

Chiang Ching-kuo's Life in the USSR and Its Possible Formation of His Worldview

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Chiang Ching-kuo, the future President of Taiwan, arrived in the USSR as a student in 1925 at the age of 15, and stayed there until 1937. His life and ideological development at that period inevitably influenced his future life and the destiny of the Republic of China. At the same time, his experiences in the USSR were closely connected with political developments there and in his native China. The nature of his life in the USSR has been studied in some depth, but the connections between his ideological evolution and politico-ideological struggles in the respective countries has received insufficient attention. This article fills this gap in the literature, and suggests fruitful paths for further studies in this regard. In March of 1925, Sun Yat-sen—the founder and leader of the Chinese Kuomintang Party (Party of the Nation)—died in Beijing. At that time, the only territories controlled by the armed units of that party and its allies were the southern province of Guangdong and a part of neighbouring Guangxi. In the political legacy he dictated on his deathbed, Sun expressed hope that communist Moscow would support his movement, and for the quick arrival of the day ‘when the Soviet Union will greet a free and strong China as its friend and ally, and that the two states will proceed hand in hand as allies in the great fight for the emancipation of the oppressed of the whole world.’¹

Sun Yat-sen was not a Marxist, much less a Communist, but like all Chinese revolutionaries, he strove to unify China and restore its former status that it had lost in

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¹ As quoted in: Yueh Sheng, *Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and the Chinese Revolution. A Personal Account* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Center for East Asian Studies, 1971), pp. 13–14.

the 19th century due to the imperialist policies of the leading world powers. To this end, Sun had accepted that cooperation with and assistance from other countries could be a useful instrument for obtaining that objective, but he achieved little success in his attempts to communicate with the global powers because none wished to see or support a strong and powerful China. The only exception was Moscow, where Sun found sympathy that arose due to the Bolshevik notion that suppressed, colonised, and semi-colonised peoples (the latter of which included China) who were at war with 'imperialism' as part of their fight for national independence and reunification were natural allies of the socialist USSR in its struggle against the capitalist powers and towards a world communist revolution.²

Since 1923, the Soviet Bolsheviks and the Communist International (Comintern), which was composed of members of pro-Bolshevik parties from a number of countries, had been providing the Kuomintang with substantial support in the form of military and civilian advisors, assistance in personnel training, and financial and military aid. In this regard, the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) had been opened in Moscow to train cadres of the for the international Communist movement including the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which had been founded in 1921 by Moscow and the Comintern. The two parties formed an alliance in 1923 known as the 'United Front' by the CCP and the 'inclusion of the CCP' (容黨, 'Rong dang') by the Kuomintang, under which rules members of the CCP could join the Kuomintang on an individual basis.

Moscow decided to create the Sun Yat-sen Communist University of the Toilers of China (UTK) less than a month after the demise of the Kuomintang leader, in the context of the national-liberation struggle that was erupting in China. It was not only intended to expand the training of the Chinese cadres that had been under way at the KUTV since 1921; as noted by Mikhail Borodin, the Chief Political Advisor to the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee (CEC) and the Comintern representative in China, 'The objective of Sun Yat-sen University is to help all students to understand Mr Sun Yat-sen's ideology so that they can continue his work and accomplish the Chinese national revolution.' Moscow wished to promote more profound cooperation between the two revolutionary parties in compliance with the 'United Front' strategy, and to this end, had managed to seat CCP and Kuomintang members behind desks in the same classroom and provide them with the same Soviet professors. A total of 340 persons in China from both parties were selected to enter the UTK based on a competitive examination, while 30 others were chosen without needing to take an exam;

² Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia's Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations Since the Eighteenth Century* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2003), pp. 75–97.

these were chiefly relatives of party leaders and included Chiang Ching-Kuo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek, the Commander of the National Revolutionary Army (NRA) First Corps.³

Chiang Ching-Kuo's biographers have claimed that he himself decided to go the USSR, and although his precise motivations are not known, it appears most probable that, like many 15 year-olds and as was common in his friendship circle, he had been 'contaminated' by revolutionary ideas. His father was reluctant to send the teenager abroad, but eventually relented.⁴

It is impossible to understand why a Kuomintang leader would send his only son to Moscow without analysing his circumstances at the time. Chiang Kai-shek had won Sun Yat-sen's trust in 1922, when General Ch'en Chiung-ming launched a rebellion in Guangzhou, prompting Sun and Chiang to go into hiding on a Yongfeng gunboat. In the following year, Chiang Kai-shek was appointed a member of the Kuomintang Military Council and Sun Yat-sen sent him to the USSR for several months to learn about and direct aid-focused negotiations. When Chiang Kai-shek returned to Guangzhou, he established the island of Whampoa (Huangpu) as the location for his Soviet-funded military academy. Here, personnel were trained for the Kuomintang National Revolutionary Army (NRA), under his personal leadership.

At the time of Sun Yat-sen's death, Chiang Kai-shek was his chief confidante and one of the foremost Kuomintang military leaders, as well as the key figure in organising the Soviet assistance.⁵ At the same time, however, he was not yet a leader of the Kuomintang, and until 1926 was not even a member of its governing body, the CEC. Chiang Kai-shek was extremely ambitious and after the death of Sun Yat-sen devised a plan to gain power over the Kuomintang by military means, and to this end, it was necessary to establish personal control and therefore to limit the influence of Soviet military advisors. This latter task at first appears contradictory because he needed to win Moscow's confidence, at the same time as consolidating his own power, which was being contested by the Chinese communists; these latter were actively promoted by Moscow and seeking to establish control over the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek appears to have determined that sending his only son to Moscow was the best way to gain the trust of the Comintern, without making any special concessions to rivals within China.⁶ Chiang Ching-kuo was the son of Chiang Kai-shek and his first wife, who he

³ Ibid., p. 80.

⁴ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 25–26.

⁵ Yurkevich, *Moskva-Kanton*, pp. 212–247.

⁶ V. P. Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi* [Chiang Ching-kuo: The Tragedy and Triumph of Chiang Kai-shek's Son] (Moscow: Rau-Universitet, 2002), p. 22.

had divorced several years prior in order to marry Soong Mei-ling, a sister of Sun Yat-sen's wife Soong Ching-ling.

Other Kuomintang leaders also took advantage of the opportunity to earn the trust of the Comintern in Moscow by sending their children and relatives to study at the UTK, including future CEC member and future ROC President Li Tsung-jen, diplomat Chen Youren, and Generals Zhang Fakui, Deng Yanda, Gu Zhenglun, and Feng Yü-hsiang.

The chief subject taught to the Chinese revolutionaries in the USSR was Soviet Marxism. Training a cadre of professional revolutionaries was a new and far-from-easy endeavour. Most of the Chinese students had a shallow theoretical knowledge of Marxism, and most had not completed a high level of general education. Furthermore, there was little Marxist literature available in the Chinese language, no training modules that took account of the most recent developments, and extremely few case studies that pertained to contemporary Asia and could have served as a basis for lecture courses. Lecturers at the university were immediately constrained by the need to write teaching materials and to translate into Chinese works such as the classics of Marxism and speeches by Soviet Communist Party leaders.⁷ Students who had reached a certain level of proficiency in Russian actively participated in these translation activities.

Some of the most highly regarded lecturers in Moscow and well-known Soviet sinologists were asked to deliver classes for the Chinese students,⁸ while the Chinese revolutionaries (most of whom were former students) worked together with their Soviet colleagues to this end. Intensive academic and research activities were conducted in parallel to teaching in order to improve the teaching materials. Leading figures from the Comintern Executive Committee (EC) and the All-Union Communist Party (the Bolsheviks) (VKP(b)) including Josef Stalin, Leon Trotsky, Nikolai Bukharin, and Nadezhda Krupskaya, CCP representatives in the Comintern EC, and prominent figures from the CCP and the Kuomintang visiting Moscow frequently delivered presentations to the Chinese students, revealing their appreciation of the importance of this contingent of revolutionaries.⁹

The UTK curricula were designed to provide students with a solid theoretical foundation for their future revolutionary activities. Students studied the Russian and foreign languages (English, French or German), the history of societal formations and revolutionary movements in various parts of the world, the history of the VKP(b),

⁷ At that time, the Soviet Communist Party was officially called the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks [VKP(b)].

⁸ Alexander Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution 1919-1927* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), pp. 171–172.

⁹ Spichak, *Kitayskiy avangard Kremlya*, pp. 94–95.

materialist philosophy and Marxist political economy, economic geography, Leninism, and military science.¹⁰

There is little doubt that Chiang Ching-kuo, who had arrived in the USSR at the age of fifteen, wanted to ‘revive’ China but with few firm views about precisely how to do so, fell under the influence of Soviet Marxism. The Chinese students would have been greatly impressed by their new country: having recently liberated itself by (according to the official narrative) putting the country’s workers in power, it was not only actively developing (the New Economic Policy [NEP], which allowed limited use of private enterprise and had proved successful, was in full swing), but was also helping other ‘oppressed’ nations to follow suit. Chiang immediately started to rub shoulders with the Communist elite, which was still full of enthusiasm for the Soviet project. At first, he lived in the apartment of Anna Ilyinichna Yelizarova-Ulyanova, the elder sister of the recently demised leader of the Bolshevik revolution, Vladimir Lenin, from whom he took his assumed Russian surname, Yelizarov (all Chinese students at the UTK would adopt Russian names). He took his Russian first name and patronymic—Nikolai Vladimirovich—from Lenin himself, who had sometimes used the pen-name Nikolai).

