Governing the Chinese Soviet Republic: 1931–1934

The transfer of CCP Central Committee leadership from its threatened headquarters in Shanghai to Mao's domain in southern Jiangxi so obviously affected the balance of power in the Jiangxi base that an equally important change in the basis of revolutionary strategy is usually neglected. This change is associated with the proclamation of the Chinese Soviet Republic (csr) on November 8, 1931, the fourteenth anniversary of the Russian October Revolution. The rechristening of the Jiangxi Provincial Soviet elevated it to the status of a second sovereign power within China, an existing alternative to the kmt-controlled Republic of China. On a less implausible, but also unsuccessful level, it claimed to coordinate the efforts of the various dispersed soviets, of which Jiangxi (or, more precisely, the Central Soviet) was the largest. In fact it was the government of an area centered in southern Jiangxi and including the border counties of western Fujian and perhaps a contiguous area of Guangdong.

The peculiar character of the power relationships between Mao and the party leadership, and in particular between Mao and the disciples of Pavel Mili from Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow, who were known as the "Russian Returned Students" or the "Twenty-eight (or 28½) Bolsheviks," is an important aspect of the political environment of the csr. The idea of an open factional confrontation suggested by the term "power struggle" is incorrect. Mao's critics were his party superiors whom he had to obey, and they in turn usually avoided denouncing Mao by name while they flailed his policies and friends. Mao had always been a faithful, if distant, subordinate of the Central Committee since 1927, and this relationship did not change with their arrival in Jiangxi. Moreover, the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks espoused the principle of collective leadership and division of responsibilities, rejecting explicitly the patriarchal style of Chen Duxiu and the personal hegemony of Li Lisan. Since both the Comintern and the Central Committee were eager to maintain some continuity in Jiangxi leadership, Mao was a natural choice as administrative head of the new soviet government. Nevertheless, the arrival of the party leadership in Jiangxi had transformed and restricted Mao's leadership role, and throughout the short history of the Chinese Soviet Republic there persisted basic divergences of style and politics between Mao and the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks, although these were not articulated by Mao into an explicit confrontation until the Zunyi Conference of January 1935, when he was elected chairman of the Politburo.

The Twenty-eight Bolsheviks gained ascendancy in Shanghai at the Fourth Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee in January 1931 on the strength of their opposition to Li Lisan and their Comintern connections. However, the situation in Shanghai began to deteriorate rapidly. Later in January, twenty experienced party cadres were arrested by the kmt, and in April the kmt secret police scored a pivotal victory by capturing Gu Shuzhang, chief of security and liaison for the Central Committee. Gu divulged his vast knowledge of ccp personnel and operations to the kmt, thereby shattering the Central Committee's communications network. But the Central Committee had already decided to dispense itself to the soviet areas. The Comintern adjusted to the shift away from the cities by declaring in July 1931 that the Chinese revolution ranked first among colonial movements because of the presence of the Chinese soviets and the Red Army.

In Jiangxi, Mao's receptivity to the Central Committee's new attentions in 1931 must have been aided by their relatively mild reaction to the Futian Incident and by the recognition finally accorded to the importance of base areas. At first the transition went rather smoothly. Mao and Zhu De were members of the initial center control group, the Central Bureau. Most of 1931 was spent in defeating the Second and Third Encirclement and Suppression Campaigns. But in September the Central Committee issued a general critique of army and civil leadership in Jiangxi. The target, as this example makes clear, was obviously Mao:

Narrow empiricism in the Red Army has had a profound influence on practical work. It negates Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory
altogether, prompting one to view all questions from one's narrow, nearsighted experience. This is nothing but the backward ideology of the peasantry which will lead to the confusion of a nonclass line.8

This critical attitude toward the indigenous leadership was officially adopted by the First Party Congress of the Central Soviet Area in November 1931. The declaration of loyalty by the party in Jiangxi was part of the refounding of the Jiangxi base as the Chinese Soviet Republic. With the arrival of members of the Central Committee throughout 1932, criticism of the earlier leadership grew harsher.

The founding of the Chinese Soviet Republic was the result of optimism about the power of the soviets created by victories in the summer of 1931 and by the sudden availability of leaders of national and international stature. The pretensions of the CNS corresponded very well with the Stalinist background and proclivities of the Twenty-eighth Bolsheviks. The political status of the CNS mirrored in the Chinese microcosm the relationship of the Soviet Union to the rest of the world. As was the Soviet Union under Stalin's “socialism in one country” formula, the CNS was simultaneously the government of a specific territory defending its people, the presumed leader of the oppressed masses throughout China, and China's model of the socialist future. As implausible as this self-understanding was, its ideological transformation of the Jiangxi Soviet from the perimeters of revolutionary politics to the showcase of properly communist policy set the ideological environment of Jiangxi politics. The strategy of survival which Mao had already developed was criticized as peasant opportunism and storybook military tactics.

The effect of the arrival of the Central Committee and the establishment of the CNS on Mao's leadership role in Jiangxi was enormous. From autumn 1931 to autumn 1932, Mao's responsibilities changed from comprehensive military and political leadership of a base area to the chairmanship of the CNS government. The functions of ideological, party, and military leadership of Jiangxi were successively assumed by the Central Committee leadership. This was not simply a reduction of scope of Mao's role. In the first place, his integrated approach was incompatible with the division of authority; moreover, the CNS as an administrative entity was quite different from the previous base area leadership.

The First National Soviet Congress held in Nuijin (capital of the CNS) in November 1931 passed a whole body of comprehensive legislation, and it was Mao's new task to implement the soviet law. The effect of the First Congress is well summarized in a pamphlet, Soviet Political Power, written in January 1932:

The great achievement of this Congress has an exceptionally important significance in the history of the Chinese soviet movement. The Congress summarized the soviet's struggles, experience, and lessons over the past three or four years, pointed out earlier weaknesses and mistakes in the soviet movement, passed the constitution of the soviet as well as various laws, for instance the Labor Law, Land Law, Economic Policy, etc., and established the Chinese Soviet Republic. It set up the National Soviet Provisional Central Government, unified the leadership of the various soviet areas, and in this way encouraged the even more rapid forward development of the Chinese soviet movement.9

It is evident in this statement that although base area experience was not irrelevant, policy tasks would be defined by the new laws and administrative framework set up by the First Congress. As the chief administrator of this regime, Mao was charged with new duties of implementation. No longer was Mao's goal simply to maximize popular mobilization, and in fact there was a serious tension between the new administrative responsibilities and his previous ideal. The establishment of the CNS brought on a campaign to differentiate clearly at every level between the organization of the soviet government and that of the CNS.10 The high expectations of the comprehensive legislation adopted by the First Congress placed an unbearable strain on Mao's government apparatus, a strain which inevitably led to the mortal sin of Jinggangshan—a systemic estrangement of officials from the masses.

In coping with the resulting leadership crisis, Mao began to develop mass-oriented leadership techniques which were extensions of his earlier political principles to the problems of permanent and large-scale government. His new approach of reinforcing and utilizing an active and integrated political climate at the local level by means of carefully guided mobilizational campaigns was attempted for the first and only time during the Land Investigation Movement of 1933. The reemergence of distinctively Maoist politics in the Land Investigation Movement was seen by the
Twenty-eight Bolsheviks as a challenge and as a derailment of their proletarian politics. Mao’s position eroded rapidly in the first half of 1934, but with the loss of the CSSN in July-October (which could hardly be blamed on Mao) and the beginning of the Long March, Mao launched an extensive critique of the military tactics of the Jiangxi leadership which was adopted by the party at the Zunyi Conference of January 1935. In 1936, at the other end of the Long March in Northwest China, Mao extended his critique of military tactics into a comprehensive attack on the politics of the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks.

In sum, Mao’s political thought made major advances in the complex political situation of the CSSN particularly in the areas of government and administration. But the political situation after 1931 prevented continuity in his base area politics. In fact, it changed Mao’s leadership role from that of a distant subordinate with comprehensive discretion to that of a functionary under ideological supervision. Mao’s theoretical development consequently was repressed and not on a par with practical policy advances. As chairman of the Politburo from 1935 Mao was expected to provide comprehensive leadership, and in great contrast to the CSSN period he produced many theoretical overviews. But the Yanan writings were the triumph of Mao’s political paradigm, not its creation.

Socialism in One Soviet: The Policies of the CSR

As chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Chinese Soviet Republic, Mao was legal head of the Jiangxi government. All of its laws and pronouncements went out under his name and those of his cochairmen, Xiang Ying and Zhang Guotao. It is apparent, however, that Mao’s personal responsibility for drafting many of these laws was negligible. Still, his was the job of realizing the policies promulgated under his name, and so they form the context of his activities from 1932 to 1934 and are of particular importance for the first year and a half after the First National Soviet Congress.

Internal Policies

The internal policies of the Jiangxi Soviet were first aimed at creating a model socialist government for the area under communist control—both for that area’s sake and for the propaganda value such a model government would have for the rest of China. This self-conscious attitude of being a microcosm for China led those in charge of the First National Soviet Congress to formulate a whole battery of basic laws, a labor law, an election law, a land law, a statement on economic policies, and the like—all of which were disproportionate to the actual legal needs of the area administered. Moreover, the extreme ideological tension of Russia in the early 1930s was forcefully present in Jiangxi in the collective person of the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks, who both asserted and defended themselves in policymaking by a tendency toward doctrinaire formalism. As a result, and with the aid of the active interest of the Comintern, the Russian-educated party leaders can be considered the principal authors of the organic laws of the CSSN.

