, such as Zhongguo Gongchandang lishi (The History of the CCP), and Zhongguo Gongchandang lishi dacidian also hold the same point of view.

<sup>7</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 44.

<sup>8</sup> Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu (The Communist Groups), (Beijing: The Press of the Historical Materials of the CCP, 1987), p 326.

with Li Dazhao for many years. Gao Yihan's memoirs are perhaps even more valuable. Gao recounted with certainty:

Less than six months before May 4th [1919], Shou Chang organised a Marxist Research Society at Beijing University. We used the name of Ma-Er-Ke-Si instead of Marx, in order to befuddle the police. When the police authorities received reports that there was a society for studying [the theory of] "Malthus" (confused with Ma-Er-Ke-Si), they considered it to be a society for researching population theories, and therefore did not interfere in the affairs of our Society. This Society was initially open to the public, but soon became a secret society. Its internal activities consisted of studying Marxist theory, while its external work consisted of holding lectures. ... At the end of 1918, we began publishing Meizhou pinglun,...<sup>9</sup>

From Gao's recollection we can gather that the Society must have started in November or December 1918 before Meizhou pinglun (Weekly Critic) started publication on 12 December and that the participants were mainly Beijing University professors and lecturers, some of whom later became Meizhou pinglun's editors and contributors, people such as Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu, Zhang Shenfu and Gao Yihan. From then on, translations of Marx's and Engels' works and articles on Marxism appeared in Meizhou pinglun and Xin qingnian.

Another firm collateral evidence is from Dai Jitao, who wrote in Xinqi pinglun of 7 September 1919: "Why was Meizhou pinglun closed down? Didn't you see that newspapers say that they [the Government] tried to prohibit the dissemination of 'Ma-

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<sup>9</sup> Gao Yihan, "Memoirs of Comrade Li Dazhao during the May 4th Period", Wusi yundong huiyilu, pp 340-41.

er-ge-shi-zhuyi' [Marxism]?" Dai's article actually reveals that there was a group of people related to Meizhou pinglun had propagated Marxism before the middle of 1919. In view of the fact that the members of the Marxist Research Society in Beijing had very close connections with Meizhou pinglun, it is hard to deny the existence of the Marxist Research Society in Beijing before 1919. It is not at all surprising why many radical students from Beijing University, such as Zhang Guotao, Liu Renjing and Luo Zhanglong were unaware of the existence of this Marxist Research Society. Although some students might well have attended the Society's lecture meetings, they would not have known who sponsored them. However, Qu Qiubai, then a student at the Beijing Russian Language Institute, remembered that he had attended meetings of the Marxist Research Society as a Chinese Marxist observed, towards the end of 1919 or at the beginning of 1920.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, the Marxist Research Society of 1920, which I shall deal with later, can be seen as a continuation of the society of the same name that had been organised in 1918.

It is difficult to understand why Li Dazhao organised the Marxist Research Society at the end of 1918, when he understood so little about Marxism. Many scholars have demonstrated that there was no hint in Li's articles before then that he had any knowledge of Marxism. Hence, simply by reference to his ideas alone, it is difficult to believe that he could have established such a society on his own initiative at that time. What is more likely is that he received an impetus from elsewhere. It is worth noting that the establishment of the Marxist Research Society and the publication of Li Dazhao's famous articles "The Victory of Bolshevism" and "The Victory of the Common People" occurred almost simultaneously. In the latter article Li seemed to be applying Lenin's theory on imperialism to the analysis of the nature of the World War. Since Li could not possibly have read Lenin's works at this time, it is

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<sup>10</sup> Qu Qiubai, Duoyu de hua (Surplus Words), quoted from Sima Lu, Zhonggong de chengli yu chuqi huodong.

reasonable to surmise that he learned some views from Soviet agents. Of course, this can be verified only by finding more historical evidence, but from the data available so far one can only draw the inference that the establishment of the Marxist Research Society in 1918 was connected with the efforts of Soviet agents as well as with Soviet Russia.

Davidson-Houston, a western historian, writes: "Marxist ideas had already been introduced into China at the end of the World War by well-known scholars such as Chen Duhsiu and Li Tachao, who had contacts with Moscow."<sup>11</sup> As I have shown in Chapter 2, before Li organised the Marxist Research Society he had already been in contact with Soviet agents Ivanov and Polevoy, who worked under direction from Moscow.

Since the Marxist Research Society in 1918 was a small group most of whose members were not really converted to Marxism, and since the scope of its activities was narrow, it did not make a notable impact on Chinese thinking. Nevertheless, the emergence of such a society in China was an event of a symbolic significance.

## **II. The Socialist Studies Society**

In the second half of 1919, a Socialist Studies Society emerged in Beijing. It had a larger membership than the Marxist Research Society, but few historians have paid attention to it. None of the books on the subject of the origins of the CCP published in PRC have mentioned it. Certainly my knowledge of this society is still far from complete and further research is required. Nevertheless, various points can be made in connection with it.

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<sup>11</sup> J. V. Davidson-Houston, Russia and China, From the Huns to Mao Tse-tung (London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1960) p 108.

First of all, it is necessary to make clear the background to the Society's formation. The Socialist Studies Society was set up by Zhang Ximan, a member of the GMD who had studied Russian at the Oriental Language Institute in Vladivostok in the period 1911-1914. Between 1917 and 1918, Zhang often visited some Bolsheviks in Harbin and said to them that Chinese should learn from the Russian Revolution.<sup>12</sup> In winter 1918, Zhang went to the Russian Far East and Siberia to investigate the facts regarding the dispatch of Chinese troops to Siberia in accordance with the Sino-Japanese Mutual Defence Military Convention. According to Zhang Ximan's reminiscences, during his stay in Siberia, he wrote a letter to Cai Yuanpei, Chancellor of Beijing University, and Wan Fuhua, an old member of the Tongmeng Hui, suggesting that they organise a Socialist Studies Society in China. Cai and Wan approved the suggestion and sent a telegram inviting Zhang to return to Beijing as soon as possible, in order to make preparations for the setting up of the Society. In July 1919, Zhang went to Beijing and worked with Cai Yuanpei and Li Dazhao<sup>13</sup> (Wan Fuhua had died before Zhang's return) to found the Socialist Studies Society. The purpose of organising the Society was to "learn the organisational methods and experiences of the great Russian October Revolution, in order to help to bring about the achievement of the Chinese national revolution."<sup>14</sup> From the way in which the

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<sup>12</sup> This is on the basis of the recollection of one of those Bolsheviks, Rilomsky; quoted from Zhang Xiaoman's letter (6 January 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Li Dazhao told Zhang Guotao in 1920 that before the May 4th Movement he had thought about organising a Socialist Research Society to study Marxism and a Russian Research Society to study the Russian Revolution. But he had never actually done anything about organising them. See Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 94; This could not rule out the possibility that Li joined the Socialist Studies Society after the May 4th Movement.

<sup>14</sup> Zhang Ximan, Lishi huiyi, p 126.

Socialist Studies Society was formed, we can see that Zhang Ximan's trip to Russia was the key to the foundation of the Society.

During the period he studied the Russian language in Vladivostok Zhang read a few works by Plekhanov and Lenin and learned about the Russian Revolution of 1905, but he did not become a socialist. Before his second trip to Russia, he had not the slightest intention of organising a Socialist Studies Society in China. So it is reasonable to suspect that the idea of founding such a society came from someone else. During his stay in Siberia and the Russian Far East in 1918, Zhang obtained the Programme of the Russian Communist Party (B) and other important Bolshevik and Soviet documents and news about the Bolsheviks' activities. On his return Zhang conveyed the message to Sun Yatsen that the Bolsheviks intended to convene the first congress of international socialist parties in February 1919 and persuaded him to send a delegate of his Party to attend the Congress in Moscow. A recent article by Zhang Xiaoman (Zhang Ximan's daughter) reveals that Zhang Ximan made contacts with Russian revolutionaries during this visit.<sup>15</sup> These events suggest that Zhang might have received some ideas from the Bolsheviks, including that of establishing the Socialist Studies Society.

The Socialist Studies Society was formed clandestinely in Beijing, probably between July and October 1919, some time after Zhang Ximan arrived in Beijing in July and before Xu Deheng left Beijing in October. Xu Deheng, a student of Beijing University, later remembered that he had attended a meeting of a group of the Socialist Studies Society at Beijing University before he left Beijing for France in October

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<sup>15</sup> Zhang Xiaoman (ed.), Zhang Ximan jinian wenji (Collected Articles in Memory of Zhang Ximan), (Beijing: The Chinese Culture and History Press, 1995), p 197. This book shows that Zhang Ximan was a secretary at the Soviet Russian Legation in Beijing in 1923 (p 428).

1919.<sup>16</sup> Hence we can be sure that the Socialist Studies Society must at least have been in existence by October.

At first the Society's meeting place was not fixed, but later it held regular meetings in the Library of Beijing University. The society's members worked carefully among the youth in order to avoid interference by the Beijing Government. Before long the Society expanded into other large cities and its membership increased. Zhang Ximan remembered that the members of the Society included: Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu, Chen Guyuan, Fan Tiren, Xu Liuji, Guo Mengliang, Yi Keyi, Yi Junzuo, Meng Shouchun, Zhu Qianzhi, Fei Juetian, Deng Zhongxia, Zhang Guotao, Qu Qiubai, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai.<sup>17</sup> Since its members held different political views and convictions, there were within its ranks splinter groups of varying persuasions. For example, one could cite the Society for Studying Guild Socialism, the Society for Studying Syndicalism and the Society for Studying Anarchism. In addition, some of those who followed the Bolsheviks formed a Marxist Studies Society in Beijing in March 1920 and a Russian Research Society in Changsha in August 1920. Although the Socialist Studies Society was thus fractured along ideological lines, nominal unity was maintained. At the end of 1920 its main branch at Beijing University made itself known to the public and issued its general regulations, in which its aim was described as "mustering the comrades who believe in socialism and have the ability to help each other with researching and spreading socialism." It further defined its main methods of work as "the translation and compilation of a series of books on socialism and the

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<sup>16</sup> Xu Deheng, 'The 60th Anniversary of the May 4th Movement', Wenshi ziliao xuanji, (1979), No 61, p 18.

<sup>17</sup> Zhang Ximan, Lishi huiyi, p 144.



publication of treatises on socialism."<sup>18</sup> The public notice gave a list of the names of Society members. Many of these were mentioned by Zhang Ximan in his recollections, but nearly all the persons in the list with the exception of Li Dazhao were in fact inclined to Guild Socialism and Syndicalism. Maybe some of the members who joined the Marxist Studies Society in March 1920, had broken away from the Socialist Studies Society.<sup>19</sup> In 1921, the Socialist Studies Society ceased to exist as its members moved on ideologically. At any rate, the Society completed its mission as a transitional organisation and helped to bring about the birth of the CCP.

## **Section 2. Mass Organisations Which Emerged during the May 4th Period**

Many historians have noticed that the Chinese Communist Party's early groups in 1920 took shape around a national network of previously existing radical associations which had come into being in the course of the May 4th movement. These radical organisations, whose members had believed in various ideologies, later came to serve as the nuclei of the Communist organisation. Further investigation is required into how the various radical groups scattered in different geographical locations came to be unified into certain nation-wide associations; how such associations' national network was used as the basis of the first Communist organisations; and whether the unification and conversion was a spontaneous process or not.

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<sup>18</sup> Beijing daxue xuesheng rikan (Beijing University Students' Daily), 4 December 1920.

<sup>19</sup> A possible reason why Li Dazhao remained in the Socialist Studies Society was that he intended to unite more socialists.

## I. Some Societies Founded in Beijing before the May 4th Demonstration

It is an accepted fact that Beijing University was the cradle of Chinese Communism. Around the May 4th period many radical student societies were formed at Beijing University and some nation-wide youth organisations were started up by people based there. Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu played important roles in the formation of some of these organisations.

In the summer of 1918 Li Dazhao supported the students of Beijing University and of some other universities and colleges in Beijing in setting up the Students' Patriotic Association, which was a nation-wide organisation initiated by the Returned Students' National Salvation League. The catalyst for the establishment of this organisation was the Sino-Japanese Joint Military Defence Convention. In January 1919 the Association's organ Guomin (The Citizens) started publication and its main aims were to propagate anti-imperialism and to oppose the warlords' government. The Society of Citizens' Magazine was set up in October of the previous year, and most of its members were students at Beijing University with Li Dazhao as their supervisor. In December 1918, a famous literary society, the Renaissance Magazine Society, which was formed by some Beijing University students, such as Luo Jialun, Fu Sinian and Kang Baiqing, invited Li Dazhao to become one of its advisors. Li set aside a room in the University Library for the Society to use; Chen Duxiu, dean of the Faculty of Literature, also lent the Society important support.<sup>20</sup> In January 1919 the Renaissance Magazine started publishing Xin chao. In March 1919, with Li Dazhao's help, some Beijing University students, such as Deng Zhongxia, Huang Rikui and Xu Deheng,

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<sup>20</sup> Fu Sinian, 'The Renaissance's Review and Prospects', Xin chao, (1919), Vol 2, No 1, pp 199-200.

founded the Common People's Educational Lecturing Corps, which was affiliated to the Students' Patriotic Association. When the Corps set up a school for railway workers at Changxindian, Li Dazhao, with Polevoy, Li Xinbai and other teachers at Beijing University, donated money to it.

Most students belonging to the above organisations were very active in the May 4th Movement. The Society of the Citizens Magazine was an important organisation which initiated the May 4th demonstration. On May 3rd 1919, it was this Society that convoked a meeting of students of Beijing University and student representatives of thirteen other universities and colleges, and at this meeting the May 4th demonstration was decided on. Many members of the Society, such as Xu Deheng, Duan Xipeng, Huang Rikui, Meng Shouchun and Xia Xiufeng played active roles in the demonstration.

Li Dazhao took an important part in directing the movement. According to Luo Zhanglong, "On the eve of the May 4th Movement the radical elements represented by Li Dazhao had already formed an organised power, which was the antecedent for the Marxist Studies Society [in 1920]; they initiated and led the May 4th Movement ideologically and organisationally."<sup>21</sup> Zhang Guotao gave a detailed account of how Li Dazhao directed students during the Movement: "In the 1919 summer vacation, Li regularly went to his office in the Library, and I saw him more often than anyone else. Not only did he give me many valuable suggestions, but he often drafted important documents for me. He also did his best to co-ordinate the views of teachers and students, while maintaining constant contact with the press."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Luo Zhanglong, 'Recollections of the Marxist Studies Society at Beijing University', *Yida qianhou*, Vol 3, pp 187-8.

<sup>22</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 67.

In 1920 when Li became a professor at Beijing University, he tried to exert more influence on the students. No other teachers at the University lent a hand to students' organisations or played such an important part in the movements as Li did. Zhang Shizhao, a former professor at Beijing University and Li's immediate predecessor as Director of the Library, said of Li that "Shouchang assumed the directorship of the Library first, and became a professor afterwards ... . While the democratic movement in Beijing was germinating, Shouchang aspired to get a position at Beijing University, in order to direct, instruct and control ... . Having entered Beijing University ... Shouchang behaved as if he were running an army ... and made banners and flags change their colours."<sup>23</sup> Zhang was not exaggerating when he wrote this, since Li Dazhao spared no efforts to do organising work. In April 1919, in a letter to Hu Shi, who was then an advisor to the Renaissance Society, Li expressed the idea that so long as members of these progressive societies headed for the light, it would not matter if they held different views.<sup>24</sup> In such a way, Li Dazhao grouped around himself many young radicals in Beijing.

Li Dazhao's organisational activities were not confined to Beijing. In June 1918 Li Dazhao participated in the establishment of the Young China Association, which was a nation-wide organisation. The Young China Society was formed at a time when large numbers of Chinese students were returning from Japan in protest against the Joint Military Defence Convention between China and Japan. Before their return, some of these students, such as Zeng Qi, Zhang Mengjiu and Lei Meisheng,

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<sup>23</sup> Zhang Cixi, Li Dazhao xiansheng zhuan (Biography of Mr. Li Dazhao), (Beijing, 1951), p 3; Since Zhang Shizhao knew Li well, he was invited to write the preface to the above book.

<sup>24</sup> Li Dazhao wenji (Selected Writings of Li Dazhao), (Beijing: People's Press, 1959), Vol 2, p 936.

had dreamed of founding an organisation similar to "Young Italy". On arrival in China, they frequently consulted Chen Yusheng, Li Dazhao, Zhou Taixuan and Wang Guangqi about this plan. At first they could not make up their minds whether to establish a political party or a society. Zhang Mengjiu recalled that they felt that building a party was a major undertaking, and moreover, they followed differing ideologies: Li Dazhao and Chen Yusheng were inclined towards Soviet Russia and favoured Communism, while the others favoured anarchism and narrow nationalism [Guojia zhuyi]; therefore, they decided to form an association as a compromise.<sup>25</sup>

The Young China Association came into being in July 1918. Since the Association's head was an anarchist, Wang Guangqi, Li Dazhao's original plan was thus not realised. As he told Zhang Guotao later, he had hoped that this Association would shoulder the responsibility for publicising Marxism, but some of its members did not believe in Marxism.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, after the formation of the Young China Association, Li Dazhao tried his best to exert an influence on the thinking of other members of the Association. According to Li Huang, a member of this Association, from about November 1918 Li Dazhao "began to speak approvingly of the Communist Revolution in Russia, and believed it to be of more significance than the French Revolution of 1789, for the Russian Communist Party supported the liberation movements of small and weak nations. ... [therefore] it was better to learn from the Russian Communist Party."<sup>27</sup> When expressing such opinions, Li Dazhao was challenged by Wang Guangqi, however, his views seemed to have been accepted by some other members of the Association, including Mao Zedong. From October 1918

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<sup>25</sup> Zhang Mengjiu, 'Reminiscences of the Young China Association', Zhuanji wenxue, Vol 53, No 1, p 144.

<sup>26</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 94.

<sup>27</sup> Li Huang, Xuedun shi huiyilu, pp 46-7.

to February 1919, Mao worked at Beijing University Library as an assistant librarian under the direction of Li Dazhao; he joined the Young China Association after Li recommended him to the group. Mao later acknowledges the influence of Li by telling Edgar Snow, the American journalist: "Under Li Ta-chao as assistant librarian at Peking National University, I had rapidly developed towards Marxism."<sup>28</sup> Although there is no proof that Mao was converted to Marxism until late 1920, it remains clear that Li Dazhao's words left a deep impression on him, so that he decided to learn from Russia. In a "Questionnaire of the Future Causes and Careers of the Members of the Young China Association", Mao indicated that he intended to study in Russia for at least five years.<sup>29</sup> Li Dazhao also tried to win over Wang Guangqi and others. Sometimes, he invited Wang to his office,<sup>30</sup> and accompanied by Chen Duxiu and Gao Yihan, visited Wang and Zhao Shiyan's dwelling place - Penglu - to talk with them.<sup>31</sup>

The Association published its own journals Shaonian Zhongguo (Young China) and Shaonian shijie (Youth World). Li Dazhao was director of the editorial department of Shaonian Zhongguo, which mainly published members' articles reflecting their various beliefs and views. Shaonian shijie carried a large number of articles on Soviet Russia and the international labour movement. An article by Zong Zihui published in Shaonian Zhongguo in December 1919 stressed that it was necessary to "unite the youth over the whole of China in order to form a large organisation ... to wage a revolution ... to break down the oppression of all reactionary

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<sup>28</sup> Snow, Red Star over China, p 154.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from Zhuanji wenxue, Vol 35, No 2, p 145.

<sup>30</sup> Fu Sinian, 'Recollecting Wang Guang-qi', Wang Guangqi xiansheng jinian ce (Memorial Book for Mr. Wang Guangqi), (Beijing, 1936), p 55.

<sup>31</sup> Guo Youshou, 'Wang Guangqi in penglu', ibid, p 28. Zhao Shiyan was the President of Sichuan Students' Union in Beijing, and was also an anarchist then.

forces."<sup>32</sup> One of the Young China Association's slogans was "small groups which can form a great union". In actual deeds, the Young China Association played an important role in uniting radical youth groups scattered in different cities. This Association had connections with many youth organisations and drew key members of those organisations in as its own members. In this way, the Young China Association became a nation-wide organisation with more than one hundred members, who were dispersed around Shanghai, Tianjin, Wuhan, Changsha, Nanjing, Chengdu and Xian, as well as Beijing. Some of its Beijing members also belonged to the Society of the Citizens' Magazine, the Renaissance Society and the Common People's Education Lecture Corps, while its members in other cities were leading elements in the New Citizens Studies Society in Changsha, the Coexistence Society in Wuhan, the Awakening Society in Tianjin and the Society of the Sunday Magazine in Chengdu. Later, nearly all of them attended the Youth Labour-Learning Mutual Aid Corps in various cities.

As one of the leaders of the Young China Association, Li Dazhao did all he could to exert his influence on other societies and to bring them together. In September 1919, just a few days after the Awakening Society was founded, Li Dazhao went to Tianjin to discuss the October Revolution and Marxism with the members of the Society there, and to establish a relationship with Zhou Enlai and other Tianjin radicals. Later, Li Dazhao invited several members of the Awakening Society to Beijing to talk with them. Zhang Zhi, a member of the Young China Association, may have been the intermediary between Li and the Awakening Society, because Zhang was editor-in-chief of Nankai rikan (Nankai Daily), which was the journal of Nankai

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<sup>32</sup> Shaonian Zhongguo, (Beijing, March 1920), Vol 1, No 5.

Secondary School. Most members of the Awakening Society belonged to the School. Both Zhang Zhi and Li Dazhao had close contacts with Soviet agents. Li Dazhao also attended the joint meeting of the Young China Association, the Dawn Light Society,<sup>33</sup> the Humanity Society,<sup>34</sup> the Awakening Society and the Youth Labour-Learning Mutual Corps in Beijing in August 1920 and told the participants that "every organisation must have a clear ideology."<sup>35</sup> Two days later the representatives of these organisations held a meeting at Beijing University Library and decided to form an organisation named "Reform and Unite". The aim of this new organisation was to unite organisations in various locations "in order to realise social reform."<sup>36</sup>

At the same time, Li Dazhao urged the Young China Association to turn in the direction he desired. At a meeting of the Young China Association on the day after the above-mentioned Joint meeting, Li Dazhao emphasised: "We have researched earnestly for two years. It is necessary now to clarify the doctrine of our Association."<sup>37</sup> What is of particular relevance to my theme is that Li Dazhao, Deng Zhongxia, Gao Junyu and Huang Rikui, who had by then become the members of the Communist Group in Beijing, attended the Congress of the Young China Association in Nanjing in July 1921 and urged the Association to adopt Marxism and Bolshevism. Because of this, Li did not attend the Founding Congress of the CCP, which was also

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<sup>33</sup> The Dawn Light Society was made up of Song Jie, Qu Shiyong (Qu Qiubai's uncle), Geng Jizhi, Zheng Zhenduo and so on. They were editors of Shuguang (The Dawn Light).

<sup>34</sup> Its members were the editors of Rendao (Humanity), the predecessor of which was Xin Shehui (The New Society). Qu Qiubai was editor of both magazines.

<sup>35</sup> Cen Xiaocen, 'Recollections of the May 4th Movement in Tianjin and the Awakening Society', Tianjin wenshi ziliao (Selected Materials on the Culture and History of Tianjin), (Tianjin, 1979), No 3, p 23.

<sup>36</sup> Zhou Enlai nianpu (A Chronicle of Zhou Enlai's Life), (Beijing, 1989).

<sup>37</sup> Huiyuan tongxun (The Circular Letters of the Members of the Young China Association), (1922), Vol 2, No 11.



convened in July 1921. This showed how much importance Li attached to the conversion of the Young China Association's members to Bolshevism. However, in the end, the Young China Association could not resolve to accept a single ideology and it therefore split into several factions. But this still left a considerable number who became key members of the CCP, including Li Dazhao, Deng Zhongxia, Huang Rikui, Gao Junyu, Zhao Shiyan, Liu Renjing, Zhang Guotao, Mao Zedong, Yun Daiying, Zhang Wentian, Shen Zemin and Yang Xianjiang.

The Young China Association finally dissolved. Nevertheless it was successful as a nation-wide progressive youth organisation which "united with other societies to form a joint front", and "played a certain role in the May 4th Movement", as Xu Deheng remarked. He went on, "it was possible to form fighting forces during the May 4th period thanks to the unity of various forces; at first the unity of [youth] within Beijing University, and then the unity of the youth of the whole country."<sup>38</sup>

In his book on Chinese Communism, Dirlik noted the sense of unity during the May 4th period, which had no common ideology as its basis; consequently he only sees the "patriotic reasons" involved in the yearning for unity.<sup>39</sup> He failed to see other reasons and forces which motivated it. Xu Deheng pointed out: "It was Comrade Li Dazhao who brought about the unity"<sup>40</sup> Li's efforts in organising cannot be seen as merely his personal actions intended only to strengthen the patriotic movement; they also contributed to developing Communist organisations as "A Brief History of the CCP" indicates: "The work of the three years from 1918-1920 was concentrated on

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<sup>38</sup> Xu Deheng, 'The 60th Anniversary of the May 4th Movement', Wenshi ziliao xuanji, (1979), No 61, p 18.

<sup>39</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 258, p 265.

<sup>40</sup> Xu Deheng, 'The 60th Anniversary of the May 4th Movement', Wenshi ziliao xuanji, No 61, p 18.

grouping together individual revolutionaries and organising them into small units capable of serving as [Communist] nuclei at different places."<sup>41</sup> According to this explanation, several radical societies, which were organised by or had connections with Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu around the May 4th Movement, can be classified into the category of such nuclei, from which the first batch of Chinese Communists were produced. In a sense, it is right to say that the May 4th Movement provided the future Communist movement with cadres. There is thus also no difficulty in comprehending why some early CCP leaders regarded the Young China Association, the New Youth Society, the Sunday Review Society, the New Citizens' Study Society, the Awakening Society, the Coexistence Society and the New China Society<sup>42</sup> as "having close connections to the birth of the CCP"<sup>43</sup> and as "the [original] cells of the CCP".<sup>44</sup>

## **II. The National Students' Union, Trade Unions and the National Federation of All Circles of the People**

The National Students' Union, which was brought into existence during the high tide of the May 4th Movement, mainly originated from the Students Salvation Association, which, in turn, was initiated by the Returned Students National Salvation League. Soon after establishing its headquarters in Shanghai on 12 May 1918, the League dispatched teams to Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou and other cities to contact students there. As a result, the Students Patriotic Association was organised in Beijing and Tianjin. During the summer vacation, the Association established ties with

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<sup>41</sup> Quoted from Wilber and How, CNSAC, P 51.

<sup>42</sup> The New China Society here may refer to the Society which edited New China; around the same time, Kang Baiqing and Meng Shouchun, who were members of the Young China Association, organised a New China Society.

<sup>43</sup> Li Lisan, 'Report on the History of the CCP', ZDBX, p 211.

<sup>44</sup> Qu Qiubai, 'Outline of the History of the CCP', ibid., p 200.

student organisations in Tianjin, Jinan, Wuhan, Jiujiang, Nanjing and Shanghai. At the end of July, Shanghai students also held a meeting about organising the Students' Patriotic Association, which was attended by representatives of the Associations of Beijing and Tianjin. In this way, the Students' National Salvation Association (the name was changed from the Students' Patriotic Association) was finally founded on 10th October, the National Day of 1918, and it was the start of uniting the students organisations throughout China. The Students' National Salvation Association commenced publication of its organ Guomin, which worked in concert with the Returned Students National Salvation League's organ Jiuguo Ribao (The National Salvation Daily), which started publication in Shanghai in July 1918, to undertake propaganda work against the Japanese aggression.

R. Mirovitskaya believes that the students who participated in the anti-Japanese movement before the May 4th demonstration were inspired by the October Revolution and armed themselves with some of the ideas and principles of the Revolution. She gives the following illustrations: the students decided to make use of methods "to try to arouse the people" and "to establish contacts with all the strata of the people"; that they seemed have understood the importance of unity in action; and that their press publicised the foreign policy principles and practices of the Bolsheviki, and presented Soviet Russia as an ally in the struggle to liberate China from Japanese rule.<sup>45</sup> Her argument is not groundless. A circular issued by one branch of the Students National Salvation Association, the New Society of Guangdong, definitely stated that the Society had for its object the establishment of a Soviet Government in China, supported by the working and trading classes. The circular claimed further:

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<sup>45</sup> Mirovitskaya, 'The First Responses in China to the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution', Far Eastern Affairs, (1978), No 1, pp 148-9.

The recent movement among the students in Beijing was caused by the influence of recent events in Russia, and the students have taken one step further in the direction of Bolshevism. ... As announced by the students, both the Northern and Southern governments will be disowned and a Soviet government will be set up.<sup>46</sup>

This showed that the October Revolution and Soviet Russia exerted a certain influence on some student organisations formed before May 4th 1919, such as the National Salvation Association, as well as on the May 4th Movement itself.

In June 1919, the National Students' Union was founded in Shanghai on the same political and organisational basis as the National Salvation Association and under the auspices of the Shanghai Students' Union. The establishment of the latter on 11 May was inspired by the May 4th demonstration and was also encouraged by a member of the Returned Student National Salvation League, Li Guo, who suggested that the students in Shanghai should show their power through a general strike.<sup>47</sup> The first statement of the Shanghai Students' Union declared its desire to organise a national students' union. On June 1st a preparatory meeting attended by student representatives from Beijing, Tianjin, Nanjing and Shanghai was held at the Global (Huanqiu) Chinese Students Union's building, which was also the temporary office of the Shanghai Students' Union.

Having founded its headquarters in Shanghai, the National Students Union's network was set up all over the country on a grand scale and there were about 193 affiliated local student unions. The president of the Union was Duan Xipeng, a student

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<sup>46</sup> FO 228/3211, September 1919; FO 405/228, Enclosure 2 in No 169.

<sup>47</sup> Cheng Tianfang, 'Four Years at the Li's Temple', *Zhuanji wenxue*, Vol 1, No 7, p 26; Liu Yongming, *Guomin dangren yu Wusi yundong* (The Members of the GMD and the May 4th Movement), (Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1990), p 160.

of Beijing University and a member of the Students' National Salvation Association; the vice-president was He Baoren, who also held the post of president of the Shanghai Students' Union simultaneously. The leading bodies of the Union were the Pingyi Bu (the Presidium) and the Zhixing Bu (the Executive Committee). The former committee consisted of 18 representatives of local student unions and overseas students; the latter had 6 people from various major cities. Some historians have considered that the National Students' Union was so "well-organised" that no other organisations or parties, even the GMD, could compare with it.<sup>48</sup> Vilensky also valued the National Students' Union highly, which, he said, "had strict discipline and was founded on the basis of a rigid system of centralisation."<sup>49</sup>

The National Students' Union played an important role in leading the anti-Japanese and anti-warlords movement. As a strong permanent organisation, it continually extended the scope of its activities and changed its front to undertake what it regarded as its patriotic and revolutionary tasks.

The Bolsheviks, of course, tried to make use of this important organisation. With regard to this, K. Fuse remarked: "It goes without saying that the Bolsheviks left no stone unturned for shaking hands with the Federation [The National Students' Union] in proceeding with their policy in China." But he believed that the Bolsheviks approached the Union from 1922 onwards.<sup>50</sup> In fact, during the time when the Union was still under preparation, the Russian Bolsheviks already had their hands on it. Around this time, the Global Chinese Students Union's office, where the preparatory

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<sup>48</sup> Li Jiannong, Zhongguo jinbainian zhengzhi shi (Chinese Political History in the last Hundred Years), (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1968), Vol 2, p 606; Lü Fangshang, Geming zhi zaqi, p 414.

<sup>49</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Die Kommunistische Internationale, (Petrograd, 1921), No 16.

<sup>50</sup> Fuse, Soviet Policy in the Orient, p 286.

work for the National Students Union was being carried out, was sometimes visited by Sokolsky, who was once found talking with the Shanghai Students Union president, He Baoren and the Global Chinese Students' Union leader Zhu Shaoping,<sup>51</sup> who both played an important role in the creation of the National Students' Union. Although Sokolsky was not a Bolshevik, he acted as an intermediary between some Chinese radicals and the left-wing Russians and Bolsheviks. These Russians tried to enlist some Chinese organisations' support in their protest against Japanese action in Siberia.<sup>52</sup> A delegate from the Russian Far East even joined the Presidium of the National Student Union.<sup>53</sup> In February 1920, the Russian Students' Union of Vladivostok sent an appeal to the Shanghai Students' Union, saying: "We extend the hand of friendship to the Chinese students who form the vanguard of the protectors of the rights of their mother country, who are fighting against the foreigners; ... Demand of your Government most resolutely the withdrawal of their troops from Russian territory and form a solid foundation for the construction of a new life." The appeal ended with the slogan "Long live the world-wide fire of revolution!"<sup>54</sup>

After the expiry of the first term of the Union's leading body, some persons who had direct or indirect relations with the Comintern agents became important leaders of the National Students' Union. Yao Zuobin was one of them and he actively

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<sup>51</sup> 'Shanghai Municipal Council Police Report', dated 7 June 1919, Quoted from Wusi yundong zai Shanghai shiliao xuanji (The Selected Materials on the May 4th Movement in Shanghai), (Shanghai: People's Press, 1960), p 844.

<sup>52</sup> 'The General Police Officer of the Shanghai Concession to the British Consul General, 7 June 1919', Wusi aiguo yundong (The May 4th Patriotic Movement), Vol 2, pp 311-12; George E. Sokolsky, The Tinder Box of Asia (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1933), p 321; FO 405/228, No 157.

<sup>53</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1921), No 16.

