

this out. In retrospect, however, it is clear that the Soviet Union played a critical though still murky role in modern Chinese history by first supporting the Nationalists, then also supporting the communists, and eventually by abandoning the Nationalists.

This chapter will be a starting point for exploring the long, controversial and complicated issue of Chiang Kaishek and his attitude toward an alliance with the Soviet Union. It focuses on the early period and thus the origins of this evolving relationship between the Soviet government and the competing contenders for power in China. I will argue that Chiang Kaishek's opposition was actually a gradual process, beginning with the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident of 20 March 1926 and culminating in the nationalist purge of communists in April 1927. Chiang was not a staunch opponent of the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union from the very beginning. On the contrary, right after his 1923 trip to Russia until the March 20 incident, he consistently and even stridently supported the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union. His eager support even earned him the title, the "Red General" (Schiffin 1980: 260).

However, Chiang interpreted the appearance of a gunboat, the *Zhongshan*, in Huangpu as part of preparations by Wang Jingwei and the communists to kidnap him, and he responded by arresting certain communists. Afterward, he wavered until the nationalist purge of the communists on 12 April 1927, after which date he ceased to offer support for this policy. It is time to lay ideology aside and attempt to see Chiang not as a hero or as a villain but as a human being caught up in the powerful currents of imperialism, nationalism, civil war, and economic dislocation, and living in a period when China was trying to reconstitute itself out of the shambles of imperial China and somehow propel itself into modernity.

One important issue must be addressed. That is about the primary sources for the early period for Chiang Kaishek. Chiang always had the habit of keeping a journal. He commissioned his elementary schoolteacher, Mao Sicheng, to compile the extracts from his journal into a book. After Chiang Kaishek carefully examined and revised it, the book was published in 1937 as *Mr. Chiang Kaishek before 1926* (Minguo shiwanian yiqian de Chiang Kaishek xiansheng). In 1992 the Second Historical Archives in Nanjing published the *Manuscript for the Chronicle of Chiang Kaishek's Life* (Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao), based on the original draft by Mao Sicheng and including the parts which were deleted by Chiang himself. Before the *Chronicle* was published, Mao Sicheng's book had been the only available primary source for the study of Chiang's early life.

However, Chiang had the habit of revising his words, no matter whether they were published or not. If we check the *Chronicle* against his collections of speeches, published right before and after the Northern Expedition in China, or published abroad, we find that his more radical or more pro-Soviet words were either deleted or modified in the "Chronicle." In other words, even though the *Manuscript for the Chronicle of Chiang Kaishek's Life* has supplemented the parts deleted by Mao's edition, it is not complete, either. One should be cautious. These materials as well as the "Biographical Sketch" (Shilue) and "Notes of

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A REASSESSMENT OF CHIANG KAISHEK AND THE POLICY OF ALLIANCE WITH THE SOVIET UNION, 1923-1927

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Introduction

There is no doubt that Chiang Kaishek played a pivotal role in modern Chinese history, yet there is little agreement among historians in the West, Taiwan, and in the People's Republic of China on the nature of his role. The West, possibly unduly influenced by the clarity of hindsight ("Chiang lost China"), often seems to follow the wisdom of the Chinese proverb "The winner is the king and the loser, a villain" (*Chengzhe weiwang, baizhe weikou*), casting Chiang in an unvarying negative light.¹ In this vein, Harold Isaacs, in his influential book, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, went so far as to accuse Chiang of being a "traitor to the revolution" because of his purge of the communists in 1927 (Isaacs 1961). In contrast, until recently, historians in Taiwan have always portrayed Chiang as a great man in modern Chinese history (Li Dongfang 1976; Tang Chengye 1980; Lu Shipeng 1987). After the lifting of martial law, a long-suppressed view of Chiang Kaishek appeared, which focused on his moral, military and political failure. With the exception of Huang Renyu, who portrayed Chiang in a more sympathetic light (Huang Renyu 1994), the accusations made against Chiang conjure up an image of cruelty, hypocrisy, ineptitude and greed for power.² The pendulum has simply swung from one extreme to the other. In mainland China, after vilifying Chiang for decades,³ a surging revisionist school now portrays Chiang Kaishek in a more positive light (Song Ping 1987; Yang Shubiao 1989; Yang Ruping and Zheng Zeming 1992; Zhang Xianwen and Fang Qingqiu 1996). They may not completely put aside ideology, yet they acknowledge that Chiang Kaishek played some positive role in the 1911 revolution and the two united fronts.

There is one area, however, where most Taiwanese and mainland Chinese scholars generally agree. They agree that Chiang Kaishek was concerned about the future of Sino-Soviet relations or was against a policy of alliance with the Soviet Union from the very beginning.⁴ The available new sources do not bear

Obstacles and Encouragement" (Kunmianji), which are part of Chiang's papers,⁵ all must be used with discretion. It is also advisable to check them against the early collections of Chiang's speeches. The contents of these collections may differ from one another, but they are still very valuable primary sources.⁶

Chiang Kaishek's visit to Russia and his report on the trip

In 1919 Sun Yatsen renamed his party, the Chinese Revolutionary Party, as the Nationalist Party (Guomindang or GMD) and in 1921 he established a government in Guangdong province in opposition to the government in Beijing with himself as the President Extraordinary. Since 1920, Sun Yatsen had been in contact with the Russians in pursuit of support for his unfinished revolution. Meanwhile the Communist International (Comintern) at its Second Congress passed resolutions to shift its revolutionary focus from Europe to the East. Just when Sun was looking for help from Moscow, Moscow was looking for revolutionary partners in China. Once the Soviet authorities had dismissed the northern warlord Wu Peifu⁷ as a possibility and once Sun Yatsen had given up hope of receiving aid from Western nations, both sides increased their contacts and seriously considered cooperation.

In Shanghai in 1920 Sun Yatsen met a former Tsarist army officer, A.S. Potapov, who had supported the Soviet regime after the revolution. Although Sun did not believe that Russia could successfully implement communism, he wanted Potapov to send his greetings to Lenin. Potapov persuaded Sun to dispatch representatives to Russia. Sun told Potapov that in August 1921 he intended to send Liao Zhongkai and General Zhu Zhixin, Sun's military liaison officer, to Russia.⁸ When Sun's plan of sending representatives to Russia was coming to fruition, Liao Zhongkai was too busy to leave and Zhu Zhixin had been assassinated. Since the purpose of the mission was mainly to seek for military aid, Chiang Kaishek seemed to be the only available qualified candidate who was sufficiently knowledgeable about military affairs. On 21 November 1922, Chiang was informed by Sun Yatsen, that he would be leading a mission to Russia to focus on its military and party system.⁹

Because Chiang Kaishek was heavily influenced by Wang Yangmings and Zeng Guofan's line of thought, and because Chiang's policy became more and more conservative after his purge of communists in 1927, this has added to the impression that he had been a conservative from the very beginning and that he had nothing to do with radical ideas of the May Fourth Movement.¹⁰ This was not the case in reality. Chiang Kaishek belonged to the May Fourth generation, too. Chiang was not only deeply concerned with the fate of China but also read such progressive magazines as *New Youth*, *New Wave*, and *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi*) in order to study the new currents of thought. For a time he was even a believer in anarchism.

Before the 1917 October revolution that brought the Bolsheviks to power in Russia, Chiang Kaishek had considered Russia to be one of the imperialistic

powers which had oppressed China. After the revolution, his attitude changed. Like many other young people of the May Fourth period Chiang also desired to go to Russia to see the new country and in 1919 he began to learn Russian. In 1921 he proposed that Sun Yatsen should learn from Russia. He concluded that only by learning from Russia could China become a strong country and expel the imperialist powers. He believed it was important to imitate the Soviet's solidarity within the party and its worker-peasant military system while adjusting it to suit the nature of the Chinese army. His ambition was to reform China. In his mind, going to Russia was a necessary first step.¹¹

Chiang Kaishek's enthusiasm for Soviet Russia is clear from his strong defense of the new regime in his 1922 booklet, "Record of Grand President Sun's Encountering a Coup by Chen Jiongming in Canton" (*Sun da zongtong Guangzhou mengnanji*). He believed that those who considered the Bolsheviks to be evil did not understand the Soviet Union. Instead, he stressed the merits of Lenin's government and organizations. He contended that the Russian government was not anarchistic; the New Economic Policy had changed Russian communism. It had adopted state capitalism and allowed private ownership. Because many Chinese were not aware of these changes, they criticized Russian communism for being too radical.¹² It is worth noting that the system he admired was the New Economic Policy which loosened up the practices of war communism. The latter had promoted nationalization, wages in kind, and forced labor.