In material terms, the students lived a very modest life, but Chiang Ching-kuo had not received a luxurious upbringing and was content with his life in Moscow, especially when he saw the difficulties faced by ordinary people. He was a good and dedicated student and eventually developed a good command of the Russian language, but also devoted a lot of his time to politics and extracurricular activities, attending university meetings, writing articles for the university newspaper *Hong Qiang* (‘Red Wall’)—of whose editorial board he became a member—and giving presentations on life in China for mass audiences outside the university.

Politically, the Chinese students’ life was marked by conflict. They had to grapple with the complicated course of the revolution in China, difficult relations between the Kuomintang, the CCP, and the VKP(b), and antagonism between fractions within these parties, in particular the struggle between the supporters of Stalin and Trotsky. Conversations at the time focused on vitally important global problems, different views about the future world revolution, the prospects of the revolution in China, and the correct strategy for revolutionary forces.

Chiang Ching-kuo quickly found his feet in Moscow. In December 1925, just a few weeks after his arrival in Moscow, he applied and was admitted to the university cell of the Chinese Communist Youth League, and soon became one of its most active members. During a stop-over in Shanghai en route to Moscow, Chiang had also joined

¹⁰ Sheng, *Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 61–67.

the Kuomintang, given that dual membership at that time was allowed. Ideologically, Chiang took the side of Trotskyists over the Stalinists, even though they were a minority of around 30 among the Chinese students.¹¹

To better understand Chiang's decisions at this time, it is important to place in context contemporary developments in China and the Soviet Union. At a conference held in the USSR in 1923, Chiang Kai-shek presented a plan for the unification of China through military means, devised by Sun Yat-sen. In that plan, the USSR was to organise a pro-Kuomintang army in Outer Mongolia that would march southwards, while the Kuomintang army would move north from Guangdong, and the two armies would meet in the middle of China. The USSR agreed to provide military assistance, but was wary of possible international complications so rejected the plan of the offensive from the north. For the same reason, the Soviet military advisors also recommended against undertaking a decisive offensive from the south of China and suggested that in the short term, it would be wiser to concentrate on consolidation of currently held positions and further training the army.¹² Chiang Kai-shek wished to move northward as soon as possible, reasonably suggesting that quite aside from the realisation of all Chinese revolutionaries' dream to reunify the country, the grand military operation under his command would contribute to the consolidation of his positions in the party and state.

Chiang Kai-shek again advocated the idea of a northern march at the Kuomintang Second Congress (held in January 1926), where he was elected a member of the CEC and of its Standing Committee, bringing him into the ranks of the party's top leadership. At that time, however, the Communists and their left-wing Kuomintang allies were dictating the social programme to be espoused by the Congress, and in the second half of March, Chiang Kai-shek initiated his first attempt to remove the Communists from power, ordering the arrest of several hundred members of the CCP who he accused of organising a military coup.¹³

Moscow considered the situation to be undesirable, but the Soviet leaders chose not to risk jeopardising their relations with Chiang Kai-shek because of it, given that the opposite action would have undermined the 'United Front' that Moscow supported and that dictated that the Communists would work to take power from within the Kuomintang, rather than to fight against it. In order to attain this objective, they decided to operate in alliance with the leftist-minded members of the Kuomintang, and Chiang Kai-shek was still regarded as being close to the left.¹⁴ This was the position adopted

¹¹ Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 180.

¹² Yurkevich, *Moskva-Kanton*, pp. 61–79.

¹³ Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 90–91.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 91–92.

by the then-ruling Stalin-Bukharin bloc, but the issue of the situation in China was raised by the Left Opposition within the VKP(b) whose adherents—Trotsky especially—had coalesced into a central point of opposition to the Stalinist leadership. Trotsky asserted that the decision to support the ‘united front’ of the CCP and Kuomintang had been mistaken from the beginning, that the Chinese Communists needed to pursue their own path, without being afraid of provoking a reaction from the imperialist powers, and that the Soviet authorities needed to help workers in developed countries to bring about a communist world revolution.¹⁵

Due to the dominance of the Stalinist majority in the Soviet Politburo, however, relations with Chiang Kai-shek were not broken and in the summer of 1926, Chiang Kai-shek became the formal leader of the Kuomintang. In July, he took on further positions such as the Chairmanship of the CEC Standing Committee and the role of Commander-in-Chief of the Kuomintang’s NRA, thereby concentrating military and political power in his own hands. Within several months, Chiang Kai-shek had stabilised the situation in south-east China and had embarked on the northern march. Soviet advisors not only did not object to his actions but even did whatever they could to help. The USSR helped to restore the combat capabilities of Feng Yü-hsiang’s National Army, which was allied to Chiang Kai-shek and moved to unite with the NRA. The march was depicted in the USSR as a national democratic revolution; Soviet newspapers described successful battles with pro-imperialist armed groups, while workers’ rallies were organised at plants and factories to display popular support for the NRA.

At first, the Left Opposition within the VKP(b) was not deemed to be criminal, and the Leftists were a disliked but tolerated minority in the Bolshevik Party. While the opposition had few supporters overall, there were quite a few among the party intelligentsia, young members, and the top leadership. For example, Grigory Zinoviev remained a member of the VKP(b) Central Committee (CC) Politburo until July of 1926 and the Chairman of the Comintern Executive Committee until October of that year, while Trotsky and Kamenev retained their membership of the Politburo until October, and Trotsky kept his position as a Comintern EC member until September of 1927. As late as in March of 1926, Trotsky was appointed Chairman of the Politburo Commission for drafting recommendations on the USSR’s policy in the Far East (mainly with regard to China and Japan).¹⁶ It was only by the end of October 1927 that all three figures were finally expelled from the CC, and until early April of 1927, Karl Radek—a prominent figure within the Party and an adherent of Trotskyism—was the rector of the

¹⁵ Ibid., pp.102–109.

¹⁶ Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 108.

UTK.

Radek, who had previously been a member of the Russian Communist Party CC and the Comintern Secretary, delivered a course of lectures on the history of revolutionary movements in China and often discussed the course of events with students such as Chiang Ching-kuo. Many eyewitnesses reported that Radek enjoyed the respect of the majority of students,¹⁷ and Chiang himself noted that Radek had been a significant influence on his own preference for Trotskyism.¹⁸ Other Trotskyist lecturers similarly influenced their students and gave them opposition literature to read, even while Stalinist-minded teachers considered questions about Trotskyism from their students to be tantamount to heresy.

The young Chinese Trotskyists did not seek to establish their own organisation. In the course of their ideological and propaganda activities, they highlighted first and foremost events in China, but also touched on developments elsewhere in the world. They would address the CCP CC, to which they would also send opposition literature they themselves had translated from Russian, speak to student audiences, promulgate their ideas, and write articles to be featured in wall newspapers. For example, in an article entitled ‘I never said “Yes”!’ Chiang called upon students not to be afraid of voicing their support for Trotskyism and to struggle actively against Stalinism. In another article (‘The Chinese National Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party’), he sharply criticised the policies of the CCP, whose leaders he claimed to be in thrall to Moscow.¹⁹

The political clashes that took place at the UTK were not constrained to academic disputes; from the beginning, the social life of the university was dominated by intrigues launched by those who wished to pay off personal scores, and in this regard, it simply reproduced the atmosphere at large in the country that had founded and governed the university. It is interesting to note that all the Chinese students, who differed considerably in age and had been subjected to several years of propaganda in their home country, took the political intriguing they observed in Moscow for granted and quickly adopted it. In his analysis of relevant archival documents, the Russian historian Konstantin Shevelyov noted that ‘the question here is not who is guilty of making certain false accusations but who is not. Regrettably, those who are not guilty

¹⁷ Sheng, *Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 20; Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 182.

¹⁸ 蔣經國。我在蘇聯的日子, pp.69-70.

¹⁹ A. V. Pantsov, *Taynaya istoriya rossiysko-kitayskikh otnosheniy. Bolsheviki i kitayskaya revolyutsiya* [The Secret History of Soviet-Chinese Relations: The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution (1919–1927)] (Moscow: Muravey-Gayd, 2001), p. 256.

are in a minority.²⁰

The university atmosphere flared up even more in late 1926, when Stalin and his cohort in the Communist Party leadership strengthened their offensive against Trotsky's supporters and began to involve the Chinese students in this struggle;²¹ over time, Stalinist faculty members, CCP CC representatives in Moscow, and security personnel began to draw the battle lines. According to documents and eyewitness accounts of his contemporaries, Chiang Ching-kuo never descended into such policy-based intrigues and squabbles.

The events that took place in the spring of 1927 in China exacerbated the unrest taking place at the UTK and personally affected Chiang and the other Chinese students. On March 21, 1927, NRA units approached Shanghai, while the Communists, in alliance with the Kuomintang, stirred up a workers' rebellion, allowing them to seize the city on the following day. The seizure of Shanghai was interpreted in the USSR as a meaningful victory by the revolutionary forces. In a poem specially composed to mark the occasion, the leading Soviet poet and Bolshevik Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote that in such times, the best poetry could be only expressed by such words as 'Comrades! Workers and armed forces of Canton have taken Shanghai!'²²

Several days later, nearby Nanking was seized as well, and Chiang Kai-shek moved his government there. Naturally, the Chinese students at the UTK, both Communists and Kuomintang, celebrated those events, but they were followed by unexpected news. Taking advantage of the ultimatum issued by Britain, the US, Japan, France, and Italy in which they demanded punishment for those responsible for the deaths of foreigners that had occurred during the seizure of Nanking, Chiang Kai-shek started to crack down on the Communists. On April 12, arrests and executions began, while the institutions and organisations controlled by Communists (including the municipal government) were dissolved. He then ordered the same course of action to be implemented in other cities controlled by his forces. These actions split the Kuomintang apart for some part. Moscow moved to support the alternative Leftist government instituted in Wuhan headed by Wang Ching-wei, but quite soon it too decided to negotiate with Chiang Kai-shek.

