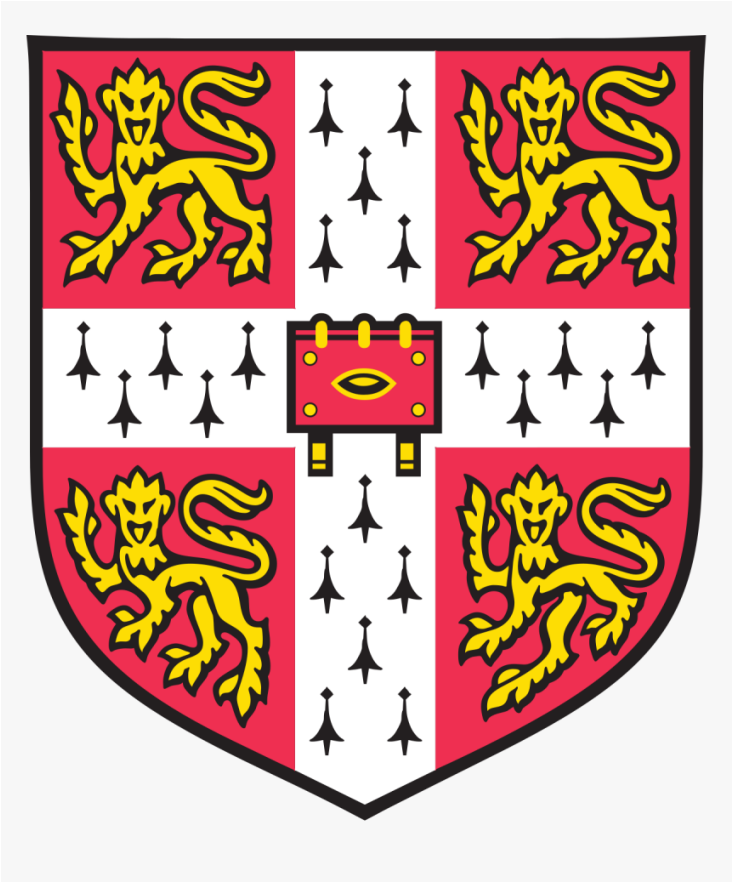
China's Last Warlord:
Gao Gang and The Northeast People's Government (1948-1954)



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10 June 2020

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Yevgen Sautin

Abstract:

China's Last Warlord: Gao Gang and The Northeast People's Government (1948-1954)

This dissertation examines how Manchuria, a vast and strategic border region existing outside the political realm of China proper since the end of the Qing Dynasty, was quickly absorbed and transformed by the Chinese Communists. This process was spearheaded by Gao Gang, the leader of the Northeast People's Government (1948-1954) and who by the Korean War reached his pinnacle of personal power and prestige. Both the Chinese Civil War and the subsequent Korean War turned Manchuria into a vital home front, where counterrevolutionaries had to be dealt with, a functioning war economy stood up, and outside influence attenuated. Gao Gang's and Manchuria's place under the sun did not last long. The 1954 purge of Gao Gang effectively ended Manchuria's special status making political distinctions between the region and intramural China nonexistent.

Second, the dissertation charts the important contribution the Northeast Government made in setting the tenor and limits for Sino-Soviet relations by maintaining firm control over Soviet involvement in Manchuria. Broadly, the dissertation explores the initial limits of centralization of authority by Beijing, and the center's eventual triumph which ended Manchurian localism. Thus, the dissertation engages both with literature on contemporary Chinese history and international Cold War historiography.

Chronologically, the dissertation covers the period from 1948 to 1954. The dissertation is an empirical work that relies heavily on Russian, Taiwanese, and where available Chinese archival sources. The chapters are organized by issue and examine the most significant policy decisions faced by Gao Gang and the Northeast Government: relations with the Soviets, industrial policy, land reform, political suppression campaigns, and the Korean War. An epilogue deals with the purge of Gao Gang and the elimination of the Northeast People's Government.

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Note on Transliteration

For Chinese, I've used *Hanyu pinyin* romanization except where the non-pinyin romanization is more familiar (Chiang Kai-shek) or the person, organization, or geographic location in question has an official transliteration not in pinyin. Thus the still extant political party is spelled Kuomintang and not Guomindang.

For Russian, all the footnotes are done according to the Library of Congress convention. In text, older customary transliterations remain. The name of the great Russian writer of *Brothers Karamazov* is written as Fyodor Dostoevsky and not Fiodor Dostoevskii.

To my parents and my grandparents

Acknowledgements

This dissertation has come a long way from my first awfully scattershot outline submitted in the spring of 2017 for my first year examination. Countless long days in the archives and studying Mandarin, sleepless nights writing and revising have gone in to this manuscript. My personal efforts would not have amounted to much, however, without the enormous amount of support I had for this project.

To begin, I am extremely grateful and lucky to have had such a patient and supportive supervisor as Professor Hans Van de Ven. Whether I was in Cambridge, Taipei, Moscow, or Washington, Hans expected real progress for our bi-weekly chats and was quick to dispense with his cutting wit. He has read every draft version of every chapter and helped resolve many a writer's block, once doing so in a crowded ramen shop on a sweltering hot Taipei summer day. I also managed to survive his first year Reading Qing Documents course, which Hans assured me was nowhere as arduous as what the late Philip Kuhn made him do in the 1980s.

Second, I would like to thank Charles Kraus and the entire Woodrow Wilson Cold War International History family. Before we even knew each other, Chuck shared rare unpublished documents, turned over his own personal library, and made countless suggestions. As I was writing up, Chuck received a compilation of Gao Gang's known speeches and telegrams, which proved to be a gold mine in the truest sense of the phrase.

A work of history is only as strong as its source base, and for that I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Alexander Pantsov and Shen Zhihua. Without an introduction, Dr. Pantsov responded to my call for help to navigate the still very Soviet bureaucracy of Russian archives. Through him, I was introduced to the deputy director of the RGASPI archive, Svetlana Markovna Rosenthal, a remarkable scholar and one of the nicest people I've met. Her involvement along with the encyclopedic knowledge of the legendary now-retired archivist Misha, allowed me to track down new documents in the Molotov Collection and get access to the personal files of Chinese Communist Party members.

In China, I was disappointed that all my applications to work in archives were effectively turned down. Where the archives failed, individuals more than made up for it. The renowned historian Shen Zhihua not only took a chance on a lowly graduate student, he shared his enormous personal collection of sources and books—many of which are unpublished and impossible to find outside of China. Through Shen, I met other Chinese historians without whose knowledge and recommendations this work would have been impossible. I am particularly thankful for Han Gang's patient answers to my at times very basic questions about party history.

My year of fieldwork gave me a chance to meet stellar people in all corners of the world. In Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Centre for China Research did everything possible to make sure my weeklong trip was productive, even bending the rules on making copies. In Beijing, I was honored to meet Lin Yunhui, a former party cadre and China's foremost expert on Gao Gang. Nearly ninety, Lin's personal and professional life has been inextricably tied with China's most searing and painful chapters.

In Taipei, Academia Sinica as well as the National Taiwan University were always a friendly port of call. In a strange quirk of our globalized world, Academia Sinica had a paid and readily accessible subscription to the British Archives' China collection in Kew, but not the Cambridge Library. Professors Chen Liwen and Chen Yung-fa were great discussants as I was in the midst of hunting for sources.

As my research slowly gave way to first attempts at writing, I was greatly aided in the process by the advice given by Barak Kushner, Arne Westad, Joseph Torigian, and Hirata Koji. After reaching out to him on twitter, Professor Brian DeMare shared his then not-yet-published book on land reform. Through a bit of sleuthing, I was able to connect with the retired historian Paul Wingrove who gave me one of only a handful copies of Andrei Ledovsky's book on Gao Gang. Lilong Xu and Joshua Tuppler were kind enough to navigate the non-customer friendly terrain of Chinese online rare book sellers and Peking University's post office to receive various parcels from Kongfuzi books. In similar vein, Yelizaveta Zemlyakova was able to get more personal files from RGASPI that I did not have time to copy myself.

During my third year in Cambridge, I am grateful that my Advisor in the History Faculty, Rachael Leow, gave me the opportunity to teach the Revolutions Module as part of the HAP lectures. Comparing the Chinese and Russian revolutions, as well as supervising undergraduates taking Dr. Van de Ven's courses helped me formulate more cogent arguments and see the bigger picture in my own research. I am also thankful for the kindness and generosity of Yee Wah, the granddaughter of Nationalist China's last Ambassador to the USSR—Fu Bingchiang. Yee Wah prepared not only all of her grandfather's diaries but also calendars and other papers, including calligraphy gifted to Fu by Chiang Kai-shek for his service.

No research can be done without funding. I am eternally thankful for the generosity of the Gates Cambridge Trust for making my studies in the UK possible in the first place, the History Faculty for funding my archival trips to Moscow, Hong Kong, and Mainland China, and the Blakemore Foundation which so generously paid for my language studies and living costs in Taipei during my fieldwork year.

Through the highs and the lows of academic research and writing, I was supported by steadfast friends in two faculties, Selwyn College, the Gates Community, and beyond. I would like to give a particular shout to Charles Lockwood, Richard Wang, Lee Kan, Bill Moriarty, James Char, James Dawson, Susan Geng, Chen Hao, Margaret Comer, Parker Lawson, and Alex Kong. The Selwyn Boat Club proved to be a welcome distraction from work and a chance to be up before 5AM rain or shine.

Long before I even applied to Cambridge, I fell in love with history and had the exceptional fortune to have remarkable teachers and professors. This dissertation would not be possible without their effort, influence, encouragement, and formal instruction. I am particularly indebted to Ingrid Kleespies, Stuart Finkel, Matthew Jacobs, Bruce Cumings, Guy Alitto, and the late Dr. Colburn.

Lastly, but most importantly, I had the constant love, support, and occasional prodding from my parents who fell in love with Cambridge and were disappointed that I chose to spend my fourth year writing up in Washington instead of the tiny hamlet on the river Cam.

"Gao Gang has shown great merit and extraordinary service towards the Red Army in the War of Resistance, everything that our party and our army has is possible due to his efforts. Comrades let's not forget his contributions!"

--Mao Zedong 11 November 1943

"History proves, facts prove, life goes on without you. For instance, there is no Gao Gang and Rao Shushi, is that noteworthy? No it is not. There is no Trotsky, no Zhang Guotao, no Chen Duxiu, and it is ok. They are all bad people. But what about good people? We can do without you too. If there is no you, does the earth stop spinning? Earth continues to spin as usual. Work continues as usual, maybe even better."

--Mao Zedong 21 March 1955



Gao Gang
Source: Gao Gang Personal File, RGASPI

Map of Northeast China



Introduction

On 27 July 1949, as Chinese People's Liberation Army units were advancing through Hunan and Jiangxi towards Guangzhou, the temporary seat of the doomed Nationalist government, more than four thousand miles away a delegation of senior Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members led by Liu Shaoqi were taking part in a full politburo meeting of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party in Moscow.[1] The delegation had been sent to the Soviet Union to secure urgent Soviet aid to help hasten the end of the Chinese Civil War, jumpstart China's economic recovery, and help chart an uncertain path towards peacetime socialism.

After CCP's Vice Chairman Liu Shaoqi finished reading a letter from Mao to Stalin thanking the boss of world communism, a bespectacled, pockmarked man stood up to speak. Displaying visible nervousness and carefully picking a few Russian words before switching to Chinese, the man delivered a gloomy assessment of Communist China's security outlook even as Communist troops were surging southward. Despite the impressive recent battlefield victories of the PLA, U.S. intervention was inevitable, and if the revolution were to succeed, it could only do so with explicit Soviet security guarantees. The man speaking was Gao Gang, the Chairman of the Northeast People's Government and at the time, the most powerful political figure in Manchuria.[2] Gao did not stop at generalities. He called for the incorporation of all of Manchuria into the Soviet Union as the 17th republic and urged the Soviet Navy to establish a permanent base in Qingdao. Only then would the United States be sufficiently deterred from interfering in China's internal affairs.

As tension mounted in the room, it was Stalin's turn to shock the audience. Flashing his occasional sinister smile, he raised a toast to Gao Gang, saying: "To Comrade Zhang Zuolin!" [3]

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[1] Renamed Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1952; from here onwards referred to as CPSU.
[2] Northeast Government during its eight year existence was renamed thrice: 8.1946- 8.1949 Northeast Bureau, 8.1949-1.1953 Northeast People's Government, 1.1953–8.1954 Northeast Executive Committee. From here on, it will be referred to as Northeast Government .
[3] Zhang Zuolin was a Manchurian warlord known for his adventurism, collaboration with Japan, and untimely demise at the hands of his former Japanese patrons who grew tired of his independence and inability (or unwillingness) to check Nationalist gains. The Gao-Stalin-Liu account comes from a Russian sinologist, Yuri Galenovich. See: Galenovich, Y. M. *Stalin i Mao: dva vozhdia*. Moskva: Vostochnaia kniga, 2009. On Zhang Zuolin see McCormack, Gavan. *Chang Tso-Lin in Northeast China, 1911-1928: China, Japan, and the Manchurian Idea*.

In a classic display of Stalinist pique, the Soviet dictator was able to diffuse an awkward situation with serious political ramifications by humiliating one of Moscow's staunchest allies in front of his colleagues and remind everyone—Chinese and Russian—who really was in charge.

The main protagonist of this dissertation, Gao Gang, was born in 1905 in Shaanxi into a peasant family. He attended several local schools where he joined a student movement and met another future local revolutionary and eventual martyr, Liu Zhidan (劉志丹). After briefly working for a Nationalist Party (KMT) county office, Gao joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1926. In the following year he attended a military academy organized by the local warlord, Feng Yuxiang (馮玉祥)—dubbed the "Christian General."[4] This brief stint suggests that Gao was not yet a committed Communist. In the next decade, Gao proved himself as a capable commander of various Communist base areas, a survivor of both KMT suppression campaigns and intense internecine struggles within the party which took the life of Liu Zhidan and nearly killed Xi Zhongxun, Gao's protégé and Xi Jinping's father. According to Gao's account to the Soviets years later, his entire family and native village were eradicated by Nationalist troops during this period.[5] In 1934 Gao's revolutionary career in Shaanxi was almost ended by a rape accusation and charges that he was insubordinate to the party line by ignoring directives, avoiding the enemy, and hiding in mountains. Despite the charges, when Mao arrived in Shaanxi after the Long March in late 1935, he quickly freed Gao and availed himself of Gao's talents. Gao came out of the wartime Yan'an Rectification movement unscathed and in 1945 was sent to

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Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1977 and Sun, Qiming (孫其明). *The King of the Northeast: Zhang Zuolin (東北王張作霖)*. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2010.

[4] The term warlord has been unfairly castigated as orientalist. Arthur Waldron has researched how the term, initially strongly associated with China, is a neologism both in English and Chinese (軍閥). In China the term appeared only in the 1920s and was imported from Japanese literature which in turn was influenced by discourse in Germany. In English, the term's connotations of illegality, small time despotism, and association with loud militaria was influenced by coverage of both early Republican China and Kaiser's Germany. See Waldron, Arthur. 1991. "The Warlord: Twentieth-Century Chinese Understandings of Violence, Militarism, and Imperialism." *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 4: 1073-1100.
The political scientist Kimberly Marten offers a concise definition that I find useful: "individuals who control relatively small pieces of territory using a combination of force and patronage." See Marten, Kimberly. *Warlords: Strong-Arm Brokers in Weak States*. Cornell University Press: 2015, 10. For a critique of the term, see: Stanski, Keith.2009. "`So These Folks Are Aggressive': An Orientalist Reading of `Afghan Warlords'." *Security Dialogue* 40, no. 1: 73–94.

[5] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 64.

Manchuria to help organize what would become the CCP's most important base area during the Chinese Civil War (1945-49).

Many a dissertation begins with a dramatic vignette, either to spark the reader's interest or as a literary device to eloquently convey overarching themes in the work. These carefully selected anecdotes are a testament to the broader power of stories, becoming touchstones for our understanding of otherwise complex or contradictory historical events, ideas, and people. Unfortunately many of these stories are just that, myths. Well known and taken as gospel, it is the thankless job of the historian to not only restore the facts to the best of their ability but also to explain *why* the myth arose and what that tells us about the event, idea, or person in question.

The above episode both helps to illustrate the tremendous power held by Stalin and the Soviet Union in molding the political and geostrategic contours of the new Chinese state and paradoxically also shows the limits of control for national leaders as events rapidly unfolded on the ground. It also clearly paints the portrait of Gao Gang as a free-wheeling warlord who defied Mao and banked on Soviet patronage. For anyone born in China before the 1980s, the Gao Gang from the story would be readily recognizable and comport with the vilification he received after his 1954 purge.[6] Reinforcing the power of this framing, the 2014 biography of Gao Gang published in China alludes to the event, stating that there are "a lot of stories" about Gao's first visit to Moscow.[7]

And yet, there is no archival evidence that this exchange between Gao and Stalin had taken place.[8] The historian Alexander Pantsov believes that this encounter could not have occurred in the stolid, protocol-heavy climate that defined CPSU-CCP party-to-party contacts.[9] Moreover, it is far from given that the nearly seventy year old Stalin could have readily remembered who Zhang Zuolin was. Even more importantly, the careful examination of Gao Gang's record in this dissertation, from his views on land reform and industrialization to how he implemented Chairman Mao's political objectives in Manchuria, all point to a loyal, pragmatic

[6] In the 1950s-60s, Gao Gang's name was routinely crossed out from older publications, his likeness removed from photos and paintings.
[7] Dai, Maolin (戴茂林), and Xiaoguang Zhao (趙曉光). *Gao Gang Biography (高崗傳)*. Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2011, 200.
[8] See Russian archival documents on the visit in Ledovsky, Andrei R. A. Mirovitskaya and V. S. Miasnikov. *Russko-kitaĭskie otnosheniia v XX veke: materialy i dokumenty*. Moscow: "Pamiatniki istoricheskoĭ mysli", 2000.
[9] Interview with Alexander Pantsov. May 2017, Moscow.

political leader. It is highly dubious that the Gao Gang of the actual historical record would have groveled before Stalin in such an excessive fashion and risked Mao's irreconcilable ire.

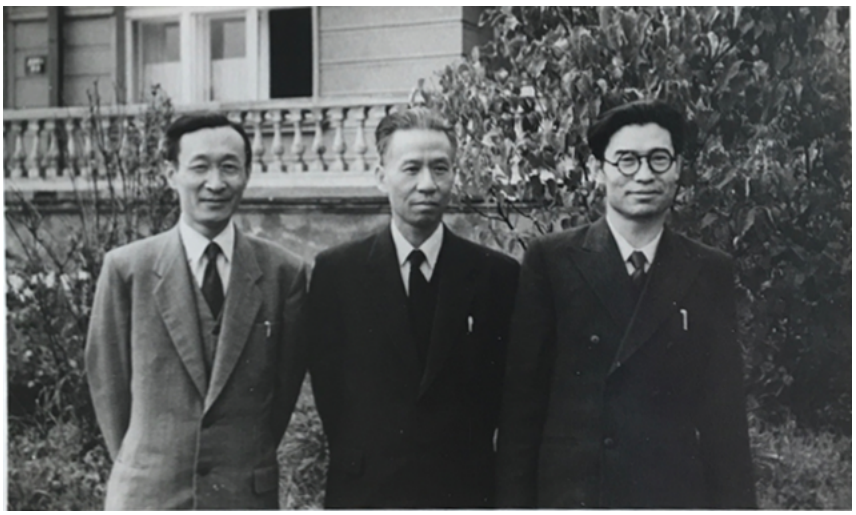


Figure 1: Gao Gang with Liu Shaoqi and Wang Jiaxiang in Moscow July 1949; Gao Gang Personal File

Going back to the alleged incident and why it became such ingrained lore in China, Gao Gang's apocryphal remarks pithily illustrate the problems confronting Mao in the last phase of the Chinese Civil War. After protracted struggles, the rectification campaign to purge the party of hostile factions during the Anti-Japanese War, and efforts to gain personal control over foreign policy matters "big and small" during the Civil War, Mao feared the rise of the same type of autonomous behavior from powerful local leaders that contributed to Chiang Kai-shek's impending defeat.[10]

The overarching narrative of the dissertation is how Manchuria, a vast and strategic border region existing outside the political realm of China proper since the end of the Qing Dynasty was quickly absorbed and transformed by the Chinese Communists. This process was spearheaded by Gao Gang, who by the Korean War reached his pinnacle of personal power and prestige. Both the Chinese Civil War and the subsequent Korean War turned Manchuria into a vital strategic rear area, where counterrevolutionaries had to be dealt with, a functioning war economy stood up, and outside influence attenuated. Despite serving as an experimental laboratory where the CCP learned how to administer and rule a complex economy and society

[10] Mao was particularly concerned when Shenyang's top CCP official, Zhu Qiwen (朱其文), met with foreign diplomats in the city shortly after the PLA took it. See Chen, Jian. *China's road to the Korean War: The making of the Sino-American confrontation.* New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1994, 38.

just as the party was transitioning from its guerilla-like roots into a state-ruling party, Gao Gang's and Manchuria's time under the sun did not last long. The 1954 purge of Gao Gang effectively ended Manchuria's special status, making political distinctions between the region and intramural China nonexistent.

Second, the dissertation charts the important contribution the Northeast Government made in setting the tenor and limits for Sino-Soviet relations by maintaining firm control over Soviet assistance in Manchuria. Broadly, the dissertation touches upon the delineation of modern borders and the centralization of authority in Beijing at the expense of regional power centers such as the Northeast Government. Thus, the dissertation engages both with literature on contemporary Chinese history and international Cold War historiography.

Chronologically, this dissertation primarily focuses on the events that transpired from 1948 to 1954. In March of 1948, the 4th Battle of Siping concluded with a decisive Communist victory, allowing the Chinese Communists to irrevocably wrestle control of Manchuria away from the Nationalists. The CCP then faced the challenge of governing a region far more complex, both in terms of its economy and geopolitical importance, than any of its previous base areas. 1948 was also the year by which efforts by both the U.S. and the Soviet Union to fence off China from Cold War competition entirely broke down. In turn, 1954 is an equally natural ending point for my dissertation. A year after the end of the Korean War and the death of Stalin, it was the year when Gao Gang was purged and the Northeast Government, along with the other regional governments, abolished to further centralize power in Beijing. This marked a point by which Manchurian "localism" had been effectively eliminated and the region firmly ensconced within the PRC political fabric.

When looking at modern Chinese history writ large, relatively little work has been done on Manchuria after the Civil War and it is the kind of focused issue that allows the tackling of important broader questions, including about economic continuity and disruption after the Communist revolution, Chinese foreign relations, and the making of a new China after 1949.

Terminology

Throughout the dissertation Manchuria and the Northeast (東北/*dongbei*) are used interchangeably. The name Manchuria is derived from land of the Manchus, which in Mongol means "oriental brightness."[11] During the Qing Dynasty, the term Manchuria was a neologism reimported from the Jesuits and the Russians as the Manchu court attempted to promote a national homeland for the Manchu people and check growing Russian imperial encroachment. In the twentieth century, the Japanese used derivatives of the term Manchuria to emphasize the region's separateness from China south of the Great Wall. Although this prompted a concerted effort from the Nationalist government and Chinese intellectuals to call the region "Three Provinces (東三省)" or the Northeast (東北/*dongbei*), the region was commonly referred to as "Beyond the Pass [Great Wall] (關外)" suggesting that mentally, the separation between intramural China and the Northeast was well ingrained.[12] While some have argued that the term Manchuria became tarnished by association with the Japanese puppet regime Manchukuo (1932-1945), the Chinese Communists called their strategic bases in the region "Manchurian" until the end of the Chinese Civil War.[13] After 1949, however, the use of Manchuria as a place name disappeared entirely, likely to erase the tentativeness of Chinese rule over the region associated with the term. Western press continued to call the region Manchuria well into the 1950s even after the Soviets fully withdrew from Dalian.[14] Outside the scope of this dissertation, in the 1970s-1980s Chinese academics and the CCP, as part of a broader Deng Xiaoping policy to revive ethnic minority discourse in public life and the Manchus in particular, invented a new

[11] Narangoa, Li. 2002. "The Power of Imagination: Whose Northeast and Whose Manchuria?" *Inner Asia* 4, no. 1: 3-25.

[12] For an overview of the history and politics behind the naming of Manchuria, see "When we travel to the Northeast, enter Manchuria, what can we see? What can we understand? (當我們去到東北，進入滿洲，可以看到什麼?明白什麼?)." The Initium. 3 July 2017. https://theinitium.com/article/20170703-initium-travel-manchu/ (Accessed 15 May 2020). Also see Fu Sinian's 1930s work as an example of the counternarrative that the Northeast is intrinsically Chinese: Fu, Sinian(傅斯年). *A Draft History of the Northeast(東北史綱初稿)*. Changsha: Yue lu shu she, 2011.

[13] See Chen, Bocun (陳伯村) ed. *Zhang Wentian Selected Northeast Works (張聞天東北文選)*. Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1990, 2-5.

[14] See "Soviet Officers visit Peiping." *The New York Times.* 23 May 1955; "China Leader Purged by Party Commits Suicide." *The New York Times.* 5 April 1955; "Manchuria Paces Red China Effort." *The New York Times.* 17 October 1965.

term “Northern Manchuria (北滿)” to emphasize the unique history of the remote Northeast hinterland and stress a narrative of Russian imperial expansion against the native and Han population which primarily lived in Southern Manchuria.[15]

Brief Historical Overview

Dubbed “the cradle of conflict” by the Sinologist Owen Lattimore in the 1930s, Manchuria was no stranger to geopolitical rivalry.[16] As Qing power waned, the region became hotly contested between Tsarist Russia and Imperial Japan. Although Tsarist defeat in 1905 sidelined Russian ambitions for Korea, Manchuria continued to be a place of intrigue between the Japanese and the Russians well into the 1920s.[17] The situation changed with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the installation of the puppet Manchukuo government. Even though Japanese influence had morphed into outright colonialist expansion, Japanese colonial rule did not completely disrupt the existing political and economic milieu of the region.[18] It would take the rapid defeat of the Japanese Kwantung Army in 1945 at the hands of the Soviet army combined with Nationalist reluctance to admit old warlord elites back to their homeland that created a true vacuum ripe for Communist expansion.

The Soviet entrance into the Pacific theater of World War II in August of 1945 created a seismic shock on the ground in Manchuria. It took the Red Army only four days to rout the Manchukuo regime, leaving the Soviets in a strong position to influence the region’s post-war future. In possession of large quantities of Japanese weaponry, the Soviets decided to rearm the Chinese Communists; this also afforded the CCP valuable time to strengthen its positions in northern parts of Manchuria- far from city centers located in the south. Although backing the Communists, the Soviets avoided rupturing ties with the Nationalist government in Nanjing which needed Soviet cooperation to recover the provinces. The swiftness of the Soviet invasion

[15] See Fromm, Martin T. *Borderland Memories: Searching for Historical Identity in Post-Mao China*. 2019.
[16] Lattimore, Owen. *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict*. 1974.
[17] See Walker, Michael M. *The 1929 Sino-Soviet War: The War Nobody Knew*. 2017.
[18] On Manchukuo period, see: Yamamuro, Shin'ichi, and Joshua A. Fogel. *Manchuria Under Japanese Dominion*. Philadelphia (Pa.): University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

caught all the major parties off-guard, including the United States. Against the backdrop of growing tensions over administrating the occupation of Germany, the Soviet advance into the Korean peninsula coupled with the seizing of the Kurile Islands during the last days of the war raised alarms in Washington that the Soviets were turning the Sea of Japan into a Soviet lake.[19]

The swift Soviet invasion allowed various ethnic groups in Manchuria to establish or vie for local autonomy. Although today Manchuria is not particularly known for its ethnic diversity (with the prominent exception of a Manchu revival in the 1980s), the Northeast was much less monoethnic in the 1940s. During the Manchukuo period, tens of thousands of Japanese came to Manchuria as settlers. The large Kwantung Army which was compromised of both local soldiers and Japanese officers, although crushed by the Soviets, was disbanded without complete disarmament—creating an instant surge in banditry. Many ethnic-Japanese remained in the Northeast well into the 1950s and played an important role in repairing industry, to say nothing of the left behind Kwantung Army troops who fought on both sides of the Chinese Civil War. The northern city of Harbin was a hub for Soviet and White Russian émigré influence. White émigrés and Soviet citizens lived uneasily side-by-side throughout the region and were seen as a major security threat by everyone, including the occupying Soviet troops.[20] Lastly, Manchuria was home to a major Korean population and three Korean-staffed PLA divisions that were left behind by the field commander Lin Biao. These troops and other Manchurian Koreans maintained links with the new North Korean state with extensive cross-border activity.[21] Furthermore, Korean PLA units fought in the North Korean army from the very first day of the Korean War.

Fears over the U.S. potentially expanding the Korean War into Northeast China contributed to China's decision to enter the conflict.[22] Starting in late 1950, Manchuria became the strategic rear for the People's Volunteer Army (PVA). Military experts and China's best

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[19] See eighth volume of FRUS for discussion on Soviet geopolitical gains in Northeast Asia following 1945: United States Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949. Volume VIII. The Far East: China*. Washington, DC, 1950.
[20] Paddock, Paul. *China Diary: Crisis Diplomacy in Dairen*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1977, 125-127.
[21] For a discussion on Manchurian Koreans, Koreans in the PLA, and CCP-KWP ties see Shen, Zhihua (沈志華). *The Last Celestial Empire: Mao Zedong, Kim Il-sung, and Sino-Korean Relations (1945-1976) (最後的'天朝': 毛澤東，金日成與中朝關係)*. 2017
[22] See 14 August 1950 Gao Gang speech to Northeast cadres: Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 240.

troops were recalled from North Vietnam and Southern China.[23] From the Soviet Union, trainloads arrived carrying T-34 tanks and self-propelled artillery, airplanes, and heavy artillery.[24] By 1951, Soviet air units equipped with brand-new MiG 15 jet fighters and additional military advisers had also been dispatched to Manchuria.[25] The region's industry and food supplies were redirected to the war effort. Fearing U.S. strategic bombing, the Northeast Government embarked on an ambitious civil defense and propaganda campaign to boost morale and strengthen the region's defenses.[26] The campaigns led to palpable changes in the political environment of the region.

The rapid remilitarization of the region presented both an opportunity and a serious challenge for the Communist leadership. Under the aegis of "Resist America Aid Korea," the party carried out mass campaigns to transform the economic order in the Northeast by promoting wartime production. Concomitantly, concerns over counterrevolutionary activity and enemy sabotage allowed the party to roundup former KMT officials and target various social groups such as local Catholics and wealthier peasants who were deemed to be politically unreliable.[27] At the same time, the demands of war placed tremendous strain on the local economy and created distortions where some private business flourished while state-run enterprises suffered from supply disruptions.[28] There was also an acute shortage of essential provisions such as food and winter clothing both in Korea and in the rear. Contrary to stereotypes, local authorities and Gao Gang did not respond by always siding with the state, instead offering protections to the private sector under the "New Democracy" model of development.[29] When combined with an influx of Soviet advisors, the efforts led to a contradictory two-track approach to both Sovietize Manchuria and preserve existing economic relations. Economic dissonance notwithstanding, the efforts of the Northeast Government rendered Manchuria unrecognizable from just a few years

[23] Li, Xiaobing. *China's Battle for Korea: The 1951 Spring Offensive*. United States: Indiana University Press, 2014, 4-6.
[24] Xu, Zhanxin (徐占信). *Manzhouli and the Korean War (滿洲里與抗美援朝戰爭).* Inner Mongolia: Neimenggu wenhua chubanshe, 2006
[25] Westad, Odd Arne. *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011, 141-145.
[26] Liu, Peitang (劉培唐), ed. *Everything for the Front: Dandong's People's Volunteers and the Resist America Aid Korea Movement (一切為了前線，丹東人民志願抗美援朝大事紀實).* 2000, 49-53.
[27] Dikötter, Frank. *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution, 1945-1957*. 2017, 117.
[28] Ledovsky, Andrei. *Delo Gao Gana*, 1990, 102.
[29] Ibid., 103.

prior. On the political front, sharp differences arose over war strategy and ceasefire negotiations between Mao, field commanders & Gao Gang, and the North Koreans.[30] Disputes over Korea contributed to the biggest political purge of the early PRC, the 1954 Gao Gang incident. With Gao Gang's ouster, a long tradition of strong local leaders in the northeast came to an end.

Literature Review[31]

Since this dissertation attempts to cover the most politically consequential policy decisions enacted by Gao Gang and the Northeast Government, the chapters are organized by issue and roughly run concurrently chronologically. The dissertation structure helps remind the reader that decision-makers do not have the luxury of being single-issue actors and that nothing happens in a vacuum. The downside of this approach is that space constraints invariably give short thrift to topics like the actual implementation of the PRC's social reforms (new labor and marriage laws, prohibition of various vices) that deserve more discussion. Since relevant literature covers everything from Sino-Soviet relations to intricacies of CCP land reform policies, every chapter has its own, concise literature review. In the introduction, the focus is instead on where this dissertation fits writ large in the China and Cold War historiography.

Steven Levine ends his argument in *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria 1945-1948* by stating that:

> *"The regional history of Manchuria in a tumultuous era is itself too large a subject to be encompassed within a single scholarly monograph… Our general understanding of the Communist revolution in China must constantly be refined or altered as new findings are published."*[32]

Although there is an extensive body of literature on the early years of Communist rule in China, the topic of Manchuria—for all its wider significance implied by Levine— continues to

[30] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond 495. Opis. 225 Delo 20, 64.
[31] Each substantive chapter has an additional concise literature review on the specific topic, i.e. land reform, Soviet experts in China, Korean War, political campaigns in China.
[32] Levine, Steven I. *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, 248.

be mentioned only in passing. Without reservation, Steven Levine's work remains the most authoritative publication on the subject, although it is more than twenty-five years old and deals primarily with the Chinese Civil War.

Levine ends his study in 1948, but his argument that the way in which the CCP utilized Northeast China as a springboard for victory in the Chinese Civil War— operating out of local urban centers, relying equally on ideology and violence to foment unrest in the countryside rather than simply riding an *in situ* peasant revolt to victory –serves as an important starting point for discussion of the subsequent post-Civil War years.[33] His findings point to the role of mobilization and coercive power in state formation during the immediate postwar period.

Levine avers that once the CCP leaders realized the power of popular mobilization, it became a tried and proven way to continue governing. By extension this suggests that land reform, the "Resist America Aid Korea" movement and the concomitant "Three and Five antis" campaign launched in Manchuria were all a pragmatic means to govern effectively, CCP-style. I argue that although the campaigns involved mass mobilization and stemmed from fear of hostile and unreliable societal elements, the political campaigns were highly ruinous. The resulting grave economic harm hindered the party's own reconstruction goals and forced the Northeast Government to backpedal and resurrect old, pre-liberation economic paradigms only thinly couched in new, ideologically-palatable language.

Levine also argues that local Communist leaders in Manchuria (Northeast Bureau), faced with a shortage of local cadres and under pressure from the Nationalist campaign, embarked on bold administrative experimentation in the cities which gave the party crucial experience for subsequent management of large urban areas.[34] Although Levine does not address this, such improvisation continued in the subsequent early years of the PRC. The only major shortcoming of the work is the argument that Mao did not exercise a meaningful leadership role in the planning of the Communist strategy and may have even been against the idea of abandoning guerilla tactics. This is a frequent misreading of Mao in political science literature. In reality, going back to the 1930s, Mao consistently wrote that a final, political victory in China could only be achieved after the Communists win large-scale conventional battles, so the shift in tactics in

[33] Levine, 197-198.
[34] Ibid., 87.

Manchuria should not be seen as an abandonment of Maoist doctrine.[35] Minor criticism aside, Steven Levine's book is all the more remarkable because it was written just before archives in China and the former Soviet Union became available to scholars.

The first major works based on archival material made available by the end of the Cold War were Chen Jian's *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* and *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* by Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai. Chen Jian's work on China and the Cold War aimed to challenge the perception in much of contemporary western historiography that Maoist China was a passive actor which only reacted to changes and decisions made by the United States and occasionally the Soviet Union. Such thinking pervaded most of the scholarship of the 1960s and 1970s. Even otherwise excellent histories of the Korean War such as Allen S. Whiting's *China Crosses the Yalu* argued that China's decision to enter the Korean War was largely due to the U.S. decision to cross the 38th parallel and the ignoring of Premier Zhou Enlai's warnings. China's own internal political considerations were not seriously analyzed.

Shifting focus to internal politics, Chen Jian discusses Mao's determination to have sole authority over the foreign policy decision making process and how this often clashed with reality in the Northeast. Chen avoids drawing comparisons however to the Nationalist camp or broader themes of center-periphery relations in Chinese history. Without exaggerating the scale of insubordination, Mao found himself in a situation that shared semblance to Chiang Kai-Shek's plight during the 1930s when he was forced to deal with multiple warlords only nominally loyal to the Nationalist cause.[36] In Mao's case, in addition to the perceived threat of Gao Gang, the chairman treated the independent Communist New 4th Army, general Liu Bocheng (劉伯承), and the Shanghai party boss Rao Shushi with suspicion.[37]

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[35] See Mao, Zedong. *On Protracted War* (1938) https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_09.htm (Accessed 16 May 2020).
[36] For a survey of the pre-WWII history of China and the so-called "Nanjing Decade" see Wakeman, Frederic E., and Richard L. Edmonds. *Reappraising Republican China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
[37] On New 4th Army see Benton, Gregor. *Mountain Fires: The Red Army's Three-Year War in South China, 1934-1938*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992; Rao Shushi was the political commissar of the New 4th Army, one of a handful of CCP senior members with higher education and overseas experience; Liu Bocheng was one of the masterminds behind the PLA's military victory in the Chinese Civil War, after 1950 he was rapidly demoted for unclear reasons and did not take part in the Korean War.

Returning to Manchuria, Chen Jian only mentions in passing that local cadres and regional officials felt sufficiently empowered to make foreign policy decisions without consulting the central committee.[38] Chen Jian concludes his work by stating that the Korean War allowed Chinese leadership to enact the most ambitious domestic revolutionary program in China's modern history: the CCP would have attempted similar reforms even without the conflict, but the war allowed for much more radical policies. Chen views this crucial period as a precursor to the Great Leap Forward, setting the tone for Chinese domestic politics for decades to come. By looking at the "Three and Five antis" in more detail and covering the campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries, this dissertation provides even more fodder for argument that political violence was a mainstay of Maoism, and not just during the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward.

In *Uncertain Partners*, the authors are the first to write a highly detailed account of the early Cold War period in Northeast Asia which tells the story from every point of view, including the North Korean one. The book provides colorful anecdotes of questionable veracity such as Gao Gang drawing the ire of Mao Zedong for only placing portraits of Stalin in the Northeast provinces or the personal gratitude of CCP leaders to Kim Il-sung for building housing and taking care of their families during the Nationalist push into Manchuria in late 1945-46.[39] In addition, the authors discuss the strategic thinking, apprehensions, and deliberations that occurred between Moscow, Beijing, and Pyongyang from 1949 through China's decision to intervene. The biggest drawback of the work is its reliance on interviews, often anonymous, with then still living officials from China, Russia, and even North Korea. There is no way to independently verify many of their assertions, and Xue provides scant detail of how he was able to meet supposedly senior retired North Korean officials.

The impact of Stalin, Soviet assistance, and the broader vicissitudes of the Cold War on Communist China touches upon the "China centered" debate present in Chinese historiography.[40]

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[38] The U.S. Consul in Mukden (Shenyang) Angus Ward and his staff were held under house arrest by the Chinese for almost a year after they refused to hand over their transmitter radio, causing a major diplomatic incident. See "A Hostage in Communist China." ADST. 12 September 2012. https://adst.org/2012/09/a-hostage-in-communist-china/ (Accessed 16 May 2020).

[39] Goncharov, Sergei N., John Wilson Lewis, Xue Litai. *Uncertain Partners Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1995, 134.

[40] See Cohen, Paul A. *History in Three Keys: The Boxers As Event, Experience, and Myth*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997 and Kuhn, Philip A. *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Broadly speaking, the "China centered" approach to history posits that much of Western scholarship on China treated the Chinese as mere bystanders and greatly exaggerated the role of western powers and ideas in the transformations that occurred in China starting with the Qing in the 19th century. Historians such as Philip Kuhn and Paul Cohen argued that foreign interference, especially early on during the First Opium War had a rather negligible effect on China. Historians were better served to look within China if they wanted to understand why the Qing dynasty entered decline.

Although harder to defend, such an argument could be extended to 20th century Chinese history as well. Indeed, many Chinese scholars maintain that western scholarship on Mao and the CCP devotes too much time parsing over the modest impact of western thinking and not enough time linking the CCP to longstanding themes in Chinese political thought. The late Gao Hua (高華) argued in his tour de force *How the Red Sun Rose* that Mao was deeply influenced by traditional Chinese political theory and history, feared that he was seen as the Li Zicheng (李自成) of China, and had a fairly dim understanding of Marxist canon.[41] Under such logic, it should come as less of a surprise that Soviet aid failed to Sovietize Manchuria or that the Northeast Government pursued economic policies directly contrary to Stalin's blueprint for industrialization.

By arguing that outside actors were a major catalyst for change in Manchuria after 1948, I potentially expose myself to similar criticisms made by Cohen and others in regards to China's modern history. Such a line of criticism is unconvincing because one cannot *a priori* declare that bringing outside factors discounts the importance of Chinese voices. The Chinese leaders were not merely reacting to outside pressure, they had agency and were active players in the Cold War from the beginning. Economic experts Zhang Wentian and Ma Hong were equally familiar with the Soviet planned economy as with market economic theory, drawing from both when necessary.[42] Finally, while it is important to always take into account the "Chinese

[41] See Gao, Hua (高華). *How the Red Sun Rose: the Origin and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement (紅太陽是怎樣升起的：延安整風運動的來龍去脈)*. 2015; Li Zicheng was a peasant rebel who greatly weakened the Ming Dynasty on the eve of the Manchu invasion.
[42] See second chapter on Manchurian industrial policy.

characteristics" in Chinese socialism, the approach can be taken too far causing scholars to overlook important linkages across the socialist bloc. The goal of my dissertation is to help place the history of Manchuria at a critical juncture in Chinese history into the broader story of the Cold War.

The "China centered" debate divides the academic community studying post-1949 China into the *PRC* and *Cold War History* camps. Adding an extra layer to the division, most PRC scholars are social or cultural historians who tend to look for continuation between the Nationalist and Communist periods, are interested in grassroots impact of Maoism, and stress the latter at the expense of the former in socialism with Chinese characteristics.[43] Cold War historians, usually relying on opened Eastern European archives, are primarily interested in elite decision making, Sino-Soviet and U.S.-Sino relations, and of course China's involvement in the various hot conflicts of the Cold War. Seeing disruption as opposed to continuity, these historians are interested how the worldwide communist movement and other global forces shaped China and were in turn influenced by the CCP. As the Cold War historian Arne Westad states, "No country has impacted China more than the Soviet Union."[44]

The value of this dissertation is that it attempts to bridge this at times unnecessary gap. The narrative of the importance of Manchuria to the creation of the PRC is a quintessentially Chinese story, but I've taken the risk of delving into economic and Soviet history to show the role of foreign ideas and foreign power where they were critical. Ironically, such a more balanced approach is readily found in the historiography of the Nationalist or Republican period of China.[45]

Chinese Scholarship

[43] Kirby, William C. 1990. "Continuity and Change in Modern China: Economic Planning on the Mainland and on Taiwan, 1943 – 1958," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 24: 121–141; Bian, Morris L. *The Making of the State Enterprise System in Modern China: The Dynamics of Institutional Change*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.
[44] See Westad, Odd Arne. *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750*. 2015.
[45] Zanasi, Margherita. *Saving the Nation: Economic Modernity in Republican China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006; Van de Ven, Hans J. *Breaking with the Past: The Maritime Customs Service and the Global Origins of Modernity in China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Most of the Chinese scholarship on the early years of the PRC and the Korean War is also divided between emphasizing the importance of indigenous factors versus the Communist international. Niu Jun (牛軍) is perhaps the most categorical in making the argument that virtually all of China's Cold War decisions were rooted in Chinese domestic politics.[46] Although many of his arguments echo official Chinese historiography such as identifying U.S. support for the KMT as the reason behind the CCP's hostility towards the United States, Niu does reach several unique and intriguing conclusions. For one, he views Mao's famous decision "to lean to one side" as just a statement of principle that initially carried few specifics.[47] He also argues that CCP-KMT negotiations mirrored the ups and downs of the Soviet-U.S. relationship. This contradicts his overarching argument about the primacy of Chinese domestic politics but is a very useful starting point for discussing the linkage between the broader Cold War developments and Chinese policy. Lastly, Niu argues that Vietnam was seen as a more important border area than Manchuria and Korea in the late 1940s.[48] I suspect this argument is made to support a narrative where Mao bears limited or no responsibility for starting the Korean War. If Mao did not view Korea as vital to China's national interest, then the decision to start the war was entirely Stalin's and Kim's. Such an interpretation is not supported by evidence in this dissertation that Mao and other Chinese leaders were devoting considerable attention to the Chinese Northeast vis-à-vis Korea.

Another major shortcoming of China-centric scholarship in the PRC is a lack of adequate attention towards linkage between China and other events within the socialist camp, even when they clearly played a palpable role. Yang Kuisong (楊奎松) is one of the few historians who brings up the Yugoslav factor in Sino-Soviet relations.[49] According to Yang, the CCP went to great lengths to publicly stress its loyalty to Moscow on this issue and were some of the most vociferous early critics of the Yugoslavs within the socialist bloc. Despite the effort, Mao was

[46] See Niu, Jun. *The Cold War and the Origins of Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*. Leiden, 2018.
[47] Westad Odd Arne, and Melvyn P. Leffler. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume 1, Origins.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 232.
[48] Ibid.
[49] See Yang, Kuisong (楊奎松). *Mao Zedong and Moscow: Gratitude and Enmity* (毛澤東與莫斯科的恩恩怨怨). Jiangxi Renmin chubanshe: 2015.

increasingly seen as the Asian Tito by the Soviets long before the official Sino-Soviet rapture.[50] Curiously, Yang believes that Stalin lacked real means of control over Mao even in the early years of the relationship, suggesting that Mao was critical of the Yugoslav line not just out of consideration to not offend his northern patron. Although Yang pays attention to the Yugoslav issue, there is no attempt to look at key events in Sino-Soviet relations side by side with the Soviet-Yugoslav split and subsequent attempts to mend fences, which suggests the two dyadic relationships shared significant linkages. Indeed, a cursory look shows that the Liu Shaoqi delegation mentioned at the beginning arrived in Moscow just as the Belgrade-Moscow split was publicly announced in the summer of 1948 to the shock of the entire world.

The Chinese historian Shen Zhihua （沈志華） is a leading contributor to the Cold War camp of historians. Having access to both Chinese and Russian sources, Shen has tackled the Korean War, Sino-North Korean relations, Soviet advisors in China, and is currently working on a project on Stalin's role in shaping China. Shen makes the case that Stalin distrusted Mao and the CCP and sought to delay and reduce the scale of Soviet economic aid and that the assistance provided was primarily for infrastructure which could be readily used by the Soviets themselves.[51] Thus Soviet engineers played an instrumental role in fixing the railways in Northeast China that were heavily damaged by war and their own pilfering but were far slower to address critical industrial needs. The repairing of the railroads did however enable the Communists to rapidly move troops in the pivotal Liaoshen Campaign.[52] When it comes to Mao, Shen is particularly interested in uncovering the motivations behind Mao's pronouncements and policies—a more difficult task than doing the same for capitalist bloc leaders because of the lack of transparency and records according to Shen.[53] He makes the case that the Chairman was largely a faithful pupil of Stalin, but with the important caveat that his own importance in the global Communist world be recognized. It was only after the Korean War and the death of Stalin

[50] Ibid., 258.
[51] Shen, Zhihua (沈志華). *Soviet Experts in China (蘇聯專家在中國).* 2006*,* 57.44-46.
[52] Huang Kecheng, deputy commander of the Northeast Democratic Alliance Army, mentions the importance of rail transport for the 1948 campaigns. See Huang kecheng (黃克誠). *Selected Military Works of Huang Kecheng(黃克誠軍事文選).* Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 2002*;*Shen's interpretation is challenged by Yang Kuisong in *Mao zedong yu mosike de enen yuanyuan* (毛澤東與莫斯科恩恩怨怨). Yang claims that without Soviet assistance the Chinese would not have been able to restore production in the Anshan steel plant or in other strategic enterprises.
[53] Shen, Zhihua (沈志華). "Assessing motivations from historical records: Interpreting three telegrams between Mao and Stalin (動機判斷與史料考證——對毛澤東與斯大林三封往來電報的解析)." Aisixiang (愛思想). 24 October 2019. http://www.aisixiang.com/data/118702.html (Accessed 16 May 2020).

that Mao's ambitions grew and he became impatient with China's trajectory for achieving socialism.

Although Shen Zhihua recognizes the strategic importance of Manchuria to Mao, there is virtually no discussion of how domestic and international politics fused together, one influencing the other. Regional leaders such as Gao Gang, Rao Shushi, or Xi Zhongxun are not seriously considered. Discussion on the overall efficacy of Soviet economic assistance and economic constraints on the CCP during the Korean War is also limited. Beyond statistical details of the material aid given, there is no discussion whether the Soviet aid transformed Chinese thinking about economic planning or national development, questions that interest many PRC historians. The impact of Soviet advisors on changes to Manchuria's economic and political order after 1948 is covered in depth in both the chapters on Soviet experts and Manchurian industrial policy. Furthermore, Soviet initiatives are briefly juxtaposed in the dissertation to the U.S. Marshall Plan launched in 1948 to provide comparison.[54]

Shen's research shows that the Soviet aid effort was much more decentralized and lacked a unified organizational structure present in the U.S. aid effort to Europe, but he resists making broader arguments about the limits of the Sino-Soviet alliance. Finally, there is not enough discussion of Moscow's own goals in Manchuria which would have been understood on some level by the CCP itself. Suspicion notwithstanding, the Soviet advisors were sent to China at a time when the Soviet Union was still in the midst of a recovery effort after the devastation of World War II; any amount of resources diverted from domestic reconstruction would have been at an immense premium. Since the Soviet Union was committing to the most ambitious foreign aid project in its history, such a decision would not have been made by Stalin lightly. In sum, while Shen is not particularly interested in the domestic political impact on China of the Korean War and Soviet assistance, I am urging that security fears over Manchuria, particularly the prospect of U.S. influence if North Korea was defeated, drove Mao to enter the Korean War and give Manchuria outsized attention.

Border Regions in Chinese History

[54] The Soviets had their own, more modest "Molotov Plan" for Eastern Europe. See Brine, J. J. *COMECON: The Rise and Fall of an International Socialist Organization*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1992.

Fear of external threats touches upon an important theme of the periphery and borderland in Chinese history. Although this has not been discussed explicitly in the case of Manchuria, Lin Hsiao-ting's recent work on Taiwan, *The Accidental State*, takes advantage of newly available U.S. and Taiwanese sources to partially rewrite the Cold War history of the U.S. China policy by looking at U.S. strategy towards peripheral regions in Southern China. Lin argues that far from "abandoning Chiang" the U.S. was exploring various options to stave off or limit Communist gains. Well into 1949, the U.S. was in talks with Yunnan leaders about setting up an independent, anti-Communist state in the south.[55] Although it is considerably more difficult to procure analogous Russian archival material, it is quite likely that the Soviets were also viewing regions like Manchuria and Xinjiang as more manageable territorial units along China's periphery that could be used to stabilize and secure core national interests.[56] The historian Arthur Waldron has speculated that the Soviet Union under Stalin was probing or opportunistically exploring the possibility of building a security belt that would have included Mongolia, Manchuria, and North Korea to protect the USSR and cement its influence in the Northeast.[57] According to Lin, the Americans quickly amended their plans as the situation on the ground made them no longer tenable—the same can be said of the Soviets who had to reckon with the swift victory of the Chinese Communists. Nevertheless, such plans and feelers could not have been secret in their entirety from Mao and the CCP leadership.

On the specific topic of border insecurity, Peter Perdue has written how threats emanating from Tibet, Mongolia, Manchuria and Xinjiang influenced court politics during the Qing.[58] Looking at the modern era, Hans Van de Ven has coined the phrase "Ming Syndrome" to explain how both the Nationalists and the Communists were haunted by the memory of internal disunity causing the Ming Dynasty's collapse at the hands of outside Manchu invaders who were actively

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[55] See Lin, Hsiao-ting. *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-Shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan*. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press, 2016.

[56] See Hasanli, Jamil. "The Soviet Archives and Xinjiang, 1944-1949." Wilson Center. 4 May 2020. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/soviet-archives-and-xinjiang-1944-1949 (Accessed 16 May 2020) [note author incorrectly states Molotov special collection is at GARF, it is stored in RGASPI]; also see Xinjiang file in the Taiwanese Foreign Ministry archive: "Reports on the Conditions in Xinjiang before/after Loss. (新疆淪陷前後情形報告)." Academia Sinica. ROC MFA Archive Collection. April 1949- March 1951. File number: 11-04-01-09-02-004, 91 pages.

[57] Interview with Arthur Waldon, 26 May 2020, Washington, DC.

[58] Perdue, Peter C. *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap, 2010.

assisted by domestic rivals.[59] Mao was well aware of this history, made all the more poignant by the then too recent example of Imperial Japan beginning its attempted conquest of China with territorial land grabs in the Northeast assisted by local warlords. Even after the Korean War, when Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated to border clashes, Mao again began to fear of an invasion from the north. On a related note, Martin Fromm lays out in *Border Memories* that for the CCP in the Northeast, local memories of Tsarist imperialism was initially a major millstone hindering popular legitimacy.[60]

Sino-Soviet Relations

As the above sections make clear, the story of Sino-Soviet relations is an important piece of the Manchurian puzzle. By now there is an abundance of secondary literature on the Sino-Soviet split, with various often diametrically opposing explanations given for the rupture.[61] A major general shortcoming of this body of literature is a tendency to interpret everything that occurred in the bilateral relationship well before the split as a harbinger of the 1960s break between Beijing and Moscow. Such an approach raises several problems that I wish to avoid in my dissertation. It suggests that the Sino-Soviet split was inevitable which invariably leads to minor contretemps being recast as major diplomatic incidents. Relations are never smooth even between longstanding allies who share similar cultures and have an extensive history of cooperation and confidence building.[62] Although the Soviets and the Chinese shared a Communist ideology, and ideological allegiance should not be given short thrift, this could not undo overnight the protracted legacy of Tsarist imperialism in addition to mutual apprehension.

[59] Van de Ven, Hans. *China at War. Triumph and Tragedy in the Emergence of the New China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018, 32.
[60] Fromm, 46.
[61] For instance John Gittings argued that the ideology made the split more violent. While Donald Zagoria argued that ideology prevented the split from leading to war in his work *The Sino-Soviet conflict, 1956-61*. For an overview of the split see: Radchenko, Sergey. *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Institute, 2009. For role of ideology, see Lüthi, Lorenz M. *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
[62] Even the "Special Relationship" between the US and the UK has not been without tension, see: McKercher, B.J.C. *Britain, America, and the Special Relationship Since 1941*. London & New York: Routledge, 2017.

The above mentioned approach to Sino-Soviet history assumes by virtual default that the Soviets and the Chinese were in a state of active competition over Manchuria. Sergey Radchenko writes in *Two Suns in the Heavens* that the Soviet bases in Port Arthur and Dalian were a major irritant in the relationship, but the same could be said of the Soviet bases in Finland and troops in Iran.[63] The Soviets eventually pulled out of all three countries, but in the case of Finland the Soviet strategy of pursuing good neighborly relations did not fall apart as it did in Iran and China.

The overstating of Sino-Soviet tensions in Manchuria is not to say there was an absence of competition. Instead, I believe that a more "realist" reading of the situation is in order.[64] Under a realist reading, Sino-Soviet relations in Manchuria displayed both moments of cooperation and competition, largely influenced by the developments in the broader Northeast Asian region. The systemic pilfering of Manchuria in 1945 by the Red Army is compelling evidence of the Kremlin wanting to manage the region's balance of power in its favor. Although the industrial looting of Germany and Northeast China receives extensive coverage in historiography, it is far less known that the Soviets left heavy industry in Korea largely intact.[65] The discrepancy was due to Stalin's wishes to create an industrialized and stable socialist Korea.[66] Conversely, we can infer that Stalin did not want China to have major industrial capacity. With the Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War coinciding with a deterioration in U.S.-Soviet relations, Stalin began to see China as a valuable potential ally or at least as a partner he could no longer afford to shun. Such a realist approach sets up a compelling challenge to Chinese historiography discussed earlier that points to domestic Chinese factors as the main drivers in the Sino-Soviet relationship.

Another important consideration for Sino-Soviet relations is how the relationship measured up to other Soviet bilateral ties. Ilya Gaiduk's work on Soviet-Vietnamese relations

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[63] For a discussion on Dalian/Port Arthur see Pickowicz, Paul, and Jeremy Brown. *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China*. Harvard University Press, 2010.

[64] Defining realism in international relations is no trivial matter, Mearsheimer's five pillars give the term its necessary depth: 1. The international system is anarchic. 2. All great powers possess offensive military capabilities. 3. States can never be certain about the intentions of other states. 4. States seek to maximize their power (resources, territory, domestic autonomy). 5. States are rational actors. See Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: Norton, 2001, 30-31.

[65] For Silesia where looting was most methodical see, Ruggenthaler, Peter. *The Concept of Neutrality in Stalins Foreign Policy, 1945-1953*. 2017, 15; On Korea see: Edelstein, David M. *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupation*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2010, 80.

[66] Silesia was given to Poland in compensation for the loss of her eastern regions to the Soviet Union

clearly demonstrates serious tension during the late 1940s. In a 1949 interview, Ho Chi Minh refused to publicly align himself with the international socialist camp which drew the instant ire of Stalin.[67] Such behavior on Mao's part would have been unthinkable. Austin Jersild has written that while relations with Eastern European socialist states were heavily skewed by the power imbalance between Moscow and the "people's democracies," there were still major differences and tensions over economic and foreign policy matters.[68] Indeed, the breakout of the Korean War and the apparent blank-check given by Stalin to Kim Il-sung was seen by many Eastern European leaders as suicidal madness guaranteed to trigger World War III.[69]

It's the Economy, stupid

The economic angle in Sino-Soviet relations is an important part of the broader relationship that deserves careful consideration. Manchuria was China's most industrialized region and was vital for any Chinese plan to quickly develop heavy industry in the socialist mold. Unsurprisingly, talks with the Soviets about sending experts to repair and expand industry began before the Nationalists were even fully driven out from the region.

The historiography on Cold War economic history is currently undergoing a new period of critical reevaluation. A recent work by Oscar Sanchez-Sibony challenges the idea that the Soviet Union was offering a credible alternative to the United States in terms of economic policy.[70] Sanchez-Sibony argues that that the USSR largely tracked the same path as other countries in the world from the interwar period until the death of Stalin: going from autarky when international trade collapsed to the resumption of supply-chains during the postwar period. Although adhering to a planned economy, the Soviets were already dependent on selling energy to the first world and settling for being second-best partners to the developing world. Sanchez-Sibony offers convincing evidence that the socialist world was much more connected to the global economy than previously thought, albeit at a disadvantaged position. The economic

[67] Gaiduk, Ilya V. *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet Policy Toward the Indochina Conflict, 1954-1963*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Institute, 2003.
[68] Jersild, Austin. *Sino-Soviet Alliance - an International History*. North Carolina University Press, 2016.
[69] See footnote 157 about exchange between the Soviet Ambassador and Hungarian Minister of Defense Farkas shortly after the outbreak of the war; Borhi, László. *Hungary in the Cold War, 1945-1956: Between the United States and the Soviet Union*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004, 262.
[70] Sanchez-Sibony, Oscar. *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

historian Hirata Koji argues that Chinese industrialization followed a hybrid model.[71] Furthermore, evidence of economic pragmatism in the policies of Gao Gang and the Northeast Government towards private capital in Manchuria reinforce Sanchez-Sibony's argument that Eastern Bloc states were much more economically heterodox.[72]

Russian historiography

Russian sources, particularly the work of Andrei Ledovsky on Gao Gang, are central to this dissertation.[73] While Russian sources have been a mainstay of Cold War scholarship, they are still relatively infrequent in China-centered histories. Russian historiography of Chinese Communism can be generally divided into three distinct eras.[74] During the first period from the late 1940s until 1959/60, Russian scholarship on China was heavily influenced by the victory of the Chinese Communists and the signing of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty. All published material stressed the fraternal nature of ties between the Soviet and Chinese people and analysis tended to be highly emotional and propagandistic. [75] Works from this period extolling the achievements of "New China" are useful for capturing the popular mood of the time and for getting extensive lists of mutual development projects but are woefully short on objectivity. In addition, although highly political, these early works were the fruit of a major Soviet push to train a new generation of Soviet sinologists due to an acute shortage of China specialists and speakers of Chinese.

With the Sino-Soviet split, Russian scholarship shifted to reflect new geopolitical realities. Academic works focused on identifying the deviations of Chinese leaders from "scientific communism" and accused them of betraying the friendship between the Soviet and

[71] Hirata, Koji. "*Steel Metropolis: Industrial Manchuria and the Making of Chinese Socialism, 1916-1964*." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2018.
[72] See chapter 2; 22 August 1949 Northeast Politburo's Recommendations to the Northeast Representative's Conference on Northeast Government's Administrative Policy (中共中央東北局關於東北人民政府施政方針向東北人民代表會議的建議) in Xue, Junfu (薛俊富), Bai Haoting (白浩亭). *Collected Works of Gao Gang (高崗文集)*. Huaxia Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 2013.
[73] Ledovsky, Andrei *Delo Gao Gana*.
[74] For a history of earlier Russian Sinology, and how virtually all Manchuria studies experts were executed during the Stalinist Great Terror of 1937-8, see: Datsyshen, V. G. *Istoriia russkogo kitaevedeniia: 1917-1945*. Moscow, 2015, 255.
[75] See Nikiforov, V. N. *Narodnaia revoliutsiia v Kitae; ocherk istorii bor'by i pobedy kitaĭskogo naroda*. Moscow: Gos. izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1953.

Chinese people. [76] Publications on Northeast China stressed the pivotal nature of Soviet help in liberating the region from Japanese occupation and the role the Soviet advisers played in rebuilding China's economy. Despite the heavy ideological slant of Soviet historiography before perestroika, unique material was still published such as O.B. Borisov's 1977 work on the Northeast Bureau during the Chinese Civil War.[77]

With the end of the Cold War, Russian historians have benefited from both being freed of Marxist-Leninist paradigms and the opening of the Russian archives. New publications on Chinese history, ranging from the Korean War and the border clashes over Zhenbao/Damansky Island to China as a home for White émigrés have made use of unique archival material.[78] Curiously, Soviet advisors have been largely neglected with the exception of a few specialized books such as Tatiana Zazerskaya's work on Soviet help in setting up China's military-industrial complex in the 1950s.[79] The most important work from this period is the compilation of Soviet documents on Sino-Soviet relations during the twentieth century published in 2006 by Ledovsky, et al.[80] The authors stress that the documents show relations between Stalin and the CCP to be generally quite close and free of major acrimony. Although some historians such as Sergei Radchenko have come to a radically different interpretation, arguing that the same documents clearly show Stalin's cynicism and more than occasional duplicity, the materials in sum paint a relationship with China in line with other relationships with socialist states and parties. There is a mix of fruitful cooperation and attempts to deepen ties along with instances of Soviet disingenuousness and ham-handed efforts to assert dominance.

