

Thesis

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**A RE-EVALUATION OF CHIANG KAI-SHEK'S BLUESHIRTS**

**Chinese Fascism in the 1930s**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the School of Oriental and  
African Studies of the University of London  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**DOOEUM CHUNG**

**1997**

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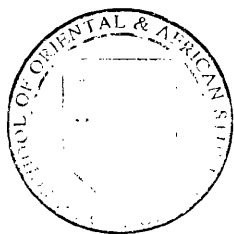
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## **Abstract**

This thesis considers the Chinese Blueshirts organisation from 1932 to 1938 in the context of Chiang Kaishek's attempts to unify and modernise China. It sets out the terms of comparison between the Blueshirts and Fascist organisations in Europe and Japan, indicating where there were similarities and differences of ideology and practice, as well as establishing links between them. It then analyses the reasons for the appeal of Fascist organisations and methods to Chiang Kaishek.

Following an examination of global factors, the emergence of the Blueshirts from an internal point of view is considered. As well as assuming many of the characteristics of a Fascist organisation, especially according to the Japanese model and to some extent to the European model, the Blueshirts were in many ways typical of the power-cliques which were already an integral part of Chinese politics. The influence of Chinese secret society traditions is also examined as an aspect that clearly distinguished them from their European Fascist counterparts.

The second part of this study will turn to the ideological development of the organisation, and to the ultimately abortive attempt to build up a mass-based organisation through the New Life Movement. At the same time, connections between the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang are analysed. Finally, this thesis looks at the apparent disbandment of the Blueshirts in 1938.

The conclusion arrived at, is that the Blueshirts may properly be described as Fascist - or an organisation with unmistakable links to Fascism. Like Fascist movements in many countries, the Blueshirts displayed the same unstable combination of adherence to highly conservative traditional values while simultaneously embracing modernism in technology, communications and new forms of social and political organisation.

Not only does this study contribute specifically to the political history of China, it also examines the development of political and military movements in the Far East in the period preceding World War Two.



## Acknowledgements

During the research and writing of this dissertation, I have acquired many debts. In particular, I am happy to acknowledge my debt to my supervisor, Dr. Rolf G. Tiedemann, whose insightful comments and invariable encouragement helped me to proceed with my work. Gratefully I acknowledge Professor Timothy H. Barrett for his advice, essential instructions, and generous support over the years. Thanks also are due to Professor David Arnold, who has inspired my research with his critical acuity. My gratitude goes to Professor Nomura Koichi and Kuboda Bunji, in Japan, who were so kind to offer me their attention to my research. I am also grateful to Dr. D. Skeel for his patience and motivation throughout the revision of this thesis.

Thanks are also due the financial support that SOAS offered me during the year of my fieldwork, which was carried out in various archives in Europe, the Far East and in the USA.

Most of all I want to acknowledge my debt to the memory of my ancestor *Chung Mongju*<sup>1</sup> of twenty one generations ago. Particularly I want to honour him as a scholar, he was a widely respected Confucianist. Furthermore, he was very pro-China, a preference my first generation grandfather also inherited from him. Although I share a similar preference towards research about China with my ancestors, due to the passage of time my ideas are necessarily different from theirs.

January 1997

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<sup>1</sup> 鄭夢周 (1337-1392). In the late Koryo Dynasty高麗 he was a well known neo-Confucian scholar and also prime-minister.

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## Note on Romanisation

How China experts survive the tortured ways of rendering Chinese into English is a small miracle of modern scholarship. Mainland China, the United Nations, and the Western news media have adopted the Pinyin style, while Taiwan and many Overseas Chinese continue to use the Wade-Giles system or variations thereof. Furthermore, the Chinese characters used in the text are given in *Fangsong fanti* 仿宋繁體 (Imitation Song Dynasty style type of characters).

For consistency, I have reluctantly used Pinyin for all publications sourced in this thesis. For mainland place names, I also have opted for Pinyin, with a few exceptions for the names of places known best by their earlier forms, such as Canton, Whampoa, Yangtze, Manchuria, and people's names such as Chiang Kaishek, Sun Yatsen and so on. In addition, both Chinese and Japanese names are presented with the surname first.

## Introduction

Over the last decade there has been a considerable increase in examinations of Fascism by historians who are generally described as *revisionist*. While these revisionist historians may often take the initiative in re-examining and re-interpreting the history of Fascism in Europe, it is important not to allow revisionist interpretations of events in China to pass by default. This thesis is a contribution to the political history of China, and, particularly in the context of a new questioning of Japanese views about the Second World War, it is important to examine political movements and military organisations in the Far East. It is an addition to the study of Fascism by examining the Blueshirts in China, and by showing that they were indeed Fascist, albeit in a different form to their European counterparts.

Those scholars who have written about the Blueshirts have all consolidated the viewpoint that Blueshirt Fascism emulated European Fascism in Hitler's Germany and/or Mussolini's Italy. The possibility that Chiang Kaishek and the founders of the Blueshirts were looking more to the Japanese example and were influenced by Fascist developments in Japan has not yet been explored. The two most prominent analysts of the Blueshirts in the West, Lloyd E. Eastman and Maria Hsia Chang (see discussion below), have gone to considerable lengths to arrive at definitive but opposite conclusions regarding the question of Blueshirt Fascism.<sup>1</sup> Eastman concludes that Blueshirt Fascism copied in general the pattern of Nazism (National Socialism), whereas Maria Chang, although considering similarities with

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Hsia Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society: Fascism and Developmental Nationalism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985; and Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution; China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990.

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Italian Fascism, finally concludes that the Blueshirts, could not be described as Fascists. Despite the exhaustive nature of their work, the conclusions at which Eastman and Chang arrive may be considered flawed. In contrast, this study will adopt the standpoint that the Blueshirts through the strong historical and cultural connections that exist between China and Japan, especially at their founding in 1932, emulated a form of Japanese Fascism upon which had been superimposed the features and ideas of the Chinese as well as Japanese secret societies.

After the First World War and in the wake of the October Revolution in Russia, the people in some European countries went on the barricades to defend themselves against an advancing Communism. Nationalist feelings ran high and Nationalism became the keyword. It was in this environment that anti-Marxism and anti-Communism were born. In Italy the first Fascist regime emerged, and in Germany the small National Socialist Party exerted its influence on national politics, while also in other European countries Fascist movements arose.

However, at the same time events in China were different, because under Sun Yatsen's 孫逸仙 leadership the Chinese Nationalist Party (*Zhongguo guomindang* 中國國民黨) co-operated readily with the infant Chinese Communist Party, established in 1921 and then a small group of people. The Guomindang was in 1924 even re-organised with the help of Comintern agents.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the development of Marxism in China during that period followed a distinctly different course from most European countries.

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<sup>2</sup> Laszlo Ladany, *The Communist Party of China and Marxism, 1921-1985, A Self-Portrait*, London: C.Hurst & Company, 1988, pp.1-9. With the help of Comintern agents in 1921 the Chinese Communist Party was established without knowing what Marxism exactly was. At the start of the twentieth century very few Chinese had heard of Marx and Engels. This was in sharp contrast to Europe where their theory achieved great attention. With Lenin and Stalin, Marxism - a doctrine, perhaps even a philosophy - became an *ideology* and was openly acknowledged as such. All Communist regimes are based on three factors: dialectical materialism, the power of the party, and a secret police. No Communist regime is based on pre-Lenin-Marxism.

The circumstances in Europe were such that the Communists were attacked by nationalist groups from the very beginning, and it was only after the split with the Communists in 1927 that the nationalist government, now under Chiang Kaishek's leadership, developed an anti-Communist (anti-Marxist) policy. After 1927, much of the Guomindang's energy was spent on fighting against and eliminating the Chinese Communists. Although, until under pressure of the circumstances - a full-scale war with Japan - in 1937, against the odds, a new co-operation between the two rival parties emerged.

This thesis examines the political developments which took place in China between 1927 and 1938 insofar as they relate to the growth of a tendency which, it will be argued, was specifically Fascist. This period of just over a decade was of central importance in modern Chinese history as it saw, in succession, the establishment of the first truly national government in the country since the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, the rapid economic and social development of Chinese society as modern industry and technology were introduced, and the rising confrontation with imperial Japan. While the main contours of political development during the Nanjing period are well-known to international scholarship, this thesis takes up a discussion about one of the more contentious elements of the periods political history, namely the Blueshirt organisation, which existed under the auspices of the Nationalist Party during the 1930s.



## Chapter One

### Towards a Working Definition of Fascism : Methodology and Sources

*Shui ze zai zhou, Shui ze fu zhou* 水則載舟, 水則覆舟  
[The people are the water, and the ruler is the boat.  
The water can support the boat, but it can also sink it]

Xunzi<sup>1</sup>

In order to examine the role of the Blueshirts in Chiang Kaishek's drive for power and his espousal of an ideology generally characterised as Fascist, a number of preliminary questions require consideration. Firstly, a working definition of Fascism needs to be arrived at, primarily in order to determine the extent to which the Blueshirts might properly be described as Fascist. This definition of Fascism will begin from a theoretical standpoint, and will be followed by a detailed discussion of the commonalities and differences of European Fascism - particularly in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany - and their relation to East Asian Fascism - particularly in Japan.

The second question considered in this chapter is a direct concomitant of a theoretical analysis of Fascism, namely, the setting of the birth of Fascism in its proper historical context. Whereas many of the discussions of political scientists on Fascism are anchored firmly in Europe, for the purposes of this thesis, it is essential to examine the historical context of East Asia.

Aside from discussions into the nature of Fascism, it is also necessary at this initial stage to outline the methodological criteria employed to

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Xunzi jianzhu* 荀子简注 (Commentary on Xunzi), by Zhang Shitong. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chunbanshe, 1974, Jiu xing pian 九行篇 (The Nine Acts), p.57.

determine whether the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation. The various sources on Blueshirts' activities that are cited in this thesis are discussed at some length. As this thesis intends to provide a more definitive view of the Blueshirts and the question of whether they were Fascist than previous scholarly works on the subject, an exposition of the more varied sources used is necessary.

### **1.1 Approaches to the Question of Fascism**

It may be possible to pursue many fruitful avenues of research into the Blueshirts without addressing the question of whether they were Fascist, but any study which does not include this question within its scope cannot be considered exhaustive. A study which sets out to determine whether the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation must first have a working definition of the term *Fascism*.

This study does not aim to provide a complete history or definitive analysis of Fascism, but to indicate the broad similarities and differences between the Fascist regimes in Europe, mainly in Germany and Italy, and those in East Asia, in Japan and China. A number of political analysts have identified the various similarities and differences within Fascist regimes and movements in Europe.<sup>2</sup> These differences have hampered attempts to formulate a comprehensive definition of Fascism and a coherent theory of how it operates. This task would be further complicated by the need to encompass Asian Fascism within the definition, because comparing European with some form of Asian Fascism may give rise to an even greater number of differences. It is, however, probable that attempts to produce a single generic definition of Fascism may prove counterproductive.

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<sup>2</sup> Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism, Comparison and Definition*, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980, pp.177-178.

## Chapter One

A popular definition of Fascism is found in the *Longman Dictionary*.

The entry reads:

Fascism is a political philosophy, movement or regime that is [usually]... hostile to socialism, exalts nation and race, and stands for a centralised government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe regimentation and forcible suppression of opponents.<sup>3</sup>

While such an explanation is, of course, insufficient to determine whether or not the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation - or indeed to gain any further insight into generic Fascism - it may at least be a starting point. It is interesting to determine the degree to which the word Fascism is explained in encyclopaedia throughout the years. Naturally, in 1910 the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* does not include the word Fascism, but explains the words *Fasces* and *Fascia* as Latin for a bandage or fillet.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, *Adair's New Encyclopedia* of 1925 explains the derivation of the word *Fascisti*, and gives a summary of the events that brought the movement in Italy, and Mussolini, to power. The existence of Fascist movements in Germany and other Western countries is also mentioned.<sup>5</sup> The first time that the word *Fascism* is found is in *The Columbia Encyclopedia* of 1935, wherein the rise of Fascism in Italy is recorded. It specifies that while Fascism has much in common with Russian style Communism, Fascism is "essentially and fundamentally nationalism" and communism is "at least in theory international." It explicates furthermore:

Reactionary sentiment, strong nationalist feelings, an authoritarian and totalitarian state moving by non-parliamentary means, a strong somewhat military party, a dictatorship and regimentation of capital and labor under the aegis of the state - all these are characteristics of the

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<sup>3</sup> Longman, *Concise English Dictionary*, Harlow, Essex: Longman Group, 1985, p.502.

<sup>4</sup> *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information, Cambridge: University Press, 1910, p.191.

<sup>5</sup> *Adair's New Encyclopedia*, A New and Up-to-date- Reference Work, for Home, School and Office, Volume Two, New York: World Syndicate Company, Inc., 1925, no page number.

fascist movements that sprang up all over Europe and in South America, China, and other parts of the world.<sup>6</sup>

This is one of the few references to a Fascist movement in China in the encyclopaedia examined. By the 1993 version of the same encyclopaedia this reference has, however, disappeared.

Any attempt to define Fascism with any sense of authority must be approached judiciously. A number of political scientists have commented on the defiance of Fascism to be categorised or defined. Noël O’Sullivan writes that Fascism “is the most controversial and elusive term in the vocabulary of twentieth-century political thought, in both popular and academic usage.”<sup>7</sup> P. Hayes claims that “Fascism is one of those ‘isms’ for which every person will find his [or her] own definition.”<sup>8</sup> While Roger Griffin determines that “there can be no objective definition of Fascism, since, like all generic concepts in the human sciences, *Fascism* is at bottom an ideal type.”<sup>9</sup> According to Stanley G. Payne, “Fascism is probably the vaguest of contemporary political terms... [because] the word itself has no implicit political reference.”<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile Ernst Nolte suggests that “the concept of

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<sup>6</sup> *The Colombia Encyclopedia*, Clarke F. Ansley (ed.), New York: Colombia University Press, 1935, p.608.

<sup>7</sup> Noël O’Sullivan, *Fascism*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1983. p.7. “The origin of the word “Fascism” is noteworthy for two reasons: it did not derive from Mussolini’s movement *Fasci di Combattimento*, and it was for long without any specific ideological or theoretical significance.” (p.207)

<sup>8</sup> P. Hayes, *Fascism*, London: 1973, p.9.

<sup>9</sup> Roger Griffin (ed.), *Fascism*, Oxford Readers, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.3. Griffin explains that: “In other words, it ultimately results from an act of idealising abstraction which produces an artificially tidy model of the kinship that exists within a group of phenomena which, despite their differences, are sensed to have certain features in common.”

<sup>10</sup> Payne, pp.4-5.

## Chapter One

Fascism has been understood in different ways and from a variety of standpoints in the course of time.”<sup>11</sup>

Due to this obvious problem, in the literature on Fascism, most discussions about its definition outline the commonalities of all Fascist movements without describing the distinctive features of each specific Fascist movement. Such a technique appears the “safest” method of avoiding lengthy discussions about ideology. However, Payne warns that “any definition of common characteristics of Fascist movements differed from each other as significantly as they held notable new features in common.”<sup>12</sup>

Two major points arise from these findings. Firstly, why has there been so much disagreement on a definition of generic Fascism? Secondly, how is one to proceed with a working definition of Fascism on such unsteady foundations? After extensive deliberations, Payne distils the argument for and against a generic Fascism in the following terms:

The experts agree that to produce an interpretation and theory about Fascism has caused much controversy. The problem primarily centres around two questions: 1. the research for adequate theories that can explain Fascism and its causes; and 2. whether or not a generic Fascism, as distinct from a variety of sometimes basically different radical and authoritarian nationalist movements and regimes, can be demonstrated to have existed with any degree of similarity.<sup>13</sup>

O’Sullivan concurs with Payne’s view that “reducing all putative Fascisms to one single phenomenon of absolutely common identity is distortive and inaccurate.”<sup>14</sup> He writes that due to the vital difference between the Italian and German regimes of the 1930s, it is probably “not permissible”

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<sup>11</sup> Ernst Nolte (ed.), *Vierzig Jahre Theorien über den Faschismus* (Forty Years Theories about Fascism), Cologne, Berlin: Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 1967, pp.15-72.

<sup>12</sup> Payne, pp.4-5.

<sup>13</sup> Payne, pp.177, 191.

<sup>14</sup> Payne, pp.195-196.

to use the term Fascism in a “generic” sense.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, political scientists have attempted to view Fascism in the light of their own personal political persuasions. Fascism has been variously diagnosed by Christians as the result of the decline of religion, by psychoanalysts as a response to emotional deprivation and sexual repression, and by generational theorists as resulting from the discontinuity of cultural values from one generation to another.<sup>16</sup> It is, however, the Marxist analysis of Fascism, which arose in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and which depicted Fascism as “the tool of capitalism in its most advanced phase”,<sup>17</sup> which has influenced a number of scholars, most especially Maruyama Masao, the leading interpreter of Fascism in Japan.

An unbiased definition of Fascism, particularly in a generic sense, seems too beset with pitfalls to be a viable option. The working definition of Fascism adopted in this thesis might be better determined from a socio-historical, rather than a theoretical, standpoint.

### **A. The Nature of European Fascism**

Most analysts of Fascism view the phenomenon as a purely European invention. Even in definitions as all-embracing as that of *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, which covers three full pages, Fascism is referred to as a “pan-European phenomenon.”<sup>18</sup> No link to East Asian Fascism, either in Japan or China, is inferred. Moreover, there are those scholars who believe that while Japan “had some of the characteristics of

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<sup>15</sup> O’Sullivan, p.3.

<sup>16</sup> O’Sullivan, pp.24-27.

<sup>17</sup> O’Sullivan, p.17.

<sup>18</sup> David Miller, Janet Coleman, William Connelly & Alan Ryan, (eds.), *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, pp.148-150.

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Fascism”, it “lacked the distinctive features of a Fascist dictatorship.”<sup>19</sup> This thesis will argue, however, that a form of Fascism did exist in Japan, and it was from Japan that Chiang Kaishek derived his desire to form a Fascist corps within the Guomindang. In any case, merely because an encyclopaedia reference on Fascism fails to mention East Asian Fascism in explicit terms does not necessarily imply that a form of Fascism there never existed.

That Fascism was born in Europe as a result of a change in social values in the wake of World War I is beyond doubt. The reasons for the birth of Fascism and the ideological system which it upheld are much less clear-cut. This comes as no surprise when one considers the difficulties inherent in attempting to define generic Fascism.

Noël O’Sullivan writes that the rise of Fascism in Europe is rooted in the course of modern European intellectual and political history.<sup>20</sup> He outlines four basic prerequisites of Fascist ideology which are linked to the main trends of European thought after the French revolution. These prerequisites are:

- (i) the viewing of politics as an activist crusade towards popular sovereignty (as J.J. Rousseau contended);
- (ii) the fusion of democratic and nationalist sentiments into a militant and aggressive tendency;
- (iii) creating within the masses a sense of “inner freedom” (following Kant’s usage of the term) even if they are not externally free to act; and
- (iv) creating a demagogic figure in a belief in the capacity of human will to shape history.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Gavan McCormack, “Nineteen-Thirties Japan: Fascism”, *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, vol.14, 1982, p.28.

<sup>20</sup> O’Sullivan, p.15.

<sup>21</sup> O’Sullivan, pp.44-77.

The face of Europe was changed beyond recognition by World War I. Before 1914, the security of the governing order, the economic and social system, and the prosperity of the middle classes in Europe existed relatively unthreatened. However, due to the rise of the working classes and their vociferous demands for equality and political rights, the middle classes feared that they would lose their safe and privileged positions. Their reaction to real or imagined threats did not bring about Fascism, but it created the preconditions for the development of Fascist movements.

Disaffection in the wake of World War I created the breeding ground for extreme nationalist groups in Europe. The tendency towards nationalism and sometimes extreme nationalism had already begun before World War I. This aspect is mentioned by Prof. Nomura, explaining that, starting from the sixteenth century, countries in Europe developed tendencies based on extreme nationalism. Subsequently, extreme nationalism developed at the end of the nineteenth century into 'national' imperialism.<sup>22</sup>

In Italy, for example, the *Associazione Nazionalista Italiana* (ANI - Italian Nationalist Party) set up in Florence in 1910 was "the major forum for rightist, statist ultra-nationalism in pre-Fascist Italy."<sup>23</sup> According to Enrico Corradini, one of the party's founders, nationalism was the anti-thesis of democracy; liberty and equality should be replaced by obedience and discipline. His main theme was nationalism, with an emphasis on increasing the strength of the army and colonial conquests. The propaganda of the Italian nationalists in favour of conquest and expansion had, before World War I, not aroused great mass enthusiasm. However, these ideas were to

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<sup>22</sup> Nomura Koichi, *Kindai Chugoku no seiji to shiso* (Studies on Political Thought in Modern China), Tokyo: Chikuma shoten, 1964, pp.144-145.

<sup>23</sup> Griffin, p.37.



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exercise a profound influence on the later Italian Fascists, with whom the Nationalist Party merged in 1923 after the March on Rome.<sup>24</sup>

In comparison with Italy, pre-war Germany was a country of great strength and energy, enjoying much more economic progress. As early as the 1890s the so-called Pan-German League had been founded. It engaged in vigorous propaganda for a more militant foreign policy, including German expansion abroad, be that in eastern Germany or by the acquisition of new colonies. The leader of the League, Heinrich Claß, favoured an Imperial dictatorship to save Germany from liberalism. It was from organisations such as the Pan-German League that the Nationalist Socialist Party after World War I was to draw of its early members. The nationalist, anti-liberal, racist and anti-Semitic propaganda spread by these organisations prepared the soil on which National Socialism was to grow. It was especially the emphasis on racialism, the firm belief in the natural superiority of an allegedly German race and in the great destiny of their *Volk* (people), that distinguished German right wing extremism from that of, for instance, Italy.<sup>25</sup> Although, Mussolini often referred to the supremacy of the Roman Empire and drew a parallel with Fascist Italy and its superiority over other nations. However, among the Italian people this idea was less pronounced and not so generally accepted as the idea of superiority of a German race was in Germany.

In Germany, the post war economic situation was deteriorating, while the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles hit the country severely. German governments changed frequently and were very weak. However, above all, it was the vast inflation of the German currency which undermined the very

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<sup>24</sup> F.L Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, pp.19, 64-66.

<sup>25</sup> Carsten, p.31. This belief in natural German superiority and the great destiny of their *Volk*, the *völkisch* concept, was to remain a distinguishing mark of the new German right. It was not shaken, but on the contrary strongly reinforced by Germany's defeat in World War One.

foundations of society, ruining the German middle classes, and destroying any remaining sense of security and stability.

The situation in Italy was in some ways similar. Here too, the economic situation worsened and the value of the *Lira* declined rapidly. Political and social unrest broke out all over the country.

In both countries, there was also the problem of soldiers who had returned from the front and felt betrayed by society. Germany had, after all, been victorious on the Eastern Front, while its defeat on the Western Front in November 1918 came as a complete surprise both to civilians and to most of the ordinary soldiers at the front. The German soldiers returning from the front regarded the Social Democratic government which signed the Versailles Treaty as traitors of the nation. They formed themselves into paramilitary units called the *Freikorps* (Freecorps) and fought street battles against factory workers who were turning towards Communists.<sup>26</sup> They also defended the isolated and fleeing ethnic German communities in Poland and the Baltic states from attack. Despite their role in the formation of the Weimar government, most of the Freikorps members found nothing attractive in the new republican order.

It is the collusion between the German army and the Freikorps which explains why, despite such blatant threats to its authority, the Weimar Republic was never able to suppress the Freikorps. The political sympathies of the country's military forces lay much more with the Freikorps than with the parliamentary regime, and the state was therefore unable to act against them in a concerted or decisive manner. The Freikorps had strong links with a number of far-right political organisations in Germany in the 1920s, and as the National Socialist Party, grew more powerful, they slowly fused into the

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<sup>26</sup> The *Freikorps* (Freecorps) were small privately-raised armies, composed of professional officers and NCO's of the former Imperial Army.

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Nazi movement. Moreover, there seems to be no borderline where the Freikorps end and Hitler's SA and SS begin. Outward signs of Hitler's debt to the Freikorps movement were the "Swastika", the Brown Shirts and the Hitler salute all of which had been previously adopted by the Freikorps units.

Especially Bavaria in the early twenties was home to many paramilitary organisations. One of these Bavarian organisations was the *Einwohner Wehr* (literally: inhabitants defence or resistance), formed in Munich to fight the Communists, and led by Colonel H. Kriebel, who in 1929 became the head of Chiang Kaishek's German advisory mission. Kriebel assisted Hitler by forming a *Kampfbund* (Combat League), and leading it in the Hitler-Putsch in Munich on 8-9 November 1923.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the overt participation of the Freikorps and other paramilitary groups in the Munich Putsch, the Weimar government was still unable to suppress them. On the contrary, it soon found that it was relying on them more and more heavily. In the early 1920s, under the forceful leadership of Hitler in Munich, the Nazis were developing into a strong party, but had no great influence outside Munich. In the later years of the Weimar Republic, the attraction of such Nazi organisations as the SA and SS for the military was great.<sup>28</sup>

In Italy, the fact that victory failed to secure all the irredentist claims of Italian nationalists, meant that some soldiers felt they had fought for nothing. Many veterans joined nationalist groups or paramilitary organisations. In both countries, this "front generation" was to play a leading role in the rise of Fascism, and it is no accident that the most important Fascist movements had their origins in the years immediately succeeding World War 1. In 1919 war

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<sup>27</sup> Martin Broszat, *Die Machtergreifung. Der Aufstieg der NSDAP und die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik*, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 1984, p.11-14,32.

<sup>28</sup> Carsten, p,115.

and revolution in Europe were more closely contiguous than ever before. The year was a crucial one for it signalled the starting point of the first Fascist parties. In Italy Mussolini set up his *Fasci di Combattimento*.<sup>29</sup> In Germany the combined *Reichswehr* and *Freikorps* overthrew the short-lived Munich Soviet Republic. In Turkey Mustafa Kemal Pasha began a revolt against his own government and the foreign powers. In Romania the foundation was laid from what later became the Iron Guards of Codreanu. Fascist movements were mushrooming in Europe in partial to the threat of possible spread of revolution through Communist agitation.

It is undeniable that Fascist movements were centred around varying degrees of anti-Marxism. While both Hitler and Mussolini were viewed as coming to power “legally”, that is, via the ballot box, Lenin had only achieved power in the Soviet Union by “illegal” means, that is, via revolution. The perceived threat of the so-called “red peril” was an important strand within the Fascist movements of both Europe and East Asia.<sup>30</sup> It should be emphasised, however, that Fascism was anti-Marxist rather than anti-Socialist. Indeed, the aims of socialism and Fascism were not really that far removed from each other. Therefore, it is perhaps more accurate to classify Fascist movements “according to the nature of the balance they

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<sup>29</sup> O’Sullivan, p.7. In ancient Rome the *fascies* was a bundle of rods carried by the lictors in front of the consuls, as a symbol of authority. During the nineteenth century, however, the bundle of rods came to symbolise strength through *unity*: the point being that, whilst each independent rod was fragile, as a bundle they were strong. By extension, the word *fascio* came in modern Italian political usage to mean a group. Groups of revolutionary socialists in Italy were the first to use the word in this sense. Before Italy had entered the first World War all over Italy *fasci* were formed demanding Italy’s intervention in the war. Mussolini belonged to the Milan *fascio*, while in 1915 a national organisation was founded with the name *Fasci d’Azione rivoluzionaria* (bands for revolutionary action) (p.207). After the war in 1919 Mussolini reconstituted the Milan *fascio*, using the name *Fasci di Combattimento*. See also Alan Cassels, *Fascist Italy*, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1985, pp.27-28.

<sup>30</sup> O’ Sullivan, p.86. Questions whether the threat of the “red peril” actually existed or not was merely “a figment of Fascist propaganda.”

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struck between” socialism and nationalism.<sup>31</sup> Both Hitler and Mussolini attempted to unify their respective countries by amalgamation, albeit to different degrees of nationalism and socialism.

The Fascist movements that ascended in Europe had so many commonalities that they were able to borrow from each other. Essentially they were both strongly nationalist and violently anti-Marxist. These traits were not unique to Fascism. They were something that they had in common with other parties and groups of the extreme Right, such as the Nationalist parties of Italy and Germany. More exclusively, the Fascists not only rejected liberalism, and other political parties, but they wanted to eliminate them and replace them by a new authoritarian and corporative state.<sup>32</sup>

Despite these commonalities, the Fascist movements which arose in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s were very different in character, and mirrored the entirely different national backgrounds of the countries in which they developed. Some were more conservative, and others more radical in their demands and actions. Some were violently anti-Semitic, and others were not. Some took revolutionary action and staged armed revolts against the government, while others insisted upon legal means of attaining power. Some acquired a strong following among the lower classes, while others remained almost entirely middle class.

The specific form of Fascism in any country must clearly be shaped by the cultural, political and social character of each society. In countries where industrialisation was advanced, the working class was already class-conscious, and was often organised into trade unions and susceptible to Communist propaganda. Fascism could not closely resemble a related political idea in a country just beginning to industrialise, with an

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<sup>31</sup> O’Sullivan, p.89.

<sup>32</sup> Carsten, pp.230-231.

overwhelmingly peasant population, low literacy and little access to telecommunications, like for example in China. Consequently, the response to this variety has been, on the part of some writers, to draw a clear line around Europe and state that Fascism can never exist outside a European context.<sup>33</sup>

The diverse typology inherent within European Fascism is perhaps best apprehended through the differences between Italian Fascism and German Nazism. There were similarities between early Fascism and early Nazism, especially in terms of economic goals and, to some extent, style. However, the differences are more striking. Firstly, the socio-political structure of German society was totally different to that of Italy. While Germany had some semblance of a centralised power, the north-south dichotomy and the intervention of the Catholic Church into Italian society resulted in a more fragmented powerbase. Secondly, and as a direct result of the above, the Nazis had more competition from well-organised nationalist groups to their right than did the Fascist in Italy.

A number of reasons may be cited to explain the apparent problem of incorporating Italian Fascism and German Nazism into one single framework. Nazism was more nationalist than socialist, manifested in its overt racist tendency. For their part, most Italian Fascists had no concept of race and derided the racist standpoint adopted by the Nazis, especially their anti-Semitic stance.

One of the most fundamental differences between Italy and Germany was that in the mid-twenties the NSDAP (National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei) had metamorphosed into the Hitler movement. The Italian

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<sup>33</sup> Payne, pp.175-176. In the section "Generic Fascism: A Uniquely European Phenomenon," Payne states that: "It is consequently doubtful that a typology derived from European Fascism can be applied to non-European movements or regimes with any specificity. As the two most assiduous students of Fascism, Ernst Nolte and Renzo de Felice, have insisted, it was an historical phenomenon primarily limited to Europe during the era of the two world wars."

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Fascist movement was not at all created by Mussolini as a party or movement, but grew up around or beyond him. Furthermore, Mussolini formed a government coalition three and a half years after the start of the Fascist movement, whereas the same process took Hitler fourteen years. No single factor or simple interpretation can account for something so complex and momentous as the process that brought Hitler to power, but the theory of mass mobilisation may offer a broader understanding of the problem.

A further difference between Germany and Italy was the economic and industrial infrastructure of the two countries: Germany was an advanced industrial society whereas Italy, by comparison, was almost backward. The very nature of this situation is at fundamental odds with the “delayed industrialisation” thesis, which maintains that Fascism occurs in a society undergoing industrialisation. The Italian Fascists were not “a mass-mobilising developmental dictatorship committed to the modernisation of Italy’s economy.”<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, that Nazism should arise in a modern industrialised society merely weakens the validity of the “delayed industrialisation” thesis. Although leading Fascists and Nazis realised they had much in common, the uncertainty over the extent of their obvious differences prevented them from ever reconciling these differences.

The diversity of form inherent within Fascist movements has led some scholars to adopt a “checklist” approach and to exclude from the category of Fascism all those movements and ideologies which do not share the same set of core characteristics. S.J. Woolf has outlined five ideological traits generally displayed by Fascist movements:<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> O’Sullivan, p.22.

<sup>35</sup> S.J. Woolf, ed., *The Nature of Fascism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1969 and particularly the contribution by N.Kogan, “Fascism as a Political System”, pp.11-18. Objections to a definition of Fascism based upon ideological traits are raised in “Discussions - Fascism and Polity”, in the *Nature of Fascism*, pp.51-60. A discussion which emphasises the difficulty, if not impossibility, of establishing a definition of Fascism.

- 1) Exaltation of the state and advocacy of totalitarian controls
- 2) One-party rule, glorification of the leader, and rejection of democracy
- 3) Nationalism, which often invokes the restoration of traditional values
- 4) The goal of creating a new Fascist man who would subordinate his individual will and aspirations to the collective will
- 5) The glorification of violence and terror

Ernst Nolte, who has written at great length on the subject of Fascism, has postulated a six-point “Fascist minimum”, which consists of a set of negatives, a central organisation feature, a doctrine of leadership and a basic structural goal, expressed as:

- 1) Anti-Marxism
- 2) Anti-Liberalism
- 3) Anti-Conservatism
- 4) The leadership principle
- 5) A party army
- 6) The aim of totalitarianism<sup>36</sup>

The assumption is that this “Fascist minimum” allows one to identify Fascist movements by attempting to distil generic Fascism into an inductive set of characteristics.

The fifth point of the “Fascist minimum” refers to the attempt of a Fascist regime to militarise politics to an unparalleled degree. Militia groups were made central to the movement’s organisation and they used military insignia and terminology in reinforcing the sense of nationalism and constant struggle.<sup>37</sup> As described by F.L. Carsten: “The Fascist parties were conceived as tightly organised semi-military machines with which state and society were to be conquered; in all of them, para-military associations or militias - clad in black, brown, green or blue shirts and uniforms played a very important part.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ernst Nolte, *Die Krise des Liberalen Systems und die Fascistischen Bewegungen* (The Crisis of the Liberal System and the Fascist Movements), Munich: 1968, p.385.

<sup>37</sup> Payne, p.12.

<sup>38</sup> Carsten, p.231.



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Militarism should be distinguished from Fascism in the sense that it only represented one aspect of Fascism. Militarism is described as exaltation of military virtues and ideals, or as a policy of aggressive military preparedness, and may be defined for the purposes of this thesis as the promotion of military values and the use of military methods to achieve political goals. Fascism in the 1930s represented something much broader. It permeated the whole of society, culturally, socially and politically - features that were not embodied by Militarism.

There were, however, also distinct militaristic factors behind the rise of Fascism in Italy. In January 1919 Mussolini's *Fascio d'Azione Rivoluzionaria* (Group of Revolutionary Action), a group initially formed to promote the intervention of Italy in World War I at the side of France and Britain, combined forces with the *arditi* - shocktroops with a distinctive uniform and armed with daggers, designed during the war for raids on enemy positions. When Mussolini founded the *Fasci di Combattimento* in March 1919, this alliance with the *arditi* was firmly cemented.<sup>39</sup> Although still a tiny minority, the Fascists received direct aid from the army, while ex-servicemen, especially from the ranks of the *arditi*, were encouraged to join Fascist squads. By October 1922 a private army came into being wholly at the disposal of the Fascist leaders - the Blackshirts. Without the support of these militaristic elements, the March on Rome and the victory of the Italian Fascists would doubtless not have been successful. While the military did not bring about a Fascist revolution in Italy, great parts of it co-operated with and supported the Fascists. Furthermore, at the beginning of 1923 the newly established Fascist Grand Council dissolved all para-military organisations and set up in their place a "Voluntary Militia for National Security." The

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<sup>39</sup> O'Sullivan, p.207. Mussolini belonged to the Milan *fascio*, while in 1915 a national organisation was founded with the name *Fasci d'Azione rivoluzionaria*. After the war in March 1919 Mussolini reconstituted the Milan *fascio*, using the name *Fasci di Combattimento*.

Blackshirts and armed squads of the Fascists were incorporated into this new force and thus acquired legal status.

In this context it should be noted that in Germany, as well as in Italy, the military (i.e. the army) in general played a passive role concerning the advancement of Fascist ideas. Once the Fascist party had established itself as the governing power, the military merely followed its leadership. Therefore, in Europe, the military as such did not develop a Fascist policy and did not *represent* the Fascist Party as it later did in Japan. This is one of the essential differences between European and Japanese Fascism.

### **B. The Nature of Japanese Fascism**

The contention of this thesis is that Japanese Fascism brought more influence to bear on Blueshirt Fascism than either of its European counterparts. This was in great part due to the historical and cultural connection between China and Japan. This section will outline the development of Fascism in Japan in its historical context. Attention is paid to the relationship between the Japanese military and nascent Fascist groupings. The development of Fascist tendencies among the Japanese military is explained and the concept of Japanese Fascism defined. Despite continuing debates among political analysts as to whether Fascism actually emerged outside Europe, Japan may be regarded as the first non-Western power to produce a recognisably Fascist regime.

It is certainly true that the Fascist regime in Japan came to power in a way that was different from the process in Germany or Italy. It is also true that it lacked some of the features normally associated with Western Fascism, as the Japanese version had its roots in quite different national developments. Tanin (Oscar Tarkhanov) and Yohan (Evgeni Yolk), two Soviet Japanologists writing in the 1930s, maintain that “the peculiarities of

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Japanese Fascism are closely interwoven with the social structure and the historical development of Japanese military feudal imperialism.”<sup>40</sup>

Essential to an understanding of Japanese Fascism are three interrelated factors: (1) the pervasive influence of the military as the most pronounced characteristic of Japanese society at that time ; (2) the speed and success of Japan’s modernisation, which contrasted sharply with almost all the rest of Asia; and (3) the weak and superficial nature of Japan’s fledgling democratic parliamentary structures, which readily succumbed to Fascism.<sup>41</sup>

The pervasive influence of the military is one of the most important reasons for the rise of Fascism in Japan. As Anthony James Joes has written, “one might say that in speaking of Japanese Fascism, one is actually speaking of the increasing imposition of military values on Japanese society as a whole.”<sup>42</sup> An analysis of Japanese militarism is therefore necessary before an examination of Japanese Fascism can be conducted.

The background against which modern Japanese militarism developed finds its roots in the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), when the governing class was the Samurai 侍,<sup>43</sup> or the soldier-administrator.<sup>44</sup> After the Meiji

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<sup>40</sup> O. Tanin and E. Yohan, *Militarism and Fascism in Japan*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973, p.20.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony James Joes, *Fascism in the Contemporary World: Ideology, Evolution, Resurgence*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1978, p.147. See also, Kobayashi Hideo, *Showa Facisito no gun shu* (Japanese Fascist Popular Movement), Tokyo: Kokura shobo, 1984. This book gives a full reference about the three interrelated factors. For instance, the three factors were actually divided into three different groups of people; 1) Kita and Ishiwara 2) Tanaka Chigaku, and 3) Kishi Nobusuke.

<sup>42</sup> Joes, p.147. See also Wan Feng, *Nihon Fasshizumu no kobo* (The Rise and Fall of Japanese Fascism), Tokyo: Rokko shuppan, 1989, p.66.

<sup>43</sup> This term has two meanings. (1) Originally, in the development of Japanese feudalism, any warrior, whether lord or vassal, but generally the latter. (2) The class, or members of a class, of military retainers of the daimyo. The special rights and privileges of the Samurai were abolished after the downfall of feudalism in 1871. In this way the Samurai embodied both, Pen and Sword - knowledge and action.

<sup>44</sup> Joes, p.147.

Restoration of 1868 in Japan the Samurai almost ceased to exist as a distinct class, however, most of the Samurai adapted themselves to the changes in Japanese society and transposed their role in society. The spirit of the Samurai continued to permeate public affairs in Japan because many Samurai found their way into positions in the government, industry and commerce. Some of them remained petty landowners in the countryside, while others took up posts in the expanding state apparatus or became officers in the reorganised army. Those members of the Samurai who remained unreconciled to the dissolution of their class supported the military expansion and hoped for rehabilitation on war outside Japan. The groups of Samurai advocating a more aggressive foreign policy formed secret societies such as the Black Ocean Society (玄洋社 *Genyosha*)<sup>45</sup> founded in 1881, and the Black Dragon Society (黒龍社 *Kokuryusha*) founded in 1901.

Movements such as the Black Ocean and the Black Dragon Society were strongly nationalistic and played a central role in the development of Japanese imperialism.<sup>46</sup> It was the period between 1894 and 1904 that saw the beginnings of an aggressive militarism in Japan. Japan's success in two wars, that with China (in 1895) and with Russia (1904-5), was mainly due to the rapid adoption of Western techniques and industrialisation.<sup>47</sup> Japanese modernisation emphasised an intense nationalism and militarism, and from the very beginning, Japan verged upon the problems of modernisation and relations with the West almost completely in terms of national defence. As

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<sup>45</sup> The origin of this body was *Koyosha* 向陽社 (Expose to the Sun society), founded by Toyama Mitsuru in Fukuoka in 1879. In 1881, Toyama and Hiraoka Kotaro (Uchida's uncle on his mother's side, and a mine-owner and former Samurai who had taken part in the Satsuma Rebellion), renamed *Koyosha* as *Genyosha*.

<sup>46</sup> Wan Feng, *Nihon Fasshizumu no kobo* (The Rise and Fall of Japanese Fascism), Tokyo: Rokko shuppan, 1989, pp.31-32.

<sup>47</sup> O.Tanin and E.Yohan, p.43.

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Kobayashi described: “The whole thrust of modernisation in its many aspects - the school system, working hours of labourers, properties for the government, the conscription system *chohei seido* 徴兵制度,<sup>48</sup> heavy industries, road building, and port improvements - was thus to mobilise the resources of the nation behind a modernised army and navy, the embodiments of national purpose and survival.”<sup>49</sup>

The prestige and power of the military apparatus were mirrored in the structure of Japan’s constitutional government, as military men headed the ministries of war and of the navy. The demands of the military could not be ignored. Moreover, Japanese laws completely privileged the army and the navy from control by or subordination to the parliament and the government. The army and navy did not tolerate any government intervention, whatever the case, in its internal affairs.<sup>50</sup>

The right-wing or Fascist movements which arose in Japan after World War I co-operated with and had the support of the military. Among the new nationalist organisations many were merely dedicated to the preservation of the “*Japanese Spirit*”, without any particular programme. Numerous patriotic societies sprang up, to combat leftist student activities, labour-farmer unions, and socialist - Communist groups.<sup>51</sup> The development of a militaristic tendency was coupled with a deeper-seated desire for nationalism. One of the leading members of a new type of reactionary

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<sup>48</sup> A revision of the conscription law in 1883, providing for three years with the colours and nine with the reserves, raised the peacetime establishment to 73,000 men and wartime strength to 200,000 more, which seemed sufficient for this purpose. All were equipped by 1894 with modern rifles and artillery, mostly of Japanese manufacture.

<sup>49</sup> Kobayashi Hideo, pp.36-37. Presumably this idea was based on Kita Ikki’s *Nihon kaizohoan daiko*. See also Joes, p.148.

<sup>50</sup> Tanin and Yohan, p.173.

<sup>51</sup> Wan Feng, p.42.

nationalist organisation was Kita Ikki 北 一 輝.<sup>52</sup> Kita had been active in China during the 1910s, associated primarily with the Japanese intelligence service and the Black Dragon Society.<sup>53</sup> After his return from China in 1918, Kita published his book *Nippon kaizo hoan taiko* 日本改造法案大綱 (The Principles of Introduction for Reconstruction of Japan).<sup>54</sup> Kita's book was referred to as the *Mein Kampf* of the Showa Ultra-nationalist Movement.<sup>55</sup>

The influence of Kita on the development of Fascism in Japan was so great that Maruyama Masao referred to him in no lesser terms than “the ideological father of Japanese Fascism.”<sup>56</sup> Kita's book summarised the attitudes of all those who felt that Japan's talent and energies were being squandered by various Japanese, instead of being harnessed to the cause of a Greater Asia under Japanese tutelage.<sup>57</sup> During the 1920s and 1930s several different Fascist tendencies competed for supremacy in Japan, all of them displaying Kita's aspiration for a Greater Asia (or Pan-Asianism).

The ideology of Japanese Fascism was based on Asian values, and was mainly constructed around the Japanese idea of 1) the “Way of the Emperor” 皇道史觀 2) the theory of Confucius, and 3) a religious philosophy.<sup>58</sup> The main thought of the spirit of Bushido 武士道 was also based on

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<sup>52</sup> Kita (1883-1937) was a nationalist revolutionary. Like many Meiji radicals, he came from a fairly well-to-do family. He had links with the Kokuryukai, and was much influenced when he was young by Social Darwinism. Kita spent several years in China after the 1911 Revolution.

<sup>53</sup> Iwase Masato, *Kita Ikki to sho kkoka shugi* (Kita Ikki and Ultra-Nationalism), pp.7-8.

<sup>54</sup> George Macklin Wilson, “Kita Ikki's Theory of Revolution”, in *Journal of Asian Studies*, November 1966, vol.26, p.89. See also, Iwase Masato, *Kita Ikki to sho kkoka shugi* (Kita Ikki and Ultra-Nationalism), p.12.

<sup>55</sup> Wilson, “Kita Ikki's Theory of Revolution”, p.89.

<sup>56</sup> Maruyama, p.28.

<sup>57</sup> Wan Feng, pp.34-36. See also, Joes, p.153.

<sup>58</sup> Wan Feng, p.34.

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Confucianism.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the teachings of *Nichiren* 日蓮 a Japanese monk (1222-1282), who was among the first of the country's religious leaders to have given a strongly national complexion to Buddhism, had exerted considerable influence on the thinking of many Japanese ultra-nationalists, including Kita Ikki and Inoue Nissho.<sup>60</sup> Inoue maintained that Shintoism, the Japanese state religion, and Fascism should merge and raise Japan to the leader of the Asian people, and finally of the whole world. Kita Ikki was seen as the man to adapt European Fascism and to create a theory of Japanese Fascism, and he therefore studied the principles of Confucius. Kita's thought was that through the ideology of Japanese Fascism it should be possible to compare the civilisations of the East and West. On the other hand, Kita was convinced that the Oriental culture and mental spirit was superior to that of the West.<sup>61</sup>

It might be fairly stated that a distinctly Japanese Fascist state comprised militarism, modernisation and Pan-Asianism.

The most cogent re-examination of the problem of Japanese Fascism has been conducted by George Wilson, who argues convincingly that the concept of Japanese Fascism is mistaken. This is true because no political movement arose to seize power, formal Japanese constitutional and

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<sup>59</sup> Wan Feng, p.37. The core of Bushido spirit was based on the ideology of Shinto and Zenshu 禅宗, which can be compared with Confucian thought.

<sup>60</sup> Born in 1886, a Nichiren priest of extreme rightist beliefs, who before turning to Buddhism had spent most of his life on the continent as a secret agent for the Japanese army. On his return to Japan, he organised various extreme nationalist societies. The most important of these was the Blood Pledge Corps (Ketsumeidan), a fanatic band of youths, centred near Mito, who were pledged to remove many of the country's political leaders by assassination. Inoue's group was responsible for the killing in 1932 of Finance Minister Inoue and of Baron Dan, the Mitsui director. As a result Inoue was sentenced to life imprisonment; he was released in 1940 on a general amnesty. He resumed political activity after 1952 and in collaboration with several members of his Blood Pledge Corps he founded the extremist National Protection Corps (Gokoku dan).

<sup>61</sup> Wan Feng, p.34.

institutional authority remained essentially intact, and parliamentary pluralism and elections continued to exist. The main pressure to change the Japanese system came from radical elements within the military or from small radical nationalist circles.<sup>62</sup>

Wilson has also delineated two basic lines of interpretation which have yielded the conclusion that Japan became a Fascist state during the 1930s.<sup>63</sup> The first, the Marxist approach, advocates that first a Fascist movement and then a full-blown Fascist regime appeared in Japan as a function of objective class conditions and a desperate form of last-ditch defence on the part of Japanese capitalism against the menace of social and economic revolution. This is the same approach as applied to Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The second approach, the authoritarian-modernisation thesis, labels as Fascist “all those governments which, in the process of rapid and paternalistic industrialisation, encounter domestic and foreign crises that lead them to pursue policies of regression at home and aggressive expansion abroad.”<sup>64</sup>

This last thesis has found many competent followers among both Western and Japanese scholars. Japanese Fascism is different from the European variety chiefly in that it came not from below through successful mass mobilisation but from above by transforming the existing state structure into an “emperor-system” or “military-bureaucratic” Fascism. By substituting the army for the Fascist party, the symbolic force of the emperor for the Fascist leader, and drawing other similar analogies, the conclusion emerges that Japan had a Fascist system, particularly after 1936. In common with its

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<sup>62</sup> George Macklin Wilson, “A New Look at the Problem of Japanese Fascism”, in Henry A. Turner, Jr., (ed.) *Reappraisals of Fascism*. New York: New Viewpoints, 1975, pp.199-214.

<sup>63</sup> Wilson, “A New Look at the Problem of Japanese Fascism”, pp.199-200.

<sup>64</sup> Wilson, “A New Look at the Problem of Japanese Fascism”, p.202.



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European counterparts, this form of Fascism suppressed liberalism and socialism, and cemented state authority over all aspects of national life.

One of the most persuasive advocates of Japanese Fascism is Maruyama Masao. According to Maruyama, the development of Fascism in Japan may be broadly divided into three stages. The first stage (1919-1931) was characterised by Right-wing movements among civilians. In the second stage, which began with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, the military became the driving force of Fascism. The final stage, when Maruyama Masao treats Fascism as a state structure (1936-1945) in contrast with regarding Fascism as a movement during the earlier phases, may be termed the consummation period of Japanese Fascism. The military, openly advocating Fascism, fashioned an unstable ruling coalition involving the bureaucracy, the economy and the political parties.<sup>65</sup>

The Japanese Fascist movement naturally had elements in common with the Fascist ideology current in the world. However, there were three distinctive points that were especially emphasised in the Fascist ideology of Japan:

(i) The family-system: the basic characteristic of the Japanese state structure is that it was always considered an extension of the family. That this structure appeared consistently in a Fascist movement stressed that national polity and a political slogan were distinctive characteristics not found in the Fascism of Germany and Italy. This defines the social context of Japanese Fascism.

(ii) Agrarianism: an important feature of Japanese Fascist ideology was a counter-movement that demanded autonomy for villages in an attempt to put a stop to the expansion of the industrial productive power of the cities. Japanese Fascism represents a confusing appearance because the tendency towards the concentration of powerful authority and strengthening of state

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<sup>65</sup> Maruyama, pp.26-27.

control, which was common in world Fascism, was limited in Japan by the ideology of agrarianism.

(iii) Pan-Asianism: the ideal of the emancipation of the Asian people from European colonialism flowed strongly through Japanese Fascism.<sup>66</sup>

The major characteristic separating Japanese Fascism from the European form was the gradation of its development. Fascism did not burst on the scene from below as it did in Germany and Italy. Furthermore, in Germany and Italy the learned class and university students played a major role. This was not the case in Japan, where the intellectual student class as a whole never supported the Fascist movement. This can doubtless be accounted for by the position of the intellectual and the differing cultural values between Asia and Europe.

In line with its European counterparts, Japanese Fascism became more radically entrenched during the 1930s. A change of government in July 1934 brought to power a party which firmly supported the army's policies on the Chinese mainland. The outcome was a strengthening of the position of a military and bureaucratic elite in Japan.<sup>67</sup>

There were a number of extremist organisations operating on the fringe of the political arena, frequently following the teachings of some prominent ultra-nationalist. These groups were so divergent from one another in their attitudes and opinions that political co-operation would have been impossible. Similarly, their activities were greatly restricted by their small size and financial insecurity. Rather different from these, however, was one group which grew up among the young military officers who were opposed

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<sup>66</sup> Maruyama, pp.34-51.

<sup>67</sup> Olavi K. Fält, *Fascism, Militarism or Japanism?; The Interpretation of the Crisis Years of 1930-1941 in the Japanese English-Language Press*. Finlandiae: Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys Societas Historica Finlandiae Septentrionalis Rovaniemi, 1985. p.45. Also Wan Feng, pp.137-140.

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to capitalism and Western ideals, and whose position gave them much better opportunities for exercising influence.<sup>68</sup> This group of young officers got more influence after the reorganisation in 1923 of the Japanese military, while this influence was greatly enhanced after the Manchurian Incident of 1932, which is often said to be the first boundary for Japan's entry into the Fascist era.

The period between 1923 and 1932 saw conflicts in connection with the reorganisation of the Japanese army between the older and the younger generation of officers. These conflicts had a great impact on the further development of the situation in Japan until 1936. The struggle between these two generations of officers within the army amounted to more than a struggle between two currents of military thought, for the younger generation represented different social strata.<sup>69</sup> The younger officers were often sons of the old Samurai families, and although not yet in a position of controlling the army, they were nevertheless the main support of the reforms in Japan's military forces which began in 1922. From early 1930 among this group of young officers there began to grow rapidly the spirit of violent opposition to parliamentary political parties, and co-operation with the right wing or Fascist movements which arose in Japan after World War I emerged. Those Fascist groups, having gained support of the military, came to manage actual political power, and some became engaged in extreme vigorous activity.

Finally, the "February Incident"<sup>70</sup> of 26 February 1936, which was an attempted coup of the group of "Young Officers" together with the Fascist

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<sup>68</sup> Fält, p.32.

<sup>69</sup> Tanin and Yohan, p.179.

<sup>70</sup> Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, London: Penguin Press 1967, pp. 300-301. The February Incident of 1936: In Japan in 1936 there were moderately free elections. These elections failed to result in a popular endorsement of democracy (absenteeism was high). At the same time the election showed a lack of electoral support for patriotic radicalism. To check this, a section of the army (the young officers)

movements, proved to be a climax of the influence of Fascism from below. Maruyama Masao writes: “The February Incident above all proved to be a turning-point. This was of course the final and biggest of the successive Fascist *putsche*. Thereafter the Fascist movement from below, led by the young officers and/or the civilian right wing, retreats into the background.” After 1936 Japanese Fascism is defined as Fascism from above.

Therefore, the February Incident was the occasion that “brought the movement of radical Fascism from below to an end, and clearly determined that Japan’s course towards Fascism would not take the shape of a Fascist revolution and *coup d’état* as in Germany and Italy.”<sup>71</sup> The military in Japan took the power of the government and within the existing political structure transformed it into a Fascist state.

### **C. A Working Definition of Fascism**

Reaching a working definition of Fascism that is also applicable to the Blueshirts requires a certain degree of flexibility. An ideology such as Communism has an established orthodoxy and a clear set of principles that finds its theory in Marxism. It is therefore legitimate to maintain that an organisation, such as the Chinese Communist Party, which embarks on a political route at variance with the ideology, is *heterodox* or *revisionist*. It is thus relatively easy to determine whether any given ideology or movement is or is not Communist. In contrast, as it has no rigorous ideological basis, Fascism is by its very nature an opportunist phenomenon an anti-ideology. It addresses itself only to the most immediate of concrete conditions. It first acts

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responded with another attempted coup, known as the 26 February Incident. The February Incident was the prelude to further political manoeuvres to the imposition of a totalitarian State. See also Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, London: Oxford University Press, 1963, pp.55-56.

<sup>71</sup> Maruyama Masao, p.33.

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and it poses the question of power, and then constructs a set of policies, organisations, myths and cults which serve that end. This body of thinking need never be coherent, because power is important, not the rationalisations which accompany it.

In essence, all Fascist movements were anti-liberal and anti-Marxist. Indeed, Mussolini himself observed at the beginning that Fascism had become “the great anti-party”, opposed to most of the old orthodoxy of left, right and centre.<sup>72</sup> Fascists often gave themselves impetus by brutal action against those to whom they opposed. Their basis seems to have been violence with no ideology behind it. Ideology may here be defined as a systematic body of concepts which forms a theoretical approach to the practical problems encountered by, for instance, society. The *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought* states:

Ideologies are patterns of symbolically-charged beliefs and expressions that present, interpret and evaluate the world in a way designed to shape, mobilise, direct, organise and justify certain modes or courses of action.<sup>73</sup>

In short, ideology advocates action to be taken according to theory. Fascism may therefore be considered anti-ideology rather than ideology. An anti-ideology, such as Fascism, has no theoretical background. As it devotes itself to action without theory, an anti-ideology has no need of a systematic body of conceptual ideas. Fascism may be described as a “cult of action.” In other words, action, rather than the ideology behind the action, is glorified. This view, shared by many Fascists, is one of the six points that is discussed by O’Sullivan when analysing Fascism: “Was Fascism an ideology, or was it - as the Fascist themselves often claimed - an anti-ideology, in which a cult of

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<sup>72</sup> Payne, p.49.

<sup>73</sup> David Miller, Janet Coleman, William Connelly & Alan Ryan, (eds.), *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, pp.235-237.

action took the place of any doctrinal commitment?”<sup>74</sup> This view of Fascism as an “acting” anti-ideology rather than a “thinking” ideology is central to a definition of Fascism applicable to the Blueshirts.

Within the definition of Fascism offered by *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought* is mentioned that: “....Fascist terror was doctrine put into practice in the most methodical way. Fascism constitutes one of the best examples of the unity of thought and action.”<sup>75</sup> That the above definition considers Fascism as “one of the best examples of the unity of thought and action” is remarkable, because the unity of “acting” and “thinking” represented by Fascism is strongly reminiscent of the debates on “knowledge and action” (*zhixing*) which permeated Confucianist thought in China since at least the Ming dynasty.<sup>76</sup> Sun Yatsen made “Knowledge and Action” part of his political doctrine, and Chiang Kaishek also used it to encourage his people to better achievements. Sun was, however, mainly concerned with revolution and national reconstruction. He developed the teachings of ancient times “to know is easy and to act is difficult” (*zhiyi xingnan* 知易行難) into “to act is easy but to know is difficult” (*zhinan xingyi* 知難行易). Sun emphasised that the key to progress was action and that to act was easier than to know. Sun’s theory reactivated in China the time-honoured

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<sup>74</sup> O’Sullivan, p.5. The significance of Fascism, as O’Sullivan explains it, lies in its making explicit implications of the *new activist style* of politics towards three things: 1) a leader, 2) a movement, and 3) a “myth” or *Weltanschauung*, (pp.113-130). This new activist style of politics is being interpreted as “a cult of actions.”

<sup>75</sup> David Miller, Janet Coleman, William Connelly & Alan Ryan, (eds.), *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, 1991, pp.148-150.

<sup>76</sup> The theory was originally advocated by Wang Yangming 王陽明 in the Ming dynasty, and maintained that action without knowledge serves no purpose while knowledge without action is futile.

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controversy over the problem of “unity of knowledge and action” (*zhixing heyi* 知行合一).<sup>77</sup>

A similar idea was initiated by the literati in Japan during the Meiji restoration. Those scholars decided that the theory of “unity of knowledge and action”, which had been developed from the Chinese concept, was an obstruction to the development of Japanese modernisation. The hypothesis they developed was that “Practice” 行 without the constraints of “Knowledge” 知 can be successful.<sup>78</sup> Thus, in the Japanese case the following concept was propagated: instead of *Chigyo koichi* 知行合一 using *Rinki ohen* 臨機應變, “action is carried out in response to the circumstances.” Moreover, the Japanese secret societies which exerted such an influence on the early development of extreme nationalism and the formation of a Fascist state in Japan, may be interpreted along the same lines. The Black Dragon society may be symbolised by “acting” and the Black Ocean Society by “knowledge.” The extent to which these societies influenced the foundations of the Blueshirts in China will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Another important aspect was the influence of Chinese secret society traditions upon the Blueshirts. This was apparent from the way the organisation operated, and is an aspect which should not be overlooked or underestimated. Paramount in this was the strong clan-feeling that characterised Chinese secret societies - an emotion beyond which the Blueshirts were not able to go. Furthermore, the secret societies and gangs

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<sup>77</sup> Chuan Yunlong, *Zhongguo zhixingxueshuo shuping* (The Review of Chinese Knowledge and Action Studies), Beijing: Qiushi chubanshe, 1988, p.183; see also David S. Nivison, “The Problem of “Knowledge and Action” in Chinese Thought since Wang Yang-Ming”, pp.137-140, in *The American Anthropologist; Studies in Chinese Thought*, Arthur Wright (ed.), The American Anthropological Association, vol.55, no.5, memoir no.75, December 1953.

<sup>78</sup> Takeuchi Hiroyuki, *Chugoku no jukyō teki kindai ron* (The Theory Confucius for Chinese Modernisation), Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 1995, p.302.

which had existed in China for centuries often derived their right of existence from rebellion against “authority.” They were renowned for their “action” rather than their “knowledge.” In this respect their ideology may also be defined as a form of anti-ideology. The extent to which the ideologies of these secret societies concords with the doctrine “unity of thought and action” of Fascism is something to which this thesis will return for further discussion.

In attempting to arrive at a working definition of Fascism, it is important to bear in mind that most Chinese interpreters of European Fascism in the 1930s - including Chiang Kaishek himself - had been educated in Confucian thought. These interpreters were unsuccessful in arriving at a definitive explanation of Fascism. Firstly, the variety and vagueness of Fascism made an interpretation all the more difficult. Secondly, the peculiarities of Confucian thought instilled in these interpreters encouraged them to view Fascism along more traditionally Chinese lines. Interpretations of Fascism in China, even among Blueshirts ideologists, advocated emulation of the external aspects and techniques of European Fascism (i.e. the action) without actually defining the concept (i.e. the thought).

The working definition of Fascism adopted in this thesis has been arrived at in the light of a number of aspects. To provide a definition of a generic form of Fascism which encompasses all the movements which arose under the umbrella of Fascism, be they in Europe or in East Asia, has been proven impossible. Fascism is a concept which defies categorisation as a simple unified theory. The historical origins of Fascism in Europe have been analysed so as to distil a set of values common to most - but by no means all - Fascist movements. While the adoption of a “checklist approach” or a “Fascist minimum” is not entirely satisfactory, it does at least provide a set of criteria by which the Blueshirts can be judged. Moreover, the strong influence of militarism on the rise of Fascism in Japan, and the specific



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cultural and traditional values which moulded Japanese Fascism, are both essential in an appreciation of the Blueshirts as a Fascist organisation. Thus, the working definition of Fascism may be summarised as follows:

- (i) The organisation is formed by social groups which feel threatened by social foment. These groups may be drawn from one social class or may be assembled by ruling groups.
- (ii) The organisation rejects Marxism, liberalism and materialism as defining tenets. These ideas are combined with other modernist or traditionalist concepts peculiar to the particular social conditions of the country in which they arise.
- (iii) The organisation attempts to extend military models of organisation and obedience to wider sections of the populace.
- (iv) The organisation activates the masses entirely from above, thereby preferring the “directed” character of activist politics above the “spontaneous” character of ideological politics, such as Marxism.
- (v) The organisation promotes sentiments of nationalism, sometimes advocating a restoration of traditional values, such as Confucianism in China.
- (vi) The organisation places the explicit cult of a leader at the very centre of its teaching in order to uphold the essence of totalitarianism. This so-called “leader principle” is often generated through the establishment of an elite corps.

### **1.2 Exposition of the Sources Cited**

The Blueshirts were a more or less clandestine organisation; many of their actions were violent and outside the law. It seems that even though the Blueshirts were a relatively strong organisation, they deliberately obscured their relationship to the Guomindang party structure. It is also likely that much of the Blueshirts’ own energy may have been spent in systematically

destroying evidence of its involvement in drug-trading, racketeering, torture and mass-execution.<sup>79</sup> This secrecy that surrounded the Blueshirts is one of the reasons for the lack of documentary sources regarding the organisation. With much of the source material available to researchers being of a secondary nature, a comprehensive investigation of the Blueshirts has been difficult.

### A. The Findings of Eastman and Chang

Following a publication in *The China Quarterly*<sup>80</sup> in 1972, two years later Lloyd E. Eastman published his book *The Abortive Revolution*. In his writings Eastman developed a thesis which argued that Blueshirts' Fascism was for the greater part modelled on Nazism.<sup>81</sup> In his discussion about Fascism, the phenomenon is carefully "defined" "one of the most ambiguous and emotionally laden words in the political-science lexicon."<sup>82</sup> He continues by stating that "there is no single form or simple definition of Fascism" for it is a "political ideology that has historically proven to be attractive to widely disparate social groups in widely diverse societies."<sup>83</sup> In Eastman's attempt to arrive at a viable definition of Fascism applicable to the Blueshirts, he adopts the above-mentioned "checklist" of S.J. Woolf. Such an approach is without doubt one of the only workable options open to Eastman in the

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<sup>79</sup> TB (Toyo Bunko), 2057. *Ranisha ni kansuru chosa* (An Investigation of the Blueshirts), pp.25-26.

<sup>80</sup> Lloyd E. Eastman, *The China Quarterly*, January-March 1972, nr.49, "Fascism in Kuomintang China: The Blueshirts." pp.1-31.

<sup>81</sup> Maria Hsia Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society: Fascism and Developmental Nationalism*; and Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*.

<sup>82</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.80.

<sup>83</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.80.

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absence of an absolute definition of Fascism. However, Eastman's use of sources to support his thesis is limited on two counts.

Writing in the 1970s, Eastman was unable to avail himself of any of the archive materials on the Blueshirts from the People's Republic. Based on information from Blueshirts publications and collected speeches from Chiang Kaishek alone, Eastman was unable to supplement the information he gleaned from Japanese sources to any great degree. In his preface to the 1990 paperback reprint of *The Abortive Revolution*, Eastman laments this situation. He cites the opening of the *Nanjing Di'er Dang'anguan* (南京第二檔案館 Nanjing Second Historical Archives) to historical researchers as a missed opportunity on his part. In order to re-assess Eastman's arguments and to add to knowledge on the Blueshirts, this thesis makes full use of the Nanjing Historical Archives and the *Shanghai Shi Dang'anguan* (上海市檔案館 Shanghai Municipal Archives) in the People's Republic, as well as the *Zhu Jiahua Dang'an* (朱家驊檔案 Zhu Jiahua Archives) from the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan.

Secondly, that Eastman has not used any Western archive materials, even those from Germany, determines that his research is restricted and therefore has its limitations. For instance, by not having used the information available in the German archives, Eastman was not able to discriminate that there was no Nazi influence on the formation of the Blueshirts. On the contrary he has concluded that the formation of the Blueshirts was triggered by German military advisers, a conclusion which this thesis will show was not entirely accurate.<sup>84</sup>

When Maria Hsia Chang published her "Fascism and Modern China" in September 1979 in the *China Quarterly* she challenged the findings of

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<sup>84</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, pp.39-40.

Eastman concluding that the Blueshirts could not be described as Fascist.<sup>85</sup>

Chang determines that:

The specialists who have dealt with European history have not reached any consensus how Fascism is to be understood or interpreted. There is no agreement about its class base.... or about its theoretical or philosophical basis: whether Fascism was revolutionary or counter-revolutionary... Given this confusion, it is not surprising that the most recent efforts to achieve some theoretical understanding of generic Fascism, having recognised this lack of consensus concerning the nature of Fascism, have been far less ambitious.<sup>86</sup>

Owing to this confusion, Chang articulates the difficulty in determining whether the Blueshirts were Fascist. Avoiding this question head-on she returns to the ideas of Sun Yatsen arguing that the Blueshirts were faithful to and were following the Sanminzhuyi. In the course of the discussion she compares the Sanminzhuyi with the ideas of the Italian nationalists and concludes that Sun's ideas and those of the Italian nationalists were congruent, defining them as "developmental nationalism" rather than Fascist.

Chang criticises both Eastman's conclusions and his adoption of the checklist approach, claiming that he has actually failed to provide a clear definition of Fascism before discussing the Blueshirts. In Chang's view, all Eastman has achieved is providing "a short checklist with which to distinguish 'Fascist' from 'non-Fascist' political movements and ideologies."<sup>87</sup> Such an approach, according Chang, fails to interpret the historical role and function of Fascism as it is specific to China.

Despite Chang's valid criticisms of Eastman's methodology, she side-steps the question of defining Fascism herself by attempting to describe the

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<sup>85</sup> Maria Hsia Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society: Fascism and Developmental Nationalism*, and Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*.

<sup>86</sup> Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, pp.7-9.

<sup>87</sup> Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, p.132.

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Blueshirts in terms of a completely different set of criteria. Avoiding the question of Fascism in a direct way, she attempts to show that the Blueshirts were not really Fascist, because they were exponents of an "ideology of delayed industrialisation."<sup>88</sup> She appears to assume that an ideology of delayed industrialisation and Fascism must necessarily be mutually exclusive. Having criticised Eastman for providing "a checklist of traits", Chang does little more than substitute her own list of criteria for his. Eventually Chang abandons any attempt at defining Fascism by dismissing the exercise as "no easy task."<sup>89</sup>

Chang develops the information presented by Eastman through use of documents from the Guomindang Archives, and the memoirs of Liu Jianqun 劉健群, a former member of the Blueshirts, entitled *Yinhe yiwang* (銀河憶忘 Memoirs of the Milky Way). Chang also cites Deng Yuanzhong's *Sanminzhuyi lixingshe shi* (三民主義力行社史 The History of Sanminzhuyi) which was published in 1984. Deng's book is problematic in as much as the information it presents adheres very closely to that of the aforementioned Japanese sources. It fails to shed any new light on the subject of the Blueshirts. Guomindang spokesmen said that during the war with Japan, when they moved from Nanjing to Chongqing, they had lost valuable documents with information about the Blueshirts. Therefore, this raises the question as to how Deng Yuanzhong's father or other former Blueshirts members whom Deng had interviewed remember that clearly every detail that is given in his book.

Chang, furthermore, criticises Eastman in judging the Blueshirts as a Fascist organisation based on his documentary materials, As she concludes:

To be persuasive, Eastman's account of the Chinese Blue Shirt Society must, like any other historical narrative, be conceptually and logically

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<sup>88</sup> Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, pp.34-35, 51, 130-131.

<sup>89</sup> Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, p.134.

clear and be supported by the documentary materials. Regarding the latter, Eastman asserts that the documentary evidence on the Blue Shirt Society supports his thesis that the society was a Fascist organisation. A review of the primary sources, the very same material he used, fails to establish this putative match of evidence to knowledge. Instead, the documentary evidence is indeterminate and equivocal.<sup>90</sup>

It is likely that Chang objects to Eastman's handling of sources in a large part because she, from the very beginning, disagrees with his conclusion that the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation. Nevertheless, her criticism is largely valid from a purely textual point of view. Even she is obliged to concede that where primary sources do not explicitly announce the Fascist character of the Blueshirts, however, "one does find in the editorials and articles of the *Qiantu* 前途 and *Shehui xinwen* 社會新聞<sup>91</sup> Blueshirt advocacy of the exaltation of the state, totalitarian controls, one party rule and glorification of the leader." Taking her argument on its own terms, she is correct in stating that to rely entirely on primary sources in order to prove that the Blueshirts were Fascist is a highly unreliable line of scholarship. Looking at the question in wider terms, however, placing primary and secondary sources together, comparing materials from different archive sources and analysing them in the light of our knowledge of the action of the Blueshirts and of the Japanese and European Fascist organisations, it is her argument, not Eastman's, which appears much the weaker.

It is unfortunate that other writers fail to include a definition of Fascism in their studies of the Blueshirts. Their work consequently addresses the question of whether or not the Blueshirts were Fascist without really offering a satisfactory explication of Fascism against which to measure Blueshirts' activities. Indeed, unfortunately many studies of interwar China

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<sup>90</sup> Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, pp.13-28.

<sup>91</sup> The Blueshirts periodical *Qiantu* (Future or Forward) and a Blueshirts journal *Shehui xinwen* (The Society Mercury).

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use political terminology without offering any prior definition of terms, and the confusion which this engenders is only too clear in many accounts of the period. The treatment of the Blueshirts by Jack Gray is one such an example.

In his chapter on Chinese Fascism Gray writes:

Its original creators were socialists; its ideals of social responsibility, public honesty and personal austerity were admirable... it was one of those movements which opposed social revolution (though not social change) by stressing the prior importance of individual moral regeneration.<sup>92</sup>

This explanation poses more questions than it answers, for the idea that "social responsibility, public honesty and personal austerity" were in some way specifically socialist ideas is unlikely to be accepted either by socialists, or, indeed, by liberals and conservatives, who might equally well consider these same virtues to be basic principles of their own philosophy. If anything was distinctive about socialist thinking in the early 20th century it was the recognition of the need to transcend individual "virtue" and to organise collective action for social change. Gray's definition is doubly confusing since its denial of a Fascist origin for the Blueshirts is based on a false definition of socialism.

Gray's intention is to show that the Blueshirts were not, at their founding, a Fascist organisation, but that they were soon "drawn into Fascism", because organisations based on such principles "have always proved very easy to draw into the service of reactionary violence."<sup>93</sup> However, his decision to label the Blueshirts at their foundation as "socialist" merely serves to obscure the fact that certain modern movements which have based their platform on calls for "social responsibility, public honesty and personal austerity" have in fact been Fascist from the outset. Gray's

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<sup>92</sup> Jack Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions: China from the 1800s to the 1980s*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp.247-248.

<sup>93</sup> Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions*, p.247.

conclusions illustrate how an inaccurate use of terms can obscure meaning and detract from a proper understanding of the situation.

### **B. Japanese Sources**

An examination of the sources Eastman used for his account of the Blueshirts in *The Abortive Revolution* shows that, with only minor exceptions, the only non-Chinese sources used were Japanese. In fact, Japanese sources represent an important means of building up a more complete picture of Blueshirts activities because of their extensiveness and accuracy especially in view of the limited nature of other, Western and Chinese sources. As Eastman states, “even as recently as the mid-1970’s, the most substantial historical sources on the Blueshirts were to be found not in Chinese materials, but in contemporary Japanese intelligence reports.”<sup>94</sup> Most of these accounts are to be found in the Toyo Bunko (東洋文庫 The Oriental Library) in Tokyo.

