

How Stalin Helped Mao Zedong Become the Leader: New Archival Documents on Moscow's Role in the Rise of Mao*

ALEXANDER V. PANTSOV

The newly discovered archival documents point toward the need to reexamine some basic assumptions regarding the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) relationships with Moscow. The history of the CCP in the 1930s and 1940s can only be understood if we pay attention to the unchanging ideological and, to a significant degree, political dependence, of CCP leaders on Moscow. Contrary to the conventional Western beliefs, the CCP even under Mao Zedong did not cut its apron strings to the Communist International (Comintern) and was not increasingly autonomous and self-directed. The Soviet ideological influence on Chinese Communism remained domineering. The archival documents make clear that starting from the late 1920s and early 1930s Moscow actively assisted the rise of Mao. Moreover, as improbable as it may seem, Moscow was responsible for initiating the cult of Mao. It was Stalin who made his decisive choice in favor of Mao and it was the Comintern General Secretary Georgii Dimi-

ALEXANDER V. PANTSOV is Professor of History at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. He has published six books and numerous articles on Chinese and Russian Communism, including *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution 1919-1927* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2000) and *Karl Radek on China: Documents and Materials* (Moscow: "OOO Sovero-Print," 2005). Professor Pantsov is currently working on a new political biography of Mao Zedong. He can be reached at <apantsov@capital.edu>.

*This article was translated from Russian by Professor STEVEN I. LEVINE of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

©Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan (ROC).

trov who conveyed this decision to the CCP. In other words, Mao owed his rise to Moscow and, in particular, to Stalin, the Kremlin dictator.

KEYWORDS: Jose V. Stalin; Mao Zedong; Georgii Dimitrov; Wang Ming (Chen Shaoyu); Communist International (Comintern); Sino-Soviet relations.

* * *



Analysis of Soviet, Communist International (Comintern), and Chinese archival materials that have become available recently demonstrates the need for a significant reexamination of our views on the history of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its relationship with the Comintern, the general headquarters of the communist movement. In particular, these documents provide a basis even for rethinking some generally accepted views of the relationship between Mao Zedong (毛澤東) and Stalin. These documents make clear that starting from the late 1920s and early 1930s, Moscow actively assisted the rise of Mao and it was the Stalinist Comintern that supported Mao and even periodically came to his defense when one or another CCP leader came out against him. In other words, Mao owed his rise to Moscow and, in particular, to Stalin, the Kremlin dictator.

At first glance, such a thesis seems paradoxical. According to most scholars in the West and in China—and, after the split between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the CCP in the early 1960s, Russian scholars too—under Mao's leadership, the CCP became autonomous and self-sufficient in the latter half of the 1930s and Mao himself, unlike the orthodox Chinese Stalinists, distanced himself from Moscow. Many authors wrote that, according to their information, Stalin did not trust Mao Zedong who seemed to him more of a "peasant nationalist" than a communist. Such well-known Western scholars as John Fairbank, Benjamin Schwartz, Conrad Brandt, and Robert North, writing first in the late 1940s and early 1950s, set forth what became the classical thesis about "Mao's independence" with respect to Stalin and in his views of China.¹

¹ See John King Fairbank, *The United States and China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univer-

The upsurge of the Chinese revolution in the countryside under Mao's leadership seemed to disprove the conclusions of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin himself regarding the "historic role" of the working class.

Until the end of 1949, Mao had never been to Moscow and Stalin did not know him personally. At the same time, Soviet informants inside and outside the CCP regularly sent negative assessments of Mao to the Kremlin labeling him an anti-Leninist and a Trotskyite. One of these informants was the former leader of the CCP delegation to the Comintern, Wang Ming (王明; i.e., Chen Shaoyu, 陳紹禹), the most ardent opponent of Mao, who transmitted his messages to Stalin in the period 1942-45 via the Soviet representatives to the CCP Central Committee Andrei Ya. Orlov (Terebin) and Peter P. Vladimirov (Vlasov). For example, in January 1943, Wang sent a detailed telegram to Stalin and to the General Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) Georgii Dimitrov concerning the "anti-Leninist and Trotskyist" activities of Mao Zedong. The telegram was received in Moscow on February 1, 1943.² On his own initiative, Vladimirov himself supplied Moscow with unflattering comments about the leader of the Chinese Communists.³ In this connection, Nikita Khrushchev's assertion that Stalin considered Mao "a primitive Marxist" seems logical.⁴ In the 1950s, Mao himself, after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, spoke many times about how Stalin mistrusted him.⁵

sity Press, 1948); Benjamin I. Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952); Conrad Brandt, Benjamin I. Schwartz, and John K. Fairbank, eds., *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952); and Robert C. North, *Moscow and Chinese Communists* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1953).

²See RGASPI (Russian State Archives of Social and Political History), 495/225/6-2/6; and Georgii Dimitrov, *Dnevnik (9 Mart 1933-6 February 1949)* (Diary, March 9, 1933-February 6, 1949) (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Kliment Okhridski", 1997), 352.

³See P. P. Vladimirov, *Osobyi raion Kitaia, 1942-1975* (The special region of China, 1942-1975) (Moscow: APN Press, 1973).

⁴N. S. Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast' (Vospominaniia v 4-x kn.)* (Time. People. Power. Reminiscences in four books), vol. 3 (Moscow: Moskovskiiye novosti, 1999), 23.

⁵See B. N. Vereshchagin, *V starom i novom Kitae. Iz vospominanii diplomata* (In old and new China. Memoirs of a diplomat) (Moscow: IDV RAN, 1999), 123; "Mao Zedong on the Comintern and Stalin's Policy in China," *Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka* (Problems of the Far East), 1994, no. 5:107; O. Arne Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of*

Let us now turn to the documented facts that tell a very different story. In the summer of 1930, Moscow, in the form of the Far Eastern Bureau of the ECCI, located in Shanghai, supported the decision to appoint Mao Zedong Political Commissar of the First Army Group of the Chinese Red Army (this was the most powerful one), and thereafter actively lobbied for Mao's inclusion in the Bureau of the Central Committee in the Soviet Areas.⁶ It was the Far Eastern Bureau that then suggested that Mao be appointed head of the Revolutionary Military Council, something it would not have done without first consulting Moscow. This is what the Far Eastern Bureau wrote to the Politburo of the CCP on November 10, 1930:

The commanders of our Red Army, Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai [彭德懷], had no connection whatsoever with the government. The government was one thing and the army another. . . . It goes without saying that such a situation won't do at all. Things have to be arranged so that Mao has responsibility not only for the condition and activities of the army, but also takes part in the government and shares responsibility for the work of the latter. He must be appointed a member of the government (chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council). There's no need to talk about the practical benefits of this proposal; they are obvious.⁷

Until Xiang Ying (項英) and Zhou Enlai (周恩來), both powerful party leaders, arrived in the Central Soviet Area from Shanghai, Mao was entrusted with the leadership of the Bureau of the Central Committee in the Soviet Areas.

Moscow approved Mao's selection in November 1931 as chairman of the Central Executive Committee and head of the Council of People's Commissars or, in the contemporary terminology, the People's Committee of the Central Executive Committee of the Chinese Soviet Republic.⁸ Moscow

the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 338-39, 340, 348, 350, 354-55; and Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao: The Memoirs of Mao's Personal Physician* (New York: Random House, 1994), 117.

⁶See M. L. Titarenko et al., eds., *VKP(b), Komintern i sovetskoe dvizhenie v Kitae. Dokumenty* (CPSU(B), the Comintern and the Soviet movement in China. Documents), vol. 3 (Moscow: AO Buklet, 1999), 48, 1067.

