

# Chinese Republic In Fujian

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Chen Mingshu, during the self-imposed exile in Japan around 1930-1931, had shifted his interest to politics after befriending people of obscure origins. In Shanghai, Chen Mingshu empowered Wang Lixi,<sup>1</sup> former KMT peasant department director who had operated the peasant movement institute together with Mao Tse-tung and Li Hanjun in 1926, with running the “Light of the Devine Nation” Society as editor-in-chief. Through Weng Zhaoyuan and Huang Qiang, former officers under KMT rebel Chen Jiongming [who was elected premier of the Chinese Public Interest Party by overseas Chinese secret societies in 1925], Chen Mingshu connected with the ‘stateism’ activist Chen Lianbo in HK,<sup>2</sup> and absorbed Weng Zhaoyuan and Huang Qiang into the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army. Having nominally returned to the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army’s command for laying siege of the Red Army in Jiangxi, Chen Mingshu secretly reached a triangular agreement with Third Party leader Deng Yanda and civil rights league director Yang Xingfo for an ‘uprising’ against the central government, while commander Cai Tingkai in summer 1932 participated in the Third Siege Campaign and incurred a casualty of 3000 troops during a three-day and two-night battle with the Red Army in Xingguo of Jiangxi Province. During the 28 January 1932 Battle of Shanghai against Japanese aggression, a fight advocated by Weng Zhaoyuan’s 156<sup>th</sup> Brigade with 200 members of the Chinese Youth Party, 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army, in close cooperation with Wang Yaqiao, recruited hatchet gang leader’s followers, assassins and former officers who engaged in multiple rampage and assassinations against Chiang Kai-shek from 1928 onward.

Before taking off for the overseas trip at the turn of 1932-1933, Chen Mingshu met with undercover communist Mei Gongbin in Shanghai to discuss about his mutiny plans. Mei Gongbin, after release by the Japanese Special Higher Police in December 1930, got acquainted in Tokyo with Hu Qiuyuan and Wang Lixi, members of Chen Mingshu’s “Light of the Devine Nation” Society, and hence entered Chen Mingshu’s inner circle. During the winter break in early 1933, Mei Gongbin, under communist *sanctification*, went to Zhangzhou of Fujian to host

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Lixi ran a “book-reading magazine” dedicated to the discourse on the Chinese historical societal development and nature from 1931 to 1933, and assembled a motley gang of agitators and conspirators, with quite some ill-willed elements embedded inside. Before dying of illness in 1939, Wang Lixi, as a member of British-communist-led Chinese chapter of the anti-imperialism league in London, had participated in the relief activities of the China Campaign Committee organized by Dorothy Woodman, Kingsley Martin, Victor Gollancz, Margery Fry, Lord Listowel et al., which indirectly validated Wang Lixi’s important untold role in the communist revolution.

<sup>2</sup> Chen Lianbo was the former Canton machinist guild head with backing of HK governors Sir Cecil Clementi and Sir William Peel, who had fought against Sun Yat-sen’s collusion with the Russians [[in]] and contributed to the crackdown on the Canton Commune in 1927.

the one-month politics indoctrination class at the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army headquarters. In the summer, Chen Mingshu, after return to Fuzhou of Fujian from Europe, instructed his subordinates, Jiang Guangnai and Cai Tingkai, in making preparations for the military action against the central government. In HK, Chen Mingshu liaised with Li Jishen for rallying the support of Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi's Southwest Faction. Mei Gongbin, after receiving Chen Mingshu's invitation, came to HK where he was introduced to Li Jishen, and emphatically sold the idea of forming an alliance with the Red Army. Li Jishen then sent Zhu Yunshan to Hongkong and Shanghai for contacting CCP Central. After Zhu Yunshan failed to locate communist politburo, Li Jishen and Chen Mingshu dispatched Mei Gongbin to Shanghai. Mei Gongbin, unable to locate Zhang Qingfu the former lead at the communist special action division, met with Hu E'gong instead. However, Hu E'gong, one of the few communist aces with special direct report authorities, was arrested by the government shortly afterward, and left Mei Gongbin in limbo. Later in the year, Mei Gongbin, who was teaching at Jihnan University and Shanghai Business School, severed relationship with CC Clique contacts and quit the jobs for Fujian after learning that Chen Gongpei, the Paris communist group organizer who was deported back to China for occupying the Institut Franco-Chinois de Lyon [[in early 1920s]], had been dispatched to the Jiangxi Soviet for collaboration talks between the Red Army and 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army.<sup>3</sup>