Chang, in her assessment of Eastman’s use of this sources, doubts the credibility of many of these Japanese sources which were written for military or government purposes. As she argues, “a good case can be made, in fact, for a deliberate attempt on the part of the Japanese government to fabricate evidence toward the Fascist self-identification of Chiang Kaishek and the Blueshirts.”<sup>95</sup> More importantly, the Japanese government cannot be objectively viewed as a neutral observer of Chinese affairs. If one of the purposes of the Blueshirts was to front Chiang Kaishek’s anti-Japanese policy and to lead anti-Japanese boycotts, then could the views of Japanese observers possibly remain unbiased? Chang approvingly quotes Eastman’s

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<sup>94</sup> Lloyd E. Eastman, “The Rise and Fall of the Blue Shirts: A Review Article”, *Republican China*, 13 (November 1987), p.25.

<sup>95</sup> Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, p.15.



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contention that “no one... was more disturbed by the Blueshirts than were the Japanese” by way of an answer to this question.<sup>96</sup> In this light, the reliability of the Japanese sources is somewhat diminished. Chang concludes of the Japanese intelligence reports that “such deliberately fabricated and coloured documents might have been reserved for the indoctrination of high-ranking Japanese military officers and government personnel, designed to denigrate and compromise the Guomindang.”<sup>97</sup>

Leaving aside the question of the objectivity of the contemporary Japanese intelligence sources, the sheer volume of these documents makes them a necessary starting-point for any serious study of the Blueshirts. It is hard to avoid consulting the documents in the Toyo Bunko, particularly the specially bound volume entitled *Ranisha ni kansuru shiryō* (藍衣社に関する資料 Materials on the Blueshirts). However, these sources will be supplemented in this thesis by documents from other Japanese archives such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Institute for Defence Studies. Given the presumed biased nature of some of the Toyo Bunko sources, the inclusion of other Japanese sources should paint a more objective picture of the Blueshirts.

Another important Japanese source is Iwai Eiichi's 岩井英一<sup>98</sup> publication *Ranisha ni kansuru chosa* (藍衣社に関する調査 An

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<sup>96</sup> Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, p.78.

<sup>97</sup> Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, p.16.

<sup>98</sup> It is remarkable that the Japanese Who's Who does not mention Iwai Eiichi as this name is found on the Japanese reports of his hand, and his name also appears in documents from PRO (Public Record Office), FO (Foreign Office, London) 371/20983 xc2371 (Chungking Political Report), March Quarter, 1937, p.381, point 8. Also Parks M. Coble in, *Facing Japan, Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937*, pp.226, 317, refers to Iwai Eiichi. Furthermore Keiji Furuya in, *Chiang Kaishek His Life and Times*, pp.492-493, mentions Iwai Eiichi.

See also NA (National Archives, Washington DC), SMP (Shanghai Municipal Police, Shanghai) report D4685, 25 June 1935. Morning Translation of the *Nippo*, *Mainichi* and *Nichi-Nichi*. It is possible that the name Iwai Eiichi is an alias. It was therefore not possible to

Investigation of the Blueshirts), which was issued by the research Division of the Foreign Ministry in 1937, marked “secret.” Iwai worked for the Japanese Foreign Office in China during the 1930s investigating the financial and personal connections Japanese officialdom had with Chiang Kaishek. These investigations inevitably brought him into contact with the Blueshirts, and he wrote about them primarily with financial considerations in mind.<sup>99</sup> Later in 1938, following the Japanese invasion of China in 1937: “Iwai was assigned by the Shanghai Consul-General to head a Special Investigation Unit aimed at gathering and analysing wartime data on unoccupied China. With a staff numbering sixty or seventy, this so-called “Iwai Outfit” established a wide network of contacts throughout China.”<sup>100</sup> Eastman comments that Iwai’s 258-page study “is the most detailed and generally reliable source on the Blueshirts” that he encountered.<sup>101</sup>

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establish the identity of Iwai Eiichi. An explanation may be that intelligence people hardly ever use their real name.

<sup>99</sup> Parks M.Coble, *Facing Japan; Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism*, Cambridge, Mass, 1991, p.226: A study by Iwai Eiichi of the Research Division of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, for instance, repeated many of the more public charges against the Blueshirts. He depicted the group as strongly anti-Japanese, active in leading the boycott organisations, prominent in assisting the resistance forces in Manchuria, and engaging in assassinations of Chinese who co-operated with Japan. Iwai suggested that the Blueshirts had devised a plan for long term resistance to Japan and thus by implication represented a major threat to Japanese interests. His footnote, Iwai Eiichi, *Ranisha no kansuru chosa*, pp.220-234. (from Toyo Bunko). Another intelligence report in Iwai Eiichi’s hand completed in 1934, blamed the Blueshirts operatives in Manchukuo, headed by Wu Shichang, for a wave of anti-Japanese terror at Hsinking(Changchun) capital of Manchukuo.

<sup>100</sup> Douglas R.Reynolds, “Training Young China Hands:Tōa Dōbun Shoin and Its Precursors, 1886-1945”, p.267. At a higher level of sophistication, in 1938 the Shanghai Consulate - General assigned Foreign Ministry officer Iwai (eighteen class) to organise and head a new generously funded Special Investigation Unit (Toku betsu chōsahan),and Barbara J.Brooks, *China Experts in the Gaimushō, 1895-1937*, pp.391-392, both in Peter Duus, Raymon Myers and Mark Peattie (eds.), *The Japanese Informal Empire in China 1895-1937*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

<sup>101</sup> Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, pp.380-381.

### **C. Use of Western Sources**

How do the sources for this thesis differ from those of Eastman and Chang and what insight into the Blueshirts do these materials give that add to, modify or challenge the arguments of Chang and Eastman? In their evaluation of whether the Blueshirts resembled Fascism in Italy and/or Germany, neither Eastman nor Chang consulted documents from Western archives. If one wishes to argue the point about the influence of European Fascism on the Blueshirts, then the consultation of Western archive material is unavoidable. In order to study a movement in Chinese society which some scholars (Eastman) assert are Fascist with a strong resemblance to Nazism and other scholars (Chang) claim are not Fascist but have possible parallels with Italian Nationalism, a starting point must be Western documentary information on this specific point.

This study's use of especially the German Bundesarchiv in Potsdam and the Political Archives of the Foreign Office in Bonn is to ascertain the strength of the link (either economic or ideological) between the Blueshirts and the Nazis. One may expect such a link to exist due to the strong connection between the Guomindang (Chiang Kaishek) and German military and civilian advisers, who were present at the important time between 1928 and 1938. The German documents are quite general in the information given. Nonetheless these documents represent a useful yardstick by which to measure the direct influence of Nazism, through the Germans present in China, on the Blueshirts organisation. In addition, at the request of Kriebel, the German Consul-General in Shanghai, during 1934 German intelligence was investigating Fascist movements in China. It is not clear from the documents whether this was a direct request on the part of the Nazi leadership in Germany, but all reports were sent to Berlin. Reports concerning the Blueshirts - as opposed to Fascist movements in general - are very few in number. Generally speaking, these German reports may be

considered impartial. The Germans were working in China in the capacity of military and civilian advisers, and were not directly involved in the organisation or activities of the Blueshirts. This is an important observation not made by other scholars, as it indicates that the Blueshirts organisation was not initiated by the ideas about Fascism from Europe, but was an Oriental venture. Most other researchers presuppose that the Nazi influence on the Blueshirts came directly and almost entirely through these advisory missions.

Most of the documented information about the Blueshirts comes from non-Chinese sources such as the National Archives (NA) in Washington and the Public Records Office (PRO) in London. These reports often relay the same information obtained through officers of the Special Branch (S1 and S2) of the Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP).

The SMP officers were generally in a far better position to acquire information than the diplomats of the embassies and Foreign Offices in China, and their reports contain quite detailed information about the Blueshirts. This is conceivably one of the reasons for the paucity of documentation concerning the Blueshirts presence and activities in the rural provinces. By and large then, information in Western archives was gathered by personnel from these countries based on Chinese police sources. Very few of these writers were actual eye-witnesses to the events they describe.

Before World War II Shanghai was divided into three sovereign jurisdictions: the French Concession, the Chinese Municipality of Greater Shanghai and the International Settlement. The latter did not belong to any power and its ruling body, the Shanghai Municipal Council, was composed of citizens of a number of countries. However, during most of its history, the Council was effectively controlled by British interests.

The Settlement's enforcement agency was the SMP. While the force included Chinese, Indian, and later Russian and Japanese personnel, until

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World War II the commissioner and senior officers were all British. The functions of the police force were dictated by the strange political demarcations of Shanghai and by the opportunities they presented for criminal activity. The SMP's Special Branch with the departments S1 and S2 was the so-called "political police", and also served as an intelligence gathering and, occasionally, as an extensive arm of the British Secret Intelligence Service in the Far East.<sup>102</sup>

The SMP experienced great difficulty in gathering reliable information. Often they had to rely on those detectives who could speak the Chinese language, or were able to infiltrate. Sometimes information was funnelled through Communists who had every reason to be against the Blueshirts. It is therefore often very difficult to say whether the information of the SMP was impartial. Even if the British officers were impartial, could the same be said of those Chinese detectives who were actually gathering the information?

Often at the request of the British Consul in Shanghai, the SMP had to report on the activities of the Blueshirts. Whether the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation was never a real concern of the SMP. Their main interests were the criminal activities in the city, activities which were perceived to include the Blueshirts from time to time. What these reports say about the Blueshirts is that they wanted to be Fascists according to the European model. Their description of the Blueshirts is as such correct, although fragmented and not as detailed as the Japanese reports. It should be remembered, however, that the Japanese reports were not reliant upon the work of the SMP.

Once it became apparent that the Blueshirts' effort was directed mainly against the Communists and the Japanese, the SMP lost their initial

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<sup>102</sup> NA, RG 263 M1750, "Records of the Shanghai Municipal Police 1894-1949."

interest in investigating them. As their main source of information dried up, Western delegations in turn reported less about the Blueshirts. There are fewer materials to be found about the organisation after 1935 and hardly any attention is paid to the disbandment of the Blueshirts in the 1938. So for the later years of their existence, researchers are obliged to rely increasingly on Japanese sources.

While the SMP was investigating the Blueshirts less after 1935, the Japanese were investigating them almost continuously from 1933 onwards, even after their disbandment. At first, the Japanese were quite confused regarding the exact objectives of this new society or organisation. They nevertheless succeeded in producing various reports which describe the Blueshirts minutely in structure as well as in organisation. The Japanese materials, furthermore, are based on a much wider variety of sources than the Western ones. Rather than drawing almost exclusively on SMP reports, they cite other sources such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Military Defence and the Manchurian Railway Company.

Unfortunately, the SMP reports sometimes include a number of errors and misunderstandings which must cause researchers to proceed with great caution. Many of the reports sent home from the European delegations were in fact highly confused. Patrick Givens, the Chief of the British SMP officers was able to speak Chinese, having joined the force in 1907, and must have been aware of the Blueshirts and how they were organised. It is hard to imagine that the SMP were not well-informed and that there were problems with the flow of reporting within the SMP. The problem was evidently one of transmission between the SMP and the foreign diplomatic organs resident in Shanghai. For example, in a despatch of the British Consul-General in

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Shanghai<sup>103</sup> to the Foreign Secretary in London, the Blueshirts are described throughout as a "party." Opening under the heading "The Fascist or Blueshirt Party in China", it then continues:

..the following information in connection with the organisation and activities of the Party in question have been obtained: The Party of which General Chiang Kaishek is the leader, is divided into the following cliques...<sup>104</sup>

The source of this report was, according to the Consul-General, the SMP. It is possible that the word "party" was used in the original police document. In that case the British authorities in Shanghai clearly lacked sufficient knowledge of the Blueshirts to add a comment to the effect that they were not a "party" in the sense that a British person would understand the term.

Alternatively, the British authorities in Shanghai may have mistranslated a Chinese term used in the original Chinese report. Either way, it is very odd that Blueshirts should have been described as a "party", when they certainly were nothing of the sort. The report proceeds to confuse the Blueshirts with the whole Guomindang, and lists the Central Club Clique (C.C.Clique), the F.F. (Fuxing 復興) Clique of the Whampoa cadets, the *Z seu* Clique (Zi shou 自首) of Gu Shunzhang 顧順章<sup>105</sup>, and the Clique of Yang Yongtai 楊永泰.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> PRO, FO 371/19315, xc 199807, SMP, nr. 411, 29 November 1934, *The Fascist or "Blueshirt" Party in China*.

<sup>104</sup> PRO, FO 371/19315, xc 199807.

<sup>105</sup> The Curricula Vitae in this thesis are mostly taken from Jerome Cavanaugh, *Who's Who in China, 1918-1950*, vol. 1-3, Hong Kong: Chinese Materials Centre, 1982. The text is generally condensed and Wade-Giles names are now rendered in Pinyin.

Koo Shun Tsang (Gu Shunzhang), army officer, born at Lien-shui (Liانشui) Jiangsu. Graduate of the Paoting (Baoding) Military Officers College. He was an instructor at the Whampoa Military Academy. He was vice-minister of War, from 1934, and Commander -in- chief of the Northern Route of the Communist- suppression Forces, 1933-34. Member of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang of Jiangxi 1934-35. Director of Chiang Kaishek's Headquarters at Xi'an, 1936-37.

The implication is that the author of the report, or at the least the British Consul-General who transmitted it, had little knowledge of the origin and formation of the Blueshirts as a separate organisation within the Guomindang. It further appears that the influence of the Blueshirts was so pervasive that they seemed to him to be the whole Guomindang. This is in one sense a useful piece of information, since it tells the researcher how the Blueshirts were perceived by one set of interested parties in China at the time. On the other hand, it is a good example of how careful the researcher must be in using the kinds of secondary sources which are available.

The National Archives in Washington (NA) are an invaluable source of information. There are many reports about the Blueshirts, reported by various detectives or officers of the SMP.<sup>107</sup> In the separate documents the information is often fragmentary, but together they provide a relatively good perception of the Blueshirts organisation. Furthermore, various press articles about the Blueshirts, from newspapers in China in the Chinese or English language, are quoted or a photocopy is provided. There is a unanimous opinion in the documents, that the Blueshirts wanted to become or already were Fascists. Sometimes, but not always, a comparison is made with Nazism and/or Italian Fascism. The information given in the SMP reports or in the newspaper articles is not always impartial, sometimes it is Communist

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<sup>106</sup> Yang Yongtai (Yang Wingtai in Cantonese) was one of the leaders of the Political Study Clique, an influential Clique within the Guomindang structure. Civil governor of Canton in 1920, born in Maoming xian, Kochow (?). Appointed Civil Governor by the administrative Council of the Military government, an institution considered defunct and dishonoured by Sun Yatsen, Wu Tingfang, and other constitutionalist leaders. Yang was Commissioner of Finance of Canton before receiving this promotion. In 1932 Yang became Chiang Kaishek's secretary-general in the Headquarters of the Military Affairs Commission.

<sup>107</sup> NA, The SMP documents are listed in *National Archives Microfilm Publications*, Pamphlet Describing M1750, Records of the Shanghai Municipal Police, 1894-1949, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency Record Group 263.



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propaganda and sometimes it is propaganda from opponents of Chiang Kaishek within the Guomindang.

In summary, although these documents were not used by scholars such as Chang and Eastman, together with the Western documents they play a substantial role in drawing a fairly reliable conclusion about what kind of Fascism the Blueshirts emulated.

Information from the Dutch Foreign Office Archives (FOH) in The Hague seems to have derived from SMP reports. Although no direct reference is made to the SMP, the FOH documents are exactly the same as those of the PRO and the NA, sometimes the reports are written in the English language and seem to be straight copies. One of the documents reports events in China in 1933 and 1934, detailing the names of persons involved in criminal activities and murder attempts in Shanghai.

French documents from Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Archives et Documentation (MAE) in Paris are not concerned with whether the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation. There are various documents regarding German military advisers in China as well as the reorganisation of a number of newspapers in Shanghai. The Blueshirts are only mentioned directly in relation to the murder on 13 November 1934 of Shi Liangcai, the director of the *Shenbao* 申報, and in two newspaper articles which discuss attempts by the “Chemises Bleues” on the lives of Chinese in Thailand collaborating with the Japanese. These are a useful source of information for the activities of the Blueshirts outside Shanghai.

In summary, the perspectives and arguments available in the Western sources add considerably to an understanding of the Blueshirts. A certain degree of judiciousness is necessary in determining fact from fiction in all of these secondary sources, including the prolific Japanese sources so championed by Eastman. That the investigations of the SMP fail on occasion to present a clear picture of the activities and nature of the Blueshirts is

unsurprising. That these investigations, almost without fail, allude to a Fascist element within the Blueshirts is significant, for they should assist in determining whether or not the Blueshirts were indeed a Fascist organisation.

### 1.3 Conclusions

The Blueshirts organisation emerged within Chiang Kaishek's Guomintang in response to the changes on the Chinese political stage. In turn, these changes mirrored the dramatic transitions in world politics in the period preceding World War II. The manner in which Fascism had strengthened nationalistic parties in Europe and Japan was particularly attractive to Chiang Kaishek. By the early 1930s the Guomintang was in drastic need of revitalisation. It was threatened from without by Communist insurgency and plagued from within by factionalism.

In its early years the Guomintang had endured a turbulent history, having to go through a number of re-organisations in order to preserve its unity and to adjust to the volatile political climate. Historically, the Guomintang was the party of China's national revolution. Having organised and militated for revolution, the republicans were too weak to maintain control of the state apparatus. Following the successes of the Republican Revolution of 1911, the imperialist Qing regime was merely replaced by a prolonged social crisis. In 1912 Song Jiaoren 宋教仁<sup>108</sup> organised the party under the nominal leadership of Sun Yatsen to succeed the Revolutionary Alliance.<sup>109</sup> Shortly before his death in 1925 Sun began to reconsider his convictions of his central doctrinal tenet *Sanminzhuyi* (Three Principles of the

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<sup>108</sup> Born in Hunan (1882-1913). In 1904 he studied at Waseda University, Tokyo.

<sup>109</sup> *Columbia Encyclopaedia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. See entry for "Kuomintang" (Guomintang), p.1506.

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People: Nationalism, Democracy and People's Livelihood). Indeed, at the party congress of 1924, during which a coalition was effected between the Guomindang and the Communists, Sun's doctrinal tent was adopted as the basic precept of the new organisation.

There is little doubt that Sun's *Sanminzhuyi* was a doctrine that was revolutionary nationalist in conception. There is also little doubt that the *Sanminzhuyi* "shared substantial affinities with" Italian Nationalism.<sup>110</sup> One may even argue that the ideology of the *Sanminzhuyi* articulates many of the tenets of Fascism. The nature of the Guomindang ideology and the heritage of Sun Yatsen therefore both remain valid in a determination of the extent to which the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation.

How did the nature of the Guomindang change following its split from the Communists and the accession of Chiang Kaishek to *de facto* party leader? In 1926 Chiang Kaishek launched the Northern Expedition, advancing from Guangzhou against the Beijing government. In September 1927 a united Nationalist Government was established under the leadership of Chiang in Nanjing. It was at this time that the Communists were purged from the Guomindang causing a bitter rift between the two parties that were to vie for overall control of China for the next two decades. The anti-Marxist and anti-Communist feelings especially among the Blueshirts ran high, while one of the differences with European Fascism is that this anti-Communist posture in China did not come directly from the common people, as it for the greater part did in Europe, but was an emotion that was given impetus by the ruling nationalist government. Though Chiang Kaishek was already actively opposing the Communists in China from 1927, after their establishment in 1932 the Blueshirts took a leading role in resisting and eliminating the Communists until the second united front with them in 1937.

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<sup>110</sup> Chang, p.51.

The Nanjing government carried through a line of thought expressed by Sun's *Sanminzhuyi*, together with his advocacy of totalitarian one-party rule during historical crises such as the confrontation with the Chinese Communists. The period was characterised not only by attempts to chart a path towards modernisation for China, but by attempts to defeat ideological challenges to Guomintang rule. Thus, after several Guomintang military campaigns, the Communists were forced (1934-35) to withdraw from their bases in South and Central China and establish new strongholds in the Northwest. Ignoring the growing Japanese threat until North China was invaded by the Japanese, the Guomintang continued the war against the Communists.

Running counter to this authoritarian centralising tendency, another dimension of organisation permeated the party - that of cliques. Powerful figures in the party at city or provincial levels built up networks of patronage, and undermined the carefully constructed unity of the Guomintang's organisation. Much has been written about these cliques (or factions) which made up the Guomintang, particularly about the large and more powerful ones such as the C.C. Clique, the Whampoa Academy Clique and the Political Study Groups. Aside from their political or theoretical differences, these cliques all shared the common characteristic of a respected leader and his personal following. Most of these cliques, it must be noted, were also extremely conservative in outlook. This then was the political context within which the Blueshirts organisation came into being.

A comprehensive re-evaluation of the Blueshirts organisation should be possible by applying the working definition of Fascism as determined in the first section of this chapter to the information available from the diverse database of Japanese and Western archival materials discussed in the second section. In this respect, a departure from the arguments of and an addition to the information provided by Eastman and Chang should be possible.

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This thesis goes beyond the findings of Eastman and Chang, because as already indicated in the introduction, they have not paid attention to the strong influence Japan had on the establishment of the Blueshirts. The example of Japanese Fascism, especially their military organisations, was a model for the formation of the Blueshirts. Furthermore, Eastman and Chang have not apprehended the important historical influence of the Chinese secret societies as well as Japanese secret societies, like the Black Dragon, on the Blueshirts. The Blueshirts tried to append those aspects to Fascism, which was an original European phenomenon, and integrate it within Chinese society. The central component of this re-evaluation is aimed at reaching as definitive an answer as possible to the question of whether the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation.

## Chapter Two

### **Chiang Kaishek's Espousal of Fascism: Inspiration from Japan and Germany**

Fascism as a phenomenon is complicated, and as discussed, literature about Fascism is substantial, complex and often contradictory. This chapter delineates the historical background against which the emergence of Fascism in China can be appraised, and characterises the process by which it started and the conditions leading to its assumption of power. In Europe, Fascism came up through the social, economic and political revolt of the immediate post-war period, which generated a turn against liberalism, democracy and Marxism. In Japan, it was the reactionary nationalist tendency superimposed on the fanaticism of the military that produced Fascism. The particular form of Fascism that emerged in China after 1932 may be explained against this background.

The discussion will focus on the influence Japan had on China's development from the end of the 19th century up to the 1930s. In this respect the Japanese connection will be examined for evidence that might help to explain Chiang Kaishek's later interest in Fascism. The discussion will consider the relative significance of the Japanese model, which was particularly important to Chiang and his adherents - the Blueshirts. This group formed the nucleus of the Chinese Fascists, who tried to expand their influence on Chinese society in the short period of their existence from March 1932 up to May 1938. The links between Chinese Fascism, Nazism and Italian Fascism are also to be examined. In this connection, some space will be devoted to the activities and influence of Chiang's German military advisers (1928-38), several of whom had been involved with the right-wing

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*Putsche* in Germany in the early 1920s. The Italian relationship is given brief attention, as its influence on the Guomindang was less important.

### **2.1 The Nature of the Guomindang**

The Three Principles of the People (*Sanminzhuyi*) advocated by Sun Yatsen were to play a fundamental role for China and the Guomindang. Sun's ideology became the Guomindang's guideline for the development of China, especially following the inauguration of the Nationalist government under Chiang Kaishek's leadership in 1927. While Sun may be seen as lacking both knowledge and skill in political science, he has always been referred to as the "Father of the Nation" (*Guofu* 國父), the one who planned China's development. Arthur N. Young, who served as a financial advisor to the Nationalist government, writes:

At this stage, creation of viable finances and rehabilitation of the economy after the revolution took priority over economic development. Yet Sun Yatsen's long-range programme of development was not forgotten, and several primary steps were taken.<sup>1</sup>

However, C.Martin Wilbur has described Sun's historical role in the following manner:

In historical terms, Sun is a transitional figure, reflecting the great Chinese passage from a decaying imperial tradition to an industrialising, nationalistic society. He played a political role in this transition, helping to bring about a republic and to prevent a monarchical restoration. Yet in historical perspective, he was only one among many figures swept along on the same tide. Sun spent an adult lifetime trying to reshape his country's political system according to his particular vision.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur N. Young, *China's Nation-Building Effort, 1927-1937*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1971, p.ix. See for details, *Jindai laihua waiguo renming cidian* (Dictionary of Recent Foreign Persons in China, Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1981, p.532. See also, BA, Deutsche Botschaft China, 09.02, vol..2245, *Foreign Advisers to the Chinese Government*, February 1931.

<sup>2</sup> C.Martin Wilbur, *Sun Yat-sen: Frustrated Patriot*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1976, pp.7-8.

The original Guomintang programme had called for parliamentary democracy and moderate socialism, although working for democracy inside the Guomintang was of more real significance than attempting to establish democracy in the country at large. After the establishment of the Nanjing government, the Guomintang began to depart from the tightly-organised democratic - centralist model imposed by the Russian advisers Michael Borodin and Vasili Blucher (Galim) only three years previously. The party remained, at least on paper, a highly organised political structure, and in certain respects grew even more authoritarian than before. Throughout the period of political tutelage, it officially based itself on the principle of party dictatorship, although in 1928 it was announced that the long-term goal was to found a constitutional democracy.<sup>3</sup>

At the core of the party's structure was the governing body, or Central Executive Committee (C.E.C.), which had the power to formulate the party's policy. When the C.E.C. was not in session this was done by the Political Council. A Military Council administered policies of a military nature, but it merely followed the instructions of the C.E.C. In contrast to this desire for an authoritarian centralisation, the Guomintang was riddled, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, with internal factionalism.

Therefore, after 1930, Chiang Kaishek sought a cure for the illnesses of China's Nationalist Revolution in Fascism. He allowed Fascist tendencies to enter his officer corps and more generally into his government - without his approval and support Fascism would not have taken root in China.

Fascism in China had no roots in either the common Chinese people or in the military. In China it was not a revolt by the masses against the government which gave rise to Fascism. It came to the attention of the

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<sup>3</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.40. See also, Ch'ien Tuan-Sheng, *The Government and Politics of China, 1912-1949*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970, pp.133-139.



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Chinese people through a more or less secret society, the Blueshirts, and the kind of Fascism the Chinese people were exposed to was an idiosyncratic form. During their existence the Blueshirts hardly ever appeared in the spotlight, and worked undercover within Guomindang governmental organisations. This situation was in great contrast to the development of Fascism in Europe, where the Fascist movements prospered in the open.

### **2.2 Chiang Kaishek's Bid for Fascism**

Chiang Kaishek once expressed his views regarding the National Revolution thus:

There is no easy task in the world; there is no difficult task in the world. Our people need only have absolutely sincere confidence in our own state and nation - enthusiastically supporting and actively carrying out the Three Principles of the People and the building of the state; unanimously recognising and jointly struggling for the purposes and objectives of the National Revolution. Then, even though future difficulties are as great as removing a mountain or emptying the sea, there is no reason why we shall not succeed.<sup>4</sup>

These words may have stimulated his followers to better achievements. However, in 1930 the feeling among many members of the Guomindang was that the Chinese revolution had failed, as Chiang himself admitted in 1932: "My only desire today is to restore the revolutionary spirit that the Chinese Guomindang had in 1924."<sup>5</sup> The Guomindang's loss of revolutionary spirit was obvious. Corruption was common in the rank and file of the Guomindang, and Chiang regularly reprimanded his subordinates severely for their misdemeanours.

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<sup>4</sup> Chiang Kaishek, *China's Destiny and Chinese Economic Theory*, London: Dennis Dobson, 1947, p.236.

<sup>5</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.1, see his footnote 3.

From the point of view of leadership, the Guomindang experienced three main problems during the Nanjing period: firstly, how to struggle against the Communist insurgency in the south and achieve national unity; secondly, how to carry forward into the economic sphere the spirit of reform and change which had dissipated so quickly after the Northern Expedition of 1926-1927; and, finally, how to solve the perennial problem of internal disunity and factions. Fascism appeared to offer a means of addressing all three issues. In his biography of Chiang Kaishek, Yang Shubiao describes the so-called “Fascist rule” of Chiang Kaishek:

The National Assembly of 1931 publicly treated Fascism as the political theory of the National Party's rule in China. The social basis of Fascism in China are: (1) the national crisis after the “September 18 event”, to resist the Japanese invasion in Manchuria; (2) the demands to reform the National Party Government by means of Fascism as well as the Three Principles of the People; (3) The big landlords and capitalists called to resist the threat of the Communist Party's land reform; (4) the successive effects in Germany and Italy, which stirred some Chinese to promote Fascism to strengthen China.<sup>6</sup>

In turning to Fascism, Chiang wanted also to provide his anti-Communist activities with a more structured ideological framework and greater militancy. In one of his speeches, Chiang emphasised: “Fascism is the enemy of Communism, and what we need is Fascism.”<sup>7</sup> Fascism also purported to offer a panacea for China's economic problems and a sovereign remedy for internal disunity within the party.

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<sup>6</sup> Yang Shubiao, *Jiang Jieshi zhuan*, (The Biography of Jiang Jieshi), Tuanjie chubanshe, 1989, pp.195-199.

<sup>7</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru shiryō: ranisha no soshiki to hanman kōnichi katsudō no jitsurei* (The Organisation of the Blueshirts and Examples of Anti-Manchukuo Anti-Japanese Activities), p.3.

### A. The Problem of Internal Unity

Under Guomindang rule, competition for political power was conducted not in society at large but within the councils of the regime itself. Because the distribution of political authority was determined less by formal chains-of-command than by the personal decisions of Chiang and his favoured aides, allocation of power was determined largely by personal influence. It was common practice, for example, for a new minister or bureau chief to dismiss the previous employees in that office and to replace them with his cronies and supporters.<sup>8</sup> The key to political success, therefore, lay less in the possession of technical expertise than in the maintenance of a personal relationship with the leaders of the regime.

Ch'ien Tuansheng has alluded to this phenomenon in the following terms:

Aside from the fact that it has an all-powerful leader in Chiang Kaishek, the Kuomintang is disrupted by its inclusion of a number of factions.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, factionalism was the principal medium for political struggle. It was another reason why Chiang looked for a powerful system which could control and direct the political power the revolution had concentrated in the hands of the Guomindang. Fascist organisational models appeared to be a solution to this problem, and the Blueshirts' founders, considering the central problem in China to be lack of unity,<sup>10</sup> followed the example of the Fascist parties in Europe advocating dictatorship for China.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Nationalist Era in China 1927-1949*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.26.

<sup>9</sup> Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, p.189.

<sup>10</sup> *Qiantu*, Shanghai, vol.2-2, 1933.

<sup>11</sup> *Shehuizhuyi yuekan* (The Socialist Monthly), "Zhongguo faxisizhuyi de xuanchuan yulun" (The Propaganda Opinion of Fascism in China), Shanghai, vol.1-7, 1933.

## **B. The Economic Factors**

Another factor in Chiang's seeking a solution in Fascism was the poor situation of the Chinese economy. The economic achievements of the Guomindang during the period 1927-37 have provoked a good deal of controversy. James E. Sheridan writes: "Some argue that the Guomindang wrought, under Chiang's leadership, a transformation with few parallels in history, whereas others see little more than the continuance of economic stagnation."<sup>12</sup> These conflicting schools of opinion agree, however, that the economic problems China faced were enormous. As Chiang was looking for a means of improving the Chinese situation in a short time, Fascism appeared to him one of the methods that could bring the Chinese economy into line with other successful countries like Germany, Italy and Japan.

One major cause of the serious situation of the economy was the deteriorating conditions in which the peasant majority lived. China has always been primarily an agricultural nation, and agriculture was the heart of the economy and the soul of the Chinese way of life.

The urgency of rural reform had been recognised by the Guomindang long before it had attained national power. However, opportunism and self-interest came to characterise the Guomindang government, for to espouse reforms was to risk being associated with Communism. The Guomindang's fear of Communism was itself one factor driving the party to conservatism. Nevertheless, the failure of the Nanjing government to effect rural reform was perhaps largely due to the fact that the government was essentially urban-oriented. The Guomindang was "in practice the Party of the bourgeoisie, who were not very well informed about and also not very interested in the problems of the countryside."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration; The Republican Era in Chinese History 1912-1959*, New York: Free Press, 1975, p.220.

<sup>13</sup> Sheridan, p.230.

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Monetary deflation caused much of the suffering in the rural areas, as China was the only large nation in the world whose currency was backed by silver. During the first three years of the world depression, the silver standard had been a stroke of luck for the Chinese economy. After the stock market crash of 1929 the price of silver dropped sharply compared to the price of gold. This led China, in contrast to most other countries, to enter a period of commercial and manufacturing boom, although, after the Japanese attack on Manchuria in September 1931 and on Shanghai in January 1932, this short period of prosperity came to an end. The confidence of foreign investors was rocked and Chinese producers were deprived of one of their largest markets.

One of Nanjing's major tasks was therefore to bring order to the currency system, for the circulation of different kinds of tael (silver standard) caused confusion. Finally, by 1935, the government had successfully outlawed the tael, and had created a standard currency which was the only legal tender throughout the country. Unfortunately the world depression had also reached China. In order to make their goods more competitive on the world market Great Britain and Japan abandoned the gold standard in late 1931. The result was that China was no longer attractive as an area of investment. The flow of silver into the country slowed as interest rates rose and prices fell.

At the same time, during these years of depression in the 1930s, a series of droughts and floods contributed to the agony of the farmers. There is no doubt that to a large degree monetary deflation and unfavourable weather conditions were the main cause of the agrarian crisis after 1931. Other causes contributing to the crisis to an increasing degree during the period of Guomindang rule were excessive taxation, usurious interest rates, and the inequitable system of land tenure. Chiang realised that harsh measures must be taken as quickly as possible to bring government officials and the economy under resolute control. Looking around for successful

models of transformation in the early 1930s, when the German Nazis had not yet seized power, Italian ideas of Fascism seemed the perfect answer. Fascism was promoted to save China:

After September 18, 1931, imitation of Italian Fascism gained the social sympathy. The forum for the future Chinese revolution is, 'Three Principles of the People (rightism) + Fascism (strong organisation). It means that, the Three Principles of the People of the National Party need the supplement of the new blood of Fascism... Fascism is the future for China... We have to use the Three Principles of the People as the substance, and Fascism as the function. In this way, there is hope for the rejuvenation of China.<sup>14</sup>

### **C. Foreign Ideology and Blueshirt Fascism**

Fascism seemed to political activists in many countries a “quick” solution to their internal problems and a formula for the unification of their nation. In this context China in the 1930s was no exception and, impressed by the success of Fascism in Italy and Germany, Chinese Fascists tried to imitate those components of Italian Fascism and German Nazism which seemed relevant to China. It should be noted that Chiang Kaishek was not the only Chinese politician who sought ways for China’s development as a modern nation by looking in part to foreign models of national development. Other politicians, for instance, Chen Lifu, Carson Chang, Zhu Jiahua, and later, after 1936, Wang Jingwei borrowed selectively from Germany and Italy, accepting what appeared compatible with their own philosophy and political situation.<sup>15</sup>

Chiang concentrated his policy on military and political unity, which he considered to be the fundamental precondition for China in the struggle for survival. It was therefore to the military sphere that Chiang - and later the

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<sup>14</sup> *Shehuizhuyi yuekan*, Shanghai, vol. 1-7, 1933.

<sup>15</sup> William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984, p.185.

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Blueshirts - looked in order to glean and emulate elements of European Fascism. Thirst for information about popular military education, sporting activities and national service increased dramatically following Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933. Furthermore, what interested Chiang most about Nazism were the qualities which enabled it to function efficiently as a regime: organisation, discipline and the ability to take harsh measures against dissidents.

However, the ideologists of the Blueshirts could not ignore Chinese history. Most of the time they therefore advocated "foreign" Fascist ideas mixed with the typical Confucianist features of classical Chinese thought. Furthermore, the powerful military right-wing of the Guomindang, the Whampoa Clique (of which the Blueshirts descended), many of whom had studied in Japan, brought to the ideological melting pot ideas flavoured with the typical Japanese military and thought of the Black Dragon, a Japanese secret society embodying radical nationalistic tendencies.

Liu Jianqun 劉健群,<sup>16</sup> one of the leading members of the Blueshirts, declared in 1969 during an interview with Eastman:

Fascism is now thought to be backward (luo-hou). But then it seemed to be a very progressive means of resurrecting the nation.<sup>17</sup>

In 1931, when Liu Jianqun wrote his seminal essay, "Gongxian yidian zhengli bendang de yijian" (貢獻一點整理本黨的意見 A Few Ideas for the Reform of the Party) he was only nineteen years of age, and some of his

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<sup>16</sup> Liu was born at 1912, in Zunyi, Guizhou Province. He graduated from the *Fazheng zhuanmen xuexiao* 法政專門學校 (Law Polytechnic School).

<sup>17</sup> Lloyd E. Eastman, "Fascism in Kuomintang China: The Blue Shirts", *China Quarterly*, January-March, 1972, p.3.

ideas were apparently inspired by the successful example of Italian Fascism.<sup>18</sup>

In this inspiration Liu was not alone, because the victory of Italian Fascism had accelerated the ripening of Fascist ideas in almost all European countries. According to Liu, the problems China was facing were: the poor condition of the Chinese economy, the poverty of the Chinese people especially in rural areas, the unequal treaties largely dictated by foreign powers, attacks on Chinese territory, and natural disasters. In addition to these problems, two superpowers - Japan and the USSR - were struggling for local hegemony in China. Japanese imperialism had already annexed Korea and Taiwan, while it had attacked Manchuria and was ready to conquer the rest of China. The USSR had to be regarded differently. Their support was ostensibly a gesture to help a weak country, yet hidden behind the USSR's friendly attitude was a conspiracy which aimed at involving the Chinese people in a civil war. The USSR's expectation was that this would bring China under their control.

Germany too, while less influential in China, was assisting the Nationalist cause simply in order to support the expansion of its own economic development, and to block the strategic advance of the USSR outside Europe. During interviews conducted in 1992 and 1993, Professor Deng Yuanzhong commented : "During the 1930s in fact Russia and Germany did not really have China's best interests at heart."<sup>19</sup> Then many politically involved Chinese referred to Germany and the USSR as nations who were successful in modernising and industrialising their country after

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<sup>18</sup> Michael R. Godley, "Fascismo e nazionalismo cinese: 1931-1938, in *Storia contemporanea* 4, no.4, p.741. See also, Eastman, "Fascism in Kuomintang China", pp.2-3; and TB. 2057, *Ranisha ni kansuru chosa*, p.2.

<sup>19</sup> My interview with Professor Deng Yuanzhong, Taipei, 13 August 1992 and 29 July 1993. Deng is the son of former Blueshirt leader Deng Wenyi.



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World War I. In connection to the efforts to modernise China Professor Deng mentioned that the Blueshirts were to be considered to some degree as the *Chinese Military Modernisation Movement*.<sup>20</sup> In this context one should keep in mind that the initial founders of the Blueshirts were members of the Whampoa Clique, which often was referred to as the *Army Clique*. Professor Deng's reference to the Blueshirts as the *Chinese Military Modernisation Movement* is reminiscent of the situation in Japan where the military and modernisation went hand in hand.

### **2.3 Japanese Fascism and its Impact on the Guomindang**

Due to their suspicion of Western Imperialism, at the beginning of the twentieth century Chinese intellectuals looked to Japan as a model for the modernisation of China and rather than directly to the West. Western imperialism constituted a danger to both China and Japan, against which radical reforms were thought to be the only favourable defence.<sup>21</sup> Preference for Japanese rather than European models was initiated by China's disastrous defeat at the hands of Japan in 1895. Indeed, the speed of Japan's victory was a salutary lesson in the benefit of modernisation.

#### **A. Japanese Imperialism**

After China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, an acute awareness spread among Chinese intellectuals that China was a vulnerable country in a competitive world.<sup>22</sup> The surrender of so much Chinese territory

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Prof. Deng Yuanzhong.

<sup>21</sup> W.G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, p.27.

<sup>22</sup> This Social Darwinian image of the world as a struggle for survival was also popularised by the writings of Yan Fu 嚴復(1853-1921).

was humiliating, particularly since the victors were the Japanese, whom the Chinese had always viewed with patronising superiority as neighbours who had once imitated their character, art and culture. The Japanese success was a profound psychological shock. In China growing nationalism coincided partly with the intellectuals' anti-imperialism, and social reform was actually directed against foreigners. The slogan of this Qing elite was “Chinese values and Western technology” (*Zhongti xiyong* 中體西用). In other words, their notion of reform was merely focused on military technology and development, while no attention was given to philosophical developments in the West.<sup>23</sup> Thus the Chinese reform movement actually used the modernisation of China as a pretext for militarisation.

The defeat in the war against Japan and its consequences did more than anything else to force the Chinese to evaluate their own strength and weaknesses. One of those who faced up to the rise in Japanese power was Sun Yatsen. However, Sun was just one among many Chinese who felt that the time had come for changes in China. “It is plausible to argue”, writes Mary Rankin, “that both Chinese elite and the Chinese state had begun to change already in the direction of slow reforms before the late 19th century. Japanese and Western imperialism then accelerated these changes and brought them to a critical point by introducing new industrial technology and organisation.”<sup>24</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century the governmental structure in China began to change, and opposition political movements arose with remarkable rapidity. These developments led to the 1911 Revolution against

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<sup>23</sup> D.Chung, unpublished MA dissertation, *Huang Zunxian's Analogy of East Asia : with Emphasis on Japan and Korea*, 1989. As a sub-theme to the major theme of nationalism, there was a strain of universalistic utopianism. As expressed by Kang Youwei, Chinese people should also learn Western thoughts and ideologies, not only Western technology.

<sup>24</sup> Mary Backus Rankin, *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986, pp.2-3.

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the Qing Dynasty, an uprising that ended the imperial state in China and set in motion processes that would continue to shape politics well into the following Republican period.

The influence of Japan was particularly great on Sun Yatsen and the political tradition which he carried forward. Sun spent a great deal of time overseas and the time he spent in Japan was of major influence on his thinking and his activities. Between his first visit in 1895 and his last visit in 1924, Sun stayed several times for different periods of time in Japan. Notwithstanding the fact that Sun had been a refugee in Japan, he was treated with respect by certain Japanese groups and developed many important contacts.

### **B. Japanese Secret Societies: The Black Dragon Society**

Secret societies were among the groups with which Sun Yatsen made contact while in Japan. As described in Chapter One, the rapid developments in Japan at the end of the 19th century had dissolved the Samurai as a separate class. The consequence of this was that revanchist elements among the Samurai based their hopes of rehabilitation on war outside Japan. Hence, groups of Samurai advocating a more aggressive foreign policy formed such secret societies as the Black Ocean Society and the Black Dragon Society. The Black Ocean Society was founded in 1881 by Hiraoka Kotaro, a mine-owner and former Samurai, and Toyama Mitsuru, taking its name from the Genkai-Nada 玄海洋灘, the gulf to the north-east of Fukuoka. In 1901 the Black Dragon Society, which is in Japanese equivalent to the Society of the Amur River, was formed by Uchida Ryohei and Sugiyama Gen, with the assistance of Toyama Mitsuru.<sup>25</sup> The Black Ocean and the Black Dragon

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<sup>25</sup> Sakurai Ryoju (ed.), *Kokuryu kai kankei shiryoshu* (The materials of the Black Dragon Society), vol. 1, "Kokuryukai to sono kikanshi" (The Black Dragon Association and their Organs), *Kokuryukai kanke shiryoshu* (The Materials of the Black Dragon Association),

Society were extreme nationalistic groups advocating a Greater Asia under Japanese rule. At the time of their establishment these societies represented the ideas of the current Japanese military system. After World War I contacts between right-wing movements in Japan, with their ideology based on Japanese *Kokusui shugi* 国粹主義 (Ultra nationalism or extreme patriotism), and those two societies developed. The character of *Kokusui shugi* may in English terminology best be described as proto-Fascism. From then on the Black Ocean and the Black Dragon Societies evolved from nationalistic into primarily Fascist groups. Chiang Kaishek and other Guomintang leaders were familiar with the concept of *Kokusui shugi* through their relationship with the Black Dragon Society and the Japanese military. The ideas may have influenced the Guomintang, especially after 1927 when Chiang came to power. Chiang Kaishek and his followers may have been inspired by the ideas of *Kokusui shugi* when founding the Blueshirts.

Kita Ikki, the aforementioned “ideological father” of Japanese Fascism, also was a member of the Black Dragon Society. Ultra-nationalism or *Kokusui shugi* developed into *Minzoku shugi* 民族主義 (ethnocentrism or racial nationalism), and the idea was perfected by Kita bringing forward that all embracing concept of *Dai Ajia shugi* (大亞西亞主義) or Pan-Asianism. Many nationalists organisations arose in Japan after WW I, but perhaps the most important such an organisation, was the *Dai Nihon kokusuikai* 大日本國粹會 (Greater Japan Nationalist Essence Society),<sup>26</sup> which had direct connections with the Hara government.

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Tokyo: Aishobo, 1992. The hieroglyphics of the name of the Amur river (forming the frontier with Russia and north Manchuria) means “Black Dragon.”

<sup>26</sup> Based on *Kokusui shugi* was the *Kokusuikai* founded in 1919, and had among its main sponsors Tokonami Takejiro, Home Minister in the Hara Cabinet.

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The Black Dragon Society in particular kept up relations for a long period with Sun Yatsen and his revolutionary group.<sup>27</sup> Uchida knew Sun Yatsen through Miyazaki Toten<sup>28</sup> and decided both to support Sun and use him at the same time. The Black Dragon Society had every interest in keeping up with the revolutionaries in China as their goal was to get a firm foothold in China, especially Manchuria. To that end, in 1911 Uchida organised a special secret society, the *Yurinkai* 有鄰會, for the purpose of supporting Chinese revolutionary organisations. When, in 1911, the revolution broke out, Toyama possibly accompanied by Uchida, went to China with a group called *Shishi dai* to assist the revolutionaries.<sup>29</sup> The character of this Japanese group *Kesshitai* (Juesidui 決死隊 - death-defying corps),<sup>30</sup> was similar to the Guomindang faction *Cici* or *Xixiyuan* (西西園 West West Garden), which was established in 1927 by Chiang Kaishek and Wang Jingwei.

On 15 January 1912 Uchida was invited by the Republican government to act as Foreign diplomatic advisor. Uchida financially supported the Guomindang through the *Yurinkai*. Though, it is more likely that Uchida had introduced the Chinese revolutionaries to a group of Japanese financiers, who gave them a loan for the purchase of weapons.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> George M. Wilson, *Radical Nationalist in Japan: Kita Ikki 1887- 1937*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1969, pp.45- 47.

<sup>28</sup> Of the two brothers, Miyazaki Toten (Miyazaki Torazo) and Miyazaki Yazo, Sun met the first in 1897 in Yokohama and then became very close friends with both.

<sup>29</sup> Marius B.Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954, pp.105-107. The *Shishi* were self-appointed guardians of the national conscience.

<sup>30</sup> Ishimaru Tota, *Sho Kaiseki* (Chiang Kaishek), Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1937, pp.132-135.

<sup>31</sup> Sakurai Ryoju (ed.), pp.vi-vii.

The military leaders in Japan were highly satisfied with Uchida's group, and the Black Dragon society was soon virtually transformed into the secret agency of the Japanese War Ministry abroad. Its services were always resorted to when, in view of existing agreements, the state power in its official capacity could not very well execute some pieces of unseemly work abroad.

Their frequently very effective agents operated more or less independently of the official Japanese intelligence system under the stimulus and direction of various patriotic societies, the prototype of which was the Black Dragon Society. There was a number of smaller groups which, like the Black Dragon Society, were engaged in propaganda work and set up schools to train operatives. It is certain that many operatives recruited and trained by these patriotic societies have played important parts in the work of the official Japanese Intelligence System. Apart from the intelligence produced by their independent agents, the societies functioned primarily as a training ground and recruiting agency for potential intelligence personnel. The Black Dragon Society prepared persons for all this work in special schools of foreign languages in Tokyo and Osaka.<sup>32</sup>

Aside from its support of the Chinese Revolution of 1911, members of the Black Dragon Society were active in many other countries, for instance among the Moslems of Russia and Asia, and in the Indian Independence Movement. With an eye to further Japanese control of all Asia, the Society worked towards infiltration. The Black Dragon Society had maintained subsidiary organisations for the purpose of collecting economic, political and strategic information in various parts of Asia and the carrying on of contacts with organisations sympathetic to the Japanese brand of Pan-Asianism. The

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<sup>32</sup> NA, RG 226, SIF (Shanghai Investigation Files), Entry 182, box 11/72, "Japanese Intelligence System", A memorandum prepared by Headquarters X-2 Washington, 11 July 1945.

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Society controlled high government officials either by direct membership or by blackmail or terrorism.<sup>33</sup>

Following the militarists' assumption of complete control of Japan and open embarkation on expansionist policy in the 1930s, it appears probable that the Black Dragon Society had fulfilled a larger part of its needs. In Japan its influence and importance seems to have decreased. However, it is likely that it was still used abroad as an "unofficial" espionage agency of the Japanese Government. The apparent decrease in prominence of the Black Dragon Society in Japanese affairs was not due to persecution by the authorities, but because its members were working abroad, and it was best that they should work in secret.

The three main organisational characteristics of the Black Dragon Society share much in common with the Blueshirts. Both organisations operated secretly, established ad hoc fronts and employed terrorist methods to enforce their aims. The organisational characteristics of the Black Dragon Society had certainly been known by Sun Yatsen and also by those Chinese students studying in Japan. It is therefore likely that the establishment of the Blueshirts was carried out with this Japanese organisation very much borne in mind.

The Black Dragon Society never developed into a mass organisation and comprised no more than about twenty thousand members in the whole of Japan.<sup>34</sup> The Black Dragon Society also functioned as a centre for the creation of legal organisations in Japanese society, a function which to some extent parallels the way the Blueshirts operated in Chinese society. While

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<sup>33</sup> NA, RG 226, SIF (Shanghai Investigation Files), Entry 182, box 11/72, "Japanese Intelligence System", A memorandum prepared by Headquarters X-2 Washington, 11 July 1945.

<sup>34</sup> O.Tanin and E. Yohan, 1973, p.47.

both organisations remained ostensibly secret, their memberships strove to find outlets through the establishment of legal organisations.

It should also be noted that many of the men in key positions in the Japanese Government and in the bodies directing Japanese intelligence activities are known to have been members of the Black Dragon Society or of one of its affiliates. That this situation closely mirrors the activities of the Blueshirts in China further suggests a parallel between the two organisations. The Black Dragon Society was still in existence in Japanese affairs during the Second World War, albeit as an executive organ of the military of Greater Asia.<sup>35</sup>

### **C. Learning from the Japanese Example**

From the end of the 19th century many Chinese students received their education in Japan. Generally speaking the Chinese students were concentrated in one place, such as the *Hongwenguan* 弘文館 founded in 1902 in Tokyo. This concentration of accommodation allowed for intensive reading of and discussion on Chinese politics. The *Hongwenguan* became a breeding ground for revolutionary and dissident thoughts. It is worth noting that this place still exists in present-day Japan under the name *Ri Zhong jiaoliu xiehui* 日中交流協會.

Kauko Laitinen has written: “Chinese students studying abroad formed an important revolutionary vanguard without which ideas of democracy and nationalism could hardly have penetrated the Chinese mainland as efficiently

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<sup>35</sup> NA, RG 226, SIF (Shanghai Investigation Files), Entry 182, box 11/72, “Japanese Intelligence System”, A memorandum prepared by Headquarters X-2 Washington, 11 July 1945.



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as they did.”<sup>36</sup> Tokyo around the turn of the century became the virtual centre of the Chinese revolutionary movement.

Students were an important propaganda force. This was recognised by Sun Yatsen and Huang Xing 黃興 who formed revolutionary groups under which students could carry out their revolutionary activities. Much of the revolutionary students' activity in China was carried out under the guise of secret revolutionary organisations, with names like the Revive China Society (*Xingzhonghui* 興中會) from Canton, the China Arise Society (*Huaxinghui* 華興會) from Hunan and the Restoration Society (*Guangfuhui* 光復會) from Zhejiang. These societies served the goal to unite both revolutionary intellectuals and secret society members in order to propagate anti-Manchu revolution and act accordingly.<sup>37</sup>

An important interlude, with possibly far-reaching consequences in relation to the formation of the Blueshirts, was when Chiang resigned government office in August 1927. Shortly after his resignation, Chiang went to Japan at the end of September 1927. On 13 October, he met his friend Zhang Qun 張群<sup>38</sup> and two others, who brought Chiang to the house of Toyama Mitsuru 頭山滿 (the founder of the Black Ocean Society). The two men had never met before, but from the beginning there was mutual respect, and it seems that Toyama saw in Chiang a great man for China's future.

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<sup>36</sup> Kauko Laitinen, *Chinese Nationalism in the Late Qing Dynasty, Zhang Binglin as an Anti-Manchu Propagandist*, London: Curzon Press, 1990, p.49.

<sup>37</sup> Laitinen, pp.49-51.

<sup>38</sup> Born in Sichuan in 1888, he was appointed Director-General of the Shanghai Arsenal on behalf of the nationalist Government in March 1928. After receiving a thorough Chinese education, he attended the Baoding (Chihli) Military Academy, following which he went to Japan and attended the Japanese Officers Military Academy. While in Japan he became affiliated with the Chinese Students Revolutionary Party. He returned to China in 1910. However, after the occupation of Nanjing in the spring of 1927, Zhang was appointed a member of the Military council. On 5 March 1928 he was appointed director general of the Shanghai Arsenal.

Toyama's memoirs recall that Chiang wanted to co-operate with Japan. Moreover, Chiang had emphasised the need to resist the Communist influence in China, and to counteract their power, internally and if necessary also externally.<sup>39</sup> During the discussion between the two men, a kind of informal co-operation between the Black Dragon Society and the Guomindang was agreed upon.

During his intermezzo in Japan, Chiang also had the opportunity to meet the then Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi in Hakone (although there is disagreement about the exact meeting place).<sup>40</sup> The talks between the two men concerned Sino-Japanese co-operation and the situation in Northern China with respect to the Northern Expedition. The meeting ended in disappointment for Chiang Kaishek, as Tanaka disagreed with Chiang to carry on the Northern Expedition.<sup>41</sup> However, one of the more positive results of this talk came to fruition in 1928, when Chinese military students began to be sent to Japan for further study. The above information becomes very important in relation to the information provided by Deng Yuanzhong in his book *Sanminzhuyi Lixingshe shi*.

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<sup>39</sup> Ishimaru Tota, pp.132-135.

The Japanese newspaper *Hochi shinbun* 報知新聞 published an article on 14 December 1936 about Chiang Kaishek. Toyama had introduced Chiang to his neighbour Kawano Chosei 川野長成 who was a very rich man. Chiang and his group stayed at Kawano's house on the second level for over ten days, but during this time Chiang made trips to Hakone and Nikko. Toyama, Kawano and Chiang and Zhang, during their dinners, talked about Sino-Japanese friendship. These events are recorded from the memoirs of Kawano during the Xi'an Incident period.

<sup>40</sup> Katokawa Kotaro, *Chugoku to Nihon rikugun* (China and Japanese Army), vol.2, Tokyo; Keibunsha, 1978, p.14.

<sup>41</sup> Katokawa.. See also, Keiji Furuya, *Chiang Kaishek's Life and Times*, New York: St. John's University Press, 1981, pp.225-226.

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Among the students who were secretly recruited to continue their study in Japan was Teng Jie 滕杰.<sup>42</sup> This was part of a plan developed by Chiang Kaishek, after his first retirement from office, to send Whampoa graduates systematically to Japan for further training. The plan started with the selection of five students from each of the first six classes. Finally, by the summer of 1931, there were more than sixty of the former Whampoa pupils in Japan enrolled at variety of schools. Their education was mainly divided into two parts, *Wen* 文 (Pen: knowledge) at Waseda and Meiji University, and *Wu* 武 (Sword: action) which was offered by Chiang's own former school, the Shikan gakko, the Artillery school, and the Cavalry School.<sup>43</sup>

Future Blueshirts members among this group included, Teng Jie, Gan Guoxun, Ren Juewu 任覺五, Ye Wei 葉維, Pan Youqiang 潘佑强, Du Xinru 杜心如, Qiu Kaiji 邱開基, Peng Mengji 彭孟緝, Li Yimin 李一民, Zhou Fu 周復, Yi Deming 易德明, Ge Wuqi 葛武啓, Ruan Zhai 阮齋, Yan Denghan 嚴登漢, Chen Jingxian 陳景賢, Hu Jingxian 胡競先, Li Shizhen 李士珍, Li Guojun 李國俊, Le Gan 樂干, while two other men, He Zhonghan 賀衷寒, Xiao Zanyu 蕭贊育 also went to Japan to continue their study when they came back from the USSR.<sup>44</sup>

Teng Jie enrolled at the political and economic science department of Meiji University. He started to research political parties, and was able to find materials on three issues 1) isms or ideology, 2) organisation, and 3) activities or practices. This information certainly helped Teng when the time came to form the Blueshirts. Those students in Japan reflected upon the

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<sup>42</sup> TB, 2057, p. 258, Teng Jie, was one of the main initiators of the Blueshirts. He was born in Jiangsu in 1905, graduated at Whampoa Military Academy (4th class).

<sup>43</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, *Sanminzhuyi Lixingshe shi*, Taipei: Huangpu jianguo wenji bianzuan weiyuanhui, 1984, p.82.

<sup>44</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.82-83.

existing situation when they found out that their host country was developing an increasingly aggressive attitude towards China.

Many of those who later became important military leaders in Republican China, including Chiang Kaishek himself, had received training at Japanese military schools.<sup>45</sup> Chiang attended, beginning early 1908, a three-year course at the school and, at the same time, joined the *Tongmenghui* (同盟會 Alliance Society), where he encountered Sun Yatsen at one of the many secret meetings he attended. In December 1910 Chiang concluded his training at the preparatory school and served in connection in the Japanese Army as a candidate for the Military Academy.

Chiang's service in the Japanese Army afforded him an opportunity to observe the workings of the Japanese military system from the inside. He believed that the strength of the Japanese armed services lay in their rigid discipline, political indoctrination and their technical education. Unquestioning acceptance of orders and unquestioning belief in the infallibility of their superiors constituted the essence of Japanese military discipline.<sup>46</sup> He obviously never forgot these characteristics and tried to instil them in his army. They are, furthermore, characteristics which both inspired and permeated the Blueshirts organisation some two decades later.

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<sup>45</sup> *Sinica* (Monthly), vol.3, no.11/1992. "Meiji Nihon to Chugokujin ryugakusei" Chinese Students and Meiji Restoration's Japan, Tokyo: Daishukan shoten. pp.21-26. The Sejo gakko was originally founded in 1885 as a preparatory school for Japanese students who wanted to enrol in the Rikugun Shikan gakko (The Military Academy) in Tokyo. On the highest level, the principal members of the Whampoa Military Academy were trained in the Rikugun Shikan gakko. These included Chiang Kaishek, Ho Yin-chin, Wang Po-lin and Chien Ta-chun, Chen Qimei. See also, Furuya, pp.11-19. The military preparatory school this source mentions is the Shimbu Gakko, which was also a preparatory school especially for Chinese students established by the Japanese in 1903. It could, however, not be confirmed what the difference was between the Sejo Gakko and the Shimbu Gakko.

<sup>46</sup> Furuya, pp.11-19.

#### **D. Japanese Militarism and the Fascist Movement**

After World War I Japan's first parliamentary government was formed. As in Germany and Italy, this regime was fragile and unstable, unable either to manage the deepening economic crisis of the 1920s or to proceed with economic transformation without massive social disruption. In this respect, the origins of Fascism in Japan are broadly similar to those in Germany and Italy.

However, it was the military in Japan which was most influential in shaping the political evolution of the country, and the army was the centre of the Fascist movement in Japan.<sup>47</sup> The word Fascism in Japan may be applied especially to the movement among the military.<sup>48</sup> The influence of the civilian right wing did not expand of itself, but was able to become an important factor in Japanese politics only when it joined hands with the military and the bureaucracy. Noteworthy about the Japanese Fascist movement was that many of its members were followers of *Shinto* 神道<sup>49</sup>, the state religion in Japan. The Japanese Fascist movement respected Shinto and that had its interaction with the military.<sup>50</sup> This factor played an important role in Japanese Fascism. Shinto was a strong binding factor between the Japanese people, and Shinto religious groups and the military wing, who both advocated ultra-nationalism, integrated with each other in the 1920s, a relationship which became even stronger in the 1930s. For instance Uchida, one of the founders of the Black Dragon Society, was a believer in

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<sup>47</sup> Tanin and Yohan, p.173.

<sup>48</sup> Fält, p.61.

<sup>49</sup> Way of the Gods. The religion of the ancient Japanese was for the most part a simple worship of the power of nature, but there were also elements of shamanism and ancestor worship. Later, after the introduction of Buddhism, the conglomeration of early religious practices and beliefs was given the name Shinto.

<sup>50</sup> Wan Feng, pp.35-36.

Shinto, more especially the Omotokyo 大本教.<sup>51</sup> During the 1930s among the believers of Omotokyo were military men, politicians and rich industrialists. Uchida was aware of the powerful influence of Omotokyo and intended to use this group for his own organisation and financial assistance.<sup>52</sup> However, in the 1930s, the relationship between Omotokyo and the Japanese military had much stronger bonds than those between Uchida himself and the military.

It should be noted that the Italian Fascists and the German Nazis clearly differ from Japan in having won State power from outside the administration, chiefly by mobilising the strength of civilians.<sup>53</sup> In European Fascism the military element was also significant but - especially in its early phases - it did not shape the Fascist movement to the same extent as it had in Japan.

Apart from the Japanese secret societies, especially the Black Ocean and the Black Dragon, several factions operated within the Japanese military system. They worked along the lines of a secret society, directing, organising

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<sup>51</sup> Hatsuse Ryuhei, *Dento teki uyoku; Uchida Ryohei no kenkyu*, Kyushu: Kyushu University Press, 1980, p.310. In 10 January 1925, Uchida stayed in Kyoto, Omotokyo's accommodation and he discussed with *Seishi, Teguchi ojiri saburo* (Uchida may have persuaded him to join or to support). Uchida chose the Omotokyo because he assumed its specific aim was to abolish the governmenting support of State Shinto. This should be seen as a direct attack on Ultra-nationalist ideology, something Uchida may have tried to prevent from happening. The stated aims of disestablishing state religion included preventing a recurrence of the perversion of Shinto theory and beliefs into militaristic and ultra-nationalistic propaganda designed to delude the Japanese people and to lead them into wars of aggression..

<sup>52</sup> Hatsuse Ryuhei, pp.311-316. Uchida and Toyama (counsellor) established the *Dai Nihon seisan to* 大日本生産黨 (Great Japan Production Party), in 28 June 1931 in Osaka, were approximately 1500 members participated. The Great Production Party declined as a political force after 1933, but even thereafter it had a fairly large membership. The production Party consisted to a large extent of Kansai elements belonging to the old traditions of the Amur River Association. Perhaps, in essence the *Seisanto* was a modernised version of the old *Kokuryukai*.

<sup>53</sup> Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, London: Oxford University Press, 1963, p.52.

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and controlling their members. This is analogous to the Blueshirts in China, which also was a semi-secret society with its main strength in the military. Examples of such secret societies within the Japanese military system are, for instance, the *Jinji no kai* 人事の會 (Personal Affairs Society) established by graduates of the *Rikugun daigaku* 陸軍大學.<sup>54</sup>

As in Japan, secret societies in China also worked within the military. An exhaustive list of the personal relationship that Chiang Kaishek had with fourteen secret societies of different origin is given in Appendix 1.

One of these societies was the *Gancheng tonglian hui* 干城同聯會 (Gancheng People Association) with Chen Cheng 陳誠 as leader. This society consisted of three different divisions and had a powerful military influence. Another society with the appearance of a military club was the *Lizhishe* 勵志社 (Moral Endeavor Society) with Wang Lizhang 汪立章 as leader. Branches of this society existed in many places. The leader, Wang Lizhang, had a special connection with Chiang Kaishek. A society made up of Whampoa Military Academy graduates and with strong connections with the Blueshirts was the *Huangpu tongxuehui* 黃埔同學會 (Whampoa Graduates Association). Its leader was He Zhonghan 賀衷寒 and its chief was Yan Bailing 嚴百齡. This group spread out over many places, especially in the big cities. Another society, the *Huang ling ma gua* 黃綾馬卦, was composed of the first to the third class of

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<sup>54</sup> Wan Feng, pp.72-75. The Rikugun daigaku is the Japanese Military Academy. The graduates of Rikugun daigaku, men like Kobadake, Nagada, Tozho, Yamaoka, Kawamoto and Itagaki, wanted to innovate the power of the military in benefit of the nation. They founded a society with the name *Jinji no kai* around 1923-24. The *Jinji no kai*, again founded another faction which was *Futaba kai* 雙葉會 (Cotyledon Society) made up of Manchuria and Mongolia specialists. Another faction was *Mokuyo kai* 木曜會 (Thursday Society), composed of military armament specialists. (reference, 15 September 1928, Ugaki's Dairy).

Ishiwara Kanji, Suzuki, Nemoto, and Muto founded in 1928 the *Mumei kai* 無名會 (Anonymous Society or Shadow Society), a faction that prepared for a future war and discussed about Manchuria and Mongolia. Furthermore, the navy's faction *Oshi kai* 王師會 (The Rule of the Master Society) and the army's faction *Sakura kai* 櫻會 (Cherry-Blossom Society), were two military Fascist secret societies that had relations with civilian Fascist groups of Okawa Humei, Mankawa, Yasuoka and Nishida.

the Whampoa Military Academy students and of current staffs from the Central Army. More information about the relationship of secret societies with and their influence on the Blueshirts is presented in Chapter Five.

In Japan, the connection between modernisation and militarisation was very close even before the rise of Fascism.<sup>55</sup> One reason for this was the rapid improvement in the efficiency of the Army. The General Staff had been created on the German model by German advisors, and was one of the first thoroughly modern elements of Japanese society during the period of the Meiji reform.<sup>56</sup> The victories over China in 1895 and Russia in 1904, were due mainly to Japan's rapid industrialisation and adoption of Western techniques. Japanese modernisation, in turn, emphasised an intense nationalism and militarism, and by 1905 Japan was ready to begin competing openly in the search for new colonies in the Far East.<sup>57</sup>

Chiang Kaishek never forgot the experience he had gained during his service with the Japanese army. During a speech to students held in June 1932, at the Whampoa Academy, Chiang spoke about the Japanese Imperialist spirit of the *Samurai* (Bushido). This spirit was something the Chinese cadets of the Academy also should adopt, he said, and then direct it against the Japanese.<sup>58</sup>

This speech of Chiang's may have contributed to the idea shared by foreign observers, that the Blueshirts had added the spirit of Bushido to their

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<sup>55</sup> Beasley, p.35. The Imperial institution deserved much of the credit for the orderliness with which the Japanese endured the upheavals of modernisation.

<sup>56</sup> Beasley, p.36. The principal German adviser was Major Klemens Meckel, who arrived in Japan in 1885.

<sup>57</sup> Harold Hakwon Sunoo, *Japanese Militarism, Past and Present*, Chicago: Nelson Mall, 1975, p.31.

<sup>58</sup> Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kaishek] jiangshuji (The Collection of Jiang Jieshi's Speeches and Talks), *Lixing zhexue* (Implementation Philosophy), Chongqing: Huangpu chubanshe, 1940, p.1.



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guiding principles.<sup>59</sup> Chiang also made the telling remark that “the rise and fall of nations is the responsibility of the Military.”<sup>60</sup> This further emphasises his principal view.

The connection between militarism and Fascism in Japan was indissoluble. The same remains true for militarism and Fascism in China. Thus, Asian Fascism may be characterised as the increasing imposition of military values on political and civilian life. In China where there was no Fascist party, the ideas of Fascism continuing to be propagated from within the military wing of the Guomindang. It should not be forgotten that the Guomindang was very much a militarist organisation, having in its leader Chiang Kaishek a man schooled in the doctrines of the Japanese military rather than the bureaucratic polity of traditional China.

The impact of Japanese militarism on Chiang Kaishek and the Whampoa cadets was considerable, and Japanese Fascist ideas were becoming increasingly well known throughout China in the Nanjing period. Besides the strong presence of the military aspect, it was the control from above that attracted Chiang most to Japanese Fascism. He admired them for their success to unify Japanese society to such a large degree, and to indoctrinate the people with values Chiang so favoured, for example the organisation, the rigid discipline, and their technical education.

By 1930, many Japanese books about Fascism had already been translated into Chinese, published in Shanghai and distributed nation-wide (See the list below). These Japanese materials were supplemented from 1932 onwards by a number of other books about Fascism.

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<sup>59</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.36.

<sup>60</sup> *Lixing congshu* (The Lixing Series), Huangpu chubanshe, Chongqing: Huangpu chubanshe, 1933, p.25, a speech by Chiang Kaishek in Nanchang, December 1933.

It is also interesting to compare the treatment of Japanese Fascism in the Guomindang's own journals. The right wing *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 (The Eastern Miscellany) wrote at length on Japanese Fascism.<sup>61</sup> It traced the formation of Japanese Fascism to the Black Dragon Society, the ultimate representative of all nationalist organisations, and its promotion of imperialism and "Asian values." The Black Dragon Society became a supporter of the ultra-nationalist *Dai Nihon seisanto* party on its founding in June 1931. At the time there were many groups with a strong nationalist character in Japan, but these groups were quite divided and needed a powerful organisation like the *Dai Nihon seisanto* in order to co-ordinate them.

Articles in *Dongfang zazhi* were also quite negative. They spoke of the uncertain political situation in Japan and condemned the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Japanese propaganda surrounding the invasion and the strength of the Fascist parties in Japan was called into question. That Fascism, or at least ultra-nationalism, was the motivating force in Japanese politics, was beyond doubt.<sup>62</sup>

The left wing *Nanfang zazhi* 南方雜誌 (The Southern Miscellany) pointed out that Fascism in Japan was not a predominant force until after the invasion of China. However, unlike Germany and Italy, where Fascist regimes strengthened the economy, in Japan an economic crisis followed the invasion of China. In practice, Japanese Fascism amounted to the control of politics by the military.

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<sup>61</sup> *Dongfang zazhi* (The Eastern Miscellany), Shanghai, vol, 30-3, 1933, pp.25, 29.

<sup>62</sup> *Dongfang zazhi*, p.23. The Cabinet of Inukai Tsuyoshi (December 1931- May 1932) and the Cabinet of Saito Makoto (May 1932-July 1934) used the *kokusui shugi*, ultra-nationalist organisation, in order to introduce Fascist ideas in their policy and so trying to dominate the government.

Catalogue of Japanese Books Translated in China <sup>63</sup>

AUTHOR	TRANSLATOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	YEAR
Fujii Tei 藤井 梯	Chen Baohua 陳寶華 Xing Moqing 刑墨卿	<i>Faxisi zhuyi zhi lilun yu shiji</i> 法西斯主義之理論與實際 (Ideal and Reality of Fascism)	Shanghai xin shengming 上海新生命	1929
Tsuchinaru Masami 土成方美	Wang Zhanggong 王長公	<i>Faxisidi zhuyi yundong zhi sixiang yu yundong ji zhengce</i> 法西斯蒂主義運動之思想與運動及政策 (Ideology and Policy of the Fascist Movement)	Shanghai huatong 上海華通	1932
Imanaka Tsugimaro 今中次摩	Zhang Wojun 張我軍	<i>Faxisidi zhuyi yundong lun</i> 法西斯蒂主義運動論 (Theory of the Fascist Movement)	Beiping Renwen 北平人文	1933
	Jin Kuiguang 金奎光	<i>Minzhushenhui zhuyi yundong lun</i> 民主社會主義運動論 (Theory of Social Democratic Movement)	Shanghai huatong 上海華通	1933
Kawano Mitsuo 河野 密	Tian Qiu 天囚	<i>Faxisi zhuyi zhi zuzhu yu lilun</i> 法西斯主義之組織與理論 (Organisation and Theory of Fascism)	Shanghai huadong 上海華通	1933
Zama Katsuei 座間勝平	Shu Yiping 舒貽平	<i>Riben faxisi yundong</i> 日本法西斯運動 (Japanese Fascist Movement)	Beiping chenbao 北平晨報	1933
Gorai Kinzo 五來欣造	Liang Weizhi 梁畏之	<i>Faxisi zhuyi ji qi guojia lilun</i> 法西斯主義及其國家理論 (Fascism and Nationalism)	Shanghai minzu 上海民族	1935
Kinishita Hanji 木下半治	Lin Jidong 林紀東	<i>Riben faxisi zhuyi</i> 日本法西斯主義 (Japanese Fascism)	Shanghai shangwu 上海商務	1937

<sup>63</sup> Tan Ruqian, *Zhongguoyi Ribenshu zonghe mulu* (Catalogue of Japanese Books Translated in China), Hong Kong: Zhongwen daxue, 1980, pp.366-381. The names of the Chinese translators are possibly an alias.

## **2.4 European Fascism and Its Influence on Chiang Kaishek's Drive for Power**

Fascism in Europe emerged as a reaction to the circumstances after World War I. Due to the destruction caused by the war many European countries found themselves in deep crisis, and many people, influenced by the successful Russian Revolution, began to turn to Communism. There was a real fear that the Bolshevik Revolution would spread across the continent and it was from this post-war crisis that Fascism appeared.

### **A. German Influence on Developments in the Guomindang**

While Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek learnt much about the spirit that emanated from the right-wing movements during their stays in Japan, the close military relations between Germany and China should not be overlooked.

