

The Darkest Red Corner

Chinese Communist Intelligence and Its Place in the Party,
1926-1945



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the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy

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Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted previously, either in its entirety or substantially, for a higher degree or qualifications at any other university or institute of higher learning.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources has been acknowledged.

Matthew James Brazil

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AB Corps	Anti-Bolshevik Corps	
BI	Background Investigation	
CCP	Chinese Communist Party	
CC	Central Committee	
CCSO	Central Committee Special Operations	
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	
CMC	Central Military Commission	
COMINT	Communications Intelligence	
Comintern	Communist International	
CSB	Central Statistics Bureau (<i>Zhongtong ju</i>)	
CSD	Central Social Department (<i>Zhongyang shehui bu</i>)	
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International	
GMD	See KMT	
GRU	Chief Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff (<i>Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravlenie</i>)	
HUMINT	Human Intelligence	
KMT	Kuomintang (<i>Guomindang</i>)	
MPS	Ministry of Public Security	

MSB	Military Statistics Bureau (<i>Juntong ju</i>)
NKVD <i>Del</i>	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (<i>Narodny Komisariat Vnutrennikh Del</i>)
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PPB	Political Protection Bureau
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSB	Public Security Bureau
SAD	See CSD
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service

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Chapter One

Introduction

Making the Past Serve the Present, Versus Straight Answers

What was the role of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) intelligence services in achieving their movement's 1949 victory? Why did the Party found CCP Intelligence¹ as an organ of the Central Committee (CC) in 1927, and then upgrade it to Department level status in 1939? Since 1980 the Party has allowed the publication of several dozen books, some films, and numerous magazine articles discussing the history of its intelligence operations during the Chinese Communist Revolution. All are in Chinese, and seem aimed at an educated middle class domestic audience—the same people who populate China's "blogosphere" which the PRC government seems anxious to monitor and control. These publications and films discuss CCP espionage and other intelligence collection, counterespionage, counterintelligence, security work, and covert action² during the Chinese Communist Revolution (1927-1949). They depict CCP Intelligence as subordinate to the top political elite, while sometimes diverting blame for its setbacks and "mistakes" to other senior people. Though some materials in Chinese from Taiwan

¹ The Chinese Communist Party reorganized and changed the name of its main intelligence and security service four times (by an alternative count, five) between 1927 and 1949. Sometimes the organizations had both an overt designation and a real name known only to persons inside the Party with a need to know to do their jobs. Where appropriate this study will refer to the proper names that predominate in the Chinese language literature and in existing English language studies: in mid-1927, the Special Operations Work Division (*Tewu gongzuo chu*), subordinate to the military department of the Party Central Committee; from November 1927 to early 1938, the Central Committee Special Operations Branch (CCSO, the *Zhongyang tebie renwu gongzuo ke*, or *Teke*); the "Defense" (*Baowei*) organizations that appeared under Mao's Red Fourth Army in 1929, nominally under the Soviet government which became the Central Committee's Central Political Protection Bureau (*Zhongyang zhengzhi baowei ju*) in late 1931 and the Northwest Political Protection Bureau in 1935; and from 1938-1949, the Central Social Department (CSD, the *Zhongyang shehuibu*; the body is often referred to as SAD, Social Affairs Department, though the word "affairs" is not contained in the Chinese title). When speaking about more than one of these periods, or when simplicity demands it, I use the generic term "CCP Intelligence" since these organizations were all directly under the CCP's senior leaders after 1927, whether or not the Party was fully united.

² These terms and others are defined at the end of this chapter.

and Hong Kong are also available, the mainland works have mostly defined the conversation. As we will discuss in subsequent chapters, they leave unclear some aspects of the significance of CCP Intelligence in the Chinese Revolution, and its place in the Party.

In February 1962, CCP Chairman Mao Zedong, the “great leader” of his time still revered by millions, wrote a directive that “the past should serve the present, and foreign things should serve China” (*gu wei jin yong, yang wei Zhong yong*).³ When considering what information to release about the specialized topic of CCP Intelligence history, the present PRC government and the ruling Communist Party still appear guided by this 50 year old instruction. It is difficult to establish that some in the Party actually fear unrest would result from revelation of embarrassing facts about CCP Intelligence history. While there may be some concern on that score, we are probably seeing strict control of information in an administrative exercise by intelligence bureaucrats, similar to the US Central Intelligence Agency’s administration of Freedom of Information Act records requests.⁴ However, the present PRC government systematically controls information about its own history, and the story of CCP Intelligence is an element of it. The way the Chinese state administers this slice of its historical narrative is an example of efficiency, and even elegance and style,⁵ when compared to their control of discourse on other

³ Geremie R. Barme, *In the Red: On Contemporary Chinese Culture*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 382.

⁴ The author made early requests for records (2003, 2004) on this topic to the US agency which were never answered or acknowledged.

⁵ Not to pretend that Chinese authorities are infallible, but CCP control over this topic *sometimes* seems nearly as strong and consistent, yet as invisible, as gravity—especially when contrasted to the brutality often observed when the CCP confronts unhappy minorities and dissidents. Popular books and films seem to stay with a “script” on CCP Intelligence history even while those of a more documentary nature such as “Annals” (*nianpu*) and diaries (*riji*) will more closely follow documented events and sometimes contradict them. On a personal level, this author’s requests for information were ignored when submitted in writing to the Ministry of State Security and to the PRC author Hao Zaijin, but handled politely and even in a friendly manner when he made a “cold call” at the MSS controlled China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) in 2004. I made this visit after speaking with James Mulvenon, who a year earlier had been allowed into the CICIR book store and walked out with as much as he could carry. Unfortunately his visit was followed by a policy shift that excluded foreigners from entering the book shop,

controversial topics. It is not unusual to hear that the Party first allowed, and then stopped distribution of a book or film about corruption, dissidents, or exploited peasants, often in a way that makes the Party look brutal or ridiculous. However, reports of banned works about CCP Intelligence are rare, in spite of how many have appeared.⁶ That indicates the probability that *anything on this topic is carefully reviewed at a central level well before publication*—an effort that began in 1983 when the new Ministry of State Security set up a headquarters group to both write and vet such studies. They eventually became the Intelligence History Research Division (*Qingbao shi yanjiu chu*).⁷ On the surface, the division and its successors appear more sophisticated than those other CCP officials responding to research about human rights questions and the problems of political dissidents. Chinese researchers might even need to seek their official approval before beginning work (a review of available literature from China and other sources will follow in Chapter Two).

The timing and manner of the CCP's release of information on intelligence work appears to operate on two principles. First, as just noted, Party officials seem to have decided that they must stay firmly in control of the dominant public narrative, the “script” on CCP Intelligence. Books, articles, and films on this topic almost invariably advance the positive legacies of Chairman Mao, Zhou Enlai (CCP Intelligence founder now treated in an almost saintly fashion), and other celebrated former leaders, and therefore help preserve the legitimacy of Party and state power as

according to a CICIR historian I met in this instance. However, he sent me packing not impolitely with a brief conversation, smiles, and a small selection of relevant books, gratis. Of course, this kid gloves treatment was given to a Western scholar.

⁶ An exception: a book by the Party historian Gao Hua which generally discusses the 1942-44 Rectification Campaign but has chapters about the role of CCP Intelligence in it. Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenme shengqi de* [How did the Red Sun Rise Over Yan'an: A History of the Rectification Movement] (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2000). This work was banned in China but as of 2008 was in its eighth printing in Hong Kong.

⁷ David Chambers, “Edging in from the Cold: Chinese Intelligence Histories in the post-Mao era” in *Studies in Intelligence*, forthcoming in Autumn, 2012.

the nature of socialism changes. Almost every mainland Chinese publisher on this topic is in Beijing or a provincial capital, controlled or easily monitored by the CCP Propaganda Department: no China-based independent publisher intrudes into this space, with the exception of a few in Hong Kong. Second, the Party keeps tight control over original sources. There was no opening of security service archives as happened in Russia for a brief period under Boris Yeltsin—though Party and perhaps military archives were probably used by CCP-supervised Chinese researchers like Hao Zaijin, Mu Xin, Kai Cheng, Yin Qi, and others cited in later chapters, and the more independent researcher Gao Hua. Such archives are especially not available to foreign researchers, perhaps because they (we) have no stake in preserving the Party’s legacy. With two known exceptions,⁸ these approved works on CCP intelligence were published after the “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China” adopted at the Eleventh CCP Congress in June 1981. It said that Chairman Mao

made gross mistakes during the "cultural revolution", but, if we judge his activities as a whole, his contributions to the Chinese revolution far outweigh his mistakes.

And:

Many outstanding leaders of our Party made important contributions to the formation and development of Mao Zedong Thought, and they are synthesized in the scientific works of Comrade Mao Zedong.⁹

⁸ Li Yimin and Huang Guoping, *Li Yimin Huiyilu [The Memoirs of Li Yimin]* (Wuhan: Hubei Renmin Chubanshe, 1980) is the first known work treating Party intelligence work in the Chinese Revolution to be openly published and available to anyone. Mu Xin, *Chen Geng Tongzhi Zai Shanghai [Comrade Chen Geng in Shanghai]* (Beijing: Wenshi Zike Chubanshe, 1980) was published as a *neibu* or “restricted” book. As the bibliography makes clear, the great majority emerged after 1981.

⁹ “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China” adopted at the Eleventh CCP Congress on 27 June 1981. These quotes come from paragraphs 27 and 28 of the Resolution. See an English translation at <http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/66095/4471924.html> See also Jonathan Unger, *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), p. 156.

These lines signaled that the long period under the relentless cult of personality deifying Mao Zedong was over. He had been a great leader but was human; he made mistakes, but his achievements were undeniable. While Mao played the most critical role of any figure in the Chinese Revolution, others also played important parts. After the Resolution was publicized, the Party gradually allowed more open news media coverage of current events and the publication of a wider variety of newspapers and magazines of popular interest. A “literature of the wounded” developed that, for the first time, critically assessed social and other aspects of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). The Party allowed historians to write in more detail compared to earlier works centered on the Chairman. They published biographies, diaries, and “Annals” (*nianpu*) recording the daily activities of figures like Zhou Enlai, Ye Jianying, Luo Ruiqing, and Yang Shangkun.¹⁰ These included works on CCP Intelligence figures of note, from their elite leadership (Kang Sheng, Chen Yun, Pan Hannian, Li Kenong, and Chen Geng) to other mostly fragmented accounts of working level activity. One unpublished work examined in subsequent chapters does its best to chronicle the death of every martyred intelligence worker in a particular time and place—and lists hundreds of people. Though selective in their treatment of events, these accounts opened up a window on how espionage and other intelligence disciplines assisted the victory of the Chinese Communist Revolution.

PRC sources, especially the popular accounts, often stress the heroic and the terrible, who should be lauded, and who was responsible. This is understandable because the times were awful indeed: both main Chinese parties, Nationalist and Communist, and the invading Japanese regularly displayed behavior as ruthless in intelligence, counterintelligence, and security work as on the conventional battlefield. Historians on the two Chinese sides have tended to ignore their

¹⁰ Unger, *Using the Past to Serve the Present*, pp. 6-7.

own Party's reprehensible acts and accumulate evidence against the evil other. With the communists, in the spirit of "making the past serve the present," peasants are always brave, as are communist soldiers and CCP Intelligence figures, while landlords, KMT spies, and others are venal and cruel; imperialists are devious and despicable; and China's problems are the fault of foreigners and traitors, not of her leaders—except when the Party formally concludes otherwise, as in the 1981 Resolution. This is a focus on heroics and atrocities, defining enemies and friends. If not intended to play a small part in directly supporting modern CCP legitimacy, this "script" likely seeks to avoid tarnishing it, implying that all educated and patriotic Chinese should support the Communist Party, even if it must do bad things to protect China from enemies. However, such works usually ignore organizational development and do not seriously address the significance of CCP Intelligence in the Chinese Revolution. This study tries to bridge some of these gaps and find the place of intelligence work in the Party between 1926 and 1945.

A Revisionist History of CCP Intelligence

PRC histories about CCP intelligence organs during the Chinese Communist Revolution, especially if intended for mass consumption, mostly represent them as purely Chinese in organization and development and led by wise, heroic leaders. Other sources hint at a more complicated and plausible narrative. In sum, this study asserts that CCP Intelligence began work in 1927-28 with *selected* aspects of a secret society during dynastic transition (namely, a stress on the self-protection and retribution functions described in Chapter Three). Fairly or not, they were sometimes depicted in the contemporary press as little better than fearsome gangs.¹¹

¹¹ Secret societies are complicated and diverse, and I do not wish to assert that early CCP Intelligence was *similar* to one of their early variants (grounded in non-elite social organization), or their later (criminalized) versions in south China and Southeast Asia. Instead, I will argue in Chapter Three that early CCP Intelligence organizations had some characteristics of secret societies, such as being founded for self-protection, but not others. A useful reference, cited later, is David Ownby (ed.), *Secret Societies Reconsidered: Perspectives on the Social History of Modern South China and Southeast Asia* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1993).

However, as CCP Intelligence consolidated operations in the late 1920s, they developed basic capabilities. At the request of the Russians the CCP lent a few of its members to Soviet army intelligence (GRU) and the Comintern to develop agent networks primarily focused on defining Japanese military capability and intent. Meanwhile the first permanent Chinese Communist intelligence organization, the CCP Central Committee Special Operations Section (CCSO, the *Zhongyang tebie renwu ke*, or *Teke*) engaged in a ruthless and bloody struggle to protect the Party's leadership and attack its enemies. The Party elite needed competent protection as it strove to survive and stay connected to China's working class in the cities and the remote military forces headquartered in Jiangxi. The CCP leadership in Shanghai lost this battle and was almost destroyed, and had to retreat to the Red Areas in Jiangxi, where the Red Army's intelligence and security organs had just participated (1930-31) in a large scale purge. In the cities, remnants of CCSO's urban agent networks went to ground and stayed hidden after about 1933-34. Some lost contact with Party leadership. Of the CCP Intelligence survivors who began the Long March (1934-35) from Ruijin, probably only a small percentage survived to reach Yan'an. In 1939, with the advantages of their new and safer base area, they consolidated and reorganized intelligence work into the Central Social Department (*Shehui bu*). Under CSD they recruited new officers, refreshed urban networks, developed rural outstations behind enemy lines, and established modern analytical and reporting capabilities at headquarters. Not only espionage, but also policing and counterintelligence, became part of the larger organization. Briefly set back by the "Rescue" campaign of 1943, CSD bounced back to outperform their Chinese Nationalist competition during the Chinese Civil War that followed the Allied victory over Japan, though that was partly due to the gradual decline of all KMT organizations, now more vulnerable than ever to hostile penetration and subversion. With the 1949 communist victory the CCP

leadership reorganized intelligence yet again, splitting espionage from policing and counterintelligence. They placed the former under the military (later under the Party) and established policing and counterintelligence in a Ministry of Public Security (MPS), subordinate to the State Council.

Goals and Questions of This Study

This dissertation seeks to describe the place of CCP Intelligence in the Party hierarchy, and how they contributed to the Chinese Communist movement's survival through WWII, with a conclusion about the development of the organization and its further evolution. This history is not widely studied outside of China—a shortage of willing informants, the secret nature of the activity, and the CCP's active efforts to control the narrative limit the information available.

Although materials and informants on CCP Intelligence are fewer than on other fields of Party history, one can still push forward to study it. The works noted above, biographies of personalities who worked in intelligence and security, and other works published in the PRC since 1980 contain significant information, while Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and government archives in Taiwan and books from Hong Kong banned in mainland China also offer opportunities to corroborate or challenge PRC accounts. In addition, a few primary source materials from the Chinese mainland, not approved for open publication, have made their way to the West through private and library acquisition, and a few surviving informants were willing to tell their stories.

Using these materials, this paper seeks to:

Analyze how the CCP's political evolution through 1945 impacted the leadership, organization, requirements, and modus operandi of CCP Intelligence. Supplementary questions:

- If CCP Intelligence in its early years had limited aspects suggestive of a secret society (stressing self-protection functions, minus the mysticism), how did the organizations change as time went on?
- Did CCP Intelligence become a “core activity” of the Party, similar in status to organizational, propaganda, and military work organs?
- How did the Party’s tendency toward use of struggle¹² affect intelligence and security work?
- What role did senior Party leaders play in building CCP Intelligence organizations?
- How did Russian training, tasking, and funding of the CCP service shape its work, and how long did this last?

Examine the “nuts and bolts” of CCP Intelligence work, and how it contributed to the realization of the Party’s political and military objectives during the revolutionary period.

Supplementary questions:

- Does an objective description of CCP Intelligence organization and work fit the Party’s “script”?

¹² “Struggle” is mentioned 415 times by Mao in his collected works from 1926-1949. The idea of its benefit seems to come from ideas of ideological and political correctness and deviation; thus deviation has to be fought, or struggled, against. In a rough survey of the use of “struggle” by Mao in his writings, the word comes up as follows: 79 times in volume one (1926 -1936); 70 in Volume Two (1937-1938); 68 in Volume Three (1939-1941); 105 in Volume Four (1941-1945); and 92 in Volume Five (1945-1949). Mao Zedong, *Mao Tse-tung Selected Works, Volumes One-Five* (New York: International Publishers, 1954).

- What achievements or failures of CCP Intelligence affected the history of the Chinese Revolution?
- How did historical events affect CCP intelligence organization and work?
- In the face of the Party's "script" of the performance of CCP Intelligence, how good were they, really at providing usable intelligence to the Party's elite leadership?

Key Terms Defined: "Intelligence" and "Security"

To describe the place in the Party of CCP Intelligence, we should establish some basic definitions.

- Intelligence¹³ comes from gathering and analyzing "raw" information such as a stolen secret document, a surveillance photo, an interrogation report, an observation from a scout in the field, or a combination of these and other pieces of "intelligence information."¹⁴ A definition from Taiwan is not dissimilar.¹⁵ After analysis, the information is written into a final product

¹³ A US Senate report in 1976 defined intelligence as "The product resulting from the collection, collation, evaluation, analysis, integration, and interpretation of all collected information." This is one of the simpler definitions, and there are others which differ between organizations. Leo D. Carl, *The CIA Insider's Dictionary of US and Foreign Intelligence, Counterintelligence & Tradecraft* (Washington, DC, US: NIBC Press, 1996), p. 281.

¹⁴ Intelligence information is also known colloquially as "raw intelligence." It is information of potential intelligence value that has not been analyzed and finally evaluated. Carl, *The CIA Insider's Dictionary*, pp. 286, 528. Chinese sources so far examined do not separate this idea from *qingbao* [intelligence].

¹⁵ A challenge of this study has been to define the role of CCP Intelligence when there is no comprehensive dictionary of terms available from the PRC. Fortunately the phraseology of intelligence work in PRC literature is used in ways that is not dissimilar to other countries. Throughout we will refer to US definitions and note Chinese usages that are similar or different. For example, a Taiwan military textbook gives a broad definition of *qingbao* [intelligence], abbreviated here, which is not far off from the US definition and is not inconsistent with PRC usage in available mainland literature: intelligence comes from specific reports that use secret, open, and semi-open methods to compile information on an international adversary, including military preparation and development, intent, and future battle area layout, as affected by political, economic, social and environmental factors. There are five subsets of intelligence in this definition: military (*junshi*), political (*zhengzhi*), foreign relations (*waijiao*), economic (*jingji*), and societal (*shehui*). Under military intelligence are three subdivisions that would be familiar to Westerners, though the last two seem to merge when defined: strategic (*zhanlue*), tactical (*zhanshu*) and battle (*zhandou*) intelligence. Hu Wenlin (ed.), *Qingbao xue* [The Study of Intelligence] (Taipei: Zhongyang junshi

that describes the current situation after considering available information. That intelligence product can be good or bad, useful, accurate, or not—just as a physician’s diagnosis based on raw data from medical tests can be accurate or not. In the pages that follow we will see operations that clandestinely collected information, often secret but not always so, from the CCP’s enemies during the revolution. In the early days of CCP Intelligence under CCSO (1927-1938) a lot of information may have been reported in “raw” form, even though some material indicates the existence of an analytical arm. Later on, in the period of the CSD (1939-1949), analysis and reporting became more systematized.

- Security¹⁶ work was part of CCP Intelligence organizations before 1949. Under CCSO, it was housed together with intelligence because of the early need, which did not change until the Central Committee fled Shanghai in 1931-32, to simultaneously spy on the CCP’s enemies and protect Party leaders leading a dangerous underground life. In the following chapters we will explore below how security work such as executive protection (*baowei*) for leaders, counterintelligence (including *fan jiandie*, catching enemy spies), traitor weeding (*chuhan*), and assassination (nicknamed “dog beating,” *dagou*) operations against enemies and turncoats were also included under CSD after 1939, but then completely removed from intelligence with the

yuanxiao, 1989), pp. 1-2; 5-6. The only collection of intelligence definitions found from the PRC was the occasional listing of the five ancient types of spies from the works of Sun Zi [Sun Tzu]. Varied definitions are spread around different PRC works, but carry some consistency. As we will see in subsequent chapters, the term *tewu* [special operations] is a catch-all that includes *qingbao* [intelligence] and *baowei* [protection] with its subset of assassination work, and *zhencha* (“detection” or scouting, which seems to be a combination of tactical intelligence and counterintelligence field work), while *gong’an* [public security] included both *jingcha* [policing] and *chanchu hanjian* [digging out or “weeding” traitors to the Han Chinese people who illegitimately assist foreigners]. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan – zhonggong qingbao, baowei gongzuo jishi* [China’s Secret War – The Record of Chinese Communist Intelligence and Protection Work] (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 2005), p. 3. A military intelligence encyclopedia which I could not examine was described to me by Peter Mattis: it did not appear to have any definitions of terms related to Human Intelligence (espionage), but was more policy oriented. Liu Zonghe and Lu Kewang, *Junshi qingbao: zhongguo junshi baike quanshu (di er ban)* [Military Intelligence: China Military Encyclopedia (2ndEdition)] (Beijing: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 2007). Many thanks to Mr, Mattis for this assistance. There may be another good PRC dictionary of intelligence terminology, but it is likely classified.

¹⁶ Security: “Establishment and maintenance of protective measures which are intended to ensure a state of inviolability from hostile acts or influences.” Carl, *CIA Insider’s Dictionary*, p. 566. This US definition would include the Chinese ideas of *baowei* [protection of VIPs] and *gongan* [public security], which we will examine more in subsequent chapters.

founding of MPS in 1949. Two critical periods examined by this study are the purges conducted in the rural Soviets in 1930-31, and the 1943 Salvation (*Qiangjiu*) Campaign, when intra-Party struggle had a pronounced effect on CCP Intelligence and security work.

Research Methodology

After looking through the secondary literature on CCP history to establish a baseline of available information on CCP Intelligence, I examined PRC sources published in China and other sources from inside and outside the Chinese mainland, including:

- Biographies from the PRC of revolutionary heroes and others who spent some or all of their careers in the intelligence and security fields;
- Histories from the PRC of CCP underground and intelligence organizations, or general documents such as the *Nianpu* (Annals, or Chronicles) of leaders connected to CCP Intelligence, which are often more factual than the other Party approved works;
- Unedited primary documents from China that have made their way into private collections or libraries;
- Works on CCP intelligence and security history independently published in Hong Kong and Taiwan;
- Taiwan archives containing Nationalist Party records of the intelligence war between the CCP and KMT;
- A declassified US study on Chinese intelligence and security services;
- A few surviving informants who are willing to discuss CCP Intelligence history.

In considering this information, I have

- catalogued the events significant to CCP Intelligence history, such as the founding of each organization, major disasters, and major accomplishments;
- cross referenced these events between types of sources, trying for example to obtain communist, anti-communist, and independent validation of events and outcomes;
- tried to identify major themes that illuminate the role of CCP Intelligence in the Chinese Revolution;
- tried to identify new information that sheds light into previously unexplored areas of the same.

Structure of This Study and Its Hypotheses and Conclusions

Chapter Two will briefly examine literature on CCP Intelligence in additional detail. Chapter Three looks at intelligence activities before the split with the Nationalists in 1927, and the founding of CCP Intelligence in Shanghai. Subsequent chapters examine Chinese communist intelligence and security activities in the rural Soviets and the Red Army, the events of the Long March, and the reorganization of CCP intelligence during the Yan'an period. A brief postscript reviews the Civil War period leading to the Chinese Communist victory in 1949.

In these chapters, this study asserts that:

- *CCP Intelligence, in a survival mode during its first eight years, came close to annihilation:* Formed right after the near destruction of the Party in 1927, the organization was nearly finished off by the KMT in the early 1930s and had to flee the cities in 1934, just before the Long March. Most of their energy was spent on protecting

themselves and their leaders, striking at their enemies when possible and funneling information, often in raw form, from espionage rings straight to the communist leadership.

- *Central control, discipline, and growing popular support relative to the KMT were its main advantages:* CCP Intelligence made mistakes and lost battles with the KMT services, and came close to being defeated by them in 1931-35. However at least a few of their numbers survived the Long March and recovered in Yan'an. In comparison to their Nationalist rivals CCP Intelligence was more centrally controlled and generally more professionally disciplined, though the regional nature of the CCP Revolution made central control less than perfect. During the Anti-Japanese War, CCP Intelligence skillfully used the Party's growing popularity to expand networks and thoroughly infiltrate the KMT's political and military institutions.
- *CCP Intelligence pursued more sophisticated operations during the Anti-Japanese War. The improved organization achieved successes that accelerated the communist victory after WWII:* Soviet training contributed to the early development of CCP Intelligence, but more in a technical than an organizational sense. After the advent of the war against Japan in July 1937, and especially after the formation of the Central Social Department in 1939, CCP Intelligence developed increased complexity in their operations which contributed to victory in 1949.
- *Russia's early influence and Mao's later on are understated in PRC works:* The influence of Russia before the Long March was significant, including training and funding. In the Yan'an and civil war periods which followed (1935-49), the influence of Mao Zedong was strong and eventually dominant. However, his influence is understated

in PRC histories, presumably because the Party wishes to avoid tarnishing the Chairman's image with the "mistakes" of 1931 and 1943.

- *Kang Sheng's role was significant but is partly distorted, and often overstated: Kang was Mao's spymaster from 1938-1946 and accomplished a reorganization of CCP Intelligence that improved operations and professionalization. CCP sources almost ignore his role in improving the service and seem to exaggerate his responsibility for abuses, again probably to avoid tarnishing the reputation of the ultimate "decider," Mao Zedong.*

A more full understanding of CCP Intelligence history clarifies some aspects of the Chinese revolution such when the CCP held advantages over the KMT, and when they did not. The Party dominated "script" enhances its legitimacy in the popular mind by playing down early Russian influence and various mistakes which might be attributed, fairly or not, to Mao. It also highlights the Party's darker side, celebrating assassination and revenge against popularly recognized "bad guys" and showing the CCP as a tough and dangerous organization. This seems purposeful but is not a Chinese or communist phenomenon: though the situations are dissimilar, the human tendency to want to warn enemies of one's power, and reassure friends, may be evident in every culture. Witness popular American slogans after September 11th, 2001 such as "Don't Mess with the US" or the public celebrations after the killing of Osama bin Laden ten years later.¹⁷

¹⁷ When historians today recall the revolutionary CCP's ability to exact revenge on traitors, it is reminiscent of more modern examples. Public trials of suspects accused of "counterrevolutionary" crimes occurred throughout the post 1949 period. Two recent examples: Just after the 1989 June Fourth Massacre, a man named Xiao Bin was interviewed by ABC News, complaining of the brutality of the military's response to demonstrations. Chinese authorities rebroadcast the interview with the announcement that Xiao Bin was wanted for spreading rumors. After his capture, he was filmed with head bowed, apologizing for "bringing great harm to the Party and country." See Richard Bernstein, "At China's Ministry of Truth, History is Quickly Rewritten," in *The New York Times*, (New York: Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr.) 12 June 1989. See <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/12/world/at-china-s-ministry-of-truth-history-is-quickly-rewritten.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>. After the March 2008 riots in Lhasa,

Besides boosting their own prestige, or perhaps to show who's boss, it may be that today's Party leaders also wish to remind their people, and the world, that it survived with its "socialist" government intact in 1989-91 when the USSR and its Warsaw Pact allies did not. The PRC is still run by leaders who would not allow Gorbachov-style "humanitarian socialism" to trump the development of state power. On display is a resurgent Chinese nation that now "stands up" with gusto even while social stability seems increasingly fractured. Therefore, much is at stake in making elements of China's past serve its present, including this one about the way the Party used its secret powers to found the People's Republic.

over 150 Tibetans were captured and accused of fomenting the disturbances. A group was shown on Tibet Television being marched to a table by officers who forced their heads down to sign confessions. Tania Branigan, "Authorities in Lhasa Parade Repentant Rioters on TV," in *The Guardian* (London: Guardian Media Group), 20 March 2008. See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/mar/20/tibet.china2>. Thanks to James Miles of *The Economist* for these examples.

Chapter Two

A Survey of Available Literature on Chinese Communist Intelligence, and the Issue of Objectivity

Chapter One examined some basic problems in defining the nature and importance of CCP Intelligence in the Chinese Revolution. In Chapter Two, we will try to clarify where information on this subject comes from and how it has been controlled; how open sources¹⁸ concerning such a secrecy-prone topic may contribute to available knowledge; why publication of PRC open source materials, such as books and articles, in Chinese were delayed until the 1980s and 90s; and why bias is so often an issue in existing material. In later chapters we will use historical accounts to review the place of CCP Intelligence in the Party from 1927 onwards.

Early Accounts on CCP Intelligence, and Their Suppression in the PRC

Locating reliable information on CCP Intelligence history is not impossible, but it remains harder than finding such material on other Chinese policy and historical issues. Note the qualifier, “reliable.” Accounts from the PRC on this topic, though growing in number and bringing new information, are often anecdotal and lack statistics, inadequate in citations, and shy about issues like responsibility for controversial events. Researchers risk misrepresenting events by fully relying on PRC histories because they are closely controlled and scripted by the Party. Secrecy is a major factor: while an early account (published in 1945 and again in March 1953¹⁹) hinted at

¹⁸ Open source: “A generic term describing information of potential intelligence value...which is available to the general public.” Carl, *CIA Insider's Dictionary*, p. 433. This term might also refer to a once confidential study that is declassified and made public, or the PRC studies that form much of the basis of this dissertation. A famous example is the “Pentagon Papers” released to by Daniel Ellsberg to US news media at the height of the Vietnam War, turning a classified study into “open source” material.

¹⁹ In 1945 the Eighth Route Army’s Propaganda Department openly published an unclassified history of activity behind enemy lines during the Anti-Japanese War. It was republished by the PLA in March 1953, before the Korean

military intelligence activity behind Japanese lines in 1944-45, the next official Chinese communist account, by Li Kenong in 1950, was classified. After that came a long public silence. Party historians only rarely wrote about underground work²⁰ in Nationalist held “White” areas²¹ (and not at all about intelligence history), until about 1980. The topic was off-limits even for “internal” (*neibu*) material.²² There is no evidence about exactly why this happened, but circumstances suggest a notional chain of events. The book from 1945 and 1953, by the PLA’s Propaganda Department, was published first just as the country was about to plunge into civil war, and reissued eight years later while the CCP’s senior intelligence officer, Li Kenong, was busy with the Panmunjom armistice negotiations in Korea (just after the belligerents signed the armistice on 28 July 1953, he became ill with a heart condition²³). When he eventually returned to normal duties, Li Kenong might have returned his attention to intelligence organization, and noted the PLA publication. There is no direct evidence, but it is not illogical to think that he

armistice, in substantially the same form. The work hinted at, but did not deal with, *military* intelligence work of the period. In 1950, Li Kenong led a small group that wrote a history of CCP intelligence work from roughly 1926 to 1949, but it remains classified at some level above *neibu* (internal use), and unavailable to foreign researchers. The PLA study (no author) is *Kangri zhanzheng shiqi de Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun* [The Chinese People’s Liberation Army During the Anti-Japanese War] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1953). This work provided context for behind the lines intelligence work on behalf of the PLA, but did not reveal specifics of intelligence organization or operations. The publisher’s introduction carries the note that this book was originally published by the Eighth Route Army’s Propaganda Department in 1945, and that the 1953 edition “basically retained the original form.”

²⁰ The difference between intelligence work and underground work is defined in a subsequent chapter. Essentially, while intelligence work focuses on discovering secrets, underground work is the collection of mainline Party tasks of administration such as organization and propaganda, albeit performed clandestinely since the work is in hostile territory. After the revolution when the CCP administered the PRC, officials who performed underground work in secret before 1949 tended to emerge into the open, some becoming public figures in that context. However, those who performed intelligence work and continued in that vocation had cover jobs. Thanks to David Chambers and a scholar in Taiwan for discussions on this point.

²¹ Thanks to David Chambers for pointing out this pre-1990 restriction. So far the author has found just two sources from China predating 1980 that deal with White area work, though there are probably others: the PLA Propaganda Department history footnoted just above, and a PRC film from 1978, *Nu jiaotong yuan* [The Woman Courier] (Changchun dianying zhipian chang, 1978), which is discussed in Chapter Six.

²² Thanks to David Chambers for pointing this out. This idea is reinforced by the listings in the bibliography and their dates of publication. As will be pointed out in a later chapter, Liu Shaoqi once asserted that CCP Intelligence history would have to remain secret for a long time, perhaps never being allowed open publication. Warren Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two* (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1968), p. 282

²³ Li Li, *Cong mimi zhanxian zouchu de kaiguo shangjiang huainian jiafu Li Kenong* [Li Kenong, the General Who Emerged from the Secret Battlefield at the Founding of the Nation] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2008) p. 286.

recommended to Zhou Enlai and more senior leaders a stricter control of official writings on intelligence, and that such a decision stood until the 1981 Historical Resolution discussed in Chapter One. While a true account of why this happened may need to await access to official archives, the lack of published material in China from 1954 to the early 1980s is clear.²⁴ Li Kenong's 1950 manuscript remained a (or perhaps, the) defining document about the Party's intelligence work during the Chinese Communist Revolution, and may first have been accessed by Party historians in the early 1980s, probably after the 1981 Resolution.²⁵ In the meantime, works began appearing from Taiwan, the offshore bastion of the CCP's Nationalist Chinese enemies.

However, these are really only symptoms of the more important factor—the nature of Mao's tenure as unchallenged leader. As David Chambers points out,²⁶ CCP Intelligence history was willfully distorted in the post-1949 purges demanded by Mao Zedong, when over 1,000 loyal intelligence officers were depicted as counterrevolutionaries, spies, and traitors. After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, the imperative to preserve the Chairman's reputation as the PRC moved into a new era of great change meant that rehabilitation of Cultural Revolution victims had to be carefully handled to avoid implying serious errors by Mao beyond those already recognized by the Party. It meant that some people wronged by Mao and the Party's radical left could only be

²⁴ Until the mid-1990s, PRC officials would not acknowledge the existence of any sort of intelligence organization, even when asked about it by name: For instance, Michael Schoenhals described his attempt to specifically inquire with PRC diplomats about the *Zhongyang Diaochabu*, (Central Committee Investigation Department) which conducted foreign intelligence work from 1955-83. He was answered with denials. He points out that the British took a similar stance about their own service during this same period. Michael Schoenhals, "A Brief History of the CID of the CCP", in Zhu Jiamu (ed.), *Dangdai Zhongguo yu tade fazhan daolu* [Contemporary China and Its Development Road] (Beijing: Contemporary China Institute and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2010).

²⁵ Li Li mentions the 1950 Li Kenong study and may have drawn information from it, but did not provide footnotes showing how it is used in his work, nor any bibliographic reference. Schoenhals notes that it is still classified and unavailable. Li Li, *Cong mimi zhanxian zouchu de kaiguo shangjiang huainian jiafu Li Kenong*, p. 265; Schoenhals, "A Brief History of the CID of the CCP," p. 265

²⁶ David Chambers, "Edging in from the Cold: Chinese intelligence histories in the post-Mao era", pp. 3-6.

gradually rehabilitated, after painstaking investigations that allowed the survivors in authority to avoid criticism. In a society more than twice bitten by criticism-self-criticism, and anxious to establish social stability, perhaps such caution was to be expected.

Mad Mirror Images: Works on CCP Intelligence from Taiwan, China, and Russia

Accounts from Taiwan on this topic after 1949 sought to portray the Nationalist side as noble and clever—albeit more betrayed, frustrated and unlucky—and their Chinese Communist enemy as dastardly, traitorous, cowardly, and cruel.²⁷ While slanted indeed, the Taiwan accounts seem less relentlessly “on message” compared to later PRC works, and in retrospect should have been taken more seriously by foreign researchers of Chinese politics. They often validate events described in the newer PRC works, as we will see in later chapters while comparing accounts from both sides of the Taiwan Straits. The earliest work available to the author treating CCP Intelligence history in any detail is Warren Kuo’s *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party*, a four-volume set published in both English and Chinese between 1968 and 1971.²⁸ These volumes, and an earlier, less detailed work by Nationalist Party intelligence chief U.T. Hsu (Xu Enzeng), lie in-between primary and a secondary source material because of the professional intelligence background and access of the authors. Hsu²⁹ was a senior intelligence official in the

²⁷ Between enemies, this does not seem unusual. In more recent times, for example, authoritarian Singapore and Malaysia have always been at odds, and occasionally close to conflict since Malaysia expelled Singapore in 1965 in order to preserve the electoral advantages enjoyed by the ruling United Malay National Organization. While living and working in Malaysia and Singapore from 1995-2000, the author observed the difficulty of purchasing a book that critically examines Singaporean history within the bounds of the island state, but found plenty for sale in neighboring Malaysia. At the same time, critical books on Malaysian history and politics are not available there but can be found in almost every Singaporean bookshop. As might be expected, each government carefully controls political expression and jails dissidents without trial, or uses the law to persecute them—not exactly the same situation as in the PRC, but these easily observable strands of similarity are hard to ignore.

²⁸ Warren Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party*, Books One and Two published in 1968, Book Three in 1970, and Book Four in 1971.

²⁹ U.T. Hsu (Xu Enzeng), *The Invisible Conflict* (Hong Kong: China Viewpoints, 1958). Hsu’s 1953 work in Chinese, *Wo he gongdang douzheng de huiyi* [A Memoir of My Struggle with the CCP] was unfortunately not

KMT who became the head of the Central Statistics Bureau (*Zhongtong*), and had personal experience against CCP Intelligence dating from the late 1920s. The insights in his work and some unpublished studies from Taiwan seem to have informed Kuo's history.³⁰ Warren Kuo was a former CCP South China Propaganda Department head who defected to the Nationalists in May 1942, just as the "Rectification" (*Zhengfeng*) campaign, which included "cadre screening," began in Yan'an (Chapter Six). At the time he was Guo Qian, the CCP South China Cadre Department Director. According to another Taiwan researcher and a PRC biography of Liao Chengzhi, Warren Kuo provided information that led to the destruction of the provincial level CCP organizations in Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hunan, and Liao's arrest by three KMT agents who cornered him in a northern Guangdong village on 30 May. Guo joined the Central Statistics Bureau (*Zhongtong*), the Nationalist Party intelligence service described above, and became a Deputy Section Leader in its Fourth Branch. He later moved to Taiwan and took the names Guo Hualun and Warren Kuo.³¹

Kuo is regularly referenced in this dissertation because his wide survey of CCP history over four volumes contain more than 100 pages that focus on CCP Intelligence, including details on specific events and organizational development tending to confirm PRC-origin materials, or supplement them without contradiction. He drew on extensive references to captured communist documents, interrogations of their imprisoned personnel, deciphered signal intercepts, and a

available. Hsu was director of the KMT's *Zhongtong*, or Central Statistics Bureau, and was the surviving senior intelligence officer on the Nationalist side after 1949.

³⁰ Interview with Taipei researcher, March 2008.

³¹ Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi Zhuan* [The Biography of Liao Chengzhi] (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2006), p. 152-153. Kuo's writings were the only publicly available, comprehensive information in English about CCP Intelligence from 1968-71 until the 1980s, and remain useful today. When Kuo died in August 1985, *qian'gu* floral wreath inscriptions were written for him by Taiwan's most senior politicians, Jiang Jinguo (Chiang Ching-kuo) and Li Denghui (Lee Teng-hui). Interview, Taipei archivist, 2008; extract of unclassified collection on Warren Kuo viewed in 2008.

critical examination of their publications. His narrative unfortunately stops in 1944, and is often salted with disgust at the communist enemy. However, the incidents he describes are generally in synch with PRC sources. This brings up the opportunity to explain the use, in parallel with Kuo's work, of its "mad mirror image,"³² Hao Zaijin's *China's Secret War (Zhongguo Mimizhan)*,³³ a 2005 work from the PRC. Hao's book is a rare *general history* of CCP Intelligence amongst relevant works from China. It starts in the mid-1920s and at times gives a reasonable account of the "intelligence war" through the Chinese Revolution—though Hao skips some controversial events, appears to rely a great deal on interviews, and is often light on citations and documentation. Detail is thin in spots (there is almost nothing on the Long March), and grows even more so after 1949. A tantalizing and frustrating work, *China's Secret War* is also regularly referenced herein. Despite their shortcomings, the two works provide a standard against which to validate or disprove events and test themes, though each often begs for less prejudiced validation. The two works contradict, corroborate, and complement each other, like twin asteroids in a spiral plummeting through the violent struggle of the Chinese Revolution.

After Kuo's four volumes were published, China's gradual opening around the time of US President Richard Nixon's 1972 visit made many scholars in the West more willing to seriously consider official PRC versions of history. Some grew wary of information from Taiwan, the Soviet Union, the US government, and Chinese refugees, considering such sources overly biased against the West's new friend, a regime long misunderstood. The memoirs written by the

³² From an offbeat poem written in 1980:

*No hope Communism no hope Capitalism Yeah
Everybody's lying on both sides Nyeah nyeah nyeah
The bloody iron curtain of American Military Power
Is a mad mirror image of Russia's red Babel-Tower*

Allen Ginsberg, "Capitol Air" in Allen Ginsberg, *Collected Poems 1947-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 746.

³³ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*.

Russian GRU officer Peter Vladimirov (1975) and US Army Colonel David Barrett (1970),³⁴ about their service in the CCP headquarters in Yan'an during World War Two, are not researched histories like some other works considered here. However, their direct observations receive some validation from more recent PRC works concerning the Rectification (*Zhengfeng*, 1942-44) and Salvation (*Qiangjiu*, 1943) Campaigns. Both men complained about intrusive surveillance against their teams in a regimented atmosphere, which can be seen in more recent PRC writings critical of Kang Sheng, the CCP Intelligence head at the time. Vladimirov stayed the longer of the two (May 1942-September 1945), and as a representative of the Comintern had better access to information than the American, albeit still imperfect—but he proved to be a keen observer of the Yan'an political scene. When published in 1974 and 1975, Vladimirov's observations of Mao as tyrant and ideological deviant who plotted with Kang Sheng to poison political rival Wang Ming were dismissed by some in the West as Soviet disinformation that “suit(s) Moscow's present purposes all too neatly,” a text edited in Russia long after Vladimirov's service in China.³⁵ This remains an apt observation and reflects Vladimirov's growing distaste for Mao and Kang Sheng the longer he stayed in Yan'an—one can imagine his joy at leaving the Chinese Communist redoubt in 1945. However, some of Vladimirov's 1975 descriptions of revolutionary Yan'an were eventually validated by other research in later decades: the slavish attitude toward Mao of Zhou Enlai and Liu Shaoqi after 1942; Mao's sexual appetite; the CCP's production and trafficking in opium to ship to KMT and Japanese controlled areas to raise funds; the nature and timetable of two damaging internal security campaigns in 1942-44.

³⁴ Peter Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries, Yanan, China: 1942-1945* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1975). A slightly shorter manuscript, sans American editing, appeared a year earlier in India as P.P. Vladimirov, *China's Special Area, 1942-1945* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1974). David D. Barrett, *Dixie Mission: the United States Army Observer Group in Yanan, 1944* (Berkeley: University of California Center for Chinese Studies, 1970).

³⁵ Ray Wylie, “The Vladimirov Diaries. Yanan, China: 1942-1945 by Peter Vladimirov” in *Slavic Review* Vol. 36, No. 2, June 1977, p. 303; Peter Giffin, “The Vladimirov Diaries by Peter Vladimirov” in *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Sep., 1976), p. 493.

As we will see in Chapter Six, Vladimirov paid special attention to Kang Sheng, head of CCP Intelligence, and his deputy Li Kenong, making comments about the former which are only now familiar, and about the latter (a dour man running the spies of Yan'an and in charge of exporting opium)³⁶ go completely against the grain in current PRC literature.

The PRC works to compare and contrast are, like the Vladimirov and Barrett books, narrower in scope than Kuo's *Analytical History* or Hao's *China's Secret War*, treating a particular event or focused on the life of a revolutionary figure. These can be detailed, especially the more extensive ones like *Chen Yun Zhuan* [*The Biography of Chen Yun*] and *Pan Hannian de Qingbao Shengya* [*The Intelligence Career of Pan Hannian*].³⁷ Books on Pan Hannian in particular have become an industry of sorts, with some inevitable plagiarism due to their popularity. Perhaps Pan's story draws readers because it dramatically reflects the ups and downs of recent national history. Only 20 years old when he joined the Party in 1926, Pan was drawn into the secret world five years later during a disastrous defection. He rose to become a senior intelligence official, and was branded a counterrevolutionary in 1955. Pan especially suffered during the Cultural Revolution, and was rehabilitated shortly after his 1977 death. Pan's biography and others like it help drive the conversation of CCP Intelligence history because there are so many of them, and because they reveal new information, even if it is scripted to suit current Party needs. These works are often compelling. They recount brave deeds and dangerous times, followed by a purgatory—or bitter end—in persecution experienced by so many intelligence workers, especially after 1949. The new detail and explanations they offer are refreshing, but in

³⁶ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp, 80, 100, 132.

³⁷ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun Zhuan* [*The Biography of Chen Yun, v. I*] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2005); Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya* [*The Intelligence Career of Pan Hannian*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1996).

the background the “script” always lingers, always very black and white. It seems to demand that the writer portray CCP Intelligence and their people (except the villains³⁸) as professional, talented, almost faultless, and even humane except when they received orders to the contrary, such as burying alive the family of a prominent turncoat in 1931, implementing widespread purges in the Red Area during the same period, and leading excessive struggles against comrades accused of “losing their footing” in 1943 (Chapter Three and onwards). According to this dominant narrative, the Party leadership, especially Mao Zedong after 1941, may have made some regrettable decisions under the pressure of their relentless enemies, but the real blame for wrongdoing belongs to a few errant figures. The dominant narrative in these new, but scripted PRC accounts reveals only what the Party wishes to be shown, and keeps the secrets the Party wishes to remain hidden. This does not mean that these works form a “Potemkin village” of sorts, because each is far more than the equivalent of an empty hut. However, it does indicate that validation from sources not subject to CCP influence should be sought whenever possible.

While older works from Taiwan have proven useful in validating those from the PRC, some newer ones published in Hong Kong offer a fresher alternative to versions of history from either of the “two Chinas.” A work by Smarlo Ma (Yi Ma), who was a CCP member from 1937 to 1943, provided a critical inside view of the Party during that period.³⁹ Two academically serious works by Gao Hua⁴⁰ and Gao Wenqian⁴¹ went further. Both men were Party historians with higher levels of access than ordinary Chinese academics. Gao Hua’s work on Yan’an during the

³⁸ Added to these are the several “hack jobs” on Kang Sheng, the major villain of this history who has been called Mao Zedong’s “claws” by one writer. As Hao Zaijin says, “we cannot avoid discussing him” because he was the CCP Intelligence head from 1938-1946. One of the goals of this study is to put his organization building efforts in perspective with his well-documented cruelty.

³⁹ Sima Lu, *Zhonggong lishi de jianzheng* [Witnessing the Secret History of the Communist Party of China] (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 2004).

⁴⁰ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenme shengqi de*.

⁴¹ Gao Wenqian, *Wannian Zhou Enlai* [Zhou Enlai’s Later Years] (Hong Kong: Mirror Books, 2003)

1940s challenged Party orthodoxy on the role of Mao Zedong, and was banned in China but published in Hong Kong. The same was true of Gao Wenqian's biography of Zhou Enlai, which also was too frank about Mao's dominant role to receive official approval in the PRC. Gao Wenqian was a researcher at the CCP Central Research Office for Documentation who left for the US in 1993 and now with Human Rights in China. Gao Hua stayed in China, remaining famous and respected, but underfunded. He passed away on 26 December 2011.⁴² These works added to understanding of the "cadre examination" and brief purge activity of the period, not to mention Mao's advice and approval of the actions of his security chief, Kang Sheng.

A source of factual validation, and additional detail, is also available from institutional web sites run by provincial and municipal CCP committees and Public Security headquarters (*Gong'an ting*). They seem unlikely to challenge the CCP's script but do often carry additional details on the exploits of a local "favorite son." These sites are dwarfed in number by unofficial blogs which seem less reliable, and online encyclopedia entries on Baidu.com which, like Wikipedia, may be good for finding direction but need to be validated by established sources. In a class by itself is an unedited (hard copy, not online) compilation by a Public Security Bureau research office⁴³ which contains copious detail of CCP intelligence station activity behind enemy lines from 1937-1947. It has proven useful in comparison to the more fully edited, finally approved accounts of the period.

Mysteries of the East in Western Eyes, and the Kang Sheng Effect

⁴² <http://english.caixin.com/2012-01-06/100346433.html> ; <http://www.hrichina.org/crf/article/6141>

⁴³ Research Office of the Inner Mongolia Public Security Bureau Headquarters, *Suimengqu Gong'an shi Changbian* [Suiyuan Inner Mongolia Area Public Security Draft History] (Hohot: Neimenggu Gong'anting Gong'an shi Yanjiushi, 1986)

In spite of the many works that have been published since 1953 in Taiwan and China, only a handful of studies have emerged in the West. Some are, and some are not, infected by a focus on Kang Sheng, and a tendency to portray CCP Intelligence as a mysterious and dark force—rather than one which requires institutional analysis. This is understandable, as the former approach is entertaining and sells books in China and abroad.

There are many scholars of history and the social sciences in the West who read Chinese well enough to produce works in English on various political and historical topics, and there are also plenty of books in the West on the intelligence services of Russia, the US, and the UK. Yet there are few about CCP Intelligence. It seems hard to explain this, though the most common questions I have received about this study reflect ideas that that the topic is too specialized or secret, and possibly a bit hazardous to study. These are not trivial concerns. If one is on the mainland, studying this topic probably involves bureaucratic hurdles, intense scrutiny and even supervision—plus one must understand something of the intelligence profession to begin making sense of the data. Outside of China, there is no scrutiny and supervision other than peer review, but there are the concerns expressed just above. Such concerns are not insurmountable, and over the past 20 years research on CCP Intelligence has seen some successes. Among the best are studies by Maochun (Miles) Yu and Frederick Wakeman on aspects of Nationalist and Communist intelligence organizations during WWII.⁴⁴ These are models for any scholar in the way that they carefully examined CCP and KMT-approved sources and other material, seeking

⁴⁴ Frederick Wakeman Jr., *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) and Maochun Yu, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (New Haven, CT, US: Yale University Press, 1996).

validation of salient events leading to thoughtful analysis about the nature of the CCP-KMT intelligence war, and new insights about the Chinese Revolution.

Wakeman and Yu avoided over-emphasis on the role of Kang Sheng who, while genuinely evil and irreversibly political, was also an organizer who improved CCP Intelligence work in ways that may have accelerated the eventual communist victory. Along with Wang Ming, Mao's political opponent from 1937 until the 1945 Seventh CCP Congress, Kang Sheng is a prominent scapegoat today for Party historians as they assess the mistakes of the Chinese Communist Revolution. As we will see in subsequent chapters, Wang is blamed for a number of errors including slavishly following Russian guidance that proved faulty compared to Mao Thought, and that hurt the Chinese Revolution: the message to modern Chinese middle class readers seems to be that the best solutions to China's problems have always come from within China and the CCP, not from any foreign source.

Previously only known outside of China to academic and intelligence specialists, Kang achieved an exaggerated notoriety with the 1988 publication of Roger Faligot's *The Chinese Secret Service*, and John Byron and Robert Pack's *Claws of the Dragon* in 1992. Both works are referenced in this dissertation but are used with caution for several reasons. They were written (1988-91) when source material on this topic was harder to obtain than now. Faligot's book was only the second published by an author independent of the Chinese Revolution,⁴⁵ and is still cited by academics. He took a highly anecdotal approach in his 1989 work, and there is only a small amount of organizational analysis. Faligot's bibliography shows that he had to rely on press accounts, secondary sources and general works from Taiwan that only mention CCP Intelligence

⁴⁵ The first was by Richard Deacon, *The Chinese Secret Service* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1974).

operations. He was unable, perhaps because of timing, to access mainland sources that were just becoming available. Faligot published an updated and improved study in 2008 which is much less anecdotal. It provides a historical overview of the revolutionary period that avoids over-emphasizing Kang Sheng, and focuses on the post-Mao era, lacking the air of mystery which characterized the 1988 work.⁴⁶

The authors of *Claws of the Dragon* cite a large bibliography but wrote that the “most important source” in assembling their work was *Kang Sheng ping zhuan* [A Critical Biography of Kang Sheng], secretly copied by John Byron, the pseudonym for a Western diplomat then in Beijing.⁴⁷ Characterized as “a hack job” by a Party historian, *Kang Sheng ping zhuan* characterizes its subject in black and white terms as an irredeemable villain, and Byron and Pack use it in an uncritical manner. There is much truth to Kang-as-villain narrative, but the picture is more complicated for at least one period in the early 1940s, as I will argue in later chapters.

This dissertation aims to look behind the curtain of the Party’s “script” to find the place of CCP Intelligence in the Party, while another study from Australia focused on the place in revolutionary Chinese policing of Mao Zedong’s “friend enemy dyad.” Michael Dutton identifies Mao’s 1926 phrase “Who are our enemies, who are our friends?” as key to the CCP’s application of internal coercive force in his *Policing Chinese Politics*.⁴⁸ His work started not in Shanghai in 1927, but in Jiangxi, and focused on security work instead of intelligence.

Nonetheless, it did provide a cogent description of the differences and similarities between

⁴⁶ Roger Faligot, *Les Services Secrets Chinois de Mao aux Jo* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2008). This study is in French and Roger Faligot has indicated that there are no plans for an English version.

⁴⁷ John Byron and Robert Pack, *Claws of the Dragon: Kang Sheng—the Evil Genius Behind Mao—and His Legacy of Terror in People’s China* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), pp. 489-90.

⁴⁸ Michael Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005)

crucial periods of internal struggle which were of assistance in addressing CCP security work in Chapters Four through Six. Michael Dutton was also generous with his time when I began this study, which is appreciated.

Two older works should also be mentioned because they are well-known. *The Chinese Secret Service* by Robert Deacon was the earliest general account of CCP Intelligence published in the West. It and Anthony Grey's *The Prime Minister was a Spy* relied heavily on confidential informants and press reports. They contained interesting material but leaned on unsubstantiated accounts, i.e. material you might hear in a lecture by an old hand in a Western intelligence school. Alas, they seemed even less genuine. Both leaned heavily on an air of mystery and exoticism, and fall outside the scope of this study.

Closed Archives, Persistent Bias

The CCP and their KMT opponents on Taiwan must have the most detailed archives about their intelligence wars, and about the wider military conflict up until 1949. In Beijing they will likely remain closed except for trusted researchers until the past is no longer needed to serve the present. There has been no opening, as briefly occurred in Moscow under Yeltsin, of secret service records,⁴⁹ and no “Mitrokin Archives” or Bradley Manning-Wikileaks-disclosures (a problem not only for the odd scholar of CCP Intelligence, but for everyone who studies wider questions in Chinese Communist Party history and current affairs).⁵⁰ Taipei's records are partially available, as we will see in later chapters. It is reasonable to surmise that both sides

⁴⁹ The opening in Moscow occurred in 1992-93, allowing foreign researchers to have unprecedented access to KGB/NKVD and other records. John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *In Denial, Historians, Communism, and Espionage* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003), pp. 3-6.

⁵⁰ Perry Link, “Waiting for Wikileaks: Beijing's Seven Secrets” (The New York Review of Books, 19 August 2010) <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2010/aug/19/waiting-wikileaks-beijings-seven-secrets/>

have much to hide concerning this brutal period, reflected in their consistent efforts to tell a largely black and white story of good and bad in their own favor.

