

LIAO CHUNG-K'AI AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN KWANGTUNG, 1924-1925*

F. GILBERT CHAN

With emphasis on the labor movement in Kwangtung, this article examines one important aspect of Liao Chung-k'ai's revolutionary career. It covers the last twenty months of his life when he served, among other official capacities, as chairman of the Bureau of Workers in the Central Executive Committee of the reorganized Kuomintang (KMT). This period began with the convention of the First Party Congress in Canton in January 1924 and ended with Liao's assassination in August 1925. During these months, the KMT leaders were engaged in a power struggle, with the "rightist" faction challenging Sun Yat-sen's alliance with Soviet and Chinese Communists.

A major architect of party reorganization, Liao supported Sun's rapprochement with Russia. He became a controversial figure in South China. His advocacy of a militant labor policy produced significant impact on the KMT revolution. It also intensified the factional conflict within the party and helped create an atmosphere congenial to the spread of violence. While many of Liao's comrades adopted a hostile attitude toward his radical beliefs, publications in Hong Kong and Shanghai generally labeled him a Communist.⁽¹⁾ In the midst of severe opposition, he fell victim to the bullets of assassins only five months after Sun's death.

Since the T'ung-meng-hui years, Liao had expressed a strong interest in

*This article is based partly on two earlier papers. The first was presented to the Columbia University Seminar on Modern China on November 13, 1975, while the second was delivered to the 28th Annual Conference of the Association for Asian Studies on March 20, 1976. All three works have the same title. Acknowledgments are due to Professor C. Martin Wilbur of Columbia University for his constructive criticisms.

(1) See, for example, *Hua-tzu jih-pao* (Hong Kong), March 17, 1924; *Hong Kong Daily Press*, August 21, 1925; and *North China Herald* (Shanghai), February 14, 1925, p. 253, and August 29, 1925, p. 238.

social changes. Thanks to the influence of Soviet advisers, he played an active role in mass mobilization in 1924-1925. This article studies his labor policy in the context of his involvement in the nationalist revolution. The KMT was afflicted with bitter dissension. As a prominent "leftist" leader, Liao was a target of "rightist" attacks. Their disagreement over the labor policy reflected some of the important differences between the two factions.⁽²⁾ By analyzing Liao's attitude toward the workers in Kwangtung, this article offers an explanation for the power struggle which was, to a considerable degree, responsible for his tragic death in the summer of 1925.

The KMT and Its Pre-1924 Labor Policy

The KMT had initiated a pro-labor policy prior to its alliance with Soviet Russia. As leader of the Canton government, Sun Yat-sen abolished the anti-labor laws which Yuan Shih-k'ai had previously promulgated. In January 1921, he created a "department" in his regime to manage the affairs of the workers.⁽³⁾ The most notable illustration of KMT attitude toward labor was its support of the Seamen's Strike in Hong Kong during the early months of 1922. Liao Chung-k'ai, then responsible for the finances of Canton, was in favor of extending material assistance to the strikers. The southern government subsequently contributed an approximate total of 100,000 *yuan* to the Seamen's Union, although it maintained an official position of nonintervention.⁽⁴⁾ G. Maring, the Soviet emissary who visited Sun in Kweilin in December 1921, was reportedly impressed by the KMT support of the strike. As a result, he

(2) In general, the KMT "leftists" supported Sun Yat-sen's alliance with Soviet and Chinese Communists, as well as the Russian strategy of mass mobilization, whereas the "rightists" were opposed to them. See F. Gilbert Chan, "Factional Politics of the Kuomintang Reorganization," a paper presented to the Annual Conference of the American Historical Association in Washington, D. C., on December 29, 1980. Cf. Jerome Ch'en, "The Left Wing Kuomintang--A Definition," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, XXV, Part 3 (1963), pp. 557-76; and James R. Shirley, "Factionalism and the Left Kuomintang," *Studies on Asia*, V (1965), pp. 97-104.

(3) Jean Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919-1927*, trans. by H. W. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 166

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 183; and Teng Chung-hsia, *Chung-kuo chih-kung yun-tung chien-shih, 1919-1926* (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1957), p. 59.

thought "more highly of Sun's socialism."⁽⁵⁾

Among Sun's comrades, Ma Ch'ao-chun, Ch'en Ping-sheng, and Hsieh Ying-po were most busily involved in labor organization during the pre-1924 years. A native of Kwangtung, Ma traveled in 1902 to San Francisco, where he met Sun two years later through Huang San-teh's introduction. Shortly afterward, he followed Sun to Japan and was admitted to Meiji University to study political economy. In 1906, he was sent by Sun to Hong Kong to mobilize the workers there. In 1917, when Sun established his first separatist government in Canton, Ma proposed an eight-point program for the promotion of a national labor movement. He soon became an influential leader of the powerful Kwangtung Mechanics Union.⁽⁶⁾

Ch'en Ping-sheng was also a native of Kwangtung. When he was eleven *sui*, he went to Hong Kong to work in an American-owned factory. He began his career as a sailor seven years later. While he was in England, he witnessed the humiliating treatment of Chinese workers by their British employers. He was henceforth determined to devote his energy to the task of improving China's international status. In 1913, he became a member of Sun's Chinese Revolutionary Party in Japan. He helped to found the Seamen's Union. As its president, he played a significant role in the strike of 1922.⁽⁷⁾

Hsieh Ying-po was a member of the Chinese parliament during the early years of the republican era. He fled to Japan after the abortive "Second Revolution" against Yuan Shih-k'ai. In November 1913, he joined the Chinese Revolutionary Party.⁽⁸⁾ He soon left Tokyo for the United States, and he

(5) Quoted from Dov Bing, "Sneevliet and the Early Years of the CCP," *China Quarterly*, No. 48 (October/December 1971), p. 682. Cf. Lydia Holubnychy, *Michael Borodin and the Chinese Revolution, 1922-1925* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1979), pp. 156, 174.

(6) See Ma Ch'ao-chun *et al.*, *Chung-kuo lao-kung yun-tung shih* (Taipei: Chung-hua ta-tien pien-yin-hui, 1966), hereinafter CKLYTS, I, pp. 48-49, 100-102. See also Howard L. Boorman (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967-1971), II, pp. 461-63.

(7) CKLYTS, I, pp. 86-87, 92-95, 97-99, 177-90.