If conditions in Germany and Italy were chaotic and demoralising, the state of affairs in China was much worse as the First World War drew to a close. China's economic problems were not limited to a few years of hyperinflation or the effects of the Great Depression - they were general, continuous and all but insurmountable. The sense of betrayal which the "front generation" felt in Germany and Italy was common in China too. Despite the pronouncements of President Wilson about self-determination, China found herself still shackled by the "Unequal Treaties" and, to make matters worse, German colonial interests in China were simply taken over by Japan.

German - Chinese contacts had existed since the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, which clearly had exposed China's military incompetence. Two new armies were created that largely followed the German system of organisation, training, and drill instruction. It should not be forgotten that

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during the period of the Meiji reform in the late 19th century Japan also modelled its army according to the German example and benefited from German military advice. Chinese interest in German military and technical expertise gave rise to another aspect of Sino- German relations that was to re-appear during the Nanjing period: the utilisation by German industry of German advisers in China to promote trade.

The beginnings of a German influence with the Guomindang date from the last year of the First World War, when Berlin hoped to bring a pro-German faction to power in China and use it to wage war against Russia and Japan. Failing this, they at least wanted to keep China neutral and out of the war altogether. Unlikely as it may seem in retrospect, they decided to back Sun Yatsen in his bid for power in Canton in July 1917. According to German sources, "German officials met with Sun in Shanghai in March to induce him to overthrow Duan Qirui 段祺瑞.<sup>64</sup> In April Sun declared himself ready, and demanded two million dollars for the purpose of influencing the Army and Navy."<sup>65</sup> These dealings appear to have been initiated by Sun as one of his many efforts to gain foreign assistance for the revolution. It should be noted, however, that Sun himself always strenuously insisted that none of this had taken place - in a letter Sun wrote to the American-Consul General in Canton he denied categorically ever receiving German funds.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Born in Anhui in 1864, he graduated from the Beiyang Military Academy in Tianjin in 1885. Duan studied artillery science in Germany in 1889, and assisted Yuan Shikai in training modern troops in 1895, and in suppressing the Boxer Uprisings in Shandong in 1900. He became Commander of the 3rd division of the Imperial Army in 1904. He first fought on the side of the Manchu House, but later took lead in asking the Manchu Emperor to abdicate.

<sup>65</sup> Kirby, p.29, see his footnote; DZA (Deutsches, Zentral Archiv), Deutsche Botschaft China 09.02, nr.2232, (115-117), Memorandum by Knipping (German Consul General in Shanghai), 20 December 1917, cited in J.Fass, "Sun Yatsen and the World War One", *Archiv Orientalni* 35 (1976), p.116. See also Wilbur, p.93.

<sup>66</sup> Wilbur, p.93, with reference to his footnote 48.

Certainly Sun had not abandoned his political intuition and was by no means entirely in the “Kaiser's” pocket. This became clear with the recognition by Sun's Canton government that a state of war existed between China and Germany, only a month after the Peking government had declared war in August 1917.

After World War I, Sun again sought support from Germany for his government in Canton, and remained very keen on German participation in China's development, partly because of the renowned skill of German workers.

For German industry, the war was to prove no more than an interruption in its attempts to participate directly in Chinese economic development. These efforts were given new impetus and direction as a result of industry's co-operation in post-war German rearmament and after 1927, the beginnings of political stability in China under a Guomindang regime committed to the “international development of China.” Even after the arrival of Soviet advisers, beginning with Mikhail Borodin in October 1923, Sun continued his efforts to maintain good relations with the Germans. Although he did not see the kind of success he had hoped for in his own lifetime, it is certain that many of the contacts he made during these early years were to prove of great importance for the government of his successor. Sun died in 1925 but the co-operation between Germany and China was continued and extended by Chiang after 1928.

With the onset of the warlord period the thirst for arms had increased considerably in China, this was also an important factor behind the German recovery in the economic relationship with China immediately after World War I. Despite the restrictions imposed by the Versailles Treaty of 1919, the Germans managed to transport arms into China.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> FOH (Foreign Office Archives, The Hague), code G nr.145 and code J1, nr.252; The Germans successfully eluded the Versailles Treaty, and managed to transport arms and

## B. The Guomintang and German Military Advisers

Deprived of Soviet advisers and support in the wake of the split with the Communists, in 1927 Chiang urgently needed an alternative to Soviet aid in many areas of Chinese society, particularly in terms of aid to modernise his army. Aid to the newly established Nanjing government was offered by the Germans.

At the beginning of the Republic of China, numerous tasks remained to be undertaken, the former president Chiang...eager to make use of the German experts to help the construction in various fields, especially in the military and police, that was the key reason why he wanted to promote the Sino-German relations.<sup>68</sup>

Not only German advisers were employed in China, but also several American, French, British, Dutch and, later Italian nationals.<sup>69</sup>

The Chinese were already enthusiastic buyers of German weapons, all kinds of industrial equipment and semi-manufactured articles. This was demonstrated by increasing German imports to China during the years 1920-27. The value of German arms imported to China amounted to over 10 million dollars a year, more than half of all foreign imports.<sup>70</sup> In this respect it seemed logical to expand this co-operation and Chiang looked for a closer relationship with Germany by offering former German military men and civilian specialists posts as advisers in China.<sup>71</sup> The hiring by Chiang of

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ammunition to China despite the Treaty. They used, among other methods, Dutch steamers who first went to the Dutch-Indies, before unloading their illegal cargo in Chinese harbours.

<sup>68</sup> Xin Damo, "Deguo waijiao dang'an zhong de Zhong De guanxi" (Sino-German Relations in the German Diplomatic Archives 1928-38), *Zhuanji wenxue*, vol.41-4, October 1982.

<sup>69</sup> BA, Deutsche Botschaft China, 09.02, nr.2245, (245), German General Consulate Shanghai, 27 May 1931, about foreign, *not German*, advisers to the National government, a full list of names is given, regarding the respective task of these advisers to the government.

<sup>70</sup> Kirby, p. 25.

<sup>71</sup> MAE, Asie-Océanie, E 503, *Instructeurs Militaires Allemands en Chine. Article 179 du Traité Versailles*, April 1931. Most of this activity was, strictly speaking, illegal. Not only had

German advisers had led several provincial governments, notably Zhejiang, also to employ civilian German advisers. Creation of heavy industry in China was the centrepiece of the co-operation between the two countries. The direction of the relationship between China and Germany was later influenced by the emergence of a clear Guomindang strategy for military and industrial development, as a consequence of the invasion in Manchuria by the Japanese, and the need of the Nazis, after their seizure of power in 1933, for raw materials.<sup>72</sup>

At the end of 1934 Chiang predicted that a World War would emerge by 1936.<sup>73</sup> He planned to reorganise his army by establishing new training centres in Nanchang, Wuchang, Luoyang, and Hangzhou. In order to fulfil his goal, Chiang set about engaging more German, as well as American and Canadian, advisers.<sup>74</sup>

The first German military man to have an important influence on China's development in the Nanjing period was Colonel Max Bauer (1869-1929), who became Chiang's earliest German adviser in 1928. During his short stay in China he had the opportunity to present his ideas directly to Chiang, and he became a respected and honoured man in China. Although Colonel Bauer was not personally close to the circles of Nazi around Hitler, he was familiar with many influential people who supported the movement. Bauer's political convictions were extremely nationalistic, as his participation

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article 170 of the Versailles Treaty forbidden the export of German war material, but article 179 proscribed the employment of German nationals in a military capacity abroad.

<sup>72</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2239, *In agreement with Chiang Kaishek, the re-organisation of Chang Hsueh-liang's army will be set about by German Military advisers*, Peking, 21 April 1932.

<sup>73</sup> Yamaki Yoshiko, "Chugoku ni okeru fasci shugi o megutte" (China and Fascism), *Chugoku kankei ronsetsu shiryō*, vol.41-14, 1972, p.220.

<sup>74</sup> Yamaki, p.220.



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in the Kapp-Putsch of 1920 had indicated.<sup>75</sup> His ideas were, however, different from the Nazi-ideology of Hitler.<sup>76</sup> Bauer did not see in Hitler a capable leader and refused to co-operate with or to accept orders from him.

Colonel Bauer went to China in November 1928 at the invitation of the Nanjing government and founded the German advisory mission that remained in China until 1938.<sup>77</sup> Within a couple of months Bauer expanded his advisory staff to twenty-six advisers with men who were all experts in their respective professions.<sup>78</sup> As well as consolidating Germany's position in China, Bauer's mission exposed the Chinese officer corps to Fascist influence from Germany for the first time. Although Bauer himself cannot be described as a typical Fascist, among the German advisers, especially after 1930, were military men with avowed Nazi ideas.

Chiang Kaishek and Bauer became close personal friends, and, according to the German newspaper *Die Brücke* published after Bauer's death in May 1929, Chiang saw in Bauer a friend and above all his best adviser.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Kirby, p.48, with reference to his footnote 42. See also, Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945*, London: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.429.

<sup>76</sup> Carsten, pp.116-117.

<sup>77</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2236, Deutsche Botschaft China, (248-249), Shanghai, 5 December 1928; See also Kirby, pp.38-61. Bauer actually went to China for the first time in November 1927, probably at the invitation of the Canton government, returning to Germany in March 1928.

<sup>78</sup> BA, 09.02, J. nr. 475/30, Deutsche Botschaft China, (85-86), Tientsin, 24 March 1930, Nanking and, 25 January, 1930, (110-112, 113-118). See also, MAE, Asie-Océanie, Chine 537, 22 November 1930 and E 503, April 1931. With respect to the numbers of German advisers, the German documents mention the names of thirty-nine advisers at 15 January 1930. The French documents mention in November 1930 the number of forty six advisers, and gives in 1931 the names of twenty-eight advisers. The exact number of advisers at any time during the period of their stay in China could not be ascertained, however, the total number of German advisers involved may not have exceeded sixty or seventy at the time of their withdrawal in 1938.

<sup>79</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2244, Deutsche Botschaft China, (248,249) , "Die Brücke", 17th May, 1930. "His death on 6 May 1929 was mourned by his German and Chinese friends and officials, and he was given a state funeral at Shanghai."

The post left vacant by Bauer was soon filled by Colonel Herman Kriebel.<sup>80</sup> However, his first tenure in Nanjing was a short and unhappy one.<sup>81</sup> Kriebel served briefly, 1929-30, as Chiang's military adviser. Later, in 1934, Kriebel was appointed by Hitler as German Consul-General in Shanghai, where he also took over as head of the "Far Eastern Nazi Organisation."<sup>82</sup> Kriebel was a Nazi, but there is little information to prove that he and Chiang were close personal friends; there is also no evidence that there even existed a close formal relationship between the two men. The impression from German documents is rather that their relationship remained a purely diplomatic one. Indeed, it is probable that Chiang's and Kriebel's ideological views clashed; perhaps this is why Kriebel's stay in Nanjing was so short.

The successor of Kriebel was General Georg Wetzell, who was appointed "Adviser General" to Chiang in Nanjing in May 1930. Wetzell was in service from 1930-34 and was almost exclusively devoted to the question of military training and battlefield tactics. The relationship between Chiang and the German advisers was seriously weakened during the tenure of General Wetzell. Especially Wetzell's close relationship with T.V. Soong 宋子文 appeared to have been particularly unacceptable to Chiang, and from March 1932 he began to search for Wetzell's replacement.

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<sup>80</sup> Kirby, p.155. Chiang's request for information on Nazism grew following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, and was funnelled to Ernst Bauer by Liang Yingwen, the former chief of the Trade Department in Berlin, who by then had become a secretary to Chiang Kaishek.

<sup>81</sup> Kirby, p.62.

<sup>82</sup> NA, SMP. D.4724, April 1936, *Memorandum on the affairs of the local Nazi party*. This branch of the Nazi party was set up to instruct German citizens in China in the tenets and beliefs of National Socialism. See also, Donald M. McKale, "The Nazi Party in the Far East, 1931-45", in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.12 (1977), pp.291-311.

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General Hans von Seeckt went to China in 1934 at the exclusive invitation of Chiang, to oversee the military advisership and to reorganise the Chinese army.<sup>83</sup> Following retirement, von Seeckt had moved increasingly into the realm of military and political theory, seeking to generalise his concept of the state and the role of the army in it. One of von Seeckt's arguments was that the army was the key to state power, a position which appealed to Chiang's imagination. Although von Seeckt was not a Nazi, and had his own pronounced ideas, he became closer to the circles around Hitler after the latter's rise to power in 1933.

General von Seeckt functioned not only as Adviser-General to Chiang from 1934-35, but was also Trustee of the Chairman of the Military Council reorganising the Chinese army, overseeing and reorganising the work of the German advisership.<sup>84</sup> He developed successful relations with Chiang, who had been impressed by his plans to reorganise the Chinese Army. After von Seeckt completed his work in China, he returned to Germany in early March 1935, and continued his work in the economic realm from Berlin. Formally he remained Chiang's adviser until his death in December 1936.<sup>85</sup> It was at

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<sup>83</sup> BA, 09.02, nr. 2238, Deutsches GeneralKonsulat Shanghai, nr.P57, 13 March 1934, and Nanking 26 May 1934, and 5 June 1934, the last two both marked "secret." See also MAE, Asie-Océanie, nr.483/2, *La Mission du General von Seeckt en Chine*, Shanghai, 17 Avril 1934. The exclusive appointment of General von Seeckt was at the repeated request of Chiang Kaishek. The German documents reveal, however, that when von Seeckt continued to refuse Chiang's appeal, there was a possibility that the French Marshall Pétain was going to become the Guomindang's Adviser-General. The entire German adviser staff was then also to be replaced by French military advisers. Under pressure from the German Foreign minister von Neurath and the minister of Defence von Blomberg, von Seeckt, despite his weak health, finally consented to the demands. Both ministers, in turn, promised the full support of the German government.

<sup>84</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2238,Deutsche Botschaft China, (56-60), Nanking 26 May 1934, (99), Shanghai, 13 March 1934, an article in the *Shishi xinbao*, nr.2239, p.1, Nanking, 18 February, 1935.

<sup>85</sup> Kirby, p.120. In order to handle future trade on an official level between Germany and China, on 24 January 1934 HAPRO (Handels Gesellschaft für Industrielle Produkte) was

von Seeckt's suggestion that General Alexander von Falkenhausen became his successor to lead the advisory mission from 1935 until they were forced to leave in 1938.

Chiang Kaishek's successive dealings with the German advisers ignited within him an interest in ideas and political practice of Fascism. It was through this network of political, military and financial relations which flourished between Germany and China in the late 1920s and 1930s that Nazi ideas began to flow from Berlin towards Nanjing. Bauer, Kriebel, Wetzell and others saw themselves as preservers of a true, if temporarily abandoned, "German spirit"<sup>86</sup> and they built the Chinese military apparatus according to the German model.

The withdrawal of the military advisers in 1938 was the result of Germany's preference for cultivating relations with Japan rather than China. The problem of maintaining links with both countries had posed itself ever more sharply for Germany during the 1930s.

In 1935, the newly-appointed Japanese Ambassador in Berlin, Count Mushakoji, remarked in a speech that Germany and Japan had a natural affinity for each other. He said that "With the advent of the Third *Reich*, which in *Geist* resembles in so many ways the spirit of Japan, a rapprochement was under way." The Nazi party's racial experts were already working on ways of restoring relations to their former cordiality, which they did by suddenly discovering that the Japanese were "Aryans."<sup>87</sup>

In November 1936 the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact was duly signed, marking a decisive shift in German interests away from China

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founded. General von Seeckt continued to work for this important trust after he returned to Berlin. Hans Klein, director of HAPRO, was his personal friend.

<sup>86</sup> Kirby, p.151. The "German Spirit", in this sense, meant the German Military's will to win and to survive.

<sup>87</sup> NA, nr.762.94/60, speech in Hamburg 15 June, 1935.

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towards her more powerful neighbour.<sup>88</sup> Japan insisted that closer relations with Berlin depended on sacrificing connections with China, and it became increasingly clear that the days of the German advisers in China were numbered. Finally, in May 1938, von Ribbentrop, *Reich* Foreign Minister, sent a telegram via Dirksen, the Ambassador in Japan, to Trautmann the Ambassador in China, ordering him to start withdrawing the military advisers immediately. According to this telegram “withdrawal is due to Hitler's anxiety that Japan might win an early victory” in her war with China.<sup>89</sup> Any contact maintained between Germany and China after 1938 was very much low level.

That Chiang Kaishek not only had used German military advisers but also profited from Japanese military advice is described by Inaba Masao 稲葉正夫.<sup>90</sup> Major-General Okamura Yasuji 岡村寧次<sup>91</sup> of the *Guandong* army (*kantogun* 關東軍)<sup>92</sup> and famous China expert, was an adviser to

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<sup>88</sup> NA, nr.762.94/30,36 *German-Japanese Agreement*, Tokyo, 4 December, 1936.

<sup>89</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2247, *Deutsche Botschaft China*, (38) 25 May 1938.

<sup>90</sup> Inaba Masao, *Okamura Yasuji daisho shiryō* (Materials on General Okamura Yasuji), Tokyo: Hara shobo, 1970, pp.1,5. See also Katogawa, pp.14-15.

<sup>91</sup> Okamura Yasuji (1884-1965), graduated at the Rikugun Shikan Gakko Military Academy the 16th class (1904). In 1913 graduated at the War College Rikudai. He went to Siberia and was in Qingdao(1915-1917), Beijing (1917-1919), Europe(1921-1922), Shanghai(1923-25, 1932). Chief of Staff of the *Guandong* army (1932-1934), Commander of North China Area Army (1941-1944), supreme commander in China (1944-1945). In 1921 Okamura and two other classmates of the Shikan Gakko's 16th class met in Baden-Baden in Germany. There they promised each other that they would devote their lives to Japan.

<sup>92</sup> Alvin D.Coox, “The Kwantung Army Dimension”, in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989. Peter Duus, Ramon H.Myers, and Mark R.Peattie (eds.), pp.395-428. The origins of the Kwantung army date back to the era of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. It was a Japanese military garrison in Manchuria, and the Kwantung Army (*Guandong* army) as such was created in 1919. At the time of its creation was more an administrative than a tactical grouping. Until 1930s the force that came to be known as the Kwantung Army possessed a rather misleading geographical identification deriving from its historical antecedents, and more importantly, constituted an army in name alone.

China and, until his death in 1965, had been very close to Chiang Kaishek, Chen Cheng 陳誠 and many other Guomindang leaders. In November 1933, Okamura also was a member of the Japanese delegation that had met with the Chinese delegation to talk about the future of Manchuria. Remarkable in this respect is that in 1907, Okamura was instructor of the *Rikugunshikan gakko* 陸軍士官學校 and in this qualification was responsible for the education of Chinese students. During his time as an instructor, he trained the Chinese students Chen Yi 陳儀, Yan Xishan 閻錫山 and Sun Dianfang 孫殿芳. These three military academy students later became close to the Guomindang, Chiang Kaishek, and may even have been related to the Blueshirts.

## 2.5 The Nature of Chinese Fascism

### A. Influences from Italy, Germany and Japan

Allusions to Fascism appeared in China in the early 1920s when the term *fanxi* 泛西 entered the Chinese vocabulary. At this time, it applied only to the Italian Fascist party. The term *faxisidi* 法西斯蒂 meaning Fascisti entered into usage, but *faxisi zhuyi* 法西斯主義, which is used to mean the ideology of Fascism in general was only used after 1933.<sup>93</sup>

That Chiang overtly intended to set up a Fascist organisation in China is beyond dispute - his own statements on the subject are unequivocal. In a speech during the second Blueshirts Convention, in late 1933 or early in 1934, Chiang declared:

Foreign countries having a prominent party are ruled by this party, the prominent party in China is the Guomindang, however, the Guomindang seems only to function as a formal organ with no power. Fascist parties in other countries are successful and it seems that in the near future they

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<sup>93</sup> Kirby, p.153. This analysis is based on titles of periodical articles containing terms for Fascism, as compiled in the comprehensive monthly indexes of, *Renwen yuekan*, 1930 - 1935.

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will be able to expand their power with even more success, therefore I declare that China also needs a Fascist party.<sup>94</sup>

The question of exactly what kind of Fascist party he thought China needed and the source of his inspiration has been the subject of much scholarly debate in recent years. As the development of the term *fanxi* indicates, China was at first aware of Fascism only as a localised Italian phenomenon. The question then arises whether Italian Fascism had any substantial influence on developments in China.

The ideology of Sun Yatsen's Chinese nationalism originally shared substantial affinities with that of the Italian nationalists, who later in 1920 joined the Italian Fascists of Mussolini. However, it should also be noted that whatever similarities there were between Guomindang and Italian nationalists, there were also significant differences: for instance the aggressive and expansionist tenor of Italian nationalism is not to be found in Sun's ideology.

In terms of practical relationships Italy never approached the scale of involvement in China which Germany achieved, presumably as Italy was less industrialised than Germany, and could not provide the same quality of technical support and advice as Germany. Although Italy's industrial development had been considerable, and in the 1930s the Guomindang was assisted by a group of Italian aviation specialists under command of General Lordi to set up the Chinese Airforce,<sup>95</sup> it could not hope to rival Germany's position in the Far East.

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<sup>94</sup> TB, 2057. *Ranisha ni kansuru chosa*, p.49.

<sup>95</sup> NA, 865.22793/1, document from the American Consulate General in Shanghai, 25th July, 1934. *Chinese Aviators go to Italy for training: Italian interest in Chinese aviation*. See also, BA. 09.02, nr.2246, (32), Nanking, 4th September, 1935. *North China Daily News* article about Gen.Lordi.

How far did Italian and/or German Fascist models influence Chinese Fascism? It may be correct that the Blueshirts' ideologists were well informed about European Fascism, however, this did not mean that Chinese Fascism was formed along those lines. The Blueshirts' organisation and structure was basically Chinese in character, while through the significant influence of the Whampoa cadets who had studied in Japan, the military element was largely drawn from the Japanese. Therefore, despite the German influence on the Chinese military via the advisers, and despite all the information which came from Europe to China about Fascism, it was the Japanese model which the Chinese military understood best. In this connection it can be argued that ultimately both the Chinese and Japanese army was influenced by German military concepts. As mentioned above, the Japanese General staff in the 1880s had, through German military advisers, been created on the German model.

Chiang showed an interest in Nazism only when it was on the verge of seizing power, and what actually intrigued him about Nazism was its organisation. One major objection to the argument that Chiang hoped to create a Nazi-style organisation is the clear lack of any evidence of German involvement in setting up the Blueshirts. Certainly, official German documentation lends little support to the idea that Germany was involved in the creation of the Blueshirts. Indeed, German diplomatic circles in China seem to have been as mystified by the emergence of the new organisation as all the other European embassies and Foreign Offices.

According to German diplomats at the embassy in Shanghai, Hankou, and Beijing, it was difficult to gather reliable information about the Blueshirts. A message by the Minister-Resident in Beijing to the Consul-General Kriebel in Shanghai, who was asking for information about Fascist Movements, reveals: "To provide accurate material about the Blueshirts is very difficult, because when the subject is discussed with Chinese people



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they always avoid the issue or declare that they do not want to get involved.”<sup>96</sup> Despite this problem the German diplomats managed to get information about the Blueshirts’ existence and their goals, although it was much less detailed than the SMP reports. The information in the report from Beijing gives a brief description of the Blueshirts’ foundation and their activities. An account from Consul-General Kriebel to Berlin a few months later provides essentially the same information. This indicates that it was indeed difficult for the German diplomats to get detailed information. Nevertheless, as the information shows, the origin of the Blueshirts and Chiang’s connection with the organisation was detected:

Last year Whampoa cadets under leadership of Tung Wen Yen [Deng Wenyi] presented a clear and convincing plan to Marshall Chiang Kaishek. Chiang approved the plan proposed. In this way China’s first Fascist Movement was founded with the name *Wen hua hsieh hui* 文化協會 (Cultural Association), with its headquarters in Nanking.<sup>97</sup>

German documents about a visit of the Chinese Vice-Minister Tang Youren 唐有壬<sup>98</sup> to the German ambassador Trautmann in Beijing also

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<sup>96</sup> AAPA (Auswärtiges Amt, Politisches Archiv, Bonn), code, Chi. IV 933, 1506/3150/34. *Organisation der Blauhemden in China* (The Blueshirts Society in China), Hankow, den 26 März 1934, by Minister-Resident Timan.

<sup>97</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2235, Deutsches Generalkonsulat in Shanghai an das Auswärtige Amt in Berlin, den 24, September 1934, nr.B.316: *Fascistische Vereinigungen in China, und Neue Lebensbewegung*, by German Consul-General Kriebel. The same document also mentions the foundation of the *Wen hua xiehui* (文化協會), by Chen Li-fu. However, the document seems to have switched both names. Although the Chinese characters given in the document refer to the correct societies, the *Zhongguo wenhua xiehui* (*Chinese Culture Study Society*) was a Blueshirts’ front group founded in December 1933. The *Zhongguo wenhua jianshe xiehui* (*Chinese Cultural Construction Association*) was an association founded around January 1934 by Chen Lifu. See also Kirby, pp.162-163.

<sup>98</sup> Government Official, son of Tang Caizhang (one of the early Guomindang martyrs), born at Liuyang, Hunan, 1894. He studied public finance at Keio University in Japan, and graduated from that institution in 1919. Tang was director of the Department of Economic Research, and elected reserve member of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang, December, 1931. Secretary-general, Central Political Council in 1932. A member of Legislative Yuan, Administrative vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Department of Asiatic Affairs of the Ministry 1933-35, assassinated at Shanghai December 1935.

support the view that the Germans officially were not well informed.<sup>99</sup> During this visit Trautmann tried to obtain information from Tang Youren about the Blueshirts movement, and Tang replied that it was quite unlike the Fascist movements in Italy or Germany. The Minister became evasive, however, when Trautmann pressed him on the subject of political assassinations. There is, in short, no indication of any insider knowledge about the Blueshirts in any of the German diplomatic sources.

The founding of a National Socialist Party (*Zhongguo minzhu shehuidang* 中國民主社會黨) in China in the 1930s may also lead one to the false conclusion that it was inspired by Nazism.<sup>100</sup> The party's spiritual mentor was the reformist Liang Qichao, as Ch'ien Tuan-sheng writes:

It was formed by the amalgamation of the National Socialist Party of Carsun Chang and the Chinese Democratic Constitutionalist Party formed by Chinese living in North America. The latter party was the lineal successor of the Emperor-Preservation Association of Kang Youwei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, and the leaders of the former including Carsun Chang, were, in greater and lesser degrees, associated with the Research Clique of Liang Qichao in its various phases.<sup>101</sup>

According to an intelligence report the date and place of founding of the party was in 1934 in Beijing.<sup>102</sup> The founders being Carsun Chang<sup>103</sup> (Zhang Junmai 張君勱), Luo Longji 羅隆基, Zhang Dongsun

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<sup>99</sup> AAPA, code, IV Chi 654, Deutsche Gesandtschaft, nr. 205, Aktz. 1506/2549/34, 8 März 1934, Trautmann, Peking.

<sup>100</sup> Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, pp.354-355. Ch'ien mentions the *Zhongguo minzhu shehui dang*. This party has been known in the West as "Social Democratic Party," but its leader, Carsun Chang, preferred to render it as "Democratic Socialist Party." See the *New York Times*, 21 March 1948.

<sup>101</sup> Ch'ien, p.355.

<sup>102</sup> NA, SIF (Shanghai Investigation Files), RG 226, 13W3, 3/34/A, entry 182, box 51/ 263, "The National Socialist Party", pp.1-9.

<sup>103</sup> Carsun Chang (Zhang Junmai, 1886-1969), was born in Jiading xian in Jiangsu province in 1886. His native district was Baoshan xian, Jiangsu. Zhang received his middle school education from the Institute of Modern Languages at Shanghai. He went to Japan in 1904,

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張東蓀, Li Gengnian 李庚年, and Pan Guangdan 潘光旦. Among the total members the most were students and a few were politicians. The principle and policy of the organisation was National Socialism; with emphasis on Absolute Patriotism and Progressive Patriotism.<sup>104</sup>

The National Socialist Party offered its support to Chiang Kaishek and declared to uphold the Three Principles of the People. Since its establishment, the policy of the party had been anti-Communist. However, after the outbreak of the war with Japan in 1937, the party gradually changed its attitude. The result was that relations between the Nationalist Socialist Party and the Communist Party improved. For the realisation of their proposals at the People's Political Council they joined the Democratic League. In any case the party was far from being a Nazi party related to Fascism.<sup>105</sup>

### 2.6 Summary and Conclusions

The Guomindang's task of creating a strong national government was hindered and limited by internal conflict, inept administration, the continued imperialist role in China, and most importantly, its weak hold over rural

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where he graduated at the Waseda University in Tokyo in 1909, having taken the Political Science Course. Upon returning to China he attended the Imperial Examinations for returned students and was subsequently made a Han Lin Compiler or Compiler of the College of Literature, a degree equivalent to Ph.D. After the outbreak of the first revolution in October 1911, Zhang resigned from the Han Lin post, and became editor-in-chief of the *BeijingTianjin shibao*, Tianjin. In 1912, immediately after the establishment of the Republic, Zhang was appointed secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. In 1931 Zhang went to Germany, where he studied at Berlin University. He also spent almost a year in England. Zhang is the author of standard works such as, "Draft for the Chinese Constitution" and "Social Democracy in New Germany." He wrote also many philosophical articles.

<sup>104</sup> NA, SIF (Shanghai Investigation Files), RG 226, 13W3, 3/34/A, entry 182, box 51 nr 263, "The National Socialist Party", pp.1-9.

<sup>105</sup> Ch'ien, p.355. The policies and programs of the Democratic Socialist Party are in general close to those of any social democratic party.

China. Chiang Kaishek's energies were directed foremost at neutralising military and political forces that might undermine his authority.

That the Guomindang turned to Fascism followed from the stress of circumstances in the 1930s, as a result of a general feeling that the revolution had failed, due among other things to the malfunctioning of the Guomindang government and its officials, and exacerbated by the worsening of the economic situation.

Chiang's ultimate goal was to transform and modernise the whole of Chinese society, and he decided to adopt Fascism as the vehicle for this transformation. He intended to begin mass-mobilisation of the Chinese peasantry his agenda of social transformation, but remained reserved on this point and set up the Blueshirts as his "task force" to accomplish this goal of a "revolution from above." Chiang drew on the experiences of various constituencies within the Guomindang when founding the Blueshirts. Students who had studied in Japan had been influenced by the Japanese Fascist movement. They brought to the ideological melting pot ideas flavoured with the typical Japanese military and extreme nationalistic thought of the Black Dragon Society.

The parallel between Japanese and Chinese Fascism continues in their religious and philosophical backgrounds, as well as their approaches to Fascism. Japanese Fascism developed within the state religion Shinto and could thus easily integrate with the existing culture. Fascism accordingly adapted to suit the religion. In China it was also tried to reshape Fascism into a form which could exist alongside the Confucian ideas and background of the Chinese people. Furthermore, the way the Blueshirts seemed to function in Chinese society parallels the methods of the Black Dragon Society in Japan. Following Chiang's visit to Japan in September 1927, Whampoa graduates, many of whom were to become Blueshirts, were systematically sent to Japan for further training. The influence of this society and of the

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secret societies working directly within the military must have been an example to the founders of the Blueshirts.

The Fascist influence also came from army officers, police officers and government officials, who had been exposed to Nazism and European Fascism, partly through the German advisory missions and partly through visits of Chinese military and police officers to Europe. Broadly speaking, European Fascism was an inspiration for, rather than a direct influence on, the Blueshirts. Chiang was very selective in borrowing from Germany and Italy, and it was from Japan that the principal lines of the new organisation were drawn.

Chinese intellectuals had access to information about Nazism and Italian Fascism, but in no known case did the values of these dimly-understood foreign ideas completely transform the thinking of those who came into contact with them. Most intellectuals were educated in traditional Confucianism and whatever overlays of foreign thinking they may have acquired, it was their traditional views and values which dominated their arguments in favour of the founding of a Fascist organisation in China. Therefore they advocated “foreign” Fascist ideas mixed with typical Chinese thought and ancient Chinese - Confucianist - features. The form of Fascism espoused by Chiang Kaishek and which permeated the Blueshirts organisation is perhaps best termed idiosyncratic.

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### The Emergence of the Blueshirts

The formation of the Blueshirts coincided with a period of great tension in China. The threat from Japanese imperialism culminated, in September 1931, in the invasion of Manchuria. It is likely that this invasion triggered the formation of the Blueshirts, the initiators of which were Whampoa cadets studying in Japan.

It may be argued that the Blueshirts developed more as a reaction to Japanese imperialism, rather than as a direct result of the influence of Italian Fascism or German Nazism. One of the main initiators of the movement, Teng Jie, had little knowledge of European Fascism at the time the Blueshirts were founded.<sup>1</sup> Liu Jianqun, the man who, because of his well-known essay to reform the Guomindang, was seen as the spiritual father of the Blueshirts may, however, have had some idea about European Fascist concepts.<sup>2</sup>

Everything about the Blueshirts - their origins, their political role, and even their name - has been the subject of controversy. Most research on the Blueshirts has concluded that the Blueshirts' name and organisational model originated in Germany or Italy, and has compared them with the Italian Blackshirts and Nazi German Brownshirts. Whatever influences may have

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<sup>1</sup> Lloyd E. Eastman, "The Rise and Fall of the Blueshirts; A Review Article", in *Republican China*, Vol. XII, November 1987, p.40. Teng Jie studied in 1931 in Japan, but Eastman's article does not reveal that he had any notion about European Fascism. However, after 1932 he frequently visited Germany and Italy, and "got so deeply impressed by "Hitler Germany, that he strutted about in a Nazi uniform." See also, Lincoln Li, *Student Nationalism in China, 1924-1949*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994, p.54.

<sup>2</sup> Eastman, "The Rise and Fall", p.40. Liu referred to Italian Fascist concepts in his essay, *A Few Ideas for the Reform of the Party*, (described later in this Chapter). See also Hung-mao Tien, *Government and Politics in Kuomintang China, 1927-1937*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972, pp.55-56. Note: In order to put things in a correct perspective, when Liu Jianqun wrote his essay he was only nineteen years of age, and was serving as He Yingqing's secretary.

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come from Fascist organisations in Europe or Japan, it should be noted that the history of China provides many examples of organisations that resemble the name “Blueshirts.” For instance, during the Ming Dynasty, the Emperor's secret police was known as the “Brocade Shirt Guardians” (*Jinyiwei* 錦衣衛).

The previous chapter discussed how European Fascism was characterised through mass mobilisation. The representative of Chinese Fascism, the Blueshirts, were in essence a small, élitist military group inside a larger political party. Due to there being a quite active secret police force within the Blueshirts’ organisation, many observers have reached the false conclusion that the organisation was nothing more than this. In fact, the Blueshirts represented a much broader organisation.

The stated aims of the Blueshirts were far from being unique in modern Chinese politics. It was their method of organisation and their ruthlessness which was “new.” Previously, organisations and tendencies within the Guomindang had declared their dedication to Chiang Kaishek and his endeavour to unify and modernise China. The most important of these groupings, the C.C.Clique (CC 系), had ended up causing Chiang so many difficulties that by 1932 he decided a different approach was necessary to bring about the change he sought in the party and in the country.

The C.C.Clique had been able to organise students and workers in anti-Japanese bodies, but it was not successful in controlling their behaviour. Thus, the anti-Japanese feelings unleashed by the C.C.Clique in July 1931 - and provoked further by the invasion of Manchuria - soon became unmanageable, and in December 1931 led directly to Chiang Kaishek's downfall. Intense criticism from anti-Japanese militants who were angered by Chiang's policy of appeasement and ensuring internal unity before resisting the Japanese, eventually forced him to resign as President. Chiang blamed the

C.C.Clique for this, and this sentiment paved the way for the creation of the Blueshirts.

### **3.1 Description of the Blueshirts**

It became increasingly clear after the establishment of the Nanjing regime in 1927 that neither the party nor the civil administration of the Guomintang were adequate to the task of building the nation and shaping a coherent government policy. Consequently, the relative power of the military gradually began to increase, while the power of the party and government institutions correspondingly waned. The continuing threats from the Japanese in North China and the on-going campaigns against the Communists only served to strengthen the power of the militarists. Increasingly, the formal organs of the party ceased making decisions themselves and simply approved what had already been decided by the factions around Chiang. These factions operated in the political arena as the most viable alternative to the paradox of a system which vested immense authority in the President, yet whose moribund bureaucratic structures were too weak to implement central decisions.<sup>3</sup>

It was Chiang's ability to manipulate these internal factions which contributed to his ascendancy in the Nationalist movement. He seldom committed himself irreversibly to an ideological position or factional policy. He easily accommodated himself to, without becoming a part of, any faction which might afford him political advantage. He also had a talent for retaining the loyalties of factions, that were bitterly antagonistic to each other, for instance, the C.C.Clique and the Blueshirts.

Following the Japanese invasion in 1931, Chiang was caught off-guard, and found himself momentarily unable to control the internal politics

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<sup>3</sup> Tien, *Government and Politics in Kuomintang China, 1927-1937*, p.45.



of the Guomindang in the usual way. Certain key cliques lost confidence in his leadership ability. As Chiang was apparently incapable of performing the primary function of a head of state, that of defending the national territory, the call arose for him to resign. As a result, Chiang left power and “retired” to his native village in Zhejiang province, although he retained his military position.

Chiang's semi-retirement brought about a coalition of interests between those political thinkers in the party who had published authoritarian manifestos calling for a more dictatorial form of rule and Chiang's own plans to reassert himself as undisputed master of the party and of the country. It was against this background that the Blueshirts came to play an important role in Chinese politics.

#### **A. The Formation of the Blueshirts**

The original stimulus for the Blueshirt Movement came from Teng Jie, a graduate of the fourth class of the Whampoa Military Academy (*Huangpu junxiao* 黃埔軍校) and one of over sixty Whampoa graduates who had gone on to study at Japanese universities and military academies.<sup>4</sup> Teng studied in Japan at the time of the Wanbaoshan Incident 萬寶山事件,<sup>5</sup> and together with

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<sup>4</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite* (The concept of the Blueshirts and their Special Service Operation), Reported by the General Headquarters of the Expeditionary Army in China, 23 August 1940, no pagination. A 29-page report, based on interrogation of a former Blueshirt member. See also Lincoln Li, pp. 53-54; Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.26; Deng Yuanzhong, p.83.

<sup>5</sup> The Korean issue came to a head on July 1931 at Wanbaoshan, a small town eighteen miles north of Changchun. A Chinese company had been leasing land first from Chinese farmers and then in turn to Koreans. Chinese authorities held that this practice was illegal because it violated a September 1909 agreement which prohibited Koreans from settling in non-border areas, a view disputed by Japan. A fight developed between Korean and Chinese farmers when the Koreans constructed several miles of irrigation ditches to which the neighbouring Chinese objected. The latter complained to local authorities, who stopped construction, whereupon Japanese consular police from Changchun armed with machine guns intervened to protect the Koreans, who resumed digging. On the first of July 1931, a Chinese mob attacked the Koreans and refilled a portion of the ditch. The Japanese police fired over the crowd, dispersing it without bloodshed. The Koreans then completed the irrigation canal.

fellow Whampoa students, he became convinced that their host country was planning to launch an aggressive war against China.<sup>6</sup> This group resolved to take some kind of pre-emptive action, and chose Teng Jie and a fellow student Xiao Zanyu 萧赞育 to return to China in late July. They were assigned the task of warning the government in Nanjing of the impending danger, and hoped that Chiang would anticipate this threat by putting more emphasis on China's unification. However, Chiang was advocating his appeasement policy with the accent on internal unification, which met a lot of resistance among politically involved Chinese.

Upon arriving home, Teng Jie found greater chaos than expected, and became convinced that China was in grave danger. He decided not to return to Japan, and instead drew up a plan of national salvation. Teng's plan was to set up an underground organisation, the key element of which was the formation of a kind of *taskforce*, a "powerful, secret, highly disciplined organisation whose leading cadres would all be graduates of the Whampoa Military Academy."<sup>7</sup> It was proposed that the organisation operate under the direct guidance of Chiang and in accordance with Sun's teachings.

By the time the Japanese invaded Manchuria in September 1931, Teng had managed, after three meetings, to assemble a core of around forty like-minded nationalists, all graduates of the first six classes of the Whampoa Military Academy.<sup>8</sup> Many of these officers had received their education at Japanese universities and military schools, and it is therefore plausible that, despite their opposition to Japanese designs on China, they were influenced

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<sup>6</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.103-106.

<sup>7</sup> Eastman, "A Review Article", p.26; see also, Deng Yuanzhong, pp.104-105.

<sup>8</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.106-107 ; Among the group were, Feng Ti 酆梯, Cai Jingjun 蔡勁軍, Lou Shaokai 婁紹鑑, Li Bingzhong 李秉中, Zhou Fu 周復, Deng Wenyi 鄧文儀, Zhang Benqing 張本清(who later gave up his membership), He Zhonghan 賀衷寒.

by Japanese military groups, like the Black Dragon Society, advocating Fascist ideas. This group of Whampoa officers called itself the *Sanminzhuyi lixingshe* 三民主義力行社 (Three Principles of the People Implementation Society)<sup>9</sup>, and it devoted itself in these early days to recruiting new members among other Whampoa graduates. At that particular time, September 1931, the name “Blueshirts” with which the organisation later became familiar, was not yet mentioned.

The Lixingshe soon developed cells in the police, the army, the party and government agencies. It began to direct the energies of these new recruits against alleged Communists within the Party, the Communists in the countryside, and pro-Japanese elements collaborating with the invaders. In January 1932, when the Japanese attacked Shanghai, it appeared to many observers that the Chinese had overcome the disorientation of five months earlier, and faced their aggressors with greater spirit and stability. This “was in large measure ascribed to the action of the new organisation.”<sup>10</sup>

Initially, the members of the Lixingshe did not inform Chiang either of the group's existence or its activities. The reason for this was ostensibly that the organisation did not wish to burden him with yet another concern during a national crisis. By January 1932, however, fearful that Chiang would interpret their intentions as either disloyal or subversive, the Lixingshe's leadership appointed Deng Wenyi 鄧文儀,<sup>11</sup> then serving as Chiang's personal secretary, to advise him of their existence and plans.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gan Guoxun, et al., *Lanyishe, fuxingshe, lixingshe*. pp.110-117. See also, Deng Yuanzhong, pp.106-109.

<sup>10</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.27; see also Gan Guoxun, pp.108-110.

<sup>11</sup> Deng was born in 1906, at Hunan Province. He graduated from Whampoa Military Academy in the First class. Deng's work in the Blueshirts was considered very important. From 1931 to 1934 Deng was primarily engaged in anti-Communist espionage. Afterwards, his interests shifted to cultural warfare and political indoctrination in the military.

<sup>12</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.111-112.

Languishing in his internal exile, Chiang originally greeted his secretary's announcement with little enthusiasm. He was, nevertheless, intrigued by the possibilities that it might offer him of coming out of his enforced retirement and resuming leadership of the party. He was also genuinely distressed by the lack of unity and the impotence of the regime. To Chiang, the group of highly motivated Whampoa graduates, who were not only fiercely nationalist but devoted to him personally, represented some kind of hope for a greater future.<sup>13</sup>

Firstly, the “Whampoa Spirit that they had manifested during and after the Northern Expedition stood in shining contrast to the distressing display of self-seeking ineffectuality and corruption typical of most other party members.”<sup>14</sup> Secondly, the personal loyalty that they had manifested towards Chiang stood out against the factionalism and opportunism of many leading Guomintang politicians,<sup>15</sup> such as Wang Jingwei 汪精衛.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.27.

<sup>14</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p27.

<sup>15</sup> Hatano Kanichi, *Gendai shina no seiji to jimbustu* (Politics and Personalities of Contemporary China), Tokyo: Kaizosha, 1937, pp.6-14; After the arrest of Hu Hanmin in March 1931, Wang Jingwei organised his own organisation called *Gaizupai* 改組派. Later, more pro-Wang Jingwei factions emerged with the following names: *Xiandai pinglun pai* 現代評論派, *Nanhua pai* 南華派, *Xuesheng pai* 學生派, *Sanminzhuyi qingnian pai* 三民主義青年派, *Geming pinglun pai* 革命評論派. Those five factions became a powerful opposition within the Guomintang. After his release on 14 October 1931, Hu Hanmin also organised his own organisation called the *Zhishe* 智社. In 1932 the Guomintang's left wing announced in a newspaper article four points of their policy (1) Adopting of British Policy (2) anti- Nanjing government Policy (3) Assassination Policy (4) Contact with Manchuria. However, these four points were not adequately explained. That time a group of Cantonese strongly advocated the *Divide China Policy*. This idea came basically from *Da ke jia zhu yi* 大客家主義. Among the *Hakka* 客家人 were many important people, even some unclear sources say that Sun Yatsen was also Hakka. Another example is, Deng Yanda 鄧演達, who had founded *Di san dang* 第三黨 (“Third Party”), the first party being the Guomintang, and the second the CCP. Deng was also Hakka (he was in Germany during 1928-1930, and was killed in China in 1932). Chen Mingjiu 陳銘樞 who founded the *Guoguangshe* 國光社 and Sun Ke 孫科 who set up the *Zaizaoshe* 再造社 were both Hakka.

<sup>16</sup> Revolutionary leader of the Guomintang, native of Zhejiang born in Canton. Received his Chinese classical education at Canton specialising in Chinese history, from which he imbibed the idea of racial independence. He went to Japan at the age of 19, and studied political science and sociology at Tokyo Law College, from which he graduated. During his stay in Japan, he

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Disloyalty was spreading down from the top levels of the party to the ordinary membership, and was beginning to undermine seriously Chiang's authority with rank-and-file party members. It is also likely that one of the factors leading to the decision to form the Blueshirts was growing evidence of personal disloyalty towards Chiang among certain student militia in the autumn of 1931.

The fact that the central government ordered the anti-Japanese militias to disband in February 1932, followed so closely by the emergence of the Li-hsing [Lixing] nicknamed Blueshirts, suggests a probable connection.<sup>17</sup>

These militias had become highly critical of Chiang, censuring him for being unprepared to meet the Japanese attack, for being incapable of defending the country, and for failing to provide China with the decisive national leadership which it needed.<sup>18</sup> Thus, in an attempt to monopolise, control and moderate anti-Japanese sentiment, Chiang decided to make use of the fledgling Lixingshe organisation, the existence of which he had just learned about.<sup>19</sup>

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joined the Tongmenghui. Was elected member of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang during its first National Congress in 1924.

<sup>17</sup> Donald A. Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts versus Japanese Bombs, The Failure of China's Revolutionary Diplomacy, 1931-1932*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991, p.104. With reference to his footnote 11, p.106.

<sup>18</sup> John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China, 1927-1937*, Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1966, pp.169-176.

<sup>19</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.111-112. Much of the Lixingshe's efforts during those early days of their existence, were in fact directed against the Japanese, and pro-Japanese people, not exclusively against the Communists. At the same time Chiang was promoting his appeasement policy, one of the reasons for his forced retirement. Although the members of the new organisation wanted resistance against the Japanese, Chiang believed that the Lixingshe provided the best answer to encounter the crisis he faced.

At almost the same time, a young Chinese man, Liu Jianqun was making his own contribution with the idea to “save China.”<sup>20</sup> At the end of 1931 he had put down his plans to reform the Guomindang in an essay entitled *Gongxian yidian zhengli bendang de yijian* (A Few Ideas for the Reform of the Party) which he brought to Chiang's attention in March 1932. Chiang thus found himself at an exceptional political conjuncture: a respected thinker was arguing for the formation of a new organisation at the same time as another party loyalist had actually founded just such an organisation. Furthermore, both events coincided with Chiang's own personal political need for a new body to bring him back into power and keep him there permanently. It was out of this marriage of the philosophical and the practical that the “Blueshirts” were born.<sup>21</sup> Just before fighting in Shanghai officially ended in March 1932,<sup>22</sup> Chiang assembled the founders of the Lixingshe. After a ceremony comparable to the ritual Chinese secret societies used, the members had sworn an oath, and Chiang officially declared the formation of the new organisation with the name *Sanminzhuyi lixingshe*.<sup>23</sup>

When it was founded the Lixingshe was, at least on one level, merely another organised faction within the ramshackle structure of the Nationalist Party. On another level, however, it was exceptional, for it was created with a

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<sup>20</sup> Hatano Kanichi, *Gendai shina no seiji to jimbustu*, pp.178-179 : He Zhonghan and Liu Jianqun suggested to adopt Fascist ideology. Liu was *Re xue han* 熱血漢 (extremely pro-Han Chinese).

<sup>21</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.30; Actually Liu Jianqun had formed the beginning of a secret association in January 1932 on the model envisioned in his essay. See the next part of this thesis “Liu Jianqun and his Significance in the Formation of the Blueshirts.”

<sup>22</sup> The date given for the establishment of the Blueshirts varies. For example Maria Chang, (p.57), refers to an unpublished diary on the Lixingshe, “hand-written by Chiang Kaishek”, and mentions 29 February 1932. Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.28, footnote 6, Deng, pp.12 and 118, and Chen Dunzheng in Gan Guoxun, et al., p.71, insist that the Lixingshe was formally established on 1 March. These sources reject the date 8 March, given by Gan Guoxun, pp.115 and 117.

<sup>23</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.110-111, 119.

specific and entirely new role in mind. It was not only to embody the personal political beliefs of Chiang himself, but to spy on his opponents and other cliques, and to curtail their activities as far as possible.

### **B. The Significance of the Blueshirt Name**

The organisation which operated within the Guomindang from 1932-38 became familiar to the Chinese public and the outside world as the Blueshirt Society (*Lanyishe* 藍衣社), rather than by its more appropriate title of Implementation Society (*Lixingshe* 力行社). Some explanation about these two terms is required, as they caused much contemporary confusion, both among the public and in the official documentation of the Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP), which was circulated to most of the foreign embassies. In the Japanese reports the name Blueshirts was also used and it is often suggested that Japanese intelligence deliberately used this name in order to emphasise their Fascist label. This confusion continued when modern scholars began researching the Blueshirts.

Japanese intelligence was investigating the new organisation intensively almost from its inception, and almost always referred to it as the Blueshirts. Similarly, the Chinese Communist Party and the left-wing of the Guomindang in their publications invariably used the name *Lanyishe* (Blueshirt Society).<sup>24</sup> Newspapers in China in the Chinese and English language and foreign newspapers cited the name Blueshirts, and the name was broadly adopted by the Chinese public. Yet this name, which had such general currency, was not in fact the official name of the organisation. Why did the Guomindang or the Blueshirts themselves not correct the widespread error? Almost certainly because the Blueshirts were a clandestine

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<sup>24</sup> Chen Gongshu, *Lanyishe neimu*, (Behind the Scenes of the Blueshirts) Shanghai guomin xinwen, 1942, (Chen Gongshu was a left wing member of the Guomindang).

organisation working within the Guomintang party ranks, the existence of which was always officially denied by Chiang and the Guomintang. The confusion about names may indeed have been seen by the Blueshirts leaders as a ideal smokescreen behind which they were all the more free to operate without fear of recrimination or accountability.

An article in the newspaper *Dagongbao* 大公報 on 10 July 1932 revealed : “When the name Lanyishe started to circulate among Chinese people, Chiang was criticised from various sides that he had formed a Fascist party within the ranks of the Kuomintang.”<sup>25</sup> Chiang, interviewed about the Blueshirts in July 1932, publicly denied any knowledge of their existence, and he stated: “I shall live and die for the Guomintang, in life I am a member of the Guomintang and in death a spirit of the Guomintang.”<sup>26</sup> While Chiang publicly denied the very existence of such a Fascist group, during a personal interview he later had with *Dagongbao's* editor-of-chief Hu Zhengzhi 胡政之,<sup>27</sup> Chiang actually admitted the Blueshirts' existence. He confessed to Hu Zhengzhi that “if people knew the exact truth, it would be much easier for my political opponents to destroy this organisation.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> PRO, FO, 371/17142 xc 930, (469), Extract from: Peking and Tientsin Times, *From Party to Personal Dictatorship*, 8 August, 1933. See also, NA, SMP, D.4685, 20 June 1933, Special Branch, *Blueshirts - Fascisti Movement in China*.

<sup>26</sup> PRO, FO, 371/17142 xc 930, (469).

<sup>27</sup> Journalist, born in Sichuan in 1893. He completed his early education in his home province. He went to Japan and studied at Tokyo College, from which he graduated in 1911, after taking the general college course and a special course in law and political science. On his return to China, he made an application for admission to the bar and passed the examination. In 1915, he went to Qirin in connection with the Sino-Japanese negotiations about the time when the twenty-one Demands were presented to China with an ultimatum. In 1921, he went to Shanghai and organised the Guowen News Agency, an independent news and advertising service, in 1926 he assisted in promoting a company to take over the *Dagongbao* from the old management and became its general manager.

<sup>28</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru chosa* (An Investigation of the Blueshirts). Issued by the Research Division of Foreign Ministry, marked "secret" 1936), p.40.



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When the National Salvation Corps (*Jiuguotuan* 救國團), organised by students of the Whampoa Military Academy and adherents of Wang Jingwei, placed searching questions to Chiang regarding this “Fascist Society”, Chiang once more denied any connection with the Society, stating that he hated it.<sup>29</sup>

It seems to have been Chiang's opponents - the Japanese, the Communists<sup>30</sup> and the left-wing of the Guomindang under the leadership of Wang Jingwei - who insisted on the Blueshirt label, doubtless because it made the political point about their Fascist nature all the more readily.

Blue Shirt Association under the leadership of Chiang Kaishek is only an instrument to oppress the people and safeguard the rule of Imperialism in China. It is the organisation to help Chiang to sell China.<sup>31</sup>

The name “Blueshirts” obviously bears strong resemblance to the names given to the Fascist movements in other countries, such as “Brownshirts” in Germany and “Blackshirts” in Italy and the UK<sup>32</sup>; in the US too, Fascist movements were known as the White Shirts, Silver Shirts, and Khaki Shirts.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, organisations with the name Blueshirts also existed in Egypt,<sup>34</sup> Ireland and France.

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<sup>29</sup> PRO, FO, 371/17142 xc 930 (434-437), Enclosure in Shanghai P/L despatch to Beijing nr.202, 17 July 1933.

<sup>30</sup> Ou Weiwen, “Lanyishe yu zhongguo guomindang”, *Nanfang zazhi*, vol.2-7, 1933.

<sup>31</sup> NA, SMP, D4685, Special Branch, 7 March, 1933.

<sup>32</sup> As far as could be confirmed the term *Braunhemden* - “Brownshirts” was not used in Germany during the 1930s. The preferred name was the abbreviation SA. The same approach may count for Mussolini’s *Camicie Nere* - “Blackshirts”, in Italy they were often referred to as *Squadristi*.

<sup>33</sup> AAPA, Deutsche Botschaft, Washington D.C., 19 January, 1934, “Faschismus in America, Silver Shirts, Khaki Shirts and White Shirts.”

<sup>34</sup> PRO, FO, 371/20123-2052, 5 December, 1936, 371/20883-2763, 3 May, 1937, and 371/20884-2763, 7 June, 1937, “Blue Shirts in Egypt”, Nahas Pasha is mentioned as the leader. Also Green Shirts existed in Egypt.

Although the term “Blueshirt” was used widely, it was certainly not used universally, and there were a number of other names in fairly common circulation. In the Chinese press, especially the Japanese-controlled “mosquito newspapers”,<sup>35</sup> as well as in documents from embassies, slight variations occur regarding the name Blueshirts Society. Sometimes they were referred to as Blue Jackets,<sup>36</sup> or the Blue Shirt Group (*Lanyituan* 藍衣團). Names such as the Blue Shirt Party (*Lanyidang* 藍衣黨),<sup>37</sup> and the Blue Clothes Society were not uncommon.

A number of other names were in use, indicating either the entire Blueshirt organisation or perhaps confusing a particular department or bureau with the entire organisation.<sup>38</sup> One of these other names was *Jiuwanghui* 救亡會, meaning “Save the Nation from Ruin Society.”<sup>39</sup> British documents suggest that some attempt was made to use the latter name for public purposes, while the shorter form “Blueshirts” was only used for secret or internal communications.<sup>40</sup> A report from the British legation in Beijing mentions that “reports of the activities of the organisation, also apparently styled the *Jiuwanghui*, have from time to time appeared in the Chinese press,

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<sup>35</sup> A “Mosquito” newspaper, was a newspaper printed in the Chinese language, but published by foreigners such as the Japanese or the British.

<sup>36</sup> J.W.Phillips, “Blue Jackets in China, A Study in Colonial Fascism”, *China Today*, vol.1-2, November 1934 and vol.1- 3, December 1934.

<sup>37</sup> AAPA, 1506/2549/34, 26 March 1934, by Timan *Organisation der Blauhenden*. See also, BA, Deutsche Botschaft China, 09.02, nr.2235, 24 September 1934, by Consul-General Kriebel, *Fascistische Vereinigungen in China, Neue Lebensbewegung*.

<sup>38</sup> *Manshu hyoron* (Manzhou Critics), vol. 5-2, July 1933, Tachibana Shiraki.

<sup>39</sup> PRO, FO, 371/17142 xc 930, SMP, report, (469-473). Enclosure No.2 in despatch to Foreign Office; Extract: Peking and Tientsin Times, 8 August, 1933: *From Party to Personal Dictatorship*.

<sup>40</sup> PRO, FO, 371/17142 xc 930, SMP report, (437-445), Enclosure in Shanghai P/L despatch to Peking nr.202, 17th July, 1933, (437) “The Blueshirt Society.” See also, NA, D.4685, SMP report, 20 June 1933, *Blueshirts- Fascisti Movement in China*, by Robertson Officer Special Branch. This information comes from a very confidential source.

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where it is often referred to as a Fascist or semi-Fascist body under the control of Chiang Kaishek.”<sup>41</sup>

This misinterpretation of the movement's name emphasises the problems regarding accuracy of information about all aspects of the organisation even when the information came from normally well-informed sources. It was clear that only a few confidants had a complete insight into the structure of the organisation.<sup>42</sup> Japanese scholarship may provide a way out of some of the difficulties by providing a geographical perspective:<sup>43</sup> one study reports that members in Hankou used to call the organisation *Fuxing she* 復興社 (Revival Society), while those in Nanjing and Shanghai tended to use the name *Jiuwanghui*. In the North of China, the most frequently used term was *Tucunshe* 圖存社, (Contrive to Survive Society). Unfortunately, this name is not found in any other document.

As far as the organisation's official name *Lixingshe* is concerned, its first use in documents of public record was in a secret report in April 1939 by the S2 Special Branch of the SMP. The report discusses the Blueshirts, or the Moral Culture Association, although this translation is certainly incorrect:

He [Dai Li] is the founder of the Blueshirts or the *Moral Culture Association* (*Lixingshe* 力行社), which was formed in 1932 with the object of supporting Chiang, removing all obstacles from the path of the military leader and effecting a strong union of Whampoa Cadets.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> PRO, FO, 371/17142 xc 930, British Legation Shanghai, July, August 1933, (434-445); Shanghai despatch nr.226, 31 August 1933. Extract from *Peking and Tientsin Times*, 31 August 1933, (469-473).

<sup>42</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.108-109. That cadets of the Whampoa Military Academy had formed a group called "*Brown Shirt Society*" in order to "Save the Nation from Ruin", was revealed in the *New York Times*, 9 September 1932. There is, however, no indication why this newspaper published the name Brown Shirts in relation to the Blueshirts.

<sup>43</sup> *Manshu hyoron* (Manchu Critics), vol.4-2, 14th January, 1933. Tachibana Shiraki (ed.).

<sup>44</sup> NA, D.7657, S2. Special Branch SMP, 24 April 1939, *General Tai Li, founder of the Chinese Blue Shirts Society*. The Chinese characters used in the document stand for *Lixing she*. The name *Lixingshe* was also used in the Japanese documents, TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite*, 1940.

An earlier use of a version of this name is found in an open letter of Whampoa cadets to Chiang, published in 1936 in *China Today* containing, among other information, details of the attempt on the life of Wang Jingwei by the Blueshirts: “It was organised and carried through by Chen Kwanguo [Chen Guangguo], head of the Special Section of the *Lishing huei* [Lixinghui, i.e. the Blue Shirts], which is your [Chiang's] private party outside the Kuomintang.”<sup>45</sup> It is therefore clear that the name *Lixingshe* (used here in the version *Lixinghui*), was well known as a name for the Blueshirts well before the 1939 report. Despite the apparent knowledge of their official name, the term “Blueshirt” continued in almost universal use and the name *Lixingshe* was hardly ever used.

The name *Sanminzhuyi lixingshe* 三民主義力行社 in literature and official documents is translated into English in a variety of ways. The translation used by Maria Chang and others is “*Earnest Action Society of The Three Principles of the People*”,<sup>46</sup> while Eastman used “*Vigorously Carry Out Society of The Three Principles of the People*.”<sup>47</sup> However, the preferred translation used in this thesis is the Implementation Society of the Three Principles of the People. That said, as it has now slipped into both common and historical convention, the more familiar term Blueshirts Society will continued to be used in reference to the *Lixingshe*.

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<sup>45</sup> *China Today*, vol.3, nr 2, November 1936, “Chiang Kai-shek’s Whampoa Cadets Accuse.” See also NA, D7657, S2, Special Branch *Anti-Chiang Kai-shek Propaganda*, obtained by SMP, 14 November 1936.

<sup>46</sup> Chang, p.4.

<sup>47</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.27.

### C. The Symbolic Significance of The Colour Blue

The Blueshirt publication *Shehui xinwen* (社會新聞 Society Mercury) drew attention to the importance of colour symbolism in Chinese public life in its criticisms of the Communist Party:

Where the Guomindang uses Blue and White as colour symbols, and the Italian National Socialists are using Black, the Chinese Communist Party needs three different colour symbols; viz. Red, Burgundy and a Paper Mulberry colour, in order to describe their party. Keeping in mind that the bandits are symbolised by Mud colour, and the Chinese opportunist politicians represent colour Grey, we may ask the following question - when the three colours, Red, Burgundy and Paper Mulberry are mixed, what kind of colour are we supposed to get? <sup>48</sup>

Clearly, “colouring” your opponents was of some significance. Traditionally, colour symbolism in Chinese culture is of great importance and it is common practice, instead of using the name of a group or party, to refer to the colour symbol associated with it: as with the Green and Red Gangs. The Guomindang Party has always regarded Blue and White as their principal colours. The ranges of meaning attributed to these colours may vary according to context: blue colour may signify the Han Chinese, and blue and white may symbolise Heaven and Earth. Generally China is described as “Land of Blue Gown” (*Lanshan dadi* 藍衫大地).

The Blueshirts themselves certainly used a much wider range of colours than a simple blue. For example, they often used a patch or badge in the shape of a triangle with sides one inch long in order to distinguish their members, and the patch was coloured differently to denote different sections of the organisation.<sup>49</sup> For instance, the Military used red, and the Military

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<sup>48</sup> SHXW, vol, 5-19, “Shemindang de sediao” (Social Democratic Party’s Colour Symbolism), 27 November 1933, no pagination.

<sup>49</sup> PRO, FO 371/17142 xc 930, 16 October 1933, from British Legation, Peking. Evidence that badges were used was given in this report. The report describes how the police at Wuchang wanted to arrest two “Chinese gangsters”, who were suspected of being Blueshirts members having murdered a Chinese who collaborated with the Japanese. However, they exhibited badges which were apparently sufficient to allow them to go their way.

Police used pink and Police Officers used white. Ordinary Guomindang Party members in turn wore Blue patches. When members were wearing traditional Chinese costume, the badges were hidden in the inside of the right sleeve, similar to members of the traditional secret societies; on Western-style suits they were fixed on the right side of their waistcoats under their jackets.<sup>50</sup>

#### **D. Organisation and Structure of the Blueshirts**

The earliest systematic investigations of the Blueshirts' organisation are described in detailed reports made by Japanese Intelligence in 1937 and later in 1939 after the interrogation of the former Blueshirts member, Zhuan Shenglan 傳勝藍.<sup>51</sup> Japanese Intelligence had observed that the previous report describing the organisation was not detailed and not distinct enough, and the hope was expressed that this new report would fill in the gaps. The Japanese reports make use of various illustrations to describe the structure and organisation, such as three concentric circles in its simplest form up to quite ingenious constructions. In different ways the Japanese also used a hierarchical pyramid to explain the organisation and structure. However, essentially these illustrations all represent the same intention, namely to emphasise the maintenance of control and secrecy of the organisation. Fundamentally the Blueshirts' organisation resembled that of the traditional Chinese secret society. Although the ideas in the 1930s in Chinese society about the traditional secret societies had already changed, that may have been the starting point for the (semi-open) Blueshirts Society. This change was directed in the "military" way, which was suitable for Chiang Kaishek. It

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<sup>50</sup> TB, 6017, *Shin fassho no naimaku* (The Inside Story of Chinese Fascism), p.4, by Nammanshu tetzudo, Shanghai Office, June 1935.

<sup>51</sup> TB, 2057, see also TB, 8463, *Ranisha no bocho kyu choho kosaku ni kansuru shiryō* (Materials about the Blueshirts' Intelligence Activities), see also TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite*.

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should be kept in mind, however, that no traditional secret society actually had military power, whereas the Blueshirts had.

The most spectacular ritual of the secret society was undoubtedly the initiation ceremony. New members were introduced by old members and had to learn the secret signs and esoteric language of the society. At the initiation ceremony candidates vowed to keep the secrets of the fraternity, and read oaths from a paper which was then burned and mixed into a bowl of chicken blood, tinted with wine and sugar. They also became bloodbrothers by squeezing some of their blood into the bowl and drinking from it. Such ceremonies were often accompanied by secret body and hand signals and perhaps even a secret dance, which was one of the means by which the rank and file as well as officers identified each other.

Chinese secret societies tended to vary their ostensible aims, activities and even to some extent, organisation, according to circumstances. Secret societies could disguise themselves as open associations like friendship clubs, or maintain both their existence and their functions in strict secrecy. In this respect the Blueshirts were very similar to traditional Chinese secret societies.

The structure, organisation and objectives of the Blueshirts are also described in various reports from Western archives,<sup>52</sup> drawn mainly from investigations by SMP agents. The principal difference between the Japanese and Western reports observed is that the reports from, for example, the SMP officers never attempted to analyse the structure of the Blueshirts in a systematic way - indeed, the Western reports were less detailed and more fragmented in their information.

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<sup>52</sup> NA, SMP, D4685, 20 June, 1933, *Fascisti Movement in China*. See also FOH, code J1, nr.1866/191, 26 June, 1933, Shanghai, *Political and Military Messages, "Blueshirts."* See also, PRO, FO, nr. 371/17142 xc 930, pp.434-445, 17 July, 1933, SMP report.

In addition, the more recent publications of Gan Guoxun and Deng Yuanzhong describe the Blueshirts' organisation and structure minutely.<sup>53</sup> Eastman in his study of the Blueshirts was one of the first scholars to refer to both these sources, by stating that:

In 1972 I published an article on the "Blueshirts," and Gan Guoxun may, in fact, have written his first article on the Lixingshe in response to mine.... Much that I wrote about the Lixingshe in that article is, I believe, still of use, but these two new books do indisputably correct some of my previous misconceptions --- principally about the manner in which the organisation came into being.<sup>54</sup>

For his initial research on the Blueshirts Eastman mainly used Japanese sources. Comparing the information given in the Japanese reports with the publications of Gan Guoxun and Deng Yuanzhong, the Japanese sources prove to be quite reliable. In response to Eastman's observations, the description of the Blueshirts' structure and organisation in the earlier Japanese and more recent Chinese sources will be adopted in this thesis.

### **E. Japanese and Chinese Analyses**

According to the Japanese reports, the Blueshirts were organised as a series of three concentric circles.<sup>55</sup> The innermost circle, the core of the organisation, formed the Lixingshe, which numbered only 528 members in 1937,<sup>56</sup> with Chiang Kaishek as its paramount leader in the centre. The

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<sup>53</sup> Gan Guoxun, *Lanyishe, Fuxingshe, Lixingshe* (Blue Shirt Society, Revival Society), Taipei: Zhuanjiwenxue chubanshe, 1984, and Deng Yuanzhong, *Sanminzhuyi Lixingshe Shi*.

<sup>54</sup> Eastman, "A Review Article", p.26. For his earlier studies Eastman refers to "Fascism in Kuomintang China: The Blue Shirts," *China Quarterly*, 49 (January-March 1972), pp.1-31.

<sup>55</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite*. See also, TB, 2057, *Ranisha ni kansuru chosha*, pp.45-47.

<sup>56</sup> TB, 2196; see also Eastman, "A Review Article", pp. 30-31. Eastman mentions about 300 members and refers to Gan Guoxun, pp.7, 118-120, and Chen Dunzheng, in Gan Guoxun, et al., p.58, and Deng, pp.13, 25, 142-143.



control of this core level was in the hands of a Central Executive Committee (C.E.C.) consisting of seventeen full and nine reserve members, although the exact size of it may have varied over the years.<sup>57</sup> This central cadre formed an administrative centre determining the Blueshirts policy. The heart of this organisation was a five-man standing committee, one of these five men being the executive secretary. It is known that from 1932 until their disbandment in 1938 five different persons served as the Blueshirts' executive secretary.<sup>58</sup>

In order to supervise the decision making of policies and operations determined by the C.E.C. of the Blueshirts, the executive secretary was given assistance by a secretariat and by four separate functional departments, namely General Affairs, Propaganda, Organisation, and Special Services. Similar departmental divisions also directed operations at secondary organisational levels.<sup>59</sup>

The second ring of the concentric circles initially contained two elitist organisations, formed about a month later than the Lixingshe. The first one was *Zhongguo geming qingnian junren lianhehui* 中國革命青年軍人聯合會 or 中軍 (the Revolutionary Army Comrades Association), based around He Zhonghan and graduates of the Whampoa Military Academy, and the second one *Zhongguo qingnian tongzhihui* 中國青年同志會 or 中青 (the Youth

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<sup>57</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kòsaku ni tsuite*. The top of the Lixingshe became known as the *Thirteen Princes*. The names of this core of the Blueshirts from its establishment, and that appear most frequently were: Feng Ti 鄆梯, He Zhonghan 賀衷寒, Kang Ze 康澤, Deng Wenyi 鄧文儀, Zhou Fu 周復, Pan Youqiang 潘佑強, Dai Li 戴笠, Liu Jianqun 劉健群, Zheng Jiemin 鄭介民, Xiao Zanyü 蕭贊育, Gui Yongqing 桂永清, Teng Jie 滕杰, and Zeng Kuoqing 曾擴情. See also, Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.79.

<sup>58</sup> TB, 2057, pp.49-50, (only five men but no names are given). See also Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.57, see his footnote 86. The men who served as executive secretary were: Teng Jie (March 1932-January 1933), He Zhonghan (January 1933-August 1934), Feng Ti (August 1934-October 1935), Liu Jianqun (October 1935-September 1937), and Kang Ze (September 1937-April 1938).

<sup>59</sup> TB, 2057; see also Eastman, "A Review Article", pp.30-31, see his footnotes 15 and 16 which refer to Gan Guoxun, pp.7, 118-120, Chen Dunzheng, in Gan Guoxun, et al., p.58, and Deng, pp.13, 25, 142-143.

Comrades Association), based around Liu Jianqun and non-military members. The Revolutionary Army Comrades Association, was abolished in early 1933.<sup>60</sup>

Factionalism had begun tearing at the fabric of the organisation almost from the beginning. Competition between the two factions within the organisation soon became endemic, sometimes even erupting in fights between members of the two groups. As a consequence, in early 1933, Chiang ordered the Revolutionary Army Comrades Association to cease all activities.

The Youth Comrades Association became the Lixingshe's main cover group, consisting of the upper-middle divisions of the cadre strata. They were actually instrumental in creating the Blueshirts. It was through this Association that new members enrolled in the organisation, and many activities planned by the Lixingshe were in the first place executed through this Association. They infiltrated the civilian populace, the bureaucracy, and numerous military units. The Youth Comrades Association organised networks all over China, and was said to have had about 30,000 members in 1938.<sup>61</sup> Sometimes people mistakenly referred to the Youth Comrades Association as the *Zhonghua fuxingshe* 中華復興社 (China Revival Society or Renaissance Society). In fact the *Fuxingshe* formed the third ring, and was in size and character the most significant vanguard organisation brought into being by the Lixingshe.<sup>62</sup> The *Fuxingshe* was the organisation's mass base

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<sup>60</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru shiryo*. See also Eastman, "A Review Article", pp.30-31.

<sup>61</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru shiryo*. See also Eastman, "A Review Article", pp.30-31.

<sup>62</sup> Gan Guoxun, p.120. See also Deng, p.120, and Eastman, "A Review Article", p.31; see also Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p. 60 with reference to his footnote 94. Eastman observed that the *Fuxingshe* was not brought into existence until July 1934. He could, "however, see no corroborating evidence in other sources." Nonetheless, carefully reading of Gan Guoxun and Deng, reveals that a name for the new front organisation, the *Fuxingshe*, had been chosen informally by April 1932. However, it was not until July 1934 that the *Fuxingshe* became actually fully active. In order to confuse matters more, Gan Guoxun and Deng Yuanzhong report that the name *Fuxingshe* was officially recognised in July 1933.

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and included staff members of the central headquarters and branch organisations. It was at the lowest level of the organisation and relatively easy for new members to join through recommendation by older members.

Application for the Youth Comrades Association and the Lixingshe was much more difficult, as screening and approval procedures were harder to pass. The Fuxingshe numbered approximately 300,000 members in 1937, although figures given varied between 100,000 to nearly 500,000. The organisational design of the Fuxingshe was essentially the same as that of the Lixingshe and the Youth Comrades Association, namely division into four departments. However, the Fuxingshe had no leadership and organisation of its own, this was vested in the Youth Comrades Association with, at the top, ultimately the same men that headed the Lixingshe. The whole organisation was ruled by the principle of democratic centralism, meaning that debate was admitted at lower levels, but decisions were made at the top. Thus, decision making remained reserved to this highest level, and as such the Fuxingshe had no leadership of its own, all decisions coming from the top of the organisation.