Unlike the slow evolution through practice of Mao’s land law, many parts of the soviets laws sprang full-blown from the collective head of the party and remained to be tested and modified in practice. This process of “legislation first, then experience” could also be contrasted with the policymaking process which resulted in what Mark Selden calls the Yanan Way. This involved the collation and evaluation of the diverse practices of various anti-Japanese bases, the sifted experience of which was formulated into general procedures.

Since others provide reasonably thorough descriptions of these major laws, I will not duplicate their efforts here. However, several aspects of Mao’s relationship to these laws are important matters for discussion. Despite the pretentiousness and inappropriateness of these laws in many respects, they were not merely for propaganda. In contrast to major sets of model legislation passed but mostly ignored by the KMT during the early 1930s, these organic laws were, for better or worse, the effective policy guidelines. Even the Labor Law, a monument to the rights of the industrial worker written from Comintern stipulations, was effective enough in its inappropriateness to merit a significantly revised new law in October 1933 and an addendum on temporary labor on 20 February 1934. This was true of the other major laws and also of the soviet administrative structure, which underwent at least four major organizational changes in 1932 and 1933.

An extremely important aspect of the Land Law is that the basic principle of land distribution (and hence of local politics) changes from Mao’s consistent target of equal distribution to one of elimination of the landlords, oppression of the rich peasants
correct except what is literally recorded in the Holy Writ. The national bourgeoisie is entirely and eternally counterrevolutionary. Not an inch must be conceded to the rich peasants. The yellow trade unions must be fought tooth and nail. If we shake hands with Cai Tingkai [leader of the Fujian Rebellion against Chiang Kai-shek in 1933-1934], we must call him a counterrevolutionary at the same moment."

Of course, during the csn period Mao was neither so articulate in his opposition to the "leftist" line nor was he so convinced of its incorrectness. On the other hand, he was not its author, and the development of his administration during the csn period tended to depart from the doctrinaire bureaucratic model supplied by the First National Congress and return to a locally based politics of mobilization. The undercurrent of conflict between Mao's mobilizational politics with its proclivity toward alliances and the ideology of regime purity guarded by the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks was, I think, the foundation for the political tension between the two.

The close relationship between the purity line and current Russian problems and Stalinist politics is clear. Stalin was interested in achieving a directed mobilization (industrialization) of a society where ideological and political control had been allowed to go to seed in the previous policy stage (the New Economic Policy). Within the Communist Party, Stalin wanted to consolidate a series of factional victories in order to establish personal hegemony. This dominant current in the Soviet Union affected Chinese Soviet politics in many ways. Despite the vast difference in political situations between the ussr and China, the purity line seemed plausible. Not only was it necessary for the Soviets to preserve their revolutionary identity in an unlikely and hostile environment, but there was now the opportunity to exercise local sovereignty provided by the first prolonged control of a fairly extensive base area. In retrospect, however, this line systematically tended to overemphasize or even absolutize the importance of the existing areas under communist control. The purity line thus led to an isolation of the Soviets from their political and social surroundings, a tendency to overestimate the strength and potential of the Soviets, and the overly defensive military posture which Mao devastatingly criticized in the Zunyi Resolution of January 1935. The watershed between the class purity and the alliance lines is evidently the Zunyi Conference of January 1935.
External Policies

The basic determinant of external policies was the Chinese Soviet Republic's view of itself:

From this day forth [1 December 1931] there will be two absolutely different states (guojia) within Chinese territory. One is the so-called Republic of China. It is the tool of imperialism, a government of the warlord, bureaucratic, and landlord classes used to oppress the laboring and miserable masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers... The other is the Chinese Soviet Republic, a state of the broad masses of exploited and oppressed masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers. Its banners are: smash imperialism, destroy the landlord class, overthrow the KMT warlord government, set up a Soviet government for all of China, fight for the interests of the several hundred million oppressed and exploited masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers and other exploited masses, fight for a genuine peace and the unity of the whole country.

From this self-understanding it can correctly be assumed that the external policies of the Jiangxi Soviet were a peculiar type of "foreign policy." Its desired audience was the population under KMT control; its target was KMT foreign affairs; and the issues were matters which it could have little direct influence on, primarily China-Japan relations. In contrast to the conciliatory policies of the KMT, the communists maintained a constant and vociferous opposition to Japanese encroachments from the fall of 1931 (the "Mukden Incident") until the exit from Jiangxi in late 1934 as the "march north to fight Japan."

There were two major developments in the attitude of the Chinese Soviet Republic toward Japan. The first was its declaration of war against Japan on 15 April 1932. This bore no immediate relationship to armed hostilities. In fact, in the declaration Chinese soviet troops are cautioned to attack first "KMT troops in collusion with imperialism." The declaration encourages spontaneous anti-Japanese mobilization within the soviets. The second development was a proposal of three conditions for a united front in January 1933. The three conditions were: cease invading the soviet; guarantee people's democratic rights; arm the masses and create volunteer troops to fight Japan. The proposal, which was addressed to "the citizens and soldiers of China," was a significantly greater external policy commitment on the part of Jiangxi.

Events were to prove that it was not completely in earnest. On 26 October 1933, a secret united front alliance was concluded between the communists and the Nineteenth Route Army of Cai Tingkai, which had defended Shanghai against the Japanese and was afterward given control over Fujian as part of a political deal to remove it from the sensitive areas around Shanghai. On 20 November, a revolt against Chiang Kai-shek was proclaimed by the Nineteenth Route Army, but within two weeks the Central Committee of the CCP had denounced the Fujian rebels for failing to undertake political reforms. No military action was undertaken by the Red Army to attack the flank and rear of Chiang's forces or to assist the Nineteenth Route Army directly. Instead, the main forces of the Red Army were transferred westward away from that battlefront. For various reasons the revolt was short-lived. There was probably a submerged difference of opinion on the handling of the Fujian Incident; Mao most likely favored a more cooperative attitude. Five days after the Central Committee's thorough denunciation, he sent a much more mildly critical telegram to Fujian. In the middle of January he sent a much more strongly worded directive (still not a denunciation), but by that time the end was near. After the defeat of the Nineteenth Route Army, Mao joined in the official denunciations. In the Zunyi Resolution, Mao observed that of course the rebels were not revolutionary, but cooperation with them would have been very useful in the Fifth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign. However, a serious alliance policy would have been incongruous with the politics of the Jiangxi leaders.

Problems of Leadership

Although Mao was not responsible for the laws of the Chinese Soviet Republic, the individuality of his political thinking is shown in his letters and directives implementing them. Mao's administrative powers were evidently wide-ranging (one Central Executive Committee resolution summarized revises some sentences handed down by the Provisional Supreme Court) and problems of implementation were enormous, so there was a broad field for the exercise and development of his leadership style. The chronic problem with administering the CSSR's laws was that they postulated an extremely high level of political dedication for both cadres and masses. Some of Mao's directives deal with bringing the
masses up to the level of the laws; others demand that cadres fulfill their responsibilities. Under the pressure of the Fourth and Fifth Encirclement and Suppression Campaigns, these rather ineffective methods were set aside and Mao initiated a series of mass campaigns and movements at the local level.

Mao elaborates his ideas on policy implementation in two letters dealing with the sovietization of new areas: one to Yuan Guoping on 6 March 1932 and another to western Fujian on how to administer the newly captured counties of Shanghang and Wuping. The first letter is most interesting for its analysis of the rural situation; the second gives Mao’s ideas on the implementation of soviet law in the cities. Although different in content, the messages are analogous.

Yuan Guoping was in despair over the backward state of the masses in the area under his control. Mao stresses that Yuan cannot abandon the general responsibility of winning over the masses, but he suggests that the work can be split into several steps in order to proceed more realistically. First the masses must be aroused against big landlords; then Yuan should quickly progress to the small landlords (and divide property and fields and abolish debts). “Once the relative majority of the poor masses have arisen” they should drive out the opportunist remnant of small landlords and rich peasants in the peasant association, setting up an organ of mass political authority (the village soviet) and a mass class group (the poor peasant association). Mao notes in the western Fujian letter that the rural revolutionary process should be prolonged only when necessary; this option does not permit cadre laziness (or rich peasant control) in the initial stages. Mao aptly abstracts the process:

You need to proceed very realistically to understand the local situation and, on the basis of the local masses’ sentiments and desires, determine an even more realistic strategy and method—then you can achieve even greater practical results.

In the latter part of his letter to Yuan, Mao insists that the only local work which cannot be turned into a waste of time by the return of White forces is the organization of guerrilla units independent of production. With an even broader perspective in mind, Mao reminds Yuan to take into account the possibility that the enemy will advance before the landlords’ power is destroyed.

In discussing the implementation of the Labor Law in the newly captured cities of Shanghang and Wuping, Mao notes three mistaken tendencies which have occurred elsewhere: the passive attitude of simply announcing the law and not checking on its implementation; working through coercive government orders against capitalists instead of through mass struggle, a method which leaves the masses passive and uncomprehending; and forcing measures which exceed local limits so that capitalists go bankrupt and economic policy is ruined instead of designing an appropriate method of implementation based on an investigation of local economic conditions and workers’ livelihood. With this last problem, there resulted much unemployment and some workers began to collude with the capitalists. On the other hand, workers’ interests should not be suppressed or ignored with the excuse of economic policy:

In summary, the Labor Law should be implemented with the firm principles of protecting the workers’ interests and not harming economic policy. In particular it should strengthen the workers’ activism in class war and their support of soviet political power.

It is evident that an alert cadre who investigates and is dedicated to mobilizing the masses would more naturally tend to avoid these mistakes than a Weberian functionary, no matter how dedicated. The point emphasized by the summary statement is the discretionary responsibility of the cadre for maximum achievement of the program as an integrated whole within the area of his leadership. Since achievement is realized through the strength of the mobilized masses, the “sentiments and desires” of the masses must codeetermine (through investigation) the content of policy and the course of implementation.

