

February 05, 1949

Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong

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Summary:

Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong discuss the situation within the CCP, the workers' question, the military situation an the CCP's tasks, and Rittenberg and Ma Haide. (Evening)

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

On the evening of 5 February 1949 another meeting with Mao Zedong took place in the presence of CCP CC Politburo members Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Ren Bishi and Zhu De, and the interpreter Shi Zhe, c[omrade]s I[van]. V. Kovalev and E.F. Kovalev

ON THE SITUATION WITHIN THE PARTY

Mao Zedong continued the conversation begun earlier that day about the situation within the party. He stressed once again that during the period of in-party struggle with the leftists and rightist opportunists in the Soviet areas up to 9/10 of the territory and members of the com[munist] party were lost.

In the course of 1941-1945, the consciousness of the members of the party rose substantially and this prepared the ground for calling the united 7th Congress of the CCP in 1945. The political program, adopted by the Congress, is currently being implemented and on its basis the organizational, political and ideological unity of the CCP was reached. It is true, Mao Zedong said, one can still observe in the ranks of the party a lack of discipline and elements of anarchy, but these are merely rare instances, on the whole there are no competing opinions and groupings in the party. Thereby we prepared ourselves to come out onto the modern political arena as a unified party. Otherwise it would be difficult for us to work. The intelligentsia does not compete with us. The Guomindang is still competing with us but its weight ratio in politics is becoming smaller and smaller.

THE WORKERS' QUESTION

Using a pause I conveyed the content of the telegram from comrade Filippov on the workers' question. I said that one should not prohibit strikes, otherwise the CCP may lose the trust of workers. The significance of the working class in the revolution is determined not by its quantity, I said, but by the fact that it is a new class, the carrier of the most progressive ideas. The future belongs to the working class. Its significance in the society will grow unstoppably.

The question that one should not prohibit strikes caused a noticeable bewilderment on the part of Mao Zedong and the present members of the CCP CC Politburo. On the whole telegrams with recommendations on the work among workers, youth, women and on the preparation of the Chinese cadres, the content of which was conveyed by me to Mao Zedong and the Politburo members, made a good impression. When they were related, Mao Zedong and the members of the Politburo uniformly nodded in agreement, and Mao Zedong said that the suggestions will be carried out.

THE MILITARY SITUATION AND THE CCP'S TASKS

Then Mao Zedong turned to recounting the military situation and the tasks of the CCP. He separated the military situation into two stages.

1. The Civil War at the present time
2. Defense measures after the Civil War.

Speaking of the civil war at the present time, Mao Zedong said that the most terrible time has been left behind, the period of large operations may be considered finished. Now purely military operations are gradually being replaced by the peace offensive on large Guomindang centers. As an example he cited the peaceful resolution of the advance on Beiping, where Fu Zuoyi's forces were under offer to surrender. He said that we will not conduct large operations near Nanjing, Hankou, Shanghai and Canton. However, Mao Zedong said, this does not mean that we are not conducting any preparations at all for further offensive operations. We are facing great difficulties on this road, mainly of the financial character. Military expenses unfavorably reflect on the prices and lead to inflation. One should take into account that we never had such a huge army and never conducted such large operations as now. Of course this leads to great expenses, which reflect on

the economy of the liberated areas. Nevertheless, all efforts must be directed at destroying the enemy, and then taking up the economy. As a result of this policy our People's Liberation Army since October 1948 to January 1949 destroyed 1 million 300 thousand of the elite Guomindang forces. Formally we have not yet won because we only have a half of China, but in fact the war is winding down.

After the end of the Civil War the main task of the party will amount to economic construction. In order to finally destroy the enemy, one should grow strong economically. Therefore, already now one should make relevant amendments to our plans, cut back expenses, strengthen the financial situation. We must finish the war with the least possible sacrifices, but it does not mean that we must not act. Our army must continue its offensive, take cities and be prepared for various contingencies. But one should also not forget that simultaneously with the military activities one should now prepare the cadres of political and economic workers, explain our political undertakings, be prepared for the resolution of the workers' question, market relations, prepare ourselves for work in the countryside in the new conditions. We say that our army must not only fight but prepare itself for peaceful work.

Continuing to recount the military undertakings, Mao Zedong said that in the nearest 2-3 months one should prepare oneself in such a way so as to confidently move to southern China and take its wide and economically valuable regions. 1-2 years will be required for us to be capable to fully possess China politically and economically. Military operations must go on from Beiping [Beijing] to Canton.

In the future the focus of our work will move into the cities. In the course of the last 20 years we had little experience of work among the city population. In the recent times, when our army began to take large cities, the city question rose before us to its full height. The Red Army played a large role in the fact that now we have big industrial cities. Thank the Red Army for it regaining for us Harbin and other cities of Manchuria. The Soviet Army not only helped us to regain cities but helped us in their reconstruction. Now we must develop Changchun, Benxihu, Anshan, Kalgan, Chifu, Beiping, Tianjin and other cities. In the nearest future the same task will emerge with regard to Xi'an, Shanghai and Hankou. Possibly, our forces this winter will capture Canton and Guilin.

ON RITTENBERG AND MA HAIDE

Making use of a pause I recounted the content of the telegram regarding [US interpreter Sidney] Rittenberg. The telegram made a great impression on Mao Zedong and the members of the Politburo. [CCP CC Politburo Member] Ren Bishi who took part in the conversation stated that Rittenberg was recommended and left here by the journalist [Anna Louise] Strong. Mao Zedong informed [me] that since 1936 another American has been living with them by the name of Ma Haide [George Hatem], who had joined the Chinese Com[munist] Party. Ren Bishi added that Ma Haide was recommended and left here by the journalist [Edgar] Snow.

I remarked to Mao Zedong, wasn't it clear that this American as well is a resident of the American intelligence and he should be arrested[?]. The information on Rittenberg caused surprised exclamations—"Yes! Yes!"

In conclusion of the conversation Mao Zedong asked me to give information about the situation in the Sov[iet] Union and on the international situation. I satisfied his request. Information was heard with great attention on the part of Mao Zedong and the CCP CC Politburo members.

The conversation ended at this.