

February 04, 1949

Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong

Citation:

“Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong,” February 04, 1949, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, APRF: F. 39, Op. 1, D. 39, Ll. 54-62. Reprinted in Andrei Ledovskii, Raisa Mirovitskaia and Vladimir Miasnikov, *Sovetsko-Kitaiskie Otnosheniia*, Vol. 5, Book 2, 1946-February 1950 (Moscow: Pamiatniki Istoricheskoi Mysli, 2005), pp. 66-72. Translated by Sergey Radchenko.

<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113318>

Summary:

Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong discuss the independence of Mongolia, the independence movement in Xinjiang, the construction of a railroad in Xinjiang, CCP contacts with the VKP(b), the candidate for Chinese ambassador to the USSR, aid from the USSR to China, CCP negotiations with the Guomindang, the preparatory commission for convening the PCM, the character of future rule in China, Chinese treaties with foreign powers, and the Sino-Soviet treaty.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

On 4 February 1949 another meeting with Mao Zedong took place in the presence of CCP CC Politburo members Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Ren Bishi, Zhu De and the interpreter Shi Zhe. From our side Kovalev I[van]. V. and Kovalev E.F. were present.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

I conveyed to Mao Zedong that our CC does not advise the Chinese Com[munist] Party to go overboard in the national question by means of providing independence to national minorities and thereby reducing the territory of the Chinese state in connection with the communists' take-over of power. One should give autonomy and not independence to the national minorities.

Mao Zedong was glad to hear this advice but you could tell by his face that he had no intention of giving independence to anybody whatsoever. Mao Zedong on his initiative asked how we feel about the unification of Outer and Inner Mongolia. I said that we do not support this proposition. Then he asked for our motives in not supporting this unification.

I replied that we do not support it because this unification would lead to the loss of substantial territory for China. Mao Zedong said that he considers that Outer and Inner Mongolia could unite and join the Chinese republic. Of course, this would be possible if the leaders of Outer and Inner Mongolia stood for this. He admits, such a possibility in, say, two years' time, when the power of communists in China strengthens sufficiently and everything achieves the desired normality. Then Outer Mongolia will declare that she seceded from the Chinese state because the Guomindang ruled the state. Now, however, when the communists have the power, Outer Mongolia desires to accede the Chinese state, by joining Inner Mongolia.

I replied that this is impossible because Outer Mongolia has long enjoyed independence. After the victory over Japan, the Chinese state, like the Soviet state, recognized the independence of Outer Mongolia. Outer Mongolia has its own army, its own culture, quickly follows the road of cultural and economic prosperity, she has long understood the taste of independence and will hardly ever voluntarily renounce independence. If it ever unites with Inner Mongolia it will surely be [within an] independent Mongolia.

Then Ren Bishi made a remark that the population of Inner Mongolia is 3 million, and Outer Mongolia—1 million.

The end result was that Mao Zedong laughed and stopped

defending his opinion.

THE XINJIANG QUESTION

Since Mao Zedong earlier told me that he wanted to discuss with me the Xinjiang question I asked him what he had in mind. Mao Zedong stated that in the Yili district of Xinjiang, which is subordinate to the Urumqi government, there is a independence movement and that there is a communist party there. I replied that I do not know about the existence of a com[munist] party in the Yili district but I know about the national movement of the local nationalities. This movement was triggered by the incorrect policy of the Chinese government, which does not want to take into account the national specifics of these nationalities, does not present rights of self-rule, does not permit the development of the national culture.

If the nationalities of Xinjiang were given autonomy, the soil for the independence movement would likely remain [sic]. We do not stand for the movement of independence of the Xinjiang nationalities and do not have any claims on Xinjiang territory, considering that Xinjiang is and must be a part of China. We stand for economic cooperation and trade with Xinjiang, like that which is taking place, and which the Guomindang government itself, in the person of its representative in Xinjiang, Zhang Zhizhong, proposes to formalize by a treaty.

Then Mao Zedong said that when in 1945 he met with Bai Chongxi in Chongqing the latter told him that the local insurgents in the Yili district have Soviet-made artillery, tanks and airplanes.

I replied to Mao Zedong that I do not know about this and cannot say anything, I only know that we did not give help to this movement, though it is a national movement against oppression.