Coexisting with the above described bureaucratic construction was a supervisory system, a control commission, performing as a watchdog overseeing the Blueshirts' administrative work. This commission checked estimated expenditures of the Blueshirts, and kept watch over the thoughts, behaviour and actions of individual members.<sup>63</sup> The total membership of this control group may have numbered over one thousand people, with at its top a supervisory committee with an executive secretary at its head. At the branch and sub-branch levels corresponding committees operated which were nominated by the co-ordinating committee.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> TB, 2057, pp.76-77.

<sup>64</sup> TB, 2057, pp.76-77.

Japanese sources also describe how the Blueshirts' organisation essentially consisted of a pyramidal structure at the top of which was, of course, the leader Chiang Kaishek.<sup>65</sup> Under him, the pyramidal structure was, from top to bottom, divided into three distinct layers. At the highest level was the Lixingshe itself, forming the command stratum of the organisation. The second layer formed the middle cadre (including the Youth Comrades Association), while the third and lowest part consisted of the mass base of the organisation (Fuxingshe). Each of these layers again was vertically subdivided into three separate sectors, representing different occupations and each having its own organisation and leaders. One sector was made up of civilians, the second of officials (from the government), while the third sector was made up of military members.

The Blueshirts' foremost strength was in military organisations, the operations of which were centralised in the Military Council, which was one of the most significant institutions in the Guomindang organisation. The Blueshirts' influence over central military organisations was clearly because Chiang was chairman of the Military Council. Practically each administrative bureau of the council had been led by a Blueshirts member. Control systems spread out from these bureaux to the provincial branch offices. Though the Blueshirts were strongest in military organisation, some of the non-military members were particularly important in the political developments of the 1930s. The four most important were Kang Ze 康澤, Dai Li 戴笠, He Zhonghan 賀衷寒, and Deng Wenyi 鄧文儀. Liu Jianqun 劉健群 also held an important position in the organisation.

The objective of this three-tiered organisation was to revive the nation. Indeed, one Japanese source referred to the Lixingshe and its subordinate units as the *Minzhu fuxing yundong* 民主復興運動 (Democratic Revival

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<sup>65</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite*.

Movement). Democracy - or sovereignty - was, of course, one of the pillars of Sun's Three Principles of the People.

The second level of the hierarchical pyramid, containing the middle cadre was divided into several branch and sub-branch associations. This level included the Youth Comrades Association, forming the Blueshirts' secondary level of leadership. Cadres of this level in the branches and sub-branches were involved with the special service operations of the Blueshirts, performing especially important functions, such as that of instructor in the Military Academy. There may have been about ten branch organisations, spread out over the provinces and important cities. These branches again were divided into sub-branches. Subsequently each branch and sub-branch was headed by a secretary. Together with the central cadres, these secretaries composed the Lixingshe.

The third and lowest level of the pyramid formed the *Zhonghua fuxingshe*, and was the mass base of the organisation, containing all other ordinary members of the Blueshirts. It was organised as the Guomindang party itself. One of the enduring hallmarks of Comintern influence on the Guomindang in the early 1920s was the fact that this level was organised into small cells of militants. These so-called small groups consisted of three to nine members.<sup>66</sup>

All members of the Blueshirts were expected to measure their behaviour against the most severe criteria; such as to obey the leader under all circumstances, to maintain secrecy, and the members were to be committed single-minded to the corps.

The organisational network set up by the Blueshirts was intended to cover the whole nation.<sup>67</sup> To achieve this, the Blueshirts focused their efforts

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<sup>66</sup> TB, 2057, pp.115-116.

<sup>67</sup> TB, 2057, pp.131-137. Areas and places where important Headquarters of the Blueshirts were located included Sichuan Province, where a large and major military headquarters was

on four major movements: New Life, National Military Training, National Economic Reconstruction, and Internal Pacification and Resistance to Aggression Movements.<sup>68</sup> The Internal Pacification and Resistance to Aggression Movement was considered to be the basis of the other three. It was determined that unless the nation was first unified and secure, it would be impossible to realise the spiritual, social, and economic reconstruction of the nation, which were the goals of the other movements.

### **F. Western Analyses**

In order to indicate that the Western reports were essentially correct, although more fragmented and less detailed in their information about the organisation of the Blueshirts a few examples are described below. The reports conclude that members of the organisation were temporarily limited to 3,000 of which about 2,000 men should come from the graduates of the Whampoa Military Academy and the rest should be chosen from the people at large. Leaders in the Central organisation were thirteen altogether, possibly

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found, because of the presence of the Red Army, while many Blueshirt members came from Sichuan Province. In Jiangxi Province (in the Nanchang area) the second most important headquarters was located, also, because of the Red Army. Nanjing was the Blueshirts' home base, and the main activities of Blueshirts were channelled through Nanjing. In Zhejiang Province there was also an important headquarters, because it was Chiang Kaishek's birth place. In Fujian Province the 4th most important headquarters of the Blueshirts was located (possibly as a result of the Fujian rebellion). Other headquarters were in order of importance located as follows; the 5th ( Hubei), the 6th (Anhui), the 7th (Henan), the 8th (Guizhou), the 9th (Shaanxi), the 10th (Gansu), the 11th (Ningxia), the 12th (Shanxi), the 13th (Yunnan). Shanghai had no location of any formal military headquarters of the Blueshirts, but as is well-known, quite a few Blueshirt groups were working in the Shanghai area, where it controlled the Police and Security forces. Blueshirts, through Qing Bang influence, exercised a firm hold on the French Concession Police and tried to do the same on the SMP. Blueshirt members had also infiltrated the Guomindang's Public Security Bureau and became very influential. For the influence of the Blueshirts in the Shanghai area, see also Chapter 5 of this thesis.

<sup>68</sup> See "Ranyisha", *Ajia rekishi jiten* (Asia's Historical Event Dictionary), Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1959, vol. 9, p.174, and *Toyo rekishi jiten* (The Great Historical Asian Dictionary) Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1959. See also, Eastman, "A Review Article", p.31; Gan Guoxun, pp.141-148.

referring to the Thirteen Princes (*Shisan taibao* 十三太保), the name given to the group of devoted followers of Chiang Kaishek who played leading roles in the Blueshirts.<sup>69</sup>

The Association established its branches in every part of the country where is a local organ of the Kuomintang [Guomintang]. The branch officers picked up the loyal members of the party and made them members of the branch. Its purpose being to grasp the dominant power in the 5th General Meeting of the Kuomintang. The purpose is to establish a central political power, which should be established under the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek. To attain the goal, the Association wants to develop three movements.<sup>70</sup>

The movements described in the document are.

***Jianjun yundong*** 建軍運動 (The movement to make the army sound)

To watch generals in various parts of the country - To seize the power of the existing generals - To train the Chinese armies in a Fascist way and to indoctrinate the soldiers with Fascist ideas - The most important part of the Association should be occupied by the militia-political student group and political student group at the Political Training Institute.

***Jiandang yundong*** 建黨運動 (The movement to make the party sound)

To drive out all the party leaders of the various cliques and keep party business under the influence of the association - to restore the presidency in the party - to send the efficient elements of the Association to the local

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<sup>69</sup> TB, 2196, as mentioned before the top of the Lixingshe became known as the *Thirteen Princes*. See also Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.36, with the *Thirteen Princes*, not exactly thirteen persons were meant. The term referred loosely to the group who played a leading role in the Blueshirts and they numbered somewhere between nine and eighteen men.

<sup>70</sup> NA, SMP, D4685, 20 June 1933. See also FOH, J1 nr. 1866/191, Political & Military Information about "Blueshirts", 26 June 1933. See also PRO, FO, nr. 371/17142 xc 930, pp. 434-445, 17 July, 1933, SMP report. These relative early investigations, about the Blueshirts provides a good insight regarding the organisation and objectives. Although here describing Western sources, nearly the same information is also found in Japanese documents or books; TB, 2196, *Ranisha no shoshiki to hanman konichi katsudo no jitsurei*, pp. 20-21. The information in the Western reports is in part different from the Japanese Intelligence report in 1940, referred to before. Because in the Western reports, produced in 1933, only three movements are mentioned, as the New Life Movement had not yet been founded in 1933.

*Dangbu* 黨部 (Local party organ) in order to safeguard the Fascist movement of the organisation.

*Jiancai yundong* 建財運動 (The movement to make finances sound)  
Equalisation of land rights - to raise loans in the name of the state-owned enterprises and provide the Fascist movement with financial support.

Through these three movements, the Blueshirts tried to assume dominance within the party and the state. According to the Western reports, the policy of the Blueshirts was directed towards six main objectives.

(a) Propaganda policy, aimed at achieving a unity of national views in its newspapers and periodicals. This line of work was the responsibility of Generals Cheng Tianfang 程天放, Shao Yuanchong 邵元冲 and Chen Bulei 陳布雷.

(b) Financial Policy, laid down by T.V. Soong. This aimed at inducing all the compradores in Shanghai and their subordinates to support the Blueshirts.

(c) Educational Policy, under the authority of Zhu Jiahua 朱家驊, ex-Minister of education, and Chen Guofu 陳國夫.

(d) Foreign Policy: In order to forge links with Fascist parties in Italy and Germany, Liu Wendao 劉文島 and H.H. Kung 孔祥熙, the then Chairman of the Central Bank in China, were sent respectively to Germany and to Italy.

(e) Internal Policy : All those opposed to the Blueshirt Movement were purged from the Guomindang as reactionaries and attacked as political enemies.

(f) Terrorist policy : The Blueshirts instituted an Assassination Corps, divided into two departments :

a. Detective Department, and b. Assassination Department.

Each of these two departments was, in its turn, divided into two sections. The Detective Department had a Military Secret Service under Wang Bailing 王



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伯齡<sup>71</sup> and a Special Secret Service, under Gu Jianzhong 顧建中, in charge of political information.

The two sections of the Assassination Department were the anti-Communist Campaign Corps, selected from among the Social Corps of Public Security Bureau, and a Sniping Corps, mostly referred to as the Blood and Iron Corps, headed by Gu Shunzhang 顧順章, who had formerly been a well-known Communist leader.

The *Blood and Iron Corps* was a name given to the Blueshirts' sniping corps, consisting of graduates of the Political Training Institute at the Whampoa Military Academy, who were specially selected to perform this task. The *Blood and Iron Corps*, was part of the Blueshirts Assassination Department, headed by Koo Shunchwang. The members of this later section were picked from among the graduates of the Political Training Institute of Whampoa Military Academy. General Yang Hu, Commissioner of the Public Order Corps at Shanghai and notorious Ching Bang leader, was in charge of training. In 1933 it was estimated that members of this corps in Shanghai numbered about 200.<sup>72</sup>

Within these Blueshirt branches, tight security was maintained by a traditional Chinese cell-system of organisation, within which each group knew only its own leader, who in turn had contact with only one superior, and not with other cells. All members should be prepared to sacrifice everything in the interest of the country, thereby to foster the idea of a central authority. Each member had to be sworn into the Blueshirts by a solemn oath, and each member received a certificate on joining, and could only leave the Society upon death.

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<sup>71</sup> Government officer, born at Yangzhou, Jiangsu, attended the Beijing Military College, Tianjin, also studied at the Japanese Military Officers College at Tokyo, where he joined the Tongmenghui, took active part in the first Revolution of 1911; served as high adviser to Sun Yatsen then Chiang Kaishek in Canton in 1923; assisted in organising the Whampoa Military Academy in which he served as an instructor in 1924.

<sup>72</sup> NA, D4685, SMP report 20 June 1933 (see for more information on the phrase *Blood and Iron* the section about Dai Li, Chapter Four).

This system of course also lent itself very well to individual cells acting on their own without orders from above, and this may go some way to explaining some of the atrocities which were attributed to the Blueshirts by their enemies - some of their activities seem to have a clearly political motivation, while others seem little more than brigandage.<sup>73</sup>

### **G. Liu Jianqun and his Significance in the Formation of the Blueshirts**

It is possible that Liu Jianqun's contribution to the formation of the Blueshirts has been somewhat overestimated. However, as most documents relating to the organisation refer to his essay, it is necessary to consider his work as part of the process which led to the setting up of the Blueshirt organisation.

Liu was a civilian who had served the revolution during the Northern Expedition and who was employed in 1931 as General He Yingqin's 何應欽<sup>74</sup> secretary, serving in his anti-Communist headquarters in Nanchang. It was during his period of service here that Liu began to discuss with his colleagues subjects such as the decline of the revolution and the rampant corruption among the officers which paralysed any effective action. After his views were challenged by military officers, in October 1931 he produced his

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<sup>73</sup> BA, 0902, nr.2235, Deutsche Botschaft China, (31-34), 24 September 1934. nr. B.316, Akt.P.0.7, nr.5726/34.

<sup>74</sup> General assistant Chief of Staff to the Nationalist Army Headquarters at Nanjing, and Chairman of the Zhejiang provincial government committee. Native of Guizhou province where he was born in 1891. After receiving a Chinese education in his home village, he was sent to the Japanese Officers Military Academy in Japan from which he graduated with honours. He returned to Guizhou province and for a time was commander of an army brigade there. When the First Division of the First Nationalist Army Corps was organised at Canton in preparation for the Northern advance, He Yingqin was appointed Commander of the First Division, under Chiang Kaishek who commanded the corps. Upon Chiang Kaishek's return to the Government and resumption of command of the Nationalist forces, He was made Assistant Chief of Staff of the Nationalist Army Headquarters. Since 1930 Minister of Military Administration [Defence Minister].

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aforementioned 87- page essay “A Few Ideas for the Reform of the Party.”<sup>75</sup>

The *Beijing Morning Post* published an interview with Liu in 1934, which revealed:

During the course of his reception of newspaper reporters at Peiping yesterday at his headquarters, Mr. Liu Chi Chuin [Liu Jianqun], Chief Captain of the North China Propaganda Corps<sup>76</sup> [a Blueshirts front organisation], distributed among the attendance three kinds of his own writings, amongst which was one entitled *Offer some views for the adjustment of the Kuomintang*, written in October 1931. Article 5 of this article contains a remarkable subject entitled: *The Organisation of the Blueshirts Society of the Chinese Kuomintang* .....<sup>77</sup>

Liu's essay has caused much of the confusion with respect to the Blueshirts' name since it contained the section called “The Blueshirt Society of the Chinese Guomintang.” Portions of the essay were published, and Liu became known as the author. It was therefore a natural assumption that Liu was the Blueshirts' founder, or that his essay had led directly to their formation - neither of which appears, in retrospect, to be true. Liu did set up his own organisation, but his attempt to create a new political force within the Guomintang was short-lived. His main contribution to the formation of the Blueshirts (Lixingshe) was the ideas expressed in his essay, not the organisation he briefly sponsored. To make the issue more complex, the organisation he actually founded was called the Blueshirt Society (*Lanyishe*). Later Liu himself became a leading member of the *Lixingshe*, which complicated matters still further.

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<sup>75</sup> TB, 2057, p.2; see also, Lincoln Li, pp.55-57; see also, Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.29.

<sup>76</sup> The North Propaganda Corps was created in June 1933, and was part of the Military Council of which Chiang was chairman.

<sup>77</sup> NA, SMP, D.4685, S2, Special Branch, 29 July, 1933. Translation of a newspaper article from the Beijing Morning Post. The organisation was divided into the following eight divisions: 1) Objects, 2) Title, 3) Nature, 4) Articles for selection of members of the Society, 5) Procedures of selection, 6) Connection of the society with various sources, 7) Organisation system, 8) Disciplinary measures.

In his assessment of Liu's essay, Eastman struggled to identify the origin of the section, supposedly part of the original text, called "The Blueshirt Society of the Chinese Guomindang." Eastman believed that this may have been a second or alternate title for the whole essay, "A Few Ideas for the Reform of the Party", or that it may indeed have been an entirely different document.<sup>78</sup> Eastman may be correct in his suspicions, but Liu's own intentions were very clear. Even if there were originally two documents, or if there was a new section added onto an original, Liu was distributing the new version himself only a few months after the original had first been circulated.<sup>79</sup>

By this time Liu had moved on from recommending party reforms to enthusiastic membership of the new organisation, a redrafting of his essay to bring it into line with actual developments would have been the most natural move.

When the *Beijing Morning Post's* reporter asked Liu whether an organisation like the Blueshirts mentioned in the essay had already been inaugurated, and whether he could give any information about its activities, Liu replied:

The Blueshirt Society will have no new doctrines beyond those of the Kuomintang. We can at once know the object of the organisation by understanding its original title, The Blueshirt Society (Lanyi she) and not The Blueshirts Party (Lanyi dang). This scheme of mine was only a suggestion to the leaders of the Kuomintang, and I have not, as a matter of fact, participated in any movement of this nature.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Eastman, "A Review Article", p.30, with reference to the footnote. See also *The Abortive Revolution*, Appendix; Deng thinks the two essays were one and the same, but in the version of "A Few Ideas for Reform of the Party" which Eastman had read, the term *Puyi t'uan*, and not *Lanyi she*, was used. Xuan Jiexi indicated that they were two separate essays. see Gan Guoxun, pp.24,30,32.

<sup>79</sup> NA, SMP, D.4685, S2, Special Branch, 29 July, 1933.

<sup>80</sup> NA, SMP, D.4685.

In the light of future statements by party leaders denying the existence of the organisation outright, this rather lame half-truth actually appears to be honest, even though Liu modestly denied ever having put his “suggestion” into practice.

In this controversial section of his essay, Liu actually proposed several names for the new organisation such as “Youth Corps” and the “Cotton Clothes Corps” (*Buyituan* 布衣團). However, in the end he deemed both these titles unsuitable. In Liu's words: “the former might be mistaken for the Youth group of the Communist Party, while the second name is not complete, as there are other native products such as silk. I therefore took the name *Blueshirts Society of the Chinese Guomindang*.”<sup>81</sup>

The newspaper article concludes by explaining that the Guomindang regarded Blue and White as their principal colours, and that the blue shirt was the stipulated formal uniform of the Guomindang. It also recalled that since ancient times, blue shirts have been recognised as the dress of the common people. In this sense the colour blue took on a distinctly populist and anti-imperialist meaning. Liu argued that: “Members of the Society must use native goods everywhere and those attending a formal conference of the Society must wear the Sun uniform (made of cotton).”<sup>82</sup>

This ideological approach underlies also the anti-Japanese boycott which started just before the Manchurian incident of 1931, and continued and intensified thereafter. The cotton industry was China's largest modern industry, producing the needed cloth for a vast, although poor, market.

Although Liu denied in the above interview that he ever participated in any movement of this nature, investigations by various researchers, of whom Eastman was the first, reveal that this was not entirely true. As mentioned

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<sup>81</sup> NA, SMP, D.4685 .

<sup>82</sup> NA, SMP, D.4685.

above, an organisation called the Blueshirt Society had been established in January 1932 by Liu and a friend.

There was a rumour in society and in the world that the Blue Shirt Association was another name for the *Implementation Society of the Three Principles of the People*. This is a misunderstanding. Actually, the Blue Shirt Association had plans of revolutionary rejuvenation. The organisation was founded just before January 1932, although the Association had not yet developed into a national organisation. The Blue Shirt Association co-existed with the *Implementation Society*.<sup>83</sup>

The information refers to the infant Blueshirt Society of Liu Jianqun and the Lixingshe of Teng Jie. Apparently Liu Jianqun's *Blueshirt Society* survived only a couple of months, and probably fused with the Lixingshe shortly after Chiang Kaishek appointed Liu head of the Political Training Section of the Central Military Academy.<sup>84</sup>

The relationship between the two organisations and Liu's involvement is confirmed by a record of the interrogation of Zhuan Shenglan, a former Blueshirt member, by Japanese intelligence in 1939.<sup>85</sup> This affirms that in October 1931 Liu wrote a pamphlet, on blue paper, entitled "A Future View of the Guomindang" - in fact the same essay as the above-mentioned "A Few Ideas for the Reform of the Party." As Liu Jianqun later became one of the leading members of the Lixingshe, many people made the understandable error of calling this organisation the Blueshirt Society or Lanyishe, the name proposed in Liu's essay.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Xuan Jiexi, "Lanyishe zhi lailongqumai" (The Origin and Development of the Blue Shirts Association), *Zhuanji wenxue*, 1982, vol.41-5.

<sup>84</sup> Eastman, "A Review Article", p.30; see also Lincoln Li, pp.55-57.

<sup>85</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite*.

<sup>86</sup> An inaccuracy never refuted by the members involved in the organisations, until Eastman's contribution on the "Blueshirts" in 1972, which was soon followed by publications of Gan Guoxun, a former Blueshirt member and Deng Yuanzhong, the son of Deng Wenyi.

## 3.2 Guomindang Factions : Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique

### A. Sword and Pen / Action and Knowledge / Blueshirts and the C.C. Clique

Chinese society considered bureaucracy as being divided into two main groups: the Pen=Knowledge (*Wenchen*:文臣) and the Sword=Action (*Wujiang*:武將). These groups represent respectively “Civil” and “Military” officers. This traditional distinction is pertinent in considering the role of the Blueshirts within the Guomindang, especially when they are contrasted with the C.C. Clique. Broadly speaking, the C.C. Clique was more akin to the *Wen* (civil officers), while the Blueshirts activities more closely paralleled *Wu* (military officers). In terms of colour symbolism, this distinction may be expressed as *Wen* = White and *Wu* = Blue.

The distinction between the pen and the sword may also be relevant in discussing the ideologies of the C.C.Clique and the Blueshirts. The C.C.Clique was defined very much by knowledge (*zhi* 知) while the Blueshirts tended towards action (*xing* 行). A similar distinction existed in Japan between the Black Dragon and the Black Ocean Societies. The influence of Japanese secret societies on the factions within the Guomindang were indeed far-reaching.

The C.C.Clique and the Blueshirts organisations were very comparable, sometimes covering the same activities, and both were supervised by Chiang, although despite this members were in constant rivalry.

The C.C.Clique came into existence in June 1927, after the establishment of the Nationalist Government in Nanjing.<sup>87</sup> The C.C.Clique

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<sup>87</sup> Several names are given to explain the C.C. abbreviation, respectively: Central Club, China Club, and C.C derived from the Chen brothers (Chen Lifu and Chen Guofu), this last explanation is mostly used.

coalesced around the Chen brothers (Chen Guofu 陳果夫<sup>88</sup> and Chen Lifu 陳立夫<sup>89</sup>), was bound to Chiang by extraordinarily close personal and emotional ties,<sup>90</sup> and like him, came from Zhejiang province. The Chen brothers gathered those who had worked directly with Chiang, many of whom had close ties with the Shanghai business world. The C.C.Clique recruited members from the so-called Stickers Clique of Guangdong, the Western Hills Group and the Sun Yatsen Study Society at the Whampoa Academy.<sup>91</sup> In addition, the Zhejiang Society of Revolutionary Comrades and the anti-Bolshevik group of the Jiangxi apparatus were absorbed. These groups formed the core of the C.C.Clique and its political influence rapidly became of great importance. By 1931 the Chen brothers and twenty-seven others made up the top rank of the C.C.Clique which controlled 15 percent of the new C.E.C., and had recruited thousands of mid-level and lower level party cadre into its rapidly growing lower ranks.<sup>92</sup>

The Organisation Department was controlled by the Chen brothers. They additionally created an intelligence network that served as the party's security police force. Thus the C.C.Clique was sometimes referred to as the

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<sup>88</sup> Government official, born at Wuxing, Zhejiang in 1892. Chen Guofu studied at the Military primary school of Zhejiang, 1908-11, promoted to the Military middle school at Nanjing and joined the Revolutionary Party headed by Sun Yatsen, 1911. He took a prominent part in the First Revolution being the right hand man to his uncle Chen Qimei 陳其美. Elected as a member of Central Supervisory Committee of the Guomindang at the second convention of the party in January 1926. Secretary to Chiang Kaishek, and chief of the Organisation Department of the Guomindang in 1926.

<sup>89</sup> Chief secretary of the Central Party Headquarters, younger brother of Chen Guofu, studied in America and received his M.A degree from Pittsburgh University. Author of a Chinese dictionary published by the Zhonghua Book Co., Shanghai, publisher of the *Current Events Monthly*, Nanjing.

<sup>90</sup> The Chen brothers were nephews of Chen Qimei (murdered in 1916 by Yuan Shikai). Chiang Kaishek and Chen Qimei had been bloodbrothers. Chiang Kaishek's contact with the Chen brothers dates from that period.

<sup>91</sup> Hung-mao Tien, p.49.

<sup>92</sup> Jordan, pp.34-35.



Organisation Clique. The Clique controlled not only positions inside the party, but also a wide range of positions in the civil administration and cultural education institutions. The Chen brothers placed adherents throughout the party and governmental apparatus, particularly in the middle and lower strata of those organisations. In this way the C.C.Clique came to have a dominating influence in the civilian branches of the regime, controlling much of the bureaucracy and labour unions.

Moreover, they recruited intellectuals, bureaucrats, and military officers to serve in the upper level of the organisation. Students from the Central Police Academy, which was set up by the Chen brothers, were sent to the provinces in order to control the local administrations and other institutions. The Clique also controlled different publications, such as the *Shishi Yuebao* 時事月報 (Monthly Times, also named Current Events), *Wenhua Jianshe* 文化建設 (Cultural Reconstruction).<sup>93</sup> The Chen brothers most actively promoted the revival of the cult of Confucius during the Nanjing period. The C.C.Clique was a well-structured political group, and its members shared six fundamental ideological and political conceptions,<sup>94</sup> which were actually very similar to the Blueshirts' principles:

1. The Three Principles of the People of Sun Yatsen form the basis of the National Revolution.
2. Chiang Kaishek is the supreme leader of the revolution, and the Party.
3. Opposing any other political doctrine not in line with the Three People's Principles.
4. Supporting of national independence and against foreign Imperialism.
5. Centralisation of power.
6. Advocating the revival of traditional moral, and religious teachings.

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<sup>93</sup> Lloyd E. Eastman [et al.], "Nationalist China during the Nanking decade, 1927-1937" in *The National Era in China 1927-1949*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.27.

<sup>94</sup> Tien, p.51.

The leading members of the C.C.Clique shared a belief in the nation's psychological reconstruction,<sup>95</sup> through reliance on traditional morality as a foundation and driving force for modernisation.

The C.C.Clique was one of Chiang's most effective political factions over a long period. However, among politically involved Chinese it was felt that the C.C.Clique actually failed to counteract successfully the Japanese invasion in Manchuria in 1931. This failure was one of the reasons that Chiang gave his approval to the Blueshirts. The secret formation of the Blueshirts did not escape the notice of the Chen brothers, who at that particular time were not yet involved in the Blueshirts. Nevertheless, on inquiry in June 1932, Chiang denied any knowledge of the Blueshirts to the Chen brothers.<sup>96</sup> This denial is all the more interesting as Chiang and the brothers were very intimate. After the Blueshirts had established their mass base of the organisation called the *Fuxingshe*, the C.C.Clique decided to change its own name to the *Qingbaishe* 青白社 (Blue and White Society). The reason for this may have been to show a new and stronger image to the public.<sup>97</sup> However, this new name was hardly ever used by the Chinese and was also rarely referred to in official documents - the "old" term C.C.Clique was mostly used.

### **B. The C.C. Clique and Blueshirts in Conflict**

Despite their mutual goal of making China and the Chinese people strong and prosperous, the C.C. Clique and the Blueshirts came into conflict almost from the outset.<sup>98</sup> The similar aims of the organisations underlay also

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<sup>95</sup> Kirby, p.157.

<sup>96</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite*.

<sup>97</sup> Chen Dunzheng, in Gan Guoxun, p.50.

<sup>98</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite*.

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the basis of the conflicts between them. The C.C.Clique, being civilian orientated, had a dominating influence in the civilian branches of the regime, controlling much of the bureaucratic administration, educational agencies, youth organisations and labour unions. The Blueshirts, although in general military orientated, showed broad political concerns that at least touched all aspects of national life. This was the foremost reason for the Blueshirts coming into conflict with the C.C.Clique. The Blueshirts tried to expand their influence at the cost of the C.C.Clique by founding their own youth organisations, cultural clubs and newspapers. This Blueshirts' expansion drift was heavily resisted by the C.C.Clique, who claimed it had the first right.

A document from the Washington Archives described the conflicts as follows: "When in 1934 tensions between the Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique became so sharp that fighting nearly erupted, Chiang merely arranged for a division of labour between the competing factions."<sup>99</sup> A similar account is found in an SMP report dated 1935, this report also refers to conflicts between the Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique: "Members of the various cliques of the Blueshirts or Fascist Party in China, although at loggerheads over the question of authority, have not yet come into open conflict."<sup>100</sup> Eastman recounts this conflict, paraphrasing Deng Yuanzhong:<sup>101</sup> "they [Blueshirts] also struggled against the civilian apparatus of the regime - and especially against the C.C.Clique... Chiang in 1933 named four civilian bureaucrats to the Lixingshe's Executive Committee: Dai Jitao 戴季陶<sup>102</sup>, Zhu Jiahua

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<sup>99</sup> NA, D.4685, SMP, report 22 August, 1933; Chen Lifu and Chen Guofu were already at variance with the military element of the Blueshirts.

<sup>100</sup> NA, SMP, D.4685, 28 June 1935. *The Blueshirt Society and the arrest of Yan.*

<sup>101</sup> Eastman, "A Review Article", p.36.

<sup>102</sup> President of the Examination Yuan. A native of Zhejiang, born in Hankou, Sichuan, 1882. Wrote poems when only nine years old; studied from the age of 13 to 16 at various school in Chengdu. He took an oath with his fellow students to overthrow the Manchu regime while still a student. Went to Japan at age of 16 and studied law at Law College of the Imperial

朱家驊<sup>103</sup> and the two leaders of the C.C.Clique, the Chen brothers. The following year, however, Liu Jianqun was appointed Secretary General by Chiang Kaishek. All these measures did little or nothing to ameliorate the factional enmities.”

In August 1935 the Blueshirts arrested a pro-Japanese newspaper reporter named Yuan Chaoyi [Yuan Zhaoyi?] who was promoting co-operation between Chinese and Japanese newspaper circles. His arrest was said to be due to differences between the Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique. Yuan was a supporter of Wu Sung Ah [Wu Xingya], chief of the social bureau of the municipal Shanghai government, and the leader of the C.C.Clique which had control over local Chinese newspapers. The Blueshirts seemed to have arrested Yuan as an indirect attack upon the C.C.Clique. The reporter, Yuan, had disappeared after attending a meeting that was organised by Iwai Eiichi, chief of the Intelligence section of the Japanese embassy. This meeting was joined by a number of Japanese and Chinese newspaper reporters. Yuan had delivered a speech advocating rapprochement between Japanese and Chinese newspaper reporters and supporting Sino-Japanese economic co-operation. His arrest was supposedly executed by the special service corps of the Blueshirts in Shanghai, which was an assassination organ under the leadership of Oong Kwang Huei [Weng Guanghui?].<sup>104</sup>

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University, Tokyo. Returned to China at the age of 19 and became an associate editor of the *Zhong wai bao* in Shanghai, 1908. President of the National Zhong shan University at Canton, 1926 and resigned this presidency in October 1930. A close friend of Chiang Kaishek and his ideas had an influence on the ideological development of the Guomindang.

<sup>103</sup> University President, born at Huzhou, Zhejiang. Doctor of Philosophy of Berlin University, Germany. Professor of Beijing University. Member of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang, member of Zhejiang Provincial Guomindang Headquarters, member of the Central Political Council, and member of the Zhejiang Provincial Government.

<sup>104</sup> SMP, D4685, 25 June 1935, Morning Translation of the *Nippo*, *Mainichi* and *Nichi-Nichi*, *Blueshirts Society Arrests pro-Japanese Chinese Newspaper reporter*. See also, NA, 28 June 1935, *The Blueshirts Society and the Arrest of Yuan Hsueh Yi*.

The friction between the two organisations had also captured the SMP's attention and one of their reports describing the efforts to channel this conflict runs:

In order to avoid the overlapping of duties, the Blueshirts have divided the responsibilities for their operations in the following manner: Chen Kuofu the leader of the C.C. Clique to take charge of the activities among educational and social circles. Yang Yungtai, Secretary General to the Field Headquarters at Wuchang, to take charge of the activities among political and military circles. Shanghai being the first city in China from the educational and social point of view, it is considered necessary for the C.C.Clique to devote its attention to this city. Chinese writers should be brought under its control. To achieve this end, the C.C. Clique has the support of some well-known Chinese writers and professors to form a special body, whose duty is to investigate the political inclinations of Chinese literati. This special body includes ten professors, and 10 January, 1935, these professors issued a manifesto through the Chinese press. Chen Lifu, issued on the following day a declaration in support of this manifesto.<sup>105</sup>

Nevertheless, despite all the attempts to solve the problems between the two organisations, the conflicts continued, and in July 1937 Chiang again called in leaders of the C.C.Clique and the Blueshirts. The C.C.Clique members present at the meeting were Chen Guofu, Chen Lifu, Zhang Lisheng 張勵生, Zhou Fuhai 周佛海,<sup>106</sup> Ye Xiufeng 叶秀峰, Xu Enzeng 徐恩曾 and Zhang Daopan 張道藩,<sup>107</sup> and leaders from the Blueshirts

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<sup>105</sup> NA, SMP, D.4685, *Blueshirt Society*, 18 July 1935.

<sup>106</sup> Leading supporter of Wang Jingwei's Peace Movement and member of the Central Executive Committee of the Tokyo Imperial University, Japan. Professor of National Canton University. Secretary at the Headquarters of Commander in - chief of the Nationalist Army. Chief secretary of the Wuhan school of the Central Military and Political Academy. Vice-Director and acting Director of the Central Publicity Council of the Guomindang, 1937-38. Fled from Chongqing with Wang Jingwei in December 1938 to launch a peace movement and has since been his leading supporter and collaborator. Author of "Basic Problems of the Three Peoples Principles", and "Fundamentals of Economics."

<sup>107</sup> Born at Guise, on July 1897. He graduated from the Department of Fine Arts (Slade School) University College, University of London. While he was in England he served as head of the Assembly of the London Branch of the Guomindang, 1923. Upon return to China in 1926, he was appointed secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Labour of the Canton Provincial government. Dean of the Qingdao National University, 1930, and member of Zhejiang Provincial Government and concurrently Commissioner of Education, 1931. Shortly

attending were Liu Jianqun, Dai Li, Deng Wenyi etc.<sup>108</sup> During the meeting it was decided that the organisations should limit themselves to their own sphere of activities: for the C.C. Clique this was party organisation and the civil administration; the Blueshirts were to focus their efforts on military policy and security matters. Because of the close relations between both organisations and their mutual interests, and as the Chen brothers became involved in both movements, one organisation was often mistaken for the other, as revealed by various SMP reports about the Blueshirts: “The C.C.Clique, embodies faithful members who wish to inculcate a new spirit, Fascism, into the masses as a measure to save the country from its perilous position.”<sup>109</sup>

Japanese reports also describe the confusion among Chinese about the two organisations.<sup>110</sup> The reports suggest that the main ambition of the C.C.Clique and the Blueshirts in Shanghai was their policy of secret terrorist activities, which was essentially correct. Sometimes the methods and activities of both the C.C.Clique and the Blueshirts were referred to as being the same as the Gestapo in Germany or GPU in the U.S.S.R.<sup>111</sup> This

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after, he was transferred to Nanjing as Vice-Director of the Organisation Department of the Central Party Headquarters during the Sino-Japanese hostilities at Shanghai in 1932.

<sup>108</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite*.

<sup>109</sup> PRO, FO, 371/19315 xc 199807, *Blueshirts Party in China*, 29 November 1934.

<sup>110</sup> JMFA, A 610-7 / 1516, vol.3,( 250). *Shina seito kessha kankei zakken*, (Miscellaneous articles about Chinese parties and Societies), reported by Japanese Consulate in Shanghai, 5 October, 1933. And Telegraph from Shanghai to Jinan, 1935.

<sup>111</sup> NA, SMP, Special Branch, D.4685, *Memorandum on the Blueshirts*, 10 December 1940. GPU = The Soviet government in 1917 instituted its own secret police, the Cheka(All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for the Suppression of Counterrevolution and Sabotage) under Felix Dzerzhinsky. This was reorganised in 1922 as the GPU(*Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie*= *State Political Administration*). It was later named the OGPU(United State Political Administration), while in 1934 the functions of the OGPU were transferred to the NKVD. This NKVD was also responsible for the Stalinist purges which culminated in the wave of terror of 1936-38.

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indicates once more how difficult it was to distinguish between the activities of both organisations, the Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique.

Initially the C.C.Clique's espionage activities were channelled through a company with the name *Zhengyuan shiye she* 正元實業社 (Origin of Basic Industrial Company), which was of course an alias. This company was established by personnel of a secret agency which was financially supported by Chiang. During this period - 1933 - the C.C.Clique controlled headquarters in Nanjing and two in Shanghai, while headquarters with the name of *Zhengyuan* or *Zhongguo gongchenghui* 中國工程會 (Chinese Engineering Association) were to be found in Canton, Hong Kong, Tianjin, Hankou and Beijing. Altogether there existed thirty C.C.Clique branches.

Despite their attempts not to aggravate each other or interfere in each others' affairs, the Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique by no means merged or became indistinguishable. For example, Chiang allowed two different secret police forces to be retained, both known as *Bureaux of Investigation and Statistics* (BIS).<sup>112</sup> The first was the *Zhongyang dangbu diaocha tongjiju* 中央黨部調查統計局, (commonly referred to by the Chinese as *Zhongtong* 中統), the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the Central Guomindang' Special Services, controlled by the Chen brothers and the C.C.Clique. The second, under the guidance of Dai Li and the Blueshirts was called the *Junshi weiyuanhui diaocha tongjiju* 軍事委員會調查統計局 (abbreviated as *Juntong* 軍統) the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the Military Affairs Commission's Special Service.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> NA, SIF 226 13W3.3/34/A, Entry 182, Box 51, 263, date of information, 21 May 1946. In a report made by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, Strategic Service Unit, Chungking detachment in 1946. This report explained that there was the C.C.Clique's *Bureau of Investigation and Statistics* - BIS - which operated under the Ministry of Organisation of the Guomindang, with Chen Lifu as Head, and the - "BIS" - which operates under the Supreme National Defence Council, and which was formerly headed by Dai Li. After 1936 strong rivalry existed between these two intelligence services.

<sup>113</sup> He Wenlong, *Zhongguo tewu neimu* (The Inside Story of the Chinese Special Agents), Hong Kong: Fengyu shuwu, 1947, pp.5-9.

These two organisations were renamed after the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) as the *Baomiju* 保密局 (Security Bureau).<sup>114</sup>

The existence of more than one secret police force under the same leader was not at all unusual, for they had been part of Chinese history for a long time. The ruling Emperors of the various Chinese dynasties had also had two distinct secret police forces.<sup>115</sup> The Han Dynasty used two secret police forces, respectively the *Zhaoyu* 詔獄,<sup>116</sup> and the *Dashuihe* 大誰何. The Tang Dynasty had also two secret police units, *Lijingmen* 麗景們 and the *Bu liang ren* 不良人, while only the Song Dynasty apparently used one secret police force, the *Junxunyuanyuan* 軍巡院.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, during the Ming dynasty two police forces, *Jinyiwei* 錦衣衛, and *Dongxichang* 東西廠 were working for the Emperor's prestige and benefit.<sup>118</sup> Also in early Republican China secret police forces were part of Chinese society, Yuan Shikai during his period of rule founded the *Zhenqidui* 偵緝隊.<sup>119</sup> Thus, in the perspective of Chinese history, Chiang's use of two separate forces was not at all a new development. Indeed, his preference to use two forces continues the tendency of Chinese thinking towards dualisation, marked perhaps most clearly by the differences between *Wen* (invisible) and *Wu* (visible).

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<sup>114</sup> Tejima Hiroshi, *Chugoku rodo undotsushi* (A History of Chinese Labour Movement), Tokyo: Toyo shobo, 1985, pp. 348-349. Chiang Kaishek founded two different Secret Service Organisation, one belonged to the Fuxingshe - originally from the Lanyishe or Blueshirts. For more information regarding the Baomiju see Chapter Six.

<sup>115</sup> He Wenlong, *Zhongguo tewu neimu*, p.8.

<sup>116</sup> The meaning of *Zhao yu* Meaning is "Punishment or put in jail, according the law of the Emperor", by Zhao Shu 詔書 (Imperial edict).

<sup>117</sup> The meaning of *Jun xun yuan* is "Military Patrol Courtyard."

<sup>118</sup> *Jin yi wei* means Brocade Shirts Defenders (or Guardians), and *Dongxichang* means East & West or Goods Storehouse. Both were the Emperor's secret police. The criminals were not subject to jurisdiction for hardly ever was used law, rules, and martial court; they were most of the time just straight away put in a jail or were killed.

<sup>119</sup> *Zhenqidui* means Squad of Scorch and Seize.



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In order to support the C.C.Clique's espionage activities the Central Party Bureau of the Guomindang fostered the training of telegraphers, who after finishing their training, worked under C.C.Clique instructions. However, the C.C.Clique and the Blueshirts used different names for groups with the same function, which made it nearly impossible for outsiders to distinguish their respective activities. An example of this is the case of two members of the Shanghai headquarters. Wang Longzhang 王龍章 (aged thirty) and Yin Mingkui 尹名揆 (aged thirty-five) went on a so-called study trip to Japan on 5th September 1936 from Shanghai, ostensibly in order to study the agricultural situation in Japan.<sup>120</sup> However, their actual plan was to investigate Chinese students suspected of pro-Japanese attitudes. It could not be determined initially whether they were Blueshirt or C.C.Clique members. Ultimately they were confirmed as being C.C.Clique members.

### 3.3 Conclusions

As a result of the threats from the Japanese and the fight against the Communists, Chiang Kaishek gradually came to rely less on the party and more on the army after 1928. This expanding military power was achieved at the cost of the civil administration of the Guomindang Government. Both the military and the civil administration of the Guomindang proved incapable of fulfilling the demands of the Chinese people of improving their conditions.

Factions operating in the Guomindang contributed to this process; instead of co-operating with each other, they often were in conflict. The most powerful faction before the establishment of the Blueshirts was the C.C.Clique. Although this Clique was relatively powerful, it indirectly caused the foundation of the Blueshirts as Chiang blamed the C.C.Clique for

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<sup>120</sup> JMFA, A 6107, 1111, vol. 3, *Shina seito kessha kankei zakken* (The Relationship of Chinese Political Factions), 1933. From this document, reported on 10 September 1936.

his forced resignation at the end of 1931. After the invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese, the C.C.Clique proved unable to manage the anti-Japanese movements, which ran out of control and began to pose a threat to Chiang's personal rule.

As a result, Chiang set up a new organisation designed to ensure his personal control over the factions and to bring about his vision for a radical transformation of Chinese society. Its official title the Lixingshe, however, never became familiar among either Chinese or foreigners, and it became publicly known as the Blueshirt Society or Lanyishe.

At its peak, the Blueshirts core group, which was in fact the Lixingshe, contained the 300-500 members of the Blueshirts' leadership. These were the only people with some knowledge of the overall operations of the Blueshirts. Even at this level activities were sectioned to enhance security and secrecy. Ambiguity was one of the most convenient means for the Blueshirts to build up its image.

An organisational design was set up to minimise lateral connections between operating units. This secret structure based on converging lines of vertical relationship and minimising horizontal contact was an innovational scheme, inherited from the Chinese secret societies. This structure also allowed for the organisation to be not only hierarchical but also loosely articulated. Thus, the two outer rings of membership did not know of the existence of the core of the Blueshirts, the Lixingshe, since they knew only the members of their own cell or branch. The policy of the founders of the organisation, especially in the beginning, and particularly for the membership of the two inner circles, was recruitment by invitation. Emphasis was placed on quality rather than on quantity.

The organisation of the Blueshirts broadly resembled the structure of the Guomindang. The national government divided its organisation into five separate powers which was analogous to the organisation of four departments

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and a Control Commission within the Blueshirts. In addition a C.E.C. had the authority to formulate policy within both the organisations. The difference was that the Guomindang's organisation contained horizontal lines of leadership, in contrast to that of the Blueshirts. Furthermore, division into three distinctive layers in order to maintain secrecy, as in the Blueshirts structure, was not an issue in the Guomindang.

The Blueshirts expanded into a relatively large-scale movement within a few years, and their rising importance brought them into conflict with one of the main existing factions, the C.C.Clique. Chiang attempted to resolve the rivalry between these two most important organisations within the Guomindang, by appointing, among others, the Chen brothers to the top stratum of the Blueshirts organisation. In practice, this meant that the C.C.Clique largely directed its energies against foreigners, including the Japanese, while the Blueshirts generally fought the Communists. Although Chiang was a master in manipulating the various factions, corresponding to the motto "divide and rule", in reality he failed to channel these conflicts effectively.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Ideology and Implementation of Blueshirt Fascism**

The interwar period was dominated in Europe by the rise of Fascism, and this trend had important repercussions on other continents around the world. It appeared to many political organisations that Fascism was an almost unqualified success story. Several countries therefore adopted certain of the ideas and practices of Fascism as a means of accelerating their national development, without necessarily subscribing fully to the complete ideologies generated in Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy. The Blueshirts were one of the movements which did just this, as they were primarily interested in strengthening their nationalist revolution and in promoting the dictatorship of Chiang Kaishek.

This Chapter examines the Blueshirts' interpretation of Fascism and how they sought to implant it in their society to create a new hybrid which was distinctively Chinese. Following on from the description of the influence of Japanese and European Fascism on the Blueshirt organisation outlined in the previous chapter, discussion now considers whether there was a new Blueshirt ideology distinct from the general philosophy of the Guomindang. Initially, this discussion compares the Three Principles of the People (Sunism) and Blueshirt Fascism. Researchers in this field have offered different analyses of this question and, even among the Blueshirts themselves, there was disagreement on this subject.

Secondly, this chapter considers how the ideology of the Blueshirts was put into effect and enforced through the practical work of the organisation. Special attention is afforded to Dai Li, a leading exponent of the Blueshirts. Thirdly, the Blueshirts' attempt to build a mass organisation during the New Life Movement is also examined.

## 4.1 The Ideology of Blueshirt Fascism

### A. The Debate on Blueshirt Ideology

Chapter One of this thesis referred to the disputes between scholars about a set of definitions which would enable an organisation to be classified as Fascist. A working definition of Fascism and the extent and scope of foreign influences on the formation of the Blueshirts have both been discussed within the scope of this study. The tentative conclusion drawn so far is that the organisation owed more to Japanese than to German Fascist models. On the other hand, an examination of the relationship between the ideologies of the Blueshirts and of Sun Yatsen may help in further appreciating the theses of other scholars. For example, Maria Chang attempts to show that the Blueshirts were not Fascist, but loyal to Sun's Three Principles of the People.

For his part, Lloyd Eastman may have greatly overestimated the importance of German advisers and influences from Germany. He was basically correct in describing the organisation as Fascist. Moreover, his work at least provided a proper scholarly basis for making such an assertion. Many other writers have been content simply to reproduce this as a received opinion without having any perception of the real ideology underlying the movement.<sup>1</sup>

It is significant that neither in his book *The Abortive Revolution* nor in any of subsequent his articles does Eastman directly refer to a relationship between Sun's Three Principles of the People and what he asserts to be the Fascist character of the Blueshirts. Instead, he concentrates almost exclusively on foreign influences. It is on precisely this point that Chang

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<sup>1</sup> Notable exceptions to this rule are: Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, and also Hung-mao Tien, *Government and Politics in Kuomintang China, 1927-1937*.

criticises Eastman's argument and his checklist of characteristically Fascist traits.

Chang's contribution to the debate begins by comparing Eastman's checklist with the guiding ideals of the Guomindang, concluding that "if we look no further than the *Sanminzhuyi* of Sun Yatsen we find every theme Eastman has identified as Fascist."<sup>2</sup> She proceeds to use this very sound conclusion to support a very weak argument. Since it is true that the Three Principles of the People could perfectly easily be made to fit into Eastman's checklist definition of Fascism, his definition may be discarded as unhelpful. Chang fails, however, to examine *why* it is so. Following her argument, one is left with the impression that because the Three Principles of the People could be defined as Fascist, the only conclusion must be that the basic definitions are at fault. Chang merely *assumes* that the Three Principles could not, under any circumstances, properly satisfy the conditions Eastman set out for a Fascist ideology. She does not address the problem posed by the fact that they do indeed conform to Eastman's definition.

Chang's argument culminates in a clear alternative. On the one hand, she contends that if Eastman's criteria were valid and the Blueshirts were Fascist, then the entire ideology of Sunism and the whole Guomindang must have been as well, because the Three Principles of the People conform to his definition. Assuming, quite reasonably, that no-one will be persuaded by this argument, she proposes an alternative view point: that Eastman's criteria are invalid and neither the Guomindang as a whole nor the Blueshirts in particular were Fascist. It is interesting that the clear distinction which Chang draws between the Three Principles of the People and Fascism follows the schema laid down by Eastman, who had stated that over time, "Fascism,

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<sup>2</sup> Chang, p.33.

rather than the Three Principles of the People of Sun Yatsen, became the guiding ideology of the Blue Shirts.”<sup>3</sup>

Developing this distinction in her argument, Chang concluded that the Blueshirts, which she persistently labels the *Chinese Renaissance Movement*,<sup>4</sup> did not have to seek out themes in the literature of a foreign political ideology, as these were already available in the traditional ideology of the Guomindang, namely the Three Principles of the People of Sun Yatsen. Her argument therefore depends on excluding any possibility that the Three Principles of the People might, under any circumstances, satisfy a definition of Fascism.

Chang's criticism of Eastman's definitions pointed to a path of enquiry which she chose not to pursue. She does not indicate whether Sunism fails to conform to definitions of Fascism proposed by other scholars. Furthermore, she fails to provide an entirely satisfying explanation of how an organisation which bore a considerable resemblance to Fascist organisation elsewhere could have been based so squarely on Sunism. Whereas Eastman did not investigate Sunism's relationship to Fascism, Chang examined it in terms which did not allow for any relationship between the two. This chapter will show that it was in fact quite possible for a fully Fascist organisation to exist within the framework of a party based on the Three Principles of the People,

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<sup>3</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.54, cited by Chang, p.11.

<sup>4</sup> *Fuxingshe*, can be translated as *revival- or rebirth Society*, both translations are used in literature and documents, while the translation used by Han Suyin is *Resurrection Society*. However, Maria Chang translated it as *Renaissance Movement*, which apparently is not wrong but also does not make much sense in this context; for *Renaissance* is a term to describe the development of Western civilisation that marked the transition from medieval to modern times (The Columbia Encyclopaedia). In *China Today*, vol.1, no.1, p.14, October, 1934, we find an article in this Chinese Communist related periodical, about a *Chinese Renaissance Movement*, which mainly dealt with the reform of Chinese literature. The *China Critic*, vol. XVI, no.5, 4 February, 1937, said that: The Chinese sentiment about National Salvation, just before the war with Japan in 1937, was first expressed in the rather vague term of *National Renaissance*, *Minzhu Fuxing*. But later a much more expressive phrase would be coined, namely “rebirth by its own vitality.”

without facing any significant problems of ideological contradiction or political disloyalty.

## **B. Sun Yatsen and His Political Legacy**

As Sun Yatsen failed to provide a coherent theoretical study of his views on social and political questions, all kinds of interpretation have been placed upon the Three Principles of the People. Sun himself interpreted them differently in different periods of his life. The origins of the Principles are as unclear as their meaning. Sun may have formulated them as early as his visit to London in 1896-97.<sup>5</sup> In that case a full twenty seven years passed before Sun publicly enunciated them at Canton in 1924. His original conception of them may well have changed during the intervening years.

It is clear that the philosophical and political antecedents of the Principles were highly eclectic in character. It is known, for example, that Sun was interested in the achievements of the Japanese Meiji Restoration and its parallels with the French Revolution.<sup>6</sup> Sun's ideas about welfare for the people may have been formed during his stay in London where he frequently visited libraries.<sup>7</sup> Books which came to his attention included Henry

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<sup>5</sup> J.Y.Wong, "Sun Yatsen and the British Connection, 1896/97 and 1984", Sydney: University of Sydney Press, 1986, *Sun Yatsen, His International Ideas and International Connections*.

<sup>6</sup> Kobayashi, *Meiji ishin to Furansu kakumei* (Meiji Restoration and French Revolution), Tokyo: Sanichi shobo, 1988.

<sup>7</sup> Nihon Son Bun kenkyukai, *Son Bun to Ajia* (Sun Yatsen and Asia), Tokyo: Hako shoin, 1993. (based on the International Academic Symposium in Tokyo in August 1993), Zhang Yufa, *Son Chusan no O-Bei keiken no Chugoku kakumei ni taisuru eikyo* (Sun Yatsen's Revolutionary thought influenced by the experience from Western countries), p.225, translated by Fujii Hiroshi. An investigation by the British Intelligence showed that Sun visited the libraries sixty eight times between 3 December 1896 and 24 June 1897.



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George's *Our Land and Land Policy* and *Progress and Poverty*, then very popular.<sup>8</sup>

During his stay in Paris in 1905, Sun employed a French scholar named Ulysse Raphael Reau, a graduate of the Paris Oriental School, as his secretary.<sup>9</sup> Sun and Reau had long discussions, which may have influenced Sun's ideas about the French Revolution, and probably also shaped his views on democracy. Sun was favourably impressed by the working of democratic governments. However, after studying them, he came to the conclusion that a representative government alone would not solve China's problems.<sup>10</sup> Sun's attention was also drawn to the work of Rudolf Steiner, notably his 1920 book *The Threefold State*. In this work, Steiner explains that the expansion of the people's national rights can be analysed according to three interconnected parts: the national economy, privilege and the inner spirit.<sup>11</sup>

Sun's travels brought him into contact with political ideas from Europe as well as from America. In San Francisco in 1904, he first came across the famous threefold doctrine of Abraham Lincoln - government "Of the People, By the People and For the People." Sun was apparently highly impressed by this phrase, as it was clear and simple and had similar implications to his own slogan. Lincoln's phraseology was similar to the three terms in the classical Chinese text *shujing* 書經 (The Books of History) : *zhengde* 正德 (right virtue), *liyong* 利用 (Utilisation) and *xiaocheng* 孝誠 (enriching the well-being

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<sup>8</sup> Henry George, *Our Land and Land Policy* (1871) and *Progress and Poverty* (1897), both books sold over 100,000 copies within three years. Author's edition published in San Francisco: W.M. Hinton and Co., March 1879.

<sup>9</sup> Zhang Yufa, p.238.

<sup>10</sup> M.N.Roy, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*. Calcutta: Renaissance, 1946, p.256, with reference to his footnote 7.

<sup>11</sup> Nihon Son Bun Kenkyukai, *Son Bun to Ajia*, Nakamura Tadashi, "Son Bun to aru Swiss no gakusha" (Sun Yatsen and Swiss Scholar), pp.279-283; Steiner's book was published in the Japanese language, during the Japanese Democracy period - Taisho - Sun was very interested in the Japanese Democracy Movement.

of the masses). Sun may therefore have felt a resonance in Lincoln's words of traditional Chinese ideas, and this may be echoed in his own conception of *Nationalism, Sovereignty and Welfare*.<sup>12</sup>

Speaking in Canton in 1924, Sun maintained that in China the slogans of the classical French revolution (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*) should be replaced by *Minzu* 民族, *Minquan* 民權 and *Minsheng* 民生. It should be remembered that the etymological meaning of the Chinese term *Minzu* is in fact not people's nationalism, but people's clan-feeling, referring to the traditional Chinese family and clan system. This idea of clan-feeling is the keystone through which the Chinese secret societies founded their legitimacy, and the same sentiment was cultivated by the Blueshirts.

Although Sun Yatsen had succeeded in leading his people to Revolution, he had failed to instil in the great number of Chinese people the feeling of an all embracing nationalism that would have been necessary to make the revolution and the Guomindang a profound success. For the larger part they remained limited to their own local or provincial traditional sphere of influence. The transition to the “modern” era could then not be made by the majority of the Chinese people. This strong feeling of nationalism was successfully cultivated by the Nazis in Germany and the Italian Fascists. The influence of nationalism upon Fascist doctrine has been so strong in Europe that Fascism and Nationalism have sometimes been regarded as virtually interchangeable terms. There are, of course, strong similarities between certain aspects of many Fascist and nationalist movements.

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<sup>12</sup> Zhang Yufa, pp.228-229, see his footnote 21. When the *Tongmenghui* was founded, in 1907 in Tokyo a sort of political programme to supplement the original slogan was proposed, which included, establishment of a Democratic Republic on the American model. They wanted the hated Manchus to go, but were not sure that monarchy as an institution could altogether be dispensed with. Nor were they willing to depose Confucius for Abraham Lincoln, whose doctrine of government *Of the People, For the People and By the People*, was then the political “summum bonum” for Sun Yatsen.

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In most circumstances the nationalist feelings of the Chinese people, the majority of whom lived in the countryside, was expressed in their clannishness. This was, of course, one of the aspects characterising traditional secret societies that the common Chinese people knew the best. Herein may also lie one of the reasons why the Blueshirts failed to command support among the people. While it is true that Blueshirts Fascism differed from European Fascism in that it did not develop from the grass-roots level, the fact that it embodied many of the features of a secret society rendered it inherently exclusive, and therefore closed to the majority of the Chinese populace.

Sun's phraseology was translated into English as: People's Nationalism, People's Sovereignty, and People's Livelihood. Another translation sometimes cited, Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism, translates Sun's ideas into terms readily understandable by a European readership, but departs substantially from the meaning of the original.<sup>13</sup>

Although undoubtedly influenced by foreign political concepts, the intellectual origins of the Three Principles of the People may also be traced back to indigenous ideas current among Chinese thinkers at the turn of the century. Therefore the significance of Chinese influences should not be underestimated when evaluating the evolution of Sun's philosophy. Among those who may have exerted some influence over Sun's thinking were the late Qing Dynasty reformers, Kang Youwei 康有為,<sup>14</sup> Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 and

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<sup>13</sup> Roy, p.272.

<sup>14</sup> Scholar and reformer, born in Nanhai, Guangdong province in 1856. A Metropolitan Graduate of Imperial Examination under the Qing regime, 1895. He was proscribed and ordered to be decapitated, but fled abroad for many years and returned to China after the establishment of the Republic. Founded the Society of Worship of Confucius and advocated the adoption of Confucianism as state religion, a faithful royalist and he played important part in the attempted monarchy restoration movement in 1917. He was ordered to be arrested, but later pardoned. He died at Qingtao, 1928.

Liang Qichao 梁啓超<sup>15</sup>, all traditional Confucian scholars.<sup>16</sup> Prof. Nomura Koichi mentions that Liang Qichao's concept about 'nation' is discussed in Liang's *Xinminlun* 新民論 (The Theory of New People - Nation).<sup>17</sup> The core of his arguments is that a 'nation' should be formed by the own people.

Sun's concept of Welfare may well have been influenced by what he knew of the foreign ideology of Communism, but it was probably also shaped by the indigenous Chinese ideas of Tan Sitong's *renxue* 仁學 (*study of humanity*), wherein *datongzhuyi* 大同主義, meaning Great Harmony, can also be explained as Welfare. The concept of *datongzhuyi*, indeed starts with Moralism,<sup>18</sup> but another influential idea referred to by Tan Sitong was the theory in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 describing that each person possesses his own freedom and expressing that there exists equality between all people. This idea may have served as the basis for the concept of people's sovereignty.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Liang was born in Xinghui xian, Guangdong Province in 1869. He studied under Kang Youwei at the latter's private school called Wanmu caotang and became the most prominent of Kang's pupils. Liang became a provincial Graduate in 1889. The combination of the two names Kang and Liang is generally known in China to mean the central figures of the reform movement which was responsible for the famous reform decrees of 1898. Preceding the reform movement, Liang started the first Chinese daily newspapers in Beijing.

<sup>16</sup> The ideologists, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, were great scholars. In contrast to them, Sun Yatsen was remarkably sterile in original thought.

<sup>17</sup> Nomura Koichi, pp.144-45. Liang Qichao published in Yokohama, in 1902, this article about *Xinminlun* in the *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報 (Liang's periodical published in Japan and also distributed in China).

<sup>18</sup> Ojima Sukema, *Chugoku no kakumei shiso* (Revolutionary Thought in Modern China), Tokyo: Chikuma sosho, pp.93, 103-104.

<sup>19</sup> Ojima Sukema, pp.47-48.

**C. Sunism and Blueshirt Fascism**

*Zhi nan xing yi yu zhen zhi li xing* 知難行易與真知力行

[To understand is difficult, but to act is easy, knowledge is inseparable from action]  
Sun Yatsen<sup>20</sup>

The last two words of the saying may have been used for the Blueshirts' name:

Li xing she 力行社

After his death, Sun Yatsen left China with an uncertain political heritage. The ideas he espoused were drawn from a wide variety of sources and never really amounted to a solidly worked out formal theory of the state, politics or government. However, Sun's views on nationalism may be precisely defined thus:

Sun sought to awaken among the Chinese the spirit of collective identity, a consciousness of belonging that would make the interest of each the interest of all. For Sun, national survival required a mix of contemporary science and traditional teachings.<sup>21</sup>

Faced with a mounting Communist threat as well as increased pressure from Japan, the Guomindang needed a somewhat stronger sense of political direction than Sun's cosmopolitan liberalism could offer. The challenge of the party leadership in the Nanjing period was to translate Sun's ideas into a meaningful, coherent and practical ideology of power.

Sun Yatsen's reflections on the theory on "Knowledge" and "Action", probably written in 1918-1919, had evolved from a feeling of disappointment and bitterness about the lack of results the revolution had brought the Chinese people. Sun asked himself why *Xinhai geming* 辛亥革命 (the Revolution of 1911) had failed. While the revolution aimed at the salvation of the country and the Chinese people, the suffering of the people had grown

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<sup>20</sup> Gan Guoxun, p.116; see also, TB, 2057, and Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, pp. 110-111; It was in the years 1918 to 1920, when Sun had no hope of returning to Canton to regain his position of command in the Canton Directorate, that he elaborated on his theory, knowing is more difficult than doing. This was also known as "The Theory of Psychological Reconstruction."

<sup>21</sup> Chang, p.31.

worse. Sun blamed the party members for having no faith in the revolution. His conclusion was that their lack of faith could be ascribed to their way of thinking: “for they are dominated by the doctrine that Knowledge is Easy and Action is Difficult.”<sup>22</sup>

This theory was first expressed in the *Shang Shu* 上書, a classical of great prestige, by Fu Yue during the Yin Dynasty (1324-1265 B.C.), and had struck deep roots in the minds of the people.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Sun considered this theory anathema to his effort to make the revolution a success. He believed it was the lack of knowledge which lay at the bottom of all the inaction of the Chinese people. Therefore, Sun Yatsen changed what he saw as “that formidable dictum of Knowledge is Easy and Action is Difficult” *Zhixian xinghou* 知先行后, into the counter-dictum “Knowledge is Difficult and Action is Easy” *Zhinan xingyi* 知難行易.<sup>24</sup> In doing so, Sun tried to shake his people from their lethargy, and let them forget their superstition in the theory of “Knowledge is Easy and Action is Difficult.” Sun was convinced that this was the only way to save China. This theory, appraised as Sunism, also placed Chiang Kaishek in the forefront of his political programme. The emphasis on action was something that suited Chiang, for being a military man he was himself a man of action, and party philosophy continued to lay pressure on the knowledge-action thesis.<sup>25</sup> David S. Nivison writes concerning this: “In developing his argument, Chiang stressed

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<sup>22</sup> Hu Shih and Lin Yu-Tang, *China's Own Critics, A Selection of Essays*, Beijing: China United Press, 1931, pp.44-46. See also, Chuan Yunlong, *Zhongguo zhixingxueshuo shuping* (The Review of Chinese Knowledge and Action Studies), p.183.

<sup>23</sup> David S. Nivison, “The Problem of “Knowledge and Action” in Chinese Thought since Wang Yang-Ming”, p.113, in *The American Anthropologist; Studies in Chinese Thought*, Arthur Wright (ed.), The American Anthropological Association, vol.55, no.5, memoir no.75, December 1953.

<sup>24</sup> Hu Shih and Lin Yu-Tang, pp.47-48. See also, Chuan Yunlong, p.186.

<sup>25</sup> Chiang Kaishek, “A Philosophy of Action”, in *China Quarterly*, vol.V, Summer 1940, nr.3, pp.355-376. See also, and Chiang Kaishek, *China's Destiny*, pp.113, 158, 185, 187, 260.

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Neo-Confucian virtues and made constant use of traditional philosophical vocabulary and hallowed text.”<sup>26</sup> It was obvious that Chiang Kaishek’s had a great preference for this subject and therefore the idea may well have served in creating the Blueshirts, which as we have seen also comes into expression in the name *Lixingshe*. Was it furthermore a coincidence that Chiang in 1932, the year the Blueshirts were established, delivered a lecture on the subject “Stages in the Development of Revolutionary Philosophy” in where he suggested the term *philosophy of action*?<sup>27</sup>

The Sunist theory is reminiscent of Western descriptions of Fascism as “the unity of thought and action.” Sun’s theory, however, raised the criticism that the fundamental error was, as Hu Shi 胡適 writes: “to regard “Knowledge” and “Action” as two distinct and independent things.”<sup>28</sup> A marked characteristic of Chinese thinking is that they often dualise their concepts. However, Sun himself may not have meant to emphasise such a strict division, but merely to allow the people to interpret things in a different way. The real meaning of Sun Yatsen had been to convince the Chinese people that while action was within the ability of everybody, only the chosen few were truly capable of knowing - of understanding. With this approach he hoped that his followers would not hesitate to take action and leave the thinking to others, in other words “follow the Leader.”

Action was also the Blueshirts’ keynote, and during a speech in November 1933, Liu Jianqun, one of the figures with the most ideological influence in the formation of the Blueshirts, declared:

Necessity is truth; *action* creates theory...Thus in China at the present time, the question is not whether the Three Principles of the People are good or bad, but how to carry out the Three Principles of the People.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Nivison, p.139.

<sup>27</sup> Chiang Kaishek, “A Philosophy of Action”, p.355.

<sup>28</sup> Hu Shih and Lin Yu-Tang, pp.54-58.

<sup>29</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.41.

His emphasis was on action, and how to carry out the Three Principles of the People with the help of the Blueshirts. This was no empty rhetoric. Liu did not seek merely to use Sun's ideas as a camouflage for the institution of Fascist rule, he saw the two as entirely compatible.<sup>30</sup> The Blueshirt ideologists outlined three reasons for the necessity of Fascism; (1) as a weapon to carry out the Three People's Principle; (2) Fascism was the best way to get rid of Communism and to unite China; (3) they considered Fascism to be the best instrument to establish an authoritarian leadership and to help the Guomindang to recover its original spirit.<sup>31</sup>

In a publication He Zhonghan specified Chiang's views on this point.<sup>32</sup> In connection with Fascism, the Three Principles of the People were seen as the "ism" to save the country. It contained three truths for China's national, political and economic equalities. Capitalism and Communism were not, he concluded, the truth to save China.

There was without doubt a *revisionist* trend within the right wing of the Guomindang. The origins of this intellectual current can be traced back to the formation of the Sun Yatsen Study Society in 1924-25, on the Whampoa campus, by a group of anti-Communist students. These students, nationalist and anti-Communist as they were, sought to develop a body of right-wing thinking within the traditions of Sun.<sup>33</sup> The leading members of this group,

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<sup>30</sup> Lincoln Li, p.62. During a meeting on 7 March 1932 between Chiang and the Whampoa cadets who established the Blueshirts, a saying of Sun Yatsen was quoted by Chiang and written on a blackboard: *Zhi nan xing yi yu zhen zhi li xing*, "To understand is difficult, but to act is easy, knowledge is inseparable from action." The last two words of the saying may have been used for the Blueshirts' name *Lixingshe*.

<sup>31</sup> Su Youci, "Faxiside xiaolun" (General Introduction to Fascism), *Shehuizhuyi yuekan*, vol.1.3, 1933, pp.530-531.

<sup>32</sup> He Zhonghan, "Zhuyi de renshi" (Understanding *Isms*), *Qiantu zazhi*, vol.2-2, Shanghai, 1934.

<sup>33</sup> Tien, p.51.



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often referred to as the Whampoa Clique, were He Zhonghan, Yang Yichi, Feng Ti, Zheng Kuoqing and Deng Wenyi. The organisation developed Sun's principles in the direction indicated in Dai Jitao's 戴季陶 works: *Sunwenzhuyi zhi zhexuejichu* 孫文主義之哲學基礎 (The Philosophical Foundations of Sun Yatsen), and *Guomin geming yu Zhongguo guomindang* 國民革命與中國國民黨 (The National Revolution and the Guomindang in China).

After the Northern Expedition the Sun Yatsen Study Society was replaced by the Whampoa Alumni Association. The secretary of this association was Zheng Kuoqing and its president was Fan Yujiang. It was this Whampoa Clique, influenced by the ideas of Dai Jitao, which formed the core of the Blueshirts after 1932. The flow of essays from the pens of right-wing writers within the traditions of Sunism was of central importance to the construction of a coherent ideology for the new movement.

One such essay, written by Mao Guanshan 毛冠山, appeared on 4 October 1932, shortly after the formation of the Blueshirts. It was published in Shanghai in Zhou Liuying's 周鏡英 *Shehui xinwen* 社會新聞 (The Society Mercury). This essay expressed Mao's vision of the nationalist revolution in China and its relationship with Fascism. He argued that three principle examples of revolution in the world - the French, the Russian, and the Turkish - could offer very little to China as models of political progress. Because of its characteristics, he contended, only through a Fascist revolution could China be saved, emphasising the success of Italian Fascism:

Fascism is not reactionary like the communist claimed. Fascism is the only instrument a dying country can use for its own salvation. Italian Fascism is substantially the strongest, bravest and most active expression of the national spirit. Without the boundary and the limits of the economy, it succeeded in a backward Italy as well as in an advanced Germany. The Fascist movement is not solely a product of Europe, It also developed in Asia as well as in America. It is the magic weapon to

save the Chinese nation from the fate of dying. It is compatible with the Three Principles of the People and the National Party.<sup>34</sup>

A month later, in November 1932, a second essay authored by Zhou Liuying the editor of *Shehui zhuyi* 社會主義 (Academy of Socialism) was published. In this essay, entitled “Fascism and Chinese Revolution”, he argued that the origins of Chinese Fascism actually lay at the end of the Qing Dynasty, and were based on the “Iron and Blood Spirit” of the *Zhongguo geming tongmenghui* 中國革命同盟會 (Chinese Revolutionary Comrades Association) of which Sun Yatsen was a founder. Zhou strongly urged the Chinese people to fight against the foreign invaders, but held that Sun's ideas alone could not save China.<sup>35</sup> Instead, Zhou's proposed that Sunism and Fascism should work together, in a partnership of the civilian and the military, in the *Pen and the Sword* ( Knowledge and Action.)

#### **D. In Defence of Dictatorship**

The right wing's attempt to remould Sunism in the image of European Fascism did not go unchallenged. Chiang's opponent Hu Hanmin 胡漢民 criticised Fascism forcefully in the *Sanminzhuyi* bi-monthly magazine (*Sanminzhuyi banyuekan* 三民主義半月刊). He argued against the existence of factions within the Guomindang, including such organisations as the Blueshirts and accused those who held Fascist ideas related to Sunism, such as Zhou Liuying and other right wing members, of wanting to dominate the party through Fascism and institutionalise a dictatorship. Hu also claimed that Fascist ideology represented an extremely narrow conception of

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<sup>34</sup> SHXW, vol. 4-17, Mao Guanshan, “Guomindang yu faxisidi yundong” (Guomindang and the Fascist Movement), 1933.

<sup>35</sup> Yamaki Yoshiko, “Chugoku ni okeru fasici shugi o megutte” (China and Fascism), *Chugoku kankei ronsetsu shiryō*, vol.41-14, 1972, p.215.

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nationalism, and that the widely held view which saw Chinese Fascism as no more than a pragmatic means towards the salvation of the nation was shallow and inadequate.

Hu's accusation that the Blueshirts would be used as a means of asserting a personal dictatorship finds an echo in internal party documents, some of which argue for precisely the kind of personal rule which he feared.

The dictatorship we foresee is not personal dictatorship, it is a dictatorship which should not be personified by one person, but organised dictatorship, democratic dictatorship which is ruled by the law.<sup>36</sup>

Mostly, these arguments stressed that dictatorship should be seen in a transitional way as part of a political evolution, and not as a permanent political system. They believed that it was an extension of the kind of political tutelage that was advocated in Sun's ideology, and was entirely consistent with the Three Principles of the People.<sup>37</sup> Parliamentary democracy was thought to be unsuitable for China, because “people are completely alienated from politics, the situation now is that people in fact do not care about politics.”<sup>38</sup>

The appeal of a dictatorship advocated by Whampoa students soon caught the attention of several Chinese commentators outside the relatively restricted worlds of the Guomindang party and the military. The *Peking and Tientsin Times* of 5 August 1933 carried an article entitled “From Party to Personal Dictatorship: Chinese Fascism and Chiang Kaishek”, which gives also details of the Blueshirts programme and policy.

Although once denied by Marshal Chiang Kaishek, it has been known for some time both in the North and the South that China's virtual

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<sup>36</sup> SMA, Q99-15, *Di wucihuiyi* (Guomindang's Shanghai Department Documents of the Fifth Conference), September 1932, pp.10-17.

<sup>37</sup> SMA, Q99-15, pp.10-17.

<sup>38</sup> SMA, Q99-15, *Xin zhongguo jianshe xuehui jingji zhengce dagang* (Outline of the Economic Policy of the Association for the Construction of New China), pp.52-54.

dictator is no longer going to hide his light under a bushel, but is determined to establish Fascism in this distracted and disunited realm. Democracy de facto as practised in Europe or de oratione as evidenced in China, are to go by the board and autocracy and dictatorship are to take their place.<sup>39</sup>

The article then enumerates the guiding principles of the Blueshirts.