<sup>54</sup> FO 228/3214, 1 April 1920.

directed the student movement.<sup>55</sup> On 1 March 1920, several Russian Bolsheviks were found at the head office of the National Students' Union talking with Yao Zuobin, Xu Deheng and others.<sup>56</sup> As a representative of the Union, Yao Zuobin reached Vladivostok in May 1920 to discuss with the Bolshevik representative of the local committee of the Dal'buro of the RCP the possibilities of aiding the Chinese labour movement and helping Chinese students to study in Soviet Russia.<sup>57</sup> The Bolsheviks and their followers also tried to approach some other key members of the Union. In the spring of 1920, Voitinsky invited the leaders of both the National Students' Union and the Shanghai Students' Union Di Kan, Cheng Tianfang and He Shizhen, to his house to find out about the situation of the student movement and to urge the students to bring about social revolution.<sup>58</sup> Around the same time, Chen Duxiu asked Gong Debai, the President of the National Students' Union's Presidium, to his house and unsuccessfully attempted to persuade Gong to become a Communist adherent.<sup>59</sup> Recently published Comintern archives show that the East Asian Secretariat did a lot of work to exert direct influence upon student organisations, especially the National Students' Union and tried to take them under their control, and by this way, they could "give ideological and organisational leadership to the revolutionary student movement."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Ishikawa Yoshihiro, 'History of the Phony Chinese Communist Party', Hyofu (Strong Wind), (Kyodo, December 1994), No 30.

<sup>56</sup> 'Lu Yongxiang to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 13 March 1920', Wusi aiguo yundong dang'an ziliao, pp 618-9.

<sup>57</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China, 1920-1922', Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka, (1973), No 1.

<sup>58</sup> Cheng Tianfang, 'Four Years at the Li's Temple', Zhuanji wenxue, Vol 1, No 7, p 27.

<sup>59</sup> Gong Debai huiyilu (Gong Debai's Reminiscences), Hong Kong: News World Press, 1963, Vol 1, p 50.

<sup>60</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 40, p 54.

During the high tide of the May 4th Movement, Chinese labourers took part in the movement by way of strikes, boycotts and demonstrations in many big cities. Trade unions and other workers' organisations mushroomed throughout China. It was reported that there were 26 unions in Guangzhou and over fifty in Shanghai by the end of 1919.<sup>61</sup> In Shanghai, China's industrial centre, many such organisations' names were preceded with "Zhonghua" or "Quanguo" and claimed to represent labourers or industrial circles in the whole of China. Among them the important ones were: the All-China Industrial Federation,<sup>62</sup> the Chinese Trade Union (later the General Society of Chinese Trade Unions),<sup>63</sup> the Chinese Labour Party,<sup>64</sup> the Chinese Labourers' Alliance,<sup>65</sup> and the All-China Society for Labour Harmony and Advance.<sup>66</sup> In fact,

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<sup>61</sup> Lowe Chuan-hua, Facing Labour Issues in China, (London, 1934), p 39.

<sup>62</sup> In February 1919, the Federation was organized by Feng Ziyou, Cao Yabo and Huang Jiemin, who were all members of the GMD. Huang and a key member of the Federation, Li Danian, were also members of the Returned Students' National Salvation League.

<sup>63</sup> It was set up by Chen Guoliang, a representative of workers returned from France, and some workers' representatives of other industrial and service trades, with the help of Chen Jianai, a member of the GMD. The first preparatory meeting was held on 28 May 1919. The first president was Chen Kong, who was followed by Chen Jianai. Many former members of the Labour Party joined the Union.

<sup>64</sup> The Chinese Labour Party was established by Xu Qiwen and Huan Hui in 1912 with Zhu Zhiyao as its president and Sun Yat-sen as honorary leader. It had about seventy branches before it was dissolved under Yuan Shikai's order of suppression. In June 1919, Shen Ruoxian, an anarchist and a member of the GMD, and some workers re-established the Labour Party by publishing a declaration. But the revived Party seemed to have no real organisation, and it just issued a few leaflets. On 8 March 1919 Shen Ruoxian wrote a letter to Jiefang yu gaizao concerning the strike of rickshawmen, in which he warned the capitalists not to oppress the workers too hard, otherwise the fate of the Russian capitalists would befall them.

<sup>65</sup> It was organised in July 1919 by members of the National Salvation League, such as Yan Juewu, Tan Xiajun, Fei Zhemin, Shen Ruoxian, and Zhao Shilong. Most of them were anarchists. According to Fei Zhemin, the formation of the Federation was actually initiated by Shen Ruoxian, who was mainly responsible for reestablishment of the Labour Party. Shen later became a Communist. See Fei Zhemin, Canjia geming de huiyi (1919-25) (Recollections of My Revolutionary Career, 1919-25), (The Posthumous Manuscripts of Fei Zhemin, collated by Fei Minsheng in 1980, unpublished).

<sup>66</sup> This Society, which was founded in July 1919, was created by important members of the GMD, such as Hu Hanmin, Dai Jitao, Liao Zhongkai, Zhu Zhixin, Cao Yabo and Huang Jiemin. It was very active in enlightening labourers and in working for labourers'



those organisations could hardly be called labourers' organisations or trade unions, since most of them were controlled by non-proletarian elements and even members of the bourgeoisie. For example, Cao Yabo of the Industrial Federation and Zhu Zhuowen, a key member of the Labour Party, were factory owners; Wu Canhuang of the Industrial Federation was the manager of a newspaper. Moreover, some organisations did not consist of real workers. For example, most members of the Industrial Federation were foremen; the Chinese Labour Union, the revived Chinese Labour Party and the Chinese Labour Federation even had no constituent labour unions or workers' organisations at the basic level, and were therefore just empty boxes;<sup>67</sup> and some were actually phoney unions concerned with publicity.

From 5 June 1919, massive workers' political strikes, which were directed against the Japanese and the pro-Japanese Beijing Government, were staged in Shanghai. But it was not a totally spontaneous movement by the labourers: most of the strikes were the result of organised actions which were instigated and "utilised by students and politicians".<sup>68</sup> After careful research, Jean Chesneaux, a Marxist scholar, who studied the Chinese labour movement during this period, pointed out: "At first glance, these strikes give the impression of having been sudden and spontaneous. In each concern, they were initiated by the zealous few who persuaded the rest to follow

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welfare and even planned to set up a school and a hospital for labourers. The source of their financial support aroused suspicion. Cf. Ma Chaojun, Zhongguo laogong yundong shi (History of the Labour Movement in China, (Taipei, 1959), p 139.

<sup>67</sup> This was the comment by a contemporary labour leader, Ma Chaojun, on the Chinese Labour Union. In his opinion, other similar organisations were also merely nominal. See Ma Chao-chun, History of the Labour Movement in China, (Taipei, 1955) p 111.

<sup>68</sup> Cai Hesen, 'The Historical Development of the CCP', (1926), ZDBX, p 5.

suit."<sup>69</sup> The famous sociologist Chen Da also considered that the strikes were "infected with the new tide of thoughts or were made use of by some persons."<sup>70</sup>

Between 1919 and 1920, several leaders of important Chinese labour organisations had close ties with the Bolsheviks. They included Chen Jianai,<sup>71</sup> the president of the General Society of the Chinese Trade Union, Cao Yabo and Huang Jiemin of the All-China Industrial Federation and the All-China Society for Labour Harmony and Advance, Zhu Zhuowen, who was then in charge of the GMD's labour activities and was called by Sun Yat-sen a "labour movement specialist"<sup>72</sup>, Xia Qifeng,<sup>73</sup> the president of the Returned Chinese Labourers' Association, Cao Futang,<sup>74</sup> the promoter of the Ship and Godown Workers' Union, and Fei Zhemin,<sup>75</sup> one of the founders of the Chinese Labour Federation.

According to a Shanghai Police Commander's report of December 1919, a Bolshevik arrived in Shanghai to contact some of the leaders of the Chinese Labour Party and the All-China Society for Industrial Harmony and Advance, Sun Wen (Yat-sen), Chen Jianai, Cao Zixiang and Yu Yalong, in order to organise an All-China Peasants' and Workers' Council. The Council's draft constitution stated that it strove to establish the direct rule of peasants and workers, and that the central and local powers

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<sup>69</sup> Chesneaux, The Chinese Labour Movement, p 152.

<sup>70</sup> International Labour Review, 1927, No 3.

<sup>71</sup> Several Bolshevik agents contacted Chen. Cf. A document of the State Council kept in the China Second Archives, quoted from Zhongguo wuzhengfu zhuyi he Zhongguo Shehui dang, p 84; 'Note from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 30 April 1920, ZEGXSL.

<sup>72</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, p 83. Zhu Zhuowen had good terms with Lizerovitch.

<sup>73</sup> Xia Qifeng was a journalist and went to Paris to report the news of the Paris Peace Conference. In spring 1920, he reached Shanghai via Siberia with a Russian Bolshevik and two Koreans. See Scalapino and Lee, The Origins of Korean Communism, p 14.

<sup>74</sup> In the British archives, this man's name is given as "Tsang Foh Daung", who had close relations with Stopany; FO 228/3214, 4 March 1920.

<sup>75</sup> Fei Zhemin, Canjia geming de huiyi (1919-25).

must be controlled by the Peasants' and Workers' Councils; all lands, forests, mines and others must be turned over to the whole society in order to prevent the exploitation of man by man; the Council decided to arm working people and form a national army of volunteers; during the period of transition, the Union aimed to establish a dictatorial government in order to destroy capitalism and to realise socialism.<sup>76</sup> It is clear that the so-called "Peasants' and Workers' Council" was a synonym for Soviet, and its constitution was brimming with Bolshevik language.

The foregoing evidence shows that the Bolsheviks had a hand in several labour organisations.

Not confining their activities to students' and workers' organisations, the Bolsheviks targeted all circles. In a letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Lu Yongxiang, the Chinese officer in charge of Songjiang and Shanghai, reported in March 1920 that about twenty Bolsheviks had come to Shanghai and attempted to make contact with Chinese in industrial, agricultural, commercial, educational and military circles and they had already got in touch with several delegates to the National Federation of All Circles of the People.<sup>77</sup>

The National Federation of All Circles of the People was founded under the sponsorship of the National Students' Union in November 1919. Its first chairman was Yu Yuzhi, who was a member of the GMD and vice-director of the Returned Students' National Salvation League. The Federation proclaimed its aim was "to unite all circles of the whole of China in order to pool their wisdom and efforts, ...; to organise a

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<sup>76</sup> 'Order No 9 of the Frontier Defence Affairs Supervisory Section of the Beijing Government', Quoted from Peng Ming (ed.), Zhongguo xiandaishi ziliao xuanji, pp 415-6. The order mistakenly regarded Chen Jianai as the leader of the Chinese Labour Party. Actually Chen was the President of the General Society of the Chinese Trade Unions. Perhaps some leaders of the Labour Party also took part in this plan.

<sup>77</sup> Wusi aiquo yundong dang'an ziliao, p 618.

genuine institution of the will of the people for making statements on foreign affairs and for making decisions on domestic affairs."<sup>78</sup>

On 1 March 1920, some Soviet agents such as Potapov and Rosanov<sup>79</sup> held a meeting with several delegates to the Federation, including Chen Jianai, Yao Zuobin, Cao Yabo and Xu Deheng, in the presence of prominent members of the GMD, Sun Hongyi and Dai Jitao. The main subjects under discussion were how to organise branches of the National Federation of All Circles of the People in several other cities, to distribute leaflets and to rouse the entire people over the country to act in unison.<sup>80</sup>

Between April and May of 1920, after the Karakhan Manifesto reached China, many mass organisations issued open letters in reply to the Soviet Government. Among these letters, the one by the National Federation of All Circles of the People was worthy of notice, stating:

We are very pleased to receive the Soviet Government's Manifesto, and we believe that the Chinese people, except for a few stubborn and decadent bureaucrats, warlords and politicians, are willing to co-operate with the Russian people. ... Hence the dreams of the old politicians and capitalists can no longer come true; and the time when the people of the world break down the barriers between different countries, different races and different classes will come soon. ... At present, the awakening

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<sup>78</sup> Minguo ribao, 19 October 1919.

<sup>79</sup> It is not sure who Rosanov was. The British Archives recorded that a Bolshevik agent named Roosanof was sent to Shanghai from Vladivostok before 1921 for special propaganda work. (FO 405/233, No 107); In a Memorandum by the Dutch acting Consul-General of Shanghai, dated 11 April 1922, when Maring was living at 6 Wayside Road in the International Settlement in Shanghai in 1921, a Russian woman Rjazanoff, Sudakoff's daughter, was his landlady for a lengthy period. (Saich, OFUFC, p 270).

<sup>80</sup> 'Lu Yongxiang to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, (13 March 1920)', Wusi aiguo yundong dang'an ziliao, pp 618-9. This report added that the meeting had also discussed the issue of propagating Bolshevism and Communism.

Chinese people are preparing to fight against the stubborn and decadent bureaucrats, warlords and politicians. The latter have only an army of a few tens of thousands of people to rely on, whom we plan to awaken to our cause.<sup>81</sup>

The interesting thing is that the open letters of the National Students' Union, the National Journalists' Union and some other mass organisations contained the following similar sentences: "Hoping that the peoples of China and Russia will develop a good friendship and devote every effort to eliminate the disparities between countries, races and classes."<sup>82</sup> Since the language used in those letters was so similar to that of the Bolsheviks,<sup>83</sup> it aroused the Chinese authorities' suspicions. A spy who was sent to the head office of the National Federation of All Circles of the People found that the Federation, the National Students' Union and some trade unions representatives, such as Xia Qifeng, Chen Jianai, Ming De and Yao Zuobin, were holding a meeting to discuss the issue of replying to the Karakhan Manifesto. The Russians Potapov and Stopany, the Chinese Lu Shikai, who worked for the Bolsheviks, and some Koreans and Japanese also attended the meeting. It was reported that an agreement was reached at the meeting: if the Central Government refused to accept the Soviet Government's telegram, they would organise an alliance of Chinese, Koreans,

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<sup>81</sup> Shi bao (Shanghai Times), 11 April 1920.

<sup>82</sup> Zhongguo xiandaishi ziliao huibian (1919-45) (Collection of Source Materials of the Chinese Modern History, 1919-45), (Hong Kong: Cultural Materials Supply Service, 1978) p 40-1.

<sup>83</sup> 'The Platform of the Communist International' pointed out that the proletariat should use "the class power of its mass organisations, its Soviets, to abolish the privileges of the bourgeoisie and to ensure the transition to the classless communist society." ... "abolish State frontiers, change the entire world into one co-operative community." (Degras, Communist International, pp 19-20.)

Japanese and Russians in Shanghai to overthrow the warlords' rule.<sup>84</sup> Although the National Federation of All Circles of the People published an article denying the report, from the content of these open letters we can see that these mass organisations seemed to act in unison; and from the Chinese who attended the meeting we know that these organisations' representatives, with the exception of Ming De (who has not been identified so far), all had close connections with Soviet agents. With regard to the idea of an alliance of Chinese, Koreans, Japanese and Russians, it was not merely a rumour. Around this time an article published in Shanghai Life said that the fates of China, Japan and Korea were closely allied; all three nations suffered from foreign interference, and the people of the three countries should learn from Russia's example to free themselves from foreign intervention.<sup>85</sup> This demonstrated that the Bolsheviks intended to ally themselves with the Far Eastern peoples.

The May 4th Movement, like the Rice Riot in Japan and the March 1st Uprising in Korea, was one of the most remarkable events of the time in the Far East. Mao Zedong emphasised: "The May 4th Movement actually took place at the summons of the world revolution, of the Russian Revolution, and at the call of Lenin. It was part of the world proletarian revolution of the time. Although the Communist Party had not yet come into existence, there were already large numbers of intellectuals who approved of the Russian Revolution and had the rudiments of Communist ideology."<sup>86</sup> Some scholars, especially those in Taiwan, argue that Mao was wrong in saying that the events in Russia sparked off the May 4th Movement. In their opinion, the most important motivating force behind the May 4th Movement was

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<sup>84</sup> Xinwen bao (Shanghai News Post), 5 May 1920.

<sup>85</sup> An extract from Shanghai Life; FO 228/3214, 25 March 1920.

<sup>86</sup> Mao Zedong, 'On New Democracy', Mao Zedong Xuanji, Vol 3, p 86.

nationalism, rather than Communism.<sup>87</sup> They are quite right to stress the role played by nationalists. But in doing so they might run the risk of forgetting that supporting and promoting national liberation and anti-imperialist movements in Eastern countries like China was an important strategy of Soviet Russia and the Comintern. I also believe that the May 4th Movement was an authentic mass patriotic movement that could not have been initiated by a few Bolshevik agents. However, we cannot rule out the possibility of the Bolshevik agents' incitement of and intervention in the Movement. For example, after the downfall of the Soviets in Siberia and the Russian Far East in summer 1918, many Bolshevik commissars fled to China and the majority were agitating for the boycotting of Japanese goods.<sup>88</sup> As we have seen, the Bolsheviks really had a hand in some important mass organisations during the May 4th Movement, especially the later stages of it. It was quite clear that if the Bolsheviks did not cause the sea to surge, they at least made a stormy sea stormier.

According to the "Brief History of the CCP", the forces in the May 4th period were "properly utilised by the true revolutionaries who joined the Communist movement as individuals for the purpose of organising an embryo for the future Communist Party."<sup>89</sup> Here, "the Communist movement" implied the international Communist movement directed by Moscow, because there was no Communist movement in China in 1919, while the "true revolutionaries" referred to were actually Li Dazhao, Huang Jiemin and their like. These radical Chinese, who were influenced by the October Revolution and who had close ties with Bolshevik agents, took the lead in the movement.

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<sup>87</sup> Chou Yusun, 'The May 4th Movement and the Chinese Communist Party', Issues and Studies, (Taipei, July 1989), Vol 25, No 7.

<sup>88</sup> FO 228/3211, No 271.

<sup>89</sup> Quoted from Wilbur and How, CNSAC, p 43.

The Bolsheviks had plenty of experience of carrying out organisational work in a planned way. Lenin even pointed out: "The whole of society would be converted into a network of front organisations; ... controlled and guided by the conscious leadership."<sup>90</sup> Such exactly was the case in China, where various Chinese radicals rallied together in "mass" and "non-party" organisations. In his report to the ECCI, dated 1 September 1920, Vilensky wrote that the organisational task for the newly established Chinese Section (the Revolutionary Bureau) of the East Asian Secretariat was: "to carry out the work of organising the Party in China by establishing Communist basic cells among the students' organisations and the workers' organisations in the coastal industrial areas."<sup>91</sup> In Vilensky's mind, as he mentioned in a later article, these students' organisations were the National Students' Union in Shanghai and some students' unions in North China, including some societies at Beijing University; as to the workers' organisations, he mainly referred to the workers' organisations in Shanghai.<sup>92</sup> In October 1920, Liu Jiang, the representative of the Chinese Communists in Russia, also reported to the Amur Committee of the RCP(B) after his visit to China that the central student organisation [the National Students' Union] and several workers' organisations in Shanghai were supporting socialists.<sup>93</sup> Beyond doubt, working in those mass organisations was the first step to forming radical organisations which would lead to the establishment of the Communist Party.

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<sup>90</sup> Lenin Collected Works, Vol 5, p 189.

<sup>91</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 39.

<sup>92</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1920), No 16. Those organisations were also mentioned by other Bolshevik agents of that time.

<sup>93</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 45.



### Section 3. The Great Harmony Party and the Truth Society

Among various revolutionary organisations, the Bolsheviks attached importance to Datong Dang (the Great Harmony Party) and Zhenli She (the Truth Society). In "On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China", Vilensky pointed out specifically that Datong Dang and Zhenli She were "two parties" formed from among the organisations which had been set up since the October Revolution.<sup>94</sup> In some Comintern agents' eyes, the Great Harmony Party and the Truth Society could be used for a period of time as bases to develop into Communist organisations. Yet these two organisations have never been mentioned in any books on the Chinese Communist Movement. Therefore, it is necessary to deal with them in detail here.

#### I. The Great Harmony Party (Datong Party)

The name of the Datong Party came from the word "Datong" (Great Harmony or universal concord). Originally, "Datong" was an ancient political concept of an ideal society. Realising great harmony in the whole world was also Sun Yatsen's ultimate aim; and to him, Datong was a synonym for Communism.<sup>95</sup>

In the programme of the Datong Party, its guiding principle was the "human equality and world harmony" and its general plan relating to China was divided into two parts: the internal policy was to denounce all warlords' rule and the temporary military government in particular; to convene a National Conference to decide state

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<sup>94</sup> Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1921), No 16.

<sup>95</sup> Cui Shuqin, Sun Zhongshan yu Gongchan zhuyi, p 90; Leng and Palmer, Sun Yat-sen and Communism, p 97.

affairs; or to raise a common people's revolution to resolve all problems. The external policy was to denounce all unequal treaties between China and foreign governments, the foreign concessions and consular jurisdiction in China. Internationally, they denounced the imperialist powers' rule in Korea, Taiwan, India, Vietnam and all other weak nations. On the basis of the programme, Wang Jueyuan argues that the Datong Party was a nationalist organisation.<sup>96</sup> But in Vilensky's opinion, the Datong Party was a "Socialist party" or "International Socialist Party", and "Communist ideology infiltrated into the party".<sup>97</sup> As an "International Socialist Party", the Party consisted of Koreans, Indians and Vietnamese and Taiwanese as well as Chinese.

The Datong Party was closely connected with the Comintern. In 1941, a Chinese Communist author gave the following account:

At the beginning of 1920, the Comintern dispatched a Korean comrade named Kim Sen who had attended its first congress to China in order to lay the groundwork for the organisation of a Communist party. When he arrived in China, he contacted Huang Jiemin, a member of the Datong Party, and twenty-one anarchists, and organised a Communist party which elected a Central Executive Committee of nineteen.<sup>98</sup>

According to Li Danyang's research<sup>99</sup>, "Kim Sen" here might be Pak Chin-sen, the general secretary of the Korean People's Socialist Party. Although Pak did not attend

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<sup>96</sup> Wang Jueyuan, Zhongguo dangpai shi (The History of the Parties of China), (Taipei: Zhengzhong Press, 1983), pp 94-5.

<sup>97</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Die kommunistische Internationale, (1920), No 16.

<sup>98</sup> Liu A sheng, Zhongguo minzu minzhu geming yundong shi jiaocheng (A Textbook on the History of the Chinese National Democratic Revolutionary Movements), (North Shanxi, 1941); Quoted from C. Brandt, Stalin's Failure in China, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp 21-2.

<sup>99</sup> Li Danyang, 'Pak Chin-sen's Efforts on the Establishment of A Party in China',

the first congress of the Comintern, he occasionally took part in meetings of the ECCI as Korean representative between the spring and summer of 1919 while he was in Moscow.<sup>100</sup> After meeting certain Soviet leaders, who promised to provide Comintern funds for the Korean independence movement, Pak and other Korean representatives pledged themselves to espouse the Communist cause. In November 1919, Pak, carrying a large sum from the Comintern fund, arrived in Shanghai.<sup>101</sup>

Pak Chin-sen's purpose in China was not only to establish relations with the Korean Provisional Government and to direct the Korean People's Socialist Party, which moved its headquarters to Shanghai in the autumn when the Party's chairman Yi Tong-hui was elected the premier of the Provisional Government, but also to set up a Chinese party which would be subordinate to the Comintern.<sup>102</sup> Actually, the work of establishing a Chinese party was not performed by Pak Chin-sen alone, because Pak only stayed in Shanghai about two months on his first visit to China. Yi Tong-hui and other Korean Communists also played an important role, acting as a "chief channel for the Comintern's contact with the Chinese and the Japanese."<sup>103</sup> Besides Pak Chinsen, the Comintern also sent other Koreans to China with money for promoting the Communist movement there.<sup>104</sup> These people included Kim Man-gyom, who also contacted Huang Jiemin and his comrades and provided them with Comintern funds.

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Jindaishi yanjiu, (1992), No 4, pp 162-76.

<sup>100</sup> Lazitch and Drachkovitch (ed.), Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern, p 350.

<sup>101</sup> Suh, The Korean Communist Movement, p 11; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, pp 9-10; Kim Chun-yop and Kim Ch'ang-sun, Hanguk Kongsan Chuui Undonsa, p 169.

<sup>102</sup> D. W. Treadgold, 'Russia and the Far East', I. J. Lederer (ed.), Russia Foreign Policy, (Yale University Press, 1962), p 555.

<sup>103</sup> Suh, The Korean Communist Movement, p 17.

<sup>104</sup> J. P. Harrison, The Long March to Power, (London: MacMillan, 1972), p 27.

Huang Jiemin, whose original name was Huang Jue, was a member of the GMD and an anarchist. In 1918, as a returned student from Japan, Huang became one of the contributing editors of Jiuguo ribao and also took charge of liaison matters at the paper.<sup>105</sup> Apart from Huang Jiemin, some other active workers in the Datong Party, such as Wen Li and Yao Zuobin were also returned students from Japan and worked on Jiuguo ribao. Wen Li (original name Wen Jincheng) was the editor-in-chief of Jiuguo ribao and was an important leader of the student movement. Yao Zuobin was a member of the GMD, he joined the Chinese Revolutionary Army (Zhonghua Geming Jun) in 1916.<sup>106</sup> Since Jiuguo ribao's aim was "to arouse people's patriotic feelings and consciousness" to fight against the Japanese,<sup>107</sup> and it often reported news about the Korean independence movement, this paper thus attracted the attention of Korean nationalists and socialists and had close ties with them. Cho Tong-woo, who was then a member of the Korean Provisional Government and later became a leader of the Korean Communist Party, was a correspondent for Jiuguo ribao. The Korean People's Socialist Party regarded Jiuguo ribao as one of the principal socialist papers in China.<sup>108</sup> Some members of the Datong Party such as Kang Baiqing, Wang Dexi and Yao Zuobin were key workers in the National Students' Union,. Kang Baiqing was a member of the Young China Association and the New Tide Society in Beijing and Wang Dexi was one of the leaders of the Nanjing Students' Union. A source show that Wang Ping was a member.<sup>109</sup> According to Potapov's report, Sun Yat-sen's secretary

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<sup>105</sup> 'Yu Yuzhi's Oral Account, recorded by Yu Anlan', 1992-93.

<sup>106</sup> See the caption under a photograph of the exhibition at Sun Yat-sen's Memorial Hall in Taipei.

<sup>107</sup> Guomin, Vol 1, No 3.

<sup>108</sup> R. 'The Situation in Eastern Asia', The Communist International, (August 1920), No 13. "R" is said to be R. W. Kim.

<sup>109</sup> Kimura Ikujiro's Chyogoku Rodo Undou Shi Nenpyo (Chronicle of Events in the

and financial minister were members of the Datong Party, and Potapov himself also joined the Party in 22 May 1920 and became a member of the Central Committee.<sup>110</sup>

Some questions about the organisation of the Datong Party, such as, when the Datong Party was founded and what its activities were, have so far remained unanswered. According to Wang Jueyuan, the Datong Party had a history of ten years, but he does not give the date when the Party was founded.<sup>111</sup> Zhang Guotao recalled that when he was in Shanghai between the end of 1919 and spring 1920, he heard that Huang Jiemin was trying to organise a Datong Party.<sup>112</sup> However, Liu A Sheng's book shows that the Datong Party already existed before Pak Chin-sen came to China in the fall of 1919. Li Huang's reminiscences offer a very interesting story about Huang Jiemin and his party. On his arrival in Shanghai in January 1919, Li Huang was recommended to meet Huang Jiemin, who called himself an anarchist and was trying to enlist as many gallant people as he could. Huang talked to Li incessantly about the world revolution. Some Korean revolutionaries were also present and they asked Li to assist in the Korean revolution against Japan. Afterwards, Huang wrote Li's name onto a piece of paper and then burnt it. These were the formalities with which Li

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Chinese Labour Movement), (printed in 1966 but unpublished, one copy is kept in the Library of Cambridge University, p 85) showed that Wang Ping and Yao Zuo-bin as members of the Chinese Communist Party received Eizo Kanto, a Japanese Communist in Shanghai. Minguo ribao of 6 October 1920 reported that Wang Ping attended the sponsoring meeting of the Shanghai Machinery Workers' Union with Chen Duxiu, Li Hanjun, Li Qihan and other people, who were members of the CCP. But there was no mention of Wang Ping in any name list of the early members of the CCP. So Wang was probably a member of the Communist party which was derived from the Datong Party.

<sup>110</sup> 'Potapov's Report to Chicherin, 12 December 1920', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 48; 'Potapov's Explanation about His Report', Quoted from Li Yuzhen, Sun Zhongshan yu Gongchanquoji, p 57.

<sup>111</sup> Wang Jueyuan, Zhongguo dangpai shi, p 94. Yang Kuisong writes in his article 'Some Facts concerning the Communist Organisations in China in the Early Period' that according to Wang Jueyuan, the Datong Party was established by Yao Zuobin in September 1921. (Dangshi yanjiu ziliao, 1992, No 4.)

<sup>112</sup> Chang Kuot'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 89-90.

Huang was admitted into Huang's party.<sup>113</sup> Li Huang did not give the Party's name, and only mentioned that it was an "anarchist" party. This might refer to the Datong Party, because many members of the Party believed in anarchism and thus it was called a "Utopian Party". Moreover, the Datong Party also had Korean members. In addition, around this time, the Korean nationalists also secretly formed a "Datong League" or "Datong Party" in the spring of 1919, which consisted of Koreans of various circles. After its leaders were arrested by the Japanese authorities, many of its members escaped to China.<sup>114</sup>

In light of the above facts, the Datong Party might have been set up at the beginning of 1919, at the latest before Pak Chinsen's first visit in autumn 1919. The Party Huang Jiemin was trying to establish around the beginning of 1920 was perhaps a "Communist party" based on the Datong Party. In fact, the Communist Party was the Datong Party's descendant and most likely they were never separated. The Datong Party could not have lasted for ten years, as Wang Jueyuan claimed, for some persons in the know, such as Yo Un-hyong and Zhang Guotao, believed both the Datong Party and the "Communist Party" were short-lived.<sup>115</sup>

Nobody can give any evidence of the operations and activities of the Datong Party. Yet its programme stipulated that the Party's primary scope of activity was in the educational and industrial fields. Since the Datong Party was a secret party, an indication of its activities is best seen in some mass organisations which were

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<sup>113</sup> Li Huang, Xuedun shi huiyilu, Part 1, p 80.

<sup>114</sup> Hanquk Dongnip Undonsa, Vol 3, p 98; Jin Jiu, Baifan yizhi (Kim Ku's Autobiography), translated by Zhang Minghui, Beijing: Democracy and Construction Press, 1994, p 200.

<sup>115</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 122; Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, p 29.

associated with it. So far as I know, nearly all the members of the Datong Party belonged to either trade unions or students' unions.

The key members of the Datong Party were involved in the labour movement and tried to lay the foundation of the Party among the working classes. For example, Huang Jiemin was one of founders of both the All-China Industrial Federation and the All-China Society for Labour Harmony and Advance. As the only national organisation in industrial circles founded on the eve of 4 May, the All-China Industrial Federation in collaboration with several organisations of other circles convened an emergency meeting on 5 May 1919 to prepare a mass rally of the Shanghai citizens and to start up the movement. The Industrial Federation actively undertook the work of mobilising and organising workers in the patriotic movement. Many members of the Federation took the lead, going on strikes and boycotts. In July, the Industrial Federation took a more radical stand "to overthrow the Beijing Government and to organise a new government by the Chinese people in order to strive for national independence."<sup>116</sup> On 27 January 1920 the representatives of the All-China Industrial Federation, the Electrical Workers' Union, (which had close ties with the Industrial Federation,<sup>117</sup>) and three other labour organisations held a meeting in Shanghai with the object of forming a central organisation "The Chinese Labourers'

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<sup>116</sup> Liu Yongming, Guomindangren yu Wusi yundong, p 236.

<sup>117</sup> The President of the Union was an electrician Li Henglin, a Protestant. He was active in the All-China Industrial Federation around the May 4th. (Chesneaux, The Chinese Labour Movement, p 160, p 457) While organising the Electrical Workers' Union in June 1919, Li was arrested. After he was released, the Union formally was set up on 9 August 1919. Four representatives of the All-China Industrial Federation attended the founding meeting and one of them made a speech on behalf of the sponsors. (Liu Yongming, Guomindangren yu Wusi yundong). This demonstrates that the Union was established by the Industrial Federation.

Union" and later a further meeting was held to discuss details of the amalgamation.<sup>118</sup> In the same month, the Union of Allied Chinese-Korean Labourers was formed in Shanghai to undertake anti-Japanese activities and propagate "Extremism" (Bolshevism).<sup>119</sup> The unification of Chinese labour organisations and co-operation between the Chinese and the Koreans seemed to be steps leading to the formation of a party. On 29 January 1920 an article entitled "Labour Organisation and the Political Party" was published in Minguo ribao, with the author, Shao Lizi, suggesting that the labour organisations themselves should "form one large party."<sup>120</sup>

Around this time Zhang Guotao heard that Huang Jiemin "enjoyed discussing socialism" and that he "was trying to organise a Ta-t'ung (Utopian) party on the platform that all Socialists in China should unite, co-operate with the Korean revolutionaries, and establish connections with Russia."<sup>121</sup> In fact, at this time Huang, as Liu A Sheng pointed out, was setting up a Communist party basing the organisation on the Datong Party, with the All-China Industrial Federation as its front.

The All-China Industrial Federation, which was administered by a committee of twenty five peoples, claimed more than ten thousand members. As the resident director, Huang was in charge of the day-to-day work of the Industrial Federation. In March 1920, he managed to reorganise it as a truly national trade-unions' federation and appointed Zhang Guotao as the general secretary.

To a certain extent, the Chinese National Students' Union was also influenced by the Datong Party through its members. Merely in the Union's leading body there

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<sup>118</sup> FO 228/3214, 29 January 1920.