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[76] See Vladimirov, P. P. *Osobyĭ raĭon Kitai͡a 1942-1945*. Moskva: Izd-vo Agentstva pechati Novosti, 1977.
[77] Borisov, O. B. *Sovetskiy Soyz i Manchurskaya Revolyutsionaya Baza 1945 - 1949*. Moscow: 1977.
[78] On border clashes see Lobo͡diuk, Nikolai. *Ostrov Damanskiĭ: dopolnitel'nye shtrikhi k sobytiiam v marte 1969 goda : interv'iu, vospominaniia, fotografii*. 2014; history of Harbin see
Taskina, E. P. *Russkiĭ Kharbin*. Moskva: Izd-vo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2005; on Korean War see Torkunov, A. V. *Zagadochnai͡a voĭna: koreĭskiĭ konflikt 1950-1953 godov*. Moskva: ROSSPĖN, 2000.
[79]Zazerskaya, T.G. *Sovetskie Spetselisti I Formirovanie Voenno-Promyushlennogo Kompleksa Kitaya (1949-60),"* St. Petersburg, 2000.
[80] Ledovsky, Andrei R. A. Mirovitskaya and V. S. Miasnikov. *Russko-kitaĭskie otnosheni͡ia v XX veke: materialy i dokumenty*.

Primary Sources

With restricted archival access in China, I've relied on materials collected by the Wilson Center's Cold War history project, including an unpublished trove of documents from provincial Chinese archives. I also extensively cite documents from the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) which has the personal files of most CCP members connected with Manchuria. The archive also houses the Molotov collection, filled with various relevant documents concerning Soviet deliberations on China, the Cold War in Northeast Asia, and Manchuria at the highest of levels. The Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVPRF) also netted considerable material on Soviet involvement in Manchuria. In addition to the Russian archives, I have made use of archival documents from the British National Archives (Kew) and Taiwan's Academia Historica (國史館). The Chinese University of Hong Kong's China Research Centre proved to be an equally invaluable repository of knowledge with their full collection of *The Northeast Daily* and the internal CCP news circulation, *Neibu cankao.* Finally, I was lucky to get access to the papers of the last Ambassador of the ROC to Moscow, Fu Bingchang (傅秉常), who kept a diary during his years in the Soviet Union. It was a highly useful background read that corroborated key details and gave different perspectives to accounts in Communist Chinese and Russian memoirs.

This dissertation also cites what Hirata Koji affectionately calls "garbage bin sources," small limited run periodicals and technical journals published in China at the time on low quality paper and often completely unknown to foreign scholars.[81] One such journal, *Northeast Industry,* proved to be invaluable for the chapter on industrial policy. Official histories and document compilations are also cited extensively. Without these sources work on modern Chinese history would not be possible, but Charles Kraus has written that although outright falsification is rare, doctoring by omission of sensitive or politically embarrassing details is a problem with several chronicles (年譜) and document volumes.[82]

[81] Hirata, 14.
[82] Kraus, Charles. "Researching the History of the People's Republic of China." CWIHP Working Paper79: April 2016, 6-7.

Audience

Western historians of China rely extensively on their Chinese counterparts—from finding sources and archival introductions to background reading on the topic in Chinese. This dissertation is no different and would have been of far inferior quality without the generosity and constructive criticism of Shen Zhihua, Han Gang, and Lin Yunhui. And yet, too few Western scholars write for a Chinese audience. Although written in English, I hope that my attempts to bring in new key figures to the discussion of the Gao Gang-Liu Shaoqi rivalry such as Zhang Wentian and Lin Feng will be of interest to both Chinese scholars of the CCP and Cold War history.

Chapter Outline

The dissertation is organized by five chapters with an epilogue and conclusion. The first chapter, Soviet Manchuria, looks at the role and evolution of Soviet assistance to the Chinese Communists in Manchuria. The chapter spans the period from immediately after Japanese surrender, when the Soviets pursued a precarious policy of assisting the Communists *sub rosa* while also not overtly antagonizing the Chinese Nationalists, to Soviet aid during the Korean War and Manchuria's economic reconstruction. The discussion shows how the Northeast Government and Gao Gang politicized Soviet aid and example to attack skeptics and opponents of Communist rule. The chapter also compares aid programs in Manchuria to what was offered to the so-called Eastern European People's Democracies and North Korea; although Soviet involvement in Manchuria was impressive in volume and scope, it did not bring Moscow nearly as much political influence as similar efforts elsewhere in the Eastern Bloc.

The second chapter, Manchuria: the CCP's Economics Lab, builds on the theme of paramount importance of the Manchurian economy for the Chinese Communists by looking at economic policy enacted by the Northeast Government from 1948 through the Korean War. Economic reconstruction was the most pressing issue facing Gao Gang and the party in Manchuria as the government needed to finance both the civil war effort and subsequently the new national state. The chapter looks at how Manchuria became a laboratory for economic ideas and where two individuals in particular, Zhang Wentian and Ma Hong, exercised outsized influence in urging the Northeast Government to abandon war communism. By looking at

speeches, reports, and contemporary expert publications such as *Northeast Industry*, I make the case that far from being textbook Stalinists or supporting rigid state planning, the Northeast Government relied upon and valued private capital, placing pragmatism above ideology.

The third chapter, Breadbasket of the Revolution*,* turns to land reform in Manchuria, the single most sweeping policy change enacted by the Northeast Government. How land reform was carried out varied greatly county to county and province to province, but it was on the whole a highly violent campaign. Although Gao and the Northeast politburo at times encouraged such violence, the chapter argues that the party experimented with various moderate policies to prevent the collapse of agricultural output. While local leadership de facto acknowledged inequality and the helpful economic role of the landowner class, the issue of rich peasants remained unresolved at the time Gao Gang was transferred to Beijing and played a role in his subsequent clash with Liu Shaoqi.

Turning to political consolidation, the fourth chapter, A Manchuria for us and not you, looks at coercive political campaigns carried out by the Northeast Government to cement control and eliminate opposition to Communist rule. Manchuria led the country in national campaigns to suppress counterrevolutionaries; the "Three antis" aimed at corrupt former Nationalist era officials; and the "Five antis" targeting the bourgeoisie. Reaching a crescendo during the Korean War, the effort paralleled the earlier Yan'an Rectification campaign during World War II. Similarities show that in times of crisis, instead of a broad-tent approach, the party has demanded ever greater loyalty and treated politically suspect classes as an existential threat. With the actual scale of resistance to Communist rule vastly exaggerated, the suppression campaigns foreshadowed even larger waves of persecution later in the 1950s and during the Cultural Revolution.

In the final substantive chapter of the dissertation, Once Again at War, I turn to the role Manchuria played during the Korean War. The war propelled Gao Gang to the zenith of his power and personal prestige and allowed for the final consolidation of Chinese control over Manchuria. Serving as the home front for the war, Manchuria paid a tremendous human and economic cost resulting in further hardship for the local population. The chapter is an attempt to center the story of the Chinese intervention in the war not on events in the Korean peninsula as is done both in western and Chinese historiography, but on the Chinese Northeast.

Lastly, the epilogue discusses the 1954 Gao-Rao Affair that ended Gao Gang's meteoric career and life. Due to the sensitivity of the political purge, many of the details remain murky and highly speculative. As a result, I've attempted to concisely chronicle Gao's downfall through various Chinese memoirs and Soviet archival documents and debunk some of the long-held rumors and myths surrounding Gao. In addition, I connect the affair with the end of the Northeast Government and the final, decisive centralization of state and party power in Beijing.

Chapter 1:

Soviet Manchuria

Under the cover of darkness, the battalion commander Wu Zhanlin (吳佔林) led his second column of the Nationalist 13th Corps into Yingkou (營口), a vital transportation hub located just 100 kilometers from the Soviet occupied ports of Dalian and Lushun. That night on 14 January 1946, the objective was to occupy Yingkou, cut the Changchun Rail Line and deny the Chinese Communists the ability to supply Shenyang, Changchun, or rotate their troops via the Soviet-controlled Liaodong Peninsula. Suddenly, the column came under fire from artillery and mortars. The flat terrain around Yingkou gave the men no chance. Wu along with his soldiers were all killed. The Nationalists assumed the attackers were Chinese Red Army soldiers, in reality they were Soviet artillerymen under the command of Lt. Colonel M. Voloshin of the 39th Army stationed in Dalian.[1]

Carefully concealed at the time by the Soviets to avoid a full rupture with the Nationalist government or U.S. intervention, and largely omitted in subsequent Chinese Communist propaganda that advanced a narrative of the CCP relying exclusively on its own efforts, the scale of Soviet involvement in the Chinese Civil War has been underestimated by historians. In Manchuria, where the civil war was won, the Soviets began assisting the CCP as early as 1945—working closely with Gao Gang and the nascent Northeast Government.

[1] Parshev, A. P., and Viktor Stepakov. *Ne tam i ne togda: kogda nachalas' i gde zakonchilas' vtoraia mirovaia?* 2015; "Battle of Yingkou, an Example of the Soviet Red Army Participating in the Chinese Civil War(營口戰役—蘇聯紅軍公開參加東北內戰壹例)." Creaders.net. 16 November 2012. http://bbs.creaders.net/history/bbsviewer.php?trd_id=793475 (Accessed 4 May, 2020).

From 1946 to 1954, as Manchuria morphed from being the decisive frontline in China's Civil War, to a laboratory for New China's Communist economic model, to a once again a strategic rear area during the Korean War, Soviet civilian and military experts were active at every juncture. The Soviets rebuilt railways and infrastructure, helped plan and expand heavy industry, actively participated in education and public health campaigns. On the military side, Soviet military advisors assisted in arming and supplying the PLA while also helping the PLA undergo crash course mechanization and modernization. In the vicinity of the Liaodong Peninsula where Soviet troops were stationed, the Soviet army even resorted to limited operations to aid the PLA. Perhaps most crucially, beyond the in-kind material assistance, the Soviets were the living, in the flesh personification of the coveted Communist system that the Chinese Communist Party wanted to build. As a result, the Soviet experts became important, if not sometimes unwitting, actors in the political clashes that unfolded in the Northeast during the "Three and Five antis（三反五反）" and the "Resist America Aid Korea (抗美援朝)" campaigns.[2]

Soviet assistance closely tracked the strategic shifts in Soviet thinking vis-à-vis Manchuria. Until late 1948-early 1949, when the CCP's victory began to look more certain, Stalin hedged by prioritizing the preservation of gains afforded to Moscow by the Yalta Agreement and the treaty signed with the Nationalist government in 1945. During this time, Soviet advisors operated under a strictly clandestine basis and some CCP requests for aid were turned down. Once Communist victory became a near certainty, Soviet involvement in Manchuria deepened with the Soviet Union taking direct action to prop up the economy of the Northeast. Lingering Soviet caution was jettisoned completely with the outbreak of the Korean

[2] See chapter 4 for more on Three and Five antis and the Resist America Aid Korea campaign.

War. Over the course of the conflict, Moscow committed itself to helping China develop a modern military industrial complex in the Northeast as part of the PRC first Five Year Plan and effectively surrendered all instruments of economic and political leverage in the region.

Before diving into the history of Soviet experts in Manchuria, an important semantics question has to be addressed. All of the English-language scholarship refers to Soviet specialists sent to China as "advisors," borrowing from scholarship on Soviet reconstruction and Stalinization efforts in Eastern Europe and directly translating the Russian word for advisor, *sovetnik*.[3] Chinese secondary literature and archival documents on the other hand refer to Soviet specialists as *zhuanjia* (專家), which more closely translates to expert than advisor *guwen* (顧問).[4] The distinction is not a pedantic one, because the Soviet bureaucracy differentiated between experts working domestically (specialists*)* and those that were sent abroad (*sovetniki/Advisors)*. Early Chinese requests for assistance in addition to meeting political pushback were often further delayed by bureaucratic confusion within the relevant Soviet ministries when the Chinese side asked for *zhuanjia* (specialists). Although in theory any engineer or doctor serving as a Soviet specialist back home could become an advisor to a friendly socialist country virtually overnight, the extreme vetting and emphasis on the person's political credentials meant that Soviet advisors (sovetniki) sent abroad were in a class of their own. In this work, the Soviets sent for work to China will be referred to as experts.

Existing Scholarship

[3] Kaple, Deborah. 2016. "Agents of Change: Soviet Advisers and High Stalinist Management in China, 1949–1960." Journal of Cold War Studies 18, no. 1: 5-30.

[4] Shen, Zhihua (沈志華). *Soviet Experts in China (蘇聯專家在中國*). Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2009.

Deborah Kaple's *Dreams of a Red Factory* is the most comprehensive study of Soviet experts in China; Kaple was able to interview numerous then still living experts in the early 1990s. Concerning the politics and economics of aid, the Soviet Union of the late 1940s was still in the midst of a costly and painful recovery after the devastation wrought by the Great Patriotic War and hardly in a position to offer economic assistance to China or Eastern Europe. Spurred by the growing Cold War tensions and Stalin's concomitant zenith of prestige and power after 1945, the CPSU domestically relied on mass campaigns, gulag labor, and harsh discipline on a scale that surpassed even the arduous years of collectivization and First and Second Five Year Plans in the 1930s. Unsurprisingly, Kable argued that Soviet experts assigned to China brought with them that totalitarian work culture and ideology. In China, such methods were readily accepted by the CCP, which also favored strict control and coercive measures.[5]

Shen Zhihua, in his work on Soviet experts in China, focuses on the impact of the experts on the overall Sino-Soviet relationship. According to Shen, Stalin tarried aid to China because he feared risking the Yalta Agreement and U.S. intervention in Northeast Asia.[6] Mao was dissatisfied with Soviet delays and what the CCP felt was an exorbitant price for Soviet assistance, but was in no position to negotiate with Moscow since the "Lean to One Side" policy effectively cut off other options. Despite the friction and frequent confusion on the ground, Soviet experts were seen as "China's best teachers" and played an immeasurable role in building the PRC. Shen also makes the argument that the Soviet experts were far less successful in influencing Chinese military modernization, citing frequent rejection of Soviet proposals.[7] As will be discussed below, it is important to not conflate some opposition to Soviet advice with

[5] Kaple, Deborah A. *Dream of a Red Factory The Legacy of High Stalinism in China*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
[6] Shen, Zhihua (沈志華), 57; 44-46.
[7] Ibid., 131-132.

across the board failure. For instance, Gao Gang personally criticized and overruled PLA commanders who questioned the wisdom of Soviet doctrine.[8] Indeed, by the end of the Korean War the PLA closely mirrored the Soviet Army in armament, organizational structure, and doctrine (with a few caveats).

Hua-yu Li's *Mao and the Economic Stalinization of China 1948-1953* touches upon the structural and ideological influence of Soviet advisors on Chinese economic planning. In particular, she notes the importance of *Stalin's Short Course* in shaping Chinese leadership's thinking on economic development, particularly coercive capital accumulation through collectivization of agriculture. Intellectually, Soviet experts, constricted by Stalinist paradigms, only reinforced flawed understanding of the Soviet Union's industrialization and collectivization as presented in the *Short Course*, which ultimately served as the basis of the Chinese First Five Year Plan. Li argues that the political environment made it impossible to challenge Soviet cannon because Mao himself backed the Stalinist blueprint.[9] Li's assessment is too categorical. In the Northeast, economic experts intimately familiar with the shortcomings of the Soviet system— such as Zhang Wentian (張聞天)— went to great lengths to chart a more pragmatic course.[10]

First Soviet Advisors in Manchuria (1946-48)

[8] "Conversation between Xu Xiangqian and Vasilevsky, sent to Stalin." RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1255.
[9] Li, Hua-yu. *Mao and the Economic Stalinization of China, 1948-1953*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
[10] See Chapter 2

The CCP's decision to make Manchuria its primary base presented numerous daunting administrative challenges. For one, prior to taking control of Harbin and Shenyang in 1946, the Chinese Communists had no experience in running large industrial cities. In order to restore normal economic conditions and quell social unrest in the cities, the CCP needed Soviet assistance. The first Soviet aid came in the form of economic trade with the Northeast to stave off economic collapse.[11] The Soviet Union maintained unofficial trade relations with Manchukuo (along with consulates in Harbin, Shenyang, and Dalian) so barter trade with the new Communist authorities began immediately. In the winter of 1946/47 the Northeast People's Government signed a trade agreement with the Soviet Union in Harbin. According to Taiwanese press, Gao Gang unilaterally signed the agreement without consulting Beijing.[12] In any case, the agreement was unprecedented in the nearly thirty year relationship between the CCP and the Soviet Union.

The Chinese Eastern Railway (KVZhD) railway personnel also repaired the tracks damaged by the Soviet invasion of Manchuria with alacrity, giving the Chinese Communists access to rail.[13] Restored rail networks in the Northeast not only played an important role in military logistics, they helped improve the economic situation; when the Soviets fixed the Jinzhuang (金莊) line, salt, shrimp, and other valuable commodities from Pulandian (普蘭店) near Dalian were once again sold throughout the Northeast, leading to the stabilization of prices and new jobs.[14]

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[11] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 34.

[12] China News, "*Red Purge Gets Under Way.*" 1 August 1954. https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=4&post=6430 (Accessed on 4 May 2020).

[13] Chinese Eastern Railway, 東清鐵路, Китайско-Восточная железная дорога or КВЖД; Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 36.

[14] Northeast Government. *Soviet Experts in the Northeast* (*蘇聯專家在東北).* Shenyang: Northeast People's Publishing, 1953, 54.

Shen Zhihua has written that the earliest Soviet aid projects were carried out primarily for the benefit of the Soviets. In Shen's support one has to look no further than the above example: Pulandian County was of particular concern to the Soviets because they feared a KMT occupation of Pulandian would adversely affect Dalian's already battered economy.[15] Evidence of self-serving behavior does not mean that the CCP leadership or even rank and file members saw initial Soviet assistance in such a jaded manner. Li Yueran (李越然), the CCP Central Committee's eventual chief Russian translator, assisted with the interpretation on the Changchun Railroad repair projects. He recalls in his memoirs that Soviet engineers working on the railway not only repaired the lines at breakneck speed but also had a strong genuine sense of mission to help the Chinese Communists.[16] This selflessness deeply impressed the Chinese working alongside.

While railways were fixed relatively quickly, restoring reliable electric supply to the cities, to say nothing of factory production, proved to be a more difficult task. Acting under Central Committee guidance, it would take almost two years for the PLA's chief commander in Manchuria, Lin Biao, to formally request on 8 September 1948 that a hundred Soviet specialists come to the Northeast. Lin asked for experts not advisors, which as described earlier added an extra layer of bureaucratic delay.[17] More importantly, the request put the Soviets in an awkward political position due to fears that Soviet involvement in Manchuria would be used as a pretext by either the KMT or the United States to step up anti-Soviet activity if not outright intervention in the case of the latter.[18] Not wanting to turn down the request at a time when the CCP was

[15] Wang, Peiping (王佩平). *Soviet Red Army in Luda (蘇聯紅軍在旅大).* Dalian, 1995, 220-222.
[16] Li, Yueran (李越然). *Personal Historical Record of Sino-Soviet Relations: Testimony of China's Chief Russian Translator(中蘇外交親歷記：首席俄語翻譯的歷史見證)*. Beijing: Shijie zhichi chubanshe, 2001.
[17] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 40.
[18] Ibid., 41.

clearly gaining the upper hand, Stalin sent a personal representative, Ivan Kovalev, to assess Chinese needs firsthand.[19] Kovalev in turn sent a detailed letter to Stalin regarding Lin Biao's original request, but there are no archival records currently available on what was done to follow up. Gao Gang mentioned that he greeted a large arriving group of Soviet experts in December of 1948, but they were most likely railway workers.[20] What is known, is that up to 1949 the Soviets took great care to keep all aid secret and relied on trade channels to deliver it.[21] Thus, when the Northeast Bureau asked to establish direct telegraph communications with the Soviet Union, Stalin himself rejected the offer.[22] Telegraph communication would not be established until after the proclamation of the PRC.

Soviet delays with assistance came at a time when several hydroelectric stations in the Northeast were in a critical state; coal mines were flooded; factories were failing to produce essential goods and munitions. Just as in Nationalist controlled territories, inflation was becoming a serious problem.[23] CCP administrative inexperience and open civil war were major factors for this socio-economic crisis, but the Soviets also contributed their fair share to the malaise. When the Soviet Red Army occupied the Northeast in 1945, much of the industry of the region was heavily damaged by Soviet pilfering. Incongruous situations arose where the Soviets were asked to carry out urgent repairs on infrastructure they themselves had wrecked.

Such was the case with the Fengman Hydroelectric Station near Jilin, at the time China's largest. In 1945, the Soviets stripped the plant of its turbines, electric generators, and other expensive equipment shipping it off to Mingachevir, Azerbaijan where a new hydroelectric dam

[19] Kovalev was incidentally the former Minister of Railways, whose handling of the military rail logistics during the Second World War earned him the highest praise from Zhukov and others.
[20] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 49.
[21] Ibid., 54.
[22] Ibid., 55.
[23] Chen, Yun (陳雲). *Selected Works of Chen Yun (陳雲文選) Volume 1*. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2015.

was being built as part of the post-war economic plan.[24] Either due to work left unfinished by the Japanese, or Soviet damage and subsequent neglect, the dam was on the verge of bursting by early 1948, requiring urgent repairs. The Soviets began repair work in March of 1948, but were not fully finished until 1951 due to missing parts. In 1949, Minister of Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov was told that it would take twenty months for a Leningrad factory to build new turbines for Fengman. Instead the relevant ministry offered to either ship back the old Japanese turbines or strip a plant in North Korea.[25] Ultimately Molotov, probably after consulting Stalin, decided to return the turbines and thereby delay the Soviet project in Azerbaijan. Soviet assistance at Fengman was covered extensively in the Chinese press, but Nationalist Chinese accounts from refugees state that memories of industrial theft was a major factor in anti-Soviet sentiment among the urban population.[26]

Another source of tension was over compensation. Early drafts of the agreement on Soviet aid stipulated equal pay for Chinese and Soviet workers. During the negotiations, the Soviets not only insisted that the Chinese cover various travel expenses but that Soviet factories and construction bureaus be compensated for the lost productivity while the experts were away.[27] When the final agreement was signed, Soviet exerts were given a salary on par with CCP Central Committee members in addition to various perks such as special stores and cafeterias.[28] The only concession the Soviets made was to drop requests for jurisdiction over Soviet experts who

[24] (Fengman Hydropower Station 豐滿水電站). Baike, https://baike.baidu.com/item/丰满水电站 (Accessed on 4 May 2020).
[25] "Letter on Jirin Hydroelectric Plant" RGASPI. Molotov Collection Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1254.
[26] Fu Bingchang Diary, 2 January, 1946.
[27] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 65-67.
[28] Lu, Zhenxiang (魯振祥), Yang Gongzhi (楊公之), and Wang Yuqiang (王玉強). *Liu Shaoqi's Writings since 1949 (建國以來劉少奇文稿) Volume 1*. Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2005, 44-45.

committed crimes in China.[29] The Soviets too felt at times that the CCP was behaving in a less than comradely fashion. Andrei Gromyko complained in 1947 to Lin Biao and Gao Gang that Russian railway workers were being discriminated against and fired from the Northern railway line, showing that recurring tensions between Chinese and Soviet railway personnel had not gone away after two years of Communist rule.[30] The Soviets also sent a demarche to the Northeast Government that it was failing to honor the 1945 Sino-Soviet agreement on comanagement of joint-stock firms.[31]

Insight on Mao's real thoughts on Soviet aid can only be speculative. Russian archival evidence clearly points to numerous delays and excuses given by Stalin and Molotov. It is reasonable to assume that Mao saw right through them, but not only was he not in any position to challenge the Moscow bosses, aid, albeit in smaller quantity, was still coming.[32] Officially Mao conveyed unequivocal gratitude to Stalin. Even going as far as praising specific engineers in his cables to Stalin.[33] We can only guess if Mao knew or cared that once back in Stalin's Soviet Union, such distinction could have brought repression and not recognition. Locally, the leadership in Manchuria was even more effusive. Not only were there large ceremonies to greet the experts, Li Fuchun (李富春) and Gao Gang personally sent off the teams on their way home, giving them parting gifts on behalf of the Northeast Government.[34]

The intense horse trading over Soviet assistance and how to pay for it should not obscure

[29] Ibid., See "Agreement on Stipulations for Soviet Experts in China (關於蘇聯專家在中國工作條件的協定)" (March 1950).
[30] Ledovsky, Andrei *Delo Gao Gana*, 1990, 65.
[31] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 68.
[32] "Memorandum of Conversation between Stalin and CCP Delegation," 27 June 1949. AVPRF. Fond. 45, Opis. 1, Delo. 329, List. 1-7.
[33] "Mao telegram to 'Filippov' (Stalin)." 8 January 1949."AVPRF. Fond. 39, Opis. 1, Delo. 37, 1.
[34] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 40.

that it was often of truly strategic value and desperately needed. In September of 1949, the Shijingshan Electric Plant (石景山發電廠) experienced a major accident, leaving all of Beijing without power. While contemporary news reports blamed the outage on KMT saboteurs, the Soviets were quietly asked to send a team of experts to investigate.[35] The team discovered that the plant operated without any protocols, lacked institutional training and emergency procedures. Lacking almost any sort of documentation, everything was done ad hoc, with new hires taught by more experienced workers orally and "on the spot." The shocking results of the investigation led to efforts to overhaul and improve plant safety in 1950 throughout the Northeast. [36]

Military assistance

Military assistance was a crucial component of early Soviet aid to the Chinese Communists. As alluded to in the introduction, one of the most understudied questions of the final phase of the Chinese Civil War is the extent of Soviet military aid to the Communist side. Both archival evidence and memoirs suggest that the Soviet Union, while maintaining diplomatic cover and plausible deniability, was deeply involved in the conflict—in the process speeding up the CCP's victory.

Initial contact between the Communist Northeast Democratic United Army (東北民主聯軍) and the Red Army in late 1945 was not without isolated contretemps; both sides were guilty

[35] Xue, Qiyu (薛啟宇)."Internal History of Beijing's Shijingshan Electric Plant 1948-1995 (*中共北京石景山發電總廠歷史大事*)", Shijingshan Electric Plant Party Records Office, 1999. Unpublished manuscript, Shen Zhihua's personal collection.
[36] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 118.

of local acts of aggression and miscommunication.[37] Existing scholarship, from Levine's *Anvil of Victory* to Dieter Heinzig's *Arduous Road*, describe this period (1945-48) as either one of the Soviets turning a blind eye to CCP activity (Levine) or as a fraught relationship where Stalin and the Soviets were constantly playing a double game in Manchuria, engaging both with the KMT and the Communists in order to consolidate and preserve the gains from Yalta.[38] Chinese historiography, even by non-party affiliated scholars such as Yang Kuisong or Niu Jun, also avoids challenging the prevailing narrative that the CCP won the final stage of the Civil War largely on their own.[39] When looking at local histories published in the 1990s around the 50th anniversary of the "Liberation War" and newly declassified Russian and Taiwanese archival material, the extent of military-to-military cooperation between the Chinese Red Army and its Soviet cousin comes into clearer focus.

When Lin Biao's forces, the 8th Route Army and the reconstituted New Fourth Army, began to arrive in Manchuria in September of 1945, they were under immense pressure to establish bases and quickly consolidate their position. About 100,000 soldiers were dispatched to the Northeast to link up with the local United Anti-Japanese Army.[40] Such a force could not hope to effectively control a region the size of France, teeming with outlaws and various military outfits, to say nothing of Nationalist troops which also began arriving in the region in September.[41] In order to ensconce themselves in major cities Shenyang, Harbin, Changchun, Jiamusi, and Mudanjiang the CCP had to rely on at least tacit Red Army support. The Soviets not

[37] Levine, Steven I. *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, 102.
[38] See Levine, 30-35 and Heinzig, Dieter. *The Soviet Union and Communist China 1945-1950: The Arduous Road to the Alliance*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015.
[39] See Niu Jun's article "The birth of the People's Republic of China and the road to the Korean War," in Leffler, Melvyn P., and Odd Arne Westad. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Origins 1 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
[40] Levine, 104.
[41] Nationalist Government issued the order to recover the Northeast on 1 September 1946.

only allowed the Communists to enter cities and set up underground party offices, they gave access to the Soviet controlled Changchun Railroad, granting the Communist troops a major advantage.[42] At the same time, the Soviets put up various hindrances to the Nationalist effort to do the same. When General Xiong Shihui(熊式輝) arrived in Changchun on 12 October 1945 to negotiate the handover of the city, Nationalist hopes for securing Soviet cooperation after signing the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty were dashed by Soviet stonewalling that it was "too dangerous" for the Nationalist troops to advance northward because cities were locked down for an anti-plague quarantine.[43]

Official Chinese historiography emphasizes that the Communist armies essentially waged two campaigns during this period: one against the Nationalists and another against bandits. The latter allowed the CCP to gain trust of the local population and greatly aided their efforts at recruiting new soldiers.[44] According to the Chinese historian Han Gang (韓鋼), ties between various Northeast bandit groups and both the KMT and the CCP are greatly exaggerated. There was an attempt by local toughs to use political allegiances as cover for their criminal activity, while both the Nationalists and the Communists found it convenient to label local strongmen as either KMT or CCP linked bandits in order to squeeze them.[45]

Political or not, local bandit formations still posed a serious menace to the nascent Northeast Government. Mudanjiang's published materials on the bandit suppression campaign

[42] Parshev, A. P., and Viktor Stepakov. *Ne tam i ne togda: kogda nachalas' i gde zakonchilas' vtoraia mirovaia?*
[43] "Secrets of Recovering the Northeast: Chiang Kai-shek's Old Friend Assumed Key Post(東北接收秘聞：蔣介石老友任接收大員)." 26 October 2013. QQ. https://view.news.qq.com/a/20131026/003282_1.htm (Accessed 4 May 2020).
[44] Xing, Ancheng (邢安臣) and Bai Juncheng (白俊成). *Ethnic Minorities during the Liberation War in Northeast (東北解放戰爭中的少數民族)*. Minzu chubanshe, 1995.
[45] Interview with Han Gang, summer 2018 Shanghai

mention that in April of 1946, Communist troops suddenly discovered that the bandits near old black mountain (老黑山) were much better equipped than expected, even possessing a tank of Japanese origin. In response, the Communist troops deployed five tanks of their own—which all came from the Soviets.[46] Soviet assistance in taking on outlaws was even more direct in Jilin, where Red Army troops took part in the capture of Baicheng (白城) in November of 1945. In that engagement, over 300 "bandits" were either killed or captured by the Soviets working together with the 8th Route Army.[47]

As the Civil War intensified, the reorganized Communist forces in the Northeast began a crash mobilization campaign, swelling their ranks to about a million by 1948.[48] Despite this impressive feat, the Northeast forces still suffered from a critical shortage of artillery, modern weaponry, and logistical support.[49] For this, the CCP also turned to the Soviet Union. Much has been noted of Stalin's initial refusal to supply the Chinese Communists with Soviet arms.[50] Heinzig uses this as evidence of Stalin's wider mistrust of Mao, but it is unlikely that the decision had anything to do with the former's opinion of Mao. Stalin was chiefly preoccupied with managing relations with the United States, maintaining a security belt in Northeast Asia, and by extension lending public support to U.S. efforts to broker peace between the Nationalists and the Communists.

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[46] Wang Zhenkui (王振奎). *Record of Bandit Suppression in Linhai (林海剿匪記實).* Mudanjiang.
[47] Xia Shangzhi (夏尚志). *Baicheng's Historical Records (白城 文史資料).* Baicheng: Baicheng Historical Records Research Committee.
[48] China's PLA Northeast Field Army(中國人民解放軍東北野戰軍). Baike, https://baike.baidu.com/item/中国人民解放军东北野战军 (Accessed 4 May 2020).
[49] Gao Gang pleaded with the Soviets for artillery shells. See Brian Murray's *Stalin, the Cold War, and the Division of China: A Multi-Archival Mystery* in CWIHP Bulletin.
[50] Heinzig, 23-27.

The Soviets had good reason to worry. The terms of the Yalta agreement had come under growing criticism both in China and in the west for being too generous to Soviet demands.[51] This emboldened the Nanjing government to challenge the Soviets both in Manchuria and in Xinjiang, in the process failing to abide by parts of the 1945 friendship treaty signed with Moscow. Feeling increasingly distrustful of Chiang Kai-shek, the Soviets attempted to check the Nationalists without further fanning the flames of anti-Soviet sentiment. Such a fine balancing act could only be achieved through covert military assistance to the CCP.

Amid the deteriorating geopolitical situation, the Nationalists launched a major offensive to secure Manchuria during the winter of 1946/47. In response, the Soviets armed the Chinese Red Armies operating in Manchuria in a way that would increase their odds against the crack Nationalist troops while maintaining a façade of deniability to avoid diplomatic repercussions. The occupying Soviet Army, formally forbidden from arming the Chinese Communists with Soviet weaponry, turned a blind eye when it came to the vast leftover Kwantung arsenals. The CCP had banked on using these weapons and it was one of the reasons why Manchuria was picked before 1945 as the Party's future main base of operations after the Anti-Japanese War. The existence of these weapons depots was hardly a secret and the KMT government along with the United States vigorously protested that the USSR was blocking Nationalist troops from securing them.[52] Moscow responded that it was opposed to any side using the weapons and was maintaining strict neutrality. To maintain the ruse, Soviet troops would occasionally invite journalists for staged destruction of seized Japanese weaponry.[53] According to memoirs of

[51] Fu Bingchang diary 5 March 1946; 28 June 1947
[52] Sheng, Michael. 1994. "The United States, the Chinese Communist Party, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1950: A Reappraisal." *Pacific Historical Review* 63, no. 4: 521-36. Accessed May 5, 2020
[53] Wang, Peiping (王佩平). *Soviet Red Army in Luda (蘇聯紅軍在旅大),* 107.

Chinese cadres working in Dalian, the Soviets only allowed the Chinese Communists to take weapons at night and under great secrecy.[54]

As alluded to earlier, the major Nationalist offensive in late 1946-47 proved to be much stronger than the Communist forces expected, quickly creating a major crisis on all sectors of the Northeast front.[55] Lin Biao's troops were underequipped and were no match for the US armed divisions of Sun Liren (孫立人) and Du Yuming (杜聿明); Mao's new strategy of holding cities and opting for positional warfare appeared to be a disaster. In reality, the Nationalists were already overstretched beyond their logistical capacity, while the Communists had a sanctuary north of the Songjiang River where they could regroup and eventually counterattack.[56] On the field of battle however, the situation seemed dire.

Fearing Communist collapse at the peak of the Nationalist advance, the Soviet Union took up a series of risky moves to help improve the situation on the operational level. According to historical accounts of cadres and soldiers who were stationed in the Liaodong Peninsula, the Soviets carried out limited nighttime artillery strikes from their positions outside Dalian against Nationalist troops approaching the peninsula.[57] Such strikes were intended as a warning to the Nationalist forces that the Soviet Army would not countenance the severing of the peninsula from the mainland; preserving a buffer zone which allowed the Chinese Communists to move injured soldiers to Soviet controlled territory while receiving arms and provisions from Dalian. The intimacy of military cooperation between the Chinese Communists and the Soviets is also

[54] Ibid.
[55] Tanner, Harold Miles. *Where Chiang Kai-Shek Lost China: The Liao-Shen Campaign, 1948*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015, 50-53; 63.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Wang, Peiping (王佩平). *Soviet Red Army in Luda (蘇聯紅軍在旅大)*, 13.

corroborated by the memoirs of the U.S. Consul in Dalian and the diary entries of Fu Bingchang.[58]

As the fighting intensified, it became apparent that the dated Japanese-made Kwantung Army weaponry was no match for the U.S. weaponry used by the Nationalists. Outgunned, the Chinese Red Army needed heavy machineguns, reliable hand grenades, and submachine guns. Frontline commanders intensified their pleas for more military assistance from Moscow, but the Soviet leadership feared that direct arms supplies would incur a U.S. military intervention that would be the final nail in the Communist coffin. Instead, the Soviet Union found an ingenious solution: captured weapons from the defeated German Wermaht. By 1945, the Soviets were in possession of vast quantities of German arms from armories located in Eastern Germany in addition to booty taken in battle. Archival documents itemizing Soviet aid to the PLA and the Korean People's Army in the Molotov collection are still classified, but the transcript of Mikoyan's meeting with Zhou Enlai in February of 1949 mentions a request for more German and Czechoslovak weapons.[59] Secondary accounts and Chinese memoirs also explicitly mention German weaponry, of the above mentioned types, given by the Soviets.[60] Not all the weaponry was in working order, and it is improbable that German arms alone were enough to decide the outcome of the campaign. What it does indicate however is that the Soviets were tipping the scales in favor of the Communists with risky gambles at a time when anti-Soviet feelings were increasing not only in Western Europe and the US, but also in Turkey and Iran.

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[58] See Paddock, Paul. *China Diary: Crisis Diplomacy in Dairen*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Univ. Press, 1977; Fu Bingchang Diary 16 May 1947.
[59] "Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Zhou Enlai." 1 February 1949. AVPRF. Fond. 39, Opis. 1, Delo. 39, List. 25-30. Reprinted in Ledovsky, Andrei, Raisa Mirovitskaia and Vladimir Miasnikov. *Sovetsko-Kitaiskie Otnosheniia, Vol. 5, Book 2, 1946-February 1950.* Moscow: Pamiatniki Istoricheskoi Mysli, 2005, 48-51. Available online at: https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113317 (Accessed 18 May 2020).
[60] Wang, Peiping (王佩平). *Soviet Red Army in Luda (蘇聯紅軍在旅大),* 112.

There is an old military saying that amateurs talk strategy, professionals talk logistics. According to Yang Kuisong and Shen Zhihua, speedy Soviet efforts to repair the Changchun Railroad and local lines played an important role in the positive outcome of the decisive 1948 Liaoshen Campaign for the Communists.[61] Communist troops enjoyed secure supply lines from north of the Songjiang River while Nationalist troops became trapped in cities with severed rail links to North China. Access to rail allowed the Communists to capitalize on their victory and drive deep into Nationalist territory.

Stalin may have tarried with aiding the Chinese Communists at the onset, but when the time came to land a *coup de grace* to Chiang Kai-shek, the Soviets acted swiftly. In early January of 1949, Stalin made available 136 locomotives and 2500 train cars from the Changchun Railway and Soviet depots to aid the PLA's advance down south.[62] Without such logistical supply, it is unlikely that the PLA could have overrun the southern provinces as quickly as they did, even with KMT defections.

Stepped up Soviet aid to the Communists was paired with covert measures to thwart Nationalist plans. By no later than 1947, the Soviets were actively sharing intelligence with the PLA.[63] Longstanding Soviet policy to block naval access to Dalian was reinforced with an operation to interfere with a KMT fact finding mission to the city led by Dong Yanping (董彥平) in 1947. In addition to being harassed and closely watched, the Soviets overnight issued new currency in the city making the delegation's cash holdings worthless, preventing Dong from

[61]Lu Zhengcao (吕正操). "Remembering Rail Transportation during the Liaoshen Campaign (回憶遼瀋戰役中的鐵路運輸)." CCP Party School Research Center, 5 November, 2015. http://www.dswxyjy.org.cn/n/2015/1105/c244516-27782123.html (Accessed 4 May 2020).
[62] "Telegram from Filippov (Stalin) to Terebin." 3 January 1949. RGASPI. Stalin Collection. Fond. 558, Opis. 11, Delo. 330, List.0083.
[63] Krutikov, K.A. *Na Kitaeskom Napravlenii*. Moscow, 2003, 65-68.

funding pro-KMT elements in the city. The delegation was even forced to ask in humiliation for Soviet financial assistance to pay for lodging.[64]

A Nationalist intelligence report on the Northeast notes the close cooperation between Soviet army intelligence and the Communists, with the former often disguised or operating alongside Soviet railway workers.[65] Open antagonism between the Soviets and the Nationalists during the civil war clearly shows that although neither side wanted a full break in relations, there was little faith in Nanjing that Moscow would restrain the Chinese Communists or in Moscow that Nanjing could be expected to be neutral in the emerging US-Soviet confrontation.

Soviet Experts during Socialist Reconstruction (1949-1950)

Although Manchuria was firmly under Communist control after the Liaoshen Campaign in late 1948, it took the official proclamation of the People's Republic in October of 1949 and the switch in Soviet recognition from the Nationalists to the Communists for cooperation between the Northeast Government and the Soviets to reach a new qualitative level. With immediate exigencies of civil war receding, the priority for using Soviet aid shifted to longer-term economic development and socialist state-building.

How Soviet aid and experts were portrayed by the CCP mattered as much as the quality of their expertise or the overall aid value in rubles. If used correctly, Soviet instructors, industrial and mining equipment, military assistance, and translated publications could help the CCP increase its legitimacy and catalyze a rapid transition to a socialist system similar to those found

[64] Wang, Peiping (王佩平). *Soviet Red Army in Luda (蘇聯紅軍在旅大).* Dalian, 1995, 46.
[65] "Report on Conditions in Border Regions Prepared by KMT Central Secretariat (中央聯秘處編印邊疆情況專報第二期)." March 1948. Academia Historica (國史館). Documents of President Chiang Kai-shek. File Number: 002-080200-00327-033.

in other new People's Democracies. Conversely, if Soviet aid proved to be costly and ineffective or worse, a veiled extension of Russian imperialism, the CCP risked being perceived as Moscow's lackeys, hoisting upon China a backward economic and social model.

By 1949 the party had already discovered that attitudes among educated Chinese in Manchuria towards the Soviet Union were at best lukewarm.[66] During the initial occupation after the August 1945 Soviet invasion of Manchuria, the Red Army failed to impose discipline resulting in widespread rape and looting. After receiving complaints and rotating troops, discipline was imposed, but the initial experience coupled with industrial pilfering poisoned relations with the local population.[67] Even after the Soviet withdrawal in March of 1946, Soviet ownership of the Changchun Railroad, which entailed hundreds of Soviet railway personnel posted throughout Manchuria, continued to be a cause of considerable people-to-people friction.

In response, the Northeast Government launched a concerted campaign to improve the Soviet Union's image. As one may expect, Soviet experts and their work was used to showcase Sino-Soviet friendship and socialist modernity. That work was made all the more urgent when Mao Zedong proclaimed his "lean to one side" (一邊倒) policy in June of 1949, forcing the Northeast Government to take additional steps to advocate for the Soviet Union.[68] Since early 1949, *The Northeast Daily* devoted all of page three to Soviet matters as part of a "Learn about the Soviet Union" (認識蘇聯) campaign. Readers were introduced to specific Soviet nationalities, major accomplishments in sciences, classical Russian and contemporary Soviet literature, and more. No event in Soviet life was deemed too niche or unimportant; even sports

[66] Brown, Jeremy, and Paul Pickowicz. *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010, 161.
[67] Edele, Mark. *The Cambridge History of the Second World War Volume II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 487-508.
[68] Shen, Zhihua and Yafeng Xia. *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Partnership, 1945-1959: A New History*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015.

events and the flora and fauna of all then sixteen Soviet Republics were covered in the newspaper. [69] Since literacy rates were still low, the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association played Soviet films and news reels both in movie theaters and using mobile projectors.

Neibu cankao reports and later criticisms during the Hundred Flowers Blooming campaign give us a good picture of how these postwar efforts were received; more than a few readers found the extensive—and fawning—coverage of the Soviet Union grating or just uninteresting, preferring more details and news about China and other parts of the world outside the socialist camp.[70] On the other hand, Soviet teachers sent to Manchurian schools, Soviet organized vocational training in factories, and opportunities to travel to the Soviet Union either to study or apprentice in factories were met with genuine enthusiasm. *The Northeast Daily* and youth magazines carried detailed stories about Chinese students studying abroad in the Soviet Union, with plenty of quotidian remarks about Russian food, hospitality, and customs along with narration of more socialist inspired activities such as participating in May Day parades.[71]

As mentioned earlier, one of the early sore points in Sino-Soviet relations was the continued Soviet control of the Changchun Railroad. Not only was there anger over what was seen as the continuation of unequal treaty practices, there were also frequent clashes between Soviet and Chinese personnel working on the railway. To change public views, on Gao's orders the Northeast Government published multiple reports of how Soviet engineers risked frostbite and worked in below freezing temperatures to quickly restore damaged sections of the railroad and other lines.[72] Propaganda aside, the memoir of the U.S. Consul in Dalian states that while

[69] A 16th Karelo-Finnish Soviet Republic existed from 1940 until 1956.
[70] N. 257 "Shenyang response to 'Sino-Soviet Friendship Month' activities lukewarm." 18 November 1952. *Neibu Cankao*; N.267 "Bad Elements in the Northeast Distort Sino-Soviet Relations." 3 December, 1952. *Neibu Cankao*.
[71]Northeast Government. *Soviet Experts in the Northeast (蘇聯專家在東北).* Dongbei renmin chubanshe. 1953.
[72] Ibid.

trade in the summer of the 1949 was still a tiny fraction of the levels seen in the heyday of Japanese rule when Dalian rivaled Shanghai and Hong Kong, the restoration of rail links had increased commercial activity.[73]

To combat perceptions that the Soviet Union was involved in the Northeast only because it saw the region as part of its sphere of influence, newspaper articles and Sino-Soviet Friendship Association events lauded the "internationalist" and "Bolshevik" spirit of the Soviets experts.[74] Stories emphasized that Soviet men and women were working very far from their families and homes, shared the difficult conditions that regular Chinese workers faced, and gave China invaluable and most up-to-date knowhow and expertise. The stress on the above themes was not accidental; they were a response to the criticisms of Soviet aid and experts that made the authorities most nervous. The Soviet experts were viewed as living lives of luxury, receiving salaries and food rations on par with CCP central committee members.[75] Despite the campaign, even CCP cadres at times voiced oblique criticism of the Soviets especially that their expertise and technology was a poor fit for China.[76]

Another recurring theme in the propaganda was favorable comparison of Soviet experts to Japanese engineers working for the old Manchukuo government. In a major national feature piece for *The People's Daily*, journalists told the story of how experts from Leningrad had managed to solve a problem in the famous Anshan Steelworks that had bedeviled not only the Japanese, but also English, French, and American experts.[77] Much of the iron ore near Anshan was of poor quality, unsuitable for sintering, a process that agglomerates iron ore dust with other

[73] Paddock, 172.
[74] Ibid.
[75] See "Real Compensation and Work Conditions of Soviet Experts (蘇聯專家的實際待遇和工作條件苏联专家的)." in Shen Zhihua's *Soviet Experts in China.*
[76] Ledovsky, 60-62.
[77] "Soviet Experts at Angang (蘇聯專家在鞍鋼)." *The People's Daily.* 3 December 1952.

fine particles to produce a sturdy product that can then be reused. Japanese engineers failed to sinter the local ores citing their poor quality and the lack of suitable furnaces in Anshan. After a couple of failed experiments, the factory invited American specialists in the hopes of finding a solution. Despite their extensive expertise, they were also unsuccessful and concluded that sintering would never be possible at Anshan. Cue stage right, it did not take long for Leningrad's Z. Shabushev to declare that not only was sintering possible, Anshan should adopt this technique as quickly as possible because it would allow for using waste products like sludge and flue dust to increase overall plant efficiency. Shabushev's recommendation was met with skepticism, especially from the older, Japanese trained engineers—the author took pains to emphasize that the remaining Japanese engineers were particularly certain that the Soviets would fail. As the reader may well predict, the Leningrad Steelworks method proved to be a success, heralding a major transformation for Anshan and allowing the plant to meet the new Northeast Government's call to economize resources and reduce waste.[78]

The reality suggests *The People's Daily* treated the episode as an exercise in fiction writing. The foremost expert on Anshan, the historian Hirata Koji, writes that Japanese scientists led by Umene Tsunesaburo developed a sintering method for Anshan ore already in the 1920s. After 1949, Umene remained—involuntarily—in the PRC for several years, and the PRC published a Chinese translation of Umene's book in 1951.[79] The Soviets may have improved sintering in Anshan, but they certainly did not introduce it.

Military assistance after Liberation

[78] Ibid.
[79] Hirata, Koji. "*Steel Metropolis: Industrial Manchuria and the Making of Chinese Socialism, 1916-1964*." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2018, 42-43.

By 1949, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had swollen to over 5.5 million men, with most of the Fourth Field Army (Former Northeast Field Army) having been sent south of the Great Wall to participate in the final campaigns of the Chinese Civil War. Although certainly a formidable force, Communist-controlled areas were over mobilized and the army was an increasingly unsustainable financial burden for the party: according to some estimates, as much as sixty percent of China's finances were military related.[80] Worse, the PLA was at best a semi-modern army: it possessed almost no armor or motorized transport. New China did not have a fleet to speak of and a tiny Air Force that was comprised of captured Nationalist aircraft and units that defected with their airplanes.[81] In a meeting with the Soviet politburo member Anastas Mikoyan, Zhou Enlai characterized the PLA in the following way:

> *"Talking about the PLA arms, Zhou Enlai said that they do not have a unified rear and unified logistics but they plan to put things in order here. First and foremost they will begin with the unification of the war industry, which has only grown since 1948 and even so primarily in Manchuria… We, Zhou Enlai said, feel a great shortage of anti-tank weapons, of which we have only 150 pieces, in which connection we would like to ask the Soviet Union to give us a certain amount of anti-tank weapons. We have an unfavorable situation with regard to tanks as well. The available tanks are mainly light."*[82]

For all these defense needs, China's new leaders had only one place to turn to:

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[80] Zazerskaya, T.G. *Sovetskie Spetselisti i Formirovanie Voenno-Promyushlennogo Kompleksa Kitaya (1949-60),"* St. Petersburg, 2000, 19.
[81] Mulvenon, James C. and Andrew N. D. Yang, eds., *The People's Liberation Army as Organization: Reference Volume*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2002, 349.
[82] "Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Zhou Enlai."

"*We would like to ask the Soviet Union to also give us specialists and equipment for manufacture of arms, and also advisers on army reorganization, on military-educational institutions and organization of the rear, including the arms industry."*[83]

According to Zazerskaya, who has reviewed Chinese aid requests to the Soviet Union, between 1950 and 1960 one third of all Soviet aid projects in China were related to defense.[84] Remarkably this figure is a conservative estimate since it likely fails to capture the dual-use of many steel and machine tool factories.[85] Despite the significant amount of military aid in absolute terms, formal Sino-Soviet military relations got off to a rocky start. Chinese leadership wanted assistance in amphibious landing capabilities to invade Taiwan and as Zhou's request states help in growing China's indigenous defense industry in Manchuria. On both fronts, the Soviets were ill-prepared to render help; the Soviet Navy itself only had a modest amount of landing craft acquired through Lend-Lease while licensing weapons production and setting up armament plants, even to a fraternal state, was still seen as a national security risk.[86]

On the operational level, military ties were also laced with tension. At the heart of the dispute was the belief among many PLA soldiers and cadres that the Soviets had little knowledge about China and liberation wars, and did not give the PLA enough credit or respect for what it accomplished during the Chinese Civil War.[87] This was in part a byproduct of CCP's own propaganda that repeatedly stressed PLA self-reliance, often with the specific phrase of: "Millet

[83] Ibid.
[84] Zazerskaya, 32-33.
[85] Ibid., 60.
[86] Russell, Richard A. *Project HULA: Secret Soviet-American Cooperation in the War against Japan*. Washington: Naval Historical Center, Dept. of the Navy, 1997.
[87] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠). *My Recollections (我的回憶)*. Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2004, 361-362.

and rifles are on the front lines (小米加步槍，創庫在前方)" meaning that the army armed and fed itself in the field from patriotic peasants, or by seizing Nationalist depots. Soviet contributions in arms, food, and money were omitted.

In the Northeast Gao Gang explicitly addressed anti-Soviet sentiment within the PLA in a speech dedicated to Sino-Soviet friendship given on 16 February 1950. Gao touted the importance of the Soviet army for China's security, dismissed criticisms as rumors stirred up by Secretary of State Dean Acheson and U.S. imperialists, and reminded the audience that,

> *"The Soviet army did not tear the Northeast from China, rather they returned the Northeast to the Chinese people from the hands of Japanese imperialists."*[88]

Despite public pronouncements, subsequent lack of direct Soviet involvement in the Korean War further lowered the prestige of the Soviet military in the eyes of many PLA officers.[89] In turn, Soviet military advisers, most of whom were decorated veterans of the Second World War, not only saw the PLA as a ragtag army that needed to modernize along Soviet lines, they took exceptional issue to doubts about the applicability or efficacy of the latest Soviet military doctrine, forged in the existential struggle with Nazi Germany.[90]

Opposition to Soviet advice from the PLA rank-and-file and lower brass did not eliminate the real urgent need for major reorganization and modernization if the PLA were to become a mechanized fighting force. Soviet reports describe that most PLA officers had no experience with modern weaponry; due to a lack of flight schools and officer academies, there were artillery officers who had never participated in live fire exercises, air force officers who had never seen,

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[88] See 16 February 1950 speech in Xue, Junfu (薛俊富), Bai Haoting (白浩亭). *Collected Works of Gao Gang (高崗文集).* Huaxia Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 2013.
[89] N. 233 "Northeast Workers' Views on Resist America Aid Korea," 18 December 1951. *Neibu Cankao*
[90] Khrushchev, Nikita Sergejevič, and Sergei Nikitič Khrushchev. *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Vol. 3, Vol. 3*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University, 2007.

let alone piloted a plane. Military officers and political commissars were often semi-literate, some newly promoted officers were completely illiterate. Problems of illiteracy persisted until the launching of the 1952 education campaign, even though the military increased the amount of cultural and general education in the interim.[91]

Setting up Soviet style military academies was identified as one of the PLA's most urgent needs even before the Korean War. As was the case with medicine, advanced vocational training, and broader higher education, the Northeast was selected as the region to start China's military overhaul. The first air academy in Communist controlled territory was founded in March of 1946 in Tonghua, Jilin. The story of the academy reflects the at times incongruous umbilical cord-like relationship between old China and new China. The academy initially used Japanese planes that were handed over by the Soviet Red Army. Most of them were outdated and broken, with an acute shortage of parts to boot. The Soviets attempted to locate spare parts for the Japanese planes, but the extent of Soviet involvement at this initial stage is not entirely clear. What is known, however, is that the first instructors were former Japanese and Manchukuo pilots.[92] Due to the Nationalist advance, the academy was forced to move a month later to Mudanjiang and then again to Dongan. Once the Communists secured the Northeast, it relocated for a final time to Changchun (but not before a brief sojourn again in Mudanjiang) in March of 1949.[93] By 1949 Soviet instructors finally arrived at the academy. Perhaps due to the itinerant nature of the institution, early cadets recalled that initially there were more instructors than students.[94]

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[91] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 102.

[92] Xu, Jianhong (許劍虹). Japanese Origins of the PLA Airforce (解放軍空軍的日本淵源), 1 November 2016. *China Times* https://www.chinatimes.com/cn/realtimenews/20161101005878-260417 (Accessed 5 May 2020).

[93] "18 Air Force Superlatives(擁有 18 個'空軍之最')." 19 May 2017. *Changchun Daily* http://ccrb.1news.cc/html/2017-05/19/content_520883.htm (Accessed 5 May 2020).

[94] Zhou Tiaoping (周兆平). *Remembering the Creation of the first PLA Airforce Academy (忆空军第一航空学校的创建*,) 171-73.; Chen Xi (陈熙), Li Dongliu (李东流). *PLA Airforce Memoirs, Historical Materials (空军回忆史料)*.;164-167.

All requests for Soviet military advisors had to be signed by Mao or Zhou and sent directly to Stalin, although during the Korean War the commander of the Chinese forces Peng Dehuai handled at least some of the requests via Gao Gang. Mao showed personal interest in the more marquee projects, such as setting up a submarine force at Dalian/Lushun and creating the PLA's first airborne units.[95] Although the Soviets stepped up considerably both the delivery of weapons and training personnel after establishing official diplomatic relations, it is unclear if robust military to military channels existed before well into the Korean War. The PLA and the Soviet army did not train together, and Soviet advice on how to conduct maneuvers and exercises was often dismissed, much to the chagrin of the embedded Soviet military advisors.[96]

Aid during the Korean War 1950-53

The outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 caused a near immediate shift in policy priorities for both the Northeast Government and the central government in Beijing. Urgent prioritization of mustering a border force, civil defense measures, and relocating industries from vulnerable cities in southern Manchuria meant that planned economic reconstruction had to be postponed. Although Soviet experts continued to work in Manchuria on modernizing plants and introducing elements of centralized planning, the 1st Five Year Plan was postponed until 1953.

As will be discussed below, on the ground work continued and the remilitarized climate may have actually spurred both the Soviets and the Chinese workers to hasten projects. At the senior level, with Gao Gang preoccupied with military logistics, the Soviet experts portfolio

[95] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 127-128.
[96] Ledovsky, 54.

appears to have been handed to Li Fuchun, Manchuria's number two.[97] On 17 August 1952, Li traveled with Zhou Enlai to Moscow to finalize an itemized list of aid projects for the 1st FYP.[98] Although Stalin promised to the Chinese delegation that the Soviet Union would give China "everything it could" for the 1st FYP, initially this turned out to be not very much at all.[99] A particularly sore point were continued delays in sending previously agreed upon Soviet experts.

Unbeknownst to the Chinese, aid to China had become politically controversial in the Soviet politburo. Although in the last years of Stalin's rule the politburo rarely formally met, Molotov's documents and accounts published during perestroika tell a story of division. Molotov was critical of what he perceived as excessive demands from Beijing, telling Zhou that experts on the ground were not optimally used and that China's latest requests were too large and difficult for the USSR to meet.[100] According to a memoir of Khrushchev's translator, in 1953 one of Stalin's old acolytes Klementiy Voroshilov wondered out loud in a politburo meeting why the Soviet Union was voluntarily giving up privileges afforded to it by the Yalta Treaty, especially when the *raison d'etre* for entering the Pacific War according to Voroshilov was to recover Russian territory lost during the Russo-Japanese War. Voroshilov allegedly wondered out-loud why the Soviet people should continue to live on rations so that others could have sinecures. [101]

In the Northeast, emphasis shifted even more towards the military-industrial sector away from earlier infrastructure, electric power, and communications projects. Although arms production was

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[97] In 1950, Li Fuchun was transferred to Beijing, to serve as Minister of Industry.
[98] Bernstein, Thomas P., and Hua-Yu Li. *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-Present*. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2011.
[99] Li, Hua-Yu. *Mao and the Economic Stalinization of China, 1948-1953*. Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, 34.
[100] "Conversation with Zhou Enlai on Soviet Experts sent to China." RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1254.
[101] Koval, K.I. 1989. "Moskovskie Peregovoryu I.V. Stalina c Zhou Enlaiem v 1953g. I N.S. Khruscheva c Mao Tsedunom v 1954." *Novoya I noveyshaya istoria* Issue 5: 104–107.

a key priority, the Northeast Bureau of Industry and Gao Gang stressed the value of smelting plants, rolled steel, aluminum, mining and coal processing, synthetic rubber, and oil for national defense.[102] In addition, several important prestige projects such as China's first automobile plant and aircraft maintenance plants were proposed for the region. Of the fifty projects agreed upon during the Korean War, thirty were in the Northeast. Heilongjiang alone—Manchuria's least industrialized province—accounted for more than ten percent of China's entire capital investments in industry.[103]

For each new factory that was built with Soviet aid, Soviet experts were there from start to finish. Active oversight of construction, installation of machinery, and employee training was carried out by experts from that given field. Skilled workers, chief engineers, directors, and even heads of individual production lines were picked by the Soviets and sent to China beforehand.[104] In the Northeast, as was the case nationally, the government copied the Soviet state planning model (gosplan) with only minor simplifications.[105] A cursory look at the Northeast People's Government organizational chart shows that ministries (mining, light and heavy industry, transportation, et) were mirrored after their Soviet counterparts.

[102] See 27 February 1951 speech "Strengthen National Defense, Develop the Economy (鞏固國防，發展經濟)." In *Gao Gang Collected Works (高崗文集).*
[103] "156 Soviet Projects of Assistance (蘇聯援建的 156 個項目)." Baike. https://baike.baidu.com/item/苏联援建的156个项目 (Accessed 6 May 2020).
[104] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 60.
[105] Ibid., 64.

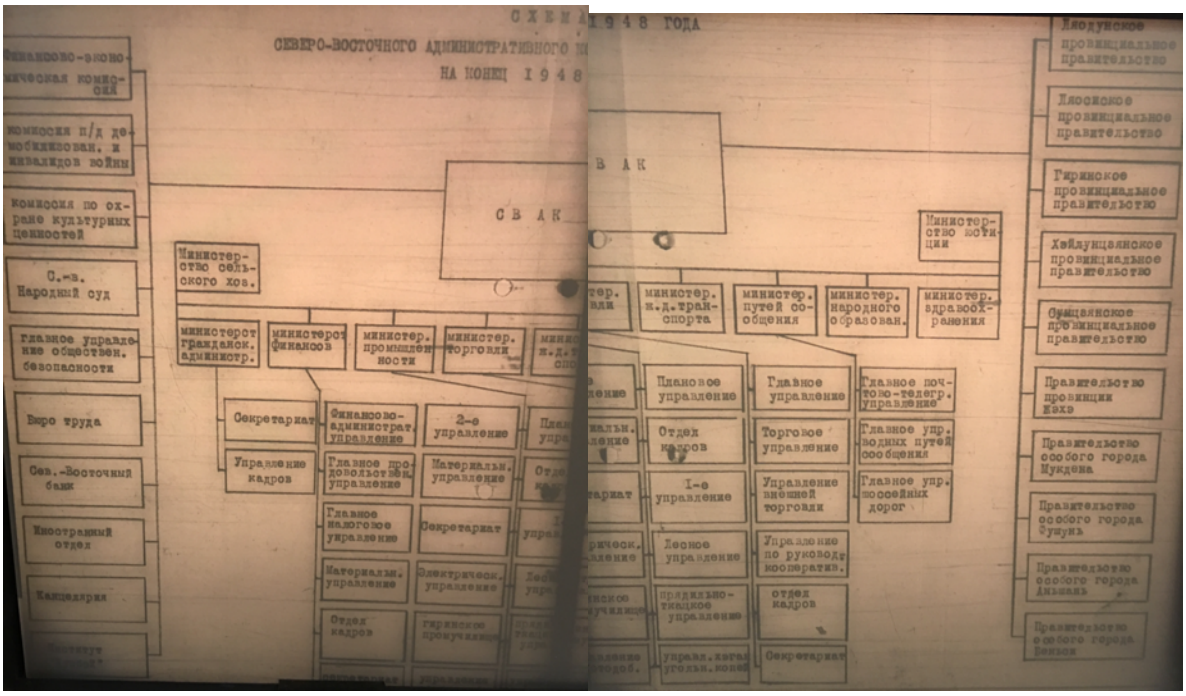


Figure 2: Northeast Government organizational chart

Throughout the Korean War, the Northeast continued to have the vast majority of Soviet experts. Aside from the 318 planners sent to Beijing to work in the central ministries, by January of 1954 there were 43 experts in Harbin helping implement economic planning, 8 in Shenyang, and 3 in Dalian. To put it in perspective, Shanghai had only three experts, while all of Southern China had just nine.[106]

As mentioned earlier, seventy-one percent of all industrial projects before the 1st FYP plan were in Manchuria.[107] The Korean War led to some industrial dislocation due to fears that industry in Liaodong Province was vulnerable to U.S. bombing, but the wartime focus on steel and coal production meant that Manchuria's industrial primacy was not diminished.[108] On the

[106] Zazerskaya, 66.
[107] Aleksandrova, Maria V. "Ekonomika Severo-vostochnogo Kitaya I Sovetskaya pomosch KNR v 50x godah." *Vneshneekonomicheskaya Politika KNR*, 326-348.
[108] Ibid.

contrary, Gao Gang, Li Fuchun, and Ma Hong (馬洪) had ensured that aviation, shipbuilding, and perhaps most prestigious of them all—the automotive sector— were all going to be concentrated in the Northeast.

