

# On the Image of the Chinese Communist Party from the Perspective of American Mainstream Media (1935–1938): Based on Reports from *The New York Times*

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Received: August 18, 2024

Accepted: September 2, 2024

Published: September 30, 2024

**To cite this article:** ZHU Yuntao. (2024). On the Image of the Chinese Communist Party from the Perspective of American Mainstream Media (1935–1938): Based on Reports from *The New York Times*. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(3), 250–260, DOI: 10.53789/j.1653–0465.2024.0403.029

Tolink to this article: <https://doi.org/10.53789/j.1653–0465.2024.0403.029>

**Abstract:** This paper aims to explain how and why the image of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) made a significant change from 1935 to 1938 in the eyes of American mainstream media. Based on the database of historical newspapers from ProQuest, a total of 232 reports related to the CCP from 1935 to 1938 have been selected as the major research objects. With a comparative and inductive approach, this paper compares the reports from 1935 to 1936 with those from 1937 to 1938 and further explores the image of the CCP from the political, military, and religious aspects. It reveals that the overall image of the CCP had shifted from negative to positive through the lens of American mainstream media. From 1935 to 1936, the role of the CCP was largely ignored by the United States, whose image was demonized and smeared as red bandits or evil persecutors. But from 1937 to 1938, there was a significant increase in relevant news, which usually spoke highly of its democratic political ideas, its gallant military forces, and its open-minded attitude toward Christianity. The causes of this shift are closely related to factors such as the interests of the United States, the diplomacy of the CCP, and American journalists in China. With the help of considerable first-hand news reports, this paper can enrich the study of the image of a political party from an external perspective and draw valuable experience for the improvement of the CCP's international image at present.

**Keywords:** Chinese Communist Party; image; American media; *The New York Times*

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## 1 Introduction

The image of a political party is the result of both the objective characteristics of the party and the subjective

perceptions held by the public (Ding, 2021, p. 16). According to the nationality of the audience, it can be further categorized into domestic and international perceptions. In recent years, with China's growing global influence, the international image of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has become a heated topic. Since its establishment in 1921, the CCP has withstood the test of time for over a century. Not only the current image of the party but also its overseas image during its early years has garnered significant attention from scholars.

Focusing on the Anti-Japanese War, Liu Keli and Feng Yuxuan (2021, pp. 1–8) explored the specific international image of the Chinese Communist Party. Sun Yun and Zhao Yuchen (2022, pp. 52–59) analyzed the commemorative articles from *Liberation Daily* and discussed how the CCP built its image on the day of “July 1<sup>st</sup>.” Hu Feng and Zhang Jie (2024, pp. 62–68) explored the image of the CCP in the Kuomintang-controlled areas after 1937. However, despite much emphasis placed on the party's positive appearance during the Sino-Japanese War, few experts have laid their fingers on the discussion of its image before 1937, which was likely to be negative. Even if some research has mentioned this difference, there is a lack of systematic analysis of the sharp contrast as well as the reasons behind it. More importantly, the current research on party image tends to make conclusions mainly based on archives in China, devoid of external evidence from the perspective of “the other”.

Therefore, based on 232 first-hand news reports related to the CCP from *The New York Times* (1935–1938), this paper attempts to investigate and examine its image from the external perspective, i. e. through the lens of American mainstream media. With a comparative and inductive approach, it compares the reports from 1935 to 1936 with those from 1937 to 1938 and takes an in-depth analysis of them from the political, military, and religious aspects. Then, it further explores the causes of the difference in combination with factors such as the interests of the United States, the diplomacy of the CCP, and American journalists in China, in the hope of enriching the study of the history of the CCP and drawing experience for the improvement of the image of the party. In a word, there are three core questions in this paper: 1) Has the international image of the CCP undergone a shift from 1935 to 1938? 2) What was the image of the CCP during this period? 3) What were the factors influencing the image of the CCP?

## 2 The Perspective of American Mainstream Media

In the early 20th century, the newspaper was an important source for American people to learn about modern China (Isaacs, 1958, p. 21). Among various influential newspapers in the United States, this paper takes *The New York Times* as an example and gives a brief quantitative analysis of the reports on the CCP from 1935 to 1938.