⁷*Ibid.*, 1198-99.

⁸See Wang Jianying (王健英), ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao huibian—Lingdao jigou yange he chengyuan minglu* (Collection of documents on history of the CCP

and its representative in Shanghai, Arthur Ernst Ewert, provided assistance for Mao in 1932-33.⁹ At that time, the Bureau of the Central Committee in the Soviet Areas, including such authoritative leaders as Zhou Enlai, Wang Jiaxiang (王稼祥), Ren Bishi (任弼時), and even the commander of the Chinese Red Army Zhu De (朱德), came out in opposition to Mao. Mao was subjected to severe criticism because of his opposition to attacking large cities. He proposed that the Red Army should avoid large battles, retreat to the mountains, and decentralize its forces.¹⁰ Moreover, Zhou Enlai and several other leaders of the soviet movement believed that "Mao Zedong does not understand Marxism."¹¹ The decision to remove Mao Zedong and criticize him publicly was taken without advance preparation and without the knowledge of representatives of the ECCI. Ewert informed the secretary of the ECCI, Joseph A. Pyatnitsky, of this on October 8, 1932. "I will pass over the fact that such a way of dealing with the question now would demonstrate our weakness to our opponents," he said:

It is impossible to adopt such measures before having exhausted all other possibilities and without serious preparations, to say nothing of securing your approval. Mao Zedong is still a popular leader and caution is necessary in

organizations—the evolution of leading organs and their membership) (Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe, 1983), 163.

⁹ Arthur Ernst Ewert (1890-1959) also went by the names Jim, Arthur, Arthur Brown, Gray, Alberto, Castro, Garry Berger, and Negro. He was a member of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) from 1919, a member of its Central Committee in 1923 and 1927-29, and a member of the Politburo of the KPD in 1925-29. In 1929-31 he was a deputy director of the lender secretariat of the ECCI in Moscow. He came to Shanghai in 1932 as a representative of the Comintern in China and secretary of the Far Eastern Bureau of the ECCI. He stayed in China until 1934. After this Stalin sent him to Brazil to get the Brazilian communist movement on track. He was arrested there in 1935 for organizing an armed communist uprising. In 1945, after ten years in prison, where he was subjected to inhuman torture, he was released in an amnesty. Toward the end of his life he suffered from mental illness. He died in East Germany.

¹⁰ See Titarenko, *VKP(b), Komintern i sovetskoe dvizhenie v Kitae. Dokumenty* 3:49; and M. L. Titarenko et al., eds., *VKP(b), Komintern i sovetskoe dvizhenie v Kitae. Dokumenty* (CPSU(B), the Comintern and the Soviet movement in China. Documents), vol. 4 (Moscow: AO Buklet, 2002), 146-48; 152-53; 158-59. See also RGASPI, 495/225/71/3, 176-79.

¹¹ Wang Song (王松; i.e., Liu Yalou, 劉亞樓), Li Ting (李廷; i.e., Lin Biao, 林彪), and Zhou Dian (Zhou Bin, 周彬; i.e., Mao Zemin, 毛澤民), *Doklad General'nomu Sekretariu IKKI G. M. Dimitrovu* (Report to the General Secretary of the ECCI, G. M. Dimitrov), January 8, 1940. — RGASPI, 495/225/477/49.

struggling against him to implement the correct line. Thus, we opposed this part of the decision, demanded the elimination of disagreements within the leading organs, and opposed the removal of Mao Zedong at present.¹²

The Political Secretariat of the ECCI completely agreed with Ewert's opinion, stressing in its telegram reply of March 1933: "With respect to Mao Zedong, we need to extend maximum patience and exert comradely influence. We should provide him every opportunity to engage in responsible work under the leadership of the Central Committee or the Bureau of the Party's Central Committee."¹³

Moscow and Ewert likewise disagreed with the CCP Central Committee's proposal to send Mao Zedong to the Soviet Union for medical treatment, clearly understanding that this was simply a pretext for the Central Committee to rid the Soviet region of a refractory and powerful leader.¹⁴ On Moscow's insistence, Mao was elevated from a candidate member to a full member of the Politburo at the Fifth Plenum of the CCP Central Committee in January 1934. To be sure, soon after the plenum, in February 1934, Mao Zedong was replaced as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Chinese Soviet Republic or, as it was then called, the People's Committee of the Central Government,¹⁵ by Zhang Wentian (張聞天), a graduate of the Comintern University in Moscow. However, this took place without Moscow's knowledge.¹⁶

Moreover, as improbable as it may seem, Moscow was responsible for initiating the cult of Mao by proclaiming him one of the "standard-bearers" of the world communist movement along with the General Secretary of the ECCI, Georgii Dimitrov, at the Seventh Comintern Congress in the summer of 1935.¹⁷ This was done through the mouth of the CCP

¹²See Titarenko, *VKP(b), Komintern i sovetskoe dvizhenie v Kitae. Dokumenty* 4:194.

¹³*Ibid.*, 295.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 585-86.

¹⁵Wang, *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao huibian*, 198.

¹⁶See Titarenko, *VKP(b), Komintern i sovetskoe dvizhenie v Kitae. Dokumenty* 4:49.

¹⁷See Qing Shi (青石; i.e., Yang Kuisong 楊奎松), "Gongchan guoji yazhi Mao Zedong le ma?" (Did the Comintern restrain Mao Zedong?), *Bainian chao* (Century Tides), 1997, no. 4:33.

delegate Teng Daiyuan (滕代遠), but it is crystal clear that without the approval of the Moscow leadership, Teng would not have said what he did. The texts of the speeches and reports by all the delegates to the congress were subjected to preliminary scrutiny, editing, and approval by the appropriate departments of the ECCI. In general, the Seventh Congress devoted particular attention to the question of augmenting the authority of the leaders of communist parties. In this connection, at a special meeting of the CCP delegation to the Comintern convened at the end of August 1935 to consider how to implement the decisions of the congress, Wang Ming, head of the delegation, made the following declaration: "Whose authority should we elevate? Of course, the members of the Politburo. . . . Who in the first place? The authority of comrades Mao Zedong and Zhu De."¹⁸

Wang Ming, moreover, was hardly a devotee of Mao Zedong. He fancied himself as the leader of the party. Some time later, under his guidance, a member of Wang Ming's staff, Guo Zhaotang (郭肇棠, Afanasiï Gavrilovich Krymov), composed a note on Mao Zedong intended for the leading members of the Comintern. Its purpose was to attenuate Stalin's positive view of the guerilla leader. Krymov wrote as follows:

Social origin—a petty landlord [someone who read the note inserted a question mark in the margin in red pencil]. He made no systematic mistakes. He is a very strong worker, active agitator and propagandist. He knows how to deal with the masses. He is a good organizer of mass work. He has the richest experience of the peasant movement and the guerilla war. He can work under the most trying and difficult conditions. He carries out his work very actively and very well.

Personal characteristics—he likes to establish close links with the masses. [He likes] propaganda work. He is self-denying.

Besides the above-mentioned positive sides, he has some flaws. He makes insufficient theoretical preparation. That is why he can easily make some political mistakes, but he can easily and quickly correct them under a strong Party leadership.¹⁹

¹⁸ Cited from A. S. Titov, *Materialy k politicheskoi biografii Mao Tsze-duna* (Materials for a political biography of Mao Zedong), vol. 2 (Moscow: IDV AN SSSR, 1970), 137.

¹⁹ RGASPI. 495/225/71/1/242-243. Someone underlined most of the last paragraph with a red pencil and put a question mark on the margin.