(8) The details about Hsieh Ying-po's admission to the Chinese Revolutionary Party are included in *Chung-hua ke-ming-tang tang-yuan ming-ts'eh*, an important primary source in the collection of the KMT Archives in Taiwan. Ch'en Ping-sheng's name, however, does not appear in this document.

studied at Columbia University in 1915. He reportedly became a member of the American Socialist Party. With his wife (formerly Miss Hurd), he returned to China in 1916. In the following year, he established the Overseas Chinese Industrial Federation, and he proposed to follow the Western practice of celebrating the May 1 Labor Day. In 1919, he mobilized the Cantonese workers to demonstrate against the political domination of Kwangsi militarists in South China. He later served as president of the Mutual Aid Society, and he advocated the conclusion of an alliance between intellectuals and workers. ⁽⁹⁾

In response to the efforts of these party leaders, labor organizations in Kwangtung provided the KMT with strong political support. For example, large groups of workers paraded on May 5, 1921, when Sun Yat-sen assumed the presidency of the Canton government. More important, the majority of the 40,000 new party members in 1921-1922 were workers; many were seamen, who were thankful for the KMT assistance of their strike in January-March 1922. During the June 16 coup of 1922, when General Ch'en Chiung-ming expelled Sun from Canton, the labor organizations tried in vain to interfere on Sun's behalf. ⁽¹⁰⁾

In spite of Sun's friendly relations with the workers, however, there were serious limitations in his labor policy. He exaggerated the importance of military campaigns in his anti-warlord movement, and he never considered labor "as more than a supporting force."⁽¹¹⁾ Mikhail Borodin, who became Sun's political adviser toward the close of 1923, charged that the KMT had failed to demonstrate genuine concern for the working class. He claimed that labor "could be a primary source of support" for the party. Yet, instead of striving

(9) CKLKYTS, I, pp. 134, 158; and Chesneau, *Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 134. C. Martin Wilbur discusses Hsieh Ying-po's life in his manuscript, tentatively entitled "The National Revolution in China, 1922-1928" (hereinafter cited as Wilbur manuscript).

(10) Chesneau, *Chinese Labor Movement*, pp. 166, 202; and CKLKYTS, I, pp. 161, 203-206. For Teng Tse-ju's report on new KMT members, see *Chung-kuo kuo-min-tang chou-k'an* (Canton), No. 9 (February 24, 1924), p. 12.

(11) Chesneau, *Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 231; and Teng, *Chung-kuo chih-kung*, p. 114. Cf. Holubnychy, *Michael Borodin*, pp. 240, 304; and F. Gilbert Chan, "From Anti-Manchism to Anti-Imperialism: Sun Yat-sen's Interpretations of Chinese Nationalism," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, VII, No. 2 (Fall 1980), pp. 253-54.

to create a "bond" with the workers, Sun's comrades were satisfied that labor unions had favored them with a mere expression of "partiality."⁽¹²⁾

To correct these shortcomings, Borodin urged the KMT to adopt a radical program of mass mobilization. This would probably be the most important component in the work of party reorganization. On November 13, 1923, he explained to the representatives of the KMT regional committees how their party could rally the "350,000 organized workers" in Canton under the banner of its nationalist revolution. According to the Russian *sovetsnik*, the KMT should "immediately" promulgate a "decree on the social laws for the workers," which would accede to their demands for an eight-hour work day and a minimum wage scale. As Borodin assured the "rightist" leaders, these provisions would only constitute "the most moderate program of any socialist party,"⁽¹³⁾

Borodin's relentless effort produced some positive results, as evidenced by Sun Yat-sen's "new line" toward the workers in Kwangtung.⁽¹⁴⁾ At the First Party Congress in January 1924, Sun advocated the adoption of labor laws, which would improve the livelihood of the workers and aid the development of their organizations. He appointed Liao Chung-k'ai, who had favored the policy of Soviet orientation, to head the newly created Bureau of Workers. Liao's principal function was to attract active labor support for the KMT

(12) A. I. Cherepanov, *Zapiski voennogo sovetnika v Kitae: Iz istorii pervoi grazhdanskoi revoliutsionnoi voiny, 1924-1927* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1964), p. 39. Cf. N. Mitarevsky, *World-wide Soviet Plots, as Disclosed by Hitherto Unpublished Documents Seized at the USSR Embassy in Peking* (Tientsin: Tientsin Press Ltd., n. d.), p. 138. My translation is based on Cherepanov's account of Borodin's speech on November 13, 1923, and is slightly different from Mitarevsky's.

(13) A record of the November 13 meeting is included, partially, in Mitarevsky, *World-wide Soviet Plots*, pp. 137-38; and, in greater detail, in Cherepanov, *Zapiski voennogo sovetnika v Kitae*, pp. 37-40. Both sources are based on Borodin's report to his Soviet superiors. Cf. Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs: A History of Relations between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), II, pp. 636-37; and Holubnychy, *Michael Borodin*, pp. 294-97.

(14) Chesneaux, *Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 246; see also pp. 243-53 and 290-318, for details of the labor movement in Kwangtung. Cf. Jen-min ch'u-pan-she (comp.), *Ti-i-tz'u kuo-nei ke-ming chan-cheng shih-ch'i te kung-jen yun-tung* (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1963), pp. 109-69, 187-218.

revolution. ⁽¹⁵⁾ On February 20, 1924, he presided over the seventh meeting of the Central Executive Committee, during which he and his colleagues resolved that the Bureau of Workers should investigate the economic conditions of the laboring class, study its methods of struggle, and guide the workers in such activities as strikes and boycotts. ⁽¹⁶⁾ This emphasis on mass mobilization ushered in a new era in the relations between the KMT and the labor; it also marked a turning point in Liao's revolutionary career.

Liao Chung-k'ai's Political Thought and His Perceptions of the Labor Movement in Kwangtung

Born in San Francisco in 1878, Liao was the epitome of Chinese nationalism. He had been a proponent of social transformations since the beginning of the twentieth century, yet he remained steadfastly opposed to the Marxist principle of class struggle. As head of the Bureau of Workers in 1924-1925, he defined the role of labor movement in the context of China's quest for national sovereignty. In this sense, he was a nationalist revolutionary, interested primarily in turning China into a strong and prosperous nation.

Liao's father, Chu-pin, was a product of Western cultural influences. He received his education in St. Paul's College, one of the earliest missionary schools in Hong Kong. He obtained sufficient training in English to earn a job in the British-financed Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. Shortly after the birth of his first son, En-t'ao, in 1863, the bank transferred him to its branch office in San Francisco. ⁽¹⁷⁾

(15) KMT Archives (ed.), *Kuo-fu ch'uan-chi* (Taipei: Chung-hua min-kuo ko-chieh chi-nien kuo-fu pai-nien tan-ch'en ch'ou-pei wei-yuan-hui, 1965), II, p. IV:51; and Lo Chia-lun (ed.), *Kuo-fu nien-p'u tseng-ting-pen*, enlarged and collated by Huang Chi-lu (Taipei: KMT Archives, 1969), II, p. 1071.

(16) See the minutes in *Chung-kuo kuo-min-tang ti-i-chieh chung-yang chih-hsing wei-yuan-hui hui-i chi-lu* (original document in KMT Archives), hereinafter cited as *Minutes of Central Executive Committee*.