Chiang Kaishek wanted to travel in Russia not only because he was fascinated by the new country and its institutions, but also because he was very disappointed in current politics in South China. This disappointment was expressed on 13 July 1923, in a letter to his friend, Yang Sukan (Cangbai), Secretary of the Sun Yatsen administration. He told Yang that he was frustrated at losing Chaozhou and Shantou to Chen Jiongming¹³ and worried about the difficulty of eliminating Chen's army in Dongjiang county. Because of these losses, it was impossible to consider Guangdong as the base of the GMD. He was afraid that if he did not leave as soon as possible, he would insult old comrades. This would be bad for both work and personal relationships. He believed that his talent lay not in acting as a staff member for consultation, but in acting as a commander in the military sphere. Since there was nothing he could do in Guangdong, he hoped he would be able to go to Europe: "If I am not allowed to go to Russia, I shall only be able to stay here passively minding my own business."¹⁴ On 5 August 1923, Chiang Kaishek met the Comintern representative, Maring (real name H. Sneevliet), in Shanghai and prepared to organize the Dr. Sun Yatsen's delegation.

On the same day Chiang drafted a proposal to the Soviet party leaders. In addition to his formal military proposal from Sun to build a military base in northwest China, the draft also discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese revolution and its future military development. In the draft Chiang mentioned that the repeated failures of the Chinese revolution were due to the

lack of an army. The failure of the Chinese revolution would affect the long-term future of world revolution. Although he noticed that the success of the revolution depended both on military effectiveness and propaganda, the most urgent task for the time being was to use a trained army to eradicate the warlords and imperialist powers. The draft implied that the Chinese revolution was part of the world revolution and that the cooperation between the Nationalist party and the Soviet Union would be mutually beneficial.¹⁵ Despite many comments to the contrary, it is actually not surprising that Chiang, like so many others of his generation, showed a great interest in traveling to the Soviet Union in order to see an anti-imperialistic version of modernity in operation. From the October Revolution up until his visit to Russia, his views about Soviet Russia remained steadfastly positive.

On 16 August 1923, Dr. Sun Yatsen's delegation left for the Soviet Union from Shanghai. It was headed by Chiang Kaishek while Wang Dengyun, Shen Dingyi and Zhang Tailai were the members.¹⁶ They arrived in Moscow on 2 September, and stayed nearly three months, departing for China on 29 November. The Russian document recorded the delegation as "Dr. Sun Yatsen's Delegation," but the Russian authorities then formally called it "The Delegation of the Chinese Communist Youth." The Russian authorities hoped that the visit could be as secret as possible. The reason for trying to give the visit such a low profile was probably to avoid catching the attention of the imperialistic powers.

As the Moscow military district commander correctly observed, when Chiang visited the Red Army, he was primarily interested in military organization, administration and technology. Chiang asked to make a speech to a group of 400 Red Army soldiers. The Russian interpreter, however, modified the speech in order to accord with the tone of a formal talk by a member of the Comintern or Communist International Youth. Allegedly, "General Chiang's speech contained certain outspoken and straightforward features." Chiang claimed he himself was a revolutionary, a revolutionary Nationalist Party member and soldier. The purpose of his visit was to learn from and unite with the Soviet Union in the struggle to defeat imperialism and capitalism. He finished the talk in a state of great emotional excitement, his voice almost shouting and his hands trembling. His speech received an enthusiastic response. He was deeply moved and excited by the Red Army's spirit, noting that its spirit and enthusiasm were the highest that he had ever seen in any army. He was also deeply impressed by the Red Army's discipline and level of literacy.¹⁷

Although the delegation failed to persuade the Soviet authorities to help finance Sun Yatsen's proposed military plan in northwest China (the main task of the delegation), Russia did promise to send more advisers to south China to train the Chinese army according to the Soviet model. The Soviet authorities kept telling the delegation that political preparation was more important than military actions. Chiang seemed to accept the idea in the end.¹⁸ Hence after the trip, Chiang began to pay attention to ideological indoctrination and political education as well as to organizational and propaganda work. There is

no doubt of his intention to learn from the Soviet Union, even though he did not carry out these tasks as completely and thoroughly as did the Chinese Communist party.

The most important result of Chiang Kaishek's visit to the Soviet Union was its impact on his view of the relationship between the GMD and the Russian Communist Party and between the Chinese revolution and world revolution. In mid-October of 1923, Chiang's delegation submitted a written report on "the nationalist movement in China and the situation within the GMD" to the Soviet authorities. It mentioned the characteristics of the Chinese revolution and stated that

the goal of national revolution (*guomin geming*) is to struggle against international imperialism and its instruments - Chinese warlords. It is precisely world capitalism and imperialism which have transformed China into a quasi-colony. Unless we overthrow world capitalism and imperialism, it will be impossible for China to have real independence. Our task is to overthrow world capitalism. Therefore, our national revolution carries an international dimension. . . . It is difficult for China to accomplish the mission alone, we have to cooperate with the Soviet Union in the anti-imperialist movement. Capitalist countries have been intentionally sabotaging the survival of the peasant-worker government. The Soviet Union can also benefit from cooperation with China.¹⁹

This report clearly indicated that Chiang found anti-imperialism to be the common ground between the Chinese revolution and the world revolution.

While attending sessions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), Chiang Kaishek elaborated on his views, which were full of admiration for Soviet Russia. He said that Moscow was the center of world revolution. The Comintern represented the interests of the proletariat throughout the world. It had a mission to supervise the revolutionary movement, particularly in countries oppressed by capitalism and imperialism. The Chinese revolution was part of the world revolution because China was oppressed by capitalist and imperialist interests. Consequently, Chiang Kaishek even supported revolution in Germany. He expounded that

If the German revolution cannot succeed, the Russian western front will not be safe. We should oppose the intervention of capitalist powers. We should let Russian comrades help the German revolution succeed. China lies on the eastern front of Russia. China is still under the influence of capitalism and imperialism. If the Chinese revolution fails, then the capitalist and imperialist powers will attack the Russian Far East, that is, Siberia. . . . Then Russia will be in danger, too.²⁰

Some may suspect that Chiang's admiring words were simply a gesture of politeness to his Russian hosts. Although this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out, his statements are consistent with what he said and did after his return to China.

Despite this admiration for Soviet Russia, Chiang Kaishek resented Soviet policy on two issues. One concerned a resolution of the Communist International to the GMD, the other the Mongolia question. The resolution, mainly drafted by the Comintern's main expert on Asia, Grigorii Voitinski, emphasized the roles of proletarians and peasants in the national revolution in China and the importance of the role of the working class in the anti-imperialist movement.²¹ The resolution was a bolshevized platform for the Chinese revolution. After reading the resolution, Chiang Kaishek angrily commented that the Russian authorities did not understand the GMD, and it was a shame that Moscow had made itself the center of the world revolution.²² The reason for his enraged reaction may have been that he opposed carrying out a premature proletarian revolution in China.

He argued with the Russian authorities, suggesting that Sun Yatsen's Three Principles of the People (*Saminzhuyi*), that is nationalism (*minzhuyi*), democracy (*minquanzhuyi*), and state socialism (*minshengzhuyi*) should become the political slogan of the Chinese revolution because the Chinese people had known about the Three Principles of the People for the past thirty years. *Minshengzhuyi* was the first step toward Communism. At the time Chiang wanted to adopt such slogans for the Chinese revolution as: "fight for an independent China," "people's government," "nationalism," and "democracy." Only as a second step would the GMD do something based on communist principles, but he did not elaborate on this.

Further, Chiang argued that a proletarian revolution in China was not appropriate at present. First, most Chinese were illiterate, which greatly impeded propaganda work. The Beijing government was against communism, and it was not possible to engage legally in propaganda work under the communist slogan. Also, openly to publicize communism might antagonize the imperialist powers more. Chiang feared that a focus on communism would undermine the primary objective of the GMD, which was to expel the Western imperialists from China. Second, since most Chinese belonged to the small-peasant class and petty bourgeoisie, the platform of the GMD should be to unite all Chinese and use the united front to ensure the revolution's success. To promote communism prematurely would only serve to alienate these people from the GMD. Such people would support the anti-imperialist policies of the GMD but were hostile to communist economic policies. To use the slogan of *Saminzhuyi* would not catch the warlords' attention and the petty bourgeoisie would not be against the GMD. Chiang concluded that propagating communist principles in China must await Chinese independence.