In two general directives issued to provincial congresses in the first half of 1932, Mao reiterates his view of implementation of soviet law, defines mistaken tendencies, and indicates several aids for correcting them. The relationship of law and mobilization is well stated in the first directive:

Your congress should make developing revolutionary war the heart of all your work. First, you should discuss all sorts of concrete policies for actually mobilizing the masses. The most important aspect of this mobilizational work is to develop struggle and to deepen
struggle. In order to raise the struggle activism of the worker and peasant masses, you need to effectively implement the Labor Law, Land Law, etc. The congress must propose very concrete programs for implementing the Labor Law and Land Law.24

The mistakes previously found in these provinces were separation from the masses (toli guanzhòng), formalism, bureaucratization, corruption, and passive resistance. The means of preventing or correcting these mistakes are a work review at the congresses with merciless (wùqìng dì) criticism of mistakes, the establishment of inspection teams under experienced and reliable party members (working with the broad masses and mass organizations), and most importantly the consolidation of a truly representative system in local government organizations.

Basically, Mao was demanding that his subordinates in the soviet government maintain the mobilizational ideals of closeness to the masses, policy integration, and flexible leadership despite the government’s bureaucratic structure and their official function of implementation. Correct cadre behavior still meant for Mao situational aptness—a standard which requires flexibility and revolutionary commitment and which produces an undifferentiated objective result. The organizational givens of an implementational bureaucracy necessarily lead to a different definition of correct cadre behavior—namely, the successful application of the laws one is charged to enforce within one’s administrative sphere. Administrative discipline and control require that areas of official competence be simplified through specialization, and with a specified organizational position it is difficult to maintain an active sense of a larger revolutionary responsibility. Mao’s general task in these documents of the first half of 1932 is to show his cadres how mobilizational goals could and should be achieved within the CNS framework. His growing frustration with government cadres stemmed from the fact that achieving both kinds of correctness simultaneously demanded exceptional talent and dedication.

**Crisis in Leadership**

Mao’s dissatisfaction with personnel and behavior in the soviet governments occurred in a context of rapidly intensifying demands on governmental performance. The vitality and military successes of the various soviets, most notably the Jiangxi Soviet and the Eyuwan Soviet under Zhang Guotao, had the effect of sharpening the struggle between the KMT and the communists. Chiang Kai-shek decided to invest a major part of his military strength in extirpating the major communist bases. The Fourth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign—which began in June 1932, defeated the Eyuwan Soviet in November 1932, and was stopped in March 1933—was, viewed positively, an opportunity for a much more significant communist victory. Viewed negatively, it was an unprecedented resource-consuming threat to the existence of the CNS. Even if the institutional governmental structure had been functioning effectively in normal times, these new and to some extent reorienting demands would have necessitated extraordinary measures. As it was, the new obligations seem to have exacerbated the constitutional weaknesses of the lower levels of government, leading to two important campaign failures in the fall of 1932: local elections and urgent mobilization for war. Mao’s analyses of these failures led to a major respecification of his mass-line, mobilizational politics.

Mao’s call on 20 September 1932 for new elections at all levels of local government was a frontal attempt to correct the insufficiencies of soviet administration.25 After almost a year of laws and directives, Mao states that “there have appeared many leadership weaknesses and mistakes in leading and developing the central responsibility of revolutionary war.” Mao lists military mistakes (lack of rear-area support) and political mistakes—the presence of cadres who are alien class elements and follow a “non-class line” (féijì huixiàn), bureaucratic corruption, a command style (mínglíng fāngshì), forcing the masses, and passivity on special treatment to Red Army dependents and women’s rights. Mao’s solution is that local governments should have constant renewal through elections which would “wash out” bad cadres and “absorb and attract” new activists.26 It is expressly stipulated that the old methods of peaceful elections and avoidance of struggle are to be discarded. Elections were ordered for all levels in eleven counties and for certain levels in nine more.

The “Urgent Mobilization for War”27 issued two weeks later was not critical of local performance, but it demanded a whole range of war-related activities from government officials. The call was for a presumably short-term “total mobilization,” since the KMT’s fourth attack was pictured as their last-ditch effort. The first
point of the mobilization was the holding of local meetings to explain to the workers and peasants what mobilization meant to their own futures. Certain immediate measures were then to build upon the enthusiasm awakened by this understanding: expansion of the Red Army, preparing cadres to send to new areas, immediate collection of the land tax, preparing for effective mass struggle against invading white armies, and destroying city walls. At the end is a statement reminiscent of jianggangshan that “all life and activity should be militarized.” Mao’s exhortations fell on deaf ears. The 5 December 1932 issue of the major Jiangxi newspaper, Red China, contained long statements by Mao on the election and mobilization campaigns, announcing that each had been a complete failure, analyzing mistakes, and giving new directions for work.

In “On the Inspection of the Election Movement at All Levels,” dated 1 December 1932, Mao declared the elections a total failure, noting that not one county had completed its elections, there was no struggle, and the election code had not been followed. The basic problem was that “there was no reform of consciousness through politics,” and this failure made the existing bureaucratism even more apparent. It was therefore determined that all incorrect elections were void and should be held again. To prevent a repetition of the failure, Mao gave detailed instructions for making the reelection a “broad mass political mobilization.” This mobilization was to be achieved by emphasizing to the masses that only if they are active will they get an effective government and by going beyond the election code and utilizing assemblies to criticize former representatives and government work. The masses should criticize rich peasants and class alien elements and elect oppressed elements, but only those with ability and the confidence of the masses. These new directives were supposed to be carried out strictly, with the help of work teams and inspectors.

Mao’s report on the failure of the urgent mobilization, “On Mobilization for War and Work Styles” (29 November 1932), is similar to the call for reelections, although it pays less attention to specific failures than to the general bad effects of bureaucratism. The basic mistakes of the mobilization were a disregard for the seriousness of the enemy’s attack and a bureaucratic style in all types and levels of soviet work. Mao criticizes bureaucratism at length:

Bureaucratism is estrangement from the masses. It destroys the relationship between the soviet and the masses. It is a great danger to the success and development of the soviet. The major symptoms of bureaucratism are perfunctoriness and coercion through issuing orders. This absolutely cannot be permitted to exist within the soviet government.

Bureaucratism expresses itself in the organizational faults of not understanding mobilization (and hence an inability to mobilize successfully), of giving orders to lower levels without facing the problem of implementation, of coercing the masses because of the absence of explanatory assemblies, and of avoiding mobilization because it is unpleasant. To this bureaucratic style Mao opposed a “new Soviet work style” in fourteen points, which is one of the most thorough operationalizations of his mobilization politics of the Jiangxi period. The main points are these:

1. All work should be built on the foundation of mobilizing the masses. Whoever rejects the work of mobilizing the masses necessarily estranges himself from the masses.
2. In executing laws and resolutions one shouldn’t simply rely on orders. One must still rely primarily on raising mass consciousness and ardor to support the execution of the law.
3. In mobilizing the masses, use various kinds of soviet organizations and all mass organizations.
4. In executing orders, pay attention to methods of mobilizing the masses, but at the same time attention should also be paid to opinions among the masses in order to have a referent for determining practical measures.
5. Guidance given to lower levels should be practical and concrete.
6. Organize work teams (gongzuotuan) to directly aid lower levels. The responsibility of the work team is to do good work in the locality, not to make empty criticisms of people while the work team itself does no work.

It is remarkable that Mao’s suggestions for war mobilization are concerned not with the supply of men and material for defense purposes but with the behavior of government officials. That he is serious about reshaping this behavior is indicated in the concluding sentence, in which he orders every level of soviet “to call a meeting immediately upon receiving this resolution to review its
own work using the spirit of criticism and self-criticism (ziwu pipi- ping), to oppose all mistakes in work, and to concretely determine ways of implementation. The results of the discussion should be reported to the center."

The inadequacies of the local election and war mobilization campaigns constituted a peculiar kind of leadership crisis for Mao as chairman of the Chinese Soviet Republic. They are important failures stemming from basic dysfunctional behavior of government officials, and yet the appropriate solutions are familiar principles of Mao’s Jinggangshan politics. Mao’s criticisms of the feudal, authoritarian habits of officials in “The Struggle in the Jinggang Mountains” and his description of the relationships between government levels in the Gutian Resolution are evidently confronting the same phenomena. The root problem of estrangement from the masses, which cuts the revolutionaries off from the source of their vitality, seems to have become a characteristic of government activity in the csr. To say that Mao “allowed this to happen” is unfair to the continuity of his personal political values, and yet the failures of Autumn 1932 were his responsibility.

The most plausible conceptualization of this leadership crisis is that it was predominantly an organizational role failure rather than a personal one. Mao was in charge of a bureaucracy with an overly ambitious battery of orders, a diffuse recruiting system, and inadequate training and control. The Twenty-eight Bolsheviks faced similar Weberian hells by attempting to impose order, discipline, and scientific division of labor. But throughout the csr documents we have considered, Mao takes the very different approach of exhorting and commanding officials to balance legal demands and concrete situations in a framework of mobilizational activity. The discord between these behavioral expectations and the prescribed organization made Mao’s commands unrealistic. Government cadres tended to become bureaucrats in the hierarchical system even though the directives they were supposed to implement were written to counter that tendency. Mao’s demands reached an ultimate point in the election movement when he insisted, in effect, that people who were chronically bad leaders administer an election whose effectiveness would be judged by their self-elimination. The miserable failure of the elections can be said to have resulted from a type of “commandism” on Mao’s part. That is, the formalities of organization—the cadres’ responsibility and his own authority—blinded him to the impossibility of

a successful implementation of his order. If mass mobilization was to be the basis of the regime (and Mao’s criticisms are based on this assumption), then the regime itself would have to approach the masses organizationally and adopt an issue-centered political process of campaigns with minimal centralization of authority. This strategy was tried on a large scale for the first time (and only time in Jiangxi) in the Land Investigation Movement.