Founded in 1851, *The New York Times* is widely regarded as one of the representatives of American mainstream media, known for its credibility and authority. After more than 150 years of development, it has established itself as one of the most authoritative newspapers in the United States and the Western world (Zheng, 2000, p. 352). Moreover, it has consistently maintained a long-lasting concern over modern China. A convincing survey indicates that from the late 1920s to the 1930s, most reports about China were published in *The New York Times* (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 127). Additionally, the famous American journalist Harold Isaacs (1958, p. 51) surveyed 181 audiences on the issue of China and found that the majority depended for their daily

news fare on *The New York Times*. In this respect, its news reports can provide a valuable resource for investigating the international image of the CCP.

Based on the database of historical newspapers from ProQuest, a total of 232 reports related to the CCP from 1935 to 1938 have been selected and examined by the author. These reports can reflect the overall characteristics and trends to a certain extent. For the convenience of analysis, they are divided into four categories: politics, war, religion, and the other. The frequency of each category is shown in Table 1.

**Table1. News Reports Related to CCP from The New York Times (1935–1938)**

Time	Politics	War	Religion	Other	All
1935	2	17	11	2	32
1936	8	22	7	2	39
1937	24	39	1	1	65
1938	40	52	1	3	96
1935–1938	74	130	20	8	232

Source: ProQuest Database of *The New York Times*

As Table 1 shows, the number of news reports in 1935 and 1936 were both less than 40, while in 1937, it was almost twice as much as that of the previous year, let alone this number reached nearly 100 in 1938. This significant contrast between the two periods indicates a growing concern over the Chinese Communist Party.

Specifically, much emphasis was placed on the CCP's activities in the military and political fields, with reports on these topics accounting for nearly 90% of all the news during the four years. Also, there was a year-on-year increase in reports on politics and wars. On the contrary, news related to religion showed a declining trend. It is noteworthy that though there was only one report on religion in 1937 and 1938 each year, this type of report constituted a notable portion in the early period, nearly 34% in 1935 and 18% in 1936.

Briefly speaking, the news reports from *The New York Times* in 1935 and 1936 differ significantly from those in 1937 and 1938 in terms of both quantity and content. Consequently, this paper attempts to make a distinction between these two periods and probes into the CCP's image from the perspectives of politics, military forces, and religions in the subsequent analysis.

### 3 Shift of the Image of the CCP

Based on considerable first-hand reports from *The New York Times*, it is evident that the image of the CCP had undergone an obvious shift from 1935 to 1938. In the former period (1935–1936), relevant comments were inclined to be negative, while in the latter (1937–1938), the tone of the reports was likely to be positive.

#### 3.1 Political aspect: from violent rebels to democratic party

Before jumping into the discussion of the political figure of the CCP, it is necessary to briefly introduce the historical background in China from 1935 to 1938. Although the CCP successfully established the Soviet Republic of China in Jiangxi Province in November 1931, it soon attracted the hostility of the ruling party in

China, i. e. , the Nationalist Party of China (Kuomintang, KMT). After bearing a series of military losses in 1934, the majority of the CCP had to give up its revolutionary base and move to other places, the process of which was later called the “Long March”, covering more than 10 provinces in China. In most cases, the party had to battle with the KMT in one place after another. However, at the end of 1936, Xi’an Incident changed this situation. In the face of severe stress from the Japanese, the CCP and the KMT started to unite to fight against common invaders. Along with the change in the relationship between the two parties, the image of the CCP had gradually shifted from violent rebels to a democratic party.

In the first period, negative attitudes played a dominant role in the American media. A report published in January 1935 introduced the gaunt sceneries of Ningdu, one of the most important revolutionary bases, after the evacuation of the communists (*The New York Times*, 1935, January 28, p. 5). There was nothing but “burned villages”, “devastated temples” and “deserted farms”. Although Ningdu used to be a prosperous city of 200,000 people, plenty of young people left this place, with only children and old people staying there. Even more, the residents had suffered a severe famine, due to the severe economic blockade. Meanwhile, the depiction of the execution spot did catch the eyes of the readers. By using horrible words, like “bullets”, “skulls” and “remains”, it presented a terrifying scene under the violent governance:

The gaunt walls of a famous Confucian temple, which the Reds used as an execution spot, are heavily pitted with bullets. At another spot is an ancient graveyard, the ground littered with skulls and remains of persons who fell under executioners’ swords (quoted in *The New York Times*, 1935, January 28, p. 5).