This conclusion stands out in stark contrast to the Soviet emphasis on class struggle. Grigorii Zinoviev, the chairman of the ECCI, replied that the GMD

slogans based on *Saminzhuyi* were not the slogans of communism. Although they reflected the early stage of the national liberation movement, they should be more concrete and precise and the GMD should be more supportive of the labor movement.²³

The Mongolia question was the second irritant. Chiang Kaishek had showed his great concern with the Mongolia question before his visit to Russia. As early as 1912 when he learned that Russia had helped Outer Mongolia obtain autonomy from China, out of indignation he wrote "A military draft plan for conquering Mongolia" (*Zhengmeng zuozhan chuyi*) to propose commanding a brigade to reclaim Mongolia.²⁴ When the Commissar for War, Leon Trotsky, finally received Chiang Kaishek, he told the delegation that if the GMD performed its political work well, it could start military activities from China's own territory, not from Mongolia.²⁵ Chiang was furious at the implication that Mongolia was not part of China. Afterward Chiang told the members of the delegation that Trotsky had cheated them. If Mongolia wanted to become independent, it needed prior agreement from China.²⁶

The trip gave Chiang Kaishek a firsthand understanding of the Soviet Union. It confirmed his admiration for the Soviet military and party system, and gave him the conceptual framework of world revolution to express his views on revolution and anti-imperialism. Yet he was disappointed in the Soviet attitude towards Mongolia and felt the Soviet authorities did not fully understand the revolutionary goals of the GMD. He shared Sun Yatsen's insistence that China could not prematurely implement communism.

It is well-known that in mid-December 1923, upon returning to Shanghai, Chiang Kaishek sent a report on the trip (*Yok'e botogoshu*) to Sun Yatsen in Guangdong. This report has yet to surface in the archives of Russia, mainland China or Taiwan and so remains unavailable to scholars. Only in Chiang's book *Soviet Russia in China* were the contents of the report briefly mentioned (Chiang Kaishek 1957: 23-26). Interestingly, this account of the report is the main source used by most scholars to document Chiang's early anti-Soviet stand. Yet, Chiang's book was written and published in the 1950s during the implementation of his famous anti-communist and anti-Soviet policy in Taiwan. One cannot help thinking that many statements in the book were modified to fit the political situation of that later time. Hence it is not a particularly reliable source for his views in the 1920s.

In the book, Chiang asserted that before his departure for the Soviet Union, he had believed that Russia would help the national revolution in China out of sincerity, not selfishness, and would treat China as an equal partner. But this belief completely vanished during his visit. He not only learned that the Soviet political system was despotic and terroristic, but also concluded that although the policy of allying with the Soviet Union could help China temporarily resist Western colonialism, it absolutely could not attain the goal of a free and independent China. Moreover, he felt the Soviet Union's strategies and aims of the so-called "world revolution" were more dangerous to the national inde-

pendent movement in the East than Western colonialism. He expressed his worries about the future of Sino-Soviet relations in his report to Sun.²⁷ Overall, Chiang's comments on the Soviet Union in "Soviet Russia in China" were mostly negative. They were also mixed with some hindsight. For example, he claimed that during the visit he had noticed the fierce power struggle, while Lenin was fatally ill, between Stalin and the internationalists, headed by Trotsky. He worried that such a power struggle would erode the cooperation between the GMD and the Soviet Union. In fact, the power struggle between Trotsky and Stalin indeed severely affected Soviet policy toward Chinese revolution, but this struggle did not intensify until 1926-27.

There is another example that casts doubt on Chiang's statements about the Soviet Union. In the book, Chiang also asserted that during the First Congress of the GMD he had found the language and behavior of the communists to be arrogant as a consequence of their receiving Soviet support, and he feared that many members of the GMD would blindly follow communism. Chiang cited this as his reason for resigning his chairmanship of the Preparatory Committee of the Huangpu Military Academy after the end of the conference and returning to his hometown in Zhejiang (Chiang Kaishek 1957: 26). There is another account of why Chiang resigned in February 1924. Frederic F. Liu claimed that Chiang and "the Soviet advisers differed substantially on important points concerning the curriculum and management of the Academy." He was "indignant at Soviet objections to his plans" and, unable to exercise full authority as he would have it, tendered his resignation (Liu 1956: 9).

As a matter of fact, the correspondence of Chiang and his friends at that time indicate that the true reason lay elsewhere. The real problem was financial: the anti-opium supervisor in Guangdong, Yang Xiyan, refused to allocate money for the Huangpu Military Academy. He also alluded to personnel problems in Guangdong. Chiang explained that without the determination to reform the party, there would be no hope for the GMD.²⁸ On 2 March 1924, Chiang expressed his concerns over party affairs and aired his grievances more clearly in a letter to Sun. Rather than criticizing the policy of allying with the Soviet Union, he considered the most urgent and dangerous problems in Guangdong to be internal, not external. He showed great dissatisfaction with Sun's government appointees. Despite Chiang's later claims to a consistent anti-Soviet policy, in this letter there was not a single reference to the Soviet Union or the CCP.²⁹

Nearly two weeks later in a letter to Liao Zhongkai,³⁰ Chiang expressed his criticism of Sun's unsatisfactory personnel appointments in much sharper tones. This letter is often cited by scholars to document Chiang's early anti-Soviet stance. It did indeed contain some of Chiang's harshest criticisms of the Soviet Union made before 1927 in either public speeches or in private correspondence. Yet, Liao once told Mikhail Borodin, the Comintern's main agent in the Guangdong government, that on 15 December 1923, the very day of his return to China, Chiang had told Liao that the Soviet Union was indeed sincere in its offer to help the GMD and it was up to the GMD to get down to work.³¹ Both

Chiang's and Liao's words are valid. What Chiang told Liao in December was his first impression about Russia. The letter of 24 March that Chiang wrote to Liao had its own historical context. According to the materials available now, Chiang's views on Russia between December and March were very consistent. His criticism of Russia in the letter seems to be an isolated case, which was stimulated by the draft treaty with Mongolia.

In it, Chiang wrote that from his observations, the Russian Communist Party (RCP) lacked sincerity. The GMD should trust only 30 percent of what the Russians said, but Liao trusted the Russians too much. Chiang even reminded Liao that one could not let one's belief in an "ideology" cause one to disregard "the facts."³² Perhaps, "the facts" were connected with the draft treaty concluded by the Soviet Union with the Beijing government in March 1924 concerning the Mongolia question. Chiang had been a strong nationalist on the Mongolia issue. This treaty did not clearly indicate when the Russian troops would withdraw from Mongolia. In Chiang's mind, the treaty may have again demonstrated Russian imperialistic ambitions. Also, it signified that the Soviet government was conducting a two-faced policy. On the one hand, it cooperated with the Guangdong government. On the other hand, it negotiated with the Beijing government to recognize the interests of the Soviet Union. "Ideology" might refer to the shared anti-imperialism of the GMD and the Russians. Chiang continued that the only policy of the RCP in China was to help the CCP become a legitimate party. The so-called internationalism and world revolution were, in fact, Caesar's imperialism.

The letter, which contains the strongest criticisms of the Soviet Union before 1927, is actually the only letter criticizing Russia among all Chiang's published correspondence of the period. This absence of criticism of the Soviet Union throughout Chiang's published correspondence and speeches of this period suggests that Chiang was not yet particularly critical. His letter to Liao was probably an isolated cautionary message to remind Liao, one of Sun's most trusted friends and one of the chief promoters of the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union, not to become too pro Soviet. The Soviet Union had its own interests to consider. Hence, Chiang used a stronger tone to warn Liao. Liao replied that the foreign policy (that is, the Soviet question) did not originate with him and would not get worse because of him.³³

Other evidence of Chiang Kaishek's opposing a policy of alliance with the Soviet Union is associated with Dai Jitao, the chief theoretician of the GMD's right wing. Certain scholars seem to take it for granted that in the course of the first United Front (1923-1927), Chiang Kaishek's ideology was heavily influenced by Dai Jitao because they were such close friends (Isaacs 1961: 89, Loh 1970: 221, Mast and Saywell 1974: 86, 96). Loh's portrayal of Chiang as a person lacking any independent thought is questionable. Loh maintained that during 1924-1925 Chiang's "discipleship to Sun was for a considerable period of time action-oriented, not thought-oriented." Chiang was greatly influenced by Sun's policies and programs but not by his thought. Only after Sun's death, Loh

asserted, did Chiang begin to read Sun's work, but his understanding of Sun's ideology still came mainly from Dai Jitao and secondarily from Liao Zhongkai. But Loh did not explain why Chiang's public attitude toward Dai's thought was ambiguous (Loh 1970: 216, 218-221).