(17) For an account of Liao Chu-pin's life, see Wang Shao-sheng, "Chi Hsiang-kang liang ta tz'u-jen," *Chung Chi Journal* (Hong Kong), III, No. 2 (May 1964), p. 110. Apparently, Liao was actively involved in promoting the welfare of Chinese residents in California. Two San Francisco newspapers reported that he had donated money to help construct hospitals for Chinese patients. See *T'ang-fan kung-pao* [*The Oriental*], October 30, 1875; and *Ts'ui-chi Hua Mei hsin-pao* [*American and Chinese Commercial Newspaper*], April 16, 1888.

Liao Chung-k'ai's uncle, Tzu-san, was a Manchu official. He had been engaged in several government enterprises which were related to China's experiments in industrialization. Thanks to this familial connection, En-t'ao later served as a diplomat in the Ch'ing and republican governments.⁽¹⁸⁾ The members of the Liao family thus shared an interest in *yang-wu* (foreign matters). In different ways, they contributed to the modernization of China.

Liao Chung-k'ai was a prominent example of the overseas Chinese who supported Sun Yat-sen's anti-Manchu revolution. During Liao's childhood in San Francisco, anti-Chinese sentiments were strong among the Californians. He later complained that he had often been ill-treated by his American playmates. The policemen, too, called the Chinese "yellow dogs." Because of his experience with racial discrimination in San Francisco, Liao was "determined to make China strong."⁽¹⁹⁾

Shortly after the death of his father in 1894, Liao went to China for the first time. He was about sixteen years old. He lived in Canton with his uncle, Tzu-san, and he flirted with the idea of an official career. Nevertheless, he could find little satisfaction with the decadent life-style of the Chinese bureaucrats. In October 1897, he married Ho Hsiang-ning, who came from a rich family of tea merchants. Under her influence, Liao read books on reform

(18) Wang, "Chi Hsiang-kang," pp. 110-13. The author was a close friend of Liao En-t'ao during the early 1950s when the latter stayed in Hong Kong. They were members of a poetry club. Liao died in the British colony on April 13, 1954, at the age of ninety-one. He had a Christian funeral two days later. See *Hua-chiao jih-pao* (Hong Kong), April 15, 1954. For a brief description of his career, see Gaimusho johobu (Japan), *Gendai Shina jimmei kan* (Tokyo: Gaimusho johobu, 1925), pp. 348-49.

(19) Liao Mong-sing [Liao Meng-hsing], "My Father Liao Chung-k'ai," *China Reconstructs*, VIII, No. 11 (November 1964), p. 25; and Liao Meng-hsing, *Wo te mu-ch'in Ho Hsiang-ning* (Hong Kong: Chao-yang ch'u-pan-she, 1973), p. 3. For the life of the Chinese in the United States, see, for example, Mary Roberts Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1909); Gunther Barth, *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964); and Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese, 1785-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

and revolution. Toward the end of 1902, he departed for Japan. (20)

While studying at Waseda University, Liao became interested in socialism. He was particularly concerned about the inequitable distribution of wealth in China. When he translated Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* into Chinese in 1905, he used the pseudonym of T'u-fu, which means "slaying the rich." He admitted to have been affected ideologically by Kemuyama Sentaro, a professor at Waseda who specialized in the history of Russian revolution. Liao did not, however, embrace Marxism as a solution to China's misfortunes. Instead, he was attracted to such socialist authors as W. D. P. Bliss, who rejected the suggestion that socialism was a class movement. (21)

Liao's association with Sun Yat-sen began in 1903, and they remained close friends for twenty-two years, until Sun died in March 1925. In 1905, Liao became a member of the T'ung-meng-hui. He identified the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty with China's national salvation. Yet, in his publications in *Min-pao*, he did not follow the examples of Hu Hu-min, Chu Chih-hsin, and Wang Ching-wei and call for a racial revolution against the "barbarian" conquerors. Indeed, he returned to China in 1909 to become a Ch'ing official in Kirin.

In the post-1911 years, Liao's nationalist thinking evolved against the background of political instability. His faith in socialism continued to dominate

(20) Ho Hsiang-ning, *Hui-i Sun Chung-shan ho Liao Chung-k'ai* (Peking: Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien ch'u-pan-she, 1957), p. 23; Liang Shao-wen, "Liao Chung-k'ai t'ung-chih lueh-chuan," *Chui-tao Liao Ch'en erh t'ung-chih chi-nien ts'e* (Canton: Chien-kuo Yueh-chun tsung-ssu-ling-pu cheng-chih-pu, 1925), p. 31; Nym Wales, *Red Dust: Autobiographies of Chinese Communists* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1952), p. 26; Chung-san (pseud.), "Wo so jen-shih te Liao Ch'eng-chih," in *Jen-wu* (Hong Kong), No. 11 (February 15, 1938), p. 23; and Kikuchi Hideo, "Ryo Chugai to dai-ichiji Kokkyo gassaku," *Ajia kazai jumpo*, No. 648 (May 1906), p. 8. For Ho Hsiang-ning's career, see Helen Foster Snow, *Women in Modern China* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1967), pp. 99-109; Liao Chengzhi [Liao Ch'eng-chih], "My Mother and Her Paintings," *China Reconstructs*, XXVIII, No. 6 (June 1979), pp. 46-55; and Li Hsin and Sun Ssu-pai (eds.), *Min-kuo jen-wu chuan* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1978-1980), II, pp. 67-77.

(21) Liao's partial translation of *Progress and Poverty* appeared in *Min-pao* (Tokyo), No. 1 (November 26, 1905), pp. 122-30. He discussed Kemuyama's influence on him in No. 11 (January 25, 1907), pp. 1-2, and he translated a portion of *A Handbook of Socialism*, by Bliss, in No. 7 (September 5, 1906), pp. 1-11.

his ideology. As a disciple of Henry George, he advocated the reform of "land policy" as a means to solve China's "immediate" problems. He condemned the landlords for their "monopolization of economic interests," and he characterized them as the major obstacle to the fulfillment of Sun Yat-sen's ideal of "equalization of land rights."⁽²²⁾ Nonetheless, his indebtedness to the Georgian philosophy notwithstanding, Liao traced the origins of socialism to the Confucian utopian system of well-fields.⁽²³⁾

In his writings of 1919-1920, Liao expressed confidence in China's potential greatness. He emphasized its huge population, vast territory, and abundant natural resources. As he insisted, China had "the qualifications to become the savior of the world." He conceded, however, that it needed "the spiritual and material assistance" of the industrial powers. As a result, he did not take a strong stand on anti-imperialism. Instead, he echoed Sun Yat-sen's call for an "economic open door policy," and he entreated Japan and the Western nations to cooperate with China in the exploitation of its rich resources.⁽²⁴⁾

Liao was dissatisfied with the results of the 1911 Revolution. He was particularly unhappy about the turn toward political dictatorship during Yuan Shih-k'ai's presidency. He blamed the warlords for the failure of the Chinese experiment in republicanism. He was equally critical of political parties, and he questioned the effectiveness of representative government in safeguarding the welfare of the people. In this respect, the influence of Delos F. Wilcox was clearly discernible. To protect the sovereignty of the masses, Liao proposed that they should be given greater control over the government through the devices of initiative, referendum, and recall.⁽²⁵⁾

During this May Fourth era, Liao was evidently leaning toward the West

(22) *Liao Chung-k'ai chi* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1963), hereinafter LCKC, pp. 65-74.