Later the ECCI Cadre Department personnel G. I. Mordvinov (alias Krylov) and Zhang Suishan (alias Boris Kalashnikov) as well as former members of the CCP delegation to the Comintern Li Lisan (李立三) and Zhao Yimin (趙毅敏) reported to the higher organs that Wang Ming "undermined Mao Zedong's authority among the Chinese comrades in the USSR." Li Lisan said the following to the ECCI officials on February 17, 1940:

I think that Wang Ming was the main source of rumors that Mao Zedong was not the political leader. He told me, Xiao Ai [Zhao Yimin] and others that Mao Zedong for all practical training was a good man, but theoretically he was very weak. During the conversation with me and Xiao Ai, whom he trusted more than me, Wang Ming discussed Mao Zedong's report at the Second Soviet Congress. He said that in his report there were lots of weak points, but he [Wang Ming] corrected them, and now the report looks better. Wang also corrected other documents that we received from China. Hence, many corrected documents looked differently in Moscow from the way they did in China.²⁰

The leaders of the Comintern, therefore, probably forced Wang Ming to laud the authority of his rival.

Immediately following the Seventh Congress, a campaign to exalt Mao Zedong began in the Soviet Union. First in line was *The Communist International*, the theoretical and political organ of the Comintern, with a lengthy panegyric titled "Mao Zedong: Leader of the Chinese Working People," at the beginning of December 1935.²¹ The article was unsigned, but it is not difficult to determine who wrote this piece. The author was the deputy director of *Pravda's* international department, Alexander Moiseevich Khamadan.²² He carried out the assignment of the highest

²⁰Ibid. 6/1/62, 63.

²¹See *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional* (The Communist International), no. 33-34 (1935): 83-88.

²²A. M. Khamadan (his real surname was Faingar) was born in Derbent (North Caucasus) in 1908. Prior to his appointment at *Pravda* in 1932, he worked in the Consulate-General of the USSR in Harbin for several years as director of the Information Bureau. Subsequently, he served as deputy editor-in-chief of the journal *Novyi Mir* (New World). At the beginning of the Soviet Fatherland War in 1941-42 he served as a correspondent for the Soviet Telegraph Agency (TASS). Khamadan suffered a tragic fate. In 1942 he was taken prisoner by the Nazis at Sevastopol, Crimea. In the POW camp, where he was known by the name "Mikhailov," he conducted underground activity for which he was confined to prison and then executed in May 1943. See A. M. Khamadan, *Zapiski korrespondenta* (Notes of a correspondent) (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1968).

party organs to the best of his limited capacity given that he had no documentary materials at his disposal, apart from tales about Mao related by his colleagues on the ECCI. Soon after, on December 13, 1935, an article by the same author on the leader of the Chinese people appeared in *Pravda*.²³ Next his biographical sketches of Mao and of Zhu De and Fang Zhimin (方志敏), the head of CCP forces in the Fujian-Zhejiang-Jiangxi border region (閩浙贛邊區) who was killed in action in 1935, appeared in a brochure "Leaders and Heroes of the Chinese People," published by the State Social-Economic Publishing House (OGIZ).²⁴ An abbreviated translation of *Red Star over China* by the American author Edgar Snow, the first Western correspondent to interview Mao Zedong, was published in Moscow in 1938.²⁵ Mao's autobiography, as it appeared in the Russian edition of Snow's book, was carefully edited. All of Mao's self-critical comments were excised, and the text itself was severely cut and polished in order to highlight Snow's main points. A Soviet reader would learn from the book that Mao Zedong was

an accomplished scholar of classical Chinese, an omnivorous reader, a deep student of philosophy and history, a good speaker, a man with an unusual memory and extraordinary powers of concentration. . . . It is an interesting fact that many Japanese regard him as the ablest Chinese strategist alive. . . . He appears to be quite free from symptoms of megalomania, but he has a deep sense of personal dignity, and possesses an iron will.²⁶

In 1939, OGIZ published a canonical biographical sketch of Mao based on a reedited version of Snow, partially supplemented by information at

²³A. Khamadan, "Vozhd' kitaiskogo naroda—Mao Tszedun," (Mao Zedong—leader of the Chinese people), *Pravda*, December 13, 1935.

²⁴See A. Khamadan, *Vozhdi i geroi kitaiskogo naroda* (Leaders and heroes of the Chinese people) (Moscow: OGIZ-Sotsekiz, 1936).

²⁵Edgar Snow's book was first published in London in 1937 by Victor Gollanz: Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (London: Victor Gollanz, 1937). Snow's interview appeared in the book in the form of Mao's autobiography under the heading "Genesis of a Communist" (pp. 125-80).

²⁶Edgar Snow, *Geroicheskiĭ narod Kitaia* (The heroic people of China) (Moscow: Molodaya Gvardiya, 1938) 72, 74; and Snow, *Red Star over China*, 83, 84. Instead of "and possesses an iron will," Snow ended this passage as follows: "and something about him suggests a power of ruthless decision when he deems it necessary."

the disposal of the ECCI.²⁷ At the same time, a brochure entitled *Mao Zedong and Zhu De: Leaders of the Chinese People*, by one of Mao's former schoolmates at the pedagogic institute in Changsha (長沙), Emi Xiao (蕭愛梅; i.e., Xiao San 蕭三), a well-known Chinese communist and writer then living in Moscow, showed up on the counters in that city. This book also made clear that Mao was the "model" leader of the Chinese communist movement.²⁸

It is not surprising that Moscow responded positively to the enlarged meeting of the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee in Zunyi, Guizhou Province (貴州省遵義) on January 15-17, 1935, at which Mao was made a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, and occupied what were in essence the leading positions in the party.²⁹ The ECCI and the CPSU learned of these decisions soon after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern from reports by Chen Yun (陳雲), a member of the CCP Politburo who took part in the Zunyi meeting, and Pan Hannian (潘漢年), a member of the CCP, both of whom were specially dispatched to Moscow in May 1935 to reestablish the severed link with the ECCI and to inform the Comintern of the major changes in the leadership of the CCP and of the vicissitudes of the Long March. Judging from documents in the Central Archives of the CCP Central Committee, Chen Yun and Pan Hannian personally delivered their report to Dmitrii Z. Manuilsky, secretary of the ECCI.³⁰ Chen and Pan did not have at their disposal a copy of the resolution "On the Results of the Struggle against the Fifth Enemy 'Campaign'," adopted by the Zunyi plenum because the resolution had not been drafted by the time they left

²⁷ *Mao Tsze-dung. Biograficheskii ocherk* (Mao Zedong: biographical sketch) (Moscow: OGLZ-Goispolitizdat, 1939).

²⁸ Emi Xiao, *Mao Tsze-dung, Zhu De* (vozhdi kitaiskogo naroda) (Mao Zedong, Zhu De, leaders of the Chinese people) (Moscow, 1939).

²⁹ See Titarenko, *VKP(b), Komintern i sovetskoe dvizhenie v Kitae. Dokumenty* 3:49.

³⁰ See Yang Kuisong, *Zhonggong yu Mosike guanxi, 1920-1960* (CCP relations with Moscow, 1920-1960) (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1997), 420. Yang Zhihua (楊之華), widow of the former leader of the CCP, Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白), who was technical secretary of the Organization Department of the CCP Central Committee, accompanied Chen Yun and Pan Hannian to Moscow, but she did not take part in the meeting with Manuilsky. See Alexander Pantsov and Steven I. Levine, *Chinese Comintern Activists: An Analytic Biographic Dictionary* (Manuscript, 2005), 266.