Besides, the attitudes of American media could be identified from the appellations. Most reports referred to Chinese communists as the “reds”, containing a potential bias held by the media. In their eyes, the Chinese Communist Party was only a small rebel force in China and its Soviet government in Jiangxi had no legitimacy at all. Instead, a large number of reporters respected Chiang Kai-shek as the head of the central government and sometimes directly referred to China as “the Nanking government”.

However, the CCP transformed its previous image and reemerged as the representative of democracy in the second period. After the negotiation with the KMT, the party members took an active part in public speeches. They claimed two key requests: setting up the People’s Political Council (representing a broad section of the people) and guaranteeing the freedom of speech and assembly (*The New York Times*, 1938, April 16, p. 12). Moreover, a manifesto of the CCP explicitly stated that the current domestic and international situation did not permit a one-party dictatorship by the Kuomintang or the establishment of a Soviet government. In this case, Chinese communists strongly supported a coalition government with a united front and looked forward to the establishment of a democratic republic based on the principles of Sun Yat-sen (*The New York Times*, 1938, November 24, p. 21). In the face of the Japanese aggression, unlike the capitulationism that apparently existed within the Kuomintang, the CCP had always maintained its belief in victory. In the eyes of some American journalists, the Chinese Communist Party seemed to have abandoned its old ideas and become a nationalist party (*The New York Times*, 1938, September 25, p. 22).

More importantly, it was reported that under the governance of the Chinese Communist Party, the residents of Yan’an experienced a high quality of life, resembling a utopian society (*The New York Times*, 1938, August

14, p. 57). Each village had its autonomous association, including farmers, workers, and businessmen, as well as women and children, whose representatives were voted by its members. Farm work was well organized and schools were set up. Women had their freedom and children accepted military training like Western scouts. Unlike previous criticism, this report presented a peaceful picture of the society under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party to foreign readers.

### ***3.2 Military aspect: from dangerous bandits to patriotic fighters***

As mentioned before, the military activities of the CCP had always been the focus of the American media. Similarly, its image had undergone a remarkable shift from 1935 to 1938. In the first period, the Red Army was often depicted as a group of dangerous bandits. Whenever the communists fled to a new place during the Long March, they were defamed as the “culprits” of regional insecurity. But during the Sino-Japanese war, the Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army became their new representatives. It was not uncommon to see American journalists speak highly of their bravery and wisdom in fighting against the Japanese invaders.

Back in 1935, the main force of the CCP, along with the Red Army, was still in a precarious state, constantly moving to evade the Kuomintang forces. Reports indicated that over 20,000 Communists “looted” northeastern Jiangxi Province, southern Anhui Province, and northern Fujian Province, causing widespread panic along their route (*The New York Times*, 1935, January 13, p. 7). Additionally, the first half of the year saw a severe drought in China, leading to a massive famine across eight provinces. The situation was particularly dire in Hunan, which was believed to have been exacerbated by the plundering of the “red bandits” (*The New York Times*, 1935, April 22, p. 1). Even by April 1936, when the communists had established a base in northwestern China, another severe famine in Sichuan Province was still attributed to the looting and invasion by the CCP. On the contrary, the reporter warmly praised the actions of the KMT. Chiang Kai-shek visited the disaster zones several times and personally organized relief efforts for the affected people, presenting a stark contrast to the atrocities attributed to the CCP (*The New York Times*, 1936, April 20, p. 8).

After the establishment of the united front in 1937, the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army under the leadership of the CCP quickly captured the attention of the American media. Their excellent military performance was frequently reported, with the Eighth Route Army being described as “famous” (*The New York Times*, 1938, July 10, p. 71). They were depicted as heroic and patriotic fighters against the invaders. When Lin Biao was seriously wounded, he was highly commended as one of the bravest generals of the Eighth Route Army who was known for his fearless leadership on the battlefield (*The New York Times*, 1938, March 15, p. 8). Even Chiang Kai-shek himself claimed in an interview that the Eighth Route Army was part of the Chinese national forces and received the same orders as other armies. He emphasized that they were fighting for their own country and they did very well, thereby consolidating their image as loyal patriots (*The New York Times*, 1938, April 7, p. 8).

Furthermore, it was stated explicitly that the CCP was the dominant force in guerrilla warfare in northern China and the backbone of the resistance against the Japanese (*The New York Times*, 1938, p. 70). The mobile semi-guerrilla tactics adopted by the Eighth Route Army brought a lot of trouble to the Japanese army. In Nanjing, the CCP’s General Ye Jianying himself introduced its military achievements in northern China (*The New York Times*, 1937, October 4, p. 10). Again, in the next year, it was commented that guerrilla warfare

was instrumental in stopping the Japanese army from moving southward and harassing Japanese communications (*The New York Times*, 1938, May 4, p. 14). Such reports further demonstrated that the CCP had truly played a key role in the Sino-Japanese War and indicated that the Western media had already had a deep understanding of the military strength and strategy of the CCP.

