

How the Red Sun Rose

"This page intentionally left blank"

How the Red Sun Rose
The Origins and Development of
the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945

By Gao Hua

Translated by Stacy Mosher and Guo Jian



THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY PRESS

How the Red Sun Rose:

The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930–1945

By Gao Hua

Translated by Stacy Mosher and Guo Jian

© The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

ISBN: 978-962-996-822-9

The Chinese University Press
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Sha Tin, N.T., Hong Kong
Fax: +852 2603 7355
Email: cup@cuhk.edu.hk
Website: www.chineseupress.com

Printed in Hong Kong

Contents

Foreword *Joseph W. Esherick* / vii

Preface / xv

Preface to the Second Printing / xix

Acknowledgments / xxi

Abbreviations / xxiii

- 1 The Origins of the Disagreements between Mao and the Central Leadership of the Chinese Communist Party / 1
- 2 The Expansion of Mao's Power after the Zunyi Conference and Moscow's Political Interference / 89
- 3 Power Struggles and Reorganization of the Party Leadership after Wang Ming's Return to China / 131
- 4 Mao's Great Victory over Wang Ming / 171
- 5 Seizing the Power of Ideological "Interpretation" / 197
- 6 The Internal and External Environments of the Chinese Communist Party and Mao's Advantageous Position on the Eve of the Rectification Movement / 221
- 7 Revolution Begins at the Top: Mao and Wang Ming Cross Swords / 279

8	The Revolution Shifts Downward: The Launch of the Full-scale Rectification Movement / 319
9	From the “Yan’an Spring” to the Attack on Wang Shiwei / 335
10	The Revolution Deepens: Reconstructing the Apparatus for Propaganda and Cadre Education / 389
11	Forging the “New Man”: From Rectification to Cadre Examination / 419
12	The Revolution Hits Its Peak: The Cadre Examination, Anti-spy, and Emergency Rescue Campaigns / 471
13	Yan’an and the Base Areas during the Emergency Rescue Campaign / 539
14	Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: The Retreat of the Emergency Rescue Campaign / 627
15	“Long Live Chairman Mao”: The Culmination of the Yan’an Rectification Movement / 661
	Postscript / 707
	Notes / 719
	Bibliography / 773
	Index / 797

Foreword

Joseph W. Esherick

Gao Hua passed away on December 26, 2012—ironically on the birthday of Mao Zedong, the man he had studied for much of his tragically foreshortened life. News media reported praise of this gentle scholar from colleagues across China, much of which can still be read in the entry on his life on Baidu (China’s combination of Google and Wikipedia). Never mentioned in these reports is the fact that his most important work of scholarship, the book translated here, is banned in China. The Chinese-language edition of *How the Red Sun Rose* has been reprinted nineteen times since 2000 and is the press’s best-selling title, but if you are caught carrying a copy into the Chinese mainland, it will be confiscated, and you could find yourself in uncomfortable trouble with the authorities. Such is the history of this monumental study of Mao’s rise to primacy in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP): it is widely known, broadly respected, and officially proscribed.

Gao Hua was born in May 1954 in Nanjing, the Yangzi Valley city that had been China’s capital under the Nationalist Party government of Chiang Kai-shek. While Gao was but a small child, his father was branded a “rightist” in one of Mao’s political campaigns, and for the rest of his life, Gao carried the label of “rightist” progeny. At school, when his classmates were called out to join crowds for political celebrations or to welcome foreign visitors, Gao was sent off to confinement in a special room. When the Cultural Revolution erupted in the 1960s, he was similarly excluded, but used the opportunity to read from a closed middle school library tended by a kindly army veteran. When university entrance exams were restored following Mao’s death, Gao was admitted to Nanjing University,

becoming a member of the celebrated classes of 1977 and 1978, filled with smart and eager students whose education had been interrupted by a decade of revolutionary turmoil.

Nanjing University was Gao's home throughout his academic career. In the 1980s, it had an envied reputation as one of China's most progressive institutions, and Johns Hopkins University founded a Hopkins-Nanjing Center with unprecedented personal and academic interactions between Chinese and foreign students. Nanjing University's history department was known for its strength in twentieth-century history, in part because the archives of the republican national government (1912–49) were housed in the city. Gao began his career studying Nationalist Party history, and his obvious scholarly talent earned him a faculty position at his alma mater. He lived with his family in a cramped apartment that quickly filled with the books and documents that fueled his research.

In the 1990s, Gao shifted his focus to Mao Zedong and the history of the Chinese Communist Party. Like so many Chinese intellectuals, Gao was at heart a liberal. He subscribed to the values of the May Fourth movement of 1919: democracy, freedom, independence, social justice, and humanism. The Communist Party also traced its roots to May Fourth, though it stressed the movement's patriotic agenda. As Gao recognized, the party had departed from the broader May Fourth ideals, becoming increasingly autocratic and intolerant of divergent views. The ultimate expression of this process was the 1966–76 Cultural Revolution, with its cult of Mao and violent suppression of "class enemies" and "incorrect" ideas. Gao dedicated the rest of his life to exploring the origins of Mao's rise to power and the formulation of the uniquely Chinese campaign style of politics, which stressed mass struggle against deviant ideas and the psychological remolding of cadres, students, and ordinary citizens. He identified the Yan'an Rectification Movement of 1942–44 as the key moment in the development of this campaign style. This book is his exploration of the deep roots and complex evolution of that pivotal moment in modern Chinese history.

Yan'an is now enshrined as a "revolutionary holy land," visited by students and party members as part of the "patriotic education" that all Chinese must receive. It sits in the northern hills of Shaanxi province, where the Long March ended in 1935 and Edgar Snow interviewed Mao Zedong and others for *Red Star over China*, the book that introduced China's revolutionary leaders to the world. During the War of Resistance

against Japan (1937–45), Yan'an was the Communist capital and it was here that Mao rose to preeminence in the party and composed the most important writings of what came to be called Mao Zedong Thought. In Yan'an, too, a "Resolution on Party History" was drafted and adopted, forming the framework for all official party history since that time.

Communist Party history is a special discipline in China. Most courses are not taught in ordinary university history departments, but in separate party history departments, often located in a School of Marxism Studies. The documents on which party history is based are kept in the tightly controlled Central Archives, then selected and edited for wider distribution by an organ of the party's Central Committee, the Central Documents Research Office. Only members of this office and a select number of scholars at the Central Party School have access to the original documents. While this does not ensure absolute uniformity in writings on party history, and there are still lively debates on specific incidents, there are clear limits on what can be published, and the basic standard is conformity with the official resolutions on party history.

Gao Hua spent his career outside of this structure. He was a member of a regular history department. His credentials were in Republican Chinese history, not in Communist Party history. Most importantly, he was not a party member and was not committed to the party's view of history. Accordingly, his research on the Rectification Movement was pursued as an avocation, a private undertaking pursued without state or university funding. He had no access to party archives, nor did he conduct interviews with senior party members who had lived and worked in Yan'an, the sort of personal testimony that was so important to such Western works as David E. Apter's and Tony Saich's *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*.¹ Gao used his meagre salary to build his own private collection of research materials and used the Nanjing University library to access published documentary collections, official biographies, memoirs, and other sources to construct the extraordinary work of scholarship presented in this volume. In the end, as we know, the book could not be published in mainland China, but was instead released in Hong Kong. It was not recognized in Gao's official record for academic promotion. After the demonstrations at Tiananmen Square, Beijing, in 1989, as the state sought to quell intellectual discontent by raising professors' salaries and providing additional income from grants and royalties, Gao was largely left out, remaining with his family in their small Nanjing flat.

The book so ably translated here is long and complex—reflecting the tortuous road that Mao traveled to supreme power in the party and, ultimately, in China. The first generation of English-language academic works on Mao focused on his writings, especially the distinctive Chinese version of Marxism-Leninism embodied in Mao Zedong Thought. From Benjamin I. Schwartz’s early work, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*, to the lifetime of scholarship by Stuart R. Schram, the concern was the theory and strategy of a peasant-based revolutionary movement in a country that Marx would have judged unready for socialism.² How did Mao revise Marxism-Leninism to make it applicable to Chinese conditions—a process conventionally understood as the “Sinification of Marxism?” More recent scholarship includes critical biographies of the entire course of Mao’s life,³ and the contest for power between the Chinese Communists and their Nationalist rivals.⁴ Gao’s concern is different from all of these. He is explicitly uninterested in Mao’s thought, but very much concerned with Mao’s craft—his tactics of struggle and use of power. He is also far less interested in the Communist Party’s competition with Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Party than in Mao’s struggles with his rivals within the party.

The result of this distinctive interpretive focus is a narrative that skips over episodes in China’s revolutionary history that receive far more attention in other studies. Some of this may be inevitable in a book that is already quite long. We get, for example, no account of Mao’s early career, especially his formative involvement in the peasant movement in Hunan or the early years of the revolutionary movement in Jinggangshan. The narrative begins instead in 1930, and concentrates on the bloody elimination of party dissidents in the Futian Incident. The Long March is barely treated beyond the critical party meeting at Zunyi; and the conflict with Zhang Guotao, Mao’s most powerful rival within the party in 1935, is barely mentioned. The Xi’an Incident of December 1936, in which two of Chiang Kai-shek’s generals kidnapped him to force a United Front with the Communists, gets only passing notice, and the entire War of Resistance against Japan is seen only dimly in the background. All of this is understandable given Gao’s central concern with the Rectification Movement as the final resolution of Mao’s long-standing conflict with Wang Ming and other members of the Soviet-trained Internationalist faction in the party. Nor are these omissions of great concern to Gao’s Chinese readers, who are familiar enough with the history to be able to fill

in the gaps. But they do pose problems for this English-language edition, whose readers may not be all that familiar with the precise chronology or political import of specific events in modern Chinese history, and the translators have made an effort to help with occasional explanatory footnotes. Nonetheless, some readers may find it useful to keep readily at hand a standard text or chronology, to remind themselves of what else was going on as Mao dealt with his rivals in the party.

The most common criticism of Gao's account is that the single-minded focus on Mao's struggle with his rivals in the party does not do justice to the full range of debates within the party leadership. Some aspects of the critique are particularly objectionable when they come from official party historians with access to the meeting minutes. While claiming that they have seen more complete records that disprove Gao's account, they also defer to state policies that prevent them from making those records available. This is, of course, an extreme form of the common bureaucratic effort to maintain power through the control of information. Unfortunately, the Chinese state has been unusually successful in recruiting establishment intellectuals into complicity with this effort—providing access, funding, and status in exchange for their cooperation to control the historical record.

At the same time, I must confess that I have some sympathy with this critique. The sources allow us no direct insight into Mao's motivation, and Gao Hua's account is admittedly based on a degree of speculation from the available documentary and memoir record. I personally am inclined to believe that while struggling for power within the party, Mao also considered the proper calibration of competition and collaboration in the United Front with the Nationalist Party, the tactics and strategy of guerrilla warfare during the War of Resistance against Japan, and the larger international context, especially relations with the Soviet Union and, toward the end of the war, with the United States.

Nonetheless, Gao's more limited focus does provide some very important insights. We gain, for example, a much clearer understanding of the full course of Mao's struggle with Wang Ming. Wang was a young returned student from Moscow when he rose to prominence in the CCP under Soviet sponsorship in 1931. At that time he promoted an adventurist, urban-oriented leftist line, and the party's failings in the early 1930s are often attributed to the "Wang Ming Left Line." Wang soon returned to the Soviet Union where he represented the CCP in the Comintern until

the outbreak of war with Japan. When he returned to China in December 1937, he came as Moscow's anointed representative, and a strong supporter of the United Front with Chiang Kai-shek. For a time, this was a real threat to Mao, who regarded Wang's policy of "everything subordinate to the anti-Japanese resistance" as a rightist error threatening the CCP's political and military independence. It has never been clear how this leftist suddenly became a "rightist." Gao Hua provides a convincing account of Wang's transition from leftist to rightist errors, noting that before his return, Wang Ming often shared Mao's criticisms of the party's leftist excesses, though always shifting in concert with Stalin and the Comintern. Mao's predicament was finding a way to attack Wang Ming without offending Stalin, and he found this in the critique of "dogmatism."

The heart and climax of Gao's study is his analysis of the Rectification Movement of 1942–44 and the unification of the party under Mao at the Seventh Party Congress in 1945. These are rich and insightful chapters, and include the important suggestion that Mao managed to add a traditional Chinese resonance to Leninist self-criticism by linking it to Confucian self-reflection (*fanxing*). Cadres were required to go beyond the academic study of the reading materials to link them to their own life experiences. To monitor this process, they were to keep notebooks, record the progress of their studies, and write accounts of their personal awakening to revolution. From these accounts, it was but a small step to self-criticism, and then to public confessions—at first voluntary, but later coerced if necessary. The materials produced by this process eventually found their way into personnel dossiers, and for many provided ammunition for their persecution in future political campaigns. These methods were steadily and systematically developed as the Rectification Movement escalated from a critique of the bookish dogmatism of the Moscow-returned "Internationalist" group, to an attack on the liberalism of young students and intellectuals, and finally the frightening excesses of security chief Kang Sheng's search for secret agents and traitors who had infiltrated the Communist bases.

In theory, it should have been difficult to combine assaults on Marxist dogmatism and bourgeois liberalism in a single campaign. But Mao managed to do that in the Yan'an Rectification Movement. To some degree, this was made possible by his appeal to Chinese models and the notion of the Sinification of Marxism. A Mao-centered Marxism with Chinese characteristics could be used to attack both Marxist book-learning

imported from the Soviet Union and liberal democratic ideas absorbed in Western-style schools by young people from China's coastal cities. Of course, it took more than the newly articulated Mao Zedong Thought to carry out this campaign, and Mao relied heavily on Kang Sheng (who had returned from Moscow with Wang Ming, but soon switched his allegiance to Mao) to orchestrate the campaign. Kang brought with him a keen knowledge of the coercive methods of the OGPU and was responsible for the most extreme excesses of Rectification. When, prodded by Moscow, Mao brought the campaign to an end, he apologized and made Kang the scapegoat, removing him from the leadership at the Seventh Party Congress. Of course, as is well known, Kang Sheng was brought back in the 1960s to play a similar role in the Cultural Revolution.

Gao Hua's monumental study of these dramatic and important events is a path-breaking work of politically engaged scholarship. He embarked on this project with the explicit purpose of locating the roots of Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. No one can read this gripping account without seeing the parallels to political campaigns that followed the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. To this day, Mao's portrait hangs over Tiananmen Square, the Sinification of Marxism remains an enduring slogan, and the cult of a single dominant leader still prevails. Whether one can draw a straight line from Rectification Movement in Yan'an to the present remains a question. One of the greatest strengths of Gao Hua's *How the Red Sun Rose* is the detailed account of the twists and turns of history that led to Rectification. It is likely that developments after 1945 should also be understood as the product of contingent and unpredictable events. Gao Hua himself was turning to the history of the People's Republic when his life and his scholarship were so tragically cut short. It remains to a new generation to carry on where he left off.

October 20, 2017

"This page intentionally left blank"

Preface

As winter turned to spring in 1942, a large-scale political movement commenced in Yan'an, the wartime stronghold of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and soon thereafter in other base areas of the Communist-led anti-Japanese resistance. It was a rectification movement that continued for many years, but because it was centered in Yan'an and most typically played out there, it came to be known as the "Yan'an Rectification Movement."

The Yan'an Rectification Movement was the first Party-wide political movement in the history of the CCP. Closely associated with and directly led by Mao Zedong, the campaign involved internal Party purges and reorganizations in various areas, including:

- Power struggles among the Party leadership and reorganization of the Party's central power apparatus;
- Ideological remolding throughout the Party;
- Examination of the personal histories of cadres and "elimination of counterrevolutionaries";
- Creation of a new system.

Among these, the high-level power struggles and the reorganization of leading organs always occupied a central position.

The Yan'an Rectification Movement began in early 1942, but its origins can be traced back much earlier. Its first manifestation occurred during the period from the 1935 Zunyi Conference to 1937, when Mao

used his advantageous position within the CCP leadership to make adjustments to Party policy and to the leading organs. Following the Sixth Plenum of the Sixth CCP Central Committee in 1938, these partial adjustments rapidly evolved into a series of major changes that Mao carried out with respect to the political line, the organizational structure, and ethos of the Party. The Sixth Plenum, which was held in Yan'an, was of decisive significance to Mao. It legitimized his power over the military and the Party, which he had achieved since 1935, and it radically enhanced his status within the Party core. The period from the end of 1938 until the autumn of 1941 was a critical phase during which Mao increased his control over the evolving situation and gradually weakened his opponents within the Party. This process reached a climax during an enlarged Politburo meeting held in September 1941, when Mao emerged victorious in his direct challenge to Wang Ming.

It was on the foundation of these years of meticulous preparation that the curtain finally opened on the Yan'an Rectification Movement in early 1942. The movement was a process during which Mao wielded his political power to thoroughly reorganize the top echelons of the Party and to redistribute power so as to establish absolute dominance. At the same time, the movement was a process during which Mao used his own ideas and thinking to thoroughly transform the Party's "Russified" character and to remold the CCP in his own image.

During the Rectification Movement, Mao wielded his creation of ideological remolding, along with methods of examining the personal histories of cadres (*shen'gan*) and eliminating counterrevolutionaries (*sufan*), to deal a mortal blow to all remnants of May Fourth liberal democratic thought and blind worship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) within the Party. This completed the foundation for the work of total Maoization of the Party, while also establishing a set of new Party traditions under Mao's distinctive personal style. Becoming second nature over time, these concepts and paradigms would change the lives and fates of hundreds of millions of Chinese after 1949.

Having emerged from isolation within the Party leadership after years of struggle, Mao further consolidated his political alliance with Liu Shaoqi during the Yan'an Rectification Movement, and with Liu's full backing Mao forced the Party core to accept his views and his paramount personal authority. The reasons for Mao's earlier period of isolation were his "heterodox" views, which departed from Moscow's orthodox theories,

and his arbitrary temperament. Borne out in practice, Mao's "heterodox" military strategy greatly facilitated an expansion of Party power, ultimately forcing the pro-Moscow faction within the Party to surrender to Mao at the same time that he rallied the Party's top military officials around him. Mao's arbitrary temperament first came to light in 1930 and 1931, when he personally led the suppression of the "AB League."^{*} This incident caused a major crisis in the Jiangxi Communist Base Area and weakened the strength of the CCP. In the face of a grimly complex and volatile situation after 1935, Mao reined in his domineering tendencies. As his power over the Party grew, after 1941 his arbitrary behavior erupted once again. This time, however, the top leadership of the Party could no longer effectively restrain him.