The difference is clearly understandable. In Beijing, history is more sensitive than in Taiwan, perhaps because CCP legitimacy is highly self-justified with a large quotient of nationalism in place of a nearly extinct communist ideology. Compared to Taiwan, the PRC has few sources of external political validation—no genuine elections, little critical examination by the press, almost no check and balance by an independent judiciary, a less than independent legislature, and a closely controlled press. In other words, the Taiwan government does not require a fawning historical narrative to minimize questions from the public. However, Beijing’s leaders seem to. As long as this situation remains true, PRC accounts of CCP intelligence operations during the revolution—detailed and new though they may be—must be validated by other evidence. In the chapters that follow, I try to do so as consistently as possible. These efforts have yielded progress, though many gaps remain.

At the end of the Chapter One, I argued that China’s current leaders seek to make the nation’s past serve its present partly to preserve regime legitimacy and social stability. CCP Intelligence history is a small part of that past, and information on it is controlled probably both for this larger political purpose and from ordinary bureaucratic caution. Those of us who study the past are not trying to make trouble and “spoil the party,” but we recognize that state leaders hold a preponderance of coercive power. How they apply that power in their most secret counsels may tell us more about them and their policies than publicly proclaimed programs.⁵¹ Achieving an understanding of how political leaders apply power when no one is watching is a way to measure

⁵¹ Thanks to Dr. Murray Scot Tanner for his telephone discussion on this point.

their character and true nature—a goal that anyone in Political Science should find appealing. A renaissance (of sorts) in CCP Intelligence history has occurred since the early 1980s. On one level (quantity) it is impressive, starting from nearly zero about 1981 with a sensitive topic in an authoritarian society and building a healthy public market segment in only a generation for books, articles, and even television programs that continues to grow in number today. On another level (quality), there was some improvement, but it has not been continuous. The present government would not be expected to release previously protected information that does anything but bolster its own legitimacy, which seems to be the ultimate goal of the “script” that governs what the Chinese public learns not only about CCP Intelligence, but also about the rest of China’s modern history. As with other topics related to state power in China, a better understanding of how coercive power is really used in secret by the nation’s political and military elite may remain out of reach of China’s citizenry, in spite of the expanded literature of the recent history of CCP Intelligence.

Chapter Three

Under Siege: Founding CCP Intelligence

The threats facing the Chinese Communist Party at its founding in 1921 were numerous, and grew worse as time went on. In their first six years, the Party's Russian mentors taught them secrecy, but may not have discussed intelligence operations. Though the CCP started a protection effort for senior Party leaders in 1925-26, they did not establish a permanent intelligence and security organ until after the Chinese Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang, or KMT) tried to destroy them in April 1927.⁵²

There is no document or testimony telling us that the defeats of 1927 led to the founding of the CCSO, but it is likely that civilian and military leaders saw the need for an intelligence and security organization with a wider focus than executive protection. After the April coup, Party leaders initially placed intelligence under the military commission, but quickly judged it was important enough to directly oversee from the Central Committee. A bloody struggle for survival followed, in which CCP Intelligence played a crucial and lethal role. However, the Communists lost; facing annihilation, CCP Intelligence and its Party headquarters fled Shanghai in 1932-33 for Ruijin in Jiangxi province and protection by the forces of Zhu De and Mao Zedong.

⁵² The April 1927 split between the Chinese Communists and Nationalists was singularly important to the decision by both sides to develop intelligence arms, as each hitherto considered the other to be an existential threat. The historical chain of events leading to the 12 April coup in Shanghai has been well documented elsewhere. See C. Martin Wilbur, "The Nationalist Revolution: from Canton to Nanking, 1923-28," in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China Volume 12, Republican China 1912-1949 Part I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 599, 607-08, 610, 613-14, 618-19, 622-624, 629, 630-31; Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009), pp. 63-68.

In spite of their initial defeats, CCP Intelligence was good at maintaining secrecy, setting up practices that minimized their presence in the history books and the public eye for decades afterward. Intelligence work and security operations are naturally secret vocations where deception is routinely employed. Describing their history often requires as much analysis as evaluation of hard data. In this chapter and those following, we are confronted with the elusive nature of solid evidence in this realm. The bulk of the documents any researcher would want remain inaccessible for the foreseeable future. However it is possible to evaluate known events, probable influences, and the inevitably prejudiced assertions from both sides of the Chinese Revolution's "secret war" to reach reasonable hypotheses about the role of CCP Intelligence in this bloody period.

Comintern Tutorials in Secrecy, Difficulties of the United Front

In ancient times, the development of intelligence work in China was basically, though perhaps not exclusively, driven by domestic military challenges.⁵³ The first two decades of the Chinese Revolution, if we think of them as 1911-1931, presented a not dissimilar situation: the main enemies of the Communist and Nationalist Parties were each other, and Chinese, albeit with Japan ever in the wings. One Chinese writer notes that KMT and CCP intelligence organs were first subordinated under the parties' military commands. They seem to have considered it a subset of political warfare,⁵⁴ indicating that both at first classed intelligence as a military

⁵³ The writings of Sun Zi (Sun Tzu) date to the Late Zhou period (c. 500 BC). His identity is variously described, though the Taiwan source in this footnote calls him a general under the Wu Kingdom during the Spring and Autumn Period (722-481 BC). His *Art of War* deals with enemies who are other Chinese warring states, not foreign powers. Hu Wenlin (ed.), *Qingbao xue*, pp. 27-28 and 122. *Sun Zi bing fa baihua jianjie* [An Introduction to Sun Zi the Art of War in Colloquial Chinese] (Taipei: Wenguang Chubanshe, 1986), pp. 273-277.

⁵⁴ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 2, 4. This idea carried over into modern times on the Nationalist side. In 1976, the author stayed as a guest at the ROC Political Warfare School in a suburb of Taipei. At that time I was told by senior cadre there that most of Taiwan's military intelligence officers were trained at the academy, and that intelligence was considered part of political warfare work. The college is now part of the National Defense

function. Indeed, while political intelligence became important to both sides, the CCP emphasized military intelligence after 1927.⁵⁵

However, before the two Chinese parties split in April 1927, they appeared to lack any sort of intelligence effort,⁵⁶ though we will see below some early security organization to protect VIPs.

In retrospect the CCP's clandestine origins and weak position in the revolution and society might easily have prompted a demand for information about potential enemies. The anti-Bolshevik hostility of many people—especially powerful foreign interests—could also have encouraged the systematic development of information about rivals and enemies. But the early Chinese Communist leaders were veterans of May Fourth 1919 Movement⁵⁷ demonstrations, accustomed to working openly to win over their fellows by public activism. Although the development of clandestine work habits by the CCP and the formation of an intelligence service may seem inevitable in retrospect, the habitual secrecy that became a signature of CCP politics and work required an initial push from the Russians. While there is evidence that the Comintern agents

University, and also known as Fu Hsing Kang College, or the *Zhengzhi zuozhan Xuexiao*.

<http://www.fhk.ndu.edu.tw/default.asp> and

http://www.fhk.ndu.edu.tw/editor_model/u_editor_v1.asp?id={7E74672B-B72F-4771-B7ED-BAC49D656EB0}

⁵⁵ This idea is supported by Zhou Enlai's guidance to intelligence officers on 1 April 1950 that operations should change from a purely military orientation toward the military and political, working for the inclusion of economic and scientific intelligence and the kinds of intelligence needed for foreign relations. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976, shang* [The Annals of Zhou Enlai, 1949-1976, vol.1] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1997).

⁵⁶ The CCP, placed on the defensive during the April 1927 coup, moved first to form an intelligence arm, but the KMT was not far behind. The first Nationalist intelligence organization was also military, the *Lianluo zu* (Liaison Group), founded in January 1928 and placed under Chiang Kai-shek's Command Headquarters (*Zong silingbu*). The man who emerged as its leader, Dai Li (Tai Li) was at first a bodyguard, like some intelligence figures on the communist side. The KMT Liaison Group was a precursor of the National Military Council Bureau of Investigations and Statistics, more conveniently known as the MSB, or Military Statistics Bureau—the *Juntong ju*), one of its two principal intelligence organizations, which discussed further below. Wakeman, *Spymaster*, p. 36. Hu Wenlin (ed.), *Qingbao xue*, p. 228, provides a brief and frustrating reference to KMT military intelligence being started “just after the founding of the Republic” with no dates, places, or names of people.

⁵⁷ At the 1918 Paris Peace Conference that ended World War I, the victorious Allies secretly agreed to allow Japan to keep Shandong province, leading to widespread public outrage in China, and the May Fourth Movement, which has been extensively studied elsewhere. Benjamin Schwartz, “Themes in Intellectual History: May Fourth and After,” in Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China Volume 12*, pp. 406-407, 427-430.

who assisted Chen Duxiu in Shanghai trained him and his comrades in some clandestine principles, it has been difficult to find any indication that they spent any time on intelligence or security work. Just below we will see that basic security was so lacking at the CCP First Party Congress that the whole delegation barely missed being surprised by the French Concession police.

In May 1920, Comintern agents Grigori Voitinsky and Yang Mingzhai arrived in Shanghai with orders from Lenin to contact Chen Duxiu and set up a “Temporary Central Organ” leading to the establishment of a communist party.⁵⁸ To that point in time, Chen’s political activities were more overt than clandestine. Just as Zhou Enlai’s open protest activities landed him in jail in 1920,⁵⁹ Chen Duxiu was imprisoned for three months for leading public demonstrations in support of the May Fourth Movement. Upon meeting Chen, Voitinsky and Yang learned that the Chinese socialist was exploring a number of foreign ideas probably not in accordance with Leninism, such as John Dewey’s guild socialism and Japanese model village practices. In essence, the two Comintern agents put Chen back on track: they talked him toward activities more aligned with Lenin’s vision of revolution, and also introduced clandestine principles. After this, Chen commissioned a friend to translate and publish the first Chinese version of *The Communist Manifesto*. Under the agents’ guidance, he formed front organizations to veil communist organizational (recruiting) and propaganda work. Voitinsky’s spouse, living with him in Shanghai, started a Russian language school for Chinese students, whose successful

⁵⁸ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, p. 283; *Zhongguo Ershi Shiji Jishi Benmo* [China’s 20th Century History From Start to Finish, vol. 1, 1900-1926] (Jinan: Shandong Renmin Chubanshe, 1999), p. 525. These and other references note no intelligence activity by the nascent Chinese Communist Party or the Soviet advisors. On Voitinsky, see Michael Share, *Where Empires Collided: Russian and Soviet Relations with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2007) p. 53, and C. Martin Wilbur, *Documents on Communism, Nationalism, and Soviet Advisors in China, 1918-1927: Papers Seized in the 1927 Peking Raid* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 78-79.

⁵⁹ See section near the end of this chapter on Zhou.

graduates were sent there for training as organizers. Chen founded the first Communist study group (*Gongchan zhuyi xiaozu*) in Shanghai, and others soon sprang up in Beijing, Wuhan, Changsha, Jinan, and Guangzhou.⁶⁰ No source indicates that all of this activity included any sort of intelligence work by the Chinese or Soviet comrades. Indeed, in the environment of the time, and because of an incident during the founding Party congress, it is uncertain whether they agreed on the need for basic secrecy of things like name lists, meeting places, and future organizing plans.

However, clandestine operations would become the norm for the Chinese Communists, even before the launching of intelligence operations. On the eighth day of the First Party Congress (30 July 1921), an incident occurred that became part of Party lore and underlined the dangers of lax security. At about 8:00pm a middle aged Chinese man known to no one wandered into the building where the session was under way. He approached the delegates, saying he was lost. The Comintern agent Maring (Sneevlit) ordered the delegates to scatter and about 15 minutes later the French Concession police arrived. Now cued in to the possibility of hostile attention and the compromise of their meeting place, the group moved the meeting to a boat on nearby Zhejiang Lake. The incident indicated not only that the CCP or the Comintern may have been infiltrated by the French or informed on by neighbors, but that the communists may not have employed basic intelligence or security methods in protecting the sensitive meeting.⁶¹

“Bolsheviks” were now too well known, and feared, in China to be ignored by authorities. The

⁶⁰ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949* (Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1998), pp. 43 and 47; Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1999), pp. 309-310.

⁶¹ Ni Xingyang (ed.), *Zhongguo Gongchandang chuangjian shi* [A History of the Establishment of the CCP] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006), p. 72.

French, British, Americans, and Japanese were hostile to the CCP based on fears of communist revolution spreading from Russia, and suspicious of their KMT allies, who had Russian advisors.

Local warlord authorities also gradually turned their attention to suppressing communists. In 1924, future senior CCP Intelligence official Kong Yuan⁶² (1906-1990) was a student activist in Changsha. Even though Kong was not yet engaged in intelligence duties, he had to operate clandestinely due to hostile local authorities. A Hunan native, in December 1924 Kong was admitted to the Communist Youth League, and the following spring entered the CCP, “throwing himself into the Revolution.” In spite of the local warlord’s hostility to the CCP and KMT, Kong assembled the largest regional memorial service for Sun Yatsen after his passing in 1925. As the KMT military entered the area in September 1926, Kong organized the worker’s pickets (*gongren jiucha dui*) after the area was secured and, right around his twentieth birthday, was appointed by the provincial CCP as the chief judge of the special court on landlords. A year later, Mao Zedong described this as one of “14 great events” in his *Report on the Conditions of the Peasantry in Hunan*.⁶³ When the Nationalist coup against the CCP occurred on 12 April 1927, Kong was on a secret mission in Wuhan to buy firearms. The local KMT sided with Chiang Kai-shek and killed CCP members and other leftists. The CCP decided to make Kong the Organization Chief of the General Work Committee, under which he participated in the

⁶² Kong Yuan was from Anyuan in Pingxiang County, Hunan Province. During the latter stages of the Chinese Revolution Kong became a ranking career intelligence officer with the secondary specialty of military operations, and after 1949 his covers included trade and customs jobs. As Director of the Central Investigations Department (CID) in 1966, Kong was the most senior CCP Intelligence official purged during the Cultural Revolution.

⁶³ Kong Yuan’s original name was Chen Kaiyuan, and other aliases include Tian Fu and Shi Xin. A summary of Kong’s career asserts that he “made great contributions to Party organization, PRC Customs work, foreign affairs, foreign trade, work on Taiwan, and on the hidden battlefield.” Tian Changlie (ed.), *Zhonggong Jilinsi dangshi renwu (3)* [Personalities in Party History in Jilin Municipality] (Jilin: Dongbei Shida chubanshe, 1999). This was posted on the Jilin CCP Municipal Committee’s web site in 2011, but no longer seems available at <http://www.jlsds.cn/yanjiu/renwu/kongyuan.htm>.

See also <http://www.ndcnc.gov.cn/datalib/2001/MartialCyclopaedic/DL/DL-3936>.

August First 1927 Uprising, now commemorated as the founding event of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The KMT-CCP Split and the Special Operations Work Division

At the time of the August First 1927 Uprising, Kong Yuan was also a member of a newly formed Political Protection Office (*Zhengzhi baowei chu*) performing executive protection work. It was one of several security bodies that sprung up in the wake of 12 April.⁶⁴ This study located three references to CCP security work before KMT-CCP split, but two of them are mere asides lacking any detail, even amidst other more complete information about what came next. In one article, a Party historian notes the existence on Shanghai of a “secret organization” (*mimi zuzhi*) founded as early as September 1925 that dealt with traitors and scabs (workers opposed to a strike), but had no intelligence functions.⁶⁵ In another article, reference is made to a CCP military police regiment (*Gongan jiaodao tuan*) under Zhu De in early 1927.⁶⁶ The regiment may have handled security tasks such as guard work and anti-spy investigations as well as military police duties, as one of its officers was the future CCP Intelligence senior officer, Zhou Xing.⁶⁷ However, the author (Zhou's widow) does not further comment. The third reference is only brief and suggests that there is more to dig out about 1926: A Military Special Commission (*Junshi tebie weiyuan*

⁶⁴ More details of Kong Yuan's career are in subsequent chapters. Perhaps due to his ability to survive under hostile conditions, Kong was eventually absorbed into the earliest CCP Intelligence organizations. For another brief biography of Kong Yuan see also Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhonggong diyijie zhi shiwujie zhongyang weiyuan* (Hereafter, *Zhongyang weiyuan*) [CCP Central Committee Members from the First to the Fifteenth Congress] (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2001), p. 111.

⁶⁵ Xue Yu, “Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang teke nuogan wenti de tantao” [An Inquiry into Certain Questions About the Central Committee Special Operations Branch] in *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu* [The Study of Chinese Communist History] (Beijing: March 1999), p. 2.

⁶⁶ Yang Yuying, “Huainian Zhou Xing” [Remembering Zhou Xing], on the web site *Fenghuo Gong An: Police in Wartime*. See <http://www.wphoto.net/news.asp?id=1853&nam=%BC%CD%C4%EE%CE%C4%D5%C2>)

⁶⁷ Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian chuanqi* [*The Legendary Pan Hannian*] (China People's Publishing House, 1996), pp. 84-85. The work by Zhang Yun is not a favorite to cite because his scholarship may not be original. However it should be noted that his starting date for CCP Intelligence organizations is late 1926, and he covers some events not included in the preferred biography by Yin Qi.

hui) under the CCP Shanghai Executive Committee (*Zhonggong Shanghai qu zhexing weiyuan hui*) was in operation that year, headed in May by Luo Yinong, and after 18 June by Gu Shunzhang.⁶⁸ Gu is discussed more below. Unfortunately no other record of this commission can be found, but it indicates that some activity—probably security and protection—was under way that year in Shanghai.

These circumstances indicate that only a small to moderate level of attention was devoted to security, and less to intelligence, before the April 1927. With the exception of Li Qiang, cited just below, mainland sources generally agree that the CCP only started an intelligence (as opposed to an executive protection) organization afterwards. The Central Military Affairs Department in Wuhan (*Zhongyang junshi bu*, later to become the Central Military Commission) started a small and short-lived “Special Operations Work Division” (*Tewu gongzuo chu*) in May 1927: after the KMT-CCP split, and before the August First Uprising. The Division gathered intelligence and provided personal protection for Party leaders, and is cited in several PRC publications⁶⁹ but not in any so far consulted from Taiwan, Hong Kong, or abroad.⁷⁰ The tasks of the Special Operations Work Division are not well recorded by most CCP sources that mention it—just the fact of its short life, ending in August 1927 when the Central Committee abolished it during the move from Wuhan to Shanghai after the failed August First 1927 Uprising, officially the birth of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA).⁷¹

⁶⁸ Wang Jianying (ed.), *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao huibian* [A Compilation of Chinese Communist Party Organizational History] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1995), p. 35.

⁶⁹ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 1 dates the Special Operations Work Division from May 1927 and says it lasted three months. See also Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai* [Zhou Enlai, Guru of the Hidden Battlefield] (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 2002), pp. 7-8.

⁷⁰ U.T. Hsu, *The Invisible Conflict*, pp. 13-18.

⁷¹ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 1-2.

Most of the available information about the unit comes from two PRC sources. One notes that a “Special Branch” (*Teke*) was formed under the CCP military by Zhou Enlai in Wuhan during late May 1927, though the exact date is not indicated. At that time the unit was under the military, not the Party Central Committee (only in November would intelligence operations be permanently placed under the Central Committee, and be called the *Zhongyang tebie renwu ke*, the Central Committee Special Operations Branch, or CCSO). By this account the *Teke* was headed by Zhou Enlai and Nie Rongzhen,⁷² and developed sources inside the Japanese and British consulates in Wuhan between late May and July 1927. Its scope is said to have been limited and not on par with the wider range of intelligence activities later undertaken by the CCSO.⁷³ Even in its infancy, this was a completely new effort for the CCP. As Chen Yun recalled in an interview with his biographers, before April 1927 the Party “did not know how to organize intelligence.”⁷⁴

Li Qiang, who was in charge of the CCP Central Military Department’s protection efforts in April 1927, provides another version of events.⁷⁵ His account says nothing about the period before the coup, but after 12 April 1927 he helped establish a Special Operations Branch (*Tebie renwu ke*) under the Military Department. The unit later became known as Central Military Affairs Department Special Operations (*Zhongyang junwei teke*) and was headed by Gu

⁷² Nie joined the CCP in 1923, was trained in the Soviet Red Army Academy in 1924, and was a political officer under Zhou Enlai at Huangpu Academy in 1925-26. He marched in the Northern Expedition. Nie became a Marshall of the People’s Liberation Army in 1955, and the first head of COSTIND, the Commission on Science and Technology in the National Defense. Nie’s career included a brief stint in the CCSO in Shanghai and the Central Military Commission in 1930-31, after which he left for the Red Areas. Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, pp. 612-613.

⁷³ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 115 describes the *Teke* (Special Operations Branch) being founded by Zhou in May 1927, after noting that Zhou did not arrive in Wuhan until sometime late that month. In He Lin (ed.), *Chen Geng Zhuan* [The Biography of Chen Geng], p. 48, Gu is clearly stated as the head of the Wuhan *Teke*.

⁷⁴ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun Zhuan*, p. 105.

⁷⁵ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, pp. 8-9.

Shunzhang. Li Qiang's account is unusual in that it frankly notes Gu Shunzhang's leadership role and does not dwell on his 1931 defection to the KMT. Li does not mention the Wuhan Based Special Operations Work Division, but they may have been the same organization using different names, as their four section (*gu*) organization was similar.⁷⁶ The Protection Section (*Baowei gu*), with 30 members, looked after top figures like Zhou Enlai and the Russian advisors, and performed protection work for organizations. "They appeared to be neither soldiers nor police; they all wore three-pocket student jackets." (*Sange koudaide xuesheng zhuang*) There was also an Intelligence Section (*Qingbao gu*) that produced a daily report of all available information in Wuhan, based on agent material—and one of their sources was the Wuhan chief of police (*Gong an*) in Wang Jingwei's government.⁷⁷ The Special Operations Section (*Tewu gu*), probably started later than the others, was responsible for suppressing renegades (*zhenya pantu*), and was also called the "Red Squad" or, more frankly, the "Red Terror Squad" (*Hong dui; Hongse kongbu dui*).

Under Li, the Red Squad started with only three operatives. Later the unit included a Local Bandit Movement Section (*Tufei yun gu*), perhaps charged with suppressing ruffians hired by landlords hindering CCP rural reform. They were located together with Zhou Enlai and the CCP Organization Department, while the Central Military Affairs Department had their offices across the river on Zhonghe Lane. At this time Li Qiang was 22 years old.⁷⁸

During the August First 1927 Uprising, the Section reportedly sabotaged the rail line from Guangzhou, and shortly before that they identified and killed a British agent amongst the Soviet

⁷⁶ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ The location was No. 12 Yuji Lane (余积里) in Hankou. Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, pp. 8-9.

advisors.⁷⁹ However, there is no record of them assessing KMT strength or intentions, as would have been done by a focused and informed intelligence organ.

It is always easier to judge what should have been. As CCP leaders looked back at the events of 1926 through April 1927, they may have perceived a series of warnings that a more focused intelligence organ might have employed to warn of the coming catastrophe:

- In August 1926, Chiang Kai-shek pledged to protect all the foreigners in Wuhan as his armies approach the city;
- In mid-December, the British opened talks with the KMT to discuss recognizing their government;
- Also in December, the Generalissimo held secret discussions with the chief of detectives in the Shanghai French Concession about eventual suppression of labor movements in the city;
- At an 11 January 1927 conference at Nanchang between Chiang and leftists, including Borodin, the Generalissimo left feeling insulted at accusations that he was becoming a tool of foreigners;
- In late March, the Northern Expedition seemed to spin out of control as its forces entered Nanjing, looting three foreign consulates and killing several foreign missionaries and others. The Japanese consul became convinced that the attackers were communists, and this version was accepted by the other foreign powers;⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 2.

⁸⁰ C. Martin Wilbur, "The Nationalist Revolution: from Canton to Nanking, 1923-28," pp. 617-619.

- On 6 April 1927, Zhang Zuolin, the Manchurian warlord, ordered his Beijing Municipal Police to raid the Soviet embassy Beijing, where they seized seven truckloads of documents showing Soviet-CCP cooperation, extensive GRU networks in China, and theft of documents from the UK and Japanese embassies. Zhang's forces also arrested and hanged CCP co-founder Li Dazhao.⁸¹

From an intelligence perspective, what was the meaning of not being prepared for the April coup, and the rapid failure of the August First 1927 Uprising and other communist revolts in the remainder of that year? There were political consequences higher up—the replacement of the CCP's General Secretary as has been well documented⁸² elsewhere—but this study could find no evidence of a purge or other punishment targeting anyone in CCP's new intelligence and security organizations, no one held to account for the failure to warn of enemy strength and intentions which might have assisted the Chen Duxiu, Qu Qiubai and others in making more realistic assessments of the battlefield. Nor is there evidence explaining why the multi-threat environment did not prompt the establishment of a seriously manned CCP intelligence organ. However, in this time when the Party was closely following Soviet instructions, it is relevant to remember that there is also no evidence that the Soviets had recommended the establishment of an intelligence organ. Moreover, the small Special Operations Work Division existed at the time when Stalin wanted to encourage the KMT-CCP United Front, and did not favor the establishment even of rural soviets by the CCP. He wished to keep Russo-Chinese relations (with the KMT) stable, and may have thought that starting up a bigger CCP intelligence organ

⁸¹ C. Martin Wilbur and Julie Lien-ying How, *Documents on Communism, Nationalism, and Soviet Advisers in China, 1918-1927: Papers Seized in the 1927 Peking Raid*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 7-9; 13-15.

⁸² Hans Van Der Ven, *War and Nationalism in China 1925-1945* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 110-113.

would be considered a provocation. Moreover, it is not hard to imagine the GRU China cadre opposing an active CCP intelligence organization which might interfere with their operations to monitor and assess Japanese and KMT military strength in China.

While little evidence has been found to support such hypotheses, the “backbone cadres” selected for CCP Intelligence in late 1927 were from the Special Operations Work Division.⁸³ Therefore if there were any sins assessed, they may have been forgiven.

Necessity, the Mother of CCP Intelligence

It might have been logical for CCP leaders to recount and assess the events of 1927 to identify problems, solve them, and take steps to prevent recurrence. Faligot provides an unattributed quote from a CCP official in 1927, post-April, sans footnote: “We need an OGPU⁸⁴ for China. The setting up of a proper Chinese Communist Party Secret Service is a top priority.”⁸⁵ That fits the circumstances, which taken together indicate a Party consensus that intelligence was (perhaps suddenly) a core function necessary for survival. While evidence is lacking that shows exactly how leaders debated and approved a Party-controlled intelligence service, Chinese sources do not contradict Faligot’s quote. As we saw above, they indicate a series of post-12 April attempts to assemble intelligence and security (mostly protection) operations while the Party was under siege, and retreating to Shanghai. There, the leadership could take shelter in the foreign concessions—the least-worst option. The enclaves were not safe, just less dangerous than KMT-

⁸³ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 5.

⁸⁴ The OGPU, or *Obedinennoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie* [United State Political Directorate] was one of the Soviet security services at the time. It was the successor to the Cheka, the first Soviet service under Lenin. By 1928 OGPU had established a network of schools around the Soviet Union that trained small classes (10-15 students) of cadres in underground, covert, and sabotage operations. Raymond W. Leonard, *Secret Soldiers of the Revolution*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), pp. x and 47.

⁸⁵ Roger Faligot and Remi Kauffer, *The Chinese Secret Service* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 1990), p. 44.

controlled areas. As the Chinese Communist leaders gradually arrived, they took steps to reorganize the CCP's fledgling intelligence effort.

A number of interpretations have emerged about exactly when the CCP created a Party-controlled intelligence service. The gradual assembly of CCP Intelligence over six months starting in May 1927, with the comprehensive organization being formed in November⁸⁶ is an explanation that makes the most sense. Perhaps this process took six months because it was a bureaucratic exercise of some complication, done by people who were under considerable pressure while on the run and in hiding. It also seems that Zhou's unavailability in the middle of the process may have stalled progress.

As we noted above, Zhou Enlai took the first step in May 1927 by forming a "Teke" (special operations section) under the military. A subordinate intelligence section ran agents in perhaps two foreign consulates. However, its scope of work was limited and lasted only through July or August.⁸⁷ That month, the Central Committee Standing Committee (*Zhongyang changwei*) decided that Zhou Enlai should organize a Special Operations Commission (*Tebie weiyuan hui*) to supervise intelligence and security work, but this was merely a decision, it was not immediately carried forward.⁸⁸

Another PRC reference tells a different founding story: that Zhou, Luo Yinong, Li Lisan, and three citizens of the Soviet Union met in Shanghai in April 1927 as the Special Operations

⁸⁶ The Party historian Xue Yu reviewed classified CCP documents and makes a convincing case showing a series of events from May to November 1927 that established the Party's consolidated intelligence organ. Xue Yu, "Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang teke nuogan wenti de tantao", pp. 1-4.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

Commission (*Tewu weiyuanhui*). They made recommendations to the Wuhan CCP to counterattack the KMT in two meetings (12 and 16 April). Though the source⁸⁹ seems authoritative, this study found no corroborating evidence for this quick-and-easy founding story. To simplify the picture, other Party leaders decided to refresh the process in September-October, but Zhou Enlai being absent held up the process until October-November.

In September the organization that later became the CCSO's First (General) Branch (*Yi ke*, or *Zongwu ke*) began procuring clandestine housing and other rentals with furniture immediately needed for comrades arriving in Shanghai.⁹⁰ Most Central Committee members arrived in late September and early October. On 18 October they held their first important meeting to discuss the lessons of the failed uprisings in Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong, and Jiangxi.

On 23 October the provisional CCP Politburo decided to convene an emergency meeting and requested Zhou Enlai, then recuperating in Yaumatei, Hong Kong, to attend. A week later he sailed for Shanghai.⁹¹ On 14 November, the Politburo decided to give Zhou the responsibility to reorganize the departments under the Central Committee: Organization, Propaganda, Military, Special Services (*tewu*, which included intelligence and security work), Investigation, Communications, Publications, and others. They were named in this order in *The Annals of Zhou Enlai*, indicating that intelligence was identified as an important, core task. In the two

⁸⁹ Liu Wusheng (ed.) *Zhou Enlai da cidian* [The Big Dictionary of Zhou Enlai] (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 1997), p. 22.

⁹⁰ Xue Yu, "Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang teke nuogan wenti de tantao", p. 3. This is logical function for any organization establishing itself on new ground. It rings familiar to the author's experience of starting up a "green field" factory in China: arrive, obtain hotel space as temporary housing for incoming personnel, negotiate permanent housing and office space, hire local staff immediately necessary for support services, and only then start worrying about starting up regular operations.

⁹¹ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 127; Xue Yu, "Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang teke nuogan wenti de tantao", p. 4.

weeks that followed Zhou was directly involved in deciding how to reorganize intelligence and security to include specific branches (*ke*) to handle general services (*zongwu*), intelligence (*qingbao*), operations (*xingdong*), and radio communications (*wuxiandian tongxun*). The organization's major responsibilities were protecting the central leadership, assembling intelligence, suppressing turncoats, rescuing imprisoned comrades, and establishing clandestine radio stations.⁹² The Politburo issued an order that month placing Zhou in charge of the organization.⁹³ We will look at this structure in more detail in the next section.

At first, the reorganized CCP Intelligence had two aspects resembling a secret society in dynastic transition: they were founded for self-protection and engaged in violent retaliation against enemies and traitors. As they struck at enemies, the sensational coverage received in the news media suggested the image of a gangster organization on the loose.⁹⁴ However, even early CCP Intelligence was unlike a criminal secret society in that they were genuinely oriented toward national politics and soon had reason to emphasize ethnic (anti-Japanese) consciousness. They also lacked the rituals and exoticism of secret societies,⁹⁵ instead emphasizing real as opposed to professed politics, intelligence, protection of elite Party members, and establishing secret communications with a foreign power and a domestic military force. In sum, the bloody “wet work” (assassinations) of the Red Squads was a part of this picture, but not everything.

CCP Underground, CCP Intelligence

⁹² Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 128; Xue Yu, “Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang teke nuogan wenti de tantao”, p. 4.

⁹³ Xue Yu, “Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang teke nuogan wenti de tantao”, p. 4

⁹⁴ See “Communist Party’s Vengeance, Wholesale Murders, Amazing Story from Shanghai” in *Straits Times*, 9 December 1931, p. 15, at <http://newspapers.nl.sg/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19311209.2.73.aspx> Thanks to Dr. David Chambers for this item.

⁹⁵ Ownby, *Secret Societies Reconsidered*, pp. 4, 5, 16, 25.

Before continuing to describe the development of CCP Intelligence operations, we should note the concurrent development of the CCP Underground. The work of the two organizations can become confused for three main reasons. 1) As we will see in later chapters, the CCP Organization Department moved people in and out of both as needed. While some people stayed in one or the other, many worked in both the Underground and Intelligence at different times, and moved on to other mainline Party organizations like the Organization or Propaganda Departments, or the military. 2) Both Intelligence and the Underground did secret work in enemy areas and were trained in clandestine operations; therefore accounts of their activities in the history books can resemble one another. 3) Both organizations shared some overlap in tasks, covering for each other when there were gaps in staffing in enemy areas, whether Japanese or White (KMT) zones.

The differences in a nutshell: CCP Intelligence ran operations specifically to gather information to satisfy intelligence requirements about enemy military forces, government bodies, foreign governments, and personalities of interest to the CCP. Most CCP Intelligence work was inherently secret *even when performed in Red areas* because their work concerned espionage and because they maintained the lowest possible profile to avoid enemy attention. By contrast, the CCP Underground worked in enemy areas to organize worker and student groups, implement strikes and occupations, and in the late 1940s, to advance anti-civil war feeling. They also conducted propaganda work including the printing of handbills and posters, news gathering for communist-run or influenced newspapers published in KMT areas, political study for Party members, organization building and preservation, and infiltration of neutral organizations in

order to influence or take over leadership.⁹⁶ These functions were generally related to CCP governance measures *openly* taken in Red Areas, except that the Communists did not encourage workers to strike.

In Chapters Five and Six, we will see some overlapping functions between Underground and Intelligence operations leading up to and during the Anti-Japanese War, such as clandestine transport of cadres and guests,⁹⁷ and negotiations with the enemy. Any overlap seems to have been cooperative rather than competitive in nature. This division of labor between CCP Intelligence and the Underground may have enhanced discipline in comparison with their KMT opponents. Those doing secret work on the Communist side were focused more on specific tasks than if there had been competitive overlap leading to wasteful “turf” battles. This may have contributed to enhancing their value to the leadership, and to CCP Intelligence becoming a core function of the Party. Though we will see in subsequent chapters that the Communists had serious internal power struggles affecting the intelligence organs in 1931 and 1943, their leadership was mostly unified. By contrast, we will also see below that the Nationalists practically institutionalized intelligence organization power struggles by creating two separate and competing agencies, the Military Statistics Bureau (MSB, the *Juntong ju*) led by Dai Li, and Chen Lifu’s Central Statistics Bureau (CSB, the *Zhongtong ju*), under the Nationalist Party itself.

⁹⁶ Examples of such underground work may be seen in Chen Shaouchou, *Liu Shaoqi zai baiqu* [Liu Shaoqi in the White Areas] (Beijing: Zhonggong Dang Shi Chubanshe), pp. 23, 27-28, 31, 47, 54-55, 93-97. See also Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: the Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 137-143.

⁹⁷ For example, Li Kenong had a second career of sorts as a negotiator. Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong, Zhonggong yinbi zhanxian de zhuoyue lingdao ren* [Li Kenong: Outstanding Leader of the CCP’s Hidden Battlefield] (Zhongguo Youyi Chubanshe, 1996), Chapters 13, 39, 42. See also Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1938), p. 56. As Song Qingling, Li Kenong, Dong Jianwu and Deng Fa were involved in Snow’s transit, his visit may have been a CCP Intelligence and Underground joint operation.

Early CCP Intelligence Structure and Functions

Once the final decision by the Central Committee was taken on 14 November 1927, the Central Committee Special Operations Branch (*Zhongyang tebie gongzuo ke*, or the *teke*, CCSO) began working in an organized way under Zhou Enlai, accountable to Party rather than military supervision.⁹⁸ CCSO developed four sections⁹⁹ suited for their clandestine existence in Shanghai. This structure echoed but did not mirror the earlier intelligence structure under the Military Department. The CCSO First and Third Sections were set up from existing structures in November 1927 after the Central Committee moved from Wuhan to Shanghai. At this time they were called the *Zongwu ke* (General Affairs Branch) and the *Xingdong ke* (Active Measures Branch), respectively. General Affairs established wholly owned commercial fronts, such as Hsing Hsing Company (*Xinxin Gongsì*).¹⁰⁰ They also partnered with legitimate businesses, and

⁹⁸ Xue Yu, “Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang teke nuogan wenti de tantao”, p. 5-6.

⁹⁹ This description is based on an examination of works by CCP authors, Warren Kuo and U.T. Hsu from Taiwan, Viktor Usov (Russia), Roger Faligot (France), and Frederick Wakeman, Jr. (US). Each has variations from the other, but a credible picture emerges if Mu Xin’s account (2002), which has some missing pieces, is filled in with Xue Yu’s article on the founding of the Teke, elements in the official Chen Yun biography (2005), and the matching parts of the other works. See Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, p. 11-13; Mu Xin, *Chen Geng tongzhi zai Shanghai*, pp.11-16; Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan*, p. 106-107; Xue Yu, “Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang teke nuogan wenti de tantao”; Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 285-286; U.T. Hsu, *The Invisible Conflict*, pp. 19-26; Viktor Usov, *20 Shiji 20 niandai Sulian qingbao jiguan zai Zhongguo* [Soviet Intelligence Organs in China in the 1920s] (In Chinese. Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 2007). French interrogations of detained CCP agents led them to name the CCSO the “Chinese GPU” but they were focused on the most visible element, the Red Squads. Frederick Wakeman, Jr., *Policing Shanghai 1927-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 137-139; Roger Faligot and Remi Kauffer, *The Chinese Secret Service*, pp. 45-54.

¹⁰⁰ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan, vol. 1*, p. 107. The Wade Giles Romanization at the time, “Hsinghsing,” added two g’s in error and should have been “Hsinhsin”: the Chinese characters are 新新公司. This may have been a mere corruption of the spelling or an intentional, prudent deceit: In modern times, British colonial police officers from the UK or the Commonwealth working in Hong Kong were required to learn spoken Cantonese, but almost none ever learned to read Chinese characters. That was likely the same in Shanghai for police in the British run International Settlement, and the French police in that country’s concession. Since *xin* (hsin) is a word commonly associated with the Chinese Communist movement, misspelling it slightly would lower the number of potentially hostile officials who might be suspicious of the company based on its name—not a perfect solution, but one that raises doubts in the enemy camp. While to a Chinese speaker the idea of this sort of ruse may seem absurd, the thin veil of the Chinese language has been used by more modern Chinese officials as well. In 2002 a military electronics research unit, Institute 54 in Shijiazhuang, near Beijing, contracted with a California firm to purchase controlled semiconductor gear without the required US license, and covered themselves with that same veil: their actual subordination under the PLA General Staff was openly published in Chinese, while their cover identity under the civilian Ministry of Information Industries was placed in English language material, both with identical addresses.

recruited peddlers as undercover agents. General Affairs arranged secret meeting places for conferences and hired cooks, maids, and other servants for party organizations and safe houses, also renting accommodations and furniture for leaders and purchasing arms for the CCSO as a whole. General Affairs Section also hired attorneys and arranged bail, and conducted other assistance for CCP members in detention, including payment of bribes to secure prisoner release. The CCP- and KMT-approved sources consulted indicate that General Affairs had a wide early role, running agents and using other clandestine operations to gather intelligence from November 1927 until the Intelligence Section was established up a few months later. After everything was up and running, each section was given its sequential number. The General Affairs Section was led by Zhang Hongyang.

The Second Section, Intelligence (*Qingbao ke*) was founded in spring 1928. It gathered intelligence information about the enemy and provided analysis. They infiltrated KMT intelligence bodies, police, foreign consulates, newspapers and press associations, and criminal syndicates. The Section achieved a number of successes against the KMT in these early years. They showed that CCP Intelligence could penetrate and seriously damage the Nationalist government—but it was not enough to reverse the rising tide of Nationalist superiority in the secret war and on the battlefield. The Second Section was initially led by Chen Geng and then by Pan Hannian after the April 1931 Gu Shunzhang defection made it hard for Chen to remain in Shanghai.¹⁰¹

Author's interviews with former Hong Kong Police officers, 1995-2007; Matthew Brazil, "China" in *The Encyclopedia of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* (Armonk: Sharpe Reference, 2005), p. 134.

¹⁰¹ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp.9-10 and 14-16; Quan Yanchi, *Zhongguo miwen neimu* [Secrets and Insider Stories of China] (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 2004), p. 44; Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian chuanqi*, p. 90; and Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 285-287.

The Third Section, or the Central Protection Departments (*Zhongyang Baowei Bumen*, nicknamed the Red Squads - *Hongdui*) was the other early CCSO organization, brought into the Teke in November 1927, and as we saw above predated CCSO itself. It did executive protection work for leaders, assassinations of enemies and, according to a Taiwan source, arranged kidnappings of hostile persons, sometimes collecting ransom. While there is no confirmation about kidnappings, both Taiwan and PRC sources agree that the Red Squads assassinated selected targets. Also nicknamed the Dog Beating Squad (*Dagou dui*), they conducted “attacks on (enemy) agents” (*daji tewu*). The Red Squads were led by Guang Huian, Cai Fei and Tan Zhongyu. Li Qiang appears to have played an early leadership or godparent role, as noted above, in 1926-28. Pan Hannian sat in as a leading member in 1931, perhaps to evaluate and rectify operations and personnel after Gu Shunzhang defected to the KMT. There is no evidence that the protection and assassination functions were strictly separated; given the often desperate situation of the CCP during these days, there was likely an integrated approach that used available personnel for tasks at hand.

The Fourth Section, Communications (*Wuxiandian tongxun*), was established in late 1929 and set up radio links with CCP branches in the provinces. They also established connections with railway, bus, and shipping firms for handling couriers and other clandestine non-radio communications, and set up channels for transporting people and funds. Fourth Branch was headed by Li Qiang and Wu Defeng.¹⁰²

Not mentioned in the PRC accounts is a separate Research Office, possibly a headquarters element not subordinate to any branch. According to a Taiwan source they studied Russian

¹⁰² Information on CCSO structure to this point is from the sources cited above in footnote 47.

secret service techniques and discussed individual cases in order to achieve improvements in technical skills and intelligence tradecraft.¹⁰³ Unfortunately no other source mentions this body, including a Russian work on Soviet intelligence in China that discusses the other four sections under CCSO.¹⁰⁴

There is no direct evidence of any CCP foreign intelligence operations in the late 1920s, though it was possible early in the Party's history to join the CCP and work underground while overseas. For example, Ji Chaoding joined the Party in Chicago in 1927, one of the first Chinese students in the US to do so. Ji departed the US that year for Europe, attended congresses of the Anti-Imperialist League in Brussels and Frankfurt in 1927 and 1929, spent a year in Moscow, and then returned to the US in 1929 where he spent the next 12 years at the Daily Worker and the China Bureau of the CPUSA, carrying on some activities covertly while others were known among American intellectuals. During his time in the US, Ji was perhaps best known for work connected with the Institute for Pacific Relations. In the 1930s he met two Treasury Department officials, Frank Coe and Solomon Adler, who worked for the PRC after 1949. While an intelligence role by Ji to this point is only possible, not proven, after 17 years overseas Ji returned to China and undertook CCP clandestine intelligence duties while ostensibly working as the confidential secretary to H.H. Kung (Kong Xiangxi), the KMT's economics expert and brother in law to Chiang Kai-shek.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, pp. 16-17; The names of the section leaders are from Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p.6. See also Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian chuanqi*, pp.86-87; and Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 285-287.

¹⁰⁴ Victor Usov, *20 Shiji 20 niandai Sulian qingbao jiguan zai Zhongguo*, pp. 165-167.

¹⁰⁵ Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao's Right* (New York: Random House, 2008), pp. 8, 19, 32-34, 42. Donald W. Klein and Anne B. Clark, *Biographic Dictionary of Chinese Communism, 1921-1965, Volume I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 161.

CCSO started operations in major Chinese cities including Hong Kong, but the center of their activity, as well as that of Western and Japanese foreign intelligence organizations in China, was Shanghai.¹⁰⁶ As noted above, the CCP Central Committee made Shanghai their base even though it was hostile territory controlled by the KMT, the British, and the French. However, Shanghai's advantage for the CCP, as noted earlier, was the foreign enclaves. They were not entirely safe, but were less hazardous than the KMT and Green Gang controlled areas. Shanghai also had the highest concentration of workers in China, and communist doctrine maintained the working class was a great ally and beneficiary of a revolution (the first resolution of the CCP in July 1921 began with the sentence "The basic mission of this party is to establish trade unions.")¹⁰⁷ Shanghai also provided good cover for sending cadres inland to other cities and provinces, as the metropolis was a transportation hub.¹⁰⁸ As a result of the communist commitment to working in Shanghai that placed the CCP and KMT close at hand, both sides' secret services regularly clashed in a clandestine war. The KMT saw the communists as terrorists who struck secretly and disappeared into the night for their sanctuaries in the foreign concessions, and the CCP saw the KMT as purveyors of "white terror" (*baise kongbu*) against their underground movement.

¹⁰⁶ Chinese and Western sources consistently cite Shanghai as important to foreign and Chinese intelligence operations and criminal syndicate activity in China from the 1920's through the latter part of the civil war ending in 1949. Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, pp. 11-12; Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 23; John King Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800-1985* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986) pp. 218, 224; Wakeman, *Spymaster*, pp. 106, 132, 248-249; Bernard Wasserstein, *Secret War in Shanghai* (London, Profile Books, 1998), pp. 1-2. As we will see in later chapters, once the Japanese conquered the Shanghai region (minus the foreign concessions) in 1937, some but not all of that activity shifted to Hong Kong: the Crown Colony offered an international outlet and a less restrictive atmosphere. When both Shanghai and Hong Kong were completely overrun by Japan after 7 December 1941, some activity shifted to Macau. However, the Portuguese enclave was too small and isolated to become a real center for regional espionage. As the Japanese became over-stretched in China after 1942 and the KMT grew more corrupt, CCP Intelligence work returned to Shanghai and seeped into the environs of Hong Kong and became established in other cities including Chongqing and Beijing.

¹⁰⁷ *Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu gongren yundong wenjian xuanbian* [Selected Documents from the Party Center Concerning the Labor Movement] (Beijing, 1985), 1:1, cited in Elizabeth Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1993), p. 74.

¹⁰⁸ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian qingbao shengya*, pp. 15-19; and Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, p. 283.

Special precautions and a consistently secret method of doing everything became integrated into CCP operation in Shanghai. All Party members, not only CCP Intelligence officers, lived a clandestine life. About 200 people were scattered in clandestine offices throughout Shanghai. The Politburo met at 447 Yunnan Road, the liaison office of the Central Military Commission at 112 Central Zhejiang Road, and the CC Organization Department at Chengdu Road. Zhou himself attended meetings only between 5:00am and 7:00am, or after 7:00pm, and never showed himself in a public place.¹⁰⁹

This initial focus by the Party on activities in Shanghai may explain at least one motivation for the subsequent propaganda focus on the glories of the CCP's *rural* revolution. Even the mixed results in the countryside were a positive contrast to the hardships and defeats in the cities under the "white terror" of the late 1920s and early 1930s. At the time, a reasonable person comparing the CCP's urban versus rural operations might have concluded that Mao Zedong and Zhu De were the most competent of the CCP's senior leaders. This may not be an original observation but it is important to the history of CCP Intelligence and the Underground. We will see in subsequent chapters that CCP Intelligence and Underground operations in the KMT and Japanese held cities did not cease after 1931. However, the center of gravity in the Chinese Revolution shifted to base areas and battlefields in the rural areas. While CCP intelligence and the Underground continued to be important, they were less in the mainstream for a time as the Chinese Revolution gradually became a peasant revolution. Equally important, CCP Intelligence

¹⁰⁹ Zhou's method of handling himself in the underground world of 1928 comes from <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/85037/8041641.html> and http://junshi.xilu.com/2009/0917/news_1375_346239.html. See also the interview with Deng Yingchao, in Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Zhou Enlai, A Political Life* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2006), p. 45.

and Underground operatives had to maintain regular contact with KMT and other non-communist figures. That became politically hazardous at various times after 1949 for some, including Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Kong Yuan, and Pan Hannian. This problem will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

The CCSO Intelligence Section: Chen Geng's Agent Networks, 1928-1931

We can continue by examining evidence of the often claimed operational prowess of CCP Intelligence. Successful CCP operations are typically ascribed to talent, bravery, or clever planning, while KMT victories are due to superiority in numbers and “White Terror” (*baise kongbu*). However, some PRC literature acknowledges errors, as we will see below in the account of the botched rescue attempt of Peng Pai. It is also possible, to a limited extent, to read between the lines.

Summing up the situation, CCSO's initial structure reflected the KMT's efforts to exterminate the CCP. The Party needed secure accommodations and facilities for leaders, a competent intelligence body, and a robust assassination squad to discipline errant CCP members and take revenge against enemies.¹¹⁰ The CCSO was pressurized by the KMT's relentless efforts to find and turn, or kill, its operatives, and its own political leadership, impatient for progress: Central Committee Circular Number 25 (*Zhongyang tongbao di ershiwu hao*, 31 December 1927) urged the insertion of agents into the KMT special services. A year later, indicating that the fight was not going their way, the Central Committee called for the execution of any Party members who voluntarily gave up and went over to the Nationalists (Circular 69, 17 October 1928, “Concerning the Surrender of Party Members”). Another internal CCP document that year

¹¹⁰ Mu Xin, *Chen Geng Tongzhi zai Shanghai*, pp. 8-9.

forbid captured members from revealing secrets, admitting CCP connections, or identifying other comrades.¹¹¹ A brief timeline showing when these circulars were issued, and when operations in response to them began, follows:

Table 1: Early CCSO Operations

December 1927	CCPCC Circular 25 urges CCSO to infiltrate KMT special service organs and other vital areas
May-October 1928	Chen Geng evaluates Yang Dengying (Bao Junfu) after he surfaces as a volunteer.
October 1928	CCPCC Circular 69 "Concerning the Surrender of Party Members." KMT announces anti-communist laws.
November 1929	Qian Zhuangfei and Li Kenong infiltrate KMT intelligence
December 1929	Li and Qian report elevation of Xu Enzeng in KMT intelligence
Early 1930	Li, Qian, and Hu begin to advance toward highly placed, critical positions, where they stay until April 1931
April 1931	Gu Shunzhang defection to KMT prompts evacuation of Yang, Li, Qian, and Hu

Available evidence indicates that CCSO took months to respond to Circular 25, and that only one operation was started within a year. That first break came from a volunteer, Yang Dengying (aka: Bao Junfu¹¹²), in February-March 1928. Yang, a Cantonese, may have been recruited but also might have jumped into CCSO's lap without warning, a lucky catch. He was a Japanese university graduate who, while there, apparently read enough Marx to gain a lasting impression. Yang returned to China at the time of the May Fourth 1919 Movement and over the years showed a propensity to cultivate friends in high places: among Shanghai businessmen, senior KMT members in the city, International Settlement police, and even with a senior British

¹¹¹ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 55, 92nn 18, 19.

¹¹² He Lin (ed.), *Chen Geng Zhuan*, p. 41.

official.¹¹³ Up until the time when he threw in his lot with the CCP, Yang seemed rather available, looking for the best way to advance. It would be interesting to read anything written by Chen Geng about Yang's actual motivations, but such a frank assessment has not yet been published.

Yang Dengying's acquaintances also included a CCP member, Chen Yangshan, whom Yang had met in 1926. When Chen stayed with Yang in approximately February 1928, Yang became convinced, or perhaps simply decided, to volunteer his services to the Party. Chen Yangshan referred Yang to Chen Geng, then head of the Intelligence Branch of CCSO, who personally cultivated the fledgling agent.¹¹⁴

From May to October 1928 Chen evaluated Yang Dengying's contacts and potential. Yang Dengying's friends in the KMT included Yang Jianhong, a close associate of Chen Lifu who was overseeing the assembly of the KMT's intelligence service, the Zhongtong. Chen decided to bring Yang Dengying into the good graces of the KMT services by feeding them sets of CCP materials: genuine copies of "Red Flag" and "The Bolshevik," and falsified documents intended to mislead or provide less than useful information: a mixture of disinformation and "chickenfeed," in today's parlance.¹¹⁵ This impressed Chen Lifu to the point that he decided to make Yang Dengying into a special agent of the KMT. When Yang Jianhong committed suicide over corruption allegations, Chen Lifu brought Yang Dengying deeper into his operation, and made him a liaison with the British authorities in Shanghai's International Settlement. Yang

¹¹³ Mu Xin, *Chen Geng tongzhi zai Shanghai*, pp. 23-24.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25

¹¹⁵ Jargon for "throwaway" classified material furnished by double agents to pass on to their controllers to establish bonafides; also known as "buildup material." Carl, *The CIA Insider's Dictionary*, p. 89.

eventually became friends with the household of the British Minister to China, Miles Lampson.¹¹⁶ In October 1929, Chen Geng obtained permission to provide Yang Dengying with an automobile to facilitate contact with his increasingly prosperous circle, and in this phase of the operation Chen Lifu even stayed as a guest in Yang's home. In 1931 the CCP operative Guan Xiangying was arrested by French Concession Police with CCP Top Secret (*juemi*) documents in his possession. The French asked Yang for assistance in finding an "appraisal expert" (*jianbie zhuanjia*) to assess them, as they had no Chinese readers. He brought in Liu Ding of the CCSO, who quietly spirited away the documents, and Yang told the French that they were mere study material with no political or intelligence value.¹¹⁷ Yang continued to operate, obtaining information of interest to the CCP until the defection in April 1931 of CCSO Director Gu Shunzhang.¹¹⁸

Perhaps the most celebrated CCP Intelligence ring of the Chinese Revolution is the trio of Li Kenong, Qian Zhuangfei, and Hu Di. Their infiltration of the KMT's highest offices began with a CCSO decision in early 1929 to seek such an opportunity through Qian—a native of Huzhou in Zhejiang Province. His was the same home town as U.T. Hsu (Xu Enzeng), who would become head of the KMT Investigations Branch (*Diaocha ke*) in December of that year.¹¹⁹ Qian was academically sharp as a former medical student in Beijing, and he excelled in a radio course offered in 1928 from which the KMT recruited signals intelligence operators. Qian eventually

¹¹⁶ Yang's efforts to exploit a connection with Lampson may have been motivated by the British minister's efforts at that time to reform the hostile attitudes of British citizens in China toward the KMT, and Chinese people in general. Robert Bickers, "Changing Shanghai's 'Mind': Publicity, Reform, and the British in Shanghai, 1928-1931." (China Society Occasional Papers, No. 26, 1992), pp. 8-9. See

<http://rose.bris.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1983/904/Changing%20Shanghai's%20mind.pdf?sequence=1>

¹¹⁷ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p.6.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 26-29. A summarized account can also be found in Viktor Usov, *20 Shiji 20 niandai Sulian qingbao jiguang zai Zhongguo*, pp. 168-169.

¹¹⁹ As we will see in Chapters Five and Six, the KMT may never have broken their habit before 1949 of approving people for sensitive positions based on personal association and recommendation, instead of background checks.

brought himself to Xu Enzeng's attention and in December 1929 became his confidential secretary (*mishu*). Maochun Yu notes that Qian was for a time in charge of KMT SIGINT, which allowed the CCP agent to install other clandestine communist operatives as radio intercept operators and analysts. Qian brought in Li Kenong, who became a member of KMT intelligence in Shanghai, and Hu Di infiltrated the Tianjin North China Control Organization (*Tianjin Zhangkong Beifang Jiguan*),¹²⁰ also with the assistance of Qian Zhuangfei.¹²¹ Li Kenong headed the network, which did much to protect the CCP's various organs in Shanghai from discovery until Gu Shunzhang's capture in April 1931.¹²²

Building Clandestine Communications Assets

The Fourth Branch, handling wireless communications, is said by one PRC source to have been directly set up by Zhou Enlai. However Li Qiang was probably the first head of the organization. The communists preferred to avoid couriers in passing intelligence information and reports because of the risk that the KMT might capture documents. However the KMT controlled the post and telegraph system, making that alternative unsafe. Russian intelligence and Comintern operations showed the utility of a third way, wireless communications, in transmitting messages in espionage work. CCP Intelligence wanted this capability, but procuring the equipment was difficult. Using the little that was available, Zhou Enlai had Li Qiang start a communications station in Shanghai in October 1928. The next year the CCP sent four students to the USSR to study radio technology and arranged for another student, Zhang Shenchuan, to clandestinely enroll in the KMT's radio school. One of the returned students from Russia, Xu Zuohu, was sent to Hong Kong by Li Qiang where he started a clandestine station that established the first CCP

¹²⁰ Maochun Yu, *OSS in China*, pp.34-35; Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 9.