Then Mao Zedong said that they have in mind giving Xinjiang autonomy in general, in the same manner as for Inner Mongolia, which is already an autonomous region.

Mao Zedong took a special interest in whether there is a lot of oil in Xinjiang or a little.

I said that in the times of [Xinjiang warlord] Sheng Shicai we pumped and processed oil in substantial quantity, which was used for the internal needs of Xinjiang for there is no transport for taking it out.

ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RAILROAD IN XINJIANG

Mao Zedong raised the question, and he was strongly supported by Ren Bishi, as to whether one couldn't build a railroad connecting the Chinese railroads with the Soviet railroads through Xinjiang. This would have great significance for joint defense in case of a new war.

In such a war China, of course, will be together with the Sov[iet] Union. In case if Manchuria were under a strike, such a railroad would be an important channel of supplying the fighting Chinese armies. This road would feed the provinces of Gansu, Shaanxi, Hebei and Sichuan, rich provinces with a mountainous landscape, which are greatly convenient for the organization of firm defense.

I said that, in my opinion, this idea is interesting, it has a future, but it will be very expensive to build and before it is decided to build, one should carefully make calculations.

Then Ren Bishi raised the question of why not build a road connecting Ulaanbaatar with Kalgan. The distance is not great here, but it would have a great significance for connecting to northern China.

I said that this question deserves attention, but we have not thought about it.

ON CONTACTS BETWEEN THE CCP AND THE VKP(b)

Further, Mao Zedong turned to the question about the contacts between the CCP and the VKP(b).

He stressed that the CCP needs all-sided help from the VKP(b). We need two advisers, one on economic, the other on the financial questions.

Replying to this, I said that Comrade I[van] Kovalev is empowered by the Council of Ministers of the USSR regarding economic questions, and the sphere of his activity includes Manchuria and northern China. He, I added, is at the complete disposal of Cde. Mao Zedong. Although he is nominally listed under the Changchun Railroad, but his activity in fact embraces all of China.

Mao Zedong expressed thanks for placing Cde. I[van] Kovalev at his disposal and, continuing the conversation, said that when the CCP CC moves to Beijing, relations between us will develop in two directions—[on the] diplomatic and party [levels]. He spoke out in favor of having an adviser on party questions with the USSR Embassy.

Politburo member Zhou Enlai, who took part in the conversation, speaking of the party adviser for the CCP, expressed a wish for him to stand as close as possible to the Chinese Com[munist] Party so as to allow one to exchange opinions with him more often, though on the main questions the

CCP would like to contact VKP(b) CC directly. As Zhou Enlai said, "the main questions will be solved in Moscow."

ON THE CANDIDATE FOR THE AMBASSADOR IN THE USSR

Touching upon the question, raised by Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong stated that periodically, for short period of time, the CCP will be sending its people to Moscow to receive relevant consultations, and the permanent job there, in the capacity of the future ambassador, will go to the CCP CC candidate member Wang Jiaxiang.

Characterizing Wang Jiaxiang, Mao Zedong said that in the past he committed mistakes together with the Wang Ming group. In 1937 he was treated in Moscow and carried out the duties of the CCP representative in the Comintern. In July 1947 he returned to us with Comintern directives, which were in accordance with our political line. These directives helped us to overcome our own mistakes.

ON THE AID FROM THE USSR

Further, Mao Zedong stressed that the Sov[iet] Union provided and [continues to] provide great aid to the CCP and the latter is very grateful to the VKP(b) for this. The Chinese Revolution, Mao Zedong continued, is a part of the world revolution. In this connection, particular interests should be subordinate to the general [interest]. We always take this into account, when we turn to the Sov[iet] Union for aid. And if, suppose, the Sov[iet] Union did not give something, we will not harbor complaints in its regard. When, before his departure to Moscow, Luo Yunhuan asked me how to raise the question of aid to us on the part of the Sov[iet] Union, I told him that one should not depict the situation in such a way that we are dying, that that we have no capabilities of our own, but stressed that it would be desirable for us to receive from you relevant aid with regard to Manchuria. Since 1947 Lin Biao has also often requested Moscow to provide aid in this or that question. I, Mao Zedong said, gave instructions to Gao Gang, that everything we take from the USSR must be paid back and that, moreover, the shortage of these or those materials at the expense of the Guomindang areas [must] be solved. The Chinese comrades must rationally use the aid of the Sov[iet] Union. If there we no aid on the part of the Sov[iet] Union, Mao Zedong stressed, we would hardly be able to achieve the current victories. This does not mean, however, that we must not rely on our own forces. But one cannot help but take into account the fact, Mao Zedong said, that the military aid of the Sov[iet] Union in Manchuria, which makes up one fourth of all your aid to us, plays a fairly substantial role.