The Jilin 1st Car factory was one of the most iconic accomplishments of the 1st FYP and a palpable illustrator of how without Soviet experts, the goals of the 1st FYP could not have been met. The story of the factory began in 1949, when Mao was taken to see the Stalin Factory (ZiS) as part of his Moscow tour. At the time, ZiS was not only the Soviet Union's most renowned auto plant, it was a mainstay in the Soviet Union's war production effort from 1941 to 1945 including producing trucks for Katyusha rocket launchers. Upon inspection, Mao is said to have remarked: "We also need a big factory like this (我們也要有這樣的大工廠)."[109] It took two years to finalize the deal, with the outbreak of the Korean War contributing to the delays.

Work did not commence on the factory until July of 1953 and it took three more years until the first truck, called liberation, was driven off the assembly line. In an intentional mirroring of the Zis factory, the Soviet experts picked the site, machine tools, and even which truck—Zis-150—would be copied and manufactured by the new plant. Approximately 500 engineers and other skilled workers—including future General Secretary Jiang Zimin and Vice Premier Li Lanqing—were sent to the Soviet Union for apprenticeship. The production of the liberation truck was heralded as a major breakthrough for China, ending a period of not having indigenous car production. This narrative glossed over the fact that cars had already been built on

[109] FAW Group Archive (中國一汽集團檔案館). *Soviet Experts in Changchun(蘇聯專家在長春).* Changchun: 2012, 57.

a limited scale in Shenyang in the early 1930s.[110] Furthermore, the Changchun factory only produced trucks and the hand-assembled luxury Hongqi sedans for senior leadership—no passenger vehicles for the proletariat.



Figure 3: Jiefang Truck; source: http://auto.sina.com.cn/news/2007-07-15/0859292722.shtml

Military Aid during the Korean War

Even though after 1949 Soviet military assistance had become overt, PLA's modernization has barely begun by the outbreak of the Korean War. Between June of 1950 and October when the People's Volunteer Army (PVA) crossed the Yalu River, Gao Gang and the Northeast Government led a crash course effort to train and equip the first wave of soldiers sent to Korea. On 7 July 1950, twelve days after the start of hostilities, the central government issued a decree to strengthen the defenses of the Northeast, leading to a concentration of more than

[110] Ma, Jinyan (馬金燕), "1931 Zhang Xueliang Ordered the Development of China's First Car: Minsheng (1931 年張學良指揮逆向開發中國第 1 車：民生牌)." 27 November 2010. https://wenku.baidu.com/view/bb8198ec102de2bd960588b0 (Accessed 5 May 2020).

250,000 troops by the 13th and orders for industrial sites to be fortified and placed on wartime footing.[111]

Despite efforts to promulgate new fighting doctrines and introduce Soviet weapons discussed later in the dissertation, it took almost a year of fighting before the PLA began to receive significant amounts of new weaponry. Delays from the Soviet side, differences over strategy, and triangular relations with the North Koreans further dented the aura of the Soviet army, leading to resistance by veteran PLA soldiers and cadres against following recommendations of Soviet military experts. At the same time, at least one third of all Soviet aid given was directed to the military-industrial sector, with much of the rest supporting dual-use technology. [112]

Through license agreements that were part of the aid, the Chinese were able to manufacture several Soviet mainstay weapons systems starting with late 1951.[113] As was the case with civilian aid, the impact of Soviet military assistance was long lasting: many organizational changes recommended by the Soviets, such as adopting the Soviet Army's divisional structure remained in place well into the 1980s. And yet, it took Gao Gang's personal intervention and criticism of Marshall Xu Xiangqian (徐向前) to get the PLA to implement divisional reorganization along Soviet lines. Xu felt the Soviet model with its emphasis on heavy armor and motorized infantry was unfeasible for China, earning Gao's ire and making the issue a political matter of Sino-Soviet relations.[114]

In response to military disgruntlement, Mao delivered a key speech to the PLA leadership

[111] See the "Decision on the Defense of the Northeast Border (關於保衛東北邊防的决定)" in the virtual Memorial Hall to the "Resist America Aid Korea" campaign: http://www.kmycjng.com/default.aspx (Accessed 18 May 2020).
[112] Zazerskaya, 60.
[113] Ibid., 80-85.
[114] "Soviet Aid to the PLA." 20 July 1951. RGASPI. Molotov Collection Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1256.

about Soviet advisers, reiterating the call that the PLA needed to comprehensively study and learn from the Soviet army, and somewhat awkwardly, strive to become the world's second best military.[115] Explicitly casting the PRC as the junior partner to the USSR was commonplace in the early 1950s, with Zhou Enlai once telling the Soviets that they should help China build socialism so that China could help the Soviet Union build communism.[116] In this case, Mao was also sending a message to the military that he expected a deferential relationship between Chinese officers and the Soviet military advisers.

The surprise Chinese offensive against U.N. troops in November-December of 1950 exceeded expectations but also brought forth unrealistic ambitions. Soviet military observers described that while the PVA had a surfeit of courage and was fighting a "just anti-imperialist liberation struggle", it was lacking both equipment and experience in how to carry out winter fighting. When advice was given on how to reorganize troops, it was once again ignored—to the great consternation of the Soviets.[117] In turn, the Chinese pressed the Soviets for modern weaponry, chafed at the perceived North Korean overreliance on Soviets for operational planning, and felt betrayed by Soviet prevarication on air support and broader assistance.[118]

The PVA's frustration over Soviet support can be easily understood. The Soviets refused to extend their air cover beyond the Yalu River, insisted on splitting military aid between the PVA and the Korean People's Army, all the while Soviet observers interfered or got in the way of military planning. The Soviet officer who wrote the above report criticizing the PVA stated

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[115] Chinese Communist Party. *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since 1949 (建國以來毛澤東文稿) Volume 4*, Central Document Publisher, 1990, 1-2.
[116] Pantsov, Alexander, and Steven I. Levine. *Mao: The Real Story*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2013, 390.
[117] See 16 June 1951 report by Soviet Ambassador and chief military advisor to North Korea, V.N. Razuvaev in Volokhova, A. 1999. "Nekotirie arkihvnie materialy o koreiskoi voyne." Problemy Dal′nego Vostoka, Issue 4, 124.
[118] Zhang Mingyuan (張明遠), 361-362.

elsewhere that he had left the diplomatic compound in North Korea only once—and that was to go to Shenyang.[119] In lieu of air cover, the Soviets proposed holding talks in Shenyang with PVA officers on sharing the Red Army's experience fighting in the Great Patriotic War in and what must have been a remarkably tin eared move.[120]

The eventual Soviet participation in the air war over Korea and how initial deployment of state of the art MiG-15 fighters was done under utmost secrecy has been covered extensively elsewhere.[121] What is less known is that Soviet airmen represented just a fraction of a nearly 80,000 strong Soviet military contingent in the Northeast.[122] China's central government worked closely with the Northeast Government to reach an agreement with the Soviets to improve air defense capabilities in Manchuria. To that end, more flight schools, new airfields, and aircraft repair factories were set up. The Soviet Union also provided input on civil defense along with continuing to handover Soviet heavy weaponry such as self-propelled artillery and tanks. Military advisers were also present at munitions factories and consulted on wartime security measures in the rear.[123]

Just as in Korea, not all Chinese military personnel were enthusiastic to work with the Soviets. In Dalian, sailors believed that the Soviet Navy was inferior to the British and U.S. fleets. Even cadres said that it was only worthwhile studying Marxism and political matters from the Soviets, not science and technology.[124] Another complaint that came up habitually up to the

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[119] Ibid.
[120] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 136.
[121] See Seidov, Igor, and Stuart Britton. *Red Devils Over the Yalu: A Chronicle of Soviet Aerial Operations in the Korean War 1950-53*. 2014.
[122] See Kolb, Richard K. *Battles of the Korean War: Americans Engage in Deadly Combat, 1950-1953*. 2010: "Soviet involvement in the Korean War was on a large scale. During the war, 72,000 Soviet troops (among them 5,000 pilots) served along the Yalu River in Manchuria. At least 12 air divisions rotated through. A peak strength of 26,000 men was reached in 1952."
[123] Parshev, A. P., and Viktor Stepakov. *Ne tam i ne togda: kogda nachalas' i gde zakonchilas' vtoraia͡ mirovaia͡?* 2015.
[124] Ledovsky, 62-63.

handover of Dalian and Lushun in 1954 was that the Soviets were giving warn out, outdated military equipment and forcing China to pay for it. Predictably, Soviet sources, especially memoirs, maintain that the Soviet Army was sharing some of its latest weaponry, including fighter jets, at great cost to itself. [125] Both the KPA and the PVA were reasonably well equipped in Korea, with brand-new weapons such as rocket propelled grenades and other weapons systems that were still Soviet mainstays at the time. The quality and quantity of equipment is ultimately difficult to assess since much of the Soviet statistical record on military aid has yet to be declassified.[126]

Despite the friction, Soviet efforts to remold the PLA were largely successful. By the end of the Korean War, the PLA not only began to resemble what would later become the Warsaw Pact organizational mold, this commitment to Soviet military doctrine and structure survived the Sino-Soviet split. The PLA famously did away with military ranks and academies during the Cultural Revolution and had a nominally multimillion strong People's Militia, but the divisional structure of regular PLA units, along with Soviet kit would not be seriously amended until the 1980s after the Sino-Vietnamese War.

High Politics of Soviet Aid

Soviet assistance, both military and civilian, was political in equal measure to both the Soviets and the recipient Northeast Government. Even issues that should have been delegated to local cadres or experts, such as organizing leisure activities for visiting Soviets or procurement

[125] Parshev, A. P., and Viktor Stepakov; Torkunov, A. V. *Zagadochnai͡a voĭna: koreĭskiĭ konflikt 1950-1953 godov*. Moskva: ROSSPĖN, 2000.

[126] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 184.

of Russian books for libraries, were often decided in Beijing by Zhou Enlai and Liu Shaoqi, who were given the Soviet expert portfolio by the central government.[127] At the same time, aid was also an area where Gao Gang was able to assert his authority and bypass his Beijing rivals by dealing directly with the Soviets.

Upon their arrival, Gao Gang and Li Fuchun took personal charge of the Soviet experts that were sent to the region. When the first group of experts arrived with Liu Shaoqi on 25 August 1949, Gao Gang met them at the Shenyang train station and gave a welcome speech.[128] From the partial summary of the speech that is available, Gao thanked Stalin, Kovalev, and the Soviet experts and on the behalf of the Northeast Government offered the Soviets "the most sincere respects."[129] After Gao, Liu spoke and praised the internationalism of the Soviet experts.[130] While the authors of *Uncertain Partners* allege that Gao flaunted his closeness to the Soviet Union and welcomed the experts in an obsequious manner, the above language is in line with what Mao and the *People's Daily* said about Soviet experts, with the latter calling the Soviets "our best teachers."[131]

On the contrary, Russian archival evidence shows that starting from 1948, far from acting the part of Soviet toady, Gao consistently asked for more aid than was given, at times even exaggerating the critical state of certain enterprises to speed up delivery.[132] This was particularly true on industrial and transportation projects, where Gao appealed directly to Stalin and Molotov

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[127] See 9 September 1953 Changchun City Government Office of Social Communication Report on Hosting Soviet Experts (長春市政府辦公室交際科招待蘇聯專家情況小結) in Changchun City Party Records Office. *Changchun Historical Materials(長春文史資料)*. Changchun, 56-57.
[128] Goncharov, S. N., John Wilson Lewis, and Litai Xue. 1993. *Uncertain partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 80.
[129] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 71.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), "They Are China's Best Teachers."
[132] "Gao Gang Requests Aid for Northeast Government." 13 December 1949. RGASPI. Molotov Collection Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1241.

for Soviet help. There is also evidence of a back and forth; Gao was once unsatisfied with the number of locomotive parts promised by the Soviets, taking the matter directly to Stalin in a telegram.[133] Gao Gang undoubtedly knew that the Soviet post-war economy was stretched thin, but he had no qualms about putting the interests of the Northeast Government first.

The Northeast Government and Gao personally flooded the Soviets with a litany of requests, ranging from assistance to raise a sunken ship to more aviation fuel.[134] These were minor requests that often did not require Soviet expert, let alone ministerial involvement, perhaps validating Molotov's earlier chancellery frustrations. It would be too simplistic, however, to conclude that Gao was simply trying to maximize resources for his area of responsibility.[135] When a famine hit Heilongjiang Province in 1950 due to flooding, there were no requests for aid for the starving peasants.[136] Nor was the Soviet government asked to help ameliorate the rampant unemployment in large cities after the Chinese Civil War, even though Soviet officials were well aware of the problem and had been taking measures since 1947 to increase state sector employment in Soviet administered Dalian.[137] The Northeast Government's politburo most likely feared that turning to the Soviets for help would hurt their standing both in the eyes of Beijing and the local population. This can be partially corroborated by records of Soviet conversations with Zhou Enlai about the famine, where he demurred on Soviet offers to help with famine relief on the account that the Chinese side did not want to overburden the Soviet Union.[138]

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[133] "Gao Gang Requests Train Parts." 16 July 1949. RGASPI. Molotov Collection Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1241.
[134] Li, 32.
[135] Should be noted that Gao Gang's lobbying strident paid off; 36 of the 47 initial Soviet industrial aid projects were to be in the Northeast.
[136] Li, 35.
[137] "Economic Situation in Dalian" 18 February 1950. RGASPI. Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1251; Paddock, 37-38.
[138] Li, 35.

Beyond the obvious material gains from Soviet assistance, the zeal with which Gao Gang and others in the Northeast Government courted and promoted Soviet aid can be explained by the role it played in helping achieve political goals. From the first days of the Northeast Bureau, senior leaders such as Gao grappled with how to increase the power of the party and do away with problematic societal elements while also preventing the collapse of the region's economy. Efforts to restart industrial production, support and expand state-owned enterprises ran against opposition from plant managers and at times even local cadres who pursued either radically leftist or rightist policies.[139] The difficult balancing act was made all the harder by corruption and malfeasance within the party. Judging by Gao Gang's public speeches and reports in the *Northeast Daily*, corruption and failure to heed orders from the party center was widespread.[140] In Changchun, a tax official named Han Muwen (韓幕文) took over 900 million yuan in bribes from local capitalists to help them avoid taxes.[141] In Dalian, a third of the managers in the main department store engaged in various illegal activities, while prominent city leaders voiced their support for Manchukuo-era capitalists since they were perceived to be more experienced in handling financial matters.[142] A report by Gao Gang in August of 1951 on SOEs also stated that plant managers throughout Manchuria favored the bourgeoisie, did not take initiative, and ignored party directives.[143] The situation in mines, warehouses, rural co-ops and other sectors was not much better.

[139] "Gao Gang Personal File." RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond 495. Opis. 225 Delo 20, 9; 36.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid, 31.
[143] "Gao Gang Personal File." RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond 495. Opis. 225 Delo 20, 4-7.

The response was a mixture of repression, concessions, and ideological work through political campaigns.[144] During the said campaigns, burnishing the Soviet leading example became imminently useful. Translations of relevant Soviet works, especially detailing the experience in the various struggles against bourgeois elements both during the Russian Civil War and after Stalin's folding of the New Economic Policy (NEP) were widely read and used as teaching materials for cadres in how to deal with hostile societal elements.[145] More importantly, Soviet experts were often the ones doing the teaching. According to Shen Zhihua's archival research, by 1952 the Northeast had trained over 30,000 cadres—most of them taught by Soviet instructors.[146] These men were then sent throughout the country where they were asked to deal with former KMT officials, comprador capitalists, and the party's own suspected of falling short of Leninist ideals. What they learned and saw in the Northeast, with its long period of Japanese rule and weak Nationalist influence, became the model for work in provinces that had very little in common with Manchuria.

The Soviet example figured prominently in Gao Gang's speeches during his tenure as the Chairman of the Northeast Government that addressed internal enemies, increasing production, and saving resources.[147] Speaking on 22 August 1949 in front of the representatives of the Northeast Government, Gao cautioned the audience that various reactionary elements in the Northeast continued to plot and engage in acts of sabotage to undermine the new people's government. To counter the threat, those in the audience were wise to look to the Soviet example to achieve lasting victory:

[144] See Chapter 4 for more on political campaigns.
[145] Kaple.
[146] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 119.
[147] "Gao Gang Personal File." RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond 495. Opis. 225 Delo 20, 1-7; 30-36.

"In order to successfully complete the task of socialist construction, we must seriously study from the Soviet Union. The Soviet people, under the leadership of the great party of Lenin and Stalin, after the victory of the October Revolution, has waged a bitter struggle for 32 years. The Soviet people destroyed domestic and foreign enemies and saboteurs, built a glorious and magnificent socialist state which has become the lighthouse for the people of the world seeking liberation. The path the Soviet people walked is the path the Chinese people want to travel, thus we must forge a close friendship with the Soviet people, learn from their tried-by-fire spirit, study their experience of socialist construction, technical skills, and management practices. This will allow us to overcome the difficulties and hasten our own construction."[148]

In subsequent speeches, Gao continued to emphasize the paramount importance of the "advanced Soviet experience."[149] This was by no means a local initiative: Gao was in-line with Mao's March 1949 call for vigilance against the imperialists' sugar coated bullets and the subsequent appeal to study from the Soviets.[150] Moreover, Gao was careful to never praise the Soviets more than Mao; in one speech on what was driving economic reconstruction Gao listed Soviet experts all the way in seventh place.[151]

The Soviet example was relevant in thwarting the efforts of the bourgeoisie to corrupt cadres, which was highlighted by Gao as a particularly salient problem for the CCP following the

[148] See 22 August 1949 speech before the Northeast People's Government Representatives Conference in *Selected Works of Gao Gang (高崗文選).*
[149] Ibid., see speeches on 7.5.1952 "Production Competition" & 1.10.1952 "New Era in Construction"
[150] "Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China" (5 March 1949) in Mao Zedong. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Volume 4.* Beijing, 374.
[151] See 13 March 1950 report on the Northeast Economy in *Collected Works of Gao Gang (高崗文集).*

taking of cities.[152] In addition, the Soviets (along with Mao and democratic reforms) were credited in propaganda as the reason why SOEs had been successful with their economic objectives of increasing production without increasing capital demands.[153]

When it came to recalcitrant holdouts, Gao once again cited the Soviet experience as reason why factory bosses should take the initiative and work well with the party government. Other sections of this chapter have discussed that in practice many engineers and factory managers were often unwilling to heed Soviet technical advice and chafed at perceived Soviet interference. For Gao Gang, at least publicly, there was no doubt about the efficacy of Soviet aid. As he pithily stated at a speech given at the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association: "When the Soviets help, the Chinese people win. When relations were not as close, the Chinese people suffered setbacks." [154]

On the Soviet side, the granting of aid was also a political endeavor. Initially from 1945 to 1948, the Kremlin was transfixed on the fear that Soviet aid in China could be used as a pretext by the United States to intervene in the Chinese Civil War and thus jeopardize Soviet security in the Far East.[155] Even in 1949, when Communist victory was increasingly certain and Stalin was privately counseling Mao to organize a national government as soon as possible, the Soviets prevaricated on publicizing aid programs to the Communists. When Mao asked for minesweepers to help clear mined harbors—including Shanghai's— the Soviet Navy went to great lengths to conceal the transfer of ships in Dalian.[156] Declassified Soviet archival records also show that Stalin raised the fear of foreign intervention when Liu Shaoqi traveled to the

[152] "Gao Gang Personal File." RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond 495. Opis. 225 Delo 20, 30.
[153] Ibid., 31.
[154] Ibid., 98-99.
[155] Heinzig, 114-117
[156] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 64.

Soviet Union in July of 1949 to consult the Moscow boss about state building and the international outlook for new China.[157] In those talks and telegrams to Mao, Stalin cautioned that the next stage of the Chinese Civil War—foreign intervention—had begun and required a contradictory mix of caution and resolve. Stalin was directly comparing the Chinese situation to the Russian Civil War, during which a halfhearted allied intervention proved to be a major catalyst for Bolshevik siege mentality and war communism. Time proved Stalin wrong about U.S. intentions, Lin Hsiao-ting has shown conclusively that while Washington continued to explore various contingency options even after the Nationalists retreated to Taiwan, the risk of direct military involvement to the CCP was remote.[158]

The second set of political questions facing the Kremlin was how to utilize Soviet aid to create a permanent, Soviet friendly regime in China. By the time the first non-railway related experts began to arrive in China in 1949, the Soviet Union had already amassed four years of experience running similar programs in Eastern Europe and North Korea. Since Soviet assistance to China was not planned in a vacuum, it is important to consider Soviet foreign policy in the early Cold War in regards to other "People's Democracies" to compare what was done in Manchuria with elsewhere in the putative Eastern Bloc.

Manchuria Walks the Path of People's Democracies

There is debate among scholars of Soviet and Eastern European history to what extent Stalin and the Soviet Union had a plan for creating an Eastern Bloc or was merely reacting and at

[157] "Liu Shaoqi Report with Stalin's comments" RGASPI. Stalin Collection Fond. 558, Opis. 11, Delo. 328; 32-50.
[158] See Lin, Hsiao-ting. *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-Shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan*. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press, 2016.

times improvising to developments both international and local.[159] The general consensus is that before the U.S. Marshall Plan in 1948, the Soviets tolerated a great deal of heterodoxy and even counseled local Communist parties to not openly engage in class warfare, refrain from radical land reform, and most importantly—form coalition governments.[160] Advice that a reader familiar with Soviet guidance to Mao in 1948-49 would immediately recognize.

The experience of Eastern Europe is relevant to the story of Manchuria and China writ large for several reasons. One, developments in Eastern Europe were closely followed by both the Nationalists and the Chinese Communists. Chiang Kai-shek saw the Czechoslovak coup in 1948 as a crucial factor in China's ultimate fate; if the U.S. and Britain did nothing to punish the Soviets, then Communist forces would be emboldened in China.[161] Mao Zedong in turn closely followed the developments of the Soviet-Yugoslav split (calling Tito a Yugoslav Zhang Guotao) and the Berlin blockade.[162]

Second, although the extent to which the Cold War was a global confrontation has been up for debate, it is undeniable that events in Europe and the Middle East influenced the geopolitical situation in Northeast Asia and vice versa. In that milieu, 1948 was a very trying year for Soviet foreign policy. In late March, the Soviet-Yugoslav split shocked the world and exposed the growing division between Stalin and Tito over the Balkans. The following month Congress voted for the Marshall Plan which terrified Moscow with the prospect of American

[159] See Norman Naimark for a succinct summary of post-Cold War historiography on Soviet planning after 1945: Naimark, Norman. 2017. "The Sovietization of East Central Europe 1945–1989." Chapter. In *The Cambridge History of Communism*, edited by Norman Naimark, Silvio Pons, and Sophie Quinn-Judge, 2:63–86. The Cambridge History of Communism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[160] Ibid.
[161] "Fan Hanjies's letter to CKS; situation in the Northeast is serious but not irreversible; CKS thoughts on Czechoslovak coup (范漢傑呈蔣中正第九十二軍三月二日可東運錦州,東北局勢雖嚴重但非不可挽救, 中正反省錄)." 29 February 1948. Academia Historica (國史館). Documents of President Chiang Kai-shek. File Number: 002-060100-00234-029
[162] *China Learns from the Soviet Union*, 65.

industrial might pulling Eastern Europe away from the Soviet orbit. In June, Stalin attempted to make inroads in Germany by blockading West Berlin, triggering the Berlin airlift and ultimately paving the way for European collective security in the form of NATO. In Northeast Asia, the South Korean government brutally suppressed the Jeju uprising and was challenging the newly proclaimed North Korean state.[163] Thus, although the CCP's gains in 1948 exceeded the most optimistic expectations of the Soviets, the overall situation remained decidedly unpropitious for the Communist movement. Under such circumstances, Stalin's counsel that Mao and the CCP take up Nanjing's offers of peace talks can be explained as a tactical move to lower the international temperature and not as some historians have alleged, evidence that Stalin wanted to prevent an outright Communist victory due to a distrust of Mao. Indeed, Stalin's cables from this period explicitly state that CCP participation in the talks would be a diplomatic faint intended to disarm a Nationalist and US plot to enlarge the conflict with U.S. participation.[164]

Beyond security considerations, the Soviet experience in Eastern Europe informed how economic reconstruction and socialist state building would be carried out in New China. In what Norman Naimark calls the "Stalinization within contours," the Soviets gave Eastern European Communists leeway to operate somewhat autonomously. This allowed them to take popular positions on some economic issues and create "New Democracy" coalitions with left of center parties to buttress their numerical weakness. Local Communists in turn learned how to play the Soviet card, often pulling them into their own interparty feuds. This became more prevalent after Soviet fears over the Marshall Plan triggered a push for control over Eastern Europe through the

[163] Cumings, Bruce. *The Korean War: A History*. New York: Modern Library, 2011, *124–125;* According to the governor of Jeju at the time, the death toll was reported to be at 60,000
[164] "Cable, Filippov [Stalin] to Cde. Mao Zedong," 14 January 1949. RGASPI. Stalin Collection. Fond. 558, Opis. 11, Delo. 330, List. 0110-0113. Available online: https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116969

hastily created Cominform.[165] Amidst growing paranoia, rivals could be done away with Soviet hands if they were accused of "Titoism" "Trotskyism" or any other capital heresy. Zhang Wentian and Ma Hong, economic experts within the Northeast Government appointed by Gao, clearly operated under a very broad definition of "socialist construction" which allowed them to advocate for and preserve economic principles at odds with the Stalinist model.

Just as in China, Soviet experts in Eastern Europe were particularly visible when it came to large, state-institutional reforms.[166] In the case of Eastern Europe, even when the communist parties were still weak and the non-communist rivals enjoyed significant appeal, the hard coercive power of the security apparatus was already firmly in communist hands. The NKVD officers that accompanied the occupying military administration not only helped create large and well-funded national secret police forces, they actively participated in the purges: exporting Stalin's preferred methods of forced self-criticisms, confessions, and show trials. [167] According to the memoirs of the U.S. Consul in Dalian, there too Soviet military authorities closely cooperated with the Chinese Communist police.[168]

After the civil war, Soviet experts were sent on detail to the newly formed regional Public Security Bureaus (PSB). The scholar Xuezhi Guo in a recently published work on the history of the Chinese public security apparatus details that not only was the Soviet gulag system used as a template for the "reform through labor" *laogai* camps, Soviet practices were also cited in the gradual shift from party oversight to CCP local government control of PSBs that began in 1946 with the creation of said bureaus in Manchuria.[169] According to memoirs and an internal-

[165] Ironically Cominform original headquarters were in Belgrade.
[166] Naimark, 194.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Paddock, 70-72.
[169] Guo, Xuezhi. *China's Security State Philosophy, Evolution, and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 61.

circulation history of the Dalian PSB, the Soviets transferred equipment and trained agents on how to detect illegal wireless sets and inspect mail without leaving evidence but beyond that their aid was unwanted and ineffective.[170] Furthermore, the Soviet public security officers sent to China were allegedly men of extremely low moral character who urged their Chinese counterparts to use honeypots and other "shameful" tricks to uncover counterrevolutionaries.

Soviet accounts of local security practices at the time returned the favor. According to an overview of Zhu De's personal security, his bodyguards did not check his meals for poison; groceries were purchased for him in the local market where everyone knew on whose table the food would end up. No serious vetting practices—as far as the Soviets could discern—existed for hiring service personnel.[171] The third strike was that Zhu De's chief bodyguard had syphilis, which he could have only contracted if he was in intimate contact with hostile layers of society.[172] We should be skeptical of such narratives for several reasons. The Chinese accounts were written after more than two decades of open Sino-Soviet confrontation, when impartial analysis of Soviet contributions to China's development would have been a serious personal liability. More glaringly, the idealized rendition of China's security services does not comport with the known harsh record of Chinese security organs. For the Soviet side, since Russian KGB-FSB archives are effectively closed to independent researchers, much is unknown about the extent to which China and the USSR cooperated in the public security sphere and whether the Soviet secret police sent to China really knew what was going on. Despite (or due to) the paucity of sources, it is likely that the Soviet influence was more limited in China than in Eastern Europe.

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[170] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 131.
[171] "Zhu De's Security is Inadequate." RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo.[?]. Contact author for copy.
[172] Ibid.

As mentioned earlier, the Chinese Communists watched the developments from the Eastern European "People's Democracies" with keen interest. Copies of the constitutions were requested, the CCP wanted to know more about the popular national fronts that encompassed non-communist parties. Mao himself at one point in 1948 asked the Soviets about extending his planned itinerary in the Soviet Union with a trip to Eastern Europe to see the example of the new People's Democracies.[173] China's newspapers devoted extensive coverage to Eastern European affairs, especially on news regarding economic development.[174] As such, it is fair to assume that the Chinese knew that Soviet economic planners and technical experts in Eastern Europe were often a source of significant tension.

Existing Soviet practices regarding experts sent to People's Democracies became the foundation for negotiations with China. In several documents concerning salaries of the experts and other important contractual arrangements, the Soviet counterparts emphasized that the terms of the agreement for China were identical to the ones given to North Korea and Albania.[175] This appears to have been used as a negotiating tactic to placate the Chinese side that the cost of hosting the experts was reasonable.[176] Shen Zhihua has written that Mao took great exception to this and did not understand why brotherly states had to rely on formal legalese when it came to mutual aid. Arguing that the early revolutionary party had an obligation to help the younger brother.[177] Accustomed to receiving financial support from Moscow *sub rosa* for the entirety of the post First United Front period, negotiations over Soviet aid contributed to Mao's eventual

[173] Shen Zhihua (沈志華).
[174]See Strauss, Julia C. *The History of the PRC (1949-1976).* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 30; Ghosh, Arunabha. *Making It Count: Statistics and Statecraft in the Early People's Republic of China*. 2020, 35.
[175] "Gromyko Letter to Molotov regarding Soviet Experts in China." 11 October 1949. RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1241.
[176] Soviet insistence on being paid in gold or U.S. dollars and compensation for lost productivity in the Soviet Union while the experts were away irked the Chinese side.
[177] Shen Zhihua (沈志華), 96.

realization that for the Soviet Union, China, although an ally, was still another country. And as the example of other People's Democracies showed, brotherly relations were not without quarrels.

Conclusion:

In the eight years of Northeast local rule, Manchuria served as both military bastion and economic vanguard for China's socialist future. In both endeavors, it could not have succeeded without unprecedented Soviet assistance. Soviet experts transformed virtually every sphere of life with new farming techniques, imported industrial know-how and machinery, public health campaigns, and socialist education. Despite how the Soviet effort was framed at the time, both in absolute terms and on the scale of political importance, defense aid took precedence over all other areas of development.

Throughout his tenure in the Northeast, Gao Gang was an active proponent of Soviet aid and experts. This allowed Gao to develop a direct working relationship with Stalin and personally secure badly needed aid during the Chinese Civil War and subsequent reconstruction. Soviet assistance helped Gao burnish the Soviet example when making difficult political and economic decisions. Absent Soviet assistance it is likely that the CCP in Manchuria would have still opted for political campaigns targeting land owners, former KMT officials, and other societal elements deemed hostile, but the Soviet model and Soviet experts on the ground helped popularize the narrative that such measures were legitimate, necessary, and even unavoidable for China's development.

Although Soviet aid proved to be palpable for the CCP's consolidation of power, the long-term benefits for the Soviet side, especially when compared to the Marshall Plan, were

quite paltry. This is explained in part by the much more modest resource and even technological base available to Moscow compared to Washington. But that explains only part of the story. Soviet aid to China was at once highly decentralized, involving dozens of ministries, and micro-managed: Stalin approved virtually every request personally. In Manchuria this led to frequent delays, wrong experts being sent, and ultimately resentment. Failure to have an equivalent of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) meant that the Soviet aid effort did not have a unified administration or strategic vision.

Chapter 2:

Manchuria: the CCP's Economics Lab

In the twilight years of the Qing Dynasty, Manchuria's seemingly vast untapped potential of land and resources drew settlers, fortune seekers, and foreigners of all stripes. The 1880s saw a literal goldrush as Han Chinese and Russian Cossacks descended on modern day Mohe (漠河), Heilongjiang. Dubbed "Amur California", the outpost existed less than a year before Qing troops arrested the Chinese prospectors and chased the Russians out during the winter of 1885-86.[1] By 1900, millions of Han Chinese had moved to the ancestral Manchu lands in search of economic opportunity, particularly the booming soy bean trade. For Tsarist Russia, rapid railway construction in Manchuria spurred dreams of further imperial expansion. The Tsarist advisor Sergei Witte envisioned "Yellow Russia" one day rivaling "White and Little Russia" (Belarus and Ukraine).[2] If Yellow Russia left behind Harbin and rail tracks, the influence of Japanese colonialism on Manchuria was even more pronounced. The Japanese built modern industry, dramatically expanded the size and importance of Manchurian cities, and attempted to create a Manchurian identity that was at least nominally multiracial and seeking progress.[3]

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[1] Skripko, K.A. Semenova, L.D., Snakin, V.V., Berezner, O.C., "Amurskaya Kalifornia- Maloizvestnaya stranitsa istorii dobuchi zolota v Priamure v fotografiah iz arkhiva Muzeya Zemlevedeniya MGU," «Амурская Калифорния» — малоизвестная страница истории добычи золота в Приамурье в фотографиях из архива Музея Землеведения МГУ (Accessed 10 May 2020).

[2] Quested, R. K. I.1982. " 'Matey' Imperialists? The Tsarist Russians in Manchuria, 1895-1917." Centre of Asian Studies Occasional Papers and Monographs; No. 50. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.

[3] Manchukuo was described in official propaganda as: "The youngest of the Oriental States, created in a pursuit of a lofty ideal...The land which was once synonymous with opium, banditry and collie labour has now changed its aspect. In its place is rising the world's newest creative, cultural State, which is giving birth to poetry, literature, music, drama, architecture, and industrial arts."
See Manchoukuo. *Concordia & Culture in Manchoukuo*. Hsinking: Manchuria daily news, 1938.

After Japan's defeat, Manchuria's strategic location and relative economic prosperity attracted both the Nationalists and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Both hoped to ensconce themselves in the region before the other and marshal Manchuria's industrial might to either spur China's postwar reconstruction or create a viable Communist state that could compete with the Nationalist government on more equal terms. Helmuth von Moltke famously said, "No plan survives initial contact with the enemy," and in this case the desires of both Mao and Chiang Kai-shek clashed with the harsh reality that neither had the experts and capability to effectively administer an industrial region that was heavily damaged by war and cut off from traditional Japanese imperial markets. A task of gargantuan difficulty that stymied planners in postwar Japan, Korea, and Taiwan as well.

Helmuth von Moltke less famously quipped that: "Strategy is a system of expedients,"[4] which is the theme of this chapter. The Northeast Government led by Gao Gang, far from employing a rigid Stalinist or even Soviet blue print, improvised and tried various policies of varying efficacy to restore production and rebuild the industrial economy to meet wartime needs first during the Chinese Civil War and then the Korean War. Perhaps understanding his own limitations, Gao empowered Zhang Wentian and Ma Hong to manage Manchuria's economy after war communism proved to be a debacle. This ideological heterodoxy of using state capitalism, private capitalism, and socialist economic planning survived at least until the early years of the First Five Year Plan (1953-1957).

Historiography

[4] Hughes, Daniel J. (ed.) *Moltke on the Art of War: selected writings*. Presidio Press: New York, New York. 1993, 45–47.

Steven Levine in the *Anvil of Victory* analyzes local newspaper reports (*Northeast Daily*) and U.S. government sources to argue that although the Chinese Communists in Manchuria faced inflation, soaring grain prices, and widespread shortages of industrial goods, unlike the Nationalists, they were able to produce just enough to meet the minimal needs of the population and the military, giving the PLA an edge over the Nationalist army.[5] Furthermore, the party was able to assemble in relatively short time a massive economic planning bureaucracy that went on to produce notable and talented Chinese state economists.[6] Writing in the late 1980s, Levine had limited or no detailed information on the role of Soviet aid and the crucial questions of *how* and *why* certain economic decisions in this pivotal period were made.

On the matter of the hows and the whys, Hua-yu Li's *Mao and the Economic Stalinization of China, 1948-1953* and Morris l. Bian's *The Making of the State Enterprise System in Modern China: the Dynamics of Institutional Change* offer the most detailed, persuasive, and opposing arguments. Li argues that China's economic planners and political leaders were ultimately influenced by Stalin's *Short Course,* which offered a very stilted and politicized account of how the Soviet Union industrialized during the first and second five year plan. The Stalinist treatise failed to adequately cover the role of private capitalism during Lenin's New Economic Plan (NEP) in restoring the Soviet economy from complete collapse during the Russian Civil War. In China, this translated to a contradictory policy of both controlling and trying to use the capitalist class.[7] To that end, guiding principles for China's economic development since the second plenum of the 7th Central Committee meeting of the CCP in March

[5] Levine, Steven I. *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, 180; shortage of goods, 178; sufficient for military needs, 196.
[6] Ibid, 196.
[7]Li, Hua-Yu. *Mao and the Economic Stalinization of China, 1948-1953*. Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006,77.

of 1949 were purposely vague to allow for reinterpretation at a later stage.[8] Within this political milieu, the Northeast was profoundly important, generating the economic blueprint that was used for China writ large. In particular, it was in the Northeast that the CCP's leader most knowledgeable in economics, Zhang Wentian, made the case for a state capitalist model of development.[9] Although Li makes the case that China's economy became thoroughly Stalinized, there is compelling evidence in Gao Gang's speeches and the working papers of Zhang Wentian, unpublished Soviet archival reports, and Northeast Government's published reports to show that economic thinking continued to be heterodox and capitalistic until at least 1953-1954 when the Northeast Government was folded.

While Hua-yu Li's work builds on earlier scholarship of K.C. Yeh and Dwight H. Perkins that the Chinese planners copied virtually wholesale the Soviet economic model, Morris L. Bian makes the case that the Chinese post-1949 state-owned enterprise (SOE) system owes its origins to the Nationalist period.[10] Bian is not the first scholar to find Republican era origins for the social welfare provisions of the SOEs and the broader *danwei* system, but his main argument is that the total war and shock of the Anti-Japanese War forced the Nationalists to reorganize their economy, particularly the armaments industry, which was continued by the Communists.[11] The focus on the armaments industry is an important one, because the CCP prioritized the military-industrial complex above all else both during the Chinese Civil War and the subsequent reconstruction and Korean War periods. The biggest shortcoming of Bian's work is the regional focus on Sichuan industries and failing to explore both Nationalist thinking on Manchuria's

[8] Ibid, 68.
[9] Ibid., 71.
[10] See Rand Corporation, and K. C. Yeh. *Soviet and Communist Chinese Industrialization Strategies*. 1968 and Perkins, Dwight H. *Market Control and Planning in Communist China*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1968.
[11] Bian, Morris L. *The Making of the State Enterprise System in Modern China : The Dynamics of Institutional Change*. Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 2005, 14.

industrial capacity and the special role the region held for early Communist economic planning. In addition, Bian does not discuss that the KMT and even the Japanese and Manchukuo authorities were also influenced by 1930s Soviet command economy.[12]

Between tax policy, industrial planning, currency reform, labor relations, and the complex relationship between the cities and the countryside in the Northeast, it would be impossible to discuss every facet of the economy. Moreover, I am not an economic historian. The focus is how on several key economic questions, considerable flexibility and even Marxist heresy was permitted by Gao Gang in order to rebuild the Northeast and help the CCP win the Civil War and have a chance during the Korean War.

Certain dye-in-the wool theorists may disagree, but people matter. Most of the individuals asked to make complex economic decisions in the Northeast Bureau had little relevant formal training and each brought their own biases. Gao Gang is sometimes described as a textbook Stalinist; in private conversations with the Soviet diplomat-historian Andrei Ledovsky he questioned the patriotism of private capitalists and viewed "New Democracy" with its stated broad tent approach to the bourgeoisie with suspicion.[13] But he was also able to criticize "leftist deviations" and talked of a slow, consensual path towards collectivization.[14] He was also first to admit that he at best only had a dim understanding of Marxist-Leninist theory.[15] In modern terms he would probably be labeled a populist. Ma Hong was a brilliant thinker and a very able assistant, but he was too junior to call the shots. His association with Gao Gang and Zhang Wentian brought great personal misfortune, and it was not until the 1980s that his economic

[12] See Hirata, Koji. "*Steel Metropolis: Industrial Manchuria and the Making of Chinese Socialism, 1916-1964*." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2018.
[13] Bernstein, Li, Bernstein, Thomas P, and Li, Hua-Yu. *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-present*. Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010, 177; for New Democracy see Ledovsky, Andrei *Delo Gao Gana*, 1990,102-103.
[14] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 27-28.
[15] Ibid., 66-67.

skills could be put to proper use in pushing China from a semi-autarkic commodity economy into one oriented around market forces.[16] Zhang Wentian, the main protagonist of this chapter, will be discussed in depth below.

Lastly, the chapter shows that China's economy at least in the initial years of Communist rule escapes easy clichés. Frank Dikotter in the *Tragedy of Liberation* states that in the pre Great Leap Forward China, intentionally onerous taxes and levies were put up to bankrupt the private sector and the capitalist class in order to meet Mao's and the party's long-held plans to do away with them entirely.[17] Records show that is not the case. Some private merchants enjoyed major windfalls if they offered goods or services that the state owned enterprises could not. Moreover, taxes and penalties were applied unevenly and Ledovsky cites a conversation with Gao Gang where the latter complained that sometimes it was the capitalists who received highly preferential treatment from the state.[18]

This chapter primarily draws from the published speeches of Zhang Wentian, his CPSU Central Committee personal file, Gao Gang's speeches, and Chinese and Russian reporting on the economic conditions in Manchuria.[19] For the latter, I have made extensive use of *Northeast Industry* (東北工業), an internal circulation periodical published by the Northeast Government's Department of Industry between 1948 and 1952.

Gao's Chief Economist: Zhang Wentian

[16] "Ma Hong: Rectifying Market Economy (馬洪；為市場經濟正名)." 24 August 2009. QH News. http://www.qhnews.com/ll/system/2009/08/24/002796966.shtml (Accessed 10 May 2020).
[17] Dikötter, Frank. *The Tragedy of Liberation : A History of the Chinese Revolution, 1945-1957*. 2013, 188.
[18] Ledovsky, 102.
[19] CPSU stands for Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Described by the Soviet intelligence operative Peter Vlasov as: "A party cadre of utmost culture with a background in engineering, literature, and social sciences, and the translator of Leo Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Wilde," Zhang Wentian (張聞天) was a literary publisher turned Marxist who was one of the most educated politburo members in CCP's history. [20] Spending most of the 1920s abroad, Zhang studied in Japan, UC Berkeley, and Moscow's Sun Yat Sen University. In Moscow, Zhang developed a deep theoretical understanding of Marxism-Leninism along with a knowledge of various moderate and "rightist" voices within the Communist Party such as Bukharin. Despite his introverted nature, Zhang was at the center of student life in Moscow since he was among a handful of students who truly mastered Russian and was the only Chinese student to have studied in the United States.[21] He interpreted for Stalin when the latter had to explain himself to Chinese students after the 1927 Shanghai Massacre and the collapse of the 1st KMT-CCP United Front.[22]

The five years that Zhang was in Moscow (1925-30) witnessed Stalin's consolidation of power in the Soviet Union and the end of the New Economic Policy (NEP) which had allowed for the partial restoration of capitalism and private enterprise to get Soviet Russia out of post-civil war ruin. Zhang was also caught up in the brutal struggle against Trotsky and his supporters within the Communist movement. After several Chinese students shouted pro-Trotskyist slogans on Red Square during the 10th anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution on 7 November 1927, a major purge of the international student ranks was ordered by the Soviet

[20] See 1 May 1945 entry Vladimirov, P.P. *Osobiy Rayon Kitaya 1942- 1945*. 1973.
[21] Cheng, Zhongyuan (程中原), senior ed.. *Zhang Wentian Biography (張聞天傳)*. Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe, 1993, 96.
[22] Ibid., 98-99.

government.[23] We know from his writing that Zhang resented the frequent interruptions of study to hold struggle sessions and the changes to curriculum that reduced emphasis from studying Russian and Marxist theory (Marx, Engels, and Lenin) in favor of practical revolutionary training.[24] Zhang's subsequent opposition to radical leftist policies can be seen from his criticism of the "leftist deviation" of the "Li lisan (李立三) line" while teaching in Moscow and beyond during his work in Manchuria and ultimately in his brave challenge to Mao at the Lushan Conference in 1959.[25]

We have no way of knowing if Zhang's difficult latter years in Moscow undermined his broader faith in Marxism, but it is not unreasonable to assume that as he himself got caught up in the bitter struggles within the university, the Comintern, and the party that he would have seen that ideological debates were often little more than a fig leaf concealing naked ambition and struggles for power. Zhang was lucky to leave Moscow in 1930; his younger brother, Zhang Jianer (張建爾), who barely survived the Nationalist purge of the CCP in 1927 and had come to the Soviet Union in his brother's footsteps to study film was executed during the Great Terror of 1937-38.[26]

Back in China, after briefly holding the post of General Secretary of the CCP and serving as Mao's ally, Zhang Wentian once again showed his contrarian nature in Yan'an.[27] In 1941 Zhang wrote a detailed report "Return to the Start (出發歸來紀)" on peasant conditions in

[23] Ibid., 101.
[24] Ibid., 97-98.
[25] Lushan Conference was a meeting of CCP leadership that saw open criticism of the Great Leap Forward, resulting in the purge of Peng Dehuai. See *Zhang Wentian Biography (張聞天傳).*
[26] Ibid., 100.
[27] There is some controversy over whether the CCP had a general secretary after 1931, see: Saich, T. and Van De Ven, Hans. *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*. Armonk, NY: M.E.Sharpe, 1994, 380.

Northern and Northwest Shaanxi. The report far surpassed Mao's famous 1927 *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan* in specificity and analytical insight and made the almost heretical recommendation of favoring rich peasants once Zhang demonstrated their key role in rural production.[28] Zhang blamed existing economic problems on the confiscatory CCP policy and called for capitalist incentives to revive rural commerce.[29] The report was suppressed while Zhang was forced to make self-criticisms during the Yan'an Rectification Movement. It was under these conditions that Zhang, like Gao Gang, asked and volunteered to be sent to Manchuria in 1945 to turnaround his career.



Figure 4: Zhang Wentian: Zhang Wentian Personal File

[28] *Zhang Wentian Biography (張聞天傳)*, 302-310.
[29] Ibid.

CCP's Political Economy

Economic considerations weighed heavily on the CCP leadership in picking Manchuria as their future base of operations. To even call Manchuria a base is a bit of a misnomer, considering it is larger than France and had a population of 40 million— twenty times as large as the Yan'an revolutionary base where the Chinese Communist movement was centered from 1935 onwards.[30] Fertile farmland, rich in coal, iron, timber, and oil, Manchuria was the prized region of Japan's colonial empire and served as the primary supply area for the Japanese war effort in China.[31] By most estimates, it boasted ninety percent of China's heavy industry.[32] Mao himself remarked at the 7th Party Congress in 1945 that:

> *"The Northeast is very important. From the future prospects of our Party and the Chinese Revolution, the Northeast is particularly important. If we lose everything that we currently have, as long as we have the Northeast, the revolution has a firm base."*[33]

Manchuria was the golden goose that both Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists and Mao and the Chinese Communists hoped would serve as a foundation for post-WWII economic revival. For the Communists, there was an understanding that only by controlling Manchuria could the CCP have the resources to sustain a prolonged conflict with Nationalist China that was

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[30] At its peak the population of the Shanganning Base was two million. See "Shanganning Anti-Japanese Base (陕甘寧抗日根據地)." Baike. https://baike.baidu.com/item/陕甘宁抗日根据地 - 4 (Accessed 7 May 2020).
[31] Myers, Ramon H. *The Japanese Economic Development of Manchuria 1932-1945*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982.
[32] *Chinese National Geography: The Geographic Magazine on China. Issues 10-12*. Beijing: Chinese National Geography Press, 2009, 235.; Aleksandrova, Maria V. "Ekonomika Severo-vostochnogo Kitaya i Sovetskaya pomosch KNR v 50x godah." Vneshneekonomicheskaya Politika KNR.
[33] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠). *My Recollections (我的回憶)*. Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2004, 304.

aided by the United States.[34] The coal and steel riches of Anshan, Benxi, and Fushun plants were a tantalizing prize, but managing such technologically complex, supply-chain dependent plants required expertise that the Communists lacked entirely and the Nationalists in large part. Nor were the economic conditions on the ground as propitious as they seemed in distant Chongqing or Yan'an. After reaching a production peak in 1943, Manchukuo entered a long economic crisis made all the worse by the Soviet invasion in August of 1945 and the severance of supply networks between Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and Manchuria.[35] To make this region productive again would require support from all quarters: Japanese and Manchukuo era engineers, private capitalists, and a state apparatus that supported industry and knew when to curtail radical policies.

Manchukuo's Share of China's Total Industrial Output in 1943			
Coal	48.8%	Salt	26.1%
Pig Iron	88.5%	Ammonium Sulfate	69.0%
Steel	91.0%	Soda Ash	60.0%
Electricity	66.5%	Machinery	95.0%
Cement	66.0%		

Figure 5: Source Hirata, 382.

[34] Chen, Bocun (陳伯村) ed. *Zhang Wentian Selected Northeast Works (張聞天東北文選)*. Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1990, 2-5.
[35] Paine, S. C. M. *The Wars for Asia, 1911–1949*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 28.

1945-1948- War Communism with Manchurian Characteristics

On 17 September 1945 Mao, who was in Chongqing for negotiations with the Nationalists, granted Zhang Wentian's request to be sent to Manchuria after Liu Shaoqi lobbied on his behalf.[36] On 30 November, days after arriving in Harbin, Zhang along with Gao Gang and Chen Yun (陳雲) sent a short four page report titled *Views on [the party's] Manchuria Work* (對滿州工作的幾點意見) to both the Northeast Government and the CCP Central Committee. [37]

The report outlined immediate policy objectives for the party in Manchuria and dampened any expectations for a quick victory; the overall Communist strategy in the region for the next two years needed to be a gradual concentration of military and economic resources. It also acknowledged that economic challenges combined with a difficult international situation where the Soviet Union had to limit aid to the Communists whilst the KMT was benefiting from all-out U.S. support made the original strategy of holding large cities in Southern Manchuria untenable.[38]

In the report, the authors went on to urge party cadres to closely work with the Soviet occupying authorities and to overcome leftist transgressions committed in the cities.[39] Speaking more broadly, the authors argued against "mechanically" transporting experience of running old liberated areas to new Manchuria.[40] This was a not so thinly veiled criticism of prior practices squeezing regions dry of their resources, which would have been disastrous for CCP efforts to

[36] *Zhang Wentian Biography (張聞天傳),* 514.
[37] Ibid., 515; There are disputes about Chen Yun's level of involvement see: He Fang (何方). "Remembering Zhang Peisen (懷念張培森)." YHCQ: 2015 Issue 7.
[38] Chen, Bocun (陳伯村) ed. *Zhang Wentian Selected Northeast Works (張聞天東北文選)*, 1
[39] Ibid., 2.
[40] Ibid., 3.

build long term bases in the Northeast. Since the south was in imminent danger of falling to the Nationalists, the authors called for a pivot to medium and small sized cities in the north, primarily Jiamusi, Mudanjiang, and Yilan.[41] Lastly, although the Northeast Government was unsure of its ability to hold even Harbin, the triumvirate still found it necessary to emphasize that Soviet assistance and support for the CCP would persist and ultimately prove decisive, stating that:

> *"[The Soviets] at certain times may adjust the extent to which they implement the Sino-Soviet Treaty and the extent to which they provide the [CCP] assistance according to international or domestic conditions as a matter of tactics, but the fundamental character of Soviet policy [provide aid to the Communists] remains constant and will not change."*

At the time of the report's writing, the Northeast Government led by Peng Zhen (彭真) hoped for a quick capture of Shenyang, Changchun, and other major cities in southern Manchuria. Peng was also in favor of a rapid and radical land reform effort in the countryside combined with a rent-seeking approach to the cities that mirrored earlier CCP practices in Shaanxi and other revolutionary base areas.[42] Apparently disregarding the advice of the report, Peng opted for a radical course during the winter of 1945-46 with the Chinese Red Army taking the aforementioned large cities by March of 1946.

As Zhang Wentian, Gao Gang, and Chen Yun predicted, the CCP's initial plans of occupying Southern Manchuria—where the bulk of the industrial riches laid—proved to be

[41] Ibid.
[42] "Lin Feng Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 52, 52.

impossible when the Soviets reluctantly began to comply with the terms of the 1945 Sino-Soviet Treaty in spring of 1946. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Soviet Red Army repeatedly tarried its withdrawal from Manchuria and set up various roadblocks to Nationalist efforts to "recover" the Northeast. Nevertheless, by summer of 1946 the Chinese Communists found themselves on the other side of the Nen and Songhua (Sungari) Rivers in Northern Manchuria and pursued by advancing Nationalist troops.[43] Following Communist reversal, Peng Zhen was sacked and replaced by Lin Biao (林彪) and Gao Gang.[44]

Northern Manchuria while rich in timber and arable land, was a far cry from the industrial base the Communists originally envisioned for themselves. Most of the textile plants, badly needed to clothe the Red Army troops for the harsh Manchurian winters, were located in the south.[45] Only ten percent of the region's coal was mined in the north; all the major steel plants were in the south; in 1938, the north produced a paltry thirteen percent of Manchuria's machine-tool production—which was vital for the war effort.[46] Soviet pillaging meant that the Nationalists were not exactly sitting on an industrial cornucopia either, but the disparity in resources was glaring.

To meet both military and civilian needs, the CCP turned to the Soviet Union. Cross border trade with the Soviet Union existed even during the Manchukuo period (the Soviets while not recognizing Manchukuo maintained trade offices in Harbin and Shenyang) and was uninterrupted by Soviet occupation. By December of 1946 the Northeast Bureau signed a formal

[43] Levine, 131.
[44] Tanner, Harold M. 2012. "Big Army Groups, Standardization, and Assaulting Fortified Positions: Chinese Ways of Warfare and the Transition from Guerilla to Conventional War in China's Northeast, 1945 – 1948." *Journal of Chinese Military History. One (Two)*: 111–113.
[45] Levine, 182.
[46] Ibid.

trade agreement with the Soviet Union.[47] Signed in Harbin with Soviet representatives from the Ministry of Trade, such a level of formal cooperation would have been equally unthinkable and impractical during the CCP's Yan'an days. Direct dealing with the Northeast Government is clear evidence that even at this early stage of the resumed Chinese Civil War, Moscow was increasing its support for the Chinese Communists and failing to honor the 1945 Sino-Soviet treaty with Nanjing.

At the same Harbin meeting, Gao Gang asked the Soviets for help in printing and establishing a local Northeast currency, and made a request for badly needed oil and medical supplies for military and civilian use. In addition, Gao asked for succor in organizing rear area supply depots and training centers for soldiers and cadres in Jiamusi. According to Ledovsky, the Soviets agreed to all the requests.[48] Soviet assistance did not come free of charge however. A U.S. intelligence assessment cited by Steven Levine states that in 1947 alone the Northeast Government sent most of the grain surplus (approximately 1.1 million tons) to the Soviet Union which was experiencing a serious post-war famine in Belarus, Lithuania, and other Western parts of the USSR.[49]

Despite the Soviet assistance, economic conditions in Northern Manchuria remained grim. In the cities there was mass unemployment, soaring grain prices, and high overall inflation.[50] In the countryside, land reform, conscription that coincided with the growing season, and grain confiscation led to starvation and plummeting harvests.[51] Ranking misery is not a useful exercise, but it is safe to state that conditions in northern Manchuria were not any better

[47] Ledovsky, 23.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Levine, 178.
[50] Ibid., 180.
[51] Zhang, Zhenglong (張正隆). *White Snow Red Blood: A True History of the CCP-KMT Battle for the Northeast (雪白血紅：國共東北大決戰歷史眞相).* Hong Kong. 2016.

than the conditions in Nationalist-controlled south which was dealing with its own set of economic hardships, particularly hyperinflation.[52]

By the fall of 1946, one year into the Communist experiment in Manchuria, the economic conditions in CCP controlled regions had further deteriorated. In addition to above mentioned wartime depravation made worse by cadre inexperience and corruption, it became apparent that systemic problems brought on by "war communism" were exacerbating the economic crisis.

The term "war communism" warrants a brief introduction. War communism was a series of radical policies attempted by the Bolshevik government during the Russian Civil War from 1918 to 1921 that produced a fitful combination of economic hypercentralization and local administrative chaos. Although historians continue to be divided whether the policies were ideologically driven by Lenin and the party to achieve communism as quickly as possible or a response to wartime emergency, war communism brought about conditions that bore uncanny similarity to those experienced by the Chinese Communists in areas under their control.[53] In response to the collapse of the Russian grain market and an exodus of workers from cities, the Bolsheviks set up a grain monopoly in 1918 that was made even more stringent in January of 1919 with a general Food Levy (prodrazverstka).[54] The system was incredibly onerous on the peasants who lacked material incentives to sell food to the state; this quickly led to forced requisitions of food and widespread peasant unrest. In the cities, the experiment of nationalizing all industries, abolishing wages and paper money was equally disastrous leading to plummeting production. By March of 1918 there was already a radical curtailing of workers' councils

[52] Munir Quddus, Jin-Tan Liu, John S. Butler. 1989. "Money, prices, and causality: The Chinese hyperinflation, 1946–1949, reexamined," *Journal of Macroeconomics*, Volume 11, Issue 3, 447-453.
[53] For an overview of the debate see, Malle, Silvana. *The Economic Organization of War Communism, 1918-1921*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
[54] Figes, Orlando. *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924*. Pimlico, 1997, 612-615.

(Soviets) and the reintroduction of commercial management for factories along with tiered salaries that favored experts and skilled workers.[55] None of these policies were popular with the party rank and file, but by then Lenin had already authoritatively declared that: "state capitalism will be our salvation."[56]

Similar to what occurred in Soviet Russia thirty years prior, the CCP's "war communism" in Manchuria created an uncoordinated rent-seeking system where individual Chinese Red Army commanders and units were responsible for the production and procurement of military supplies in their area of responsibility.[57] In addition to essentially living off the land, there was little incentive to establish or restore trade links, which meant that some units sat on surpluses of materials or products badly needed elsewhere. To address these problems and continued leftist excesses, Zhang Wentian issued the following instructions on 21 September 1946 on behalf of the Northeast Government:[58]

1. Return confiscated property to original owners and end "settling of accounts" with city industrialists and merchants
2. Reduce the tax burden by cancelling all taxes and levies other than the single provincial business tax
3. Increase the legal work day back to ten hours from eight. (Note: This is in the interest of the workers, while an eight hour work day is a "leftist deviation")
4. Police are to protect merchants and their property
5. Coordinate sharing of profits between workers and capital
6. The Party needs to educate the people that it will protect industry & merchants and not confiscate or end private property

The change of policy was intended to stimulate industrial production, reduce unemployment, and improve the flow of both goods and currency in the Northeast. What is most remarkable is the clear linkage between reversing radical confiscation and anti-bourgeoisie polices and

[55] Smith, S. A., *'War Communism' in The Russian Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, 2012, 74.
[56] Ibid., 73.
[57] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 77.
[58] Ibid., 55.

restoring economic normalcy in Zhang Wentian's thinking and policy. The timing is worth noting as well. By late September 1946 the conflict with the Nationalists once again descended into all out civil war, with Gao Gang and Zhang publicly stating that war needs took precedence above all else.[59] In their eyes, rolling back radical worker and party led economic policies was necessary to adequately supply the PLA and win the civil war. While this has some parallels to the Bolshevik curtailment of workers' councils, "war communism" was completely abandoned only towards the end of the Russian Civil War, when the Bolsheviks felt confident to turn their attention to post-war reconstruction.

Less than two months later, on the 29th anniversary of the October Revolution on 7 November 1946, Zhang Wentian issued thirteen further recommendations for the Manchurian economy.[60] Once again, Zhang's recommendations were to the right of even Lenin's New Economic Policy.[61] Zhang argued that:

> *"In order to both improve the people's livelihood and win a protracted war, it is necessary to admit that the [Northeast] needs to absorb and use a large amount of private capital and develop private capitalism."*[62]

Moreover, Zhang criticized prior 'settling of accounts" (清算), saying such vendettas had hurt capitalists and prevented them from doing work useful for the national economy. Although Zhang's recommendations comport with key tenets of Soviet planning such as endorsing a rapid accumulation of capital for industrialization via agricultural requisitions, Zhang emphasized that

[59] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠). *Wo de hui yi (我的回憶)*. Beijing: Zhonggong dang shi chubanshe, 2004, 306.
[60] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (張聞天東北文選), 76.
[61] NEP was a 1921 policy that reintroduced private markets and was in existence until 1928/9.
[62] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (*張聞天東北文選*), 76

while "State controlled capital occupies an important position, its main task is not to exclude and absorb private capital.. but to address [private capital's] shortcomings and work in concert for both wartime and livelihood needs."[63] Zhang also called for the restriction of the military's economic activity by their work units since their small public capital was inefficient and often outright unproductive.

In the document, Zhang also took a position in support of free trade. As mentioned earlier, individual provinces had taxes and levies for interregional trade (厘金), while local Red Army units and cadres had various barriers to trade such as forced contributions from merchants, confiscation, and duties.[64] Restrictions on goods sold and privileged positions for state monopolies defined both the Manchukuo era and the KMT; Zhang believed that with the sole exception of firearms and ammunition, everything should be sold on the market. Zhang hoped in particular that agricultural products like sorghum, wheat, soybeans, tobacco leaves, and millet could be traded for valuable goods such as clothing and salt.[65] Tackling bureaucratism, Zhang called for a unified and hierarchical trade office system which would reduce corruption and prevent local units and commanders from undermining commercial policy set by the Northeast Government.