These developments were an unpleasant surprise for Moscow, which could no longer conceal its disagreements with Chiang Kai-shek, and the so-called 'progressive'

²⁰ K. V. Shevelyov, 'K voprosu ob otrazhenii kitayskoy tematiki v "Biograficheskom spravochnike Kominterna"' [On the Treatment of Chinese Topics in the 'Comintern Biographical Directory'], *Nauchno-informatsionnyy byulleten*. Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, Vol. 2 (12), 2000.

²¹ Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 177–178.

²² Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon*, p. 100. Translation improved.

and ‘leftist commander-in-chief and leader of China’s national-democratic revolution was abruptly denounced as a traitor and an agent of the *haute bourgeoisie*. Relations with the Kuomintang, whose representative had been admitted to the Comintern Presidium and vested with consultative capacity as recently as January of 1927, were disrupted.²³ On April 21, the *Pravda* newspaper published a manual for propaganda workers in which it was asserted: ‘Chiang Kai-shek’s coup reveals the national bourgeoisie’s breakaway from the revolution, the birth of a national counter-revolution, and the deal made between rightist Kuomintang members and imperialists against the Chinese revolution.’²⁴

At that time, the UTK was busy with preparations for the annual May Day celebration and a big portrait of Chiang Kai-shek had been made ready. This portrait had to be hastily removed and the former ‘Red General’ was denounced in mass rallies. The official Soviet News Agency TASS disseminated a statement by Chiang Ching-kuo in which he denounced his own father. In reference to this occasion, a school friend of Chiang later wrote: ‘After these events, wherever we went, people used to ask us: Which one of you is Chiang Kai-shek’s son?’²⁵

It is impossible to be sure whether Chiang Ching-kuo’s denunciation of his father derived from his fervent ideological beliefs or whether he was forced to do so by Chinese Communists working in the Comintern. We only note here that this action was taken by a young man aged only 17 who had suddenly found himself in an extreme situation and who, like other Chinese Communist Youth League members, lamented the tragedy of the Communist movement in China.²⁶ It should also be noted that soon after, it became a common practice in the USSR to coerce the wife and children of a man who had been denounced as a counter-revolutionary to reject their family member.

Chiang wrote in his memoirs that in April of 1927, he graduated from the UTK and together with some of the other Chinese students in Moscow, asked leave to return to China. However, the CCP representatives in Moscow rejected the request because they were concerned that his return would consolidate the position of Chiang Kai-shek, and therefore recommended that Chiang continue his studies in the Soviet Union.

Chiang Ching-kuo was not the only relative of high-profile parents who the Soviet authorities did not want to return to China due to the potential benefits to be gained from the retention of the offspring of the Chinese elite in the USSR. In January 1928,

²³ Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 98.

²⁴ I. V. Stalin, ‘Voprosy kitayskoy revolyutsii. Tezisy dlya propagandistov, odobrennye TsK VKP(b)’ [Questions of the Chinese Revolution: Thesis for Propagandists, Approved by the VKP(B) CC], *Pravda*, 1927, No. 90, April 21, 1927.

²⁵ Sheng, *Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 119.

²⁶ Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 180.

Pavel Myf—the new rector of the UTK and the secretary of the university Party committee—wrote to the VKP(b) CC Organization Bureau:

‘In the process of compiling character references of university students to describe their Party and academic activities, we have identified a number of students whose tenure at the university is, both from communist-political and learning-related perspectives, absolutely inexpedient. The group of students who is to be expelled includes: Feng Qiguo (Sobinov) and Feng Funeng (Nezhdanova), who are the children of General Feng, and Zhao Xianding (Motylkova), a daughter of General Zhao Shuyi, who is a corps commander and an ally of General Feng. Sobinov is a member of the Komsomol, which he joined in Moscow. He is not interested in the Party and political issues, does not get involved in partisan issues (he supports the opposition), is undisciplined, and has connections to the Kuomintang and the Chinese Consulate. Politically, Nezhdanova and Motylkova are airheads and very young. Motylkova is married to Liu Hui (Unschlicht), a student who has been arrested by the operational department of the OGPU.²⁷ ... None of the three contributes to classroom learning. Taking into account this information and general political conditions, we consider it necessary to take measures in relation to all three so as to keep them in the USSR as hostages.’²⁸

Several months later, however, Feng Yü-hsiang’s children were allowed to return to China, but Chiang Ching-kuo was not. Chiang’s official character reference written by the university authorities after his graduation asserted the following: ‘(a) [Chiang possesses] emotional stability: with regard to the Russian and Chinese revolutions, he is an active supporter of the opposition; (b) he is well disciplined; (c) he has a superficial understanding of current Party issues; (d) he does not follow the Party line. ... Note: He is a very capable comrade who has the potential to grow to the level of a good Party functionary, but so far, he is an absolutely immature person and in need of completing tough, grassroots work under strong leadership.’²⁹

This report had a significant effect on Chiang Ching-kuo’s life. He found himself entirely cut off from China, apart from access to some late-arriving Chinese newspapers and magazines. Chiang had fallen from a life of privilege into the position of a hostage whose future lay at the mercy of the interests of various political forces, which tended not to align with his own.

The nature of Chiang’s life in the Soviet Union over the following years is

²⁷ The Joint State Political Directorate was the name of the Soviet secret police from 1923 to 1934.

²⁸ Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyy arhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoy istorii [Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History] (RSASPH). Fund 530, Series 1, File 34, p. 6.

²⁹ RSASPH, Fund 550, Series 1, File 2, p. 267.

somewhat uncertain. Some documents report that he spent the period fighting for communism and world revolution, gladly forsaking old friendships and even his family for the sake of his ideals. In other documents, however, he appears as a victim whose movements were dictated by influential political forces.

The most representative of the first set of documents are his application form and a personal statement, which Chiang submitted in 1936 as part of his application for entry to the VKP(b), while the most interesting of the second is his memoirs *My Days in Soviet Russia*, the draft copy of which formed part of the lengthy report he wrote in 1937 upon his return to China. These memoirs were published for the first time in English in 1989 as an attachment to Ray Cline's book on Chiang.³⁰ Cline headed the CIA mission in Taipei in 1958–1963 and was in close communication with Chiang, who provided him with his notes for publication.

The opinions of Chiang's biographers also differ. The Taiwanese researcher Yu Miin-ling considers it possible that because Chiang had developed a leftist identity during his stay in Moscow, he 'shared the view that his father had "betrayed" the revolution and therefore did not wish to return home for the time being.'³¹ However, Vladimir Galitsky, the author of a Russian biography of Chiang, concluded that he simply accepted the rules of the game that were imposed on him by the Soviet authorities, while maintaining the belief that Kuomintang's strategy was correct.³²

In our view, the second version of events is much closer to the truth, but elements of both hypotheses can be found in Chiang's life, which was richer and more complex than the fictionalised accounts. It appears that his denunciation of his father was genuine, rather than simply conformist, as evidenced by the fact that Chiang did not change his mind about that or any other issue, even when he could; he never acquiesced to the ideology of Stalinism, if anything becoming an even more dedicated Trotskyist.

The Chinese students considered the 'betrayal' by the Kuomintang to be a failure of the entire Chinese policy being pursued by the Stalinist leadership of the Soviet Union. Those who retained their loyalty to the Kuomintang were required to return to China and were labelled 'rightists' by the Soviet authorities, but criticism of Moscow's Chinese policy by the Left Opposition gained popularity among the leftist members of the Kuomintang who were sympathetic to the communists, and many went on to

³⁰ Chiang Ching-kuo, 'My Days in Soviet Russia', in Ray S. Cline, *Chiang Ching-Kuo Remembered: The Man and His Political Legacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Global Strategy Council, 1989). We used the Chinese edition of this work: 蔣經國。我在蘇聯的日子 // 蔣經國先生全集。一卷。臺北。1991.

³¹ 余敏玲 (Yu Miin-ling), 俄國檔案中的留蘇學生蔣經國 (Jiang Jingguo's Student Years in the Soviet Union as Reflected in the Russian Archives), 近代史研究所集刊 29 期, 1998/06, p. 117.

³² Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: Tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi*, p. 62.

become Trotskyists.