<sup>119</sup> Hanguk Dongnip Undonsa, Vol 3, p 400.

<sup>120</sup> Shao Lizi was an old member of the GMD and also a founding member of the CCP.

<sup>121</sup> Chang Kuo-f'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 84, pp 89-90.



were several members of the Party, such as Kang Baiqing, Wang Dexi and Yao Zuobin.

Labourers' organisations headed by the Industrial Federation and students' organisations headed by the National Students' Union frequently acted in concert. From January to April 1920, several major strikes and demonstrations took place in Shanghai to oppose the Beijing Government dealing directly with Japan on the Shandong issue and to protest against the beating of students by the Chinese authorities in Tianjin and Shanghai. During this period, the National Students Union called all-China students' strikes several times. With extraordinary zeal, Yao Zuobin of the Executive Committee of the Union participated directly in making the decisions and leading these actions,<sup>122</sup> and afterwards he went to consult with the Bolshevik representative in Vladivostok on the possibilities of giving aid to the Chinese labour movement.

The students' strikes soon caused citizens', especially workers', strikes. In April, some of the students and workers who were on strike in Shanghai marched along the streets and urged shopkeepers to strike.<sup>123</sup> This period was regarded as the second high tide of the mass movement after 4 May 1919. He Fenglin, the Acting Military Commanding Officer (Hujun Shi) of the Songjiang and Shanghai regions, considered that "this unrest" was "coerced and agitated by certain labour organisations' leaders who were the henchmen of the Bolsheviks."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ishikawa Yoshihiro, 'The Whole Story of the Phoney Chinese Communist Party', *Hyofu*, (1994), No 30, pp 93-4.

<sup>123</sup> Wusi yundong zai Shanghai shiliao xuanji, pp 564-574.

<sup>124</sup> ibid., p 579.

With the upsurge of the movement, the All-China Industrial Federation convened a meeting on 18 April 1920 to make preparations for a mass rally on May Day. Besides the Industrial Federation, representatives of six other labour organisations attended the meeting and agreed to sponsor the May Day commemoration rally. Huang Jiemin, the convenor and chairman, addressed the meeting. Cao Yabo, Chen Duxiu and the representatives of the Shanghai Students' Union were also present at the meeting.

Before the May Day rally, the Industrial Federation printed and distributed a large number of leaflets, appealing to workers to attend the rally. The National Students Union also published a circular summoning students from all regions to join in unity with labourers in Labour Day celebrations. On 1 May 1920, the army and police took stringent measures to prevent the mass rally and parade. Owing to pressure from the authorities, the commemorative rally could not be held at the proposed assembly place and only lasted five minutes. Nevertheless, a large number of pamphlets were distributed, and one of them urged workers "to overthrow the Government and the capitalists; and to establish a new government."<sup>125</sup> Such a slogan reflected the political stand of the organisers of this rally.

An open letter on behalf of all the workers of China to the Soviet Government, which could not be read out at the May Day rally, as originally planned, was published in the newspapers afterwards. It proclaimed: "We are trying to create a new, happy and permanently peaceful world for humankind and are determined to shoulder the responsibility for it with you." It further expressed the hope that the working class in Soviet Russia would offer "vigorous" aid and guidance to their fellow labourers in

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<sup>125</sup> Zhongguo gongyun shiliao (Historical Materials on the Chinese Labour Movement), (Beijing, 1984), Part 2, p 17.

China, India, Korea and Vietnam, who were still under the oppression of the capitalist class.<sup>126</sup> This gives us a clue that this letter might have been drafted by someone of the Datong Party, because the Party consisted of Koreans, Indians and Vietnamese, as well as Chinese. A leaflet entitled "May Day", which was issued by the Beijing Communist Group in May 1921, indicated that the May Day celebration on 1 May 1920 was held by various trade unions and the Socialist Party.<sup>127</sup> We may remember that Vilensky wrote that the Datong Party was a "Socialist Party", or "International Socialist Party".<sup>128</sup>

Although this May Day celebration was not a success, it made a great impact. The military authorities in Shanghai considered the rally to be "a disturbance created by the Bolsheviks", and even "a Russian Movement".<sup>129</sup>

At this time, Pak Chin-sen, who had returned to Moscow, was participating in the work of the ECCI and Narkomindel. He later attended the Second Congress of the Comintern as the Koryo Communist Party's delegate and was elected the sole member of the ECCI to represent the Far Eastern Communists.<sup>130</sup> He published an important article entitled "The Revolutionary East and the Next Tasks of the Communist International", in which he pointed out:

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<sup>126</sup> Shi bao, 2 May 1920. Moscow's newspapers reported this rally and carried "Chinese Workers Send Greetings", which reads: "A Chinese Labour Union ... sent the following telegram to the Siberian Soviet: 'We welcome the Russian Red Army, ... We Chinese labourers and peasants are quite willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with you under the flags of the army of right in the hope that ultimately we shall up-root the evil of capitalism and class distinction.'" Workers Dreadnought of September 1920 reprinted this news report.

<sup>127</sup> Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu, Vol 1, p 287.

<sup>128</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1921), No 16.

<sup>129</sup> Zhongguo gongyun shiliao, Part 2, p 17.

<sup>130</sup> The Second Congress of the Communist International, Vol 2, p 306, p 194.

The barbarous policy of the larger imperialist powers in the colonies has created favourable conditions for a revolution. This policy has developed strong nationalist tendencies. ... Certainly, amid the revolutionaries, there are elements which united with us, internationalists, only with the object of attaining national-political liberation, but we shall use their revolutionary zeal for the struggle against world capitalism, for the triumph of a social revolution in the whole world.<sup>131</sup>

The "revolutionary East" interested Lenin a great deal. In his opening speech to the Congress, Lenin optimistically said that the Soviet movement had already laid a foundation in Asia. And before his draft outline of the theses on national and colonial problems was published, Lenin wrote a letter to seek opinions. At the end of this letter, he listed "China - Korea - Japan" as discussion points for the National and Colonial Commission, while not including India, the most important target in the East. Pak probably reported what was happening in the Far East to Lenin.

Before long Pak Chin-sen went to China again to direct the Communist movement in the Far East as the representative of the ECCI and arrived in China in December 1920.<sup>132</sup> He offered advice and financial support to help Koreans, Chinese and Japanese organise Communist parties. Since he only stayed in China quite briefly during his two visits, Pak Chin-sen was not the only one to sponsor the Communist Party organised from the Datong Party. Other Korean Communists, such as Kim Man-gyom, Yi Tong-hui and Kim Ri, also helped Huang Jiemin and Yao Zuobin set up the Communist Party.

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<sup>131</sup> The Communist International, Nos 11-12.

<sup>132</sup> Suh, The Korean Communist Movement, p 14.

Busily agitating against imperialism and in favour of Soviet Russia, Huang Jiemin's party shared a common temporary goal with the Bolsheviks and therefore became a useful tool for Soviet Russia to fulfil its strategies in the Far East at the time. However, the Datong Party only included "a weird conglomeration of people who had nothing in common"<sup>133</sup> and its leaders were anarchists and nationalists who did not understand Marxism. So the "Communist Party" derived from the Datong Party could not be a real Communist party.

There appeared representatives of five different Chinese Communist and Socialist parties at the Congress of Toilers of the Far East and most of them were there just to make up the numbers. Yao Zuobin, who had arrived in Moscow with Yi Tonghui and Pak Chin-sen, was present as the envoy of the "Dongfang" (Oriental) Communist Party.<sup>134</sup> The Dongfang Communist Party was probably the party derived from the Datong Party. Yet, Yao Zuobin's representation was challenged by the Chinese Socialist Youth League's members who were studying in Moscow, and Yao was even detained in Moscow and sent into exile in Siberia.<sup>135</sup>

"Should the revolution demand it in future," Pak Chin-sen once wrote, "we shall know how to turn our arms against our quondam 'ally'."<sup>136</sup> Here Pak made no secret of the Comintern's tactics of making use of the nationalists and other

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<sup>133</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 691.

<sup>134</sup> Jiang Kanghu, Xin-E youji (Travels in New Russia), (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1923) p 51; Jiang perhaps made a mistake by saying that Yao Zuobin attended the 3rd Congress of the Comintern, for Yao and the two Koreans departed from Shanghai in July 1921 and they could only have attended the Far Eastern Toilers' Congress. Cf. Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, p 40.

<sup>135</sup> Bao Pu, 'Travels in Red Russia', Chen bao, 28 August 1924.

<sup>136</sup> Pak Dinshun, 'The Revolutionary East and the Next Task of the Communist International' Communist International, (June-July 1920), Nos 11-12.

revolutionaries' zeal and then casting them aside once they were no longer necessary.

Writing this, Pak could not have foreseen the fate awaiting him and his party.

In the factional struggles of the Korean Communist movement, the Koryo Communist Party fell into disfavour with the head of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern, Shumiasky, who backed the Korean Communist Party he had fostered in Siberia and withdrew the Comintern's support for the Koryo Communist Party. At the end of 1922, Pak Chinsen was dismissed from all leading positions within the Party and the Comintern.<sup>137</sup> As a result, Huang Jiemin's party, which relied on Comintern funds channelled through the Koryo Communist Party, soon disintegrated.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, Pak Chin-sen's effort to organise a Chinese Communist Party proved to be "an abortive attempt".<sup>139</sup>

## II. The Truth Society

Although the Truth Society was regarded by the Bolsheviks as a party which propagated Communist ideas and supported the Soviet system,<sup>140</sup> up to now, very little historical research has been published on the Truth Society (Zhenli She or Zhen She in Chinese).

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<sup>137</sup> Pak remained in Moscow, where he was later found in "pathetic decline ... and was having difficulty in finding enough to eat." Kondo Eizo, Cominterun no Misshi (Secret Messenger of the Comintern), (Tokyo, 1949), pp 128-9.

<sup>138</sup> A close friend of Huang Jiemin, Yo Unhyong, who was one of the leading members of the Koryo Communist Party, once said: "Of course, the Chinese Communist Party assisted by Yi Tonghwi soon dissolved. It was a separate one from that organized by Chen Tuhsiu." Quoted from Scalapino and Lee, Communism in Korea, p 29.

<sup>139</sup> Treadgold, 'Russia and the Far East', Lederer (ed.), Russia Foreign Policy, p 555.

<sup>140</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1921), No 16.

According to Wusi shiqi de shetuan (The Societies of the May 4th Period) edited by Zhang Yunhou, the Truth Society was an organisation formed by anarchists in 1923. In fact, as early as April 1919, a pamphlet printed and distributed by the Truth Society appeared, which publicised anarchism, supported the Russian Revolution and called for soldiers' uprisings to carry out a common people's revolution.<sup>141</sup> As far as I know, a society named Zhen She was established in 1919 as the first anarchist organisation among the Chinese anarchists in Nanyang (the countries around the South China Sea) and its real head was said to be Hua Lin.<sup>142</sup> This Zhen She's headquarters was in Guangzhou, and there were several branches in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and other South East Asian countries. This Zhen She had close connections with other anarchist societies in China, such as Minsheng She (People's Voice Society) and Jinhua She (Evolution Society), and with certain mass organisations, such as the Returned Students' National Salvation League. Zhen She also engaged in labour movements there. It issued and circulated various pieces of literature, such as "Original Doctrine of Revolution", "Conversations regarding Anarchism" and "How to Spread Revolution to Its Fullest Extent". One of them contained the words: "The people in China are still asleep and the Government and wealthy classes are still cruel and arbitrary;" while the compatriots in Russia, Germany, England and other countries "have made preparations to declare war against our enemy." Another circular stated: "If the resulting revolution is not a socialistic one, it will certainly be a revolt of the proletariat." Zhen She's activities and propaganda were so extreme that they were considered "Bolshevik" by the colonial

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<sup>141</sup> Lishi dang'an (Historical Archives), (Beijing, 1982), No 1, pp 105-112.

<sup>142</sup> Ou Xi, 'The Brief Account on the Anarchist Movement in Nanyang', Min zhong (The People's Bell), Vol 2, No 1, 25 January 1927, Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 1, p 722; FO 228/3211, August 1919.

authorities, and as a result, many of its members were expelled from the Nanyang area.<sup>143</sup>

In the same year, a society with the name "Zhen She" (or sometimes called "Zhen Xuehui") was organised in Tianjin by the anarchists Jiang Banruo of Tianjin, and Yang Zhidao and Xu Zhenfeng of Nanjing. The latter two were formerly the organisers of Qun She (the Masses Society) of Nanjing.<sup>144</sup> This Truth Society started publication of a periodical entitled Xin shengming (New Life) in August 1919, which was edited by Jiang Banruo, Yang Zhidao and Huang Lingshuang. The latter was a key member of Shi She (the Real Society) in Beijing. Xin Shengming was reviewed as a paper of "socialist colour" with the aim of "awakening the working class and reforming [China] society".<sup>145</sup> The journal exhorted the Chinese working people to "overthrow the present social system" (issue no. 2) and strive for a society in which the working class would run the state and manage production (issue no. 1). In an article entitled "Labour Problems and the Russian Revolution", the author stated: "There has been a precedent in Russia already. ... Russia's working people were the vanguard in overthrowing the old society and creating a new society." Because of Xin Shengming's revolutionary nature, it was banned by the local authorities after only three issues and was condemned for "poisoning and bewitching the workers' minds and harbouring the intention of revolution".<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> FO 228/3211, August 1919; FO 405/228, No 157, No 169; FO 405/233, No 107; Liu Shixin, 'Some Recollections of Anarchist Activities', Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 2, pp 935.

<sup>144</sup> 'List of Anarchist Organisations', Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan.

<sup>145</sup> Yu Henian, 'The Cultural Movement in Tianjin', Xin ren (New People), (18 August 1920), Vol 1, No 4.

<sup>146</sup> Quoted from Wusi shiqi qikan jieshao, Vol 2, p 323, p 327; Vol 3, p 95.



The Truth Society to which Vilensky referred was based in Zhangzhou, Fujian province. Vilensky wrote: "This Party's leader was Chen Jiongming, ... whose troops occupied Fujian province;" and the Party's task was to "fight against the warlords' governments both in the South and the North."<sup>147</sup>

Whether these societies with the same or similar names were branches of one organisation or not has not been ascertained so far, but they surely had connections. A clue to this was that Hua Lin, the leader of the Nanyang Zhen She, went to Tianjin to edit Xin chunqiu bao at about the time that the Tianjin Zhen She was founded.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, the only member of Zhenli She Vilensky mentioned was Feng Fuguang, a leading member of the National Students' Union and the National Federation of All Circles of the People, who was a representative of the Tianjin Students Union and came from Tianjin.<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, between 1919-1920, many of the members of the Truth Societies both in Nanyang and Tianjin went to South Fujian, where Chen Jiongming "was eager to strive for the realisation of Socialism".<sup>150</sup> At the end of 1919, several members of the Nanyang Zhen She, including Liu Shixin, were invited by Chen Jiongming to Zhangzhou to launch a social revolution. Around the same time, some students' unions in North China also sent their representatives to Zhangzhou to help Chen Jiongming. The persons from Tianjin are worthy of note. According to Zhang Zhi's recollection, in February 1920, after a meeting with a Russian Bolshevik

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<sup>147</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1921), No 16.

<sup>148</sup> Xu Shanguang and Liu Jianping, Zhongguo wuzhengfu zhuyi shi (History of the Anarchist Movement in China), (Wuhan: Hubei People's Press, 1989), pp 89-90; FO 405/228, No 169, July 1919.

<sup>149</sup> Public Letter of the State Council, 16 September 1919, 'Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Beijing Government', Quoted from Wusi aiguo yundong dang'an ziliao, p 390. Feng was a student of Beiyang School of Law and Politics.

<sup>150</sup> Chen Jiongming's letter to Sun Zhongshan, 5 December 1919; quoted from Lü Fangshang, Geming zhi zaiqi, p 263.

and Li Dazhao in Tianjin, the main founder of Tianjin Zhen She, Jiang Banruo, who was the inspector of Nankai Secondary School<sup>151</sup>, together with Zhang Zhi, the editor in chief of Nankai rikan (Nankai School's Daily), and a Shanxi comrade, left for Fujian.<sup>152</sup> In addition, another organiser of the Tianjin Zhen She, Xu Zhenfeng, also went to Zhangzhou.<sup>153</sup> After the core members of the Truth Societies of Nanyang and Tianjin arrived in Zhangzhou, they probably also established a branch of the Truth Society or moved their headquarters there and asked Chen Jiongming to join as its figurehead. At any rate, the Truth Societies in Nanyang and Tianjin can be seen as the predecessors of the Truth Society in Zhangzhou.

At the time of 1919-1920, Zhangzhou was considered by the Beijing government and foreign diplomats as the centre for disseminating "Extremism" and "Bolshevism".<sup>154</sup> Many pamphlets and magazines were circulated among the masses. For example, a pamphlet published on 1 April 1920 stated that the object of anarcho-communism was that "All productive necessities ... must be restored to and owned by the community. To abolish personal ownership of property and, at the same time, the monetary system. ... There shall be no army, police and prisons. ..." With regard to the proceedings to reach the objective, it called for "a great revolution by the common

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<sup>151</sup> Nankai Secondary School was a famous school in Tianjin. The students of this school took an active part in the May 4th Movement and played an important role in organising the Tianjin Students' Union.

<sup>152</sup> Beijing dangshi yanjiu wenji (Collected Theses on the History of the CCP in Beijing), (Beijing: The Beijing Press, 1989), p 44; The "Shanxi comrade" was probably Yu Keshui, the organiser of Ping She (The Equality Society); cf. Haiyu Guke Jiefang bielu.

<sup>153</sup> Liu Shixin, 'Some Recollections of Anarchist Activities', Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang shiliao xuan, Vol 2, p 935.

<sup>154</sup> Shen bao (Shanghai Daily), Shanghai, 29 April 1920; American Consulate, Amoy, 'Bolshevist Propaganda in the Amoy Consular District' (Dispatch No 306), 10 April 1920, in records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of China, 1910-29, (The National Archives, 1960), Quoted from Dirlik, Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution, pp 150-1.

people", which, according to the author, meant "a great world revolution". The pamphlet praised strongly the Russian Revolution: "Our Russian brothers have already risen and pushed to the utmost degree our principles in undermining their Government and private property. ... the influence of the Red Army has reached as far as Northern Europe and Central Asia, and it is seeking its way down from Siberia to Vladivostok, ... A world revolution is to materialise in the near future." And it went on to say that China should "go as fast as possible to catch up with the predecessors and to exercise her best energy in one way in preaching the doctrine and arranging to make a rising." In another pamphlet, the final phrase was "If you want your sons and grandsons to have food you must follow Bolshevism. The doctrine of Bolshevism is to let every man have food to eat and work to do."<sup>155</sup>

The claim that Bolshevism was spreading in Zhangzhou was obviously overstated, because most publications publicised anarcho-communism. However, judging from some pamphlets, it cannot be reckoned as pure anarchist propaganda, as some historians have suggested, because these pamphlets called for a Bolshevik-style revolution in China.

According to a Reuters' report in April 1920, propaganda highlighting what had been accomplished in Russia and declaring that the Chinese would follow the lead of their Russian brothers was conducted by a society which openly advocated Bolshevism and which was established by General Chen Jiongming in Zhangzhou.<sup>156</sup> This report did not give the society's name, however, we may still remember that Vilensky clearly attributed the propagation of "Communist ideology" to the Truth

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<sup>155</sup> The translations of such pamphlets are kept in FO 405/228, No 82.

<sup>156</sup> FO 228/3214, 29 April 1920.

Society which was under the auspices of Chen Jiongming. Therefore, the society in question was probably the Truth Society.

Vilensky further pointed out that the institutions for propagating "socialist doctrine" in Zhangzhou were the Educational Bureau and the office of Min xing (Fujian Star).<sup>157</sup> Some key figures who worked in these two institutions were members of the Truth Society. Around spring 1920 Zhang Minquan<sup>158</sup> came from Shanghai to Zhangzhou and joined the Educational Bureau as Chen's advisor on educational affairs and became one of editors of Min xing (Daily). Zhang Minquan was reported by British Intelligence to be an "active spirit in the Bolshevik propaganda", because some pamphlets were drafted by him.

In April 1920, a notice appeared in Chen Jiongming's daily paper Min xing in Zhangzhou urging those who advocated Bolshevism and intended to join the Party to register themselves with Lu Shikai of Post Box No.105 in Shanghai.<sup>159</sup> Lu Shikai was an anarchist who collaborated with Stopany, a Bolshevik, at the Esperanto School in Shanghai. Lu was on very close terms with Zhang Minquan. Both were famous scholars of Esperanto and Zhang sometimes also delivered speeches at the Esperanto School. So the notice might have been put in Min xing (Daily) by Zhang Minquan.

The notice did not tell what "Party" it was drawing people to join. But when the Soviet representative Potapov visited Zhangzhou,<sup>160</sup> an important task for him was

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<sup>157</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the CP in China', Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1921), No 16.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Section 3, Chapter 3.

<sup>159</sup> ZEGXSL, 29 April 1920.

<sup>160</sup> This visit was the result of the liaison between Shanghai and Zhangzhou through Lu Shikai. 'American Consular in Amoy's Report of 11 November 1920', American National Archives, Class 800, 1920. Jiang Banruo also complied with Polevoy's directive from Tianjin requesting Chen Jiongming to grant permission for a Soviet mission to Zhangzhou; cf Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielu.

said to be to make use of Chen Jiongming's connections to set up a Communist Party in China.<sup>161</sup> Perhaps that was why Vilensky used to say "Party" when mentioning the Truth Society and call the members of the Society Communists".<sup>162</sup> This Party might be the so-called "Zhina (China) Communist Party", because in 1921 Zhang Minquan and another anarchist, Chen Kong-San, bearing a cipher letter of introduction by Chicherin, went to Soviet Russia in order to attend the Third Congress of the Comintern and the Congress of Toilers of the Far East as representatives of "Zhina Communist Party".<sup>163</sup> The "Zhina Communist Party", which was different from the CCP founded by Chen Duxiu, was actually a party descended from the Truth Society and some other anarchist societies.

The Truth Society consisted of the former members of Minsheng She, Qun She, Ping She and Shi She, most of whom were anarcho-communists and belonged to the Anarcho-Communist Comrades' Union founded by Shi Fu in 1914; there was an effort in 1919 to form a unified anarchist organisation - the Anarcho-Communist Party, but this failed.<sup>164</sup> In Chita, Zhang Minquan told Qin Baopu that their aim in Soviet Russia was to obtain funds for the anarcho-communist movement, and before they left for Russia the Koryo Communist Party's deputy chairman, Kim Rip gave them - the Chinese anarcho-communists - 1,000 Yuan to convene a Congress in Shanghai in May

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<sup>161</sup> Zhou Gu, 'Sun Yat-sen's Relations with Russian Revolutions at the Early Stage', Zhuanji wenxue (1 March 1991) Vol 85, No 3, p 112.

<sup>162</sup> Vilensky, 'On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1921), No 16.

<sup>163</sup> Jiang Kanghu, Xin E youji; Bao Pu, 'Travels in Red Russia', Chen bao, 26 August 1924; FO 228/3140, p 77.

<sup>164</sup> 'The Proclamation of the Comrades' Union of Anarcho-Communists' claimed that they would establish an union of 'Zhina Anarcho-Communist Party', Min sheng, No 17; and in August 1914 the Comrades' Union of Anarcho-Communists published an article entitled 'On the Aims and Means of the Anarcho-Communist Party' Min sheng, No 19; Fang Qingqiu, 'The Chinese Anarchist Factions during the May 4th Period', Lishi dangan, (1981), No 2.

1921. At this Congress, only a minority supported sending representatives to the Third Congress of the Comintern and co-operating with the Bolsheviks, whereas the majority opposed these moves. This caused a split in the anarcho-communist organisations.<sup>165</sup> In fact, what Zhang Minquan and Chen Kongsan represented was a small section of the anarcho-communists which was determined to co-operate with the Bolsheviks and tried to get funds from the Comintern. These anarchists were mainly members of the Truth Society, the Evolution Society and the Mutual Aid Society. For example, Chen Kong-san was a representative of the Beijing anarchists, such as Chen Derong, Liu Guohang and Chen Youqin, who had a close association with Polevoy and published Shehui yundong (Social Movement) in Beijing.<sup>166</sup> Most of these anarchists also entered into an alliance with Marxist Communists and formed the Socialist League. Since the formation of the Socialist League was closely related to the founding process of the CCP, I will deal with it in the next chapter.

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The spring of 1920 saw a tendency towards the unity of diverse factions of Chinese socialists. Besides Chen Duxiu, a Beijing University professor, some Beijing University students, such as Zhang Guotao<sup>167</sup>, Luo Jialun, Xu Deheng, and Kang Baiqing, with Liu Qingyang, a leading member of the Tianjin Students Union, all went to Shanghai to participate in the activities of the National Students' Union and the

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<sup>165</sup> Bao Pu, 'Travels in Red Russia', Chen bao, 26 August 1924.

<sup>166</sup> 'Zai De's Report to the Infantry Headquarters of the Beiyang Government', 5 June 1922, in Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, p 1058; Bao Pu, 'Travel in Red Russia', Chen bao, 26 August 1924.

<sup>167</sup> Zhang and another student, probably Luo Jialun were deputed by Li Dazhao to Shanghai. Zhang kept up a correspondence with Li and reported all his activities in Shanghai to Li after his return to Beijing. Cf. Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1; FO 228/3214, 15 April 1920.

National Federation of All Circles of the People. They contacted journalists, including Dai Jitao, Li Hanjun, Shen Xuanlu and Shao Lizi, leaders of some trade unions, Cao Yabo and Zhu Zhuowen, the key founder of the Datong Party, Huang Jiemin, and several Koreans who belonged to the Korean Socialist Party and the Korean Provisional Government, for example Yo Un-hyong and Kim Kyu-sik. They also established close relationship with Chen Jiongming and the anarcho-communists around him in Zhangzhou. Zhang Minquan, who later became the representative of the Zhina Communist Party, returned to Shanghai from Zhangzhou to lead the May Day celebrations on 1 May 1920 in Shanghai with Huang Jiemin, who was later to become the leader of the Dongfang Communist Party and Chen Duxiu, who became the founder of the CCP.

Having seen for himself this unification of various radical forces, Vilensky wrote in his article "On the Eve of the Establishment of the Communist Party in China" that, centering on Beijing University, the advanced elements of Chinese revolutionary youth acted under the guidance of several long-tested socialist professors and; that Beijing University students had a great influence over the Beijing Students' Union. He pointed out:

The students' unions in North China have established direct relationship with the students' unions in the South. They have also kept close connections with the reliable representatives of some political organisations (Chinese and Korean), the strike committee of the [National] Students' Union, trade unions and journalists in Shanghai. Through regular contacts, they maintain links with several other cities which have students unions, such as Jinan, Nanjing, Hankou and Zhangzhou. They have close connections with the latter, in particular. General Chen

Jiongming - Governor of Fujian province - has established a commune, which is spreading socialist ideas widely.”<sup>168</sup>

Having studied the details, one can clearly discern a picture of the distribution and connections of the main revolutionary forces.

Behind the unity of the revolutionary forces, we can see the concerted efforts of the Bolsheviks. They were active in directing organisations of many different kinds and at different levels. Some organisations were used for making an empty show of strength.<sup>169</sup>, and some “socialist” or “communist” parties were merely established for serving as stopgaps.<sup>170</sup> Ostensibly, there were no connections between those organisations, but sometimes they were held together by common actions. When the time was ripe, some of these units began merging and converging in a process of division and elimination of the previous ones.

“The Brief History of the CCP” pointed out: “the initial work of collecting material for laying the Party’s foundation may be said to have been accomplished in three years [1918-20].”<sup>171</sup> At the first representative assembly of members of the RCP(B) in China, which was held from 5 to 7 July 1920, the first subject under discussion was their achievements in organisational work. Summarising the organisational work, Vilensky pointed out: “We have already laid a preliminary foundation in organisation building, and we need to make use of the existing

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<sup>168</sup> Die Kommunistische Internationale, (1921), No 16.

<sup>169</sup> In 1930, Yang Mingzhai, Voitinsky’s interpreter, wrote a report to the Comintern, in which he suggested that they must change the methods of work entirely and not to employ masses to make an empty show of strength as before. This report offended some leaders of the Comintern and as a result of it, Yang was sent to Tomsk into penal servitude and later died there. [Zhonggong dangshi ziliao, (1995), No 2].

<sup>170</sup> According to Jiang Kanghu, there were delegates of five Chinese communist parties to the 3rd Comintern congress. [Xin E youji, p 60.

<sup>171</sup> Wilbur and How, CNSAC, p 52.



organisations and the experience we have accumulated to continue the work of organisation building.”<sup>172</sup> The "existing organisations" included some of the organisations I have discussed above.

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<sup>172</sup> 'Vilensky's Report to the ECCI, 1 September 1920', GLZDC Vol 1, pp 42.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE CREATION OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

The establishment of the Chinese Communist Party is a topic which has been studied by many historians for nearly as long as it has been in existence. I do not intend to repeat their detailed accounts of the CCP's founding process. My task here is to clarify the Comintern's role in the establishment of the CCP.

In regard to the initiation and dynamics of the founding of the CCP, so far there have been a variety of views. The former Soviet scholar V. I. Glunin maintains: The first communist groups in China were set up with the direct participation of the Comintern which furnished the Chinese Communists with organisational and other assistance. It should be mentioned that prior to the arrival of the Comintern delegation no one in China had ever raised the question of forming a Communist party.<sup>1</sup>

Although this account seems too extreme, similar views have been expressed by more and more historians in recent years. For example, Dirlik confirms that "the Communist Party of China was a product of direct Communist International intervention."<sup>2</sup> A Chinese professor, Xiang Qing, also admits that the founding of the CCP was a direct consequence of Comintern effort to establish a Comintern Chinese branch in the Far East.<sup>3</sup> However, the CCP's official historians are reluctant to accept

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Glunin, 'The Comintern and the Rise of the Communist Movement in China', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 281.

<sup>2</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p x.

<sup>3</sup> Xiang Qing, 'The Establishment of the CCP', Zhu Chengjia (ed.), Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu lunwen xuan, Vol 2, p 296.

such views, so they attempt to explain the Russian role away. Liao Gailong's comment is typical:

The assistance of the Comintern and Soviet Russia only promoted the foundation of the CCP. But it should not be considered as the main reason why the CCP was established. We cannot say that the CCP was transplanted from Russia by the Comintern and Soviet Russia.<sup>4</sup>

Hans van de Ven goes further, writing that "Comintern efforts to expand the forces of Communism into East Asia were not a sine qua non for the founding of the CCP"; and that "the role of ... Comintern agents was not a determining factor in the rise of Communist cells in China."<sup>5</sup>

Which point of view is closer to the historical facts? This is the question I shall attempt to clarify in this chapter by giving more details of the process of the founding of the CCP.

Before doing so I have to point out that what I will discuss here is the CCP which is still in power today, because there were several Chinese Communist parties and organisations during that time. I have already dealt in the previous chapter with some "Communist" parties and organisations which once existed in China, and it is worthwhile to briefly introduce the Chinese organisations in Russia here, because they have a bearing on the subject I am discussing.

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<sup>4</sup> Liao Gailong, 'On the Comintern, Soviet Russia and the Chinese Revolution', Dangshi ziliao tongxun, (1983), No 11-2, pp 114-16.

<sup>5</sup> Hans J van de Ven, From Friend to Comrade, The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920-1927, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p 56, p 68.

## Section 1. A Chinese Communist Party in Russia

As early as the end of 1918, when the All-Russia Union of Chinese Workers was formed in Petrograd, a Communist organisation was simultaneously established in it with the help of the RCP(B). Afterwards, several local Chinese Communist organisations were formed, and one such organisation in Blagoveschensk called itself the Chinese Communist Party of the Amur Region. On 1 July 1920 the Central Organisational Bureau of Chinese Communists was set up under the RCP(B) in Moscow. Chicherin declared that this organisation's task was to become a tie linking the current and the future revolution in China. The Bureau's constitution stated that the Chinese Communists' direct duties were to accomplish a social revolution in China, to organise the working class and to establish Communist branches in their motherland. The Constitution even required the Bureau to move to China in the future.<sup>6</sup> These clauses suggest that Moscow at one stage intended to establish a Communist party in China through the Chinese Communist organisation in Russia under the direction of the RCP(B) or to move the Communist organisations which had already established in Russia to China directly, just as they did in Turkey and Iran. A leader of the Central Organisational Bureau, Liu Qian (his Russian name was Federov), even wrote letters in the name of the "Chinese Communist Party". In the autumn of 1920, the Bureau discussed the necessity of establishing branches in China and dispatched its members to China with this intention. From then to 1922, some of

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<sup>6</sup> Persits, 'Eastern Internationalists in Russia and Some Questions of the International Liberation Movement', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, pp 101-2; Xue Xiantian and Li Yuzhen, 'The Chinese Communist Organisations in Russia and Some Issues concerning the Establishment of the Communist Party in China', Jindaishi yanjiu, (1989), No 5, p 161.

them contacted and even joined the CCP's local branches and also drew several members of the CCP into the "Chinese Communist Party" belonging to the Central Organisational Bureau in Russia.<sup>7</sup> According to Russian archives, the head of the Chinese Socialist Party, Jiang Kanghu, and an important member of the Datong Party, Yao Zuobin, joined the "Communist Party".<sup>8</sup> Yet the activities of the Chinese Communists who lived in Russia did not become a major current in the establishment of a Communist party in China, mainly because of its members' low level of education and limited capacity.<sup>9</sup> However, the attempt of the Chinese Communists in Russia to spread Communist organisation to China was a component part of the Bolsheviks' plan to establish a Communist party in China, and therefore should not be overlooked.