### ***3.3 Religious aspect: from evil persecutors to open-minded friends***

In terms of religion, its image had made a significant shift from evil persecutors to open-minded friends. As is shown in Table I, though the events on the CCP's attitude towards Christianity made up about one-third of all the reports in 1935, little news on the relationship between the CCP and Western missionaries was mentioned after 1937.

In the former period, the military activities of the CCP often disrupted the preaching of Western missionaries. As the Red Army left its bases in Jiangxi, missionaries in neighboring provinces had to give up their work and escape from their bases, for fear of the "looting" of the communists. Several titles of reports at that time reflected their worries and misunderstandings, such as "Reds Endanger Americans", "Two Missionaries Escape", "Reds Capture Missionary", "Americans Flee Bandits" and so on.

More interestingly, "a painful tragedy" of missionaries had been recorded. It was said that after cruelly killing a couple of missionaries, a communist tried to kill their daughter to avoid the trouble of taking care of her. At this very moment, an unknown captive bravely stood out and saved her at the expense of his own life (*The New York Times*, 1935, January 28, p. 5). However, considering its vivid description and literary words, the authenticity of this account may be questionable. Chances were that it was exaggerated to satisfy the curiosity of the Americans. Supporting this skepticism, nearly two months later, another report detailed the release of the captured missionary and his pregnant wife. (*The New York Times*, 1935, March 31, p. 28). Nevertheless, this sorrowful story did gain the sympathy of the audience, as there were several special follow-up reports on the adoption of this girl, which undoubtedly had a long-lasting bad impact on the image of the CCP.

In the second period, although news about missionaries' activities became scarce in *The New York Times*, these reports still provided valuable historical records. In 1938, a piece of report explicitly revealed the sharp change in the image of the party. It introduced that the communist leader Zhu De himself and other famous generals of the Eighth Route Army attended a Catholic Mass (*The New York Times*, 1938, February 20, p. 7). Mr. Zhu told the crowd that communism and Christianity had something in common, in that they both sought peace and justice for the masses and expected nothing in return. He emphasized that our common enemy at present was fascism. By seeking common grounds and respecting differences, the liberal and friendly attitudes of the CCP towards religion were clearly stated, to a certain extent eliminating the misunderstandings of Western readers.

## **4 The Underlying Causes of the Shift of Its Image**

Based on the comparative approach, it can be concluded that the image of the CCP had undergone an obvious shift from 1935 to 1938, which was specifically manifested in the aspects of politics, military affairs, and religion. In general, the tone of the reports changed from criticism to approval, effectively building a good



international image of the party. Admittedly, the change in the relationship between the KMT and the CCP was often regarded as the direct reason behind it. However, with the help of these first-hand reports and other historical materials, this section aims to explore some underlying factors, such as the interests of the United States, the diplomacy of the CCP, and the foreign journalists in China.

#### 4.1 *The interests of the United States*

Before the late 1930s, the American media seemed largely indifferent to social forces in China. Living in Peking, Nanking, or a few other Westernized cities, most American diplomats knew little about China's vast interior and their concerns only centered on protecting the lives and commercial interests of American citizens (Schaller, 1979, p. 4). The military struggle and anti-church movement around the revolutionary areas where the CCP was located often disrupted normal commercial and missionary activities, posing a great threat to their safety. As mentioned before, whenever the Red Army arrived at a new location, there might be widespread panic, prompting missionaries to flee. Together with the abundant slanders and rumors intentionally made by the KMT, it was normal that the American media maintained a hostile attitude towards the CCP. Additionally, it should be noted that the CCP was still quite weak in the early period, which did not arouse much attention from the American people, who would not bother to examine the authenticity of the news. For example, the American government was indifferent to Mao Zedong as the leader of Soviet power in China and even paid little attention to the Long March that began in 1934 (Grayson, 1979, p. 36).