Sheng Yueh (Sheng Zhongliang), a 'leftist' student and the Kuomintang representative in the CEC, described this ideological turn as follows: 'After all of these developments, few of the students at Sun Yat-sen University, I suspect, felt that the Comintern or the Soviet leaders could necessarily be relied upon to guide wisely the course of the revolution in China. The towering reputation that Stalin and Bukharin had acquired among many of us was badly shaken. This state of affairs, of course, created a favorable situation for students and faculty members whose sympathies lay with Trotsky. They could present Trotsky's positions, while criticizing Stalin and the Comintern, and only a hard core of Comintern loyalists had the heart to argue against them. Thus it was at this point that Trotskyism at Sun Yat-sen University achieved its initial thrust, and among those who pushed Trotsky's cause at that time was Chiang Ching-kuo. He appeared frequently at speakers' lecterns, usually with a pile of books from which he quoted, supporting Trotsky's positions.'³³

It is easy to understand why the Chinese students supported the stance of the Leftist opposition with regard to China. The Leftists promoted more active and even uncompromising assistance for the Chinese revolution, without taking into consideration the situation in the USSR. Both the Leftists and the Stalinists agreed that 'national-democratic' movements in colonies and semi-colonies were natural allies of the socialist USSR in its struggle against Western imperialism, but Trotsky and his adherents emphasised the international values of such movements, which made it necessary bring about the world revolution as soon as possible. In April of 1924, Trotsky stated: 'You must know how to couple together the uprising of the Indus peasants, the strike of coolies in the port of China, the political propaganda of Kuomintang bourgeois democracy, the struggle of the Koreans for independence, the bourgeois-democratic rebirth of Turkey and the economic and cultural and educational work in the Soviet republic of Transcaucasia; you must know how, both ideologically and practically, to link all this with the work and struggle of the Communist International in Europe and in particular in Britain where the mote of British communism is slowly – more slowly than many of us would like – burrowing under MacDonald's conservative bastion.'³⁴

Stalin, meanwhile, prioritised the interests of the USSR because he considered the Soviet Union to be the base of the world revolution, and therefore allowed certain

³³ Yueh Sheng, *Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow and the Chinese Revolution: A Personal Account* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Center for East Asian Studies, 1971), pp. 130–131.

³⁴ Leon Trotsky, 'Perspectives and Tasks in the East. Speech on the third anniversary of the Communist University for Toilers of the East', April 1924. <https://marxists.architecture.net/archive/trotsky/1924/04/perspectives.htm>

concessions and compromises with respect to struggles in other countries. Differently, the Trotskyists uncompromisingly supported a swift transition to operational independence among foreign communist parties, support for them as they sought to come to power, and the resolution of communist goals such as the socialisation of the economy and struggles against local capitalists and non-communist parties. Stalinists advocated a more cautious approach and for communists in Asia and Africa to provide active support to ‘national-democratic’ parties similar to the Kuomintang, which were stronger and could therefore yield more benefits for Moscow’s foreign-policy objectives.

Stalin would explain his cautiousness by stating that countries such as China were much less developed than the Soviet Union and therefore it was too early to set in motion a communist takeover. Stalin believed that the world communist revolution was not going to happen for some time, making it the duty of communists in all countries to defend the USSR as the base for future world socialism. It is not the goal of this paper to speculate whether this position simply reflected Stalin’s desire to justify his own power or was a genuine strategy implemented to ensure the survival of communism during a period of uncertainty, but it proved much more attractive than Trotskyism for the grassroots of the Stalinist regime—the new communist bureaucracy was less willing to die for an ephemeral world revolution than it was to defend its privileged position and quietly build socialism in one country at a time. The Chinese and other foreign revolutionaries, who first and foremost wished to bring about victory in their respective countries, were naturally attracted to Trotskyism, which called on Moscow to aid them, regardless of local consequences.

This difference was summarised in a document published by the opposition in Moscow: ‘The CC views the Chinese Revolution simply as a means of inflicting severe damage on the enemies of the USSR. This is not the policy of the Comintern but of the [Soviet Union] People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.’³⁵ This criticism mirrored the Chinese communists’ own feelings; Li Ta-chao, one of the founders of the CCP, approvingly wrote: ‘One can conclude that Trotsky considered the Russian revolution to be a catalyst of the world revolution. The Russian revolution is only one of the revolutions taking place in the world. Countless other popular revolutions are still due to occur, one after another.’³⁶

Of course, these debates in Moscow were not confined to the China issue. Previously, the USSR had given considerable assistance to the fledgling Turkish Republic headed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which had significantly contributed to its

³⁵ As quoted in: Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 2.

³⁶ Li Ta-chao, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* [Selected Works] (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), p. 160.

survival as an independent state. Moscow had taken this course of action because it had hoped that Ankara would adopt an anti-West position, which it subsequently did for some time. In 1923, however, having consolidated his power, Atatürk banned the Communist Party of Turkey, but Moscow nevertheless chose to continue its cooperation with Ankara. Later, Stalin's geopolitical realism also led him to reach an agreement with Nazi Germany, despite its virulent opposition to communism. For revolution-oriented Leftists, this attitude was a betrayal of their foreign comrades and of the quest for a world revolution. The anti-communist 'coup' in China by Chiang Kai-shek resulted in radicalisation of both the Soviet Left Opposition and their supporters in the UTK, who blamed the Stalinist leadership for the failure and stated that this turn of events vindicated the statements made by the Leftist leaders.

This was a difficult time for Chiang Ching-kuo, marked by a search for the truth and a more profound development and confirmation of his views. Archive documents make it clear that Chiang and some of his university friends turned to Trotskyist faculty members for ideological clarification and studied oppositional literature in depth.³⁷

Chiang presented his views at opposition meetings and in university wall newspapers; he criticised Moscow and the CCP, accusing the latter of taking its lead from the former, and called for Trotskyists to have the courage to voice oppositional opinions. He also spoke out in public. Ivan Pavlov, an opposition activist who worked as a lecturer at the UTK in 1927, shared his recollections of this time in his memoirs: 'At 8 a.m. on November 7, 1927—the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution—thousands of students crowded the yard of the Moscow University building in Mokhovaya Street. The first speakers began to address those gathered. A welcome speech was delivered on behalf of the "Chinese working classes" by a Komsomol member dressed in a leather jacket, a student at Sun Yat-sen Chinese University who was Chiang Kai-shek's adopted³⁸ son and who had adopted the Russian surname Yelizarov. Greeted enthusiastically by the audience, Yelizarov delivered an emotional and incendiary oppositional speech in Russian. The crowd was greatly stirred up.'³⁹

The opposition demonstration held on November 7 was a shock for the Stalinist leadership and a justification for subsequent repressions. Prior to that, while opposition supporters had been criticised and removed from leadership positions, the outcome of the ideological and power struggle was far from clear; opposition viewpoints had not yet been banned, and nobody envisaged that ten years later, most proponents of these

³⁷ Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 179–180.

³⁸ Author's mistake. Chiang Ching-kuo was the biological, not the adopted son of Chiang Kai-shek.

³⁹ I. M. Pavlov, 1920-e: revolyutsiya i byurocratiya. Zapiski revolyutsionera [The 1920s: Revolution and Bureaucracy. Notes of a Revolutionary] (St Petersburg: 21st century, 2001), pp. 88–89.

views would be executed by firing squads. By the end of 1927, the authorities started to expel oppositionists from the Party, with the most active figures being exiled or even imprisoned.

The authorities also took a much more hard-line approach to the Chinese students and relations between Moscow and the Kuomintang government worsened drastically. The Kuomintang Moscow party committee was dissolved and Kuomintang students started to leave the USSR. The Soviet authorities were reluctant to let them go and sought to delay their departure, and after the KMT CEC officially broke off relations with the UTK in September of 1927, the OGPU arrested almost all remaining members of the Kuomintang, including those who had left Moscow but had not yet crossed the border.⁴⁰ Of a total of 562 Chinese students, only 239 remained at the UTK,⁴¹ while about 50 Kuomintang members chose to ignore their CEC orders and stay at the university, while many of them expressed a willingness to join the Chinese Communist Youth League and the CCP.⁴² This turn of events was a result of the efforts taken by Chinese Communist students, who, supported by their Soviet ideological comrades, worked among the KMT to persuade them to change their allegiance.

However, the CCP leaders recognised that quite a few of the repatriated UTK graduates had defected to the Kuomintang,⁴³ a fact that hardened the ruling Stalinists' attitude to the Chinese students in Russia who wished to return home. In short, it was obvious that Chiang Ching-kuo would be trapped in a deadlock under Stalin's dictatorship. Despite being at the mercy of a powerful elite in a foreign country, Chiang did not lose his optimism and never capitulated. He had been interested in the military since childhood, and submitted an application to attend and later entered a special-assignment military school. Upon graduation in late 1927,⁴⁴ Chiang was sent to study in St Petersburg at the Tolmachev Military-Political Academy. These and all later movements were recommended or at least approved by the Chinese section of the Comintern.

During the two and a half years he spent at the Tolmachev Academy, Chiang studied a number of fields pertaining to military matters, including strategy under Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, political science, economics, and philosophy. Chiang

⁴⁰ Spichak, *Kitayskiy avangard Kremlya*, pp. 85–86.

⁴¹ 白瑜先生訪問紀錄 [Record of a Visit to Mr Pai Yu], 中央研究院近代史研究所, 臺北, 1987, pp. 22–25.

⁴² Min-ling L. Yu, *Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow: 1935-1930*. Department of History, New York University. January 1995. Unpublished manuscript, p. 79. As quoted in: Spichak, *Kitayskiy avangard Kremlya*, p. 85.

⁴³ RSASPH, Fund 530, Series 1, Files 34, p. 109.

⁴⁴ Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: Tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi*, p. 43.

was an excellent student; he wrote an interesting paper on the history of guerrilla warfare and published articles in a number of academic journals.

Political activities continued to be an important part of Chiang's life. He was elected as a member of the Komsomol Bureau at the academy and in 1929 became a candidate for membership in the VKP(b). One year before that, he had announced a break with Trotskyism. Chiang explained in his memoirs that he took this step on the advice of his friends, and such advice can be considered reasonable, even though some of his Trotskyist former comrades believed that 'the thought of active Trotskyist activity simply terrified him.'⁴⁵ While Chiang was studying in Moscow, the battle between Stalin and his adherents and the 'Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc' reached its peak, with the Stalinists winning a complete victory. Trotsky and a group of his closest supporters were sent into exile in 1928, but the struggle for control over the party and the country continued, marked by frequent purges and massive repressions; to declare loyalty to the Trotskyist cause was tantamount to a death sentence, and to have a history of Trotskyist sympathy was extremely dangerous. Prior to Chiang Kai-shek's 'anti-Communist coup' in China, the Kuomintang's track record of close cooperation with the Chinese and Russian Communist Parties had guaranteed immunity for Chiang, but after the events of April 12, 1927, he was transformed into a hostage whose political value not everyone recognised, particularly following the severing of diplomatic relations between the USSR and China in 1929 after the eruption of hostilities related to the Chinese Eastern Railway. Some communists were prepared to sacrifice Chiang to protect their own career ambitions and to use him as an example to demonstrate their collaboration in the struggle against enemies.