## **Section 2. The Socialist League and the Origins of the CCP**

While studying the origins of the CCP one cannot ignore the Chinese Socialist League, which had very close relations with the CCP's early organisations. But up to now, only a few historians have paid attention to the Socialist League, and most of the books concerning the origins of the CCP have not even mentioned it. Even in Dirlik's book The Origins of Chinese Communism, which deals much with the important role of the anarchists in the early organisational activities that culminated in the founding of the CCP, there is not one word about the League.

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<sup>7</sup> Xue Xiantian and Li Yuzhen, 'op. cit.', pp 168-170.

<sup>8</sup> Li Yuzhen, Sun Zhongshan yu Gongchanguoji, p 85.

<sup>9</sup> According to Persits, they were "weakly grounded in Marxism-Leninism." Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 103.

The Socialist League was an organisation for rallying Chinese socialists of different ideological persuasions, especially Marxists and anarchists, to take part in social revolution in China and it can be seen as an alliance of smaller groups. Since some CCP groups grew from within it, it is necessary to make clear the Socialist League's formation and development.

As concerns the establishment of the Socialist League, Zheng Peigang's recollections tell us that in spring 1920 he received a letter from Hang Lingshuang, in which Huang wrote that after meeting Polevoy, he and Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Hua Lin, Wang Jingcheng plus some other people formed a Socialist League in Beijing and elected Chen as leader; Huang also urged Zheng to go to Shanghai to help Chen Duxiu, who was due to leave for Shanghai to organise the League there.<sup>10</sup> This indicates that the Socialist League must have been formed before Chen left Beijing for Shanghai in February 1920. Other sources suggest that the Socialist League was established in 1919. One source claims that not long after Chen Duxiu was released from prison in fall of 1919, the Socialist League was formed in Beijing.<sup>11</sup> Liang Bingxuan remembered that there had been a Socialist League in South China before Liang went to Zhangzhou in autumn 1919.<sup>12</sup> According to Xu Deheng's recollections, in the winter of 1919, Li Dazhao telegraphed Xu, who was in Shanghai, asking him to find accommodation in Shanghai for Chen Duxiu.<sup>13</sup> This

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<sup>10</sup> Gao Jun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi zai Zhongguo (Anarchism in China), (Changsha: Hunan People's Press, 1984), p 519.

<sup>11</sup> Sima Lu, Zhonggong de chengli yu chuqi huodong, p 306.

<sup>12</sup> Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielü, pp 8-9. Thomas A. Stanley in his Osugi Sakae: Anarchist in Taisho Japan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982, pp 132-4) writes that the Socialist Alliances [Leagues] founded in 1919 were products of a conference of Far Eastern socialists held in Shanghai. In fact, the Conference was held in the fall of 1920.

<sup>13</sup> Wang Shudi, et al. (eds), Chen Duxiu pinglun xuanbian (Selected Comments on

might hint that the plan to expand the Socialist League into Shanghai was conceived of as early as the end of 1919.

In any case, the Socialist League was considered to have been organised on the initiative of Comintern agents. In a letter to Zheng Peigang, Polevoy declared himself a Bolshevik and described his desire to get in contact with the Chinese anarchists in order to make joint efforts in social revolution.<sup>14</sup> Polevoy was even a member of the Socialist League's first organisation.

In Shanghai, one of Chen Duxiu's tasks was to form the Socialist League there. Zheng Peigang rushed to Shanghai to help Chen and introduced several anarchists, such as Zhang Mochi, Fei Zhemin, Zhao Shilong and Huang Bihun to him, and later Shen Xuanlu, Li Hanjun, Shen Zhongjiu, Wang Fuquan, Shi Cuntong, Wei Jinzhi, Yuan Zhenying, Wei Keshui and so on joined them.<sup>15</sup> The Shanghai branch was founded in May 1920.<sup>16</sup> Later, a small branch of the League was set up in Hangzhou by Shen Zhongjiu.<sup>17</sup> In the summer of that year, a Soviet agent named Stromisky and Yang Mingzhai held a meeting of the Socialist League at Chen Duxiu's house to relay the Comintern's instructions to the League members and discuss how to develop social revolutionary work more actively. The Chinese members who were present at the meeting included Marxists, such as Chen Duxiu and Li Hanjun and anarchists, such as

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Chen Duxiu), (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Press, 1982), Vol 2, p 275.

<sup>14</sup> Zheng Peigang, 'Some Historical Facts about Anarchism in China', Ge Maochun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 2, pp 956-57.

<sup>15</sup> ibid., Vol 2, pp 957-8.

<sup>16</sup> Tang Tingfen, 'The Anarchist Factions and Their Split during the May 4th Period', Huazhong shifan xuekan (The Journal of the Central China Normal University), (Wuhan, 1981), No 3.

<sup>17</sup> Liu Shixin, 'Some Recollections of Anarchist Activities', Ge Maochun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 2, p 939.

Zheng Peigang, Yuan Zhenying and Wei Keshui. A Korean and an Indian also attended the meeting.<sup>18</sup>

The Guangzhou branch of the Socialist League was founded by Soviet agents Stoyanovich (alias Minor) and Perlin in autumn 1920. With the exception of the two Russian Communists, all the members of the Guangzhou branch were anarchists and included Liang Bingxuan, Liu Shixin, Ou Shengbai, Tan Zuyin and so on.<sup>19</sup>

By the fall of 1920, the Socialist League had become a nation-wide organisation with branches in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hangzhou. Under the direction of the Revolutionary Bureau in Shanghai, the League's main work was to promote the labour movement and launch social revolution. The Socialist League, financed by Stromisky, set up the Youxin Printing House, which printed Communist and anarchist periodicals, pamphlets and leaflets.<sup>20</sup> Some of the League's branches also started publication of several weekly magazines for labourers, such as Laodong jie (Labour Circle) in Shanghai, Laodong yin (Workers' Voice) in Beijing and Laodong zhe (Labourers) in Guangzhou, which were subsidised by Comintern agents, and which are also counted as publications of the Communist groups.<sup>21</sup> These periodicals described the labourers' miserable life and hard work, explained to labourers how capitalists were exploiting them and urged them to organise trade unions.

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<sup>18</sup> Zheng Peigang, 'Some Historical Facts about Anarchism in China', Ge Maochun, et al. (eds.), ibid., Vol 2, p 958. We may remember that Datong Party had Korean and Indian members.

<sup>19</sup> Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielu; 'A Summary of the Guangzhou Communist Group', Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu (The Communist Groups), Vol 2, p 679.

<sup>20</sup> Zheng Peigang, 'Some Historical Facts about Anarchism in China', Ge Maochun, et al. (eds.), Wuzhengfu zhuyi sixiang ziliao xuan, Vol 2, pp 958-9.

<sup>21</sup> 'Zheng Peigang's Recollection', Gao Jun, et al. (eds), Wuzhengfu zhuyi zai zhongguo, p 520; Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu.



Around early 1921, an open debate on Marxism and anarchism started. Many members of the Socialist League were involved in it. Chen Duxiu and other Bolshevik followers' criticism of anarchism and the anarchists' objection to the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat caused a rift within the League. As a consequence of this, and of the suppression of the anarchists in Russia after the Kronstadt uprising, many anarchists withdrew from the Socialist League. With the loss of its function as an alliance, the Socialist League withered away.

The relationship between the Socialist League and the founding of the CCP often confuses people. In some ways, the Socialist League seems to have been a predecessor of the CCP, as nearly all the branches of the Socialist League became Communist groups within a year. For example, the Beijing Communist group was formed almost entirely by former members of the Socialist League with the exception of Zhang Shenfu and Zhang Guotao; the League's Guangzhou branch was simply regarded as a Communist group in a report to the Comintern.<sup>22</sup> But the parallel development in founding some branches of the Socialist League and cells of the Communist Party made their relations more complicated. For example, when the Socialist League was formed in Shanghai, the CCP's first group was also founded there in the same month.

If we compare the Chinese Socialist League with the Japanese Socialist League, with which it had close relations and which was also supported by the Comintern,<sup>23</sup> we find that their development was similar in some ways. In a collection

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<sup>22</sup> 'Report of the Guangzhou Communist Group', Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji (Selected Documents of the Central Committee of the CCP, 1921-25), (Beijing: The CCP's Central Academy Press, 1989), pp 20-1.

<sup>23</sup> The Japanese Socialist League was formed in July 1920, shortly after the East Asian Secretariat sent an agent to Japan to contact Japanese socialists, including

of articles published in the spring of 1922 to commemorate the Far Eastern Toilers' Congress, Katayama wrote that a Communist cell existed inside the Japanese Socialist League in 1920, and Safarov's article pointed out that the Communist Party of Japan was first organised in 1920.<sup>24</sup> Since the first Communist Party in Japan - the Enlightened People's Communist Party - was organised by Eizo Kondo, a key member of the Socialist League, in August 1921, it is quite evident that Safarov counted the foundation of the Socialist League as the beginning of the Communist Party. Such being the case, we can easily explain why "A Brief History of the CCP" states that "by the beginning of 1920, an embryo of the CCP existed in Shanghai. By the middle of 1920 this organisation numbered about seventy persons. ... Since the Party had not then been established, these persons cannot be called Party members but comrades. There were about ten comrades in Peking and ten in Canton. ... A small number among our comrades had had some experience and this served as the foundation of their future work"<sup>25</sup> This "organisation" with about ninety members must have been the Socialist League, for the CCP had just over fifty members until its first congress in 1921. The statement in the "Brief History" and the Japanese case indicate that the "embryo of the CCP" may have also existed inside the Socialist League.

In view of this, the founding of the CCP cannot be treated separately from the founding of the Socialist League but they must also not be confused with each other.

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Marxists and anarchists there. After its foundation, a key member of the League, the famous anarchist Osuge, went to Shanghai to hold meetings with Voitinsky and Chen Duxiu and obtained Comintern funds to publish Rodo Undo (Labour Movement). [Iwamura Toshio, Cominterun to Nihon Kyosanto no Seiritsu (The Comintern and the Founding of the Communist Party of Japan), (Tokyo, 1977), p 105]; Li Dazhao and three other Chinese joined the Japanese Socialist League. [Jindaishi yanjiu, (1985), No 1].

<sup>24</sup> Quoted from Iwamura Toshio, Cominterun to Nihon Kyosanto no Seiritsu, p 105.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from Wilbur and How, CNSAC, pp 49, 52.

Unless the history of the Socialist League is clarified, it will be impossible to give a comprehensive account of the full founding process of the CCP.

### **Section 3. The Process of the Formation of the Communist Groups**

The early organisations of the CCP were normally called "the Communist Groups". But according to many participants, when the first cell of the CCP was formed in Shanghai in 1920 it was named the "Chinese Communist Party".<sup>26</sup> Since the term "the Communist Groups" was first adopted by the Communist International and has been used by many histories for a long time, and in order to differentiate the early organisations of the CCP from the formally founded CCP after its first congress, it is convenient to call these early organisations "the Communist Groups" here.

There is a shared consensus among most scholars about how the Communist Groups were formed in China, although there are still some questions which remain to be examined further. However, Hans van de Ven challenges this agreement by arguing: "A number of early Communist organisations emerged independently of Comintern efforts," and therefore, "The CCP's birth was not dependent on the activities of a few Comintern agents and intellectuals in Shanghai, but resulted from the initiatives of Chinese intellectuals throughout China and in Europe."<sup>27</sup>

In order to set the historical facts straight, while giving a brief account of the process of the formation of the Communist groups, I would like to focus my discussion in the following sections on the Comintern's efforts to persuade Li Dazhao

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<sup>26</sup> Li Da's letter to Wang Laidi, 16 May 1957. See Wang Laidi, 'Some Problems on the Early Organisation of the CCP', Zhejiang xuekan, (1981), No 3.

<sup>27</sup> Hans van de Ven, From Friend to Comrade, p 56, p 243.

and Chen Duxiu to form the CCP, and their roles in founding the first Communist nucleus in Shanghai and Communist groups in other cities and also overseas.

### **The Initiatives of Soviet and Comintern Agents**

Who took the initiative in establishing the CCP is a question we must answer here.

For a long time, Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu were believed to be the originators of the CCP. Many historians in the PRC assert that it was Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao who first contemplated setting up a Communist party in China.<sup>28</sup> They say this because Gao Yihan once recalled that when Li Dazhao accompanied Chen Duxiu to Tianjin in February 1920, the two men talked about the possibilities of forming a political party in China;<sup>29</sup> and they believe that as a result of this discussion, Li and Chen agreed to make efforts to accomplish this task in the South and North respectively.<sup>30</sup> They also think this because they take for granted that Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu's discussion preceded Voitinsky's arrival, before which Chinese radicals had no contact with Comintern and Soviet agents. This interpretation tallies neither with the historical facts nor the development of Li and Chen's thoughts.

Before 1920, Chen and Li had no intention of establishing a Communist Party in China. Chen Duxiu even condemned any efforts to form a political party in China. Not long after the May 4th Movement, seeing the strength of mass organisations, Chen

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<sup>28</sup> Xiao Chaoran and Sha Jiansun (eds.), Zhongguo geming biannianshi (Annals of the Chinese Revolution), (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1984), p 57.

<sup>29</sup> Wu Jialin and Xie Yiming, Beijing dangzuzhi de chuangjian huodong (Attempts to Establish the Beijing Communist Organisation), (Beijing, 1991), p 93.

<sup>30</sup> Zhou Youxin, 'Li Dazhao and the Founding of the CCP', Zhu Chengjia (ed.), Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu lunwen xuan (Selected Theses on the History of the Chinese Communist Party), (Changsha: Hunan People's Press, 1983), Vol 1, p 51.

said: "There need be no political parties except various mass organisations."<sup>31</sup> In November 1919, in one of his articles, Chen warned the people: "Do not let them (the political parties) use our pure labourers and young students to form any political parties or labour parties." Before autumn 1918, Li Dazhao's opinions of political parties were based on his tendency to conciliation. He once believed that there should be no room for the existence of an opposition when the nation was in crisis.<sup>32</sup> Although Li later claimed that he liked to talk about Bolshevism, he was still interested in the "New Village" and "Mutual Aid" movements till early 1920. Even in May 1920 Li said to Zhang Guotao that he did not think that the time was then right for the formation of a Communist party.<sup>33</sup> Unless there had been pressure from outside, Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu would not have started the work of organising the CCP.

In fact, such an outside factor existed even before 1920. The foundation of the Comintern in March 1919 triggered the establishment of Communist parties all over the world. Around the fall of 1919 the Bolsheviks placed the setting up of Communist parties in the Eastern countries on their agenda. The resolution which was passed by the Second Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East stressed the "necessity of a gradual formation of communist parties in the countries of the East as sections of the Communist International."<sup>34</sup> This congress was a turning point for organising Communist parties in the East, and afterwards the Comintern and RCP(B) sent more agents to the Eastern countries with that aim in mind.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Chen Duxiu, 'The Shandong Problem and Citizens' consciousness', 26 May 1919, Duxiu wencun, Vol 1, p 646.

<sup>32</sup> Lü Mingzhuo, Li Dazhao sixiang yanjiu, p 115.

<sup>33</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 90.

<sup>34</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, p 164.

<sup>35</sup> In early 1920, in a letter to the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, Mustafa Subhi, the head of the Council for International

According to Peng Shuzhi's account, which is based on Li Dazhao's recollections, at the end of 1919, a Russian Communist, Hoholovkin, mandated by the Comintern, visited Li at Beijing University and discussed with him the possibility of forming a Communist Party in China.<sup>36</sup> One of Hu Shi's talks revealed that a Soviet representative also visited Chen Duxiu in Beijing to talk about the establishment of a Communist party in China.<sup>37</sup> This visit was probably made in the fall of 1919. Li Lisan's report in 1930 shows that when Chen Duxiu once went to Tianjin, a correspondent of the Comintern News Agency contacted him and then they went together to Shanghai to discuss the formation of a Communist party.<sup>38</sup> Li Lisan did not mention when this event took place, but it probably happened in January or February of 1920 for Chen went via Tianjin to Shanghai twice during those two months.<sup>39</sup> In February, at a meeting held at the Yong-An Hotel in Shanghai, the main speaker revealed that some "true well wishers of China" advised the Chinese to form a Bolshevik-style society.<sup>40</sup> The "true well wishers of China" meant Bolshevik agents, especially Lizerovitch, who attended the meeting; and the people present included Li Hanjun, who later collaborated with Chen Duxiu in establishing the CCP in Shanghai. Around this time, Pak Chin-sen, who came from the Comintern, also attempted to set up a Communist Party in Shanghai and established contact with Chen Duxiu through Huang Jiemin.

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Propaganda, reported: "We have already sent hundreds of comrades for responsible Party work to all countries, but they have to be sent in thousands, ...." See Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 89.

<sup>36</sup> Peng Shuzhi, 'How Did the First Communist Group Take Form?', Peng Shuzhi xuanji, Vol 1, p 43. In another article, Peng wrote that this visit took place in early 1920.

<sup>37</sup> Luo Ergang, 'Some Facts about Hu Shi', Yan Zhenwu (ed.), Hu Shi yanjiu conglu, Beijing: Sanlian Press, 1989, p 13.

<sup>38</sup> Li Lisan, 'A Report on the History of the CCP', ZDBX, p 211.

<sup>39</sup> Wang Guangyuan (ed.), Chen Duxiu nianpu, pp 78-81.

<sup>40</sup> FO 228/3214, 8 April 1920; FO 405/228, 7 April 1920.

The above evidence indicates that the Comintern and Soviet agents proposed to establish a Communist party in China before spring 1920, and they especially contacted Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, Li Hanjun and Huang Jiemin directly or indirectly and urged them to take a lead in starting organisational work. Chen Duxiu later admitted frankly that he had only "followed the appeal to organise the Chinese Communist party in 1920."<sup>41</sup> Zhang Shen-fu, a close friend of Chen and Li and one of the CCP founders, also recalled: "We were rather childish at the time. Establishing the CCP was promoted by the 3rd International."<sup>42</sup> These show that without the Soviet agents' influence and suggestions, Chinese radical intellectuals would not even have thought of establishing a Communist party in China at the time.

Voitinsky is considered to have played the part of "chief architect" in founding the CCP.<sup>43</sup> However, his team's dispatch to China related to the earlier agents' preparatory activities. As Voitinsky told the Chinese, before he was sent to China the RCP(B) and the Comintern's relevant authorities had received several telegrams from Vladivostok and were made familiar with the situation in China.<sup>44</sup> They probably obtained reports from their agents such as Hoholovkin and Burtman.<sup>45</sup> On their arrival in Beijing, through the recommendation of Polevoy and Ivanov, Voitinsky's team held several meetings with Li Dazhao and several young students. Polevoy and Ivanov's

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<sup>41</sup> Chen wrote this to refute the Comintern's accusation against his "opportunistic policy" which led to the failure of the Great Revolution of China in 1927. Quoted from Daniels (ed.), A Documentary History of Communism, Vol 2, p 293.

<sup>42</sup> Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 588.

<sup>43</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 191.

<sup>44</sup> Li Da, 'Memoir of the CCP's Foundation and Its First and Second Congresses', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 6.

<sup>45</sup> Peng Shuzhi wrote in his 'How did the First Communist Group Take Form?' [Peng Shuzhi xuanji, Vol 1, p 45] that Voitinsky was dispatched to China as soon as the Comintern obtained the report by Hohonovky; According to Kasanin [China in the Twenties, pp 14-5], after Burtman returned to Siberia in early 1920, he was appointed the director of the Eastern Nationalities Section of the Siberia Bureau of the RCP(B). This section directly led the work of Voitinsky's team.

recommendation was never an “accidental case”, as some scholars believe,<sup>46</sup> they had already established contacts with radical Chinese. Nevertheless, Voitinsky’s visit was obviously crucial in triggering the establishment of the CCP. In talks with radical Chinese in Beijing, Voitinsky suggested to them that what they needed most was “an organisation similar to the Russian Communist Party.”<sup>47</sup> Voitinsky’s team’s advent almost coincided with the foundation of the Marxist Study Society of Beijing University. It was said that Li Dazhao encouraged Voitinsky to discuss the problem of forming the CCP with Chen Duxiu in Shanghai. In fact, going to Shanghai was the original plan of Voitinsky’s team, since one of their tasks was to study the possibilities for setting up the East Asian Secretariat of the Comintern in Shanghai.<sup>48</sup>

As soon as Voitinsky’s team arrived in Shanghai, they got in touch with the office of Shanghai Life. This had probably been arranged previously by Vilensky, who financed Shanghai Life and dispatched Voitinsky’s team. On the foundation which had already been laid by several Soviet agents, and with their assistance, Voitinsky started his work of organising a Communist Party in China. Voitinsky’ role in this was important. However, he was not the first or the only Bolshevik agent who initiated the formation of the CCP, and Soviet and Comintern agents’ joint efforts to set up a Communist Party can be noted before and around the time of his arrival in China.

### **The Birth of the First Communist Nucleus in Shanghai**

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<sup>46</sup> Xue Xiantian, ‘The Comintern’s Strategy of Establishing Parties and the Way of the Formation of the CCP’, Shijie lishi (The World History), (Beijing, 1989), No 4.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Luo Zhanglong’s Recollection’, Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 197.

<sup>48</sup> Shevelyov, ‘On the History of the Formation of the Communist Party of China’, Far Eastern Affairs, (1981), No 1, p 129.



As early as 1912, Lenin hoped that a Chinese proletarian party, similar to the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, would appear in Shanghai - the most advanced industrial city in China.<sup>49</sup> Establishing a Communist party based on the organisations of industrial workers in Shanghai was obviously the Bolsheviks' original plan. For this reason, the Comintern and Soviet agents once tried to turn the Datong Party, which had close relations with trade unions in Shanghai, into a Communist party; and they also urged radical Chinese intellectuals, such as Chen Duxiu, to participate in the labour movements in Shanghai.

When talking about the origins of the CCP, Cai Hesen pointed out that Chen Duxiu's move to Shanghai in early 1920 was not his personal action and was part of a larger plan.<sup>50</sup> We shall remember that a Comintern agent accompanied Chen to Shanghai in early 1920 to discuss the formation of a Communist party there.<sup>51</sup> Chen's purpose for going to Shanghai, was said to be to use Shanghai "as the base of the labour movement and the centre of his work", because he "fully realised the close connections between party and labour organisation".<sup>52</sup> Soon after he reached Shanghai, Chen devoted the greater part of his attention to the labour movement and came into contact with the All-China Industrial Federation, the Shanghai Ship and Godown Workers' Union and several other worker organisations which had close relations with the Datong Party and Soviet agents. He was also involved in the preparations for the World Labour Commemoration Rally of 1 May 1920, of which

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<sup>49</sup> Lenin, 'Democracy and Narodism in China', Lenin Collected Works, Vol 18, p 169.

<sup>50</sup> Cai Hesen, 'Development in the History of the CCP', (1926), ZDBX, p 10.

<sup>51</sup> Li Lisan, 'A Report on the History of the CCP', ZDBX, p 211.

<sup>52</sup> 'A Brief History of the CCP', Wilbur and How, CNSAC, p 48.

Huang Jiemin of the Datong Party took charge. The 1920 May Day movement was specially regarded as an important event related to the origins of the CCP.<sup>53</sup>

However, the co-operation lasted a very short time. Vilensky, after making investigations in China by himself and Abramson during the summer of 1920, found that in Shanghai and elsewhere "there was not a single workers' cell" and hardly any proletarian movement to speak of; meanwhile, he noticed that a group of Chinese professors such as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao were leading a big student movement.<sup>54</sup> This might be a reason that the Bolsheviks decided to make Chen and Li's group the centre of gravity for the formation of the CCP.

Now, let us focus our attention on some radical intellectuals' organisations which laid the direct foundation for the CCP.

After reaching Shanghai, Chen Duxiu soon got in touch with the weekly Xingqi pinglun, whose editors Dai Jitao and Li Hanjun were writing articles introducing Marxism, and Chen Duxiu was said to have participated in the editing of the journal, too.<sup>55</sup> Chen also prepared to move Xin qingnian to Shanghai. Having studied the situation in Shanghai, Voitinsky's team worked out a plan to unite the forces grouped around some progressive journals, such as Xin qingnian, Xingqi

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<sup>53</sup> Qu Qiubai, 'Outline of the History of the CCP', Qu Qiubai wenji (Writings of Qu Qiubai), (Politics), (Beijing, People's Press, 1996), Vol 6, p 875.

<sup>54</sup> 'Vilensky to Trotsky, 8 April 1928'; Quoted from Leong Sow-theng, Sino-Soviet Relations: The First Phase, 1917-20, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1971), p 147. It was reported that Vilensky's Chinese interpreter, Abramson, made contact with workers and students in Shanghai and had an intimate understanding of their thinking, emotions and activities. See Li Yuzhen, Sun Zhongshan yu Gongchanquoji, p 86.

<sup>55</sup> Gesalyov, 'The formation of the CCP', in Dangshi ziliao (Materials on the History of the CCP), (1953), No 7.

pinglun and Shishi xinbao, hoping that these publications' leaders would take the lead in forming a Communist or Socialist Party in China.<sup>56</sup>

According to "A Brief History of the CCP", at the beginning of 1920, Chen and his associates, Dai Jitao, Shen Xuanlu, Chen Wangdao, Li Hanjun, Shi Cuntong and Yu Xiusong, organised a group in Shanghai.<sup>57</sup> This group can be identified with the Society for Studying Marxism in Shanghai, which actually formed around May, instead of the beginning of 1920; the Society for Studying Marxism in fact served as a front for the "embryo" of the CCP.<sup>58</sup> At first, this "Society" or "Group" consisted only of persons who belonged to or had connections with the office of Xingqi pinglun. Zhang Dongxun of Shishi xinbao was not involved, perhaps because as a guild socialist, he was not willing to join a Marxist group. Voitinsky and other Soviet agents had something to do with the formation of this organisation. Before May Day 1920, Voitinsky visited the Office of Xingqi pinglun, and talked with the staff of Xingqi pinglun and Chen Duxiu.<sup>59</sup> Lizerovitch and Lundon were also in frequent contact with Xingqi pinglun's key editors then, especially Li Hanjun.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Qiwu Laoren, 'Before and After the Formation of the CCP', Quoted from Far Eastern Affairs, (1981), No 1, p 129. Those journals were therefore regarded as the "cells" for forming the CCP. Also see Qu Qiubai, 'Outline of the History of the CCP', ZDBX, p 200.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted from Wilbur and How, CNSAC, pp 48-9.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 49. Also see Chen Wangdao, Shao Lizi and Li Da's recollections in Yida qianhou. According to Chen Wangdao, before the foundation of the Shanghai Communist Group, Chen Duxiu, Li Hanjun, Chen himself and some other people organised a Marxist Research Society in Shanghai. The Society for Studying Marxism was the public, external name, while they called it "Communist Party" internally. [Dangshi ziliao congkan (The CCP's Historical Materials Series), (Shanghai, 1980), No 8].

<sup>59</sup> 'Chen Gongpei's Collections', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 564,

<sup>60</sup> FO 228/3214, 22 April 1920; May 1920.

In June, "Voitinsky proposed establishing a Communist party".<sup>61</sup> From then on, he and some other emissaries convoked several semi-overt discussion meetings, whose topic was to discuss "the methods to organise the Communist Party".<sup>62</sup> Zhou Fohai in his recollections gave a detailed account of Voitinsky's speech at one such meeting. According to Zhou, Voitinsky said that without a dominant theoretical current and without organisation, the Chinese revolution could not be pushed forward; and he concluded with the hope that those present at the meeting "should organise a Chinese Communist Party".<sup>63</sup> Since there were no organisational formalities at this stage, the people who attended such meetings could withdraw freely and attendance at every meeting was not quite the same. That is why several participants were mistakenly counted among the founding members of the CCP. Shortly after the proposal to form a Communist party was put forth definitely, Dai Jitao, the editor of Xingqi pinglun, dropped out; so did some other participants.

In the middle of June, a preparatory meeting for establishing a Communist Party was held by Chen Duxiu, Li Hanjun, Shen Xuanlu, Shi Cuntong and Chen Gongpei in Shanghai, and at the meeting the Party's programme was drafted.<sup>64</sup> Yu Xiusong's recently discovered diary dated 10 July recorded that he and some other people had formed a "Social Communist Party" several days before, and that he had felt confused about Bolshevism and anarchism during that time, but realised he was

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<sup>61</sup> Shi Cuntong: 'Some Problems during the Period of the Formation of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 34.

<sup>62</sup> 'Yuan Zhenying's Recollections', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 472.

<sup>63</sup> Chen Gongbo Zhou Fohai huiyilu hebian (collected Memoirs of Chen Gongbo and Zhou Fohai), (Hong Kong: Chunqiu Press, 1967), p 114.

<sup>64</sup> Shi Fuliang (Shi Cuntong), 'Some Problems on the foundation of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 34; 'Chen Gongpei's Recollections', ibid., Vol 2, p 564. According to Ishikawa Yoshihiro's textual research, this meeting was also a farewell party for Shi Cuntong to Japan, which was held before June 17th. See his article, 'Shi Cuntong in His Youth', Toyoshi Kenkyu, (1994), Vol 53, No 2.

wrong to have followed anarchism blindly.<sup>65</sup> This suggests that the Social Communist Party Yu Xiusong and others formed might have served as an interim organisation between the Socialist League and a purely Communists organisation. Anyway, this meeting of five people was very important in the process of establishing the CCP since the report of the First Congress of the CCP to the Comintern writes: "the Chinese Communist organisation was established in the middle of last year [i.e. 1920]. Initially, the Shanghai organisation had only five members in total."<sup>66</sup>

Around this time a "Socialist Party" appeared in Shanghai. Liu Shaozhou in his speech at the Second Congress of the Comintern said that Xingqi pinglun was published by the "Socialist Party" of Shanghai, and that this party was "Marxist".<sup>67</sup> The party Liu referred to was surely not the Socialist Party founded by Jiang Kanghu, and might not be the Socialist League because most members of the League did not believe in Marxism. It was probably an alternative name for the Social Communist Party or the Communist Party, which grew from the Society of Studying Marxism and which had close connections with Xingqi pinglun.<sup>68</sup> This can be confirmed by the following evidence: in the summer of 1920, Chen Duxiu wrote a letter to Li Dazhao to

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<sup>65</sup> Shanghai dangshi (The History of the CCP in Shanghai), (Shanghai, 1991), No 7.

<sup>66</sup> 'The First Congress of the Communist Party of China', written in the second half of 1921, Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu, Vol 1, p 52.

<sup>67</sup> Liu Shaozhou's speech at the Second Congress of the Comintern, Second Congress of the Communist International, Vol 1, P 139. Xiang Qing asserts: "This speech of Liu's showed that he did not know the activities of the Party establishment in China at all." ['The Comintern and the Chinese Revolution during the Period of the Establishment of the CCP', Jindaishi yanjiu, (1980), No 4]. I believe that what Liu said was not purely fictitious, and we should not deny it arbitrarily, but instead, should try harder to find more historical evidence about "the Socialist Party".

<sup>68</sup> When Xingqi pinglun stopped publication in June 1920, its staff stated that they intended to study socialism and publish periodicals on propagating socialism and books on socialism. [Xingqi pinglun, 6 June 1920, No 53]; Afterwards, a "Social Sciences Study Society" appeared in Shanghai and the Society was located in Li Hanjun's house, which was also used as a place of the Communist group's activities ['Shen Yanbing's Recollections', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 46].

solicit Li's opinions on what name would be better for his new party: "Communist Party" or "Socialist Party", and Li's reply suggested that it should be called the Communist party.<sup>69</sup> Chen Duxiu himself wrote in an article published in September 1920 that "our party" was the "Socialist Party".<sup>70</sup> In October 1920, in a telegram to the Beijing Government He Fenglin reported: "Chen Duxiu of the Socialist Party, colluding with the Russian [Bolshevik] Party and Liu Helin, have organised a machinery workers' union in the foreign settlements [of Shanghai], and published journals to spread socialism."<sup>71</sup>

The "Social Communist Party" and "Socialist Party" have puzzled some historians. If we probe into the process by which the CCP was established, indeed we find that a number of Bolsheviks explicitly intended this process by which smaller and various communist and socialist organisations should be conglomerated, or established the Communist party step by step. Therefore, there is nothing strange about there being so many organisations with "communist" or "socialist" in their names, or there being several alternative and temporary names for the Communist Party's early organisations.

In June 1920, Voitinsky wrote in a letter: "Our task at the moment is to unify the various scattered revolutionary organisations into one centre. Qunyi Publishing House can be the core of those groups. ... In order to co-ordinate and concentrate the activities of different organisations, we are making preparation for a joint conference

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<sup>69</sup> 'Zhang Shenfu's Recollections', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, pp 220-21.

<sup>70</sup> Chen Duxiu, 'My Views on the Current Situation', Xin qingnian, Vol 8, No 1, September 1920.

<sup>71</sup> Shen bao, 16 October 1920.

of socialists and anarchists in North China.”<sup>72</sup> This indicates that Voitinsky did not intend formally to organise a purely Communist party at once.

Around this time, Vilensky, the supervisor of Voitinsky's team, came to China. As soon as he arrived in Beijing, he convened a meeting of the Russian Communists working in China on 5-7 July 1920. One topic of this meeting was to discuss the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party. Vilensky pointed out that the conditions for establishing a Communist Party in China had matured, and the participants agreed that it would be possible to convene a congress and to complete the work of founding the CCP thoroughly.<sup>73</sup> Afterwards the work of establishing the CCP was speeded up. On 19 July, a meeting of "the more active Chinese comrades" took place in Shanghai, at which Chen Duxiu, Li Hanjun and Shen Xuanlu firmly advocated the establishment of a Communist Party. Shortly they were joined by Yu Xiusong, Li Da (the latter returned from Japan in August), Zhou Fohai and others. It is claimed that the meeting in July laid the foundations for the future CCP.<sup>74</sup> Around August, the CCP was set up in Shanghai with Chen Duxiu as the secretary. Li Hanjun drafted the Party Constitution, which contains six or seven items, the main ones being "the dictatorship of the workers and the peasants and co-operative production".<sup>75</sup>

This Communist organisation in Shanghai was the founding cell of the CCP and worked as a sponsoring group of the CCP. Around the same time, a

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<sup>72</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 28. The Qunyi Publishing House once printed Xin qingnian and was located in Shanghai.