Thus there was a growing consensus on the right of the party, strongly advocated by the Blueshirts, that dictatorship was the most suitable political form for China. During a meeting for Guomindang officials held in honour of his return from Italy, Liu Wendao 劉文島<sup>40</sup> addressed the audience in the following words:

Dictatorship only works when the leader is good, in Europe it works out for Mussolini and Hitler as they are good leaders. Also China has such a good leader, 'Chiang Kaishek', he can be compared with Mussolini and with Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮.<sup>41</sup> Chiang has the aspiration and the courage to reconstruct our country as he is personally concerned about China's fate. Now China is still in the period of political tutelage, and people's training and education has not yet been completed. In this period 'politics of a good man is necessary. The task of every Chinese person is to help Chiang Kaishek, whether we are educators or businessmen, we all have the responsibility to help him. Only then is China's recovery possible.<sup>42</sup>

Under a dictatorship it would prove easier to maintain social order and to start the political construction which China so urgently needed.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> PRO, FO 371/17142 xc 930, 14 August, 1933, p.469. Enclosure no.2 in despatch to Foreign Office. Extract: *Peking and Tientsin Times*, 5 August, 1933.

<sup>40</sup> During the 1930s Liu Wendao was Chinese Ambassador in Berlin.

<sup>41</sup> A statesman and strategist in the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-265), who became a symbol of resourcefulness and wisdom in Chinese folklore.

<sup>42</sup> SMA, Q99-15, pp.22-24. Guomindang's "Internal" Documents, 9 September 1932, A meeting held as a welcome back party for Liu Wendao from Italy.

<sup>43</sup> SMA, Q99-15, pp.22-24.

## **E. The Lushan Conference**

In order to determine the way forward for the Blueshirts, a conference was held at Lushan<sup>44</sup> on 21 August 1933.<sup>45</sup> Chiang used the conference as a forum to argue not only for tighter internal organisation of the Blueshirts, but also for the advantages of untrammelled dictatorship:

The conference decided to establish Fascist cells in the Kuomintang headquarters in “loyal” military units and in schools and universities and to entrust this work to Wu Hsin Yah [Wu Xingya] and Pan Kung Chia [Pan Gongjia] in Shanghai; Chiang Chi Chung [Jiang Zhizhong], Chief of the General Staff of the Wuhan Military Headquarters and Commanding Officer of the Armoured Trains Detachment of the Central Military Headquarters, in Hupeh [Hubei]; Hu Chun Han [Hu Zhonghan], Chief of the Political Training Department of the Kiangsi Military Headquarters, in Kiangsi [Jiangxi]; Kang Chih [Kang Zhi], member of the Hunan Provincial Bureau of the Kuomintang, in Hunan, and Tseng Kwang Ching [Zheng Guangqing] in Szechuen [Sichuan].<sup>46</sup>

Chiang told the assembled military and Blueshirts leaders at Lushan that: “The most important task is to rejuvenate our already dead revolutionary spirit!” Berating the Guomintang as a “lifeless skeleton”, Chiang praised, in contrast, the rising Fascist parties in Italy and Germany, whose revolutionary spirit had guided them to total control of their nations.<sup>47</sup> Chiang's voice was only one in a growing chorus criticising the Guomintang

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<sup>44</sup> Tien, p.125. In 1933 Chiang had set up a training camp in Lushan to standardise the command system and to try to eliminate the regional diversity. In 1935 the training camp was moved to Emei shan (Sichuan), because of the coalition between the Guangdong and Guangxi militarists against Chiang. The camp was returned to Lushan in 1937.

<sup>45</sup> NA, SMP. D4685, August 1933. See also, PRO, FO. 371/17142 xc 930, (464-465). See also FOH, J1, nr. 2301/318, *Blueshirts*, Peking, 26 September, 1933.

<sup>46</sup> NA, SMP.D4685. See also, PRO, FO 371/17142 xc 930, (464-465). Present at the conference at Lushan were; Chen Lifu, member of the C.E.C and Chief of the Organisation Department, Zeng Kuoqing 曾擴情, member of the C.E.C and special delegate of the Guomintang in Sichuan, Wu Xingya 吳醒亞 member of the standing Committee of local Guomintang Headquarters and Chief of the Social Bureau, Fan Gongzhan 潘公展 member of the Standing Committee of the Shanghai Guomintang Headquarters and Chief of the Education Bureau, and many others.

<sup>47</sup> Kirby, p.155.

and raising the question of whether China, like Germany and other nations, would best be served by a strong dictatorial government.

Once they had been formed, the Blueshirts did not simply adopt the ideas of the Sun Yatsen Study Society, but continued to develop the revisionist direction taken by Dai Jitao. Eventually, they actually elaborated their own Three Principles of the Nation, which narrowed the meaning of the Three Principles down to a specifically Fascist idea which mainly dealt with the military organisation of Chinese society:<sup>48</sup>

- 1) National Defence a. Strengthening defence b. Reform of the Military  
c. Expansion of the airforce.
- 2) Ultra Nationalism a. Spiritual b. Material
- 3) Socialist State a. Social services & reform of management  
(administration) b. rapid development of transport  
infrastructure.

In other words, there is a smooth and unbroken surface or contiguity stretching across Sun's Principles and those of the Blueshirts. Sun's ideas were not in any sense Fascist or proto-Fascist - on the contrary, they were so general that they could encompass any sort of political programme of any ideological character. Hence, at the same time as the Blueshirts were developing and defending one version of Sun's political legacy, the Communist Party was using the very same Principles in its own propaganda and arguing that only a revolutionary socialist programme could bring about their fulfilment. There was no need for either Communists or Fascists to abandon Sunism. It fitted easily with the substance of their own political perspectives. <sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru shiryō*, (Materials on the Blueshirts), pp.3-4.

<sup>49</sup> Yamaki Yoshiko. Internally the Blueshirts were divided and did not have a unanimously clear idea about the way Chinese Fascism should go. It often happened that members of the CCP, when released from jail, were asked to become members of the Blueshirts, while also some members of the Qing Bang (Green Gang) and the Hong Bang (Red Gang) became Blueshirt members.

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Some Blueshirts did indeed go so far as to call for openly abandoning the ideas of Sun Yatsen. For example, in January 1934 a number of cadres announced during a conference that their view of Sunism had changed. They now thought that “We should give up democracy and Sunism and replace it by Fascism in order to promote Chiang's dictatorship. We should abolish the teachings of Sun, and extend military education with the purpose of creating a new Fascist society.”<sup>50</sup>

Thus, while on the surface of its party propaganda the Guomintang insisted that it remained consistently faithful to the Three Principles of the People, and while the Fascist ideas emerging in the early 1930s could be made to fit in comfortably with the old Sunist slogans, some people in the organisation saw the opportunity for a clean break in ideology as a positive opportunity. These ultra-enthusiasts never won the day however, and Chinese Fascism was able to grow and flourish within the generous confines of the existing party ideology.

### **F. The View of Fascism by Various Guomintang Factions**

The relationship between the Blueshirts and the central command of the Guomintang was often complex and confusing. In order to give some insight in to the question of to what extent the aims of the Blueshirts departed from the Guomintang as a whole, a short explanation about the internal structure of the Guomintang is necessary.

The Guomintang in the 1930s consisted of a number of factions, all of which were bound to Chiang Kaishek by personal or patron relationships. The allocation of power was determined primarily by personal influence. Three dominant factions were obliged to Chiang. The C.C.Clique, the

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<sup>50</sup> Yamaki Yoshiko, p.212, quotation from *Sanminzhuyi yuejian* (Monthly Sanminzhuyi), vol.4-5, Nov 1934.

Whampoa Clique (from which the Blueshirts developed) and the Political Study Clique. It was in name only that the President of the Executive Yuan served as prime minister, commanding the work of the subservient ministries of foreign affairs, finance, education, commerce and so on. Despite the formal positions that Chiang Kaishek held over the regime as a whole, he exercised that authority with minimal concerns for formal chains of command. As a result of Chiang's predominance over the regime and of his preference for ignoring formal chains of command, the government, as a policy-formulating and administrative organisation, became enervated. The civil government thus always remained subordinate to the interests of Chiang and the military, and it never became a driving force of its own.

As a political party, the Guomintang remained underdeveloped even more than the governmental administration as a result of Chiang Kaishek's approach to transform the revolutionary movement into a military authoritarian regime.

The Guomintang consisted of many factions of which the largest were generally the most influential in policy making. In practice Chiang Kaishek controlled them all. The relations among these several factions were complex, while each supported Chiang Kaishek as leader of the regime. At the same time, their dealings with each other were sometimes stretched to its limits causing excessive pressures between the members. Jealousy and struggle for power was common place.

The Blueshirts often viewed the other cliques as corrupt civilian politicians, and were particularly hostile towards the C.C.Clique. The political, educational and intelligence operations of the two factions overlapped, thereby generating intense friction. Mostly ideological and policy differences were not the main cause of this friction. The fundamental issue was, however, one of power and position.



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Chiang's attitude to this was always to "divide and rule", thus assuring his supremacy, and preventing either one of them from becoming powerful.<sup>51</sup>

Outside Chiang's direct control stood two other Guomintang factions, led by rival applicants to the legacy of Sun Yatsen: the Reorganisation Clique of Wang Jingwei, which was still part of the Nanjing government; and a less well-defined grouping around Hu Hanmin, who had associated himself with the virtually autonomous Southwest Political Council of Guangdong and Guangxi. The outlooks of these groups on dictatorship and Fascism remain relevant to this discussion.<sup>52</sup>

No other faction matched the adoration of Blueshirts and the Whampoa Clique for Fascism. No other faction shared their aspiration for such a radical solution to China's problems. The C.C.Clique's advocating of Fascism was much more modest. Its chairman, Chen Lifu, was also concerned with problems of order and control. For instance, the leadership principle and the recruitment of youth were given priority. Zhu Jiahua, an important figure in the C.C.Clique and later in the *Sanminzhuyi* Youth Corps had also introduced the German advisers to Chiang Kaishek in 1927. Although the C.C.Clique lacked a precise ideological approach, most of its top figures agreed that the reformation of Chinese society should be executed along the lines of traditional Confucian morality.

The Political Study Clique had a very different standpoint on Fascism and its relevance to China. Its approach to Fascism was pragmatic rather than ideological. The influence of this clique on Guomintang politics should not be underestimated, because a growing number of its members came to hold

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<sup>51</sup> Lloyd E. Eastman, "Nationalist China during the Nanking Decade, 1927-1937", p.21, in *The Nationalist Era in China 1927-1949*, with contributions of L.Eastman, J.Ch'en, S.Pepper, and L.Van Slyke.

<sup>52</sup> Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, pp.158-166.

high government positions in the mid-1930s. Yang Yongtai, of the Political Study Clique, became Chiang's secretary-general in the Headquarters of the Military Affairs Commission in 1932. He remained one of the most powerful political figures in the nation until his assassination in 1936.

The Wang Jingwei Reorganisation faction was identified with the Left wing of the Guomindang. After 1931 Wang co-operated in an uneasy way with Chiang Kaishek, as head of the Executive Yuan he was nominally in charge of the government, but the real power resided with Chiang's Military Council, i.e. Chiang himself. Wang did not favour Fascism and was against a dictatorship for the Guomindang, but his views became more positive after a sojourn in Germany in 1936. The well-known publicist and editor of *People's Tribune* Tang Liangli was identified with the clique of Wang Jingwei, and became an important mouthpiece. Tang's journal stressed the social character of the Nazis in a way that was more compatible with Wang's ideas. The resemblance between the concept of Sun Yatsen's People's Livelihood and Nazism was discussed.

Hu Hanmin opposed Fascism and criticised the Guomindang for trying to transform China into a Fascist country. Hu's criticism was vested mainly in his personal contempt for Chiang Kaishek. One of Hu Hanmin's followers, Liu Luyin, expressed his views concerning Fascism and concluded that there existed in some way a relationship between European Fascism and Sun Yatsen's Three Principles of the People.

In summary, of all the factions within the Guomindang, it was from the Whampoa Clique i.e. the Blueshirts that the most positive promotion of Fascism came. Their initiative was stimulated by Chiang Kaishek. In a less radical way the C.C.Clique followed many of the ideas advocated by the Blueshirts. It is possible that their motivation for Fascism was induced by Chiang Kaishek. Although many of its members influenced Guomindang politics, the approach to European Fascism of the Political Study Clique was

pragmatic. Wang Jingwei was reluctant to use Fascist ideas for China's reconstruction until he had visited Europe in 1936. After that time his group emphasised the social features of Fascism as a tool for change in China. Primarily due to his opposition to Chiang Kaishek, Hu Hanmin represented a different view of Fascism.

### **G. The Blueshirts' Programme**

The Blueshirts' programme held that the nation was supreme and sacred. The only duty of a Blueshirt member was to pledge himself to protect the national interest: "all members are responsible for national affairs and must sacrifice everything for the sake of the country."<sup>53</sup> The range of their activities and the breadth of their goals encompassed the mix typical of Fascist movements elsewhere - ultra-nationalism, dictatorship, opposition to individualism and democracy, state domination of the economy, totalitarian control of culture, militarisation of society, and the use of secret police against political enemies.<sup>54</sup> The Fascist axiom of obedience to an absolute leader was an essential part of the Blueshirts ideology. Their ideal was a community demonstrating absolute co-ordination between the will of the leader and the actions of the people.

The *Shehui xinwen* published Blueshirt views on the cultural development of China and the Chinese people. One report claimed: "The National Party never developed a cohesive cultural policy. Up to now this policy only proved destructive instead of constructive and creative in character. The cultural policy of the National Party should include the

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<sup>53</sup> NA, SMP. D4685, 20 June, 1933, by the head of SMP section S2, P. Givens, *Fascistic Movement in China*.

<sup>54</sup> Eastman, "A Review Article", p.43.

following points: party education, governmentalisation of the press, intermittent propaganda, and individual cultural development.”<sup>55</sup>

In addition to these ideas, it was explained that “in the present situation, China needs a unified culture, and China needs an independent national culture for the future development of the Chinese revolution. Two aspects must be considered. Vertically, from an historical view, present day China should carry out the culture of the Three Principles of the People, and horizontally, from its social aspect, present day Chinese culture must include two elements: firstly, state extremism and national extremism, and secondly science. It is foreseen that present cultural control includes five parts: control of religion, education, arts, the press and social groups.”<sup>56</sup>

The Blueshirts' programme was thorough and comprehensive. It covered every phase of military and political endeavour, and aimed at conferring dictatorial powers on Chiang. It planned to place political affairs, defence forces and the financial system of the country on a sound basis and to eliminate radicalism of all descriptions. In order to attain all these aims, the Blueshirts planned to reform the Chinese educational system.<sup>57</sup> Starting at primary school, part of the time at school was to be spent on military education, where nationalism was to be accentuated zealously.

There was no consensus among foreign observers at that time as to whether the Blueshirts would be able to implement their programme comprehensively. Though their organisation was efficient, reports show that

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<sup>55</sup> SHXW, vol. 4-13, “Guomindang de wenhua zhengce pipan” (Criticism of the Guomindang’s Cultural Policy), 1933.

<sup>56</sup> SHXW, vol. 4-22, “Guomindang de tongzhi wenhua yundong” (The Guomindang Movement to Control Culture), 1933.

<sup>57</sup> Colin Mackerras, “Education in the Guomindang Period, 1928-1949”, pp.157-159. In *Ideal and Reality, Social and Political Change in Modern China, 1860-1949*, by D.Pong and E.S.K.Fung, (eds.); see also, Israel, p.191.

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soon after their establishment there was already a lack of unity.<sup>58</sup> The Shanghai Branch of the Blueshirts in particular suffered some serious setbacks. However, in China, particularly in organisations of this kind, this was not unusual: the maintenance of cohesion between civilian and military factions was often fraught with difficulties. This problem was not unique to the Blueshirts.

The overtly Fascist nature of their programme is clear from internal Guomintang documents, which reveal that Fascist policies and practice were discussed in detail.<sup>59</sup> Having determined their main objective as being to instruct the Chinese people in Fascist ideas and to control public opinion, the documents disclose that a new Society, the *New China Reconstruction Academy Association* (*Xin Zhongguo jianshe xuehui* 新中國建設學會), was formed in Shanghai on 19 June 1932 for that purpose.

This new society was to assist the Guomintang government with the planned indoctrination of the Chinese people with Fascist ideas, and with the control of public opinion.<sup>60</sup> The Association published monthly periodicals, and a series of books on a variety of subjects, including historical materials on issues such as constitutional government, state managed economies, and the electoral systems and education systems in different countries.

According to Guomintang documents, the chairman of the association, was Huang Yanpei 黄炎培 (Huang Kegian),<sup>61</sup> who had been deputy leader of the 1911 Revolution and who was Chiang's sworn brother.

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<sup>58</sup> NA, SMP. D4685, 20 June 1933.

<sup>59</sup> SMA, Q99-15, It could not be established whether these documents were produced by Blueshirts or by Guomintang officials outside the Blueshirts organisation.

<sup>60</sup> SMA, Q99-15, pp.24-25.

<sup>61</sup> Educator and member of the Democratic League of China, born in Shanghai. During the first revolution, 1911-12, he was chief of the educational bureau under the Tatu of Jiangsu. He was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy by St. John's University, Shanghai, and was a member of the National Defence Committee, 1937.

The Association enjoyed the approval and full support of Chiang, and was in addition financed by the Guomindang.<sup>62</sup>

Aside from the work of this Association, the Blueshirts had a wealth of study materials through their other publications. The journal of the Central Military Academy at Nanjing, the *Huangpu yuekan* 黄埔月刊 (Whampoa Monthly), treated a variety of topics such as: Democracy and Dictatorship, Dictatorship and the Leader, The Political Thought of Fascism, The Political Organs of Fascism, Dictatorial Government under Mussolini, German Dictatorship under Hitler, and Dictatorial Government in China.<sup>63</sup> Through Fascism, the Blueshirts tried to militarise the nation, and through militarisation to unite China in order to “save the nation from ruin.” The name *Jiuwanghui* (Association to save the Nation from Ruin) was often used for the Blueshirts when dealing with official affairs.<sup>64</sup> The overtly and consciously Fascist character of the Blueshirts is clearly revealed by the fact that under the leadership of Deng Wenyi, He Zhonghan and others, the Blueshirts published over one hundred works on Fascist ideas and practices in Germany and Italy.<sup>65</sup>

## **H. Reorganising the Army**

Stringent control over the army was considered as crucial to improving its functioning, and it was decided that to meet this goal an assault force within the army was necessary. Guomindang documents mention that:

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<sup>62</sup> SMA, Q99-15, pp.24-25.

<sup>63</sup> Kirby, p.163.

<sup>64</sup> PRO, FO 371/17142 xc 930, (437), 17 July 1933, and NA, SMP. D4685, 20 June 1933. The name *Chuwanghui* [*Jiuwanghui*] (Association to save the Nation from Ruin), was used when dealing with official affairs.

<sup>65</sup> Chen Shaoh, *Heigang lu* (Record of Internal Secret), Hong Kong 1973, p.44.

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The soldiers are poorly equipped and they are not loyal to the government, they try to escape whenever it is possible. Therefore it is necessary to organise an assault force within the army to bring the soldiers into line. This assault force is intended to be the reliable force of the government. The assault force is a “special task force”, and therefore will only be employed, for instance, to attack certain strong positions of the enemy, or when there are certain incidents in the country. In the case of there being an incident in the country, the assault force first has to deal with the revolt of the people, secondly with the revolt within the Guomintang army, and thirdly to combat the Communist troops. As such the assault force may be compared with Hitler's Schutzstaffel (SS) or the Party's Vanguard Army.<sup>66</sup>

Political instruction in the army, notwithstanding a significant number of German advisers working as instructors<sup>67</sup> at the Military Academies, was essentially a Chinese preserve.<sup>68</sup> More importantly, it was a Blueshirt preserve, and a dominant figure in the Blueshirt oligarchy, He Zhonghan, who headed the Central Political Training Office. In addition, after the failure in 1933 to defeat the Communists in Jiangxi by military means alone, Chiang changed his strategy and coined the slogan: “Seven parts political, and three parts military” (*Qifen zhengzhi sanfen junshi* 七分政治, 三分軍事). His earlier strategy had emphasised the military. To support this new strategy a “Special Task Force” - *Biedongdui* 別動隊 - was formed. It was in fact a front organisation for the Blueshirts headed by Kang Ze 康澤, another prominent Blueshirt. This task force had among its duties political propaganda within the military services.

The success of military reorganisation can be seen from the increasingly high proportion of the party's membership which came from the

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<sup>66</sup> SNHA, 773/711, “Guomintang Documents”, Manuscript of the Military Committee of the National Government, September 1938, no.13588. These documents were for internal use only.

<sup>67</sup> Lincoln Li, p.65. The entire unit was given thirty days training in intelligence work conducted by a German adviser, and a special scheme in which seventeen hundred commission officers of the rank of colonel and below were given the latest German military training by three German advisers.

<sup>68</sup> Kirby, p.61.

armed forces. In 1930s the membership of the Guomindang, especially military members, gradually increased every year. Compared with other sections, on the eve of the Sino-Japanese War, the members of the military achieved up to 63% of all members.<sup>69</sup>

This is shown by the figures below :

<u>Year</u>	1932	1933	1934	1935
<u>Province &amp; City members</u>	32.0%	30.4%	31.2%	30.8%
<u>Overseas members</u>	8.8%	8.0%	7.4%	6.2%
<u>Military members</u>	59.2%	61.6%	61.4%	63.0%

### **I. Fascism and Economic Policy**

Liu Jianqun's 1931 essay "A Few Ideas for the Reform of the Party" had identified the major threats to the Republic as deterioration of the national economy; increasing rural poverty resulting from natural calamities and government inaction; and aggression by the Western powers and Japan.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, from the outset, the men who were instrumental in forming the Blueshirts were aware of the need for an important economic dimension as part of their programme to transform China radically. Essentially, they espoused the sort of étatism which sought to give the state a leading role in planning production and distribution of goods in order to break through the innumerable local barriers which hampered balanced development - lack of capital, lack of skills, lack of infrastructure, lack of productive capacity, and lack of developed markets.

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<sup>69</sup> Ikeda Makodo, *Chugoku gendai seijishi* (The Political History of Contemporary China), Tokyo: Holitsu bunkasha, 1962, p.313.

<sup>70</sup> Hatano Kanichi, *Chugoku kokuminto tsushi* (The General History of the Guomindang), Tokyo: Daito shuppansha, 1943, pp.464-465. See also, TB, 2057, pp.2-5.



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The Blueshirts recognised that government intervention was indispensable in China's economic construction. They foresaw that the government would have to resort to extreme policies to intervene in people's economic life, to guide private enterprise and people's consumption. According to the Blueshirts this could only be done under Chiang's dictatorship. The example of the recovery of Germany after World War One was impressive, associated with the rise of Hitler and his National Socialist Party.<sup>71</sup>

Many Blueshirt publications about China's economic policy addressed the policies needed to build up a state controlled economy. They recommended that heavy industries such as steel, automobile, airline, railway, chemical and defence should be run by the state.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, they suggested that the state should control international currency exchange in order to stabilise the exchange rate. International air transport should be run by the government and domestic airlines should be run by Chinese entrepreneurs rather than by foreigners. Private enterprises should receive tax benefits as a means of encouraging them to put their profits into expanded production. Economic development was to be enhanced through such initiatives as the Farmers Bank and producers' co-operatives. The distribution of profits to share-holders was to be limited. In order to control people's consumption, tax would be imposed on luxury goods.<sup>73</sup>

The two political premises of the implementation of economic control are, first of all, revolutionary targets which are decided by progress; second, the strong but flexible political institutions. The aims of the economic control in China: (1) develop the domestic production; (2)

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<sup>71</sup> SMA, Q99-15, p.19.

<sup>72</sup> SMA, Q99-15, pp.54-64.

<sup>73</sup> SMA, Q99-15.

resist foreign aggression; (3) strengthen state power; (4) establish the economic foundation for the people's livelihoods.<sup>74</sup>

The high level of state intervention in the economy which the Blueshirts wanted could only be envisaged under a form of government which involved centralised control. Dictatorship of a specifically Fascist character was thus much more than a political means of achieving unity. It was also the necessary prerequisite for economic transformation. The Fascist dictatorship in Italy was, for instance, praised as an economic model for China:

One of Mussolini's slogans was, Order, Authority and Justice, Belief, Obedience and Struggle. These six words were the key to his success. Out of these six words the most important one is authority. Without authority there would be no justice, without justice there would be no belief and, without belief there is no obedience and struggle. So, authority is the most fundamental factor in Italy's success.<sup>75</sup>

Summing up the Blueshirt view of the radical change necessary in China's society, the Blueshirt publication *Shenhui xinwen* stated that "Fascism is the only tool of self-salvation of nations on the brink of destruction. There is no solution for China other than imitating the Fascist spirit of violent struggle as in Italy and Germany."<sup>76</sup> In other words it was not merely a question of dictatorship, but of *Fascist* dictatorship.

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<sup>74</sup> SHXW, vol.5-11, "Shishi jingji tongzhi di zhengzhi wenti" (Political Problems in Implementing Control of the Economy), 1933, p.178.

<sup>75</sup> SMA, Q99-15, p.21, Guomindang Internal Documents, 9 September 1932. *A Meeting held for the welcome back from Italy of Liu Wentao.*

<sup>76</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, pp.40-41. See his footnote nr. 20, "Guomindang yu fa hsi ssu ti yun tung" (The Kuomintang and Fascism), *Shuhui xinwen*, vol.4, 274, 24 August, 1933.

## 4.2 The Implementation of Blueshirt Fascism

The range of the Blueshirts' activities was very broad. Chiang Kaishek and most leaders of the Blueshirts were interested in Fascism largely for instrumental reasons. They were impressed that the Fascist parties in Europe had so quickly and successfully transformed divided and weak states into unified and powerful nations. They therefore sought to learn from the practical techniques that these Fascist regimes had employed.

This approach is also clear from both *Womende xunlian* 我們的訓練 (Our Training), a training manual of the Fuxingshe and from a speech Liu Jianqun delivered in November 1933, shortly before he assumed the post of secretary-general of the Lixingshe. This speech was titled “Fuxing Zhongguo geming zhi lu” 復興中國革命之路 (The Road to Reviving the Chinese Revolution).<sup>77</sup> Eastman explains that “these authoritative publications make explicit that the exigent task confronting China at the time lay not in arguing ideological subtleties, but in implementing the ideology already in their possession. For the Lixingshe, therefore, ‘action’ not theory was all-important.”<sup>78</sup> This conformed to the ideas of Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek.

However, the choice for action by the Blueshirts often escalated into violent action, and especially violence was answered by violence. Repeatedly was heard that “power alone was the measure of success.”<sup>79</sup> This opinion to use violence in name of the nation was also repeatedly found in the Blueshirts periodicals *Qiantu* and the *Shehui xinwen*.

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<sup>77</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.41. See also his footnotes 54 and 55.

<sup>78</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.41.

<sup>79</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.47.

**A. The Activities of the Blueshirts**

The Blueshirts tried to realise their goals through a comprehensive programme of modernisation and the imposition of order with an emphasis on education and on cultural control. Military training in schools, the Boy Scouts<sup>80</sup> and among the adult masses was promoted.<sup>81</sup> Fascist propaganda was strongly concentrated at schools or special groups. The impression was that the Blueshirts did not care what kind of group or school it was, as long as it served their goal of temptation and inspiration by Fascism. This technique immediately spread out like a spider's web.

The press was reformed. He Zhonghan was the guiding genius behind these reforms in the press and he expressed his views as follows: "Journalism in itself needs to have a conception of morals, for innovation of unlawful customs. The main importance is the censorship of Journalism. For our propaganda, *XINWEN* 新聞 - News is the most efficient publication, but also film and radio are important for our propaganda."<sup>82</sup> The Blueshirts founded a variety of mass-media, opened bookstores, published periodicals, while

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<sup>80</sup> *NCDN* (North China Daily News), "China's Scouts Progressing, Nanking's Enthusiasm", 11 November, 1933.

<sup>81</sup> PRO, FO. 371/17142 xc 930, (472), 24 August, 1933. See also, NA, SMP, Special Branch, D4685, 20 June, 1933.

<sup>82</sup> *Qiantu*, vol. 4-9, 1936. An address made by He Zhonghan on 7 and 8 May entitled "The Policy of Journalism and the Nation's Benefits" in which....He argued about the Control of Journalism, because it was connected to the Nation's benefits.

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propaganda work was performed by publishing newspapers,<sup>83</sup> journals and books.<sup>84</sup>

Between 1932-1935 approximately two hundred different periodicals with publications about Fascist propaganda were supervised by the Blueshirts.<sup>85</sup>

Despite all the effort that the Blueshirts put in this propaganda work, the message about Fascism they tried to spread among the Chinese people was often not received. Most people did not really understand the arguments and phrases used in the articles, and the influence that was exercised by Blueshirts' Fascism as a political ideology remained therefore limited to a small group. In contrast to this propaganda the violence used by the Blueshirts was something that was better understood and feared by a large group of people.

In reference to European journalism, He Zhonghan said that in "Russia, after the Revolution, the mass media came from private control under government -managed -nationalised control. In Italy, it is under control

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<sup>83</sup> NA, SMP. D4685, 20 June 1933. In the part about Propaganda Policy, the following newspapers are mentioned as 'Society organs'; Zhongguo ribao(China Daily News), Pingming wanbao(Common People's Evening News), Renmin wanbao(People's Evening News), Wenhua zhoubao(Culture weekly), Renmin zhoubao(People's weekly), and Zhengzhi pinglun(Political Review). See also, PRO, FO 371/17142 xc 930, (443), 24 August, 1933, In Shanghai there were nine Guomindang and Blueshirts newspapers for propaganda. The document includes a list of the newspapers' names.

<sup>84</sup> Yang Shubiao, *Jiang Jieshi zhuan* (The Biography of Jiang Jieshi), Shanghai: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1989, pp.199-201. Bookstores opened by the Blueshirts for instance were: *Bati shudian* 拔提書店, *Wenhua shuju* 文化書局, *Qiantu shuju* 前途書局, *Xin Shengming shudian* 新生命書店, *Zhengzhong shuju* 正中書局, *Xinguang shuju* 新光書局, *Xinken shudian* 辛壘書店, etc.

<sup>85</sup> Yang Shubiao, pp. 199-201. A few examples are: *Faxisitizhuyi yundong lun* 法西斯主義運動論 (Theory of the Fascist movements), *Faxisizhuyi zhi zuzhilun* 法西斯主義之組織理論 (Theory on organisation of Fascism), *Faxisidizhuyi zhi jingjijichu* 法西斯蒂主義經濟基礎 (The basics on an economy for Fascism), *Faxisidi zhi nuchao* 法西斯蒂之怒潮 (The raging tide of Fascism), *Faxisidi ji qi zhengzhi* 法西斯蒂及其政治 (Fascism and politics), *Faxisidi jiaoyu* 法西斯蒂教育 (Fascist education), *Faxisizhuyi yanjiu* 法西斯主義研究 (Research on Fascism).

of the Party or it is government- managed. In Germany, after Hitler came to power journalism was brought under Party control.”<sup>86</sup> Hence, censorship was the issue and He Zhonghan’s contemplation was often published in the Blueshirts periodical *Qiantu*:

Besides technology and organisation, there is little we can borrow from the press policies of Britain, the United States and France, who are suffering under the system of democracy. However, we can learn a lot from the press policies of Germany, Italy and Soviet Russia, who rule the country through the party, although their ideology is based on different “isms.”

There are five issues concerning press policies and laws. (1) Journalist acts as civil servant; (2) Journalists act as complete organisations which advocate the welfare for the journalists; (3) Emphasis on the training of the journalists; (4) Emphasis on both inspection and propaganda; (5) The Publicity Department of the central government controls the power of the press.<sup>87</sup>

In this regard it is interesting to note that about one year earlier, around January 1935, a reorganisation in the management of three major Shanghai newspapers and one news agency was ordered by the Guomintang government - presumably by Chiang Kaishek. The newspapers included the *China Times*, the *China Press*, the *China Evening News*, together with the *Shuh Shih* [Shushi?] News agency.<sup>88</sup> The director-general, Zhang Zuobing, was forced to resign at the end of 1934, and proposed was that Du Yuesheng among others would fulfil an important role in the new organisation of the newspapers.<sup>89</sup> These reorganisations may have been initiated in the wake of

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<sup>86</sup> *Qiantu*, vol. 4-9, 1936.

<sup>87</sup> Wang Jiahong, “De Yi Su-E xinwen de zhengce yu xinwen fazhi bijiaolun” (The Comparison of the Press Policies and the Press Laws among Germany, Italy and Soviet Russia), *Qiantu zazhi*, 4-9.

<sup>88</sup> MAE, “E”, Asie - Océanie, nr. 245, box nr.529, *Réorganisation de Journaux Chinois*.

<sup>89</sup> Zhang Zuobing’s main associate Hollington Tong (Dong Xianguang董显光), who was chief-redactor and managing director of the China Press had temporarily, from January 1935 up to the middle of June 1935, taken over Zhang Zuobing’s functions. The final reorganisations were to become effective in June 1935, and included a number of important people to be appointed in the management of the newspapers and agency. A major position would be given to Du Yuesheng.

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the murder on 13 November 1934 of Shi Liangcai, the director of the *Shenbao* 申報, who had continuously attacked Chiang on his appeasement policy.<sup>90</sup>

The Blueshirts also set up, or took over control of, a variety of police and public security units. These units, some of them secret, were used to enforce Blueshirt supremacy within the party and obedience to Chiang Kaishek in society as a whole. Some of these units became feared for their ruthlessness and violent action against their opponents. This violence was not only directed against Communists, Japanese and political rivals, but were also “aimed against persons in the party or government who did not measure up to the standards of this revolutionary elite.”<sup>91</sup> It took some time for them to make their presence felt and for the public to become aware of their existence.

As the Blueshirts were a secret organisation, reports of their activities in the newspapers were mostly a mixture of rumours, leaks and suppositions.<sup>92</sup> Press dispatches from provincial cities occasionally brought to light the work of the Blueshirts in Nanjing, Hankou and Guangzhou.<sup>93</sup> The first report of their activities in Shanghai appeared in the press on 13 November 1933, describing how members of the Society had been distributing pamphlets advocating Fascism and denouncing Communism.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> The murder of Shi Liangcai was attributed to the Blueshirts.

<sup>91</sup> Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.47.

<sup>92</sup> NA, D.4685, 8 July, 1933; *Miscellaneous Mainichi*, “Shanghai Settlement Police and Blueshirt Society”; *NCDN*, 20th June 1933, “Blueshirts for China”; *China Forum*, July 1933, and *Siao kung pao*, 12 August 1933, “Blueshirts to assassinate opponents.”

<sup>93</sup> Yen Yinglu, “Can China become Fascist,” *China Critic*, 14 June 1934; “Blue Clothes Society”, *Peking and Tientsin Times*, 7 August 1933; “Blueshirts said at work in Canton”, *Hankow Herald*, 16 August 1933, and “Cantonese obstructionists”, 10 September 1933.

<sup>94</sup> “Chinese Fascism comes into the open”, *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, 17 November, 1933.

Between 1932 and 1936 there was a concentration of Blueshirt activity in Shanghai. The activities of the Blueshirts in Shanghai consisted of the following: firstly reporting on the general situation in the city, watching over the thoughts and activities of civil and military leaders and leaders of public bodies who might come under suspicion of being anti-Chiang and/or pro-Communist elements or harbouring such sentiments, and secondly the vigorous suppression of Communism. Until his death in 1936, Wu Xingya was chief of the Bureau of Social Affairs in Shanghai. On instructions from Nanjing, he established the Shanghai Youth Strength Society (*Shanghai qingnian lische* 上海青年力社) which in reality was the counterpart of the Blueshirts in Shanghai.<sup>95</sup>

Blushirts members were sometimes also sent abroad specially to study science and technology with the final goal of returning to China and producing explosives and poisons.<sup>96</sup>

### **B. Anti-Communist Activities**

Since their foundation the Blueshirts had a strongly and explicitly anti-Communist orientation.<sup>97</sup> Early members included men such as Teng Jie and Deng Wenyi who had founded the *Zhonghua wenhua xuehui* 中華文化學會 (Chinese Cultural Association), an extreme anti-Communist body. Before the formation of the Blueshirts, this group had remained in close touch with

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<sup>95</sup> NA, SMP report D4685, 9 December 1940, *Memorandum on the Blue Shirt Society*.

<sup>96</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no kainen to sono tokumu kosaku ni tsuite* ; Yu Lexing 余樂醒 went to France to study science and technology.

<sup>97</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru shiryō*, (Materials on the Blueshirts: Chiang Kaishek's Double Policy), An important Japanese Government report, issued in 1935, p.29. Two subsections describe the Blueshirts old and new members in conflict with each other.



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Whampoa graduates in order to co-ordinate their activities.<sup>98</sup> It is quite possible that in the first instance foreign observers, including Japanese, may have confused this Association for the Blueshirts.

The Purge of 1927 had by no means eliminated the Communists, and by 1932 there was a coherent and well-organised area of CCP control in Jiangxi which had proclaimed itself the Chinese Soviet Republic. The crushing of this entity and the suppressing of Communism was therefore an urgent priority of the party leadership. Through military assaults on Communist strongholds and a battle for the “hearts and minds” of the peasantry on the fringes of Communist-dominated areas the Blueshirts took a leading role. In June 1932 a more conservative policy described as “Three Parts Military and Seven Parts Political” was initiated. Part of this struggle involved inculcating among the peasantry a respect for Sun's Three Principles of the People. However, the CCP used nearly the same method, first explaining the Principles to the peasants, and then teaching them how the Guomindang failed to apply them.<sup>99</sup>

To direct their anti-Communist activities more effectively, the Blueshirts in October 1933 set up a special task force - the *Biedongdui* 別動隊.<sup>100</sup> Its members were sent into areas controlled by Communists with special instructions, including organising the population into a “Communist-Annihilation Volunteer Militia” (*Baoweituan* 保衛團). In fact this became an extension of the *Biedongdui* itself.<sup>101</sup> The *Biedongdui's* instructions also

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<sup>98</sup> The exact date of establishment of the Chinese Culture Association is not mentioned, possibly late 1931.

<sup>99</sup> William Wei, *Counterrevolution in China, The Nationalists in Jiangxi during the Soviet Period*, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1985, pp.50-52, and pp.65-76.

<sup>100</sup> Wei, p.79. See also Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, pp.70-74.

<sup>101</sup> TB, 2057, pp.146-150. See also, Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, pp.72, 89-90, with reference to his footnote 8. Fighting against the Communists was, however, not exclusively a Blueshirt preserve, as before the Blueshirts' foundation there existed the Anti-Bolshevik Corps (ABCORPS). This corps was formed in 1925, following the death of Sun, by a group of young

were to improve the welfare of the people in the areas taken by the Communists, with emphasis on education. Also, in almost every big city, certain members of the Blueshirts worked in close co-operation with the local police in order to fight against the Communists.

The importance given to the anti-Communist struggle may be seen from the fact that, in 1934, at Chiang's suggestion, the Blueshirts moved their Headquarters to Nanchang so as to be close to the front line of the struggle against the Soviet Republic. Prioritising the anti-Communist struggle also led Chiang to remove some of the more established leaders of the organisation and replace them with younger, more loyal and more militant men, many of whom had just returned from the Soviet Union, where they had studied and researched the Red Army and the Soviet Secret Police, (the GPU). The name of this Blueshirt section was *Dangzhengjun sheji weiyuanhui* 黨政軍設計委員會, or Committee for Guomintang Military Planning.<sup>102</sup>

Communist influence was not confined to remote rural areas. Since 1927 the CCP had been underground in the cities, but even after the purge, the headquarters of the party remained in Shanghai. The Blueshirts therefore set up a special organisation to destroy them in this important city. "The local *Dangbu* received a secret order from the C.E.C. of the Guomintang in Nanjing, ordering the formation of a *Shanghai Municipality Comrades Association for the Elimination of Communists*."<sup>103</sup> The instructions were that:

A Standing Committee of the following three persons with Wu Kaisien [Wu Kaixian] as Chief Secretary, has been appointed: General Yang Hu,

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Guomintang members. Chen Guofu was a short time associated with the ABCorps until the C.C.Clique was formed in 1927. Under Wang Lixi's leadership the ABCorps became a highly cohesive organisation. Its activities extended to every district in Jiangxi, and reached even into Anhui and Nanjing.

<sup>102</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru shiryo*, p.29.

<sup>103</sup> NA, SMP. D4685, 27 May, 1934. *Blueshirts' Fascist Activities in Shanghai: Kuomintang Forms a Shanghai Municipality Comrades Association for the Elimination of Communists*.

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Chief of the Paoantui [Baoandui]. Chen Soo [Chen Su], Pang Kungtsuh [Pang Gongzi], Nanking's Special Political Officer in Shanghai. The organisation will be divided into 90 sections covering Greater Shanghai. Each section will consist of five members including a leader.

Appended to the document was a copy of the rules and regulations, and an application form for future members for the Association.

### General Rules

- 1)The object of this Association is based upon the principle of materialising the National Revolution of the Three Principles of the People.
- 2)The title of this Association is *Shanghai Municipality Comrades Association for the Extermination of Traitors*.

The six chapters which follow these general rules concern membership, organisation and duty, conditions and secrecy. An appendix advises that “the committee reserves the right to amend or alter these rules when necessary.”

With the view to successfully suppressing the local Communist influence in the city, two sister organs of the Shanghai Youth Strength Society (*Shanghai qingnian lishi* 上海青年力社) were at the same time established by the Blueshirts also under the sponsorship of Wu Xingya. These were the Middle Vanguard Society (*Zhongfengshe* 中鋒社), the mission of which was to supervise student activities in local middle schools, and the Shanghai Municipality Mutual Aid Society (*Shanghaishi hushe* 上海市互社), which task was to direct movements of youths among local Guomintang members.<sup>104</sup>

The Blueshirts were successful in finally driving the CCP out of Shanghai within a year of their formation, and their campaign of terror against trade unionists and other suspected Communist sympathisers ensured that the CCP was unable to regain a foothold in the city. However, following

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<sup>104</sup> NA, SMP. D4685 S.1 Special Branch report by D.I.Sih Tse-liang, 20 January 1937, *Kuomintang Control over Local Chinese Youths' Movement*, and S.1 report Special Branch by C.D.I. Kuh Pao Hwa, 3 October 1940, *Youth Organisations of the Kuomintang Formerly existent in Shanghai*.

the death of Wu Xingya in August 1936, the Shanghai Youth Strength Society was dissolved while the two other organisations definitely ceased to exist in Shanghai at the end of 1937. This was a consequence of the withdrawal of the Chinese armed forces from the Shanghai area.<sup>105</sup>

### **C. Anti-Japanese Activities**

The second main sphere of Blueshirt activity, at least in the organisation's early years, was organising anti-Japanese activities all over China. The main source of information for these activities are the records of the Japanese Secret Services in China,<sup>106</sup> according to which the Blueshirts worked in close co-operation with the numerous existing anti-Japanese National Salvation Associations. Internal sources, however, confirm the extent of anti-Japanese activities. An official Blueshirt publication claimed that, in the spring of 1933, in Wuhan, its agents killed over 40 “traitors”, accused of collaborating with the Japanese.<sup>107</sup> The Blueshirts always labelled their victims as “traitors”, but this was possibly just a pretext for their actions. In the Shanghai area too, anti-Japanese actions were numerous and many murders were committed by the Blueshirts or related groups.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> NA, SMP. D4685, Special Branch report by G.J.Bennett, 9 December 1940, *Memorandum on the Blue Shirt Society: General survey of the Blue Shirt Society*.

<sup>106</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no soshiki to han Man ko nichu katsudo no jitsurei* (The organisation of the Blueshirts and examples of anti-Manchuko and anti-Japanese activities). See also, Parks M.Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937*, Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991, pp. 226-230: The Blueshirts involvement in anti-Japanese activities in northern China is explained.

<sup>107</sup> Eastman, “A Review Article”, p.31, quoted in footnote 17 of the article *Womende Xunlian* (n.p. 1936, p.14).

<sup>108</sup> NA, SMP. D7667, S2, Special Branch, 10 December, 1936, Anti-Japanese Incidents: *The murder of Japanese in the International Settlement*: (1) On 9 November 1935, a Japanese sailor was murdered on Darroch Road, (2) on 10 July 1936 a Japanese civilian was murdered on Chi Mei Road, (3) on 23 September 1936, a Japanese sailor was murdered on Haining Road and (4) on 11 November 1936, a Japanese civilian was murdered on Baikal Road.

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The invasion of Manchuria meant that an important focus for anti-Japanese activities was the north of the country. Parks M.Coble devotes considerable attention to the Blueshirts' activities in North China,<sup>109</sup> noting that the pace of the Blueshirt campaign increased sharply from 25 July 1934, after Xu Huizhi 徐會之<sup>110</sup> was made head of the organisation's North East Bureau.<sup>111</sup>

The Blueshirt campaign against the Japanese in northern China was indeed extensive. Chiang sent members of the Blueshirts' so-called *Blood and Iron Corps*,<sup>112</sup> to engage in acts of terror. At the same time, the Blueshirts directed an anti-Japanese boycott and a press campaign. Assassination squads, including some composed of Koreans, operated in Tianjin and attempted to infiltrate Manchuria.<sup>113</sup> Japanese reports contain a long list of specific assassinations and attempts attributed to Blueshirt agents. These sweeping charges were echoed in the Japanese press both in Manchuria and in China proper.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, demands by Japan for the abolition of the Blueshirts, made during the negotiations of June 1935, illustrate Japanese concern.

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<sup>109</sup> Coble, pp.226-240.

<sup>110</sup> Government Official, born in Hebei in 1900. Studied at the Whampoa Military Academy and graduated from the first class, staff officer of 10th Division of 2nd Army, 1925. Chief of Political Training Department of 65th Division, 1932. Section chief of Administrative and Disciplinary Department of National Military Council, 1934. Police commissioner of Wuchang and Anhui Police Headquarters, 1935-37, and chief of administrative and disciplinary Department of Chiang Kaishek's Provisional Headquarters in Xi'an, Baoding and Wuchang, 1937.

<sup>111</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no soshiki to han-Man ko-Nichi katsudo no jitsurei*, p.33.

<sup>112</sup> NA, SMP, D4685, 20 June, 1933.

<sup>113</sup> Coble, p.227.

<sup>114</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2323, *Deutsche Botschaft China*, M.Kubota "Blueshirts attempt stranglehold on China", *The Manchurian Daily News*, 9 November 1935; Kokutsu (News Agency), "Blueshirts to remove anti-Chiang men. Secret orders to keep watch over pro-Japanese leaders", Shanghai, 20 January 1936.

Shortly after their establishment, possibly in August or September 1932, the Blueshirts formed a Northern Branch in Tianjin. The appointed leader of this branch was Liu Butong 劉不同,<sup>115</sup> who directed the Blueshirts in extreme anti-Japanese activities. However, presumably due to Liu Butong's "left wing" label, he was replaced later that same year by Jiang Bocheng 蔣伯誠. By early 1933, Jiang Bocheng had been appointed the Deputy of the Political Training Section of the Guomindang's Military Department.<sup>116</sup> This position was later to be held by Liu Jianqun. Meanwhile, control over the whole Northern branch of the Blueshirts remained in the hands of Jiang Bocheng. One of the founding members of the Blueshirts, Zeng Kuoqing 曾擴情,<sup>117</sup> took over Liu Jianqun's post in Tianjin in April 1934. With Zeng Kuoqing's arrival as Deputy of the Political Training Section in Tianjin, the heyday of the Blueshirts' activities in this area commenced. It was also the beginning of close co-operation between nucleus members of the Guomindang Government and the Blueshirts, resulting in increased power in North China.

In June 1934, He Yingqin 何應欽, He Guiguo 何桂國<sup>118</sup>, Lu Tangping 魯湯平, Shen Yinran 沈尹然, Zhang Ji 張繼,<sup>119</sup> Zeng Kuoqing and Wen

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<sup>115</sup> University professor and government official, born in Andong in north China in 1905. Received his education in China and abroad. Liu was a research fellow of London University, England. Upon return to China he was appointed professor of Fudan University and Law College of Shanghai. Member of the Guomindang and member of the Legislative Yuan and professor of the University of Nanjing. Author of "History of Public Finance of Taxation."

<sup>116</sup> TB, 5540, Oniwa Katsuhito, *Ranisha wa odoru* (Actions of the Blueshirts), pp.2-3.

<sup>117</sup> Member of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang and director of Party Affairs in Sichuan 1896. Graduated from Chao Yang University in Beijing and the Whampoa Military Academy in Canton, 1924. Guomindang representative to the Headquarters of the Independent 13th Division of the Nationalist Revolutionary Army, 1927. Secretary of the Military Department of the Guomindang Central Military Academy in Nanjing, 1928. Special Commissioner of Party Affairs attached to the Beijing Branch, Military Affairs Commission, 1934.

<sup>118</sup> Commander of 57th Army, born in Yongxian, Guangxi, 1896. A graduate of Japanese Military Officers College, Tokyo, instructor at the Baoding Military Officers' College and the Mukden Military Training School with the rank of Colonel.

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Linzheng 閻麟徵, founded a new branch in Beijing, the so-called *Huabei zongzhibu* 華北總支部 the Northern China Headquarters. The Blueshirts tried to expand their control over the five Northern provinces, of Hebei, Shanxi, Shandong, Chaheer and Suiyuan, their predication being “Anti-Japanese for the Salvation of China.”<sup>120</sup> The members of this new branch were labelled, especially by the Japanese, as first class assassins.

The withdrawal from Hebei province of the Blueshirts and the Office of the Guomindang's Third Corps of the Military Police was triggered by the assassination by Blueshirts of the presidents of two pro-Japanese newspapers, namely Bai Yuhuan 白榆桓 of the *Chenbao* 晨報 and Hu Enzhuang 胡恩傳 of the *Guo Quan* 國權.<sup>121</sup> The two presidents were killed in the Japanese concession in Tianjin, and it was suggested that the two were quite close to the Japanese army there.

Only the Guomindang's Third Corps of the Military Police withdrew from Hebei as a result of Japanese aggression. It appeared that the Blueshirts did not withdraw, but went undercover and worked in disguise as a kind of *Bang* 幫 society. Before the Xi'an Incident in early 1936, Chiang Kaishek was worried about the reliability of Song Zheyuan 宋哲元,<sup>122</sup> the army

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<sup>119</sup> Veteran Guomindang member and revolutionary, born in Zhili. Went to Japan at the age of 18, where he studied political science and economics at the Waseda University in Tokyo. While in Japan, he made acquaintance with revolutionary leaders including Sun Yatsen, Huang Xing 黃興 and others. Later at Shanghai, he assisted in publications openly attacking the Manchu Government. In 1924 elected member of Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang. Member of the joint council of the Central Executive Committee and Central Supervisory Committee of the Guomindang in 1927.

<sup>120</sup> TB, 5540, pp.4-5.

<sup>121</sup> TB, 5540, pp.4-5.

<sup>122</sup> Army Officer, born in Lening district, Shandong 1885, received his training at an army training institute. Commander of 26th Mixed Brigade, and Commander of the 11th Division. Military Governor of Jehol, and Field Commander of the Fourth Route Army of the Second Group Army. Commander of the 28th Division. Chairman of Chahar Provincial government and concurrently commander of the 29th Army, 1931-35.

leader of the Twenty Ninth Route Army. He suspected Song of secretly being in contact with the Japanese. Therefore, Chiang's opinion was that he certainly needed the Northern Branch of the Blueshirts, and he endeavoured the reconstruction of this branch, especially in the cities of Jinan, Tianjin, Beijing and Zhangjiakou.<sup>123</sup>

However, close examination of contemporary intelligence reports, including Japanese ones, shows that the Blueshirt threat to Japan in North China had been greatly exaggerated, not least because anti-Japanese actions by a host of other organisations appear to have been routinely attributed to the Blueshirts by the Japanese. For example, one organisation which maintained a very active profile in the north was the Beijing Anti-Japanese National Salvation Association (*Beiping kang Ri jiuguo hui* 北平抗日救國會), controlled by followers of Zhang Xueliang and supported by the Young China Party, which extended its operations into Manchuria. It should also be recalled that many of the acts of sabotage and resistance to the Japanese were increasingly led by the CCP.<sup>124</sup>

Whatever the original intentions of the Blueshirts' anti-Japanese campaign and how vigorous it may have been, it did not last very long.<sup>125</sup> The *Shanghai Times* of 21 January 1936 ran the story “Blueshirts to suspend Anti-Japan Activities.”<sup>126</sup> The story reported that anti-Japanese activities by the Blueshirts would cease for one year, pending the election of Chiang Kaishek as President of China. The newspaper furthermore reported that in

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<sup>123</sup> TB, 5540, p.10.

<sup>124</sup> Coble, p.229.

<sup>125</sup> NA, SMP, D3753-1, containing reports from 4 March 1935 to 25 April 1935. The reports mostly from newspaper translations are all about measures taken by the Chinese government to suppress the anti-Japanese activities.

<sup>126</sup> NA, SMP, D4685. “Blue Shirts to suspend Anti-Japan Activities”, *Shanghai Times*, 21 January 1936.



an address delivered before the graduating class of the advanced course of the Nanjing Military Academy on 26 December 1935, Chiang had stated:

While I believe in opposing Japan, I am not making my sentiments public because of the international situation. Should the state of affairs in the world change, I shall not hesitate to rise and fight Japan.<sup>127</sup>

In fact, Chiang consistently argued for securing internal unity before turning to face the external enemy - a line which he was to pursue in the face of all opposition until the Xi'an Incident forced him into alliance with the CCP against the Japanese Empire. Although, after the war with Japan started in August 1937, gradually most organised activities of the Blueshirts in the Shanghai area disappeared, anti-Japanese terrorism continued. As Wakeman writes, "both official and unofficial organs continued throughout 1937 and 1938 to attribute anti-Japanese terrorism to the notorious Blue Shirts, whom they took to be co-ordinated by former police chief General Cai Jingjun 蔡勁軍<sup>128</sup> in his disguise as head of the Moral Endeavor Society (*Lizhishe*)."<sup>129</sup> Hence, the Blueshirts were held responsible for different sorts of anti-Japanese activities in the Shanghai area after the Sino-Japanese war started.

#### **D. The Secret Services and Dai Li**

Of all the Blueshirts' activities, the one which instilled almost universal fear and hatred among the Chinese people was called *tewu* 特務 or

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<sup>127</sup> NA, SMP, D.4685.

<sup>128</sup> Police Commissioner, born in Canton, 1892. Graduated from the Whampoa Military Academy, and was director of the general Headquarters of the Military Affairs Commission at Nanchang. Commissioner of Public Safety of Shanghai Municipality, around 1935.

<sup>129</sup> Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The Shanghai Badlands: Wartime Terrorism and Urban Crime, 1937-1941*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.18. See also Chapter 2 of this thesis, about the relationship Chiang Kaishek had with various secret societies, the *Lizhishe* is mentioned as a society with the appearance of a military club, p.90.

Special Services, an euphemism for intelligence and terrorist operations.<sup>130</sup> The man responsible for overseeing this aspect of the Blueshirts activity was Dai Li 戴笠, one of Chiang's most trusted lieutenants. Dai Li has sometimes been described as “The Chinese Himmler”, because of his feared interrogation methods and ruthless attitude towards the opponents of Chiang Kaishek.

Before entering the Whampoa Military Academy in 1926, Dai Li already had connections with Chiang, having worked in his private secret service during the early 1920s in Shanghai.<sup>131</sup> It was during his period in Shanghai that Dai Li gradually built up his contacts with other leading figures in the Guomindang, such as Dai Jitao and Chen Guofu.<sup>132</sup>

Dai Li was taken under the special patronage of Dai Jitao, as they had the same surname and were both coincidentally also from Chiang Kaishek's native province of Zhejiang. As they were fellow-countrymen, Dai Jitao felt a special emotional link with the young Dai Li.

In the spring of 1926, at the age of twenty-nine, Dai Li went to Guangdong, then still the seat of the Nationalist government, and enrolled in the Whampoa Academy's sixth class. He never finished the course work at Whampoa, but was nevertheless granted a diploma by special dispensation.

When Chiang Kaishek went into retirement in 1931, according to a 1939 SMP report, Dai Li, with the assistance of Zheng Jiemin 鄭介民<sup>133</sup> and

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<sup>130</sup> John Byron and Robert Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992, p.92. The Chinese term `tewu'(Special Service) has a very broad meaning, combining the Anglo-American concepts of `intelligence', `secret intelligence' and `security' with the concept of `Special Operations'- that is, paramilitary operations ranging from reconnaissance missions to assassinations.

<sup>131</sup> Yu Zidao and Qu Youwei, “Lixingshe shulun”, *Jindaishi yanjiu*. Zhongguo kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, Beijing, June 1989, p.223.

<sup>132</sup> Dai Li worked for the Gelaohui (a secret society), and previously had worked with He Zhonghan, at the same time that He's brother, He Qingyan, was Chiang's security guard.

<sup>133</sup> Army Officer, born in Wenchang, Guangdong province in 1899. In 1925 he entered the Whampoa Military Academy. In 1926 proceeded to the Sun Yatsen University in Moscow for

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other Whampoa students, established a secret service and collected information concerning the movements and activities of Chiang's opponents, including newspaper extracts and criticisms. They compiled a very long report containing valuable information, which was submitted to Chiang when he was reinstated in 1932. As a mark of his appreciation, Chiang appointed Dai Li to the Military Affairs Commission (of which Chiang was President), and authorised Dai to form a secret service section.<sup>134</sup> In September 1932 Chiang also appointed him chief of the second section of the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the Military Affairs Commission, popularly known as the *Juntong*.<sup>135</sup>

When the Blueshirts were founded in March 1932, the organisation included an intelligence section, of which Gui Yongqing 桂永清 was initially appointed head. However, as Gui held key positions in the army and was too busy, shortly afterwards Dai Li took over his position as head of the intelligence section of the Blueshirts.<sup>136</sup> One of the key functions of this secret service section was to organise political assassinations of Chiang's enemies. They performed this task so assiduously that Dai Li's agents were soon suspected of being everywhere, and each new assassination and abduction was readily attributed by the press and by the public to his organisation. These so-called Iron and Blood Squads or Iron and Blood

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further studies, on returning to China in 1928 became the "aide de camp" to Chiang Kaishek, appointed secretary to the Commander of the Fourth Army, 1929. Member of the General Staff, 1932. Studied military strategy in Europe, 1934-35, returned to China and published his "History of Wars in Europe", 1935. Chief of the Second and later the Third Bureau of the General Staff, 1935-36.

<sup>134</sup> NA, SMP. S2, D7657, 24 April, 1939.

<sup>135</sup> NA, SIF 226 13W3.3/34/A, 182, Box 51, 263, 21 May 1946. A report made by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, Strategic Service Unit, Chungking detachment in 1946; see also, Lincoln Li, p.66.

<sup>136</sup> Lincoln Li, p.65. See also, his footnotes 103 and 104.

Corps (*Tiexuedui* 鐵血隊) were later absorbed by the more formal Military Bureau of Investigations and Statistics of the Military Council, the BIS.<sup>137</sup>

The first of Blueshirts' murders was, in all probability, the assassination of Ying Xiuren 應修人, who was a friend of the well-known Chinese writer Ding Ling 丁玲.<sup>138</sup> On 14 May 1933, Ying Xiuren, alias Ding Jiu 丁九, was found dead, most likely murdered by Blueshirts. Ying had been living at the house of his friend Ding Ling. Pan Zinian 潘梓年 (alias William P.M.Fung), a professor at Shanghai Arts College and a close friend of Ding Ling, had been living there too. Both Pan Zinian and Ding Ling were members of the Chinese Society for Civil Rights, and both were mysteriously kidnapped, apparently by the Blueshirts. Later Pan was found in detention at the Bureau for Public Safety.<sup>139</sup>

The most important crime attributed to the Blueshirts in Shanghai was the murder of Yang Qian 楊鈞,<sup>140</sup> which took place soon after the killing of

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<sup>137</sup> Kirby, p.149; The phrase *Blood and Iron* stems from Bismarck. Bismarck's policy of *Blood and Iron*, was elevated in Chinese to an "ism" - *Blood and Ironism* - (*Tie xue zhu yi*), and was seen to lie at the centre of Bismarck's success. On the far right, *Blood and Ironism* could be a catchword for a radical militarisation of the Guomintang under the aegis of the Blueshirts; one name originally considered for it was the *Chinese Kuomintang Blood and Iron Corps*; see also, Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, pp.60-61. *Zhong guo guomintang tie xue tuan*, while Dai Li's Special Service Department within the Corps was often called the *Blood and Iron Squad - Tie xue dui*.

<sup>138</sup> Woman writer, born in Hunan province in 1905, studied at the Pingmin Girls School founded with Chen Duxiu's encouragement. Entered Shanghai University, Department of Chinese Literature in 1924. Arrested as a Leftist writer in May 1933, and detained for about two years, then released under surveillance in Nanjing. Left Nanjing in November 1936, and went to Xian fu, where she arranged to join the Chinese Communist movement in Shaanxi.

<sup>139</sup> FOH, 1866/191, 26 June 1933, Political and Military information *The Blueshirts*, and FOH 2780/295, 14 September 1933.

<sup>140</sup> Yang was General Secretary of Central Research Council, born in Jiangxi, 1893. Graduated from Cornell University and Harvard University with MA and MBA degrees respectively. Joined the Guomintang before the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty and participated in the 1911 Revolution, served as secretary to Sun Yatsen, when Sun was elected Provincial President of China at Nanjing. General Secretary and concurrently director of the economic research section of the Social Science Department of the Academia Sinica. Assassinated by gangsters in Shanghai 18 June 1933, allegedly for his activities in connection with the China League for Civil Rights.

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Ying Xiuren, outside the Academia Sinica<sup>141</sup> on 18 June 1933.<sup>142</sup> Yang Qian, (alias Yang Xingfu 楊杏佛) was Secretary of the Chinese Society for Civil Rights,<sup>143</sup> vice-president of the Academia Sinica, and an opponent of Fascism. Yang Qian had denounced the wave of terror which the Blueshirts had brought with them, and had in particular spoken out against the “disappearance” of Ding Ling and her friend. Indeed, he had even gone so far as to accuse the leading Blueshirt Ma Shaowu 馬紹武 (alias Shi Jimei) of this crime.<sup>144</sup> The aftermath of the murder showed that as well as enjoying patronage from the highest levels of the Guomindang, the Blueshirts also had agents with considerable courage. Rather than risk revealing the secrets of the Blueshirts, one of Yang's assassins, closely pursued by the Police, committed suicide in order to avoid falling into their hands.<sup>145</sup>

The murders and disappearances grew in frequency and in boldness. On 13 November 1934, Dai Li's group murdered one of China's leading publishers, Shi Liangcai 史量才,<sup>146</sup> whose newspaper, the *Shenbao* had

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<sup>141</sup> The Academia Sinica was the Highest Institution of Advanced Study and Research in China, founded by Cai Yuanpei.

<sup>142</sup> FOH, 1866/191, 26, June, 1933, Political and Military information *The Blueshirts* ; 2780/295, 14 September, 1933. The Bureau for Public Safety was a euphemism for a Blueshirts Police Office.

<sup>143</sup> Ding Ling and Cai Yuanpei founded the China Society for Human Rights, also called the China League for Civil Rights. Members of the League included Lu Xun, H. Isaacs, Agnes Smedley, Lin Yutang, Chiang Menglin, Li Zhi, Zou Taofen and Hu Shih. The primary purpose of the League was to fight Chiang's insidious campaign to portray all his opponents as Communists. One of Cai Yuanpei's closest associates at the Academia Sinica, the politically active Yang Qian, was murdered by the Blueshirts.

<sup>144</sup> FOH, Shanghai, 26 June 1933, nr. 1866/191, Political and Military information, *The Blueshirts* and Shanghai, 14 September 1933, nr. 2780/295, 14 June 1933, Ma Shaowu was killed in the International Settlement, apparently by Communists. See also, NA, SMP, D4685, Ma Shaowu and his successor were both assassinated by CCP members.

<sup>145</sup> BA, 0902, nr. 2235, Deutsche Botschaft China, (32), 24 September 1934, nr. B.316, Akt.P.O.7, nr. 5726/34.

<sup>146</sup> Managing director of *Shenbao Daily News*, Shanghai. Born in Nanjing in 1879, received the degree of BA by Imperial Examination when he was 20 years of age. At the age of 25 he gave up scholastic endeavours and studied sericulture at the Zhejiang Sericulture College and

betrayed “leftist” tendencies.<sup>147</sup> In Tianjin in May 1935 one of Dai Li's men assassinated two newspaper editors in the Japanese concession for advocating an independent North China.<sup>148</sup> The most dramatic and politically significant attack was the attempt on the life of Wang Jingwei, former leader of the Left Guomindang and Chiang's main rival for leadership of the party. This attack was attributed to the Blueshirts in a report from the Special Branch of the SMP.<sup>149</sup>

The attempt on the life of Wang Jingwei occurred on 1 November 1935, during the opening of the 6th Plenary Session of the Guomindang in Nanjing. Wang was then President of the Executive Yuan and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The attempt was made when Guomindang leaders were posing for a group photograph. Chiang, although present at the meeting, decided not to take his seat next to Wang Jingwei, as he said he was suffering from toothache and wanted to stay inside.<sup>150</sup> Two reasons for the attempted murder were put forward, the first being that Wang Jingwei was very pro-Japanese, the second that he had betrayed his former supporters.

It would appear that the plot was organised by a man known as Wang Yaqiao 王亞樵, who was a Qing Bang member.<sup>151</sup> Wang had been active in the formation of volunteer units in Shanghai, during the Sino-Japanese affair of 1932 and it was at this time that he became acquainted with Zhang Zhilian

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graduated soon afterwards. He was one of the most prominent persons among the local gentry of Shanghai in educational, social and philanthropic societies.

<sup>147</sup> FOH, 3662/365, 19 November 1934, *Murder of Shi Liangcai*.

<sup>148</sup> TB, 5540, pp.4-5; see also Coble, p.228.

<sup>149</sup> NA, SMP. S2, 18 November 1936.

<sup>150</sup> As far as it is known, Chiang had false teeth, which makes his excuse rather suspicious.

<sup>151</sup> Brian G.Martin, “The Origin of the Green Gang and its Rise in Shanghai, 1850-1920”, in *East Asian History*, nr.2, December 1991, p.83. See also his footnote 61, “Reported assassination of Wong Yaojao.”

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張志廉, organiser of the Blood and Soul Groups in this area.<sup>152</sup> Under Wang's direction, his followers murdered Zhao Tieqiao 趙鐵橋, the managing director of the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company,<sup>153</sup> carried out an attempt on the life of T.V. Soong, Minister of Finance, and plotted an attempt on the lives of members of the League of Nations Commission who were in Shanghai after the Manchurian Incident.<sup>154</sup> The pattern of these attacks was very simple - liberals, human rights activists, opponents of one-party rule and dictatorship - anyone, in short, within the political, cultural, legal or media worlds who might speak out against Chiang and his increasingly authoritarian rule.

### **E. The Blueshirts' Death List**

In July 1933, the *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury* published an article containing a death list for assassination by Fascists (for the full list of names on the death list see Appendix 2). According to the newspaper, "a mysterious document purporting to emanate from the secret Blue Gown, or Chinese Fascist organisation and containing orders for wholesale assassinations has been circulated, both in Shanghai and in Canton."<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Zhang Zhilian was one of the five leaders of the *Five Sages Mountain* (Triadgang) founded in 1929. He was a leading follower of Du Yuesheng in the 1930s. The Blood and Soul Group (for the Extermination of Traitors) was an organisation founded early 1932 to agitate anti-Japanese feelings and enforce boycotts against the Japanese. The organisation was controlled by Du Yuesheng.

<sup>153</sup> The background to this murder centred around a serious dispute between Zhao Tieqiao, the government appointed Commissioner for the reorganisation of the China Merchant's Steam Navigation Company, and Li Guojie, the former Chairman of the same Company. Both men had accused each other of misuse of funds and of corruption.

<sup>154</sup> NA, SMP. D7667. "Anti-Japanese Incident." Wang Yaqiao, without any doubt one of Du Yuesheng's men, had probably also been a Blueshirts member, however, this could not be confirmed.

<sup>155</sup> NA, SMP, D4685, 25 July 1933, The American controlled Shanghai newspaper *Evening Post & Mercury*, published a death list. See also, PRO, FO 371/17142 xc 930, 24 August 1933, p.467.

The *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury* article openly linked Chiang with the Blueshirts and asserted that the name Blueshirts stood for the secret assassination of opposition leaders and for alliance with Japan, in total disregard of Chinese administrative integrity and territorial sovereignty.

Simultaneously, the *China Forum*, a magazine edited by Harold Isaacs, received an identical copy of the deathlist saying that it came from an anonymous source.<sup>156</sup> The *China Forum* described it as a list of people destined for the same end meted out to Yang Qian, which included the names of the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party. Among them was Kang Sheng 康生<sup>157</sup>, under his alias Chao Yun, and the list extended in a broad sweep across the Chinese political scene, as far as Hu Hanmin, political leader of the anti-Chiang opposition in the Guomintang. This document was signed with the character “*hua*” 華 which apparently stood for the ruling organ of the Blueshirt organisation. The list was dated 15 June 1933, i.e. one day after the murder of Ma Shaowu, the well-known Blueshirts chieftain<sup>158</sup> and three days before the murder of Yang Qian.

A SMP report reveals that:

An attaché case dropped by Ma Shao Wu when he was assassinated, was picked up by the Municipal Police and was found to contain, among

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<sup>156</sup> NA, SMP, D4685. Advance proof of an article to appear in the *China Forum* was obtained (25 July 1933), including the list of names of those to be assassinated. Isaacs said he did not know the source of the document sent to his office, but that his investigation and inspection had convinced him personally of its authenticity.

<sup>157</sup> John Byron and Robert Pack, p.110. The third name on the death list - dated 15 June 1933, the day after Shi Jimei's assassination- was *Zhao Yun*, another Shanghainese version of Zhao Rong, Kang's 'nom de guerre.' Dai Li's Blueshirts had recognised Kang's importance in the Communist movement in Shanghai.

<sup>158</sup> NA, SMP. D4685, 25 July 1933. See also, Byron and Pack, p.109, 14 June 1933, four Communist assassins shot and killed the head of the Shanghai Bureau of the Investigation Section (Blueshirts section), Shi Jimei-also known as Ma Shaowu, Lu Keqin and Zhou Guangya- as he alighted from a car in the heart of the International Settlement. Shi a former Red Squad agent, had defected to the Guomintang and won the reputation of being the most effective Investigation Section agent in Shanghai. He had masterminded a number of schemes, including the kidnapping of Ding Ling.



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other articles, the following papers: - (1) Analysis of Organisation of Chinese Communism. (2) The present Political Situation and Special Work. (3) List of Individuals of Radical Tendencies. The contents of papers 1 and 2 give a general idea of the policy towards radicals by which the inner circle of Chiang Kaishek 's supporters was guided last June, and the list of names is largely made up of individuals whose elimination from political activities would undoubtedly be received as good news by the same group. It is certain that the Blue Shirt Society would not have been willing at that time to sanction the removal of these people by assassination, because of the publicity against them, they must finally have dispelled any such intention which may have been entertained. <sup>159</sup>

This information brings to light that the deathlist fell into the hands of the SMP through Ma's murder who immediately "leaked" this information regarding the Blueshirts to the press. Official reports to the British Consul-General on this subject, however, were received more than one month after the murder of Ma.

News of this deathlist resurfaced once again on 12 August 1933, when the *Xiaogongbao* 小公報, a mosquito newspaper of Japanese origin, published an article entitled "Blueshirts preparing to assassinate opponents" (Chinese). According to the article:

The Shanghai Evening News & Mercury published the other day an article containing a secret order of the Blueshirt Society and a list of names of distinguished persons to be assassinated. However, the identity of the assassination gang is not known. Of late, wild rumours of assassination have been in circulation. Last night, this paper secured the following assassination schemes of the Blueshirt Society, disclosed by a local member of the Society:- fifty seven persons (a list of whose names is not available), divided into 14 corps, are engaged in the assassination service in Shanghai, under the leadership of Tai Li [Dai Li] and Zau Yungshing [Zhao Yongxing 趙永興]. The headquarters of these 14 Corps are:-

- 1) Six Corps in the French Concession.
- 2) Five Corps in the International Settlement.
- 3) Three Corps in Chinese controlled territory. <sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> PRO, FO 371/17142 xc 930, enclosure nr.1 in Shanghai despatch to Peking nr.226, 31 August 1933, by the SMP date 26 August 1933.

<sup>160</sup> NA, SMP. D4685, 14 August 1933.

The article claimed the assassins were mostly disguised as rickshaw coolies, hawkers or fortune tellers, and said they posted themselves in the same district as the persons destined for assassination.

The deathlist was almost certainly a deliberate leak designed to cow Chiang's opponents and build up the Blueshirts' reputation for ferocity. By the time the list was produced, the Communists had already been driven out of Shanghai and the Soviet Republic was crumbling, so the only opposition Chiang faced was from liberal intellectuals outside the party and disgruntled faction leaders within it. Threatening to kill the leaders of the CCP was an idle menace, but placing liberal, humanitarian opponents on the same list was an attempt to intimidate them into silence. There is no evidence that the Blueshirts tried to work through their list in any systematic way after it had been leaked, and the political importance was not so much in the list itself as in the leaking of it.