ON THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GUOMINDANG GOVERNMENT

Then Mao Zedong turned to the questions of negotiations with the Guomindang government. He declared that the CCP is conducting negotiations not with the Guomindang, but with the Guomindang government. This is a new development in the political life of modern China. One should, Mao Zedong stressed, agree with the government, and not with the Guomindang, since negotiations with the latter would raise its authority in the eyes of the public opinion. In the future the Guomindang will be dissolved, and if at the present time we recognize it as a party to negotiations, it will inevitably claim to have a place in the future coalition government. Now we are strengthening the propaganda so as to expose the Guomindang, and then we will dissolve it, as in his time Lenin called the constituent assembly and then dissolved it.

We, Mao Zedong stated, raised before the Guomindang eight conditions, which were accepted by the latter as the basis. If the Guomindang-ists agree with the first point of our conditions, then we will instruct them to arrest the war criminals. Our conditions entail reorganization of the Guomindang army, formation of a government without reactionaries, cancellation of the Guomindang laws and, in particular, the law on the party status of Guomindang. Of course, during

the talks with us the Guomintang-ists will insist on joining the government, but the democratic parties are against this just as the entire Chinese people are. Now nobody will defend the Guomintang any longer. It also does not have the abilities for independent organization of the coalition government. In fact the Guomintang is isolated. Even America, France and England openly come out against it. Such a situation is objectively beneficial to us. As far as separate Guomintang leaders are concerned, then, for example, we can use in our interests Bai Chongxi, but his forces should be completely destroyed.

Many people, Mao Zedong said, think that our publication of the war criminal list isolates us from other political parties but we believe that this list delivers strong blows to the Guomintang. They will not unite in the face of this list, they are afraid for their skins. Bai Chongxi, for example, declared that he is for talks with us. Li Zongren also follows this position, intending to send his representatives to us. As is known, Fu Zuoyi surrendered his forces to us. We consider him to be a war criminal. If he helps us to reorganize these forces, we will have a basis for exonerating him in the eyes of the people.

Regarding Zhang Zhizhong, Mao Zedong said that we do not have a reason to include him on the list of war criminals despite the fact that he is a trusted person of Jiang Jieshi.

Talking of the tactics of negotiations with the Guomintang government Mao Zedong spoke out in favor of ruining the general negotiations with the central government, but supporting the local negotiations. Guomintang must be destroyed a part at a time. We know that the former ambassador in the Sov[iet] Union, Yan Huiqing, intends to come to Beiping [Beijing] for negotiations over peaceful resolution of the Shanghai question. All of this suggests, Mao Zedong said, that the Guomintang is suffering one defeat after another. Moreover, many local Guomintang authorities already are voluntarily beginning to establish contact with us. For example, when Fu Zuoyi conducted negotiations with us, a delegation composed of 10 people arrived from Beiping, among who was the city mayor, CC-ist¹, Huo Sheyuan and a member of the Legislative Yuan. We received them well and they were very satisfied with our reception.

Returning to the position of Zhang Zhizhong, Mao Zedong pointed out that the issue concerning him, and the issue concerning those like him, presents itself like this: should we draw them [to us]? If they accept our conditions then they will therefore betray the Guomintang and they can be drawn to us. For example, if Zhang Zhizhong passes his forces to us, one can think of drawing him into our power [arrangements]. In case of the taking of our side by Shao Lizi, we think, he could be drawn to the work of the future coalition government. But, Mao Zedong stressed, all these persons are unpopular with the people, and the people do not like them.