During the Yan'an Rectification Movement, Mao deliberately indulged his arbitrary nature in service to his political objectives. Among the high-level leaders, Mao drew a line to separate friends from enemies and then he created and used every opportunity to attack any dissent. In Yan'an and other base areas, Mao implemented a politics of terror by instigating "rescue campaigns" that were actually purges of the entire cadre corps. Following the Rectification Movement, the ultra-leftist policies of examining cadres' personal histories and eliminating counterrevolutionaries that Mao had implanted in Party organs became second nature and they had a lasting deleterious effect on post-1949 China.

The Yan'an Rectification Movement provided Mao with an arena to play out his complex and ingenious political strategy. Daring to shatter the Party's historical conventions, his methods were profoundly ruthless, and he used his keen assessment of the mindsets of his opponents to subdue his enemies with seamless and masterful proficiency. Mao's strategic skills resided in his skillful utilization of ancient Chinese political arts as well as his in-depth understanding of OGPU methods.[†] Due to an intensive drive by Mao, all power became concentrated in the hands of Mao during

^{*} Translators' Note (cited hereafter as TN): The "Anti-Bolshevik League" incident is described in detail in Chapter 1. The original Anti-Bolshevik League was an intelligence agency of the Nationalist government, but it was already defunct by the time that Mao led a campaign against it.

[†] TN: The *O(byedinyonnoye) G(osudarstvennoye) P(oliticheskoye) U(pravleniye)* (OGPU), or the Joint State Political Directorate, was the secret police in the USSR from 1922 to 1934.

the Seventh Party Congress in 1945. Mao's public image also developed around the time of the rectification, and amidst the heady intensification of his personality cult, Mao deliberately revealed himself to be leader of both the Party and the Chinese people. On public occasions and in encounters with all sorts of people, Mao invariably played the role of an enlightened ruler—courteous to the wise, cultivating the educated, and supremely open-minded. His cordial and proper reception of others bred general goodwill among Party members and people from all walks of life in the Kuomintang-controlled areas. In the upper levels of the Party, however, Mao indulged his headstrong, conceited, and arrogant nature. He took revenge against former political opponents for petty grievances and he relentlessly taunted Party colleagues. For a very long time, Mao's two-faced character prevented outsiders from understanding his true nature.

The Yan'an Rectification Movement occurred more than fifty years ago, but to this day a complete picture of the movement cannot be clearly deduced in conventional ideological terms. The purpose of this book is not to refute mainstream judgments about the Yan'an Rectification Movement but rather to attempt a differentiation and analysis by combing through all kinds of related historical materials, whether from the distant or the more recent past. My desire is to conduct new research into the Yan'an Rectification Movement, to brush away the dust of history, and to reveal the movement's true face, thus providing an alternative to the official historical narrative and interpretation. I must leave it to the reader to judge whether I have attained this goal.

Gao Hua
1999

Preface to the Second Printing

Publication of this book by The Chinese University Press in March 2000 received an enthusiastic reception from readers. I offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks to the many readers who have written to me offering encouragement and support during the past two years.

The Yan'an Rectification Movement was a major event that affected China's progress during the twentieth century, but scholarly research on the subject has been rather weak. In this book I have attempted to research and analyze the movement from one perspective, and I humbly welcome corrections from readers.

On the occasion of this reprinting, I would especially like to offer my thanks for the guidance provided by a number of venerable scholars. By various means, Chen-Ning Franklin Yang, Wang Yuanhua, Chen Fong-ching, Wu Jinglian, Wei Zhengtong, Chang Hao, Lin Yu-sheng, Chang Yu-fa, Dong Jian, Wei Liangtao, and others explored certain important questions with me and offered valuable encouragement and approval of my research. Jin Guantao, Liu Qingfeng, Jean Hung, Lu Fang-sang, Chen Yung-fa, Liu Xiaofeng, Xu Jilin, Xiao Gongqin, Zhu Xueqin, He Qinglian, Chen Yan, Ding Xueliang, Xu Youyu, Huang Ying-che, Tang Shaojie, Qian Wenzhong, Chien Yeong-shyang, Liang Kan, Mao Dan, Li Yang, Zhang Wenzhong, Qian Gang, Wu Dongfeng, and others offered positive and helpful suggestions as to how to carry out further research.

When the first edition of this book was published, computerized conversion of simplified Chinese characters into traditional characters was not optimal, and multiple rounds of proofreading failed to detect a

number of textual errors. This edition has been produced to correct these textual errors. Additionally, during the past two years, some new historical materials related to the Yan'an Rectification Movement have appeared, and these will be taken into account in a future revised and enlarged edition.

I would like here to express my heartfelt thanks to Yan Yi, Ma Peiwen, Wei Tianzong, and Xue Lin. Following publication of this book, Yan Yi and Ma Peiwen not only carried out in-depth discussions with me about its content and composition but also took the trouble to correct the textual errors. Wei Tianzong also sent me corrections on place names. Professor Xue Lin is a linguistics expert at Nanjing University, and her knowledge of linguistics enlightened my revisions to this book.

I would like to offer special thanks to my research student Huang Jun for his assistance with the corrections to the electronic text.

Gao Hua

May 12, 2002, at home in Nanjing

Acknowledgments

The Chinese University Press would like to thank the Research Centre for Contemporary Chinese Culture of The Chinese University of Hong Kong for granting us gratis English copyright of this edition. The translation of this book was generously supported by The Carter Center, the Open Society Foundations, and several readers and friends of Gao Hua. Without the munificent help of the above parties, the publication of this book is not possible.

"This page intentionally left blank"

Abbreviations

BRSO	Border Region Security Office
CASC	Central Anti-spy Struggle Committee
CCGSC	Central Committee General Study Committee
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMC	Central Military Commission
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
OGPU	O(<i>byedinyonnoye</i>) G(<i>osudarstvennoye</i>) P(<i>oliticheskoye</i>) U(<i>pravleniye</i>), or the Joint State Political Directorate
INA	International News Agency
KMT	Kuomintang
PRC	People's Republic of China
SDP	Socialist Democratic Party
SPSB	State Political Security Bureau
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

"This page intentionally left blank"

1. The Origins of the Disagreements between Mao and the Central Leadership of the Chinese Communist Party

I. The “Peasants’ Party,” the “Soldiers’ Party,” and Mao’s “Secretarial Dictatorship”

The Yan’an Rectification Movement launched in the spring of 1942 to a certain extent represented an eruption of Mao Zedong’s long-term dissatisfaction at that time with the central leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The Yan’an Rectification Movement had a very long historical evolution, and although a series of measures and arrangements that Mao had proposed after the 1935 Zunyi Conference paved the way for the movement, its roots go back to the era of the Chinese Soviet Areas. During a period of seven or eight years, conflicts and grudges accumulated between Mao and the CCP central leadership, and even though the two sides sometimes cooperated, they mainly coexisted in a state of mutual suspicion and distrust. Political differences occupied a prominent position, but Mao’s personality and work style were also sources of contention and deep ambivalence among the central leadership.

Mao’s initial claim to fame was his ascent of Jinggang Mountain in the autumn of 1927. This first armed engagement against the Kuomintang (KMT) rendered Mao a celebrated military leader of the Communist Revolution. For the KMT, Mao was a leader of the troublesome “Zhu-Mao Red Bandits”;^{*} for the CCP and Moscow, Mao made an outstanding

^{*} Translators’ Note (cited hereafter as TN): Referring to the military campaigns by Communist forces led by Mao and prominent military leader Zhu De (1886–1976).

contribution to the soviet areas, upon which the CCP depended for its survival. Yet, for a considerable time, Mao's "heterodox" thinking and conduct were offensive both to Moscow and the central leadership of the CCP. This was displayed at different times and in different ways. The period from 1927 to 1930 was the conception stage. At that time, Moscow and the CCP Central Committee were closely monitoring Mao's activities in Jiangxi, and although they had misgivings about some of Mao's positions and they parted ways with him on some policies in the Jiangxi Communist area, they generally acknowledged and respected Mao's views and his leadership of the Red Army and the base areas.

Mao's main contribution, from the perspective of the Comintern and the CCP Central Committee, was that at the critical juncture following the split between the KMT and the CCP in 1927, he had the courage and intelligence to set up Communist Base Areas and to develop a Party-led Red Army so that within the vast KMT-dominated territory the CCP had a place to establish a foothold and to implement its political program. Mao was elected to the Central Committee in abstentia during the CCP's Sixth Congress, which was held in Moscow in June 1928. The CCP Central Committee was extremely careful in its handling of Mao's relations with other key military leaders, generally emphasizing preservation of Mao's prestige. The famous "September Missive," drafted under the direction of Zhou Enlai in 1929, supported Mao's views and helped to restore his leadership of the Fourth Red Army after he had come into conflict with Zhu De over the jurisdiction of the Fourth Red Army's Front Line Committee and the Military Commission respectively.¹

From 1927 to 1930 Mao was best known within the CCP as a military leader; his activities were largely focused on military engagement, of which theory was merely one aspect. The Central Committee held that Mao's theoretical position remained within the framework drawn up by the Comintern and the Central Committee, and Mao did not ask the Central Committee to alter its urban-centric general line.

In practical terms, during this period Mao enjoyed the highest authority in the Jiangxi Soviet Area and in the Red Army, and it was Mao who was mainly responsible for implementing the Central Committee's directives in the Jiangxi Base Area. Mao interpreted Comintern and Central Committee directives flexibly, based on actual circumstances and his own needs. For that reason, neither Stalin in far-off Moscow nor the

Central Committee in Shanghai imposed any direct or concrete constraint on Mao's activities. The Fourth Red Army led by Mao was the single pillar that sustained the armed forces of the base army, the Party, and the soviet regime, and Mao's position as secretary of the Front Line Committee was the highest position in the Fourth Red Army. Most leaders of Party and government organs in the Jiangxi Soviet Area, as well as a majority of the commanders in the Red Army, had either followed Mao up Jinggang Mountain or were old comrades during the early battles in southern Jiangxi and western Fujian. Although these people gave due respect to the Comintern and the CCP Central Committee, both sentimentally and intellectually they were detached from both. This is why during this period the Comintern and the Central Committee could only exert an influence on the Jiangxi Soviet Area through Mao, and the extent of their influence was largely under Mao's control.

However, beginning in 1930, as the Central Committee gradually shifted the focus of its work to the Jiangxi Soviet Area, it sent cadres who had recently returned from training in Moscow to reinforce operations in the base area, and the relations between Mao and the Central Committee became increasingly ambivalent.

The Central Committee had initially stifled its discontent with Mao's "heterodox" views and behavior for the sake of building the Party and consolidating the Red Army. Now, however, there was a constant trickle of disquieting news from the Jiangxi Soviet, and the Central Committee began to form some negative opinions about Mao.

1. The Problem of the "Peasants' Party"

The issue of the "Peasants' Party" was raised in a February 25, 1929, report to the Hunan Provincial Party Committee by Yang Kemin, whom the Party committee had sent to inspect Party operations in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region. Yang wrote, "It is basically a peasant region, so there is a pronounced flavor of a peasants' party."² Mao made similar remarks in a report to the CCP Central Committee: "In all border counties, the Party seems to be made up almost entirely of peasants."³ The extent of the problem was immediately apparent by the dominance of peasants at all levels of the Party's Jiangxi organization.

Second, the peasants in the Party organization included many people

affiliated with the rural underworld. Yang Kemin's report⁴ stated that the 300 to 400 Party members in Ling County included "many members of the Hong Society."^{*}

Third, local Party organizations were very clannish. Since the base areas could only exist in remote villages and the mountainous Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area had an isolated and self-contained natural economy, patriarchal clan organizations were the only source of social cohesion. Thus the Communist Party felt obligated to merge with these clans. Single-surname clans routinely organized into Party branches, and it was common for "Party branch meetings to be essentially clan meetings."

Fourth, because almost all Party members were peasants, they tended to be poorly educated and they were often illiterate, making it "truly difficult to build a fighting Bolshevik party." The Party encountered extreme difficulties in terms of ideological training, and many Party members and grassroots Party organizations displayed an "entrenched local mentality, conservative thinking, and lack of discipline." Some of the most basic Party knowledge eluded them, causing Mao to lament: "It is difficult for them to understand that the Communist Party does not distinguish between national and provincial borders; they even have problems understanding that it does not distinguish between counties, regions, and villages."⁵

Yang and Mao were basically in agreement in their observation that "mechanized industry is beyond the peasants' wildest dreams, and they have no conception of imperialism."⁶

Although Mao and Yang held similar opinions about the Party's "peasant character," they parted ways regarding the nature of the problem and how to deal with it.

Whereas Mao Zedong only raised the fact that peasants made up the majority of Party members, Yang Kemin felt that the Party organization in the Border Regions was a "peasants' party." Mao thought it was possible to make the peasants into Bolsheviks by imbuing them with folk revolutionary knowledge; Yang, however, felt that given their poor education and their dearth of political knowledge, "it would actually be very difficult to bring about progressive thinking among the peasants."

^{*} TN: The Hong Society was a traditional secret society (a "triad"), typically associated with criminal activity.

Yang's observations, reflecting the orthodox views of the Comintern and the CCP Central Committee, held that the danger of becoming a "peasants' party" could only be surmounted by the Party's working class.

Although in September 1926 Mao expressed the idea that "peasants are the most revolutionary," from 1927 to 1928 the Comintern and the CCP Central Committee influenced him considerably and he indicated some concern about the Party's "peasant character." However, after spending more than a year fighting guerrilla warfare in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region and after gaining a deeper understanding of the rural economy and society, Mao's concerns were gradually dispelled. He felt that the peasants' ignorance could be addressed through political education, and their limited literacy would prevent them from being influenced by the erroneous ideology of the Second Comintern. The more practical issue was that the Jiangxi Base Area was almost completely devoid of the working class; even if all local artisans and shop assistants were classified as workers, they comprised only a small proportion of the population. For this reason, Mao quickly reversed his criticism of the "peasant character" of the local Party and he devoted himself to the ideological training of peasant Party members.

The CCP Central Committee could not criticize Mao's idea of remolding peasant Party members through political training; first, this was because Mao never denied the role of the working class in leading the revolution, and second, it was because, by the strictest measures of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the CCP organization in the soviet areas could not be considered a Communist Party. The only way to face this reality was to depend on ideological immersion to turn the peasant Party members into Bolsheviks. Even so, the Central Committee was uncomfortable about Mao's flexible interpretation of Marxism; although generally affirming the role of workers in leading the revolution, Mao highlighted the significance of peasants, and he was already showing a tendency to "depart from the classics and to rebel against orthodoxy."

2. *The Problem of the “Soldiers’ Party”*

In October 1927, after Mao led his troops up Jinggang Mountain in the aftermath of the Autumn Harvest Uprising,^{*} the army was the only force existing in the soviet areas. In this tense wartime environment, the Party merged with the Red Army, and the armed forces effectively became an incarnation of the CCP organization.

Establishing a Party organization within the Red Army was a major step taken by Mao based on a lesson from the CCP’s failure in the 1927 uprising; it was meant to reinforce Party leadership of the Red Army. Mao believed that one reason for the CCP’s earlier failure was that “our organization utterly failed to win over the rank-and-file soldiers within the Nationalist Army; even Ye Ting’s[†] section had only one Party branch in each regiment, so the soldiers could not brave the serious test.” In October 1927 Mao established a system of “company branches” in Sanwan, Yongxin County, and in the middle of the month he held a swearing-in ceremony in Ling County for six soldiers who joined the Party. Thereafter, the CCP engaged in a vigorous and systematic expansion within the Red Army.

The system of “company branches,” completed with the system of Party representatives that was implemented during the Northern Expedition, imitated the system in the Soviet Union’s Red Army. Beginning in 1929, Party representatives within the Red Army came to be referred to as “political commissars,” and beginning in 1931, company political commissars came to be known by their present titles of “political instructors.”

The army was effectively the nursemaid and defender of the local Party. Prior to April 1928, the local Party organization in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area was largely dispersed and operations were suspended. In mid-May, Mao convened the Border Region’s first representative assembly, in Maoping, Ninggang County, which formally adopted the guiding principle of “the army helping to develop the local Party.” Mao was elected

^{*} TN: The Autumn Harvest Uprising was a September 1927 insurrection that took place in Hunan and Jiangxi provinces. Led by Mao Zedong, the Red Army thereafter established a short-lived Hunan Soviet.

[†] TN: Ye Ting, a regiment commander in the Fourth Army of the National Revolutionary Army, took part in the failed August 1927 Nanchang Uprising, the first major Kuomintang–Communist engagement in the Chinese Civil War.

secretary of the Border Region's first Special Committee, and thereafter he simultaneously held the top military and civilian positions in the leadership.

Even so, any shift in the army's main force was cause for an immediate crisis in the local Party. In August 1928, Zhu De complied with the directive of the Hunan Provincial Party Committee to attack Hunan. The resultant "August Failure" caused disarray in the Party and government structure of the Border Area. Once the main armed forces managed to reoccupy the region in September, however, the Party and political leaderships were rapidly reestablished. Given the obvious importance of the armed forces, local Party organizations inevitably became subordinate to the military apparatus.

The CCP Central Committee had a conflicting and complicated attitude toward the role of the Red Army in the Party organization of the base area. On the one hand, Party leaders completely supported the establishment of Party organizations within the army and they were profoundly aware that military leadership of the local Party was an inevitable result of the arduous and suboptimal environment. On the other hand, they were deeply concerned about the increasing peasant character of the Red Army and the army's dominance over local Party branches.