### **4.3 The Attempt to Create a Mass Base: The New Life Movement**

If the Blueshirts were to remain a highly elitist force, its leaders were aware of the importance of building a mass organisation to support it. Their studies of successful Fascist movements elsewhere pointed to this necessity.

In Japan the total sum of active members of Fascist movements (general patriotic organisations) amounted to 250,000, and some 400,000 members of other organisations related to the ultra-nationalistic movements - i.e. 650,000 altogether.<sup>161</sup> Italian Fascists numbered 350,000 in a population of about 30 million (ratio 1:90). In Germany, between 1932-33, NSDAP membership grew from 108,000 to almost 1.5 million, and between 30

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<sup>161</sup> Tanin and Yohan, pp.273-275.

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January 1933 and the end of 1934 increased by almost 200%. The growth of the Hitler Youth was enormous, and in 1933-34 the membership increased from 108,000 to nearly 3.6 million.<sup>162</sup> The SA men amounted to about 70,000 in 1923, while by 1930 there were 100,000. From 1930 their numbers grew quickly to over 300,000 men.<sup>163</sup>

One characteristic of these regimes was the distinction between ordinary party membership and membership of specific organisations such as the SA, the SS, the Hitler Youth or the Fasci di Combattimento. There was, of course, a substantial overlap between these organisations - membership of one of them almost always entailed party membership, but ordinary party membership did not necessarily mean anything more than a passive adherence to the ideology of the ruling party. The mass-organisations were useful both in recruiting new party members and in focusing them in specific areas of work and activity which translated ideology into something meaningful in their everyday lives.

China during the early Nanjing period had no such movement. Between the elite Blueshirt organisation and the mass membership of the party there was a gulf of apathy and inactivity, not to say outright political confusion. New members were constantly added to the party's membership registers, but lapsed ones rarely taken off. With regional warlords signing up their entire armies as individual members, and with the severe ideological divisions which existed between the different wings of the party, the entire structure of the party was moribund. Once Chiang had established his personal dictatorship the formal, democratic-centralist structures of decision-

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<sup>162</sup> Karl Dieter Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, pp.294-295.

<sup>163</sup> Carsten, p.14. See also, Jane Caplan, "Theories of Fascism", p.139 and Gunter W.Remming, "The Destruction of the Workers' Mass Movements in Nazi Germany", p.218, in, *Radical Perspectives on the Rise of Fascism in Germany, 1919-1945*, M.N. Dobkowski & Isidor Wallimann (eds.), New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989.

making which had been introduced by the Soviet advisors fell into disuse and the party became a functionless appendage of the “Generalissimo's” personal rule.

Analysing the examples of successful Fascist movements elsewhere, the conclusion was not lost on the Blueshirt leaders: a successful dictatorship needed the underpinning of a mass movement, formed through vigorous propaganda work. A good ratio for such an organisation was around 1:200, as this was sufficiently large to have a nation-wide impact, but sufficiently exclusive for members to be attracted by greater privileges and for the ideology of the movement not to be watered down. It was with the successful mass movements of other Fascist regimes in mind that the New Life Movement (*Xinshenghuo yundong* 新生活運動) was set up.

The New Life Movement was inaugurated at the Blueshirts' headquarters in Nanchang in 1934. From 18th-21st March, Chiang Kaishek gathered one hundred key central and provincial leaders in Nanchang, and launched the movement, with a great burst of publicity.<sup>164</sup>

The intention of the Blueshirts leaders was to incorporate Blueshirt members into the mass organisation of the New Life Movement of up to 2 million members sharing their goals and ideology.<sup>165</sup> The reality was rather different: in the first year of their existence, the Blueshirts managed to recruit only about 1400 members across the whole of China, divided into twenty-one branches. There were also offices abroad in Berlin, London, Paris, Vienna, Hanoi, Moscow, Washington and Tokyo.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> T.Hollington Kong, *Chiang Kaishek: Soldier and Statesman*, London: Hurst & Blackett, 1938, pp.544-554.

<sup>165</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru chosha*, p.105, March 1936.

<sup>166</sup> TB, 2196, pp.129-130.

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Despite this proliferation of branches, and although by 1937 there were no fewer than 300,000 Blueshirts in the organisation, the goal of 2 million members was never fulfilled. The New Life Movement as a whole was not as successful as the founders, including Chiang, had expected at the start.<sup>167</sup>

### **A. The Objectives of the New Life Movement**

The principal aim of the movement was the social regeneration of China, through the promotion of clean and tidy habits and an unselfish consideration for others. Respect for each other and the desire to prevent the exploitation of one people by the other were the two factors that are at the heart of the movement.<sup>168</sup> It promised, furthermore, a “New Life” through “Old” methods. In contrast to the Blueshirts, The New Life Movement was open in nature, and all Chinese had access to it.

The main objectives of the movement were:

1. Noblesse Oblige (Nobility obliges)
2. Production in favour of the people's wealth
3. Militarisation to strengthen people.<sup>169</sup>

According to a speech given by Chiang Kaishek at the Whampoa Military Academy titled “Carrying on the New Life”:

The aim of the New Life Movement is that all our ordinary compatriots become healthy and modern citizens. In order to achieve this goal, one of the first things to gain is a strong physique. Only then you can become mentally strong and healthy, and then you can learn the skills to

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<sup>167</sup> “New Life Idea Fails Expectation: Much Display but Few Concrete Results”, *NCH*, 26 February 1936, “Chiang said, the results accomplished were not as satisfactory as expected. Despite the fact that 100,000 last year were active in the movement.”

<sup>168</sup> “Various Phases of New Life, and Why the Movement is so often Misunderstood by the Intelligentsia; Its effect on Common people”, *NCDN*, 17 December 1934.

<sup>169</sup> Ishimaru, pp.255-266.

strengthen your country in order to defend your country from the oppression and the invasion of foreign countries.<sup>170</sup>

Chiang's interest in the personal behaviour of Chinese citizenry was not a sudden impulse. It was the natural culmination of his entire life, beginning with his own home training. In this context, it should be remembered that it was Chiang who succeeded in “inspiring something of the spirit of the English ‘round-heads’ in the Whampoa cadets, thus spurring the Northern Expedition to its success.”<sup>171</sup> Possibly Chiang wanted to see himself as a strong military leader, a Chinese Cromwell. Furthermore, the original idea for the New Life Movement may have come from the Promoting Morality Association (*Jindehui* 進德會), founded by Wang Jingwei during the early Republican period. This association’s characteristic was also more like a Moral Reform Movement.<sup>172</sup>

Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥<sup>173</sup> wrote about the New Life Movement in the following terms:

The fundamental necessity for the rejuvenation of our nationalism and salvation of our country is talent. There is a great need to mobilise the people’s spirit, which is essential. Therefore, we need, first of all, to promote the spirit, and the best way to promote the spirit is the New Life Movement.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Chiang Kaishek’s speech, *Lixing xinshenghuo*, Huangpoa Military Academy.

<sup>171</sup> Tong Hollington Kong, *Sho Kaisheki* (Biography of Chiang Kaishek), pp.141.153-154, translated by Terajima Tadashi & Okuno Masami: The spirit of the New Life Movement was originally inspired by Cromwell’s “Roundheads” from the 17th century English Civil War. Chiang Kaishek delivered a speech to students at the Whampoa Military Academy about this spirit, and the idea was put forward by Chiang as the basis for the New Life Movement.

<sup>172</sup> Hatano, p.198.

<sup>173</sup> Retired army commander, born in Anhui, 1880. Attended the Beiyang Military School at Tianjin at age of 16, but left in 1898 before graduation, joined the army and became a company commander. He was elected member of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang and member of the Central Political Council, 1929. Was relieved of all his political and military appointments by the Nanjing Government for revolting against Nanjing, 1929.

<sup>174</sup> GA, 483,48, Feng Yuxiang, Manuscript by Calligraphy, *Jiuguo bi xian shixing xin shenghuo yundong*, (In order to Save the Nation the New Life Movement has to be carried out First).

The town of Nanchang, where the Movement had been founded, henceforth became a sort of model town for the embodiment of New Life values. New buildings were erected on the sites of ruined and dilapidated houses, streets were widened, straightened and connected, a number of schools were opened, highways were constructed, and parks were laid out for the benefit of the people. Various other towns copied the model of Nanchang, but when the administration moved to Nanjing, it seemed beyond the power of the regime to transform the character of so large a city. Also in Shanghai the Movement was promoted by most important officials, like General Wu Dezheng, the mayor of Greater Shanghai, who was assisted during a mass meeting to encourage the Movement, by Pan Gongzhan 潘公展 (education commissioner), Wen Hong'en (Public safety commissioner), and Dr. Li Tinggen, (health commissioner).<sup>175</sup>

### **B. New Life Movement and the Remoulding of the Confucian Message**

Notwithstanding the name New Life, the movement taught the age old message of duty - to home and family, and to the country. National conscience and social co-operation were, accordingly, held to rest upon the four ancient Chinese virtues: *li* 禮 (courtesy), *yi* 儀 (obligation to everybody), *lian* 廉 (honesty and respect for the rights of others), and *chi* 耻 (magnanimity and honour). Chiang said that these four virtues had in ancient times made China a mighty nation, and now they were to serve as a basis for the New Life Movement.

According to its theorists, many of them Blueshirt members, it was as a result of materialism and a steadily growing contact with the “poisoned

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<sup>175</sup> “Shanghai's New Life Movement, Campaign Week Inaugurated in Schools, Acceleration Society's Activities”, *NCDN*, 10 April 1934 and 5 June 1934.

civilisation” of the West, that China had lost touch with these virtues, which in ancient times were the foundation of her moral strength.

A significant departure from traditional Chinese values was, however, to be found in the New Life Movement’s policy towards women. A Women's New Life Movement came into existence, and the Association of the Women's New Life Movement in Nanjing enjoyed the advantage of having Madame Chiang Kaishek as chair person of the organisation.<sup>176</sup> Therefore many changes may have been brought about through the influence of Madame Chiang Kaishek. One of the principles of the New Life Movement was that man and woman were equal, and it was advocated that women should act as wise and sensible wives in order to build up a healthy and perfect modernised home (family).

Freedom of marriage was advocated, in the sense that man and woman should be free in their partner choice.<sup>177</sup> This approach was for Chinese conception quite modern, but in general it was difficult for women to be treated the same as men in Chinese society. On comparing the principles of the New Life Movement to women with the treatment of German women during the Nazi period, it is found that the Nazis were a male oriented organisation, and a minor role was assigned to women. Women, for instance, were not admitted to the party leadership, while National Socialism sought to contain the emancipation of women and reduce her role to biological and family functions.

In line with the anti-urban, anti-modern ideology of National Socialism, this generally was understood to mean motherhood, housework, and at best “women” professions. The introduction of the so-called household year, marriage credits, and child bonuses was part of the anti-

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<sup>176</sup> T’ang Leang-Li (ed.), “Women's Part in the New Life Movement”, *The People's Tribune*, vol.14, nr. 3, Shanghai, 1 August 1936, pp.169-172, “Feminism and feudalism do not mix, and now that the last traces of the feudal system in China are rapidly passing away, it is only proper that the voice of feminism should begin to make itself heard in this land.”

<sup>177</sup> JFMA. 19451-12, *Chugoku ni okeru shinseikatsu undo ikken*, pp.1-11.



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emancipation campaign. However, under pressure of the circumstances women from 1936 on, in the beginning especially unmarried women, were reabsorbed into the labour process.<sup>178</sup>

The general emphasis of the New Life Movement on self-reliance and traditional values was a powerful echoing of the values advocated by Sun Yatsen, and indeed during celebrations of the second anniversary of the New Life Movement, Sun was quoted:

So coming to the root of the matter, if we want to restore our race's lost standing, besides uniting all into a great national body, we must first recover our national morality - then, and only then, can we plan how to attain again the national position we once held.<sup>179</sup>

Chiang was convinced that the masses must be brought into line, no matter how, and the traditional Confucian value of loyalty to superiors became one of the central ideas most avidly expounded by the New Life Movement. The movement appeared to be quite successful at the outset - members were even teaching the New Life morals to overseas Chinese.<sup>180</sup> Yet despite the Blueshirts' efforts, they were never able to construct the kind of mass base of support which was typical of Fascist movements in Italy and Germany. Thus, the attempt to form a mass base for the Guomindang through the New Life Movement failed,<sup>181</sup> and any analysis comparing the Blueshirts with Western forms of Fascism must therefore take this failure into account.

The New Life Movement represented the Guomindang's effort to overcome public alienation from the government, to mobilise the public not

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<sup>178</sup> Bracher, pp.116-117, 421.

<sup>179</sup> "The Second Anniversary of The New Life Movement." *The China Critic*, February 1936; In Nanking an official ceremony was held on 19 February 1936, in the auditorium of the Officer's Moral Endeavour Association. Over 5000 government officials, party members, representatives of various organisations were present.

<sup>180</sup> FOH, Political messages, J1, nr. 581, *New Life Movement at Chinese Schools in the Dutch Indies*, 18 August 1936.

<sup>181</sup> J.W.Phillips, "Blue Jackets in China, A Study in Colonial Fascism", in *China Today*, November 1934.

only to support the state but also to help in its reform. An analysis of the New Life Movement shows that in the political intent and goals it bore a strong resemblance to European movements described by the generic term Fascist, both in its counterrevolutionary attitude and in its design for the total mobilisation of society in the service of the State.<sup>182</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to continue this analogy to the mass mobilisation methods employed in the New Life Movement. The emphasis of the Guomindang was on control. From the beginning it was obvious that Chiang's goal was "controlled mobilisation", rather than the unbridled release of hostility against internal and external enemies. The ideology of the movement lacked the tone of hostility or myth making that impenetrated Fascist and Nationalist Socialist writings. Such control by a government was possibly a consequence of the fear of undermining its own foundations by an unruly mass movement. The difference was that, unlike its European counterparts, the New Life Movement was initiated not by a radical right movement trying to gain power but by the government itself.

An article by Ying Mengyuan 榮孟源 refers to the reason why Chiang actually was reluctant to built up a mass movement. According to Ying, it seems that at the beginning of 1931 Chiang had decided that the Fascist ideology of Western countries such as Italy and Germany was not as such suitable for China.<sup>183</sup> This observation is remarkable, especially in the light of Chiang's approach to Fascism after 1932, but is typical of Chiang's attitude.

One of the main reasons for this decision, as Chiang explained, was that the Chinese youth, or the Chinese people in general, were at the time

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<sup>182</sup> Arif Dirlik, "The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution," *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.34-4, 1975, p.947.

<sup>183</sup> Ying Mengyuan, *Jiang jia wang chao* (Jiang's Dynasty), Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1980, p.127.

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quite interested in Western thought and goods. His fear was that once they had absorbed these Western ideas a revolt was possible and the people would no longer respect their own leader. This viewpoint represents a good example of Chiang's approach to the New Life Movement in 1934.

There was a certain element of Confucianist thought behind the New Life Movement. On the 12 February 1931 Chiang Kaishek made a speech at the *Nanjing zhongyang junxiao* 南京中央軍校 (Nanjing Central Military Academy) about Confucius, especially emphasising his concept of *Daoli* 道理 (reason).<sup>184</sup> While it is clear that Chiang Kaishek paid attention to Confucian Thought, this begs the question: was Chiang a real Confucianist or was it just convenient to him to control his people?

Confucianism has deep roots in the Chinese way of life and thinking. It dictated for centuries the Chinese way of life and even today it exerts its influence. This was not the case with Fascism, which was not a grass root ideology, either in Europe or in China. The ideas of Confucius are basically concrete ideas, concerning the relationship between the ruler (heaven) and the ruled (earth). That people should always obey their superior or elders is the basic structure of Confucian theory. The politicians of the Guomindang realised that obedience of the people was needed to meet their political world. They thought that the structure of Confucian ideology was suitable for their active policy. This re-evaluation of Confucianism indicated, in the first place, a recognition of the advantage of Confucian values for the Chinese people and, in the second place, the Chinese people did not need a special reason to accept Confucian values. Although Chiang Kaishek's Nanjing Government advocated modernisation of the Chinese nation, Chiang was thinking of traditional values and concentrated on the re-flourishing of Confucianism. It must be borne in mind that Confucianism has often been

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<sup>184</sup> Ying Mengyuan, p.127.

used as a tool by the literati for modernisation purposes. The New Life Movement was built on an ideological mixture of classical Confucian tenets, a Christian code of ethics and military ideals.<sup>185</sup>

It is sometimes suggested that the idea for the New Life Movement came originally from Madam Chiang (Song Meiling), this suggestion was perhaps initiated through her friends who were familiar with her missionary activities. Therefore, when people heard or read about the New Life Movement through the mass media their idea was often that it exposed a similar concept as the Western YMCA. Especially among the Chinese literate, more than among common Chinese people, there was quite often the misunderstanding that the New Life Movement was related with a kind of oriental YMCA.

Despite all the effort to make the New Life Movement a success and to build up a mass movement, it proved to be abortive. It never attracted the support of the rural elite or the masses. It never generated enough impetus to transform itself into an authentic mass movement.

The paramount reason for the failure of the New Life Movement was its irrelevance to the lives of the people it sought to attract. Nationalist leaders found out too late that the support of traditional values met little resonance with the needs of the common people and the ideas of rural elite. The incapacity of the movement to attract the support of the rural elite, was due, in part, to its changing character. It no longer defined its status necessarily in terms of an adherence to Confucian ideology, especially since the incentive of the civil service examination no longer existed.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Takeuchi Hiroyuki, *Chugoku no jukyo teki kindai ron* (Confucius' Theory for China's Modernisation), Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 1995, pp.300, 328.

<sup>186</sup> Kauko Laitinen, *Chinese Nationalism in the Late Qing Dynasty*, pp.46, 49. See also Nobutaka Ike, "War and Modernization", pp.189-209, in *Political Development in Modern Japan*, by Robert E. Ward (ed.). The Chinese elite was traditionally chosen by means of competitive civil service examinations. In these examinations the applicants were tested for their knowledge of the Confucian classics and the great body of commentaries on the classics

“New Life” Confucianism must have seemed particularly meaningless to men preoccupied with political and social survival. The New Life Movement’s assertion that the material wants of the masses would eventually be met through spiritual regeneration must have seemed absurd to the impoverished.

The fundamental flaw of the New Life Movement for the larger part was its assumption that immaterial triviality alone would satisfy the socio-economic needs of the people.<sup>187</sup>

### **C. The New Moral Order**

The New Life Movement was meant to rejuvenate the Chinese people. Out of a total Chinese population of 450 million, only around 100 million were believed to be literate. In other words, techniques and materials had become modernised, but the people's mentality and education was still retarded.<sup>188</sup> In response to this problem, the New Life Movement developed, under Zhu Jiahua's responsibility, a Reformed Education Policy, and mounted campaigns to improve general standards of behaviour and weed out superficial Westernisation.<sup>189</sup> As part of this initiative, the newspapers often published all kinds of New Life regulations. An example of these regulations may show why the New Life Movement has sometimes been regarded as a futile and somewhat comic effort to regenerate the nation by reviving the

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which had been built up over the centuries. The nature of the examinations was such that only those who had assiduously studied the classics since early childhood could hope to pass them. In 1905 the imperial examinations were abolished, and as a substitute for the Confucian classics, “new learning” (i.e. modern western scholarship) became popular.

<sup>187</sup> Wei, pp.78-80.

<sup>188</sup> Ishimaru, pp.255-266.

<sup>189</sup> Zhu Jiahua, “The New Life Movement, An Exposition of its Aims: China's Reformed Education Policy”, *NCDN*, 25 March, 1934.

morality of Confucianism, and by prescribing quantitative rules of personal conduct:

The penalty for spitting on the street is ten yuan.  
Perming your hair is not allowed, straight hair is the best...  
Pedestrians should keep to the left-hand side.

The rules were sometimes so strictly interpreted by police authorities that, according to them, smoking on the streets was not allowed.<sup>190</sup> Billboards were placed in the streets of the cities appealing to unemployed people “When you have no work, you must find something to do.”<sup>191</sup>

The New Life Movement was often misunderstood by the intelligentsia, because it was too simplistic. It should therefore not be forgotten that it was meant for everybody - the farmer, the man from the small village, and for the man in the street, for the rich and the poor.<sup>192</sup> On the surface the New Life Movement was remarkable for the absurdly exaggerated anticipation of its proponents, who held the serious -if self-serving- connotation that the key to China’s national salvation lay in hygienic activities to purge the unhealthy habits of body and mind of the Chinese people.<sup>193</sup>

Intellectuals outside the direct administration of the Guomindang and the Blueshirts failed to understand the demands of the New Life Movement. While these intellectuals understood little about the Fascist motives behind the Movement - indeed they were likely to be anti-Fascist in outlook - they were schooled in the Confucianist reasoning with which Chiang Kaishek

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<sup>190</sup> “New Life Canons Enforced, Police stop smokers on Nanking Street”, *NCDN*, 27 April 1934.

<sup>191</sup> “New Life Movement, Hangchow Slogans”, *NCH*, 24 April 1935.

<sup>192</sup> “Various Phases of New Life, Why the Movement is so often Misunderstood by the Intelligentsia; its Effect on Common People.” *NCDN*, 17 December 1934.

<sup>193</sup> Dirlik, p.945.

attempted to imbue the movement. Intellectualising about this Confucianist standpoint would also have failed to clarify the situation. This is because the demands of the New Life Movement were either too basic or too exaggerated to be taken seriously on a purely intellectual level. The obvious lack of a coherent theoretical basis for the movement invested it with failure even at the very outset. This point was not, however, appreciated by the self-serving ideologists within the Guomintang.

#### **D. The Moral War Against Communism**

While proscribing hairstyles may appear ridiculous and futile, there was much more to the New Life Movement than a tirade of invectives against undesirable personal habits. The construction of a neo-Confucian social order in Nanchang was seen as a key factor in throwing a sort of sanitary moral cordon around the Chinese Soviet Republic.

The fluid borders of the soviet region and the extensive propaganda work of the CCP had turned peasant discontent into political disaffection in many areas, prompting anxieties in the Guomintang leadership. In particular, Chiang himself felt that the Red Army's success in recruiting from the peasantry made stringent controls necessary.<sup>194</sup>

During the years 1933-35, when Communist operations were centred in Jiangxi, the Blueshirts attempted to control and win back the masses in areas of Communist influence and to enforce the blockade of the Chinese Soviet Republic. To this end, cadres were despatched into the countryside to organise peasants in zones recently recaptured from the Communists. On arrival, they organised the entire population into a *Baojia*<sup>195</sup> system

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<sup>194</sup> TB, 6017, p.8

<sup>195</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, *China's Destiny*, pp.135, 167. *Bao Jia*: A system of mutual responsibility. See also Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1968, pp. 64-65, according to Snow, *baojia* literally means "guaranteed armour." The *baojia*

保甲制度 and launched a “social survey” as a means of weeding out Communists and other undesirable elements.<sup>196</sup>

In order to ensure that the Communist influence was erased forever, the cadres began to educate the peasantry in the values which Chiang considered to be the most appropriate for the rebirth of the nation. It was the propagation of these values which was the *raison-d'être* of the New Life Movement.<sup>197</sup>

It is somewhat paradoxical that Chiang preached the moral virtues of the New Life Movement with such vigour, yet was never able to weed out the corruption of even his closest associates. Indeed, the Blueshirts, who were the backbone of the New Life Movement, were certainly some of the greatest recipients of graft and bribes in China. The New Life Movement highlighted many of the key contradictions of the Blueshirts Movement. The Blueshirts were closely linked with the underworld smuggling rings of the Qing Bang, and are known to have consolidated their position in Sichuan, following the removal of the capital from Nanjing, by taking over the local opium cartels. Yet one of the major campaigns of the New Life Movement was to eliminate opium-smoking.<sup>198</sup>

One of the offshoots of the New Life Movement was the formation of the Voluntary Labour Service Corps (*Laodong fuwutuan* 勞動服務團) in the

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system was a method of controlling the peasantry which was widely imposed by the Guomindang and the Japanese. One *bao* was made up of approximately ten *jia*. The combined *baojia* was held collectively responsible to the district magistrate, for any offence committed by any member of the roughly hundred family unit. As a measure for preventing the organisation of peasant protest it was almost unbeatable. Among the functions of the *bao jia* was the collection of taxes for the maintenance of the militia; and Tejima Hiroshi, *Chugoku rodo undotsushi*, pp. 348-349; Chiang Kaishek revived the *Bao Jia* system, and used it as a tool to educate and control people.

<sup>196</sup> Eastman, p.72, see his footnote, nr 141.

<sup>197</sup> “New Life in Szechuan”; *NCH*, 27 March 1935, The personal visit of Chiang Kaishek to the province should inspire enthusiasm, his primary object is to clear out the Reds.

<sup>198</sup> “The New Life and Opium”, *NCDN*, 1 November 1934.



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summer of 1934, which was a form of moral corvée designed to extract the maximum of forced labour out of the army, the party organisations, the schools, women, or any other group.<sup>199</sup> Everything was to be utilised; moral and physical strength as well as material. With such a huge mass of people working for the goals of unity and strength announced by the leader, it was hoped that the country would be able to stand firm against aggression.

In another attempt to harness every drop of energy from the embattled population, and as a supplement to the New Life Movement, in April 1935 Chiang also instituted the People's Economic Reconstruction Movement (*Fuxing dazhong de jingji* 復興大眾的經濟).<sup>200</sup> Its aim was ostensibly to improve the standard of living of the people through utilisation of all the natural resources of the country. It also claimed to aim at the abolition of unemployment by creating new fields of labour. The two movements, the New Life Movement and the People's Economic Reconstruction Movement, would, according to the firm belief of their founder, raise China to a great power of the first order.

The New Life Movement was also part of Chiang's effort to counter the demoralisation which was setting in among his officers, and an attempt to elevate the struggle against Communism onto a higher plane than merely bayoneting recalcitrant peasants in one village after another. In strengthening the ideological beliefs of his military, Chiang saw the Movement as a means of ensuring their loyalty to his programme of pacification before tackling Japanese aggression. Chiang defended his policy of appeasement during a conference:

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<sup>199</sup> Dirlik, p.951; see also Eastman, "A Review Article", p.33, Chang, p.5, and Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, p.47; Corvée labour was actually a system used at various times from the early years of the empire down to the latter part of the Ming. It was especially complicated during the Tang Dynasty. Corvée labour was used regularly on major public works.

<sup>200</sup> Dirlik, pp.978-979.

He predicted an approaching Second World War, a conflagration which would occur by 1936 or 1937. The new war, asserted Chiang, presented China with a golden opportunity. If it entered into the conflict united, China could emerge revived and transformed from weakness to strength. If China entered in a weakened and divided state, it would be destroyed. Internal unity must come first.<sup>201</sup>

Chiang thus still faced a formidable political challenge in maintaining his foreign policy. The political threat was not so blatant as the Fujian Rebellion<sup>202</sup> or Feng Yuxiang's Anti-Japanese Allied Army, but the danger was just as real. Chiang had to maintain the morale of his army and his political supporters. He had to convince them that a policy of patience and accommodation with Japan would serve the national interests. The New Life Movement was of critical importance in securing these political ends.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

The popularity of Fascist ideas in China cannot be explained by a sociological analysis which is concerned only with identifying which of the country's social strata were most threatened by Communism. There was no disgruntled lower middle class, as there was in Germany, which had seen a half-century of steady rises in prosperity wiped out by hyperinflation. Nor was it the case that China's producers were eager to embrace an ideology of

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<sup>201</sup> Coble, p.153, with reference to his footnote 12; Speech of 18 March, 1934, *Chiang Tsung-tong yen-lun hui-pien*, vol.11, pp.140-141. On the Nanchang conference itself, see KWCP, vol.11, nr.11, March 19 1934 ; KWCP, vol.11, nr.12, 26 March 1934, coverage in "Da-shi shu-ping"; and *Shen-bao nian-jian*, 1935, p.D-32; and Keiji Fururya, *Chiang Kaishek His Life and Times*, p.580. That Chiang had not changed his earlier views is proved by his diary notes. Chiang noted in his diary: The Second World War is drawing nearer and nearer every day. What sacrifices we must be prepared to make during the war and what sort of position China might occupy in the post-war world are questions about which we should make a detailed study beforehand. (Entry of 28 January 1938)

<sup>202</sup> The 19th Route army had made western Fujian a *third force* stronghold. They had cleared out local war-lords and forced Chiang Kaishek to accept their nominee as governor. They had pursued a vigorous reform programme which included abolition of excessive local taxes and experimental land reform. But the corvée and forced levies they imposed had created opposition. Moreover they were Cantonese *guest soldiers*. Their popularity was already fading when they launched the rebellion.

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“delayed industrialisation” emulating Germany and Italy. China had, in fact, very few indigenous manufacturers in the early 1930s, and many of these would have preferred open collaboration with the Japanese in order to bring about order and stability, rather than throwing in their lot with a slightly bizarre experiment in Chinese Fascism.

The specific form which Fascism took in China was much closer to the Japanese than to any European model. The social and political climate of China in 1932 was quite unlike the period just after the First World War in Europe, when the Fascist movement started in Italy and the National Socialist German Workers' Party was founded.

In Italy and Germany these organisations started as authentic movements of the working and lower middle classes. In China, as in Japan, it was initiated by the Chinese military elite. Certainly in China the popularity of Fascist ideas never reached the heights attained in Italy and Germany. While skilful use of modern propaganda methods brought Hitler and Mussolini into the hearts and homes of millions of their fellow countrymen, Chinese Fascism never really became much more than an ideological conceit of the military and the political elite. It was in the intellectual circles within the Guomindang, many of them deeply conservative and many others, like Dai Jitao, a former CCP member, who believed Fascism could open up a pathway towards their ideal of a modern nation.

The history of the Blueshirts was the history of their attempts to translate the mechanism for creating this ideal into a practical organisational form. Chinese admirers generally took established Fascist regimes as their models, not nascent Fascist movements. In so doing they saw existing political systems of concentrated powers and not the often anarchic, social-revolutionary forces that preceded them and helped drive them to power. The Blueshirt movement was an attempt to draw on the lessons of Fascism in

Europe, and to push a disorganised, demoralised and backward China as quickly as possible down the path to modernisation.

The Blueshirts were not greatly interested in ideological debate, but in this, they differed little from Fascist movements in Europe itself. Fascism in all its forms was essentially about the exercise of power, and it replaced the analysis of state power so beloved of European liberals with a “Führer”-philosophy which was consciously anti-intellectual and anti-analytical. Thus, the mere fact that the Blueshirts did not evolve a systematic theory of how to apply Fascism in China does not indicate that they were not Fascists.

The activities in which the Blueshirts engaged - anti - Communist purges, anti-Japanese populism and assassination of political opponents - are classically Fascist. Chiang tried through insidious campaigns to portray all his opponents as Communists. Chiang's attempt to achieve his aims by a combined effort which balanced the violence of the Blueshirts with the New Life Campaign was also classically Fascist. Where the Blueshirts eliminated opponents, the New Life Movement tried to mobilise supporters; where the Blueshirts were brutal enforcers, the New Life Movement tried to lead by exhortation.

## Chapter Five

### The Blueshirts' Dependence on the Qing Bang

#### 5.1 The Guomintang's Dependence on the Qing Bang

It is tempting to consider the Qing Bang 青幫 (Green Gang) as a sort of Mafia, as Eastman clearly does when he writes of the “Mafia-like Shanghai Qing Bang.”<sup>1</sup> This comparison is probably more valid with reference to the Mafia in their traditional homelands in southern Italy than to the modern, urban Mafia of the United States. Just as the Italian Mafia had real social roots in local communities, and took on a number of functions including that of a benevolent society, so the Qing Bang had roots in particular localities and professions as well as in historic secret societies. Perhaps Christopher Duggan's description of the Mafia comes closest to what the Qing Bang were. “The Mafia”, he noted, “was not a secret society, but a way of life or an attitude of mind.”<sup>2</sup>

The Mafia, unlike most Chinese secret societies, used the structure of the family as a concrete basis of recruitment. The Chinese societies, especially those of the Triad type, were not structured on the family, although they evoked the ideology of the family generally, and that of the fraternity, specifically.

Before discussing the origins of the Qing Bang, it should be noted that close co-operation between it and the ruling Guomintang was a central feature of the political landscape during the Nanjing period. Although the national capital was upstream at Nanjing, Shanghai was the powerhouse of

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<sup>1</sup> Eastman, *Nationalist China during the Nanking Decade, 1927-1937*, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Duggan, “Preface”, *Fascism and the Mafia*, New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1989.

China's nascent capitalist development, as well as the most important point of contact with the Japanese and the Europeans. Chiang Kaishek recognised the key importance of this city, not least because of its role in securing finances for him. Chiang also had strong personal links both with the city and with the leadership of the Qing Bang - between 1912 and 1922, Chiang Kaishek had spent much of his time in Shanghai. The relationships he developed with key figures in finance and the underworld remained unchanged during the period in which Chiang Kaishek won control of the Guomindang and turned towards Fascism. During the early years of the Nanjing period the Qing Bang was at the height of its power as an independent organisation, and at the height of its influence over the Guomindang. Unlike the Blueshirts, however, the Qing Bang, in common with traditional secret societies, actually had no military power. It was precisely during this period that Fascism first appeared in Nationalist China. Du Yuesheng 杜月笙,<sup>3</sup> the powerful Qing Bang leader in the Shanghai area had already expanded his influence beyond the traditional spheres of the secret societies. Those activities inevitably brought the Qing Bang in conflict with the Blueshirts.

This Chapter will address the nature of this relationship, and examine how closely the Blueshirts were linked with the Qing Bang and other important Bang societies. Principally, it will look at how the Blueshirts drew in and incorporated existing members of established Bang, and how they co-operated with them in their work. Many scholars have already examined the activities of the Bang societies, especially during the 1920s. This Chapter

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<sup>3</sup> Banker and public welfare worker, born in Pudong, Shanghai, 1884. Received his education under private tutors, and entered business at Shanghai at an early age. Member of the Supervisory Committee of the Shanghai Chinese General Chamber of Commerce. President, Zhongwai Bank, Tongwai Bank, director, Commercial Bank of China. Founder and chairman of board of directors of the Chengshih Middle School, Shanghai. Director of the Chartered Stock and Produce Exchange, Ltd., Shanghai.

seeks to widen the scope of debate by bringing together information from Chinese, Japanese, British and American sources.

### **A. What were the Bang?**

Before beginning a discussion on the Qing Bang and their connection with the Blueshirts, some explanation concerning the terms used will be helpful. The original meaning of the character *bang* 幫 was “help” or “aid” or “assist.” It is debatable why western scholars first started to translate the word *bang* as “Gang.” One Chinese researcher has translated *bang* as “Bands”, the Green Band (Ch’ing - pang).<sup>4</sup> Band, however, would be a more appropriate translation of the characters *dai* 帶 or *dui* 隊.

Many researchers use the term secret society to describe the Bang, and therefore conflate them all too readily with the genuine secret societies *mimi shehui* 秘密社會. This rendering however derives mainly from the Japanese translation *himitsu shakai* 秘密社會 rather than from Chinese sources, and the term “secret society”, with all its ambiguities, is really not a suitable translation for the term Bang. In contrast to western scholars, certain Japanese scholars have glossed the term as “Guilds”,<sup>5</sup> and this explanation is the one which probably comes closest to the heart of what the Bang societies were about. Bang societies are not strictly comparable with gangs in the western sense of the word. The Bang societies have a long history in China and were involved in economics, religion, artistic patronage and many other areas of activity which were rarely of any interest to most “gangs” in the West. In the mutual support which they provided their members, as well as in

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<sup>4</sup> Ch’en Yung-fa, “The Wartime Communists and their Local Rivals: Bandits and Secret Societies” - Select Papers from the *Centre for Far Eastern Studies*. No. 3, 1978-79, p.13.

<sup>5</sup> Negishi Tadashi, *Shanghai no girudo* (Shanghai’s Guild), Tokyo: Nihon hyoronsha, 1951; see also John Stewart Burgess, Ph.D, *The Guilds of Peking*, Columbia University Press, 1928, pp.15-16. The spelling ‘guild’ and ‘gild’ are both used, which is purely arbitrary.

their involvement in such a wide variety of activities in society, the Bang were more like the medieval guilds of Europe than any modern criminal association.

The point is important since all possible translations of the term Bang are heavily value-laden, and a basic misunderstanding of the term may well lead to distorted perspectives of research, especially in the 1930s in Shanghai.

Another terminology that is often subject of misunderstanding is the name *she* 社, also used in *Lanyishe* and *Lixingshe* i.e the Blueshirts. At the end of the Qing dynasty the terms for the traditional generational status of the Bang societies were in descending order of seniority, the *Da* 大, the *Tong* 通, the *Wu* 悟 and the *Xue* 學.<sup>6</sup> This traditional generational status terminology, indicating the position within the society, remained in use until 1949. However, a much more general term came into vogue namely the *she* generational status. This generational status group (*zibei* 字輩) was adopted by all members who were accorded that particular rank in the society, and was not only used by the Qing Bang but also by the *Hongmen* 洪門.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, just as mistranslating of the term Bang leads to misunderstandings about the nature of the Guilds, mistranslating of the term *she* may lead to a misunderstanding of the nature of the Blueshirts.

Smaller organisations which were formed under the umbrella of the Qing Bang often called themselves *she*, such as the *Zhichengshe*<sup>8</sup> 至誠社,

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<sup>6</sup> Sakai Tadao, *Chugoku minshu to himitsu kessha* (Chinese People & the Secret Societies), Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1992, pp.153-154. See also Brian G.Martin, "The Origins of the Green Gang and its Rise in Shanghai, 1850-1920," *East Asian History*, 2 (December 1991), pp.67-86.

<sup>7</sup> Sakai Tadao, pp.153-154. The *Hongmen* (Hong League) or Hong Family (*Hongjia*), otherwise known as Heaven and Earth or the Triad societies (*Sanhehui*), became in the late Qing dynasty the most powerful group of secret societies in central and south China.

<sup>8</sup> Sakai Tadao, pp.153-154. The original name of the *Zhichengshe* was *Tongdengshan* 同登山. In the name we find the traditional generational status *Tong* 通. Before the Japanese-Chinese war of 1937, Bai Zihou 白子侯 who came from Sichuan province was its leader. Bai



## Chapter Five

*Minxingshe* 民興社<sup>9</sup> and *Fuxingshe* 復興社.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore the well-known Qing Bang boss of Shanghai, Du Yuesheng, organised in November 1932 a society with the name the *Hengshe* 恒社.<sup>11</sup> By 1934 the members of this Society had increased to 223, and among them were, politicians, government and military officials, and industrialists. The fact that so many smaller Bang societies were called *she* may have led the Japanese to misunderstand the nature of the *Lanyishe* or *Lixingshe* [Blueshirts], whom they assumed, because of their name, to be not a political organisation of the Guomindang, but merely another “gang.”

Secret societies have always influenced Chinese history, and have existed in China throughout recorded history. Collectively, they constitute one of the institutional backbones of Chinese society. Historically, their influence has always been widespread and their ramifications have extended into every branch of Chinese life, especially politics, religion, commerce, trade unions and the criminal underworld. The societies were often of a Buddhist or Daoist origin, but their main objective by the nineteenth century was to safeguard the common people against oppression by corrupt

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Zihou was also one of the leaders of the Sichuan *Paoge* (a reactionary gang from Southwest China with connections to the Gelaohui.) Bai Zihou was also quite an important person in the Shanghai Hong Men Societies During the war with Japan and after the war when its headquarters was in Chongqing the leader of *Zhichengshe* was Zhou Xunyu 周迅予.

<sup>9</sup> Sakai Tadao, pp.154-155. The leading members of the *Minxingshe* were, Liao Haicheng 廖海澄, Liao Songbai 廖松柏, Wang Yucheng 王禹丞 and Ren Hanqing 任漢卿, who were all followers of Bai Zihou.

<sup>10</sup> Sakai Tadao, pp.154-155. After Bai Zihou died the *Minxingshe* members formed a new organisation the *Fuxingshe*, while Ren Hanqing became the chief leader.

<sup>11</sup> Watanabe Jun, “Seibo, Unga seikatsusha shudan no dairyu” (The Group of Boatmen's Life : Qing Bang), *Rekishi tokuhon* (Readers History), March 1988, p.153. The *Hengshe* 恒社 (Endurance Club) was registered in the French Concession founded in November 1932, but formally inaugurated 25 February 1933. Du Yuesheng was a member of the rather low *Wu* generational status group. This, however, did not prevent him from exercising authority over Qing members who belonged to the generational status group preceding his own. It may, notwithstanding Du's power over higher ranking people, have led to the introduction of the status group *she*, which was a more general indication.

officialdom. The most important of these organisations were the Triads or Hongmen league.

The secret societies in South China generally called themselves *hui* 會 while those in the North usually called themselves *jiao* 教.<sup>12</sup> The Hui was a secret political brotherhood with a religious tendency, whilst the Jiao were secret religious associations with a more nationalistic character. The one aspect they had in common, was an anti-Manchu sentiment.<sup>13</sup> In China, many peasants undoubtedly joined Bang 幫 societies because the writ of constitutional authority did not run in the villages remote from the cadres of state power. They banded themselves together to resist the authority of the local landlords and officials, and to protect their own economic and social interests.

Scholars such as Max Weber favour an analysis of the Bang which sees them as generally lacking strong political connections and primarily reflecting loyalties to family and region.<sup>14</sup> These ties of blood and common origin were traditionally much more important than political programmes or ideologies, and they were generally directed to securing economic benefits rather than challenging the authority of the Imperial governor by entering the domain of politics.

Towards the end of the Qing Dynasty, this began to change, as the revolutionary organisations began to draw on the organised manpower of the Bangs. In Zhejiang province, for instance, the revolutionaries made contact

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<sup>12</sup> *Hui* has the same meaning as *Banghui* 幫會, it represents the lower class of farmers or common people's Bang groups. During the Qing Dynasty it was officially also called *Huifei* 會匪. For instance, *Tiandihui* 天地會 or *Gelaohui* 哥老會. *Jiao* or also *Jiaofei* 教匪, is the group of religious sect for example, *Qinglianjiao* 青蓮教, *Bailianjiao* 白蓮教.

<sup>13</sup> TB, 5090, *Manshu kyū sina ni okeru chika himitsu dantai ni tsuite*, pp.193-198; see also, TB, 2196, *Ranisha no soshiki to hanMan koNichi katsudo no jitsu rei*. See also Immanuel Y.Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, p.128.

<sup>14</sup> Fei-ling Davis, *Primitive Revolutionaries of China*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, pp.72-74, who quotes Max Weber's, *The City*, p.14.

with various Hongmen groups.<sup>15</sup> Sun Yatsen, for example, used the *Xingzhonghui* 興中會 (Revive China Society), the *Tongmenghui* 同盟會 (Revolutionary Alliance) and others, politicising them to an extent which clearly marked them out from more traditional Bang organisations.

## **B. The Qing Bang**

During the first decade of the 20th century the Bang societies reputedly controlled more than 700 salt-smuggling craft and commanded over 10,000 followers in the lower Yangtze region. Smuggling had become their economic mainstay, and this experience would later prove valuable when they expanded out of the salt business into much more profitable trade in opium.<sup>16</sup>

One of the most influential Bang societies was the Green Gang or Qing Bang, which dominated central and eastern China in the first half of this century, with the port of Shanghai as the main centre of its activities.<sup>17</sup> The weakening of central control in the Republican period and the laxity of legal sanctions against it allowed it to widen its mass base with relative ease. The Qing Bang reached the peak of its strength in the period 1920-1950, when China's political parties were deeply divided and the city of Shanghai was frequently under the control of warlord armies or foreign powers. During this period, the Qing Bang was the effective master of the city.

The link between Chiang Kaishek and the Qing Bang was by no means the first one between political leadership and the Bang societies, for

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<sup>15</sup> Mary Backus Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902-1911*, Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971, pp.128-139.

<sup>16</sup> Brian G.Martin, "The Origins of the Green Gang and its Rise in Shanghai, 1850-1920", *East Asian History*. p.75, nr.2, December 1991. See also Rankin, p.137.

<sup>17</sup> Chao Wei-pang, "A Chinese Secret Society, The Rise and Growth of the Ching Pang." *The China Review*, October-December 1934, vol. 3.4, pp.35-36.

Sun Yatsen himself had established such links much earlier. After the Revolution of 1911, the modernist wing of the young intelligentsia was fundamentally hostile to China's past, but more conservative elements wanted to control the drive towards modernisation within the bounds of traditional Chinese social institutions. Linking new political organisations with established Bang networks was one of the ways in which this more conservative trend sought to anchor reforms securely in the realities of everyday Chinese life.

Sun's programme was to reform and modernise China under a period of political tutelage, during which the nation would entrust itself to the “political guardianship” of the Guomindang. The way to secure this supremacy was to link up with established Bang organisations, which had deep roots in Chinese society and enjoyed the trust of the common Chinese. This philosophy was adopted and developed by Chiang Kaishek, and it was the basis for the Fascism which appeared in China during the 1930s. The emergence of the Blueshirts was only a new means of securing the political subjugation of the people in ways which the Bang societies had hitherto failed to achieve.

Throughout the period of Sun's leadership, there was an internal battle between intellectual revolutionaries and pragmatic power politicians, the latter gradually gaining the upper hand. In the final years of the Qing Dynasty, Sun and Huang Xing 黃興 had tried, unsuccessfully at the time, to woo the Qing Bang into forming an alliance with them. Nonetheless, it is known, especially in the area of Shanghai, that the revolutionaries managed to mobilise the assistance of a number of leaders of the local “Red [Triads] and Green [Qing] Gangs.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, as Mary Backus Rankin writes, in

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<sup>18</sup> Mark Elvin Mark, “The Revolution of 1911 in Shanghai”, *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 29 (1984), pp.152-153. See also Rankin, p.204.

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the first few days after the 1911 Revolution Chen Qimei had “skilfully consolidated his position as military governor of Shanghai with aid from both merchant-gentry and secret society Green and Red Gang allies.”<sup>19</sup> Although, Chen Qimei’s activities were centred around Shanghai, he had also some influence on revolutionary movements in his native Zhejiang province.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, after the 1911 Revolution, the Northern Warlords (*Beiyang junfa* 北洋軍閥) managed to induce a number of Qing Bang men to support them, and with the assistance of this group, dominated the lower Yangtze valley for upwards of a decade.<sup>21</sup> In 1924 the Guomindang regime in Canton, which was preparing itself for the Northern Expedition, began courting the Qing Bang again in order to secure its acquiescence in the establishment of Guomindang rule in the Shanghai region. All in all, it is clear that Sun could not have led the national revolution to success without the secret societies and their activities within the revolutionary units.

### **C. Chiang Kaishek, Shanghai Business and the Qing Bang**

Chiang Kaishek came from Zhejiang province, and since local loyalties were so important in Chinese social life, his origins continued to be of central importance throughout his life. There was a group of businessmen called the Zhejiang Magnates (*Zhejiang - Jiangsu caifa* 浙江,江蘇財閥), which had its origins in the *Ningbo Bang* 寧波幫, a guild with close ties to one of the sects of the Qing Bang.<sup>22</sup> These businessmen had come to dominate the banking and finance sectors of Shanghai's economic life, and

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<sup>19</sup> Rankin, p.119. Chen Qimei is one of the Tongmenghui (Revolutionary Alliance) heroes.

<sup>20</sup> Rankin, p.119.

<sup>21</sup> Chao Wei-pang, p.35.

<sup>22</sup> Coble, *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government 1927-37*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980, p.23, see his footnote, Shanghai tung-she, (ed.), *Shanghai yen-chiu tzu-liao*, in Shanghai, 1936, pp.289-290.

they thus derived maximum benefit from the rapid economic expansion which Shanghai experienced between 1895 and 1920. Because of their power, the Ningbo Bang attracted groups of capitalists from neighbouring areas, until they had eventually extended their web of personal relationships to form the Zhejiang magnates. This group commanded most of the business organisations of Shanghai, including the General Chamber of Commerce, the Shanghai Bankers' Association and the Native Bankers' Association. In 1923, for example, 86% of the membership of the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce originated from Zhejiang.<sup>23</sup>

Chiang Kaishek's Zhejiang connections proved very important following the failure of the second revolution in 1913, when he was nearly reduced to beggary in Shanghai. He managed to use his local connections to secure for himself the lowly post of *paiban* (clapboard man) in the Shanghai Stock Exchange,<sup>24</sup> which began functioning in Shanghai in around 1916.<sup>25</sup> The seemingly insignificant job of “clapboard man” belies the level of education required in order to do this work correctly. Around the same time, Chen Qimei 陳其美 (revolutionary military governor of Shanghai in 1911, who became Sun Yatsen's chief lieutenant) introduced Chiang Kaishek to the Qing Bang boss Huang Jinrong 黃金榮 (Pock- marked Huang)<sup>26</sup> and his right-hand man Du Yuesheng. Generally this is taken to be the origin of

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<sup>23</sup> Coble, p.22, see footnote, *The China Annual*, 1944, pp.434-453 : Wu Cheng-hsi, *Chungkuo te yinhang*, p.127.

<sup>24</sup> Yang Shobiao, p.13.

<sup>25</sup> Wang Fumin, *Chiang Kaishek sheng ping* (The Life of Chiang Kaishek), Shanghai: Tuanjie chubanshe, 1989, pp.31-32.

<sup>26</sup> Merchant leader and welfare worker, born in Shanghai, 1868. Proprietor of the Great World (amusement centre), Crystal theatre, and Chinese Grand Theatre of Shanghai. Well-known for donation towards flood relief and other charitable causes. Huang was decorated by the Chinese Government, for generous contributions.

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Chiang's connection with the Qing Bang.<sup>27</sup> However, another account tells that Yu Qiaqing 虞洽卿<sup>28</sup>, member of the Ningbo Bang, introduced Chiang Kaishek to Huang Jinrong.<sup>29</sup> Which of the two men actually introduced Chiang to the Qing Bang boss has not been established, but both sources agree that Chiang's connection with the Qing Bang dates from that moment. However, according to Pichon Loh, it was during the period of the 1911 Revolution and its aftermath that Chiang Kaishek developed relations with the Qing Bang bosses in Shanghai.<sup>30</sup>

In any case, Chiang's entry into the world of finance in Shanghai was of political importance to the Guomindang, since Sun was desperately trying to gather financial support for a new wave of revolutionary activity. At the time, he was concentrating most of his efforts on Japan, where an unnamed political organisation provided him with funds which were actually spent on helping to found the Shanghai Stock Exchange Corporation. The conclusion appears to be that the Guomindang was acting as a secret conduit for

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<sup>27</sup> Yokoyama Hironori, "Shokaiseki to Shanghai koeki jo", (Chiang Kaishek and Shanghai Stock Exchange Corporation), *Chugoku kenkyu geppo*, 1, 1992, p.17. See also, Wang Fumin, *Chiang Kaishek sheng ping*, p.32.

<sup>28</sup> During the 1911 Revolution Yu Qiaqing had provided major military support for the revolutionary forces in Shanghai. He had also promoted the rise of Chiang Kaishek and participated in the anti-Japanese boycotts of the 1930s, as well as having close contacts with all the leaders of the Qing Bang. He was known as a business leader and public welfare worker, born in Ningbo, Zhejiang, 1865. Entered business in Shanghai at an early age, and became managing director of the Sanpe Steam Navigation Company, the Shanghai Chinese Produce Exchange and several other companies in Shanghai. Was elected president of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai 1925, and co-director of Shanghai-Wusung Special Administrative Area 1925. Chairman of the Chinese Ratepayers Association in Shanghai 1926, and elected Chinese councillor of the Shanghai Municipal Council 1929.

<sup>29</sup> Yokoyama Hironori, p.19, see his footnote 19.

<sup>30</sup> Pichon P.Y. Loh, *The Early Chiang Kaishek: A Study of His Personality and Politics, 1887-1924*. New York: Colombia University Press, 1971, p.26. Chiang Kaishek followed the example of his mentor Chen Qimei and also developed relations with the Qing Bang bosses in Shanghai. These links date from the time Chiang commanded one of Chen Qimei's "Dare -to-Die" Corps, which was sent from Shanghai to assist in the liberation of Hangzhou. See also Rankin. pp.214-217.

Japanese capital to penetrate Shanghai, and that it expected to reap the benefits when profits began to accrue to the Shanghai Stock Exchange Corporation.

Chiang's business activities in Shanghai lasted until 1922, and his relationship with the Qing Bang and the Shanghai business world continued to grow closer. Qing Bang appointees such as Du Yuesheng, who became manager, and Yu Qiaqing, who became chairman, began to fill senior posts in the organisation. Chiang rose along with them, becoming a middle-level manager.<sup>31</sup>

After Chiang became Guomindang leader, he continued to cultivate his links with the Qing Bang. He was thus a man who took on many different roles, and presented different faces to different people. To the students of the Whampoa Military Academy he was “Dean”, to the people of Zhejiang Province, he was “Chairman”, to the Bang, he was the “Big Dragon Head”, and to the ordinary people, he was a “New Emperor.”<sup>32</sup>

#### **D. Connections Between the Guomindang and the Qing Bang**

Many highly-placed members of the Guomindang elite were members of the Qing Bang.<sup>33</sup> Among these were (warlord) generals such as Li Jinglin 李景林,<sup>34</sup> and Zhang Zhijiang 張之江<sup>35</sup> who was a close supporter of Chiang

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<sup>31</sup> Yokoyama Hironori, p.22 ; see his footnote 36, Wei Baizheng. “Shanghai zheng quan wu pin jiao yi suo yu Chiang Kaishek” (Shanghai Stock Exchange and Chiang Kaishek).

<sup>32</sup> Yokoyama Hironori, p.19 ; Li Ao, *Chiang Kaishek yan jiu* (The Research of Chiang Kaishek), vol.3, p.294.

<sup>33</sup> Ch'en Yung-fa, “The Wartime Communists and Their Local Rivals: Bandits and Secret Societies,” in *Selected Papers from the Centre for Far Eastern Studies*, no. 3, 1978-79, p.20.

<sup>34</sup> Born in Zhili, in 1884, attended the middle school of Zhili province and later the Baoding Military College, entered the military service in 1900 and soon rose to the rank of major. Li joined the Nationalist and was appointed pacification Commissioner for Zhili and Shandong provinces, retired for a while after the resignation of Chiang Kaishek, 1927; adviser to Zhang Xueliang, 1930.



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Kaishek; and politicians as Finance Minister Zhang Yinghua 張英華.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the Guomintang Ambassador to the USA, Dong Xianguang 董先光 [Hollington K. Tong]<sup>37</sup> and the leader of the Postal Workers' Union in Shanghai who was later the CCP Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, Chu Hsuchfan [Zhu Xuefan] 朱學範<sup>38</sup> were also members.

Of the Qing Bang bosses in Shanghai, Du Yuesheng was especially successful in expanding his network of power and influence. It was particularly through his new society, the *Hengshe* 恒社 (Endurance Club), founded in November 1932, that Du managed to incorporate important Guomintang politicians, military officials, industrialists and financiers into his organisation. The *Hengshe* was different from Du's Qing Bang, but formed an integral part of it. However, the members were neither admitted into the Qing Bang nor were not instructed in its secret language.<sup>39</sup>

The Qing Bang was the largest and most powerful secret society that had a relationship with the Guomintang. During the Nanjing period, the Qing Bang played an important role in securing the Guomintang's authority

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<sup>35</sup> Native of the Yanshan district of Zhili Province where he was born in 1881. After serving in various branches of the Army in the North, he was appointed Military Governor of the Chahar District and later Tupan of the Northwest Frontier force. Participating in the defence of the district to the north of Beijing against the Fengtian forces, following the withdrawal of Marshal Feng Yuxiang from Beijing. When Feng retired from the Guomintang and spent a year in Russia, Chiang Kaishek assumed command of the Guomintang and was largely responsible for the masterly retreat from Kalgan across Mongolia into Gansu and Shaanxi.

<sup>36</sup> Retired government officer, born in Zhili, in 1886, studied at the Tianjin Anglo Chinese College; received his advanced education in Manchester, England.

<sup>37</sup> Journalist, born in Ningbo, Zhejiang in 1887, studied at the Lowrie High School, Shanghai High School and the Anglo-Chinese College, Shanghai.

<sup>38</sup> Labour leader, born in Shanghai in 1905; Shanghai Law College, Chairman of the Shanghai General Labour Union, leader of the Shanghai Postal Workers' Union; Delegate to the National People's Congress.

<sup>39</sup> Brian G.Martin, *The Shanghai Green Gang: Politics and Organized Crime, 1919-1937*, California: University of California Press, 1996, pp.180-182.

in its main powerbase, the lower Yangtze valley. It is assumed that Chiang made his first contacts with members of the Qing Bang in 1911 during his stay in Shanghai.<sup>40</sup>

The relationships which he was to build up there were to stand him in good stead many years later, at a particularly critical time in his political career. The point at which Qing Bang assistance became vital to Chiang was in 1927, when the Northern Expedition had triumphantly swept up from Canton (Guangzhou), seizing Nanjing and going on to take Shanghai. In many areas through which the advancing Nationalists had passed, the workers and peasants had spontaneously risen ahead of them and the army arrived to find that the job of turning out the henchmen of the local warlord had already been done for them. The General Strike which was organised in Shanghai indicated to Chiang that he risked losing control of the revolution which he had just won, and he therefore sought to curb the power of the unions and of the Communists both inside and outside the Guomindang. The result of this was the Shanghai Massacre, which was managed operationally by the Qing Bang on Chiang's behalf.<sup>41</sup> It was the Qing Bang which mobilised armed strike-breakers to occupy the key points of the city, delivering it effectively into Chiang's complete control, and destroying in a few days the dangerous influence of the Communists within the party.

The Qing Bang members replaced Communist militants in the factories, where labourers working in the industries in the coastal cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin looked for protection and support against the foreign factory owners, mostly Japanese, who only exploited the Chinese workers. This protection and support could only effectively be found in an

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<sup>40</sup> Pichon P.Y. Loh, *The Early Chiang Kai-shek. A Study of his Personality and Politics, 1887-1924*, p.24.

<sup>41</sup> Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "Policing Modern Shanghai", *The China Quarterly*, September 1988, nr.115, p.418.

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organisation with the power of the Qing Bang, so the organisation grew rapidly.

The price which Chiang had to pay the Qing Bang for this timely intervention is not known, but it is certain that the Bang grew and prospered in the lower Yangtze region during the Nanjing period.

As a result of this *coup de main*, much has been made of the great debt that Chiang subsequently owed Du Yuesheng and the Green Gang. But although the Green Gang bosses were given military titles with the rank of major-general in May 1927, Du Yuesheng and Chiang Kaishek's interests were far from identical.<sup>42</sup>

In the core area of the Nationalist government in the 1920s and 1930s, the Qing Bang leaders effectively acted as intermediaries between the bankers and Nationalists of Chiang, and as a sort of control mechanism on the workhorse in the large industrial areas.

On the one hand, they took over many of China's largest industrial enterprises, while on the other, they continued to expand their empire of street rackets in the poorest areas of the cities. One hundred thousand rickshaw pullers paid a percentage of their meagre earnings into the hands of gangster owners.<sup>43</sup> The Qing Bang's men dominated official labour unions, intervening in every industrial dispute. Paradoxically, it is mostly through disagreements between the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang that the extent of their relationship with each other becomes clear. While they were co-operating, things ran smoothly and quietly, and it was only when disputes broke out that matters otherwise hidden came out into the open.

The relationship between the organisations was one which extended to all levels of the Guomintang, and was by no means confined to the personal

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<sup>42</sup> Wakeman, p.419, referring to his footnote 54; for an impressive list of Du's official titles, see Shanghai Shi Nianjian Weiyuanhui (comps), *Annual Mirror of Greater Shanghai*, p.X-25.

<sup>43</sup> Wakeman, p.419.

interests of the party leaders.<sup>44</sup> A good example of personal relationship is that of Du Yuesheng and Chiang Kaishek. Du was rewarded for his “service” to the Guomindang during the bloody coup against the Communists in 1927, with his appointment by Chiang as a nominal Councillor with the rank of Major-General.<sup>45</sup> Du was later appointed to leading positions in the world of banking in Shanghai, for example President of the Zhongwai Bank, and he also achieved a prominent position during an important reorganisation of Chinese newspapers.<sup>46</sup>

The Bang societies drew in bankers, businessmen, politicians and party officials and found them positions within their ranks. Moreover, most of the policemen and detectives of the French Concession and the International Settlement were members of the Qing Bang,<sup>47</sup> as were Chinese municipality military officers in the local garrison commander's headquarters, officers of the Bureau of Public Safety, minor politicians and Guomindang labour leaders. At the lowest level of society, the lumpen proletariat of the shanty towns both supported the Guomindang and mobilised at the behest of the Qing Bang.

The particular complexities and ambiguities of Shanghai lent themselves very well to the hegemony of the Qing Bang during the Nanjing period. Large parts of the city were outside direct Chinese jurisdiction, and therefore attracted commercial, criminal and political elements which sought

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<sup>44</sup> Jean Chesneaux, *Secret Societies in China in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1971, p.164.

<sup>45</sup> Brian G.Martin, “The Origins of the Green Gang and its Rise in Shanghai, 1850-1920,” p.85. The article shows a photograph of Du Yuesheng at the age of forty in the military uniform of Major-General.

<sup>46</sup> MAE, 529, “E” - Asie-Océanie, Direction des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, *Réorganisation de journaux Chinois*, Peking, 15 July, 1935.

<sup>47</sup> Brian G.Martin, “The Pact with the Devil”, in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Wen-hsin Yeh (eds.), *Shanghai Sojourners*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, pp.270-271.

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to make a base for themselves in an area beyond the reach of Chinese legal or military sanctions. Thus there was the Qing Bang “King” of the French Concession underworld, Du Yuesheng, who led activities ranging from labour agitation and intimidation to kidnapping and murder.<sup>48</sup> In other parts of Shanghai, the loose structure of interlocking webs of influence and authority which were collectively known as the Qing Bang extended into every corner of the city’s life.

The Qing Bang link was important to the Guomindang in enabling it to exercise authority in Shanghai and in the provinces. In the city, the Guomindang had difficulty controlling capitalists, many of whose banks, businesses and factories were located in the foreign concessions outside its jurisdiction. Where the Nanjing government could not venture, the Qing Bang could boldly go. Methods such as coercion, extortion and kidnapping were used to bring recalcitrant businessmen into line. At the same time, the remnants of the CCP continued, after 1927, to exert considerable influence on the labour unions. The Qing Bang was indispensable in working against this influence, particularly in the form of the armed combat force formed by the bosses out of Shanghai members to fight the CCP union, known as the *Zhonghua gongjinhui* 中華共進會 (China Reform Federation Society).<sup>49</sup>

Outside the city, the two most important Guomindang guerrilla forces in the Yangtze delta, the People's Self-Defence Army and the National Salvation Army of Loyalty and Righteousness, depended heavily on the Bang for recruits.<sup>50</sup> The Reserve Brigade of Suqian, Northern Jiangsu, was

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<sup>48</sup> PRO, FO 371/17142, xc 930, British Consulate General, 9 November, 1933. Extract from Shanghai Municipal Police report, 6 November 1933.

<sup>49</sup> Watanabe Jun, p.153. Professor Watanabe is currently lecturer of Modern Chinese History, Komazawa University in Tokyo, I visited him in August 1994 and Prof. Watanabe offered me an original copy of the article.

<sup>50</sup> Ch'en Yung-fa, p.26.

also formed primarily from Qing Bang members. Here the Guomindang appears to have been mobilising the enormous reserves of surplus manpower for its own political purposes. Furthermore, when the Guomindang expanded its direct control over the area to the north and south of the Yangtze, the relationship with the Qing Bang once more proved beneficial to both parties.<sup>51</sup>

As a result of Chiang's links with the Qing Bang, and of their ruthless methods of bringing both capital and labour under his authority in Shanghai, the Qing Bang's influence on the city and the Guomindang grew ever stronger. Criminal elements demanded rewards for their services, and this fuelled the mood of speculation and corruption which was already prevalent in Shanghai.

The large influx of rural migrants into the Shanghai in the first decades of the century, and the consequent increase in criminal activities, posed serious problems of social control for the municipal police authorities. Shanghai was divided into the Chinese City, the International Settlement and the French Concession, and each area had its own administrative, legal and police systems. There was little or no co-operation between the three separate authorities, or indeed between their civil administrations or judicial systems.

These conditions allowed Bang members to flourish. They could set themselves up in one jurisdiction and conduct armed robberies, kidnapping and narcotics deals in the other two. They could then safeguard themselves by bribing or infiltrating the police officials of each area. Indeed, Bang members formed the core of the Chinese detective squads in both the International Settlement and the French Concession. For example, the Chief of the Chinese Detective Squad of the Shanghai Municipal Police in the 1920s was Shen Xingshan 沈杏山, who was also leader of the Qing Bang

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<sup>51</sup> NIDS, S15 - 4/99, *Shina no himitsu seiryoku seibo, kobo*. (The use of the secret power of the Qing Bang and Hong Bang in China), Hatano budai, November 1938, no pagination.

organisation known as the Big Eight Mob (*Da ba gu dang* 大八股黨).<sup>52</sup> In the French Concession, the Chief of the Chinese Detective Squad was none other than Huang Jinrong. There also existed a significant community of interests between the French authorities and Du Yuesheng and his Qing Bang.<sup>53</sup>

After the occupation of Shanghai by the Japanese in November 1937, two sorts of anti-Japanese activities began: suburban guerrilla resistance movements and urban political terrorism. Both were, to some extent, organised by Dai Li who, after the war broke out in August, went to Shanghai and in co-operation with Qing Bang leader Du Yuesheng supervised the guerrilla activities in the Shanghai area.<sup>54</sup>

In 1937, some of Dai Li's closest associates were current or former policemen. These included Cai Jingjun 蔡勁軍 ex-Commissioner of Police, Ji Jianzhang 吉簡章, ex-Commander of the Peace Preservation Corps, and Wang Zhaohuai 王兆槐, ex-Chief of Intelligence of the Wusong-Shanghai Defence Headquarters. Furthermore, Yao Jianai 姚家鼐, former police inspector, was responsible for the setting-up of Blueshirts front labour unions in early 1937.<sup>55</sup>

### **E. Qing Bang Co-operation with the Japanese and the Communists**

Connections with the Qing Bang were not restricted to the Guomindang. For example, co-operation between provincial Qing Bang

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<sup>52</sup> Brian G.Martin, "The Origins of the Green Gang and its Rise in Shanghai, 1850-1920," p.84. See also, Paul Maurice, "The Ching Pang: A Chinese Secret Organisation", in *China Today*, 3-10, December 1937, p.188.

<sup>53</sup> This relationship is described in a study by Brian G.Martin, "The Relationship between the Green Gang and the Shanghai French Concession Authorities, 1925-1935", in Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Wen-hsin Yeh, (eds.), *Shanghai Sojourners*. pp.270, 285-287.

<sup>54</sup> Wakeman, *The Shanghai Badlands*, pp.18-19.

<sup>55</sup> NA, SMP, D 7657. General Tai Lieh [Dai Li] founder of the Chinese Blue Shirts Society. 24 April, 1939, by Tan Shao Ling.

societies and the Japanese during the war of resistance is well documented. After the war with Japan had started in 1937, co-operation between the Qing Bang and the Japanese - and also with the Communists - became obvious, especially in those provinces occupied by the Japanese. William T. Rowe attests to this relationship by writing: "In Hankou then we have the Qing Bang - or an organisation calling itself that - functioning openly during the occupation, not only recognised but also financially underwritten by the occupation authorities."<sup>56</sup> This co-operation may in some way be explained by the independence of the Bang societies. Their goal did not always parallel that of either Guomindang or "the authorities" in general. They were more concerned with protecting their people and saving their own interests.

The above findings of a relationship between the Qing Bang (and other secret societies) and the Japanese is confirmed by Ch'en Yung-fa 陳永發 [Chen Yongfa].<sup>57</sup> In the occupied areas the Japanese recruited the help of two secret societies, including the Qing Bang. Chang Yiqing [Zhang Yiqing], a Qing Bang leader from North China, whose tie with Japanese intelligence can be traced to before the war, was assigned responsibility by the Japanese for organising Qing Bang members in central China into pro-Japanese organisations. It certain that a certificate issued by these organisations was better than an ordinary citizenship card in dealing with the Japanese security personnel. As a result, many common people joined the Qing Bang just to obtain a membership certificate from the Japanese-sponsored Qing Bang organisation.<sup>58</sup> Along similar lines, Wang Jingwei also relied on various

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<sup>56</sup> William T. Rowe, "The Qing Bang and Collaboration under the Japanese, 1939-1945: Materials in the Wuhan Municipal Archives", in *Modern China: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol.8, nr.4, October 1982, pp.491-499.

<sup>57</sup> Ch'en Yung-fa, "The Wartime Communists and Their Local Rivals: Bandits and Secret Societies," in *Selected Papers from the Centre for Far Eastern Studies*, no.3, 1978, pp.28-29.

<sup>58</sup> Ch'en Yung-fa, pp.28-29.



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secret societies with these tendencies during his puppet regime under the Japanese.<sup>59</sup>

That the Communists, and extraordinarily also some Blueshirts, were co-operating with the Japanese during the wartime period in Shanghai is documented by Elizabeth J. Perry. She writes: “To be sure, the radicals were not without rivals during the wartime period. Wang Hao, the Blueshirt instigator of the 1936-37 strike collaborated with Japanese occupation forces. So did some Communist elements within the silk weavers’ movement.”<sup>60</sup>

### **5.2 The Period of Symbiosis - the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang**

By the time the Blueshirts were formed in 1932, close economic and political links had already existed between the Guomindang and the Qing Bang for more than five years. The Blueshirts emerged in a social and political environment in which such co-operation was more the norm than the exception. The Blueshirts thus became one more interest group in the complex web of competition and co-operation which regulated the relationships between the political, economic and social order of the provinces under Guomindang control and especially of the city of Shanghai.

During the first few years of their existence, the Blueshirts co-operated readily with the Qing Bang. This was because the Qing Bang provided them with two essential things - economic support and the means of harnessing the population of China to the Guomindang's increasingly corporatist political machine. Drug traffic and dealing were until then for the greater part a Qing Bang monopoly, however, the Blueshirts were trying to win their share at the cost of the Qing Bang. The Blueshirts initially used the Qing Bang to

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<sup>59</sup> Chesneaux, pp.184-186.

<sup>60</sup> Elizabeth J.Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993, pp.208-209.

suppress people, but finally stepped in themselves as drug dealers. An example of this practice is the close co-operation between the Qing Bang and the Blueshirts in Hankou as described in a report of the British Consul General in Tianjin:

The first working of this gang in Hankow [Hankou] occurred last spring when the Nisshin Kisen Kaisha compradore was shot for dealing with the Japanese.... But, although it is not known how many shared the same fate, the names of those who are known make it difficult to ignore the surmise that these terroristic acts were not inspired by anti-Japanese motives but were in reality an endeavour to break the power of the opium clique whereby the traffic in opium might become a "Chiang" monopoly. Having accomplished their objective in Hankow, the "Ch'ing Pang"[Qing Bang] are reported to have moved up-river. By this time a second body of Blueshirts had been trained and they were sent to Hankow, to take over.<sup>61</sup>

For their part the Qing Bang bosses were aware of the political power represented by the Blueshirts and tried to take advantage of this situation. Throughout the Nanjing period, the Qing Bang continued to practice its oldest pastime of smuggling. It controlled the flow of arms, opium and other high-value commodities into the city of Shanghai and other areas in its sphere of influence, and grew very wealthy on the proceeds. Of all their activities, opium was of central importance in the relationship of the Qing Bang bosses with the Guomindang regime, just as it had been in their relations with the warlord regimes.<sup>62</sup> The Guomindang was almost permanently in financial crisis, and was never able to raise enough money from taxation to support its military expansion and the Bolshevik Extermination Campaigns against the Chinese Soviet Republic. The revenue from the Yangtze black market was therefore the only source of money readily available to it, and the symbiosis between the Party and the Qing

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<sup>61</sup> PRO, FO 371/18088 xc 1697, *Blueshirt Activities: summary of Hankow position*, very confidential, pp.162-165. British Consulate General, 11 December 1933.

<sup>62</sup> Brian G.Martin, *The Shanghai Green Gang: Politics and Organized Crime, 1919-1937*, p.134.

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Bang was in large measure a means of securing a steady creaming-off of funds from illegal trading into party coffers.

Although the most profitable item of illegal trade was opium, from the beginning of the Nanjing period in 1927, the official policy of the Guomindang had been to eradicate opium consumption as quickly as possible. All trade became the legal responsibility of the Opium Monopoly Bureau, and all opium addicts were supposed to register with the bureau. This policy was in fact less an attempt to eradicate opium than to monopolise it, so that the profits could be split between the Guomindang and the Qing Bang. When Zhang Xiaolin 張嘯林 was appointed head of the Opium Monopoly Bureau, he immediately subcontracted a private company run by Qing Bang leaders to handle the monopoly sales.<sup>63</sup>

An illustration of the close co-operation which prevailed between the Guomindang and the Qing Bang was the so-called “Teapot Dome Scandal.” In 1928, a steamer en route from Hankou to Shanghai was stopped and searched by the police from the Municipality of Greater Shanghai, who discovered that it was carrying opium on the orders of the Wusong-Shanghai garrison commander Xiong Shihui. The Mayor of Chinese Shanghai Zhang Dingfan, who had been informed about the dispatch of this consignment, decided to take the opportunity presented by the incident to settle accounts with his political rival, Xiong Shihui. He informed the government in Nanjing and accused Xiong of having violated the government’s anti-opium regulations, making sure that the Shanghai newspapers covered the news extensively. The case compromised the government to such an extent that a special commission, headed by Zhang Zhijiang, a follower of Chiang and Chairman of the National Opium Suppression Committee, was arranged to investigate the affair. The committee’s report only blamed a few scapegoats,

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<sup>63</sup> Parks M. Coble, *The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937*, p.38.

but ignored the wider circumstances of the question. This incited the anger of Zhang Dingfan who resigned as Mayor of Chinese Shanghai.<sup>64</sup> This opium scandal was a serious matter both for Chiang Kaishek and also for the Qing Bang. Their active participation in the distribution of the disputed opium consignment was given exaggerated attention in the press, and they feared that it would undermine their relations with key political and military figures in Shanghai as well as in Nanjing. Therefore, the Qing Bang bosses themselves also joined in the general disapproval of the scandal and the demands for sentences for those involved.