China. Their report was not supplemented by documents. Moscow received the text of the resolution later, sometime in 1936. This document was brought by another participant in the meeting, Deng Fa (鄧發), an alternate member of the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee.³¹ A second copy of the resolution was transmitted to the Cadre Department of the ECCI at the end of 1939 by Liu Yalou (pseudonym Wang Song), former commander of the Second Division of the 1st Corps of the Chinese Red Army and future commander of the Air Force of the PRC, who had come to Moscow to study at the M. V. Frunze Military Academy.³²

To be sure, not everyone in the Executive Committee of the Comintern in the 1930s looked upon Mao Zedong as an unreservedly qualified candidate for the top position in the Chinese Communist Party. The Far Eastern section of the Eastern lender secretariat of the ECCI and its director Pavel Mif tried to put forward Chinese graduates of the Moscow international institutes of higher education—the Communist University of the Toilers of China (KUTK) and the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV)—for the key positions in the CCP. This was hardly by chance. Mif had served as vice-rector (1925-27) and then rector (1927-29) of KUTK, and headed KUTV in 1936. Mif's most actively promoted students formed a faction within the CCP of the so-called "28 Bolsheviks." At the top of Mif's list were Wang Ming, Qin Bangxian (秦邦憲), and Zhang Wentian. It was Mif who in 1931 helped Wang Ming to assume the position of head of the CCP delegation to the Comintern and it was Mif who promoted Qin Bangxian to be General Secretary of the CCP Central Committee.

Other officials in the Comintern, the Central Committee of the CPSU, and the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern were aware of the limited practical experience of "Mif's pupils." Some of them favored the promotion of such veteran Comintern cadres as Zhou Enlai, Xiang Ying, and Zhang Guotao (張國燾).

³¹Wang, Li, and Zhou, "Doklad General'nomu Sekretariu IKKI G. Dimitrovu," 53.

³²Ibid.

At the time, there were several factions within the ECCI, the most prominent of which were headed by Pyatnitsky and Manuilsky. These groups carried on fierce battles behind the scenes. There was also disunity among those who guided the Chinese Communist Party. For example, Mif often quarreled with Ludwig I. Mad'iar, deputy head of the Eastern lender secretariat.³³ It is understandable, therefore, that various factions in the ECCI, largely from purely personal ambition, supported "their people" and "their favorites" in the CCP.

Until the late 1930s, Stalin did not come down on the side of any of the factions either in the ECCI or in the CCP. With Machiavellian perspicacity, he combined three groups to form the leadership of the CCP. These were the domestic communists (Mao Zedong and his supporters), the Moscow graduates (Wang Ming, Qin Bangxian, and Zhang Wentian who replaced Qin Bangxian as head of the CCP Central Committee in 1935), and the veteran Comintern cadres (Zhou Enlai and Xiang Ying). By doing so, he prevented any of these groups from getting the upper hand over the others. This, more than anything else, explains Moscow's deliberate promotion of Mao Zedong in the early and mid-1930s as a counterweight to the already entrenched leaders of the party—Zhou Enlai and Xiang Ying—and the new but already influential cadres like Wang Ming, Qin Bangxian, and Zhang Wentian.

Stalin made his decisive choice in favor of Mao Zedong at the end of the 1930s. In the summer of 1938, the leadership of the ECCI approved the selection of Mao Zedong as General Secretary of the CCP Central Committee. He was to replace Zhang Wentian who had served in this position after the dismissal of Qin Bangxian. In early July 1938, Dimitrov conveyed this decision to the then acting head of the CCP delegation to the ECCI, Wang Jiaxiang, who was about to go back to China. Wang's successor, Ren Bishi, also attended this meeting.³⁴ Here is what Dimitrov said: "You should tell

³³For one of these conflicts see Titarenko, *VKP(b), Komintern i sovetskoe dvizhenie v Kitae. Dokumenty* 3:1306-27.

³⁴See RGASPI, 495/225/71/3/185; Xu Zehao (徐则浩), ed., *Wang Jiaxiang nianpu 1906-1974* (Biographic chronicle of Wang Jiaxiang 1906-1974) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2001), 190.

everybody that it is necessary to support Mao Zedong as the leader of the Chinese Communist Party. He is hardened in the actual struggle. Other persons like Wang Ming should not compete for the leadership."³⁵ On September 14, at the CCP Politburo meeting in Yan'an (延安), Wang Jiaxiang reported on this decision.³⁶ As Li Weihai (李維漢), a participant in the meeting, later recalled: "Wang Jiaxiang at the meeting transmitted . . . Dimitrov's opinion; it clearly pointed out that the leader of the Chinese people was Mao Zedong. Dimitrov's words had a profound impact on the meeting. From that time on our Party had a better and clearer understanding of Mao Zedong's leading position; the issue of the Party united leadership was resolved."³⁷

In late 1939 and early 1940, the ECCI prepared recommendations on organizational issues for the CCP Central Committee in connection with the party's forthcoming Seventh Congress. Zhou Enlai, who was in the Soviet Union for medical treatment and who intended to return to China in early February 1940, was supposed to transmit these recommendations orally to Mao Zedong and other members of the Central Committee. This is what Dimitrov wrote in a telegram to Mao Zedong dated March 17, 1940: "Zhou Enlai will inform you in person about everything we discussed and agreed upon regarding Chinese affairs. These issues should be examined seriously and final decisions made completely independently. In case of disagreement with us on various issues, it is requested that you inform us promptly of your reasons."³⁸

A report preserved in the archives from the Cadre Department of the ECCI to Dimitrov gives some indication of what these recommendations were. In particular, the report said,

³⁵Cited in Xu, *Wang Jiaxiang nianpu*, 190.

³⁶See *ibid.*, 196; Pang Xianzhi (逢先知), ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu 1893-1949* (Biographic chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2002), 90; and Jin Chongji (金冲及), ed., *Mao Zedong zhuan 1893-1949* (Biography of Mao Zedong 1893-1949) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2004), 531.

³⁷Li Weihai, *Huiyi yu yanjiu* (Memoirs and study), vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi ziliao, 1986), 415-16.

³⁸RGASPI, 495/225/71/3/189.

It must be borne in mind that Wang Ming enjoys no authority vis-à-vis the veteran cadres of the party. In any case, Wang Ming does not possess any authority deriving from his activity within the party itself. He was put forward for leadership in the party at the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee in January 1931 under pressure from Mif. [Around the time this report was written, Mif was arrested by Stalin's secret police and shot as an "enemy of the people."] In view of various doubts and questions arising from Wang Ming's activities, and the indisputable facts of the leadership's disinformation at the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU(B), the Thirteenth Plenum of the ECCI, and the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, it must be recommended to the leadership of the CCP that Wang Ming not be given any leading role or be nominated for any of the leading positions in the leadership of the party.

It must be recommended to the party leadership that Politburo member Kong Xing [Kang Sheng 康生, the former deputy head of the CCP delegation to the ECCI], and candidate Politburo member Fang Lin (方林; i.e., Deng Fa), and Central Committee members Guan Xiangying [關向應] and Yang Shangkun [楊尚昆] not be nominated for membership in the Politburo or the Secretariat, and not be responsible for personnel, organizational, or security work.