The Land Investigation Movement

Throughout fall, winter, and spring of 1932-1933, there were a myriad of campaigns in the soviet area—hygienic campaigns, attempts to get government agencies to save for the war effort, continual exhortations to buy government bonds, constant appeals to join the Red Army. The main campaigns focused on the three most basic needs of the csr in its hard-pressed situation: direct support of the military effort (chiefly Red Army recruitment and improvement of local militia), fund-raising (chiefly through a series of three government bond drives), and agricultural production and its distribution. Despite the importance of the first two campaign foci, we will devote our attention to the third. After the “urgent mobilization for war,” problems of military support remain in the forefront (particularly during the Red May recruitment drive of 1933), but Mao does not seem to have been directly responsible for this effort. The bond campaign was more directly in his area, but it is well described by Trygve Løvseth in his study and its complexity exceeds its significance for our purposes. The concern with agriculture, however, led to new attentiveness to local politics which culminated in a comprehensive local-level political mobilization led by Mao: the Land Investigation Movement (cha tian yundong).

Since agriculture provided the only renewable resource available to the Jiangxi government, there was considerable pressure to make the harvest as good as humanly possible. The most ambitious attempt in this direction was a “plant early” movement announced by Mao on 28 December 1932. The idea of this effort was to advance the entire agricultural calendar by one month to enable double-cropping. Judging from discussions of a severe food problem in the summer of 1933, this campaign was a failure. The more general movement was for a “Bolshevik spring planting,” which included a field investigation (cha tian), propaganda
about the individual as well as the general benefit of increased production, encouragement of production competitions and “attack teams” (tusi dui), establishment of all sorts of cooperative efforts, and productive use of spare time by party units in agricultural pursuits. The “field investigation” segment was supposed to be undertaken in old soviet districts to make sure that all the benefit of the land revolution went to the masses in order to increase their productive spirit. Despite publicity throughout the spring—including one optimistic report on a locality entitled forebodingly “Who Will Compete with Them?”—the movement was given a quite critical evaluation by Bo Gu on 8 April. Although there was praise for the army’s efforts, party and government organs were criticized for not doing enough. The cooperative movement was just starting and the unions were not yet functioning. Evidently this mid-movement report failed to change its course, for problems related to agricultural production continued. In late May, Mao and Hu Hai made a report on the failure of the Land Investigation Movement to the Central Bureau (Zhongyang Ju) which induced the party leadership to announce a new and thorough Land Investigation Movement to be executed by the Central Government (Zhongyang Zhengfu) under Mao’s leadership. The lengthy and specific resolution by the Central Bureau did not, however, give Mao a free hand with the direction and content of the movement. Many of the hallmarks of the movement as it was developed by Mao are already included in the Central Bureau document. First, it is a movement to develop village class war, thoroughly solve the land problem, clean out feudal and semifeudal elements (destroying landlords but not rich peasants), and raise hired hand and poor peasant consciousness, activism, and organizational strength. It is also emphasized that the masses be mobilized as broadly as possible through all popular organizations, particularly the labor unions and poor peasant associations. It should involve active, critical elections where mass views are expressed freely. Finally, it should be closely linked with the complete reform of party and soviet work. This resolution differs from Mao’s statements at several points. First is its emphasis on earlier policy mistakes of the party as a cause of the inadequacy of land reform, pointedly mentioning Mao’s “trim the fat and add to the lean” (chou fei bu sou) policy. More important, it emphasizes the leadership role of the hired hands through their unions, whereas Mao placed primary emphasis on the poor peasant associations. But the most pervasive difference is Mao’s concentration on the process of implementation.

Mao’s general statement on the movement, “Execute a Broad and Deep Land Investigation Movement,” was written on 1 June, the day before the Central Bureau’s resolution, but it was not published in Red China until 20 June. This delay in itself shows considerable finesse on Mao’s part, because it was appropriate for this document to emphasize the general need for thorough land reform (judged inadequate in 80 percent of the Jiangxi Soviet, inhabited by more than 20 million people, including fifteen whole counties and parts of nine others). However, Mao first wanted to develop the movement intensively in an eight-county area. It was thus better for the movement’s dynamics to publish it in the midst of reports on the eight-county effort rather than before the Eight-County Conference was announced. Many of the movement’s organizational peculiarities are specified in the document of 1 June. First, the centrality of the Land Investigation Movement is guaranteed by giving the chairman of each level’s soviet overall responsibility for the movement. Not only are various land, legal, and security organs told to exert their whole strength for the movement, but less directly related organs (for instance the People’s Military Committee, with responsibility for local defense and Red Army recruitment) are told to build their efforts on the momentum of the movement. Despite governmental involvement in the movement, one of its functions is “washing out” bad officials and admitting new activists. Second, the poor peasant associations are specified as the most important mass organization in the movement. Mao does not mention the unions, although he does call on “workers’ groups” (gangren xiaozu) to be active leaders in the poor peasant associations. Third and most interesting is the attention paid to phasing and coordination. The most important aspect of this emphasis has been mentioned already—namely, the general phasing of the movement by starting with only eight counties. On a local level, it is recommended that the movement commence with the most backward locality. Coordination is to be achieved through short training sessions given by model districts; it is to be maintained by periodic work review meetings, monthly at the county level and every ten days at the district level.

From 18 June to 21 June 1933, Mao held a meeting of responsible persons of district rank and above from eight selected
counties to discuss the Land Investigation Movement. Mao delivered a report and concluding remarks at this conference, both of which specified in greater detail the expected course of the movement. These were immediately reprinted in Red China, as were other documents and news (not all favorable) relating to the eight-county effort throughout the summer.\textsuperscript{33}

Mao’s report is divided into three sections: the first on why and where the movement is necessary, the second on large-scale mobilization as the first step in the movement, and the third on basing the development of the movement on differences in class struggle among localities. In the first section Mao presents categories for classifying soviet territory in terms of success in land revolution and also gives a plausible explanation of why so many long-held areas are still “relatively backward” in this respect. The three types of areas are new, relatively backward, and deeply penetrated; the respective land strategies are confiscation and distribution, inspection, and reconstruction (concentration on production).\textsuperscript{34} The reason Mao gives for so much soviet territory remaining relatively backward is that during the first land revolution many rich peasants became revolutionaries and gained control of the movement because they could read and write. They were well rewarded (or rewarded themselves well) in the first division, but as the revolution was consolidated and more systematic divisions were carried out, the purpose of the soviet was clearly diverged from their class interests and they became hidden reactionary and even counterrevolutionary elements. Mao claims that if these elements were not rooted out by land and class investigation, the masses would lose their revolutionary activism. In the second section, Mao gives everyone a concrete place to begin their own contribution to the movement by stressing popular mobilization. He then discusses cadre education—an important point for his audience of intermediate-level officials, since one of their chief tasks is to inform and inspire base-level cadres. The first aspect of education is proper and sufficient information; the second is short classes on movement problems run by advanced areas; the third (introduced by Mao as “a type of education which should occur during activity”) is regular work inspections. The final section of Mao’s report deals with the variety of local conditions. Not only are there three categories of counties, but there are relatively backward and relatively advanced districts, townships, villages, and families, which should not all be treated the same way. In general the procedure at each level should be to draw models from the advanced but concentrate work on the backward.

Mao’s concluding remarks at the Eight-County Conference are evidently a summary of three days of intensive discussion, but there are few changes in his description of the movement which are not mainly the addition of detail to earlier points. The most significant innovation is that now it is recommended that the county, district, and township levels have a land investigation committee for general leadership. The additional detail supplied in the concluding remarks is interesting and significant (for instance, the importance of getting mass approval before confiscating in order to avoid clan wars). But the major utility of the conference was not in redefining the movement: it was the involvement and education of a great number of intermediate leaders through their experience of discussing the movement in concrete detail.

The sense of creative participation in the Land Investigation Movement which was stimulated by the Eight-County Conference was sustained by Mao’s manner of supplying direction in the most delicate aspect of the movement—namely, the standards for determining individual class membership. The definition of classes was extremely important because the Land Investigation Movement was expressly a class war, and the dividing line between enemies and friends was the demarcation between rich peasants and middle peasants. Middle peasants were the protected allies of the masses; rich peasants were semifoulard elements to be weakened but not destroyed. An analysis by Mao entitled “How to Differentiate Classes” was published in Red China along with his concluding remarks on 29 June.\textsuperscript{35} This analysis was a concise description of each class and its major components, but it did not attempt to supply the detail necessary for complicated judgments. Instead on 23 July the basically good work of Huangsong district in Ruijin county was reviewed, and ten incorrect decisions were described in detail with the original and the correct decision. A fully developed directive on class analysis was not supplied until October 1933.