Until the break of the Xi'an Incident at the end of 1936, which marked an important turning point, the American media started to realize the significant influence of the CCP in China. President Roosevelt himself expressed great concern about the event and several senior American officials, including Ambassador Johnson, feared that Japan might exploit the crisis to intensify its pressure on Chinese territory (Schaller, 1979, p. 12). Meanwhile, the American mainstream media was quick to react. On the second day of this shocking event, *The New York Times* published a front-page report on the Xi'an Incident (*The New York Times*, 1936, December 13, p. 1). In the following days, the newspaper continued to cover the negotiations and speculated on the CCP's role in the emergency. Although some critics initially suspected the hidden support from Moscow, the Soviet Union soon clarified its position, claiming no involvement in the incident (Zhang, 1999, p. 241). Through the radio broadcast set up in Xi'an, the CCP was able to express its own opinions to the masses directly. As the crisis was peacefully resolved, the Chinese communists gradually came into the international spotlight.

More importantly, the expansion of Japan and its acquisition of resources in China caused worries to the American government. The United States had suffered from a great loss in business in China and hoped to use China as the weapon with which to contain Tokyo's expanding imperialism (Schaller, 1979, pp. 16–17). Especially in 1938, the Japanese minister announced giving up the "Nine-Power Treaty", seriously infringing on the core interests of the United States. While the KMT's army was losing ground on the front battlefield, the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army led by the CCP continuously made victories, naturally earning high praise from the United States. The evidence of American increasing attention was that the American Navy sent the official Evans Carlson as the special observer to northern China to take a close look at the CCP's guerrilla warfare. President Roosevelt even asked him personally to send the letter directly to the White House, to learn about the latest situation (Blankfort, 1947, p. 173). The American observers' reports helped build a more

concrete and comprehensive image of the CCP, moving beyond the stereotype of radical communism.

#### 4.2 *The diplomacy of the CCP*

Apart from the attention of the American government, the adjustment of the CCP's diplomatic policy during this period provided precious opportunities for the American media to have an immediate connection and effectively promoted the international image of the CCP.

In August 1935, the seventh Congress of the Communist International was held, in which the delegation of the CCP drafted and issued the "Letter to all Compatriots to Fight against Japan and Save China" (《為抗日救國告全體同胞書》), to wit, the "Declaration on August 1" (《八一宣言》), calling for the establishment of a united front. It highlighted that the CCP would like to unite all the forces that supported the revolution in China and made friends with peoples and countries that expressed sympathy and kept a neutral attitude toward the Chinese people's struggle against Japanese invaders (People's Republic of China, 1991, p. 524). This huge change of strategic goals foreshadowed the subsequent cooperation between the KMT and the CCP and opened the door for American journalists to visit the "red zone".

Moreover, the party spared no effort to expand its influence through publicity and adopted an open-minded policy toward foreign media. At the end of 1937, the CCP established the Yan'an Foreign Affairs Office (延安交際處) which was specifically responsible for external communication. Mao Tse-Tung required the office to allow foreign journalists to see both the advantages and achievements of the CCP's work as well as its weaknesses and mistakes. He emphasized the importance of allowing foreign journalists to retain their own opinions (Liu, 2021, p. 3). The CCP's activities were not limited to the red zone but also extended into Kuomintang-controlled areas. In January 1938, the CCP launched its core newspaper, *Xinhua Daily*, in Wuhan, providing Western foreigners with first-hand information about the party. This "red newspaper" immediately became a bridgehead for the CCP to introduce itself to the world and significantly contributed to enhancing its international image (Shuang, 2022, p. 96).

Additionally, the leaders of the party took an active part in public activities and warmly introduced their ideas and proposals. A special interview of Chinese communists appeared shortly after the Xi'an Incident, in which the famous and wise leader, Chou En-lai actively answered several key questions and elaborated on the requests of the party, expressing his hope for a united front in the future. Perhaps it was the first time for the foreign readers of *The New York Times* to have a clear picture of the CCP in such a direct way:

"We Communists do not believe in civil war. We do not believe Chinese should fight Chinese." [...] "We do not ask the declaration of an immediate war against Japan. But we do require the establishment of a government which will give the people their own choice." [...] He has a modest but composed manner and a friendly smile. The hardships of the last ten years have not hardened his handsome face (*The New York Times*, 1937, March 21, p. 6).

Similar reports appeared more frequently during the Sino-Japanese War. In 1938 alone, there were 25 reports related to the communist leaders, including Mao Tse-Tung, Zhu De, and Peng Dehuai, directly showing their charm to the overseas audience.