¹²¹ Barnouin and Yu, *Zhou Enlai*, pp. 45-46.

¹²² Mu Xin, *Chen Geng tongzhi zai Shanghai*, pp. 34-40.

wireless link to the British colony in early 1930. In September that year, Zhou personally set up training for Soviet area and army “wireless cadre” (*wuxiandian ganbu*). One group of operators studied secretly at the Fuli Electric Appliance Factory in Shanghai until foreign concession police, following up on a lead concerning suspicious activity, arrested five instructors and 15 students. Li Qiang and the survivors split up and later resumed the training under clandestine conditions, though details are not available.¹²³

Not only did the CCP need communications with Moscow and the Comintern, they required it with their base in the Jiangxi Soviet. At the 1930 battle in Wenjia city, Jiangxi, the Red Army captured radio equipment, but the soldiers knew nothing of its importance and smashed it to bits. After this Mao told the Red Fourth Army staff officer Guo Huagu to add a line to battle orders (*zuozhan mingling*) to preserve any captured radio equipment – and radio operators. In December 1930 at the battle of Longgang, not only was an enemy division commander Zhang captured, but also 10 enemy radio technicians. The Red Army soldiers, still ignorant about radio technology, again destroyed the equipment. In spite of this setback, the KMT radio technicians proved to be of great value: they accepted the communist uniform and were sent to start stations in various places that the CCP wished to establish communications. When proper equipment was eventually procured, the CCP established working stations in Shanghai, Jiangxi, Shaanxi, and other locations.¹²⁴

In a late addition to their mission portfolio, CCSO also looked after the CCP’s cryptology and “book breaking” (deciphering) of KMT messages, an effort apparently started by Zhou Enlai in

¹²³ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p.7.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

1930. CCSO was the originator and distributors, and a user, of the CCP's ciphers, while the Underground and the rest of the CCP were consumers. Communist successes in book breaking were important, as by September 1926 the KMT was using six identifiable codes which had taken four years up to that point for the sophisticated intercept effort run by the US to begin reading.¹²⁵ As we saw above, efforts by CCSO agents including Li Kenong, Qian Zhuangfei and Chen Geng from 1928-31 led to infiltrations of the KMT that resulted in the CCP obtaining at least some KMT codebooks.¹²⁶ By 1941 KMT Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) and its most well-known subset, Communications Intelligence (COMINT), may have been moved into a separate Meteorological Bureau partly to enhance security in the wake of these disturbing discoveries.¹²⁷ However, this is not to say that the CCP was the least bit successful at book breaking against KMT ciphers: their success may simply have been due to the theft by communist agents of KMT code books.

How Important Was Zhou Enlai?

PRC sources depict Zhou Enlai as the founder of CCP Intelligence, and an all-around intelligence guru.¹²⁸ He was essential to the founding process and conducted early political oversight, though he was not ever present: his role seems limited to 1927-31, and again from 1945 onwards into the period of the People's Republic.¹²⁹ His reputation for talent, dedication, and endless capacity for work is also apparent in this realm of intelligence operations, where he

¹²⁵ Jeffrey T. Richelson, *A Century of Spies: Intelligence in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 76. Richelson cites *Army Security Agency Historical Background*, vol. 3, pp. 137-138.

¹²⁶ Maochun Yu, *OSS in China*, p. 34; Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian chuanqi*, pp.86-87; and Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, pp. 16-17.

¹²⁷ Richelson, *Century of Spies*, p. 242; Barnouin and Yu, *Zhou Enlai*, pp. 45-46.

¹²⁸ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 115.

¹²⁹ Zhou's consistent involvement after 1945-46, when Kang Sheng was reassigned to other duties, is more clear. An illusion to Premier Zhou survives today amongst Ministry of State Security cadre, who refer to money used for paying confidential informants as "The Premier's funds" (*Zongli fei*). Private interview with former US intelligence community officer, June 2012.

founded a secret service and supervised it from the political level even while playing a major role in running the rest of the movement. Below, we will see accounts which show Zhou to be sufficiently ruthless to do whatever was required to protect it, and strict in clandestine practice. However, his role seems exaggerated in some of the more popular accounts, perhaps in order to minimize the role of the two big villains of CCP Intelligence, Kang Sheng and Gu Shunzhang.

Zhou Enlai was not inclined to clandestine habits early in his revolutionary career. His revolutionary career began at Nankai University, where he openly organized. When public demonstrations escalated during the second half of 1919, Zhou wrote and edited articles for the radical *Tianjin Xuesheng Lianhe Huibao* (Tianjin Student Union Bulletin). On 29 January 1920 while leading a protest at the governor's residence, Zhou was arrested and imprisoned for six months, spending his 22nd birthday in jail. The atmosphere was not so severe though: the convicted demonstrators were apparently not tortured or shot, and while in prison Zhou was allowed to organize meetings of activists to discuss Marx's works.¹³⁰ Zhou only adopted clandestine practices in 1921 when he joined the CCP in France, and came under Comintern leadership.¹³¹ He might also have been encouraged toward the disciplines of secrecy by his stint in prison, and when he narrowly escaped being deported from France after public demonstrations there that same year.

After the 1923 Comintern decision that the CCP should ally with the KMT, Zhou Enlai returned to China and became the political commissar at the KMT's Huangpu Academy, which trained

¹³⁰ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 1, 31, 33-35, 37-38, 40.

¹³¹ In 1985, Zhou's affiliation with the CCP was officially ruled to have dated from "Spring 1921" by the CCP Organization Department. That was when he joined the Paris Communist Small Group (*Bali Gongchan Zhuyi Xiaozu*). He and seven others started the group in mid-1921 on instructions from Chen Duxiu. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 47.

the Nationalist officer corps. Though there is no record of military intelligence work being done at this point in the KMT army, Zhou had perhaps his first brush with espionage on 10-12 June 1925 when he tried to convince rebellious KMT troops from Yunnan and Guizhou to return to the fold. According to a PRC version of events, British intelligence bribed their commanders to overthrow the new Nationalist government in Guangzhou. Zhou's efforts failed, fighting resumed, and KMT loyalists defeated the rebels. This account does not say if Zhou provided intelligence to KMT forces about insurgent troop deployments from his time spent in their camp.¹³² So far, an examination of the literature shows no sign that any military intelligence work was undertaken in the KMT army in these early days, though this experience may have given Zhou an insight about its potential value.

Chinese mainland sources paint a picture of Zhou Enlai taking three roles in CCP Intelligence: Party overseer, master trainer and intelligence guru, and ad hoc organizer of important networks. A contemporary source points to Zhou working in 1928 with Li Weihai, Ren Bishi, and Deng Xiaoping to formulate CCP Notice Number 47 (*Zhongyang Tongzhi Di 47 Hao*) "Concerning the Rectification of Party Organizations Under the White Terror, Development, and Secret Work" (*Guanyu zai baise kongbu xia dang zuzhi de zhengdun, fazhan he mimi gongzuo*).¹³³ The same contemporary account has Zhou teaching a 20 day – plus CCSO seminar early in 1928, noting that one of the subjects was "Three Missions and One Prohibition" (*San renwu yi buzhun*): "Obtain intelligence, punish renegades, enforce all special responsibilities such as raising funds, and do not engage in intra-party investigations." (*Gao qingbao, chengchu pantu, zhexing gezhong teshu renwu baokuo choukuan*). Gu Shunzhang and Chen Geng also taught the course,

¹³² Liu Wusheng (ed.), *Zhou Enlai da cidian*, p. 18

¹³³ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 7-8.

which included intelligence tradecraft, self-defense, “White Area” (enemy) underground operations, and how to carry out attacks against the enemy.¹³⁴ Zhou also reportedly had a hand in founding the “Red Squads” or Red Guard (*Chiwei dui*) with Gu Shunzhang, who had already been trained in violent clandestine operations in Vladivostok.¹³⁵

How long did Zhou’s direct involvement in CCP Intelligence work last? More matter-of-fact accounts are in *Zhongyang Weiyuan*, the official Central Committee biographic reference, and *The Annals of Zhou Enlai (Zhou Enlai nianpu)*. They endorse the picture of Zhou with an early multifaceted intelligence role by saying that from 1928 to 1931, showing him taking “many actions in order to preserve the security of the party’s secret work in Shanghai, as well as the party’s liaison to and leadership of the armed struggle, and develop secret work in KMT controlled areas.” His *Annals* also show him supervising matters from the political level after laying the foundation for operations in the early days. After 1931, when he had to leave Shanghai, others took the reins: Chen Yun, Kang Sheng, and Pan Hannian.¹³⁶ This may be the best way to summarize his influence during this period.

How the Red Squads Operated

The CCSO Third Branch, as noted above, was also known as the Red Squads or the Dog Beating Squad. It was the most visible part of CCP Intelligence, receiving occasional publicity because of its high profile assassination work. The French Concession Police referred to them as the

¹³⁴ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, p.14; Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 8.

¹³⁵ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 8.

¹³⁶ Zhou’s early role in intelligence is cited in his *Annals* and other sources through least 1931, when he investigated the series of incidents in and outside of Futian, and when he handled the Gu Shunzhang defection. However, evidence of continued involvement grows thin until he returns to these matters in 1945. Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 540; Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 127-28, 147-48, 166-67, 208, 210-11.

“Chinese GPU.”¹³⁷ It was an “active” or “operationally” organized unit (*xingdong zuzhi budui*), and in its infancy in November 1927 consisted of 20-odd he-men (*haohan*) born and raised in Shanghai. To enforce discipline and take revenge, especially in key cases, they assassinated “renegades” (*pantu*) who betrayed the CCP and went over to the Nationalists. Specific targets seem to have been chosen based on the damage that they did to the Party. The assassinations were public and very violent, intended perhaps to make an example and promote public fear.

U.T. Hsu noted that the Red Squads were as separate from CCSO as CCSO was from the Underground: provided with unlimited funds, they were expected to cultivate the image of corrupt wastrels in order to cover up their actual vocation as assassins—but instantly give their lives if called upon. Red Squad operations were carefully planned, often akin to military assaults.¹³⁸

Bai Xin, a CCP veteran of the December 1927 Guangzhou Uprising, defected to the KMT in early 1929. He gave them information that led to the 24 August arrest of four communists including Peng Pai, a highly successful CCP peasant organizer, Politburo member, and secretary of the CCP’s Central Agricultural Commission.¹³⁹ The KMT raid that netted Peng was against a

¹³⁷ Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai*, p. 138. This point comes from Wakeman’s examination of French documents from the *Services de Renseignements Politiques*. The Russian GPU was the *Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie*, or “State Political Directorate” – that is, the secret police. GPU was the successor to the OGPU and predecessor to the NKVD and eventually the KGB. By contrast the GRU was the Red Army’s “Main Intelligence Directorate”, the *Glavsnioe Radsdivateinoie Oupravienie*. Leonard, *Secret Soldiers of the Revolution*, p. x.

¹³⁸ Xu Enzeng (U.T. Hsu) describes another Red Squads operation against Guang Huian, who had betrayed the CCP and was assassinated in a Shanghai hospital by a team of six. They expended dozens of rounds of ammunition and killed several policemen. U.T. Hsu, *The Invisible Conflict*, pp. 84-89.

¹³⁹ On 24 August 1928 the KMT raided an address on Hsin Chai Road in Shanghai based on information supplied by Bai Xin. They arrested CCP Central Military Commission (CMC) Director Yang Yin, CMC member Yan Changyi, Jiangsu CMC cadre Xing Shizhen, and CCP member Zhang Jichun. See Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshi Zhou Enlai*, p. 187. Yang Yin was also an early CCP member (1922) and a major figure in the Guangdong CCP. He became a member of the CCP Central Committee in 1928. In October 1933 the CCP re-named the Chinese Soviet

clandestine meeting that Zhou Enlai was to attend—but he was waylaid by other business and made one of his narrow escapes.¹⁴⁰

Following Peng's arrest, Zhou Enlai called an emergency meeting on the night of 24 August and gave CCSP two priority tasks: rescue the detainees and investigate Bai's activities in order to plan his punishment. Gu Shunzhang and Chen Geng were placed in charge.¹⁴¹

CCSO put all available resources into the rescue attempt, managed by Li Qiang¹⁴² Gu Shunzhang actually commanded the force, who disguised themselves as a movie crew, according to a Taiwan source.¹⁴³ Li later wrote that 20 Red Squad members were made available because of the scale of the operation. Various foul ups and bad luck foiled the operation of 28 August, and Zhou Enlai called off the rescue attempt.¹⁴⁴ There were no more chances to affect an escape; Peng Pai, Yang Yin, Yan Changyi and Xing Shizhen were executed at Longhua on 30 August.¹⁴⁵

The assassination of Bai Xin, a former CCP veteran of the Guangzhou Uprising, was big news in Shanghai that contributed to the gangster image of the “Chinese GPU.” On Wednesday 13 November, an English language newspaper reported the incident as “an unprecedented assassination” by suspected communists, but in an apparent attempt to cloak the actual nature of the incident, called Bai Xin (Wai Hsing) the “chief of the detective bureau of the Shanghai-

Republic No. 1 Red Army Infantry School after Peng and Yang. Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, pp. 268-269; and Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 292 and 312.

¹⁴⁰ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, p. 194. See also Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁴¹ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, p. 195; and Liu Wusheng, *Zhou Enlai da cidian*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁴² At the time, as noted earlier, Li Qiang was head of the CC Special Operations Fourth Section (Communications). This indicates that a significant degree of flexibility was demanded of senior intelligence cadre in these early days – it is reasonable to guess that most or all *Teke* officers were tough, hardened individuals.

¹⁴³ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, p. 292.

¹⁴⁴ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, pp. 197-198.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

Woosung-Lunghua Gendarmerie Commissioner's office and head of the Anti-Communist Office in the Chinese City."¹⁴⁶ All of this violence was starting to alarm the British and French authorities in Shanghai.

The Other United Front: Shanghai Foreign Concession Police and the KMT

In the forty-four months between May 1928 and the end of 1931, the CCP mounted over forty attacks that killed thirty people. This was a small number compared to a more intense situation such as Baghdad in 2004-2010, but still significantly impacted the city. French and British Concession authorities grew increasingly concerned about communist activities during this period, not only because of these attacks, but also because they suspected that the Comintern used Shanghai as a base and because of communist inspired movements in their other Asia colonies. Concerns over these activities must have contributed to British and French decisions to cooperate with the KMT to control movement between the concessions and the "Chinese city" neighborhoods of Shanghai, and to exchange intelligence about CCP and Comintern activities.

The major goal of cooperation was to find and neutralize the CCP and Comintern presence in Shanghai. Otto Braun, the Comintern agent who assisted the CCP from 1932-1939, described the fear of capture on his side:

Those who were caught faced a horrible choice: to become traitors or be killed. Thousands of the best Party cadres in China had already suffered the same fate. Gangster bands, with whom the Kuomintang had been working for a long time, and Chiang Kai-shek's fascistic "Blue shirts" assisted the police. This systematic extermination campaign, which had continued unchecked since 1927, forced the Communists into deepest secrecy.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, pp. 212-214; Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 166-167; and Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 293-294.

¹⁴⁷ Otto Braun, *A Comintern Agent in China, 1932-1939* (University of Queensland Press, 1982), p.2.

A one-sided assessment that ignored the terror of the Red Squads, but it carried its own accuracy.

The CCP's phrase for those who defected to the KMT was "renegade" (*pantu*).¹⁴⁸ Later in the mid-1930s Dai Li (Tai Li) who became a dominant figure in KMT Intelligence, believed that the best people to hunt CCP members were such former comrades, and he stressed their capture and rehabilitation – with execution only as a last resort. However in the period after April 1927, captured Communists might be killed after a short and painful interrogation. This lends credence to the idea that many communists were hard targets who violently resisted capture to avoid becoming a "renegade" or being tortured to death. A Taiwan source inadvertently confirms this by noting the quick executions after capture of senior CCP members Peng Pai in 1929 and Xiang Zhongfa in 1931 (more below).¹⁴⁹

The KMT used not only ruthlessness to gradually tighten their grip upon the CCP base, but also administrative thoroughness. From the beginning of the break with the CCP in April 1927, the Nationalist army's Shanghai Garrison Command insisted that an effective mail cover (intercept) system be established. The body they established in 1928 under the Shanghai Public Security Bureau (hereafter, Shanghai police) was named the Postal Inspection Committee (*Youzheng jiancha weiyuanhui*). It searched postal and telegraph traffic for clandestine communist communications and propaganda materials. Their first head was Ding Mocun, who later joined

¹⁴⁸ In contrast to "renegade" (*pantu*), those who betrayed China and joined the Japanese puppet government were called "Han traitors", or *hanjian*.

¹⁴⁹ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 282, 312-313. Peng was captured on 24 August 1929 and executed on the 30th. Xiang was captured on 22 June 1931, and shot two days later. Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, pp. 185-186.

the Japanese puppet government under Wang Jingwei after the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War to head their intelligence service.¹⁵⁰

At the same time ties were built between the Nationalist army and the Shanghai Chinese Police. Graduating members of the Police Affairs Group (*Jingwu zu*) of the Central Army Officer's School began filling police roles in the Shanghai Police in August 1930, and an intelligence arm was created called the Special Services Group. A Party Affairs Investigation Department (*Dangwu diaocha ju*), forerunner of the KMT Central Statistics Bureau (CSB, the *Zhongtong ju*) was first headed by Chen Lifu and then Xu Enzeng, specifically created to hunt down communists. They were not yet in the mood for persuasion. A secret KMT order from August 1930 mandated that captured CCP members "should be immediately dealt with, according to military law." In January and February 1931 a law made it a crime to criticize the KMT in the press, and an "Emergency Law for Punishment of Crimes Against the State" mandated death for disturbing public law and order "with a view of subverting the public," conspiracy with foreign countries (read Russia), or inciting troops to desert or rebel. The KMT was especially watchful for communist activities on important revolutionary anniversaries such as the 10 October 1911 Revolution, the May Fourth 1919 Movement, and the May Thirteenth 1925 Movement.¹⁵¹

These measures tightened control in the Chinese districts, but the CCP still used the foreign concessions as a refuge, with the British and French were at least technically neutral in the civil war. As the KMT became frustrated with this gap in their efforts, and pushed to close it. Their semi-official collaboration began in 1928 and was gradually formalized by 1930. Xu Enzeng, a

¹⁵⁰ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, p. 43.

¹⁵¹ Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai*, pp. 43-44, 133-135.

major KMT intelligence figure in these early days, later said that “it was only because we had the full and vigorous cooperation of the concessions’ authorities that we were able to destroy even more of the Communist Party underground groups in Shanghai.”¹⁵²

1931, Year of Disasters for CCP Intelligence, and the Defeat of the CCP in Shanghai

The April 1931 capture by the KMT of CCSO Director Gu Shunzhang (1904-1936) was a key event in the history of CCP Intelligence, and only the beginning of the Party’s hardest year to date. In June, Xiang Zhongfa, the CCP General Secretary, was captured and executed, and that same month the Comintern’s agents in Shanghai, Jakob Rudnik (Noulens) and Tatiana Moissenko were arrested. While authorized histories of CCP Intelligence stress the clever ways that they sidestepped the disasters of 1931, the Party’s intelligence organization and the Underground itself came close to annihilation in the three years that followed.

Gu Shunzhang was from Shanghai. Xu Enzeng (U.T. Hsu), the head of CSB (*Zhongtong ju*) supervised his conversion and employment. Xu wrote that “although he was a genius at secret service work, his knowledge of political theories was rather limited.” His original name was Gu Fengming, and he was also known as Li Ming and Zhang Hua. Gu joined the CCP in 1924 and was active as a communist labor organizer at the British-American Tobacco Company plant in Pudong, Shanghai, during the 30 May 1925 Movement, when he organized pickets.¹⁵³ In October 1926 he was sent to Vladivostok for secret service training and the instigation of worker uprisings, and received instruction in assassination techniques, becoming known as an expert in

¹⁵² Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai*, p. 146.

¹⁵³ Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 621.

lethal choke holds that left no mark.¹⁵⁴ He returned to Shanghai in December 1926, apparently in the midst of an uprising that began there in October, and also participated in workers' movements in February 1927 and March 1927. The workers' pickets at the time of the 1927 Northern Expedition were organized by Gu and Zhou Enlai, with Gu as the nominal leader, supervised by Zhou according to two separate Taiwan accounts,¹⁵⁵ At this time Zhou was also the Secretary of the CCP Jiangsu Zhejiang Military Region Committee. Gu reportedly gave initial training in intelligence operations to Li Kenong, later to become head of the CCP Central Social Department and eventually of the entire CCP intelligence community after 1949.¹⁵⁶ As noted above Gu led the Special Branch (Teke) under the military Department in Wuhan after the April 1927 coup,¹⁵⁷ and was also elected a member of the Military Department that year. Though many sources are vague about this, it appears that Gu went on to become the *defacto* head of the CCSO in 1928 and sat on the Party commission directly supervising its work, also becoming a member of the Central Committee.¹⁵⁸

On 28 March 1931 the CCP Politburo decided that Gu Shunzhang should escort Zhang Guotao to the Hubei-Henan-Anhui (*E'yuwan*) Soviet Area to take up the position of Secretary of the

¹⁵⁴ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan, vol.1*, p. 103; Kai-yu Hsu, *Chou En-lai, China's Gray Eminence* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1968), p. 94; and Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 621.

¹⁵⁵ Li Tien-min, *Chou En-lai* (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1970), pp. 84-85; 150-151; and Chang Jun-mei (ed.), *Chinese Communist Who's Who, vol. 1* (Taipei: Institute for International Relations, 1970), p. 435.

¹⁵⁶ Chang Jun-mei (ed.), *Chinese Communist Who's Who, vol. 2*, p. 438.

¹⁵⁷ He Lin (ed.), *Chen Geng Zhuan* [Biography of Chen Geng] (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe, 2007), p. 48.

¹⁵⁸ There is disagreement amongst sources of Gu's actual position when he was captured in 1931. He was called "the actual head" (*shiji fuze ren*) of the CCSO in Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 5; Gu was "department head" (*bu zhang*) of CCSO as of 14 November 1928 in *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao huibian, Zhongguo gongchandang lingdao jigou yange he chengyuan minglu* [Directory of Organizations and Personnel of the Communist Party of China During the Revolution] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), p. 117; and Gu is "director, secret service department, CCPCC" in Chang Jun-mei (ed.), *Chinese Communist Who's Who, vol. 2*, p. 435. Conversely, Gu's handler after defection, Xu Enzeng, called him the head of the Red Squads and "the number one communist executioner," not head of all CCSO in U.T. Hsu, *The Invisible Conflict*, pp. 57 and 59. In agreement with Xu Enzeng are Jin Chongji, *Chen Yun zhuan, vol. 1*, p. 103; Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 621; and Liu Wusheng, *Zhou Enlai Dacidian*, p. 31.

Central Committee's branch bureau and the local Military Commission secretary. After safely delivering Zhang, Gu headed back and passed through Wuhan. On 25 April while in Hankou (Hankow, part of greater Wuhan) he went for a rendezvous in the disguise of the "All-Transforming Magician" Hua Guangqi, alias Li Ming, his favorite cover. In one version, Gu was betrayed by a recently arrested CCP agent, Yu Zhongxin, who had just switched sides and joined the KMT. Yu spotted Gu in front of the Wee Golf Course in Hankou doing a performance, and summoned help.

After his arrest, Gu decided to cooperate with the Zhongtong as the alternative, particularly given his position, was torture and eventual death.¹⁵⁹ He immediately began providing limited information to his captors about local CCP organization, but demanded a meeting with Chiang Kai-shek to discuss more sensitive issues, which was arranged for the following Monday in Nanjing.¹⁶⁰ To their credit, the KMT's Wuhan CSB (*Zhongtong ju*) branch issued six encrypted, classified reporting telegrams to Chiang's headquarters in Nanjing that Saturday, in spite of the weekend. However in Nanjing, Xu Enzeng (H.T. Hsu), the recipient, was "debauching" and missed the telegrams. One of Li Kenong's comrades Qian Zhuangfei, who was Xu's secretary, saw them first. He immediately sent a courier by overnight express train from Nanjing to Shanghai to reach Li Kenong so that Li could alert the CCP Central Committee: the man who knew all their special operations secrets, and probably a lot more, was talking to the Nationalists. However, the only way that Li ordinarily could spread the alarm was by speaking to Chen Geng,

¹⁵⁹ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, pp. 42-45. Hsu, *Chou En-lai, China's Gray Eminence* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 128.

¹⁶⁰ Liu Wusheng, *Zhou Enlai Dacidian*, pp. 31-32; and Barnouin and Yu, *Zhou Enlai*, pp. 45-48. The logical choice of transport at that time between these points was boat. Transport time today by bus between the cities is 10 hours (www.chinadam.com/transportation/wuhan.htm), and by passenger boat to Nanjing from the closer river port of Yichang is 50 hours (www.chinadam.com/transportation/yichang). Given that there was first an interrogation in Wuhan that resulted in six reporting telegrams to Nanjing, Gu departed Wuhan at the earliest on Saturday evening. To arrive in Nanjing before late Monday night, he must have been placed aboard a speedboat or an aircraft.

the head of the CCSO Second Branch, and this was not a scheduled contact day between the two of them. So he contacted Chen Yun, who spread the warning.¹⁶¹

Zhou, Chen Yun, Li Kenong, Nie Rongzhen, and Li Qiang met on 26 April and issued instructions for CCP members in Shanghai and Jiangsu to shift accommodations that night. Within two hours Chen sent more than 100 posters with Gu's picture to Party branches so that they could watch out for him and take evasive measures.¹⁶² The CCP Central Committee had Zhou carry out an operation to test the loyalty of Gu's family, asking if they intended to join him in Nanjing. When Gu's wife said that she would be obligated to do so, her callers murdered her and the ten other members of the family, except for an infant boy.¹⁶³ Their bodies were not discovered until weeks later, but they may have been killed that Sunday or Monday night (26-27 April), just as Gu was requesting that Chiang Kai-shek protect his family.

Li Kenong and Qian Zhuangfei fled Nanjing for the Jiangxi soviet area. Zhou fled in early December 1931, taking a month to reach Ruijin and begin his new life in the Red Areas.¹⁶⁴ According to the CCP's "Order the Arrest of Gu Shunzhang, A Traitor to the Revolution", Gu gave the KMT information on how to find CCP General Secretary Xiang Zhongfa and other ranking officials, the locations of CCP offices in Hubei, the identities of more than a dozen

¹⁶¹ Jin Chongji (ed.) *Chen Yun zhuan*, vol. 1, p. 104.

¹⁶² Ibid; Liu Wusheng, *Zhou Enlai Dacidian*, pp. 31-32; and Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 210-211.

¹⁶³ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, p.178; No author, *Wu Hao: Blood Soaked Secrets in the Dark Shadows of History*, in *Dangshi Wencong*, No. 88 (Comprehensive Party History Publishing, 2003). The latter, in a modern account of this famous incident, describes the murder of an entire family as a matter of fact, with no negative comment, which is not unexpected. Other popular histories available on the mainland also present the killings in a matter of fact style, begging the question of if, and when, the CCP officially views the killing of innocents as justified. This may be clarified by further research. See also Li Tien-min, *Chou En-lai*, pp. 152-153.

¹⁶⁴ Zhou departed Shanghai in December 1931. Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 540; and Liu Wusheng, *Zhou Enlai dacidian*, p. 32.

previously unknown communists including people already in custody, and general information about CCP operations.¹⁶⁵

After this there is little indication that Zhou remained involved in CCP Intelligence work. Now he took on political and military duties in Ruijin. In May 1931 Kang Sheng was placed in charge of the Third Branch (Red Squads), under Chen Yun as CCSO Secretary (*Shuji*), with Pan Hannian heading the Second Branch (Intelligence). An official biographical sketch of Kang omits his secret service role listing only his main responsibilities as Director of the Organization Department and the Trade Unions Department, but Chen Yun's biography notes the roles new arrangement including Kang in CCSO. When Chen left Shanghai on 13 January 1933, Kang took responsibility for all CCSO operations for six months until his own departure for the USSR in July, when Pan Hannian took over. In the year after Gu's defection, all three men sat on the Special Work Commission. Chen made an important change to CCSO operations, requiring every member to have a proper job and be "integrated into society"¹⁶⁶ for better cover.

Pan Hannian, newly named as the leader of Second Section (Intelligence), was allegedly a *xinshou* (new operative) in the intelligence field¹⁶⁷ but was given the job of identifying a prominent KMT target to retaliate for the KMT roundup of communists that was in progress.

¹⁶⁵ Stuart Schram, Stephen C. Averill and Nancy Hodes, *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949*, vol. 4 (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1992); pp. 163-165 has the translated text of "Order the Arrest of Gu Shunzhang, a Traitor to the Revolution, A General Order Issued by the Council of People's Commissars of the Provisional Central Soviet Government, 10 Dec 1931."

¹⁶⁶ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan vol. 1*, pp. 107, 111, 112, 115, 133-34; Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, pp. 455, 701; and Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 214-16.

¹⁶⁷ Available material on Pan suggests that the April 1931 Gu Shunzhang defection resulted in the Party bringing Pan Hannian into CCP Intelligence work. The possibility that Pan began such work earlier is carried in an interview with the late daughter of Qian Zhuangfei, Li Lili. In a 2004 CCTV interview she recalled Pan Hannian and Li Kenong coming to her family home to meet Qian in approximately 1927. Li, born in 1915, became a film star in the 1930s and 40s. http://www.chinesemirror.com/index/2007/02/silent_film_sta.html

His team soon found that the KMT Shanghai Garrison Command Inspector General (*Songhu jingbei siling bu ducha zhang*), Wang Bin, moved about town in a predictable manner, using rickshaws and always using the same routes to and from home. Obtaining his photograph, Pan's team initiated surveillance and planned with the Red Squad to carry out an ambush. They chose a spot near the present day People's Square, where Wang patronized restaurants and other businesses and often boarded rickshaws in the same area, the present day Jiujiang, Hankou, and Fuzhou Roads. Wang Bin's assassination was a visible reminder that the communists were still a force to be reckoned with in the city, and was reported with banner headlines that night in the evening newspapers and the next morning in the dailies. Operations like this, though less prominent, continued through the year.¹⁶⁸

The comings and goings from Shanghai of Chen Geng reveals how the CCP held on there as long as possible. Chen was among those who initially stayed behind in the city after the April 1927 coup. At that point he was head of the CCSO Second Branch. After being wounded in the Nanchang Uprising in 1927, Chen had made his way to Shanghai via Swatow and Hong Kong. He was treated in the Shanghai French Concession by a well-known surgeon of the time, Niu Huilin, a cousin of the KMT leader T.V. Soong. Niu suspected Chen's CCP affiliation but for unknown reasons did not turn him in. Chen became known to the KMT *Juntong* but remained at large in Shanghai until 1931¹⁶⁹ when his cover was revealed to the KMT by Gu Shunzhang, sometime after his defection in April. The CCP ordered Chen out on 21 September 1931 for a military position.¹⁷⁰ In mid-1933¹⁷¹ he was wounded in Shaanxi while the Twelfth Division

¹⁶⁸ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁶⁹ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, pp. 147-148; p. 447.

¹⁷⁰ Quan Yanchi, *Zhongguo miwen neimu*, p. 43-44.

commander in the Fourth Army. Following treatment and a series of adventures where he was captured twice and escaped from local militias in Shaanxi, Chen made his way to Shanghai to obtain new orders. He learned that the Fourth Army was now in Sichuan and planned to travel there, in the meanwhile arranging further medical attention to his leg; the night before departure Chen went to see a movie and was spotted by Gu Shunzhang, who followed him out of the theatre. Gu attempted to convince Chen Geng to defect on the spot. Chen knocked him down and fled but Gu blew a whistle to summon police, who arrested Chen. He was imprisoned at the International Settlement jail at Sima Road with Liao Chengzhi, who had been apprehended that March.¹⁷² They were later moved to the main jail in the Chinese city. At this time the KMT was engaged in a policy of taking time to urge some CCP members to seek forgiveness and defect, as opposed to the usual approach of a one-time offer of mercy for those willing to betray the communist cause, with the alternative of torture and execution for those who demurred. Gu Shunzhang visited his prisoner Chen Geng over the next several months, saying that the communist cause was lost and plying him with gifts. Chen later told Edgar Snow that he would not agree. The KMT transferred Chen to Nanjing where he had several more meetings, this time with Chiang Kai-shek himself who offered clemency due to Chen's exploits during the Northern Expedition. Two underground CCP members helped Chen escape after he was transferred to a Nanjing hotel. They led him to the house of a policeman who was also secretly a communist.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Li Songde, *Liao Chengzhi* (Singapore: Yongsheng Books, 1992), pp. 431-432 show Liao imprisoned from 28 March 1933 after being "sold out" and moved between jails as indicated by Snow in *Random Notes on Red China* (footnote below), until he left Shanghai in September. Snow's *Random Notes* reflects no specific dates but notes Liao's detention with Chen in the two jails.

¹⁷² On Liao's time in jail, and eventual release after lobbying from Song Qingling, see Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi Zhuan [The Biography of Liao Chengzhi]* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2006), pp. 3, 33-34, 678.

¹⁷³ Edgar Snow, *Random Notes on Red China (1936-1945)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 92-99.

The next major disaster for the Communists came on 15 June: no CCP member was taken, but all were indirectly affected when the Comintern's representative in Shanghai, and conduit for funds from Moscow, was arrested. His identity and contact details had come to the British Shanghai Municipal Police from the arrest of a communist operative in Singapore.¹⁷⁴

Hilaire Noulens was the cover name of the Comintern's Asia representative Noulens, also known as Paul Ruegg. His spouse was known as Gertrude Ruegg, names which the French police believed were genuine. The couple had numerous other identities and Comintern agents never knew their actual names, but Hilaire was actually a Ukrainian NKVD agent named Jakob Rudnik, or Luft, who was posted to the Soviet embassy, Vienna from 1925-1929 as a Balkans trade specialist. The couple met in Rome, where she was a Secretary (not an office "admin" but the diplomatic rank) at the Soviet embassy. Rudnik returned to the USSR after this posting with his new wife and emerged in Shanghai a year later, in 1930, as Noulens.¹⁷⁵

Their arrest on 15 June in the British Concession cut off Comintern funding to the CCP for a time, and revealed Moscow's intent to build the Chinese Communist Party as a counterweight to Japan,¹⁷⁶ and may have suggested that Soviet activity in China had not abated since 1927, when the raid on the Soviet embassy, Peking showed the extensive nature of the USSR's involvement in the Chinese scene. The British Shanghai Municipal Police showed that Noulens operated from five different residential addresses in Shanghai, using four telegraphic addresses and eight post office boxes. He had accounts in seven different Chinese banks which held deposits totaling

¹⁷⁴ T'ang Leang-li, *Suppressing Communist Banditry in China* (Shanghai: China United Press, 1934), p. 71.

¹⁷⁵ Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai*, pp. 147-151

¹⁷⁶ The best account of the case is by F.S. Litten, "The Noulens Case", in *The China Quarterly*, no. 138, June 1994, pp. 492-512.

\$48,000. Documents in his possession showed communications regarding communist activities in China, Korea, the Philippines, Indochina, Singapore, Malacca and Penang, Taiwan, and present day Indonesia. According to a KMT report the documents on China seized from Noulens detailed union organizing plans in Shanghai of industrial workers and in north China of silk and cotton workers, plans to rally the unemployed in different places, the formation of communist cells in the Nationalist army, and other unnamed activities.¹⁷⁷ Richard Sorge and his operative Ruth Werner were connected to Noulens but escaped capture. Both were GRU “illegals” in Shanghai, gathering military intelligence on the Japanese and other forces, and assisting the CCP.¹⁷⁸

Just a week after the arrest of Noulens, the KMT caught CCP General Secretary Xiang Zhongfa. Having ignored warnings from Zhou Enlai about the risk, he spent one last night with his mistress at a hotel on Joffre Road in the French Concession before a scheduled evacuation the next day to a Red rural base. A KMT agent had been tracking his movements, and spotted Xiang as he emerged from the hotel early on the morning of 22 June. He was arrested and held by the French;¹⁷⁹ word quickly reached the CCP leadership through the female CCSO operative in Pan Hannian’s network, Huang Mulan. She was having breakfast in the Donghai Coffee Shop next to the Paris Theatre with an attorney named Chen, when an acquaintance of his who worked as a translator for the French Concession police found them. He brought the news that an important communist had been just been arrested and was being held at the Songshan Road Police Station.

¹⁷⁷ T’ang Leang-li, *Suppressing Communist Banditry in China*, pp. 70-72.

¹⁷⁸ Ruth Werner, *Sonya’s Report* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1991), p. 91. Sorge recruited Werner in about February 1931 in Shanghai to assist in GRU meetings with CCP underground and intelligence operatives (pp. 36-38). Werner later went on to be a professional illegal operative with GRU in Manchuria, Poland, and the UK, and at the peak of her intelligence career transmitted atomic secrets to Moscow gathered by Klaus Fuchs.

¹⁷⁹ Wakeman, *Policing Shanghai*, pp. 139, 368n 48, citing Xu Enzeng, *Wo he gongdang douzhengde huiyi*. See also Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 282, 312-313.

The translator did not know the communist's name, but said that he was "in his 50s, from Hubei, has nine fingers and gold teeth... He had no spine, he completely confessed without even being seated in the electric chair," adding that the KMT was sending people to collect him. Hu left as quickly as possible and informed Pan Hannian, who when he heard the description knew that this might be Xiang Zhongfa. He informed Kang Sheng, who then passed the word to the leadership, including Zhou.¹⁸⁰

Zhou arranged for a bribe to be offered to the Chinese police chief in the French Concession, but the matter was out of the senior policeman's hands: that same day the French turned Xiang over to KMT General Xiong Shihui, head of the Shanghai Garrison Command. After two days of interrogation he revealed CCP structure, organization, financing, and operational details, including Zhou Enlai's address, the fact of a US\$45,000 per month stipend to the CCP from the Comintern during 1930, and the significant sums transferred from Moscow to the PLA.¹⁸¹

When General Xiong reported after just two days that there was no more left for Xiang to tell, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the execution of the CCP General Secretary. According to a KMT-approved source:

He even kowtowed to beg for a chance to live and made some candid confessions which led to the raids on four Communist organizations.¹⁸²

On 24 June, Xiang was shot. CCSO managed to purchase a copy of the confession, and apparently he had revealed everything he knew.¹⁸³ Exactly what four organizations were raided

¹⁸⁰ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshi Zhou Enlai*, p. 377; and Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya.*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁸¹ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp. 51-52; Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, p. 282

¹⁸² Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, p. 313

is not revealed in available documents, but if his compromises were this limited, then Xiang's loss was not as devastating as when the CCP's espionage chief Gu Shunzhang turned against the Party.

Table 2: KMT Statistics on Capture of Communists, 1927-1937

Year	Notable or Major Raids by KMT Against CCP	CCP or other Communists Captured**	Including CCP Members of Note***	Including Specifically Identified CCP Intelligence Operatives	Locations of Raids and Captures in Urban and <u>Rural</u> Areas
1927*	2	26+	8+	0	Shanghai
1928	20	20+	2	0	Shanghai
1929	2	6+	5+	0	Nanjing, Shanghai
1930	0	0	0	0	
1931	18	4,725+	31+	6	Shanghai, Hankou, Beiping, Tianjin
1932	23	11,900+	37+	Unspecified numbers in CCP Intelligence cells within KMT army	Shanghai, Baoding, <u>Eastern Henan, southern Shandong</u>
1933	8+	6,220+	25	0	Shanghai, Qingdao; <u>rural Shaanxi, rural Hunan and Jiangxi, rural Jiangsu</u>
1934	9+	99+	69	38, Shanghai	Shanghai, Beiping; <u>rural Henan, Jiangsu, and Fujian</u>
1935	10	808	8	8, Tianjin	Tianjin, Kaifeng; <u>rural Henan, Anhui</u>
1936	1	2+	2	0	Guiyang; <u>rural Guizhou</u>
1937	46+	54+	9+	0	<u>Rural Hunan, Jiangxi</u>
Total	139	23,806+	196	52+	

Sources: Warren Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, pp. 311-324; and U.T. Hsu, *The Invisible Conflict*, p. 127.

* Actions taken by the KMT in the 12 April 1927 coup were not included in these figures.

** The actual numbers are higher, but these are the specifically recorded. Except for Comintern agents Hilaire Noulens and spouse in 1931, all other captured communists in this table were CCP members.

*** Mentioned by name – mostly in leadership positions

KMT statistics listing arrests of Communists from 1927 to 1937 indicate a losing struggle by the CCP, especially from 1931-34, to stay in the cities. By 1932 conditions in Shanghai were unsustainable, the Central Committee evacuated the Jiangxi Soviet, and most CCP Intelligence operatives were transferred out with them. Li Kenong, who escaped after the 1931 Gu Shunzhang defection, was already there, assigned to the Political Protection Bureau under the

¹⁸³ Barnouin and Yu, *Zhou Enlai*, p. 48.

Red Army. In retrospect, 1931 was the beginning of a gradual decline for CCSO. The stage was set for eventual subordination of CCP Intelligence to Mao Zedong, though this took some time (Chapters Five and Six).

In 1933, only a few CCP Intelligence and Underground personnel, notably Kang Sheng, Pan Hannian, Chen Geng and Liao Chengzhi, continued to operate in Shanghai, and military intelligence became more of a priority to protect the new bases in the rural areas.¹⁸⁴ The Comintern was there, however, with a representative who collected money for transmission to Ruijin. By this time KMT-British-French cooperation was at a high tide, and no longer could a European operate only semi clandestinely, receiving funds by wire from overseas, as did Noulens. Now the Comintern brought in couriers such as the CPUSA activist Steve Nelson and his spouse, Margaret. Steve Nelson was given his mission while in training for Comintern operatives in Moscow, and was briefed by CCP leader Wang Ming.¹⁸⁵ The Nelsons each made separate deliveries of \$50,000 in 1933, travelling on cruise liners and posing as tourists. They met German Comintern operatives in private homes, with a Chinese Communist witness to the transaction.¹⁸⁶ The situation continued to deteriorate though; by 1934 the KMT had made so many arrests in the cities that the CCP's normal urban operations became impractical. Kang Sheng himself left in 1933 for Moscow, and other senior people were gone by 1934, mostly bound for Jiangxi.

¹⁸⁴ Klein and Clark, *Biographic Dictionary of Chinese Communism, Volume I*, p. 545

¹⁸⁵ For more on Wang Ming and the CCP delegation to the Comintern, see Chapter Five.

¹⁸⁶ Steve Nelson, James R. Barrett, Rob Ruck, *Steve Nelson, American Radical* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1981), pp. 141-152.

The hindsight of history tells us that Jiangxi, or Moscow, were the only escapes for CCP cadres from the “white terror” of the cities. However the sanctuary of the Red Army of “Zhu-Mao”¹⁸⁷ was surrounded by the Nationalists, who had initiated a series of encirclement campaigns. Here too, the Party needed an active and flexible intelligence arm, but had instead the State Political Protection Bureau—better at weeding out “enemies” within than ascertaining the strength and intentions of the KMT armies. The Communists would barely survive and escape, as they did from Shanghai, but only because they had inside information about enemy plans from an agent

¹⁸⁷ The Red Army was popularly referred to by some as “*Zhu Mao hongjun*” or simply “*Zhu-Mao*.” Liu Wusheng (ed.), *Zhou Enlai da cidian*, p. 29; Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 148; and Hans Van Der Ven, *Warfare in Chinese History* (Boston: Brill, 2000), p. 336.

Chapter Four

CCP Intelligence and Security in the Base Areas and on the Long March

In 1927, the CCP lacked good intelligence on the enemy during their military uprisings in Nanchang, Guangzhou, and elsewhere. They failed partly because of this, and retreated to rural base areas in Jiangxi and adjacent provinces. As we saw in the last chapter, the Party Central Committee saw lack of intelligence as an important problem. They returned to Shanghai to re-establish their underground headquarters, and founded a permanent intelligence and security service, the CCSO. It operated almost exclusively in the cities, the battleground for China's proletariat, but eventually had to retreat to the rural base areas.

In those areas, the Red Army and rural Party organizations had already developed their own security services, focused more on rooting out internal enemies than on enemy intelligence. In 1930, they were used as interrogators and a secret police in the bloody purges of local forces over a large area, often conveniently referred to as the Futian Incident. In April 1931, a Party resolution on Futian¹⁸⁸ concluded that the old security organizations made mistakes including the use of torture to force false confessions. They created the Political Protection Department under Wang Jiaxiang, replacing the old organs tied to local commanders with a more "complete security system" which could pursue future purges under a presumably more reliable central leadership. The significance of the new organization went further. CCP Intelligence and security was not yet unified, but was a step closer to ending the split between urban and rural organs. Surviving agents of the CCSO and other "secret Party members" in the KMT military

¹⁸⁸ "Resolution on the Futian Incident (16 April 1931)" in Tony Saich (ed.), *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 530-535.

were available source, albeit significantly depleted, for information on the enemy surrounding the CCP's forces in the soviet areas. Such an agent inside the Nationalist army provided information that enabled the Red Army to break out and flee to the northwest, but by the time they reached their new base, the CCP force had lost 80 per cent of their number—and the State PPB may have been virtually destroyed. Afterward, CCP Intelligence assets in the Red Army and the cities needed to be rebuilt. As contact with urban networks was re-established, the stage was set for a significant reorganization.

Problems in Military Intelligence for the Red Army, 1927

When Mao Zedong analyzed what went wrong in for the CCP's forces in southern Hunan and the Hunan-Jiangxi border area in 1927, it was one of the few times he mentioned intelligence matters in his published works:

The causes of our August defeat were as follows: (1) Some officers and men, who were wavering and homesick, lost their fighting capacity, while others, who were unwilling to go to southern Hunan, were lacking in enthusiasm. (2) Our men were exhausted by marches in the sweltering summer heat. (3) Having ventured several hundred *li* away from Lingxian, our men lost contact with the border area, and became isolated. (4) As the masses in southern Hunan had not yet been aroused, the expedition proved to be pure military adventurism. (5) ***We were uninformed about the enemy situation***, and (6) the ***preparations were inadequate, and the officers and men did not understand the purpose of the operation.***¹⁸⁹ (emphasis added)

This study found no specific information on military intelligence available to other Communist commanders during the uprisings of the second half of 1927, though the circumstances of the last of them, the Guangzhou Uprising (11-13 December) indicate thorough planning but a lack of intelligence: the action made quick gains largely due to the element of surprise, the speed of

¹⁸⁹ Mao Tse-tung, "The Struggle in the Ching Kang Mountains: The Independent Regime in the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Area and the August Defeat," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, vol. 1* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965) p. 78.

execution, and the temporary absence of units from the local KMT garrison commanded by Zhang Fakui. However, the CCP's planners either did not know the location of these and other KMT forces, or misjudged the speed by which they could be brought into the battle.¹⁹⁰ Less than 24 hours after General Zhang's forces and others returned to the city on 12 December, the battle was over. Two to three thousand Communist troops, sympathizers, and innocents died. Soviet diplomats were also a target. When the KMT military closed their Guangzhou consulate, it eliminated a source of local intelligence and communications support for the CCP. In the process some of the Soviet diplomats were killed, and all were eventually expelled.¹⁹¹

At the close of such a year, with one setback after another, the highest councils of the CCP decided to fix this problem by starting a Party controlled intelligence organ in Shanghai, which we examined in Chapter Three. Now we will examine how security work in the Red Army was formed, and intelligence work was gradually introduced.

Purging Counter-Revolutionaries Committees, the Futian Incident, and the Founding of the State Political Protection Bureau, 1927-31

In the weeks after 1 August 1927, while the Party moved toward starting an intelligence organ in Shanghai under the Central Committee, Li Lisan led an effort to form Political Protection divisions (*Zhengzhi baowei chu*) in the Red Army.¹⁹² They were small units of perhaps a dozen

¹⁹⁰ Mainland literature on CCP Intelligence tends to skip the reasons for the failure of the uprisings, but Part 1 of the officially sanctioned 2008 television series “*Zhonggong Dixia Dang*” [The CCP Underground] makes it seem as if the failure of the December 1927 Guangzhou Uprising was due to both bad judgment and lack of intelligence. See: http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTE0NzMxMjE2.html

¹⁹¹ C. Martin Wilbur, “The Nationalist Revolution: from Canton to Nanking, 1923-28”, pp. 690-696.

¹⁹² Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 12. Hao does not say exactly when this happened, but his text indicates it was soon after 1 August.

people, not the large “division”¹⁹³ in a modern army. It remains unclear exactly how far down the chain of command they were established, or where the idea originated. However a PRC source states that the Russian Cheka or its successor was the model for the State Political Protection Bureau, founded four years later in 1931.¹⁹⁴ On the surface this makes little sense—when the existential problem for the CCP in 1927-34 was the KMT military, why use as a model the Cheka? It was founded “for a revolutionary settlement of accounts with counter-revolutionaries” and emphasized internal repression, though a foreign intelligence capability later developed.¹⁹⁵ Why not use as a model the GRU, Soviet military intelligence, which had agents in China who could potentially become available as advisors? As we will see in this chapter and the next, during these early days in Jiangxi, establishing an internal purge mechanism held sway over gathering intelligence on the enemy. This was not a “hands-off” approach to intelligence in the Red Army by the Party center, as they did provide some guidance, and there would be more to come that emphasized hunting down internal enemies over gathering enemy intelligence. However, it left a great deal of latitude in the hands of local commanders to pursue their own solution. This differentiation between intelligence and security operations in the cities and the countryside may have been an early indication that they would not be uniformly structured everywhere during the Chinese Communist Revolution.

¹⁹³ Translations into English of Chinese civilian unit designations can be troublesome. The standard followed in this study is “department” for *bu* if under the Party Central Committee (under the post-1949 PRC State Council it is “ministry”), “bureau” for *ju*, “branch” for *ke*, “division” for *chu*, “section” for *gu.*, and “squad” for *dui*. Modern use corrupts this academic standard: on the civilian side in China, *chu* can be used today for a small organization of about ten people, and can be translated as “section.” In either case, a *chu* “division” is relatively small, not the larger military “division” (*shi*) of roughly 15,000 soldiers. As we continue, I will make efforts to keep this as clear as possible for the reader.

¹⁹⁴ Zhao Shaojing, “Suqu ‘Guojia zhengzhi baowei ju’ yu sufan kuodahua wenti banzheng” [The Soviet Area State Political Protection Bureau and the Question of Enlarging the Purge of Counter-revolutionaries] at http://www.scuphilosophy.org/research_display.asp?cat_id=94&art_id=7873 , Sichuan University Institute for Philosophy, 9 May 2009.

¹⁹⁵ Christopher Andrew, Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 558.

While the leaders of the Guangzhou Uprising in December 1927 apparently had no outside intelligence or security support, the Guangzhou Revolutionary Commission established what might have been the earliest military Purging Counter-revolutionaries Committee (*Sufan weiyuanhui*), charged with investigating and punishing enemies. Once communist forces began to secure territory, this work became more important because of genuine concern over enemy agents, so the Party Central Committee directed that all local Soviets establish organizations for opposing counter-revolution, which should arrest suspects such as local landlords and warlords. That instruction was reiterated in a Resolution at the Sixth CCP Congress in Moscow, in July 1928.¹⁹⁶

In Jiangxi, Mao's units already had started an effort to catch spies: the Purging Counter-revolutionary Committees and Political Protection Sections which operated from November 1927. There is no available evidence that they performed any standard military intelligence operations like scouting, enemy order of battle analysis, or enemy signal intercept. They focused instead on tracking down internal enemies. Michael Dutton points to sources indicating a scattershot and disorganized policing and counterintelligence situation from late 1927 to 1930. A wide range of Party organizations were "given the freedom to carry out the elimination of counter-revolutionaries."¹⁹⁷ Other evidence supports this and also points to evolving efforts in the military and Party, although when compared to earlier developments they do not seem necessarily linear or consistent. On 5 April 1929, the Red Fourth Army, led by Mao, established

¹⁹⁶ Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, "Resolution on the Question of the Organization of Soviet Political Power," in Saich (ed.), *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party*, p. 362.

¹⁹⁷ Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, p. 38.

its Protection Section (*Baowei ke*) under the Political Department. Ten days later, a county in the Gannan region set up a Purging Counter-revolutionary Committee (*Sufan weiyuan hui*).¹⁹⁸

Who were the people doing the work? This study has found no material that defines where recruits came from and how well they performed to standards in the early period, but one insight comes from an account about Zhao Cangbi, who later became a Minister of Public Security in the 1970s. This was four years later and in the northwest, not in Jiangxi, but the available pool of candidates may not have been dissimilar in the two places. Zhao was recruited near Yan'an into the State Political Protection Bureau at age 18 in 1934, and was put on track for a leadership position because he had an upper primary school (*Gaoxiao*) education, according to an account by his widow,¹⁹⁹ suggesting the possibility of a very low educational background amongst the rank and file.²⁰⁰ This was a contrast to the people recruited by Pan Hannian in the mid and late 1930s, who had to mix in urban circles, possess a thorough understanding of the target area and the enemy, and who therefore were generally more educated. This contrast is further discussed in Chapter Five.

Unless one chooses to count the massive purges of 1930-31 against the “A-B Corps,” described below, the PRC accounts of this period (1927-34) in Jiangxi do not include any concrete examples of genuine enemy agents being caught. According to two Taiwan historians, these

¹⁹⁸ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 12; Zhao Shaoqing, “Suqu ‘Guojia zhengzhi baowei ju’ yu sufan kuodahua wenti banzheng”.

¹⁹⁹ “*Zhongguo de Fu'er Mosi, yuan Gong'an bu zhang Zhao Cangbi de Yan'an baowei gongzuo*” [China's Sherlock Holmes: Former MPS Minister Zhao Cangbi's Protection Work in Yan'an], at <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/85038/10366238.html>

²⁰⁰ This prompts the author to recall travel in China in 1985, when my spouse and I arrived by rail in Jinan, Shandong, and had to make contact with an institute. I called on the Public Security Bureau at the railroad station and asked for help in locating the school, which had moved. The four officers present were able to locate a telephone directory that had the right information, but one of them admitted that none of his number could actually read it—that I would have to look up the name myself.

efforts against “counter-revolutionaries” made the Red Areas hard to penetrate. KMT intelligence:

...made the CCP central organs in Shanghai its immediate targets, but later it sent its agents to those other areas where the communist secret services were active. But KMT agents were unable to penetrate communist occupied or soviet areas to any appreciable extent. Few records revealed KMT espionage in these regions.²⁰¹

We will see in the next chapter that the KMT also found it difficult to penetrate Yan’an a decade later. Unfortunately for their many victims, the CCP as an institution may have developed little appreciation for how well they had hardened themselves against hostile enemy intelligence agents in the areas they controlled. The PPB and its successors accomplished this in Jiangxi, and later on in Yan’an, partly by politicizing the masses through campaigns that depended on fear—fear of the enemy, of a wrathful CCP, and of not reporting everything one knows. Explaining how this developed, and became a part of security work, we come to the CCP’s first big internal purge, the series of revolts and suppressions in late 1930 which are conveniently called the Futian Incident.

The Futian Incident and associated clashes have been called the first of “three major left deviations in the history of public security and protection,” (*gongan baoweishi shang de sanci dade zuoqing*), the others being the Salvation (1943) Campaign, and the Cultural Revolution.²⁰² In the context of CCP Intelligence history, Futian as a major bloodletting was also a catalyst for the reorganization of security efforts in the Red Areas. Centralizing them under the new State Political Protection Bureau was an important, if seemingly small, step toward making CCP

²⁰¹ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, p. 308; and author’s interview with Taiwan researcher, 2008.

²⁰² Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 13.

Intelligence more effective in the Chinese Communist Revolution, because it substantially added to effective control of all assets from the political level of the Party.

In the time leading up to the Futian Incident, Mao pushed for land confiscation from rich peasants, whereas before land reform had focused on “local tyrants” and landlords. This stricter application went against the interests of some local CCP leaders, who wanted less outside influence and more local control. An increasing polarization developed. Eventually it set Mao and his loyalists against local communist forces under the Jiangxi CCP, and its political leadership.²⁰³ Mao dubbed the latter members of the “AB Corps,” said to be a pro-KMT organization that had infiltrated the Red Areas.²⁰⁴

During the clashes that resulted in November and December 1930, Communist units battled each other in Futian and several other locations, and security units carried out interrogations to establish that their prisoners were A-B Corps members. The interrogators, probably ignorant of the actual KMT enemy and under pressure to catch counter-revolutionaries, contributed to Mao’s ability to advance what Michael Dutton calls the “friend enemy dyad,” an excessive reaction making those who opposed Mao automatically enemies. As whole communist units were so named, it indicated to the common observer that the situation was desperate: enemies were close

²⁰³ Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, pp. 47-48.