(23) Liao Chung-k'ai et al., *Ching-t'ien chih-tu yu-wu chih yen-chiu* (Taipei: Chung-kuo wen-hsien ch'u-pan-she, 1965). See also Joseph R. Levenson, "Ill Wind in the Well-Field: The Erosion of the Confucian Ground of Controversy," in Arthur F. Wright (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 268-87.

(24) LCKC, pp. 94-96.

(25) *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8. Liao translated Wilcox's book, *Government of All the People*, and published it under the title, *Ch'uan-min cheng-chih* (Taipei: P'a-mi-erh shu tien, 1957).

for ideological inspiration. His borrowings from Henry George and Delos Wilcox enriched his political thought; they also accounted for its growing maturity. Yet, one must not exaggerate the extent of this Western influence. In his writings during these years, Liao often turned back to China's cultural heritage for emotional support. Moreover, he was attracted by the Russian Revolution of 1917. For some time, he even planned to go to Moscow to study. He also maintained a friendly relationship with Chang Kuo-t'ao and other intellectuals who later founded the Chinese Communist Party. ⁽²⁶⁾

Prior to Sun Yat-sen's rapprochement with Soviet Russia in 1923, Liao had not been diligently preoccupied with the labor movement in Kwangtung. Neither had his writings demonstrated a keen awareness of the revolutionary strength of the working class. In the KMT, as well as in Sun's separatist governments in Canton, Liao's principal responsibility had been focused on the management of finances. Nevertheless, he must have realized, in the aftermath of Ch'en Chiung-ming's coup in June 1922, that the Chinese revolution had failed. Sun's movement to "protect the constitution" had been victimized by the selfish ambitions of the militarists. In late 1922, therefore, Liao endorsed Sun's decision to seek aid from Moscow. In January of the following year, he accompanied Adolph Joffe to Japan, where they discussed the details of the KMT reorganization. ⁽²⁷⁾ In October, Mikhail Borodin arrived in Canton and, under his tutelage, Liao learned the revolutionary tactics of mass mobilization.

Liao's writings and speeches in 1924-1925 reflected this strong Soviet influence. He redefined Chinese nationalism by stressing the significance of anti-imperialism. He blamed the West for China's misfortunes, and he denounced President Woodrow Wilson as a hypocrite and a failure. According to him, Christianity had become "a tool of aggression in the hands of the imperi-

(26) Ho, *Hui-i Sun Chung-shan*, p. 12; and Chang Kuo-t'ao, *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-1927: Volume one of the Autobiography of Chang Kuo-t'ao* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1971), p. 77.

(27) Holubnychy, *Michael Borodin*, pp. 189-90; and C. Martin Wilbur, *Sun Yat-sen: Frustrated Patriot* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 140.

alists." Hence, he lauded the delirious xenophobia of the Boxer Uprising, which he argued was as important as the 1911 Revolution. ⁽²⁸⁾

The most dominant feature of Liao's political thought during these last years of his life was his emphasis on the mobilization of the masses. He was chairman of both the Bureau of Workers and, since November 1924, the Bureau of Peasants. He spoke to these two groups regularly. He maintained that his authority was derived from "the support of the people." In an effort to activate the political consciousness of the masses, he urged the KMT to initiate a campaign against illiteracy, so that the Chinese people could become responsible citizens of a "democratic nation." ⁽²⁹⁾

For the first time in his career, Liao developed an active interest in the labor movement in Kwangtung. Prior to the KMT reorganization, he had only been an actor of secondary importance in the drama of labor unrest. He lacked the experience of such leaders as Ma Ch'ao-chun, Ch'en Ping-sheng, and Hsieh Ying-po, although he enjoyed the enthusiastic support of Mikhail Borodin and many Chinese Communists. Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, and Lin Tsu-han were his "close friends." ⁽³⁰⁾ In the beginning of 1924, Liao selected Feng Chu-p'o as his secretary in the Bureau of Workers. Feng was a Chinese Communist who had become extremely unpopular among the members of the Kwangtung Mechanics Union. He soon gained control of the bureau, while Liao was busy with other affairs in the KMT and the Canton government. ⁽³¹⁾

Liao, however, was not a socialist revolutionary. Even during these years when he was the undisputed leader of the KMT "leftists," his commitment to social changes remained mostly limited to a conceptual level. He was primarily concerned with the promotion of the nationalist revolution, and he insisted

(28) LCKC, pp.123-24, 161-62. For Liao's attack against Christianity, see his speech on December 25, 1924, in *Fan Chi-tu-chiao chou-k'an*, No. 3 (March 4, 1925), p. 5. Cf. *North China Herald*, January 3, 1925, p. 9; and *China Weekly Review* (Shanghai), December 5, 1925, p. 10.

(29) LCKC, pp.137-38, 176.

(30) Wales, *Red Dust*, p. 30.

(31) CKLKYTS, II, pp.287, 424; and Tsou Lu, *Chung-kuo kuo-min-tang shih-kao* (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1965), p. 406.

that the entire Chinese population had been exploited by warlords and imperialists. He did not view the workers as a social class with special group interests; nor did he regard their movement as a struggle against capitalism. In his opinion, the solution of China's social problems was contingent upon its accomplishment of political independence. Thus he treated the labor movement in Kwangtung as an integral part of the KMT revolution.⁽³²⁾ In March 1924, a leading newspaper in Hong Kong accused him of using the workers to serve his own political purposes. Similarly, Borodin was unhappy because, according to him, Liao and his "leftist" comrades were reluctant to support the radical programs of socialist transformation.⁽³³⁾

Without question, Liao's perception of the labor movement in Canton was politically inspired. His nationalist thought was traceable to his early years in San Francisco, but it was strengthened in 1924-1925 by his new emphasis on anti-imperialism. He described warlords as "domestic reactionary forces;" they were natural allies of Japan and the Western powers.⁽³⁴⁾ Instead of being an important component in an elaborate plan for social changes, mass mobilization was a revolutionary strategy for the campaign against regional militarism and foreign aggression.

