

The Spirit of Zhang Tailei and the Centenary History of the Communist Youth League Works Together

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Abstract

This article takes the contribution of Mr. Zhang Tailei, one of the Three Heroes of Changzhou City in Jiangsu Province, in the creation of the Communist Youth League of China as a starting point. It horizontally studies the positive impact of Mr. Tailei on the historical process of the Communist Youth League of China and vertically connects it to the important spirit of the ongoing centenary of the establishment of the Communist Youth League of China. The aim is to elucidate the significance of the centenary history of the Communist Youth League and promote the enduring influence of the indomitable spirit behind its establishment on the present era. Based on the historical records of Mr. Zhang Tailei and the Communist Youth League of China, the article conducts a series of discussions and arguments, demonstrating the beneficial effects of establishing a centenary Communist Youth League.

Keywords

Communist Youth League of China; Zhang Tailei; Centenary of the Establishment of the Communist Youth League of China.

1. Historic Contribution to the Communist Youth League of China of Mr. Zhang Tailei

A hundred years ago, on a day when you returned after completing your studies, you hurriedly joined a new struggle without even having time to change out of your gown. In order to save the nation and seek eternal happiness for all, you rolled up your sleeves, raised your arm high, and shouted with determination. You came and went in haste, leaving behind only the words, "To secure everlasting happiness for the people of the world," dedicating yourself entirely to the revolutionary cause. You were willing to transform into a thunderbolt that shattered the old world. In an era characterized by confusion, where everyone drifted aimlessly with the currents, you resonated clearly and shone brightly.

Zhang Tailei was born into a prominent family in Wujin County, Jiangsu Province. His ancestors were well-known in Changzhou, and as early as the Qianlong period, one of his great-grandfathers was a scholar. As a family known for their literary pursuits, the Zhang family upheld the values of filial piety, sibling harmony, and benevolence. Despite their declining fortunes in his father's generation, they maintained a tradition of discipline, kindness, humility, and integrity. Zhang Tailei was intelligent, diligent, and achieved excellent academic results from a young age. In 1911, he entered Changzhou Prefectural School with outstanding grades, and in 1916, he enrolled in the Law and Politics Department of Beiyang University in Tianjin. After graduating in 1920, he embarked on his revolutionary career through the introduction of a fellow townsman.

Zhang Tailei was one of the founders of the Communist Youth League of China and a vibrant figure in the youth movement of that era. He led a large number of youth activities and made great contributions to the establishment of the Chinese Youth League organization and the development of the youth movement throughout his short life.

As early as the May Fourth Movement in 1919, Zhang Tailei wholeheartedly joined the struggle as a patriotic student in Tianjin, taking practical action. During this time, he actively traveled to Beijing to establish contacts with progressive students and had close communication with one of the leaders of the May Fourth Movement, Li Dazhao. It was also in that year that he firmly chose Marxism and joined the early Communist Party. The following year, under the guidance of Li Dazhao, Zhang Tailei actively participated in the establishment of the Chinese Youth League organization, which later evolved into the Chinese Socialist Youth League. As one of the founders of the Communist Youth League of China, Zhang Tailei made significant contributions to the establishment of the youth league organization. At its inception, he drafted the constitution for the Socialist Youth League in Tianjin, established the "Labor Newspaper," and delivered multiple speeches. With his profound knowledge and excellent diplomatic skills, he traveled to Russia to work while simultaneously pursuing further studies and exchanges. He deepened the impression of the Communist Youth International on the Chinese youth movement and sought more support and resources. At international conferences, he actively engaged in communication with a rigorous and serious work attitude, and his unwavering determination gained recognition from the global youth community. Under his influence, the influence of the Communist Party of China and the youth league organization expanded internationally.

Upon returning to China, Zhang Tailei made significant contributions to the reorganization of the youth league organization. He played a leading role in the preparations for the first national congress of the Chinese Socialist Youth League, drafting various resolutions, presiding over the congress, and being elected as one of the five members of the Executive Committee of the Central Youth League. In this milestone of the establishment of the Chinese Socialist Youth League, Zhang Tailei shone like a brilliant star, radiating his own light and heat through his efforts.

His outstanding performance in the work of the Communist Youth International also gained recognition. The numerous articles he published provided a blueprint for the work focus of the youth league and actively promoted the national revolution of Chinese youth. He delivered multiple speeches at the Communist Youth International, strengthening the influence of the Chinese Socialist Youth League.

In the short span of time, Zhang Tailei made significant contributions to the cause of communism both domestically and internationally. He became a pivotal link in Chinese and international youth league organizations, actively promoting the development of the Chinese Socialist Youth League. His revolutionary beliefs burned within him, touching the hearts of everyone. Today, a hundred years later, numerous young people continue to follow in his footsteps and carry forward his spirit. Though his life was short, the path he walked will never cease. There are successors who will take up the baton he left behind and continue the unfinished journey.