It must be recommended that Politburo member and Secretary of the Central Committee Bo Gu [博古; i.e., Qin Bangxian], and members of the Central Committee Luo Mang [Luo Mai, 羅邁; i.e., Li Weihan], Chen Changhao [陳昌浩], Zhang Hao [張浩; i.e., Lin Yuying 林育英], and Kong Yuan [孔原] not be nominated for the Central Committee or employed in personnel or organizational work or in the central party organs. . . . From materials prepared by the Cadre Department of the ECCI and conversations with Zhou Enlai, Zheng Ling [Chen Lin, 陳林; i.e., Ren Bishi], Mao Zemin and others, a data sheet was prepared on twenty-six leading members of the CCP (with data attached) who could be nominated at the Seventh Congress for the leading organs of the CCP. Basically, these were the most authoritative, experienced, and tested cadres of the party who had survived the difficult underground party life and the civil war and who were now leading the party, military, and military-political work. The following persons stood out among the twenty-six comrades: Lin Biao, He Long [賀龍], Liu Bocheng [劉伯承], Nie Yongcheng [Nie Rongzhen, 聶榮臻], Xiao Ke [蕭克], Xu Xiangqian [徐向前], Cheng Guang [Chen Guang³⁹], Deng Xiaoping [鄧小平] and Ye Jianying [葉劍英] who were well-known not only in the party but throughout China as the leaders and commanders of 8th Route Army units. Deng Yingchao (鄧穎超; female) [the wife of Zhou Enlai], Mao Zemin, Gao Gang [高崗], Xu Teli [徐特立], Chen Yi [陳毅], Liu Xiao [劉曉], Zhang Qiqi [?], and Zeng Shan [曾山] were considered fully tested and experienced party workers. . . . Mao Zedong is truly the most outstanding political figure in the CCP. He knows China better than the other CCP leaders, knows

³⁹Most likely, it is Chen Guang (陳光, 1907-54) who was at the time acting commander of the 115th division of the communist 8th Route Army. However, it might also be Zhou Enlai, as Chen Guang was one of his pseudonyms.

the people, correctly interprets political events, and basically frames problems correctly.⁴⁰

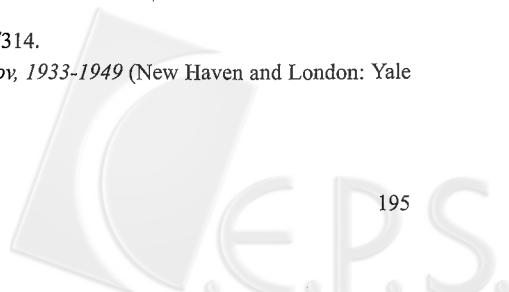
The overwhelming majority of the persons recommended were supporters of Mao Zedong. Those whom Moscow suggested not be employed in responsible positions were viewed by the ECCI as adherents of Wang Ming, Mao's main adversary at the time. The ECCI, and Stalin who was standing behind it, were evidently trying to help their choice for leader of the CCP to consolidate his power. In fact, they even overdid it. Mao Zedong did not consider Kang Sheng, who by then had openly come over to his side, nor several of the other party workers, as his enemies. He even tried to defend Kang Sheng in one of his letters to Dimitrov: "Kon Sin [Kang Sheng] is reliable."⁴¹ It is interesting that at the same time Mao Zemin, Mao Zedong's younger brother who in 1939 was in Moscow, criticized Kang Sheng: "Now in Yan'an there is the Party Higher School that is run by a mysterious Kang Sheng. He sets up his own secret-service network among the students and recruits people. I am afraid that this is not a Party school that is supposed to be an anvil of Party cadres, but a school that Kang Sheng uses to create his own cadres."⁴² Perhaps, the younger brother did not keep abreast of the elder brother's business!

Soviet money also helped strengthen the authority of Moscow's chosen CCP leader. The archival documents demonstrate the colossal amount of financial aid that the Chinese Communist Party received from the Comintern and the AUCP(B) not only in the 1920s, but also in the 1930s. These financial infusions amounted to tens of million of American dollars. In November 1936, for instance, the Comintern Executive decided to give the CCP US\$550,000. The ECCI planned to send the first installment of US\$150,000 as early as the end of November. In March 1937, the ECCI Secretariat promised the CCP Central Committee Secretariat to increase its financial aid to US\$1,600,000. In reality, in 1937 the Comintern

⁴⁰RGASPI, 495/225/71/3/186-89; and 495/74/314.

⁴¹Ivo Banac, ed., *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933-1949* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 295.

⁴²RGASPI. 495/225/472/18.



subsidy to the CCP was about US\$2,000,000.⁴³ The Comintern Executive Department of International Liaison delivered money to the CCP Central Committee through Song Qingling (宋慶齡), the widow of the late President Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙), and a sister-in-law of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石). Song was motivated to help Moscow and the CCP because of her leftist ideology. It was with Song Qingling that Mao Zedong maintained contacts. In November 1936, for instance, in response to Mao's letter to her regarding the CCP's financial problems, she helped the Comintern transmit US\$50,000 to Mao through the Chinese Communist, Pan Han-nian.⁴⁴ Dimitrov even looked upon her as "almost a Communist."⁴⁵ He knew perfectly well that in addition to being involved in financial transactions Song Qingling also served as a source of intelligence from inside the Chinese government. In her secret communications with Moscow she sometimes used her Western name "Mme. Suzy."⁴⁶

Incredible as it may seem, the Soviet Union went on rendering financial aid to the Chinese Communist Party (in fact Mao Zedong) even after the June 22, 1941 Nazi invasion of the USSR! The AUCP(B) Politburo archives preserve an astonishing document: the Politburo decision of July 3, 1941 to give the ECCI "US\$1,000,000 to render help to the Chinese Communist Party [Central Committee]."⁴⁷ The Comintern Executive requested even more, US\$2 million, but had to settle for half that amount.⁴⁸

⁴³See Yang Kuisong, "Sulian da guimo yuanzhu Zhongguo hongjun de yici changshi" (The Soviet attempt to render help to the Chinese Red Army), in *Sulian, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming de guanxi xintan*, ed. Huang Xiurong (黃修榮) (New study on the relationship between the Soviet Union, the Comintern, and the Chinese revolution) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1995), 324-26.

⁴⁴See "Letter from Song Qingling to Wang Ming. January 26, 1937," RGASPI/495/74/281/34-35. For Mao's letter to Song Qingling see Stuart R. Schram, ed., *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949* (Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 356-57.

⁴⁵Banac, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 40.

⁴⁶See in detail Alexander Pantsov, "Stalin and the Chinese Communist Dissidents," in *Reflections at the End of a Century*, ed. Morris Slavin and Louis Patsouras (Youngstown: Youngstown State University Press, 2002), 35.

⁴⁷RGASPI, 17/162/36/41.

⁴⁸Banac, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 172, 176; and *Dimitrov, Dnevnik (9 March 1933-6 February 1949)*, 238.

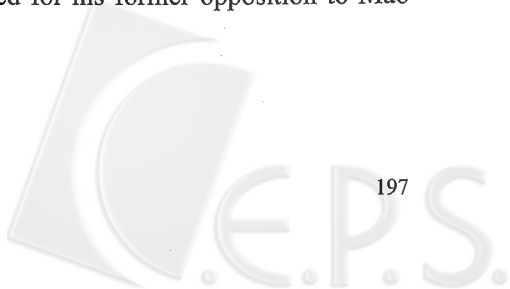
It was on this day (July 3) that Stalin addressed the Soviet people on the radio for the first time since the beginning of the war. He acknowledged the German occupation of Lithuania, a huge part of Latvia, the western part of Byelorussia, and some parts of the Western Ukraine. The Luftwaffe was bombing Soviet cities, but the Politburo was making a decision to send US\$1,000,000 to the CCP Central Committee!