<sup>73</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 41; Yang Yunruo and Yang Kuisong, Gongchanguoji he Zhongguo geming (The Comintern and the Chinese Revolution), (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1988), p 16.

<sup>74</sup> Shevelyov, 'On the History of the Communist Party of China', Far Eastern Affairs, (1981), No 1, p 128.

<sup>75</sup> Li Da, 'Memoirs on Founding of the CCP and its First Congress', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 7.

"Revolutionary Bureau" was established in Shanghai, consisting of five members: Voitinsky and four Chinese Communists, including Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and Li Hanjun. The Bureau in Shanghai acted as a central bureau and subsidiary bureaux were set up one after another in Beijing, Tianjin and Guangzhou with Polevoy, Stoyanovich and some other members of the RCP(B) in charge.<sup>76</sup>

Yang Kuisong believes that the Revolutionary Bureau was the "leading core" which "derived from the Socialist League" and was the same thing as the sponsoring group of the CCP.<sup>77</sup> This is quite wrong. The Revolutionary Bureau must not be confused with the sponsoring group of the CCP, for the latter included all the members of the Shanghai branch of the CCP, whereas the Revolutionary Bureau and its subsidiary bureaux' leading cadres were mainly Russian Bolsheviks with a few very important Chinese Communists. The (Chinese) Revolutionary Bureau, in common with its parallel organisation - the Korean Revolutionary Bureau - was a subsidiary section of the East Asian Secretariat, and it was an organisation superior to the sponsoring group of the CCP for leading revolutionary movements in China. At any rate, it is unquestionable that there was a centre in Shanghai for directing the establishment of the CCP.

### **The Communist Groups in Other Cities**

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<sup>76</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China, 1920-1922', *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka*, (1973), No 1.

<sup>77</sup> Yang Kuisong, 'The Historical Facts of the CCP's Shanghai Sponsoring Group from the Archives of the Comintern', *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu*, (1996), No 4; in this article, Yang considers that the meeting of 19 July 1920 was a founding meeting of the Socialist League and denies there was any Communist group in Shanghai before the Revolutionary Bureau was formed.



Under the direction of the Revolutionary Bureau, the sponsoring group of the CCP took the responsibility for promoting Communist groups across China. The key members of the sponsoring group, such as Chen Duxiu and Li Hanjun, tried their best to find their personal links separately and persuaded their radical friends in other cities to set up local Communist groups.

Through Chen Duxiu's regular correspondence with Li Dazhao in Beijing, Li had kept abreast of developments in Shanghai before Chen demanded that he form a Communist group in the capital of China. When their colleague at Beijing University, Zhang Shen-fu, stayed in Shanghai in September 1920, Chen Duxiu asked him to urge Li Dazhao to set up a Communist organisation in Beijing as soon as possible. Later that month, the Beijing Communist Group was established with three initial members: Li Dazhao, Zhang Shen-fu and Zhang Guotao. All these people were members of the Marxist Research Society at Beijing University and had met with Voitinsky in the spring. Before long, Zhang Shenfu went to France, and six anarchists, Huang Lingshuang, Hua Lin, Chen Derong, Zhang Bogen, Wang Jinglin and Yuan Mingxiong, were drawn into the group. These anarchists were said to have "sneaked into" the Communist organisation in Beijing.<sup>78</sup> Some historians also cannot explain why there were so many anarchist members in the Beijing Communist Group. If we take account of Polevoy's role in establishing the Beijing group, this phenomenon will be easy to explain. Qu Qiubai in his report to the Comintern in January 1921 wrote that Professor Polevoy's group assisted Voitinsky in establishing Communist circles in

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<sup>78</sup> 'The Report of the Beijing Communist Organisation', 1921, Translated from the Archives of the CCP's Delegation to the Comintern, quoted from Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu, Vol 1, p 14.

North China.<sup>79</sup> Now we know that Plevoy was a member of the Beijing Bureau of the Revolutionary Bureau. Since he was an initiator of the Socialist League and had close relations with some anarchists in Beijing and Tianjin, it was natural for him to recruit members of the Socialist League into the Communist Group. Luo Zhanglong, who later joined the Beijing group with Liu Renjing, recalled that they (the believers in Marxism) were once on very intimate terms with the anarchists and co-operated well.<sup>80</sup> But when the group discussed the draft programme of the CCP, the anarchist members disagreed with the clause on the dictatorship of the proletariat. After an argument, Huang Lingshuang and two other anarchists withdrew from the group, but three remained, including Chen Derong. Afterwards, more former members of the Marxist Research Society joined the group.

Under the direction of the Beijing Bureau, the Beijing Group (Branch) of the CCP also acted as a centre in North China to help the formation of the Communist groups in other cities.

In April 1920, when Voitinsky's team left Beijing for Shanghai, they stopped off in Jinan, Shandong province, which was the home town of Yang Mingzhai, Voitinsky's interpreter. They talked with Wang Jinmei, Deng Enming, Wang Xiangqian and some other secondary school students, most of whom were members of the Society for the Promotion of the New Study (Lixin Xuehui) organised in the latter half of 1919, about propagating Marxism and organising a Communist organisation

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<sup>79</sup> Bulletin of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern, No 1, February 1921; quoted from Glunin, 'The Comintern and the Rise of the Communist Movement in China', Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East, p 283.

<sup>80</sup> Luo Zhanglong, 'Recollections on Some Problems of the Founding of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 200.

there.<sup>81</sup> This meeting had probably been arranged by Li Dazhao previously, because he had met Wang Jinmei during the May 4th Movement. Afterwards, Li Dazhao's Beijing Communist Group sent comrades to assist them in the work of establishing a group. From Shanghai, Chen Duxiu wrote a letter in summer 1920 to his friend Wang Leping, an old member of the GMD and a member of Parliament, who had founded a book society - Qilu Shushe in early 1920, asking him to form a Communist group in Shandong. Wang passed on those words to Wang Jinmei and Deng Enming and encouraged them to take up the work. Although Wang Leping joined the CCP, he himself was not much involved in organisational activities.<sup>82</sup> The Jinan Communist Group was founded around winter 1920 with members such as Wang Xiangqian, Wang Fuyuan, Jia Naifu as well as the above three founders. It was the second Communist group to appear in North China.

The establishment of the Wuhan Communist Group was directly initiated by the Shanghai sponsoring group. In summer 1920, Li Hanjun wrote to his friends Dong Biwu and Zhang Guoen in Wuhan, whom Li had met in Shanghai in the previous year and talked about following the path of the October Revolution to reform China completely, and asked them to organise a Communist group in Wuhan.<sup>83</sup> Around the same time, when Liu Bochui, a lawyer, stopped over in Shanghai, he was admitted into

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<sup>81</sup> Zhou Zixin, 'The Shandong Communist Group', Dangshi yanjiu (Studies of the Party History), (1980), No 2.

<sup>82</sup> Wang Leping set up the Qilu Book Society at the end of 1920 to promote the sale of progressive books in Shandong. He was later invited to attend the Far Eastern Toilers Congress as a representative of the CCP. Cf. Zhou Yangru, 'The Shanghai Communist Group', Zhu Chengjia (ed.), Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu lunwenxuan, Vol 1, p 101; Li Zhao, 'Wang Leping Should Be the Founder of the Jinan Communist Group', Renwu (Outstanding Personages), (Beijing, Sanlian Press, 1993), No 5.

<sup>83</sup> Dong Biwu, 'The Founding of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 292; Dong Biwu, Wuhan sili zhongxue jianji. Dong therefore described Li Hanjun as "my Marxism teacher".

the Communist Party and was entrusted by Chen Duxiu with responsibility for setting up a group of the CCP in Wuhan. Upon his return to Wuhan, Liu Bochui contacted Bao Huiseng, Dong Biwu, Chen Tanqiu and Zheng Kaiqing, who was a university janitor and had met Chen Duxiu by chance in Wuhan early that year, to discuss matters relating to the establishment of the Wuhan Communist Group. Sometime in autumn 1920, the above-mentioned people plus Zhang Guoen and Zhao Zijian held a meeting at which they decided to form a Communist Group in Wuhan.<sup>84</sup> Around the same time, a Marxist Study Society was formed by the same people. Later, Li Hanjun came to Wuhan to give advice and lectures to this Group.

The Soviet agents also offered assistance to the Communists in Wuhan. In the winter of that year, Mamayev and Polevoy were sent to Wuhan to do organisational work. Their tasks included establishing the Wuhan Branch of the Revolutionary Bureau<sup>85</sup> and a foreign language school. In addition, they gave instructions to the Wuhan group and encouraged them to study revolutionary theory and stressed "the Communist Party's iron discipline." They tried to enlist members of the Book Society for Benefiting the Masses (Liqun Shushe), a radical local student group, which had anarchist tendencies and was actively involved with the "new village" and the labour-learning movements, into the Communist group.<sup>86</sup> In April 1921, Lizerovitch and Maher, in the company of Huang Lingshuang and Yuang Zhenying, two anarchists, came to Wuhan,<sup>87</sup> and they further persuaded the Liqun Book Society members to join

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<sup>84</sup> Bao Huiseng, 'Recollections on the Period of the First Congress of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, pp 312-3.

<sup>85</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 35.

<sup>86</sup> Bao Huiseng, 'Some Problems on the First Congress of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, pp 373-4.

<sup>87</sup> FO 228/3211, May 1921.

the Communist group.<sup>88</sup> As a result of their joint efforts, this Society was reorganised as the Coexistence Society (Gongcun She), aiming to achieve human coexistence by way of class struggle and the dictatorship of the workers and peasants. The society's leaders, Yun Daiying and Lin Yunan, who had played leading roles in the May 4th Movement in Wuhan, later became famous Communists.

Guangzhou is an important city in South China. In August 1920, Chen Duxiu wrote a letter to Tan Pingshan, Chen Gongbo and Tan Zhitang in Guangzhou, suggesting to them that a Communist group should be set up there. Tan Pingshan, Chen Gongbo and Tan Zhitang were former students of Beijing University and after graduating, they started publication of Zheng heng in Shanghai in April, so they had kept close personal links with Chen Duxiu. After receiving Chen Duxiu's letter, they first set up the Socialist Youth League and prepared to establish a Communist organisation in Guangzhou. Unexpectedly, the course of events changed this.

In September 1920, Voitinsky sent Stoyanovich (Minor) and Perlin to Guangzhou with instructions for the establishment of a Guangzhou branch of the Revolutionary Bureau.<sup>89</sup> The two agents were first introduced by Huang Lingshuang, a member of the Socialist League in Beijing, who accompanied them as interpreter, to seven anarchists, Liang Bing Xuan, Liu Shixin and others. They soon formed a branch of the Socialist League there. Towards the end of 1920, the Socialist League branch became a Communist group. Tan Pingshan and Chen Gongbo refused to join this group, which Chen Gongbo later called "an anarchist communist party", for, "of the nine members of its executive committee, only Peslin [Perlin] and Minor were

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<sup>88</sup> 'Recollections of Yuang Zhenying', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 475.

<sup>89</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 33.

Communists".<sup>90</sup> In view of this group's anarchist inclinations, this episode of the formation of the Guangzhou Communist Group has been belittled and neglected by many historians.

In January 1921, Voitinsky and Chen Duxiu arrived in Guangzhou. At first they still held that the Marxists and anarchists "should co-operate" and "would not separate".<sup>91</sup> But the anarchist members were reluctant to obey and carry out orders from the central body, so they withdrew from the organisation. Around the spring of that year, the "true Communist Party" was organised by Chen Duxiu, Chen Gongbo, Tan Pingshan and Tan Zhitang in Guangzhou.

The Changsha Communist group's first members came from among the radical members of the New Citizen's Society including Mao Zedong, Peng Huang and He Shuheng. This Communist group was also, set up at the urging of Shanghai. During May-July 1920, while Chen Duxiu was organising the CCP, both Mao and Peng took part in the Work and Study Mutual Aid Corps in Shanghai, and they often visited Chen at his residence. Mao later recollected: "The words Chen Duxiu uttered about his beliefs made a deep impression on my mind at the turning point of my life."<sup>92</sup> On their return to Changsha, Mao and Peng Huang organised the Russian Study Society in August 1920. This plan had been contemplated several months earlier and discussed with Li Dazhao, with whom Mao kept in close contact after he left Beijing University library. The Society purchased books on the October Revolution and Soviet Russia

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<sup>90</sup> 'Report of Guangzhou Communist Party', Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji, pp 20-1.

<sup>91</sup> 'Li Changren's Recollections', Tan Pingshan yanjiu shiliao (Research Material on Tan Pingshan), (Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Press, 1989), p 408.

<sup>92</sup> 'Mao Zedong's Recollections on the Period of the First Congress of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 245.

and tried to invite some Russians from Shanghai to teach Russian. It also tried to contact Soviet representatives in Beijing.

After receiving Chen Duxiu and Li Da's letters about the developments in Shanghai, Mao set about organising a Communist group in Changsha. Later, the Shanghai sponsoring group posted its organ, Gongchan dang and some Communist documents and pamphlets to Mao.<sup>93</sup> Around late autumn 1920, the Changsha Communist Group came into existence.

### **The Overseas Communist Groups**

In addition to the Communist groups in China, similar groups were also established abroad - one was in France and the other in Japan. Neither group was an autonomous Communist organisation; both had close connections with the Shanghai sponsoring group and were organised by the people who had joined early Communist organisations in China.

Between 1919 and 1920, thousands of Chinese students went to France under a work-study scheme. Before Chen Gongpei went to France to study, he had attended the preparatory meeting to establish the CCP in Shanghai in June and even took a draft Party programme with him. Zhao Shiyan, who had been active in Beijing during the May 4th Movement, was admitted to the CCP's sponsoring group by Chen Duxiu in Shanghai before his departure to France. In the fall of 1920, Zhang Shenfu, one of the founding members of the Beijing Communist Group, came to take up a teaching post at the Sino-French University in Lyon. These three people had the task of developing Communist organisations in France and other European countries. At the beginning of

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<sup>93</sup> 'Zhang Wenliang's Diary', 27 December 1920; Gongchanzhuyi xiaozu, Vol 2, p 518.

1921, Zhang Shenfu recommended Liu Qingyang and Zhou Enlai, who were both members of the Awakening Society in Tianjin, for party membership. In spring of that year, after receiving a letter from Chen Duxiu in Shanghai, Zhang Shenfu, Zhao Shiyan, Chen Gongpei, Liu Qingyang and Zhou Enlai formed a Communist group in Paris, which remained secret until 1922 when Zhao Shiyan and Zhou Enlai founded the Youth Communist Party. Many members of this organisation later became important Communist leaders, including such people as Zhou Enlai, Cai Hesen, Deng Xiaoping, Li Lisan, Wang Ruofei, Li Weihan, Xiang Jingyu, Nie Rongzhen, Chen Yi and Li Fuchun.

In Japan there were two members of the CCP: Shi Cuntong and Zhou Fohai, who had both been involved in preparing to establish the CCP in Shanghai before they went to Japan to study in summer 1920. Shi Cuntong, who was studying in Tokyo, later got in touch with Zhou Fohai in another city for the purpose of exchanging ideas, and they also kept in correspondence with the Shanghai sponsoring group. Before the founding congress of the CCP, they did not recruit any new Party members, but established relations with several radical Chinese students in Japan, such as Peng Pai, Lin Kongzhao and Yang Zizhen. In summer 1921, Shi Cuntong helped Zhang Tailei, who had been then sent by the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern to Japan, to contact Japanese Communists.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Cf. 'The Chronological Table of Peng Pai's Life', Peng Pai wenji (Collected Works of Peng Pai), (Beijing: People's Press, 1981), p 366. Ishikawa Yoshihiro, 'Shi Cuntong in His Youth', Toyoshi Kenkyu, Vol 53, No 2, pp 96-7.



Other sources suggest that some CP groups were also set up in Tianjin, Nanjing, Xuzhou, Henan and Hong Kong before July 1921.<sup>95</sup> However, there is not enough available evidence to prove their existence.

#### **Section 4. The Founding of the Chinese Socialist Youth League**

The Chinese Socialist Youth League (SY) groups were sometimes considered as Communist groups for they served as a reserve force of the CCP, or a Communist preparatory school. For example, Zhang Tailei's report to the 3rd Congress of the Comintern accounted the group of the SY in Tianjin a Communist organisation.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> 'Zhang Tailei's Report to the 3rd Congress of the Comintern' says that before May 1921 there were communist organisations in Tianjin, Nanjing and Hong Kong besides other cities. [Persits, 'The History of the Formation of the CCP', NAA, (1971), No 4, p 48]; while 'A Brief History of the CCP' claims that a Communist nucleus was established in Henan. These accounts do not come out of a void: a group of the Socialist Youth League (SY) was organised by Zhang Tailei in Tianjin in November 1920. Xie Guangyi in his article 'New Query about the Number of Delegates to the First Congress of the CCP' [Shanghai shifan xueyuan xuebao (Academic Journal of Shanghai Normal Institute)] shows that Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu dispatched two Beijing University students, Chen Derong and Bi Desheng, to Nanjing and Xuzhou to help radical students organise the CP groups there, which later sent two delegates to the first congress of the CCP. Because of their anarchist beliefs, the two delegates left the Congress. Judging from this account and other sources, I believe that the two groups might be the branches of the SY or the Socialist League. The Henan group was probably organised by Zhao Zijian, who had joined the Wuhan group of the CCP, and was later appointed a teacher in Zhengzhou Railway Workers' School in the early 1921. Zhao once invited Li Dazhao to give lectures in the School. They recruited some railway workers into the Party. [Zhang Jiang, 'Li Dazhao and the Establishment of the Communist Organisations in Henan', Henan daxue xuebao (Academic Journal of Henan University), (1985), No 3]. According to Liang Furan's recollection, Lin Changzhi, Zhang Rendao and Li Yibao published a magazine entitled Zhen shan mei (The True, the Good and the Beautiful) in Hong Kong in 1920 and after hearing that Chen Duxiu was going to Guangzhou via Hong Kong by sea at the beginning of 1921, they went to see Chen on the ship. With Chen's encouragement they organised a group for studying Marxism. The CCP's Hong Kong branch grew out of this group later. [Yida qianhou Vol 2, p 456]. There was also a Socialist Study Society in Hong Kong, which published Feng Ziyou's 'The Past and Future of Socialism in China' in April 1920.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted from NAA, (1971), No 4, p 48.

No sooner had the Bolsheviks set out to establish the Communist Groups than they started to "enlist revolutionary and left-wing youths to organise the Socialist Youth League".<sup>97</sup> For this purpose, the Organisation Section of the Revolutionary Bureau increased their work among students, and convened a conference in Beijing of student representatives from Beijing, Tianjin, Hankou, Nanjing and other cities on 17 August 1920; and at the conference, the Bolshevik agents and some student representatives agreed on the establishment of the Socialist Youth League.<sup>98</sup> The founding meeting of the SY was held in Shanghai on 22 August 1920<sup>99</sup> and was attended by Shen Xuanlu, Chen Wangdao, Li Hanjun, Yu Xiusong, Yuan Zhenying, Jin Jiafeng and Yie Tiandi; Yu Xiusong was elected the secretary of the SY. Two Koreans named Pak and An, and a Japanese, Bansai Taro, were also present at the meeting. The Korean An was said to have just come from Russia and brought a large amount of money to Shanghai.<sup>100</sup>

The SY central group's organisation and activities were under the cover of the Foreign Languages Supplementary School in Shanghai.<sup>101</sup> Yang Mingzhai held the post of head of the School, and Yu Xiusong was its secretary. As a centre to enlist and

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<sup>97</sup> Fang Lu, 'Liquidating Chen Duxiu', quoted from Zhongguo shehuizhuyi qingniantuan chuangjian wenti lunwenji (Collected Theses on the Establishment of the Chinese Socialist Youth League), pp 4-5.

<sup>98</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China', Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka, (1973), No 1.

<sup>99</sup> 'The Report of the Chinese Delegation to the Second Congress of the Communist Youth International', quoted from Dov Bing, 'Voitinsky and the Foundation of the CCP', Feiqing yuebao (Information on the CCP, Monthly), (Taipei, 1976), Vol 19, No 5.

<sup>100</sup> Fang Lu, 'Liquidating Chen Duxiu', Zhongguo shehuizhuyi qingniantuan chuangjian wenti lunwenji, p 5. "An" might be An Pyong-chan, who was the president of the Korean Youth League founded in 1919; he was sent to Moscow to seek financial support from the Comintern, and after his return became one of the leaders of the Korean Communist Party. "Banzai Taro" is perhaps the assumed name of Yoshihara Taro, a Comintern agent.

<sup>101</sup> Li Da, 'The First of July Memoirs', Qiyi yuekan (The July First Monthly), (Beijing, 1958), No 7.

train radical youth, the School provided them with many Communist courses and books. Yang Mingzhai and Voitinsky's wife taught Russian, Li Hanjun, Li Da and Yuan Zhenying taught French, Japanese and English respectively. Nearly all the students at the School joined the SY and some were selected to study at the Communist University for the Toilers of the East in Moscow. Among them, were Liu Shaoqi, Ren Bishi, Luo Yinong, Ke Qingshi and Xiao Jinguang, who later became important communist leaders. A similar school was planned to be set up in Wuhan.

The work to rally more radical youths around the SY was also taken further by Soviet agents. Lizerovitch and other Bolshevik agents attended a conference of anarchist youth from Suzhou, Nanjing and Shanghai in the fall of 1920 and tried to convert them to Bolshevism.<sup>102</sup> Voitinsky was optimistic about the results of work among young Chinese men, for he saw that the numbers of them who had pledged themselves in writing to support Soviet and Communist principles were increasing daily.<sup>103</sup>

Soon SY branches were established in various cities. Besides Beijing, Tianjin, Wuhan, Changsha, Jinan and Guangzhou, where Communist groups already existed, Tianjin, Nanjing, Shanxi and Tangshan also set up SY groups. Some of these SY groups at first consisted of many members of the CP, and some of them also enlisted anarchists, because the standards for admission were not strict. However, most of them were said to be willing to "make great efforts to go towards Soviet-style Socialism."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> FO 228/3216, No 41, 4 December 1920.

<sup>103</sup> FO 228/3216, No 37, 6 November 1920.

<sup>104</sup> B. Shumyatsky, 'Historical Episodes of the Chinese Communist Youth League and the Communist Party', 1928, quoted from Qingyunshi ziliao yu yanjiu (Materials and Research on History of the Chinese Youth Movements), (Beijing, 1983), Vol 2.

The Comintern and Soviet agents guided the activities of the SY of China directly. In spring 1921, the secretary of the Eastern Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Comintern of Youth, Green, went to China in order to invite the Chinese SY to send delegates to the Second Congress of the Youth Comintern. He attended some meetings of the SY, reported on the situation in Soviet Russia and directed the work of the SY.<sup>105</sup> Because of his frequent attendance at the meetings of the Beijing branch of the SY, Polevoy was regarded as "a person who joined the SY in China", and he also offered money for some youths' travelling expenses to Soviet Russia.<sup>106</sup>

After Yu Xiusong, representing the SY, went to Moscow to attend the Congress of the Comintern of Youth, some of the SY's branches disbanded or stopped work, due to their heterogeneous membership and the lack of key cadres and funds. The SY was re-established in November 1921 by Zhang Tailei, who was working for the Comintern's Far Eastern Secretariat.

In the spring of 1922, Dalin, the Youth Comintern's plenipotentiary to the Far East, reached China. With Zhang Tailei's help, Dalin drafted the Programme and Constitution of the CSY, which were adopted by the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the CSY in May 1922. This Congress resolved that the CSY would join the Youth Comintern.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> 'Eastern Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Youth Comintern to the Chinese SY in Shanghai', March 1921, Qingnian gongchanguoji yu zhongguo qingnian yundong (The Comintern of Youth and the Chinese Youth Movements), (Beijing, The Chinese Youth Press, 1985), pp 37-9; Luo Zhanglong, 'Some Problems on the Founding Period of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 202; 'Guan Qian's Report', 17 March 1921, Zhongguo wuzhengfu zhuyi he Zhongguo shehuidang, p 86.

<sup>106</sup> 'Guan Qian's Report to the Beijing Government', Zhongguo wuzhengfu zhuyi he Zhongguo shehuidang, p 80.

<sup>107</sup> S. A. Dalin, Zhongguo huiyilu, 1921-1927 (China Memories, 1921-1927), (Beijing: The Chinese Sciences Press, 1981), p 59; p 95.

It can be noted from the above accounts that the groups of the CCP and the CSY which emerged in several cities around the same time were not formed spontaneously by the Chinese themselves, but organised as the result of the suggestions and guidance of the Revolutionary Bureau led by Voitinsky in Shanghai. Apparently ignorant of this fact, Hans van de Ven insists that not all Communist groups were connected to the Shanghai Centre, and he cites the Communist cells in Beijing, Sichuan, Hunan and France as exceptions.<sup>108</sup> Since I have already discussed the cases of all the above groups except the one in Sichuan, I intend only to say something briefly about the latter here.

According to "Report from the Communist Organisation in Chongqing, Sichuan", a Communist cell formed in Chongqing of Sichuan Province on 12 March 1920 and it then dispatched a four-man delegation to link up with Communist organisations in all provinces and to travel to Soviet Russia.<sup>109</sup> He Shengming and Cao Zhongbin's researches show that this report was written by the delegation from Sichuan which consisted of four anarchists while they were in Soviet Russia in 1921, and therefore, the so-called "Communist Organisation in Chongqing" was probably in reality an anarchist organisation.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, this cell grew up around Wu Yuzhang, who was said to have become a member of the Socialist League since 1919.

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<sup>108</sup> Hans van de Ven, From Friend to Comrade, pp 71-7.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Zhongguo Gongchandang diyici daibiao dahui dang'an ziliao (Archival Sources for the First Congress of the CCP), (Beijing: People's Press, 1984), p 100. An American missionary remembered that in the fall of 1920 he heard of Communists meeting in Shanghai, and one of the delegates was a school teacher from Sichuan. Barnett, My Life in China, pp 188-9.

<sup>110</sup> He Shengming: "An Provisional Assessment of 'the Report from the Communist Organisation in Chongqing, Sichuan'", Sichuan dangshi yanjiu ziliao (Historical Research Materials of the CCP in Sichuan), 1985, No 1; Cao Zhongbin: "Discussion and Analysis of 'the Communist Party' in Chongqing", Dangshi yanjiu ziliao, 1992, No 2.

As we have seen, the Socialist League was organised by the Bolsheviks. In 1922 Wu organised the Chixin Society with Wang Weizhou, who had been a member of the Koryo Communist Party and had just returned from Soviet Russia. Later, Wu with some people established in Sichuan "the Youth Communist Party".<sup>111</sup> In Chengdu, some youths such as Wang Youmu, Tong Yongsheng, Li Shuoxun and Liu Nongchao established the Sichuan Socialist League in the fall of 1921. This organisation's formation was also not the result of an isolated development. From spring 1921, these young people started to correspond with Li Hanjun, who was then in charge of the work of the CCP's sponsoring group in Shanghai. Later, at the invitation of Chen Yusheng, a close friend of Li Dazhao and a member of the Young China Association, Deng Zhongxia, Huang Rikui and some members of the Young China Association, (most of whom had joined the early groups of the Communist Party or the Society for Studying Marxism), at Li Dazhao's request, went to deliver lectures in Sichuan during the summer vacation of 1921. In the autumn of that year, Yun Daiying, who had converted to Bolshevism, also went to Sichuan. It was under Yun's direction and in accordance with the Constitution of the CSY, which was published in Xin qingnian, the organ of the CCP, that the Sichuan Socialist League was organised.<sup>112</sup> This evidence indicates that the early Communist and Socialist youth organisations in

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<sup>111</sup> Yang Angong riji, pp 32-3; 'Wu Yuzhang's Talk about the Youth Communist Party in Sichuan', Dangshi yanjiu ziliao (Sichuan People's Press, 1982), Vol 3, p 62; Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielu; Zhongguo Gongchandang diyici daibiao dahui dang'an ziliao, p 100; Wang Weizhou, 'My Recollections', Zhonggong dangshi ziliao, (1982), No 1.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Liu Nongchao, 'In Memory of Li Hanjun, - One of the CCP's Founders', Li Danyang and Liu Jianyi (eds.), Li Hanjun yanjiu ziliao ji; Shaonian Zhongguo, (October 1921), Vol 3, No 4; Wu Yuzhang, 'In Memory of Martyr [Zhao] Shiyan', Renmin ribao (People's Daily), 1962; Yang Hansheng, 'In Memory of [Li] Shuoxun', Renwu (Outstanding Personages), (Beijing, 1983), No 3.

Sichuan, without exception, also came into being thanks to the influence of Soviet Russia and the direction of the CCP's central and local organisations.

Hans van de Ven correctly suggests that "the formation of cells was not the result of all those committed to Marxism-Leninism joining a cell, ... Instead, people previously connected to each other on the basis of study-society or school ties set up a cell."<sup>113</sup> This exactly indicates that the Communist groups were organised in such a rash that they had to depend on personal links and to base the groups upon some pre-existing study societies instead of on shared Communist beliefs.

## **Section 5. Building a Bolshevik-Style Party**

Most historians of the People's Republic of China maintain that the CCP was a Bolshevik-style proletarian party guided by Marxism-Leninism from its foundation since it was under the direction of the Comintern from the outset.<sup>114</sup> Many foreign scholars have shared this assessment. But, recently a few Western scholars have proposed different views. For example, M. Meisner stresses the indigenous roots of the development of the CCP ideology, and considers that the direct influence of Lenin's doctrines upon the Chinese Communists in the early stage was negligible.<sup>115</sup> Hans van de Ven asserts that the CCP was not a Leninist Party before 1927, for he believes that the foundation of the CCP was not solely a result of the Comintern efforts to expand the forces of Communism into East Asia, and that therefore the early

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<sup>113</sup> Hans van de Ven, From Friend to Comrade, p 80.

<sup>114</sup> Zhonggong dangshi tongxun (Bulletin of the History of the CCP), (1993), No 1.

<sup>115</sup> Meisner, 'Li Ta-chao', in Hsueh (ed.), Revolutionary Leaders, p 382.

Chinese Communists lacked a concept of a centralised leadership possessing ideological authority.<sup>116</sup> Yet the historical evidence suggests otherwise.

### Seeking Unity in Thinking and Organisations

Towards the fall of 1920, the Provisional Centre of the CCP emerged out of the Shanghai sponsoring group. In November, with the help of Voitinsky, the Provisional Centre drew up a "Manifesto of the CCP" as the basis for admitting Party members.<sup>117</sup> This document claimed: "The Communist party will lead the revolutionary proletariat to struggle against the capitalists and seize political power from the hands of the capitalists, for it is that power that maintains the capitalist state; and it will place that power in the hands of the workers and peasants, just as the Russian Communist Party did in 1917." The Manifesto stressed it would be necessary to use the dictatorship of the proletariat to eliminate the system of private ownership and to create a new society according to the ideal of Communism.<sup>118</sup>

It is obvious that this Manifesto totally ignored the native conditions of China as it was articulated in Bolshevik dogma and coloured by Russian experience. Nevertheless, it became a document used for unifying the thinking of the members of the Communist groups in various places.

On 17 November 1920, on the third anniversary of the Russian October Revolution, Gongchan dang (the Communist Party) started publication as the secret formal organ of the CCP. For the purpose of Communist theoretical education, this periodical published many works and documents from Soviet Russia, such as the State

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<sup>116</sup> Hans van de Ven, From Friend to Comrade, p 2, p 56.

<sup>117</sup> Yang Kuisong and Dong Shiwei, Haishi shenlou yu damo lüzhou (Mirage on the Sea and Oasis on the Desert), (Shanghai, 1991), p 172.

<sup>118</sup> Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu, Vol 1, pp 48-51.



and Revolution by Lenin, the "Constitution of the RCP(B)", "Conditions of Admission to the Communist International" and the "Manifesto of the Second World Congress of the Communist International". The latter specially pointed out: "The Communist International has proclaimed the cause of Soviet Russia as its own." and "The question of Soviet Russia has become the touchstone by which all the organisations of the working class are tested."<sup>119</sup> In Gongchandang's first issue, Chen Duxiu declared: "Chinese workers must unite and use revolutionary methods to overthrow the capitalist class in China and abroad, and must follow the Russian Communist Party." This showed that the early Chinese Communists were determined to take the Russian path.

After setting the tune, Voitinsky left Shanghai for Guangzhou in December 1920 with Chen Duxiu, who went there to assume the post of Commissioner of Education in Guangdong Province, leaving the secretary duties to Li Hanjun.<sup>120</sup> The Party's Provisional Centre soon set up an Education Committee with Yang Mingzhai and Bao Huiseng in charge and an Labour Movement Committee with Yu Xiusong and Li Qihan in charge.

In January 1921, Fromberg, who had worked for the Eastern People's Section of the RCP's Siberian Bureau, was dispatched to China by Smurgis, the representative of the Far Eastern Bureau of the Profintern (Red Trade Union International) in Chita, and he worked mainly in Shanghai in contact with Voitinsky.<sup>121</sup> After Voitinsky went back to Russia in March 1921, Fromberg remained in China and probably took over some of Voitinsky's duties, since the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern and the

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<sup>119</sup> Degras, The Communist International, p 177.