Nonetheless, in his effort to win the support of workers and peasants, Liao depended more on his new Communist friends than on his KMT associates. His reliance on Feng Chu-p'o was a typical example. When he later headed the Bureau of Peasants, Liao likewise chose P'eng Pai as his secretary. P'eng was a Chinese Communist who had been very active in the peasant movement of South China. He became a KMT member during the period of party reorganization. Some "rightist" leaders, however, doubted his loyalty to Sun Yat-sen, and they had wanted to drive him out of the Bureau of Peasants even before Liao appointed him secretary. Because of his trust in P'eng, Liao offended many KMT veterans.

(32) LCKC, p.202.

(33) *Hua-tzu jih-pao*, March 15, 1924; Holubnychy, *Michael Borodin*, p.375.

(34) LCKC, p.241.

Meanwhile, Liao made several significant concessions to his Communist allies. In a symbolic gesture, he hoisted a red flag with hammer and sickle above his office. He also organized armed corps of workers and peasants. An American diplomat reported in October 1924 that the "labor troops" had demonstrated in Canton, carrying banners which advocated the establishment of "a Soviet form of government in China."⁽³⁵⁾ In 1925, a Shanghai publication characterized Liao as a "pronounced Bolshevik," and there were rumors that he had joined the Chinese Communist Party.⁽³⁶⁾

Under Liao's direction, the Bureau of Workers clearly assumed a pro-Communist position, and this turn toward radicalism was vigorously opposed by Ma Ch'ao-chun, Hsieh Ying-po, and other experienced labor leaders in the KMT. They allied with the "rightists" to challenge Sun Yat-sen's collaboration with Soviet Russia and the Chinese Communist Party. In this way, Liao's militant labor policy became a central issue in the the bitter intraparty struggle of 1924-1925.

Intraparty Struggle and the Labor Movement in Kwangtung

Before the KMT reorganization, Canton had been principally a commercial center, and it did not pride itself on a strong tradition of labor unionism. The Kwangtung Mechanics Union, for instance, was politically conservative. It was similar in organization to the guilds of the earlier days, and its members included both employers and workers.⁽³⁷⁾ In his discussions with these two groups, Ma Ch'ao-chun did not emphasize their social and economic differences. Instead, he urged them to work harmoniously toward their common goals. Teng Chung-hsia, an activist in the labor movement of the 1920s, criticized the workers in Canton for their lack of class consciousness.⁽³⁸⁾

(35) Chesneaux, *Chinese Labor Movement*, pp.246, 249. See also Douglas Jenkins to American charge d'affaires ad interim (Peking), October 13, 1924, in United States Department of State, *Records Relating to Internal Affairs of China, 1910-1929* (hereinafter USDS), 893.00/5776; and October 23, 1924, in USDS, 893.00/5790.

(36) *North China Herald*, February 14, 1925, p.253; *Hua-tzu jih-pao*, March 20, 1924, and March 29, 1924; and *Hong Kong Daily Press*, August 21, 1925.

(37) See Wilbur manuscript; and Chesneaux, *Chinese Labor Movement*, pp.201-202.

(38) CKLKYTS, I, pp.100-102; and Teng, *Chung-kuo chih-kuang*, p.10.

In comparison with the KMT, the Chinese Communist Party did not have much influence on the labor organizations in South China. In October 1921, Liao Chung-k'ai recommended T'an P'ing-shan and Feng Chu-p'o to teach at a night school funded by the Kwangtung Mechanics Union. They were soon dismissed, after being condemned by the school authorities for their subversive activities. Most of the union members objected to Sun Yat-sen's collaboration with the Communists. On eight different occasions between August and December 1922, Ma Ch'ao-chun attempted unsuccessfully to dissuade Sun from seeking assistance from Soviet Russia. In a September meeting with Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Ma warned the Chinese Communists against sabotaging the KMT revolution.⁽³⁹⁾ At the beginning of 1924, Hsieh Ying-po was openly displeased with Liao's appointment as chairman of the Bureau of Workers.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Henceforth, he and Ma refused to endorse Liao's radical policy of mass mobilization.

In addition to these labor leaders, there were other opponents to Sun Yat-sen's alliance with Soviet and Chinese Communists, and they included such KMT veterans as Tai Chi-t'ao, Chang Chi, Tsou Lu, Feng Tzu-yu, Teng Tse-ju, and Sun Fo. Tai was convinced that the alliance was a tactical error, although he had been "closely associated" with Chang Kuo-t'ao and his comrades during the May Fourth epoch. Tsou was skeptical about the Marxist principle of class struggle, and he was alarmed by Borodin's growing importance in Canton.⁽⁴¹⁾ In November 1923, Teng and ten other KMT members wrote to warn Sun Yat-sen of probable Communist conspiracy. With Chang Chi and Hsieh Ch'ih, Teng submitted to the Central Executive Committee in June 1924 a formal proposal to impeach the Communists.⁽⁴²⁾

(39) CKLKYTS, I, pp.198-99, 235-38.

(40) *Hua-tzu jih-pao*, May 17, 1924.

(41) For Tai's relations with Chang Kuo-t'ao, see Chang, *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party*, p.77. In a letter to Chiang Kai-shek on December 13, 1925, Tai expressed his reservations about the KMT alliance with the Communists. See Ch'en T'ien-hsi (ed.), *Tai Chi-t'ao hsien-sheng wen-ts'un* (Taipei: Chung-yang wen-wu kung-ying-she, 1959), III, pp.979-86. See also Tsou Lu, *Hui-ku lu* (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan-she, 1968), I, pp. 148-56.

(42) *Kuo-fu nien-p'u*, II, pp.1036-37; and Teng Tse-ju, *Chung-kuo kuo-min-tang erh-shih-nien shih-chi* (Shanghai: Cheng-chung shu-chu, 1948), pp.314-23. Cf. *Sun Chung-shan nien-p'u* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1976-1977), III, p. 231.

Confronted with such formidable opposition, Sun Yat-sen became increasingly dependent upon Liao Chung-k'ai's loyal support. In the summer of 1924, Liao was governor of Kwangtung, party representative of the Whampoa Military Academy, director of the Central Bank of China, chairman of the Bureau of Workers, and member of both the Central Executive Committee and the powerful Political Council. At the same time, his wife, Ho Hsiang-ning, headed the Bureau of Women.

Burdened with these many responsibilities, Liao emerged as one of the most influential leaders in South China. He was convinced that Sun's pro-Communist policy was the key to revolutionary success. He became intolerant of the "rightist" resistance to his course of radicalism. In May 1925, he denounced Feng Tzu-yu, a prominent KMT veteran, as a reactionary and an enemy of the nationalist movement.⁽⁴³⁾ Thanks to this self-righteous attitude, he was often estranged from his close associates, including Hu Han-min, an intimate friend since 1905.

