

# University for Toilers of the East

by Ah Xiang

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In August, in the residence of Dai Jitao at No. 6 Yuyangli Lane, Chen Duxiu launched the Shanghai Socialist Youth Corps, which in the opinion of Yuan Zhenying was one of the two faces of the same organization as the Socialist Alliance, namely, the two sides of the same coin, not an affiliate to the party (i.e., the Socialist Alliance). In communist Zhang Tailei's June 1921 report to the IIIrd Comintern congress, which was abridged for publication in the Young Communist International's newsletters, the official launch date for the Chinese Communist Party was set at August 22nd, 1920. Among the intellectuals of Zhejiang nativity, Shen Xuanlu and his mistress Ding Baolin were most enthusiastic about the organization activities. Dai Jitao, a senior KMT leader who was to the right-of-the-center, soon withdrew as a result of receiving a rebuke from Sun Yat-sen. Shao Lizi, later in August 1926, purportedly withdrew from the communist party with Chen Duxiu and Qu Qiubai's suggestions. In September 1920, the Foreign Language Society (School), i.e., the front organization of the Shanghai Socialist Youth Corps, began operations to recruit youths for preparatory studies before further indoctrination in Moscow. At Chen Duxiu's instigation, Heh Minfan, president of the Chuanshan (stone ship mountain) Academy, launched the Russia Study Society in Hunan, with [姜济寰] Jiang Jihuan as general affairs director, Mao Tse-tung as secretarial director, and Peng Huang as accounting director.

Voitinsky, who continued to liaison with Bai Jianwu, a confidante of North China's militaryman Wu Peifu as well as travelled south to see Chen Chiung-ming in the company of Polevoy, left his wife Kuznetsva to teach Russian at the Foreign Language School in Shanghai. [廖划平], member of the spontaneously-established Sichuan communist party, came to study Russian in the foreign language school before being sent to Moscow.] The framework of recruitment that extended as far as Sichuan in western China was built on the existing networks of the statist Young China Society and the anarchist Europe Work-Study Group, as well as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao's personal network. Liu Shaoqi, a Hunan native who travelled to Peking and Baoding to enroll in the preparatory work-study programs as part of the anarchists' plan for gaining skillsets and accumulating funds, was referred by Heh Minfan, president of the Chuanshan (stone ship mountain) Society, to Shanghai to

study Russian. Further, Heh Minfan, who took charge of the socialist youth corps in Hunan Province, provided affidavit for Liu Shaoqi to be admitted to the youth corps in winter 1920. In the spring of 1921, more than twenty socialist youth members, as the first batch of students from the Shanghai communist group, departed Shanghai on a three-month trip to Moscow after 8 months of studies in the Russian language and Marxist-Leninist theories, posing as tailors, barbers and other manual laborer professions. The Soviets and the Japanese divided the spheres of control at the Iman River, between the two railway stops. The entourage had to evade the Chinese consulate interrogation at Japan-controlled Vladivostok before boarding the train for Soviet-controlled Khabarovsk. The destination was the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or KUTV due to be officially opened in Moscow on October 21, 1921. Later in late 1921, Liu Shaoqi et al., who were officially members of the youth corps, converted to the communist party membership at KUTV, where a Chinese party branch headquarters was set up. From 1921 to 1930, nearly 1400 Chinese from mainland China and from Europe were sent to the Soviet Union for indoctrination, with hundreds among them further selected for military courses and the Soviet OGPU trainings at the Soviet Red Army College and Lenin School, respectively.

In Paris, on December 2, 1923, Zeng Qi officially launched a new revolutionary party, the Chinese Youth Party, to compete with the communists. Violent between the Youth Party and Communist Party, and threat of death against and murder of anti-communist people by the communists, continued in France till Zhou Enlai called for a truce and a three-party alliance in late May of 1924. After signing the truce agreement in June with the Youth Party which developed to about 120-130 people by then, Zhou Enlai left France in observance with the Soviet orders to move members to Moscow for training and to return to China for the KMT-CCP collaboration. From 1923 to September 1924, communists in Europe transferred three batches to Moscow for studies at The Communist University of the Toilers of the East or KUTV, including Zhao Shiyan, Wang Ruofei, Liu Bojian, Nie Rongzhen, and Li Fuchun et al.