²⁰⁴ The A-B Corps was actually a real, right wing KMT organization founded in Guangzhou in 1925 or 1926 by Duan Xipeng, a Jiangxi native. By 1927 the organization had spread through personal associations via Nanjing to southern Jiangxi province, into the areas of operation for Mao’s Red Fourth Army. Over the next several years it operated in Jiangxi, as the KMT and CCP fought over various localities. While CCP sources generally say that “AB” meant “anti-Bolshevik,” a conclusion reached at the time by Mao to justify attacking and suborning local forces, two more independent scholars point out the original meaning was something like “province and county.” A meant the provincial level, and B meant the subordinate counties in the organization. Sima Lu, *Zhonggong lishi de jianzheng*, pp. 443-444; Stephen C. Averill, “The Origins of the Futian Incident,” in Tony Saich and Hans Van Der Ven (eds.) *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 82-83, 91; and Schram, et al. (eds.), *Mao’s Road to Power, vol.4*, p. 8.

at hand, and no effort was too extreme to save the revolution, including torture. Once confessions under torture “proved” Mao’s opposition were enemies, the victims could be forced to name more names, and used in public displays to politicize the masses and further alert them to the danger.²⁰⁵ In such an atmosphere, a high number of people, including countless ordinary peasants, were in effect dragooned into becoming potential informants, if they knew what was good for them. In a rural place where people did not come and go, everyone knew everyone else, and outsiders were easily identified, this created an impossible situation for a real enemy agent to blend in and operate. This situation was carried through more or less intact when the CCP reached Yan’an. It created one of the principal advantages of CCP Intelligence over their Nationalist and Japanese enemies: while Communist agents could be chosen or trained to blend in with Chinese urban populations, finding someone to blend in to the CCP’s redoubts in Ruijin and Yan’an was more difficult.

The clashes during the Futian Incident period were not just in that small town, but were a series of battles between forces loyal to Mao Zedong and those which appear to have been resisting Mao’s moves against Jiangxi CCP Committee chairman Li Wenlin. Besides being political rivals, the two men actively despised each other.²⁰⁶ While there seems to be no causal link between Futian and later harsh political movements such as the Salvation Campaign (1943) and

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 46.

²⁰⁶ In February 1930, Li Lisan urged the Red Army to attack urban areas, and that summer Mao and the Fourth Army left their base areas for Changsha, Nanchang, and Wuhan. In May, the Jiangxi provincial secretary, Li Wenlin, returned to Ruijin from the Soviets Conference in Shanghai, led by Li Lisan, carrying instructions to launch a search for KMT A-B Corps adherents in the Jiangxi Soviet government and the Red Army. Li Wenlin began these arrests in June. He and Mao had a testy exchange in late June or early July: Li confronted Mao for not attending the Soviets Conference led by Li Lisan, calling Mao a “right deviationist.” Mao countered with a put-down that was roughly equivalent to in colloquial English to “Li Wenlin, you don’t know shit” (*Li Wenlin, ni dongde ge pi*). Their forces were soon clashing in the field, according to Sima Lu. Sima Lu, *Zhonggong lishi de jianzheng*, pp. 444-445. The study by Averill asserts that the Futian Incident followed Li Wenlin’s strenuous opposition to Mao’s policy of pursuing purges in the Red Army, and the arrest of Li. Averill, “The Origins of the Futian Incident,” p. 101.

the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), it is not incorrect that the tortures, forced confessions, condemnation of innocents, and executions hold some parallels with later purges in CCP history. However, the scale of killings in Futian set it apart from later movements. Stephen Averill noted that they were “widespread, decentralized, and paranoid...largely out of the control of any of the top leaders.” One PRC study concluded that “over 90 per cent of the cadres in the south western Jiangxi area were killed, detained, or stopped work.”²⁰⁷ Another tallied 1,000 CCP members arrested as A-B Corps members out of a total of 30,000 Communists in southern Jiangxi, and 4,400 Red Army soldiers singled out from 40,000. The figures are consistent with one study from outside of the mainland.²⁰⁸

After Mao’s forces prevailed over the Jiangxi CCP, the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern concluded in March 1931 that the A-B Corps had indeed widely infiltrated the Red Army, and that the violence was necessary to purge them.²⁰⁹

The observer might interpret events several ways: the simpler idea of Mao’s forces versus a KMT A-B Corps, or Mao versus recent Central Committee arrivals, or Mao versus local CCP provincial authority, or just a steadily accelerating chaos. However for our purposes of tracking the development of CCP Intelligence and security forces, the events show that the Red Army’s coercive apparatus, and the organs under local Party committees that were created to hunt down counter-revolutionaries, had become subordinate not to the Party center but to local commanders and committees, just as the military forces were under those commanders. Though the political

²⁰⁷ Averill, “The Origins of the Futian Incident,” pp. 101-105; and Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 13-14.

²⁰⁸ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 14; and Sima Lu, *Zhonggong lishi de jianzheng*, pp. 450 and 451-52.

²⁰⁹ Xu Zehao (ed.), *Wang Jiaxiang nianpu, 1906-1974* [The Annals of Wang Jiaxiang, 1906-1974] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2001), p. 52.

protection organs were formally limited to investigation and arrest, and were supposed to hand over suspects to the organs of the judiciary (*falu ji guan*), they paid little if any heed to such restrictions, and followed the requirements of war as they perceived them. When the State Political Protection Bureau was founded in early 1931, central control was improved but the same sort of exemption was in force: centralization did not fix this problem. Trial by judiciary was not required during war or “soviet expansion.”²¹⁰

Some executions were done by the Political Protection units, including the killing of Li Mingrui, commander of the Red Seventh Army, who tried to escape with his guard company at Ningdu but was caught and shot.²¹¹ Hao Zaijin maintains that Political Protection units took the lead in the arrests, investigations, and executions, but they were not the only ones doing the shooting. Red Army units attacked each other in the belief that whole battalions were loyal to the KMT. Suspected A-B members were routinely tortured by their captors to name other “conspirators.” By the end of 1930, all officers in the 20th Army from the commander down to deputy platoon leaders were under arrest. In 1931 the purge spread from Futian in south west Jiangxi to the communist held border regions of Hunan-Jiangxi, Hunan-Hubei, and Hubei-Henan-Anhui. Political Protection and Purging Counter-revolutionary units and others carried out large scale executions of alleged A-B Corps members, CCP members, Red Army cadre, and even some “base area founders.” Though there is no further detail made available in his account, Hao Zaijin asserts that at least some purges went on until the beginning of the Long March, and some

²¹⁰ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 14; Mao Zedong, “Outline of the Organization of the State Political Security Bureau of the Chinese Soviet Republic” (January 27, 1932), in Schram, et al. (eds.), *Mao’s Road to Power*, vol. 4, p. 838.

²¹¹ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party*, Book Two, p. 307.

happened on the journey itself, until October 1935, when CCP forces settled in northern Shaanxi.²¹²

Sometime in the last few months of 1930, leaders of the Party in Shanghai appear to have decided to bring security work and the Purging Counter-revolutionaries Committees under more centralized control. Probably in August 1931, the Central Political Protection Division (*Zhongyang zhengzhi baowei chu*) was founded with Deng Fa at its head,²¹³ subordinate to the Red Army General Front Command, Special Operations Team. In November, the organization was elevated to become the State Political Protection Bureau (State PPB, *Guojia Zhengzhi baowei ju*) and given the responsibility to guard the Party center. Either at this point, or perhaps at an earlier time, Li Kenong, Qian Zhuangfei, and others entered the organization as division and section chiefs, with responsibilities in the soviet areas and in enemy areas,²¹⁴ a change that appears to have brought enemy intelligence (*di qing*) work into the State PPB, changing it from a security organization into one also concerned with intelligence. The CCSO continued its work in Shanghai but now there was another central body with security and intelligence functions.²¹⁵ Their precise relationship requires further definition.

Zhou Enlai's investigations into the Futian clashes during early 1931 may have led him and other central leaders to think that their own political command over the Red Army might be in jeopardy from an ascendant Mao Zedong. That may have caused them to reverse the earlier

²¹² Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 12 and 14-15. On the claim that purge activity continued on through 1935, see p. 15, first paragraph.

²¹³ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 15 puts the founding in January 1931, while the following reference puts it in sometime in May. Xu Zehao, *Wang Jiaxiang Nianpu*, pp. 56-57.

²¹⁴ Tan Zhenlin, Li Yimang, Li Yutang, Wu Lie, Hai Jinglin, and Ma Zhulin were also noted in leadership positions for the new Bureau. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 13; and Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p.322.

²¹⁵ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 10; Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 99; and He Jinzhou, *Deng Fa Zhuan* [A Biography of Deng Fa] (Beijing: Zhonggong Dangshi Chubanshe, 2008), pp. 70-71.

verdict in Mao's favor, and they rebuked him for overreacting to the so-called A-B Corps. To simply state the situation, Mao's military talent was respected and appreciated, and so he was not purged, but his power was limited so he could not take over the Party hierarchy.²¹⁶

Though Zhou Enlai and others reined in Mao after the Futian Incident, and attempted reform of the rural security organs, they faced a formidable task. In Ruijin, Zhou found Purging Counter-revolutionaries Committees and Political Protection Sections that functioned like a secret police. The rural organizations may have seemed atomized by comparison to the urban ones, under the primary influence of local commanders instead of a central authority.

Red Army Military Intelligence; Militarizing CCP Intelligence

In January 1933 Luo Ruiqing became the chief of the First Front Army Protection Bureau (*Hongyi juntuan baoweiju ju zhang*). After March 1933 this organization developed subordinate units following standard military intelligence functions. There was a General Office (i.e.: headquarters: *Zongwu ke*), a Scouts Department (*Zhencha bu*), and a Mission Operations Department (*Zhixing bu*). The scout unit performed field reconnaissance of the enemy, internal investigations, and investigations of political and social conditions (*shehui zhencha*) of the population in the military's area of operations. Due to lack of declassified accounts it is hard to determine if this is coincidence or not, but two years earlier Richard Sorge proposed to his employers in the 4th Department of Soviet Army intelligence (GRU) that he do political-social

²¹⁶ This story of how the Party leaders from Shanghai at first backed and then rebuked Mao are described in Saich (ed.), *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party*, pp. 510-14; Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, p. 334; and Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 16.

intelligence in addition to military intelligence.²¹⁷ As Zhou Enlai had at least one detailed meeting on cooperation with Sorge a couple of years earlier, in 1930,²¹⁸ it is possible that the GRU agent's ideas influenced this aspect of Red Army intelligence. Unfortunately this single source does not contain any information on the successes and failures of Luo's organization.

Whether the two events are connected, it is interesting to observe that the Red Army's move under Luo Ruiqing to change mere VIP protection organs toward performing military intelligence functions were immediately followed by closer cooperation between the State PPB unit leadership and the developing intelligence command in the Red Army. As the Red Army's days in Ruijin grew short in the lead up to the escape via the Long March (October 1934), and the need for good tactical intelligence grew ever more pressing, many or most of the CCSO's remnant personnel in Shanghai, Jiangsu, Tianjin, Beijing, and amongst the KMT Army were dead or under arrest. However, some "secret Party members" and former CCSO agents inside the KMT military and in other Nationalist organs survived to play important roles. The Underground Party member Zhao Bosheng, discussed a few pages hence, engineered a large defection of KMT troops. Mo Xiong was an agent in the KMT staff close to Chiang Kai-shek, and is also described later in this chapter.

In 1934 the State PPB included both civilian-focused units, and those embedded in the Red Army. They appear to have been like two halves of the same coin, led by Deng Fa and Li

²¹⁷ Luo Ruiqing Biography Editorial Group, *Luo Ruiqing Zhuan [The Biography of Luo Ruiqing]* (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo chubanshe, 2007), pp. 61, 64, 66.

²¹⁸ Zhang Shaohong and Xu Wenlong, *Hongse Guoji Tegong [Red International Agents]* (Harbin: Harbin Publishing, 2005), pp. 18-22.

Kenong—the latter held positions in both.²¹⁹ Some prominent examples show how the PPB and Red Army military intelligence had a “revolving door” aspect with senior personnel who came in and out: Luo Ruiqing, a political officer who became 1st Corps PPB head under Lin Biao and went on to higher office,²²⁰ Zhang Shunqing, the 3d Corps PPB head under Peng Dehuai who also was an army political officer,²²¹ and Wang Shoutao, who was Director of the Political Department of the 9th Corps when the Long March began and became PPB Director for a short time after the March ended.²²² Earlier we read of personnel like Chen Yun, Chen Geng and Qian Zhuangfei, prominent CCSO officers who went on to other assignments. Later we will see how the revolving door was also a feature of the Central Social Department (*Zhongyang Shehuibu*, 1939-1949) which was organized to carry on from the CCSO and PPB.

Given the background of Li Kenong and Qian Zhuangfei as CCSO clandestine officers in KMT areas, one might suppose that they were assigned duties in Ruijin to control other clandestine officers behind enemy lines. However CCP sources give few details of their daily work—mostly just noting their arrival and reassignment after being “blown” with the defection of Gu Shunzhang in April 1931. Sources agree that Li was head of the “implementation department” of the State PPB in Ruijin (*Guojia zhengzhi baowei ju, zhixing bu*),²²³ but give little information about what he actually did there, other than arranging for passage of personnel in and out of

²¹⁹ While in Ruijin, Li Kenong was simultaneously the head of the Enforcement Department of the PPB (*Zhengzhi baowei ju zhixing bu buzhang*) and of the PPB in the First Front Army. <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/34136/2543750.html> paragraph 2, and <http://www.xwwb.com/web/wb2008/wb2008news.php?db=15&thisid=95528>, paragraph 8. Accessed August, 2012.

²²⁰ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Three*, p. 6. Luo became the first Minister of Public Security and later PLA Chief of Staff.

²²¹ Ibid; “Zhang Shunqing” in the *Baidu Encyclopedia* online (<http://baike.baidu.com/view/2710205.htm>). Zhang was also on the army political officer career track. He attained a Party committee position in Guangdong in 1942 but was captured and killed there by the KMT in 1944.

²²² Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Three*, p. 7.

²²³ See web sites in footnote 32. *Zhixing* means to implement or execute a policy or a procedure.

White areas. This might indicate that Li supervised communication with intelligence assets in enemy areas—but this is all there is, and such work was a shrinking enterprise as 1933 turned into 1934 and the KMT eliminated CCP operatives in the cities. Qian Zhuangfei was assigned to a military unit as a PPB cadre and as head of the Intelligence Bureau of the Central Military Commission. He either died in a KMT air raid during the Long March, or was captured and killed.²²⁴ Both men would have been subordinate to Deng Fa.

The Shanghai Party Committee sent Pan Hannian away from the city in May 1933 because of the arrest there on the 14th of two left-wing writers who were close to him—Pan’s friend Ding Ling and Pan Zinian, a cousin—since they might have been tortured into disclosing his whereabouts. He travelled via Hong Kong through rural Guangdong to Ruijin. On arrival Pan was assigned to a Red Army Propaganda Department position, taking the place of Yang Shangkun as deputy head of the CCP Propaganda Department, and as Director of the Local Work Department of the Red Army General Political Department, and Director of the PPB White Area Work Department.²²⁵ Just before the Long March began, in August-September 1934, Zhou Enlai sent Pan to open negotiations with Guangdong warlord general Chen Jitang, whose troops manned three of the four lines surrounding Ruijin—the fourth being regular KMT troops under Chiang Kai-shek. Chen, like other warlords only loosely commanded by Chiang, preferred to preserve his forces, motivating him to finalize a five point agreement with CCP General Zhu De that

²²⁴ Mu Xin, *Yinbi zhanxian tongshuai Zhou Enlai*, pp. 463-464, 466; interview with Taiwan academic. Available organization directories are less than specific about Qian’s duties.

²²⁵ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de Qingbao Shengya*, pp. 71-72.

ceased hostilities and allowed for trade in the weeks before the breakout.²²⁶ As the CCP forces departed, they passed through the staggered lines of General Chen in a prearranged manner.²²⁷

Pan was in one of the last units to depart Ruijin, beginning the Long March on 20 October 1934. At this point he was director of the Army's Propaganda Department, and there is no more mention of White Area work.²²⁸ On the Long March, Pan supervised the preparation of news, propaganda themes, and slogans. He coordinated duty for himself and his staff to go down to the combat units and keep in touch with the troops to make the propaganda as genuine as possible.²²⁹

The Encirclement Campaigns and CCP Intelligence

The CCP had a clandestine ring headed by Mo Xiong inside the KMT all through the time of the encirclement campaigns, some of whom provided intelligence or covert action in favor of the communist forces in the Red Areas. None of them examined so far seem to have been recruited by the PPB or its predecessor organizations, and appear to have been remnant assets of CCSO. These known cases provide a general idea of the situation, though a more complete picture will have to await the opening of the CCP's archives for the period.

During the Second Encirclement Campaign, the KMT 26th Army defected en masse to the communist side on 14 December 1931, in the Ningdu Uprising, "the first major Chinese soldiers' insurrection." The defection of 17,000 KMT soldiers into the Soviet area was led by their Chief of Staff Zhao Bosheng, a secret CCP member probably recruited in February-March 1927 by

²²⁶ Ibid, *Pan Hannian de Qingbao Shengya*, p. 76

²²⁷ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, pp. 110-111.

²²⁸ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de Qingbao Shengya*, pp. 76-77.

²²⁹ Ibid, pp. 127-128.

Deng Xiaoping or Liu Bojian while they were political officers with the unit (then still under command of the “Christian General” Feng Yuxiang). Feng had invited the pair to join his unit and run the political department, when they arrived in Xi’an fresh from schooling in Moscow.²³⁰ Zhao’s clandestine recruitment by Deng or Liu appears unconnected with CCP Intelligence—perhaps driven by basic organization department or CCP Underground imperatives. It remains unclear how Zhao Bosheng communicated with the CCP afterwards, or if he was simply a “sleeper” agent: not performing regular espionage duties but awaiting activation. After going over to the CCP in December 1931, Zhao was made commander of the 13th Red Army in August 1932. He was killed in battle on 8 January 1933.²³¹

In early September Chiang Kai-shek called a conference of military leaders at Lushan and unveiled a fifth encirclement campaign which he called the “bucket plan” (*tietong jihua*). His staff had just completed it in July; 800,000 troops were to be deployed in another attempt to surround and annihilate the CCP. The planning was so intricate that one set of documents weighed two kilograms. Unfortunately for the KMT, one of the officers in attendance was Mo Xiong, a CCP mole recruited by the CCSO in 1930 by Zhou Enlai and Li Kenong.²³² Mo Xiong had worked in several areas of the KMT hierarchy, including as a KMT army commander in

²³⁰ Jin Chongji, *Mao Zedong Zhuan* (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1996), p. 275 identifies 14 December 1930 as the exact date of the Ningdu Uprising, and the participation of Zhao, his CCP membership, and the association with Liu Bojian and Deng Xiaoping in 1926. The information on Deng Xiaoping’s return from Moscow and assumption of duties as a political officer under Feng Yuxiang comes from Yang Shengqun (ed.), *Deng Xiaoping nianpu, 1904-1974, shang* [The Annals of Deng Xiaoping, 1904-1974, vol.1] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2009), pp. 32-33; The data on Liu Bojian is also seen at <http://baike.baidu.com/view/1836.htm>. See also Schram, et al. (eds.), *Mao’s Road to Power, vol.4*, pp. 246, 339, 353.

²³¹ Schram, et al. (eds.), *Mao’s Road to Power, vol.4*, p. 353.

²³² “Yifen juemi qingbao cushi hongjun tiaoshang changzhenglu” [Secret Intelligence Prompted Red Army to Embark on Long March], *Zhongguo Gongchandang xinwenwang*, <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/144956/9090941.html>, sourced from *Shijie junshi zazhi* (August, 2012)

Guangdong in the mid-1920s, when he was accused of taking part in the 1925 murder of Liao Zhongkai.²³³

One of Mo's major KMT career achievements was as a chief of *cefan zu* (groups to incite defection) under Dai Li during the Fujian rebellion of 1933.²³⁴ As this work came after his recruitment into the secret ranks of the CCP, the full story of what he did during that time would be revealing about how he was run by his CCP handlers and what he was allowed to do to maintain his cover.

As soon as Chiang Kai-shek's planning conference for the Fifth Encirclement Campaign was dismissed, Mo Xiong contacted his CCSO liaison (that is, not from the State PPB). Xiang Yunian was visibly grateful, promising the Red Army would never forget what he had done. Xiang found his CCSO colleagues Liu Yafo and Liu Zhiying,²³⁵ and they spent the night extracting key elements of the plan and adding their own analysis, using secret writing (*mixie moshui*) to record crucial details and the analysis into four student dictionaries. Packaged thus, the material would have been undetected by casual inspection, though potentially incriminating in the hands of an expert. Xiang packed up the books and departed for the Soviet area disguised as a teacher. On the way he decided that normal roads and the teacher disguise were too dangerous, and detoured through mountains and woods. He emerged from his trip looking like a

²³³ Schram, et al. (eds.), *Mao's Road to Power*, vol.4, p. 298.

²³⁴ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, p. 232

²³⁵ According to the article on Mo Xiong at <http://baike.baidu.com/view/340588.htm>, all three of Mo's CCP contacts were sent by the Shanghai CCSO (*Teke*) to serve in his network, though the article does not make clear exactly when they arrived in Jiangxi.

beggar, and, so the story goes, even knocking out four of his teeth to look the part. He arrived in Ruijin on 7 October.²³⁶

Mao Zedong's biography records that in early October he received a secret communication from the Central Committee "on special assignment" requiring him to immediately return to Ruijin, where Zhou Enlai told him to prepare for departure.²³⁷ Zhou Enlai's Annals notes that, in the four weeks preceding departure, he supervised negotiations with KMT general Chen Jitang, attempting to convince him to agree to a truce with the CCP. But there is no mention of Mo Xiong, only the preparations to depart just before 10 October, and the departure itself that day.²³⁸

The Long March and CCP Intelligence

*In the Long March, history offers few comparable triumphs of will-power over circumstance, nor a better example of constant improvisation.*²³⁹

CCP Intelligence was already changing its focus toward enemy military intelligence, but as Communist forces fled for China's northwest, the change accelerated: available material suggests that the protection of key leaders, internal investigations, apprehending deserters, and tactical military intelligence such as scout work, signal intercept, and analysis to produce order of battle assessments made up their entire work load.²⁴⁰ Their goal was the simple survival of the Red Army and the Chinese Communist movement. Some of these efforts are openly discussed in PRC literature, some are not but are still apparent, and some aspects still appear to be classified

²³⁶ "Yifen juemi qingbao cushi hongjun tiaoshang changzhenglu,"

<http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/144956/9090941.html>

²³⁷ *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1893-1949* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1996), p. 330.

²³⁸ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 264-265.

²³⁹ Jerome Chen, "The Communist Movement 1927-1937" in John K. Fairbank and Albert Feuerwerker (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 13 Republican China 1912-1949, Part 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 209.

²⁴⁰ "Order of battle" is the military term for identification, strength, command structure and disposition of personnel, units, and equipment of a military force. Carl, *CIA Insider's Dictionary*, p. 471.

or seem to be avoided. Li Kenong took the leading role during this period. Perhaps his most important work was identifying enemy troop deployments in the path of the Red Army and recommending route changes to avoid hostile forces—giving the path of the Long March its zigzag quality. As Li’s intelligence management role increased, Deng Fa, Chen Yun, and Zhou Enlai withdrew from their previous roles related to this work. Urban spymaster Pan Hannian also maintained military duties in the first months of the Long March. In the meantime surviving remnants of the CCSO in the cities generally laid low until contacted the following year by Pan in the south and Liu Shaoqi in the north. There seems to be no identifiable institutional or professional development in CCP Intelligence during this period, no formal political oversight, nor even directives—just survival, including an effort to eavesdrop on the communications of Zhang Guotao when he attempted to create a rival communist command and Central Committee.

When the Long March began on 10 October 1934, the State PPB’s changed focus toward enemy military intelligence was accompanied by a gradual shift in leadership (October 1934 – early 1935) from Deng Fa over to Li Kenong. Deng Fa’s biographic material never mentions Li Kenong and says that Deng continued “to be responsible for leading the PPB’s work” at the start of the March. While this might seem to mean that Deng remained in charge, his subsequent responsibilities seem to show a shift downward to tactical matters:

- Leading the team that provided close protection to the Central Committee column during late 1934, and

- thwarting KMT saboteurs in an incident during the Zunyi Conference in January 1935.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ He Changgong and Hu Hua, *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan, zi di 31 zhuan* [Historical Biographies of the Chinese Communist Party, vol. 31] (Xi’an: Shaanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1980), pp. 357-358.

Deng Fa's biography²⁴² has nothing further to say about his activities for the remainder of the Long March. The more official *Central Committee Members* list (*Zhongyang weiyuan*) fails to name either man as State PPB chief during the Long March, and says almost nothing about Li in the March (he "participated"). However this source shows that Deng Fa took on political commissar responsibilities in three units at unspecified times during the March,²⁴³ indicating that he too took on military duties. The *Annals* of Zhou Enlai show Deng Fa's appointment on 20 September 1935 as political commissar of the Red Army's Third Column under Ye Jianying, an odd thing for Deng's official biographers to overlook. On arrival in Wayaobao, with the March concluded, Deng was appointed as head of the Grains Department of the Northwest Office (*Xibei banshichu liangshi bu buzhang*).²⁴⁴ Later on in June 1936, as is well known from Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*, Deng Fa met Snow in Xi'an, helping him hook up with a connection for clandestine travel to Wayaobao and Yan'an. Afterwards, Deng went on to Moscow to give a "work report" to the Comintern.²⁴⁵

In summary, Deng was not purged, but he may have been eased out of the State PPB's leadership. Deng Fa supported Mao at Zunyi in January 1935 and was on the Politburo until 1945, so this chain of events seems more like a series of lateral transfers of a loyal cadre for the needs of the service. Part of the explanation for his shift out of PPB leadership may lie in the nature of the

²⁴² Ibid, pp. 358-359.

²⁴³ For Li Kenong, this source simply says he participated in the Long March, while for Deng Fa it lists military positions: deputy commander and political commissar of the CMC column, First Echelon headquarters member and political commissar, and Shaanxi-Gansu Detachment Third Column political commissar. Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 99 and p. 322.

²⁴⁴ He Changgong and Hu Hua, *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan, zi di 31 zhuan*, p. 359; *Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 293; Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Three*, p. 133.

²⁴⁵ He Jinzhou, *Deng Fa Zhuan*, pp. 123-127; He Changgong and Hu Hua, *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan, zi di 31 zhuan*, p. 359; and Snow, *Red Star Over China*, pp. 52-53.

man himself. Deng was not an educated person, but a roughneck who became, in today's parlance, a "knuckle dragger." a protector and enforcer, brave, physically capable, useful in protection work and to intimidate or attack enemies, loyal, a man among men who might have been a match for practically anyone.

The contrast with Li Kenong is telling. Each set of biographic materials seldom mentions the other man, which may be a coincidence or telling of a rivalry. If one contrasts what is said about the two, it appears that Li slowly took charge of intelligence work, while Deng Fa received specific responsibilities that removed him from that role.

- Li led the reconnaissance detachment of the Red Army Working Group (*Hongjun gongzuobu diaocha dui*) which spearheaded main columns in order to gather intelligence on opposing troops;

- Li made recommendations on route changes based on enemy force dispositions, giving the Long March its "zigzag" nature: this logically put him directly in contact with Zhou Enlai, though this is not stated in the materials;

- Li led the effort to "sweep away" (*saochu*) enemy spies within the communist ranks, also a function that might have had him directly reporting to Zhou;²⁴⁶

- From the beginning of the Long March, Li was "responsible for security of the Central Committee Column and at the Zunyi Conference;"²⁴⁷

- In August 1935, when the CCP units split in two, Li headed the First Front Army's Protection Bureau as the unit headed north;

²⁴⁶ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 75-76.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 74

- In September, Li provided unspecified but valuable help in intercepting a telegram from Zhang Guotao to the Red Army commander Chen Changhao, whom Zhang hoped to convince to join him in the south in opposition to Mao Zedong, establishing a “temporary Central Committee;”

- Li remained in charge of VIP protection until the end of the March,²⁴⁸ and as we will see later on, remained a leader of intelligence work for the rest of the revolution and beyond.

Li’s biography gives a hint about why he was placed in charge of intelligence during the Long March: for the three years he was in Ruijin (1931-1934), Li conducted unspecified Red Army work, perhaps tactical intelligence: “wearing the grey uniform of a soldier, he was both a brave fighter and an intellectual cadre.”²⁴⁹ In modern terms, Li appears to have been a better-rounded leader and manager than Deng Fa.

In summary, during mid-1931 Li Kenong arrived in Ruijin, and worked three years for Deng Fa, but appears to have replaced him during the crisis atmosphere of the Long March (October 1934 – November 1935). The Red Army must have needed someone with knowledge of counterintelligence, human intelligence (agent handling), tactical military intelligence, and signal intelligence. If Li Kenong’s knowledge in these varied fields was not encyclopedic, it appeared broader than Deng’s.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 77-80; and Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 20.

²⁴⁹ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, p. 73. On “tactical intelligence,” all ground forces have the same basic requirements for tactical intelligence: ascertaining enemy unit strength, weaponry, disposition, capability, and intent. Carl, *The CIA Insider’s Dictionary*, p. 638.

Why the coy treatment of intelligence intellectual and espionage expert Li Kenong versus covert operative Deng Fa? Why do PRC historians not clearly describe these events, when details are often available about other situations? Perhaps Deng's biographers were under instructions not to reveal details of his transition out of PPB leadership. CCP personnel decisions are typically secret, and the Organization Department of the Central Committee has always kept a tight hold of information about them.²⁵⁰ Moreover, if an historian clearly explained why Li replaced Deng on the Long March, even if the explanation was that Deng was needed elsewhere as a political commissar with great motivational skills, then other CCP Intelligence leadership transitions would beg explanation—such as why Kang Sheng, now depicted as the major villain in CCP Intelligence history, took over CCP Intelligence and security in 1938. That might require becoming more specific about the errors of the Chairman, the Pandora's Box no one wants to open.

Up until this period, and for long thereafter, Zhou Enlai was involved either in the development of CCP intelligence, or in its supervision. Though famous for his tireless work ethic and multiple abilities, Zhou does not appear involved in intelligence or its oversight after 1931, or during the Long March. Rather, he was focused on military command and other elite leadership duties, especially before the January 1935 Zunyi Conference. During this time, the Zhou Enlai *Annals* contain no reference to intelligence or its supervision, which is consistent with the biographical information on both Deng Fa and Li Kenong: neither mentions Zhou Enlai during the March, and a Taiwan source confirms that Zhou focused on military planning.²⁵¹ There is a

²⁵⁰ A good review of the roots of secrecy in the CCP's Organization Department can be found in Richard McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers* (London: Penguin Press, 2010), pp. 70-75.

²⁵¹ Zhou was Chair of the CCP Military Commission and assumed overall responsibility for military command before Zunyi. Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Three*, pp. 23, 26.

reference from November 1935, after arrival at Wayaobao, when Zhou sits in a meeting to discuss continuing to work toward re-establishing contact with CCP Underground remnants in Chinese cities.²⁵² However after that, and especially after the arrival of Kang Sheng in November 1937, Zhou appears uninvolved in intelligence matters until 1945 (Chapter Six).

Red Army Communications and Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) on the Long March

There is evidence that the CCP successfully intercepted KMT radio messages that helped them survive the Fifth Encirclement, and the Long March. Otto Braun, the Comintern military advisor then attached to the Red Army who accompanied the March, noted in his memoir that KMT signals intercepted by the communists indicated that Chiang Kai-shek had decided to move forward by one month his final Autumn 1934 assault, apparently a confirmation of the agent report from Mo Xiong. Taiwan scholar Warren Kuo indicated that CCP operators were good at decryption of signal intercepts, and that

Trained in the Russian espionage technique, they got valuable intelligence from radio monitoring that helped the Communists to thwart many Nationalist military attacks. This special service talent did save the Communists from being totally annihilated during their flight from Jiangxi to north-western China.²⁵³ ...In the course of the Red Army's westerly flight, Zhou Enlai assumed overall responsibility for the military command. According to Mr. Chen Ran, Zhou Enlai spent many a sleepless night waiting for intelligence reports from the 2nd Bureau of the Military Council, headed by Zeng Xisheng. These reports were gathered from reconnaissance and interception and decoding of Government military telegraphic messages, and they were analyzed by Zhou before issuing orders...²⁵⁴

²⁵² From 10 October 1934, when the Long March began, until it ended in November 1935, this record reflects no intelligence work or supervision by Zhou Enlai. Instead, his activities are focused on leading the March, making military decisions, and enduring criticism at Zunyi. He continued elite leadership duties afterward. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 265-296.

²⁵³ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Two*, p. 344.

²⁵⁴ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Three*, p. 26.

Mao called the Second Department the “lamp that lit the way in the darkness” for the Red Army during the Long March.²⁵⁵

While these PRC sources hint that Red Army success against KMT coded messages was due to decryption skills, they may actually have owed it to stolen code books. KMT intelligence leader Xu Enzeng suspected that his code book had been stolen in March or April 1931 by CCP agent Qian Zhuangfei, but never reported it out of fear of punishment by Chiang Kai-shek. If the KMT did not change their codes, hostile decryption might have been easily done for several years, until the Long March ended in 1935.²⁵⁶ PRC writings about their SIGINT successes are few, but Imperial Japanese Army cryptographers found KMT ciphers easier to break and read than those used for CCP signals, at least in the 1930s: the first Japanese successes against CCP ciphers would not come until 28 February 1941.²⁵⁷ This is further discussed in Chapter Five.

Claims made about good CCP signals intelligence may be true, but there was at least one costly glitch omitted from the CCP’s version of history: perhaps less a Chinese or a communist phenomenon than a bureaucratic one. Sun Shuyun uncovered an intelligence failure, possibly attributable to Li Kenong, when she researched her book on the Long March and interviewed a former Red Army SIGINT intercept operator and decoder named Zhong Fazhen. Zhong related how Mao’s first battle after Zunyi, at the town of Tucheng, was a disaster that Zhong attributed

²⁵⁵ “Zeng Xisheng” in the *Baidu Encyclopedia* online <http://baike.baidu.com/view/566618.htm> ; “Mao Zedong zan hongse tegong Zeng Xisheng: meiyou tade erju, jiu meiyou Hongjun” [Mao Zedong Praised Red Special Agent Zeng Xisheng: Without his 2d Bureau There Would Be No Red Army], in *Xinhua wang*, at http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2010-03/22/content_13219777_1.htm.

²⁵⁶ “Hongse tegong Qian Zhuangfei” [Red Special Agent Qian Zhuangfei] in *Renmin wang* at <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/144964/145470/8859544.html> ; http://news.xinhuanet.com/mil/2006-08/22/content_4991275.htm

²⁵⁷ Ken Kotani, *Japanese Intelligence in World War II* (Oxford: Botely Publishing, 2009), pp. 18-20, 21, 170, 191. Kotani’s employed the private papers of Yokoyama Yukio, “Memories of Special Intelligence,” and Japanese military archives.

to faulty intelligence: the Red Army expected two regiments of Sichuan warlord troops on 28 January 1935, and instead engaged four of them, with four more arriving as the battle progressed. Mao called for reinforcements that could not arrive until dark, and at mid-afternoon that day the warlord's forces almost captured the spouse of Zhu De. Terrible losses resulted, "thousands" in the words of Zhong.²⁵⁸ After this battle the Red Army put strong emphasis on improving SIGINT, whose operators were paid more and fed better than other soldiers. Zhong also told of an instance when a battalion turned back into a pursuing enemy force and gave up an untold number of lives to rescue a SIGINT intercept operator who was inadvertently left behind on the March, so valued were their services in intercepting enemy radio traffic and breaking their ciphers.²⁵⁹

Chen Yun's White Area Work Attacked at Zunyi, First Steps in Restoring Urban Networks

Before and during the Long March Chen Yun also engaged in a variety of duties, some related to intelligence work but also some military and production related tasks. Before the March began, Chen took political leadership of the Red Area and White Area rural and urban worker movements, setting operational goals for CCP Underground leaders nationwide, and taking direct control of such work in Jiangsu.²⁶⁰ He wrote key documents on White Area work in 1933 and 1934 (before he was criticized at Zunyi), and later on in 1940, offering analysis of failures and prescriptions for improvement. These appeared in English in 1983, before most of the Beijing approved histories of CCP Intelligence work were published, but after the 1981 Resolution discussed earlier. Chen's essays offer critical and frank accounts of the problems of

²⁵⁸ Sun Shuyun, *The Long March: the True History of Communist China's Founding Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), p. 112-113.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 114.

²⁶⁰ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan vol. 1*, pp. 151-154

motivating people go out and risk their necks for the cause, hinting that the more recent, approved (and cheery) texts on the Party's clandestine work offer just part of the picture.

When Chen was Director of the Department of White Area Work under the Central Committee, he wrote "How to Begin Work in White Areas" in June 1934, saying that guerrilla raids should include efforts to seek potential agents, such as boatman, coolies, and peddlers, who could sustainably travel in and out of White Areas, and that cadres should be recruited amongst static residents of enemy areas who have organizing and other social skills.²⁶¹ He criticized the failure by some cadre to understand real conditions in enemy areas, saying harder work was necessary to effectively recruit agents. In a sample of his prescriptions, he offered a novel suggestion for work in border areas:

We must start a mass campaign in White areas to support the Soviets and the Red Army... Workers' clubs and people's recreation centers should be set up along the borders of Soviet areas by trade unions and Soviet governments to encourage workers, peasants and other poor people from White areas to stop there for rest and recreation when they pass by border areas. In this way we may persuade some of them to participate in our work in White areas.²⁶²

Chen also inspected military factories in the Red areas and drove operational and maintenance improvements to raise production; in addition Chen was sent, along with Liu Shaoqi, to major military units to improve political work and raise consciousness amongst the troops in the weeks before the Long March. At that time Chen became the political officer (*Zhengwei*) of the Fifth Army Group (*Wu juntuan*) which acted as rear guard in the first weeks of the March. His title was Rear Guard Unit Political Officer (*Houwei budui zhengwei*). In October 1934, the opening

²⁶¹ "Strengthen Secret Party Organizations" in Selected Works of Chen Yun, 1926-1949 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1983), p. 34.

²⁶² Ibid, pp. 36-37.

days of the March, Chen's duties required him to go without sleep for six days and nights.²⁶³ On the way, Chen's duties appear to have been entirely military.²⁶⁴

At Zunyi in January 1935, Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Peng Dehuai and others criticized the “left deviations” of Bo Gu and Comintern advisor Otto Braun, and led shortly afterward to the replacement of Zhou Enlai as head of the military commission.²⁶⁵ Chen Yun's biography claims that he was appointed as head of the Central Committee's Organization Department on 19 January, but this is not supported by other documents, and this may have been a temporary assignment or simply a biographer's mistake. Chen remained a member of the Politburo (appointed in 1934 after coming to the Red Area in 1933). He retained some military duties even with his senior positions, as appears common under the circumstances.²⁶⁶

Liu Shaoqi criticized Chen Yun for “left adventurism” in the White Areas, based mostly on the heavy losses suffered by the Party since the defection of Gu Shunzhang in 1931. His critique echoed those leveled by Mao against Zhou Enlai, Otto Braun, and Bo Gu for tactics that led to the loss of tens of thousands of troops in the breakout from Ruijin. Chen Yun responded that heavy losses were inevitable under the KMT's “White Terror,” and that condemning all

²⁶³ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan*, vol. 1, pp. 155-158

²⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 159-164.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 166-168.

²⁶⁶ Chen is confirmed as a Politburo member in both his biography and in *Zhongyang weiyuan*. See Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, pp.342, 454-455. These entries show Li Weihai as CCP Organization Department director from March 1933 to September 1936. Chen Yun is shown taking the Organization Department director job after he returned to China in November 1937. See also

<http://hbcsztssc.blog.163.com/blog/static/43829367201162405623995/>. Chen Yun told his biographer that he was appointed as Organization Department director on 19 January 1935. Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan* vol. 1, p.

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operations resulting in losses as “adventurism” was an insult to those who were sacrificed.²⁶⁷ Mao convinced Liu to set this criticism aside, however, and Chen did not suffer for it.²⁶⁸

In the decision of the conference, “A Review of the Errors in the Military Line of Comrades Bo Gu, Zhou Enlai, and List (Braun),” there were ten points, all concerning military performance and errors such as allowing the Red Army to become too conservative and passive in defense. CCP Intelligence and Underground operations were not mentioned in these points—in essence, escaping the criticisms leveled against the military leadership. However Pan Hannian was ordered to depart the March and work in the White Areas to revitalize Underground and Intelligence networks, using Hong Kong and Shanghai as centers for liaison.²⁶⁹

Pan Hannian did not leave immediately but was released by Zhang Wentian, the new Party Secretary who replaced Bo Gu, in about April 1935 to travel to Hong Kong. A year later, Liu Shaoqi went to Beiping and Tianjin to perform the same sort of revitalization of Underground and possibly Intelligence networks in north China.²⁷⁰ Their efforts were sorely needed. Chen Yun’s biography counts three mass arrests of CCP members in Shanghai between June 1934 and July 1935 (KMT statistics account for over 99 CCP members captured or killed nationwide in 1934, and 808 captured or killed in 1935). During one of these actions, probably September 1934 according to Otto Braun, the Shanghai CCP’s two-way radio station was captured, cutting off contact with the Red Army and Moscow through 1936.²⁷¹ On 5 March 1935 Ren Bishi, then the Secretary of the Hunan-Hubei-Sichuan-Guizhou CCP Committee, remote from Shanghai,

²⁶⁷ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Three*, p. 18.

²⁶⁸ Interview with Taiwan academic.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-24.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁷¹ Otto Braun, *A Comintern Agent in China, 1932-1939* (Queensland University Press, Australia, 1982), p. 79.

reported to the Long March Central Committee in a telegram that the Shanghai Central Committee remnants and the Communist Youth League and the CCSO there had “all undergone major destruction with the sacrifice of many cadres.”²⁷²

On 31 May the Central Committee’s column stopped at Ludingqiao, in the present day Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan. Senior leaders including Mao, Zhou, and others²⁷³ met and made two decisions, according to Chen Yun’s recollection: turn the March north to cross the Snowy Mountains (Xueshan) and the grasslands, and send Chen to Shanghai to reconnect with CCP remnants there and “restore the organization” along with Pan Hannian, on his way to report on the progress of the March and the Zunyi decisions to the Comintern in Moscow.²⁷⁴ The CCP may have decided to dispatch Chen to the USSR because their radio equipment in Shanghai and on the March, now in one of its hardest periods, was disabled or lost. If the report about Ren Bishi’s March 1935 telegram to the Long March Central Committee is correct, the Red Army may have had some working equipment but were lacking in cipher pads and radio schedules usable in contacting Vladivostok and Moscow.

On or about 8 June Chen quietly dropped away from the Long March and made his way toward Chengdu and then Chongqing for Shanghai. This text emphasizes that he journeyed alone, without protection and without Pan Hannian, who had departed the Long March in perhaps April. Chen stuck to back roads, avoiding main thoroughfares and hostile checkpoints. After five or six days of travel, making one contact along the way, Chen reached Chengdu. Bearing a personal

²⁷² Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan vol.1*, p. 179.

²⁷³ Chen recalled that they were Mao Zedong, Zhu De, Zhou Enlai, Zhang Wentian, Wang Jiaxiang, himself, Liu Shaoqi, Bo Gu, Liu Bocheng, and others whom he could not recall. Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan vol.1*, p. 175.

²⁷⁴ Zhong Wen, ed., *Bainian Chen Yun* [The 100 Years of Chen Yun] (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2004), p. 55.

letter (*qinbi xin*) from Liu Bocheng, he spent the night with a sympathetic official of the Meifeng Bank. He obtained funds from this bank and the next day transferred them to a deputy general manager of the Shanghai Jiangsu Industrial Bank, who took them to Shanghai for the CCSO there.²⁷⁵

While in Shanghai Chen stayed in hotels and the home of a still active CCP Underground worker, using his time to search the city for leads on CCP members who might still be alive, taking advantage of his status as a visitor unknown to local authorities. Perhaps when Chen had done all that he could, he boarded a Russian ship and departed in mid-July 1935.²⁷⁶

Chen Yun and Pan Hannian may have met only once before Chen left China, in late June or early July 1935 at a secret liaison point (*mimi lianluodian*) in Shanghai. Pan had the good luck of running into an old acquaintance, a Shanghai postal telegraph worker named Xu Xiguang, whom he had known in 1926-27 as an officer in the General Political Department of the Northern Expedition army. Xu was not a communist but was sympathetic with the revolution, and after assessing him and checking his background, Pan recruited Yang to be an internal line (*neixian*) agent of CCP Intelligence in the postal telegraph department. Since the CCP had lost all, or almost all, of their radios in the remnants of the urban networks, Pan decided to establish a different sort of network using overt telegrams transmitted in the clear over the postal network. To make this arrangement work, a set of reliable communist *neixian* agents were needed. If employed in the right positions in the post and telegraph system, they could control handling of the messages at each end, thereby avoiding scrutiny. This way, telegrams using everyday

²⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 175-176.

²⁷⁶ *Chen Yun zhuan vol. 1*, pp. 179-182

language with coded meanings could be used, addressed to “dead,” or non-existent telegraphic addresses (*sidian*) that were recognized by CCP telegraphers as meant for a CCP Underground or Intelligence addressee. In practical terms, if a CCP Underground outstation had some problem to report to their controller, they would send a telegram using phraseology understood only to the recipient. For example, when the Guangzhou organization had to close down and disperse, they wired

Mr. Wang Siping, Jinan Hotel, Sima Road, Shanghai. Spring has arrived, and the red blossoms and white flowers have ceased.

Though this text seems insecure and likely to arouse suspicion, if communist agents were doing the transmitting and receiving, this communications method was a “closed circuit.” As long as this method remained unknown to the KMT, and there was no intercept and analysis going on, it would be safe. One prominent CCP historian claims that this was so—that the KMT never figured out the use of the postal system, the false addresses, or the use of agents as telegraphers—and available Taiwan sources do not dispute the claim.²⁷⁷

Conclusion

It is tempting to think that there was a correlation in 1927-34 between the influence of Mao Zedong and serious problems with CCP intelligence and security work. His pursuit of power over rivals and consequent reliance on purges by his security forces focused them on destructive activities that weakened the Red Army. Meanwhile the intelligence networks in the cities, over which Mao had no control, at least did some good for the Party. However, not every such development was due to Mao: the direction to start up atomized political protection and purge

²⁷⁷ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp. 66-68.

branches in the military units, with little or no central direction or control, came from Li Lisan, perhaps with guidance from Moscow. It is curious that Mao's bad experience of being without information on the enemy in 1927 did not prompt him to improve military intelligence. Instead, he made political protection and purging the dominant form of security work. Mao temporarily lost control of these functions after his growing power caused Party leaders to rein him in, in 1931-32. There was one benefit of the stress on purges though: the oppression in the Red Areas and relentless pursuit of enemies made the Chinese soviet districts fairly toxic to real KMT agents, who had a hard time penetrating a society under such intense surveillance. In the meantime, some remnants of the CCSO's urban structure, organized under the State PPB perhaps in 1933, when Kang Sheng departed for Moscow, survived. Their agents had some significant successes, including allowing the CCP to break out of the KMT's Fifth Encirclement Campaign, which might otherwise have annihilated the communist movement in China. New organizational, policy, and leadership challenges followed which took many years to resolve but led to a reorganization that brought CCP Intelligence a step closer to becoming a modern service in the 1940s. The return to China of Kang Sheng would be important to that process, and we will examine this and other developments in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

The Early Yan'an Period: CCP Intelligence Rebuilds, Kang Sheng Reorganizes, 1936-1941

We have seen that CCP Intelligence operatives in the cities worked “underground” for the organization’s first eight years through 1935. Everyone from the lowest operative to the highest officer was under constant threat of arrest, torture, and execution, while those attached to the Red Army, subject to multiple encirclement campaigns, were not much more secure. At the end of the Long March in November 1935, CCP Intelligence was crippled from serial defeats and must have taken enormous casualties that were never revealed. However, while Yan’an was not perfectly secure, it was more so than previous environments, and CCP Intelligence had its first chance to consistently develop. At first they made little progress in operational capabilities or professional standards, partly due to competing priorities. As noted in the previous chapter, purge activity continued after the Reds arrived in their new base area. It became formally known as “traitor weeding” by 1937, part of a larger effort to make the base areas and border regions safer. This and other urgent and important activities came in quick succession: the opportunity presented by the Snow visit 1936; the Xi’an Incident that December; the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War nine months later; ad hoc participation in negotiations by experienced enemy handlers Li Kenong and Pan Hannian; the need to refresh the urban agent networks; and dealing with the new opportunities of the Second United Front with the KMT.

All of these developments required endless hard work, but were a continuation of past activities—in modern parlance, “fires” to put out. The arrival of Kang Sheng in November 1937, soon after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, would change this dynamic. Kang is correctly known for his energetic cruelty in pursuit of “traitors” within, though the vast majority of his

targets were nothing of the sort (Chapter Six). Less understood is one of the main topics of this chapter, what he achieved while reorganizing CCP Intelligence into the new Central Social Department (CSD, *Zhongyang shehuibu*), also known in English as the Social Affairs Department, or SAD.²⁷⁸ As its director, Kang enhanced vertical control and discipline in CSD's operations, and increased the organization's capability and range in ways that eventually proved important to the Party's 1949 victory. Kang's role in improving CCP Intelligence during this period is one of the most overlooked aspects of the organization's history, perhaps because his return to power at the Party center was followed by the harsh Rescue Campaign (1943), in which he played a prominent role. That campaign figured into Kang's subsequent political decline, and was central to the narrative that decades later showed him in collusion with the far left during the Cultural Revolution, leading to his posthumous expulsion from the Party. Villain though Kang was, it would be inaccurate history to wipe away the contributions he made to CCP Intelligence, and the Chinese Communist Revolution.

The Setting: CCP Intelligence and Security, and Mao Zedong's Ascendance in the Party

Based on decisions made at the January 1935 Zunyi Conference, Mao Zedong joined the three man team commanding the military and became "first among equals," not dominant, in the political leadership.²⁷⁹ The arrival of Wang Ming two years later would pose a challenge to his position. Mao's leadership of the Long March after the Zunyi Conference is often credited with the survival of the CCP, but the Red Army took over 90 percent losses by the time they reached

²⁷⁸ SAD has become standard, but since the word "affairs" is not necessarily implied in the Chinese name, I am using the more literal translation "Central Social Department."

²⁷⁹ Jerome Chen, "The Communist Movement, 1927-1937," pp. 209, 211-212.

the northwest.²⁸⁰ While the low survival rate amongst the general population of the marchers is well known, the losses suffered by CCP Intelligence cadre are not. The activities of prominent CCP Intelligence survivors of the period are recorded, as are two Long March casualties: Qian Zhuangfei and Hu Di, the second of whom was “mistakenly” killed during a purge under uncertain circumstances.²⁸¹ While no source on intelligence history so far examined has offered even a rough estimate of CCP Intelligence casualties, the losses must have been as ghastly as the military’s considering the hazards of the KMT’s mop up in the cities and the overall kill rate on the Long March itself. The defacto end of the CCSO in November 1935 was itself driven by attrition, according to a Party historian.²⁸² So in this early period of Mao’s ascendancy, CCP Intelligence was most likely in shock from a thorough butchering that left only a small fraction of their original number. Accounts of the reconstruction of urban and other networks, which we will examine in this chapter and the next, lend to the idea that CCP Intelligence had to rebuild almost from scratch with a few surviving cadre, recruiting where they could: the army, other cadres, and new recruits who had fled to Yan’an from enemy areas. This must have meant that senior officers like Pan Hannian and Li Kenong had significant influence on how the organization was eventually reassembled, a vital task which may partially account for their lionized status in the Post-Mao era. As we will see below, Kang Sheng’s influence as leader from December 1937 to October 1946 was also significant. However, due to his politics and

²⁸⁰ Of the 100,000 Red Army soldiers who began the Long March, only 8,000 survived and reached northern Shaanxi, according to Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 16. He does not cite numbers for the losses suffered by those in the intelligence ranks.

²⁸¹ Qian Zhuangfei was killed in a KMT aerial bombardment on the Long March, and Hu Di was “mistakenly killed in a purge” during the same period. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 106.

²⁸² KMT and Concession police made persistent arrests of CCSO agents in Shanghai between Kang Sheng’s assumption of leadership in January 1933 and the fall of 1935. In September 1935, due to mounting losses, head of the Shanghai station Wang Shiyong, a Whampoa graduate, sent almost everyone away to Tianjin, Hunan, Sichuan, and Moscow, leaving Qiu Jifu and 10 others to continue operations in Shanghai. All 11 were arrested within two months—effectively the end of the CCSO. Xue Yu, “Guanyu zhonggong zhongyang Teke ruogan wenti de tantao”; Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 10.

actions which harmed many, his achievements have mostly been ascribed to others. Kang is demonized by modern historians, not the least to take the blame for decisions which might otherwise need to be placed with Chairman Mao.

In the wake of the Long March, Mao developed the new base area centered around Yan'an, gained Stalin's endorsement of his leadership, rebuilt and preserved the CCP's forces, and developed a theoretical framework to practically apply Marxist ideas to the Chinese landscape—"Mao Zedong Thought." Mao's efforts to unite the Party under his leadership included an effort to incorporate influential groups, sometimes referred to as "mountaintops" (*shantou*)²⁸³ led by important figures such as Zhou Enlai. Zhou's political base likely included military and Party figures from his time on the Politburo and the Central Military Commission, and might also have included senior intelligence survivors.²⁸⁴ Mao would not have ignored Zhou's base as he strove to unite the CCP. Though Kang Sheng was not a newcomer to CCP Intelligence,²⁸⁵ he also likely considered how to handle those who had positive memories of Zhou's founding role, or owed him allegiance for advancement. It was Kang Sheng's good luck that Zhou's political position was weak from 1937-1943.²⁸⁶ Therefore, Kang's arrival in November 1937 was well-

²⁸³ Frederick Teiwes, "Mao Zedong in Power (1949-1976)" in William A. Joseph, *Politics in China: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 64-66.

²⁸⁴ Given Zhou's leading role in building CCP Intelligence from May 1927 to the return of Kang Sheng ten years later, "Zhou Enlai's people" (*Zhou Enlai de ren*) probably included many post-Long March CCP Intelligence survivors. However, to qualify this assertion, use of the term mountaintop (*shantou*) has not been observed in any source discussing CCP Intelligence. For more on the importance of the Party's "mountaintops" during 1935-1945, see Frederick C. Teiwes, "Political Personae, Biographical Profiles" in Colin Mackerras (ed.), *Dictionary of the Politics of the People's Republic of China* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 17-18.

²⁸⁵ As noted in Chapter Three, Kang Sheng took over the Red Squads under Chen Yun in May 1931, and continued his main jobs as Director of the Organization Department and the Trade Unions Department. When Chen left Shanghai on 13 January 1933, Kang took responsibility for all CCSO operations and then handed that job over to Pan Hannian upon departure for Moscow in July. Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan, vol. 1*, pp. 107, 111, 112, 115, 133-34; and Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, pp. 455, 701.

²⁸⁶ An added factor in Kang's favor was the weakened position of Zhou Enlai between 1937 and 1943. The principal surviving founder of CCP Intelligence was in effect "out of the way" during Kang's ascent. Frederick

timed for him to consolidate power over the Party's intelligence and security functions. We will examine this further below, and will see how CSD also grew in size, with a more complicated range of duties, an expanded scope of intelligence collection, and the achievement of political control, accountable to the Central Committee, over "weeding" (vetting and spy hunting work) that had previously been under army unit level control.

In the interim were the difficult days just after the Long March. In late 1935, two years before Kang Sheng and Wang Ming returned to China, the arduous and nearly lethal journey from Jiangxi ended with a difficult and perhaps unstable situation. In the early days of the communist occupation of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia (Shaan-Gan-Ning) Border Region, conditions varied in different localities such that the Politburo decided in January 1936 to allow military units in each place to engage the enemy at their own pace, whether in Soviet or White areas, albeit under a unified policy.²⁸⁷ The CCP's occupation of the region took two full years and was done in a piecemeal fashion against local and KMT resistance. Small communist guerrilla units operated locally before then, including Liu Zhidan's men who took Wayaobao in October 1935, making it the first CCP headquarters in the area. Baoan, where Edgar Snow interviewed Mao and other leaders in September-October 1936, was captured only six months earlier and became the first formal capital. A KMT infantry division held Yan'an for another 18 months and the CCP could not occupy it until four weeks after the December 1936 Xi'an Incident. Illustrating the limits of communist military power at that moment, it was gained only by negotiation.²⁸⁸ In the meantime, the urban position of CCP Intelligence was also difficult. Though Pan Hannian was engaged in

Teiwes and Warren Sun, "From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: The CCP's Changing Leadership, 1937-1945" in Saich and Van Der Ven (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, p. 363.