Although the CCP Central Committee's June 4, 1928, "Letter to Zhu De, Mao Zedong, and the Front Line Committee" acknowledged Mao as commander of the Red Army and top Party leader in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region, it raised a series of criticisms regarding Party and military operations there. The Central Committee was especially concerned about the rapid upsurge of peasant membership in the Red Army, finding "a profound petty-bourgeois peasant mentality both in state organs and leading Party organs." The Central Committee told Mao to work to "maximize the number of hired hands and poor peasants and to decrease the number of hooligans" in the Red Army, and it instructed him to "thoroughly remold all levels of the local Party committees and leading organs and to promote more activist worker and peasant elements, especially worker elements, to take part in the leading organs of the Party committees at all levels." The Central Committee also criticized the soviet regime in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region "for being comprised largely of higher-level appointees rather than those elected from among the lower levels." It ordered Mao to "prohibit the Party branch and the army from appointing the soviet" and to "absolutely forestall the problem of the Party commanding the soviet."⁷

The Central Committee's directive to imitate the experience of the CPSU by changing the composition of the Red Army and adjusting relations among the Party, the army, and the local soviet was purely wishful thinking. The circumstances of the Communist Party in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region in 1928 could hardly have been more different from the situation of the CPSU and the Soviet Red Army in 1917 and 1918. The Border Region *troika* of a soviet regime, a Red Army comprised of peasants, and a Communist Party organization mainly comprised of peasants and established under the direction of the Red Army was the result of the objective historical environment. This triumvirate, with the army at its core, as an offshoot of the CPSU paradigm, was the basic formation of the Chinese Communist Revolution; at this time, however, it was still in a state of germination and it was not understood by the orthodox CCP Central Committee.

3. *The Problem of Mao Zedong's "Secretarial Dictatorship"*

Mao was both the founder of the Hunan-Jiangxi Red Army and the leader of the Party organization in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region. Because the army determined the survival of the Communist Party in the Border Region, it was natural for Mao to exercise leadership over both the army and the Party. But the concentration of power in Mao's hands became increasingly controversial.

In a report to upper levels, Du Xiujing, serving as an inspector for the Hunan Provincial Party Committee, pointed out:

At present, the operations of the Special Committee of the Border Region are expanding daily. All of the work and the direction are effectively concentrated in the hands of Comrade Zedong, and Comrade Zedong has additional responsibilities as the army's Party representative. An individual's energy is limited; how can he handle so much?⁸

Yang Kaiming, who served for a time as secretary of the Border Region Special Committee, expressed similar feelings:

The Special Committee's business is invariably handled only by the secretary, and dictatorship by the secretary has become a common

malady in the Border Region. When Zedong was secretary of the Special Committee, the committee was in Zedong's pocket; later Kaiming served as secretary, and the Special Committee was Kaiming's one-man show. ... Party members worship their leader and put their faith in heroes while they accord less recognition to the Party organization.⁹

In connection with Du Xiuqing's and Yang Kaiming's comments on Mao's "secretarial dictatorship," the Central Committee's June 4, 1928, "Letter to Zhu De, Mao Zedong, and the Front Line Committee" required that Zhu and Mao abolish the Fourth Army's Party representative system and establish a Political Department system, implying the delegation of Mao's power as Party representative in the Fourth Red Army. The issue of the parameters of Zhu De's and Mao's respective jurisdictions within the Fourth Red Army erupted as a serious dispute in 1929. Although Mao's major strategies and military tactics and principles were more practical, his manifestly arbitrary temperament made him generally unpopular among army cadres¹⁰ and for a time he was forced to leave the Fourth Red Army and focus on regional work. Finally, based on strategic considerations to unify the Fourth Red Army and to develop the Jiangxi Base Area, the Central Committee resolved this leadership crisis by selecting Mao instead of Zhu as supreme commander of the Fourth Red Army. Even so, the Central Committee never abandoned its uneasiness with Mao's dictatorial ways.

Du Xiuqing's and Yang Kaiming's comments on Mao's "secretarial dictatorship" did not come out of nowhere; rather, they originated with the Central Committee as a result of the rapid change in the path, guiding principles, and work methods of the CCP during this transitional period. At the time, the Central Committee's ideas and the Party's work style were still influenced by the democratized thinking and practices of the Russian Communists during the early stages of the October Revolution, which prompted the Central Committee's dissatisfaction with the "secretarial dictatorship" in the Jiangxi Base Area, and criticism of "the masses recognizing the individual and not the Party" was obviously aimed at Mao. The Central Committee had no recourse but to reiterate views such as "increasing the leadership power of workers and strictly preventing the trend toward peasant dominance of the Party" and "opposing individual leadership and concentration of power in the Front Line Committee."

Mao was dismissive of such criticism of his "secretarial dictatorship."

Following the 1927 “August 7 Conference,” the leading organs of the Central Committee underwent a major reorganization, and at one point Qu Qiubai^{*} recommended that Mao work for the Party Central Committee in Shanghai. But Mao responded that he was “unwilling to live with you [i.e., Qu Qiubai] in high-rise buildings,” and he took the initiative to blaze new trails for the Communist Party in the impoverished rural villages. Mao regularly reported to the Central Committee from the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region, but the fact that the armchair generals in their “Western-style buildings,” whose qualifications and achievements compared so unfavorably with those of Party founder Chen Duxiu, only increased Mao’s antipathy toward the Central Committee.

In sum, from 1927 to 1930 there were no major conflicts between Mao and the Comintern or the CCP Central Committee in terms of the major direction, but disharmony was brewing over the issues of the “peasants’ party,” the “soldiers’ party,” and Mao’s “secretarial dictatorship.” These issues eventually led to a series of new problems that further complicated Mao’s relationship with the Central Committee.

II. Mao’s Extremist Campaign against the “AB League” and the Response of the Central Committee

Among the various contradictions between the Party Central Committee and Mao, the antipathy and suspicions raised by Mao’s campaign against counterrevolutionaries were prominent. This issue was very sensitive, however, and neither Mao nor the Central Committee ever fully clarified their respective responsibility for the campaign. Rather, both Mao and the Central Committee, each for their own reasons, indulged in a great deal of obfuscation that triggered a multitude of hypotheses. The fact is that Mao

^{*} TN: Qu Qiubai became de facto leader of the CCP in 1927 after Chen Duxiu was removed due to the collapse of the CCP-KMT collaboration. Qiu went to Moscow in 1928 as a delegate to the Comintern, but, because he disagreed with the Party’s central leadership over the course of the revolution, in 1930 he was dismissed from his position as a delegate to the Comintern as well as from the central leadership. After working as a writer and translator in Shanghai for a time, in 1934 he went to the Central Revolutionary Base Area in Ruijin but he did not join the Red Army on its Long March. He was captured by the KMT in 1934 and executed in June 1935.

pioneered the CCP's practice of harsh *sufan*^{*} campaigns. His leadership of the 1930–31 campaign to suppress the “AB League” originated from his ultra-Leftist commitment to eliminate counterrevolutionaries as well as his complex personal motivations. Under extremely difficult circumstances, the secretary of the Central Bureau of the soviet area, Xiang Ying, made great efforts to correct Mao's errors, but the CCP Central Committee took a Leftist approach and placed its full support behind Mao, with the result that following the Fourth Plenum Mao began cooperating with the Sixth Central Committee. It was only when the counterrevolutionary purges worsened that the Central Committee began to adjust its policies and ended its cooperation with Mao.

The origins of the *sufan* campaign in the Jiangxi Soviet Area can be traced back to the Mao-led Party purge in the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area in September 1928. Aimed at ridding the Party of “opportunists,” this first purge by the CCP created the prototype for combining rectification of the Party with elimination of counterrevolutionaries, targeting in particular intellectuals from landlord and rich-peasant families.

A number of documents report that this purge specifically targeted not only traitors and those who had surrendered to the Kuomintang but also intellectuals: “Party membership cards shall be issued to all peasant Party members but not to intellectuals who have joined the Party (which requires approval by the upper levels).”¹¹ “All who have family members working for the Kuomintang reactionaries or who are enlisted as soldiers, who do not follow orders, who are unwilling to take part in the revolution, or who have undesirable social relations shall be purged. Purged Party members will not be announced or notified; they will not be summoned to meetings, but the register of the names of Party members will be updated. There are several ways to deal with Party members who have committed errors: warnings, probation, or expulsion.”¹²

Whereas the September 1928 purge carried out in the Jinggang Mountain region can be considered relatively small in terms of scale and short in terms of duration, the “Elimination of the AB League” that swept through southwest Jiangxi beginning in February 1930 was a massive and brutal internal Party purge, and it directly led to the outbreak of the Futian Incident that shook the soviet area in December 1930.

* TN: A *sufan* campaign is a purge of ideological heretics.

1. *Mao's Campaign against the "AB League" and the Futian Incident*

Mao's authority over the Jiangxi Soviet Area took form following the 1929 Gutian Conference.^{*} Two of the most important conditions for Mao to take power were already in place: 1.) the Central Committee's explicit support provided a legal foundation for Mao's authority; and 2.) Mao's outstanding leadership had expanded the base area and had increased its population. In particular, Mao's erstwhile opponent, Zhu De, had suffered a military setback that diminished his prestige, whereas Mao's military success provided a practical basis for his authority. Mao's leadership authority was tangibly reflected in 1930 when he served as both political commissar and Front Line Committee secretary of the First Front Red Army. With an integrated Party leadership structure yet to be established in the soviet areas, Mao's position as secretary of the Front Line Committee became the top leadership position in the Jiangxi Soviet Area. Even so, Mao was not yet a member of the CCP Central Committee, and some of the Red Army and Party personnel in the soviet area were still able, in the name of the Central Committee, to passively resist Mao's newly-won power.

The period from the late 1920s to the early 1930s marked the beginning of the CCP's armed revolution, when forces rose up in various areas and the grand objective of rebelling against the Kuomintang allowed conflicts within the revolutionary camp to be temporarily shelved. In the base areas, however, contradictions continued between local cadres and cadres from the outside, between cadres who had studied in the Soviet Union and those who had remained in China, and between cadres who were intellectuals and cadres who were from peasant backgrounds. The only thing binding them together was the authority of the Central Committee, including the authority of the ideological principles provided by the Central Committee. It was the distance between the city-based Central Committee and the rural outback that necessitated that the Central Committee exercise its leadership over the base areas through Mao and, as a result, Mao's personal insights, intelligence, character, and work style became all the more crucial.

Among the military cadres in the Jiangxi Soviet Area, Mao possessed

^{*} TN: The Gutian Conference, the first CCP meeting following the Nanchang Uprising, was held in December 1929 in Gutian, Shanghang County, of western Fujian Province.

the greatest political savvy, had the strongest willpower, and was the most adept at military operations, but he was also prone to arbitrary behavior. When Chen Yi went to Shanghai in July 1929 to report to the Central Committee on the wrangling between Zhu and Mao, the Central Committee expressed its explicit support for Mao. Upon returning to Jiangxi, Chen Yi personally invited Mao to serve as leader. Zhu De and Chen Yi, ever loyal to the Party and submissive to the Central Committee, then mended relations with Mao, allowing for a reconciliation of the divisions and conflicts within the Fourth Red Army. Even so, for various reasons Mao's differences with the southern Jiangxi Red Army and the Party organization continued to intensify.

It was under these circumstances that Mao mounted his great purge of the "AB League." The direct reason for this incident was that Mao's newly-established authority in the Jiangxi Soviet Area was challenged by the Li Wenlin-led Southwest Jiangxi Red Army and Party. Mao could not tolerate organized defiance of his authority right under his nose, even if such opposition came from the Red Army or the local Party organization. In order to defend his authority in the base area, Mao threw off the constraints of Party ethics and did not hesitate to use extreme methods against Party comrades whom he suspected of being part of a dissenting force.

What did Mao hope to achieve by using such unusually violent methods to resolve intra-Party disputes? In a word, Mao wanted to become the Lenin of the Jiangxi Soviet Area. Because he was not yet the Lenin of the CCP, however, and because he did not possess lawful authority over the entire Party so as to execute his plan, all he could do was to resort to extreme methods to crush his opponents.

How did Mao resolve the enormous conflict between Party ethics and principles and his campaign of terror in the Party and the military? Mao had his ways. He claimed that the Southwest Jiangxi Party and the Red Army led by Li Wenlin had fallen victim to the forces of opportunism and a rich-peasant direction; therefore, a thorough transformation was essential in order to save the revolution. In this way, Mao raised an ideological banner over his repression.

Li Wenlin was an intellectual who had helped found the Southwest Jiangxi Party and Red Army. In the desperate situation of the Nationalist Army's third extermination campaign at Jinggang Mountain in February 1929, Mao and Zhu decided to evacuate to southern Jiangxi and to join forces with Li Wenlin in Donggu, known as "east Jinggang."

Initially, Mao, Zhu, and Li had a close relationship, but complications emerged in southwest Jiangxi during the latter half of 1929 and early February 1930. Mao had led the Fourth Red Army in and out of southwest Jiangxi on two occasions in 1929, and in early 1930 he had divided forces with the Fifth Red Army led by Peng Dehuai to carry out guerrilla warfare. Repeatedly reorganized, the Jiangxi Red Army and the Southwest Jiangxi Party organs developed views that differed from those of Mao in a number of areas, and thus relations with Mao became increasingly strained.

These differences of opinion mainly focused on two issues:

1.) Land reform. Local forces favored implementing the decision of the Sixth Party Congress to “confiscate the land of despotic gentry” and they opposed Mao’s call to “confiscate all land.”

2.) The jurisdiction and deployment of the manpower in the armed forces and local Party organs. At the end of November 1929, Mao proposed merging the Special Committees of western Jiangxi with the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Region to form a new Western Jiangxi Special Committee. Mao also proposed merging the Second and Fourth Red Regiments, led by Li Wenlin, with Peng Dehuai’s troops to form a Sixth Red Army. But Southwest Jiangxi felt that such a decision should first be approved by the CCP Central Committee and the Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee. In January 1930 Mao also encountered strong local resistance to his appointment of Fourth Red Army cadres Liu Shiqi and Zeng Shan as members of the Western Jiangxi Special Committee, the highest level leadership organ in southwest Jiangxi and the surrounding areas.

In order to resolve this conflict with the Red Army and the Party organs in southwest Jiangxi, from February 6 to February 9, 1930, Mao convened a joint conference (eventually known as the “February 7 Conference”) of the Fourth Red Army’s Front Line Committee, the military committees of the Fifth and Sixth Red Armies, the action committees and hub area committees under their jurisdiction, and the Party and Youth League leaders of the soviet. The meeting was held in Pitou Village, Ji’an County, where the Western Jiangxi Special Committee was based. Jiang Hanbo also attended this meeting in his capacity as an inspector for the Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee, and Liu Shiqi and Zeng Shan assisted Mao in organizing the meeting.

At the February 7 Conference, Mao, whose leadership of the Fourth Red Army had been restored by the Central Committee only two months earlier, launched a harsh attack, with the help of Liu Shiqi and Zeng Shan,

on the leaders of the local Red Army and Party organs. This attack planted the seeds for the subsequent campaign against the AB League.

Mao and his allies accused the leaders of the Southwest Jiangxi Army and Party of two “serious political errors”:

1.) Mao and his allies criticized the recommendation by local leaders Jiang Hanbo and Li Wenlin to confiscate only the land of the “despotic gentry” as “completely following the direction of the rural bourgeoisie” (rich peasants), and Mao pointed out that “continuing in this way will fundamentally nullify the strategy of the working class winning over the peasants and will take the path of Trotsky and Chen Duxiu, basically abolishing the entire agrarian revolution.”

2.) Mao and his allies accused Jiang Hanbo, Li Wenlin et al. of “using nonpolitical and trivial remarks to incite comrades to oppose the correct line of the Party leader”¹³—the term “Party leader” here refers to Liu Shiqi, Mao’s appointee as secretary of the Western Jiangxi Special Committee.

The February 7 Conference labeled the southwest Jiangxi leaders as “rich-peasant elements,” expelled Jiang Hanbo from the Party, and transferred Li Wenlin from the army to assume secretarial posts in the Southwest Jiangxi Special Committee and soviet. On February 16, the Fourth Red Army Front Line Committee, of which Mao was secretary, issued Notice No. 1, which formally declared the launch of a campaign to “purge landlords and rich peasants”:

The landlords and rich peasants who clog all levels of leading Party local organs represent a serious crisis within the Southwest Jiangxi Party. The Party’s policy is completely opportunistic, and, without a thorough purge, it will be impossible to execute the Party’s great political mission and the revolution will basically fail. This joint conference appeals to revolutionary comrades within the Party to rise up and strike down the opportunistic political leadership and to expel landlords and rich peasants from the Party so that the Party can rapidly become a Bolshevik party.¹⁴

Issuance of this notice marked the beginning of the Jiangxi Soviet Area’s launch of a two-year campaign to “eliminate the AB League,” which spread like wildfire throughout southwest Jiangxi.

The campaign against the AB League underwent two phases—the first from spring 1930 to January 1931, and the second from May 1931 to

early 1932. The Futian Incident occurred toward the end of the first phase.

Prior to this, “striking down opportunistic leadership” had been a concept in intra-Party struggles. Appearing around the time of the 1927 August 7 Conference, this concept was merely a declaration of turning away from Chen Duxiu’s direction and terminating his leadership of the Central Committee. After the August 7 Conference, although the Central Committee increasingly emphasized ideological unity, some traces of the democratic tradition from the period of the Great Revolution still remained within the Party. According to Party ethics and principles at the time, divergent viewpoints could still contend within the Party, but the CCP Central Committee or the Comintern Headquarters in Moscow had the final say in these disputes. It was unheard of for comrades with different viewpoints to suffer physical annihilation. In 1930, however, Mao coupled his call to “strike down opportunistic leadership” with physical annihilation.

Turning a concept of intra-party struggle into a concept of fighting the enemy required transition and transformation, and Mao easily found an intermediary link. He declared that opportunistic leaders within the Party were actually landlords, rich peasants, and counterrevolutionaries, and then he seamlessly joined a slogan of struggle against the enemy—“Strike down the Kuomintang, exterminate landlords, rich peasants, and counterrevolutionaries”—with a concept of intra-party struggle—“Strike down opportunistic leaders.” In one stroke, he justified suppression and rationalized annihilation. In spring 1930, news was already spreading within the soviet areas that the Kuomintang’s AB League was engaged in infiltration and sabotage and that its organization was being unearthed, putting the base areas on an unprecedented state of high alert. Under these conditions, Mao could easily use “suppression of counterrevolutionaries” to demand that the Party organization and Soviet Government in the base area support and submit to the policy of suppressing the AB League.

Following the February 7 Conference, an atmosphere of revolutionary terror gradually metastasized in the Jiangxi Soviet Area. Under the leadership of Secretary Liu Shiqi, and in compliance with the spirit of Notice No. 1 of the Fourth Red Army Front Line Committee, the Southwest Jiangxi Special Committee launched a propaganda offensive in the form of a “Propaganda Outline for Opposing the Reorganizationist AB League,” which was issued by its West Route Action Committee to all levels of the Party organization on June 25:

If vacillating and ill-behaving elements are discovered among the masses, they are to be captured and handed over to the Soviet Government for investigation and punishment. Any unfamiliar persons who pass through the Red regions must be rigorously examined, and if there is any cause for suspicion, they are to be arrested and handed over to the Soviet Government. Masses traveling within the Red regions should carry a pass issued by their soviet. ... Worker and peasant masses are to be distinguished only by class without regard to family relations and friendships. Anyone found behaving improperly at home or elsewhere, even if a friend or relative, should be reported to the soviet for arrest and punishment.