During Chen Mingshu's temporary stay in Zhangzhou of Fujian Province, Cai Tingkai was instructed to make preparations for the military action against the central government. Cai Tingkai, in face of the Red Army continuously harassing Yanping, took the matter into his own hands after receiving no satisfactory feedback from Chen Mingshu in regards to Mei Gongbin's contacts with CCP Central. In mid-September, Chen Gongpei, who was sent over from Hong Kong for discussions on the matter of contacting the Red Army, went on a long-distance trek for the Soviet enclave and crossed the frontline at Yanping to have a meeting with Red Army general Peng Dehuai. Upon news of contact with the Red Army, Chen Mingshu flew over from Hong Kong again and instructed a new visit to the Soviet enclave. In early October, Chen Gongpei crossed the front with Third Party member Xu Minghong and Comintern agent Chen Xiaohan (Luo Jinan), with the former nominally acting as 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army chief secretary since 1932 and the latter working as Cai Tingkai as 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army spokesman and personal secretary since 1931.<sup>4</sup> On October 26<sup>th</sup>, three undercover, former or fellow communists stamped a non-aggression, demarcation and transportation eleven-clause preliminary agreement with the Red Army on behalf of the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army. In November, in reciprocity, The Chinese Soviet Republic, dispatched to Fuzhou political [diplomatic] representative Pan Hannian, secretary Huang Huoqing, and consecutively military representative Zhang Yunyi In late November, Zhang Yunyi and Chen Xiaohan signed a commercial barter agreement stipulating the supplies

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<sup>3</sup> Hu Qiuyuan, Chen Gongpei, who declared severance from CCP after Aug 1st Nanchang Uprising, would act as the secret emissary for the claim that Peng Dehuai was Chen Gongpei's Hunan provincial native.

<sup>4</sup> Xu Minghong, a student of Liang Suming [[]], was political department director for 10<sup>th</sup> Division of 4<sup>th</sup> Corps during the 1926 Northern Expedition, joined communist party in April 1927, and lost touch with CCP in the aftermath of the August 1927 Nanchang Mutiny. Chen Kun, son of Luo Jinan (Chen Xiaohan), disclosed that Chu Zehan, the brother of Chu Tunan (another Comintern agent recruited together with Chen Shaohan by Li Dazhao in Peking in 1920s), had confirmed in 2003 that Luo Jinan's work in Fujian republic was part of the Third Comintern design.

of salt, cloth, medicine and equipment in exchange for tungsten ore to be supplied by Mao Zemin's Soviet tungsten ore Company. CCP Jiangxi Soviet, having noticed the newly-built Fujian airforce, dispatched Soviet Bank's Fujian branch manager Lai Zulie to Fujian for purchasing planes with hundreds of ounces of gold as well as ordered the pavement of airfields across the Jiangxi Soviet.

Early in the year, Manfred Stern (known as Kléber in the Spanish Civil War), who arrived in Shanghai in spring 1933, ordered the Chinese Red Army to pave a way to the southeastern coast so that the Soviet transport ships could bring over arms and ammunition.<sup>5</sup> With Russian endorsement, Red Army mounted a second eastern expedition into Fujian by withdrawing Red Army units from the linkage area between Jiangxi Soviet and the Fujian enclave. When Chen Mingshu and Li Jishen launched the Fujian mutiny in late November, Otto Braun and Manfred Stern, having received the new Moscow instructions against social democrats around the world, were in debate over rendering assistance to the Fujian mutiny. Superficially, back in January 1933, Chinese Soviet Republic declared that it was willing to forge anti-Japanese battle agreement with any army willing to undertake three measures of i) ceasing to attack the Soviet enclave, ii) safeguarding people's democratic rights and iii) arming the populace. Secretly, in June 1933, Chinese communists disclosed to the Russians that they had absolutely no trust in bourgeoisie generals such as Cai Tingkai. When Chen Mingshu and Li Jishen launched the Fujian mutiny in late November, Otto Braun instructed that the Red Army should not render assistance to the Fujian rebels who were more deceiving than real enemies. In Shanghai, Mme Sun Yat-sen, who just convened an anti-war and defend-USSR Far East congress in early autumn, continued the Comintern anti-social-democrat line by denouncing the Fujian mutiny. Chinese communists, under new Moscow order, denounced the Fujian republic as a scam by Productive People's Party, Social Democratic Party, Third Party, and Chen Duxiu's Trotskyite Revocationists.