In 1941, enjoying the Kremlin's support and flush with Soviet money, Mao Zedong launched a rectification (整風, *zhengfeng*) campaign. Its major target was Wang Ming. Stalin's attitude towards Wang Ming became cautious as early as December 1936 during the famous Xi'an Incident (西安事變). At that time Stalin unexpectedly called Dimitrov. He could not hide his temper and asked: "Who is this Wang Ming of yours? A provocateur? He wanted to file a telegram to have Chiang Kai-shek killed." Dimitrov, quite astonished, answered that he had not heard anything of the sort. "I'll find you that telegram!" said Stalin, hanging up the phone.⁴⁹ He never did, however, most likely because he did not have it, having been misinformed by someone. Nevertheless, this episode was characteristic: the Kremlin boss treated Wang Ming with great suspicion.

Finally, at the end of the 1930s Stalin disavowed Wang Ming. It is true that the latter still enjoyed Dimitrov's confidence. During Wang Ming's sojourn in Moscow he established good relations with Dimitrov. Before returning to China in November 1937, Wang Ming and his wife Meng Qingshu (孟慶樹) left their five-year-old daughter Faina with the Dimitrov family and Dimitrov and his wife Rosa adopted her. It is understandable that the ECCI General Secretary must have worried about his friend very much as Wang Ming had become Mao's main antagonist. However, Dimitrov could not do anything without Stalin's sanction.

Other targets of *zhengfeng* were Qin Bangxian and the rest of the "28 Bolsheviks." Incidentally, many of those whom Mao purged in those years had been included on the list of leaders that Moscow had viewed with distrust. Zhou Enlai was also blamed for his former opposition to Mao

⁴⁹Banac, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 42.



Zedong. A fundamental part of *zhengfeng* was elaboration of the canonical course of Party history. Here Mao followed his teacher's maxims strictly. "One must sometimes correct history," Stalin said, letting the cat out of the bag one day.⁵⁰ Mao had no doubts about this motto, too. As a model he used Stalin's *Short Course of the AUCP(B)*.⁵¹ In the new, canonical Party history Mao was assigned the major role.

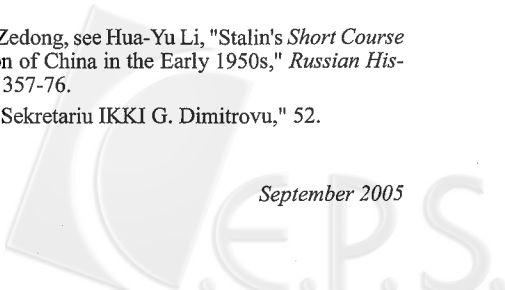
Even after Mao, with the help of the ECCI, achieved supreme power, however, Moscow did not allow him to apply any major sanctions against the Comintern cadres whom he had mistrusted. That Mao tried to adopt such sanctions is clear from the documents preserved in the Comintern archives. Of particular interest is a fourteen-page document addressed to Dimitrov on January 8, 1940 from Liu Yalou, Lin Biao, and Mao Zemin, Mao Zedong's younger brother, all of whom were in Moscow at the time. This document directly attacked Zhou Enlai, Ren Bishi, Xiang Ying, and Qin Bangxian. The report said, in part, "Zhou Enlai is principally responsible for military adventurism, and comrades Han Ying [Xiang Ying] and Zheng Ling [Ren Bishi] were his main confederates."⁵² Moreover, the report almost openly charged Qin Bangxian with being an enemy of the revolution. That the authors of the report were three persons close to Mao Zedong forces us to believe that the report was written and sent to the leadership of the ECCI with Mao's knowledge. However, despite this and notwithstanding the gravity of the accusations against these well-known CCP leaders, the document was shelved. In view of the political situation at the time, there can be no doubt that the decision to "put it on ice" must have been taken by Stalin, not Dimitrov. The General Secretary of the ECCI was not an independent actor.

By early 1943 Mao increased the pressure on Wang Ming. The latter reported himself ill in order to avoid participation in the rectification cam-

⁵⁰Ibid., 14.

⁵¹On the influence of the *Short Course* on Mao Zedong, see Hua-Yu Li, "Stalin's *Short Course* and Mao's Socialist Economic Transformation of China in the Early 1950s," *Russian History* 29, no. 2-4 (Summer-Fall-Winter 2002): 357-76.

⁵²Wang, Li, and Zhou, "Doklad General'nomu Sekretariu IKKI G. Dimitrovu," 52.



paign. On January 15, 1943 Georgii Dimitrov received an anxious message from Yan'an through the military intelligence channel. Most likely it was from Vladimirov. The informer reported that Wang Ming was seriously ill: "He needs treatment in Chengdu [成都] or in the USSR, but Mao Zedong and Kon Sin [Kang Sheng] supposedly do not let him leave Yan'an, for fear that he will give out unfavorable information about them."⁵³ Attempting to gain time, Dimitrov advised the Intelligence Directorate representative against interfering in the internal affairs of the Chinese Communists.⁵⁴

This could not satisfy Wang Ming. At the end of January 1943, he sent a detailed telegram to Stalin and to Dimitrov via Vladimirov and Orlov, directly accusing Mao Zedong of "anti-Comintern" activities. However, on February 3 Dimitrov received a telegram from Mao Zedong containing accusations against Wang Ming.⁵⁵ Evidently, Mao became aware of his enemy's calumnies and hastened to counter-attack.

The conflict was sharpening. On February 11 Dimitrov unexpectedly received a call from Vladimir G. Dekanozov, the former Soviet Ambassador to Germany, now serving as the USSR Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs. He started a conversation on Wang Ming, advising Dimitrov to tell Wang to apply directly to the Soviet Ambassador in China Alexander S. Paniushkin to procure an exit authorization for himself from Chiang Kai-shek.⁵⁶ As an old NKVD member, Dekanozov might have received the information on Wang Ming through his own channels. He was aware of Dimitrov's friendly relations with Wang Ming and may have decided to help Wang. However, he also might have provoked Dimitrov. His call indeed was very strange. Why should one ask for an exit authorization from Chiang Kai-shek, but not from Mao Zedong? Most likely, Dekanozov was checking Dimitrov's loyalty: did Dimitrov consider his personal relations to be above the interests of the worldwide communist movement?

⁵³Banac, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 256.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 259.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 354.



Dimitrov had to sacrifice his old friend. Some months later, on December 13, 1943, he sent Wang Ming a very pessimistic message: "As for your part[y] affairs, do your best to settle them yourselves. Intervening from here is now inexpedient."⁵⁷ Wang Ming's fate seemed to be sealed. Suddenly a miracle occurred, however. A few days after the pessimistic telegram, on December 22, 1943, Dimitrov dispatched a private letter to the CCP leader. He strongly recommended that neither Zhou Enlai nor Wang Ming be persecuted. "I consider politically incorrect the campaign being waged against Zhou Enlai and Wang Ming," he wrote. "Persons such as Zhou Enlai and Wang Ming must not be severed from the party, but should be retained by all means and used for the party's work."⁵⁸ He strongly recommended ending the persecution of Wang Ming. At the same time he asked Mao not to punish Zhou Enlai. There can also be no doubt that Dimitrov acted in accordance with Stalin's instructions.

What happened in these nine days? Why did Stalin decide to save Wang Ming? Perhaps, Stalin wanted to use Wang Ming as some sort of counterweight to Mao Zedong in the future? Who knows what thoughts the Kremlin dictator entertained?

Dimitrov's letter of December 22 was not ignored. Mao Zedong responded with two telegrams, of January 2 and 7, 1944. The first telegram read: "Zhou Enlai and I are on very good terms. We have no intention of severing him from the party. Zhou Enlai is a great success and has made great progress." At the same time Mao was not yet ready to retreat on the Wang Ming question. "Wang Ming has engaged in diverse anti-party activities," wrote Mao,

All party cadres have been apprised of this. However, we are not planning to make this known to the party masses as a whole; still less are we planning to publish this for all the non-party masses. The examination of all of Wang Ming's errors by senior party cadres has resulted in a still greater degree of consolidation and unity among those cadres. . . . In my view, Wang Ming is unre-

⁵⁷ Ibid., 288.