The Qing Bang and the Guomindang were not alone in smuggling opium. After their invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the Japanese increasingly developed activities in opium and heroin manufacturing and smuggling in the areas under their control. This was done under Japanese military protection. These activities brought them into conflict with the Qing Bang and with the Blueshirts. Reported by a Japanese source was that the morphine business increased also. Morphine arrived in Shanghai and Talian via Kobe.<sup>65</sup> Also Japanese pharmaceutical companies got involved into the production of morphine in Japan, companies as *Hoshi seiyaku*, *Dai nippon seiyaku* and *Sanko seiyaku* are mentioned.<sup>66</sup> The morphine was transported to China and there sold. However, the Japanese produced the heroin mainly in Manchuria and North China, as heroin was easy to manufacture even in small factories. The areas and production sites were protected by the Japanese Army. A correspondent of the North China Daily News in Tokyo gives a report written

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<sup>64</sup> FOH, 1601, Opium Combat in China, A-dossiers 1919-1940, 6 December 1928, Peking, *Opium schandaal te Shanghai*, Afd. V.Z. nr. 40058.

<sup>65</sup> Eguchi Keiichi (ed.), *Ni Chu sensoki ahen seisaku*, (The Opium Police During the Sino-Japanese War), Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1985. As stated by Iwamura Seiin, former officer of the Japanese Embassy in China.

<sup>66</sup> Eguchi Keiichi.

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by a friend who made journey through Manchuria in 1933.<sup>67</sup> This friend observed ; “not only in provinces like Yunnan and Sichuan, but also in the North areas as Jehol and Manchuria planting and smuggling of opium has increased the last years. In Manchuria this friend reports there are “fields and fields full of poppy.”<sup>68</sup>

This smuggling by the Japanese in north China was of course used by the anti-Japanese salvationist groups for strong criticism on the Guomintang government. During 1936 the relationship between China and Japan seemed to have reached the point for a general collapse, although Chiang Kaishek tried everything to delay war with Japan.

In 1933, a correspondent of the *Journal de Shanghai* noted that opium was freely available in Shanghai, and that in order to circumvent the law, it was sold under the guise of a “pharmaceutical paste.” The correspondent noted the “pharmaceutical” boxes, bearing seals with the inscription “special taxes from Jiangu province.” This semi-official co-operation between the Guomintang and the Qing Bang certainly cost a great deal to the dealers and vendors of opium, and the money which accrued to the Guomintang was largely used to meet the cost of the anti-Communist campaigns.<sup>69</sup> The amount of money earned from the opium trade was substantial, and also the Blueshirts got their share, for example the financial contributions Chiang made to them amounted monthly 60,000 yuan from the special opium tax.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> FOH, A-dossiers 1919-1940, box 1601, January 1934, nr. 374/49 (4158), *Opium Combat in China*.

<sup>68</sup> *North China Daily News*, 15 November, 1934 “Opium Traffic in North China, Chinese Delegates’ Charges against Japanese.” The delegates declared that enormous quantities of opium were being brought from Jehol and were sold in the vicinity of Tianjin.

<sup>69</sup> FOH, A194/241, 15 July 1933, and 10 October 1933.

<sup>70</sup> TB, 2057, p.68.

An example of suspected co-operation between the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang took place in October 1932. A Bang led by Wang Degui 王得貴, Xiao Hubei 小湖北 and Lin Fa 林發 seized a consignment of opium which was being landed. It appears that the Shanghai Municipal Police colluded in the raid in return for a small share of the opium. Notably, the consignment of opium was received on the jetty by a Chinese man wearing a blue uniform, and the driver of the getaway van was told when to drive off by another man, similarly dressed.<sup>71</sup>

The Blueshirts' role in the relationship between the Party and the Bang was important,<sup>72</sup> since they were able to use armed force to assist the Qing Bang in destroying any rival Bangs which attempted to break the monopoly, and since they were the Guomindang's primary political vehicle for suppressing Communism. They were thus at one and the same time the party's means of securing its share of the opium profits, and the party organ to which a very high proportion of those profits was devoted.

The co-operation in smuggling and racketeering was often indistinguishable from related political activities. The Bang warfare between rival opium traders in Shanghai was ferocious, and the gang members were frequently involved in political assassinations as well as in attempts on the life of their underground rivals. For example, Wang Yaqiao, a native of Anhui, shot and killed Xu Guoliang 徐國梁, Chief of the Wusong-Shanghai Constabulary in 1924.<sup>73</sup> This murder was the result of a dispute between the military forces of Zhejiang and Jiangsu about the sale of opium - a dispute which grew so serious that the two armies were at war with each other. At the

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<sup>71</sup> NA, SMP, file nr. unknown, 29 October 1932, "Opium Robbery at North Honan Road, Soochow, by superintendent Quale."

<sup>72</sup> PRO, FO, 371/17142, xc 930, (434).

<sup>73</sup> NA, SMP, D7667, S2. 11 December 1937.

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time, Wang Yaqiao was a small-time gangster, engaged mostly in kidnapping and armed robbery, but in 1926 he came to the fore once again in connection with the activities of the Labour Union in the Western Districts.<sup>74</sup> As described in the previous chapter, Wang Yaqiao was also connected with the attempt on the life of Wang Jingwei. His accomplice in this murder attempt was Zhang Yuhua 張玉華, who also confessed to being involved in the Nakayama Incident.<sup>75</sup> Another perpetrator mentioned in this attempt on Wang Jingwei's life and the Nakayama incident was Yang Wendao, who had strong Blueshirt connections.<sup>76</sup> Yang was the chairman of a mutual aid association affiliated to the Hongmen Triad, an anti-Japanese secret society based in Shanghai in the 1930s. Chiang Kaishek personally intervened on Yang's behalf when he was arrested on suspicion of murdering the Japanese military officer Nakayama. Despite being released by the police, thanks partly due to a campaign in the press, Yang's position within the military was a powerful one. This worried Chiang, who attempted to arrest Yang on some charge or another. Wise to this, Yang effected his escape to Hong Kong.<sup>77</sup>

This close interweaving of underworld and political activities led to a blurring of distinctions in many foreign reports between the Blueshirts, who were primarily and explicitly a political organisation, and the Qing Bang, who were not. The violent attacks which the Blueshirts mounted on their political enemies were not always easily distinguishable from gangland

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<sup>74</sup> Wang Yaqiao (Wong Yahjao), is also mentioned by Brian G.Martin, in his essay, "The Origins of the Green Gang and its rise in Shanghai, 1850-1920"; Wang Yaqiao, a Green Gang member and a professional assassin, was Shanghai's equivalent of "Murder" Inc.

<sup>75</sup> TB, 7556, *Shina himitsu kessha no shin josei ; Konichi terou tsushin toshite miru*, (The Chinese Secret Society's New Circumstances, and terrorism against the Japanese), p.34; The Nakayama Incident in November 1935 surrounded the murderer of a Japanese first class marine in Shanghai. The man accused of having been the murderer was Yang Wendao, who was said to have had connections with the Eighteen Route Army and the Blueshirts.

<sup>76</sup> TB, 7556, p.34.

<sup>77</sup> TB, 7556, p.48.

murders - nor did the Blueshirts wish them to be. Foreign commentators therefore sometimes tended to mistake the Blueshirts for no more than another “gang” or secret society - as a sort of Mafia rather than as a Fascist organisation.<sup>78</sup>

The relationship between the Qing Bang and the Blueshirts seems to have lasted as long as the Blueshirts were an organised force in the Guomindang. While the Blueshirts ceased to exist as an organisation in 1938, the fate of the Qing Bang after the Nanjing period is rather more difficult to fathom out, although a number of contributing factors may be suggested. The first and most obvious of these is that with the move of the capital upriver first to Wuhan and then to Chongqing, the Guomindang moved away from the area in which the Qing Bang had its traditional powerbase.

Secondly, the extremities and deprivation of the war period ruined the industrial base of the lower Yangtze, depriving the Gang of their lucrative base of extortion and racketeering.

Thirdly, with millions of people fleeing west as refugees, many others killed or taken prisoner, it appears that the personal networks on which Qing Bang authority were built up were undermined or broken. Lastly, The United Front which the Guomindang was obliged to form with the Communists in 1937 may have made the previous level of co-operation between the party and the Bang impossible.

What is clear is that the Qing Bang never succeeded in wielding the same kind of influence over Chinese politics as it did in the Nanjing period. Nonetheless, there are many examples of co-operation between other “gangs” and the Blueshirts. In Suqian, Jiangsu province, for example, Liu Shanchen, a Blueshirts member and leader of the Qing Bang, had control over about

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<sup>78</sup> PRO, FO, 371/18088 xc 1697, (162-164).



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10,000 members of Big Swords and Small Swords Societies.<sup>79</sup> In central and north China, a number of the *Zaijiali* 在家里 or At-home societies had both strong connections with the Qing Bang and also good relations with the Blueshirts. The Blueshirts, when expanding their activities to Manchuria used frequently the local *Zaijiali* members.<sup>80</sup> The origins of the At-home societies can be traced back to the *Gelaohui* 哥老會, itself a branch of the *Tiandihui* 天地會 (Heaven and Earth Society). The *Gelaohui* was established in the early Qing dynasty. An association of handicraft workers, farmers, ex-soldiers and vagrants, the *Gelaohui* was primarily an anti-Manchu organisation. The aims of the At-home societies were much broader than this, but their main base remained in Manchuria. By 1932 the *Zaijiali* wielded a great deal of power in Manchuria, as in the course of their existence many upper class Chinese had joined it. For example, politicians, governors, military men, but also political refugees coming from other parts of China.

Frederic Wakeman has shown how co-operation between the SMP and the Blueshirts was conducted through Qing Bang influence.<sup>81</sup> Both the SMP and the French Concession Police (FCP) routinely exchanged daily and weekly intelligence reports, which were sometimes also shared with the British, French and American consuls, as well as the offices of the national capital. The Chinese Detective Squad within the SMP, which was composed mainly of Zhejiang and Jiangsu natives who could understand the Shanghai dialect and deal with local criminals, had regular connections with the FCP and the Public Security Bureau of the Chinese municipality. Such

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<sup>79</sup> Ch'en Yung-fa, p.28.

<sup>80</sup> TB, 5090, *Manshu oyobi shina ni okeru chika himitsu dantai ni tsuite* (Secret Groups in Manchuria and China), pp.192-193.

<sup>81</sup> Frederic Wakeman jr., "Policing Modern Shanghai", *The China Quarterly*, September 1988, nr.115, pp.436-437.

connections naturally led to fears over security leaks, especially as these connections were also linked to Chinese gangs and syndicates.

The Public Security Bureau had been infiltrated by Blueshirts from 1932, primarily through Dai Li's secret police. Indeed, Dai Li's men assumed command of the Special Service Group (*tewuchu* 特務處) in 1934 with relative ease. Dai Li's attempts at buying over Chinese police in the International Settlement were, however, largely unsuccessful. Owing to the vigilance of British Intelligence and the Chinese superintendents in the Special Branch, Dai Li never gained control of the SMP detectives. Nonetheless, this did not prevent Dai from using Qing Bang connections to develop contacts within the SMP. The FCP was a much easier organisation for Dai's agents to infiltrate. This was because the detective squad was controlled by the Qing Bang, and Dai was therefore able to receive all the necessary assistance from Du Yuesheng.

A co-operation between members of Du Yuesheng's own secret society, the *Hengshe*,<sup>82</sup> emerged in 1937 after the Sino-Japanese War had begun. Du ordered members of his society, who were working in military hospitals as first-aid helpers, to join the anti-Japanese movement. In exchange, Du promised them positions as soldiers at Xinchangzhen 新場鎮, and Nanhuixian 南匯縣. This is believed to have been the start of a closer co-operation between Du Yuesheng and the BIS (Military Bureau of Investigations and Statistics of the Military Council).<sup>83</sup>

In relation to this, in 1937 Du founded the *Sujiang* 蘇江 (江蘇, 浙江) *Xingdong weiyuanhui* 行動委員會 (Action Council), which acted as a Qing

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<sup>82</sup> Watanabe Jun, p.153.

<sup>83</sup> Zhou Yumin, Shao Yong, *Zhonguo banghui shi* (The History of the Chinese Secret Society), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, p.630.

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Bang organisation within the BIS.<sup>84</sup> This organisation within the BIS was supported by the *Zhengchengshe* 正誠社, an organisation founded in early 1910 in Shanghai by *Paoge* 袍哥, a Sichuan secret society affiliated to the *Gelaohui*. However, the foreman of the *Paoge*, Bai Zihou 白子侯, was seriously ill before the start of the Sino-Japanese War and was therefore replaced by Zhou Xunyu 周迅予, a member of the BIS and also a *tewu*.

### A. Qing Bang Labour Unions

In examining political co-operation between the Qing Bang and the Guomindang it is important to bear in mind what Chiang Kaishek's objectives were. He had adopted Sun's idea of state-initiated and state-controlled industrialisation as the best way to achieve equitable growth, and to avoid the class conflicts which had beset industrialisation in Europe and North America.<sup>85</sup> This idea was strongly nationalist and strongly corporatist. It actively sought to prevent the formation of class distinctions in society.

The rapid industrialisation of parts of China posed major problems of social control for the Guomindang regime. As peasants came in off the land or the urban poor were drawn into the new factories, an industrial working class was in the process of being created. In this, China was sharing the same experience as all other countries undergoing industrialisation. In China, however, as most of the early capitalists and factory owners were foreign, there was a distinct Chinese working class before there was a Chinese bourgeoisie similar to those which existed in the advanced capitalist countries. In the throes of intense and disruptive social transformations, the

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<sup>84</sup> Zhou Yumin, Shao Yong, p.631. *Paoge* : Member of a reactionary gang in Southwest China, before liberation.

<sup>85</sup> Tim Wright, "The Nationalist State and the Regulation of the Chinese Industry in the Nanjing Decade", in David Pong and Edmund S.K.Fung (eds.), *Ideal and Reality, Social and Political Change in Modern China, 1860-1949*, New York: University Press of America, 1985, pp.128-129.

Chinese industrial workers faced their foreign bosses alone, without any distinct leadership. Chinese industrial workers were thus at the forefront of the nationalist conflict, and could therefore be radicalised fairly easily.

Ready to exploit this radical potential was the CCP, which had a distinct advantage over its Western counterparts. Whereas Communism had emerged as a political force in the West as a product of industrialisation, in China, it was present as a political force from the very beginning of the industrialisation process. The Communists were at work from the moment they joined the Guomindang in 1924 to the massacre of 1927, trying to increase working-class militancy, and to build trade unions in the coastal cities, demanding the right to determine China's own destiny, and ultimately, to split the Guomindang itself along class lines.<sup>86</sup>

In order to put his national-corporatist programme into effect therefore, Chiang had to maintain the strictest control over the working population of the provinces and Shanghai, because as in any country which faces the immediate task of economic development, the problem of labour control was a crucial one.

The general strike in Shanghai of 30 May 1925 in protest against the shooting of nine Chinese by the foreign police paralysed the city. This was followed by the dramatic events of March 1927 known as the Shanghai Massacre. Shanghai workers seized the city in a combined general strike and armed insurrection, and delivered the commercial and industrial metropolis to Chiang's army. After that Chiang then felt strong enough to dispense with and dispose of the Communists and their allies, and turned his guns with Qing Bang help against the labour movement.<sup>87</sup> Thereafter any signs of

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<sup>86</sup> Tejima Hiroshi, p.9.

<sup>87</sup> Walter E.Gourlay, "Yellow Unionism in Shanghai: A Study of KMT Technique in Labor Control, 1927-1937", in *Papers on China*, vol.7, from the Regional Studies Seminars, Harvard University, May 1951, p.104.

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resurgent Communist activity were eradicated as soon as they appeared. The Guomindang had justified its reorganisation by the relevant charge that the workers had been used in the past by the Communists to further the plans of Moscow.

The techniques adopted by Chiang to solve labour uprisings seemed remarkably similar to those used by Mussolini in 1922. The system Mussolini used for ending labour conflicts had at that time been discussed at length and commented upon favourably in Western countries such as England and the United States, and Chiang was without doubt familiar with the story. One of the points of Mussolini's five-fold programme was the "Reorganisation" of the unions by means of attacks by his Black Shirts against union headquarters involving the murder of leading union officials.<sup>88</sup> Chiang then had a willing and capable ally in the Qing Bang whose membership has been estimated at anywhere from 20,000 to 100,000.

The Qing Bang was a pre-capitalist form of organisation, which drew in members from all social classes. It controlled large sections of especially the Shanghai labour force directly or indirectly, and it represented the easiest way of securing the loyalty of the workers to the Party. It was, paradoxically, both a remnant of the old feudal China, and an embryonic corporatist organisation typical of 20th century Fascism. The struggle to control and mobilise industrial labour in Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s thus took the form of a battle for power between the class-militant CCP and the cross-class Qing Bang. Since Du Yuesheng had an implacable hatred of the Japanese, Qing Bang-organised labour took as much of a leading role in the anti-Japanese boycotts of 1928, 1931 and 1932 as did the Communist-led sections.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Gourlay, pp.105-106.

<sup>89</sup> Jordan, p.32.

In the 1930s the Blueshirts were the political shock-troops whose mission was to maintain this control and suppress this subversion, but they would have found it difficult to carry this out had they not been able to work within and alongside the Qing Bang. The Blueshirts entered labour politics in 1932 in a climate of extreme hostility to foreigners, especially the Japanese, who had just invaded Manchuria and had attacked Shanghai in the beginning of 1932 in order to protect their own interests. The Blueshirts set about harnessing this hostility to a Guomindang political agenda. They laid plans for boycotts of Japanese textile factories, strikes, and the assassination of CCP leaders (a list of over 100 CCP targets was circulated to Blueshirt members). The Qing Bang was able to supply labourers from neighbouring provinces to the factories in Shanghai. The Blueshirts probably assisted in the selection of people with anti-Communist sympathies, so as to control the labourers. The Communist influence in the Shanghai factories declined, especially after 1932.

Chiang Kaishek had carefully guarded against labour revolts by assuring that union leadership would be safely in the hands of the Guomindang. In effect that meant that union posts had to be filled by appointments from above. In May 1931 twelve key people in the Guomindang government's Department of Communications, the Central Postal Administration and the Shanghai Post Office joined in May 1931 the Qing Bang and became followers of Du Yuesheng. The purpose according Zhu Xuefan's account, was "to use his membership in Du's Green Gang group to strengthen his own control over the Postal Workers' Union and to enhance his standing as a major figure in the Guomindang's trade union organisation."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Brian G. Martin, pp.167, 169. The key people named are Lu Jingshi, Zhu Xuefan, Zhang Kechang and nine others.

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As mentioned, Chiang Kaishek wanted to guard against labour revolts by assuring that union leadership would be safely in the hands of Guomintang, that is, preferentially Blueshirts representatives.<sup>91</sup> However, they unfortunately did not have many capable people of performing such a function. At this point the Qing Bang stepped in and assisted with favour in this task. With their help the Blueshirts exerted strong and far-reaching control over the workers. All the powerful workers in Shanghai were gang members or Blueshirts related. The programme of the Guomintang was intended to keep labour obliging as a political factor, and to promote harmony in industrial relations.<sup>92</sup> This goal was met for the greater part. There were strikes among the labourers, but most of these strikes originated in protests against pay cuts, lay-offs and so on. There were hardly any political strikes.

Elizabeth Perry has provided a description of the work of the Blueshirts in co-operation with the Qing Bang in the Shanghai unions during the period 1932-37.<sup>93</sup> She writes :

In West Shanghai, Wang Hao a member of the Peasant-Worker Section of the Shanghai Guomintang, established in January 1937 a District Three Silk Weavers' Union. Wang was a follower of Qing Bang labour leaders Lu Jingshi and Zhu Xuefan, who were in turn top lieutenants of Qing Bang chieftain Du. Wang was also a member of the Blueshirts. Since more than a few silk weavers in Shanghai had received training from the Blueshirts, Wang was able to draw on the connection to develop a following among the workers..... Wang's mission to organise the silk weavers was part of a concerted programme by his backstage bosses, Lu Jingshi and Zhu Xuefan, to develop a base among labour in preparation for the upcoming National Assembly elections.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Gourlay, p.120.

<sup>92</sup> Gourlay, p.121.

<sup>93</sup> Elizabeth J.Perry; "Strikes among Shanghai Silk Weavers." A contribution to Frederic Wakeman, Jr., Wen-hsin Yeh (eds.), *Shanghai Sojourners*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, pp.332-334.

<sup>94</sup> Perry, pp.332-334, *Yijiusanqi nian sichou da bagong*, (The great silk-weavers strike of 1937) 1982, in the Archives of the Shanghai Number Four Silk-Weaving factory, pp.1-2;

And as one silkweaver recalled:

We workers did not realise at that time that unions were part of a Guomindang plot to drum up mass votes for its National Assembly. All we knew was that organisation would give us strength. This fellow Wang, I understand, was a member of the Blueshirts. But he had a leftist demeanour and was really trusted by the workers, who saw that he ate plain noodles, rode a bicycle and lived in modest circumstances.<sup>95</sup>

As a result of such methods, by the end of the Nanjing period, the Blueshirts were in a position to exercise control over Shanghai in a direct way that was quite without precedent.

### **B. Conflict Between the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang**

The relationship between the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang was, however, far from being a simple matter of co-operation. As the Guomindang consolidated its authority over China, and as the Blueshirts grew stronger and more organised, the relationship was frequently interrupted by outbursts of violent conflict as the Blueshirts struggled to secure more power and influence for themselves in Shanghai and other parts of the country.

One of the first indications that the Guomindang was no longer always prepared to work through the Qing Bang, but was looking for ways to work around them, came in November 1934. Du Yuesheng learned that Chiang Kaishek, T. V. Soong<sup>96</sup> and Kong Xiangxi 孔祥熙<sup>97</sup> had bought a huge

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Zhang Yuezhen, interview transcript in the archives of the Shanghai Number Four Silk-Weaving Factory, 1982/10/4.

<sup>95</sup> Perry, pp.332-334.

<sup>96</sup> Government official, a native of Guangdong, born in Shanghai. Received his early education at St. John's University, Shanghai, following which he went to the US, and entered the Harvard University, graduating in 1915 with a BA. Later graduated from Columbia University with an MA. Upon returning to China in 1917, he joined the Coal and Iron Works Ltd., as secretary of the company. At the time of the organisation of the Nationalist government he served as Director of the Department of Commerce. In the fall of 1928 he



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amount of silver, which they intended to export secretly to Britain.<sup>98</sup> In order to find out exactly what was going on, and to disrupt the export by provoking internal jealousies, Du informed Shi Liangcai, editor of *Shenbao*. Chiang attempted to bribe Shi to keep quiet, but he unwisely refused, and was assassinated by the Blueshirts as a result.<sup>99</sup> Shi's murder occurred on a highway outside Shanghai.

The Shi assassination, however, involved a much broader dispute between the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang in Shanghai. The Blueshirts apparently tried to gain control of the labour movement and opium revenue from the Qing Bang. Starting in autumn 1934, encounters continuously developed at the Shanghai docks between members of the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang of Du Yuesheng. This, however, was just one side of the story. The Blueshirts were also anxious to extend their control into the news media and endeavoured to buy into the *Shenbao* and *Xinwenbao*. The editor of the *Shenbao*, Shi Liangcai, was encouraged by Du Yuesheng not to give in to the Blueshirts demands.<sup>100</sup>

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joined the Nanjing government as Minister of Finance and vice-president of the Execution Yuan.

<sup>97</sup> Business man and banker. Retired government official. Born into a prominent banking family in Daiguxian, Shanxi. The 75th direct descendant of Confucius. Following the Boxer Rebellion, he went to study in the US, where he became a follower of Sun Yatsen. Graduated from Oberlin College in 1906, and received his MA from Yale University in 1907. Became a member of the Central Political Council of the Guomindang.

<sup>98</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no soshiki to hanman koichi katsudo no jitsurei*, pp.30-31.

<sup>99</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no soshiki to hanman koichi katsudo no jitsurei*, pp.30-31.

<sup>100</sup> Coble, *Facing Japan*. p.216 with reference to his footnote 98. Shi Liangcai (a prominent Shanghai, newspaperman) director of the *Shen bao*, was murdered on 13 November 1934. See also, FOH, J1 nr. 3662/365, *Murder of Shi Liangcai*, Shanghai, 19 November. There is every reason to assume that political motives were the reason for Shi's murder, and that the Blueshirts were involved. See also, TB, 2196, *Ranisha no soshiki to han Man ko Nichi katsudo no jitsu rei*, pp.29-31.

The reason for Du's generously given protection was simply because the Qing Bang boss in Shanghai had aspirations to take over the newspapers himself, or at least to become influential in the newspaper business.<sup>101</sup> Despite Du's protection, however, Shi was murdered.

Political conflicts also arose as the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang competed to extend their influence further and further beyond the Yangtze valley.

It was found, however, that the grip obtained by the "Ch'ing Pang" [Qing Bang] had to be broken, or that there would be a danger of the Blue Shirts having little prestige left. This resulted in a round up and the execution of "terrorists" on the middle of the river in the summer. The "Ch'ing Pang were naturally furious, and as repercussions several Government police officials in Shanghai were shot, and the elaborate precautions for the safety of T.V. Soong on his return to China; both due to fear of revenge on their part.<sup>102</sup>

Although negotiations with the Qing Bang had started, the former perfect allegiance was never reached again. In fact, Chiang was trying to make Wuhan the principal Blueshirt stronghold.<sup>103</sup>

Moreover, in May 1932, the Blueshirts penetrated the Manchurian *Zailijiao* 在里教 organisation.<sup>104</sup> This group possessed a strong, though not openly-exercised political influence in Manchuria. Consequently, Blueshirts and *Zailijiao* members formed a committee and worked together.

In May 1934, however, the Qing Bang founded their Northern Branch in Manchuria, despite the efforts of the Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique to

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<sup>101</sup> MAE, "E", Asie-Océanie, nr.245, Box nr.529, pp.212-218, *Réorganisation de Journaux Chinois*.

<sup>102</sup> PRO, FO 371/18088 xc 1697, *Blueshirt Activities: summary of Hankow position*, very confidential, pp. 162-165. British Consulate General, 11 December 1933.

<sup>103</sup> PRO, FO 371/18088 xc 1697.

<sup>104</sup> *Zailijiao*: learn something 'inside', which means to become mentally strong, like monks. This group practised stoicism (asceticism), and was a very similar group to the *Zaijiali*, their members including governors, businessmen and farmers.

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block this initiative, for both were afraid that the Qing Bang would become too powerful. The Qing Bang leaders sent a special trained group to the Department of Manchuria Guidance, which created a slogan of five characters *Sha ren Manzhouren* 殺人滿洲人, which means “Kill The Manchurian.”<sup>105</sup>

The production and smuggling of drugs by the Japanese in Manchuria after 1932 only offered the prospect of greater profits to the winner of the conflict between the Qing Bang and the Blueshirts, thus prompting them to fight each other even harder. It may seem that the smuggling of drugs by the Japanese had nothing to do with the Blueshirts, but the influence it had on Blueshirts' activity in north China was significant.

Blueshirts branches were also formed in other provinces such as Shandong, Hebei, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Shaanxi and Charhar. In their efforts to establish cells in the provinces, the Blueshirts found often strong opposition from the various cliques or secret societies in the area.<sup>106</sup> The various gangs were of the opinion that the province should be governed by them.<sup>107</sup> However, the Guomindang and the gang units were frequently fighting side by side against the CCP. One such example is in the northern part of Sichuan province where the gang of Huang Qingyuan 黃清沅 worked together with Guomindang units to repel the Red Army successfully. Such co-operation was not always so natural. In March 1935 part of Huang Qingyuan's gang planned to found in the mountains in Huwei a separate society with the name *Huweishan lirenshe* 虎威山勵仁社 (the strictly enforce society ) with Chen Tianbao 陳天寶 as its president. Chen was

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<sup>105</sup> TB, 5090, p.17.

<sup>106</sup> NA, D4685, January 1935, *Expansion of the Organisation of the Blue Shirts Society*, Translation of the *Jiangnan Chenbao*, a Japanese newspaper in the Chinese language.

<sup>107</sup> Zhou Yumin, Shao Yong, pp.566-567.

looking for expansion of his power among the gangs. In the wake of this split, other gang members, like Liu Xian 劉先, Lai Huashan 賴華山, Luo Jinguang 羅金廣, Tang Dengcheng 唐登城, Xie Yongzhi 謝用之, Leng Kaitai 冷開泰 also formed a new society with the name *Jiao gong zi weituan* 剿共自衛團 the Voluntary Army to purge the CCP corps.

All in all the Guomintang army and its officials (and possibly Blueshirts members) were often mixed up in serious struggles with the gangs in Sichuan province. In 1935 Liu Xiang 劉湘, then chairman of Sichuan province, was even opposing the Gelaohui. This opposition went so far that in early 1937 an order by the Guomintang called for the practical and strict admonition rule for the Gelaohui in the thirteen provinces. People were warned - especially school teachers, members of the *Baojia* 保甲, technicians and all kind of rank and file people in departmental offices - that under no circumstances were they to become members of the Gelaohui. People who already were members were immediately to withdraw from the society.<sup>108</sup>

From the moment that the Guomintang established offices in the provinces, they mainly concentrated on anti-Communist activities. It was expected that the Bang societies would co-operate in these activities. This co-operation was at best patchy.

In 1930, Yang Qingsan 楊慶山 a core member of the Hongmen 洪門 became director of the Investigation section (*Zhenjichu* 偵緝處) in Hankou. The main responsibilities of this section were concerned with anti-Communist activities. The section arrested important CCP members such as You Sunxin 尤崇新 ; the CCP secretary in Wuhan. Their activities are comparable on many levels with the secret intelligence operations of the agents of Dai Li.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, in Hebei, the *Paoge*, under the leadership

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<sup>108</sup> Zhou Yumin, Shao Yong, pp.570-571.

<sup>109</sup> Zhou Yumin, Shao Yong, p.572.

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of Liu Huiqin 劉惠欽 and his subordinates, used its members for anti-Communist activities.

When Xian Tiewu 宣鐵吾 was appointed vice-chief of Zhejiang province in 1935 he ordered Weng Guanghui 翁光輝 in Hangzhou 杭州 to form among Qing Bang members a spy ring called the *Baojia zhentan xunlianban* 保甲偵探訓練班 (Baojia Espionage Training Class). After the men had been trained, they were to become active in anti-Communist activities in the province.

Their record of achievement was the investigation of the farmers' revolt in Yongkang 永康, Dongyang 東陽 and Chengxian 乘縣, and the killing of the revolt leader, who was a Communist member.<sup>110</sup>

That the Blueshirts developed activities in other large cities like Nanjing, Hankou and Guangzhou was clear from press dispatches.<sup>111</sup> For instance, it was reported that on 13 November 1933 "members of this [Blueshirts] society made their first début by staging mass meetings and raising riots, while they were distributing pamphlets, advocating Fascism and denouncing Communism."<sup>112</sup>

Around the beginning of 1933, a Blueshirts' branch was established, in Tianjin with Ren Tianmu 任天木 as chairman. It seems that Ren's group developed a relatively friendly co-operation with the Qing Bang in that area and within a short time the group had expanded into six groups.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Zhou Yumin, Shao Yong, p.575.

<sup>111</sup> Yen-Ying Lu, "Can China Become Fascist?", *The China Critic*, 14 June 1934, vol.2, no.24, pp.560- 564. Press dispatches cited in the article are from *Peking and Tientsin Times*, 7 August 1933, "Blue Clothes Society", from the *Hankow Herald*, 16 August 1933, "Blue Shirts Said at Work in Canton", and from the *Hankow Herald*, 10 September 1933. "Cantonese Obstructionists."

<sup>112</sup> "Chinese Fascists Come into the Open", *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury* 17 November 1933.

<sup>113</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru shiryō* (Materials on the Blueshirt Society), p.17.

Chiang Kaishek also expanded the Blueshirts' activities in various provinces.<sup>114</sup> This expansion was viewed, with considerable gravity by General Liu Wenhui of the semi-independent Sichuan province. Meanwhile, in Shandong, as a direct reaction to this, a Guomintang member, Zhang Weizong, was assassinated. Members of the Blueshirts had stealthily penetrated into the semi-independent provinces. The policy in Shandong, Hubei, Sichuan, Yunnan, Shansi, Charhar and other provinces was to form so-called "Guomintang Affairs Re-Organisation Committees." Blueshirts units were also established in order to carry out this policy. The new local members of the Blueshirts were sent to the various organisations in order to attempt to secure controlling power. The assassination of Zhang Weizong resulted from the local people discovering his real objective and uncovering the Blueshirts' policy. In Shanxi province the units of General Yan Xishan were also opposed to the Blueshirts and drove away the members directing the Committee. In Sichuan, Wu Guoguang, a prominent Blueshirts leader, established a general Headquarters which was opposed by various Cliques, among which may have been the Qing Bang.<sup>115</sup>

Reliable information reveals that Chiang Kaishek dispatched members of the Blueshirts to Beijing, Tianjin, Qingdao, Shanghai and other districts to keep watch on the attitude of Chinese officials and civilians towards Japan. The Commissioner of the Shanghai Bureau of Public Safety was usually appointed and recommended by Mayor Wu Dezhen. However, the practice was abolished following the appointment of Cai Jingjun, a follower of Chiang Kaishek, as commissioner of the Shanghai Public Safety Bureau. Cai's appointment was made by the National government without the

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<sup>114</sup> NA, D 4685, *Expansion of the Organisation of the Blue Shirt Society*, January 1935. A translation of the *Kiangnan Tsen Pao* (Jiangnan Chenbao), a Japanese newspaper in the Chinese language.

<sup>115</sup> NA, D 4685, January 1935. Translation from the (*Jiangnan chenbao*).

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recommendation of Mayor Wu Dezhen. General Cai was a prominent member of the Blueshirts. Similarly, Guan Jingling, a member of the Blueshirts, was appointed as Commissioner of the Bureau of Public Safety in Beijing.<sup>116</sup>

Political differences between the Qing Bang and the Blueshirts also arose around the question of dictatorship. Both the Blueshirts and their erstwhile allies the C.C Clique were enthusiastic supporters of the notion of a dictatorship, while the Qing Bang remained opposed to it. They feared that a dictatorship would be strong enough to dominate or crush them, and they were quite satisfied with the status quo. Pursuant to their political objectives, the C.C Clique and the Blueshirts began to look around for new allies, and in August 1936, they held a meeting in Shanghai with the leaders of the Hongmen Triad, which was part of the *Hong Bang* 紅幫 (Red Gang). This appears to have been an exploratory meeting to see whether the Hong Bang could be developed as a counterbalance to the ubiquitous influence of the Qing Bang, but there is no record of this meeting having been followed up.<sup>117</sup>

### 5.3 Conclusions

The relationship between the Blueshirts and the Qing Bang cannot be considered outside the already existing network of relations between the Guomindang, Chiang Kaishek and the Qing Bang. This relationship had been established by Sun Yatsen. Linking new political organisations with established Bang networks was one of the ways in which Sun sought to anchor reforms securely in the realities of everyday Chinese life.

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<sup>116</sup> NA, D 4685, 19 March 1935. Translation from the (*Jiangnan chenbao*).

<sup>117</sup> TB, 7556, p.34.

The co-operation of the Qing Bang with government authorities was not one restricted to the Guomindang. The relationship that existed in the late 1920s and early 1930s between the Qing Bang and the French Concession authorities in Shanghai is well-known. Although not as obvious as the community of interests that existed between the French and the Qing Bang, it is likely that the other foreign administrations may also used the Qing Bang. Despite the aversion of the Qing Bang leaders to the Japanese, there also existed a form of co-operation between them, especially in the provinces after 1937 during the war of resistance. This same thing can be said of the co-operation between the Qing Bang and the CCP.

During the 1920s Chiang Kaishek depended heavily on Qing Bang support in order to secure his power base in the lower Yangtze valley, and this dependence was at once necessary and irksome to him. Chiang Kaishek may have been aware that continuous co-operation with the Qing Bang, rooted in Chinese culture, would become a bothersome factor for the modernisation programme he envisaged.

By the early 1930s Chiang was secure enough to launch the Blueshirts as a political force, intending that they would be the means of extending and deepening his authority, and of establishing the kind of classless state-capitalist society which he envisioned.

The purpose of infiltrating was to subdue labour both politically and economically. There is no doubt that in the political sphere labour was subdued. Indeed, certain similarities exist between the policies of Chiang Kaishek and those of Mussolini. Yet so-called “yellow unionism”, as it developed in China, bore little resemblance to Fascist unionism as established in Italy. The difference is worth noting. Fascist unionism was both bureaucratic and dynamic. A conscious effort was made to educate, indoctrinate and orient labour to play a part in the new order of Fascism. Individual workers were constantly encouraged to become leaders of Fascist



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unions and a place was made for such leaders in the party hierarchy. Through these leaders the working class was directly linked to the State. Instead of being de-politicised, the workers were politicised in a very carefully controlled manner and thus the Party had the elements of a mass base in the factories. In contrast to this Chiang's solution was bureaucratic with nothing dynamic about it. Yellow unionism was controlled and administered with a minimum of labour participation. The leaders came from outside the ranks of labour- a situation unthinkable in Italy. It is also unthinkable that Mussolini would have permitted himself to share the control of the workers with a Qing Bang.<sup>118</sup>

For around two years, the Blueshirts worked relatively easily within the framework of existing Party-Qing Bang relations, but by 1934 it had become clear that their purpose was not to coexist with the Qing Bang, but to absorb it. The Qing Bang, commanded by Du Yuesheng, was strongly anti-Japanese, whereas the Blueshirts, especially after 1934, were fully committed to Chiang Kaishek and his appeasement policy.

In this sense, the Blueshirts may be considered the "Bang of the Party." They were supposed to defeat and subsume existing Bangs, secret societies, labour unions, cartels and smuggling rings within a single, party-directed organisation. Controlling Communists and labour organisations was of paramount concern to the Blueshirts. They would thus monopolise all sources of black-market income and take control over all forms of social organisation. They were to replace the feudal cross-class Bang organisations with the modern cross-class Fascist organisations.

Had the Guomindang's authority not disintegrated in Shanghai in 1937, it is possible that the Blueshirts might have achieved these goals at least in part. However, after only six years in existence, they were formally

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<sup>118</sup> Gourlay, pp.128-129. That Mussolini took harsh measures against the mafia is described by Duggan, pp.95-120.

closed down, and the Bang were able to reassert themselves during the days of chaos in which the Japanese took control of the Shanghai area and great parts of China. The Blueshirts were eventually the losers in their dispute with the Qing Bang.

## Chapter Six

### The Metamorphosis of the Blueshirts into the Youth Corps

The Blueshirts existed for only six and a half years, from March 1932 to June 1938. They were summarily disbanded when the Extraordinary Congress of the Guomindang, held at Wuchang in March 1938, ordered the abolition of all "small" intra-party organisations. This meant, at least implicitly, the end of the Blueshirts as a separate organisation. This was, however, never made explicit. At this congress Chiang Kaishek proposed the foundation of the *Sanminzhuyi qingnian tuan* 三民主義青年團 (Three Principles of the People's Youth Corps), envisioning it as subsuming all the competing youth factions within the Guomindang.

This Chapter examines the reasons why the Guomindang and Chiang Kaishek needed an all co-ordinating youth organisation at that particular time, and the relationship that existed between the establishment of this youth organisation and the dissolution of the Blueshirts. As there was not one sole reason for the disbandment of the Blueshirts, their dissolution may be related to other events: such as the Xi'an Incident, the United Front with the CCP, and the huge and frequent student demonstrations.

This Chapter attempts to unravel the mystery surrounding the sudden disappearance of the Blueshirts, and proposes that this probably occurred due to its complete integration within other groups. The reorganisation of the Blueshirts followed the Xi'an Incident at the end of 1936, which led the Guomindang to form a United Front with the CCP in 1937, shortly before the Japanese launched the war against China. It was almost certainly pressure from the CCP which then forced Chiang to consider the dissolution of the Blueshirts.

This Chapter also discusses the reasons for the formation of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps, formally inaugurated in July 1938 to succeed the Blueshirts. It considers to what extent the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps resembled the German Hitler Youth, as German documents reveal that the demand for material about the Hitler Youth by Guomindang leaders increased unmistakably after the proposed formation of the Youth Corps. Lastly, it discusses whether or not the disappearance of the Blueshirts meant the end of Chinese Fascism, or whether the ideology lived on in new organisations.

### **6.1 Apparent Disbandment of the Blueshirts**

By 1938 the disbandment of the Blueshirts was almost predictable. For upwards of four years Chiang Kaishek had worked tirelessly to overcome factional conflicts within the Blueshirt organisation and other Guomindang factions. However, these were, if anything, growing worse.

The optimism which had suffused the party after the success of the Northern Expedition soon evaporated, and the bitter struggles with the Communists and the Japanese opened up one rift after another in the makeshift coalitions of interests which held the Guomindang and its internal organisations together. Formed in part to take the Guomindang beyond these constant squabbles, the Blueshirts had ended up being not the solution, but part of the problem. Ultimately, these disputes, particularly those with the C.C.Clique, made the Blueshirts more trouble than they were worth to Chiang. The Xi'an Incident provided the occasion - or possibly the excuse - for beginning their liquidation.

**A. The Internal Struggle**

Long before the Xi'an Incident, it was clear that the Blueshirts were not meeting Chiang's original expectations. One of the reasons for this was that the endemic factionalism of Guomindang politics had spread into the Blueshirt organisation itself. As early as 1934, a leading member of the organisation wrote of his concern in a letter to his fellow member Liu Jianqun as follows:

Compared to the time when our organisation was initially formed, it has lost its power, and we have lost our confidence. We have no more dreams and hopes for the future. It is therefore necessary to revive the spirit we possessed, in order to revive the nation - unite for the Party and the country. Frankly speaking, the reason why the spirit of the *Lixingshe* now differs from the past is because some of our leading comrades have lost their warm and true friendship for each other. The leader [Chiang] has now gradually ceased to be in sympathy with the organisation.<sup>1</sup>

By the mid-1930s China was united, except for the Japanese occupied territories, but the Blueshirts' internal problems were never resolved and they were involved in increasingly fratricidal conflicts with the C.C. Clique. Towards the end of 1936, these struggles had made the Blueshirts largely ineffective, and the organisation had almost entirely lost its former ability to influence the party, government or army.<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, Blueshirt members lost much of their enthusiasm and devotion for their organisation. In addition, in the struggle for power and authority both in Shanghai and in certain rural areas, the Blueshirts clashed frequently with the Qing Bang. In these struggles, the Blueshirts were ultimately unable to gain the upper hand.

Furthermore, the Blueshirts' attempts to control and manipulate the important labour unions and student movements had not brought the results

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<sup>1</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, p.492. The content is actually nearly the same as that given in TB, 2057, pp.22-27; Chiang Kaishek's Instruction in Jiangxi, 1934, during the Blueshirts' second Plenary Meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Gan Guoxun, pp.9-10.

Chiang anticipated. Despite the Blueshirts' best efforts, the CCP was still winning wider and wider support among students, rank-and-file soldiers and nationalist youth. All these problems were leading Chiang to the conclusion that he needed a new organisation to take in hand the tasks which he had originally assigned to the Blueshirts.

### **B. Chiang Kaishek's Strategy towards Japan Before the Xi'an Incident**

In their political work, the Communists tried to mobilise the people around the slogan *Kang Ri* 抗日 (resisting the Japanese). For its part the Guomintang, and especially Chiang himself, always used the weaker term *Pai Ri* 排日 (reject the Japanese). The implicit meaning of these two expressions is quite different. Wang Jingwei, although a well-known supporter of pro-Japanese policy, once expressed himself similarly during his speech on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the Central Government, saying : "My posture to the Japanese is *Kang Ri* not *Pai Ri*."<sup>3</sup> Chiang, on the other hand, continued to use the weaker term *Pai Ri*. Therefore, even this slight difference in terminology indicates Chiang's placatory approach to Japan.<sup>4</sup>

In the face of Chiang's weaker line, the Communists were successfully inciting young people with the idea that the Guomintang dared not fight Japan. This was an important part of their ability to mobilise and organise young people around a programme of radical nationalism. The formation of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps was, in large measure, an attempt by the Guomintang to recapture the ground lost to the CCP in its mobilisation of

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<sup>3</sup> Speech Wang Jingwei made on 3 May, *Shunbao*, 4 May 1937.

<sup>4</sup> As was mentioned in Chapter Two, Sun and Chiang had strong Japanese connections, which may also in this case explains Chiang's attitude.

youth. Chiang's apparently weak line against the Japanese was also the reason for one of the most remarkable events in modern Chinese history - the Xi'an Incident.

### C. The Xi'an Incident

On 12 December 1936, Chiang was kidnapped from his temporary headquarters about fifteen miles from Xi'an. As soon as the leader was made prisoner, Zhang Xueliang<sup>5</sup> informed Zhou Enlai 周恩來 of Chiang's capture. Zhou in turn asked the Kremlin for advice on how to proceed, for many CCP members wanted to execute Chiang.

Recent information, however, reveals that actually Zhang Xueliang himself had given this instruction to Liu Guiwu 劉桂五.<sup>6</sup> The diary and letters of Liu Guiwu, which were in the possession of his daughter, brought to light that Zhang had ordered Liu to kill Chiang Kaishek on his arrival in Xi'an. Zhang had informed Liu that his order was of course top secret, but the execution had to be carried out no matter what. Three days later Zhang recalled his first order to Liu, saying that the situation had changed and Chiang's murder was not longer necessary. Zhang Xueliang explained that Chiang was of more value to them alive for Chiang must be persuaded to cooperate in order to fight against the Japanese.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Born in Liaoning, vice Commander-in-Chief of the National Army, Navy and Air Forces of China and Commander-in-Chief of the North-eastern Frontier Defence. Upon the outbreak of the 2nd Zhili-Fengtian War in 1924, he was promoted Commander of the 1st Fengtian Army and rendered exceptional services at the Great Wall.

<sup>6</sup> Liu, a military man from North China, was unfortunately killed in action during the Sino-Japanese War.

<sup>7</sup> *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 15 August 1995. Liu Guiwu's daughter used Liu's diary and letters to reveal this information to the Chinese newspaper, *Zhongguo funü bao* 中國婦女報 in August 1995. The Japanese *Nihon keizai shimbun* in turn took the information from this Chinese newspaper.

The Comintern also regarded Chiang as having a key role in achieving Chinese unity against Japan. A message from Moscow [Stalin] was sent stating that everything was to subordinate to winning Chiang over to a united front.<sup>8</sup> Stalin now considered the interests of the CCP of minor importance to those of the Comintern. Following consultations with Moscow, three CCP representatives came to Xi'an and had several meetings with Chiang during his imprisonment.<sup>9</sup> On one occasion, Zhou Enlai is said to have alluded to the fact that Chiang's son, Jiang (Chiang) Jingguo 蔣經國, was enjoying good treatment while staying in the USSR,<sup>10</sup> saying; "it is time to come back to China for your son, he has already stayed long enough in Russia [Jiang Jingguo had gone to Moscow in 1927], and I will help you to ask Moscow

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<sup>8</sup> Ishikawa Tadao, *Chugoku kyoosanto shi kenkyu*, (Study of the Chinese Communist Party), Tokyo: Keio tsusin, 1959, p.228. Zhang Guotao, a former CCP member, commented on the Xi'an Incident; During the Xi'an Incident Stalin sent a telegram to the CCP, that was discussed by top members of the CCP. Zhang Guotao became in 1938 a Guomindang member. He was in 1950 interviewed in Hong Kong by Robert C. North. See also Werner Meissner, *Philosophy and Politics in China; The Controversy over Dialectical Materialism in the 1930s*, London: Hurst & Co., 1986, pp.37-40.

<sup>9</sup> Nakanishi Tsutomu, Nishizato Tatsuo, *Chugoku kyoosanto minzoku toitsu sensei*, (The Nation's United Front of the Chinese Communists), Kyoto: Daiga tou, 1946, p.115. The three representatives were: Zhou Enlai, vice-president of the Military Council, Ye Jiangying, chief of staff of the Eastern Front Red Army, and Jin Pangxian, chairman of the Northwest Branch Soviet Government.

<sup>10</sup> Nishikawa Takeshi, *Shu Enlai no michi* (Zhou Enlai's Way), Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1976. See also, Tong Hollington Kong, *Sho Kaisheki* (Biography of Chiang Kaishek), translated into Japanese. p.557. Chiang's eldest son, Jiang Jingguo, was in Russia during the Xi'an Incident, and his second son, Jiang Weigu, received training by the Nazis in Germany, 1936-38; and, William W. Whitson, *The Chinese High Command A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927-71*, London: Macmillan, 1973, p.266. Jiang Jingguo studied at the Military and Political College in Leningrad, where his classmates included Fu Zhong, Li De and Xiao Qingguang; and also, W.C Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, p.180. The education Chiang urged his son, Weigu, was that of the German military, Chiang even risked the potential political embarrassment of having his son - in a German uniform - accompany the first German troops to invade Austria (March 1938) and participate in the occupation of the Sudetenland. See his footnote; Interview General Jiang Weigu, Taipei, 22 March, 1978.



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for his safe return." This hint may have been a factor in persuading Chiang to reach an accommodation with the Communists.<sup>11</sup>

The outcome of these talks appeared to be a very good bargain for the CCP and the material results of co-operation were not long in appearing. In January 1937, Chiang received a request to support the CCP's army financially. Chiang responded promising 200,000 or 300,000 yuan every month to be spent on military purposes.<sup>12</sup> In February the same year, Chiang stated that "the most important part of the unification is fulfilled not through formalities, but through the will and spirit to co-operate, and to practice in modesty the *Sanminzhuyi*, and not only to use it as 'Red' propaganda." The Communists declared in their turn that Sun Yatsen's *Sanminzhuyi* was the ideology that China needed in order to cope with Japanese Imperialism,<sup>13</sup> and proclaimed resistance to the end beside the Central Government.<sup>14</sup>

By far the greatest concession which the CCP managed to secure from Chiang at Xi'an concerned the Blueshirts. They had developed primarily as an anti-Communist force. It is no surprise therefore that one of the conditions

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<sup>11</sup> Qi Gaoru, *Jiang Jingguo de yi sheng* (Chiang Chingkuo's Lifetime), Taipei: Zhuanji wenxue zazhishe, 1991, pp.7-23. Jiang Jingguo left Moscow on 25 March 1937 and came back to China. He became in April 1937 a regular Guomindang member, then 28 years old. In 1938 he was appointed Head of the Youth Corps' Central Office. See also Parks M.Coble, *Facing Japan*, p.354. Zhang Guotao, in his memoirs, states that a reconciliation between the Guomindang and Chinese Communist Party would clear the way for a reunion between father and son, and Jiang Jingguo was permitted to leave Russia in March 1937.

<sup>12</sup> Yang Shubiao, p.313. In January 1937, Chiang received a telephone call from Ku Juitong on behalf of Zhou Enlai.

<sup>13</sup> Ch'ien Chungjui [Qian Junrui] et al.(ed.), *Jiuwang shouce* (Handbook of the Duties of the Citizen in the War of Resistance), Shenghuo shudian faxing, 1939. Actually for the first time edited 27 November 1937. The same information is to be found in the *Dagongbao* of 23 September 1937.

<sup>14</sup> From August 1937, participation in the Government was somewhat widened by the formation of the Supreme National Defence Council, with a 25-member Advisory Council composed of representatives from a number of political groups, including the CCP. In July 1938, this body was expanded and its name was changed to the People's Political Council (PPC).

laid down by the CCP negotiators at Xi'an for a United Front was the disbandment of the Blueshirts. The precise terms agreed regarding the disbandment were never made public, but implicit in these terms was the condition that the anti-Communist activities by the Blueshirts should be halted.

On 26 December 1936, the day following his release, Chiang broadcast a statement from Luoyang. He announced that although he had refused to sign the terms proposed, he would accept those which were beneficial for China and would carry out his promise. He professed "fidelity to promises, determination in deeds." A commentary on this declaration, made by Mao Zedong 毛澤東, contained the following:

Of Chiang's statement, one section is worthy of my admiration: *Fidelity in promises, determination in deeds...* We regard his order for withdrawal of his troops as evidence of his ability to observe with fidelity the following terms he promised to fulfil.<sup>15</sup>

The results were immediately noticeable. In January 1937 the Government suspended its Communist-suppression campaign,<sup>16</sup> and the Blueshirts' activities were thereafter to concentrate primarily on 'pro-Japanese Chinese elements.' As remarked by Edgar Snow: "The Special gendarmes of the Blueshirts continued their espionage on Communists, but kidnapping and torture ceased."<sup>17</sup> On 21 February 1937, the C.E.C. of the Guomindang adopted a resolution entitled "Eradication of the Red Menace"

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<sup>15</sup> Mao Tsetung, "Fidelity to promises", *China Today*, vol.3, nr. 6, March 1937, pp.69-70, written comment of Mao Zedong on a broadcast by Chiang. In addition the well-known six CCP demands were published in the newspaper.

<sup>16</sup> W.F.Elkins, "Fascism in China: The Blue Shirts Society 1932-37", *Science and Society*, Vol.XXXIII, 1969, p.433. See also Lyman Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends, The United Front in Chinese Communist History*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967, p.89; On 6 January, 1937, the Bandit Suppression Headquarters in Xi'an was quietly abolished.

<sup>17</sup> Snow, *Red Star Over China*, p.398.

(*Genchu hongse kongbu* 根除紅色恐怖), which despite its militant title, was in fact an offer to give the Communists a chance to make “a new start.”<sup>18</sup>

#### **D. The Challenge to the Blueshirts**

Several aspects of the Xi'an Incident had important consequences for the Blueshirts. In the first place, it created the first opportunity for the hatred which many Chinese felt for them to be expressed openly. These emotions were also noticed by W.F. Elkins, who writes "for the first time in China since the period of 1924-27, people were free to think as they pleased, and talk as they pleased."<sup>19</sup>

Prior to the Xi'an Incident there had been a substantial Blueshirt presence in the city. This was because a few months earlier some 1,500 of the Third Gendarmes had arrived in the city. This was a so-called special service regiment of the Blueshirts, commanded by Chiang's nephew, General Jiang Xiaoxian 蔣孝先, who was credited with the abduction, imprisonment, and killing of hundreds of radicals.<sup>20</sup> They had established espionage cells throughout Shaanxi province, had undertaken suppression of the popular anti-Japanese movement which had made great headway, and had begun to arrest and kidnap alleged Communist students, political workers and soldiers.

Revenge was wreaked during the Xi'an Incident when Blueshirt leaders in Xi'an were either shot dead or put under military detention.<sup>21</sup> One

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<sup>18</sup> Furuya, p.525.

<sup>19</sup> Elkins, p.433.

<sup>20</sup> R.A.Howell, "Sian Points the Way", in *China Today*, vol.3, nr.6, March 1937, pp.72-77. See also Snow, p.378.

<sup>21</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.570-571.

of the first officers captured was Jiang Xiaoxian. When the Northern revolutionary army realised who he was, they shot him dead on the spot.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, the Blueshirts felt partly responsible for the unexpected turn of events, as they had agents deployed at the Headquarters of Zhang Xueliang.<sup>23</sup> If their much-vaunted secret services had been better-informed, it is possible that they could have prevented the kidnapping of Chiang Kaishek. Just a few days before Chiang's kidnapping the Blueshirts, in co-operation with the Xi'an police, drew up a list of people suspected of pro-Communist sympathies, and arrested them.<sup>24</sup> Since these arrests did nothing to deter or prevent Chiang's capture, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Blueshirts were arresting the wrong people. From the point of view of an organisation devoted to the personal safety of their leader, the Xi'an Incident must have represented an unmitigated disaster.

Thirdly, the actions of the Blueshirts during the Xi'an crisis may well have been important factors contributing to their demise soon afterwards. They consistently urged the use of military force against Chiang's kidnapers while he was being held. Far from trying to negotiate his leader's release, Deng Wenyi, the Blueshirts' secretary-general at that time, was worried that Zhang Xueliang would take Chiang away by aeroplane to Xinjiang or possibly to the Soviet Union. Therefore, on his own initiative, Deng instructed the Central Army commanders in North China to prepare their troops to surround and attack Xi'an.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> J.M. Bertram, *Crisis in China, The Story of the Sian Mutiny*, London: Macmillan, p.133; see also T.A.Bisson, *Japan in China*, London: Macmillan, 1938, p.167.

<sup>23</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.570-571; see also Lincoln Li, *Student Nationalism in China, 1924-1949*, p.74.

<sup>24</sup> Nakanishi, Nishizato, p.115.

<sup>25</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, pp.568-590.

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Nanking [Nanjing] rushed troops to Tungkwan [Dongguan]; and a number of towns were bombed. A fleet of Government planes roared low over the roofs of Sian [Xi'an], and the sound of their engines cannot have been very reassuring to Chang's [Zhang] prisoner (Chiang). After those hours on the hill side above Lintung [Lindong], some of Chiang's worst moments must have been in captivity, when he - like the rest of Sian - waited for the first air-raid.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, the pro-Japanese faction led by He Yingqin, the Guomindang Minister of War, also planned to invoke a military solution against Xi'an. It was revealed that He Yingqin, Wang Jingwei and H.H.Kong, while anticipating the events, even tried to set up an anti-Communist and pro-Japanese faction.<sup>27</sup> Although this ultimately came to nothing, it must have been a salutary experience for Chiang to realise just how many of his associates wanted him out of the way.

Under such extreme circumstances one might have expected Chiang to rely ever more heavily on his most trusted cohorts, the Blueshirts. However, Chiang was left with a most unfavourable impression of the wisdom of the Blueshirts' leadership and their effectiveness in action. He held the Blueshirts, and to a lesser extent the C.C.Clique, responsible for his capture, for his not being informed about what was going on in Nanjing, and for their

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<sup>26</sup> Bertram, p.151; see also, Lucien Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971, p.147. Nanjing Government planes attacked Zhang's armies thirty miles from Xi'an; fortunately for Chiang, a snowstorm kept the planes from bombing the city where he was being held.

<sup>27</sup> Nakanishi, Nishizato, p.118. See also, Frederick Spencer, "Sian and National Unity in China", in *China Today*, February 1937, vol.3, nr.5 ; The pro-Japanese clique in Nanjing, consisting of the former Anfu clique, the Zhengxue clique (see *China Today* December 1936, p.28), the Wang Jingwei clique, and He Yingqing, had made good use of Chiang's detention in Xi'an to consolidate their influence in Nanjing. However, despite their junior standing in the pro-Japanese community, they showed particular energy to instigate civil war and block any peaceful settlement of the Xi'an situation. He Yingqing, the present Minister of War in Nanjing, established the close relations with Japanese authorities through the conclusion of the He (Yingqing) - Umetsu agreement. Not very popular, particularly in China's Northern provinces.

inability to take measures to stop it. Furthermore, Chiang was of the opinion that they should have been more concerned about his safety.<sup>28</sup>

In the period following his release, Chiang had time to reflect on the intense hatred people felt towards the Blueshirts, as well as the ineffectiveness in dealing with precisely the kind of situation at which they were supposed to excel. Their actions during the crisis had revealed them to be more than incompetent - they were overreaching themselves to the extent that Chiang no longer felt secure himself.

Chiang therefore lost no time in taking measures against them. He assembled the core leaders of the Blueshirts, and discussed with them the future tasks of the organisation.<sup>29</sup> He ordered them to reorganise the Blueshirt movement throughout China, suggesting that it should henceforth restrict its activities to the Southwest.<sup>30</sup> Here, presumably, it would be safely isolated from the main theatres of conflict in the north of the country, and would also be well out of the way of the areas in which the CCP was in control.

In 1938 Guomindang documents describing the Communists' activities revealed that the middle school teacher Li Tiyuan 李倜元 had organised an anti-Lixingshe group.<sup>31</sup> When the Guomindang discovered this, the activities of Li Tiyuan and his group were cautiously investigated. They found that the main activities were restricted to Guizhou province, while their

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<sup>28</sup> Deng Yuanzhong, p.622.

<sup>29</sup> TB, 5540, pp.10-11.

<sup>30</sup> It explains possibly once more Chiang's double policy; on the one hand he agrees with the Communists to unite and fight against the Japanese, while on the other hand he remains suspicious about the CCP, and continues to develop anti-Communist policies.

<sup>31</sup> SNHA, document nr.726/161/1487, by the Central Members of the Guomindang, 10 December 1938. Unfortunately no date for the foundation of this anti-Lixingshe group was given.

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goal was to sabotage the “Fascist” Lixingshe. The belief of this anti-Lixingshe group was apparent: China faced an extremely difficult period, and all effort should be made to unite in fighting against Japanese Imperialism. There was no room for an authoritative Fascist organisation like the Blueshirts. In the end this anti-Lixingshe group became a relatively strong organisation, and may have contributed to the decision for the Blueshirts to disappear from public view.

### **E. The Special Case of Dai Li**

The changes which Chiang Kaishek set in motion in 1937 had a clear direction. The three main functions of the Blueshirts were being split up. The anti-Communist struggle was no longer politically expedient, so the Blueshirts' work in this area was now redundant. Work on the moral and political regeneration of China, which had been carried out under the auspices of the New Life Movement, was to be hived off into a new organisation, the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps. The only part of the Blueshirts' work which was still of value to Chiang was the secret service.

The secret service of Dai Li was kept out of the reforms of 1937. In a large measure, this was due to the personal loyalty and extraordinary bravery shown by Dai Li during the crisis. He had retained the confidence of Chiang by risking his own life to join him at Xi'an and challenge the negotiations.

Dai Li was very depressed about the Xi'an Incident, and blamed himself for its occurrence. On 22 December, before he went to Xi'an together with Madame Chiang, Song Meiling 宋美玲, to plead for Chiang's release, he gathered his commanders and said: "If my mission fails to bring our Master Chiang back safely, I must commit suicide. I hope, nevertheless, that

everybody will remain dedicated to our revolution."<sup>32</sup> When Dai Li arrived in Xi'an he observed billboards and banners with the text "Kill Dai Li now." He responded to demonstrators he encountered by saying "An ancient Chinese proverb is: 'One can die for his Master'. Now at this moment our leader is in danger, therefore I am here to be at his side, and if I was afraid to die I would not have come to Xi'an."<sup>33</sup> Dai Li was quartered in the basement floor of Zhang Xueliang's residence, from where he wrote a letter to Chiang: "I came to Xi'an to save my Master's life, but I now will be put to death soon. However, in the knowledge that I die for my Master I do not fear death."<sup>34</sup> Finally, on 25 December, he was released together with Chiang and all his other followers. The thoughts Dai Li expressed and his attitude in this critical situation were based on his Confucian background.

Such loyalty was rare under any circumstances, but in the Guomindang it was almost unbelievable. Chiang Kaishek saw in Dai Li a follower whom he could not simply demote or ignore, and in his reorganisation of the Blueshirts, he was determined to preserve a key place in the new structures for his loyal lieutenant.

#### **F. Student Power and Chiang Kaishek's New Stratagem**

One of the key considerations in Chiang's reforms of 1937-8 was to move away from the kind of vanguard elite organisation, which the Blueshirts represented, towards a more mass-based institution which would harness popular nationalism. In particular, Chiang wanted to draw on the

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<sup>32</sup> Gu Seng, *Dai Li Jiangjun yu Kang Ri zhanzheng* (Dai Li Chief of National Intelligence and the Resistance War against Japan), Taipei: Huaxin chuban, 1975, p.33.

<sup>33</sup> Gu Seng, p.33.

<sup>34</sup> Gu Seng, p.33.



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enormous power of student nationalism which had been alienated from the party by the excesses of the Blueshirts. This nationalism would form an important part of his drive to win radical and dedicated new cadres into the Guomindang - and away from the Communists. In the 1920s and 30s, the student movement in China was part of daily political life, influencing the decisions of leaders, playing a significant role in the effort to free China from her semi-colonial position and to modernise her social and economic organisation.<sup>35</sup> Both the Guomindang and the Communists worked to harness and direct student nationalism and radicalism into an organised political force. In the 1930s, the Communist party proved particularly successful at this.<sup>36</sup>

The Japanese challenge in the 1930s undermined the Guomindang's credibility as an effective defender of Chinese nationalist interests, the criticism of Chiang and his appeasement policy was almost as sharp as the condemnation of Japan. When Chiang arrived in Xi'an on 4 December 1936, a crowd of people was waiting for him, not only members of the Communist party, but also students and ordinary civilians. In particular, the group of young students appealed to Chiang's nationalistic feelings to start fighting against the Japanese.

Between 18 September and 9 December 1936, six enormous demonstrations marched through the streets of Xi'an. On 9 December, three days before Chiang was kidnapped, thousands of students marched from

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<sup>35</sup> Iwamura Michio, *Chugoku gakusei undoshi* (The Chinese Student Movement), p.156 ; Lin Yutang, in his article "The History of Chinese Journalism", states that in a time of peace student power is not appropriate, but a country in war or when a government is corrupt, student protests and revolts are quite normal.

<sup>36</sup> Van Slyke, pp.66-67. Until the beginning of 1936, the student movement remained more or less fragmented and uncoordinated, but on 30 March 1936, representatives from sixteen cities assembled in Shanghai to found the first national student union since the days of the Northern Expedition. Peking and Shanghai emerged as the guiding centres of the movement.

Xi'an towards his suburban headquarters at Lintong 臨潼 to appeal for immediate resistance to Japan and an end to the civil war.<sup>37</sup>

Chiang ignored the demonstrations completely, and even ordered the arrest of several students.<sup>38</sup> However, if he was not prepared to listen to the students before his kidnapping, he was certainly interested in harnessing student nationalism after his release. He appreciated that student nationalism was for the greater part based on emotions and was thus highly volatile. He understood, too, that students' readiness to sacrifice all was only a momentary response. He realised that if he could command and discipline these nationalist and self-sacrificing instincts, he would have a formidable political force at his command.

In 1936, *Qiantu*, a prominent Blueshirt periodical, published an inquiry into the Student Nationalist Movements.<sup>39</sup> Its conclusion was that: "From now on the only right way for the Student Nationalist Movements is founded on three principles, which are the basis for China's salvation. These principles are: 1. the effort to study 2. to gain physical strength 3. to maintain one's health."

It is conceivable that Chiang and his subordinates when they were discussing the formation of a new youth organisation for the Guomindang, came up with the name Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps, initiated by the *Qiantu* article about the three principles for the Student Movements.

The public - and particularly those elements into which Chiang wanted to tap - became aware of his plans at a large demonstration at Zhongshan Park in Hankou on 9 February 1938. Nearly 30,000 students had gathered to protest against the Japanese invasion. The organisations present included the

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<sup>37</sup> Israel, pp.170-171; see also Van Slyke, p.74, and Bertram, pp.107-108.

<sup>38</sup> Iwamura Michio, p.110.

<sup>39</sup> *Qiantu*, vol.4-2,1936, an article about the Student Nationalist Movement.

*Qingnian xingdongdui* 青年行動隊 (the Youth Activity Corps), the *Hubei xueshenghui* 湖北學生會 (Hubei Student Union Association), the *Wuhan xueshenghui* 武漢學生會 (Wuhan Student Union Association), the *Guangxi xueshengjun* 廣西學生軍 (Guangxi Student Union Army), the *Zhonghua tongzijun* 中華童子軍 (the Chinese Boy Scouts), and many more.

The demonstration was organised by Peng Wenkai 彭文凱 and the main issue was the summons to China's youth to unite under the leadership of the Guomindang and Chiang Kaishek, and to fight for the revival of China.<sup>40</sup> Chiang's answer to this was the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps. He saw this new organisation as filling an important gap. The New Life Movement attempted to teach the Chinese people to bring more discipline into their lifestyle according to the teachings of Confucius, while the Blueshirts aimed at the militarisation of society. What was lacking was a well structured organisation to guide and mould Chinese youth according the teachings of Sun Yatsen.

### **G. Chiang Kaishek's Defiance of Nazi Germany**

The dissolution of the Blueshirts and the withdrawal of the German advisers by the Nazi Government were almost simultaneous, and was followed closely by German recognition of Manchukuo in February 1938. During that period, the friendship that existed between China and Germany underwent a change, initiated by Nazi interest in Japan.

As discussed in Chapter Two of this study, the German advisers were not directly involved in the formation of the Blueshirts, although they were influential in orienting the leadership of the Guomindang towards the far right in general. Their sudden departure from China in June 1938 may nevertheless have been connected with the disbandment of the Blueshirts. In

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<sup>40</sup> *Zhonghua minguo shi shiliao zhangpian* (Series of Chinese Historical Materials), 1937, vol.44, p.393.

the light of the political developments in Germany and Japan, the presence of the advisers in China had become increasingly anomalous by 1937 for Germany. Japan, which had just signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany, was able to point to the absurdity of the *Reich* advising a Chinese government which was not only hostile to Tokyo, but had, after the Xi'an Incident, formed a coalition with the CCP. From that time, Japanese pressure on the German Government to withdraw its advisers increased.<sup>41</sup> Finally, in May 1938, von Ribbentrop, Germany's Foreign Minister, ordered the immediate withdrawal of all German advisers.<sup>42</sup> Trautmann, Germany's ambassador to China, who had negotiated until the last moment to postpone the withdrawal, left his post at the end of June 1938,<sup>43</sup> while the German advisory mission under the leadership of General von Falkenhausen left Hankou on 5 July 1938.

It was no coincidence that the Blueshirts were disbanded almost simultaneously. Though no concrete evidence proves a causal relation between the two events, there are many inferences to suggest it. Chiang was a

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<sup>41</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2477, Deutsche Botschaft China, Telegram from Dirksen, German ambassador to Japan, to Trautmann, German ambassador to China, 2 November 1937. Nr.104/7515/37. According to a message from the Japanese embassy in Berlin, received at the Japanese General Staff in Tokyo, "The "Führer and Reichskanzler" has instructed the German Minister of War to order the withdrawal of all military advisers from China". However, the message was identified by Trautmann as "not authentic."

<sup>42</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2477, nr.3104/3953/38, 24 May, 1938. Trautmann, in a last effort to postpone the withdrawal, telegraphed to Berlin: "That the advisers be gradually withdrawn." However, von Ribbentrop's answer to this request was brutally clear, threatening Trautmann and the advisers; " You an old official should know that orders must be obeyed. Withdrawal is due to Hitler's anxiety that Japan win an early victory." Von Ribbentrop ordered the advisers in China immediately to go to Japan and assist their German colleagues in Japanese service. Disobedience would cost them their citizenship, and endanger their families by being put in a concentration camp.

<sup>43</sup> *NCH*, Hankow, 26 June 1938, "German Ambassador Highly Praised." The newspaper article mentioned that: "The German Ambassador Dr. Trautmann, upon instructions from Berlin, is leaving today. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Dr. Wang Chingwei, as well as numerous high Chinese officials, appeared at the station to take leave of the Ambassador."

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master in playing a double policy. He was alarmed by the change in political attitude of the German government to China, and aware of increasing Japanese diplomatic pressure on the Germans to withdraw their advisers from China. Considered in this context, the disbandment of the organisation has a particular importance.

In the first place, it was a placatory gesture to the Japanese, despite the war, to suggest that China finally gave in to their wish to disband the anti-Japanese Blueshirts. On the other, hand Chiang was strongly displeased by the German attitude, and showed this by the dissolution of the *Fascist* Blueshirts, so breaking off the connections that had remained.

Relationships between the two countries still existed, notwithstanding the withdrawal of the advisers and the German Ambassador.<sup>44</sup> This was substantiated by the “restricted”, but still very important, continuation of the HAPRO-barter agreement between the Guomindang and HAPRO.<sup>45</sup> At nearly the same time Zhu Jiahua, as President of the Sino-German Cultural Association, discussed continuation of "cultural" co-operation in an interview on 30 December 1938 with journalists of the “Transocean News Service” and

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<sup>44</sup> Kirby, p.249. However, after the withdrawal of the advisory mission a few German advisers were still in China. These consisted essentially of five German military advisers who remained to serve Chiang despite all threats from von Ribbentrop. These were representatives of Otto Wolff and the trading firm Carlowitz, the 'journalist' Wolf Schenke (see part 2 of this chapter), the German chargé Dr.Bidder, HAPRO representative Ludwig Werner, and Chiang's bodyguard Walter Stennes. See also, NA, RG 226, OSS E 182, Box 11/73, 15 August, 1945. Stennes is reported to have come to China during the 1930s after having been forced to leave Germany by Hermann Göring. Some time after coming to China Stennes made peace with the Nazi regime and during the war acted as an agent for Nazi intelligent organisations in China. Stennes was Chiang's bodyguard from the summer of 1934 to the summer of 1940. In 1941 he lived in Shanghai in the Park Hotel (Headquarters of all Nazi activities there). After the war Stennes was caretaker of Chiang's house at nr 7 Rue Francis Garnier at Shanghai.

<sup>45</sup> Zhu Jiahua dang'an (Institute of Modern History Academy Sinica), in Taipei, Revision of Barter Agreement discussed on 4 October 1938, between the National Government of China, represented by Dr.H.H.Kung, Minister of Finance and HAPRO (Handels Gesellschaft für Industrielle Produkte), under instructions of the German Ministry of Economics, represented by Dr.H.H.Woidt. A report of thirty pages, containing details about arms and ammunition deliveries by HAPRO, and metal ores and fats and vegetable oils by China. Secretary during the negotiations was L.T.Chen of the Central Bank of China.