At the same time, the “Outline” called for “implementing a Red purge in the countryside” and a “Red Terror” to “purge spies hiding under the Red Flag”:

At present, all levels of the soviets should intensify elimination of counterrevolutionaries and catch and kill despotic landlords and reactionary rich-peasant elements as a warning, but killing requires proof of actual counterrevolution and wrongful killing is strictly prohibited.¹⁵

Although the “Outline” referred to proof being required for killing and it prohibited wrongful killing, once the great door of terror was opened, the situation quickly spun out of control.

In July and August 1930, the Campaign to Eliminate the AB League rapidly migrated from the grassroots to the upper-level organs. In August Li Wenlin assumed the post of secretary of the Jiangxi Province Action Committee, which had recently been set up under Li Lisan’s orders to launch an assault on the major cities. Li Wenlin was no less zealous in “attacking the AB League” than the former Special Committee secretary, Liu Shiqi, and perhaps even more so.

The Southwest Jiangxi Special Committee first selected the case of Zhu Jiahao, a worker in the Special Committee’s Distribution Department, who was deemed to be “underperforming in his work and misbehaving in speech and action,” as a precedent. “Urgent Notice No. 20: Mobilizing Party Members and the Masses to Thoroughly Eliminate the AB League,” issued by the Special Committee on September 24, 1930, revealed that after

Zhu Jiahao had been arrested, “the Special Committee had interrogated him” and he initially firmly refused to admit guilt, but later “under harsh interrogation employing both the carrot and the stick, he finally confessed that both the Lenin Youth Corps of the Red Flag Society and the Southwest Jiangxi Government had AB League groups. ... He exposed all the AB League elements that had infiltrated the Party, the Youth League Special Committee, and the Southwest Jiangxi Government and reported on the organizations in each county and region.”

This “Urgent Notice” went on to stipulate in detail the fundamental principles for interrogation and execution, which encouraged the extortion of confessions under torture and a policy of “killing without amnesty” all “AB League elements”:

The AB League is extremely insidious, cunning, treacherous, and tough; without undergoing the most ruthless beating, its members absolutely will not confess. It is necessary to employ a carrot-and-stick approach and to submit them to continuous and unremitting interrogation with harsh punishment in order to detect the origins of their words, to discover clues, and to question them closely, mainly in order to make them confess regarding the AB League organization so that it can be fundamentally annihilated.

As soon as an AB League element was found, as the next step the “Urgent Notice” required execution:

With respect to leaders, of course, employ extraordinary methods, but be sure to have them executed by the masses at a mass rally. ... AB League members from rich-peasant and petty-bourgeoisie classes and above, as well as hooligans and local riffraff, are to be killed without mercy. ... Workers and peasants who once had a status in the AB League and who are capable and relatively active are to be killed without mercy.¹⁶

The Southwest Jiangxi Special Committee rigorously enforced the campaign against the AB League, and by October, among some 30,000 Communist Party members in the region “more than 1,000 were expelled as landlords or rich peasants” (the February 7 Conference required that “representatives of rich-peasant elements within the Party, regardless

of class or past work performance, must be mercilessly and resolutely expelled from the Party”), and more than 1,000 AB League members were exterminated.¹⁷ One out of every four workers in the Southwest Jiangxi Soviet Government was labeled a member of the AB League, and most of them were killed.¹⁸

While the Special Committee was conducting its anti-AB League campaign with great fanfare, Mao was too busy handling military matters to become directly involved. However, in October his attitude changed. On October 14, 1930, while in the county town of Ji’an, Mao wrote a letter to the CCP Central Committee reporting his views on conditions in the Southwest Jiangxi Party and the measures he was preparing to take. In this letter, Mao further developed his basic view toward the Southwest Jiangxi Party organs that he had expressed during the February 7 Conference, pointing out: “The entire Southwest Jiangxi Party has recently been in a state of major crisis; the entire Party is guided by a rich-peasant direction. ... Many AB League elements have been uncovered in the Special Committee organs of the Party and Youth League, the Southwest Jiangxi Soviet Government, and the Red Army School, and most of the leading organs at all levels are packed with AB League rich peasants.” Mao declared that in order to “remedy this crisis,” he had decided to carry out a campaign to eliminate counterrevolutionaries under the slogan of “attacking the AB League” so as to “fundamentally reform” the Party and Youth League organs of southwest Jiangxi.¹⁹

Did Mao truly believe that there were so many members of the “AB League”? The answer is that he half-believed it. Since 1927 the CCP had been struggling to survive under an extremely punishing environment of siege and annihilation. As a self-defensive response, Mao was accustomed to taking the KMT’s anti-Communist actions very seriously, and in the intense struggle between the KMT and the CCP, Mao had developed a psychological predisposition that it was safer to assume that the KMT was active in the Communist zones. In terms of “vigilance,” no other top CCP leaders exceeded Mao. Additionally, even Li Wenlin and the others vigorously attacked the “AB League,” giving Mao no reason to doubt that there were many AB elements.

Yet Mao was most definitely a realist; he knew very well that there could not possibly be so many members of the “AB League” in the soviet areas. But since the sluice of terror had already been opened, it made sense for him to seize the opportunity to crush all declared and potential

opposition. Mao thus delivered his masterstroke: Before suppressing Li Wenlin and other leaders in southwest Jiangxi, he carried out a major AB purge of the units of the First Front Red Army under his own command (the First and Third Army Groups) in November 1930.

In October 1930, Mao led the First Front Red Army in storming Ji'an and then he withdrew, and also he urged Peng Dehuai to retreat after taking Changsha. These moves caused resentment within the Red Army and confusion ensued for a time. In order to eliminate the sources of instability, in the latter half of November Mao launched a "rapid rectification," which involved establishing organizations to eliminate counterrevolutionaries within the divisions, regiments, battalions, companies, and platoons, and to capture and kill Party members within the military who came from landlord or rich-peasant families as well as complainers and malcontents. In less than one month, more than 4,400 of the Red Army's 40,000-plus men were identified as members of the AB League, including "dozens of [AB] regimental commanders"²⁰ who were put to death.

The First Front Red Army's campaign against the AB League was extremely violent, and any Party member from a prosperous family or with an intellectual background or who had parted ways with Mao at some point in the past was in a precarious situation.

At that time, Huang Kecheng was political commissar of the Third Division of the Third Army Group. The Organizational Section chief and Administrative Section chief of the division had been purged as members of the AB League. The Propaganda Section chief, He Ducai, had joined the Communist Party during the Great Revolution, had taken part in the Nanchang Uprising, and after accompanying Zhu De up Jinggang Mountain had rallied the troops at a critical juncture after their commander had defected. But He Ducai had sided with Zhu De in the clash between Mao and Zhu before the Gutian Conference, so Mao considered him untrustworthy and soon transferred him out of the First Army Group; this is how He Ducai came to serve as Propaganda Section chief under Huang Kecheng.

He Ducai was friends with Huang Kecheng, and the two "could talk together about anything." He Ducai felt that Mao was extraordinary and that no one could match his abilities or question the correctness of his political stands, but he also felt that Mao's organizational principles were misguided: "Mao Zedong puts excessive trust in those who submit to him,

and he is incapable of unbiased treatment of those who hold different views. He is not as magnanimous and above-board as Commander Zhu.” He Ducai gave the example of some disreputable individuals who had gained Mao’s trust through their submissiveness and who now commanded great authority and committed misdeeds with impunity.²¹ Inevitably, this highly intelligent and blameless man was soon labeled a member of the AB League and executed.

According to Xiao Ke’s memoirs, the campaign against the AB League reached a climax from late November to early December 1930; in Xiao Ke’s own division, “we did nothing but devote our main energy to attacking the AB League,” killing sixty people. Two weeks later, the division decided to execute more than sixty others, but Political Commissar Luo Ronghuan intervened; Xiao Ke rushed to the execution grounds and prevented the execution of more than twenty men, “but more than twenty others had already been killed.”²²

If Mao was so unsparing toward the First Front Red Army under his direct command, he showed hardly any mercy toward the southwest Jiangxi local Red Army that had always sung to a different tune. As described above, Li Wenlin approached the campaign against the AB League with great determination, but as indiscriminate killings became increasingly apparent in October 1930, Li began to cool toward the campaign. In early and late October, the Jiangxi Province Action Committee started to impose rectification measures, but it is striking that as Li Wenlin began to have reservations about the fanatical campaign, Mao began turning up the heat.

In November 1930 Mao aimed the dagger of his “fundamental reform” at the Jiangxi Province Action Committee and the southwest Jiangxi Red Army under it. This was carried out with even more violence because Li Wenlin had insisted on implementing the line of the Central Committee led by Li Lisan and had opposed withdrawal of the battle plan for attacking Nanchang.

In May 1930 Li Wenlin attended the Congress of Chinese Soviet Areas in Shanghai as a representative of southwest Jiangxi. This meeting, convened by Li Lisan, called for concentrating assaults on major cities and aimed for an initial victory in one or more provinces. After Li Wenlin returned to Jiangxi, in early August he convened the Second Plenum of the Southwest Jiangxi Special Committee to implement Li Lisan’s directives. The Second Plenum indirectly criticized Mao’s views and methods; it rescinded its endorsement of Mao’s recommendations as well as Mao’s

appointment of Liu Shiqi as secretary of the Special Committee, and it recommended that the Central Committee in Shanghai strip Liu Shiqi of his Party membership, thus provoking Mao's intense resentment. Mao was used to being the Central Committee's chief representative and manager of the Jiangxi Soviet Area, so how could he tolerate someone opposing him in the name of the Central Committee right under his very nose? At that point Mao was not yet familiar with the phrase the "Lisan Line," so he judged the Second Plenum to be a conference of "AB League liquidationists"^{*} and he marked all those who attended for obliteration.

In October 1930 the First Front Red Army captured Ji'an. Among the Kuomintang's local archives a document purportedly signed by Li Wenlin's father who was a landlord was discovered.²³ The contents of this document are unknown, but it became the so-called evidence connecting Li Wenlin with the AB League.[†] Later that month, during the Xiajiang Conference and the Luofang Conference, Li Wenlin openly opposed Mao's battle tactic of "luring the enemy in deep" and he promoted Li Lisan's directive to target the major cities. The overall intensification of the conflict with Mao led Mao to label Li Wenlin a leader of the AB League. At the end of November 1930, Li was detained in Huangpi, Ningdu County, and soon thereafter many people who had worked with Li were also arrested. After extracting confessions through torture, on December 3, 1930 the General Front Line Committee of the First Front Red Army sent a letter to the reorganized Jiangxi Province Action Committee. (Following Li Wenlin's arrest, Mao's former subordinate, Zeng Shan, had taken over the leadership of the Action Committee. The letter was in fact written by Mao, but mainland scholars have avoided implicating Mao by deleting his name.) The letter identified Duan Liangbi (a member of the Standing Committee of the Action Committee and secretary of the Special Committee of the Southwest Jiangxi Youth League), Li Baifang (secretary general of the Action Committee), and others as members of the AB

^{*} TN: Li Lisan's policies fell into disfavor in July 1930 following a series of defeats in attempts by Communist forces to capture the major cities. Li Lisan was then denounced and sent to Moscow for "corrective study." The term "liquidationism" in Marxist theory refers to ideological liquidation of the revolutionary Party program.

[†] However, according to an investigative report carried out by the Jishui County Party History Office in 1987, Li Wenlin's father was only a "relatively-rich landowner who practiced minor exploitation" and he had died in May 1927.

League, and ordered “the capture of Li Baifang et al. and a rigorous search for clues of counterrevolutionary activities in southwest Jiangxi so that they can be thoroughly extinguished.” In this letter, Mao wrote that the Action Committee “must join with Comrade Li [Shaojiu] to immediately execute its duty of extinguishing counterrevolution without the slightest hesitation,” and must “round up rich peasants, hooligans, and vacillators in every county and district and to slaughter them. In districts where such capturing and killing are not carried out, the Party and government certainly belong to the AB League, and the leaders of those places shall be captured and prosecuted.”²⁴

On December 3 Li Shaojiu proceeded to Futian with Mao’s letter of instructions, and on December 5, Mao sent two Red Army soldiers with a second letter of instructions to Li Shaojiu and the provincial Action Committee. This letter instructed them to use the arrested individuals to “find even more important people.” In order to ensure compliance with the letters of instruction, Mao also sent the secretary of the General Front Line Committee, Gu Bo, to Futian to “assist in the campaign to eliminate counterrevolutionaries.”

On the afternoon of December 7, Li Shaojiu, who was then secretary general of the General Political Department of the First Front Red Army as well as chairman of the Counterrevolutionary-Elimination Committee, arrived at the headquarters of the Jiangxi Provincial Soviet Government in Futian to direct the Action Committee’s implementation of the General Front Line Committee’s campaign to eliminate counterrevolutionaries. Li hand-delivered Mao’s letter of instructions to Zeng Shan (chairman of the Jiangxi Provincial Soviet Government) and to Chen Zhengren, and then arrested the eight main leaders of the Action Committee and the Twentieth Red Army: Duan Liangbi, Li Baifang, Jin Wanbang (director of military affairs for the provincial Soviet Government), Zhou Mian (director of the Soviet Government’s Finance Department), Xie Hanchang (director of the Political Department of the Twentieth Red Army), Liu Wanqing, Ren Xinda, and Ma Ming. Li Shaojiu used various forms of torture on these comrades until they were “a mass of wounds,” and “their fingers were broken and their bodies were burned so badly that they could not move,” with some dying on the spot. Whenever torture was employed, Li Shaojiu was always present. According to contemporary records, the tortured comrades “shook the heavens with cries that lingered in one’s ears as every available form of torture was applied.” On December 8, the

wives of Li Baifang, Ma Ming, and Zhou Mian visited their husbands in detention, but they were then also arrested as members of the AB League. They were similarly tortured, with bamboo strips driven under their fingernails, their genitals burned with incense sticks, and their breasts cut with small knives.²⁵ Enduring this brutal torture, Duan Liangbi revealed that Li Wenlin, Jin Wanbang, Liu Di, Zhou Mian, Ma Ming, Ren Xinda, Cong Yunzhong, Duan Qifeng, and others were “leaders of the AB League,” and he confessed that there were many members of the AB League in the Red Army School. Regarding extraction of these confessions through torture, General Xiao Ke states in his 1982 memoirs, “Even half a century later, one can only sigh in grief. Those of us who experienced this still cannot bear to recall it.”²⁶

During the five days from December 7 to the evening of December 12, Li Shaojiu (who had departed Futian on December 9), chairman of the provincial soviet, Zeng Shan, and secretary general of the General Front Line Committee, Gu Bo (who had arrived on December 8) took charge of rigorously enforcing the elimination of counterrevolutionaries in Futian. Zeng Shan personally interrogated Duan Liangbi and used the elicited information to arrest more than 120 “AB League members,” among whom there were dozens of “key criminals,” and some forty were executed.²⁷ Before he set off for Donggu, Li Shaojiu personally arranged for the execution of twenty-five people.

A platoon led by Li Shaojiu escorted the Political Department director of the Twentieth Red Army, Xie Hanchang, out of Futian on December 9, and upon arrival at the headquarters of the Twentieth Army in Donggu on December 10, Li Shaojiu discussed with Commander Liu Tiechao and Commissar Zeng Bingchun how to implement Mao’s two letters of instruction by “finding clues to reach a major breakthrough.” Li Shaojiu, Liu Tiechao, and Zeng Bingchun used extorted confessions from Duan Liangbi and Xie Hanchang to determine that Liu Di, commissar of the 174th Regiment of the Twentieth Army, was a member of the AB League. However, because Liu Di was from his native village, Li Shaojiu did not immediately arrest him, but instead he used a “carrot-and-stick approach” to compel Liu Di to confess. After the Futian Incident, Liu Di wrote a letter to the Central Committee admitting that he had come up with the idea of launching the incident after talking with Li Shaojiu. Liu Di said he knew all along that Li Shaojiu was a person who “usually had incorrect ideas, had a very low proletarian consciousness, and was prone to using

despicable tricks to stir up discord.” In order to avoid being immediately taken off for interrogation under torture, Liu Di changed to his Changsha dialect and said to Li Shaojiu, “I am Your Honor’s subordinate. ... Now that you have fortuitously arrived, I will do my best to receive political education and acknowledge my errors. I believe Comrade Mao Zedong is not a member of the AB League, nor is the commander, and the only thing I have done is to follow you gentlemen, so what does this have to do with me?” Seeing how Liu Di declared himself, Li Shaojiu let him go.²⁸

The Futian Incident broke out on December 12. After breakfast that morning, Liu Di met in secret with the leader of the detached battalion, Zhang Xing, and the political commissar, Liang Xueyi, to discuss how to deal with Li Shaojiu. They were unanimous in their belief that the arrest by the General Front Line Committee of the First Front Red Army of the AB League was “part of a conspiratorial plot” to attack Party cadres in southwest Jiangxi. In order to foil the plot, they decided to immediately arrest Li Shaojiu, along with the commander of the Twentieth Army, Liu Tiechao, and the others. After their meeting, Liu Di went to the detached battalion to rouse the soldiers, and he then led the entire battalion to surround the headquarters, where they arrested Liu Tiechao and released Xie Hanchang and the others. Li Shaojiu escaped, as did Political Commissar Zeng Bingchun who went into hiding in his home village. That night, Xie Hanchang and Liu Di led the detached battalion of the Twentieth Army to storm Futian, where it surrounded the provincial Action Committee and the provincial Soviet Government and released Duan Liangbi, Li Baifang, and more than seventy other “AB League members.” Central Funding Committee member Yi Ershi (Liu Zuofu) was also captured (however, he was released the next day and was invited to speak at a mass rally). The chairman of the provincial Soviet Government, Zeng Shan, escaped during the chaos and fled to his home village. Gu Bo managed to flee,²⁹ and Gu Bo’s wife, Zeng Biyi, and Chen Zhengren’s wife, Peng Ru, also escaped under cover of night. Thus ended the Futian Incident that shook the Jiangxi Soviet Area.