PREPARATORY COMMISSION FOR CONVENING THE PCM [POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING]

Further, Mao Zedong turned to the question of creation of a preparatory commission for convening the PCM. A list of 23 organizations, included in the commission, has not been published yet, but has been agreed upon with the interested parties. The following organizations are included on the list:

1. CCP
2. PLA
3. The Revolutionary Committee of the Guomintang
4. The Union to Advance Democracy in China
5. The Democratic League of China
6. The Association for Saving the Motherland
7. The Third Party (Democratic Party of Workers and Peasants)
8. The Union to Advance Democracy in Shanghai
9. The Society for the Democratic Transformation of China

10. The Congress of Professional Unions of China
11. The Peasants' Union of China
12. The Youth Organization of China
13. The Student Union of China
14. The All-China Women's Union
15. The Association of Cultural Workers of China
16. The Association of the Industrial Enterprises of Shanghai
17. The Union of Workers in Education
18. Representatives of non-party figures (Guo Moruo)
19. Representatives of the national minorities
20. Representatives of the Chinese emigrants, living in South-East Asia (Chen Jiageng, etc.)
21. Representatives of the Chinese emigrants living in the USA
22. The Association for the Study of Sun Yatsen.

The membership of the preparatory commission will be composed of 3-4 people, delegated from each of the aforementioned groups, but irrespective of the number of delegates each organization will have only one vote. The communists will have 9 people on the commission, and 5 sympathizers. The rest of the seats are assigned to 4 centrists and 5 democrats. In the PCM 2/3 of the places will belong to the CCP. The commission will convene in the beginning of the month of March, prepare the composition of the political consultative meeting and the agenda of its sessions. The PCM will discuss two questions:

1. Approval of the general political program.
2. Formation of the coalition government.

Further, Mao Zedong said that before convening of the preparatory commission they conducted large explanatory work among the democrats. We openly explain our policy (foreign, land, internal and other). They like our frankness. This guarantees their support for us.

THE CHARACTER OF THE FUTURE RULE

Speaking of the character of the future rule, Mao Zedong said that this will be a people's democracy on the basis of a union between workers and peasants under the leadership of the proletariat.

The proletariat, Mao Zedong said, conducts its leadership through the communist party. We say that the people's democracy is based on the union between workers and peasants because 90% of the population of China is comprised of workers and peasants. This dictatorship is directed against imperialism and the bureaucratic capital, against the enemies of the Chinese people, and we explain this to our democrats, who are still afraid of the word dictatorship.

ON THE TREATIES WITH FOREIGN POWERS

Mao Zedong informed that in the conversations with the democratic leaders they explain what they mean by the renunciation of the treacherous treaties of Jiang Jieshi. They do not demand the cancellation of all of Jiang Jieshi's treaties, because among them there are such, which have patriotic character. The following, for example, belong to them:

1. Treaty on the cancellation of the extraterritorial rights of foreigners in China.
2. Cancellation of rights of the so called 8-power treaty.
3. The Sino-Soviet treaty on the Changchun Railroad and Port Arthur.

ON THE SINO-SOVIET TREATY

I asked Mao Zedong how he explains in the conversation the patriotic character of the Sino-Soviet treaties, to which Mao Zedong said, laughing, that it was not he, but Jiang Jieshi who signed this treaty. I explain to them, Mao Zedong said, that the Sov[iet] Union arrived in Port Arthur in order to protect itself and China from Japanese fascism, for China is so weak that it cannot protect itself without help from the USSR. The USSR came to the Changchun Railroad and to Port Arthur not as an imperialist force, but as a socialist force for protection of common interests.

To my question as to why the communists speak out against the American naval base in Qingdao and defend the Soviet base in Port Arthur, Mao Zedong replied that American imperialism sits in China for oppression, but the Sov[iet] Union, which has its forces in Port Arthur—for protection from Japanese fascism. When China becomes strong and will be in a position to defend itself independently from the Japanese danger, the Sov[iet] Union will not need its base in Port Arthur. With that, Mao Zedong said that one of the Chinese women, a member of the Legislative Yuan of the Guomindang, declared that if the communists are able to get Port Arthur back for China from the Russians, it will be a great deed. Mao Zedong said that this woman does not understand politics.

In conclusion Mao Zedong stressed that they openly speak about their pro-Soviet sentiments. He referred to the fact that on the day of celebration of the anniversary of the October Revolution they stressed that China must stand in the anti-imperialist camp headed by the Soviet Union. We do not have a middle way, concluded Mao Zedong.

The conversation ended at this.

1. CC clique, a political faction within the Guomindang.