As early as April 1924, the Chinese Communists began to report on the factional struggle within the KMT between the "rightists" and the "leftists." In June, they identified Sun Fo and Huang Chi-lu as "rightists." According to Ch'en Tu-hsiu, the "leftists" were advocates of revolution, whereas the "rightists" tended to compromise with warlords and imperialists.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In a derogatory manner, the Communists labeled as "rightists" any KMT leaders who challenged either Sun Yat-sen's pro-Russian policy or the Soviet mode of revolution. Liao and his "leftist" allies generally subscribed to these simplistic characterizations. Wang Ching-wei, for example, declared:

Those comrades of ours who are anti-imperialist, turn to the left! Those who are content to live under the unequal treaties, who want China to remain forever a semicolon, and who support the perpetuation of the world-wide influence of imperialism, turn to the right!⁽⁴⁵⁾

(43) LCKC, p.241.

(44) *Kuo-fu nien-p'u*, II, p. 1092; and *Hsiang-tao chou-pao*, No. 62 (April 23, 1924), pp. 495-96.

(45) Wang, "Tao Liao Chung-k'ai t'ung-chih hsu chu t'ung-chih," *Liao Chung-k'ai hsien-sheng ai-ssu-lu* (n.p., 1926), p. 21.

With the KMT thus divided into two opposing factions, Liao was determined to strengthen his own political authority in Kwangtung; this would insure the continuation of his radical program of mass mobilization. He was backed in this endeavor by Sun Yat-sen, Borodin, and other Communist and "leftist" associates. At one time, Liao concurrently held thirteen important positions in both the KMT and the Canton government. His wife, his brother, and his sister also served in various official capacities.⁽⁴⁶⁾ With such overwhelming power in his hands, Liao moved aggressively against the conservative labor leaders and their "rightist" comrades in the KMT, the business community in Canton, and the British authorities in Hong Kong. These were, in his opinion, representatives of the "reactionary forces" in China and, therefore, enemies of the KMT revolution.⁽⁴⁷⁾

In this campaign against the conservative elements in Kwangtung, Liao was eager to rally the workers under Sun Yat-sen's banner. He could not tolerate the disunity within the labor movement. Not only did Ma Ch'ao-chun and Hsieh Ying-po defy his command over the workers, but they also entertained serious reservations about Sun's alliance with the Communists. Hence, in May 1924, Liao convened the Canton Conference of Labor Delegates to unify the workers under his leadership, hoping thereby to reduce the influence of Ma and Hsieh. Nevertheless, the powerful Kwangtung Mechanics Union and several other labor organizations opposed this drastic measure of political centralization, and they kept themselves away from Liao's conference. In the ensuing battle for control over workers, Liao polarized the mass movement in South China and won the enmity of many KMT veterans⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Liao's confrontation with the merchant corps in Canton in August-October 1924 was the culmination of more than a year of mutually hostile relationship between him and the business community. As minister of finance and, later, governor of Kwangtung, he had enforced a policy of excessive taxation that

(46) Tsou, *Chung-kuo kuo-min-tang shih-kao*, p. 406.

(47) LCKC, pp. 241-44.

(48) Chesneaux, *Chinese Labor Movement*, p. 246; and *Hua-tzu jih-pao*, May 17, 1924.

was essentially anti-merchant.⁽⁴⁹⁾ While his advocacy of a militant labor movement did not endear him to the commercial interests of the province, his leanings toward the Communists constituted a significant cause of alienation. In August, when he endorsed Sun Yat-sen's decision to confiscate the shipment of arms imported to Canton by the merchants, a Hong Kong newspaper questioned the constitutionality of his governorship. The merchants charged that Liao was "an important element of the Communist Party," and they described their struggle with the KMT as a sacred war against Communism⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Liao regarded the merchant corps, which numbered approximately 50,000, as a menace to the Canton government. He objected to any suggestions of compromise, after his confiscation of the ammunitions. The ill-advised intervention of the British consulate general added fuel to the flames of revolution, turning what could have been a domestic conflict into a nationalist movement against imperialism. According to Liao, the "rebellion" of the armed merchant volunteers, supported by British "imperialists," was symbolic of the problems of China. Its suppression would represent a forward step toward the success of Sun Yat-sen's revolution.⁽⁵¹⁾

On the afternoon of October 10, participants in a national holiday parade collided with the merchant corps. The "labor troops," organized by Liao earlier in the year, were allegedly armed. During the skirmish, dozens of peasants, workers, and students lost their lives. The bloodshed prompted the KMT to assault the business community on October 15. More than one thousand buildings were destroyed, while the property damage amounted to thirty million *yuan* in Hong Kong currency⁽⁵²⁾. The Chinese Communists hailed the incident as a

(49) For a detailed account of the merchant corps incident, see *Kuang-tung k'ou-hsieh ch'ao* (Hong Kong: Hua-tzu jih-pao, 1924). Liao's policy of taxation is discussed in F. Gilbert Chan, "An Alternative to Kuomintang-Communist Collaboration: Sun Yat-sen and Hong Kong, January-June 1923," *Modern Asian Studies*, XIII, Part 1 (February 1979), pp. 135-36.

(50) *Hua-tzu jih-pao*, August 14, 1924; August 16, 1924; and September 1, 1924.

(51) P'ing-tzu (pseud.), "Chi Kuang-chou shang-t'uan chih pien," *Hsien-tai shih-liao* (Shanghai: Hai-t'ien ch'u-pan-she, 1934-1935), III, p. 8; *Hua-tzu jih-pao*, August 13, 1924; and *Kuang-chou k'ou-hsieh ch'ao*, I, pp. 15, 18; II, pp. 43-45, 50-52.

(52) USDS, 893.00/5776; and 893.00/5790.

victory over the counterrevolutionaries.⁽⁵³⁾ Thanks to his anti-merchant prejudice, Liao was blamed for the violence. Yet, in view of the active involvement of the masses in the collision, the defeat of the conservative business interests in Canton must be portrayed as his personal triumph.

In March 1925, Sun Yat-sen died in Peking without officially designating his successor. Before his departure from Canton in November 1924, he had appointed Hu Han-min acting generalissimo, to be in charge of the KMT government. Hu had been a faithful disciple since 1905, and he had supported Sun's decision to admit Chinese Communists into the party. Nonetheless, he did not trust the Russians, and he differed with Mikhail Borodin on such critical issues as land distribution. In October 1924, when Sun formed the Revolutionary Committee, he followed Borodin's advice and did not name Hu as its member.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Hu and Liao had been intimate friends since the T'ung-meng-hui era. Hu became governor of Kwangtung after the success of the 1911 Revolution, and he chose Liao to be his commissioner of finance. Yet, Hu was not outwardly a warm person. At times, he even kept his close associates at a distance.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Because of his opposition to the Soviet strategy of mass mobilization, he and Liao were estranged from each other in 1924. Toward the end of the year, they came into conflict over the right of peasants to vote in the forthcoming mayoral election in Canton⁽⁵⁶⁾.