Local malfeasance and disregard of Northeast Government instructions was a serious problem that extended well into the early years of the PRC. In its quest to marshal ever greater resources to support a rapidly swelling Red Army, the CCP and individual work units collected various in kind taxes and levies that differed from county to county and from work unit to work

[63] Ibid., 77.
[64] Ibid., 80.
[65] Ibid., 77-78. On salt specifically, Zhang said there should be no Manchukuo era "Military goods" restrictions and high customs.

unit.[66] As a result of both policy and ad hoc requisitions, already scarce manufactured goods disappeared almost entirely from the villages, further lowering incentives for the peasants to voluntarily sell their grain. The party was slow to address the growing economic crisis in part due to the initial belief by Peng Zhen that such self-reliance would actually boost production. The attempt by the Northeast Government to create what Steven Levine calls a system of autarky both in the cities and in the countryside proved hard to undo once the error of such policies became manifest.[67]

Economic Relations with the Nationalists

Wars, especially civil wars, do not mean that trade with the enemy grinds to a halt. On the contrary, conflict induced scarcity and arbitrage opportunities create strong incentives for smuggling, an activity that is often only halfheartedly suppressed by the warring parties. Throughout the fighting and the intermittent ceasefires between 1945-1948, goods and capital moved across the dividing line. The CCP officially only tolerated trade with Nationalist controlled Southern Manchuria for nonstrategic goods, but judging from the coverage in *The Northeast Daily*, the local authorities were never able to completely stamp out trade with Nationalist controlled areas.[68] The goods sold to the Nationalists were taxed at various rates (five to thirty-five percent); in turn high duties (reaching seventy percent) were placed on imported luxury goods like cosmetics.[69] To prop up CCP-controlled industry through import-substitution, there was an import ban on nonstrategic goods that the Communists produced themselves.[70] Gao Gang appears to have taken the issue of smuggling particularly seriously, highlighting that it

[66] Levine, 193-194.
[67] Ibid., 176.
[68] For a report on smuggling in Liaoxi see: "Smuggling among Treacherous Merchants in Liaoxi is Rampant (辽西商奸走私猖獗)." *The Northeast Daily* (*東北日報*). 15 August 1947.
[69] Levine, 194.
[70] Ibid.,

threatened the economy and strengthened the enemy in speeches starting from Yan'an and even during the Korean War.[71]

When trade benefited the Communists, such as clothing and medicine they had difficulty procuring, there was little incentive to go after merchants who did business with the Nationalists. Grain shipments were a different matter. As mentioned earlier, grain was the barter currency for essential Soviet assistance and the CCP was not about to feed its enemy while struggling to provide enough food for its own soldiers and workers. Once Changchun was encircled and placed under siege in May of 1948, Lin Biao's forces took up draconian measures to prevent even soybean shells (used in peacetime only for fodder) from reaching the city in order to starve it into submission and set an example for other Nationalist strongholds.[72] Although Changchun experienced horrific starvation, it is difficult to be certain of the efficacy of CCP efforts to crack down wholesale on private grain sellers given the soaring prices for grain both in southern and northern Manchuria, frequent references to combatting grain black markets in local newspapers, and the sheer vastness of Manchuria.[73]

Trading with the enemy brought another serious risk to the Communists: capital flight. As early as 1946, restrictions on interprovincial and intraprovincial trade were put in place to prevent merchants and landlords from absconding with valuable resources.[74] Even when Nationalist fortunes reversed in 1947 and the PLA went on the counteroffensive, the Harbin

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[71] See 10 January 1952 speech "Overcoming the Corrosive Effect of the Bourgeoise on the Party & Resisting Rightist Thinking in the Party (克服資產階級思想對黨的侵蝕反對黨內的右傾思想)" and 1943 "Examining [our] Finance & Economics Work and Future Work Direction (財經工作的全面檢討與今後工作方針)" in Xue, Junfu (薛俊富), Bai Haoting (白浩亭). *Collected Works of Gao Gang (高崗文集).* Huaxia Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 2013.

[72] Dikotter, 20-21.; Du, Bin (杜斌). *Starving Changchun: Chinese Civil War's most Brutal Siege (長春餓殍戰：中國國共內戰最慘烈的圍困)*. Taichung: 2017.

[73] Levine, 180; on siege of Changchun see Van de Ven, Hans J. *China at War Triumph and Tragedy in the Emergence of the New China*. 2018.

[74] Levine, 176.

municipality felt compelled in 1948 to publicly announce a ban on transfer of capital to nationalist territories.[75] Such decisions suggest that despite persistent efforts by the Northeast Government and Zhang Wentian in particular to entice the local capitalists to cooperate with the new regime, a significant portion of them nevertheless preferred to take their chances with the Nationalists, whose economy by then was in a hyperinflationary death spiral.[76]

Efficacy notwithstanding, internal reports show that the Northeast Government took various measures to gain the trust of the Manchurian capitalists.[77] Likely going further than what Mao Zedong had in mind when he stated that getting the private capitalists on board was a major objective of the broader "New Democracy" strategy, a 19 July 1949 report "On Private Capitalists in the Northeast" to the CCP Central Committee explicitly stated that private capital needed state support (albeit with control too).[78] Furthermore, the preceding three years (1945-1948) were described as defined by "leftist deviations" which led to attacks against small and medium sized merchants who were confused for genuine national traitors (漢奸).[79] In particular, the report called for the end of two practices especially corrosive for party-private capitalist relations:[80]

1. One-sided pursuit of labor interests (片面工人福利觀點) which prevents mutually beneficial terms for labor and capital
2. Tax abuse: while state interests come first, the state cannot tax private industry to death

[75] Ibid., 184.
[76] See Quddus, Munir, Jin-Tan Liu, and John S. Butler. 1989. "Money, Prices, and Causality: The Chinese Hyperinflation, 1946-1949, Reexamined". *Journal of Macroeconomics.* 11, no. 3: 447-453.
[77] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (*張聞天東北文選*), 275.
[78] Li Hua-yu writes that Mao added "at the present time" to Zhang Wentian's comments that: "the party should not put restrictions on the part of the capitalist economy that was still beneficial to the national economy." *Economic Stalinization of China*, 78; *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (張聞天東北文選), 277.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

In addition to tax authorities seeing capitalists as a cash cow and the party siding with labor, the report alleged widespread abuse and neglect of legitimate private interests in joint firms. Without offering specifics, Zhang stated that the politburo of the Northeast Government made a decision to remedy this problem in joint partnerships. [81]

Zhang Wentian made detailed arguments why the private sector mattered to the Northeast. Private capitalists were more proactive (積極性) than the state sector and they possessed a high economic productivity.[82] Even under the terms of New Democracy this was an incredibly bold claim to make, especially when the same report mentioned how many CCP cadres resented capitalists *sans distinction* for their engagement in speculation.[83] Among the many "left deviations" in the report, Zhang chided Andong party cadres for allowing peasants to enter the city to continue hounding landlords after land reform—and in the process attacking urban capitalists as well until the party stepped in.[84] The Andong incident was not an isolated case, and Zhang acknowledged that many cadres did not understand the need to guard against such "left deviations."[85] The lack of support for conciliatory policies towards the bourgeoisie is documented in his other reports and is reminiscent of the early NEP years of the Soviet Union, when policies to roll back "war Communism" enjoyed scant support among party cadres who did not understand why the party should show leniency to erstwhile class enemies.[86]

Zhang saw the private capitalist class standing at a fork in the road: either opt for the path of New Democracy or fail to prosper. At the same time, the private sector could only prosper

[81] Ibid., 278.
[82] Ibid, 277.
[83] Ibid, 278.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] *The Russian Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*, 74.

under the aegis of New Democracy if the government gave it clearly defined support, attention on loans, labor and tax policy, provided market access & necessary materials, allowed capitalists to set profitable prices.[87] In context, Zhang Wentian's statement that, "state-owned enterprises are more important than private ones," seems perfunctory given the amount of attention paid to various "leftist deviations" and the unequivocal praise for the private capitalist sector's contributions to economic reconstruction.[88]

Zhang Wentian would not have sent the report to Beijing if it was not cleared by Gao Gang. As repeatedly mentioned, to the extent that Gao Gang is remembered at all, it is as a rigid Stalinist and Soviet toady. If that was really the case, it would be incredulous to see a report defending private capital and criticizing the government for not giving enough aid to capitalists leave his desk. Fortunately, Gao's own remarks provide more evidence of his actual economic pragmatism. Speaking at the Northeast Representatives' Conference on 22 August 1949, Gao made the following comments on behalf of the entire Northeast politburo:

> *"Promote and use private capital to its utmost ability in the recovery and development of Northeast Industry…Rectify both previous instances of unnecessary restrictions and a [laissez faire] attitude towards private merchants… Bring to bear the active potential of private capital in developing rural production and linking the countryside with the city."*[89]

[87] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (張聞天東北文選), 277-280.
[88] Ibid.
[89] See 22 August 1949 Northeast Politburo's Recommendations to the Northeast Representative's Conference on Northeast Government 's Administrative Policy (中共中央東北局關於東北人民政府施政方針向東北人民代表會議的建議) in *Collected Works of Gao Gang (高崗文集).*

To be clear Gao was not as enthusiastic about the long-term reliance on private capital as Zhang Wentian, the above speech clearly calls for monitoring and *some* restrictions on the bourgeoisie. Later in the speech, Gao criticized in equal measure those who wanted to leave private factories to their own devices and those who wanted to place "inappropriate restrictions (不適當的限制)" on them.[90] However, there is no talk of confiscations, ad hominems towards the bourgeoisie, or any hint that class struggle should define economic relations in Manchuria. The evidence suggests Gao was sympathetic to Zhang's recommendations.

Zhang Wentian's frequent exhortations to defend the capitalist class from abuse did not mean he was pessimistic about the future of China's economy under New Democracy. He himself stated that once the early leftist excesses were corrected, some of the private capitalists had actually done remarkably well.[91] Political speeches and printed propaganda was one thing, but the situation on the ground continued to be precarious for private capital. The above mentioned Zhang report on private capital describes an incident in Liaoning's Benxi County where the county trade office approached a private lime rock quarry about a state-private cooperation agreement. When ownership politely refused, the trade office sent public security officials who ordered the quarry to cease all operations. At the same time, a state-owned company was set up which hired a portion of the old workers and used the firm's dormitory and other facilities to mine lime rock. The incident happened in April of 1949 and was not brought to the attention of the Northeast Government until July.[92]

[90] Ibid.
[91] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (*張聞天東北文選*), 277-280.
[92] Ibid., 279.

The quarry incident was not an isolated case of local corruption or imperious bureaucrats. Advancing PLA soldiers may have sung the "Three Rules and Eight Notices" song extolling the PLA's discipline and care for the people, but newly "liberated areas" in southern Manchuria were subject to looting akin to Nationalist actions in Taiwan and East China immediately after the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance.[93] Army units took over factories, dismantled machinery, and quartered themselves in warehouses, factories, and private residences.[94] The urban population was treated with suspicion and contempt despite Northeast Government directives that the party and the army needed to prioritize cities over the countryside.[95]

On 15 September 1948, Zhang Wentian on the behalf of the Northeast Government sent a major economic report to Beijing. The report, "Outline on the Structure of the Northeast Economy and the Guiding Principles for Economic Construction (關於東北經濟構成及經濟建設基本方針的題綱)," would have a profound impact on Manchuria's subsequent economic development and would ultimately be adopted by Mao as the blueprint for industrial reconstruction in China writ large.[96] Although Zhang is credited with authoring it, it was actually written by Ma Hong, a talented young economist in the Northeast Government's research office.

Ma Hong's (馬洪) story is illustrative of the allure and prestige that Manchuria held for the CCP's young and ambitious party cadres. This was particularly true in the realm of industrial policy. After a brief stint on the Datong-Puzhou railway line where he impressed the local

[93] Issued by Mao Zedong in 1928 to improve military discipline and win over the masses. Three Rules of Discipline: obey orders in all your actions, do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses, turn in everything captured. The Eight Notices: Speak politely. Pay fairly for what you buy. Return everything you borrow. Pay for anything you damage. Do not hit or swear at people. Do not damage crops. Do not take liberties with women. Do not ill-treat captives.; Levine, 184.
[94] Ibid.
[95] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (*張聞天東北文選*), 191.
[96] Li, 69.

management with his organizational skills, Ma Hong arrived in Yan'an in 1938 a few months shy of his eighteenth birthday. He was quickly recognized by Chen Yun, who recommended Ma take up studies at the Central Party School and later the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. In 1945, Ma Hong was sent to Manchuria where he worked in the Chahar-Rehe region until being noticed by Gao Gang in 1947 on an inspection trip.[97] In June of the following year, he joined the Northeast Bureau's policy research office, which served as the brain trust for the entire Northeast Government.[98]At the policy research office, Ma Hong was the principal author of Zhang Wentian's above mentioned 1948 report which identified five distinct types of production in Manchuria.[99]

According to Zhang Mingyuan's (張明遠) memoirs, Ma Hong not only accompanied Gao Gang and other senior members of the Northeast Government on inspection trips, he was active in organizing working groups to study from the Soviets and how to handle thorny technical and political matters. [100] In particular, Ma and Zhang in 1949 looked at ways to deal with new rich peasants who had gotten wealthy from the mutual-aid teams and with party members who oppressed hired laborers or entered into economic arrangements unbefitting of Communists.[101] On matters regarding industry and private merchants, Ma Hong invited technical experts and called for pragmatism. Zhang Mingyuan recalls that the study committees had real

[97] Ma Hong (馬洪). Wikiwand. http://www.wikiwand.com/zh/马洪 (Accessed 11 May 2020).
[98] Ma, Ya (馬雅). *A Strong Wind Scatters Clouds: Ma Hong Biography 大風起兮: 馬洪傳 : 中共高層政爭內幕*. Hong Kong. 2014.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Zhang Mingyuan was one of the deputy chairmen of the Northeast People's Government. He distinguished himself during the Korean War by handling difficult logistical challenges.
[101] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠). *Wo de hui yi (我的回憶)*, 309.

clout, their recommendations, especially technical ones, were sent out and could be enacted without the explicit approval of Gao Gang and the Northeast politburo.[102]

Returning to Ma Hong's and Zhang Wentian's report on Manchuria's economy, even in its final version—the report went through several revisions that are not currently available to scholars— it highlights several politically problematic economic realities on the ground. Although the authors took pains to stress the importance of state owned enterprises (SOEs), they acknowledged that SOEs were just one of five forms of enterprise organization in the region. And even though all major industries such as steel were represented by SOEs from the Manchukuo era, they still did not account for a majority of Manchuria's economic output.[103]

In addition to SOEs, Manchuria had an extensive network of cooperatives which had been placed on "socialist railing" by promoting mutual-aid teams in the countryside. The Northeast Government's agricultural policies and land reform are discussed in proper detail in the subsequent chapter, but the report in question cautions Beijing that executive edicts alone could not advance socialism and especially collectivization.[104] Peasants needed to join willingly these newly created Soviet style mutual aid teams and supply and marketing co-ops, otherwise rural production would plummet and feudalism "restored." The call for moderation on agrarian matters was reiterated by Gao Gang in subsequent internal speeches and in Soviet recommendations to Liu Shaoqi on land reform in 1949-50.[105]

After SOEs and co-ops came the state and private capitalist sectors. State capitalism was further divided into four types: rent (出租制), value added（加工制), ordered goods（定貨制),

[102] Ibid, 310.
[103] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選*), 202-203.
[104] Ibid., 205.
[105] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 20-21.; "Molotov Criticizes Land Reform in China" 17. ? 1950. RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1251.

and commission system (代賣制). The first subcategory claimed industries, usually specializing in the development of natural resources such as timber or fishing, where the state lacked the expertise to exploit and bring the needed raw materials to market. With value added manufacturing, capitalist industry could turn raw materials provided by the state into finished goods that were profitable. The final version of the report makes no mention whether such value added manufacturing was cheaper and of higher quality than SOE products, but the emphasis on promoting and maintaining these state-capitalist arrangements suggests that for at least the time being Zhang and the Northeast Government did not believe SOEs could outperform their capitalist competitors. When describing the system of ordered goods, essentially public sector procurement, the authors explicitly stated that it is capitalist organized industries that provided goods both in the quantity and quality needed to meet state demand.[106] It is only when discussing the commission system, where private merchants and industrialists were hired to provide services and goods for the state, that Zhang Wentian was optimistic that as the co-op system matured the demand for the commission system would wane.[107] Since this is not said for any of the other three state capitalist subtypes, it is safe to assume that the authors envisioned them to continue playing an important role in the Manchurian economy for years to come.

The fourth form of economic organization discussed is the private capitalist sector. In a theme that appears in both earlier and subsequent Northeast Government reports and speeches, the authors are unequivocal that the active nature (積極性) of the private capitalists was a positive force that the party could learn from and that it needed to be harnessed for overall economic development. The section is careful to criticize past KMT mismanagement of private

[106] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (*張聞天東北文選*), 209.
[107] Ibid.

capital, alleging that eighty to ninety percent of banking assets in Manchuria became objects of "speculation" as opposed to prudently invested in necessary industries.[108] There is also a quote by Lenin that, "every day, every hour petty merchants engaging in trade give birth to capitalism," which is meant to remind the party that it had to maintain vigilance and control over the private sector.[109] Despite these caveats, it is made clear that not only did private capitalists have an important role to play, they were the only ones that profitably produced a wide range of goods and services at the time of the report's writing.[110]

The last part of Manchuria's economy was comprised of small merchants and cottage industries. Zhang and Ma quoted Stalin stating that most peasants participated in this mode of production and that eventually they would turn to socialism.[111] Although this type of economic production would undoubtedly disappear in the future, as was happening according to the authors in Eastern Europe, for now the petit bourgeoisie were to be tolerated and peasants who engaged in cottage industries were not be forced to join co-ops if they did not want to. The report acknowledged that this meant that a certain level of inequality would persist among peasants.

The report also made a series of recommendations that would be prioritized and echoed again after the Northeast Government shifted to peacetime reconstruction efforts in 1949. In particular, there was an identified need to improve management practices in SOEs by doing away with old or bureaucratic capitalist models, expand monetary circulation throughout Manchuria, and implement unified policies on labor, resource supply, and product quality control.[112]

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[108] Ibid., 211.
[109] Ibid., 212.
[110] Ibid., 211.
[111] Ibid., 213.
[112] Ibid., 202-203.

Hua-yu Li has written how the September report was further revised by Liu Shaoqi and Mao Zedong on the way to becoming the blue print for China's national economic reconstruction. According to Li, in conversations about the report, Zhang Wentian made the case that state capitalism, not SOEs, would be the principal driver for China's economic growth after the civil war.[113] It is safe to assume that this conviction stemmed from both Zhang's familiarity with Lenin's writing about NEP and the economic reality on the ground in Manchuria that he had been privy to since late 1945. Instead, Mao wrote to Liu on 26 October of 1948 that Zhang's report needed further revisions, with the overall economic policy being set at restricting private capital.[114] Although the Northeast Government in Manchuria had also been publicly promoting an inherently contradictory policy of trying to both control and use the capitalist class, regionally this was a half-hearted effort. Mao's focus, on the other hand, was clearly on making sure private capital did not attempt to get off "socialist tracks," treating the positive contributions of the capitalist class as a matter of secondary importance.[115]

Labor Relations under the Northeast Government

When the CCP initially occupied northern Manchuria, they encountered for the first time since their heady days in Shanghai before the 1927 purge actual proletariat.[116] Even Harbin, the least industrialized of Manchuria's major cities, boasted several thousand workers and even more

[113] Li, 71.
[114] Ibid., 77.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Chang Kai-Shek's 1927 purge of CCP from government and the KMT party that ended the first United Front.

"semi-proletariat."[117] CCP cadres were genuinely motivated to win over China's future ruling class and to put core tenants of Marxism-Leninism into practice. However efforts to improve living conditions for the workers by increasing their wages and reducing their work hours made private businesses unprofitable, leading to layoffs and plummeting production.[118]

The Labor Bureau of the Northeast Government initially barred private employers from having the power to fire workers, and sided with the workers on questions of management and factory organization, mandating that director boards be filled by a worker majority.[119] This proved to be disastrous in practice and was eventually reversed at Zhang Wentian's urging.[120] After a period of revolutionary idealism, Manchurian CCP leadership realized that in wartime, production took precedence to building a workers' paradise.

In 1947, profit sharing schemes, essentially material incentives, were rolled out that pegged workers' salaries to their experience and output.[121] Incidentally, the Soviets who were also facing high employment and low production in Dalian, enacted similar measures by adopting the Soviet eight tier wage structure for workers at SOEs.[122] When Chen Yun visited a Dalian shipbuilding plant that had enacted the above Soviet salary system, he reportedly "clapped his hands in delight," but there is no evidence that the Northeast Government's Labor

[117] In 1926 Mao defined "semi-proletariat" as semi-owner peasants, the poor peasants, the small handicraftsmen, the shop assistants, and the peddlers. The term appears to be a Mao's invention, even Stalin marked it with a question mark in one report. See Mao, Zedong. *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 2000.
[118] Levine, 184.
[119] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 55-56.
[120] Ibid., 55.
[121] Levine, 184.
[122] During the Stalinist period, most pay levels and bonuses were tied to level of output and not skill level or hours worked to incentivize over-fulfillment of plans. The Eight-tier wage model which rewarded education and expertise was used only in certain industries. See Filtzer, Donald A. *Soviet Workers and De-Stalinization: The Consolidation of the Modern System of Soviet Production Relations, 1953-1964*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002.; see Lin Chun's work on Mao's eventual criticism of the eight tiered wage system as a concession to the bourgeoise: Chun, Lin. *The Transformation of Chinese Socialism*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2006, 154.

or Industry departments ever directly copied the Soviet model.[123] What is clear is that after attempting to institute "equal payment for all" as was the case with early Soviet Russia, wartime considerations mandated the return of labor inequality.[124] *The Northeast Daily* devoted considerable attention to workers who "voluntarily" took ten to twenty percent pay cuts or worked on days off.[125] Workers were encouraged with prizes, technical experts with tainted political backgrounds (including Japanese engineers) were kept on the job.[126]

Unsurprisingly, these new initiatives were unpopular with workers and led to only modest increases in production.[127] Labor unions were asked not only to explain but also sell the policies to skeptical Chinese workers as essential to the cause of the Chinese revolution and their long-term livelihood.[128] In support of that effort, Zhang Wentian's speeches and reports repeatedly stressed that a ten hour work day instead of eight, was in the interests of the workers and that wages and compensation needed to be coordinated with management.[129] Ma Hong and Zhang took a position informed by thinking familiar to any student who took an introductory course to microeconomics: increasing wages leads to higher unemployment.[130] Where economists are far less certain is the relationship between growth in wages and increases in productivity. On this important question, Zhang Wentian appears to have convinced his fellow politburo members in the Northeast to take up a highly conservative position that was closer to Hayek than Marx.

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[123] "Soviet Experts in China, then "big older brother" was not how we think of them! (蘇聯專家在中國，當年的"老大哥"不是我們想的那樣!)" 16 October 2018. https://www.xuehua.us/2018/10/16/苏联专家在中国，当年的老大哥不是我们想的/zh-tw/ (Accessed 10 May 2020).
[124] Petroff, Peter. *The Soviet Wages System.* 1938 https://www.marxists.org/archive/petroff/1938/soviet-wages.htm (Accessed 11 May 2020).
[125] " Voluntary Pay Cuts by Labor (*勞工自願減少工資*)." *The Northeast Daily(東北日報)*. 16 July 1946, page 2.
[126] Levine, 184.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 55-57;79; 270.
[130] Meulders, D. *Minimum Wages, Low Pay, and Unemployment*. Palgrave MacMillian, 2016.

In the summer of 1949, both the journal *Northeast Industry* and the local newspapers began to devote considerable attention to a production records campaign that was kicked off by Gao Gang. The campaign was a Stakhanovite style effort to motivate and incentivize individual workers, work units, and factories to shatter production records. Participants were also encouraged to reduce waste and expenses, giving the campaign at times inherently incompatible goals. In an editorial for the *Liaodong Masses (遼東大眾*), Zhang Wentian both exhorted workers to participate in this mass labor mobilization while also criticizing the blind nature of some production competitions that set unrealistic or unnecessarily high targets.[131] Contemporary reports give evidence that the campaign was not a particularly popular one among at least some workers.

The self-criticism of a Haizhou (海州) mine published in *The Northeast Industry* journal reveals that local management saw the planned production targets of the campaign as aspirational goals and not as a minimum requirement that had to be met.[132] Although "bureaucratism" was identified as the main culprit, the report found worker enthusiasm—despite the production campaign— to also be deficient. Workers voiced their frustration by saying: "算了吧，不幹啦，沒奔頭 (It doesn't matter, [production campaign] has nothing to do with me, there is no prospect [for it]."[133]

In a similar instance of low employee morale and failure to meet production targets, the editorial staff of the journal took a stance in line with Zhang Wentian's market incentives thinking. Taking aside the first perfunctory "eliminate the old influence of the Japanese

[131]"How to Organize and Promote the New Records Campaign (如何組織與推動新紀錄運動)." *Liaodong Masses (遼東大眾),* 20 October 1949.
[132] Northeast Government Ministry of Industry (東北人民政府工業部). *Northeast Industry (東北工業*). September 1950, 40.
[133] Ibid.

exploiters" recommendation, the report called for concrete quality standards and providing material incentives to improve output.[134] Going further, the editors asserted that managers should have the right to fire workers for negligence and other unsatisfactory behavior, while good workers needed to be rewarded with prizes and higher pay.[135] Although no currently available speech by Zhang Wentian or Gao Gang reference the journal, its importance in shaping economic policy not just in Manchuria but all of China was stressed by the historian Han Gang.[136] It is safe to assume that the editorials printed by the journal were reviewed by the Northeast Politburo and likely Gao himself, giving the journal an additional imprimatur.

The new records campaign coincided with the end of major hostilities in the Chinese Civil War, which brought some much needed respite for the Manchurian economy. In a speech during the summer of 1949, Zhang Wentian remarked that the departure of PLA troops from Manchuria finally allowed for more sustainable finances in the Northeast.[137] The experience learned in the difficult preceding four years gave confidence to the Northeast Government that economic reconstruction would bring about profound transformation to Manchuria. In the words of a delegate member visiting the Soviet Union in March of 1950:

> *"We are living in a period of transition from war communism to new economic policy…We are currently using a system of natural allocation system of foodstuffs and basic goods. This creates leveling, which doesn't stimulate workers and leads to discontent. We must move away from natural allocation to a system of wages and salary."*[138]

[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid., 20-21.b.
[136] Interview with Han Gang, Fall 2019 Washington, DC.
[137] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (張聞天東北文選), 276.
[138] "Conversation with Wang Fu." 23 March 1950. RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1253.

1949-52: Reconstruction & Renewed War

The Soviet politburo member Anastas Mikoyan recalled that when he visited the CCP leadership at Xibaipo in early February 1949, Mao appeared least confident when discussing the future of China's economy.[139] The Chinese leader hoped for reconstruction to begin in earnest but wanted Soviet input on how to best spend the credit about to be given by the Soviets and was unsure how to manage large, economically complex cities like Shanghai.[140] The Chairman also wanted to consult the Soviets on the prudence of appealing to capitalist countries for loans and economic investment, something that Stalin ultimately endorsed in his cables to Mao.[141] As archival record and public speeches by Gao Gang and other key figures in the Northeast Government show, CCP officials in Manchuria too were eager to place the local economy on a peacetime footing and jumpstart industrial reconstruction but were unsure about the policy specifics.

At the same Xibaipo conference Mikoyan met with Ren Bishi, a senior CCP politburo member and one of its most workaholic members. Ren told Mikoyan that the party had high hopes for Manchuria's economy. The Northeast would be the main industrial region of all of China, serving as both a hub for defense industry and a model for the rest of China. The emphasis on the defense sector was deliberate. Despite efforts to reign in military spending that were alluded to by Zhang Wentian earlier, China was spending as much as two thirds of its

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[139] Shen, Zhihua (沈志華). *Soviet Experts in China (蘇聯專家在中國).* 2006*,* 57.
[140] Ibid., 58.
[141] "Telegram No.1828 from Filippov [Stalin] to Kovalev." 19 April 1949. RGASPI. Stalin Collection. Fond. 558, Opis. 11, Delo. 331, ll. 0024-0025. Reprinted in Ledovsky, Andrei, Raisa Mirovitskaia and Vladimir Miasnikov. *Sovetsko-Kitaiskie Otnosheniia*, Vol. 5, Book 2, 1946-February 1950 (Moscow: Pamiatniki Istoricheskoi Mysli, 2005),. 120-121.

budget on the military and PLA modernization was a major objective for the planned post-civil war industrialization.[142]

A year later, on 6 June 1950, less than a fortnight before the outbreak of the Korean war, Gao Gang offered a similarly high assessment of Manchuria's economic prominence at the 1st Northeast party conference. Gao stated that:

> *"Almost everyone understands [the role of the Northeast economy], but we must once again return to this question, emphasize the interrelated nature between the Northeast and our party work here and the entire country. The livelihood of the entire country depends on our work here. Everyone is watching our reconstruction efforts, party demands that we turn our industry here into a base for industrialization of the entire country."*[143]

As the Northeast Government grappled with how carry out reconstruction and industrialization in practice, in August of 1950 the Northeast Central Committee came up with a four stage framework for the economic development of Manchuria that was in equal part retrospective as it was forward looking. The first stage, which officially had already concluded by the time the document was written, was the final eradication of the old economic order. From November 1948 to July 1949, industry was transferred into the hands of the Party from the "KMT" which is assumed to be the bureaucratic capitalist class whilst stolen equipment and materials taken by the general public in the stormy initial days of revolution were returned to their rightful owners (as long as they were not class enemies).[144]

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[142] "Mikoyan's Conversation with Zhu De and Ren Bishi." 2 February 1949. AVPRF. Fond. 39, Opis. 1, Delo. 39, List 37.
[143] Ledovsky, 32-33.
[144] Ibid., 39.

From July of 1949 until February of 1950, the Manchurian economy fought to overcome waste and poor management with the introduction of "systemic management practices," introduced new accounting and budgeting practices from the Soviet Union, and carried out production competitions.[145] The third stage from February to June of 1950 saw the introduction of inspections and quality controls in enterprises and a new system of tiered salaries and individual responsibility for workers. Although the Northeast Government did not frame this period as the final winding down of war communism, the introduction of market forces and the end of ad hoc confiscatory policy is clearly at the core of this third stage.

Lastly, from June of 1950 the Manchurian economy entered the final phase of development that at least nominally lasted until 1952 when reconstruction was declared to be finished.[146] The substantive emphasis was on further controls and the gradual implementation of policies that would expand the state sector of the economy. Despite the goal of expanding the role of the state in economic affairs, the main benchmark for progress was still insuring that goods produced could pay for themselves and not use up too much capital, in other words be profitable.[147]

The centrality of organizing production around profit can also be seen in expert-level Soviet documents on Manchuria's post 1949 economy. A joint memorandum signed between the PRC and the USSR on 27 December of 1951 gives the most succinct summary of Soviet thinking and priorities vis-à-vis the Chinese economy. According to the Soviets, the first and most important objective for Chinese industry was to increase output. Specifically this meant: modernization of equipment, improving production methods, using advanced (Soviet)

[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid., 48.
[147] Ibid., 39.

techniques, training workers, carrying out production competitions, implementing multi-tiered salary systems, and professionalizing management and planning. All of these recommendations, especially learning from new Soviet methods, were given extensive coverage in the *Northeast Industry* journal throughout its existence from 1949 to 1952.[148] The second most important task, which the document states deserved the full attention of the entire country and party, was to lower production costs. In practice this meant setting fixed limits for materials, electricity, and fuel for each production unit or type of good when appropriate. Third, introduction of Soviet style accounting and a unified set of national standards to improve state profit, reduce waste and inefficiency, and improve the quality of goods. Lastly, the safety regulations for equipment and overall worker safety needed to be improved.[149]

Although the above document was published in late 1951, when China was concomitantly once again at war and beginning to plan its first Soviet-style Five Year Plan, the list of Soviet recommendations were reiterations of what had been presented by Soviet experts since 1949. More importantly, with the possible exception of Soviet style accounting practices, none of the recommendations were explicitly Stalinist or command economy in nature. Reducing production costs, optimizing working time (i.e. productivity) are at the heart of what is understood as market or supply and demand economics. Moreover, the explicit endorsement of tiered wage system for workers implied the acceptance of inequality and income stratification within the working class for the foreseeable future and was a departure from the piece-rate system that dominated Soviet labor relations in practice.[150] None of this necessarily comported with classical Marxist economic theory, but it closely reflected the practices that were advocated

[148] See stories on Soviet methods from smelting to concrete, reports from Leningrad, Urals, Kuzbas region in issues 101-106 of *Northeast Industry (東北工業)*.
[149] Full text of Joint Memorandum is found in: Shen Zhihua, 117.
[150] Flitzer, 93-95.

for and implemented by the Northeast Government in Manchuria years earlier when the CCP just began its experience of managing an industrial economy.

Contemporary newspaper reports provide a dizzying amount of statistics to make the case that both Soviet suggestions and Northeast Government economic directives were producing immediate results on the ground. According to *The Northeast Daily*, by April of 1949, 191 factories had already been repaired and back in operation. By September the number had risen to 243 and by December 307 factories, mines, and textile plants were online.[151] If the newspaper coverage is to be believed, productivity was also rising exponentially: although operating at only a quarter capacity, Manchuria's steel mills had managed to produce 42.2 percent of Manchukuo's 1943 level output in 1949. In the textile sector, 66 percent of Manchuria's mills were churning out production at 143 percent levels of the Manchukuo period.[152]

At the same time, the article acknowledged that poor accounting and budgeting practices continued to hamper production. Past practices also created perverse incentives for some workers to shirk their work and still collect food rations. Gao Gang is quoted in saying that during the Anti-Japanese War and the Civil War, the party did not care about production costs. Fixing these mistakes would take significant amount of time not in small part because too many cadres only cared about big "global" issues. In Gao's opinion, "You see a true test of someone's revolutionary qualities if they are willing to do the little things that are needed for economic work."[153] More specifically, Gao recommended different pay grades and salaries along with other material rewards to fix the inverted incentive structure that was holding down economic growth. Just like Zhang Wentian, Gao Gang was criticizing the old "war communism" model

[151] "Standing at the forefront of Northeast's Economic Construction (站在東北經濟建設的最前面)." *The Northeast Daily (東北日報).* 6 June 1950, page 1.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.

and argued in favor of a mixed system with some capitalistic elements. Given that the Soviet Union was pursuing its own well publicized economic reconstruction campaign driven by mobilization, Gao was breaking with the Stalinist blueprint in his recommendations.

Two months after the above article was published, Gao Gang gave a report on the state of the Manchurian economy at the August plenum of the Northeast People's Government (2-9 August 1950) that painted a decidedly less rosy picture from the newspaper reporting. In his speech, Gao complained that the quality of manufactured goods was unacceptably low: sixty percent of all light bulbs, bike tires, and unspecified industrial equipment was defective.[154] The campaign to reduce waste and capital costs also appeared to be failing: the first half of 1950 saw 830 billion yuan in loses, almost equal to the entire planned amount of capital investment for 1950.[155]

A year later, Gao Gang delivered a more sanguine report on how the economy did in 1950 overall. The 29 June 1951 report on SOEs summarized that production increased from 1949 to 1950 by 117.3 percent.[156] Labor productivity was said to be higher than at any point during the Manchukuo period with salaries increasing 27 percent in 1949 and 12.5 percent in 1950.[157] Given that inflation continued to be a serious problem well into 1950 it is unlikely that workers actually enjoyed the kind of material improvement to their living standard that Gao claimed.

The success of the above economic reconstruction was attributed to Mao Zedong, democratic reforms, new policies, and the helpful role of Soviet advisors. The surface layer of obligatory socialist platitudes are in contradiction with Gao Gang's more detailed observations

[154] Ledovsky, 53.
[155] Ibid., 54.
[156] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 30.
[157] Ibid.

about Manchuria's economic reality and its future. For instance, in order for the production records campaign to be effective, Gao argued that factory directors, not government officials, had to be responsible.[158] Furthermore, Zhang Wentian's point that workers could not be hostile to management was reiterated. Gao arguably went further by stating that workers had no reason to fear mechanization and increased use of machinery and that political work should be done in concert with production objectives, not at odds.[159] In other words, no class struggle when it came to industrial output. The latter point was highlighted by an unknown Soviet official perusing Gao Gang's personal file, while it is unlikely that they had the historical record in mind while marking up, the remark is particularly illustrative of the willingness of Northeast Government officials to prioritize capitalistic or classical economic solutions over leftist policies.

On matters pertaining to stimulating economic growth and reducing production costs, Gao in the report called for a set of policies that appear to be a mix of Soviet style socialist practices and more market oriented solutions. On growth, Gao recommended the following steps:[160]

1. Speedup turnover of inventories and increase Yuan liquidity in the Northeast
2. Increase the rate of machine use, reduce the rate of wear/damage with the goal of increasing the value of production by seven to eight percent
3. All SOEs must give workers responsibility for individual roles/duties
4. Implement correct technical and quality standards
5. Strict quality control throughout the supply chain from initial suppliers of raw materials to producers of semi-finished inputs to final manufactured product

[158] Ibid., 34.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., 31-33.

6. Strict quality control over each new production line to ensure quality and eliminate waste.

To manage costs, Gao called for the elimination of old production standards and constant review of costs. This was to be aided by new accounting practices that needed to be publicized with every worker and work unit.[161] Gao also specifically singled out the need for SOEs to honor contracts to reduce waste and inspire confidence in the public sector.[162] It should be noted that not all the cost saving methods were a break with typical Soviet style policy. Gao Gang and the Northeast Government supported the improvement of planning, the elimination of ad hoc work plans, and the suborning of local party structures to strictly monitor the quality and accounting practices of local construction projects.[163]

Lastly, the report provides more evidence that plans formulated by the party-state often failed to be implemented on the ground. At the time of the report's writing in 1951, some factories continued to ignore local party and government instructions. *Neibu cankao* and other literature has covered that at Anshan, relations between the famous steel plant and the local city officials were particularly dysfunctional.[164] Gao believed it was up to the factory management to take the initiative in smoothing relations with the local government.[165] To that end he called for:

1. Discussion and coordination of plan targets with local officials
2. Coordination and common strategy to carry out educational work in the factory (particularly about production records)

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[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.
[164] See Hirata, Koji. "*Steel Metropolis: Industrial Manchuria and the Making of Chinese Socialism, 1916-1964*." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2018, 42-43.
[165] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 37.

3. Organize and educate workers to fight bad practices
4. Factories should partner with local governments to jointly secure and police sites

In turn, city officials needed to pull their share of the weight by:[166]

1. Inspect that orders and laws are followed, especially regarding labor conditions
2. Make sure that the when doing any kind of construction (sewage, electricity, housing) needs of factories (SOEs) take first priority
3. Arrange for uninterrupted supply of resources and selling of surplus production

Assessing Zhang Wentian's and Gao's Economic Policies

It is difficult if not impossible to authoritatively judge the effectiveness of the above recommendations. Criticism and self-criticism op-eds in the *Northeast Industry* up to the very last issue of the magazine in December of 1952 are replete with managerial oversights and tensions with local officials.[167] In one Shenyang factory, poor accounting practices of counting repaired pipes as new manufacture led to daily discrepancies of 130 million yuan between stated production and actual output.[168] In Jilin, one chemical plant registered at least 500 million yuan in quarterly losses from defective goods due to an apparently complete lack of quality control. Although "bureaucratism" was blamed, the article mentioned that the plant managers were obsessed with quantity and overlooked quality.[169] Despite the problems, official statistics given

[166] Ibid., 38.
[167] See : Northeast Government Ministry of Industry (東北人民政府工業部). *Northeast Industry* (東北工業). April 1951.
[168] Northeast Government Ministry of Industry (東北人民政府工業部). *Northeast Industry* (東北工業). September 1950, 1
[169] Ibid., 20-21.

by the Northeast Government for 1951 and 1952 show that initial production goals starting from 1950 onwards were overfulfilled each year (14 percent in 1950).[170] Even if the numbers were manipulated, major speeches and newspaper accounts give us a good sense of how Zhang Wentian, Gao Gang, and the Northeast Government wanted the Manchurian economy to look and perform. Of course the *desired reality* is not a reliable steward for making sense of the reality on the ground. For that, we must turn to third party accounts in the absence of other available primary sources.

According to a report prepared for Molotov and the Soviet politburo, just year of Communist rule had brought some noticeable improvements to the Northeast. Shenyang, then a city of 1.7 million, saw a major expansion in public transportation (sixty trams and fifty-one buses by October 1950 versus only thirty-nine trams in 1949), new sewage and drainage systems, and a housing construction boom despite labor and material shortages.[171] With the help of Soviet experts, water use efficiency was increased and a constant water supply was provided to those with access. More than 9,000 people had been connected to natural gas lines, up from the planned 8,000 but still only less than half a percent of the total population.

In Liaodong Peninsula, employment in factories nearly doubled in the same period from 11,602 workers in 1949 to 21,162.[172] Official statistics in the report state that in the first half of 1950, 83.71 percent of the entire output for 1949 had already been produced.[173] Furthermore, the yuan value of the production was up 192 percent from 1949, with asbestos production value up 301 percent. The report makes no note of inflation, so the statistics alone are a flawed measurement for industrial growth. The same report identifies poor management practices as a

[170] Ledovsky, 41-43.
[171] "Report on Northeast Development" ?. ?. 1951. RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1256.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.

major impediment for Liaodong's economic recovery. Fifteen factories were observed to have a major inventory and capital glut. 311.5 billion yuan of goods were not being sent to markets and just stockpiled in warehouses. At the same time, other industries like winemaking suffered from underinvestment. It should be noted that according to Levine, the neglect of certain sectors was a deliberate effort by the Northeast Bureau to bankrupt and eliminate undesirable socio-economic elements.[174]

In neighboring Liaoxi Province, economic recovery was measured in major increases in energy intensity; in the first six months of 1950, factories used up seventy-one percent of 1949's entire electric consumption. The report also states that price stabilization had been achieved. For Liaoxi's nine most important goods, prices went up "only" thirty-seven percent in 1950, as opposed to sixty percent in 1949.[175] The metrics used to measure inflation are once again vague, but the doubling of state department stores and a modest increase in private merchants does point to economic growth.

Lastly in Heilongjiang, a province which during the Manchukuo period was an agrarian region without any heavy industry, for the first time factories were being built to produce agricultural machinery and tools.[176] Although only some grain mills had modern mechanized equipment, Heilongjiang could produce enough wheat grain in three to five months to supply all of Manchuria. And once the production record campaign kicked off, this northeastern breadbasket was said to be producing at almost double the rates of 1949. The production record campaign allegedly resulted in 135 new records, but the report admits that much of the industry

[174] Levine, 181.
[175] "Report on Northeast Development" ?. ?. 1951. RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1256.
[176] Ibid.

in the province could still be described as "cottage" (kystarnoi), falling short of government hopes.[177]

The above report was likely prepared by Andrei Ledovsky, one of the Soviet Union's ablest China hands and subsequently a professional historian. In his work on the Gao Gang affair, he recalls a much more uneven picture of Manchuria's transition away from war communism. A 10 March 1951 visit by Soviet consulate officials in Shenyang to a textile mill uncovered that more than two years after liberation, both production and labor conditions lagged far behind what was portrayed in propaganda. Under the Japanese, the mill employed 3000 people. When the Soviets visited, there were just 726 workers (103 women). Due to the Korean War, Japanese machinery was moved to Northern Manchuria where it was left unused, stored in a warehouse. Using cruder Chinese equipment, the plant could only produce blankets for the military. The mill had only one engineer, no safety standards, with dust and toxic fumes everywhere without any ventilation. Many workers were sick with tuberculosis. Most of them lived in dormitories where they lacked virtually all furniture; living standards were so abysmal that they ate meat only two to three times a month.[178] Eighty percent of the workers were illiterate. A glass factory visited on the same tour had equally poor labor conditions and a lack of qualified management (no engineers in a plant of 1200 workers).[179]

Ledovsky makes an important claim that the campaign to reduce costs and eliminate waste was ineffective not because of flawed conceptional thinking but due to disastrous implementation. Capital equipment was worn down or damaged by myopic efforts to save on everything; some factories did not properly oil machine tools and equipment to save on lubricant.

[177] Ibid.
[178] Ledovsky, 42.
[179] Ibid.

In part this could be explained by the continued lack of necessary technical expertise among workers, despite progress in educating adult workers. Perhaps more crucial, local cadres and factory managers displayed a shocking level of indifference to party directives and felt that safety and quality control regulations could be subject to loose interpretations. It was this lack of systematic control and oversight—something that to the party's credit it attempted to rectify—and not sabotage as was often portrayed in reporting, that was slowing industrial recovery.[180]

Conclusion

The Northeast Government estimated that a quarter of Manchuria's industrial capacity was destroyed during the Chinese Civil War.[181] Three years later in 1952, despite returning back to a state of wartime mobilization during the "Resist America Aid Korea" campaign, the government officially declared that reconstruction had finished. For Mao and the CCP, the narrative that it took China only three years to recover from the Chinese Civil War, while the Soviet Union officially spent five years rebuilding under the New Economic Policy (NEP) of the 1920s was a source of major pride and confidence.[182]

With reconstruction officially over, on 10 January 1952 Gao Gang delivered the earlier cited speech titled, "Overcoming the Corrosive Effect of the Bourgeoisie on the Party & Resisting Rightist Thinking in the Party."[183] In early stages of planning China's 1st Five Year Plan, Gao had the following to say on the role of private capitalists:

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[180] Ledovsky, 55.
[181] Ledovsky, 33.
[182] Li, 64.
[183] "Overcoming the Corrosive Effect of the Bourgeoise on the Party & Resisting Rightist Thinking in the Party (克服資產階級思想對黨的侵蝕反對黨內的右傾思想)." *Gao Gang Collected Works (高崗文集)*, 10 January 1952.

"We have some comrades who often say we can't be too "left" towards the bourgeoisie, but they don't understand what is "left." We are not indiscriminately confiscating, closing bourgeoisie owned industries. Our taxes don't exceed the levels set by the government, we allow private capital to operate within the confines of the law. That is not "left." On the contrary, if we adopt an indifferent attitude towards the theft of state assets by the bourgeoisie, the speculation of traitorous merchants, turn a blind eye towards activities that hurt the people's interests, do not punish traitorous merchants who entice our workers towards illegality, then we will have a "right" deviation.[184]

The tone alone is sufficient to indicate that in the midst of the Korean War and political campaigns against the bourgeoisie, Gao had a dim view of private capital. That said, even after officially completing reconstruction and turning to building socialism, Gao was against charting a truly Stalinist course with complete confiscation, no private industry, and near widespread price controls. Instead, Gao continued to support an economic development model that was a mix of command economy planning and market driven production. The role of state planning was on the upswing, but the hybrid model then in place would not have been completely alien to economic development strategies of Taiwan, Manchukuo, and Japan.

The genesis of this pragmatic, mixed economy approach was when wartime mobilization of resources through "war communism" in the Northeast proved to be both inefficient and unsustainable. In the policy debates that occurred behind the scenes, evidence strongly suggests that local Manchurian party leaders, with Gao Gang's sanction, although not without

[184] Ibid.

contradictions, displayed a remarkable level of pragmatism and tolerance for the private sector that exceeded that of Lenin, to say nothing of Mao and Stalin.

These were not esoteric or niche policy debates. Even though Mao was especially circumspect on sharing his views on economic development, when he suspected other party members engaging in undue codling of private capital the outcome could be fatal. The 1952 purge of Bo Yibo (薄一波) over purportedly liberal tax policy, the demotion of Ma Hong in 1954 and the banishment of Zhang Wentian in 1959, and the eventual imprisonment and death of Liu Shaoqi in 1966 attest that policy planners faced enormous political risks in excess to the obvious pressure of quickly alleviating economic underdevelopment.

When Gao Gang was transferred in 1953 to assume China's country-wide economic state planning responsibilities, there was much that the Chinese Communists could be sanguine about on the industrial front in Manchuria. Compared to the economic chaos in Taiwan and total war ruin in Korea, the PRC stood poised for a massive industrial surge similar to the 1st and 2nd Soviet Five Year Plans. It would be incorrect, however, to assume that these early Pre-Great Leap Forward years represented a halcyon period for China's industry. The chapter demonstrates that the CCP initially found itself ill-equipped to administer Manchuria's complex industrial economy. Conditions on the ground, often made worse by the CCP themselves, were little better than the well-known travails of the KMT and the Nationalists. Leftist mistakes by senior leaders such as Peng Zhen greatly exacerbated recovery efforts and forced Zhang Wentian and others in the Northeast Government to make important concessions to private capital. Gao Gang supported these concessions, but the continued focus on military expenditures proved to be an onerous millstone that depressed living standards and generated more industrial imbalances in Manchuria.

Chapter 3:

Breadbasket of the Revolution: Land Reform in Manchuria

> *"In our conversations and in our writing, we often say: 'the great Chinese people.' Who ultimately can represent the Chinese people though? Who is the greatest? I am afraid different people will give different answers. Chiang Kai-shek says he represents the Chinese people, supporting him means supporting the Chinese people… In reality CKS is an autocrat, representing only the tiny minority of large landowners and compradors. How can he represent the Chinese people? The true representatives of the Chinese people are the common people that make up more than eighty percent of the Chinese population: who are they? The peasantry. We say we want to create an 'independent, peaceful, democratic, and prosperous new China,' what that means is that we need to create a new China with peasants at its core. Without resolving the peasant question, new China will be out of reach."*

So said Zhang Wentian in a speech given at the Northeast University in October of 1946 as the Northeast Government was gearing up to carry out the second wave of land reform in Communist controlled areas of Manchuria.[1]

Ever since the party's tumultuous Jiangxi Soviet (1931-34) period, decisions concerning peasants and land were the single most consequential, often do-or-die policies carried out by the

[1] Chen, Bocun (陳伯村) ed. *Zhang Wentian Selected Northeast Works (張聞天東北文選)*. Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1990, 57.

CCP.[2] For Zhang Wentian, Gao Gang, and the rest of the Northeast Government, the stakes were equally existential. Faced with a rural population that had little prior contact with the Communists, the party had to quickly secure the strategic rear by eliminating hostile elements and carry out land reform that could unlock badly needed manpower and popular support for the war effort while not jeopardizing production. This chapter analyzes how the Northeast Government pursued these contradictory objectives during the civil war period and how post land reform organization of the Manchurian countryside became one of the most contentious political questions in the first years of the PRC, playing a role in Gao Gang's eventual downfall.

What was Land Reform?

Zhang's above comments comport with what is broadly seen as Mao's core revolutionary tenets: focus on peasants and the countryside and their powerful revolutionary potential to upend and remake China. Superficially, the speech echoes the main themes of Mao Zedong's 1927 report on the Hunan peasant movement which both Chinese and western scholars continue to frequently cite and treat as a touchstone for understanding land reform and CCP's politics in the countryside.[3] In reality, land reform meant different things at different times and in different regions throughout the party's history. Earliest efforts at land reform in remote parts of Jiangxi and Fujian provinces involved favoring landless Hakka and carrying out violent terror campaigns against all landlords and rich peasants. By 1936, when the CCP found itself in Shaanxi and in

[2] On how land reform facilitating military mobilization, see Selden, Mark. *The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974 and Chen Yung-fa (陳永發).1996. " Civil War: Mao Zedong and Land Revolution, Wrong Decision or Political Feint? (內戰：毛澤東和土地革命：錯誤判斷還是政治謀略)."*Mainland Magazine (大陸雜誌)*, Vol. 1-3.

[3] See Mao Tse-Tung. *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967. Axioms such as "revolution is not a dinner party," and "power grows out of the barrel of a gun" all originate there.

need of support from local landlords, the party shifted focus away from radical struggle in the countryside to a more anodyne policy of reducing tenant farmer rent and interest payments that was never seriously implemented.[4]

In Manchuria after 1945, serious policy differences emerged between Zhang Wentian and Liu Shaoqi who wished to maintain a moderate stance and Peng Zhen who called for a return to the radical land reform efforts of the early 1930s. Personal loyalty proved thicker than ideological solidarity, however, with Gao Gang backing Zhang Wentian's prescriptions despite his disdain for landlords while Liu sided with Peng Zhen to block Gao. Unsurprisingly, the debate over land reform would eventually evolve into a no less contentious clash over collectivization and policy towards rich peasants.

Literature Review

Despite strong interest in land reform from foreign researchers before the 1990s, the topic fell into relative neglect until the 2010s. Recently, two historians Xiaojia Hou and Brian DeMare, have made very important contributions in providing a richer, more nuanced understanding of land reform. Hou in her article, "'Get Organized': The Impact of two Soviet Models on the CCP's Rural Strategy, 1949-1953" argues that while claims of Soviet influence on specific policies should always be investigated with caution, there is strong evidence that Mao was inspired and wished to replicate (and later out-do) Stalin's harsh collectivization.[5] Stalin's views on agriculture hinged on a selective interpretation of Lenin's 1923 "Cooperative Plan" written shortly before the latter's death. Unlike Lenin, Stalin was unequivocal in his support for

[4] For a thorough history of land reform by the CCP, see DeMare, Brian James. *Land Wars: The Story of China's Agrarian Revolution*. 2019.
[5] Bernstein, Thomas P., and Hua-yu Li. *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-Present*. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2011, 167.

mechanized collectivization and the use of collective farms to accumulate capital and put the countryside on socialist rails. Mao took up similar views, eventually calling for Chinese mutual aid teams to transition into Soviet-style collective farms (kolkhoz). The alternative interpretation of the "Cooperative Plan" was made by Bukharin, envisioning a linkage of individual peasants and the city through supply and marketing co-ops. Bukharin's views were well known to Zhang Wentian and would briefly become official CCP policy in 1949 under the auspices of "New Democracy."[6]

Brian DeMare in his recent book, *Land Wars*: *The Story of China's Agrarian Revolution* effortlessly captures both the uneven, complex, and violent experiences of class struggle driven emancipation (翻身) and land redistribution at the village level with their broader importance to the Maoist narrative. Drawing on extensive new sources, DeMare charts how work teams made up of activists and party cadres forever transformed China by taking complex and regionally different social milieus and distilled them into binary antagonistic peasant and landowner classes. Although land reform meant different things in different parts of the country, by 1952 more than 300 million peasants had gone through the revolutionary furnace, making land reform the single most sweeping policy enacted by Mao and the CCP.[7]

Shifting from the national to the regional, Steven Levine's *Anvil of Victory* provides important details on the role of land reform and peasant mobilization in facilitating Chinese Communist victory in Manchuria. Although the work is regional in focus, Levine makes an implicit criticism of the competing interpretation that land reform on a local and even regional

[6] Ibid., 172-173.
[7] DeMare, 161.

level was a "self-generated folk revolution" that tapped into the political self-awareness of oppressed peasants more than the outside intervention of the CCP and party cadres.[8]

While land reform continues to be a sensitive topic for Chinese historians, several important works have addressed the linkage between land reform and politics. Du Runsheng (杜潤生) argues that instead of focusing on how much land was transferred and to whom, attention should be on the "tremendous achievements in the political and social realms," chiefly the liberation of the peasant class. This liberation through land acquisition allowed peasants to develop a political and national consciousness.[9]

Manchuria before Land Reform:

As Communist cadres began to arrive in Manchuria in late 1945 after the swift defeat of the Manchukuo government, land reform had already started without them. In many villages, the peasants carried out their own "settling of accounts" against Japanese colonial era collaborators and occasionally Japanese settler colonists although instances of leniency were also not uncommon against the former occupiers.[10] With the exception of Soviet controlled Liaodong Peninsula, where the Red Army had decided to keep the Japanese era elites in place for the time being, local peasants and village associations were busy reorganizing and renegotiating the political and economic relations without the CCP.[11]

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[8] Levine, Steven I. *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, 198.

[9] Du, Runsheng (杜潤生). *China's Land Reform (中國的土地改革)*. Beijing: Dang dai zhongguo chubanshe, 2009.

[10] See the memoirs of Kazuko Kuramoto whose family survived the tumultuous first months of post-war Manchuria due to the generosity of their Chinese neighbors. Kuramoto, Kazuko. *Manchurian Legacy: Memoirs of a Japanese Colonist*. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1999.

[11] Wang, Peiping (王佩平). 1995. *Soviet Red Army in Luda (蘇聯紅軍在旅大)*. Dalian, 1995, 15-16; 63.

Agrarian conditions in Manchuria differed from that of intramural China. During the Manchukuo period the vast majority of land (approximately eighty percent) was owned either by Japanese settler pioneers and colonial entities or by landlords loyal to the former local warlord, Zhang Zuolin (張作霖).[12] As a result, Manchuria had more hired labor and tenant farming than elsewhere in China.[13] High tenancy rates did not necessary mean the Northeast was fertile soil for Communist agitation. Due to Manchuria's size and rich black soil, there was much less land pressure— roughly double the acreage per capita—contributing to a major agricultural boom in the 1930s-40s that attracted peasants from south of the Great Wall.[14] While Chinese farmers enjoyed a higher standard of living in the Northeast compared to other parts of China, Japanese agricultural taxes were still unpopular and became more onerous in the later Manchukuo period. For instance, the *chuhe (*出荷) in-kind tax on corn and soy was eventually expanded to cover pork, potatoes, white cabbage, and other produce.[15]

In Northern Manchuria, where the Communists found themselves after the Nationalist advance of 1946, much of the Japanese owned land was uncultivated or abandoned in the wake of the Soviet invasion in August of 1945.[16] Ten to fifteen percent of arable land in Northern Jilin and Heilongjiang was vacant, gifting the CCP an easy starting point for land redistribution.[17]

With few local cadres amongst them, the CCP was initially viewed with suspicion by peasants in Manchuria. Villagers refused to give troops water or food and resisted efforts to help

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[12] Dai, Maolin (戴茂林), and Xiaoguang Zhao (趙曉光). *Gao Gang Biography (高崗傳)*. Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2011, 170-171.
[13] Levine, 199.
[14] Ibid., 199-201.
[15] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 170.
[16] Kuramoto, Kazuko. *Manchurian Legacy : Memoirs of a Japanese Colonist*. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1999.
[17] Levine, 213.

care for wounded Chinese Red Army soldiers. Zhang Zhenglong's (張正隆) *White Snow, Red Blood (雪白血紅)* states that when local peasants saw Communist troops in their ragtag outfits or wearing Japanese military kit, they took to calling them "Chinese Devils (中國鬼子)" in reference to the War of Resistance era "Japanese devils" epithet.[18] In some instances, locals even fired on passing Communist troops.[19] As winter approached in 1945, the Northeast Bureau faced a high-stakes debate on what the overall strategy should be for securing bases in the Northeast.[20] Gao Gang forcefully argued for the abandonment of major cities (Shenyang, Changchun) in favor of focusing on small cities and adjacent rural areas.[21] This was opposed by Peng Zhen, at the time the most senior official in the Northeast Bureau, and was not decided until both Chen Yun and more importantly Mao weighed in. According to historians Dai Maolin and Zhao Shaoguan, the fall 1945 debate about strategy was the starting point for numerous subsequent disagreements within the Northeast politburo.[22]

In November of 1945, Mao had formally approved the use of rent and interest reduction to gain peasant support. For the Communists to be taken seriously, they first needed to eliminate the most proximate threats to their power. According to official accounts, two thirds of all county seats in Northern Manchuria were occupied by "bandits" who numbered over 30,000 in total.[23] On 12 December, the Chinese Red Army officially started the "Bandit Suppression Campaign," that is officially lauded for decisively ending terror in the countryside and winning the hearts and

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[18] Zhang, Zhenglong (張正隆). *White Snow Red Blood: A True History of the CCP-KMT Battle for the Northeast(雪白血紅 : 國共東北大決戰歷史眞相)*. Hong Kong. 2016.
[19] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 144.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 144-145.
[22] Ibid., 152.
[23] Ibid, 155.

minds of honest peasants. Undoubtedly many of the "bandits" were indeed violent criminals who took advantage of the lawless interregnum, however even official narratives acknowledge that the bandit groups in addition to local ruffians were a mix of landlords, hostile village committees, demobilized Manchukuo troops and sympathizers.[24] Some even had Nationalist army standards and were de-facto KMT auxiliary troops.[25] Destroying these bandit formations not only secured the Red Army's communication and supply lines, it sent a message to the countryside that the CCP was a force to be reckoned with and that land reform was to be taken seriously.[26]

On 4 May 1946 the Central Committee issued a directive that surplus landlord property was to be expropriated, albeit still compensated with CCP-issued bonds.[27] Rich and middle peasants were not affected by the directive. In the Northeast, initial land reform in the spring of 1946 was not conducted on strict class basis; land was foremost given to widows and families of Red Army soldiers killed in action, landless laborers, and lastly some poor peasants.[28] The results of initial attempts to mobilize the peasants proved to be desultory. Despite the bandit suppression campaign, peasants continued to be largely cautious and politically passive, forcing the cadres and work teams to lead the "settling of accounts" campaigns against traitorous landlords.[29]

One of the reasons why the peasants were slow to warm to Communist agitation was that while the desire to strike against Japanese era collaborators was palpable, the old order was not

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[24] See following 2005 CCTV documentary on the Northeast Land Reform Movement called "The Tempest (暴風驟雨)." Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBZ82iNEsdk (Accessed 12 May 2020).
[25] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 154.
[26] Zhang Zhenglong claims in *White Snow Red Blood* that the CCP made deals with some bandits to intimidate recalcitrant villages.
[27] Levine, 206.
[28] Ibid., 204.
[29] Ibid., 205.

nearly as unpalatable as Communist propaganda suggested. Not only did the Manchukuo era system despite its tax burden provide opportunities for upward social mobility in the countryside, older local traditions naturally prevented the rise of a powerful landed aristocracy. As DeMare writes,

> *"Partible inheritance, the time-honored tradition of equally dividing property among male heirs, promoted social mobility both up and down the village hierarchy. As one activist in Heilongjiang later recalled, landlord wealth in his village was due to hard work and never lasted even three generations. There was no reason to care too much about a landlord: 'His grandson would be poor."*[30]

To break this perceived passivity, the CCP turned to an outside enemy. With the Nationalist advance, land in Southern Manchuria had been quickly returned to landlords and KMT officials. [31] Pro-KMT sentiment among landlords was then officially used by the Northeast Government as justification to adopt a more militant line. To that end, on 7 July 1946, the Northeast Government in Harbin issued the "7.7. Declaration" which called for the confiscation without compensation of all livestock, farm equipment, and property (including houses) of all landlords and the confiscation of idle land owned by rich peasants.[32] The same declaration also called for immediate steps to focus away from the cities back to the countryside in order to consolidate base areas in northern Manchuria.[33] Strongly pushed for by Peng Zhen, the Northeast Bureau had staked its future survival on a radical course in the countryside not seen since the party's Jiangxi Soviet days.

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[30] DeMare, 5.
[31] Levine, 206.
[32] Ibid; See following work for a Maoist differentiation of rural classes: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_8.htm (Accessed 12 May 2020).
[33] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 166.

In order to help turn the declaration into reality, the newly appointed Northeast Government Secretary Lin Biao personally authorized a new internal party periodical *"The Masses (群眾)"* where he penned a lengthy call to cadres to improve their work methods. In the inaugural issue he urged party cadres to learn local dialects and become familiar with the actual needs of the peasants.[34] The new approach was summed up in the pithy slogan of:

> *"Leave the cities, abandon the car, take off leather shoes, change into peasant clothes, don't draw distinction between civil and military [cadres], men and women, level of experience, all cadres who can go the countryside should all go there."*[35]

As land confiscation intensified after the "7.7 Declaration" a debate unfolded within the Northeast Government that would continue in different iterations well after land reform was completed—eventually rising to the national level. The debate was how the party should treat rich and middle peasants, a question of just how radical land reform should be. While Peng Zhen and Lin Feng (林楓) staked out the most far left position, Zhang Wentian recognized early that a "leftist deviation" on land reform was as dangerous as similar deviations on industrial policy. On 20 August 1946, Zhang Wentian responded to a Central Committee inquiry (詢問) that has not yet been made public. In his response, titled "Opinions on the Question of Land Reform" Zhang said the main goal of the party in Manchuria was to isolate Chiang Kai-shek and build a broad anti-CKS united front. With that in mind, a conciliatory line of giving landlords some support and not creating too many enemies made the most sense.[36]

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[34] Ibid.,169; 13 July 1946 issue of "*The Masses"*
[35] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 166-67.
[36] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選*), 49.