⁵⁸ M. L. Titarenko, ed., *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional i kitaiskaiia revoliutsiia. Dokumenty i materialy* (The Communist International and the Chinese revolution) (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), 296; and Banac, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 290.

liable. Wang Ming was arrested before in Shanghai. Several people have stated that while in prison, he admitted belonging to the Com[munist] Party. He was later released. There has also been talk of his dubious connection with Mif. Wang Ming has engaged in extensive anti-party activities.⁵⁹

Just five days later, however, Mao retreated: he understood clearly who indeed was corresponding with him! He wrote:

Internal party issues: our policy in this area is aimed at unification, at the consolidation of our unity. As regards to Wang Ming, precisely the same policy will be carried out. Work carried out in the second half of 1943 has resulted in significant improvement in the internal party situation and party unity.

Please set your mind at rest. All your thoughts, all your concerns are closer to my heart, for my own thoughts and my own concerns are, at bottom, exactly the same.⁶⁰

Having received the telegram of January 7, Dimitrov finally could calm down. Mao stayed loyal to Moscow. "I was especially glad of your second telegram," wrote Dimitrov to him on February 25,

I had no doubts that you would give my friendly remarks the serious attention they require and that you would take the appropriate measures as dictated by the interests of the party and our common cause. I would be most grateful to you if you would inform me of the practical results that your measures have yielded to date. Fraternal regards. I firmly grasp your hand.⁶¹

A few weeks before, on January 19, Dimitrov had also sent a telegram to Wang Ming concerning his relationships with Mao. Dimitrov informed his old friend of the successful negotiations with his enemy.⁶² Needless to say, Wang Ming was not satisfied entirely. Nonetheless, he understood that he could not expect more from Stalin and Dimitrov. Moscow did not want to see him as the Party leader, but it had no desire to put him at Mao's mercy. He had to humble himself. On March 7 Dimitrov received an answer from his old friend:

Dear G. M. [Dimitrov]! In the course of December and January two telegrams of yours have been forwarded to me.

⁵⁹Banac, *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 295.

⁶⁰Ibid., 296.

⁶¹Ibid., 299-300.

⁶²Ibid., 297.

I thank you for your concern for the CPC and myself. My attitude toward Mao Zedong remains the same as it was before, for I wholeheartedly support him as the leader of our party irrespective of our personal disagreement in the past regarding particular issues of the anti-Japanese national united front policy and the very serious campaign against me that has been waged in the last year over matters of internal party life.

I have been told by a comrade that he has been systematically informing you regarding all these matters.

I do not know what interests you in this area and which issues are unclear.

Please provide me some indications, and I will reply. For the last year a campaign has been under way in the party to reexamine its entire history on the basis of the ideas and activities of Mao Zedong.

He is being represented as the chief representative of Chinese Bolshevism and Sinicized Marxism-Leninism.

Recognizing that you are capable of enhancing the authority of the party, which is especially important in the absence of the Comintern, and given the significance of the CPC as the national party, I fully support that campaign.

To that end I have already stated both verbally and in writing to Mao Zedong and the [Central Committee] that the struggle against Li Lisan-ism, the promotion of the new policy of an anti-Japanese national united front, is to Mao Zedong's credit, and not mine, as I used to believe.

I have also stated that I renounce all political disagreements.

I sincerely thank you and dear Rozi for the many years that you have cared for and raised my daughter.⁶³

At the Seventh Congress of the Chinese Communist Party which took place in April-June 1945, Zhou Enlai and Wang Ming were both included in the Central Committee, and Zhou Enlai even strengthened his position in the top echelon of the party.

It is quite possible that within his close circle Stalin did indeed refer to Mao as "a primitive Marxist." Probably, Mao also had reasons for taking offense, because Stalin did not trust him. Whom, after all, did the "leader of the peoples" trust? Which of his most faithful henchmen did he not despise? Whom did he consider a great Marxist? He regarded them all as just pawns on his chessboard.

The history of the CCP in the 1930s and 1940s can only be understood if we pay attention to the unchanging ideological and, to a significant degree, political dependence, of CCP leaders on Moscow. Among other evidence, this is demonstrated by the abundant archival documents con-

⁶³ Ibid., 306-7.

taining information about the numerous writings of CCP leaders who were forced to engage in self-criticism or to defend their innocence against accusations of so-called "Trotskyite activity." There even exists evidence, albeit indirect, that in 1938 Stalin, who was planning to stage a huge political show trial of Comintern officials, included on the preliminary list of accused such Chinese Communists as Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi (劉少奇), Kang Sheng, Chen Yun, Li Lisan, Zhang Wentian, Wang Jiaxiang, Ren Bishi, Deng Fa, Wu Yuzhang (吳玉章), Yang Shangkun, and Dong Biwu (董必武).⁶⁴ The investigator Aleksandr Ivanovich Langfang beat these accusations out of Guo Zhaotang (Afanasii Gavrilovich Krymov), at the time an official in the Cadre Department of the ECCI, arrested in March 1938.⁶⁵ There can be no doubt that he did not do this on his own initiative. It is telling that none of these, with the exception of Zhou Enlai, were included on the list of persons recommended by the ECCI in 1940 for the highest rank of CCP leaders.

The Comintern show trial that Stalin proposed to conduct in late spring 1938 was to supplement the three trials already taking place, namely, of Zinoviev and Kamenev, Radek and Pyatakov, and of Bukharin and Rykov. This time the chief defendant was to be Pyatnitsky, the secretary of the ECCI. Bela Kun and Wilhelm G. Knorin,⁶⁶ leading members of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, were slated to play major roles, while the Chinese were to be supporting actors. If Stalin had not backed away from the plan, who knows how many important CCP leaders would have been numbered among his victims.⁶⁷

⁶⁴See Pantsov and Levine, *Chinese Comintern Activists*, 48.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 48, 71-72. Langfang also tried to beat out an accusation against Qu Qiubai who had already been executed by the Chinese Nationalists in 1935.

⁶⁶On preparations for the trial, see Boris A. Starkov, "The Trial That Was Not Held," *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 8 (1994): 1297-1316; and Reinhard Müller, "Der Fall des Antikominintern-Blocks—ein vierter Moskauer Schauprozess," (The case of the anti-Comintern bloc—a fourth Moscow show trial), *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (Yearbook for historical research on communism), 1996, 187-214.

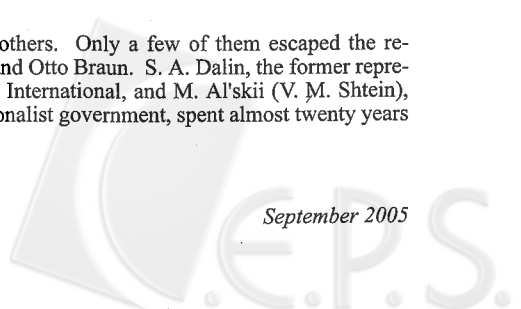
⁶⁷Nonetheless, this did not save Pyatnitsky, Bela Kun, or Knorin. They were shot without a trial. A majority of the Comintern specialists on China was also destroyed: A. E. Al'brecht, L. N. Geller, N. A. Fokin, T. G. Mandalyan, P. Mif, N. M. Nasonov, M. G. Rifes, I. A.