At the time of Sun's death, Hu had emerged as the chief spokesman of the KMT "rightists." As acting generalissimo, he was probably Sun's most likely successor. The prospect of a "rightist" leadership in the party, however, frightened Liao and his Communist friends. They were particularly concerned about the future of the so-called "Three Great Policies" (alliance with Soviet

(53) *Hsiang-tao chou-pao*, No. 89 (October 29, 1924), p. 739.

(54) Chiang Yung-ching, *Hu Han-min hsien-sheng nien-p'u* (Taipei: KMT Archives, 1978), pp. 293, 295; and Mao Ssu-ch'eng, *Min-kuo shih-wu-nien i-ch'ien chih Chiang Chieh-shih hsien-sheng* (Hong Kong: Lung-men shu-tien, 1965), VIII, pp. 7b-8b.

(55) Hu Mu-lan (Han-min's daughter), "Hui-i wo te fu-ch'in," *Chung-kuo min-chu lun-t'an* (Hong Kong), II, No. 1. (January 1, 1966), p. 17.

(56) *Hsiang-tao chou-pao*, No. 98 (January 1925), p. 824.

Russia, admission of Chinese Communists into the KMT, and assistance to peasants and workers). Their struggle with Hu therefore transcended all personal considerations of power and ambition; it was a contest to decide the direction of the Chinese revolution.

The Swatow Conferences of May 1925 brought the "leftists" and their political allies together in an effort to deprive Hu of the opportunity to succeed Sun as the KMT leader.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Liao was the main architect of this coalition and he had the blessings of Borodin and other Communist associates. Hu was apparently aware of the strength of his opposition and was hence willing to compromise. He had earlier suggested the idea of collective leadership, thus placing the Canton government under a committee, which would be headed by a chairman. Liao and his "leftist" comrades agreed to this proposal, and one of the purposes of their meetings at Swatow was to devise a plan for the selection of the new chairman.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Despite his dominant position in the party, Liao was not a serious candidate; he was too controversial to be acceptable to many KMT veterans. He favored Wang Ching-wei, who was eventually elected to the chairmanship in July.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Liao's success in outmaneuvering Hu in this political battle was a remarkable victory for the "leftists," and it guaranteed, at least for the time being, the continuation of Sun Yat-sen's "Three Great Policies." As minister of finance in the newly reorganized government, Liao reached the pinnacle of power.

The "rightist" reaction was bitter. The appointment of their leader, Hu Han-min, as minister of foreign affairs in the Canton government which had

(57) Hu, "Hui-i wo te fu-ch'in," II, No. 1, p. 18. Cf. James R. Shirley, "Control of the Kuomintang after Sun Yat-sen's Death," *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXV, No. 1 (November 1965), pp. 77-79.

(58) Hu Han-min, "Ke-ming kuo-ch'eng chih chi-chien shih-shih," *San-min chu-i yueh-k'an*, II, No. 6 (December 1933), pp. 89-90; Hu Han-min, "Tao T'an Tsu-an hsien-sheng," in *Ke-ming hsien-lieh hsien-chin shih-wen hsuan-chi* (Taipei: Chung-hua min-kuo ko-chieh chi-nien kuo-fu pai-nien tan-ch'en ch'ou-pei wei-yuan-hui, 1955), III, p. 1690. Hsu Ch'ung-chih admitted to his friend in Hong Kong that he had been a part of the conspiracy at Swatow. See Hu, "Hui-i wo te fu-ch'in," II, No. 1, p. 18. See also the minutes of the February 19 meeting of the Political Council, in *Chung-yang cheng-chih wei-yuan-hui chi-lu* (original document in KMT Archives).

(59) Wang Wei-lien, "Ti-i-jen kuo-fu chu-hsi te jen-hsuan," *Hsien-tai shih-liao*, I, pp. 4-5.

contacts only with Soviet Russia was a brutal mockery. Hu I-sheng, Han-min's cousin, charged that Wang Ching-wei, treacherous and power-hungry, had plotted with Borodin against his fellow KMT comrades. Chu Cho-wen likewise maintained that Liao was a traitor to his own party.⁽⁶⁰⁾ This ferocious response of the "rightists" to Hu Han-min's humiliating defeat coincided with the outbreak of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike, posing a real threat to Liao's radical policy of mass mobilization.⁽⁶¹⁾

The May Thirtieth Incident of 1925, followed by the massacre at Shameen on June 23, swelled the anti-imperialist sentiments in Canton to a new height.⁽⁶²⁾ It led to a fresh confrontation between the KMT and the British authorities in Hong Kong. As early as June 16, Liao had advocated the boycott of British goods. In his dual capacity as chairman of the Bureau of Workers and minister of finance, he assumed a leading role in the anti-British strike in Canton and Hong Kong. He argued that this was a war of national liberation, claiming that the violent outbursts in May and June typified the "imperialist oppression of the Chinese people." He urged the Strike Committee to work for the abolition of unequal treaties. In pursuit of the objective of anti-imperialism, he begged the strikers not to fight primarily for the improvement of their economic well-being.⁽⁶³⁾

His dedication to the cause of nationalist revolution notwithstanding, Liao's anti-British crusade encountered seemingly insurmountable difficulties. The Cantonese objected to his suggestion to restore the gambling tax in order to raise funds to support the strike. With the arrival of more and more Chinese

(60) Hu I-sheng, *Kao hai-wei-wai t'ung-chih shu* (n. p., n. d.), pp. 1-3; and Chu Cho-wen, *Chu Cho-wen chih hai-wei-wai t'ung-chih shu* (n. p., n. d.), hereinafter CCW, p. 3. Both sources were mimeographed by the authors for private circulation. They are in the possession of the KMT Archives in Taiwan.

(61) For an account of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike, see Kan T'ien, *Sheng-Kang ta pa-kung* (Peking: T'ung-su tu-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1956). See also CKLKYTS, II, pp. 374-400; Teng, *Chung-kuo chih-kung*, pp. 222-54; and Chesneaux, *Chinese Labor Movement*, pp. 290-318.

(62) For details about the May Thirtieth Incident and the massacre at Shameen, see Kao Erh-pai and Kao Erh-sung, *Sha-mien ts'an-sha an* (Canton: Ch'ing-nien cheng-chi hsuanch'uan-hui, 1925); Teng, *Chung-kuo chih-kung*, pp. 180-221; CKLKYTS, II, pp. 401-17; and Chesneaux, *Chinese Labor Movement*, pp. 262-89.