Zhang argued that this was particularly true in the case of small landlords, and that they had a right to their land, in the process criticizing the previous month's directive without mentioning it by name. Preserving their land would make landlords as a class less hostile to the party and allow the CCP to harness their productive abilities.[37] Going further Zhang argued that most small landlords were not really landlords at all. Instead, they were artisan and cottage industry workers, petty merchants, and independent tillers.[38]

Zhang's call to avoid antagonizing the entire landlord class and focusing instead on a more conservative rent and interest reduction policy was a natural continuation of his earlier work in Northern Shaanxi during the Anti-Japanese War. This would be wholly unremarkable if he had not been persecuted for these views during the Yan'an Rectification movement.[39] What is even more stunning is that Zhang's frank views on the positive contributions of landowners to village economies was made in the presence of Lin Feng (林楓), the man who had reported Zhang's "subjectivism" on agrarian work to Mao in Shaanxi.[40]

Zhang Wentian had good reason to be concerned. During the "settling accounts" campaigns, various opportunists and local hooligans joined the party and work teams.[41] The escalation in rural violence during the summer of 1946 interfered with farm work and there were concerns that the fall harvest would be significantly below 1945 levels.[42] In addition to alienating landlords and their extended family clans and agents, an inspection by Chen Yun found that in

[37] Ibid., 50.
[38] Ibid.
[39] "Luo Fu (Zhang Wentian) Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 56.
[40] Ibid., 100-101.
[41] Levine, 209.
[42] Ibid.

many villages no sooner had a landlord been struggled with, then a party cadre moved into their former residence and continued to exploit hired labor.[43]

In response, the Central Committee issued further instructions on 29 August calling on the 12,000 cadres engaged in land reform to facilitate an alliance between middle and poor peasants while also avoiding making too many enemies out of landlords and rich peasants, adopting both Zhang Wentian's language and views.[44] On 1 September, Zhang further expounded on his position in a report to the Central Committee called "Several Points to Remember during All Out Mobilization of the Masses (在放手發動群眾中應注意之事項)." In it he recommended to not overlook the middle peasant class which should be given land and not marginalized.[45] Rich peasants who worked at least a portion of their own land were also to be protected by the party, even if they rented out other portions of their land or hired additional labor.[46] While striking a very tolerant line towards rich peasants, Zhang nevertheless believed that any landlord who was a part of the old political system, even if they were the sole landlord of a village, was to be struggled with and their assets seized.[47]

In the report, Zhang linked the success of the countryside to the city and reiterated his broader economics views that while improving living standards for everyone was a priority, the Northeast Government could not afford to raise salaries too much or adopt the eight hour work day because it would lead to unemployment. The priority instead was attracting merchants and capitalists and providing enough goods to meet the demands of the countryside.[48]

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[43] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 173.
[44] Ibid., 172.
[45] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (*張聞天東北文選*), 51.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., 52.

On 18 November 1946, the *Northeast Daily* reported that during the initial land reform campaign, 26 million *mu* of land was given to 5 million landless peasants.[49] Heilongjiang province led with 6 million *mu* redistributed, followed by Songjiang (4.8 million), Nenjiang (4 million), Liaoji (4 million), Andong (3 million), Hejiang (2 million), Jilin (1.2 million), Liaoning (734,000), and Tyumen (300,000). Liaoning's low numbers are explained by its occupation in near entirety by Nationalist troops. The relatively large discrepancy between Jilin and Heilongjiang and Songjiang however hint at the very uneven results of the first round of land reform. Despite the setbacks, the newspaper declared that the Northeast Government provisionally succeeded in implementing Sun Yat Sen's long-yearned wish for "tillers to have their own land (耕者有其田)" and that the rural standard of living had noticeably risen, ushering in a "scene of prosperity."[50]

Second Stage of Land Reform: Winter 1946-47

As 1946 drew to a close, implementation shortfalls of the initial land reform effort began to sprout. Already on 7 November, a week before the *Northeast Daily* praised the results of land reform, Chen Yun had written to Gao Gang that many areas that underwent land reform were "half cooked (半生不熟)."[51] Half-cooked areas, due to poor tactics or inexperienced cadres, failed to fully mobilize the masses against landlords. Although there was some struggle against landlords, they were able to preserve their "latent power" while the peasants failed to shed their old, feudal political views.[52]

[49] 1 mu is .16 acres.
[50] " The Northeast is a Scene of ever Improving Prosperity (東北呈現一派蒸蒸日上，欣欣向榮的景象)." *The Northeast Daily*, 18 November 1946.
[51] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 173.
[52] Ibid.

In the 30 November speech by Zhang Wentian cited at the beginning of the chapter, Zhang urged the party to take a moderate path in order to consolidate and expand the gains of land reform. Calling on all cadres to be on the same page, Zhang said rich peasants who personally engaged in physical labor should not be struggled against. Even those that took part in colonial administrative structures, such as village leaders, could keep their land after they were removed from their positions of authority.[53] In Zhang's own words, such an approach showed the humanitarianism (人道主義) of the peasantry, who despite the centuries of oppression, left landlords ample land to feed and clothe themselves.[54] Although critical of landlords and their phony "propriety and integrity (仁義道德)" Zhang appears to have moved even further to the right of his August report with this call to not struggle against rich peasants who participated in colonial administration. As for middle peasants, Zhang thought they should be given up to 5 *mu* of land to solidify the alliance between the poor landless and the middle peasant class.[55]

Despite the call for leniency, Zhang was not nearly as supportive of the landowning class as he was of urban capitalists.[56] Unlike his stance that private capital needed state sponsorship and that interests of management were as important as that of workers, Zhang accepted that land reform could not be carried out peacefully.[57] Paraphrasing Mao, he said: "Revolution is not embroidery or reading a book" and that after "thousands of years of oppression" there will be bloodshed.[58] Moreover, Zhang feared that without land, peasants would continue to be politically

[53] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 61.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] See previous chapter.
[57] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 64-65.
[58] Ibid., 61.

passive and fail to truly rise up. Thus, even for moderates such as Zhang resolving the "half cooked" problem appeared to be at the top of party agenda.[59]

Given his earlier recommendations to the Central Committee on avoiding creating too many enemies in the countryside, it is puzzling that Zhang in the course of one speech both called for the protection of land owned by rich and landlord classes and argued that the peasants themselves would not tolerate anything less than settling accounts with the very same "reactionary landlords who supported Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese before."[60] Although it is certainly possible that Zhang Wentian saw "leftist deviations" in the cities to be more harmful than in the countryside, both his previous writings from his time in Northern Shaanxi and subsequent debates about how to organize the peasantry post-land reform strongly suggests an aversion to coercive measures and the desire to place production and output above class struggle. This elicits the question if Zhang's uncharacteristically aggressive remarks may have been the product of internal political pressure within the Northeast Government.

Beyond cadre failure of mobilizing the peasants, Zhang's speech hints at other factors that impeded the first wave of land reform. Just as Xi Jinping's father, Xi Zhongxun, complained that many poor peasants in Huabei (華北) were poor because they: "Love to eat, drink, go whoring, gamble, or don't want to work,"[61] Zhang acknowledged that some of the recipients of land were indeed local bullies, rogues, opium smokers, and morphine addicts.[62] What land reform's detractors failed to realize, however, was that these bad societal elements would not be able to enjoy their gains for long since they would need to be productive and contribute to the

[59] Ibid., 58.
[60] Ibid., 60.
[61] DeMare, 88.
[62] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (*張聞天東北文選*), 62.

village economy or face the confiscation of their newly gotten land.[63] Lastly, Zhang explored the at times awkward revolutionary irony that some intellectuals and cadres themselves came from landowner families. In such instances, they needed to think of the people and not their class, lest they lose the faith and trust of the masses they wanted to mobilize.[64]

The following month, Zhang Wentian published additional instructions on land reform "Further Deepen Land Reform Struggle(進一步深入土地鬥爭)" in Hejiang province which cast the outcome of land reform as a life or death matter for the party. Adopting an even more strident stance than the above speech, Zhang called on cadres to not display any leniency towards landlords and "evil gentry."[65] Class struggle was violent, and while some peasants thought enough had been done or that mercy towards class enemies was in order, the party needed to teach and then repeat over and over how to properly struggle with landlords. Concomitantly, cadres were said to be pessimistic about land reform— there was a need to rally their confidence.[66] The report points to growing frustration at the pace of land reform, with specific instructions to guard against "pretend land redistribution" where land was publicly divided but secretly remained in the hands of original owners.[67] Zhang's instructions end by reminding the recipients that the party had one, two months, at most half a year to a year, to mobilize the masses and build up bases to resist Chiang Kai-shek. In his own words, land reform was a life or death struggle for the CCP.[68]

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 65.
[65] Ibid., 85.
[66] Ibid., 86-87.
[67] Ibid, 85.
[68] Ibid., 89.

Zhang Wentian was hardly alone in feeling increasingly impatient by the slow pace of land reform. In mid-December, the leading provincial cadre from Heilongjiang, Zhao Dezun (趙德尊), sent Gao Gang a concerned letter where he identified four reasons for half cooked regions:[69]

1. Peasants had not actually received the promised land, houses, property, livestock.
2. Peasants lacked the determination, usually due to extreme hardship or poverty, to take confiscated land.
3. Landed gentry/ bad elements used tricks and force to resist.
4. Bad cadres and progressive elements had separated themselves from the masses.

A close reader might remember that Heilongjiang led Manchuria in amount of land redistributed, suggesting that if even the head of Heilongjiang was raising the alarm, conditions elsewhere were likely even worse.

On 20 December, Gao penned a lengthy reply to Zhao. Given the politically-motivated nature of most post-purge accounts of Gao's views, the letter is one of a handful currently available pre-purge sources shedding light on Gao's concrete thinking on land reform. In the letter, Gao called for additional inspections to "dig out the bad roots" and ensuring that economic and political struggle were united. In more detailed instructions, Gao told Zhao to not confiscate lands concealed by middle and poor peasants. While poor peasants ought to be favored in disputes with rich, middle, or tenant farmers, small landlords were to be left alone. It was also natural that during the course of land reform, some peasants received more land and others got

[69] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 173.

less. Gao counseled that this should not spark conflict and during reinvestigations cadres needed to avoid leftist deviations by relitigating past and new post-land reform grievances.[70] Gao's conciliatory stance towards small landowners and unwillingness to relitigate petty disputes suggests that he did not want cadres to be preoccupied with land reform and that in the face of a Nationalist onslaught radicalism in the countryside was seen as a liability by Gao.

In the first two months of 1947, the Northeast Government came to the conclusion that only a small percentage of villages had properly carried out land reform during the previous year.[71] In Songjiang province, sixty percent of the villages were half-cooked and a further five to ten percent "badly mishandled (搞亂)."[72] Work teams were understaffed and overwhelmed, often making all the crucial decisions intended to be made by local villagers (identifying landlords, categorizing peasants, organizing struggle sessions) themselves.[73] Even the *Northeast Daily* admitted that the quicker the pace of reforms, the more likely a county was mismanaged.[74]

Unsurprisingly, it was Zhang Wentian who offered the most detailed report on how to fix the underlying problems before the next spring planting season. The twenty page 12 February report "On All Problems in Mass Work (論群眾工作中的諸問題)" stressed the urgency of the tasks at hand: the party had two-three months to rectify land reform problems before the spring planting season.[75] Zhang offered statistics for Hejiang province, where eighty percent of the

[70] Ibid., 175.
[71] Levine, 207.
[72] Ibid., 208.
[73] Ibid., 209.
[74] "Several Concrete Problems concerning Land Reform and the Mass Movement (土地改革和群眾運動中的幾個具體政策問)." *The Northeast Daily.* 25 January 1947.
[75] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 107.

villages were either half-cooked or completely raw.[76] To meet this challenge, cadres needed to first cook the "half cooked rice" in their heads.[77] Less metaphysically, half cooked and raw villages had to be inspected to identify the underlining causes of stalled land reform. Simultaneously work teams needed to be on guard against cadres who had become corrupted by their power.[78]

The new work teams had to spend more time on the ground, since only cadres intimately familiar with specific villages could know how long land reform would take. Cadres had to be patient, Zhang complained that too many were not willing to wait until the peasants became conscious and their views matured. Everything (houses, livestock, land) was to be allocated by the peasants and not the work teams.[79]

Tying the work in the countryside with the overall liberation effort, Zhang signaled a shift towards an even more violent land reform campaign. According to the report, the struggle with "evil and tyrannical" landlords was more than just an economic one: it had to be united with the political and military campaigns carried out by the party. If cadres treated land reform as just the reallocation of land or livestock, the effort would meet failure.[80] In concrete terms, if in the past the party welcomed cooperation from landlords—particularly donations of idle land—this was now dismissed as a ploy to preserve their power.[81] The language and tone used to describe land reform also became more militant. The pro-KMT landlords and Japanese era local officials were called a "fascist band" throughout the report.[82]

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 105.
[78] Ibid., 106.
[79] Ibid., 99.
[80] Ibid., 94.
[81] Levine, 209.
[82] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 93.

The increased intensity if not outright ferocity of land reform to meet the "half cooked" challenge created a dangerous unintended consequence: collapse in agricultural production. According to Levine, the overall conditions in the countryside around the time of Zhang's report were increasingly dire. Wealthy peasants, wishing to avoid scrutiny, only planted enough crops to survive. Tenant farmers were swept up in struggle sessions in villages that favored only the poorest, landless individuals. Nor were the newly enfranchised poor farmers picking up the slack in production; poor farmers often sold their new tools, draft animals, or simply didn't know how to use them.[83] Others became dependent on the state and expected more assistance in the future.[84] Historians Dai and Zhao state that draft animals and farming equipment were actually scattered by the nascent mutual aid teams, intended as a precursor to collectivization, that will be discussed in detail below, compounding the problem.[85]

Backpedaling on Land Reform

Even official CCP histories admit that 1947 was a year of exceptional hardship.[86] The old order had been destroyed but the new one had not yet been built.[87] Both Zhang's and Gao Gang's reports show that at least during the first two years of Communist rule, the extent the countryside had been transformed has been somewhat exaggerated. The hardships faced by raw, half-cooked, and cooked areas were more the result of a vicious cycle of war and uncertainty about future policies than actual attempted land redistribution. It should also be noted that not all landlords

[83] Levine, 214-215.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 176.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

were petrified over their prospects under Communist rule. Landowners in some areas maintained their power through family networks and jokingly said: "[we] can hang the plough on the roof and still eat for a few years."[88]

The serious disruption in production occurred at a time when the CCP could afford it least. The Nationalist offensive in the Northeast reached its crest in early 1947, forcing the Northeast Government to requisition greater amounts of grain and other agricultural goods. In such a pivotal moment for the Communist cause, the Northeast Government issued a directive on 20 February reversing course from previous efforts to place class struggle at the heart of land reform.[89] The directive stated that now the central tasks of land reform were releasing production potential, promoting rural production, and strengthening base areas. [90] Not long after the politburo decision, Zhang Wentian moved away from his previous hardline stance to his more familiar calls for moderation and a shift away from class struggle to production. In a report published on 14 April of 1947, "Several Questions [on the] Spring Ploughing Production Campaign (春耕生產運動的若干問題)" Zhang stated that "only by working hard and turning to production can peasants consolidate their gains and win final liberation from exploitation." [91] Emphasizing that production was the most important goal of the party, Zhang called for the party to instill and build up a "production perspective" in peasants. As was the case with Zhang's writings about capitalists and industry, peasants' proactive nature (積極性) had to be protected

[88] Ibid.
[89] See "Directive on Resolving "Half-Cooked Rice" and Preparation for Spring Plowing" in Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Edited Volume. *Compilation of Historical Documents from China's Land Reform* (*中國土地改革史料選編*). Beijing, 1988.
[90] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 176.
[91] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選*), 111.

and spurred on.[92] Zhang believed the state ought to encourage peasants to become wealthy through hard work. While pushing for production, cadres needed to also counteract old views that promoted laziness and idleness.[93]

The elevation of production over class struggle by Zhang Wentian ushered in a new and protracted debate about how peasants were to be organized post land reform. In time the debate became part of the broader rivalry between Gao Gang and Liu Shaoqi and led to a major reshuffle of the politburo of the Northeast Government. In his April 1947 report, Zhang stressed that organizing peasants was the most important component of mobilizing peasants for said production.[94] Peasants were to be organized on the basis of private individual farming, however, and not mutual aid teams. Any work by cadres to foster cooperation between the villagers had to adhere to local conditions and not ordered by decree.[95] Instead, the cadres needed to set a model example about how to achieve high agricultural production.

In concrete terms, the shift in thinking by the Northeast Government ushered in policies that encouraged village enterprise. A 100 million Yuan fund was established to provide horses, other draft animals, and farm equipment to model (hard working) peasants.[96] The government also provided interest free loans for seeds, fertilizer, and tools to the poorest farmers administered by county offices.[97] Speaking at a public assembly in Ningan (寧安) in the early spring of 1947, Lin Feng assured middle and rich peasants that prosperity was glorious and that hiring labor and renting land was within their right as long as the terms were fair.[98]

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[92] Ibid., 112.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., 114-115.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Levine, 217.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Levine, 216.

Third Wave

Due to a lack of access to archives of the Northeast Government, we do not know how controversial the above shift in policy was and more crucially to what extent Mao and the Central Committee were involved. The policy of favoring production over class struggle almost certainly had its detractors within the Northeast Bureau because by the summer and fall of 1947 radical land reform was back with a vengeance in the guise of the "land equalization" campaign.

Already in the early summer of 1947, the Northeast Government approved the "Cut down the big tree, dig out treasure (砍大樹，挖財寶)" campaign to find and expropriate valuables hidden by landlords during previous land reform efforts.[99] On 20 June 1947, speaking at a Songjiang conference of county secretaries, Gao Gang told the audience that the only way to destroy landlords was to go after their family members.[100] Under the slogan, "Boldly go all out, all out is [our] policy (大膽放手，放手就是政策)" Gao told the cadres that since feudal power could only be smashed with violence, cadres should not shy away from it.[101]

If Gao Gang feared that local cadres were giving landlords a pass, he need not have worried. The third cycle of land reform from fall 1947 through the winter of 1948 was the most violent yet. A 25 August 1947 directive called for the targeting of bad elements, exposing of "landlord tricks," and a more thorough education of the people about the necessity of violent struggle.[102] Party cadres actively advanced a narrative that landlords mocked the peasant gains

[99] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 176.
[100] Ibid., 177.
[101] Ibid.; Levine, 212-213.
[102] Levine, 220-221.

after liberation and were sitting on vast holdings of grain and foodstuffs.[103] Not only were all landlords now seen as an enemy, even middle peasants were increasingly targeted as well.[104] In the face of peasant ambivalence and village loyalty explained as a lack of class consciousness, activists encouraged villagers to swap and attack the landed elites in neighboring villages.[105] The practice played on local rivalries and jealousies and often spiraled into out of control violence. Compounding the mayhem was the fact that war requisitions and a poor harvest in the summer of 1947 had led to famine in Communist controlled areas.[106]

Steven Levine has written that contrary to propaganda narratives, the violence stoked and facilitated by the CCP was not an elemental force of anger by the poor against their oppressors. Much of the violence was meted out randomly.[107] According to the Secretary of Songjiang province, Zhang Xiushan (張秀山), there village activists attacked and even killed middle peasants; as was mentioned in the previous chapter, many chased landlords into the cities and damaged their urban property. Such behavior, even though disastrous for economic output, was met with an indifferent (沒辦法) attitude by cadres.[108] Zhang Wentian's wife, Liu Ying (劉英), recalled that indiscriminate attacks hurt poorer and richer middle peasants and quickly spread from county to county.[109] Even the *Northeast Daily* admitted that the last wave of land reform

[103] DeMare, 110.
[104] Levine, 220-221.
[105] Ibid., 224-225.
[106] DeMare, 110.
[107] Levine, 212-213.
[108] CCP Central Historical Records Committee (中共中央黨史資料證集委員會). *The Decisive Liaoshen Campaign (遼瀋決戰),* Vol 2. Renmin Chubanshe, 1988, 79.
[109] Liu, Tong (劉統). *Record of the Northeast During the Liberation War(東北解放戰爭記實): 1945-1948*. Dong fang chubanshe, 1997, 423.

was carried out with terror. On 27 December 1947, the *Northeast Daily* reported that in Longjiang County, Qiqihar Province (modern day Heilongjiang Province) Dahalakeng village:

> *"In only three days [village activists] "sorted out" more than thirty medium, small, and "disguised" landlord and rich peasant households, establishing a solid base for land equalization. [8, 9 December] were this village's most boisterous days, during the day a mass of poor peasants and hired laborers wielding whips and wooden clubs arrived in the main street to escort the detained landlords and their "running dogs" [associates], gathering around trucks filled to the brim with landlord clothing, foodstuffs, and agricultural tools… On the 13th, the entire village commenced the "move and swap houses" campaign, landlords were driven out to one wing of [their] houses, with the upstairs rooms given to poor farmers and hired laborers… According to the poor farmers' small committee's land distribution plan, one poor peasant or hired laborer unit had to monitor three landlord or rich peasant households, with one three village activist team [from outside the village] "inspecting" landlords three times a night.*[110]

This violent approach to land reform stemmed from a major all-party conference held at Xibaipo from 17 July through 13 September.[111] The document that came out of it, the 10 October Draft Land Reform Law (中國土地法大綱), called for the complete "eradication of feudalism" via equal land redistribution.[112] Article Six, the most important part of the law, stipulated that:

[110] 27 December 1947. *The Northeast Daily*.
[111] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 177.
[112] Levine, 222.

> *"All landlord land is to be expropriated, taken by the village committees, combined with other landholdings and distributed according to village population, with no distinction for men, women, the elderly or children. Land is to be divided equally, taken from those with more to adjust for those who have less or whose land is of poorer quality."*[113]

In practice, the new rules led to major aforementioned leftist deviations hurting middle peasants whose lands were also confiscated. Moreover, larger more productive farms were broken up affecting output. Not long after the promulgation of the new legislation and reflecting the changed political mood, Chen Yun called on 18 October for peasant associations to be only compromised of poor peasants and hired laborers—completely shutting out landlords and middle peasants from village political life.[114]

The conference on land reform coincided with a major political shuffle in the Northeast Bureau. Peng Zhen, previously the 1st secretary of the Northeast politburo, was removed from office and sent back to the party center.[115] The standard accepted account is that Peng Zhen was recalled by Mao for serious leftist errors which included indiscriminately attacking the capitalist class, middle peasants, and displaying Han chauvinism towards minorities and the Soviets.[116] While not being privy to Northeast Government documents, the charge of leftist agrarian excesses does not add up with the fact that the most violent and disruptive phase of land reform began *after* Peng Zhen was already dismissed. The fact Peng was replaced half-way through the conference with the significantly more junior-ranking Gao-loyalist Zhao Dezun (趙德尊) as

[113] See Article 6 in CCP. *Draft Land Reform Law of China (中國土地法大綱)*. Tianjin: Tianjin dazhong shudian, 1951.
[114] Levine, 222-223.
[115] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 177.
[116] Ibid., See Lin Feng section below on anti-Soviet views.

Northeast representative points to an abrupt decision. At the very least, the full picture behind Peng's dismissal is incomplete. There is good circumstantial evidence that Gao Gang and Peng clashed over land reform in the months leading up to the conference.[117]

The rivalry between Gao Gang and Liu Shaoqi is much better documented, with some sources pointing to differences over land reform also as its starting point.[118] According to Zhao Dezun's memoirs, Liu allegedly took Peng Zhen's side and told the Northeast delegation that "unity was paramount and not to drop stones on someone who has already fallen into a well."[119] Specifically, Liu was criticizing the broad brush effort by the Northeast Government to lump all landlords and rich peasants as national traitors. Zhao dutifully reported back to the Northeast Bureau the contents of his exchange with Liu Shaoqi. In Harbin, although Gao Gang refrained from publicly displaying his displeasure, he privately criticized Liu Shaoqi for taking a "one-sided" defense of Peng Zhen. This suggests that Peng Zhen was not in favor of the leftist course prescribed to him in secondary literature. In his post-purge self-criticism in 1954, Gao acknowledged the rift with Liu Shaoqi over the issue but cast it as only a "work-related problem" not a personal grudge.[120] Although the full details of these leadership struggles might never be known, land reform was clearly a major wedge issue used in those fights.

On 12 January 1948, sensing that land equalization was proving to be disastrous for the Northeast, Zhang Wentian issued a directive calling for its curtailment by protecting industrial and commercial interests of landlords.[121] Zhang criticized activists who targeted landlords who

[117] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 177-178.
[118] Heinzig, Dieter. *The Soviet Union and Communist China 1945-1950: The Arduous Road to the Alliance*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015, 217; Westad, Odd Arne. *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press, 2004, 325.
[119] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 178.
[120] Ibid.
[121] "Protecting Industry and Commerce during the Land Equalization Movement(在平分土地運動中保護工商業)"

had urban commercial interests and former landlords who had lost their property during the Japanese era or who stopped being landlords after the defeat of Manchukuo and entered non-agricultural business.[122] The document strongly condemned the practice of peasants chasing landlords into the cities and continuing the struggle by wrecking their property. In the directive, Zhang attributed this behavior to an erroneous view shared by activists and many party cadres that after fourteen years of Manchukuo rule there were no legitimate national or private capitalist enterprises and that their complete disappearance would not pose a problem for the Northeast or the countryside.[123] To remedy the problem, the directive called for the restoration of all illegally seized property from landlords and that their factories and stores must be left unperturbed.[124] In cases where property was seized, it could not be dispersed or be allowed to fall into disrepair.[125] Offending parties were to be fined. Zhang also called for party cadres to attend village councils of poor farmers and hired laborers and explain the necessity of the Northeast Government's Commerce and Industry Policy.[126]

Zhang's explicit mention that many cadres instead of enforcing existing protections on private capital that extended to landlords, actively encouraged peasants to go after their "floating wealth" is telling of the ideological sentiment in the CCP's Northeast branch. There is no evidence how the directive was received within the Northeast Government or by Gao Gang in particular who was at the time in Northwestern Manchuria (冀察熱) personally overseeing local land reform efforts, but it was viewed and approved by Mao himself on 31 January.[127]

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[122] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 159.
[123] Ibid., 160.
[124] Ibid, 161.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid., 159.

What is clear from the sources is that the carnage of land reform and its effect on output further exacerbated the political rift between Liu Shaoqi and Gao Gang. On 7 February 1948 Liu criticized the Northeast Bureau for labeling as many as a quarter of all peasants landlords or rich peasants, stating the figure was grossly inflated and that even estimates in the eight-ten percent range swept up middle and rich peasants who hired occasional help during harvest and tilling season— calling them landlords would be risible.[128] Going further, the slogan adopted in the Northeast, "Poor peasants and hired labor fight for the country to rule the country (窮雇農打江山坐江山)" violated Mao's call to avoid peasant voluntarism and to keep the party firmly in charge. Liu was equally critical of the violence and deaths that resulted from the third wave of land reform, calling on the Northeast Government to provide avenues for rich peasants to become productive elements of society. From now on, only courts could sentence people to death.[129] Liu was not alone within the party center to criticize how land reform was handled in Manchuria. In January of 1948 Ren Bishi in a speech urged for more precise peasant class definitions and to rein in excesses by using the death penalty in only exceptional cases.[130]

By late February 1948, the Northeast Government once again shifted the priority away from political struggle to production by declaring feudalism to be finally eliminated. A *Northeast Daily* editorial from 15 February stated that in Northern Manchuria feudalism had been destroyed, and that further land division would only damage productivity and reduce incentives for peasants to farm.[131] On 28 March 1948, Gao Gang spoke for four hours in Harbin summarizing the results of the land-equalization campaign at the All-Northeast Party

[128] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 182.
[129] Ibid., 183.
[130] DeMare, 88.; Levine, 226.
[131] *The Northeast Daily.* 15 February 1948.

Conference. Gao declared that in political and economic spheres, feudalism had been crushed.[132] The fundamental problems related to land reform in the Northeast had also been resolved and that land reform was a monumental accomplishment for the party; theretofore China had never seen villagers have real political power.[133]

According to Gao, land reform allowed the party in the Northeast to raise the necessary troops and resources to defeat the U.S.-equipped Nationalist army. However there were leftist mistakes which included attacking merchant property in the cities, killing too many people, and going after property of rich peasants.[134] Unsurprisingly Gao took no personal responsibility for the above leftist deviations or the admitted decline in production, instead blaming poor peasants for unilaterally taking actions and practicing anti-Marxist "mass spontaneity" (群眾自發論). At most, the party could be faulted for not vigorously enough correcting the mistaken view that middle peasants were not of the masses.[135]

Shifting the blame for land reform excesses on the peasants themselves not only contradicts the historical record of how the third wave of land reform was carried out, it also is the polar opposite of what Gao himself said only three months prior. In a speech published by the *Northeast Daily*, Gao complained in Rehe that party cadres needed to change their work style and actively stoke the land equalization campaign. Moreover, poor peasants were the mainstay of land reform and that when talking about the peasant mass line, it was really only the poor peasant and hired labor mass line that mattered (農村中的群眾路線就講貧雇農路線好了).[136]

[132] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 189.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] *The Northeast Daily.* 12 January 1948.

The above changes in land reform policy were a part of the CCP's preparation for a major counteroffensive in Manchuria that culminated in the decisive Liaoshen Campaign. To that end, the Northeast Government officially declared on 1 June 1948 that land reform was completed save a few areas and that 6.3 million peasants benefited from land redistribution.[137] Gao Gang's marathon speech in Harbin called for increased production as one of the chief objectives for post-land reform agrarian policy.[138] As the Northeast Government began to plan production targets for 1949 and contemplate economic recovery, new debates unfolded about the future course of agriculture and peasant organization, primarily on whether and how fast the countryside should move towards collectivization. With Northeast leading the way, those debates became of national importance. At the same time, the departure of Peng Zhen, Chen Yun, and soon after Zhang Wentian meant that Gao Gang was relatively unrestrained to enact his vision for Manchuria's countryside post liberation.[139]

Post-Liberation Agriculture: What is to be Done?

Even before the fall of Shenyang on 1 November 1948 and the capitulation of Nationalist troops in Southern Manchuria, the Northeast Government began planning for Manchuria's first peace time planting season.[140] In May of 1948 a special inspection team led by Gao Gang and Zhang Wentian was organized. Comprised of talented cadres Ma Hong and Deng Liqun (鄧力群), the group's task was to monitor and spur the economic restoration of cities and their linkage

[137] Levine, 228-229.
[138] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 190.
[139] Ibid, 191.
[140] Ibid, 194.

with the countryside.[141] On 18 July 1948, Zhang Wentian gave a lengthy speech on prospects for rural economic development within the economic structure envisioned by New Democracy (新民主主義的經濟結構與農村經濟的發展前途).[142] Although the full minutes from the conference are not currently available, Zhang unequivocally stated that it was too early to pursue collectivization and that the focus needed to be on linking the countryside with the national economy.[143] Speaking bluntly, Zhang said that although a co-op based rural economy had a lot of potential, there was very little of it in the Northeast. The nascent mutual aid teams, which will be described below, were a promising means to boost production but they should be voluntary in nature and that efforts to force or compel peasants to join them had already failed where tried.[144] Some mutual aid teams had resorted to confiscating agricultural equipment and draft animals which greatly undermined their popularity.[145]

According to Zhang, the peasants were alarmed about the party's approach to private property: whether they would keep what they received during land reform was on the mind of every peasant.[146] This was a major challenge to Communist rule and cadres needed to both protect and reinforce property rights.[147] Alas, cadres instead prioritized setting up mutual aid teams and attempted to coerce peasants into joining; in some instances the mutual aid team collapsed as soon as the cadres left the village.[148] Zhang argued that peasants should be seen as

[141] Deng Liqun was considered one of the party's most accomplished leftist intellectuals. After 1949, he carried out land reform in Xinjiang both at breakneck speed and with ruthless brutality. Staunch opponent of Deng Xiaoping's reforms in the 1980s; Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 193.

[142] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian* (*張聞天東北文選*), 185.

[143] Ibid. 187.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid., 189-190.

[148] Ibid.

private property holders, not Communists and that socialism to them meant "eating well and being well clothed."[149]

Zhang did not dismiss collectivization outright, but he stressed Lenin's maxim that collectivization without mechanization was impossible. By Zhang's estimate Lenin and the Soviets needed 20,000 tractors and in the future Anshan was to provide as many tractors as required for the Northeast, but this was a long-term, not immediate goal for the region.[150] Until then, as was the case in the cities, the priority was to increase the peasants' proactive nature (積極性).[151] Providing incentives to individual farmers would boost production and blunt "bourgeois slander" that the CCP would communize all property and even the wives of peasants.[152]

Zhang's evoking of Lenin on the question of collectivization was deliberate. From the end of hostilities in the Northeast in late 1948 until the outbreak of the Korean War in the summer of 1950, as the Northeast Government debated collectivization, the two biggest secondary issues were the question of newly rich peasants and whether party members engaged in farming had the legal or ethical right to hire labor. The debates were fierce and Zhang's opposition to collectivization eventually led to his removal-by-promotion when he was unexpectedly appointed first as the PRC representative to the United Nations Security Council and then Ambassador to the Soviet Union in January of 1950 and effectively sidelined from all

[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid., 188.
[152] Ibid.

subsequent domestic debates.[153] In such an environment, Zhang may have hoped that couching his views in Leninist rhetoric would give him an edge.

After the above July speech and until his reassignment, Zhang produced several reports outlining his vision for the Northeast that were shared both with the Northeast politburo and the CCP Central Committee.[154] In those reports, Zhang Wentian made the case that the best way to link the cities with the countryside and encourage economic growth was through rural supply and marketing co-ops (供銷合作社), not mutual aid teams (勞動互助). Such cooperatives were strongly endorsed by Lenin in 1923, when he said: "If the whole of the peasantry were organized in cooperatives, we would be standing firmly with both feet on the soil of socialism."[155] After Lenin's death the following year, Bukharin further developed the idea by proposing connecting small rural producers with the state owned urban economy where goods would be circulated between the cities and countryside based on supply and demand and the relatively unimpeded buying and selling of said goods.[156] As mentioned in the chapter on industrialization, Zhang was familiar with Bukharin's thinking and although he could not mention or credit him, Bukharin undoubtedly heavily influenced Zhang's reports in 1949.

Zhang Wentian wrote in a 22 December 1948 report that the state-owned sector could not even begin to satisfy rural demand for goods, forcing peasants to turn to private merchants.[157] In addition, adverse macroeconomic conditions (blamed on speculation) led to fluctuating prices

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[153] Zhang, Peisen (張培森). *Zhang Wentian Chronicle (張聞天年譜),* 2010, 934-935.

[154] See 22 December 1948 "On Developing Rural Supply and Marketing Cooperatives" and 24 April 1949 "Views on Dividing Profits and Dividends of Rural Supply and Marketing Cooperatives" on pages 233 and 241 of *Zhang Wentian Northeast Selected Works* respectively.

[155] Lenin, Vladimir. "On Cooperation" 1923. https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1923/jan/06.htm (Accessed 12 May 2020).

[156] "Get Organized", 174.

[157] 22 December 1948 "On Developing Rural Supply and Marketing Cooperatives" *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選*), 233.

and an unstable currency hurting peasants and state owned enterprises alike.[158] Supply and marketing co-ops first created incentives for farmers and small merchants to sell their produce and goods; only then could subsequent production targets help stabilize the new economic system.[159] These co-ops would also unite "thousands upon thousands" of small producers, which could lead to savings through economies of scale, unity between the city and the countryside, and even stronger class consciousness.[160] Perhaps most importantly, the co-ops could harness the usefulness of the capitalist class for New Democracy under a mode that allowed for both "unity and struggle" between the state economy and the capitalist one.[161]

According to the historian Xiaojia Hou, even Mao initially backed supply and marketing co-ops which were supported by Liu Shaoqi at the party center.[162] However Mao did so only grudgingly and there is evidence cited by both Hou and Hua-yu Li that Mao shared Stalin's thinking that socialist agriculture only needed production cooperatives (mutual aid teams) and that even they were just a step on the way to collectivization. Supply and marketing co-ops meant tolerating private property for the foreseeable if not indefinite future, something that everyone from Mao to local village cadres were apprehensive about; cadres in the Northeast openly asked: "since our goal is agricultural collectivization, why don't we carry it out today?"[163]

Rich Peasant Question

[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid., 234-235.
[160] Ibid., 235.
[161] Ibid., 236-237.
[162] "Get Organized", 175.
[163] Ibid., 178.

In the Northeast the pressure to collectivize was fueled by the charge that post-land reform conditions had led to the rise of "rich peasants" and that this posed a major threat of capitalist resurgence. Although surveys carried out in other parts of China in late 1949 put the share of "rich peasants" at only 3.77 percent of the population, Mao declared that rich peasants were the "bourgeoisie of the villages."[164] Not quite ready to endorse outright collectivization, Gao Gang nevertheless backed the aggressive expansion of mutual aid teams as the only remedy to this insidious threat. As the reader might suspect, Zhang Wentian strongly denounced the idea that peasants had to join mutual aid teams as the only way to prevent capitalist resurgence.[165] But Zhang was increasingly isolated in the Northeast Government; reports coming from Shenyang were reinforcing similar fears held by Mao at the party center. Around this time, the *Northeast Daily* began to devote extensive coverage to the question of rich peasants and came out in support of collectivization.[166]

Responding to the growing linkage between collectivization and the problem of rich peasants, on 17 May Zhang Wentian sent his final rural-work report to the Northeast politburo and Mao Zedong, "*Three Problems Facing Rural Work* (關於農村工作的三個問題)." Outlining conditions since the completion of land reform, Zhang reported that a lot of formerly poor peasants and hired laborers had become middle peasants and that a good number of middle peasants had risen to rich peasant status.[167] Remarkably, some households who were struggled against also managed to grow rich. A sudden cornucopia of rural wealth does not a happy CCP bureaucrat make. Questions arose whether peasants could rent out, sell, or swap the land they

[164] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 253.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Zhang, Peisen, 900.
[167] *Selected Northeast Works of Zhangwentian (張聞天東北文選)*, 251-252.

received from land reform.[168] Workers who fled urban unemployment to the countryside now wished to return to the cities, could they sell the land they acquired in the interim? Were farmers free to leave the countryside for the cities in search of factory jobs? Lastly, Southern Manchuria—only recently brought under Communist control—had a large refugee population from south of the Great Wall. Due to a surplus of labor in Southern Manchuria, peasants there generally received smaller land plots (2 *mu* or less) and many refugees wanted to return to Huabei in the hopes of getting more land.[169]

Zhang counseled that the above questions were a natural development and that the party should not be overly concerned. Instead of administrative restrictions, the party should support any peasant effort that was helpful towards the overarching goal of development and boosting production.[170] Zhang also estimated that growing economic productivity would hasten class stratification and consciousness, particularly among middle peasants, this too was something the party should allow to develop without interference.

On the question of mutual aid teams, Zhang was once again adamant that they have to be voluntary and that the party could not order peasants to join them.[171] In the Northeast, the natural form of rural organization was the pooling of draft animals and labor during the tilling season by two or more families (插犋換工).[172] This arrangement predated the Communists and the Japanese, and in Zhang's eyes should not be opposed by the party. On the contrary, the party needed to support these efforts. Only with the natural rise of greater class consciousness and improvements in production capability would farmers join the larger, more collectivized mutual

[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid., 252.
[171] Ibid., 253.
[172] Ibid.

aid teams. Believing that farmers needed broad leeway, Zhang argued that farmers had the right to work the land themselves and could rent or sell their land as long as they did not become "feudal."[173]

Publicly, Zhang Wentian neither rejected the wisdom nor the inevitability of Soviet-style collective farms. His report states that mutual aid teams and consumption co-ops were a precursor for collectivization. At the same time, without an agricultural revolution that led to major increases in production, collectivization was a utopian goal in his estimate.[174] For starters, a vast qualitative gap existed between mutual aid teams and true collectivization that could only be bridged when the cities could provide the countryside with tractors and other machinery.[175] More importantly, if during wartime peasants were willing to endure hardship and requisition, Zhang forcefully argued that the post-war countryside wanted to grow rich. The party should accept a long protracted struggle between the co-op and capitalistic models of development which would exist side by side for years to come.[176] Instead of issuing orders to organize from above, the party should focus on introducing new farming methods, technology, and foster closer links between the city and the countryside.[177] Such thinking put Zhang significantly to the right of his colleagues both in the Northeast and in the party center. Thus, Zhang's open questioning of even the efficacy mutual aid teams almost certainty resulted in political backlash. Perhaps sensing how politically explosive such views were, Zhang concluded his report with the

[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid., 254.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 256.
[177] Ibid., 255-256.

argument that his views comported with Mao's call for cadres to lead by example and to treat peasants with patience (耐心說服，典型示範).[178]

The Ascendancy of Gao Gang

In late January 1949, as debates about collectivization and rich peasants were picking up steam, Gao Gang made his triumphant return to Shenyang. From 14 to 20 February, the Northeast Government Standing Committee held its first meeting in the new capital. The committee officially set economic development as the overriding task for the government, but the session was overshadowed by Gao Gang's criticism of decisions made in the early years of the Northeast Government with Peng Zhen at the helm. Lin Feng, a close ally of Peng's, accepted responsibility and said that he was unsure in the past of what the correct course was (心中無數). Unwilling to let the matter rest, Gao seized on this, and declared that Lin was not only unsure but also unqualified (水平太低) at the time.[179]

Lin Feng is a central and overlooked figure in Gao Gang's rise and fall in Manchuria. [180] One of a handful of native Manchurian cadres, Lin worked as Liu Shaoqi's secretary in Tianjin shortly before the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War; with his senior patron's support Lin would succeed Gao in the Northeast Government after the latter's ouster. In 1945-46, Lin was tasked but apparently failed at properly carrying out land reform in the northwestern part of Manchuria,

[178] Ibid., 255.
[179] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 197.
[180] See Frederick C. Teiwes' *Politics at Mao's Court*, Mao rebuked Gao Gang for trying to marginalize Lin Feng while the latter was deputy chair of the Northeast Government.

a crucial bridge to the Yan'an-Shaanxi revolutionary base area, prompting Gao Gang to personally oversee (and criticize) the effort from Rehe in late September 1947.[181]

Official Chinese accounts state that in early 1948 Lin Feng supported a peasant-led, spontaneous means of organizing mutual-aid teams throughout the Northeast which was opposed by both Gao and Lin Biao.[182] It is unclear, however, if the tensions between Gao and Lin had an ideological basis (left versus right) or were primarily a derivative of the rivalry between Gao Gang and Liu Shaoqi. Further complicating the puzzle is the fact that it was none other than Lin Feng who denounced Zhang Wentian's pro-landowner policies in Shaanxi during the Yan'an Rectification Campaign.[183] Given the near certain animus between Lin and Zhang Wentian, Lin may have played a role in Zhang Wentian's sudden departure from Manchuria. Circumstantial evidence points to Lin's importance in the political battles within the Northeast politburo, but very little is currently available on Lin Feng outside of Russian sources.

According to Lin Feng's CPSU personal file, party cadres under his authority discriminated against Mongolians during land reform in northwestern regions of Manchuria that were home to ethnic minorities.[184] Existing local Mongol self-governing associations were disbanded while Han Chinese equivalents were allowed to reorganize and continue their work. Furthermore, the report alleges Mongolian language schools were closed and all county documents and government proceedings were carried out in Mandarin. Although there were Mongol local cadres, their concerns were ignored and marginalized, further contributing to widespread unrest.[185] Across the board, early land reform in the region was done top-down, with

[181] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 184.

[182] Lin Feng (林楓). Baike, https://baike.baidu.com/item 林枫/60298#1 (Accessed 12 May 2020).

[183] "Luo Fu (Zhang Wentian) Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 56.

[184] Modern day Inner Mongolia; "Lin Feng Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 52, 52.

[185] Ibid., 52-53.

administrative action substituted for genuine mobilization of the masses. Judging from what was covered earlier, the Soviets probably exaggerated the degree to which Lin's handling of land reform differed from other areas, but the claims that the "settling of accounts (清算)" phase in the areas led to the deaths of numerous kulaks (rich peasants) and middle peasants comports with what was described earlier.[186]

The "Han chauvinism" deviation was corrected by the Northeast Government in February of 1949 shortly after Gao's semi-public chastising of Lin, but the Soviet compilers of the Lin dossier linked this incident to a bigger pattern of problematic, if not outright anti-Soviet behavior by Lin Feng.[187] Lin along with Peng Zhen allegedly accused the Soviets of helping the KMT in 1946, and claimed that the Marshall mission was more objective and closer aligned to the CCP's interests.[188] The Soviet characterization of Lin further adds that it was Peng's and Lin's overestimation of Communist military strength in the Northeast that led to the 1946-47 setbacks and defeats.

It is not known whether Gao Gang, Zhang Wentian, and Lin Feng were actively communicating competing visions for dealing with rich peasants and organizing agricultural production to the party center or first attempting to establish a good-faith consensus regionally. Gao's alleged direct letters to Mao and contacts with the Soviets on peasant issues point to serious internal maneuvering.[189] Attesting to this, Gao had a telling exchange with Andrei Ledovsky. Gao told the Soviet diplomat that he rejected the idea that the countryside should just

[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Marshall Mission was a failed diplomatic attempt undertaken by George C. Marshall to facilitated negotiations between the CCP and the Nationalists on forming a unified government; "Lin Feng Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 52, 53.
[189] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 261-262.

serve the city, be in perpetual debt.[190] Further showing his heterodox views, Gao also criticized "peasant socialism" as a glorification of poverty. He was equally opposed to maintaining the status quo or using capitalist means, clearly at odds with Zhang Wentian's views. The only positive policy pronouncement Gao made was endorsing a course towards eventual collectivization.[191]

Although supply and marketing co-ops were politically controversial, Li-hua Yu has written that in Manchuria they proved to be immensely successful.[192] After years of acute scarcity, peasants were able to purchase fertilizer, tools, pesticides, salt, and cooking oil from the co-ops. In turn, they provided a means for farmers to sell produce and nonagricultural cottage goods. Co-ops also offered disaster relief. Perhaps even more importantly, Zhang's predictions about the co-ops boosting trade volume and linking the countryside with the city after commercial links were severed by war and occupation came true. Through the co-ops, grain and soybeans from Manchuria were sold in northern and central China, while cotton, dates, pepper, and other goods made their way to the northeast. According to Cheng Zihua, in charge of the co-op system, the effort: "had built an independent and new type of commercial network, deeply rooted in the rural economy throughout the country."[193] Nevertheless, as subsequent sources attest, even the supply and marketing co-ops—absent strong political backing—faced serious problems.

Rural policy on the Eve and During the Korean War

[190] Ledovsky, Andrei. *Delo Gao Gana,* 1990, 31-32.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Bernstein, Thomas P., and Hua-yu Li., 150.
[193] Ibid., 151.

On 5 December 1949, Gao Gang convened a two day conference of all Northeast county secretaries to discuss agrarian policy.[194] In his remarks which were subsequently published in the *Northeast Daily* on 4 January 1950, Gao Gang endorsed both mutual aid teams and supply and marketing co-ops.[195] At the same time, Gao echoed Zhang Wentian's earlier concerns stating that the party should not force farmers to join and needed to respect those that want to "go at it alone (單幹)."

Collectivization was affirmed as the eventual goal, but the process of getting there would be gradual. Without mentioning names—or at least in the edited published account—Gao criticized those who raised the question of whether peasants could continue to independently work their land or hire labor during the transition period to collective agriculture. Instead, the party needed to focus its energies on making cooperative modes of production more productive than independent or capitalistic forms of farming.[196]

Just as in the cities, the focus for 1950 was on restoring production. Gao argued that in the future success or failure of rural counties would be judged not by how many members a mutual aid team had, but by output. Specifically output of premium quality. Gao ordered that in 1950 inspection teams need not report how many mutual-aids teams have been set up, but instead how much grain had been produced and if they were producing more than independent farmers.[197]

Despite having a more rightist and non-Stalinist position on collectivization, Gao in the same speech endorsed controversial positions on the rich peasants question. Gao came out in

[194] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 255.
[195] Ibid., 257.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.

favor of prohibiting the sale and purchase of land by anyone not engaged in physical farming and endorsed restrictions on the renting of land. Giving the right to rent out land to only orphans, widows, veterans, and workers & intellectuals who were still refugees in the countryside, effectively barring most middle and rich peasants from doing so.[198]

The last big matter of contention at the conference was whether or not party members had the right to hire workers and thus enter "exploitive" labor arrangements. Although Gao is known in secondary literature for taking a hardline stand against the practice, in this earlier speech Gao equivocated, calling only on the CCP to discourage cadres from doing so.[199] Gao instead suggested party members buy horses and draught animals and find other, unspecified means to increase output. At the same time, Gao argued party members should join mutual aid teams. Gao said that if cadres did not like how mutual aid teams were run, they had a duty to participate and turn them around, suggesting implicitly that in some villages local cadres adopted a "do as I say not as I do" approach to them.[200]

While Mao was in Moscow negotiating a friendship treaty with Stalin and Gao was busy laying out his vision for Manchuria's agricultural development, Liu Shaoqi granted an interview to a Pravda journalist where he forcefully defended the rights of rich peasants:

> *"Wealthy farmers will help productivity increase and will supply towns with goods… The new wealthy farmers are only beginning to appear and should not be curbed… If we try ordering capitalism to stop, it will get us nowhere. On the contrary, we shall make things worse, because millions of peasants will turn against our regime."*[201]

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[198] Ibid., 259.
[199] For a discussion of Gao's article on the matter, "To Whom Is the Glory" see Teiwes, 37.
[200] Ibid., 258.
[201] "Get Organized," 178.

Echoing his public remarks, on 23 January 1950 Liu Shaoqi sent comments and instructions to the Northeast Government to correct perceived mistakes regarding rich peasants. In the directive, Liu clearly states that most putative rich peasants were in fact only middle peasants. Furthermore, in the next three to five years, not only was there no need to limit rich peasants, such actions would be counterproductive to increasing production. Liu concluded that some exploitation was inevitable while also granting party members the right to hire labor.[202]

Liu's above instructions are portrayed in Gao Gang's biography as a major rebuke of Gao Gang. The authors argue that Liu was criticizing Gao's rushed call for collectivization and his misunderstanding that mutual aid and supply and marketing co-ops were two different means of production. Although there was a clear divergence on party members hiring help, the differences on collectivization are exaggerated. There is no evidence that Gao called for administrative measures to force peasants to join mutual aid teams; Gao appears to have had a Khrushchev-like conviction that collectivization would out-compete traditional modes of farming. Once again, Gao Gang escapes simplistic characterizations as a Stalinist.

Moreover, unlike the Stalinist view that collectivization was primarily needed as a means to quickly accumulate the requisite capital for crash industrialization, Gao envisioned accumulating capital via increases in productivity and savings followed by city taxes.[203] Agricultural taxes were a distant third source of capital. Gao's motivations for collectivization instead seem to have been a mix of sincere belief that collective farms meant abundance and the modernizing prestige that came with the replacement of wooden plows and malnourished animals with gleaming brand-new red tractors.

[202] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 260-261.
[203] "Get Organized," 179.

The outbreak of the Korean War had an immediate adverse effect on the Northeast countryside. Although Manchuria had been living under peace time since early 1949, it had not yet recovered from the devastation of the Civil War and three rounds of land reform. According to a report prepared for Molotov and the Soviet politburo in early 1950, the war saw Manchurian agricultural output fall by a third and a sixteen percent reduction in livestock (thirty percent in North China).[204] The quality and weight of the livestock also declined, while all of Manchuria had just over 300 tractors. [205] The report estimated that it would take two to three years for Manchurian agriculture to recover to 1943 levels.[206]

In the summer of 1950, following North Korea's invasion, the central committee decided to hasten land reform and spur efforts to eliminate bandits and counterrevolutionaries in intramural China.[207] In areas such as Manchuria where land reform had already been completed, grain taxes went up to support a national mobilization effort. Until the end of the war in 1953, grain taxes in Manchuria were as high as fifteen-twenty percent of total crop yield depending on the area and local conditions.[208]

According to a Soviet summary of a meeting between Lin Feng and Soviet consular officials on 15 January 1951 in Shenyang, the Korean War greatly disrupted original agricultural plans of the Northeast Government. While the region enjoyed a modest surplus in some agricultural products (500 million eggs, 1-1.5 million kilograms of pork, 5 million tons of grain), there were no markets for it.[209] At the same time, continued disruptions between the countryside

[204] "Land Reform in China" 16 August 1950. RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1254.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Li, Hua-Yu. Mao and the Economic Stalinization of China, 1948-1953. Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, 84.
[208] Ibid., 156.
[209] "Conversation between Consul General Ledovsky and Lin Feng." 15 January 1951. RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1255.

and the cities created a major shortage of necessary industrial goods. It is unclear from the report if the glut in output was due to marketing and supply co-ops not functioning as well as historians previously assumed or if the Northeast Government was ordered to stockpile food and barred from trading for strategic reasons by Beijing. The latter is unlikely because Lin asked in the same meeting if the Soviets were interested in purchasing some of the surplus.[210]

The Soviets were interested in updates on the pace of peasant organization in the Northeast. Lin Feng answered that participation in mutual aid teams ranged from twenty percent to a hundred depending on the county, with a forty percent average for the region.[211] Despite the growth of marketing and supply co-ops, private capital still accounted for nearly half of the trade in cities, validating Zhang Wentian's concerns discussed in the previous chapter that the capitalist class was vital to New China's development. Most importantly, debates about collectivization notwithstanding, the Northeast Government had begun taking steps in that direction by directly administrating some farms. These farms already had tractors purchased from the USSR.[212]

Gao Gang's personal file shows that debates about collectivization, Communists hiring labor, and co-ops continued unabated throughout the "Resist America Aid Korea" period. On 12 April 1952, more than two years after Gao Gang and Zhang Wentian called on the Northeast Government to not cajole farmers into joining mutual aid teams, Gao reported that although there were now 1,200 cooperative farms in Manchuria compared to just a 100 in 1951, most were set

[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.

up by administrative means.[213] Conditions in these farms were very poor and the Northeast Government could not purchase grain from many of them.[214]

On the question of permitting the purchase and renting of land, Gao reiterated the same earlier restrictions designed to exclude rich peasants.[215] On Communists hiring employees, however, Gao hardened his stance by calling for an outright ban for members of the party which owned land or enterprises from hiring labor.[216] Earlier on 10 January 1952, Gao Gang said at the Northeast Party Conference that Communists engaging in exploitation was a serious rightist deviation.[217] Worse, some of those cadres had become rich peasants themselves giving credence to an erroneous view that mutual aid teams would not turn into production co-ops and eventually full-fledged collectivized farms.[218] Citing figures to illustrate the threats posed by such thinking, Gao said that although only 4.3 percent of Communists in Kashan county, Heilongjiang hired labor, they were enough to undermine the efforts of the party to strengthen mutual aid teams and co-ops.[219]As a result the following trends could be seen throughout the region:

1. Uneven use of farm animals, peasants without horses not treated equally within mutual aid teams; some Communists still not wanting to join them. Peasants resisted the idea that all members were on equal footing within the teams.
2. Model workers were only encouraged financially, political work was not done, and many became distant from the collective/masses and stopped being model workers.
3. Mutual aid teams were being corrupted by hired labor, usury. Some party members also engaged in usury.

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[213] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 5-6.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid., 6.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid., 8.
[218] Ibid., 19-20.
[219] Ibid.

Using much more strident language than during the time Zhang Wentian was in the Northeast, Gao ended his speech with a warning shot that if the party remained passive and developed a "rich peasant type of economy" political power would inevitably fall into the peasants' hands. If the party continued to hire labor, loan money at a high interest, then the party would become a rich peasant organization.[220]

Given Gao Gang's middle ground positions covered earlier, what explains this pronounced shift to the left? Furthermore, during the same speech and in subsequent reports, Gao continued to support only graduate collectivization, repeating the usual maxim that mechanization needed to precede collectivization and the focus should be on improving and strengthening mutual aid teams and the co-op system.[221] The answer is likely Mao Zedong and changes in thinking at the party center. Although Liu Shaoqi provided fairly forceful support for rich peasants, Li Hua-yu has shown that Mao went along with this moderate approach, endorsed by no-less authority than Stalin, only grudgingly.[222] By 1953, Mao distanced himself from the gradualist, rich-peasant friendly program in favor of converting existing co-ops into more advanced collectivized co-ops.[223] Gao, sensing the shifting political contours around rich peasants and collectivization, likely began to agitate for a more leftist policy in the preceding year. Indeed, Gao quotes Mao heavily in the January 1952 speech, going as far back as Mao's 1943 statement that the only way to breakdown feudalism, save peasants from poverty was to guide them towards collectivization.[224]

[220] Ibid, 18-20.
[221] Ibid., 24-25.
[222] Li, 82.
[223] Ibid.
[224] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 24.

Conclusion

When the CCP arrived in Manchuria they promised revolution, and three waves of land reform later the Northeast countryside was forever transformed. If in the cities the Northeast Government led by Gao Gang pursued a rather conciliatory strategy towards private capital, in the countryside such leniency towards landowners and rich peasants was limited. Even Zhang Wentian, with his extensive research on land economy, at times publicly advocated for violent land reform.

Although the Northeast leadership was concerned about falling agricultural production, the hostility towards landlords can be explained in part by military exigency. The CCP wanted to break classes that were perceived to be sympathetic to the KMT while also giving land to the poorest to buy their support for the CCP's ever-growing military conscription. Once the military threat subsided and focus shifted to economic recovery, the Northeast Government's stance on agrarian matters softened.

Even before the proclamation of the PRC, land reform in the Northeast was carefully examined in Beijing as a model for all of China. Although the debates that emerged roughly fell on a left versus right divide on how rapidly China was to pursue collectivization and how newly rich peasants were to be treated, political loyalties often trumped ideological affinity. There is no evidence that Gao Gang ever repudiated Zhang Wentian's more rightist views whereas with Liu Shaoqi and Lin Feng conflict over land reform became pitched.

In 1953 Deng Zihui (鄧子恢), with Liu Shaoqi's endorsement, outlined a national policy of "four freedoms" which gave farmers the freedom to hire; freedom to borrow and lend money;

right to buy, sell, and rent out land; right to engage in trade.[225] These rights reflected many of the incentives that were enacted by the Northeast Government after the civil war to boost the countryside. At the same time, sensing Mao's more radical inclination, Gao amplified his support for collectivization during the last year of his tenure in the Northeast just as the supply and marketing co-ops were beginning to bear fruit. Thinking he had the Chairman's blessing, Gao hoped he would have the last word on economic planning in his rivalry with Liu Shaoqi.

[225] Deng Zihui was Mao's most outspoken opponent of collectivization and communes within CCP leadership; Li, 127.

Chapter 4:

A Manchuria for us and not you

In the spring of 1951, in the midst of China's second offensive on the Korean Peninsula against U.N. forces, Andrei Ledovsky and several other Soviet diplomats visited the Anshan steel plant in Southern Manchuria. While inspecting the plant and progress made by Soviet experts, the diplomats stumbled upon a horrific sight: in a dirty basement, factory workers and cadres were forced to kneel on small, filthy square mats, contorted and in visible agony.[1] The Soviets were told that these men had been detained as part of a campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries at the plant. In the two preceding months, any worker could denounce their colleagues; even the factory director was placed under house arrest. Suspects were tortured in the above manner until they were ready to give a "sincere" self-criticism.[2] What Ledovsky witnessed was how the first post-civil war mass political campaign launched by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to solidify its rule looked like in practice.

From October 1950—days after China's entry into the Korean War—until late fall of 1952, China was engulfed in a series of overlapping campaigns intended to suppress and root out counterrevolutionaries, corrupt officials, KMT sympathizers, and treacherous members of the bourgeoisie.[3] The three most prominent campaigns: suppression of counterrevolutionaries, Three-antis and Five-antis (三反五反), were all first launched in Manchuria and then expanded

[1] Ledovsky, Andrei. *Delo Gao Gana,* 1990, 93-94.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Three-antis: Oppose corruption, waste, bureaucratism (反貪污，反浪費，反官僚主義); Five-antis: Oppose bribery, tax evasion, cheating on government contracts, theft of state property, theft of economic secrets (反行賄 反偷稅漏稅 反偷工減料 反盜騙國家財產 反盜竊國家經濟情報)

to cover the entire country.[4] The importance of the campaigns was twofold: like the earlier rectification efforts during the party's Jiangxi Soviet days and Yan'an, the campaigns launched during the Korean War eliminated or cowed into submission discontented voices that emerged after China suddenly found itself again facing mass mobilization and wartime austerity.[5] Second, the campaigns were triggered in Manchuria because the local party apparatus saw the economic success of the bourgeoisie, rich peasants, and other social elements outside the party during the broad-tent "New Democracy" period as a direct threat. In parallels to subsequent political campaigns in the PRC, the Northeast Government willingly sacrificed economic stability for perceived more salient political objectives.

The following chapter relies on Gao Gang's CPSU personal file, published speeches and newspaper accounts, and partial local county records from Yanbian (延邊) county and the port city of Dalian to fill an important gap in the historiography of the early PRC. While analyzing the sources, it becomes clear that just as Manchuria served as an economic laboratory for the Chinese Communist Party transitioning from guerilla warfare to state rule, after 1949 the region served as a testing ground for means to discipline wavering party cadres and attack the bourgeoisie. While similar to economic planning and land reform in their improvisational and contradictory nature, policies on political campaigns differed in one important aspect: if in the

[4] Teiwes, Frederick C. *Politics and Purges in China: Rectification and the Decline of Party Norms, 1950-65*. 2018, 108-109; MacFarquhar, Roderick. *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 32.

[5] After the KMT ended the First United Front and attempted to annihilate the CCP, Mao and the remnants of a failed uprising in Hunan fled to the mountainous Jiangxi-Fujian border area. There, Mao was able to forge alliances with local bandits, carry out violent land reform, and conscript landless Hakka to swell the ranks of the Red Army. Those that questioned the new "base area" strategy and other decisions by Mao were purged, although Mao was not yet the paramount leader of the CCP. For more on the Jiangxi Rectification see Stephen Averill's *Revolution in the Highlands: China's Jinggangshan Base Area (State & Society in East Asia)*; Yan'an Rectification movement launched in 1942 was a major ideological mass movement that purged the ranks of the party and Red Army and cemented Mao's preeminence in the CCP.

past various ideological heterodoxies were tolerated, now Manchuria wished to lead the way towards ideological purity.