It was against this background that the 'case of the Jiangsu-Zhejiang community'⁴⁶—a useful example of the attitudes that prevailed at that time in Comintern schools—emerged. Chen Shaoyu, a lecturer, interpreter, and member of the Party committee at the UTK, and Pavel Myf, a Stalinist and the new university rector, declared that they were aware of the existence of a 'clandestine counter-revolutionary organisation of students from the afore-named provinces [Jiangsu and Zhejiang].' Despite it being a complete fabrication, the OGPU launched an investigation into this accusation that initially yielded only a few suspects, but before too long, Boris Menis—the principle investigator—had collected evidence incriminating as many as 22 students from various higher-education institutions, concluding that the goal of the suspects was to 'seize the Party leadership of the Chinese student body and to orient it to support opportunist leaders of the Chinese Communist Party such as Chen Duxiu, to maintain

⁴⁵ Pantsov, *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 189.

⁴⁶ Подробнее см. Спичак. С. 109–117.

connections with rightist Kuomintang members, and to seize influence in military schools. The documented evidence fully proves the presence of criminal and anti-Party activities, thus revealing a need for the arrest and interrogation [of the suspects].⁴⁷

Chen Shaoyu included Chiang Ching-kuo in the group of community leaders suspected of these activities. Chiang had been born in the province of Zhejiang, had been attracted to Trotskyism during his first years in Moscow, and together with his classmates had been involved in a money-lending scheme among the Chinese students to cover their living expenses that they jocularly referred to as the ‘mutual aid fund.’ To bolster their fabricated accusations, Chen and Myf transformed this fund into a foundation that the ‘community’ had created for criminal and counter-revolutionary purposes.

The story was brought to the attention of Xian Zhongfa, the visiting Moscow representative of the CCP CC and a member of the Comintern EC Presidium, who in turn tried to alert VKP(b) leaders such as Stalin and Bukharin. He was not successful, but the case was nevertheless brought before the Comintern EC and the OGPU and as a result, four students were arrested, some were expelled from the CCP and the Communist Youth League, and 34 military students were expelled from their respective higher-education institutions.⁴⁸ Finally, this affair reached the VKP(b) Politburo and the Central Control Commission (CCC). On its session held on August 10, 1928 and chaired by influential Party official Yemelyan Yaroslavsky ‘in the presence of several dozen Chinese and Russian comrades,’ the CCC issued a decision in which it fully exonerated the members of the ‘Jiangsu–Zhejiang community’ and announced that ‘the case of the community mutual aid fund’ was closed.⁴⁹ The day before, Myf and Chen Shaoyu retracted their accusations, but this did not prevent Chen from returning to the case several years later.

It should be noted that although Chiang Ching-kuo was mentioned as being one of the leaders of this supposed community, these intrigues did not affect him in any significant way and unlike the other suspects, he was never interrogated by OGPU officers. It might have been his origin that protected him. Having graduated from the Tolmachev Academy with distinction in June of 1930, he had asked the Soviet authorities to allow him to either return to China or to enter the Red Army. However, these requests were refused, which Chiang believed to have been due to the opposition of the Chinese section within the Comintern, but it is also unlikely that the Soviet government would have fully trusted him. A character reference of Chiang written when

⁴⁷ RSASPH, Fund 530, Series 4, File 3, p. 20.

⁴⁸ Спичак. Ук. Соч. С.113; Yu Ming-ling L, Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow, 1925–1930.

⁴⁹ Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: Tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi*, pp. 43–44.

he was a third-year student at the Tolmachev Academy noted: ‘Politically well developed. Active in Party work. By virtue of his young age, he has little practical work experience, and his unique background means that he should not be sent to China immediately and given a position of responsibility there. It seems a good idea to send him to work in a production enterprise for one year.’⁵⁰

This recommendation was realised, and Chiang Ching-kuo’s military career in Russia came to an end. After two months, he was appointed to the position of group instructor of Chinese students at the International Lenin School (ILS), a Comintern school set up to educate mid- and high-level cadre officials from foreign communist parties. In that capacity, he conducted study tours with his students to Ukraine and Transcaucasia, while he also contracted and survived a severe illness. His first negative character reference was issued at the ILS: ‘[Chiang] does not understand the reality of the CCP and the Chinese revolution, and is unable to render assistance to his superiors in the form of practical leadership in the realisation of slogans such as “Let’s make nationalisation a reality!”’.⁵¹

Chiang’s life after that was a series of unexpected and abrupt changes, as he was moved between fairly low-rank positions at production facilities far from his professional interests. Was it a form of character building purposely prescribed to him by the Party, or were the Soviet authorities simply unsure what to do with the young foreigner of controversial political status? It was fairly common for the Comintern to send a poor student who had a history of conflict with the authorities to a provincial factory to learn ideological purity from local workers, but the character test assigned to Chiang was remarkable for its complexity.

In October 1930, Chiang was dispatched to the Dinamo factory as a locksmith’s apprentice, for which he received a very low salary that did not even cover his basic livelihood, and was therefore forced to supplement this income wherever he could. He was later promoted to assistant head of a workshop and then deputy assistant factory director.⁵² In May 1931, he was sent to the village of Bolshoe Zhokovo in Moscow region as a commissioner of the VKP(b) CC and the Regional Executive Committee (local government) to ‘exercise the Party leadership of the rural Soviets and management boards of four collective farms.’⁵³ Due to his skilful and honest approach to his work, Chiang won the trust of his colleagues both in the factory and in the

⁵⁰ RSASPH, Fund 550, Series 1, File 10, p. 23.

⁵¹ RSASPH, Fund 531, Series 1, File 21, p. 19.

⁵² Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: Tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi*, p. 93.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

village.⁵⁴

In the autobiography he wrote in China in 1937, Chiang attributed his vicissitudes to the hostility of the CCP representatives in the Comintern.⁵⁵ However, Chiang's own account should not be treated as objective because his purpose here was to exonerate himself and justify his communist background to his father and his new allies. In an earlier autobiography he wrote while in the USSR in 1936 to support his quest for admission to the Communist Party, Chiang described the situation quite differently, curating the events detailed in the work to ensure that the Soviet authorities would view him more favourably. In one section, he wrote: 'Upon graduation from the Academy, the Comintern sent me to work at a factory as a rank-and file worker to boost my proletarian understanding, which was necessary for the development of my attitude. It was with great enthusiasm that I went to work at the factory and after one year, I sent a written request to the Comintern to be sent to work in a collective farm, where I worked as its head and performed labour in the collective farm alongside the farmers. I consider my work at the factory and the collective farm to have been part of the grand school of life and Bolshevism, and I worked there with great willingness and enthusiasm. I learnt a great deal from the workers and the collective farmers, as well as from the respective Party organisation leaders. In 1932, based on resolution by the Political Secretariat of the Comintern EC, the VKP(b) CC dispatched me to the VKP(b) Ural Oblast Committee, which assigned me to work in the Ural Machine-Building Plant.'⁵⁶

In October 1932, Chiang was ordered to return from Bolshoe Zhokovo to Moscow and was sent to Sverdlovsk (now known as Yekaterinburg), an industrial city in the Ural economic district. According to Chiang, he was seriously ill for about a month, and was then sent to Altay to work in a gold mine.⁵⁷ He described this as his hardest period in the USSR. However, no documents concerning this period have as yet been found in the Russian archives.

In 1933 Chiang began working at the Ural Heavy Machine-Building Plant (Uralmash). Here, his life took a more stable course. It appears that he was unaware that on one occasion in the 1930s, he was almost sent back to China. Moscow offered to exchange him for the Soviet intelligence officer Jakob Rudnik, who had been arrested while living in Shanghai under the name Hilaire Noulens with a colleague to whom he was married.⁵⁸ The offer was delivered via Sun Yat-sen's widow Soong Ching-ling,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ 蔣經國。我在蘇聯的日子, pp. 76–80.

⁵⁶ Tsentr dokumentatsii obshchestvennykh organizatsiy Sverdlovskoy oblasti [Center of Documentation of Civic Organisations of Sverdlovsk Oblast] (CDCO SO), Fund 153, Series 1, File 120, p. 5.

⁵⁷ 蔣經國。我在蘇聯的日子。

⁵⁸ Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, pp. 58, 59; Frederick S. Litten, 'The Noulens Affair', *The China*

who was no doubt acting under instructions from Moscow. Chiang Kai-shek consulted his wife, to whom he had been married for four years, without having had any children, and Soong Mei-ling wanted to accept the deal. However, Chiang Kai-shek decided not to follow her advice⁵⁹ and the deal fell through. Chiang Ching-kuo had to stay in Russia for several more years.