In fact, in May 1923 Chiang had read Sun Yatsen's "On Equalizing the Ownership of Land" before going to the Soviet Union. Also, Chiang's talk with Zinoviev in Moscow, during which he claimed that state socialism (*Minshengzhuyi*) was the first step to communism, is an example of how he reflected Sun's latest thinking.³⁴ Before Dai Jitao published his first work, "The Philosophical Foundation of the Teachings of Sun Yatsen", in June 1925, many of Chiang's speeches had reflected Sun's views, which Sun had expressed during the First Congress of the GMD in January 1924 (Bergère 1998: 328-329). While Sun Yatsen was trying to define *minshengzhuyi* in a broader context, Chiang was doing the same thing. In reality, many of Chiang's speeches echoed Sun's policy positions.

Dai Jitao was one of the earliest members of the GMD to study Marxism and was deeply involved in the establishment of the CCP. However, for Sun Yatsen's sake, he did not join the CCP on its founding day. He was against allowing the CCP members to join as individuals in the GMD from the very beginning, and he subsequently became a member of the rightist Western Hill Group (Li Yunhan 1966: 398-400, 415-426). In July 1925, Dai Jitao published a booklet, "The National Revolution and the Guomindang". Although Dai declared that "it was necessary for China to ally itself closely with Soviet Russia to achieve national independence and freedom and to participate in the World revolution", he warned that China must not abandon its independence and rely completely on Soviet Russia. "China must not forget its own needs and blindly follow Russia" (Wilbur and How 1989: 165). It is clear that Dai did not oppose the policy of cooperation with the Soviet Russia but insisted that China should have autonomy to control the course of revolution. Early in August 1925, he wrote to Chiang and bitterly criticized the CCP (Wilbur and How 1989: 166). Dai's similar position appeared in a long letter to Chiang Kaishek to express his deep disapproval of party affairs, particularly related to the communist activities on 13 December 1925, when Dai Jitao announced his resignation from all party positions in the GMD. Even so, Dai did not urge Chiang to stop cooperating with the Soviet Union (Chen Tianxi 1959, vol. 3: 979-986).

Chiang responded to Dai's repeated anti-communist stance with helplessness and disgust. On 18 October 1926 after receiving Dai's telegram, Chiang wrote in his "diary" that his old friends had changed their nature. He strongly disliked meeting them. Dai's telegram showed that Dai had a "mental disorder" (*jingshen cuoluan*). Chiang felt ever more resentful. How could he achieve the goal alone while the party members were decrepit and behind the times?³⁵

Despite the fact that Chiang Kaishek and Dai Jitao were very close friends, they seemed to maintain their own positions over party affairs. This may partly explain why Chiang's public attitude toward Dai's thought was vague. How

Chiang separated friendships and political positions to a certain degree is demonstrated more clearly in his open letter to the domestic and overseas GMD comrades on 25 December 1925. He denounced the deeds of the Western Hill Group, charging that the group's desire to expel communists from the GMD was narrow-minded. Sun Yatsen had said that although *Sanminzhuyi* and Communism were different, both were for revolution. In order to reaffirm his support for the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union, he rebuked the Western Hill Group for making a false charge against Wang Jingwei, Chairman of the Guangdong government, and explained that Borodin did not completely dominate party affairs.³⁶ What the Western Hill Group had done violated Sun's policy as well as party discipline and thus hindered the national revolution.³⁷ Chiang's concept of party discipline also came from the Soviet Union.

Chiang Kaishek's position was further revealed in a personal letter to his friend, Zhang Ji, also a member of the Western Hill Group. In it Chiang Kaishek attributed the failure of the revolution in China to the arrogance and corrosive jealousies among senior members of the GMD. In order to achieve the national revolution and to unify China, the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union and the CCP, initiated by Sun Yatsen, should be carried through. Chiang wrote, "Although there are differences between communism and *Sanminzhuyi*, there is a common devotion to revolution. We have set the strategy of cooperation with other revolutionary forces, yet we want to exclude them, isn't this contradictory?" He was confident that the CCP would not be able to usurp power in the GMD. For the time being, the issue was not whether there should be further cooperation with the CCP, but how best to implement such cooperation.³⁸ In the process of revolution one had to sacrifice personal friendships with certain comrades in order to assure the success of the revolution. Chiang Kaishek was a devoted follower of Sun Yatsen. When he was asked to join the Communist Party in Moscow, Chiang replied that he needed to ask Sun Yatsen first, whereupon he was teased by the Chinese communists in Moscow for being a loyalist of Sun Yatsen.³⁹ In fact, by April 1927 Chiang's thought was more similar to Sun's than Dai Jitao's.

Chiang Kaishek's support for the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union

In order to carry out the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union, *Sanminzhuyi* and communism had to be made compatible. The ambiguity of the content of *Sanminzhuyi* made possible a potential compatibility with Communism. *Sanminzhuyi* had been set out in the charter of Sun Yatsen's Revolutionary Alliance (*Tongmenghui*) in 1905, but its contents had been left unclear. Sun Yatsen lost his notes or manuscript on the subject when the South China warlord, Chen Jiongmeng, bombarded his residence in June 1922 (Bergère 1998: 135, 352). In the spring of 1924, Sun Yatsen began to lecture on *Sanminzhuyi* to students in Guangdong Teacher's College. In August 1924 Sun's lecture notes

were compiled into a book. Preparing lectures also gave Sun another opportunity to revise his thesis to cope with new political developments.

From the beginning, the "Three People's Principles" had comprised nationalism, democracy and socialism. Before 1911, nationalism meant Han Chinese opposition to the ruling Manchu dynasty. In the 1920s it had become Chinese opposition to foreign interference in China. This new stance created a natural affinity between the anti-imperialist nationalism of the GMD and the Soviet anti-imperialist struggle. In the case of democracy, Sun Yatsen segmented the path to this goal into three stages: the military, the tutelary and the constitutional phases. Under the circumstances prevailing in China during the 1920s, he believed that only the first stage could possibly be achieved.

The most controversial item turned out to be the definition of *minshengzhuyi* which has been translated variously (depending on circumstances), for example as "the people's livelihood." In the 1905/06 program of the Revolutionary Alliance, Sun had presented *minshengzhuyi* as a synonym for socialism (*shehuizhuyi*), which meant adopting a policy of taxing profit from selling land for the greater benefit of society. Later, he added state socialism and a major plan of economic modernization to the people's livelihood. He described these ideas in 1921 in a book entitled *The International Development of China*. It was only in 1924 that Sun provided a "new, systematic, and more profound definition," that is, identifying *minshengzhuyi* with communism. In his first lecture to students on 3 August, Sun, under strong pressure from the moderate wing of the GMD, denounced the errors of Marxism. After that lecture Borodin took him to task and pressured him to modify his views in order to save the GMD alliance with the Soviet Union. Sun "was trying to bring together the extremists of both parties by presenting an ideological justification for their collaboration, postulating that the livelihood of the people and Communism were identical" (Bergère 1998: 383). The nature of the "Three Principles of the People" left them open to the most divergent interpretations (Bergère 1998: 167, 382, 388, 392). This ambiguity also made possible Chiang Kaishek's ideological revisions in the 1920s.