In Moscow, the Chinese Communists in February 1925 obtained the Soviet approval to transfer 20-30 selected members at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or KUTV, such as Xiong Xiong, Wang Yifei, Nie Rongzhen, Yan Changshuo et al., to the Soviet Red Army College for six-month military training. In August 1925, the Far Eastern Department of the Comintern passed an act to require the CCP to conduct the military work in China. In September 1925, Wang Yifei and about twenty-six cadres were sent back to China, where they convened the 2nd

expanded plenary meeting of the CCP 4th congress in Peking as to launching the military committees in the three hot spots of Peking, Canton, and Henan, with Li Dazhao, Tan Pingshan and Wang Ruofei in charge respectively. In Canton, Borodin and the Chinese Communists expanded the marshal office's armored unit to a 2,000-men communist-exclusive independent regiment headed by Ye Ting, a trainee from the Soviet Red Army College. The marshal office's armored unit, which served as bodyguards for Sun Yat-sen and was purportedly launched at the suggestion of Zhou Enlai, was nominally subordinate to the Cantonese provincial army. Later in the 1926 northern expedition, the armored unit became the communist-exclusive independent regiment.

In Moscow, the Comintern reorganized the 'University for Toilers of the East' into 'Sun Yat-sen University' in honor of the late Sun Yat-sen who passed away on Mar 12th of 1925. [There is an apparent confusion since numerous memoirs pointed out that the 'University for Toilers of the East', aka Orient Univ, was set up for communism activists, while 'Sun Yat-sen University' was set up for enrolling the Chinese Nationalist Party members.] Jiang Jingguo [Chiang Chingguo], the elder son of Chiang Kai-shek, on Oct 19th of 1925, together with about 90 Chinese students, boarded the stinky cattle freight ship for Vladivostok and onward to Moscow to attend 'Sun Yat-sen University'. Per Japanese author Xiaogu Haozhilang's "*Biography of Mr Jiang Jingguo*" (Central Newspaper Publishing House, 1990 edition, Taipei, Taiwan), Jiang Jingguo had shown interests in Bukharin and Trotsky's theories in early years of his stay in Moscow. Jiang Jingguo also enrolled in the Communist Youth League which was under the supervision of the CCP's Moscow Branch. (Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin had opposing views in regards to the war with Germany during WWII. Lenin proposed acceptance of any terms in exchange for peace with Germany, i.e., the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, while Bukharin advocated continuing fighting and Trotsky advocated the 'no war no talk approach'. Trotsky was deprived of the military committee commissar post in 1925, expelled from USSR Soviet Central Committee in Oct 1926, exiled to Alma-Ata in Jan of 1928, expelled from USSR in 1929, deprived of citizenship in 1932, and assassinated in Mexico in 1940. Bukharin, for his antagonism towards Lenin and Stalin, was classified as a rightist and opportunist in 1929 and sentenced to death for treason in 1938. )

By July 1926, the number of members of the Communist Party of China ascended to 57,000 in contrast with 432 members at the CCP 3rd Congress in June 1923, with the communist members in active participation in the KMT's political, military and administrative organs at all levels.

In Moscow, the Seventh Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (Nov 22 to Dec 16, 1926) issued directives for the Chinese Communists to take drastic actions to implement the armed struggle in the villages, penetrating the KMT "governmental apparatus in order to steer it to the Left and carry out a radical agrarian program", and steering the KMT to "become a real people's party", and simultaneously, the 6th plenum of the Executive Committee of the Young Communist International passed similar resolutions, calling on the Chinese Communist Youth League to "expand beyond intellectuals" and "unite urban and rural proletarian youths and enlist all peasant and intellectual youths loyal to the revolution," and instructing those in Canton to come out of hiding to conduct "open activity" and launch "open struggle". From Moscow, the Soviets, In March 1926, selected a batch of Chinese communists from among the third session students at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or KUTV, including Zhu De et al. who were transferred from Europe, and Luo Shiwen et al., who were sent in from China, for a secretive combat military training course lasting for about six months. On December 30, 1926, the Soviet politburo made a decision to expand the military training with the launch of a one-year politico-military training at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or KUTV, with allocation of 1 million ruble funds and a target of training 500 Chinese communists.

In Sichuan Province, the CCP first took initiatives in organizing the Red Army by means of mutinies against the provincial military. On August 26th, 1926, Chen Yi, a communist active in the March 18 demonstration against Duan Qirui's regency in Peking, was introduced to Zhu Yujie (Zhu De) whom General Yang Sen referred to as a Comintern's representative for the apparent reason that Zhu De had returned to China from Moscow, where he just completed the half-year military training at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or KUTV.