The Uralmash was a major industrial construction project of the Soviet Union's first five-year plan and was considered an honourable exile location to which the Stalinists sent opposition figures. For those in political disgrace, being sent to the Uralmash was much better than the various other possibilities that might befall them. It is possible that it was the influential novelist Maxim Gorky who advised Chiang to apply to go to the Uralmash. Gorky maintained friendly relations with the Uralmash's Party Committee Secretary Leopold Averbakh, who had been a famous Komsomol figure, the editor of many newspapers and magazines, and a founder of the All-Russia Association of Proletarian Writers. Chiang was acquainted with Gorky, and struck up a close relationship with Averbakh while in Sverdlovsk. Chiang's memoirs record an idealised version of how he became acquainted with Gorky.⁶⁰

In the Uralmash, Chiang first worked as the assistant to the head of the No. 1 Machine Shop, and in 1934, became the Deputy and then the Acting Editor-in-Chief of *Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye* ('For Heavy Machine-Building'), the factory newspaper.⁶¹ Mikhail Bannikov, a Sverdlovsk journalist who worked under Chiang as the Executive Secretary of the newspaper, recalled later: 'Kolya⁶² [Chiang] showed himself to be a skilful leader, capable of quickly dictating entire "just-in-time" articles. A typical morning in the editorial office went as follows: The boss would enter his office and inquire about the issues at hand, and if there were any gaps remaining in the printed edition, he would reassure us: "It doesn't matter, I'll fill them myself." Communists from the printers and the editorial office at Party meetings praised Chiang, saying: 'It is thanks to his initiative that the newspaper is never published late anymore, and has started to operate more smoothly.'⁶³

Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye was mainly devoted to factory matters, but sometimes touched on international affairs, based on propaganda materials sent from

Quarterly, Vol. 138, June 1994, pp. 492–512.

⁵⁹ Chiang Kai-shek. *Nanking Diaries*, entries of Dec. 15 and 16, 1931. As quoted in: Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, p. 59.

⁶⁰ 徐甦 [Xu Su]. 蔣宋大家族[Big Clans of Jiangs and Songs]. 瀋陽：遼寧人民出版社，1988，p. 46.

⁶¹ Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi*, p. 101.

⁶² Short for Nikolai.

⁶³ V. Zaytsev, 'Kolya Yelizarov - president Taiwanya' [Kolya Yelizarov – President of Taiwan], *Vecherniy Sverdlovsk*, February 26, 1990.

Moscow. Chiang would sometimes write about China, where the revolution had entered a new phase of the communist movement and armed struggle against the Kuomintang. A civil war was under way in rural districts of southern and central China, to which the communists had relocated following a series of failed attempts to stir up rebellions in major cities.

The archive of *Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye* in Sverdlovsk retains some editions that featured articles by Chiang on this subject. Here is an excerpt from an article published in 1934:

‘Since the end of 1929, there have been two Chinas: Soviet China, to which the future belongs, and Kuomintang China, which is retreating into the past.

‘Within a short period of time, the Soviet movement has become a significant political factor; the multi-million-strong masses of workers and peasants under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party have started to establish a Soviet government. The Soviets located in scattered and rural districts have already formed a powerful state, a republic with a total territory amounting to 1,848,180 km², while the territory of the already stable Soviet districts amounts to 681,355 km². The entire territory of Germany is 68.7% of the size of this stable territory, while that of Britain (without colonies) is only 35.5 % and Japan 55.9 %.’⁶⁴

Another article written by Chiang in 1934 covered the seventh anniversary of the establishment of the Guangzhou Uprising:

‘On December 11, 1927, workers and labourers from the city of Canton [Guangzhou] under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party raised the Soviet banner for the first time in a semi-colonial country.

‘The slogans of the Canton Commune were a nation-wide statement on the hegemony of the proletariat and the Soviets as a form of democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. ...

‘The Canton Commune fell, but let our enemies remember that its cause is alive and developing. Kuomintang China will be replaced by Soviet China, and the workers and peasants will be the masters of the country.

‘In the event that an imperialist war is waged against the USSR, the motherland of socialism, Chinese workers and peasants bearing the banner of the Canton Commune will stand as one man to defend it.’

It is difficult to establish with reasonable accuracy to what extent Chiang really believed in what he was writing. He had never supported Stalinism in the first place

⁶⁴ *Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye*, November 27, 1934.

and, from what is known from his later statements and conversations, he was in the process of becoming disillusioned with the Communist system as such. However, this was a long process, and it is hard to say at what stage he stopped being a devoted Communist and decided to simply play by the rules in order to avoid being arrested, just as many people around him did at the time. As we show later, he most probably maintained a positive view of at least some aspects of the Soviet system even after returning to China.

Despite his onerous newspaper duties, Chiang was nevertheless able to conduct a significant amount of public work. His assumed Russian surname, Yelizarov, can be frequently seen in the minutes of Party meetings at the time. At one such meeting, he gave a presentation on the best way to guard vegetable gardens; at another, he spoke on the issue of late payments of wages to workers; and at a third meeting, he took part in a debate on Party purges. The nature of his presentations corresponded well to the needs of any given moment. He spoke stridently and dogmatically, and everywhere saw enemies and saboteurs: 'The communist Babin arrived 20 minutes late, while Pavlov did not appear at work after getting drunk. Lebedev broke his machine-tool and concealed this fact. ... The class enemy is operating within our ranks!' 'Our engineering personnel stay in their workshop and do not participate in political work. As comrade Molotov said, there should be no pure engineers and technicians who do not participate in political life, but our engineering personnel do not even attend meetings! We must struggle against this resolutely!' However, he also spoke in more practical terms, such as when he criticised the 'inept organisation of workers' everyday lives' or wrote a proposal to organise a volunteers' brigade to guard the vegetable gardens before all the potatoes have been stolen.⁶⁵

It was probably under the influence of Averbakh, the Executive Secretary of the main editorial office in charge of a multi-volume series that was being published on the history of plants and factories, that Chiang undertook to write the history of the Ural Machine-Building Plant, and by the time of his departure for China, he appears to have written a great deal and even to have edited it for publication. Regrettably, we failed to find these materials. During his free time, Chiang enjoyed going to the countryside with his colleagues and would attend parties where, his colleagues recollected, he was known to sing Russian songs and perform Caucasian dances with a knife in his teeth. On one occasion, having received a holiday voucher issued by the factory, he and his

⁶⁵ A. Dzhapakov, 'Ural'skie korni prezidenta Taywanya' [The Ural Roots of the Taiwanese President], *Ural*, No. 7, 2002, pp. 177–189. <http://biblio28.ru/kraevedenie/zhizn-zamechatelnix-lyudej/czzingo-cz.html>

wife spent their leave in a resort on the Black Sea coast.

Those who were acquainted with Chiang described him as industrious, intelligent, dedicated, and talkative. He was highly educated, and just this fact was sufficient to generate respect for him among the barely literate people who had built the Uralmash and then toiled in its workshops. Maria Anikeeva, a former production clerk in one of the Uralmash workshops whose husband, Fyodor Anikeev, was the workshop-level Komsomol Committee Secretary, introduced Chiang to his future wife, and the two families became close friends. In 1990 Anikeeva extolled the popularity of Chiang's lectures on the international situation to one of the authors of this article, and related that he was a clever and friendly companion.

His future wife was Faina Vakhreva, a lathe operator described by those who knew her personally as 'a very modest and intelligent girl who everybody liked.' Faina was an orphan who had just graduated from a technical school and lived with her elder sister. Chiang later recalled: 'Faina understood my situation better than anyone else; she showed me sympathy at difficult moments and extended her hand in help.' In March of 1935, Faina and Chiang were married and their first child, a son they called Eric (later known as Alan or Xiaowen), was born in December. In September 1935, at a closed Party meeting of the printing and editorial offices of *Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye*, the participants approved probe report about VKP(b) candidate member Chiang.⁶⁶ In this atmosphere of respect, Chiang submitted an application for admission to the Party in November 1936 in which he wrote: 'My father Chiang Kai-shek is a traitor and betrayer of the great Chinese revolution and at the present time is the leader of the Chinese black reaction. Since the first moment of his betrayal, I have been wholly opposed to him.' In December, Chiang was admitted to the VKP(b).⁶⁷

This, however, was just one side of Chiang Ching-kuo's life; there was another side that brought him considerable suffering. Chiang wrote in his memoirs that in 1934, the head of the Ural Department of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), the successor of the OGPU, summoned him to his office and said: 'The Chinese Government demands that you return to China. ... You must write a statement to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the effect that you don't wish to return.' Several days later, 'the same head of department told me that one of the secretaries at the Chinese Embassy wanted to talk with me, and demanded that I report the content of the conversation to him afterwards. The talk took place shortly after, and in addition to the secretary, two more men were present, one of whom was a Chinese man who was sitting in the room next door. Of course, I did not dare to state my wish to return to my home

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

country.’⁶⁸

A. P. Panfilov, a former colleague of Chiang at *Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye*, confirmed with one of the authors of this paper that this episode really took place. Panfilov reported that the story was discussed in depth in the newspaper offices: ‘Chiang was visited by some representatives of his father, who entered his office. He did not say what they spoke about, but the truth will out, and we found out anyway. They employed every tactic they could think of to persuade him to return, but he refused absolutely and shouted at them. Then, they said: “Please could you write a formal refusal as proof that we visited you.” Well, he wrote something that was very rude.’⁶⁹

On February 11, 1936, the newspaper *Leningradskaya Pravda* published Chiang’s letter to his mother, and it was then reproduced in a number of other periodicals.⁷⁰ Chiang wrote that he had found personal happiness in the struggle for the happiness of the whole of humanity, and that he would march boldly along the road towards the Chinese revolution. He explained to his mother how wonderful the communists were as people, sharply criticised the actions of his father, and blamed him for the cruel treatment of his former wife. Furthermore, Chiang described the USSR as his ‘motherland’ and called upon the USSR to struggle for the independence of China and for the establishment of a Soviet government there. Chiang finished the letter by writing that he would be happy to meet his mother in any country, if only she would be able to leave China.⁷¹

This letter, in which a son addresses his mother—a semiliterate woman—in the formal language of a newspaper editorial leaves a strange impression, and it is difficult to shake off the idea that it was dictated by somebody else. Chiang wrote in his diary that Comintern officers were ‘twisting his arm’ to make him sign the text they had prepared: ‘On the fourth day, I could not stand up to their pressure any longer and agreed to sign it, provided I could add just one phrase of my own: “If you want to see me, please come to Western Europe because we will be able to meet there.” My reasoning was as follows: If my relatives could send me a letter in which they asked me to meet them in Europe, then I could use it in order to leave the USSR.’⁷²

However, the meeting in Europe did not take place. Throughout 1936–1938, the atmosphere of suspicion and witch-hunting in the USSR reached a fever pitch. The

⁶⁸ 蔣經國。我在蘇聯的日子, p. 84.