Following the Futian Incident, Xie Hanchang, Liu Di, and others led the Twentieth Red Army to Yongxin, Lianhua, and Angu counties in the Xianggan (Hunan-Jiangxi) Soviet Area west of the Gan River. There they continued the agrarian revolution and established a “Jiangxi Provincial Action Committee” and a “Jiangxi Provincial Soviet Government” in Yongyang, Ji’an County, and adopted four emergency measures:

1.) They immediately dispatched Duan Liangbi to Shanghai with 100 kilos of gold (in fact, what he delivered to the Central Committee in Shanghai was only “a few kilos”)³⁰ to report to the CCP Central Committee on the “elimination of the AB League” in southwest Jiangxi and on the Futian Incident, and to ask the Central Committee to pass its judgment.

2.) They issued arrest warrants for Zeng Shan, Chen Zhengren, Gu Bo, and Li Shaojiu. The provincial Action Committee held that Zeng Shan could not evade responsibility for colluding with Li Shaojiu in his abusive campaign and that they should be brought to justice.

3.) They won the sympathy and support of Wang Huai, secretary of the West Route Action Committee of the Xianggan Soviet Area of the Southwest Jiangxi Special Committee. (Wang Huai continued to head the Action Committee following a failed attempt on December 9 by Mao’s old subordinate, Chen Zhengren, former Standing Committee member and propaganda head of the provincial Action Committee, to implement the spirit of the letters of the General Front Line Committee by arresting Wang.) Under Wang Huai’s leadership, anti-Mao activities in the soviet area west of the Gan River and by the Twentieth Red Army gained widespread sympathy, and Wang Huai’s view—that the action of the Twentieth Army was not counterrevolutionary but rather a “struggle between the working-class line and the peasant line”—spread rapidly. Decades later, one of the people involved in the Futian Incident, Zeng Shan, vividly recalled that “the thinking of Party members and the masses in the soviet area west of the Gan River was extremely confused, and it even muddled the understanding of some people and Party members east of the Gan River.”³¹ This indicates the wide-ranging influence of Mao’s extremist activities at that time.

4.) They openly unfurled an anti-Mao banner and attempted to win the support of Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Huang Gonglüe, and Teng Daiyuan. On their way to the western side of the Gan River, Xie Hanchang and Liu Di put up many “notices to comrades and the masses,” warning of a “crisis in the Party,” accusing Mao of thinking of himself as “Party emperor,” and raising the slogan of “down with Mao Zedong, support Zhu, Peng, and Huang.” On December 20, Xie Hanchang, Li Baifang, Cong Yunzhong, and others in Yongyang wrote a “letter to Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Huang Gonglüe, and Teng Daiyuan” that denounced Li Shaojiu’s round-up of the AB League and his indiscriminate killing of comrades, while also attacking the General Front Line Committee for siding with Li. The letter enclosed

a forged “letter from Mao Zedong to Gu Bo,” which was meant to drive a wedge between Mao and Zhu and Peng and Huang.

Peng Dehuai probably presented the strongest evidence that the “letter from Mao Zedong to Gu Bo” was forged. Decades later when recalling this matter while writing his prison confession, Peng wrote, “This letter was written by Cong Yunzhong, the leader of the Futian Incident. He regularly practiced Mao’s handwriting style and was able to imitate it passably, but there were some other giveaways—when Comrade Mao Zedong wrote letters, he used Chinese script rather than Roman and Arabic numerals for the year, month, and day.”

This forged letter was never made public until it was reproduced in full in a historical work on the Central Soviet Area that was published in 1985:

Comrade Gu Bo: In accordance with the shifts in current circumstances and letters from certain parties, our plan must be rapidly implemented. We have decided to capture and kill military Communist Party and local Communist Party members simultaneously, and after the capture and killing to continue with our plan of carrying out the mission in western Jiangxi and the provincial Action Committee within three days. When interrogating Duan [Liangbi], Li [Baifang], Wang [Huai], and other core cadres, it is necessary to focus particularly on compelling them to confess the key complicity of Zhu, Peng, Huang, and Teng in the AB League within the Red Army and their criminal dealings with certain units of the White Army. Deliver their confessions to me for their earliest capture and killing and for the rapid accomplishment of our plan. This letter is top secret, and no one can be told of it except Zeng [Shan], Li [Shaojiu], and Chen [Zhengren].
Mao Zedong.³²

Upon hearing of this letter, Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, and Huang Gonglüe had different responses. Zhu was stationed at the headquarters of the First Front Red Army in Huangpi and was not directly commanding any units, so the success of such “wedge-driving” would depend on Peng Dehuai, who controlled the 10,000-strong Third Army Group, and his deputy, Huang Gonglüe.

In mid-December 1930, Peng Dehuai received a letter from Xie Hanchang and others as well as the “letter from Mao Zedong to Gu Bo” and he immediately reached the conclusion that this was a “dangerous

plot to split the Party and the Red Army.” Peng quickly drafted a “brief declaration of less than 200 words” stating that “the Futian Incident was counterrevolutionary in nature” and that the Third Army Group “supports Comrade Mao Zedong and supports the leadership of the General Front Line Committee.”

As to Huang Gonglüe’s somewhat more equivocal approach, Peng Dehuai recalled, “As I was saying this [his analysis that the Mao letter to Gu Bo was forged], Huang Gonglüe arrived, and after listening for about ten minutes, he left. After the meeting, I asked Comrade Deng Ping why Gonglüe had come here, and Deng merely replied: ‘Peng is still taking Mao’s side,’ then he left.”³³

Due to Peng Dehuai’s interpretation and persuasion, the Third Army Group’s “mood shifted to one of indignation toward the Futian Incident.” Peng led the troops to Xiaobu, about 7.5 kilometers from Huangpi and personally invited Mao to speak at a Third Army Group cadre meeting, where Peng voiced his firm endorsement of Mao.

Amidst the tensions following the Futian Incident, the support given by Peng and the Third Army Group of the Red Army was extremely significant in terms of bolstering Mao’s shaky status. Nevertheless, the anti-Mao sentiment spread by the leaders of the incident had badly damaged Mao’s prestige. In order to counter the attacks against him in southwest Jiangxi, Mao personally stepped forward and without a qualm drafted the December 20, 1930, “Letter of the General Front Line Committee in Response to Accusations.”

In this letter, Mao insisted there were grounds for the campaign against the AB League. He stated that testimony by key AB League miscreants within the Red Army “in various ways proved that the provincial Action Committee hosted the Jiangxi Provincial Headquarters of the AB League, headed by Duan Liangbi, Li Baifang, and Xie Hanchang, and that in order to remedy the crisis in the revolution in southwest Jiangxi, the General Front Line Committee dispatched Comrade Li Shaojiu to Futian to seize them.” Mao said there was irrefutable evidence that Duan and the others were leaders of the AB League: “If Duan, Li, Jin, Xie, and so forth are loyal revolutionary comrades, even if they suffer injustices for a time, they will eventually be vindicated, so why would they frame other comrades? Others might offer false testimony, but how could Duan, Li, Jin, and Xie, who are in charge of the provincial Action Committee and the Military Political Department?”³⁴ Mao knew very well that Duan and

the others had been designated members of the AB League entirely on the basis of confessions extracted through torture, but instead of objecting to this, he claimed that the inability of Duan and the others to tolerate unjust treatment for the sake of the revolution proved that they had something to hide. According to Mao's logic, if Duan and the others admitted to being leaders of the AB League, this was sufficient to prove that the AB League was a real thing. Mao's logic became the conventional train of thought for subsequent ultra-Leftist examinations of cadres and campaigns to eliminate counterrevolutionaries, and it was the main ideological source for an endless stream of injustices. Based this thinking, Mao was not wrong to insist on the existence of the AB League, and in doing so he actually was making an enormous contribution to the revolution. He said, "The AB League installed a commander-in-chief and a chain of command within the Red Army, and on five occasions it set dates for insurrections and made insurrection banners. If we had not rigorously stamped it out, the Red Army long ago would have ceased to exist." Mao declared that the Futian Incident had "revealed its true form as a revolt," and he called for it to be resolutely suppressed.³⁵

In the name of the Chinese Workers and Peasants Revolutionary Committee, in the latter half of December 1930 Mao drafted a bulletin, in the form of a hexasyllabic poem, on the punitive expedition to Futian:

Duan, Xie, Liu, and Li started turning traitor at Futian.
 They led the Red Army to turn renegade before a formidable foe.
 They split the revolutionary forces in a monstrous malfeasance.
 They sabotaged decisive class battles and chaotically created rumors.
 They attacked the provincial Soviet Government and toppled the
 regime of workers and peasants.
 They chased out Chairman Zeng Shan and captured Central
 Committee members.
 They embraced Chiang, and opposed the Communist Party and a
 thorough redistribution of land.
 They vainly plotted insurrection to sabotage the Red Army legions.
 They tried to turn the Red Zones into Black Prisons.
 The AB abolished factions and united all types of scoundrels.
 They hollered for revolution, but in their hearts they were traitors.
 They raised the Red Banner in revolt so people could not see through
 them.

This is traitor Chiang's venomous scheme; we must all make it known.

This is a pressing struggle; class rebellion is inevitable.

Do not panic over the unexpected, but unite all the more.

Strike down the counterrevolutionaries; tomorrow brings victory.³⁶

Mao took it for granted that he was the symbol of the Red Army and the Party. He was also the representative of the Central Committee and the Comintern in the base area, so those who opposed him had to be "anti-Bolshevik," and all those who were killed must have been counterrevolutionaries, so what had he to be ashamed of? In Mao's eyes, an exalted goal—extinguishing the AB League to safeguard the revolution—justified using harsh measures. The great terror consolidated the authority of the General Front Line Committee as well as Mao's personal authority; amidst the great terror, Mao became the Lenin of the Jiangxi Soviet Area.

2. *Xiang Ying's Four-month Correction of Mao*

On January 15, 1931, the Central Bureau of the Chinese Soviet Area was established in Xiaobu, Ningdu County, with Xiang Ying as acting secretary. The Politburo of the CCP Central Committee abolished the General Front Line Committee and appointed Mao and Zhu De as members of the Central Bureau. A Central Revolutionary Military Committee was set up under the Central Bureau to take charge of the Red Army in Jiangxi as well as in the rest of China. Xiang Ying was appointed chairman of this committee, with Zhu De and Mao serving as vice chairmen. In terms of Party principles, Xiang Ying had taken over Mao's position as supreme leader of the Communist Party and army of the Jiangxi Soviet Area.

Xiang Ying's arrival in the soviet area and the establishment of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area was a major strategic move in terms of the CCP shifting its emphasis to the soviet areas during this transitional period. It represented concrete implementation of related directives from Stalin and the Comintern. In late July 1930, when Stalin received Zhou Enlai in Moscow to listen to his report on the work of the CCP, he ordered that the CCP place the issue of the Red Army at the forefront of China's revolution. On July 23, the political Secretariat of the Comintern's Executive Committee issued a "Resolution Regarding the China Issue,"

which pointed to the establishment of a soviet central government and a combat-ready and politically steadfast Red Army as “the first task under China’s special circumstances at present.”³⁷

In shifting its work focus toward the Jiangxi Soviet Area, the CCP’s most pressing issue was to adjust the relationship between Mao and the Central Committee and to assess Mao’s work in Jiangxi. Zhou Enlai’s remarks during this period indicate that the CCP Central Committee was not entirely satisfied with Mao, but Zhou always used a self-critical tone to discuss such problems. During a meeting of the Provisional Politburo on August 22, 1930, Zhou said, “In the past, we repeatedly criticized the erroneous conservative viewpoints of the peasants, while also opposing a purely guerrilla warfare strategy. In particular, the Central Committee has brought up the error of separatism; in fact, too little attention has been paid to the base area and this is a shortcoming in our work.”³⁸

Having discovered the crux of the problem, the next step was to consolidate the Central Committee’s leadership of the soviet area and the Party’s leadership of the Red Army. At a Politburo meeting on September 29, Zhou Enlai requested that the Central Committee send him to the soviet area. On the following day, at an enlarged meeting of the Central Military Commission (CMC), Zhou again stressed the need for the Party to hold the highest authority within the Red Army.

On October 3, 1930, following the Third Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee, the Party’s top inner circle, the three-man Standing Committee of the Central Committee Politburo, was established, consisting of Xiang Zhongfa, Zhou Enlai, and Xu Xigen, with Zhou as the effective leader. This Standing Committee made a preliminary decision to create a Central Bureau of the Soviet Area comprised of Zhou, Xiang Ying, Mao, Yu Fei, Yuan Binghui, Zhu De, and a local cadre, and it dispatched Xiang Ying ahead to Jiangxi. On October 17, the Central Committee Politburo decided to appoint Zhou as secretary of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area, with Xiang Ying serving as acting secretary pending Zhou’s arrival. The Central Bureau was to be the supreme leadership organ of the Party, military, and government in the soviet area. On October 29, Zhou drafted a directive from the CCP Central Committee to the Front Line Committee of the First and Third Army Groups of the Red Army, notifying Mao: “Pending Xiang Ying’s arrival, the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area will be established with Mao Zedong as acting secretary and Zhu De as commander-in-chief of the First and Third Army Groups

of the Red Army. All political and military leadership is now concentrated in the Central Bureau.”³⁹

The concrete measures taken by the CCP Central Committee to implement the directives of Stalin and the Comintern were in place by October 1930. In compliance with the Central Committee’s shift toward the soviet area, in September and October Zhou Enlai made even more detailed arrangements:

Zhou conducted a military training session in Shanghai to prepare a group of Soviet-trained military cadres to be sent to the soviet area. After attending this session, Zhang Aiping, Huang Huoqing, and other military cadres were sent to Jiangxi.

Zhou arranged for Liu Bocheng, Ye Jianying, Fu Zhong, Li Zhuoran, and other Soviet-trained cadres to translate the Red Army Infantry Combat Regulations and the Political Work Regulations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) into Chinese for delivery to the soviet area.

Zhou also took charge of establishing a fixed and more secure secret communications channel from Shanghai to the Jiangxi Soviet Area, and he established a CCP Central Committee Communications Bureau headed by Wu Defeng.

He actively prepared for a high-powered confidential radio transceiver between the Comintern Headquarters in Moscow and the Comintern Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai as well as a wireless radio link between the CCP Central Committee in Shanghai and the Jiangxi Soviet Area. This opened up communication channels between Moscow, Shanghai, and the Jiangxi Soviet Area.

It was against this background that at the end of 1930 Xiang Ying took the underground secret transport route to the Jiangxi Soviet Area to serve as the soviet area’s top leader charged with the great task of consolidating the leadership of the CCP Central Committee over the Jiangxi Red Army.

Xiang Ying was one of the few top Party leaders with an industrial-worker background, and after joining the Party in Wuhan in 1921 he had spent some years in the labor movement. He had taken part in the CCP’s 1928 Sixth National Congress in Moscow, had been a member of the CCP Central Committee since its Fourth Congress in 1925, and had been elected to the Politburo and its Standing Committee during the First Plenum of the Sixth CCP Central Committee. Xiang Ying was a staunch believer in the Marxist-Leninist theories that he had studied in the Soviet

Union, and he had deep feelings for Stalin and the Soviet Union. His personality and work style were reserved and strict.

In late November 1930, Xiang Ying set off from Shanghai, and as soon as he arrived in the Jiangxi Soviet Area he learned about the Futian Incident, targeting the secretary of the General Front Line Committee of the Fourth Red Army, Mao Zedong, that had recently erupted in the Southwest Jiangxi Red Army.

The first item of business for the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area under Xiang Ying's leadership was to deal with the Futian Incident. On January 16, 1931, the Central Bureau issued its "Notice No. 2: Resolution Regarding the Futian Incident," which expressed "complete agreement with the line of struggle adopted by the General Front Line Committee regarding the Futian Incident," while watering down the views of Mao and others and advocating a policy of appeasement to mitigate tensions within the soviet area and to avoid a split within the Red Army.

The contradictory and ambiguous nature of the resolution was chiefly reflected in its view of the nature of the Futian Incident. Xiang Ying held that "Duan Liangbi and Li Baifang of the Jiangxi Provincial Action Committee, and head of the Political Department of the Twentieth Army, Xie Hanchang, are the key malefactors of the AB League" who launched the Futian Incident as an "anti-Party action" to "split the revolutionary forces" and to "split the Red Army," and Xiang Ying decided to "expel the leaders of the Futian Incident, Duan Liangbi, Li Baifang, Xie Hanchang, Liu Di, and Jin Wanbang, from the Party." At the same time, however, Xiang Ying saw the Futian Incident not as a counterrevolutionary insurrection led by the AB League but rather as an "unprincipled factional struggle." He ordered the Southwest Jiangxi Special Committee and the Party committee of the Twentieth Army to end their mutual attacks and to await an investigation and handling by the Central Bureau.

If Xiang Ying consciously adopted a nuanced stance toward the nature of the Futian Incident, his sharp criticism of the expansion of the purge of the AB League was largely directed at Mao. The resolution focused its criticism on "the past flaws and errors in the struggle against the AB League liquidationists" and it enumerated its main manifestations: "The first is a non-mass line; in many places, the Red Army or the upper-level organs took over." "The second is rash actions, fingering others without criteria." Xiang Ying stressed that thereafter "it is essential to act on the basis of actual facts and circumstances, and by no means should

there be indiscriminate beating and killing ... nor should arrests be made on the basis of loose accusations. ... In every conflict, the Party should use educational methods to teach all Party members. Only in this way can the Party follow the Bolshevik path.”⁴⁰

Xiang Ying’s attitude was closely related to his complicated impression of Mao. Xiang had had some dealings with Mao during the Great Revolution, but prior to his arrival in Jiangxi, his knowledge of the soviet area was based entirely on scattered reports that he had read in Central Committee organs in Shanghai as well as descriptions by Zhou Enlai. In terms of character, Xiang Ying was straight and candid, a very different person from Mao, and upon learning the full details of the Futian Incident, he was unable to hide his displeasure with Mao. At the same time, Xiang was an old Party member, and he knew very well how much Mao had contributed to the Party and the Red Army since 1927 as well as the decisive role and status that Mao enjoyed in the soviet area. As a new arrival, Xiang knew he could not get away with openly criticizing Mao, so he took great pains in his assessment and handling of the Futian Incident both to defend Mao’s reputation and to resolutely curb and correct Mao’s errors. Even so, as Xiang became increasingly familiar with the situation in the Jiangxi Soviet Area, his original assessment of the Futian Incident changed and his criticism of Mao gradually intensified.