“Deutsche Nachrichten Büro”, stressing the importance of this co-operation to the advantage of both China and Germany.<sup>46</sup>

In order to determine whether the dissolution of the Blueshirts meant the end of Chinese Fascism, it should be remembered that Chinese Fascism was idiosyncratic in nature. Although it was also inspired by European Fascism, it largely resembled Japanese Fascism, but had distinct Chinese interpretations. The conclusion can be drawn that Chinese Fascism continued to exist, albeit in a more modest form than before. The Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps may in some way be interpreted as the outward manifestation of Chinese Fascism.

## 6.2 The Creation of the *Sanminzhuyi* Youth Corps

The reasons for the establishment of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps may also help to explain why the Blueshirts were disbanded.

### A. The *Sanminzhuyi* Youth Corps and the Hitler Youth

In considering models for its youth movement the Guomindang seriously examined movements in other countries, for instance the French Physical Culture Youth (Culture Physique de Jeunesse de France) and the British Boy Scouts. More political examples, such as the Komsomol, the Italian Fascist Youth and, most importantly, the Hitler Youth, were also considered.<sup>47</sup> The Blueshirts published an article in *Qiantu* concerning the detailed investigation of the Italian Youth Corps, the *Balilla* 巴里拉.<sup>48</sup> This

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<sup>46</sup> *Zhu Jiahua on Sino-German Cultural Co-operation*. Chongqing, 30 December 1938.

<sup>47</sup> TB, 5011, *Kokuminto no seinen undo to sanminshugi seinendan* (Guomindang's Youth Movement and the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps).

<sup>48</sup> *Qiantu*, vol.3-2, 1935. See also, Cassels, *Fascist Italy*, pp.66-67. The Italian Fascist Youth Corps included, except the *Balilla*, youth organisations for boys of fourteen to eighteen years

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youth corps was for boys of eight to fourteen years of age, and was set up by the Department of Education with Mussolini as its President. The goal of the Italian Youth movements was to improve young people's spirit and efficiency, and to teach them organisational methods.

Whatever other models it may have drawn upon, general historical opinion has been that the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps followed Fascist principles related to the Hitler Youth.<sup>49</sup> Phillippe Jaffe, in his commentary on Chiang's book *China's Destiny*,<sup>50</sup> certainly noticed the similarity, writing: "Another important development during this period was the establishment of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps, which Chiang praised so highly. This organisation, bearing a marked resemblance to the Hitler Youth, is the principal means by which the Guomintang hierarchy seeks to impose its doctrines and its control on the youth of China."<sup>51</sup>

To what extent the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps actually resembled the Hitler Youth is still a matter of debate. After the 1938 Extraordinary Congress, Guomintang representatives started to approach German officials with requests to provide information regarding the organisation and structure

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old, named the *Avantguardisti*, and for those between eighteen and twenty-one year, called the *Giovani Fascisti*.

<sup>49</sup> Kirby, pp.177-178. See his footnote: The opinion that the *San Min Chu I Youth Corps* had Fascist elements was shared by T.White and A.Jacoby, *Thunder out of China*, and by the German Ambassador to China, Trautmann, Nachlass Trautmann, DZA, Bl.243, cited in Drechsler, 40-41. "The corps was a good example of Chiang's synthetic approach, of reforming the national formula by extortion, education, and control."

<sup>50</sup> Some periodicals and books compare Chiang Kaishek's *China's Destiny* with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, stressing the Fascist relationship between the two countries and the fact that both leaders were dictators. However, this comparison is irrelevant as the books were written from different viewpoints and for different reasons. See also, NA, SIF, 226, 13W3, 3/34/A, Entry 182, Box 51, 263, YKB.3769, Interview with Chen Lifu, 6 March, 1946. In this interview Chen Lifu points out that: "The Nationalism of the Kuomintang has not been the same as that of Hitler." He states that "Our Nationalism merely seeks equality between our own nation and all others among all the various ethnic groups within our nation."

<sup>51</sup> Chiang Kaishek, p.302.

of the Hitler Youth and the N.S.D.A.P. For instance, Lautenschlager, a German diplomat in China, was asked by the Chinese officials to supply materials. In connection with this, he wrote to the Foreign Office in Berlin on 16 May 1938:

The newly appointed General Secretary of the party, former Minister of Transport Chu Chiahua [Zhu Jiahua]<sup>52</sup>, educated in Germany, has contacted me in regard to the plans to change the Kuomintang [Guomindang] to the model of the N.S.D.A.P. Furthermore, another German-educated representative of the Kuomintang, Dr. Chang Liang-jen [Zhang Liangren], former chairman of the German-Chinese Culture Association, visited me with the same request.<sup>53</sup>

Concerning the formation of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps Lautenschlager commented:

To conclude with, in combination with the planned reorganisation of the Kuomintang to the model of the N.S.D.A.P. a Chinese youth movement is in formation. Under consideration at the moment is organising this movement under the guidance of two German-speaking generals Hsü Pei-ken [Xu Beigen] and Kwei [Gui Yongqing] on the model of the Hitler Youth. I had exchanged views with both generals, who initially contacted me. I advised them to discuss the matter with Wolf Schenke,<sup>54</sup> who was active in the RJF (*Reichs Jugend Führung*), and is

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<sup>52</sup> Zhu Jiahua studied geology in Berlin, and was involved in engaging Max Bauer to come to China. His record of service in the Guomindang leadership was impressive - Zhu Jiahua had been Minister of Education (1932), Minister of Communications (1932-35). Served as Governor of Zhejiang province after 1935, and was intermediary during the negotiations Chiang had with General von Seeckt. Although General Chen Cheng formally held the post of Secretary General of the Youth Corps, he was too busy, therefore Zhu Jiahua served as acting Secretary General from 1939-40, and became Head of the Organisation Department of the Guomindang between 1939-44.

<sup>53</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2286, *Reorganisation of the Kuomintang to the model of the N.S.D.A.P: establishment of a Chinese Youth movement to the example of the Hitler Youth*. Message to the Foreign Office in Berlin, by diplomat Lautenschlager (it mentioned that the German Ambassador was informed), Hankou, 16 May 1938, Deutsche Botschaft nr.371, Aktz. 1517/3773/38. Lautenschlager, in his capacity as 'Ortsgruppenleiter' of Foreign organisation of the N.S.D.A.P. in Nanking, transmitted the message also to the country group leaders of the N.S.D.A.P. in Shanghai.

<sup>54</sup> NA, RG 226 OSS E182, Box 11/73, 15th August, 1945. Wolf Schenke was officially known as the correspondent for the *Völkische Beobachter*. He was an assistant to F.H.Glimpf, and a leader of the Hitler Youth. Schenke, Glimpf and K.Leverentz all worked under the direction of Major R.Weise, head of the Tokyo Office of DNB (Deutsche National Bund). In 1941, Schenke was active in Shanghai as an agent of the Gestapo.



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now working as correspondent of the *Völkische Beobachter* in Hankow [Hankou].<sup>55</sup>

Another German despatch reports the establishment of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps:<sup>56</sup> On 18 June 1938 Chiang Kaishek announced the founding of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps. His speech is reminiscent of the German National Socialist conceptions for the corps. Chiang stated that: "The Youth is the guarantee of the Revolution. They represent the New Life of the Nation."

Chiang stressed in this speech that the main task of the Youth Corps was resistance against the Japanese invasion, the accomplishment of the national reconstruction programme, and the continuation and realisation of China's national revolution. He emphasised that, in order to accomplish this task, the Youth of China should be united and educated in a joint programme. Chiang furthermore gave utterance to his fears that China's existence and his life-work was being threatened by Japan, and that he wanted to see it guaranteed for the future. Most importantly, the ideology Chiang seemed to have in mind for the Youth Corps, was reflected by his words: "Our Youth will not be allowed to follow the example of Youth organisations of other countries, who admit the existence and development of various political convictions and movements."

The Germans appear to have transmitted the requested material, including a substantial report translated from German into Chinese,

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<sup>55</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2286, Despatch to message nr.371 by the Embassy in Hankow 16th May, 1938. Aktz. 1517/3773/38, *Reorganisation of the Kuomintang to the model of the N.S.D.A.P.: Formation of a Chinese youth movement towards the example of the Hitler Jugend*. N.S.D.A.P. foreign organisation, country group China, area group Nanking. Hankow, 12 May 1938.

<sup>56</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2286, *Establishment of a Youth Corps by Marshall Chiang Kaishek*. German Embassy, Hankou, 24 June, 1938, Aktz. 1514/4474/38. The message nr.371 of 16 May 1938 Aktz. 1517/3773/38, mentions the enclosing of a newspaper article from the *Central China Post* of 23 June 1938. Unfortunately this article was not found in the material supplied by the archives.

containing information about the "Constitution of the German Youth."<sup>57</sup> The report describes in extension the *Stellung der Jugend in Partei und Staat* (Position of the Youth in the Party and State), and mentions details about the structure and organisation of the Hitler Youth. The Guomintang officials had also contacted Wolf Schenke, as is confirmed by a letter Schenke sent to a government official in Berlin.<sup>58</sup>

### **B. One Faith, One Party, One Will**

At the Extraordinary Congress of the Guomintang, held at Wuchang from 29 March to 1 April 1938,<sup>59</sup> Chiang declared to the opening session:

The form of the party persists, but the spirit of the party has almost completely died out. Most of the members appear dejected, their living is soft, they lack enthusiasm, and their work is slothful. They seek ease and pleasure, and are struggling for power and fighting for their selfish interest....How can they be revolutionary party members?<sup>60</sup>

The words repeated those of Liu Jianqun in his essay "A Few Ideas for the Reform of the Party" written at the end of 1931, when plans were

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<sup>57</sup> Zhu Jiahua dang'an, *The Constitution of German Youth*. Containing material on German Youth Organisations between May 1935 to May 1956. It could unfortunately not be determined when and by whom this material was transmitted. As mentioned, Zhu Jiahua was acting secretary-general of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps in 1938.

<sup>58</sup> BA, 09.02, nr.2286, Letter of Wolf Schenke, Hankow, 1 September 1938, to "Kamerad" Stadler, the Head of Borderregion- and Foreign Office of the RJF (Reich Jugend Führung) in Berlin.

<sup>59</sup> TB, 5011. See also, K. Furuya, pp.596-598, see also, Omura, "Kokuminto linji daihyo no gadaru mono" (The Relationship between the Guomintang's Extraordinary Session and the Guomintang), *Manchu Critics*, April 1938, p.12, see also, Milton J.T.Shieh, *The Kuomintang Selected Historical Documents, 1894-1969*, pp.178-179. The Extraordinary Congress was held in Wuchang. However, Guomintang's Headquarters, after retreat from Nanjing was then in Hankou, moreover several other more informal meetings by the Blueshirts were held in Wuhan.

<sup>60</sup> Lloyd E. Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction, Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937-1949*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984, pp.89-91, see his footnote, Chu Tzu-shuang, *Chung-kuo-min-tang li-tz'u ch'üan-kuo tai-piao ta-hui yao-lan* (Successive national party congresses of the Chinese Kuomintang, an anthology), pp.70-71, 74.

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developed to found the Blueshirts. However, Chiang was now preparing the Guomindang for the abolition of all existing parties and the formation of a new party of national unity.<sup>61</sup> China must have “one faith, one party, and one will”, Chiang declared<sup>62</sup> - an expression strongly reminiscent of Hitler's nostrum *Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer* (One People, One Empire, One Leader).

Before the war with Japan, in 1937, there had already existed plans to establish a Youth Corps,<sup>63</sup> but it was not until March 1938, when the Extraordinary Congress met in Wuchang, that Chiang's proposal to create the corps was officially adopted. Chiang proposed the foundation of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps, which he envisioned as subsuming all the competing factions within the Guomindang. As a consequence of this decision the abolition of all “small intra-party” organisations, including the Blueshirts and the Blue and White Society (*Qingbaishe*) of the C.C.Clique, was announced. Chiang hoped that, within the Youth Corps, all members could set aside their differences and work together.

Chiang realised that success in his national resistance and reconstruction programme depended in large part upon the willingness of Chinese youth to support it. Chiang made his goal clear: he particularly wanted to reach and influence China's students. Therefore he placed great

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<sup>61</sup> Shieh, pp.178-179. See also, K.Furuya, p.597. The People's Political Council (PPC), was formed as a result of decision of the Congress. It was a consultative body representing diverse political groups, sometimes referred to as China's wartime Parliament, and was inaugurated on 17 July 1938. Zhou Enlai was made one of the 17 members of the Presidium of the Extraordinary National Congress of the Guomindang in March 1938. He also was appointed Vice-Minister of the Political Training Board of the National Military Council, a position he held until 1940.

<sup>62</sup> Kang Ze, “San min zhu yi qing nian tuan cheng li de jing guo” (The Founding of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps), *Wen shi zi liao xian pian*, vol.14.40, pp.199-200. See also, Gan Guoxun, p.77.

<sup>63</sup> Kang Ze, p.197.

emphasis on the role the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps had to play, and on the duty of all young Chinese to join that Corps:

After the beginning of the War of Resistance, I immediately organised the *San Min Chu I Youth Corps* to serve the urgent needs of the youth of the country, to open a new life for the Kuomintang, and to serve as the source of a new motivating force for the Chinese nation.....Can you not see that a country of four hundred and fifty million people in the present great age, with Sun Yatsen's Three Principles of the People as its guiding revolutionary doctrine, cannot be subjugated.<sup>64</sup>

### C. The Youth Corps' Founders

Initially four men were involved in the idea of creating the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps, these men were Chen Lifu, Liu Jianqun, Kang Ze and Chiang Kaishek. They had regular meetings to discuss the creation of the youth corps, reminiscent of the many informal meetings prior to the formation of the Blueshirts.

Their first meeting took place the middle of September 1937 at Chiang's country house in Nanjing. On that occasion, Chiang said to his audience: "Now the war with Japan has begun, we do not need the relatively small secret organisations any more. What we urgently need now is a large organisation."<sup>65</sup> Chiang realised the necessity of having an organisation that every Chinese could join, especially youth, and he instructed Kang Ze to draft a plan accordingly.

During the second meeting Chen Lifu had invited people from the Blueshirts and the CC.Clique to join the session. At this meeting the disbandment of the Blueshirts and the *Qingbaishe* was announced, and Chiang asked Chen Lifu to speak a few words. Chen Lifu partly repeating the words Chiang spoke during the first meeting, said:

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<sup>64</sup> Chiang Kaishek, *China's Destiny*, pp.216-218.

<sup>65</sup> Kang Ze, p.197.

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In war we need regular armies to face the enemy's regular forces, but we also need special forces to conduct guerrilla warfare. The Blueshirts and the Blue and White Corps (*Ching paishe* [Qingbaishe]) are like the special forces. While regular armies do battle, our special forces recruit patriotic youths to assist them. Our regular armies have now started to fight, and the special forces are no longer needed and must be disbanded. Whatever our actions we will only follow the orders of Chiang. We have no special mission of our own.<sup>66</sup>

Kang Ze and Liu Jianqun proposed to form a new organisation with the name *Sanminzhuyi qingnian tuan*,<sup>67</sup> while Chen Lifu suggested including more words, and also mentioning the Guomindang. He proposed the name *Zhongguo-Guomindang Sanminzhuyi qingnian tuan* (China - Goumindang Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps). Finally the shorter name was agreed upon by all present.

Once agreement had been reached among these core leaders, Chiang organised a further meeting in January 1938 at Chiang's official residence in Hubei. The result of the four men's sessions was laid before the top leadership of the party. Not all those present were enthusiastic about the idea, but Chiang countered their complaints by declaring that, if necessary, he would even change the name of the Guomindang as it was for the sake of China's well being.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Chen Lifu, *The Storm Clouds over China, The Memoir of Chen Lifu, 1900-1993*, Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1994, Sidney Chang, Ramon Myers (eds.), p.143.

<sup>67</sup> Gan Guoxun, p.78. According to this source, Kang Ze suggested actually the name *Zhongguo qingnian tingshendui* 中國青年挺身隊, meaning "The Chinese Dash Forward Youth Corps." While the name *Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps* was suggested by He Zhonghan.

<sup>68</sup> Gan Guoxun, pp.199-200. The reason why Chiang spoke these unconcealed threatening words, could be explained by the conditions made by the Communists during and after the Xi'an Incident. One of their demands was that the Guomindang should change its internal policy.

### D. Indoctrination of Youth in the *Sanminzhuyi*

During a speech Chiang delivered on 16 June 1938 to Chinese youth, Chiang said the following;

The goals of the Youth Corps are indissolubly linked with the survival of the Chinese people. The youth are the pioneers of our revolution, and the New Life for China. At the beginning of our revolution we were anti-Qing Dynasty, and in 1926 we were anti-Warlord, the majority of our members were youths. Therefore now I emphasise again the important task which has been reserved for youth.<sup>69</sup>

In creating the Youth Corps, Chiang hoped to provide a framework within which supporters of the revolution and the war of resistance could work together in a common effort. Chiang, appointed commander of the Youth Corps, stated that its purpose was, in the first place, to achieve success in "Resistance and Reconstruction"<sup>70</sup> by organising and disciplining Chinese youth. Secondly, Chiang aimed to centralise the new revolutionary force of the people, and thirdly, to achieve the early realisation of the *Sanminzhuyi*.<sup>71</sup> General Kang Ze assisted in the training of the Youth Corps members.<sup>72</sup>

The impact of western ideas and foreign culture on Chinese society was increasing, a development not particularly welcomed by the majority of

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<sup>69</sup> TB, 5011, This information is similar to the one in German source. See also, BA, 09.02, nr.2286, Aktz. 1514/4474/38, *Establishment of a Youth Corps by Marshall Chiang Kaishek*. German Embassy, Hankou, 24 June 1938. In connection with the message nr.371, 16 May 1938, Aktz. 1517/3773/38.

<sup>70</sup> PRO, FO 371/22082 nr.2763, p.182, British Embassy Shanghai, 26 August 1938, which contains a translation of the "Plan of the Kuomintang for the Campaign of Resistance and National Reconstruction." Article 31 mentioned; Training shall be given to the country's youth so as to enable them to serve in the war zones and in rural districts; see also, Milton J.T. Shieh, *The Kuomintang: Selected Historical Documents, 1894-1969*, New York: St. Johns University Press, 1970, pp.187-192.

<sup>71</sup> Shieh, p.176, China's domestic policy is in keeping with her foreign policy. The Highest guiding principle being the Three Principles of the People, both China's internal and external policies stem there from.

<sup>72</sup> Gan Guoxun, p.78. Prior to the dissolution of the *Fuxingshe*, Chiang instructed Kang Ze to draft a plan which would unite rival factions in the party and those in the *Lixingshe*.

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the Guomintang leaders. In order to cope with this problem Chiang proposed to transform the *Sanminzhuyi* of Sun Yatsen into something similar to a religion, like Buddhism or Christianity. Educating Chinese youth from an early age in the *Sanminzhuyi* was intended to stop foreign influences on the Chinese people.

Furthermore, in order to attract youngsters away from Communist youth corps, the new organisation's attention had to focus on the rural areas.<sup>73</sup> At that time, especially in the Northwest Yan'an area, the Communists were active in recruiting youngsters often at the very young age of ten. Furthermore, the youth was enthusiastic about the spirit of the Red Army. After the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps was established the CCP, questioned the Guomintang's decision to their formation, declaring that it should not mean that all China's youth had to join the corps, as had been ordered by the Guomintang leadership.<sup>74</sup>

The Youth Corps was formally inaugurated on 9 July 1938, and its headquarters was set up in Wuchang.<sup>75</sup> The Corps was initially created for youth between the ages of 16-20 years, in order to organise, instruct and train them for China's "Resistance and Reconstruction" during the war with Japan, based on the teachings of Sun's Three Principles of the People. It was meant to be a sort of "nursery" for future Guomintang members.<sup>76</sup> Regular Guomintang party members had to be at least twenty years old, while the Youth Corps gave the Chinese youth the opportunity to apply for

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<sup>73</sup> TB, 5011, pp.3-4.

<sup>74</sup> SNHA, nr.726/161/1487, by the Central Members Organisation of the Guomintang, 10 December, 1938. It was ordered that also all non-Guomintang youth organisations were required to register with the government in May 1938.

<sup>75</sup> Gan Guoxun, p.78.

<sup>76</sup> TB, 5011, pp.3-4.

membership from the age of sixteen. Prospective members needed two references from Guomintang members. The average period necessary for training was one year, while in order to become a Guomintang party member one had to be in the Youth Corps for four years. The Extraordinary Congress also abolished the system of probationary membership in the Guomintang, so that youth could henceforth enrol directly in the corps, and later automatically become well-trained Guomintang members.

Chiang's expectations for the new organisation were lofty. He declared in 1938, for instance, that "I regard the life or death, the survival or destruction, of our nation and the people as hinging entirely upon the formation of this Youth Corps." He continued "the youth are the revolutionary vanguard and the new life of the nation. There is no social progress or political reform that does not depend upon the stimulus of youth as its primary force."<sup>77</sup> Despite the critical situation in China, through the war with Japan, spirits were high and people felt united in their resistance against the Japanese. In the wake of the establishment of the Youth Corps one year later on 12 March 1939 the "National Spirit Mobilisation Movement" - Citizen Pact - was launched as part of an effort to control the people.

### **E. The Blueshirts in Disguise**

To declare the dissolution of the Blueshirts was easier than to enforce the order. The problem Chiang faced was what to do with the remaining Blueshirts members, especially with the members outside the elite core group of the Blueshirts, who represented a large number of people. Apart from anything else, Chiang needed the experience of the core group of "old"

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<sup>77</sup> TB, 5011, pp.1-11.



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Blueshirts in the new organisation he was planning, and it may therefore be assumed that he actually never intended to discharge them. Chiang instead planned for the former Blueshirts to be reorganised into the Youth Corps.<sup>78</sup> The Blueshirts leaders, once they were confronted with their dissolution, met at Wuhan to discuss the future, and one of the results was that many former Blueshirts now became Youth Corps members.

From the very beginning several top leaders of the Youth Corps from the very beginning were former Blueshirts. On the executive committee of the Youth Corps, five members were of the *Thirteen Princes* of the Blueshirts.<sup>79</sup> Although members of the C.C.Clique also tried to muscle in on the new organisation, the most important positions were soon taken by former Blueshirts. Chiang himself was President of the Youth Corps, as he had been of the Blueshirts, while in name his deputy was General Chen Cheng 陳誠,<sup>80</sup> but in practice Zhu Jiahua was delegated to fulfil this role. The names of Dai Li and Huang Renlin 黃仁霖 were also mentioned as vice-presidents. Leading cadres in the Youth Corps were Chen Lifu, Ye Chuchang 葉楚倡, Huang Jilu 黃季陸<sup>81</sup> and Liu Jianqun, while Kang Ze became Head of the Youth Corps' Organisation Department.

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<sup>78</sup> Gan Guoxun, p.78.

<sup>79</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no gainen to sono tokumu kòsaku ni tsuite*, pp.37-40.

<sup>80</sup> Born in Qingtian, Zhejiang, 1900. In 1925, as a Whampoa cadet, he was one of the founders of the "Sun Yatsen Study Society." In 1933 became Head of the Officers Training Corps at Lushan. Chen Cheng headed various Communist Suppression Campaigns (Jiangxi Commander). Was also kept prisoner at Xi'an, at that time he was vice-minister of War, and Commander of the Communist Suppression Forces in four provinces. In 1938 Chen was Director of the Political Department of the National Military Council. Also in 1938 Chen was Wuhan garrison Commander, this was an elite army.

<sup>81</sup> He was University President and Government Official, born in Sichuan, 1899. Graduated from Fudan Middle School, Shanghai, 1917. Attended Keio University, Japan, 1917-19, went to the United States and studied at Ohio University, 1919-21. Received his MA from Columbia University, 1922. Did research work at University of Toronto, Canada, where he became editor of *Shenhua ribao*, a Guomintang newspaper in Canada 1923. Returned to China in 1924 and attended the National Congress of the Guomintang which was presided over by

The Corps leader in Hankou was Shi Tiankai, and in the Communist controlled North of China the Youth Corps branch was represented by Han Dai 韓代, with Li Shouwei 李守維<sup>82</sup> and Ma Yuanfang 馬元放<sup>83</sup> as deputies. An important leader, then secretary of the Military Affairs Commission of the Guomintang, was Tao Baichuan 陶百川. Chiang chose Tao as he had great influence in educational circles in Wuhan.<sup>84</sup>

The Blueshirts' control of the Youth Corps' organisation took a few years, but operations of the Corps were soon largely headed by cadres identified with the former Blueshirts, and during the later years of the separate existence of the Youth Corps, their influence dominated.<sup>85</sup>

There is evidence to show that although the main structure of the Blueshirt organisation was dismantled inside China, special intelligence tasks were still entrusted to active Blueshirt units both overseas and at home.

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Sun Yatsen. Participated in National Political Conference, 1936. Vice-Minister, and Minister of the Ministry of Economic Affairs in 1937.

<sup>82</sup> Li's nick name was Li Dawei 李大維, and his real name was Li Shoulian 李守廉, therefore who ever reported his name may perhaps been mistaken. Government Official, born in Linyuan, Jehol, graduated from Central Political Institute (now University of Political Science) Nanjing, engaged in party and political work in various parts of the country, fought for three years in the War of Resistance against the Japanese; instructor of Southeast Training Corps; member of Jehol Provincial Government and commissioner of Civil Affairs; organised and director of Administrative Personal Training Corps of Jehol, has written " The Foundation of New Administration."

<sup>83</sup> Government official and educator, born in Changzhou, Jiangsu, 1901. Graduated from Jiangsu Provincial College of Law and Politics. Later he was sent to Japan to study Japanese municipal education by Jiangsu Provincial Government. Upon returning to China he became a secretary-general of the Ministry of Information and Overseas Chinese Affairs of the Guomintang. In June 1940, was arrested in Shanghai by Japanese and puppet authorities and confined in Nanjing for three years and two months.

<sup>84</sup> TB, 5011, pp.37-40.47.

<sup>85</sup> Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, pp.126-130. The *Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps* in 1947 merged with the Guomintang, and ceased to exist as an independent organisation.

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Branches outside China may have been active under the name Blueshirts as is shown by two articles in newspapers from Thailand.<sup>86</sup>

Evidence that the Blueshirts survived their apparent disbandment inside China is given by a Japanese source.<sup>87</sup> It is mentioned that the Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique comprised about half a million members in their heyday. After the Sino-Japanese war, in 1945, these two organisations merged and were re-named *Guofangbu baomiju* 國防部保密局 (Secret Intelligence Bureau of the Department of National Defence).

It should be assumed, however, that this information concerns the secret service of the Blueshirts and the C.C.Clique, and not the entire organisations of both. This supposition is confirmed by Chinese material.<sup>88</sup> An article by Shen Zui 沈醉 discloses that the *Baomiju* was formally founded on 1 July 1946, at 22 Matajie in Nanjing. The article explains that the *Baomiju* was a reorganisation of the *Junshi weiyuanhui diaocha tongjiju* 軍事委員會調查統計局 - Bureau of Investigation and Statistics (BIS) of the Military Affairs - consequently Dai Li's secret service, founded after Dai Li's death. The sudden death of Dai Li confronted Chiang with the need to find a successor for his most trusted lieutenant, and finally a member of the Canton faction Zheng Jiemin 鄭介民<sup>89</sup> became Head of the Bureau. At the Extraordinary Congress of the Guomindang in March 1938, the abolition of

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<sup>86</sup> MAE, Asie- Océanie, "Un nouvel attentat de L'association des Chemises Bleues" (A new murder attempt by the Blueshirts), *Thia Mai* du 24 Juin, 1939; and *Siam Nikorn* , 27 Juin, 1939.

<sup>87</sup> Tejima Hiroshi, *Chugoku rodo undo tsushi*, (The History of the Chinese Labour Movement), p.348.

<sup>88</sup> Shen Zui, "Guofangbu baomiju naimu", *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* (this series is the most qualified historical materials in the PRC), vol.6.22, pp.204-217.

<sup>89</sup> NA, SIF, RG 226 13W3, 3/34/34/A, Entry 182, Box 51, 263, YKB-4209, Subject: Current Political Machinations, source: an official at the Ministry of Information, date: 31 March, 1946; Chen Chiehmin may now replace Dai Li.

all “small” intra-party organisations, including the Blueshirts and the *Qingbaishe* (Blue and White Society) of the C.C.Clique, was announced.

However, documents from the National Archives in Washington, describing the formation of a new Chinese Government in 1946, frequently report the presence of the C.C.Clique and the Army Clique, particularly the Whampoa Clique (a synonym for the Blueshirts), and their major influence on the negotiations.<sup>90</sup> The conclusion is altogether justified that the Blueshirts still existed after the war with Japan. Further, possibly more convincing evidence is provide by special branch reports of the SMP. In November 1941, translations of various Chinese newspapers reveal “The Organisation of the Blue Shirts Society” in Shanghai. These newspaper reports that:

There are eight executive detachments of the Blue Shirt Society in Shanghai. Each detachment has several squads. A large squad has a responsible chief, a vice-chief and several members undertaking intelligence work and communications.<sup>91</sup>

### 6.3 Conclusions

Information, even in Chinese sources, is not always complete. For example, The *Guomintang 90th Yearbook* (Zhongguo Guomintang jiushi nian dashi nianbiao 中國國民黨九十年大事年表) reports the foundation of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps on 6 April 1938. It also records the establishment of the Blueshirts 1 March 1932. Remarkably, the yearbook does not refer to

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<sup>90</sup> NA, SIF, RG 226 13W3, 3/34/34/A, Entry 182, Box 51, 263, 21 March 1946. Subject: Second Plenary Session of the Sixth Kuomintang Central Executive Committee, sub-source: This part of the report is based on newspaper reports as well as on talks with members of the Guomintang Central Executive Committee, leaders of the Communist Party and Democratic League and editors of several Chongqing newspapers.

<sup>91</sup> NA, SMP special branch, D4685, 29 November 1941, “The Organisation of Blue Shirt Society”, Afternoon translation of 28 November 1941 of the following newspapers: *Central Daily News*, *Guomin Daily News*, *Bing Bao*, *New China Daily News*, *Guobao*. It is possible that these publications refer to the Blueshirts in Shanghai before the war with Japan in 1937 began.

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their disbandment in 1938. That this information was not catalogued in such a prominent work is possibly intentional, knowing that the Blueshirts organisation was never actually dissolved.

The disbandment of the Blueshirts cannot be attributed to one solitary reason, but was the result of a combination of factors. It was not only the disunity within the Blueshirts that caused their dissolution. It was also not simply the quarrels between the various Guomindang factions that made the Blueshirts disappear. Moreover, it was not solely the discovery that an *Anti-Lixingshe* group had been formed by the Communists to sabotage the Blueshirts. All three factors were important reasons for Chiang Kaishek in justifying the decision to disband the organisation. The Blueshirts unquestionably failed to meet the expectations Chiang had during their foundation, and their shortcomings were painfully exposed by the Xi'an Incident.

It was, however, also not exclusively the Xi'an Incident that caused the break up. The Communists' demand for the Guomindang's anti-Communist campaigns to cease could only finally be satisfied a year after the Xi'an Incident, when the Blueshirts were formally wound up.

Chiang still needed the Blueshirts, and possibly found the time not yet ripe for drastic action. Even after the United Front with the Communists was formalised, in July 1937, and the war with Japan had commenced, the Blueshirts still survived.

Plans had long existed to create a new youth organisation under the guidance of the Guomindang, but these early talks in 1937, did not yet include the disbandment of the Blueshirts. The main reasons leading to the decision to disband the Blueshirts organisation were the continuation of the war which Japan fought against China, and the loss of technical and material support from the Nazis in 1938.

Without the formation of a united front with the CCP after the Xi'an Incident, the Japanese would probably not have taken the drastic decision to launch a full scale war against China at that particular time, and the history of the Blueshirts might have taken a different course.

Once the Japanese had started their attacks, it became increasingly clear that they would continue their effort to conquer China by force. Additionally, as a consequence of the Anti-Comintern Pact between Japan and Germany, the German advisers were withdrawn from China. The war had already cost China a considerable loss in men, material and territory, and the Government had to reconsider its position. Chiang realised that China had to rely on its own internal strength, and therefore unification was of vital importance.

The Blueshirts, and especially its nucleus - the *Lixingshe* - formed an educated and well trained hard core composed mostly of military men, who had for the greater part served the interest of Chiang Kaishek rather than the interest of China and the Chinese in general. What was needed now, especially in the context of the Guomindang's war programme of "Resistance and Reconstruction", was a large predominating organisation centred around China's youth, with the *Sanminzhuyi* as their guiding principles. Within this setting there was no room for the Blueshirts.

Although the Blueshirts may have disappeared from public view, in practice actually only their name was gone. Chiang had never intended to give up the organisation which he had so carefully built. In essence they still existed, primarily through integration with the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps, the members of which they tried to inspire with their ideals. Moreover, Blueshirts secret cells in all probability continued to exist independent from the Youth Corps. The disbandment of the Blueshirts was a strictly political move typical of Chiang. He wanted to strengthen his personal position with the founding of the Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps.

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The Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps was at the same time a counter-balance organisation against the various Communist Youth organisations. Chiang hoped to steal the fire of the Communists who had been very successful at recruiting youth. The Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps was less overtly anti-Communist, which represented Chiang's new found rapprochement with Communist inspired Chinese Nationalism.

The Sanminzhuyi Youth Corps was modelled on successful youth movements in other countries, most obviously resembling features of the Hitler Youth. The Guomindang was impressed by the structure, technical skills and efficiency the Hitler Youth organisation possessed. This was largely the same reason that interested Chiang in Western Fascist organisations and ideology at the time the Blueshirts were founded.

# BLUE JACKETS IN CHINA

## A Study in Colonial Fascism

By J. W. PHILLIPS

great—in eternal peace mankind would be ruined."

Chiang Kai-shek, in instructions to his troops on the Kiangsi anti-Red front said:

"The influence that the first world war gave to China cannot be said to be bad, therefore, we are not afraid of another war."

R. Palme Dutt, in his remarkable book "Fascism and Social Revolution," sums up eloquently the process of destruction that is threatening:

"The more obvious and glaring expressions of this process, the burning of foodstuffs, the dismantling of machinery that is still in good condition, strike the imagination of all. But all do not yet see the significance of these symptoms: first, through these symptoms of the whole con-

trodden. Colonial peoples, national minorities, immigrants,—these are the most lowly in the eyes of the exploiting owners of industry. It is these that feel the axe first. And China is no exception. During the past five years, the imperialist powers have redoubled their energy in exploiting the Chinese masses. Japan, Great Britain, America, France, Germany, and Italy have all done nobly by themselves in the process of chopping and slicing up this juicy morsel of the Far East. But internal affairs have made the lot of China even worse and more complex. The Chinese native landlord-bourgeoisie exploiting classes find on the one hand large sections of their own country wrested from their grasp by Japanese imperialism, and in more indirect ways, by other imperialist powers. On the other hand, one



Chiang Kaishek Receiving His Well Deserved Awards at the Hands of His Foreign Masters  
*China Today*, November 1934.



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### Re-appraising the Blueshirts as a Fascist Organisation

*To investigate reason where things begin;  
To study the hidden motive when the mind first stirs.*

*Chiang Kaishek.<sup>1</sup>*

At the beginning of the 20th century, China faced an increasing crisis of modernity. In this, China was by no means alone, as the experiences of other countries as diverse as Japan, Russia, Turkey and Egypt clearly illustrate. In each of these countries, long-established social, political and economic structures had reached the point where they were no longer viable. The paradox that confronted intellectuals and politicians in each of these countries was that the very forces that provoked this crisis were the only ones that represented any hope of getting out of it - economic transition, land reform, industrialisation, popular political representation and cultural transformation. All of these forces came under the same general heading of "Westernisation." The challenge facing the leaders of each country was to develop a response to Westernisation which would enable their country to steer a way through the severe dislocations which threatened its stability. For their part, the leaders of the Guomindang sought harmony between Western and Chinese culture.

Between 1890 and 1950 China was socially and politically unsettled. Throughout this period the country's leadership tried to build a compromise between Chinese tradition and Western technique, which appeared to represent the only chance for the survival of a distinctive Chinese nation. On

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<sup>1</sup> *Chiang Tsung-t'ung yen-lun hui-pien* [*Zongtong yanlun huibian*], (An edited collection of President Chiang Kaishek), Chiang Tsung-t'ung yen-lun hui-pien pien-chi wei-yuan-hui (ed.), 24 vols, Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chu [Zhengzhong shuju], 1956.

one occasion the high official, Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, found the courage to write:

“ To know the West without knowing China is to break one's heart.  
To know China without knowing the West is to be deaf and dumb.”<sup>2</sup>

The means of making this uneasy compromise work throughout the earlier part of the 20th century was to accept ideas from the West only as a “technique”, leaving the core of Chinese philosophy and world-view intact. The strategy was to “adopt the Western body but preserve our Chinese soul.” In a sense, this was precisely the strategy followed by Chiang Kaishek when he turned to Fascism in the 1930s. While adopting the “technique” of Fascism, Chiang Kaishek was actually seeking to reinforce the philosophical core of Confucian values which had always underpinned Chinese political theory.

The reformer Liang Qichao, without considering that the modernisation process in European countries covered a period of about 300 years, mentioned that in Japan the process of modernisation took just 30 years. Liang inferred that China should be able to undergo this process of modernisation within three years.<sup>3</sup> This was a challenging remark and, of course, not very realistic, for the process of modernisation in China needed time to develop. Furthermore, the method by which Chiang Kaishek sought to develop and modernise China in the 1930s, that is by impulse of Fascism, proved to be unsuitable for a country with a Confucian background. This idea of development concurs with the second phase of “spontaneous activism” mentioned by O’Sullivan in his description of Fascism. This development

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<sup>2</sup> Zhang Zhidong, *Zhang Wenxiang gong quanji* (The Complete Papers of Zhang Zhidong), Beijing, 1937. From his “Quanxue pian” 勸學篇 (Exhortation to learning).

<sup>3</sup> Takeuchi Hiroyuki, p.172.

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proved to be a veritable “cult of action” for the Chinese people who had been brought up with Confucian values.<sup>4</sup>

For a parallel, one might consider the process by which Buddhism developed in China. Buddhism originally came to China from India in about the 1st century A.D. Its entry to China along the trade routes from central Asia, initiated a four-century period of gradual assimilation. The Chinese developed Buddhism according to their own situation and during this period integrated Buddhism within their culture and beliefs. This process took a long time and the assimilation of Buddhism encountered resistance from, for instance, both Confucianism and Taoism, coupled with opposition from government.

However, just as in Europe the Fascist movements of the 1930s found their basis in the Christian religion, in China and Japan the European phenomenon of Fascism was integrated with the traditional values and philosophy of Confucianism and the Buddhist religion.

The immense influence that Confucius had exercised over the Chinese people for over two thousand years resulted from an acceptance of the common stock of beliefs and moulding them into a coherent system of ethics and politics. Three points of Confucius’ teachings were paramount: firstly, the emphasis which was placed upon the principle of leadership and the force of example; secondly, the enormous importance which was attached to filial piety; and thirdly, the insistence upon correct behaviour.

These points had inspired generations of Chinese leaders, guiding their actions and moulding their characters. The career and achievements of

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<sup>4</sup> O’Sullivan, pp.113-114. “It was in the last decade of the nineteenth century that the idea arose that a successful activist movement could never rely upon the spontaneous political enthusiasm of the masses. It must concentrate, instead upon activating the masses entirely from above... The activist style of politics, in a word, now began to acquire the ‘directed’ character which was later to find its supreme expression in the Fascist ideal of perfect and unquestioning submission to the will of a leader.”

Chiang Kaishek also, proved that the transforming influence of Confucian teachings and the example of great leadership were as vital and operative as at any time in the preceding three thousand years of China's history.

The interpretation of traditional virtues served as the philosophical basis for the New Life Movement, which was in fact an attempt to renovate China's moral life in harmony with traditional principles. The genuine objective of the New Life Movement was to counter Communist ideology. In the course of the struggle against the Communists, Chiang had realised that it was not so much military power as the political temper of the people that held the key to the success of his campaigns. However, the New Life Movement inspired few Chinese, and within a short space of time lost most of its attraction. Chiang expressed that the “new life” was in essence a military life, thereby stressing the disciplining, not the participation, of the populace. If Chiang had been in a position to incorporate a more overtly nationalistic charisma into the movement, than perhaps it could have developed into an important factor in organising his regime.

The Guomindang government's failure to deliver promised economic and social change meant that, throughout the Nanjing period, it also experienced a continuing loss of support. This ranged from mere political cynicism and flirtation with Communism on the one hand, to outright rebellion in Fujian on the other. In its efforts to restore lost support, and in the absence of a concrete social and political programme that was realisable in the short term, the Guomindang relied on the population's strong belief in an established order founded on a glorious past, and based its claim to legitimacy on traditional and conservative grounds. It is in the context of this general political climate that the Blueshirts Society must be located.

The Nanjing government was all but terminally weak, and seemed in effect to have the choice of enforcing its will by violence on recalcitrant and disloyal areas or else watching them drift away from its authority altogether.

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The formation of the Blueshirts represented the peak of the attempt to introduce order and control into a demoralisingly chaotic political environment. In his desire to find a proven model for radical authoritarian transformation of a political system, Chiang and his associates came across the Fascist model of other countries, like Japan, Italy and Germany. Fascism is a product of Western countries that developed, among other things, in reaction to Marxism and to Communism. In its historical context Fascism came into being in a direct reaction to Communism after the October Revolution in Russia and after World War One, before which Marxism as a socialist theory was already in existence.

Ernst Nolte has explained in his definition of Fascism that “without Marxism there is no Fascism.”<sup>5</sup> Considering this, one may argue that Fascism in China during the 1930s had its basis in the same anti-Communist and anti-Marxist approach as European Fascism. However, the social and political context of China was quite different to that of Europe. The Guomindang readily co-operated with the Chinese Communists and with the Comintern until 1927. Anti-Communism, if at all present, did not appear to hinder this partnership. After 1927 Communism presented a clearer and more immediate threat in China than it in fact did in many European countries. Moreover, this anti-Communist posture did not come directly from the common people, but was initiated and activated from above.

Another important factor was that China lacked a powerful, well established and militant working class. The country's social formation was to oblige the Communist Party to abandon the orthodox Leninist model for the formation of a mass-proletarian party in favour of a party of the mass peasantry. It was precisely the same lack of a “mass-society” in the Western

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<sup>5</sup> Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism; Action Francaise-Italian Fascism-National Socialism*, pp.20-21. See also Ernst Nolte, “The Problem of Fascism in Recent Scholarship”, in Henry A.Turner Jr.(ed.), *Reappraisals of Fascism*, New York: New Viewpoints, 1975, p.31.

sense which made it impossible to transplant the Fascist model into China intact.

Throughout the Nanjing period, Chiang Kaishek doggedly refused to deviate from his insistence on the need firstly to pacify the country, secondly, to end the Communist insurgency and, thirdly turn against the Japanese. Chiang's policy of appeasement or “first internal pacification, then external resistance” (*rangwai bixian annei* 攘外必先安內) met with strong disapproval throughout China and made it difficult for him to draw fully upon Chinese nationalism as an element for political unification. If Chiang had been capable of winning over the backing of the student demonstrators, the salvationist supporters, and the politically active common Chinese people, he might have been able to strengthen his government and military with a lot of competent people. Until the United front with the CCP in 1937, Chiang was unable to work seriously towards this. Within the Guomintang, Chiang Kaishek's power was restricted, furthermore also the Guomintang did not enjoy an unlimited power within China.<sup>6</sup>

A belief that the Blueshirts were primarily concerned with the struggle against Japan requires an explanation of why Chiang deliberately set up an organisation to further an end directly contrary to that of his most cherished political belief. Clearly, the formation and activities of the Blueshirts only make sense within the context of an explicit and militant anti-Communist policy.

Chiang endeavoured to build up a strong coherent national government able to unify China, through a right-wing, authoritarian regime

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<sup>6</sup> Hatano Kanichi, *Gendai shina no seiji to jinbutsu*, pp.54-55 : Chiang Kaishek's power was limited, for China had twenty-four provinces, of which only seven provinces (Jiangsu 江蘇, Zhejiang 浙江, Anhui 安徽, Hubei 湖北, Hunan 湖南, Hebei 河北, Henan 河南) were under Chiang Kaishek's control. Guangdong 廣東, Guangxi 廣西, Fujian 福建 and Guizhou 貴州 were nearly semi-independent provinces, while Shandong 山東, Shanxi 山西 and Sichuan 四川 were controlled by Warlords.

that was based on his military power. He was, however, sceptical of the recruitment of mass political movements. Consequently, this animosity played a significant role to disadvantage throughout his career. He may have inherited this scepticism to mass mobilisation from Sun Yatsen, who was well known to be indifferent to mass activity during most of his career.<sup>7</sup>

The Blueshirts were aware that many of the Guomindang's difficulties were attributed to its poor record on mass mobilisation and its neglect of basic “grass roots activities”, for abandoning the work of mass mobilisation meant that the people were left to Communist influence. The Blueshirts therefore developed a programme of mass mobilisation, but did not see the full advantage of their work.

When Manchuria was handed over to the Japanese without a fight, Chiang lost considerable support from important Chinese groups and politicians. Clearly, the Blueshirts came into being as a direct result of this contention, rather than the threat exercised by the Chinese Communists. The Guomindang had been confronted by their resistance activities as early as 1927. The invasion of Manchuria once more demonstrated how vulnerable China was. It induced the idea of forming a well-disciplined and organised group as a means, in first instance, of militarising Chinese society. Military education from an early age, starting at primary school, was a new phenomenon in Chinese society.

What did the Blueshirts mean to the Republican period? It is easy to sum up a whole list of ideas, activities and reforms generated by the Blueshirts. However, the cornerstone of their policy was political unification, and national and territorial integration. More significant and important to the Blueshirts was that this was the first time in Guomindang history that a well-structured group of well-educated people ranged around one leader,

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<sup>7</sup> Sow-theng Leong, “Sun Yatsen's International Orientation, The Soviet Phase, 1917-1925”, in *Sun Yatsen, His International Ideas and International Connections*, J.Y. Wong (ed.), p.80.

supported him and promoted his ideas. Although the Blueshirts did not represent the whole Guomindang, their influence was diverse and they were supposed to be everywhere, organising, controlling, spying and revising.

The Blueshirts were, above all, devoted to Chiang. They made it possible for him to remain in power. Chiang, for his part, did not want to be openly committed to them, although each understood the extent of their dependence on the other. This situation actually never changed, not even during the war with Japan or afterwards.

Chiang Kaishek was not a demagogue like Mussolini or Hitler, he lacked, for instance, their rhetoric gifts. However, having received a military education, he had other qualities. It is therefore justifiable to conclude that, without the Blueshirts' support and protection, Chiang would not have survived as the leader of the Republican period. The Legislative *Yuan* in Taiwan nowadays has five factional groups. Among these groups is the so-called United Caucus Clique (*Lianhe zuotanhui pai* 聯合座談會派), which is a coalition of the following groups already existing before 1949: graduates of the Whampoa Military Academy, members of the *Sanminzhuyi* Youth Corps, members of the Fuxingshe and the followers of Zhu Jiahua.<sup>8</sup> This United Caucus Clique is the largest and most important faction since the 1950s in the Legislative Yuan. This indicates that support for Chiang Kaishek by groups and people related to the Blueshirts continued after the war with Japan, and also after the Guomindang left mainland China.

A Chinese Fascist ideology developed under the influence of Blueshirt ideologists. In the beginning, these Blueshirts ideologists emphasised the obvious example and propagated Italian Fascism, for until then that was the most successful regime. This "trend" of Italian Fascism found followers in

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<sup>8</sup> Hung-mao Tien, *The Great Transition, Political and Social Change in the Republic of China*, Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1989, pp.147-148.



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important Guomindang leaders, for example Liu Wendao, the Chinese ambassador and others who had paid visits to Italy, like Zhang Xueliang. J.S.Barnes' book the *Universal Aspects of Fascism*, was widely cited in China at the time. It states:

Fascists in each country must make Fascism their own national movement, adopting symbols and tactics that conform to the traditions, psychology and tastes of their own land.<sup>9</sup>

Mussolini praised Fascism as “a purely Italian phenomenon in its historical expression, but its doctrinal postulates have a universal character.”<sup>10</sup> With that description, the Chinese ideologists felt quite comfortable with a free interpretation and use of the term “Fascism” in the Chinese context.

The economic relationship with Italy, however, never met that with Germany. Especially after the rise to power of the Nazis, the focus for inspiration about Fascism turned for the larger part to Germany. Relationships with Germany were structured foremost through Chinese intellectuals dealing with economic development in the Guomindang regime and not primarily through militarists. In practice, this meant that China's army and industry were modernised with the assistance of the Germans, while hardly any direct influence of this aid was felt in Chinese society at large. The ideological influence of Germany remained restricted to quite a few Chinese.

Until 1910, many Chinese students studying abroad went to Japan. After 1920, this trend changed and the numbers of students studying in Europe and the USA increased. This contributed to the fact that Fascist movements became well known among Chinese literati. Therefore, the

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Michael R. Godley, “Lessons from an Italian Connection”, In David Pong and Edmund S.K. Fung (eds.), p.101.

<sup>10</sup> James S. Barnes, *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, London: 1929, in the “Preface.”

sizeable number of Chinese officers who studied abroad, many of them in Germany and Italy, but also France, may have contributed to European Fascist influence in China.

Fascism was fashionable in those days, and in that respect the Blueshirts were no exception. The ideology they were propagating, however, was alien to the Chinese people. It therefore proved difficult to draw their full support. Only a few Chinese could read or write. This was one of the reasons why Fascist propaganda failed in large part to influence the people. Also, very few people in China in the 1920-30s had an understanding of what Fascism actually meant. They often took it to mean a kind of absolute rule or dictatorship, which is indeed a preposterous statement, especially as there were many absolute rulers in history who were clearly not Fascists. In fact, Fascism did not suit China then. China was far behind the rest of the world as far as economic development was concerned. There were also no underlying forces in China looking for a way to take over the government by means of a Fascist regime. China had, as a matter of course, to resist Imperialism. She had a strong determination to shake off the yoke of foreign aggression and to fight for her economic and political independence.

All in all, the Guomindang's experiment with Fascism was doomed to fail, simply because the circumstances did not meet the conditions required for Fascism, like they did in Europe or in Japan. The short trend that Fascism enjoyed in China illustrates the difficulties in transferring political concepts from one nation to another. Chinese Fascism did not contain a form of racism, like in the Nazi ideology, and it should be seen more as a kind of clannishness. This was a more general phenomenon in China and not one restricted to Chinese Fascism. It was more in similarity with the Chinese secret societies. The Blueshirts, and the Chinese in general, were xenophobic, an emotion which at the time was strongly directed towards the Japanese.

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The precise degree to which there was an influence of traditional secret societies on the Blueshirts is difficult to estimate, but there were undoubtedly strong similarities between the two phenomena. The analogy is determined from the secrecy that surrounded the establishment of the Blueshirts in 1932, and the way they operated during the course of their existence. One may cite, for instance, The recruitment of members, the organisational features and the way the members kept in touch with each other.

Secrecy was a condition to be met in all cases, members of the Blueshirts having to swear unconditional loyalty to the society and to be prepared to sacrifice their life, liberty and rights in the interest of the society. The names *Lanyishe* 藍衣社 (Blueshirt Society) and *Lixingshe* 力行社 (Implementation Society) contain within them the term *she* 社, which was one of the traditional generation status-groups within the Qing Bang. A particular characteristic of secret societies is that they could disguise themselves as open associations, like friendship clubs, or maintain both their existence and their functions in strict secrecy. This specific trademark of the secret societies was frequently used by the Blueshirts .

Chiang drew on the experiences of various constituencies within the Guomindang when founding the Blueshirts. Students who had studied in Japan had been influenced by the Japanese Fascist movement. They brought to the ideological melting pot ideas flavoured with the typical Japanese military and extreme nationalistic thought of the Black Dragon Society. The way the Blueshirts seemed to function in Chinese society paralleled the methods of the Black Dragon Society in Japan. Following Chiang's visit to Japan in September 1927, Whampoa graduates, many of whom were to become Blueshirts, were systematically sent to Japan for further training.

It is moreover conceivable that when the Blueshirts were established, by individuals with a military background in Japan, this was done with the Japanese Black Dragon organisation very much borne in mind. In a historical

way there is a strong connection between both the Japanese Black Dragon (action) and Black Ocean (knowledge) Societies and the Chinese Blueshirts and C.C.Clique. The ideas developed by the Japanese secret societies were to some degree used and further perfected by the C.C.Clique and the Blueshirts. The concept of duality of thinking has been a procedure in China for centuries and the Japanese had borrowed the same idea and modelled it into a practical instrument. Hence, in a broader sense, one may say that knowledge or theory which was developed in China was adopted by the Japanese and moulded into a practical methodology by them. In that respect, the analogy of “knowledge and action” continues, China representing “knowledge” and Japan “action.”

The Blueshirts, however, did not need to look at the Japanese secret societies for traditional features, such as oaths and secrecy, but they sought their spirit and military way of organisation, something that was lacking in the traditional Chinese secret societies. The connection of the Guomindang with the Black Dragon Society goes back to the relationship Sun Yatsen and more generally the revolutionaries had with it. It seems that Chiang wanted to renew this contact when he visited Toyama Mitsuru, the founder of the Black Dragon and a friend of Sun while in Japan.<sup>11</sup> Was Chiang in some way looking for help from Toyama? Was it a coincidence that Chiang resigned in 1927 and visited Japan to contact, among others, Toyama, and from 1928 Whampoa students were sent to study in Japan? Whatever the connection may be, the Blueshirts had a strong and unmistakable tie to the Black Dragon Society.

The founders of the Blueshirts had borrowed organisational characteristics from the Japanese Black Dragon and Black Ocean Societies. The Black Dragon Society also functioned as a centre for the creation of legal

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<sup>11</sup> Wilson, p.47.

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organisations, a function which to some extent paralleled the way the Blueshirts operated in Chinese society. While both organisations remained ostensibly secret, their memberships strove to find outlets through the establishment of legal organisations. Many of the men in key positions in the Japanese Government and in the bodies directing Japanese intelligence activities were known to have been members of the Black Dragon Society or of one of its affiliates. This situation closely mirrors the activities of the Blueshirts in China and suggests a parallel between the two organisation

One of the reasons why the Blueshirts failed to implement Fascism in China was that the Chinese secret societies and Fascism were actually incompatible. The mentality of Chinese secret societies and Fascism did not match, for Fascism needed to flourish in the open, not in secret. Fascism sought to appeal to the masses in a way that made the people conscious and proud of their nationality.

The fact that the Blueshirts may have been organised along the lines of a secret society may also be better understood against the background of Chiang's policy, especially the remark made to Hu Zhengzhi 胡政之, president of the *Dagongbao* 大公報 in 1933: "When people exactly know the truth, it is much easier for my political opponents to destroy this organisation."<sup>12</sup> Chiang did not want to admit openly his and the Blueshirts' advocacy of Fascism. Another reason for these emphatic denials of a connection with Chinese Fascist organisations is possibly due to Chiang's fear of losing the considerable financial support of other countries like the USA. The Japanese did quite the contrary, by intentionally referring to the Lixingshe from the very beginning of their investigations as the Blueshirts. Through the connection with a Fascist-minded organisation with the name

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<sup>12</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha ni kansuru chosa* (An Investigation of the Blueshirts). Issued by the Research Division of Foreign Ministry, marked "secret" 1936, p.40.

"Blueshirts," the Japanese tried to harm Chiang's and the Guomindang's reputation in the eyes of nations friendly to China.

There were differences between Fascism in Japan and China. For instance, in Japan, early Fascism was given shape by civilian Fascist movements and later taken over by the military. In China, Fascism started with the military, i.e. the Blueshirts, who in turn tried to form a Fascist society. Clannishness played an important role within the oriental form of Fascism, be it in Japan or in China, and this can be traced back to the relationship that existed between members of secret societies. Connections between people from the same province or city was of significance. Having the same relations or knowing the same people was also meaningful. For example Chiang Kaishek and the main core of the Blueshirts came from the same province (Zhejiang) and many members also had a connection with Japan, or had met each other in Japan. The same concept counts for Japan, where Uchida and Toyama also came from the same place, *Kushu*, and were both sons of former *Han's* 藩 lower class Samurai.

A strong point of Japanese Fascism was that it was able to win the support of the believers of the state religion *Shinto*, for among this believers were many young soldiers, and they were eager to absorb the Fascist ideas. The idea to involve many young soldiers inspired, for at that time Japan had a compulsory military service, and the number of soldiers with a religious (Buddhist) background increased. In China, which had no compulsory military service system or an overt religious presence with the army, the situation was different.

The technique used by the nucleus of the Blueshirts - that is, working within the Guomindang organisation without being recognised - was to their advantage. In this way most of the bureaucracy could be avoided and they felt free to act without being limited by procedures.

It is not entirely clear how the Blueshirts managed to finance their

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costly organisation. For the years between 1926 and 1936, a total of 3,758 days, the Guomindang engaged in thirteen civil war campaigns, and of the Guomindang's total income, 92.22 % was spent on the military budget.<sup>13</sup> However, it is obvious that the main stream of money came from, or was indirect connected with, Chiang Kaishek. The opium special tax revenue was a huge source of income to the government, and the Blueshirts had their share of this tax income.

Methodological differences still play an important role in interpreting the ideology of the Blueshirts. This is clearly evidenced in recently published books about the Blueshirts in mainland China and Taiwan. These books contain a strong political bias, especially the sections concerning Chiang's financial manipulations in connection with the Blueshirts.

In 1934, Chiang analysed China's situation with respect to Japan, and concluded that the Chinese had in fact over-estimated their power. One of the reasons for this was that information about Japan was often second hand in nature. Another, possibly the most important reason, was that the Chinese judged Japan from an emotional rather than a rational standpoint. Actually most Chinese were not really anti-Japanese at hearts. The Japanese, on the other hand, had under-estimated the Chinese. They supposed that China was still hopelessly divided and that the Guomindang was not beyond the phase of a revolutionary movement. Another important mistake the Japanese made in their assessment of the Chinese people was not to recognise that the Chinese nation was bound together by Sunism. The Chinese could be anti-government, but people were hardly anti-Sun Yatsen, which counted for both the CCP and the Guomindang.

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<sup>13</sup> Lee Chihtang (Tian Chin Yung Pao's president), *Nanjing Se Fu no Hi Sei*, The Kuomintang's Government's Staff Policy, p.2, *Guowen zhoubao*, vol.13-6, p.50.

Chiang was a master in double policy, which he showed many times both in his attitude to the Japanese and the CCP, and also in negotiations with Western countries. This attitude of Chiang played also a significant role in his approach to Fascism and the Blueshirts.

Many scholars writing about Chinese history have drawn attention to this period, but most of them echo the current opinion that the Blueshirts tried to imitate European Fascism. The two scholars who analysed the Blueshirts more thoroughly than others, Maria Hsia Chang and Lloyd E. Eastman, arrived at diametrically opposed conclusions to this question.

In summary, Eastman's final comments on this question amount to: "Opinions on whether the Blueshirts were a Fascist organisation or not will inevitably differ. But it is crystal clear that - however committed the Lixingshe leadership may at one time have been to Fascism as an explicit method of national revival - overt and direct Fascist influence on the Lixingshe was short-lived."<sup>14</sup> In his earlier works on the Blueshirts, Eastman provides less nuance and depicts the Blueshirts as a Fascist organisation largely influenced by the Nazis. He emphasised the influence the German military advisory commission had on the development of Fascism in China, mentioning the German advisers Bauer and Kriebel as the spiritual forerunners of Nazism. Eastman structures the development of Fascism in China around this premise.

This thesis concludes that the direct influence of the Nazis on the Blueshirts through the military advisory commission in China, especially in 1928-31, was minimal. In this respect, it departs from the findings of Eastman. Most of these early advisers were German civilians and at the time anti-Nazi. The first stay in China of Kriebel, who was a Nazi, was too short to be of great influence on the Chinese officer corps. After 1934, the Nazi

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<sup>14</sup> Eastman, "A Review Article", p.43.



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influence on the Chinese officer corps may have gradually increased, but never to the extent that it dominated. The Chinese managed their own organisations and did not allow any foreign control.

Maria Chang has been too inclined to take paper declarations at face value, and to assume that the Blueshirts genuinely strove to put into practice the ideals to which they dedicated themselves. The political context in which these documents were produced, and how they served to rally individuals to the existing political programmes of the Guomindang leadership must be borne in mind. By translating the name *Fuxingshe* rather poetically as “The Renaissance Society”, and by discussing the Blueshirts’ declarations rather than their activities, Chang leaves the reader with little idea of the real political world of China in the 1930s. There is nothing in her analysis to suggest that the Nationalists were conducting systematic extermination campaigns against the Communists in Jiangxi, or that these succeeded in finally driving the Chinese Communists on the *Long March*. Her account ignores the relationship with the Qing Bang, and the political assassinations that were a key part of the Blueshirts activities. It is only when placed in the context of the Blueshirts’ activities that their declared aims can be judged.

It is certain that the ideas of Fascism could not ultimately be reconciled with Sun Yatsen’s desire for democracy. Sun’s system, where the party government was designed to be democratic in structure, differs from Fascist rule, which overtly takes the form of a personal dictatorship. The Fascist dictatorship seems to be an end in itself and not a means of realising an ideally democratic government as foreseen by Sun’s ideas.

Though Fascism represented a new force, it proved to be a principle incapable of general application. China notably lacked the underlying forces necessary to prepare the way for its realisation. In these circumstances, the Blueshirts represented an unsuccessful experiment with Fascism, both for the Guomindang and for Chiang.

An address made by Chiang to the People's Political Council in 1938 attested to the fact that democracy was worthy of (re)consideration. He possibly realised that it was never too late to change one's views. He stated:

Twenty seven years have passed since the founding of the Chinese Republic. During this period, there have been a number of so-called popular assemblies, but no real democracy or constitutionalism. Besides, the numerous corruptive practices that unfortunately accompanied these earlier assemblies had directly or indirectly plunged the nation into unusual chaos and weakness. As a result our country today is being subjected to oppression and humiliation by our enemies. Of course, the People's Political Council is not a parliament, but you should remember the past mistakes of party politics as a constant warning, and at the same time strive hard for the laying of a firm basis for the realisation of a truly democratic form of government in this country.<sup>15</sup>

It is possible that Chiang felt the opportunity was ripe to talk about democracy again. The Blueshirts had been "disbanded" and a Youth Corps representing all Chinese youth had been founded. However, Chiang's rhetoric, and that of his immediate followers, failed to be translated into action. Although Chiang may have spoken of democracy in October 1938, documents from Germany and the Zhu Jiahua Archives prove that in May 1938 as acting secretary of the Youth Corps, Zhu asked for - and received - materials on Nazi organisation and the Hitler Youth. Chiang's motives are again called into question. A war was going on and the Guomindang had been forced into an uneasy alliance with the CCP in order to fight the Japanese. Chiang seemed nevertheless to be planning his own political agenda which departed from CCP co-operation.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, the answer to the question of whether the Blueshirts were Fascist has to be posed within the context of the working definition of Fascism given earlier. The organisation initially came into being due to the

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<sup>15</sup> *China Today*, vol.5, nr.1, October 1938, "Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek Speaks for Democracy", p.9.

<sup>16</sup> TB, 6020, *Tekika Mikataka?* (Enemy or Friends?), pp.18-30.

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threat posed to China by foreign invasion and as the result of the menace of social revolution on the part of the Chinese Communists. From the outset the organisation therefore espoused a militantly anti-Communist policy. It rejected materialism, liberalism and advocated a revival of traditional Chinese values. The Blueshirts were built up by the ruling class, that is, the right wing élite within the Guomindang. They tried to get a firm grip on Chinese society as a whole by organising labour unions, establishing youth organisations and setting up cultural societies. Furthermore, military models of organisation, particularly through the youth movement, were imposed upon Chinese society as a whole.

This thesis has shown that the Blueshirts fall well within the working definition of Fascism arrived at in Chapter One. Therefore, the Blueshirts can be considered as a Fascist organisation, albeit representative of an idiosyncratic form of Fascism. That their leaders always denied the existence of the Blueshirts and their own membership of the organisation, is in sharp contrast to European Fascist movements.

An assessment based on the primary sources employed in this study, many of which have not been used before, justifies the conclusion that the Blueshirts were Fascists - or at least tried to create a Fascist society in China. It was arguably the propaganda, publications and activities of the Blueshirts, rather than their own Fascist ideology in itself, that led to them being labelled Fascists. This view is supported in the documents of the many foreign observers living and working in China in the 1930s. The re-assessment of the Blueshirts as a Fascist organisation should be apprehended in political rather than in analytical terms. That Chiang Kaishek and the leaders of the Blueshirts mostly denied their preference for Fascism in public is unimportant for, conversely, these denials merely determined their Fascist label.

## Appendix 1

*Chiang Kaishek and his secret societies*<sup>1</sup>

The name of the Society or Group	The name of the main leader	Foundation and Organisation	Activities of the Society or Group
The Blueshirt Society <i>Lanyishe</i> 藍衣社	President :Chiang Kaishek 蔣介石	Commander of all networks	The centre of activities for all secret societies
C.C.Clique 陳 & 陳 團	Leader: Chen Brothers Nucleus members: Luo Jialun, 羅家倫 Xu Enzeng, 徐恩增 Yu Jingtang, 余井塘	Mainly connected with the Organisation Department and Central Police Academy	The party offices in each province had over 15 members
Xingying fumi julebu 行營副秘俱樂部	Leader: Yang Yongtai, 楊永泰 Nucleus member: Wang Shihe 王世和, Deng Wenyi 鄧文義, He Chuhan 何楚漢	In Nanchang its main members were found	Supporting Chiang Kaishek checking all societies and groups
Gancheng tonglian hui 干城同聯會	Leader: Chen Cheng 陳誠 Nucleus member: Wang Jingjiu 王敬久, Song Xilian 宋希濂	Three different divisions	military influence
Lizhishe 勵志社	Leader: Wang Lizhang 汪立章, Nucleus member: Luo Ming 羅明	Below the divisions other branches were established in many places	Military Club The leader, Wang Lizhang and Chiang Kaishek had a special connection
Tongweishe 同維社	Leader: Xiong Shisuo 熊式蓑	basic ground for its activities is Jiangxi province	Centre is in Jiangxi but gradually extended power to Hunan and Hubei
Huangpu tongxuehui 黃埔同學會	Leader: He Zhonghan 賀衷寒 Chief: Yan Bailing 嚴百齡	Graduates from Whampoa Military Academy, every year was represented.	Combined activities with the Blueshirts. This group spread out over many places especially in big cities.

<sup>1</sup> TB, 2196, *Ranisha no soshiki to han man konichi katsudo no jitsu rei.*

**Appendix 1** continued

*Chiang Kaishek and his secret societies*

<b>The name of the Society or Group</b>	<b>The name of the main leader</b>	<b>Foundation and Organisation</b>	<b>Activities of the Society or Group</b>
Xianbing ganbutuan 憲兵 干部團	Leader: Gu Zhenglun 谷正倫, Main member: Ji Zhangjian 吉章簡	Basically a training place for the Military Police	Surrounding <i>Chang Jiang</i> . Control of the opium sale via black routes. This money was used to support Chiang Kaishek.
Zhongyang junxiao shisheng yanjiuhui 中央軍校師生研 究會	Leader: Zhang Zhizhong 張治中 main member: Shi Guozhen 史國鎮		
He xi 何系 (He Yingqin's connection)	Leader: He Yingqin 何應欽		
Wan xi 皖系 (Anhui connection)	Leader: Chen Tiaoyuan 陳調元		
Zhe xi 浙系 (Zhejiang connection)			
Xu xi, 徐系 (Xu Tingyao's connection 徐庭瑤)	The leader of Xu Tingyao 徐庭瑤 and the Seventeenth Route Army		
Huang ling ma gua 黃綾馬卦	Only the students of the first to the third class of the Whampoa Military Academy	Current staffs from the Central Army	

## Appendix 2

### *Death List*

NA, SMP, Special Branch, File nr. D4685, 25 July 1933. The American controlled Shanghai newspaper Evening Post & Mercury, published a death list; and PRO, FO 371/17142 xc 930, 24 August, 1933, p.467.

#### **List of names:**

Chen Shaoyu	Chinese Communist Party leader, (Wang Ming's alias)
Chin Panhsien (Jin Banxian)	Chinese Communist Party leader
Chao Yun	Chinese Communist Party leader, (Kang Sheng's alias)
Liah Chensen (Liang Zhensen)	Chinese Communist Party leader
Li Chusen (Li Zhusen)	Chinese Communist Party leader
Hu Hanmin	Leader of the Right Guomindang(anti-Chiang)
Hsiao Fuchen (Xiao Fuzhen)	Canton (Guangdong) politician
Hsiang Hanpi (Xiang Hanpi)	Kwangtung (Guangdong) Army
Teng Tsayu (Deng Zayou)	Canton politician
Tsou Lo	Canton politician, President of Sun (Zou Luo) Yatsen university
Li Chisen (Li Zhisen)	Kwangsi (Guangxi) General

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Chen Chitang (Chen Zhidang)	Kwangtung Warlord
Li Yangchin (Li yangqin)	Kwangtung Army commander
Yu Hanmo (Yu Hanmo)	Kwangtung Army commander
Hsiang Hanoin (Xiang Han?)	Kwangtung Army commander
Huang Jenfan (Huang Renfan)	Kwangtung Army commander
Feng Lunkwan (Feng Lunguan)	Kwangtung Army commander
Li Chungjen (Li Zhongren)	Kwangsi General
Pei Chungshih (Pei Zhongshi)	Kwangsi General
Huang Chilü (Huang Zhilü)	Hu Hanmin follower
Chen Eugene	assistant of Huang Chilü, now with the South West Political Council.
Chang Fahkwei (Zhang Fagui)	Kwangsi General, onetime “Ironsides” commander
Teng Chailiang (Deng Zhongshi)	
Kwei Chungshih (Gui Zhongshi)	Hu Hanmin follower
Ling chimang (Ling Jimang)	Canton politician
Lin Yichun	Kwangtung Provincial Government member

Chen Lienpeh (Chen Lianbei)	Hongkong & Shanghai Bank compradore,
Hu Molan	Hu Hanmin's daughter
Chen Chien (Chen Jian)	C.E.C. of the Guomindang, former 6th Army commander
Tang Mosin (Tang Moxin)	Former Szechuan military leader
Fan Tinyin	Onetime subordinate of Chiang Kaishek
Chen Chaoya	C.E.C. of the Guomindang
Peh wenwei (Pei Wenwei)	C.E.C. of the Guomindang
Hsun Kewu (Xun Kewu)	Szechuan (Sichuan) military leader
Chang Chipen (Zhang Jiben)	Former Chekiang Provincial chairman
Chang Tifan (Zhang Difan)	Kwangsi politician
Ho Shihchen (He Shizhen)	Hu Hanmin follower
Chen wei	Hu Hanmin follower
Chen Mingshu	One time 19th Route Army commander
Chiang Kwangnai (Jiang Guangnai)	Chairman of Fukien (Fujian) Province
Tsai Tingkai (Cai Dinggai)	Commander of 19th Route Army
Chang Yen (Zhang Yan)	19th Route Army divisional commander



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Tang Chesu (Tang Zhesu)	
Wang Lishih (Wang Lishi)	Chen Mingshu follower
Chen Chunfu	Chen Mingshu follower
Seng Chengya	Hu Hanmin follower
Feng Yuhsiang (Feng Yuxiang)	Northern warlord
Fang Cangwu	Feng follower
Sh'ao Tupi (Shao Dubi)	Feng follower
Chi Hanchang (Ji Hanchang)	Feng follower
Yang Chien (Yang Jian)	General Secretary of League for Civil Rights (murdered on 18 June 1933)
Lu Sin (Lu Xun)	China's foremost writer
Mo Tu (Mo Du)	Best known of younger writers in China
Chen Pingho (Chen Pinghe)	Former editor of the Shun Pao (Shenbao), big Shanghai daily newspaper
Hu Yutze (Hu Yuze)	Formerly editor of Eastern Miscellany, popular monthly magazine
Tien Han (Tian Han)	Well-known left dramatist
Wang Chaoshih (Wang Zhaoshi)	leader of the Statist or "Nationalist" party

## Abbreviations

AAPA	Auswärtiges Amt, Politisches Archiv, Bonn
BA	Bundesarchiv, Abteilungen Potsdam
DZA	Deutsches Zentral Archiv, Potsdam
FO	Great Britain, Foreign Office, Public Record Office, London
FOH	Foreign Office Archives, The Hague
GA	Guomindang Archives (Historical Committee of the Central Committee of Nationalist Party), Taibei
HAPRO	Handels Gesellschaft für Industrielle Produkte
JMFA	Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, Tokyo
MAE	Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
NA	National Archives and Record Service, Washington DC
NCDN	<i>North China Daily News</i>
NCH	<i>North China Herald</i>
NIDS	National Institute for Defence Studies, Tokyo
SHXW	<i>Shehui xinwen (The Society Mercury)</i> , Shanghai
SIF	Shanghai Investigation Files
SNHA	Second National Historical Archives of China, Nanjing
SMA	Shanghai Municipal Archives, Shanghai
SMP	Shanghai Municipal Police
TB	Toyo Bunko (Oriental Collection), Tokyo
ZStA	Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Potsdam

Note: Different names and abbreviations have been used in the older secondary literature to describe the same archive in Potsdam, Germany, namely DZA= Deutsches Zentral Archiv (institutional name used during the early years of the German Democratic Republic); ZStA=Zentrales Staatsarchiv (institutional name used during the later years of the GDR). After German reunification the name was changed to Bundesarchiv, Abteilungen Potsdam.

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