<sup>120</sup> According to Li Da, Li Hanjun gave up the position of acting secretary and handed over the post to Li Da in March 1920. But other sources show that Li Hanjun was still in charge of the work of the Provisional centre till the Party's first congress.

<sup>121</sup> Holubnychy, Borodin and the Chinese Revolution, p 149; Huang Xiurong, Gongchanguoji yu Zhongguo geming quanxi shi, p 90.

Far Eastern Bureau of the Profintern reached an agreement to co-operate in the Far East.<sup>122</sup>

In March, a preparatory conference for the founding congress of the CCP was convened in Shanghai, with Communist groups from various cities attending. According to Zhang Tailei's report to the Comintern, there was no unified Communist organisation until the conference. A temporary programme was drafted at the meeting, which stipulated the Party's organisation and work methods, and its relations with and attitudes towards the SY, the Trade Unions and other organisations. One important purpose of this conference was to get rid of anarchists in order to purify the Party.<sup>123</sup> In addition to achieving the unity of organisations, efforts were also made to unify thinking.

### **Co-ordinated Preparation for Establishing the Communist Parties in the Far East**

In March 1921, one member of the Revolutionary Bureau, Li Dazhao, wrote:

We should form an organisation quickly. This organisation ... should be a common working people's party. Recently, our Communist friends in many countries have been eager to have a try at forming organisations, and have a leading centre - the Third International. Why don't we Chinese Communists form a big organisation quickly in order to work in concert with Communist friends in other countries?<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Kartunova, 'Internationalist Aid to the Working Class of China', Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka, (1973), No 1.

<sup>123</sup> Revoliutsionnyi Vostok (the Revolutionary Orient), (1928), Nos 4-5, pp 215-6; quoted from Qingnian gongchanguoji yu Zhongguo qingnian yundong.

<sup>124</sup> Li Dazhao, 'Organisational Training and the Reform Cause', Li Dazhao wenji, p

This article shows that Li Dazhao was overtly inspired by the Comintern and also suggests that he knew that the formation of a united CCP, with establishment of Communist parties in some other countries, was a co-ordinated action under the direction of the Comintern. As someone already in the Revolutionary Bureau, Li would have been privy to these efforts at co-ordination, even if he could only openly express them as a call to action.

In the summer of 1920, the East Asian Secretariat established the Korean Revolutionary Bureau and sent Korean Communists Yi Chun-suk and Yi Chun-grin to Japan to launch a Communist movement there. In the middle of November 1920, a joint conference of the socialists of the Far East took place in Shanghai, and it was attended by 40 Chinese delegates, 3 Koreans, 18 Japanese and one Indian.<sup>125</sup> As far as I know, Voitinsky, Kim Man-gyom, Chen Duxiu, Yi Tong-hwi, Toshihiko Sakai, Osugi Sakae, Yo Un-hyong and Huang Jiemin attended this conference or the preparatory meetings. The central theme of their discussions was the feasibility of establishing a league of Far Eastern revolutionary parties to be directed by the Comintern.<sup>126</sup>

On 12 January 1921 Izvestiia published an article entitled "The Growth of Communism in the Far East" by Vilensky, who stated triumphantly:

East Asia has laid down a foundation for an organised unification of the revolutionary work among the toilers of China, Korean, Japan, and India, i.e., among almost all Asian peoples who make up the 800 million

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<sup>125</sup> North, Moscow and Chinese Communists, p 56; Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, 90.

<sup>126</sup> Suh, The Korean Communist Movement, p 18; Beckmann & Genji, The Japanese Communist Party, p 30; Chang Kuot'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 691.

population of the East Asian continent. The conference marks the growth of communism in the Far East and the organisational shaping up of communist parties, of which the Chinese Communist Party is an example. This is a great historical event in the life of the peoples of East Asia. Let the imperialists of the world know that even without any “evil intention and participation” by Soviet Russia, the toilers find the ways and means for the struggle against their oppressors. We can only welcome them, and send our fraternal greetings to the new fighters for the cause of communism.<sup>127</sup>

Here, Vilensky attempted to conceal the roles played by Soviet Russia and the Comintern in establishing Communist parties in the Far East. But Izvestiia of 11 January 1921 revealed that the conference had decided to “establish on Siberian territory a central bureau in order to be able to carry on productive work and to conduct it in contact with the world proletariat.” This “central bureau” was, in fact, the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern in Irkutsk, which was formed in January 1921.

At the time when the CCP's preparatory conference was taking place, an ECCI member, Pak Chin-sun, was in Shanghai as a representative of the Comintern. Although it is not clear what role he played at that conference, it is certain that Pak was in charge of the work of establishing the Korean Communist Party and the Japanese Communist Party. The first congress of the Korean Communist Party (the Shanghai faction) was held in May 1921; in the same month, the newly formed Preparatory Committee of the Japanese Communist Party sent Kondo Eizo to Shanghai to attend a

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<sup>127</sup> Eudin and North, Soviet Russia and the East, 90.

Comintern-sponsored meeting presided over by Pak Chin-sen with the attendance of the Chinese and Korean Communists. In August, the Enlightened People's Communist Party was formed in Japan with Kondo Eizo as Chairman.<sup>128</sup> The co-ordinated operations in founding Communist Parties in the Far East around the middle of 1921 seemed to derive from a general plan of the Comintern. The founding congress of the CCP, according to Shumyatsky, the head of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern, was also planned to convene in May 1921.<sup>129</sup> However, it did not happen as scheduled, perhaps because the Chinese Communists had to wait for some important figures from the Comintern to arrive.

### **The First Congress of the Chinese Communist Party**

Following Voitinsky's return, the Party Provisional Centre found itself in financial difficulties. Some Communists in Shanghai had to sell their articles to contribute the Party funds. However, they still managed to continue publishing Xin qingnian and other magazines and pushed forward workers strikes. In April 1921, several meetings were held for preparing the May Day commemorative rally. But on 29 April the French Concession police made a raid upon the Party's offices in No 6 Yuyang Li in Shanghai and wrecked the plan. In view of the facts of the funds shortage and the police's raid, Li Hanjun in May convened a meeting, at which he suggested that Party activities be suspended and that either Party headquarters be moved Guangzhou or Chen Duxiu be asked to return to Shanghai.

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<sup>128</sup> Beckmann and Genji, The Japanese Communist Party, p 390; Iwamura Toshio, Comintern to Nihon Kyosanto no Seiritsu, p 105.

<sup>129</sup> 'Shumyasky's Report to the ECCI', 27 March 1921, Quoted from NAA, (1971), No 4.

Around this time, the Comintern sent two other representatives to Shanghai. Maring (Sneevliet), the secretary of the Committee on the National and the Colonial Questions of the Comintern's Second Congress and a member of the ECCI, was regarded by Lenin as a suitable person for establishing "working people's Soviets" in the colonial East. On Lenin's recommendation, Maring was dispatched to China by the Comintern as its plenipotentiary.<sup>130</sup> On 3 June 1921, he arrived in Shanghai with the deputy leader of the Indonesian Communist Party, Darsono.<sup>131</sup> Through Fromberg, Maring soon got in touch with Nikolsky, who was sent to China by the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern.<sup>132</sup> Nikolsky appeared to be Maring's assistant, because he was only a new member of the RCP. But Maring later revealed that during his stay in Shanghai, he limited himself to assisting Nikolsky to fulfil the task assigned by the Far Eastern Secretariat.<sup>133</sup>

Not long after that, Maring and Nicolsky established contact with Li Hanjun and Li Da, who were jointly in charge of the work of the Provisional Centre of the CCP. At their first meeting, Maring demanded that Li Hanjun hand in a work report and asked for a program of activities and a budget. Li Hanjun refused these demands by announcing that the CCP had not yet been officially formed and even if it decided

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<sup>130</sup> R. T. McVey, The Rise of Indonesian Communism, (Ithaca, 1965), p 76.

<sup>131</sup> J. H. Brimmell, Communism in South East Asia, A Political Analysis, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p 80; FO 228/3211, June and July, 1921. Later, Baars, who with Sneevliet "sowed Communist seeds" in Indonesia and was regarded as the No 2 of the Dutch founders of the Indonesian CP, Semaun, the general secretary the ICP, and Najoan, an important member of the ICP, also came to China for a short time. Fo 228/3211, July 1921; Saich, OFUFC, Vol 1, p 242.

<sup>132</sup> Many participants of the First Congress of the CCP recollected that Nicolsky was a representative of the Profintern, but according to Kartunova, Nicolsky was one of the staff of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern. In March 1921, the two organisations reached agreement to cooperate in the Far East, so Nicolsky probably also undertook to act on behalf of the Profintern. Cf. Kartunova, 'Unknown Participant in the First CPC Congress', Far Eastern Affairs, (1989), No 3.

<sup>133</sup> 'Sneevliet's Archive', quoted from Ye Yonglie, Zhonggong zhi chu, p 292.

after establishment to join the Comintern, the Party's relationship with the Comintern would still have to be looked into further.<sup>134</sup> In spite of this disagreement, Maring and Nikolsky suggested convening the founding congress of the CCP, and Li Hanjun and Li Da then wrote to the local Communist groups asking them to send delegates to the Congress and remitted money from the Comintern funds to them as delegates' travelling expenses.

In July, 13 delegates gathered in Shanghai. They were Li Hanjun and Li Da, the Shanghai delegates; Zhang Guotao and Liu Renjing from Beijing; Dong Biwu and Chen Tanqiu from Wuhan; Mao Zedong and He Shuheng from Changsha; Chen Gongbo and Bao Huiseng from Guangzhou;<sup>135</sup> Wang Jinmei and Deng Enming from Jinan; and Zhou Fohai from Japan. These delegates represented 53 members of the Communist organisations in China and abroad. The two main founders of the CCP, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, did not attend this important congress because they were busy with other work elsewhere. However, the Party's platform and programme outlined by Chen Duxiu was brought forward for discussion. In these Chen emphasised the following points: the leadership of the Party in accordance with democratic centralism; Party discipline; and the education and training of Party members.<sup>136</sup> These were obviously Bolshevik doctrines.

On 23 July, the First Congress of the CCP was inaugurated in a classroom of the Bowen Girls' School, and most meetings were held at the house of Li Hanjun's

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<sup>134</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, p 138.

<sup>135</sup> Bao Huiseng was not a representative of the Guangzhou group, but he was sent by Chen Duxiu from Guangzhou.

<sup>136</sup> 'A Brief History of the CCP', Wilbur and How, MRSANC, p 53.

brother, Li Shucheng,<sup>137</sup> both of which were located in the French Concession and therefore beyond the reach of the Chinese authorities.

Maring and Nikolsky, as representatives of the Comintern, were present at some of the meetings of the Congress. After setting the agenda, the delegates reported to the Congress on their work in various areas. Maring made a speech on the world situation, the mission of the Comintern and the tasks of the CCP, and he also stressed that the CCP should pay special attention to establish workers' organisations. Then Nikolsky gave a presentation on the newly founded Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern and the work of the Profintern. They also suggested that the Congress make a report to the Comintern and select a committee to draft the Party's platform and working programme. Afterwards, the main topic of the meetings was discussing these draft documents.

The basic points of the drafts were approved by all participants. A few differing views mainly focused on some tactical issues, such as: whether Party members could become government officials or Members of Parliament; whether the CCP should co-operate with other revolutionary parties, especially the GMD; and whether it was right for the Party to recruit more intellectuals. The Congress' report to the Comintern recorded: "One side firmly believed that acceptance of parliament could turn our party into a yellow party. They quoted the example the Social Democratic Party in Germany to show that when people entered parliament they gradually abandoned their principles and became a part of the bourgeoisie, becoming

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<sup>137</sup> Li Shucheng was one of the founders of Tongmeng Hui. In the Revolution of 1911 he was the Chief of Staff for Huang Xing, the General Commander at the Wuchang front, and in 1912 he became an advisor to Sun Yat-sen. During the founding congress of the CCP, Li Shucheng was in Hubei and Hunan provinces leading a struggle to drive out the military ruler of Hubei, Wang Zhanyuan, a Beiyang warlord.



traitors, and recognising the parliamentary system as the only means of struggle and work. So as not to undertake any common activities with bourgeoisie, and in order to concentrate our forces for attack, we certainly should not participate in parliament but should engage in struggle outside of it. ... The others persisted in advocating that we must link open work with secret work. If we did not believe that the state could be abolished within 24 hours, and that a general strike could be suppressed by the capitalists, then political activities were a necessity. Although opportunity for uprisings were few and far between, we had to make preparations in the meantime. We had to improve the workers' conditions, expand their outlook and lead them to take part in the revolutionary struggle and to fight for freedom of publication and assembly. The open propagation of our theories is an indispensable condition for success and the adoption of common activities with other parties and factions oppressed in parliament could bring partial success. However, we must point out to the people that it is futile to hope to build a new society within the old system, ... . The working-class must emancipate itself because it is not possible to force them to carry out revolution. ... ."<sup>138</sup>

According to Dong Biwu, this report was written by Li Hanjun and Dong himself.<sup>139</sup> Apparently the latter opinions were mainly held by Li Hanjun, for he expressed the view at the Congress that most delegates did not know political tactics, and he was later criticised as a "legal Marxist"<sup>140</sup>. His opinions were sometimes

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<sup>138</sup> Quoted from Zhongguo Gongchandang diyici daibiao dahui dangan ziliao, pp 12-3.

<sup>139</sup> 'Dong Biwu's Letter to He Shuheng', 31 December 1929 in Moscow.

<sup>140</sup> The term "Legal Marxist" was first used to criticise Li Hanjun by Communists such as Cai Hesen and Chen Tanqiu, when they were in Moscow between the late 1920s and 1930s. It is certain that they copied the term from the Russians. 'Legal Marxism' dated back as Russian political label to the 1890s.

supported by Li Da and Chen Gongbo,<sup>141</sup> but their views were rejected by most of the delegates, and later they were criticised as the "sitting on the fence" group.<sup>142</sup> However, while persisting in his views, Li Hanjun promised to abide by the decision of the majority.<sup>143</sup>

Thus, the resolutions passed by the Congress were quite left-leaning ones, which included items such as: the Party should take an entirely independent stand and only safeguard the interests of the proletariat; it must adopt the policy of attacking all other current parties, and never establish any relations with other parties; Party members should not become government officials or members of Parliament.<sup>144</sup> Such resolutions obviously neglected the tactics set out by Lenin in the theses adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern namely that the Communists should support national revolutionary or bourgeois democratic movements in colonies and backward countries; and that Communists should use all the means and methods available, combining illegal forms of struggle with every form of legal struggle in their war with the enemy; and legal means included participating in bourgeois parliaments.<sup>145</sup> Zhang Guotao later explained that most delegates had not yet seen the text of the theses on the colonial problem and only a few delegates had obtained a few rough ideas about them from Maring or from Western European Communist publications.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Chen Pan-tsu (Chen Tanqiu), 'Reminiscences of the First Congress', The Communist International, (1936), Vol 7, Nos 4-5.

<sup>142</sup> 'A Brief History of the CCP', Wilbur and How, MRSANC, p 53.

<sup>143</sup> Bao Huiseng, 'Recollections of the First Congress of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2; 'Liu Renjing's Talk', in summer 1981, recorded by Li Danyang; Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, p 147.

<sup>144</sup> Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji, Vol 1, pp 4-5; p 8.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. 'Theses on the National and Colonial Question' and 'Theses on the Basic Tasks of the Comintern', see Degras, The Communist International, Vol 1, p 139; p 143; pp 122-23.

<sup>146</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, Vol 1, p 143.

In spite of the arguments about some tactical problems, the Congress unanimously adopted the basic items of the Party Programme, which stipulated: "(1) The proletariat and revolutionary army must overthrow the state power of the capitalist class, ...; (2) To introduce a dictatorship of the proletariat until the class struggle is over and all class distinctions are abolished; (3) To destroy the system of capitalist private property and to expropriate machines, land and factories and to turn the means of production over to public ownership; (4) To ally with the 3<sup>rd</sup> International."<sup>147</sup> As to organisational principles, the Party's Platform stipulated very strict rules about Party organisation and its member recruitment: for example, the Party and its members must absolutely break with other parties and "yellow" (opportunistic) intellectuals; each Party member should attend one local branch and new members would have a two-month probationary period; all Party members must abide by Party discipline to keep Party secrets and not reveal their identity; local organisations' policy, activities and financial budgets must be subject to the supervision of the Party's Central Committee. The Party's first resolution on its working programme especially demanded that all publications whether published by central or local Party organisations should be ran by Communists and must not carry any article which run counter to the principles, politics and resolutions of the Party. It was quite possible that when drawing up these articles, certain of the "Conditions of Admission to the Communist International" were referred to, for they seem quite similar in many ways.

One evening when the sixth meeting had just begun, a stranger came into Li Hanjun's house and peeped in. Alerted to the possibility that the man might be a detective of the French Concession, Maring at once proposed that the meeting should

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<sup>147</sup> 'The First Platform of the CCP', Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji, Vol 1, p 3.

adjourn immediately and everyone must leave by separate ways. All the participants evacuated the house except Li Hanjun and Chen Gongbo, who remained there to cope with the search and interrogation by the police and detectives of the French Concession.

After this incident, the meeting place had to be moved somewhere else. At the suggestion of Li Da's wife, Wang Huiwu, a member of the SY, all the delegates except Chen Gongbo, went to Jiaxing - a small town near Shanghai - by train the following day, and held the last meeting on a houseboat on the South Lake. At this meeting, the delegates passed the Party's Platform and the working programme, and elected persons to form a Provisional Central Executive Bureau of the Party. The result of the vote was: Chen Duxiu, general secretary, Li Da in charge of propaganda and Zhang Guotao in charge of organisation; while Zhou Fohai was selected to act on behalf of Chen Duxiu until Chen returned to Shanghai. The Congress was then closed and the CCP was formally born.

When talking about the CCP's first congress, Chen Duxiu commented that "the first Party platform was drawn up in the light of Lenin's ideas on party-building and the Bolshevik Party's organisational principles, and it was therefore a good one, more revolutionary than the platforms of other parties in European countries."<sup>148</sup> Chen Tanqiu also said that the first congress had decided to adopt the Bolshevik party's organisational principles and experience to organise the CCP.<sup>149</sup>

However, this is not to say that the CCP emerged as a full-blown Leninist structure at first, and that there was no opposition within the Party to totally imitating

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<sup>148</sup> Pu Qingquan, 'What I Know about Chen Duxiu', Wenshi ziliao, (1980), No 71, p 33.

<sup>149</sup> Chen Pan-tsu, 'Reminiscences of the First Congress', The Communist International, (1936), Vol 7, Nos 4-5.

the model of the Bolshevik party. We may have noticed that this congress did not resolve to join the Comintern. According to "A Brief History of the CCP", this was due to the "opportunistic current of thought at the Congress".<sup>150</sup> Obviously, this passage mainly referred to Li Hanjun's position.

Li Hanjun was the first important CCP founder who dared to question the rightness of Bolshevism and the authority of the Comintern. In February 1921, Li and Chen Duxiu began a dispute over a draft Party platform sent by Chen to Shanghai, in which Chen advocated a more centralised Party leadership, whereas Li preferred a more democratic one. In Li's opinion, an overly centralised central committee of the Party would lead to the dictatorship of the Party leader. At the first congress Li still insisted on this view. Moreover, Li Hanjun held that applying Marxism to practice at different times and in different countries would bring forth various forms; for example, its manifestation in Russia was Bolshevism, which was dictatorial, and in Germany it was democratic socialism. He suggested that the different systems should be examined and one which would be more suitable to national conditions should be chosen. As to the Party's relationship with the Comintern, Li considered that the CCP alone should assume the responsibility of developing the Communist movement in China, with the Comintern doing nothing but helping; the CCP could accept theoretical guidance from the Comintern and act in accordance with it, but should not depend upon Comintern subsidies to carry on the Party's work; the representatives of the Comintern must not be considered as anything more than advisers.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Quoted from Wilbur and How, CNSAC, p 53;

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Li Da, 'The Foundation of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol 2; Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the CCP, p 138, pp 145-6; 'A Brief History of the CCP', in Wilbur and How, CNSAC, p 53; Bao Huiseng, 'Recollection of the First Congress of the CCP', Yida qianhou, Vol, 2.

Nevertheless, the existence of different opinions within the CCP did not mean that the early CCP was a loose organisation only consisting of former "friends" without ideological identity, as Hans van de Ven has asserted. On the contrary, the CCP tried to purify its organisation and define its ideology by purging dissenters and criticising other opinions at a very early stage. Li Hanjun was excluded from the leading centre of the CCP soon after the First Congress. Before long, some other founding members, who held independent ideas, or had different views from Chen Duxiu, such as Li Da, Chen Wangdao, Shen Xuanlu and Shao Lizi, also left the Party. Chen Tanqiu pointed out that around the time of the Party's First Congress, the CCP unified its thinking by fighting against "legal Marxism" as well as anarchism and guild socialism, thus laying a foundation for Bolshevising the Party.<sup>152</sup> Although the CCP did not join the Comintern for a while, all its activities and work were conducted on the general instructions of the Comintern's Far Eastern Secretariat and direct guidance of the Comintern agents.<sup>153</sup> In sum, the First Congress made the CCP embark on a path towards becoming a Bolshevik party.

## **The Second Congress of the CCP**

In June 1922, before its 2nd Congress, the CCP's Central Committee issued its "First Manifesto on the Current Situation", which declared that the Chinese proletariat's urgent task was to "act jointly with the democratic party to establish a

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<sup>152</sup> 'Chen Tanqiu's Speech at the Celebration Meeting of the 15th Anniversary of the Founding of the CCP in Moscow', Zhonggong dangshi ziliao, (1982), No 3; Peng Shuzhi also wrote that after the First Congress of the CCP, "the newly born Party's general inclination was to go in the direction of the Bolsheviks." Peng Shuzhi xuanji, Vol 1, p 53.

<sup>153</sup> 'Riutin's Report to the Eastern Department of the ECCI, 20 May 1922', GLZDC, Vol 1, p 88.

united front of democratic revolution ... to liberate the Chinese people from a dual yoke - the yoke of foreigners and the yoke of powerful militarists in our country - a war which is just as urgently needed as it is inevitable." We may remember that at the Party's 1st Congress a majority of the delegates took a harsh stance and rejected the suggestion to unite with the democratic party - the GMD, and intended to wage a pure proletarian revolution in China. Why was there a great change in basic tasks and tactics within one year? One view is that it was a result of the fact that the Chinese Communists by then had a more sound understanding of China's particular conditions and they themselves had adopted the tactics set by Lenin. In fact, it was the First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East, which was inaugurated in Moscow on 21 January 1922, that brought about this change. At this Congress the Comintern leaders, Zinoviev and Safarov clearly expounded Lenin's theory on revolution in the colonies and backward countries, and appealed to the Far Eastern peoples to wage national democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism with the aid of the Russian and Western proletariat. Safarov specially pointed out that the first task for the CCP was to liberate China from the yoke of foreign powers, to overthrow Dujun (the local military heads of provinces), and to establish a democratic republic. Lenin himself did not attend the Congress, but he received the representatives of the CCP and the GMD, hoping that the two parties could co-operate in the national democratic revolution in China.<sup>154</sup> In April 1922 Chen Duxiu called the CCP's important cadres together to discuss the gist of the First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East and on 23 May he wrote an essay claiming that the CCP should form a united front with the GMD, anarchist organisations and other parties in labour movement. Later Chen admitted

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<sup>154</sup> Huang Xiurong, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming guanxi shi, Vol 1, p 110.

that this First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East's resolutions on democratic revolutions in Eastern countries encouraged the CCP to make its new programme.<sup>155</sup> According to Saich, the stress at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Comintern on the need for the Communist parties to break out of their isolation and to try to become mass parties was of importance to later policy towards China. The CCP's shift in emphasis on the United Front came about not only through the discussions with Maring before his departure to Moscow in spring 1922, but also from pressure by Dalin.<sup>156</sup>

The Party's Second Congress was held in Shanghai in July 1922. The delegates to this Congress were not elected by the local branches, but were appointed by the centre of the Party. The more prominent among them were those who had just returned from abroad, and therefore were better acquainted with Bolshevik principles. The Party Constitution adopted by this Congress stressed Bolshevik organisational principles: strict, highly centralised and disciplined organisation and training within the Party. This Congress unanimously resolved to participate in the Comintern and to become one of its sections, which brought the Party under complete Comintern control. In consequence, the CCP would obey all decisions made by the Comintern. In such a way, the Party was pulled into Russian waters. The 2nd Congress worked out the Party's maximum programme and minimum programme. While insisting that its aims were to establish the dictatorship of the labourers, to abolish the system of private ownership and to realise a Communist society, the CCP made clear its immediate aims were to overthrow the feudal rule of the warlords and to end the

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<sup>155</sup> Li Yanqi, 'The CCP's Early Views on Its Relations with Other Parties', Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu, 1997, No 6, p 36; 'Chen Duxiu's Remark about the West Lake Conference and the GMD-CCP Co-operation', 10 December 1929, GLZDC, Vol 2, p 340.

<sup>156</sup> Saich, OFUFC, Vol 1, p 93, p 111.



oppression of international imperialist powers. The Congress also passed a resolution "On the Democratic United Front", which stated that the CCP prepared to establish a united front with democratic party - the GMD - and democratic Parliament members during the democratic national revolution.

Some scholars consider that Bolshevik concepts of organisation and the united front policy were imported into China by the Comintern, and that both the drive for centralisation and the adoption of the united front policy were the steps toward the Party's Bolshevisation.<sup>157</sup> Beyond any doubt, the 2nd Congress marked the CCP's more rapid development into a Bolshevik-style party.

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After a comprehensive survey of the process of the founding of the CCP, it is safe to say that it was impossible for radical Chinese intellectuals to have formed the CCP at that time without the direction and assistance of the agents of Soviet Russia and the Comintern. It is no exaggeration to say that the CCP, as Maring remarked, "was born too early and was supported too strongly by foreign means."<sup>158</sup> As a party, which was established and propped up by the Bolsheviks, the CCP naturally adopted Bolshevik concepts as its theoretical basis and organisational principles from the very beginning. It has been rightly remarked that the first wave

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<sup>157</sup> G. Benton, Bolshevising China: From Lenin to Stalin to Mao, 1921-44, (Leeds East Asia Papers, No 22), p 7; H. Gruber, Soviet Russia Masters the Comintern, (New York: Anchor, 1974), p 349 and 399.

<sup>158</sup> 'Maring's Letter to the ECCI, 20 June 1923', GLZDC, Vol 2, p 477-8. According to Chen Duxiu's report to the Comintern on 30 June 1922, only from October 1921 to June 1922, the CCP's Central Committee's expenditure amounted to a sum of 17,655 yuan, in which, 16,655 yuan came from the Comintern. GLZDC, Vol 2, p 304.

of Bolshevisation in China started from the CCP's founding period.<sup>159</sup> For the CCP to develop into a Leninist party only required a course of quantitative change, rather than a qualitative one, it is certainly incorrect to speak of the CCP as a non-Leninist Party in its first phase.

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<sup>159</sup> Benton, Bolshevising China, p 26.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ANALYSES AND CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis I have carefully examined the origins of the Chinese Communist Party and emphasised the importance of the role played by Soviet Russia and the Comintern in founding the CCP. I have pointed out that establishing a Communist party in China was a part of the Bolsheviks' general global strategy of world revolution, and of the Comintern's efforts to expand Communist forces into the Far East. The formation of the CCP was by no means a spontaneous action which Chinese radicals undertook by themselves. Rather, it was initiated and promoted by Soviet Russia and the Comintern. In other words, without the influence of the October Revolution and the endeavours of Bolshevik agents, the CCP could not have been founded at a time when the prerequisites for organising a Communist party were totally lacking in China. The rudiments of such an interpretation have been held by many other scholars in Western countries, Russia, Taiwan and Hong Kong; recently even several historians in the PRC essentially endorse this view.<sup>1</sup>

As mentioned in my Introduction, there are also several other positions which are different or partly different from mine.<sup>2</sup> In order to explain why I believe

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism; Brandt, Stalin's Failure in China; Shevelyov, 'On the History of the Formation of the Communist Party of China', Far Eastern Affairs (1981) No 1; Glunin, 'The Comintern and the Rise of the Communist Movement in China' Ulyanovsky (ed.), The Comintern and the East; Sima Lu, Zhonggong de Chengli yu Chuqi Huodong; Li Yunhan, Cong Ronggong dao Qingdang; Xiang Qing, Gongchanquoji he Zhongguogeming Guanxi Shigao.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi (The CC of the CCP'

some of those arguments are wrong and some cannot be completely accepted, I would like to make our divergence of views more clear and do further analysis here. By doing so, I also try to strengthen my own argument.

### **Section 1. On the Assumed Prerequisites for the Foundation of the CCP**

The official explanation in the PRC for the birth of the CCP is that it was established as a result of Marxism-Leninism combining with the Chinese labour movement; and that it only obtained some help from the Comintern led by Lenin. Even had there been no Comintern and no assistance from Soviet Russia, a Communist party was bound to have emerged in China eventually.<sup>3</sup> In answer to this, we must first establish whether there was a mature proletarian movement and a wide diffusion of Marxism or not before the CCP was born.

In order to demonstrate that there was a social basis and class foundation for forming the CCP, official Chinese historians have described the Chinese working class

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Institute for Study of the History of the CCP), Zhongguo Gongchandang lishi (The History of the Chinese Communist Party), Beijing, People's Press, 1991; Van de Ven, From Friend to Comrade; 'Yang Kuisong, Zhonggong yu Mo-si-ke de Guanxi (The CCP's Relations with Relations with Moscow), Taipei: Dongda Book, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Hu Sheng, Zhongguo Gongchandang de qishinian, p 19; 'The Central Committee of the CCP's Resolution on the Presidium of the ECCI's Proposal for Disbanding the Comintern', Jiefang ribao (The Liberation Daily), (Yan'an, 27 May 1943); Zhou Wenqi, 'Commentary on the Studies of the Relations between the Comintern, Soviet Union and the CCP during the Recent Decade', Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu, (1991), No 5, p 46.

entering the political arena as an awakening independent force during the May 4th Movement and playing a decisive role in achieving the success of that struggle.<sup>4</sup>

It was true that China's industry and trade made considerable progress during World War I. However, China was still in the early stage of industrial development even after the War. In 1920, national industrial output represented only 6.2% of the total gross output of industry and agriculture measured by value.<sup>5</sup> There was almost no heavy industry in China and modern factories and mills were found mainly in a few port cities. Most industrial enterprises were small in scale, often with inadequate capital resources, and their technology and equipment were usually outmoded and obsolete. In 1919, there were only two million Chinese workers, accounting for a mere 0.5% of the total Chinese population. Most Chinese workers had just recently changed their status from peasants or workers in small handicraft enterprises to industrial workers and, therefore, still possessed to a considerable extent a non-proletarian consciousness.

Most early Chinese labour organisations took the form of guilds and had strong connections with the old secret societies. Even trade unions founded during the May 4th period were actually mixed associations, consisting of factory-owners, workers, engineers and foremen. They were controlled by non-proletarian elements. As Jean Chesneaux has pointed out, many of these organisations were without any definite class basis and were far from being genuine trade unions.<sup>6</sup>

It is well known that the Chinese working class displayed its united strength by strikes during the May 4th movement, but this does not necessarily indicate that the Chinese working class already had class consciousness and political initiative. Cai Hesen pointed out that "the workers' strike in the May 4th Movement was due on the one hand to their hatred of the oppression and invasion of the Powers; and on the other

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<sup>4</sup> Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi, Zhongguo Gongchandang lishi, p 34.

<sup>5</sup> Xu Dixin and Wu Chengming (ed.), Zhongguo ziben zhuyi fazhan shi (History of the Development of Chinese Capitalism), (Beijing: People's Press, 1990), Vol 2, p 1051.

<sup>6</sup> Chesneaux, The Chinese Labour Movement, p 163.

hand, was a result of their being utilised by students and politicians.” Cai believed that the Chinese workers participated in the movement only “passively”.<sup>7</sup> Deng Zhongxia, a prominent leader of the Communist labour movement, admitted that the Chinese capitalists “supported and encouraged” anti-Japanese patriotic strikes, and that some of them even “commanded” the workers to go on strike, because the Movement was directed against their foreign competitor - Japanese capital and therefore accorded with the Chinese bourgeoisie’s self-interest and direct needs.<sup>8</sup>

Not only were there no genuine workers’ organisations or independent labour movement during the May 4th period, but even in the summer of 1920, when the CCP came into being, these circumstances remained unchanged. On August 22 Chen Duxiu remarked that “the dirty politicians played the main role and were in the limelight in most new trade unions, while most old guilds were fully monopolised by factory-owners or foremen.” Ironically, the representatives of the Comintern and Soviet Russia also took a pessimistic view of the Chinese workers’ level of consciousness, their organisations and the state of the labour movement. Vilensky and Maring in Shanghai and Markhlevsky in the North, found that the workers were not numerous and therefore did not represent an effective force; that trade unions had generally not been organised; and that the working class lacked political consciousness. In other words, there was no labour movement comparable to that found in Europe. They therefore believed that the conditions for building a Chinese labour movement were wanting and the Chinese working class could not play an important role in national political affairs in the short term.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cai Hesun, ‘The Historical Development of the CCP’, (1926), ZDBX, p 5.

<sup>8</sup> Deng Zhongxia, Zhongguo zhiqong yundong jianshi (A Concise History of the Chinese Labour Movement), (Beijing, 1957), p 8. His comment is backed by a lot of evidence. For example, Zhu Zhuowen, who was the owner of Housheng Ironworks in Shanghai, encouraged his employees to join the patriotic movement; under his influence, the Metalworkers’ Guild organised strikes. (Minguo ribao, 20 May 1919)

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Leong, Sino-Soviet Relations: the First Phase, p 17; Li Yuzhen, ‘Maring in China and His Tragedy’, Jindaishi yanjiu, (1991), No 1, p 81; GLZDC, Vol 2, p 241.