²⁸⁷ This was in point three of the Politburo meeting of 2 January 1936. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 298.

²⁸⁸ "The Border Region" (interview with Bo Gu), in T.A. Bisson, *Yenan in June 1937: Talks with the Communist Leaders* (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley China Research Monograph Number 11, 1973), p. 30.

efforts to revive networks, many operatives might have stayed inactive and as invisible as possible, just to survive.²⁸⁹

Available evidence indicates that the State PPB and remnants of the CCSO (*Teke*) pursued no significant reorganization or professional improvement in 1935-37. Instead, they appear to have been engaged in the many urgent tasks of the moment: negotiations to advance an anti-Japanese united front; “weeding out” (*chanchu*) bandits, spies, and traitors from the Red areas; and breaking the KMT information blockade to the outside world, efforts that we will discuss in sections further below. First we will examine the December 1936 Xi’an Incident, a defining event that was mostly successful for CCP Intelligence, but included a significant failure.

Negotiation, Infiltration, and Charm: the Lead Up to the Xi’an Incident

Pan Hannian, Chen Yun and others made efforts to revive urban clandestine networks during 1935, but Pan’s intelligence duties were interrupted in 1936 to pursue negotiations with the KMT. As we will see just below, Pan and Li Kenong ran secret truce negotiations on two tracks, with the KMT and with local warlords Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng, intended to prepare the ground for Zhou Enlai to reach final agreement at the political level once details were settled. Based on Comintern guidance, both sets of talks aimed to take pressure off the Chinese Communists by advancing an anti-Japanese united front under Chiang Kai-shek, and mutual non-aggression with nearby warlords. Moscow pushed this strategy with the CCP to avoid the possibility of a pro-Japan government in China, which could lead to the two Asian giants uniting

²⁸⁹ As illustrated by Chen Yun’s travails in attempting to contact survivors in Shanghai in July, 1935. Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan*, vol.1, pp. 179-181.

against Russia, and the eventuality of a war by Germany and Japan against the Soviet Union on two fronts.²⁹⁰

After the forays to Shanghai and Hong Kong by Pan Hannian and Chen Yun to make contact with remnant CCSO and Underground assets, they travelled to Moscow in September 1935. There the pair reported to the Comintern on the latest circumstances of the CCP. Given the hunger for detailed information by the Comintern—and by Moscow Center and the GRU—Pan probably conducted one or more briefings focused on intelligence operations. He also did unspecified work at the Chinese Communist Party’s delegation.

Up until this time, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek resisted calls for an anti-Japanese accommodation among Chinese combatants, because “he was determined to exterminate the Chinese communists first before resisting external aggression,”²⁹¹ in a policy he called “establishing domestic peace before resisting foreign aggression (*Rangwai bi xian anwei*).” Chiang might have been encouraged knowing that the communist leadership was split between Mao and Zhang Guotao. However, Mao succeeded in having Zhang Guotao’s efforts to start a second Central Committee declared as “anti-Party” in January 1936, and Zhang’s position slowly unraveled throughout the Spring. By June, he formally abolished his separate central committee and re-joined the movement under Mao in Yan’an).²⁹² In February Chiang realized that increasingly aggressive Japanese diplomacy and popular Chinese outrage would make impractical further attempts to appease Japan while exterminating the communists. War with

²⁹⁰ For a discussion on this strategy in the context of the Xi’an Incident, see Van Der Ven, *War and Nationalism in China 1925-1945*, pp. 170-171.

²⁹¹ Henry Wei, *China and Soviet Russia* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand and Co., 1956), pp. 129-130.

²⁹² Zhang is noted as an addressee to major commanders in a routine telegram on 20 May 1936. In June, he formally abolished his second central committee. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 300, 310, 312.

Japan was coming quickly²⁹³ and the communists showed signs of uniting under Mao. Chiang sent instructions to Moscow for the Nationalist Chinese military attaché there, Deng Wenyi, to make contact with the CCP and begin discussions on cooperation. Pan Hannian was chosen, perhaps by Wang Ming and Kang Sheng, to be that senior working level contact.²⁹⁴ During this time Chiang also initiated discussions in Vienna with the Soviets to explore an anti-Japanese alliance in exchange for military aid.²⁹⁵

After initial discussions Pan returned to China in July 1936, stopping first in Hong Kong. He was met there by Nationalist Chinese agents and taken to Nanjing to see KMT Organization Department Deputy Chief Zhang Chong. Pan had no means for secure communications with his leadership in Baoan, so when talks could go no further, he travelled there to report to Zhang Wentian, Mao, and Zhou. They sent Pan back to Nanjing and Shanghai in September-November, this time for discussions at a higher level with KMT Central Committee representative Chen Lifu. This was an important escalation to the political level on the Nationalist side, but the meetings soon grew strained. Chen took a hard line, indicating perhaps paralysis or lack of commitment to progress on his side. He pushed for conditions the communists would never accept: absorption of the Red Army into the Nationalist forces, control of CCP base areas by the Nationalists, and less than independent movement for CCP cadre and forces. There was no progress until after the Xi'an Incident of December 1936, when Zhou Enlai directly negotiated with Chiang Kai-shek,

²⁹³ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 78. The more aggressive “rational ultra nationalist” civilian regime led by Hirota Koki reacted to an attempted military coup by supporting preparation for war with the US as well as Russia. Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 117.

²⁹⁴ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp. 78-79 notes that Pan was chosen by “the leaders of the CCP-Comintern representative office” in Moscow to negotiate. Kang and Wang were not named in the text, but they were the senior leaders in that office at the time. See also Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 316.

²⁹⁵ Jerome Ch'en, “The Communist Movement 1927-1937” p. 225.

then a prisoner in Xi'an (below). After Chiang's release, post-Incident negotiations continued for months, assisted by Pan, in the lead up to the start of the Sino-Japanese War in July 1937.²⁹⁶

There were at least three other efforts at work before the Xi'an Incident: talks with Zhang Xueliang, an infiltration of the staff of his neighboring warlord, Yang Hucheng, and a charm offensive against Yang himself by an "old friend," Nan Hanchen.

The first effort: with the expressed aim by Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai of splitting Chiang Kai-shek and the "Young Marshal" Zhang Xueliang,²⁹⁷ the CCP initiated negotiations with Zhang in February 1936. Their goal was to achieve a mutual non-aggression agreement, and secure the communist eastern flank, occupied by Zhang's Manchurian army.²⁹⁸ Li Kenong and Liu Ding, both veteran communist intelligence operatives, travelled to Xi'an to initiate the discussions with Wang Yizhe, a general in Zhang's command.²⁹⁹ Zhang Xueliang also occasionally participated. The communist side offered to allow restoration of trade to and through the areas they controlled.³⁰⁰ Trade with a very poor area connected to no adjacent source of wealth does not seem like a desirable negotiating offer unless there were lucrative goods available, i.e. opium, a question discussed in Chapter Six.

The CCP's talks with Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng were an early example of several such lead negotiator roles in Li's career: During the Xi'an Incident Li was part of Zhou Enlai's

²⁹⁶ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp. 79-80.

²⁹⁷ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 301.

²⁹⁸ John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War, 1937-1945, the Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 27.

²⁹⁹ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 25. Liu Ding [Liu Ting] later became an important PRC ministry level official in heavy industry. Klein and Clark, *Biographic Dictionary of Chinese Communism, Volume I*, p. 628.

³⁰⁰ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 113-115; and Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 300-302 (entries for 20 February and 5 March 1936).

delegation that negotiated with Chiang Kai-shek, and during the post WWII Marshal Mission, Li represented the CCP in those talks. After 1949, Li was a senior negotiator with the UN at the Korea truce talks and later represented the PRC in Geneva.³⁰¹ Others who spent time in CCP Intelligence had qualifications beyond servicing dead drops and working on counter surveillance, bribery, blackmail, secret writing, and the lot: Kang Sheng (ideology), Pan Hannian (negotiations, cultural, and propaganda work), Zhao Cangbi (law enforcement), Chen Geng (military command), Chen Yun (economics), and Kong Yuan (trade, foreign affairs) immediately come to mind.³⁰²

In the first days of March 1936 the CCP and Zhang Xueliang reached a tentative agreement to “keep to each other’s territory and invade neither” (*geshou zhudi, hubu qinfan*), and establish mutual liaison offices. The agreement was ratified by Zhou Enlai on or about 9 March.³⁰³ The Eighth Route Army Office in Xi’an, to which the communists sent operatives including State PPB veteran Deng Fa in August 1937, was the first such liaison office established in a White area by CCP Intelligence.³⁰⁴ In June the Party used it to facilitate passage to Baoan for Edgar Snow, perhaps its maiden operation. Xi’an was the first of 15 liaison offices that the communists established in KMT controlled cities, most of which were active from 1937-42.³⁰⁵

³⁰¹ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 374, 396, 406; and Chang Jun-mei (ed.), *Chinese Communist Who’s Who*, vol. 2, p. 439.

³⁰² A Taiwan scholar commented that his research showed CCP Intelligence officials like Kong Yuan were generally well qualified in their alternate occupations. Private interview.

³⁰³ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 26-27; and Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp. 302-303.

³⁰⁴ Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, *Ba lu jun huiyi shiliao* [Eighth Route Army Memoirs and Historical Materials] Vol. 3 (Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1991), p. 18

³⁰⁵ Most offices lasted only two or three years because of wartime conditions or other reasons. The Xi’an office as the longest lived, from August 1937-June 1946. *Ibid*, pp. 18-22.

As has been documented in other studies, contacts between Zhang and the CCP continued through the second half of 1936, but Zhang resisted the Party's urgings to oppose Chiang Kai-shek.³⁰⁶ Meanwhile the Generalissimo continued to insist that all his forces unite to eliminate the CCP, visiting Xi'an in October to personally press the point. An invasion by Japanese puppet armies of Mongol and Manchurian troops in October-November heightened tensions as Zhang and his staff grew ever more resentful that the Nationalist government under Chiang would not give priority to resisting Japan.³⁰⁷

The second and third efforts: In the same period, the CCP ran an agent network inside Yang Hucheng's staff and a charm offensive against Yang himself. Yang Hucheng was the nearby warlord who was allied with Zhang Xueliang during the Xi'an Incident and was a key instigator to detain the Generalissimo in December. The network was meant to keep the CCP informed of Yang's intentions toward the CCP, and his communications with Zhang Xueliang and with the KMT. A clandestine agent on Yang's staff supervised a network including a communications operator with access to KMT army ciphers (Yang's forces, the 17th Route Army, were technically a part of the Nationalist military).³⁰⁸

Nan Hanchen's charm offensive was perhaps the key to bringing Yang Hucheng toward allying with the CCP and Zhang Xueliang to resist Japan. Though in the end the actual detention of

³⁰⁶ Van Der Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925-1945*, p. 179; and Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 2d ed. 1999), pp. 403-407.

³⁰⁷ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, pp. 118-122.

³⁰⁸ Yang's confidential assistant (*mishu*) in 1929, Song Qiyun, was an underground CCP member. In 1930 Yang appointed Nan Hanchen to be the chief confidential assistant (*mishuzhang*) of the Shaanxi provincial government. Nan then introduced his hometown friend Li Zhifeng to be confidential assistant of the office that decrypted enciphered telegrams for the Shaanxi Provincial Government. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 25. On the advantage of obtaining an opposition code book see Robert L. Benson, *The Venona Story* (Ft. Meade, Maryland: Center for Cryptologic History, undated), pp. 9, 14, 15, 27.

http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona_story.pdf

Chiang Kai-shek in the Xi'an Incident was a surprise to the communists, Nan's work with Yang was like an investment that pays sudden and surprising returns. Nan was Yang's friend from 1927.³⁰⁹ In late 1935 he was a prominent communist and the head of Liaison for the CCP Northern Bureau. Appropriate to the task of cultivating Yang Hucheng, the Northern Bureau specialized in united front work, intelligence, and underground work in the KMT army.³¹⁰ Understanding Yang's difficult military position with the entry of Zhang Xueliang's forces into his area, Nan assessed Yang's situation in the summer of 1935 as not wanting to attack the Red Army, not yet having peaceful relations with Zhang Xueliang, but not certain whether to oppose Chiang Kai-shek. Through a series of conversations and letters in late 1935, Nan convinced Yang to endorse a united front against Japan, including mutual non-aggression between his forces and the CCP, commerce between their areas including the purchase of medicines, an intelligence exchange, the mutual establishment of secret liaison stations, and further discussions to establish a united front with Zhang Xueliang. Once these understandings had been reached in principle, Mao sent Wang Feng to negotiate the details.³¹¹

The CCP had "started the ball rolling" or had loosed the arrow, but could not observe where it would fly. Mao Zedong and the Party had only a few hours warning that the kidnapping of Chiang was to take place.³¹² Available accounts indicate that CCP leaders—and their

³⁰⁹ Deng Jiarong, *Nan Hancheng Zhuan* [The Biography of Nan Hancheng] (Beijing: Zhongguo quanrong chubanshe, 1993), p. 92, 356; and Yoshihide Soeya, *Japan's Economic Diplomacy with China, 1945-1978* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 34.

³¹⁰ Deng Jiarong, *Nan Hancheng Zhuan*, pp. 90-91.

³¹¹ Ibid, pp. 94-97. Wang Feng (1910-1998) had previously served on the local Special Work Commission and was assigned to intelligence duties at this time, probably under the State PPB. After 1949 and until the Cultural Revolution he was a senior official in the State Nationalities Commission. "Wang Feng" in the *Baidu Encyclopedia* online, <http://baike.baidu.com/view/247534.htm>

³¹² Liu Ding was briefed by Zhang on the imminent operation just after midnight on 11-12 December, and reported it to CCP headquarters in Baoan by 0200 or 0230 on the 12th. Wu Dianyao, "Liu Ding" in *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan* [Personalities in Chinese Communist Party History], No. 43, 1990, p. 303. I am grateful to Dr. David Chambers for drawing this reference to my attention.

intelligence organ—were pleased but largely surprised by Chiang’s detention on 12 December and enraged by Stalin’s immediate disapproval of it.³¹³ This idea is supported by the inconvenient timing of the Xi’an Incident: the CCP was planning a surprise attack against a Nationalist garrison on their northern flank for much needed grain for 20,000 new troops, and had to cancel the assault.³¹⁴ Chiang later wrote in his memoir *Soviet Russia in China* (1957) that he flew again to Xi’an in December 1936 precisely because he knew of Zhang Xueliang’s and Yang Hucheng’s secret contacts with the CCP, aiming to discipline and rally the two generals and their officers—indicating that he knew as much about Zhang and Yang as did the CCP. Upon his arrest Chiang thought the CCP was in on the plot, but later he wrote that it was largely the idea of Yang Hucheng.³¹⁵

Zhang presented eight demands intended to cease KMT-CCP hostilities, lift the ban on Communist and front organizations in the White areas, and convene a conference on national salvation with the goal of resisting Japan. Once Chiang was taken prisoner, Zhou Enlai immediately placed himself in the middle of the situation to conduct discussions with him, and Stalin intervened to stop the CCP from putting the Generalissimo on trial. Sources discussing CCP intelligence history do not go beyond this description of events, indicating that the Xi’an Incident may not be a high point in the history of the organization.

³¹³ Two PRC accounts of this chain of events indicate that the Party was taken totally by surprise, and are consistent with other sources. Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 113-115; and Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 22-30.

³¹⁴ Chen Yung-fa, “The Blooming Poppy Under the Red Sun” in Saich and Van Der Ven (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, p. 267, first paragraph.

³¹⁵ Chiang Kai-shek, *Soviet Russia in China* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957), pp. 72-75; Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, p. 114; Jerome Ch’en, “The Communist Movement 1927-1937,” p. 226; and Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Three*, pp. 222-226. The last author differs on the details but also does not say that the CCP had advanced knowledge of plans to kidnap Chiang.

Li Kenong disappears from the records of Zhou's negotiations with the KMT after the Xi'an Incident, though Li's biography has him assisting Zhou in united front talks with Zhang Chong of the KMT in February 1937.

Afterwards Li ran other sensitive errands: he arranged for Comintern funds in US dollars to be smuggled from Shanghai to Xi'an and Yan'an, and in a private meeting tried to convince the third Soong sister, Song Ailing (wife of KMT finance minister H.H. Kung) to support the United Front. This may have been the first, but was not the last time that CCP Intelligence approached Song Ailing to solicit her help in advancing the United Front—Pan Hannian would also do so in Hong Kong in 1938. One of Pan's biographers noted the development of an aspect of CCP Intelligence work during this period: combining united front and espionage work.³¹⁶ In retrospect this seems logical and utilitarian. Compared to underground workers, intelligence people might possess more skills in spotting and assessing candidates for recruitment to the communist cause, arranging secret information exchange, and know more about how to maneuver someone into a position where discreet, mutual cooperation could be established—or blackmail could be initiated. Intelligence officials also appear more often in the literature of this period conducting negotiations with the enemy, also convenient to advance United Front work.

For the rest of the year Li was based in Nanjing as the chief of the Eight Route Army liaison office—his post when Kang Sheng returned to China in November 1937.³¹⁷ By contrast, Pan Hannian appears in records as regularly engaged in working level negotiations with the KMT on matters such as the CCP's appeal to "reassure the Northeast Army" by returning Zhang Xueliang,

³¹⁶ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 127-129; and Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 92.

³¹⁷ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu*, pp. 341-371; Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 127-129; and Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, *Ba lu jun huiyi shiliao*, p. 19.

and preparations for Zhou's face to face sessions with Chiang. On the 28th the KMT invited Zhou to another session with Chiang at Lushan, but before that meeting could be arranged, hostilities commenced with Japan at Marco Polo Bridge (Lugouqiao) on the night of 7 July 1937.³¹⁸

Meanwhile, Pan kept a hand in the field of clandestine operations, if not espionage. A month before, on 11 June, the Party ordered Pan, Feng Xuefeng, and Liu Xiao to form a three man group to lead the Shanghai Underground. Their mission was to restore cultural work, arrange military logistical activities, and perform worker organizing. In spite of Pan's participation this appeared to be standard Party organization work, albeit underground, so he may have joined them to enhance security while working separately to restore intelligence networks. Once hostilities began with Japan, Zhou Enlai personally intervened to plan next steps in Shanghai with Pan Hannian and Liu Xiao. Shanghai's underground work expanded to place secret Party cells in student and educator groups, women's organizations, and amongst textile workers, dock workers, printers, and other.³¹⁹

Kang Sheng in Russia, 1933-1937: Politics in Command of Security Work

As noted in Chapter Three, Kang Sheng headed the Red Squads under Chen Yun, in addition to other duties, from May 1931 to January 1933, and took over CCSO for six months until his departure for Russia in July. He went to Moscow,³²⁰ says a Taiwan source, "for the sole purpose

³¹⁸ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu*, pp. 347, 350, 354, 359, 366, 370.

³¹⁹ Ibid, p. 371 (July, 1937); and *Hongse Shanghai xunli, kangzhan shiqi Jiangsu shengwei*, at *Zhonghua wang* [China.com], <http://xl1999.blog.china.com/201108/8506186.html>

³²⁰ Kang continued his main jobs as Director of the Organization Department and the Trade Unions Department after the Gu defection in 1931. When Chen Yun left Shanghai on 13 January 1933, Kang took responsibility for all CCSO operations and then handed that job over to Pan Hannian upon departure for the USSR six months later, in

of studying the Soviet secret service,” and returned to China in November 1937 “to take charge of the CCP secret service and improve it.”³²¹ Because of Kang’s intelligence and special operations experience in Shanghai, and his assumption of such duties on returning to China, it is widely believed that he studied security and intelligence techniques in Moscow.³²² However, evidence actually showing Kang Sheng as NKVD trainee, or anyone else’s, in Moscow is incomplete due partly to the secrecy endemic in the vocation, not to mention the time and place—Russia during Stalin’s Great Purge. It seems likely that the only security related work Kang performed in Russia was to observe Stalin’s purges, develop NKVD contacts, and identify Chinese for arrest. Since these arrests came during a period when NKVD targeted other foreigners in Russia, they may have approached Kang Sheng for assistance in identifying victims, rather than vice versa. There appears to be no evidence of Russian intelligence training of Kang to this point, though Stalin’s decision to send him back to China to run CCP Intelligence may have resulted in some last minute instruction before his departure in November.

Whether or not Kang received some sort of intelligence training, he was busy with a wide range of other activities in Russia: a delegate to the Comintern; Secretary of the CCPCC Manchurian Bureau with underground offices in Harbin and Vladivostok; recruiter and coordinator, if not actually a commander, of a force of “people’s volunteers” in Manchuria and another unit of 4,000 Chinese workers and students and Korean and European communists raised in Russia and

July. Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, pp. 373-374; Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun Zhuan, vol. 1*, pp. 107, 111, 112, 115, 133-34; and Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, pp. 454-55, 701.

³²¹ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, pp. 373-374.

³²² “Kang was relieved of his Shanghai assignments in 1933 and sent to Moscow where he studied Soviet Security and intelligence techniques and also acted as a CCP representative to the Comintern.” Klein and Clark, *Biographic Dictionary of Chinese Communism, Volume I*, p. 425. “Kang had been trained by the Soviet NKVD in the 1930s, and served as a prominent leader in the Yan’an Rectification Campaign.” Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2d ed., 1999), p. 568. “Chapter V, Moscow, Finishing School for Sadists. Kang Sheng spent the next four years in Moscow completing his political education and earning postgraduate degrees in every aspect of political terror.” Byron and Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon*, p. 112.

sent to Mongolia to await the arrival of the Chinese Red Army near the end of the Long March.³²³

Contributing to Stalin's purge may have kept Kang busy but, again, this had more to do with "security" and purging enemies than anything else. Intelligence training would conceivably have included topics like talent spotting in the field and central vetting of agents, recruitment techniques, tradecraft (e.g.: secret writing, clandestine photography, agent meeting techniques), analysis and reporting, and management thereof, but no source so far consulted mentions anything like this. Instead, we read that Kang's met with NKVD officers and focused on identifying CCP members and other Chinese trainees for arrest as "Trotskyites," "special agents" (*tewu*) and "traitors" (*pantu*). PRC sources that discuss Kang's collaboration with NKVD tend to be short on details—Hao Zaijin's work discusses Kang's time in Russia over only a few lines,³²⁴ and a primary source often referred to by Western scholars, chapter eight of *Kang Sheng ping zhuan* [A Critical Biography of Kang Sheng], has less than seven pages on Kang in Russia—much of it taken with listing the biographical details about his victims. Dates found in these pages refer mostly to the activities of victims before they were detained, not to Kang Sheng's work in identifying them, and the earliest arrest is noted in 1936. This might allow a reader to presume that Kang was busily plotting the demise of his fellow Chinese from 1933-37, but actually he appears to have done so only in 1936-37, and there are no details about who initiated the NKVD-Kang meetings.³²⁵ The historical context suggests the possibility that NKVD officers came to Kang looking for targets rather than the other way around: Soviet

³²³ Chang Jun-mei (ed.), *Chinese Communist Who's Who*, vol. 1, p. 338.

³²⁴ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 56.

³²⁵ Zhong Kan, *Kang Sheng ping zhuan* [A Critical Biography of Kang Sheng] (Beijing: Hongqi Chubanshe, 1982), pp. 57-58.

persecution of “diaspora nationalities” (ethnic groups on the USSR’s borders that had migrated into Soviet territory during previous generations) peaked in 1935-38. Chinese were among nine nationalities forcibly resettled away from Soviet borders in 1935-38, and during 1937-38 the regime specifically targeted them for mass arrest and execution based solely on their nationality.³²⁶ As to foreign communists of all nationalities, NKVD arrests against them happened mostly in 1937, and included large numbers of Chinese.³²⁷ In short, extant data indicates that Kang may have had no intelligence duties at all in Russia, and that he took up purge work less as a mastermind, perhaps more as a glorified NKVD informant, albeit with senior CCP rank.

“Glorified” because Kang allegedly set up a “purge office” (*Sufan bangongshi*) with Wang Ming once Soviet purges accelerated, giving it a bureaucratic place in the Comintern delegation.³²⁸ Why these unfortunate victims were targeted on Kang’s list of victims is not entirely clear. PRC sources say some had derogatory information on Kang Sheng (his supposed 1930 arrest by the KMT in Shanghai³²⁹) or Wang Ming (blunders in Manchuria).³³⁰ If not with Kang Sheng, then where was Soviet intelligence cooperation happening? Soviet intelligence activity in China during the 1930s was mostly focused on Japan and conducted by GRU—Soviet military intelligence. It was GRU that ran networks in China, and had arranged with Zhou Enlai for mutual assistance a few years earlier. Since both Kang Sheng and Gu Shunzhang are villains in

³²⁶ Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, “Introduction” in Suny and Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 14, 19n 14, 20n 31.

³²⁷ Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 272, 401, 402-403.

³²⁸ Zhong Kan, *Kang Sheng ping zhuan*, p. 57. No date was provided.

³²⁹ Klein and Clark, *Biographic Dictionary of Chinese Communism, Volume I*, p. 424. Kang’s alleged arrest by the KMT and “sell out” to them in 1930 is also written up in Zhong Kan, *Kang Sheng ping zhuan*, p. 300. This may be an exaggeration since it is not recorded in the more official biographical summary of Central Committee members found in Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 701.

³³⁰ Zhong Kan, *Kang Sheng ping zhuan*, pp. 57-59.

CCP history, but as we saw in Chapter Three, sources from China (and Taiwan) mention intelligence training only for Gu, not Kang, there seems little reason to avoid the subject in PRC works if Kang really was trained by a Soviet intelligence organization. If nothing else, blaming Kang's errant ways in 1943 on Russian training would be convenient. As it is, only Kang's proximity to the Great Purge has been blamed for influencing his later behavior.

The July 1937 Marco Polo Bridge incident and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War must have been a factor in Stalin's decision to send Wang Ming and Kang Sheng back to China, but he may have made his decision the next month, just after Wang Jiaxiang reported to the Comintern on the situation in China on 10 August in a meeting with Wang Ming and Deng Fa present. The Comintern official Georgii Dimitrov received the report and doubtless relayed it to Stalin. By early September Dimitrov informed Wang that he, Chen Yun and Kang Sheng should return to Yan'an, Deng Fa should go to Xinjiang, and Wang Jiaxiang should remain in Moscow and take over as the CCP representative to the Comintern. Therefore Kang had two months to prepare before departure. Since he was to move into CCP-Intelligence soon after arrival, and there is some reason to believe that Stalin wanted him to take over that activity, it is possible that Stalin ordered some last minute training in intelligence management or methods for Kang.

On 11 November 1937, just three days before Wang Ming and his party were to fly from Moscow for Yan'an, Stalin called in Dimitrov, Wang Ming, Kang Sheng, Deng Fa, and Wang Jiaxiang. Stalin was focused on Tokyo's threat to the Soviet Far East, telling his visitors that the CCP should put past differences with the KMT behind them and focus on the fighting Japan. He asked Wang Jiaxiang, who was in the best position to know the current situation, the strength of

the Red Army. When Wang Jiaxiang replied that it was about 30,000, Wang Ming interjected that 300,000 was more accurate. Stalin replied that it was less their gross number but their fighting ability as individual soldiers that mattered. Stalin could not have overlooked the possibility that Wang Ming might not provide reliable information from afar.

Whether Kang Sheng received formal intelligence training or simply kept his eyes and ears open, what might he have learned in Russia that affected the history of CCP Intelligence? Kang's time in Moscow (September 1933 – October 1937) was marked in part by the 1 December 1934 murder of Sergei Kirov, Secretary of the CPSU in Leningrad, and the Great Purge that followed,³³¹ bringing significant change to the political atmosphere and drastically altering the work of Soviet state security. After more than 14 years of security services power being split between sometimes competing agencies, Soviet intelligence and security was consolidated under one organ for the first time in July 1934, as the NKVD.³³² The new body became a large, highly organized, and privileged organ in the Soviet state, with great experience in arbitrary arrest, repression, and violence as Stalin moved more and more against his real and imagined enemies within the Party. Combining the OGPU and NKVD into one body in 1934 must have been discussed, or at least privately considered, among Russians and resident foreigners, especially those like Kang Sheng with an interest in security matters. So it is logical to assume that Kang followed these developments and learned from them whether or not he was in formal training. NKVD, which also became responsible for all forced labor camps, remained under Stalin's direct control and expanded even further to become a vast organization that was "the effective

³³¹ Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror, A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 37-38.

³³² For explanations of how the Soviet intelligence organs evolved under Lenin and Stalin, see Robert Conquest, *Inside Stalin's Secret Police: NKVD Politics 1936-1939* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1985), p. 1; and Conquest, *The Great Terror*, p. 33-35.

instrument in determining the course of events in the USSR.”³³³ Witnessing this consolidation might easily have given Kang Sheng an idea of the processes a national level system must go through in breaking up old organizations, deciding whom to retain and dismiss, and the length of time necessary to establish standardized procedures and structures across a wide geographical area—just the challenges he would face in reorganizing CCP Intelligence.

Kang Sheng and Wang Ming Return to China

We saw above that CCP Intelligence officials conducted some military intelligence, urban espionage, and important negotiation work, but there was no discernible professional or operational development. Though turbulent times would come again, better days were just ahead, and would be under Kang Sheng and not Zhou: Central Committee Department status in February 1939 (the highest ever accorded to CCP Intelligence), greater coordination between civilian and military intelligence operations, and a large training effort that deployed an unknown number, probably thousands, of agents in the field.

In Shanghai during 1931-33, Kang had already served as CCP Organization Department director and as a member of the temporary Central Committee and the Special Operations Commission, and for his last six months in Shanghai, as the head of CCSO. So in Yan’an, his appointment to head CSD while holding higher political offices was not unprecedented. However, Kang might have seen the CSD post as a good opportunity to exercise more power than he had ever had, as head of an increasingly important and large coercive apparatus in an expanding Party. He took almost immediate political control of civilian intelligence and eventually gained influence over military intelligence.

³³³ Conquest, *Inside Stalin's Secret Police*, p. ix.

Did Mao Zedong wish to shift CCP Intelligence away from Zhou Enlai, or at least toward Kang Sheng as a (small) part of his program to build an influential base of followers and dominate the Party? An argument against this idea might note that Kang Sheng was sent back to China by Stalin, and so his rise could be read as more Stalin's doing than Mao's. One might also recall that Kang was initially aligned with Wang Ming and the "28 Bolsheviks" who opposed Mao, and that he was already a Central Committee and Politburo member.³³⁴ Hao asserts that the Comintern and Stalin really made the choice of Kang, and that CCP leaders agreed to it because Kang had international experience; Zhou Enlai and Chen Yun were otherwise engaged; Luo Ruiqing was busy in the Red Army while Deng Fa and Zhou Xing were already carrying out the Elimination and Clean Up (*Sufan*) Movement; and the Party ranks of Li Kenong and Pan Hannian were lower than Kang's.³³⁵ Kang's rank and prestige upon his return meant that he did not need Mao's patronage—that day would only arrive after early 1939. However, the timing of appointments granted to Kang Sheng may mean that Mao decided within months after November 1937 to gradually endorse Kang to take over intelligence and security and other important work. There is no evidence that Mao solely engineered Kang's appointments in the intelligence and security field in early to mid-1938, but given the future Chairman's position at the time, it seems unlikely that this series of offices would have been approved without Mao's agreement.

In January, Kang was appointed secretary of the Central Committee Trade Union Movement Commission (*Zhonggong zhongyang zhigong yundong weiyuan hui*); in early 1938, as head of

³³⁴ The 28 Bolsheviks were not so much a political clique as a group that was trained during the same period. They were not doctrinally united, and some came to Mao's side against Wang Ming earlier than others. David Apter, "Discourse as Power: Yan'an and the Chinese Revolution" in Tony Saich (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Chinese Revolution* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 220.

³³⁵ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 68-69.

the Central Committee Protection Commission (*Zhonggong zhongyang baowei weiyuan hui*); in the Spring of 1938, Kang was appointed first in a list of six members of the Central Committee Enemy Area Work Commission (*Zhonggong zhongyang diqu gongzuo weiyuan hui*), was appointed head of the CCP Party School in March, and placed on the Party Newspaper Commission in April or May.³³⁶ Perhaps it was by mutual agreement that Kang stayed close by Mao in Yan'an during 1938-41 while Zhou, the father of CCP Intelligence, was sent away first to Wuhan and then to Chongqing to help run liaison with the KMT. During this period, Zhou suffered several political setbacks: he lost his position on the Secretariat at the Politburo Conference of 9-13 December 1937, when Wang Ming, Kang Sheng, and Chen Yun were added;³³⁷ and while in Wuhan at the Yangtze Bureau, Zhou supported Wang Ming against Mao in 1938. During a later self-criticism, Zhou said he turned away from Wang and supported Mao beginning in May 1939,³³⁸ three months after the Politburo named Kang as head of the new Central Social Department. At the Politburo Conference, Kang was named to the Secretariat and replaced Wang Shoudao as Director of the Political Protection Bureau.³³⁹ As we will see in the next chapter, Kang reorganized and upgraded the CCP Intelligence organization in time for it to be used in a coercive campaign to find spies within, an operation that could not have happened without Mao's approval. This effort backfired and caused Mao to apologize to the Seventh Party Congress in 1945 for the excesses that resulted. However, he must have approved the operations

³³⁶ *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao* [CCP Materials on Organizational History] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000) p. 427

³³⁷ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan*, vol. 1, p. 231; and Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party*, Book Three, pp. 336-340.

³³⁸ Wang Ming, Chen Yun, and Kang Sheng were appointed to the Secretariat, and the top nine members of the Central Committee were Zhang Wentian, Mao Zedong, Wang Ming, Chen Yun, Zhou Enlai, Zhang Guotao, Bo Gu, and Xiang Ying. Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan*, vol. 1, p. 231. For the analysis on Zhou Enlai's predicament during this period, see Teiwes and Sun, "From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: The CCP's Changing Leadership, 1937-1945" pp. 363-365.

³³⁹ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party*, Book Three, p. 341.

carried out by Kang Sheng, and the fact that Mao had to repudiate them after they became a liability may only indicate that the Chairman lacked the ability to foretell the future.

When they arrived in Yan'an on 29 November 1937, Wang Ming and Kang Sheng carried titles affiliating them to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) and the Chinese delegation to the Comintern, and both were Politburo members.³⁴⁰ Until then Mao had made gradual progress to consolidate power, but Wang was a new challenge: a Comintern official in charge of affairs in the east, who had a following in the Returned Students group and was not willing to subordinate himself to Mao. Other senior leaders such as Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and Zhang Wentian did not have an equivalent prestige or following.³⁴¹ Unconfirmed information indicates that an uncertain number of Russian military advisors also arrived with Wang and Kang. They probably included a Comintern agent with an intelligence background, a radio operator, and perhaps a physician.³⁴²

In December Wang Ming, Kang Sheng, and Chen Yun were added to the CCP Politburo and the Secretariat was also revamped: except for Mao, all the new members of the Secretariat (Wang Ming, Zhang Wentian, Chen Yun, and Kang Sheng) had been to Moscow. Moving fast, Wang Ming travelled with Zhou and Bo Gu on 18 December to Wuhan for negotiations with Chiang

³⁴⁰ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, p. 392.

³⁴¹ Frederick Teiwes and Warren Sun, "The Formation of the Maoist Leadership: From the Return of Wang Ming to the Seventh Party Congress", in Saich and Van Der Ven (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, pp. 342-344.

³⁴² A photo of the arrival in Yan'an of the Wang Ming-Kang Sheng flight shows three, possibly four non-Chinese, only two of whom wear flyers' headgear. Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan, vol. 1*, p. 229. Available evidence indicates that there were three Soviets already present in Yan'an when Vladimirov arrived in Yan'an in May 1942. John W. Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1937-1945: The Diplomacy of Chinese Nationalism*. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 64. Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, p. 7.

Kai-shek.³⁴³ He established the Yangtze Bureau, hoping to replace Yen-an as the center of CCP leadership. In hindsight, Wang's fast move was in the wrong direction. He unwisely left both the military and the Party's security services in Yan'an, close to Mao. Perhaps he viewed the situation as similar to the period when the Central Committee lived underground in Shanghai, close to the working class, the CCP's military operated in the hinterlands, and it was technically subordinate. If so, this was a dated and fatal assumption: the military, the coercive apparatus, the bulk of Party members, and the charismatic leader in waiting were in one place, while Wang Ming was in another.

Kang Sheng remained in Yan'an with Mao, and also worked fast. In December-January 1937-38 he and Wang Ming alleged that the former CCP General Secretary, Chen Duxiu, was a Japanese spy. There is no information describing their evidence. Wang Ming brought up the charge in a January 1938 meeting of the Politburo in coordination with Kang Sheng, who published the essay "Weeding out (*chanchu*) the spies of the Japanese invader, enemies of the people, and Trotskyite bandits" in which he alleged that Chen had been a Japanese spy since 1931.³⁴⁴ The charges, judged as baseless now but apparently accepted at the time, leave open the possibility that Wang Ming and Kang Sheng were transmitting the charge against Chen from Moscow, perhaps from Stalin.³⁴⁵ Chen Duxiu might have been an irritant to Stalin since he had publicly accepted Trotsky's critique of the Communist International's handling of the CCP-KMT split in 1927.³⁴⁶ Therefore the spying charge against him might not have displeased Mao.

³⁴³ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu*, p. 394.

³⁴⁴ Zhong Kan, *Kang Sheng ping zhuan*, p. 72.

³⁴⁵ The situation carries an echo of one that followed ten years later in 1947-48, when Stalin handed over to the CCP a list of spies including the American communist Sydney Rittenberg. Rittenberg was eventually cleared.

³⁴⁶ Jerome Ch'en, "The Communist Movement, 1927-1937" p. 181.

Then in the summer of 1938, Kang assisted Mao, who intended to marry the controversial actress Jiang Qing (Chiang Ch'ing), by vouching for her background against allegations of KMT connections³⁴⁷ Kang may have taken over CCP Intelligence at this point, or even sooner. One official source, *Zhongyang Weiyuan*, loosely asserts that Kang took over all of CCP Intelligence right after arrival, though this is imprecisely stated.³⁴⁸

Purges Live On: Traitor Weeding in Liberated Areas

Purges persisted after the CCP arrived in the northwest at least in part because of KMT and Japanese espionage operations that must have been noticeable, even alarming, to the CCP's leadership. It is difficult to measure the volume of enemy espionage the Party faced, but the examples Chinese authors put forth, and the comment by one PRC author that "it was not hard for the Japanese to find traitors in China"³⁴⁹ indicate at least a perception of a persistent, elevated threat. The same Chinese author classified intelligence activity during this period as falling into several categories. *Tewu* (special agent and their operations) as a general concept included *baowei* (body guarding), *xingdong* (active measures) and *qingbao* (intelligence gathering).³⁵⁰ *Tewu* as "special agent" was not necessarily pejorative, it could be a compliment: there were enemy *tewu*, and friendly *tewu*. The thing that made them good or bad, just like a soldier, was whose side they were on, not the secret nature of their work. In 1941, Mao would tell Li

³⁴⁷ Zhong Kan, *Kang Sheng ping zhuan*, pp. 75-77.

³⁴⁸ See Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, pp. 373-374 and *Book Three*, p. 341. The author asserts that Kang was appointed head of the Political Protection (Security) Bureau, replacing Wang Shoutao, upon arrival in Yan'an in November 1937. A mainland biographical reference only loosely asserts that Kang immediately took over all intelligence functions in its entry for Kang Sheng. Shen Xueming (ed.), *Zhongyang weiyuan*, p. 701.

³⁴⁹ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 139.

³⁵⁰ *Jiandie* (间谍) is a general term for a secret agent inside his enemy's camp, and included *jianxi* (奸细), the "traitor within" recruited by the enemy after he was already in place to steal secrets or provide other service. Both sides also employed *zhentan* (侦察), peasants, itinerants, or others recruited to watch, note reportable events, and pass them along when conditions were safe. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 137-138.

Kenong's son, Li Bing: "Do you know what your father does? He is a major special agent—though one for the Communist Party!"³⁵¹

Not all terms connected to espionage were neutral though, because anyone who turned against the Party or China had a special moniker applied, depending on the nature of their betrayal. As we saw in earlier chapters, a *pantu* (turncoat) left the communist movement for the KMT, itself the party of betrayal, once comrades who turned on the CCP in 1927. *Hanjian* (ethnic Han traitor) were ethnic *Han* Chinese who betrayed all of China to join the Japanese invader; *jianxi* (traitor within) was a Chinese already in a "position of trust" in the communist movement, who was spotted, assessed, and recruited by the Japanese or KMT because he had access to secrets.

The Northwest (formerly State) PPB pursued bandits and hostile agents in the base area and border region in 1937-39 to attain a more acceptable level of security, and their special targets were *hanjian* and *jianxi*. Perhaps the Party believed these enemies to be plentiful in part because Japanese intelligence organizations quickly appeared in Shanxi with the 1937 invasion. In the second half of that year they set up five intelligence bodies in Taiyuan and other towns in the province, and six subordinate stations that supposedly recruited a dozen Chinese in short order. Some were higher level agents who were sent to Yan'an and adjacent border regions to recruit others, while some acted in lower capacities as couriers and scouts (*zhentan*).³⁵² One of the former was a Chinese, Ma Kezhi, recruited by Japanese military intelligence in 1936 and trained to set up a network. He had no position inside the CCP and so was not a *jianxi*, but was a *hanjian* and *tewu*, a traitor against China. Ma travelled on foot from Taiyuan to Yan'an in 1937,

³⁵¹ "Ni fuqin shi da tewu, buguo shi Gongchandang de da tewu." Li Li, *Cong mimi zhanxian zouchu de kaiguo shangjiang huainian jiafu Li Kenong*, p. 155

³⁵² Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 139

finding an opportunity in two Chinese woman students on their way to Yan'an to join the revolution. His plan went awry when one of the women reported him to the Eighth Route Army office in Xi'an, and Ma was caught.³⁵³

In autumn 1938, the Work Committee of the Shanxi-Chahar-Suiyuan Border Area formed a Dig Out (often translated as “to weed”) Traitors Department (*Chanchu Hanjian bu*). It included four sections: a Reconnaissance Branch (*Zhencha ke*), an Interrogation Branch (*Shenxun ke*), an Enemy Military Work Branch (*Dijun gongzuo ke*), and an Eliminate Traitorous Personnel Training Squad (*Chuhan renyuan xunlian ban*). However the effort was stalled for unspecified reasons, and not completed.³⁵⁴ This was a time when county level Public Security Bureaus were not yet established—that only occurred in late 1939 to early 1940. Once that infrastructure was in place, traitor weeding was more securely organized. The next mention of digging out traitors in this part of China comes in February 1940, when the various levels of the CCP's anti-Japanese local governments in the Red areas of Shanxi held their first united administrative conference and decided to establish the NW Shanxi Public Security Bureau (*Jin xibei gongan zong ju*) to unify their efforts to dig out traitors (*chanchu hanjian shiyi*).³⁵⁵

An example from the army yields a bit more detail, and shows that the organization of “traitor weeding” followed the same basic pattern on the military side. In Shandong, a traitor weeding infrastructure was organized under the Eighth Route Army from August to December 1938. It stayed in place in the following years, and was highly vertical in its nature, relying on a Russian model in the beginning for structure and methods. Their work was kept secret from the regular

³⁵³ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimizhan*, pp. 138-139.

³⁵⁴ *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, p. 2

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 3

army command, with combat leaders forbidden to inquire about it. Each detachment (*zhidui*) had a Traitor Weeding Section (*chuhanke*); regiments (*tuan*) had a Traitor Weeding Branch (*chuhangu*); battalions (*ying*) had a Protection Clerk (*Baowei ganshi*), and each company (*lian*) had a Protection Committee Member (*baowei weiyuan*). Cadre at the time popularized a variant on a well-known saying to encourage Weeding Cadre (*chuhan ganbu*) and Weeding Special Agents (*chuhan tepaiyuan*) to keep their mouths shut: Fear neither heaven nor earth, fear a Traitor Weeding Cadre who's looking for a chat (*Tian bupa, di bupa, jiupa chuhan ganbu zhao tanhua*). One author recalled his service in such a weeding unit and asserted that it worked well until Kang Sheng arrived,³⁵⁶ but this study has found no appreciable changes in the program until after the Rectification Campaign began in 1942.

Higher, Bigger (and Badder): Founding the Central Social Department

The Central Social Department (CSD), founded in February 1939, was variously called *Zhongshebu* and *Shehuibu* inside the Party. It and the separate *Zhongyang qingbao bu* (*Zhongqing bu*, or CCP Central Committee Intelligence Department) have been referred to as one in the same, “one organization, and two name plates” (*yige jigou, liang kuai paizi*). Kang Sheng may have been in charge of both, and their headquarters were co-located in the Zaoyuan (Date Garden) area of Yan'an.³⁵⁷ They were separate to a degree, though available evidence indicates no effort by the Central Committee to check and balance Kang Sheng. Military and political coordination seems to have been the object of the Central Committee creating the body in September 1941. The Intelligence Department directed intelligence tasks by the Eighth Route

³⁵⁶ Wang Fang, *Wang Fang Huiyilu* [Memoirs of Wang Fang] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 2006), p. 11

³⁵⁷ Li Kenong's semi-official PRC biographer “Kai Cheng” notes that in 1949 CSD was called both *Zhongshebu*, short for the CCP Central Committee Central Social Department, and *Zhongqingbu*, short for CCP Central Committee Intelligence Department. An examination of PRC internal documents shows that CSD was referred to by that name—the Social Department—through 1949. Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, p. 364; and Hao Zaijin, p. 105.

Army Liaison Offices, including by Zhou Enlai in Chongqing, Xie Juezai in Lanzhou, and others, which afforded the opportunity to task and collect with both CSD and military officers working together, while keeping the military out of CSD, and still placing Kang Sheng in a dominant position. The 1943 creation of the publicly known CCP Central Committee Enemy Area Work Commission (*Zhongyang diqu gongzuo weiyuanhui*)³⁵⁸ may have been a move in the same direction: Kang and CSD could exert a controlling influence, while keeping CSD operations separate and uninfected by the powerful military.

In the February 1939 creation of CSD³⁵⁹ which began the assembly of this new structure, three predecessor organizations or their remnants were integrated into CSD: the CCSO, founded in Shanghai in 1927; the Northwest Political Protection Bureau (nee State Political Protection Bureau), which provided security for the Red rear area before the Long March and security for Mao during it; and the Guard Division (*Baowei chu*) which protected Mao in Yan'an, and a local constabulary and CI service. CSD was organized with a Director, a Deputy Director, a Secretary General, and subordinate sections: First Section, organization; Second Section, intelligence; Third Section, examination and trial; Fourth Section, analysis; a general services section; and a cadet training corps.

A Taiwan author listed these CSD functions which are not contradicted by any PRC source:

- to formulate CCP security policies and plans;
- provide guidance to subordinate CSD elements;

³⁵⁸ *Zhongguo Gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao, vol. 4, 1945.8 – 1949.9* (Beijing: Zhonggong Dangshi chubanshe, 2000), p. 549. The reference showing that one of the CSD's public names was the Enemy Area Work Commission also notes that Li Kenong became the CSD Deputy Director in March 1941.

³⁵⁹ Kang Sheng ran all of Party intelligence by August 1938. Zhong Kan, *Kang Sheng ping zhuan*, p. 77.

- direct security measures and purges within the party;
- provide security related guidance to the military, party, and other groups on public security (police) and intelligence;
- assign cadres to perform espionage, enemy penetration, and other subversion outside the party; and
- devise codes and ciphers.³⁶⁰

The new CSD was not unlike CCSO in basic organization. The difference seems to be that there was no more separate PPB and therefore no urban-rural divide in CCP Intelligence; the CSD director, Kang Sheng, chaired the commission that ran military intelligence; and the new consolidated body probably had more resources and ambitiously upped efforts to expand into enemy held areas. Moreover, CSD was now run from a secure headquarters, in contrast to the furtive underground existence of CCSO. With a more secure base area and the opportunity to grow and train, specialization and sophistication could take hold.

The CCSO was an elite, closed system that, as Zhou had put it years earlier, did the party's most secret work. CSD was no less secret but gradually developed into a more bureaucratic organization reaching deeper down into local areas, in parallel to the Party organization. It utilized not only the party organization, but also mass movement techniques to pursue its functions.

The Party "decision" document that records the February 1939 founding of CSD forbade even discussing the organization amongst Party members who did not have a need to know about it.

³⁶⁰ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, pp. 374-375.

Decision to Establish the Central Social Department (*Shehuibu*)
Secretariat, the Chinese Communist Party
(18 February 1939)

To all chairmen of central bureaus, and to Comrades Zhu De and Peng Dehuai:

1. Presently, the Japanese, traitors and stubborn internal enemies use all kinds of ways to send spies to our organizations to pursue plots of sabotage against us; to ensure the health of our Party organizations, the CCP Central Committee has decided to establish amongst our higher Party organs the *Shehuibu*, which will have the following main tasks:
 - 1) For those who affiliate to certain organizations, their task is to prevent the enemies, traitors and spies from entering into our organization, ensure the success of our political tasks, and protect the organization from being damaged;
 - 2) Gradually assign our comrades into the enemy's organizations with all means possible. Try to utilize all the enemy people and protect ourselves by strengthening the control of enemy's inner organization.
 - 3) Collect all the proofs, documents and facts of the sabotages engaged in by enemy spies and traitors. Educate comrades to raise their awareness.
 - 4) Manage key departments' work to ensure the correct conduct of secret work.
 - 5) Regularly choose and train those comrades who are suitable to do this kind of job.
2. This task should be completed with the strongest determination by various central offices, provincial governments, and district party committees. We need to choose the most capable comrades with the right political standpoint to found the *Shehuibu*. For those "special committees" (*Tewei*)" and "County Committees (*Xianwei*)" that currently lack credible people and proper conditions, we temporarily will postpone setting up *Shehuibu* offices in those places.
3. This decision is highly confidential will not be published within our Party organization. The detailed tasks of *Shehuibu* should not be passed down to subordinate levels. Those who violate this restriction will be punished under terms of Party discipline.³⁶¹

The Politburo's directive that followed six month later seems to urge reluctant Party cadre to cooperate with CSD:

For the sake of Party solidarity, Party security must be strengthened against subversive agents. Hence education in opposing traitors and in heightening Party vigilance must be stepped up...Meanwhile, party organs at all levels must appoint personnel exclusively in charge of security and set up exclusive training courses for security personnel whenever possible. It is

³⁶¹ Zhonggong zhongyang shuji chu [CCPCC Secretariat], "Guanyu chengli shehui bu de jue ding" [Concerning the Decision to Establish the Central Social Department] 18 February 1939, in Zhonggong zhongyang shehui bu [Central Social Department], *Kangzhan shiqi chubao wenjian* [Documents on Digging Out Traitors and Protection in the Anti-Japanese War], December 1948. Thanks to David Chambers for this document.

important to ferret out and eliminate enemy agents and Trotskyites within the Party in membership screenings and especially in regular checks into the cadres' performance.³⁶²

In current Party-approved accounts of intelligence history, changes such as the organization of the CSD seem immediate and far reaching. However the reorganization took time. This was a sensitive political matter related to coercive authority during a period when Mao was trying to consolidate power; some State PPB might have needed convincing; and CCSO's remaining assets were mostly still scattered, some in hiding. Only in 1941 would Kang Sheng have espionage operations, analytical work, counterintelligence (CI), and protection (*baowei*) working in an observably coordinated way under the Central Social Department (CSD). One way he and his department's leadership pursued more coordinated, professional, and effective operations was through training and the promulgation of professional standards.

Rebuilding, Training, Professionalization

The Anti-Japanese War generated popular patriotic fervor that gave CCP Intelligence natural opportunities to rebuild its shattered manpower base and retrain itself to a higher standard. Not only did many youth travel to Yan'an to join the revolution, but number of people who stayed in the cities, whether controlled by the Japanese or the Nationalists, gradually came to see the CCP as a sincere force for national liberation. The KMT unwittingly cooperated with the CCP to turn the White areas into a kind of recruiting heaven for the communists in two stages. From 1937-39, writers and intellectuals were initially enthusiastic about supporting the Nationalists against Japan, themselves generating slogans like "Literature must go to the countryside!" "Literature must join the army!" and "Propaganda first, art second!" In this first period the KMT allowed propaganda to be handled by the communists and their sympathizers, and some propaganda units

³⁶² Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, p. 148.

actually became front organizations for the CCP. This opened up an avenue for CCP Intelligence recruiting. From 1939 to 1941, another stage was apparent: as the Second United Front fell apart, the KMT returned to its repressive policies against both the CCP and the independent left. Some fled to Yan'an, some to Hong Kong. Those who stayed behind were textbook candidates for recruitment: disillusioned, scared, frustrated, and gradually impoverished as government support evaporated and friends disappeared into government custody.³⁶³

However before they could take full advantage of the situation, CCP Intelligence had to recover and rebuild after the five years of high casualties that began with the Gu Shunzhang defection in 1931 and only ended with the Long March. While mainland sources do not admit to Russian influence, there are hints of it in this critical stage. Stalin's probable orders to Kang Sheng to return to China and take charge of CCP Intelligence; the Russians reportedly on the November 1937 flight with Kang Sheng and Wang Ming; and the use of Russian materials by Chinese instructors in assembling training for traitor weeding in December 1938, as we saw just above, and in 1940 as we will see below.

CCP Intelligence accounts of who was trained stress four varieties of students: surviving intelligence workers, local peasants, students from the White areas who came to Yan'an to help the revolution, and Red Army soldiers judged to have the right mix of skills. Successful candidates, to use modern jargon, had an understanding of the target area: cultural, linguistic, and geographical. In other words, they needed street smarts and local knowledge to survive by blending in.

³⁶³ Leo Ou-fan Lee, "Literary Trends: the road to revolution 1927-1949," in Fairbank and Feuerwerker (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 13*, pp. 467-468.

The first example is a “before and after” case: the “before” is a State PPB unit that ran paramilitary style operations in 1937-38 to “dig out” or “weed” (*chanchu*) various bandits, spies, traitors, and agents in the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region. Zhao Cangbi, who decades later became the Minister of Public Security (1977-1983), was a plainclothes (*bianyiti*) section leader (*kezhang*) at the beginning of this effort.³⁶⁴ Enrolled at age 18, Zhao trained in a PPB basic school from 1934-36. Probably owing to his literacy as a higher primary school (*Gaoxiao*) graduate, Zhao at age 20 or 21 became the executive officer of what appears to be a platoon-sized³⁶⁵ PPB patrol unit that combed rural areas looking for bandits and enemy agents. In 1939 he was credited with defeating the “*Gelaohui*” (Brothers’ Old Association) which had been terrorizing about ten village communities along the Yellow River, stealing grain and occasionally murdering someone. They *Gelaohui* so affected local sensibilities that a local saying went: “When a dog howls, people’s hearts jump; when a person yells, the whole village is in chaos” (*Gou yijiao, renxin tiao, ren yihan, quancun luan*). Zhao organized a series of public meetings where he announced his “Report on mobilization to dig out the Brothers’ Old Association (*Guanyu chanchu gelaohui de dongyuan baogao*). In retaliation the *Gelaohui* formed plans to assassinate Zhao but he managed to defeat them before they could pull it off, reportedly to the delight of the local population.³⁶⁶

However Zhao was up to something more complicated by 1940. That year he used “Soviet materials and his own extensive experience” to draw up lesson plans for gathering and

³⁶⁴ Xu Aihua, “*Zhongguo de Fu’er Mosi, yuan Gong’an buzhang Zhao Cangbi de Yan’an baowei gongzuo*” [China’s Sherlock Holmes: Former MPS Minister Zhao Cangbi’s Protection Work in Yan’an], in *Renminwang*, at <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/85038/10366238.html>; “Zhao Cangbi” in the *Baidu Encyclopedia* online, <http://baike.baidu.com/view/305261.htm>; and Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 137.

³⁶⁵ Usually a platoon has 40-46 soldiers and an officer, but the unit can be half that size.