Chen Mingshu, *notwithstanding* Li Jishen's brokering, failed to rally the support of southern and southwestern military blocks such as Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi's Guangxi Faction<sup>6</sup> and Chen Jitang's Cantonese Faction. Initially, Chen Mingshu requested assistance from Li Jishen who in turn asked his brother Li Jiwen to petition with senior KMT leader Hu Hanmin for forging Guangxi-Guangdong-Fujian trilateral alliance. Hu Hanmin dispatched Xiao Focheng as a personal emissary for a persuasion with Chen Jitang. However, Both Chen Mingshu and Li Jishen were at odds with Guangdong provincial chairman Chen Jitang over control of the province.<sup>7</sup> Li Jishen, unhappy with the new posts as office director and standing commissar of

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<sup>5</sup> Otto Braun, shielding Manfred Stern from other Comintern agents on one hand, often provided military advice to the Comintern FEB and CCP Central. During the government siege of the Jiangxi Soviet, Braun proposed that the Red Army made a strike to the northeastern direction for linking up with Fang Zhimin's Red Army in Jiangxi-Fujian border area. In refuting Braun's objection, Stern even suggested that Soviet Union should consider a secretive flight through the Chinese airspace for airdropping supplies to the Soviet enclave.

<sup>6</sup> Li Zongren at one time flew to HK to dissuade Li Jishen. In late October 1933, Bai Chongxi was one step behind in flying to HK for stopping Li Jishen's trip to Fuzhou. After Hu Hanmin and Chen Jitang denounced the so-called "People's Government" of Fuzhou, Li Zongren joined in with a public wire calling for repentance.

<sup>7</sup> Chen Mingshu and Chen Jitang, division commanders under Li Jishen's NRA 4<sup>th</sup> Corps during the northern expedition time period, had a power struggle over the control of Guangdong, ending in Chen Mingshu's abandoning the provincial chairman post after Chen Jitang played a trick in packing up Jiang Guangnai and Cai Tingkai's two divisions for the 1930 Wars of the Central Plains.

the Military Committee, director of the Training and Supervision Board, as well as commissars of KMT Central Executory Committee and KMT Political Council, left Nanking for Shanghai in late 1931 after release from the house arrest. In Shanghai, Li Jishen was invited to be head of Fang Dingying and Xu Qian's "anti-Japan society"<sup>8</sup> and in 1932 expanded it an "anti-Japanese militarymen united society". After failing to recover Guangdong from Chen Jitang's rule, Li Jishen colluded with Chen Mingshu and Fang Dingying in organizing a military committee in Hong Kong under Hu Hanmin's "New KMT Party", for which Li Jishen was expelled from the KMT party a second time on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1933. In early November 1933, Jiang Guangnai returned from Hong Kong to relay Chen Mingshu and Li Jishen's order as to establishing a people's government within the month. Around November 15<sup>th</sup>, Li Jishen's former lieutenants as well as members of the "anti-Japanese militarymen united society", Chen Mingshu's "Devine Nation" members, Third Party members, as well as Feng Yuxiang's representatives converged on Fuzhou. Isolated from Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, Chen Mingshu and Li Jishen utilized radicals from the "Third Party", former KMT Re-organizers, assassination kingpin or undercover communists, such as Xu Qian, Tan Pingshan, Chen Youren, Zhang Bojun, Shen Junru, Wang Yaqiao, Ye Ting and Yu Xingqing [ ] for launching "Fujian People's Revolutionary Government" in Fuzhou.