Would this have been to Mao Zedong's advantage? I think it would have. The removal from the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party of important figures whose loyalty, as we have seen, both Stalin and Mao had doubted, would only have strengthened the position of Stalin's new protégé in China. In the end, however, Mao had to get along without the trial. What Stalin did for him was quite enough. By the beginning of the 1940s, with the help of the all-powerful Kremlin dictator, Mao achieved the highest position in the CCP. In 1942-44 he carried out a purge (*zhengfeng*) in his own party while keeping a cautious eye on Moscow. Incidentally, many of those whom Mao purged in those years were on the very same list of leaders whom Moscow had viewed with distrust.

After nine years, Mao Zedong backed by Stalin accomplished an impressive victory over his historic opponent Chiang Kai-shek. As a result, mainland China fell into the grip of a communist dictatorship. Mao Zedong, a faithful pupil of Stalin, began to construct a Soviet model of political, social, and economic development. In other words, a Stalinist regime was established in China. Its elements included the undivided power of the communist party, strictly centralized and hierarchical, an unlimited cult of the party leader, all-embracing control of the political and intellectual life of citizens by the internal security organs, the nationalization of private property, rigid centralized planning, priority development of heavy industry, and enormous expenditures on national defense.

By the mid-1950s, the Soviet Stalinization of China was complete, and Mao Zedong created the foundation for his own theory of socialist construction which later became known as Maoism. However, this new conception was no more than a Chinese form of Stalinism, whose influence as a system of totalitarian political and economic power remained immutable. Its effect on the sociopolitical life of the PRC may be felt to this day.

Rylskii, H. Neuman, J. Pogani, and many others. Only a few of them escaped the repression. Among these were Arthur Ewert and Otto Braun. S. A. Dalin, the former representative in China of the Communist Youth International, and M. Al'skii (V. M. Shtein), former financial adviser to the Chinese Nationalist government, spent almost twenty years in Soviet labor camps.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Banac, Ivo, ed. 2003. *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933-1949*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Brandt, Conrad, Benjamin I. Schwartz, and John K. Fairbank, eds. 1952. *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Dimitrov, Georgii. 1997. *Dnevnik (9 Mart 1933-6 February 1949)* (Diary, March 9, 1933-February 6, 1949). Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Okhridski.
- Fairbank, John King. 1948. *The United States and China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Jin, Chongji, ed. 2004. *Mao Zedong zhuan 1893-1949* (Biography of Mao Zedong 1893-1949). Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe.
- Khamadan, A. 1935. "Vozhd' kitaiskogo naroda—Mao Tszedun" (Mao Zedong—leader of the Chinese people). *Pravda*, December 13.
- _____. 1936. *Vozhdi i geroi kitaiskogo naroda* (Leaders and heroes of the Chinese people). Moscow: OGIZ-Sotsekiz.
- Khamadan, A. M. 1968. *Zapiski korrespondenta* (Notes of a correspondent). Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel.
- Khrushchev, N. S. 1999. *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'. (Vospominaniia v 4-x kn.)* (Time. People. Power. Reminiscences in four books), vol. 3. Moscow: Moskovskiiye novosti.
- Li, Hua-Yu. 2002. "Stalin's *Short Course* and Mao's Socialist Economic Transformation of China in the Early 1950s." *Russian History* 29, no. 2-4 (Summer-Fall-Winter): 357-76.
- Li, Weihai. 1986. *Huiyi yu yanjiu* (Memoirs and study), vol. 1. Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi ziliao.
- Li, Zhisui. 1994. *The Private Life of Chairman Mao: The Memoirs of Mao's Personal Physician*. New York: Random House.
- Mao Tze-dung. Biograficheskii ocherk* (Mao Zedong: biographical sketch). 1939. Moscow: OGIZ-Goispolitizdat.
- Müller, Reinhard. 1996. "Der Fall des Antikomintern-Blocks—ein vierter Moskauer Schauprozess," (The case of the anti-Comintern bloc—a fourth Mos-

- cow show trial). In *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (Yearbook for historical research on communism), 187-214.
- North, Robert C. 1953. *Moscow and Chinese Communists*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Pang, Xianzhi, ed. 2002. *Mao Zedong nianpu 1893-1949* (Biographic chronicle of Mao Zedong 1893-1949), vol. 2. Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe.
- Pantsov, Alexander. 2002. "Stalin and the Chinese Communist Dissidents." In *Reflections at the End of a Century*, ed. Morris Slavin and Louis Patsouras, 28-40. Youngstown: Youngstown State University Press.
- _____, and Steven I. Levine. 2005. *Chinese Comintern Activists: An Analytic Biographic Dictionary*. Manuscript.
- Problemy Dal'nego Vostoka* (Problems of the Far East). 1994. "Mao Zedong on the Comintern and Stalin's Policy in China," no. 5:107.
- Qing Shi (Yang Kuisong). 1997. "Gongchan guoji yazhi Mao Zedong le ma?" (Did the Comintern restrain Mao Zedong?). *Bainian chao* (百年潮, Century Tides), no. 4:33.
- Russian State Archives of Social and Political History (RGASPI).
- Schram, Stuart R., ed. 1999. *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949*. Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Schwartz, Benjamin I. 1952. *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Snow, Edgar. 1937. *Red Star over China*. London: Victor Gollanz.
- _____. 1938. *Geroicheski narod Kitaia* (The heroic people of China). Moscow: Molodaya Gvardiya.
- Starkov, Boris A. 1994. "The Trial That Was Not Held." *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 8:1297-1316.
- Titarenko, M. L., ed. 1986. *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional i kitaiskaiia revoliutsiia. Dokumenty i materialy* (The Communist International and the Chinese revolution). Moscow: Nauka.
- Titarenko, M. L., et al., eds. 1999, 2002. *VKP(b), Komintern i sovetskoe dvizhenie v Kitae. Dokumenty* (CPSU[B], the Comintern and the Soviet movement in China. Documents), vols. 3 and 4. Moscow: AO Buklet.
- Titov, A. S. 1970. *Materialy k politicheskoi biografii Mao Tsze-duna* (Materials for a political biography of Mao Zedong), vol. 2. Moscow: IDV AN SSSR.

- Vereshchagin, B. N. 1999. *V starom i novom Kitae. Iz vospominanii diplomata* (In old and new China. Memoirs of a diplomat). Moscow: IDV RAN.
- Vladimirov, P. P. 1973. *Osobyi raion Kitaia, 1942-1975* (The special region of China, 1942-1975). Moscow: APN Press.
- Wang, Jianying, ed. 1983. *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi ziliao huibian—lingdao jigou yange he chengyuan minglu* (Collection of documents on history of the CCP organizations—the evolution of leading organs and their membership). Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe.
- Westad, O. Arne, ed. 1998. *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Xiao, Emi. 1939. *Mao Tsze-dung, Chzu De (vozhdi kitaiskogo naroda)* (Mao Zedong, Zhu De, leaders of the Chinese people). Moscow.
- Xu, Zehao, ed. 2001. *Wang Jiaxiang nianpu 1906-1974* (Biographic chronicle of Wang Jiaxiang 1906-1974). Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe.
- Yang, Kuisong. 1995. "Sulian da guimo yuanzhu Zhongguo hongjun de yici changshi" (The Soviet attempt to render help to the Chinese Red Army). In *Sulian, Gongchan guoji yu Zhongguo geming de guanxi xintan* (New study on the relationship between the Soviet Union, the Comintern, and the Chinese revolution) ed. Huang Xiurong, 324-26. Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe.
- _____. 1997. *Zhonggong yu Mosike guanxi, 1920-1960* (CCP relations with Moscow, 1920-1960). Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi.