³⁶⁶ Xu Aihua, “*Zhongguo de Fu’er Mosi, yuan Gong’an buzhang Zhao Cangbi de Yan’an baowei gongzuo*.”

disseminating intelligence (“*zeyang shouji he zhuandi qingbao*”), classroom and practical exercises in different settings of surveillance and counter surveillance (“*zhencha yu fan zhencha*”), methods of securely carrying concealed information, battlefield intelligence collection, an understanding of enemy intelligence acquisition, and digging out turncoats to the KMT. He personally taught at least some of the classes and his students went on to leadership positions in CCP Intelligence and the police.³⁶⁷

Pan Hannian also ran systematic instruction after he returned to Yan’an for a brief period in early 1939. That month, Chen Yun as Director of the Organization Department assigned him to the new Central Social Department. Needing people to revamp his urban networks, Pan worked with Chen Yun to quietly survey the students in the Yan’an Anti-Japanese University (*Yan’an Kangda*), North Shaanxi Public School (*Shaanbei Gongxue*), the Marx-Lenin Institute (*Malie Xueyuan*), and other schools to find students suitable for intelligence operations. Their recruits included not only genuine 20-something typical university students, but also soldiers, peasants, and workers. For example, Pan recruited a man and woman whom he believed were psychologically suited for long term clandestine work, and trained them to be inserted into Chongqing, the Nationalist capital. The couple met the criteria of possessing the local language and local geographical knowledge, with sufficient understanding of the target city’s culture and language so that they could be trained to successfully recruit local citizens and build a network. While the writings available on Pan Hannian reveal no evidence of Russian influence on his work per se, this arrangement orchestrated by him is reminiscent of contemporary Russian

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

NKVD and GRU training for illegal³⁶⁸ agents—persons trained to blend into the target society, passing themselves off as ordinary citizens. Their main goal was to recruit genuine local people to establish a network. Such networks were called “illegal” because the agents enter the target area illegally, and because they have no “legal” protective cover, such as being diplomats with immunity from local laws. Pan personally tutored the couple in the agent craft he knew well, which includes secret writing, and street skills like servicing dead drops, brush pass routines, and recognition signals. Other instructors presumably covered subjects they would need to pass on to their agents and establish a completely autonomous network, such as Morse code, ciphers, and radio theory. The couple survived the war owing to their training and adaptability.³⁶⁹ Unfortunately there is no data on the total number of people taken from regular schools in Yan’an for these tasks, or a breakdown of their origins, social groups, and so on. See Chapter Six for a continued discussion of Pan’s work to build urban networks in the early 1940s.

Expansion Into Denied Areas Begins: Three Different Solutions to Three Kinds of Enemy Turf

During the Second United Front with the KMT and the Anti-Japanese War, CCP Intelligence needed to expand into three kinds of hostile, denied areas:

- cities under the control of the KMT or a foreign power (with only a low to moderate percentage of civilians sympathetic to the CCP).

³⁶⁸ Definitions of “illegal” agents and the facets of their operations, all of which focus on Soviet activity, may be found in Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, *The Encyclopedia of Espionage* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1997), p. 277; and Carl, *CIA Insider’s Dictionary*, pp. 271-272. Further background is in Ilya Dzhirkvelov, *Secret Servant: My Life with the KGB and the Soviet Elite* (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 106-108; 178. The training and deployment of GRU illegals is more thoroughly described in two other works, Robert Whymant, *Stalin’s Spy: Richard Sorge and the Tokyo Espionage Ring* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996) pp. 26-39; and Werner, *Sonya’s Report*, pp. 42-46, 98-111.

³⁶⁹ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp. 83-88.

- rural areas under the control of the KMT or the Japanese (with a higher proportion of CCP sympathizers and only loosely supervised on average by regular soldiers and military counterintelligence units);

- cities under the control of the Japanese (with a higher percentage of civilians sympathetic to Yan'an).

These three types of places offered distinctive challenges and opportunities. The CCP Intelligence response seems to have followed a pattern for each, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Three Solutions for Diverse Areas of Operations

Type of Area	CCP Intelligence Solution	Comments
City under KMT or foreign control	Eighth Route Army Liaison Offices (<i>Ba lu jun banshichu</i>) and covert agent networks	Overt, represented all of CCP like an embassy; 15 offices closely watched by KMT. Conducted liaison, propaganda, espionage, etc. Most closed by 1943 when United Front deteriorated. Hong Kong was negotiated with the UK, and semi overt until December 1941.
Rural area under hostile control	Intelligence Station (<i>Qingbao zhan</i>), existing CCP Underground network, or Provincial CCP intelligence personnel	Covert in operation, supervised by CSD officers who recruited local people. High rate of casualties, often due to betrayal.
City under Japanese control	Urban agent network or existing Underground network	Covert. Some organizations carried over from Teke, sometimes refreshed under direction of Pan Hannian. Some networks lasted until 1949.

The Eighth Route Army Liaison Offices (*Ba lu jun banshichu*) were a new innovation for the period of the Second United Front. These 15 offices were almost all in KMT controlled cities, though one was in rural Henan and doubled as an intelligence station (*Qingbao zhan*) of the sort

to be discussed in the next section (Hong Kong is separately discussed in Chapter Six).³⁷⁰ The creature comforts of life were easier to come by in these urban stations than in Yan'an or in army field duty (no doubt) but the tensions that came with the job were high. To merely walk out on to the streets could be dangerous: KMT security services would not only place heavy surveillance on the liaison office personnel, but would sometimes harass or harm them depending on the political situation at the time. The KMT could easily surround the liaison offices with static and mobile surveillance: pedicab drivers, beggars, peddlers and the like, and other innovations like rooftop observation posts.³⁷¹

This is a selection that shows how the offices varied in activities, and how they opened and closed based on local conditions and relations with local KMT authorities.

Xi'an (25 August 1937 - 10 September 1946) was the original office and, while not the largest, became a reference point for the others. It was the longest-lived of them all, staying open just over nine years, and was the closest to Yan'an. Xi'an specialized in military to military liaison with the KMT, facilitating Yan'an's communications with the rest of China, and propaganda work in a comparatively neutral venue where Chiang Kai-shek's authority was limited. The comparison is not precise, but the clandestine operatives might have seen the situation in Xi'an as having at least one parallel to the French and International Concessions in Shanghai a decade earlier: neither the Communists nor the Nationalists had complete control of the city, and had to fight to keep the other from gaining advantage. The 1938 death of one of the Xi'an office staff, Xuan Xiafu, illustrates the situation. Xuan was a CCP member and a graduate of the first class at

³⁷⁰ Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, *Ba lu jun huiyi shiliao*, pp. 22, 32.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Whampoa (Huangpu) Military Academy, with many contacts in the KMT army. While “performing duties” outside the office in August, Xuan disappeared and was secretly killed by the KMT—unfortunately it remains unclear exactly what he was up to.³⁷²

As would an embassy in a hostile host country, the Xi’an office took precautions to prevent more kidnappings and minimize the risk posed by other likely problems, up to and including a hostile invasion of the premises. The Xuan Xiafu kidnapping led to a renewal of instruction to discourage going over to the KMT—“integrity training” (*Qijie jiaoyu*)—in all liaison offices. Staff were supposedly taught to be strong and resist KMT appeals to defect, perhaps by stressing the shame of becoming a turncoat (alas, no lesson plans are available). Whenever anyone from any section travelled on holiday, s/he had to leave full itinerary and routes so that the organization could keep track of them. Cipher Section (*Jiyao ke*) code clerks were under special restriction in Xi’an and eventually throughout the system since they were a priority KMT target—they could only go out if paired with one or more other liaison office workers, and could not carry any papers on them (included amongst their number were Tong Xiaopeng, who went on to be a senior official in CCP Intelligence after the revolution). Sensitive material on premises, such as code books, were hidden behind baseboards instead of keeping them out in the work space or placed in an easy-to-target safe. When it was necessary to send a document somewhere, secret writing (SW) was employed. The preferred method was to imprint the classified text in “invisible ink” using SW techniques on the blank side of the folded pages of an old fashioned string-bound book (*xianzhuang shu*), and then re-bind it.³⁷³

³⁷² Ibid, p. 34

³⁷³ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 126, 131-132.

Due to the proximity with Yan'an, the liaison office in Xi'an carried out at least once to monetary transfer from the Comintern. In February 1937 Moscow sent the CCP a large amount of US Dollars to a bank in Shanghai. The CCP tasked Mao Zemin, older brother of Mao Zedong, CCP member, and head of the Central Soviet Bank (*Zhongyang Suweiai Yinhang*), to move it to Yan'an or Xi'an. Mao and his spouse lived near the present day Yuyuan Gardens in Shanghai in a western style home, posing as a rich couple. He established a group of four people to do the transfer. They first tried to set up a traditional Chinese private bank (*Qianzhuang*) in Xi'an to accept the money but the KMT would not approve it. The group was at a loss how to accomplish the transfer, so Li Kenong visited them in Shanghai to explore the options. They concluded that Mao's group should launder the funds by purchasing stocks and bonds in Shanghai with the dollars and then sell them for French Francs, a paper currency accepted in KMT areas. They took perhaps several weeks to do this because it was a large sum. Once the Francs were ready, they packed the currency in the false bottoms of some leather suitcases, and Mao and his spouse took it by train in a first class overnight sleeper to Xi'an. Ye Jianying waited there for them and whisked the couple out of Xi'an station, avoiding routine searches. The money was used to purchase weapons, medical supplies, and other necessities.³⁷⁴

Right after this Li Kenong spent some time during early 1937 at the Xi'an office, possibly for an operational orientation. After that he spent the next 12 months openly operating as a "declared" CCP Intelligence officer on KMT territory for the first time, and worked to set up the Nanjing, Wuhan, Guilin, and Shanghai offices, where he was briefly in charge of each.³⁷⁵ These and other offices developed under their own unique circumstances. The Shanghai office opened in the

³⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 128-129.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 4 of photos; *Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, Ba lu jun huiyi shiliao*, pp. 18, 19, 21; and *Zhonggong Qingbao Shounao, Li Kenong*, pp. 304-306.

early autumn 1937 on the present day Yan'an Central Road in the British Concession. It transitioned to "semi-public operations" (*zhuanru ban gongkai huodong*) in late October as the Japanese army occupied the areas outside the foreign concessions. The CCP's Shanghai office specialized in CCP Underground United Front development work, rescue of imprisoned comrades, printing propaganda materials and books, liaison with armed guerrilla units in the Jiangnan area south of Shanghai, and materiel support to the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies.³⁷⁶ Sources do not say so, but this office may really have gone completely underground at this point, not just "semi-public," for two reasons: open operations might have attracted violent covert action by the Japanese or KMT services; and the KMT Juntong was the more active and successful Chinese intelligence service in Shanghai at this time, with more than 150 recorded assassinations in Shanghai of Japanese officers and Chinese collaborators from August 1937 – October 1941.³⁷⁷ Keeping out of their sight was probably the only rational thing to do, but since there is not much heroic narrative value in this rational choice, it is not highlighted in PRC accounts.

Chongqing (April 1939-September 1946) was the largest of the 15 offices, with the heaviest workload and broadest scope of activities since it was in the Nationalist wartime capital for six years). Besides the liaison office the facility housed the CCP Southern Bureau headed by Zhou Enlai, which altogether brought the staff to over 100 people, including the senior military and

³⁷⁶ Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, *Ba lu jun huiyi shiliao*, p. 18. Unlike other entries in this source, the one on Shanghai does not carry details about how, when, and why the office closed.

³⁷⁷ The KMT Juntong's assassination of Wang Jingwei's foreign minister Chen Lu on Chinese New Year's Eve in February 1939 led the Japanese to establish a collaborationist secret service under Ding Mocun for the Wang Jingwei puppet government. Ding appears to be the model for Mr. Yee in the movie *Lust, Caution*, which posits an attempted Juntong comeback in Shanghai in 1942 after Ding's service suppressed the Juntong's assassination ring. The original story by Eileen Chang was based on an actual attempt in December 1939 by a female Juntong operative named Zheng Pingru to stab Ding at the Shanghai Siberian Fur Store, a site which is prominently depicted in the movie. Sa Su, *Dongfang Tegong Zai Xingdong* (Shanghai: Wenhui Chubanshe), pp. 26-29; and Wen-hsin Yeh, ed., *Wartime Shanghai* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 119-120.

Party officials Ye Jianying and Dong Biwu. In its balance of overt and covert work, the Chongqing office ran the agents that recruited the former US Army soldier Sidney Rittenberg, who eventually joined the CCP and stayed on China, and conducted “united front” work, or propaganda and subversion, with Chinese and foreigners who were repelled by the increasing corruption of the KMT. Zhou Enlai hosted foreigners such as Ernest and Martha Hemmingway and the American journalist Theodore White, leaving a positive impression that sharply contrasted with the corrupt, ostentatious Nationalist elite. The Hemmingways later told State Department officials that they came away from discussions with Zhou carrying the impression the communists would win over the KMT after the war.³⁷⁸

The Eighth Route Army Lanzhou Office (August 1937 – November 1943) was in a more unique geographic position, and so focused on military liaison with the KMT, passage of CCP members to and from the USSR, materiel support from Russia, and passage in and out of Yan’an. In charge was Xie Juezai, who apparently reported directly to the Party’s Intelligence Department. Xie was a senior cadre whose diary raised one of the questions about CCP opium growing in the border region near Yan’an. The Party was forced to close this office when relations with local authorities became too hostile to continue.³⁷⁹

The liaison offices were well-placed to carry out espionage functions—the Zhang Luping ring under the CSD, described in the next chapter, funneled its purloined classified documents to Ye Jianying and Zhou Enlai in the Chongqing office—but they were not just intelligence stations:

³⁷⁸ Barnouin and Yu, *Zhou Enlai*, pp. 89-90; Chae-Jin Lee, *Zhou Enlai: The Early Years* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 1.

³⁷⁹ Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, *Ba lu jun huiyi shiliao*, p. 18; and Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 126.

the 14 liaison offices in the KMT controlled cities were more like diplomatic posts (an embassy or consulate), charged to conduct tasks tailored to their locations, very similar to how consulates do slightly different things depending on the needs of their districts. In Chongqing, political relations with the KMT and running agents in the Central Government were priorities. In Xi'an, military intelligence, military liaison between Communist and Nationalist forces, and trade promotion were made priorities. Propaganda, and of course subversion (recruiting sympathizers into the Underground for non-intelligence-related clandestine work) was important everywhere.

Writing about the Eighth Route Army Liaison Offices, Li Kenong's biographer asserted that one could even say that an analogous style can be seen in the setup of (China's) embassies and consulates established after the founding of the (People's) Republic, which maintained the fine traditions of the CCP's arduous work.³⁸⁰

An account of the Hong Kong Liaison Office is found in the next chapter.

Starting Up the Intelligence Stations (Qingbao zhan)

After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on 7 July 1937, elements of the Japanese army worked their way west to Baotou. In October they set up the puppet Mongolian United Autonomous Government. In response, the CCP set up a Tri Border Special Operations Commission (*Sanbian tebie weiyuanhui*) in January 1938 to plan operations behind enemy lines, and on 20 March Mao sent orders to Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, He Long, and others to enter the enemy rear in the Suiyuan- Inner Mongolia (Suimeng) region to initiate guerrilla activity. Over the rest of the year the Eighth Route Army moved guerrilla operations further north and east into areas nominally occupied by the Japanese, who did not have sufficient troops to thoroughly control anything but towns and main roads.³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, p. 127.

³⁸¹ *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, pp. 1-2.

The Japanese army's skeletal occupation of Suimeng gave the CCP the opportunity to establish "anti-Japanese democratic regimes" all over the region, in small towns like Liangcheng, Fengzhen, and Datong. At the end of the year they also began setting up Public Security Bureaus (PSBs, *Gongan ju*) at the county level where possible, beginning in areas close to Yan'an. As mentioned above, this was when the NW Shanxi PSB established "Traitor Weeding" (*Chanchu Hanjian*) organizations under its command at the county level beginning in February 1940.³⁸²

This organizational base also enabled the CCP to begin inserting intelligence stations between Yan'an and the CCP's Japanese and Nationalist enemies. CSD started the first intelligence stations near Yan'an in December 1940, in the small towns Suide, Suiyuan, Dingbian, and Qingbian. The Suiyuan station under Wang Jude sent Reporting Telegram Number 1, addressed to "Yan'an Kang," in February 1941. Wang's station operated successfully until it was raided by a Japanese unit on 20 August, in an action that killed all hands.³⁸³ We will further discuss the intelligence stations in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The story of CCP Intelligence just after the Long March was one of recovery, rebuilding, and consolidation. Before Kang Sheng returned to China in late 1937, the organization may have been in virtual shock from heavy casualties and had to focus on immediate priorities related to the survival of the movement. However Kang's return coincided with the first period of the

³⁸² Ibid, pp. 2-3.

³⁸³ Ibid, pp. 2-4.

Second United Front, allowing a brief respite from KMT pressure. The start of the Anti-Japanese War meant the CCP faced two enemies instead of one, but the new circumstances made it easier to recruit new blood into CCP Intelligence to facilitate recovery and rebuilding. For the first three years after the Central Social Department was founded in February 1939, Kang Sheng oversaw an expansion of intelligence activities behind enemy lines, systematized counterintelligence work, and consolidated military and civilian intelligence operations at headquarters. “Traitor weeding” and cadre screening had been carried through by the State PPB (renamed Northwest PPB after the Long March) and continued in 1938-41, but was no longer a military function. Now, “weeding” was performed at the behest of the civilian Party leadership to protect against the real threat of KMT and Japanese infiltration, and was therefore controlled by Party leaders who stood a better chance of keeping this function under political control—insulation perhaps against a return to the problems of Futian a decade earlier. Of course, this was a revolution and a war against an invader: just as there were numerous collaborators in German Occupied France, so there were plenty of Chinese traitors working for Japan. Captured CCP members continued to occasionally go over to the KMT’s side, including one Eighth Route Army liaison office chief, and CCP Intelligence uncovered real cases of agents infiltrating Yan’an. Kang’s organization pursued these problems without going after anyone senior in the leadership itself, with political control from the Politburo. This activity before 1942 appears to have been a “credit” to the Mao’s cause: Kang was improving intelligence and counterintelligence work in ways that strengthened the Party’s position and lasted through the CCP’s victory in 1949. However, as we will see in the next chapter, in 1942 the search for traitors intensified, and politics drove this element of CCP intelligence work, “weeding,” in a paranoid direction.

Chapter Six

Rectification, Rescue, and Intelligence, 1942-45

*Of course, we may make mistakes, but up until now, there have been no mistakes. This is proved by the minutes of our meetings. In almost all cases the criminals, when pressed against the wall by evidence, admit their crimes. And what argument would have more weight than the confession of the accused himself.*³⁸⁴

Felix Dzerzhinsky, 1918

Shi Zhe: *How can we interrogate them without material (evidence)?*

Kang Sheng: *If there were materials on them, what interrogation would be needed?*³⁸⁵

Conversation the night before mass arrests in Yan'an by CCP Intelligence units, April 1943

Rectification, Rescue (and the Russians)

No matter from which country, culture, or civilization a counterintelligence officer hails, the work of catching enemy agents on one's own sovereign territory seems to encourage suspicion toward what, to others of us, are merely the vicissitudes of life: close ties to friends or relatives in a foreign nation, immigration during a period when high numbers arrived from abroad, personal or money problems, unexplained income, or past membership in an off-beat organization. Senior CCP officials at the Politburo level have always conducted some form of political oversight on their intelligence organizations. In contrast to a Western representative democracy, however, that oversight has no measure of public accountability, and is beholden only to the secret requirements of their conspiratorial party—and at times in the past only to their “great leader.”

Western observers are accustomed to managers who identify problems to prevent their recurrence. Looking back at Yan'an in 1942-44, they might wonder if CCP leaders tried to avoid

³⁸⁴ John J. Dziak, *Chekisty, A History of the KGB* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1988), pp. 13, 188, 210.

³⁸⁵ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 249-250.

repeating the purges of Futian and other places a decade earlier. They did in part. During the Salvation Campaign of 1943, which sought to expose enemy agents, there was no open warfare between communist units accusing each other of betrayal. However, while less violent, the campaigns rivaled the Futian period in paranoia and nonsense. A small group of CCP officials, though justifiably concerned about hostile espionage, put their intelligence chief Kang Sheng in charge in 1943 with wide ranging consequences. Kang disrupted life for the broader population and also for his own intelligence and security personnel and exponentially overestimated the numbers of possible enemies within—but he did not have to sell that paranoid idea to Party leaders like Liu Shaoqi and Chen Yun, for they already believed. During the Salvation Campaign of 1943, purge activity took over the agenda for CSD while intelligence work declined, and may have briefly ceased. The cost to the party's intelligence work was high: inattention to work which may have contributed to a counterintelligence problem discussed below, and a significant setback to the effort to plant agents in the KMT forces nearby Yan'an. Meanwhile in army units further afield and in the KMT and Japanese-occupied cities, intelligence work continued, but was affected to different degrees.

In this chapter we will examine these events in the context of Mao's program. At some time before the Seventh Party Congress in 1945, Mao surveyed the damage of the Salvation Campaign, in which CCP Intelligence units in Yan'an played an important role, and decided to change course. He virtually stopped Salvation and changed the focus of Rectification in January 1944 partly because of declining morale, partly due to Soviet alarm over his attacks on Wang Ming, Zhou Enlai, and other pro-Comintern "internationalists." Still, Mao did not give up in his bid to balance Soviet influence. Before 1944 was out he attempted a brief overture to the

Americans, hoping for military cooperation and arms supplies. As Van Slyke has pointed out, to Mao and the CCP, the Americans were a wild card (and opportunity): anxious to win the war, dissatisfied with Chiang Kai-shek, willing to work for a united and democratic China in the post war era.³⁸⁶ However, Mao eventually realized that the US was too closely tied to Chiang Kai-shek to be pulled toward the CCP's cause and become a reliable ally and alternative to the Soviets. The US gradually would be perceived as an enemy—and CSD would begin focusing on American related targets in China.

Since the CCP now needed the Soviets more than ever, Kang Sheng was, in the phrase of one scholar, “a debit to Mao's cause.”³⁸⁷ Mao moved Kang sideways and out of intelligence work in October 1946 to make him less of a political liability, and preserved for later service. As a result, CCP Intelligence was redeployed to more practical tasks oriented to achieving military and political victory for the Party.

The Setting: Momentum, Binge, Opportunity, Purge

In 1940-45, the middle and late years of the Anti-Japanese War, the CCP underwent a period of dizzying ups and downs. The breakdown of the anti-Japanese United Front, and Chiang Kai-shek's resentment at CCP expansion into Japanese occupied areas prompted his “third anti-communist high tide:” a blockade of the Yan'an base area by 400,000 Nationalist troops, the opening salvo of escalating hostilities between the two Chinese sides. In spite of the blockade, the CCP worked more effectively compared to their Nationalist opponents to use guerrillas, Underground organizations, and intelligence networks to infiltrate in-between Japanese

³⁸⁶ Lyman Van Slyke, “The Chinese Communist Movement During the Sino-Japanese War,” in Fairbank and Feuerwerker (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 13*, p. 713.

³⁸⁷ Teiwes and Sun, “From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: the CCP's Changing Leadership, 1937-1945,” p. 370.

occupation forces in north and east China, behind their lines. To simplify the picture, the KMT's efforts to pressurize the CCP continued but suffered from cracks in the coalition of generals who did not always do the Generalissimo's bidding, and the CCP was on a generally upwards and unifying trend. However, there was a fly in the Communist Party's ointment: the paranoia against enemies within. It was not without reason in the context of the times,³⁸⁸ but its excessive nature caused havoc that did not exempt central organs, including those concerned with intelligence and security.

At the Yan'an headquarters a surge of new CCP members from 1937 to 1940 sparked concerns of KMT infiltration. It led Mao, with the endorsement of Liu Shaoqi and Chen Yun, to pursue two campaigns and one procedure, all ostensibly aimed at promoting unity and discipline in the ranks and catching enemies who had burrowed their way in. The procedure, not usually called a *yundong* [campaign or movement] was a Cadre Examination (*Shencha ganbu*, or *Shen'gan*). It began in the autumn of 1941 to find those who posed risks that were undetected when they joined the CCP. A Rectification Campaign (*Zhengfeng yundong*, 1942-1944) promoted ideological unity and Mao Thought and caused Party leaders to focus more sharply on finding the enemies within.³⁸⁹ This turned the Party to conduct a brief but widespread purge, the Salvation Movement (*Qiangjiu yundong*) in 1943. That chain of events is important to this study because Kang Sheng was charged with much of the day to day implementation, and the CCP's intelligence and security forces were viewed as key to implementing the Party's will at each stage. Security work might actually have escaped professional control during this time, as one in

³⁸⁸ For a summary of the threats facing the CCP in the early 1940s, see Michael Dutton, *Policing Chinese Politics*, pp. 106-107.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 107-108.

five cadres in Party, Army, government, and mass organizations were “trained” during April – August 1943 to search for spies in their midst.³⁹⁰

Further afield from Yan’an, the campaigns were felt to various degrees, but not so overwhelmingly as in the CCP’s northwestern redoubt. Military intelligence efforts in the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army, and espionage operations in the occupied cities remained relatively free to focus on practical intelligence requirements for the war effort. To simplify the picture yet again, CCP politics and its battlefield requirements against the KMT and Japan worked as a twin dynamic that separately drove the development of CCP Intelligence in different parts of China. In the field, it was generally toward higher achievement; in Yan’an and nearby districts including Suiyuan, on an up and down, roller coaster-like trajectory.

CCP Intelligence Expands its Reach, and Kang Sheng Consolidates His Scope of Control

The story of the campaigns is important, but is not the whole history of CCP intelligence during this period. The wider story shows how security work and a few local intelligence tasks were expanded to become a task for the whole Party under the CSD’s new structure, even while mainline espionage, intelligence analysis, and VIP protection remained the province of the Department’s professional ranks. As with the CCSO (the *Teke*, 1927-1935), the Central Social Department was directly subordinate to the Central Committee on paper (and in reality, to the Politburo). At the same time, CSD became integrated into all levels of the Party in a way the CCSO never was. Professional cadres were extended down to some regions, districts, and local committees. Even in the rural district committees and the party cells, non-CSD cadres were

³⁹⁰ Peter J. Seybolt, “Terror and Conformity, Counterespionage Campaigns, Rectifications, and Mass Movements, 1942-1944” in *Modern China*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Jan. 1986), pp. 56-57.

given intelligence functions as an extra duty.³⁹¹ This was not inconsistent with previous operations that drafted non-professionals into intelligence and security roles, as we saw in Chapter Three. It presaged a more extreme enlistment of numbers of people into spy-catching activities in 1943, as we will explore below.

CSD cadres were sent many places where CCP forces had control, and ran clandestine intelligence operations in parts of KMT controlled China and Japanese occupied areas. These operations in support of the army and in KMT-controlled cities appear to have been administered from 1938 to 1942 by the CSD's two deputy directors: Pan Hannian had charge of operations in the Japanese controlled areas, including that of the Wang Jingwei puppet regime, while Li Kenong ran operations in the rest of the country, including almost all KMT areas.³⁹² Whether at intelligence stations or urban secret networks, in early 1942 all CSD operatives were being driven to infiltrate the KMT in as many local areas as possible with quantities of agents—but they had some distance to go before meeting that goal. In January 1942 Zhou Enlai told a conference of the Southern Bureau of the CCP Central Committee that the CCP had inserted more than 5,000 agents in Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan. A prominent example was KMT Lieutenant General Yan Baohang, a military strategist for Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek but secretly an asset of CSD, in charge of a clandestine agent network.³⁹³ After the revolution, in reference to the CCP's agents, the Generalissimo himself admitted in his memoirs that “there was no space that they did not enter” (*Wu kong bu ru*).³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, p. 374.

³⁹² The division of their duties may have included some overlap in KMT areas of China, but Pan is clearly identified as having charge of clandestine operations in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and all Japanese occupied and Wang Jingwei puppet government areas. Military intelligence would have been separate. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 54, 59.

³⁹³ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, pp. 341, 523.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 523.

Meanwhile in Yan'an, Kang Sheng steadily consolidated positions that enabled CSD to control growing portions of intelligence and security (that is, counterintelligence and police work). As we saw in Chapter Five, during 1938-1939 Kang aligned himself with Mao Zedong and began to consolidate his control over CCP Intelligence operations. Kang became chair of a new committee on Cadre Screening in autumn 1941, and in June 1942 he took control of the General Study Committee that gave overall guidance to it and Rectification. The Central Social Department by this time had elements doing military security, political security, economic security, domestic intelligence, and international intelligence – the last mostly press review and radio broadcast intercept.³⁹⁵ These occupations may have been the most severely affected when, as we will see below, a large number of CSD cadre were taken out of their jobs at the height of Salvation in 1943.

Zhengfeng, the Rectification Campaign of 1942-44, remains a positive event in CCP history to mainland writers today, or at least something that is treated with wary respect, with criticisms reserved for Salvation and Kang Sheng.³⁹⁶ Teiwes and Sun assert that the “start” of the Rectification, at least among the elite, is best identified as the enlarged Politburo and Secretariat Conference of September-October 1941.³⁹⁷ There is at least one small precursor: in June and October 1941 Zhou Enlai reported from Chongqing to the Chairman that he had convened

³⁹⁵ At this time the CCP had at least one overseas agent in Zhou Enlai's friend Ji Chaoding, who worked with the CPUSA for a period, but by his brother's account was the whole time wholly subordinate to the CCP. After 1945, Ji became a CCP agent inside the KMT Finance Ministry. Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao's Right*, pp. 19-22, 32-34.

³⁹⁶ He Jinzhou, Li Huimei, *Deng Fa Zhuan* [A Biography of Deng Fa] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2008), p. 165; Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 189; and Jin Chongji (ed.), *Chen Yun zhuan*, vol. 1, p. 335

³⁹⁷ Teiwes and Sun, “From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: the CCP's Changing Leadership, 1937-1945,” pp.346-347.

meetings to “discuss the question of studying Rectification.”³⁹⁸ It is not surprising that Zhou Enlai should have been eager to “get out front” in pursuing discussion of Rectification of Party work in Mao’s favor from his remote station in enemy (KMT) territory,³⁹⁹ given the trouble he attracted by supporting Wang Ming shortly after Wang’s initial return to China in 1937, discussed in the previous chapter.

A principal motivation for Mao to pursue the movements of 1942-44 was to attack his chief political opponents in order to make easier the assumption of unchallenged Party leadership. The use of these assets, diverted from their normal intelligence and counterintelligence duties, was partially justified by the existence of real enemy subversion threats. However, if catching real spies was ever a serious motivation for the Chairman, CCP Intelligence assets were diverted away from that and into purge activities, with serious consequences.

The Consensus for Weeding Out Party Ranks

As early as September 1938, Chen Yun, head of the Organization Department, complained that some units were going too easy on checking the backgrounds of subordinate cadres, allowing questions and past mistakes to go unexamined.⁴⁰⁰ A year later the conversation expanded and more CCP senior leaders had become concerned about the post Long March (1936-38) influx of new members who came from outside the usual worker and peasant base. Culturally and

³⁹⁸ Liu Wusheng (ed.), *Zhou Enlai Daxidian*, p. 63. At the time, Zhou was the senior Party member in the Southern Bureau and the Eighth Route Army Liaison Office in the KMT capital.

³⁹⁹ As noted in the previous chapter, Zhou at this point was trying to make amends for supporting Wang Ming on the question of a United Front with the KMT.

⁴⁰⁰ Jin Chongji, *Chen Yun zhuan*, vol. 1, pp. 274-275. While head of the Organization Department (December 1937 to March 1944), Chen Yun advocated comprehensive cadre examination procedures, which are described in the section below on background investigations. Luo Yanming, “Chen Yun, Kang Sheng yu Yan’an ganbu shencha” [Chen Yun, Kang Sheng, and the Yan’an Cadre Examination]. in *Dangshi bolan* [An Exposition of Party History], no. 8, 2010.

politically unlike most Long March survivors, the new people drawn in to fight Japan included some “undesirable,” untested landlords, rich peasants, urban bourgeois, and merchants. In August 1939 the Central Committee concluded that careful cadre screening must be carried out from top to bottom, seeking to weed out class enemies and enemy agents:

In order to consolidate the Party, it is necessary to have a careful screening of the components of the Party membership so as to weed out the adversaries (landlords, rich peasants, and merchants), speculators and enemy agents and saboteurs... this screening must be carried out from top to bottom. The regional bureaus, district and provincial committees of the Party should first screen the cadres of various levels to make secure the leading Party organs of all levels and put them in the hands of loyal, dependable and tested cadres.⁴⁰¹

Kong Yuan, then already a career CCP Intelligence officer whose work in the field would extend into the 1960s, counseled moderation two months later, in October. Screening, said Kong, should not be considered a special assignment or a sign of distrust of cadres, nor should it lead to disunity amongst them. Rather it is a kind of ordinary Party work that must be systematically pursued, employed not against cadres but against enemy agents.⁴⁰² This may indicate that, for some, early ideas of cadre screening were as much social as political, as much administrative as security oriented. Spy catching seems indicated, but not dominant.

However, in mid-1940, top level officials showed increasing concern about who had recently entered the Party. A Central Committee document dated 1 August 1940, the “Directive on the Screening of Party Cadres” spelled out specific tasks:

In screening, attention must be paid to individual cadres with regard to their family backgrounds, social relationships, whether they have joined anti-revolutionary parties (before joining the CCP), whether they have withdrawn from the Party in the past, and if so, what was the cause for their withdrawal, and how they regained their Party membership. As to the cadres who were once arrested or captured, there should be a careful examination of their political performance during the arrest or capture, and of the circumstances surrounding their release... As to the military

⁴⁰¹ *The Communist, No. 1, October 1939*, cited in Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, p. 382.

⁴⁰² Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, pp. 124-125.

political and Party cadres who have operated independently, there should be a check of their behavior involving corruption and violation of Party policies...As to the cadres who have committed serious political errors, attention should be paid to the content and nature of such errors. After...screening, a specific conclusion and judgment should be rendered.⁴⁰³

In October, Chen Yun wrote that eliminating and stopping traitors was the most important task for consolidating the work of the Party's secret organizations—and that it was not being done well. He was circumspect on details and did not mention Kang Sheng, the CSD director, or Kang's predecessors Wang Shoudao or Zhou Xing, but complained:

We cannot say that our efforts to consolidate secret Party organizations are complete. After the Central Committee recently inspected several provincial Party committees, most are not consolidated.⁴⁰⁴

Chen added that traitors aligned with Japan and the KMT were a long term problem, but many comrades simply did not seem aware of the threat:

Purging and guarding against traitors has been the most important work of our secret Party organizations. Regardless of whether it was the Japanese imperialists, the traitors, or KMT stubborn elements, their main method of opposing the CCP was to insert traitors within our Party to conduct sabotage and form networks. This is still going on today. But very many of our comrades are not alerted... During the civil war, the painful experience of having our Party organizations destroyed in Shanghai and the provinces was thus. This is why purging and guarding against traitors is important in the present and will be important in the future.⁴⁰⁵

In April 1941, shortly before Rectification (*Zhengfeng*) began, Liu Shaoqi sounded the warning of infiltration at the *top* of the Party. His words could have been in a Kang Sheng speech during

⁴⁰³ Ibid, p. 383; and “Zhongyang guanyu shencha ganbu wenti de zhishi” [Central Committee Instruction Concerning the Question of Investigating Cadres], 1 August 1940, in Zhongyang dang'an guan, *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji*, Vol 12 [Selected Documents of the CCP Central Committee] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1992), pp. 444-447. Thanks to David Chambers for calling my attention to the second source.

⁴⁰⁴ Chen Yun, “Gonggu dang zai dahoufang ji dang zhanqu de mimi zuzhi” [Strengthen Secret Party Organizations in the Main Rear Area and in Enemy Occupied Areas], in Chen Yun, *Chen Yun wenxian, 1926-1949* [Works of Chen Yun, 1926-1949] (Renmin chubanshe, 1984), pp. 203-204.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, pp. 136-137. The official translation, which is slightly different than this, can be found in Chen Yun, *Selected Works of Chen Yun, 1926-1949* (Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1988), pp. 133-139.

the height of the troubles, the brief *Qiangjiu* (Salvation) Campaign that followed over two years later:

In opposing us, the Kuomintang has on the one hand used military force and on the other has sent out espionage agents ***for the purpose of penetrating our top level organs to seize leadership of our party***, government, and armed forces. Who can be sure that there is no Kuomintang agent hidden in the rank and file of our 8th Route and New 4th Armies?⁴⁰⁶ (emphasis added)

Liu went on to say that KMT agents in the CCP were well entrenched:

As we know, the Kuomintang started such subversive operations against us more than a decade ago. Their operatives have been able to go through hardship and difficulties and hardship to hide in our ranks for prolonged periods, and even behave properly in words and deeds to win the trust of our top flight leaders.⁴⁰⁷

Gao Wenqian, a biographer of Zhou Enlai, concluded that the *Zhengfeng* Rectification Campaign (1942-1944) and the shorter *Qiangjiu* Salvation Campaign (July 1943) were principally political in nature: to purge Wang Ming and his followers, eliminate the foreign influence of Moscow from the CCP elite, and encourage mass conformity by punishing disagreement as treason,⁴⁰⁸ a conclusion shared by Vladimirov⁴⁰⁹ and Wang Ming.⁴¹⁰ There is much merit in that view. This study does not dispute that conclusion, but seeks in part to clarify the place of CCP Intelligence in the Party's drive to corral genuine popular fear of the KMT and Japan to marshal support for the movements of 1942-44.

⁴⁰⁶ Liu Shaoqi, "Speech at the Security Personnel Training Class at Yancheng, April 29, 1941," in Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, p. 475.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 476.

⁴⁰⁸ For a summary of this argument, see Gao Wenqian, *Zhou Enlai, the Last Perfect Revolutionary, A Biography* (New York: BBS Public Affairs, 2007), pp. 85-86.

⁴⁰⁹ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, p. 158.

⁴¹⁰ "Chen Shao-yu [Wang Ming]'s Post Mortem of the Rectification" in Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, pp. 623-626.

Even if they ended in paranoia, the CCP's fears of infiltration as reflected in the comments of Chen Yun and Liu Shaoqi, were genuine (at the same time we should note that they were based on continuous activity and pressure over the previous decade by the KMT services, not on successful infiltration of the CCP). As we saw in Chapter Five, during the first months of 1937, Generalissimo Chiang regained control of Xi'an by positioning loyalist forces around the city. He replaced mutinous division commanders in Zhang Xueliang's armies, and redeployed parts of them to Jiangsu and Anhui.⁴¹¹ This cancelled out Xi'an as a neutral transit point and turned it into a more secure KMT garrison. As part of the Nationalist effort to secure Xi'an, the KMT's rival intelligence bodies, the Juntong and Zhongtong, started a "special operations and intelligence offensive competition (*teqing tuji jingsai*) in 1937,"⁴¹² trying to outdo each other in infiltrating the communist forces. Though it seems the Nationalist services could not best CCP Intelligence in placing clandestine agents who could send back reports to headquarters by secure means, they had their successes. Though the Juntong and Zhongtong may not have been adept at infiltrating the CCP, they were always on the lookout for opportunities:

- In April-May 1938 CCP former General Secretary Zhang Guotao, then governor of the CCP border region government, out of favor with Mao, developed contacts in the KMT and travelled to Wuhan to defect. He ended up doing intelligence and other research for KMT Juntong intelligence leader Dai Li;
- The KMT secretly enlisted the CCP's Yan'an area governor in 1940;

⁴¹¹ Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, p. 141.

⁴¹² Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 139-140.

- The Juntong establishing a large spy ring in the CCP Border Area in 1939-40 that was broken in early 1941.⁴¹³

As in Shanghai a decade earlier, those leaving the CCP side with the right combination of humility, skills, and a good story could find ready employment under the KMT's rival intelligence leaders Dai Li or Xu Enzeng. As discussed in Chapter Two, Warren Kuo was an example: a former communist official who defected to the KMT, worked for the Zhongtong as an intelligence analyst, and wrote about CCP history from Taiwan. That a former CCP Intelligence officer became one of the prominent Nationalist historians of the CCP in the post 1949 period is an indication of how well the two Chinese parties may have infiltrated each other's secret services, and how familiar the two sides' spies became with each other over the decades. A banner hung in the meeting room of the Eighth Route Army's annual intelligence work conference at Matianzhen, Shanxi, for four days in early December 1942. It read: "We need to have those whom neither riches nor honors can corrupt, whom neither poverty nor lowly conditions can swerve from principle, and neither threats nor force can bend."⁴¹⁴ If there was a KMT mole in the audience, perhaps he might have thought: Don't we all.

With two Nationalist intelligence agencies in competition, it may be that the KMT demand for turncoats was roughly twice as high as otherwise, with a fixed supply from the CCP side. This may have backfired on the Nationalists, making it easier for CCP Intelligence to infiltrate them. Reports of highly placed CCP moles in the Nationalist government and army are numerous, and

⁴¹³ "Mao Zedong pingjia Zhou Xing shi wuchan jieji de baojian"; Chang Kuo-t'ao [Zhang Guotao], *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, 1928-1938* (University of Kansas Press, 1972), p. 552; and Klein and Clark, *Biographic Dictionary of Chinese Communism, Volume I*, p. 42.

⁴¹⁴ Zhao Yongtian, *Huxue shuxun* [In the Lair of the Tiger] (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1994), pp. 8-9.

as we have seen, they usually had a way to send their purloined secrets back to the CCP. However, senior KMT agents secretly serving in the CCP's ranks seem to be few in available accounts, even though the Nationalists had some successes. Only limited KMT success in penetrating Yan'an seems evident. From examining Kuo's volumes, his sources were mostly of the types that secret agents do not steal from the source. While there are some secret documents possibly purloined from CCP headquarters, there are a lot more captured papers, data from interrogations, some deciphered telegrams, and open CCP publications.⁴¹⁵ These would have come from sources *outside* of Yan'an: captured communist soldiers and underground agents, signal intercepts, and "open source" purchases of newspapers or books. In short, this study failed to find evidence that the KMT ran effective networks in Yan'an that could gather information and report it back to the Nationalists in a secure and timely way. The espionage war was turning toward a CCP winning streak that solidified after the Japanese surrender, even though Chinese communist leaders did not seem to realize it at the time.

In the CCP military there was also little sign of penetration by KMT agents. Benton's study of the New Fourth Army found that KMT intelligence was incomplete, speculative, and inaccurate. One 1940 report for example asserted that "most New Fourth Army junior cadre" were "part of the Zhang Guotao clique" and therefore in opposition to Mao. He contrasts their efforts to penetrate the CCP forces with the New Fourth Army's use of an extensive network of volunteers from the masses, who, reminiscent of available material on the Eighth Route Army, manned "intelligence points" (*qingbaodian*) and "communications stations" (*jiaotongzhan*) behind KMT and Japanese lines that provided detailed reporting, including on personalities among senior

⁴¹⁵ The consolidation of the CCP's Border Region government in 1936-40 is described in CCP newspaper reports, KMT Central Statistics Bureau (*Zhongtong ju*) intelligence reports, and an open source, 1940 publication from Chongqing, in Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Three*, pp. 568-594, 604-605.

nationalist officers.⁴¹⁶ The Eighth Route Army also used a system of liaison stations, as described further below by a woman courier who worked in such a network along the Shandong coast,⁴¹⁷ indicating that a template of sorts for intelligence organization was being widely promulgated by CCP Intelligence.

The events described in this section seem to show a progression of events, from

a) Chen Yun and Liu Shaoqi calling for greater diligence against enemy agents and bad elements (October 1940 and April 1941);

b) greater elite comprehension of what Mao wanted in Party rectification against Wang Ming's "formalism," etcetera (roughly June-August 1941);

c) Mao's direct discussion of this with the Party elite in the Politburo and Secretariat (September-October); and

d) in the Autumn, the creation of a senior cadres study group led by Mao, and the Cadre Screening Committee under Kang Sheng.⁴¹⁸ In February 1942, Mao formally announced the Rectification Movement.

In spite of the KMT's apparent lack of success against Yan'an and growing communist networks behind the lines of their opponents, the communist leaders' worries about enemy spies contributed to devastating paranoia. We have discussed the consensus amongst senior leaders that there was an infiltration problem, and noted the CCP's friend/enemy distinction that helped drive such it. Another practical concern added to the angst of senior leaders.

⁴¹⁶ Gregor Benton, *New Fourth Army: Communist Resistance Along the Yangtze and Huai, 1938-1941* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon press, 1999), pp. 81-82, 102-103.

⁴¹⁷ See below under *Kang's Wider Influence and the Limits of His Control: East and South China* for the interview with Madame Wang Xirong, 2008.

⁴¹⁸ Teiwes and Sun, "From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: the CCP's Changing Leadership, 1937-1945," p. 346.

Background Investigations: the weak defense

Both the KMT and CCP had successes against each other in the 1920s and 30s at least partly owing to their seemingly common condition in intelligence work: strong offense and weak defense. Available evidence indicates that neither did a good job of conducting proper background investigations⁴¹⁹ (BIs) of their own people before 1945. For the Nationalists, the Li Kenong ring inside the KMT in 1927-31, the Mo Xiong operation in 1934, and others we examined above and will see below, show a common pattern: the KMT's reliance on hometown and other personal connections and ad hoc judgments to choose people for Nationalist Party membership and even to clear them for sensitive positions and access to secret information. Below we will review cases indicating that the KMT never solved this problem before their defeat in 1949: their military strength waxed and waned in the last nine years before the communist victory, while increasing corruption made easier various avenues of infiltration by the communists. This situation probably lowered the price of bribery. That might have made it easier for Wang Jingwei puppet officials and Nationalists in sensitive positions to decide to hedge their bets by cultivating underground or intelligence contacts with the ever stronger communists.

The CCP's efforts on BIs and other security measures before 1942 show a moderate contrast. Their major advantages were relative lack of corruption, reliance on a standard applications procedure, and possibly a committee adjudicated decisions instead of ad hoc ones: everyone had to fill out the same membership form revealing familial and other associations in detail, everyone

⁴¹⁹ "Background Investigation (BI): term for a personnel security investigation designed to confirm the loyalty, trustworthiness, reliability, honesty, discretion and stability of an individual prior to the granting of a security clearance for access to classified information." Carl, *The CIA Insider's Dictionary*, p. 46.

was interviewed and questioned, and the threat of re-examination seems always to have been present. An contemporary PRC source claims that Chen Yun, who was head of the CCP organization Department from December 1937 to March 1944, prioritized Cadre Examination (*Shencha ganbu*) and gradually established standards: fully gather all information from past organizations; understand the applicant's entire situation including political affiliations, family background, social situation, and trustworthiness; keep long term, permanent files on each person; clarify all unanswered questions; and only refer investigations to the CSD if a question of enemy connections arises. Apparently Kang Sheng "destroyed the cadre examination system" in 1942 by suborning it to his efforts against Wang Shiwei and other so-called enemy agents. Whether or not this is the whole story, by the end of Rectification the Party's background investigation effort needed rebuilding.⁴²⁰

To be fair, this was a weakness not dissimilar to the British and other national intelligence services of the era: the UK Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, aka: MI6) relied mostly on personal references from trusted talent spotters at certain schools like Oxford and Cambridge, followed by a board interview.⁴²¹ The CCP might also have referenced their own records in Yan'an, but performing a detailed field check of hometown associations—the "door knock" with neighbors—was probably considered impractical at this time: such checks are practical if you are the local authority, harder if you clandestinely operate. Chen Yun complains about the difficulty of checking the stories told by applicants on their CCP membership paperwork in his essay

⁴²⁰ Luo Yanming, "Chen Yun, Kang Sheng yu Yan'an ganbu shencha," pp. 9-10.

⁴²¹ Before the end of WWII, the UK's Secret Intelligence Service processed security clearance for employees based on personal references and an interview, and did not adopt positive vetting until after the exposure of Klaus Fuchs as a spy for the Soviet Union in 1947. See Philip H.J. Davies, *MI-6 and the Machinery of Spying* (London: Frank Cass, 2004, p. 220-221). "Negative vetting" is checking government records for derogatory information, while "positive" vetting included interviews of personal references, neighbors and employers, and others who might reveal inconsistencies in application data or even direct indications of disloyalty or other disqualifications.

“Communists Must Be True to the Party” (1940), saying “quite a few” Party members had hidden adverse personal information when applying for membership:

It is true that many people who have concealed information from the Party and told lies are either new members or are politically immature. However, some have ulterior political motives—those who have committed many evil deeds, turncoats, renegades, traitors, or hostile elements who have sneaked into the Party. These people have concealed their records and lied in order to subvert the Party. They are essentially different from the immature communists. There are also some careerists who use the same method to win the Party’s confidence and climb to leadership positions. We must increase our vigilance against all these persons and allow them no opportunity to sabotage our cause.⁴²²

This suggests that the Party’s membership included persons inappropriate to the movement, including enemy agents. Mao’s successful consensus building that led the Party into Rectification,⁴²³ which we will discuss more below, and the fact that he allowed Kang Sheng to advance the coercive aspects that emerged during Salvation in 1943, seemed intended not only to get diminish the roles of Wang Ming and his supporters. It also seemed aimed to clean out internal enemies, as urged by Chen and Liu in 1939-1941.

In the next section we will review these campaigns. According to one mainland author, they temporarily stopped CCP Intelligence work in Yan’an.⁴²⁴ Below we will see that some slowdowns occurred close by, but that this may have been less true the farther one went from headquarters. However, to close the discussion on the CCP’s background investigations, it is worth observing that by 1946, just before the time when Li Kenong took over, BIs appeared to be more regularized and improved—possibly a fruit of the *Zhengfeng* Rectification period.

Sydney Rittenburg, the American who joined the CCP in 1946, had no perspective on the earlier

⁴²² *Chen Yun Wenxian, 1926-1949*, pp. 13, 134-135. This translation is amended from the official one in order to match other word usage from other translations in this text. For the official translation, *Selected Works of Chen Yun, 1926-1949*, pp.30-132.

⁴²³ Teiwes and Sun, *The Formation of the Maoist Leadership: From the Return of Wang Ming to the Seventh Party Congress*, pp. 346-348.

⁴²⁴ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 286-287.

period of the Rectification and Salvation Campaigns, but observed that “an exhaustive background check had to be made” of applicants seeking admission to the CCP, and that concern of infiltration was still high:

The party immediately rejected unpopular people, or those with legal problems, or whose lives included disreputable marital or sexual affairs, or people whose political background looked suspicious. The party was constantly under attack in those days, and officials wanted to eliminate the possibility of spies infiltrating. For Chinese applicants, I knew, the background check was as elaborate as an FBI clearance. The party would send people back to the applicant’s hometown to confirm that they had attended the schools and done the things that they said that they had done. I had written the standard autobiography, but there was no way of verifying my claims.⁴²⁵

Rittenburg added that there were other hurdles: political attitude (“they wanted only dedicated communists”); the testimony of two guarantors; and for Rittenburg as a foreign applicant, as told to him by An Ziwen, there was a secret rule:

...a rule that is not written down anywhere and is kept secret, but it exists nevertheless. The rule is that a foreigner can only become a party member by direct approval of the five members of the Central Committee Secretariat.’ That meant Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Ren Bishi, and Zhu De.

It is hard to confirm why such high level consideration was required for a foreign applicant.

However in practical terms, since a detailed home town check was impossible for foreigners, it made logical sense to elevate the matter to the highest level of collective decision making—a logical bureaucratic measure to prevent the working level from being trapped between risky decisions and endless prevarication, while allowing senior leaders to directly control the most controversial decisions. More importantly, with the end of the damaging movements of 1942-44, intelligence workers were freed up to do normal work.

⁴²⁵ Sidney Rittenberg and Amanda Bennett, *The Man Who Stayed Behind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), pp.91-92.

To summarize, in 1940-42 senior Party leaders concluded that their vetting system was failing. They believed that it allowed enemies into the Party during the high tide of membership growth in the late 1930s. Chen Yun's budding Cadre Examination process seems to have been disrupted by the Rectification and Salvation Campaigns, and revived afterwards. Though checks of family and employment background must have been time consuming and expensive, they may have been viewed as less burdensome than allowing people in without sufficient vetting. Having Party members in the ranks whose backgrounds caused suspicion generated a disruptive paranoia. How was CCP Intelligence involved in this escalation?

The Yan'an Campaigns Become Intense, 1942-43

In 1943 Kang Sheng might have felt assured of Mao's support, and Liu's, when he told the Soviet GRU liaison Peter Vladimirov that "Cadre screening should proceed from bottom to top. The most dangerous enemies are those hidden in the top level of the Party."⁴²⁶ During the *Qiangjiu* (Salvation) Movement of that year, Kang Sheng attained his highest level of political influence to that time, a result of years of work.

In spite of what Kang told Vladimirov about where the enemies of Party could be found, the CCP *organized* the movements from the top-down, though they applied them first in the middle ranks with Rectification study, then the lower ranks during Salvation, and finally in criticisms of more senior people late in 1943, higher targets like Zhou Enlai, Peng Dehuai, and Nie Rongzhen (below).

⁴²⁶ Yang Shangkun wrote that he remembered Kang putting it this way in Chinese: “审干应该从下面往上追，最危险的敌人是里藏在上层的人” *Yang Shangkun yi Yan'an zheng feng* [Yang Shangkun Remembers the Yan'an Rectification], cited at http://www.360doc.com/content/11/0128/11/1297235_89529382.shtml. Unfortunately, he did not specify which month in 1943.

In early 1943 the CCP Central Committee formed a Party and Non Party Cadre Examination Committee (*Dang yu fei dang ganbu shencha weiyuanhui*).⁴²⁷ Liu Shaoqi complained to Vladimirov in March 1943 that Kang Sheng's leadership was taking it in the wrong (apparently harsh) direction, but his endorsement of events may be indicated by his leadership of a similar sounding body formed that month to strengthen the leadership of the Cadre Screening Movement: the Anti-Traitor Struggle Committee (*Fan neijian douzheng weiyuanhui*) headed by Liu Shaoqi, and assisted by Kang Sheng (in charge of day to day work), Peng Zhen, and Gao Gang. At the time, Mao said that "Rectification (*Zhengfeng*) is to cleanse the Party's thinking, and Cadre Examination is to cleanse its organization."⁴²⁸

Had the elite enthusiastically endorsed Rectification, carrying it out all the way down into their organizations without a sign of opposition, and had there been fewer troubling enemy espionage cases, then perhaps cadre investigation and anti-spy work would have been brief. However the opposite happened. Unlike at Futian, there was no open warfare: the emphasis at Yan'an was on study. However, the "enemies" identified were similar. The vast majority was comrades and friends, people committed to the cause in one way or another. Guilty or not, people would have to be held in order to preserve the reputation of the leader.⁴²⁹ Seeming opposition activity by the prominent writer Wang Shiwei in his article critical of Party leadership (17 February 1942) might be the most well-known problem of that time, when other artists and writers posted "wall

⁴²⁷ Anhui sheng jigou bianzhi weiyuanhui bangongshi [Office of the Organization Committee of Anhui Province], *Zhonggong zhongyang jigou yange jiyao* [Institutional History Summary of the CCP Central Committee], at http://www.ahjgbzw.gov.cn/include/web_content.php?id=22978 (July 2011). Vladimirov records the committee's existence earlier, on 28 March 1943. Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, p. 108.

⁴²⁸ Jin Chongji (ed.), *Mao Zedong zhuan 1893-1949* [Biography of Mao Zedong, 1893-1949] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1996), p. 652.

⁴²⁹ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenyang shengqi de*, p. 466; and Seybolt, "Terror and Conformity, Counterespionage Campaigns, Rectifications, and Mass Movements, 1942-1944," pp. 51-53.

papers” (*qiangbao*) echoing Wang’s sentiments. There were also some genuine infiltration problems. A KMT agent of Dai Li’s Juntong, Li Chunmao, was arrested on 2 February, the day after Mao’s speech on rectifying the Party’s work style. On 1 May, 11 KMT Juntong agents were arrested by the CCP Border Region Protection Bureau (*Bianqu baoweiju*). Altogether that year 32 spy cases broke in Yan’an and the border region,⁴³⁰ though by their description all those apprehended were, if genuine KMT agents, low level operatives. Meanwhile in May, the Jiangxi CCP Committee and almost all of its subordinate units were arrested by the KMT Juntong, and the KMT scored successes in other localities,⁴³¹ a series of events that must have stirred memories amongst the Party’s senior leaders of the devastating KMT round ups of CCP members in 1931-34. As 1942 continued, *Zhengfeng* showed some success in silencing the criticism of artists and intellectuals new to Yan’an, but Mao and Kang Sheng spoke of Rectification becoming all talk and no action.⁴³² Possibly in mid-1943, Kang gave a personal interpretation of Mao’s position on the relationship between Rectification, Cadre Examination, and Salvation. One would lead to the other: “Rectification is bound to turn to Cadre Examination, and Cadre Examination is bound to turn to anti-traitor work (or, the elimination of counterrevolutionaries)” (*Zhengfeng biran zhuanru shen’gan, shen’gan biran zhuanru fanjian (sufan)*).⁴³³

In February 1943 a speech by Liu Shaoqi from almost two years before, “On the Intra Party Struggle,” was disseminated for a second time. It was a set of procedural rules for the Rectification Movement. Liu warned about infiltration by enemy agents and Trotskyists. He

⁴³⁰ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 239.