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1933, Chen Mingshu and Li Jishen officially launched the People's Revolutionary Government, announced a "National People's Congress" and declared the founding of the of the Chinese Republic, with Fujian Province subdivided into four provinces of Minhai, Yanjian, Xingquan and Longjiang and two special municipalities of Fuzhou and Amoy. A new national flag, with a Soviet-style five-pointed yellow star in the background of red at the top half and blue lower half, was devised in place of blue sky and white sun flag. The People's Revolutionary Government called for overthrowing the KMT's central government as well as alliance with the Chinese communists and the Soviet Russia. Li Jishen acted as chairman (president) of the Fujian Republic, Chen Youren assigned the post of foreign minister, Zhang Bojun education minister, director of the land committee and commissar of the economic and cultural committee, and Huang Qixiang "tactician general director" of the "People's Revolutionary Army". Chen Mingshu himself tacked on the director post for the cultural committee, and Mei Gongbin member of the cultural committee as well as director for the departments of mass movement and cadre political indoctrination. Young radical scholar Hu Qiuyuan, a Waseda political economy graduate as well as a self-acclaimed Marxist, assumed the post as "education & propaganda director". 19th Route was renamed to the "People's Revolutionary Army", with Cai Tingkai as commander-in-chief. Yan Lingfeng, a Chinese Trotskyite who was at one time Chen Duxiu's propaganda department minister, later tacked on the post of intelligence department chief at the People's Revolutionary Government. Zuo Shunsheng, the Chinese Youth Party leader, took a small group of followers to Fujian Province. After observing the motley group, Youth Party quietly left the scene. The second day, Pan Hannian, as 'foreign minister' of the Chinese Soviet Republic, signed the "anti-Chiang Kai-shek and anti-Japanese agreement" with the fake Chinese Republic. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, Huang Qixiang, to effect conformity with the newly-created Productive People's Party, announced the dismissal of Deng Yanda's "KMT Provisional Action Committee".

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<sup>8</sup> The "anti-Japan Society" was built on top of Fang Dingying's "society of revolutionary comrades" and Xu Qian's "labor-bourgeois combination group". Among the cadres of the "anti-Japan Society" would be Zhu Yunshan.

19<sup>th</sup> Route Army, to effect a quick victory, launched a three-route attack against the Fujian-Zhejiang border in the attempt of sacking Hangzhou the provincial capital and threatening Nanking the nation's capital. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, KMT convened the 384<sup>th</sup> Political Council meeting and passed a resolution to expel Chen Mingshu, et al., from the party. On 21<sup>st</sup>, Chiang Kai-shek ordered a five-prong attack at Fujian rebels. Dai Li, the SSD director, made a trip to Amoy to personally direct the sabotage work against the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army. After 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army relocated to Fujian Province in late May 1932, the Special Services Department was instructed to penetrate into the middle and lower echelons of the Cantonese Army officer corps. Zheng Jiemin managed to send in several Guangdong and Hainandao natives through personal liaison. Yun Dayi, a native of Wenchang County from Hainandao Island, later instigated 78<sup>th</sup> Division commander Yun Yinglin into a defection to the central government during the Fujian Mutiny. Li Zongren memoirs stated that tactician division chief Fan Renjie secretly telegraphed to Nanking with itineraries of the "People's Revolutionary Army" and that corps chief Mao Weishou clandestinely expressed loyalty to Nanking.