In 1925, Chiang stated that *Sanminzhuyi* in sociological terms was "state socialism." But it included all kinds of socialism. Its scope was broad, not narrow.⁴⁰ When Chiang Kaishek was asked about the relations between the GMD and the Russian Communist Party, he answered that the two parties shared the same goals of anti-imperialism and revolution, but there were significant differences between *Sanminzhuyi* and the Comintern's communism.⁴¹ Chiang believed that *Sanminzhuyi* included communism, that the implementation of the former would indirectly entail the implementation of the latter. The two ideas were complementary.⁴² He insisted the highest guideline for Chinese revolution was *Sanminzhuyi*. The Russians coming to China should promote *Sanminzhuyi*, not Communism, which was not suitable in the current situation.⁴³

Despite the fact that Chiang Kaishek did not openly spell out the differences between *Sanminzhuyi* and communism, he was certainly aware of them. In his

mind, *Sanminzhuyi* was against class struggle and confiscating lands and redistributing them by force. Yet he tried to maximize the similarities between the two. This, combined with his earnest desire to unify anti-imperialist forces throughout the world convinced the Soviet advisers in China that Chiang was a Communist, a revolutionary or at least one of the most left-leaning members of the GMD. In fact, his insistence on *Sanminzhuyi* as the guiding principle for the Chinese revolution and his delaying of the achievement of communism into the distant future heartened back to the Sun Yatsen - Joffe joint declaration of January 1923. That document had announced a GMD-USSR alliance but had made clear that communism could not be implemented under the current conditions in China (Degras 1951: 370-371).

In addition, on various occasions, Chiang Kaishek vigorously publicized the concept of world revolution and its relationship to the Chinese revolution. In his article, "Six big military plans for revolution," made to the Military Council of the GMD, he wrote that the goal of the Chinese revolution was to oppose imperialism in China, but this anti-imperialism contained an international dimension. The enemies of imperialist powers were all China's friends. They shared the common goal of all oppressed nations which was to oppose the imperialists. Therefore, the Chinese revolution should be considered as one of the world revolutions.⁴⁴ Here one can see how Chiang maximized the similarities between *Sanminzhuyi* and communism by defining China's friends as all being enemies of the imperialists. He tried to include all possible forces to fight against imperialism. He had come to this strategy in late January 1923 in his discussions of the political situation in Guangdong with Liao Zhongkai.⁴⁵ Chiang did his best to implement this strategy.

At a party for Chinese and Russian officers he attributed the success of the so-called Second Eastern Expedition to Russian comrades. It was this expedition that permanently expelled Chen Jiongming from Eastern Guangdong and made the province a firm base of the GMD. According to Chiang, the Chinese problem was fast becoming a world problem. China could not close its doors and hope to have a revolution alone. If China did not unite all the revolutionary parties in the world and did not fight together with those nations, which treated it equally, then the Chinese revolution would surely fail. He praised and emphasized the fact that it was part of the Russian "national spirit, the strength of the Comintern, and their mission of revolution [which was] coming to China to cooperate with the GMD and helping the Chinese revolution succeed. The success of the Chinese revolution means the success of world revolution, and will mean the complete success of the Russian revolution." These sentences cited above were removed by Chiang afterwards from the book, "Mr. Chiang Kaishek Before 1926."⁴⁶

Some may argue that Chiang Kaishek's support for the Soviet Union might have simply been a pretense in order to obtain Soviet aid, since the evidence for his support mainly appeared in public lectures. In reality, Chiang's support not only appeared in his public speeches, but also in his private writings. In

December 1925, he joyfully noted in his "diary" that China had become the center of world revolution. This was indicated by the choice of location for the World Conference of Uniting Oppressed Nations, which was held in Guangzhou (Chiang Kaishek 1998: 6).

Such pro-Soviet support was also revealed in his letters to his son, Jiang Jingguo (Chiang Ching-kuo), who was then studying in Moscow. On 16 March 1926, he answered his son's letter written in February. He was delighted that his son had made ideological progress. He summarized the content of his recent speeches in China, writing that the Chinese revolution could only be meaningful when it became part of the world revolution. Without an international dimension, the Chinese revolution could not be called a revolution. Moreover, he wrote that he did not mind that his son had joined the *Komsomol*, the youth branch of the Russian Communist Party. Although he was not a member of the Communist Party, the two of them would fight together for the revolution. Chiang Kaishek was truly content that at home they were father and son, but in the revolution, they were comrades.⁴⁷ On 13 June 1926, Chiang received a letter from his son and showed it to his long-time friend, Zhang Jingjiang. He was delighted that Jiang Jingguo was making progress. Here the progress probably refers to ideological rather than to Russian-language progress.⁴⁸ In his letters Chiang had so consistently encouraged his son to be a revolutionary that Jiang Jingguo had become a leftist, even a Trotskyist on matters concerning world revolution (Yu Miin-ling 1998: 119–122, 124).

Contemporary newspapers also detected Chiang's pro-Soviet stance. An editorial in the Tianjin newspaper, *Dagong Bao*, considered Chiang Kaishek to be the main advocate of the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union (Fang Meng 1993: 16). Similarly, in the summer of 1925, right after the assassination of Liao Zhongkai, Beijing's *Chen Bao* described Liao and Chiang Kaishek as the two pillars of communism in the Guangdong government.⁴⁹ The assassination of Liao was certainly a heavy blow to the communists, which, according to Chen Bao, made Chiang determine to root out and punish the assassins.⁵⁰ In addition, in early 1926, Chiang was still thinking about visiting the Soviet Union again. He believed this trip would be critical for his new life.⁵¹

However, it is true that Chiang Kaishek did not conceal his disagreements with the Soviet authorities. In Moscow he expressed his opposition to the Soviet policy of implementing communism in China in the near future and to Soviet interference in Mongolia. In Guangdong, he made the disapproval known to Russian advisers, too. Nevertheless, the Soviet authorities in Moscow and Soviet advisers in Guangdong both regarded Chiang highly. In February 1926 when Borodin gave a detailed report on Guangdong to the Bubnov Commission⁵² in Beijing, he singled out Chiang Kaishek as the most devoted leftist in the GMD.⁵³ Other Russian advisers also regarded Chiang "as one of the most loyal followers of Dr. Sun Yatsen and one of the best revolutionaries; according to his speeches, he might be regarded as a communist, but looking more deeply at his convictions, one sees that he belongs to a typical

'intelligentsia' of the radical kind, after the pattern of the French Jacobins."⁵⁴ To be put into the category of the "Jacobins" was the highest form of praise in the 1920s, given the Soviet admiration for radical revolution. These advisers had had extensive contacts with Chiang over a number of months and, in Borodin's case, over more than two years. Given that Chiang was famous for his short-temper, it is hard to believe that, had he been truly anti-Soviet at the time (as he later insisted), he could have disguised all traces of such sentiments. A more plausible interpretation is that Chiang still admired many, though not all, things about the Soviet Union.

After the March 20 Incident in 1926, when Chiang arrested the communists, some advisers in Canton began having doubts about Chiang, but they still did not consider him to be a rightist, much less a counter-revolutionary.⁵⁵ The Russian advisers also admitted their own mistake in placing too much power in the army and the party. Possibly, the Soviet authorities did not have a better alternative within the GMD than Chiang and were hoping to woo Chiang back to more leftist views. But no one believed Chiang had undermined the Sino-Soviet alliance.

In addition to publicizing the concept of world revolution, Chiang Kaishek also translated his admiration of the Soviet military and political systems into action when he had an opportunity to do so. When Sun Yatsen commissioned him to organize the Huangpu Military Academy in Guangdong, Chiang used Russian methods of organization and discipline to train the cadets. He proudly announced that the Huangpu Corps was the first Chinese army to implement the party representative or political commissar system.⁵⁶ He even asked the Soviet plenipotentiary to China, L.M. Karakhan, to give all quotas of the political commissars for the communists.⁵⁷ In order to raise the morale of the Huangpu Corps to the level of that of the Red Army, he started to pay close attention to indoctrinating them with the principles of *Samminzhuyi*. His ideal was to make the Corps become a party army like the Russian Red Army.⁵⁸ Indeed, the Corps commanded by Chiang was later called the party army. In August 1925, it became the First Corps, the most organized and disciplined element of the National-revolutionary Army.