Background & Literature Review

Although the political campaigns waged in Manchuria and intramural China after 1949 played a colossal role in the CCP's efforts to ensconce themselves and begin to transform Chinese society, they have not received the scholarly or popular attention that earlier political rectification campaigns or subsequent Great Leap Forward have. In addition, the active role of Gao Gang in the campaigns is not acknowledged in Chinese historiography, with the exception of the Gao Gang biography published by Dai Maolin and Zhao Xiaoguang.[6]

Frank Dikotter in *Tragedy of Liberation* focuses on the staggering human toll of both the political campaigns and land reform, challenging the assumption that the initial pre-Great Leap Forward years of the PRC were a relatively halcyon period of recovery after decades of internecine struggle. According to a confidential report produced by the Anshan steelworks, the industrial gem of Manchuria and all of China, workers lived in appalling conditions throughout the thrift and production campaign for the Korean War. Workers without existing housing were forced to live in shacks and even animal pens, where freezing temperatures during the winter could kill all but the fittest.[7] Dikotter's citing of materials from nearly every Chinese province helps paint a broad picture and provide national context; in Guangdong tax officials brought workers to witness public executions during the "Three and Five-antis" while in Shenyang,

[6] See Zhang, Haixing, and Qi Pengfei. *Quick access to the People's Republic of China: the first sixty years (1949-2009)*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2010 & Wang, Wen (王雯). *Historical Record of the PRC, Founding of the Nation (中華人民共和國歷史紀實. 開國奠基, 1949-1953)*. Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe, 1994.
[7] Dikötter, Frank. *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution, 1945-1957*. 2013, 264-265.

workers participated directly by stripping villainous merchants and forcing them to stand for hours in the freezing Manchurian cold.[8] In Northwestern Gansu province, the "Three and Five-antis" campaign completely wrecked the provincial tax base.[9]

Dikotter looks at the political campaigns as more evidence of CCP's brutality post 1949, but he does not attempt to connect the movements to the wartime Yan'an Rectification Movement and the even earlier rectification campaign during the party's Jiangxi Soviet period. Nor is there an interest in discussing how the political campaigns served the party's interests and who gained from the campaigns.

On the latter front, Joshua Howard has written that workers at private firms were able to exploit the "Three and Five-antis" to settle scores with loathed management and successfully raise their wages. Hinting at the limits of labor gains, however, such efforts at SOEs which were nominally not exempt from the campaigns, proved to be far less successful for the working class.[10]

Joseph Torigian's forthcoming book on Xi Zhongxun discusses the former's role during this period in Northwest China. Unlike Gao Gang and the Northeast Government, Xi resisted efforts to increase the quotas for "big and small tigers" that individual units had to uncover. [11] This allowed the region to avoid the same levels of gratuitous violence seen in the Northeast and in major cities like Shanghai which led the country in executions. Despite some misgivings and slower roll out of the campaigns, both "Three and Five-antis" eventually resulted in major economic disruptions in the Northwest as well; either due to political exigency or genuine

[8] Ibid., 170.
[9] Ibid., 322.
[10] Howard, Joshua. 2004. *Workers at War: Labor in China's Arsenals, 1937–1953*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
[11] Term for corrupt officials.

ideological considerations, Xi did not oppose the campaigns in any meaningful fashion once it became crystal clear that Mao and the Central Committee understood the consequences and prioritized political goals over economic stability.[12]

The historian Yang Kuisong (楊奎松) has written that the campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries was a concerted means by Mao to carry out mass mobilization and to get rid of ideologically pernicious elements both in the party and Chinese society writ large.[13] According to a conversation between Mao Zedong and the Minister of Public Security Luo Ruiqing (羅瑞卿) cited by Yang, the Korean War actually served as a "golden opportunity" that the party could not miss in dealing with its internal enemies.[14] Contrary to expectation that external threats called for a more cautious, broad-tent approach, the party charted a course of ideological purification to secure its strategic rear. Although Yang does not point to parallels with the party's earlier political campaigns, he sees clear similarities to subsequent Anti-rightist and "Four Cleanup" campaigns launched in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

While looking at connections between the political campaigns of the early 1950s and the party's efforts before coming to power, one would be hard pressed to find a finer source than Gao Hua's (高華) *How the Red Sun Rose* (紅太陽是怎樣升起的：延安整風運動的來龍去脈). In what is probably the most authoritative work on the Yan'an Rectification Campaign (延安整

[12] Torigian, Joseph. *The Party's Interests Come First: The Life of Xi Jinping's Father Xi Zhongxun*. [in progress], 2021. Contact the author for a galley copy.
[13] Yang, Kuisong. 2008. "Reconsidering the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries." *The China Quarterly* 193. Cambridge University Press: 105.
[14] Ibid.

風), Gao writes that Mao turned what appeared to be the most unpropitious moment in the party's history—an existential threat in the face of both the Nationalists and the Japanese— to "thoroughly reorganize" the CCP and cement his personal power. The linkage between the Manchurian political campaigns and the Yan'an Rectification campaign is not just about similar methods of using torture and denunciations to achieve political consolidation at a time of crisis: both Gao Gang and Zhang Wentian were swept up by the Yan'an campaign, with Zhang being severely criticized and purged after Lin Feng denounced him. When Gao, Zhang, and Lin were all assigned to Manchuria, the pressure of civil war, personal animus, and foreign threat must have made for an unenviable environment in the Northeast politburo.

From an economic perspective, the economic historian Li Hua-yu in aforementioned *Economic Stalinization of China* provides analysis of the effects of the "Five-antis" on China's economic development. The 'Five-antis" campaign in particular led to the growth of the SOE sector at the expense of private industry. Mao Zedong saw this as a key indicator that China not only was ready to transition to a fully socialist type of economy, but that it would do so sooner than the Soviet Union had done after the Russian Civil War.[15] Unfortunately for Mao, the attack on the bourgeoisie arrested China's overall economic growth and badly hit state revenue, which prompted Bo Yibo's much maligned tax plan (which taxed state and private industry at equal rates) to rescue the government's finances. Li's research question was on the character of China's economy and the influence of Soviet thinking on China's economic planning, so it is unfair to criticize the work for neglecting the political dimension of the "Five-antis" campaign. But economic decisions do not occur in a vacuum and while the work details the effects the

[15] Li, Hua-Yu. *Mao and the Economic Stalinization of China, 1948-1953*. Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, 7; 63.

campaign had on production and policy thinking in Beijing (particularly tax policy), it does not adequately cover the political and class implications. The most important of which was the near total destruction of petit bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie classes perceived by the party to be inimical to the long-term interests of the CCP and its efforts to consolidate power and remold China.

Michael M. Sheng has published an important revisionist account of the "Three-antis" campaign. Sheng challenges the assertion that the campaign began in Manchuria, instead attributing its genesis solely to Mao. In addition, he charts how the campaign was waged both in the civilian sphere and the army, where it arguably had an even more desultory effect on the PLA and its fighting capability than on economic growth.[16] When it comes to where the campaign started, Sheng appears to have lacked access to published speeches and other materials from the Northeast that clearly show the "Three-antis" campaign in Manchuria preceded the national call by a few crucial months. This omission by no means discredits Sheng's assertion that Mao played a central role in fueling the hunt for corrupt cadres. Gao Gang and other regional leaders were moving proactively to gain recognition and explicit support from the Chairman; in the case of Gao likely even trying to anticipate Mao's wishes and policy preferences.

Lastly, Frederick Tewies has made connections between the "Three and Five-antis" and Gao Gang's eventual purge in his work, *Politics at Mao's Court: Gao Gang and Party Factionalism in the Early 1950s*. Tewies was the first western scholar to argue that Mao was personally in charge of the campaign, operating from Tianjin at the time.[17] Furthermore, Tewies furnishes statistics that during the "Five-antis" the goal was to execute or punish 300,000

[16] Michael M. Sheng. 2006. "Mao Zedong and the Three-Anti Campaign (November 1951 to April 1952): A Revisionist Interpretation." *Twentieth-Century China*, 32:1: 56-80.
[17] Teiwes, Frederick C. *Politics at Mao's Court: Gao Gang and Party Factionalism in the Early 1950s*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1990, 16-18.

members of the national bourgeoisie (large and mid-sized capitalists who received little to no foreign capital) which had been previously spared in the effort to get rid of the more powerful "bureaucratic capitalist" class. The top one percent of the national bourgeoisie was either imprisoned or executed, while the two to five percent were given very high fines that intentionally drove them to bankruptcy.[18] The accusations against the bourgeoisie of disloyalty during the Korean War belied the premeditated intent by Mao to drastically shrink the size and clout of the economic class. Tewies argues that this intent was not always understood by everyone around Mao, especially as the campaigns took a serious toll on China's public finances.

Suppressing Counterrevolutionaries

The campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries (鎮壓反革命運動) did not have a clearly defined start date, rather it grew out of efforts to target landlords during land reform and given more impetus after the outbreak of the Korean War and the launch of the "Resist America Aid Korea" national movement. Per official instructions issued by the CCP Central Committee on 12 February 1951, Public Security officials had to both not let even a single counterrevolutionary slip through their grasp and prevent false imprisonment of innocents, summed up in: "strike with steadiness, accuracy, and vigor" (打得穩、打得準、打得)."[19] In Manchuria, the campaign had no shortage of vigor, with local newspapers, propaganda posters, and mass rallies urging everyone to uncover both counterrevolutionaries and enemy spies. The

[18] Ibid.
[19] Zhou Liangshu (周良書). "Elimination of Bandits & Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries, Consolidation of State Authority(剿匪鎮反鞏固政權)." 28 September 2011. Baike. https://baike.baidu.com/reference/2452948/79bb4HkCIGHOexiGhXOLKHHbVj_nhg_IqU2VwfA3UyKeR4185UufnzDFVfhFUVQZJtW5WXZl6hgCAaBlVqwga3vBztZ_yXrJH3AOYcECL5GiOLhkzRCwIN8rmK9Xfp90bQ (Accessed 24 May 2020).

surfeit of targets inevitably meant that many innocent individuals were arrested and even executed. All of this was known and actively encouraged by senior Northeast Government leadership, including Gao Gang.

On 20 March 1951, Gao Gang gave a speech to the Northeast Public Security Bureau that is in Gao's CPSU Central Committee personal file. Gao argued that although U.S. imperialism was the greatest threat to China, "because [The U.S.] does not 'dare' to show up in China, it [was] using KMT agents, defeated Japanese, 'Li Xinman (Syngman Rhee) traitors' and other nations who are U.S. satellites."[20] Gao called on the Northeast Government to be vigilant and for the Public Security Bureau to study counter espionage tradecraft. Although Ledovsky records in his work that some officials in the Northeast Government who spoke with Soviet diplomats privately admitted that the campaign against KMT spies and saboteurs was overblown, in the closed-door speech Gao cited cases and figures that were in line with public facing propaganda published in the *Northeast Daily*.[21] Specifically, he reported that in 1950 a staggering 3,794 special agents or counterrevolutionaries had been arrested in Manchuria. A further 1,749 bandits had been suppressed with 652 rifles and guns seized. Five machine guns and cannons, plus "a lot" of radio transmitters, fake documents, grenades, and poison rounded out the seized caches.[22]

The dry, bureaucratic style of speech summaries provided by Soviet diplomats or reporters fail to speak to the atmosphere in the room or how Gao delivered his speech. What is striking, however, is the extent Gao's private remarks aligned with the rhetoric in editorials published in the *Northeast Daily*. On 24 February 1951, less than two weeks after the Central Committee directive on suppressing counterrevolutionaries had been issued, the *Northeast Daily*

[20] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 85.
[21] Ledovsky, 83.
[22] Ibid.

published a front page editorial raising the alarm that bandits, spies and saboteurs, evil landlords, and other counterrevolutionary elements were using "every possible means (千方百計)" to carry out subversive behavior.[23] With U.S. imperialists and KMT Nationalists threatening to "retake the Mainland" and even engaging in guerilla warfare, the newspaper cast the suppression campaign as a life and death struggle for New China.[24]

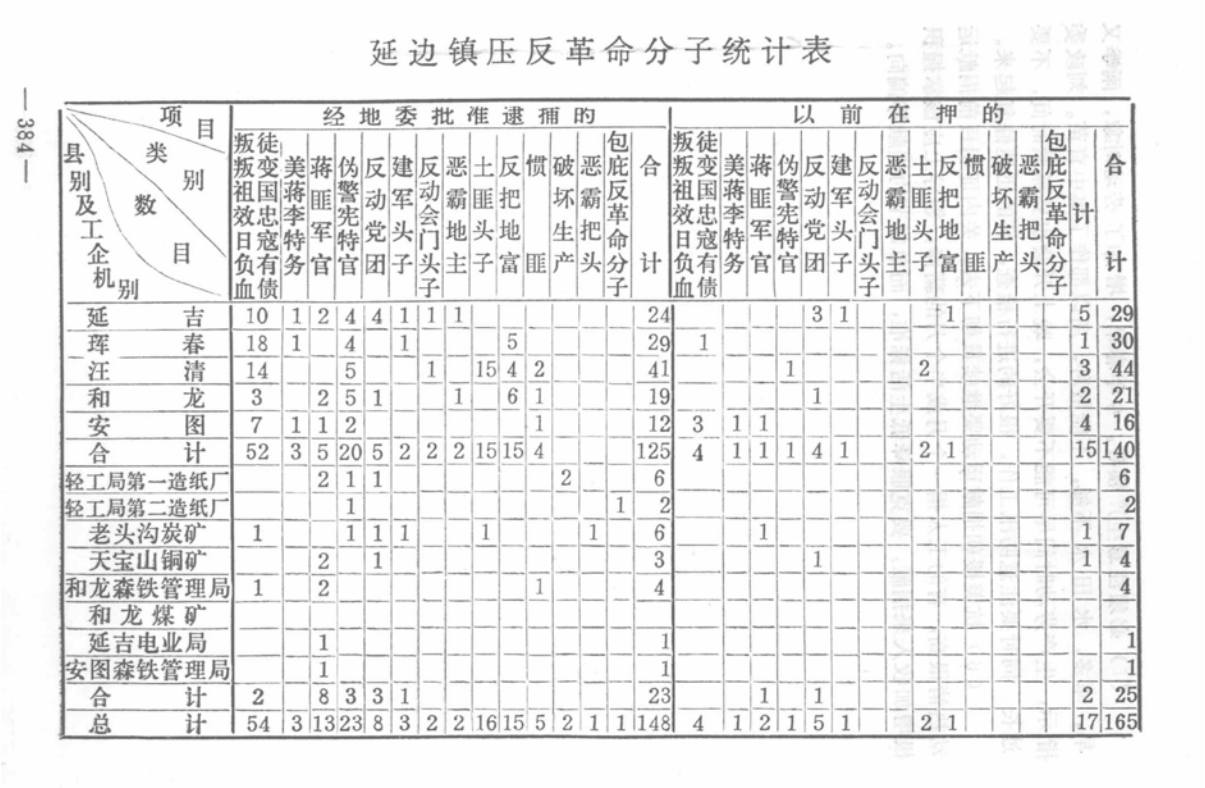
Yang Kuisong writes that prior to the suppression campaign lauded by Gao above, the CCP indeed faced palpable threats to its rule from underground elements. Arson by KMT agents or sympathizers was allegedly common in cities, while remote areas witnessed full-scale insurrections.[25] After mass arrests during the suppression campaign, arson and assassinations of CCP cadres became almost nonexistent.[26] The campaign had managed to break the back of residual resistance that persisted after the Nationalist defeat in 1949 according to the historian. Although Yang's arguments are well supported by government sources, it is unclear if the alleged "KMT agents" were truly taking orders from the Nationalists in Taiwan or were just locals disgruntled with communist rule. Judging from recent research on the Nationalists during the early Cold War, the KMT was in such a state of disarray in the immediate years after its retreat from Mainland China that it is highly unlikely that it had the means to coordinate any serious guerilla campaigns in the distant Northeast.[27]

Debating whether senior CCP officials really believed the statistics or rumors of clandestine activity in Manchuria is not an exercise conducive to results, but partially available

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[23] "Why we must Persist in Suppressing Counterrevolutionaries (為什麼必須堅決鎮壓反革命)."*The Northeast Daily*, 24 February 1951.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Yang, 112; In China's Southwest, anti-communist rebels did indeed receive limited support from remnant Nationalist units that fled to Burma and Thailand in 1949. See Gibson, Richard M., and Chen, Wenhua. *The Secret Army: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Drug Warlords of the Golden Triangle*. Singapore: J. Wiley & Sons (Asia), 2011.
[26] Yang, 112.
[27] See Lin, Hsiao-ting. *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-Shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan*. 2016.

county level records provide tantalizing evidence that the numbers cited by Gao Gang above were greatly inflated if not manufactured out of thin air by relevant departments within the Northeast Government. In the autonomous region of Yanbian, home to Manchuria's Korean minority and on the border with North Korea, public security records show that only three "US-ROK spies" and thirteen "KMT agents" had been arrested out of an equally modest total of 148 detained counterrevolutionaries from fall 1950 until 4 July 1951.[28] Of course a single county cannot speak for the entire region, but given the seeming ease for the enemy to insert agents or recruit sympathizers here relative to remote areas deep in Manchuria, it is fair to question official statistics until comparably detailed county level statistics become available to scholars.



延边镇压反革命分子统计表

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县别及工企机别	经地委批准逮捕的															以前在押的															合计
	叛变投敌祖国有血债	徒效忠日寇负债	美蒋特务	李匪军官	伪警宪特官	反动党团	建军头子	反动会门头子	恶霸地主	土匪头子	反把地富	惯匪	破坏生产	恶霸把头	包庇反革命分子	计	叛变投敌祖国有血债	徒效忠日寇负债	美蒋特务	李匪军官	伪警宪特官	反动党团	建军头子	反动会门头子	恶霸地主	土匪头子	反把地富	惯匪	破坏生产	恶霸把头	包庇反革命分子	计	合计
延吉	10	1	2	4	4	1	1	1								24						3	1				1					5	29
珲春	18	1		4		1				5						29	1															1	30
汪清	14			5			1		15	4	2					41					1					2						3	44
和龙	3		2	5	1			1		6	1					19						1										2	21
安图	7	1	1	2							1					12	3	1	1													4	16
合计	52	3	5	20	5	2	2	2	15	15	4					125	4	1	1	1	4	1			2	1						15	140
轻工局第一造纸厂			2	1	1							2				6																	6
轻工局第二造纸厂				1										1		2																	2
老头沟炭矿	1			1	1	1			1				1			6			1													1	7
天宝山铜矿			2		1											3					1										1	4
和龙森铁管理局	1		2								1					4																	4
和龙煤矿																																	
延吉电业局			1													1																	1
安图森铁管理局			1													1																	1
合计	2		8	3	3	1										23			1		1										2	25
总计	54	3	13	23	8	3	2	2	16	15	5	2	1	1		148	4	1	2	1	5	1			2	1						17	165

Figure 6: Arrest Statistics for Political Crimes in Yanbian County[29]

[28] CCP Yanbian County, Yanbian Prefectural Office. (中共延邊地委延邊專署). *CCP Yanbian County Major Documents Compilation* (*重要文件匯編*) *2nd Volume (1949.6- 1952.8).* Yanbian Archive,1986, 380.
[29] Ibid., 384.

Absence of a credible threat from saboteurs did not mean that fear and paranoia could not have swept through rank-and-file cadres and ordinary people. Soviet reporting states that already in the first weeks after the outbreak of the Korean War and before China's intervention, some cadres in the Northeast began to resign from the party.[30] In Southern Manchuria the panic was particularly palpable. Farmers buried grain, people moved north, and Soviet consular officials reported that mysterious fliers had been distributed warning people that World War III had begun and that the U.S. would not only prevail but would use atomic bombs against the Communists.[31]

On 16 January 1951, Ledovsky met with Lin Feng (林楓), one of Gao Gang's chief rivals in the Northeast politburo. Lin told his Soviet interlocutor that the Korean War had emboldened former landlords and old rich peasants who were now openly intimidating peasants by telling them to "to take good care of their old equipment and work harder, because you will have to give it back soon because the Communist government will fall."[32] As a result, peasants had resumed contacts with "feudal" village associations, religious groups, fraternal and brotherly unions. Lin alleged that all of these organizations had been semi-underground since liberation and were semi-criminal in nature.[33] Other unnamed officials passed on information to Ledovsky that during the first ten months of 1950, 125 sabotage groups had been uncovered, leading to 2,375 arrests. In July-August, about 500 bandits were captured in rural areas. One group had nineteen members in Shenyang, twenty-four in Changchun, and fifty in Yingkou although it is unclear if this was an organized crime outfit or a genuine partisan force with ties to the Nationalists.[34]

[30] Ledovsky, 82-83.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid, 83.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

Returning to official coverage, a lengthy editorial in the *People's Daily* on 26 December 1950 criticized local officials for failing to thwart counterrevolutionary activity and not disabusing the masses of problematic views. Chief amongst those was the perilous notion that since the KMT armies had been defeated the danger facing China had lifted and that a lenient policy was more fitting for peacetime socialist reconstruction.[35] In Manchuria, the *Northeast Daily* devoted extensive coverage to acts of sabotage, detailing 340 such instances in Shenyang alone in 1950. Large photos of seized pistols and other equipment were prominently placed to mobilize readers and increase their vigilance.[36] Despite the propaganda work, party officials who spoke with Ledovsky privately admitted that many industrial accidents and fires attributed to sabotage were in fact caused by negligence and poor work safety conditions, a problem covered previously.[37]

Facing pressure from the party center, the Northeast Government reported to Beijing in late December 1950 that previous failings of the suppression campaign stemming from unwarranted magnanimity towards counterrevolutionaries had been rectified. Gao Gang personally signed off and was informing Beijing of the following steps:

1. Following an October meeting of provincial and city committees in the Northeast, an agreement was reached to reexamine cases of counterrevolutionary activity.
2. In the past death sentences were given out by the regional Northeast Government, now provincial and Shenyang and Dalian city administrations could also sentence political criminals to death. Death sentences against foreigners would still only be decided by Beijing.
3. Reorganization of the courts in the Northeast. 2800 pending cases would be adjudicated in the following three months. Gao informed Beijing that no one would be freed and all the leaders would be executed. Bizarrely, perhaps copying Soviet practice, prisoners who

[35] "Thoroughly Correct Distorted Interpretations of 'leniency' (徹底糾正曲解"寬大無邊"的偏向)." *The People's Daily*. 26 December 1950.
[36] For example see second page of *The Northeast Daily* 29 April 1950 and second page of *The Northeast Daily* 10 April 1952.
[37] Ledovsky, 83.

committed criminal acts (violation of marriage law, assault, owned brothels or opium dens, would be amnestied as long as no murder was committed.

4. Five thousand former KMT officers, religious sect leaders, other reactionary elements had already been sent to forced labor re-education camps. Gao promised that more would be caught shortly.[38]

Although the same report cautioned against a "left deviation" meaning in this case excessive punishments against counterrevolutionaries, it is clear that the Northeast Government opted for a very harsh and punitive stance. According to Ledovsky's account, courts were initially slow and unwilling to deliver death sentences.[39] In Changchun, out of an armed sixty man bandit group which was filled with "incorrigible recidivist bandits," only four were sentenced to death. After the December directive and criticism from Beijing, the Public Security Bureau appealed and secured twenty death verdicts. From December of 1950 onwards, the local Public Security Bureaus directly answered to the central ministry which led to a sharp increase in arrests and harsher rulings. Ledovsky compares this period to the Soviet Great Terror of 1937-8— the new rules encouraged anonymous denunciations, informants, and made leniency or administrative discretion impossible.[40] At the same time, Public Security officials were often poorly educated and had dim understanding what constituted counter revolutionary behavior.[41] Many of them had suspect backgrounds themselves.

In Yanbian, where the earlier Public Security Bureau chart showed how few actual recorded cases of sabotage and counterrevolutionary activity could be found, the suppression campaign led to tragic deaths. In Wangqing County (汪清), suicides were common. In

[38] Ledovsky, 85.
[39] Ibid., 86-87.
[40] Ibid., 84.
[41] Ibid., 86-87.

neighboring counties landlords who had already been struggled with were rearrested and faced double jeopardy. Cadres and everyday people did not know the difference between "revolutionary' and "counterrevolutionary" behavior.[42] Directives sent to the lowest rungs of the party echelon added pressure and made calm decision making difficult if not impossible:

1. Start with those who need to be killed or released, then investigate the middle. Check up on cadres.
2. Must maintain vigilance, unite campaign with [Resist America Aid Korea] and campaign on patriotic production. Just because land reform has already been carried out and there have been "big arrests" and "big executions" does not mean there are no counterrevolutionaries. Vigilance has been too low in the past.
3. Mid-levels of organizations have to eliminate anti-revolutionary thinking completely, do not focus solely on leadership.
4. Organize State Security Protection Committees (治安保衛委員會) with three members; rural areas also need them. These troikas are to help root out enemies.
5. Campaign cannot interfere with production, do not hold meetings when harvest season begins, evening meetings cannot be too long- preserve time.
6. Campaign to raise contributions for "Resist America Aid Korea" cannot cease.

By 26 April 1951 when Ledovsky met again with Gao Gang to discuss the suppression campaign, Gao told him that greater vigilance led to 5,000 additional arrests of counterrevolutionaries in the Northeast. Same cadres complained that there was a shortage of skilled personnel and that if someone had a checkered past it should not automatically disqualify them from working if they were honest and law-abiding. Gao explicitly said he disagreed with such thinking and called for thorough checks of all employees, referral of suspicious and unreliable elements to the authorities for harsh punitive measures including the death penalty.[43] When it came to dealing with perceived enemies of the new regime, Gao did not show the kind of flexibility he displayed on industrial policy, instead opting to demonstrate to Mao and the

[42] *CCP Yanbian County Major Documents Compilation* (*重要文件匯編*), 381.
[43] Ledovsky, 84-85.

Central Committee that the Northeast was at the vanguard of dealing with enemies of the revolution.



Figure 7: Seized anti-revolutionary weapons cache. Source: Northeast Daily 6 February, 1951

Prelude to the Three-antis

The suppression of counterrevolutionaries officially resulted in 712,000 deaths; in 1959 at the Lushan Conference convened to address the disastrous Great Leap Forward, Mao revised the number upward to a million killed. Most historians agree that the number was at least twice as high.[44] While the country was gripped with spy mania, the campaign unlike Stalin's Great Terror in 1937-38, left the party and the PLA largely unscathed. This would change with the 'Three-antis" movement which went after corrupt and ideologically compromised party cadres both in civilian work units and the military. The "Three-antis" campaign and the subsequent 'Five-antis" campaign occurred concomitantly to the suppression movement and other

[44] Li, Changyu. "Mao's 'Killing Quotas'." Human Rights in China (HRIC). 26 September 2005. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi117LWi83pAhXjT98KHVIVDTUQFjAAegQIBBAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.hrichina.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2FPDFs%2FCRF.4.2005%2FCRF-2005-4_Quota.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3QTh01MQlM-faJLHvkeIVj (Accessed 24 May 2020).

"patriotic" campaigns. In the case of the "Three-antis" it was the Northeast Government that first raised the alarm about the threat to communist rule from inside the party and began to implement various policies that would be ultimately endorsed by Mao and ordered carried out in China writ large.

On 1 March 1951, nineteen days before his aforementioned speech at the Northeast Public Security Bureau, Gao Gang delivered a major speech at the 3rd enlarged politburo meeting of the Northeast Government.[45] Published the next day in the *Northeast Daily,* Gao said that government workers in Manchuria fell into four categories: exemplary workers who "earnestly study work conditions, delve deeply into questions, can grasp the key element of assignments, study, review their professional experiences, and pay close attention to cadres who provide leadership on ideological and work matters." The second type of workers met expectations and had some successes but didn't necessarily produce high quality work. The third type of worker enjoyed occasional success but they exaggerated their results and were not always present in the office or the field. The last and least fourth category of worker actively damaged the people's interests, tore themselves from the masses, engaged in bureaucratism, corruption, and were all around "degenerate."[46]

Gao made clear in his speech that this was more than just an instance of red tape or "routineism." The worst kind of workers put on airs, bossed workers around, were "good for nothing." Tellingly, Gao attributed their failings to stubborn use of "old society values" in the new society. Not only had the offending workers not learned anything since liberation, Gao called for investigative committees to be set up, show vigilance, and diligently work to uncover

[45] *The Northeast Daily.* 2 March 1951.
[46] Ibid.

the rot.[47] Struggles against bureaucratism had always been about undoing the pernicious effect of Nationalist (and in Manchuria's case Manchukuo) rule, but if before the Korean War the campaign to fight bureaucratism was intended to boost production and concerned economic matters, it was now presented as a much larger problem of a whole reactionary class being politically hostile to the CCP and New China's values.

The fight against bureaucratism was given extra saliency by the rapid growth of the public sector during 1949-50. In 1949 there were about 300,000 public sector employees within the Northeast Bureau of Industry, by 1950 the number swelled to 700,000.[48] As more accountants, engineers, managers joined SOEs and co-ops, some in the party worried that enemy forces had taken advantage of this opportunity to infiltrate factories and businesses. Such fears were explicitly vocalized by Gao Gang to his Soviet interlocutors and made clear in speeches and policy directives looked at below. The perceived lax attitude by factory managers and many party cadres at the local level who focused only on economic growth only heightened the fears of Gao Gang.

The above speech was given shortly before a major regional conference held in Shenyang from 18 May to 2 June that kicked off a savings campaign. War demands required major changes to China's economy and the conference set a goal of 5 million tons of grain equivalent in savings for Manchuria.[49] Achieving the goal proved to be exceedingly difficult however. Even though the campaign had the attention of the CCP's entire leadership, corruption, poor planning, and suspected sabotage or indifference stymied collections. As local officials struggled to meet the targets set by the Northeast Government, more information trickled up that party cadres were

[47] Dai, Maolin (戴茂林), and Xiaoguang Zhao (趙曉光). *Gao Gang Biography (高崗傳)*. Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2011, 226-227.
[48] Ledovsky, 84.
[49] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 226-227.

taking a permissive stance towards unreliable social elements. Thus the impetus grew for a major shakeup that would target those perceived to be putting the brakes on the war aid efforts.

The opening salvo of the shakeup came on 31 August 1951 when Gao Gang delivered a report on "Opposing the Rot of Corruption and Opposing Bureaucratism (反對貪污腐化，反對官僚主義)" to the Northeast Government politburo.[50] While Gao Gang initially reiterated familiar criticisms of bureaucratism and workers who clung to old ways of working, he went much further by casting bureaucratism as an urgent problem of values, class consciousness, and ultimately a risk to the party's rule. According to Gao:

> *"Degenerate elements brought landlord, bureaucratistic, comprador, and other non-proletariat consciousnesses, lifestyles, and work manners into the party."*

Not only did these bad elements bring pernicious KMT work styles into the party, their approach was fundamentally at odds with Marxism-Leninism, actively prevented links between the masses and the party. More ominously, Gao raised the alarm that corrupt and bureaucratic elements were using various entrapments and deceptive tactics to entice party cadres, even old, seasoned party members.[51] Gao cautioned his audience that if this serious problem was not solved quickly, it would leave a long legacy of trouble for both the people and the revolution (貽害人民，貽害革命). In other words, if the Northeast Government was going to meet its wartime requirements and continue socialist construction, it needed to first purge its ranks of hostile elements.

[50] *The Northeast Daily.* 1 December 1951.
[51] Ibid.

Three-antis Begins

Official party histories and documents state that the "Three-antis" campaign began on 30 November, 1951 with a Central Committee directive calling on the entire party to seriously monitor, uncover, and punish corruption among cadres.[52] Although the historian Michael Sheng has put out a contrarian narrative that the "Three-antis" campaign did not begin in the Northeast—instead arguing that Mao was the conceiver and chief executioner of the campaign—the evidence shows that Gao Gang de facto kicked off the campaign three months earlier on 31 August with the speech discussed above.[53] Not only were the stated 'Three-antis" goals of opposing corruption, waste, and bureaucratism overtly brought up by Gao, the impetus behind the 30 November directive mirrored that of Gao's earlier speech; it came as a direct response to nationwide problems in meeting the targets for the savings and thrift campaign.[54] Gao Gang even beat the center in identifying the eventual main culprit of the campaign— old KMT era officialdom. It would not be until a later 8 December directive that the party center began to link corruption within the party with hostile outside (KMT) influence.

Returning to Gao's August speech, the introduction foreshadows the main ideological objectives of the "Three-antis" campaign nationally. It began with the assertion that old bureaucrats required thorough reeducation, and that this transformation had been done quite poorly or not at all.[55] It was these *ancien regime* officials who brought "KMT reactionary clique

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[52] Communist Party of China. "Three anits, Five-antis" Movements ("三反"、"五反"運動)." http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/33837/2534704.html (Accessed 24 May 2020).
[53] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 227.
[54]"CCP Central Committee: Instructions on Immediately Stirring the Masses to Start the "Three antis Struggle" (中央發出：關於立即限期發動群眾開展"三反鬥爭"的指示)." 4 January 1952. Baike. https://baike.baidu.com/reference/484290/9b05Lg8abjowJF6zZ1xBCe-x9omNXB-BdOgufxHZ7vAUb_eLtWBnn_NDHYhfGNq08N6Mf6co7ImC-a6Q-Q3U-UXOLw41vE4ezpARoGKU (Accessed 24 May 2020).
[55] *The Northeast Daily.*1 December, 1951.

work style" into the party and linked up with other reactionaries and traitorous merchants using various "seductions and soft approaches to target cadres that did not have firm convictions." As mentioned earlier, Gao alleged that many cadres, even old cadres, could not resist the temptation and "fell into the mud."[56] Gao's speech was not officially published until 1 December[t], a common practice that continues to this day with sensitive speeches. The speech was likely edited, with additional theoretical parts added after the "Three-antis" campaign became national with the 30 November Beijing directive.[57]

With the enemy defined, Gao set out to outline concrete policy goals to fight bureaucratism, which he defined as: "[a] hotbed on which corruption grows." To that end, the published speech called for four concrete steps:

1. In every department, start a mass movement to find corrupt and bureaucratic behavior.
2. All those who are found guilty (need clear, incontrovertible evidence) are to be punished with utmost severity, any demonstration of leniency would be a crime against the revolution.
3. At the same time, need to encourage and reward model workers, farmers, young people, cadres, women, all who protect the people's interest and are clean and honest.
4. **Everyone and everyplace must be checked without exception; exterminate every form of bureaucratism.**

A month before the Central Committee directive launching the "Three-antis" was even sent, Gao Gang was already reporting on the Northeast's progress. In the three months following Gao Gang's call to action, 3,629 corrupt officials had been exposed in Shenyang.[58] The Northeast Government's Trade Department admitted to 500 million RMB in waste, while the Changchun

[56] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 227.
[57] *The Northeast Daily.*1 December 1951.
[58] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 229

railroad was reporting loses in excess of 100 billion.[59] The investigations had uncovered serious cases of waste, bureaucratism, and corruption, but they also provided an opportunity for the Northeast Government to develop best practices to tackle the problems. To that end, Gao included six necessary conditions for the "Three-antis" campaign to succeed:

1. The campaign must be a genuine mass movement with mass participation.
2. Directors must show responsibility and leadership, when necessary carry out earnest self-criticism on the failings of their own work units.
3. Since fighting corruption and internal rot is a complex struggle, ideological work must be done amongst the masses to increase their proactive nature (積極性) and address their misgivings about the campaign, otherwise corrupt elements may evade the "spear of justice."
4. Quickly resolve known cases. This will inspire confidence amongst the masses, compel individuals to confess, and isolate bad elements.
5. As the campaign deepens and develops and the consciousness of the masses increases, the campaign should take up new problems and expand its scope.
6. Strong cadres need to help smaller work units set up effective investigatory committees.[60]

As the "Three Antis" became a national movement, the Northeast and its head, Gao Gang, were at the forefront of this new political campaign. Gao's reports were routinely endorsed by Mao and retransmitted on behalf of the Central Committee to other regional governments. On 20 November 1951, Mao Zedong mentioned Gao by name and instructed every regional

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

government to study the Northeast 1 November report covered above.[61] As mentioned in the literature review, "Three-antis" got off to a slow start in the Northwest where Xi Zhongxun was the leader. On 13 December 1951, Mao telegrammed Xi that it was Gao Gang who first discovered the severity and extent of corruption in the CCP and that the campaign to thwart it began in the Northeast under the personal guidance of Gao.[62] Around the same time, Mao endorsed and sent out a 3 December report by Gao Gang on expanding the "Three Antis" work into the mining and industry sector which according to Mao's comments saved the Northeast 10 million tons in grain equivalent.[63]

To what extent Manchurian reality met national perceptions of the Northeast leading the movement is debatable. In Dalian, the "Three-antis" campaign began shortly after Gao Gang's speech on 31 August. By 8 September the municipal party branch office already agreed on a three pronged approach: first educate work units on the importance of combating corruption and bureaucratism, then help organize effective control and investigatory offices. Third, encourage criticism, self-criticism, and confessions. If the first two recommendations were met, Dalian would see improved and rectified work units and collectives led by honest cadres.[64] On 21 September more instructions were issued to all factories, port facilities, and work units in Luda due to a lack of clarity on the ground on concrete campaign objectives.[65] The confusion on the implementational level was identical to the problems encountered by "Three-antis" organizers elsewhere once the campaign became national in December, suggesting that although the

[61] Chinese Communist Party. *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since 1949* (*建國以來毛澤東文稿),* Second Volume. Central Document Publisher (中央文獻出版社), 1988, 513.
[62] Ibid, 568.
[63] Ibid., 574.
[64]Li Chuanhua (Main ed.) (李傳華). *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷).* Dalian: Dalian chubanshe, 1998, 441.
[65] Ibid.

Northeast served as a model for the rest of China, actual coordination and exchange of best practices was quite limited. In Dalian, the response to confusion at least officially was to "systematically" study the works of Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Liu Shaoqi on bureaucratism and corruption.[66] There is no way of knowing if Gao Gang was piqued by Dalian's party leadership for explicitly elevating Liu Shaoqi as a leading authority on rectification when it was Gao's reports on fighting corruption that received Mao's endorsement. In any case, the city would issue two more clarifying reports with a 3 November report admonishing the slow progress on the "Three-antis" by stating that, "Three-antis campaign cannot be carried out in a hollow or abstract manner; it must deeply permeate every layer of work units, factories, and enterprises in Dalian (三反·不要空洞抽象地進行，要深入到各基層單位，工廠企業)."[67]

Hunting Tigers

Nowhere was Gao's and Manchuria's leading role in the campaign more evident than in the efforts to "catch tigers." A staple of CCP parlance up to the present Xi Jinping era anti-corruption campaign, a "tiger" is a senior, high ranking official who uses their position for personal gain. In a 26 January 1952 report that was quickly endorsed and retransmitted by Mao on 31 January, Gao called for particular scrutiny in the following cases to detect and apprehend tigers:[68]

1. Individual used to be a merchant or factory boss but has now entered government organs or industry (especially if it is a public-private mixed enterprise).

[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid, 442.
[68] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 231.

2. Family is involved in commerce, but the individual is in government. Make no distinction for seniority but be vigilant if the family business has flourished since the individual joined the party.
3. Individual maintains close ties with private merchants, leads a corrupt lifestyle.
4. Profligate spenders with means that far outstrip their official positions.
5. Procurements are done with a single vendor or just a handful of same merchants.
6. Large discrepancies in price for same goods during the same period.
7. "Poison pen" letters sent to any relevant or outside department of government agency.
8. Carefully study the experience from the 516 tigers already caught by the Northeast Government.

On the same day that Mao Zedong endorsed Gao's recommendations on catching tigers, the chairman sent a lengthy telegram to Gao that sheds light on how Mao envisioned the "Three-antis" would transform China. Mao was pleased that the Northeast Government had already dealt with 160,000 suspected individuals, 400 of which had been "big tigers."[69] Going forward, eighty percent of the detained individuals would not be prosecuted as long as they returned any stolen money and had rectified their behavior. Another ten percent in Mao's estimate represented the capitalist interests who could be convinced to support the party or at least be neutral. Mao instructed Gao that investigators needed to work methodically to crack these cases and not carry out investigations just for appearances sake. This left roughly ten percent "reactionary capitalist" elements of which one to two percent required harsh and speedy punishment up to death by firing squad.[70] The document not only implicitly endorsed a target quota for officials but also

[69] *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since 1949* (*建國以來毛澤東文稿*) *Volume 2,* 1988, 117-119.
[70] Ibid.

unequivocally linked the ills of corruption and bureaucratism in the party with capitalism. Indeed, Mao was at least as interested in what effect the "Three-antis" would have on the capitalist class as he was on cleaning up the party, stating that within the bourgeoisie there were great internal contradictions and his strategy would isolate and divide the class.

While some regional leaders balked at the quota targets for catching "big tigers," Gao Gang appears to have embraced the campaign with ardent zeal. [71] Although the quota set in January 1952 called for the arrest of 500 tigers, Gao cabled Mao Zedong on 6 February informing the Central Committee that in the Northeast an astounding 4,000 large tigers had been caught and a further 25,000 medium and small sized tigers arrested.[72] Three days later, Mao congratulated Gao Gang on his efforts, stating that "of the six regional governments, the Northeast People's Government was in first place."[73] But even though Mao explicitly stated that the Northeast should serve as a model for China's other regions, he acknowledged that similar high numbers of arrests might not be attainable elsewhere.[74]

One reason the Northeast Government was able to arrest so many people in a little over a month was because the threshold set for being a "big tiger" was embezzling just 10,000 yuan (old currency).[75] Moreover, every bureau and county had to catch their own big tigers, with fixed quotas sent from Shenyang. Predictably, this created perverse incentives that led to tragic consequences: the administrative director for the Bank of Shenyang and the Deputy Director of the Northeast Bureau of Industry both committed suicide after being branded tigers.[76]

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[71]Torigian, Joseph. *The Party's Interests Come First: The Life of Xi Jinping's Father Xi Zhongxun*. [in progress], 2021. Contact the author for a galley copy.
[72] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 233-234.
[73] *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since 1949* (*建國以來毛澤東文稿) Volume 2,* 1988, 177-178.
[74] Ibid.
[75] 1 USD was officially worth 26,170 Old Renminbi. See: "Renminbi's Exchange Rates from Past to Presen〔重要歷程〕人民幣匯率的前世今生)." Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/idCNnCN098325720100414 Accessed 9 June 2020.
[76] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 234.

In an example of internal competition, in November of 1951, officials in Dalian estimated that there were at least 4,000 tigers in their region alone.[77] By 3 February 1952, when the campaign to hunt tigers officially commenced, the target was set at 2,080 tigers and 200 big tigers.[78] Ledovsky recounts that just like in Harbin and other major cities, the campaign to catch tigers in Dalian was a mass affair. In April of 1952 a struggle session was held in a soccer stadium; 17,000 cadres, workers, and those simply curious witnessed thirteen "tigers" be sentenced. Greeting the death verdicts with yells of 'Kill (殺)!".[79]

The increasing militancy of the campaign began to bear results. By 20 November 334 corruption cases were opened that implicated 4660 people.[80] Dalian officials reported that waste and corruption resulted in 24.2 billion yuan in losses.[81] The increase in arrests was undoubtedly a mixed blessing for city leadership: it drew attention to apparent severity of corruption in Dalian. The first secretary of the city, Bo Zhonghai (博忠海) stated in a 17-19 December meeting that about half of deputy directors (副局長) were corrupt.[82] Unlike in the cases involving counterrevolutionaries and sabotage, it is difficult to ascertain if the levels of corruption were inflated. Within the Northeast Government, Dalian had a reputation for being particularly corrupt, carrying a derisive moniker that in Luda "the mountains are tall, the forests dense, with many tigers who are big and fat (旅大山高，林密，虎多，虎大而肥)."[83]

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[77] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷),* 443.
[78] Ibid., 444.
[79] Ledovsky, 92. (10 April)
[80] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷),* 444.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 443.
[83] Ibid., 446.

As in other parts of Manchuria, however, the campaign to uncover tigers created perverse incentives to exaggerate cases of corruption. By May of 1952 the city, despite its reputation for being a hotbed of corruption, essentially reversed course by adopting a new strategy of "Struggle Severely, Punish Leniently (鬥爭從嚴， 處理從寬)."[84] By the time the campaign was officially concluded in 1953, only 1369 tigers had been found in Dalian—a little over a quarter of the original estimate.[85]

End of Three-antis

Despite the exponential growth in arrested tigers that solidified Manchuria's reputation as a model of condign justice that needed to be emulated in regions such as Shanghai and East China, the implementation of "Three-antis" remained uneven. On 10 January 1952 Gao Gang addressed the Northeast politburo where he complained that notwithstanding calls to deepen the campaign it had only been done in the central administration.[86] According to Gao, the campaign had been most successful in the editorial board of the main Northeast newspaper, *Northeast Daily*, Northeast Public Security Bureau, and military units.[87] When it came to regular police, mines, factories, warehouses, county and rural areas the results were decidedly modest. Banks, factories, co-ops, were also singled out for a deficit of enthusiasm, portending the transformation of the "Three-antis" campaign into the "Five-antis."[88] To add vigor to the movement, Gao made the following directives:

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[84] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷),* 445.
[85] Ibid., 446.
[86] On 10 January, Gao Gang gave a speech to the Northeast Government politburo that was republished in the *People's Daily* on the 24th after first being published in the *Northeast Daily* on the 21st. See: "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495. Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 17.
[87] Ibid., 18.
[88] Ibid.

1. In some work units or areas the campaign has gone satisfactory but the masses have not been engaged.
2. Other places the campaign has only partially been started; after the politburo meeting, cadres have two days to ramp up the campaign.
3. Where work hasn't started at all cadres have five days, failure will result in dismissal.
4. Write less, hold fewer meetings, spend less time in your offices, go to the masses, face the workers and the peasants. Regularly report to the Northeast Politburo.

If the steps were taken, the "Three-antis" movement would not only liquidate corruption, waste, bureaucratism in Gao's estimate, it would usher in a new type of morality: with an emphasis on economy and self-reliance.[89]

At the time of Gao Gang's speech, he would have been receiving local reports on the progress of the campaign. One such report from Yanbian (延邊), the Korean autonomous region in Manchuria on the border with North Korea, shows familiar deficiencies. Although the "Three-antis" movement was tied to the campaign to save resources for the war effort, it was not seen as a top priority; some cadres saw production as more important and that the "Three-antis" instead of helping, actually distracted from work to aid the war effort.[90] As expected, the campaign was carried out halfheartedly, with some work units not even starting the hunt for corruption and waste as of 8 January 1952— almost six months since Gao Gang made his first call to action.[91]

Although county leaders reported on arrested tigers and the grain equivalent amounts stolen, the reports acknowledged that ideological work among the masses had not been properly carried out. In Yanbian, there was no "strong anti-corruption consciousness" and the fight against bureaucratism was not taken seriously.[92] In response, local officials tried to make factory

[89] Ibid.
[90] *CCP Yanbian County Major Documents Compilation* (*重要文件匯編*), 390.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., 390.

and enterprise deputies directly responsible for the campaign; the most reliable cadres were asked to communicate with each other and share their experiences. In the city, more meetings were organized to carry out educational work to increase awareness about bureaucratism and how it risked China's future.[93]

With the "Three-antis" fizzling in Yanbian, it was essentially rebranded and broadened into the anti-bourgeoisie "Five-antis" campaign in the same January of 1952.[94] The new campaign, discussed below, made a far more lasting impression on cadres and average people alike. On 31 January 1952 the Public Security organs of Yanbian County already had their first big arrest: the director of the Yanbian People's Printing House, surnamed Jin (金).

Likely an ethnic Korean, Jin was caught in Shenyang conniving with "traitorous private merchants" by buying inventory at inflated prices and bringing it to Harbin for unspecified side deals. According to the report, the graft was made worse by criminal gluttony—Jin wasted more than 100 million Yuan on meals by feasting five-six times a day. Leading a licentious lifestyle, women accompanied Jin on his business travels; he went dancing with them and gifted his paramours expensive purses. In turn they enticed him with western clothing and lingerie. And when finding time for actual work, Jin failed to bargain with merchants, hurting the interests of the proletariat class in Yanbian.[95] Although the report does not say what happened to Jin, it is likely that he was executed.

Either out of economic pragmatism or loyalty, party cadres throughout Manchuria and intramural China were loath to proactively jail fellow cadres in the initial stages of the political

[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., 391-392.
[95] Ibid., 393.

campaigns. Once the "Three-antis" were redirected to the bourgeoisie and capitalists, however, the same cadres displayed little compunction in applying the harshest of punishments.

Five-antis Launched (26 January 1952- 25 October 1952)

The "Five-antis" campaign directed at the bourgeoisie was effectively the final stage of the "Three-antis." Officially, the 'Three-antis" campaign uncovered extensive collusion between corrupt cadres and nefarious capitalists and reactionary merchants (such as the Jin case above) warranting new investigations and a change in focus. The most egregious and often cited example was the use of rotten cotton and unsanitary waste products to make first aid field dressings for PVA soldiers fighting in Korea.[96] The case triggered widespread outrage throughout China and was used in the public decrees in late January 1952 initializing the "Five-antis," the last of the major political campaigns in the first years of the PRC. As can be seen by Gao's 1951 instructions to investigators to be weary of cadres that had close links to members of the bourgeoisie, the suspicion against the bourgeoisie was manifest long before the aid dressing scandal. Indeed, even when Zhang Wentian endeavored to protect the private capitalist class and defend their utility, he encountered strong internal prejudice that all capitalists engaged in speculation, hoarding, and other practices that harmed public interest.[97] When it came to the "Five-antis" campaign, the hay had been long dry and just missing a spark.

[96] "During the Korean War, these People Sold Fake Medicine to the PVA. After discovering, the Chairman was Livid. (抗美援朝時，此人將假藥賣給志願軍，主席得知後大為震怒)." 5 October 2018. Sohu. http://www.sohu.com/a/257748481_100168243 (Accessed 24 May 2020).
[97] See Chapter 2 on Manchurian industry.

As was the case with the "Three-antis," delineating a clear start of the "Five-antis" campaign is difficult. In the Northeast, the vilification of the bourgeoisie began before 26 January 1952 when the official directive was sent out by the central government. The main theme of the above mentioned 10 January 1952 report by Gao Gang before the Northeast politburo was rightist deviationism and the corrupting effect of bourgeois thinking on the party. Gao credited the "Three-antis" campaign for showing the party its own deficiencies and exposing the intensity of bourgeois opposition.[98] According to Gao, the bourgeoisie threat was twofold: active subversive measures by the bourgeoisie themselves and a lack of vigilance stemming from a false belief that class warfare had receded. Regarding the latter, as the center of party activity shifted to the cities from the countryside, the party had come into closer contact with bourgeois elements. The bourgeoisie nominally acknowledged the leadership of the party, but they also attempted to expand their ideological influence and were trying to force out and hurt the workers and their interests on political and economic matters.[99] As a result, Gao saw a serious right wing deviation developing within the party.

Making no acknowledgement of his previous endorsement of the positive traits of the capitalist class in respect to the national economy, Gao strongly rebuked the "erroneous view" that with Communist victory, class warfare had receded.[100] Instead reminding fellow politburo members of Mao's March 1949 (2nd plenum 7th party congress) forewarning about the sugar-coated bullets of the bourgeoisie. According to Gao's remarks, in actuality the struggle was only increasing and intensifying. In practical terms, deemphasizing class struggle led to party cadres giving concessions to the bourgeoisie. Party members who were themselves from the bourgeois

[98] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 8.
[99] Ibid., 8-9.
[100] Ibid.

class were particularly susceptible to their propaganda and influence in Gao's estimate. A small fraction had already joined forces with the bourgeoisie and were responsible for the corruption within the party. Gao surmised that the root problem was the still relatively low number of workers in the party, not enough study of Marxism-Leninism, a deficiency in critical thought on "anti-proletarian ideas" and the overall apolitical nature of cadres.[101]

Analyzing the threat posed by the bourgeoisie, Gao Gang stated that this hostile class used two general approaches to sap communist rule: ply communists away from the party or infiltrate the party themselves.[102] As a means of tactics, the bourgeoisie encouraged or turned to corruption which according to Gao was especially serious in party offices and departments tasked with financial or economic matters. Once the bourgeoisie found its way into the party, it encouraged cadres to share secret or proprietary market information, sell government property, commit acts of sabotage, smuggle, manipulate tax statistics, create inaccurate inventories, and engage in other serious economic crimes.[103] Corrupt members of the party used their position and the privileges the cadre position entailed to further enrich capitalists. Unsurprisingly, Gao's 10 January report offers a simple cure for this multi-symptom malady: expand the scope of investigations beyond just corrupt cadres and go after hostile capitalist and bourgeois elements.

Turning to specific instances of bourgeois-CCP member quid pro quo and collusion, Gao stated that one tax official in Changchun, Han Muwen (韓慕文), received 900 (units of currency) per month from capitalists in exchange for covering seven private businesses who evaded taxes on a sum of 120 million yuan.[104] Gao stated that so deep was the conspiracy between the

[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid., 10.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

bourgeoisie and corrupt officials that the capitalists promised officials employment if they were fired from their public jobs and signed pacts with them to never reveal or confess their crimes even under the threat of death.[105]

When manipulating wavering cadres was not enough, the bourgeoisie resorted to outright infiltration. Gao's report states that in the Dalian state department store the managers of six departments were major merchants themselves. 1,200 out of 1,300 employees were hired on the recommendation of the capitalists.[106] Out of thirty-five managers, twelve took bribes.[107] They also gave sensitive market information to private merchants; the head of the watch department swapped watches that were donated for the "Resist America Aid Korea" campaign with cheap watches from his own shop.[108] Gao added that the department store was not an isolated case of corruption in Dalian; crony hiring and hoarding of goods was ubiquitous.[109]

Gao's conclusion that the bourgeoisie class was nothing short of iniquitous and the main culprit behind corruption in the party is worth emphasizing. Such thinking suggests that in the eyes of Manchuria's leadership corruption was merely a symptom, not the root cause of the party's troubles. For the Northeast Government, the "Five-antis" campaign thus meant that the struggle for clean governance or modernization, long-associated with anti-corruption work, would now be closely tied with class-struggle, specifically curbing the national capitalist class. Conversely, this meant that all energy needed to be focused on persecuting the capitalists. This was of course in direct contradiction with the concept of "New Democracy," a broad tent approach to attract everyone who was dissatisfied with previous KMT rule and that explicitly

[105] Ibid, 11.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

granted rights and privileges to all capitalists outside of the so-called "bureaucratic capital" class that represented the wealthiest of the old regime. In short order, this shift would become discernable elsewhere in China, with particularly tragic results in Shanghai where the local authorities under the authority of Rao Shushi (饒漱石) operated with particular zeal due to the city's reputation as a commercial entrepôt. From 25 January 1952 until the first of April, at least 876 people committed suicide in Shanghai due to persecution.[110]

What can explain Gao Gang's shift from protecting the bourgeoisie and defending their utility to leading the charge of the "Five-antis" campaign? As discussed elsewhere in the dissertation, Gao Gang's speeches and recollections of key figures in the Northeast Government such as Zhang Mingyuan and Ma Hong show that Gao was not a rigid Stalinist as commonly assumed in secondary literature and broadly supported Zhang Wentian's relatively liberal economic policies. Given the prior linkage between the extreme material hardship that the Northeast Government faced during the Chinese Civil War and more pragmatic economic policy, it is risky to assume that the renewal of war was enough to trigger class warfare. Instead, the likely change was a desire to anticipate and meet the wishes of Mao Zedong. The Chairman was a reluctant adherent to "New Democracy" and his desire to place China on "socialist railing" was likely an open secret among senior party leadership.[111] Mao's recognition and praise of Gao's efforts in Manchuria with the "Three antis" campaign almost certainly had a heady effect on a man who was widely considered by his contemporaries to be highly ambitious.[112]

[110] "That Year [1953], Chinese Merchants by the Thousands Jumped from Buildings, Entire Families Perished (那一年，中國商賈千人跳樓 全家共赴黃泉)." 26 June 2013. Sohu. http://history.sohu.com/20130726/n381843451.shtml (Accessed 13 May 2020).
[111] Li, 44-45; 134.
[112] Teiwes, 157.

As the "Five-antis" campaign progressed and class struggle intensified with growing arrests and executions in Shanghai and other major cities, Gao made a key speech on "rightism" in the party on 22 March 1952 that was republished in the *Northeast Daily*. Completely reversing his earlier support for the bourgeoisie, Gao said that while some party officials still thought that capitalists were to be followed because they had the requisite technical and economic experience, if the party allowed the bourgeoisie to lead, it would lose the working class.[113] Turning to the state economy, Gao alleged that some cadres did not want to set up socialist types of co-ops or enterprises and instead hoped to turn them into private fiefdoms. They used public funds to invest in private business of their family and associates.[114] Gao went on to outline the five main causes of the rightist deviation in the Northeast:

1. Authorities failed to develop a strong bulk market for high demand goods which allowed capitalists to speculate; government officials looked the other way or actively participated.
2. Theft/fraud from government contracts was common.
3. Commerce tax was lower than industrial/manufacturing tax so a lot of businesses reclassified their goods or put industrial capital into itinerant (mobile) trading firms.
4. Workers were treated poorly, pay was withheld by capitalists.
5. Not enough ideological work [was] the biggest sign of rightism, private firms were favored. Class background was not seriously considered when hiring, counterrevolutionaries had been hired. Some [were] pushing back and saying that to not work with the bourgeoisie would be a left deviation.

Gao Gang dismissed fears of a left deviation as nonsense, stating that Leftism only applied to blanket confiscation and onerous taxes, a shift from his earlier position when he unequivocally

[113] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 12.
[114] Ibid, 13.

cautioned against leftism in both industrial policy and land reform. Beyond the more militant ideological tone and selective use of data to make this argument (SOEs generally paid workers less than privately owned firms), Gao's focus on taxation foreshadowed the subsequent conflict between Mao and Minister of Finance Bo Yibo (薄一波) over tax policy, one of the key turning points in China abandoning "New Democracy" in favor of a state-socialist course.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, the 31 December 1952 tax plan proposed by Bo Yibo taxed private and state owned enterprises at the same rate. The proposal was tabled immediately after scathing criticism by Mao, who allegedly learned of it from reading *The People's Daily*. Historians have often cited the incident as the beginning of Mao's paranoia that senior leadership wanted to exclude him from policy debates and that there was a "rightist" deviation within the core nucleus of the party.[115] While that may have explained Mao's visceral reaction, a much more prosaic explanation involving the effects of the "Five-antis" is more likely.

One of the "Five-antis" was explicitly the evasion of taxes by the bourgeoisie, something that in addition to the above 22 March speech, Gao Gang repeatedly brought up in his talks with Soviet interlocutors.[116] Given the importance attached to combatting tax evasion, Bo Yibo's proposal to essentially let the chief suspects, private capitalists, off the hook almost certainly came off tin-eared. Furthermore, in the Northeast the new tax rules meant significantly higher taxes due to a disproportionate share of SOEs.[117] Ironically, Bo's conciliatory policy was

[115] Tewies, 62-63; Dikotter, 170.
[116] Ledovsky, 102-103.
[117] Tewies, 62-63.

conceived as a means to salvage public finances which took a major hit during the "Five-antis."[118]

If in the case of the suppression campaign against counterrevolutionaries the evidence clearly points to an exaggeration of the threat, what can be said about the levels of corruption in Manchuria during the "Three and Five" Antis and the meddling of private capital in state affairs?

As discussed in the second chapter, Zhang Wentian's economic development model for the Northeast, particularly the "jiagong (加工)" system of the state providing raw materials and semi-finished goods to enterprises to produce badly needed (and more valuable) finished goods generally proved to be highly successful. Jiagong's success on a macro level did not mean there was no room for abuse in isolated instances. In Dalian, enterprise directors and private merchants were able to collude with city officials to manipulate the cost of material inputs.[119] After the launch of the "Resist America Aid Korea" campaign, local businesses received numerous contracts as state-owned enterprises struggled to meet wartime demands.[120] On the whole, it appears that without the private sector Dalian's state-owned industries would not have been able to produce the uniforms, medical supplies, and foodstuffs needed to supply PVA units fighting in Korea, but certain sectors saw a flourishing of bribery and corruption.[121] According to Public Security records, a staggering ninety-eight percent of capital construction projects in Luda/Dalian saw embezzlement. Almost three quarters of all trade was manipulated in some illegal fashion.[122] In addition to the infamous case of rotten and unsterile bandages being sent to

[118] Ibid.
[119] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷),* 445.
[120] Ibid., 450.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.

the front, unscrupulous merchants used sand and bran to replace or add filler to grain, wheat, and oats destined for the troops in Korea.[123]

Despite the litany list of bourgeoisie misdeeds that primed the "Five-antis" cannon, detailed statistics collected by the Dalian Public Security Bureau suggest that while the problem of corruption was no chimera, much of it was happening in the state sector. A 1952 categorization of 10,000 public-private mixed sector employees found that 5,600 of them (56 percent) engaged in no corruption whatsoever and were clean and honest. Of the group, most were small food-stall owners, hairdressers, tailors, workers in paper mills, ceramics factories, public bath houses, noddle stands, and bean curd workshops (豆腐房).[124] 3,700 (37 percent) of the inspected workers followed the rules about half the time. These were small, medium sized merchants who belonged to the bourgeoisie class. Their infractions were minor tax evasion, shoddy work on government orders (偷工減料), and stealing or underutilizing state-allocated resources.[125] Lastly, less than 5 percent (453 individuals) of the employees inspected were guilty of serious economic crimes such as major tax evasion and theft of state property. All of the cases came from pharmaceutical enterprises, auto repair shops, hardware stores, machine tool factories, factories producing electric cables, building materials, wood and lumber, and offices of trade representatives. What is notable is that the vast majority of the above businesses were either SOEs, co-ops, or enterprises dependent on state management in the first place.

Once the "Five-antis" campaign kicked off, the results of subsequent investigations also strongly point to the public sector as a major driver of local corruption. From the end of April to

[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 452.
[125] Ibid.

16 May of 1952, 9,000 Dalian employees were checked (90 percent of them worked in industry).[126] Of the 300 serious crimes uncovered, almost all came from steel, building construction material, and hardware sectors or state trade offices. One unscrupulous building materials manager tried to pass old, rotten 2x4 planks as 4x6 beams. In total, the serious crimes resulted in billions of losses in renminbi and led to eight to twelve year forced labor sentences.[127] A subsequent investigation that went on until 11 June and checked an additional 10,000 workers in Dalian found that: 1,492 workers fastidiously observed the law (14.8 percent), 6005 (60.3 percent) basically followed the law, 2448 broke half the laws (21.3 percent), 311 seriously broke the law (3 percent), and 34 completely broke the law (.3 percent). Of the thirty-four, nineteen were executed.

As is discussed below, investigations of this scope were mammoth undertakings that involved hundreds and sometimes even thousands of investigative personnel. The CCP in the Northeast was determined to uncover extensive evidence of bourgeois perfidy. Yet even in the climate of fear and anonymous denunciations, these investigations more often than not pointed to corruption in embarrassing places for the party—state owned enterprises and local trade and party offices.