⁶⁹ Alexander Larin’s interview of A. P. Panfilov, Moscow, 1995.

⁷⁰ *Leningradskaya Pravda*, February 11, 1936. According to Galitsky, who published the manuscript of the letter, it was actually written on November 23, 1935. See: Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: Tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi*, pp. 128–132.

⁷¹ Denny, H., ‘Son Repudiates Chiang Kai-Shek’, *The New York Times*, February 12, 1936, p. 12.

⁷² 蔣經國。我在蘇聯的日子, p. 85.

country was swept by a wave of repressions, nobody felt safe, and there was no possibility of Chiang being allowed to go to Western Europe.

The Chinese delegation in the Comintern and some lecturers at the Comintern's Chinese schools zealously supported the nationwide campaign of repression and kept a close eye on their former students, wherever in the country they resided. In 1931, Chen Shaoyu returned to Moscow, this time as a member of the CCP CC Politburo and the head of the CCP delegation in the Comintern, as well as with the new pseudonym—Wang Ming. Chen again brought up his previous accusations about the 'Jiangsu-Zhejiang community' and brought another political speculation to the attention of the Comintern EC and the NKVD—the putative 'Chugunov espionage ring' ('Chugunov' was the assumed Russian name of Zhou Dawen, the Editor-in-Chief of the Chinese-language newspaper *Gongrenzhi Lu* ('The Workers' Way') in Khabarovsk, and before that the Chairman of the All-China Students' Union). Chiang was also accused of being a member of this 'espionage ring.' Due to the persistent pressure applied by Wang Ming, Zhou Dawen and three of his Chinese colleagues who had worked in the Far East were arrested and executed.

Meanwhile, the purges were reaching Sverdlovsk, and had affected some of those close to Chiang. His friend Yefim Tsetlin, who was the head of the Technical Service Bureau, before which he had been the Chairman of the Komsomol CC and the head of Nikolai Bukharin's Secretariat, became the main target of the campaign launched in the Uralmash, while Averbakh, who had recommended Chiang for admission to the Party and by that time was the Secretary of the Regional Committee,⁷³ also came under suspicion. Quite soon, both were arrested and shot.

It was decreed that *Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye* 'had not correctly highlighted the methods Tsetlin used for his treacherous counter-revolutionary activities' and on January 5, 1937, the Bureau of VKP(b) Committee of Sverdlovsk Ordzhonikidze region, where the Uralmash was situated, resolved 'to temporarily release comrade Yelizarov, the acting editor, from his duties.'⁷⁴ Chiang was transferred to the Organizational Department of the Ordzhonikidze region VKP(b) Committee as its deputy head, but at the regional Party Conference of February 7–11, Chiang's connections with the Trotskyists were discussed.⁷⁵

This put Chiang at risk of arrest, but he received the support of the Party leadership of the oblast and city in the form of the of VKP(b) Sverdlovsk's Oblast Committee First Secretary Ivan Kabakov; Mikhail Kuznetsov, who had been downgraded from First to

⁷³ *Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye*, February 2, 1937.

⁷⁴ *Za Tyazhyoloye Mashinostroyeniye*, January 6, 1937.

⁷⁵ Dzhapakov, 'Ural'skie korni prezidenta Taywanya'.

Second Secretary of the VKP(b) Sverdlovsk Municipal Committee; and Ivan Kormilov, the head of the personnel department of the Municipal Committee.⁷⁶ Several months later, all three were arrested and later executed. It is difficult to say whether they supported Chiang out of friendship or under instructions from Moscow. In all probability, Moscow had plans for Chiang that differed from those of his Party bosses.

Fortunately for Chiang, there were major changes in Far Eastern international relations at that time. Due to the threat represented by Japanese aggression, relations between the governments of the USSR and China began to thaw, and with the active facilitation of the Soviet Union, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party agreed to cooperate. It was in this geopolitical situation that Chiang's requests to return to China and Chiang Kai-shek's efforts to secure the release of his son produced the desired effect.

The decision to allow Chiang to leave was taken at the highest level. On March 3, 1937, without having voted, the Politburo of the VKP(b) resolved 'not to object to a trip to China by Chiang Kai-shek's son, if he agrees to it.'⁷⁷

Anikeeva remembered: '[Chiang] said on one occasion that the CC had summoned him to Moscow. He used to go there frequently and bring back presents for us but this time, when he returned he said: "We need to bid each other farewell. The CC is sending me to China, with the goal of bringing my father to our side." And then he left, with his whole family. We received a telegram that asked us to meet the Yelizarovs at the railway station, where we saw each other for the last time, after which they went to China.'⁷⁸ This took place in March 1937. One month later, Chiang Ching-kuo celebrated his 27th birthday.

Chiang left the USSR on March 25, 1937, and it is unclear how his life would have developed had he not. In July of that year, a certain Sukhoi denounced Chiang to the Sverdlovsk Municipal Committee and enumerated his numerous counter-revolutionary activities such as his contact with Averbakh, Tsetlin, and other suspicious figures, conversations with foreign correspondents, the establishment of a counter-revolutionary organisation, and even drunkenness.⁷⁹ One cannot be sure why Sukhoi felt the need to write a lengthy denunciation of a man who had already gone abroad.

⁷⁶ S. Ageev and A. Iglin, 'Tak kto zhe on, prezident Taywanya?' [So, who is he, the president of Taiwan?], No. 8–10, 1989. <http://biblio28.ru/kraevedenie/zhizn-zamechatelnyix-lyudej/czzingo-cz.html>

⁷⁷ Arhiv Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii [Archive of the President of the Russian Federation], Fund 3, Series 68, File 146, p. 15.

⁷⁸ Alexander Larin's interview with Maria Anikeeva, Sverdlovsk, 1990.

⁷⁹ CDCO SO, Fund 161, Series 6, File 332, p. 6.

Perhaps he was unaware of Chiang's departure.

Interestingly, while en route to China, Chiang sent a letter from Vladivostok to his former newspaper in which he reported that he had learned that the brother of Leonid Vladimirov, the factory's director, had been arrested as a Trotskyist.⁸⁰ Vladimirov, a high-level industrial manager, was himself arrested in September 1937 and executed in January of the following year.

It is hard to say why, being so close to the border, Chiang performed this action. It could have been a condition for his departure imposed by the NKVD, which was looking for damaging information about Vladimirov, while he could have been motivated by a desire to take revenge on Vladimirov for having been one of those who had actively participated in the campaign of criticism of Chiang that was unleashed in February and could have resulted in his arrest. Another possibility is that he wished to demonstrate his loyalty so that his departure would not be impeded at the last moment. This version of events is supported by the fact that he also sent telegrams to several Chinese communists in the USSR, including Wang Ming, in which he declared that he was going to China as a good communist.⁸¹ Whatever the truth, this episode reveals a lot about life in the USSR at that time and about Chiang Ching-kuo himself.

Chiang later described his years in the USSR as the most difficult of his life. While that was probably true, we can hardly agree with the Taiwanese authors who have asserted that the twelve years he spent in the Soviet Union were a waste of time, except for the fact that he met his wife there and came to know the 'unsightly truth about Communism.'⁸² Indeed, Chiang did not earn fame in the Soviet Union; he was merely rewarded with a handsome watch as a thank-you gift for having done 'enormous work to develop socialist competition in the largest workshop of the plant,' while his name was inscribed in the *Red Book of Model Workers* for having organised a group of workers to solve a serious industrial problem.⁸³ However, it would be unfair to say that he wasted his time in the USSR, where he received a strong basic education, mastered several professional specialties, and acquired leadership experience.

As to whether he came 'to know the truth about communism,' we cannot even be so sure about that. The inconsistency and incompleteness of the archival materials at researchers' disposal and the inherent subjectivity of all biographical sources make it impossible to come to a firm judgment about the extent to which Chiang became

⁸⁰ CDCO SO, Fund 153, Series 1, File 6, pp. 143–145.

⁸¹ Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: Tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi*, p. 208.

⁸² *Free China Review*. Taipei, 1978. Vol. 28. No. 5, p. 12.

⁸³ T. Yefimova, *Uralmashetsy. Desyat' zavodskikh pyatiletok* [The People of Uralmsh: Ten Five-year Plan Periods at the Plant] (Sverdlovsk: Sredneural'skoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1982), p. 63.

disillusioned with communism in the USSR. It is probably that while in the USSR, Chiang did not retain a total belief in communism. Whatever the truth of the matter, we should admit that his difficult life and unpleasant experiences sufficed to cool off his romantic and youthful enthusiasm, led him to examine socialism with a more critical eye, and contributed to his evolution towards anti-communism.