In mid-December, Li Yutang and Li Yannian's divisions, led by Jiang Naiwen, entered Fujian Province from eastern Jiangxi province and went against Yanping from Chongan, Jianou and Jianyang, whereas Wei Lihuang led Song Xilian, Li Moan and Liu Kan's divisions against Yanping from Shaowu and Shunchang. On December 25<sup>th</sup>, Chiang Kai-shek travelled to Pucheng from Hangzhou to see off his troops on the thrust towards Zhenjiang-Fujian border. While Zhang Zhizhong directed Wang Jingjiu and Sun Yuanliang's divisions against Fujian from Xianxialing, Pucheng and Jianou, Tang Enbo, with Leng Xin and Wang Zhonglian's divisions, followed through against Shunchang from northeastern Fujian Province. Communist Red Army yielded the way by vacating the territory of southern Jiangxi Province in lieu of an early mutual aid agreement with the Fujian government. Among Fujian provincial army, gentry-organized forces and armed brigands, 56<sup>th</sup> Division commander Liu Heding declined the offer from the People's Government and accepted the rank of 39<sup>th</sup> Corps chief from the central government; Zhou Zhiqun tacked on the New 11<sup>th</sup> Division commander post and assisted the Central Government in moving against northern Fujian from Shaowu direction; and Lu Xingbang, conferred the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps chief rank by the People's Government, defected to the central government when the Central Army reached Yanping. At Amoy, Japanese, American and British warships roamed the Min-jiang River in the name of protecting their nationals. On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, government planes bombed coastal Zhangzhou. In early January, Chen Qixuan, who was ordered to attack Zhejiang Province, defected to the government side and reorganized his troops as New 10<sup>th</sup> Division at Shouning on Zhenjiang-Fujian border.

Before Mao Weishou and Shen Guanghan's rightside and leftside relief armies arrived at Gutian and Yanping, deputy 5<sup>th</sup> Division commander Chen Renzhi surrendered to Zhang Zhizhong at Gutian, while 6<sup>th</sup> Division commander Situ Fei surrendered to Wei Lihuang at Yanping. On the night of 8<sup>th</sup>, Tan Qixiu's 5<sup>th</sup> Corps was completely routed by Jiang Dingwen's 2<sup>nd</sup> prong at Shuikou. Cai Tingkai, leaving 4<sup>th</sup> Corps chief Zhang Yan as Fuzhou martial law commander,

ordered a retreat of all troops to Quanzhou. After Yanping, Shuikou and Gutian were taken over by government troops, Amoy and Fuzhou followed next. Li Jishen, Chen Mingshu, Jiang Guangnai and Huang Qixiang took off for Hong Kong by plane. Before the gang exited Fuzhou, Japanese Imperial Navy offered to lend assistance to the people's government, for which Fujian republic's foreign minister Chen Youren personally boarded Japanese warships to express gratitude. On 15<sup>th</sup>, Jiang Dingwen's troops entered Fuzhou. When the drivers escaped for their lives, the political and cultural officials of Fuzhou people's government, such as Hu Qiuyuan, were left stranded on the streets of Fuzhou. Japanese Navy officers and consulate officials promptly intervened to take them to a Japanese-owned hotel at the outskirts where Japanese geisha women provided entertainment before the gang boarded Japanese-chartered ships the next day for escapade to Hong Kong. Trotskyite Ye Lingfeng, having failed to escape the scene, was caught by government agents and subsequently joined Dai Li's special services department.

The Fujian marines gave allegiance to the central government by assisting the Central Army in the landing at Amoy; however, at Fuzhou, navy minister Chen Shaokuan acquiesced with Sa Zhenbing and Cai Tingkai in allowing 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army cross Wulongjiang River from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> under the cover of fake shelling to the skies. On January 14<sup>th</sup>, Fang Shengtao and Zhang Zhen, et al., i.e., former provincial officials and generals, returned to Fujian Province as "special military commissioners". One day earlier, Zhang Zhen's lieutenants already entered Zhangpu and Amoy, and began the process of pacifying banditry forces. When Jiang Dingwen's troops landed at Amoy from Fuzhou, garrison commander Huang Qiang surrendered. Cai Tingkai, retreating with his forces, was attacked by Wei Lihuang's troops at Xianyou. On 17<sup>th</sup>, Cai Tingkai arrived at Quanzhou and after discerning the disloyalty of his generals, handed the army to Mao Weishou, dispatched deputy tactician Fan Hanjie to Amoy for reorganization talks, and flew to Longyan to prepare the ground for continuous resistance in cooperation with the Red Army. On 21<sup>st</sup>, Shen Guanghan, Mao Weishou, Ou Shounian and Zhang Yan published a wire declaring a defection to the central government. On 22<sup>nd</sup>, Chen Yi officially assumed the chairmanship for Fujian Province. 19th Route Army (i.e., the "People's Revolutionary Army") was reorganized by Mao Weishou as 7<sup>th</sup> Route Army for the five-province banditry quelling, with mid- and lower-level officers transferred to Nanking and Luoyang's military academies for indoctrination. Among officers for indoctrination would be assassin Sun Fengming who managed to slip away to rejoin Wang Yaqiao's hatchet gang. In early February 1934, Cai Tingkai, who sought shelter with Fu Bocui in western Fujian, handed the remnants, including Zhou Shidi's regiment of 1500 soldiers, to Guangdong Army and left for Hong Kong in lieu of taking Zhang Dingchen's invitation to join the Red Army. Chen Jitang, first reorganizing the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army remnants as 2<sup>nd</sup> Independent Brigade under Guangdong 1<sup>st</sup> Group Army, then disbanded the brigade, and executed Xu Minghong on Nanking's order. Zhou Shidi, a former communist regimental commander who participated in the 1927 Nanchang Mutiny, fled to the Jiangxi Soviet alone.

