

1949

Speeches/Documents

Title: Cable to Stalin

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Date: May 17, 1949

Source: *[Source: APRF: F. 45, Op. 1, D. 331, Ll. 50-55. 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.128-132. Translated for CWIHP from Russian by Sergey Radchenko.]*

Description: Meeting with Mao

On 12 May a meeting with Mao Zedong took place and later that day with members of the Politburo in Mao Zedong's presence. Present at the meeting were comrades Zhu De, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun, and member of the CC Wang Jiaxiang.

Com[rade] Mao Zedong briefly recounted the course of the military operations. He said that General Chen Yi's army group alone took more than 100 thousand Guomindang forces as prisoners, having lost merely 6 thousand soldiers of the PLA, adding that: "the main body of our forces is moving unstopably to south [China] for annihilation of the active forces of the adversary, and then a part of them will turn in the direction of Shanghai for liquidating a Guomindang grouping, which has already been encircled by us. Forces of the PLA will come out to the mouth of the Yangzi River with the aim of cutting access to Shanghai from the sea side. After encirclement, the forces will adopt a waiting position." They do not intend to take Shanghai now for a month while the adversary is posing even slight resistance, though [they] already now could destroy the weak garrison protecting Shanghai without much effort. [We] are not taking Shanghai, he said, consciously, so as to stir among the inhabitants of Shanghai the hatred toward the Guomindang forces and the Guomindang government, and at the same time prepare ourselves better for running the city. Relative ease of our victories, he remarked, suggests that our estimates, expressed in the month of February to the effect that the main big battles against the Guomindang forces are already over, and that in the prospect one has only particular, small scale operations, have been justified. The military situation materialized in such a way that the army of Cde. Lin Biao is crossing the Yangzi River 15-20 days earlier than planned. Before it was considered necessary to carry out the crossing of the Yangzi River by Lin Biao's forces only after their full concentration at the points of crossing. Now, when the adversary is retreating, and at the crossing points his forces are not substantial, the crossing of the river will be carried out by parts as Lin Biao's forces arrive to the crossing points. Before it was not planned to take the Southern provinces this year, now with the current situation they will be taken in the nearest three months. The only province which is causing difficulties in terms of taking it is Xinjiang, but this is not because any resistance is expected there on the part of the forces of the adversary, but only because this province is far from the deployment of the PLA forces, and covering large distances across the sands poses big difficulties.

He said that we are close to completing the victory in the open military struggle with a very strong and cunning Guomindang reactionary Jiang Jieshi regime, which was actively supported and is still supported by the American imperialists. We owe these victories of ours to the international revolutionary movement, and first and foremost to the Soviet Union. If there were no Communist Party of the Bolsheviks, created by the great leaders Lenin and Stalin, if there were no Soviet Union, if there were no victory over the reaction in 1917-1921, if there were no defeat of the most terrible reaction represented by the German fascists and the Japanese militarists during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, there would be no Chinese Communist Party and victory of the Chinese Revolution. We, and all fraternal communist parties owe to our elder brother—the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks, owe to its creators: great leaders—Lenin and Stalin; the high authority of the Communist Party of the Bolsheviks—is a sign of the power of the revolution, without this authority it would be impossible to lead, unite the revolutionary movement of all countries against the imperialists of all countries. Without this authority the forces of the revolution would lose, and the imperialists would win in the strengthening of the forces of reaction. If one were to depict imperialism as a lion, then in the current situation the body and the head of the lion are bound by the strong vises of the revolutionary forces, by the Soviet Union. The new democratic countries of Eastern Europe and the European Communist Parties help bind the head of this lion. We, the Chinese communists, pinched "the lion's

tail and are trying to cut it off. We suppose that the cutting of the tail will in turn weaken the power of the imperialists, concentrated in the head of the lion.”

Further, Cde. Mao Zedong turned to economic questions. He said that recently [he] spoke with the democrats who declared that “you, communists, have a political and military center— this is your strength, but you do not have an economic center— this is your weakness.” “We understand this weakness of ours, said Cde. Mao Zedong—we feel it. Not only we, the leaders, do not have the experience of running the economy, but our whole party. We are like a girl who, when marrying, knowing that she will have to bear children, but not knowing how it will be, she still knows that it will be inevitable and so [she] marries. We are like that, we know the general direction, how the economy of our country should develop, and we are going for it, but how it takes place, we cannot say this, because we do not know. We must create an economic center as soon as possible. This leading economic center should have, from the CCP CC—secretary of the CC Liu Shaoqi, from the future democratic government—member of the managing board of the CCP, Cde. Chen Yun and you, as a representative of the Soviet government.” “Through you, he says, I will interfere in the management of the economy and push [it].” It is suggested to complete the work to develop the structure of the economic center in the course of a month, in order that no later than 2 June the delegation could depart for Moscow. Comrade Mao Zedong further gave a characteristic to the comrades: Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun, Bai Po, who will be the deputy of Cde. Chen Yun. He said that “the secretary of the CCP CC Comrade Liu Shaoqi came out from the bottom, from the workers; in the course of 15 years he worked with the working class, [he is] theoretically prepared person. In the course of his entire work in the party [he] did not commit serious mistakes. Very thoughtful, careful, likes to look into details, into small things. Has a great authority. Was one of the first to visit the Soviet Union. Com[rade] Chen Yun was formerly a manager for a big bookseller. Therefore he has an opportunity to study, received an education, cultured, thoughtful, capable, including economic questions, very careful in his actions, has authority. Com[rade] Bai Po—secretary of the CC bureau of Northern China, honest, capable person but with little experience. [“]