One can thus convincingly argue that, around the time the CCP was founded, the Chinese working class had not stepped upon the historical stage as an independent political force. Even several Chinese scholars have argued that, at the time of the May 4th Movement, the Chinese working class had neither worked out any guiding principles nor put forward its own class political demands; in addition, the working class organisations had not cast off their predominantly backward, primitive and spontaneous forms. Moreover the scale of the labour movements and their social influence were rather limited. It follows that it was impossible for the Chinese working class to become either an independent political force or a class-for-itself at that time.<sup>10</sup> All of this is contrary to what many supposedly authoritative Chinese historians have asserted. I can therefore confidently state that, under such circumstances, the combination of the Chinese labour movement and Marxism-Leninism was impossible, due to the lack of development of the former.

As for the latter, we should examine whether there was widespread dissemination of Marxism-Leninism in China. Despite the fact that Marxism was introduced into China at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Marxist influence was for a long time rather weak compared with some other socialist schools of thought. Although several intellectuals became interested in Marxism during the May 4th period, there were nearly “no Marxist converts in a genuine sense”.<sup>11</sup> At that time there was no such term as “Leninism”, although some of Lenin’s doctrines had been introduced into China.

Li Dazhao, who is normally recognised as the “first Marxist in China”,

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Chen Chuanhai and Xiu Youli, ‘On the Leading Force of the May 4th Movement, Shehui kexue pinglun (Social Sciences Reviews), (1989); Wang Xueqi and Zhang Jichang, ‘Re-consider the Viewpoint that the CCP Was the Product of the Combination of Marxism-Leninism and the Chinese Labour Movement’, Hangzhou daxue xuebao (Journal of Hangzhou University), (1989), No 9; Zhang Jingru and Jiang Xiuhua, ‘The May 4th Movement Was Not the Beginning of the New Democratic Revolution’, Dongyue luncong (Dongyue Tribune), (1989), No 5.

<sup>11</sup> Luk, The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism, p 34.

believed that establishing a socialist system had to rely not only on a change of material conditions but also had to use moral principles and human sympathy to persuade people to abandon evil and do good.<sup>12</sup> Li used Kropotkin's theory of "mutual aid" to reinterpret the Marxist theory of class struggle. He claimed that, for revolution, both Marx's idea of class struggle and Kropotkin's idea of mutual aid were necessary.<sup>13</sup> If even Li Dazhao's knowledge of Marxist theory was at this level, one can imagine the deficiencies of the other founders of the CCP.

Around this time, Chen Duxiu's ideas were in confusion. In December 1919 Chen still held that China should follow the example of Britain and America and put democracy into practice.<sup>14</sup> In February 1920, he claimed that his new belief was Christianity, for it was "a religion of love" and "the Gospel of the poor".<sup>15</sup> Until spring 1920, Chen Duxiu still considered that Marx's historical materialism, Kropotkin's mutualism, Darwin's evolutionism and Malthus' population theory were all "aspects of the truth", and that "there was no universally applicable truth".<sup>16</sup> This indicates that Chen did not believe solely in Marxism even just before he started to organise the first Communist group. Talking to Edgar Snow in 1936 about his state of mind after the May 4th Movement, Mao Zedong reminisced that "my mind was a curious mixture of ideas of liberalism, democratic reformism and utopian socialism."<sup>17</sup> Liu Shaoqi admitted frankly that, when he joined the SY in 1920, "I only knew socialism was good, knew of Marx and Lenin, knew of the October Revolution and the Bolshevik Party; but I did not understand what socialism was."<sup>18</sup> According to Deng Yingchao, Zhou Enlai's wife, during that time the members of the Awakening Society

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<sup>12</sup> Li Dazhao, 'My Marxist Views', Xin qingnian, May 1919. \* It was said the publication of this issue was actually delayed.

<sup>13</sup> Li Dazhao, 'Class Competition and Mutual Aid', Meizhou pinglun, 6 July 1919.

<sup>14</sup> Chen Duxiu, 'The Basis for Democracy', Xin qingnian, Vol 7, No 2.

<sup>15</sup> Chen Duxiu, 'The Christian Religion and the Chinese', Xin qingnian, Vol 7, No 3.

<sup>16</sup> Chen Duxiu, 'Malthus' Population Theory and China's Population Problem', 1 March 1920, Duxiu wencun, Vol 1, p 285.

<sup>17</sup> Snow, Red Star over China, pp 148-9.

<sup>18</sup> Liu Shaoqi xuanji (Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi), (Beijing: People's Press, 1985), p 485.



in Tianjin “did not have any firm beliefs, and did not understand what Communism was”; what they knew was that Communist society was “the most ideal society”, “the October Revolution had succeeded thanks to Lenin, and their revolution had liberated the majority of the oppressed and had created a classless society.”<sup>19</sup> Bao Huiseng, also remembered: “During the founding period, we only had a limited knowledge of Marxism. The majority of our comrades did not learn Marxism-Leninism until they became members of the CCP.”<sup>20</sup> Li Da said later that in the early 1920s the Chinese Communists hardly knew any theory, and what they had was only a political inclination. Moreover:

During the period of the founding of the CCP, only a few people had read the works of Marx and Lenin, because there had not been enough time for us to study these classical works. On the whole, the theoretical preparation for founding the CCP was not adequate.<sup>21</sup>

Even the Russian advisers complained about the ‘immaturity’ of the Chinese Communists as far as their understanding of Marxist theory was concerned.<sup>22</sup>

This situation was in marked contrast to that found in Europe, where the socialist movement was long established and Marxism had been studied deeply before the foundation of the Marxist parties. Thus the usual model was for Marxist ideological activity to occur prior to the setting up of socialist or communist organisations. Judging from the process of the CCP’s establishment, we can find an interesting phenomenon - it was the organisation that determined ideology, as Dirlik

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<sup>19</sup> Deng Yingchao, ‘Recollections of the May 4th Movement’, Wusi yundong huiyilu, Vol 1, Beijing: People’s Press, 1979, p 75.

<sup>20</sup> Bao Huiseng, ‘Recollections of the First Congress of the CCP’, Yida qianhuo, Vol 2, p 313.

<sup>21</sup> Li Da, ‘The Ideological Struggles During the Founding Period of the CCP’, Yida qianhou, Vol 2, p 53.

<sup>22</sup> Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, pp 119-120.

correctly suggests:

Understanding of Marxism was not a precondition for Party membership, ... what was essential to begin with was 'belief' in Bolshevik goals and methods. ... The ideological presuppositions of the Party were articulated in the very process of its organisational formation.

In other words, the CCP "was the condition for the emergence of Marxism as an identifiable alternative in Chinese socialism."<sup>23</sup>

This interpretation can be confirmed by the fact that most Marxist Studies Societies were only set up after the formation of the Communist groups and that most Chinese translations of Marxist writings and Lenin's works were available only after they were printed by the CCP's sponsoring group and the East Asian Secretariat of the Comintern.

At that time, the material conditions for the realisation of the Marxist socialist programme were lacking in Chinese society. The Chinese radicals had no experience of living in a large-scale industrialised society. Hence it could be said that the social environment and the backward mode of production restricted the Chinese radicals' ability to understand abstruse Marxist theories, especially the theories dealing with the nature of commodities in capitalist society. Frankly admitting the complete lack of theoretical preparation for the foundation of the CCP, Chen Duxiu said to Zhang Guotao in summer 1920 that there were no fully-fledged Marxists, only some students of Marxism who would simultaneously put into practice what they were studying when starting to organise a Communist Party in China.<sup>24</sup>

Recently, some Chinese scholars have made comments on the early Chinese Communists' level of Marxist knowledge which are more objective and less

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<sup>23</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 251; p 9.

<sup>24</sup> Chang Kuo-t'ao, The Rise of the CCP, Vol 1, pp 101-102.

influenced by official ideology. In their opinion, these intellectuals had not become Marxists, most of them had not properly completed their conversion from radical democrats to Communists, and therefore could only be called “intellectuals with Communist tendencies”. Likewise, most of the so-called Communists were merely people who advocated Bolshevik revolution, intended to follow the Russian way and therefore joined the Communist organisation.<sup>25</sup>

From the above, we can see that before the foundation of the CCP in the summer of 1920, there was no widespread diffusion of Marxism-Leninism, nor even a group of intellectuals who had grasped Marxism-Leninism correctly. Hence there was by no means a coming together of Marxist-Leninism and the labour movement.

In view of these facts, some Chinese scholars such as Wang Xueqi and Zhang Jichang suggest that such a combination occurred only after the Party’s foundation.<sup>26</sup> This means that the fusion was not a prerequisite for founding the CCP, rather it was a direct outcome of it. This interpretation seems more convincing.

In a sense, the fusion of Marxism-Leninism with the labour movement needed to be achieved by intellectuals with Communist tendencies. With regard to the interrelations between Marxism-Leninism, the labour movement and radical intellectuals, Dirlik believes that it was the growing attraction to labour, the labour movements and the consciousness of the people that “forced on Chinese radicals the realisation that socialism was of immediate relevance to their society”, and “predisposed them to the Bolshevik message.”<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, Schwartz remarks, in contrast to Dirlik’s arguments: “A close reading of the writings of Chen

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<sup>25</sup> Wu Guo’an and Gao Jun, ‘The Development and Peculiarities of Studies of Modern Chinese History’, Dangshi yanjiu yu jiaoxue (Studies and Teaching of the CCP History), (Fuzhou, 1991), No 1; Han Lingxuan, ‘Some Issues about Intellectuals with Communist Tendencies’, Jindaishi yanjiu, (1983), No 2.

<sup>26</sup> See their article ‘Reconsider the Viewpoint that the CCP was the Product of the Combination of Marxism-Leninism and the Labour Movement’, Hangzhou daxue xuebao, (1989), No 9.

<sup>27</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 260; p 263.

[Duxiu] and Li [Dazhao], does not suggest that the rise of a Chinese proletariat was itself an important factor in their conversion. It would be more correct to say that Leninism turned their attention to the proletariat rather than that the proletariat turned their attention to Leninism. ... their concern for the deplorable living conditions of the Chinese industrial workers after 1920 was not genuine.”<sup>28</sup> Historical evidence suggests that Schwartz’s reasoning is sounder than Dirlik’s. In addition to Communist ideology, the Bolsheviks’ direct encouragement and direction and the Comintern’s financial support were also responsible for the intellectuals’ radical turn towards the working class and their involvement in the early labour movements.

The establishment of the Secretariat of the Labour Organisations marked the beginning of the labour movement led by the CCP and was regarded as the real start of the alliance of Marxism-Leninism and the labour movement as well. Nevertheless, Maring, who had organised the Secretariat, drafted the declaration for it and financed it with Comintern funds, admitted in 1923 that “it is a Secretariat without real labourers.”<sup>29</sup> The above evidence demonstrates that the state of the labour movement led by the Communists did not improve much even after the CCP’s birth.

In sum, the birth of the CCP was not an outgrowth of the combination of Marxism-Leninism with the Chinese labour movement, because there was neither a mature proletarian movement nor a wide diffusion of Marxism and the self-declared prerequisites - the class foundation and the theoretical basis - for forming the CCP did not exist in China.

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<sup>28</sup> Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao, p 25.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Maring’s Letter to the ECCI, 20 June 1923’, GLZDC, Vol 2, p 478.

## **Section 2. The CCP's Birth Was Brought about by Soviet Russia and the Comintern**

One may ask: if there were no such prerequisites for organising a Communist party in China at the time questioned, how could the CCP have been established in 1920-21? I agree with Dirlik's comment that there was nothing "spontaneous" either about the conversion to Marxism, or about the organisation of the Party.<sup>30</sup> The more probably conclusion is that the CCP's premature birth was brought about by Soviet Russia and the Comintern, whose propaganda and organisation activities were strengthened after the spring of 1920.

This is not a new viewpoint. However, for a long time, works taking this position have not substantiated with sufficient reliable historical documents to confirm the role played by Soviet Russia and the Comintern. Making the widest possible use of newly-published former Soviet documents, Chinese and British archives, and other available sources, my thesis provides much detail about what the Bolsheviks did to establish the CCP. Several findings and explanations may make new contributions to this field of study.

First of all, I have tried to set the origins of the CCP against the big picture of the world as a whole, and to examine its international background. Obviously, the foundation of the CCP was not an isolated Chinese event, and it was closely related to the October Revolution in Russia, the Bolsheviks' general global strategy of world revolution and the Comintern's efforts to expand Communist forces into the Far East. There is no doubt the CCP was only one of the Communist parties promoted by the Comintern during 1919-1922. Therefore, one distinguishing feature of this thesis is to examine the origins of the CCP as an integral part of the whole international Communist movement. Only by such an approach can we explain many of the events

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<sup>30</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of the Chinese Communism, p 258.

that happened in China in this period. A Russian historian, A. V. Pantsov, pointed out at the International Academic Conference on the History of the Revolutionary and National Liberation Movement in China, which was held in Berlin in October 1998, that the first phase (1918/19-1922) of the Bolsheviks' policy over China was based on Trotsky's drive for a universal dictatorship of the proletariat, China included.<sup>31</sup>

Of course, as Russia's largest neighbour, China also became one of Soviet Russia's major targets in the East because of its important position in the latter's consideration of geopolitics. As part of the Bolsheviks' pursuit of state self-interest, their revolutionary strategy was closely connected with Soviet Russia's foreign policy of allying itself with adjoining Asian countries in order to reduce the pressures from the imperialist powers and to break the diplomatic deadlock. Its ultimate aim was to turn the colonies of imperial powers into reserves and support for Soviet Russia. China was being used by Japanese troops as a base for invading Siberia, and the Chinese government, too, was sending its own troops to join the Entente intervention from 1918. So it was imperative for the Bolsheviks to frame a preliminary policy towards China not long after the October Revolution, with the aim of building a friendly relationship with the Chinese government and creating a revolutionary China.

Contrary to the widely accepted view that after the October Revolution hardly any Soviet and Comintern agents were dispatched to China until the spring of 1920 when the blockade of the Sino-Soviet border lifted,<sup>32</sup> my research shows that as early as the spring of 1918, agents from Soviet Russia arrived in China and started recruiting there. From then to 1921, agents of Soviet Russia and the Comintern were numerous and varied: they were not all pure Bolsheviks as many historians have imagined, but also included Mensheviks, anarchists and even former Tsarist officers; in addition to Russians, various other nationalities also engaged in work in China, for example, former prisoners of the First World War, former Chinese labourers in Russia and

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<sup>31</sup> 'International Academic Conference on the History of the Revolutionary and National Liberation Movement in China', Far Eastern Affairs, 1998, No 6.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. First three footnotes in Chapter 2.

Communists from some European and Asian countries. In order to conceal their true identities and as a cover for their secret activities, many of them had different overt professions, such as journalists, scholars, teachers, businessmen and tailors. Therefore, these agents were not easy to identify. Several leading Bolshevik bodies, centres and working institutes, for example, the East Asian Secretariat of the Comintern, the Yurin Legation of the Far East Republic of Siberia, the office of Shanghai Life and the Beijing branch of the Rosta, were formed in China for the purpose of directing the activities of the agents and the Chinese revolutionary movements, and to conduct propaganda and organisational work. These agents and bodies were subordinate to the different organisations of the RCP(b), the Comintern, the Red Army, the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, the Cheka and the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia, etc.. In spite of the fact there were sometimes conflicts among these organisations, their representatives sometimes worked together in China for their common cause. Maybe this is the first work to have given much detail relating to Soviet and Comintern agents and their organisations in China during 1918-22.

A newly-published collection of documents - Far Eastern Policy of Soviet Russia (Collection of Documents by the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(b) Central Committee, Siberia Revolutionary Committee and Others (in Russian, compiled by M. P. Malishva and V. R. Poznansky, published in Novosibirsk, 1996) - provides supporting for my thesis. M. Persits, in his book review of this collection, writes that “the right to carry out communist work in Russia’s neighbouring countries in the East was contested by many a party, state and Comintern organisation, as well as by their numerous representatives. ... Everyone wanted to be a party to the creation of an eastern front for the global revolution that seemed just around the corner. ... despite the rivalry, communist work advanced satisfactorily, ... .”<sup>33</sup>

Many scholars have focused their attention on Bolshevik agents’ contact with

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<sup>33</sup> Persits, “A New Collection of Documents on Soviet Policy in the Far East in 1920-1922”, Far Eastern Affairs, 1997, No 5.

Chinese “progressive elements”, who later took part in the Communist movement.<sup>34</sup> In fact, before the arrival of the agents, there were no Communists or Marxists in China at all. Even Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu’s conversion to Marxism and Bolshevism was mainly the result of persuasion by Soviet agents. Contact was not confined to the above category of Chinese; the scope and targets were quite wide-ranging. This thesis shows that in order to achieve their various goals, Bolshevik agents also came into contact with Chinese belonging to various factions with widely differing political beliefs, party affiliations, and various social strata. For a period of time, they regarded any Chinese who were opposed to the Japanese as being their friends and even tried to establish relations with warlords. Such contact started not long after the first group of Soviet agents appeared in China. Thus, it is quite wrong to suggest, as some historians have done, that there was no direct contact between the Bolsheviks and the Chinese revolutionaries until the spring of 1920.<sup>35</sup>

As for their connections with the Chinese nationalists, my study shows that the Bolsheviks’ attempts to form an alliance with Sun Yat-sen and his party started in 1918, prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Comintern, the moment when Lenin formally proposed the Comintern’s policy of supporting bourgeois revolutionaries’ national liberation movement in colonial countries. The purpose of this was to attract the GMD to the common struggle against the imperialist powers, to oppose the Pro-Japanese Beijing Government’s participation in the Allied intervention in Siberia and to help them create a pro-Soviet Chinese government. B. A. Elleman’s

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<sup>34</sup> Huang Xiurong, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming guanxi shi, p 53; Xue Xiantian and Li Yuzhen, ‘The Communist Organizations of the Chinese Residents in Russia and Some Issues concerning the Establishment of the Communist Party in China’, Jiandaishi Yanjiu, (1989), No 5.

<sup>35</sup> Xiang Qing, Gongchangguoji yu Zhongguogeming Guanxi Lunwenji, p 81; Huang Xiurong, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming guanxi shi, p 53.



recent research comes to the same conclusion as mine, which stresses that the United Front policy was originally adopted prior to the foundation of the CCP, and that Maring's contribution to the United Front was merely to persuade the Chinese Communist leaders to adopt this pre-existing policy.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, my thesis shows that the Bolsheviks did not limit their dealings with the Chinese nationalists only to encouraging a national liberation movement. At this early stage the Bolsheviks also endeavoured to persuade several nationalist leaders, including Sun Yat-sen himself, to take the lead in forming a socialist or Communist party which would then be subordinated to the Comintern. The documents of the RCP(b)'s local organisations in Siberia suggest that, sparing no efforts or resources, the Bolsheviks really tried to exert influence on the more active members of the growing national liberation movement in the hope that it might eventually head towards socialist revolution. Perhaps because the GMD had not followed the Bolsheviks in this, the Comintern Far Eastern Secretariat was eager to "take on the leadership of all the [Chinese and Korean] opposition elements" by means of "infiltrating [Communists] into those nationalist revolutionary organisations to carry out organic work there." The Russian scholar Persits believes that this Trojan horse tactic by which Communists joined the GMD, cannot be totally credited to Maring, and it "had its origin in the depths of the Comintern Far

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<sup>36</sup> B. A. Elleman, 'Soviet Diplomacy and the First United Front in China', Modern China, 1995, No 4.

Eastern Secretariat, way back in late 1920.”<sup>37</sup> In the final analysis, this tactic was only one of the methods which was creatively used to realise Lenin’s strategy in the East.

Generally speaking, not enough attention has been paid to Soviet propaganda in China between 1919 and 1921 and its scale has been underestimated. Some scholars have hardly even been able to find any evidence of Bolshevik propaganda before the summer of 1920.<sup>38</sup> My study reveals that the focus of the Bolsheviks’ propaganda in China in its first stage was to the anti-imperialist movement, especially the anti-Japanese movement, and so it contained scarcely any elements of Communist ideology; it was not so much propaganda as agitation before 1920.

Around 1920, the Bolsheviks launched an intensive propaganda campaign in China and made use of various media, methods and channels to publicise their principles and ideology. At first, they mainly conducted oral propaganda, directing certain Chinese intellectuals individually or in groups; later, their agitation and propaganda expanded to workers, soldiers, as well as students. In order to extend Soviet Russia’s political influence, the Soviet news agency set up branches in several cities in China, which regularly supplied news and publicity free of charge to the Chinese and foreign press. For the sake of disguising the source of their propaganda, the Bolsheviks used very flexible tactics: they enlisted some Chinese to

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<sup>37</sup> Far Eastern Affairs, 1997, No 5.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Xiang Qing, ‘The Comintern and the Chinese Revolution in the Period of the Foundation of the CCP’, Jindaishi yanjiu (1980), No 4; Luk, The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism, pp 33-4.

help with propaganda work; they made use of several Chinese journals to serve their own purposes and created and subsidised some new magazines; they even established some printing houses in China to print large quantities of books and pamphlets for distribution there. Moreover, the Bolsheviks also obtained socialist and Communist publications from other countries by the means described earlier and used them as propaganda materials in China. Most of the above facts have hitherto been ignored.

The arrival and publication of the Karakhan Manifesto in China aroused among the Chinese masses a sentiment of friendship for Soviet Russia. In consequence, Soviet Russia's call for national liberation and the Bolsheviks' interpretation of imperialism, which simplified the explanation of China's affliction by attributing it to foreign aggression, attracted more and more Chinese. In addition, many Communist publications not only contained works by Marx, Engels and the Bolshevik leaders, but also included many articles which portrayed Soviet Russia as a fair socialist society. This encouraged the belief that Soviet Russia was a successful example of national regeneration and therefore that China also needed a socialist revolution of the Bolshevik type. Those were the main reasons why Chinese public opinion suddenly inclined to praising Soviet Russia; and why many radical intellectuals were attracted to Bolshevik theory and practice around this time.

It is generally acknowledged that the May 4th Movement was a turning point in the Chinese modern history and a very important event in the run-up to the

founding the CCP; the date 4 May 1919 was even regarded by someone as “marking the birth of the CCP”.<sup>39</sup> Having carefully re-examined the whole May 4th Movement (in a broad sense, it lasted from 1917 to 1921 as Zhou Tse-Tsung argues).<sup>40</sup> I have found that this movement, especially its later part, was made good use of by Soviet Russia. As I have written in some preceding chapters,<sup>41</sup> since opposing the Japanese was an important strategic aim of Soviet Russia in the Far East, from 1918 numerous agents (including former POWs) in China did their best to carry on anti-Japanese agitation, propaganda and even incited Chinese to boycott Japanese goods.<sup>42</sup> Some Chinese intellectuals who had already worked for the Communist cause tried to rally radicals around themselves and to form several societies which played an important role in the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. After the patriotic demonstration of 4 May 1919, several important Bolshevik agents approached Chinese student activists and mass organisations which emerged as part of the Movement in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai, and attempted to manipulate them by attending their meetings or talking with their leaders individually. Mao Zedong pointed out that the emergence of the May 4th Movement was “a response to the call of the October Revolution and of Lenin.”<sup>43</sup> Although his comment cannot be treated seriously, I have every reason to say that even if Soviet and

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<sup>39</sup> A Brief History of the CCP, in Wilber and How, CNSAC, p 43.

<sup>40</sup> Tse-Tsung Chow, The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1960).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Chapters 1-5.

<sup>42</sup> Therefore, a British official report of August 1919 pointed out “there is a Bolshevik element in the anti-Japanese agitation.” FO228/ 3211.

<sup>43</sup> Mao Zedong xuanji, Vol 2, p 693.

Comintern agents did not initiate the May 4th demonstration, they at least gave an impetus to this Movement in order to attain their own goals.

The official view of the PRC is that the May 4th Movement prepared large numbers of cadres for the formation of the CCP. This is quite true. My study demonstrates that it was mainly from among those activists and organisations with close connections who had Soviet and Comintern agents during the May 4<sup>th</sup> period that a batch of radicals emerged who later became the key members of the Communist party. That is why A Brief History of the CCP states that the two forces formed in 1919 “were properly utilised by the true revolutionaries who joined the Communist movement as individuals for the purpose of organising an embryo for the future Communist Party.”<sup>44</sup>

Among various socialisms which were prevalent during the May 4th period, Dirlik especially singles out anarchism, which he considers “pervaded radical thinking on social and cultural change.” He also points out that the Chinese anarchists “participated directly in the initial efforts toward the founding of the Party.”<sup>45</sup> The above phenomena have recently been noticed by more and more scholars both in China and abroad.<sup>46</sup> The issue is how to explain them.

Hardly any historians have considered that there was direct co-operation between Chinese anarchists and the Bolshevik agents. But allying with

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<sup>44</sup> Wilber and How, CNSAC, p 43.

<sup>45</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 3, p 10.

<sup>46</sup> Lu Zhe, Zhongguo wuzhengfuzhuyi shigao (Draft History of Anarchism in China), Fuzhou: Fujian People's Press, 1990; Scalapino & Yu, The Chinese Anarchist Movement.

organisations of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists abroad to promote world revolution was one tactic of the Bolsheviks, because they believed that these organisations were more revolutionary than the social democratic parties belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> International. Without exception, the Bolshevik agents sought Chinese anarchists' help in China and persuaded those who believed in anarcho-Communism to undertake revolutionary and communist propaganda. For example, the newly published Russian and Comintern documents collection reveals that a pamphlet for distribution among Chinese soldiers, formerly considered as pure anarchist agitation, was actually written by a Chinese anarchist who worked for the East Asian Secretariat.<sup>47</sup> Failure to see this is perhaps the main reason why several scholars have mistaken Bolshevik propaganda for simple anarchist agitation.<sup>48</sup>

With the aim at uniting more radical youths with anarchist inclinations, Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, who had already committed themselves to organisation work for the Communist cause, supported and sponsored the Work and Study Mutual Aid Movement. This started at the end of 1919 and spread to many cities in China and abroad. Numerous radicals who later joined the CCP, such as Mao Zedong, Yu Xiusong, Zhao Shiyan, Shi Cuntong and Chen Gongpei, actively took part in the movement and became members of the Work and Studies Mutual Aid Corps. Chen Duxiu once said to Chen Gongpei and others: "It is for Communism and the CCP that we organised the Work and Studies Mutual Aid Corps."<sup>49</sup> This not only reflected what communism was in their eyes - working, studying and living together and sharing

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<sup>47</sup> GLZDC, Vol 1, p 31.

<sup>48</sup> Fang Qingqiu, 'Some Issues on Mutinies under the Rule of the Beiyang Warlords', Lishi dang'an (Historical Archival Materials), (Beijing 1982), No 1.

<sup>49</sup> Ma Lianru, Zhongguo Gongchandang chuangshilu (The Founding of the CCP), Beijing: The Chinese Social Press, 1991, p 131.

common property; but also revealed their plan - to organise a Communist Party by drawing radical youths into quasi-communist organisations. Later, Bolshevik agents also suggested to anarchists that they form a Socialist League with Chinese Communists. The anarchists of this League and of some other anarchist groups were encouraged to embrace Bolshevism and to participate in the CCP.

With regard to the process of forming the CCP, most historians in the PRC consider that it was Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu who took the initiative to form the CCP and their organisational activities only gained some help from Voitinsky's group in 1920.<sup>50</sup> It is clear from the analysis of early articles by Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu that their thinking was in a confused state during 1918-20. In Chapter 6, I noted the evidence that they started their organisational activities (which led to the formation of the CCP) after they had received instructions from Bolshevik emissaries. This indicates that the CCP was by no means voluntarily initiated by the Chinese on their own accord.

It may have puzzled many people as to why there were manifold Communist and socialist organisations in China during 1919-21. I have highlighted evidence which shows that Voitinsky was not the sole Bolshevik emissary entrusted with the task of setting up a Communist party in China. Other Soviet and Comintern agents, including Korean Communists, also attempted to help different Chinese radical groups to establish Communist or socialist organisations and parties in China and to provided them with financial support. The Socialist League, the Oriental

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<sup>50</sup> Hu Sheng, Zhongguo Gongchandang de qishinian, p 19. The most textbooks on the history of the CCP published in PRC hold the similar view.

Communist Party ( evolved from the Datong Party), the Zhina Communist Party (based on anarcho-communist organisations including the Truth Society) and the so-called Social Communist Party all belonged to this category. As a result, more than one Communist party appeared in China. In spite of the fact that some of these organisations were just formed to serve as a stopgap, some really helped to lay the foundations for establishing the CCP.

Unable to distinguish such efforts behind the scenes, most historians could not deal with such diverse courses and processes of party-forming action. Facing these complicated cases, some students just do not admit that there was any possibility of there being Communist organisations and parties other than the CCP in China;<sup>51</sup> some, who acknowledge the existence of these organisations and parties, insist that they were formed spontaneously by the Chinese themselves without relations with the Comintern and the RCP(b);<sup>52</sup> others assert that these organisations could not have existed simultaneously.<sup>53</sup> Scholars with the above views may have not recognised what tactics the Bolsheviks used in organisational work in China during

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<sup>51</sup> Cao Zhongbin: "Discussion and Analysis of 'the Communist Party' in Chongqing", Dangshi yanjiu ziliao, 1992, No 2.

<sup>52</sup> See Yang Kuisong, 'Some facts about the early Communist organisations in China', Dangshi yanjiu ziliao, 1992, No 4. I have to point out that this article contains many mistakes. For example, he writes that the Datong Party was started by Yao Zuobin in Beijing in September 1921.

<sup>53</sup> For example, Ren Wuxiong denies the existence of the Marxist Study Society in Shanghai in early 1920, because he found some new material showing that there was a Socialist Study Society around that time; and he also believes that the Socialists' League was once the name of the Communist Party and, the Party changed its name to the Social Communist Party only after the League's disbandment. See 'The Socialist Study Society Established by Chen Duxiu in 1920' and 'Inquiry into the Socialists' League', Dangshi yanjiu ziliao, 1993, No 4 and 6.



this time. The Bolsheviks tried to establish more parties and organisations in Eastern countries, even fake ones, to make a show of strength, to support Soviet Russia and to carry out revolution under the leadership of the Comintern. Some front or peripheral organisations were used not only for allying and uniting more revolutionaries with varying beliefs, but also for concealing the core organisations - Communist parties and their activities- from being discovered. Therefore, the process of party-formation cannot be seen as a straight line. It had offshoots, in which organisations might overlap each other or, one might contain another. In any case, Comintern agents played a determining role in establishing these Communist organisations. There are therefore no grounds for saying that the CCP emerged out of a number of autonomous Communist organisations or that its foundation was not dependent on the efforts of Comintern agents, contrary to what Yang Kuisong and Hans van de Ven still insist.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, since the establishment of the CCP was closely linked to the formation of Communist organisations and parties in Korea and Japan, my research demonstrates the co-ordinated efforts to form parties in the Far East under the unified leadership of the Comintern. This may help us understand why there existed socialist leagues involving alliance between anarchists and the Bolsheviks both in China and Japan and why several Koreans and Japanese reportedly attended some meetings to discuss the formation of the CCP and CSY. This confirms that the foundation of the CCP was merely an integral part of the Bolsheviks' global efforts. A memorandum from the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(b) to the Party's Central Committee (dated 4

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<sup>54</sup> See Yang Kuisong's Zhonggong yu Mo-si-ke de guanxi, 1920-1960 (The CCP's Relations with Moscow, 1920-1960), (Taipei, Dongda Books, 1997) and other works; van de Ven mainly expresses this view in his From Friend to Comrade.

December 1920) reveals that the Comintern Far Eastern Secretariat was painstakingly forming Communist groups in China and Korea by sending agents to do clandestine study-group work, and disseminating Communist propaganda among the general public.<sup>55</sup>

By giving so many details about several so-called Communist parties and organisations, clarifying their relationship to the early CCP, and relating the establishment of the Communist parties in China to the establishment of other Communist parties in the Far East, this thesis provides a more comprehensive picture of the background and process of the establishment of the CCP.

As a result of the Bolsheviks' direct guidance and financial support in the establishment of the Party, the CCP decided to follow the Bolsheviks' principles. From examining the Party's manifesto and program, and its early activities, I conclude that the CCP was built along Leninist lines in respect of political doctrines and organisational principles. As Liu Shaoqi pointed out, since the CCP was established after the October Revolution when the Bolsheviks had succeeded, "there was already a living model; therefore, the CCP was built under the guidance of the Comintern according to Lenin's principles from the very beginning. ... [It] was not influenced by the Second International of European Social Democratic parties, either ideologically or organisationally. ... Since its foundation, our Party carried out criticism and self-criticism, maintained well-organised Party organisations and strict disciplines, did not allow the existence of the inner-Party factions, and strongly denounced liberalism within the Party, the tendency of independence of

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<sup>55</sup> Far Eastern Affairs, 1997, No 5.

trade unions and economism, etc., ... [Those factors] enabled us to build a Leninist party from the outset.”<sup>56</sup> The view that the building of the CCP followed the Bolshevik Party’s example from the start was widely held by relevant historians.<sup>57</sup> Chen Yongfa, a scholar in Taiwan, points out in particular that a tendency to monism and exclusiveness in ideology and organisation emerged in China after the birth of the CCP.<sup>58</sup> In essence, the CCP itself was nothing more than a centralised organisation of élite, professional revolutionaries which strove for state power. This basic nature of the CCP was decided at its birth and subsequently there were only differences in the degree of Bolshevisation it experienced.<sup>59</sup>

As a result of my research it is quite clear that Marxism-Leninism and the labour movement were not significant factors in drawing Chinese radicals into the Communist movement, whereas a major reason why a Communist force emerged and grew in strength was that Bolshevik agents brought to Chinese radicals the organisational principles of Bolshevism and were directly involved in the task of organising the CCP.