In January 1934, Pan Hannian fled to HK from Fuzhou. Before returning to Ruijin of Jiangxi and the Soviet enclave, Pan Hannian instructed Mei Gongbin and Chen Zhaoli to stay on to continue anti-Chiang Kai-shek movements in HK. Sanctioned by Li Jishen and Chen Mingshu, Mei Gongbin published the *Populace Daily* and recruited a batch of communists for the editorial work. After Xi'an coup, Mei Gongbin returned to Shanghai to assist Pan Hannian in launching communist "united front" movements, and brokered meetings between Pan Hannian and the leaders of CC Clique such as Wu Kaixian and Pan Gongzhan. After the outbreak of the resistance war, Chen Zhaoli, after working as secretary for New 4<sup>th</sup> Corps Chief Ye Ting as well as N4C Wuhan Office director for a few months, tacked on the job of penetrating into Li Jue's 70<sup>th</sup> Corps for undercover army work.

After the debacle of Fujian republic, Chen Xiaohan, in lieu of fleeing to Europe or Moscow as most of the fugitives did, returned to Shanghai and Tientsin to work in the cultural arena. After linking up with student Yang Shangde, Luo Jinan recommended his brother, Chen Shaohan, for the Russian GRU service. Chen Zhaoli, having fled Fujian Province, continued instigations in HK, Shanghai and Tokyo from January 1934 to November 1937. The undercover communists whom Chen Zhaoli cohorted with would include Mei Gongbin, Peng Zemin, Zhu Tng, Chen Cisheng [[]], and Hu Yungong. Hu Qiuyuan fled to HK where he was arrested and expelled by HK authority. Hu Qiuyuan, together with the son of Chen Mingshu, rode on ship for Britain. During stopovers in Singapore and Malacca, local Chinese went on aboard to give welcome to this young scholar whose "articles on resisting Japanese" earned him a big fame everywhere.<sup>9</sup> After escaping to London in February 1934 in the aftermath of Fujian mutiny debacle, Wang Lixi, under pen name Shelley Wang [implying British poet Percy Bysshe Shelley], engaged in left-wing writer league activities, for which he was called Shelley of the Orient. In August 1935, Wang Lixi, under the recommendation of Xiao San [i.e., Mao Tse-tung's pal since the New Citizen Society of 1918, CCP left-wing writers' resident representative to Moscow's international revolutionary writers' league since 1927, and a member of Soviet Writers' Union], attended the *First* Congress of Soviet Writers that was hosted by Maksim Gorky (Aleksai Peshkov, author of *My Childhood* (1913-14), *In the World* (1916) and *My Universities* (1922)). Wang Lixi, Wang Lixi, as a member of British-communist-led Chinese chapter of the anti-imperialism league in London, had participated in the relief activities of the China Campaign Committee organized by Dorothy Woodman, Kingsley Martin, and Victor Gollancz, which mapped the scheme of Chen Hansheng's 20 million USD money laundering activities under the umbrella of American communists.

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<sup>9</sup> On the way, Hu Qiuyuan observed how Europeans threw coins into the sea to attract Indian boys in diving into the sea. Prior to entry into European ports, Hu Qiuyuan was surprised to see that colonialists threw white suits into the sea. An Italian sailor explained that those Europeans who ruled Asian countries like masters would be ashamed of being identified as colonialist-colonist returnees on European continent.