In August a new phase of the Land Investigation Movement began with Mao’s “Preliminary Summary of the Land Investigation Movement,” published 29 August.\textsuperscript{36} The movement had established its character during the summer. The new phase attempted to consolidate the movement by describing its successes
and characteristic faults and abstracting detailed rules for class differentiation from the experience of the movement. This phase lasted until 1934, when Mao was heavily criticized by the party leadership and the movement was entrusted to Zhang Wentian, who promptly radicalized it.²⁶

All three aspects of the consolidation phase of the movement—praise of models, criticism of errors, and stipulation of new rules—are present in the "Preliminary Summary." First the general success of the movement is noted:

With the urging of the Party and the Central Government, the Land Investigation Movement has already developed broadly. If it is said that formerly the Land Investigation Movement was barely at the starting point, now one month's work in July after the June Eight County Land Investigation Conference has already exceeded the results of the half-year of work since winter. In general the Land Investigation Movement took on a new form in the eight participant counties. The Land Investigation Movement has already become a broad mass movement.²⁷

After establishing the general context of success, Mao describes in detail a model district, Rentian, which moved from being backward to being "first class" in fifty-five days. In discussing its success, Mao not only details the numbers of landlords and rich peasants discovered, amount of land redistributed, and other direct goals of the movement. He also indicates that the movement spurred the district to success in other campaigns: over seven hundred persons volunteered for the Red Army (without a single desertion), and there was remarkable progress in bond buying, culture, and party membership. The reasons for this general success were first that the district realized the importance of the movement and then three aspects of implementation: its mobilization method of starting with the most backward areas, its correct class line, and its excellent attention to mass work.²⁸

After presumably encouraging his audience with stories of successes, Mao proceeds to the deficiencies and mistakes in the movement. He observes that some party units ignore movement directives and that unless the party took it seriously the movement would fail. Most errors in the movement were of two types: rightist excesses, ranging from protective misclassification to actively repressing revolution, and leftist excesses of terrorizing middle peasants and treating rich peasants like landlords. Mao calls for a "thought struggle" (xiang douzhen) within the party against the "left opportunism" of ultrarevolution in the movement.²⁹ Mistakes against middle peasants should be publicly confessed and rectified. Criticism of officials should be neither too passive nor too fierce, and persons with a bad class background should not be removed if their work is good. Mao's discussion of methods of implementation generalizes his praise of Rentian's success. On the one hand, cadres should not be "tailists" (wei ba zhi yi) but should go after the most backward places. On the other hand, everything should be done through the masses and commandism should be avoided. The poor peasant associations should be true mass organizations rather than enlarged party organizations (for instance, membership should not require an introduction), but the principle of hired hand leadership should not be ignored.

Another aspect of the consolidation of the Land Investigation Movement was the attempt to coordinate its hitherto uneven development. The unevenness of development had been consciously promoted by the initial emphasis on eight counties; this had served the purposes of providing a model, developing experience, and limiting an organizationally demanding experiment to a manageable arena. By September the eight counties were developing their own advanced problems. Experience had already improved the guidance of the movement, and more trained personnel were available.

The document most characteristic of the consolidation phase of the Land Investigation Movement is the lengthy "Resolution on Some Questions in the Land Struggle," issued 10 October 1933.³⁰ This document was written for problems which were too complex for the relatively simple class definitions of "How to Analyze Classes." Some of these complexities were equivocal cases where rules for adjudication were clearly needed—for instance, how to handle cross-class marriages. However, most of the quality of the resolution derives from its attempt to codify from movement experience a realistic class equity for rural conditions. True to the tendencies of his earliest Jinggangshan land law, Mao avoids categorical distinctions which are easy to legislate but impractical to enforce. He attempts in this document to specify and even quantify the meaning of terms like "significant exploitation," "major occupation," and "well-off middle peasant." This attempt at specification leads inevitably to a depth of detail in the resolution
which would have been indigestible at the beginning of the Land Investigation Movement but must have come as a welcome standardization to cadres facing a variety of borderline cases with a set of well-understood but simple definitions. Since the easiest thing to do was to classify an exploiter who worked as a rich peasant and an exploiter who did not as a landlord, many provisions of the resolution are definitions of acceptable amounts of exploitation, work, and related details which were to the advantage of middle peasants threatened by rich peasant classification. Even with the detail provided, considerable latitude is allowed in extenuating circumstances with the consent of the masses. The controlling principle is the effect of a decision on the masses and their allies:

This type of evaluation of circumstances must be 100% precise. It should not call a well-off middle peasant a rich peasant, because that makes the middle peasants dissatisfied. But at the same time it should not call a rich peasant a well-off middle peasant, because that makes the poor peasants dissatisfied. Therefore it should be a careful evaluation and it should receive mass approval."

The effect of the resolution was a new bias toward litigiousness in favor of middle peasants. This bias evidently dampened the original enthusiasm of the movement and prompted many demands for redress for earlier alleged leftist excesses. At the Fifth Plenum of the CCP Central Committee held in January 1934 in Ruijin, Mao and his resolution were blamed for this state of affairs. The criticism of the resolution was that it replaced the investigation of class (cha jieji) with the calculation of class (suan jieji). It diverted cadres from continuing to develop the movement, and it provided opportunities for counterattacks by rich peasants and landlords. Nevertheless, with some significant modifications (no classifications prior to the movement could be changed; no changes could be made unless the masses doubted their earlier verdict) Mao’s document remained the standard for correct classification. But in propaganda and spirit, the spring 1934 phase of the Land Investigation Movement under Zhang Wentian achieved a reradicalization with its sweeping slogans and criticisms of Mao’s rules. This new radicalization developed to the point that in June Zhang Wentian had to issue new condemnations of left extremism.

The pattern of Mao’s guidance of the Land Investigation Movement shows a recognition of the ineffectiveness of the commandist leadership style, which he had shared with other communist leaders, and the adoption of a mass-line leadership style in guiding the movement’s cadres. First a clear and simple picture of the movement was given; then, in the Eight-County Conference, the cadres were encouraged to involve themselves in the elaboration of the campaign’s purpose. The initial efforts of the cadres were directed at the most backward units, where the greatest rate of progress could be expected and slight mistakes would do the least harm. Individual cases of success and failure and instances of correct and incorrect classification were described in detail. Finally, in August, the consolidation began with the evaluation of results, identification of general errors, and stipulation of standards. The reassertion of central control in consolidation went beyond merely coordinating local efforts, but it also avoided the extreme of taking them over. The October resolution in particular used the general experience of the first phase of the movement to create a unified and detailed scheme of class equity. It represented a significant advance in class policy which would not have been possible without the variety of spontaneous experience which had informed it. Together with “How to Differentiate the Classes,” the resolution became a classic of the communist rural revolution; in 1947 and 1948 both statements were republished with commentary as directives for the national land reform.

The Effects of Popular Mobilization

The Land Investigation Movement was by far the most important arena of Mao’s renewed politics of popular mobilization, but the resurgence can also be seen in his other writings of 1933. Mao’s foreign policy statements began in late 1933 to stress that the CSR was a state where poor people ruled themselves. His writings on the bond campaigns emphasized that not only was commandism in the sale of bonds bad in itself but it was less effective than propaganda and the stimulation of voluntary contributions. In a long report on economic reconstruction in August 1933, the themes of popular mobilization and integrated politics are prominent. Mao identifies Bolshevization with “massification” (quanzhong hua) and juxtaposes them to bureaucratism and commandism, noting that commandism looks successful at first but its
results cannot be consolidated." Against those who would postpone serious economic work until after the defeat of the Fifth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign, Mao claims that even war preparations would suffer if everything else were neglected for their sake. He emphasizes instead a self-conscious integration of land investigation, labor law implementation, elections, cultural work, military work, and economics.

It was at the local level that popular mobilization and policy integration were to be combined. In December 1933, Mao investigated two model township governments and reported on them in detail. The description is reminiscent of the Xingguo Investigation in style, but the content is quite different, since this locality is a thoroughly transformed society.

The investigation of Changgang is most like the Xingguo Investigation in its introduction, since it inveighs against cadres at higher levels of soviet government who know nothing about the actual content of local level work and thus "are not able to truly solve the problem of 'making all soviet work serve the needs of revolutionary war.'" What is new in the introduction is Mao's self-confident formulation of the basic policy problem and process:

Our tasks have already been put forward; from expanding the Red Army to repairing roads and bridges, many plans have been announced. The problem is how to mobilize the masses to really and completely execute these tasks and plans. An extraordinarily tense revolutionary war demands that we solve this problem quickly and generally. But the solution to this problem is not something to be thought out within our brains. It depends on novel and concrete experience collected in the process of mobilizing the masses for executing all kinds of tasks. This experience should be developed and used to expand our scope (tingyu) of mass mobilization so that it corresponds to even higher tasks and plans.

Presently in many local soviet organs duties are discharged in a perfunctory manner, and the serious mistake of coercive directives exists. These are 100% bad for the relationship of soviet to masses and greatly obstruct the fulfillment of soviet responsibilities and plans. On the other hand, there are numberless working comrades in lower-level soviet in various localities who have created many good methods of mobilizing the masses. They are one with the masses, and their work brings great results. One type of responsibility of higher soviet officials is to gather and rationalize (zhengli) this good experience and disseminate it over a broad area. This type of work should be started immediately in every province and in every county. The most effective method of combating bureaucracy is to give them living models.""

Changgang is an exceptionally good "living model" because of its proliferation of grass-roots organizations, its mass work style, and its excellent results in most campaigns. Mao describes Changgang in detail—organizations, responses to various campaigns, cooperative activities, and changes in life and prices since the revolution. It is not an example of the Land Investigation Movement's success in exposing class enemies and strengthening proletarian consciousness, since only a modest number (six) of class alien elements were uncovered and Mao notes that only one in ten inhabitants understood what "leadership of the workers" meant. Organizationally, however, Changgang had an exceptionally well-developed and well-run government apparatus. The representative assembly met frequently in well-run meetings; there were work reports every other meeting. Each representative was in charge of fifty inhabitants. The township had fifteen committees which were composed of the heads of corresponding village committees. Special groups like the election committee (for the Second National Congress) and the women's association were also functioning, though a bit too placidly for Mao's tastes. The peculiarity of Changgang's work style was that it was "able to use its whole strength to mobilize the masses and also use the greatest patience in persuading the masses." As a result, Changgang was able to better the lot of its inhabitants, meet all its quotas and campaign responsibilities, and achieve an increase in harvest in 1933 despite a tremendous loss of manpower to the Red Army.