(63) Kao and Kao, *Sha-mien ts'an-sha an*, pp. 5-6, 34-35; and LCKC, pp. 245-53.

from Hong Kong, he had to plan to engage them in useful work. On July 28, he proposed to the Strike Committee that the idle workers should help in the projects of road construction. No agreement, however, resulted from the negotiations. ⁽⁶⁴⁾

The dissension among labor leaders was often a source of trouble, and many were against Liao, who, they believed, always favored the Communists in a dispute. ⁽⁶⁵⁾ Indeed, a shot was fired at him during a labor meeting a few days before his tragic death on August 20. He had reportedly been warned that it would be "a good idea" for him to take a "vacation" away from South China. ⁽⁶⁶⁾ Moreover, his wife, Ho Hsiang-ning, insisted that "Hong Kong" had offered a sum of two million *yuan* for "the assassination of Communists in Canton." Chu Cho-wen, a KMT "rightist," confirmed that he had taken part in a conspiracy to eliminate Liao and Wang Ching-wei by violent methods. ⁽⁶⁷⁾

On the morning of August 20, when Liao and his wife were approaching the entrance of the KMT headquarters, a group of about half a dozen men attacked him. Fatally wounded by three bullets, he died on his way to the hospital. ⁽⁶⁸⁾ During the period of mourning, the Chinese Communist Party asserted that Liao was "a victim of an imperialist plot." Ho Hsiang-ning called upon the KMT comrades to emulate her husband's "revolutionary zeal" in their struggle for "national freedom." ⁽⁶⁹⁾ Nevertheless the "rightist" reaction to the tragedy was mostly unsympathetic. Chu Cho-wen, for example, depicted the assassination as "the people's final judgment." A Hong Kong newspaper contended that Liao had been responsible for bringing "strife, sorrow, and

(64) *North China Herald*, June 27, 1925, p. 485; and CKLKYS, II, p. 414.

(65) CKLKYS, II, pp. 423-24.

(66) *North China Herald*, August 29, 1925.

(67) Ho, *Hui-i Sun Chung-shan*, p. 38. Cf. Vera Vladimirovna Vishnyakova-Akimova, *Two Years in Revolutionary China*, trans. by Steven I. Levine (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 77. See also Lei Hsiao-ts'en, *Sa-nien tung-luan Chung-kuo* (Hong Kong: Ya-chou ch'u-pan-she, 1955), pp. 27-28.

(68) *Min-kuo jih-pao* (Canton), August 21, 1925; *North China Herald*, August 29, 1925, p. 238; and John Van Antwerp MacMurray to secretary of state, August 24, 1925, in USDS, 893.00/6545 A detailed report of the tragedy is included in *Chui-tao Liao Ch'en erh t'ung-chih chi-nien ts'e*, pp. 21-25.

(69) *Hsiang-tao chou-pao*, No. 127 (August 31, 1925), p. 1159; and *Liao Chung-k'ai hsien-sheng ai-ssu-lu*, p. 11.

anarchy" to the "unhappy city" of Canton.⁽⁷⁰⁾ In Chinese politics, such rancorous indictment against a deceased leader was rare, however unpopular he might have been. The bitterness generated by Liao's untimely demise reflected the extreme divisiveness within the revolutionary movement in Kwangtung.

Conclusion

A product of his age, Liao's definition of the goals of the KMT revolution was largely conditioned by his social background, family upbringing, educational experience, as well as his association with Sun Yat-sen and other comrades. In spite of his genuine interest in socialism, Liao devoted his career mostly to the promotion of political changes in China. He was, above all, a nationalist, influenced considerably by his early years in San Francisco. His ideological differences with the "rightists" were insignificant. He had been friendly with most of them, particularly Hu Han-min, prior to the KMT reorganization of 1923-1924. Their disagreement centered mainly on the issue of alliance with the Communists.

Liao's revolutionary career during the pre-1923 years had been replete with failures and disappointments. He was therefore appreciative of the Soviet offer of aid, especially when the KMT was shunned by other foreign powers. Unlike his "rightist" associates, he trusted the Russians and the Chinese Communists, and he was enthusiastic about their strategy of mass mobilization. He was angered by the "rightist" opposition to his new radical programs, and he became increasingly dependent on the Communist allies. In so doing, he alienated his "rightist" friends and brought an intraparty struggle which continued to haunt the KMT after his assassination.

In 1924-1925, Liao's leadership in the labor movement in Kwangtung was intricately linked to his support of Sun Yat-sen's rapprochement with the Communists. He was not the first KMT leader to be interested in the organization of workers. Yet, different from Ma Ch'ao-chun and Hsieh Ying-po, he

(70) CCW, p. 3; *Hong Kong Daily Press*, August 10, 1925; and *North China Herald*, August 1, 1925, p. 69.

was willing to apply the Russian revolutionary tactics to the task of mass mobilization, and he did not hesitate to enlist the support of the Communists. He was optimistic that the nationalist movement would be thus strengthened. Nonetheless, by following the course of radicalism, he divided the party and thereby weakened the KMT revolution.

Although he was frequently labeled a Communist, Liao was not a Marxist disciple. He did not believe in the principle of class struggle; socialist transformation was, to him, an objective for the distant future. He became active in the labor movement only for political reasons. In fact, he confided to Hu Han-min and Ch'en Kung-po shortly before his death that he had been disturbed by the strong Communist influence in both the Bureau of Workers and the Bureau of Peasants.⁽⁷¹⁾ Hence, to a large extent, the "rightist" opposition to Liao's programs was not ideologically oriented; they differed chiefly on the question of revolutionary tactics.

The intensity of the "rightist" opposition was demonstrative of the strength of the conservative forces in China during the 1920s. Despite the efforts of Borodin and his "leftist" allies, the hope of a social revolution in 1925 was mostly illusive. Liao's assassination might have foretold the failure of the Chinese Communist movement in 1926-1928. One is therefore inclined to challenge the argument of Harold Isaacs that the revolutionary activities of the masses contributed to the military victory of the Northern Expedition.⁽⁷²⁾

(71) Hu Han-min, "Liao Chung-k'ai hsien-sheng ching-shen pu-ssu," in Wei Su-ch'iu (ed.), *Liao Chung-k'ai hsien-sheng* (n.p., 1943), pp. 90-93. See also Hu's letter to Lin Chih-mien, October 25, 1933, in *San-min chu-i yueh-k'an*, II, No. 6. (December 1933), pp. 135-36; and Ch'en Kung-po, *Ch'en Kung-po hsien-sheng wen-chi* (Hong Kong: Yuan-tung t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1967), II, p. 432.

(72) Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961). Cf. Donald A. Jordan, *The Northern Expedition: China's National Revolution of 1926-1928* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976).