Effect of the campaigns on the Party in Manchuria:

The three political campaigns had a lasting effect on the CCP in the Northeast both ideologically and organizationally. If before 1950 the party encouraged and saw a rapid growth in membership, from mid-1950 until July 1952 there were virtually no new members admitted to

[126] Ibid., 455.
[127] Ibid.

the party in the Northeast.[128] In Dalian, at the start of the campaigns party membership stood at around 30,000. By June of 1952, only 585 new members were admitted from 10,000 applicants. Of those already in the party, just 970 received promotions during the same time span.[129]

As mentioned earlier, during the initial phase of the "Three-antis" campaign, there was a real reluctance by cadres to go after fellow communists. To the extent that anything was done on the ground, it was limited to lectures and meetings on ideological and theoretical matters. By late 1951, all party members in the Northeast had their application materials and biographies investigated and rechecked.[130] Those who concealed an adverse class background or former ties to the KMT were expelled. Derogatory evidence was collected through both anonymous denunciations favored by security organs in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and by holding public struggle sessions. In one such session at a Dalian factory of eight thousand workers, four thousand investigators were dispatched to meticulously check written biographies and extract self-criticisms.[131]

Both the "Three and Five-antis" campaigns despite initial apprehension came to exhibit all the telltale signs of a Maoist mass movement. In Harbin, more than 300,000 people turned up to public demonstrations supporting the "Three-antis" campaign; twenty five percent of all women living in the city were in attendance.[132] Mass rallies often resulted in demonstrators marching to enterprises and demanding managers engage in self-criticism. If the crowd did not find the suspect sufficiently contrite, the cadres in charge were sacked on the spot and often imprisoned afterwards.[133] As alluded to earlier, packed soccer stadiums were used for public

[128] Ledovsky, 68.
[129] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷),* 445-450.
[130] Ledovsky, 90.
[131] Ibid., 91.
[132] Ledovsky, 92.
[133] Ibid.

trials. In Dalian, cadres and members of the bourgeoisie who failed to make satisfactory self-criticisms were forced to wear dunce hats in a similar routine that would repeat itself during the Cultural Revolution when the Red Guards forced dunce hats upon those unlucky to run afoul of their diktat.[134]

To reach the widest possible audience, speeches were routinely broadcast to hundred thousand plus sized audiences. In Dalian, the city gave the bourgeoisie ten days starting from 11 February 1952 to turn themselves in for any past crimes. Although the ultimatum was extended, on 5 March the city organized a massive ceremony to mark the passing of the deadline that attracted more than 100,000 people.[135] On 26 March 1952, Dalian mayor Han Guang (韓光) delivered a major speech extolling the importance of the "Five-antis" campaign. Loudspeakers broadcasting the speech were set up in ten city squares reaching an estimated 83,000 people.[136]

Although propaganda material and instructions from the Northeast politburo discussed above welcomed the campaigns turning into mass movements, the mobilization of the masses seriously impugned on the party leadership's ability to carry out other essential tasks in a time of war. While as a region the Northeast saw fewer executions than Shanghai where the "Five-antis" was carried out with particular severity, Manchuria still witnessed widespread abuse that made normal work impossible. The Soviets documented at least fifty suicides in Harbin alone during the "Three and Five-antis" campaigns.[137] In Dalian forty-three suicides were officially linked to the campaigns.[138] Even official sources admit that investigatory committees in Dalian used harassment and coercion to obtain false confessions from industrialists and members of the petit

[134] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷),* 454.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ledovsky, 92.
[138] Ibid.

bourgeoisie.[139] The Changchun Railroad, a vital transportation artery for the region and an early target of the 'Three-antis" campaign, saw widespread use of torture to extract confessions out of railway workers.[140] The campaigns were so brutal that it led to severe disruptions in the rail company's ability to function. This was at a time when Chinese armies fighting in Korea were chronically undersupplied with already large bottlenecks along the rail lines.

Ironically, the fear generated by the campaigns cowed local leadership and made the problem of "bureaucratism" likely even worse. In one of a handful of documents from the Northeast Politburo available to scholars, Gao Gang, Li Fuchun, and Lin Feng instruct local cadres that all contacts with foreigners—even when accepting medical supplies brought by Soviet doctors sent to Manchuria—needed to be first cleared by the central committee in Beijing.[141] On the flip side of the same coin, Beijing took a keen interest beyond the submitted reports from the Northeast politburo in what was going on in Manchuria. On 17 February 1952 Mao dispatched Chen Boda (陳伯達), staunchly loyal to Mao and one of the party's leading ideological authorities, to personally investigate the "Five-antis" work in the Northeast and report to the Chairman.[142]

Conclusion

[139] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷),* 457.
[140] Ledovsky, 93.
[141] "Northeast People's Government Order: All Foreign Affairs Matters Must be Reported to the Central Committee" 14 June 1950. Woodrow Wilson Center CWIHP. Chinese Provincial Archives Collection. Original Chinese citation:
50.07.14。東北人民政府通令：一切外交事務均須報中央由外交部處理。大連市檔案館，全宗 2，目錄 2，卷宗 104，頁碼 6-7。 [Note Dalian Archive is currently closed to researchers]
[142] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 234.

The actual risk posed by the bourgeoisie to the CCP's rule in Manchuria was grossly inflated: by 1950 the Communists were well ensconced, their Nationalists opponents relegated to exile and disarray in distant Taiwan. By repeatedly sounding the alarm about residual KMT supporters and traitorous bourgeoisie, Gao Gang and the Northeast Government managed to turn a largely imaginary problem into an all-too-real mass movement that swept up first the Northeast and then all of China. In that regard, the PRC's first mass campaigns can be seen as the antecedents of the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s.

The three political campaigns that were carried out in the Northeast from 1950 to 1952 rearranged the political landscape in Manchuria and effectively ended New Democracy. Although the "Three and Five antis" were initially conducted only halfheartedly, they were highly effective in whipping up fear and increasing the intrusive role of the party in economic matters. The frequent investigations, sackings, and struggle sessions had an adverse effect on wartime production, but these movements were conceptualized as political and social purification, not a drive to boost economic output. And on that score, from the party's point of view they proved to be successful.

Like all major political movements, the three campaigns had both winners and losers. The losers are evident: the bourgeoisie and old managerial professionals who had stayed behind after the Nationalist defeat in the hope and belief in New Democracy and New China saw their prospects wither as more and more restrictions were placed on them. On the other end of the fulcrum, some workers, young cadres, and the Northeast politburo came out as major winners. For the Northeast Government and Gao Gang in particular, the campaigns were a chance to shine and demonstrate how China writ large could tame corruption and the unwelcome influence of the bourgeoisie.

Chapter 5:

Once Again at War: Manchuria during the Korean War

"Valiant and spirited, full of mettle, cross the Yalu River, preserve the peace, defend the Motherland, protect your native home. Good sons and daughters of China: rally and unite, resist America and aid Korea, defeat the wicked American wolf."[1]

On 31 July 1953, four days after an armistice agreement was signed in Panmunjom ending the Korean War, the supreme commander of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA), Peng Dehuai (彭德懷), was bestowed with North Korea's highest award—Order of the National Flag (first class).[2] At the ceremony, Peng reluctantly accepted the award, demurring that instead the order should have gone to "old pockmarked Gao [Gang] (高麻子)" for his role in leading the home front and logistics efforts during the war.[3]

In the West, the Korean War is often referred to as the "forgotten war," a conflict overshadowed by the preceding Second World War, wars in the Middle East, and the protracted Vietnam War.[4] While the international dimension to the Korean War has been studied by several generations of historians, the focus of nearly all the relevant historiography has been centered on

[1] Chinese words of the PVA Volunteers Song:"雄赳赳，氣昂昂，跨過鴨綠江，保和平，衛祖國，就是保家鄉。中國好兒女，齊心團結緊， 抗美援朝，打敗美國野心狼 Source: https://baike.baidu.com/item/中国人民志愿军战歌 (Accessed 14 May 2020).

[2] The order has since been superseded by the Order of Kim Il-sung and the Order of Kim Jong-il.

[3] Dai, Maolin (戴茂林), and Xiaoguang Zhao (趙曉光). *Gao Gang Biography (高崗傳)*. Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2011,, 237.

[4] Clay Blair coined the phrase in his 1987 work. Blair, Clay. *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953*. Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 2003.

events in the Korean Peninsula even when the research questions concerned U.S. domestic politics or China.[5] The broad intent of scholarship on Chinese involvement in the war has been to explain Beijing's decision making process to intervene and on the strategic, diplomatic, and even psychological effect of Chinese intervention and direct conflict with the United States and U.N. troops.[6] Overlooked in these narratives is the Chinese home front, and how the war served to consolidate CCP rule, reorient the economy back towards military production, and set-off the political campaigns discussed previously that ended the more permissible period of "New Democracy."[7]

While the "Resist America Aid Korea" movement was a national campaign that impacted every province and region of China, Manchuria and the Northeast Government played a leading role in the campaign, once again serving as a testing ground for China's first modern conflict that involved extensive logistics networks, air support, and considerable mechanization. To deal with the challenges posed by the war, the Northeast Government and Gao Gang personally were granted a range of extraordinary powers by the central government. With Gao playing a pivotal role in coordination between the People's Volunteer Army out in the field in Korea, the Soviets providing military assistance, North Korean allies, and the Central Committee in Beijing

[5] See Li, Xiaobing. *China's War in Korea: Strategic Culture and Geopolitics*. 2019; Whiting, Allen S. *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990; Chen, Jian. *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

[6] See Pease, Stephen E. *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea, 1950-1953*. Stackpole, 1992. For an example of the psychological impact of China's intervention in the United States see: Pasley, Virginia. *21 Stayed: The Story of the American GIs Who Chose Communist China: Who They Were and Why They Stayed*. Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI, 1994.

[7] See Kim, Donggil. 2016. "New insights into Mao's initial strategic consideration towards the Korean War intervention," *Cold War History*, 16:3, 239-254.

implementing a nationwide mobilization campaign, Gao finally lived up to his reputation of being the "king of the Northeast (東北王)."[8]

Literature Review

While China's entry into the Korean War has been covered extensively by historians writing in English, the experiences of the PVA—to say nothing of the home front— has been sorely overlooked, producing a historiography that is Korean Peninsula (and US) centric.[9] The only book that covers the impact of the Korean War on Manchuria in any real depth is Shu Guang's *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953*. Written in the mid-1990s, Zhang's book was criticized by reviewers such as Steven Levine for only relying on Chinese sources and failing to fact check or critically evaluate propagandistic claims made by Chinese regimental histories (downplaying PVA losses while exaggerating those of the U.N. forces) which found their way into the text.[10] Although the portions on military history and Mao's reasons for intervening deserve skepticism, the book is nevertheless valuable for its occasional description of the home front efforts. Thus, Zhang details how in Manchuria more than five million people underwent vaccinations and biological warfare civil defense training due to fears of U.S. use of bioweapons in the Northeast.[11] An aside from the main argument of the

[8] See introduction for a brief discussion of the sobriquet: Chen Dameng (陳大蒙), Zhao Shiqiu(趙世秋). *Gao Gang Case Reexamined (高崗罪案重審)*. Hong Kong, Mingjing Publishing, 2014.
[9] See Whiting, Allen S. *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1990; Chen, Jian. *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
[10] Levine, Steven I. *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950–1953.* By Shu Guang Zhang. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995) *Journal of American History*, Volume 83, Issue 3, December 1996, 1086–1087.
[11] Zhang, Shuguang. *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995, 184.

work, such details suggest that while claims of biological warfare by the U.N. troops on the Korean Peninsula should be treated as disinformation, the narrative triggered genuine fears in Manchuria and led to aggressive civil defense policies that will be discussed below.

Another work from the same period, *Uncertain Partners* by John Lewis, Xue Litai, and Sergei Goncharov*,* also provides important details about the Manchurian angle to the war. The authors offer oral sources that speculate Gao Gang opposed the initial decision to send troops into Korea due to fears of political and economic ramifications for the Northeast.[12] Despite the authors' claims that the majority opposed intervention during the initial CCP politburo meeting, the elite level decision making at the lead up to intervention remains murky with several directly contradictory accounts.[13] More definitive is the account of the strong links between the Korean communists and their Manchurian counterparts. During the Chinese Civil War, as the Nationalists advanced into Southern Manchuria in the summer of 1946, Kim-il Sung arranged for shelter for the families of the Northeast Bureau leadership—earning the gratitude of both Mao and Gao.[14] After Communist victory, ethnic Korean units of the PLA were sent on Mao's orders to join the newly formed Korean People's Army and fought in the initial North Korean offensive. Lastly, the authors discuss the importance of the Soviet angle to the Korean War and how with Soviet assistance Manchuria became the birthplace of the Chinese air force, with academies, repair centers, and even airfields built from scratch for state of the art Mig-15 jet fighters.[15]

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[12] Goncharov, Sergei N., *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1995, 167; 174-175.

[13]The historian Chen Jian, relying on an oral interview with the CCP interpreter Shi Zhe (who has his share of inconsistencies in his memoir), writes that Gao was opposed to the war while Zhou lent Mao crucial internal support. Zhu Jianrong (*Mao's Korean War,* 201) has written that everyone, including Zhou Enlai, was opposed and that Mao essentially hoisted the decision to go to war on the politburo. Shen Zhihua doubts to what extent there were deliberations at all (citing lack of evidence); the prevarication was Mao's alone.

[14] Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Que Litai, 134.

[15] For more on Soviet military assistance, see first chapter on Soviet experts in China.

Among Chinese historians writing in Chinese about the Korean War, Shen Zhihua's (瀋志華) *Mao Zedong, Stalin, and the Korean War* (毛澤東，斯大林與朝鮮戰爭) and *The Last Celestial Empire: Mao Zedong, Kim il-Sung and Sino-Korean Relations 1945-1976* (最後的"天朝"：毛澤東、金日成與中朝關係) provide valuable details not seen in English language publications. According to archival documents available to Shen, in addition to weapons and ammunition, the Soviet Union provided China 1,500,000 tons of oil products during the war and 943,000 tons of steel—strategic goods without which the PVA would not have been able to carry out sustained operations.[16] Even though Stalin delayed providing air cover, the Soviets eventually sold China 3,000 fighter planes and set up a network of repair centers, flight schools, and auxiliary airfields.[17] Discussed in more detail in the chapter on Soviet aid, Manchuria was by far the biggest recipient of such aid. Lastly, Shen details how the Korean War impacted the CCP's thinking about its first five year plan; Gao Gang played an important role in 1953 conveying Soviet advice on how much the 1st Five Year Plan should focus on the military-industrial sector. Shen argues convincingly that Soviet recommendations to revise downwards the overall growth targets were less to do with political considerations and more a reflection of concerns that China was not investing enough in defense procurement.[18] Unfortunately, Shen's works which rely more on Russian archival sources than Chinese primary sources, do not engage extensively with the political or economic ramifications of the war for China in general and the

[16] Shen Zhihua *Mao Zedong, Stalin, and the Korean War* (毛澤東，斯大林與朝鮮戰爭), 344.
[17] Ibid, 343;345.
[18] Ibid, 348.

Northeast in particular. Chinese historiography of the Korean War mirrors its western cousin in adopting a Korean peninsula centric lens.

Prelude to War

The rapid advance of the PLA in 1949 followed by partial demobilization meant that before 25 June 1950, of the six military districts in New China, the Northeast had the smallest garrison—only 100,000 troops.[19] The PLA's best units were in the south engaged in mop up operations against residual Nationalist resistance with the expectation that they eventually would be used to invade Taiwan to conquer the last remaining bastion of the KMT.

Virtually overnight, the Northeast Government was ordered to strengthen Manchuria's defenses and fortify the areas neighboring the Sino-Korean border. On 22 July, Zhou Enlai suggested to Mao that Gao Gang should be placed in charge for coordinating the effort. Allegedly Zhou originally wanted Su Yu (粟裕), the commander who was responsible for the victory in the Huaihai Campaign and captured Shanghai, but Su was ostensibly ill and recovering in Qingdao.[20] While the politburo deliberated China's options as fortunes reversed for the Korean communists, Mao telegrammed Gao Gang on 5 August to finish concentrating troops and raise their combat readiness by mid-September.[21]

From mid-July until early October when the PVA was sent into Korea, Gao Gang completely preoccupied himself with military matters, even leading units during training.[22] Gao

[19] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 238.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Chinese Communist Party. *Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since 1949* (*建國以來毛澤東文稿),* First Volume. Central Document Publisher (中央文獻出版社), 1987, 454.
[22]Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 241.

relied on his experience as a commander in Shaanxi province during the late 1930s, but also stressed the need for new thinking. Correctly anticipating that the PVA would be called upon to fight with over-stretched supply lines, Gao ordered the Chinese troops to internalize new military theory: "Maximize old means, actively think of new means (多用老辦法，多想新辦法)."

Stepping away from his propaganda role, he also loathed to see the PVA underestimate their future opponent.[23] Lastly, Gao stressed the importance of good relations with the North Koreans, foreshadowing difficulties that will be discussed below. To that end, Gao called for interpreters to be imbedded in units and that the troops use Korean banners, military unit names, uniforms, and even personal names whenever possible.[24] Never completely implemented, the steps were designed in part to create confusion among the enemy, but the chief objective was to allay concerns among the Korean people whether the Chinese were indeed "volunteers aiding the Korean people" or another foreign occupying force.[25] Throughout the troop buildup and the initial stages of the first Chinese offensive, Gao was not only tasked with logistical and military duties in Manchuria, he was copied on all high-level telegrams currently available to researchers between Mao and PVA command on the ground in Korea, attesting to Gao's importance.[26] On the eve of the PVA's crossing of the Yalu River, with the important caveat of failing to provide adequate winter gear, Gao's efforts had resulted in the Northeast units being the best armed and well trained formations that the CCP ever fielded.[27] Indeed, despite propaganda efforts to play

[23] History Department of the Chinese Academy of Military Science. *History of the Resist America Aid Korea War (抗美援朝战争史)*, Volume 1. Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 2000, 91-92.
[24] Ibid; Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 240.
[25] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠). *Wo de hui yi (我的回憶)*. Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2004, 363.
[26] Xue, Junfu (薛俊富), An Wenming (安文明). *Selected Gao Gang Letters and Telegrams (高崗同志書信電選集)*. Huaxia Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2013.
[27]Many PVA POWs during the Korean War refused to be repatriated to China and opted to go to Taiwan, prompting speculation that the bulk of the troops sent to Korea were conscripted and disenchanted former Nationalist troops. In reality, of the 6 corps that entered Korea in late October, only one—the 50th—was predominantly made up of former KMT soldiers.

down the tactical abilities of the PVA by focusing on "human wave" attacks, U.N. forces rated highly the PVA's discipline and ability to carry out raids and large-scale ambushes.[28]

Gao Gang's Shuttle Diplomacy

The lead up to the Chinese intervention in the Korean War exposed a series of difficult logistical, economic, and multilateral problems that could not be practically managed from Beijing. Already on 5 August 1950, Mao cabled Gao Gang that he had to personally help raise the morale among cadres, answer any ideological questions cadres might have, and oversee general political preparation for the then still merely potential intervention.[29] As the war progressed, Gao's role in managing thorny issues continued to grow: by the end of his tenure in the Northeast he had traveled once to Moscow and twice to North Korea to coordinate war planning, a highly unusual step for a regional leader that only further elevated his profile within the party.[30]

Shortly after Chinese troops crossed the Yalu River, Gao Gang received additional powers as the principal logistics officer (後勤官).[31] On 5 November, Zhou Enlai cabled both Gao and Li Fuchun telling them that even decisions usually reserved for the party center could be decided by the Northeast politburo and then retroactively approved by Beijing. Zhou further stressed in the telegram that the central committee wanted to be "[their] shield" and not get in the

[28] Mahoney, Kevin. *Formidable Enemies: The North Korean and Chinese Soldier in the Korean War*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2001.
[29] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 246.
[30] See available correspondence between Mao, Gao, Stalin, and Kim il-Sung available at the Wilson Center Digital Archive: "Handwritten letter from Gao Gang and Kim Il Sung to Stalin, with 13 June 1951 letter from Mao Zedong to Gao Gang and Kim Il Sung." 14 June 1951. AVPRF. Fond. 45, Opis. 1, Delo. 339, List. 57-60;
"Ciphered Telegram No. 20448, Mao Zedong to Filippov [Stalin]." 5 June 1951. RGASPI. Stalin Collection. Fond. 558, Opis. 11, Delo. 339, List. 0023.
"Ciphered Telegram No. 3557, Filippov [Stalin] to Roshchin." 13 June 1951. RGASPI. Stalin Collection. Fond. 558, Opis. 11, Delo. 339, List. 0031-0032.
[31] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 247.

way of quick decision making by Gao Gang and Li.[32] Attentive readers will recall that the Northeast Government notified and asked for Beijing's permission even when it came to small procurements of medical supplies from the Soviets; given Mao's instructions in early 1949 that all foreign related matters "big and small" had to be cleared by the center, Zhou's order—at least on paper— was a major departure from CCP efforts to centralize decision making.[33]

Three days later, perhaps acting on Gao's requests, Zhou Enlai called for the first conference between the PVA supreme commander Peng Dehuai, Gao Gang, and Kim il-Sung. Gao had been notifying the party center that the PVA was losing trucks at an alarming rate and badly needed more vehicles.[34] Moreover, coordination with the North Koreans was poor- both exacerbating the logistical challenges and making combined military operations impossible.

Official historiography portrays the first meeting between the Chinese and the North Koreans as a resounding success.[35] Per Gao's recommendation, Zhou cabled Stalin asking if Soviet trucks already in Manzhouli and destined for Dalian could be diverted to the front. Stalin readily agreed and the PVA was able to receive 495 additional trucks that same month. Coordination with the Koreans also markedly improved. Mission accomplished, Gao returned to Shenyang on the 16th of November. As will be discussed below, shortages of trucks and drivers remained a perennial problem for the PVA, while memoir accounts point to resentment and interpersonal tensions between North Korean and PVA leadership before, during, and after the first conference.

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[32] Ibid.
[33] Chen, Jian. 1993. "The Ward Case and the Emergence of Sino-American Confrontation, 1948-1950." *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 30: 149-170.
[34] Wang, Yan (王焰) (ed). *Peng Dehuai Chronicle (彭德懷年譜).* Beijing: renmin chubanshe, 1998, 449.
[35] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 250.

As repeatedly mentioned, very few archival documents from the Northeast Government are currently available to researchers. One such report, however, sent by Northeast politburo member Li Fuchun to Zhou Enlai on 13 November 1950, provides a more complete picture of the first conference and gives details on home front efforts during the first month of the war.[36] Starting from matters of high politics, Li reports that since sending troops to Korea, coordination between the Northeast Government, PVA, and the North Koreans had been poor. Li doubted whether the already planned meeting between Kim il-Song, Gao Gang, and Peng Dehuai would be enough to improve matters, instead suggesting a three party permanent committee be established.

Regarding military matters, Li informed Zhou that most of the troops sent to Korea were not from Northern provinces and were completely ill-equipped to deal with cold, despite some training and winter kit. Soldiers were already asking for rotations and needed rest in the Northeast. Li suggested that troops could undergo additional training in the Northeast, be taught how to be more self-sufficient in cold climates and be trained to resist air attacks, the cold, and hunger. In typical official fashion, the report is light on specifics how troops were expected to better withstand hunger and enemy air attacks.

When it came to the home front, and efforts directly under the purview of the Northeast Government, Li was more sanguine. If the report is to be believed, mobilization in Manchuria was going well, with 120,000 new soldiers mobilized. Factories from Andong were being moved to the hinterland. Hostile elements were being caught and some executed in reference to the campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries.[37] Li did not discuss the already patent confusion

[36] Li Fuchun report to Zhou Enlai (13 November 1950). Shen Zhihua's personal archive. Full source available from the author by request.
[37] See previous chapter.

and disruption encountered with the relocation of industry, suggesting that beyond merely informing the central government, Li wished to put the Northeast Government's best foot forward.

The next meeting between PVA leadership and the North Koreans occurred after the Second Offensive on 25-30 January 1951. Very little is known about the second meeting, where major disagreements arose about strategy and objectives for the planned third offensive. Allegedly, Peng Dehuai wanted the PVA to rest and regroup before crossing the 38th parallel, potentially also to take advantage of the growing unpopularity of the war amongst the U.N. coalition.[38] Predictably, Kim il-Sung wanted to press on, quickly recapture Seoul, and take as much territory as possible with the ambitious goal of evicting U.N. troops from the Korean Peninsula. During the meetings, Peng, his deputy Deng Hua (鄧華), Kim, and Gao all delivered major reports. Deng discussed preliminary lessons learned from initial contact with the enemy and how the Korean and PVA troops needed to adjust. Although the 20,000 character report is not available, other sources cite that Deng stressed the overwhelming air superiority of the U.N. Forces and how heavy losses of trucks had hampered the PVA's ability to supply troops. Deng proposed only attacking at night, attempting to surround U.N. units when possible, and concentrating troops in two parallel belts to reduce their vulnerability to aerial bombing.[39] Following the military overview, Kim il-Sung outlined the Korean Workers Party objectives in a speech that was identical to his report before the Korean Workers Party politburo that is

[38] After the Chinese intervention the Korean War had become unpopular both in Europe and the United States, until the third Chinese Offensive and the violent recapture of Seoul once again turned public opinion. See: Lee, Steven Hugh. *The Korean War*. Routledge. 2016, 100.
[39] Shenyang Theater Command Logistics Department (瀋陽區後勤部). *Main Logistical Events of the Shenyang Military Theater Command (瀋陽區後勤大事紀)*. 1984, 20.

available in its entirety in the *Neibu cankao.*[40] Last, Gao delivered a report on the internal conditions in China, which is not currently available to scholars in any form.[41]

As is the case with the first conference, official historiography portrays the second meeting of the bosses as a resounding success.[42] In a publicly available telegram sent by Gao to Mao shortly after the meeting, the former informs the chairman that on military and policy matters there were no differences and that the shared goal was complete liberation of Korea. Once again, memoirs discussed in detail below strongly suggest that the official platitudes of:

> *"[the conference] played an important role in affirming the importance of exchanging experience, clarifying policy, collective thought among cadres. All the cadres came out full of vigor and with utmost confidence (全體同志情緒飽滿),"*

belied serious distrust between the PVA and the North Koreans.[43]

After a U.N. counter-offensive and Seoul once again changing hands, a contested stalemate emerged. On 3 June 1951, Kim went to Beijing to meet with Mao and then traveled to Moscow to consult with Stalin. Two days later, Mao cabled Stalin that Gao would be joining Kim and would share Sino-Korean views and solicit his opinion on policy and negotiations with the U.N. command.[44]

The extent Gao Gang had a personal relationship with Stalin is up for debate, but Gao did have a personal meeting with Stalin during his June 1951 trip to Moscow where Stalin endorsed Mao's plan to pursue a dual track approach of fighting and negotiating. Gao also met with Zhang

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[40] N. 021 "*Marshall Kim Il-sung's Report before the KWP's Third Plenum."* 12 February, 1951. Neibu Cankao N.267 "*Bad Elements in the Northeast Distort Sino-Soviet Relations*," 3 December, 1952. Neibu Cankao.
[41] Zhang, Mingyuan *Wo de huiyi (我的回憶)*; Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 250.
[42] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 250.
[43] Ibid., 250-251.
[44] Ibid.

Wentian, who was serving as the PRC's first ambassador to the Soviet Union. Zhang gave Gao unspecified economic related materials to pass on to Ma Hong, showing that Zhang continued to be involved at least informally with the Northeast Government and maintained a personal relationship with his protégé Ma Hong.[45]

In the latter stages of the war after the first round of peace talks collapsed, Gao continued to play a broad leadership role and actively contributed to coordination between the Chinese effort and the North Koreans. The Soviet diplomat Ledovsky recalls that in addition to his "special powers," Gao routinely briefed the central committee and CCP politburo on the conduct of the war and the situation on the home front as China & North Korea engaged in difficult armistice talks with the U.N. coalition.[46] Ledovsky also mentions that Gao's reports from Shenyang made their way to the Soviets who then used them in consultations with both Beijing and the Koreans.[47] Ledovsky's comments are corroborated by the publicly available telegrams between Mao and Gao; the former routinely asked the Northeast Government for reports on troop strength, food supply, and weapons.[48]

Assessing Ledovsky's claims that Gao's active role during the Korean War sparked jealousy in Beijing with his detractors is harder to assess. If Mao was growing weary of Gao's close ties with the Soviets and growing international stature, one would hardly expect to see more sensitive assignments be given to Gao. And yet, on 23 September 1952, less than a month before Gao was to be transferred to Beijing, Mao told Gao that he should directly liaise with North Korean leadership about sending skilled engineers to North Korea to meet the country's

[45] Ibid., 252.
[46] Ledovsky, Andrei. *Delo Gao Gana,* 1990, 76.
[47] Ibid.
[48] *Selected Gao Gang Letters and Telegrams (高崗同志書信電選集)*. See 15 October 1950 cable; 21 November - Mao asked Gao where the cotton goods were, what was the status.

catastrophic labor shortage and to arrange the return of Korean orphans evacuated to China. Leveraging the close working relationship with Kim il-Sung and the North Koreans, Gao was able to quickly dispatch 2,000 engineers to Korea and 26,000 orphans to Korea—earning heartfelt thanks for his internationalism from Kim.[49] Gao Gang's can-do attitude undoubtedly raised the prestige and popularity of the Northeast Government and his own person and it is unlikely that this undermined Gao's political standing within the party.

Production & War Economy

The Chinese Marshall Nie Rongzhen (聶榮臻) recalled that it was not until the Korean War that the CCP seriously had to grapple with how to provide for and supply the PLA, forcing the army and the party to build up home front and the strategic rear capacity virtually from scratch.[50] Even though the scale of the fighting in the last stages of the Chinese Civil War far exceeded guerilla warfare, the PLA still relied on captured areas, Nationalist depots, and the countryside to provide for the rapidly advancing armies. The PLA was also keen to play up a myth of self-reliance that minimized the contributions of external aid summed up as, "[our] Millet and rifles are on the front lines (小米加步槍，創庫在前方)." Whatever its veracity in the past, such a strategy was completely unsuitable for the Korean Peninsula.[51] To meet this novel challenge, the CCP turned to the Northeast Government.

Due to geographical proximity, advanced industrial base, and links to the Soviet Union, it was wise for the Northeast Government and not the central government in Beijing to manage and

[49] *Selected Gao Gang Letters and Telegrams (高崗同志書信電選集)*, 23 September, 1952.
[50] PLA Historical Records Series Editorial Committee (解放軍歷史資料叢書編審委員會). *Logistics Work Memoirs, History, Materials (後勤工作回憶史料) Volume 2.* 1999, 1-2.
[51] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 248.

coordinate the PVA's rear and logistical efforts in North Korea. The work, led by Gao Gang and Li Fuchun, focused on increasing armament production, tending to the wounded, and carrying out mass campaigns such as a savings drive that both aided the war effort materially and raised morale and popular support for the cause.[52]

According to incomplete statistics, more than 3,940,000 people took part in rear work in the Northeast; 740,000 of them were sent directly to North Korea to fill local labor shortages. 399,000 individuals from the Northeast were mobilized into the army, with 300,000 ultimately sent to Korea.[53] Every county, village, and city had its own representative or committee to coordinate work under the broad auspices of "Resist America Aid Korea" movement.[54]

Savings

Similar to the savings campaign in the Soviet Union during World War II and the Liberty Bond effort in the United States, China carried out a savings drive to raise funds for the war effort. The Northeast Government was the first to start the campaign, raising more than 6.5 trillion RMB.[55] Individual cities and even large enterprises set individual targets, usually to raise enough money to buy a fighter plane; in total, Manchuria exceeded the planned contribution amounts twofold.[56] In Dalian, the initial 15 April 1951 target to raise enough money for 22 planes was quickly met and by May 1952 the city had raised 41 billion RMB.[57]

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[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Authors Unknown. *The Great Resist America Aid Korea Movement (偉大的抗美援朝運動).* Beiing: Renmin chubanshe, 1954, 1142.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Li Chuanhua (Main ed.) (李傳華). *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷).* Dalian: Dalian chubanshe, 1998, 432.

As mentioned in the chapter on land reform, although the savings campaigns were nominally voluntary and designed to increase patriotism and turn the "Resist America Aid Korea" into an all-encompassing campaign, workers, peasants, and cadres were pressured to participate. The selection of planes as the emblem for the campaign was likely intentional. Even though the Soviets had already given the central government a loan to purchase them, their power, relative cost, and association with technological advancement made planes, particularly jet planes ideal for the campaign.

Armaments

Just as the PVA had to rely on logistical support for its food provisions, the PVA's arms and ammunition depended on Manchuria's industrial base and external aid from other Eastern Bloc states. Despite gains in production during the industrial reconstruction phase after the Chinese Civil War, domestic production could only meet about ten percent of the demand for armaments at the outbreak of war.[58] In 1951, for its first campaign, the PVA needed 14,100 tons of small-caliber ammunition, domestic production could only provide 1,500 tons. As a result, the 12,000 ton shortfall was met with Soviet imports which consisted of a mix of Soviet ammunition and leftover stocks from Lend-Lease.[59]

The shortage of artillery shells and heavy munitions was even more acutely felt. A lack of artillery support forced the PVA to postpone offensives and increased the number of casualties. To partially mitigate the shortage, Gao Gang in 1951 designated the military-industrial sector,

[58] *Logistics Work Memoirs, History, Materials (後勤工作回憶史料) Volume 2.* 1999,7.
[59] Shen, Zhihua (沈志華).*Mao, Stalin and the Korean War* (毛澤東，斯大林與朝鮮戰爭). 1999, 341.

particularly the manufacture of artillery shells, mortar rounds, and small arms ammunition as the top priority area for economic investment for 1952.[60]

In a development program introduced to the Northeast Politburo on 27 February 1951 called *Consolidate National Defense, Develop the Economy (*鞏固國防發展經濟), Gao outlined objectives for 1951-52 guided by war needs. The main areas of focus were strengthening civil defense, rear supply, and medical care, and increasing the quantity of new weapons such as rocket artillery systems, anti-aircraft guns, and coastal defense systems.[61] Although the PVA still suffered from an acute shortage of anti-aircraft capabilities, Gao stated that production of indigenous weapons (likely including ammunition) grew by 71.7 percent from pre-war levels. There is no context provided for the statistics, such as whether military related production declined after the end of the Chinese Civil War and before the start of the Korean War. Gao also mentioned that the volume of railway transport had increased by 9.2 percent above the planned target—a statistic that either should be taken with a dose of skepticism or serves as evidence that U.S. bombing efforts were not as successful in disrupting the logistics efforts of the PVA as assumed.[62]

Just as Nie Rongzhen alluded to decades later, the report made clear that fighting on foreign soil and against the most technologically advanced opponent in the world presented serious challenges to the PVA and China. Gao stressed the need for modernization and mechanization in the report, particularly in transport where China lacked the capacity to build its own trucks. The plan also called for the arming and organization of a large People's Militia (民

[60] Ledovsky, 44.
[61] Xue, Junfu (薛俊富), Bai Haoting (白浩亭). *Collected Works of Gao Gang (高崗文集).* Huaxia Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 2013, 27 February 1951.
[62] Ibid.

兵) in the Northeast, which was another means for the "Resist America Aid Korea" campaign to be a mass movement. There are no specifics on how the militia was used, and the effort was likely modest. The *min bing* would return to the fore in the 1960s when the specter of millions of armed Chinese civilians was a major tool of psychological warfare deployed by China during the Sino-Soviet split in the late 1960s.[63]

Lastly, Gao called for the dispersion of heavy industry (分散工業基點). The goal for 1951-52 was to increase their output by eighteen percent and make these dispersed plants the main priority for investment in new industry.[64] Ledovsky notes in his memoir that the policy of moving industry away from the Sino-Korean border to the Manchurian hinterlands was haphazard and ultimately counterproductive.[65] The local history of Andong also notes that initial efforts to protect and relocate industry were disruptive and abandoned later on during the war.[66] Despite these setbacks, the strategic prioritization of dispersing heavy industry influenced industrial planning long after the end of hostilities in Korea. The first Five Year Plan reduced the industrial concentration in relatively vulnerable Southern Manchuria by funding steel plants in Baotou, Inner Mongolia, military plants in central Lanzhou, Gansu, and southern Yunnan.[67] During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), fears of a Soviet preventive nuclear strike once again prompted the CCP to pursue a "third line" strategy of relocating and building strategic factories in distant hinterlands.[68]

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[63]See Central Intelligence Agency. *The Evolution of Soviet Policy in the Sino-Soviet Border Dispute,* Intelligence Report, 28 April 1970. (Approved for Release May 2007).

[64] *Collected Works of Gao Gang (高崗文集),* February 27, 1951.

[65] Ledovsky, 80.

[66] Liu, Peitang (劉培唐), ed. *Everything for the Front: Dandong's People's Volunteers and the Resist America Aid Korea Movement (一切為了前線，丹東人民志願抗美援朝大事紀實).* 2000, 49-53.

[67] Worden, Robert L., Andrea Matles Savoda, Ronald E. Dolan, ed. "*The First Five-Year Plan, 1953-57,"* China: A Country Study, Washington, DC: Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, July 1987.

[68] Meyskens, Covell F. "*Mao's Third Front: The Militarization of Cold War China*," Cambridge University Press, 2020.

The above published plan provides a high-level overview of policy planning by the Northeast Government. In order to meet those new targets, major factories in Anshan, Shenyang, and Fushun were ordered to revert back to armament production. Dalian's 81 Factory (八一工廠) and Shenyang's 53 Factory (五三工廠) produced the bulk of sophisticated ordinances such as rocket propelled artillery (katyusha rockets) and Soviet-licensed rocket propelled grenades.[69] Factory 81 routinely received visits from city leaders who urged the workers to smash production records under the slogan of "sweat a little more on the home front, shed less blood on the front line (后方多流汗，前方少流血)." As mentioned earlier, although the 20,000 75mm rounds and 30,000 70mm rounds produced per quarter were insufficient to meet PVA demand, the factories did succeed in producing various types of armaments that had never previously been manufactured in China.[70]

Artillery Shells	Grenades	Bullets	Mountain guns (artillery)
2,295,862	116,519	21,770,000	20

Armament Production in Manchuria 1949[71]

The ability of individual factories to increase output and commence the production of new, technologically sophisticated weapons does not in itself mean that CCP-directed policies were always conducive to standing up the home front effort. Hirata Koji in his pioneering work that charts the history of the Anshan steel plant from its Japanese colonial origins through the Cultural Revolution, writes that while Anshan played an important role for the war effort,

[69] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷)*, 436.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Zhu, Jianhua (朱建華) (ed.). *Northeast Liberated Area Finances and Economic History (東北解放區財政經濟史稿).* Heilongjiang, 70.

producing everything from steel picks to metal used for artillery shells, the climate of fear that descended on the factory-city hampered the work.[72] In both 1951 and 1952, as the plant ramped up production and was put on war footing after briefly relocating some industrial equipment to Northern Manchuria, Japanese and Nationalist engineers were denied sensitive info and excluded from floor and management meetings.[73] Outside the sprawling steel metropolis, posters appeared showing a Japanese imperialist decapitating a Chinese person as an American approvingly watched in the background.[74] With about 10,000 Japanese engineers still working in Manchuria at the time, the new exclusionary security policies led to delays, increased accidents, and a decline in production quality.[75]

Food

Napoleon famously quipped that an army marches on its stomach. For the PVA, it learned just how far it could go on a nearly empty one. Operating outside China's borders in a country that was already devastated by war and overwhelmed with refugees, the PVA had to rely almost completely on its logistical network for provisions. In the first months of the war, Chinese troops only ate fried noodles and snow, enduring acute hunger in addition to frostbite.[76] During the first conference between Peng Dehuai, Gao Gang, and Kim il-Sung in December of 1950, Peng stressed the urgency of improving food provisions. Due to U.S. Air Force sorties and the PVA's rapid advance, troops did not have time to cook their own food. Moreover, the heavy pots and other cooking accessories carried by soldiers proved to be unpractical, adding an

[72] Hirata, Koji. "*Steel Metropolis: Industrial Manchuria and the Making of Chinese Socialism, 1916-1964*." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2018.
[73] Hirata, 163-164.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., 133.
[76] *Logistics Work Memoirs, History, Materials (後勤工作回憶史料),* 3.

unnecessary burden.[77] Instead, Peng challenged the civilian leadership to provide premade, nutritious meals for the troops that would not freeze on the way.[78]

By the end of the war, troops had canned meat, soybean cakes, egg powder, and even bean curd and pork on some occasions.[79] When it came to feeding the troops, although not every goal was met (Nie unsuccessfully argued that the PVA needed Russian style rolling soup kitchens with bread and beef soup which was not easily perishable and specifically intended for cold weather to provide nutrition and bolster troop morale),[80] the Northeast Government managed to provide a subsistence minimum. And by doing so vastly expanded the processed food sector in Manchuria.

The main staple of the PVA were fried noodles. In big cities throughout China, noodles were fried and packaged to be sent to the front. The movement started in Shenyang, where 138,000 *jin* of noodles were prepared daily.[81] Every twenty days, 2,760,000 *jin* were sent to the front. Women, school children, and elderly all took part in the cooking. To stress the importance of the campaign, Zhou Enlai himself fried noodles in a Beijing hutong in front of reporters.[82] After the first winter campaign, roasted soy flour (黃豆粉) and vegetables were added to make the meals more nutritious.[83]

[77] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠), 361.
[78] Ibid.
[79] *Logistics Work Memoirs, History, Materials (後勤工作回憶史料) Volume 2,* 4-5.
[80] Ibid.
[81] 1 jin is approximately 600 grams.
[82] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠), 362.
[83] Ibid, 363.



Figure 8: Noodle making for the front

In Dalian, from November 1950 onwards local factories produced canned goods and biscuits for the front. The quantity demanded vastly exceeded existing capacity, and many products such as canned fruit had never before been produced in the city. Working around the clock year-round and even during the Lunar New Year of 1951, production increased from 5,000 to 8,000, to ultimately 10,000 cans a day in Dalian. By the end of 1951, Dalian had already sent 2,394 tons of canned meat, 14,000 tons of biscuits, and 400,000 tons of preserved fruit. According to official sources, more than 98 percent of the products passed quality control.[84]

In addition to assembling rations, tobacco, vanity items, and even occasional delicacies were sent to the troops to boost morale. Heilongjiang province annually sent 6,300 pig heads, 100,000 towels, 100,000 bars of soap, and 300,000 packs of cigarettes. Rehe Province provided loose tobacco while Inner Mongolia sent more than 30,000 *jin* of meat floss and dried lamb.[85]

[84] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷)*, 435.
[85] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠), 364.

Cities organized drives to donate and give winter clothing to troops in need.[86] Ledovsky recounts that women and children played a particularly important and active role in putting together care these packages for the troops.[87] According to Soviet sources, almost 400,000 women and children volunteered, in some places out stripping the ability of local committees to find roles for them.[88]

Despite the home front effort, well into 1952 the PVA was barely surviving on their rations. The noodles, PVA's main staple, froze during the winter and were of poor nutritional value. In addition to frost bite, many PVA soldiers suffered from night blindness and scurvy.[89] In the first campaign, nearly everything the soldiers brought froze and became inedible. Kindling fires was both prohibited and highly dangerous—Mao's own son, Mao Anying (毛岸英) died in an airstrike after their position was revealed by smoke. Throughout the war, soldiers were banned from starting fires both at night and during the day, forcing the men to rely on ready rations.[90]

Two Zhangs

What Zhang Wentian and Ma Hong were able to accomplish for Manchuria's economy in terms of vision and flexibility, two Zhang Mingyuans (張明遠) contributed to Manchuria's logistics work in equal measure. In an uncanny instance of namesakes, a Zhang Mingyuan from Gansu province served as the deputy commander for logistics (後勤) of the Northeast Military

[86] Ibid, 363.
[87] Ledovsky, 74.
[88] Ibid.
[89] "During the Korean War, what kind of Noodles did our Troops Eat? (抗美援朝我國志願軍吃的究竟是什麼炒麵?)." KK News. 26 October 2016. https://kknews.cc/history/omzmxy5.html (Accessed 14 May 2020).
[90] Ibid.

District. At the same time, another Zhang Mingyuan from Hebei was one of the Deputy Secretaries of the entire Northeast Government and in charge of railways and transportation. The more senior Zhang was one of five Gao Gang protégés who would be purged alongside their old patron in 1954.[91] Both men wore glasses and were frequently part of the same inspection teams, creating confusion for even those who knew them to say nothing of subsequent journalists and historians.[92]

The biggest issue that the two Zhangs were forced to grapple with was the abysmal condition of rail infrastructure. After the third offensive which saw the PVA take Seoul, disruptions and chaos in rail supply prevented the Chinese armies from advancing further south, contributing to the eventual strategic failure of the offensive.[93] Once the failure of rail supply could no longer be papered over by the general advance of the PVA, the more senior Zhang was assigned on Gao's recommendation to manage the rail network in the Northeast and enter into thorny negotiations with the North Koreans over control of the entire Sino-Korean rail system. In that capacity, Zhang traveled with Gao Gang and Peng Dehuai to North Korea to meet Kim as part of Gao's second trip to North Korea that was covered earlier.

The Hebei Zhang Mingyuan was picked by Gao because of his prior experience managing logistics for the Liaoshen campaign during the Chinese Civil War. On 22-23 January 1951, an emergency meeting in Shenyang was held to discuss rear front work from the Chinese side. With Zhou Enlai in attendance, the senior Zhang was empowered by the party center to organize the system of supply and reassign cadres where needed.[94] As will be discussed in a

[91] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠), 356.
[92] Ibid., 367. In the early 1990ies TV journalists approached the senior Zhang for an interview, not only were they unaware that there were two Zhangs, the military history articles written about the war that they brought with them were actually written by the other Zhang Mingyuan.
[93] Ibid., 355.
[94] Ibid., 358.

separate section, in addition to heavy losses from U.N. bombing campaigns, the overall rail network was struggling to move all the military aid coming from the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc states. In the subsequent two months, the situation only continued to deteriorate.

U.S. bombing of North Korean railways almost completely severed transportation links between the troops and Manchuria. A single sortie on 8 April 1951 destroyed eighty-four train cars carrying a total of 2,870,000 *jin* of foodstuffs, 330,000 *jin* of cooking oil, 400,000 sets of uniforms, and 190,000 pairs of boots.[95] At best, only sixty-seventy percent of goods sent from the Northeast reached the front.[96] Beyond ferocious U.N. bombing and strafing, the railway network was further strained by refugees attempting to use both trains and the railway paths as a means to flee the fighting. According to Chinese statistics, 110,000 Koreans fled to Yanbian alone during the war; Shen Zhihua cites a Soviet report that 80,000 Koreans and 2,500 family members of cadres crossed the border by 1951.[97]

Under such difficult conditions, Zhou Enlai, Li Fuchun, and Nie Rongzhen recommended in late January 1951 that a unified rail administration be stood up.[98] Despite the urgency of the problem, it would not be until 1 May 1951 that the senior Zhang Mingyuan assumed overall leadership for the entire transportation system, strongly suggesting that negotiations with Pyongyang were difficult indeed.[99] Although it would take another few months (August 1951) for a railway command to be set up in Shenyang, Zhang was able to address the prior lack of coordination between Chinese and North Korean railway officials and greatly increase the speed and efficacy of railway shipping for the remainder of the war.

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[95] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠), 370-371.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Shen, Zhihua (沈志華). *The Last Celestial Empire: Mao Zedong, Kim Il-sung, and Sino-Korean Relations (1945-1976) (最後的'天朝': 毛澤東，金日成與中朝關係)*. 2017, 495.
[98] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠), 368-369.
[99] Ibid., 368-371.

The turnaround in rail management was achieved in part due to a major reshuffling of local party cadres. Zhang Xiushan (張秀山), a senior member of the Northeast politburo and another close ally of Gao, writes in his memoir that the Hebei Zhang Mingyuan utilized his previous familiarity with rail issues and his inter-party organizational work to pull county heads, county secretariat (縣委書記), and even four Northeast Government ministers to work round-the-clock on logistical and rail issues.[100]

The junior Zhang Mingyuan also played an important role on the home front. In addition to overseeing the earlier mentioned efforts to provide clothing to the troops, the Gansu Zhang managed the relief effort for PVA casualties. The memoirs of Ledovsky, the senior Zhang Mingyuan, and Zhang Xiushan all mention catastrophic shortages of medical supplies, doctors, and hospital beds.[101] China's inability to produce trucks meant that there were almost no motorized ambulances to move the wounded from the front lines to field stations and eventually hospitals in Manchuria. Furthermore, the destruction of North Korean hospitals sent more than 100,000 injured North Korean soldiers to already overwhelmed Northeast hospitals.[102]

To meet this challenge, the junior Zhang Mingyuan with the approval of the Northeast Government, ordered a massive expansion of hospitals and mobile operation units. In Dalian alone, 4,000 additional beds and ten convalescing centers were prepared.[103] Complete statistics for the entire Northeast are not available, but in Dalian 22,400 wounded were treated over the course of the war starting from late January 1951.[104] According to Soviet doctors sent to China,

[100] Zhang, Xiushan (張秀山). *My Eighty Five Years: From the Northwest to the Northeast 我的八十五年: 從西北到東北.* Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2015, 21.
[101] Zhang Mingyuan (張明遠), 259.
[102] Ibid.
[103] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷)*, 438
[104] Ibid.

the healthcare system in the Northeast was the envy of intramural China.[105] There were shortages of drugs that Soviet assistance only partially covered, but the presence of Japanese trained physicians who could carry out complex surgeries allowed for near miraculous outcomes for some badly injured fighters.[106]

Despite the efforts of individuals like the junior Zhang Mingyuan, just as with food rations, the care of the wounded was uneven at best. Newspaper reports of rotten cotton and contaminated bandages sent to the front sparked public indignation and were used as social fuel for the "Five antis" campaign. Given the strain placed by injured soldiers and refugees on the Manchurian healthcare infrastructure, it is unsurprising that improving the quality of care for the wounded became a priority issue for Gao Gang and the Northeast Government. It should be equally unsurprising that such a key issue became politicized. And in the political milieu of the day, that meant the Northeast Government was going to assign blame and implicate social classes perceived to be hostile to the wartime regime.

Sino-Korean Ethnic Tensions

Difficult negotiations with North Korean cadres, influx of refugees, disjointed first aid efforts, were in part due to—and in turn further fueled—serious interethnic tension. On 6 November 1951, at a reception to commemorate the 34th anniversary of the October Revolution, Gao Gang made a scene when he refused a toast to the Northeast Government. According to Ledovsky who was present at the reception, Gao said that he did not want to drink his glass of wine with, "those who throw injured Korean soldiers out of ambulances and only take Chinese

[105] *Soviet Experts in the Northeast (蘇聯專家在東北*). Dongbei renmin chubanshe. 1953, 60-71.
[106] Yang Dan (楊丹), "Orthopedic Doctor during the Korean War Remembers: Organized Surgical Troops to Join the Battlefield (抗美援朝整形醫生憶：組建手術隊師徒一起上戰場)," Renmin Wang. 26 October 2010. http://history.people.com.cn/GB/198305/198865/13055278.html (Accessed 14 May 2020).

soldiers."[107] Given the intense scarcity of resources outlined above, it is unsurprising that in times of crisis, relations between the PVA and the Koreans were at their worst despite the propaganda efforts by both sides to promote internationalism and the relative familiarity of some PVA units with their North Korean counterparts.[108]

Not present in official accounts, instances of Sino-Korean, and Sino-Soviet-Korean friction indirectly come up in Zhang Mingyuan's memoirs. Zhang recalled that cadres assigned to the front from the Northeast had to be taught about the intricacies of "internationalism" and that the Chinese had to learn to respect North Korean customs, local cadres, and not put on a "savior complex."[109] At the same time, a lot of North Koreans harbored suspicions that the PVA was fighting in Korea only to establish Chinese rule on the peninsula.[110] Although this lack of trust between the local populace and the foreign troops invites parallels to how residents of Manchuria greeted the Soviets in 1945, in Korea Zhang Mingyuan and the Northeast Government quickly understood that one of the most effective ways to improve inter-ethnic relations was to strive for self-sufficiency and not rely on the Korean countryside for food and supplies.[111] At least in Chinese and Russian language sources, there is no evidence of looting and serious abuse of the local population by the PVA.

Separate to conflict among rank-and-file troops, the elite level saw their own inter-ethnic tensions. In one of the most telling anecdotes of Zhang's memoir, Zhang recalls that Peng Dehuai was frustrated that neither the North Koreans nor the Soviets respected the Chinese and their military experience. More egregiously, in Peng's eyes, the Soviets had given Kim bad

[107] Ledovsky, 78.
[108] The North Korean army had several units comprised of ethnic Koreans who fought in the PLA during the Chinese Civil War.
[109] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠), 363.
[110] Ibid., 367.
[111] Ibid.

advice that led to avoidable defeats.[112] Peng saw the mote in the eyes of Kim il-Sung and Soviet Ambassador Shtykov, but failed to see the beam in his own eye; Peng attempted to summon Kim to the PVA command to summarily inform him that Zhang Mingyuan would head the Sino-Korean railroad. It took Gao Gang to point out that Kim was still head of state, no matter how precarious, and it would be more appropriate if they walked over to his quarters and not the other way around.[113]

In Manchuria, incidents of discrimination and chauvinism were also present. According to Ledovsky, the Shenyang office of foreign affairs (外事辦), which answered to Beijing and not the Northeast Government, failed to assist and actively disparaged Koreans who were evacuated to Shenyang or were there for training. The Soviet diplomat was also unhappy of how the *Waiban* treated Soviet experts and diplomats in the city, supposedly making it difficult to schedule meetings and get accurate information on home front activities.[114] In general, Soviet military advisors and civilian experts who were posted to China and not North Korea had a difficult time gaining access to the PVA or rear areas, relying instead on briefings held in Shenyang.[115]

The Soviets were also unhappy with how local authorities in the Northeast were dealing with perceived pro-American sentiments. Even within the several hundred thousand-strong student volunteer effort, pro-US views were still purportedly present. Others, despite propaganda efforts, continued to fear U.S. nuclear weapons and question the communist camp. The internal circulation daily, *Neibu cankao,* has several reports of outright indignation over the fact the

[112] Ibid., 361-362.
[113] Ibid., 362.
[114] Short form for office of foreign affairs (外事辦);Ledovsky, 78.
[115] Ibid.

Soviets were not directly fighting in the war.[116] Li Fuchun told the Soviets that such anti-Soviet views were becoming rare, but the head of the Waiban for Shenyang, Lu Xi (陸曦) admitted in a 19 February 1951 conversation that people living in Manchuria wrote directly to Mao and the central government voicing opposition to China's participation in the war.[117]

The CCP party center in Beijing was aware of ethnic friction from the first days of the war. On 26 December 1950, Mao cabled Peng Dehuai, Gao Gang, and Kim il-Sung calling for the resurrection of the PLA civil war era policy of "Three Rules Eight Notices."[118] It was to be applied in the field by the PVA to improve relations with the North Koreans.[119] Going further, Mao explicitly instructed the Chinese cadres to work with their Korean counterparts, prioritize mass work (connecting with the local people) and severely criticize fellow comrades who abused Koreans. Mao's instructions to Gao and Peng that offending cadres should be removed shows that Mao was sensitive to China's image in Korea. At the same time, the sheer existence of the telegram serves as indirect evidence to corroborate Ledovsky's claims that Sino-Korean relations were often fraught during the war.

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[116]See N. 247 *"Some Dalian Cadres and Masses have an Incorrect Understanding of the Soviet Union,"* 1 November 1952. Neibu Cankao; N.267 "*Bad Elements in the Northeast Distort Sino-Soviet Relations*," 3 December 1952. Neibu Cankao.

[117] Ledovsky, 78-79.

[118] **Three Rules:** 1. Obey orders in all your actions. 2. Do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses. 3. Turn in everything captured. **Eight Notices:** Speak politely. Pay fairly for what you buy Return everything you borrow. Pay for anything you damage. Do not hit or swear at people. Do not damage crops. Do not take liberties with women. Do not ill-treat captives.

[119] *Selected Gao Gang Letters and Telegrams (高崗同志書信電選集)*, 26 December 1950.



Figure 9: Why are you dying for Russia? Anti-PVA poster.

Fear & Mass Mobilization

Although Mao famously referred to U.S. imperialists as "paper tigers" and downplayed the cataclysmic nature of nuclear war, not everyone in the Northeast responded to the outbreak of the Korean War with equal equanimity.[120] U.S. involvement in the Korean War triggered incidents of panic and sabotage both in the cities and the countryside of Manchuria. As early as 13-14 of August 1950—when military preparations for possible assistance to North Korea had just begun—Gao Gang made the case to senior military and civilian officials in the Northeast that the U.S. nuclear arsenal could not paralyze China's decision making.[121] At the meeting, Gao stated that:

> *"Some people fear the atomic bomb. In reality there is no need to fear it. First of all, the U.S. is not the sole possessor of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union also has the bomb. Second, if used on the battlefield, it will hurt both armies. Third, the*

[120] For Mao's views on nuclear warfare and the U.S. see following interview: "Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong." Wilson Center CWIHP. 6 August 1946. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121327 (Accessed 14 May 2020).
[121] Edited Volume. *History of the Resist America Aid Korea War (抗美援朝戰爭史), Volume 1*. Beijing: junshi kexue chubanshe, 2000, 91-92.

people of the world oppose nuclear weapons, it exposes the evil nature of imperialism, this will make the U.S. think twice before using the bomb."[122]

Nuclear reassurance notwithstanding, Gao urged the cadres to take up civil defense work and combine ideological work in their respected areas with practical steps.

In addition to addressing the fear of nuclear war that was likely present in the room, Gao made the case that the U.S. invasion of Korea was just one step in a larger plan to oppose people's liberation movements throughout Asia. According to Gao, U.S. imperialism had already invaded Korea, occupied Taiwan, and was busy organizing reactionary forces throughout the continent. Crucially, if U.S. aggression was not checked, Korea would become a springboard to invade Manchuria and China proper. Remilitarization of Japan and support for the ROK government was presented as more evidence of U.S. perfidy.[123]

Gao ended the speech with a rhetorical question: "Is it better to wait and fight [U.S. imperialists] on Chinese soil or set out now and help the Korean people defeat them there? The choice before cadres and soldiers is either wait for the United States to invade the Northeast and North China or set out for Korea. Defeating U.S. imperialism outside China's borders is favorable to us, our friends, and the international anti-imperialist movement. We must help North Korea. Their enemies are our enemies, their victory is our victory," said Gao.[124]

Publicly, the Northeast Government's actions matched the confident tone set by Gao Gang. The various peace committees that had been set up in major cities in early 1950 to collect signatures opposing everything from "Chiang Kai-shek bandits" to U.N. intervention in Korea officially gave way to more ideologically militant "Resist America Aid Korea" committees.[125]

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[122] Ibid.
[123] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 240.
[124] Ibid.
[125] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷)*, 430.

Every work unit, factory, or enterprise had to participate in the mass campaigns; a single petition drive opposing Japanese rearmament and U.S. aggression in Korea collected 800,000 signatures in Dalian alone.[126]

Although Gao's speech was followed up with a flurry of propaganda activity, it is ambiguous to what extent Gao himself believed the official line. Gao's biographers Dai and Zhao state that Gao was concerned about the potential effect of the war—let alone U.S. bombing—on the Manchurian economy and even social stability.[127] Hence, he allegedly was one of the few members of the CCP politburo who opposed China's intervention.[128] This unsourced assertion is directly contradicted by Ledovsky's account which states that Gao took up his tasks with enthusiasm and understood the broader importance of China's intervention for the world communist cause.[129] Given the revisionist motivations by both party historians to paint Gao as wavering on the war to portray daylight between him and Mao, and Ledovsky to cast Gao as a stalwart friend of the Soviet Union and a true internationalist, there is not enough evidence to determine how sanguine Gao felt about China's prospects in a war with the United States.

What is borne out in the sources is that the subject of fear figured prominently in official correspondence between Gao and Mao. On 30 August, Gao sent a letter to Mao reporting that old cadres who had defeated the Japanese and the KMT, now had doubts if not outright trepidation about U.S. airpower, artillery, and military prowess. Other party members were equally ignorant and needed education too.[130]

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[126] Ibid., 431.
[127] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 243.
[128] The authors of *Uncertain Partners* make the same claim about Gao without offering sources, see earlier 12th citation.
[129] Ledovsky, 72.
[130] Dai, Maolin, and Xiaoguang Zhao, 241.

In Dalian, to combat fears among cadres and the general public, a visual propaganda campaign was launched that compared the relative strength of "Today's China" and China during World War II; the strength of U.S. imperialism compared to past Japanese imperialism; and the two ideological blocs.[131] The campaign was a truly mass affair: over 11,000 artists and 1,539 supporting cadres were called upon.[132] Large murals were painted to help Dalian residents understand "U.S. Imperialism" and the U.N. Forces with the goal of dispelling myths and fear while also reminding the residents to not underestimate the opponent. As mentioned earlier, at Anshan steelworks, graphic posters were hung by the front gates depicting a Japanese militarist gorging an unarmed Asian man while a U.S. G.I. looked on with approval.[133]



Figure 10: Two worlds, Imperialist Camp and Peace & Democracy Camp. Source: 1 Jan. 1951. *The Northeast Daily*

On 1 May 1951, speaking at the large May Day demonstration, the secretary of the Dalian city committee, Ouyang Qin (欧阳钦), delivered an impassioned speech about the need

[131] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷)*, 431.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Hirata, 163-164.

for patriotic education to an audience of more than 200,000.[134] Praising the heroism of the PVA and Korean troops while denouncing U.S. aggression and plans for Japanese military rearmament, Ouyang nevertheless reminded the listeners that the U.S. was a formidable foe and could not be taken lightly. Ouyang's speech reflected a change in message after the PVA's initial victories. According to Zhang Xiushan (張秀山), pushing U.N. troops back from the Yalu River all the way south of the 38th Parallel had a momentous effect on public morale and confidence in the Northeast.[135] No longer fearing a direct military invasion by the United States, the message instead pivoted to sacrifice and the costs necessary for China to endure in order to prevail.

The new propaganda featured patriotic families, PVA soldiers, and rear area workers such as drivers. The campaigns emphasized sacrifice, stressing the mass nature of their work and that everyone had a role to play. One Dalian mother, Wang Guiying (王桂英), who already had three boys who fought in the Chinese Civil War, sent her two daughters to volunteer as nurses in Korea.[136] Farmers released badly needed sons to the front during peak harvest season. In addition to volunteers, just in 1951 alone, "Resist America Aid Korea" committees in Dalian sent 150,000 letters of encouragement and 100,000 mini-parcels to raise morale.[137]

Given how vital logistics work was and the dire shortage of trucks, drivers occupied a particularly prominent place in propaganda, on par with pilots and combat heroes. One such driver, Wang Fuqing, allegedly traversed more than 33,000 kilometers and transported 3666.7 tons of weight—overfulfilling his quota by ninety-four percent.[138] When Wang was killed in a

[134] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷)*, 431.
[135] Zhang, Xiushan (張秀山), 21.
[136] *City Administration and Societal Transformation. Dalian Volume (城市的接管與社會改造. 大連卷)*, 432.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid., 437.