Caixi, the second township discussed, was the best in the san in setting up cooperatives and was also exceptional in Red Army recruitment. Eighty-three percent of the men in Caixi were volunteers. Mao attributes this militancy to three aspects of Caixi's military effort: propaganda instead of coercion, special treatment of Red Army families, and solid and well-trained local forces. The district's most impressive accomplishments were in economics, where production, consumer, and food cooperatives made possible substantial improvements despite the drastic reduction in the male work force. Although most fieldwork in 1933 was done by women, production was 10 percent above prerevolutionary output due to active agricultural cooperatives dating back to 1930.
There were fourteen consumers' cooperatives in the district giving dividends to members and 5 percent discounts to Red Army families. The food cooperative, which started in 1930 as a government bureau, was important in stabilizing the price and availability of grain. As a result, a thirty-item price comparison showed indigenous produce mostly at or below prerevolutionary prices. Because of the tightening KMT blockade, however, exports had collapsed and prices of imports, particularly salt, had risen drastically.

These two investigations of December 1933 are worthy additions to Mao's series of rural surveys beginning with the Hunan Report. They originate from the same conviction that the really important policy level is the basic level at which policies are applied, and with rural policies the basic level is the village. They also have the same motive of politics through investigation. Mao's descriptions of rural dynamics make certain policies or policy orientations seem self-evident and necessary rather than debatable alternatives.Objectivity and comprehensiveness—but not detachment—are investigative virtues for Mao. In the Changgang and Caixi cases, the policies demonstrated by description to be correct are numerous tenets concerning mass mobilization and integrated policy. But these investigations are unique in that they are the first studies to show the results of correct and established revolutionary policies. The description is not dominated by the event of the oppressed overthrowing the oppressors; rather it concentrates on effective forms of self-rule of the masses.

**Summarizing the Jiangxi Experience**

The beginning of 1934 was a watershed for Mao's political status in the CDT. Hostility to some aspects of his leadership had been present since the end of the Fourth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign in the spring of 1933. This is evident in the campaign against the Lo Ming line, in which Mao's brother Zetan was criticized for deriving his military tactics from The Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms and recommending to his men that they study that work.\(^{12}\) Incidentally, it was in the campaign against the Lo Ming line that Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-ping) suffered his first removal from office as an opportunist.\(^{14}\) That old scores were not forgotten by the party leadership is indicated by their reference to the earlier incorrect policy of "taking from the fat and adding to the lean" as a cause for the survival of feudal elements.

The growing concentration on the military task of defeating the Fifth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign and the criticism of Mao's management of the Land Investigation Movement led to a diminution of his political influence\(^{13}\) and a reduction in the importance of the tasks left assigned to him. Of course, this did not remain the situation for long. One year after the Fifth Plenum was the Zunyi Conference, at which Mao assumed a comprehensive leadership position in the party. But by the time of the Zunyi Conference the Long March was already four months old.

Fortunately for our purposes of analyzing Mao's thought, he was in a reflective and summarizing mood in the last year of the CDT. One reason for this disposition is evident in the Changgang and Caixi investigations—namely, that a significant amount of experience had been gathered. Another reason for Mao's summarizing tendencies was the occasion of the Second National Congress held at the end of January. The elections to the congress, which ran through the preceding fall, were supposed to bring a new harvest of activists into the Soviet governmental processes, and Mao's speeches which opened the congress are his most eloquent summaries of purpose and experience in Jiangxi.

**Mao's New Idea of Local Government**

Two basic ideas reach a degree of stability toward the end of the Jiangxi period: Mao's notion of how to run a popular movement and his conception of local-level Soviet government as mass self-government. Both rely on the principle of mass activism, but campaigns direct activism toward a specific purpose whereas local revolutionary government is an enduring structure for planning and coordinating local contributions to campaigns, providing services, and handling local problems.

Over the course of Mao's chairmanship of the CDT, the campaigns became more important for the implementation of Soviet policy on the local level than the officials. However, it is particularly evident in the Land Investigation Movement that the nature of campaigns had shifted from being an authoritative call for implementation of a directive (the 1932 election campaign) to being a real dialectic of policy implementation and policy creation—that is, a real dialectic of leaders and led. This approach was ill-suited to the formal discipline of Weberian authority with its orientation toward strict implementation (producing bureaucratic and commandist tendencies) and presumptions of universal appli-
cation. The new campaign style demanded more than compliance from cadres and masses: it sought enthusiasm.

Since the conceptualization of a campaign originates with the leadership, persuasion is the key to mobilization. This fact presents a tremendous challenge to campaign planning and leadership, because effective persuasion demands communication, grounds for persuasion, and finally channels for mass action. The most immediate aspect of communication, that of broad and frequent delivery of the campaign message, was already recognized as a necessity in the first election campaign of 1932 and in the urgent mobilization for war. The need for motivation and structure was not recognized until after the failure of these two movements. In Mao’s criticism of the urgent mobilization campaign he observes that the estrangement from the masses involved in bureaucratic behavior prevents success in mobilization. Much progress was made with the problem of motivation in the Eight-County Conference, which attempted to involve a large number of cadres in the definition of the Land Investigation Movement and then gave special attention to their accomplishments. Among the organizational innovations important to communication were the more developed meeting schedule and structure of the basic soviets.

The second element of mobilization, grounds for persuasion, involves the basic identity of interests between leadership and masses. Grounds for persuasion of the masses were not emphasized in the first election campaign; they were prominently mentioned in the urgent mobilization; but they were fully elaborated only in the criticisms of these two campaigns. With the policy of immediate distribution of confiscated goods, the Land Investigation Movement gave central importance to this factor. Basically the grounds for motivation emphasized in late 1932 were the mutual threat of White victory, the real progress that the soviet had brought about (land laws, labor laws, elections), and the personal benefit of active participation (election of competent officials). The persuasive factors remain substantially the same in the Land Investigation Movement, but the contents change considerably. The mutual threat argument, the danger of class enemies and reactionaries, is not as impressive as that of enemy armies. But the personal benefits were more tangible in the form of immediately shared land and confiscated items. Real progress in soviet life was presumably even more marked in 1933, judging from the cases of Changgang and Caixi and from Mao’s report at the Second National Congress.

The third element of mobilization, channels of mass action, was for the most part left to the local government and party organs until the Land Investigation Movement, when the poor peasant associations and other mass organizations were emphasized. These associations had no hierarchy above the township level and open (in fact, as large as possible) membership for the lower classes.8 But with mass response comes the delicate question of popular spontaneity conflicting with the plans of the leadership. This problem can be mitigated by multistage processes of give and take between cadres and masses. For instance, Mao’s suggested process of land investigation has four stages: discussion of classes (propaganda); class investigation (only of the bad minority); public approval of classifications (by the poor peasant association and a village mass meeting); confiscation and distribution.9 Party leadership must prevail in clashes with mass organizations, but it must reform rather than simply dissolve poor peasant associations that are troublesome.

Complementing the effective persuasion of the campaign structure on specific issues is the emphasis on participatory self-government in the township-level soviets. The structure and principles are clear enough in Mao’s descriptions of Changgang and Caixi, but they are worked out in detail in a handbook for local government written in March 1934.10 The growth in significance of township soviets is clearly reflected in the changes in the relevant organic law sections between late 1931 and 1934. The 1931 law does not allow the township soviet to have a presidium (zhuxi tuan) or for that matter any standing committees; moreover, it limits townships to three subsidized officials (the basic municipal soviet is allowed fourteen, and a district is allowed thirteen).11 Villages (cun) are not mentioned. In the 1934 document,12 the presidium is described and twenty-five standing or special committees are specified. Moreover, villages are discussed as necessary subdivisions of the township. Each representative to the township assembly is supposed to have thirty to seventy inhabitants as his responsibility “in order to receive the views of the inhabitants and also for leadership work,” and he is up for election every six months.

The main novelty of Mao’s township pamphlet in the context of this later law is his emphasis on village-level work, although he
does develop township work per se with some characteristic touches. Predictably, Mao emphasizes the need for responsible persons and groups to prepare well for meetings and the need for practical discussion. He adds the new techniques of concentrating on only one major problem at each meeting,\(^{31}\) and starting the next meeting with a report of work already done on the problem previously discussed. The presidium is encouraged to feel responsible for the investigation and education of representatives. Mass organizations without their own hierarchies are completely the responsibility of the township soviets, and their leadership should be involved in relevant projects. Of greater interest is Mao’s claim that “the heart of township work is village work.”\(^{32}\) This is so because much of the township’s practical work is carried out at the village level, and it is also the level at which regular mass meetings (every two weeks) are held. Township mass meetings are called only for specific purposes. Township work thus does not diminish in intensity from top to bottom. Both the township representative assembly and the village representatives meet every ten days, and although there are many more committees at the township level, the direct mass work is at the village level. In contrast to Zhang Wentian’s rather Weberian and authority-conscious piece on district government,\(^{33}\) Mao pays little attention to specialization and hierarchy. Mao’s model for active township government was never widely applied in Jiangxi, however, because the Fifth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign soon proved to be the last.

**The Second National Congress of the CSR**

The National Congress was planned as an important event involving internal policy direction and external propaganda. It was to summarize two years of governmental experience, consolidate leadership both within the Central Soviet and among the dispersed soviets, and demonstrate the accomplishments of the “Soviet road” for China.\(^{34}\) A new election law was announced for the occasion (it included the preferential voting rights for workers which the people of Changgang could not understand), and the campaign led to another detailed statement by Mao on how to run an election.