2. The Creative Development of the Centenary of the Communist Youth League of China.

In 2022, China will witness the convening of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which also marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Youth League of China. Over the course of a century, through hardships and challenges, the Communist Youth League has unwaveringly followed the Party's lead, guided young people with Marxism, united them with patriotism, and inspired them with lofty ideals, composing numerous hymns of youth. Throughout these 100 years, the Communist Youth League has consistently adhered to the Party's leadership, uniting and leading a vast number of young

members in playing the role of vanguard, shock force, and backbone in the revolutionary, construction, and reform endeavors.

The Communist Youth League of China is a mass organization composed of advanced youth with a glorious history and revolutionary traditions, created and led by the Communist Party of China. It serves as a school for young people to learn communism through practice and acts as an assistant and reserve force for the Communist Party of China.

Since its inception in May 1922, the Communist Youth League of China has continuously grown and developed under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the tireless efforts of countless proletarian revolutionaries. It has united and led young people of all ethnicities in the forefront of revolution and construction. It has played the role of the main force and shock force in the establishment of New China, the establishment and consolidation of the socialist system, and the development of socialist economy, politics, and culture, nurturing and delivering a large number of new forces and key personnel for the Party. The historical development process of the Communist Youth League of China can be divided into four periods.

The first stage is the establishment of the Socialist Youth League. Before the formal establishment of the Communist Party of China, communist activists in various regions, during the process of establishing early party organizations known as communist groups, aimed to widely unite progressive young people and cultivate the Party's reserve forces, thereby considering the establishment of a youth organization in China. After the establishment of communist groups in Shanghai, Beijing, Wuhan, Changsha, Guangzhou, and other places, these early party organizations also established early organizations of the Socialist Youth League under their leadership. In July 1921, after the official establishment of the Communist Party of China, immediate efforts were made to formally establish the Chinese Socialist Youth League. On May 5, 1922, the First National Congress of the Chinese Socialist Youth League was grandly held in Guangzhou. With the congress's convening, Chinese youth, under the guidance of the league, bravely participated in various revolutionary activities, becoming a strong force in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism.

The second period is the Communist Youth League era. On April 12, 1927, when the Chinese revolutionary movement achieved significant victories, the right-wing faction of the Kuomintang, represented by Chiang Kai-shek, betrayed the revolution. Amidst the White Terror, the Communist Youth League of China remained unwavering in its commitment to follow the Communist Party. The September 18 Incident in 1931 escalated national contradictions in Chinese society, making it the primary contradiction. The Communist Party of China, in response to the need to establish a united front against Japanese aggression, led the call to establish the Anti-Japanese National United Front. According to the needs of establishing the Anti-Japanese National United Front, the Communist Youth League of China was reorganized in 1936.

The third period is the New Democratic Youth League era. After the reorganization of the Communist Youth League in 1935, the league organization remained inactive for ten years. To adapt to the new era, in October 1946, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed the establishment of the New Democratic Youth League. In January 1949, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China formally issued the "Resolution on Establishing the Chinese New Democratic Youth League" and the work of reestablishing youth leagues began nationwide. In April 1949, under the leadership and care of the Communist Party of China, the First National Congress of the Chinese New Democratic Youth League was held in recently liberated Beijing, marking the completion of the establishment of the Chinese New Democratic Youth League. In June 1953, as the country entered a period of planned construction, the New Democratic Youth League held its second national congress in Beijing on June 11 to discuss and resolve tasks during the construction period. At the congress, Chairman Mao Zedong delivered an important speech, congratulating the youth on being "healthy in body, diligent in study, and

excellent in work," and the congress identified these "Three Excellences" as the future direction of youth work.

The fourth period is the era of the Communist Youth League of China. On June 11, 1964, the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Youth League of China was held in Beijing amid an improvement in the national economy, making it the most grandiose congress since the establishment of the league. The congress was attended by 2,396 official delegates and 927 attending delegates. During this congress, a new constitution was adopted, calling on all young members nationwide to diligently work and study for the construction of the motherland. With the development of the situation, in accordance with the needs of reform and opening up, the 13th National Congress of the Communist Youth League of China was held in Beijing on May 3, 1993. At the congress, the three major tasks for Chinese youth and the Communist Youth League over the next five years were defined as "educating young people with socialist theories that have Chinese characteristics, leading young people to engage in economic construction as the main battlefield, and actively serving the healthy growth of young people." In June 1998, the 14th National Congress of the Communist Youth League of China was held in Beijing. On July 22, 2003, the 15th National Congress of the Communist Youth League of China was held in Beijing, where the league's constitution was revised and "Glorious, the Communist Youth League of China" was established as its anthem. From June 10 to 13, 2008, the 16th National Congress of the Communist Youth League of China was held in Beijing.

Mr. Zhang Tailei was one of the early pioneers of the workers' movement in the Communist Party of China and one of the founders of the Communist Youth League of China. In November 1920, under the guidance of Li Dazhao, Zhang Tailei established the first socialist youth organization in Tianjin. He served as the first secretary, presided over the inaugural meeting, and read the constitution he drafted, as well as founding the "Labor Newspaper."

In the spring of 1921, while serving in Russia, Zhang Tailei actively established connections between the Chinese youth movement and the international communist youth movement, learning from the work experience of the Soviet Union's youth organizations and seeking the care and support of the Communist Youth International for the Chinese youth movement. As an envoy of the early Communist Party of China and the youth league, Zhang Tailei performed excellently in his tasks, enhancing the influence of the early party organizations and the youth league organization.