⁴³¹ *Ibid*, p. 241.

⁴³² *Ibid*.

⁴³³ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenyang shengqi de*, pp. 461-462. The date of this quote is not supplied by Gao Hua, but the context suggests it may have been in mid-1943.

also cautioned against excess and unwarranted criticism, slander, and plotting against others for personal gain as part of Rectification,⁴³⁴ indicating that these might have been problems even in July 1941. However just a month later in March 1943, Liu said that “problems inside the Party are issues of leadership,” and on 28 April he was named as the chair of the Central Committee’s Anti-Traitor Commission (*Zhongyang fan neijian weiyuanhui*). The other members were Kang Sheng, Gao Gang, and Peng Zhen.⁴³⁵ The members’ seniority indicated that they would consider serious cases and any measures with wider implications. Their focus on Cadre Screening (*Shencha ganbu*) in January 1943 was not only traitors within but “Trotskyites, and spies of the KMT, Japan, and America” (perhaps the earliest warning about the US).⁴³⁶ From January to August 1943, Kang called for wider application of “traitor weeding” (*Chan chu Hanjian*), seemingly a move to expand the previously local practice that sought to identify people cooperating with the Japanese into a campaign targeting the entire population of the communist held areas, especially focused on the relatively vulnerable students and intellectuals who had fled KMT- and Japanese- held areas.⁴³⁷

The campaign against lower level people began in real earnest on the night of 1 April 1943, when CSD led other security forces to conduct a mass arrest of 260 people in Yan’an. In the days beforehand, Kang Sheng called Shi Zhe, then chief of the Border Area Protection Bureau (*Bianbao Baoweiju*) and Zhou Xing, chief of the Border Area Security Department (*Bianqu*

⁴³⁴ Liu Shaoqi, “On the Intra Party Struggle,” originally delivered on 2 July 1941, and revised for a second dissemination on 25 Feb 1943, in Boyd Compton, *Mao’s China, Party Reform Documents, 1942-1944* (University of Washington Press, 1952), pp. 226-236.

⁴³⁵ *Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi, Zhongguo gongchandang lishi 1921-1949* [History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-1949] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiu chubanshe, 2011). Thanks to David Chambers for this reference. See also Jin Chongji, *Mao Zedong zhuan*, p. 652.

⁴³⁶ These developments are cited in Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 249.

⁴³⁷ Teiwes and Sun, “From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: The CCP’s Changing Leadership, 1937-1945,” pp. 371-372.

baolan chu) to his cave, presumably because he needed their manpower for the operation—summoning them in this manner seems a demonstration of who was boss, underlining Kang’s ultimate leadership of the CCP’s intelligence and security forces. According to Shi Zhe, Kang said that he was making the arrests to stop these suspects from possibly contacting an official delegation that was about to arrive from KMT general Hu Zongnan’s headquarters. Shi Zhe said that Kang produced a list of over 200 people⁴³⁸ and showed Shi and Zhou marks he had made on it, designating some as “renegades” (*pantu*), others as “traitors” (*neijian*), “special agents” (*tewu*) or “Japanese agents” (*Ri’te*). Shi Zhe asked what material Kang had on them, and “how can we interrogate them without material?” Kang replied “If there were materials on them, what interrogation would be needed?” (*You cailiao haiyao nimen shenwen gan shenme?*).⁴³⁹ While current PRC sources criticize Kang Sheng’s conduct as excessive, they ignore the fact that there was an institutional allowance for such abuse. Under CCP regulations the security forces had the authority to arrest anyone suspected of ties to the KMT, the Japanese, or any conceivable enemy, or comrades who merely held deviant views, as long as the action was backed by senior leaders. The authority came from a Red Army procedure from 1930, used during the Futian period, that did not require any sort of judicial review—just approval of the political leadership—to indefinitely detain suspects. The regulation remained in force until 1950.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁸ Lin Qingshan, *Kang Sheng Zhuan*, p. 100.

⁴³⁹ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 249-250. Neither this nor the previous source provided a breakdown of exactly who was arrested that night, but in an article by the late Wang Ruoshui, the dissident theoretician noted these statistics from July, 1943. About 70 percent out of the 100-plus working for Liberation Daily and Xinhua News Service were declared “special agents, as were 170 out of 200 students at the CMC 3d Department (Communications) School; about a dozen (*shijige*) out of 60 enrolled in the Central Committee’s Secretary’s (*Mishu*) School were detained, and about two thirds (208) were cleared out of 380 total in the Northwest Public School (*Xibei gongxue*). Wang Ruoshui, “Wusi Jingshen he Dang Wenhua de Pozhuang” [May Fourth Spirit and Party-Culture Conflict]. See http://blog.tianya.cn/blogger/post_read.asp?BlogID=1818563&PostID=17062305

⁴⁴⁰ Flora Sapio, “*Shuanggui* and Extralegal Detention in China” (*China Information*, 22:8, 2007, online at <http://cin.sagepub.com/content/22/1/7>), pp. 3, 22.

Vladimirov reported that disappearances continued throughout the month and into the summer. Throughout this time, even at the height of Salvation, the Comintern emissary and GRU agent was free to wander on horseback through the Special Area during the day observing meetings and other events, though he was regularly under surveillance. He wrote up his observations at night, which his radio operators transmitted to Moscow and Georgii Dimitrov, previously the Comintern overseer of the CCP, but still close to Stalin and in charge of China policy.⁴⁴¹ Besides observing life and events, as a military attaché⁴⁴² would do, Vladimirov had his private sources, the most prominent being the Chairman himself.⁴⁴³ Mao showed confidence that Moscow would live with the attacks against the Comintern's favorite Chinese comrades, and the CCP's hostility toward the united front with the KMT. On 23 July, at the height of the Salvation Campaign, Vladimirov recorded that its next stage was to "expose 'spies' in the middle levels of the CCP and later in the leading echelon of the Party," and that Mao had told him "with satisfaction that he was planning to carry on this campaign until the next year."⁴⁴⁴ Mao Zedong regularly sought out Vladimirov, once for eight hours in December 1944, just after the US had refused to supply arms to the CCP.⁴⁴⁵ This was Vladimirov the Comintern emissary, who also listened attentively in March 1943 to the private complaints of Liu Shaoqi about Kang Sheng's efforts on the Party and Non Party Cadre Examination Committee. They went beyond standards,

⁴⁴¹ Vladimirov referred to Dimitrov as the recipient of his reports. Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp. 163, 180.

⁴⁴² Hao says that Vladimirov (Chinese name: Sun Ping) had two primary jobs. He was a GRU officer and the deputy military representative in China for the ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International). His "cover" job for public consumption was as China correspondent for Tass, the Soviet news agency. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 144-145.

⁴⁴³ Mao spent considerable time with Vladimirov according to the account by the latter, including a long sessions where Mao laid out his version of CCP history for the Soviet agent to record. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 57; Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp. 190-194, 312-15.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 135; and Chen Yung-fa, "Suspect History and the Mass Line: Another Yan'an Way," in Jeffrey Wasserstrom (ed.), *Twentieth Century China: New Approaches* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 177.

⁴⁴⁵ For examples, see Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp. 26, 305, 312, 359-60.

said Liu, who added that the criticisms of Wang Ming and others was a mistake.⁴⁴⁶ As noted in Chapter Two, the GRU officer and Comintern representative Peter Vladimirov died in 1953; his 1942-45 diary was edited three decades later by the CPSU and then published in 1974-75, at the height of Sino-Soviet tension. The diary contents are not flattering to Mao or the CCP, and parts could easily be a fabrication or exaggerated. Liu Shaoqi for example was a leading figure in criticizing Wang Ming. Perhaps his supposed complaint to Vladimirov was untrue, or Liu was hedging his bets by cozying up to the GRU agent in case he might later need the Soviets. However it is interesting, as we will continue to see below, that some of Vladimirov's observations are consistent with newer PRC material and critical histories from Warren Kuo, Gao Hua, and Gao Wenqian: a vindictive Kang Sheng, his closeness to Jiang Qing, Salvation becoming manic and Yan'an a depressing place in July 1943, Mao in total control, and so forth.

If CCP Intelligence cadre were overly busy in self-criticisms, taking special measures to arrange struggle meetings, and enhancing surveillance of the general population, this might explain why GRU agent Vladimirov was able to secretly meet on more sensitive matters with another Politburo member. Bo Gu complained privately on 8 April that Liu Shaoqi had suddenly changed direction and now supported Kang Sheng. Bo Gu (Qin Bangxian) was one of the "28 Bolsheviks" and a sympathizer with Wang Ming. In any counterintelligence officer's mind, he would be a suspect for dangerous liaisons with the resident Soviet spy, and while the reader can see how Bo and Vladimirov were careful in their (few) secret meetings, one wonders how they got away with it unless CSD's surveillance of Vladimirov was interrupted by more urgent, but less important matters. In four meetings Vladimirov recorded with Bo Gu (in diary entries of 8

⁴⁴⁶ "He personally told me that he regards the criticism of Wang Ming and a number of other comrades as a mistake." Ibid, p. 111.

April, 29 May, 29 November, and 4 January 1944), he said Bo showed fear of observation.⁴⁴⁷ There is no hint of payoffs, dead drops, or any of the other usual accoutrements of espionage, but had Kang Sheng known of the information being passed, it is hard to imagine him not considering Bo to be a big catch in the anti-Soviet, spy hysteric atmosphere of the moment. By Vladimirov's account, Bo was motivated by being upset at Mao for identifying him and Wang Ming as a "left opportunists" since at least December 1942;⁴⁴⁸ apparently he had mulled over providing information for the five months leading up to the first (April 1943) meeting. Bo was nervous and furtive, and unscheduled: Vladimirov's account makes it appear that he waited for Bo to come to him, and the Russian worried in August when he had not seen Bo in months. When he did appear, Bo unburdened himself to the Russian GRU agent with complaints, all of which were useful as political or other intelligence—about Mao's campaign against Wang Ming, the surveillance system set up by CSD, Liu Shaoqi's accommodation with Kang, and the increasingly unchallenged power of Mao. Bo spoke of Mao's growing hostility toward Moscow and the Chairman's joy in May 1943 at the dissolution of the Comintern.⁴⁴⁹ All this time, Bo Gu was apparently never confronted by his security services. Kang Sheng may not have learned about the meetings, at least until much later (if he did, there seems no reason for Kang and Mao to tolerate them). It seems possible that Kang Sheng's operatives were so busy with other tasks that this detail eluded their surveillance apparatus.

Another source Vladimirov acknowledged in his diary was Wang Ming, though the erstwhile CCP leader only complained to the Russian about Kang Sheng's conduct in Moscow, not Mao's policies in Yan'an. Wang became sick in October 1942 and seriously ill in December,

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 111, 117, 148, 181, 190.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 84.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 111, 117, 118, 133, 134, 142, 148, 180-181, 190.

prompting contact with the Soviet delegation's physician, Andrei Orlov. Neither Wang nor Bo Gu appear to have divulged confidences to the Russians in 1942. Wang finally started complaining to Vladimirov in April 1943, but apparently divulged no Party secrets. That same month was the more dramatic turning point for Bo Gu, who actually disclosed confidential Politburo discussions. Bo may have believed Wang Ming was being slowly poisoned,⁴⁵⁰ and it was simultaneous to the escalation of attacks against Bo Gu in the Politburo. According to Vladimirov, Wang Ming did not divulge secrets even on 23 December 1943, when his wife finally informed him that he was the main object of fierce political attacks by the Chairman.⁴⁵¹ While this account is consistent with the other events of the time, it rather neatly depicts Wang, who became Mao's bitter enemy, as the loyal and wronged victim of a despot, illogically kept in the dark by all around him to his darkening fate.

We have followed the escalation of tensions in Yan'an in 1939-43, leading up to a distinct and separate *Qiangjiu* Salvation Movement of July 1943. The PRC author Hao describes 1943 as a hysterical time when the Party treated their own people "as if they were the enemy." He explains that KMT spying was at its peak; the USSR was under tremendous German pressure; the Russians dissolved the Comintern in May 1943; in June "multiple sources" informed the CSD that Chiang Kai-shek was planning a military attack against the CCP, and there was indeed a military operation by KMT General Hu Zongnan's forces against the CCP at Guanzhong,

⁴⁵⁰ This online article concludes that Wang Ming was poisoned as described above, but that Mao was not responsible. Ding Shaoping, "Mao Zedong zhishi zhuzhi yisheng shishi 'yaowu zhuzhe duhai' Wang Ming?" [Did Mao Zedong Order Attending Physicians to Gradually Poison Wang Ming?] (29 December 2011).

<http://history.people.com.cn/GB/205396/16752903.html>. When Wang Ming's spouse pressed for an investigation, the physician in charge of his medication was reassigned and the matter was ruled a medical error.

⁴⁵¹ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp. 88, 91-92, 107, 108, 110-111, 122, 135-136. George Hatem (Ma Haide) was also accused of being incompetent in handling Wang Ming's medication. Edgar A. Porter, *The People's Doctor: George Hatem and the Chinese Revolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 153-154; Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp. 48, 70.

Shaanxi on 7 July. All of this caused “the people in Yan’an to overestimate the importance of enemy spies.”⁴⁵² Mao, presumably one of those people, by then had concluded that “spies were as thick as fur,” and Liu Shaoqi agreed.⁴⁵³ At this time Kang Sheng “discovered” another big spy case and arrested 19 people just after Hu Zongnan took the opportunity of the Comintern’s dissolution to call on the CCP to dissolve itself.⁴⁵⁴

The Tragedies and Absurdities of “Salvation”

One PRC source marks Kang Sheng’s famous 15 July 1943 speech as the point when mass confession mania began its spread around Yan’an, and Cadre Examination (*Shen ’gan*) was changed to be called the Salvation (*Qiangjiu*) Movement.⁴⁵⁵ If this is not the technically correct date for the beginning of Salvation, 15 July still seems to be a day when life changed for those living in Yan’an. Kang’s speech had an almost evangelical tone, and was titled “*Qiangjiu Shizuzhe*,” or “Salvation for Those Who Have Lost Their Footing.” In Yan’an’s main hall about 1,000 Party members gathered from units directly subordinate to the Central Committee. Kang was the main speaker; he reported that over 200 people had been arrested, including a prominent “KMT spy” from the Henan CCP. He urged people to confess their mistakes and be saved,⁴⁵⁶ and 12 mounted the stage to do so.⁴⁵⁷ Vladimirov and Party historian Gao Hua agree with PRC sources on the content of Kang’s speech, though the former makes Kang seem much more frantic

⁴⁵² Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 253-255.

⁴⁵³ Teiwes and Sun, “From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: The CCP’s Changing Leadership, 1937-1945,” p. 372. Another quote, possibly by Mao, resembles this one: “spies are like hemp” (*tewu you ma*). Jin Chongji (ed.), *Mao Zedong zhuan*, p. 676.

⁴⁵⁴ Teiwes and Sun, “From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: The CCP’s Changing Leadership, 1937-1945,” p. 372.

⁴⁵⁵ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 256-259.

⁴⁵⁶ “Qiangjiu shizuzhe – Kang Sheng zai Zhongyang zhishu dahui de baogao [Rescue Those Who Have Lost Their Footing – Kang Sheng’s Report to Units Subordinate to the Central Committee], 15 July 1943, in Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun guofang daxue dangshi dangjian zhengong jiaoyan shi (ed.), *Zhonggong dangshi jiaoxue cankao ziliao* (Beijing: n.p., n.d.) Vol. 17 (xia), pp. 380-384.

⁴⁵⁷ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenyang shengqi de*, p. 509; and Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, p. 130.

and accusatory.⁴⁵⁸ Just as important is that Vladimirov and Gao Hua tell us that Peng Zhen and Zhu De also spoke. Peng opened the meeting for Kang, told how to identify KMT agents, and promised that those who repented and gave themselves up would be set free. The twelve who repented came onstage during his introduction. Gao Hua and Vladimirov gave similar albeit not identical versions of Zhu De's remarks. According to Vladimirov, Zhu De unexpectedly arose as Peng Zhen was about to close the meeting, and addressed the assembled Party members in a calm voice:

Do you mean to say that after this meeting I should lose faith in my friends and comrades in arms? Does this mean that from now on I should live in fear of arrest or expect to see my friends arrested? How dare you treat the party activists in this way, the best men of the party and its backbone?⁴⁵⁹

Afterward, Vladimirov claimed, the meeting adjourned in stunned silence. Alternatively, Gao Hua described it this way:

Although Zhu De also participated in the meeting, in his brief speech he stressed the protection of cadres. Compared to Kang Sheng and Peng Zhen, his speech was vastly different. Owing to Zhu De's power in Yan'an being merely symbolic, his statement did not dilute the atmosphere of the meeting place.⁴⁶⁰

Zhu De's status as a co-founder of the army with Mao may have given him the assurance that he could safely make a public statement that went so firmly against the grain, or perhaps he nervously wondered what would happen next. It could simply be that, for at least that moment, Zhu De was in possession of rather significant guts.

Vladimirov commented that Kang Sheng's men carefully watched the 15 July meeting for dissenters, but Zhu De was not arrested and continued in his duties. The next day, on Mao's

⁴⁵⁸ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, p. 130.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

⁴⁶⁰ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenyang shengqi de*, pp. 508-509.

orders, Zhu sent a telegram to KMT commander Hu Zongnan objecting to their aggressive troop deployments earlier in the month. On 2 August, Vladimirov wrote that fences and gates were erected around work places, and guards posted. CCP Intelligence introduced a special messenger system through which all organizations communicated with each other, though a high percentage of their workers had admitted espionage and some were confined in their work places since jail space was at a premium. “Mournful silence reigns in the city and its environs at night; not a voice is heard, no laughter, no lights.”⁴⁶¹

Modern accounts published in the PRC indicate the opposite. Salvation allegedly slowed with the publication of the Central Committee’s “Decision on the Examination of Cadres” on 15 August, and that it caused people, including Li Kenong, to see the error of following Kang Sheng.⁴⁶² However, Gao Hua’s account, while less dramatic than Vladimirov’s, tracks more with his version of events. Gao says that the 15 August Central Committee Decision on the Examination of Cadres *caused Salvation to speed up and spread* into the Shan’ganning border area. The Decision declared that “it is unsurprising that spy cases have been so numerous” and added that “spy cases are a worldwide problem.”⁴⁶³ Hao Zaijin’s work sticks to the Party line that Salvation lasted only “ten-plus days” (*shi ji tian*), implying 15 July to about 1 August, saying that Ren Bishi put a stop to it when complaints led to his “discovery” of torture ordered by Kang Sheng. Supposedly the Salvation Movement became the Thought Education (*sixiang*

⁴⁶¹ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp. 139-140.

⁴⁶² An official history terms Salvation an attempt by Kang Sheng to “continue *Wang Ming*’s formula of “extort confessions by torture, and believe them” (*bi gong xin*, 逼供信). Zhongguo renmin jingcha bianxie zu, *Zhongguo renmin jingcha jianshi* [A Brief History of Chinese People’s Policing] (Beijing: Jingguan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1989), p. 58; and Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, p. 256-258.

⁴⁶³ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenyang shengqi de*, p. 509; and “Zhongyang guanyu shencha ganbu de jue ding” [Central Committee Decision Concerning Cadre Examination] 15 August 1943 in Zhongyang dang’an guan, *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* [Selected Documents of the CCP Central Committee] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1992), Vol. 14, pp. 89-96.

jiaoyu) Movement on 5 August. However, Hao describes Kang's spouse Cao Yi'ou leading struggle sessions not only days before (9 July) but also weeks later (4 September)⁴⁶⁴ than the "ten-plus days." A week after Kang's 15 July speech came one of the crazier incidents, a mass meeting at the Suide Normal University where a teacher claimed he had been beaten with rocks by assailants. Somehow this prompted a 16 year old student to claim that he was the culprit, the head of the "Rock Party (*Shi'tou Dang*)". As ridiculous as this seemed, perhaps investigators had no choice in context but to choose an extreme response. They deprived the entire student body of sleep for nine days of meetings, during which 230 people, or 72 percent of the students, eventually confessed themselves to be "special agents" (*tewu*). On 22 September the *Liberation Daily* covered the story not as an example of an abuse or a mistake, but rather as an achievement,⁴⁶⁵ indicating that the Salvation movement was still full on, spreading shock and awe amongst the Party's middle ranks. Kang Sheng's report to a cadre conference on 29 March 1944 indicated that *Qiangjiu* went on to the end of 1943—and only then was he in trouble for overstepping his bounds:

After the ranking cadres' conference of the Northwest China Bureau in the winter of 1942, a rectification study campaign was conducted in the counties to oppose liberalism. From April to December of last year, an anti-subversion struggle was begun among the masses in one place after another, thus setting in motion the confession campaign throughout the Border Region. By the end of December, this struggle began to undergo certain readjustments to differentiate priority actions and rectify the mistakes of applying torture, extracting confessions, and accepting them as true.⁴⁶⁶

Kang elaborated, saying that "reliance on a handful of security personnel has been changed to a reliance on the masses." In other words, his forces had withdrawn from Salvation and Rectification. He lauded successes, such as ferreting out Wang Shiwei and other "Trotskyite and

⁴⁶⁴ Hao, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 262, 263, 264, 266-67.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 268-70.

⁴⁶⁶ Kang Sheng, "The Development and the Current Tasks of the Anti-Subversion Struggle" in Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, p. 412.

Kuomintang saboteurs,” and warned that some people initially judged as innocent might still be guilty, while outlining a plan to re-evaluate mistakes made by the security forces, and rehabilitate, vindicate, and reinstate the innocent.⁴⁶⁷ Though under criticism, Kang Sheng was still on post.

Hao describes Salvation statistics unavailable elsewhere, though they are contradictory in parts. During 1943, 56 people reportedly committed suicide in Yan’an. The Central Committee document issued on 15 August, “Decision Concerning Cadre Examination,” counted over 2,000 spies rounded up in Yan’an during the 1943, though another places the number of spies eliminated in Yan’an at 15,000 from early 1942 to the end of 1943. Looking at a more elite slice of victims, 604 persons in Central Committee departments confessed to spying, which was 23 percent of the total (roughly 2,620), and 404 confessed in the Military Commission, which was 21 percent (about 1,920 altogether). However the same document said that none had been killed—and in any case that the CCP Northwest Bureau would have to approve any executions. On 2 July 1943, Mao supposedly wrote a letter to Kang Sheng with “nine measures (*jiutiao fangzhen*)” that outlined how leaders should take responsibility for all actions in the upcoming movement, and that it would be incorrect to allow forced confessions. On 9 October Mao wrote that the CCP should “Kill no one and arrest as few as possible (*yige busha, dabu buzhuo*).”⁴⁶⁸

All this seems to suggest the Salvation Movement lasted at least six months, from April or May to October 1943—and Kang’s 29 March 1944 report indicates eight months, ending in December. There seems to be little evidence that Mao Zedong pulled back from leadership during this period. It seems more plausible that he was fully knowledgeable, with Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun,

⁴⁶⁷ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, pp. 413, 414, 422, 423.

⁴⁶⁸ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, 270-276; 285; and *Zhongguo renmin jingcha bianxie zu, Zhongguo Renmin Jingcha Jianshi*, pp. 57-59.

and probably Ren Bishi in agreement to set Kang Sheng in charge of Salvation by driving mass meetings. As noted above, Kang had Li Kenong do so even at the school that trained intelligence cadres.

In the previous section, we saw Party historian Gao Hua's citation of an often repeated line in 1942-43 by Kang Sheng, which became well-known at the time, that "Rectification is bound to turn to Cadre Examination, and Cadre Examination is bound to turn to anti-traitor work (or, the elimination of counterrevolutionaries)" (*Zhengfeng biran zhuanru shen'gan, shen'gan biran zhuanru fanjian (sufan)*). Gao notes that mainland historians, including Party historians, held a conference in the 1980s during which they concluded (with the blessing of Party Propaganda Minister Deng Liqun), that Rectification and Cadre Examination were correct and wise decisions by Mao; Salvation on the other hand was an episode at the end of Rectification, and an attempt by Kang Sheng to destroy it, which Mao reined in after "ten days or so."⁴⁶⁹ It is not surprising that this Party line remains basic guidance today for aspiring to be published on the mainland; Gao Hua's history showing Mao's fullest possible support for Kang Sheng during Rectification, Cadre Examination, and Salvation⁴⁷⁰ is banned in the PRC, though it has been reprinted numerous times in Hong Kong.

In approximately October 1943, events shifted. Mass meetings slowed or ended, but Rectification shifted focus upward, as Mao had hinted it might to Vladimirov three months earlier.⁴⁷¹ Zhou Enlai's *Annals* says that he "spoke many times for Rectification" in November and December 1943, recounting some successes but mostly criticizing his errors, such as lack of

⁴⁶⁹ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang shi zenyang shengqi de*, p. 461-462.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 464-465.

⁴⁷¹ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, p. 135

understanding of the peasantry, not believing that guerilla war was effective, and earlier adherence to the Li Lisan “Line.” The *Annals* concludes with the comment that “during this instance of Rectification, Zhou Enlai went through unfair and excessive accusations and criticism.”⁴⁷² Vladimirov’s account is not inconsistent, though it may have been exaggerated or posthumously beefed up with details by 1970s Soviet editors. He reported on 1 November that Peng Dehuai and Ye Jianying had been summoned to Yan’an and “were awaiting punishment for belonging to the Wang Ming group,” and that Nie Rongzhen had also arrived from Hebei-Chahar to be accused of “dogmatism” as a Wang Ming supporter.⁴⁷³ On 23 December:

The first stage of [*Zhengfeng*] was concerned only with indoctrinating the public. The struggle inside the CCP was concealed from the Party rank and file members. Suppression concerned ‘dogmatists’ in general. The names of Wang Ming and others were only vaguely mentioned. But Wang Ming himself was kept in strict isolation. Now Luo Fu, Bo Gu, and Zhou Enlai in a series of statements at the sittings of the Politburo of the Central Committee have admitted to having erroneous views...Zheng-feng assumes a qualitatively new state. Now each internationalist in the CCP leadership is discredited personally, as is consequently the entire “procapitulatory course of the Comintern” and “Soviet dogmatism” in general.⁴⁷⁴

On 28 December, Mao seemed to be preparing to more widely criticize Wang Ming and Bo Gu. The Party Center Secretariat sent a telegram to remote Party leaders including Rao Shushi and Deng Xiaoping, and the Eighth Route Army in Shandong, Hebei, and Suiyuan, directing them to set up study of the “sectarian and opportunistic line mistakes” of Wang Ming and Bo Gu. They were to include 100 to 200 or so cadre at the bureau and sub-bureau level, but not spread it much beyond that—limited distribution that may eventually have led to public criticism of the two men had the campaign continued. According to the telegram, the meetings were intended as “the deepest and highest stage of Rectification, intended to bring unity in preparation for the Seventh

⁴⁷² Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1898-1949*, pp, 568-569.

⁴⁷³ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, p. 164.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p.184.

Party Congress.”⁴⁷⁵ However, Mao’s determination would soon be reversed. A combination of falling morale, the eventual confession of Wang Ming,⁴⁷⁶ and perhaps the pressure from Moscow of the Dimitrov telegram appears to have led Mao to decide that it was time to ease off and allow people to get back to work.

As described above, CSD may have missed Bo Gu’s clandestine reports to Vladimirov in April, May, and November, or perhaps did not fully analyze or appreciate what the GRU officer was overtly observing and reporting back to Moscow—not the least of which were mass struggle meetings and the deteriorating health of Wang Ming. In either case, not surmising that Moscow was aware of the goings on in Yan’an would have been a major oversight for the people Kang tasked with watching the Soviet mission. In response to the GRU reports, including the alleged poisoning of Wang Ming which Vladimirov believed was orchestrated by Mao and Kang, Dimitrov sent Mao a telegram on 22 December. Party historian Gao Hua asserts that Mao “only really put the brakes on Salvation” after he received it.⁴⁷⁷ Dimitrov expressed disapproval over Mao’s political attacks against the Moscow group—specifically Wang Ming and Zhou Enlai, the condition of Wang Ming, and CCP hostility toward the KMT which threatened the United Front,⁴⁷⁸ and therefore the war effort. Then he turned his attention to Kang Sheng:

I also feel doubts about the role of Kang Sheng... He is taking abnormal measures that only arouse mutual suspicion and strong dissatisfaction by ordinary Party members and the masses, which (might) help the enemy and collapse the Party.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁵ Yang Shengqun (ed.), *Deng Xiaoping Nianpu, 1904-1974 vol. 1* [The Annals of Deng Xiaoping] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2009), pp. 500-501

⁴⁷⁶ Chen Yung-fa, “Suspect History and the Mass Line: Another Yan’an Way,” pp. 180-182.

⁴⁷⁷ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang zenyang shengqi de*, p. 465.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 466.

⁴⁷⁹ Gao Wenqian, *Wannian Zhou Enlai*, p. 82

While the Comintern was formally dissolved and one could legalistically therefore dismiss Moscow's objections, this would have been reckless considering how much Mao and the CCP had at stake in maintaining good relations with the USSR. Mao probably calculated that the Party would need further Russian military aid and political assistance in the coming confrontation with the KMT. Mao stopped seeing visitors on 1 January, and on the 4th he called in Vladimirov to recite a monologue "of the Soviet Union's significance for the existence of the Special Area, the importance of the united anti-Japanese front, and the political role which the former Comintern played for the CCP." He explained that these points were in a telegram just sent to Dimitrov on the 2nd, and said he took Dimitrov's "apprehensions and concerns close to heart."⁴⁸⁰

In the first three months of 1944, Mao gradually retreated in the political war on Wang Ming, and distanced himself politically from Kang Sheng—while keeping Kang on as CSD director and Party security chief. Though senior Party cadre gradually became emboldened and criticized Kang, Mao wished to protect him;⁴⁸¹ perhaps for future fights with the Russians and internal enemies (one could argue that no senior and capable member of Mao's coterie had more experience of the Russians and various enemies than Kang Sheng). While Kang gradually lost political power, Kang was insulated from serious punishment because Mao never said that Rectification, Cadre Examination, or Salvation were mistakes (*cuowu*).⁴⁸² Instead, Mao took more gradual steps in retreat, and preserved his influence. He shifted Cadre Examination to a new stage of "examination and distinguishing" (*zhen bie*) in the last days of 1943. In January 1944 during the summary of a meeting of the Secretariat (*Shuji chu*), Mao said that not all people

⁴⁸⁰ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp.136, 190-194.

⁴⁸¹ Gao Hua, *Hong taiyang zenyang shengqi de*, p. 465.

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, p. 465.

from the KMT areas should be thought of as spies, or that underground workers are “red flag” imposters. He urged opposing “*bi gong xin*” (forcing confessions through torture and believing them).⁴⁸³ As the year wore on Mao apologized several times at the Party School (May and October 1944 and February 1945), for allowing events to go too far, though he did not say that Rectification itself was in error.⁴⁸⁴ In incidents that became famous, with Mao doffing his hat, bowing, and admitting that he was in charge when bad things happened.⁴⁸⁵

Western writings have provided different estimates on when exactly Li Kenong replaced Kang Sheng as the head of CCP Intelligence. One well-known source says it was late 1945, though Chinese sources note that Kang was reappointed head of CSD in August 1945 and that Li Kenong did not take over until October 1946. Vladimirov noted in September 1945 that Kang had lost his political appointments but claimed he retained control of the security apparatus. In either event, Mao protected Kang thereafter, and gave him land reform and other work in east China.⁴⁸⁶

All the sleight of hand seems intended to convince the modern reader that Salvation lasted only a “ten-odd days” and that Mao put a stop to it when he saw how it was getting out of hand. This

⁴⁸³ Jin Chongji, *Mao Zedong zhuan*, pp. 654-655.

⁴⁸⁴ Chen Yung-fa, “Suspect History and the Mass Line: Another Yan’an Way,” p. 182-183.

⁴⁸⁵ PRC sources tend to minimize Mao’s apologies but he had to make them multiple times. In the winter of 1944, before the Seventh Party Congress, it was dramatic: in a packed public meeting hall, the crowd completely silenced, Mao told the assembly that “The problems that have emerged during this movement should principally be assumed by me.” He then bowed (*jugong*) before the assembly. Seated beside him silently on the stage was Kang Sheng. Lin Qingshan, *Kang Sheng Zhuan* (Jilin: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1996), p. 112; Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 318-321; and Jin Chongji, *Mao Zedong zhuan*, p. 655.

⁴⁸⁶ Teiwes and Sun, “The Formation of the Maoist Leadership: From the Return of Wang Ming to the Seventh Congress,” p. 374; Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution 3: The Coming of the Cataclysm, 1961-1966* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 292-293; Zeng Qinghong (ed.) *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao, vol .4, no. 1* [Materials on Chinese Communist Organizational History] (Beijing: Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, 2000), p. 41; Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp. 486, 488, 514, 517; Byron and Pack, *Claws of the Dragon*, pp. 189, 192; and Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 295-296, 364.

version would tend to preserve the image of the Chairman, Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun, and Ren Bishi as wise leaders. In reality, Mao and his senior colleagues appear to have gone along with the campaign, the torture, and all the rest of the excesses. In essence, when Kang Sheng became a debit to Mao's cause he lost political power, though he retained intelligence and security authority until October 1946.

While it might be possible to conclude that the outcome of Rectification and Salvation was bad for CCP Intelligence, it would depend on one's point of view. From the perspective of political power and connections of the organization to top leaders, CCP Intelligence lost out, as noted above: Kang Sheng was reappointed to the Central Committee and the Politburo at Mao's insistence during the Seventh Party Congress, but underwent severe criticism for the excesses of Salvation and Rectification. Kang Sheng's subsequent political exile has been well-studied⁴⁸⁷ and does not need elaboration here. From another perspective, the Chairman's position was more secure than ever: his record of military and political success remained solid, all those who had held out against him were either gone or under sanction, and those remaining were grateful to have survived, and be allowed once again to work. Mao was free to choose whom to appoint to take over CSD when he felt the time was right, perhaps with the goal of raising the effectiveness of the Party's intelligence and security organizations. Mao may have decided that the CSD was unnecessary for intimidating "enemies": mass struggle worked well enough for that. There is no smoking gun memo, signal intercept, or agent's memoir to prove it, but Mao's actions after 1945 suggest this conclusion. He relieved Kang Sheng in 1946; directed further purge work to mass organizations; steered CSD and its successors toward intelligence tasks; and

⁴⁸⁷ Teiwes and Sun, "From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: the CCP's Changing Leadership, 1937-1945," pp. 373-375.

in 1949 handed over policing and counterintelligence work to Luo Ruiqing and a new Ministry of Public Security.

This brings us to the nature of Kang's authority. While it was significant in the area of Yan'an and the nearby Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region, in areas further afield, the situation appears more nuanced.

Kang Sheng's Achievements and the Limits of His Control

Kang Sheng's tenure as Central Social Department director is most often associated with the abuses of the Rectification and Rescue campaigns, but he drove other developments during 1940-46. We saw above how he combined codes and ciphers, human intelligence, covert action, and military intelligence under his position as Central Social Department director, advancing CSD toward becoming a modern national intelligence organization. Kang's development of the intelligence stations (*qingbaozhan*) and subordinate intelligence points (*qingbaodian*) also improved operational capability, not the least because they appear to have operated in tandem with CCP Underground "communications stations" and communications points" (*Jiaotongzhan* and *jiaotongdian*): these actually extended the reach of CCP Intelligence because they allowed the Underground to take up intelligence tasks where CSD was absent. At this lower level, intelligence points operated using "single line liaison" (or single line running—*danxian lianxi*): only one case officer in the echelon above would know the details of the intelligence point's operations, such as the location of meetings, names of assets, and so on. This limited damage in case of compromise or capture of the officer or his working level assets.⁴⁸⁸ At least some of the

⁴⁸⁸ Wang Fang, *Wang Fang huiyilu* [The Memoirs of Wang Fang] (Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2006), p. 43. Thanks also to Dr. David Chambers for a discussion on this point.

CSD intelligence stations were linked with headquarters via enciphered radio communications. Using these means, Kang equipped himself to control intelligence personnel, administration, and operational tasking, but he was able to push it only so far.

Histories published in the PRC tend to present Kang Sheng as being firmly in control of his expanded intelligence structure, focusing on his accumulation of authority over operations.

His surveillance of the Soviets and Americans resident in Yan'an could be subtle, or overt, but normally was constant in nature.⁴⁸⁹ Colonel David Barrett of the US Dixie Mission wrote:

There were no police in Yen-an. Police were probably unnecessary, for as we came to know later, the whole of Chinese Communist society is pervaded with spies, snoops, and informers. Such persons, of course, were not in evidence...it is likely we never went anywhere that someone did not follow us, but we were never aware of it.⁴⁹⁰

In the adjacent Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region, conditions were different: these were contested areas, where CCP power could not always be openly displayed. However it was close enough for Kang to keep a tight leash on his personnel, and because of the short distance it was relatively uncomplicated to summon cadre to Yan'an during the 1942-44 campaigns. In regions further afield though, Kang had only some influence over intelligence operations and less punitive authority.⁴⁹¹ In the Shandong operational area of the Eighth Route Army, though "traitor weeding" was implemented in the first year of the Anti-Japanese War, starting in December 1938, by 1942 Kang's power to run such punitive programs far from Yan'an may have declined.

In Hong Kong, the local CCP under Liao Chengzhi organized resistance per guidance from Yan'an, 1938 to January 1942, but after Liao departed, the local communist cadre under Zeng Sheng prioritized military intelligence and mutually beneficial cooperation with the British; they

⁴⁸⁹ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp. 39-40, 160.

⁴⁹⁰ David D. Barrett, *Dixie Mission: the United States Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944* (Berkeley: University of California Center for Chinese Studies, 1970), p. 34.

⁴⁹¹ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, 594-595.

appear never to have engaged in “traitor weeding” or any of the activities of the Rectification and Salvation Movements. This is not to say that Kang had no control further out—it simply means that his control may have generally declined with distance and with competing battlefield requirements. Below we will further compare these regions and try to characterize available evidence.

Suiyuan and Inner Mongolia: The Curse of Proximity?

During a 1993 visit by the author to Shijiazhuang, the city in Hebei Province not far from the nation’s capital, my municipal government hosts commented that “heaven and the emperor” (Beijing) were neither very high nor far away—that Shijiazhuang was close enough to the central government that there was no escaping its observation and interference, but far enough away so that helpful assistance was rare.⁴⁹² During the Anti-Japanese War, the CCP Intelligence station network in Suiyuan and Inner Mongolia, being closer to headquarters in Yan’an than either the Eighth Route Army or New Fourth Army areas, found itself in such a position.

Part of the reason for the attention may have been the threatening Japanese presence in Suiyuan and Inner Mongolia, just north of Yan’an—an early problem for the CCP, immediately holding the attention of the communist leadership. Japanese forces advanced rapidly after the start of hostilities in July 1937, entering Zhangjiakou that month and Datong on 13 September. After a pause, the Japanese quickly advanced once again to the west and south, entering Guisui (the present day Hohhot), on 14 October, and then advancing another 200 miles to Baotou in only

⁴⁹² At the time, the author was a US Foreign Service Officer. These comments came at a dinner with municipal government officials, who related the idea with an ironic humor.

three days.⁴⁹³ This was in the month before Wang Ming and Kang Sheng returned to China, an indication of the urgent situation that greeted their arrival—which might have contributed to Stalin’s decision to send them back at that juncture.⁴⁹⁴

A month after the group returned to Yan’an, the Central Committee established the Central Special Work Commission (*Zhongyang tebie gongzuo weiyuanhui*), known publicly as the Enemy Area Work Commission (*Diqu gongzuo weiyuanhui*). It was charged with consolidating management of intelligence and security work. Either at the beginning or soon afterwards, Kang Sheng was placed in charge and Pan Hannian was his deputy. In the Spring of 1938, subordinate bodies to manage work in battle areas and the cities were formed, led by Du Liqing (Xu Jianguo) and Pan Hannian, respectively.⁴⁹⁵ In January 1938 Kang became a member of the CCP Tri-Area Special Services Committee (*Zhonggong Sanbian Tebie Weiyuanhui*), which convened to discuss anti-Japanese military work in the front line areas of Suiyuan, Shaan-Gan-Ning, and Inner Mongolia. Perhaps as a result, in March, Mao issued telegrams to army leaders including Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, He Long, Guan Xiangying, and Xiao Ke directing that they establish anti-Japanese bases and guerrilla operations north of Yan’an to deter the Japanese from further advancing toward CCP headquarters. That same month, Eighth Route Army guerrillas entered the Japanese rear area in Suiyuan, taking advantage of the over-stretched deployment of the

⁴⁹³ *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, pp. 17-18. Guisui was renamed Hohhot (Hehuhaote) in 1954.

<http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/292639223.html> and <http://baike.baidu.com/view/481492.htm>

⁴⁹⁴ Kuo, *Analytical History of the Chinese Communist Party, Book Four*, pp. 373-374. PRC works do not contradict this idea.

⁴⁹⁵ In Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 54, the author says that the commission “had full management of the Party’s intelligence and security work,” and that Zhou Enlai was the first chair of this commission for perhaps two weeks before he departed for the KMT area with Wang Ming. However, there is no mention of Zhou being associated with the commission in other works examined about the period. *Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, Zhou Enlai nianpu*, pp.392-396; and Gao Wenqian, *Wannian Zhou Enlai*, pp. 66-69.

enemy. The first guerrilla detachment entered Inner Mongolia, further to the north, on 29 July.⁴⁹⁶

In these areas close by to Yan'an, counterintelligence work was ramped up at the same time as intelligence tasking. Traitor Weeding Departments (*Chan chu hanjian bu*), probably locally accountable and not under CCP Intelligence, were established in Suiyuan (Autumn 1938), Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi (September 1939). In Daqingshan, which became an active CCP base area in Inner Mongolia, the Traitor Weeding Department pursued two general types of work. One was registering all itinerant peddlers working in the area, since Japanese and KMT intelligence was known to use them to gather information. Peddlers who were unregistered with the local CCP were not allowed to enter the Daqingshan Base Area. The second was interrogation of all peddlers and other travelers. The local self-defense forces and all mass organizations were charged with keeping a watch for any travelers staying on homes or hostels, and expected to question them about why they were in the area. In order to follow up according to expectations, the work committees at each level down to counties and townships were told to establish a Special Operations Unit (*Tewu Dui*) of between 20 and 50 people to investigate suspicious cases.⁴⁹⁷

This account indicates that, in the early days before the Rectification Movement, “traitor weeding” was assigned to local, non-professional people, though their selection and training may have been supervised by cadre from Yan'an. This might be considered an early example, albeit

⁴⁹⁶ Mao proposed a north-south defensive line from Daqingshan, 500 kilometres north of Yan'an, to Suide, about 100km NW of the communist capital. The defensive line was also to follow the Beiping-Suide Road. *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁷ “Daqingshan kangri youji genjudi shi zenme chuangaode?” [How is the Daqingshan Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Base Area Organized?], in *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, p. 35.

not the first, of programmatic recruitment of large numbers of people to do semi-mass-based intelligence or counterintelligence work that eventually led to so-called “actuarial” intelligence conducted outside of China to acquire Western technology and identify dissidents after 1949.⁴⁹⁸

The Central Social Department cadre from the party center assigned to the front line areas in Suiyuan, Shanxi, and Inner Mongolia appear to have focused on management and conduct of espionage duties—the gathering of intelligence. The effort to establish intelligence station networks was painstaking, dangerous, and subject to numerous setbacks: even though the Japanese were not everywhere, the intelligence stations were best placed amongst or nearby their forces, to facilitate fast reporting of critical information. The case of a Central Social Department officer named Zhang He, who was in and out of Japanese-occupied Guisui (Hohhot) three times from 1943-45, is an example that in some ways echoes others in mainland literature. At the same time, the account on which the following was based is from an unpublished history; it seems more frank and matter-of-fact than other openly published articles and books on intelligence work from the PRC, showing the care in which Zhang was trained and selected, and the tedious and careful nature of this work, with no fluff about heroics or fantastic successes.

Zhang He is not mentioned in other works and he has no internet profile—giving some perspective to the oft-used phrase “nameless heroes” (*wuming yingxiong*), referring to the thousands who performed intelligence duties behind Japanese and nationalist lines.⁴⁹⁹ Zhang was

⁴⁹⁸ “Actuarial intelligence” is the idea that assigning a large number of trusted collectors, none of whom are professional intelligence officers, to a target will result in at least one of them eventually obtaining the required information. Paul Moore, “Chinese Culture and the Practice of ‘Actuarial’ Intelligence,” http://www.asiancrime.org/pdffdocs/Actuarial_Intelligence_by_Paul_Moore.pdf

⁴⁹⁹ Zhang He [张和] took the name Zhang Youxin [张又新] after 1949. Like almost all of the hundreds of agents and junior to mid-grade intelligence officers named in *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, he has no internet profile either on the biographical web sites like Baidu, nor in general web searches.

a Shanxi native who entered the CCP in 1938 while assigned to the Eighth Route Army Liaison Office in Xi'an. In 1941 he was assigned to the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Area Police Political School as an assistant to the instructors. As he had attended high school in the Suiyuan-Inner Mongolia region during the mid-1930s, and had participated in an underground Red Pioneer (*Xianfengdui*) youth group there, Zhang He was selected by the Organization Department as a candidate for intelligence training in 1942, specifically for insertion to Guisui.⁵⁰⁰

Zhang was transferred to the Central Social Department's Zaoyuan intelligence school where he studied secret service techniques (*tegong jishu*), codes and ciphers (*mima xue*), and military knowledge (*junshi zhishi*). In February 1943 Zhang and a radio operator named Li Wucui departed Yan'an and passed through Xing County, Shanxi where they met with the Shanxi-Suiyuan Investigations Bureau to coordinate the clandestine route to be used into Guisui city, and establish liaison countersigns (*lianluo anhao*). In May they left accompanied by a Red cavalry unit for insertion near Guisui. Since Li had no "social relations" (relatives or friends) in Guisui, Zhang went in with him to establish his cover identity. Afterwards Zhang left and returned the next month under an assumed name, Zhang Ming, with a matching *Liangminzheng* (police clearance, 良民证), taking a job a postal worker. Li had found a job as a salesman and hid the radio in the household of a nearby sympathizer. However they were forced to withdraw to Yan'an in October 1943 when a network member was arrested by the Japanese Kempeitai (military police) and revealed all he knew of the network. After the surrender of Japan, Zhang returned to Guisui in November 1945 to take charge of anti-KMT "inner line" work to insert

⁵⁰⁰ *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, pp.164-65.

agents amongst the nationalist government and military⁵⁰¹ as part of a larger effort to revive that work in China's northwest—an operation to recover lost ground after the Salvation Campaign.

Daqingshan Intelligence Station at first focused on gathering basic information on enemy puppet military and police forces by obtaining their books and periodicals, understanding their strategies for conducting sweep (*saodang*, 扫荡) and anti-sweep operations, conducting liaison with friendly forces, and battling with Japanese special agents and the (hostile) KMT underground. They and communist guerrillas operated in an often flat but sometimes hilly and lonely terrain that afforded an advantage against the Japanese and the KMT troops of Fu Zuoyi. The Daqingshan Section's annual budget for 1943 was US\$30,000, and their work was guided only by the document "On Friendly Party Intelligence Reports West of The Yellow River" (*Guanyu hexi youdang huodong qingbao baogao*).⁵⁰² Though limited in guidance and facing harsh living conditions and a hostile operating environment, the Daqingshan section was successful, "acting like a window into the area puppet, KMT, and Japanese forces." In that same year their subordinate Suinan Intelligence Station managed to foil a plot by the KMT agents Zhang Guohua and Zhang Peizhen, using their cover positions in the local government, to foment a local rebellion. The Daqingshan Section managed to place 43 "*neixian*" (inner line, or penetration) agents into organizations such as the Baotou puppet police and intelligence bodies, Baotou and Guisui municipal area commercial organizations, the puppet Mongolian army's 18th division, the Nationalist Army's 22d Army, and transportation organizations all over the present day area of Hohhot.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 165-66.

⁵⁰² Ibid, pp. 48-50, 122.

⁵⁰³ Ibid, p. 47.

Beginning in the spring and summer of 1943 things became a measure tougher. In spite, or perhaps because, of living lives of hardship behind enemy lines, “many of these comrades were accused of being Japanese spies” when party and government organs began Cadre Examination. In 1943-44 Suiyuan and Inner Mongolia experienced the “recall to the rear area of all comrades except for local agents in the field (*diqude waiqin renyuan*).”⁵⁰⁴ An account of this period in asserts that

This was a mistake by those who were coordinating the cadre investigations (*shen'gan* 审干) — they were from the investigations bureau (*diao cha ju*) but were intellectuals from the White areas, and so because their experiences were different from those of the people in the field, there were things they could not understand or explain... Cadres came under investigation for ties to Japanese intelligence because of being associated with a particular agent in Datong named Sun. Wang Shukai (王树楷), one of the earliest agents dispatched to Suiyuan and Inner Mongolia, was accused of being connected to Sun and the accusations spread to include Zou Dapeng and Zhou Yi (周怡) of the Shanxi-Suimeng Investigations Bureau. As a result all intelligence operations of the Daqingshan qingbao chu ceased until the first half of 1945. Therefore, the time of greatest development in intelligence gathering (had to wait until) the enemy was about to surrender.⁵⁰⁵

It is hard to explain why urban intellectuals from the White areas—the very targets of cadre investigations in Yan’an—were doing these inquiries, though it is possible that those under Kang Sheng tasked to pursue the campaign decided not to send illiterate or semi-literate uneducated peasants to investigate more educated people.

We should note that a trek back to Yan’an from Suiyuan in response to a recall for examination would take one or two weeks, while a trip back from Shandong or Guangdong was far less practical due to the greater distance and hazards of such a journey across occupied China. Alas,

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid, 47-48. Zou Dapeng recovered and was given a CSD job with military cover in Changchun until 1949, when he took up an intelligence related position on Zhou Enlai’s staff. Eventually he was assigned senior posts in the CCP Central Investigations Department, where he became a deputy director under Kong Yuan until he was purged with Kong in mid-1966 at the start of the Cultural Revolution. <http://baike.baidu.com/view/317322.htm>

no statistics are given on percentages or numbers of field agents who stayed in place versus others who were recalled to Yan'an for examination. Nor is there information about how many came back, and when. However, the impact on intelligence work nearer in to Yan'an appears to have been substantial.

The stultifying effect of the Salvation campaign seems to have discouraged cadres from getting involved in agent insertion operations until 1945, when the Party decided to force the issue and “volunteer” the unwilling, like it or not.⁵⁰⁶ “Inner line work” (*Neixian gongzuo*), referred both to agent insertion operations for ordinary espionage, and also to counterespionage operations⁵⁰⁷ (hinting at earlier training or at least doctrinal Soviet influence, “line” was Soviet jargon for “network” or “activity,” generally clandestine in nature⁵⁰⁸). During the early days of CCP Intelligence, the Central Committee Special Operations (CCSO, the *Te'ke*) in Shanghai, with the KMT and Concession police only a stone's throw away, “inner line” espionage and counterespionage work had been a staple of operations. For reasons that are unclear, though the materials just below offer some hints, during the Yan'an period this work was less resolutely pursued. The author of a 1944 critique noted that inner line work would be “the most important task of 1945...this tool can bring ‘knowledge of the self and the other, and a hundred victories from a hundred battles’.” He said that the failure to develop inner line agent insertions in 1942-

⁵⁰⁶ In April 1945 the CCP's Inner Mongolia Public Security Bureau published three specialist topic papers intended to revitalize espionage activity against the CCP's enemies. “Guanyu jiachang neixian gongzuo de zhishi” [Instructions Concerning the Strengthening of Agent Insertion Work]; “Guanyu fangshou kaizhan neixian gongzuo gei geji gonganjudu zhishi” [Instructions to PSBs at All Levels On Taking A Free Hand in Launching Agent Insertion Work]; and “Duiyu jinhou qingbao gongzuo de yijian” [Opinions Regarding Intelligence Work Henceforth]. *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, p. 122.

⁵⁰⁷ To partially recap from Chapter 1, espionage seeks to discover enemy secrets, while counterespionage operations are meant to disable an enemy service from within, usually using insertion agents. This distinguishes counterespionage from counterintelligence—catching the enemy's spies on your own territory, and taking other measures to prevent the enemy from learning your secrets. For definitions of and the distinctions between counterespionage and counterintelligence see Carl, *The CIA Insider's Dictionary*, pp. 123-124.

⁵⁰⁸ Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Firsov, *The Secret World of American Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 43.

1944 was “a major shortcoming.” The guidelines to get moving and recruit more inner line agents were:

1. As far as possible, pull cadre who are suited for this work, even going so far as to include those who only reluctantly will go, to send into the heart of enemy espionage organizations to be hard core inner line agents (*jigan neixian*). After they have made their choice they are given short term training for this project at headquarters, they will be directly sent in to the Eliminate and Protect organizations (*Chubao Jiguan*, nb: probably the successors to the Red Squads). Inserted agents will strictly avoid mixing with other agents from the CCP Underground.
2. Seek a reliable bridge (*xunmi kekao qiaoliang*) that can be used as connections, grant promises to make them gather intelligence. In the past, not enough of this work was done mostly because of lack of initiative, lack of flexibility, no tactical ability, no daring, no guts (*danzi xiao*), fear of being at a disadvantage, and unwillingness to dare to face enemy intelligence personnel. The result is no intelligence, and our espionage activities then become the enemy’s own property (*zhuan yongpin*).
3. As to the traitors (*pantu*) used by the enemy, we should treat them leniently and give them a chance to turn over a new leaf (*zixinde jihui*) to win them over, using encouragement and criticism to establish a relationship, appropriately encourage them to serve the revolution, and atone for one’s crimes by doing a good deed.
4. Of those arrested, we should find out who is willing to work for us, who would benefit us and are able. Even if they are of little ability or use, we will gain benefit from their numbers.
5. Our enemies know that the weakness of merchants is their desire for money. We should use this same knowledge to lure them in to our side.
6. The enemy continues to use those who confess to us and obtain yet more information. We should do the same, and persuade spies to reveal new work to us, and keep them permanently out of the control of the enemy.
7. Concerning field agent work (*waiqin gongzuo*), obtain people who are smart and flexible. Build up secret communications and contacts to better supervise inner line agent work.⁵⁰⁹

In the same document, laziness and inaction was cited as a barrier to moving forward to victory:

In looking back at our work over the years, different levels of comrades were defensive and negative, and had the tendency of routinism (*shiwuzhuyi*, nb: the style of paying excessive attention to petty matters instead of making long term plans, neglecting policies, principles, and political education) and were not positive in attention to elimination and protections work, which is important to inner line tasks. Let’s look at how the enemy services do their work. The Japanese and KMT, who used spy work to prop up their fascist rule, and even the so-called “hick” (*tubaozi*) Yan Xishan, had guidelines for spy work. For our liberated areas and in our

⁵⁰⁹ *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, pp.122-123. The same document carries a brief explanation on p. 214 that *chubao* meant protection of VIPs and rooting out traitors (*hanjian*).

organizations, we need “to establish as many Underground organizations as there are stars in the sky” (*jianli mantian xingde dixia zuzhi*).”⁵¹⁰

By April 1945, when the Allied victory in Europe was at hand, the Japanese and Kuomintang still were widely present in this theatre, but opportunities were apparent:

Enemy morale is low, and this is a good opportunity to recruit people as inner line agents. We hope that the different levels of public security bureaus don't again make the mistake of inaction...those who are engaged in elimination and protection work should make inner line work a first priority especially in towns and provinces along borders and provincial boundaries... grab the chance to seek cooperation from people like retired military, intellectuals, and primary school teachers, and all others who will fight for us, even obstinate cadres (*wanni gongzuode ganbu*). Give them simple training, and assign them to do the job. As we assign such cadre to do inner line work we may find that their thought and work style are not quite decent (*sixiang yu zuofeng bushen zhengpai*), and that they are not suitable for other jobs, but they have special skills to manipulate people (*gouxin doujiao*) and shatter the enemy.⁵¹¹

In this section we have seen how a region nearby Yan'an fared under the watchful eye of Kang Sheng: hundreds of officers sent from Yan'an strove to set up an efficient network of intelligence stations with communications to headquarters. When Salvation began in mid-1943, the campaigns were not conducted in enemy territory but officers were recalled to Yan'an and operations virtually ceased. By late 1944 espionage operations were revived, though some cadre were reluctant to participate: some perhaps because of the period of repression they had just witnessed, some out of simple fear of placing themselves in a high risk operation. Two other regions farther away from Kang Sheng provide a contrast, perhaps illustrating the limits of his control.