The first order of business when the congress opened was Mao’s “Report to the Second Congress” of the Central Executive Committee and the People’s Commissariat. This report began on 24 January and was concluded the following morning. It was then discussed by the 776 delegates in groups until 27 January, when Mao made his concluding statement. The report was then adopted by the congress and it moved on to other business.\(^{35}\)

Mao’s report, which is quite long, is divided into five sections: (1) the present situation, (2) the anti-imperialist leadership of the CSR, (3) the struggle against the encirclement and suppression campaigns, (4) basic policies of the Soviet during the past two years, and (5) concrete tasks for attaining national unity. The first section observes that although the main problem now is civil war, its struggle is an especially important part of the world revolution. The second section presents the Soviet stand against imperialism, particularly its hostility to Japanese incursions. The third section recalls the success of the Soviet against the Fourth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign and describes the Fifth Campaign as the concentration of all reactionary forces with the help and leadership of the imperialists.

The fourth and fifth sections of the report, which describe the accomplishments and present tasks of the CSR, are its most detailed parts. Among the ten categories of the “basic Soviet policies of the last two years,” the most interesting are those dealing with the Soviet democratic system, the land revolution, and economic policy.\(^{36}\)

Mao’s discussion of the Soviet democratic system begins with his most eloquent statement of the principle of self-rule which had evolved in the CSR:

“The workers’ and peasants’ democratic dictatorship is the people’s own political power. Its relationship with the masses (minzhong) should maintain the highest degree of intimacy; only with this can it serve its function... It has already become the organizer and leader of the revolutionary war; in addition it is the organizer and leader of the livelihood of the masses. The greatness of its strength is incomparable to that of any other state form in history. But its strength completely depends on the people; it cannot for an instant be separated from the people. The Soviet regime must use force to deal with all class enemies, but with its own class—the poor masses of the workers and peasants—it cannot use any force. Its expression can only be the broadest democracy (minzhu zhuyi).\(^{37}\)

Mao cites four demonstrations of broad democracy in the Soviet. In the first, the elections, he notes many improvements. He then
cites the municipal and township representative assemblies, giving some details of the Changgang system, and claims at the end:

Everyone can see that when soviet political power has attained this level of democratic development it will have gone beyond any other governmental system in history. Moreover when the soviet relies on this system and unites with the broad masses, it will make the soviet the organ most able to develop the creative power of the people, it will make the soviet the organ most able to mobilize to meet civil war and revolutionary reconstruction. This is also something not accomplished by any other government in history.**

The two other illustrations of soviet democracy are the various freedoms allowed to the revolutionary masses and finally the reduction in size of administrative units.

Mao emphasizes the importance of land revolution by noting that the soviets and the Red Army owe their existence to it. From the experience of the soviets he distills seven principles of land revolution: (1) all struggle should be through the masses and have their approval; (2) confiscated land and items should be distributed among the poor masses; (3) distribution should only occur if the majority wants it; (4) the Land Investigation Movement looks for hidden exploiters, not for a general redetermination of class status; (5) those who oppose land revolution should be attacked; (6) class struggle should be used and landlord-instigated clan and locality struggles should be avoided; (7) soviets should propagate thoroughly and develop poor peasant associations and hired hand unions.***

Mao's statement on soviet economic policy, which is included in his Selected Works as "Our Economic Policy," is notable for its description of the dynamics of agricultural production, a responsible state role in the overall economic of the soviet, and the role which cooperatives were beginning to assume in soviet economic life. Agricultural production was generally lower than the traditional output of the area, although it had greatly improved in 1933 and in some places had surpassed old standards. The drop in production which accompanied land revolution was attributed to uncertainties about land distribution. The government's attitude of comprehensive responsibility toward the economic life of the soviet is evidenced by its concern for border commerce, export commodity production, and development of new industries. Evidently the need for regulation was not clearly recognized until the summer of 1933, when the unregulated export of grain in the previous fall was seen as a cause of the food shortage.**

Mao balances his promise of more economic intervention with a guarantee of a more stable political environment for private capital in the soviet. Previously the attitude toward nonagricultural wealth had been more or less predatory. This is indicated by the statement in the financial section of Mao's report that "on the basis of past experience, this type of income [confiscations and fines] often has a major role."** An analogous type of irresponsibility was the tendency, already criticized by Mao, to ignore and postpone economic reconstruction because of military urgencies. The development of cooperatives according to Mao was extremely rapid. There were now 1,423 cooperatives of various sorts in seventeen csq counties. These were primarily consumer and grain cooperatives, but there were a significant number of producers' cooperatives.

Despite the various accomplishments listed in Mao's report, the last section on "Concrete Tasks for the Thorough Defeat of the Fifth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign and Attaining National Victory" conveys the feeling of a dangerously difficult task. True to Mao's integrated policy approach, the "concrete tasks involve every area of soviet work, first of all the Red Army, but also economic reconstruction, soviet development, and antiimperialist work in White areas." Many things cited as accomplishments earlier in the report reappear here as problems to be emphasized. This treatment underscores the fact that the salient message of the report is not the degree of success in various areas but the significance of various tasks. Unfortunately for the viability of the report, its assignment of relevance presupposed the continued existence of the csq.

Mao's concluding remarks on the discussion of the report have a more timeless quality about them because they discuss one basic government problem: the relationship of mass livelihood to revolutionary war.** Mao had raised this issue in his report but felt that it was not sufficiently addressed by the delegates. The government's key tasks and their relation through popular mobilization to revolutionary war are eloquently stated:

If the soviet only mobilizes the people to carry on the war and does nothing else, can it succeed in defeating the enemy? I answer, no it
cannot. If we want to win, we must do a great deal more. In reality, the basic task of the soviet is to guarantee the interests of the broad masses, to lead the economic struggle of the workers, to restrain capitalist exploitation. It must lead the peasants' struggle for land and distribute the land to them, heighten their labor enthusiasm, and increase agricultural production, establish cooperatives, develop trade with outside areas, and solve the problem facing the masses—food, shelter and clothing, fuel, rice, cooking oil and salt, sickness and hygiene, and marriage—in short, all the practical problems in the everyday life of the masses should claim our attention. If the soviet attends to these problems, solves them, and satisfies the needs of the masses, it will really become the organizer of the well-being of the masses, and they will truly rally round the soviet and give it their warm support. Comrades, will the soviet then be able to arouse them to take part in the revolutionary war? My answer is it will, it will certainly be able to.  

This is not simply a commitment to serve the people. It expresses the conviction that serving the people is the necessary ground for mass mobilization which in turn is the guarantor of success in revolutionary war. This is basically the same conviction that lay behind the argument of "The Great Union of the Popular Masses" in 1919 and behind Mao's suggestion of a peasant strategy in 1926. He concretizes his point in the concluding remarks by citing a bad example of a city which concentrated only on war aims and turned out to be ineffective even in that. The good models, Changgang and Caixi, achieved good results in everything. The process of popular mobilization implied in this close connection between mass service and task success is put in terms quite similar to those of Mao's first mass-line statement of 1926:

The soviet should convince the masses that it represents their interests, that its life is intimately bound up with theirs. It should help them proceed from those things to supporting the soviet, to an understanding of the higher tasks we have put forward, the tasks of the revolutionary war, so that they will support the revolution and spread it throughout the country, respond to our political appeals, and fight to the end for victory in the revolution.  

This process is not one which renders practical services unnecessary after the masses have understood higher goals. It is a constant dialectic of new tasks in a context of demonstrated identity of inter-

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The central idea of Mao's positive summary of the Jiangxi experience is the growth of beneficial accomplishments and effective methods in the CSK and the revolutionary significance of closeness to the masses. The accomplishments and methods he details are to a great extent innovations of the Jiangxi period and would probably have been the basis of an increasingly popular and powerful regime there had the trajectory which he plotted been allowed to develop. As it was, even in the vastly changed circumstances and strategy of later stages of Chinese Communism the experience of Jiangxi proved to be a valuable experiment. Not only did many specific policies resurface in Yanan or in the national land revolution, but Mao's thesis of the substantiality of self-government became the premise of later periods. The seriousness and comprehensiveness of government operations which Edgar Snow observed in Bao An in 1936 can be viewed as a result of realizations in Jiangxi in 1933. On the other hand, the importance which Mao attaches to popular mobilization is a reappearance of one of the oldest themes of his political thought.

The Zhunyi and Wayaobao Conferences

The last issue of Red Flag, 12 October 1934, could not be printed. Its mimeographed pages contain heroic but pathetic appeals for continued resistance against the KMT. The Red Army had escaped, but the pretense and real accomplishments of the CSK had collapsed. The necessity of the Long March, which began in October 1934, was a jolting change of context from the long-range problems of socialist China to the most immediate military questions of survival. At the Zhunyi Conference of January 1935, Mao resumed his direction of military strategy which had been terminated in late 1932. Appropriate to this resumption and to the military failure of the CSK was a critique of military policy during the Fifth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign, and this is provided in the Zhunyi Resolution. At the Zhunyi Conference the Twenty-
eight Bolsheviks argued, not surprisingly, that the defeat of the Jiangxi Soviet could not have been avoided. Their self-criticism—that the leadership underestimated objective difficulties and overestimated revolutionary strength—led to the face-saving conclusion that victory was impossible. Mao vehemently disagreed with this assessment, saying that defeat was due to the adoption of a purely defensive military line against the Fifth Encirclement and Suppression Campaign. The military leadership was afraid of Chiang’s blockhouse system of encirclement, overconfident in the Red Army’s strength, and rigid in their principle of not yielding an inch of Soviet territory. They had abandoned the flexible military tactics developed earlier by Mao and had adopted a policy of resistance to KMT advances which left the initiative with the KMT. Mao then reiterates the essentials of his guerrilla strategy. He says that the blockhouses should have been ignored rather than attacked. The Red Army, he argues, should have gotten outside the rings of blockhouses, threatened nearby KMT-held cities, and thus rendered the fortifications a liability for the KMT. Moreover, Mao criticizes the leadership and timing of the Long March, which was too late, too secretive, and too panic-ridden.