Another interesting question concerns the influence that Chiang's life in the USSR exerted on his views and his later activities in China. This question is far from simple, not only because it is difficult to establish reliable sources on the subject but because it is not easy to find out the extent to which Chiang was aware of the truth about life in the USSR. Many Russian and Chinese revolutionaries led very similar lives, and many Chinese people were fully aware of the situation in the USSR, although probably not as aware as Chiang, who lived there for over ten years and witnessed the most hellish period of Stalinist terror.

The influence of Chiang's life in the USSR on his later activities has already been described in the literature, such as the style of his political reports, his decision to implement development plans, and even the headlines of his newspaper articles, which remained identical to Soviet-style headlines: 'The Party is the soul of the revolutionary army,' and 'By sacrificing ourselves in struggle, we will realise the three-year plan.'⁸⁴ In terms of content, the articles he wrote in later life barely differed from those he had written for Soviet newspapers, apart from a change in the name of the party.⁸⁵ Another case in point is Chiang's establishment of an institution to educate political commissars during his tenure as the director of the General Political Department of the Taiwanese Ministry of National Defense, to which position he was appointed in 1950.⁸⁶

However, Chiang did not introduce Soviet structures in China from scratch. Since 1923, the Kuomintang had been built following the pattern of the Soviet Communist Party and many of its members had, like Chiang, studied in the USSR. Chiang borrowed some elements of Soviet life very competently, but even without him, the organisational structure of the Kuomintang strongly had resembled the Communist Party for quite some time. Kuomintang party members, just like the communists, would even address one another as 'comrade' (同志).

Of course, there were differences between the Kuomintang and the Communist

⁸⁴ 蔣總統經國先生言論著述彙編 [A Collection of Speeches and Writings of Mr President Chiang Ching-kuo], 臺北, 黎明文化事業股份有限公司, Vol. 1, 1981.

⁸⁵ A. G. Larin, 'Tsyang Tsingo v Rossii' [Chiang Ching-kuo in Russia], in P. M. Ivanov (ed.), *Sovremennyy Taiwan* [Contemporary Taiwan] (Irkutsk: Uliss, 1994), pp. 142–143.

⁸⁶ Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan*, pp. 194–195.

Party, but these differences were mainly related to the programme and objectives, and even in these areas there were initially many points in common. Both here and more generally, several questions arise. For instance, can Chiang Ching-kuo's experience of life in the USSR be connected to the fact that it was he who started the process of democratisation in Taiwan? After the seizure of mainland China by the Communists, Taiwan began to position itself as the 'Free China,' even though martial law had been introduced, albeit temporarily and in conformity with the teaching of Sun Yat-sen. Why it was Chiang Ching-kuo who abolished martial law and allowed a multi-party democratic system to come into being in Taiwan? Certainly, domestic circumstances and pressure exerted by the West and especially the US played an important role, but we should recall that it was the Trotskyists who had called for in-party democracy while they were an opposition faction. They did not advocate democratisation in the Western sense of the term because their 'party democracy' simply allowed the possibility of discussions within the party, but at the same time, Trotsky's ideas and criticism of Stalin's 'dictatorship of the Secretariat' served as a reference point for a theory of the new ruling class in communist countries. This theory was articulated for the first time by a Yugoslav communist, Milovan Đilas⁸⁷, from where it spread to communist reformers such as Euro-communists in Western Europe and even into the Soviet bloc, leading to the Prague Spring and, ultimately, to Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika*. It is not impossible to imagine that Chiang Ching-kuo's thought developed in a similar way, especially after he was able to see the nature of life in the USSR at first hand and to experience the results of Stalin's 'new class' domination.

The second interesting question concerns the root of the decision to build a market economy in Taiwan. The social ideal to which Chiang Kai-shek strove, based on the ideas of Sun Yat-sen, was termed by Kuomintang theoreticians the 'Society of Great Unity' (大同). In this perfect society, whose name had been borrowed from Chinese classical philosophy, all property was to be socialised, the differences between rich and poor overcome, and labour was to serve the entire society, and not be done merely for the sake of wages. That approach was thought to bring about the principle of the 'people's well-being'—the third of the three principles of Sun Yat-sen.

During the anti-Japanese and civil wars, Chiang Kai-shek took advantage of the state of emergency to approach this ideal through the permanent establishment of the state as the sole owner of property and the central economic driver.⁸⁸ After the defeat

⁸⁷ Milovan Đilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1957).

⁸⁸ A. V. Meliksetov, *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskaya politika Gomindana v Kitae (1927–1949)* [Social and

of the Kuomintang on the mainland and its retreat to Taiwan, under the pressure of US and domestic economists who believed that this centralisation was one of the chief reasons for the discontent of the population that had not supported the Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-shek started to allow an increase in the role of the private sector, while retaining state control over the largest economic sectors, the notion of indicative planning, and the significant role of government investment in promising sectors. To realise this policy, he advanced the concept of a ‘*xiaokang* [mid-level wealth] society’ (小康社会) as the first step to attaining the ‘*datong* (大同, Great Unity) society.’ It was announced that private property was acceptable and even useful during the ‘*xiaokang*’ stage and that ‘commodities could be manufactured for the sake of profit, and that people could work simply in order to receive their wages and salaries.’⁸⁹

Chiang Kai-shek outlined his theory of ‘*xiaokang*’ (this term had also been borrowed from classical Chinese philosophy) at the beginning of the 1950s.⁹⁰ Since the late 1960s, in his capacity as the Prime Minister and then President of Taiwan, Chiang Ching-kuo actively worked in this direction by retaining the central role of the state, at the same time as allowing the development of private entrepreneurship. For example, in his administrative report to the Fourth Plenum of the Kuomintang’s CEC in 1973, he stated that the economic system he was building was based on free enterprise, but was also consistent with the ideals of the Great Unity society.⁹¹ It was under his leadership in the 1970s that the Taiwanese government realised the so-called Ten Major Construction Projects and Twelve New Development Projects, the success of which, according to the official presidential website, ‘contribute[d] to this nation’s rapid economic development and social stability and prosperity, thus paving the way for the ensuing economic takeoff.’⁹² People’s Republic of China statesman Deng Xiaoping was naturally aware of these new Kuomintang theories and it would be logical to assume that he studied Taiwan’s experience with reforms and used many of its aspects, including its terminology.

However, one can only speak of a partial influence of the Kuomintang on the Chinese communists in this sense since the very idea of ‘*xiaokang*’ as a transitional

Economic Policy of the Kuomintang in China in 1927–1949] (Moscow, Nauka, 1977), pp. 162–234.

⁸⁹ 蔣中正 [Chiang Kai-shek]. 民生主義育樂兩篇補述 [Two Editions to the Principle of People’s Welfare: Education and Entertainment], 1954. http://www.ccf.org.tw/ccef001/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=535:0002-4&catid=110&Itemid=256.

⁹⁰ Meliksetov, *Sotsial’no-ekonomicheskaya politika Gomindana v Kitae*, pp. 236–237.

⁹¹ Free China Weekly, 1973, No. 45, pp. 4–5.

⁹² *Presidents since 1947. Chiang Ching-kuo (6th–7th terms).* <https://english.president.gov.tw/Page/85>.

period to '*datong*' strongly calls to mind the Bolshevik notion of the 'transitional period' to communism, which in the 1920s provided the groundwork for the NEP in Soviet Russia. The overall goal of that period was to realise an economic breakthrough, with the 'commanding heights' of the economy to be retained by the state, but private initiative to be allowed in agriculture and small industries. A complete convergence of concepts such as '*xiaokang*' and 'transition period' can be observed in the contemporary ideology of the CCP, according to which the course of the construction of communism, private property and a market economy are permissible in order to reach '*xiaokang*,' or mid-level wealth.

Trotskyism, which Chiang Ching-kuo admired while in the USSR, opposed the NEP and advocated the swift nationalisation of the economy, as well as for accelerated 'super-industrialisation' at the expense of the peasantry. However, Chiang would have seen while in the USSR that after he had liquidated the Left Opposition, Stalin actually began to apply its economic programme. He also saw the catastrophic implications of this development in both industry and agriculture. Many members of the Kuomintang later also held the view that the policy of statism was one of the reasons why many Chinese people did not support the Nationalists during the Civil War period.

Stalinism can be criticised from both leftist and rightist positions. The transition to market reforms in Taiwan did not only come about due to pressure from Washington; another factor was the failure of Soviet and Kuomintang attempts to accelerate development by means of economic statism. It is almost certainly not a coincidence that many Chinese Trotskyists who had studied in the USSR supported the Kuomintang upon their return to their home country; Chiang Ching-kuo is far from an exception in this regard.⁹³ Furthermore, it is easy to see how the experience of life in the Stalinist USSR could lead to a belief that rightist economic approaches were more productive, and that measures similar to but more consistent than the Soviet NEP would be more beneficial for Taiwan. The appropriate nature of this ideological development was later confirmed by the fact that eventually, the Chinese communists in mainland China arrived at the same conclusion; perhaps it is relevant to state here that Deng Xiaoping, the architect of mainland Chinese economic reforms, was a classmate of Chiang at the UTK and had a similar although much shorter experience in the USSR. However, more precise answers to these questions can be only formulated following further and more detailed research.

⁹³ Galitsky, *Tsian Tsingo: Tragediya i triumph syna Chan Kaishi*, p. 215.