In August 1921, Zhang Tailei returned to China and, as directed by the Communist Youth International, organized the Chinese branch, leading the reorganization and development work of the socialist youth league organization. He drafted the "Provisional Constitution of the Chinese Socialist Youth League," taking decisive measures to rectify the membership and strengthen.

3. The Relationship between Contributions of Mr. Zhang Tailei to the Early Communist Youth League and Relevance to the League's Current Development

Mr. Zhang Tailei is one of the main founders of the Communist Youth League of China. In the turbulent and chaotic era of the early 20th century, amidst raging wars, Mr. Tailei, with his passionate revolutionary spirit and knowledge, became one of the creators of the Youth League, laying the foundation for its subsequent development. In 2022, coinciding with the centennial anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Youth League, under the leadership of the Party, the Youth League has made continuous progress and currently has over 70 million members. Emphasizing the development of its members, it is highly valuable to study the history of its establishment and appreciate the exemplary qualities of great figures like Mr. Zhang Tailei from the founding era.

In the early 20th century, Mr. Zhang Tailei upheld the spirit of communism and anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, harboring great enthusiasm for revolution. He hoped to overthrow the corrupt rule of the Qing Dynasty and achieve a new society of equality for all by following the path of communism. In contemporary times, under the correct leadership of the Communist Party of China, we have embarked on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, gradually progressing towards a society of happiness for the people. However, when recalling the hardships of the early days of the Youth League, such as the "April 12th" counterrevolutionary coup launched by Chiang Kai-shek in 1927, which persecuted a large number of Youth League members and communist youth, it was at this critical moment that the Communist Party of China urgently convened a national congress in April and May to not only criticize the right-wing capitulationism within the Party but also provide guidance for the further development of the Youth League. Following the next day, the Youth League also held a national congress, further clarifying its work tasks and goals, as well as establishing its proletarian nature. Under such difficult conditions that year, the Youth League still developed rapidly, and this spirit spread throughout the vast land of China, with the red wave sweeping across every inch of the land. Undoubtedly, Mr. Zhang Tailei's efforts and sweat played a significant role in this.

Today, one hundred years later, we must pick up the wisdom and spiritual achievements left by our predecessors, revisit the arduous journey and the illustrious history of the past century of the Youth League, in order to gain more insights and strength in the present. In the contemporary 21st century, we should pay more attention to the study and reflection on the history of the Youth League. The pages of history that we turn over lightly represent the epitome of the vigorous development of the Communist Youth League in China. As one of the founders, Mr. Zhang Tailei has many spiritual deeds worth learning from. For example, he was not only one of the first young representatives sent to the Communist Youth International but also the first envoy of the Communist Party of China sent to work in the Communist International. This teaches us that in the current era, for the Youth League to broaden its path of development, it must make efforts to acquire knowledge from the outside world, seek references from various sources, and develop in multiple aspects in order to become stronger. Mr. Zhang Tailei dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the establishment and development of the Youth League, absorbing the communist ideology from the Soviet Union, and adding significant ideological references to the history of the Communist Youth League of China. Individuals nurture history, and history reflects between the great deeds of individuals. It is precisely Mr. Zhang Tailei's devoted revolutionary spirit that gave the Youth League a great start. As the successors of contemporary Chinese communism, we have emerged from the influence of the Youth League's ideology. On the occasion of the centennial anniversary of its establishment, we must pay more attention to the history of the Youth League, retell its history, and innovate in the future.

4. Conclusion

"The life of Zhang Tailei, like a comet streaking across the night sky, although brief, was dazzlingly brilliant. His life reached its peak in Guangdong and abruptly came to an end at its zenith, like the thunderous crack that shatters solid ice. This is the evaluation of Zhang Tailei by his grandson, retired Major General Feng Hailong of the Armed Police, referring to his grandfather. Looking back on the magnificent life of Mr. Zhang Tailei, just as his name suggests, he was like a thunderbolt that shattered the old world and brought us new ideas.

At the age of 29, Mr. Zhang Tailei was in the prime of his life, bravely forging ahead on the path of the Chinese revolution, and sacrificed his young and precious life for the revolutionary cause, fulfilling the oath he had made with his passion and youth. His life journey, though short, was

incredibly noble and great due to his belief that "revolutionary ideals are higher than the heavens." As one of the founders of the Communist Youth League, he will forever be an exemplary figure for the younger generation to learn from.

The tranquility of the years is ensured because of people like Mr. Zhang Tailei who bear the weight for us as we move forward; the prosperity of today is due to people like Mr. Zhang Tailei who shed blood and sweat for us. Though he has passed away, his charisma will forever endure, and the Chinese people will never forget him! The youth of China should never forget the sacrifices of their predecessors and strive to learn from the spirit of Zhang Tailei, inheriting the ideas of a hundred years of the history of the Communist Youth League, shining brightly in the construction of the future of our motherland. May we carry on the aspirations of our predecessors and continue writing the glorious chapter of China!"

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