U.S. bombing on 31 October 1951, his hometown of Dalian held a citywide memorial ceremony.[139]

In Andong, the biggest city on the Sino-Korean border, local leadership boasted of a near hundred percent participation rate in the mass campaigns. Out of a total of 250,000 residents, 223,608 signed the peace petition before China's intervention.[140] On 9 July 1950, two weeks after the Korean War had begun and while North Korean troops were still rapidly advancing south, forty teams of cadres dispersed throughout the city to urge everyone living in Andong to sign the peace petition. Using trucks and loud speakers, about 30,000 people assembled later that evening to listen to the municipal party leadership exhort the residents to be vigilant of saboteurs, spies, and pro-U.S. elements.[141] After China's entry, Andong became a constant feature in propaganda detailing confirmed and alleged U.S. air attacks on targets inside China's borders.[142] Once the front lines again moved further south, a new ominous specter arose in local Andong propaganda efforts and in Manchuria writ large: germ warfare.

Biological Weapons Threat

War has always known many forms of subterfuge. During the Korean War by far the most cynical and effective example was the placement of fabricated stories of U.N. germ warfare against Chinese and Korean civilians starting from 1951.[143] The accusations were made

[139] Ibid.
[140] *Everything for the Front: Dandong's People's Volunteers and the Resist America Aid Korea Movement (一切為了前線，丹東人民志願抗美援朝大事紀實)*, 5.
[141] Ibid., 41.
[142] Ibid., 94-97.
[143] For a comprehensive list of documents related to Biological weapons claims see: Wilson Center CWIHP. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/250/korean-war-biological-warfare-allegations (Accessed 15 May 2020).

at the highest level, with Mao Zedong personally issuing instructions in 1952 to: "Get mobilized, stress sanitation, reduce disease, improve health, and smash the enemy's bacteriological warfare."[144] Picked up and republished by newspapers throughout the world, the campaign was also greatly aided by Soviet diplomatic efforts to organize independent fact-finding missions which were routinely shown falsified evidence and staged sites.[145]

One such fact-finding mission, organized by the Soviet affiliated World Peace Council, was reluctantly led by Cambridge University's Joseph Needham. A highly accomplished biochemist, Needham developed a strong interest in Sinology in his adult life, spending most of World War II in China assisting the Nationalists with public health work. In the summer of 1952, Needham traveled to Beijing, Shenyang, and North Korea to assess Communist claims after other scientists declined.[146] The delegation concluded that the U.S. was experimenting with biological weapons in Korea. For evidence, the team was only allowed to look at materials collected by Chinese and North Korea scientists and hear testimony of captured U.S. airmen who recanted their confessions after release. Needham was not without misgivings, but he trusted the professionalism of his Chinese counterparts—many of whom he knew personally—and did not believe that as scientists they would consent to government-led falsification.[147]

Despite vociferous denials by the United States and the U.N. command at the time, it would not be until the 1990s and the opening of Russian archives that definitive evidence was

[144] Mao, Zedong, "An Inscription on Smashing the Enemy's Germ Warfare." 1952. Wilson Center CWIHP. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/123086 (Accessed 15 May 2020).
[145] Leitenberg, Milton. "China's False Allegations of the Use of Biological Weapons by the United States during the Korean War," CWIHP, 2016. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/chinas-false-allegations-the-use-biological-weapons-the-united-states-during-the-korean (Accessed 15 May 2020).
[146] Buchanan, Tom. 2001. "The Courage of Galileo: Joseph Needham and the 'Germ Warfare' Allegations in the Korean War." *History* 86, No. 284: 503-522.
[147] Ibid.

found to debunk North Korean and Chinese claims and demonstrate clear collusion and conspiracy to spread misinformation.[148]

In Manchuria, with its history of human experimentation by the Japanese during World War II, the campaign was taken up with grim seriousness. Sixty-six quarantine stations were set up along the Sino-Korean border and five million residents of Manchuria received immunizations during the war.[149] Suspicious insects were collected in glass jars, while roads and streets in major cities such as Shenyang were sprayed with chlorine.[150] The *Northeast Daily* devoted extensive coverage to the threat of biological weapons, emphasizing personal stories and portraying the human toll of disease.[151] Although there is no way to verify, it is likely that the stories of illness were not invented: communicable diseases like cholera were still prevalent at the time. But their reservoir and vectors were far more prosaic than U.S. bombs.

Sometimes the public health campaigns and urges of vigilance went too far. Ledovsky recounts how outside many government offices in the Northeast had buckets of potassium permanganate (margantsovka), a popular Russian disinfectant, which employees rinsed their mouths with and gargled in their throats as they walked in.[152] The extreme measures show that while at the elite level the campaign was certainly a ruse, the already palpable climate of fear in the Northeast allowed imaginations to run wild with local cadres taking up measures that likely made fear even more all-permeating.

Manzhouli: Birth of Special Regions

[148] Leitenberg, Milton. "China's False Allegations of the Use of Biological Weapons by the United States during the Korean War."
[149] Zhang, Shuguang, 184.
[150] Ledovsky, 77.
[151] "A Happy Family Destroyed by American Bacteriological Warfare (被美國細菌戰破壞了的一個幸福家庭)." *The Northeast Daily* (東北日報). 26 February 1952.
[152] Ledovsky, 76-77.

The outbreak of the Korean War and Manchuria once again serving as the strategic staging area for Chinese armies coincided with a lengthy internal party process to determine the national structure for the new Chinese state that culminated in the adoption of the 1954 PRC constitution after the war. As Mao grappled with whether to make New China a highly centralized state or one with at least nominal regional autonomy, events in Manzhouli (滿洲里) prompted Beijing to elevate this key border city to "special administrative (特區)" status, which along with Dalian set a precedence for future policy on Tibet and Xinjiang, Special Economic Zones under Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s, and even the special status afforded to Hong Kong and Macau under "One Country Two Systems."[153]

When Tsarist Russia completed the China Far East Railway in 1901, Manzhouli was the first railway station on the Chinese side of the border. In the following years, the small trading post experienced intense boom and bust cycles tracing the political upheaval both in China and Russia. Despite efforts by pro-Japanese warlords and later the Manchukuo authorities to seal the border with the Soviet Union, Manzhouli was also one of the centers for communist agitation in Manchuria, with a communist cell that predated the founding of the CCP.[154] By 1950, however, the railway town could boast of only a modest train station with four tracks (platforms) and a single loading crane.[155]

Shortly after the North Korean invasion of South Korea, the PLA set up offices in Manzhouli to receive forthcoming Soviet military aid.[156] By September, Manzhouli already had

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[153] Pantsov, Aleksandr, and Steven I. Levine. *Mao: The Real Story*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013, 356-357. See Potter, Pitman B. *Law, Policy and Practice on China's Periphery: Selective Adaptation and Institutional Capacity*. 2015, for a general discussion of autonomous regions and SARs in China.
[154] Liu, Jianyi, *The Origins of the Chinese Communist Party and the Role Played by Soviet Russia and the Comintern,* PhD. Dissertation, University of York, 2000, 71.
[155] Xu, Zhanxin (徐占信), *Manzhouli and the Korean War (滿洲里與抗美援朝戰爭).* Inner Mongolia: Neimenggu wenhua chubanshe, 2006, 31.
[156] Ibid., 21.

250 army officers and 3,000 party cadres on site— about ten percent of the city's population.[157] Once Stalin gave the green light to increase military assistance, the city became the destination point for almost all military materiel intended for China and North Korea. By November 1950 eight to fifteen trains arrived daily from the Soviet Union.[158] Although not every train was loaded with guns and ammunition, the amount of materiel arriving quickly overwhelmed the existing infrastructure, creating a serious bottleneck.

Due to a lack of cranes and other equipment, all of the materiel, even thirty-two ton T-34 tanks, had to be offloaded using manual labor, made even more arduous by the unforgiving Manchurian winter.[159] In the winter of 1950-51, it took more than two hours to unload a single train- requiring 1,000 workers working in teams of as many as fifty to move the heaviest objects. To meet this gargantuan challenge, the entire industrial and party apparatus of the city was mobilized, with the head of customs in Manzhouli, Kong Yuan (孔遠), personally making the case to the workers on site that their work was pivotal to the war effort, repeating the slogan: "sweat a little more on the home front, shed less blood on the front line (後方多流一滴汗，前方少流一滴血)."[160]

While there is no evidence to doubt the patriotic determination that must have been felt by many if not most of the workers, the conditions in Manzhouli were as trying as some combat zones. Workers were limited to a single meal a day, had no access to showers, and lived in old, unheated housing. As a result, frost bite was exceedingly common.[161] Brutal working conditions were compounded with serious clerical errors and administrative red tape that directly hindered

[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., 31.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., 32.
[161] Ibid.

the war effort. Vital shipments were turned around; on 18-20 of April 1951, twenty-eight cistern-train cars filled with fuel oil for tanks were sent back to the Soviet Union by mistake, a huge logistical blow to the war effort at a time when China had negligible domestic sources of oil and even less refining capacity.[162]

As early as the fall-winter of 1950 when Zhou Enlai, Gao Gang, and Zhang Mingyuan were attempting to coordinate rail traffic with North Koreans, local authorities began asking the Northeast Government in Shenyang to send senior officials and overhaul the administrative process in Manzhouli, and establish direct links with relevant senior Soviet authorities in the Ministry of Railways and Transport. Published sources provide no detail on what Shenyang's response was to the request, but the issue was effectively taken out of the Northeast Government's hands by Zhou Enlai who assumed personal responsibility.[163] Zhou appointed three new cadres to Manzhouli in November of 1950: Li Guang (李光), Zhao Decai (趙德才), and Huang Mingrui (黃鳴瑞).[164] The most senior, Huang, told all the cadres in Manzhouli that if trains were not unloaded within twenty-hour hours, heads would roll (不管有多大困難，24 小時內必須換裝完畢，否則，拿腦袋來見!).[165] Compounding the bottleneck was the fact that Manzhouli was also the gateway for most trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Zhou Enlai issued a directive that military freight took precedence, but local authorities continued to struggle without having a clear set of procedures, made worse by a near complete lack of cooperation and communication with Soviet counterparts across the border.[166]

[162] Ibid., 48.
[163] Ibid., 10-11.
[164] Ibid., 21.
[165] Ibid., 34.
[166] Ibid., 38-39.

In response to continued difficulties, on 9 December 1950 Zhou sent a new directive that placed the entire railway system and local administration of Manzhouli under military command, formally establishing a special-administrative area that remained in effect for the duration of the war until April 1953.[167] The new governing committee, set up on 17 January 1951, quickly adopted an overarching slogan for its work: "better personnel wait for trains than trains wait for personnel (寧可人等車，不要車等人)."[168] Although the committee answered to Zhou Enlai and the Central Government, the chairman coordinated with both Gao Gang and Lin Feng before commencing his work. While we have no record of Lin's specific instructions, Gao told the committee head Yuan Xianqian (原憲千) to smoothly manage Sino-Soviet relations in his capacity.[169] On their end, the Soviets sent experts from the Changchun railway, including A. Vasiliev who was no stranger to Chinese rail.[170] Vasiliev, despite his relatively advanced age, braved the elements and actively resolved issues as their arose on the tracks, pushing the Soviet end of the bureaucracy to be more nimble and accommodating to conditions in Manzhouli.[171]

Once the conflict became a war of attrition, the PVA needed even larger uninterrupted shipments of various ammunition and artillery shells that could not be produced in China. In order to meet the influx of Soviet aid (15,298 train cars during four months from late 1950 to early 1951), an enlarged station, two new platforms, a new depot, and other infrastructure was hastily built.[172] Better infrastructure was combined with a new customs system dubbed "One pass, non-stop travel (一票直達)." Adopted on 1 April 1951, the new system was intended to do

[167] Ibid., 39.
[168] Ibid., 43.
[169] Ibid., 40-41.
[170] *Soviet Experts in the Northeast (蘇聯專家在東北*). Dongbei renmin chubanshe. 1953, 51-56.
[171] Xu, Zhanxin (徐占信), 43.
[172] Ibid., 42; infrastructure improvements Ibid., 58-59.

away with onerous paperwork and reduce the unloading time to eight hours for regular trains and four hours for priority shipments.[173]

	Artillery	Anti-aircraft guns	Trucks & Motorcycles	Observation Equipment	Communication Equipment
1950	**2110**	**2736**	**3301**	**18 types**	**8 types**
1951	**3286**		**3286**	**18 types**	**6 types**
	(100-200mm heavy artillery, rocket artillery, mountain guns, anti-tank guns, field guns)				

Figure 11: Chinese Arms Imports from the USSR)[174]

Despite the administrative reorganization and the creation of an expedited customs corridor, train car pile ups continued to occasionally occur, leading to military delays in Korea. Delays offloading freight on 11 July 1951 led to the postponement of the 6th offensive and once again required Zhou Enlai's direct intercession.[175] That same summer, miscommunication resulted in just 589 tons of explosives being delivered instead of the 1,000 ordered by frontline commanders.[176] Pileup of military goods did not go unnoticed by Soviet leadership either. On 10 September 1951, the head of the KGB, Lavrentiy Beria, received a report about such an incident on 15 August 1951 that led to 4,500 train cars left idling.[177] The Soviets responded with both dismissals of some Soviet railway personnel and an official note to the Chinese government

[173] Ibid., 46.
[174] Ibid., 29.
[175] Ibid., 62-63.
[176] Ibid., 50.
[177] "Incident on Sino-Soviet Border at Manzhouli." 10 September 1951. RGASPI. Molotov Collection. Fond. 82, Opis. 2, Delo. 1262.

demanding immediate action.[178] In a different instance, a 1,000 car pileup of aid destined for North Korea was resolved only after Pyongyang officials complained directly to Stalin who in turn telegraphed Beijing.[179] Such incidents show that not only did Manzhouli cadres find themselves working in a difficult international setting with pressure coming from the Northeast Government, Beijing, Pyongyang, and Moscow but also that Manzhouli was of such crucial importance to the war effort that senior leadership both in the CCP and the CPSU were personally involved in administrative and logistical matters throughout the war.

Throughout the war, Manzhouli was also impacted by the "Three and Five antis" campaigns discussed in the previous chapter, with cadres arrested both for corruption and suspected sabotage.[180] It is impossible to accurately quantify the extent to which politically caused disruptions along with infrastructure hurdles in Manchuria impeded the war effort. The delays undoubtedly cost the lives of PVA soldiers, but Zhang Mingyuan's memoirs and other sources attest to confusion and delays closer to the front that were just as serious and stubborn to fix. By 1953, more than 5.6 million tons of materiel had transited through Manzhouli according to official Chinese statistics showing that challenges notwithstanding, Manzhouli played a huge role in the modernization and arming of China's forces in Korea.[181]

Conclusion:

On 19 May 1952, *Time* magazine ran a feature article on Gao Gang and Manchuria, called "North of the Great Wall." Gao Gang, described as a "stolid, square-faced communist" and "one of Asia's most powerful men" was cast as presiding over Manchuria that served as:

[178] Ibid.
[179] Xu, Zhanxin (徐占信), 38-39.
[180] Ibid., 143-146.
[181] Ibid., 10.

"the arsenal, supply depot and staging area for Chinese armies in Korea, and the constantly expanding haven of the 1,500-plane Red Chinese air force which hovers buzzard-like over the stalemate in Korea."[182] Western media attention paid to Manchuria and Gao Gang in particular illustrates how the Korean War and the "Resist America Aid Korea" campaign helped elevate both Gao and the Northeast Government to its zenith of prominence and political importance that stretched beyond of Manchuria's and even China's borders.

As argued in the chapter, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA) relied almost entirely on Manchuria for its rear area logistics, including everything from food supply and evacuating the wounded to receiving and servicing Soviet military aid. Such a supply and logistics effort was a gargantuan challenge for the CCP, which had never previously fought a war on foreign soil. A fact that has been underappreciated by historians studying the Korean War, the difficulty in feeding, clothing, and arming a million plus strong force under constant enemy air attacks led to considerable experimentation, and delegation of authority by the party center to the Northeast Government and Gao Gang specifically. Armed with broader powers, the Northeast Government launched a large scale public fundraising campaign that eventually became a national campaign. In order to address systemic problems in railway logistics, the border city of Manzhouli was given special administrative status- a first in PRC history.

Despite making progress throughout the war, the measures taken were at best a qualified success. The home front effort to supply the PVA with adequate clothing, food, medical care, and even ammunition fell well short of the needs of the troops or what was provided to the U.N. side. Efforts to move industry to the Manchurian hinterland and the climate of fear stoked by the government via political campaigns to discover spies and saboteurs resulted in production

[182]; Hirata Dissertation, 131.

disruptions. The exclusion of KMT and Manchukuo era experts at a time when expertise was badly needed and in short supply was a needless additional burden.

Where the Northeast Government succeeded was winning the propaganda battle. The Resist America Aid Korea campaign made the workers toiling on the home front into heroes, while casting the United States as a savage aggressor willing to even use biological warfare. The effective portrayal of logistical successes, even if they were inflated, went a long way towards increasing the prestige of the CCP and the Northeast Government.

The war also influenced economic planning, with plans for 1951-1952 emphasizing armament production and heavy industry at the expense of consumer goods. The stimulus for the Manchurian defense industry continued into the First Five Year Plan which was launched after the war in 1954. Despite the shift from peaceful economic reconstruction to military production, private capital continued to play an important role in meeting the needs of the PVA. On the political front, the war turned out to be the high water mark for the Northeast Government. In late 1952, as armistice talks resumed, Gao Gang was transferred from Shenyang to Beijing, to head the newly created State Planning Commission (SPC). He was succeeded in the Northeast by one of his long-time rivals, Lin Feng. Two years later, Gao Gang would be purged and the Northeast Government dissolved in the reorganization of the PRC government in 1954. For the first time perhaps since the late years of the Qing Dynasty, “north of the Great Wall” ceased to be a distinction of any political meaning.

Epilogue:

Gao Gang Affair and the end of the Northeast Government

On 6 February 1954, Zhou Enlai delivered a scathing report that would come to stun alike the Chinese Communist Party, fraternal communist parties, and China watchers abroad.[1] Zhou Enlai accused Gao Gang, then Vice-Chairman of the Central People's Government Council and the Vice-Chairman of the People's Revolutionary Military Council, of ten major crimes. The first and implicitly most serious crime was that Gao Gang spread heretical views of "political power grows out of the barrel of the gun" and "Red-White areas" theory.[2] The additional charges were:

2. Gao engaged in factionalism and opposed the central committee leadership.
3. Gao spread rumors and instigated interparty disunity.
4. Gao carried out a factional cadre policy, privately promised cadres official posts.
5. Gao treated [Manchuria] as his personal property and independent fiefdom (獨立王國).
6. Gao falsely acted in the name of the center, undermined the trust and authority of the party center.
7. Gao plagiarized the work of others, presented the work as his, hoodwinked and deceived the party center.
8. On Sino-Soviet relations, Gao stirred up trouble and undermined Sino-Soviet unity.
9. Gao carried out efforts to seize state and party power through plots.
10. Gao led a degenerate private life.[3]

The multitude of charges, their broad scope and severity, and the evoking of personal character flaws sent a clear signal that Gao Gang's career was finished. According to official accounts, Gao had conspired with Rao Shushi, the head of Shanghai and the East China People's

[1] The public 18 February Communique on the 4th Plenum did not mention Gao or Rao by name, and only made an appeal to party unity. The first public comment on the purge did not come until March of 1955 when Gao Gang was posthumously expelled from the party.
[2] Although the gun quote is Mao's famous axiom, it has a less quoted corollary, that the party must always firmly wield the gun; Zhou accused Gao of inverting this and placing the military (red areas were those with leaders from a military background) in charge of the party.
[3] Teiwes, Frederick C. *Politics at Mao's Court: Gao Gang and Party Factionalism in the Early 1950s*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1990, 240-243.

Government, to remove Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai.[4] The 1955 resolution on the incident states that Gao spent the summer and fall of 1953 traveling across China meeting senior officials and attempted to entice them to join the plot. Gao specifically hoped to gain support from other regional heads with military backgrounds—so called red area leaders— with posts in a new government. Despite having no previous relationship with Gao, Rao Shushi allegedly became a willing accomplice because he too harbored dreams of elevating his position and wanted to cover up his record of failure in Shanghai.[5]

As Gao canvassed senior leaders, Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping informed Mao of Gao's activities who then moved with alacrity to deal with this serious threat to party unity. During the Cultural Revolution, after the Lin Biao incident, Lin was somewhat crudely grafted on to the Gao-Rao plot.[6] Recalling in 1980, Deng Xiaoping said that Gao would not have dared to strike so high [Liu Shaoqi] without having Lin Biao's support.[7]

Scholars working both inside and outside of China have pieced together more details of Gao's activity after moving to Beijing from the Northeast in late 1952.[8] Most crucially, Mao had voiced his displeasure over how both Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai were handling economic matters such as the First Five Year Plan and tax policy to Gao; likely giving Gao the impression

[4] See 31 March 1955 "Resolution on the Gao-Rao Anti-Party Alliance (關於高崗、饒漱石反黨聯盟的決議)" in CCP Party School. "Historical Reference Materials of the Chinese Communist Party (中共黨史參考資料) Volume 20." Beijing, 536-538.
[5] Ibid.
[6] On 12-13 September 1971 Lin Biao, his wife, and several close aides died in a mysterious plane crash in Mongolia. According to the official line, Lin had attempted to bomb Mao's train and seize power (571 incident) and tried to flee to the Soviet Union when the plot failed. Documents from the KGB investigation of the wreckage remain classified but in the 1990s details emerged that the plane had turned around before crashing.
[7] Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平). *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平文選) Volume 2.* Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1994, 293-294.
[8] For latest scholarship see: Lin, Yunhui (林蘊輝). *Reexamining Gao-Rao Incident (*重考高崗饒漱石'反黨'事件). Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2017.

that Mao wanted to sideline them.[9] From June to August 1953, in an action that undoubtedly had Mao's full blessing, both Gao and Rao vituperatively attacked the Finance Minister Bo Yibo over his tax proposal. The attacks forced substantive changes on how state-owned enterprises were taxed (the original plan hurt Manchurian SOEs) and prompted both Liu Shaoqi and Zhou to make mild self-criticisms. It is also now known that the man who informed on Gao and subsequently took great pains to minimize the extent of their cooperation in the Northeast, Chen Yun, had maintained close contact with Gao throughout 1952-53 and may have encouraged him to challenge Liu Shaoqi.[10]

Shocking as it was, the February plenum was a grand display of political theater. Mao had already criticized Gao behind closed doors in a December 1953 politburo meeting for undermining party unity by running a "second party command headquarters."[11] Shortly thereafter, Mao tasked Liu Shaoqi with organizing the plenum and preparing the take down of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi, but chose to not be directly associated with the purge. The charges that emerged apparently were a tough sell within the party. So much that a year later, when Gao was posthumously stripped of his party membership at the 5th National Congress of the CCP, Mao explicitly refuted "false notions" circulating among the cadres that the wrongs committed by Gao were not serious and that Gao and Rao were not really in an "anti-party alliance."[12]

The nature of Gao's activities between the politburo meeting and the February plenum are a mystery; according to several accounts Gao desperately sought an audience with Mao but

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[9] Tewies, 42-43.
[10] Ma, Ya (馬雅). *A Strong Wind Scatters Clouds: Ma Hong Biography 大風起兮: 馬洪傳：中共高層政爭內幕*. Hong Kong. 2014; Zhao, Jialiang (趙家梁), and Zhang Xiaoji (張曉霽). *Gao Gang in Beijing (高崗在北京)*. Hong Kong: Dafeng chubanshe, 2009.
[11] Tewies, 119-120.
[12] Mao Zedong (毛澤東). *Selected Works of Mao Zedong (毛澤東選集) Volume 5.* Beijing, 1977, 138-156.

was ignored.[13] On 17 of February, Gao attempted to shoot himself but failed.[14] Although it is generally accepted that Gao did indeed eventually commit suicide, the timing and circumstances of the preceding attempts remain murky.

On 25 February 1954, Zhou Enlai delivered the concluding remarks for the plenum. By then other party members, most notably Chen Yun, had spoken denouncing Gao Gang. Almost two months would pass before Gao Gang submitted his 20-30,000 character self-criticism (我的反省) where he explained his actions and stated that his differences with Liu Shaoqi had only been those of policy.[15] Although the self-criticism has been referenced in several secondary sources including Gao's biography that was heavily cited in this dissertation, the full text has not been made public.

The day before Gao Gang handed over his final written defense, 28 April, five close allies in the Northeast Government—three of whom are no strangers to the reader—all lost their jobs.[16] The so called "Five Tiger Generals (五虎上將)": Ma Hong (馬洪), Zhang Mingyuan (張明遠), Zhang Xiushan (張秀山), Guo Feng (郭峰), Zhao Dezun (趙德尊) were not only Gao protégés but also key cadres with enormous functional experience within the Northeast Government. Ma Hong was the secretary of the State Planning Commission and one of China's most talented economists; Zhang Mingyuan was the Northeast third deputy secretary and one of the heroes of the Korean War; Zhang Xiushan was the second deputy secretary and in charge of

[13] Teiwes, Frederick C. *Politics and Purges in China: Rectification and the Decline of Party Norms, 1950-65*. 2018.
[14] Lin Yunhui, 27.
[15] Dai, Maolin (戴茂林), and Xiaoguang Zhao (趙曉光). *Gao Gang Biography (高崗傳)*. Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2011, 178.
[16] Ibid., 389.

propaganda work; Guo Feng was the head of the Northeast Orgburo in charge of cadre policy; Zhao Dezun was the general secretary of the Northeast after Gao left and the head of the agriculture department.

The local winner in this shakeup was Lin Feng, Gao's longtime rival and brief successor as Northeast head. Lin Feng chaired the Northeast politburo meetings on the Gao-Rao affair in 1954 and received Zhou Enlai in Shenyang when the latter arrived to inspect the results of the Gao-Rao purge in Manchuria.[17] In one struggle session, Lin described Gao in the following manner:

> *Gao Gang has become a traitor of the Party, the public enemy of the people; his criminal deeds of sky-high proportion cannot be tolerated by the party discipline and the nation's law.*[18]

Shortly thereafter Lin was promoted to Beijing to be the Vice-Secretary of the Central Committee, reporting directly to his old patron Liu Shaoqi. In August of 1954, the Northeast Government along with other regional governments was abolished. The widely accepted reason for the reorganization was that no regional leader could ever again amass the kind of power and influence Gao Gang wielded.[19] Under direct control from the central government in Beijing, key posts managing Manchuria's industry and agriculture were filled with cadres who lacked the political clout of Zhang Wentian, Ma Hong, or Zhang Mingyuan. Although Manchuria continued to figure prominently in subsequent Chinese five year plans due to its industrial base, it ceased to

[17] Sheng, M. 2011. Mao and Chinese Elite Politics in the 1950s: The Gao Gang Affair Revisited. *Twentieth-Century China 36*(1), 67-96, 94.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Interview with Han Gang, Fall 2019 Washington, DC.

be a laboratory for new or innovative economic policies. Instead the large northeast state-owned enterprises became synonymous with economic conservatism in China.[20]

Role of Manchuria in the Affair

The thorough purge of the Northeast Government and the charge that Gao Gang ran Manchuria as his personal fiefdom raises the question to what extent did Gao's tenure in Manchuria play a role in his downfall. The other related unknowns are the circumstances behind Gao's transfer to Beijing from Shenyang in late 1952. Given the paucity of definitive sources, some speculation is unavoidable, but more evidence exists than has been previously assumed that suggests the affair had little to do with Gao's role in the Northeast Government.

The Australian historian Warren Sun who has studied Gao Gang extensively argues that Gao's dispatch to Beijing, along with other "tigers" like Deng Xiaoping, Xi Jinping's father Xi Zhongxun, and Rao Shushi was not a demotion. In 1952-3, while the political and administrative structure of the young new state was still maturing, it was already clear to those with ambition that the party center was where real power would lie.[21] It should be noted that Rao, Deng Xiaoping, Deng Zihui, and by 1962 even Xi were all purged at one point, suggesting that after years of accruing local power the adjustment to Beijing court politics was a perilous one not just for Gao Gang.[22]

According to Sun, the cause of Gao Gang's downfall is to be found not in Manchuria or the early months of 1953 which saw the recall of Peng Dehuai to Beijing, the end of the Korean

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[20] Hirata, Koji. "*Steel Metropolis: Industrial Manchuria and the Making of Chinese Socialism, 1916-1964*." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2018, 380.
[21] Interview with Warren Sun, Summer 2019 Melbourne, Australia.
[22] See Teiwes, Frederick C., and Warren Sun. *The Politics of Agricultural Cooperativization in China: Mao, Deng Zihui, and the "High Tide" of 1955*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993 and Pantsov, Alexander, and Steven I. Levine. *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

War, and the death of Stalin, but instead the fall and winter of 1953. In Sun's view, Gao would not have attempted whatever shadow campaign took place without at least a tacit approval from Mao.[23] The centrality of Mao to the story has also been argued by Teiwes and Michael Sheng.

According to Ma Hong's daughter Ma Ya (馬雅), although Gao was arguably the most junior of the six Vice Premiers, his office was the closest to Mao and they spoke frequently.[24] Gao was in high spirits and under the impression that he enjoyed Mao's unique confidence. Gao's Beijing secretary, Zhao Jialiang (趙家梁), recounts that sometimes Zhou Enlai put Gao second on the distribution list for sensitive documents, behind only Mao and ahead of Liu Shaoqi and others in the politburo standing committee.[25] This was immediately flagged as something politically very dangerous and Zhao counseled Gao to take this up with Zhou Enlai.

Lin Yunhui, the preeminent scholar of Gao Gang in China, also argues that Manchuria played only a marginal role in Gao's downfall. Lin makes the case that immediately upon arriving in Beijing, Gao rose in stature to be the third-fourth most powerful person in the CCP and that he was a victim of a struggle for power. More controversially, in his works and in my interview with him, Lin asserts that Mao regretted Gao's death and felt the 1954 purge went too far.[26] Gao was never going to retain his posts, but he had a future with the party. If the official narrative of three suicide attempts is to be believed, it is unlikely that Mao did not realize the full gravity of the situation. Given that Gao's alleged accomplice Rao Shushi was jailed for the

[23] Interview with Warren Sun, Summer 2019 Melbourne, Australia.
[24] *A Strong Wind Scatters Clouds: Ma Hong Biography 大風起兮: 馬洪傳：中共高層政爭內幕.*
[25] Yang Jisheng(楊繼繩). Gao Gang's Secretary Discusses 'Gao Gang Incident' (高崗秘書談「高崗事件」). YHCQ: 2013 Issue 6. http://www.yhcqw.com/50/9167_4.html (Accessed 18 May 2020).
[26] Lin Yunhui, 252.

remainder of his life where he developed schizophrenia, it is hard to believe Gao's fate would have been any less bleak.[27]

Soviet sources tell a different story. The Soviet diplomat Andrei Ledovsky recounts in his book that Gao was dejected about the impending move to Beijing. During their last meeting in Shenyang in late 1952, Gao was extremely gloomy and all but said he had no interest in heading the State Planning Commission.[28] Not mentioned in Ledovsky's book, a highly confidential report written by Ledovsky on 11 June 1952 states Gao had just been unofficially notified about moving to Beijing. Gao then said this was engineered by Liu Shaoqi, Peng Zhen, Bo Yibo, and Li Fuchun because they were opposed to his criticism of rich peasants and of his stance on the Korean War (no elaboration given). In addition, Liu took issue with Gao's close ties with the Soviets in Manchuria.[29] Nor was Gao in high spirits during his final visit to the Soviet Union in 1953, at the height of his putative party coup planning. If Ledovsky's account of that encounter is to be believed, Gao ominously intimated that this would be his last visit to Moscow: suggesting that Gao felt he was in personal danger much earlier than the February 1954 denunciation.[30]

According to the historian Chen Jian, Mao did not inform the Soviets of the entire affair until two weeks after the plenum, something that would have been unthinkable just a year earlier when Stalin was still alive.[31] When Mao did invite Ambassador Yudin on 26 March 1954 to

[27] Author Unknown. Rao Shushi (饒漱石). Wikipedia. https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/饶漱石 (Accessed 18 May 2020).
[28] Ledovsky, Andrei. *Delo Gao Gana,* 1990, 112-113.
[29] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 82.
[30] Ledovsky, 115.
[31] Chen, Jian. *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, 64.

officially inform the Soviets of the Gao-Rao affair, Mao was cryptic in his assessment of what transpired:

> *"Mao said that for a long time it was felt that both within the party and outside it something had not been right. There was a feeling as if an earthquake was taking place, with tremors breaking out sometimes here, sometimes there, but it was impossible to say where the epicenter was located. This became particularly evident in June-July of last year, when the CCP CC convened a conference on financial and economic matters. Then, from July to December of 1953, it became more strongly felt that two centers existed within the party, one being the party's Central Committee, but the other invisible and underground. The tremors began to be felt even more strongly in the party. After 24 December, when this question was discussed in the Politburo, many things became clearer. Now we know where this was all coming from. However, that does not mean that an earthquake cannot occur in another place."*[32]

Mao made no mention of Manchuria, but he stated that Gao concealed details from his final visit to the USSR about the Beria plot and CPSU developments from the CCP party center and that his plotting intensified immediately upon his return from the USSR.[33] This may well have been a veiled message to Moscow to stay out of CCP internal affairs, suggesting that a Soviet factor was present in Gao's downfall after all.

Myth and Rumor around the Gao-Rao Affair

[32] "Pavel Yudin: Memorandum of Conversation with Mao Zedong, 26 March 1954." 31 March 1954. AVPRF. Ambassadors' Journals. Fond. 06, Opis. 13a, Papka. 39, Delo. 227, List. 1-5. Available online at: https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111360 (Accessed 14 May 2020).
[33] Ibid.

Whether in serious academic works or Hong Kong tabloid "wild histories," accounts of Gao Gang are replete with the most brazen of stories—putting any prince from the Warring States Period to shame. On one occasion Gao Gang purportedly offered Manchuria to be the 17th Soviet Republic; when Mao traveled to Moscow for the first time to meet the boss of world communism, he learned that an entire train car was loaded with gifts from Gao Gang to Stalin. Mao is said to have immediately ordered the train car detached.[34] Without informing the central committee, Gao struck a barter trade deal with the Soviets just for the Northeast.[35] And most egregious of all, there was the alleged portrait incident that is told in two different versions.

In what has become CCP lore, Mao was reportedly incensed that he saw portraits of Stalin and Gao on every train station platform in the northeast as he made his way from Beijing to Moscow. The story is almost certainly apocryphal. For one, there is a telegram from Mao to none other than Gao Gang opposing the erection of a bronze Mao statue in Shenyang, suggesting that the Northeast Government was hardly neglecting Mao's burgeoning cult of personality.[36] Second, while the *Northeast Daily* at the time did indeed have extensive fawning coverage of Stalin and the Soviet Union, this was the case with all regional dailies. A comprehensive survey of the newspaper from 1948 to 1953 shows that Mao was featured more frequently and just as prominently as Stalin while Gao's portrait was always smaller and rarely on the front page. Some accounts state that it wasn't even Mao who saw the portraits in question but a CCP-friendly

[34] Heinzig, Dieter. *The Soviet Union and Communist China 1945-1950: The Arduous Road to the Alliance*. 2015, 216.
[35] China News, "Red Purge Gets Under Way." 1 August 1954. https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=4&post=6430 (Accessed on 4 May 2020).
[36]See telegram from 30 May 1950: Xue, Junfu (薛俊富), An Wenming (安文明). *Selected Gao Gang Letters and Telegrams (高崗同志書信電選集)*. Huaxia Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2013.

delegation of Hong Kong merchants who traveled to Manchuria in 1949.[37] Lastly, upon returning from Moscow, Mao delivered an unusual speech in Shenyang cautioning against the rise of a "red aristocracy (富二代)" and congratulated Gao and the Northeast Bureau for being "simple and honest."[38]

There is no smoke without a fire, and Gao did commit at least one diplomatic transgression by congratulating Stalin without Beijing's approval. Overriding the objections of the chief editor, the *Northeast Daily* printed a congratulatory note drafted by Gao's office for Stalin's 70th birthday without clearing it with Beijing. Once the relevant authorities were alerted in the middle of the night, Beijing ordered the newspapers to be collected, destroyed, and a new version in-line with Xinhua's celebratory message printed.[39] Since it is not currently possible to compare the two versions, we are left to guess if substantive differences truly existed between what Gao had authored and the approved version.

Gao Gang continues to be a sensitive figure for the CCP because the impact of the Gao-Rao incident was extremely far reaching. During the Cultural Revolution, Gao Gang was evoked in criticisms of Lin Biao, suggesting in turn that Lin played at least some role in Gao's political maneuvering in 1953.[40] Deng Xiaoping not only delivered the final *coup de grace* in 1955 when after his remarks he recommended Gao Gang be posthumously kicked out of the party, he purportedly blocked an effort by the reform-minded Hu Yaobang to pardon and rehabilitate Gao

[37] Li Su (李肅). "Taboo History: Mao Zedong Abandoned Gao Gang.(禁忌史話：毛澤東拋棄高崗)." Youtube. 26 January 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3khzn2XLzQ0 (Accessed 18 May 2020).
[38] Zhang, Mingyuan (張明遠). *Wo de hui yi (我的回憶)*. Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2004.
[39] Ibid., 311.
[40] See *Politics at Mao's Court: Gao Gang and Party Factionalism in the Early 1950s* and Author unknown. *Condemn Lin Biao's Crimes in the Northeast during the Liberation War* (批判林彪在東北解放戰爭時期的罪行). Liaoning People's Press, 1974.

in the 1980s.[41] Even more tantalizing, Xi Jinping's father Xi Zhongxun was nominally purged in 1962 for attempting to rehabilitate Gao Gang through support for a biography of another Shaanxi communist leader.[42] The elder Xi and Gao were well acquainted from their Shaanxi days and it is a near given that China's current paramount leader Xi Jinping is well aware of the shadow that Gao cast over his family for years after Xi Zhongxun's 1962 purge.



Figure 12: Gao Gang, He Long, and Li Lisan. Source: Gao Gang Personal File

[41] Chen, Dameng (陳大蒙), and Zhao Shiqiu (趙世秋). *Reexamining Gao Gang's Crime (高崗罪案重審)*.Taipei: Lingxiu chuban, 2014.
[42] Macfarquhar, Roderick, and Michael Schoenhals. *Mao's Last Revolution*. 2008.

Did Gao's Personal Character Doom him?

Described as hot-tempered, gruff, and highly-ambitious, Gao Gang's rapid rise in the party inevitably created enemies.[43] Gao's official biographers recount that Gao was not able to resist the temptation of moving into the ostentatious residence of the old Zhang family warlords in Shenyang while preaching modesty to Northeast cadres.[44] Bo Yibo, who Gao attacked, wrote a letter to the Central Committee in 1952 detailing allegations of corruption within the Northeast Government.[45] Most troubling, there are allegations Gao was a rapist, a charge his personal secretary Zhao Jialiang vehemently denies.[46]

As inferred from the 1954 charges, another blight on Gao's reputation was his tendency to appropriate the work of others as his own. Zhao Jialiang remembers that party cadres at a meeting of the state planning commission attended by Mao were incredulous when Gao presented complex economic analysis as his.[47] Given that all senior cadres had their speeches prepared and that Gao employed the extremely talented and capable Ma Hong and had maintained close ties with Zhang Wentian, this could be another post-facto politically motivated denigration.

While Gao Gang was charismatic, he was apparently a poor judge of character. The Chinese historian Han Gang has said that Gao's biggest rival was Chen Yun, not Liu Shaoqi—

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[43] See Yang Shangkun (楊尚昆). "Recalling the Gao Gao Incident (回憶高饒事件)." Aisixiang. 30 January 2015. http://www.aisixiang.com/data/83330.html (Accessed 18 May 2020).

[44] Dai, Maolin (戴茂林), and Xiaoguang Zhao (趙曉光), 235-236.

[45] *Reexamining Gao Gang's Crime (高崗罪案重審).*

[46] Li, Nanyang (李南央). *My Father Li Rui (我的父親李銳).* 2014; denied in *Gao Gang's Secretary Discusses 'Gao Gang Incident' (高崗秘書談「高崗事件」).*

[47] *Gao Gang's Secretary Discusses 'Gao Gang Incident' (高崗秘書談「高崗事件」).*

something that Gao may have realized only when Chen denounced him in 1954.[48] Chen and Gao worked together in the Northeast during the difficult early days of the Northeast Bureau. There they penned a joint report to the Central Committee advocating a flexible line towards the bourgeoisie and private capital, something Chen tried to expunge from party records well into the 1980s when he was one of the most influential politburo members of the CCP.[49] During the Korean War, when Chen Yun was working in Beijing, Gao spoke favorably of his work on price controls when Peng Dehuai complained why Chinese-made goods were so expensive for the PVA.[50]And most importantly, after Gao moved to Beijing, Chen was a frequent visitor at Gao's residence. According to Zhao, Chen mined Gao for information on Mao's thinking while actively encouraging Gao to seek an even greater role in the party. When it came time to denounce Gao, however, it was Chen Yun who accused Gao of being another Zhang Guotao, betraying Gao's trust in what must have been a particularly cruel and demoralizing moment.[51]

Zhao Jialiang's account while critiquing most of the charges against Gao as revisionist also debunks claims by Gao's widow that her husband was completely innocent.[52] Zhao's apparent objectivity makes his account both credible and highly valuable. Zhao himself told the editors of the independent-minded magazine *Yanhuang Chunqiu* (炎黃春秋) that only he, Guo

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[48] Interview with Han Gang, Fall 2019.

[49]Report in question see: Chen, Bocun (陳伯村) ed. *Zhang Wentian Selected Northeast Works (張聞天東北文選)*. Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1990, 2-5; for Chen Yun see He Fang (何方) "Remembering Zhang Peisen (懷念張培森)" YHCQ: 2015 Issue 7.

[50] Dai, Maolin (戴茂林), and Xiaoguang Zhao (趙曉光).

[51] Zhang Guotao fought with Mao over CCP leadership during the Long March, before leaving the party in 1938; for Chen Yun's remarks see Zhao, Jialiang (趙家梁), and Zhang Xiaoji (張曉霽). *Gao Gang in Beijing (高崗在北京)*. Hong Kong: Dafeng chubanshe, 2009.

[52] See "Since 1949: Gao Gang Widow's Cry of Grievance (1949 之後：高崗遺孀喊冤)." VOA Chinese. 28 December 2007. https://www.voachinese.com/a/a-21-w2007-12-28-voa61-58265657/1073623.html (Accessed 17 May 2020).

Feng, An Ziwen, who were still living at the time knew the full truth about the Gao-Rao affair.[53] Due to a lack of archival material, too much emphasis has been placed on memoirs and textual analysis of official statements made by party leaders such as Deng Xiaoping or Yang Shangkun at different junctures. Now that all the principal figures have deceased and the Gao-Rao incident is no longer within living memory, researchers will need to move beyond memoirs to ascertain what really transpired.

Understanding the Gao-Rao incident and Further Research

According to Zhao, the most damning allegation against Gao was that he essentially set up a shadow politburo and was actively scheming to remove Liu Shaoqi. In support of this, two pieces of evidence are offered: Gao's hutong alley was always crowded with cars and that upon returning from Moscow in 1953, Gao immediately convened a meeting of the state planning commission on Lunar New Year's Day.[54] That this highly circumstantial evidence made its way into the official charges against Gao gives a glimpse of how suspicious and rumor prone Beijing was just a few years into communist rule. Given that Gao chaired a nascent ministry that was tasked with implanting a planned economy for all of China and carrying out the country's first Five Year Plan, it would have been more surprising if Gao was not holding meetings and having chauffeurs wait late into the night.

On the second charge, Zhao argues that Gao would not have dared to buck convention without Mao's explicit approval. Moreover, it was Mao who likely instructed Gao to hold the meeting on New Year's Day. Whether the chairman organized the meeting in this fashion with

[53] Yang Jisheng(楊繼繩). Gao Gang's Secretary Discusses 'Gao Gang Incident' (高崗秘書談「高崗事件」). YHCQ: 2013 Volume 6. http://www.yhcqw.com/50/9167_4.html (Accessed 18 May 2020).
[54] Ibid.

an ulterior motive of sullying Gao depends on one's personal views on Mao's capacity for duplicity.

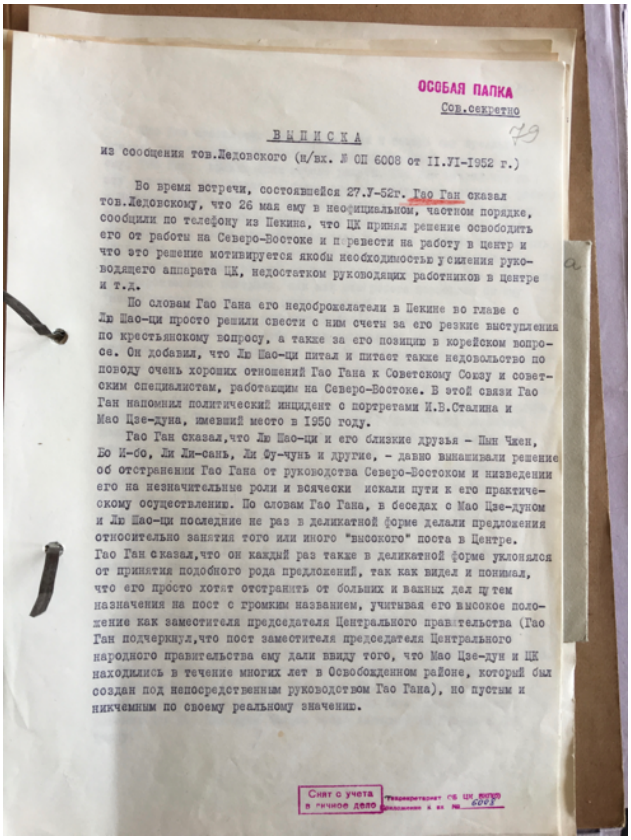
Gao's confession has not been made public nor has it been seen by any of the historians interviewed by the author. Although a document produced under great duress and motivated by an attempt to either save himself or his close associates cannot be taken entirely at face value, if Zhang Wentian's full self-criticism from 1943 that is available in the Russian RGASPI archive is any guide, Gao's self-criticism would offer crucial chronological and substantive details of Gao's activity and the extent to which Mao was aware and sanctioned it.

Gao's personal file at RGASPI has several reports written by Ledovsky that are crucial pieces of evidence because we have Ledovsky's book on the Gao Gang affair that was written towards the end of his life as an academic and here we have Ledovsky speaking as a young Soviet diplomat. Ledovsky recounts a conversation where Gao disparaged Rao Shushi as an ineffective, effete, intellectual.[55] Although politicians have been known to take back worse slights, Gao's dim view of Rao makes it unlikely that he saw him as the most capable accomplice for a highly risky internal power move. More tantalizing, another report states that serious differences arose between Gao and the CCP politburo over the Korean War and economic policy.[56] Unfortunately the report does not elaborate what those differences were, but we can speculate that in addition to the very decision to enter the war, disagreements over dispersing industry and treatment of rich peasants may have arisen.

The Soviet personal file has no evidence that Gao was a Soviet agent, a claim that appears in some Chinese secondary publications and in contemporary Taiwanese reports which

[55] "Gao Gang Personal File" RGASPI. Comintern Archive. Fond. 495, Opis. 225, Delo. 20, 88.
[56] Ibid., 65.

painted Gao as "Beria's man."[57] But absence of evidence is not enough for an acquittal in this case. Some of the documents, including Ledovsky's biography of Gao Gang, have markings that they were held in a separate, higher classification file until the 1970s.[58] It is conceivable, although unlikely that other reports were withheld even longer or destroyed. It is also possible that intelligence assessments on Gao were made by the KGB and not shared with the CPSU Central Committee personnel staff. More research is needed and consultation with the handful of researchers who have experience with KGB records in Moscow. Gao Gang's personal file in the Taiwanese intelligence archives, to say nothing of documents that may be in Beijing, are entirely off-limits.



ОСОБАЯ ПАПКА
Сов.секретно

ВЫПИСКА
из сообщения тов.Ледовского (в/вх. № ОП 6008 от II.VI-1952 г.)

Во время встречи, состоявшейся 27.V-52г. Гао Ган сказал тов.Ледовскому, что 26 мая ему в неофициальном, частном порядке, сообщили по телефону из Пекина, что ЦК принял решение освободить его от работы на Северо-Востоке и перевести на работу в центр и что это решение мотивируется якобы необходимостью усиления руководящего аппарата ЦК, недостатком руководящих работников в центре и т.д.

По словам Гао Гана его недоброжелатели в Пекине во главе с Лю Шао-ци просто решили свести с ним счеты за его резкие выступления по крестьянскому вопросу, а также за его позицию в корейском вопросе. Он добавил, что Лю Шао-ци питал и питает также недовольство по поводу очень хороших отношений Гао Гана к Советскому Союзу и советским специалистам, работающим на Северо-Востоке. В этой связи Гао Ган напомнил политический инцидент с портретами И.В.Сталина и Мао Цзе-дуна, имевший место в 1950 году.

Гао Ган сказал,что Лю Шао-ци и его близкие друзья – Пын Чжен, Бо И-бо, Ли Ли-сань, Ли Фу-чунь и другие, – давно вынашивали решение об отстранении Гао Гана от руководства Северо-Востоком и низведении его на незначительные роли и всячески искали пути к его практическому осуществлению. По словам Гао Гана, в беседах с Мао Цзе-дуном и Лю Шао-ци последние не раз в деликатной форме делали предложения относительно занятия того или иного "высокого" поста в Центре. Гао Ган сказал,что он каждый раз также в деликатной форме уклонялся от принятия подобного рода предложений, так как видел и понимал, что его просто хотят отстранить от больших и важных дел путем назначения на пост с громким названием, учитывая его высокое положение как заместителя председателя Центрального правительства (Гао Ган подчеркнул,что пост заместителя председателя Центрального народного правительства ему дали ввиду того, что Мао Цзе-дун и ЦК находились в течение многих лет в Освобожденном районе, который был создан под непосредственным руководством Гао Гана), но пустым и никчемным по своему реальному значению.

Снят с учета в личное дело

Figure 13: Ledovsky's report with "Special Folder" and "Return to Personal File" stamps

[57] China News, "*Red Purge Gets Under Way.*" 1 August 1954. https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=4&post=6430 (Accessed on 4 May 2020).
[58] Ibid., 82.

Although Ledovsky's book on the Gao-Rao affair is a rigorous academic work, it does have elements of a memoir posing the same problem as previously cited Chinese-language accounts. Ledovsky paints Gao in a principled and honorable light, but as someone who had profound differences with Mao over China's future trajectory; Ledovsky claims that Gao was against Mao's cult of personality and wanted a federal structure for the PRC that offered autonomy to various ethnic minorities. This portrayal of Gao Gang runs contrary to the evidence collected in this dissertation that Gao consistently stressed his personal loyalty to Mao. Stalin's personal representative to Mao, Ivan Kovalev, did not leave behind memoirs although he spoke with historians in the late Perestroika years. [59] Unfortunately he only discussed his role during the Second World War and Stalin's talks with Mao Zedong in Moscow so there is no current way to corroborate Ledovsky's claims that Kovalev told him Gao Gang wanted a federal structure for China with Manchuria being its own republic.[60] Most prominently, Khrushchev mentions Gao as a sincere friend of the Soviet Union sacrificed by Stalin to win Mao's trust.[61] Writing when he himself had been ousted, Khrushchev evoked Gao only to criticize Stalin's China policy and implicitly absolve himself of any responsibility for the subsequent collapse of Sino-Soviet relations. The common thread in all of the political memoirs written by Chinese and Soviet principals is that they use the Gao Gang story for their own ends kicking up more dust over what had actually transpired.

[59] Kovalev, I.V. "Answers to Professor G. A. Kumanev's Questions." 28 May 1988. http://militera.lib.ru/h/kymanev_ga2/11.html (Accessed 18 May 2020).
[60] Ledovsky, 30.
[61] Khrushchev, Nikita Sergejevič, and Sergei Nikitič Khrushchev. *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Vol. 3*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University, 2007, 343-344.

Conclusion

On 3 July 1966 U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk arrived in Taiwan for a two day visit to meet with Chiang Kai-shek and other senior KMT officials. With the Vietnam War escalating and Communist China descending into the abyss of the Cultural Revolution, Rusk hoped to get some clarity from his Nationalist interlocutors about what was happening in China. In one of the meetings, the younger Chiang, Minister of Defense Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), brought up Gao Gang. Chiang characterized the Cultural Revolution as a political rectification campaign, the third since 1949. Although the scale of the 1960s campaign was far greater, it shared a similar cause with Gao Gang's 1954 purge and the dismissal of Peng Dehuai in 1959. According to Chiang, in all three instances Mao wished to solidify his own control and do away with rivals without getting personally involved. With Gao, it was a question of an interparty challenge to Mao's authority. Peng represented the threat posed by the PLA to Mao after the disaster of the Great Leap Forward. Now, Mao was using the Cultural Revolution to flush out remaining foes.[1]



Figure 14: Dean Rusk with Chiang Ching-kuo in Taipei, July 1966.

[1] Chiang added nuance to his analysis by saying that unlike the first two rectifications, Mao was not completely in control of the situation in 1966; "(Wei Daoming's Preliminary Recorded Minutes of 4 July Meeting of CCK with Sec. State Rusk where Opinions on CCP Rectification were Exchanged.(魏道明函蔣經國檢奉於七月四日美國國務卿魯斯克來華期間與之就中共整肅事交換意見之初步整理完竣談話紀錄)." 20 July 1966. Academia Historica (國史館). Documents of President Chiang Ching-kuo. File: 005-010100-00067-002.

Even by 1966 Gao Gang and Manchuria of Gao's time seemed a world removed from China of Rusk's time, what more could be said after another half century? In 1945, Manchuria was an economic jewel, accounting for ninety percent of China's industrial capacity. In 1952, seven of the seventeen members of the inaugural PRC State Planning Commission (NDRC) had previously worked in Manchuria.[2] In 2020, the NDRC instead has a working group on northeast industrial revitalization: since the 1990s the region's "rustbelt" status has been widely acknowledged.[3] Gao Gang's pro-Soviet leanings and desire to emulate the Soviet Union at the time are equally anachronistic; Chiang told Rusk in 1966 that Mao's anti-Soviet policy was well entrenched and in-line with his goal to strengthen his own standing and also raise his personal prestige in the worldwide communist movement.[4] Today the Soviet Union is no more while China has long shifted its focus to advanced capitalist states.

First appearances can be deceiving. This dissertation has shown that Gao Gang and the Northeast Government left an indelible mark on the CCP and the PRC. When Gao first arrived in Manchuria in late 1945, it was far from certain that any Chinese entity—let alone the Communists—would be in charge of the region that had been effectively outside of intramural China's control since the late Qing Dynasty. The Northeast Government at once had to deal with a numerically superior and better equipped Nationalist Army, bandit groups, a suspicious local population, severe shortage of resources, and a depressed local economy. The precariousness of the Communist position was made worse by their own initial blunders of attempting radical land reform and industrial expropriation. Chaos and military setbacks allowed Gao Gang to assert

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[2] Hirata, Koji. "*Steel Metropolis: Industrial Manchuria and the Making of Chinese Socialism, 1916-1964*." PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2018, 385.
[3]NDRC, PRC. " https://en.ndrc.gov.cn/mfod_8236/200812/t20081218_1193969.html (Accessed 17 May 2020).
[4] "(Wei Daoming's Preliminary Recorded Minutes of 4 July Meeting of CCK with Sec. State Rusk where Opinions on CCP Rectification were Exchanged.(魏道明函蔣經國檢奉於七月四日美國國務卿魯斯克來華期間與之就中共整肅事交換意見之初步整理完竣談話紀錄)."

control and focus the Northeast Government on marshalling resources for the war effort. In addition to undoing leftist excesses, Gao was aided by the Soviets who had a vested interest in preventing Communist collapse in the Northeast.

Both western secondary literature such as Heinzig's *Arduous Road* and Chinese scholarship have stressed that Soviet involvement in the Chinese Civil War was minimal: the CCP relied on its own efforts aided by Nationalist ineptitude to win. The multi-archival, multi-lingual source base for this dissertation shows conclusively that Moscow was far more involved in the conflict than previously thought. The Soviets assisted the PLA in the vital realm of logistics, while also providing fuel, weapons, and ammunition. Soviet troops stationed in Dalian spied and disrupted Nationalist operations and even resorted to limited military actions to aid the Communists. It is true that Moscow did not sever relations with the Nationalist regime outright, but this was borne out of tactical considerations that had little or nothing to do with Stalin's personal opinion of Mao.

This dissertation has shown how Soviet assistance was used to modernize the PLA and aid the war effort first during the Chinese Civil War and then the Korean War. The effort also provided badly needed resources and expertise for industrial plants that had been cut off from their traditional links with Japan. But Soviet experts were carefully supervised by the CCP. Even in Manchuria, where the Soviet Union had a naval base in Dalian until 1955 and had developed some economic ties, the Soviets were not able to extend the kind of political influence that Soviet aid cast over Eastern Europe. Gao Gang and the Northeast Government were learning from the Soviet example on their terms, an experience that the CCP continues to apply in its contemporary relations with technologically more advanced states.

Even though Gao would not have been successful without Soviet aid, the Northeast Government was not interested in being a Soviet appanage. Sensitive of the region's infamy as the springboard for foreign aggression into China proper, Gao asserted CCP control over Manchuria by rapidly expanding the region's party apparatus, restricting the movement of capital, and placing Soviet economic assistance under firm Northeast Government control.

Furthermore, Gao Gang's affinity for the Soviets has been exaggerated. This ingrained image of Gao has completely concealed the Gao of historical record found in memoirs, archival documents, and his own speeches that were cited in this dissertation. Gao did not shy away from jostling with Soviet leaders over aid and their behavior in Manchuria. In addition to pressing Ledovsky and even Molotov for quicker deliveries of aid, the Chinese translator Shi Zhe (師哲)

who was present at the fateful July 1949 conference in Moscow, recalled that Gao was furious with the Soviets about their dismantling of Japanese industry in Manchuria. Among those who grew up on popular histories and political gossip, the story goes that Gao and Liu Shaoqi almost came to blows after Gao Gang offered to trade China's sovereignty; instead Shi claims it was Liu who prevented Gao from raising industrial theft with Stalin. [5]

Manchuria under Gao Gang's leadership represented a cacophony of new economic ideas: some followed Soviet and Marxist prescriptions, others were capitalist and nationalist in essence. War communism was abandoned in Manchuria far sooner than in Soviet Russia; industrial reconstruction was not funded through agricultural collectivization. This latter point is an important distinction overlooked in the secondary literature emphasizing the *Stalinization* of China's economy. When the experiment with equal land redistribution failed, the Northeast

[5] Heinzig, Dieter. *The Soviet Union and Communist China 1945-1950: The Arduous Road to the Alliance*. 2015, 215.

Government reintroduced old practices of favoring larger landholdings only thinly disguised in new rhetoric. After being battered by earlier waves of land redistribution, new rich peasants arose that did quite well for the standards of the day. Gao's reversal of radical land reform led to rural revival, but he could not shake his distrust of rich peasants even as they filled state coffers. In the cities, even as State-owned Enterprises (SOEs) were lauded, the government acknowledged the "active nature" of private capitalists and curbed labor demands for higher wages and shorter working hours. The overriding goal of the Northeast Government was increasing production to which even class interests could be subsumed. This is clearly seen in speeches and official documents of Zhang Wentian and Gao Gang. Such a trial-and-error approach would be a familiar description of post-1979 Reform and Opening China when economic liberalization officially began, but it also was the China of 1949.

While Manchuria's experience with economic reconstruction was praised publicly by Beijing's central committee and internally in publications like *Neibu cankao* as a model for the rest of China, the pragmatic approach of Gao Gang had its limits. The promise of "New Democracy" to create a broad-tent society that had a place for everyone dissatisfied with Nationalist rule proved to be short-lived. Although "New Democracy" was envisioned specifically for relatively affluent and socially stratified regions like the Northeast or Shanghai, Gao Gang treated it with suspicion. Instead the Northeast Government launched a violent campaign of persecution against accused counterrevolutionaries that was expanded into the 'Three and five antis" to target a wide swathe of former KMT officials, merchants, and private industrialists. In addition to causing death and suffering, the campaigns disrupted the CCP's own goals of economic reconstruction. Evidence gathered from Yanbian county records and other sources show that the actual threat posed to CCP rule in the Northeast was grossly inflated by the

party if not entirely imagined. When carrying out repression, the Northeast Government borrowed on earlier mass purges done in CCP-controlled areas, paving the way for Anti-Rightist repressions in the late 1950s and eventually the Cultural Revolution. Although Michael M. Sheng has questioned whether the campaigns in the Northeast predated the nation-wide efforts, Gao was first to report on his region's handling of suspected subversives. His efforts to capture "tigers" were personally praised by Mao and actively disseminated throughout the country—further elevating Gao's national stature in the process.

While the Northeast Government preoccupied itself with domestic matters, the outbreak of the Korean War made Manchuria a military region once more. During the Chinese Civil War, Manchuria proved to be decisive in defeating Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists. From 1950 to 1953, although the "Resist America Aid Korea" campaign was at times haphazard and came at a steep human and economic cost, the Northeast (in addition to Soviet assistance and resources from elsewhere in China) managed to provide just enough material to the Chinese troops to fight the U.S.-led U.N. troops to a draw. The war was a huge propaganda boost for Gao Gang personally and the new Chinese Communist state. During the war, Gao was able to maximize his independence from the party center. He employed the proven old tactic of representing a distant center in the periphery by explicit mandate that is a recurring theme in Chinese history. He was also aided by new means such as increasing his legitimacy via high-profile Soviet aid, meetings with Stalin, mass campaigns, and the press.

Both today and seventy years ago, power in the upper echelons of the party is derived from careful placement of loyal cadres. While in the Northeast, Gao identified and cultivated several highly capable cadres, chief amongst them Ma Hong and Zhang Mingyuan. Gao was also able to successfully work with Zhang Wentian, a man of a very different social and educational

background to Gao. At the same time, Gao's differences with Liu Shaoqi and his ally Lin Feng only deepened. According to official narrative, during the fall and winter of 1953 Gao plotted to remove Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai, triggering in the process the first major interparty conflict since the founding of the PRC. Chiang Ching-kuo in 1966 was correct: interparty competition within the CCP was fierce, indeed, just as it is today.[6]

Although it is unlikely that Gao was a marked man when he was transferred to Beijing in late 1952, the days of the Northeast Government's autonomy were numbered. Mao Zedong had always been weary of strong, politically independent leaders and once he defeated Chiang Kai-shek he was determined to recentralize authority in Beijing. Gao Gang's ouster in 1954 which led to the abolishment of regional governments only hastened the process.

As of 2020, Gao Gang has yet to be rehabilitated, despite the activism of his son and widow.[7] Although it has been almost seventy years, the party continues to treat the Gao-Rao Incident as a sensitive matter. At the very least, reappraising Gao Gang would invite unwelcome questions about Lin Biao and subsequent interparty conflicts. Until more evidence is released, the mystery behind his downfall will continue to overshadow and distort his administrative record in Manchuria, which represents a much more ineradicable contribution to the CCP.

[6] "(Wei Daoming's Preliminary Recorded Minutes of 4 July Meeting of CCK with Sec. State Rusk where Opinions on CCP Rectification were Exchanged)."
[7] "Since 1949: Gao Gang Widow's Cry of Grievance (1949 之後：高崗遺孀喊冤)." VOA Chinese. 28 December 2007. https://www.voachinese.com/a/a-21-w2007-12-28-voa61-58265657/1073623.html (Accessed 17 May 2020).

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