There are a number of reasons why several scholars have held different positions from mine: some of them did not fully utilise the ample primary materials which exist. These include Russian, Chinese, English and other countries’ archives, to which they might have been unable to gain access or which have simply been ignored

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<sup>56</sup> Liu Shaoqi, ‘On the Struggles within the Party’, Liu Shaoqi xuaji (Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi), (Beijing: Peoples Press, 1981), Vol 1, pp 185-6.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Zhang Jingru’s Zhongguo Gongchandang de chengli (The Founding of the CCP) and Luk’s The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism.

<sup>58</sup> Chen Yongfa, Zhongguo Gongchan geming qishinian (70 Years of the Communist Revolution in China), Vol 1, p 67.

<sup>59</sup> As for the so-called “Bolshevisation” movements in the late 1920s, I believe that it was because the Comintern and the new CCP leaders felt that the earlier CCP was not “Bolshevised” enough or they attempted to depreciate the achievements under the leadership of Chen Duxiu, who was not so tractable as the Comintern expected.

so far. Some historians hold certain political stances or are/were in particular situations, which could not allow them to entertain explanations other than ideologically coloured views. In other cases, although scholars have mastered most of the historical materials used by me in the preceding chapters, they still explain events wrongly, because they know that something was so, but not why it was so. With the exception of causes resulting from lack of materials or from political positions, a reason for those who deny the important role played by Soviet Russia and the Comintern in the establishment of the CCP is, in my opinion, that they are unable to see the wood for the trees, to grasp the essence behind the appearance. It is to say that they failed to relate the establishment of the CCP to the general strategy of Soviet Russia and the Comintern, and failed to distinguish the tactics employed by the Bolsheviks.

### **Section 3. Other Reasons Why Bolshevism Took Root in China**

While the major circumstances and main reasons for the establishment of the CCP have been made clear, various questions have still been left unanswered. For example, in addition to direct Comintern intervention, were there any other factors which prompted Chinese radicals to be receptive to the Bolshevik model? Why was Bolshevism, as a foreign ideology, able take root in the soil of China? To put it abstractly, what internal causes facilitated the external intervention?

We know that whether an organ transplant succeeds or not mainly depends on the affinity that exists between the donor and the recipient. If there is such an affinity, a transplant will take; if conditions are otherwise, the transplant will be rejected. On the basis of this analogy, we can suggest that it was the similarities between Russia and China that made the transplant possible. Lenin pointed out: "In very many and very essential respects, Russia is undoubtedly an Asian country and, what is more, one of

the most benighted, mediaeval and shamefully backward of Asian countries.”<sup>60</sup> As a huge Asian country, China’s basic national conditions were similar to Russia’s: in both countries peasants constituted the great majority of the population (about 83% in Russia and over 90% in China); economic development was backward (China was even more backward than Russia); and after a long period of despotic rule a legacy of autocracy remained. Since there was no democratic tradition or effective democratic system in either country, social contradictions and conflicts of interest could not easily be settled by compromise and adjustment, and were prone to burst into sharp clashes and acute struggles. People who could not find a way to carry out social reforms were thus compelled or inclined to resort to illegal, extreme methods. Under such economic and social conditions, exacerbated by despotism and tyranny, the consciousness of personal autonomy could not develop and human rights were ignored; the broad mass of the people was inclined to inertia and passivity and their love of a strong leader or a “great saviour” made coercive and manipulative methods possible. Bolshevism, which itself was a product of despotism in Russia, was easily able to take root in the similar soil of China.

Several Chinese radicals argued that since Russia had many similarities with China, Bolshevism could be adapted for dealing with the problems of the Chinese revolution. Li Da opined: “Russia is a peasant country and China is also a peasant country, it is possible that the Chinese revolutionary movement will adopt the direct action of Sovietism.”<sup>61</sup> Mao Zedong’s friend Peng Huang said that “the national conditions, industrial state and the national character of China are quite similar to Russia’s, therefore, Russian Bolshevism can be practised in China.”<sup>62</sup>

Hardly anyone fails to see that such similarities were an important factor in the successful transplant of Bolshevism into China. Other internal factors also have to be

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<sup>60</sup> Lenin, ‘Democracy and Narodism in China’, Collected Works, Vol 18, pp 163-4.

<sup>61</sup> Li Da: ‘Discussing Socialism and Questioning Liang Rengong’, Xin qingnian, (8 April 1921), Vol 9, No 1.

<sup>62</sup> Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao, No 2.

taken into account. Recently, more and more scholars, while recognising the significance of Comintern intervention, have paid serious attention to the indigenous roots of Chinese Communism.<sup>63</sup> However, their views are quite different from the official explanations that the combination of Marxism-Leninism and the labour movement was the major reason for the birth of the CCP. Some of the reasons they have enumerated are valid, but others are, in my opinion, mistaken, for they sometimes take results for reasons.

It is commonly, and I believe correctly, argued that the bitter antipathy felt by the Chinese for the status quo facilitated their receptivity to the Bolshevik message. In the period in question, China fell into dire straits, doubly afflicted by domestic malaise and foreign invasions. The Revolution of 1911 did not lead to the building of a genuine republic in China. The Parliament existed in name only. State power fell into the hands of former officials. Worse still, China was immersed in chronic, tangled warfare between rival warlords, who were backed by different imperialist powers. Everything went in the opposite direction from the wishes of the Chinese people: the political and social situation showed no improvement, and people's living conditions were even worse than before. Faced with a deep crisis, the whole country was in a state of ferment, which Sokolsky described in terms of China being a "tinder box".<sup>64</sup>

Intellectuals were particularly sensitive to the situation. In 1919, Chen Duxiu expressed the radical intellectuals' rancour over the situation: "Darkness will hem us in from all sides in these days of international powers, political horrors, the crime of private wealth, the darkness of war, the inequality of classes, ... ." <sup>65</sup> Li Dazhao pointed out: "Contemporary life is a life in prison. Our world, our nation, our society and our family are different levels of prison which confine us, locks that deprive us of

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. B. Schwartz's Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao, M. Meisner's Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, Yang Kuisong's Haishishenlou yu damolūzhou and Hung-yok Ip's 'The Origins of Chinese Communism - A New Interpretation', Modern China, 1994, No1.

<sup>64</sup> Sokolsky, The Tinder Box of Asia, p 4.

<sup>65</sup> Chen Duxiu, 'What Should We do?', Xin qingnian, Vol 6, No 4, 15 April 1919.

freedom”.<sup>66</sup> Li Hanjun believed that the whole of Chinese society had been tied tightly by the old system, old laws and old morals and had become a “dead prison”; and therefore, it must be completely destroyed and then entirely rebuilt.<sup>67</sup> The young Mao Zedong also wrote: “At present, the condition of our nation is terrible, the bitterness of human existence is intolerable, and society is in its darkest state.”<sup>68</sup> The domestic crises in politics and economics and the foreign menace to Chinese territorial sovereignty encouraged the development of radical sentiments to challenge the status quo.

Moreover, the Chinese intellectuals’ antipathy towards the status quo was also fuelled by their discontent with their own fate. After the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905, Chinese intellectuals were deprived of the traditional social status of “Shi” (the scholar-gentry), which had made them an integral part of the ruling apparatus in late imperial China. Under the new education system, the students’ place in the political or even social arena was no longer assured. Yu Yingshi describes this as the marginalisation of the intelligentsia in Chinese society and believes it was an important reason for the radicalisation of China.<sup>69</sup> Among ordinary intellectuals, those whose families declined in wealth and position were more prone to radicalisation. Zhou Enlai, Zhang Tailei, Qu Qiubai and many other radical intellectuals who later became Communists can be included in this category. For example, Qu Qiubai admitted that he belonged to “the status of the bankrupt Shi”, and when he reached Beijing to study, his family was reduced to poverty. He thus “became free from responsibility, [and]... rushed around like a blind fly seeking a way

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<sup>66</sup> Li Dazhao wenji, Vol 2, p 10.

<sup>67</sup> Li Renjie (Li Hanjun), ‘We Must Reform Thoroughly and Completely’, Jianshe (Construction Monthly), (Shanghai, January 1920), Vol 1, No 6.

<sup>68</sup> Mao Zedong, ‘The Great Union of the Masses’, Mao Zedong ji (Collected Works of Mao Zedong), (Hong Kong, 1975), Vol 1, p 57.

<sup>69</sup> Ying-shih Yu, ‘The Radicalization of China in the Twentieth Century’, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol 122, No 2, Spring 1993.

out for his living.”<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese intellectuals’ traditional consciousness of their social responsibilities, which was similar to Russian populism and the Bolshevik concept of revolutionary elitism in certain respects, inclined a part of the intelligentsia to become the first radical critics of a corrupt society. Having seen that China was on the brink of disorder and collapse in many respects, the radical intelligentsia believed that social reconstruction was urgently needed.

Desperate diseases require desperate remedies. Chinese intellectuals believed that the most pressing task was to find a way to rescue China from hell and remould it. There seemed to be no disagreement on the necessity of transforming China. The problem was how to do it and which way to go. Most radical intellectuals believed that the problems of the day could not be solved by traditional thinking and China must not follow the old road any longer. During the May 4<sup>th</sup> period, various ideas introduced from the West were discussed and several programmes for social transformation were put forward and even practised. Yet, the point at issue is still which idea or programme was the most important factor in making the Chinese receptive to Communist ideology and the Bolshevik way.

It is well-known that the famous slogan in that era was to advocate “Mr De (democracy) and Mr Sai (science)”. Hung-yok Ip believes that “The May 4<sup>th</sup> passion for democratic values - liberty and equality - contributed to the popularity of socialist ideas, the first stage in the intellectual process that eventually led some radicals to Communism.”<sup>71</sup> Gu Xin argues that the so-called “Mr De” was not “democracy” but “the doctrine of the common people” - a concept of populism, which was quite different from Western democratic values. He attaches more importance to the role of populism in the Chinese radicals’ conversion to Marxism and the Bolshevik idea of “the dictatorship of the workers and peasants”.<sup>72</sup> Gu’s viewpoint obviously derives

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<sup>70</sup> Qu Qiubai wenji, wenxue bian (The Literary Writings of Qu Qiubai), Vol 1, p 24.

<sup>71</sup> ‘The Origins of Chinese Communism - A New Interpretation’, Modern China, 1994, No 1.

<sup>72</sup> ‘From “the Doctrine of the Common People” to “The Dictatorship of the Workers



from the works of Meisner, who writes that Li Dazhao's populist views were "ready-made for the adoption of Leninist phraseology". For instance, Meisner points out that Li always used the expression "vanguard of the mass movement" to express the significance of the intelligentsia, which "clearly reflected the influence of Bolshevik doctrines." But he thinks that "there is little reason to believe that Li's general emphasis on the role of consciousness and the importance of the intelligentsia was derived from Lenin."<sup>73</sup> If one takes into account Li's early connections with Soviet agents, it is not surprising that he might have held some views conceived by Russians. However, Dirlik notes that there was no distinct line between populism and anarchism during the May 4<sup>th</sup> period, and stresses that the majority of those who turned to Bolshevism after 1920 went through an anarchist phase. He therefore argues that anarchism "served as a 'midwife' to Marxism".<sup>74</sup> Since I have already discussed at length how the Bolsheviks made use of the Chinese anarchists and anarchism in their organisational and propaganda works, his inference, albeit impressive-sounding, is drawn from insufficient observation and analysis, and is therefore a lopsided view. Regardless of all the different views discussed above, all scholars believe that there was a "potential predisposition" in favour of socialism which led radical Chinese to adopt Bolshevism.

Socialism seemed not unfamiliar to Chinese people, who could find similar thoughts in the teachings of the great Chinese thinkers of both ancient and modern times. For example, Confucius said: "Don't worry about poverty, worry about inequality. ... Distribute wealth equally, and there will be no poverty"<sup>75</sup>; in the Han Dynasty, an article appeared entitled "Datong Pian" (On Great Harmony), in Confucius' name. In this article the author depicts a society of harmony and concord, in which everyone devotes themselves to public service; people form fraternal

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and Peasants": Populism in May 4<sup>th</sup> period and the Origins of Marxism in China', Dongya Jikan (East Asia Quarterly), Taipei, 1999, No 1.

<sup>73</sup> Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, p 202.

<sup>74</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 3.

<sup>75</sup> Lun yu (The Teachings of Confucius), Chapter 16.

relations; all people, whether old, young, sick, disabled or childless, enjoy welfare; there is only public property and no personal property;<sup>76</sup> a Taoist text Taiping jing (Scripture of Great Peace) attacked the social and economic inequalities of its time and advocates radical reforms; in modern times, Kang Youwei wrote the Datong shu (Book of Universal Concord), in which he conceived of a great harmonious society. According to him, in such a society, there is no difference between the rich and the poor, all people are equal and enjoy freedom; there are also no barriers between races and countries. Hence, the whole of humanity will be united in a single civilisation and will live in universal peace and harmony.<sup>77</sup> The idea of social equality was also a common demand of the peasantry. “Kill the rich and succour the poor” and “Equalisation of lands” were the slogans of many Chinese peasant uprisings under successive imperial dynasties. The programme of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in the Qing Dynasty was “Being equal and even everywhere, there is food and clothing for all”.

Numerous Chinese intellectuals who were under the influence of traditional egalitarian thinking and yearned for universal harmony were therefore readily receptive to socialist ideas. Since China had not gone through the stage of large-scale industrial production and a fully social division of labour, what they could embrace was the idea of economic equality, which was an idea that the backward small-scale peasant economy easily encouraged. Sun Yat-sen explained his Principle of People’s Livelihood as “to make the wealth of society equal among the poor and the rich, and not to permit the rich to oppress the poor.”<sup>78</sup> The Chinese anarchists believed that private ownership was the origin of all social evils, so if “all goods produced are placed in public places and owned by all people, the behaviour of encroaching on others’ properties will disappear.”<sup>79</sup> Even the understanding of socialism by some

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<sup>76</sup> Li yun', Li ji.

<sup>77</sup> Kang Youwei's Datong shu is written in 1901-02.

<sup>78</sup> Sun Zhongshan quanji, Vol 3, p 37.

<sup>79</sup> Tianyi bao (Tokyo), No 1 and No 6.

people who later became Communists did not go beyond these bounds. Chen Duxiu at one stage believed that socialism was the same thing as Confucius' idea of "distributing wealth equally and impoverishing no-one".<sup>80</sup> Li Da also wrote: "Socialism, in sum, has two striking slogans: one is to redress economic inequality; the other is to reinstate human beings' status of real equality."<sup>81</sup> C. J. Friedrich and Z. K. Brzezinski also acknowledge the relationship between traditional Chinese culture and communist ideology.<sup>82</sup> Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng go so far as to assert that it was the interaction of Western ideas and the traditional doctrines of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism that led to the Chinese Communists' acceptance of Utopian ideas.<sup>83</sup>

Undoubtedly, the predisposition towards and the yearning to realise socialism brought the Chinese to look favourably on Russia's socialist revolution, since that flew the banner of eliminating exploitation and of realising social equality. The October Revolution also had a strong appeal for the Chinese people because it seemed to confirm the idea that capitalism could be rejected and social revolution more easily be carried out in backward countries. As some radical Chinese believed: "The October Revolution indicates that even when material civilisation is not advanced, it still cannot hinder the realisation of socialism."<sup>84</sup>

However, what Chinese intellectuals at first took interest in and discussed were various schools of socialism, including anarchism, syndicalism, guild socialism, democratic socialism, Marxism and Bolshevism. Although many of them sympathised with the cause of the Bolsheviks, few of them were willing to follow the Russian

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<sup>80</sup> Chen Duxiu, 'On Suicide', Xin qingnian, 1 January 1920; 'Malthus' Population Theory and China's Population Problem' 1 March 1920, Duxiu wencun, Vol 1, p 285.

<sup>81</sup> Li Da, 'The Aim of Socialism', Minguo ribao's Supplement, Juewu (Awakening), 19 June 1919.

<sup>82</sup> C. J. Friedrich and Z. K. Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship & Autocracy, New York: Praeger publishers, 1965, p 106.

<sup>83</sup> 'Idealism and Utopia', Ershiyi shiji (The 21st Century), Hong Kong, 1995, No 2.

<sup>84</sup> Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao (Report on the Affairs of the New Citizens' Study Society), (Changsha, 1921), No 2.

example of going through a violent social revolution. Before the summer of 1920, the idea of a peaceful social transformation prevailed among the intellectuals who later became Communists. For example, at the end of 1919, Chen Duxiu stated that he did not want to see class struggle take place and in the following spring he showed interest in the fraternity of Christianity; in Xin chao in 1919 Tan Pingshan expressed his fear that if Bolshevism spread in China it would bring disaster since the Chinese people were uneducated and he therefore proposed promoting social democracy in order to prevent a Russian-type revolution; in Xiangjiang pinglun Mao Zedong called for a “revolution without bloodshed” and argued against using authoritarian power to overthrow authoritarian power. He himself actively took part in the movement for provincial autonomy and was a member of the Work and Studies Mutual Aid Corps till 1920. Like Mao, most radicals who later joined the CCP, such as Yun Daiying, Qu Qiubai, Deng Zhongxia, Huang Rikui, Zhou Enlai and Chen Yannian, had had anarchist leanings at earlier stages. They tried to practise Kropotkin’s mutual aid, Tolstoy’s Pan-labourism and the New Village movement started by Mushakoji Saneatsu, in order to improve the people’s spirit and way of life as viable alternative ways of avoiding the terror of a social revolution. Yun Daiying once wrote: “I believe that if I apply myself to doctrines of freedom, equality, fraternity, labour and mutual aid, then naturally, other people would be moved and society would be changed.”<sup>85</sup> In the meantime, some other moderate proposals were put forward as means to reconstruct China’s society. These included spiritual transformation, revision of the constitution, the development of industry, universalisation of education, and the abolition of the inheritance system.

However, only a few months later, the Russian way seemed to some radical intellectuals to have become the only viable method for national regeneration and to be something to be imitated. For example, in September 1920 Chen Duxiu came to

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<sup>85</sup> Yun Daiying wenji (Writings of Yun Daiying), (Beijing: People’s Press, 1984), Vol 1, p 109.

believe that class struggle was the only way to solve various social problems and to achieve socialism;<sup>86</sup> in January 1921, Mao Zedong spoke at the New Citizens' Study Society: "Russian-style revolution is a new way that can reach where no other road has reached before and this is a more feasible means [to achieve results] than other reform methods."<sup>87</sup>

Having noticed this sudden change, Luk raises the question: "If China's intellectuals were overwhelmingly opposed to class struggle and a Bolshevik type of revolution in 1919 and early 1920, then why and how did such a sizeable Communist movement come into being in the second half of 1920 and in 1921?"<sup>88</sup>

The prevalent explanations for this are that disillusionment with the failure of peaceful transformation (especially the failure of the Work and Study Mutual Aid Movement), the political emergence of labour and the result of the polemics on Marxism with anarchism and social reformism which were took place in 1920-21 inclined radical Chinese to believe in Marxism and Lenin's doctrines. In consequence of this, the CCP was established with the help of the Comintern. I do not dispute that these experiences might have played some part, but as I have made clear above, the Work and Studies Mutual Aid movement and several labour organisations which emerged after the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement were in fact deliberately promoted and utilised by the Chinese Communists and Comintern agents.

As to the theoretical polemics,<sup>89</sup> the debates between Chinese Communists and anarchists, social democrats and guild socialists started after the CCP had already been founded and had obtained the Comintern's ideological guidance<sup>90</sup> and financial

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<sup>86</sup> Xin qingnian, Vol 8, No 1.

<sup>87</sup> Xinmin xuehui huiwu baogao, No 2.

<sup>88</sup> Luk, The Origins of Chinese Bolshevism, p 35.

<sup>89</sup> Cai Guoyu discusses the polemics in detail in 1920 Niandai chuqi Zhongguo shehui zhuyi lunzhan (Polemics on Socialism in China during the Early 1920s), Taipei: Commercial Press, 1988.

<sup>90</sup> For example, around the summer of 1920, the Comintern's East Asian Secretariat appealed to radical Chinese youth arguing that the only way to save China was to

support. The CCP's provisional centre mobilised all of its resources to engage in the debates; and even the argument between Li Dazhao and Hu Shi over "Isms v. Problems" was unfolded in 1919, Li had already been in contact with Soviet agent and had participated in Communist movement as an individual. In light of those, Zhang Tailei, in his speech on behalf of the CCP at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Comintern, declared that the Chinese Communists were trying to lead young people who had been affected by anarchism and reformism in the direction of Communism.<sup>91</sup>

Although not many Chinese were convinced by Communism, and Bolshevism did not hold a dominant position in Chinese's thought in the early 1920s, the CCP's powerful and energetic ideological propaganda made non-Russian-type socialisms and other competing ideologies seem pallid by comparison. The official historians of mainland China therefore assert that the polemics secured the "victory of the truth of Marxism over various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideological trends."<sup>92</sup> However, Dirlik attributes the dominance of Marxism over non-Marxist socialisms to the "prerogatives of Bolshevik organisation".<sup>93</sup>

On the above grounds, I can say that main causes which brought about the change to Bolshevik ideology were Bolshevik propaganda and organisational activities, which were strengthened after the spring of 1920. Partly from the binding organisational force and partly out of their own political convictions, the CCP's members opted for Bolshevism.

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launch a social revolution, and that following the capitalist way could not achieve the aim of developing China's productive forces and improving Chinese people's living conditions. (GLZDC, Vol 1, p 34). At the end of 1920, Voitinsky in his speech at a meeting of the Guangzhou branch of the Socialist League talked about the theories and methods of Marx and Lenin and persuaded the branch's members to give up their anarchist ideas and to submit themselves to the Russian Communists. (Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielu, Ziyouren, Nos. 73-86).

<sup>91</sup> GLZDC, Vol 2, p 183.

<sup>92</sup> Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiu shi: Zhongguo Gongchandang lishi, Vol 1, p 47.

<sup>93</sup> Dirlik, The Origins of Chinese Communism, p 6.

In the discussion about why the Chinese “chose” socialism, some scholars suggest that the radical Chinese concern with quickening China’s pace to catch up with advanced countries was a factor.<sup>94</sup> Many radicals indeed showed their strong desire to keep China from losing its status in the world and to bypass the capitalist stage. Li Dazhao wrote that China’s economy should not be out of the scope of the world’s economic influence. The world had gone through its capitalist stage and would enter a socialist stage. China was just at the starting point. If it wanted to keep up with global development, it must advance at double speed and run industry using socialist methods.<sup>95</sup> Holding a similar view, Chen Duxiu said: “The capitalist system in many countries is going to collapse, how can China alone keep it on the excuse of special national characteristics and conditions?”<sup>96</sup> Li Da also claimed: “At present, capitalism in China is in the embryonic phase, so the suffering of the people caused by the industrial revolution is still not serious. If we can carry out our socialist revolution promptly, [China] can be brought entirely out of danger.”<sup>97</sup> Their ideas were not new. Over ten years before, Sun Yat-sen had expressed the idea that China could move from the mode of production of the Middle Ages to the socialist stage, for there would be fewer obstacles to reforming the social system in China than in capitalist countries. However, this idea was criticised by Lenin in 1912 as a petty-bourgeois “socialist” reactionary theory.<sup>98</sup>

At first glance, these Chinese Communists’ denial of the indispensable material conditions for socialism and their hopes of taking a non-capitalist road seemed quite similar to Sun Yat-sen’s idea. But, considering that they had joined the CCP, we can conjecture that their ideas possibly came from Lenin’s self-contradictory

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<sup>94</sup> Yang Huiqing, ‘Brief Discussion on the Ideas to Choose Socialism during the May 4<sup>th</sup> Period’, Henan daxue xuebao (Journal of Henan University), Zhengzhou, 1991, No 1.

<sup>95</sup> Li Dazhao, ‘Socialism in China and Capitalism in the World’, Li Dazhao xuanji, pp 356-7.

<sup>96</sup> Chen Duxiu, ‘Criticism on Socialism’, Xin qingnian, Vol 9, No 3, July 1921.

<sup>97</sup> Xin qingnian, Vol 9, No 1, 8 April 1921.

<sup>98</sup> Lenin, ‘Democracy and Narodism in China’, Collected Works, Vol 18, p 166.

claim that backward countries might develop Communism without passing through the capitalist stage through using the soviet system and with the aid of the proletariat in advanced countries. Chen Duxiu made it clear: "In Soviet Russia the Republic overthrew the feudal system only to be replaced by socialism half a year later. This is clear proof that there need not be any long interval between feudalism and socialism."<sup>99</sup> It implied that China had to follow the Russian way to socialism. In fact, the aforementioned statements by the founders of the CCP should not be seen as evidence of why the Chinese chose socialism, but rather as publicity for the Chinese Communist movement.

According to some people, nationalism, more than anything else, accounted in this presentation for the Chinese attraction to Communism from its very origins.<sup>100</sup> During the May 4<sup>th</sup> period, nationalist sentiments rose to an unprecedented height and to some extent, nationalistic concerns reinforced the Chinese attraction to socialism. The advanced Chinese, as Mao Zedong described them, "had searched for truth from the West" for nearly a hundred years. The democratic political system, sciences and technology were things the Chinese desired to learn from Western countries. But they soon found that the "teachers" always committed aggression against the country of their "students". As early as the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some intellectuals, such as Liang Qichao, found there was a big gap between the rich and the poor in the capitalist countries. World War I further confirmed the belief of many Chinese in the Western powers' cruelty, although the end of the War brought vague hopes to the Chinese, who believed that this was the victory of democracy, justice and humanity. But the Versailles treaty made the Chinese realise that the Allied Powers had no intention of applying the principle of national self-determination, which Woodrow Wilson had proposed, to China, and this shattered the faith many had had in the West. Consequently, the fundamental validity of the Western democratic political system

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<sup>99</sup> 'The Value of Commemorating National Independence', Xin qingnian, Vol 8, No 3.

<sup>100</sup> For example, such view can be seen in Chang Kuo-t'ao's The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party.



also came under suspicion.

Under these circumstances, Soviet Russia's policies, such as "peace without annexation of territory and without indemnity" and "national self-determination"<sup>101</sup> attracted more and more Chinese. During the May 4th period, with its high anti-imperialist spirit and patriotic zeal, China's enthusiasm for socialism increased. Qu Qiubai described the course of development: "The prolonged agonies suffered as a result of oppression by the imperialist powers wakened vague dreams of democracy. ... so the student movement suddenly began to incline towards socialism."<sup>102</sup> Many scholars also acknowledge that nationalism was essential for radical Chinese to respond to the Marxist-Leninist message. Meisner remarks that "nationalism was centrally involved in Li Ta-chao's response to the Bolshevik revolution and his interpretation of Marxism. ... nationalistic impulses were also very much present in the motivations of the other founders of the Communist movement in China."<sup>103</sup> Schram considers that Li Dazhao "represented the combination of the most radical Western ideas with Chinese nationalism."<sup>104</sup>

Nevertheless, as many early Communists' recollections show, it was the Karakhan Manifesto that contributed to the shift in the sentiments of radical Chinese from distrusting the Western democratic model to embracing Russian-style revolution and the socialist model. In fact, the Karakhan Manifesto itself and the Comintern agents' activities in persuading various Chinese circles and organisations to issue declarations supporting the Manifesto were also effective Soviet propaganda operations. As Odoric Wou points out: "Thanks to the influence of Marxism-

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<sup>101</sup> For the Bolsheviks, the right to national self-determination had to be subordinated to the interests of Soviet Russia. In 1923, at the 12<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, Stalin stressed: 'The right to self-determination cannot and must not serve as an obstacle to the exercise by the working class of its right to dictatorship. The former must give way to the latter.' Stalin, Works, Vol 5, p 266.

<sup>102</sup> Wusi yundong wenxuan (Selected Articles on the May 4th Movement), p 429.

<sup>103</sup> Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, p177.

<sup>104</sup> S. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1969) pp 20-1.

Leninism, Chinese nationalism gained an overtone of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism.”<sup>105</sup> After that, the Bolshevik interpretation of imperialism and their call for anti-imperialism replaced simple patriotic nationalism and strongly attracted radical Chinese. In the light of this, it is possible to make clear that without certain Soviet propaganda, pure nationalist aspiration could not have become a dynamic which led radical Chinese to espouse Bolshevism.

Among other causes, a crisis of faith during that time was also a factor which should be taken into account. Traditional Chinese thoughts, culture and customs were attacked by radical intellectuals from the New Culture Movement. Confucianism, which had dominated Chinese thinking as a political and ethical standard for over two thousand years, was the first to bear the brunt of this attack. The prevalence of iconoclasm among young intellectuals in effect signalled the fading-away of the charisma of the old elite and the disintegration of the old value system in the minds of the young. As I have discussed above, Chinese intellectuals’ faith in the democratic ideas of the West was also shaken by their experience of what they regarded as imperialist aggression and plunder. This vacuum in faith made China hardly withstand the influx of foreign thought and ideologies and inclined Chinese radicals to absorb new political ideas and to establish new beliefs. This created conditions where Marxism-Leninism could be easily embraced by Chinese radicals, rather as if it were a religious faith itself. Knowing that Marxism had been attacked on the grounds that it was a kind of religion and that the actions of Lenin and his followers bore the imprint of religion, Chen Duxiu and Zhang Shenfu both agreed that nothing could be done without some religious spirit and superstitious belief.<sup>106</sup>

Utilitarianism, that is to say, the eagerness for quick success and instant benefit, seems a cause which inclined the Chinese radicals to head toward a Russian-

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<sup>105</sup> See F. G. Chan and T. H. Etzold (eds.), China in the 1920s - Nationalism and Revolution, New York: New Viewpoints, 1976, p 111.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Zhang Songnian to Chen Duxiu’, 12 June 1921; ‘Chen Duxiu to Zhang Shenfu’, 1 July 1921; Duxiu wencun, Vol 3, p 826.

type revolution. For example, Chen Duxiu once told his friends that he intended “to use the Bolsheviks’ bold and resolute methods to carry out a revolution, in order to change the poverty, ignorance and weakness of China and to overturn its status of a semi-colony.” He asserted: “Only by that will we then have the qualifications to expect further progress.”<sup>107</sup> For him, Bolshevism was a “doctrine of succour” and the “need of the time”.<sup>108</sup> Many other early Communists who regarded Bolshevism as a weapon of action which had proved effective, also adopted Bolshevism as a panacea for China’s main social problems and the key to national salvation. Cai Hesen, who believed that the successful experience of the Bolsheviks offered a shortcut, avoiding exploratory detours, argued impatiently:

We have already had the Russian plan all worked out for us. It’s all ready-made. Why should we go looking around for some other types? Their whole scheme is all ready. It has been written out on paper for us to read, and they themselves are carrying it out in practice. Why should we waste our time on further experimentation?<sup>109</sup>

Such instrumental views of the Russian experience and this attitude of blindly following Bolshevism were quite common among the early Chinese Communists. This impatience prepared them to adopt the Bolsheviks’ drastic methods for total and thorough social transformation.

So, we can see that China was fertile soil for Bolshevism to take root in: it was not only because of the affinities between Chinese and Russian conditions, but also because of many special internal causes, including the imperative necessity of social revolution<sup>110</sup> and national liberation, indigenous ideological traditions, radical

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<sup>107</sup> Haiyu Guke, Jiefang bielu.

<sup>108</sup> Duxiu, ‘Doctrines and Ornaments’, Xin qingnian, (October 1920), Vol 8, No 2.

<sup>109</sup> Xiao Zizhang, ‘Mao Zedong’s Life in His Youth’, Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu, p 577.

<sup>110</sup> John Dunn believes that modern revolutions normally unite two components: a passage of decisive social and political destruction and a passage of social, economic, and political re-creation. T. Saich and H. van de Ven (eds.), New Perspectives on the

inclinations and some individuals' pre-occupations. Hence, the Chinese' acceptance of the Russian model was not simply a process of mechanical and passive imitation.

The various arguments above explaining why the Chinese were receptive to the Russian model and why Bolshevism could take root in China all seem plausible, but some of them are untenable. It is evident that many Chinese intellectuals who had the same or similar preoccupations with democracy, populism, anarchism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, utilitarianism, and with or without religious beliefs, or whatever other tendencies to socialism, did not accept the Russian model, and even resolutely opposed Bolshevism. Such cases were too numerous to mention individually. And it also cannot explain why in some colonies or partially colonised countries which were beset with the same sort of social and national problems as China, and whose people with same thinking as the Chinese idea of social equality, did not take the Communist road. Therefore, none of those factors could become the major and motivating drive for the establishment of the CCP.

In spite of the fact that China might have favourable conditions which made the transplantation of Bolshevism possible, the evidence analysed in this thesis invites the conclusion that, had there been no initiative or efforts from Soviet Russia and the Comintern, it could not have been successful in the early 1920s. It was mainly the Bolsheviks' efforts in propaganda and organisation that brought about radical Chinese intellectuals' conversion to Bolshevism and the establishment of the CCP. The birth of the CCP was not an inevitable outcome of China's historical development.

### Summary

From my preceding research and conclusions, people may not hard to find that the origins of the CCP and its relations with Soviet Russia is a subject worthy of

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Chinese Communist Revolution, (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995) These were just what China possessed at the time in question.

further study.

Fully employing historical materials unearthed from archives and newly-published documents and examining some historical events from various angles and with different perceptions, my thesis has made several findings concerning the establishment of the CCP which have never been dealt with before or have been neglected by many historians up to the present. Accordingly, I have offered some new explanations which may challenge several established viewpoints. Hence, this thesis sheds new light upon the origins of the CCP.

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