### 4.3 American journalists in China

In fashioning the positive image of the Chinese Communist Party, a group of prominent American journalists in China played a key role, including the famous “3S”, Edgar Snow, Agnes Smedley, and Anna Louise Strong. As is shown in Table 2, the number of reports mentioning the activities of American journalists, among all the 232 news reports related to the CCP, had increased significantly in 1937 and 1938 (although there were other famous foreign journalists like James Bertram from New Zealand, this section mainly talks about the major influence of American journalists, considering the audience of American social media).

**Table 2. Reports Related to American Journalists in The New York Times (1935–1938)**

Year	Frequency	Representative Journalists
1935	0	
1936	2	Gerald Yorke
1937	5	Agnes Smedley; Harry Dunham
1938	5	Agnes Smedley; Edgar Snow; Anna Louise Strong; Harrison Forman

Source: ProQuest Database of *The New York Times*

In the first period, American news reports primarily relied on information from missionaries and adventurers. Only a few journalists, like Reuter’s correspondent Gerald Yorke, provided limited descriptions of the activities of the CCP. But most of his introductions were based on secondary sources, in that he did not have the chance to visit the heart of the red area due to the news blockade “as effective as a stone fortress” (Snow, 1961, p. 3).

The person who broke the ice was the well-known American journalist Edgar Snow. With the help of Soong Ching-ling, he successfully entered the zones of Chinese communists in Yan’an and collected a great deal of first-hand information. Due to the length of the paper, the details of Edgar Snow’s visit will not be discussed here, but the profound influence of his documentary work *Red Star Over China* should never be underestimated. This book was widely accepted for its readability and credibility, due to Snow’s close observation and neutral writing style with non-partisan tendencies. It revealed the truth of the revolutionary base established by the CCP in an all-around way and even exerted an influence on the policy of the American government toward China. At that time, President Roosevelt showed great interest in Snow’s works and met him in person three times, discussing the strength of the CCP. The president even planned to change the policy from “supporting Chiang Kai-shek” to “supporting Chiang Kai-shek to unite with the CCP”:

(Snow asked) “We can’t support two governments in China, can we?” “Well, I’ve been working with the two governments there” The president responded. [...] “and I intend to go on doing so until we get them together.” (quoted in Snow, 1968, p. 128)

Moreover, another American journalist, Agnes Smedley, made significant contributions as well. During the Xi’an Incident, she was at the center of events, managing radio communications and actively helping to broadcast the ideas of the CCP; after the July 7th Incident, she reported the battles of the Eighth Route Army to

Shanxi Province; later on, she visited the New Fourth Army and completed her documentary work *Battle Hymn of China* (Zhang, 1999, pp. 247, 293, 298). As a veritable war correspondent, she closely followed the movements of the Chinese communists and provided timely reports to foreign readers. Additionally, the work of the journalist Anna Louise Strong should not be omitted. In January 1938, she paid a special visit to the headquarters of the Eighth Route Army in Shanxi and stayed there for ten days (Zhang, 1999, p. 297). Based on her personal experience, she warmly praised the solidarity and bravery of generals and soldiers led by the CCP in her book *One-fifth of Mankind* (Strong, 1938, p130–133). Thanks to the relentless efforts of these excellent foreign journalists, a positive and vivid image of the party had been presented to the American people.

## 5 Conclusion

To sum up, based on first-hand reports published in *The New York Times*, this paper confirms that the image of the CCP in the eyes of the American mainstream media had undergone an obvious shift in the late 1930s, by and large, turning from negative to positive. From 1935 to 1936, the role of the CCP was often ignored by the United States, whose image was demonized and smeared as red bandits or evil persecutors. But from 1937 to 1938, there was a significant increase in relevant news on the CCP and the reliability of the reports. The American media often spoke highly of its democratic political ideas, the gallantry of its military forces on the battlefield, and its open-minded attitude toward Christianity.

By combining reports with major historical events from 1935 to 1938, three main underlying reasons for this shift could be identified. To maintain its interests in the Far East, the United States had to pay more attention to the CCP, which played an increasingly important role in fighting against the Japanese army. Meanwhile, the CCP timely adjusted its diplomatic policy and took an active part in publicizing its propositions. Finally, a group of outstanding American journalists in China, such as Snow, Smedley, and Strong, took the initiative to explore the “red truth” and effectively bridged the gap between the CCP and the American people, playing a key role in shaping a favorable image of the party. The successful practices from that period still offer valuable insights for improving the international image of the CCP today.

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