The Zhongshan Gunboat Incident and the policy of alliance with the Soviet Union

The Zhongshan Gunboat Incident marked a turning point in Chiang's attitude toward the pro-Soviet policy. Although he continued to try to salvage the Sino-Soviet alliance, his doubts were starting to outweigh his hopes. On 19 March 1926, a gunboat called the *Zhongshan* headed to Huangpu from Canton without any order from Chiang. This made Chiang suspect that Wang Jingwei had sent the gunboat to take him forcibly to Russia in order to get rid of him. Chiang's first response was to buy a ticket on a Japanese ship leaving Canton. At the port, he was persuaded to stay, however, and took a series of counter-measures. On

20 March Chiang ordered Canton to be put under martial law, the gunboat under guard, the Soviet advisers under house arrest and arrested certain communists, including the acting chief of the Naval Bureau, Li Zhilong. This became known as the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident or March 20 Incident. Although it is now clear that Chiang Kaishek did not initiate the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident, he certainly took full advantage of it (Yang Tianshi 1993: 431-474).⁵⁹ It offered him a great opportunity to solve those problems that had long perplexed him. Namely it enabled him to circumscribe the influence of the CCP and the Soviet advisers. This made him the most powerful leader in the GMD.

The Soviet advisers' harsh self-criticisms suggest some causes of the incident. They admitted that they had made many severe mistakes in the party, political and military affairs of the GMD. A. Bubnov, head of a commission, who happened to be in China evaluating the Soviet aid to the Chinese revolution, concluded that the centralization in the military had developed too rapidly and thus had incited great resentment among Chinese generals. The Soviet advisers should not directly lead the national revolution. Otherwise, they would deepen the conflicts between the rightists and leftists of the GMD and provoke a strong anti-communist backlash.⁶⁰ They had almost entirely forgotten that they were advisers, not commanders. Due to these serious mistakes, the Soviet authorities decided to make concessions to Chiang. They recalled the chief and deputy chiefs of Soviet military advisers in South China, N.V. Kuibyshev (Kisan'ka), I.I. Razgon (Ol'gin) and V.P. Rogachev. The purpose of this measure was to gain time to restore the influence of the GMD left and to get rid of Chiang at the first opportunity.

The conflict between Chiang Kaishek and Wang Jingwei was another cause of the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident. When Chiang Kaishek was in Moscow he had told a Chinese student, Zhao Shixian (Shiyuan), about the importance of autonomy in the revolution.⁶¹ Since then Chiang had not mentioned the issue for about two years. He did not do so until late 1925 and early 1926, when he had become dismayed by the intrusive role of the Soviet advisers and the CCP in the army and the GMD. As soon as he sensed this threat to GMD control over the course of the Chinese revolution, he began to warn his GMD comrades, particularly Wang Jingwei. Wang used to hold the meetings of the Political Council (the highest institution in the government) in Borodin's residence, where he followed whatever Borodin proposed. Just before and after the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident, Chiang Kaishek repeatedly reminded Wang Jingwei of the importance of being independent. Cooperation with the Comintern should have its limits, essential decision-making should be in Chinese hands.⁶² At the beginning of 1926 Chiang's growing distrust of Wang Jingwei fed his own suspicions that intrigues against him were afoot. He also worried about the escalating influence of the CCP within the GMD, as well as growing Russian control over the military. He believed that Kisan'ka was trying to assume complete control over the National-revolutionary Army. Although he still

wanted to maintain cooperative relations with the Soviet Union, this was becoming progressively more difficult.

In public speeches after the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident Chiang Kaishek mentioned national revolution more frequently than world revolution and rarely mentioned the Soviet Union. This change indicated that ideological compatibility was on the wane. Instead, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of Chinese autonomy in the revolution.⁶³ Even though he still acknowledged that Moscow was the center of world revolution and China should be commanded from the center, he now thought that the GMD should exercise power independently.⁶⁴ On 16 September 1926, the GMD representative in the Soviet Union, Shao Lizhi, reported Chiang's opinion in the meeting of the ECCI that "the basic condition for the victory of revolution is unified leadership and a single will. The Chinese revolution is part of the world revolution. The Chinese revolution needs unity, the same as the world revolution. The leader of world revolution is the Comintern. Therefore, the leader of Chinese revolution must be the GMD."⁶⁵

After 20 March 1926 some Soviet advisers were suspicious about Chiang's intentions but the relationship was maintained. Among the advisers Borodin supported Chiang the most. Chiang Kaishek and Borodin had had fairly cordial relations before the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident, if not as close as those between Borodin and Wang Jingwei. Right after Sun Yatsen died, Chiang Kaishek even claimed that Borodin was his teacher and would continue leading the revolution in China (Wilbur and How 1989: 145; Bao Huiseng 1983: 171). Right after the incident, when Borodin was on the way to Moscow to report on his work in China, Chiang even hoped that Borodin would return to Guangzhou as soon as possible. The Soviet advisers also believed that only Borodin could restore Chiang's confidence in them and fix the situation.⁶⁶

When Borodin returned to Guangzhou at the end of April, he realized Chiang Kaishek had become the most powerful man in the GMD and had an unshakable determination to launch the Northern Expedition. Borodin and Kisan'ka both believed that this was premature given the lack of preparatory political work. But Borodin did not openly oppose it for fear that Chiang would think that all Soviet advisers sided with Wang Jingwei, who was against the Northern Expedition. Borodin only privately told Chiang's personal aides several times that the Northern Expedition was doomed to fail politically, even though it might succeed militarily.⁶⁷

In May 1926, Borodin and Chiang Kaishek had a series of discussions about the relations between the CCP and the GMD. Chiang demanded that communists should not occupy key positions in the GMD and asked that a list of the communists within the GMD be submitted to the chairman of the Central Executive Committee. Borodin considered the restrictions on communists to be too harsh. Chiang admitted this, but added that to allow communists to continue to work actively and to occupy too many significant posts would destroy the GMD. For the sake of preserving Sun Yatsen's policy, he

had to put severe restrictions on communists.⁶⁸ In the same month, Chiang also took measures to weaken the influence of the GMD right: he arrested the chief of Public Security Bureau in Guangzhou, Wu Tiecheng and expelled the head of Guangzhou City Affairs Committee, Wu Chaoshu. This pleased Borodin very much.⁶⁹

However, Borodin was frequently criticized by his Russian colleagues in China for making too many concessions to Chiang. They feared that this would inflate Chiang's ambitions since he would mistakenly think that Borodin would support him no matter what measures he took against the communists.⁷⁰ Borodin reminded his colleagues that it was not yet time to engage in a struggle against Chiang; the urgent and current task was to prepare future opportunities so they should not rupture relations with Chiang for the time being.⁷¹

Chiang's situation was even more complicated than that of Borodin. His rectification of party affairs had weakened the GMD right and pacified neither the left nor the right. Instead, both factions demanded more from him. Chiang was caught in the middle. No matter what he did, there was always one faction criticizing him for not doing enough, while the other charged him with doing too much. When he complained of his dilemma to Borodin, Borodin said Chiang had become the captive of both factions.⁷²

The Northern Expedition went smoothly and made the GMD left and the communists engage in more actions in welcoming the return of Wang Jingwei, who had left China after the March 20 Incident. Borodin, the left and communists all pinned their hope on Wang. Only a few people, such as N.A. Fokin, who worked in the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern in Shanghai, believed that even if Wang's return could not turn the clock back to how it was before the March 20 Incident, a new situation had formed.⁷³ Yet most considered Wang to be the only person who could defeat Chiang in the GMD. Their actions forced Chiang Kaishek to think more about his future as well as the Chinese revolution and ponder over possible counter-measures.

The split of the new government to two locations - Nanchang and Wuhan⁷⁴ - severely damaged relations between Chiang Kaishek and Borodin. In early January 1927, Chiang went to Wuhan in person and tried to persuade Borodin to give up Wuhan as the capital. Not only did he fail in this goal, but Borodin humiliated him in public. Months later Chiang would burst out in anger when he recalled the scene.⁷⁵ Matters reached a head in late February 1927 when Chiang asked Voitinskii to recall Borodin in exchange for making Wuhan the capital. He claimed he acknowledged Borodin's contribution to the consolidation of the GMD. However, Borodin's insistence on making Wuhan the new capital had split the national revolution. He assured Voitinskii that his opposition was limited to Borodin and he remained a loyal supporter of the Comintern.⁷⁶ Perhaps this was his greatest effort to rescue the alliance with the Soviet Union. Yet, Chiang must have realized the great difficulty, if not impossibility, of a long-term alliance with the Soviet Union if the GMD wanted to maintain control over the course of the national revolution.