Wide Influence, Limited Control: Intelligence in East and South China

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, p. 123. Yan Xishan [Yen Hsi-shan] was the “model governor of Shanxi” who, with unusual political skill and tenacity, ruled the province from the end of the Qing Dynasty until 1949. Yan retreated to Taiwan with the KMT and was an advisor to Chiang Kai-shek until he died in 1960. Howard L. Boorman (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China, Vol. 4* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 47-50.

⁵¹¹ *Suimengqu gonganshi changbian*, p. 124.

To understand where CSD policy from Yan'an had strong influence, where it may have been ignored, and where the situation was rather in-between, it is necessary to go beyond the narrative of heroic Communists, cowardly Nationalists, and dastardly Japanese in accounts of the period published in mainland China. The situation is more nuanced when one examines specific local cases in this huge country. For instance, in at least one remote area, the Leizhou peninsula opposite Hainan, the Japanese briefly appeared in to sweep away any KMT military in 1938 but never returned to the villages. A witness of the time, whose account was not contested by his local Party authority as they listened in, said that his district was left to govern itself and that the CCP did not arrive until 1949.⁵¹² In the rural areas near Hong Kong, locally raised and developed CCP forces accomplished substantial infiltration and harassment of occupying Japanese forces, while in neighboring Fujian there was likely no success. Also, KMT guerrilla methods varied and substantially affected the environment for CCP Intelligence: in north China some units under Dai Li's Juntong, trained in special operations by the US Navy, operated with the sole purpose of disrupting the Japanese and communists, and sought no base amongst the surrounding Chinese populace; in the region just north of Hong Kong, the KMT established a permanent guerrilla force headquarters that was more oriented to monitoring British and CCP activity than fighting the Japanese, and was not sufficiently disciplined to prevent subordinate units from turning to banditry against local peasants and travelers.

⁵¹² Author's interview with CCP committee members and village elders in Leizhou, near Zhanjiang, Guangdong during 2006.

After the 7 December 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan began withdrawing troops from China to the Pacific island front,⁵¹³ but senior Japanese officers were loath to give away hard won gains on the Chinese mainland. Thus, in a general trend, the Japanese became progressively more overstretched. Cities as large as Shanghai and as small as Weihai (the coastal town in Shandong) and Zhanjiang (Guangdong) remained occupied by Japan. However, some parts of the countryside, increasingly remote from the writ of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, came more firmly under communist influence. This allowed CCP military units to build support and eliminate enemies in base areas. Mao and Liu both believed that the suitability of a place as communist base area was due less to social conditions than tactical military considerations,⁵¹⁴ and so they attempted long term occupation where ever possible. That gave CCP Intelligence and the military the chance to establish the structure of CCP bureaus and sub-bureaus, including the intelligence stations (*qingbaozhan*) and work stations (*gongzuozhan*)⁵¹⁵ we discussed above. Military influence upon CCP Intelligence personnel, operations, and tasking grew. Their successes outside of Yan'an and its environs might have been an example for Li Kenong to follow when he took over CCP Intelligence in October 1946.

Whether intelligence stations with standardized operations were Kang Sheng's idea or not, their wide proliferation appears to be one of CSD's achievements. A comprehensive examination of all of China is beyond the scope of this project since materials are available only on certain regions, but the available evidence suggests Kang oversaw an effort to standardize operational

⁵¹³ Akira Iriye, "Japanese Aggression and China's International Position 1931-1949" in Fairbank and Feuerwerker (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 13*, p. 530-31; and Chan Sui-jeung, *East River Column: Hong Kong Guerillas in the Second World War and After* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), p. 83.

⁵¹⁴ Lyman Van Slyke, "The Chinese Communist movement during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945," p. 651.

⁵¹⁵ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 85; Akira Iriye, "Japanese aggression and China's international position, 1931-1949," pp. 529-31; and Lyman Van Slyke, "The Chinese Communist movement during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945," pp. 658-59.

methods and control over such a network. The stations in east and south China, though far from Yan'an, appear to have been started up by Central Social Department personnel sent from headquarters, or at least advised by them. However in spite of a Yan'an imprint on the wider intelligence station network, as the Pacific War began Kang and his headquarters organization gradually lost tasking, personnel, and operational control of the more remote stations.

Shandong and the Eighth Route Army

At the beginning of the Anti-Japanese War, CCP Intelligence and security elements followed the Eighth Route Army into Shandong and quickly set up support elements to do traitor weeding work and intelligence gathering. Wang Fang, who eventually rose to be Minister of Public Security in 1987, arrived in the summer of 1938 with a "Traitor Weeding Cadre Education Team" (*Chuhan ganbu peixunban*). That December he was appointed a Traitor Weeding Section Chief (*Chuhan kezhang*) and Director of Military Trials (*Junshi shenpansuo suozhang*). Writing nearly seven decades later when Kang Sheng had been vilified, Wang claimed that

When we began traitor weeding work, we used a Soviet model, keeping our work completely secret" and answering only to Yan'an—no military commanders could question their operations. After 1940, we began the 'clean-up' of Shandong. Under the ultra-left influence of Kang Sheng, we engaged in 'ruthless struggle and merciless blows (*canku douzheng, wuqing daji*)...mistakenly injuring many good comrades inside the Party.⁵¹⁶

By Wang's account, he saw his error when Liu Shaoqi visited Shandong in the Spring of 1942, examined these operations, and criticized the conduct of traitor weeding as being "ultra-left" in nature, after which traitor weeding was reined in.⁵¹⁷ However, this explanation seems too neat in

⁵¹⁶ Wang Fang, *Wang Fang huiyilu*, p. 14.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid, p. 14. Another problem is the date of Liu's visit, which Dittmer has in "late 1942." Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shaoqi and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Armonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), p. 17

attributing all errors to Kang Sheng, as if other leaders somehow remained uninformed, another indication of the “script” in operation. As we saw above in the discussion of the Yan’an Rectification and Salvation Campaigns, Liu was in agreement concerning the merits of struggle by weeding against traitors in 1942, which Kang introduced into the Rectification Campaign in December 1942.⁵¹⁸ An interview source of Teiwes and Sun offered a more plausible account that Liu Shaoqi criticized General Peng Dehuai after this same visit for not sufficiently emphasizing mass mobilization and rent reduction, both about as “leftist” as traitor weeding.⁵¹⁹

1942 was a year of severe pressure on the Eighth Route Army by opposing Japanese forces, partly because they had broken the CCP army code and were reading secret CCP military telegrams from about February 1941 to a year later.⁵²⁰ Though it is hard to find evidence that Peng Dehuai sought to retain control of centrally directed intelligence work in his area of operation, Peng was logically the most interested party of all in promoting unity in his local forces, effective command and control, and consolidation of strategic and tactical military advantage. Liu would not have opposed these things, but would likely have carried with him a centrist agenda, especially including the goals of the Yan’an campaigns.

Instead of being drawn into a confrontation, one source suggests that Peng finessed the problem by gradually winning over the junior CSD cadres dispatched to his area. Peng and his political commissar, who oversaw Eighth Route Army intelligence work, warmly welcomed the small unit of intelligence operatives sent to him from Yan’an in the Autumn of 1940. They began

⁵¹⁸ Peter J. Seybolt, “Terror and Conformity, Counterespionage Campaigns, Rectifications, and Mass Movements, 1942-1944,” pp. 52-53.

⁵¹⁹ Teiwes and Sun, “From a Leninist to a Charismatic Party: The CCP’s Changing Leadership, 1937-1945,” p. 358.

⁵²⁰ Kotani, *Japanese Intelligence in World War II*, pp. 21, 44-45; and Michael Lindsay, *The Unknown War: North China 1937-1945* (London: Bergstrom & Boyle Books, 1975), p. 62. Lindsay interviewed a former Japanese army source, as did Kotani.

research work over the new year, but at some point between May and July 1941 Peng and Luo's deputy chief of staff for intelligence, Zuo Quan, Peng's chief of staff, informed them that they were now working for the Eighth Route Army—and congratulations for that. The cadre are said to have been grateful.⁵²¹ Unfortunately there is nothing to confirm whether this was a power play by a general over some junior officers, or something else, but it does not make these CSD operatives look like a Gestapo or Kempeitai unit. At the time the Eighth Route Army general staff was working to drag as many qualified cadre as possible into dangerous “inner line” (*neixian*) agent insertion work, where they would be expected to pose as local residents in Japanese occupied areas and gather military intelligence.⁵²² These were solid intelligence tasks similar to those assigned by CCP Intelligence to its units in Suiyuan and Inner Mongolia two years later, hardly the stuff of purges.

While some personnel in Suiyuan or under the Eighth Route Army may have understood that they were contributing to an intelligence station network, a woman courier in the Shandong coastal city of Weihai performed similar work from 1942-45, but never heard of CSD and considered herself to be subordinate to the CCP Underground and the Eighth Route Army. The identity of her superiors in the Weihai Liaison Station (*Lianluozhan*) network were not revealed to Wang Xirong, and she hardly considered herself a spy, but she was observing, relaying reports, and delivering written materials, as well as delivering CCP organizational and propaganda materials and the occasional pistol.

My job was to run a communication line between the Station Chief (*jiaotong zhan zhang*), whose name was Sun Zu (孙组), and the other CCP Underground elements under his supervision. Of course I did not think this was his real name. There were more than 20 Liaison Points

⁵²¹ Zhao Yongtian, *Huxue Shuxun [The Distinction of Venturing into the Tiger's Den]* (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1994), p. 3.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, pp. 6-9.

(*lianluodian*) under the Station all around Weihai. My house was one of them, as it lay along the courier line between the liaison station downtown and the station chief's residence in the outskirts. He lived in the countryside at Yangting, where my mother was, about 30 km west-southwest from the Liaison Station (*lianluozhan*) in Weihai city... Eighth Route Army cadres would come to my house with messages for the Underground comrades in the city and I would carry these in, and carry replies out. These liaison points were mostly small shops. Our favorites were shoe stores, because people would come and go and not necessarily buy anything. Fruit shops were also used. CCP Underground operatives would visit these liaison points and pick up things that I had taken into the city, or would leave things that I might take out. They would also come for a number of other reasons, including instructions.⁵²³

Wang Xirong was an ordinary peasant woman of low standing who was called *Gengzi* from birth and until 1946, when she took a more standard three character name. Perhaps she is somewhat representative of those from the masses of rural people, the “nameless heroes” mentioned above, who were outraged by the Japanese invasion and joined CCP Underground and intelligence operations: even at age 92 when interviewed in 2008, it seemed like the war had changed her into an extraordinary person. Wang's war record was apparently so outstanding that her story became the basis for a popular film in 1978,⁵²⁴ which may account for the Dalian Municipal Government asking her if she would be willing to offer an interview to the author in 2008. However, there were thousands of others like her even in a place like Hong Kong, far from CSD headquarters and remote from any sizable communist military force.

Hong Kong Commando and Military Intelligence Operations

CCP Intelligence ran two broad efforts in Hong Kong, Macau and the surrounding area from 1938-1945: commando and military intelligence under the organization that was consolidated in

⁵²³ Interviews with Madame Wang Xirong, age 92, in Dalian, Liaoning, China, 17 and 30 August 2008. While residing in Dalian, municipal officials knew of my research interest in the history of CCP intelligence and underground work. They suggested that I meet Madame Wang, of whom they evinced some clear civic pride. Wang Xirong had not spoken about her experience during World War Two for decades, since *The Woman Courier* was filmed in 1978, and seemed pleased to provide her account.

⁵²⁴ *Nu Jiaotong Yuan* [The Woman Courier]. (Changchun: Changchun dianying zhipian chang, 1978).
http://www.56.com/u27/v_NDcyMTk1ODQ.html

1942 and named the East River Column, and an urban agent network directly controlled by Pan Hannian. We will discuss the former here and the latter in a subsequent section.

Yan'an exerted strong control over the Underground operations in Hong Kong with a team led by Liao Chengzhi, who was chosen in October 1937 by Zhou Enlai and approved by Mao to start the Eight Route Army Liaison Office there. Mao gave Liao three priorities: publicize to the outside world the anti-Japanese stand of the CCP and its forces; prompt overseas Chinese and sympathetic foreigners to contribute money and materiel to the cause; and compile information on the latest developments in international affairs (*guoji zuixin dongtai*).⁵²⁵ His team included Zhang Weiyi, an older and more experienced cadre, who was picked a year later by Pan Hannian to run the CSD intelligence network in Hong Kong.⁵²⁶ Liao arrived in Hong Kong in January 1938 after Zhou Enlai's negotiations with the British to establish an Eighth Route Army Liaison Office in Hong Kong. The British wanted the office to stay clandestine to avoid attention from the Japanese and KMT, while the CCP wanted as open an operation as they could manage. The two sides compromised by agreeing on a semi open arrangement where the CCP's office would be hidden from public view, albeit in a busy part of Hong Kong at 18 Queensway, Central.⁵²⁷ The establishment later adopted the business name of Yue Hwa, which survives today as the famous mainland Chinese department store chain.

In 1938-39 Liao fostered "Return to Hometown Service Teams" in Hong Kong and nearby localities in Guangdong, with the object of gathering as many people of military age as possible.

⁵²⁵ Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi Zhuan* (The Biography of Liao Chengzhi; Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 2006), pp. 43-44.

⁵²⁶ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 93.

⁵²⁷ Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi zhuan*, pp. 44 and 91.

In the months leading up to the Pacific War during 1941, these became consolidated into the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade, with a main detachment, a marine unit, a logistics unit, couriers, and an intelligence organization. The last two had a higher percentage of women than did the combat elements. The intelligence workers were unarmed agents stationed around the New Territories and Kowloon, some of whom were passive observers sending reports of enemy activity, and some of whom sought opportunities to work amongst the Japanese army and puppet forces. The East River People's Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Column (*Dongjiang renmin kangri youji zongdui*) was founded from these organizations in February 1942.⁵²⁸

At the start of the Pacific War, Yan'an passed instructions to the East River Column. They should establish an underground evacuation route to remove Chinese friends of the CCP under the United Front policy, including left personages like the writer Mao Dun and some KMT officials; evacuate British government officials who remained at large and later some prisoners from the Japanese internment camps, and the occasional Allied flyer; develop intelligence on Japanese army units, ship movements, and plans; and pursue limited guerrilla attacks against Japanese transport links and isolated units.⁵²⁹ Just as Japanese units in other parts of China were stretched and could not cover every square mile of occupied territory, so in this region Japan could only secure Hong Kong Island and urban Kowloon. Parts of Kowloon and virtually all of the Crown Colony's New Territories were frequented or controlled by guerrillas of the East River Column, especially at night.⁵³⁰ By 1944 the East River Column had established a network of intelligence stations and subordinate intelligence points, just as the CCP had done in northern

⁵²⁸ Ibid, pp. 142-145; and Chan Sui-jeung, *East River Column* (Hong Kong University Press, 2009), pp. 41-43.

⁵²⁹ *Kangri zhanzheng shiqide Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun* [The Chinese People's Liberation Army During the Anti-Japanese War] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1953), pp. 169-172; and Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi zhuan*, pp. 127-131, 145, 150.

⁵³⁰ Chan Sui-jeung, *East River Column*, pp. 41-43, 50, 51-55.

China, which commanders used to gather information on the Japanese which was passed on to the British and employed to generate targeting data for UK and US bombing raids. This activity was the product of cooperation between the British Army Assistance Group (BAAG) and the CCP, and fostered by Zhou Enlai in his discussions with the British ambassador in Chongqing. While approved in Yan'an (and the subject of much consternation amongst KMT officials), the cooperation was driven in part by the enthusiasm of Zeng Sheng and his cadre in Hong Kong on the one hand, and BAAG on the other, to pursue common tactical goals like military training and successful bombing raids, and strategic objectives such as tying down Japanese troops who might have been used elsewhere.⁵³¹ BAAG officers observed that East River Column guerrillas were superior in skill if not numbers to nearby KMT units: more adept at infiltrating Japanese units to gather intelligence useful to the British and Americans in planning bombing raids and the eventual Allied liberation.⁵³²

We have seen that Liao Chengzhi led the CCP's Underground efforts as senior Party cadre, and built a local commando force. Yan'an ordered him to withdraw in December 1941, and Liao established a remote headquarters about 150 kilometers to the north,⁵³³ probably intending to remain in the region, while staying mobile in order to avoid capture. However, three KMT Zhongtong agents apprehended Liao on 30 May 1942.⁵³⁴ Up until that time, the orders of Yan'an seemed to have been strictly followed: when East River Column guerrillas retreated from the KMT in the face of overwhelming force in 1939, Yan'an ordered them to move back toward Hong Kong, and they complied in spite of the danger. However, Liao's capture left the East

⁵³¹ Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi zhuan*, pp.129-131; *Kangri zhanzheng shiqide Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun*, pp. 172-173; and Chan Sui-jeung, *East River Column*, pp. 17, 63-64, 83-84.

⁵³² Chan Sui-jeung, *East River Column*, pp. 50, 57-61; and Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi zhuan*, p. 149.

⁵³³ Near Lechang, Shaoguan County. Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi zhuan*, p. 153.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 139, 143-147, 149-151, 152-153; and Chan Sui-jeung, *East River Column*, pp. 20-23.

River Column without a representative from the Party Center. They were led for the rest of the war by General Zeng Sheng, a more locally oriented Cantonese CCP leader who appears less closely tied than was Liao to Yan'an.⁵³⁵ Now on his own, Zeng appears to have been operating with combat utility uppermost, completely unaffected by the Rectification and Salvation Campaigns: no mention of recalls to faraway Yan'an to face struggle sessions, not even any study sessions to pursue self-criticism.⁵³⁶ These sources note no orders from Yan'an, so another possibility is that CSD considered the East River Column to be too far away to deal with during Salvation. It is possible that practical local requirements and distance from headquarters combined to somewhat insulate Hong Kong from the Yan'an campaign.

Pan Hannian's Urban Networks

Pan Hannian (1906-1977), was one of the three most senior leaders⁵³⁷ of CCP Intelligence during the Anti-Japanese War and the subsequent Civil War ending in 1949. As we saw in Chapter Five, he and Li Kenong did double duty as senior negotiators with the CCP's enemies. While his boss, Kang Sheng, set up the CSD apparatus in Yan'an and the military's areas of operation, Pan started separate clandestine efforts in foreign occupied cities including Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjin. Pan's talented efforts building secret networks is worth a separate book in itself (as is currently being prepared by an able scholar).⁵³⁸

In April 1939, when Pan had just taken up a senior administrative position in CSD, he needed the attention of an eye specialist. Travel for this was contemplated, and in an unclear sequence of

⁵³⁵ Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi zhuan*, p. 145.

⁵³⁶ Chan Sui-jeung, Wang Junyan, and *Kangri Zhanzheng Shiqi* describe the period at various levels of detail, including extensive interviews by Chan. However, none of these sources mention anything about the Yan'an campaigns having any impact at all on East River Column forces.

⁵³⁷ Pan became one of two CSD Deputy Directors (*Fubuzhang*) along with Li Kenong under Kang Sheng.

⁵³⁸ Dr. David Chambers is the author of a forthcoming biography of Pan Hannian.

events Kang Sheng decided to permanently station Pan in Hong Kong to run all operations there and in Japanese occupied territories. The breakdown of responsibility was:

- CSD urban networks in Japanese occupied areas under Pan;
- The intelligence stations and operations in the KMT occupied cities, including those based in the Eighth Route Army liaison offices under Li Kenong;⁵³⁹
- Military intelligence organs, including signals intelligence under Zeng Xisheng;
- CSD bureaus answering to both Kang and the local CCP Committee.

While intelligence tasking to these four strands was handled separately, Kang and the Committee for Work Behind Enemy Lines fostered cooperation amongst them at the local level. All four sets had separate “single lines of control” (*danxian lianxi zhidao*) to minimize compromise of the network in case one or more persons were captured. These single lines in theory led up to one point, CSD headquarters and Kang, though as we saw above, his control of parts of the network in the army base areas remote from Yan’an was gradually lessened by local commanders. The same may have been true of the provincial committee resources, but further research is needed to validate this idea.⁵⁴⁰

Before December 1941, Hong Kong was a “heaven on earth for spies” as Hao puts it: a free port requiring no visa for entrance of passengers, and an operating base for CCP, KMT, Soviet, and American agents.⁵⁴¹ After the outbreak of the Pacific War, access to the outside world was cut off, and Hong Kong lost that advantage as the base for an intelligence network. Though some

⁵³⁹ “Ge genjudi yiji suozaidi de junshi zhihui xitong ye dou you zijide qingbao gongzuo bumen” [Every base area and its military support system has its own intelligence work department]. Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 92; Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 59-60.

⁵⁴⁰ Wang Junyan, *Liao Chengzhi zhuang*, p. 44; and Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp. 90-92.

⁵⁴¹ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, p. 123.

operatives stayed behind, most transferred out of Hong Kong to several places including Shanghai. As one of the concentrations of Japanese power in China between 1937 and 1945, Shanghai might seem to be a poor choice, but the heavy Japanese presence also meant more information valuable to the CCP's survival could be found there. Perhaps the other advantages were the large population of Chinese people who had suffered terribly under Japan and could be useful as sympathizers, and the more complicated atmosphere of a lingering foreign presence which, though suppressed, took up significant Japanese enforcement attention that might otherwise be focused on local people.

In 1939, Pan Hannian was watching for an opportunity to infiltrate Wang Jingwei's new intelligence headquarters at No. 76 Jessfield Road in Shanghai when Li Shiqun, the deputy for the puppet government's intelligence under Ding Mocun, passed word to the CCP underground that he was interested in providing intelligence. Li may have had plenty of contacts on all sides (he had defected from the communists to the KMT Zhongtong in 1932, and then went over to the Wang Jingwei puppet regime in the fall of 1939),⁵⁴² but he requested as liaison a particular woman named Hu Xiufeng. She was a family friend who could come and go at his residence without arousing suspicion, saving Li from awkward explanations or the impossible task of clandestine meetings outside his tightly restricted movements. Pan was unable to obtain Ms. Hu's agreement but discovered that her sister, Hu Xiumei, was a CCP Underground operative in Shanghai living under the alias Guan Lu.⁵⁴³ The way which Guan Lu was brought into the operation illustrates a relatively efficient, developing bureaucracy in the CCP's secret organizations and their attention to keeping underground and intelligence separate wherever they

⁵⁴² Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, p. 429.

⁵⁴³ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 119

coexisted—a long way from the freewheeling days of the CCSO and the dog beating squad. Guan Lu was first transferred to Pan’s organization under the CCP Southern Bureau—a move perhaps intended to cement discipline into the equation—and brought to Hong Kong for a briefing by Pan. Liao Chengzhi was present to lend the Underground’s authority to the venture. Guan Lu returned to Shanghai, now handled only within CSD channels with no more Underground contacts. She made regular visits to Li Shiqun’s household:⁵⁴⁴ the curious could be told, correctly, she was a family friend, or even be led to believe that she was Li’s mistress, therefore Guan Lu was almost perfectly “backstopped”.⁵⁴⁵ Guan Lu visited at mealtimes, had tea, played cards, and generally socialized, but her instructions were not those of a femme fatale. Pan told her to speak as little as possible, and listen for any information dropped in her presence by Li which would be meant for her to report back to Pan.”⁵⁴⁶ She did not live in the household, but always returned home in the evenings to make reports to Liu Shaowen’s CSD operatives about what she had learned, including things Li purposely said in her presence.⁵⁴⁷

Guan kept up this routine until the spring of 1942. Yan’an decided to move her to employment with the Japanese, probably assisted by Li Shiqun. She eventually joined a high profile effort under the “Greater East Asian Cultural Representative Conference” to covertly build evidence against Chinese traitors for use after the war. Unfortunately, Pan Hannian’s 1955 arrest due to his meeting with Wang Jingwei in 1943 led to accusations against Guan which rolled over to the

⁵⁴⁴ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 120.

⁵⁴⁵ *Backstop*, from the FBI Glossary: “The arrangement made by documentary or oral means to support a cover story so that inquiries about it will elicit responses indicating the story is true.” Carl, *CIA Insider’s Dictionary*, p. 46.

⁵⁴⁶ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, p. 121

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 121.

Cultural Revolution and an eight year imprisonment. She was finally rehabilitated in 1983 in a statement affirming the legitimacy of her activities on behalf of the Southern Bureau.⁵⁴⁸

Pan worked during 1940 to develop networks in Hong Kong and Shanghai and make them “intelligence strongpoints.” People inside CCP intelligence nicknamed the resulting organization “The Pan system” (*Pan xitong*).⁵⁴⁹ His network in Hong Kong developed information confirming about a week before the fact a previous Chongqing report of the impending German invasion of Russia, though the report took until the 20th to reach Yan’an. The invasion came on 22 June 1941.⁵⁵⁰ These reports were supposedly fed to the Comintern and Stalin, who did not accept them as credible. After the invasion began Pan’s networks determined that Japan intended to push into the south Pacific and Southeast Asia and not advance north toward the Soviet Union, a report that was more welcomed by Moscow.⁵⁵¹

In the meantime, CCP Intelligence networks in Chongqing also were showing successful results, including a damaging penetration of the Zhongtong’s signals intelligence apparatus.⁵⁵² The discovery of this network had a significant impact on KMT operations, causing Dai Li to turn to the Americans for assistance in modernizing his organization’s counterintelligence work. He reached agreements with the US that led the Americans to assign intelligence officers from the

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 122-123.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 126-127.

⁵⁵⁰ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, p. 430.

⁵⁵¹ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian de qingbao shengya*, pp. 131-135; 139.

⁵⁵² The network, discovered by the KMT in February 1942 in Chongqing, showed the depth of the communist’s penetration in this priority area. This seven person CSD ring worked in the KMT’s Telecommunications Central Station (*Dianxun zhongtai*). One member was a KMT Lieutenant Colonel, Feng Chuanqing, who commanded a 24x7 SIGINT operation with hundreds of radio intercept positions and perhaps a thousand operators. The network was headed by Zhang Luping, a young woman who was sent from Yanan by CSD in the winter of 1939. She reported directly to Ye Jianying, then based at the CCP liaison office in Chongqing. Shi Wenqi, *Zhang Luping Zhuan* [Biography of Zhang Luping] (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1985), pp. 114, 132, 138, 142, cited in Maochun Yu, *OSS in China*, pp. 43-44.

US Navy and the OSS, and experts from FBI and the Narcotics Bureau as advisors to the Nationalists.⁵⁵³ That cooperation would be interrupted in the last stages of the Chinese Civil War (1947-1949) after the failure of the Marshall Mission, but renewed for decades with the start of the Korean War in 1950.

We have reviewed a complicated situation: mounting paranoia amongst the CCP's top political leadership, which led to disruption at the Party's Yan'an headquarters that involved CCP Intelligence. Conversely, more successful operations further afield from Yan'an underlined the intelligence successes of the CCP (in spite of the shenanigans at headquarters) which contrasted with the declining abilities of the Nationalists. In short, the tide of the intelligence war had turned in favor of the Communists, whether or not the CCP's elite political leadership realized it. How much did the Chinese Communists owe to their Russian patrons for these achievements?

A Review of Russian Influence, 1930-1945

Soviet military intelligence, the GRU, may have been the most successful such organization, Chinese or foreign, in China before 1949. As we saw in Chapter Three, the raid on the Soviet Embassy, Beijing in April 1927 revealed extensive GRU networks in China. GRU's mission was concrete and relatively uncomplicated by politics, focused on measuring the relative strengths of KMT, CCP, and Japanese forces, and defining Japanese intent: would they try to advance north from China into the Soviet Far East? GRU must have independently recruited Chinese people to become clandestine agents, but they also turned to the CCP to supply Party members for this role. In probably 1938, Deng Fa and Chen Yun selected 12 cadres for training and deployment as GRU agents. Perhaps a few months before September 1939, Peter

⁵⁵³ Maochun Yu, *OSS in China*, p. 44.

Vladimirov, the Soviet GRU officer discussed above, set up an “Intelligence Liaison Group” (*Liangong qingbao zu*) in Lanzhou, where the Soviets had a diplomatic mission. Either then or shortly thereafter, the Soviets sent a training group to Yan’an who gave instruction until at least 1943.⁵⁵⁴

Gao Qing was one of that group of 12 in Lanzhou, in October 1939. He and his comrades traveled to a military academy in Russia for just over one year of clandestine tradecraft, political subjects, and radio operation and maintenance.⁵⁵⁵ After graduation, GRU sent him to Chongqing to infiltrate the KMT. He would score big, gaining admission to the KMT Zhongtong and getting to know its head, Xu Enzeng (U.T. Hsu), rival of Dai Li. During this time, possibly late 1941, Gao met by chance Kong Yuan, whom he had previously known in the West Route Army in Xinjiang. Kong brought him to the Eighth Route Army Liaison Office in Chongqing. In conversation, Gao informed Kong that he was working for the Russians and expressed the strong desire to meet Zhou Enlai—and only Zhou Enlai would do. Dong Biwu, who like Gao was from Hubei, entered the room first and the two chatted in local dialect. Then Zhou entered the conversation. Before Gao had to explain anything, Zhou noted that he understood the situation: Gao’s Russian masters forbid him any “lateral contacts” with the CCP, but Zhou gently inquired if Gao would be willing to begin breaking that rule and consult with CCP Intelligence. Gao readily agreed, and asked who his contacts would be:

Zhou Enlai answered, “Telephone to Kong Yuan.”
“And in an emergency, if Kong Yuan is not in?”

⁵⁵⁴ Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 121-122; and “Kangzhan qijian Zhonggong neibu de ‘guoji jiandie’” [The “International Spies” Inside the Chinese Communist Party During the Anti-Japanese war], at *Mingjing Lishi* [Mirror of History], http://www.mingjinglishi.com/2012/07/blog-post_3958.html

⁵⁵⁵ In Chinese, “Dalasuofukaya” Academy (达拉索夫卡亚军校). Yu Tianming, *Hongse jiandie - daohao bashan* [Red Spy – Code Name Bashan] (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1993), pp. 36, 237-243.

“Wu Kejian of Xinhua Agency.”
“And if Wu is not in?”
“Pan Hannian!”⁵⁵⁶

While he continued to secretly work for the Russian GRU inside the KMT’s Zhongtong, Gao had the codename *Bashan*. He may have been a rare case: one PRC source indicates that only some, not all, CCP members lent to GRU played this double role, for which Gao was clearly a volunteer, albeit cleverly brought along by Kong Yuan. KMT counterintelligence official Mao Renfeng, head of the KMT Secrets Preservation Bureau (Baomiju), learned of the existence of a communist agent or network codenamed *Bashan* and conducted a hunt for them. He caught some members, but not Gao Qing.⁵⁵⁷ As to the CCP-Soviet relationship, given that Zhou Enlai was willing to quickly accept Gao Qing’s less than subtle walk-in, over which the Soviets would likely have been outraged, and the negative accounts of Vladimirov⁵⁵⁸ it seems possible that the relationship which was blooming in 1938-41 was in decline in 1942-43.

A final issue, opium growing, may not have hurt but probably did not help cooperation between CCP Intelligence and the Soviets. Again, one of Vladimirov’s disdainfully written observations plays in. His *Vladimirov Diaries*, as noted above, contained numerous observations which seemed outrageous when revealed in the 1970s. One allegation was particularly so, given the accepted nationalist nature of the Chinese Communist Revolution: that the CCP partly financed itself by growing and exporting opium. Vladimirov wrote that Ren Bishi briefed him in September 1943 on the “vanguard, revolutionary role” played by opium in the difficult economic situation, so that he could relay to Moscow the CCP’s “opium policy” and solicit their

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 242-243.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 555-557.

⁵⁵⁸ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, pp. 11, 40

understanding. Li Kenong, the CSD deputy director, played an important role by maintaining liaison with criminal secret societies in the KMT and Japanese areas in order to assure their cooperation in its safe passage and sale on their turf.”⁵⁵⁹ Research by Chen Yung-fa two decades after publication of the diaries confirmed this and more: that exports of the “special product” (*techan*) from Shaan-Gan-Ning were of significantly higher value than other products, and that while Mao considered planting of this “certain thing” (*mowu*) to be a mistake, that the CCP economy would have suffered a considerable setback without it.⁵⁶⁰

Conclusion

In 1943-44, intelligence personnel in the CCP’s Yan’an headquarters and in nearby Suiyuan and Inner Mongolia had been diverted in large numbers to duties related to the Rectification, Cadre Examination, and Salvation Campaigns. Many intelligence workers were also identified as targets. Once the Russians applied the brakes, in Gao Hua’s phrase, to Salvation over the 1943-44 New Year, Party leaders smarting over the Mao-Kang accusations against them might have seen (as one of many issues) a contrast in the effectiveness of intelligence work far away from headquarters, compared to nearby it. The more successful and active operations of the Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army, and the guerrillas in Hong Kong were not unaffected by the campaigns, but distance and military priorities provided some insulation. The evidence reviewed here indicates that Mao understood and approved the programs pursued by Kang Sheng that led to the debacles in Yan’an during the Salvation Campaign of 1943, and so did the other senior leaders on the spot: Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun, and Ren Bishi. Kang retained his position in CCP Intelligence as head of CSD until October 1946, though he lost political influence within the

⁵⁵⁹ Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, op. cit., pp. 100, 154, 218.

⁵⁶⁰ Chen Yung-fa, “The Blooming Poppy Under the Red Sun: The Yan’an Way and the Opium Trade” in Saich and Van De Ven (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, pp. 273-275.

Party. It is telling that Li Kenong, portrayed today as Kang's inevitable successor, was in Beijing during all of 1946 until the moment that he was recalled to Yan'an on 1 October and placed at the head of CSD. While Mao could have allowed Kang to remain in office just to "show who was boss" until yielding to the inevitable, his decision to suddenly bring Li Kenong back from Beijing suggests a snap decision for unclear reasons. Pan Hannian apparently was never a candidate for the job, remaining busily engaged in other duties.⁵⁶¹

After replacing Kang with Li Kenong, CCP Intelligence moved away from internal investigations to refocus on espionage. There is no direct evidence, but it is possible that Mao told Li Kenong to follow the military's lead in ramping up the deployment of "inner line" agents to penetrate the KMT, secretly acquiring the military, political, and economic intelligence needed for the final struggle with the Nationalists. This benefitted the communist forces as they fought against their better armed and larger foe, and may have speeded the CCP's 1949 victory as they continued to improve while KMT intelligence declined. In spite of all the damage caused by the 1942-44 campaigns, the Party ended the period in better shape to formulate its own policy and write its own doctrines with less Russian influence. Intended or not, the campaigns of 1942-44 also permanently affected CCP Intelligence, making it more secure than before from foreign influence—including their Russian patrons.

Kang Sheng was indeed a villain, but did he do anything which would credit an intelligence professional? Despite the turbulence of the Rectification and Salvation Campaigns, Kang Sheng moved CCP Intelligence away from its secret society, gang-like origins under the CCSO and

⁵⁶¹ Throughout 1946 he travelled at the direction of CSD—presumably this meant Kang Sheng—to set up renewed intelligence networks in Nanjing, Shanghai, Shenyang, and possibly other locations. Zhang Yun, *Pan Hannian Zhuanqi*, pp. 276-279.

PPB toward a more genuine national intelligence organization. Moreover, Kang was successful at maintaining secrecy. Though his methods were repulsive and carried a high cost to Yan'an society, he cultivated a highly resistant environment against KMT and Japanese agents.

He and his successors overlooked three glaring problems, however. First, from 1940 to 1944, for whatever reason, the KMT were reading some of the CCP's enciphered radio messages. Second, Vladimirov had secret meetings with a Politburo member, Bo Gu, who revealed sensitive political secrets that were sent on to Moscow. Third, the CCP's "internal line" work in nearby Shaan-Gan-Ning suffered during Rectification and Salvation, and would require a renewed effort in 1945-46. Available evidence suggests that Kang Sheng was never called to explain any of these problems.

As Mao Zedong directed CCP Intelligence away from hunting for internal enemies and refocused them on preparing for civil war, he also came to realize that the Americans were too close to Chiang Kai-shek to be an ally of the CCP. The postwar period would be the beginning of intense US involvement between the two sides that would lead to a new phase of the Chinese Revolution for the CCP, and its intelligence arm.

Conclusion

The Further Evolution of CCP Intelligence

In April-May 1945, Mao Zedong turned sour on the Americans,⁵⁶² perhaps realizing that they would find it politically difficult to not continue supporting their wartime ally Chiang Kai-shek, and could not be expected to assist the Chinese Communists now that Japan was near defeat. Four years later, on the eve of victory and already based in what would soon be called Beijing, Mao would explain in a formal essay that the CCP was “leaning to one side”⁵⁶³ to oppose imperialism and align itself with socialism, and with the Soviet Union.

In between, the KMT lost its significant advantage in men and arms partly because of the political and military prowess of the CCP, but also because of the KMT’s gradually mounting debilities.⁵⁶⁴ As has been well documented elsewhere, prominent among the KMT’s weaknesses during the civil war were organizational problems, factionalism, and corruption.⁵⁶⁵ For example, as Nationalist units took over from the surrendering Japanese, some returning KMT officials exploited opportunities to seize wealth and property for personal use. This became so common that the word *jieshou*, meaning to “take over” came to be used in a farcical sense as a homonym

⁵⁶² Mao Zedong, “The Hurley-Chiang Duet is a Washout” (7 July 1945), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume Four: 1941-1945*, p. 324. On 28 May 1945 four American intelligence officers were captured by Communist Chinese forces in Fuping, Hebei, in a matter that became known as the “Fuping Incident.” Within days the Central Committee issued an order to all units to arrest and hold any unauthorized Americans found anywhere. Maochun Yu, *The Dragon’s War: Allied Operations and the Fate of China, 1937-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), pp. 182-183. Six weeks before, on 10 April, Mao spoke to Vladimirov, venting his anger at Hurley after the latter’s Washington, DC press conference in which the US envoy expressed support for Chiang Kai-shek. Mao told the Russian that Hurley was “an imperialist.” Vladimirov, *The Vladimirov Diaries*, p. 387.

⁵⁶³ Mao Zedong, “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship: In Commemoration of the Twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Communist Party of China” (June 30, 1949), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume Five: 1945-1949*, p. 415.

⁵⁶⁴ John Dunn, “Conclusion,” in Saich and Van De Ven (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, p. 392

⁵⁶⁵ For an example, see Joseph Y.S. Yick, *Making Urban Revolution in China: the CCP-GMD Struggle for Beijing and Tianjin, 1945-1949* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 16, 48, 49.

with different Chinese characters meaning “plunder” or “take from the poor.”⁵⁶⁶ Such an atmosphere provided fertile ground for CCP Intelligence as they sought to more thoroughly infiltrate KMT military and political institutions.

While CCP Intelligence went into the civil war period with clear advantages over their KMT rivals, they started off being caught by surprise, as were even the Americans, by the sudden surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945. That day Li Kenong called an “emergency conference” of CCP Intelligence organs at all levels to redefine priorities for the postwar period. At a broad level, all units were instructed to seek information on KMT military armaments, movements, plans to reoccupy cities, and offensive strategies.⁵⁶⁷ The new situation created a high demand for more communist intelligence workers to respond to the need for information as the Nationalists re-occupied cities around China. As noted in Chapter Six, the Suiyuan-Inner Mongolia region next to Yan’an found itself with a lack of personnel who could be employed as “inner line” penetration agents due to the purges of the 1943 Salvation Campaign: as early as April 1945, CCP Intelligence leaders there were urged by headquarters to compel hesitant cadres to “volunteer” for this hazardous duty. Li Kenong paid personal attention to this problem on 16 October, when he gave a talk at the conference of the Shanxi-Suiyuan Public Security Bureau to discuss the “problems of changing direction in intelligence and reconnaissance work.” The Chinese Communist Revolution was entering the final struggle for dominance of the mainland, and one of the CCP’s surviving heroes of 1931, arguably Mr. Inner Line himself, had come to urge the meeting to increase efforts to recruit cadre into this dangerous but essential work.

⁵⁶⁶ Pepper, *Civil War in China*, pp. 8 n. 4, 36-41.

⁵⁶⁷ Kai Cheng, *Li Kenong*, pp. 266-267.

To fully contribute to victory, CCP Intelligence had to return to the basics, infiltrating KMT military and administrative units, and those of the former warlord Yan Xishan, in order to overcome the enemy's initial military superiority. A year later, after Li Kenong took over CCP Intelligence, he found it necessary to make similar exhortations to increase the pace of agent insertion work in the northeast (Manchuria).⁵⁶⁸ There, the CCP faced the sudden arrival of large Nationalist army units ferried in by US aircraft. They needed the inside information for each of these movements that only an inner line agent with ears and eyes inside the enemy's territory could supply: their intent, where units were headed, how many would arrive, and the details of their armament.

In the meantime, during 1945-46, Pan Hannian pursued the same goals of building intelligence networks in Shenyang, Shanghai, Nanjing, Hong Kong and possibly other cities. Pan also became involved in rebuilding underground work and propaganda work in these locations.⁵⁶⁹ Perhaps it was a measure of the increasing maturity of CCP Intelligence, and the Party itself, that this new influx of agents did not trigger another "rectification" during the civil war. They had gone overboard in cadre examination just two years before, plugged the gaps in the admissions process, and emerged scarred but an even harder target. Now, the CCP could focus on pushing forward to the last round of a fight to the finish with its Nationalist enemy.

While CCP Intelligence was busy with increased opportunities to recruit and develop agent networks, and Kang Sheng was still technically in charge, Li Kenong was diverted to another negotiation job. In January 1946 he joined Luo Ruiqing as an aide under Ye Jianying to the

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 267-268.

⁵⁶⁹ Yin Qi, *Pan Hannian Shengya*, pp. 185-187.

“Marshall Mission” (January 1946-January 1947) initiated by US President Truman to avoid a civil war in China.⁵⁷⁰ Li was charged with coordinating all communications, confidentiality, secretarial (*mishu*) and relief work for the communist side. In spite of this duty he continued to be fully engaged in managing nationwide intelligence efforts.⁵⁷¹ As Maochun Yu and others have pointed out, it was a peace mission that neither Chinese side wished to succeed,⁵⁷² ending after 12 months of continuous ceasefire violations.

No accounts so far examined confirm exactly why Kang Sheng stayed in office until 1 October 1946, though Li Kenong’s busy participation in the first nine months of the Marshall Mission may explain part of the timing.⁵⁷³ With the ill-fated US effort in its last stages, and military confrontation heating up, Mao may have considered October 1946 to be the right time for an overdue change in CCP Intelligence leadership.

In spite of the KMT’s initial military advantages, and what may have been a rough start for CCP Intelligence in some places, Li Kenong and Pan Hannian were already adept at coordinating the placement of agents on the Nationalist side. They achieved fairly comprehensive penetration⁵⁷⁴ of the KMT military and government from 1946-49. As they did earlier in the decade, the CCP

⁵⁷⁰ Ye Jianying ran the CCP mission to the “Executive Headquarters” a senior working group of intelligence and military officers to handle ceasefire violations. In Chinese it was called the Military Mediation Enforcement Division (*Junshi diaocha zhixing bu*, or *Jundiao bu* for short). Fan Shuo, *Ye Jianying zai guanjian shike* [Ye Jianying in Crucial Moments] (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 2001), pp. 197-200.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷² Yu, *The Dragon’s War*, pp. 192-193.

⁵⁷³ In Chapter Six I argued that Li Kenong was the only viable candidate to replace Kang, and that he remained in Beijing until 1 October 1946 when Mao recalled him to take up the leadership of CSD. There is some chance that Kang remained in charge of CSD until then, though his political power had been significantly curtailed after the Seventh Party Congress (April-June 1945) and many believe he was already out of office.

⁵⁷⁴ Chambers, “Edging in from the Cold: Chinese intelligence histories in the post-Mao era”.

continued to keep hostile intelligence services at bay in their occupied areas,⁵⁷⁵ a legacy that carried over into the People's Republic as outside services found it highly difficult to run agent networks on the mainland. By contrast, Chiang Kai-shek's chronic inability during World War two and afterward to control rival US intelligence operations and others by the British on Chinese soil further contributed to his loss of prestige.⁵⁷⁶ The situation may have assisted CCP Intelligence by allowing their operatives to argue to potential agents that the Communist Party would never allow non-Chinese spies to roam the country. As more people previously uninvolved in the civil war wished victory for the CCP and concluded that the KMT deserved defeat, the Nationalists gradually lost the ability to recruit and sustain support amongst the population—for intelligence operations as well as military ones.

A Hidden Role in Victory

Secret Successes

From the beginning, CCP Intelligence was arguably more clandestine than its opposition. While they were tracked by the KMT security services and those of the foreign powers, and a captured communist or a defector would occasionally let out details, CCP Intelligence operations, methods, and personnel were generally less understood than other like organizations of the period—a practice that may have originated with the Russians. This was arguably a major success by itself, because wide misunderstanding of CCP Intelligence methods and targets meant that countermeasures by opposing security services tended to be less effective. CCP Intelligence

⁵⁷⁵ More famous than the May 1945 Fuping Incident (footnote 1, above) was the killing of US Army Captain John Birch, an OSS officer, in Shandong on 25 August 1945, by a CCP military interception team. Captain Birch was attempting to contact a former collaborator general with whom the CCP was conducting negotiations. Yu, *The Dragon's War*, p. 183.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 197-198.

was so good at keeping themselves secret that for over a decade after the CSD was abolished in 1949, Western intelligence services thought they still existed.⁵⁷⁷

Another benefit of the security measures pursued by CCP Intelligence and the episodes of spy-catching and “Salvation” was, as briefly mentioned above, turning the Communist areas into extremely hard targets for KMT and other opposing security services. Though Kang Sheng’s tenure as Mao’s intelligence and security chief is now seen as a bad period according to the “script,” that cost might be seen by some in the authoritarian CCP as worthwhile. In 1941, when Mao’s position had become unassailable and Kang Sheng was in control of all intelligence and security, the CCP was well on the way to establishing a “counterintelligence state,” as the CPSU had done in Russia. CCP Intelligence and the Party’s other organizations made their base areas very difficult for hostile intelligence services to penetrate, and it became nearly impossible to maintain agent networks with radio communications to headquarters. They accomplished this between 1942 and 1949 by instituting intensive surveillance of public spaces, direct spying on persons with links to the outside world, and mass struggle movements that intimidated people from cooperating with any hostile intelligence effort. In addition, the enduring improvements made to background checks (cadre examinations) after 1944, and increasingly strict rules on protecting information meant that CSD left a legacy of China as almost too tough a nut to crack for Taiwan and Western intelligence after 1949.

Besides contributing to counterintelligence goals, and perpetuating the ruling party’s power, these hardening measures may have helped promote a personality cult of the leader. However, Mao in this sense was not Stalin: there was a notable contrast between the Russians and the

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with former US diplomat, 2005.

Chinese Communists that illuminates a basic feature of CCP Intelligence. The Russians employed a high quotient of coercive power wielded by their NKVD and its successor during the Great Purge (1934-39) and again after World War Two. Simply stated, the CCP also employed the coercive power of its intelligence and security apparatus for these purposes, but with only a small fraction of the lethality, and for much briefer periods. The spilling of blood in 1930 in Futian and other places, awful though it was, was as much due to military factionalism as politics, and anyway did not reach the height of Stalin's purges. Salvation, the worst period of the 1940s, was odious, destructive, and a setback for CCP Intelligence and the Party generally—but compared to the Great Purge in the USSR and the Futian period a decade before, it was mild. In the eyes of the Party leaders today, these excesses may be seen in a positive light, though they may also be abhorrent to others less accustomed to authoritarian sensibilities.

Organizational Development and Professionalization

In this sphere though, the CCP's tendency to embrace struggle as a way to solve problems did not promote progress. Unfortunately for CCP Intelligence, the insulation it might have received from a more moderate leader than Mao from the CCP's "struggle culture" was limited. Before Mao, this was less of a problem for CCSO in the cities. The small "Special Operations" group that started out in 1926-27 staffed mostly with strong young "knuckle draggers" was turned into a more versatile Central Committee Special Operations Branch intended to protect and inform the leadership. They fought and eventually lost the urban struggle, sustaining an unknown but certainly substantial percentage of casualties among their operatives in the process. At the time when this first formal CCP Intelligence organization was being bloodied in the cities, the Red Army's separate security organs were brought into a purge driven by Mao Zedong which was later condemned by Party historians as excessive, mistaken, and tragic. The survivors of both

who were brought together on the Long March must have sustained a high number of additional casualties. In the reorganization that followed, their rising value was evident by elevation of the new CSD as a major organ (*bu*, department) under the Central Committee. This new level of prestige did not instantly bring matching power, but their leader Kang Sheng's access to Mao Zedong and his adherence to Mao's program translated into an accumulation of offices and responsibilities, allowing for the Central Social Department to reach much farther down into the Party than its predecessor.

Had Rectification and Salvation not intervened, CCP intelligence might have continued its evolution uninterrupted toward becoming the highly effective organization it was by 1947. By then CSD had eyes and ears in numerous KMT organs, and had infiltrated US diplomatic missions in China. One of their agents was a local national employee of the American Consulate, Shanghai, Jin Wudai. He became the American citizen and CIA employee Larry Wu-tai Chin, one of the most damaging spies in that agency's history.

This is not to say that the civil war might have been more quickly ended without Rectification and Salvation. It is simply that they were detours that slowed the recovery of CSD after their significant casualties of the decade before. One outstanding element (the Salvation period excepted), was the focus in the 1940s on the practical requirements of victory. The renewed emphasis on useful battlefield and political intelligence after the surrender of Japan was not new—it had always been part of the mission. However this time, practicality would be more durable. This emphasis stayed with CCP Intelligence until 1949, when intelligence collectors were suddenly working for a nation, not a revolutionary movement, and Zhou Enlai suggested in

April 1950 adding economic and diplomatic intelligence tasking to the usual mix of military intelligence requirements.⁵⁷⁸

The Impact of the Political Scene

Struggle is again a key link. When Mao Zedong decided that the Party in Yan'an was vulnerable to enemies within because of an influx of new members, he might have turned to the Organization Department and Chen Yun, and called for a quiet acceleration of cadre screening. Technically, this was Chen's responsibility. However, as we saw above, Chen Yun himself seemed to urge alarm on this score, and was joined by Liu Shaoqi. Probably with their agreement, Mao turned to Kang Sheng to oversee the day to day work of cadre screening. Over the course of 1941-43, cadre screening turned into a manic spy hunt that completely disrupted life at the Communist headquarters and some points beyond, for CCP Intelligence and the larger movement.

This is not to say that political campaigns against enemies ceased after 1943. They remained a tool of the Party until the death of Mao. For example, land reform was renewed with vigor in CCP held areas during the civil war. However, from 1945, the Party used mass organizations to carry out such struggles. Unlike 1930 and 1943, they did not divert intelligence or security personnel to pursue struggle, nor struggle against intelligence workers, nor stress seeking enemies within the Party.⁵⁷⁹ Instead, CCP-led struggle after 1945 (and before the Cultural Revolution) tended to focus outward: in the civil war, partly on landlords or other people of

⁵⁷⁸ Li Ping, *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, p. 30.

⁵⁷⁹ The 1955 arrest of Pan Hannian might be thought of as an exception, as a struggle against intelligence people. However, it was a case prompted by Pan's confession of hiding his 1943 meeting with Wang Jingwei (Chapter Six). Afterwards there was a campaign of sorts to search co-conspirators among Pan's colleagues that had some, but not all, aspects of a political movement. The next time intelligence and security personnel were targeted was the Cultural Revolution, when almost no organization was safe. Thanks to Dr. David Chambers for his comments on this matter.

privilege perceived as enemies of the communist movement. Land reform was directed to benefit the Party's friends (the poor half of the peasantry) who could in turn be expected to help secure the countryside against a return to the old regime. That freed the army to focus on taking the cities, and winning the civil war. It also freed CCP Intelligence to keep its resources focused on the KMT enemy that would overrun Yan'an in March 1947—but not before a CCP agent on the staff of KMT general Hu Zongnan warned headquarters of the impending action.⁵⁸⁰ By this time, CCP Intelligence was all business, because the Party was all about achieving the fastest possible victory. Mao had unleashed CSD, partly for the pragmatic need to focus on victory, and probably because, by this time, he trusted them.

The Soviet Impact on CCP Intelligence.

While the influence of the Soviets on CCP Intelligence was present at the beginning, there seems to be no point at which imitation was attempted, except when the Political Protection Bureaus were founded in Jiangxi based partly on the Soviet Cheka. However, this brief period seems isolated. Even though the influence of the Soviets from the founding of the CCP was strong, it appears to have not been carried through to other aspects of intelligence and security except for training and mutual assistance. In the intelligence sphere, the Soviets trained CCP operatives, borrowed Chinese comrades for use in GRU networks, and set up a formal intelligence liaison in Yan'an. However, the structure of CCSO with its functional sections including a protection arm seemed tailored for Shanghai—it was practical, and suitable for the environment.

Fortunately for the “script,” Mao's ideas about acceptable security practices changed when he reached Yan'an, and this meant that any imitation of the Soviet secret police model was over with. By this time, Mao had been through political battles with Li Lisan and Wang Ming, both

⁵⁸⁰ Xiong Xianghui, who helped coordinate the 1971 Kissinger visit. Hao Zaijin, *Zhongguo mimi zhan*, pp. 358-360.

of whom paid more attention to Comintern instructions than Mao could stomach. Mao knew that the CCP needed the Soviet Union, but objected to Stalin trying to run the Chinese Party. Mao kept the Soviet structure out of his security apparatus while accepting their liaison and training. This is highlighted in the PRC's scripted histories. Less convenient to highlight is that Mao commissioned Kang Sheng to do the reorganization.

Soviet influence on CCP intelligence was increasingly indirect in the late 1940s and afterwards. While it is unlikely that Kang's successor, Li Kenong, totally ignored what Soviet advice was offered during the Civil War and the 1949-1959 friendship period, there was still no imitation or even emulation—just cooperation. The two sides would closely cooperate during the Korean War, but even then, there was no Chinese adoption of Soviet structure, and no use of secret Police to discipline the Party; with his prestige and the obligation so many felt for his stewardship of victory in 1949, perhaps a key explanation was that Mao did not need Stalin's pervasive terror apparatus.

Assessing the Major Figures and Their Hidden Failures

The good, bad, and ugly of CCP Intelligence history is highly personalized, and may be glimpsed in the organization's heroes and villains. Kang Sheng with his paranoia, plotting, and sense of mystery, plus the lethal assassin Gu Shunzhang with his instant betrayal and opportunism, are the dark side which are played over and over again in PRC literature. Party historians and others who wish to be published in the PRC today tell us that they were the evil which the Party has excised from the intelligence profession, and wishes to avoid ever repeating.

A sanitization of sorts has occurred in approved histories of CCP Intelligence. Zhou Enlai, Li Kenong, and Pan Hannian are offered as nearly pure examples of professionalism, virtue, and even humanity and kindness. Countless “nameless heroes” are cited as those who selflessly, if not thoughtlessly, sacrificed themselves for the future which is today—a China which is stronger than ever and will likely continue its rise in world affairs.

The major problems in today’s accepted “script” include these sanitizations, and the missing contributions of Kang Sheng in laying the foundations of the CSD. Another is the underrepresented mistakes and setbacks that reflect on decisions made by senior historical figures. Zhou Enlai and perhaps others for example: keeping the leadership too long in Shanghai when the game was clearly up; sending Gu Shunzhang on a dangerous mission with Zhang Guotao when Gu had countless secrets in his head and had displayed poor judgment; not keeping proper track of Xiang Zhongfa, allowing him to accept unreasonably high risk of capture for personal reasons; not completely cleaning up and reversing the excessive purge work of the PPB after Futian—and these were just the mistakes of 1930-31. Did Li Kenong really help direct the Long March *flawlessly* based on his immense skill? Did Pan Hannian always display perfect judgment in selecting agents? The script makes some of these things difficult to see, for all the whitewash.

The biggest elephant in the room to protect, though, is Mao Zedong. This study has attempted to place him and these other figures into better perspective regarding the successes and failures of CCP Intelligence during the Chinese Communist Revolution. As a core business of the Party, intelligence sat at the table with other major actors at the Party Center such as the military, the

Organization Department, and the Propaganda Department. Placing it there was an achievement of Mao, because when he “unleashed” them, CCP Intelligence advanced his knowledge of the enemy. In that sense, Mao might be thought of as a convert to intelligence.

Jiang Qing, Mao’s wife, famously said during her 1980 trial she was Mao Zedong’s dog; if the Chairman asked her to bite someone, she bit him. Kang Sheng played a role that was not dissimilar. With Mao’s hand firmly gripping the leash, Kang’s was a hidden role in the victory of the Chinese Communist Revolution. It is the darkest, and perhaps dirtiest, red corner inside the room that houses a previously forbidden history of how secret operations contributed to the CCP’s 1949 victory.

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