On February 4, 1931, Xiang Ying, in the name of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area, sent a letter summoning “West Route Comrades” Wang Huai and Cong Yunzhong, a representative of each Party committee, and other relevant parties (such as Chen Zhengren of the Red Army School, and so forth) to the Central Bureau for “a discussion to reach a final resolution on all matters.” In this letter, Xiang explicitly stated that it was wrong to view the “Second Plenum” as a meeting of the “AB League,” a clear departure from Mao’s position.⁴¹ Xiang’s letter showed that he was prepared to deal with the aftermath of the Futian Incident. On February 19, 1931, the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area issued its Notice No. 11, which corrected the views expressed in the January 16 “Resolution” that regarded the Futian Incident as an “anti-Party counterrevolutionary” action led by Duan Liangbi et al.:

Based on the history of the Southwest Jiangxi Party’s struggle and the Party’s organizational foundation as well as the objective operational facts of the Futian Incident, the Central Bureau cannot

reach a subjective conclusion affirming that the Futian Incident was an insurrection by AB League liquidationists, nor does it have facts proving that all of the people leading the Futian Incident were AB League liquidationists or that they consciously and openly formed a United Front with the AB League to oppose the Party and oppose the revolution. This analysis and decision utilizes Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism and is as correct as steel.⁴²

The notice announced that Li Shaojiu, Duan Liangbi, and three others would be stripped of their Party membership. As for the others, as long as they “testify that they did not join the reactionary organization [the AB League], acknowledge their errors in participating in the Futian Incident, and thoroughly submit to the Party’s decision, they shall be allowed to return once again under the leadership of the Party.”

Beginning from February 19, Xiang Ying’s main efforts were focused on securing the return of the Twentieth Army to the east side of the Gan River. Feeling pressure from Xiang and, additionally, as the person at the center of the incident, Mao lay low for a time, forced to wait and see how things developed. He devoted himself body and soul to directing the battle against the encircling Nationalist troops.

Xiang first secured the return of the political commissar of the Twentieth Army, Zeng Bingchun, who had gone into hiding in his home village during the Futian Incident, and then put him in charge of persuading and mobilizing Twentieth Army personnel. He also delivered instructions from the Central Bureau notifying the head of the Western Jiangxi Special Committee and the leaders who had taken part in the incident to return to the soviet area for a meeting with the Central Bureau, and he sent cadres to Yongyang to disband the Jiangxi Provincial Action Committee that had been established by Xie Hanchang and the others.

Whether or not to attend the meeting of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area was a crucial issue in terms of the personal safety of those who had led the insurrection. At this point, Xiang Ying’s personal integrity played a decisive role. According to Zeng Shan’s recollections, Xie Hanchang and the others placed great hope in Xiang Ying and “reckoned that Comrade Xiang Ying supported them.” Harboring such a hope, in April 1931 the main leaders of the Futian Incident, Xie Hanchang, Liu Di, and Li Baifang, as well as the secretary of the West Route Action Committee, Wang Huai, complied with the instructions of Xiang Ying and

the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area and returned to Huangpi, Ningdu County, to attend the Central Bureau meeting and to “acknowledge their errors to the Party and to request education from the Party.” Only Duan Liangbi, who had gone to Shanghai to report on the incident to the CCP Central Committee, was not present. Officers and men of the Twentieth Red Army similarly obeyed the Central Bureau directive to “strive to annihilate the armed forces of the landlords in Taihe and the Gujiang Northern Route, and to retake the masses who had been forced to defect.” But neither they nor Xiang Ying anticipated the fate that awaited them: The CCP Central Committee vetoed Xiang Ying’s assessment and handling of the Futian Incident, and Xie Hanchang, Liu Di, Li Baifang, and many of the Party cadres of the Twentieth Army and southwest Jiangxi ended up being executed.

3. The Resurgence of the Campaign to Eliminate the AB League: The Central Committee Delegation Denounces Xiang Ying and Supports Mao

According to currently available documents, the CCP Central Committee delivered its first response to the Futian Incident on February 13, 1931.

The period from November 1930 to January 1931 was a special one in the history of the CCP: the Central Committee in Shanghai was embroiled in an intense internal struggle over the issue of “correcting the errors of the Lisan Line.” Returning from their studies at Moscow’s Sun Yat-sen University, Chen Shaoyu (Wang Ming), Qin Bangxian (Bo Gu), and Wang Jiaxiang, whose status in the Party had been relatively low in the past, called for an urgent meeting to reorganize the Central Committee, which, with Zhou Enlai and Qu Qiubai as its core members, had, in their view, “committed errors of conciliationism” in the struggle with the “Lisan Line.” However, the “Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee Faction” and the “All-China Federation of Trade Unions Faction,” led respectively by He Mengxiong and Luo Zhanglong, which had liaised with Chen Shaoyu et al. in opposing the current Central Committee, made an about-face and opposed Chen’s call to convene the Fourth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee. These factional disputes brought the Central Committee to the brink of a split. Finally, however, under the personal direction of Comintern representative Pavel Mif (Mikhail Alexandrovich Fortus), who had secretly arrived in Shanghai in mid-December, the Central Committee convened an enlarged Fourth Plenum on January 7, 1931, to enforce Party

unity. The meeting held a re-election for members of the Politburo, which Chen Shaoyu joined with Mif's support, and the Standing Committee of the Central Committee, comprised of Zhou Enlai, Xiang Zhongfa, and Zhang Guotao, retained Xiang as its general secretary, but from then on the Central Committee was effectively controlled by Chen and Zhou. On January 27, the Politburo held a meeting at which it unanimously decided to rescind the Party and Central Committee membership of Luo Zhanglong. This was the beginning of what came to be known in Party history as the "period of dominance by the Wang Ming Left Deviation Line." Following this meeting, the intra-Party disputes came to an end and the work of the Politburo was back on track.

Having resolved the crisis of a Party split, the first order of business for the newly-established Politburo was to discuss the Futian Incident.

On February 13, 1931, the Central Committee convened a Politburo meeting, at which the Futian Incident was the main topic of discussion. At this point, certain questions remain: How did the Central Committee learn about the Futian Incident? In January and February 1931 telecommunication links had not yet been established between the Central Committee in Shanghai and the Jiangxi Soviet Area, and it was not until autumn that the Central Committee was able to communicate with the Jiangxi Soviet via Hong Kong. Documents show that following the Futian Incident, the Politburo required that Mao report on what happened;⁴³ did Mao respond to that request? Following the Futian Incident, Mao did write a "Letter of the General Front Line Committee in Response to Accusations." Was this letter written for the Central Committee in Shanghai? According to authoritative documents that came to light in the late 1980s, Yi Ershi (Liu Zuofu), the Central Funding Committee member who had been detained during the Futian Incident, was subsequently released by Duan Liangbi, and after collecting some 50 kilos of gold, he hurried back to Shanghai to report to the Central Committee. Other documents reveal that from February to March 1931 Duan Liangbi and two others from the Jiangxi Provincial Youth League Committee went to Shanghai to report on the Futian Incident and they were received by Bo Gu, who then reported to the Standing Committee of the Central Committee. Bo Gu decided that the oral accounts by people from southwest Jiangxi and the documents that the Central Bureau of the Youth League had received from southwest Jiangxi that accused Mao were generally true.⁴⁴ Although Zhou Enlai did not receive the visitors from

southwest Jiangxi, one question can basically be settled: By February 13, 1931, Zhou and the others already knew about the Futian Incident, and Zhou had decided to take appropriate organizational measures to deal with what he considered to be a serious matter.

Zhou Enlai made two decisions during the February 13 Politburo meeting: first, to immediately send instructions from the Central Committee to Jiangxi to “cease all disputes and unite against the enemy”; and second, to restructure the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area by making Xiang Ying, Ren Bishi, Mao, and Wang Jiaxiang members of its Standing Committee. After this restructuring, Mao’s role as the No. 2 person in the Central Bureau was taken over by Ren Bishi, and Soviet-educated Wang Jiaxiang, who had just joined the Central Committee, became part of the highest leadership organ of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area.⁴⁵

On February 15, the Politburo of the Central Committee convened another meeting, at which it was decided that a committee made up of Zhou Enlai, Ren Bishi, and Wang Jiaxiang would look into the nature of the Futian Incident as well as determine how to handle it. On February 20, the Politburo held a special meeting to discuss the views of the three-man committee, represented by Zhou: “The southwest Jiangxi AB League is a counterrevolutionary organization, but there are always vacillators and unsteadfast elements within the Red Army who objectively can be made use of by the AB League.”⁴⁶

The meeting decided that, based on Zhou’s conclusions, Ren Bishi would draft a letter demanding an end to the disputes in the Jiangxi Soviet Area and calling for all resources to be concentrated against the enemy. A Central Committee delegation would be dispatched to the soviet area with full authority and jurisdiction to deal with the Futian Incident.

On February 23, the Central Committee sent a letter drafted by Ren Bishi to the General Front Line Committee of the First Front Red Army, the Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee, and all special committees and all local Party committees:

The Futian Incident unfortunately occurred just as the enemy was intensifying its attacks on us and as the Red Army and the masses were engaged in an arduous battle with the enemy; in any event, this worked to the advantage of the enemy while crippling us. The Central Committee has made a special decision to immediately dispatch a delegation to the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area and

has commissioned the delegation with full authority to investigate and resolve this matter. Prior to the arrival of the Central Committee delegation, all disputes must immediately cease. From the General Front Line Committee to the Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee, all ad-hoc committees and Red Army Party committees down to every local Party branch must unconditionally submit to the unified leadership under the General Front Line Committee and join in ruthless warfare against the enemy.⁴⁷

This letter, drafted by Ren Bishi on behalf of the Central Committee, overturned two key issues in the original decision of the October 1930 Politburo meeting, dealing a heavy blow to Xiang Ying.

First, the letter repudiated the legitimacy of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area that the Politburo had approved (following the Third Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee) and that had just been set up, and it stripped Xiang Ying of his supreme authority over the Jiangxi Soviet Area.

Second, the letter explicitly stipulated that prior to the arrival of the Central Committee delegation, Mao would enjoy the highest authority over all matters in the Jiangxi Soviet Area. It restored the General Front Line Committee of the First Front Red Army and repudiated the legitimacy of the CMC, which, led by Xiang Ying, had just been established in mid-January. (In fact, on January 30, 1931, the post-Fourth Plenum Politburo had already decided to reorganize a new seven-man CMC, with Zhou Enlai as secretary.)

On March 4, the Politburo Standing Committee decided to organize a Central Committee delegation, consisting of Ren Bishi, Wang Jiaxiang, and Gu Zuolin, to set off immediately for the Jiangxi Soviet Area. As the first high-level delegation sent to Jiangxi following the Fourth Plenum, the direct mission of Ren, Wang, and Gu was to represent the Politburo in the handling of the Futian Incident, and it enjoyed explicit and comprehensive authority. For safety's sake, it was decided that Ren would depart on March 5, followed by Wang on March 7.

Regarding the Comintern's attitude toward the Futian Incident, at present detailed material is still lacking. In spring 1931, the Comintern's resident organ in China was the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai. It was headed by a German, Gerhart Eisler (known in Chinese as Luo Bote), whose status in the Comintern was relatively low, and his views were seldom accepted or taken seriously by the CCP central leadership. As early as spring 1930, differences of opinion between the CCP Central

Committee and the Far Eastern Bureau on the “rich-peasant” issue and other matters had led Zhou Enlai to make a special trip to Moscow to report to the Comintern. Eisler’s status was boosted in the summer and autumn of 1931 after he reported to Moscow on Li Lisan’s attempt to pull the USSR into China’s Civil War and the Far Eastern Bureau began resisting Li Lisan, but Eisler still lacked authority, so the Comintern dispatched Pavel Mif to China on a secret mission to preside over the Fourth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee. According to the relevant documents, following Mif’s arrival in China in December 1930, he spent half a year living incognito in Shanghai, yet to date no material has come to light revealing Mif’s views on the Futian Incident.

Only one or two documents indirectly indicate the Comintern’s attitude toward the Futian Incident. The *Chronology of Zhou Enlai (1898–1949)* reveals that the Central Committee Politburo held a meeting in Shanghai on March 27, 1931, and at that meeting Zhou presented the views of the Comintern’s Far Eastern Bureau. The book discloses no details about these views, but I have reached the conclusion, based on Zhou Enlai’s remarks at the Politburo meeting and on the “Central Committee Politburo Resolution on the Futian Incident” published the following day, that the Far Eastern Bureau held the following general views about the Futian Incident: 1.) The Futian Incident was a counterrevolutionary movement; and 2.) The enemy’s power to carry out internal attacks should not be exaggerated.

I am able to verify this conclusion based on another document. A *Biography of Ren Bishi* reveals that following the Politburo’s February 20, 1931, meeting to discuss the Futian Incident, the Comintern’s Far Eastern Bureau took a view different from that of the Politburo and it disagreed with the hastily approved campaign by the General Front Line Committee against the “AB League.” As a result, the letter Ren Bishi drafted on behalf of the Politburo on February 23 contained no statement to the effect that the General Front Line Committee’s campaign against the AB League was “generally correct.” However, by March 27 the Far Eastern Bureau had changed its view, affirming that the Futian Incident was a “counterrevolutionary insurrection and the leadership of the Front Line Committee was correct,” even requiring that the Politburo issue its decision on the Futian Incident jointly with the Far Eastern Bureau.⁴⁸ This was the “Central Committee Politburo Resolution on the Futian Incident” published the following day.

No document to date directly verifies who drafted the March 28 resolution, but I feel that it was most likely drafted by Zhou Enlai. Zhou Enlai's brief within the Politburo was the soviet area and the Red Army, and beginning in January 1931, when Zhou drafted Notice No. 1 of the Fourth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee, he represented the Central Committee in the drafting of at least seven directives and cables to the Comintern Executive Committee related to the political line and the work of the Party. Without exception, all of the most important documents related to the overall situation were drafted in part or in full by Zhou Enlai. The resolution reflected Zhou's intensely tendentious but also compromising mindset and his executive style, and it matched the spirit of Zhou's remarks when discussing the Futian Incident at the Politburo meeting on February 20. The resolution pointed out: "[The Futian Incident] is essentially and undoubtedly a counterrevolutionary action prepared and executed by class enemies and their organ of struggle, the AB League"; "The resolute line of struggle against the class enemy by the General Front Line Committee under Comrade Zedong's leadership is essentially correct. This kind of resolute line of struggle against enemies of the revolution should be executed at all times." The resolution also stated, "At the same time, there is a danger that overestimating the strength of counterrevolutionary organizations and their deceitful influence among the masses will weaken our staunch faith that we have in the strength of the masses and in the correct line to vanquish the class enemy."⁴⁹ Beginning from February 1931, the Central Committee and Zhou Enlai maintained an unyielding attitude toward the nature of the Futian Incident, and the Central Committee delegation that Ren Bishi led to the soviet area faithfully executed Zhou's policy, without ever guessing that not long thereafter the Central Committee and Zhou would undergo a complete change of heart regarding the Futian Incident. Specific changes to the policy of eliminating counterrevolutionaries and correcting Mao's errors on the issue occurred after Zhou arrived in the soviet area at the end of 1931. By then, thousands of Red Army soldiers and local cadres had already been wrongfully executed.

In mid-April 1931, the Central Committee delegation led by Ren Bishi, Wang Jiaxiang, and Gu Zuolin, bearing the document from the Fourth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee, arrived in southern Jiangxi via western Fujian and met with the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area led by Xiang Ying. On March 18, prior to the arrival of the delegation,

Xiang Ying had convened the first enlarged meeting of the Central Bureau. Xiang had originally called this meeting to reinforce unity and consolidate the authority of his leadership within the soviet area. The main purpose of the meeting was to transmit the Comintern's October 1930 letter, which had just arrived. Specific issues to be discussed included the Futian Incident and "a review of past work with the First and Third Corps of the Red Army." When speaking of the Central Bureau's handling of the Futian Incident, Xiang reiterated: "Using educational methods is correct; we should clearly recognize that not everyone who took part in the Futian Incident was necessarily an AB Clique liquidationist; denying this point is wrong."⁵⁰

Yet Xiang Ying's opinion was immediately overturned once the Central Committee delegation arrived. As soon as Ren, Wang, and Gu took charge, they called another enlarged meeting of the Central Bureau as a "continuation of the first enlarged meeting" to transmit the Fourth Plenum document and the Central Committee's views regarding the Futian Incident. On April 17, in Qingtang of Ningdu County, Ren Bishi convened this meeting, which was attended by Mao, Xiang, and others. The meeting passed the "Resolution Regarding the Futian Incident" drafted by the Central Committee delegation, and further affirmed the "counterrevolutionary" nature of the incident: "The Futian Incident was led by the AB League as a counterrevolutionary insurrection under the banner of the Lisan Line. More precisely, the Futian Incident was a counterrevolutionary rebellion led by the AB League and with the participation of supporters of the Lisan Line."

The resolution criticized the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area for having been established under the "conciliatory line" of the Third Plenum, and it criticized the Central Bureau under Xiang Ying's leadership for "a completely wrong line in resolving the Futian Incident":

[Xiang Ying] never pointed out that the Futian Incident was a counterrevolutionary rebellion led by the AB League, but rather he affirmed that the Futian Incident was not a rebellion by the AB League. This completely obscures the counterrevolutionary nature of the Futian Incident. He also stated that the Futian Incident evolved out of unprincipled factional infighting, and this is an even greater error.