Even if the relations between Borodin and Chiang Kaishek did not rupture, external developments had made the united front policy extremely difficult to maintain. After the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident the GMD took a series of measures to restrain communist activities. Yet the members of the CCP did not decrease, but increased. As Wang Qisheng's study points out, in the early period of the alliance policy, there was a one-way migration, from the CCP to the GMD; in the middle and later periods, it became a two-way exchange, when many GMD members also joined the CCP; in the later period, a reverse took place. No wonder at the end of 1926 some GMD members felt that the GMD was not "admitting the CCP" (*ronggong*), but the CCP was "admitting the GMD" (*rongguo*) (Wang Qisheng 2000: 73, 76). Moreover, the Hong Kong-Guangdong strike, which lasted one and a half years and ended in October 1926, had demonstrated the tremendous power of the labor unions. The three insurrections in Shanghai in early 1927 also showed the strong influence of the CCP. All these factors threatened Chiang's personal power and even the existence of the GMD. Therefore, in the second half of 1926 Chiang had started searching for alternative sources of aid to bypass the Soviet Union.

On 18 April 1927, Chiang made a speech on establishing the capital in Nanjing. He claimed that the policy of cooperating with the Soviet Union had not changed. The expulsion of communists from the GMD was simply an internal party matter of no real concern to the Soviet Union. However, he strongly stressed the importance of autonomy. This strong emphasis was a clear indication that the alliance with the Soviet Union had become impossible (Chiang Kaishek 1927: 679). In his 4 May 1927 speech, Chiang Kaishek finally and openly called the Soviet Union an imperialist country (Chiang Kaishek 1927: 697).

Conclusion

There are three key sources which have convinced many scholars that Chiang Kaishek consistently opposed the policy of allying with the Soviet Union. The first one is based on Chiang's report on his trip to Soviet Russia as described in his book *Soviet Russia in China*. Many scholars in Taiwan and mainland China have accepted this account uncritically. The second is based on Chiang's close ties with the conservative Dai Jitao. It has been often incorrectly assumed that Chiang's ideas always mirrored those of Dai. The third misconception grew out of Chiang's purge of the communists in 1927. Because of the purge, it was assumed by Isaacs and others that Chiang must have opposed the policy from the very beginning.

Having tested these assertions against new materials on this subject, we find that past research has greatly over-simplified this part of history. Chiang Kaishek was not an anti-communist prophet, nor a double-faced anti-communist intriguer. Rather, he was a loyal member of the GMD who identified with certain aspects of the Soviet revolution but also had some serious reservations

about that revolution. In fact, in the early period of the Northern Expedition, he consistently supported Sun Yatsen's policy of allying with the Soviet Union.

Chiang Kaishek's opposition did not constitute an abrupt shift from complete admiration for the Soviet Union before the visit to determined opposition afterwards. The process was gradual and took about five years, from his visit in 1923 until the purge in 1927. Although Chiang had reservations about the 1923 Comintern resolution on the GMD and about Soviet policies in Mongolia, for several years he still believed that the Chinese revolution could be incorporated into a world revolution led by the Soviet Union because both China and the Soviet Union shared the same goal of anti-imperialism. An alliance with the Soviet Union seemed to offer a great hope for Sun Yatsen's small military force located far off in South China. Perhaps Soviet assistance would make the national revolution possible. The Soviet military and party system could strengthen the army and the GMD; the Soviet Union's anti-imperialist stance and connection with the world revolution could broaden the scope of the Chinese revolution by supplementing Chinese forces in their struggle against the imperialist powers. Chiang Kaishek as well as Sun Yatsen tried to search out all possible forces to achieve a national revolution in China.

A Chinese revolution guided by experienced Soviet revolutionaries seemed very promising. Nevertheless, Chiang Kaishek shared the same vision of Sun Yatsen's national revolution in China. While Sun and Chiang both emphasized the similarities between *Samminzhuyi* and communism and minimized their differences, neither envisioned a social revolution in China. When the First United Front was formed, both Sun and Chiang were confident that the CCP would remain too weak ever to usurp power from the GMD. Events did not support this optimism. Had Sun Yatsen lived longer, he would have become trapped by the same dilemmas confronting Chiang. Once the expanding power of the CCP directly threatened the GMD, long-avoided unpalatable choices had to be made. It was no longer possible to paper over fundamental differences with the USSR.

Due to many external factors after the *Zhongshan* Gunboat Incident, Chiang's support for the Sino-Soviet alliance gradually weakened. Even though Chiang and Borodin had disagreements over party affairs, Chiang tried to maintain a policy of cooperation. As the Northern Expedition was starting, Chiang needed Soviet aid, while the Soviet authorities could not find a better alternative to Chiang Kaishek. The dispute over the capital and the three insurrections in Shanghai forced Chiang to seek aid elsewhere and eventually led to a complete rupture with the Soviet Union. While we do not deny that the Soviet Union and Chiang Kaishek were trying to take advantage of each other, we cannot ignore other factors as well.

Harold Isaacs' accusation that Chiang Kaishek betrayed the revolution is an oversimplification. He vilified Chiang as a Cerberus, the three-headed guardian at the gates of Hell. The three heads faced left, right and center, with the single ambition of achieving his personal power over the dead bodies of his former

communist allies and at the expense of an alliance with the Soviet Union (Isaacs 1961: 89-93). As has been shown, even in Moscow Chiang Kaishek never committed himself to social revolution; rather, he had his own definition of revolution in mind. Chiang Kaishek had assumed that the GMD would eventually subsume the CCP. When the reverse proved more likely to come to pass, he ended his cooperation with the Soviet Union. This decision, in fact, reflected a consistency in his revolutionary goals, goals that had never been identical with those of the Soviet Union.

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Notes

- 1 Guy Alitto 1987. The article by Alitto provides the most comprehensive Western historiography available on Chiang Kaishek up to 1986. The author is also one of the very few Western scholars who offers more positive views on Chiang.
- 2 Among them, the best example is by Li Ao and Wang Rongzu 1995.
- 3 The best example of the vilifying school is Chen Boda 1954.
- 4 Chiang Kaishek 1957: 25; Li Yunhan 1966: 234; Wang Yujun 1987: 77-121; Li Guoqi 1987: 229-247; Song Ping 1987: 72, 76; Yang Shubiao 1989: 37; Yang Ruping and Zheng Zeming 1992: 63; Zhang Xianwen and Fang Qinggu 1996: 4-5.
- 5 Chiang Kaishek's papers are also called *Daxi dang'an* (Daxi Archive), held at *Historica Sinica* in Taipei.
- 6 Various collections of Chiang's speeches include *Huangpu Collection* (Huangpu congshu, based on Chiang Kaishek's lectures, compiled by Jia Botao), *Collection of Mr. Chiang Kaishek's Speeches* (Chiang Kaishek xiansheng yanshuoj), *Collection of Chiang Kaishek's Speeches and Letters* (Chiang Kaishek xiansheng yanlunji), *Collection for Training in the Huangpu Military Academy* (Huangpu xulianji). There are two editions of the *Collections of Chiang Kaishek's speeches*; one published in Guangzhou in 1927, the other published in Shanghai in 1929. The *Collection of Chiang Kaishek's Speeches and Letters*, published by the Thai Overseas Chinese Daily News, includes the most complete contents of Chiang's speeches from his early period. There is also another edition of *Collection for Training in Huangpu Military Academy*, edited by Deng Wenyi, published in Nanjing in 1947, but the contents of both editions are the same.
- 7 Wu Peifu's strong opposition to the stationing of Soviet troops in Mongolia made the Soviet authorities rule out the possibility of cooperating with him.
- 8 VKP(B), *Komintern* 1994, 7: 46. Sun and Potapov's meeting must have taken place before 21 September 1920, when Zhu Zhixin was still alive.
- 9 Sun Yatsen, vol.5, 1985: 379, vol.6, 1985: 616; Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 414.
- 10 The May Fourth Movement focused on the promotion of literacy, the re-evaluation of traditional Chinese culture, and nationalism.

