

The building of a "Working Class" Image: The Chinese Communist Party and the Comintern

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Abstract : The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been a "working class" political party since its founding. In the wave of the world revolutionary movement in the early 20th century, however, such an image demonstrated multiple aspects due to China's multi-party competition and the complex relationship between the CCP and the Comintern. Before and after the Northern Expedition (1925-28), the CCP focused on using the "working class" image to distinguish itself from the regional warlords and the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) in terms of theoretical propaganda, prioritizing itself on organizing workers' movement in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. It was not until the outbreak of a major labor and anti-imperialist movement in spring 1925 that the CCP received the assistance and attention of the Comintern. And yet precisely because of the experience of organizing several large-scale workers' movements during the Northern Expedition that the CCP began to harbor a different understanding of the workers' movement in China than the Comintern. How to maintain the CCP's image as a "working class" party within the framework of the united front thus became a difficult problem. It was not until the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) that the party chairman Mao Zedong depicted a blueprint for the "working class" to be the masters of the country in a CCP-dominated society. This presentation focuses on the CCP's "working class" image and seeks to answer why and how the CCP shaped its image before it took over China in 1949. It also illustrates that theoretical construction and revolutionary reality are equally important to the CCP.

Keywords : communist party of china, chen duxiu, mao zedong, comintern, working class, political party image

Conference Title : ICSH 2025 : International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

Conference Location : Florence, Italy

Conference Dates : October 04-05, 2025