This set of military errors took place within a larger context of policy mistakes which was not discussed by Mao until the Long March was concluded in December 1935. At that time the Wayaoao Conference was held and “a new stage of Chinese revolutionary history” was inaugurated—that of the anti-Japanese national revolution. A necessary element of the party’s political realignment was a critique of its previous errors. The general critique was presented in Mao’s report at Wayaoao, and it is evident in the resolution adopted by the conference. It is supplemented in some details by Mao’s lectures on military strategy from 1936.

Since the basic policy announced at Wayaoao was the alliance of “different individuals, different organizations, different social classes and levels, and different troops” against Japan, the primary fault of the previous leadership is described as “closed-doorism.” This fault is broadly construed as self-satisfaction with the party’s propaganda that it was the vanguard of the revolution, a narrow focus on work among the lower classes and among workers, and an unwillingness to form alliances. A large number of specific leadership errors can be grouped as symptoms of these three aspects of closed-doorism.

The Stalinist proclivities of the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks sub-
stituted ideological chastity for a strategy appropriate to a localized revolutionary movement. This dogmatic self-image is symbolized by the establishment of the Chinese Soviet Republic. In an actual situation of “strategic defensive” the party leadership pretended that the struggle was between two equal powers. “Our fight against Chiang Kai-shek had become a war between two states, between two great armies.” Maintaining and intensifying the socialist identity of the csa as the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks understood it meant progressively greater isolation of “their” China from the rest of China. Mao’s position in 1936 was considerably more realistic:

We are a state, but today we are not yet a full-fledged state. Today we are still in the period of strategic defensive in the civil war, and are very far removed from being a full-fledged state. Our army is still much inferior to the enemy both in numbers and in technical equipment, our territory is still very small, and our enemy is constantly out to destroy us and will never rest content until it has done so.

Within the political context of the csa, the adamancy of party leadership regarding the treatment of various classes has already been observed. The harsh stand against the rich peasants led to serious problems of control and mass apathy. The preferential treatment of workers was misunderstood by the majority of the population. In the period of the Second United Front, the anti-rich peasant provisions of the Land Law were stricken and the unity of all classes against Japan was emphasized. When the period of “strategic offensive” finally arrived in 1947, however, Mao’s perspective on the class nature of the rural struggle again became current.

The most immediate manifestation of closed-doorism was the party leadership’s coldness toward alliances. Particularly in Mao’s report the handling of the Fujian Rebellion is castigated, not simply from a military viewpoint but because of the implied refusal to ally with other classes:

Whose class interests does the 19th Route Army led by Cai Tingkai and others [the force behind the Fujian Rebellion] represent? Those of the national bourgeoisie, the upper petty bourgeoisie, and the rich peasants and small landlords in the countryside... Whatever
course Cai Jingkai and his associates take in the future, and despite their Fujian People's Government's adherence to old practice in failing to arouse the people to struggle, it must be considered beneficial that they turned their guns, originally trained on the Red Army, against the Japanese imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek. It marked a split within the KMT camp.\textsuperscript{181}

The alliance policy adopted at the Wayaobao Conference was broad enough to include any anti-Japanese group or class, but it avoided the kind of overcommitment to a specific alliance that exacerbated the disaster of 1927. The united front focused on an issue with very broad appeal: opposition to Japanese imperialism. Since this issue could be expected to be paramount for a number of years, the united front policy could be expected to be relatively stable. The strategic thinking behind the united front strategy was considerably more subtle than that achieved by the purity line of the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks. Rather than have the politics of the revolutionary party be simply an immediate expression of its identity and goals, Mao's politics are immediately determined by what is discerned to be the principal contradiction of the political situation. The Stalinist virtues of dogmatic faithfulness and accuracy in execution are replaced by the more discretionary virtues of flexibility and alertness.

Mao's criticisms of the narrowness and rigidity of the Jiangxi leadership are made with the advantage of hindsight, but his anti-closed-doorism perspective also antedates the failure of the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks' leadership and even their arrival in Jiangxi. The united front strategy of 1935 is the most fitting framework for the political-military strategy of popular mobilization, because both are directed by the same principle of achieving maximum effective mobilization. In the situation of the Long March, Mao could not simply return to his old views or put his once-suppressed opinions in command, because the movement now lacked a base and the national context had been redefined by the growing intensity of Japanese incursions. Mao's already established notions of political and military leadership would have to be transformed by the environment of their new application and by Mao's new role of comprehensive leadership within the party. His theoretical attention turned first to the development of a strategy appropriate to war against Japan and then to the conceptualization of the principles which had already become firm in his experience and applied thought: the dynamic unity of theory and practice and the absolute political power of the mobilized masses.

Conclusion

At this point we can begin to see in general terms how Mao's political thought developed in the csn period from 1931 to 1934 and why it has been so difficult for researchers to specify his politics during this time. The conundrum of csn political history is this. The potential for factional struggle was certainly there within one organization: two major groups existed with different experiences, personal loyalties, and policies. Moreover, Mao's side lost; and when it later emerged victorious it claimed that there had indeed been a sharp conflict. Yet there are few signs of a struggle. There are many Central Committee criticisms which certainly have Mao in mind, but they do not attack him by name. More important, there is no evidence that Mao used his tremendous personal prestige to further his differing views or to defend himself. It seems that Mao lost but he never fought. Researchers who noted the loss have presumed a battle: those who found no battle have asserted that the struggle is a later fabrication.\textsuperscript{182} This is not the only time in ccp history when later smoke has had a problematic relationship to original fire. Lowell Dittmer evokes this conundrum in a far more productive way than most students of Jiangxi in his study of "two-line struggle" rhetoric in the Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{183}

The paradigm approach has great utility in studying the csn period. Above all, it provides an elegant explanation for both the facts and the later significance of the period in which the apparently contradictory components of other approaches each have their place. My interpretation is that in the early base area period, 1927 to 1931, Mao developed his basic rural strategies in order to survive. These were derived primarily from close and anxious attention to the problems of guerrilla leadership and only secondarily harmonized with Marxism and the Central Committee. In retrospect, it was the beginning of Mao's characteristic approach to rural revolution, but at the time it was merely necessary. The explicit tensions between Mao and the Central Committee were center-periphery tensions. The center-periphery problem appeared solved when the center moved to the periphery in 1931, and Mao's policies, which were in fact of peasant origin, seemed
out of place among the Stalinist pretensions of the csa. Within the sphere left to him Mao tried to do his version of a good job, which meant an orientation toward maximum result and the avoidance of estrangement from the masses. This approach led to basic administrative innovations in the csa which because of their mass-line character conflicted with the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks’ notions of proper policy. In 1934 it became clear to both groups that their approaches were in basic conflict, and Mao was removed from leadership roles. At this time, it was not practical for Mao to develop his policy differences into a challenging, alternative theory of ccp leadership. Mao may have been caricatured as a Sancho Panza by the Central Committee, but he was certainly no Don Quixote. Besides, such general theoretical formulations are incredibly difficult and risky, except for professional philosophers-princes. In 1934 Mao was content to state the principles of good leadership which he saw the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks ignoring. His concluding remarks at the Second National Congress are a concise summary of his approach in an ironic setting: he emphasizes the importance of concern for the well-being of the masses because in three days of discussion the delegates had forgotten to mention it.

There was no fight in the csa because Mao’s practical policy initiatives were too novel to have a ready-made ideological defense. Mao’s belief in them was incommunicable, and he bowed to authority and persuasiveness. In 1959 Mao was self-confident enough in dealing with Peng Dehuai to threaten to return to Jinggangshan and fight in his own way; but not in 1931.

Although there was no fight, there was a major and irreconcilable tension between Mao and the party leadership in the csa. The political approach of the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks presumed a mass base and emphasized discipline. Their policies against bureaucratism were Weberian rationalizations of the bureaucratic structure. Their goal was the efficient and accurate delivery of Party Central directives. The popularity and appropriateness of the content of directives was no problem because they knew the Marxist theory of class struggle, the Leninist theory of imperialism, and the latest directives of the Comintern. Mao emphasized investigation as the source of correct (appropriate) policies, and his goal was maximum effective mobilization. He was opposed to bureaucracy ancient or modern, efficient or inefficient, because its one-way control structure did not encourage interaction with the masses. The mass campaign approach exemplified by the Land Investigation Movement was a partial solution of the problem of maintaining coordination while minimizing hierarchy. The complex of campaigns developed in Yanan in 1942–1945 are a more complete expression of this alternative form of democratic centralism.

What took place in the csa was a clash of political paradigms, but it was not a battle of two fully articulated paradigms. Mao’s was still in embryo, a growing collection of policies that worked and political principles. The Leninist-Stalinist paradigm of the Twenty-eight Bolsheviks was self-confident and it was also in authority. It is inevitable that Mao would be submissive and avoid conflict in such circumstances. It is also inevitable that when he became confident of his mature paradigm in later years, the time of practical development under an ill-fitting leadership would be viewed retrospectively as a more defined struggle, a time when truth was with the minority. Mao’s 1945 analysis of csa politics is an effort at historical self-understanding as well as an official history.