- 11 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 39, 48, 220, 55, 57, 62.
 12 Chiang Kaishek, Zifanlu, part.1, vol. 6, 1931: 488-489.
 13 Chen Jiongming was a veteran of the 1911 revolution. In 1920 he conquered Guangdong and worked with Sun Yatsen. Chen was a provincialist. He hoped to make Guangdong a model province, a plan which went against Sun's unification of China. In June 1923 he ejected Sun from Guangdong and from then on was at war with the Nationalist party. In the summer of 1925 his army was completely crushed by the GMD forces.
 14 Chiang Kaishek, Zifanlu, part. 1, vol. 4, 1931: 259-261.
 15 Daxi Archive, "Chiang Kaishek's proposal to Soviet party leaders", in: Instructions and Memos (Choubi), No. 1, 5 August 1923: 1-12.
 16 Wang Dengyun was a member of the Nationalist party. He studied in America and served as a translator in the mission. Shen Dingyi was one of the founders of the CCP, but withdrew his membership after the First Congress of the CCP. Zhang Tailai was a member of the CCP.
 17 VKP(B), Komintern 1994: 262-264, 281.
 18 Ibid.: 257, 282.
 19 Ibid.: 272-273.
 20 Ibid.: 297, 299.
 21 Ibid.: 283; 308-311.
 22 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 141.
 23 VKP(B), Komintern 1994: 297-298, 303.
 24 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 18.
 25 VKP(B), Komintern 1994: 307.
 26 Ibid.: 346-347.
 27 Chiang Kaishek 1957: 21-25.
 28 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 158-164.
 29 Ibid.: 160-164.
 30 Chiang Kaishek 1957: 23-24. This letter can be found in Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 164-168.
 31 VKP(B), Komintern 1994: 347.
 32 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 167.
 33 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 169.
 34 VKP(B), Komintern 1994: 298.
 35 Chiang Kaishek, Jiang Jieshi riji leichao, vol. 1, 1999: 7.
 36 The paragraph, in which Chiang refuted the charges against Wang Jingwei and Borodin, is not included in the Chronicle, 486. But it is included in *Collections of Mr. Chiang Kaishek's Speeches and Letters*, vol. 1, 1938: 100.
 37 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 484-486.
 38 Ibid.: 624.
 39 Ibid.: 168.
 40 Chiang Kaishek, vol. 2, 1938: 67; Chiang Kaishek 1925: 80; Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao (1992: 340) refers to *Sarminzhuyi* as "state capitalism."
 41 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 321.
 42 Ibid.: 468, 485.
 43 Ibid.: 414.
 44 Ibid.: 386.
 45 Ibid.: 114.

- 46 Ibid.: 472-473. The full text of the speech was published in Zhengzhi Zhoubao, October 1, 1926: 15.
 47 Russian State Archives of Social and Political History (RGASPI), F530, op. 4, d. 49: 88-92. One may wonder how Chiang Kaishek's letters ended up in the Moscow archives. According to memoirs of students who studied in the Soviet Union then, no one was permitted to take a single piece of paper, not even their class notebooks, out of the country. These materials have been preserved in archives in Moscow. Another question is how frank Chiang could be in his correspondence. There may have been a tendency for him to understate his disagreements with Moscow in such letters. Yet, with hindsight, it might be misleading to believe that he could have written something just to please the Soviet authorities. Given the state of the documentation, it is hard to say. One possibility does not necessarily rule out the other.
 48 In the fall of 1926, Jiang Jinguo asked to transfer to the lower level Russian class because he was having difficulties in the higher level one. RGASPI, F530, op. 1, d. 77: 44-45.
 49 *Chen Bao*, 27 August 1925: 3.
 50 *Chen Bao*, 5 September 1925: 6.
 51 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 539.
 52 Andrei S. Bubnov (Ivanovskii in China) was an old Bolshevik. In 1924 he was the head of the Central Political Administration of the Red Army. The secret mission he headed and which arrived in China in February 1926 was to inspect the work of Soviet aid missions in China and to recommend policy for the future. All members of the mission were from the Central Committee of the RCP.
 53 VKP(B), Komintern 1994: 101.
 54 Wilbur and How 1989: 608. The author of the document is not stated. According to Wilbur/How, it may have been General N.V. Kuibyshev and some of his senior staff members. See Wilbur and How 1989: 598. Before 20 March 1926 there was only one adviser (name unknown) who expressed caution about Chiang's political position. He wrote, "it is difficult to foretell whether Chiang Kaishek will turn into an ordinary tuchun [warlord] and cease playing with leftist principles, or if he will go farther in the same direction." (Wilbur and How 1989: 698)
 55 Ibid.: 706, 709. Author for both documents is General V.A. Stepanov. He was adviser to Chiang Kaishek in the First and Second Expeditions and succeeded General N.V. Kuibyshev as head of the Soviet Military Group in Guangdong on 24 March until Bliukher arrived in early May 1926. Interestingly, according to Stepanov, it was Jan Yankai, Zhu Peide and Wang Jingwei who branded Chiang as counter-revolutionary (ibid.: 704).
 56 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 231, 267, 274.
 57 VKP(B), Komintern 1996: 68.
 58 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 205, 340, 414.
 59 The incident was the result of a rightists' intrigue.
 60 VKP(B), Komintern 1996: 140-146.
 61 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 141.
 62 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 542, 553; Chiang Kaishek, part 1, vol. 3, 1931: 245-254.
 63 Jiang Jieshi nianpu chugao 1992: 573.
 64 Ibid.: 1992: 589 (note 1).

- 65 VKP(B), Komintern 1996: 426-427.
 66 *Ibid.*: 153-154.
 67 *Ibid.*: 308-310, 363-366.
 68 Chiang Kaishek 1999, No. 1: 4-5.
 69 VKP(B), Komintern 1996: 365.
 70 *Ibid.*: 260.
 71 *Ibid.*: 325-331.
 72 *Ibid.*: 239-240.
 73 *Ibid.*: 110, 461.
 74 On 13 December 1926, the GMD leftists, following Borodin's advice, formed the Provisional Joint Council in Wuhan, chaired by Xu Qian. It usurped the authority of the GMD Political Council. On 31 December Chiang Kaishek claimed that the headquarters of the NRA, Nanchang, was the only and highest authority of the GMD.
 75 Daxi Archive, Shilue, 20 April 1927.
 76 VKP(B), Komintern 1996: 631.

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CHIANG KAISHEK BETWEEN REVOLUTION AND MILITARISM, 1926/27

Tim Trampedach

Introduction

Historiography in the People's Republic of China still paints a rather gloomy picture of Chiang Kaishek and his activities in the 1920s.¹ In particular, concerning the years 1926/27, there is almost total unanimity in PRC publications: Chiang Kaishek turned against Sun Yatsen's Three Great Policies (*san da zhengce*) and took the counter-revolutionary path by initiating the anti-communist putsches on 20 March 1926 and 12 April 1927, thus causing the "defeat of the revolution" (*geming shibai*) in an alliance with imperialists, capitalists and warlords.² Chiang Kaishek has been called a "traitor to the revolution" (*geming pantrui*) and a "new warlord" (*xin junfa*), even if the latter judgment has become a subject of controversy in recent discussions among scholars in the PRC.³

In Western publications, the evaluation of Chiang Kaishek has been more diverse, but not only Isaacs' influential study which has considered Chiang in context with Fascist dictatorships, has seen him as a counter-revolutionary who only replaced the old militarism with a new one (Isaacs 1961). Fairbank (1989: 216) claims that Chiang Kaishek "suddenly stopped being a revolutionary" in 1927; according to Gernet's view (1979: 648) Chiang "crushed the revolution" in Shanghai; Osterhammel (1989: VII) and Wilbur (1984: 145) also use the term counter-revolution to describe Chiang's behavior; Dreyer (1995: 5) in a more recent study has judged Chiang to be the "most powerful warlord" during the Northern Expedition in 1926/27; and according to Schwarz (1998: 173, 180) Chiang Kaishek was the most important and successful warlord during these years.

Of course, there are also several studies in the West, in Japan, and especially in Taiwan that make more positive judgments of Chiang Kaishek, neither regarding him as a "traitor to the revolution" nor as a "new warlord". Nevertheless, it is worth studying the issue of Chiang's attitude towards the revolution and his relationship with militarism in China during the years

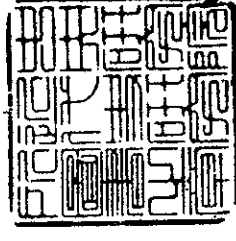
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THE CHINESE
REVOLUTION IN THE
1920s

Between triumph and disaster

*Edited by Mechthild Leutner,
Roland Felber, Mikhail L. Titarenko
and Alexander M. Grigoriev*



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