Having overturned Xiang Ying's analysis and handling of the Futian Incident, the Central Committee delegation established close and friendly cooperation with Mao based on their philosophical unanimity. In May 1931, the Central Committee delegation reestablished the General Front Line Committee of the First Front Red Army, with Mao again serving as secretary. Mao became secretary of the Central Bureau in August, and on October 11, 1931, the Central Bureau notified the CCP Central Committee by cable that Mao had formally replaced Xiang Ying as head of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area:

Xiang Ying's resolution on the Futian Incident was completely wrong to treat it as a factional struggle, and he does not have the muscle for leadership. As a result, he has lost his credibility; the Central Bureau has decided to name Mao Zedong as acting secretary and requests the Central Committee's approval.⁵¹

In tandem with the restoration of Mao's leadership was the re-arrest and trial of the main Futian Incident leaders, who had complied with the notification to return to meet with the Central Bureau. An Adjudication Committee led by Zhou Yili (who had established a close relationship with Mao after joining the General Front Line Committee of the First Front Red Army in 1930 as a representative of the Yangtze Bureau) was established under the direct leadership of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area. The Adjudication Committee's first step was to "carry out the execution by a firing squad of Li Di, the leader of the Futian Incident," after which it put Xie Hanchang, Li Baifang, Jin Wanbang, Zhou Mian, Cong Yunzhong, and the others on "public trial" and executed them. Thirty years later, a participant in these "trials," Zeng Shan, recalled:

During the trials, there were no extortions of confessions by torture, and those being tried had complete freedom to speak their views. They did not acknowledge that it was a counterrevolutionary organization, but they affirmed that it opposed the Mao clique.⁵²

Executing the main leaders of the Futian Incident did not mean that the AB League had successfully been eliminated; rather, it signaled an even greater onslaught against the AB League. In July 1931, Political Commissar Zeng Bingchun and Xiao Dapeng, who succeeded Liu Tiechao

as commanding officer, persuaded the Twentieth Red Army to abandon its guerrilla warfare west of the Gan River and to comply with the Central Bureau's decision to return to Yudu County, east of the Gan River in the middle of the soviet area. However, what awaited them was not welcoming cheers and fireworks but rather mass arrests and executions. The Central Bureau ordered the disbandment of the Twentieth Army, detained Commander Xiao Dapeng, Political Commissar Zeng Bingchun, and all cadres to the level of deputy platoon leader, while "rank-and-file soldiers were distributed among the Red Army's Third and Fourth Army Groups." The majority of the detained cadres of the Twentieth Army were "disposed of" (executed) as "AB League liquidationists."

At the local levels, "more than 90 percent of the cadres in the Southwest Jiangxi Region were labeled members of the AB League"; "some were wrongfully disposed of and some were taken into custody or suspended from work."⁵³ Xiang Ying's firm action brought only a four-month hiatus to the campaign that Mao had launched in 1930, and beginning from April 1931 the campaign spread like wildfire, reaching its climax between May and July.

The call to "use a carrot-and-stick approach and hotly pursue and make detailed inquiries," as laid out in the Central Bureau's April 17 "Resolution on the Futian Incident," resulted in an upsurge in the use of torture to extort confessions by alleged members of the AB League. "All AB League cases were uncovered through the oral testimonies of the malefactors. ... Interrogation techniques relied entirely on torture." Regarding the "carrot-and-stick" approach, the so-called "soft" method was "to use language to trick the suspect into confessing. ... The so-called "hard" method usually involved hanging the person by both arms and then flogging him with an oxtail broom. If he still refused to confess, he would be burned with incense sticks or kerosene, and sometimes his hands would be nailed to a table and bamboo strips would be driven under his fingernails. In all counties, no form of torture was out of bounds. There was the so-called explosion torture (in Wantai), striking land mines,* riding the sedan chair, and flying the airplane (in all counties), sitting on the

* TN: According to an online source quoting a Red Army veteran, this torture consisted of binding together a victim's thumbs and then driving a stake between them.

happy chair, toad drinking water, monkey pulling the halter, and inserting a red-hot gun barrel into the anus (Shengli County). ... In Shengli [County], there were some 120 forms of torture. ...”⁵⁴ During the campaign, suspects who succumbed to the torture and gave false testimonies or confessions produced an ever-growing number of “AB League liquidationists.” “Anyone who did not take harsh action against the AB League was considered an associate and faced the possibility of arrest.” The campaign apparatus chased after shadows, “publicly making the absurd statement that it was better to wrongfully kill 100 than to allow one to escape,” so that “everyone felt imperiled and was intimidated into silence, and most of the cadres who were promoted or transferred went unwillingly in tears. ... At the height of the campaign, even two people conversing could be suspected of being members of the AB League.”⁵⁵

Deng Xiaoping, who was in the Central Soviet Area at the time, subsequently commented: “I felt that the methods the General Front Line Committee used against the AB League erred by exceeding organizational bounds. Such methods in fact gave rise to terror within the Party, making comrades afraid to speak out.”⁵⁶

Yet the friendly and cooperative relationship that the Central Committee delegation established with Mao on the basis of the campaign against the AB League lasted only about seven months; once the contradiction between Mao and Xiang Ying was resolved, new contradictions arose between Mao and the Central Committee delegation. Apart from differences on policy points, ambiguity over Mao’s personal authority and the jurisdiction of the delegation exacerbated tensions. In theory, Mao was the supreme leader of the Party, armed forces, and government in the Jiangxi Soviet Area, while the status of the Central Committee delegation was less clear-cut. In terms of authorization by the CCP Central Committee, Ren Bishi should have been the top man in the Jiangxi Soviet Area, but Mao was acting secretary of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area, which made him the most powerful man in the soviet area, whether in terms of his power base or in terms of his theoretical jurisdiction; the Central Committee delegation, for all its authority, held only supervisory status. The resultant contradictions brought an end to the honeymoon period for Mao and the post-Fourth Plenum Central Committee, and beginning in early November 1931 the two sides became embroiled in more than three years of antagonism and conflict.

III. Similarities and Differences between Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong Regarding the Elimination of Counterrevolutionaries in the Soviet Areas

There has long been serious confusion in Party history over the “expansion” of the campaign to eliminate counterrevolutionaries in the soviet areas. The conventional explanation is that Wang Ming and the Wang Ming Line bear full blame for the disastrous campaign and that Mao had absolutely nothing to do with it. Furthermore, Mao has been depicted as a hero in the struggle against Wang Ming’s “Left Deviation” Line against counterrevolutionaries. Yet the historical truth is exactly the opposite: It was Mao who was the originator of the extremist policies and practices against counterrevolutionaries in the soviet areas.

In fact, regarding the issue of eliminating counterrevolutionaries, in principle there were no differences between Mao and the CCP Central Committee—both affirmed the necessity of such campaigns. However, after Zhou Enlai and others gained a deeper understanding of what actually occurred during the campaigns in the soviet areas, the Central Committee began adjusting its policies regarding eliminating counterrevolutionaries and adopted a series of rectification measures. At the same time, the initial doubts about Mao’s monopoly of power gradually increased and the Central Committee bolstered its vigilance, while resolutely ending the mass physical annihilation that was taking place within the revolutionary camp.

After the Central Committee delegation led by Ren Bishi set off for Jiangxi in March 1931, the Central Committee continued to emphasize the “counterrevolutionary nature” of the Futian Incident, while also forestalling what it referred to as a “radicalization” of the campaign against counterrevolutionaries. By the time the Central Committee inspector, Ouyang Qin, who had accompanied Ren Bishi et al. to the Jiangxi Soviet Area, returned to Shanghai in the latter half of July 1931, he had completely accepted the view that the soviet areas were infested with members of the “AB League” and he reported to Zhou Enlai accordingly. After hearing Ouyang’s report, on August 30, 1931 Zhou drafted the “CCP Central Committee Letter of Instruction to the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area and the General Front Line Committee of the Red Army,” which affirmed that the soviet area’s “anti-AB League struggle is absolutely correct and necessary,” but it also criticized errors

of “simplification” and “expansion” in the struggle. The letter stressed: “Not every local-landlord remnant or rich-peasant element is necessarily a member of the AB League. ... Not every one of the Party’s executors or supporters of erroneous lines, or every backward peasant, or every member of the Party or masses who has committed erroneous deviations or actions is necessarily a member of the AB League.”⁵⁷

During the Yan’an Rectification Movement, this letter, with Zhou’s name removed, was harshly criticized as a representative work of the Wang Ming Line; such criticism continued even into the mid-1980s.⁵⁸

The reason why Mao could never forget this letter was that it played an important role in guiding the first Party congress in the soviet area (also known as the Gannan or South Jiangxi Conference). Ren Bishi and others used the spirit of this letter’s correction of the “rich-peasant line” as the basis for indirect criticism of Mao.

As the leader of the Central Committee delegation, Ren Bishi communicated the gist of Zhou Enlai’s letter at the Gannan Conference. However, because Ren had become deeply embroiled in the campaign to eliminate the AB League, he focused on a thorough discussion of land policies rather than on efforts against counterrevolutionaries. Both the “Political Resolution” of the Gannan Conference and the Central Bureau’s December 5, 1931 directive to all levels of the Party organization communicated the CCP Central Committee’s criticism of the “expansion” of the campaign to eliminate counterrevolutionaries in the soviet area and also put forward the slogan “Resolutely oppose the extremely pernicious and extremely erroneous ‘counterrevolutionary-centrism’”; even so, indiscriminate attacks and slaughter in the soviet areas were not effectively stemmed.

The mass campaign against counterrevolutionaries did not actually end until Zhou Enlai went to the Jiangxi Soviet Area in late 1931. Because the campaign was inextricably connected to the CCP Central Committee’s line against “Right Deviation” and to internal power struggles in the soviet area, Zhou was obliged to act with great circumspection, avoiding direct confrontation with Mao while also significantly bolstering the authority of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area. Only in this way was Zhou able to extricate the soviet area from the immense terror of the campaigns to eliminate counterrevolutionaries.

Zhou gained an understanding of the disastrous consequences of the campaigns as he traveled from western Fujian to southern Jiangxi in mid-December 1931. At that time, western Fujian was carrying out a campaign

to “eliminate the Socialist Democratic Party (SDP)” on a formidable scale, equal to that of Jiangxi’s campaign against the “AB League.” The brutality of this campaign and the enormous destruction it inflicted on the West Fujian Soviet Area spurred Zhou to take urgent measures to halt the campaigns against counterrevolutionaries in the soviet area.

The campaign to “eliminate the SDP” in western Fujian began in early 1931 and rapidly reached a climax in March. In terms of scale, method, and brutality, the campaign was almost indistinguishable from the campaign against the AB League in southern Jiangxi. Over the course of nearly one year, large numbers of Red Army cadres, local leaders, and ordinary soldiers, officers, and civilians were labeled “SDP elements” in a suppression that victimized some 6,352 people.⁵⁹ It caused the director of finance of the West Fujian Soviet Government, Fu Bocui, to leave the Communist Party and mount a military defense on May 27, 1931. It also triggered the “Kengkou Mutiny,” which was similar to the Futian Incident. This campaign against counterrevolutionaries drained the vitality of the West Fujian Soviet Area, and the number of Party members dropped from 8,000 to 5,000.⁶⁰

The CCP Central Committee, CMC secretary Zhou Enlai, Central Committee representative Deng Fa, a western Fujian local leader, Zhang Dingcheng, and Central Committee delegation member Ren Bishi all shouldered different levels of responsibility for the campaign against the SDP in western Fujian.

Under the influence of the Comintern’s line against “Right Deviation,” the CCP Central Committee offered the same initial support to the campaign against the SDP in western Fujian as it did to the campaign against the AB League in Jiangxi. Beginning in August 1931, however, while continuing to affirm the correctness of the campaign, the Central Committee shifted its focus to preventing its “radicalization” and “simplification.”

On April 4, 1931, following revision by Zhou Enlai, a “Central Committee Resolution Regarding Current Work in Fujian” was issued. The resolution called for the Fujian Provincial Party Committee to “carry out comprehensive and thorough transformation of practical operations in accordance with the Comintern line and the resolution of the Central Committee’s Fourth Plenum.”⁶¹ On the same day, based on a report from western Fujian, the Central Committee sent a letter to the Min-Yue-Gan (Fujian-Guangdong-Jiangxi) Special Committee with the following instructions regarding efforts against counterrevolutionaries: “Pervasive White Terror has actively infiltrated the Party organization and the Red

Army for the purpose of sabotage (western Fujian's so-called SDP, Jiangxi's AB League, and other local reorganizationist factions), and from Chiang Kai-shek to Fu Bocui, they have been completely integrated and planned." The letter required all levels of the Party organization to adopt "the harshest measures to suppress" these groups.⁶²

This April 4 letter from the CCP Central Committee fueled the flames of the campaign against counterrevolutionaries in western Fujian. To date, mainland sources have not revealed who drafted this letter. An analysis of related clues suggests that it most likely was Zhou Enlai. As described above, within the Politburo Zhou was in charge of the soviet areas and military matters, and Zhou invariably drafted Central Committee directives touching on issues related to the soviet areas and military matters. This letter to the Special Committee was sent out on the same day as the Central Committee directive revised by Zhou. Also on that same day, Zhou attended a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee to discuss problems in the Xiang-E-Gan (Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi) Border Region Soviet Area. As a leading cadre of the Central Committee, Zhou Enlai bore some responsibility for the "radicalization" and "expansion" of the campaign against counterrevolutionaries in western Fujian.

In the summer of 1931 Zhou's understanding of the campaigns against counterrevolutionaries in the soviet areas underwent an obvious change; while criticizing the "simplification" and "expansion" of the campaign against the AB League, Zhou also raised fairly direct criticism of the problems that had come to light in the campaign against the SDP in western Fujian.

In about mid-September 1931, the letter to the Min-Yue-Gan Soviet Area that Zhou had drafted on August 29 reached western Fujian. While affirming "the existence of the SDP in western Fujian and other localities," the letter also raised a series of questions about the suppression campaign in western Fujian:

Since [SDP elements] have been able to extensively infiltrate our Party, Youth League, and Red Army, why, after repeated unearthing and arrests, are their activities still often discovered within our organization? Why do some deceived masses look on without voluntarily surrendering and why are they even afraid to join the Communist Party? These questions very much deserve our attention, but no satisfactory answers to them can be found in any of your documents.⁶³

Zhou's new attitude toward the suppression of counterrevolutionaries formed the necessary basis for the urgent rectification that he carried out following his arrival in the soviet areas. Yet, at that time, leaders with nimble visions such as Zhou were extremely rare in the soviet areas. The top leader of the Min-Yue-Gan Party, Deng Fa, lacked Zhou's cultivation and vision, and his fanatical approach was a direct cause of the disastrous consequences of the campaign in western Fujian.

Following the Third Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee, in December 1930 the Central Committee sent its newly-elected member, Deng Fa, to Longyan in western Fujian to serve as secretary of the CCP's newly-established Min-Yue-Gan Special Committee. Deng was directly subordinate to the leadership of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area, but since western Fujian was still cut off from southern Jiangxi (it was not until September 1931 that western Fujian could be joined with the Southern Jiangxi Soviet Area into a single unit), Deng effectively held the highest operational authority. After arriving in western Fujian, Deng joined with local cadres Deng Zihui, Zhang Dingcheng, Lin Yizhu, and Luo Shouchun to form a new leadership organ for the Party and the soviet, and he took on full responsibility for operations in the West Fujian Soviet Area.

Deng Fa and Xiang Ying were both sent to the soviet areas to strengthen Party operations following the Third Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee. On his way to southwest Jiangxi, Xiang passed through Longyan where he met with Deng. Upon his arrival in southwest Jiangxi, Xiang immediately concentrated on dealing with the aftermath of the Futian Incident and he did not look into operations in western Fujian.

Deng and Xiang were among the few CCP leaders with genuine proletarian backgrounds and they both had attained a measure of fame during the early history of the Party. Deng had become deeply familiar with the "dictatorship of the masses" as a leader of the worker pickets during the massive labor strikes in Guangdong and Hong Kong in 1925 and 1926. Upon arriving in western Fujian, Deng initially had difficulty becoming accustomed to the "hooligan phenomenon" and "hooligan work styles" that flourished in the rural base areas. When Deng saw Ministry of Culture cadres in the soviet area sleeping with two women at the same time, his instinctive judgment was that the West Fujian Party and soviet organs had been infiltrated by counterrevolutionaries. This was followed, in early January 1931, by an incident at a rally to commemorate Lenin and German Communists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. During

the rally, some officers and men of the Twelfth Red Army (under Luo Binghui as commanding officer and Tan Zhenlin as political commissar), unaware of the difference between the Second and Third International, mistakenly shouted, "Support the Second International" and "Long Live the Socialist Democratic Party!" Without a moment's hesitation, Deng launched a campaign to "eliminate the SDP." Although he had been sent to the soviet area as the Central Committee's representative at the same time as Xiang Ying, Deng lacked Xiang's capacity for careful analysis and discreet judgment of complex matters. His intense personality and fanatical revolutionary temperament resulted in a steady expansion of the campaign against counterrevolutionaries in western Fujian.

The campaign against counterrevolutionaries led by Deng Fa in western Fujian had all the hallmarks of a revolutionary meat grinder, and all alleged SDP members were subjected to torture. The only method for suppressing counterrevolutionaries was execution, and once the machinery of terror was activated, it went into an autopilot frenzy that continued to reach new heights, resulting in the arsonists being incinerated and the killers being butchered.

The curtain rose on the West Fujian Soviet Area's great terror against counterrevolutionaries with the March 2, 1931, execution of Political Commissar Lin Meiting and sixteen others from the 100th Regiment of the Twelfth Red Army. The campaign rapidly engulfed all levels of the Red Army, Party, and Soviet Government as well as the Communist Youth League, Young Pioneers, and Children's Corps. Most local Red Army cadres from the platoon level upward, half of the thirty-five administrators of the West Fujian Soviet Government,⁶⁴ Duan Fenfu, and other leaders of the peasant uprising in western Fujian, and the leaders of Yongding, Longyan, and Hangwu counties were all exterminated. Most of the victims were young people in their twenties; the first victim, Lin Meiting, was only 24 years old at the time of his execution. The victims also included a substantial number of members of the Young Pioneers and Children's Corps, the youngest of whom was only 16 years old.⁶⁵ A wide variety of crimes, including participating in the SDP's "ten dime movement," "smokers' league," "girls' corps," "love-seeking corps," and "mess committee," were all deemed worthy of execution.

Party cadres from landlord and rich-peasant families made up a substantial proportion of the victims. This reflected a common characteristic of the campaigns against counterrevolutionaries in the soviet

areas; Party cadres with such backgrounds were inevitably the first targets of the purges. At the first public trial and execution, held in western Fujian on March 2, 1931, the chairman of the West Fujian Counterrevolutionary-Elimination Committee, Lin Yizhu, explicitly stated the three principles for punishing “SDP members,” the most important of which was that those with bad family backgrounds were to be executed on the grounds that “during the struggle, those from landlord and rich-peasant families will inevitably betray the revolution.”⁶⁶

The unprecedented Red Terror of the campaign against the SDP sent western Fujian’s Party members, cadres, and ordinary people into a blind panic. Many cadres and soldiers were compelled to flee for their lives, with some even crossing the sea to escape death, while even more made their way to Shanghang County’s Gujiao District, which by then was controlled by Fu Bocui.