Further Cde. Mao Zedong turned to characterization of comrades Wang Ming, Li Lisan and other comrades. Turning to me he said: “You will necessarily encounter professional union figures, including Li Lisan. With regard to Li Lisan, we received an explanation from Moscow, that if he maintains honesty at work and does not commit political mistakes, he could be left at leadership work. We know that Li Lisan in the past committed big political mistakes. He committed the first mistake in 1930, when [he] came to the leadership of the CC without elections, [and] took a Trotskyist position on the questions of the Chinese Revolution. After this big mistake of his, he was removed from [his] post and sent to the Soviet Union. He stayed in the Soviet Union until 1946, i.e. 16 years. There he was arrested for Trotskyism, but was freed from confinement with a resolution that he does not have counterrevolutionary activities [on his hands]. After the arrival of Li Lisan to China, we studied him carefully. Li Lisan behaves himself honestly. [He] takes active part in work. His attitude toward the Soviet Union and toward the Soviet comrades is a good one. We suppose that he is an honest communist and may remain in the role of a deputy head of the professional unions. Com[rade] Chen Yun was elected by us to be the chairman of the professional unions, and the political leader of the professional unions is the secretary of the CC Cde. Liu Shaoqi. If we uncover the slightest mistakes on the part of Li Lisan, then comrades Liu Shaoqi and Chen Yun will immediately interfere and correct him.” Com[rade] Mao Zedong requested that, as questions arise on the part of Li Lisan, or on my part to Li Lisan, to meet with him. [I] consider it necessary to report to you that Li Lisan is from the same place as Mao Zedong [*zemliak Mao Tszeduna*], they know each other from childhood, and therefore according to the traditions of common-place-origin [*zemliachestva*] and friendship, which are particularly strong in China, Cde. Mao Zedong consistently and insistently supports Li Lisan. Com[rade] Mao Zedong particularly touched on the role and behavior of Wang Ming. He said that “there were three deviations in the Chinese Revolution: the first, committed by Chen Duxiu, the second—is Strakhov (Li Lisan), the third—Wang Ming. During the first period, the period of the rightist deviation, as a result of Chen Duxiu’s actions, the party decreased from 50,000 to 10,000, the revolutionary forces suffered a great loss. The defeat of the Chen Duxiu group raised the authority of the party and it grew to 400,000 people, and the army—from 10,000 people to 300,000 people. The leftist activity of Wang Ming resulted in the ranks of the party shrinking from 400,000 people to 40,000 people, and the army—from 300,000 to 30,000, and from the 10 Soviet regions only one remained. The underground communist organization was completely ruined in the Guomindang regions, [and] since Wang Ming covered his actions by the Comintern’s name, claiming that “whoever is against me, [he] is against the Comintern,” therefore many communists, including Bo Gu, Luo Fu, Zhou Enlai, Wang Jiaxiang, supported him. His most active supporters were Bo Gu and Luo Fu. Zhou Enlai, Wang Jiaxiang and Luo Fu honestly committed and honestly recognized their mistakes

and now correct them in practice. Behavior of Wang Ming, however, in the course of the last 3-4 years, testifies to the fact that he has not learned much, has not understood much in the events, which are taking place. As a doctrine-man he probably continued to believe in his rightness, and his semi-recognition of his mistakes is a forced maneuver. Therefore at the second plenum of the CC, which took place in March 1949, members of the plenum demanded more than once from Wang Ming that he talk about his mistakes in a more consistent and frank fashion. In his many statements, Wang Ming did not reveal his mistakes. Already after the plenum Wang Ming was offered [the opportunity] to express an appraisal of his incorrect activity in writing. He gave a promise to do this, and probably, after recovery, will write it.

Comrade Mao Zedong turned to me with a request, after Wang Ming sends his written statement, to study it and then to talk with Wang Ming. 1. In case Li Lisan or Wang Ming turned to me, may I meet with them. 2. In the course of 5 days from 12 until 17 May comrades Chen Yun, Wang Jiaxiang and I consulted with regard to the future administrative economic center. Not one of the Chinese comrades expressed concrete propositions, having turned [to me] with a request to give the structure of the future administrative center on the basis of the exchange of opinion. [I] developed an approximate structure. Today, on 17 May it was discussed for 6 hours at the Politburo in the presence of comrades Mao Zedong, Zhu De, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Dong Biwu, Chen Yun, Wang Jiaxiang, and Bai Po. No substantial amendments were introduced. Decision was made to work on it for several more days. Comrades Mao Zedong expressed a wish to consult with Moscow with regard to the creation of the economic center. The structure of the economic center is transmitted next. Request your instructions for advising the Chinese comrades. Kovalev