In July 1927, in the aftermath of the Comintern's debacle in China, the Soviets, in order to train the Communist Party members for armed rebellion, ordered to select six or seven hundred people for training through the military crash course at the Communists University of the East in Moscow so as to prepare them to be Red Army military cadres for the armed revolution. In 1928, after the end of the military crash course, most of the students came back to join the Chinese Red Army.

In 1928, the Chinese students at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or KUTV were incorporated into the Sun Yat-sen University that was established in 1925. Chinese students in Moscow would be engaged in numerous

ideological struggles, either between the CCP and the KMT or between the so-called Marxists-Leninists and the Trotskyites. In Jan of 1928, Jiang Jingguo renounced the Trotskyite thoughts.<sup>1</sup> In Jan 1928, Jiang Jingguo was exiled to Alma Ata though he severed himself from the Trotsky thoughts which he acquired from his teacher at Sun Yat-sen University [converted from Far East Toilers' University established by Stalin after Sun Yat-sen death on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1925]. Then, Jiang Jingguo was sent to Central Military & Political Research Institute in Leningrad. On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1929, Zhang Xueliang's troops raided the Russian consulate in Harbin, confiscated 3rd Comintern documents, and arrested 39 Russian and Chinese communists. On July 10<sup>th</sup>, the Russian and Chinese communists were expelled from Manchuria. The USSR severed diplomacy on July 18<sup>th</sup>, launched an invasion on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and occupied Suibin, Tongjiang, Lubin and Hailaer by Nov. After graduation in May 1930, Jiang Jingguo was forbidden from return to China again, and was sent to Lenin University [i.e., Sun Yat-sen University]. Using two letters directed for Chiang Kai-shek, the CCP members accused Jiang Jingguo of being a reactionary. Jiang Jingguo was sent to an electricity company at the outskirts of Moscow. As a result of confrontation with Wang Ming [Chen Shaoyu] in Oct 1931, Jiang Jingguo was exiled to a village for hard labor in Nov. In Nov 1932, the Japanese pushed against Jinzhou of Manchuria. The Chinese Soviet nominally declared war on Japan. The USSR and China re-established diplomacy. Wang Ming forced Jiang Jingguo into a relocation to a gold mine in Altai Mountains [Jan 1933] and a heavy machinery plant in Ural Mountains [Sept 1933]. In Dec 1934, Jiang Jingguo declined the Russian coercion in writing a declaration of no return to China. In Jan 1935, Wang Ming called Jiang Jingguo to Moscow again, but for writing a statement about his personal freedom inside the USSR. Sometime in 1935, Jiang Jingguo was married with a Russian woman he got acquainted with in the Urals. Inside China, the CCP invaded Shanxi Province in the name of an "eastern campaign against the Japanese" on Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, 1936, withdrew from Shanxi on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, and issued the May 5<sup>th</sup> Promulgation as well as the Aug 25<sup>th</sup> open letter to the KMT. After Dec 12<sup>th</sup> Xi'an Incident, the USSR released Jiang Jingguo to China.




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<sup>1</sup> Jiang Jingguo made up a decision for himself to attend this university in Moscow. Chen Jieru claimed that she had often played the role of pulling together the father and the son. In early 1925, Jiang Jingguo came to Canton, and took pictures together with Chiang Kai-shek and Chen Jieru as well as his teenager pals [including Wang Jingwei's son and daughter, Zhu Zhixin's daughter etc]. Chen Jieru stated that she had persuaded Chiang Kai-shek into allowing his son go to Moscow with his childhood pals. In Oct of 1925, Jiang Jingguo arrived in Shanghai where he officially joined the KMT as a member, consulted with senior KMT leader Wu Zihui for advice, and on Oct 19<sup>th</sup>, together with about 90 Chinese students, boarded the stinky cattle freight ship for Vladivostok and onward to Moscow by Nov 1925. Jiang Jingguo would serve as 'hostage' for close to 12 years in USSR, enduring various hardships, persecutions and coercions. After graduation in April 1927, Jiang Jingguo was forbidden from return to China.

In the fall of 1930, the Sun Yat-sen University was shut down. The University of the East began to recruit the Chinese students, instead, mainly from Northeast China and North China, for training as the Soviet Red Army G.R.U. agents. In 1937, the University of the East was divided into two separate units, one only for the Soviet and other for only foreign students, that came to be known as Institute of Colonial Issues. By 1938, after Stalin's Great Purge which saw many Chinese and Korean-Japanese communists killed, the Soviets completely closed down the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or KUTV.

## **Ah Xiang**

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