Fu Bocui was the leader of the 1928 Jiaoyang peasant uprising, and he had served as commander of the Fourth Column of the Fourth Red Army and as minister of finance of the West Fujian Soviet Government. Fu had come under criticism by the West Fujian Party organization because his home region of Gujiao had implemented a system of “communal households,” and when he subsequently refused to attend Party meetings or accept a work transfer, the Party put him on probation in October 1930 for having a “third party viewpoint.” After Deng Fa became secretary of the Min-Yue-Gan Special Committee, he announced the revocation of Fu Bocui’s Party membership in February 1931 and he sent the Red Army to attack Gujiao District, compelling Fu to take up armed resistance against the Party.

On March 6, 1931, the West Fujian Soviet Government issued Notice No. 23, which declared that Fu Bocui was the leader of the West Fujian “SDP” and Gujiao was the “lair of the SDP.” During the Great Terror, Gujiao District under Fu’s control became a refuge for many Red Army cadres and soldiers fleeing arrest and execution.*

* After leaving the Communist Party, Fu Bocui at one point accepted an appointment as head of a KMT public security unit in the Shanghang-Longyan-Liancheng Border Area. After the Central Red Army withdrew from the soviet area in October 1934, Fu gave material assistance to the remnants of the Communist guerrilla forces that continued to fight in Jiangxi, Guangdong, and Fujian. In May 1949, Fu and the 3,000-plus troops under his command pledged allegiance to the Communist government. On May 14, 1985, the Fujian Provincial Party Committee issued a notice rehabilitating Fu Bocui, declaring him a “comrade” and also overturning the wrongful labeling of him as a “leader of the SDP.”

In late spring 1931, the massive Red Terror in western Fujian threatened the Communist Party's social foundation—the jurisdiction of the West Fujian Soviet Government was filled with a tense and eerie insecurity that seriously disrupted social order in the base area. Fu Bocui's armed revolt was followed on May 27 by a little-known incident in CCP history, the "Kengkou Mutiny."

The Kengkou Mutiny and its suppression was virtually a carbon copy of the Futian Incident in southwest Jiangxi.

At the height of the great purge in western Fujian, accusations were made that the Party secretary of Hangwu County's Third District (now the towns of Xikou and Taiba in Shanghang County), He Dengnan, the political commissar of the county's Third Military Brigade, Chen Jinu, and some 200 others were "members of the SDP," and they were detained in Kengkou and Baisha (the location of the county's Soviet Government). On May 27, a group of people led by the commander of the county's Third Military Brigade, Li Zhen, its deputy political commissar, Zhang Chunming, and its deputy commander, Qiu Ziting, abducted the secretary general of the West Fujian Soviet Government, Luo Shouchun, who was on an inspection visit at the time, and they forced him to write a personal order releasing all the detainees. That night, the Third Military Brigade surrounded the Soviet Government Headquarters and released those who had been arrested, while a portion of the troops were dispatched to Baisha under Luo Shouchun's personal order to secure the release and return of all Third Military Brigade personnel who had been detained there.

When news of the Kengkou Mutiny reached the CCP's Min-Yue-Gan Provincial Party Committee (the Special Committee was renamed the Min-Yue-Gan Provincial Party Committee in May 1931), Party Secretary Deng Fa immediately called it a "counterrevolutionary insurrection," and the New Twelfth Red Army was sent to attack Hangwu's Third District. By May 29, most of the troops of the Third Military Brigade had been disarmed and arrested, including those whose release had just been secured two days earlier. On the same day, the Min-Yue-Gan Provincial Party Committee passed a resolution directing that "the arrested SDP members shall be interrogated by various methods to uncover their entire organization and they shall be promptly executed."⁶⁷ Li Zhen, He Dengnan, Qiu Ziting, and the majority of the cadres and soldiers of Third Military Brigade were then executed.

Although the May 29 crackdown was exceedingly severe, it failed

to entirely contain the extreme frustration with the campaign against counterrevolutionaries that pervaded the military and the populace of the West Fujian Soviet Area. Similar revolts occurred in Xi'nan and Hugang of Yongding County, but they were thoroughly suppressed.⁶⁸

As the Party's top official in the West Fujian Soviet Government, Deng Fa should be considered directly and preeminently responsible for the extreme behavior that occurred under his jurisdiction.

The chairman of the West Fujian Soviet Government, Zhang Dingcheng, took a more temperate approach toward the elimination of counterrevolutionaries than the fanatical Deng Fa, but ultimately he submitted to Deng's will.

Zhang Dingcheng was one of the main founders of the western Fujian Party and soviet regime; he was extremely familiar with the revolutionary history and cadre situation in western Fujian, and he was a representative figure among the local cadres. After Deng Fa arrived in western Fujian, Zhang became his deputy, responsible for keeping Deng apprised of the situation among the local cadres, and he should have done his best to protect those cadres during the campaign against counterrevolutionaries. Until today, however, few such examples have come to light; all that has been discovered are notices to eliminate counterrevolutionaries issued under the name of the chairman of the West Fujian Soviet Government, Zhang Dingcheng. Zhang's Ruling No. 1 and No. 2, in particular, brought major harm to western Fujian.

At the beginning of the campaign against counterrevolutionaries, Zhang Dingcheng's proclamations stipulated that the main SDP leaders should be detained and dealt with severely, while ordinary members who gave themselves up and disclosed their activities should be merely confined and cautioned.⁶⁹ The western Fujian government also promulgated "Regulations for the Surrender of Reactionary Political Offenders," which explicitly stated that everyone who gave himself up within half a month, regardless of his rank, would be exempt from punishment. Yet these stipulations were not actually followed, and as power to carry out executions was rapidly delegated downward, such policies and regulations became no more than mere scraps of paper.

On March 18, 1931, the western Fujian government issued Notice No. 25, which amended the stipulation that required petitioning the government for permission to execute prisoners. The notice explicitly declared that "in cases of urgent need," an execution can be carried out

first and then “reported to this government for retroactive authorization.”⁷⁰ This new stipulation resulted in a rapid proliferation of executions, and all levels of the Party organization in the soviet area, including hospitals, were empowered to arrest and execute “SDP elements” at their own discretion. Under the fanatical mood of the time, alleged “SDP elements” were tortured into confessing and implicating others, regardless of the veracity of the allegations, resulting in a horrific “melon vine” process under which even members of the Young Pioneers and the Children’s Corps were often exposed as “SDP members.”

During the year following the March 1931 downward delegation of the executions, the campaign against counterrevolutionaries became the focus of all efforts in western Fujian. The western Fujian government required that within two months all localities were to eliminate SDP members in their midst. Under the push of exhortations from above, all levels of the Party organization regarded massive arrests and speedy executions as signs of revolutionary steadfastness. Even cadres who expressed reservations about the campaign were quickly and rashly executed. Leaders of the Yongding County Party Committee, including Xie Xianqiu, Lu Zhaoxi, and Zeng Mucun, were labeled SDP members and executed for their “hesitant and irresolute attitudes toward the Special Committee’s order to arrest people listed as SDP members.”⁷¹ For the sake of self-preservation, all Party organs launched what amounted to a mass competition to kill SDP members. Once people no longer had qualms about bloodshed, killing one person or one hundred people was much the same. When fanaticism was combined with dread, only the killing of more “SDP members” could restore the cadres’ psychic equilibrium. As a result, the wildfire of the campaign burned ever hotter until it raged out of control and it was not extinguished until Zhou Enlai arrived in western Fujian.

Zhang Dingcheng’s other responsibility for the disastrous campaign in western Fujian was his failure to impose due restraint on Lin Yizhu, who was in charge of the campaign. Lin Yizhu was a local cadre and one of the leaders of the Min-Yue-Gan Special Committee. During the campaign against counterrevolutionaries, he served as head of the West Fujian Government’s exceedingly powerful Adjudication Department, and the mere sound of his name made people blanch with terror. According to one written source, “when handling major cases [Lin Yizhu] completely ignored Zhang Dingcheng, chairman of the West Fujian Soviet Government.”⁷²

There is some truth to this, because Lin was under direct orders from Deng Fa and was infamously power-hungry. But as the senior statesman of the West Fujian Party, Zhang Dingcheng should have had some influence and binding power over a local cadre such as Lin Yizhi. It is manifestly illogical to place the entire blame on Deng Fa and Lin Yizhu for the disastrous consequences of the campaign and to absolve Zhang Dingcheng of all responsibility; Zhang enjoyed a secure and authoritative position throughout the campaign, and at its height many victims harbored hopes that Zhang would impose some kind of restraint on Lin Yizhu.

After receiving Zhou Enlai's August 29 letter criticizing expansion of the campaign against counterrevolutionaries, western Fujian's top leaders quickly demonstrated their ability to rein in Lin Yizhu. Deng Fa and others sold out Lin and the other campaign leaders, sending them to the chopping block; his hands dripping with the blood of innocent people, Lin Yizhu finally reached the end of the campaign's assembly line. On September 29, the West Fujian Soviet Government issued Notice No. 97, which declared that Lin Yizhu was secretary of the SDP Special Committee in western Fujian, and it labeled Luo Shouchun (secretary general of the West Fujian Government), Zhang Danchuan (director of the government's Cultural Department), Xiong Binghua (head of the government's Labor Supervision Department), and six others as core members of the local SDP, and it ordered that all of them be executed.

The position Zhang Dingcheng took regarding the campaign against counterrevolutionaries was probably strongly influenced by the campaign to eliminate the "AB League" in southwest Jiangxi. Although at that time communications had not yet been established between western Fujian and southwestern Jiangxi, the two regions had always maintained close relations, and Zhang Dingcheng had become acquainted with Mao as early as 1929. The main leaders of the Twelfth Red Army launching the campaign against the SDP in West Fujian, Tan Zhenlin and Luo Binghui, had initially been sent there by the Fourth Red Army under Mao's command to support Communist work in West Fujian. When southwest Jiangxi launched its campaign against the AB League, and particularly after the Futian Incident broke out, it was hardly surprising that Zhang Dingcheng's thinking became "overheated."

Ren Bishi also held indirect responsibility for the disastrous campaign in West Fujian. On March 15, 1931, as West Fujian's campaign against counterrevolutionaries approached a climax, the Central Committee

delegation led by Ren Bishi passed through Hugang, Yongding County, on its way to southwest Jiangxi, and Ren communicated the gist of the Fourth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee to Deng Fa, requiring that West Fujian “concentrate its firepower on the campaign against Right Deviation.” West Fujian had always suffered from excessively Leftist tendencies, and the renewed strike against “Right Deviation” could only push it to greater extremes. Ren Bishi held two completely different attitudes toward Deng Fa and toward Xiang Ying on the other; after arriving in southwest Jiangxi, Ren was displeased with Xiang’s passive attitude toward the campaign against counterrevolutionaries and he dismissed Xiang from his position as secretary of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area. Deng Fa, in contrast, retained his position as the top official in West Fujian, which encouraged his already Leftist inclinations and sent him ever farther down the road of extremism.

Whether or not Mao had any connection with the campaign in West Fujian remains a question for further study. Judging from the timing, however, after Xiang Ying entered southwest Jiangxi, Mao was dismissed as secretary of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area and very soon thereafter he led the First Front Red Army into battle against the Nationalist forces in the soviet area, so it would appear that Mao had no opportunity to intervene in the campaign in West Fujian.

On the other hand, the West Fujian campaign against the SDP was an incident that occurred right under the nose of southwest Jiangxi and shook the entire soviet area, and it could not have possibly escaped Mao’s attention. After April 1931, the Central Committee delegation supported Mao against Xiang, and the campaign against the AB League again surged forward. At that time, the West Fujian campaign against the SDP was on the ascent, lending legitimacy to the attack on the AB League. Mao had no reason to oppose the campaign against the SDP that occurred in tandem with the campaign against the AB League.

Mao’s embroilment in the campaign against the AB League in southwest Jiangxi and his negligible involvement in West Fujian’s campaign against the SDP determined the very different attitudes Mao took toward these two incidents.

After September and October 1931, the content of the August 30 Central Committee directive that Zhou Enlai had drafted, including its criticism of the extremism of the campaign against the AB League, reached the Jiangxi Soviet Area, and as he began experiencing a cold-

shoulder from the Central Committee delegation led by Ren Bishi, Mao gradually adjusted his posture in order to shake off any unnecessary blame. In November 1931, while Zhang Dingcheng was in Ruijin for the First National Congress of Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers, he reported to Mao on the elimination of counterrevolutionaries in West Fujian, and Mao instructed him to immediately correct the expansionist errors of the campaign, while also allocating 5,000 silver dollars to cover relief measures.

Following the Zunyi Conference, Mao began chipping away at the power of Deng Fa, who enjoyed a relatively close relationship with Zhou Enlai, and during the Yan'an Rectification Movement, Mao once again attacked Deng by resurrecting criticism of the "expansionism" of West Fujian's campaign against counterrevolutionaries. Regarding West Fujian's campaign against the SDP, in which he had never been directly involved, Mao took the approach of affirming the necessity to eliminate counterrevolutionaries and he attributed the problems to an expansion of the scope of the campaign.

As the person directly responsible for this case, in 1945 Deng Fa explicitly stated: "Looking back on it today, it is difficult to say whether there even was a Socialist Democratic Party in China, much less whether Fu Bocui was a member."⁷³ Yet Mao was unwilling to directly acknowledge that West Fujian's campaign against the SDP was unjust.

In a speech during the Seventh Party Congress on May 31, 1945, Mao said, "The elimination of counterrevolutionaries has followed an extremely painful road. Counterrevolutionaries should be opposed, but the Party, as yet immature, took the wrong path on this issue and committed errors."⁷⁴ While in this instance mentioning the suffering caused by the campaigns to eliminate counterrevolutionaries, Mao did not directly touch on the issue of redress for those unjustly killed in the campaigns against the AB League and the SDP, and in particular he evaded any question of his own responsibility. Even with that, this portion of Mao's speech remained unpublished for a long time.

The main reason that Mao put off redressing the campaign against the SDP was that it was closely related to the campaign against the AB League in southwest Jiangxi. If the alleged SDP members were all rehabilitated, this would inevitably lead to a reversal of the verdicts in the campaign against the AB League and would result in damage to his own prestige.

In accordance with the CCP Central Committee's views on how

to handle problems left over from history, the Fujian Party organization in 1954 rehabilitated 3,728 individuals who had been wrongfully put to death during the campaign to eliminate counterrevolutionaries in West Fujian and posthumously recognized them as martyrs to the revolutionary cause.⁷⁵ Regarding the basic question of whether the West Fujian Soviet Area actually had an “SDP,” however, or whether the campaign against the SDP was warranted, the 1931 conclusion was upheld in its entirety. It was not until 1985, nine years after Mao’s death, that this question was finally resolved. On the basis of many investigations and inquiries, the Fujian Provincial Party Committee concluded that the “Socialist Democratic Party” did not exist in western Fujian, and that the campaign to eliminate the SDP there was not merely a problem of an excessive scope but also an out-and-out miscarriage of justice. In 1985, alleged “SDP leader” Fu Bocui was rehabilitated.

Likewise, it was not until the 1980s, and with Mao’s historical responsibility expunged, that clarity was brought to bear on the campaign to eliminate the AB League in southwest Jiangxi.

Without a doubt, Zhou Enlai should shoulder part of the leadership’s blame for the serious consequences of the campaigns against counterrevolutionaries in the soviet areas. However, Zhou’s attitude toward the issue was markedly different from Mao’s.

There are many indications that Zhou’s support of the campaigns arose from his adherence to the Comintern’s rationale of “opposing Right Deviation” rather than from any personal motivation. Mao’s actions, in contrast, strongly suggest that he was using the campaigns to eliminate dissenters.

It was because Zhou was acting on principle that he hurriedly issued the Central Committee directive before he gained a thorough understanding of southwest Jiangxi’s campaign against the AB League and the Futian Incident, and thereby he unintentionally supported the Leftist error that had been spreading in the soviet area. Mao, however, initiated the extremist campaign against counterrevolutionaries; Zhou supported it only after Mao launched the campaign.

Although Zhou shifted his emphasis to correcting expansion of the campaign to eliminate counterrevolutionaries in August 1931, it took him nearly three months to put the brakes on the out-of-control campaign apparatus following his entry to the Central Soviet Area in December 1931. Mao, in contrast, took little such action. It was because the problems

caused by the campaigns against counterrevolutionaries in the soviet area were widespread and also involved sensitive issues of errors within the leadership that Zhou cautiously demonstrated his resolve to correct the issues while working for compromises that would preserve Party unity.

On December 18, 1931, while en route from Yongding to Changting after having personally observed the disastrous consequences of the campaign against counterrevolutionaries in West Fujian, Zhou Enlai wrote a letter to the CCP Central Committee requesting an immediate and forceful decision to end the malignant campaign.

Zhou wrote, "After only three days merely passing through the soviet area, I have witnessed the very serious consequences of West Fujian's handling of the SDP. ... The problem is very serious at present, and change is extremely difficult." Zhou wrote that he was determined to "fight this serious problem."⁷⁶

On January 7, 1932, Zhou presided over his first meeting as secretary of the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area. The meeting passed a "Resolution Regarding Work on the Problem of the Campaigns to Eliminate Counterrevolutionaries in the Soviet Areas," which harshly criticized misuse of the criminal law during the "period of the Front Line Committee's leadership" to commit the serious error of "killing people like child's play" in the "elimination of the AB League," and emphasized the need to correct "line errors in the work of eliminating counterrevolutionaries."⁷⁷

After receiving Zhou Enlai's letter, the Central Committee in Shanghai sent a letter of instructions to the Min-Yue-Gan Provincial Party Committee on January 21, 1932, expressing the same views as Zhou on the campaign against counterrevolutionaries, and it ordered that the provincial Party committee under Deng Fa's leadership immediately carry out an investigation into the "unforgivable" errors committed during the campaign. On February 29, the Central Bureau of the Soviet Area sent a letter to the Min-Yue-Gan Provincial Party Committee and the forthcoming provincial Party congress, again criticizing the "serious errors" committed during "efforts to eliminate counterrevolutionaries" in West Fujian. At the beginning of March, Zhou Enlai sent Ren Bishi to Changting as the Central Bureau's representative to direct the Second Congress of the Min-Yue-Gan Provincial Party Committee, and he sent Li Kenong to be specifically responsible for redressing the injustices perpetrated in southwest Jiangxi, west Fujian, and in the First Front Red Army. It was due to Zhou Enlai's painstaking efforts that the massive campaigns to eliminate